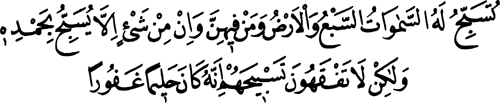
# The Supreme Signs[[1]](#footnote-1)

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

*The seven heavens and the earth and all that is in them extol and glorify Him, and there is nothing but glorifies Him with praise, but you understand not their glorifying; indeed, He is Most Forbearing, Most Forgiving. (17:44)*

# First degree: Heavens

Since this sublime verse, like many other Qur’anic verses, mentions first the heavens that brilliant page proclaiming God’s unity, gazed on at all times and by all men with wonder and joy in its pronouncement of the Creator of this cosmos, let us too begin with a mention of the heavens.

Indeed, every voyager who comes to the hospice and the realm of this world, opens his eyes and wonders who is the master of this fine hospice, which resembles a most generous banquet, a most ingenious exhibition, a most impressive camp and training ground, a most amazing and wondrous place of recreation, a most profound and wise place of instruction. He asks himself too who is the author of this great book, and who is the monarch of this lofty realm. There first presents itself to him the beautiful face of the heavens, inscribed with the gilt lettering of the stars. That face calls him saying, *“Look at me, and I shall guide you to what you seek.”*

He looks then and sees a manifestation of dominicality performing various tasks in the heavens: it holds aloft in the heavens, without any supporting pillar, hundreds of thousands of heavenly bodies, some of which are a thousand times heavier than the earth and revolve seventy times faster than a cannon-ball; it causes them to move in harmony and swiftly without colliding with each other; it causes innumerable lamps to burn constantly, without the use of any oil; it disposes of these great masses without any disturbance or disorder; it sets sun and moon to work at their respective tasks, without those great bodies ever rebelling; it administers within infinite space the magnitude of which cannot be measured in figures should they stretch from pole to pole all that exists, at the same time, with the same strength, in the same fashion, manner and mold, without the least deficiency; it reduces to submissive obedience to its law all the aggressive powers inherent in those bodies; it cleanses and lustrates the face of the heavens, removing all the sweepings and refuse of that vast assembly; it causes those bodies to maneuver like a disciplined army; and then, making the earth revolve, it shows the heavens each night and each year in a different form, like a cinema screen displaying true and imaginative scenes to the audience of creation.

There is within this dominical activity a truth consisting of subjugation, administration, revolution, ordering, cleansing, and employment. This truth, with its grandeur and comprehensiveness, bears witness to the necessary existence and unity of the Creator of the Heavens and testifies to that Existence being more manifest than that of the heavens. Hence it was said in the First Degree of the First Station:

*There is no god but God, the Necessary Being, to Whose Necessary Existence in Unity the heavens and all they contain testify, through the testimony of the sublimity of the comprehensiveness of the truth of subjugation, administration, revolution, ordering, cleansing, and employment, a truth vast and perfect, and to be observed.*

# Second degree: Atmosphere

Then that wondrous place of gathering known as space orthe atmosphere begins thunderously to proclaim to that traveler come as a guest to the world, *“Look at me! You can discover and find through me the object of your search, the one who sent you here!”* The traveler looks at the sour but kind face of the atmosphere, and listening to the awesome but joyous thunderclaps perceives the following.

**The clouds**, suspended between the sky and the earth, water the garden of the world in the most wise and merciful fashion, furnish the inhabitants of the earth with the water of life, modify the natural heat of life, and hasten to bestow aid wherever it is needed. In addition to fulfilling these and other duties, the vast clouds, capable of filling the heavens sometimes hide themselves, with their parts retiring to rest so that not a trace can be seen, just like a well-disciplined army showing and hiding itself in accordance with sudden orders.

Then, the very instant the command is given to pour down rain, the clouds gather in one hour, or rather in a few minutes; they fill the sky and await further orders from their commander.

Next the traveler looks at **the wind** in the atmosphere and sees that the air is employed wisely and generously in such numerous tasks that it is as if each of the inanimate atoms of that unconscious air were hearing and noting the orders coming from that monarch of the universe; without neglecting a single one of them, it performs them in ordered fashion and through the power of the monarch. Thereby it gives breath to all beings and conveys to all living things the heat, light, and electricity they need, and transmits sound, as well as aiding in the pollination of plants.

The traveler then looks at **the rain** and sees that within those delicate, glistening sweet drops, sent from a hidden treasury of mercy, there are so many compassionate gifts and functions contained that it is as if mercy itself were assuming shape and flowing forth from the dominical treasury in the form of drops. It is for this reason that rain has been called *“mercy.”*

Next the traveler looks at **the lightning** and listens to the thunder and sees that both of these, too, are employed in wondrous tasks.

Then taking his eyes off these, he looks to his own intellect and says: *“The inanimate, lifeless cloud that resembles carded cotton has of course no knowledge of us; when it comes to our aid, it is not because it takes pity on us. It cannot appear and disappear without receiving orders. Rather it acts in accordance with the orders of a most powerful and compassionate commander. First it disappears without leaving a trace, then suddenly reappears in order to begin its work. By the command and power of a most active and exalted, a most magnificent and splendid, monarch, it fills and then empties the atmosphere. Inscribing the sky with wisdom and erasing the pattern, it makes of the sky a tablet of effacement and affirmation, a depiction of the gathering and the resurrection. By the contriving of a most generous and bountiful, a most munificent and solicitous sustainer, a ruler who regulates and disposes, it mounts the wind and taking with it treasuries of rain each as heavy as a mountain, hastens to the aid of the needy. It is as if it were weeping over them in pity, with its tears causing the flowers to smile, tempering the heat of the sun, spraying gardens with water, and washing and cleansing the face of the earth.”*

That wondering traveler then tells his own intellect: *“These hundreds of thousands of wise, merciful and ingenious tasks and acts of generosity and mercy that arise from the veil and outer form of this inanimate, lifeless, unconscious, volatile, unstable, stormy, unsettled, and inconstant air, clearly establish that this diligent wind, this tireless servant, never acts of itself, but rather in accordance with the orders of a most powerful and knowing, a most wise and generous commander. It is as if each particle were aware of every single task, like a soldier understanding and hearkening to every order of its commander, for it hears and obeys every dominical command that courses through the air. It aids all animals to breathe and to live, all plants to pollinate and grow, and cultivates all the matter necessary for their survival. It directs and administers the clouds, makes possible the voyaging of sailing ships, and enables sounds to be conveyed, particularly by means of wireless, telephone, telegraph and radio, as well as numerous other universal functions.*

*“Now these atoms, each composed of two such simple materials as hydrogen and oxygen and each resembling the other, exist in hundreds of thousands of different fashions all over the globe; I conclude therefore that they are being employed and set to work in the utmost orderliness by a hand of wisdom.*

*As the verse makes clear,*

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*And the disposition of the winds and the clouds, held in disciplined order between the heavens and the earth, (2:164)*

*the one who through the disposition of the winds employs them in countless dominical functions, who through the ordering of the clouds uses them in infinite tasks of mercy, and who creates the air in this fashion such a one can only be the Possessor of Necessary Existence, the One Empowered over All Things and Knowledgeable of All Things, the Sustainer endowed with Glory and Generosity.”* This is the conclusion our traveler now draws.

Then he looks at **the rain** and sees that within it are contained benefits as numerous as the raindrops, and dominical manifestations as multiple as the particles of rain, and instances of wisdom as plentiful as its atoms. Those sweet, delicate and blessed drops are moreover created in so beautiful and ordered a fashion, that particularly the rain sent in the summertime, is dispatched and caused to fall with such balance and regularity that not even stormy winds that cause large objects to collide can destroy its equilibrium and order; the drops do not collide with each other or merge in such fashion as to become harmful masses of water. Water, composed of two simple elements like hydrogen and oxygen, is employed in hundreds of thousands of other wise, purposeful tasks and arts, particularly in animate beings; although it is itself inanimate and unconscious. Rain which is then the very embodiment of Divine Mercy can only be manufactured in the unseen treasury of mercy of One Most Compassionate and Merciful, and on its descent expounds in physical form the verse:

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*And He it is Who sends down rain after men have despaired, and thus spreads out His Mercy. (42:28)*

The traveler next listens to **the thunder** and watches **the lightning**. He understands that these two wondrous events in the atmosphere are like a material demonstration of the verse,

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*The thunder glorifies His praise, (13:13)*

*The brilliance of His lightning almost robs them of their sight (24:43).*

They also announce the coming of rain, and thus give glad tidings to the needy.

Yes, this sudden utterance of a miraculous sound by the atmosphere; the filling of the dark sky with the flash and fire of lightning; the setting alight of the clouds that resemble mountains of cotton or pipes bursting with water and snow these and similar phenomena are like a blow struck on the head of the negligent man whose gaze is directed down at the earth. They tell him:

*“Lift up your head, look at the miraculous deeds of the most active and powerful being who wishes to make himself known. In the same way that you are not left to your own devices, so too, these phenomena and events have a master and a purpose. Each of them is caused to fulfil a particular task, and each is employed by a Most Wise Disposer.”*

The wondering traveler hears then the lofty and manifest testimony to the truth that is composed of the disposition of the winds, the descent of the rains and the administration of the events of the atmosphere, and says: *“I believe in God.”* That which was stated in the Second Degree of the First Station expresses the observations of the traveler concerning the atmosphere:

*There is no god but God, the Necessary Being, to Whose Necessary Existence in Unity the atmosphere and all its contains testifies, through the testimony of the sublimity of the comprehensiveness of the truth of subjugation, disposal, causing to descend, and regulation, a truth vast and perfect, and to be observed.*

# Third degree: The globe

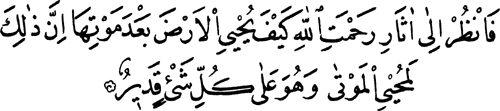
Next the globe addresses that thoughtful traveler, now growing accustomed to his reflective journey:

*“Why are you wandering through the heavens, through space and the sky? Come, I will make known to you what you are seeking. Look at the functions that I perform and read my pages!”* He looks and sees that the globe, like an ecstatic Mevlevi dervish with its twofold motion, is tracing out around the field of the Supreme Gathering a circle that determines the succession of days, years, and seasons. It is a most magnificent dominical ship, loaded with the hundreds of thousands of different forms of food and equipment needed for all animate beings, floating with the utmost equilibrium in the ocean of space and circling the sun.

