# Letters[[1]](#footnote-1)

# The Third Letter

*In His Name, be He glorified!*

*And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise. (17:44)*

One night at the height of a hundred-story building in my tree-house at the top of a cedar tree, I looked at the beautiful face of the heavens gilded with stars and saw an elevated light of miraculousness and brilliant secret of eloquence in the All-Wise Qur’an’s oath of,

*So verily I call to witness the planets \* That recede, go forth, or hide. (81:15-16)*

This verse, which refers to the planets and their being concealed and spread abroad, displays to the gaze of observers an elevated embroidery full of art and an exalted, instructive tapestry. The planets emerge from the sphere of the sun, their commander, and entering that of the fixed stars, display fresh embroideries and instances of art in the skies. Sometimes they come shoulder to shoulder with another star like themselves and display a beautiful situation. At other times they enter among the small stars and assume the position of commander. Especially in this season after evening, Venus on the horizon, and before the early dawn one of its shining companions, display a truly graceful and lovely scene. Later, after carrying out their duties as inspectors and acting as shuttles in the tapestries of art, they return, and entering the dazzling sphere of the sun, hide themselves. Now they demonstrate as brilliantly as the sun the majestic dominicality and glittering divine sovereignty of the One who spins this earth of ours and the planets described in the above verse with perfect order in space, each like a ship or airplane. See that majestic dominion which has under its sway ships and airplanes a thousand times larger than the earth, and that travel thousands of times faster.

You can see from this what an elevated happiness, what a great honor, it is to be connected to such a Monarch through worship and belief, and to be his guest.

Then I looked at the moon and saw a shining light of miraculousless in the verse,

*And the moon, We have measured for her mansions till she returns like the old lower part of a date stalk. (36:39)*

Indeed, the determining, rotating, regulating, and illuminating of the moon, and its positioning in regard to the earth and the sun with precise reckoning is so wonderful, so astonishing, that nothing at all could be difficult for the All-Powerful One who orders and determines it thus. It instructs all beings with intelligence who behold it, conveying to them the idea that the One who makes it thus can surely do everything. It follows the sun and does not deviate from its path even for a second, or lag behind one iota in its duties. It makes those who observe it carefully exclaim: *“Glory be to the One whose art bewilders the mind!”* Especially when like at the end of May it comes into conjunction with the Pleiades in the shape of a fine crescent, appearing as the curved white branch of a date-palm, and the Pleiades appear as a bunch of grapes, it conjures up in the imagination the existence of a huge luminous tree behind the veil of the green heavens. As if the pointed tip of one of the tree’s branches had pierced the veil and stuck out its head together with its bunch of grapes and become the Pleiades and the crescent moon, and the other stars had become the fruits of that hidden tree. See the subtlety and eloquence of the metaphor of: *“Like the old lower part of a date stalk.”*

Then this verse occurred to me,

*He it is who has made the earth submissive to you, so traverse you its tracts, (67:15)*

which suggests that the earth is a mastered ship or mount. From this I saw myself high up in a huge ship speeding through space. I recited the verse,

*Glory be to Him Whom has subjected these to us, for we could never have accomplished this, (43:13)*

which it is Sunna to recite when mounting such means of transport as horses or ships.[[2]](#footnote-2)

I saw that with its motion the globe of the earth had assumed the position of a projector showing images as in the cinema; it brought into movement all the heavens and began to mobilize all the stars like a magnificent army. It shows such lofty scenes that it intoxicates those who think and fills them with wonder. *“Glory be to God!”,* I exclaimed, *“what numerous, vast, strange, wonderful, and elevated works are performed at so little expense!”* Two subtle points concerning belief occurred to me after this:

**The First:** A few days ago I was asked a question by a guest: the gist of it, which inferred doubt, was this: Paradise and Hell are a great distance away. Through divine grace, the people of Paradise will pass through the resurrection like lightning or as swiftly as Buraq, and enter Paradise. But the people of Hell, how will they go, with their ponderous bodies, loaded down with the heavy burdens of their sins? How will they travel?

