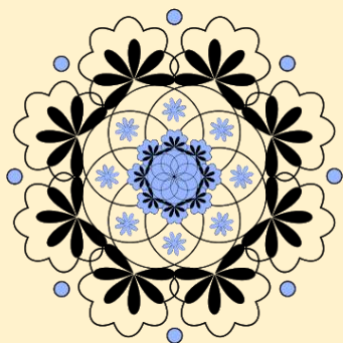


**THE MANIFESTATIONS
OF MERCY, WISDOM
AND JUSTICE IN
TROUBLES AND
CALAMITIES**



**FROM THE RISALE-I NUR COLLECTION
BEDIUZZAMAN SAID NURSI**

From The Eighteenth Word...

Second Point

This Point elucidates one meaning of the verse: Who has created everything in the best way, {Qur'an, 32:7.} and is as follows:

In everything, even the things which appear to be the most ugly, there is an aspect of true beauty. Yes, everything in the universe, every event, is either in itself beautiful, which is called 'essential beauty,' or it is beautiful in regard to its results, which is called 'relative beauty.' There are certain events which are apparently ugly and confused, but beneath that apparent veil, there are most shining instances of beauty and order.

Beneath the veil of stormy rains and muddy soil in the season of spring are hidden the smiles of innumerable beautiful flowers and well-ordered plants. And behind the veils of the harsh destruction and mournful separations of autumn is the discharge from the duties of their lives of the amiable small animals, the friends of the coy flowers, so as to preserve them from the blows and torments of winter events, which are manifestations of Divine might and glory, and under the veil of which the way is paved for the new and beautiful spring.

Beneath the veil of events like storms, earthquakes, and plague, is the unfolding of numerous hidden immaterial flowers. The seeds of many potentialities which have not developed sprout and grow beautiful on account of events

which are apparently ugly. As though general upheavals and universal change are all immaterial rain. But because man is both enamoured of the apparent and is self-centered, he considers only the externals and pronounces them ugly. Since he is self-centred, he reasons according to the result which looks to himself and judges it to be ugly. Whereas, if, of their aims one looks to man, thousands look to their Maker's Names.

For example, man reckons to be harmful and meaningless thorned plants and trees, which are among the great miracles of the Creator's power. Whereas they are the well-equipped heroes of the grasses and trees. And for example, hawks harrying sparrows is apparently incompatible with mercy, but through this harrying, the sparrow's abilities unfold. And for example, he considers the snow to be very cold and uninviting, but under that chilly, unpleasing veil there are aims so warm and results so sweet they defy description.

From The Fifteenth Ray...

Third Phrase: **'The Merciful, the Compassionate'**

An extremely brief allusion to the proof in this phrase:

Yes, the existence and reality of a boundless mercy is as clearly apparent in the universe as the light of the sun. As certainly as light testifies to the sun, so this extensive mercy testifies to a Most Merciful and Compassionate One behind the veil of the Unseen. An important part of mercy being

sustenance, that mercy is signified by the Name of Provider. As for sustenance, it points to an All-Compassionate Provider so clearly that anyone with an iota of intelligence is compelled to affirm Him. For example, He sends food to all living beings, particularly to the helpless and young, throughout the earth and the atmosphere, in truly wondrous fashion beyond their wills and power, from seeds, droplets of fluid, and grains of earth which all resemble each other. He makes the hen-birds search out the food and bring it their wingless, frail chicks in the nests at the tops of trees. He subjugates the hungry lioness to her cubs, so she does not eat the meat she finds but gives it them. He sends the pleasant, nutritious, pure, white milk, like the water of Kawthar, from the springs of breasts to the infants of humans and young of other animals, without it being polluted by red blood and filthy excrement, sending also their mothers' tenderness to assist them. Then just as in truly wondrous fashion He causes the appropriate sustenance to hasten to all the trees, which need a sort of food, so He bestows an extensive table of foods on man's senses, which require sustenance physical and non-physical, and on his mind, heart, and spirit. It is as though the universe consists of hundreds of thousands of laden tables of every different kind and sort, all enfolded one within the other like the petals of the rose and shirts of the maize cob. With a multitude of various tongues, particular and universal, to the number of tables and the foods they bear and their bounties, these point out to everyone who is not

completely blind a Most Merciful Provider, an All-Compassionate and Munificent One.

If it is said: The calamities, ugliness, and evils in this world are contrary to that all-embracing mercy, and spoil it.

The Answer: This question has been answered completely satisfactorily in various parts of the Risale-i Nur such as the Treatise On Divine Determining. Referring you to them, here we make only a brief allusion, as follows:

All the elements, all the realms of beings, and all creatures, have numerous duties, particular and universal, and each of those duties yields numerous results and fruits. For the most part these are beneficial, beautiful, good, and are mercy. Only a few of them encounter those lacking ability, those who act wrongly, or those who deserve punishment and disciplining, or those who will be the means of producing many shoots of good. An apparent, minor evil is ugliness; it is apparently unkind. But if for that minor evil not to occur, the element and universal being is prevented by mercy from performing its duty, then all its other good and beautiful results would not come into existence. Since the non-existence of a good is evil and the spoiling of beauty is ugly, evils, ugliness, and pitilessness would occur to the number of those results. Thus, hundreds of evil and instances of unkindness would be perpetrated just so that one evil would not occur, which would be entirely contrary to wisdom, benefit, and the mercy of dominicality. For example, things like snow, cold,

fire, and rain have hundreds of benefits and purposes. If through their own choice careless or imprudent people harm themselves, for instance if they put their hands in the fire and say there is no mercy in its creation, the innumerable good, beneficial, merciful uses of fire will give them the lie, and hit them in the mouth.

