**The Eleventh Ray The Eleventh Matter**

**THE FRUITS OF BELIEVING IN ANGELS, ESPECIALLY AZRAEL AND THE ANGELS WHO RECORD OUR DEEDS**

**1) The Peace That Belief in Azrael Brings to a Person**

**2) The Joy Derived from Believing in the Existence of Angels Who Record Human Deeds**

**3) The Sweetness of Kiramen Katibin Angels Standing on a Person's Shoulders, Recording Their Deeds, Displaying Them in Eternal Scenes, and Granting Their Owners Everlasting Rewards**

Hundreds of the innumerable fruits, both particular and universal, of the sacred tree of belief, one of which is Paradise, another, eternal happiness, and the other the vision of God, have been explained in certain other parts of the *Risale-i Nur*. Referring interested readers to these parts, we will set out here just a few examples of its most minor and particular fruits rather than those of its universal pillars.

One day while praying, “O my Lord! In veneration of Gabriel, Michael, Israfil and Azra’il, and through their intercession, preserve me from the evil of humans and jinn!” I felt particularly exhilarated and consoled when I mentioned Azra’il—the name of the Archangel of death and one who usually causes people to tremble with fear. “All praise and gratitude be to God!” I uttered, and began to feel earnest love for him. I will point out extremely briefly only a few of the fruits of belief in the angels, together with certain particular fruits of belief in other pillars. They are as follows:

**ONE FRUIT***:* Everyone’s most precious possession which they try their utmost to preserve is their spirit. I felt great joy at having submitted it to a powerful and trustworthy hand—Azra’il, thereby saving it from aimlessness and preventing it from being lost or annihilated. Then the angels who record human actions came to mind, and I saw that their existence yields numerous sweet fruits such as this one.

**ANOTHER FRUIT:** Everyone tries eagerly to preserve worthwhile sayings or deeds of theirs through prose, poetry, or film-making, thus immortalizing what they have said or done. And if their deeds are to produce everlasting fruits in Paradise, they are even more anxious to preserve them. The fact that the recording angels perch on people’s shoulders to record those deeds which will gain them perpetual rewards and which people will watch as everlasting scenes in the everlasting realm, seemed so lovely and agreeable to me that I cannot describe it.

**THIRD FRUIT:** Then, when the worldly authorities had isolated me from everything connected with social life, keeping me away from all my books, friends, assistants and things that console me, and when I was being crushed by exile and the empty world was tumbling down all around me, one of the many fruits of belief in the angels came to my aid. It cheered up my world and lightened my life, filling it with angels and spirit beings, and making everything around me smile with joy. It showed too that the worlds of the people of misguidance weep in desolation, emptiness, and darkness.

**FOURTH FRUIT:** While enjoying the pleasures of this fruit, my imagination received and tasted one of the numerous fruits of belief, namely belief in the Prophets. Suddenly, my belief in all of the past Prophets so powerful as if I had actually lived among them lit up the past, expanding my belief and giving it universality. It also served to endorse the teachings of the Seal of the Prophets, upon him be peace and blessings, concerning belief to the number of the past Messengers, thus silencing the satanic ones.

Then a question occurred to me, which is also discussed in The Thirteenth Gleam, concerning the wisdom which lies in seeking refuge in God from Satan. It was as follows:

**Question:** Although the people of guidance are supported and strengthened by innumerable sweet fruits and benefits such as these, by the fine results of good deeds and the compassionate help of the Most Merciful of the Merciful, why is it that the people of misguidance are frequently able to defeat them? Why, at times, are twenty unbelievers able to crush a hundred believers?

**The Answer:** While thinking about this, I recalled the emphatic warnings of the Qur’an concerning feeble intrigues of Satan, and how it reminds us frequently that God Almighty is with the believers and sends angels to assist them. This matter has been explained in detail elsewhere in the *Risale-i Nur* and so we will allude to it here only briefly.