He then looks at the pages of the earth and sees that each page of each of its chapters proclaims the Sustainer of the Earth in thousands of verses. Being unable to read the whole of it, he looks at the page dealing with the creation and deployment of animate beings in the spring, and observes the following:

The forms of the countless members of hundreds of thousands of species emerge, in the utmost precision, from a simple material and are then nurtured in most merciful fashion. Then, in miraculous manner, wings are given to some of the seeds; they take to flight and are thus dispersed. They are most effectively distributed, most carefully fed and nurtured. Countless tasty and delicious forms of food, in the most merciful and tender fashion, are brought forth from dry clay, and from roots, seeds and drops of liquid that differ little among each other. Every spring, a hundred thousand kinds of food and equipment are loaded on it from an unseen treasury, as if onto a railway wagon, and are dispatched in utmost orderliness to animate beings. The sending to infants of canned milk in those food packages, and pumps of sugared milk in the form of their mothers’ affectionate breasts, is in particular such an instance of solicitousness, mercy and wisdom that it immediately establishes itself as a most tender manifestation of the mercy and generosity of the Merciful and Compassionate One.

In short: this living page of spring displays a hundred thousand examples and samples of the Supreme Gathering, and is a tangible demonstration of this verse,



*So look to the signs of God’s mercy: how He gives life to the earth after its death, for verily He it is Who gives life to the dead, and He has power over all things. (30:50)*

Moreover, this verse may be said to express in miraculous fashion the meanings of the page that is spring. The traveler thus understood that the earth proclaims through all its pages, in fashion proportionate to their size: *“There is no god but He.”*(A phrase repeated many times in the Qur’an.)

In expression of the meaning beheld by the traveler through the brief testimony of one of the twenty aspects of a single page out of the more than twenty pages of the globe, it was said in the Third Degree of the First Station:

*There is no god but God, the Necessary Being, to Whose Necessary Existence in Unity the earth with all that is in it and upon it testifies, through the testimony of the sublimity of the comprehensiveness of the truth of subjugation, disposition, nurturing, opening, distribution of seeds, protection, administration, the giving of life to all animate beings, compassion and mercy universal and general, a truth vast and perfect, and to be observed.*

# Fourth degree: Seas and rivers

Then that reflective traveler read each page of the cosmos, and as he did so his faith, that key to felicity, strengthened; his gnosis, that key to spiritual progress, increased; his belief in God, the source and foundation of all perfection, developed one degree more; his joy and pleasure augmented and aroused his eagerness; and while listening to the perfect and convincing lessons given by the sky, by space and the earth, he cried out for more. Then he heard the rapturous invocation of God made by the tumult of the seas and the great rivers, and listened to their sad yet pleasant sounds. In numerous ways they were saying to him: *“Look at us, read also our signs!”* Looking, our traveler saw the following:

The seas, constantly and vitally surging, merging and pouring forth with an inclination to conquest inherent in their very nature, surrounded the earth, and together with the earth, revolved, extremely swiftly, in a circle of twenty-five thousand years in a single year. Yet the seas did not disperse, did not overflow or encroach on the land contiguous to them. They moved and stood still, and were protected by the command and power of a most powerful and magnificent being.

Then looking to the depths of the sea, the traveler saw that apart from the most beautiful, well adorned and symmetrical jewels, there were thousands of different kinds of animal, sustained and ordered, brought to life and caused to die, in so disciplined a fashion, their provision coming from mere sand and salt water, that it established irresistibly the existence of a Powerful and Glorious, a Merciful and Beauteous Being administering and giving life to them.

The traveler then looks at the rivers and sees that the benefits inherent in them, the functions they perform, and their continual replenishment, are inspired by such wisdom and mercy as indisputably to prove that all rivers, springs, streams and great waterways flow forth from the treasury of mercy of the Compassionate One, the Lord of Glory and Generosity. They are preserved and dispensed, indeed, in so extraordinary a fashion that it is said *“Four rivers flow forth from Paradise.”*[[2]](#footnote-2) That is, they transcend by far apparent causes, and flow forth instead from the treasury of a nonmaterial Paradise, from the superabundance of an unseen and inexhaustible source.

For example, the blessed Nile, that turns the sandy land of Egypt into a paradise, flows from the Mountains of the Moon in the south without ever being exhausted, as if it were a small sea. If the water that flowed down the river in six months were gathered together in the form of a mountain and then frozen, it would be larger than those mountains. But the place in the mountains where the water is lodged and stored is less than a sixth of their mass. As for the water that replenishes the river, the rain that enters the reservoir of the river is very sparse in that torrid region and is quickly swallowed up by the thirsty soil; hence it is incapable of maintaining the equilibrium of the river. A tradition has thus grown up that the blessed Nile springs, in miraculous fashion, from an unseen Paradise. This tradition has profound meaning and expresses a beautiful truth.

The traveler saw, then, a thousandth part of the truths and affirmations contained in the oceans and rivers. The seas proclaim unanimously with a power proportionate to their extent, *“There is no god but He,”* and produce as witnesses to their testimony all the creatures that inhabit them. This, our traveler perceived.

Expressing and conveying the testimony of the seas and the rivers, we said, in the **Fourth Degree** of the First Station:

*There is no god but God, the Necessary Existent, to the necessity of Whose Existence in Unity point all the seas and the rivers, together with all they contain, by the testimony of the sublimity of the comprehensiveness of the truth of subjugation, preservation, storing up, and administration, vast and well-ordered, and to be observed.*

# Fifth degree: Mountains and plains

Then the traveler is summoned, on his meditative journey, by the mountains and the plains. *“Read too our pages,”* they say. Looking he sees that the universal function and duty of mountains is of such grandeur and wisdom as to stupefy the intelligence. The mountains emerge from the earth by the command of their Sustainer, thereby palliating the turmoil, anger, and rancor that arise from disturbances within the earth. As the mountains surge upward, the earth begins to breathe; it is delivered from harmful tremors and upheavals, and its tranquility as it pursues its duty of rotation is no longer disturbed. In the same way that masts are planted in ships to protect them from turbulence and preserve their balance, so too mountains are set up on the deck of the ship that is the earth, as masts and stores, as is indicated by verses of the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition such as these:

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*And the mountains as pegs (78:7), And We have cast down anchors (50:7), And the mountains He anchored them (79:32).*

Then, too, there are stored up and preserved in **the mountains** all kinds of springs, waters, minerals and other materials needed by animate beings, in so wise, skilful, generous and foreseeing a fashion that they prove that they are the storehouses and warehouses and servants of One possessing infinite power, One possessing infinite wisdom. Deducing from these two examples the other duties and instances of wisdom -as great as mountains- of the mountains and plains, the traveler sees through the general instances of wisdom in them and particularly in regard to the fashion in which all manner of things are stored up in them providentially, the testimony they give and the Divine unity they proclaim declaring *“There is no god but He,”* a declaration as powerful and firm as the mountains and vast and expansive as the plains and he too says, *“I believe in God.”*

In expression of this meaning, it was said in the **Fifth Degree** of the First Station:

*There is no god but God, to the Necessity of Whose Existence point all the mountains and plains together with what is in them and upon them, by the testimony of the sublimity of the comprehensiveness of the truth of the storing up, administration, dissemination of seed, preservation, and regulation, a truth providential, dominical, vast, general, well-ordered, and perfect, and to be observed.*

# Sixth degree: Arboreal and vegetable realm

Then, while that traveler was travelling in his mind through the mountains and plains, the gate to the arboreal and vegetable realm was opened before him. He was summoned inside: *“Come,”* they said, *“Inspect our realm and read our inscriptions.”* Entering, he saw that a splendid and well adorned assembly for the proclamation of God’s unity and a circle for the mentioning of His Names and the offering of thanks to Him, had been drawn up. He understood for the very appearance of all trees and plants that their different species were proclaiming unanimously,

*“There is no god but He.”* For he perceived three great and general truths indicating and proving that all fruit giving trees and plants with the tongue of their symmetrical and eloquent leaves, the phrases of their charming and loquacious flowers, the words of their well-ordered and well-spoken fruits, were testifying to God’s glory and bearing witness that *“There is no god but He.”*

**The First:** In the same way that in each of the plants and trees a deliberate bounty and generosity is to be seen in most obvious fashion, and a purposive liberality and munificence, so too it is to be seen in the totality of the trees and plants, with the brilliance of sunlight.

**The Second:** The wise and purposive distinction and differentiation, one that cannot in any way be attributed to chance, the deliberate and merciful adornment and giving of form all this is to be seen as clearly as daylight in the infinite varieties and species; they show themselves to be the works and embroideries of an All Wise Maker.

**The Third:** The opening and unfolding of all the separate members of the hundred thousand species of that infinite realm, each in its own distinct fashion and shape, in the utmost order, equilibrium and beauty, from well-defined, limited, simple and solid seeds and grains, identical to each other or nearly so their emerging from those seeds in distinct and separate form, with utter equilibrium, vitality and wise purpose without the least error or mistake, is a truth more brilliant than the sun. The witnesses proving this truth are as numerous as the flowers, fruits and leaves that emerge in the spring. So the traveler said, *“Praise be to God for the blessing of belief.”*

In expression of these truths and the testimony given to them, we said in the **Sixth Degree** of the First Station:

*There is no god but God, to the Necessity of Whose Existence in Unity points the consensus of all the species of trees and plants that are engaged in glorifying God and speak with the eloquent and well-ordered words of their leaves, their loquacious and comely flowers, their well-ordered and well-spoken fruits, by the testimony of the sublimity of the comprehensiveness of the truth of bestowal, bounty, and generosity, done in purposive mercy, and the truth of differentiation, adornment, and decoration, done with will and wisdom. Definite, too, is the indication given by the truth of the opening of all their symmetrical, adorned, distinct, variegated and infinite forms, from seeds and grains that resemble and approximate each other that are finite and limited.*

# Seventh degree: Animals

As this traveler through the cosmos proceeded on his meditative journey, with increased eagerness and a bouquet of gnosis and faith, itself like a spring, gathered from the garden of the spring, there opened before his truth perceiving intellect, his cognitive reason, the gate to the animal and bird realm. With hundreds of thousands of different voices and various tongues, he was invited to enter. Entering, he saw that all the animals and birds, in their different species, groups and nations, were proclaiming, silently and aloud, *“There is no god but He,”* and had thus turned the face of the earth into a vast place of invocation, an expansive assembly for the proclamation of God’s glory. He saw each of them to be like an ode dedicated to God, a word proclaiming His glory, a letter indicating His mercy, each of them describing the Maker and offering Him thanks and encomium. It was as if the senses, powers, members and instruments of those animals and birds were orderly and balanced words, or perfect and disciplined expressions. He observed three great and comprehensive truths indicating, in decisive form, their offering of thanks to the Creator and Provider and their testimony to His unity.

**The First:** Their being brought into existence with wisdom and purpose and their creation full of art in a fashion that in no way can be attributed to chance, to blind force or inanimate nature; their being created and composed in purposive and knowledgeable manner; their animation and being given life in a way that displays in twenty aspects the manifestation of knowledge, wisdom, and will all of this is a truth that bears witness to the Necessary Existence of the Eternally Living and Self Subsistent, His seven attributes and unity, a witness repeated to the number of all animate beings.