Moreover, man's selfish desires and lowly emotions, which are blind to consequences, cannot be the criteria, measure, or balance of the laws of mercy, sovereignty, and dominicality which are in force in the universe. He sees things according to the colour of his own mirror. A black-hearted, cruel person sees the universe as weeping, ugly, dark, and tyrannical. But if he looks through the eye of belief, he sees a macroanthropos clothed in seventy thousand beautiful garments one over the other, sewn of instances of mercy, good, and wisdom. Like a houri of Paradise dressed in seventy fine garments, it is always laughing, smiling with mercy. He will observe that mankind within it is a miniature universe, and each individual man a microcosm. He will exclaim with all his heart and spirit: *"All praise be to God, the Sustainer of All the Worlds * The Merciful, the Compassionate. * Owner of the Day of Judgement!"*

From The Twenty-Sixth Word...

If you say: "Divine Determining has bound us like this. It has negated our freedom. Isn't belief in it a burden and irksome for the heart and spirit, which yearn for expansion and to roam freely?"

The Answer: Absolutely not! It is not burdensome; it rather affords a luminosity and joy producing a lightness, ease, and spirit, and ensuring confidence and security. Because if man does not believe in Divine Determining, he is compelled to bear a burden as heavy as the world on the shoulders of his spirit within a constricted space, which allows him only an insignificant independence and temporary freedom. For man is connected with the whole universe. He has infinite aims and desires. But since his power, will, and freedom are insufficient to meet a millionth of these, it may be understood how awesome is the burden of the distress he bears. Thus, belief in Divine Determining throws that burden in its entirety onto the ship of Divine Determining, allowing him to roam free within its perfections with perfect ease and perfect freedom of spirit and heart. It only negates the petty freedom of the evil-commanding soul and smashes its Pharaoh-like tyranny and lordship, and its acting as it wishes. Belief in Divine Determining produces such pleasure and happiness it is beyond description. We shall only allude to it with the following comparison.

Two men travelled to the seat of government of a king, and there entered his private palace, a place of rare wonders. One of them did not recognize the king and laying hands on everything and stealing them, wanted to settle there. However, he experienced certain difficulties, for he had to manage the palace and its park, oversee its revenues, work its machines, and feed its strange

animals; he suffered constant distress. The paradise-like park became hell for him. He pitied everything. He could not govern them. He passed his time regretfully. Then this thieving, unmannerly man was cast into prison as a punishment. The second man recognized the king and knew himself to be his guest. He believed that all the matters in the park and palace occurred through the regulation of the law, and that everything functioned with perfect ease in accordance with a programme. Leaving the difficulties to the king's law, he benefited with complete enjoyment from all the pleasures of that Paradise-like garden, and relying on the king's mercy and the efficacy of the administrative laws, he saw everything as agreeable and passed his life in perfect pleasure and happiness. He understood the meaning of the saying: "He who believes in Divine Determining is saved from grief."

Fourth Topic

If you say: "In the First Topic you proved that everything about Divine Determining is good and beautiful. Even the evil that comes from it is good, and the ugliness, beautiful. But the disasters and tribulations in this world refute that statement."

The Answer: O my soul and my friend who feel severe pain out of intense compassion! The facts that all virtues and perfections return to existence and that the basis of all rebellion, calamities, and defects is non-existence are a proof that existence is pure good and non-existence, pure evil. Since non-existence is pure evil, circumstances that either result in non-existence or give an inkling of

it, also comprise evil. Therefore, life, the most brilliant light of existence, proceeding through different circumstances, finds strength; it encounters varying situations and is purified; it takes on numerous qualities and produces the desired results, and enters many stages and displays comprehensively the impresses of the Bestower of Life's Names. It is due to this fact that certain things happen to living creatures in the form of griefs, calamities, difficulties, and tribulations whereby the lights of existence are renewed in their lives, and the darkness of non-existence draws distant and their lives are purified. For arrest, repose, silence, idleness, rest, and monotony are all, both in quality and as conditions, non-existence. Even the greatest pleasure is reduced to nothing by monotony.

In Short: Since life displays the impresses of the Most Beautiful Names, everything that happens to it is good. For example, an extremely rich and infinitely skilful person who is proficient in many crafts, for an hour and in return for a wage, clothes a miserable wretch in a bejewelled, artistically fashioned garment. This garment he made in order to make the miserable man act as a model and to display the works of his art and his extensive wealth. He works the garment on the man, gives it various forms, and alters it. In order to display every variety of his art, he cuts it, changes it, and lengthens and shortens it. Can the poor man receiving the wage be justified if he says to the person: "You are giving me trouble. You are making me bow down and stand up. By cutting and

shortening this garment which makes me more beautiful, you are spoiling my beauty"? Does he have the right to tell him: "You are acting unkindly and unfairly"? Thus, like him, in order to display the impresses of His Most Beautiful Names, the All-Glorious Maker, the Peerless Creator, alters within numerous circumstances the garment of existence He clothes on living creatures, bejewelled with senses and subtle faculties like eyes, ears, the reason, and the heart. He changes it within very many situations. Among these are circumstances in the form of suffering and calamity which show the meanings of some of His Names, and the rays of mercy within flashes of wisdom, and the subtle instances of beauty within those rays of mercy.

From The Twelfth Letter...

Second Question

Why are devils created? Almighty God created Satan and evils; what is the wisdom in it? Isn't the creation of evil, evil, and the creation of bad, bad?

The Answer: God forbid, the creation of evil is not evil, the 'acquisition' of or desire for evil, rather, is evil. For creation and bringing into existence look to all the consequences, whereas such desire looks to a particular result, since it is a particular relation. For example, there are thousands of consequences of rain falling, and all of them are good. If through mischoice, some people receive harm from the rain, they cannot say that the creation of rain is not mercy, they cannot state that the creation of rain is evil. For it is due to their mischoice and inclination that it is evil for them. Also, there are numerous

benefits in the creation of fire, and all of them are good. But if some people receive harm from fire through their misuse of it and their wrong choice, they cannot say that the creation of fire is evil; because it was not only created to burn them. Rather, they thrust their hands into the fire while cooking the food through mischoice, and made that servant inimical to themselves.

