

SCIENCE, REASON AND CONSCIENCE: A PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNEY FROM THE CHAIR TO THE CREATOR – 17

The deep silence in the room enveloped minds in pursuit of truth, filling the atmosphere with an almost tangible sense of mystery and tension. The Believer's striking and thought-provoking words had sparked new questions in the minds of those listening, their expressions now marked by a keen anticipation. In their eyes was a mix of excitement and impatience, as if on the verge of unravelling a secret.

With a slight smile, the Believer let his thoughtful gaze drift over his friends, as if foreshadowing undisclosed layers and truths hidden in the depths. Aware of the questions he had stirred in their minds, he turned his eyes toward the Deist, his gaze an unspoken invitation to delve deeply into a topic they had only touched on before. Everyone in the room eagerly awaited the truths he would reveal in this new, profound conversation. Finally, after a gentle smile at the Deist, he broke the silence in a soft yet resolute tone.

Believer: “I’ll ask once again,” he began in an inviting yet probing tone, “Does the Creator truly leave the universe to itself after creation? Is this immense order, which sustains itself, ownerless? Can this realm of beings, running like a clock, genuinely continue without a guiding hand?”

The Deist smiled slightly, as though he had been waiting for this question. In that moment, everyone in the room sensed that the conversation was on the edge of a profound debate. A new journey of discovery seemed to have begun. The Deist gently opened his hands and began to explain:

Deist: Yes, exactly. According to Deism, God created the universe and established the laws that would sustain its functioning. However, after setting these laws, He left the universe to itself. The universe, much like a wound-up clock, continues operating within the boundaries of its own laws.¹

The Believer paused for a moment, his brow furrowing slightly, with a look of curiosity and mild astonishment appearing on his face.

Believer: So, does the Creator have no influence at all on this process? After all, there is order, and isn’t the continuity of this order an act of contribution from the Creator?

The Deist lightly waved his hands, speaking in a calm tone:

Deist: No, quite the opposite. We acknowledge that God has established an order. From the Deist perspective, God created this order and set the laws governing how everything functions. However, this order is maintained not by miracles or extraordinary interventions but through natural laws. In this way, God's contribution can be seen as indirect.²

The Believer slowly nodded, gazing into the distance for a brief moment, as if gathering his thoughts. Then, with a slight smile, he turned to his friends:

Believer: So, as I understand it, you're saying, "The Creator brought the universe into existence and set it in motion but does not intervene directly to sustain its operation."

The Deist nodded in a calm and steady tone:

Deist: Yes, that's exactly it. We Deists believe that God has given the universe a specific order, purpose, and meaning. But this contribution was a one-time arrangement during the universe's creation. God does not continuously intervene, as the universe is already functioning within the framework of the laws He set. In Deism, ***God is acknowledged as the initiator and the first cause that established order in the universe.*** However, He no longer interferes in its operations. In other words, we can say that God's role is limited to the act of creation.³

The Believer, eager to recapture everyone's attention, turned to his friends, preparing to share his thoughts. The interest in their eyes signalled that the discussion was about to deepen. With a steady and resonant tone, he looked carefully around, as if to draw his friends' focus, and asked:

Believer: And what about the order and harmony in the universe? Isn't this, in your view, a sign of a Creator's existence?

The Deist, listening intently, tilted his head slightly and responded thoughtfully. He slowly clasped his hands together, as if to give weight to his words:

Deist: Certainly, the order in the universe is also, for us, a sign of God's existence. However...

He paused, then continued with a calm expression:

Deist: We believe that this order is maintained not through God's constant intervention, but by the laws He established in the beginning, which operate on their own. God designed this

order from the start and set the laws in place. Through these laws, the universe maintains its own balance.

The Believer thought for a moment, his slight smile growing more distinct. He nodded approvingly and spoke in an enlightening tone:

Believer: I see. So, according to Deist thought, the Creator crafted the universe as a work of art, set it up with laws for its functioning, and then is content to simply observe. Am I understanding this correctly?

