

## SCIENCE, REASON AND CONSCIENCE: A PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNEY FROM THE CHAIR TO THE CREATOR – 21

### "The Truth of Your Nature God: A Call for Confrontation"

Time in the room seemed to have come to a standstill. Silence echoed in a spiral of deep thought and curiosity. The Believer's final words had left an impact powerful enough to shake not just the course of the debate but also the foundations of deeply held beliefs. Everyone sensed that the next sentence spoken could alter the direction of the future.

This moment had transcended the boundaries of an ordinary discussion. Representatives of differing ideas and beliefs stood as if before the doorway of truth, hesitating to step through. They yearned to know what lay beyond, **yet were uncertain whether they could bear the weight of the reality awaiting them.**

The serene smile on the Believer's face was both an invitation and a challenge. His gaze, silently asking, "**Are you ready to face the truth?**" reached out to every person in the room. The Deist, the Atheist, and the Agnostic were now compelled to confront more than just their own thoughts—they had to face truth itself.

The silence in their minds merged with the pounding of their hearts. This was the sign of a new beginning. One question lingered in everyone's mind: "**What happens now?**"

The Believer, fully aware that the room's silence had drawn all attention toward him, began to speak with a meaningful smile:

**Believer:** Yes, I said "**but**" because you need to answer this question: By attributing such "**perfection**" to the universe, aren't you essentially deifying it? According to Deist thought, it almost seems as if a second "**god**" exists. After all, the Creator is already divine, and you acknowledge this Creator. Yet, you then describe the universe as a system so meticulously designed that it doesn't just appear divine—it is elevated to the position of a deity in its own right. By portraying a universe left to run freely, as though it were a conscious entity, doesn't this give rise to the idea of a second god?

The Believer's words struck like a lightning bolt in the minds of everyone in the room, especially the Deist. The Deist leaned back slightly at first, then tilted his head forward with a pensive expression. His eyes wandered across the floor as if searching for something. It was evident that he felt the weight of what had been said; his furrowed brows and face, etched with confusion and inquiry, betrayed his inner turmoil. For the first time, it seemed as though he realized that the meaning he had attributed to the universe could be interpreted in such a way.

For a moment, it was as if he were battling within himself, caught between the beliefs he had previously defended and the ideas now presented by the Believer. As he navigated these thoughts, his lips parted slightly, yet no words came out. It was as if the words were stuck in his

throat. When he slowly lifted his gaze to meet the Believer's, his face carried a mix of emotions and an unspoken admission that these thoughts had never occurred to him before.

The Believer observed the Deist's state intently, but there was neither triumph nor challenge in his expression. His face reflected only deep understanding and a patient gaze. The Deist, seemingly moved by this look, drew in a faint breath and straightened his posture. Yet, he still found himself at a loss for words. These new thoughts echoed in his mind, forcing him to reevaluate his own views, like a reverberation that demanded his attention.

In the heavy atmosphere, the Believer slowly shifted his gaze from the Deist to the Atheist. Taking a deep breath, he continued to speak:

**Believer:** According to atheist thought, there is no Creator; yet, interestingly, the universe is portrayed as if it were a "god." A universe that can organize everything on its own, manage every detail, and operate flawlessly. Doesn't this make the universe itself a deity, endowed with such limitless power?

After a brief pause, he turned his attention to the Agnostic. Noticing the hesitation and curiosity on his face, the Believer resumed speaking:

**Believer:** In agnostic thought, the Creator may or may not exist. If He exists, He is already a deity. But if He doesn't, then you end up deifying the universe. Because **you attribute so much power and will to it that you imagine it as a conscious entity**. If this isn't seeing the universe as a god, then what is it?

The confident expression on the Atheist's face faded into surprise as the Believer's words struck a chord. Lowering his gaze, he clasped his hands tightly; confronting this new perspective had clearly unsettled him. A question he had never considered before now clouded his mind. He opened his mouth a few times but seemed at a loss for words.

The Agnostic, on the other hand, was lost in thought, his eyes filled with hesitation and amazement. Beads of sweat forming on his forehead betrayed the internal questioning that had begun to stir within him. Lowering his gaze briefly before lifting it again, his face revealed the difficulty he was having in processing this new perspective.

