

BELIEF IN ANGELS

QUR'AN - (The Qur'an with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Ünal)

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ
وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

2.97. (This is not all. They feel enmity toward Gabriel because he brings the Qur'Ä n to you, not to one among them.) Say (O Messenger, to them): "(The Lord of the worlds, my and your Lord, declares:) ~Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel (should know that) it is he who brings down the Qur'Ä n on your heart by the leave of God, (not of his own accord), confirming (the Divine origin of and the truths still contained in) the Revelations prior to it, and (serving as) guidance and glad tidings for the believers. "" (Surah al – Baqarah, 97)¹

مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِلَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَالَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ

(Enmity to Gabriel, who does nothing other than what he is commanded to do by God, means enmity to God and to His will.) Whoever is an enemy to God, and His angels, and His Messengers, and (so) Gabriel, and Michael, (should know that) God is surely an enemy to the unbelievers.² (Surah al – Baqarah. 98)

أَمَّنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ
وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ
الْمَصِيرُ

The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and so do the believers; each one believes in God, and His angels, and His Books, and His Messengers: "We make no distinction between any of His Messengers (in believing in them). " And they say: "We have heard (the call to faith in God) and (unlike some of the people of Moses) obeyed. Our Lord, grant us Your forgiveness, and to You is the homecoming. "(Surah al – Baqarah, 285)³

¹ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=2&min=90&show=10

² http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=2&min=90&show=10

³ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=2&min=280&show=10

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُولَى أَجْنِحَةٍ مَثْنَى وَثُلثَ وَرُبَاعٍ يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

All praise and thanks are for God, the Originator of the heavens and the earth (each with particular features and ordered principles), Who appoints the angels as messengers (conveying His commands) having wings, two, or three, or four (or more). He increases in creation what He wills. Surely God has full power over everything. (Surah Fatir, 1)⁴

وَتَرَى الْمَلَائِكَةَ حَافِينَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَقِيلَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

And you (O Messenger) will see the angels surrounding the Supreme Throne (of God), glorifying their Lord with His praise. It has been judged among them with truth and justice, and it will be said (by all the people of Paradise): "All praise and gratitude are for God, the Lord of the worlds!" (Surah az – Zumar, 75)⁵

وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنَّا أَشْهَدُوا خَلْقَهُمْ سَتُكْتَبُ شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَيُسْأَلُونَ

And yet they have judged the angels, who are themselves the servants of the All-Merciful, to be females (whom they judge to be of little value, and yet regard as His daughters). Did they witness their creation? This testimony of theirs will be recorded, and they will be called to account (for this falsehood in the Hereafter). (Az Zukhruf, 19)⁶

HADITH

Narrated Abu Huraira:

One day while Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was sitting with the people, a man came to him walking and said, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). What is Belief?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Belief is to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Apostles, and the meeting with Him, and to believe in the Resurrection." The man asked, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) What is Islam?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "Islam is to worship Allah and not worship anything besides Him, to offer prayers perfectly, to pay the (compulsory) charity i.e. Zakat and to fast the month of Ramadan." The man again asked, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) What is Ihsan (i.e. perfection or Benevolence)?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Ihsan is to worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not achieve this state of devotion, then (take it for granted that) Allah sees you." The man further asked, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) When will the Hour be established?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "The one who is asked about it does not know more than the questioner does, but I will describe to you its portents. When the lady slave gives birth to her mistress, that will be of its portents; when the bare-footed naked people become the chiefs of the people, that will be of its portents. The

⁴ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=35

⁵ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=39&min=70&show=10

⁶ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=43&min=10&show=10

Hour is one of five things which nobody knows except Allah. Verily, the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah (alone). He sends down the rain, and knows that which is in the wombs." (31.34) Then the man left. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Call him back to me." They went to call him back but could not see him. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "That was Gabriel who came to teach the people their religion." (See Hadith No. 47 Vol 1)⁷

‘Abd Allah b. Mas’ud said:

The Messenger of Allah (May peace be upon him) who spoke the truth and whose word was belief told us the following : The constituents of one of you are collected for forty days in his mother’s womb, then they become a piece of congealed blood for a similar period, then they become a lump of flesh for a similar period. Then Allah sends to him an angel with four words who records his provision the period of his life, his deeds, and whether he will be miserable or blessed; thereafter he breathes the spirit into him. One of you will do the deeds of those who go to Paradise so that there will be only a cubit between him and it or will be within a cubit, then what is decreed will overcome him so that he will do the deeds of those who go to Hell and will enter it; and one of you will do the deeds of those who go to hell, so that there will be only a cubit between him and it or will be within a cubit, then what is decreed will overcome him, so that he will do the deeds of those who go to Paradise and will enter it.⁸

COMMENTARIES

From the Risale-i Nur Collection by Beduizzam Said Nursi – a

thematic tafseer

The Words, The Twenty-Ninth Word, First Aim

Introduction

It may be said that the existence of the angels and spirit beings is as definite as that of human beings and animals. Indeed, as is explained in the First Step of the Fifteenth Word, reality undoubtedly requires and wisdom certainly demands that like the earth the heavens have inhabitants, and that its inhabitants are intelligent, and suitable for the heavens. In the tongue of the Shari’a, those inhabitants, of which there are numerous kinds, are called angels and spirit beings.

Reality requires it to be thus. For despite the earth’s smallness and insignificance in relation to the heavens, its being filled with intelligent beings and from time to time being emptied and then refilled with new ones suggests —indeed, states clearly— that the heavens too, with their majestic constellations like adorned palaces, are filled with animate creatures, the light of the light of existence,

⁷ <http://sunnah.com/urn/44550>

⁸ <http://sunnah.com/abudawud/42/113>

and conscious and intelligent creatures, the light of animate creatures. Like man and the jinn, those creatures are spectators of the palace of the world, and ponderers over the book of the universe, and heralds of this realm of dominicality. With their universal and comprehensive worship, they represent the glorification of the large and universal beings in the universe.