The Deist smiled briefly in response, then nodded with a calm and confident voice:

Deist: Yes, that's exactly the essence of Deism. God is the creator of the universe, giving it order and function. However, He no longer intervenes directly. The universe continues its existence independently through the laws He established.

Meanwhile, the silence in the room reflected a moment of intense focus. The Atheist and Agnostic were drawn into the depths of the discussion, watching with thoughtful expressions. The Believer seemed almost as if he had planned this, particularly wanting the Atheist to hear these ideas, emphasizing the act of creation within the universe. Using his hands to make his explanation clearer, he spoke in an enthusiastic and explanatory manner:

Believer: So, what you're saying is something like this: Imagine a very wealthy and highly skilled engineer who builds an automobile factory. He designs every detail, establishing its rules and processes. His expertise is so advanced that he sets up the factory to operate fully automatically; everything is equipped with computerized systems, making the factory capable of producing cars entirely on its own.

The Believer spread his hands slightly, an expression in his eyes highlighting the depth of the question as he continued:

Believer: In this case, after designing every detail and setting up the factory, this engineer could leave it to run automatically. After all, the system he built can operate independently, right? The factory is even designed to meet its own needs and resolve potential issues on its own. Such an extraordinary engineer wouldn't need to constantly oversee the factory. Is this what you mean?

The Deist was both surprised and impressed by this analogy. He smiled slightly and nodded in agreement, responding in a confident tone:

Deist: Yes, that's precisely how we see it. Just as a skilled engineer designs an automobile factory to operate automatically, God created the universe, established its laws, and ensured that everything functions within those laws. Just as the engineer trusts his system to operate independently without constant supervision, God does not need to constantly intervene in the universe's operation. The universe is a system that continues on its own, according to the laws He set.

After a brief pause, the Deist added in a gentler tone, as if to emphasize the sensitivity of the topic:

Deist: However, this doesn't mean that God has abandoned or is indifferent to the universe. On the contrary, the fact that the universe is such a flawless, self-sustaining system reflects God's greatness and perfection. From the Deist perspective, God possesses the wisdom and power to create an order that operates within its own rules. Therefore, constant intervention in the universe's functioning is unnecessary.

The Believer lowered his head slightly and glanced at the Atheist and Agnostic, his gaze almost as if to point to them. Raising his voice a little, as if wanting everyone to grasp the essence of this discussion, he spoke:

Believer: I've continued this conversation deliberately so that our friends here **can see the "true nature" of your beliefs, clearly and openly.** I am not unfamiliar with your ideas; I know your views and their foundations deeply. But I wanted the listeners to hear these thoughts directly from you so they could understand this topic in all its dimensions.

He paused for a moment, then took a deep breath, his eyes turning seriously toward those around him:

Believer: Now, I want to respond to each of these ideas step by step. Because **understanding the Creator's uninterrupted connection to the universe is crucial to truly appreciating the value of creation.**

The Deist and the others in the room were in a state of surprise; the Believer's ease, confidence, and self-assurance both surprised and slightly unsettled them. How could they respond to such profound questioning? Yet they knew well that the Believer always approached his discussions with a solid foundation in logic and science—he always had. They even recognized that he knew

their ideas as well as, if not better than, they did. At times, he could articulate their thoughts with more clarity and depth. Now, everyone's eyes were fixed on him with curiosity, waiting quietly for his next words.

The Believer took a deep breath, focusing on those around him, and began to speak in a serious tone:

Believer: "Before I begin responding, I'd like to highlight an important point," he said, adding a weight of seriousness to his words. "From your perspective, it seems that the universe is viewed as a **"perfect toy"** created by the Creator. According to your explanation, the Creator has meticulously established a flawless order, a self-sustaining system, and no longer needs to intervene. A toy so perfect that it functions entirely on its own, lacking nothing; it even repairs itself if it wears down and never fails. And its maker simply sits back and watches, isn't that right?"