As silence left a deep resonance in both their minds, the Believer continued to watch them patiently. This brief but impactful pause had triggered a wave of introspection in the room.

Noticing that everyone was attentively listening, the Believer lowered his voice slightly, speaking with a more emphatic tone:

**Believer:** Why do you feel the need for a second deity? Why do you insist, against all reason, on ascribing divinity to "**lifeless**", "**unconscious**", "**ignorant**", "**powerless**", and "**will-less**"

matter? Or, by naming the order formed by all these as "**nature**," do you then call it a "**god**"? Isn't this, as you yourself can sense, a claim that defies the very boundaries of reason and logic? What drives this effort, this insistence of yours?

The Believer paused for a moment, his gaze meeting each person's eyes in turn as if to measure the impact of his words in the silence of the room. Then, with a resolute expression, he concluded:

**Believer:** "Fine, let it be as you say," I said. Because if it is as you say, you will have to answer these questions. And this is where the real issue begins.

If everything, all this order and existence, were attributed to nature itself or to causes that are part of it, as you claim... there is a serious problem here: **what you call nature is itself unconscious, unaware, powerless, and will-less.** How then could such a being bring about this order, which requires infinite knowledge, power, and wisdom?

But it doesn't stop there. If nature is the source of everything, and everything is a part of nature, then you are approaching a Pantheistic<sup>1</sup> view. That is, you see the universe itself as a god. But this brings another problem: wouldn't a god need to be conscious, aware, and powerful? **The matter of the universe, unable even to change the laws governing itself, how could it be a god?**

Now I ask:

1. **Given the unconscious nature of what you call "nature," how can an unconscious entity create such a perfect order?** If you claim "Nature does it through its own laws," then who established those laws? Can laws exist without a lawmaker?
2. **When you believe in a pantheistic "god" of which everything is a part, can this god govern its own parts?** Nature is a whole, yet it is made of parts. How can these parts come together to create a system superior to themselves? Isn't this illogical?

And if we go further...

Pantheism, with its inherent logical inconsistencies, paves the way for atheism and materialism. Because if "nature" is not a god, then the only remaining argument is this: "**The universe created itself.**" But this is a blatant logical fallacy. Nothing can bring itself from nonexistence into existence. Thus, you must also explain the following:

- **Is the idea of self-creating matter logical?** If matter had the power to create itself, it would already possess the attributes of a creator that brings things into existence from nothing. But since powerless and unconscious matter does not have this quality, this claim contradicts itself.
- **If matter and energy are the source of existence, why are they not infinite?** Science has already established that the universe is finite and limited, so why do you rely on such an inadequate cause to explain its existence?

At this point, I ask:

- Can the order you attribute to nature truly explain everything?

- If you claim nature itself is a god through pantheism, does it not bother you that this "god" is will-less, unconscious, and dependent?
- Ultimately, can't you see that this order cannot be explained by a chain of causes and requires a Creator?

If you continue with these thoughts, you will unknowingly arrive at atheism or materialism. But this creates an even greater contradiction: **to deny a god, you must deify nature, matter, or causes.** This, in turn, once again highlights how rational and consistent it is to believe in a single Creator.

The Believer, utilizing the profound silence in the room, let his gaze linger on each listener before taking a deep breath. Softening his tone but ensuring his words carried weight, he continued:

**Believer:** You know, Bediüzzaman Said Nursi has a remarkably meaningful address that resonates with your perspective. He says:

***“O helpless person who worships causes and nature!”<sup>2</sup>***

After a brief pause to emphasize the depth of Bediüzzaman's words, the Believer elaborated further:

**Believer:** ***"A person who worships causes."***<sup>3</sup> Yes, you attribute all the events and order you observe in the universe to what you call "causes." You assign all acts to a mechanism you name "nature" or "the workings of matter." You say, "They create each other," implying that one entity produces another, thinking this explains the cycle. But do you realize what you're actually doing? You are elevating causes to the status of a deity. You ascribe to them power and will as though worshipping a god. If this isn't worshipping causes, then what is it?

The Believer paused and turned his gaze to the Deist, adding calmly:

**Believer:** ***"One who worships nature"***<sup>4</sup>... This goes a step beyond causes. You not only revere the causes but also view the outcomes of these causes-the entire material universe-as a deity. You claim that the entire order and flawless operation occur spontaneously, as if it were self-generated, and you venerate this material realm. In doing so, you imagine **"nature"** as a self-creating, self-regulating system that eliminates the need for a Creator. If this isn't deifying nature, then what is it?

