# Divine Determining[[1]](#footnote-1)

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

*And there is not a thing but its [sources and] treasures [inexhaustible] are with Us, but We* only *send down thereof in due and ascertainable measures (15:21) And of all things have We taken account in a Clear Book (36:12)*

[Divine Determining[[2]](#footnote-2) and the power of choice[[3]](#footnote-3) are two important matters. We shall attempt to disclose a few of their mysteries in four 'Topics'.]

# First Topic

Divine Determining and the power of choice are aspects of a belief pertaining to state and conscience which show the final limits of Islam and belief; they are not theoretical and do not pertain to knowledge. That is to say, a believer attributes everything to Almighty God, even his actions and self, till finally the power of choice confronts him, so he cannot evade his obligation and responsibility. It tells him: *“You are responsible and under obligation.”* Then, so that he does not become proud at his good deeds and his achievements, Divine Determining confronts him, saying: *“Know your limits; the one who does them is not you.”* Yes, Divine Determining and the power of choice are at the final degrees of belief and Islam; the former has been included among the matters of belief to save the soul from pride, and the latter, to make it admit to its responsibility. Obdurate evil-commanding souls clinging to Divine Determining in order to clear themselves of the responsibility of the evils they have committed, and their becoming proud and conceited on account of the virtues bestowed on them and their relying on the power of choice, are actions totally opposed to the mystery of Divine Determining and wisdom of the power of choice; they are not matters pertaining to knowledge which might give rise to such actions.

For ordinary people who have not progressed spiritually there may be occasions when Divine Determining is used, and these are calamities and disasters when it is the remedy for despair and grief. But it should not be used to justify rebellion and in matters of the future so that it becomes a cause of dissipation and idleness. That is to say, Divine Determining has not been included among the matters of belief to relieve people from their obligations and responsibility, but to save them from pride and conceit. While the power of choice has been included in order to be the source of evils, not to be the source of virtues, so that people become like the Pharaoh.

Yes, as the Qur'an states, man is totally responsible for his evils, for it is he who wants the evils. Since evils are destructive, man may perpetrate much destruction with a single evil act, like burning down a house with one match, and he becomes deserving of an awesome punishment. However, he does not have the right to take pride in good deeds; his part in them is extremely small. For what wants and requires the good deeds is Divine mercy, and what creates them is dominical power. Both request and reply, reason and cause, are from God. Man only comes to have them through supplication, belief, consciousness, and consent. As for evils, it is man's soul that wants them, either through capacity or through choice, —like in the white and beautiful light of the sun some substances become black and putrefy, and the blackness is related to their capacity— however, it is Almighty God Who creates the evils through a Divine law which comprises numerous benefits. That is to say, the cause and the request are from the soul, so that it is the soul which is responsible, while it is Almighty God Who creates the evils and brings them into existence, and since they have other results and fruits which are good, they are good.

It is for the above reason that the *'acquisition'* (kasb) of evil, that is, the desire for evil, is evil, but the creation of evil is not evil. A lazy man who receives damage from rain, which comprises many instances of good, may not say that the rain is not mercy. Yes, together with a minor evil in its creation are numerous instances of good. To abandon that good for a minor evil becomes a greater evil. Therefore, a minor evil becomes like good. There is no evil or ugliness in Divine creation. They rather pertain to His servant's wish and to his capacity.

Furthermore, Divine Determining is both exempt from evil and ugliness with regard to results and fruits, and free from tyranny and ugliness with respect to reason and cause. Because Divine Determining looks to the true causes and acts justly. Men construct their judgements on causes which they see superficially and fall into error within the pure justice of Divine Determining. For example, a judge finds you guilty of theft and sends you to prison. You are not a thief, but you have committed a murder which no one knows about. Thus, Divine Determining also sentenced you to imprisonment, but it sentenced you for the secret murder and acted justly. Since the judge sentenced you for a theft of which you were innocent, he acted unjustly. Thus, in a single thing the justice of Divine Determining and Divine creation and man's wrongful choice or acquisition were apparent in two respects; you can make analogies with this for other things. That is to say, with regard to origin and end, source and branch, cause and results, Divine Determining and creation are exempt from evil, ugliness, and tyranny.

