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**THE RECONSTRUCTION OF ISLAMIC
THOUGHT IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
AND BEDIUZZAMAN SAID NURSI**

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by Şükran Vahide

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Cause and Effect in the Risale-i Nur

Yamina Bouguenaya Mermer

"Recite in the name of your Sustainer Who created..."

We have all read or heard of how the first revelations came to Muhammad (PBUH). He first received revelation in the cave on Mount Hira, where he went frequently to plunge himself in profound contemplation, having withdrawn from daily occupations. Before conveying his Sustainer's command, Gabriel, the bearer of revelation, enveloped Muhammad in his embrace until he could endure no more and could almost not breathe. He then related the first command: "Read! (or Recite!)" Muhammad the Trustworthy, who remained apart from those who had taken false gods for themselves and performed his duty of worship of his Single God alone in a cave, gave this answer: "I don't know how to read." Gabriel did not leave it at that; he again embraced Muhammad as though to crack his ribs, and again said: "Read! (or Recite!)" What was the exhausted and hopeless Muhammad (PBUH) to recite, and how? Anyone who did not know how to do what they call "reading," for example, to read "a text," would give the same answer: "I don't know how to read." But because Gabriel the Trustworthy knew very well that Muhammad (PBUH) knew true "reading," he embraced God's Beloved once again, and saying: "Read!", he conveyed the first revelation: "Read in the name of your Sustainer who created..", which teaches what was intended, and how and why it should be read.

Through the revelation he received, Muhammad (PBUH), God's Messenger, who because we supposed 'reading' referred only to the reading of texts, we

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thought did not know how to read, was charged with the duty of teaching all mankind until the end of the world how to read.¹

What is intended by this event, which everyone knows about, is quite clear to me. The verse, which is related to be the first revelation, states clearly what this person was to teach, who did not know how to read the writings on animal skins or leaves of paper: the teacher of "reading in the Name of the Sustainer Who created..."

From beginning to end, the Risale-i Nur, which never compromises its rule of taking the Qur'an as its guide, explains, through the lesson it has received from that Glorious Teacher (PBUH) what, why, and how we should read in the name of our Sustainer, in a way that all sorts of people can understand, employing the Qur'anic methods of comparison, allegory, and repetition.

Reading the Universe

The Holy Qur'an mentions for example, the heavens 310 times, the earth 451 times, creation 262 times, the word *āyat* meaning for the most part 'sign' rather than (Qur'anic) 'verse' 382, pointing out that these are signs and witnesses making known God. With phrases like, "So look at...", "Do they not see...?", "Do they not think...?", it calls on us repeatedly to look at the universe and creation and to ponder over it.

In the Risale-i Nur, which follows the Qur'an, one frequently comes across expressions like "Come, look all around you and note everything carefully," "We see that...", "When every conscious being that comes into the world opens its eyes, it sees that..." Together with inviting us to look, it shows that all things are signs and evidences making known our Maker and teaches us the method of reading and deciphering them. This is the education of "reading" everything "in the name of our Sustainer who created." The saying "And in all things are signs indicating that He is One," which is repeated in many places in the Risale-i Nur and teaches that all creatures make known the Single One of Unity, makes it clear that it has taken the way of the Qur'an.

For the Qur'an teaches us how the universe should be read, how we should understand its testifying to the Divine existence and unity:

*Behold in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding.*²

In this verse, our Sustainer teaches us what is the equivalent of the key to achieve this "reading:" "in the creation," that is, considering *the manner of creation*.

Now, by means of an example, we may make an analysis of "reading" by considering *the manner of creation*.

1. Almost everywhere in the Risale-i Nur, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is portrayed as having the function of a teacher who instructs humanity how 'to read,' or the subjects treated are analyzed in the light of what he taught. See in particular, the Nineteenth Word, Nineteenth Letter, Eleventh Word, the Eleventh Proof of the First Station of the Twenty-Second Word, the Third and Fifth Branches of the Twenty-Fourth Word.

2. Qur'an, 3:190.

They told us at school that plants produce their own food under the name of photosynthesis. We should first leave aside the preconception of themselves producing it, which has been implanted in our brains, and note together how their food is produced, that is, the food's *manner of creation*.

If you crush the leaf of any plant in your hand, your fingers will be stained green. The substance that causes this is chlorophyll. The chlorophyll, which we see, is made up of atoms of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, and magnesium, and works like a food factory. It *captures* sunlight, it *draws* water from the plant's roots, and *ensures* the production of hydrogen, oxygen, and energy stores known as ATP. Oxygen, which is vital for animate beings, is *given* to the air. The above steps form the first stage of the process of photosynthesis.

