

SCIENCE, REASON AND CONSCIENCE: A PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNEY FROM THE CHAIR TO THE CREATOR – 7

The silence in the room indicated that the believer was deep in thought. The agnostic, after sharing his thoughts with a moment's hesitation, felt the weight of the lack of response from the other. The atheist, on the other hand, waited at the other end of the room with a sarcastic expression on his face.

The same question echoed in everyone's mind: "What will happen now?"

The believer remained silent for a while longer. This silence made the atmosphere in the room heavier; it was like the silence before a storm. Finally, the Believer raised his head and looked at the other two people in the room. This look reflected a deep determination.

Believer: "Friends," he said slowly, "Perhaps the most difficult questions can be solved with the simplest answers. Maybe the answers we seek are much closer than we think."

The agnostic was surprised once again. The believer's approach intrigued him. What kind of argument would he present this time? And could this new discourse resolve his indecision? The atheist, on the other hand, was inwardly wondering where this discussion would lead.

Now it was time to raise the biggest question on everyone's mind:

"WHAT IF THERE REALLY IS A CREATOR?"

The atmosphere in the room was getting denser with each passing second. The Believer took a deep breath. With the peace and confidence, he carried within him, he decided to speak, choosing the words that would dispel the tension in the room and take the discussion to a new dimension. As if carrying the weight of what he was about to say, he began to choose his words carefully.

Believer: Look, my friend, if you've noticed, I'm talking about **the existence of a creator**; I'm not saying Allah, God, Deity, etc. I haven't mentioned any religion either. I didn't even say that you need to be religious. But *I'm stating that there must be a "doer," that is, a "creator," according to reason, logic, science, and even law.* You say, *"The day will come when science will make another explanation or a doer will be reached. Therefore, for now, I am **keeping myself safe** by remaining 'skeptical,' that is, by saying 'there is the unknown.'"* Of course, the decision is yours, no one's will is interfered with, **but the consequences are also endured.**

You say, *"non-believers can also live meaningful, peaceful, and happy lives."* Of course, they can. I didn't say that **"only"** believers can live like this. **But there's a difference.** I'm talking about living a meaningful, peaceful, and happy life without risking eternal loss. As I said, a person will endure the consequences of their decisions. I have nothing to lose by believing. **But the loss of not believing can be beyond explanation.**

You say, *"I think the arguments presented by Hazrat Ali and Bediüzzaman Said Nursi are **fundamentally based on a belief system**, and when viewed from outside this belief system,*

they may not be convincing. The existence of the afterlife or belief in a creator are not scientifically proven things." So, you don't find the information presented by Hazrat Ali (ra) and Bediüzzaman Said Nursi to be scientific.

- Firstly, **if you don't look with preconceived notions**, religious arguments are also scientific data; they express ideas about the existence of a creator, and these ideas are based on the sciences of reason and logic. **It shouldn't be considered scientific to reject an idea based on the affiliations of those who express it.**
- Secondly, by saying "*They are not scientifically proven things,*" you are expressing your own opinion. You are making a direct assumption. This shows that you are inclined not to believe, that you have a cold or even **prejudiced view of faith**, which is not compatible with humanity, science, reason, conscience, or logic.

You say, "I don't find probability calculations based on a belief system based on assumptions valid." The answer I gave you is a solution given as a result of **your skepticism**. Because you say to the atheist, "*what if it's not like that,*" and to me, "*what if science explains in the future that there is no creator.*" **The scientific solution** to this is to give a hypothetical answer, which is what was given to you.¹

I also know Pascal's philosophical argument of "*what if there is.*" Despite this knowledge, I deliberately expressed this argument from Islamic sources. Because Pascal did not write this clearly, and this argument has been expressed for years before Pascal, attributed to Hazrat Ali (ra).

