

Dear Readers,

The concept of “*belief*,” one of the oldest and deepest subjects in human history, has been debated, questioned, and redefined for centuries by philosophers, scientists, theologians, and ordinary people alike. I, too, would like to share my thoughts on this ancient discussion by starting a series of articles where I present my perspective.

In this series, we will explore different belief perspectives, such as those who believe in a creator, those who do not (atheists), and those who are unsure (agnostics). Through dialogues between characters with these differing viewpoints, we will delve into the topic using **scientific and logical arguments, explanations that appeal to reason and conscience, evidence-based statements, and a gentle language.**¹

First, we will include a deist character, who believes in a creator but sees them as passive, in these dialogues that will take place between characters who believe in a creator, those who do not believe in a creator (atheist), and those who are unsure (agnostic). My aim is to better understand the differences between belief and disbelief, to open new horizons for **minds that think and question** about this subject, and perhaps to help all of us better understand our own belief systems.

My writings, while addressing deep philosophical and theological questions, were written using a language that is supported by real-life examples and logical arguments, and that values scientific methods. I have taken care to adopt a style that allows everyone who reads to find something of their own, **that inspires thought**, and perhaps enables them to reconsider their own beliefs.

As we embark on this series, I hope that you, my valued readers, will also be a part of these dialogues and perhaps gain a new perspective. In each article, we will address a different perspective and deepen our discussions on faith.

We have tried to offer an unconventional perspective through the example of a chair, an object we are all familiar with. Most of us become so accustomed to the events and objects we see around us that we stop thinking about how and why they came to be. This situation can create a kind of “**familiarity**,” limiting our world of thought and leading us to misconceptions.

The chair example aims to break these habitual thought patterns by showing how even this ordinary-looking object emerges through an intricate and orderly process. In this way, it is intended to attract the reader's attention, lead them to deeper thoughts, and enable them to look at events from a different perspective.

The chair example aims to arouse curiosity in the reader's mind and encourage them to think about the miraculous aspects of creation. This example also appeals to the perspectives of people with different beliefs, allowing them to reflect on these issues and evaluate different perspectives.

I invite you to the first part of this series and wish you enjoyable and enlightening moments in this contemplative journey we will take together. Now, let's all listen to this interesting conversation and seek the answers to these important questions within ourselves.

Curiosity and wonder are innate (natural) feelings in human nature. While trying to understand the world around us, even seemingly ordinary events can lead us to deep thoughts. The unknowns and unseen aspects of life can cause us to embark on an inner journey. Such an event took place in an ordinary room, bringing together three people with different worldviews.

A seemingly ordinary room had transformed into a stage where different worldviews met. Three individuals—one who believed in the existence of a creator, one who doubted it (agnostic), and one who denied the existence of a creator (atheist)—crossed paths in this room. Each had come with their own beliefs and thoughts, but they all shared a common goal: **To find the truth**. What would transpire in this room promised to be much more than just an ordinary conversation.

This room would become a stage where three different perspectives met, thoughts clashed, and ultimately meaning was sought. They would witness how science, logic, and conscience intertwined on the fine line between truth and belief. The encounter of these three individuals was not only the beginning of a journey that would change their lives but also potentially alter the perspective of everyone who read their story.

The three people looked around curiously. Boards, nails, sandpaper, a ruler, a saw, a drill, a hammer, glue, and most importantly, an assembly manual with strange writings, lines, numbers, sequences, and arrow signs. These materials (referring to the substances or elements involved in the construction of an object or a living being) and the manual (referring to the laws of nature) suddenly became the center of attention in the room.

Suddenly, the ruler moved! Its camera started scanning the manual **as if it were alive**. As the numbers on the ruler rapidly changed, it determined which boards to cut according to the measurements in the manual. The three people looked at each other in astonishment. **How could this be possible?**

The saw wasn't idle either. After scanning the manual with its own camera, it began cutting the boards to the dimensions specified by the ruler. Four legs and two wide pieces were flawlessly cut and separated. The three people in the room held their breath at what they were witnessing.

The drill and hammer started moving around the manual like dancers. The drill, following the diagram in the manual, drilled holes where the nails would be placed, while the hammer prepared the nails and got ready for the assembly process. The three people were mesmerized by this incredible scene.

One of the cut wide pieces, **as if it had a will of its own**, moved and positioned itself horizontally on the four legs. The drill and hammer quickly came into play, using nails to secure the wide piece to the legs. The second wide piece moved in the same way and was mounted vertically to the edge of the first piece.

The glue, like a painter glancing at the manual, spread itself onto the joints of the assembled boards, further strengthening the pieces. Meanwhile, the sandpaper also came into action, smoothing the entire surface of the newly formed structure.