The Believer continued, deliberately slowing his pace and speaking with a stronger emphasis:

Believer: Yes, **it appears as though you're elevating the Creator's "power," yet simultaneously portraying Him as an artist detached from His work.** Isn't this, in effect, reducing the Creator to merely a maker of a perfect toy? Doesn't this approach resemble an artist indifferent to his own creation?"

He paused for a moment, a thoughtful expression crossing his face, as though ensuring that everyone grasped the meaning behind his words:

Believer: This perspective diminishes the greatness of the Creator and **oversimplifies** creation itself. Viewing the Creator as one who merely *"makes a perfect toy"* **lowers His divine significance.**

As he observed the astonishment on the Deist's face, the Believer sought to emphasize his point further, turning his attention to the Atheist and Agnostic:

Believer: **Whether you realize it or not, the fundamental aim behind this viewpoint is to belittle the Creator and creation.** On one hand, you appear to **"praise the Creator,"** but on the other, you devalue His works. From this perspective, everything becomes simple and ordinary; even the worth of creation, and ***humanity itself, is diminished.***

A deep silence filled the room. The Believer's words resonated in the minds of his friends, leaving them in an unexpected state of reflection. Taking a deep breath, the Believer glanced

around, then turned to the Deist and spoke in a contemplative tone, his voice echoing with the weight of his questioning and understanding:

Believer: Think about it; why would the Creator, who is both capable and responsible for managing the order He established, allow it to appear as though it operates independently? If the Creator brought forth such a magnificent universe and created beings within it—like humans—capable of thinking and questioning, does it make sense for Him to leave its functioning unattended? Is this perception meant to lead atheists, agnostics, and even you Deists to believe that “*the universe operates on its own*”?

The Deist, perceiving the depth of the Believer’s question, nodded slightly and replied in a thoughtful tone:

Deist: Perhaps the Creator desires that the order He established continues within its own laws, giving humans the opportunity to develop their understanding independently. We see this freedom as a sign of the Creator’s trust in the universe.

The Believer, bowing his head thoughtfully in response to the Deist’s reflection, continued with words laden with meaning:

Believer: Then why would an artist allow his work to appear as if it exists independently of him? Doesn’t this diminish the value of the artist behind the art? Have you heard these words of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi?

With interest, the Deist watched as the Believer slowly and with a profound expression shared the quotation.

“O you who worship causes and revere nature, yet remain pitifully misguided! Since the nature of everything, like everything else, is created—indeed, it is crafted and continually renewed. And, like every effect, its apparent cause is also an artifact. And since the existence of every created thing depends on countless instruments and mechanisms, then surely there exists an Absolute Power who created that nature and fashioned that cause. And what need does this ABSOLUTE POWER have to involve helpless intermediaries in His Lordship and Creation?”⁴

As the weight of these words filled the room, the Deist took a deep breath, trying to collect himself. With a thoughtful expression, he briefly scanned his surroundings before turning back to the Believer:

Deist: With Bediuzzaman’s words, you expect us to understand that creation is directly connected to a Creator, rather than to mere causes and effects. However, we believe this connection existed **only in the beginning**, during the formation of the universe.

The Believer slowly clasped his hands together as if to delve further into his thoughts. Looking at his friends, he continued, striving to clarify a challenging point:

Believer: From your perspective, however, the Creator appears **distant** and **passive** toward His creation. Yet doesn’t an artist reveal his devotion to his work not only through his initial touch but also through a continuous connection with it? Wouldn’t a power constantly present within the established order enhance the value of that work?

A quiet, contemplative air settled over the room. The Deist tried to grasp the full depth of the Believer’s questioning, and everyone’s eyes were fixed on him, anticipating that the discussion was about to deepen further. The Believer, fixing his gaze on the Deist, seemed to be approaching a pivotal point in his argument and began:

Believer: To your ideas, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi responds with a rather intriguing example, inviting you once more to “reflect.”