**If it is said:** *“Man has no ability to create with his power of choice and has nothing apart from 'acquisition,' which is as though theoretical, so how is it that in the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition he is shown to be rebellious and hostile towards the Creator of the heavens and the earth, Who complains greatly about him; the Creator mobilizes Himself and all His angels to assist His believing servants against the rebellious, affording them the greatest importance?”*

**The Answer:** Because disbelief, rebellion, and evil are destruction and non-existence. However, vast destruction and innumerable instances of non-existence may result from a single theoretical matter and one instance of non-existence. Through the helmsman of a large ship abandoning his duty, the ship may sink and the labor of all those employed on it go for nothing; all those instances of destruction will result from a single instance of nonexistence. Similarly, since disbelief and rebellion are non-existence and destruction, the power of choice may provoke them through a theoretical matter and cause awesome consequences. For although disbelief is only one evil, it insults the whole universe, accusing it of being worthless and futile, and denies all beings, which display proofs of Divine unity, and is contemptuous towards all the manifestations of the Divine Names. It is therefore pure wisdom that Almighty God utters severe complaints about the unbelievers, threatening them awesomely in the name of the universe and all beings and the Divine Names; it is pure justice that they should suffer eternal punishment. Since through unbelief and rebellion man takes the way of destruction, with a small act of service, he may perform a great many works. In the face of unbelief therefore, the believers are in need of Almighty God's boundless grace. For due to one troublesome child who is trying to burn down a house, ten strong men who have undertaken to protect and repair it may be obliged to beseech the child's parents, or even have recourse to the king. In the same way the believers are in need of many Divine favors in order to withstand the unmannerly people of rebellion.

**In Short:** If the one speaking of Divine Determining and the power of choice has perfect belief and is aware of the Divine presence, he attributes the universe and himself to Almighty God, knowing them to be under His disposal. He has the right to speak of them. For since he knows himself and everything to be from Almighty God, he assumes the responsibility, basing it on his power of choice. He accepts that it is the source of evils and proclaims his Sustainer free of fault. He remains within the sphere of worship and undertakes the obligations with which he is charged by Almighty God. Moreover, he does not become proud at his good deeds and achievements; he rather looks to Divine Determining and offers thanks. He sees Divine Determining in the calamities that befall him, and endures them in patience.

However, if the one speaking of Divine Determining and the power of choice is one of the heedless and neglectful, then he has no right to speak of them. For, impelled by his misguidance, his evil-commanding soul attributes the universe to causes and divides up God's property among them. And he attributes the ownership of himself to himself. He ascribes his acts to himself and to causes. His responsibility and faults, he refers to Divine Determining. He will finally ascribe the power of choice to Almighty God, and he will consider Divine Determining last of all; thus discussion of them becomes meaningless. To discuss them is only a trick of the soul which is entirely contrary to the wisdom in them, in order to save such a person from responsibility.

# Second Topic

This is a minute and scholarly investigation addressing scholars in particular.[[4]](#footnote-4)

If you say: *“How is Divine Determining compatible with the power of choice?”*

**The Answer:**In seven ways:

**• The First:** The All-Just and Wise One, to Whose wisdom and justice the universe testifies with the tongue of order and balance, gave to man a power of choice of unknown nature which would be the means of reward and punishment for him. We do not know many of the numerous aspects of the All-Just and Wise One's wisdom; our not knowing how the power of choice is compatible with Divine Determining does not prove that it is not so.

**• The Second:** Of necessity everyone perceives in himself a will and choice; he knows it through his conscience. To know the nature of beings is one thing; to know they exist is something different. There are many things which although their existence is self-evident, we do not know their true nature... The power of choice may be included among these. Everything is not restricted to what we know; our not knowing them does not prove the things we do not know do not exist.

**• The Third:** The power of choice is not opposed to Divine Determining, indeed, Divine Determining corroborates the power of choice. Because Divine Determining is a sort of Divine knowledge. Divine knowledge is connected with our will and choice, in which case it corroborates it, it does not nullify it.

