

SCIENCE, REASON AND CONSCIENCE: A PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNEY FROM THE CHAIR TO THE CREATOR – 9

The Atheist eagerly joined the conversation after the Agnostic's remarks, expressing full agreement with the Agnostic's perspective and elaborating on the topic from an atheist point of view:

Atheist: Absolutely! As our Agnostic friend mentioned, **rather than attributing the unknown to a creator, it is far more logical to continue exploring through scientific methods.** When we examine the workings of the universe, we can already see that everything can be explained by natural laws and processes. The formation of the universe, the evolution of life, the birth and death of stars—these are all explained by scientific research, and they will continue to be explained. There is no need for the assumption of a creator.

There might be points that science has not yet explained, but that doesn't mean these points can never be explained. Scientific knowledge is constantly evolving and progressing. What we cannot explain today, we may be able to explain tomorrow. The key is to be patient and trust in the path of science. **In fact, the assumption of a creator could actually have a stifling effect on scientific progress.** If we attribute everything we cannot explain immediately to a creator, we may feel no need to research further on that topic, which would halt scientific advancement.

When trying to understand the workings of natural processes, we need to use scientific methods and remain patient. We know that everything happens within a framework of specific rules and laws, and science is working to uncover these laws. For example, there was once a belief that lightning was sent by the gods, but now we know it's an electrical phenomenon. This demonstrates the power of science in explaining the unknown.

Moreover, **there are many examples showing that what we cannot explain now may be scientifically understood in the future.** Each detail in the functioning of nature continues to come to light through scientific research. From an atheist perspective, we see that this universe operates within its own laws and requires no external intervention. Everything in nature happens within the framework of the universe's own nature and physical laws.

Logic and reason also guide us to this conclusion. **Science provides knowledge that is supported by observations and experiments, which is repeatable and verifiable.** Religious and belief systems, on the other hand, often do not rely on this objective and testable information. Therefore, it is more rational to trust the results of scientific research and evaluate natural phenomena from this perspective.

Our atheist view advocates for the necessity of using **scientific methodology** in explaining natural phenomena. **With scientific advances, we know that many things we do not understand today will be clarified in the future.** Instead of making hasty decisions, it is best to be patient and await the discoveries of science.

In conclusion, as our Agnostic friend has pointed out, we must continue to understand the workings of nature and the universe with scientific thought and an open-minded approach. This is the most reliable and logical path to discovering the truth. We should focus on tangible evidence and scientific explanations rather than metaphysical assumptions like a creator.

The Atheist's enthusiastic and confident words filled the atmosphere of the room for a moment. As the Atheist's words echoed, a silence prevailed in the room. In everyone's gaze, there was a deep sense of thought, curiosity, and questioning. The Atheist's strong and logical explanations, his faith in the scientific method, and his confidence in future discoveries had permeated the air.

However, this silence was not one of calm but rather the harbinger of an approaching storm. The Believer seemed to be waiting for the ripples caused by the Atheist's words to settle. His eyes wandered through the room, as if lost in deep contemplation of a distant point.

After a while, he lifted his head with a slight smile on his face. This smile was neither mocking nor dismissive; it was more akin to the compassionate smile of a teacher gently correcting a student's misunderstanding. He took a deep breath, as if to release all the accumulated thoughts within him through that single breath...

Believer: "I see," he began, his voice calm and measured, "that our discussion is turning into a clash of **prejudices rather than an exchange of ideas**. This won't help us find the truth or understand each other."

He paused for a moment, as if waiting for his interlocutor to absorb these words. Then, with a hint of sadness in his voice, he continued:

Believer: "I'm not here to impose my beliefs on you as a person of faith. I just want to draw attention to some points that people who think like you often overlook. I do not deny the importance of science, but the claim that science can explain everything does not seem realistic to me."

He took another deep breath, this time with a spark in his eyes.

Believer: "However," he continued, his voice growing firmer, "I see some fundamental errors in what you say. You often operate with preconceived notions. You say, 'Let's be scientific,' but you don't approach the matter scientifically. Look, **while I haven't brought up religions, you've turned to religious topics and cited examples from religions filled with superstitions**. You criticize the '*metaphysical perspective*,' but by using incorrect religious examples, you distance yourself from scientific objectivity.

You bring up misunderstood religious issues, like the early marriage of Hazrat Aisha (ra), trying to supposedly disprove my views. **Isn't your main concern the 'existence or non-existence of a creator'?** So why are you bringing up religious matters? **First, acknowledge the existence of a creator, and then question and try to understand religions.** Which religion you choose to follow, or whether you choose to follow any at all, is your decision. But **our current topic is the existence of a creator**. Why do you shift to religious issues, like a wrestler avoiding defeat by stepping out of the ring?"

