

PRINCIPLES OF ISLAMIC FAITH

AND THEIR EVIDENCE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ءَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَيَّ
رَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ
وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ ءَالْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

“O you who believe!

Believe in Allah, His Messenger, and the Book He has sent down to His Messenger, and the Books He sent down before.

And whoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day has indeed strayed with a far misguidance.

(An-Nisā', 136)

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FOREWORD

True faith (*īmān*) forms the foundation of the Islamic religion. For this reason, another name for the *Ilm al-Kalām*, which focuses on the principles of faith, is “‘Usūl’ud-Dīn,” meaning “the fundamentals, roots, and foundations of religion.”

Plants draw their nourishment from their roots. If a plant’s root is strong, its other parts will be strong; if not, the other parts will not be strong either. If the root cannot obtain sufficient nourishment from the soil, the plant withers and dies.

In human life, too, beliefs serve as roots.

A person’s personality and character are built upon his beliefs. If the belief is strong, the person’s personality and character will be strong as well. If the belief is not strong, that person’s personality and character will not be strong either.

People who have strong faith are resilient in the face of adversity. They stand up against any kind of challenge and overcome them. The willpower of those with weak faith, however, is very weak. A person that has weak faith cannot withstand adversity and can be quickly defeated.

While it is nearly impossible to break the spirits of people who have strong faith, it is very easy to break that of those who do not have strong faith.

The best examples of people who have strong faith in history are our Prophet and his Companions.

1,400 years ago, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), despite the circumstances being entirely against him, achieved an unprecedentedly grand societal revolution, which no other human being has ever accomplished until and since then, in an extremely short amount of time. He completely eradicated the Age of Ignorance and established a brand-new society, a community (an *ummah*), shaped according to the Qur’ān and Sunnah, serving as an example to all of humanity.

By virtue of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), people who once worshipped idols became devout believers who prayed at night and fasted during the day; those who would kill even their own children without mercy became so compassionate that they could not even step on an ant. Moreover, through the training and education they received from our Prophet, they transformed from being ignorant, uncivilized, and uneducated into people who taught knowledge to all of humanity, serving as examples and guides; they taught what true civilization should be to nations which were considered the most civilized of their time.

At the root of these noble qualities lay their strong and firm faith. Their faith surpassed everything else.

And the Ummah of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) followed in their footsteps of the Noble Companions (peace be upon them), taking them as their role models. With their strong and firm faith, the Ummah of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) triumphed over their

enemies for centuries, established Islam's dominance over a large part of the world, and founded the world's greatest cultures and civilizations.

However, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Muslim ummah suffered a major defeat against the West. Western philosophies such as materialism, positivism, communism, and evolutionism made their way into the Islamic world. These philosophies undermined the ummah's faith. Many lost their faith and became adherents of these philosophies. Many fell prey to doubts and whispers of the devil. Islamic life in society diminished, and morality deteriorated. The erosion of faith marked the beginning of other disasters. Unity in society was lost, and divisions and conflicts among people began. Society faced numerous political, social, and economic hardships.

When we look at the Islamic world, we see these problems everywhere.

To escape the disasters we are currently facing, a new momentum of faith is needed; because faith possesses an immense potential power within it. For this reason Imam Nursi says, "A man who attains true faith can challenge the entire universe." This potential power holds within it all that we need to resolve our problems.

If we can strengthen the faith of the people in our societies, we can, let alone return to conditions similar to the previous glorious periods of Islamic societies, we can even build much better and progressed societies than of those times, united around our common Islamic values. We can revive the ummah and build new societies that will serve as examples to the whole world.

Today, the entire world, having lost its peace and happiness, yearns for such a society.

The book in your hands is a modest work prepared with the aim of contributing to the aspirations mentioned above. It was compiled by drawing upon the Qur'ān and Sunnah, the works of past scholars, and especially the epistles of Imām Bedī'uzzamān Sa'īd an-Nursī. The content of the book is supported by rational and scholarly evidence.

This book was prepared with an aim of trying to make it beneficial for even those who are new to reading books on Islamic true faith, especially for the young generation. Every effort was made to ensure that the language is simple and easy to understand. To avoid making the reading experience tiresome, the topics discussed were kept as brief as possible.

This book does not delve into the topics of kalām that do not have much relevance in today's world.

We hope that, by the grace of Allah, this book will be beneficial to our readers.

Striving is our duty, but the result is His decree.

PART ONE

1. Ahl al-Sunnah

As-Salaf'us-Sāliḥīn (The Pious Predecessors)

Our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was given prophethood at the age of 40; within 23 years, he reformed the people of the Arabian Peninsula and raised a generation of Companions who would set an example for all of humanity.

He commanded his Companions and the entire ummah who would come after them to always adhere to the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and warned them against the bid'ah. The Companions remained completely faithful to his orders; throughout their lives, they acted in accordance with the Qur'ān and Sunnah in both belief and practice, and passed on these two legacies to the generation that followed them, known as the Tābi'ūn. Likewise, the Tabi'ūn also transmitted this legacy with the same diligence to the third generation, known as the "Tāba'ut-Tabi'īn." The Tābi'ūn and the Tāba'ut-Tabi'īn, like the Companions, made the Qur'ān and the Sunnah the basis of their lives.

Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) praised these three generations as follows: *"The best of people are those of my generation (my Companions), then those who come after them, and then those who come after them."*¹

Islamic scholars have named these three virtuous generations "As-Salaf'us-Sāliḥīn"; that is, the righteous people of the past, and have recognized them as leaders in religion.

The Emergence of Madhhabs (Sects)

During the time of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), social life was shaped by the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) would give rulings on the events occurring in his time based on the revelation or inspiration he was receiving from Allah, or through his own ijtihād². Following the passing of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), the Companions too gave rulings on events occurring in society according to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. If there was no explicit ruling in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah regarding an event, they gave rulings based on their

¹ Bukhārī, Shahādāt, Chapter 9; Faḍailu's-Ṣaḥāba, Chapter 1; Muslim, Faḍailu's-Ṣaḥāba, Chapter 52,

² **Ijtihād:** It refers to a mujtahīd scholar "exerting every effort to derive the ruling on a matter – for which there is no explicit ruling in the Qur'ān and Sunnah – from the Qur'ān and Sunnah." One of the common ways ijtihād is exercised by Islamic scholars is through qiyās (analogy). Qiyās is defined as follows: It is to determine the ruling on a matter for which there is no explicit verse or hadith by linking it to the ruling on another matter for which there is an explicit verse or hadith, based on the common cause or reason between them.

There are numerous proofs from the Qur'ān and Sunnah regarding the acceptability of ijtihād in Islam. One of the most well-known hadiths on this subject is as follows: When the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) wanted to send Mu'ādh (may Allah be pleased with him) from the Companions to Yemen as a governor, he asked him, "If a case comes before you, how will you rule?" Mu'ādh replied, "I will rule by the Book of Allah." Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) asked, "What if you cannot find a ruling in the Book of Allah?" Mu'ādh replied, "By the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah." Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) then asked, "And if you cannot find a ruling in the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah or in the Book of Allah?" Mu'ādh replied, "I will exercise my own ijtihād and will not refrain (from giving a ruling)."

Upon this, the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) struck Muaz on the chest and said, "Praise be to Allah, Who has helped the messenger (Mu'ādh) of the Messenger of Allah to find something which pleases the Messenger of Allah." (Abū Dāwūd, Al-Tirmidhī)

own *ijtihād*. The leading Companions, foremost among them the four caliphs, consistently sought solutions to newly appearing issues through *ijtihād*.

The *Tābi'ūn*, who came after the era of the *Sahāba*, also issued rulings based on the *Qur'ān*, the *Sunnah*, the fatwas (rulings) of the *Sahāba*, and their own *ijtihād*. It can be said that during that period, there were either *mujtahīds* or scholars at the rank of *mujtahīds* in every city. In the early period of Islam, *mujtahīds* were not limited to the four imams of jurisprudence. Each *mujtahīd* derived rulings from the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* according to his own understanding and issued fatwas in accordance with the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (). However, over time, the majority of the Muslim community abandoned the fatwas of other *mujtahīds* and gathered around the four *mujtahīd* imams which we know of today.

Starting from the *Tābi'ūn* period, those who acted upon the fatwas of Imam al-A'zam came to be called *Hanafī*, and those who acted upon the fatwas of Imam Mālik came to be called *Mālikī*. The gathering of people around these fatwas manifested in a natural way and was not an artificial or forced situation. No *mujtahīd* ever said, "I am founding a *madhhab*; follow me." They simply issued fatwas based on the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* for those who came to them seeking guidance. Ultimately, as the number of people acting upon their fatwas grew, the phenomenon we call a *madhhab* (sect) emerged. The fatwas of other *mujtahīds* from the *Tābi'ūn* or *Tāba'ut-Tabi'īn* periods were gradually forgotten and abandoned.

What Is Ahl al-Sunnah ?

As is well known, the *Sunnah* consists of the sayings, actions, and approvals of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.). The term "Ahl al-Sunnah" literally means "those who follow the *Sunnah*." Today, speaking of the Ahl al-Sunnah, means referring to those who follow the *Hanafī*, *Shāfi'ī*, *Mālikī*, and *Hanbalī* *madhhab*s in practice, and the *Ash'arī* and *Māturīdī* *madhhab*s in *i'tiqād* (belief). These four *madhhab*s in practice and two *madhhab*s in *i'tiqād* have consistently been referred to by this term from the first century of Islam to the present day because they have continued the beliefs and way of life of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and the Companions.

From the early days of Islam to the present, the Ahl al-Sunnah has constituted the majority of the Muslim community for centuries. According to research, the Ahl al-Sunnah currently accounts for 90% or 93% of all the Muslims in the world.³ Although many *bid'ah* sects have emerged throughout history, they have either faded away over time – such as the

³ See: Bekir Topaloğlu, *Kelam İlmi*, Damla Publishing, 1985, p. 149.

Prof. Topaloğlu also provides the following information regarding the proportions of population among the Ahl al-Sunnah: *Hanafīs* 53%, *Shāfi'īs* 33%, *Mālikīs* 13%, *Hanbalīs* 1%.

Mu'tazilah – or have continued to exist only as a small (marginal) minority within the Muslim community – such as the Shia⁴.

Based on what we have discussed so far, we can say the following: The Ahl al-Sunnah is the main and the largest branch of the Muslim ummah, which has continued to follow the path of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), the Companions, the Tābi'ūn and the Tāba'ut-Tabi'īn in both belief and practice up to the present day.

Hadiths Pointing to the Ahl al-Sunnah

Muslims, who were united during the time of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and the following times, split into factions following the martyrdom of Caliph Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him). In the years that followed, this fragmentation and differentiation increased with the emergence of different groups. The main and the largest group, which constitutes the center of the ummah and is known as the Ahl al-Sunnah, is the only community within this differentiation that practices "True Islam." Let us examine some hadiths that point to this.

Anas ibn Mālik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: ***"My ummah will not come together upon misguidance. If you see my ummah in disagreement, follow the majority."***⁵

This hadith serves as evidence that the Ahl al-Sunnah, who constitute 90% of the Ummah of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) today, are on the path of truth. For they are the largest segment of the Ummah.

It is narrated from Abdullah ibn Amr (may Allah be pleased with him) that our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said:

"The Children of Israel were divided into seventy-two sects. My ummah, however, will split into seventy-three sects. All of them are destined for Hell, except for one." They asked, "O Messenger of Allah, which one is that?" He replied, "Those who follow my path and that of my Companions."⁶

Another well-known hadith of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), narrated in many hadith collections including al-Bukhārī and Muslim, is as follows:

Thawban (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: ***"A group from my ummah will always remain triumphant upon the truth until Allah's command (the Hour) comes; those who separate from them will not be able to harm them, and the Hour will come while they are in this state."***⁷

⁴ Shiites are estimated to constitute 8% or 10% of the Islamic world. See: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi (Encyclopedia of Islam by Türkiye Diyanet Foundation), Vol. 23, entry on "Islam".

⁵ Ibn Māja, Kitāb al-Fitan, Chapter 8, hadith no. 3950.

⁶ Al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Īmān, Chapter 18, nos. 2640, 2641 / Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb as-Sunnah, Chapter 1, nos. 4596, 4597.

⁷ Muslim, Kitāb al-Īmārah, Chapter 53.

In summary: After our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), certain deviations occurred within the ummah; however, the Ahl al-Sunnah, who constitute the main body and the vast majority of the ummah, have preserved the original state of the religion. They have prioritized the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, always upheld them, brought them to the present day without altering or distorting them, and by struggling against deviant sects, have ensured the truth to always prevail.

2. Bid'ah and the People of Bid'ah

What is Bid'ah?

Bid'ah refers to matters that are not part of the religion's original essence, that have been added to the religion later, that lack Sharī'ah-based evidence regarding belief and practice, and that contradict the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

In the Noble Qur'ān, Allah (s.w.t.) says: *"Today I have perfected your religion for you, and completed My favour upon you (...)"*⁸. Based on this verse, bid'ah is defined as: "Beliefs, behaviors, or attitudes introduced after the completion of religious commands that contradict the clear verses of the Qur'ān, the Sunnah of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), and the general consensus of the Companions, the Tābi'ūn, and the mujtahīd imams."

Our Prophet, p.b.u.h, warned his ummah against the bid'ah by stating: *"All bid'ah are misguidance, and all misguidance is in the Fire"*⁹.

Types of Bid'ah

Our Prophet (p.b.u.h) said: *"Whoever establishes a good practice in Islam, if it is followed after him, he will be rewarded with the same reward as those who act upon it. Nothing will be diminished from their reward. And whoever introduces an evil innovation into Islam, if people act upon it after him, a sin equal to that of those who act upon it will be recorded against him. And nothing will be deducted from the sins of those who act upon it."*¹⁰

Islamic scholars, drawing upon this and similar hadiths of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), have divided the bid'ah into two categories: "bid'ah hasanah" (good bid'ah) and "bid'ah sayyiah" (bad bid'ah).

Bid'ah hasanah refers to religious innovations that do not contradict the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and in fact have evidence from the Qur'ān and Sunnah. For example, during the time of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), the Qur'ān had been written down, but it had not yet been compiled into a book. Compiling it into a book can be considered a good innovation. Similarly, in the early periods of Islam, the Qur'ān did not have dots, vowel marks, or verse

⁸ Surah Al-Mā'idah, verse 3.

⁹ Sunan an-Nasā'ī, Salāt al-'Īdayn, Chapter 22, hadith no. 1576.

¹⁰ Muslim, Al-Jāmi' Al-Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-'Ilm, Chapter 6, hadith no. (1017) 15; Al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-'Ilm, Chapter 15, hadith no. 2675.

numbers. These were added later. Likewise, the practice of performing Tarawih prayers in congregation and the construction of minarets in mosques fall into this category. We could add many more examples to this list.

Bid'ah sayyiah, on the other hand, are things that have emerged as contrary to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. When the term "bid'ah" is mentioned, it is primarily these types of bid'ah that come to mind. Today, the bid'ah have multiplied to an extreme degree. For example: Denying the hadiths, criticizing the Companions, rejecting the madhabs, interpreting Islam according to Western philosophy, envying the West, supporting European customs, denying that women's hijab is obligatory in Islam, and claiming that Christians and Jews will enter Paradise are some of the bid'ahs prevalent today.

People of Bid'ah

Those who support the bid'ah that may be related to either belief or practice are called "the People of Bid'ah" (Ahl al-Bid'ah).

In the Islamic world, all groups outside the Ahl al-Sunnah – such as the Mu'tazilah, Shi'a, and Khawarij – are considered groups of the People of Bid'ah. These groups have either interpreted the verses of the Qur'ān according to their own thoughts, or denied hadiths, and have taken sides with bid'ah related to either belief or practice.

Although Islamic scholars have stated that the People of Bid'ah have fallen into misguidance and strayed from the true path of Islam, they have also affirmed that these groups are not disbelievers. However, it is accepted that those among these sects who deny the fundamental principles of Islam are considered disbelievers. For example, Imam al-Ghazālī stated that philosophers who deny the resurrection of both the soul and the body after death are disbelievers.

The Shiites, who claim that the caliphate was the right of Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) and that this right was unrighteously taken away by Abū Bakr and Umar (may Allah be pleased with them), have also fallen into bid'ah in many matters. Scholars have stated that they are people of bid'ah (ahl al-bid'ah) but not disbelievers. However, the Ghurabiyyah sect among them has been deemed disbelievers because they claim that the true Prophet is not our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) but rather Ali (may Allah be pleased with him).

PART TWO

‘ILM AL-KALĀM

1. The Hadith of Jibril

The Hadith of Jibril relates how Jibril (upon whom be peace) came in human form and asked our Prophet (p.b.u.h) about the words “Īmān, Islām, and iḥsān,” and discusses the answers given by our Prophet (p.b.u.h). Since this hadith explains the three most fundamental principles of our religion, it is appropriate for us to begin with it.

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

One day, while we were in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.), suddenly, there came a man dressed in pure white and that had fully black hair. He showed no signs of having traveled, and none of us could recognize him. He sat directly next to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), resting his knees against the Prophet’s knees, and placed his hands on his thighs. Then he said:

“O Muhammad! Tell me what Islam is!”

The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) replied: “Islam is bearing witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, performing the prayer properly, giving zakat, observing the fast of Ramadan, and performing the pilgrimage to the Kaaba if you are able to do so.”

The man said, “You have spoken the truth.”

We were astonished by this, for he was both asking and affirming.

The man said, “Tell me about Īmān!”

The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) said: “Believing in Allah, His angels, His Books, His messengers, and the Day of Judgment, as well as believing in destiny – its good and its harm.”

That man (again) said, “You have spoken the truth.” Then he said, “Tell me about iḥsān!”

The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) said: “It is to worship Allah as if you see Him. For even though you do not see Him, He certainly sees you.”

That man said, “Tell me about the Day of Judgment!”

The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) said: “In this matter, the one who is asked of is not more knowledgeable than the one who asks.”

The man said, “Then tell me about its signs!”

¹¹The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: “The slave-woman will give birth to her own master, and you will see barefoot, naked, dependent shepherds competing with one another to build tall

¹¹One interpretation of the phrase in the hadith “the slave-woman giving birth to her own master,” is that in the end times, children will not respect their mothers and will treat them as if they were slaves.

structures.”

After that, the man left. I waited for a while. Finally, the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) said to me, “O Umar! Do you know who that questioner was?”

I replied, “Allah and His Messenger know best.”

He said: “He was Jibrīl. He came to teach you your religion.”¹²

¹² Muslim, Kitāb al-’Īmān, Chapter 1, hadith no. 102.

2. Definition of ‘Ilm al-Kalām

‘Ilm al-Kalām is a discipline that focuses on the six pillars of faith mentioned in the hadith about Jibril, explaining and proving them.

‘Ilm al-Kalām has also been defined as follows: It is an Islamic science that proves religious doctrines and beliefs by using definitive evidence and dispelling any doubts that may arise.

‘Ilm al-Kalām is also known by the names Aqā’id, Usul al-Dīn, the ‘Ilm al-Tawhid, and Fiqh al-Akbar.

3. The Purpose and Benefits of ‘Ilm al-Kalām

The purpose of the ‘ilm al-kalam – as with all Islamic sciences – is to grant humans happiness in this world and the hereafter. However, scholars have also discussed certain secondary objectives and benefits of the ‘ilm al-kalam. Some of these are as follows:

- a. The ‘ilm al-kalam elevates a person’s weak, imitative faith to the level of a strong, rational faith based on evidence. In this way, the individual attains an unshakable faith.
- b. Through the evidence it presents, the ‘ilm al-kalam silences atheists and supporters of bid‘ah.
- c. The ‘ilm al-kalam, by strengthening a person’s Īmān (faith), serves as a means for him to avoid sins and perform righteous deeds. It purifies a person’s intention and helps him attain sincerity. If one’s intention lacks strength and sincerity, he may fall into ugly emotions such as hypocrisy or self-admiration in his deeds, and thus his actions may go to waste.¹³

Due to these and similar characteristics of it, Islamic scholars have referred to the ‘Ilm al-Kalām as the “Ashrafu’l-Ulūm,” meaning the most noble of Islamic sciences.

4. The Historical Development of ‘Ilm al-Kalām

Following the fitnahs (disorders) that emerged during the time of Caliph Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) and afterward, disputes and factionalism arose. During that period, the Khawarij initiated the first doctrinal schism. Following them, other heretical groups such as the Jabriyya, Qadariyya, Murji‘ah, Shi‘a, Jahmiyya, and Mu‘tazila too emerged.

Until the beginning of the fourth century AH (after Hijrah), the Ahl al-Sunnah creed persisted as the belief of the scholars of fiqh and hadith. Later, Imam Mātūrīdī (d. 333/944)

¹³ See: Bekir Topaloğlu, *Kelâm İlmi*, Damla Publications, 1985, p. 51 / Sayyid Sharīf al-Jurjānī, *Sharh al-Mawāqif*, Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1998, vol. 1, p. 57.

and Imam Abū al-Hasan al-Ash‘arī (d. 324/936) systematized the ‘ilm al-Kalām within the Ahl al-Sunnah. They began to combat deviant sects within society. Thanks to scholars such as Imam al-Bāqillānī, Imam al-Ghazālī, and Fakhruddīn al-Rāzī, who continued the methodology of these two figures, the Ahl al-Sunnah creed became firmly established in Islamic societies, and the influence of deviant sects gradually faded.

5. Modern Times and ‘Ilm al-Kalām

In the 19th century, the philosophies of materialism, positivism, and evolutionism spread throughout Europe. The Church, failing to adequately defend their religion against atheism, lost much of its former influence and authority over society.

Starting in the 19th century, as the Islamic world began to be influenced by the West, Western atheistic philosophies such as materialism, positivism, and evolutionism also began to spread gradually.

Contemporary Islamic scholars recognized that traditional kalām books were not sufficient to address new philosophical issues, and they sought to establish a renewed version of ‘ilm al-kalām. However, following World War I, nearly the entire Islamic world was reduced to colonial states, and such efforts came to an end.

The Republic of Türkiye, established in place of the Ottoman Empire, was not a colony, but its situation was no different from that of other Islamic countries. The post-war restructuring of society was shaped entirely according to the Western mindset and religion was excluded from social life.

In the first half of the twentieth century, Imam Bediuzzaman established a new ‘ilm al-kalam through the epistles he wrote. With these works, he proved matters of faith and silenced the skeptical currents.

PART THREE:

FAITH (ĪMĀN) AND MATTERS RELATED TO FAITH

1. The Definition and Scope of Faith

We use “faith” to refer to the Arabic word “Īmān”, which means: to believe, to affirm, to trust, and to be free from doubt and fear.¹⁴ For example, accepting the words of someone who brings us news without denying them is an act of belief and affirmation.

Īmān (faith) is also defined briefly as: “Affirmation with the heart and declaration with the tongue.”

In Islamic terminology, Īmān (faith) means: affirming the religious essentials (al-ḍarūrāt al-dīniyya) – the rulings confirmed with certainty to be brought from Allah by our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) – and wholeheartedly believing that the things he brought to us are true and correct without any doubt.

2. The Increase and Decrease of Faith

There are six pillars of faith. These do not increase or decrease. Denying even one of them leads a person to disbelief. However, faith can increase or decrease in terms of strength and weakness.

Faith can increase through righteous deeds, pursuit of knowledge, and reflection, or it can diminish as a result of engaging in sin.

A verse from the Qur’ān states: *“The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts tremble; and when His verses are recited to them, (this) increases them in faith (...)”*¹⁵

Ibn Umar, one of the Noble Companions, says: “We asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Does faith increase or decrease?’ He replied, ‘Yes, it increases, even to the point of admitting its possessor into Paradise. It decreases, even to the point of casting its possessor into Hell.’”¹⁶

3. Imitative Faith and Critically Verified Faith

Faith is divided into two categories based on its strength or weakness: Īmān al-taqlīd (imitative faith) and Īmān al-tahqīq (critically verified faith).

Īmān al-Taqlīd (Imitative Faith): Īmān al-tahqīq or imitative faith refers to believing in the six pillars of faith without evidence, only due to the influence one receives from his parents or environment.

¹⁴ Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, Hak Dini Kur’ân Dili, Azim Distribution, vol. 1, p. 168.

¹⁵ Al-Anfāl, 2. See also: ‘Āli ‘Imrān, 173; At-Tawbah, 124; Al-Aḥzab, 22; Al-Fath, 4; Al-Muddaththir, 31.

¹⁶ Tafsīr al-Bayḍawī, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1999, vol. 1, p. 190. Al-Taftāzānī, Sharh al-Maqāṣid, ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1998, vol. 5, p. 213.

Īmān al-Tahqīq (Critically Verified Faith): Īmān al-tahqīq or critically verified faith refers to believing in the six pillars of faith in a way that is strengthened through research and supported by both rational evidence and narration-based evidence.

Islamic scholars have agreed that Īmān al-taqīd (imitative faith) is valid and legitimate; however, they also agree that those who do not transform this type of faith they have into Īmān al-tahqīq (critically verified faith) through evidence will have committed sin by doing so, and that it is an individual obligation (farḍ al-ayn) for every believer to transform their faith into Īmān al-tahqīq.¹⁷ Those who possess Īmān al-taqīd face the danger of losing their faith either due to the influence of heretic people they may encounter or because of doubts and whispers of the devil.

4. Levels of Critically Verified Faith

The transformation of the weak Īmān al-taqīd into Īmān al-tahqīq occurs either through performing worship or through studies of knowledge based on evidence and proof. In Islamic history, Sūfīs sought to transform their faith into Īmān al-tahqīq performing worship, while scholars of kalām sought to do so through bringing evidences and proofs.

Īmān al-tahqīq refers to faith strengthened by evidence. It is also called faith based on yaqīn (certainty). Yaqīn is defined as knowledge free from doubt, certain knowledge in accordance with reality, or the heart's assurance regarding the truth of a matter. There are three levels of yaqīn: ʿilm al-yaqīn, ʿayn al-yaqīn, and haqq al-yaqīn.

ʿilm al-Yaqīn: It is the certain knowledge formed in the heart as a result of rational or narration-based evidence. (When we see smoke rising from behind a mountain, our understanding that there is a fire there is ʿilm al-yaqīn.)

ʿAyn al-Yaqīn: It is defined as knowledge obtained through observation and seeing, and whose truth is self-evident. (Going behind the mountain and seeing the fire with our own eyes is ʿayn al-yaqīn.)

Haqq al-Yaqīn: It is the unshakable faith formed in the heart after numerous conclusions of evidence and observation. This state is the highest level of certainty. (The knowledge regarding fire that settles in our hearts as a result of experiencing its many qualities, such as experiencing it burn wood and vaporize water, is an example of haqq al-yaqīn.)

¹⁷ See: ʿAliyy al-Qārī, Sharh al-Fiqh al-Akbar, Çağrı Publications, p. 383;p. 219; Nūr al-Dīn al-Şābūnī, Maturidiye Akaidi (Arabic original: al-Bidāya fī şūlī'd-dīn), trans. Bekir Topaloğlu, p. 173.

5. The Relationship Between Faith and Deeds

According to the scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah, faith and deeds are distinct from one another. Deeds are not a part or component of faith. However, there is a very close bond and relationship between the two.

The fact that deeds are not a part of faith does not mean that there is no relationship between faith and deeds. Islamic scholars are in agreement that, from the perspective of the integrity of religious life, there is a close relationship between faith and deeds. “Acts of worship strengthen and solidify doctrinal and faith-based principles, making a person truly obtain them.” In the sight of Allah, faith without deeds is accepted as faith, yet it is not a faith that is particularly pleasing to Him due to the absence of deeds. There is an unneglectable risk that those who make a habit of acting contrary to their faith may, at the end, lose their faith.

Faith leads to action and performing worship; it requires them. Faith that does not result in performing religious deeds is weak. If a person merely affirms what is required to be believed but adopts an attitude that disregards deeds and violates religious prohibitions by committing sins; then his commitment to the religion, to Allah, and to the Prophet gradually diminishes. And one day, the light of faith in his heart completely may fade away.

6. The Concept of Major Sins

Major Sin

Sins are divided into two categories: major (kabīrah) and minor (ṣaghīrah). In Surah An-Nisā’, it is stated:

“If you avoid the major (sins) from which you are being forbidden, We will cover your (minor) misdeeds from you and admit you into a noble place (Paradise).”¹⁸

Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said, *“Beware of the seven things that lead to being destroyed!”* The Companions asked, “O Messenger of Allah! What are these seven things?” The Messenger of Allah replied, *“Associating partners with Allah, practicing sorcery, killing someone who Allah has forbidden the killing of, eating (taking) riba (usury), eating (taking) the property of an orphan, fleeing from battle while fighting the enemy, and falsely accusing believing, married women of adultery.”*¹⁹

Imam Bediuzzaman states that these sins mentioned by our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) are the “akbaru’l-kabāir” (the most major of the major sins), and that major sins are not limited to seven but are numerous. Ibn Abbas’s (may Allah be pleased with him) responding to those who ask of him, “Are the major sins seven?” by saying “They are close to seventy” also

¹⁸Sūrah An-Nisā’, 31. (See also: Sūrah An-Najm, 32)

¹⁹ Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Waṣāyā, Chapter 23 / Al-Jāmi’ Al-Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-’Imān, Chapter 38, hadith no. 89.

supports this view.²⁰ The explanations of many other Islamic scholars also align with this perspective.

Various opinions have been put forward regarding the definition of major sins. The most sound view on this matter is Ibn Abbas's statement: "They are the things for which Allah has decreed Hell in the Hereafter and *ḥadd* (punishment according to Islamic law) in this world."²¹

Furthermore, Islamic scholars state, in agreement with what Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said, that "a major sin ceases to be major if the person repents and seeks forgiveness; and a minor sin ceases to be minor if the person persists in committing it."²²

Major Sins and Faith

Those who commit major sins become sinners. They do not become disbelievers nor do they leave the faith. This is because those who commit these sins do so not because they deny Allah or the Hereafter, but because they have succumbed to the desires of their lower-selves. For example, smokers smoke even though they know it is harmful to their health. This is not because they do not believe in the harm of smoking, but because they have succumbed to the desires of their lower-selves.