**The Second:** There appears from the distinction made among those infinite beings and from their adornment and decoration in a fashion by which their features are different, their shapes adorned, their proportions measured and symmetrical, and their forms well-ordered there appears from this a truth so vast and powerful that none other than the One Powerful over all things, the One Knowledgeable of all things, could lay claim to it, this comprehensive act which displays in every respect thousands of wonders and instances of wisdom; it is impossible and precluded that anything other than such a one could lay claim to it.

**The Third:** The emergence and unfolding of those countless creatures, in their hundreds of thousands of different shapes and forms, each of which is a miracle of wisdom, their emergence from eggs and drops of water called sperm that are identical with each other or closely resemble each other, and are limited and finite in number, all this in the most orderly, symmetrical and unfailing fashion, is so brilliant a truth as to be illumined with proofs and evidences as numerous as the animals themselves.

By the consensus of these three truths, all the species of animals are engaged together in testifying that *“There is no god but He.”* It is as if the whole earth, like a great man, were saying *“There is no god but He”* in a manner befitting its vastness, and conveying its testimony to the dwellers of the heaven. The traveler saw this and understood it perfectly. In expression of these truths, we said in the Seventh Degree of the First Station:

*There is no god but God, to Whose Necessary Existence in Unity points the consensus of all animals and birds, that praise God and bear witness to Him with the words of their senses, their faculties and powers, words well-balanced, ordered and eloquent; with the words of their limbs and members, words perfect and persuasive; by the testimony of the sublimity of the comprehensiveness of the truth of bringing into being, making, and creating, according to will, the truth of distinction and decoration according to purpose, and the truth of proportioning and forming according to wisdom. Definite too is the indication given by the truth of the opening of all of their orderly, distinct, variegated and infinite forms, out of identical or similar eggs and drops of sperm, that are finite and limited.*

# Eight degree: Humanity

That meditative voyager, in order to advance farther in the infinite degrees and countless luminous stages of knowledge of God, then wished to enter the world of men, the realm of humanity. Humanity, headed by the prophets, invited him, and he accepted the invitation. Looking first at the stopping place of the past, he saw that all of the prophets (Peace and blessings be upon him), the most luminous and perfect of human kind, were reciting in chorus, *“No god but He,”* and making remembrance of God. With the power of their brilliant, well attested and innumerable miracles, they were proclaiming God’s unity, and in order to advance man from the animal state to angelic degree, they were instructing men and summoning them to belief in God. Kneeling down in that school of light, he too paid heed to the lesson.

He saw that in the hand of each of those teachers, the most exalted and renowned of all celebrated human beings, there were numerous miracles, bestowed on them by the Creator of All Being as a sign confirming their mission. Further, a large group of men, a whole community, had confirmed their claims and come to belief at their hands; a truth assented to and confirmed by these hundreds of thousands of serious and veracious individuals, unanimously and in full agreement, was bound to be firm and definitive. He understood, too, that the people of misguidance, in denying a truth attested and affirmed by so many veracious witnesses, were committing a most grievous error, indeed crime, and were therefore deserving of a most grievous punishment. He recognized, by contrast, those who assented to the truth and believed in it, as being the most true and righteous, and a further degree of the sanctity of belief became apparent to him.

Yes, the infinite miracles bestowed by God on the prophets (Peace be upon them) each one being like a confirmation of their mission; the heavenly blows dealt to their opponents, each being like a proof of their truthfulness; their individual perfections, each one being like an indication of their righteousness; their veracious teachings; the strength of their faith, a witness to their honesty; their supreme seriousness and readiness to self-sacrifice; the sacred books and pages held by their hands; their countless pupils who through following their paths attain truth, perfection and light, thus proving again the truthfulness of the teachings; the unanimous agreement of the prophets those most earnest warners and their followers in all positive matters; their concord, mutual support and affinity all of this constitutes so powerful a proof that no power on earth can confront it, and no doubt or hesitation can survive it.

Our traveler understood further that inclusion of belief in all the prophets (Peace be upon them) among the pillars of belief, represents another great source of strength. Thus he derived great benefit of faith from their lessons, in expression of which we said in the Eighth Degree of the First Station:

*There is no god but God, to the Necessity of Whose Existence in Unity points the unanimity of all the prophets, through the power of their luminous miracles, that both affirm and are affirmed.*

# Ninth degree: The Prophets

That questing traveler, having derived a lofty taste of truth from the power of belief, found himself invited, while coming from the assembly of the prophets (Peace be upon them) to the classroom of those profound, original, exacting scholars who affirm the claims of the prophets (Peace be upon them) with the most decisive and powerful proofs and who are known as the purified and most veracious ones.

Entering their classroom, he saw thousands of geniuses and hundreds of thousands of exact and exalted scholars proving all the affirmative matters connected with faith, headed by the necessity of God’s existence and His unity, with such profound demonstrations as to leave not the least room for doubt. Indeed, the fact that they are agreed in the principles and pillars of belief, despite their differences in capacity and outlook, and that each of them relies on a firm and certitudinous proof, is in itself such evidence that it can be doubted only if it is possible for a similar number of intelligent and perspicuous men to arrive at a single result. Otherwise the only way for the denier to oppose them is to display his ignorance -his utter ignorance and his obstinacy with respect to negative matters that admit neither of denial nor affirmation. He will in effect be closing his eyes but the one who closes his eyes is able to turn day into night only for himself.

The traveler learned that the lights emitted in this vast and magnificent classroom by these respected and profound scholars had been illumining half of the globe for more than a thousand years. He found in it moral and spiritual force that the combined strength of all the people of denial would be unable to shake or destroy. In brief allusion to the lesson learned by the traveler in this classroom we said in the Ninth Degree of the First Station:

*There is no god but God, to Whose Necessary Existence in Unity points the agreement of all of the purified scholars, with the power of their resplendent, certain and unanimous proofs.*

# Tenth degree: Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him

Our contemplative traveler came forth from the classroom, ardently desiring to see the lights that are to be observed in the continuous strengthening and development of faith, and in advancing from the degree of the knowledge of certainty to that of the vision of certainty. He then found himself summoned by thousands or millions of spiritual guides who were striving toward the truth and attaining the vision of certainty in the shade of the highway of **Muhammad (PBUH)** and the ascension of Muhammad (PBUH). This they were doing in a meeting place, a hospice, a place of remembrance and preceptorship, that was abundantly luminous and vast as a plain, being formed from the merging of countless small hospices and convents. Upon entering, he found that those spiritual guides people of unveiling and wondrous deeds were unanimously proclaiming, *“No god but He,”* on the basis of their witnessing and unveiling of the Unseen and the wondrous deeds they had been enabled to perform; they were proclaiming the necessary existence and unity of God. The traveler observed how manifest and clear must be a truth to which unanimously subscribe these sacred geniuses and luminous Gnostics. For, like the sun is known through the seven colors in its light, the saints’ luminous colors, their light filled hues, their true paths and right ways and veracious courses are manifested from the light of the Pre-Eternal Sun through seventy colors, indeed, through colors to the number of the Divine Names, and are all different. He saw that the unanimity of the prophets and the agreement of the purified scholars and accord of the saints forms a supreme consensus, more brilliant than the daylight that demonstrates the existence of the sun.

In brief allusion to the benefit derived by our traveler from the Sufi hospice, we said in the Tenth Degree of the First Station:

*There is no god but God, to Whose Necessary Existence in Unity points the unanimity of the saints in their manifest, well affirmed and attested divinations of the truth and wondrous deeds.*

# Eleventh degree: Angels

Now our traveler through the world, aware that the most important and greatest of all human perfections, indeed the very source and origin of all such perfections, is the love of God that arises from belief in God and the knowledge of God, wished with all of his powers, outer and inner, to advance still farther in the strengthening of his faith and the development of his knowledge. He therefore raised his head and gazing at the heavens said to himself:

*“The most precious thing in the universe is life; all things are made subordinate to life. The most precious of all living beings is the animate, and the most precious of the animate is the conscious. Each century and each year, the globe is engaged in emptying and refilling itself, in order to augment this most precious substance. It follows, then, without doubt, that the magnificent and ornate heavens must have appropriate people and inhabitants, possessing life, spirit and consciousness, for events relating to seeing and speaking with the angels such as the appearance of Gabriel (Peace be upon him) in the presence of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) and in the view of the Companions have been transmitted and related from the most ancient times. Would, then, that I could converse with the inhabitants of the heavens, and learn their thoughts on this matter. For their words concerning the Creator of the cosmos are the most important.”*

As he was thus thinking to himself, he suddenly heard a heavenly voice: “If you wish to meet us and hearken to our lesson, then know that before all others we have believed in the articles of faith brought by means of us to the prophets, headed by the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), who brought the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition.

*“Then too all of the pure spirits from among us that have appeared before men have, unanimously and without exception, born witness to the necessary existence, the unity, and the sacred attributes of the Creator of this cosmos, and proclaimed this with one accord. The affinity and mutual correspondence of these countless proclamations is a guide for you as bright as the sun.”* Thus the traveler’s light of faith shone, and rose from the earth to the heavens.

In brief allusion to the lesson learned by the traveler from the angels, we said in the Eleventh Degree of the First Station:

*There is no god but God, to Whose Necessary Existence in Unity points the unanimity of the angels that appear to human gaze, and who speak to the elect among men, with their mutually corresponding and conforming messages.*

# Twelfth and thirteenth degree: Luminous intellects and illuminated hearts

Then, that ardent and inquisitive traveler, having learned from the tongues of various realms of creation in the Manifest Realm in their material and corporeal aspects, and from the utterance of their modes of being, desired to study and journey through the World of the Unseen and the Intermediate Realm, and thus to investigate reality. There opened to him the gate of upright and luminous intellects, of sound and illumined hearts, that are like the seed of man, who is the fruit of the universe, and despite their slight girth can expand virtually to embrace the whole of the cosmos.

He looked and saw a series of human isthmuses linking the realm of the Unseen with that of the Manifest, and the contacts between those two realms and the interchanges between them insofar as they affect man, taking place at those points. Addressing his intellect and his heart he said:

*“Come, the path leading to truth from these counterparts of yours is shorter. We should benefit by studying their qualities, natures and colors concerning faith that we find here, not by listening to the lessons given by the tongues of disposition as was previously the case.”*

Beginning his study, he saw that the belief and firm conviction concerning the Divine unity that all luminous intellects possessed, despite their varying capacities and differing, even opposing, methods and outlooks, was the same, and that their steadfast and confident certainty and assurance was one. They had, therefore, to be relying on a single, unchanging truth; their roots were sunk in a profound truth and could not be plucked out. Their unanimity concerning faith, the necessary existence and unity of God, was an unbreakable and luminous chain, a brightly lit window opening onto the world of the truth.