In Short: The lesser evil is acceptable for the greater good. If an evil which will lead to a greater good is abandoned so that a lesser evil should not be, a greater evil will then have been perpetrated. For example, there are certainly some minor material and physical harms and evils in sending soldiers to fight a jihad, but in the jihad is a greater good whereby Islam is saved from being conquered by infidels. If the jihad is abandoned due to those lesser evils, then the greater evil will come after the greater good has gone. And that is absolute wrong. Also, for example, to amputate a finger which is infected with gangrene and has to be amputated is good and right, although it is apparently an evil. For if it is not amputated, the hand will be amputated, and that would be a greater evil.

Thus, the creation and bringing into existence of evils, harms, tribulations, satans, and harmful things, is not evil and bad, for they are created for the many important results they yield. For example, satans have not been set to pester the angels, and the angels cannot progress; their degrees are fixed and deficient. However, in the world of humanity the degrees of progress and decline are infinite. There is an extremely long

distance through which to progress, from the Nimrod's and Pharaoh's as far as the veracious saints and the prophets.

Thus, through the creation of satans and the mystery of man's accountability and the sending of prophets, an arena of trial and examination and striving and competition has been opened so that coal-like base spirits may be differentiated and separated out from diamond-like elevated spirits. If there had been no striving and competition, the potentialities in the mine of humanity which are like diamonds and coal would have remained equal. The spirit of Abu Bakr the Veracious at the highest of the high would have remained on the same level as that of Abu Jahl at the lowest of the low. This means that since the creation of satans and evils looks to great and universal results, their being brought into existence is not evil or bad. The evils and instances of bad that arise from abuses and the particular causes known as inclination or choice pertain to man's 'acquisition' and choice, not to Divine creation.

Third Question

Almighty God sends calamities and inflicts tribulations; is this not tyrannical towards the innocent in particular, and animals even?

The Answer:

God forbid, the sovereignty is His. He holds sway over His possessions as He wishes. Moreover, a skilful craftsman makes you a model in return for a wage and dresses you in a bejewelled garment that he has most artistically fashioned. Then in order to

display his art and skill, he shortens it and lengthens it, measures it and trims it, and he makes you sit down and stand up. Are you able to say to him: "You have made the garment which made me beautiful ugly. You have caused me trouble, making me sit down and stand up." Of course, you cannot say that. If you did say it, you would be crazy.

In just the same way, the All-Glorious Maker has clothed you in a most artistically wrought being bejewelled with faculties like the eye, the ear, and the tongue. In order to display the embroideries of various of His Names, He makes you ill, He afflicts you with tribulations, He makes you hungry, He fills you, He makes you thirsty; He makes you revolve in states like these. In order to strengthen the essence of life and display the manifestation of His Names, He makes you journey in numerous such conditions. If you say: "Why do you inflict these calamities on me?", as is indicated in the comparison, a hundred instances of wisdom will silence you. In any event, calm, repose, idleness, monotony, and arrest from action are forms of non-existence, and harm. Action and change are existence and good. Life finds its perfection through action, it progresses by means of tribulations. Life manifests various actions through the manifestation of the Divine Names, it is purified, finds strength, it unfolds and expands, it becomes a mobile pen to write its own appointed course; it performs its duty, and acquires the right to receive reward in the hereafter.

The Second Flash

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

When he called upon his Sustainer saying: "Verily harm has afflicted me, and You are the Most Merciful of the Merciful." { Qur'an, 21:83.}

The supplication of Job (Upon whom be peace), the champion of patience, is both well-tested and effective. Drawing on the verse, we should say in our supplication, *O my Sustainer! Indeed harm has afflicted me, and You are the Most Merciful of the Merciful.*

The gist of the well-known story of Job (Upon whom be peace) is as follows:

While afflicted with numerous wounds and sores for a long time, he recalled the great recompense to be had for his sickness, and endured it with utmost patience. But later, when the worms generated by his wounds penetrated to his heart and his tongue, the seat of the remembrance and knowledge of God, he feared that his duty of worship would suffer, and so he said in supplication not for the sake of his own comfort, but for the sake of his worship of God:

"O Lord! Harm has afflicted me; my remembrance of You with my tongue and my worship of You with my heart will suffer." God Almighty then accepted this pure sincere, disinterested and devout supplication in the most

miraculous fashion. He granted to Job perfect good health and made manifest in him all kinds of compassion. This Flash contains Five Points:

First Point

Corresponding to the outer wounds and sicknesses of Job (Upon whom be peace), we have inner sicknesses of the spirit and heart. If our inner being was to be turned outward, and our outer being turned inward, we would appear more wounded and diseased than Job. For each sin that we commit and each doubt that enters our mind, inflicts wounds on our heart and our spirit.

The wounds of Job (Upon whom be peace) were of such a nature as to threaten his brief worldly life, but our inner wounds threaten our infinitely long everlasting life. We need the supplication of Job thousands of times more than he did himself. Just as the worms that arose from his wounds penetrated to his heart and tongue, so too the wounds that sin inflicts upon us and the temptations and doubts that arise from those wounds will-may God protect us!-penetrate our inner heart, the seat of belief, and thus wound belief. Penetrating too the spiritual joy of the tongue, the interpreter of belief, they cause it to shun in revulsion the remembrance of God, and reduce it to silence.

Sin, penetrating to the heart, will blacken and darken it until it extinguishes the light of belief. Within each sin is a path leading to unbelief. Unless that sin is swiftly obliterated by seeking God's

pardon, it will grow from a worm into a snake that gnaws on the heart.

For example, a man who secretly commits a shameful sin will fear the disgrace that results if others become aware of it. Thus the existence of angels and spirit beings will be hard for him to endure, and he will long to deny it, even on the strength of the slightest indication.

Similarly, one who commits a major sin deserving of the torment of Hell, will desire the non-existence of Hell wholeheartedly, and whenever he hears of the threat of Hell-fire, he will dare to deny it on the strength of a slight indication and doubt, unless he takes up in protection the shield of repentance and seeking forgiveness.

