

Lesson 5: The Manifestations of God in Nature

The world of matter and nature, conceived as a created whole, is the best, clearest and most universal evidence for the knowledge of God. The wise will of that Eternal Principle can be discovered in the very processes of material change. It is apparent that His eternal rays bestow life and sustenance on all beings, and that all of creation derives both its existence and its advancement from Him.

To study the different beings in the universe, the mysteries of the book of creation, the pages of which all bear witness to the operation of a lofty intelligence in its creation, provides, then, evidence on which to base knowledge and belief in a wise Creator Whose power is but slightly manifested in the order of beings for all their splendor and vastness.

It is, moreover, a simple and straightforward proof that lacks the complexity and weightiness of philosophical evidence. It is a path for study and contemplation that is open to all; everyone can benefit from it, both thinkers and scholars and the simple masses of humanity.

Everyone, to the extent permitted by his capacity and vision, can see in all the phenomena of creation indications of connectedness, harmony, and purposefulness, and find in every one of the countless particles of creation a firm proof for the existence of the source of being.

The complete adaption of every species of animal to its conditions of life is a great sign of God; each has been created with all the particular instruments needed for its conditions of life.

Moses, the one who spoke with God, peace be upon our Prophet and him, made use of this proof in order to demonstrate the existence of God to the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh said to Moses and his brother: "*Who is your Lord ?*" Moses, peace be upon our Prophet and him, replied,

"Our Lord is the one Who endowed all things with a particular form of creation." (20:49)

Likewise, Imam as-Sadiq, peace be upon him, said to Mufaddal, "Look carefully at the structure of the bird's creation; see how it has been created light and small in volume to enable it to fly. It was given only two legs instead of the four given to other animals and only four of the five toes they have on each foot.

Birds have slim, pointed breasts to enable them to fend the air easily and fly in every direction.

The long legs of the bird fit easily beneath its tail and its wings, and its whole body is covered with feathers so that air might penetrate them and aid it to fly. Since the food of birds consists of seeds and the flesh of animals that they consume without chewing, they have no need of teeth.

Instead, God created for birds a hard and sharp beak that cannot break when tearing off meat or suffer injury when gathering seeds. To enable this creature to digest the food it has not chewed, it has been given a powerful digestive system and a warm body. Furthermore, birds reproduce by laying eggs so they can remain light enough to fly; if their offspring were to grow in their stomachs, they would become too heavy to fly."

Then the Imam referred to a general law, saying, "Thus all the peculiarities of a bird's creation conform to its environment and its manner of life."¹

The question of animal speech—the means by which animals communicate with each other—is another divine sign. They possess a special kind of language that enables them to communicate with each other.

The Noble Qur'an thus relates the story of an ant addressing the Prophet Solomon, peace be upon our Prophet and him,

"An ant said, "O ants, enter your dwellings lest Solomon and his army unwittingly trample you underfoot." (27:18)

Modern scientists have discovered a sophisticated system of communication among the animals that is more complex and precise than our own system of communication. Crissy Morrison writes, "If we put a female moth next to the window of our room, it emits soft signals that a male moth picks up from an incredible distance and it sends its own signals in return. However much you may wish to disturb this communication, you will be unable to do so. Does this weak creature carry some kind of transmitter, or does the male moth have a receiver concealed in his antennae?

"A cricket rubs its legs together, and the sound can be heard up to a kilometer away on a quiet, still night. In order to summon its mate, the male cricket sets sixty tons of air in motion and the female cricket sends a warm response to his wooing by some physical means, although apparently no sound is audible from her.

"Before the invention of radio, scientists used to imagine that animals communicated with each other by means of smell. Supposing this hypothesis to be true, it would still be something of a miracle, because the smell would have to move through the air to reach the nostrils of the female insect. This is quite apart from the question of whether a wind is blowing or not and how the female insect is to pick up the smell and tell where it is coming from, enabling her to know where her suitor is located.

"Today, thanks to highly complex mechanical means, we have gained the ability to communicate with

each other over great distances. Radio is a remarkable invention, enabling us to communicate with each other instantaneously. But the use of this invention is dependent on a wire and our being present in a certain place. The moth is still way ahead of us."²

Choosing the empirical sciences as a means of studying the infinite mysteries of the world has another advantage in addition to lying within the reach of everyone. It is that awareness of the wonders of creation and the order prevailing in it which naturally links man to the God Who has created it; such awareness displays to man the attributes of perfection, knowledge and limitless power that characterize the Creator and Source of all being.

