

SCIENCE, REASON AND CONSCIENCE: A PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNEY FROM THE CHAIR TO THE CREATOR – 8

The room was enveloped in silence. Everyone was curious about what would happen next after the Agnostic's words. The Believer took a deep breath and gathered his thoughts. He was prepared to respond to this challenge with scientific and logical arguments, explanations that appealed to reason and conscience, and statements based on evidence.

In this section, we will explore how the Believer addresses the Agnostic's doubts and where this profound discussion will lead. We will delve deeper into the complex relationship between doubt and faith. We will see the path the Believer chooses in response to the challenges posed by agnostic thought. In this philosophical debate, supported by scientific data, we will continue **our quest for truth.**

Are you ready to embark on an inner journey at the intersection of faith, science, and philosophy? Now, let's listen to the continuation of this intriguing and profound conversation and search for the answers to these important questions within our own inner world.

The Agnostic's thoughtful words had once again changed the atmosphere in the room. The Believer nodded, indicating that he understood the Agnostic's doubts and questions. After a brief moment of contemplation, he took a deep breath and began to speak:

Believer: You have presented several arguments, and I understand your perspective. I will try to address each of your arguments one by one:

1. **"Pascal's Wager" Argument and Uncertainty:** You said, *"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."*

As I stated in my previous response, I did not mention any religion or a specific creator. You brought up Pascal's Wager and compared the event we attribute to Hazrat Ali (ra) to these logical assumptions. I did not open the topic of religion here. I spoke of the necessity of the existence of a creator. **If you wish, you can determine which religion to believe in through your research and preferences later.**

2. **Probability Calculations and Persuasiveness:** You say, *"Probability calculations present philosophical and logical arguments, but the persuasiveness of these arguments varies from person to person."*

Once the probabilities are known, the choice is up to the individual. Some choose the risky path, others the risk-free path. With a scientific and logical approach, this is the mathematical answer and the solution presented in such a situation.¹ The person is free to be persuaded or not, and this is a choice made by the person's will.

3. **Faith and Emotional Bonds:** *"Faith often relies on deep personal experiences and emotional bonds,"* you said. People who believe in a creator are often judged with preconceived notions, such as "they are biased," *"they speak based on their emotional attachment to their faith,"* or *"they are unscientific."* However, have I made any illogical or irrational

statements so far that would suggest I am speaking from an emotional bond? Moreover, I **have supported each of my arguments with scientific and academic sources and referenced them in footnotes. Yet, you still suggest that I am speaking from an emotional bond. I leave it to the audience to judge what this implies.**

4. **Criticism and Assumptions:** *"Instead of criticizing agnosticism, it is important to acknowledge that both sides operate based on certain assumptions,"* you claim. In other words, you are accusing us of also operating on assumptions.

We have no doubt in our belief. You spoke with doubt, and we responded to your doubts accordingly. Agnosticism means *"skepticism."* You might say, *"The literal meaning may be so, but we call it 'unknowability.'"* However, *"unknowability"* also contains doubt. You defined agnosticism as *"the data of science, the point reached by science, and the natural process are not yet fully concluded. Science needs to continue its research, and we should wait for it to reach a conclusion."*² Doesn't this definition express *"dilemma," "being stuck in between," "skepticism"?*³

5. **Criticism and Assumptions:** You accuse that *"Instead of criticizing agnosticism, it is necessary to accept that both sides act based on certain assumptions."*

Your conclusion that the hypothetical solution we presented to you is our belief is wrong. Since the arguments you present remain in a dilemma, we also offered you hypothetical solutions.

You defined agnosticism as *"science will eventually either reach a creator or reach another conclusion."* Yes, that is the definition of agnosticism. If a solution is sought, this definition requires progress with hypothetical solutions. Scientists work in this way as well. For this reason, we acted based on assumptions and offered solutions to prevent you from remaining in a dilemma. I had previously provided you with scientific sources on this matter as footnotes, stating that this is the scientific solution in such a situation.

Our production of hypothetical solutions does not mean that we are in the same dilemma. We speak clearly: *"There is activity in the universe, and every activity requires a doer."* This is our clear statement. Similarly, the atheist speaks clearly: *"Yes, there is activity in the universe, but the substances in the universe do these things within the framework of the abilities inherent in their essence and the laws existing in the universe. There is no need for a creator."*

You find yourself between us and the atheist, not committing to either side, with statements like, *"Let's see what the process reveals; let's leave it to time."* These statements of yours are based on an assumption, and we have proposed a solution accordingly. We do not believe in a creator hypothetically; rather, we assert that *"science, reason, logic, and conscience demand it."*

Perhaps at this point, it would be more appropriate to explain our belief with a concrete example:

Under the scorching sun of Edirne, the dome of the Selimiye Mosque gleams like a pearl. As your gaze is captivated by the mosque, you start contemplating its architectural features, the height of the dome, and the elegance of the minarets. Doesn't your mind, out of curiosity, ask:

"Who built this magnificent masterpiece?"

