**The Twenty-second Word**

**Arguments for Divine Existence and Unity and how to acquire a firm conviction of Divine Unity**

(This Word consists of two Stations)

In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate.

*God sets forth parables for humanity in order that they may bear (them) in mind and take lessons (through them)*. (14:25)

*Such parables do We set forth for humanity so that they may reflect.* (59:21)

**First station**

ONCE TWO PEOPLE WASHED THEMSELVES IN A POOL AND FEEL INTO a trance-like state. Upon awakening, they found themselves in an amazing land. With its perfect order and harmony, it was like a country, or rather a city, or a palace. They looked around in utmost amazement: from one point of view, it was a vast world; from another, a well-ordered country; from yet another, a splendid city. If it was looked from still another point of view, it was a palace though one it was in itself a magnificent world. They traveled and saw its creatures speaking a language they did not know. However, their gestures indicated that they were doing important work and carrying out significant duties.

One of them said: “This world must have an administrator, this well- ordered country a master, this splendid city an owner, and this skillfully made palace a master builder. We must try to know him, for it must be he who brought us here. If we do not, who will help us? What can we expect from those impotent creatures whose language we do not know and who ignore us? Moreover, one who has made a huge world in the form of a state, a city, or a palace and filled it with wonderful things, embellished it with every adornment, and decorated it with instructive miracles must have something he wants us and those who come here to do. We must know him and learn what he wants.”

The other man objected: “I don’t believe it, that there is such a being and he governs this world by himself.” His friend replied: “If we do not recognize him and remain indifferent, we gain nothing and might face great harm. But if we try to recognize him, there is little hardship and the chance of great benefit. So, it is in no way reasonable to remain indifferent?” The other man insisted: “I find all my ease and enjoyment in not thinking of him. Besides, I am not to bother myself with things that make no sense to me. These are all confused things that are happening by chance or by themselves. They are none of my concern.” His smart friend replied: “Such obstinacy will get us and many others in trouble. Sometimes a land is ruined because of one ill-mannered person.”

The other person turned and said: “Either prove that what you say is true or leave me alone.” At that, his friend said: “Since your obstinacy borders on insanity and will cause us to suffer a great calamity, I will show you twelve proofs that this palace-like world, this city-like state, has one master builder who administers it by himself and has no deficiency. He is invisible to us, but must see us and everything and also hear all voices. All his works seem miraculous. All these creatures whom we see but whose languages we do not understand must be his officials [working in his name].

**Twelve proofs**

**FIRST PROOF***:* Look around! A hidden hand is working in everything, for some- thing little and without strength like a seed is bearing loads weighing thousands of pounds.[[1]](#footnote-1) Something without consciousness is doing much intelligent and purposive work.[[2]](#footnote-2) As they therefore cannot be working on their own, a powerful, hidden one is causing them to work. If everything were happening on its own, all the work being done in this place must itself be a miracle, and every- thing a miracle-working marvel.

**SECOND PROOF***:* Look at the adornments of these plains, fields, and residences! Each are marks pointing to that hidden one. Like a seal or stamp, each gives news of him. Look at what he produces from a few grams of cotton.[[3]](#footnote-3) See how many rolls of cloth, linen, and flowered material have come out of it; how much sweet food and other delights are being made. If thousands of people clothed themselves from these or ate of those, there would still be enough. Again, look. He has taken a handful of iron, soil, water, coal, copper, silver, and gold and made some living creature.[[4]](#footnote-4) Look and see. These sorts of work are particular to one that holds this land together with all its parts under his miraculous power and all-submissive to his will.

**THIRD PROOF***:* Look at these priceless, moving works of art![[5]](#footnote-5) Each has been fashioned as a miniature specimen of this huge palace. Whatever is in the palace is found in these tiny moving machines. Who but the builder of this amazing palace could include all of it in a tiny machine? Could chance or something purposeless have intervened in this box-sized machine that contains a whole world? However, many artistically fashioned machines you see, each is like a seal of that hidden one, like a herald or a proclamation. In their language of being, they announce: “We are the works of art of one who can make this entire world as easily as he made us.”