This precise order indicates an aim, a plan, broad and extensive wisdom. What creativity, what power, what knowledge He has invested in all the world of being, in the smallest and the greatest of His creation alike—in the earth, in the atmosphere, in the heavenly bodies, in the heart of stones, in the heart of atoms!

When we speak of "order" it should be understood that the concept of order is applicable to a phenomenon when its different parts are somehow interrelated in such a way that they harmoniously pursue a specific aim; the collaboration of the parts with each other must also have been taken into account.

Although those who deny the existence of order in the universe generally do not deny the existence of an active cause (since they accept the law of causality), what is meant by the principle of mutual acquaintance in nature is the ultimate cause, and this—implying as it does the intervention of aim and purpose in natural phenomena—they do reject.

In numerous of its verses, the Noble Qur'an invites men to ponder on the order of creation so that the mass of people should be able, in the simplest way possible, to become aware of the existence of the Unique Creator. These are some of the verses in question:

"In the creation of the heavens and the earth, in the alternation of the night and the day, in the sailing of ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind; in the rain which God sends down from the skies and the life He gives therewith to a land that is dead; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth; in the change of the winds and the clouds which they trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth—in all of these matters, there are for the wise, clear proofs of the knowledge and power of the Creator. " (2: 164)

"God it is, that Pure Essence, that has raised the heavens without any pillar, as you see, and then adorned His throne in the midst of creation with perfect power. He has subjected the sun and the moon to His will so that each of them rotates in due course. He has imposed firm order on the affairs of the world and set forth the signs of His power with detailed proofs, that you may believe with certainty in the meeting with your Lord." (13:2)

"He it is Who spread out the earth and raised the mountains upon it. He made the rivers course and brought forth every kind of fruit, and He created all things in pairs. He covered the bright day with the dark night. Certainly in these matters are clear proofs for the thoughtful of the power of the Creator." (13:3)

If we accept and have recourse to every theory that has been put forward by the specialists and researchers, even the theory of evolution concerning the appearance of the various species found in the world, none of the theories in question will be comprehensible without the presence of an absolute power, the intervention of a will, an awareness, and a final purpose and aim.

Gradual creation within the system of nature also clearly displays the intervention of will and awareness in its processes; all the stages in the movement and progress of nature have been based on a very exact choice and calculation, and nature has never diverged in the slightest in millions of years from its ordained path.

It is true that in the initial stages of deriving proof for the existence of God from the orderliness of the universe, use is made of empirical data, and that some parts of the argument are constructed with the help of the senses, the study of nature and empirical observation.

However, in reality, the argument is not an empirical one but rather a rational one, guiding us away from nature toward the transcendent reality that lies beyond nature. Empirical proofs concern the relationship between two parts of nature, each of which must be sensorially perceptible to permit the relationship between the two phenomena to be established.

When we estimate the degree of knowledge and awareness of a person by examining his works and achievements, we are not engaged in an empirical discovery, for the degree of knowledge and intelligence of a person is not a tangible quantity for us subject to direct experimentation on our part. Of course, man directly experiences will, intelligence, and thought within his own being, but he does not have a similar awareness of their existence in others; they are inaccessible to him.

It is through the works and achievements of men that we become aware of the existence of intelligence and thought in them, although there is no empirical proof of their existence in them.

Now the discovery of intelligence in others by way of their works and achievements rests on a rational proof, not an empirical deduction in the sense of intelligence and its workings being directly susceptible to direct examination so that their interrelations might be discovered. This discovery also does not rest on a logical comparison in the sense of positing an identity between one individual and all others.

Given, then, that the recognition of thought and intelligence in men does not take place by way of empirical proof, it is obvious that the argument of orderliness in the universe and its connection with the divine essence also does not belong to the category of empirical proofs.

From another point of view, since man is not the creator of nature but a part of it, his actions in the world of nature represent the establishment of a relationship between different parts of that world.

The aim and the purpose pursued by man in the compounding of a whole series of material elements (as, for example, in constructing a building, a car, or a factory) relate to his own being; that is, the ultimate purpose and aim is the maker himself, not the thing made.