**• The Fourth:** Divine Determining is a sort of knowledge. Knowledge is dependent on the thing known. That is, it knows it as it is. The thing known is not dependent on knowledge. That is, the principles of knowledge are not fundamental so that the knowledge directs the thing known with regard to its external existence. Because the essence of the thing known and its external existence look to will and are based on power. Also, pre-eternity is not the tip of a chain reaching into the past which should be considered the end point in the existence of things and a source of compulsion. Rather, pre-eternity holds the past, the present, and the future all at once, looking at them from above like a mirror. In which case, it is not right to imagine an end to past time which stretches back within the sphere of contingency and call it pre-eternity, and to suppose that things enter that knowledge of pre-eternity in sequence, and that oneself is outside it; to reason thus is not right. Consider the following example in order to explain this mystery:

Suppose there is a mirror in your hand and the area to your right is the past and the area to your left, the future; the mirror only holds what is opposite it. Then with a movement it holds both sides, but it cannot hold all of it. However low the mirror is held, less will appear in it, and the higher it rises, the area it encompasses expands, until it can hold both sides in their entirety simultaneously. Whatever occurs in the areas reflected in the mirror in this position cannot be said to precede or follow one another, or to conform to or oppose one another. Divine Determining is part of pre-eternal knowledge, and in the words of the Hadith, pre-eternal knowledge is *“at an elevated station which from its lofty view-point encompasses everything that has been and will be from pre-eternity to post-eternity.”* We and our reasoning cannot be outside of it so we can be like a mirror to the area of the past.

**• The Fifth:** Divine Determining has a connection with cause and effect. That is, this effect will occur through this cause. In which case, it may not be said that *“Since so-and-so's death is determined at such-and-such a time, what fault has the man who fired the rifle through his own choice, for if he had not fired it, the other still would have died?”*

**Question:** Why may it not be said?

**The Answer:** Because Divine Determining specified that so-and-so's death would occur through the man's rifle. If you suppose that he did not fire the rifle, then you are supposing that Divine Determining had no connection with it, so with what would you decree his death? If you imagine cause and effect to be separate like the Jabriyya, or you deny Divine Determining like the Mu'tazila, you leave the Sunni School and join the heretics. We people of truth say: *“If he had not fired the rifle, we do not know if he would have died.”* The Jabariyya say: *“If he had not fired it, he still would have died.”* While the Mu'tazila say: *“If he had not fired it, he would not have died.”*

**• The Sixth:[[5]](#footnote-5)** According to Maturidi, inclination, the essence of the power of choice, is a theoretical or relative matter and may be attributed to God's servants. But Ash'ari considered it to have existence, so did not attribute it to them. However, according to Ash'ari, the power of disposal within inclination is a theoretical matter, which makes the inclination and the disposal together a relative matter lacking a definite external existence. Theoretical or relative matters do not require causes through which, for their existence, necessity would intervene and nullify the will and power of choice. Rather, if the cause of the theoretical matters acquires the weight of preference, the theoretical matter may become actual and existent. In which case, at that juncture, it may be abandoned. The Qur'an may say to a person at that point: *“This is evil; do not do it.”* Indeed, if God's servants had been the creators of their actions and had had the power to create, then their wills would have been removed. For an established rule in the sciences of religion and philosophy is: *“If a thing is not necessary, it may not come into existence [of itself].”* That is, there has to be a cause for a thing to come into existence. The cause necessarily requires the effect. Then no power of choice would remain.

**If you say:** Preference without a cause or attribute to cause the preference is impossible. Whereas the theoretical or relative matter we call human acquisition sometimes does a thing and sometimes does not; if there is nothing to cause the preference, preference without something to cause it would necessarily occur, and this demolishes one of the most important bases of theology?

**The Answer:** A being preferable without something to make it preferable is impossible. That is, a being deemed preferable or superior without a cause or attribute to make it so is impossible. But preference without something to cause it is permissible and occurs. Will is an attribute, and its mark is to perform a work such as that.

**If you ask:***“Since the one who creates the murder is Almighty God, why do you call me a murderer?”*

**The Answer:** Because according to the rules of grammar, the active participle is derived from the infinitive, which is a relative matter. It cannot be derived from the verbal noun, which is an actual or existent matter. The infinitive is our acquisition; so we are called the murderer. The verbal noun is Almighty God's creature. Something which gives an inkling of responsibility cannot be derived from the verbal noun.

