ANNOOR

Selected Papers from International Nursi Studies Conference in India, 2016 on “Education & Ethics in Said Nursi’s Risale-i Nur”
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Selected Papers from International Nursi Studies Conference in India, 2016 on “Education & Ethics in Saîd Nursî’s Risāle-i Nūr”

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I am going to take up the question whether women in Islam are empowered or not in the light of Risale-i Nur, the magnum opus of Bediüzzaman, the exegesis of Qur’an and what did Nursî come up with empowering women uplifting her from being degraded in the name of secularization convincing them they are protected in Islam than that of men, it is of no doubt on the relevance of discussing this topic as we are living in a world where some women are paid to get naked and others are fined for being covered and regulations of the laws against hijab keep coming even many nation has put a ban on women’s dress. Muslim women, her dress and so on are always subjected to many discussions here the clear cut elucidation of the Nursî would be suffice to mute all allegations. This paper shows that how far and deep women is empowered and protected.

Said Nursî was a charioteer of Islamic modernism who gave considerable heed to women empowerment through Islamic framework and imparted to his students that the existence of women as being one of the manifestation of tajalli (materialization) and of the nature of Allah who is most beautiful (jameel).

The word empowerment, in spite of this terminology, is recent by origin; the morphology of the word seems to have a deep root in the psych of civilization which had been born out of conflict and remains being tangled with conflicts. This conflict which began with renaissance and continue to date, appears to be one thread which runs through western social and intellectual development. Right at the very beginning, it was a conflict between man and
god, then between state and church, then science and nature, then proletariat and bourgeoisie, then women and man.

Strictly saying, there is no universal definition for women empowerment as factors such as socio-cultural, geographical, environmental, political, and economic, as well as many other aspects of countries and regions influenced it. As far as Nursîan mode of women empowerment is concerned it is against western mode of feminist approaches as it is nothing but a disguised form of exploitation of body, of deprivation of honour and degradation of soul.

The mode of empowerment that is being imparted by Said Nursî is apparent in his magnum opus, *Risale-i Nur*, as such, Women empowerment means increasing the spiritual, moral, social, educational and economic strength of women in a society.

**Spiritual empowerment**

As Belief is both light and power humankind should be empowered with belief. According to Nursî, Religion is innate to human nature and the most important matter for humanity is belief, gaining a strong belief is more important than gaining the domination of the world and saving ones belief is like saving eternal world in his view belief has the value of the diamond while politics and worldly affairs are worth only pieces of glass. So he stressed spiritual empowerment of women by towing the lines of *sharia*, at these spiritual realm men and women are equal in responsibilities almighty Allah says that: I shall not allow to go to waste the deed of any doer among you whether be a male or female. It is clear that Islam does not discriminate between men and women in religious responsibilities since each gender shares most of the responsibilities. But each has certain responsibilities that are particular to it. The Qur’ān usually uses the masculine form of address, for this is one of the characteristic of Arabic language. In almost every language, the masculine form is used for a group comprising both men and women like the word mankind which include men and women so brotherhood also includes sisterhood.

1. Qur’an 4: 40  
2. Qur’an 4: 64
Belief in the almighty Allah and hereafter is precious as it opens the door to happiness and seeking refuge in him is invaluable medicines for the development of intellectual weakness. All justice, peace, honesty, integrity and love emanate from faith in high judge and religiously based moral percepts\textsuperscript{3}. According to WHO, health is the state of physical, mental, and economic well-being of the people and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity\textsuperscript{4}. Here it is a proven fact that belief is the way of managing tension\textsuperscript{5}.

Our duty is not restricted to living an easy life (according to the requisite of modern corrupt civilisation) and gratifying our carnal desires nor our delicate senses and abilities, sensitive faculties and organs, well ordered members and systems and inquisitive senses and feeling included in the machine of our life (our body) to satisfy the base carnal self-low desires\textsuperscript{6}. But each person has his own responsibilities laid upon them. Nursî believes that Belief is the only way by which we can reach the highest degree of perfection which enables us to attain true humanity\textsuperscript{7}.

**Moral empowerment**

By a cursory glance to *Risale-i Nur*, it is sure that the very existence and development of the society is on the stem of morality, a good society influenced by good morals is the ideal society which is being dreamt of by Nursî\textsuperscript{8}. The sole means of saving women’s happiness both here and hereafter is by saving their elevated innate qualities from corruption, women are the champions of compassion\textsuperscript{9}. Bediüzzaman believed that good morals are innate to all human beings so that he admonished the mankind to develop moral building and drew morals from Qur’ân and Hadith Allah says in Qur’ân:

> We have indeed created man in the best of moulds. Then do we abase him (to be) the lowest of the low (95:4–5).

Further *Risale-i Nur* says:

> “Happy the man who in order not to lose companion of eternity, copies his righteous wife and so becomes righteous himself and happy the
women who seeing he husband to be pious. Adhere to religion herself so as not to lose her everlasting friend and companion. Unhappy the man who follows his wife in sin, does not try to make her give it up, but join her. And unhappy the women who seeing her husband’s sinfulness follows him in another way and alas for the wife and husband who assist one another to embrace the evil of civilization”11.

This statement shows the inevitability of moral empowerment to both men and women. It is clear to gather that only means of strengthening family life and finding happiness in this world and the next and of causing the elevated qualities of women to unfold, is Islamic conduct within the bounds of sharia. Afore mentioned extract says that even women has the right to spite her husband’s stints in her loyalty and faithfulness to him. She can rather try to reform her husband’s faults12.

Men do not resemble women in heroism and sincerity like men cannot be compete with them in vice for instance if for eight minutes pleasure a man commit sin, he only suffers a loss of eight liras, but as the penalty of the pleasure of eight minutes sin, in this world too, the women bears a heavy load for eight months and then has the hardship of rearing the unprotected child for eight years. She therefore cannot compete with men in vice13 as it is also a protection for women he called for women’s moral empowerment like that of man.