The relationship between the parts of the things made is, therefore, a non-natural relationship; by establishing that relationship, the maker wishes to attain his own purposes and to relive his own deficiencies, for all the efforts of man are a movement from potentiality to actuality and deficiency to perfection.

However, these two characteristics do not apply to the relationship between created beings and God. The relationship between the different parts of God's works is not a non-natural one, and the purpose of the created phenomenon does not relate to the Creator. Put differently, the aims of God's acts all relate to the acts themselves, not to the Agent, for God's wisdom necessitates that He should cause all beings to attain their perfection.

If in the course of developing the argument of the orderliness of the universe we attempt to prove the existence of a maker similar to the human maker, the divine maker will, in reality, also be a created being on the level of man; proving the existence of such a maker is an entirely different matter from proving the existence of the Maker and Creator of all being.

From a scientific point of view, the self-origination of matter is impossible; the Marxist theory that the material world is constantly evolving and advancing toward higher states is clearly contradictory to scientific data and the realities of nature. All development and motion in the mineral realm is due either to the intervention of a will external to matter or to attraction, interchange, and compounding with other bodies.

In the vegetable world, development, growth and increase occur as the result of rainfall, sunshine and obtaining the necessary materials from the soil. The same is the case in the animal world, except that there the factor of volitional movement toward what is useful and necessary must be added.

In all the instances just mentioned, there is a clear cooperation between things and creatures, on the one hand, and factors external to them, on the other. In accordance with the particular properties innate in each being and the laws and formulae to which it is subject, it is incapable of disobeying the commands that have been engraved in its being.

The particular properties. We sense clearly that beings in this world are subject to change and impermanence. Throughout the period of its existence, any material being is either proceeding along the

path of growth and development or advancing toward decay and decline. In short, no material being on the plane of existence remains fixed and unchanging.

Finiteness is another property of a sensory existent. From the smallest particle to the biggest galaxy, all things are in need of space and time; it is simply that certain things occupy a greater space or a longer time, and others, a shorter time and a smaller space.

Moreover, all material beings are relative from the point of view of their very existence as well as the properties they possess; whatever attributes such as power, magnificence, beauty and wisdom we ascribe to things, we do so in comparison to something else.

Dependence and conditionality are also among the characteristics of these beings. The existence of any being we may conceive is dependent and conditional on other factors, and it, therefore, stands in need of them. No material thing can be found in the world that relies entirely upon itself, that has no need of anything other than itself. Neediness and dependence, therefore, circumscribe all material beings.

Man's intelligence and thought are able to transcend the veils of outward appearance, unlike his senses, and to penetrate the depths and inner dimension of being; they cannot accept that existence should be confined to relative, finite, changing and dependent beings.

On the contrary, the power of thought clearly recognizes the necessity of the existence, beyond the observable realm, of a stable, absolute and self-subsistent reality upon which all other beings rely and depend. This reality is present in all times and at all places; were it not to be present, the totality of the world would cease to exist and would lose all share of being.

Once we see the dependency of the created world and realize that no phenomenon can exist unaided, we conclude that there is a Necessary Existent, for we are compelled to ask, "Upon what is every phenomenon ultimately dependent?"

If we answer, "On another body," then we must ask, "On what is that body, in turn, dependent?" If, then, the answer is given, "On a thing the nature of which is unknown to us," the question arises, "Is that thing simple or compound?"

If it is said to be compound, then we reply that a compound is also dependent on its parts, since first the parts must exist in order for the compound to come into being. Since nature is a compound, it cannot be the Necessary Existent.

We are, therefore, compelled to say that the first cause must be simple; it must also be coterminous with the Necessary Existent, since the chain of causality cannot continue indefinitely.

The totality of the world is, then, in need of a reality that is independent and upon which all conditional, finite and relative phenomena depend. All things need that reality to fill them with being, and all beings possess a sign of its infinite life, knowledge, power and wisdom.

They, thus, permit us to gain valuable knowledge concerning that reality and enable every intelligent, curious person to deduce the existence of a Creator.

The mutual dependence of matter and the laws of being in no way points to the independence of matter. On the contrary, the different phenomena that arise from matter, together with their close interrelatedness, indicate that matter, in its mode of existence, is compelled to accept and follow certain laws and norms that impel it to order and harmony.

Existence depends on two basic factors: matter and orderliness, which are closely interrelated and give birth to a coherent and harmonious world.