What occurred to me was this: if for example all nations are invited to a general congress in America and each boards a huge boat and goes there, in the same way, the globe, which travels the long distance of twenty-five thousand years in one year in the vast ocean of the universe, will take on its people, travel to the field of the resurrection, and disembark them. Furthermore, the Hell at the center of the earth is indicated by the fact that the earth’s temperature increases one degree every thirty- three meters. That Hell will pour its fire into the Greater Hell, whose temperature of two hundred thousand degrees is similar to that described in Hadith and according to Hadiths will carry out some of the duties of the Greater Hell in this world and the Intermediate Realm[[3]](#footnote-3). Then at a divine command, the earth will be transformed into a better, eternal form, and will become one of the habitations of the hereafter.

**The Second Point** which comes to mind: it is the custom of the All-Powerful Maker, the All-Wise Creator, the Single One of Unity, in order to demonstrate the perfection of His power and beauty of His wisdom and proofs of His unit y, to perform many works with very little and to have large duties carried out by small things. As I have said in some of the Words, if all things are attributed to a single being, they become so easy as to be necessary. Whereas if they are attributed to numerous makers and causes, as many difficulties arise as to make them impossible. For a single person like an officer or master builder easily positions numerous soldiers or numerous stones with a single act, a single movement, and obtains a result. But if, in order to obtain those positions and results, it is referred to the soldiers in the army or the stones of the dome, which is without support, they could be achieved only with truly numerous acts, numerous difficulties, and great confusion.

And so, if such acts as the whirling and rotations, the circulation and revolutions, and the glorification-scattering promenading and excursions of the four seasons and day and night in the universe are ascribed to unity, then by impelling a single globe with a single command, a Single Being can obtain those elevated situations and exalted results. He can display the wonders of art in the alternation of the seasons, and the marvels of wisdom in the revolutions of day and night, and the graceful spectacles in the apparent motions of the stars, sun, and moon. For the army of all beings is His. If He wishes, He may appoint a soldier like the earth to be commander of all the stars, make the mighty sun a lamp furnishing heat and light for his people, and the four seasons, which are tablets of the inscriptions of His power, as shuttles, and night and day, which are pages for the writings of His wisdom, He can make into bows. By showing each day the moon in a different shape, He makes it a calendar for reckoning time. And just as He makes the stars adorned, elegant, shining lanterns in the hands of the angels, dancing in ecstasy, so too He demonstrates many instances of wisdom that look to the earth. If these situations are not sought from One Being whose command, order, law, and regulation address all beings, then all the suns and stars would have to cut an infinite distance each day with actual motion and infinite speed.

It is because of the infinite ease in unity and infinite difficulty in multiplicity that businessmen and industrialists give a unity to multiplicity and so make things easy; that is, they form companies.

**In Short:** There are infinite difficulties in the way of misguidance, and infinite ease in the way of unity.

*The Eternal One, He is the Eternal One!*

Said Nursi

# The Fourth Letter

*In His Name, be He glorified!*

*And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise. (17:44)*

May God’s peace and mercy and blessings be upon you, and upon my brothers especially...

My Dear Brothers!

I am now on a high peak on Çam Dağı (Pine Mountain), at the top of a might y pine-tree in a tree-house. In lonely solitude far from men, I have grown accustomed to this isolation. When I wish for conversation, I imagine you to be here with me, and I talk with you and find consolation. If there is nothing to prevent it, I would like to remain alone here for a month or two. When I return to Barla[[4]](#footnote-4), I shall search for some means for the verbal conversation with you I so long for, if you would like it. For now I am writing two or three things that come to mind here in this pine-tree.