The nature of the universe surely points to their existence. For since it is embellished and decked out with uncountable numbers of finely adorned works of art and meaningful decorations and wise embroideries, it self-evidently requires the gazes of thoughtful admirers and wondering, appreciative lovers; it demands their existence. Yes, just as beauty requires a lover, so is food is given to the hungry. Thus, the sustenance of spirits and nourishment of hearts in this boundless beauty of art looks to the angels and spirit beings; it points to them. For while this infinite adornment requires an infinite duty of contemplation and worship, man and the jinn can perform only a millionth of that infinite duty, that wise supervision, that extensive worship. This means that boundless varieties of angels and spirit beings are necessary to perform those duties, and to fill and inhabit the mighty mosque of the world with their ranks.

Indeed, a species of the spirit beings and angels is present in every aspect, in every sphere, of the universe, each charged with a duty of worship. It may be said according to both the narrations of Hadiths and the wisdom in the order of the world that from lifeless planets and stars to raindrops, all are ships or vehicles for a kind of angel. The angels mount these vehicles with Divine permission and travel observing the Manifest World; they represent their praise and glorification.

It also may be said that certain sorts of living bodies act as aeroplanes for different kinds of spirits. From the birds of Paradise, called the Green Birds in a Hadith which says: "The spirits of the people of Paradise enter into Green Birds in the Intermediate Realm and travel around Paradise in them,"¹ to flies, each is a vehicle for a sort of spirit. The spirits enter into them at a Divine command, and through the faculties and senses of those living bodies like the eyes and ears, observe the miracles of creation in the corporeal world. They perform the particular glorification of each.

Just as reality necessitates it to be thus, so does wisdom. For, with an intense activity, the All-Wise Maker continuously creates subtle life and luminous intelligent beings from dense earth, which has little connection with spirit, and from turbid water, which has small relation with the light of life. He surely then creates certain sorts of intelligent beings from the seas of light and even from the oceans of darkness, from the air, electricity, and other subtle matter suitable for spirit and appropriate for life. And surely these creatures are exceedingly numerous.

First Aim

To believe in the angels and affirm that belief is a pillar of faith. There are four Fundamental Points in this Aim.

FIRST FUNDAMENTAL POINT

The perfection of existence is through life. Rather, the true existence of existence is through life. Life is the light of existence, and consciousness is the light of life. Life is the summit and foundation of everything. Life appropriates everything for living beings; it is as though it makes one thing the owner of everything. Through life, a living thing may say: "All these things belong to me. The world is my house. The universe is my property, given to me by my owner."

Just as light is the cause of things being seen, and, according to some, of the existence of colours, so is life the revealer of beings; it is the cause of their qualities being realized. Furthermore, it makes an insignificant particular general and universal, and is the cause of universal things being concentrated in a particular. It is also the cause of all the perfections of existence, by, for example, making innumerable things co-operate and unite, and making them the means of unity and being endowed with spirit. Life is even a sort of manifestation of Divine unity in the levels of multiplicity, and a mirror reflecting Divine oneness.

Consider the following: a lifeless object, even if it is a great mountain, is an orphan, a stranger, alone. Its only relations are with the place in which it is situated, and with the things which encounter it. Whatever else there is in the cosmos, it does not exist for the mountain. For the mountain has neither life through which it might be related to life, nor consciousness by which it might be concerned.

Now consider a tiny object like a bee, for example. The instant life enters it, it establishes such a connection with the universe that it is as though it concludes a trading agreement with it, especially with the flowers and plants of the earth. It can say: "The earth is my garden; it is my trading house." Thus, through the unconscious instinctive senses which impel and stimulate it in addition to the well-known five external senses and inner senses of animate beings, the bee has a feeling for, and a familiarity and reciprocal relationship with, most of the species in the world, and they are at its disposal.

If life then displays its effect thus in the tiniest of animate beings, certainly when it rises to the highest level, that of man, it will be revealed and extended and illumined to such a degree that just as a human being is able to move through the rooms of his house with his consciousness and mind, which are the light of life, so he may travel through the higher, and the spiritual and corporeal worlds with them. That is to say, just as that conscious and animate being may go in spirit as though as a guest to those worlds, those worlds too come as guests to his mirror-like spirit by being reflected and depicted there.

Life is a most brilliant proof of the All-Glorious One's unity, and one of the greatest sources of His bounty; it is a most subtle manifestation of His compassionateness, and a most hidden, unknowable, and incomparable embroidery of His art.

Life is hidden and subtle, because the life of plants even, which is the lowest of the levels of life, and the awakening of the life-force in seeds, that is, their stirring, opening, and growth, which are the first steps in plant life, has remained unfathomed by human science since the time of Adam, despite being so evident and familiar, so ubiquitous and common. Man's reason has been unable to discover its true reality.

Moreover, life is so pure and unblemished that in both its aspects that is in both its inner and outer faces it is pure, translucent, and transparent. Not veiling it with causes, the hand of power touches it directly. Whereas It made apparent causes a veil, to be the source of the insignificant aspects of things and their base external qualities, which are inappropriate to the dignity of power.

IN SHORT: It may be said that if there was no life, existence would not be existence; it would be no different from non-existence. Life is the light of the spirit, and consciousness is the light of life. Since life and consciousness are important to this great extent; and since there is self-evidently an absolutely perfect order in the universe, and a masterly precision and most wise harmony; and since our lowly, wretched globe, our wandering earth has been filled with uncountable numbers of animate beings, intelligent beings, and beings with spirits; it may be concluded with decisive certainty that those heavenly palaces, those lofty constellations also have animate and conscious inhabitants appropriate to them. As fish swim in water, so are those luminous inhabitants present in the fire of the sun. Fire does not consume light; indeed, Fire aids light.