In the second stage, the energy store and hydrogen *take* carbon dioxide, which is toxic for us, from the air, and sugar *is produced*. A part of this sugar is *used* to perpetuate the plant's own life. And some of it is *used* in the production of starch, carbohydrates, and protein. In this way both the air *is purified* of poisonous gas, and food *is produced* for humans and animals.

You probably looked at what I have said and thought that photosynthesis was very complex. In fact, it is a process of successive events perhaps a thousand times more complex than what I have explained. The Nobel Prize for Chemistry was awarded to someone called Calvin, who was one of the scientists who have claimed down the centuries to have solved the riddle of the universe, for having found the order of the chemical reactions which occur in only the second stage, and set them down as formulae.

If the Nobel Prize is given to someone who has been able to formulate one part of the process of photosynthesis, what prize should be given to the one who makes that factory, which so small as to be invisible, function?

Let us summarize the benefits produced by photosynthesis: the air, which is vital for all animate beings, is cleansed by carbon dioxide being taken from it and oxygen given to it. And this is carried out in the most direct way, with the least cost, causing no harm, in a way that is beautiful, colourful, delicious and full of art. Results as important as these, and benefits as perfect, could only be the consequence of a will and purpose. In which case, these results must have been intentionally planned beforehand. In order to do this planning, it is necessary to know all animals and humans, and their needs, and to have compassion on them. In fact, it is necessary to have compassion for human beings in order to prepare delicious, pleasant smelling, artistic food for them, in a way that addresses all their senses. In order to achieve all these aims, it is necessary to:

- i. know all the substances used in photosynthesis down to their finest details; and to know the sun, air, and water;
- ii. have complete knowledge of all plants, in which they work, which are all different and therefore function according to different systems, and to work in harmony with them;
- iii. know perfectly the physical make up of the living beings which will

consume the food that is produced, and the systems according to which they function, and to work faultlessly in their bodies;

iv. have complete power so as to be able to control all these functions, make them subject to one's command and make them work. This power has to be such that it extends from the water, air, and minerals in the earth, and from man and the animals to the sun.

Only one possessing all the above characteristics can carry out photosynthesis and prepare our food for us. That is, no one can do all these matters other than one possessing infinite knowledge and power.

This means that all the substances—that is, causes—connected with the process of photosynthesis either work through the command and will of one possessing infinite knowledge and infinite power, or each possesses infinite knowledge and power itself, so that it can carry out these perfect processes faultlessly, without confusion, at exactly the right time and at exactly the right place. Everyone who thinks knows that carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, water and sunlight possess not even a miniscule amount of knowledge, will, power, or compassion, let alone an infinite amount. They lack intelligence, will, and power. As it says in the Qur'an,

*Have they feet to walk with? Or hands to lay hold with? Or eyes to see with? Or ears to hear with?*³

Materialist science is prejudiced and deifies causes

It is clear that none of these substances possess any characteristics that are their own and are directly their own property. Why then, although this is a fact, do the science books say that they carry out these functions themselves? Why, through expressions like "the plant produces its own food," "chlorophyll captures the energy in the sunlight. The compound ATP stores some of this energy within itself," "the rest of the captured energy divides the water between the oxygen and hydrogen," is it shown the plants, chlorophyll, ATP and sunlight do these things themselves?

These books have been written by materialist scientists. Due to their prejudice, they deny the existence of a Creator who creates everything. They look at the universe as though there was no Creator. They discover the order in the universe, everything of which was created within an order. Since the order was created together with particular causes and particular effects, they observe that a particular cause is together with a particular effect. Looking at events with the preconception of there being no Creator, they are compelled to assert that the causes make the effects. Since they consider the causes to possess the perfections observed in the effects, they state that as in the example above, the chlorophyll, sunlight, water, and so on, possess attributes like infinite knowledge, will, power, and compassion. And this is to attribute the attributes of Godhead to causes.