Social status of women

Public policy and education and liberating from the mistreatment, exploitation and oppression that inhibit women from reaching their full of potentials, these are the means of social empowerment14. First and most empowerment of women are to give them their own separate personality. There is certainly no better empowerment than being one’s own self. Islam considers her as an independent person having equal responsibility like men. Risale-i Nur says that sacrificing mentality of women for her children wanting nothing in return with utmost pertinent of mind is a testament to prove
that women are capable of great heroism\textsuperscript{15}, she is the first master and influential teacher of humankind\textsuperscript{16}. Said Nursî reminiscence of his mother that “the lessons instilled in my nature and spirit by my mother when I was one year old I now see at the age of eighty to be each fundamental seeds amid great truth”\textsuperscript{17} and it is from his mother that he learned to be compassionate which is one of the most important principle of \textit{Risale-i Nur} and to be kind and gentle. Which is the greatest truth of \textit{Risale-i Nur}. Afore mentioned statement proves that women are not only independent person but she is the master of society. Even to slandering women is one the major sin\textsuperscript{18} in Islam (\textit{kabair}) all mighty Allah says that:

\begin{quote}
Your lord decrees that you worship only him and be good to (your) parents if one of them, or both, attain old age in your life time, do not say Ugh to them (as an indication of complaint or impatience), nor push them away and always address them in gracious words. Lower to them the wings of humility out of mercy and say: “my lord, have mercy on them” even as they cared for me in child hood (17:23–24)\textsuperscript{19} more over paradise is the ultimate goal of every Muslim irrespective of men and women and every Muslims have been striving for that but prophet says “Paradise is beneath the feet of mothers\textsuperscript{20}. in another Hadith prophet Muḥammad says: Follow the religion of elderly women \textsuperscript{21}. By bringing these evidences, Nursî is trying to portray the supremacy of women in society to some extent.
\end{quote}

Bediüzzaman believed that women are the heroes of compassion which places women in a unique positions so as to keep society on the track of compassion and kindness as such he rebelled against women liberation organizations that strive to deviate women to think that they are like men and should act as men, as they are equal rights and responsibilities that of men. Said Nursî was of the stance that women and men have different inherent natures and roles in society despite they are equal before the law this equality never believed to be identicality.

Islam is the religion of nature\textsuperscript{22} so the Islamic principles are so appropriate with the nature of human being, be it men or women, in the view of weakness and delicacy of a women’s nature, Nursî says
that Qur’ān reminded women to protect themselves by sporting veil in order not to stimulate the lust of men because the veil is the fortress and safety to the honour of women. He quote Qur’ān says:

\[O \text{ prophet! Tell your wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad)} \ (33:59)\]

He denounced the modern civilization which cast away the veil, because it is contrary to human innate nature and their innate dispositions demand it, moreover she is weak and delicate and they need protection\(^2^4\). Nursî promoted this Qur‘anic verse with a logic that seven out of ten women are either old or ugly so that she won’t like to expose themselves to others who are more beautiful that they feel of being discomfited at sight of people so the veiling functions as a protector from humiliations and slavery\(^2^5\).

He enjoined female students that they should never sell their honour by being unveiled because, he says, that Asia, the land of Islam, is relatively torrid it is well known that the environment has an effect on people’s morality, Perhaps in those cold countries immodest dress does not stimulate the animal appetites and carnal desires of those cold people and lead to abuse. But the carnal lusts of the easily influenced and sensitive people of hot countries are continually excited by immodest dress, which is thus the cause of much abuse and weakening of the young generation\(^2^6\).

The kind of personality that Islam seeks to build is also one which will save women from the torments of having to dance to whims and caprices of men, as the modelling industry amply demonstrate. Too often women go through all manners of dieting and work-outs not for their own good but for meeting men’s expectation of beauty; sometimes they undertake measures that are clearly injurious to their health like the bleaching of their skins and implants of silicon to boost their bust-line. The personality Islam seeks to bestow is one which gives women confidence, security and esteem which allows them to deal with men as equal without having to play to their gallery or aspire to behave like men.
Educational empowerment

Main duties and responsibilities of women are domestic households in order to carry out those varieties of tasks, women must keep their glorious attitude and should be given the Islamic education adequately. According to Said Nursî the essential and intrinsic duty of our existence is to seek perfection through learning. women empowerment should be implemented through overall education, she should be taught both religious and secular education. According to Nursî the Islamic education for women and other students, should integrate among the education at home (tarbiyath fi al-bait), education at school, (formal), education in the community (non-formal) and education by state.

Said Nursî not only said that the search for knowledge is compulsory on every men and women on the basis of sharia, but he also was of the view that whoever educates an individual and whoever educate a female educates a nation. The women to this extend symbolizes the human races and the custodian of human values and the conscience of society. If she left ignorant and backward so will the nation and if she is educated and advanced, so will the nation. This is what Risale-i Nur movement is re-enacting so far.

Said Nursî said that man’s first master and most influential teacher is his28 mother “I am eighty years old and have received lessons from eighty thousand people, yet I swear that the truest and most unshakable lessons I have received are those inculcated in me by my late mother”29. Nursî students believe that the key duty of the women in society is to be the first educator and it is essential that women acquire as much education of all types as possible.

Economic status of women

Women in Islam are, economically, more empowered than that of any society since Islam has obligated upon them Maher1 which is hers, not even her parents or husband can take even a little there of without her consent and permission, her wealth also been hers and if she works she never have to operate a joint account with her
husband, a lot of what is called economic empowerment, Islam had
given women 14 centuries ago. Her economic independence is a right
being granted by Islam and no one can deny it. Nursî quote Qur’ân:

“Allah (thus) directs you, as regards your children’s (inheritance): to
the male, a portion equal to that of two females: if only daughters, two
or more, their share is two thirds of the inheritance; if only one, her
share is a half. For parents, a sixth share of the inheritance to each if
the deceased left children. If no children, and the parents are the (only)
heirs, the mother has a third; if the deceased left brothers (or sisters),
the mother has a sixth. (the distribution in all cases is) after the payment
of legacies and debts... in what your wives leave, your share is a half,
if they have no child, but if they leave a child, ye get a forth after pay-
ment to legacies and debts.... If the man or woman whose inheritance
is in question has left neither ascendants nor descendants, but has left
a brother or a sister, each one of the two gets a sixth, but if more than
two, they share in a third, after payment legacies and debts.27

God directs (thus) about those who leave no descendants or ascendants
as heirs. If it is a man that dies, leaving a sister but no child, she shall
have the inheritance, if (such a deceased was) a woman, who left no
child, her brother takes her inheritance if there are two sisters, they
shall have two thirds of inheritance (between them), the men having
twice the share the female.28

Women are in Islam more empowered and protected as a child, as
a wife and as a mother, Islam has given a women such special and
distinguished position which nor other culture or civilization has
given her and that ought to be the envy of men.