He saw also that the unanimous, assured and sublime unveilings and witnessing of the pillars of belief enjoyed by all those sound and luminous intellects, whose methods were various and outlooks divergent, corresponded to and agreed with each other on the matter of the Divine unity. All those luminous hearts, turned and joined to the truth and manifesting it, each a small throne of dominical knowledge, a comprehensive mirror of God’s Eternal Besoughtedness, were like so many windows opened onto the Sun of the Truth. Taken together, they were like a supreme mirror, like an ocean reflecting the sun.

Their agreement and unanimity concerning the necessary existence and unity of God was an unfailing and reliable most perfect guide, most elevated preceptor. For it is in no way possible or conceivable that a supposition other than the truth, an untrue thought, a false attribute, should so consistently and decisively be able to deceive simultaneously so many sharp eyes, or to induce illusion in them. Not even the foolish Sophists, who deny the cosmos, would agree with the corrupt and dissipated intellect that held such a thing possible. All of this our traveler understood, and he said, together with his own intellect and heart, *“I have believed in God.”*

In brief allusion to the benefit derived from upright intellects and luminous hearts by our traveler, for knowledge of belief, we said in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Degrees of the First Station:

*There is no god but God, to Whose Necessary Existence in Unity points the consensus of all upright intellects, illumined with congruent beliefs and corresponding convictions and certainties, despite differences in capacity and outlook. There also points to His Necessary Existence in Unity the agreement of all sound, luminous hearts, with their mutually corresponding unveilings and their congruent witnessing, despite differences in method and manner.*

# Fourteenth and fifteenth degree: World of the Unseen and Revelations

Then that traveler looking closely at the World of the Unseen, and voyaging in it with his intellect and his heart, knocked inquisitively on the door of that world, thinking to himself, *“What does this world have to say?”* The following occurred to him: it is to be clearly understood that behind the veil of the Unseen is one who wants to make himself known through all these numerous finely adorned artefacts full of art in this corporeal Manifest World, and to make himself loved through these infinite sweet and decorated bounties, and to make known his hidden perfections through these innumerable miraculous and skilful works of art, and who does this by act rather than speech and by making himself known by the tongue of disposition. Since this is so, of a certainty he will speak and make himself known and loved through speech and utterance just as he does through deed and state. In which case, from his manifestations we must know him in respect to the World of the Unseen. Whereupon he entered that world with his heart and saw the following with the eye of his intellect:

The truth of revelations prevails at all instants over all parts of the World of the Unseen, with a most powerful manifestation. There comes with the truths of revelation and inspiration proceeding from the One All-knowing of the Unseen, a testimony to His existence and unity far stronger than testimony of the universe and created beings. He does not leave Himself, His existence and His unity, only to the testimony of His creatures. Rather, He speaks with a pre-eternal Speech consonant with His own being. The Speech of the One Who is all-present and all-seeing everywhere with His Knowledge and Power is also endless, and just as the meaning of His Speech makes Him known, so does His discourse make Himself known together with His attributes.

The traveler recognized that the truth, reality, and existence of revelation has been made plain to the point of being self-evident by the consensus of one hundred thousand prophets (Peace be upon them), by the agreement among their proclamations concerning the manifestation of Divine revelation; by the evidences and miracles contained in the sacred books and heavenly pages, which are the guides and exemplars of the overwhelming majority of humanity, confirmed and assented to by them, and are the visible fruits of revelation. He understood further that the truth of revelation proclaims five sacred truths.

**The First:** To speak in accordance with men’s intellects and understandings, known as *“Divine condescension to the minds of men,”* is a form of Divine descent. It is a requirement of God’s dominicality that He endows all of his conscious creatures with speech, understands their speech, and then participates in it with His own speech.

**The Second:** The One Who, in order to make Himself known, fills the cosmos with His miraculous creations and endows them with tongues speaking of His perfections, will necessarily make Himself known with His own words also.

**The Third:** It is a function of His being Creator to respond in words to the supplications and offerings of thanks that are made by the most select, the most needy, the most delicate and the most ardent among His beings true men.

**The Fourth:** The attribute of Speech, an essential concomitant and luminous manifestation of both Knowledge and Life, will necessarily be found in a comprehensive and eternal form in the being Whose Knowledge is comprehensive and Whose Life is eternal.

**The Fifth:** It is a consequence of Divinity that the Being Who endows men with impotence and desire, poverty and need, anxiety for the future, love and worship, should communicate His own existence, by way of His speech, to His most loved and lovable, His most anxious and needy creatures, who are most desirous of finding their Lord and Master.

The evidences for the existence in unity of the Necessary Existent offered in unanimity by universal and heavenly revelations, which contain the truths of Divine descent, dominical self-proclamation, compassionate response, Divine conversation, and eternal self-communication, constitute a proof more powerful than the testimony for the existence of the sun brought by the rays of sunlight.

Our traveler understood this then looked in the direction of inspiration and saw that veracious inspiration indeed resembles revelation in some respects and is a mode of dominical speech.

**THE FIRST:** Revelation, which is much higher than inspiration, generally comes by the medium of the angels, whereas inspiration generally comes directly.

So too a king has two modes of speech and command. The first consists of his sending to a governor a lieutenant equipped with all the pomp of monarchy and the splendor of sovereignty. Sometimes, in order to demonstrate the splendor of his sovereignty and the importance of his command, he may meet with the intermediary, and then the decree will be issued.

The second consists of his speaking privately in his own person, not with the title of monarch or in the name of kingship, concerning some private matter, some petty affair, using for this purpose a trusted servant, some ordinary subject, or his private telephone.

In the same way the Pre-Eternal Monarch may either, in the name of the Sustainer of All the Worlds, and with the title of Creator of the Universe, speak with revelation or the comprehensive inspiration that performs the function of revelation, or He may speak in a different and private fashion, as the Sustainer and Creator of all animate beings, from behind the veil, in a way suited to the recipient.

**THE SECOND DIFFERENCE:** Revelation is without shadow, pure, and reserved for the elect. Inspiration, by contrast, has shadow, colors intermingle with it, and it is general. There are numerous different kinds of inspiration, such as the inspiration of angels, the inspiration of men, and the inspiration of animals; inspiration thus forms a field for the multiplication of God’s words, that are as numerous as the drops in the ocean. Our traveler understood that this matter is, indeed, a kind of commentary on the verse,

http://www.nur.gen.tr/Include/images/kulliyat/aimg/sualar/i093.gif

*Were the sea to become ink for the words of my Sustainer, verily the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Sustainer (18:109).*

Then he looked at the nature, the wisdom, and the testimony of inspiration and saw that its nature, wisdom and result were composed of four lights.

**The first:** it is the result of God’s Lovingness and Mercifulness that He makes himself loved through word, presence and discourse, in the same way that He makes Himself loved to His creatures through His deeds.

**The second:** it is a requirement of His Compassionateness that just as He answers His servants’ prayers in deed, He should also answer them in word, from behind veils.

**The third:** it is a concomitant of dominicality that just as He responds in deed to the cries for help, supplications, and pleadings of those of His creatures who are afflicted with grievous misfortunes and hardships, so too He should hasten to their help with words of inspiration, which are like a form of speech.

**The fourth:** God makes His existence, presence and protection perceptible in deed to His most weak and indigent, His most poor and needy, conscious creatures, that stand in great need of finding their Master, Protector, Guardian, and Disposer. It is a necessary and essential consequence of His Divine solicitousness and His dominical compassion that He should also communicate His presence and existence by speech, from behind the veil of veracious inspiration a mode of dominical discourse to individuals, in a manner peculiar to them and their capacities, through the telephone of their hearts.

He then looked to the testimony of inspiration and saw that if the sun, for example, had consciousness and life, and if the seven colors of sunlight were the seven attributes, in that respect it would have a form of speech through the rays and manifestations found in its light. And in this situation both its similitudes and reflections would be present in all transparent objects, and it would speak with all mirrors and shining objects and fragments of glass and bubbles and droplets of water, indeed with all transparent particles, in accordance with the capacity of each; it would respond to the needs of each, and all these would testify to the sun’s existence; and no task would form an obstacle to any other task, and no speaking obstruct any other speaking. This is self-evident.

In the same way, the Speech of the Glorious Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, the Beauteous and Exalted Creator of All Beings, Who may be described as the Pre-Eternal Sun, manifests itself to all things, in general and comprehensive fashion, in a manner appropriate to their capacity, as do also His Knowledge and Power. No request interferes with another, no task prevents the fulfilment of another, and no address becomes confused with another. All of this our traveler understood as self-evident. He knew that all of those manifestations, those discourses, those inspirations, separately and together, evidenced and bore witness unanimously to the presence, the necessary existence, the unity and the oneness of that Pre-Eternal Sun with a knowledge of certainty that approached a vision of certainty.

In brief allusion to the lesson in knowledge of God from the World of the Unseen gained by our inquisitive traveler, we said in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Degrees of the First Station:

*There is no god but God, the Necessary Existent, the One, the Single, to Whose Necessary Existence in Unity points the consensus of all true revelations, containing Divine descent, glorious discourse, dominical self-revelation, compassionate response to the invocations of men, and eternal indications of His existence to his creatures. There points also to His Necessary Existence in Unity the agreement of all veracious inspirations, containing expressions of God’s love, compassionate responses to the prayers of God’s creatures, dominical responses to the appeals of His servants for aid, and glorious intimations of His existence to His creatures.*

# Sixteenth degree: The Blessed age of the Prophet (pbuh)

Then that traveler through the world addressed his own intellect saying*: “Since I am seeking my Master and Creator by means of the creatures of the cosmos, I ought before all else to visit the most celebrated of all these creatures, the greatest and most accomplished commander among them, according to the testimony even of his enemies, the most renowned ruler, the most exalted in speech and the most brilliant an intellect, who has illuminated fourteen centuries with his excellence and with his Qur’an, Muhammad the Arabian Prophet (May God’s peace and blessings be upon him).”* In order thus to visit him and seek from him the answer to his quest, he entered the blessed age of the Prophet in his mind, and saw that age to be one of true felicity, thanks to that being. For through the light he had brought, he had turned the most primitive and illiterate of peoples into the masters and teachers of the world.

He said too to his own intellect, *“Before asking him concerning our Creator, we should first learn that value of this extraordinary being, the veracity of his words and the truthfulness of his warnings.”* Thus he began investigating, and of the numerous conclusive proofs that he found we will briefly indicate here only nine of the most general ones.