Some people regard matter as independent and imagine that it has itself gained this freedom and elaborated the laws that rule over it. But how can they believe that hydrogen and oxygen, electrons and protons, should first produce themselves, then be the source for all other beings, and finally decree the laws that regulate themselves and the rest of the material world?

Materialism imagines that lowly objects are the source for the emergence of higher objects without troubling to ascertain whether the higher, in fact, exists at the level of the lower. If lowly matter is unable even at the highest stage of its development, namely thought and reflection—either to create itself or to violate any of the laws that rule over it, it follows ineluctably that it is unable to create other beings and the laws regulating them. How, then, can it be believed that lowly matter should engage in the creation and origination of higher beings or have the power to bestow existence on lofty phenomena?

In the new science of systems, the principle has been established that systems comprising living elements that have an aim or systems organized externally on the basis of a given program, may develop in the direction of expansion, greater orderliness and improvement.

However, all systems, whether simple or compound, need to be aided by and interrelated with factors external to themselves; they are unable to construct themselves. No system or substance in the world will be able to create or to will a moving and developing organ unless it enjoys a measure of will power and consciousness.

Based on the law of probabilities, the result of universal independent motivation could be only dispersal and anarchy, tending to a uniform death.

The law of probabilities also decisively refutes the appearance of the world by way of accident, considering it irrational and impossible. Even calculations based on the mathematical law of probabilities confirm the necessity of correct guidance and planning for the world, in accordance with a precise program and a conscious will.

The law of probabilities deals, in fact, a decisive blow to those who believe in theory of the accidental

origination of the universe. If we attempt to apply the theory of accident to a simple system or to small numbers, its applicability is not impossible, although extremely unlikely.

But it is inconceivable that one should ever chance on a geometric accident expressing the firm orderliness and harmony that prevail in the complex system of the world. Partial and simple changes in the order of existence are also unable to explain the transformation of the world, the coalescing of diverse elements, and the compounding of fundamental atoms to form a harmonious compound.

If nature was once engaged autonomously in composition and formation, why does it not now display any initiative in the direction of changing itself further; why does it no longer exhibit profound, automatic change?

Even slight and simple occurrences in the world result in the creation of remarkable images that are harmonious and consonant with the aim of creation. This is itself an indication of the truth that behind all the stupendous changes, a conscious and powerful force is engaged in creating and producing the wondrous system of the universe: it gives shape to the remarkable crystallization of the world of creation and traces out the plan and order of being.

The harmony and interconnectedness of millions of natural phenomena and their relationship to life can be explained on the basis of one hypothesis only—namely that we conceive of a Creator for this vast system Who has established the diverse elements of life on this globe by means of a limitless and infinite power and drawn up a program for each of those elements. This hypothesis is in conformity with the harmonious links that we see embedded in a phenomenon.

If we do not accept this hypothesis, how likely is it that such harmony should have come about—accidentally and without purpose among the variegated orders of being? How could it be believed that matter should itself be the origin of millions of attributes and characteristics and thus be the equivalent of the purposeful, wise and all-knowing Creator?

If the world of being did not exist, with all its wonders that bedazzle the intellect and the splendor of which human knowledge cannot fully comprehend, and if the universe consisted simply of a mono-cellular being, still the possibility that such a slight and insignificant entity, together with the order prevailing over it and the necessary conditions and materials, should come into existence as a mere chance, a possibility, an accident, such a possibility represents, according to the Swiss biologist Charles Unguy, so minute a figure as to be mathematically inconceivable.

All the particles of existent beings are subject, both in their internal structure and in their interrelations, to a well-established order. Their composition and their relations with each other are such that they aid

each other to advance along their respective paths to the aims that lie before them.

Benefiting from the relationship they have with all other beings and from their exchange of influence in them as determined by their own composition, they are able to advance toward their aim and destination.

The principal accomplishment of the material sciences is to identify the external aspects and qualities of the world; to identify the essence and true nature of created beings and phenomena lies beyond the grasp of those sciences.

For example, the utmost achievement of which an astronomer is capable is to know whether the billions of spheres in the heavens are fixed and stationary by virtue of centrifugal force or whether they are continuing to rotate while a force of attraction prevents them from colliding with each other and maintains their equilibrium. He may also measure their distance from the earth and their speed and volume by means of scientific instruments.