**The First:** This is somewhat confidential, but no secrets are concealed from you. It is as follows:

Some of the people of reality manifest the divine name of Loving One, and with its manifestations at a maximum degree look to the Necessarily Existent One through the windows of beings. In the same way – but only when he is employed in service of the Qur’an and is the herald of its infinite treasuries – this brother of yours who is nothing, but nothing, is given a state whereby he manifests the divine names of All- Compassionate and All-Wise. God willing, the Words manifest the meaning of the verse: *“He who has been given wisdom, has been given great good.”(2:269)*

**The Second:** This excellent saying about the Naqshbandi Order suddenly occurred to me: *“On the Naqshbandi way one has to abandon four things: the world, the hereafter, existence, and abandoning itself.”* It gave rise to the following thought:

*“On the way of impotence four things are necessary: absolute poverty, absolute impotence, absolute thanks, and absolute ardor, my friend.”*

Then the rich and colorful poem you had written, *“Look at the multicolored page of the book of the universe, etc.”* came to mind. I gazed at the stars on the face of skies in the light of it, and I said to myself: If only I could have been a poet and completed it! Then I set about it although I have no ability to write poetry or verse, and what I wrote was not poetry. I wrote it as it occurred to me. You, my heir, may convert it into poetry and put it into verse. This is what occurred to me:

*Then listen to the stars, listen to their harmonious address! See what wisdom has emblazed on the decree of its light. Altogether they start to speak with the tongue of truth,*

*They address the majesty of the All-Powerful, All-Glorious One’s sovereignty: We are each of us light-scattering proofs of the existence of our Maker,*

*We are witnesses to both His Unity and His Power,*

*We are subtle miracles gilding the face of the skies for the angels to gaze upon. We are the innumerable attentive eyes of the heavens which watch the earth,* *which study Paradise*. [[5]](#footnote-5)

*We are the innumerable exquisite fruits that the hand of wisdom of the All- Glorious and Beauteous One has fastened*

*To the celestial portion of the tree of creation, to all the branches of the Milky* *Way.*

*For the inhabitants of the heavens,*

*We are each of us a travelling mosque, a spinning house, a lofty home; Each is an illumining lamp, a mighty ship, an airplane.*

*We are each of us a miracle of power, a wonder of creative art*

*Created by the Powerful One of Perfection, the All-Wise One of Glory; A rarity of His wisdom, a marvel of His creation, a world of light.*

*We demonstrated to mankind innumerable proofs,*

*We made them hear with these innumerable tongues of ours;*

*But their accursed unseeing, unbelieving eyes did not see our faces, They did not hear our words.*

*And we are signs that speak the truth: Our stamp is one, our seal is one,*

*We are mastered by our Sustainer,*

*We glorify Him through our subjugation, We recite His Names,*

*We are each of us in ecstasy,*

*A member of the mighty circle of the Milky Way.*

*The Eternal One, He is the Eternal One!*

Said Nursi

# The Fifth Letter

*In His Name, be He glorified!*

*And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise. (17:44)*

In his Letters (Maktubat), Imam-i Rabbani[[6]](#footnote-6) (May God be pleased with him), a sun of the Naqshbandi Order and its hero, said: “For me, the disclosure of a single matter of the truths of faith is preferable to thousands of illuminations, ecstasies, and instances of wonder-working.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

He also said: *“The final point of all the Sufi ways is the clarification and unfolding of the truths of faith.”*[[8]](#footnote-8)

He also said: *“Sainthood is of three sorts: one is the lesser sainthood, which is the well-known sainthood. The others are the middle sainthood and the greater sainthood. Greater sainthood is to open up by way of the legacy of prophethood a direct way to reality without entering the intermediate realm of Sufism.”*[[9]](#footnote-9)

He said also: *“The Naqshi way is traversed with two wings; that is, by having firm belief in the truths of faith and by carrying out the religious obligations. The way cannot be covered if either of these two wings is defective.”*[[10]](#footnote-10) In which case, the Naqshi way consists of three veils:

**The First** and most important is to serve the truths of faith directly; Imam-i Rabbani travelled this way in his later years.