3. Qur'an, 7:195.

To ascribe even the least effect, which is the work of will and power, to causes, which are themselves in need of being made and possess neither intelligence, nor consciousness, nor will, nor power, —let alone Divine attributes— is “delirious raving.”⁴

The Qur'an states as follows that it is impossible to ascribe divinity to any being other than the Single Creator, Who continuously creates all things:

*Yet they have taken besides Him, gods that can create nothing but are themselves created; that have no control of hurt or good to themselves; nor can they control death nor life nor resurrection.⁵ * Do they indeed ascribe to Him as partners things that can create nothing, but are themselves created. * No aid can they give them, nor can they aid themselves!⁶*

If there had been any being other than God that possessed the attributes of divinity, it certainly would have intervened in creation and dominicality, and the order of the universe would have been spoilt. But just as the perfect order in all things from the tiniest fly and a particle in the pupil of an eye to the solar system shows that causes are not effective, so it testifies clearly to the existence and unity of a Necessarily Existent One.

Materialist science is based on a negative approach

Scientists have never at any time or in any way been able to prove that causes have a true effect, and they cannot prove it. They are aware of this. It is therefore not possible to prove that causes have an effect. Even if it was proved in principle that they do not have an effect, since up to now no one has been able to prove it, they say that the thesis that causes have an effect is an accepted truth.

To take our example, materialist scientists say that causes like sunlight, water and air, etc. are effective factors in the formation of nutrients. And to “prove” this they deprive a plant of water or sunlight, and demonstrate that it withers up and dies; that is, that photosynthesis is not carried out, and therefore nutrients not produced. Thus, they say, *if there is no* water or light, the nutrients are not produced. And going on from this “*if there is no*” they reach the conclusion that “water or sunlight produces the nutrients.” They suppose that in this way they have proved their thesis.

If it is noted carefully, it is seen that this is a negative approach; it is not a proof.⁷

4. Nursî, Bediüzzaman Said, *Lem'alar*, İstanbul, Sözlür Yayınevi 1995, 185 / *The Flashes Collection* [Eng. tr: Şükran Vahide], İstanbul, Sözlür Publications 1995, 235).

5. Qur'an, 25:3.

6. Qur'an, 7:191-2; *Şualar*, 527

7. This approach is to be found everywhere in the Risale-i Nur and is summarized in the below passage: “What deceives those who worship apparent causes is the two things coming together or being together, which is called ‘association;’ they suppose the two things cause one another. Also, since the non-existence of one thing is the cause of a bounty being non-existent, they suppose that the thing’s existence is also the cause of the bounty’s existence. They offer their thanks and gratitude to the thing and fall into error. For a bounty’s existence results from all the bounty’s conditions and preliminaries. Whereas the bounty’s non-existence occurs through the non-existence of only a single condition.” See, *Lem'alar*, 136-7 / *The Flashes Collection*, 182.

On pressing the on/off button on a television, a picture appears on the screen. Whenever we press the button, the picture appears. While if we do not press it, there is no picture. According to the logic of the negative approach of materialist scientists, "the button makes the picture on the screen." And the "proof" of this is that the picture does not appear when the button is not pressed. They do not think that the broadcasting is done outside, and it is not the button that does it. The button is merely part of the order of the television equipment. The person who made the television intentionally situated the button in the apparatus so the picture would appear on the screen. What logic is there if someone was to tell you that if you do not accept that the button produces the picture, make the picture appear without pressing it? The order and system of the television makes it impossible to work it without pressing the button. Because it was not made in that way. If the person says to you when you cannot make the television work without the button "There you are! It's the button which makes the picture," you would only laugh at the person.⁸

Who is the Creator of the system and order?

The fact that the result is not achieved when one of the causes is missing can in no way be proof that the cause in question had the effect. At the most, it is evidence that a particular cause and particular effect are made *together*.⁹ This is proof that the relation of cause and effect is established within an *order*.

Materialist scientists claim that because nutrients are not produced when there is no sunlight, it is the light that produces them. In order to prove this, they say "carry out photosynthesis without sunlight."

The universe was created within an order. This order is how the Creator creates or is the manner of His creation. It is His *sunna*. The order continues because He does not change the manner of His creation.¹⁰ Creating photosynthesis and sunlight together is the manifestation of the order. The Creator creates photosynthesis and light together. He established the order of food production in this way. Photosynthesis is done without light so it might be investigated who does it. Proof of what is not cannot be required. The question is to prove who does what is; who does photosynthesis with light.

The Qur'an does not say that God creates without causes. So what does it say? It says that it is God that creates both cause and effect; that it is God that ties cause and effect together within an order. It teaches that it is God Who creates both sunlight, and chlorophyll, and the nutrients. It states that those who do not accept this have to claim that there is in the sunlight, infinite knowledge, will,

8. The basic arguments of this debate are set out in *Dispute With The Devil*, see, *Mektûbat*, Istanbul, Sözlür Yayınevi 1994, 295-304 / *Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, Letters 1928-1932* [Eng. tr.], Sözlür Publications, 1994, 365-376.