**FOURTH PROOF***:* I will show you something even stranger. Look. All things in this land are changing. Each lifeless body and unfeeling “bone” has started to move toward certain purposes, as if each were ruling the others. Look at this machine beside us.[[6]](#footnote-6) It is as though it were issuing commands and all the materials necessary for its adornment and functioning were running to it from distant places. Look over there. That seemingly lifeless body is as though beckoning, for it makes the biggest bodies serve it and work for it.[[7]](#footnote-7) You may compare the rest with these.

Everything seems to have subjugated to itself all creatures in the world. If you do not accept the hidden one’s existence, you must attribute all his skills, arts, and perfections to the stones, soil, animals, and creatures resembling people to the things themselves. In place of one miracle-working being, millions of miracle-workers like him have to exist, both opposed to and similar to each other at the same time, and one within the other, without causing any confusion and spoiling the order. But we know that when two rulers intervene in an affair, the result is confusion. When a village has two headmen, a town two governors, or a country two kings, chaos arises. Given this, what would happen if there were an infinite number of absolute rulers in the same place and at the same time?

**FIFTH PROOF:** Look carefully at the palace’s ornaments and the city’s adornments! See this land’s orderliness and reflect on this world’s artistry. If the pen of a hidden one with infinite miracles and skills is not working, or if all these ornaments are attributed to unconscious causes, blind chance and deaf nature, then even every stone and every blade of grass here would have to be a miracle-working decorator and a wonderful inscriber able to write a thousand books in a letter, and to display infinitely different forms of artistry in a single ornament.

Look at the inscriptions in these stones.[[8]](#footnote-8) Each contains the inscriptions of the whole palace, the laws for the city’s order, and the programs for organizing the state. Given this, making the inscriptions a stone contains is as wonderful as making the state. So each inscription and instance of art is a proclamation of that hidden one and one of his seals. As a letter indicates its writer, and an artistic inscription makes its inscriber known, how can then an inscriber, a designer, or a decorator, who inscribes a huge book in a single letter and displays a thousand ornaments in a single one, not be known through his inscriptions and ornaments?

**SIXTH PROOF:** Come onto this vast plain![[9]](#footnote-9) We will climb to the top of that huge mountain to see the surrounding area. We use these binoculars, for curious things are happening in this land. Every hour things are happening that we never imagined.

Look! These mountains, plains, and towns are suddenly changing so that millions of new things can replace them with perfect orderliness, one within and after the other. The most curious transformations are occurring, just as though innumerable kinds of cloths are being woven inside and among others. See, familiar flowery things have been replaced in an orderly fashion with others of similar nature but different form. Everything is happening as if each plain and mountain is a page upon which infinite different books are being written without flaw or defect. It is utterly inconceivable that these things, which display infinite art, skill, and exactness, come about on their own. Rather, they show the artist who engenders them. The one who does all these things displays such miracles, for nothing is difficult for him. It is as easy for him to write a thousand books as to write one book.

Look around you! He puts everything in its proper place with such wisdom, pours his favor so generously on the needy and deserving, draws back and opens universal veils and doors so bountifully that all are satisfied, and lays out such munificent tables that a particular feast of bounties is given to each and every species of animate beings of this land. Indeed, each group and even each individual being is offered a table of bounties particular and suitable to it. Can there be anything more inconceivable than that any of these affairs could be attributable to chance, purposeless or vain, or have many hands behind it, and that their maker is powerful over everything, and everything is subjugated to him? So, my friend, what pretext can you find to persist in your denial?

**SEVENTH PROOF:** Come, friend! Let’s turn to the mutual interrelations of this amazing palace-like world’s parts. Look! Universal things are being done and general revolutions are taking place with such perfect orderliness that as if all rocks, soil, and trees in this palace were obeying this world’s general rules and were free to do whatever they will. Things that are most distant come to each other’s aid. Look at that strange caravan[[10]](#footnote-10) coming from the unseen on mounts resembling trees, plants, and mountains. Each member is carrying trays of food on its head and bringing it to the animals waiting on this side. Look at the mighty electric lamp in that dome.[[11]](#footnote-11) It not only provides light, but also cooks their food wonderfully; the food to be cooked is attached to a string[[12]](#footnote-12) by an unseen hand and held up before it. Also see these impotent, weak, defenseless little animals. Over their heads are small, spring-like “pumps” full of delicate sustenance.[[13]](#footnote-13) They only have to press their mouths against these pumps to be fed.