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Relevance of Bediüzzaman Nursî in philosophical thought

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ABSTRACT

This study includes on Relevance of Bediüzzaman Nursî in philosophical thought and deals with the philosophical aspects of Risale-i Nur. Here I will try to classify the Nursî’s philosophy into the different categories. The main peculiarity of this study is that it tries to interpret the various classification of philosophies included in Risale-i Nur.

In first part, we will introduce about Bediüzzaman Nursî and Turkish people, those who believed in its own purity and charity.

In second part, we will discuss about Nursî’s approach to philosophy and his four importance principles that make Qur’anic wisdom greater than wisdom of philosophy and science.

In last part, we will discuss Nursî’s view in Greek philosophy, which was beginning of the translation of the Greek philosophical books to Arabic text in Ma’amun’s period.

An introduction on Said Nursî

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî born on 1877 in Nursî of eastern Anatolia. This village situated to Turkey. His father was Mulla Mirz and mother is Nuriya. He studied the religious knowledge from renowned scholars of his local place. A variety of brain and ability had filled in his behaviour. He overcomes many eminent contemporary scholars in many debates on his 16th age. By this he called as “Bediüzzaman”. The Ottoman Empire put an end in his period after the First World War. He became an eye witness for many
anti-Muslim secularist objectivities and improper in country’s democratic government.

In this time, he worked as his name the ‘Bediüzzaman’ denotes and played a major role in these activities. He established Madrasa ‘Al- Zahra’ looking to the importance of moral and material knowledge in modern era. The great scholar like Imam Ahmad Sarhindi, Jalaludheen Rumi and Imam Ghazali had influenced in his life.

He passed away on 1960, March 23, and buried in Urfa in the presence of a lack of people including Mayer and Governor of Urfa. After that his dead body changed from there and replaced to strange place where only his two followers have identify.

Said Nursî¹ and Turkish people

Turkey is a Muslim civilized country. Its people believed in its own purity and charity. They believed that they have a firm base on their religious idea and ideals. Later, Turkey faced a great revolution on religious belief. Western and European thoughts attacked the traditional belief and activities. Western philosophical thoughts questioned their doctrines as that are from the myths. This questions led them to think philosophically about the reality of Islamic base, is there real history on it? Or is it myth and concept? At last, they reached to the world passed away before the prophet Muḥammad (s). There was no one to protest scare less against the western philosophy, because some of the protesters who are known as great Islamic scholars were killed by the administrator.

At last the Islam became as a wall will fall down nearly. At same time, the western philosophy took roll on the heart of Turkish people. They began to imitate the western philosophy throughout their life, the doctrines of Islam erased by the philosophy. It remained as etched in the heart of Turkish people.

While the Greek philosophy was purifying the heart of Turkish Muslims, the great Islamic philosopher Bediüzzaman said Nursî arrived among them. He interpreted Islamic views accordance with

¹ The real name is Said Nursî, Normally written as Said.
circumstance in a simple way. He established the Islamic ideas and ideals with suitable examples in a theoretical way. He knackered the western philosophy and it is thoughts with clear evidence. Thus, they defeated by the argument of Bediüzzaman said Nursî. He swept their fake arguments and foolishness and spayed the Islamic culture and rituals. The western philosophers saw him as an angel of the god came to save the Muslim people and shame the rivals and their beliefs and to destruct the mind of philosophers.

Bediüzzaman said Nursî corrected the corrupted Islamic believes and thoughts. He became as a helper for Islamic scholar in Turkey who are tired and bored by the contradictions. He is a man who gathered all kind of knowledge in one mind within few time. He gained qualification on all over the part of knowledge, and he wrote a book it seems as holy namely Risale-i Nur, it is his thought and life, got from the god Allah through revelation (ilham). This holy book led the Turkish people to right way after Bediüzzaman said Nursî. He performed the role in the same way of imam Al-Ghazali. So, the people gave to him one as “The second Ghazali” (Al–Ghazali–II), and greatest Islamic reformer of the 20th century.

**Approach of Nursî to Philosophy**

In regards with the Risale-i Nur, Nursî reveal his opinion with philosophy under the Qur’ānic verse, that he applied four important principles that make Qur’ānic wisdom greater than wisdom of philosophy and science.

1. We can summarize it as follows; philosophy without religion is an astray, there is no reality behind it. If only make, the universe insulting itself. We can enlighten this point with a suitable example; there was a king in a village, who made a calligraphy of Qur’ānic verses, with the jewels and other cosmetic materials.

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2 Its original language is Turkish, later this was translated into several world languages such as English, Spanish, and Arabic and so on.
3 Holy Qur’ān, Surah; Al-Baqara,Verse: 269
4 Said Nursî, Risale-i Nur, words, vol.1, p. 141
He wanted to show it to an Islamic scholar and to a philosopher, to examine them how they conduct with this works. When they presented the palace, the king ordered them to speak something about his works.

Firstly, philosopher came to stage and began to express about the beauty of work, he made. He only spoke about the jewels and its art work and how fantastically it was arranged in lines with a great touch of art. After, the scholar came and he began to speak about the inner meaning of verses, and how it belongs with our lives.

He only spoke about the meaning of verses and did not say anything about the beauty of jewels. The king was very satisfied with the explanation of scholar, and he gave him money prices and gifts. He made the philosopher away from the palace and gave him some punishments. This story shows us what is the real money of life and how the philosopher and science only can to touch with the outer part of all things.

2. Here we talk about the second principle; it is obvious that the student of philosophy and its all scholars are self-sufficient in their life, their goal, only connect with the benefits they went to get by studying this material knowledge.

In the other side, the moral scholar is a dedicated life to goal and all beings around him. He want to line as a slave all want save the people, He only greed for benefits from Allah.