9. Qur'an, 14:32. See also, 2:22; 6:99; 16:65; 35:27; 43:11; 50:9. A summary of the argument that causes have no effect, which is one of the basic questions dealt with in the *Risale-i Nur*, is this: "[God Almighty] creates cause and effect together directly. And in order to demonstrate His wisdom and the manifestation of His Names, by establishing a apparent causal relationship and connection through order and sequence, He makes causes and nature a veil to the hand of His power..." See, *Mektûbat*, 193 / *Letters*, 244).

10. See, Qur'an, 48:23; 30:30; 33:62; 35:43.

power, and compassion, which are necessary to make the nutrients; but that it is impossible to prove this.

*Or have they taken for worship [other] gods besides Him? Say, "bring your convincing proof..."*¹¹

We may recall the meaningful conversation in the Qur'an between Abraham and Nimrod: employing the order God has placed, Nimrod claimed: "*I give life and death.*" To which Abraham replied: "*But it is God that causes the sun to rise from the east; so you cause it to rise in the west.*" At which answer, Nimrod was "confounded."¹²

We are bound to try to understand this lesson in belief in Divine unity given by the Qur'an if we do not want to be faced with the danger of tainting our ideas and worlds with associating partners with God, and should also look at the universe in this way. As students of the Qur'an, we should take this lesson from the Qur'an: "My Creator is He Who makes food *from* sunlight, *from* water, and *from* carbon dioxide."¹³ Also, in the light of the instruction we have received from the Qur'an, we should say this to those who do not accept the Creator and claim the sunlight makes the food: "Take the sunlight and without using the order placed by the Creator, for instance without using the leaf of a tree, make it produce food. Or make it do anything at all. Or if you like, gather together all the causes and obtain a result. Since you say causes do it, without following the order God has laid down, without using a fly's egg for instance, make a fly by gathering together all the causes."¹⁴

*Those on whom you call besides God, cannot create [even] a fly, if they all met together for the purpose! And if the fly should snatch away anything from them, they would have no power to release it from the fly. Feeble are those who petition and those whom they petition!*¹⁵

Clearly, causes cannot create, for they are created. Causes are only signs and means for making known their Creator.¹⁶

11. Qur'an, 21:24; see also, Qur'an, 27:64.

12. Qur'an, 2:258.

13. Qur'an, 24:45; see also, 22:5; 86:6; 2:164; 21:30; 16:66; 25:54, etc.

14. "If all material causes were to gather together and if they possessed will, they could not gather together the being of a single fly and its systems and organs with their particular balance. And even if they could gather them together, they could not make them remain in the specified measure of the being. And even if they could make them remain thus, they could not make those minute particles, which are constantly being renewed and coming into existence and working, work regularly and in order. In which case, self-evidently, causes cannot claim ownership of things. That is to say, their True Owner is someone else." *Lem'alar*, 252 / *The Flashes Collection*, 308). See also, *Sözler*, İstanbul, Sözler Yayınevi 1993, 573-81; 590 / *The Words* [Eng. trans. Şükran Vahide], Sözler Publications 1992, 619-27; 636-7.

15. Qur'an, 22:73.

16. There are numerous verses in the Qur'an stating that creatures are 'signs' (*āyāt*). For example, 2:164. It is shown throughout the *Risale-i Nur* that causes are all 'signs' making known their Maker. For an example, see the Third Window of the Fourth Flash, in the Second Station of the Twenty-Second Word, and the Second Point of the Second Aim of the Thirtieth Word. Here it explains how by carrying out important functions despite their impotence, all particles testify to the existence of the Necessarily Existent, and how, by acting as though consciously in conformity with the general order of the universe as well as conforming to particular order of the places they are found, they testify to His unity.

The Qur'an proves Divine Unity

The universe's creation is within an order. This order necessitates that creatures always come into existence under the same conditions. These conditions give rise to the result that all creatures come into existence together with other creatures. We observe this togetherness in the form of the cause and effect relationship. Whenever people are not aware of this and sink into heedlessness and habit, there is a very high possibility that they fail to see that cause and effect are created together and deviate into supposing that causes have an actual effect. It is mistaken to suppose that causes have an actual effect when it is God that makes both. It is to deviate into false thinking. To claim that effects are the work of causes, is knowingly or unknowingly to associate partners with God, even if the person says: "God created the universe." In order to prevent people making this fearsome mistake, the Qur'an continuously states in the clearest terms that nothing at all other than God possesses the attributes of Divinity, and that under whatever name, no cause has attributes like maker, creator, giver of sustenance, bringer down of rain from the skies, and raiser of plants from the earth.