However, the final result of all this knowledge and experimentation does not extend beyond the interpretation of the external and superficial aspect of creation, for the astronomer is unable to perceive the true nature of the attractive force, the essence of the centrifugal force or the manner in which they and the system they serve came into being.

Scientists can interpret a machine without being aware of the interpretation of the motive power. The natural sciences are similarly incapable of interpreting and analyzing the millions of truths that are embedded in nature and in the human person.

Man has delved into the heart of the atom but has been unable to solve the complex and obscure mysteries of a single living atom. In short, it is these bastions of mystery that the champions of the natural sciences have been unable to conquer.

One of the wonders of creation is the mutual harmony existing between two phenomena that are not contemporaneous with each other. This harmony is of such a nature that the needs of a phenomenon that has not yet come into being are already provided for in the structure of another phenomenon.

The best example of this kind of harmony can be seen in the relationship between mother and child. Among humans and other mammals, as soon as the female becomes pregnant and as the foetus grows in the womb, the mammary gland that produces milk—a pleasant and comprehensive form of nurture—sets to work under the influence of special hormones.

As the foetus grows, this nutritive substance increases in quantity so that when the foetus is on the threshold of birth and is ready to step forth into the broad and limitless world, the nutriment needed by the child and suited to all its bodily needs stands ready.

This ready-made substance is perfectly attuned to the still undeveloped digestive system of the infant. It

is stored in a hidden depot—the breast of the mother, a depot with which the mother was equipped years before the infant took shape. In order to facilitate the feeding of the newly-born infant, small, delicate holes are placed in the tip of the breast—itsself of a size to fit in the mouth of the infant—so that the milk should not flow directly into the mouth of one who does not have the power to swallow it. Instead, the infant draws the daily sustenance it needs from that depot by sucking.

As the newly born infant grows, changes appear in the milk that are linked to his age. It is for this reason that physicians believe the suckling of a newly born infant by wet-nurses who have not born a child in some time to be inadvisable.

Here the question arises: is not the provision for the needs of a being made in the structure of one being for the needs of another being that does not yet exist, something planned and foreseen on the basis of wisdom and exactitude? Is not this provision for the future, this subtle and wondrous interrelation between two beings, the work of a powerful and all-wise power? Is it not a clear sign of the intervention of an infinite power, a great designer and planner, whose purpose is the continuation of life and the growth of all phenomena toward perfection?

We know well that the precise calculations which we can see underlying all machines and industrial tools are the result of the talents and ideas that went into their planning and construction. Similarly, based on our objective observations we can reach the general philosophical conclusion that wherever order and assembly based on balance and calculation are to be observed, will, intelligence and thought should also be sought.

The same precision that can be observed in industrial machines is to be seen to a higher and more remarkable degree in natural beings and their composition. Indeed, the degree of planning and organization visible in nature is at such a high level that the precision expended by man on his own creations cannot in any way be compared with it.

When, without hesitation, we recognize that our industrial order is the product of thought and of will, ought we not perceive the operation of infinite intelligence, will and knowledge behind the precise planning of nature?

In the present age, the science of medicine has reached a degree of progress that permits it to remove a kidney from within the human body and implant it in the body of a person whose kidney has stopped functioning and who is on the verge of death. This advance is assuredly not the result of one physician's labors alone; it draws on the legacy of several millennia.

A transplant operation is then the final stage in a long process, the preliminary stages of which were accomplished by earlier scientists: the ideas and insights of scientists had to accumulate for several thousand years before a kidney transplant could take place.

Is it possible that this result could have been attained without knowledge? Plainly not: powerful human brains had to labor for several millennia for the transplanting of kidneys to be made possible.

Now let us pose another question. Which requires the more knowledge and science: the changing of a tire on the wheel of an automobile—a task which admittedly calls for a certain technical skill—or the manufacture of the tire itself? Which is more significant: the making of the tire or changing it?

Although a kidney transplant is a medically significant procedure, it resembles changing the tire on the wheel of an automobile; it fades into insignificance when compared with the structure of the kidney itself and the mysteries, subtleties and calculations that it contains.

What realistic scientist, sincerely given to seeking the truth could claim today that while a kidney transplant is the result of centuries of continuous scientific research and experimentation, the structure of the kidney itself reveals no trace of a creative intelligence and will, being the product of mere nature—nature which has no more knowledge or awareness than a kindergarten pupil?