**• The Seventh:** For sure, man's faculty of will and power of choice are weak and a theoretical matter, but Almighty God, the Absolutely Wise One, made that weak and partial will a condition for the connection of His universal will. He in effect says: *“My servant! Whichever way you wish to take with your will, I will take you there. In which case the responsibility is yours!”* If the comparison is not mistaken, you take a powerless child onto your shoulders and leaving the choice to him, tell him you will take hiin wherever he wishes. The child wants to go to a high mountain so you take him there, but he either catches cold or falls. So of course you reprimand him, saying, *“You wanted to go there,”* and you give him a slap. Thus, Almighty God, the Firmest of Judges, makes His servant's will, which is utterly weak, a condition, and His universal will follows it.

In Short: O man! You have a will known as the power of choice which is extremely weak, but whose hand in evil acts and destruction is extremely long and in good deeds is extremely short. Give one of the hands of that will of yours to supplication, so that it may reach Paradise, a fruit of the chain of good deeds, and stretch to eternal happiness. And give its other hand to the seeking of forgiveness, so that it may be short for evil deeds and will not reach the Zakkum-tree of Hell, which is one fruit of that accursed tree. That is, just as supplication and reliance on God greatly strengthen the inclination to do good, so repentance and the seeking of forgiveness cut the inclination to do evil, putting an end to its transgressions.

# Third Topic

Belief in Divine Determining is one of the pillars of belief. That is, the belief that *“everything is determined by Almighty God.”* The certain proofs for Divine Determining are so numerous they cannot be calculated. We shall show in an Introduction, simply and clearly, how strong and broad is this pillar of belief.

**Introduction:**

Numerous verses of the Qur'an, like,

Nor anything fresh or dry [green or withered] but is [inscribed] in a Clear Book (6:59)

state clearly that before it comes into existence and after it passes from existence, everything is written. Through its creational signs like the order, balance, regularity, adornment, differentiation, and the giving of form, the verses, the signs, of the mighty Qur'an inscribed by Divine power and called the universe confirm these statements of the Qur'an. Indeed, the well-ordered missives and finely balanced verses of the book of the universe testify that everything is written. The indication that everything is determined and written before it comes into existence are all beginnings, seeds, measured proportions, and forms; each of these testifies to this. For seeds and grains are subtle containers appearing from the workbench of “Be!,” and it is in each of which is deposited a tiny index traced by Divine Determining. Divine power employs minute particles according to that plan of Divine Determining, and constructs the mighty miracles of power on the seeds. That is to say, everything that will happen to the tree is as though inscribed in its seed. For in regard to their substance seeds are simple and similar to one another; materially they are nothing.

Furthermore, the well-measured proportions of everything clearly show Divine Determining. Yes, whatever living creature is considered, it is as though its form and measure emerged from a wisely and skillfully wrought mould. For it to receive such a measure, form, and shape, either there has to be a truly wondrous and infinitely intricate physical mould, or else pre-eternal power cuts out the form and shape according to a well-proportioned immaterial mould that exists in knowledge and comes from Divine Determining, and clothes it in it. For example, look carefully at this tree or that animal, you will see that the particles, which are lifeless, deaf, blind, unconscious, and similar to one another, are in motion in its growth and development. In some of the being's intricate extremities the particles halt, as though seeing, knowing and recognizing the place of fruits and benefits. Then in another place they change their direction as though following some important aim. That means they are in motion in accordance with the immaterial measured proportions of the tree or animal, which come from Divine Determining, and are governed by those proportions.

Since there are the manifestations of Divine Determining to this extent in physical and visible things, certainly the forms with which things are clothed with the passing of time and the states acquired through the motions they perform will also be dependent on the ordering of Divine Determining. In a seed are two manifestations of Divine Determining; one is 'evident' and points to the Clear Book, which is a title of will and the creational commands; the other is 'theoretical' and points to the Clear Record, which is a title of Divine knowledge and the Divine command. 'Evident' Divine Determining specifies the physical nature, states, and parts of the tree which the seed comprises. While 'theoretical' Divine Determining specifies the stages, states, forms, motions, and glorifications which the tree will undergo and perform over the period of its life, and which are in the seed and will be created from it; these stages, states, forms, and acts, which constantly change and are called its life-history, each have a regulated measure in accordance with Divine Determining, the same as the tree's branches and leaves.