He paused momentarily, adding a deep emphasis to his voice as he continued.

“Consider this: is it easier for a watchmaker to craft the gears of a clock, arranging and assembling the clock directly with those gears? Or is it easier for him to create an extraordinary machine within which those gears exist, and then leave the task of making the clock to the inanimate hands of that machine, expecting it to construct the clock on its own?”

Or consider a writer: if he brings ink, a pen, and paper and personally writes the book himself, is that easier? Or, would it be easier if he were to invent a writing machine, one more intricate and painstakingly crafted than the book itself, made solely for producing that single book, and then instructs this unconscious machine to “Go ahead, write!” while he refrains from intervening? Is this not a hundred times more difficult than simply writing the book?”⁵

Here, Bediuzzaman **deliberately**⁶ uses the well-known “**clock and clockmaker**”⁷ metaphor of Deism. Deists interpret this metaphor to mean that, once set in motion, the universe could run independently through natural laws—an incorrect conclusion. However, Bediuzzaman clarifies the same metaphor in a far more logical way, demonstrating that the Deist interpretation of this example does not lead to a sound conclusion. The notion of a clockmaker winding the clock once and then stepping back is

insufficient to sustain an ongoing order; rather, he emphasizes that for a meaningful and orderly structure to persist, continuous and intentional intervention is essential.

Through this metaphor, Bediuzzaman addresses the issue of creation by dissecting this profound philosophical question and offering an explanation that everyone can grasp, free of complex philosophical terms. His words reveal that the idea of creation being set up and left to operate on its own is as illogical as expecting an unconscious writing machine to produce a meaningful book. Thus, **he resolves a topic that many obscure with complex philosophical debates, delivering a clear and concise answer accessible to all.**

When the Believer finished speaking, the Deist paused for a moment, a look of astonishment and admiration on his face. His eyes suddenly lit up, he clapped his hands together excitedly, and, unable to contain himself, exclaimed:

Deist: What a brilliantly clear explanation! Why haven't I heard this before? It seems you're reading Bediuzzaman's works. In that case, could you expand even further on the logical explanation behind this example?

The Deist's face radiated the joy of encountering a fresh perspective. This was the first time he had heard such an explanation, and it opened up a far deeper understanding than he'd expected. He was eager to hear more about this view in greater detail.

The Believer paused and looked at the Deist with deep conviction in his eyes:

Believer: Bediuzzaman's works, the Risale-i Nur Collection, are **like a sun illuminating our path in THESE TIMES of darkness.** He unveils the truths behind events and the essence of reality in a language we can understand. He reveals the profound meanings and great truths underlying events—truths that a superficial view might overlook—and helps us develop inner awareness, allowing us to see the direction each event ultimately guides us.

As the Believer's words echoed through the room, everyone was moved by the mystery of creation and the allure of an invitation to explore its depths. Bediuzzaman's examples, especially the "clock and clockmaker" metaphor, revealed the truth with a clarity that pushed the boundaries of the mind, opening new doors not only for the Deist but for everyone. In that moment, the Deist and the others felt they were standing on the threshold of a door opening to truth, more than just a debate.

The Believer glanced around the room with a gentle smile and turned to the Deist, an expression full of meaning. It was as if he was waiting for the perfect moment to unveil another truth that would reveal the infinite wisdom behind creation. Then, looking at the thoughtful faces surrounding him, he broke the silence in a voice that resonated deeply, as soft as a prayer yet profound enough to fill the stillness:

Believer: As Bediuzzaman expressed, the path to truth is ***found in fully understanding both the work and its Maker***. The Creator's connection to His creation is not only in the initial touch but in a presence that resonates in every moment of its existence. So, let us take the next step and together explore the mystery behind this profound attention and perfect order. Are you ready?