Is it not more logical to posit the existence of intelligence, will and planning in the creation of and ordering of the world than to attribute creativity to matter which lacks intelligence, thought, consciousness and the power to innovate?

Belief in the existence of a wise creator is without doubt more logical than faith in the creativity of matter, which has neither perception, consciousness, nor the ability to plan; we cannot attribute to matter all the properties and attributes of intelligence that we see in the world and the ordering will that it displays.

Mufaddal said to Imam as-Sadiq (upon whom be peace!): "Master, some men imagine that the order and precision we see in the world are the work of nature."

The Imam responded: "Ask them whether nature performs all its precisely calculated functions in accordance with knowledge, thought and power of its own. If they say that nature possesses knowledge and power, what is there to prevent them from affirming the eternal divine essence and confessing the existence of that supreme principle?"

If, on the other hand, they say that nature performs its tasks regularly and correctly without knowledge and will, then it follows that these wise functions and precise, well calculated laws are the work of an all-knowing and wise creator. That which they call nature is, in fact, a law and a custom appointed by the hand of divine power to rule over creation."³

The Subtleties of Nature

Consider a malarial mosquito. There is no need to use a microscope; through the customary use of the naked eye you will be able to perceive the precise and complex order contained in that insignificant object.

Within this delicate object there exists a complete set of members and senses, remarkable for their precision: a digestive system, a circulatory system, a nervous system, a respiratory system. The mosquito possesses a fully equipped laboratory: with wonderful precision and speed it processes all the materials it needs. Compare with it a scientific laboratory:

For all the human and economic resources devoted to it, it can never attain the speed, precision and exactitude of the contemptible laboratory of the mosquito. How much time, reflection and intelligence are needed, for example, to manufacture a cure for the mosquito's sting!

When so much planning, thought and precision are needed for man to perform such a task, are not the subtlety, exactitude and orderliness observable in the world a proof of origination deriving from the intelligence, creative planning and far-reaching wisdom of the creator? Is it at all feasible to regard all the precise geometry, functioning and movement of the universe as the outcome of matter in its ignorance? We proclaim most affirmatively that the phenomena of creation express order and regularity; they do not proclaim purposelessness, anarchy and disorder.

If we occasionally perceive weak points in nature this does not imply inadequacy or defect in the vast book of creation. Our thought and perception are unable to soar and take flight, and the reach of our intelligence is too short to understand all the mysteries and enigmas of the universe. Our intellect cannot discern all the aims and goals of existence.

If we are unable to understand the function of a small screw in a great machine, does this give us the right to accuse and condemn its designer as ignorant? Or is that the horizon of our gaze is too narrow to encompass the true aim and purpose of the machine?

Ignorance cannot perform the task of knowledge, knowledge, moreover, that is never commingled with ignorance in any way. If, as the materialists imagine, the world of nature did not arise from knowledge and will (despite the signs of creativity and inventiveness apparent in its every phenomenon) then man, too, in order to attain his purposes would have to abandon his advance on the path of knowledge and imprison himself in ignorance in order to conform to the ignorance of nature itself.

The reality that guides and directs the functioning of the world with such regularity and orderliness possesses an aim, purpose and will that cannot be denied. It cannot be supposed that the ceaseless process of action and reaction advances in a fixed direction without the intervention and supervision of an intelligence.

After years of careful planning and exhausting labor, biochemists have succeeded in discovering certain experimental organisms on a very simple and primitive level from which all trace of life is absent. This scientific triumph was regarded as very valuable and received with great enthusiasm in scientific circles, and nobody claimed that this highly deficient and primitive laboratory creation had come into being as the result of chance, without direction, planning and precision.

This being the case, those who ascribe all the beings in the vast system of the universe, together with their complex and mysterious properties to the blind and unconscious forces of matter, are, in reality, doing violence and injustice to logic and human intelligence and waging open war on the truth.

Give your attention for a minute to a typesetter in a printing house. He expends great care and attention when he is setting the letters required for one page of a book, but when he reviews his work, he comes across small errors arising from some slight inattention. Were the typesetter to take a handful of letters and scatter them over the plate instead of carefully arraying them in rows, is it at all possible that the resulting page should be correct in its contents and free of error?