3. Another different between philosophy and Islamic teaching can be can’t down as follows: philosophy is built up on ‘force’. Its teachings connect with the material force, while the moral teaching deals with eternal truth.

Basic theory of philosophy is based on conflict between human being and find the goal, oneself itself. Mutual assistant based on brotherhood is the milestone of Islamic teaching which leads the moral values of goodness.

4. To understand the superiority of Qur’ân on other all doctrines, there we can look to some examples;

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5 Ibid, p. 141, 142,
The first, a king of a country will use two types of telephone for his communication. One is for his privat reasons. He can use it for his all-purpose, sometime; he will use it for royal purposes also. Second system of communication is official telephone. He only uses it for the government affairs like the communication with other countries, communication with some official people and etc.

The Second: a man uses the mirror for light of sun. But he cannot absorb all benefits of sun by this light. He only can get the light. But there is many other things are utilized by sun.

Another man expose to sun directly. He can touch with all that sun exposes. He can only say what is he real phenomenon of sun and what are the benefits we can acquire from sun. With these two examples, we can understand how the reality that Qur’ān makes different from other all things that are not directly from god.

Greek philosophy in Nursî’s view

According to Nursî the beginning of the translation of the Greek philosophical books to Arabic text in Ma’amun’s period was the beginning of raising confusions among the Islamic philosophy. By this process, lots of Greek philosophical thoughts which are very tough and bad are concerned as the Islamic philosophical thoughts. It caused to be confused the thought of Arabian peoples especially the thinkers, which they were pure and clear heart people. Generally, it effected among the people. They began to follow others in philosophical thoughts and they are compelled to study deeply about the philosophical thoughts as they can to separate the bad and blameworthy Greek philosophical theories. This caused to be considering the philosophy as a must to be studied things among the people. Arabian people compelled to understanding of Greek philosophy and began to try to fertilize the real and true praiseworthy philosophies from the bad and blameworthy philosophies of Greek thinkers.

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6 Ibid, p. 143–145  
7 Ibid, Muhakamath, p. 25
It caused also to mixing of the Arabian language to the foreign language especially the Greek language. It caused to confuse the words in their language through mixing it with others. In such situation Arabian scholars especially the language scholars thought about the starting of the so many institutions where should be studied about the languages. In the different parts of the Arabia many institutions established to these purpose.

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Qur’anic scienticism in Bediüzzaman Said Nursî’s Risale-i Nur

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ABSTRACT

Said Nursî was a multi-talented personality and a true representative of Islam based knowledge with all-encompassing ideas and visionary insights of life. He upholds the Qur’anic Scienticism and talked about faith based on research (iman tahqiqi), rely on positive action (jihad manaavi). According to him

“We should moulds the science brought from Europe and America, which, in fact, belongs to Islam, with the light of oneness and view it from the point of view of the contemplation and signified meaning mentioned by the Qur’ân, that is, on behalf of its maker and master.”

He impeccably put forth an approach for Muslims to live in resonance with post-modern era without violating their faith. Nursî’s magnum opus “Risale-i Nur” collection is an interpretation on the Qur’ân written for all modern men in order to bring their thought with in the enquiry of Qur’anic methodology of knowledge, in order to put a challenge for materialist and positivist philosophy. Said Nursî perceived all scientific procedures from the eyes of Qur’ân and clarified them successfully within the boundaries of the reasoning. He stated that the Qur’ân includes scientific thought and encouraged all modern men to search for it. He very determinedly worked to substantiate conformity of Islam’s message with modern science. An Attempt has been made to acme the Qur’anic Scienticism in Risal-i-Nur to prove his worth as a true archetypal of Qur’anic Message in the modern era.

The scientific domination of the west, which gave rise to war machinery in particular and effects of science on all walks of life in general has undermined the power of the Muslim *Ummah*. The glorious past of the Muslim *Ummah* was completely blurred at the present. In order to show Muslim *Ummah* as dark aged people with no taste of progress and to highlight their character as believers of customs and traditional life style. This scientific developments in relation with politics gave rise to colonialism and Orientalists raised finger directly on the Qur’ānic knowledge being obstacle on the way of progress and prosperity. The Qur’ānic knowledge has been considered as misrepresentative of the modern science which guides humans only for spiritualism.\(^2\) The decline in thought among Muslims gave a setback to *Ummah* which resulted as political decline of Muslim *Ummah* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the effects of the Western Civilization have raised a serious „tumult among the Muslims of all the countries and regions. This tumult is different from that of the past in a way that it is not confined to a single Muslim country but it has engrossed the whole Islamic world into its grip. Moreover previous objections and assaults on Islam were raised in an age when Muslims had not collapsed politically and culturally. On the contrary, at present Muslim world has to antagonize this status quo in a condition, when Western nations have succeeded the Muslims in all spheres of life particularly Politico–Economic and Socio–Intellectual thus Muslims have decreased into subservience and difficult position.\(^3\) Consequently, the pummeling of anti–Islamic forces have taken Muslim domain at odd ends. In this condition the Muslim scholars in every country have been fulfilling their duties according to their respective capacities to defend the Islamic faith. The names of Abul A’la Maududi and his fellows (Pakistan and India), Hassan al–Banna and Sayyid Qutb Shaheed (Arab World) and many other

\(^2\) Serdar Do an, The Influence of Modern Science on Bediüzzaman Said Nursi’s Thinking, Islamic Sciences, Volume 12 Summer 2014 Number 1, p.1

\(^3\) Sarwat Saulat (1977), *Bediüzzaman Said Nursî Shakhsiyat aur Tehrik* (Karachi: Idara–e Marif–e Islami, 12.)
leaders are quite prominent in this successful defense. The person who discharged this duty in Turkey in the previous century is Bediüzzaman Said Nursî. It is a factual poise that he took the cause of Islam into hand in such a horrible and hostile conditions after a tenacious struggle of two and half decades, and faced many difficulties like imprisonment, exile, judgments and uproars of secular forces. He succeeded in changing the status of his country, „Turkey from an anti-religious state into once again a follower of Islam. Turkey as republic had set all in support of positivistic scientific approach and almost left no space for religion in any matter of life. They considered scientific secularism as order of life and tried to barrow everything from western antagonists of Islamic knowledge.