The Believer's words resonated within the souls of those present, leaving them eagerly awaiting the profound insights to be revealed in the next part. This invitation, which stirred curiosity in their eyes, opened the door to a deeper discussion yet to be fully realized. Now everyone was filled with the anticipation of seeing how the Believer would offer logical explanations for Bediuzzaman's words and provide satisfying answers to their questions. Each person felt the excitement of drawing one step closer to the mystery of existence. The next chapter would be the next step on this inner journey.

TO BE CONTINUED (GOD WILLING)

¹ The fundamental idea of Deism has been supported by numerous philosophers and scientists throughout history and expressed in various works. Below, you can find some key sources that articulate the Deistic view of the Creator "leaving the universe to operate on its own" after its creation:

1. John Toland - *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696)

John Toland is considered one of the earliest thinkers to define Deism clearly. In this work, he argues that the Creator established the universe within rational laws and that it operates within these laws.

2. Voltaire - *Traité de Métaphysique* (1734)

Voltaire is one of the most prominent proponents of Deism. In this work, he proposes that while the Creator created the universe, He does not intervene, allowing the universe to function through its intrinsic laws.

3. Thomas Paine - *The Age of Reason* (1794)

In these famous works advocating Deism, Paine argues that after creating the universe, the Creator left it to be governed by natural laws. He presents the universe as a "wound-up clock" that operates within its own framework.

4. Paul Davies - *The Mind of God: The Scientific Basis for a Rational World* (1992)

In this book, Paul Davies explores the structured nature of the universe and the operation of scientific laws, suggesting that while the Creator initially intervened, the universe can sustain itself within these established rules.

5. Stephen Hawking - *The Grand Design* (2010)

In this book, co-authored with Leonard Mlodinow, the laws explaining the universe's existence and the possibility of these laws functioning independently are emphasized. Hawking suggests that while there might have been an initiating force, the universe can maintain itself according to these principles, paralleling Deism's "wound-up clock" metaphor.

6. Lawrence Krauss - *A Universe from Nothing: Why There Is Something Rather than Nothing* (2012)

Krauss focuses on the role of physical laws in explaining the existence and operation of the universe. He argues that these laws are potent enough to account for the universe's self-existence, supporting the notion of a universe operating by its unique rules.

7. Neil deGrasse Tyson - *Astrophysics for People in a Hurry* (2017)

Tyson emphasizes the intricate yet logical order of the natural laws governing the universe, explaining that it can function "like a wound-up clock" without constant external intervention. This approach aligns closely with the foundational tenets of Deism.

8. Michael Shermer - *Why Darwin Matters: The Case Against Intelligent Design* (2006)

Shermer argues that scientific laws governing the universe and life can operate without external intervention. Although not directly linked to Deism, he proposes that natural laws are sufficient to explain the universe's order, making continual divine intervention unnecessary.

These works provide scientific and philosophical foundations for Deism and support the Deistic view that the universe operates within its own laws.

Note: Deism gained popularity, especially during the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries, as a movement opposing the church and prevailing Christian doctrines of the time.

² Additional sources that support this Deistic view—that the Creator brought the universe into existence but left its operation to natural laws—are as follows:

1. John Polkinghorne - *Science and Creation: The Search for Understanding* (1988)

Theologian and physicist John Polkinghorne discusses the idea that the Creator, as a creative force, established natural laws without direct intervention in the universe. The concept that the Creator is the power behind the order, while the functioning continues through natural laws, aligns with Deistic principles.

2. Michael Shermer - *How We Believe: The Search for God in an Age of Science* (2000)

Shermer, approaching the Deist view of the Creator's contribution as "indirect," argues that natural laws are sufficient to explain the universe's operation. He philosophically explores the idea that the Creator established the order and then let it proceed on its own.

These works provide scientific and philosophical grounding for the Deistic notion that "the Creator's role is indirect, sustained through natural laws rather than direct intervention."