**THE FIRST:** All excellent qualities and characteristics were to be found in that extraordinary being, according to the testimony even of his enemies. Hundreds of miracles were made manifest at his hands, according to explicit Qur’anic verses or traditions enjoying the status of tawatur[[3]](#footnote-3). Examples of these miracles are his splitting of the moon,

*And the moon split (54:1),*

with a single indication of his finger; his casting of a handful of dust into the eyes of his enemies, causing them to flee,

*It was not your act when you threw, but God’s (8:17),*

and his giving his thirsting army to drink from the water that flowed forth from his five fingers like the Spring of Kawthar. Since some of those miracles, numbering more than three hundred, have been set forth with decisive proofs in the remarkable and wondrous work known as The Miracles of Muhammad (The Nineteenth Letter), we leave discussion of the miracles to that work, and permit the traveler to continue speaking:

*“A being who in addition to noble characteristics and perfections has all these luminous miracles to demonstrate, must certainly be the most truthful in speech of all men. It is inconceivable that he would stoop to trickery, lies and error, the deeds of the vile.”*

**THE SECOND:** He holds in his hand a decree from the lord of the universe, a decree accepted and affirmed in each century by more than three hundred million people. This decree, the Qur’an of Mighty Stature, is wondrous in seven different ways. The fact that the Qur’an has forty different aspects of miraculousness and that it is the word of the Creator of all beings has been set forth in detail with strong proofs in the Twenty-Fifth Word, The Miraculousness of the Qur’an, a celebrated treatise that is like the sun of the Risale-i Nur. We therefore leave such matters to that work and listen to the traveler as he says, *“There can never be any possibility of lying on the part of the being who is the conveyor and proclaimer of this decree, for that would be a violation of the decree and treachery toward the One Who issued it.”*

**THE THIRD:** Such a Sacred Law, an Islam, a code of worship, a cause, a summons, and a faith did that being bring forth that the like of them does not exist, nor could it exist. Nor does a more perfect form of them exist, nor could it exist. For the Law appearing with that unlettered being has no rival in its administration of one fifth of humanity for fourteen centuries, in a just and precise manner through its numerous injunctions. Moreover the Islam that emerged from the deeds, sayings, and inward states of that unlettered being has no peer, nor can it have, for in each century it has been for three hundred million men a guide and a refuge, the teacher and educator of their intellects and the illuminator and purifier of their hearts, the cause for the refinement and training of their souls, and the source of progress and advancement of their spirits.

The Prophet is similarly unparalleled in the way in which he was the foremost in practicing all the forms of worship found in his religion, and the first in piety and the fear of God; in his observing the duties of worship fully and with attention to their profoundest dimensions, even while engaged in constant struggle and activity; in his practice of worship combining in perfect fashion the beginning and end of worship and servitude to God without imitation of anyone.

With the Jawshan al-Kabir, from among his thousands of supplicatory prayers and invocations, he describes his Sustainer with such a degree of gnosis that all the gnostics and saints who have come after him have been unable, with their joint efforts, to attain a similar degree of gnosis and accurate description. This shows that in prayer too he is without peer. Whoever looks at the section at the beginning of the Treatise On Supplicatory Prayer which sets forth some part of the meaning of one of the ninety-nine sections of the Jawshan al-Kabir will say that the Jawshan too has no peer.

In his conveying of the message and his summoning men to the truth, he displayed such steadfastness, firmness and courage that although great states and religions, and even his own people, tribe and uncle opposed him in the most hostile fashion, he exhibited not the slightest trace of hesitation anxiety or fear. The fact that he successfully challenged the whole world and made Islam the master of the world likewise proves that there is not and cannot be anyone like him in his conveying of the message and summons.

In his faith, he had so extraordinary a strength, so marvelous a certainty, so miraculous a breadth, and so exalted a conviction, illumining the whole world, that none of the ideas and beliefs then dominating the world, and none of the philosophies of the sages and teachings of the religious leaders, was able, despite extreme hostility and denial, to induce in his certainty, conviction, trust and assurance, the slightest doubt, hesitation, weakness or anxiety. Moreover, the saintly of all ages, headed by the Companions, the foremost in the degrees of belief, have all drawn on his fountain of belief and regarded him as representing the highest degree of faith. This proves that his faith too is matchless. Our traveler therefore concluded, and affirmed with his intellect, that lying and duplicity have no place in the one who has brought such a unique sacred law, such an unparalleled Islam, such a wondrous devotion to worship, such an extra-ordinary excellence in supplicatory prayer, such a universally acclaimed summons to the truth and such a miraculous faith.

**THE FOURTH:** In the same way that the consensus of the prophets is a strong proof for the existence and unity of God, so too it is a firm testimony to the truthfulness and messengerhood of this being. For all the sacred attributes, miracles and functions that indicate the truthfulness and messengerhood of the prophets (Peace be upon them) existed in full measure in that being according to the testimony of history. The prophets have verbally predicted the coming of that being and given good tidings thereof in the Torah, the Gospels, the Psalms, and the pages; more than twenty of the most conclusive examples of these glad tidings, drawn from the scriptures, have been set forth and proven in the Nineteenth Letter. Similarly, through all the deeds and miracles associated with their prophethood they have affirmed and, as it were, put their signature to the mission of that being which is the foremost and most perfect in the tasks and functions of prophethood. Just as through verbal consensus they indicate the Divine unity, through the unanimity of their deeds they bear witness to the truthfulness of that being. This too was understood by our traveler.

**THE FIFTH:** Similarly, the thousands of saints who have attained truth, reality, perfection, wondrous deeds, unveiling and witnessing through the instruction of this being and following him, bear unanimous witness not only to the Divine unity but also to the truthfulness and messengerhood of this being. Again, the fact that they witness, through the light of sainthood, some of the truths he proclaimed concerning the World of the Unseen, and that they believe in and affirm all of those truths through the light of belief, either with knowledge of certainty, or with the vision of certainty, or with absolute certainty. He saw that this too demonstrates like the sun the degree of truthfulness and rectitude of that great being, their master.

**THE SIXTH:** The millions of purified, sincere, and punctilious scholars and faithful sages, who have reached the highest station of learning through the teaching and instruction contained in the sacred truths brought by that being, despite his unlettered nature, the exalted sciences he invented and Divine knowledge he discovered they not only prove and affirm, unanimously and with the strongest proofs, the Divine unity which is the foundation of his mission, but also bear unanimous witness to the truthfulness of this supreme teacher and great master, and to the veracity of his words. This is a proof as clear as daylight. The Risale-i Nur too with its one hundred parts is but a single proof of his truthfulness.

**THE SEVENTH:** The Family and Companions of the Prophet who with their insight, knowledge, and spiritual accomplishment are the most renowned, the most respected, the most celebrated, the most pious and the most keen-sighted of men after the prophets examined and scrutinized, with the utmost attention, seriousness and exactitude, all the states, thoughts and conditions of this being, whether hidden or open. They came to the unanimous conclusion that he was the most truthful, exalted, and honest being in the world, and this, their unshakeable affirmation and firm belief, is a proof like the daylight attesting the reality of the sun.

**THE EIGHTH:** The cosmos indicates its Maker, Inscriber, and Designer, Who creates, administers, and arranges it, and through determining its measure and form and regulating it, has disposal over it as though it was a palace, a book, an exhibition, a spectacle. And so too it indicates that it requires and necessitates an elevated herald, a truthful unveiler, a learned master, and a truthful teacher who will know and make known the Divine purposes in the universe’s creation, teach the dominical instances of wisdom in its changes and transformations, give instruction in the results of its dutiful motions, proclaim its essential value and the perfections of the beings within it, and express the meanings of that mighty book; it indicates that he is certain to exist. Thus, the traveler knew that it testified to the truthfulness of this being, who performed these functions better than anyone, and to his being a most elevated and loyal official of the universe’s Creator.

**THE NINTH:** There is behind the veil One Who wishes to demonstrate with these ingenious and wise artefacts the perfection of His talent and art; to make Himself known and loved by means of these countless adorned and decorated creations; to evoke praise and thanks through the unnumbered pleasurable and valuable bounties that he bestows; to cause men to worship Him with gratitude and appreciation in the face of His dominicality, through His solicitous and protective sustenance of life, and His provision of nurture and bounty in such manner as to satisfy the most delicate of tastes and appetites; to manifest His Divinity through the change of seasons, the alternation of night and day, and through all His magnificent and majestic deeds, all His awe-inspiring and wise acts and creativity, and thereby to cause men to believe in his Divinity, in submission, humility and obedience; and to demonstrate His justice and truthfulness by at all times protecting virtue and the virtuous and destroying evil and the evil, by annihilating with blows from heaven the oppressor and the liar. There will of a certainty be at the side of this Unseen Being His most beloved creature and most devoted bondsman, who, serving the purposes that have just been mentioned, discovers and unravels the talisman and riddle of the creation of the universe, who acts always in the name of that Creator, who seeks aid and success from Him, and who receives them from Him Muhammad of Quraysh (Peace and blessings be upon him!)

The traveler further said, addressing his own intellect: *“Since these nine truths bear witness to the truthfulness of this being, he must be the source of glory of mankind and the source of honor for the world. If we therefore call him the Pride of the World and Glory of the Sons of Adam, it will be fitting. The fact that the awesome sovereignty of that decree of the Compassionate One, the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition that he holds in his hand, has conquered half the world, together with his individual perfections and exalted virtues, shows that he is the most important personage in the world. The most important word concerning our Creator is that which he utters.”*

Now see: the foundation of the summons of this extraordinary being and the aim of all his life, based on the strength furnished by his hundreds of decisive and evident and manifest miracles, and the thousands of exalted, fundamental truths contained in his religion, was to prove and bear witness to the existence of the Necessary Existent, His Unity, attributes and Names, to affirm, proclaim and announce Him. He is therefore like a sun in the cosmos, the most brilliant proof of our Creator, this being whom we call the Beloved of God. There are three forms of great and infallible consensus each of which affirms, confirms, and puts its signature to the witness he bears.

**The First:** the unanimous affirmation made by that luminous assembly known and celebrated throughout the world as the Family of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) including thousands of poles and supreme saints of penetrating gaze and ability to perceive the Unseen, such as Imam ‘Ali (May God be pleased with him), who said, *“Were the veil to be lifted, my certainty would not increase,”* and ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Gilani, the Ghawth al-A‘zam (May his mystery be sanctified), who saw the Supreme Throne and the awesome form of Israfil while yet on the earth.

**The Second:** the confirmation made with a strong faith that permitted men to sacrifice their lives and their property, their fathers and tribes, by the renowned assembly known as the Companions, who found themselves among a primitive people and in an unlettered environment, devoid of all social life and political thought, without any scripture and lost in the darkness of a period between prophets; and who in a very brief time came to be the masters, guides, and just rulers of the most civilized and politically and socially advanced peoples and states, and to rule the world from east to west in universally approved fashion.

**The Third:** the confirmation provided with unanimous and certain knowledge by that lofty group of punctilious and profound scholars of whom in each age thousands spring forth, who advance in wondrous fashion in every science and work in different fields.

Thus, the testimony brought by this being to the Divine unity is not particular and individual, but general and universal and unshakeable. If all the demons that exist were to unite, they could not challenge it. Such was the conclusion reached by the traveler.