It may be that when a single arsonist tries to set fire to a palace, the pal- ace can remain standing only through the efforts of a hundred men protecting it, a hundred men who have recourse to the full force of the law. For like its existence, the subsistence of the palace is possible only through the continued existence of all its parts, together with the presence of all the conditions and causes necessary for its subsistence. Its destruction and non-existence, however, may occur through the non-existence of a single condition. Just as the palace can be razed to the ground by a vandal with a single match, vast destruction and mayhem may be wrought by satanic ones among jinn and humanity with comparative ease. The basis and origin of all evil and sin is non-existence and destruction. Their apparent existence veils actual non- existence and destruction—that is, although evil and sin appear to actually exist, in truth they are the absence of good and therefore pure non-existence.

Thus the satanic ones from among jinn and humanity are able to resist a great force with what is in actual fact an extremely weak one, thus compelling the people of truth to seek refuge continuously at the Court of the Divine. For this reason, the Qur’an attaches extreme importance to the protection of the good. It offers as a source of their support ninety-nine Divine Names and orders them sternly to withstand these enemies.

**This answer unveiled a great truth and the basis of an awesome matter.** Paradise displays the crops of all the worlds of existence and causes the seeds sown in the world to sprout and grow into eternal plants or trees. Similarly, in order to display the grievous consequences of the innumerable terrible worlds of non-existence and nothingness, Hell burns up the products of these worlds and cleanses the universe of the filth from the world of non-existence. But this is a matter which we will discuss elsewhere.

**FIFTH FRUIT:** Another example of the fruits of belief in the angels concerns the “questioning angels,” known as *Munkar* and *Nakir*:

I once imagined entering the grave, as one day, like everyone else, I will. As I lay there, terrified by the desolation and despair of that dark, cold, narrow pit, two blessed friends from among the species of angels called *Munkar* and *Nakir* appeared and began to converse with me. At once both the grave and my heart were broadened, illuminated, and warmed as windows were opened, one after the other, onto the world of spirits. I was filled with joy at this imaginary situation, knowing that I would experience such a thing in the future and I offered heartfelt thanks.

It was narrated that a *medrese* student who was studying Arabic died. In response to the question of *Munkar* and *Nakir*, who asked him “Who is your Lord?” he imagined for a moment that he was back in *medrese* and answered: “The word ‘who’ is the subject and ‘your Lord’ is its predicate; now ask me something difficult!” His answer made both the angels and the other spirit beings and a saintly person who was observing this incident from the world laugh, and brought a smile to the metaphorical face of Divine Mercy. God willing, the student was delivered from torment. I hope that like the late Hafiz Ali, a martyred student of the *Risale-i Nur* who died in prison while studying and enthusiastically copying the treatise known as *Fruits of Belief*, and answered the questions of *Munkar* and *Nakir* with the truths set forth in this treatise, we as students of the *Risale-i Nur* may also be graced with the ability to answer the questions to be posed by *Munkar* and *Nakir* with the powerful proofs explained in the *Risale-i Nur*.

**SIXTH FRUIT:** Another small benefit to be had from belief in angels concerns worldly happiness. An innocent child who had learnt his lesson of belief from a manual concerning Islamic daily life once said to another child who was weeping at the death of his little brother: “Don’t cry! Be thankful, for your brother has gone to Paradise and is now with the angels. He is enjoying himself there and having a better time than we are. He is flying around like the angels and taking a look at everything.” With these words he turned his friend’s mournful tears into happy smiles.

Exactly like that weeping child, during this sorrowful winter I received painful news of two deaths. One was the death of my nephew, Fuad, one of the most successful high school students in the country and someone who had published the truths studied and taught by the *Risale-i Nur*. The second was the death of my sister, Alima Hanim, who died while circumambulating the Ka‘ba during *Hajj*. While the deaths of my two relatives were making me weep, as did that of Abdurrahman, which is described in *Treatise of Hope and Solace for the Elderly* (that is, The Twenty-sixth Gleam), I saw in my heart through the light of belief that the innocent Fuad and that righteous woman had as their companions the angels and *houris* of Paradise, and had been saved from the perils and sins of this world. Feeling overwhelming joy instead of that dreadful sorrow, I congratulated both of them and Fuad’s father, Abdülmecid, along with myself, and offered thanks to the Most Merciful of the Merciful. This has been mentioned here as a supplication for mercy for the two deceased.

