

SCIENCE, REASON AND CONSCIENCE: A PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNEY FROM THE CHAIR TO THE CREATOR – 20

The silence weighed heavily in the room, spreading over everyone like an invisible veil. Everyone was quietly grappling with the depth and gravity of the words they had just heard. The questions echoing in their minds seemed to grow larger, bridging the gaps between unspoken thoughts. In that silence, it felt as though they had all become travelers, embarking on a journey to uncover the mysteries of the universe.

The Believer slowly let his gaze rest on the Deist's face. That face bore both the resistance of firmly held beliefs and the bewilderment of standing on the threshold of a new truth. Taking a deep breath, the Believer began to speak with a wisdom that seemed to address everyone in the room:

Believer: If our thoughts carry us beyond the limits of our perceptions, we can glimpse the truth. Just as every word in a book gains meaning through its author, so too does the universe find its meaning in the continuous intervention of its Creator. Now, let us proceed to the second stage of Bediüzzaman's analogy, which illuminates this profound truth, and continue this journey together.

With these words, the room's sense of curiosity deepened further. Everyone eagerly awaited the next insights, hoping to take one step closer to unraveling the secrets of existence.

Believer: "In the second stage, Bediüzzaman poses the following question:

STEP 2:

"Or would it be easier for him to invent a writing machine—more intricate and labor-intensive than the book itself, designed solely for producing that one book—place it within the ink, pen, and paper, and then command the mindless machine, 'WRITE!' while abstaining from any further involvement? Wouldn't such a scenario be a hundred times more challenging than simply writing the book himself?"

A Mindless Writing Machine Producing the Book

At this stage, the analogy critiques the scenario in which the creative force intervenes only at the beginning of the universe and then withdraws entirely. Bediüzzaman uses the analogy of a writing machine to illustrate the logical inconsistency of this idea.

Elements of the Analogy:

- **The Writing Machine:** Represents unconscious and mindless natural laws. According to Deist thought, these laws operate independently of the Creator.
- **Paper, Ink, and Pen:** Symbolize matter and natural elements in the universe.

- **The Book:** Represents a structured, meaningful, and complex entity, symbolizing the functioning of the universe and the orderly system within it.

This analogy emphasizes that attributing the complexity and order of the universe to mindless natural laws, without ongoing intervention, is as irrational as expecting a mechanical, unconscious writing machine to produce a meaningful book on its own."

As the Believer explained the elements of the analogy one by one, a barely audible murmur escaped the lips of the Atheist, who was lost in deep thought at the other end of the room: "*Adatullah... or Sunnatullah...*" The words seemed like a key, searching for a way to unlock a knot in his mind. His eyes stared into the void, weighing the meaning of these terms and the wisdom behind them. The slight tremor in his voice betrayed the resonance these concepts had created within him, sparking a new process of inquiry.

When this murmur echoed through the silence of the room and reached the Believer's ears, a noticeable sense of satisfaction appeared on his face. To him, this small utterance was a victory—not just of a debate, but of awakening a thought, stirring a heart, and perhaps even kindling faith. The light in his eyes grew brighter, for this moment transcended a simple dialogue; it marked the beginning of a profound intellectual journey.

Containing the excitement welling up within him, the Believer continued speaking with even greater enthusiasm. He knew that the power of his words was not measured solely by their meanings but by the echoes they awakened in the minds and hearts of others. Now, he sensed that he had built a bridge to the Atheist's thoughts, and on the other side of that bridge, a window to truth was beginning to open. To carry more light to that window, he infused his words with profound wisdom and sincere conviction, ensuring that each one resonated with purpose:

Believer: Logical Steps

1. The Absence of Consciousness

- **In the Analogy:** The writing machine represents the natural laws that govern the functioning of the universe. Bediüzzaman emphasizes that the machine is "unconscious" and "mindless," meaning it neither understands the meaning nor the purpose of the text it is writing. This illustrates that natural laws, on their own, cannot sustain a meaningful order.
- **Response to the Deist Perspective:** Deism posits that the Creator set the universe in order and then withdrew. However, Bediüzzaman finds it illogical that an unconscious and will-less mechanism (natural laws) could sustain a meaningful universe on its own. A writing machine lacks awareness of the writing process or the purpose it serves. Similarly, Bediüzzaman stresses the impossibility of unconscious, mindless natural laws producing or sustaining order autonomously. Just as a writing machine cannot independently produce a coherent and meaningful book, natural laws cannot, without consciousness, shape the universe into a harmonious and ordered system.