Similarly, one who does not perform the obligatory prayer and fulfil his duty of worship will be affected by distress, just as he would be in case of the neglect of a minor duty toward some petty ruler. Thus, his laziness in fulfilling his obligation, despite the repeated commands of the Sovereign of Pre-Eternity, will distress him greatly, and on account of that distress will desire and say to himself: "Would that there were no such duty of worship!" In turn, there will arise from this desire a desire to deny God, and bear enmity toward Him. If some doubt concerning the existence of the Divine Being comes to his heart, he will be inclined to embrace it like a conclusive proof. A wide gate to destruction will be opened in front of him. The wretch does not know that although he is delivered by denial from the slight trouble of duty of worship,

he has made himself, by that same denial, the target for millions of troubles that are far more awesome. Fleeing from the bite of a gnat, he welcomes the bite of the snake.

There are many other examples, which may be understood with reference to these three, so that the sense of,

Nay but their hearts are stained {Qur'an, 83:14.} will become apparent.

Second Point

As was explained concerning the meaning of Divine Determining, known as destiny, in the Twenty-Sixth Word, men have no right to complain in the case of disasters and illness for the following three reasons:

First Reason: God Most High has made the garment of the body with which He has clothed man a manifestation of His art. He has made man to be a model on which He cuts, trims, alters and changes the garment of the body, thus displaying the manifestation of various of His Names. Just as the Name of Healer makes it necessary that illness should exist, so too the Name of Provider requires that hunger should exist. And so on...

The Lord of All Dominion has disposal over His dominion as He wishes.

Second Reason: It is by means of disasters and sicknesses that life is refined, perfected, strengthened and advanced; that it yields results, attains perfection and fulfils its own purpose. Life

led monotonously on the couch of ease and comfort resembles not so much the pure good that is being, as the pure evil that is non-being; it tends in fact in that direction.

Third Reason: This worldly realm is the field of testing, the abode of service. It is not the place of pleasure, reward, and requital. Considering, then, that it is the abode of service and place of worship, sicknesses and misfortunes-as long as they do not affect belief and are patiently endured-conform fully to service and worship, and even strengthen it. Since they make each hour's worship equivalent to that of a day, one should offer thanks instead of complaining.

Worship consists in fact of two kinds, positive and negative. What is meant by the positive is obvious. As for negative worship, this is when one afflicted with misfortune or sickness perceives his own weakness and helplessness, and turning to his Compassionate Sustainer, seeks refuge in Him, meditates upon Him, petitions Him, and thus offers a pure form of worship that no hypocrisy can penetrate. If he endures patiently, thinks of the reward attendant on misfortune and offers thanks, then each hour that he passes will count as a whole day spent in worship. His brief life becomes very long. There are even cases where a single minute is counted as equal to a whole day's worship.

I once was extremely anxious because of an awesome illness that struck one of my brothers of the Hereafter, Muhajir Hafiz Ahmed. But then a warning came to my heart: "Congratulate him!"

Each minute he spends is counted as a whole day's worship. He was in any event enduring his illness in patience and gratitude.

Third Point

As we have pointed out in one or two of the Words, whenever one thinks of his past life, he will say in his heart or with his tongue either "Ah!" or "Oh!" That is he will either experience regret, or say "Thanks and praise be to God." Regret is inspired by the pains arising from the cessation of former pleasures and separation from them. For the cessation of pleasure is a pain in itself. Sometimes a momentary pleasure will cause everlasting pain. To think upon it will be like lancing a wound, causing regret to gush forth.

As for the lasting spiritual pleasure that comes from the cessation of momentary pains experienced in the past, it inspires man to exclaim, "Thanks and praise be to God!" In addition to this innate tendency of man, if he thinks of the reward that results from misfortune and the requital that awaits him in the Hereafter, if he realizes that his brief life will count as a long life because of misfortune-then instead of being merely patient he should be thankful. He should say, "Praise be to God for every state other than unbelief and misguidance."

It is commonly said that misfortune is longlasting. Indeed it is, but not because it is troublesome and distressing as people customarily imagine, but rather because it yields vital results just like a long life.

Fourth Point

As was explained in the First Station of the Twenty-First Word, the power of patient endurance given to man by God Almighty is adequate to every misfortune, unless squandered on baseless fears. But through the predominance of delusion, man's neglect and his imagining this transient life to be eternal, he squanders his power of endurance on the past and the future. His endurance is not equal to the misfortunes of the present, and he begins to complain. It is as if-God forbid!-he were complaining of God Almighty to men. In a most unjustified and even lunatic fashion, he complains and demonstrates his lack of patience.

If the day that is past held misfortune, the distress is now gone, and only tranquillity remains; the pain has vanished and the pleasure in its cessation remains; the trouble is gone, and the reward remains. Hence one should not complain but give thanks for enjoyment. One should not resent misfortune, but love it. The transient life of the past comes to be counted as an eternal and blessed life because of misfortune. To think upon past pain with one's fancy and then to waste part of one's patience is lunacy.

As far as days yet to come are concerned, since they have not yet come, to think now of the illness or misfortune to be borne during them and display impatience, is also foolishness. To say to oneself "Tomorrow or the day after I will be hungry and thirsty" and constantly to drink water and eat bread today, is pure madness. Similarly, to think of

misfortunes and sicknesses yet in the future but now non-existent, to suffer them already, to show impatience and to oppress oneself without any compulsion, is such stupidity that it no longer deserves pity and compassion.

In short, just as gratitude increases Divine bounty, so too complaint increases misfortune, and removes all occasion for compassion.

During World War One, a blessed person in Erzurum was afflicted with an awesome disease. I went to visit him and he said to me complaining bitterly: "I have not been able to place my head on the pillow and sleep for a hundred nights." I was much grieved. Suddenly a thought came to me and I said:

"Brother, the hundred difficult days you have spent are now just like one hundred happy days. Do not think of them and complain; rather look at them and be grateful. As for future days, since they have not yet come, place your trust in your Compassionate and Merciful Sustainer. Do not weep before being beaten, do not be afraid of nothing, do not give non-being the colour of being. Think of the present hour; your power of patient endurance is enough for this hour. Do not act like the maddened commander who expects reinforcement on his right wing by an enemy force deserting to join him from his left, and then begins to disperse his forces in the centre to the left and the right, before the enemy has joined him on the right. The enemy then destroys his centre, left weak, with a minimal force. Brother, do not be like

him. Mobilize all your strength for this present hour, and think of Divine Mercy, reward in the Hereafter, and how your brief and transient life is being transformed into a long and eternal form. Instead of complaining bitterly, give joyful thanks."