Since there is such a manifestation of Divine Determining in the most common and simple of things, it surely demonstrates that all things are written before they come into existence; this may be understood with little attention. Now, evidence for the fact that the story of everything's life is written after its existence are all fruits, which in this world tell of the Clear Book and the Clear Record, and the faculty of memory in man, which points to the Preserved Tablet; these all hint and testify to this fact. Indeed, the appointed events of a tree's life are written in its seeds, which are like the hearts of its fruits. And man's life-history together with some of the past events of the world are written in his memory in such a way that, as though copying out with the hand of power and pen of Divine Determining in a faculty as tiny as a mustard seed a small note from the page of his actions, the memory gives the note to man's hand and puts it in the pocket of his mind, so that with it he will call his actions to mind at the time of reckoning. So too, due to it he may be confident that within the upheavals of transience and death there are numerous lasting mirrors in which the All-Powerful and Wise One depicts and makes permanent the identities of transient beings; and truly numerous tablets which shall endure for all eternity on which that All-Knowing Preserver inscribes the meanings of transitory beings.

In Short: Since plant life, the simplest and lowest level of life, is dependent on the ordering of Divine Determining to this extent, certainly human life, the highest level of life, has been drawn in all in its details according to the scale and measuring of Divine Determining and is inscribed by its pen. Yes, just as raindrops tell of clouds, and drops of water point to the existence of a water-source, and notes and portfolios to the existence of a large ledger, so too, the 'evident' Divine Determining which we observe and which is the physical order in living beings indicates the notebook of Divine will and creational commands known as the Clear Book. Similarly, their fruits, seeds, grains, forms, and shapes, which are like the droplets, notes, and portfolios of 'theoretical' Divine Determining, which is the non-physical order and pertains to life, indicates the Preserved Tablet, one office of Divine knowledge, which is called the Clear Record.

**To Conclude:** We see clearly that at the time of their growth and development the particles of living beings travel to their intricate extremities and halt, then they change their path. At each of the extremities they produce the fruits of benefits, uses, and instances of wisdom. Clearly, the forms of those things and their measures are drawn with a pen of Determining. Thus, observable, evident Determining shows that in the non-physical states of living beings also are well-ordered, fruitful extremities and limits drawn with the pen of Determining. Divine power is the source, Divine Determining is the pattern. Power writes the meaningful book on that pattern. Since we understand clearly that the fruitful limits and purposeful extremities have been drawn with the pen of Divine Determining, physical and non-physical, certainly the states and stages which all living beings undergo in the course of their lives are also drawn with that pen. For their life-stories follow a course with order and balance; they change forms and receive shapes. Since the pen of Divine Determining thus rules in all living beings, surely the life-history of man, the world's most perfect fruit and vicegerent of the earth and bearer of the Supreme Trust, is more than anything dependent on the law of Divine Determining.

**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 program. 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 nonexistence are a proof that existence is pure good and non-existence, pure evil. Since non-existence is pure evil, circumstances that either result in nonexistence 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 skillful person who is proficient in many crafts, for an hour and in return for a wage, clothes a miserable wretch in a bejeweled, 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 it 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, bejeweled 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.

# Conclusion

Five Paragraphs which silenced the Old Said’s rebellious, proud, vain, conceited, and hypocritical soul, and compelled it to submit.

FIRST PARAGRAPH: Since things exist and they are full of art, they surely have a maker. As is decisively proved in the Twenty-Second Word, if everything is not one person’s, then each thing becomes as difficult and problematical as all things. Since someone made the earth and the heavens and created them, for sure that most wise and skillful Being would not leave to others living beings, which are the fruits, results, and aims of the heavens and the earth, and spoil his work. Making it futile and without purpose, He would not hand over to others all His wise works; He would not give their thanks and worship to others.

SECOND PARAGRAPH:  O my conceited soul! You resemble a grape-vine. Do not become proud! The vine itself did not attach the bunches of grapes; someone else attached them.

THIRD PARAGRAPH:  O my hypocritical soul! Do not become vain, saying: “I have served religion.” According to the meaning of the saying, “God strengthens this religion by means of sinful men,”1 it was because you were not purified. Indeed, you should know yourself to be such a sinful man, and that your duty and worship is thanks for past bounties. For these are the function of your nature, incumbent on you due to your creation, and the result of art; know this and be saved from vanity and hypocrisy!