Say: "Who is it that sustains you [in life] from the sky and from the earth? Or who is it that has power over hearing and sight? And who is it that brings out the living from the dead and the dead from the living? And who is it that rules and regulates all affairs?" They will soon say, "God." Say, "Will you not then show piety [to Him]?"¹⁷

From beginning to end, the Qur'an teaches this, because associating partners with God is the most serious possible danger one can think of. No one of any intelligence can deny the existence of a Sustainer Who creates the heavens, earth, and all of us. It is because of this that Satan tries to push us not towards denial but towards associating partners with God. The Qur'an continually warns us against this satanic device, and calls on us to follow the broad path of affirming Divine unity.

Since first and foremost the Qur'an teaches this, the Risale-i Nur, which receives instruction from the Qur'an, does the same. It is seen in the Risale-i Nur, that its first task is to close the paths leading to associating partners with God. This is the purpose of its expressing on every opportunity that causes are created only as a veil to the manifestation of Divine power, that they cannot have any true effect that will have a result, and that only God, the Single One of Unity, can make the effects. Such statements are frequently to be encountered in the Risale-i Nur.

"... all apparent causes are only veils; they have no true effect in creation; if it is not for His will and command, nothing, not even a minute particle, can move."¹⁸

17. Qur'an, 10:31; see also, 13:16; 29:61; 39:38; 43:9, 15, 87; 12:105-6.

18. *Şualar*, 532. See also, the introduction to *Lem'alar in Mesnevi-yi Nûriye*. The following expresses very succinctly the position of causes: "Yes, dignity and grandeur demand that causes are a veil to the Hand of Power in the view of the mind, while Divine Unity and Oneness require that causes withdraw their hands from [having] an actual effect. (*Şualar*, 223).

If only people would think what it means to claim causes have effect, they would understand what a great lie¹⁹ and slander it is. If it is not said that all results or effects are directly the works of God, the Single One of Unity, then all the Divine attributes have to be ascribed to the cause of an effect.

This is because all things in the universe are tied to one another. A single thing can exist only in the totality of the universe. It is necessary to know the whole universe and possess power enough to have everything in existence under one's disposal in order to make one thing, so that the thing can be placed in the universe in the most meaningful and beneficial fashion and for it to function in harmony with other things.

If we employ an example given in the Risale-i Nur, a particle situated in the pupil of the eye has duties and benefits in relation to the nerves and blood vessels in the eye, with the face, head, and body, with other human beings and with all the beings the eye sees. Only one who creates all the members of the body can situate that particle in the pupil of the eye. Since man then has relations with all the universe, only the one who creates the universe can create man.²⁰ It is necessary to possess innumerable attributes in order to be able to create the universe: infinite knowledge, infinite will, infinite power, infinite compassion, and so on. Is it possible that causes, which are in need of everything apart from themselves, could possess infinite attributes such as those?

For instance, it is said that plants "produce" their own food. What attributes does the plant possess so that it should be able to do this? Does it have intelligence so that it could plan those tremendous processes? Does it have eyes, so that it can see all the things in its environment and function in harmony with them? Does it have power so that it can make them work as it commands? Does it have compassion, so that it can store up the nutrients in excess to its needs and give them to other living beings who are going to eat it?²¹ The answer is clear: no! The poor plant has neither intelligence, nor power, nor compassion.

*Those whom they invoke besides God create nothing and are themselves created.*²²

So why do the scientists who win Nobel Prizes make such a mistake that seems so simple? Do they not realize that an unconscious particle itself cannot do these things, which leave even man in amazement? Yes, they do know, but as it says in the Risale-i Nur, "Since the unbelievers do not accept a Necessarily

19. See, Qur'an, 10:66; 6:116; 53:23; 16:105.

20. See the Second Point of the Second Aim of the Thirtieth Word (Sözler, 537-9 / *The Words*, 576-8).

21. It is stated in various contexts in the Qur'an in order to show that apart from God no cause has any effect, that causes possess nothing of themselves and that of themselves they can supply none of things we ask of them. For example, *Were they created out of nothing, or were they themselves the creators? * Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Nay, they have no firm belief* (52:35-6). And, *...Such is God your Sustainer; to Him belongs all dominion. And those whom you invoke besides Him have not the least power. * If you invoke them, they will not listen to your call, and if they were to listen, they cannot answer your [prayer]* (35:13-14). See also, 13:14; 56:63-4, 68-9; 7:194; 88:17-20; 20:35; 46:4; 26:72-3; 40:20, etc.