Then, with a slightly more emphatic tone, the Believer lingered on the word ***"helpless"***:

**Believer:** And here, Bediüzzaman describes you as "**helpless**," meaning helpless.<sup>5</sup> Why?

Because you have no other recourse. If you hold an atheistic perspective, you are left with no option but to deify nature in order to deny the Creator. You are compelled to think of nature as a god capable of existing on its own. If you adopt a deistic perspective, the helplessness takes on a different form. Yes, you believe in a Creator, but you realize that acknowledging Him as an active being would impose certain responsibilities. To avoid these obligations, you set the Creator aside, letting Him rest, and replace Him with nature. This, too, is nothing but viewing nature as a deity.

The Believer's gaze moved across the room, observing the astonished and contemplative expressions of the listeners. Sensing that his words were prompting deep reflection, he softened his tone and continued:

**Believer:** The real question is this: Why are you pushing yourselves so hard? Why do you elevate nature or causes to the level of a deity? **Attributing such immense power-against all logic-to something unconscious, unaware, ignorant, will-less, and powerless... is this truly a reasonable path for your mind and conscience?** What compels you to do so?

With these words, the silence in the room deepened. Everyone seemed to be weighing the meaning of his statements within themselves. The Believer's explanation appeared to have carried each person to a deeper stage in their journey of thought.

With his eyes scanning the listeners, the Believer resumed speaking in a firmer tone:

**Believer:** Yes, I said to you, "You are deifying nature and worshipping it." Perhaps you will object, saying, "*No, we are not worshipping it; we are merely stating that nature is the doer.*" But you must understand that I am not using the word "*worship*" in the traditional sense of religious rituals or physical acts of devotion. What I mean is that by exalting nature, you are treating it as a deity. You attribute sanctity to it, base the source of everything on it, and thus exhibit a form of devotion to it that resembles worship.

The Believer paused briefly, using the silence in the room to imbue his words with deeper meaning, and then continued:

**Believer:** When you deify nature, your thoughts and beliefs begin to revolve around it. You explain everything you see and every experience you have by attributing it to "nature." In doing so, you reach a point where you no longer acknowledge anything beyond nature, sanctifying it as the ultimate source and ruler of all existence. This means that, in a sense, you see nature as a deity. Yes, perhaps nature does not demand worship, prayers, or sacrifices from you. But **it seems that your deification of nature stems from a desire to escape these obligations.**

The Believer's face took on a calm yet probing expression as he subtly shifted his tone:

**Believer:** Viewing nature as a god **makes things easier for you**. This belief imposes no obligations on you. Even if nature were a god, it does not establish rules for you or hold you accountable. This allows you to live as you please, behaving recklessly in the world, without seeing any barriers to your actions. You do whatever you wish, in whatever way you want, relishing the "freedom" this belief offers you. But the truth is, even nature has its rules, and when you violate them, you must face the consequences.

The Believer's tone grew more serious. Feeling the intensity of the listeners' attention, he pressed on with greater emphasis:

**Believer:** Until now, you have recklessly violated the rules of nature. When oxygen levels in the atmosphere dropped to dangerous levels, when you polluted seas and rivers to the point of making them unusable, when you degraded the soil to render it barren, and when you exploited animals to the brink of extinction... only then did you realize that even nature has demands of you. It was as if nature itself said: "Because you disregarded my rules, I will exact my punishment." Today, you are living with these consequences, yet you still believe you can escape responsibility by evading these rules.

Observing the seriousness etched into the listeners' faces, the Believer softened his tone slightly and continued:

**Believer:** Now, your gaze turns to space. After wreaking havoc on Earth, you say, "Let's go there and start anew." But even before you arrive, you've already turned space into a heap of debris with your satellites. This shows that living without rules or responsibility has become a habit for you. Yet you must not forget that wherever you go, rules and responsibilities will await you. This is an immutable truth of the universe.