Much relieved, he said, "Praise and thanks be to God, my disease is now a tenth of what it was before."

Fifth Point

Consisting of three matters.

First Matter:

True and harmful misfortune is that which affects religion. One should at all times seek refuge at the Divine Court from misfortune in matters of religion and cry out for help. But misfortunes that do not affect religion in reality are not misfortunes. Some of them are warnings from the Most Merciful One. If a shepherd throws a stone at his sheep when they trespass on another's pasture, they understand that the stone is intended as a warning to save them from a perilous action; full of gratitude they turn back. So too there are many apparent misfortunes that are Divine warnings and admonishments, others that constitute the penance of sin; and others again that dissolve man's state of neglect, remind him of his human helplessness and weakness, thus affording him a form of tranquillity. As for the variety of misfortune that is illness, it is not at all a misfortune, as has already been said, but rather a favour from God and a means of purification. There is a tradition which says: "Just as a tree drops its ripe fruit when

shaken, so too do sins fall away through the shaking of fever."

Job (Upon whom be peace) did not pray in his supplication for the comfort of his soul, but rather sought cure for the purpose of worship, when disease was preventing his remembrances of God with his tongue and his upon God in his heart. We too should make our primary intent, when making that supplication, the healing of the inward and spiritual wounds that arise from sinning.

As far as physical diseases are concerned, we may seek refuge from them when they hinder our worship. But we should seek refuge in a humble and supplicating fashion, not protestingly and plaintively. If we accept God as our Lord and Sustainer, then we must accept too all that He gives us in His capacity of Sustainer. To sigh and complain in a manner implying objection to Divine Determining and Decree is a kind of criticism of Divine Determining, an accusation levelled against God's compassion. The one who criticizes Divine Determining strikes his head against the anvil and breaks it. Whoever accuses God's mercy will inevitably be deprived of it. To use a broken hand to exact revenge will only cause further damage to the hand. So too a man who, afflicted with misfortune, responds to it with protesting complaint and anxiety, is only compounding his misfortune.

Second Matter:

Physical misfortunes grow when they are seen to be large, and shrink when they are seen to be

small. For example, a dream enters one's vision at night. If one pays it attention it swells up and grows; if one does not, it disappears. So too if one attempts to ward off an attacking swarm of bees, they will become more aggressive; whereas if one pays them no attention they will disperse. Thus if one regards physical misfortunes as great and grants them importance, they will grow, and because of anxiety pass from the body and strike root in the heart. The result will then be an inward affliction on which the outward misfortune fastens to perpetuate itself. But if the anxiety is removed by contentment with the Divine Decree and reliance on God, the physical misfortune will gradually decrease, dry up and vanish, just like a tree whose roots have been severed. I once composed the following verses in description of this truth:

**Cry not out at misfortune, O wretch, come, trust
in God!**

**For know that crying out compounds the
misfortune and is a great error.**

**Find misfortune's Sender, and know it is a gift
within gift, and pleasure.**

**So leave crying out and offer thanks; like the
nightingale, smile through your tears!**

**If you find Him not, know the world is all pain
within pain, transience and loss.**

**So why lament at a small misfortune while upon
you is a worldful of woe? Come, trust in God!**

**Trust in God! Laugh in misfortune's face; it too
will laugh.**

**As it laughs, it will diminish; it will be changed
and transformed.**

If in single-handed combat one smiles at an awesome enemy, his enmity will be changed to conciliatoriness; his hostility will become a mere joke, will shrink and disappear. If one confronts misfortune with reliance on God the result will be similar.

Third Matter:

Each age has particular characteristics. In this age of neglect misfortune has changed its form. In certain ages and for certain persons, misfortune is not in reality misfortune, but rather a Divine favour. Since I consider those afflicted with illness in the present age to be fortunate-on condition that their illness does not affect their religion-it does not occur to me to oppose illness and misfortune, nor to take pity on the afflicted. Whenever I encounter some afflicted youth, I find that he is more concerned with his religious duties and the Hereafter than are his peers. From this I deduce that illness does not constitute a misfortune for such people, but rather a bounty from God. It is true that illness causes him distress in his brief, transient and worldly life, but it is beneficial for his eternal life. It is to be regarded as a kind of worship. If he were healthy he would be unable to maintain the state he enjoyed while sick and would fall into dissipation, as a result of the impetuosity of youth and the dissipated nature of the age.

Conclusion

God Almighty, in order to display His infinite power and unlimited mercy, has made inherent in man infinite impotence and unlimited want. Further, in order to display the endless embroideries of His Names, He has created man like a machine capable of receiving unlimited varieties of pain, as well as infinite varieties of pleasure. Within that human machine are hundreds of instruments, each of which has different pains and pleasures, different duties and rewards. Simply, all of the Divine Names manifested in the macroanthropos that is the world also have manifestations in the microcosm that is man. Beneficial matters like good health, well-being, and pleasures cause man to offer thanks and prompt the human machine to perform its functions in many respects, and thus man becomes like a factory producing thanks.

Similarly, by means of misfortune, illness and pain, and other motion-inducing contingencies, the other cogs of the human machine are set in motion and revolution. The mine of weakness, impotence, and poverty inherent in human nature is made to work. It induces in man a state whereby he seeks refuge and help not only with a single tongue, but with the tongue of each of his members. Thus by means of those contingencies man becomes like a moving pen comprising thousands of different pens. He inscribes the appointed course of his existence on the page of his life or the Tablet in the World of Similitudes; he puts forth a declaration of the Divine Names; and becomes himself an ode to

the glory of God, thus fulfilling the duties of his nature.

From The Second Ray...

What impelled me to the truth of this First Fruit was a certain feeling and experience.