The Believer paused for a moment, as if gauging the Atheist's reaction. Everyone was astonished, eagerly anticipating what would come next.

Believer: Some people may have worshipped lightning, but what I'm suggesting is that we examine each event and ask whether the materials involved have the ability to perform the tasks at hand.

His voice was now more resolute and emphatic. This long conversation with the Atheist and Agnostic was just beginning.

Believer: You tell me that *“these materials possess the properties to do so.”* And I ask in return, *“They might have the properties, but can they actually utilize them?”* I also said, *“In fact, these materials aren't even aware of their properties.”* Yet, we see conscious, purposeful actions being carried out, with a perfect order in place. I ask you to explain this to me. But you respond, *“For now, science is unable to explain these things, but it will in the future.”* Then, you go on to say negative things about certain religions.

The Believer took a deep breath and continued:

Believer: Stop giving examples from religions filled with superstitions and think about how you're stressing people out with the notion that “science can't explain these things for now, but it will in the future.” People are falling into depression. **Since Aristotle, you've been telling people to “wait, it will be resolved,”** but people live and die during that time. Don't these people have any value to you? Are they just objects, mere matter, that you can say 'let's wait and see'? How long should we wait? People's lives are passing by, and they are dying. They ask, **“Where did I come from, what should I do, and where am I going?”** This is the core issue of philosophy, and it is the real, **silent cry of humanity.**¹

As people age, they become more aware of these questions, and their depression and anxiety increase.² Life becomes meaningless, people become like machines, losing their souls. Suppose that science eventually arrives at the conclusion of a creator and accepts it (which, as I understand it, you neither expect nor hope for, and in fact, you don't want it to happen). In that case, have the people who believed in you **since Aristotle lived and died in vain?** The human soul asks these questions. Even if you don't believe in the soul, do you also not believe in emotions? And if you don't believe in emotions, does the mind not ask these questions? **The mind does ask them, as people have been doing since Aristotle, and some have always said, “Wait.”**³

I might be able to wait, but time does not. The heart, soul, emotions, and mind do not listen to commands. Up to a certain age, while people are busy with the struggles of life, they don't hear this **silent cry** within them. If they do hear it, they suppress it or temporarily soothe themselves with the words of people like you. But **after a certain point, when the struggles end, and they are left alone, they can no longer silence this cry.**⁴ In some Western countries,

people commit suicide or choose euthanasia after reaching a certain age. To silence this inner voice, they either choose death or try to suppress it with alcohol or even more extreme drugs. The meaninglessness of life makes them savage; they become terrorists or shoot people for pleasure. Are these stories we have never heard?⁵

You give examples of people who worshipped lightning. Yes, it's true; such things are said to have happened. This shows that humanity is in search and is looking for answers to its questions. With the knowledge and guidance they had at the time, they did what they could. While humanity is in search, you say, "**Wait**," and what's more, you are waiting as well. But no progress is visible from your side; **there has been nothing for centuries that gives meaning to our lives, satisfies our souls, hearts, emotions, or minds, and still, there is nothing.** Even if those who worshipped lightning were wrong, at least they gave meaning to their lives and were happy. All this effort, this constant running around by people, is it not all for "a better" and "happier life"? But you keep driving them into "uncertainty."⁶

If you trust this knowledge of yours and have committed yourself to this path, then you must work day and night for humanity and find a solution to this problem. *You cannot sleep, you cannot entertain yourself, you cannot waste time.* Because humanity is waiting for news from you. For tens of thousands, or according to some views, hundreds of thousands of years, humanity has been waiting for you, but there is "nothing"; **always the same answer: "Wait."** If you have no other answer, then be silent, keep your knowledge to yourself. You cannot satisfy humanity; **you are dragging them deeper into a vortex.** On the other hand, keep working so that at least you have an occupation that satisfies you. Although, in the end, even you give up internally. Some of you don't show it, but some eventually admit it.⁷

The Believer paused and waited. He was breathing heavily, his chest rising and falling. Shaking his head as if to clear his thoughts, he took a deep breath and prepared to continue:

Believer: I apologize if I was a bit harsh. As a person of faith, I don't find such a tone fitting for myself.⁸ But twisting my words and intentions has worn me out. I ask you to set aside your preconceived notions. Don't stress yourself with the idea that I'm trying to "convince you of something." Understand that we are both trying to "**discover the truth.**"

I present my arguments with scientific evidence and references. I approach this with logic, while you evaluate it from a different perspective; I use reason in my explanations, but you focus on other aspects. I continue with arguments based on science. **Despite providing scientific references and academic arguments, you respond with, "We can't say anything for now, let's wait."** Even the strong language I used earlier isn't merely an emotional outburst; each statement is backed by scientific sources and academic studies. I've included these scientific references and academic works as footnotes below; you can review them.