2. A Greater Difficulty: Assigning a Specific Purpose to an Unconscious Mechanism

Bediüzzaman points out that inventing a writing machine solely for the purpose of producing a book is far more laborious and complex than directly writing the book. This highlights the unnecessary and illogical nature of creating such a mechanism just to achieve the same result.

- **In the Analogy:** The Creator would have taken a simpler and more direct approach by writing the book rather than inventing a machine to do so. Designing every detail of the writing machine specifically to produce a single book would be a more labor-intensive and intricate process than simply writing the book directly. Furthermore, continuously monitoring and adjusting the machine would require more effort than direct involvement in the writing.
- **Response to the Deist Perspective:** Even if Deism acknowledges the delicate and dynamic order of the universe, it attributes the ongoing maintenance of this order to natural laws functioning independently. However, as Bediüzzaman's analogy illustrates, the universe's intricate and precise systems are so delicate that maintaining purposeful order through an unconscious process is impossible. The idea that mindless natural laws could sustain such meaningful and harmonious order logically demands a more complex explanation than the direct intervention of a conscious Creator.

In essence, Bediüzzaman's analogy demonstrates that attributing the universe's order to natural laws functioning autonomously is both unnecessarily complicated and fundamentally illogical.

As the Believer's words echoed through the room, they sparked different questions and inner reflections in each listener's mind. The Deist, lost in deep thought, turned his gaze to the distance, as though these words were offering him a new perspective that challenged everything he thought he knew about the universe. The Atheist, grappling with the logical consistency of the explanations, felt the unfamiliar weight of a profound inquiry stirring within him. Meanwhile, the Agnostic, caught in a swirl of curiosity and uncertainty, appeared increasingly serious, as if silently absorbed in his own contemplations.

The Believer noticed these subtle changes in his listeners' expressions. Seeing the impact his words had on them filled him with a stronger desire to delve even deeper into the topic. Fueled by this growing enthusiasm, he prepared to move on to the next point of his explanation, ready to open yet another window that would illuminate the mysteries of existence.

Believer: Let us continue with the explanations:

3. The Challenge of Sustaining Order: The Need for Control

No matter how complex and intricate a writing machine may be, it still requires a control mechanism to produce a meaningful book. Here, Bediüzzaman emphasizes that for a machine to operate according to a specific order and purpose, constant supervision is indispensable.

- **In the Analogy:** A writing machine can only create a meaningful book if every letter and sentence it produces is guided and supervised to form a coherent whole.

Since the machine is unconscious and devoid of will, it cannot establish order on its own; every stage of its operation must be overseen.

- **Response to the Deist Perspective:** Bediüzzaman highlights the necessity of continuous intervention to sustain the order of the universe. No matter how advanced or intricate an unconscious writing machine may be, it cannot produce a meaningful work without a control mechanism (constant supervision). For an unconscious machine to write a coherent and logical book from start to finish, it requires ongoing direction and regulation. Similarly, the idea that unconscious natural laws can sustain the complex order of the universe is impossible.

For order to be sustained, the conscious intervention of a Creator is essential. Natural laws, being devoid of consciousness, cannot maintain the continuity of order or harmony in the universe. The sustained order of the universe is only possible through the constant involvement of a conscious creative force.

4. Conclusion: Meaningful Order Cannot Be Sustained on Its Own

In Bediüzzaman's analogy, the idea of a creative force inventing a writing machine and leaving it to produce a book on its own is an unrealistic expectation. Because the machine is unconscious, it cannot independently achieve the meaning and order expected of the book.

- **Conclusion in the Analogy:** The Creator cannot achieve a meaningful book by simply telling the machine, "*Go ahead and write,*" without further involvement. In such a scenario, what the machine produces would either be meaningless or require constant supervision. Similarly, the order of the universe cannot be sustained by leaving it to unconscious natural laws; a harmonious and purposeful system can only exist through the ongoing intervention of a creative force.
- **Response to the Deist Perspective:** According to Bediüzzaman, if a Creator had merely initiated the universe and then withdrawn, the complex order of the cosmos could not have been continuously preserved. Just as an unconscious writing machine cannot be expected to produce a meaningful book, natural laws cannot sustain the order of the universe independently. Leaving the functioning of the universe solely to mindless natural laws does not ensure the continuity of order; instead, it necessitates the constant intervention of a creative force.

In this view, the order of the universe derives its meaning not from an initial intervention alone but through the continuous control and guidance of a Creator.