It would be still more absurd to claim that a hundred kilograms of molten lead, forced through a tube, should emerge in the form of ready made letters; that a fierce tempest should then pick up those letters and arrange them in a particular and regular order on thousands of metal plates; and that these plates should result in the printing of a thousand–page book containing numerous precise scientific discussions and attractive, alluring expressions, all this without the slightest error occurring.

Could anyone support such a theory?

What do the materialists who deny God have to say concerning the emergence of the variegated forms of the letters of creation and the precise and complex relations that regulate the heavenly bodies, natural creation and all material objects? Are the letters of creation (i.e., the atoms and the particles that comprise them) in any way lesser than the letters used in printing?

Is it in any way acceptable that these orderly, meaningful letters, this precise and well–organized geometry, the astounding forms depicted in the book of creation, should be the work of ignorance and aimlessness? That a great and wise power, a miraculous ordering principle, should not be present in the very texture of the world? Do not all phenomena arise from a manifestation of consciousness, awareness and power?

If the power hidden in the depths of matter does not arise from the universal intelligence, what factor guides it to the elaboration of forms, to an amazing regularity and harmony?

If that power is an agent devoid of intelligence and conscious will, why does it never fall prey to disorder, and why does its compounding of matter never result in collision and destruction?

It is here that belief in the creator bestows meaning on all existence and endows the world with sense and content. Those who possess deep vision and clear thought perceive plainly that an infinite power assures the preservation of the order of the world by means of firm supervision and absolute sovereignty.

In the past, everyone used to guide and control his own riding beast, and he was similarly accustomed throughout the ages to see an owner or supervisor in control of every piece of property, every scrap of

land, every group or organization. Now matters are different. Today's man has gained access to remote-controlled satellites, electronic devices and pilotless planes, all equipped with automatic instruments and gadgets.

Everyone knows that it is possible to construct a well equipped machine that will react in appropriate ways to various contingencies, without the maker of the device being present or visible. We, therefore, no longer have the right obstinately to deny the existence of God simply because His hand is not visibly at work in the affairs of creation—visibly, that is, to our deficient understanding and knowledge.

It would, of course, be a highly defective analogy were we to draw a parallel with the maker of an artificial satellite or rocket who sitting in a fully equipped station on earth and with the aid of complex equipment guides and controls the course and movement of a spaceship.

But if the intervention of God's hand in the order of creation is not visible to our physical eye and perception (although we can observe signs and indications that are like a ray proceeding from the splendor of His majesty) can we for that reason overlook the existence of a planner and mover who alone possesses true knowledge, power and will, simply because he cannot be contained in the narrow framework of time and space?

It is true that our capacities are limited in understanding a being who is without all like or exemplar in the sensory realm and whom human language is unable to describe fittingly and precisely. The lamp of our intelligence sheds little light on this endless plain, or—to put it differently—it encounters walls of limitation. A

t the same time, our relations in this world are with phenomena; that which impresses itself on our minds consists of the lines that are traced out by the observance of the objective world. But in perceiving that world, the problem of imagining it is removed from us; no barrier exists between our concepts and the necessary amount of cognition.

Nonetheless, certain skeptical persons who have abandoned the sound mode of thought that derives from man's essential nature and who have become limitingly accustomed to the existent entities of nature constantly await the occurrence of a miracle from God which will rupture the current order of nature in order to make a gift to them of faith and belief, making His existence readily comprehensible and acceptable.

However, they overlook that whatever new traces and signs of God might appear will cause only a temporary excitement and agitation; with the passage of time, they will become "normal" and no longer arouse attention.

Although all phenomena are now included in the framework of the order of creation, they began by rupturing the order of nature, and since all beings have been repeated on the stage of the world since the first manifestation, they now appear to be normal and customary.

By contrast, a sensorially imperceptible being—a being, moreover, that is replete with splendor and majesty and full of sanctity and greatness—will always influence men's souls. Their attention to such a being will, indeed, always increase and they will constantly look towards it with desire.

It is the dominance of a spirit of obstinacy, of judgment based on a discordant logic, that shackles human thought with limitations. For every creature in the order of being is an adequate proof for those who purse and empty their minds of obstinacy and the causes of denial.

[1.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, III, pp. 103–104.

[2.](#) Morrison, Raz-i Afarinish, pp. 102–104.

[3.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, II, p.21.

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