In short, all things in this world, as if positioned face-to-face, help each other. As though seeing each other, they cooperate with each other. To perfect each other’s work, they support each other and work together. The wonders in this world cannot be counted. You can approach them in the light of the examples cited. All of this decisively proves that everything is subjugated to the builder of that wonderful palace, the real owner of this world. Everything works on his behalf, like an obedient soldier carrying out his commands. Everything takes place by his power, moves by his command, and is arranged through his wisdom. Everything helps the others by his munificence, and everything is made to hasten to the aid of others through his compassion. O my friend, can you object to this?

**EIGHTH PROOF:** Come, O my friend who suppose yourself to be intelligent, as does my own selfhood! You do not want to recognize this magnificent palace’s owner although everything points to him, shows him, and testifies to him. How can you deny such testimony? Given this, you have to deny the palace as well and say: “There is no world, no state.” Deny your own existence, too, and disappear, or else come to your senses and listen to me.

In the palace are uniform elements and minerals that encompass the whole land.[[14]](#footnote-14)103 It appears that everything is made from them. This means that whoever owns them owns everything made from them, for whoever owns the field owns its crops, and whoever owns the sea owns its contents. These textiles and decorated woven clothes are made from a single, similar basic thing. Obviously, the one who creates this thing both prepares it and makes it into yarn, for such a work does not allow the participation of others. Therefore, all of the things skillfully woven out of it are particular to him.

All types of such woven things are found throughout the land. They are being made all together, one inside or among others, in the same way and at the same instant. Therefore, they can be the work only of one person who does everything with one command. Otherwise such correspondence and conformity as regards time, fashion, and quality would be impossible. So, each skillfully made thing proclaims that hidden one and points to him. It is as if each kind of flowered cloth, skillfully made machine, and delicious morsel is a stamp, a seal, a sign of that miracle-working one, and proclaims in the language of its being: “Whoever owns me as a work of art also owns the boxes and shops in which I am found.” Each decoration says: “Whoever embroidered me also wove the roll of cloth in which I am located.” Each delicious morsel says: “Whoever cooked me also has the cooking pot in which I am located.” Each machine says: “Whoever made me also makes all those like me that are found throughout the land. The one who raises us everywhere is also the same. As this same person owns the land and this palace, he also must own us.” This is just as the real owner of, say a cartridge-belt or a button belonging to the state, has to own the factories in which they are made. If someone ignorantly claims ownership of it, it will be taken away. Such people will be punished for pretending to own the state’s property.

In short, just as each element in this land has permeated throughout it, so can their owner only be the one who owns all the land. Since the artistry throughout this land is of the same nature and works of art resemble each other, displaying the same stamp, whatever has spread throughout the land is evidently the work of a single being’s art. And, that one rules over everything. Thus, there is a sign of oneness, a stamp of unity in this magnificent palace-like land. Some things are uniform, unique, and of the same nature, yet all-encompassing. Other things, though various and abundant, display a unity of grouping since they resemble each other and are found everywhere. Such unity demonstrates the one of unity. That means that this land’s builder, host, and owner must be one and the same.

Look attentively! See how a thick string has appeared from behind the veil of the Unseen.[[15]](#footnote-15) See how thousands of strings hang down from it. See their tips, to which have been attached diamonds, decorations, favors, and gifts. There is a gift particular to everyone. Can you be so foolish as not to recognize and thank the one who offers such wonderful favors and gifts from behind the veil of the Unseen? For if you do not recognize him, you must argue: “The strings themselves make and offer these diamonds and other gifts.” In that case, you must attribute to each string the status and function of a king [who has a miraculous power and knowledge to do whatever he wishes]. Whereas, before our very eyes an unseen hand is making the strings and attaching gifts to them! Given this, everything in this palace points to that miracle-working one rather than to itself. If you do not recognize him, by denying what is occurring in the palace, you show a determined ignorance of a kind to which a truly human being must not sink.