It was like this:

At one time, due to my excessive feelings of pity, sympathy and kindness, I was exceedingly touched and sorry for living beings, and of them, intelligent beings and man, and particularly the oppressed and disaster-stricken. I exclaimed from my very heart: "Neither these monotonous laws which prevail over the world hear the woes of these powerless and weak unfortunates, nor do the overwhelming, deaf elements and events hear them. Is there no one who will take pity on their wretched state and intervene in their particular plights?" My spirit was crying out from its very depths. My heart called out with all its strength: "Do these fine creatures, these valuable goods, these yearning and grateful friends, have no owner, no master, no true friend who will look to their business, accompany them and protect them?"

The satisfying, soothing, and sufficient answer to the cries of my spirit and tumult of my heart was this: through the mystery of the Qur'an and light of belief, and the mystery of Divine unity, I perceived the particular favours and special assistance of the All-Glorious One, Who is All-Merciful and Compassionate, above the law, to those lovable

creatures who weep and lament under the pressure of universal laws and the assaults of events; and His particular dominicality towards everything directly; and the facts that He Himself directs everything personally and listens to the complaints of all things; and that He is the true owner, protector, and master of everything. I felt an infinite joy in place of that endless despair. Being totally owned by such a Glorious Owner, and being connected to Him, in my view all living beings gained in importance and value a thousand times over.

For since everyone takes pride in his master's honour and fame, and at the rank of the person to whom he is attached, and acquires a dignity, through the unfolding of this relation through the light of belief and the state of being owned, and due to its strength, an ant vanquished the Pharaoh and could feel the pride of a thousand Pharaohs, who were heedless, imagined themselves to be independent and to own themselves, and had overweening pride -which was extinguished at the door of the grave- at their forefathers and the land of Egypt. And in the face of Nimrod's pride, which changed into torment and shame when he tasted the pangs of death, the fly pointed to the pride of its own relationship, reducing Nimrod's to nothing.

The verse,

To assign partners to God is verily a great transgression { Qur'an, 31:13.}

states that to associate with God is an infinite wrong. Assigning partners to God is a vast crime,

since it transgresses the rights, honour, and dignity of all creatures. Only Hell can cleanse it.

From The Second Ray...

[There follows a very concise yet powerful reply to a two-part question related to this Station.]

The First Part of the Question:

You are saying in this Station that beauty, good, and justice encompass the universe, so what do you say to all the ugliness, disasters, illness, tribulations, and death we see around us?

The Answer:

A single instance of ugliness which results in or shows up numerous instances of beauty is indirectly an instance of beauty. While the non-existence of an ugliness, or its being invisible, which then conceals numerous instances of beauty and does not permit them to be seen, is not a single, but a manifold, ugliness. For example, if an ugliness which is a unit of measurement is non-existent, the beauty would be of only one sort, and its numerous degrees would remain concealed. For it is through the intervention of ugliness that the degrees of beauty unfold. Just as the degrees of heat become apparent through the existence of cold, and the degrees of light are known through darkness, so universal instances of good, universal benefits, universal bounties, and universal instances of beauty become apparent through there being minor instances of evil, harm, calamities and ugliness. This means that the creation of ugliness is

not ugly, it is beautiful, because the majority of its results are beautiful. Yes, a lazy man who suffers loss due to the rain, cannot deny the good results it produces in the name of mercy; he cannot transform the mercy into harm. As for transience and death, it is demonstrated with extremely powerful and decisive proofs in the Twenty-Fourth Letter that they are not contrary to general mercy, all-embracing beauty, and comprehensive good; in fact, they are necessitated by them. The creation of Satan, even, since he is the cause of striving and competition, the springs of man's spiritual progress, is also good, as is the creation of his species; their creation is beautiful in that respect. Also, for unbelievers to suffer torments in Hell even is good, since through their unbelief they have transgressed the rights of all beings and insulted their honour. These two points have been explained in detail in other treatises, so here we are curtailing the discussion with this brief indication.

The Second Part of the Question:

{The answer to the second part of the question has great importance; it dispels numerous doubts.} Alright, so we can accept the answer about Satan and the unbelievers from a general point of view, but how is it that the Absolutely Beautiful One, the Absolutely Compassionate One, the Absolutely Self-Sufficient One, Who is absolute good, inflicts evil, calamities, and ugliness on particular wretched individuals?

The Answer:

Whatever good, beauty, and bounty there are, they come directly from the treasury of mercy of that Absolutely Beautiful and Compassionate One, and from His particular bestowal. Evils and calamities on the other hand are occasional results out of the many results of the general, universal laws which are called 'adat Allah and represent His universal will. Since they are minor and required by those laws, He creates them in order to preserve and maintain the laws, which are the means to universal benefits. But in the face of those minor, grievous results, He responds with special, merciful assistance and particular dominical favours to the cries for help of individuals afflicted by misfortune and tribulations. And by showing that He acts as He wishes, and that all aspects of all things are tied to His will, and that universal laws too are always subject to His will and choice, and that a Compassionate Sustainer heeds the individuals who cry out at the constraint of the laws and responds to their cries for help with His favours, through exceptions to those universal Divine principles and general laws and their minor evil results and His particular favours and making Himself loved in special ways, He opens up an unrestricted infinite field for the unrestricted infinite manifestations of His Names, and opens too the doors of particular manifestations.

From The Twenty-Fourth Letter...

First Sign

As is described at the end of the Twenty-Sixth Word, when making a precious bejewelled and embroidered garment, a skilful craftsman employs a poor man in return for a commensurate wage. In order to display his skill and art, he dresses the poor man in the garment, then measures it and cuts it, and lengthens and shortens it, and making the man sit down and stand up, he gives it various forms. So does the wretched man have the right to say to the craftsman: "Why are you interfering with this garment which makes me beautiful, and altering and changing it? Why are you making me stand up and sit down, disturbing me and causing me trouble?"

In exactly the same way, in order to display the perfections of His art through the embroideries of His Names, the All-Glorious Maker takes the essential nature of every sort of being as a model, then He clothes them all and especially living creatures in the garment of a body be-jewelled with senses, and inscribes it with the pen of Divine Decree and Determining; thus demonstrating the manifestation of His Names. In addition, He gives to every being a perfection, a pleasure, an effulgence, in a way suitable to it and as a wage.