Moreover, since, as is plain to see, pre-eternal power creates innumerable animate beings and beings with spirits from the most common substances and densest matter, and giving it great importance, transmutes dense matter by means of life into a subtle substance; and since it strews the light of life

everywhere in great abundance, and gilds most things with the light of consciousness; with such flawless power and faultless wisdom, the All-Wise and All-Powerful One would certainly not neglect the other floods of subtle matter like light and ether, which are close to and fitting for the spirit; He would not leave them without life, without consciousness, inanimate. Indeed, He creates animate and

conscious beings in great numbers from light, which is also matter, and even from meanings, air, and even words. Just as He creates numerous different species of animals, so from these torrents of subtle matter He creates numerous different spirit creatures. One kind of them are the angels, others are the varieties of spirit beings and jinn. If you wish to see just how true, self-evident, and rational it is to accept the existence of great numbers of angels and spirit beings, and as the Qur'an shows, just how contrary to truth and wisdom, and what a superstition, aberration, delirium and foolishness it is not to accept them, consider the following comparison.

There were two men, one rustic and uncouth, the other civilized and intelligent, who made friends and went to a splendid city like Istanbul. In a distant corner of that civilized and magnificent city they came across a dirty, wretched little building, a factory. They looked and saw that the strange factory was full of miserable, impoverished men working. All around the building were beings with spirits and animate beings, but their means of livelihood and conditions of life were such that some were herbivorous, they lived only on plants, while others were piscivorous, they ate nothing but fish.

The two men watched the scene. Then they saw in the distance thousands of adorned palaces and lofty castles. Among the palaces were spacious workshops and broad squares. Because of either the distance, or the defectiveness of the men's eyesight, or because they had hidden themselves, the inhabitants of the palaces were not visible to the two men. Moreover, the wretched conditions in the factory were not to be seen in the palaces. In consequence of this, the uncouth country-bumpkin, who had never before seen a city, declared: "Those palaces have no inhabitants, they are empty, there are no beings with spirits in them," uttering the most ignorant garbled nonsense. To which the second man replied:

"O you miserable man! This insignificant little building you see here has been filled with beings endowed with spirits, with workers, and there is someone who continually employs and replaces them. Look, there is not an empty space all around this factory, it has been filled with animate beings and beings with spirits. Do you think it is at all possible that there would be no high-ranking and suitable inhabitants in that orderly city, in those wisely adorned palaces so full of art which we can see in the distance? Of course they are occupied, and the different conditions of life there are appropriate for those who live there. In place of grass, they eat pastries, and in place of fish, cakes. They're not being visible to you because of the distance, or your weak eyesight, or their hiding themselves, can at no time point to their not being there." The fact that a thing is not seen does not indicate its non-existence.

As the above comparison indicates, the fact that the globe of the earth is the home of these infinite numbers of beings endowed with consciousness and spirit, despite its insignificance and density among the lofty heavenly bodies and planets, and even its grossest and most rotten particulars becoming masses of micro-organisms when they cease as sources of life, necessarily, demonstrably, decisively indicates, testifies to and proclaims that infinite space and the majestic heavens with their constellations and stars are full of animate beings, conscious beings, and beings with spirits. The Illustrious Shari'a of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) and the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition call these beings, who are created from fire, light, and even from electricity, and from other subtle flowing matter, "The angels, the jinn, and spirit beings." There are different kinds of angels, just as there are different kinds of corporeal beings. Indeed, the angel who is appointed to a raindrop will not be of the same sort as the angel appointed to the sun. There are also a very great many different sorts of jinn and spirit beings.

The Conclusion of this Fundamental Point:

As may be established empirically, matter is not essential so that existence may be made subject to it, and be dependent on it. Rather, matter subsists through a meaning, and that meaning is life, it is spirit.

Also, as may be established through observation, matter is not the thing served so that everything may be ascribed to it. It is rather the servant; it renders service to the process of the perfection of a truth. And that truth is life. And the fundament of that truth is spirit.

Also, as is self-evident, matter is not dominant so that recourse may be made to it or perfections sought from it. Rather, it is dominated; it looks to the decree of some fundament, it is in motion in the way that that decree dictates. And that fundament is life, it is spirit, it is consciousness.

Also, as is necessary, matter is not the kernel, it is not the fundament, it is not a settled abode so that events and perfections may be affixed to it or constructed on it. Rather, it is a shell prepared to be split, rent, dissolved; it is a husk, it is froth, it is a form.

Consider the following: a creature so minute it can only be seen with a microscope has such acute senses it can hear its friend's voice, and see its sustenance; it has extremely sensitive and sharp senses. This demonstrates that the effects of life increase and the light of the spirit intensifies in proportion to the reducing and refining of matter. It is as though the more matter is refined and the more we become distanced from our material existences, the closer we draw to the world of the spirit, the world of life, and the world of consciousness; and the more intensely the heat of the spirit and the light of life are manifested.

Is it therefore at all possible that there should be this many distillations of life, consciousness, and spirit within this veil of materiality, and that the inner world which is beyond this veil should not be full of conscious beings and beings with spirits? Is it at all possible that the sources of these numberless distillations, flashes, and fruits of meaning, spirit, life and the truth apparent in this material existence in the Manifest World should be ascribed only to matter and the motion of matter, and be explained by it? God forbid! Absolutely not! These innumerable distillations and flashes demonstrate that this material and manifest world is but a lace veil strewn over the inner and spirit worlds.