The Believer took a deep breath, letting his gaze once again sweep across the audience before concluding:

**Believer:** Until now, you have chosen to deify nature and causes because you had no other recourse (**helpless**). It was an easy way to avoid responsibility. However, no matter how much you try to escape, even your god of nature has had to say "**STOP**" to you. This situation should teach you one undeniable truth: you cannot escape responsibility. Rules exist in every corner and every atom of the universe, and there is no life outside of these rules. You cannot live recklessly. Accepting this reality is an inevitable conclusion for you.

These words shattered the silence in the room like a thunderclap. The astonishment on the faces of the Atheist, Agnostic, and Deist deepened even further. This wasn't merely due to the weight of what they had just heard but also to the confidence and the emphasis on truth that permeated the Believer's words.

The Believer seemed to have finished speaking, yet gave no indication that he was truly done. He took a deep breath, settled comfortably into a chair in the corner, leaned back, and let his arms rest freely at his sides. While the listeners observed his calm yet assured demeanor, their minds seemed to be swept up in a whirlwind of curiosity.

The Believer surveyed the room, his gaze lingering on each listener's face, studying their expressions of bewilderment and silence. Then he spoke again:

**Believer:** Let me tell you the true nature of this "nature" you exalt so highly, that you sanctify and deify as your "god of nature."

The room was filled with silence, but within that silence, countless unspoken words seemed to echo. The Believer's mention of the "**true nature of your god of nature**" sparked a cascade of new questions in the minds of his audience. What did he truly mean? What more was he about to reveal?

The Believer's calm yet striking words had unleashed a storm of thoughts in everyone's minds. The expressions on the faces of the Atheist, Agnostic, and Deist betrayed not only their curiosity but also the beginnings of profound self-examination. Perhaps this was the first step toward an inevitable confrontation with truth.

But where this confrontation would lead remains to be seen... in the next chapter.

## **DEVAM EDECEK (İNŞALLAH)**

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<sup>1</sup> **Pantheism:** Pantheism is a philosophical and theological perspective that, in its essence, expresses the idea that "everything is God" or "God is in everything." According to pantheism, the universe as a whole—nature, existence, and God—are one and the same. In this view, God is not a separate being distinct from the universe but is the universe itself. Rather than a creator, God is regarded as the laws of nature and the workings of the universe.

### **1. Core Principles of Pantheism**

- **Unity of God and the Universe:**  
God is not a being separate from the universe. The universe itself is seen as God. For this reason, pantheism does not include the concept of a divine personality or a distinct creator.
- **Universality of Sacredness:**  
Everything is sacred because everything is a part of God. Nature, existence, and the universe are reflections of a divine reality.
- **Rejection of Dualism:**  
Pantheism rejects the separation (dualism) between God and the universe. It argues that there is no distinction between the supernatural and the natural.

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## 2. Pantheistic Concept of God

- **Impersonal God:**

In pantheism, God is not a conscious being or a creative force but a universal reality. God is the sum of the laws and order that govern the functioning of the universe.

- **Universal Intelligence or Energy:**

In some interpretations of pantheism, God is described as a "universal intelligence" or "energy," serving as the source of the order observed in the universe.

- **Infinite and Boundless:**

According to pantheism, God is infinite and boundless, as He is everything and is identical with the universe itself.

<sup>2</sup> From the Risale-i Nur Collection by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Flashes 186

<sup>3</sup> **Worship of Causes**

The term *worship of causes* refers to the tendency to attribute the occurrence of events and the existence of beings solely to material causes, ignoring the divine wisdom or creative power behind them. In Islamic and philosophical thought, this term is used to critique a worldview that excessively emphasizes material causes while neglecting the role of the Creator.

### The Concept of Worshipping Causes

- **Excessive Focus on Cause-and-Effect Relationships:**

Worshipping causes involves explaining events and beings in the universe purely through material causes. For example, describing the growth of a tree solely as a result of soil, water, and sunlight, while ignoring the creative power behind this system.

- **Denial of Divine Intervention:**

This perspective assumes that causes operate entirely independently in the universe, denying any direct intervention or will of God.

- **A Materialistic Outlook:**

Worshipping causes is often associated with materialism, which argues that all phenomena can be explained through material causes alone.

For example, if someone explains the growth of a flower only in terms of soil minerals, water, sunlight, and temperature, without recognizing a creative force behind this process, they are adopting a perspective that worships causes. In Islamic understanding, however, these processes are merely tools, and it is God who ensures their harmonious functioning.