Has then anything the right to say to the All-Glorious Maker, Who manifests the meaning of, the Lord of All Dominion has free disposal over His realms as He wishes:" You are giving me trouble and disturbing me."? God forbid! In no way do

beings have any rights before the Necessarily Existent One, nor can they claim them; their right is to carry out through offering thanks and praise, what is required by the degree of existence He has given them. For all the degrees of existence that are given are occurrences, and each requires a cause. Degrees which are not given are possibilities, and possibilities are non-existent as well as being infinite. As for instances of non-existence, they do not require a cause. For example, minerals cannot say: "Why weren't we plants?"; they cannot complain. Their right, since they have received mineral existence, is to offer thanks to their Creator. And plants may not complain asking why they were not animals; their right is to offer thanks, since they have received life as well as existence. As for animals, they may not complain that they are not humans; the right over them rather, since they have been given the precious substance of spirit in addition to life and existence, is to offer thanks. And so on.

O complaining man! You did not remain non-existent; you were clothed in the bounty of existence. You tasted life; you did not remain inanimate, nor become an animal. You received the bounty of Islam; you did not remain in misguidance. You have experienced the bounties of good health and well-being!

O ungrateful one! Where did you win the right not to offer thanks in return for the degrees of existence which Almighty God has given you and are pure bounty. How is it that because exalted bounties which are contingencies and non-existent

and which you do not deserve have not been given you, you complain about Almighty God with meaningless greed, ungrateful for the bounties you have received? If a man rises to an exalted degree like climbing to the top of a minaret and finds a high station, and on every step receives a large bounty, then does not thank the one who gave him the bounties and complainingly asks why he could not have risen higher than the minaret, how wrong he would be, what an ungrateful denial of the bounties, what great foolishness it would be; as even a lunatic would understand.

O discontented greedy, thriftless wasteful, unjustly complaining, heedless man! Know certainly that contentment is profitable thanks, greed is loss-causing ingratitude, and frugality, fine and beneficial respect for bounties. As for wastefulness, it is ugly and harmful contempt for bounties. If you have intelligence, grow accustomed to contentment and try to be satisfied with little. If you cannot endure it, say: "O Most Patient One!" and seek patience. Be satisfied with your lot and do not complain. Understand who is complaining about whom, and be silent. If you have to complain, then complain about your soul to God Almighty, for the fault is its.

From The Twenty-Fifth Flash...

Third Remedy

Impatient sick person! The fact that those who come to this world continuously depart, and the young grow old, and man perpetually revolves amid death and separation testifies that he did not

come to this world to enjoy himself and receive pleasure.

Moreover, while man is the most perfect, the most elevated, of living beings and the best endowed in regard to members and faculties, through thinking of past pleasures and future pains, he passes only a grievous, troublesome life, lower than the animals. This means that man did not come to this world in order to live in fine manner and pass his life in ease and pleasure. Rather, possessing vast capital, he came here to work and do trade for an eternal, everlasting life.

The capital given to man is his lifetime. Had there been no illness, good health and well-being would have caused heedlessness, for they show the world to be pleasant and make the Hereafter forgotten. They do not want death and the grave to be thought of; they cause the capital of life to be wasted on trifles. Whereas illness suddenly opens the eyes, it says to the body: "You are not immortal. You have not been left to your own devices. You have a duty. Give up your pride, think of the One Who created you. Know that you will enter the grave, so prepare yourself for it!" Thus, from this point of view, illness is an admonishing guide and advisor that never deceives. It should not be complained about in this respect, indeed, should be thanked for. And if it is not too severe, patience should be sought to endure it.

Sixth Remedy

O brother who thinks of the pleasures of this world and suffers distress at illness! If this world

was everlasting, and if on our way there was no death, and if the winds of separation and decease did not blow, and if there were no winters of the spirit in the calamitous and stormy future, I would have pitied you together with you. But since one day the world will bid us to leave it and will close its ears to our cries, we must forego our love of it now through the warnings of these illnesses, before it drives us out. We must try to abandon it in our hearts before it abandons us.

Yes, illness utters this warning to us: "Your body is not composed of stone and iron, but of various materials which are always disposed to parting. Leave off your pride, understand your impotence, recognize your Owner, know your duties, learn why you came to this world!" It declares this secretly in the heart's ear.

Moreover, since the pleasures and enjoyment of this world do not continue, and particularly if they are illicit, they are both fleeting, and full of pain, and sinful, do not weep on the pretext of illness because you have lost those pleasures. On the contrary, think of the aspects of worship and reward in the Hereafter to be found in illness, and try to receive pleasure from those.

Ninth Remedy

O sick person who recognizes his Creator! The pain, fear, and anxiety in illness is because it is sometimes leads to death. Since superficially and to the heedless view death is frightening, illnesses which may lead to it cause fear and apprehension.

So know firstly and believe firmly that the appointed hour is determined and does not change. Those weeping beside the grievously sick and those in perfect health have died, while the grievously sick have been cured and lived.

Secondly: Death is not terrifying as it appears to be superficially. Through the light afforded by the All-Wise Qur'an, in many parts of the Risale-i Nur we have proved in completely certain and indubitable fashion that for believers death is to be discharged from the burdensome duties of life. And for them it is a rest from worship, which is the instruction and training in the arena of trial of this world. It is also a means of their rejoining friends and relations, ninety-nine out of a hundred of whom have already departed for the next world. And it is a means of entering their true homeland and eternal abodes of happiness. It is also an invitation to the gardens of Paradise from the dungeon of this world. And it is the time to receive their wage from the munificence of the Most Compassionate Creator in return for service rendered to Him. Since the reality of death is this, it should not be regarded as terrifying, but on the contrary, as the introduction to mercy and happiness.

Moreover, some of the people of God fearing death has not been out of terror at it, but due to their hope of gaining more merit through performing more good works with the continuation of the duties of life.

Yes, for the people of belief, death is the door to Divine mercy, while for the people of misguidance, it is the pit of everlasting darkness.