The three people in the room were watching what was happening in amazement. Before their eyes, a brand-new wooden structure had come into existence from ordinary materials and a manual: **A chair**. The perfect craftsmanship and flawless details of the structure astonished them even more.

The person with agnostic beliefs (neither believing nor disbelieving in a creator) asked in astonishment, *“How did this happen?”*

The atheist (who doesn't believe in a creator) said thoughtfully,² *“The materials already have the ability to do these things within themselves. They did all of this themselves under the guidance of the manual; we witnessed the events unfold before our eyes.”*

The person who believed in the necessity of a creator objected to the views of the others and said: *“It may be true that the manual explains how to do everything and that these parts have certain properties. However, it is evident to anyone with scientific knowledge, logic, observation, and reason that these inanimate objects do not have the power and will to move on their own. It's not even possible for them to recognize each other, read the manual, and understand it. Therefore, there must be an unseen,³ conscious being with will and purpose who carried out this perfect order and creation.”*

The person with agnostic beliefs (neither believing nor disbelieving in a creator) spoke again, *“I disagree with both of you. The human mind currently does not understand the truth of how these things happen. Therefore, we cannot know how and why they are doing what they are doing. We can neither accept nor deny a creator. We simply don't know how and why this is happening. One day, science will explain this, and we will understand; thus, we will reach the truth and believe in that truth.”*

DIFFERENT BELIEF PERSPECTIVES

People have different belief and thought systems regarding the existence and functioning of the universe. These differences can generally be grouped into three main perspectives: those who believe in a creator, those who definitively do not believe in a creator (atheist), and those who remain undecided between believing and not believing (agnostic). Let's examine the fundamental statements and explanations of each perspective:

Atheist (Who Does Not Believe in the Existence of a Creator):

- **Statement:** *“The materials already have the ability to do these things within themselves. They did all of this themselves under the guidance of the manual; we witnessed the events unfold before our eyes.”*
- **Explanation:** According to the atheist perspective, everything in the universe can be explained by natural processes and their inherent properties. The order and activity in the universe arise as a result of the functioning of natural laws. This person argues that physical and chemical laws enable the formation of complex structures through the combination of materials. Therefore, they believe that the existence of the materials and the manual is sufficient, and the events occur spontaneously. From the atheist perspective, there is no need for any conscious creator; natural laws and random processes are enough to explain such formations.⁴ [i]

Those Who Believe in the Existence of a Creator:

- **Statement:** “It may be true that the manual explains how to do everything and that these parts have certain properties. However, it is evident to anyone with scientific knowledge, logic, observation, and reason that these inanimate objects do not have the power and will to move on their own. It's not even possible for them to recognize each other, read the manual, and understand it. Therefore, there must be an unseen, conscious being with will and purpose who carried out this perfect order and creation.”
- **Explanation:** According to the perspective that a creator must exist, the order and functioning in the universe are established by a conscious creator or a being with will. This person argues that materials cannot move on their own and that a conscious power guides this event.

Person with Agnostic Beliefs (We Cannot Know the Truth):

- **Statement:** “I disagree with both of you. The human mind currently does not understand the truth of how these things happen. Therefore, we cannot know how and why they are doing what they are doing. We can neither accept nor deny a creator. We simply don't know how and why this is happening. One day, science will explain this, and we will understand; thus, we will reach the truth and believe in that truth.”
- **Explanation:** According to the agnostic perspective, it is accepted that it is impossible to reach definitive knowledge on a particular subject. This person argues that they cannot make any definitive judgment about how and why the current situation occurred and, therefore, it is not possible to accept or deny a creator. Agnostics are aware of the limitations of science and human knowledge and believe that current knowledge is insufficient. According to them, more scientific research and evidence are needed to understand the unknowns. Therefore, they prefer to remain open-minded without reaching a definitive conclusion.⁵

The second person, who is an atheist, jumps into the conversation and continues very confidently:

TO BE CONTINUED (GOD WILLING)

SCIENCE, REASON AND CONSCIENCE: A PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNEY FROM THE CHAIR TO THE CREATOR - 2

¹ “Risale-i Nur's method is gentle, kind, and soft-spoken.”