The Fate of One Who Commits a Major Sin

If a person who has committed a major sin repents, Allah may accept his repentance and forgive him; if he dies without repenting, Allah the Almighty may forgive him either through the intercession of an intercessor or by His own grace and mercy, or He may punish him in Hell according to the extent of his sins, and after his punishment is completed, He will admit him to Paradise. Such people will not remain in Hell forever as long as they do not fall into disbelief (kufr).²³ Our Prophet (s.a.v) points to this fact in the hadith: "Whoever has even a speck of faith in their heart will be taken out of Hell."²⁴

7. Every Sin Has a Path Leading to Disbelief

The scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah have stated, "One who commits a major sin does not become a disbeliever." However, this statement does not imply that such sins can be committed without any consequences, nor does it mean that major sins cause no harm to

²⁰Imam al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1993, vol. 3, p. 91.

²¹See Abū al-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zāḍ al-Masīr*, vol. 2, p. 22.

²² Imam al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1993, p. 91; Taftāzānī, *Sharh al-Aqaid*, Dergah Press, p. 262

²³ Nūr al-Dīn al-Şābūnī, *Maturidiye Akaidi* (Arabic original: *Al-Bidāyah Fī 'Uşūl Al-Dīn*), trans. Bekir Topaloğlu, p. 161; Abū al-Yusr al-Pazdawī, *Usul al-Dīn*, trans. Şerafeddin Gölcük, p. 187.

²⁴ *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol. 1, p. 72, hadith no. 284.

faith. Sometimes there can be significant concern that those who commit major sins may fall into disbelief because of the sins they have committed.

Imam Bediuzzaman says the following on this subject:

“The wounds that arise from our sins and the whispers (wasāwis) and doubts (shubuhāt), that emerge from those wounds, damage our faith – may Allah protect us from this happening – by striking the inner depths of our hearts which are the seat of faith; and they attack the spiritual pleasure of our tongue, which is the interpreter of faith, by distancing our tongues from Divine remembrance (dhikr) so hatefully that they silence the dhikr on our tongues.

Yes – sin deeply penetrates the heart, getting right inside it, and perpetually and continually blackens it, and hardens it until it removes all the light of faith from it. There lies a road in every sin that leads to disbelief (kufr). If that sin is not quickly erased through repentance, it turns into a little spiritual maggot, nay a snake, that bites into the heart.”²⁵

8. There Is Pleasure in Faith, and Agony in Disbelief

Faith yields the happiness of a person both in this worldly life and in the Hereafter. Disbelief and denial, however, not only cause a person to remain in distress and suffering in this world but also lead to being thrown into Hell for eternity in the Hereafter.

Let us focus here on the benefits of faith in this world and the harms of disbelief:

The Meaning of Life and Death

Human beings are most curious about the answers to the questions: “Why does life exist?”, “What is the purpose of life?” and “Why is there death?” Science and philosophy have been unable to answer these important questions.

Tolstoy, a Russian author, in his work *My Confession*, recounts that he received a religious education as a child, but became an atheist after his college education; and that much later, he gave much thought to the questions “Why do I exist?”, “What is the meaning of life?” and “Why is there death?” and fell into depression because he could not find answers to these questions. The writer was only able to escape this depressing state by believing in Allah.

Expressions similar to those described by Tolstoy can also be found in the works and sayings of other philosophers. For example, according to some philosophers, life is just absurd. According to the French atheist philosopher Camus, “We live in an absurd world. The

²⁵Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Flashes (Lem’alar)*, trans. Hayrat Translation Committee, *The Second Flash, The First Subtle Point* (<https://risalahonline.com/the-flashes/the-second-flash#3>)

absence of a purpose in life in this absurd world can lead a person to depression, and even to suicide.”

It is clear that atheism, which claims life has no purpose and is absurd, cannot offer humanity anything positive and satisfying, or anything capable of making a person truly happy.

In contrary, faith provides us with the answers to the questions, “Why do I exist?”, “What is the meaning of life?” and “Why is there death?” Learning these answers adds meaning to our lives, enriching and enlivening them.

Organization of Life

The Qur’ān and the Sunnah guide us on how to organize our lives. Therefore, a believer knows how best he can act in his personal life, family life, and social life. This makes his life much easier.

A non-believer, however, cannot know how he should be behaving in his personal life, family life, or social life. Not knowing what to do and how to do leads him to hesitation and conflict. Sometimes his wrong actions cause his relationships with others to deteriorate.

Value

Every human being naturally desires to be valued, to be appreciated, and to be loved. Feeling worthless or devalued can lead a person to develop an inferiority complex. Alternatively, others’ failure to value a person may cause him to hate or become hostile toward them, and being too much valued and loved by others can lead a person to become arrogant, conceited, or self-centered. Such situations can lead to problems both for the individual and for society.

Faith in Allah satisfies the innate sense of being valued within a person. Because humans, each of them, are Allah’s most precious creations. The Qur’ān states that man was created in the best of forms (ahsanu taqwīm) and is the noblest of all creatures (ashrafu maḥlūqāt). While a person may gain fame among people in this world through his wealth or status, in the sight of Allah, he gains value through his faith, worship, and supplications. Being valued in this way serves leads to goodness in many ways in both the individual and social life.

Powerlessness

Human beings are inherently powerless. Powerlessness means a person’s lacking the power to save himself from tribulations and calamities.

A person who does not believe in Allah, when faced with misfortunes, sees that his strength is insufficient to cope with them. He seeks someone to save him but cannot find anyone. All the small and great misfortunes he encounters every day cause distress and depression in his soul.

A person who believes in Allah views every misfortune as a test. He endures them with patience. At the same time, he turns to Allah in prayer. He knows that Allah will help him. His faith in Allah grants him great resilience in the face of difficulties.

Poverty (Faqr)

Poverty or faqr refers to a person's inability to provide himself with what he desires, needs, and aspires. Although humans can provide themselves with a very small portion of their desires and needs with what they have in their hand, they cannot provide themselves with the majority of them. This is because our desires and needs are limitless.

A person who does not believe in Allah feels great misery because he cannot obtain his desires and needs. However, a believer works to provide himself with his desires and needs, turns to Allah for help in this matter, and pleads with Him. Even if his request is not granted, he is content with what he receives. Even if his desires and wishes are not fulfilled in this world, he finds comfort in the thought that Allah will bestow them upon him in the Hereafter.

The Past and the Future

Unlike animals, human beings have connections to both the past and the future. The events we have experienced in the past can disturb us whenever we remember them. The future, on the other hand, can be frightening to us because we do not know what lies ahead. We have certain expectations, but we may not be able to fulfill them. We also have certain fears and anxieties that might come to pass. The anxiety about the future stemming from our expectations and fears constantly troubles us.

Someone who does not believe in Allah feels these fears and anxieties deeply.

However, a person who believes in Allah turns to Him regarding the things in the past that trouble or bother them and prays. If he has committed sins in the past, he repents and seeks forgiveness, asking for Allah's mercy. As for the future, he does the job he needs to do and leaves the outcome to Allah. Because he believes that everything is under Allah's control. He accepts whatever Allah has decreed for him and finds peace. That is why, in a proverb, it is said, "One who believes in destiny is saved from sorrow."

Zawal and Firaq

Zawal means the end or cessation of something. For example, a person's money running out or the passing of youth into old age are such instances. Firaq, on the other hand, refers to separation from our loved ones.

At the root of all sorrow lie zawal and firaq. Throughout life, a person endures the agony of being unable to attain the beings he loves and cares for, and the pain of those he has attained parting from him. Ultimately, he too parts from all his loved ones and enters the darkness of the grave alone.

One who believes in Allah and the Hereafter believes that *zawal* and *firaq* are temporary. Even if our youth fades away, we will have eternal youth in the eternal realm. Even if we part from our friends, in the eternal realm, there will be an eternal reunion with them. The things the *zawal* and *firaq* of whom sadden us being temporary, and the knowledge that we will reunite with them again, soothes our sorrows.

Other Beings

Humans are connected to everything that surrounds them – from his family and friends to the entire realm of humans, and even to every living being and the universe. If one does not have faith, he attributes everything that happens in the world to chance and nature. The state of the world and the human realm constantly troubles them. Along with his own suffering, he also bears the suffering of others. Earthquakes, plagues, floods, famines, inflation, decay, and the transience of the world leave him in agony, as if under a most tedious and dark calamity. He bears the weight of the entire world upon his shoulders. He endures the torments of hell in this world before even reaching hell.

The believer, however, considers all beings, be it living or non-living, small or big, to be servants and soldiers of Allah. He knows that all these beings are under the management and control of a Being who is Wise, All-Knowing, All-Powerful, Merciful, and Generous. He believes that there is a wise purpose behind every occurrence. With this mindset, he does not fear the events happening in the world that he is connected to; rather, he looks at these events with contemplation and reflection, thereby finding peace.

Death

Man's greatest fear is death. A person without faith views death as the annihilation of himself and all his loved ones. This leaves him in agony.

A believer, however, believes that death is a passage to a better world and a reunion with loved ones. The grave is, for him, a garden from the gardens of Paradise, and the eternal Paradise is an everlasting realm free from distress and sorrow, more delightful and beautiful than worldly life. For this reason, the thought of death does not disturb him; rather, it can even bring him joy.

Numbing of Emotions

An atheist or a sinner, when unable to solve the problems he faces, seeks to escape the crushing weight of these problems. To avoid feeling the distress and sorrows he endures, he tries to numb his feelings and forget everything through various forms of entertainment. However, trying to forget one's troubles through entertainment can only help him temporarily even if they were to be able to help him. Suppressing one's emotions never solves the problems one faces in life or resolves misfortunes.

The Solution

Modern civilization has appealed solely to people's physical and sensual pleasures, neglecting their spirituality. This neglect of the spiritual side of humans has left people distressed and depressed. No science or technology has been able to find a remedy for these spiritual afflictions.²⁶

Imam Bediuzzaman says: "Can a man who has been afflicted with terrible calamities in his soul, conscience, mind, and heart – and has whereby fallen into torment – truly be happy merely because his body appears to be adorned with deceptive wealth and finery? Can such a man be called happy? If a person's body were in a temporary, illusory paradise, but his heart and soul were in hellfire, could that person be happy?"

The only way to be saved from these tribulations is through true faith.

Social Life and Faith

So far, we have focused on the effects of faith on individual life. The impact of faith on social life is also very important.

A person without faith may easily violate the rights of others. Because disbelief makes a person selfish and self-serving. He evaluates everything according to his own interests. For his own benefit, he can easily steal, kill, and commit oppression. He may even disregard the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people for his own benefit.

Fearing Allah, a helpful feeling stemming from faith, prevents a person from violating others' rights and from committing wrongful acts such as theft, murder, and oppression. Furthermore, faith instills in a person's heart the desire to do things that may earn Allah's pleasure. A person knows that to earn Allah's pleasure, he must treat other people well. This sentiment fosters harmony among people, compassion, mutual support, and brings people closer together. Thus, peace and order are established in society.

When we look at the pre-Islamic era, we see the harm that disbelief and denial inflict on social life; when we look at the Age of Bliss, we see the benefits of faith for social life. Likewise, when we look at disbelieving Western societies today or at the people among us whose faith has weakened, we can see many problems stemming from a lack of faith. Conversely, when we look at periods of Islamic societies when Islam was practiced properly, in everywhere we can encounter beautiful things stemming from faith.

In summary: Peace in society is only achievable through the strengthening of people's faith.

²⁶ See also: Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, *Sözler (The Words)*, p. 296 ff.

PART FOUR: THE PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

In this section, the six principles of faith will be examined. To start off the topic, we will have some introductory matters.

First Introduction

Questions That Occupy Every Person's Mind and Their Answers:

Feelings toward religion are among the strongest and most important feelings of human nature. For instance:

Suppose you go to sleep at home at night, but when you open your eyes in the morning, you find yourself on an airplane flying through the air. What questions would come to your mind?

In such a situation, four questions inevitably come to everyone's mind:

- **WHO** brought me here?
- **WHY** was I brought here?
- **WHERE** is this plane going?
- **From WHOM** can I find the answers to these questions?

The world we live in is no different from an airplane. Every single person who opens their eyes on this "world-plane", without exception, asks himself the four questions above, whether consciously or unconsciously: "**WHO** brought us here, **WHY** were we brought here, **WHERE** are we going, and **from WHOM** will we learn the answers to these questions?"

Until we answer these four questions, it is impossible for us to grasp the meaning of life. We cannot know what we and the beings around us are, what purpose they serve, why they exist, or why they cease to exist. Without knowing the answers to these questions we would live, but without knowing why we live; we would die, but without knowing why we die.

Philosophy and science have failed to answer these questions. Only the Qur'ān has provided satisfactory answers to them.

The Qur'ān has four fundamental principles. These four principles are related to the answers to the four questions that occupy the minds of all people, not just Muslims, and through which life gains meaning. These four principles are: Tawhīd, worship and justice, the Resurrection, and risālat (messengerhood).

The first principle of the Qur'ān is **Tawhīd**. By speaking of Allah's names, attributes, essence, and of His creation, the Noble Qur'ān addresses the question, "Who brought us from the realm of nonexistence into this realm of existence?", thereby introducing Allah to us.

The second principle of the Qur'ān is **worship and justice**. Justice means giving his due right to every possessor of right. There are two categories of rights: Allah's rights over us and the rights of people over us. Allah's rights over us are us believing in Him and worshipping Him. The rights of people – of our own selves, our families, and others – over us are treating them with good morals, fulfilling their rights and not violating them. From beginning to end, the Qur'ān teaches us our duties toward Allah and other people in this world, teaching us how to organize our lives. In this way, we learn in detail the answers to the questions, “Why were we brought here?” and “What do we need to do here?”

The third principle of the Qur'ān is **the Resurrection**. The Qur'ān answers the question, “Where do the dead go?” by explaining in detail that the dead do not cease to exist but pass unto the realm of the grave, which is just another realm created by Allah. The Qur'ān explains to us that, after the Day of Resurrection, all people will be resurrected and will be held to account at the place of Judgement; and also explains that based on this reckoning that will be held, people will go to either Paradise or Hell according to situation of their faith and worship.

The fourth principle of the Qur'ān is **risālat** (messengerhood). The Qur'ān explains that the answers to the abovementioned questions, which occupy every person's mind, can only be taught to us by the messengers appointed by Allah.

The answers the Qur'ān provides to these questions that occupy the human mind are the most important elements demonstrating its universality. Because neither the passage of time, nor differences in locations or nations, can alter these questions or invalidate the Qur'ān's rational answers.

In this book, we will focus on three of these four principles: belief in Allah, belief in the Messenger of Allah, and belief in the Hereafter.

Second Introduction:

Every Possessor of Beauty and Perfection Wants to See and Display His Beauty and Perfection:

As we previously mentioned, by nature, people are curious about and have the desire to know the Being that brought them from the realm of nonexistence into the realm of existence. Indeed, the greatest purpose and wisdom behind Allah's creation of humanity is for humanity to be acquainted with Allah, that is, know Allah. For instance:

It is narrated in a hadith that Allah said, *“I was a hidden treasure. I created the creation (everything) so that I be known and recognized.”* In surah Zariyat, Allah says: *I*

*created the jinn and mankind only so that they worship Me*²⁷. Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) interpreted the phrase “*so that they worship Me*” in this verse as “*so that they know Me,*” which reinforces the meaning of this narration.²⁸ In this regard, Allah created humans and jinn so that they know Him and worship Him in the guidance found within knowing Allah.”

In light of these verses and hadiths, Imam Bediuzzaman explains the reason why Allah created the existent beings as follows: “A Being endowed with beauty and perfection desires to see and display His beauty and perfection.” For example, when a painter creates a beautiful painting, he takes great pleasure in standing before it and admiring his own work. At the same time, he also wants others to see this painting and understand his skill and mastery as well. Imam Bediuzzaman states that Allah, too, created all living and non-living creatures to display His boundless artistry, beauty, and perfection, both to Himself () and to conscious beings, that is, the humans, jinn, and angels.

²⁷ Surah Adh-Dhāriyāt, 56

²⁸ See: Al-‘Ajlūnī, *Kashf al-Khafā’*, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1988, Beirut, vol. 2, p. 132.

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE: BELIEF IN ALLAH

The foundations of Islam are in the principles of faith, and these principles of faith are based on the foremost and most important principle: faith in Allah. Faith in Allah forms the foundation of all religious matters.

This section will focus on the proofs of Allah's existence, as well as explaining His attributes and names.

EVIDENCE OF THE EXISTENCE OF ALLAH

1. The Importance of Proving the Existence of Allah

Throughout human history, while it is common to see people worshipping stars, the Sun, stones, and idols, it is rare to find people that denied Allah. From Adam (p.b.u.h.) to our Prophet (p.b.u.h), all prophets have struggled against polytheistic peoples; that is, people who believed in Allah but associated idols as partners with Him. Likewise, when we look at the time period from the early days of Islam to the present, we do not encounter atheists in Islamic societies, with the exception of a few philosophers. Islamic scholars have not struggled against atheists in society, but rather struggled against heretical sects such as the Mu'tazilah and the Shi'a. Atheism was not observed in Christian Europe either until the modern era.

In medieval Europe, the Church's beliefs – which were contrary to reason and in conflict with scientific facts – along with the Church's excessive pressure on the people and scientists, led philosophers to despise the Church and caused scientific studies to drift toward atheism. Atheism, which first emerged among philosophers, later influenced the general public as well, particularly in the 19th century; transforming Western societies into atheist peoples. As Western culture began to influence all the nations of the world, atheism spread like a plague in every direction.

Starting in the 19th century, as the Islamic world began to be influenced by the Western ideologies, atheist philosophies gradually began to spread there as well. Islamic scholars worked against these atheistic philosophies. They conducted studies aimed at understanding, analyzing, and refuting them. Among these works, the works of Bediuzzamān Saīd Nursī hold a very important place. Because through his Corpus of the Book of Light (Risale-i Nur Külliyyatı), Bediuzzaman subjected atheist philosophies to rigorous criticism with strong evidence, refuted them, and proved the principles of faith.

2. Evidences

Before proving the existence of Allah, we must focus on the evidences used in the proving of the principles of faith.

In the 'ilm al-Kalām, three types of evidence are generally used. These are: deduction

or *a posteriori* argument (burhān innī), induction or *a priori* argument (burhān limmī), and exemplification (tamsīl).

Deduction: Deduction means deducing causes from results. For example, discovering the agent from a work he did; the artist from a work of art he produced; or fire from smoke. When we see smoke rising from behind a mountain, even though we do not see the fire, we say, “There is a fire there.” Because smoke is a result, the cause of which is fire.

In the ‘ilm al-Kalām, the deduction is used to prove the existence of Allah. We do not see Allah with our eyes, but we see the works He has created in the universe with our eyes. These entities we see serve as evidence for the existence of Allah, Who created them.

Induction: Induction means inducing results from causes. For example, discovering the effect from the cause, the art from the artist, or smoke from fire. When we see a fire burning in the darkness of night, we say, “There is a fire there; therefore, even if we do not see it, there must also be smoke.”

The Burhan-ı limmî is used to prove all principles of faith except for belief in Allah. The other principles of faith are proven based on belief in Allah. In this sense, belief in Allah serves as the foundation for all other principles of faith.

Exemplification: Exemplification refers to the method of explaining and proving a subject through examples, or comparing one thing to another similar thing. Examples facilitate the understanding of difficult topics and make the proving of truths easier.

3. Methods of Proving the Existence of Allah

Various proofs have been put out to prove the existence of Allah. Among these, the most important ones are the “Evidence Through Origination (Ḥudūth)” and the “Evidence Through Order and Purpose.” Let us briefly examine these:

3.1. Evidence Through Origination (Ḥudūth)

Evidence through origination (ḥudūth) is, in simple words:

- a. Everything that originates – that is, comes into being – has an originator, a creator.
- b. The universe has an origin, so it has been originated.
- c. Therefore, the universe must have an originator, a creator; and that Creator is Allah.”

The creation of the universe, known today as the Big Bang, has been scientifically proven. This, in turn, demonstrates the validity of the evidence through origination. To explain:

Studies conducted in the field of astronomy in the 1920s revealed that planets are moving away from one another. Based on this expansion, scientists proved that the universe is expanding and, consequently, that the universe did not always exist (zero volume) *but*

emerged through a Big Bang. Although atheists initially opposed this view, numerous subsequent studies and experiments have proven the Big Bang to be true.

The creation of the universe from nothing is clear evidence for the existence of Allah. Because it is impossible for a universe that did not previously exist to create itself. Therefore, the universe was created by an external power, and that external power is Allah's power. The universe was created from nothing by Allah, Who possesses infinite knowledge, will, and power.

Therefore, the Big Bang scientifically demonstrates the existence of Allah.

Evidence Through Order and Purpose

Evidence Through Order and Purpose is briefly as follows:

- a. There is a great order in the universe. This order operates according to a specific plan and purpose.
- b. It is impossible for mindless, unconscious entities to invent an order on their own or to follow a plan and purpose. In particular, the connection, unity, and order in the whole of a thing that emerges from the combination of small parts cannot be created by these small parts.
- c. There must be a being endowed with knowledge, will, and power who establishes the order in the universe in accordance with a purpose (or purposes) and who sustains this order and purpose.
- d. This Being, who possesses knowledge, will, and power, is Allah.

Let us consider the following concise statements as examples of the evidence through order and purpose:

"A town cannot be without a mayor, a house without a builder or constructor, nor a book without a writer." The writing of a book, the construction of a house, and the administration of a village inevitably require there to be individuals possessing knowledge, will, and power to perform these actions.

The book of the universe requires there to be a Being with knowledge, will, and power Who wrote it; the palace that is this world, likewise, requires a Being with knowledge, will, and power Who built it. Otherwise, such a perfect universe and world would not have come into existence. Likewise, if there were no administrator to the world and the universe, the marvelous order within the army of living beings would turn into chaos.

Above, we stated that a book – and even a single letter – cannot exist without a writer. Let us demonstrate the truth of this claim through an experiment conducted by scientists. It is as follows:

Some atheists claim that the world came into existence by chance and say, “A monkey randomly pressing computer keys could, by chance, produce a masterpiece like one of Shakespeare’s literary works.” To test whether this claim was true, scientists placed a computer in a cage containing six monkeys at the British National Arts Council. For one month, the monkeys randomly pressed the computer keys. After one month, fifty pages of text randomly typed by the monkeys were retrieved. The writings were examined. Not a single meaningful word was found in the fifty pages. In English, “I” is a single letter with the meaning of the first-person singular. However, for this single letter word to have a meaning, if there must be a space before and after it. But even this single letter word, “I”, could not be found within the fifty-page writings of the monkeys.²⁹

If not even a single word appears by chance in fifty pages of writing, how could plants and animals – which are as orderly, systematic, and meaningful as a book – have come into existence by chance?

Scientists have stated that plant and animal cells, and even the proteins within those cells, cannot be formed by chance or coincidence. Scientifically, it has been established that the probability of a single protein molecule within a cell being formed by chance is as small as 1×10^{-160} , meaning a 0,000...(159 zeros in total)...0001% chance. These probabilities pertain to just one of the countless protein molecules within the cell. The situation is even more complex for cells and organs comprising millions of cells.³⁰

All of this demonstrates that existent beings did not come into existence by chance or coincidence, but they came into existence through the creation of a Possessor of infinite knowledge, will, and power; that is, Allah.

Evidence for the Existence of Allah

Here, drawing on the arguments of order and purpose, let us examine some examples of evidence that demonstrate Allah’s existence.

1. The Pharmacy Analogy

The hundreds of medicines in a pharmacy, prepared with ultimate precision and care, undoubtedly indicate the existence of a highly skilled chemist; a pharmacist who has an understanding for diseases and their treatments.

The world resembles a vast pharmacy. The millions of different varieties of plants and animals found in this pharmacy are like bottles of medicine. Because they have been created from a multitude of different substances that carefully measured and combined.

²⁹ Antony Flew, *Yanılmışım Tanrı Varmış* (original: *There is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*), trans. Zeynep Ertan & Hasan Kaya, Profil Publishing, Istanbul, 2008, p. 80.

³⁰ See: John Clover Monsma, *Niçin Allah’a İnanıyoruz* (Why We Believe in Allah), trans. İbrahim Sıtkı Eröz, Hikmet Publishing, vol. 2, pp. 20–22.

As greater and more perfect his world is to the pharmacy mentioned above, with all its greatness and perfectness, it serves to demonstrate the existence of Allah and introduce Allah to us.

2. The Factory Called the World

A factory that weaves thousands of fabrics from a simple material indicates the existence of a manufacturer who established that factory, as well as the existence of the foremen and craftsmen who operate it.

The world we live on has also been constructed as a factory producing millions of beings. In fact, this factory is a factory that produces more factories. In this world, particles (atoms) from the air, water, and earth are brought together to produce – that is, to create – countless plants, animals, and humans.

Just as fabric is produced in a textile factory, in this world-factory, human skin, bird feathers and wings, and the hides of other animals are produced.

These produced beings also function like factories in their own right. For example, plants produce leaves, flowers, and fruit; animals produce milk and meat. Our own bodies transform the food we take in from the outside into cells, blood, bones, and organs; that is, they produce them. Many more examples can be given on this.

Just as every factory indicates the existence of a craftsman who built it, this factory called the world too, more strongly even, indicates the existence of a Creator Who built it; it introduces to us the Possessor of Majesty Who is the Creator of all plants, animals, humans and other beings.

3. The Army of Living Beings

In the barracks of the earth, millions of armies have been formed from plants and animals. The uniforms, food, training, weapons, enlistment (i.e., the time of their birth), and discharge (i.e., their death) of these millions of armies are all distinct. Every single soldier in these armies is provided for without any need of it being overlooked, and all the armies are managed marvelously without any confusion. These armies are sometimes discharged – for example, in the winter – and then a new army is formed again in the spring.

Surely, a well-organized army indicates the existence of a commander who manages it. The formation of all the armies of plants and animals in the barracks called the earth, the fulfillment of their needs, and their extraordinary management too indicates the majesty, power, and sovereignty of Allah, the sole Ruler, Manager, and Nurturer of this universe. It is Allah Who performs all these actions in the universe through His majestic knowledge, will, and power.

4. Food Warehouse

A market or warehouse containing thousands of food items naturally indicates the existence of its owner, who gathers these items from around the world, stores them, and prepares them.

The world we live on has billions, if not trillions, of living beings on it while it is traveling through the cosmos. (If a person were to try to cover the distance the Earth travels around the sun in a single year by walking, it would take him twenty-four thousand years to complete it.) Meanwhile, the needs of the hundreds of thousands of animals living on Earth are all different. An ant and an elephant, a fly and an eagle, a fish the size of a fingernail and a whale, a lion and a gazelle – none of them eat the same things. The ship that is our world, passes through the four seasons during its journey. As if a train, it loads provisions from the season of spring to its wagons, filling its storehouse with thousands of different foods. Thereby, it provides sustenance to the living beings whose provisions run out in winter.

In this sense, this world is a divine food storehouse, a colossal market, filled with thousands of kinds of devices, goods, and canned packages – a highly safe, divine spaceship traveling through the cosmos.

Just as a food warehouse or a market selling foodstuffs indicates the existence of its founder and owner who made and stocked them, so too does this vast food warehouse we call the world – which contains the needs of all living beings and never runs out – indicate the existence of Allah, Who has created and established it, and Who continuously manages it according to these qualities.

5. Electric Lamps and Stars

If millions of electric lamps were to be constantly moving about every corner of a city, illuminating it without ever running out of energy; these lamps and their factory would undoubtedly introduce, with wonder and praise, a master who manages the electricity, manufactures the moving lamps, establishes the factory, and supplies all that is needed for this system to function. Such a situation would leave everyone endearing to such an incredibly powerful master capable enough to do all this.

Just as that is the case, the lamps called the stars on the roof of our world's palace in this cosmic city, some of which, according to the science of astronomy, are a thousand times larger than the Earth and move seventy times faster than a cannonball. Yet their order is not disrupted, and they do not collide with one another. Even after burning for centuries, they do not go out, and their fuel does not run out.

According to the science of astronomy, the Sun, which is our source of light and heat, is a million times larger than our Earth. In space, it travels at an average speed of 250 kilometers per second.³¹ (Jet planes travel at 2,500 kilometers per hour. In other words, the

³¹ See: Taşkın Tuna, *Hayat Kaynağımız Güneş* (The Sun, Our Source of Life), Yeni Asya Publications, p. 20.

distance that takes a jet plane an hour to cover is only a matter of ten seconds for the Sun. Buses, on the other hand, can only cover such distance in a whole day). It is said that the Sun is at an age of one million years. If we tried to keep it burning with the type of fuel we have on earth, an amount of kerosene equal to the world's oceans, coal equal to the world's mountains, or woodpiles equal to a thousand Earths would be needed every single day.

Allah sustains it and millions of stars like it (there are a hundred billion stars [1x10¹²] in the Milky Way galaxy alone) without kerosene, wood, or coal, and does not let them go out. He moves them collectively and at great speed through the cosmos without causing them to collide with one another.

These celestial "electric lamps" reveal to us, in proportion to their size, the existence of the Ruler, the Illuminator, and the Administrator of this universe; that is, Allah.³²

³² For these five examples, see: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Staff of Moses* (original: *Äsā-yı Mūsā*), trans. Hasan Spiker & Berkant Öztaş, Hayrat Publishing, p. 24.

THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH

In ‘Ilm al-Kalām, the attributes of Allah are explained under two categories: Attributes of Essence and Attributes of Action. Attributes of Essence are further divided into two subcategories: transcendent and subsistent.