The "philosophical argument" or "thought" you call "Pascal's Wager" is a philosophical argument put forward by Blaise Pascal, a 17th-century French philosopher, mathematician, and physicist. The idea of "Pascal's Wager" is included in his work "Pensées" (Thoughts), published in 1670 after Pascal's death. "Pensées" is a compilation of Pascal's various philosophical and theological thoughts in defense of the Christian faith. It argues that believing in the existence of a creator is a rational choice. This argument is based on the idea that when we do not know whether a creator exists or not, the potential benefits of believing are far greater than the potential harms of not believing.

The Basic Logic of Pascal's Wager is as follows:

1. The Case of the Creator Not Existing:

- If there is no Creator and a person believes in the Creator, this person's loss is limited (time, energy, worship).
- If there is no Creator and a person does not believe in the Creator, they lose nothing.

2. The Case of the Creator Existing:

- If the Creator exists and a person believes in the Creator, this person is rewarded with eternal happiness and paradise.
- If the Creator exists and a person does not believe in the Creator, this person is punished with eternal pain and hell.

So, according to Pascal, if the creator exists and we believe, we go to heaven, which is an infinite reward. If the creator exists and we don't believe, we go to hell, which is an infinite punishment. If the creator doesn't exist, it doesn't matter whether we believe or not, because

in either case there is nothing to lose or gain. In this case, according to Pascal, **believing is the most logical choice, because the potential gain is infinite and the potential loss is limited (such as time, energy, worship).**

Pascal's argument, just as Bediüzzaman stated, is evaluated through a mathematical probability and expectation theory. Pascal argues that the possible gains of believing in the creator are much greater than the possible losses of not believing. **Therefore, a rational individual should choose to believe in the creator according to probability and gain calculations.**

The work "Pensées" has been criticized for Pascal's Christian beliefs and philosophy, just as you said. It has been stated that Pascal's Wager proposes a pragmatic² belief, that is, "*even if a person does not believe, they should choose to believe for possible gains,*" but faith generally requires an inner commitment and sincerity, and therefore, faith as merely a wager would not be considered true faith.

It is not the believers who raise doubts or contradictions that are being criticized. Since you are in doubt, a solution, a safe path, is being offered to you. You are the one presenting the possibilities and probabilities. Among these possibilities, the safest one is being offered to you. Just like Bediüzzaman offering a solution to his friend who is afraid to cross the river by boat.

Of course, one should be sincere in faith, but **the most reasonable, safest, and most scientific method to offer someone in a dilemma like skepticism is this.** A doctor does not operate **on a healthy person**; they put the person on the operating table because they have diagnosed an illness and offer them a more comfortable life. I have provided the "**scientific sources**" regarding the **scientific** nature of this method in the footnote, you can use them if you wish.

You say that believing in the existence of the Creator with the assumption of "what if He exists" is "insincerity." Yes, this may be true. However, **I see that the real insincerity lies in remaining in doubt.** Because if beings come into existence as a result of natural processes and you are still in doubt, then you are showing insincerity towards the reality of natural processes. Similarly, if there is a creative power and you doubt it, **this also means displaying disloyalty and insincerity towards it.**

I believe that a person in a dilemma or doubt should be determined in a belief and **courageously** accept the consequences of that thing. This idea of mine is supported by scientists, mathematics, and logic.

The agnostic's mind was in turmoil. The believer's words had deeply affected him. The question "**What if there really is a creator?**" echoed in his mind. This thought both excited and frightened him. The existence of a creator could add meaning to his life, give him a purpose and direction. But **at the same time, the WEIGHT of a life he was responsible for before this being also FRIGHTENED him.**

The question "**But what if there isn't?**" also echoed in a corner of his mind. **If there was no creator, what was the meaning of life? Was everything just a coincidence?** This thought **pushed him into a void**, making him feel helpless in the face of the meaninglessness of his existence.

The agnostic was trapped **between these two dilemmas**. On the one hand, the peaceful and meaningful life described by the believer attracted him, while on the other hand, the scientific and rational worldview advocated by the atheist also made sense to him.