**NINTH PROOF:** Come, O friend! You neither recognize nor want to recognize the palace’s owner because you deem his existence improbable. You deny because you cannot grasp his wonderful art and manner of acting. But how can all of these exquisite things, this wonderful existence, be explained without recognizing him? If we recognize him, all this palace and its abundant contents are as easy to understand as a single thing in it.

If we do not recognize him and if he did not exist, one thing would be as hard to explain as the whole palace, for everything is as skillfully made as the palace. Things would not be so abundant and economical. No one could have any of these things that we see. Look at the jar of conserve attached to that string.[[16]](#footnote-16) If it had not been miraculously made in his hidden kitchen, we could not have bought it at any price. But now we buy it for a few cents.

Every kind of persistent difficulty and impossibility follows from not recognizing him. A tree is given life from one root, through one law, and in one center. Therefore, forming thousands of fruits is as easy as forming one fruit. If this depended on different, particular centers and roots and on separate, particular laws, each fruit would have been as hard to form as the tree. If an army’s equipment is produced in one factory, through one law, and in one center, it is done as easily as equipping one soldier. But if each soldier’s equipment is procured from many places, then equipping one soldier would require as many factories as needed for the whole army.

This is also true in this well-organized palace, splendid city, progressive state, and magnificent world. If the invention of all these things is attributed to one being, it is easy to account for their infinite abundance, availability, and munificence. Otherwise, everything would be so costly and hard that the whole world would not be enough to buy a single thing.

**TENTH PROOF:** My friend, we have been here for fifteen days.[[17]](#footnote-17) If we still do not know and recognize this world’s ruler and rules, we deserve punishment. We have no excuses, because for fifteen days we have not been interfered with, as though given respite. But neither have we been left to ourselves. We cannot wander about and cause disorder among creatures so delicate, well-balanced, subtle, skillfully made, and instructive as these. The majestic lord’s punishment must be severe.

How majestic and powerful he must be to have arranged this huge world like a palace and turn it as though a light wheel. He administers this vast country like a house, missing nothing. Like filling a container and then emptying it, he continuously fills this palace, this city, this land with perfect orderliness and then empties it with perfect wisdom. Also, like setting up a table and then removing it, he lays out throughout the land, as though with an unseen hand, diverse tables with a great variety of foods one after the other, and then clears them away to bring new ones.[[18]](#footnote-18) Seeing this and using your reason, you will understand that an infinite munificence is inherent in that awesome majesty.

Just as all these things testify to that unseen being’s unity and sovereignty, so these revolutions and changes occurring one after the other bear witness to his permanence. How so? For the causes of things disappear along with them, whereas the things we attribute to causes are repeated after them. So, nothing can be attributed to causes; everything takes place as the work of an undying one. For example, sparkling bubbles on a river’s surface come and go, but new ones coming after them also sparkle. Therefore, what makes them sparkle is something constant standing high above the river and having permanent light. Similarly, the quick changes in this world and the things that replace the disappearing ones, assuming the same attributes, show that they are manifestations, inscriptions, mirrors, and works of art of a permanent and undying one.

**ELEVENTH PROOF:** Come, O friend! Now I will show you another decisive proof as powerful as the previous ten proofs put together. Let’s board the ship and sail to that peninsula over there, for the keys to this mysterious world are there.[[19]](#footnote-19) Moreover, everyone is looking to that peninsula, expecting something and receiving orders from there. We have landed. Look at the huge meeting over there, as if all the country’s important people have gathered. Look carefully, for this great community has a leader. Let’s approach nearer to learn about him. See his brilliant decorations—more than a thousand.[[20]](#footnote-20) How forcefully he speaks. How pleasant is his conversation. I have learned a little of what he says during these fifteen days, and you could learn the same from me. He is speaking about the country’s glorious miracle-displaying sovereign, who has sent him to us. See, he is displaying such wonders that we have to admit that he is the special envoy of the sovereign.