At a time when science and philosophy were used to produce young atheists and nihilism was popular; when such things were done in the name of civilization, modernization, and contemporary thinking; and when resisters were persecuted, Said Nursî worked for a people’s revival, infusing them with modern and traditional education as well as spiritual training. Said Nursî diagnosed the Muslim world’s long-standing “diseases” and offered the most effective cures. Basing his activity on the Qur’ān and Sunna (the Prophet’s traditions), as well as the Islamic tradition and natural phenomena (considered signs of Divine Existence and Unity), he concentrated, respectively, on proving the pillars of Islam; the necessity of belief, worship, morality, and good conduct; and socio-economic issues facing contemporary Muslims.

The way Islam got revived in Turkey as a result of his efforts is really unique perhaps in the whole Islamic history. The distinctive character of Said Nursî among his contemporary is his non-political but academic jihad for Islamic resurgence. Maryam Jamila a scholar well known and aware about the conditions prevailing during first half of 20th century has understood his mission in totally. While

4 Ibid, 13
5 Badiuzamman Said Nursî (2005), The Words: The Reconstruction of Islamic Belief and Thought Translated by Huseyin Akarsu, The Light Inc, New Jersey, p. xii
writing a letter to “Nur” magazine America published in 1975, in which she explained the distinct character of Said Nursi among his contemporaries:

“The basis of Bediüzzaman Nursi’s strength lies in the fact that he had grasped his own difficulties and pitfalls and he had realistically evaluated the conditions which Muslims were suffering from. Unlike other Muslim revivalists, he did not prepare splendid plans for the Islamic universal political, social and economic systems which cannot be put into practice in the near future.”

This is because Muslims, students of the Qur’ān, follow proof. We do not abandon proof for blind obedience and imitation of the clergy, as do some adherents of other religions. Therefore when reason, science, and knowledge prevail in the future, the Qur’ān will gain ascendancy, for it relies on proof and calls upon reason to confirm its pronouncements.

In Turkish situation to work for the Islamisation of the society in its any form means to take risks one who works for it needs clearance of thought and approach, otherwise it will turn authorizes hostile to him. The approach of said Nursi was thought clear, Maryam Jamila explains his approach as:

Therefore he quite wisely, refrained himself from establishing a rigid and inflexible organization because such an organization could easily be banned by some dictator, unlike this, Said Nursi strengthened the roots of faith in the hearts of millions of Turks through his preaching and his writings. This was such a revolution as could not be banned and even a despotic dictator could not constraint its teachings.”

Said Nursi paid full attention to the resurgence of Islamic Belief among the Turkish nationals. The pattern he implemented for the

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6 Ibid, p.15
8 Ibid: 15
rejuvenation of Muslim society is “non-physical jihad or jihad of the word.”

At a time when science and philosophy were used to mislead young generations into atheism, and nihilistic attitudes had a wide appeal, at a time when all this was done in the name of civilization, modernization and contemporary thinking and those who tried to resist them were subjected to the cruellest of persecutions, Bediüzzaman strove for the overall revival of a whole people, breathing into their minds and spirits whatever is taught in the institutions of both modern and traditional education and of spiritual training.

He wrote a commentary of the Qur’ān Risal i Nur in which “he explains the basic tenets of belief, the truths of the Qur’ān, to modern man and attempted to explain the verses of the Qur’ān with empirical approach. A scientific explanation of the Qur’ān which revolutionized the modern Muslim thought in academic, Resale –I Nur is the collection of six thousand pages of Bediüzzaman Said Nursî’s known as scientific exegesis of the Qur’ān. In this collection Nursî tried to answer all the contemporary challenges put forth by the Modern Sciences to religion in general and Islam in particular.

The most famous, intelligent naturalist philosophers violently attack the Qur’ān and the truths and essentials of belief, condemning whatever they cannot grasp as superstitious, and base their unbelief on nature. The fact is that they cannot grasp the reality of the Qur’ān. The Qur’ānic verse, Their Messengers said: “Can there be any doubt about God, the Originator of the heavens and the earth?” (14: 10) To which we reply:

O foolish one! Lift your head out of the swamp of naturalism, and turn round! You will see the Maker of Majesty, to Whom all things, from atoms to galaxies, testify, each with its own tongue, and at Whom they point, each with its own finger. Behold the manifestation of the Eternal Designer, Who has made that palace

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9 Bediüzzaman Said Nursî and what is Risal i Nur, Sozler Publications, Turkey, pp. 6-7
10 Ibid;7
and written its program in that “notebook”! Lend an ear to His Book—the Qur’ān—and be saved from your nonsensical words!!¹¹

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî put all his efforts to explain every aspect of social and academic life which the then Turkish society faced in a more modern way. The philosophical challenges related to origin of life, universe and scientific developments faced by Turkish society were answered by him. He explained verses of the Qur’ān in a scientific manner.

According to Bediüzzaman Said Nursî,

“My proud soul! You are the traveller, and this world is a desert. Your impotence and poverty have no limit, and your enemies and needs are endless. Since it is thus, take the name of the Pre-Eternal Ruler and Post-Eternal Lord of the desert and be saved from begging before the whole universe and trembling before every event.

I saw one manifestation of In the Name of God, the Merciful, and the Compassionate as follows:

On the face of the universe, the face of the earth, and the face of man are three Stamps of dominicality one within the other and each showing samples of the others. Divine Names in the vast sphere of the universe weave such a seal of compassionateness, tapestry of clemency, and seal of benevolence within a Stamp of Mercy that it demonstrates itself to minds more brilliantly than the sun.¹²

It is in order to express this mighty mystery and clearly point out the Seal of Divine Mercy that the All-Wise Qur’ān suddenly mentions the smallest sphere and most particular matter when describing the vastest sphere of the universe, for example, the creation of the heavens and the earth. And so that the mind does not wander, nor the heart drown, and the spirit may find directly its True Object of Worship, it opens the subject of man’s creation and man’s voice, and the subtle details of the bounties and wisdom in his features, for example, while mentioning the creation of the heavens and earth. The verse,

¹¹ Bediüzzaman Said Nursî (2009), Nature: Cause or Effect?, Twenty-third Gleam, Tughra Books, New Jersey, 26
And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and in your colours4 (4. Qur’ān, 30:22) demonstrates this truth in a miraculous fashion.