That is the essential question. And the answer: Mimar Sinan. This mosque is not just made of stone and mortar; it bears the signature of a genius, a master. This is not merely an assumption but a reality. When you consider the genius of Mimar Sinan, his artistry, and the innovations he brought to architecture, you understand better that the Selimiye is not just a structure but a work of art. Thus, the existence of Sinan becomes evident in your mind, heart, and conscience.⁴

Seeing the Selimiye as merely a pile of stones is like seeing a painting as just color stains. Both are the product of "*a doer*," that is, "*someone who makes*." The fact that we do not "*see*" Mimar Sinan does not mean he does not exist. **The existence of the Selimiye is clear evidence of his existence. This is a scientific fact and cannot be denied in any way.**⁵

As you examine the mosque more deeply, the artistic wonders, subtleties, and scientific genius in its architecture make the existence of Mimar Sinan even more apparent. This is like "*seeing*" his existence, and it is called "*tahkiki iman*" (true faith).

In other words, our belief in the existence of the one who created the beings in the universe is not hypothetical but **an undeniable reality**. Scientific studies on beings and the wonders within them increase the admiration for their creator in a person with reason and conscience (just as our admiration for Sinan increases as we see the wonders in the Selimiye) and makes His existence even more evident. As this process deepens, the person begins to believe in His existence as if "*seeing with their own eyes*." This state is called "*Aynel Yakin*," meaning "**certain knowledge as if seeing**."

As these studies deepen further, the person feels His presence so intensely that they feel they are with Him at all times, that He manifests Himself everywhere with them. This is like the "**objectification**" of His existence on the person, as if they believe in His existence with a feeling of "**touching Him**."

We can liken this situation to a person seeing a ship by the sea. The person on the shore does not see the ship at first but sees its smoke or hears its sound. Thus, they become aware of the ship's existence. This is called "*ilmel yakin*," meaning "**knowing through knowledge**." As the person moves towards the sound, that is, as they try to get to know the ship, they eventually start seeing the ship. This is called "*aynel yakin*," meaning "**knowing by seeing**." When they get even closer, they are in direct contact with the ship. This is called "*hakkal yakin*," meaning "**knowing through direct experience**." **The existence of the ship is now an indisputable reality for the person**, just as we do not doubt the existence of an object when we hold it.⁶

"*Yakin*" is defined as "*the proof of the mind, the tranquility of the soul*." Let me explain:

Yakin is a state of belief that is free from doubts, certain, and unshakeable. It not only knows the existence and oneness of God theoretically but also feels and lives it deeply.

- **Proof of the mind:** The mind of a person who reaches the level of yakin attains complete proof and certainty about the existence and oneness of God. **There is no room for doubt;** the mind finds peace.

- **Tranquility of the soul:** Yakin is not just a mental state but also a **state of spiritual calmness and peace**. The person moves away from worldly desires and wants, their heart fills with the love of God, and they find true peace.

Our belief is not hypothetical, as you suggested, but rather a "certain" faith. Bediüzzaman Said Nursi's report of Hazrat Ali's (ra) statement in the *Risale-i Nur Collection*—"Even if the veil of the unseen were lifted, my certainty would not increase"⁷—emphasizes the depth of this certain faith.

With this statement, Hazrat Ali (ra) expresses that his belief in Allah, the afterlife, angels, and other unseen truths is so strong and unshakeable that even if the veil of the unseen were lifted and these truths became visible, his certainty would not increase. This shows that our faith is not based on any assumption but is deeply internalized and grounded in an unshakeable truth.

This faith, as seen in Hazrat Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), is the same as that found in our illiterate grandmothers, whom we refer to as "**ummi**."⁸ Their faith, too, is without a doubt, not hypothetical. Our belief is at the level of "**yakin**" (certainty), which is achieved through reason, conscience, and deep experience.

The believer's words intensified the atmosphere in the room. Everyone paused for a moment in the face of his deep and passionate expressions. These words were causing them to question their doubts and beliefs once again. The agnostic, while pondering the definite and clear arguments presented by the believer, had a series of new questions and issues that needed to be addressed in his mind. He was staring at the ground, trying to gather his thoughts. He took a deep breath in the silence, turned his gaze back to the believer, and spoke:

Agnostic: My friend, you are absolutely convinced that there is a creator behind events and natural processes. **Sometimes we cannot provide explanatory information about natural processes. Current science falls short in this regard.** However, I don't think it's right to see this inadequacy and immediately decide, "*So, a creator is doing it.*"

When we don't have information about natural processes or when we don't know for sure, it's a more honest approach to say "WE DON'T KNOW" instead of attributing it to a creator. Science continues to research and understand the unknowns. Therefore, it is more logical to wait for the research to continue instead of making a direct connection between "*the unknown*" and "*the creator*."