The concept of "worship of causes" describes an excessive reliance on material causes, even to the extent of considering them the ultimate source of power and influence. While this does not imply literal worship, it suggests a figurative devotion—attributing to causes a role that rightfully belongs to God.

### How Worship of Causes is Considered "Worship":

1. **Attributing Absolute Power to Causes:**

- In this perspective, causes are viewed as the primary source of events and existence. For example:
  - Claiming that a disease is cured solely by medicine.
  - Explaining the order of nature exclusively through physical laws while ignoring the Creator who established and sustains these laws.
- This emphasis elevates causes to the status of absolute and independent powers. Figuratively, this is considered "worship" because it disregards the true source of power (God) and fails to recognize the wisdom behind the causes.

2. **Mistaking Causes for Ultimate Ends:**

- Causes are merely tools, while the ultimate end is God's will and power, which brings both causes and effects into existence. However, this perspective treats causes as ultimate goals, chasing after them as if they are the end themselves.
  - For instance:
    - Viewing wealth solely as a result of hard work, ignoring the role of God in providing blessings.
    - Attributing natural disasters purely to weather phenomena without considering the wisdom of a divine controller.

3. **Lack of Reliance on God (Tawakkul):**

- Worshipping causes is also linked to a lack of trust in God. Instead of placing faith in God, a person relies entirely on material causes.



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- For example: A farmer depending solely on agricultural techniques while neglecting to pray for divine assistance.
  - This view mistakes causes as independent entities, detached from God's will.
4. **Neglecting Divine Order:**
- Rather than seeing causes as part of a system created and orchestrated by God, this perspective considers them autonomous forces. In Islamic thought, this perspective is criticized as being close to *shirk* (associating partners with God).
  - Here, "worship" does not refer to literal rituals but to an excessive attribution of power and independence to causes.

**Examples to Clarify the Concept:**

1. **Healing and Medicine:**

- *Perspective of Worshipping Causes:* "This medicine cured me." (Seeing the medicine as the sole cause of healing.)
- *Believer's Perspective:* "God healed me through this medicine." (Acknowledging the cause and the Creator behind it.)

2. **Sustenance and Work:**

- *Perspective of Worshipping Causes:* "If I don't work, I can't earn anything." (Viewing work as the sole and independent factor.)
- *Believer's Perspective:* "Work is a means; God blesses my efforts and provides my sustenance." (Recognizing the wisdom beyond material causes.)

**Conclusion:**

The worship of causes refers to a worldview that overemphasizes material causes and neglects the divine wisdom and power orchestrating those causes. While it does not involve literal worship, it metaphorically elevates causes to the level of deities by attributing to them absolute and independent power. This perspective is contrasted in Islamic thought with a holistic understanding that sees causes as tools in the hands of the Creator, emphasizing reliance on God and acknowledgment of His ultimate control over all things.

<sup>4</sup> **The Concept of "Worshipping Nature"**

The term "*worshipping nature*" refers to the perspective that attempts to explain the source of creation and existence through nature or matter, viewing nature as an independent power. While it shares similarities with the concept of "worshipping causes," it differs in its focus and context of critique.

**1. Meaning of Worshipping Nature**

- **Viewing Nature as a Creator:**  
A person who worships nature sees it as self-existent, capable of establishing a systematic order, and sufficient to explain everything. In this view, nature is almost imagined as a deity.
- **Attributing Sanctity to Matter:**  
Those who worship nature attribute the explanation of events and order in the universe solely to natural laws and physical processes. However, they reject the existence of a Creator who establishes and governs these laws.
- **Rejecting or Neglecting God:**  
Worshipping nature often leads to either a complete denial of the Creator or the perception of the Creator as entirely inactive in the operation of the universe. This perspective is frequently associated with atheism or materialism.
  - *Example:* Explaining the blooming of a flower through genetic structures and photosynthesis while rejecting the notion of a Creator behind this system.

**2. Differences from Worshipping Causes**

**Worshipping Causes:**

- Recognizes the existence of causes and confines the explanation of events to them, while acknowledging that these causes are part of the natural order.
- May not outright reject the connection of causes to a Creator but tends to overlook or completely disregard it.
- Sees causes as independent and effective powers but does not view nature as a whole as a deity.

**Worshipping Nature:**

- Takes a step further, considering nature itself as the Creator.
- Argues that not only causes but all beings and laws are products of nature.