22. Qur'an, 16:20.

Existent One, they are compelled according to their beliefs to accept as many false gods as there are particles. Thus, no matter how illustrious a philosopher or scholar he may be, an unbeliever is in profound ignorance to the utmost degree."²³

Those who say that causes have an effect are truly compelled to ascribe the attributes of divinity to causes. But this is not because they exalt them and suppose them to be god, but because they consider themselves to be great and do not want to accept an absolute Sustainer Whose commands they will be obliged to conform to.

*For they, when they were told that there is no god except God, would puff themselves up with pride.²⁴ * Then shall We say to those who joined gods [with Us]: "to your place! You and those you joined as 'partners.'" We shall separate them, and their 'partners' will say: "It was not us that you worshipped! * Enough is God for a witness between us and you; we certainly knew nothing of your worship of us!"²⁵*

Both causes and effects show the Divine Names

The order of the universe was established in such a way that it makes known to us our Creator. All causes are created together with the effects in a wise and purposeful arrangement. Numerous benefits and aims are observed in all the relationships of causes and effects. The Qur'an points out the wise purposes and significant benefits in the effects so that it will be understood that unconscious causes are infinitely distant from intending them and creating them, and it may be understood that causes are only veils and these wise aims are the work of One Who is All-Knowing, Wise, and Powerful, possessing infinite knowledge, wisdom and power.

The Qur'an dismisses causes from owning their effects; it separates them. In this way, it makes known our Sustainer to us together with His beautiful Names. The Risale-i Nur follows this method and explains how the Divine Names may be seen through the Qur'an's light.

When seen from afar, mountain peaks on the horizon appear to be adjacent to the sky. But as one approaches, it is understood that there is an infinite distance between the earth and the sky. As in this example, when seen from afar, that is, when seen superficially without questioning, causes and effects appear to be adjacent. But on drawing close, that is, when they are scrutinized intentionally and their characteristics questioned, it is realized that there is in reality a great distance between cause and effect. That is, it is understood that the cause which appears to be most powerful has not the slightest influence on an effect which appears the most simple. Everything is directly a miracle of Divine power. The effect's cause does not possess the absolute knowledge, absolute power, and absolute will necessary for the occurrence of the effect. Cause and effect have no

23. See the First Aim of the Thirtieth Word, and the Second Point of its Second Aim.

24. Qur'an, 37:35.

25. Qur'an, 10:28-9.

relationship by which they affect each other. It is only the Creator's wise and purposeful arrangement that has created them side by side. When one realizes the existence of this arrangement and the cause is dismissed from having any effect, it becomes perfectly clear that everything is a "miracle." Should all causes unite even, they would be powerless to create the least significant being, for instance a mosquito. Mosquitoes are miracles before which all causes are impotent. For miracles are not events outside the events that determinists like Descartes, who got caught up on causality, called "ordinary," and are outside the general order of the universe. Miracle means something "before which all things, all causes, are impotent;" and since all causes are impotent to make even the smallest fly, everything is a miracle of our Sustainer.

Understanding this saves us from the error of supposing that cause and effect are connected and that effects are the works of causes. To suppose that is not an unimportant error. For so long as we make it, we are open to the danger of associating partners with God, against which the Qur'an continuously warns us. We may know the Divine Names in certain fashion only when we are saved from that situation and see all things directly as His art and miracle.

Just as it is understood on climbing the hill that the vast distance exists between the earth and the sky — and it is in that space that the stars rise; in exactly the same way, when it is understood that cause and effect cannot affect each other, a distance so vast opens up between them that "in the vast distance between cause and effect the Divine Names rise like stars."²⁶

We see that this way, this method, is taught in the Qur'an from beginning to end. The Risale-i Nur follows this Qur'anic method exactly. Doubtless this will be best explained with an example.

For example, in Sura 'Abasa, by mentioning miracles of Divine power in a purposeful sequence, the Qur'an ties causes to effects and points to an aim at its conclusion with the words *for use and convenience to you*. This aim proves that within the sequence of all the causes and effects is a hidden disposer who sees and follows the aim, and that the causes are a veil to him.