Belief is not restricted to a brief affirmation based on imitation; rather, it has degrees and stages of development. It is like a seed growing into a fully grown, fruit-bearing tree; like the sun’s image in a mirror or in a drop of water to its images on the sea’s surface and to the sun itself. Belief contains so many truths pertaining to God’s Names and the realities contained in the universe that the most perfect science, knowledge, and virtue is belief and knowledge of God originating in a belief based on argument and investigation. While belief based on imitation can be refuted through doubt and questions raised by modern thought, belief based on argument and investigation has as many degrees and grades of manifestation as the number of Divine Names. Those who attain certainty of belief coming from13 direct observation of the truths on which belief is based study the universe as a kind of Qur’ān. The Qur’ān, the universe, and humanity are three kinds of manifestations of one truth. The Qur’ān, issuing from the Divine Attribute of Speech, may be regarded as the written or composed universe. The universe, originating in the Divine Attributes of Power and Will, may be considered as the created Qur’ān. Since the universe is the Qur’ān’s counterpart and, in one respect, the collection of Divine laws of creation, sciences that study the universe must be compatible with Islam.

Therefore now (when science prevails) and in the future (the age of knowledge), true belief should be based on argument and investigation; on continual reflection on God’s “signs” in the universe; and on natural, social, historical, and psychological phenomena. Belief is not something based on blind imitation; rather, it should appeal to both the intellect or reason and the heart, for it combines reason’s acceptance and affirmation with the heart’s experience and submission. There is another degree of belief: certainty com-

ing from direct experience of its truths. This depends on regular worship and reflection. Those with such belief can challenge the world. So, our first and foremost duty is to acquire such belief and, in complete sincerity and purely for God’s sake, spread it to others. A hadith relates that it is better for you if one embraces belief through you than for you to possess the world.¹⁴

Said Nursî saw that modern unbelief did not originate from ignorance, but from science and philosophy. Paradoxically, the Muslims’ neglect of science and technology caused them to fall behind the West economically and militarily. But the same science and technology that enabled the West to achieve global military and economic superiority caused Western people to lose their belief and traditional moral and spiritual values, and fall into pessimism, unhappiness, and spiritual crisis.

Said Nursî viewed nature as the collection of Divine signs. Thus science and religion could not be in conflict, for they are two (apparently) different expressions of the same truth. Minds should be enlightened with science, and hearts need to be illuminated with religion.

Some lamps (stars and planets) in this palace of the world’s roof, in this city of the universe, are far larger than Earth. They move with amazing speed, but in a very delicate order. They do not collide with each other, become extinguished, or run out of fuel. Astronomers say that our sun, a lamp and stove in the All-Merciful One’s guest-house, is several billion years old and a million times larger than Earth. To keep burning, each day it needs as much oil as the seas of Earth, as much coal as its mountains, or as many logs and wood as 10 earths. Such lamps point with their finger of light to an infinite power and sovereignty that, in turn, illuminates the sun and other similar stars without oil, wood, or coal. It does not allow them to be extinguished or collide with each other, even though they are larger than those lamps and are managed more perfectly. The science of electricity and the stars’ testimony make

¹⁴ Ibid, Xvii
known this vast exhibition’s Monarch, Illuminator, Director, and Maker. They also make Him loved, glorified, and worshipped.¹⁵

Scientism and materialistic philosophy have strayed from the path of truth. As the Qur’an is not a science book, why should it elaborate on cosmological matters? It mentions certain facts of creation to make known the Divine Essence, Attributes, and Names. It explains the meaning of the Book of the Universe to make known its Creator. Therefore it considers creation only for the sake of knowledge of its Creator. Science, which considers creation only for its own sake, usually addresses scientists. The Qur’an, however, addresses humanity. Since it uses creation as evidence and proof to guide humanity, most of whom are common people, its evidence should be easily understandable. Guidance requires that unimportant things only be touched upon, and that subtle points be made understandable via parables. So as not to mislead people, it should not change what they consider obvious so that such information becomes useless or harmful. For example, it calls the sun “a moving lamp.” It does not mention the sun for its own sake but because it is the “mainstay” of the order and the centre of the universe’s system, and order and system are two ways of learning about the Creator. By saying: And the sun runs its course (36:38), it suggests the well-ordered disposition of Divine Power in the revolutions of the seasons, day and night, and so implies the Maker’s majesty.¹⁶

“Heaven is a wave stretched and restrained,” they were created in such a way that stars and planets can move easily within them. Wisdom and reason require that all heavens should consist of seven levels in different states and formations, each being a heaven to a world (e.g., from the World of Earth to the Intermediate World [of the grave] and the World of Symbols or Ideal Forms, and to the World of the Hereafter).¹⁷

The sun runs its course to its place destined that is the determining of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing. (36:38)

¹⁶ Ibid, P. 255
¹⁷ Ibid, P. 585
Initially, Said Nursî based his Defense of the religious truths on arguments derived from modern Western philosophy. Later on, he saw that this way degraded Islam and that its essentials could not be reached by the principles of human philosophy. He then returned to the Qur’ān almost exclusively. He writes:

Islam’s essentials are too deep for the principles of philosophy to reach. In arguing with Islam’s opponents, in resisting and overcoming modern (materialistic) trends of thought, the Qur’ān was enough:

“While there is a permanent miracle like the Qur’ān, searching for further proof appears to my mind as superfluous. While there is a proof of reality like the Qur’ān, silencing those who deny it would not weigh heavily on my heart?”

There are numerous other examples like these five which show that if the sciences of belief are experienced directly as cures from the mysteries of the All-Wise Qur’ān as a consequence of need and as healing for wounds, those sciences of belief and spiritual cures are sufficient for those who perceive their need and make use of them with earnest sincerity. Whatever the chemist and herald is like who sells and announces them—be he commonplace, or bankrupt, or rich, or a person of rank, or a servant—it does not make much difference.