Let us examine these in order:

- **Attributes of Essence**
- **Attributes of *Tanzīh* (Negation)**

Tanzīh means declaring something to be free from flaws, deficiencies, and imperfections, in other words, negating the idea that that thing has those flaws. Allah’s attributes of tanzīh (*sifāt al-tanzīh*) are the ones which express that He is free from deficiencies, indecencies, oppression, and similar negative things.

Also known as attributes of *salb* or as *ma‘nawī* attributes, these describe not what Allah is, but what He is not. For example, “Qidam” means having no beginning, and “Baqā’” means having no end.

The attributes from which Allah must be declared free from are too many to count. Islamic scholars have agreed that the six most important among these attributes are “Wujūd, Qidam, Baqā’, Waḥdāniyyah, Mukhālafatun lil-Ḥawādith, and Qiyāmu bin-Nafs.”

Let us examine these one by one:

1. Wujūd

Wujūd means “to exist”. Allah is exalted above its opposite, non-existence.

Islamic scholars have described the existence of Allah as the “Wājibu’l-Wujūd,” meaning “the Being whose non-existence is inconceivable and whose existence is necessary.” The Wājibu’l-Wujūd is none other than Allah. As for other entities, they are referred to as “mumkinu’l-wujūd,” meaning “entities whose existence and nonexistence are both possible.” The mumkinu’l-wujūd beings exist only if Allah creates them; if He does not create them, they do not exist. Or, if Allah wishes to annihilate a mumkinu’l-wujūd being He has created, it ceases to exist.

Some scholars have regarded the attribute of Wujūd as an independent attribute and have called this attribute “Sifāt al-Nafs.”

2. Qidam

Qidam means having no beginning, being eternal.

With regard to both His essence and attributes; Allah is *qadīm*, He is eternal. There is no beginning to His existence. He did not *come* into existence, He did not *start* to exist. Another word used to denote the meaning of *qadīm* or a synonym of it is *‘azalī*.

The Noble Qur'ān states: *“He is the First and the Last.”*³³ Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) also says in a hadith: *“There was Allah, and there was nothing else (except Him).”*³⁴

Since Allah is the *Wājibu'l-Wujūd*, His existence is *qadīm* (eternal), that is, without a beginning. Because every created being is in need of a creator to bring it into existence. If Allah had come into existence later, there would have to be a creator before Him, and that creator would also require a creator, and then another creator and so on... This chain of causation cannot continue infinitely. It is obligatory by reason to accept the existence of a Being whose existence is necessary () and who has no beginning. To explain the realm of existence, it is obligatory by reason to accept the existence of a Being whose existence (*wujūd*) is *wājib*.

3. **Baqā'**

Baqā' means having no end, being eternal³⁵.

All beings are transient; Allah, however, is *bāqī* (eternal). *Baqā'* is a result of being *qadīm*. Because that which is *qadīm* (has no beginning) is, necessarily, also *bāqī* (has no end). Allah being the *Wājibu'l-Wujūd* too demonstrates His being *bāqī*. Because it is impossible for a Being Whose existence is *wājib* (obligatory) to be non-existent.

Two verses on this topic are as follows: *“All that is on (earth) is bound to perish. But forever will remain the Countenance of Your Lord, the Possessor of Majesty and Generosity.”*³⁶, *“Everything except His Countenance will perish.”*³⁷

4. **Waḥdāniyyah**

Waḥdāniyyah means oneness, more specifically the Oneness of Allah. Allah is free from any kind of partners in any matter or thing whatsoever.

There are countless verses regarding the Oneness of Allah. As is well known, the first verse of Surah al-Ikhlās states, *“Say, “He is Allah, the One.”* Another verse on this subject reads as follows:

*“And your God (Allah) is the One God. There is no god but Him, the Most Compassionate and the Most Merciful.”*³⁸

³³ Surah Al-Ḥadīd, 3

³⁴ Al-Bukhārī, Al-Jāmi' Al-Ṣaḥīḥ, Bad'u'l-Khalq, Chapter 1.

³⁵**Translator's Note:** In Arabic, in terms of being eternal, the words *'azal* and *qidam* refer to not having a beginning and *'abad* and *baqā'* refer to not having an end. However, English does not differentiate between these two concepts with regard to being eternal. Therefore, both of these concepts are translated into English using the word eternal.

³⁶ Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān, 26-27.

³⁷ Sūrah Al-Qasas, 88.

³⁸ Sūrah Al-Baqarah, 163.

In the Islamic faith, after belief in the existence of Allah, the most important principle is belief in the Oneness of Allah. The extraordinary order and harmony observed everywhere, from atoms to stars, clearly demonstrates the Oneness of Allah, Who perfectly governs this universe, and that He has no partner. For if different hands were to interfere in a matter, that matter would become chaotic. If there were two presidents in a country, two governors in a city, or two headmen in a village, chaos would ensue in every aspect of that country, city, or village.

A verse on this matter states: “Had there been within the heavens and the earth gods besides Allah, they would surely have been ruined.”³⁹

5. Mukhālafatun lil-Ḥawādith

Mukhālafatun lil-Ḥawādith means not resembling created beings, not being similar to any of them.

Everything other than Allah is created, and Allah does not resemble any created being. Two verses on this subject state: “There is nothing like unto Him. And He is the All-hearing, the All-Seeing.”⁴⁰ “And there is none equal to Him!”⁴¹

We can acquire the knowledge that Allah exists by using our reason and intellect. However, we cannot perceive *how* His Essence is through our senses, nor can we comprehend it through our intellect or imagination. On this subject, the Imam Bediuzzaman states, “Knowing the existence of a thing is one thing; knowing its nature (or essence) is another.” This is because when we imagine something we have not seen, we always start from things we already know and have seen. However, since Allah does not resemble any created thing, whatever comes to our mind or imagination regarding Him will not resemble Him.

We can acquaint ourselves with Allah not through His Essence, but through His Names and Attributes. We can learn and recognize His Names and Attributes by observing the beings He has created and contemplating the acts of His creating. On this subject, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) says, “Reflect upon the created beings. not about (the Essence of) the Creator. Because you cannot properly comprehend Him.”⁴²

6. Qiyāmu bin-Nafs:

Qiyāmu bin-Nafs means that Allah is self-subsistent; that is, He exists and does not depend on others neither for His existence nor for the continuation of His existence. This attribute is also called “qiyām bi-dhāt”. The opposite of this is called “qiyām bi-ghayr”,

³⁹ Sūrah Al-Anbiyā, 22.

⁴⁰ Sūrah Ash-Shūrā, 11.

⁴¹ Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ, 4.

⁴² Kanz al-‘Ummāl, hadith no. 5706.

meaning “to exist through another”, or “to depend on another for one’s existence”. The existence of all beings is “qiyām bi-ghayr”. Because the beginning and continuation of their existence is through Allah’s act of bringing them into being and keeping them in existence.

A verse on this subject reads: “O humanity! It is you who stand in need of Allah. Yet Allah is the Self-sufficient (Al-Ghaniyy) and the Praiseworthy (Al-Hamīd).”⁴³ .

For example: When we stand before a mirror, our image appears in it. This image is dependent on us to exist. We, however, are not dependent on it to exist. The universe and the entities within it are like a mirror. Allah brings them into existence and sustains them through His will and power. Allah does not need the mirror called the universe for His existence, but the universe needs Allah for its existence. This is what some Sūfīs mean when they say, “This universe is a mirror; everything is sustained by Allah.”

⁴³ Sūrah Fāṭir, 15.

The Thubūtī (Positive) Attributes

“Thubūtī” means positive or affirmative. Thubūtī attributes, on the other hand, are those ascribed to Allah’s Essence; unlike the Tanzīhī attributes, they describe what He is, not what He is not. For example, “Ḥayāt” (Life) signifies that Allah is the Living, and “‘Ilm” (Knowledge) signifies that Allah is the All-Knowing.

1. ‘Ilm:

‘Ilm means knowledge in Arabic. In addition to everything in the universe, from the smallest atom to the cosmos, Allah fully and comprehensively knows everything in or about the past, present, and future – that is, all that has ever existed, currently exists, or will exist. Knowing one thing does not prevent Him from knowing others. Everything in *ālam al-ghayb* (the unseen realm) as well as everything in *ālam ash-shahādah* (the visible realm), is within the scope of His knowledge. Ignorance (lack of knowledge) about anything at all is impossible for Allah. Allah’s knowledge is also eternal, it was not acquired later; He knows everything and every event before they come into existence, while they exist, and after they cease to exist.

When compared to Allah’s knowledge, human intellect and knowledge are as small as nothing in comparison. Just like the angels’ statement mentioned in the Qur’ān, “*We have no knowledge, except that which You have taught us.*”⁴⁴, humans’ knowledge cannot extend beyond what Allah has taught them and permitted them to know.

Some verses regarding Allah’s knowledge are as follows:

*“Allah has surely encompassed all things in knowledge..”*⁴⁵

*“Not even (a thing of) an atom’s weight in the heavens or earth escapes His knowledge, nor anything smaller or greater. All is in the clearly declaring Book (the Preserved Tablet).”*⁴⁶

*“And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him. And He knows whatever is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it; nor is there a grain in the darkneses of the earth, nor anything moist or dry, except that it is (recorded) in a clear Book..”*⁴⁷

2. Irādah:

Irādah means willing something, preferring one of two (or more) things, or choosing. The terms “mashī’ah” and “ikhtiyār” are synonyms of the word “irādah”.

All beings, just as they indicate and prove the existence of Allah Who brought them

⁴⁴ Sūrah Al-Baqarah, 32.

⁴⁵ Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭalāq, 12.

⁴⁶ Sūrah Saba, 3.

⁴⁷ Sūrah Al-‘An‘ām, 59.

into being from nothing, they also indicate the attribute of Allah called *irādah*. Because without Allah's willing for their existence, the coming into being of anything in the universe would be impossible. Our creation, when and where we were born, from which mother and father, whether we are male or female, our characteristics, the shape of our faces, and even our fingertips, have all been shaped and came into being by Allah's willing for it and by His choosing it.

We can think about all beings, the situations they are in, and their characteristics in the same way as explained in the paragraph above.

Here are some verses from the Qur'ān on this subject:

“When He wills a thing (to come into being), His Command is only to say, “Be,” and it (immediately) is.”⁴⁸

“To Allah belongs the kingdom of heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills. He bestows females (daughters) on whom He wills and bestows males (sons) on whom He wills. Or He bestows both males and females (sons and daughters). He leaves whom He wills infertile. Indeed, He is All-Knowing (‘Alīm), Most Capable (Qadīr)”⁴⁹

Allah Almighty has two types of *irādah*:

Irādah al-Takwīniyyah: This is the *irādah* of Allah regarding the creation of something or bringing about something to happen. Among other things, the laws of nature in the universe too have come into existence through this type of *irādah*. For this reason, these laws are referred to as “*sunnatullah*”, “*ādatullah*”, and “*awāmīr al-takwīniyyah*” (acts and commands pertaining to creation), and the entirety of all these laws is called “*Sharī‘ah al-Fitriyyah*”, meaning “the Creational Law”. That is to say, these are not the laws of *nature*, but they are the laws of Allah.

Tashrī Irādah: This is the *irādah* of Allah regarding the commands He wants humans to follow and regarding the establishment of religious laws. Allah reveals His laws, which consist of His commands and prohibitions to humanity, through prophets and scriptures (such as the Qur'ān).

3. Qudrah:

Qudrah means “to have power over”. Allah is the Possessor of absolute power. This power is intrinsic to His essence, meaning that it is not something that is acquired but rather it is something He has always and eternally had and will always and eternally have. With this power, He has created and is always creating all the atoms, living beings, the world, the solar system, galaxies, and everything we can think of. All the beings He has created constitute countless proofs of His infinite power.

⁴⁸ Sūrah Yā-Sīn, 82.

⁴⁹ Sūrah Ash-Shūrā, 49-50.

Since Allah's qudrah (power) is essential – that is, pertaining to His essence – its opposite, 'ajz (powerlessness) cannot interfere with His power. Therefore, there are no degrees and levels of power for Allah. For this reason, His power is absolute and boundless. Creating a tree or a seed, a star or an atom, and the universe or a star is equally easy for Him. In relation to His power, there is no such thing as easy or difficult. All are equally easy.

Just as the sun provides heat and light to a single drop of water, it simultaneously provides heat and light to an ocean. Just as these two tasks are equally easy for the sun, there is no difference between small and big, or few and many for Allah's power.

Just as a commander mobilizes a single soldier with the command "March!", he can also just as easily mobilize a great army. In this regard, there is no difference between a soldier and an army for the commander's mobilization of them. In a similar way, Allah also creates both the atoms and the stars with the same command "Kun!" (Be!). The creation of both of them are equally easy in relation to Allah's power. He sets an atom in motion with a single command, and He also sets all the planets in motion with a single command. Everything is easy in relation to His power.⁵⁰

Two verses about Allah's power are as follows:

"The creation of (all of) you and the resurrection of (all of) you are but as (easy as that of) a single soul."⁵¹

"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, and in the ships sailing through in the sea (loaded) with what benefits humankind, and in what Allah sends down of water from the skies, giving life thereby with it to the earth after its death and spreading out therein every (kind of) moving creature, and in directing of the winds, and in the clouds that are made obedient (to the order) between the sky and the earth - (in all of this) are evidences (of the existence and oneness of Allah) for a community that use their reason."⁵²

4. Sam' and Baṣar:

Sam' means hearing and baṣar means seeing. Allah hears and sees everything. There is no limit to His hearing and seeing. He hears even the most secret whispers. Even on a pitch-black night, He sees it when a black ant walks on a black stone, and He also hears the sound of its footsteps.

Not being able to see or hear is a deficiency. And it is impossible for Allah, Who has endowed all living creatures with the faculties of seeing and hearing, to be unable to see or hear. That is why, as is mentioned in the Qur'ān, Prophet Ibrāhīm (p.b.u.h.) says to his

⁵⁰ See: Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, Sözlür (the Words), Altınbaşak Publications, p. 201 (29th Word).

⁵¹ Sūrah Luqmān, 28.

⁵² Sūrah Al-Baqarah, 164.

father: “O my dear father! Why do you worship things that neither hear nor see, nor can bring you any benefit?”⁵³

It is reported that in a time when revelation came to Prophet Mūsā (p.b.u.h.), his heart was preoccupied with the well-being of his family (he wondered, “If I leave them, how will they provide for themselves?”). Upon this, Allah the Almighty commanded him to strike a rock with his staff. When he struck it, the rock split open, and a second rock emerged from within. Then, when he struck that second rock with his staff, it also split open, and a third stone emerged from within. Then, when he struck that third rock with his staff, it also split open, and from within emerged a tiny worm, as small as a speck of dust, with something in its mouth to serve as its sustenance. The veil was lifted from Mūsā’s (p.b.u.h.) ear, making him the worm say, “I glorify the One who sees me, hears my words, knows where I am, does not forget me, and provides my sustenance.”⁵⁴

5. Kalām:

“Kalām” means “speech” or “to speak,”.

Allah speaks through revelation to angels and prophets. And He also speaks through inspiration to His chosen righteous servants and sometimes even to some other humans and animals. Allah commands, forbids, and informs through His attribute *Kalām*.

Allah, Who created the universe – with such boundless profusion, filled from end to end with wonders – to make Himself known, and Who causes His perfection, greatness, and majesty to be proclaimed through thousands of tongues, certainly makes Himself known through His own words as well. Indeed, for a Being Who causes all the spirit-endowed creatures He has created to speak and Who knows their speech to also speak Himself and to intervene in those conversations of His creation with His own speech is a necessity of His Lordship.

Some verses on this subject are as follows:

“And it is not for any human being that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a veil or that He sends a messenger to reveal (to him) with His permission as He wills.”⁵⁵

“Those are the Messengers; We gave superiority to some of them over others. Among them are those to whom Allah spoke (directly), and some He raised in degrees.”⁵⁶

6. Ḥayāh:

⁵³ Sūrah Maryam, 42.

⁵⁴ Fakhruddīn Ar-Rāzī, *Al-Tafsīr Al-Kabīr*, Dār al-Fikr, vol. 9, p. 193.

⁵⁵ Sūrah Ash-Shūrā, 51.

⁵⁶ Sūrah Al-Baqarah, 253.

“Ḥayāh” or “Ḥayāt” which can be defined as “life” or “being alive,” is one of Allah’s most important attributes. His Life is eternal and everlasting. Death and transience can never be attributed to Him. The source of the life of all living beings is also His Life.

Life in living beings is the clearest proof of Allah’s attribute of Life. Because it is a logical necessity that the One who grants life to others must Himself possess Life first.

The proofs that establish all of Allah’s attributes also establish His attribute of Life. Because knowledge is a sign of life; hearing is a sign of being alive; seeing is can only be performed by the living; having any will or volition is possible only with life; only those who possess life can perform actions through power; and speaking is an act that the living who possess knowledge do. All these attributes and the proofs for them also demonstrate clearly that Allah exists and that He possesses Life. Due to these characteristics of it, it can be said that the attribute of Life is the foundation and source of all other attributes. Because without the attribute of life, the existence of the other attributes is not possible.⁵⁷

7. Takwīn

The word takwīn refers to the act of creating, causing to exist, or bringing into being something that did not previously exist.

Māturīdī scholars accept that, in addition to the attributes we have listed so far, Allah also possesses the attribute of takwīn. As evidence for this matter, they cite verses such as, “When He wills a thing (to come into being), His Command is only to say, “Be,” and it (immediately) is.”⁵⁸

They state that the attribute of takwīn (creation) is distinct from Allah’s attribute of qudrah (power). In the Māturīdī school – which is from the Ahl al-Sunnah – takwīn is an attribute related to Allah’s act of bringing into existence from nothing, whereas power is an attribute related to the movement, manipulation, and governance of things. For example, the creation of the world from nothing is by the attribute of takwīn, while the world’s rotation around its own axis and revolving around the sun is by the attribute of qudrah.

The Ash‘arī school, – who are also from the Ahl al-Sunnah – however, did not accept a separate attribute of creation distinct from Allah’s attribute of power. According to them, both the creation of something from nothing and the movement and management of created beings occur through Allah’s attribute of power.

⁵⁷See: Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, Lem’alar (The Flashes), Altınbaşak Publications, p. 395.

⁵⁸Sūrah Yā-Sīn, 82.

Attributes of Action

Attributes of action are the attributes that express Allah's relationship with the universe and describe in great detail how He creates and governs it. Most of Allah's names, known as al-Asmā' al-Husnā (the Most Beautiful Names), are categorized under these active attributes.

All of Allah's actions – such as creating, giving life, shaping, forming, providing sustenance, bestowing blessings, granting healing, and causing death – are considered attributes of action.

THE BEAUTIFUL NAMES OF ALLAH (AL-ASMĀ' AL-ḤUSNĀ)

Just as Allah has attributes, He also has many names.

A sultan is addressed by different titles and names in each department of his government. For example, while he is called **the sultan** in an administrative capacity, he is called **the commander-in-chief** when he is at the head of the army. Similarly, he is called **the caliph** in his capacity as the head of religious and scholarly affairs, and **the chief justice** when presiding over cases in the judicial department. When we compare other departments like this, we can see that a single sultan may potentially possess hundreds of different names and titles across the different departments of his sultanate and the various ranks of his government.

Drawing from this example, just as a sultan takes on different names according to his position and actions, Allah – who is infinitely more majestic and exalted – also has different names related to His actions. For instance, since Allah is the Owner of the universe, He is the “al-Māliku’l-Mulk” and “al-Malik.” Since He created all beings, He is “al-Khāliq.” Because He nurtures them, He is “ar-Rabb” and “Rabbu’l-‘Ālamīn.” Because He gives life to living beings, He is “al-Muḥyī”; because He shapes them, He is “al-Muṣawwir”; because He bestows blessings, He is “al-Mun‘im”; because He provides sustenance, He is “ar-Razzāq”; and because He causes death, He is “al-Mumīt.” And we can count many more examples like these.⁵⁹

These names of Allah are called “al-Asmā’ ul-Ḥusnā,” meaning “the Most Beautiful Names.” A verse on this subject reads as follows: “And to Allah belong the Most Beautiful Names (al-Asmā’ ul-Ḥusnā). So supplicate to Him by them!” (Al-A’raf, 180)⁶⁰

Fakhruddīn al-Rāzī states: “It is well-known among scholars that there are one thousand and one sacred and pure names of Allah in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. According to what I have seen in some sermon books, Allah Almighty has four thousand names. A thousand of them are in the Qur’ān and authentic hadiths, a thousand in Tawrāh, a thousand in ‘Injīl, and a thousand in Zabūr . It is said that another thousand are in the Preserved Tablet and have not reached the human realm. I say that what is mentioned in these books is not far from reason.”⁶¹

Among Allah’s many names, 99 of them hold great significance. For this reason, it is narrated that our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said, “Allah has 99 names; whoever recites them will enter Paradise.”⁶² By saying this, he drew attention to these names.

⁵⁹See: Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, Sözlür (The Words), Altınbaşak Publications, p. 119 (24th Word).

⁶⁰The phrase “to Allah belong the Most Beautiful Names” appears four times in the Qur’ān: Sūrah Al-A’raf, 180; Sūrah Al-Isrā’, 110; Sūrah Tā-Hā, 8; Sūrah Al-Hashr, 24.

⁶¹Fakhruddīn Ar-Rāzī, Al-Tafsīr Al-Kabīr, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1993, vol. 1, pp. 13 and 160 (Turkish Translation: Suat Yıldırım et al., Akçağ Publishing, vol. 1, pp. 3 and 216)

⁶²Bukhārī, Kitābu’d-Da‘awāt, Chapter 68 / Muslim, Kitābu’dh-Dhikr, Chapter 2, Hadith 2677.

1. Allah

The name “Allah” is the proper name of our Lord, the Creator of this universe. The name “Allah” encompasses all of His attributes and names that reflect His perfection. Because this name points to His Divine Essence.

Islamic scholars have defined the name “Allah” as “the True God Who is worshipped and Who is most worthy of worship”, “the Essence possessing the attributes of divinity and lordship,” “the Essence that is the Wājibu’l-Wujūd (the One Whose existence is necessary), the Eternal and Everlasting ,” and “the Creator of the universe.”

Some scholars have stated, “The name ‘Allah’ is the *Ism al-A‘zam* (the greatest name of our Lord).”⁶³

2. Al-Ism Al-A‘zam (The Greatest Name)

Al-Ism al-A‘zam means “the greatest name of Allah.” It is reported in some hadiths that when supplications are made using al-Ism al-A‘zam, Allah will accept them.

Some scholars have rejected the notion that any single name could be the *Ism al-A‘zam*, stating, “Allah has no lesser name; all His names are greatest.” The majority of scholars, however, have accepted the existence of al-Ism al-A‘zam based on numerous hadiths, though they disagreed on which specific name constitutes al-Ism al-A‘zam.⁶⁴ The explanations offered by Imam Bediuzzaman regarding al-Ism al-A‘zam reconcile and unify all the scholars’ views in a way that satisfies the hearts. Imam Bediuzzaman states:

“Al-Ism al-A‘zam is hidden. Just as the hour of death is hidden in one’s lifetime and the Night of Power is hidden within Ramadan, there is a profound wisdom in the concealment of al-Ism al-A‘zam among the names [of Allah]. In my perspective, the true al-Ism al-A‘zam is hidden and is revealed only to the *khawāṣṣ* (the people who are of very high spiritual degree). However, every name has a degree that is its a‘zam [greatest] degree, and that degree [of that name] functions as the al-Ism al-A‘zam [of that particular name]. The fact that the *awliyā’s* (Islamic saints) discoveries of al-Ism al-A‘zam are different stems from this secret. There is a poem titled “*Arjūzah*” by Imam Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) in the book *Majmū‘atu’l-Aḥzāb*. It mentions al-Ism al-A‘zam as six names. Imam al-Ghazālī, in his epistle titled “*Junnat al-Asmā’*”, makes explanations to those six names that encompass al-Ism al-A‘zam mentioned by Imam Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), and elucidates their characteristics. Those six names are: “Fard, Ḥayy, Qayyūm, Ḥakam, ‘Adl, and Quddūs.”⁶⁵

⁶³ See: Al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr, Iḥyā al-Turāth al-‘Arabī*, Beirut, 1995, vol. 1, p. 102.

⁶⁴ See: Jalaluddīn Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Ḥāwī Li’l-Fatāwā*, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1988, vol. 1, p. 394.

⁶⁵ Bediuzzaman Said Nursī, *Barla Lāhikası* (the Letters of Barla), Altınbaşak Publications, p. 339.

3. Jalālī and Jamālī Names

Islamic scholars have stated that Allah's names are divided into two categories: "Jalālī" (relating to greatness, exaltedness) and "Jamālī" (relating to beauty, goodness).

Names such as 'Azīz, Qahhār, and Shadīdu'l-'Iqāb, which convey meanings of majesty, sublimity, power, and might, are the Jalālī names. Names such as Laṭīf, Muḥsin, Jamīl, Ghafūr, Ghaffār, Raḥmān, and Raḥīm, which convey meanings of grace, benevolence, beauty, compassion, and forgiveness, are the Jamālī names. Likewise, Paradise is a manifestation of Allah's Jamāl, while Hell is a manifestation of Allah's Jalāl.

THE SECOND PRINCIPLE: BELIEF IN THE PROPHETS

Part One: The Reality of Prophethood

In this section, we will discuss what prophethood is, as well as the topics of revelation, miracles, and humanity's need for prophets.

Among the six principles of faith, the most important principle after belief in Allah is belief in the prophets. This is because it is the prophets who teach us all the principles of faith and all the matters of religion. Based on this importance, in the Shahada, after affirming belief in Allah's existence and oneness, belief in the prophethood of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) is a required condition.

1. Nubuwwah

Nubuwwah means prophethood in Arabic. And *nabī*, a word of the same root, means a prophet or messenger. In Islamic terminology, a *nabī* is a messenger chosen by Allah from among His servants, to whom He reveals His commands, prohibitions, and the things that will lead to the happiness of people in both this world and the hereafter, and who is given the duty of conveying these revelations to humanity. A synonym for the word *nabī* in Arabic is *rasūl*, though there are subtle differences in meaning.

A “*rasūl*” is a prophet sent with a book and a new *Sharī'ahh* (religious, moral and legal rulings); a “*nabī*,” on the other hand, is a prophet who, while receiving revelation from Allah, follows the *Sharī'ahh* of the previous *rasūl*. For example, the prophets who emerged from among the Children of Israel after *Mūsā* (p.b.u.h.), such as *Dāwūd* and *Suleymān* (peace be upon them), acted in accordance with the *Sharī'ahh* of *Mūsā* (p.b.u.h.). A verse on this subject reads: “Indeed We sent down *Tawrah*, in which there is guidance and light. By it, the prophets who had submitted (to Allah) used to judge for those who were Jews (...)” (Al-Ma'idah, 44)

2. The Number of Prophets and Prophets Whose Names Are Mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān

In the Noble Qur'ān, the names of 25 prophets are mentioned. However, the number of prophets is not limited to those mentioned in the Qur'ān. Regarding this, the Qur'ān states: “Certainly, We sent messengers before you as well; there are some of them that we told (their) story to you, and there are some of them that we did not tell (their) story to you. (...)”⁶⁶ Similarly, the verses “(...) there is no nation to which a warner (prophet) has not

⁶⁶Sūrah Al-Mu'min/Al-Ghāfir, 78.

come.”⁶⁷, “(...) for every people there is a guide.”⁶⁸ indicate that prophets were sent to all nations.⁶⁹

It is narrated that the number of prophets is 124,000. Abū Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him), one of the Noble Companions, says: “I asked the Prophet, ‘O Messenger of Allah! How many prophets are there?’ He replied, ‘124.000. 315 of them, a large group, are rasūls.’”⁷⁰

Since there are other narrations as well on this subject, some scholars have deemed it more appropriate to say, “I believe in all the prophets that came, from the time of Ādam (p.b.u.h.) to our Prophet (p.b.u.h.),” without specifying a number.

3. The Proofs and Necessity of Prophethood

All the proofs presented regarding the existence of Allah, His attributes, and His names are also proofs for the reality of prophethood. Because every entity in this universe clearly demonstrates that the Being who created it is the All-Wise. And it is a requirement of wisdom for the All-Wise Creator to send a prophet to humanity to inform them about why He created them and what He wants them to do. Imam Bediuzzaman states, “Just as the sun necessitates light, and light necessitates day; so do the wisdoms in the universe necessitate the Prophethood of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.)”

The need of people for prophets is a very clear truth. Just as people need a teacher to teach them things they do not know, they also need a prophet to teach them the matters of faith, worship, and morality which they do not know. Just as they need a doctor, they also need spiritual doctors to treat their spiritual illnesses. The Qur’ān states: “(...) We have sent you a prophet from among yourselves, who recites Our verses to you, and purifies you (from sins), and teaches you the Book and wisdom (the rulings in the Book) and teaches you that which you have not known.”⁷¹

Let us now address some points regarding the proofs of the reality of prophethood and humanity’s need for prophets:

a. Only the prophets who have been sent by and received revelation from Allah can teach us the fundamentals of faith in a correct and sound manner.

People need a prophet sent by Allah to make known Allah to them. Throughout history, the majority of the people have failed to find Allah on their own; instead, many

⁶⁷ Sūrah Al-Fāṭir, 24.

⁶⁸ Sūrah Al-Ra’d, 7.

⁶⁹ For example, in Old Turkish (the Turkish used way before Turks met Islam), there are words such as “yalvaç” (meaning “prophet”), “uçmak” (meaning “paradise”), “tamu” (meaning “hell”), and “albız” (meaning “devil”). The existence of such words in Old Turkish indicates that a prophet had come to the Turks as well in the old times.