*Then let man consider his sustenance. * For that We pour forth water in abundance. * And We split the earth into fragments. * And We produce therein corn, * And grapes and nutritious plants, * And olives and dates, * And enclosed gardens, dense with lofty trees, * And fruits and fodder, * For use and convenience to you and your cattle.*²⁷

"Indeed, with the phrase, *for use and convenience to you and your cattle*, it dismisses all the causes from the ability to create. It is in effect saying: rain comes from the sky in order to produce food for you and your animals. Since water does not possess the ability to pity and feel compassion for you and produce food, it means that the rain does not come, it is sent. And the earth produces plants and your food comes from there. But lacking feelings and intelligence, it is far beyond the ability of the earth to think of your sustenance and feel compassion for you, so

26. Sözlür, 411 / *The Words*, 435.

27. Qur'an, 80:24:32.

it does not produce it itself. Furthermore, since it is remote from plants and trees to consider your food and compassionately produce fruits and grains for you, the verse demonstrates that they are strings and ropes which One All-Wise and Compassionate extends from behind the veil, to which He attaches His bounties and holds out to animate creatures. And so from this explanation numerous Divine Names rise, like All-Compassionate, Provider, Bestower, and All-Generous.”²⁸

In brief:

“... The results, purposes, and benefits attached to effects demonstrate self-evidently that they are the works of an All-Generous Sustainer, an All-Wise and Compassionate One, beyond the veil of causes. For unconscious causes certainly cannot think of some aim and work for it. Yet we see that each creature which comes into existence does so following not one, but many aims, benefits, and instances of wisdom. This means an All-Wise and Generous Sustainer makes those things and sends them... Furthermore, all the finely adorned plants which smile at creatures and the embellishments and displays in animals self-evidently point to the necessary existence and unity of an All-Glorious One behind the veil of the Unseen; One Who wants to make Himself known and loved through these beautifully adorned fine arts. That is to say, this adornment in things and these displays and embellishment indicate certainly the attributes of making known and making loved. While the attributes of making known and making loved self-evidently testify to the necessary existence and unity of an All-Powerful Maker Who is Loving and Known.

“In Short:

“i. Since causes are extremely commonplace and impotent and the effects attributed to them are most valuable and full of art, this dismisses causes.

“ii. And the aims and benefits of effects also discharge ignorant and lifeless causes, and hand them over to an All-Wise Maker.

“iii. Also, the adornment and skill on the face of effects indicates a Wise Maker Who wants to make His power known to conscious beings and desires to make Himself loved.”²⁹

Conceptual *Diagram* (See overleaf)

Conclusion

The universe exists in order to make known to us our Creator. By considering the manner in which beings are created, those who think may find attributes which pertain to their Creator.³⁰ Man was created with senses and faculties that enquire into where both he and the beings around him came from, where they will go to, and what functions they are performing; they seek the answers. The universe was also ordered in a way that supplies the answers to these questions.