Bediüzzaman a versatile Scholar of religious and natural science advocated the integration of both scientific and religious knowledge because of the inert relationship. The relationship has numerous values put forth by Qur’ān. The Qur’ān is the original source of this integration. Nursî declared, “I shall prove to the world that the Qur’ān is a spiritual sun that cannot be extinguished.” It was in such an atmosphere that Said Nursî worked toward the construction of an indestructible fortress around the Qur’ān, undeterred by the blasts detonated internally or externally, and thus opted to be a tireless servant in the implementation of the Divine declaration,
“Indeed it is We, We Who send down the Reminder (i.e. the Qur’ān), and it is indeed We Who are its Guardian” (al-Hijr, 15:9).

Since his death in 1960, a great number of readers have ascribed charisma to his text. However, as Vahide points out, the Risale was not intended and does not function as a substitute for the Qur’ān; on the contrary, it is a commentary on the Qur’ān in light of the modern sciences and the tremendous challenges affecting the modern Muslim world.20

As a scholar who had studied almost all the positive or natural sciences of his day, he reflected, to a certain extent, the influence of modern scientific data and philosophy used to corroborate the realities of the Qur’ān in his early works, where he addresses others using their own brand of logic. Later on, he asserts, “Only what has been sanctified by the Qur’ān may act as corroboration for the Qur’ān. Substantiating the Qur’ān with whatever is not in accord with it means demoting it to a degree.” However, he never despised or ignored any truth wherever it is found, in accordance with the Prophetic Tradition:

“Wisdom is like the lost property of believers. Wherever they find it, they have a greater right to take it.”21

He was the embodiment of a distinguished spiritual master and a noble character full of respect for his history and predecessors, attached to tradition but open to new developments, endowed with love of truth, uncompromising in the face of imitation, sober and vigorous in evaluating ideas and situations, and dignified by the highest degree of faith. He carried only the purest of intentions—to earn the good pleasure of God and serve humanity.

Since truth-seeking scholars and the science of eloquence agree that each Qur’ānic verse contains guidance and instruction, it follows that verses relating the Prophets’ miracles, the most brilliant of all verses, should not be considered mere historical events.

Rather, they comprise numerous indications of guidance. By relating these miracles, the Qur’ān shows the ultimate goal of scientific and technological developments, and specifies their final aims, toward which it urges humanity.  

Like every element in nature, fire performs a duty under a command. It did not burn Abraham, for God commanded it not to do so. One type of heat burns through coldness. Through the phrase Be peace, God Almighty ordered the cold: “Like heat, do not burn him.” It is simultaneously fire and cold. Science has discovered a fire called “white heat,” which does not radiate its heat. Instead, by attracting the surrounding heat, it causes the surrounding area to become cold enough to freeze liquids and in effect burns them through its cold. (Hell, which contains all degrees and sorts of fire, also must have this intense cold.) In coming times justice will prevail and uphold the cause of divinity because of the potentiality of the Asma al Husna related to engineering or medicine. By frequently emphasizing its eloquent and beautiful style, the Qur’ān suggests: “At the end of time, eloquence and beauty of expression, the most brilliant sciences and branches of knowledge, will be most sought after in all their varieties. People will find that when it comes to making each other accept their opinions and exercise their rule, their most effective weapon will be eloquent expression; their most irresistible force will be fine oratory.” In short, most Qur’ānic verses are keys to a treasury of perfections and a store of knowledge.

The originality of Risale-i Nur is based on Qur’ānic truths enlightens the mind, soul, and feelings. It heals those wounded by modern trends, and defeats atheists and their anti-Qur’ān propaganda. They have banished heedlessness in its most dense, suffocating, and extensive dimensions, all of which evolved under the broad veil of science, by demonstrating the Light of Divine Unity in a most radiant fashion.

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23 Ibid, P. 273
24 Ibid, P. 376
25 Ibid, P. 170
He eloquently viewed that Science alone cannot provide solace to human beings. The scientific and philosophical doubts created by positivists has ruined the human character for greedy ends. The sole purpose of science is to fashion the worldview of the human life but cannot provide any solution to life after death, because it ignored that part of life and erected its edifice on the material existence. When said Nursî studied the natural sciences he felt the need of teachings have the power to get rid humans from the greed and up-liftment human aspiration from worldly desire for “falah” of the both the worlds. He is of the view;

Then, before all else, I had recourse to the learning I had been studying for so long, and searched for a consolation, a hope. Unfortunately, up to that time I had filled my mind with “natural” sciences and the sciences of philosophy as well as Islamic ones, and had mistakenly imagined those philosophical and “natural” sciences to be the source of personal development and means of enlightenment. However, those philosophical issues had greatly muddied my spirit and hindered my spiritual development. Suddenly, thanks to the Mercy and Grace of God Almighty, the sacred wisdom contained in the wise Qur’ân came to my aid. As explained in several parts of the Risale-i Nur, it washed away and cleansed the dirt of those philosophical issues. Ignorance was a source of Muslim poverty, internal conflict, and other problems. Ignorance of Islam’s truth, when added to ignorance of science and technology, resulted in vast uncultivated plains and the Muslims’ natural wealth flowing to foreigners. Although the Qur’ân demands unity, Muslims remained divided even as their lands were being invaded and their people humiliated.\textsuperscript{26}

The Qur’ân insistently draws our attention to natural phenomena, the subject matter of science, and urges their study. In the first 5 centuries of Islam, Muslims united science with religion, intellect with heart, and material with spiritual. After that period, however, the West took the initiative in science through its scientists’ (un-

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid, P. xiv)
conscious) obedience to the Divine laws of nature. This obedience engendered the West’s domination of the Muslim world, for the latter no longer pursued Islam’s religious and scientific aspects. Power and force have some right in life, and have been created for some wise purpose. Equipped with force through science and technology, the West triumphed over the Muslim world. Fourth: Muslims gradually deprived Islam of its force, allowed it to become diluted, and caused it to lose its purity and authenticity. Just as a hawk’s attacks causes a sparrow to develop its power of defense, God allows unbelief to attack Islam successfully so that Muslims will restore Islam to its original purity and force.27

Those who attain certainty of belief coming from direct observation of the truths on which belief is based study the universe as a kind of Qur’ān. The Qur’ān, the universe, and humanity are three kinds of manifestations of one truth. The Qur’ān, issuing from the Divine Attribute of Speech, may be regarded as the written or composed universe. The universe, originating in the Divine Attributes of Power and Will, may be considered as the created Qur’ān. Since the universe is the Qur’ān’s complement and, in one respect, the collection of Divine laws of creation, sciences that study the universe must be compatible with Islam.28