From the Fourteenth Word...

Third Question: What is the reason for this disaster, which arises from the wrongdoing of a few individuals, occurring to a degree generally throughout the country?

The Answer: The general disaster results from the wrongdoing of the majority: most people in effect participate in the actions of those tyrannical individuals by supporting them either actively or morally or in some connection.

Fourth Question: Since this disaster of an earthquake results from wrongdoing and is atonement for sins, why are the innocent and those not at fault struck by it? How does Divine justice permit this?

The Answer, again in regard to its meaning: Since this matter concerns the mystery of Divine Determining, we refer you to the Risale-i Nur and here only say this:

And fear tumult or oppression, which affects not in particular [only] those of you who do wrong. {Qur'an, 8:25.}

That is, beware of the calamity or disaster which when it occurs is not restricted to wrongdoers but strikes the innocent as well.

The meaning of the above verse is as follows: this world is a field of trial and examination, and a place of striving where man is accountable for his actions. Accountability and examination require that reality remains veiled so that through competition and striving the Abu Bakr's may rise to the highest of the high and the Abu Jahl's may enter among the lowest of the low. If the innocent remained untouched by such disasters, the Abu Jahl's would submit just like the Abu Bakr's, and the door of spiritual and moral progress through striving would be closed and the mystery of accountability spoiled.

Since Divine wisdom requires that oppressed and oppressor are together afflicted by disaster, what then is the share of the wretched oppressed of Divine mercy and justice?

It was said in reply to this question: for them there is a manifestation of mercy within the wrath and anger in the disaster. For just as the transient property of the innocent becomes like alms and gains permanence, the relatively little and temporary difficulty and torment is a form of martyrdom for them which also gains for their transient lives a permanent life. The earthquake earns for them a huge, perpetual profit, so for them is an instance of Divine mercy within the wrath.

Fifth Question: Why does the One Who is All-Just and All-Compassionate, All-Powerful and All-Wise, not give particular punishments for particular wrongs, but inflicts a mighty element? How is this

in keeping with the beauty of His mercy and His all-encompassing power?

The Answer: The All-Powerful One of Glory gives numerous duties to each element and through each duty causes them to produce numerous different results. If one result of one of an element's duties is ugly, evil, or calamitous, the other good results make this result good also. If the element, which is angry at man, is prevented from that duty so that the single ugly result will not occur, then instances of good to the number of the good results will be abandoned, and so since not doing a necessary good is evil, instances of evil will be perpetrated to the number of the instances of good. A single evil not occurring would be extremely ugly, contrary to wisdom, contrary to reality, and a fault. And power, wisdom and reality are free of fault. Since certain errors constitute rebellion comprehensive enough to make the earth and elements angry, and are insulting aggression against the rights of numerous creatures, for sure, in order to demonstrate the extraordinary ugliness of such a crime, the command being given to a mighty element to "reprimand them" among its other general duties, is perfect wisdom and justice, and for the oppressed, perfect mercy.

An Addition and Footnote to the Sixth Question:

In order to defend their way and counter the awakening of the believers and hinder them, the people of misguidance and the atheists display an obduracy so strange and a stupidity so peculiar that

it makes a person regret his humanity. For example, in order to make men give up their wicked and wrongful rebellion which recently has to a degree taken on a general form, and to arouse mankind and make it forego this awesome revolt and recognize the universe's Sovereign, Whom it does not want to recognize, the Creator of the heavens and the earth -not on account of a particular title but as Sustainer and Ruler of the whole universe and all the worlds and through a widespread and general manifestation throughout the universe in the universal sphere of His dominicality- has struck mankind in the face with awesome and widespread calamities like earthquakes, storms, and world wars through the universal elements coming to anger -through water, the air, and electricity, which are matchless and constant- and has demonstrated through them in most clear fashion His wisdom, power, justice, and self-subsistence. Although this is the case, certain brainless satans in human form respond to these universal dominical signs and divine reprimands with a foolish obstinacy, saying:

"It's nature. It's the explosion of some strata under the earth and just chance. It's the sun's heat clashing with electricity, which happened in America and brought all machinery to a standstill for five hours, and also caused the atmosphere in Kastamonu Province to turn red and take on the appearance of a conflagration." They utter meaningless nonsense like this. Due to a boundless ignorance resulting from misguidance and an ugly obduracy arising from aggressive atheism, they do

not know that causes are only each a pretext and a veil. A small seed taking the place of a village full of factories and looms to weave and produce the members of a pine-tree as large as a mountain shows this. By saying, "The tree emerged from the seed," they in effect deny the thousand miracles displayed in the pine tree, and put forward a number of apparent causes. They reduce to nothing a huge dominical act worked through the Creator's will and wisdom. Sometimes they attach a scientific name to a most profound, unknowable, and important truth which has purposes in a thousand respects, as though through the name it has been understood. Whereas it is merely made commonplace, and without purpose, wisdom, or meaning.

So, come and see the innumerable degrees of stupidity and foolishness! They attach a name to a truth so profound and broad and unknown it could be completely understood only if it and its purposes and instances of wisdom were described in a hundred pages. As though it was something obvious they say: "It is this." For example, "It is some substance in the sun clashing with electricity." Furthermore, they ascribe a particular and intentional dominical event to one of the natural laws, which are each the titles of universal and all-encompassing will and universal sovereignty, and are known as 'Divine laws.' And by doing this they sever its connection with Divine will and choice, then refer it to chance and nature. They display an ignorance more profound than Abu Jahl. It is a rebellious foolishness like attributing the

victorious battle of an individual soldier or a battalion to military regulations and discipline, and cutting its connection with the commander, king, government, and purposeful action.

Similarly, if a wonder-working craftsman produces a hundred okkas of various foodstuffs and a hundred yards of varying cloths from a chip of wood the size of fingernail, like the creation of a fruitbearing tree from a seed, and someone points to the chip of wood and declares that these things have come into being out of it 'naturally' and 'through chance,' reducing to nothing the craftsman's wondrous arts and skills, what utter lunacy it would be. It is exactly the same as that....