In reference to the lesson learned in the School of Light by that traveler from the world, that wayfarer in life, when he visited in his mind the blessed age of the Prophet, we said at the end of the Sixteenth Degree of the First Station:

*There is no god but God, the Necessary Existent, the One, the Unique, the Necessity of Whose Existence in Unity is indicated by the Pride of the World and the Glory of the Sons of Adam, through the majesty of the sovereignty of his Qur’an, the splendor of the expanse of his religion, the multiplicity of his perfections, and the exaltedness of his characteristics, as confirmed even by the testimony of his enemies. He bears witness and brings proof through the strength of his hundreds of manifest and evident miracles, that both testify to truth and are themselves the object of true testimony; and through the strength of the thousands of luminous and conclusive truths contained in his religion, according to the consensus of all the possessors of light, the agreement of his illumined Companions, and the unanimity of the scholars of his community, the possessors of proofs and luminous insight.*

# Seventeenth degree: The Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition

The tireless and insatiable traveler, who knew the aim of life in this world and the essence of life to be faith, addressed his own heart and said: *“Let us examine the book known as the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition, which is said to be the word and utterance of the Being Whom we are seeking, the most famous, the most brilliant and wisest book in the world, that issues a challenge in every age to whoever refuses to submit to it. Let us see what it says. But first, we must establish that this book is from our Creator,”* and he began to search.

Since the traveler lived in the present age, he looked first at the Risale-i Nur, flashes from the miraculousness of the Qur’an; he saw its one hundred and thirty parts to consist of luminous points drawn from that Book of Discernment, or well-founded explanations of its contents. Even though the Risale-i Nur is valiantly struggling to diffuse the truths of the Qur’an in all directions, in this obstinate and atheistic age, no one can defeat it, which proves that its master, its source, its authority and its sun, is the Qur’an, heavenly not human speech. Among the hundreds of proofs in the different parts of the Risale-i Nur, the single proof contained in the Twenty-Fifth Word and the end of the Nineteenth Letter, establishes forty aspects of the Qur’an’s miraculousness in such a way that whoever sees it, far from uttering any criticism or objection, admires its arguments, and utters appreciative praise. The traveler left it to the Risale-i Nur to prove that the Qur’an is miraculous and the true Word of God, turning only to a brief indication of a few points showing its greatness.

**First Point:** Just as the Qur’an, with all its miracles and truths indicating its veracity is a miracle of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) so too, Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) with all his miracles, proofs of prophethood and perfections of knowledge, is a miracle of the Qur’an and a decisive proof of the Qur’an’s being the Word of God.

**Second Point:** The Qur’an, in this world, brought about in so luminous, felicitous and truthful a fashion, a revolution in the social life of man, as well as in the souls, hearts, spirits, and intellects of men, in their individual, social, and political lives, and having caused this revolution perpetuated it in such a fashion, that for fourteen centuries at every moment its six thousand, six hundred and sixty-six verses have been read by the tongues of more than a hundred million men, training them, refining their souls and purifying their hearts. To spirits, it has been a means of development and advancement; to intellects, an orientation and light; to life, it has been life itself and felicity. Such a book is of a certainty unparalleled; it is a wonder, a marvel, and a miracle.

**Third Point:** The Qur’an, from that age down to the present, has demonstrated such eloquence that it caused the value attached to the odes known as *“Seven Hanging Poems”* that were written in gold on the walls of the Ka‘ba to descend to such a point that the daughter of Labid, when taking down her father’s poem from the Ka‘ba, said, *“Compared with the verses of the Qur’an, this no longer has any value.”*

A bedouin poet heard this verse being recited,

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*Therefore expound openly what you are commanded (15:94),*

and immediately prostrated. They asked him: *“Have you become a Muslim?”* *“No,”* he replied, *“I was prostrating before the eloquence of this verse.”*

Thousands of scholars and litterateurs, like geniuses of the science of rhetoric such as ‘Abd al-Qahir Jurjani, Sakkaki, and Zamakhshari, have unanimously decided that the eloquence of the Qur’an is beyond human capacity and is unattainable. The Qur’an has also from that time forward invited to the field of combat all arrogant and egoistic litterateurs and rhetoricians, and said to them in a manner calculated to break their arrogance: *“Come, produce a single sura like it, or else accept perdition and humiliation in this world and the hereafter.”* Despite this challenge, the obstinate rhetoricians of that age abandoned the short path of producing a single sura like the Qur’an, and instead chose the long path of casting their persons and property into danger. This proves that the short path cannot be taken.

Millions of Arabic books are in circulation, some written by friends of the Qur’an in order to resemble and imitate it, others written by its enemies in order to confront and criticize it. Not one of them has been able to attain the level of the Qur’an. Should a common man even listen to them, he is sure to say: *“The Qur’an does not resemble these other books, nor is it in the same class as they. It must be either below them or above them.”* No one -no unbeliever or fool- in the world can say that it is below them. Hence its degree of eloquence is above all of them. Once a man read the verse,

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*All that is in the heavens and the earth extols and glorifies God (57:1).*

He said: *“I cannot see any miraculous eloquence in this verse.”* He was told*: “Go back to that age like the traveler, and listen to the verse as recited there.”* Imagining himself to be there before the revelation of the Qur’an, he saw that all the beings in the world were living in an unstable, transient world in empty, infinite and unbounded space, in confusion and darkness, lifeless and without consciousness and purpose. Suddenly he heard this verse proclaimed by the tongue of the Qur’an and the verse removed a veil from in front of the universe and illumined the face of the globe; this pre-eternal speech, this eternal decree, gave instruction to all conscious beings, drawn up in the ranks of succeeding centuries, in such fashion that the cosmos became like a vast mosque. All of creation headed by the heavens and the earth, was engaged in vital remembrance of God and proclamation of His glory, was joyously and contentedly fulfilling its function.

All of this our traveler observed. Thus tasting the degree of the eloquence of the Qur’an, and comparing the other verses to it by analogy, he understood one of the many thousands of wise reasons for the conquest of half the globe and a fifth of humanity by the eloquent murmuring of the Qur’an, for the uninterrupted continuance of its respected and magnificent monarchy for fourteen centuries.

**Fourth Point:** The Qur’an has demonstrated such a veracious sweetness that whereas the repetition of even the sweetest thing induces disgust, it has from earliest times been accepted by everyone and even become proverbial that repeated recitation of the Qur’an, far from inducing disgust and weariness in men of sound heart and pure taste, on the contrary increases its sweetness.

The Qur’an demonstrates, moreover, such a freshness, youth and originality, that even though it has lived for fourteen centuries and passed through many hands, it retains its freshness as if it had only just been revealed. Every century sees the Qur’an enjoying a new youth, as if it were addressing that century in particular. Similarly, scholars of every branch of learning, even though they keep the Qur’an constantly at their side in order to benefit from it, and perpetually follow its method of exposition, see that the Qur’an maintains the originality of its style and manner of explanation.

**Fifth Point:** One wing of the Qur’an is in the past, and one is in the future, and like its root and one wing are the agreed truths of the former prophets, and it confirms and corroborates them, and they too confirm it with the tongue of unanimity, so too all the true Sufi paths and ways of sainthood whose fruits like the saints and purified scholars, who receive life from the Qur’an, show through their vital spiritual progress that their blessed tree is living, effulgent, and the means to truth, and who grow and live under the protection of its second wing, testify that the Qur’an is pure truth and the assembly of truths and in its comprehensiveness, a matchless wonder.

**Sixth Point:** The Qur’an’s truthfulness and veracity show that its six aspects are luminous. Indeed, the pillars of argument and proof beneath it; the flashes of the stamp of miraculousness above it; the gifts of happiness in this world and the next before it, its goal; the truths of heavenly revelation, the point of support behind it; the assent and evidence of innumerable upright minds to its right; and the true tranquility, sincere attraction, and submission of sound hearts and clean consciences on its left all prove that the Qur’an is a wondrous, firm, unassailable citadel of both the heavens and the earth.

So too from these six levels, the Disposer of the universe has set His seal on its being sheer truth and right, and not being man’s word, and its containing no error the Disposer, Who has made it His practice to always exhibit beauty in the universe, protect good and right, and eliminate imposters and liars, has confirmed and set His seal on the Qur’an by giving it the most acceptable, highest, and most dominant place of respect and degree of success in the world.

And so too the one who is the source of Islam and interpreter of the Qur’an his believing in it and holding it in greater respect than everyone else, and being in a sleeplike state when it was revealed[[4]](#footnote-4), and other words and speeches not resembling or coming near it, and that Interpreter’s describing without hesitation and with complete confidence through the Qur’an true cosmic events of generally the past and the future from behind the veil of the Unseen, and no trickery or fault being observed in him while being under the gazes of the sharpest eyes, and his believing and affirming every pronouncement of the Qur’an with all his strength and nothing shaking him, is a stamp confirming that the Qur’an is revealed and true and the blessed Word of his own Compassionate Creator.

Also a fifth of mankind, indeed the greater part of it, being drawn to the Qur’an and bound to it in religion and giving ear to it eagerly desirous of the truth, and according to the testimony of many indications and events and illuminations, the jinn, angels, and spirit beings also gathering around it in truth worshipping fashion like moths whenever it is recited[[5]](#footnote-5) is a stamp confirming the Qur’an’s acceptance by all beings and that it occupies a most high position.

Also, all the classes of mankind from the most stupid and lowly to the cleverest and most learned taking their full share of the Qur’an’s instruction and their understanding its most profound truths, and all branches of scholars like the great interpreters of the Greater Shari‘a in particular, and hundreds of Islamic sciences and branches of knowledge, and the brilliant and exacting scholars of theology and the principles of religion extracting from the Qur’an all the needs and answers for their own sciences is a stamp confirming that the Qur’an is a source of truth and mine of reality.

Also, although the Arab literary figures, who were the most advanced in regard to literature, those of them who were not Muslims had the greatest need to dispute the Qur’an, their avoiding producing the like of only a single sura and its eloquence, eloquence being only one aspect of the seven major aspects of the Qur’an’s miraculousness, as well as the famous orators and brilliant scholars up to the present who have wanted to gain fame through disputing it being unable to oppose a single aspect of its miraculousness and their remaining silent in impotence, is a stamp confirming that the Qur’an is a miracle and beyond the powers of man.

Yes, the value, superiority, and eloquence of a speech or word is apparent through knowing, *“from whom it has come and to whom, and for what purpose;”* the Qur’an then can have no like, and none can reach it. For the Qur’an is a speech and address of the Sustainer of all the worlds and Creator of the whole universe and a dialogue in no way hinting of imitation and artificiality. It is addressed to the one sent in the name of all men, indeed of all beings, the most famous and renowned of mankind, the strength and breadth of whose belief gave rise to mighty Islam and raised its owner to the level of the *“Distance of Two Bowstrings”* and returned him as the addressee of the Eternally Besought One. It describes and explains the matters concerning happiness in this world and the next, the results of the creation of the universe, and the dominical purposes within it. It expounds also the belief of the one it addresses, which was the highest and most extensive of belief and bore all the truths of Islam. It turns and shows every side of the huge universe like a map, a clock, or a house, and teaches and describes it in the manner of the Craftsman Who made them to produce the like of this Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition is not possible; the degree of its miraculousness cannot be attained to.