Look carefully. Not only the peninsula’s creatures are listening to him; he is making his voice heard in wonderful fashion by the whole country. Near and far, everyone is trying to listen to his discourse, even animals. Even the mountains are listening to the commandments he has brought so that they are stirring in their places. Those trees move to the place to which he points. He brings forth water wherever he wishes. He makes his fingers like an abundant spring and lets others drink from them.

Look, that important lamp in the palace’s dome splits into two at his gesture.[[21]](#footnote-21) That means this whole land and its inhabitants recognize that he is an envoy. As though understanding that he is the most eminent and true translator of an unseen miracle-displaying one, the herald of his sovereignty, the discloser of his talisman, and a trustworthy envoy communicating his commandments, they heed and obey him. All around him, those who are sensible affirm whatever he says. By submitting to his commands and answering his beckoning, everything in this land, even the mountains, the trees, and the huge light that illuminates everywhere, affirm him.[[22]](#footnote-22)

So, O friend, could there be any deception in the words of this most illustrious, magnificent, and serious of beings, who bears a thousand deco- rations from the king’s royal treasury, about the miracle-displaying king and his attributes, and in the commands he communicates from him? He speaks with firmest conviction and is confirmed by all the country’s notables. If you think they contain some deception, you must deny the existence and reality of this palace, those lamps, and this congregation. Your objections will be refuted by the proof’s power.

**TWELFTH PROOF:** Come, O friend who must have come to your senses a little. I will show you further proof as strong as the sum of the previous eleven proofs. Look at this illustrious decree,[[23]](#footnote-23) which has descended from above and which everyone looks upon with full attention out of amazement or veneration. That being with a thousand decorations is explaining its meaning. The decree’s brilliant style attracts everyone’s admiration, and speaks of matters so important and serious that everyone feels compelled to listen. It describes all the acts, attributes, and commands of the one who governs this land, who made this palace, and exhibits these wonders. There is a mighty seal on the decree, an inimitable seal on every line and sentence. The meanings, truths, commandments, and instances of wisdom it provides are in a style unique to him, which also functions like a stamp or seal.

In short, this supreme decree shows that supreme being as clearly as the sun, so that one who is not blind can “see” him. If you have come to your senses, friend, this is enough for now. Do you have more objections?

The stubborn man replied: “In the face of all these proofs I can only say: ‘All praise and gratitude are for God,’ for I have come to believe, in a way as bright as the sun and clear as daylight, that this land has a single Lord of Perfection, this world a single Owner of Majesty, and this palace a single Maker of Grace. May God be pleased with you for saving me from my former obstinacy and foolishness. Each proof was sufficient to demonstrate the truth. But since with each successive proof, clearer and finer, more pleasant, agreeable, and radiant levels of knowledge, scenes of recognition, and windows of love were opened and revealed, I waited and lis- tened.”

The parable indicating the mighty truth of Divine Unity and belief in God is completed. Through the grace of the All-Merciful, the enlightenment of the Qur’an, and the light of belief, I will now show, after an introduction, twelve gleams from the sun of Divine Unity, corresponding to the twelve proofs in the parable. Success and guidance are from God alone.