SECOND FUNDAMENTAL POINT

It may be said that all the scholars of the speculative and the scriptural sciences have, knowingly or unknowingly, united to effect a consensus in affirming, despite difference of expression, the existence and reality of the angels and spirit beings. One group of Peripatetic philosophers of the Illuminist School even, who made much progress in the study of matter, without denying the meaning of the angels, stated that each realm in creation has a spiritual, incorporeal essence. They described the angels thus. Also, a group of the early philosophers who were Illuminists, being compelled to accept the meaning of the angels, were only wrong in naming them 'the Ten Intellects and Masters of the Realms of Creation.' Through the inspiration and guidance of revelation, scholars of all the revealed religions have accepted that each realm of creation has an angel appointed to it, and have named them the Mountain Angel, the Sea Angel, and the Rain Angel, for example. Even the Materialists and Naturalists, whose reasoning is restricted to what is immediately apparent to them and who have in effect fallen from the level of humanity to that of inanimate matter, rather than being able to deny the meaning of the angels,¹ have been compelled to accept them in one respect, though naming them the Flowing Forces.

O you wretched man who is reluctant to accept the angels and spirit beings, on what do you base this view? What facts do you rely on that you oppose the conscious or otherwise unanimity of all the scholars concerning the existence and reality of the meaning of the angels and the real existence of spirit beings? And since, as was proved in the First Fundamental Point, life is the revealer of beings, indeed, is their consequence, their quintessence; and since all the scholars are in effect unanimous in their acceptance of the meaning of the angels; and this world of ours has been filled to such a degree with animate creatures and beings with spirits; is it all possible that the vastness of space and the rarefied heavens would remain empty of dwellers, have no inhabitants? You should never think that the laws in force in this creation are sufficient for the universe to be alive, because those governing laws are insubstantial commands; they are imaginary principles; they may be considered as non-existent. If there were no absolutely obedient creatures called angels to represent them, make them

apparent, and take their reins into their own hands, those laws could not be defined as existent, nor be represented as having a particular identity, nor be an external reality. Whereas, Life is an external reality, and an imaginary command cannot sustain an external reality.

In Short: Since the scholars of religion and philosophy, and of the speculative and scriptural sciences, have in effect agreed that beings are not restricted to this Manifest World; and since, despite being inanimate and inappropriate for the formation of spirits, the visible Manifest World has been adorned to such an extent with beings with spirits; existence is surely not limited to it. There are numerous other levels of existence in relation to which the Manifest World is an embroidered veil.

Furthermore, since, just as the sea is appropriate for fish, and the World of the Unseen and the World of Meaning appropriate for spirits, and this necessitates their being filled with them; and since all commands testify to the existence of the meaning of the angels; certainly and without any shadow of a doubt, the most beautiful form of the angels' existence and spirit beings' reality, and the most rational view of their nature which sound intellects will accept and acclaim, is that which the Qur'an has expounded and elucidated. The Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition states that: "The angels are honoured slaves. Never contesting a command, they do whatever they are commanded. The angels are subtle, luminous beings, and are divided into different kinds."

Just as mankind is a nation and human beings are the bearers, representatives, and embodiments of the Shari'a or code of divine laws which proceeds from the attribute of Divine speech, so are the angels a mighty nation, and those of them who are workers are the bearers, representatives, and embodiments of the 'code of laws pertaining to creation, which proceeds from the attribute of Divine will.' They are a class of God's slaves who are dependent on the commands of the creative power and pre-eternal will, which are the true effective agent, and for whom all the heavenly bodies are like places of worship, like mosques.

THIRD FUNDAMENTAL POINT

The question of the angels and spirit beings is one of those questions in which the reality of a universal may be inferred from the existence of a single particular. If a single individual is seen, the existence of the species may be concluded. Whoever denies it, denies it as a member of the species to which it belongs. While whoever accepts the single individual is compelled to accept its whole species. Since it is thus, consider the following:

Have you not seen and heard that all the scholars of the revealed religions throughout the ages from the time of Adam until now have agreed on the existence of the angels and the reality of spirit beings? The different groups of mankind have concurred in having seen and conversed with angels and in their narrations concerning them, as though they were discussing and narrating events about one another. Do you think that if a single angel had not been seen, and the existence of one or numerous individuals not been established through observation, and their existence not been perceived clearly, self-evidently, that it would have been at all possible for such accord and such a consensus to continue, and to continue persistently and unanimously in such an affirmative and positive manner, based on observation?

Also, is it at all possible that the source of this general belief should not be some necessary principles and self-evident matters? And is it all possible that a baseless delusion should persist and become permanent in all the beliefs of mankind throughout all the revolutions it has undergone? And is it all possible that the basis of the assertion of these scholars of the religions, of this mighty consensus, should not be a certain intuition and empirical certainty? And is it at all possible that that certain intuition and empirical certainty which result from innumerable signs, and those signs which have been observed on numerous occasions, and those numerous observations should not all, without doubt or hesitation, be founded on necessary principles? In which case, the cause and the basis of the assertion of the universal belief held by these scholars are the necessary and categorical principles resulting from the great number of times the angels and spirit beings have been observed and seen, which demonstrates the strength of the consensus.

Furthermore, is it all possible, rational or feasible that the unanimous testimony of the prophets and saints, who are like the suns, moons, and stars in human society, concerning the existence of the angels and spirit beings and their actually seeing them, should be prey to doubts or be the object of suspicion? Especially since they are qualified to speak in this matter. It is obvious that two people who are qualified to speak on a matter are preferable to thousands who are not. Moreover, in this question they are affirming a matter, and people who affirm a matter are preferable to thousands who deny or reject it.

Is it at all possible for there to be any doubt concerning the statements of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition, the Sun of Suns in the world of truths, which never at any time sets, shining continuously in the skies of the universe? And can there be doubt concerning the testimony and witnessing of the Muhammadan Being (PBUH), the Sun of Prophet hood?

Since, if on a single occasion the existence of a single spirit being is verified, this demonstrates the real existence of the whole species; and since it proves the existence of the whole species to be true, for sure, the best and most rational and acceptable form of their real existence will be similar to that expounded by the Shari'a, described by the Qur'an, and seen by the One who ascended to a "distance of two bow-lengths."