Moreover, we see that everything in the universe takes shape within a framework of certain rules and laws, and science explains this activity and existence by revealing these laws that exist in the universe. From this, it emerges that "the existences and activities that science cannot explain today will eventually be found as science continues its studies." In the future, many laws that exist in the universe and that we do not know now will be discovered, and their explanations will be made.⁹ Logic and reason also require this.

When trying to understand the mechanisms underlying natural processes and the workings of the universe, **it is important to avoid hasty conclusions.** It may take time for science to

progress and make new discoveries, but being honest and open-minded during this process will help us reach a deeper and more accurate understanding.

The agnostic's unexpected challenge had completely changed the course of the discussion in the room. What would the believer respond to this new challenge? On this fine line between doubt and belief, which side would come forward with stronger arguments? Would the answers given by the person who believes in the Creator be enough to convince the agnostic? Or would this discussion go even deeper and lead to the emergence of new questions? In the ninth chapter, the answers to these questions and much more await 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 These statements have been extensively studied, particularly in the fields of decision theory and game theory. Here are some fundamental concepts and theories that form their scientific and academic basis:

1. **Decision Theory:** Expected Utility Theory: Bernoulli, Daniel. "Exposition of a New Theory on the Measurement of Risk." *Econometrica*, 1954.
2. **Game Theory:** Nash, John F. "Equilibrium Points in N-person Games." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 1950.
3. **Prospect Theory:** Kahneman, Daniel, and Amos Tversky. "Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk." *Econometrica*, 1979.
4. **Decision Trees and Probability Theory:** Breiman, Leo, et al. "Classification and Regression Trees." Wadsworth & Brooks/Cole Advanced Books & Software, 1984.
5. **Risk Perception and Decision Making:** Slovic, Paul. "The Perception of Risk." Earthscan Publications, 2000.
6. **Neuroeconomics:** Glimcher, Paul W. "Decisions, Uncertainty, and the Brain: The Science of Neuroeconomics." MIT Press, 2003.
7. **Behavioral Economics:** Thaler, Richard H., and Cass R. Sunstein. "Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness." Yale University Press, 2008.

These theories and concepts help us understand how individuals make choices between risky and risk-free paths and form the basis of the statement "with a scientific and logical approach, the mathematical answer and the solution presented in such a situation is this."

² The term "**agnosticism**" can be defined in various ways, and the sources that underpin these definitions can differ. The text presents three different definitions of agnosticism:

1. **Agnosticism as "Skepticism":** This definition is closest to the fundamental meaning of agnosticism. Agnostics generally argue that it is impossible to have certain knowledge about the existence of supernatural beings or creators. Therefore, they adopt a skeptical attitude towards such matters. Sources supporting this definition include:
 - *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy - Atheism and Agnosticism:* This article defines agnosticism as "the view that a definitive judgment on the existence or non-existence of creators is impossible due to the impossibility of knowledge or the insufficiency of available information."
 - *Bertrand Russell - "Am I an Atheist or an Agnostic?" (1947):* In this essay, Russell describes himself as an agnostic and explains agnosticism as "someone who believes that they do not possess certain knowledge about the existence or non-existence of creators."

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2. **Agnosticism as "Inconclusiveness"**: This definition is a more philosophical interpretation of agnosticism and suggests that the existence or non-existence of creators is, in principle, unknowable. Sources supporting this definition include:
 - *Immanuel Kant - "Critique of Pure Reason"* (1781): In this work, Kant discusses the limitations of human reason and the impossibility of obtaining certain knowledge on metaphysical matters. Agnostics, drawing from this view, argue that definitive knowledge about the existence of creators is not possible.
 3. **Agnosticism Defined as "We Should Wait for Science to Continue its Investigations and Reach a Conclusion"**: This definition approaches agnosticism from a more scientific perspective, emphasizing that there is insufficient scientific evidence to reach a definitive conclusion about the existence of creators. Sources supporting this definition include:
 - *Carl Sagan - "The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark"* (1995): In this book, Sagan emphasizes the importance of the scientific method and argues that supernatural claims should be supported by scientific evidence. Agnostics who agree with this view maintain a skeptical stance until there is definitive proof regarding the existence of creators.