There was a constant battle in his inner world. He was going back and forth between his logic and his emotions. He wanted to believe, but according to him, he could not find enough evidence to support his belief. He wanted to doubt, but he was also afraid of the emptiness that doubt dragged him into.

This inner conflict caused the agnostic to deepen his thoughts even further. **Perhaps** this uncertainty could be a starting point for him. **Maybe** instead of looking for definite answers, he should learn to **live with questions**. **Maybe** he should seek the meaning of life within himself, in his own experiences.

With these thoughts, the agnostic made a decision. **He would no longer seek definitive answers**. Instead, he would listen to the arguments of both sides with an open mind, progress on his inner journey, and find his own truth. For him, this uncertainty would not be a burden but an opportunity. Because this uncertainty would force him to continue thinking, questioning, and exploring.

When the believer finished his words, there was a brief silence in the room. Everyone seemed lost in the depths of the conversation. Every thought, every argument had mental and emotional reflections. The agnostic was thoughtfully looking at the blank paper in front of him. He had things he wanted to say, but after such an intense discussion, he wanted to choose his words carefully.

The atmosphere of the room was filled with the weight of the believer's words. However, this weight **did not lead the discussion to a conclusion but allowed it to go deeper**. This moment, where the discussion deepened, made the connections between thoughts even more apparent, making the logic and belief behind each argument more visible. When the agnostic felt ready to continue the conversation, he raised his head, looked at the other two, and began speaking in a calm tone:

Agnostic: While I respect the believer's arguments, I would like to share some of my opposing views on this matter.

First of all, arguments like Pascal's Wager are usually conducted through a single religion or belief system. However, there are many different belief systems in the world. Therefore, **there may be uncertainty in choosing the right belief**.

Probability calculations like Pascal's Wager present **philosophical and logical arguments**, but **the persuasiveness of these arguments varies from person to person**. Belief is often based on deep personal experiences and emotional connections. The criticism that such probability calculations can lead to insincere beliefs should be taken into consideration. **Faith requires a sincere commitment, beyond being seen as just a logical wager**.

Instead of criticizing agnosticism, **it is necessary to accept that both sides act based on certain assumptions**. In discussions conducted on these assumptions, it would be beneficial to adopt a more balanced and mutually understanding approach.

The agnostic's words seemed to completely change the course of the discussion in the room. How would the believer respond to this unexpected challenge? On this fine line between doubt and belief,

which side would come forward with stronger arguments? In the eighth chapter, the answers to these questions and much more will be waiting for you...

TO BE CONTINUED (GOD WILLING)

I HAVE PARTICULARLY PREFERRED TO USE ENGLISH AND WESTERN AUTHORS' WORKS AS SOURCES BELOW.

The reason for this preference is the unfortunately biased attachment of many people to **WESTERN AND ENGLISH SOURCES**. However, in Eastern sources and especially in our own works, there are works admired by Western sources. The works of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi's Risale-i Nur Collection, Imam Ghazali, Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Sina, Ibn Khaldun, and many other valuable names prove this.

¹ When a person is in a dilemma about a subject, it is a scientific approach to produce solutions with probability calculations. Probability calculations are a scientific and mathematical method used for decision-making in situations of uncertainty. This approach is widely used, especially in "**risk assessment**," "**decision theory**," "**game theory**," and various engineering and economics fields.

Probability Calculations and Scientific Approach:

1. Uncertainty and Probability:

- Scientific approaches aim to make the best decision using probability calculations in situations of uncertainty. Such calculations evaluate the possible outcomes of events and try to determine which outcome is more likely to occur.
- For example, in a medical decision-making process, when choosing a treatment method, probability calculations are used to determine which treatment has the highest probability of success.

2. Decision Theory:

- Decision theory is a discipline that tries to make the best decision through probability and utility calculations. This theory allows a person to make a rational decision by considering the consequences of each option and the probabilities of these consequences when choosing between different options.
- A person in a dilemma can use this theory to analyze possible outcomes and make the most rational decision.