⁷⁰ Aḥmad, vol. 5, p. 266; Imām Al-Suyūṭī, Al-Durr al-Mansūr, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1993, vol. 1, p. 126 (narrated from Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Ḥibbān, Al-Ṭabarānī, Ḥākim, and Bayhaqī)

⁷¹ Sūrah Al-Baqarah, 151.

people worshipped the sun, the moon, and idols; thereby falling into polytheism or denial of the existence of Allah. Some people, like Ibrāhīm (p.b.u.h.), were able to logically find out the existence of Allah through their reasoning and intellect. However, people who found out about the existence of Allah in such a way were in the minority. Moreover, even if a person would find out about the existence of Allah through his/her own reasoning and intellect, he/she could not get to know about His attributes and names in detail. Only prophets can make Allah known to us with all His attributes and names.

Furthermore, faith is not limited to merely believing in Allah. It would be impossible to find out about the other five pillars of faith through reason alone. For example, matters such as resurrection after death, being held accountable, and the existence of Paradise and Hell can be known with certainty only if these things are conveyed to us by a prophet appointed by Allah.

b. Only the prophets sent by Allah can teach us how to properly express our gratitude to Him and perform acts of worship.

Even if people were to discover the existence of Allah through their reasoning and intellect, they could not find the answers to questions such as, “Why did Allah, Who bestows upon us countless blessings, create us?” or “What does Allah desire from us?” through their reasoning and intellect alone. It is the prophets who can, by Allah’s allowing them, teach us humans the reasons and wisdoms behind our creation. We can learn only from them which acts of worship we need to perform, how to perform them, and to what extent. Moreover, they do not merely teach; they personally perform each of these acts of worship, thereby setting a practical example for humanity. For example, in a hadith, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) says, “Pray as you have seen me pray!”

c. Only the prophets can teach us how to correctly organize our personal, family, and social lives; they teach us akhlāq (good morality) and the rules governing human relations.

In our personal lives, what are the things that are right, good and beneficial to do, and what are those which are wrong, bad and harmful to do? In family life, how should relationships between husband and wife, parents and children, and among relatives be? In social life, how should relationships among people be like? Developing a genuinely truthful and encompassing understanding of these matters often transcend the limits of human reason. People can only learn how to correctly organize their personal, family, and social relationships from a prophet. Otherwise, they will be exposed to many difficulties in their

personal, family, and social lives, making life unbearable. All the chaos and difficulties observed in individual, family, and social life today clearly demonstrate this fact.⁷²

While doctors diagnose and treat physical illnesses of people, prophets diagnose and treat their spiritual illnesses.

d. People need a prophet for putting their life in order.

Just as Allah appoints leaders to animals that live in groups to maintain order and discipline among them, He also has sent prophets to ensure order and discipline in the human realm. On this matter, Imam Bediuzzaman says: “The Eternal Power that does not leave ants without a leader or bees without a queen will certainly not leave humanity without a prophet.”⁷³

People living in communities need rules and laws to organize their social lives. By means of these laws, disputes between people are resolved, and matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and commerce are brought into order. People who violate others’ rights through committing crimes such as theft, murder, and assault are punished with deterrent punishments so as to prevent such crimes.

However, to do all this, first of all there is a need for individuals and institutions capable of justly and reasonably establishing these rules and laws. And it is only the prophets sent by Allah and the Sharī‘ah revealed to them that can justly, reasonably and correctly establish the rules and laws regarding social life. And it is only them who can determine truly deterrent penalties to be imposed upon those who violate these rules and laws, thereby ensuring social order and peace.⁷⁴

e. Prophets moreover teach us about the benefits of this worldly life.

When Allah sends prophets to the human world, He does so not only for them to make people attain happiness in the afterlife but also for them to make people attain happiness in this worldly life. In accordance with this, many prophets have taught people how to conduct various crafts and make various tools.

For example, among the prophets, Ādam (p.b.u.h.) taught agriculture to humanity, Nūḥ (p.b.u.h.) taught the craft of shipbuilding, and Idrīs (p.b.u.h.) taught how to write and sew for the first time. Allah taught Dāwūd (p.b.u.h.) the craft of making armors. Regarding

⁷² People today go to psychologists because they cannot get their personal or family lives in order. On this matter, a psychologist says, “Because so many people have asked me to be their god, I have come to appreciate the significance of a real God.” Henry C. Link, *The Return to Religion*, The Macmillan Company, 1936, p. 55.

⁷³ Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, *Mektubat (The Letters)*, Altınbaşak Publications, p. 457.

⁷⁴ See: Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, *Ishārātu’l-İ‘jāz (Signs of Miraculous Inimitability)*, Altınbaşak Publications, p. 132; *Al-Taftāzānī, Sharh al-Maqāṣid, ‘Ālam al-Kutub*, 1998, vol. 5, p. 19.

this, a verse states: “And We taught him the craft of making garments (armor) for you, so that they might protect you from the severity of your warfare. Will you then be grateful?”⁷⁵

f. All the prophets, from the first prophet to the last, are evidences for the reality of prophethood.

The reality of prophethood is not merely something that we can intellectually deem “possible.” It is something that has actually taken place numerous times; it is a reality. The fact that it has occurred, taken place, and is a concrete, historical reality is the greatest proof that prophethood is true.

Throughout human history, from Ādam (p.b.u.h.) to our Prophet (p.b.u.h), many prophets have come. They conveyed the commands they received from Allah to humanity, and at the same time, they proved their prophethood through rational arguments and miracles. Throughout their lives, they lived in accordance with the truths they preached, serving as examples to people in worship, morality, and daily conduct. They did not perform their duties for any personal gain, but did all they did for the sake of Allah. Most importantly, all prophets across different times and places have always invited people to the same principles such as belief in the existence and oneness of Allah, belief in the Hereafter, and practice of good character. It should not be forgotten that what we are talking about here are historical facts.

Contrary to the consensus of the prophets in the messages they bring, when we look at the lives and opinions of philosophers, we can clearly see that their ideas did not conform to one another, that they were in very huge disputes, refuting one another. Moreover, we often see that they could not even fully adhere to or live by the philosophies they themselves came up with and taught to others.

The consensus of the prophets and the fact that they themselves too were truly believing in and practicing what they have brought to people from Allah clearly demonstrates that they were true in the cause that they brought.⁷⁶

4. What is waḥy (revelation)?

Waḥy (revelation) is defined as Allah’s communicating to a prophet, directly or through an angel, regarding any truth, ruling, knowledge, command, or prohibition.

Revelation is a result of Allah’s attribute of kalām (speech). All the sacred books and scriptures revealed to the prophets have been conveyed to humanity through revelation. A verse on this subject states:

⁷⁵ Sūrah Al-Anbiyā, 80.

⁷⁶For the wisdom behind the sending of prophets, see: Al-Taftāzānī, Sharh al-Maqāṣid, ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1998, vol. 5, p. 6.

“And it is not for any human being that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a veil or that He sends a messenger to reveal (to him) with His permission as He wills. Indeed, He is Most High (‘Aliyy) and Most Wise (Ḥakīm).”^{77, 78}

Prophets are distinguished from other people by being the recipients of Allah’s revelation and by being confirmed through miracles that prove the truth of these revelations.

5. What is a miracle?

A miracle means an extraordinary event or phenomenon created by Allah in the hands of the person He has sent as a prophet to prove his claim, which other people are unable to replicate.

Although a miracle manifests through the prophet, in reality, it is an act of Allah. A verse regarding miracles states: “(...) Without Allah’s permission, it is not possible for any prophet to bring any sign (miracle).”⁷⁹

It is Allah Who establishes the laws of the universe. However, Allah is not bound to act in accordance with these laws at all times. Whenever He wills, He creates actions that contradict these laws, which can be called as exceptions to these laws. Miracles, too, are such exceptional actions created by Allah in defiance of the standard laws of the universe to validate the claims of the prophets He has sent.

Imam Bediuzzaman explains the concept of miracles as follows: “A miracle is a confirmation of a prophet’s claim by Allah, the Creator of the universe. It is as if saying “*Şadaqta*” (You have spoken the truth!). Just as if you were to say in a sultan’s council and in his presence, ‘The sultan has appointed me to such-and-such a task.’ When evidence is requested from you regarding that claim, if the sultan says, ‘Yes’, it means that he has

⁷⁷ Sūrah Ash-Shūrā, 51

⁷⁸ Islamic scholars have categorized revelation under two categories: recited revelation (wahy matluw), meaning revelation that is read and recited with the intention of worship, and non-recited revelation (wahy ghayr matluw), meaning revelation that is not recited or read. Wahy matluw is exclusively the Qur’ān. Our Prophet has no type of interference for this type of revelation. He immediately and directly has had these revelations written down, taught them, and had them memorized. He carefully distinguished these revelations from the other type of revelation known as ghayr matluw.

Wahy ghayr matluw, on the other hand, consists of certain truths that Allah revealed to the Prophet through inspiration, apart from the Qur’ān. As evidence for the existence of such a category we call wahy ghayr matluw, scholars cite the following verses: “(Muhammad) does not speak of (his) desire. (What He says) is only a revelation that is revealed.” (An-Najm, 3-4), and “For Allah has sent down to you the Book and the wisdom, and has taught you what you did not know. And the grace of Allah upon you is truly great.” (An-Nisā’, 113)

The second verse explains that the Book and wisdom were revealed to our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) by Allah. The Book referred to here is the Qur’ān. There is no disagreement on this. And it is clear that the word “wisdom” here refers to the Prophet’s (p.b.u.h.) Sunnah. Based on this and similar verses, scholars have accepted that the Sunnah also originates from revelation.

It is also narrated that, on this matter, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said, “Take heed! A Book was given to me (by Allah), and along with it, an equal measure (of the Sunnah) was also given.” (Al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-‘Ilm, Chapter 10, hadith nos. 2663-2664). However, not all hadiths/Sunnah are based on revelation. Some hadiths/Sunnah are based on our Prophet’s (p.b.u.h.) ijtihād. Yet, as long as they come from authentic sources, all Sunnah serve as evidence in our religion.

⁷⁹ Sūrah Ra‘d, 38.

confirmed you. Likewise, (another way he can confirm you is) if he changes his customary practice and situation by means of you. In this way, he confirms your claim in a manner more definitive and more certain than just saying the word “Yes”.⁸⁰

Just as states issue documents to their officials to prove their positions – for example, that they are doctors or police officers – so too has Allah granted the prophets, who are His officials, miracles that serve as documents impossible to imitate. If miracles had not been granted to the prophets, they could not have proven their claims or their prophethood. Nor could the truthful be distinguished from the liar in the matter of prophethood. When a miracle occurs, it becomes naturally and unequivocally clear that the prophet is speaking the truth.

Şalih (p.b.u.h.) was asked by his people to make a rock split open and a camel emerge from within it. He prayed to Allah, Allah accepted his prayer, and the rock split open, and a female camel emerged from within it.

A rock splitting open and a camel emerging from within it is a miracle. Then, isn't the emergence of a living being from an egg – such as an ostrich egg, which is encased in a nearly stone-like shell – containing a yellow and white liquid also a miracle? Yes, in fact, both events are miracles.

Imam Bediuzzaman describes every living creature as a “Mu‘jizatu Qudratu Ilāhiyyah” (a miracle of divine power). It should not be difficult for a person who acknowledges that every living creature – each of whom is a miracle – was created by Allah, to accept other miracles of Allah as well.

6. The three qualities of the prophets

All prophets possess three qualities: prophethood, humanity, and servanthood. Their role in conveying the message they received from Allah to people and performing miracles represents their prophethood aspect. The fact that they perform all the acts of worship they preach to people better and more frequently than others is their servanthood aspect; their morals, way of life, and characteristics such as eating and drinking like other people are their aspect.

Their quality of prophethood is related to tablīgh (conveying). However, their aspects of worship and humanity are about setting an example to humans through their way of life (Sunnah).

⁸⁰ Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, Zülfikar, Altınbaşak Pub., p. 76. (From the 19th Letter).

Generally, scholars of Kalām have always defined a miracle in this way. For such definitions of “miracle”, see: Al-Taftāzānī, Şerhü'l Akaid Tercümesi (Translation of Sharh al-'Aqāid), p. 295, Dergah Publishing, 1999; Nūr al-Dīn al-Şābūnī, Maturidiye Akaidi (Arabic original: Al-Bidāyah Fī 'Uşūl Al-Dīn), trans. Bekir Topaloğlu, p. 105, 2000.

7. The Selection of Prophets from Among Humans

Since angels do not experience human conditions such as hunger, illness, fatigue, or suffering, they cannot serve as examples to people through their actions. However, as humans, prophets not only convey the messages revealed to them but also live in accordance with those messages, thereby setting an example for people through their actions. In this sense, just as they have the duty of conveying to humans the revelations sent to them, they also have a duty of serving as examples for humans to follow.

Throughout history, all prophets, like other humans, have obeyed all the natural laws that Allah has established on earth and they have lived as human beings. They too have been affected by cold and heat, and have felt hunger, joy, sorrow, and pain. They have served as examples to humanity through all these human conditions and have taught lessons through all their actions. If every one of their actions had been extraordinary and exceptional, or if they had been angels and not humans, they could not have served as leaders and guides to humans in every respect of their life; they could not have been such a huge manifestation of the mercy of Allah that is guiding humans in all the situations they may face in life.

It is true that the prophets have also performed miracles. But their state of performing miracles does not encompass all their life. Imam Bediuzzaman says the following on this subject:

“The Most Noble Messenger (p.b.u.h) was sent as an imām (leader) and guide for humanity so that people may learn the rules and principles of personal and social life from him, and so that they grow accustomed to obeying the (natural) laws that the Almighty has established in the universe through His will and power, and thereby act in accordance with the principles of His wisdom. If the Most Noble Messenger, peace be upon him, had always relied on miracles and extraordinary phenomena in both his social and personal life, he could not have served as a leader and guide to people in every respect.

It is for this very reason that he would display miracles only when necessary to confirm his cause and to refute the denial of the unbelievers. At other times, just as he obeyed divine commands more than anyone else, he also adhered to and obeyed the laws of ādatullah (the universal law established by Allah’s wisdom and will, also called “natural laws” today) more than anyone else. He would wear armor against the enemy and give commands like “Take cover!” to his army. He would sustain wounds and endure hardships, so that he fully demonstrates his observance and obedience to the laws of Divine wisdom and the great natural Sharī‘ahh of the universe.”⁸¹

⁸¹ Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, Lem’alar (The Flashes), Altınbaşak Publications, p. 83.

8. The Attributes of the Prophets

Islamic scholars have emphasized certain attributes that serve as integral parts of the duty of prophethood of the prophets, who act as intermediaries between Allah and His servants. Five of these are as follows:

1. **Faṭānah:** Faṭānah means being clever and intelligent. Since prophets convey the messages of Allah to people, first they have to be able to fully understand the messages of Allah themselves. And then they have to convey them in a way that people can understand, and engage in debate with those who deny it, intelligently convincing or refuting them.
2. **Amānah:** Amānah means being reliable. Prophets are those in whom both Allah and people place their trust.
3. **Tablīgh:** This means not concealing the truths, commands, and prohibitions revealed by Allah; conveying them exactly as they are. Prophets have certainly and always conveyed the commands they received from Allah to people. They have never concealed anything from it nor added anything to it.
4. **Ṣidq:** Ṣidq means being truthful and honest. Prophets never lie, whether it be in conveying Allah's revelation or in their dealings with people.
5. **ʿIṣmah:** This refers to the protection of prophets from sin by Allah. Since prophets were sent as exemplary figures, they were protected from sin and evil. According to the scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah, ʿiṣmah is an attribute exclusive to prophets.

9. The Degrees of the Prophets and the Ulul-Azm Prophets

The Holy Qurʾān has made belief in all prophets obligatory without distinguishing between them. Two verses on this subject are as follows:

“(...) All of them (the Prophet and the believers) believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, and His messengers, (saying) ‘We make no distinction between any of His messengers.’ (...)”⁸²

“(...) (Those who) say, ‘We believe in some (of the prophets) and reject others,’ and wish to take a path in between; it is they who are truly the disbelievers.”⁸³

Although the prophets are equal in terms of being prophets, there is a difference in degree among them in terms of virtue. Two verses on this subject are as follows:

“We have indeed favoured some prophets over others”⁸⁴

⁸² Sūrah Al-Baqarah, 285.

⁸³ Sūrah An-Nisāʾ, 150-151.

⁸⁴ Sūrah Al-Isrāʾ, 55.

“Those are the Messengers; We gave superiority to some of them over others. Among them are those to whom Allah spoke (directly), and some He raised in degrees.”⁸⁵

Among the prophets, the ulu’l-‘azm prophets are the greatest.

The ulu’l-‘azm prophets are those who, while fulfilling their duties, have demonstrated extraordinary resilience and patience in the face of the difficulties they encountered, without ever losing heart. In verse 35 of Surah Al-Ahqaf, it is stated: “(O Messenger) So endure patiently, as the (previous) ulu’l-‘azm messengers did.”

Islamic scholars have stated that our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), along with Ibrāhīm, Nūḥ, Mūsā, and ‘Īsā (peace be upon them), are the ulu’l-‘azm and the most exalted prophets, citing two verses as evidence:

“He has ordained for you the religion (of Islam) which He ordained for Noah, and which He has revealed to you (...)”⁸⁶. “(Remember) when We took from the prophets their solemn covenant, and from you, and from Noah, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, and ‘Īsā, son of Mary. We took from them a solemn covenant.”^{87, 88}

10. Our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is the Greatest Prophet

The ulul-azm prophets are the most exalted ones among all prophets. Among them, the greatest prophet is our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). Scholars have cited certain proofs in this regard. Some of them are as follows:

1. The Qur’ān states, “(O Prophet!) We have sent you only as a mercy to the worlds.”⁸⁹. Since he is a mercy to the worlds, he must be superior to all the worlds. The other prophets are also included in these worlds.
2. All prophets were sent to their own peoples, whereas our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was sent to all of humanity. The Qur’ān states, “And We have sent you (O Messenger) to all humankind as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner (...)”⁹⁰, and “(O Muhammad!) Say, ‘O people! Indeed, I am the Messenger of Allah (sent) to you all (...)”⁹¹. Since his mission is universal, his rank is also higher.
3. The prophethood of all other prophets is limited to a specific time. The prophethood of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), however, will continue until the Day of Judgment. His Sharī‘ah has abolished the Sharī‘ah of all previous prophets and abrogated their rulings.

⁸⁵ Sūrah Al-Baqarah, 253.

⁸⁶ Sūrah Ash-Shūrā, 13.

⁸⁷ Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb, 7.

⁸⁸ See: ‘Aliyy al-Qārī, Sharh al-Fiqh al-Akbar, Çağrı Publications, p. 296.

⁸⁹ Sūrah Al-Anbiyā, 107.

⁹⁰ Sūrah Saba, 28.

⁹¹ Sūrah Al-A‘rāf, 158.

4. The Mi'raj miracle was bestowed exclusively upon him, and he led all the prophets in prayer at the Al-Aqsa Mosque. His leading all the prophets in prayer demonstrates his greatness.
5. In an authentic hadith, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) says, "I am the master of the children of Adam on the Day of Resurrection (...) All the prophets will be under my banner."⁹² . This hadith clearly demonstrates that he is superior to all the prophets.
6. Regarding the Ummah of our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), the Qur'an states, "(You are) the best community brought forth for mankind (...)"⁹³ If his (p.b.u.h.) ummah (community) is the best of all ummahs, then the prophet of this ummah must also be the greatest of all prophets.

⁹² Al-Tirmidhī, Tafsir al-Qur'ān, no. 3073 / Aḥmad, Musnad, vol. 1, pp. 281, 295.

⁹³ Sūrah 'Āli 'Imrān, 110

Part Two: The Prophethood of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) (Risālah al-Muḥammadiyya)

This section will focus solely on the prophethood of our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.).

A. The Prophetic Aspect of Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) (His Spiritual Personality)

As we explained earlier, all prophets, foremost among them our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), have three aspects: prophethood, servanthood, and humanity. Each of these three qualities has its own distinct conditions.

A sultan, in terms of his humanity, is no different from other people. However, he is distinguished from others by his royal attributes. The same situation is applicable for the prophetic aspect and the human aspect of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.).

Imam Bediuzzaman describes the prophetic aspect of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) as follows:

“Yes - look at this proof's (Prophet Muhammad's p.b.u.h.) spiritual person; you will see that for his sake, the earth's surface is a mosque, Mecca a miḥrāb (prayer niche), and Medina a pulpit; that radiant proof, our Prophet (‘alayhisṣalātu wassalām), is the Imām of all of the people of faith, and preacher to all mankind, and the leader of all of the prophets, and the master of all of the saints, and the leader of a circle of Divine remembrance made up of all of the prophets and the saints”⁹⁴

In this description, the phrases “the earth's surface is a mosque” and “preacher to all mankind” refer to our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) being as a prophet to the entire world; “Mecca a miḥrab (prayer niche)” refers to the fact that – because the Ka‘ba is in Mecca – we face the Mecca’s direction in prayer, and the phrase “the Imām of all of the people of faith” refers to the fact that our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) is a leader and example to his ummah in every aspect of life. The phrase “Medina a minbar (pulpit)” refers to the fact that Islam spread from Medina to the entire world. For the pulpit is where tablīgh (preaching) is made.

His being the leader of all prophets refers to his having been sent to all of humanity. As mentioned earlier, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) is the most superior among and the leader of all prophets.

His being the master of all of the saints is refers to his having educated and nurtured – and still educating and nurturing to this day – all the saints through the Qur’ān and Sunnah he brought. Scholars regard the karāmah (extraordinary situations bestowed upon the saints by Allah) displayed by the saints as the miracles of the Prophet to whom that saint is connected. Because that saint has attained the degree of sainthood through being educated the Prophet to whom he is connected.

⁹⁴ See Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, Zülfikar, Altınbaşak Publications, p. 321.

B. The Proofs of Our Prophet Muhammad's (p.b.u.h.) Prophethood

Our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is the last prophet sent by Allah. Like the prophets before him, he also proved his prophethood by displaying countless miracles, foremost among them the Qur'ān, which is the greatest miracle. However, the proofs of our Prophet Muhammad's (p.b.u.h.) prophethood are not limited solely to his miracles. Anyone who makes research without prejudice can understand his truthfulness and sincerity from all his actions, deeds, states, words, and character. Indeed, some individuals, even a renowned Jewish scholar of the time called Abdullah ibn Salam, embraced Islam simply by seeing the face of our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), declaring, "There is no falsehood in this face; there can be no deceit in this countenance!"

Although some scholars have stated that there are about a thousand proofs of the prophethood and miracles of our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), there are actually thousands of such proofs.

Here, let us focus on just eight of the proofs of the prophethood of our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.).

1. The Personality of Our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.)

In the Noble Qur'ān, it is stated: "O humankind! Indeed there has come to you a clear proof (the Prophet) from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a clear light (the Qur'ān)."⁹⁵ In this verse, the "proof" refers to our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), and the "light" refers to the Qur'ān. Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) is the clearest proof both of Allah's existence and oneness, as well as of his own prophethood.

Throughout his life, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was never seen to tell a lie. Both his friends and enemies were agreeing that he possessed a good and noble character. Although he was unlettered, he brought profound truths of knowledge to the world. While conveying his religion, he feared absolutely no one and paid absolutely no heed to threats or offers of things such as money or position. He fulfilled his duty with utmost confidence. He was knowing, loving, and fearing Allah more than anyone else, and was – and is – the foremost in worship. He adhered to all the rules of the religion he brought more strictly than everyone else. He did everything he did only for the sake of Allah and never acted for any worldly or personal benefit.

All these facts about him serve as evidence that he never resorted to deceit or lies, and that he was fully sincere and truthful in his cause.

2. The Age of Bliss

About 1,400 years ago, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) brought about a great revolution. He

⁹⁵Sūrah An-Nisā', 174.

completely eradicated the Age of Ignorance and established a brand-new society – an ummah – shaped according to the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. People who had previously worshipped idols became those who prayed at night and fasted during the day. People who used to bury their daughters alive became so compassionate that they could not even step on an ant. Illiterate Bedouin people who knew neither reading nor writing established the Islamic culture and civilization which is higher and more civilized than the greatest of civilizations. They became exemplary people for the entire humanity.

The revolution brought about by our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is unique and unparalleled in world history. It has no equal or parallel. He did not achieve this revolution through his own personal power and strength, but through Allah’s guidance; that is, through his prophethood. In this sense, the transformation of the Age of Ignorance into the Age of Bliss serves as proof of his prophethood.

3. The Qur’ān

The Qur’ān is the greatest miracle of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.). Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) states in a hadith: “Every prophet was certainly granted miracles (by Allah) so that people believe in him. And the miracle granted to me is the Qur’ān that Allah revealed to me. For this reason, I’m hoping that I will be the one with the most followers on the Day of Judgment.”⁹⁶

Our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) challenged the people around him with the Qur’ān, inviting them to produce something similar to it. Although they were at the highest level of literary skill (eloquence and fluency), they could not produce anything similar to the Qur’ān – which our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), who was unlettered and knew nothing of poetry, brought. This is one of the proofs demonstrating that the Qur’ān is a miracle and that it is the words of Allah.

More explanations about the Qur’ān will be made in the section on “Belief in the Scriptures.”

4. Sharī‘ah

Sharī‘ah refers to all the rules in religion regarding all aspects of human life that must be followed in society.

Although our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was unlettered, he established legal rules concerning individual, family, and social life. These rules emerged from the Qur’ān, his words, and his actions and conduct. These legal rules have governed millions of people justly for 14 centuries.

⁹⁶ Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Faḍāil al-Qur’ān, Chapter 1 / Muslim, Kitāb al-Īmān, Chapter 70, hadith no. 152.

Islamic law (Sharī‘ah) has a structure that comprehensively encompasses all of personal, family, social and societal life. Within this structure, it is evident that every ruling – from the courtesies in eating to international law – is in perfect harmony with one another. Some of the principles Islamic Sharī‘ah articulated 14 centuries ago could only be attained by other civilizations centuries later, even as late as today.

It is a miraculous event that an unlettered individual established such legal rules and governed people justly for centuries. This serves as evidence of the truthfulness of our Prophet Muhammad’s (p.b.u.h.) prophetic mission.

5. Scholars and Saints

The greatest leaders are those who train other leaders. Our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), while being the leader of his ummah, trained other leaders who would guide the human world both in his own time and in subsequent eras. Thousands of brilliant scholars who emerged from his ummah – such as Imām al-A‘ẓām, Imām Shāfi‘ī, Imām Mālik, Imām al-Ghazālī, Imām al-Bukhārī, Imām Muslim, and Imām al-Ash‘arī – have guided the ummah in the realm of knowledge.

Likewise, thousands of saints from his ummah – such as Abdu’l-Qādir al-Gilānī, Sheikh al-Shāzalī, Mawlāna Jalālu’d-Dīn ar-Rūmī, Shāh Naqshbandī, and Imām Rabbānī – have spiritually guided the ummah. They both affirmed our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and proved to the humanity, with evidence, that he was the true Prophet.

The fact that so many scholars and saints have attained very high ranks in knowledge and spirituality through our Prophet Muhammad’s (p.b.u.h.) teachings, and that those scholars and saints have affirmed his prophethood, and have proved it to those around them, and that they have reached a consensus on these matters is another proof that our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is truthful in his cause.

6. Previous Prophets

From Adam (p.b.u.h.) to our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), thousands of prophets have been sent to humans. They have served as righteous guides to humanity, proving that the messages they bring are true through their miracles, scriptures, and moral conduct. All the prophets of the past serve as spiritual evidences for our Prophet Muhammad’s (p.b.u.h.) prophethood. Because all the qualities, miracles, and proofs that led people to call prophets like Mūsā and ‘Īsā (peace be upon them) “prophets” are present in our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) in their most perfect form, as attested by history. One who accepts the prophethood of other prophets has to accept the prophethood of our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) as well.

7. The Holy Scriptures

One of the greatest proofs of our Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) prophethood is that his mission was foretold in the previous Holy Scriptures, such as Tawrah (Torah), Zabūr (Psalms), and 'Injīl (Gospel). This truth is clearly stated in the Qur'ān. For example, one verse states: "Those whom We gave the Book recognise him as they recognise their own sons. But indeed, one party among them conceals the truth while they know (it)."⁹⁷

Ḥusayn al-Jisrī (may Allah have mercy on him) extracted one hundred and ten proofs regarding the prophethood of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) from Tawrah and 'Injīl in his book titled "Risālah al-Ḥamīdiyyah". It is likely that there were even more passages constituting such proofs before these sacred books were altered or corrupted. Islamic scholars have proven to the ahl al-kitāb (people of the book, that is, Christians and Jews) the prophethood of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) by extracting these proofs from these holy books.

8. The Miracles of Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.)

A miracle is an extraordinary phenomenon granted by Allah to His prophets to prove their prophethood. Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was also bestowed with many miracles.

Islamic scholars have stated that there are about a thousand such miracles. Some of them concern the news he gave about the past and the future. Some concern trees and stones coming to speak and bearing witness to his prophethood. Some concern animals speaking to bear witness to his prophethood. Some concern the getting abundant of food and water. Some concern the resurrection of the dead and the healing of the sick. Among these miracles, the most significant ones are the Mi'rāj and the splitting of the moon, which are also miracles that are mentioned in the Qur'ān.

These miracles manifested by our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) have been narrated in well-known and authentic hadith collections. Some scholars have authored independent works on this subject.⁹⁸

Qaḍī 'Iyāḍ, in his book "Ash-Shifāu'sh-Sharīf", reports from Abdullah ibn Umar that:

Once, a Bedouin came to the Noble Messenger (p.b.u.h.). He asked him, "Where are you going?" The Bedouin replied, "To my family." Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said, "Would you not prefer something better than that?" The Bedouin asked, "What is that?" Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) replied, "It is to bear witness that there is no god but Allah, that He is One and has no partner or associate, and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger." The Bedouin asked, "What is the witness to this testimony?" Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) declared, "That Samura tree by the valley will be the witness."

⁹⁷ Sūrah Al-Baqarah, 146.

⁹⁸ Imam Bediuzzaman explains 300 miracles of our Prophet Muhammad in his work titled "the 19th Letter" or "Mu'jizāt al-Ahmadiyyah".