All the comparisons and descriptions in the *Risale-i Nur* describe the fruits of belief that are the means of happiness in this world and the next. Compared with the happiness and pleasures of life they engender in this world, these universal and extensive fruits suggest that their belief will gain every believer everlasting happiness; indeed, it is bound to produce shoots and develop in that way. Five of these numerous universal fruits were described at the end of The Thirty-first Word as fruits of the Ascension, while five are included as examples in The Fifth Branch of The Twenty-fourth Word.

We said at the beginning that each of the pillars of belief has innumerable different fruits, and that one of the fruits of the totality of these pillars is the vast Paradise, while another is eternal happiness, and yet another, perhaps the sweetest, is the vision of God. Also some of the fruits of belief that are the means for happiness in both worlds have been described in the comparison which comes at the end of The Thirty-second Word.

**SEVENTH FRUIT:** Belief in Divine Decree and Destiny also yields precious fruits in this world. Evidence of this can be seen in the well-known saying “Whoever believes in Divine Destiny is secure against grief.” A universal fruit of belief in Divine Destiny is explained in the fine example which is given at the end of *Treatise on Divine Decree and Destiny*, which is about two men who enter the lovely garden of a palace. I have had innumerable personal experiences which have convinced me that a lack of belief in Divine Destiny destroys the happiness of this worldly life. Whenever I consider grievous misfortunes from the perspective of Divine Destiny, I see that the misfortune is greatly lightened. I often wonder how those who do not believe in it can continue to live at all!

**EIGHTH FRUIT:** One of the universal fruits of the pillar of belief in the angels is mentioned in The Second Station of The Twenty-second Word as follows: the Archangel Azra’il, upon him be peace and blessings, said to God: “Your servants will be annoyed with me and complain about me when I carry out my duty of seizing the spirits of the dying.”

God replied: “I will make illnesses and calamities a veil to cover your duties, so that my servants’ complaints will be directed at these phenomena and not at you.”

Like these veils, the duty of Azra’il is also a veil, so that unjustified complaints are not directed toward God Almighty. For not everyone can fathom the wisdom, mercy, beauty, and benefits of death: people see only its outward face and start to object and complain. It is in order that unjustified complaints are not directed to the Absolutely Compassionate One that the function of Azra’il has been veiled. In exactly the same way, the tasks of all the angels, indeed of all apparent causes, are veils that cover the hand of Power, so that the dignity and holiness of Divine Power and the all-embracing nature of Divine Mercy are preserved with regard to things whose essential beauty is not apparent and whose wisdom is not understood; they are preserved so that they do not become the target of objections, and so that those who view things superficially do not see Divine Power as something which is occupied with things that are base, trivial or cruel. For as was discussed convincingly in the *Risale-i Nur*, no cause or agent can play any essential role in the creation or control of things, and everything most evidently bears the stamp of Divine Unity. Invention and creation are particular to God exclusively; causes are merely a veil. Conscious beings like angels can do nothing but carry out certain duties with their partial, limited will-power and in accordance with the Divine purpose for their existence. This is called “acquisition.”[[1]](#footnote-1) What they do is a kind of worship that they offer in the form of their vital duties.

The Dignity and Grandeur of God demand that in the view of the mind causes are veils to cover the hand of Power;

While Divine Unity and Oneness demand that causes have no creative part in creation.