3. Scientific Methodology:

- Probability calculations are used to create hypotheses that can be supported by experiments and to test these hypotheses. Scientific experiments and observations test the accuracy of these calculations and determine whether the results are consistent with probabilities.
- A probability calculation is considered a scientific approach as long as it is consistent with real-world observations.

4. Applications:

- Probability calculations are used scientifically in many fields, from determining insurance risks to weather forecasting, from health risk analysis to making financial decisions.

Probability calculations are an important part of the scientific approach and are an effective method for making rational decisions in situations of uncertainty. For a person in a dilemma, using probability calculations guides this person to a more informed and logical decision. **Such calculations are considered part of scientific methods and are applied in a wide range.**

I can suggest several recent scientific sources that support the acceptance of probability calculations as a scientific approach. These sources explain how probability theory and decision theory are applied in various fields and how they are used as a scientific method. Below you can find some important sources and information about these sources:

1. "Probability Theory: The Logic of Science" by E.T. Jaynes (2003)

- **Description:** This book examines in depth how probability theory is used in scientific reasoning. Jaynes explains how probability theory can be integrated with scientific methods and how it can be used in decision-making processes.
- **Importance:** It can be used as a fundamental resource for understanding that probability calculations are part of scientific logic.

2. "An Introduction to Decision Theory" by Martin Peterson (2009)

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- **Description:** This book explains the basic concepts of decision theory and how this theory is related to probability calculations. The book covers uncertainty and risk analysis in decision-making processes.
 - **Importance:** It is a useful resource for understanding how decision theory and probability calculations are used as a scientific method.
3. **"Risk Assessment and Decision Analysis with Bayesian Networks" by Norman Fenton and Martin Neil (2012)**
- **Description:** This book introduces probability calculations and tools such as Bayesian networks used in risk assessment and decision analysis. It explains how it is applied, especially in fields such as engineering and health.
 - **Importance:** It is a recent and detailed resource for understanding the scientific and practical applications of probability calculations.
4. **"The Foundations of Modern Probability" by Olav Kallenberg (2002)**
- **Description:** This book explains the foundations of modern probability theory and the mathematical infrastructure of this theory. Kallenberg examines how probability theory plays a critical role in scientific methodology.
 - **Importance:** It is an important resource for understanding how probability theory is related to scientific methods.
5. **"The Signal and the Noise: Why So Many Predictions Fail—But Some Don't" by Nate Silver (2012)**
- **Description:** This book examines how probability and statistics are used and how they can help make the right decisions. It explains how probability calculations are used, especially in fields such as economics, politics, sports, and finance.
 - **Importance:** It is a contemporary resource for understanding real-world applications of probability calculations.
6. **"Rational Choice in an Uncertain World" by Reid Hastie and Robyn M. Dawes (2010)**
- **Description:** This book examines how to make rational choices in situations of uncertainty and how probability calculations can help in this process. The applicability in the fields of psychology and economics is emphasized.
 - **Importance:** It is useful for understanding the role of probability calculations and decision theory in individual and social decision-making processes.

By examining these sources, it is understood how probability calculations are used as a scientific method and the importance of these calculations in decision-making processes, and they provide solid evidence in this regard. These sources emphasize the importance of probability theory and decision theory both theoretically and practically.

² The word **pragmatic** generally means utilitarian or beneficial. It expresses the approach of determining the value of something by looking at the benefit that will arise with it. In other words, it defines an attitude oriented towards action and application rather than theoretical thought, focusing on practical results.

Pragmatism: It is the philosophical movement that adopts the pragmatic way of thinking. According to this philosophy, the truth or value of an idea depends on its practical results and benefits.

Example: "The company adopted a more **pragmatic** approach in its new marketing strategy and as a result achieved a large increase in sales."

In this example, the word "pragmatic" means that the company adopted an approach aimed at providing benefits by focusing on practical results rather than theoretical thoughts.