Ibn ‘Umar says: “That tree shook and came out of its place, cracking and splitting open the ground, it came right next to the Most Noble Messenger (p.b.u.h.). Three times, the Noble Messenger (p.b.u.h) asked that tree to bear witness to his prophethood. And the tree bore witness to it all three times. Then he commanded the tree to return to its place, and it settled back.”

Upon witnessing this miracle, the Bedouin said, “When I return to my people, if they follow me in believing in you, I will bring them all to you. If they do not follow me, I will come to you and be with you.”⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, Zülfikar, Altınbaşak Publications, p. 259; Qaḍī ‘Iyāḍ, Al-Shifā al-Sharīf, Bedir Publishing, p. 294; Al-Dārimī, Al-Sunan, Muqaddimah, Chapter. 4, hadith no. 16.

THE THIRD PRINCIPLE: BELIEF IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Belief in the Holy Scriptures is closely connected to the other principles of faith. Because:

Since it is Allah Who revealed the Book, this principle is connected to faith in Allah; since it was revealed to the prophets through angels, it is connected to the belief in the angels; since it was conveyed to people through the prophets, it is connected to the belief in the prophets; and since it announces the Hereafter, it is connected to the belief in the Hereafter.

In explaining belief in the Holy Scriptures, Islamic scholars have divided the topic into two parts: the *Suhuf* and the Books.

A. *Ṣuḥuf*

"*Suhuf*" is the plural of the word "*ṣaḥīfah*," meaning "page," and refers to the scrolls or small books revealed to the prophets, in addition to the four major books known as *Tawrah* (the Torah), *Zabūr* (the Psalms), *ʿInjīl* (*ʿInjīl*), and the *Qurʿān*.

It is reported that the *ṣuḥufs* consist of 100 pages in total. *Abū Dharr* (may Allah be pleased with him) says:

I asked the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), "O Messenger of Allah! How many books did Allah reveal?" He replied, "104 books. Fifty pages were revealed to Seth, thirty to *Idrīs*, ten to *Ibrāhīm*, and ten to *Mūsā* before *Tawrah*. And (in addition to) *Tawrah*, *ʿInjīl*, *Zabūr*, and the *Furqān* (the *Qurʿān*, which distinguishes truth from falsehood) were revealed."¹⁰⁰

None of these scrolls have survived to the present day. Therefore, we do not have any knowledge regarding their content.

B. The Books

1. *Tawrah*

Tawrah, meaning "Law" or "*Sharīʿah*," is the holy book revealed to *Mūsā* (p.b.u.h.). *Tawrah* constitutes only a portion of the book known today as the Old Testament. *Tawrah* has not remained as it was revealed in the time of *Mūsā* (p.b.u.h.); it has been corrupted over time. Specifically:

During the time of *Mūsā* (p.b.u.h.), *Tawrah* existed as a single copy. There was no tradition of memorization, and it had not been duplicated. However, it was decreed by

¹⁰⁰Imām Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Durr al-Mansūr, Dār al-Fikr*, Beirut, 1993, vol. 8, p. 489. Fakhruddīn ar-Rāzī mentions in his commentary that Adam (p.b.u.h.) was also given 10 pages. See: Fakhruddīn Ar-Rāzī, *Al-Tafsīr Al-Kabīr*, trans. Suat Yıldırım et al., Akçağ Publishing, vol. 23, p. 89.

Prophet Mūsā that it be taken out of the Ark of the Covenant every 3 or 7 years and read to the people.¹⁰¹

In 605 B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, he ordered all copies of Tawrāh to be burned. A century later, Prophet ‘Uzayr (Ezra) (p.b.u.h.) said that he has memorized them and so he had them rewritten. After some time, the Romans invaded Palestine and once again destroyed and eliminated the copies of Tawrāh. But then, the Jews rewrote it. However, it is unknown on what basis they carried out this work. For this reason, the presence of passages in Tawrāh that were not originally there and the omission of sections that were previously there should not be surprising.¹⁰²

The burning, destruction, and loss of Tawrāh, followed by its rediscovery, the difficulty of reproducing books at that time, and the addition or omission of certain passages – whether intentionally or unintentionally – by its scribes have all contributed to the corruption of Tawrāh.

The corruption of Tawrāh has also been admitted by some Jews and Christians. Numerous examples of corruption can be cited from the Tawrāh that Jews read today. For instance, the claim that Allah created the universe in six days and rested on the seventh, that Prophet Jacob wrestled with Allah and defeated Him, that Hārūn (Aaron) (p.b.u.h.) – the brother of Mūsā (p.b.u.h.) and a prophet – made the golden calf and invited people to worship it, that the daughters of Prophet Lūṭ (Lot) (p.b.u.h.) got their father drunk, and that Prophet Dāwūd (p.b.u.h.) committed adultery etc. Such repugnant slanders clearly demonstrate that Tawrāh has been corrupted. It is possible to add many more examples of such corruption on this subject.

2. Zabūr

Zabūr is a book revealed by Allah to Dāwūd (p.b.u.h.). A verse states, “And to Dāwūd, We granted Zabūr (the Psalms).” (An-Nisā’, 163) The Qur’ān and Sunnah do not provide extensive details regarding Zabūr.

Some scholars state, “Zabūr consisted entirely of admonitions and hymns; it contained no legal rulings or laws. Dāwūd (p.b.u.h.) acted in accordance with the Sharī‘ah of Mūsā (p.b.u.h.), just like the earlier prophets of the Children of Israel.”¹⁰³

Like Tawrāh, Zabūr also forms a part of the book known today as the Old Testament.

¹⁰¹Prof. Günay Tümer, Abdurrahman Küçük, Dinler Tarihi, Ocak Publishing, Ankara, 1988, p. 127.

¹⁰² Dînbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi (Journal of Academic Research in Religious Sciences), VII (2007), Issue 3, p. 159. (Kur’ân-ı Kerîm İle Diğer Semâvî Kitapların/Sayfaların Karşılaştırmalı Kısa Bir Tarihi. Muhammed Hamîdullah [A Brief Comparative History of the Holy Qur’ân and Other Heavenly Books/Pages. Muhammad Hamidullah], trans. Bahattin Dartma)

¹⁰³ Cevdet Paşa, Kısas-ı Enbiya (Stories of the Prophets), Bedir Publishing, Istanbul, Vol. 1, p. 36.

3. ʾInjīl

ʾInjīl is the holy book revealed to ʾĪsā (p.b.u.h.) and the literal meaning of the word “ʾInjīl” is “good news”.

ʾĪsā (p.b.u.h.) conveyed the ʾInjīl that was revealed to him to the people, but the words of what he conveyed were not recorded in writing. After his being ascended to heaven, disputes arose among Christians. While some called him a prophet, others went to extremes, claiming he was a god or the son of Allah. (Paul, who was a Jewish opponent of Christianity that later converted and infiltrated Christian circles, played a major role in the corruption of Christianity. Paul introduced the doctrine of the Trinity into Christianity.) Much later, the messages that had been conveyed orally were put into writing. However, these oral accounts differed greatly from one another, and as a result, dozens of versions of ʾInjīl emerged.

Roman Emperor Constantine, who was formerly a pagan, embraced Christianity later in his life. However, he defended the doctrine of the Trinity – that is, the belief in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. To resolve the disputes among Christians, he brought together 2,048 bishops in Nicaea in the year 325 AD. This gathering went down in history as the Council of Nicaea. Among the 2,048 bishops were only 318 people who shared Paul’s view in support of the doctrine of the Trinity. Since King Constantine had accepted the doctrine of the Trinity, he supported this minority of 318 people, and from among 40–50 ʾInjīls, four ʾInjīls – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – were selected since they conformed with the doctrine of the Trinity. After these four ʾInjīls were selected, the others were banned. Those who claimed that ʾĪsā (p.b.u.h.) was not a god were either excommunicated (banned from the church) or punished.

Over time, the doctrine of the Trinity became widespread among all Christians, and the belief that Allah is one and that ʾĪsā (p.b.u.h.) is a prophet – which many Christians were accepting up until then – was forgotten. Thus, Christianity became corrupted.¹⁰⁴

The ʾInjīl of Barnabas

Barnabas was a disciple of ʾĪsā (p.b.u.h.). The ʾInjīl he wrote also was included among the forbidden books. This book, which had been banned for centuries, was rediscovered and published in the 20th century.

The ʾInjīl of Barnabas describes ʾĪsā (p.b.u.h.) as a prophet and rejects the claim that he is the son of Allah. It states that ʾĪsā (p.b.u.h.) was not crucified but was taken up to heaven by angels, and that he will return in the end times as a member of the community of the final prophet. It also frequently mentions the characteristics of our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.).

¹⁰⁴ Muhammed Ebû Zehra, *Hristiyanlık Üzerine Konferanslar (Conferences on Christianity)*, Fikir Publishing, 1978, Istanbul, p. 230. None of these four Gospels were written in neither Hebrew nor Aramaic, so they were not in the language ʾĪsā (p.b.u.h.) spoke, but in Latin, and all four were in the form of a biography of ʾĪsā (p.b.u.h.).

Islamic Ruling on the Corrupted Holy Scriptures

The evidence we have presented so far clearly demonstrates that these books have been corrupted. However, there are still some parts within these books that contain the Words of Allah. In this case, how should we approach these books?

We can divide these corrupted (altered, distorted) holy books into three categories based on their content:

- a. We affirm and accept the parts of these books that are in accordance with the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.
- b. We reject the parts in these books that contradict the Qur'ān and the Sunnah – such as the claims that 'Īsā (p.b.u.h.) and 'Uzayr (p.b.u.h.) are the sons of Allah.
- c. Regarding matters where we cannot determine whether they align with the Qur'ān and the Sunnah or not, we neither affirm nor reject them.¹⁰⁵

Regarding this third category, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) stated: “When the People of the Book tell you something, neither affirm it nor deny it. Instead, say to them, ‘We believe in Allah, His Books, and His Prophets.’”¹⁰⁶

This advice from our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) is the most correct way to avoid, by mistake, denying what is true or affirming what is false. In one narration, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) advised the Noble Companions to recite the following verse: “Say: ‘We believe in Allah and in what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Ibrāhīm, Ismā‘īl, Ishāq, Ya‘qūb, and their descendants, and what was given to Mūsā and 'Īsā, and what was given to the other prophets by their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we submit ourselves to Allah.’” (Al-Baqarah, 136).

4. The Qur'ān

Scholars have defined the Qur'ān as follows: It is the divine revelation revealed by Allah Almighty through the angel Jibrīl to the final Prophet, Muhammad, in Arabic to be conveyed to all humanity; that has been transmitted to us through a chain of reliable narrators; that is written in the muṣḥafs; and that begins with the Surah al-Fātihah and ends with the Surah an-Nās.

The Qur'ān consists of 114 surahs and, according to the prevailing view, 6,666 verses.

The Qur'ān is the only sacred book that has not been and that cannot be altered or distorted. It has reached us today exactly as it was revealed.

¹⁰⁵ See: Mansur Ali Nasif, Et-Tac, Pamuk Publishing, vol. 4, p. 49; Mubarekuri, Tuḥfat al-Aḥwazī, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, Beirut, vol. 8, p. 370.

¹⁰⁶ Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Tafsīr, Chapter 11.

The Preservation of the Noble Qur'ān Without Alteration Until the Present Day

Our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) had all the surahs and verses, from the first revelation he received to the last, written down and preserved. Whenever a revelation came to him, he would immediately call for one of the scribes he appointed with the duty of writing down the Qur'ān and thus have the revelation that came to him written down. Once the writing was complete, he would have it read back to him and correct any errors – that is, if there were any. He would tell the scribes where each new verse would be placed within the entirety of the Qur'ān, and they would record it just like the others. After the verses or surahs were written down, copies of the writings were made and distributed among the Muslims. Additionally, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was making a lot of encouragements to the Companions for the memorization and recitation of the Qur'ān, whether during prayer or outside of it.¹⁰⁷

After migrating to Medina, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) would recite the entire Qur'ān back and forth with Jibril (p.b.u.h.) every year during the month of Ramadan. (This recitation is called “al-‘Arḍah.”) In the last Ramadan before his passing, he recited the entire Qur'ān twice from beginning to end.¹⁰⁸

While he was alive, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) had all the surahs and verses written down, but he had not compiled them into a book. Abū Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) ordered that the Qur'ān be compiled into a muṣḥaf (a book). The duty to arrange this compiling process was given to Zayd ibn Thābit (may Allah be pleased with him), who was one of the scribes of revelation. Zayd collected the written surahs and verses from the Companions. He was very meticulous in this matter, requiring at least two witnesses from the individuals bringing the written text to confirm that it had been written under the supervision of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.). As a result, after about a year of meticulous work, the Qur'ān was compiled into a Muṣḥaf. All of the Noble Companions living at the time agreed that there was nothing missing or added in this Muṣḥaf.

During the caliphate of Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him), various copies of this Muṣḥaf were made and sent to the provincial capitals. One of these copies is currently in Istanbul (which was in Medina before that), one is in Tashkent (brought there from Damascus by Timur), and one is in the India Office Library in London; the British seized this copy from the library of the Mongol sultans in Delhi when they occupied the city in 1857.¹⁰⁹

Based on the Qur'āns reproduced during the time of Caliph Uthman, more Qur'ānic manuscripts were reproduced, and these were disseminated throughout the entire Islamic world. In this dissemination, Muslims acted with great care and meticulousness, ensuring

¹⁰⁷ Muhsin Demirci, *Tefsir Usulü*, İfav Publishing, p. 70 ff.

¹⁰⁸ Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Faḍāil al-Qur'ān*, Chapter 7.

¹⁰⁹ Muhsin Demirci, *Tefsir Usulü*, İfav Publishing, p. 77 ff.

that nothing was added to or omitted from the Qur'ān. The greatest proof of this is that every single Qur'ān in the world is identical, letter for letter.

As a result of all this, the Qur'ān has reached us today unchanged, preserved exactly as it was revealed to our Prophet (p.b.u.h.). In contrast, the original forms of other holy books have not been preserved.

The Qur'ān is a Miracle

When the prophets conveyed Allah's commands to people, they performed miracles to ensure that their communities believed in them. As we mentioned earlier, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) also performed many miracles. Among these miracles, the Qur'ān is the greatest miracle of him. Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) stated: "Every prophet was certainly granted miracles by Allah so that people believe in him. The miracle granted to me, however, is the Qur'ān that Allah revealed to me. For this reason, I hope that I will be the one with the most followers on the Day of Judgment."¹¹⁰

Only those living during their time witnessed the miracles of the prophets of the past. With the passing of those prophets, their miracles also came to an end. However, even though our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) has passed away, the miracles of the Qur'ān will remain to be witnessed by all until the Day of Judgment. For this reason, his ummah will be greater in number than the ummahs of the other prophets.¹¹¹

Islamic scholars have examined the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān from various perspectives. Here, let us highlight a few of the Qur'ān's miraculous aspects:

a. The Qur'ān Is a Miracle in Literary Terms

During the time our Prophet was sent, poetry was very widespread among the people of the Arabian Peninsula. Everyone was engaged in poetry in some shape or form, and poets were regarded as national heroes. Eloquence was so powerful that sometimes two tribes would go to war because of a poet's verse, and sometimes they would cease fighting and make peace because of a poet's verse. The Arabs held poetry competitions at their annual fairs. In these competitions, seven poems by seven poets would be selected, inscribed in gold, and hung on the walls of the Ka'ba. These seven poems later became famous as the "Mu'allaqat al-Sab'a."

It was during such a time – a time when literature and eloquence were at their peak – that the Qur'ān was revealed by Allah to our Prophet (p.b.u.h.). (During the time of Mūsā, p.b.u.h., magic was in prevalence, and during the time of 'Īsā, p.b.u.h., medicine was in prevalence; and so their most significant of miracles were of those types. And since literature and eloquence were in prevalence during the time of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), his greatest

¹¹⁰ Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Faḍāil al-Qur'ān, Chapter 1; Muslim, The Book of Faith, Chapter 70, Hadith 152.

¹¹¹ Jalaluddīn Al-Suyūfī, Kur'an İlimleri Ansiklopedisi (Encyclopedia of Qur'ānic Sciences), (Translation of Al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān), Madve Publishing, vol. 2, p. 307.

miracle also came as a miracle in the realm of eloquence.)

Allah challenged the Arab literary figures and poets to produce words comparable to or superior to even the shortest chapter of the Qur'ān. He made this challenge to them with the verse: "And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down (the Quran) upon our servant, then, bring forth a chapter like it (...)"¹¹²

The Arabs of that time, who were at the pinnacle of literary achievement, could not respond to this challenge that came from the Qur'ān. In fact, they even removed their most renowned poems, known as the "Mu'allaqat al-Sab'a," from the walls of the Kaaba. The fact that Arab poets could not oppose the Qur'ān or produce anything similar to it demonstrates that the Qur'ān is a miracle in terms of eloquence and that it is not the words of our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) but the Words of Allah.

b. The Qur'ān's Explanations Regarding the Past and Future Is a Miracle

One of the greatest miracles of the Qur'ān is that it has provided information about the past and the future. For instance:

Since our Prophet was illiterate, it was impossible for him to learn about the past by reading books. (Moreover, the Arabs had no written books. And at that time, Tawrah and 'Injil had not yet been translated into Arabic either.) Yet the Qur'ān accurately reports the stories of many prophets such as Adam (p.b.u.h.), Noah (p.b.u.h.), and Ibrāhīm (p.b.u.h.), as well as those of many nations and historical events. Some historical research conducted today have proven that the information reported by the Qur'ān is accurate. Therefore, the Qur'ān is not the word of our Prophet, but the word of Allah, Who knows the past in all its details.

Just as the Qur'ān speaks of the past, it also speaks of the future. For example, in the year 613 AD (the fifth year of prophethood), a war took place between the Persians and the Byzantines. The Persians won the war. The Byzantines suffered a major defeat in this war, leaving them in a quite tough situation. In Mecca, the polytheists said, "Although the Byzantines are People of the Book, they were defeated by the idol-worshipping Persians; one day we will crush you just like that." Upon this, Allah revealed a verse stating, "The Romans have been defeated in a nearby land, but after their defeat, they will triumph within a few years (...)"¹¹³ Indeed, in the subsequent battle, as the Qur'ān had foretold, the Byzantines defeated the Persians.¹¹⁴

The verse "(...) you will certainly enter the Sacred Mosque (...)"¹¹⁵, revealed before the conquest of Mecca, foretold the conquest of Mecca, and this prophecy came true exactly as stated. Similarly, in Surah an-Nasr, it is stated, "When comes the help of Allah and the

¹¹²Sūrah Al-Baqarah, 23.

¹¹³Sūrah Ar-Rūm, 2-4.

¹¹⁴ Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, Hak Dini Kur'an Dili, Azim Distribution, vol. 6, p. 236.

¹¹⁵Sūrah Al-Fatḥ, 27.

conquest, and you see people entering Allah’s religion in multitudes”¹¹⁶ and indeed, after the conquest of Mecca, the people of the Arabian Peninsula entered the Islamic faith in multitudes.

The Qur’ān’s reports about the future are not limited to these examples. There are many other instances like these. Since our Prophet could not have known the past or the future on his own, the Qur’ān’s prophecies regarding the past and the future demonstrate that it is the Word of Allah, Who knows the past and the future.

c. The Qur’ān’s Mentioning the Scientific Discoveries of Today Is a Miracle

Today, science has advanced, and many new things that were unknown in past centuries have been discovered. The Qur’ān, which was revealed 1,400 years ago, has foretold these new discoveries made by science.

For example, science has now established that the universe was created through a Big Bang. The Qur’ān states, “Have those who disbelieve not seen that the heavens and the earth were once joined together, and We then split them apart”¹¹⁷, telling 1,400 years ago exactly what science has only been able to reveal in the 20th century.

The universe was once thought to be in a static state before, but modern science has revealed that it is constantly expanding. And this too was mentioned in the Qur’ān with the verse: “And We constructed the heaven with our strength, and indeed We are (continuously) expanding it.”¹¹⁸

A verse states: “He let forth the two seas so that they meet, 20(yet) between them is a barrier; they do not transgress (and mix with each other).”¹¹⁹ Indeed, this phenomenon mentioned in the Qur’ān has been discovered in some seas during the twentieth century. Since our Prophet did not live by the sea and had never traveled by sea, it is impossible for him to have known such a thing on his own. Therefore, it is Allah – Who knows all the seas in every detail – Who is sending down this information to us.

There are many Qur’ānic verses that align with scientific discoveries which could only have been discovered in today’s world. There are many independent books that delve into detail of this miraculous aspect of the Qur’ān. All of these are proofs demonstrating that the Qur’ān is the Word of Allah.

¹¹⁶Sūrah An-Nasr, 1-2.

¹¹⁷ Sūrah Al-Anbiyā, 30.

¹¹⁸ Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt, 47.

¹¹⁹ Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān, 19-20.

THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE: BELIEF IN ANGELS

Belief in the existence of angels, one of the six pillars of faith, is a matter that follows belief in Allah. Belief in the existence of angels is obligatory in religion, and denying them would make a person disbeliever.

1. What is an angel?

Angels (*malak*, pl. *malā'ikah*) are described as “invisible, subtle, nūrānī (luminous) beings.” Just like humans, they too possess consciousness and free will.

Angels are not subject to testing and trials like humans. For this reason, they have not been given a lower self, and Satan does not try to tempt them. They do not commit sins, they are sinless. Whatever Allah commands them to do, they carry it out without objection.

Each of them has specific ranks and stations according to their nature. These ranks and stations are fixed and unchanging. They derive immense spiritual benefit and pleasure from fulfilling the duties and acts of worship assigned to them by Allah, and from witnessing the manifestations of Allah’s names and attributes throughout the universe. The reward given to them is this pleasure that they get. Just as humans derive pleasure from water, air, light, and the things they eat and drink, angels derive such pleasure from carrying out Allah’s command, from remembrance (dhikr), from glorification of Allah (tasbīh), from worship and knowledge (ma‘rifah), and from their love for Allah. Because they are created from light, light is sufficient as their sustenance. Indeed, the beautiful, pleasant scents that are similar to light in some sense too are a kind of sustenance for them, and they take pleasure in them.¹²⁰

Among conscious beings, angels are the most numerous and the largest in number. Regarding this, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) says: “The heavens creak. And it is their right to creak. There is no spot in them where an angel is not prostrating.”¹²¹ There is a verse on this subject: “And no one knows the armies of your Lord except Him.”¹²²

Just as humans possess free will, so do angels. They perform their duties through this free will. However, unlike humans, they never use their will for evil or sin. Because they are sinless. They have no capacity for evil. They use their wills solely in accordance with Allah’s command. All their actions are considered acts of worship.

However, just as the power that humans possess is created by Allah, the power that angels possess is also created by Allah. They have no true autonomy. No one other than Allah possesses the power to create. For this reason, the actions of angels are attributed to Allah in terms of creation and to the angels in terms of *kasb* (acquisition).

For example, it is Mīkāl (p.b.u.h.) who causes rain to fall by Allah’s command. However, if Allah had not created power and strength within Mīkāl (p.b.u.h.), he could not

¹²⁰ See: Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, *Sözler* (The Words), Altınbaşak Publications, p. 139 (24th Word, 4th Branch).

¹²¹ Al-Tirmidhī, *Kitab al-Zuhd*, Chapter 9, Hadith 2312 (Çağrı Publications).

¹²² Sūrah Al-Muddaththir, 31.

perform this tasks. Therefore, the act of causing rain to fall belongs to Michael in terms of *kasb* (acquisition) and to Allah in terms of *khalq* (creation).

Angels are like officials who carry out tasks in a country. As is known, every country has its own laws, and government officials enforce these laws. Laws do not govern the country on their own. In the universe as well, all activities – from the smallest to the largest – are organized according to laws. Just as the totality of laws in the universe is called “nature,” in Islam it is more commonly referred to as “*sharī‘ah al-fitriyyah*” or “*sharī‘ah at-takwīniyyah*”, both meaning “the creational law”. Angels, who are Allah’s servants, govern the entities in the universe according to these laws.

2. Wisdoms behind the creation of angels

Imam Bediuzzaman says, “Every being possessing beauty and perfection desires to see and display its own beauty and perfection.” Allah Almighty, too, created all the creatures in order to see and display His own beauty and perfection. Angels, too, were created in accordance with this wisdom.

Imam Bediuzzaman states the following regarding the creation of angels:

“Angels – like humans and jinn – are the spectators of this cosmic palace, the contemplators of this book of the universe, and the heralds of the sovereignty of Lordship. Through their universal and comprehensive acts of worship, they represent the praises of the universe’s great and integral beings.

“**Indeed**, the state that this universe is in points to their existence. Because Allah’s adorning the universe with countless intricate, exquisite ornaments, meaningful beauties, and wise patterns, clearly manifests a requirement that beings who contemplate it and are captivated by and appreciate those beauties should witness them; the condition that the universe is in demands their existence and presence. Yet humans and jinn can perform only one in a million of these boundless duties, this wise oversight, and this vast worship. Thus, for these boundless and diverse duties and acts of worship to be performed, an infinite variety of angels is necessary to fill and enliven this great cosmic mosque in rows.

“**Indeed**, in every direction and every sphere of this universe, there are groups of spiritual beings and angels assigned to specific duties of worship. Based on certain hadiths and on the wisdom behind the order of this universe, it can be said that certain wandering, mobile inanimate objects – from the stars traversing the heavens down to raindrops – serve as the vessels and mounts of certain angels. Those angels, by Allah’s permission, mount these celestial bodies, observe and traverse the realm of creation, and represent the praises and remembrances of those mounts.”¹²³

Angels have also been created to serve as a veil for some of Allah’s actions the beauty of which are not fully comprehensible. For instance:

¹²³ Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, *Sözler* (the Words), Altınbaşak Publications, p. 176 (29th Word).

There are many wisdoms and beauties in all of Allah's acts. However, people often cannot comprehend these wisdoms and beauties. For this reason, they rebel against and show objection against Allah. To prevent people from rebelling and showing objection against Him, and thereby putting themselves in a sinful position, Allah has placed angels as a veil before His acts whose wisdom cannot be easily comprehended. For example, there are many wisdoms and beauties in death. However, most people cannot comprehend these wisdoms and beauties. For this reason, 'Azrā'īl (p.b.u.h.) has become a veil for Allah in death. Likewise, diseases have also been made a veil for 'Azrā'īl (p.b.u.h.). When death occurs, people attribute it to diseases and do not show an objection against Allah. This is a manifestation of the mercy of Allah for people since people's rebellion and objection absolutely cannot do any harm to Allah, but such actions will make those people sinful and will thereby have potentially great negative consequences for those people. That is to say, Allah prevents humans from harming themselves through creating these veils.

Regarding this, Jābir ibn Zayd, an Islamic scholar from the Tābi'ūn, says: "The Angel of Death used to take people's souls without any prior disease. Therefore, people cursed and reviled him. He, in turn, complained about them to Allah Almighty. Allah then made diseases a veil for the Angel of Death, and thus he was forgotten."¹²⁴

3. Proof of the Existence of Angels

Since angels are subtle beings, they cannot be seen with the naked eye. However, their invisibility does not mean they do not exist. Because we accept the existence of many things that we cannot see with our eyes. For example, there are certain microorganisms that can only be seen under a microscope. Although we cannot see them, we accept their existence by trusting scientists. We cannot see electricity, yet we cannot deny it. There are many radio waves and television signals in the atmosphere. But we cannot see them either. The fact that we cannot see them does not prove that they do not exist.

Almost all religions, particularly the heavenly religions, have accepted the existence of angels. Prophets, and even some people who are not prophets, have encountered them at various times. For example, Jibrīl (p.b.u.h.) would often appear to our Prophet (p.b.u.h) in the form of a Noble Companion named Diḥyah. People saw him, but they thought he was Diḥyah. After he left, they realized he was an angel upon the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) informing them. During the Battle of Badr, five thousand angels came to assist our Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) army; both believers and polytheists saw them. There are countless reports on this subject.

Humans and Angels

Angels are concerned with humans. They take an interest in them, love the believers, make supplications for them and assist them.

Here are some verses on this subject:

¹²⁴Imām Al-Suyūṭī, Al-Durr al-Mansūr, Dār al-Fikr, vol. 6, p. 543.

“Those (angels) who carry the Throne and the ones around it glorify the praise of their Lord, believe in Him, and ask for forgiveness for those who believe (like themselves). (They say,) ‘Our Lord! You have encompassed everything in the aspect of mercy and knowledge; then, bestow forgiveness upon those who repent, follow Your path, and protect them from the punishment of Hell!’”¹²⁵

“Indeed, those who say "Our Lord is Allah" and (sincerely) remain steadfast, angels will descend upon them (at the moment of death, in the grave, and at the place of Resurrection,) saying, “Do not fear and do not grieve, but rejoice in the news of the Paradise, which you have been promised. We are your friends in the world and the Hereafter. (...)”¹²⁶

4. The Kinds of Angels

Just as there are various types and species of plants and animals, so too – in a far more exalted sense – do angels have countless varieties and classes among themselves. Certainly, the angel assigned to a raindrop is not the same as the angel assigned to the sun. Here, let us briefly mention some classifications of angels made by scholars based on the Qur’ān and Hadīth.

Muqarrabūn: These are angels who are esteemed in the presence of Allah and who have been brought close to Him. These angels are devoted to worship; that is, they are constantly engaged in worship. They are immersed in the ma’rifah (knowledge) and love of Allah and are occupied solely with worshipping Him.

The Four Great Angels

Jibrīl (p.b.u.h.)