From the Risale-i Nur Collection by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Flashes 176 : Twenty-Third Flashes

² Atheism is a worldview that does not believe in or denies the existence of a creator. There are various philosophical schools and systems of thought under the umbrella of atheism. Here are some philosophical ideas that can exemplify atheist systems of thought:

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1. **Materialism:** According to this view, everything that exists in the universe is composed of matter, and concepts such as non-material beings or souls are rejected. Prominent thinkers of materialism include Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Ludwig Feuerbach.
 2. **Rationalism:** Rationalists argue that the most reliable way to attain knowledge is through reason and logic. Atheist rationalists assert that the belief in the necessity of a creator contradicts reason and logic. Leading rationalist thinkers include Baruch Spinoza and Bertrand Russell.
 3. **Empiricism:** Empiricists argue that knowledge can be acquired through experience and observation. According to this view, it is not possible to attain definitive knowledge about entities that cannot be directly experienced (e.g., a creator). David Hume and John Locke have made significant contributions to this thought.
 4. **Positivism:** Positivists only accept knowledge obtained through scientific methods as valid. This philosophical view argues that supernatural beings do not exist because they cannot be scientifically proven. Auguste Comte is one of the founders of this movement.
 5. **Secular Humanism:** This system of thought advocates for human well-being and happiness on a human-based ethical and rational foundation, without supernatural beings or religious beliefs. Thinkers who embrace this view include Paul Kurtz and Richard Dawkins.
 6. **Existentialism:** Existentialism focuses on individual freedom, responsibility, and the search for personal meaning. Atheist existentialists argue that humans must create their own meaning and do not need an external creator. Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus are prominent representatives of this thought.
 7. **Naturalism:** Naturalists argue that the universe can be explained by natural laws and physical processes, and supernatural beings or events are unnecessary. Richard Dawkins and Carl Sagan are among the modern proponents of this view.
 8. **Nihilism:** Nihilists argue that life or the universe has no meaning, purpose, or value. Atheist nihilists believe that the belief in the necessity of a creator also falls within this meaninglessness and is unnecessary. Friedrich Nietzsche is one of the leading thinkers of nihilism.
 9. **Absurdism:** Absurdism emphasizes the contradiction between the human search for meaning and the meaninglessness of the universe. Absurdist's argue that one way to overcome this contradiction is to reject the belief in the necessity of a creator. Albert Camus is a significant representative of absurdism.
 10. **Humanistic Atheism:** This thought argues that humans have the capacity for moral values and creating meaning, and there is no need for supernatural beings or powers in this process. This view emphasizes that humans can create their own ethical and moral systems.
 11. **Dogmatic Atheism:** Dogmatic atheists definitively argue that a creator does not exist and support this belief with strong arguments. This view takes a firm stance against religious beliefs and rejects the existence of a creator with scientific and logical arguments.
 12. **New Atheism:** The New Atheism movement is a modern atheist movement that advocates for reducing the influence of religion in public life and politics and promoting the supremacy of science. Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, and Daniel Dennett are the leading proponents of this movement.
 13. **Deterministic Atheism:** This view argues that all events in the universe can be explained by specific physical laws and cause-and-effect relationships. Deterministic atheists assert that there is no need for a supernatural being in the workings of the universe. This thought can be associated with Laplace's concept of determinism.
 14. **Postmodernism:** Postmodernism advocates for the rejection of universal truths and meta-narratives. In this context, religion's claim to universal truth is criticized, and the belief in the necessity of a creator is questioned. Michel Foucault and Jean-François Lyotard are important thinkers of postmodernism.
 15. **Socialism and Communism:** These ideologies, advocated by thinkers like Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, criticize religious beliefs, especially organized religion, as a tool of social control. They argue that religion distracts people from real-world problems.

This list demonstrates how diverse atheist thought can be and how different philosophical currents can influence the atheist worldview. Each current, with its own methods and arguments, opposes the belief in the necessity of a creator or offers alternative explanations.

³ "Even millions of skilled magicians cannot perform these arts. This means that the **unseen** king has very great miracles."

From the Risale-i Nur Collection by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Words 55: Tenth Word

"...let him explain to those who enter the palace how they indicate the perfections and skills of the palace owner, and let him inform them of the manners of entering and the ceremonies of viewing, and describe the ceremonies of attending to the **unseen** sultan in accordance with his pleasure."

From the Risale-i Nur Collection by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Words 121: Eleventh Word

"The master **whom we do not see**, sees us and everything and hears our words. All his works are miracles and wonders. All these creatures we see, whose languages we do not know, are his officials."

From the Risale-i Nur Collection by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Words 280: Twenty-Second Word/ First Station
"...let him describe the Maker of that palace to the people through the palace's contents, decorations, wonders, and inhabitants. And let him explain the symbolism in the palace's decorations and teach the signs of the arts within it (what are the rhymed mosaics and measured decorations inside, and how do they demonstrate the perfections and skills of the palace owner?) to those who enter the palace, and let him inform them of the manners of entering and the ceremonies of viewing, and describe the ceremonies of attending to the **unseen**, all-knowing, and all-powerful sultan in accordance with his pleasure and desires."

