

# Excerpted from *Luminous Couplets*

[*al-Mathnawi al-Arabi al-Nuri*]

by Imam Bediuzzaman Said Nursi

Translated from the original (Arabic) by Dr. Mustafa Tuna,  
who also added cross references from Imam Nursi's later writings in *Risale-i Nur*.

[Turkish abridged translation here](#)

## Chapter: Drop from Sea of Monotheism

### Introduction

*In the name of God, the Merciful, the Giver of Mercy.*

الحمد لله والصلاة على نبيه

All praise is due to God and blessings be upon His Prophet.

فهذا الأثر: على أربعة أبواب وخاتمة ومقدمة.

This work has four sections, a concluding remark, and an introduction.

#### (4.ii) Introduction

اعلم أني حصلتُ في أربعين سنة في سفر العمر، وثلاثين سنة في سير العلم: أربع كلمات، وأربع جمل. سيجيء تفصيلها. أشيرُ هنا إلى الإجمال..

Know that in my forty years of life journey and thirty years of pursuing knowledge, I have obtained **four words and four sentences**. The details of this will come. Here I am pointing to it in summary.

أما الكلمة فهي: المعنى الحرفي، والمعنى الاسمي، والنية، والنظر.

**As for the words**, they are: indicative meaning, nominative meaning, intention, and viewpoint.

أعني: أن النظر إلى ما سواه تعالى، لا بد أن يكون بالمعنى الحرفي وبحسابه تعالى، وأن النظر إلى الكائنات بالمعنى الاسمي أي بحساب الأسباب خطأً. ففي كل شيء وجهان: وجه إلى الحق، ووجه إلى الكون. فالتوجه إلى الوجه الكوني لا بد أن يكون حرفياً وعنواناً للمعنى الاسمي الذي هو جهه نسبيته إليه تعالى؛ مثلاً: لا بد أن يُرى النعمة مرآة للإنعام، والوسائط والأسباب مرآيا لتصرف القدرة..

This is what I mean: Anything other than the One, exalted is He, should be viewed with the indicative meaning and on account of the One exalted is He. Viewing the cosmos with the nominative meaning, that is, on account of causes, is a mistake.

Everything has two faces: one facing the Real and the other facing the realm of being. The face facing the realm of being has to be considered indicatively and as a title for the aspect of the nominative meaning that relates to the One exalted is He. For example: a blessing has to be seen as a mirror to the act of blessing, while intermediaries and causes have to be seen as mirrors to the disposal of divine power.<sup>[i]</sup>

#### *(4.ii-a) From the Barla Addendum (Nursi's Letter to Brother Re'fet Barutçu)*

As for your second question about the discussion of nominative and indicative meanings, in addition to being explained at the beginning of most books on the science of Arabic grammar, there are sufficient elucidations about that matter that explain it with representations in the treatises of the science of reality called the *Words* and the *Letters*.<sup>[ii]</sup> It is unnecessary to offer too much explanation to an intelligent and meticulous person like you.

Suppose you are looking at a mirror. If you look at it for the glass, then you behold the glass on purpose. In it, the sight catches Re'fet incidentally. If the purpose is to look at the mirror to see your blessed countenance, then you behold the amiable Re'fet on purpose. You say: "مَتَبَارَكَ اللهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ" "May God, the most excellent Creator, bless you!" The glass of the mirror remains incidental, your sight catches it indirectly.

So, in the first case, the glass of the mirror is the nominative meaning; Re'fet becomes the indicative meaning. In the second case, the glass of the mirror is the indicative meaning; that is to say, it is not being viewed for itself, it is being viewed for another meaning, which is the reflection. The reflection is the nominative meaning. That is to say, the reflection is included in the definition of 'noun' in one respect, which is: 'indicates a meaning in itself.' As for the mirror, it becomes a confirming example of the definition of 'particle,' which is: 'indicates a meaning in other than itself.'

From the viewpoint of the Qur'an, all existent beings of the cosmos are particles (*hurūf*); they express the meaning of Someone else with the other-indicative meaning. That is to say, they inform about His names and attributes. In most cases, spiritless philosophy looks with the nominative meaning. It becomes bogged down in the swamp of Nature...<sup>[iii]</sup>

وكذا، إن النظر، والنّيّة يغيّران ماهيات الأشياء، فيقلبان السيئات حسنات. كما يقلب الإكسيرُ الترابَ ذهباً، كذلك تُقلب النية الحركات العادية عبادات. والنظرُ يقلب علوم الأكوام معارف إلهية.. فإن نُظر بحساب الأسباب والوسائط فجهاالات، وإن نُظر بحساب الله فمعارف إلهية..