Jibrīl (p.b.u.h.) is the name of the angel who is at the highest level among all the angels and who brings revelation to the prophets. Jibrīl is the name of this angel mentioned in the Qur’ān. Another name used to refer to this angel is Jabrā’īl, which is a word of Hebrew origin meaning “servant of Allah” or “‘Abdullah.” Additionally, in the Qur’ān, Jibrīl is referred to by names such as “Rūḥ al-Qudus” (the Holy Spirit), “Rūḥ al-’Amīn” (the Trustworthy Spirit), “ar-Rūḥ” (the Spirit), and “Rasūl” (Messenger). According to the Qur’ān, Jibrīl possesses superior and precise knowledge, as well as irresistible power. Angel Jibrīl (p.b.u.h.) is highly esteemed in the sight of Allah, and the other angels obey Jibrīl (p.b.u.h.).

Isrāfīl (p.b.u.h.)

Isrāfīl (p.b.u.h.) is the angel who will blow *al-ṣūr* (trumpet) when the Day of Judgment arrives. Isrāfīl (p.b.u.h.) will blow the trumpet twice. At the first blast, everyone on

¹²⁵Sūrah Al-Mu’min/Al-Ghāfir, 7.

¹²⁶Sūrah Fuṣṣilat, 30-31.

earth and in the heavens will die. At the second blast, all beings will be resurrected and gathered at the *maḥshar* (place of gathering).

Mīkāʾīl (p.b.u.h.)

Mīkāʾīl (p.b.u.h.) is the angel representative of and given authority over the winds, rains, plants, and other natural phenomena and things.

ʿAzrāʾīl (p.b.u.h.)

ʿAzrāʾīl (p.b.u.h.) is the angel of death. He takes the souls of those whose time has come, by Allah’s command. The name ʿAzrāʾīl does not appear in the Qurʾān. In the Qurʾān, he is referred to as “Malaku’l-Mawt,” meaning “the angel of death.”

Let us address a frequently asked question here: Hundreds of people die simultaneously around the world. How does ʿAzrāʾīl (p.b.u.h.) take the souls of all these people by himself?

We can answer this question in two ways:

- a. Since angels are spiritual beings, they can be in many places at once. For example, when we enter a room with hundreds of mirrors, even though we are only one person, we appear as hundreds. Although there is only one sun, it appears in countless places at once and performs limitless acts with its heat and light. Just like this, since ʿAzrāʾīl (p.b.u.h.) is a luminous being, an angel, he can be in hundreds of places at once, taking the souls of all the dying beings. This is not difficult for him.
- b. According to a second view, ʿAzrāʾīl (p.b.u.h.) has assistants in the matter of taking souls. The verse in the Qurʾān, “(...) when death comes to one of you, Our messengers (the angels) take his soul, and they do not neglect (their duty at all)”¹²⁷, indicates that there is more than one angel involved in the act of taking the soul. ʿAzrāʾīl (p.b.u.h.) serves as the leader of these angels.¹²⁸

The Angels of Mudabbirāt:

“Mudabbir” means one who manages, plans, or administers. The angels of mudabbirāt are the angels tasked with managing the universe according to Allah’s commands.

The following verses refer to the angels of mudabbirāt: “By those that scatter (dust), and those that bear loads, and those that sail with ease, and those that distribute affairs by the command (of Allah).”¹²⁹, “and (I swear) by those who manage the affairs”¹³⁰, “By those

¹²⁷ Sūrah Al-Anʿām, 61.

¹²⁸ See also: Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, Mektubat (The Letters), Altınbaşak Publications, p. 229 (28th Letter, 2nd Issue.)

¹²⁹ Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt, 1-4.

¹³⁰ Sūrah An-Nāziāt, 5.

lined up in ranks, and those who drive (and prevent with strong warnings), and those who recite the remembrance (the Qur'an), most surely, your God is one.”¹³¹

We can divide the angels of *mudabbirāt* into two categories: the angels of the heavens and the angels of the Earth. All stars, large or small, planets, and celestial bodies in the sky – such as the Sun, the Moon, and the Earth – are under the administration and control of these angels. Each celestial body in the heavens serves as a *masjid* or a place of worship for them.

Every entity on Earth has an angel that is assigned to it. In reference to this, some narrations state that “there are angels appointed even to each of the raindrops falling from the sky,” and even that “there is an angel appointed to everything.”

We can divide the angels of *mudabbirāt* into four categories as those appointed to inanimate objects, plants, animals, or humans.

In some narrations, certain angels are referred to by names such as *malaku’l-jibāl* (the angel of the mountains) and *malaku’l-biḥār* (the angel of the seas). These expressions indicate that angels have been assigned to every entity, even if it is inanimate.

Angels Assigned to Humans

From the beginning of life to its end, many angels attend to humans. It is even reported that there are 20 or 360 angels who are always with every human.¹³² Let us discuss some of the angels concerned with humans:

The Angel Assigned to the Formation of the Human Being

The shaping of a human being in the mother’s womb is carried out by an angel appointed by Allah. Regarding this, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) states:

“After forty-two days have passed since the *nuṭfah* (sperm) was deposited, Allah sends an angel to it. The angel shapes it, creating the ears, eyes, skin, flesh, and bones. Then the angel asks, ‘O Lord! Will it be male or female?’ The Lord decrees as He wills, and the angel records it. Then the angel asks, ‘O Lord! What will be his lifespan?’ The Lord decrees as He wills, and the angel records it. Then the angel asks, ‘O Lord! What will be his provision?’ The Lord decrees as He wills, and the angel records it. Then the angel departs, holding a scroll in his hand, and does not add or subtract from what has been commanded.”¹³³

Kiraman Kātibīn

Kiraman Kātibīn means “scribes that are esteemed in the sight of Allah.” There are two of these angels, and they record a person’s good and evil deeds. However, the manner and specifics of how these angels record good deeds and sins remain unknown to us.

¹³¹Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāffāt, 1-4

¹³² See: Imām Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Durr al-Mansūr*, vol. 4, p. 615.

¹³³ Muslim, *Kitāb al-Qadar*, Chapter 1, Hadith 2645. (In the same chapter, Muslim narrates another hadith stating that four things – a person’s sustenance, lifespan, deeds, and whether he will be *sa’īd* (blessed) or *shaqī* (wretched) – are also written.)

Two verses on this subject are as follows: “And indeed, over you are guardians (of your deeds - the angels), honourable scribes. They know whatever you do.”¹³⁴ and “The two receivers (recording angels) receive, sitting on the right and on the left (to record all that you do). He (man) utters no word but there is a watcher (angel) ever ready by him.”¹³⁵

What these angels write will be given to the person as a book of deeds on the Day of Judgment, and these angels themselves too will bear witness to what that person has done.

Guardian Angels (Al-Malā'ikatu'l-Ḥafāzah)

The Guardian Angels are the angels who protect humans from before and behind them. A verse on this subject reads: “For each person there are (angels) in succession before and behind him, guarding him by the command of Allah. (..)”¹³⁶⁻¹³⁷

It is reported that these angels are tasked with protecting people from jinn, predatory animals, pests, and harmful things. According to a narration, a man came to Imam Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) and said, “Some people want to kill you; protect yourself from them!” Imam Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) replied to him, “There are two angels with every person who protect him from the calamities that are not destined for him. However, when destiny comes, the angels step aside from between the person and destiny. Indeed, the *ajal* (the appointed time of one's death) is an unbreakable shield (meaning, one who has not yet reached their appointed time of death will not die).”¹³⁸

Munkar and Nakir

They are the two angels who question a person in the grave. They are called “Munkar and Nakir” because of them being unrecognizable. This is because the deceased has never seen them before. These two angels ask the person about “his Lord, his religion, and his prophet.” A believer answers these questions correctly. A disbeliever cannot. Many hadiths have been narrated regarding the questions of Munkar and Nakir.¹³⁹ After this questioning, the grave becomes either a garden from the gardens of Paradise or a pit from the pits of Hell.

The Angels of Paradise

Various verses mention the angels of Paradise. One verse reads: “And those who fear (sinning against their Lord) will be driven to Paradise in groups. Finally, when they reach there, its gates will open, and its warders will say to them: “Peace be upon you! You have become pure. So, enter it to live therein eternally!”¹⁴⁰ The chief of the angels of Paradise is an angel named Ridwān.

¹³⁴Sūrah Al-Infīṭār, 10-12.

¹³⁵Sūrah Qāf, 17-18.

¹³⁶Sūrah Ar-Ra'd, 11.

¹³⁷For details, see: Muhtasar İbn Kesir tefsiri (Abridged Tafsīr of Ibn Kathīr), vol. 2, p. 273; Imām Al-Suyūṭī, Al-Durr al-Mansūr, vol. 4, p. 615.

¹³⁸Imām Al-Suyūṭī, Al-Durr al-Mansūr, vol. 4, p. 614

¹³⁹Imām Al-Pazdawī, Ehl-i Sünnet Akaidi, trans. Şerafeddin Gölcük, Kayihan Press, p. 237; Al-Tirmidhī, Janāiz, Chapter 70; Al-Kattānī, Naẓm al-Mutanāthir, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, p. 132, no. 111.

¹⁴⁰Sūrah Az-Zumar, 73.

The Angels of Hell

In the Qur'ān, the angels of Hell are referred to as "az-Zabāniyyah," meaning "those who push and shove".¹⁴¹ There are 19 angels of Hell.¹⁴² The name of their chief angel is "Mālik".¹⁴³ A verse regarding the angels of Hell is as follows: "O you who believe! Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are harsh and severe angels who do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded."¹⁴⁴

5. Which Are Superior: Angels or Humans?

According to the scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah, all prophets are superior to all angels; that is, their ranks and values are higher in the sight of Allah. As for the angels who are messengers, they are more virtuous than other humans. There is a consensus among scholars on this matter. Among humans, those who possess piety and righteous deeds are also considered more virtuous and superior to other angels (excluding the messenger angels) according to their ranks.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Sūrah Al-'Alaq, 18.

¹⁴² Sūrah Al-Muddaththir, 30.

¹⁴³ Sūrah Az-Zukhruf, 77.

¹⁴⁴ Sūrah At-Taḥrīm, 6.

¹⁴⁵ See: Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, Muvazzah İlm-i Kelâm (Clear Ilm al-Kalâm), Bilmen Publishing, 1972, p. 290.

The Jinn and Shayṭān

The Jinn

The Jinn are spiritual beings created from fire, capable of taking various forms, and invisible to the eye. The Qur'ān states: "And We had created (the father of the jinn), Jān, before from smokeless fire (a scorching flame of heat)."¹⁴⁶

While humans are richer in terms of their potential and abilities than jinn, in certain matters, the jinn are superior to humans.

According to the majority of scholars, the jinn do possess attributes such as being tall or short and having a physical presence in a space. They possess the power to easily perform arduous tasks beyond human capability, possess certain unique knowledge unknown to humans, and have the ability to take on various forms.¹⁴⁷

Like humans, jinn are conscious beings who have a religious obligation to perform worship but who have a free will to choose not to do so. Regarding this, the Qur'ān states: "I created the jinn and mankind to worship Me!"¹⁴⁸

Among the jinn, there are both believers and disbelievers. The Qur'ān states that a group among the jinn once spoke among themselves as follows: "And indeed, among us are the righteous, and among us are those who are less so. We follow different paths."¹⁴⁹ In this respect, they are no different from humans.

Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was sent as a prophet both to the jinn and humans. For this reason, he is referred to as "Rasūl ath-Thaqalayn."

Shayṭān (Satan/Devil)

According to the dictionary, the word "Shayṭān" means "the one who has strayed from goodness and mercy, and is exposed to burning and destruction." In Islamic terminology, it refers to a rebellious, spiritual being among the jinn who seeks to lead humans astray from the right path.

The term "shayṭān" not only refers to Iblis – who deceived Adam (p.b.u.h.) and caused him to be expelled from Paradise by making him eat the forbidden fruit – but it also refers to beings among humans and jinn who lead people toward evil, falsehood, and sin. In this sense, the word "shayṭān" is used both as a proper noun and as a common noun.

Iblīs-Shayṭān

When Allah created Adam (p.b.u.h.) and commanded the angels to prostrate before him, the angels immediately prostrated; however, Iblīs, who was among the angels at that

¹⁴⁶Sūrah Al-Hijr, 27.

¹⁴⁷Vehbi Efendi, Hūlasatūl Beyan, Üçdal Publications, vol. 15, p. 6174.

¹⁴⁸Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt, 56.

¹⁴⁹Sūrah Al-Jinn, 11.

time, refused, became arrogant, and did not prostrate. In response to Allah’s question as to why he did not prostrate, he claimed, “Since I was created from fire and Adam from clay, it is not right for the superior to prostrate before the inferior,” and thus rebelled against Allah. Allah, in turn, cursed him for this arrogance and rebellion, expelling him from His mercy and Paradise. Upon this:

“(Iblīs) said: ‘My Lord! Then give me respite till the Day is resurrected.’ (Allah) said: ‘Surely! You are of those allowed respite till the Day of the time appointed.’ (Iblīs) said: ‘By Your might, I will surely mislead them all, except Your sincere servants amongst them.’”¹⁵⁰

After Iblīs was cursed and expelled from Paradise, he deceived Adam (p.b.u.h.) into eating the forbidden fruit and caused Adam (p.b.u.h.) too to be expelled from Paradise.

After Adam (p.b.u.h.), his wife, and Iblīs were sent down to the world, the test of humanity began on earth. What we have explained so far is frequently recounted in various parts of the Qur’ān, and the children of Adam are warned against Shayṭān.

The Wisdoms Behind the Creation of the Shayṭāns

There are extensive explanations on this subject in Imam Bediuzzaman’s Risāla-i Nūr Corpus. We are including a brief excerpt from it here.

“Question: What is the wisdom behind Allah’s creation of Shayṭān and evil? Isn’t it evil to create the evil, and isn’t it ugly to create the ugly?

“Answer: Far be it from Him; creating evil is not evil; rather, it is the act of a person acquiring or earning (*kasb*) evil through his own will that is evil. Because creating or inventing something pertains to all its results. A person’s acquisition of something through his own will, being a specific relationship, pertains to specific results.

[For example, knives are sold in stores. Selling a knife is not evil. Because we use it for many good and beautiful deeds. But if someone buys a knife and uses it to kill a person, this is evil and ugly. This ugliness belongs to the person who uses it in the wrong way. It does not belong to the person who sells the knife.]

“For example, the falling of rain has thousands of beautiful and beneficial results. If someone suffers harm from the rain due to his own mistake, he cannot say, ‘Allah’s sending of rain is not a mercy,’ nor can he conclude, ‘The creation of rain is evil.’ On the contrary, the rain became a misfortune for him due to him himself misusing his will. [Here, the fault lies not with Allah – far be it from Him – who sends the rain, but with the person who made the mistake of not taking the necessary precautions he should have taken to protect himself against any potential harm.]

“Likewise, there are many blessings and benefits in the creation of fire. However, if someone suffers harm from fire due to a wrong thought or action of his own, he cannot say,

¹⁵⁰Sūrah Ṣād, 79-83

“The creation of fire is evil.” Because fire was not created for the sole purpose of burning him. Perhaps by misusing his own free will, he turned his servant [that is, fire] into an enemy.

“**In short:** For *khayrun kathīr* (a great good) to be achieved, *sharrun qalīl* (a small evil) is acceptable. (If there is much good and little evil in a matter, the matter is undertaken because of the majority of its good results, and the small amount of evil is disregarded.) If an action that would yield much good were abandoned merely to avoid a small amount of evil, then a much greater evil would occur.

“For example, when sending soldiers to *jihād* – that is, war – there are certainly some minor material and physical hardships and seemingly evil results. However, there are many benefits in that *jihād*. Through *jihād*, Muslims are saved from the attacks and invasions of the disbelievers. If *jihād* were abandoned because of that small amount of harm, not only would many benefits be lost, but many evils would also come to happen. [The country would be invaded by the enemy.] This would result in a complete *ẓulm* (oppression/injustice).

“Moreover, for example, amputating a finger that has become gangrenous and must be cut off is a good thing, it is beneficial. Yet, outwardly, it appears to be an evil [because the person will lose his finger]. But if the finger is not amputated, the entire hand will be lost. And this is a greater evil.

“Thus, the creation and existence of evils, harms, calamities, *shayṭāns*, and harmful things in the universe are not evil or ugly. Because they have been created for very important purposes.

“For example, since *shayṭāns* do not affect [or whisper to] angels, they do not progress; their ranks are fixed and unchanging. Likewise, since *shayṭāns* do not afflict animals either, their ranks too are fixed and deficient.

“In the ranks of the human realm, however, there is potential for infinite ascension and discension. There is a very long path of progress, ranging from the Nimrods and Pharaohs all the way to the Siddīqun, which are the most exalted of the saints, and the prophets. Thus, to distinguish and separate the lowly souls – which are like coal – from the high and noble souls – which are like diamonds – a field of test, trial, *jihād*, and competition was opened through the creation of *shayṭāns*, the secret of *taklīf* and the sending of prophets. If there were no struggle and competition, the potentials in the human ore – which are like diamonds and coal – would remain together. The spirit of Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq, who is at the highest rank [among people other than prophets], would remain on the same level as the spirit of Abū Jahl, who is at the lowest rank.

“Thus, the creation of *shayṭāns* and evils, because it for great and universal outcomes, is not evil or ugly. The evils and ugliness arising from specific situations caused by the misuse of human free will belong to human will itself; they do not belong to the act of creation of Allah.

“If you were to ask: ‘Because of the devils, most people become disbelievers; they are led to disbelief, and thereby suffer harm. According to the principle ‘al-ḥukmu li’l-akthar’ meaning ‘judgment is based upon the majority’ if the majority suffers harm from it, does that not make the creation of evil, evil?’

“**The answer:** Quantity (numerical abundance) has no significance in relation to quality (value). The true majority is determined by quality.

“For example, if there were a hundred date seeds, and they were placed under the soil without being watered, they would remain a hundred seeds worth a hundred liras. But if they were planted in the soil and watered, and [even if] eighty of the seeds rotted while twenty of them became date palms, can you say, “Watering them was evil; most of the seeds rotted”? Of course not. Because those twenty seeds, having become trees, are now worth twenty thousand seeds. One who loses eighty but gains twenty thousand does not suffer a loss; it is not evil.

“For example, if there were a hundred peacock eggs, they would be worth five hundred liras in total. But if peacocks were placed on top of those one hundred eggs, and if eighty of them went bad, while twenty turned into twenty peacocks, could a person say, ‘There was a great loss; this treatment was evil; setting the eggs for incubation was ugly, it was evil’? No, that is not the case; rather it is good that this was done. Because that flock of peacocks and eggs lost eighty eggs worth four hundred liras but gained twenty peacocks worth eight thousand liras.

“Thus, after the prophets were sent to the human realm with their mission of *tablīgh* (da‘wah and proclamation), the *taklīf* and test begins. Some people wage jihād against their lower-selves and against the shayṭāns. And as a result, hundreds of thousands of prophets (anbiyā’), millions of awliyā (Islamic saints), billions of aṣfiyā (the purified ones), and countless righteous people emerge. These are like the suns, moons, and stars that honor the human realm.

“And as a result of the testing and trial, some people follow their lower-selves and the shayṭāns; denying Allah, or becoming munāfiqs (hypocrites). They fail the trial. Although they may be numerous in number, in terms of quality, they are in an insignificant position, a position like those of the harmful animals. [They do not have significance in the sight of Allah.]”¹⁵¹

Exams are held in schools. The purpose of an exam is to distinguish the hardworking students from the lazy ones. If exams were not held, it would be impossible to tell the hardworking from the lazy. At the same time, the hardworking students would also turn lazy.

Allah Almighty tests us in this world through Shayṭān to reveal who will choose the path to attain His pleasure and who will follow Shayṭān. If Shayṭān did not exist, we could not

¹⁵¹ Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, Mektubat (The Letters), Altınbaşak Publications, p. 31 (12th Letter).

distinguish between Abū Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) and Abū Jahl. Through trials, the righteous are separated from the wicked. Those deserving of reward and those deserving of punishment are revealed.

THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE: BELIEF IN THE HEREAFTER

The Hereafter (ʿĀkhirah) refers to the eternal realm that will begin after the Day of Resurrection.

According to Islamic terminology, Qiyāmah (the Resurrection) or Yawmu'l-Qiyāmah (the Day of Resurrection) has two meanings: First, the breaking down of the order of the universe and the utter destruction of everything when Isrāfīl (p.b.u.h.) blows *al-ṣūr* (the trumpet). The second is the occurrence of the “baʿthu baʿd al-mawt” (resurrection after death) with Isrāfīl (p.b.u.h.)’s second blow of *al-ṣūr*, and the gathering of people rising from their graves and assembling at the place of gathering.

A. Signs of the Hour (Ashrāʿu's-Sāʿah)

No one knows when a person will die. However, conditions such as old age and diseases are signs of death. When these signs appear, one can estimate when the person will die.

And the world is a larger version of the human. It too has an *ajal* (the appointed time of its death) called the Resurrection or the Hour and when that time comes, it will die. Although the exact time of this *ajal* is unknown, there are certain diseases that indicate its approach. We refer to these diseases as the “signs of the Hour” or “signs of the Resurrection”. Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) mentioned these signs of the Hour in many of his hadiths. Some scholars have compiled these hadiths and authored independent works on this subject.¹⁵²

Scholars have divided the hadiths of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) regarding the signs of the Hour into two categories: they have referred to one as the minor signs of the Hour and the other as the major signs of the Hour. Here, we will briefly discuss some of them.

a. The Minor Signs of the Hour

Although scholars have divided the signs of the Hour into two categories as minor and major; this does not mean that the minor signs are insignificant. They should not be underestimated. They are called “minor” only in comparison to other signs that are far greater in magnitude.

Some of these signs are as follows: The spread of ignorance and lack of knowledge regarding religious matters, the widespread consumption of intoxicating beverages, the prevalence of usury and immorality, the decline in marriages and the increase in adultery and similar sins, children rebelling against their parents, the weakening of family bonds, increase in the oppression by rulers, and the rise in killings...

¹⁵² Imam Bediuzzaman explains these topics in his epistle titled “Beşinci Şuâ (The 5th Ray)”.

b. The Major Signs of the Hour

Based on certain hadiths, scholars have listed the following as the major signs of the Hour:

1. The spread of two nations named Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj (known in English as Gog and Magog) across the earth, corrupting the land.
2. The emergence of a figure known as the Dajjal from among the Jews, denying Allah and claiming to be a god himself. Additionally, a munāfiq (hypocrite) known as the Sufyānī – the Dajjal of the Islamic world – causing *fitna* (sedition) and disorder to break out within the Islamic world.

Two hadiths from our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) about the Dajjal are as follows: “Between the creation of Adam and the Hour, there is no greater event than (the fitna of) the Dajjal.”¹⁵³ and “Every prophet sent by Allah has certainly warned his people against (the Dajjal), who is a big liar and (spiritually) blind. Take heed! He is blind; your Lord is not blind. The word ‘kāfir’ (disbeliever) is written between his two eyes.”¹⁵⁴

3. The descent of ‘Īsā (p.b.u.h.) from the heavens to the earth to kill the Dajjal, and his acting with the Sharī‘ah of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.).

Our Prophet said: “I swear by Allah, in Whose hand is my soul, that surely in the future, ‘Īsā, the son of Maryam, will descend among you as a just judge (or arbiter). He will break the cross, kill the pig, abolish the jizya tax, and wealth will multiply so much that no one will accept (a donation of) wealth. A single prostration will be better than the world and everything in it.”

Abū Hurayrah (ra), who narrated the hadith, said: “If you wish, read this verse: ‘And there is none from the People of the Book except that they will surely believe in (‘Īsā) before his death. And on the Day of Resurrection, he will be a witness against them.’^{155//156}

4. The coming of the Mahdī (may Allah be pleased with him), his struggle against a munāfiq (hypocrite) known as Sufyānī, and his alliance with ‘Īsā (p.b.u.h.) to spread Islam throughout the world.
5. The deterioration of social life once again, some time after the spread of Islamic life during the time of ‘Īsā (p.b.u.h.) and the Mahdī (may Allah be pleased with him).
6. The destruction of the Ka‘ba and the removal of the Qur’ān from the earth.
7. A living creature named "Dābbattu'l-'Arḍ" emerging from the earth and telling people whether they believe or not.
8. A terrifying fire erupting from Yemen and spreading around the region.

¹⁵³ Muslim, Al-Jāmi‘ Al-Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-Fitan, Chapter 25, Hadith 2946 / Ahmad, Vol. 4, p. 20.

¹⁵⁴ Bukhārī, Al-Jāmi‘ Al-Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-Fitan, Chapter 26 / Ahmad, vol. 3, p. 103

¹⁵⁵ Sūrah An-Nisā’, 159

¹⁵⁶ Muslim, Al-Jāmi‘ Al-Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-‘Īmān, Chapter 71, Hadith 242. (Vol. 1, p. 135) / Bukhārī, Al-Jāmi‘ Al-Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-Buyu‘, Chapter 102, (Vol. 3, p. 40) Çağrı Publishing.

9. A major land subsidence occurring in each the East, the West, and the Arabian Peninsula.
10. The emergence of a smoke that will cause believers to be like having caught a cold and making disbelievers be as if they are drunk.
11. The sun rising from the place where it sets.
12. The onset of the Hour.

Life in the Grave

According to Islam, death is not non-existence. At the moment of death, the soul leaves the body. Even if the body decays and disintegrates, the soul continues to exist. The realm where the soul continues to exist is called the Realm of Qabr (the Grave) or the Realm of Barzakh. (Barzakh means interval. Since the Realm of the Grave is between this world and the Hereafter, it is called the Realm of Barzakh.)

Several verses and numerous hadiths have been narrated regarding the realm of the grave. One of these verses is as follows: “the worse of that punishment suddenly seized the Pharaoh’s people. (That worse punishment is) the fire! They are presented to it morning and evening. On the day when the Hour will set off, (it will be said,) ‘Put Pharaoh’s people into the severest of punishment!’”¹⁵⁷

Islamic scholars have stated that the Pharaoh’s people being presented to the fire before the Hour is an example of the punishment in the grave.

There are countless hadiths on this subject. One hadith goes as follows:

“When a believer is placed in his grave, an angel comes to him and asks, ‘What did you worship in the world?’ Allah guides the believer to the truth, and he says, ‘I worshipped Allah.’ The angel then asks, ‘What did you say about that man (the Prophet, p.b.u.h.)?’ The believer replies, ‘He is the servant and Messenger of Allah.’ No further questions are asked of him after this. Then they take him to a house in Hell containing fire and tell him, ‘This is the house that is your place in Hell. But Allah has protected you and had mercy on you (by granting you faith), so He exchanged this house for a house in Paradise.’ The believer says, “Let me go so I may bring this good news to my family.” They tell him, “(No, you cannot), you remain here in your grave.” When the disbeliever is placed in his grave, an angel comes to him and speaks harshly, asking, “What did you worship in the world?” He replies, “I do not know.” The angel says to him, “You did not know, and you did not follow the truth,” then asks, “What did you say about that man (the Prophet, p.b.u.h.)?” He replies, “I said whatever (the disbeliever) people said.” Upon this, the angel strikes him between the ears with an iron mallet. The man screams so loudly that all creatures, except humans and jinn, hear him.”¹⁵⁸

In another hadith, it is mentioned that the angels who come for the questioning in the grave are named Munkar and Nakir. In another well-known hadith, it is stated:

“The grave is either a garden from the gardens of Paradise, or a pit from the pits of Hell.”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Sūrah Al-Mu’min/Al-Ghāfir, 45-46.

¹⁵⁸ Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb Al-Sunnah, Chapter 27, Hadith 4753.

¹⁵⁹ Al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb Al-Ṣifāt Al-Jannah, Chapter 15, Hadith 2549.

B. Proofs of the Resurrection After Death

Imam Bediuzzaman has presented strong evidence for the resurrection after death in his epistle titled *Haşir Risalesi* (the Resurrection Epistle). Let us briefly examine some of the proofs mentioned in the Resurrection Epistle:

1. All the mercy, wisdom, and justice we observe in the actions that take place in the universe demonstrate that Allah is Just, Merciful, and All-Wise. And these qualities indicate that Allah will grant humanity eternal life. Because Allah has instilled in human nature the desire for eternal life. Granting such a desire, but then not giving humans eternal life would be something absolutely contrary to and unthinkable for Allah's mercy, wisdom, and justice.
2. Every government rewards its officials who serve it and punishes the insurgents that rebel against it. And for a Divine Sovereignty Whose laws and Lordship governs the universe, it is necessary to reward the obedient who believe in and worship Him, and to punish the rebellious and the wicked. Although this reward and punishment are made manifest in a minor scale in this world, they are not made manifest in all their aspects; they are not fully visible. For example, those who pray do not see the complete reward of their prayer in this world, nor do sinners see a deserving punishment for their sins. Therefore, there must certainly be another realm where the obedient will receive their reward and the rebellious will receive their punishment.

On this subject, the Qur'ān states: "Or did those evil doers think that We will make them equal with those who believe and do righteous deeds, in their lives and their deaths? What a bad judgement they make! And Allah created the heavens and the earth with truth (everything being in their proper place) so that each person may get what he has earned! And (on that Day) none will be treated unjustly."¹⁶⁰

3. In this world, the oppressor remains in his might and the oppressed remains in his humiliation, and in such condition they depart from this world. For the oppressed to take their rights from the oppressors, the Hereafter must certainly exist. The justice that is not fully realized here will be fully established in the Hereafter, at the supreme court of justice of Allah.

Regarding this, a verse states: "Indeed, those who persecute the believing men and women and do not repent afterwards, they will have the punishment of Hell, and they will have the punishment of the burning fire."¹⁶¹

4. In this world, Allah shows us many examples of the resurrection after death. For instance, every night, in a way, we die in sleep, and every morning we are resurrected upon waking up. Every winter, the world dies; in spring and summer, it revives. Every century, one generation passes away, and a new generation arrives. Undoubtedly, Allah, Who shows us

¹⁶⁰ Sūrah Al-Jāthiyah, 21-22.

¹⁶¹ Sūrah Al-Burūj, 10.

examples of resurrection after death every night, every year, and every century, will also fulfill the resurrection He has promised to humanity after death.