**The Second** is to [advance the cause of] the religious obligations and serve the glorious practices (Sunna) of the Prophet (UWBP) under the veil of the Sufi way.

**The Third** is to strive to eliminate the sicknesses of the heart by way of Sufism and to journey with the feet of the heart.

Of these, the first is the equivalent of obligatory, the second, close to obligatory, and the third, Sunna.

Since the reality of the matter is thus, my conjecture is that if such persons as Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir Gilani[[11]](#footnote-11) (May God be pleased with him) and Shah Naqshband[[12]](#footnote-12) (May God be pleased with him) and Imam-i Rabbani (May God be pleased with him) were alive today, they would expend all their efforts on strengthening the truths of faith and tenets of Islam. For it is through them that eternal happiness is won. Any deficiency in them results in eternal misery. A person without faith will not enter Paradise, but very many will go there without Sufism. Man cannot live without bread, but he can live without fruit. Sufism is the fruit, the truths of Islam, basic sustenance. In former times, through spiritual journeying from forty days to as much as forty years, a person could rise to some of the truths of faith. But now, if through Almighty God’s mercy there is a way to rise to those truths in forty minutes, it surely is not sensible to remain indifferent to it.

Thus, people who have studied the thirty-three Words closely state that they have opened up just such a Qur’anic way. Since this is a fact, I am of the opinion that the Words so far written about the mysteries of the Qur’an are a most appropriate medicine and salve for the wounds of this time, and a most beneficial light for Islam as a whole, which has been subject to the assaults of darkness, and a most right guide for those wandering bewildered in the valleys of misguidance.

You know that if misguidance arises from ignorance, it is easy to dispel. Whereas if it results from science and learning, it is difficult to eliminate. In former times, only one person in a thousand was in the latter category, and only one in a thousand such people would be reformed through guidance. For such people fancy themselves. They do not know, but they think they do know. I think that Almighty God has bestowed the Words at this time, which are flashes of the Qur’an’s miraculousness, as an antidote to this atheistic misguidance.

*The Eternal One, He is the Eternal One!*

Said Nursi

1. From the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Letters, The Letters, BSN [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Muslim*, Hajj, 425; *Abu Da’ud*, Jihad, 72, 74; *Tirmidhi*, Da’wat, 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See, *Bukhari*, Bad’ al-Khalq, 10; *Muslim*, Janna, 30; *Tirmidhi*, Jahannam, 7; *Musnad*, ii, 313. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Barla: the village in Isparta Province in S. W. Turkey where Bediuzzaman spent eight years in exile, from 1926-1934. (Tr.) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. That is, since innumerable miracles of power are exhibited on the face of the earth, which is the seed- bed and tillage for Paradise, the angels in the world of the heavens gaze on those miracles, those marvels. And like the angels, the stars, resembling the eyes of the heavenly bodies, gaze on the finely fashioned creatures on the earth, and in so doing look at the world of Paradise. They look on both the earth and Paradise at the same time; they observe those fleeting wonders in an enduring form in Paradise. That is to say, in the heavens, there are prospects of both worlds. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi was also known by the titles of Imam-i Rabbani, Ahmad Faruqi, and Regenerator of the Second Millennium. He lived in India 971/1563-1034/1624, where he purified the religion of Islam of polytheistic accretions and efforts to degenerate it. He is also famous for his efforts to reform Sufism. (Tr.) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Imam Rabbani, al-Maktubat, i, 182 (no: 210). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ibid., i, 240 (no: 260) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ibid., i, 98 (no: 91); i, 99 (no: 94). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Sayyid ‘Abd al-Qadir Gilani (Geylani), known as the Gawth al-A’zam, was a towering spiritual figure in the history of Islam. He lived 470 (1077) – 561 (1166). (Tr.) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Muhammad Baha’uddin Naqshband. He was the founder of the Naqshbandi Order, and died in 791-1389 in Bukhara. (Tr.) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)