FOURTH PARAGRAPH:  If you want knowledge of reality and true wisdom, gain knowledge of Almighty God. For the realities of beings are rays of the Divine Name of Truth and the manifestations of His Names and attributes. The reality of all things, whether physical, non-physical, essential, non-essential, and the reality of all human beings, is based on a Name and relies on Its reality. Things are not merely insignificant forms without reality. There is a brief discussion of this mystery at the end of the Twentieth Word. O my soul! If you long for the life of this world and flee death, know certainly that the conditions you suppose to be life are only the minute in which you are. All the time previous to the present minute and the things of the world within that time are dead in the present minute. And all the time subsequent to the present minute and all it contains are non-existent in it, and nothing. That means the physical life on which you rely is only one minute. Some of the learned, even, said it was a tenth of a minute, rather, the passing instant. It is due to this mystery that certain saints stated that with regard to this world, this world is non-existent. Since it is thus, give up the physical life of the soul; rise to the level of life of the heart, spirit, and inner faculties; see what a broad sphere of life they have. For them, the past and the future, which for you are dead, are living; they are existent and full of life. O my soul! Like my heart, you too weep and cry out and say:

*I am ephemeral; I do not want another who is thus.*

*I am impotent; I do not want another who is thus.*

*I have surrendered my spirit to the Most Merciful; I do not want another.*

*I want another, but let him be an eternal friend.*

*I am a mere atom, but I desire an Everlasting Sun.*

*I am nothing, yet I wish for these beings, all of them.*

FIFTH PARAGRAPH:  This Paragraph occurred to me in Arabic, and so it was written thus. Also, it recalls one of the thirty-three degrees of reflection in the recitation, God is Most Great.

*God is Most Great! The Eternal, All-Knowing, All-Wise, Most Generous, Most Compassionate, All-Beauteous, the Inscriber, the Pre-Eternal! What is the reality of the universe in* its *entirety and in its parts, and its pages and levels, and what is the reality of beings altogether and singly, in their existence and continuation, but the lines of the pen of His Determining and Decree, and His setting in order and determining, with knowledge and wisdom; what are they but the skillful inscriptions of His knowledge and wisdom and regulating and forming, with art and favor; the adornments of the shining hand of His art and favor and embellishing and illuminating, with grace and munificence; the flowers of the subtleties of His favor and munificence and making known and loved, with mercy and bounty; the fruits of the effusions of His mercy and bounty and pity and compassion, with beauty and perfection; the flashes and manifestations of His beauty and perfection through the testimony of the transience of the mirrors and the ephemerality of the places of manifestation and the permanence of that transcendent, eternal beauty, and its constant manifestation and appearance throughout the passage of the seasons, centuries, and ages, and the perpetual bestowal of bounties throughout the passage of the creatures and days and people?*

*Indeed, a perfect work points to one possessing intellect who performs a perfect act, and the perfect act points to one with understanding who possesses perfect names, and the perfect names point to perfect attributes, and perfect attributes point to perfect qualities, and the perfect qualities point to the perfection of the essence from which they proceed, and this is absolutely certain.*

*Indeed, the ephemerality of the mirrors and death of creatures together with the perpetual manifestation and constant effulgence is the clearest of proofs that their apparent beauty does not belong to the places of manifestation; it is the most eloquent statement and clearest argument for a transcendent beauty, and renewed bestowal, to the Necessary Existent, to the Enduring One, the Loving One...*

*O God! Grant blessings to our master Muhammad from pre-eternity to post-eternity to the number of things encompassed by Divine Knowledge, and to his Family and Companions, and grant them peace.*

1. From the 26th Word, The Words, BSN [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Divine Determining (Qadar) is also known as fate or destiny. [Tr.] [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The power of choice or faculty of will (juz'iirädajuz'-i ikhtiyäri), also known as free will. [Tr.] [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This Second Topic is the most profound and difficult of the questions of the mystery of Divine Determining. It is held by the all learned scholars to be one of the most important and controversial questions of theology and belief, yet the Risale-i Nur has solved it completely. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This is a truth addressing exact scholars in particular. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)