Just as the angels and the apparent causes employed in creational tasks are all means of preserving Divine Power from the attribution to It of defects and apparent evil that some see in things or events, the essential beauties and instances of wisdom of which are invisible or unknown; they are means of sanctifying God, of believing in and declaring His absolute freedom from any shortcoming or wrong, so too, harmful elements and satanic individuals from among human beings and jinn are employed in evil deeds and actions that pertain to non-existence so that they may assist in the preservation of Divine Power from the attribution of injustice or unjustified objections and complaints. They also help to pave the way for the glorification of God Almighty as being absolutely free of all the defects and faults in the universe. For defects and faults arise from non-existence or a lack of sufficient ability, from destruction or the failure to perform certain duties, all of which lead to non-existence and arise from acts which bring about destruction or non-existence. The defects and faults are ascribed to these satanic and evil veils; objections and complaints are directed at them, and thus they function as the means by which God Almighty is declared absolutely free from all defects.

In fact, evil and destructive works pertaining to non-existence do not need any notable power or strength: some trivial act, some insignificant power, or even the non-performance of a duty may cause great destruction and extensive non-existence. Despite this, it is often supposed that the doers of evil have real power and ability, even though they play no role other than to cause non-existence and no power other than minor “acquisition.” But since the evils arise from non-existence, the doers of evil are their agents. If they are intelligent beings, they deservedly suffer the consequences. That is to say, the perpetrators of evil deeds are their agents or doers. However, since good deeds and acts pertain to and are means of existence, those who do them are not their true doers: rather, they are the means through which Divine favor manifests itself; the wise Qur’an states that their reward too is purely a Divine favor: *Whatever good happens to you, it is from God; and whatever evil befalls you, it is from yourself* (4:79).

*In short:* The worlds of existence and the innumerable worlds of non-existence clash, producing fruits like Paradise and Hell. All the worlds of existence declare, “All praise and gratitude are for God!” thus declaring Him to possess all attributes of perfection to an absolute degree, while all the worlds of non-existence announce, “All-Glorified is God!” thus declaring God to be absolutely free of all defect and injustice. Angels and demons, together with instances of good and instances of evil, including the beneficent inspirations and satanic whisperings which enter the heart, all struggle against each other. And as these clashes occur, one fruit of belief in the angels is suddenly manifested, illuminating the universe. Showing us one of the lights of the verse: *God is the Light of the heavens and the earth* (24:35), it causes us to taste how sweet this fruit is.

**NINTH FRUIT:** Another universal fruit of belief in the angels is to be found in The Twenty-fourth and Twenty-ninth Words.

In every corner of the universe, in every realm of being and in everything, whether particular or universal, is the compassionate majesty of Lordship, which makes itself known and loved. And most certainly it is necessary to respond to that majesty, that compassion and that will to make itself known and loved with thanks and comprehensive, conscious worship, declaring them to be free of all defects. It is only the countless angels that can perform this duty on behalf of unconscious inanimate creatures and the universal elements; they are the only creatures who can represent the wise, majestic activity of the sovereignty of that Lordship everywhere on the earth, from its very core to the Pleiades and beyond.

For example, the lifeless, soulless laws of philosophy show the creation of the earth and its “natural” duties to be dark and desolate. However, Ibn ‘Abbas narrates in reference to earlier Prophets of the Children of Israel that the earth sits on the shoulders of two angels called *Thawr* (the Ox) and *Hut* (the Fish). According to this narration, these angels supervise the earth. Furthermore, a substance called *sakhra*, belonging to the other world, is said to be the foundation stone of the earth and will be used in the transformation of a certain part of the earth into Paradise. This provides a perspective from which one may understand the real meaning of the narration, namely that the earth rests on the shoulders of these beings known as *Thawr* and *Hut*. Unfortunately, this figurative description came to be taken literally over the course of time, taking on a completely irrational complexion, whereas the fruit of belief in the angels illuminates the earth, its creation and duties. Since the angels travel through earth and rock and the centre of the globe in the same way that they travel through the air, neither they nor the earth have need of physical rocks, or a fish or an ox to support them!