Also, thousands of precise and learned scholars of high intelligence have each written commentaries expounding the Qur’an, some of which are of thirty, forty, or even seventy volumes, showing and proving through evidence and argument the innumerable qualities, fine points, characteristics, mysteries, elevated meanings, and numerous indications concerning every sort of hidden and unseen matter in the Qur’an. And the one hundred and thirty parts of the Risale-i Nur in particular, each of which proves with decisive arguments one quality, one fine point of the Qur’an. Each part of it like The Miraculousness of the Qur’an, and the Second Station of the Twentieth Word, which deduces many things from the Qur’an concerning the wonders of civilization like the railway and the airplane, and the First Ray, called Signs of the Qur’an, which makes known the indications of verses alluding to the Risale-i Nur and electricity, and the eight short treatises called The Eight Symbols, which show how well-ordered, full of meaning, and mysterious are the words of the Qur’an, and the small treatise proving in five aspects the miraculousness of the verses at the end of Sura al-Fath in regard to their giving news of the Unseen each part of the Risale-i Nur shows one truth, one light of the Qur’an. All this forms a stamp confirming that the Qur’an has no like, is a miracle and a marvel, and that it is the tongue of the World of the Unseen in the Manifest World and the Word of One All-Knowing of the Unseen.

Thus, due to these qualities and characteristics of the Qur’an indicated above in six points, six aspects, and six levels, its sublime, luminous sovereignty and sacred, mighty rule has continued with perfect splendor illuminating the faces of the centuries and the face of the earth for one thousand three hundred years. And also on account of these qualities of the

Qur’an, each of its letters has gained the sacred distinction of yielding at least ten rewards, ten merits, and ten eternal fruits, and the letters of certain verses and suras yielding a hundred or a thousand fruits, or even more, and at blessed times the light, reward, and value of each letter rising from ten to hundreds. The traveler through the world understood this and said to his heart:

*“The Qur’an, which is thus miraculous in every respect, through the consensus of its suras, the agreement of its verses, the accord of its lights and mysteries, and the concurrence of its fruits and works, so testifies with its evidences in the form of proofs to the existence, unity, attributes, and Names of a Single Necessarily Existent One that it is from its testimony that the endless testimony of all the believers has issued forth.”*

Thus, in brief allusion to the instruction in belief and Divine unity that the traveler received from the Qur’an, it was said in the **Seventieth Degree** of the First Station:

*There is no god but God, the One and Unique Necessary Existent, to Whose Necessary Existence in Unity points the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition, the book accepted and desired by all species of angel, men and jinn, whose verses are read each minute of the year, with the utmost reverence, by hundreds of millions of men, whose sacred sovereignty over the regions of the earth and the universe and the face of time is permanent, whose spiritual and luminous authority has run over half the earth and a fifth of humanity, for more than fourteen centuries, with the utmost splendor. Testimony and proof is also given by the unanimity of its sacred and heavenly suras, the agreement of its luminous, divine verses, the congruence of its mysteries and lights, the correspondence of its fruits and effects, by witnessing and clear vision.*

# Eighteenth degree: The cosmos

Our traveler, our voyager through life, knew now that faith is the most precious capital man can have, for it bestows on indigent man not some transient and ephemeral field or dwelling, but a palace, indeed an eternal kingdom as vast as the whole cosmos or the world itself. Faith also bestows on ephemeral man all he will need for life eternal; delivers from eternal annihilation wretched man who waits on the gallows for the arrival of fate; and opens to man an eternal treasury of everlasting felicity. The traveler then said to himself:

*“Onward! In order to gain a further degree from among the infinite degrees of faith, let us refer to the totality of the cosmos, and listen to what it says. We will then be able to perfect and illumine the lessons we have received from its components and parts.”*

Looking through the broad and comprehensive telescope he had taken from the Qur’an, he saw the cosmos to be so meaningful and well-ordered that it took on the shape of an embodied book of the Glorious One, an incarnate dominical Qur’an, a finely adorned palace of the Eternally Besought One, an orderly city of the Most Merciful. All the suras, verses, and words of that book of the universe, even its very letters, chapters, divisions, pages, and lines, through their constant meaningful effacement and reaffirmation, their wise changes and alternations, gave unanimous expression to the existence and presence of One Who has Knowledge of all things and Power over all things as the author of the book, of a Glorious Inscriber and a Perfect Scribe seeing all things in all things and knowing the relationship of all things with all things.

So too all the species and particles of the cosmos, all its inhabitants and contents, all that enters it and leaves it, all the providential changes and the wise processes of rejuvenation that occur in it - these proclaim in unison the existence and unity of an exalted craftsman, a peerless Maker Who sets to work with limitless power and infinite wisdom. The testimony of two great and vast truths, of a piece with the immensity of the cosmos, affirms this supreme witness of the cosmos.

**FIRST TRUTH:** These are the truths of ‘createdness’ and ‘contingency’ established with countless proofs by the gifted scholars of the principles of religion and the science of theology, as well as the sages of Islam. They said that since change and mutation are to be observed in the world and all things, the world must be ephemeral and created; it cannot be uncreated. If it is created, then there must be a Maker who created it. And if there is no cause to be found in the essence of a thing either for its being or for its non-being, so that these two are equally possible, that thing cannot be necessary and eternal.

It has further been proven with decisive arguments that it is not possible for things to create each other, since that would involve the absurd and false notion of causality and never-ending causal sequences. Hence the existence of a Necessary Existence becomes necessary, whose like cannot exist, whose similitude is impossible, all other than whom is contingent and created by him.

Yes, the truth of createdness has permeated the whole of the cosmos, and many instances of it are visible to the eye; the rest can be seen only by the intellect. For in front of our eyes a whole world dies every autumn, and together with it die hundreds of thousands of different kinds of plants and small animals, each member of each species being like a small cosmos unto himself. It is, however, so orderly and disciplined a death that all things leave behind in their places seeds and eggs that in the spring shall be the means of resurrection and rebirth, miracles of mercy and wisdom, miracles of power and knowledge. They hand to the seeds and eggs their book of deeds and plan of action, entrusting them to the wisdom of the Glorious Preserver and under His protection, and only then do they die.

In spring, the dead trees, roots and animals come to life again exactly as they were, thus providing hundreds of thousands of examples, specimens and proofs of the supreme resurrection. In the place of others, plants and animals resembling them exactly are brought into being and life, thus publishing the pages of the beings of the preceding spring, together with their deeds and functions, just like an advertisement. Thus they demonstrate one meaning of the verse,

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*When the pages are spread out.*

Then also, with respect to the whole, each autumn a great world dies, and each spring a fresh world comes into being. That death and creation proceed in so orderly a manner, and so many separate deaths and creations occur within them, in such orderly and regular fashion, that it is as if the world were a traveler’s lodge where animate beings reside for a time, where travelling worlds and migrant realms come, fulfil their duties, and then go on their way. So there is apparent to all intellects, with the clarity of the sun, the necessary existence, infinite power and unending wisdom of a Glorious Being Who creates and brings into being in this world vital realms and purposive universes, with perfect wisdom, knowledge, and equilibrium, with balance, order and regularity, and Who then employs them for dominical purposes, Divine aims and Merciful goals, with full power and compassion. We leave to the Risale-i Nur and the books of the theologians the further discussion of matters related to createdness.

As for contingence, it prevails over and surrounds all of the cosmos. For we see that all things, universal or particular, big or small, from God’s Throne down to the ground, from the atom to the planet, all are sent to the world with a particular essence, a specific form, a distinct identity, particular attributes, wise qualities, and beneficial organs. Now to bestow on that particular essence and quiddity its peculiarities, from amongst the infinite possibilities available; to clothe it in its specific, distinctive and appropriate form, from among the possibilities and probabilities that are as numerous as the forms that may be conceived; to distinguish that being with the identity suited to it, from among the possibilities as numerous as the other members of its species; to endow with special, suitable and beneficial attributes the created object that is formless and hesitant midst the possibilities and probabilities that are as numerous as the varieties of attribute and degree; to affix to that aimless creature, perplexed and distraught amidst the innumerable possibilities and probabilities that result from the infinitude of conceivable paths and modalities to affix to it wise qualities and beneficial organs and equip it with them all of these are indications, proofs, and affirmations to the number of the innumerable possibilities of the necessary existence, infinite power and unlimited wisdom of the Necessary Existent Who creates, chooses, specifies, and distinguishes the quiddity and identity, the form and shape, the attribute and situation of all contingent beings, whether they be universals or particulars.

They indicate, too, that no object and no matter is hidden from Him, that nothing is difficult for Him, that the greatest task is as easy for Him as the smallest, that He can create a spring as easily as a tree, and a tree as easily as a seed. All this, then, pertains to the truth of contingence, and forms one wing of the great testimony borne by the cosmos.

Since the testimony of the cosmos, with its two wings and two truths, is fully established and explained in various parts of the Risale-i Nur, and particularly the Twenty-Second and Thirty-Second Words, as well as the Twentieth and Thirty Third Letters, we refer our readers to those writings, and cut short an extremely long story.

**SECOND TRUTH:** As for the Second Truth that proceeds from the total scheme of the cosmos, which is also the second wing of its great and universal testimony, it is as follows:

There is to be seen a truth of cooperation among these beings that are attempting to maintain their existence, and if they are animate, their life, and fulfil their functions in the midst of constantly stirring changes and revolutions, a truth that lies far beyond their capacities.

For example, the elements hasten to aid animate beings; the clouds to help the vegetable kingdom; the vegetable kingdom, to help the animal kingdom; the animal kingdom, to help the human kingdom. Milk gushes forth from the breast, like the spring of Paradise, to succor the infant; the fact that animate beings are given their needs and sustenance in a manner that transcends their capacity, from unexpected places; the replenishing of the cells of the body with particles of food, through their being subjugated by their Sustainer and their employment at His merciful hands all of these and numerous other examples of the truth of cooperation demonstrate the universal and compassionate dominicality of the Sustainer of All the Worlds, Who administers the cosmos like a palace.

Solid, inanimate and unfeeling objects, that nonetheless cooperate with each other in a sensitive and conscious fashion, must of necessity be caused to rush to each other’s aid by the power, mercy, and command of a Compassionate, Wise, and Glorious Sustainer.