Bediüzzaman's "*writing machine*" analogy exposes the logical flaws in the Deist perspective. He argues that the universe, when left to unconscious natural laws, cannot sustain its complex and meaningful order. Just as an unconscious writing machine cannot produce a meaningful work simply by being told "*Go ahead and write,*" the universe cannot generate its intricate order simply by being told "*Go ahead and operate.*" This order requires the ongoing intervention and control of a conscious creative force.

The Deist couldn't hide his admiration as he listened to the explanations, feeling a sense of regret for not having encountered such knowledge before.¹ His amazement and wonder were reflected in his gestures; the illumination on his face and the widening of his eyes revealed the profound impact these ideas had on him. The Believer noticed this and felt a quiet sense of satisfaction.

After a while, the Deist, trying to grasp this new perspective, looked at the Believer with a thoughtful expression and said:

Deist: "I suppose Bediüzzaman is trying to explain how difficult—if not impossible—it is for a book to write itself in a meaningful way."

The Deist's comment deepened the atmosphere of reflection in the room. Everyone was once again questioning the meaning of the order in the universe through the examples and explanations the Believer had provided. The Believer's words had created small cracks in the Deist's worldview, allowing new ideas to seep into his mind. Yet, as if clinging to his own perspective, the Deist nodded slowly, took a deep breath, and expressed his opposing view.

While everyone in the room silently weighed the impact of this new perspective, the Believer turned his gaze toward the Deist with a faint smile. That look further deepened the silence, as if signaling the beginning of a new phase in their unspoken debate.

The Deist, trying to suppress his inner questioning, spoke again:

Deist: "As always, you present very logical arguments, and I can see that. However, we Deists believe this: God is an all-powerful Creator, capable of doing whatever He wishes in any way He pleases. He created this universe with perfect order and functionality. He designed it to meet all its needs, leaving it self-sufficient, and now He observes His creation from a distance. God has brought forth a masterpiece that requires no further involvement in its details."

The Believer, after a moment of thought, turned to his companions with a calm expression, as if he had made an unexpected decision:

Believer: "Alright, let it be as you say."

A profound silence fell over the room, followed by gasps of shock and amazement. The Deist's eyes widened in disbelief, staring at the Believer. The Atheist, unable to contain his surprise, leapt to his feet, while the Agnostic covered his mouth with his hand, his face a mixture of confusion and astonishment.

Atheist: "What... What's going on? Does this mean you're giving up?"

The Agnostic murmured quietly to himself:

Agnostic: "After all those logical and scientifically grounded explanations... is he really conceding?"

An air of uncertainty filled the room as everyone tried to make sense of the Believer's sudden statement. Until now, the Believer had presented strong arguments based on logic and science, seemingly holding the upper hand in the discussion. Could this be an unexpected retreat, or was he throwing in the towel?

The Believer, with a serene smile, calmly observed their reactions amidst their bewildered gazes. It was as though he had deliberately made a strategic move to shift the direction of the debate in his favor.

The Believer took a deep breath, letting his gaze wander around the room. Once he was certain he had everyone's full attention, he spoke in a calm yet profoundly meaningful tone:

Believer: "But..."

He slowly turned his eyes to the Deist, as if his next words were about to shift the entire course of the discussion.

He stopped before finishing his sentence. This brief pause sparked a new wave of curiosity and anticipation in the room. The Deist, Atheist, and Agnostic exchanged glances, trying to decipher what the Believer was about to say. At that moment, a single question echoed in everyone's mind: "*What does he mean?*"

The Atheist, leaning forward impatiently, urged him:

Atheist: "Go on, please! What do you mean? What's behind that 'but'?"

The Agnostic nodded in agreement, his curiosity evident:

Agnostic: "Yes, we're waiting for your explanation. Don't leave us in suspense."

The Believer turned to them with a gentle smile. His eyes reflected a depth of understanding and knowledge. Responding to their anticipation, he gave a slight nod, his expression calm yet layered with unspoken meaning.

The silence in the room felt like the prelude to a new wave of discussion. For the listeners, who were already rethinking the wisdom and order behind the universe, the moment was deeply intriguing.

And then, everyone in the room felt it: this was more than just a debate. They were standing at the threshold of a profound truth.

TO BE CONTINUED (GOD WILLING)

¹ Shouldn't those who have read and understood the *Risale-i Nur* yet remain passive also reflect on this? Shouldn't they strive to catch up with these efforts? Will there be no accountability for this?