³ Some scientific and academic sources that support the association of agnosticism with the terms "dilemma," "being caught in between," and "skepticism" include:

1. **"Agnosticism" (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)**: This article defines agnosticism as "the view that a definitive judgment on the existence or non-existence of creators is impossible due to the impossibility of knowledge or the insufficiency of available information." This definition indicates that agnosticism inherently involves a dilemma and skepticism.
2. **"The Varieties of Religious Experience" (William James, 1902)**: In this book, James considers agnosticism as part of the spectrum of religious belief and notes that agnostics occupy an intermediate position between theists and atheists. This supports the association of agnosticism with the notion of "being caught in between."
3. **"Why I Am Not a Christian" (Bertrand Russell, 1927)**: In this essay, Russell defines agnosticism as a position where a definitive belief or denial of the existence of creators is not possible due to insufficient evidence. This supports the association of agnosticism with skepticism.
4. **"The God Delusion" (Richard Dawkins, 2006)**: In this book, Dawkins critiques agnosticism, noting that agnostics are indecisive and skeptical because they lack certain knowledge about the existence of creators. This also supports the association of agnosticism with the concepts mentioned in your text.

These sources demonstrate that the association of agnosticism with the terms "dilemma," "being caught in between," and "skepticism" has a scientific and academic foundation. However, it is important to remember that there are different interpretations and approaches to agnosticism. While some agnostics may embrace these expressions, others may define themselves in different ways.

⁴ The example presents an argument based on attributing an architectural work to its creator. This argument can be supported by various scientific and academic disciplines such as art history, architectural theory, epistemology, aesthetics, and inference to the best explanation. Works like Mimar Sinan's Selimiye Mosque clearly demonstrate his genius and mastery through concrete evidence, and the existence of these works establishes the existence of Mimar Sinan as a scientific fact.

⁵ The example we provided presents an argument based on attributing an architectural work to its creator. The scientific and academic foundations of this argument can be explored through various disciplines and theories:

1. **Relationship Between Creator and Work**: Attributing a work to a creator is considered a philosophical and logical argument. This argument suggests that a certain order, complexity, and aesthetic point to the existence of a creator. *Source*: Behe, Michael J. *"Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution."* Free Press, 1996. Behe's work argues that complex biological systems require the existence of a designer.
2. **Epistemology (Philosophy of Knowledge)**: Epistemology deals with the nature and source of knowledge. The existence of a work and its attribution to a creator can be considered an epistemological argument. *Source*: Plantinga, Alvin. *"Warranted Christian Belief."* Oxford University Press, 2000. Plantinga discusses the rational foundations and epistemological basis of belief.
3. **Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art**: Aesthetics examines the nature of art and beauty. The view that the aesthetic value of a work reflects the genius and mastery of its creator is part of the philosophy of aesthetics. *Source*: Danto, Arthur C. *"The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art."* Harvard University Press, 1981. Danto explores the aesthetic and philosophical values of art.
4. **Inference to the Best Explanation**: Attributing a work to a creator is known as inference to the best explanation. These types of arguments analyze how the available data can be best explained. *Source*:

Lipton, Peter. *"Inference to the Best Explanation."* Routledge, 2004. Lipton examines how this method is used in scientific and philosophical arguments.

⁶ This analogy is a common example used to explain the different levels of the concept of "yakin" in Islamic epistemology:

1. Ilm al-Yaqin (Knowledge Through Information):

- This level refers to being aware of the existence of something through indirect evidence. For example, a scientist might know about the existence of a planet through telescopic observations or mathematical calculations.
- This concept is similar to the process of acquiring knowledge through the scientific method. Scientists form hypotheses, conduct experiments, and analyze results to gain knowledge through indirect evidence.

2. Ayn al-Yaqin (Knowledge Through Seeing):

- This level refers to knowing something through direct observation. For example, when a person sees a tree, they do not doubt its existence.
- In scientific terms, this level corresponds to direct evidence obtained through experiments and observations.

3. Haqq al-Yaqin (Knowledge Through Direct Experience):

- This level refers to knowing something by experiencing it and interacting with it. For example, a person knows what a fruit is like by tasting it.
- Scientifically, this level is akin to knowledge obtained through experimental work and applied research.

⁷ Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, from the *Risale-i Nur Collection, Mektubat (Letters) 220: The Nineteenth Letter / The Sixteenth Degree of Âyet-ül Kübra* Treatise Discussing the Prophethood of Ahmad (PBUH) Sharif al-Radi, Muhammad ibn al-Husayn. (1989). *Nahjul Balagha = Peak of Eloquence: Sermons, letters, and sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib*. Imam Foundation.

⁸ **Ummi:** Refers to a person who is illiterate and has not received formal education. However, this person believes in the existence of God. According to Islam, if a person does not believe in the Creator, they are considered "**ignorant**," even if they are literate and highly educated.

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