Then, you make insinuations about things I haven't even done. Although *I haven't invited you to any religion*, you bring up examples from superstitious religions. Despite not mentioning a creator from any specific religion, you persist with your preconceived notions. This tires me and leads me to speak in this manner.

Believing or not believing in a religion is a matter of your free will; it's your decision. What we are trying to address here is not a praise of any religion but the question of "*whether a creator*

exists or not." I don't understand why you bring up religion when the matter of a creator hasn't even been resolved.

Even though you don't believe in the existence of emotions, the soul, and the heart, dismissing them as metaphysical, my emotions are exhausted, my soul is weary, and my heart is heavy. I don't know how you interpret the mind, but I want to appeal to you through reason once again.

I said to you: *"The materials that make up a chair may have certain properties, but they don't have the ability to use these properties, and they aren't even aware of them."* I asked, *"How then, are these conscious, intentional, knowledge-driven actions occurring?"* You mentioned *"instincts,"* to which I responded: *"It's as if a door handle has performed a deliberate and purposeful task requiring knowledge and power. This is something that the door handle doesn't possess—how did it happen?"* Similarly, I asked, *"Can a pen, despite having the property to draw and the notebook having the property to be drawn on, create lines on its own? And how did **these meaningless, random lines** come to be?"* You gave answers that wouldn't even satisfy a grade-school child and told me, *"Don't give simple, man-made examples; **that's not scientific.**"*

I then proved to you that these are scientific methods, backed by scientific sources and academic studies. I even provided examples from reputable universities like Oxford. I chose Western and English sources deliberately because some of you have preconceived notions about this. But when I gave examples from Hazrat Ali (ra) and Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, you dismissed them with the assumption that using metaphysical sources isn't scientific.

While you accept the architect of the Selimiye Mosque, you say: *"We can't explain these formations for now, because science is not advanced enough to explain them. Let's wait, science will work on it, and a new explanation will come with new discoveries. Science will discover new laws in nature. Everything happens within the framework of natural laws through natural processes, but don't ask how for now; the answer will come in the future."* When I said, *"When you think of the Selimiye Mosque, the architect comes to mind, and that architect is Mimar Sinan,"* you responded: *"Then how did this perfect architecture of the universe come to be? How could these works, infinitely more perfect than the Selimiye, exist without an architect?"* I said, *"If you don't accept the architect of the Selimiye, it becomes a mere pile of stones, and all that art loses its meaning."* *"I explained that when we look at the Selimiye Mosque, the architect immediately comes to mind and is accepted. Even though Mimar Sinan is not present with the Selimiye, we accept his existence, and that masterpiece informs us of Mimar Sinan's attributes, in other words, his qualities—how he is as a person. Although we can't know his essence—his person—we can understand his attributes through his art. This is known as recognizing the creator through the creation."* You then labeled my belief as hypothetical, saying that I am actually *"skeptical, or in a way, agnostic"* myself.

I said to you: *"When you see an electrical wire installed in the wall, you know that there was a craftsman, and this wire tells us about the kind of craftsman who made it, even though we don't see the craftsman next to the wire."* And yet, you say again: *"Let's wait."*

For heaven's sake, what else are we waiting for? You initially dismissed my examples as simplistic, but when I proved that they were scientific methods, you said: *"Let's wait; new natural laws will be discovered, and we'll understand how these laws govern these natural processes."* Whatever I say, I know that in the end, you will say, *"We don't know; there is uncertainty. The things we can't explain now might be scientifically understood in the future."*

Let's wait; science will find the answer eventually." But I will persist in presenting new examples, trying to understand you and **revealing the true nature of what you are saying**. If you stubbornly refuse to understand, I will provide examples for the sake of those listening to us.

Let me give you one more example that might shed light on your approach. With this example, I hope you'll gain insight into natural laws, natural processes, and the conclusions you are waiting to reach. This will help us better understand the meaning of your words, **"In the end, science will arrive at a natural law and explain how these natural processes work, and thus we'll understand whether a creator exists or not. Let's wait."**

As the Believer finished his speech, the atmosphere in the room grew tense and heavy. Everyone seemed to be trying to predict what the next sentence would be. The audience began eagerly anticipating what would happen next. They sensed that a new debate, perhaps with deeper and more striking explanations, was on the horizon. Everyone's eyes sparkled as if they had found the key to unlocking the door to the next chapter.