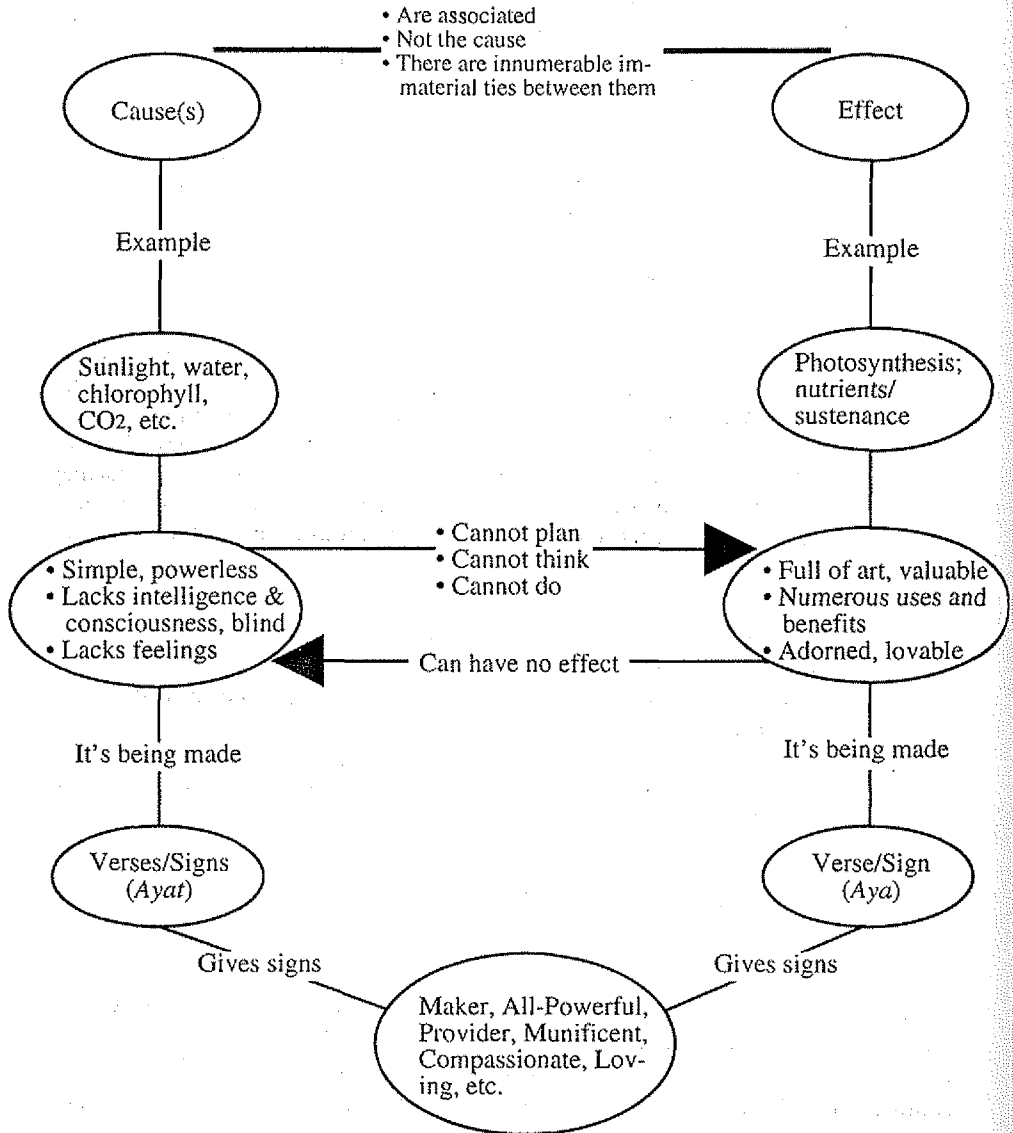
Since the universe and all its beings are meaningful, full of art, lovable, and comprise numerous benefits, they make known to us its Creator together with

28. Sözlür, 393-4 / *The Words*, 435-6.

29. Sözlür, 635 / *The Words*, 712.

30. See, Qur'an, 3:191, etc.

Conceptual Diagram



His Beautiful Names. Since this is so, believers should study the universe down to its finest details; they should get to know their Sustainer through it; and act in accordance with the wisdom and purposes in its creation. Indeed, man was created to know his Sustainer and to offer thanks and worship to Him alone.³¹

31. See, Qur'an, 51:56.

Since the person who knows his Sustainer through the testimony of the universe knows that causes have no effect even in his daily relations with the universe, he will consciously have recourse to the Creator of causes directly. When he has recourse to causes, it will be a prayer to the causes' Creator. Due to this understanding, the farmer who ploughs his field is basically knocking on the door of his Sustainer, Who is the Compassionate Provider. In his view, it is not only human beings who offer prayer; the gathering together of all the causes God charges with duties when He creates something, is also the prayer of beings to their Sustainer.³²

It is a great crime for believers to leave this meaningful, wise, and purposeful universe to the hands of the materialists and turn a blind eye to their condemning it to meaninglessness, purposelessness, chance and coincidence under the name of "scientific study." The believer should take the universe in his hand, see it as a book, and under the guidance of the Qur'an, "which teaches the meanings of the book of the universe,"³³ read it in the name of his Sustainer. This is "scientific study" for the believer. In whatever field of knowledge he works, it is the duty of every believer who follows the wisdom of the Qur'an to open up that long distance between cause and effect and to see the Most Beautiful Divine Names which show themselves clearly in that space, and to display them. The diagram given above shows the outline of this study.

Everything from the smallest unit of the universe to the largest —minute particles, cells, plants, animals, man, the land, the seas, the planets, the stars, and so on— must be made the subject of research and be seen as an "ascent in knowledge of God"³⁴ (a means,³⁵ or stairway, to knowledge of God). There will be technological advances in the course of these researches, which will be the means to thanks since they will be seen as Divine bounties. Only "scientific studies" of this sort will be the means to happiness in both this world and the hereafter by making known to humanity its Sustainer.

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32. *Mektûbat*, 285-6 / *Letters*, 353-4.

33. *Sözler*, 426 / *The Words*, 452.

34. *Sözler*, 645-6 / *The Words*, 698-9.

35. The Qur'an enjoins us to attempt every such means. See, 5:35 and 17:57.