The universal cooperation visible throughout the cosmos; the comprehensive equilibrium and all-embracing preservation prevailing with the utmost regularity in all things, from the planets to the members, limbs and bodily particles of animate beings; the adorning whose pen ranges over the gilded face of the heavens, the decorated face of the earth, and the delicate faces of flowers; the ordering that prevails over all things, from the Milky Way and solar system down to fruits such as corn and pomegranates; the assigning of duties to all things, from the sun and the moon, the elements and the clouds, down to honeybees all of these great truths offer a testimony of proportionate greatness, and their testimony forms the second wing of the testimony offered by the cosmos.

Since the Risale-i Nur has established and clarified this great testimony, we will content ourselves here with this brief indication.

In brief allusion to the lesson of faith learned by our traveler from the cosmos, we said in the Eighteenth Degree of the First Station:

*There is no god but God, the Necessary Existent, the like of Whom cannot exist, other than Whom all things are contingent, the One, the Unique, to the Necessity of Whose Existence in Unity points the cosmos, the great book incarnate, the supreme Qur’an personified, the ornate and orderly palace, the splendid and well-arranged city, with all of its suras, verses, letters, chapters, parts, pages, and lines, with the agreement of its fundaments, species, parts and particles, its inhabitants and contents, what enters it and what leaves it; with the testimony of the sublimity of the comprehensiveness of the truth of createdness, change and contingency; with the consensus of all scholars of the science of theology; with the testimony of the truth of the changing of its form and its contents, with wisdom and regularity, and the renewal of its letters and words with discipline and equilibrium; and with the testimony of the sublimity of the comprehensiveness of the truth of cooperation, mutual response and solidarity, reciprocal care, balance and preservation, among all its beings, as is to be clearly observed.*

# Nineteenth degree: The presence of God

Then the ardent and inquisitive traveler, who was seeking the Creator of the world, had advanced by gaining knowledge of God indirectly through eighteen degrees and approached, at the end of an ascension in belief to the throne of truth, a station where in the presence of God, he addressed Him directly. He said to his own spirit:

*“In the noble opening sura of the Qur’an, the verses that extend from the beginning to the word iyyaka (You alone) are like a form of praise and encomium uttered indirectly; but the word iyyaka signifies a coming into His presence and addressing Him directly. So too we should abandon this indirect seeking and ask for the object of search from the object of our search. For one must ask the sun, that shows all things, concerning the sun, since that which shows all things will show itself even more clearly. Just as we perceive and know the sun by its rays, so too we can strive to know our Creator, in accordance with our capacities, through His Most Beautiful Names and Sacred Attributes.”*

We will set forth here, with the utmost brevity and concision, two of the countless paths that lead to this goal; two of the infinite degrees of those two paths; and two of the abundant truths and details of those two degrees.

**THE FIRST TRUTH:** There appears visible to our eye a comprehensive, permanent, orderly and awesome truth, one that changes, transforms, and renews all beings in heaven and on earth, with imperious and incessant activity. Within the truth of that in every way wise activity, there is immediately perceived the truth of the manifestation of dominicality, and in turn, within the truth of that in every way merciful manifestation of dominicality, is recognizable the truth of the epiphany of Divinity.

From this continuous, wise and imperious activity, the deeds of an All Powerful and All Knowing Doer can be discerned, as if from behind a veil. And from behind the veil of these nurturing and administering deeds of dominicality, the Divine Names, manifest in all things, can be immediately perceived. Then behind the veil of the Beautiful Names, manifest with Glory and Beauty, can be deduced the existence and reality of the seven sacred attributes, according to the testimony of all creation, in a life giving, powerful, knowledgeable, all-hearing, all-seeing, volitional and speech-endowed form, there appears to the eye of faith in the heart, self-evidently, necessarily, and with full certainty, the existence of a Necessary Existent that is described by these attributes, a Single One of Unity known by these Names, a Peerless and Eternal Doer, in a form more evidential and brilliant than the sun.

For a beautiful and profound book necessarily presupposes the act of writing and a well-built house presupposes the act of building; and the acts of writing beautifully and building well presuppose the names of writer and builder; and the titles of writer and builder obviously imply the arts and attributes of writing and building; and these arts and attributes self-evidently necessitate one who will be qualified by the names and attributes, and be the artist and craftsman. For just as it is impossible for there to be a deed without a doer, or a name without one designated by the name, so too it is not possible for there to be an attribute without one qualified by the attribute, and for there to be a craft without a craftsman.

On the basis, then, of this truth and principle, the universe with all the beings it contains resembles a collection of profound books and letters written by the pen of Divine Determining, and countless buildings and palaces constructed with the hammer of Divine Power. Each of these singly in thousands of ways and together in uncountable ways utters the following testimony:

These innumerable dominical and merciful deeds, and the endless manifestations of the thousand and one Divine Names which are the source of the deeds, and the infinite manifestations of the seven transcendent attributes which are the source of the Beautiful Names, in endless and infinite ways point to and testify to the necessary existence and unity of an All-Glorious Essence Which is the source of those all-embracing, sacred seven attributes and is qualified by them. And so too all the instances of beauty, loveliness, perfection, and exquisiteness found in those beings self-evidently testify all together to the sacred beauties and perfections of the dominical deeds, and the Divine Names, and attributes, and qualities, which are fitting and worthy of them, and to the sacred beauty of the Most Pure and Holy Essence.

So the truth of dominicality that manifests itself within the truth of activity reveals and makes itself known in qualities and acts such as creating, originating, fashioning and bringing into being, with knowledge and wisdom; determining, forming, administering and changing with regularity and balance; transforming, causing to descend and perfecting, with purpose and will; and feeding, nurturing, and bestowing generosity and bounty, with tenderness and mercy. And within the truth of the manifestation of dominicality, the truth of the immediately perceived revelation of Divinity makes itself known and recognized through the compassionate and munificent manifestations of the Beautiful Names and through the Glorious and Beauteous manifestations of the seven affirmative attributes: Life, Knowledge, Power, Will, Hearing, Sight, and Speech.

Just as the attribute of Speech makes the Most Sacred Essence known through revelation and inspiration, so too the attribute of Power makes the Essence known through its skilled works and effects, each of which is like a word assuming external shape. Presenting the cosmos from end to end under the aspect of an incarnate book of discernment, it describes and makes known a Powerful Possessor of Glory.

As for the attribute of Knowledge, it makes known a single Most Sacred Essence, through each of the wise, well-ordered and balanced objects of creation, through each creature administered, directed, adorned, and made distinct by God’s Knowledge.

As for the attribute of Life, it is proven not only by its own evidences, but also by all the works that proclaim God’s Power, by all the well-ordered, wise, balanced and adorned forms and states that indicate God’s Knowledge, as well as by all proofs of all other attributes. Thus Life, showing as witnesses all animate beings, which act as mirrors reflecting those abundant proofs, makes known an Eternally Living and Self-Subsistent Essence.

It is also this attribute that constantly changes the cosmos, in order to produce in it ever-fresh and various manifestations and designs, and turns it into a supreme mirror composed of countless smaller mirrors. Similarly, the attributes of Seeing and Hearing, Willing and Speaking, each reveal and make known the Most Sacred Essence, just as the cosmos does.

Then, too, just as the attributes point to the existence of the Possessor of Glory, they also indicate in most manifest fashion the existence and reality of life, and the livingness and permanence of that Essence. For Knowing is a sign of Life; Hearing is an indication of Life; Seeing belongs only to the living; Will takes place only with Life. Purposive Power is found only in living beings, and Speech is a task for those endowed with Knowledge and Life.

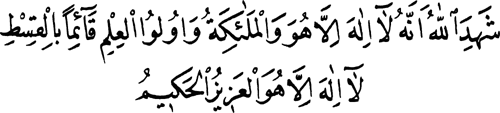
It follows from the foregoing that the attribute of Life has proofs seven times as numerous as the cosmos, and evidences that proclaim its existence and the existence of the One Whom it qualifies. Thus it comes to be the foundation and source of the attributes, the origin and support of the Supreme Name. Since the Risale-i Nur establishes this first truth with powerful proofs and clarifies it, we will content ourselves now with a drop from this ocean.

**THE SECOND TRUTH:** Divine discourse, which proceeds from the attribute of Speech.

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*Were the sea to become ink for the words of my Sustainer (*18:109*)…*

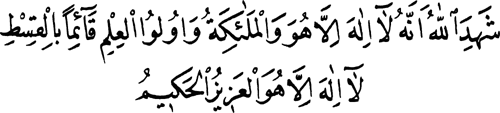
According to the inner sense of this verse, Divine discourse is infinite. The clearest sign demonstrating the existence of a being is his speech. This truth, therefore, constitutes an infinite testimony to the existence and unity of the Pre-Eternal Speaker. Since two powerful evidences of this truth are revelation and inspiration, set forth in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Degrees of this treatise; another broad proof is provided by sacred and heavenly Books, as indicated in the Tenth Degree; and a further most brilliant and comprehensive proof is furnished by the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition, as discussed in the Seventeenth Degree - for all these reasons we refer our readers to those Degrees for the exposition and affirmation of this truth. Enough for us and for our traveler, who was unable to proceed beyond this point, are the lights and mysteries contained in the sublime verse that proclaims this truth in miraculous fashion and adds its own testimony to all of the preceding ones:



*God bears witness that there is no god but He, as do the angels and the possessors of knowledge; steadfast in equity; there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise! (3:18)*

In allusion to the core of the lesson learned by our traveler at this sacred Station, we said, in the Nineteenth Degree of the First Station:

*There is no god but God, the Necessary Existent, the One, the Unique; His are the Beautiful Names, His are the Supreme Attributes, and His is the Most Sublime Similitude. To His Necessary Existence in Unity points the necessarily existent Essence, with the consensus of all its sacred and comprehensive attributes and all of its Beautiful Names, manifested according to the consensus of His dominant qualities and deeds. By the testimony of the sublimity of the truth of the self-revelation of Divinity in the manifestation of dominicality, in the permanence of imperious activity through the act of bringing into being, creating, making and originating, in will and in power; and through the act of determining, forming and regulating, in choice and in wisdom; through the act of expending, preserving, ordering, administering, and nurturing in purposiveness and mercy, in complete order and equilibrium; as too by the testimony of the sublimity of the comprehensiveness of the truth of the mysteries of the verse: God bears witness that there is no god but He, as do the angels and the possessors of knowledge; steadfast in equity; there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise!*



1. From the Staff of Moses, BSN [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See, Muslim, Janna, 26. (The rivers, Sayhan, Jayhan, Euphrates, and Nile). [Tr.] [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Tawatur is the kind of report transmitted by numerous authorities, about which there is no room for doubt. [Tr.] [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Muslim, iv, nos: 1816, 1817; al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak, ii, 392; Tabrizi, Mishkat al-Masabih, No: 4844. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Bukhari, vi, 234; al-Mustadrak, i, 553, 554. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)