Likewise, indeed viewpoint and intention transform the quiddities of things, and thus, they turn evil deeds into good deeds. Just like an elixir that turns soil into gold, intention turns ordinary actions into worship. And viewpoint turns the knowledge of the realms of being into divine gnosis [knowledge of God]... Hence, if viewed on account of causes and intermediary instruments, it is ignorance upon ignorance, and if viewed on account of God, it is divine gnosis.<sup>[iv]</sup>

وأما الكلام:

### As for the sentences:

فالأول: "إني لست مالكي" وإن مالكي هو مالك الملك ذو الجلال والإكرام... فتوهّمْتني مالكا، لأفهم صفات مالكي بالمقايسة. ففهمت بالمتناهي الموهوم الغير المتناهي. فجاء الصباح وانطفأ المصباح المتخيّل..

**First: "I do not own myself."** Verily, my owner is the Owner of dominion, the Possessor of majesty and munificence... So, I supposed myself to be an owner to understand the attributes of my Owner by way of comparison. Through the supposed finite, I understood the supposed concept of endlessness. And so, the morning came and extinguished the imaginary lantern...<sup>[v]</sup>

الثاني: "الموت حق" فهذه الحياة وهذا البدن ليسا بقابلين لأن يصيرا عمودين تُبنى عليهما هذه الدنيا العظيمة؛ إذ ما هما بأبديين ولا من حديد ولا حجر بل من لحم ودم وعظم. ومتخالفات توافقوا في أيام قليلة هم على جناح التفرق في كل أن.. فكيف يُبنى بالأمال قصراً يسع الدنيا على هذا الأساس الرخو الفاسد والعمود المتوّد الكاسد..

**Second: "Death is real."** This tremendous world cannot be built on the columns of this life and body, for they are not eternal or made of iron or rock, in fact, they are made of flesh, blood, and bones. A variety of different things congruently come together for a few days yet remain poised to part ways at any time. How can a palace as vast as the world be built on expectations alone on this frail and corrupted foundation and decayed and slack column?<sup>[vi]</sup>

الثالث: "ربي واحد": كل السعادات لكلّ واحدٍ هو التسليمُ لرب واحد. وإلّا لاحتاج إلى الأرباب المتشاكسين من مجموع الكائنات؛ إذ لجامعة الإنسان، له احتياجات إلى كل الأشياء، وعلاقات معها، وتآلمات وتأثرات، شعوريا وغير شعوري بكل منها، فهذه حالة جهنمية. فمعرفة الرب الواحد الذي كل هذه الأرباب الموهومة حجابٌ رقيق على يد قدرته هي حالة فردوسية دنيوية..

**Third: "My Lord is One."** For everyone, felicity of any type is only in submitting to a single Lord. Otherwise, one will be in need of conflicting lords among all created beings of the cosmos, for, owing to his comprehensiveness, a human being needs, attaches to, and either consciously or unconsciously feels the pains and distress of everything... And this is a hellish state. As for the

gnosis of a single Lord for Whose hand of power these supposed lords are but delicate veils, that is a *Firdaws*-like state in this world...<sup>[vii]</sup>

الرابع: إن "أنا" نقطة سوداء، وواحد قياسي، التفّت على رأسه خطوط الصنعة الشعورية، تشاهد فيها أن مالكة أقرب إليه منه..

**Fourth: Verily, the "I" ( 'anā) is a black dot and a unit of measurement.** The lines of conscious artistry are wrapped around its head, and in them, it is witnessed that the Owner is closer to him than him.<sup>[viii]</sup>

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[i] See LM11.1.

[ii] That is, Nursi, *Sözler*; and Nursi, *Mektûbat*. Note that this letter was written in 1934, before Nursi authored the treatises in Nursi, *Lem'alar*; and Nursi, *Şualar*.

[iii] Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, *Barla Lâhikası* (Istanbul: Envâr Neşriyat, 1995), 348.

[iv] See Glossary; LM4.5.4, 6.7, 8.4, 9.21, 14.3.32, 15.16, and 17.4.1.3; Nursi, *Sözler*, 130-32/W12.1, 638-41/W32.3.2.2.q, and 723/W.Lemaat.77; and Nursi, *Mektûbat*, 450/L29.9.6.2.

[v] That is, when the reality of the true Owner of everything is understood, the supposed ownership of the self disappears. See LM4.1.iv.1.

[vi] See Nursi, *Sözler*, Nursi, *İşarat-ül İ'caz*, 31/W7; and Nursi, *Lem'alar*, 208-09/L25.6(2).

[vii] The highest level of Paradise. "*Firdaws*" in Arabic and "Paradise" in English share the same etymological root in ancient Iranian. See Nursi, *Sözler*, 5-7/W1, and 319-20/W23.2.1

[viii] See Nursi, *Sözler*, 535-39/W30.1.