FOURTH FUNDAMENTAL POINT

If the creatures of the universe are observed with care, it may be seen that like particulars, universals have collective identities, each of which appears as a universal function; it is apparent that each performs a universal duty. For example, just as a flower as itself displays an embroidery full of art, and with the tongue of its being recites the Creator's Names, so the garden of the globe resembles a flower, and performs an extremely orderly, universal duty of glorification. And just as a fruit issues a proclamation expressing its glorification of God within an order and regularity, so does a mighty tree in its entirety have a most well-ordered natural duty and worship. And just as a tree glorifies God through the words of its fruits, flowers and leaves, so do the vast oceans of the heavens glorify the All-Glorious Creator and praise the Sublime Maker through their suns, moons, and stars, which are like words; and so on. Although external beings are outwardly inanimate and unconscious, they all perform extremely vital, living, and conscious duties and glorification. Of a certainty, therefore, just as angels are their representatives expressing their glorification in the World of the Inner Dimensions of Things, so are they the counterparts, dwellings, and mosques of those angels in the external and manifest world.

As is explained in the Fourth Branch of the Twenty-Fourth Word, the first of the four categories of workers employed by the All-Glorious Maker of the palace of this world is that of the angels and spirit beings. Since, without knowing it, plants and inanimate beings perform extremely important though wageless duties at the command of One Who does know; also without knowing it, animals serve extensive universal aims in return for an insignificant wage; and since, observably, in return for two wages, one immediate and the other postponed, human beings, knowing the All-Glorious Maker's aims, are employed through their conforming to them, their taking a share of everything for themselves, and their supervising the other servants; it will certainly be the first category, as well as the fourth, which will constitute the servants and workers. They both resemble human beings in that knowing the universal aims of the All-Glorious Maker, they conform to them through worship, and they are contrary to them. For being beyond sensual pleasure and some partial wage, they consider sufficient the pleasure, perfection, delight and bliss they experience through the All-Glorious Maker's attention, command, favour, consideration, and name, through their perception of Him, connection with Him, and proximity to Him. They labour with the purest sincerity, their duties of worship varying according to their different kinds, and according to the varieties of the creatures in the universe.

Like in a government there are various officials in the various offices, so the duties of worship and glorification vary in the spheres of the realm of dominicality. For example, through the power, strength, reckoning and command of God Almighty, the Archangel Michael is like a general overseer

of God's creatures sown in the field of the face of the earth. If one may say so, he is the head of all the angels that resemble farmers. And, through the permission, command, power, and wisdom of the All-Glorious Creator, the incorporeal shepherds of all the animals have a head, a supreme angel appointed to the task.

Thus, since it is necessary for there to be an angel appointed over each of these external creatures in order to represent in the World of the Inner Dimensions of Things the duties of worship and service of glorification which it performs, and to present them knowingly to the Divine Court, the way the angels are described in the narrations of the Bringer of Sure News (PBUH) is certainly most appropriate and rational. For example, he declared: "There are some angels which have either forty, or forty thousand, heads. In all the heads are forty thousand mouths, and with the forty thousand tongues in each of those mouths they glorify God in forty thousand ways." This Hadith has a reality and both contains a meaning, and has a form, or manner of description. Its meaning is as follows:

The angels' worship is both extremely orderly and perfect, and most universal and comprehensive. As for the form of the truth, it is this:

There are certain mighty corporeal beings that perform their duties of worship with forty thousand heads in forty thousand ways. For example, the heavens glorify God with the suns and the stars. While the earth, which is a single being, performs its duty of worship, its dominical glorification with a hundred thousand heads and with the hundreds of thousands of tongues in each mouth. Thus, the angel appointed to the globe of the earth has to be seen in this way in order to display this meaning in the World of the Inner Dimensions of Things.

I myself, even, saw a medium-sized almond tree which had close on forty large branches like heads. When I looked at one branch, I saw it had nearly forty smaller branches like tongues. Then I looked at one tongue of one of those small branches; forty flowers had opened on it. I studied the flowers considering the wisdom in them, and saw in each close on forty exquisite and well-ordered stamens, colours, and arts, each of which proclaimed one of the All-Glorious Maker's Names and their constantly varying manifestations. Is it at all possible that the All-Wise and Beauteous One, Who is the All-Glorious Maker of the almond tree, would impose this many duties on an inanimate tree, and not mount on it an appointed angel appropriate to it, to be like its spirit, to understand and express its meaning, proclaim it to the universe, and present it to the Divine Court?

O friend! So far, our explanation has been an introduction to bring the heart to acceptance, the reason to submission, and to compel the soul to surrender. If you have understood it to some degree, and wish to meet with the angels, prepare yourself. Moreover, purify yourself of wrongful prejudice. Now look, the doors of the world of the Qur'an are open! Look, the paradise of the Qur'an is with "wide-open gates"! Enter and Look! See the angels in beautiful form in the paradise of the Qur'an! Each of its revealed verses is a place to alight, so look from them:

By the winds sent forth one after another to man's profit, Which then blow violently in tempestuous gusts And scatter things far and wide; Then separate, one from another Then spread abroad a message.²

By the angels who tear out the souls of the wicked with violence, By those who gently draw out the souls of the blessed, And by those who gently glide along on errands of mercy, Then press forward as if in a race, Then arrange to do the commands of their Lord.³

Therein come down the angels and the Spirit by God's permission in every errand.⁴ ...over which are appointed angels stern and severe, who flinch not from executing the commands they receive from God, but do precisely what they are commanded.¹

Also listen to:

...Glory be to Him! They are but servants raised to honour. They speak not before He speaks and they act in all things by His command, listen to its praises. And if you wish to meet with the jinn, enter this resounding Sura:

Say, it has been revealed to me that a company of jinn listened to the Qur'an.