³ Additional sources supporting the Deistic concept that "the Creator does not intervene in the universe after its creation" include the following:

1. Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583 - 1648)

- **Work:** *De Veritate (On Truth)*, 1624
- **Explanation:** Known as the founder of modern Deism, Lord Herbert advocates for a natural religion. He argues that the Creator established the universe but does not intervene directly afterward, asserting that people can understand the Creator and moral laws through reason.

2. Matthew Tindal (1657 - 1733)

- **Work:** *Christianity as Old as the Creation* (1730)
- **Explanation:** Tindal posits that natural religion is older and more universal than revealed religions. He suggests that the Creator endowed the universe with perfect laws and does not intervene in their operation.

3. Anthony Collins (1676 - 1729)

- **Work:** *A Discourse of Free-Thinking* (1713)
- **Explanation:** Collins promotes free thought and the use of reason. He argues that after creating the universe, the Creator does not constantly intervene, and that natural laws explain the functioning of the universe.

4. Ethan Allen (1738 - 1789)

- **Work:** *Reason the Only Oracle of Man* (1784)
- **Explanation:** Allen emphasizes the importance of reason and natural laws. He argues that the Creator does not continuously intervene in the universe and that humanity can understand the universe through reason.

5. Victor J. Stenger (1935 - 2014)

- **Work:** *God: The Failed Hypothesis* (2007)
- **Explanation:** Stenger asserts that the universe can be explained by scientific laws without requiring divine intervention. In line with Deistic ideas, he suggests that the universe operates on its own.

These sources provide philosophical and scientific foundations for the Deistic view that the universe continues independently within its own established laws, without direct intervention from the Creator.

⁴ From the Risale-i Nur Collection by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Flashes 186

⁵ From the Risale-i Nur Collection by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Flashes 187

⁶ Bediuzzaman's use of the "clock and clockmaker" metaphor reminds me of a passage from his work *Tarihçe-i Hayat (History of Life)*, where he says: "They either do not understand or do not want to understand the *Risale-i Nur*. They think I am a madrasa teacher trapped in scholastic swamps. However, I have engaged with all positive sciences, and with the philosophy and sciences of the modern age. I have solved the deepest issues on these subjects and even authored works on them. But I do not indulge in logical tricks, nor do I lend my ear to the deceptions of philosophy."

These words of our esteemed Master Bediuzzaman reveal his depth of knowledge, his mastery of the sciences, and his connection to contemporary science. They also make one reflect on how those who belittle him fail to realize the immense treasure they overlook.

⁷ Writers who use the “clock and clockmaker” metaphor to explain Deistic thought frequently employ it to emphasize that the universe, once set in motion, continues operating within the framework of natural laws. Below is a chronological list of significant figures who have supported or used this metaphor in their works:

1. Voltaire - *Traité de Métaphysique (Treatise on Metaphysics, 1734)*

Voltaire, from a perspective close to Deism, asserts that God created the universe perfectly and left it to operate within its own laws. The idea of the universe functioning like a wound-up clock is prominent in his writings.

2. David Hume - *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (1779)*

Hume discusses the functioning of the universe through the clock and clockmaker analogy, suggesting that natural laws suffice for its operation. He emphasizes that the universe should function like a clock on its own, highlighting that nature’s laws eliminate the need for constant divine intervention.

3. Thomas Paine - *The Age of Reason (1794)*

A defender of Deistic thought, Paine argues that after creation, the universe can operate on its own through natural laws. He describes the universe as a “wound-up clock” in his work, asserting that it maintains order within the framework of these laws.

4. William Paley - *Natural Theology (1802)*

Using the “clock and clockmaker” analogy, Paley argues that the order of the universe indicates the existence of a designer. Although Paley emphasizes the design of the universe as God’s creation, he suggests that natural laws allow it to function without God’s constant intervention.

These works support the idea, central to Deistic thought, that God created the universe and left it to operate within the framework of its own laws, as illustrated by the “clock and clockmaker” metaphor. By arguing that the universe functions according to its intrinsic laws without the need for continuous intervention, these writers make scientific and philosophical contributions to the Deistic worldview.