5. The Qur'ān frequently highlights the resurrection of the vast earth, which has withered and died in winter, during spring. This example is one of the clearest proofs of the resurrection after death. Hundreds of thousands of species that have completely died in winter, leaving not a single individual behind, are recreated in spring almost exactly as they were the previous year. For example, certain species of flies that have completely died out in winter are recreated as new flies that are like the previous flies when spring arrives, once again filling the earth. Likewise, trees that appear to have died in winter are given a new life in spring; their leaves, flowers, and fruits are all rebuilt. The marvel of these resurrections and rebirths we witness every spring not only proves that Allah exists and He is One but they also prove His attributes of knowledge, will, power, and giving life. Therefore, Allah – Who, in every spring, recreates, rebuilds, and gives life to hundreds of thousands of living species, in a way “resurrecting” them – will certainly resurrect the humankind, which has perished in the winter of the Hour with the coming of the spring of the resurrection that follows it, creating them a second time.

One of the verses in the Noble Qur'ān that mentions the spring season as evidence for the Resurrection is as follows: “So observe the effects of Allah’s mercy – how He gives life to the earth after its death. Indeed, He is the One who will give life to the dead, for He is Powerful over all things.”¹⁶²

6. All the evidence presented regarding the Qur'ān being the Word of Allah also serves as evidence for the resurrection after death. Because the Qur'ān declares that resurrection after death will occur. By establishing the trueness of the Qur'ān, as we did earlier in the book, one also establishes the reality of the Resurrection.
7. Allah has informed us, through the Qur'ān and all the heavenly scriptures, of the reason behind our creation. He has promised Paradise to those who believe in Him and worship Him, and has warned and threatened those who do not believe or worship Him with Hell. It is exceedingly easy for Him to create the things He has promised. A verse from the Qur'ān states: “Does the human being not see that We created him from a lowly sperm-drop (nuṭfah). Then behold! He becomes a clear adversary. And he set forth for Us an example, forgetting his (own) creation. He said, ‘Who will give life to these bones while they are decomposed?’ Say, ‘He Who created them the first time will give them life (again)! For He is the One Who truly knows every creation.’”¹⁶³ It is inconceivable that Allah would not create the Hereafter while He has promised that He will create it. Because it is exceedingly easy for Him to create it, just like it is exceedingly easy for Him to do everything. Undoubtedly, He will send His obedient servants to Paradise and those who rebel against Him to Hell.

¹⁶² Sūrah Ar-Rūm, 50.

¹⁶³ Sūrah Yā-Sīn, 77-79.

8. All the evidence presented regarding the truthfulness of our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is also evidence for the resurrection after death. Because our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) too has declared that the resurrection after death will occur. By establishing the truthfulness of his course, as we did earlier in the book, one also establishes the reality of the Resurrection.
9. Experts in any field know their subject better than all other people. And the experts in the spiritual realm are the prophets, the awliyā (saints), and the asfiyā (the purified ones). Prophets have proven their claims through their miracles, awliyā through their karāmah (the extraordinary situations bestowed upon them), and the asfiyā through strong evidence. Regarding the fact that the resurrection after death will occur, these experts in the spiritual realm – one hundred twenty-four thousand prophets and millions of awliyā and asfiyā – have all agreed on this matter. Some of them have seen the realms of the Hereafter with their physical eyes, some with the eyes of the heart¹⁶⁴, and some have concluded its existence with definitive evidence and informed us of it. Indeed, our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), the greatest one among and the leader of all these noble figures, personally witnessed Paradise and Hell on the Night of Mi‘rāj (Ascension), then returned to inform us about it. On behalf of all humanity, Allah the Almighty revealed the realms of the Hereafter to our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), thereby making him a witness. Since he, as the absolutely noble and truthful person he is, says, “I went there and saw them,” there can be no more reliable or truthful report than this. Undoubtedly, after death and the Resurrection, all people will go to the realms of the Hereafter and receive either reward or punishment.

Reading Passage

Prophet Mūsā (p.b.u.h.), with the intention of both learning himself and also telling people what he has learned, asked Allah, “O my Lord! You have created these creatures; why do You make them die afterwards?”

Allah did not answer the question immediately. He commanded Mūsā (p.b.u.h.), “O Mūsā! Sow wheat in a field!” Mūsā (p.b.u.h.) sowed the wheat. When the seeds and crops had fully ripened, he took his sickle and began to harvest them.

Allah said to Mūsā (p.b.u.h.), “O Mūsā! Were you not the one who sowed this wheat? Why are you now reaping it?”

Mūsā (p.b.u.h.) replied, “O Lord! The purpose of sowing wheat is to harvest the crop. The crops have ripened. It would not be right to leave them here. That is why I am reaping them. Also, among the crops, there are both grains and straw. The grain must be separated

¹⁶⁴Just as we can see things through television or other technological devices which we could otherwise not be able to see, Allah can show His righteous servants the conditions of Paradise and Hell through other things that we can say are like spiritual televisions. A common example of this, accessible to everyone, is a person seeing Paradise and Hell in his dream while he is asleep.

from the straw. For just as it would not be appropriate to place grain in the straw barn, it would also not be appropriate to place straw in the wheat barn. It is surely necessary to distinguish between them.”

Allah Almighty said, “O Mūsā!” “This is also the answer to the question you asked Me. I send creatures into the world for a purpose. Once that purpose is fulfilled, I take them from the world. It is not right for those whose duty in the world has ended to remain there. Furthermore, among the people there are pure souls, and there are also impure, darkened souls. Just as grain must be separated from straw, so too must the good be separated from the evil.”

From the Mathnawī of Mawlāna Jalāluddīn ar-Rūmī.

The Benefits of Belief in the Hereafter

To explain some of the benefits of the belief in the Hereafter in this section, we will quote a passage from Imam Bediuzzaman's Risāla-i Nur Corpus:

“We will point now - so that they may serve as criteria - to four of the hundreds of evidences that demonstrate that belief in the hereafter is one of the foundations of man's personal and social life, and that they are the bases of his happiness and his perfections.

“The first evidence: Children, who make up almost half of all humanity, could only cope with the death and loss of life that appears to them so terrifying and saddening, with the idea of paradise. They are able to find a spiritual strength within their extremely weak and fragile natures. And with that paradise, children can find a ray of hope within their spiritual temperaments, which are tremendously feeble and cry at the smallest thing - and thus they are able to live in happiness and peace.

“For example, by means of the idea of paradise, the child says, ‘my little brother or friend died, and he has become one of the birds of paradise, and he roams around in it, and lives even better than we do’.

“Otherwise, the death of children like themselves and of adults around them at all times would strike the anxious sights of those poor, helpless children and would destroy their resistance and spiritual strength, and it would cause all of their subtle spiritual centres (al-laṭāifu'l-ma' nawiyah), like the spirit (rūḥ), the heart (qalb), and the intellect (‘aql), to cry so badly along with their eyes, such that they would either be left destructed or end up like the mad and miserable.

“The second evidence: It is only through the idea of the next life that the elderly, who always make up half of humanity in a sense, are able to withstand the thought of the grave that is for them so near at hand, and find solace in the face of the imminent extinguishment of their lives, their lives to which they are so attached; and faced with the closure of their beautiful world. Only in the hope of an eternal life are they able to cope with the painful, alarming despair brought upon by death and extinction, in their swiftly-effected delicate spirits and temperaments that have become again child-like, causing them to become quickly upset.

“Otherwise, if they didn't have the hope of an eternal life, those dignified beings so deserving of compassion, and those anxious fathers and mothers, so in need of tranquility and peace of mind, would feel such terrifying screams of their spirits and disquiet of their hearts that this world would be a gloomy dungeon for them, and this life a grim torment.

“The third evidence: The only thing that prevents the high-spirited feelings and immoderate egos (nafs) and rampant caprice (hawā') of youth and teenagers, who are the most robust and central element of human social life, from transgression, oppression and destruction, and that enables social life to follow its natural course, is the thought of hell. Otherwise, without the anxiety of hell, those drunken teenagers and youth who run after

their caprices as they are, would, according to the principle الحكم للغالب (Power is with the strong) turn this world into hell for those helpless, vulnerable and feeble ones; and those youth would turn elevated humanity into an animalism of singular vulgarity.

“The fourth evidence: The most all-embracing centre, and the most foundationally strong driving force in humanity’s life in this world, and a paradise for worldly happiness, and a refuge and fortress is family life. And everyone’s home is a small world of theirs. And the life of that home and that family life, and the happiness of both, can only become realised through sincere, serious and constant respect in loyalty, and in true, compassionate, self-sacrificing mercy. And this true respect and sincere mercy only take place through an eternal friendship and a perpetual companionship and an enduring togetherness, and through thinking and believing that their relationships of fatherhood, sonhood, brotherhood and friendship will continue on in endless time and in a boundless life.

“Such a man would, for example, say ‘this wife of mine will be my perpetual life-companion in an endless world and an eternal life. It does not matter at all that for now she is old and unsightly, for she possesses an eternal beauty and her beauty will come back.’ And he might treat his old wife with such love, compassion and mercy, quite as if she were a beautiful houri, saying, ‘I will make every sacrifice and act with all mercy for the sake of the like of this perpetual companionship.’ Otherwise, the type of companionship that is subjected to eternal departure and separation after a short, external friendship that lasts for only a few hours, doubtlessly can produce a sort of metaphorical mercy and artificial respect carrying the meaning of totally external, temporary and baseless pity like how animals pity other animals. And other interests and dominant sentiments like those in animals overcome that respect and mercy and that worldly paradise turns into hell.

“Now, one of the hundreds of fruits of belief in the Resurrection is thus pertinent to man’s social life. And were you to draw conclusions based on hundreds of facets and benefits of the other fruits analogous to this single fruit with these four evidences, it would be understood that the actuality of the reality of the Resurrection and its occurrence are conclusively certain, to the degree of conclusive certainty of the elevated reality of humanity and humanity’s innate disposition with universal needs. Rather the actuality of the reality of the Resurrection and its occurrence are more manifest than the signification and testimony of the existence of needs in man’s stomach to the existence of various foods. And indeed they give news of the Resurrection’s actuality even more forcefully. It further proves that were humanity to be stripped of the fruits of the reality of Resurrection, humanity’s quiddity (māhiyyah), which is of surpassing importance, loftiness and vitality, would fall down to the status of rotting carrion that is a filthy breeding ground for microbes.

“Let sociologists, politicians and moral philosophers be aware of this, they who care so passionately for the direction of mankind, and for their morality and societies. Let them

come and tell us what they could fill this emptiness with, and how they could heal these deep wounds?”¹⁶⁵

C. Resurrection After Death and Matters Related to the Hereafter

1. Resurrection After Death

With Isrāfīl’s (p.b.u.h.) first blowing of *al-ṣūr* (the trumpet), the Hour will break out; shortly thereafter, by Allah’s command, with the second blowing of the trumpet, the resurrection and re-creation will begin. This resurrection will occur in the blink of an eye. The Qur’ān states: “The creation and resurrection (of all of) you are (with respect to Our power) as (easy as that of) a single soul. (...)”¹⁶⁶, “(...) The coming of the Hour is but like the blink of an eye, or even nearer. (...)”¹⁶⁷

During the resurrection after death, bodies will be reconstructed, life will be breathed into them, and souls will enter and settle within them. Imam Bediuzzaman describes how these three events will occur in such ease and rapidity and in such a short time as follows:

- a. The formation of bodies: The construction of leaves, flowers, and fruits of countless trees, as well as the bodies of plants and small creatures from nothing in the spring season serves as an example for the construction of human bodies.
- b. The creation of life in the bodies: Just as it is possible to turn on millions of lights at once by flipping a switch, life too will be created very rapidly in countless human bodies.
- c. The souls taking their places in the bodies: just as the soldiers in an army who are scattered around quickly take their places in formation upon hearing the sound of a bugle, so too the souls – who are like Allah’s soldiers – will swiftly take their places within the bodies.¹⁶⁸

2. Al-Ḥaṣhr (the Gathering) and Al-Maḥshar (the Place of Gathering)

Ḥaṣhr means “gathering,” and Maḥshar means “place of gathering.” The Maḥshar or the place of gathering is also called “Al-‘Araṣāt.”

During the Gathering, the earth will be leveled and transformed into a flat field. Some verses on this subject are as follows: “On that Day, the earth will be changed into another earth, and the heavens (into other heavens); and all shall appear before Allah, the One (Wāḥid), the Subduer (Qahhār).”¹⁶⁹, “(O My Messenger!) They ask you about (what will happen to) the mountains (on the Day of Resurrection); say, “My Lord will crush them into

¹⁶⁵ Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, *Şualar (The Rays)*, Altınbaşak Publications, p. 182.

¹⁶⁶ Sūrah Luqmān, 28.

¹⁶⁷ Sūrah An-Naḥl, 77.

¹⁶⁸ Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, *Şualar (The Rays)*, Altınbaşak Publications, p. 31.

¹⁶⁹ Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 48.

fine dust and scatter them. He will leave them (their places) a flat and desolate plain. You will see in it neither a hollow nor a height.”¹⁷⁰

3. The Horror of Al-Maḥshar

In many verses of the Qur’ān, humans are warned that the Gathering Place will be a terrifying place. Some of these verses are as follows:

“(O Messenger!) Warn them of the approaching Day when hearts will rise to the throats, choking with distress! The wrongdoers will have neither a close friend nor an intercessor (whose protection) will be accepted.”¹⁷¹

“Then, when comes the Deafening Blast (the second blowing of the Trumpet), on that day, man will flee from his brother and his mother and his father and his spouse and his sons. On that day, every one of them will have a concern enough for him.”¹⁷²

Hell will surround the Gathering Place; the sun will come within a mile of the people; people will be immersed in sweat according to the state of their deeds. Everyone will be preoccupied with saving themselves. Even the prophets will say, “*Nafsī, nafsī,*” meaning they are concerned with their own affairs. People will appeal to the prophets to intercede for them. Each prophet will refer the people to another prophet. Finally, they will turn to our Prophet, and our Prophet will prostrate himself beneath the Throne to intercede on behalf of humanity. Allah will accept his supplication. After this acceptance, the distribution of the books of deeds and the reckoning will begin.¹⁷³

The waiting and reckoning at the Gathering Place will last 50,000 years. However, for the believers, this period will be as if it was very short.

4. The Books of Deeds

The deeds of the children of Adam, recorded by the angels known as the Kirāman Kātibīn, will be presented to them at the Gathering as a Book of Deeds. These books will be handed to some from the right, to others from the left, and to others from behind, and they will contain all the good and evil deeds a person has committed throughout his life, regardless of the deeds being small or big. A verse on this subject reads: “And the book (of deeds) will be laid open, and you will see the sinners as people fearful at what is (written) in it, and they say, ‘Woe to us! What a book this is! It leaves out nothing small or big, but takes them into account.’ And they will find all they did present (before them), and your Lord does not wrong anyone.”¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ Sūrah Ṭā-Hā, 105-107.

¹⁷¹ Sūrah Mu’min, 18.

¹⁷² Sūrah ‘Abasa, 33-37.

¹⁷³ Bukhārī, Al-Jāmi‘ Al-Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-Anbiyā, Chapter 3; Muslim, Al-Jāmi‘ Al-Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-‘Imān, Chapter 84, hadith nos. 194, 195.

¹⁷⁴ Sūrah Al-Kahf, 49.

The books of deeds will be given to some from the right and to others from the left. This is described in a verse as follows: "Then as for the one who will be given his book (of deeds) in his right hand, he will be given an easy reckoning, and he will return to his people joyfully. But as for the one who is given his book (of deeds) behind his back, he will call for destruction (wishing for death to escape punishment) and will enter a blazing fire."¹⁷⁵

Whether the Book of Deeds is handed to a person from the right or the left is the first indication of whether a person is destined for Paradise or Hell.

5. The Reckoning

The Reckoning means people being held to account for what they did in the world after their books of deeds are given; this means that they will be questioned and judged on this matter. There are many verses on this subject. Some of them are as follows: "Did you think that We created you without purpose, and that you would not be returned to Us?"¹⁷⁶, "Then, on that day, you will certainly be questioned for (every single one of) the blessings (given in the world)."¹⁷⁷

Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) also states on this matter: "The son of Adam's feet will not slip in the Presence of his Lord until he is held accountable for five things: how he spent his life, how he spent his youth, where he earned his wealth and where he spent it, and how he acted upon what he knew."¹⁷⁸

Another hadith states: "On the Day of Judgment, a servant will first be held accountable for his prayers. If his prayers are sound, he will attain salvation and pass the reckoning. If his prayer is not sound, it means he has suffered loss and harm. If there is a deficiency in his obligatory (farḍ) acts, the Exalted Lord will say to the angels, 'Look! Does my servant have any voluntary (nāfilah) acts?' The deficiency in the obligatory acts is made up from them. Then his other deeds proceed in the same manner."¹⁷⁹

6. Al-Mīzān

Mīzān is a word meaning "scale".

On the Day of Judgment, a divine mīzān – a scale or weighing instrument whose nature is unknown to us – will be set up to measure, weigh, and reveal the amount of people's good deeds (valuable, virtuous acts) and sins (worthless, evil acts) to their owners.

This weighing and reckoning signifies the manifestation of justice and truth. Everyone there will receive their due right, no matter how small, and thus divine justice will be fully

¹⁷⁵ Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq, 7-12.

¹⁷⁶ Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn, 115.

¹⁷⁷ Sūrah At-Takāthur, 8.

¹⁷⁸ Al-Tirmidhī, Şifāt al-Qiyāmah, Chapter 1, hadith no. 2416.

¹⁷⁹ Al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Şalāh, Chapter 188, hadith no. 413.

realized. One of the verses pointing to these matters is as follows: “And We will indeed set up the scales of justice (for the weighing of deeds) on the Day of Resurrection, so that no soul will be wronged in anything. And even if it be the weight of a mustard seed (of a deed), We will bring it forth. And We are sufficient as a Reckoner.”¹⁸⁰

As a result of the weighing, those whose good deeds and virtues outweigh their sins will be blessed with entering Paradise, while those whose sins and evils outweigh their good deeds will deserve and go to Hell. However, those who have faith but have committed many sins will enter Paradise after remaining in Hell for a time that is in proportion with the extent of their sins.

7. Shafā‘ah (Intercession)

Shafā‘ah (intercession) means acting as an intermediary for the forgiveness of another.

In Islamic terminology, shafā‘ah refers to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and other great figures making supplications and requests to Allah Almighty on the Day of Judgment for a portion of sinful believers to be forgiven and for certain obedient believers to attain higher ranks.

There are many verses and hadiths regarding shafā‘ah. Two such verses are as follows:

“(On that Day,) none will have the right to intercede except those who have received permission (for intercession) from the Merciful.”¹⁸¹ “On that Day, no intercession will benefit except from the one to whom the Merciful has given permission and (from the one) whose word He is pleased with (and permitted to speak).”¹⁸²⁻¹⁸³

In *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, widely regarded as the most comprehensive collection of hadiths in the Islamic world, 86 hadiths related to intercession have been recorded.¹⁸⁴ The collective weight of these 86 hadiths should be sufficient to convince anyone who has faith and fairness in his or her heart.

In a hadith narrated in an authentic and mutawātir way by seven Companions, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) states: “Every prophet has an accepted (special) prayer by Allah. Every prophet made his prayer in this world. As for me, I have reserved my prayer for making intercession on behalf of my ummah on the Day of Resurrection.”¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ Sūrah Al-Anbiyā, 47.

¹⁸¹ Sūrah Maryam, 87.

¹⁸² Sūrah Ṭā-Hā, 109.

¹⁸³ See also: Sūrah Saba’, 23; Sūrah Al-Baqarah, 255; Sūrah Yūnus, 3; Sūrah Az-Zukhruf, 86; Sūrah An-Najm, 26; Sūrah Al-Anbiyā, 28.

¹⁸⁴ See: Ali al-Muttaqī, *Kanzu’l-‘Ummāl*, trans. Hasan Yıldız et al., vol. 14, pp. 390–415, 628–640

¹⁸⁵ Al-Kattānī, *Naẓm al-Mutanāthir*, Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, Beirut, p. 244, no. 300.

8. Ḥawḍu'l-Kawthar (The Pond of Kawthar)

Ḥawḍu'l-Kawthar is a very large pond, river or pool bestowed by Allah Almighty upon our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) on the Day of Resurrection. Its water is very sweet and refreshing. Believers will drink from this water and use it to quench the heat caused by the horror of the Day of Resurrection.

Some hadiths mention that every prophet will have a pond, and every community will drink from their own prophet's pond.

9. Aṣ-Ṣirāṭ

Ṣirāṭ means "path".

Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) described the Ṣirāṭ in the Gathering Place as a bridge "thinner than a hair" and "sharper than a sword," spanning the space between the Gathering Place and Paradise and extending over Hell.¹⁸⁶ Those destined for Paradise cross over it. But while those destined for Hell try to cross it, their feet slip, and they tumble into Hell.¹⁸⁷

Islamic scholars have stated that the description of the Ṣirāṭ Bridge in the hadiths as "thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword" signifies the difficulty of crossing it. How one will cross this bridge will vary depending on a person's level of faith and deeds. Yunus Emre's saying in a poem, "The Ṣirāṭ is thinner than a hair, sharper than a sword. / I feel like going there and building houses upon it," is a beautiful expression expressing the fact that crossing this bridge will be easy for the righteous believers.

Our Prophet has informed us that some people will cross this bridge in the blink of an eye, some as fast as lightning, some like the wind, like a bird, or like swift-running horses and camels, while others will fall into Hell trying to cross it.¹⁸⁸

10. The People of Fatrah (Interregnum)

The word "fatrah," which in the dictionary means "weakness, calmness, or cessation," is used as an Islamic term primarily to refer to the period between 'Īsā (p.b.u.h.) and our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) during which there were no prophets. People living during this period are called "the People of Fatrah".

The Ash'arī and Māturīdī scholars have differed regarding the status of the people of Fatrah. According to Imam Māturīdī, people during the Fatrah period are obligated to intellectually establish the existence and oneness of Allah. Otherwise, these people will be destined for Hell. Imam ash-Shāfi'ī and al-Ash'arī, however, based on the verse, "And We

¹⁸⁶ Ahmad, vol. 6, p. 110; Muslim narrates that Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī from the Noble Companions said, "As far as I know, the bridge (over Hell) is thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword" (Kitāb al-Īmān).

¹⁸⁷ Nūra'd-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī, Maturidiye Akaidi (Arabic original: Al-Bidāyah Fī 'Uṣūl Al-Dīn), trans. Bekir Topaloğlu, p. 178.

¹⁸⁸ Muslim, Al-Jāmi' Al-Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-Īmān,

never punish until We have sent a messenger.”¹⁸⁹⁻¹⁹⁰, have accepted that the people of fatrah, regardless of their condition, will be among the ahl an-najāh (that is, the people of salvation, meaning those saved from Hell).¹⁹¹

On this matter, Imam Bediuzzaman says:

“And We never punish until We have sent a messenger.”¹⁹²; by the secret of this verse, the people of fatrah are among the ahl an-najāh (the people of salvation). By consensus, they are not held accountable for their errors in matters of detail. According to Imam ash-Shāfi‘ī and Imam al-Ash‘arī, even if one falls into disbelief, they remain among the ahl an-najāh as long as they do not deviate from the fundamentals of faith. Because divine obligation arises through the sending of a prophet, and this obligation is established and made definitive only through awareness of it. Since negligence and the passage of time have obscured and concealed the religions of the earlier prophets, they were not able to serve as a proof for the people of fatrah. If they obey, they receive reward; if they do not, they do not face punishment. Because they remained hidden, they cannot serve as a proof.”¹⁹³

Imam al-Ghazālī divides people into three categories. The first category: those who have not heard the name of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and to whom the message of Islam has not reached. These will be among the ahl an-najāh (the people of salvation). The second category: those to whom Islam has been conveyed. If they do not accept Islam, they will be destined for Hell. The third category: those to whom Islam has been misrepresented. Imam al-Ghazālī states, “According to my understanding, their situation is like that of those in the first group.”¹⁹⁴

11. Al-A‘rāf

Literally meaning “the high parts of mountains and hills”, al-A‘rāf is the name of the wall or the high location located between Paradise and Hell.

Regarding those in al-A‘rāf, the Qur’ān states: “And between the two (the people of Paradise and the people of the Fire) there will be a barrier (a wall they cannot cross). And upon the Heights (al-A‘rāf, the elevated places of that barrier) there will be people who recognise everyone by their marks. They will call out to the people of Paradise, “As-salāmu alaykum (may Allah’s peace be upon you)!” Though they (the people of the Heights) have not yet entered it, while they (ardently) desire to do so. And when the eyes (of the people of al-A‘rāf) are turned toward the people of the Fire, they will say, ‘Our Lord! Do not place us with the wrongdoing people!’”¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁹ Sūrah Isrā‘, 15.

¹⁹⁰ See also: Sūrah Al-Mā‘idah, 19; Sūrah An-Nisā‘, 165; Sūrah Tā-Hā, 134.

¹⁹¹ See: Shahāb Al-Dīn Maḥmūd Al-‘Ālūsī, Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī, Dār Iḥyā‘ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, Beirut, vol. 15, p. 40.

¹⁹² Sūrah Isrā‘, 15.

¹⁹³ Bediuzzaman Said Nursī, Letters, Altınbaşak Publications, p. 269 (28th Letter)

¹⁹⁴ Imam al-Ghazālī, İslam’da Müsamaha (Forbearance in Islam) (original: Fayṣal al-Tafriqa bayna al-Islām wa-al-Zandaqa), trans. Süleyman Uludağ, Marifet Publishing, Istanbul, 1990, pp. 71–73.

¹⁹⁵ Sūrah Al-A‘rāf, 46-47.

Scholars have expressed differing opinions regarding who the people of al-A‘rāf are, but the majority have stated, “They are those whose good deeds and sins have resulted equal when measured, and who have not yet entered either Paradise or Hell.”

Some scholars have also stated that, just like those who lived in the period of fatrah, those who died without hearing the message of any prophet, as well as the children of polytheists who died in childhood, will also be in al-A‘rāf.¹⁹⁶

Al-A‘raf is not a place of permanent stay. Those in al-A‘rāf will be kept there for a time, and then, by Allah’s mercy, they will enter Paradise.

12. Jannah (Paradise)

Jannah (Paradise) is an eternal place of reward, filled with every conceivable physical and spiritual delight and blessing. According to the scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah, Paradise is already created and currently exists¹⁹⁷.

The inhabitants of Paradise will be thirty-three years old, they will be at the height of Prophet Ādam (p.b.u.h.), they will have a beauty like the beauty of Prophet Yūsuf (p.b.u.h.), and their hearts will be like the heart of Prophet Ayyūb (p.b.u.h.).¹⁹⁸

According to some hadiths, the last person who will enter Paradise will be granted a place ten times the size of the earth.¹⁹⁹ Some of the inhabitants of Paradise, however, will be granted a place of an expanse of a thousand years.

Paradise has eight levels. The highest level is the Jannah al-Firdaws. Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said, “When you ask Allah for Paradise, ask for the Jannah al-Firdaws! For it is both the center and the highest part of Paradise.”²⁰⁰

From this hadith, it is understood that the eight levels of Paradise are arranged in a cone-like shape, ascending from the bottom to the top.

Believers will attain many blessings in Paradise. On this matter, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) says: “Allah Almighty declared, ‘I have prepared such things in Paradise for My righteous servants that no eye has ever seen them, no ear has ever heard of them, and they have not even crossed the mind of any human being.’ If you wish, read Allah’s verse in the Qur’ān: ‘No soul knows what delights of the eyes are kept hidden for them as a reward for what they used to do.’²⁰¹”²⁰²

¹⁹⁶See, Abū al-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-Masīr*, vol. 3, pp. 207, 208.

¹⁹⁷ Taftāzānī, *Sharh al-Aqāid*; Nūra’d-Dīn al-Şābūnī, *Al-Bidāyah*, p. 92.

¹⁹⁸ *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, vol. 14, p. 490, hadith no. 39382.

¹⁹⁹ Muslim, *Kitāb al-Jannah*, Chapter 83, hadith no. 308.

²⁰⁰ Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*, Chapter 22.

²⁰¹ Sūrah As-Sajdah, 17.

²⁰² Bukhārī, *Kitāb Bad’ al-Khalq*, Chapter 8.

The greatest of all the blessings in Paradise, however, will be to see Allah Almighty and to behold His Divine Beauty. Indeed, this will be a delight surpassing all the delights of Paradise.

Paradise is eternal. Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) has informed us that when the people of Paradise enter Paradise and the people of Hell enter Hell, death will be brought in the form of a black-and-white ram and slaughtered in a place between Paradise and Hell where all people can see it, and that an announcer will then announce, “There is no more death for you!” and that this will increase the joy of the people of Paradise while intensifying the sorrow and pain of the people of Hell.²⁰³

13. Jahannam (Hell)

Literally meaning “deep pit,” Hell is the place of torment where disbelievers will remain eternally, and where sinful believers will be punished according to the extent of their sins. Hell has seven levels. Like Paradise, Hell is already created and currently exists.

²⁰³ Bukhārī, Kitāb ar-Riqāq, Chapter 51.

THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE: BELIEF IN QADAR (DESTINY)

In Islamic history, three sects emerged regarding the *qadar* (destiny): the Ahl al-Sunnah, the Jabriyyah, and the Mu'tazilah. The Jabriyyah went to extremes by denying human free will and attributing everything to destiny. The Mu'tazilah sect, conversely, went to the opposite extreme by denying predestination, claiming that "Man creates his own actions."

The Ahl al-Sunnah, however, followed a moderate path in accordance with the explanations of the Qur'ān and Sunnah; they accepted destiny but affirmed that humans possess a free, limited will, with which they chart their own course in life. At the same time, they maintained that after exercising this will, their actions are created by Allah.

Let us address these topics in order.

1. Definitions of Qadar and Qaḍā'

The word "qadar", in the dictionaries, carries meanings such as "measurement, determination, designation, and having the power to do."