See them and listen to what they say. Take a lesson from them. Look, they are saying:

*"We have really heard a wonderful recital It gives guidance to the right, and we have believed therein: We shall not join in worship any gods with our Lord."*⁹

The Rays, The Eleventh Ray, The Eleventh Topic

Another particular and example of the fruit of belief in the angels concerns the questioning angels, Munkar and Nakir; it is this: in my imagination I entered my grave, telling myself: "I am bound to enter here, the same as everyone else." While taking fright at the bleakness and despair of the lonely, dark, cold, narrow solitary confinement of the grave, two blessed friends resembling Munkar and Nakir appeared. They began to debate with me. My heart and grave were broadened, illumined, and warmed; windows were opened up onto the world of spirits. I felt truly happy at that situation which I saw in the imagination then, and will see in reality in the future, and I offered thanks.

A *medrese* student who was studying Arabic grammar died and in replying to Munkar and Nakir's question of "Who is your Sustainer?", thought he was in his own *medrese* and said: "'Who' is the subject, 'your Sustainer' is its predicate; ask me something difficult; that's easy." It made both the angels, and the spirits who were present, and a diviner of graves who witnessed the incident, laugh, and brought a smile to Divine mercy. Being delivered from torment, the late Hafiz Ali, a martyr hero of the *Risale-i Nur*, died in prison while writing out and enthusiastically studying the treatise of The Fruits of Belief. Just as he replied in the grave to the questioning angels with the truths of The Fruits of Belief—as he had in court here—, so I and the *Risale-i Nur* students shall reply to those questions with the brilliant and powerful proofs of the *Risale-i Nur*, in the future in fact and now in meaning, and will cause the angels to confirm them and appreciate them and congratulate them; God willing. Another small example of belief in the angels leading to worldly happiness is this: an innocent child who had learnt his lesson from the *Ilm-i Hal*, said to another child who was wailing at the death of his little brother: "Don't cry, be thankful, because your brother has gone to heaven and is with the angels. He is enjoying himself there and having a better time than us. He is flying around like the angels, and taking a look at everything." He turned his friend's woeful tears into happy smiles.¹⁰

The Words, Fourteenth Word, The Third

For example, in order to ascend to the truth which the Bringer of Sure News described concerning the Bearers of the Throne, the angels appointed to the earth and the skies, and other sorts of angels, stating that they glorify God with forty thousand heads, and with the forty thousand tongues in each head, and in forty thousand ways with each tongue, consider the following carefully. Through verses like,

The seven heavens and the earth and all within them glorify and extol Him.³ It was We Who made the hills declare in unison with him Our praises.⁴ We did indeed offer the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains,⁵

the All-Glorious One expresses clearly that even the greatest and most universal of beings demonstrate that they glorify Him in accordance with their universality and in a way appropriate to

⁹ <http://www.erasale.com/index.jsp?locale=en#content.en.201.521>

¹⁰ <http://www.erasale.com/index.jsp?locale=en#content.en.204.279>

their vastness. And it appears to be thus. Just as the words of glorification of the heavens, which are an ocean glorifying God, are the suns, moons, and stars, so the words of praise of the earth, a flying thing praising and glorifying, are the animals, plants and trees. That is to say, just as the trees and stars all perform particular forms of glorification, so does the earth and every part of the earth, and all the mountains and valleys, and the land and the sea, and the spheres of the firmament and the constellations in the heavens all perform universal forms of glorification. The earth, which possesses these thousands of heads containing thousands of tongues, certainly has an angel appointed to it who translates and displays in the World of Similitudes the flowers of glorification and fruits of praise it performs with each, and who represents and proclaims them in the World of Spirits.

Indeed, if numerous things take on the form of a collectivity, a collective personality comes into being. If such a collectivity fuses and becomes a unity, it will have a collective personality and a sort of spirit which will represent it, and an appointed angel who will perform its duty of glorification. As an example, consider the plane-tree in front of my room here, a mighty word of the mouth of Barla and the tongue of this mountain: see how many hundreds of tongues of smaller branches there are on the three heads of the three main branches of its trunk. Study carefully how many hundreds of words of well-ordered and balanced fruits it has, and how many hundreds of letters of well-proportioned winged seeds; just as you hear and see how eloquently it praises and glorifies the All-Glorious Maker, the Owner of the command of *"Be!" and it is*, so too the angel appointed to it represents its glorification with numerous tongues in the World of Meaning. Wisdom necessitates that it is so.¹¹

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Angels and Their Functions

Angels are created from light. The Arabic word for angel is malak. According to its root form, malak means messenger, deputy, envoy, superintendent, and a powerful person. The root meaning also implies descent from a high place. Angels build relations between the macrocosmic world and the material one, convey God's commands of, direct the acts and lives of beings (with God's permission), and represent their worship in their own realms.

Having refined or subtle bodies of light, angels move very rapidly and can be found in all realms of existence. They place themselves in our eyelids or in the bodies of other beings to observe the works of God. They also descend into the hearts of Prophets and saintly people to bring them inspiration. Such inspirations are usually from God, but sometimes they come from angels.

Some animals, like honeybees, act according to Divine inspiration. Science asserts that all animals are directed by impulses, but cannot explain what an impulse is and how it occurs. Scientists are trying to discover how migrating birds find their way, how young eels hatched in the waters of Europe find their way to their ancestral waters in the Pacific. Even if we attribute this to information coded in their DNA, this information is assuredly from God, Who knows everything, controls the universe, and assigns angels to direct these creatures' lives. If science says we must not question the existence of such invisible forces as the law of growth in living creatures, it is even more scientific to attribute such forces to angels, God's special servants.

¹¹ <http://www.erisale.com/index.jsp?locale=en#content.en.201.178>

Everything that exists, either as an individual or as a species, has a collective identity and performs a unique, universal function. Each flower displays a superlative design and symmetry and recites, in the tongue of its being, the Names of the Creator manifested on it. The entire Earth performs a universal glorification as though it were a single flower. The vast "ocean" of the heavens praises and glorifies the Majestic Maker of the universe through its suns, moons, and stars. Even inert material bodies, although outwardly inanimate and unconscious, perform a vital function in praising God. Angels represent these immaterial bodies in the world of the inner dimensions of things, and express their praise. In return, these immaterial bodies are the angels' representatives, dwellings, and mosques in this world.