Also, since the earth offers Divine glorifications with as many heads as there are species of beings, with tongues to the number of the members of those species, and to the number of the parts, leaves, and fruits of those members, then surely in order to consciously represent this magnificent, unconscious “natural” worship and offer it to the Divine Court, there will be an appointed angel with forty thousand heads, glorifying God with each of its forty thousand tongues, and with each tongue uttering forty thousand Divine glorifications. The Trustworthy Reporter, upon him be peace and blessings, informed us of this as a truth. This shows that the existence and extraordinary nature of angels, such as Gabriel, upon him be peace, who communicates and manifests God’s relationship with humanity, the most significant result of the creation of the universe; Israfil and Azra’il, upon them be peace, who represent and watch with adoration the awesome activity of the Creator in the world of living beings, such as giving life, restoring to life, and discharging from duties through death; Michael, upon him be peace, who, in addition to watching the All-Merciful’s providing for His creatures, which is the most extensive and pleasurable act of Mercy in the sphere of life, consciously represents unconscious thanks. The existence and extraordinary nature of angels like these and the immortality of their spirits are necessitated by the sovereignty and magnificence of Divine Lordship.

Their existence and that of the species to which each belongs is as certain as the existence of the sovereignty and magnificence that can be observed in the universe as clearly as the sun. Other matters concerning the angels may be approached from this perspective.

The All-Powerful One of Grace and Majesty has created hundreds of thousands of species of living beings on the earth; He has created beings with spirits in great abundance, even out of base and rotten substances, filling the cosmos with them. With regard to the miracles of His Art He causes them to declare: “What wonders God has willed! How blessed is God and how great are His blessings! All-Glorified is God!”, and with regard to the gifts of His Mercy: “All praise and gratitude are for God! All thanks be to God! God is the All-Great!” Most certainly, therefore, He has created inhabitants and spirit beings appropriate for the vast heavens, beings who never rebel and perform constant worship. Not leaving the heavens empty, He has created countless different kinds of angels, far greater in number than the animal species. Some of them ride on the raindrops and snowflakes and applaud the Divine Art and Mercy in their own languages. Others ride on the moving stars and, on their journeys through space, proclaim to the world their worship in the form of the exaltation of God and the declaration of His Unity with regard to the grandeur, dignity and magnificence of Lordship.

The agreement of all the revealed Scriptures and religions since the time of Adam concerning the existence and worship of the angels, and the numerous unanimous reports in all ages of the conversations and meetings that human beings have had with angels, prove that their existence is as certain as the existence of the people of America, whom we have never seen; it is also clear that the angels are concerned with us.

Now come and experience, through the light of belief, this universal fruit: see how it fills the universe from end to end, beautifying it and transforming it into a vast mosque or place of worship. While scientific materialism and atheistic philosophy show the cosmos to be cold, lifeless, dark and desolate, belief reveals that it is full of life and light. It shows that it is conscious, familiar, and most agreeable, allowing the people of belief to experience a manifestation of the pleasures of eternal life, each according to the degree of their belief while still in this world.

*In conclusion:* On account of the unity in the universe which arises from God’s Oneness, the same Power, the same Names, the same Wisdom, and the same Art prevail in every part of the universe, and all creatures, individually or as a species, proclaim the Creator’s Unity, His absolute Control and Authority, His Creativity, Lordship, and Holiness through their tongues of disposition. In the same way, He has created the angels and populated the heavens with them, causing them to represent and offer through their worshipful tongues the glorifications which all unconscious creatures offer through their tongues of disposition. Angels never act in opposition to the Divine Command. Apart from pure worship, they do nothing in the name of creation, nor do they intervene in anything unless commanded; they cannot even intercede unless they are given permission. They manifest to the utmost degree the meaning of *Angels are but His honored servants* (21:26); and *They carry out what they are commanded* (66:6).

1. “Acquisition” denotes the volitional acts of responsible beings like humanity and jinn which yield certain results and for which they are responsible. (Tr.) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)