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- Substitutes nature for a deity, unlike those who worship causes, who may see natural laws as a mechanism but do not entirely dismiss the Creator's will.

#### Examples:

- *Worshipping Causes*: "Rain falls because water vapor condenses in the clouds." (Acknowledges causes but may overlook God's will.)
- *Worshipping Nature*: "Rain falls entirely as a result of the autonomous functioning of natural laws." (Views nature as the Creator.)

### 3. Conclusion

- **Worshipping Causes**: Sees causes as the ultimate source of events but does not deify nature. It may indirectly acknowledge God's power but tends to neglect the connection.
- **Worshipping Nature**: Treats nature as a deity and completely rejects the Creator, attributing independent power to matter and natural processes.

Bediüzzaman's critique focuses on humanity's tendency to forget the ultimate source, God, when observing causes or nature. While both concepts differ in degree, they are seen as perspectives that obscure the truth. Both fail to recognize the divine power and wisdom that underlie and orchestrate the universe.

#### <sup>5</sup> The Term "Helpless" as Used by Bediüzzaman Said Nursi

The word "*helpless*" (*bîçare* in the original) as used by Bediüzzaman Said Nursi means "powerless, in need of assistance, and devoid of strength." This expression is used metaphorically to describe the state of those who worship causes (materialists) or nature. By labeling such individuals as "*helpless*," Bediüzzaman emphasizes that they are far from the truth and that the causes or nature they rely upon lack any real power or influence.

#### 1. The Meaning of "Helpless"

- **Spiritual and Intellectual Helplessness**:  
The term "*helpless*" conveys that these individuals are in a state of despair because they are unable to see the truth and act on a flawed understanding. This implies that they fail to find true meaning in life and lack a genuine source of strength to rely on.
- **Alienation from Truth**:  
Those who worship causes or nature, by ignoring or denying God, deprive themselves of a true foundation. This represents a state of intellectual and spiritual helplessness.

#### 2. Difference Between Worshipping Causes, Worshipping Nature, and Helplessness

- **Worshipping Causes and Worshipping Nature Are Conditions, While Helplessness Is the Result**:
  - *Worship of Causes*: Believes that causes are the ultimate agents of effect, ignoring the divine power behind them.
  - *Worship of Nature*: Considers nature itself to be the ultimate creator, rejecting the existence of God.
  - *Helplessness*: Describes the powerless state of both those who worship causes and those who worship nature. They are "*helpless*" because they lack a real foundation of truth.

#### 3. Bediüzzaman's Perspective: Why "Helpless"?

According to Bediüzzaman:

- Those who fail to perceive the reality behind causes or nature (the divine power and will of God) are resting on a very weak foundation.
- While those who worship causes or nature may appear to adopt a scientific or logical mindset, their failure to account for God leaves a significant void in their reasoning.
- The causes or nature they rely on possess no independent power. Therefore, their beliefs inevitably lead to a state of helplessness and emptiness.

#### Examples:

- A person who explains the formation of a raindrop solely through physical causes, without recognizing the divine wisdom orchestrating these causes, becomes helpless in understanding the purpose behind this system.
- Similarly, someone who argues that nature functions autonomously without a Creator ultimately fails to provide a definitive explanation, leaving them both intellectually and spiritually "*helpless*."

#### 4. Consequences of Helplessness

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- **Inability to Be Self-Sufficient:**

Those who worship causes or nature fail to recognize the limitations of the causes or nature they rely on. This leads to a sense of inadequacy and powerlessness.

- **Failure to Attain Truth:**

By ignoring the divine power behind causes or nature, such individuals cannot comprehend the true meaning and order of the universe. This results in intellectual and spiritual dissatisfaction.

- **Reliance on Temporary Solutions:**

Without a genuine foundation, they depend on superficial explanations provided by causes or nature. However, when these explanations reach their limits, they are left in despair.

Bediüzzaman describes those who worship causes or nature as "*helpless*" because what they rely on lacks real power and cannot lead them to the truth. Through this expression, he emphasizes that true intellectual and spiritual fulfillment can only be achieved by turning toward God. The term highlights the fragile state of those who depend on material or natural processes as the ultimate explanation for existence, underscoring their need for a deeper understanding rooted in divine reality.