There are various classes of angels. One class is engaged in constant worship; another worships by working. These working angels have functions that resemble human occupations, like shepherds or farmers. In other words, the face of the Earth resembles a general farm, and an appointed angel oversees all of its animal species by the command of the All-Majestic Creator, by His permission and power and strength, and for His sake. Each animal species is overseen by a lesser angel appointed to act as its shepherd.

The face of the Earth is also an arable field in which all plants are sown. Another angel is appointed to oversee all of them in the Name of Almighty God and by His power. Lower ranking angels worship and glorify Almighty God by supervising particular plant species. Archangel Michael, upon him be peace, one of the bearers of God's Throne of Sustenance,¹² oversees the angels of the highest rank.

Angels who function as shepherds or farmers bear no resemblance to human shepherds or farmers, for their supervision is purely for God's sake, in His Name, and by His power and command. They observe the manifestations of God's Lordship in the species they are assigned to supervise, study the manifestations of Divine Power and Mercy in it, communicate Divine commands to it through inspiration, and arrange its voluntary actions.

Their supervision of plants, in particular, consists of representing in the angelic tongue the plants' glorification in the tongue of their being. In other words, these angels proclaim the praises and exaltations that all plants offer to the Majestic Creator through their lives. These angels also regulate and employ the plants' faculties correctly and direct them toward certain ends. Angels perform such services through their partial willpower and a kind of worship and adoration.¹³ They do not originate or create their acts, for everything bears a stamp particular to the Creator of all things. Only God creates. In short, whatever angels do is worship, and it is therefore not like the ordinary acts of human beings.

Since there is one angel to represent every kind of creature and present its service and worship to the Divine Court, the Prophet's, upon him be peace and blessings, description of angels is entirely reasonable and true. According to him, there are angels with 40,000 heads, each with 40,000 mouths, and 40,000 praises sung by 40,000 tongues in each mouth.

This Prophetic tradition means that angels serve universal purposes, and that some natural creatures worship God with 40,000 heads in 40,000 ways. The firmament, for example, praises the Majestic

¹² This is an official of the highest rank, whom God employs to veil His provisioning of all creation. (Tr.)

¹³ Said Nursi says that they have partial will-power, as shown by their response to God's proclaiming to them that He would choose a vicegerent on the Earth. This partial willpower, however, does not cause or enable them to disobey God's orders. As such, their willpower is weaker than our willpower.

Creator through its suns and stars; the Earth, although a single body, worships with many thousands of "heads" each with many thousands of "mouths" and each with many thousands of "tongues" Thus this tradition is considered to refer to the angel who represents the Earth in the world of the inner dimensions of things (the world of immaterial bodies).

The Majestic Maker of this huge palace of creation employs four classes of laborers: angels and other spirit beings; inanimate things and vegetable creations, which are quite important servants working without wages; animals, which serve unconsciously in return for a small wage of food and pleasure; and humanity, which works in awareness of the Majestic Creator's purposes. Men and women learn from everything, and supervise lower-ranking servants in return for wages (reward) here and in the Hereafter.

The first class consists of angels. These beings are never promoted for what they do, for each has a fixed, determined rank and receives a particular pleasure from the work itself as well as a radiance from worship. Their reward is found in their service. Just as we are nourished by and derive pleasure from air and water, light and food, angels are nourished by and receive pleasure from the lights of remembrance and glorification, worship and knowledge, and love of God. Since they are created of light, light sustains them. Even fragrant scents, which are close to light, are enjoyable nourishment for them. Indeed, pure spirits take pleasure in sweet scents.

Angels receive their own reward—elevated bliss—for carrying out the commands of the One Whom they worship, working for His sake, rendering service in His Name, and supervising through His view. They gain honour through their connection with Him, are refreshed by studying His Kingdom's material and immaterial dimensions, and are satisfied by observing His Grace and Majesty's manifestations. The resulting bliss is so elevated bliss that we cannot even begin to comprehend or perceive it.

Angels do not sin or disobey, for they do not have an evil-commanding soul that must be resisted. They have fixed stations, and so are neither promoted nor abased. They have no experience with such negative qualities as envy, rancour, enmity, and all the lusts and animal appetites found in human beings and jinn. They have no gender, do not eat or drink, and do not feel hunger, thirst, or tiredness. Although they receive no wages for their worship, they derive special pleasure from carrying out God's commands, delight in being near to Him, and receive spiritual pleasure from their worship. Praise, worship, recitation of God's Names, and glorification of Him are their nourishment, as are light and sweet fragrances.

On the other hand, we struggle with our evil-commanding soul and Satan. While angels invite us to true guidance, inspire us with belief and good conduct and virtue, and call us to resist the temptations of Satan and our evil-commanding selves, Satan and our evil-commanding selves try to seduce us. A person's life is the history of his or her continuous struggle between angelic inspiration and satanic temptation. This is why we can be elevated to the highest rank or abased to the lowest rank. Also, this is why the elect of humanity, the Prophets and great saints, are higher in rank than the greatest angels, and why ordinary believers are higher than common angels. Also, although angels have more knowledge of God and His Names and Attributes than we do, we are more comprehensive mirrors of God's Names and Attributes due to our developed human senses, our ability to reflect, and our complex nature.

There are different kinds of angels. Besides those deputed to represent and supervise various species and present their worship to God, there are four Archangels and angels who carry God's Throne.¹⁴ Other groups of angels are known as Mala'-i A'la (the Highest Council), Nadiyy-i A'la (the Highest Assembly), and Rafiq-i A'la (the Highest Company). Specific angels have been appointed to Paradise and Hell. Angels who record a person's deeds are called Kiramun Katibun (the Noble Recorders), and, as stated in a hadith, 360 of them are responsible for each believer's life. They guard their charges, especially during infancy and old age, pray for them, and ask God to forgive them. Other angels help believers during times of war and attend assemblies that praise and glorify God, as well as study meetings held for God's sake and to benefit people.