The Believer took a deep breath and, closing his eyes, gathered himself to present his next example. With a clear and firm voice, filled with determination in his eyes and seriousness on his face, he began:

Believer: "Now, I will speak about something we are all very familiar with..."

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 There are new scientific sources and academic studies available on existential questioning and the search for meaning. Here are some examples:

1. **Existential Questions and Philosophy**
 - Book: *"The Philosophy of Existentialism"* by William Barrett (2016)
 - Article: *"Existentialism in the 21st Century"* by Sarah Bakewell (2016)
2. **Psychology and Existential Inquiries**
 - Book: *"Existential Psychology East-West"* by Louis Hoffman (2018)
 - Article: *"Meaning in Life: A Review of Theory and Research"* by Michael F. Steger (2021)
3. **Sociology and the Search for Meaning**
 - Book: *"The Lonely Crowd"* by David Riesman (2019)
 - Article: *"The Sociology of Meaning in Life"* by John Scott (2020)
4. **Philosophical Psychology and the Silent Scream**
 - Book: *"The Denial of Death"* by Ernest Becker (2018)
 - Article: *"The Existential Vacuum: A Phenomenological Study"* by Emmy van Deurzen (2022)

These sources reflect current approaches and research on existential questioning and the search for meaning. Studies in this field are continuously evolving, offering new perspectives.

² There are new scientific sources and research indicating that existential questioning and its psychological effects increase with age. Here are some examples:

1. **Aging and Existential Inquiries**
 - Book: *"The Existential Concerns of Older Adults"* by Monika Ardelt (2020)

aging, such as fear of death, loneliness, and the loss of life's meaning, and suggests coping strategies.

2. Midlife Crisis and the Search for Meaning:

- Book: *"Midlife: A Philosophical Guide"* by Kieran Setiya (2017)
 - **Summary:** Setiya approaches the midlife crisis from a philosophical perspective, viewing this period as an opportunity to question and reevaluate the meaning of life. He emphasizes the importance of redefining concepts such as happiness, success, and personal values.
- Article: *"Midlife Crisis: A Narrative Review"* by Susan Krauss Whitbourne (2016)
 - **Summary:** Whitbourne provides a review that examines the concept of the midlife crisis from various theoretical perspectives. She discusses the causes, symptoms, and coping strategies associated with the midlife crisis.

3. Spirituality and the Search for Meaning:

- Book: *"Man's Search for Meaning"* by Viktor E. Frankl (1946)
 - **Summary:** Drawing on his experiences in Nazi concentration camps, Frankl argues that humans have the capacity to find meaning even in the most difficult circumstances. He shows that the search for meaning is one of the fundamental motivations of humans, and that even painful experiences can be made meaningful.
- Article: *"Spirituality and Meaning in Life: A Review of the Literature"* by Crystal L. Park (2010)
 - **Summary:** Park provides a review examining the relationship between spirituality and the search for meaning. She discusses the positive effects of spirituality on psychological well-being, coping abilities, and life satisfaction.

These sources provide scientific evidence that existential questioning and the search for meaning increase with age.

⁵ Here are some facts and academic sources related to the topics discussed:

1. Suicide and Euthanasia

- **Suicide Rates and Aging:**
 - **Source:** World Health Organization (WHO), *"Suicide data"* (2019)
 - **Summary:** According to the WHO, suicide rates are higher among the elderly population in high-income countries. The rates are particularly pronounced among men aged 70 and above.
 - **Data:** According to the WHO's 2019 report, the suicide rate among individuals aged 70 and over in high-income countries is 27.4 per 100,000.
 - **Link:** <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide>
- **Euthanasia Practices:**
 - **Source:** Emanuel, E.J., Onwuteaka-Philipsen, B.D., Urwin, J.W., & Cohen, J. *"Euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide: A review of the empirical data from the United States."* JAMA, 2016.
 - **Summary:** This article reviews empirical data on euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide in countries where these practices are legal, such as the Netherlands, Belgium, and the United States.
 - **Data:** The article notes that euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide are more common among the elderly population in the Netherlands and Belgium.

2. Alcohol and Drug Use

- **Alcohol Use:**
 - **Source:** National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), *"Alcohol Facts and Statistics"* (2018)
 - **Summary:** According to the NIAAA, alcohol use in the United States is particularly common as a means of coping with stress and depression.
 - **Data:** In 2018, 26.45% of adults aged 18 and older reported heavy alcohol use in the past month.
- **Drug Use:**
 - **Source:** Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), *"Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States"* (2020)
 - **Summary:** The SAMHSA report indicates that the use of opioids and other drugs is increasing, particularly as a way to cope with depression and anxiety.
 - **Data:** In 2020, 10.1% of adults aged 18 and older reported illicit drug use.