1. This refers to seeds, which bear trees on their heads. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This refers to delicate plants like grapevines, which cannot rise by themselves or bear the weight of fruits, and so throw their delicate arms around other plants or trees and wind themselves around and load themselves onto them. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For example, an atom-sized poppy seed, an apricot stone that weighs a few grams, or a melon seed each produce from Mercy’s treasury woven leaves more beautiful than broadcloth, flowers whiter or yellower than linen, fruits sweeter than sugar, and finer and more delicious than jams, and offer them to us. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This refers to the creation of animal bodies from elements and living creatures from sperm. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This refers to animals and human beings. Since an animal is a tiny index of the world, and humanity is a miniature of the universe, whatever is in the universe has a sample that is contained within each human being. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This refers to fruit-bearing trees. As if bearing on their slender branches hundreds of looms and factories, they weave wonderful, richly adorned leaves, blossoms and fruits, and then cook these fruits and offer them to us. Such majestic trees like pines and cedars have set up their workbenches on hard, dry rock to work. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. This “body” signifies grains, seeds, and the eggs of flies. A fly leaves its eggs on an elm tree’s leaves. Suddenly, the huge tree turns its leaves into a mother’s womb, a cradle, a store full of honey-like food, as if it, although not fruit-bearing, produces animate fruit. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. This refers to humanity, the fruit of the Tree of Creation, and to the fruit that bears the program of its tree and its index. For whatever the Pen of Divine Power has inscribed in the great Book of the Universe has been compressed in our creation. Whatever the Pen of Divine Destiny has written in a huge tree has been included in its fingernail-sized fruit. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. This signifies the earth’s face in spring and summer, when innumerable individuals of countless species are brought into existence; they are “written” on the earth. They are recruited and may undergo changes without flaw and with perfect orderliness. Thousands of tables of the All-Merciful are laid out and then removed and replaced with fresh ones. All trees are like bearers of trays, and all gardens are like cauldrons. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. It refers to “caravans” of plants and trees bearing the sustenance of all animals. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. An allusion to the sun. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The string and its attached food denote a tree’s slender branches and the delicious fruits thereon. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The breasts of mothers. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Elements and minerals denote the elements of air, water, light, and soil, which perform numerous systematic duties: By Divine permission, they hasten to help all needy beings, enter everywhere by Divine command and provide help, convey the necessities of life, and “suckle” living creatures. They also function as the source, origin, and cradle for the weaving and decoration of Divine artifacts. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The “thick string” is a fruit-bearing tree, the strings are its branches, and the diamond decorations, favors, and gifts are the various flowers and fruits hung thereon. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. The jar of conserve denotes Mercy’s gifts (melons, watermelons, pomegranates, and coconuts like tins of milk), each of which is a conserve of Divine Power. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. An allusion to the age of 15, the age of responsibility. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. The tables denote the earth’s face in summer, during which hundreds of the All-Merciful’s tables are prepared fresh and different in the kitchens of Mercy, and then are laid down and removed continuously. Every garden is a cooking pot, and every tree is a tray-bearer. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. The ship refers to history, the peninsula to the place of Age of Happiness, the age of the Prophet. Taking off the dress of modern civilization on the dark shore of this age, we sail on the ship of history over the sea of time, land on the Arabian peninsula in the Age of Happiness, and visit the Pride of Creation as he is carrying out his mission. We know that he is a proof of Divine Unity so brilliant that he illuminates the whole earth and the two faces of time (past and future), and disperses the darkness of unbelief and misguidance. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. A thousand decorations signify the Prophet’s miracles that, according to meticulousres earchers, number around one thousand. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The important lamp is the moon, which split into two at his gesture. As Mawlana Jami remarked: “That unlettered one who never wrote, wrote with the pen of his finger an *alif* [א— the first letter of the Arabic alphabet] on the page of the skies, and made one forty into two fifties.” In other words, before he split the moon, it resembled the Arabic letter *mim* (م), the mathematical value of which is forty. After splitting, it became two crescents resembling two *nun*s (ن), the value of which is fifty. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. The author refers to the mountains and trees answering the Prophet’s call. See The Nineteenth Letter’s ninth through twelfth signs in Said Nursi, *The Letters* (Turkey: The Light, Inc., 2007) (Tr.) The huge light is the sun. Once the Prophet was sleeping in ‘Ali’s arms, who did not wake him up out of deep love and respect for him. When the Prophet woke up, the sun was about to set, and ‘Ali had not yet prayed the afternoon Prayer. Upon the Prophet’s order, the earth revolved a little backwards and the sun appeared above the horizon so ‘Ali could pray. This is one of the Prophet’s famous miracles. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The illustrious decree refers to the Qur’an, and the seal to its miraculousness. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)