Angels, particularly angels of mercy, do not enter houses containing statues or places where dogs are fed, and refrain from close contact with ritually impure people and menstruating women. They also avoid those with bad breath (derived from eating onions or garlic or from smoking), and do not visit those who sever relations with their parents and relatives.

Although God is All-Powerful and can guard everyone by Himself, He may appoint angels to guard His servants. To earn such a guardianship, believers have to do willingly that which is good and establish a close relation with God Almighty. They must have strong belief in God and all other pillars of faith, never abandon regular worship and prayer, lead a disciplined life, and refrain from forbidden things or sinful acts.

Angels helped the believers during the battles of Badr and Uhud, and also during the conquest of Makka. They always help believers who sincerely struggle in the way of God, regardless of time and place.

Belief in angels has many benefits. For example, it provides us some peace and removes our loneliness. The inspiration breathed by angels exhilarates us, enlightens us intellectually, and opens new horizons of knowledge and thought. Awareness of their continuous company also helps us abstain from sin and improper behaviour.

We may use some Qur'anic verses, such as the following, to observe angels:

By the loosed ones successively, storming tempestuously; by the scatterers scattering, and the severally severing and those hurling a reminder, excusing or warning. (77:1-6)

By those that pluck out violently; and those that draw out gently; by those that float serenely, and those that outstrip suddenly; by those that direct an affair. (79:1-5)

... in (the Night of Power) the angels and the spirit descend, by the leave of their Lord, upon every command. (97:4)

... a Fire whose fuel is men and stones, and over which are harsh, terrible angels who disobey not God in what He commands them and do what they are commanded. (66:6)

¹⁴ We do not know what the Qur'an means by God's Throne or how it is carried.

Glory be to Him! Nay, but they are honoured servants that outstrip Him not in speech, and perform as He commands. (21:26–27)¹⁵

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Angels and Jinn In This World

Angels and jinn can assume any form or shape and appear in this world. Here, we observe movement from the visible to the invisible: water evaporates and disappears into the atmosphere, solid matter becomes a liquid or a gas (steam), and matter becomes energy (nuclear fission). Likewise, we observe movement from the invisible to the visible: gases become fluids, evaporated water becomes rain (as well as snow or hail), and energy becomes matter. Similarly, intangible thoughts and meanings in our minds can appear in the tangible form of letters and words in essays and books.

In an analogous way, such invisible beings as angels, jinn, and other spirit entities are clothed in some material substance, such as air or ether, and then become visible. According to Imam Shibli, God may allow them to assume a form when they utter any of His Names, for this functions like a key or a visa enabling them to assume a form and become visible in this world. If they try to do so without God's permission, by relying on their own abilities, they are torn into pieces and perish.

We read in Qur'an 19:17 that the spirit God sent to Mary (the mother of Jesus), and whom Muslim scholars say is Archangel Gabriel, appeared before her as a man. When Gabriel came to Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, with Revelation or God's Messages, he usually came as a warrior, a traveler, or a Companion named Dihya. For example, he came as a warrior on horseback following the end of the Battle of the Trench and told the Prophet, upon him be peace: "O Messenger of God, you have taken off your armor but we, the angels, have not yet done so. God orders you to march upon the Banu Qurayza." Once he came as a traveler dressed in white and, in order to instruct the Companions in religion, asked the Prophet such questions as: What is belief? What is Islam? What is ihsan (excellence or perfection of virtue)? When is the Day of Judgment?

Like angels and jinn, Satan (who is a jinn) can appear in different forms. It is narrated that before the Battle of Badr, he appeared to the Qurayshi leaders as an old man from Najd and advised them. Likewise, a Companion guarding the spoils of war caught a disguised Satan trying to steal some items. Satan entreated the Companion to release him, which he did—twice. On the third time, the Companion tried to take him to God's Messenger. But Satan appealed: "Release me, and I'll tell you how you can secure yourself against me." The Companion asked what that was, and Satan replied that it was the Verse of the Throne (2:255). When informed of this, God's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, commented: "That wicked one is a liar, but on that occasion he told the truth."

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¹⁵ <http://fgulen.com/en/fethullah-gulens-works/1362-essentials-of-the-islamic-faith/24566-angels-and-their-functions>

¹⁶ The Companion did not know that the man was Satan

The Qur'an relates that a group of jinn listened to God's Messenger recite the Qur'an and, when they returned to their people, said: "O people! Surely we listened to a Book that has been revealed after Moses, affirms what precedes it, and guides to right and the Straight Path" (46:30). The sura continues with what they thought about what they had heard. Some Traditions tell us that the Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, recited parts of the Qur'an and preached his Message to the jinn.

Jinn can also appear as snakes, scorpions, cattle, donkeys, birds, and other animals. When our Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings, accepted the jinn's oath of allegiance in the valley of Batn al-Nakhla, he wanted them to appear to his community either in their own form or in other agreeable forms, not as such harmful animals as dogs and scorpions. He warned his community: "When you see any vermin in your house, tell it three times: 'For God's sake, leave this place' for it may be a friendly jinn. If it does not leave, it is not a jinn. If it is harmful, you may kill it."

The jinn who gave allegiance to God's Messenger promised him: "If your community recites the basmala (In the Name of God, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate) before anything they do and cover their dishes, we will not touch their food or their drink." Another Tradition says: [When you have relieved yourselves] do not clean yourselves with bones and dried pieces of dung, for they are among the foods of your jinn brothers.¹⁷

¹⁷ <http://fgulen.com/en/fethullah-gulens-works/1362-essentials-of-the-islamic-faith/24568-angels-and-jinn-in-this-world>