3. Meaninglessness and Violence

- **Sense of Meaninglessness and Violence:**
 - **Source:** Baumeister, R.F., "*Violent Aggression in Defense of Self*," in *Psychological Review*, 1997.
 - **Summary:** Baumeister discusses how a sense of meaninglessness can lead to violent behaviors in some individuals. It is noted that identity crises and feelings of meaninglessness can provoke violent reactions.
 - **Data:** It is emphasized that psychological emptiness and a sense of meaninglessness often underlie violent actions.
- **Terrorism and Radicalization:**
 - **Source:** Kruglanski, A.W., Gelfand, M.J., Bélanger, J.J., Sheveland, A., Hetiarachchi, M., & Gunaratna, R., "*The Psychology of Radicalization and Deradicalization: How Significance Quest Impacts Violent Extremism*," in *Political Psychology*, 2014.
 - **Summary:** This study indicates that the search for meaning and purpose, particularly among young people, can increase the risk of being drawn to radical ideologies and engaging in terrorist activities.
 - **Data:** It was found that radicalization is related to personal and social quests for meaning.

The data from these studies suggest that in the aging process, the increase in suicide, euthanasia, alcohol and drug use, and feelings of meaninglessness can lead to violence and radicalization in some individuals.

⁶ There are new scientific sources and academic research related to the topics mentioned in this statement:

1. The Role of Religion and Spirituality in Human Life:

- **Book:** "*Religion for Atheists*" by Alain de Botton (2012)
 - **Summary:** De Botton explores the role of religion in adding meaning, purpose, and a sense of community to human life. He discusses how even those without religious beliefs can benefit from religious rituals and traditions.
- **Article:** "*The Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*" by Kenneth Pargament (2013)
 - **Summary:** Pargament examines the role of religion and spirituality in people's lives from a psychological perspective. He explores how beliefs interact with coping mechanisms and psychological well-being.

2. Happiness and the Search for Meaning:

- **Book:** "*Happier*" by Tal Ben-Shahar (2007)
 - **Summary:** Ben-Shahar argues that happiness is not just a goal but also a process, and that applying the principles of positive psychology can lead to a happier life.
- **Article:** "*Meaning in Life and Well-Being*" by Michael F. Steger (2012)
 - **Summary:** Steger presents research examining the positive effects of finding meaning in life on psychological well-being. He emphasizes the important role that the search for meaning plays in coping with depression, anxiety, and other psychological challenges.

3. Science and the Search for Meaning:

- **Book:** "*The Big Picture*" by Sean Carroll (2016)
 - **Summary:** Carroll argues that a scientific worldview can add meaning to human life. He shows that it is possible to live a meaningful life by seeking scientific answers to big questions, such as the origin of the universe, the meaning of life, and humanity's place in the cosmos.
- **Article:** "*Science and the Search for Meaning*" by Lawrence M. Krauss (2017)
 - **Summary:** Krauss discusses the potential of science to bring meaning to human life. He emphasizes how science can help us understand the universe and ourselves, thereby adding depth and meaning to our lives.

⁷ Here is some evidence related to this topic:

1. Mental Health of Atheist and Agnostic Individuals

- **Article:** "*The Non-Religious Identification Survey: Results from a National Survey*" by Tom W. Smith (2009)
 - **Summary:** This research focuses on the mental health and life satisfaction of atheist and agnostic individuals. The study found that they sometimes experience existential questioning.
- **Article:** "*Atheism, Secularity, and Well-Being: How the Findings of Social Science Counter Negative Stereotypes and Assumptions*" by Luke W. Galen and James K. Kloet (2011)

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- **Summary:** This study focuses on the psychological well-being and happiness levels of atheist and secular individuals. It notes that some individuals experience existential crises and a search for meaning.

2. **Confessions and Inner Turmoil of Atheist and Agnostic Individuals**

- **Book:** *"Confessions of a Former Atheist"* by Kenneth W. Daniels (2010)
 - **Summary:** Daniels, as a former atheist, recounts his process of questioning his atheist beliefs and experiencing inner turmoil. The book highlights that atheist individuals sometimes question their beliefs and the meaning of life, with some eventually turning to different belief systems.

⁸ **"Risale-i Nur's method is gentle, kind, and soft-spoken."**

From the Risale-i Nur Collection by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Flashes 176 : Twenty-Third Flashes