From the Risale-i Nur Collection by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Words 574: Thirty-First Word / Third Principle

⁴ This explanation is a summary of the content and discourse of the following works. Here are some important works that explain the basic principles of atheism and contain the sources of atheist thought:

1. **"The God Delusion" by Richard Dawkins:** Richard Dawkins is one of the leading proponents of atheism. In this book, he argues that beliefs in the existence of a creator are irrational and that scientific thought contradicts these beliefs.
2. **"God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything" by Christopher Hitchens:** In this book, Christopher Hitchens argues that religion is harmful and extols the virtues of atheism, asserting that religion harms humanity and that atheism is a more logical and humane approach.
3. **"Letter to a Christian Nation" by Sam Harris:** In this book, Sam Harris argues that religious beliefs contradict science and logic and claims that atheism offers a more rational worldview.
4. **"Atheism: The Case Against God" by George H. Smith:** In this book, George H. Smith criticizes arguments for the existence of a creator and defends the philosophical foundations of atheism.
5. **"Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon" by Daniel Dennett:** Daniel Dennett defends atheism by examining religious beliefs from a scientific and evolutionary perspective in this book.
6. **"The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason" by Sam Harris:** Sam Harris explains the dangers of religious beliefs and how atheism offers a rational worldview.
7. **"Why I Am Not a Christian" by Bertrand Russell:** In this classic work, Bertrand Russell defends the irrationality of religious beliefs and the philosophical foundations of atheism.
8. **"Dialectical and Historical Materialism" by Joseph Stalin:** This work explains the basic principles and historical development of Marxist materialism. Stalin explains the philosophical foundations of dialectical materialism and how social changes are explained by material processes.
9. **"The Materialist Conception of History" by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels:** Marx and Engels argue the fundamental principles of historical materialism and that the development of societies is determined by material conditions. This work deals with the connection of materialism with historical processes.
10. **"Principles of Scientific Materialism" by John Dalton:** In this book, John Dalton explains the basic principles of scientific materialism and how natural sciences explain material processes.
11. **"Matter and Consciousness" by Paul Churchland:** In this work, Paul Churchland discusses the effects of materialist philosophy on mind and consciousness and how material processes explain mental phenomena.
12. **"The Selfish Gene" by Richard Dawkins:** Dawkins explains the role of genes in evolutionary processes and how material processes create biological diversity through natural selection. This book is an important example of biological materialism.
13. **"The Atheist's Guide to Reality: Enjoying Life without Illusions" by Alex Rosenberg:** Rosenberg discusses how we can understand reality and meaning from a materialistic perspective. This work addresses the effects of atheist and materialist philosophy on life philosophy.

These books are works that defend atheist and materialist perspectives and argue that the order and functioning of the universe can be explained within the framework of natural processes and natural laws. These works elaborate on the philosophical and scientific foundations of the atheist perspective.

⁵ This explanation is a summary of the content and statements of the following works. Here are some important works that explain the basic principles of agnosticism and contain the sources of agnostic thought:

1. **"Agnosticism and Christianity" by Thomas Henry Huxley:** Thomas Henry Huxley is the first person to use the term "agnosticism." In this book, he explains the basic principles of agnosticism and its relationship with Christianity.

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2. **“Why I Am Not a Christian” by Bertrand Russell**: In this classic work, Bertrand Russell defends the irrationality of religious beliefs and the philosophical foundations of agnosticism. The book discusses how agnosticism can be defended as a rational worldview.
 3. **“The Agnostic Inquirer: Revelation from a Philosophical Standpoint” by Sandra Menssen and Thomas D. Sullivan**: This book examines the philosophical and theological foundations of agnosticism and explains the agnostic approach in terms of epistemology (theory of knowledge).
 4. **“God and the Burden of Proof: Plantinga, Swinburne, and the Analytic Defense of Theism” by Keith M. Parsons**: Parsons discusses the analytical defense of theism and the stance of agnosticism against theism. The book includes a philosophical analysis of agnostic arguments and theological claims.
 5. **“Agnosticism: A Very Short Introduction” by Robin Le Poidevin**: This book presents the basic concepts, history, and philosophical foundations of agnosticism in a brief and understandable way.
 6. **“Doubt: A History” by Jennifer Michael Hecht**: This work comprehensively covers the history of skepticism and agnosticism. The book explains the intellectual development of agnosticism and how it has been defended throughout history.
 7. **“In Praise of Doubt: How to Have Convictions Without Becoming a Fanatic” by Peter L. Berger and Anton C. Zijderveld**: Berger and Zijderveld discuss the virtues of skepticism and agnosticism and take a stance against dogmatism. The book also addresses the social and political dimensions of agnostic thought.