In Islamic terminology, it is defined as "Allah's eternal knowledge and will regarding every creature from birth to death, encompassing all its qualities – such as time, place, quantity, form, sustenance, lifespan, beauty, ugliness, benefit, and harm – and the determination and designation of these aspects by Allah."

"Qaḍā'," on the other hand, refers to Allah's power's creation of entities and events – that were designated and decreed in eternity by Allah's attributes of knowledge and will – when their appointed time comes.

Qadar pertains to Allah's attributes of knowledge and will, while qaḍā' pertains to His attribute of power.²⁰⁴

For qadar, one might say it is the plan and blueprint of the universe; for qaḍā', it is the implementation and realization of this plan and blueprint.

Every entity has a qadar. Just as the universe as a whole has a qadar, so do galaxies, the Earth, species of living beings, and every individual living being have a qadar.

2. Evidence for the Existence of Qaḍā' and Qadar

There are many rational and narrational proofs for qaḍā' and qadar. Let us examine them one by one:

a. Narrational Proofs Regarding Destiny

There are countless verses and hadiths regarding qaḍā' and qadar. There are many verses stating that everything is written and recorded in al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ (the Preserved

²⁰⁴ The definitions of qaḍā' and qadar mentioned above reflect the definitions made by the Māturīdī scholars. The Ash'arī scholars assign the meanings pertaining to qaḍā' to qadar and those pertaining to qadar to qaḍā'.

Tablet). Some of them are as follows:

“Not even (a thing of) an atom's weight in the heavens or earth escapes His knowledge, nor anything smaller or greater. All is in the clearly declaring Preserved Tablet”²⁰⁵

“And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him. And He knows whatever is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it; nor is there a grain in the darkneses of the earth, nor anything moist or dry, except that it is (recorded) in a clear Book (al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz).”²⁰⁶

“Indeed We created everything with a qadar (measure).”, “But everything they did is recorded in the books (of deeds). Every (matter,) small or great, is written down.”²⁰⁷

Here are some hadiths on this subject:

In the well-known Hadith of Jibrīl, while our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was listing the six pillars of faith, he also included belief in “qadar (destiny), and that the good and bad consequences of it are from Allah.”

Another hadith of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) on this matter is as follows: “The first thing Allah created was the pen. He said to it, ‘Write!’ The pen asked, ‘What shall I write?’ Allah commanded, ‘Write the measure (qadar) of everything (that will occur) until the Hour!’ (And the Pen wrote everything down in the Preserved Tablet.)” Ubādah ibn aṣ-Ṣamit, one of the Noble Companions, who narrated this hadith, said to his son, “O my son! I heard the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) say, ‘Whoever dies without this belief is not from me.’”²⁰⁸

Abdullah ibn Amr from the Noble Companions narrates that our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: “Allah decreed the measures (the qadars of all things) fifty thousand years before the creation of the heavens and the earth.”²⁰⁹

From this and similar hadiths, we understand that Allah, before creating the universe, had prepared its plan and blueprint. To express this in a better way, we can say that Allah knew how the universe and everything that is in it or that will happen in it, from eternity; that is, even before the existence/creation of the concept of time. The seven heavens, galaxies, stars, the earth, humans, animals, cells, and atoms – how they will be and what they will do – were all recorded. Then the process began. Today, all events in the universe, from everything that is happening in the realm of atoms to the realm of stars, are proceeding and will continue to proceed according to this divine plan.

²⁰⁵ Sūrah Saba', 3.

²⁰⁶ Sūrah Al-'An'ām, 59

²⁰⁷ Sūrah Al-Qamar, 49 and 52-53.

²⁰⁸ Abu Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Sunnah, Chapter 16, hadith no. 4700; Al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Qadar, Chapter 17, hadith no. 2155.

²⁰⁹ Al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Qadar, Chapter 18, Hadith 2156.

b. Rational Proofs Regarding Destiny

The most beautiful examples that can serve as rational evidence for the Preserved Tablet are seeds, eggs, and human DNA. One who cannot deny these examples cannot deny the Preserved Tablet either. For instance:

The plan of the tree is written in its seed, the plan of the bird in its egg, and the plan of the human is in his DNA; all their characteristics have been written in these small things by Allah. From the seed comes the tree; from the egg, the bird; and from the sperm and ovum, the human – all emerge according to a written plan and characteristics.

Everything that has happened or will happen in the universe is also written in the Preserved Tablet. If we liken the universe to a great tree, we can say that the Preserved Tablet is the seed of that great cosmic tree. If we view the universe as a massive human being, the Preserved Tablet is the DNA of that massive human. Similarly, if the universe were a colossal bird, we could say that the Preserved Tablet is the egg of that colossal bird.

3. Qadar and the Partial Free Will of Humans

As mentioned above, “Qadar is the plan for the life of the universe and every being, while *qaḍāʾ* is the implementation of this plan.” While this is the definition of qadar and *qaḍāʾ*, humans also possess a free will. In matters of choosing between good or evil in human life, they make choices with this free will, thereby directing their lives through their own will. Let us examine this issue in detail:

In human life, some events are beyond human will. For example, when and where we are born, which mother and father we are the child of, whether we are male or female, our level of intelligence, and our emotions – these matters completely transcend our will. In these matters, only Allah’s will prevails. Human will has no function whatsoever in these matters. Moreover, humans are not held accountable for these matters.

However, there are also actions in human life that are carried out through one’s own free will. Especially regarding good versus evil, humans make choices using what we call “*al-irādah al-juzʾiyyah*” (partial free will), and accordingly, they become deserving of either reward or punishment for the choices they make in the sight of Allah.

The scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah explain this matter as follows:

Allah creates a will in humans capable of choosing between good and evil. Humans use this will, which is capable of choosing both good and evil, to make a choice between good and evil. This will is called “*al-irādah al-juzʾiyyah*” (partial free will)²¹⁰ and is attributed to the human. After the human exercises this will, the action that he chose to act is created by Allah.

²¹⁰ *Al-irādah al-juzʾiyyah* (partial free will) has also been described as “choosing one of the options to do or not to do something.” Additionally, *al-irādah al-juzʾiyyah* has also been given the names: ‘Azim Muṣammam, Mayl, and Kasb. See: Abdullatif Harputī, *Tanqīḥ al-Kalām*, p. 202 ff.

Here, we should also briefly touch upon some differences between the Jabriyyah sect, the Mu'tazila sect, and the Ahl al-Sunnah:

a. Humans Possess Free Will

In Islamic history, the bid'ah sect known as the Jabriyyah completely denied human free will, claiming that all events – whether good or evil – occur solely by Allah's will and power, that humans are like leaves in the wind, and that they possess no will of their own. Since the ideas of the Jabriyya sect contradict reason, the Qur'ān, and the Sunnah, they could not find many followers in Islamic societies. A verse rejecting the Jabriyyah's view is as follows:

“Those who associate partners (with Allah) will say, ‘If Allah had willed, neither would we have associated partners (with Him), nor would our forefathers (have done so); and we would not have declared anything forbidden (of our own accord).’ Those before them (also) denied (their messengers) in the same way, until they tasted Our punishment. Say, ‘Do you have any knowledge with you (to support this claim)? Then produce it for us. You follow nothing but assumption, and you are only speaking lies.’ Say, ‘Then the most conclusive proof belongs to Allah. So if He had willed, He would surely have guided you all together (to the right path. However, He left you to your own freewill.)’”²¹¹

This verse explicitly refutes the claims of the polytheists, explaining that Allah has granted humans free will and that those who commit shirk (associating partners with Allah) do so of their own free will.

The Māturīdī and Ash'arī sects, which we refer to as the Ahl al-Sunnah, have accepted qadar, and stated that people choose between good and evil through their own free will, but that the good or evil a person chooses is created by Allah afterwards.

Here, let us present some evidence regarding the existence of human free will:

1. Allah Almighty has sent thousands of prophets, from Adam (p.b.u.h.) to our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h); all of these prophets conveyed Allah's commands and prohibitions to people, and informed them that obedience to Allah will be rewarded and disobedience to Him will be punished. If humans did not possess free will, then Allah's sending of prophets and revelation of scriptures would be meaningless. A verse on this subject is as follows: “(We sent many) messengers as bearers of good news and as warners, so that mankind would have no excuse before Allah after the Messengers. For Allah is Almighty (‘Azīz – Whose power prevails over all), All-Wise (Ḥakīm – Whose every act is full of wisdom).”²¹²

²¹¹ Sūrah Al-'An'ām, 148-149.

²¹² Sūrah An-Nisā', 165.

2. Likewise, for Allah to send prophets to people, then compel them to disbelief and rebellion, and subsequently punish them by casting them into Hell, is completely contrary to Allah's justice, mercy, and wisdom. About this, a verse from the Qur'ān says: "This is because of what your hands have sent forth, for Allah is certainly not unjust to (His) servants."²¹³
3. The Qur'ān also emphasizes in many verses that humans possess free will and rejects the belief in compulsion. Some relevant verses are as follows:
 - a. "And say, "The truth is from your Lord; whoever wills, let him believe, and whoever wills, let him disbelieve!" Indeed, We have prepared for the wrongdoers a fire the wall of which has surrounded them from all sides. (...)"²¹⁴
 - b. "Say, 'O people, the truth has truly come to you from your Lord. So whoever is guided is guided only for his own benefit, and whoever goes astray goes astray only to his own detriment. I am not a guardian over you (to compel you to believe).'"²¹⁵
 - c. "As for (the people of) Thamūd, We showed them guidance but (not seeing the truths of faith) they preferred blindness over guidance (...)"²¹⁶
 - d. "If Allah had willed, they would not have associated partners (with Him)."²¹⁷
4. Every person feels, in his conscience, that he possesses free will. For example, when faced with the beautiful and the ugly, we choose the beautiful; when faced with the beneficial and the harmful, we choose the beneficial. This demonstrates that we possess free will. Likewise, when a person chooses one of two things, if he is satisfied with the outcome, he says, "I'm glad I did that." If the outcome is not good, he says, "I wish I hadn't done that." A person who is not free in his actions and choices cannot say neither "I'm glad I did that" nor "I wish I hadn't done that." These two feelings are the psychological and conscientious proofs that we choose and act freely, through our own free will.
5. Those who have not understood what qadar (destiny) is sometimes attribute the sins or mistakes they commit to qadar and say, "We commit these sins because Allah has written it so." However, Allah's writing something before it happens is never a situation that compels a person to commit sin. With His eternal knowledge, Allah has known in advance what we will do and has written these things in the Preserved Tablet. However, we do not do the things we do because Allah has written them; on the contrary, He has written them because He, with His all-encompassing knowledge,

²¹³ Sūrah 'Āli 'Imrān, 182; Sūrah Al-'Anfāl, 51.

²¹⁴ Sūrah Al-Kahf, 29.

²¹⁵ Sūrah Yūnus, 108.

²¹⁶ Sūrah Fuṣṣilat, 17.

²¹⁷ Sūrah Al-'An'ām, 107.

knows what we will do through our free will. Allah's knowledge of and recording of what we will do does not compel us to perform those actions or make them obligatory for us to do. Because "knowledge is subject to the known (that is, what is already there)," meaning knowledge is dependent on the thing that is known. For example, our knowing when the sun will rise tomorrow and recording it in calendars does not compel the sun to rise at that hour.

6. Allah's knowledge is not like our knowledge. We know only the past; we cannot know the future. Whereas Allah, with His eternal knowledge, knows all of the past, the present moment we are in, and the future in their full detail. On this subject, Imam Bediuzzaman states: Suppose you have a mirror in your hand; imagine the space to your right as the past and the space to your left as the future. Whichever way the mirror is turned – right or left – it can show that side. What is seen in the mirror varies in terms of being close or far to it. However, if we hold the mirror in such a way that it looks from top to bottom, the mirror captures both the right and left sides at once. In this case, the distances between what is seen in the mirror and the mirror are equal. We cannot say "before" or "after" for any of them. Our knowledge – our mirror – is oriented toward the past and can only perceive the past in a sequential order. However, it cannot know the future. Whereas Allah's eternal knowledge, much like a mirror viewing time from above, encompasses everything from *'azal* (beginningless eternity) to *'abad* (endless eternity) – past and future, what has been and what will be – all at once, embracing and surrounding them. In such kind of knowledge, there is no such thing as things happening before or after one another.²¹⁸

b. Human Actions Are Created by Allah

The Ahl al-Sunnah accept that after the human exercises his free will, the action that he chose to act is created by Allah. The Mu'tazilah sect, however, states, "The human creates his own actions – not Allah." Let us now examine some proofs regarding the fact that actions are created by Allah:

1. A verse from the Qur'ān states: "(...) it is Allah that created both you and what you have make."²¹⁹ In accordance with this verse, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) says: "Indeed, Allah has created every doer and the deed he performs."²²⁰
2. Various verses state, "Allah is the Creator of all things."²²¹ Another verse states: "Or have they set up partners with Allah who create as He creates, so that the creation seemed similar to them? Say, 'Allah is the One Who created every thing in truth, and He is the

²¹⁸ See: Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, *Tilsimler (The Talismans)*, Altınbaşak Publications, p. 84. (26th Word, The Epistle on Qadar.)

²¹⁹ Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāffāt, 96.

²²⁰ Kanz al-'Ummāl, hadith no. 1319. (Quoted from *Khalq Af'āl al-'Ibād* by Bukhārī, Ḥākīm, and Bayhaqī.)

²²¹ Sūrah Az-Zumar, 62; Sūrah Al-Mu'min/Al-Ghāfir, 62; Sūrah Al-'An'ām, 102.

One Who is the One (al-Wāḥid), the Dominant (al-Qahhār).”²²² Based on this verse, since human actions also fall under the category of “things”, we can say that they too are created.

3. Creating anything requires the attributes of knowledge, will, and power. For the creator of a thing, it is necessary for him to first know **everything about that thing** which is to be created **in all its details**, then to will and desire its creation, and finally to create it through his power. However, we can absolutely never observe all of these to be present together in humans when they are performing the actions they perform. Therefore, human actions cannot be created by humans. About this matter, the Qur’ān states: “How could the One Who created not know? He is the Most Subtle (Al-Laṭīf, the Knower of all the subtleties in hearts), the All-Aware (Al-Khabīr).”²²³

c. The Creation of Evil Is Not Evil; the *Kasb* (Acquisition) of Evil Is Evil

The scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah have stated that after a person exercises his free will, all of his actions – whether good or evil – are created by Allah. However, regarding the creation of evil deeds, they have said, “The creation of evil is not evil; the *kasb* (acquisition) of evil is evil,” meaning, “It is not the creation of evil that is evil, but the servant’s choice, desire, and acquisition of evil that is evil.” Because Allah is not pleased with evil and creates it only because humans desire it for the wisdom of the test and trial in this world. In this sense, the ugliness of the evil that’s committed is attributed not to the act of creation, but to the human’s will for choosing to commit it.

On this subject, Imam Bediuzzaman says:

“The creation of evil is not evil; rather, the *kasb* (acquisition) of evil is evil. Because creation and invention pertain to all outcomes; whereas a person’s acquisition pertains to specific outcomes since it involves a specific relationship.

“For example: The coming of rain has thousands of results, all of which are good. If some people were to suffer harm from the rain by misusing their free will, they cannot say, ‘The creation of rain is not merciful’; they cannot judge that ‘the creation of rain is evil.’ Rather, by misusing their free will and through their wrongful actions, the rain became a misfortune for them.

“Likewise, there are many benefits in the creation of fire; all of them are good. However, if some people were to suffer harm from fire due to misusing their will, they cannot say, ‘The creation of fire is evil.’ Because fire was not created solely to burn him; rather, he, through his own wrong choice, put his hand into the fire that cooks his food and turned that servant of his into an enemy to himself.”²²⁴

²²² Sūrah Ar-Ra‘d, 16.

²²³ Sūrah Al-Mulk, 14.

²²⁴ We have provided a detailed explanation regarding this issue in the discussion about the wisdoms behind the creation of shayṭāns (devils). One can refer to that section if needed.

“Man’s partial free will and partial freedom of choice are indeed weak, and they have a notional existence (al-amru’l-i‘tibārī) – (not existing as an actual being). Yet, Allah the Almighty and Absolutely Wise (Al-Ḥakīmū’l-Muṭṭaq) has made this weak, partial free will a simple condition to the operation of His universal will. In essence, it is as if He says, ‘O My servant! Whichever path you choose by your own will, I will lead you along that path. Therefore, the responsibility is yours.’

“By way of analogy: Suppose you took a feeble child upon your shoulders, set him free, and told him, ‘I will carry you wherever you wish to go.’ If that child desired to climb a high mountain and you carried him there, and there he took ill or fell, you would surely reproach him, saying, ‘You chose this!’ and you might even slap him in the face.

“Now, Allah the Almighty, the Sovereign Ruler of all rulers (Aḥkamu’l-Ḥākīmīn) has made the will of His extremely weak servant a simple condition, and His universal will operates with regard to it.”²²⁵

As can be understood from this explanation, it is Allah Who creates “evil” according to the human’s will, and all responsibility regarding that evil pertains to the human.

4. Qadar and ‘Ajal

“‘Ajal” refers to a specific time or the end of that specific time, meaning a predetermined time period for any matter. “‘Ajal” is most commonly used to mean “the lifespan decreed by Allah for every living being and the time of death, which marks the end of that lifespan.”

The Qur’ān states: “And for every community there is an appointed term. When their term comes, they can neither delay it for a moment nor advance it.”²²⁶, and “And Allah never delays a soul when its appointed time (for death) comes. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.”²²⁷

These verses clearly state that a determined lifespan has been decreed for humans, and that when this lifespan ends (when their ‘ajal comes), they will die.

But does the situation of a person killed by a murderer fall within the scope of this verse? Since every person is granted a determined lifespan, what would have happened if the murderer had not killed the victim? Would the victim have died anyway because their ‘ajal had come, even if the murderer had not killed them? Or would their predetermined destiny have been different in such a situation; that their predestined lifespan granted to them would be longer?

²²⁵ Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, *Talimlar (The Talismans)*, Altınbaşak Publications, p. 84. (26th Word, The Epistle on Qadar).

²²⁶ Sūrah Al-A‘rāf, 34.

²²⁷ Sūrah Al-Munāfiqūn, 11.

Some discussions have taken place around these questions. The approaches of the Ahl al-Sunnah, the Jabriyyah, and the Mu‘tazilah to this issue have differed.

The scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah agree with consensus that just as those who die after completing their natural course of life die by their ‘ajal (appointed time), so too do those who are murdered die by their ‘ajal.

Imam Bediuzzaman addresses this issue as follows:

“Qadar takes into account the cause and the effect together; they are interconnected. That is, qadar connects two things as, “This result will happen together with this cause.” Therefore, one cannot say ‘If the death of so-and-so person was decreed for a specific time, what fault does the man who fired the gun with his free will have? He would have died anyway even if he hadn’t fired.’ and it is incorrect to say so.

“Because qadar has determined the death of the person that died through the killer’s gun. If you assume that he did not fire the gun, then you are assuming that qadar did not apply. In that case, by what would you judge his death? If you were to conceive of qadar as applying separately for the cause and the consequence, like the Jabriyyah, or if you were to deny destiny altogether, like the Mu‘tazilah, you would abandon the Ahl al-Sunnah wa’l-Jamā‘ah and enter the rows of the deviant sects.

“In conclusion, we, the people of truth – the Ahl al-Sunnah – say, ‘What would happen if he had not fired the gun is unknown to us.’

“(But, as the deviant sects on this matter,) the Jabriyyah say, ‘Even if he hadn’t fired it, the man would still have died,’ the Mu‘tazilah say, ‘If he hadn’t fired it, the man wouldn’t have died.’”²²⁸

5. Tawakkul and Qadar

In the dictionary, tawakkul means to place trust in another, to delegate one’s affairs to another, or to appoint another as a deputy by acknowledging one’s powerlessness. In Islamic terminology, however, it means to make the necessary preparations for any matter, fulfill the required causes, and then leave or entrust the outcome to Allah. It has also been described as “doing what one is capable of and relying on Allah in matters beyond one’s capacity.” Entrusting a matter to Allah without fulfilling one’s own duty is not tawakkul but laziness. Such an understanding has also been rejected by the Qur’ān and the Sunnah.

In the Qur’ān, the verse “(...) a man can have nothing except what he strives for.”²²⁹ encourages believers to work. When the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was asked, “Should I leave my

²²⁸ See: Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, *Tilsimler (The Talismans)*, Altınbaşak Publications, p. 84. (26th Word, The Epistle on Qadar.)

²²⁹ Sūrah An-Najm, 39.

camel (untied) and place my tawakkul in Allah?” he replied, **“No. First, tie it up, and then place your tawakkul in Allah!”**²³⁰

Imam Bediuzzaman says the following on this subject: “Do not misunderstand! Trust in Allah does not mean completely rejecting the causes. Rather, it is to regard causes as veils to Allah’s hand of might and to adhere to those causes; it is to regard striving for causes as a form of supplication through action, while seeking the outcomes solely from Allah Almighty, attributing the outcomes to Him, and being grateful to Him.”

For example, a farmer plowing and sowing his field while entrusting the outcome to Allah, or a patient visiting a doctor, taking medication, and awaiting healing from Allah – these are acts of tawakkul.

It is Allah Who grants healing. However, medicines are a means to healing; Allah creates the healing within the medicine. It is said that Mūsā (p.b.u.h.) fell ill. The Children of Israel visited him and said, “The remedy for this illness is this; we have been cured by it. You should use it too!” Mūsā (p.b.u.h.) said, “I will not seek treatment until Allah grants me healing without medicine.” Allah the Almighty said to him, “I will not grant you healing unless you are treated with the medicine they have told you about. It is I who place the benefit within the medicines.” Upon this, Mūsā (p.b.u.h.) did as they had said and was cured of his illness.²³¹

Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) also stated regarding this matter: “Allah has sent down both diseases and their cures to the earth. There is a cure for every ailment. Seek treatment! But do not seek treatment with that which is ḥarām (forbidden)!”²³²

Belief in qadar leads to tawakkul (trust in Allah). Imam Bediuzzaman says: “Īmān (true faith) leads to tawḥīd (believing in the oneness of Allah); tawḥīd leads to taslīm (submission); taslīm leads to tawakkul; and tawakkul results in the happiness of both worlds (this world and the Hereafter).”

In many verses, believers are commanded to practice tawakkul.

“(…) when you have resolved upon a course, place your trust in Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who place their trust (in Him).”²³³

²³⁰ Kanz al-‘Ummāl, hadith nos. 5687, 5688, 5689

²³¹ Imam al-Ghazālī, Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn, trans. Ahmet Serdaroğlu, Bedir Publishing, vol. 4, p. 515.

²³² Abu Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Ṭibb, Chapter 11, hadith no. 3876.

²³³ Sūrah ‘Āli ‘Imrān, 159.

“Say: ‘Nothing will ever befall us except what Allah has written for us. He is our Protector. So let the believers place their trust in Allah alone.’”²³⁴

Regarding this matter, Imam Bediuzzaman says:

“Belief in qadar is so delightful and blissful that it cannot be described. We will now merely point to that delight and that bliss with the following similitude. Listen:

“Two men enter the magnificent palace of a sultan situated within a vast garden.

“One of them, unaware of the sultan, seeks to seize the garden and palace that are filled with many strange things and settle there like a thief. But he sees the burdensome responsibilities which that garden and palace demand – like operating the machinery and providing for some strange animals – along with all the expenses of them and the difficulty of managing them. So he suffers constantly, asking, “How will I handle all of this?” That garden, which is like paradise, becomes a hell for him. He feels sorry for everything. He cannot manage anything. He spends his time in despair. Then that thief, that insolent man, is thrown into prison as punishment.

“The second man recognizes the sultan and regards himself as the sultan’s guest. He believes that all the affairs in that garden and that palace proceed according to the laws of an established order, and that everything operates with perfect ease through a set program. Leaving the hardships and burdens to the sultan’s laws, he attends to his own affairs and, with perfect contentment, enjoys all the delights of that garden, which is like paradise. Relying on the sultan’s mercy, wisdom, and the beauty of his administrative laws, he accepts everything with grace, spending his life in perfect pleasure and happiness.”²³⁵

In this similitude, the sultan refers to Allah Almighty. The palace and garden represent this world. The first person refers to those who do not believe in Allah and who thereby assume the universe to be aimless and ownerless, and that everything happens on its own. The second person, however, represents those who believe in Allah; those who know and have faith that everything that happens only happens by Allah’s permission, through His qadar and power. Those who hold this belief believe that there is an aspect of wisdom in every event and every matter. Trusting in Allah’s wisdom and justice, they do not interfere with Allah’s actions but fulfill their own duties.

With regard to this truth, our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) states, “Belief in qadar dispels sadness and sorrows.”²³⁶

²³⁴ Sūrah At-Tawbah, 51.

²³⁵ Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, *Tilsimler (The Talismans)*, Altınbaşak Publications, p. 89. (26th Word, The Epistle on Qadar.)

²³⁶ Ali al-Muttaqī, *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, vol. 1, p. 106, no. 481.

6. The Good Are Attributed to Allah; The Evil Are Attributed to the Human's Self

Based on the verse "Whatever good befalls you is from Allah, and whatever evil befalls you is from yourself."²³⁷, Imam Badiuzzaman explains that good deeds and rewards should be attributed to qadar, while evils and sins should be attributed to the partial free will of oneself; and that this is actually the reason why qadar and partial free will have become part of the principles of faith.

Here, the following question may come to mind: Why are good deeds attributed to qadar and evils to the free will? Shouldn't both be attributed to the free will?

The answer is: The role of human's partial free will in good deeds is very minimal. However, evils are entirely attributable to it. Let us illustrate this point with an example:

Let's suppose a merchant ship with a crew of 100 people transports a large quantity of goods from one city to another and, as a result of selling those goods, makes a profit of a hundred thousand dollars. If the ship's helmsman were to say, "If it weren't for me, this ship couldn't have come here, and therefore this profitable trade wouldn't have taken place. In that sense, 99% of this profit should be mine." All the crew on the ship would object, saying, "We worked just as hard as you did. Without us, you couldn't have brought this ship here either. Therefore, we must divide the profit equally. Your share is only 1%."

If, on the return trip, the helmsman got drunk and caused the ship to sink, and said, "Since we split the profit into 100, let's split the loss into 100 too," the crew would reply, "We were partners in the profit because everyone had a share in the profit's making. But you alone are responsible for this loss. Because we all did our duty; you did not. This disaster befell us solely because of your mistake. Therefore, 100% of the blame and loss belongs to you."

Just as in this example, the human body is like a ship. A person's partial free will, however, is like the helmsman of this ship. Humans' partial free will plays a major role in the occurrence of an action, but that will alone is not sufficient for an action to occur. All our limbs, organs, and emotions participate in the making of that action. And it is Allah Who creates all those limbs, emotions, and all the actions that are performed through them. The only thing attributed to the human being among these is his partial free will.

If a person directs his will toward good and serves as a means for good to occur, as in the example above, it can be said that his share in the making of this good through his partial free will is only 1%. However, in the making of evil, the share of that partial free will is 100%.

Imam Badiuzzaman says, "It is the Divine Mercy that wants good deeds, and the Divine Power that brings them into existence. Both the question and the answer, the cause and the effect, originate from Allah Almighty. A person attains them only through prayer, faith, consciousness, and contentment."

²³⁷ Sūrah An-Nisā', 79.

Since the human will's share in the emergence of the good is small, one has no right to take pride in it. We can apply this analogy to all other good things and virtues about a person.

If a person directs his will toward evil and becomes the cause of its occurrence, he bears full responsibility, much like the helmsman who caused the ship to sink.

This is due to the fact that evils and sins are of the destructive type. Although evil deeds too are created by Allah, since this creation is contingent upon the human's wanting it (that is, his choosing it), the responsibility lies with the human. In this sense, creating the evil is not evil; rather, acquiring (*kasb*), wanting, and earning evil is evil. Therefore, all responsibility lies with the lower-self (*nafs*) of a person.

In summary: A person should attribute all the goodness and perfection that emanate from him to qadar (that is, to Allah), and should not take pride in or become arrogant about this goodness and perfection. As for evils and sins, one should attribute them to one's own self, realize his responsibility, turn to Allah, and seek repentance and forgiveness.

However, those who do not understand why qadar and free will have been included among the fundamentals of faith today exhibit the exact opposite of this truth, attributing goodness and perfection to their own selves, and evil and sins to qadar.

Imam Badiuzzaman says the following on this subject:

"If the person speaking of destiny and free will possesses the awareness that he is always in the presence of Allah, possessing perfect faith, he surrenders both the universe and his own self to Allah Almighty, knowing them to be under His control. Then he has the right to speak of qadar and free will. Because, since he knows that his self and everything else are created by Allah, he then takes responsibility through his free will. He accepts being held accountable for sins and glorifies his Lord. He remains within the sphere of worship and takes upon himself the divine commands.

"Moreover, to avoid taking pride in his own perfections and good deeds, he looks to qadar; instead of boasting, he shows gratitude. In the misfortunes that befall him, he sees the decree of qadar and exercises patience.

"If the person speaking of qadar and free will is among the heedless, then he has no right to speak of qadar or free will. Because his lower self, driven by heedlessness or misguidance, attributes the universe to causes, distributes Allah's property among them (claiming the beings in the universe to be created by natural causes and not Allah), and claims ownership of himself. He attributes his actions to himself and to causes. But he attributes any responsibility or fault he may have to qadar.

"At that point, the discussion of free will – which will ultimately be attributed to Allah Almighty – and the discussion of qadar – which will ultimately be the focus of attention –

becomes meaningless. It then becomes merely a selfish ruse (for such a person), designed to evade responsibility – which is entirely contrary to the wisdom behind qadar and free will.”²³⁸

²³⁸ See: Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, *Tilsimler (The Talismans)*, Altınbaşak Publications, p. 82. (26th Word, The Epistle on Qadar.)