Said Nursî viewed nature as the collection of Divine signs. Thus science and religion could not be in conflict, for they are two (apparently) different expressions of the same truth. Minds should be enlightened with science,

and hearts need to be illumined with religion.29 Since truth-seeking scholars and the science of eloquence agree that each Qur’ānic verse contains guidance and instruction. By relating these miracles, the Qur’ān shows the ultimate goal of scientific and technological developments, and specifies their final aims, toward which it urges humanity.30

27 Ibid, P. xv
28 Ibid, P. xvii
29 Ibid, P. xx
30 Wordsings, 210
From the very beginning, Muslims have taken a rational (or rather, intellectual and cognitive, ʿaqlī) and scientific (ʿilmī) approach to matters in both the religious (including, spiritual) and monotonous domains (umūr al-dīn wa al-dunyā). The integration is a process from time immemorial as the classical Muslim scholars were deducing laws from the verses of the Qur’ān for the new situations arising at times. Factually the revelation of the Qur’ān upon the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was extended over a period of time and was seen as a response to situations he faced many a times. Later on Muslim Scholarship developed on the same lines and the Muslim world produced galaxy of the scholars who influenced history over a vast period of time.

Said Nursî emphasized on the study of subjects as history, geography, mathematics, geology, physics, chemistry, astronomy, and philosophy (probably natural science), as well as current affairs and developments in Ottoman life and the Islamic world. He developed this thought while studying together religious and scientific subjects, then considering them in relation to the needs of the times. The basis of this method was to “combine” the religious sciences and modern sciences, with the result that the positive sciences would corroborate and strengthen the truths of religion. Said now followed this method when teaching his students.

Said Nursî was reading Newspaper continuously and came across a news report in which the British secretary of state vehemently put forth their desire and very eloquently suggested the House of Commons which resulted as radical change in the thought of said Nursî when he came across the evil intentions of Europe.

towards Qur’ān. He heard that a British secretary for the colonies had even said in a newspaper: “So long as the Muslims have the Qur’ān, we shall be unable to dominate them. We must either take it from them, or make them lose their love of it”.¹

It is noteworthy that as he acknowledges the scientific knowledge medieval religious discourse as did not dismiss it as outdated. Instead, he suggests that insofar as their aim to understand the Qur’ānic guidance is considered, a medieval commentator’s scientific mistake is not a genuine problem in itself. After all, when the Qur’ān speaks of the world, it speaks not so as to communicate scientific information about it, but rather to attract attention that there is an order, and to point out to the Maker of that order.² Nursî was man of very high vision and know how to work for the ethico–moral life of the world. He was of the view that scientific approach is the utmost operative way to convince the enlightened world. In the upcoming period, truth will take the place of force, and proof the place of fallaciousness. In his words: “Through the endeavours of science, what will prevail entirely in the present and totally in the future, is truth instead of force, proof instead of sophistry, and reason instead of nature”.³ Nursî adds that in the future, truth and justice will take the place of the gun and the sword. In his words: Yes, just as in former times Islam’s progress was obtained through weapons and the sword, by smashing the enemy’s bigotry, destroying their obstinacy, and repulsing their aggression, in the future the immaterial swords of true civilization and material progress and truth and justice will defeat and rout the enemy in place of weapons and the sword.⁴

An achievement of such a set of objectives spins just around the approach based on well-structured planning. Modern trends and

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¹ Ibid. 31
² Isra Yazicioglu, Perhaps Their Harmony is not that Simple: Bediüzzaman Said Nursî on the Qur’an and Modern Science, Theology and Science, 2013, Vol. 11, No. 4, 339–355,
³ Nursî, Bediüzzaman Said (1977), Muhakemat, Sozler Yayinevi, Istanbul, 32
approaches are much stronger to influence on the minds of young generations towards modern education. Muslim scholarship need to meet head on to put forth modalities sequentially to revive the educational design on Islamic lines. It may be justifiably acknowledge that Islamic pursuit of education/knowledge is a necessary design for the blossoming the culture of free inquiry and rational scientific thinking that encompasses through the sphere of both theory and practice within the belief on God. Islamic education is really a source incumbent for life and had a social as well as scientific function. Bediuzzaman said Nursî utilized his logical knowledge to demonstrate that there is no conflict between science and true religion instead; it is a mere provocative tactics of positivists who for personal gains created a psychological warfare between the two. It is Islamic knowledge which serves as a means for direction and growth for a good and more civilized society.
Said Nursî and his thinking:  
a short study

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ABSTRACT

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî (1876–1960), mostly well known as Molla Said, became prominent with the title of ‘Bediüzzaman’ meaning ‘the wonder of the time’. Still he is acclaimed for his ideas and visionary insights that include all the areas of life. He comprehended the meanings of Qur’anic verses deeply and saw that each Qur’anic verse compressed the whole universe. Only by the age of 20, Nursî was able to award with public recognition of a versatile personality. In view of Bediüzzaman, the whole system of education must be oriented and integrated in accordance with the demand of time and necessity of the society. He was committed to fight against ignorance, poverty and disagreement with the weapons of art, knowledge and unity. It was evident in the establishment of Madrasatuz Zahra by Nursî himself which was a combination of three branches of educational institutions namely the Madrasahs or traditional religious schools, the Maktabs or new secular schools and the Tariqas or Sufi disciplines, existed in the society during his time. Nursî emphasized on religious sciences and modern sciences to be taught alongside. The very significant dimension of Nursî’s thought was his encouragement of dialogue instead of clash among civilizations which was later viewed by Huntington in this modern era. Nursî, in his Damascus Sermon (Khutba–i Shamiyah) highlighted the need for Muslim–Christian dialogue, which he felt, had a potential to solve world troubles. Nursî suggests Muslim should unite ‘not only with their fellow-believers, but also with the truly pious Christians’. It can also be applied to all other religions as well. In fact, considering the world humanity in a darkness of ignorance, Nursî was about to cry out with his heart, spirit and mind, and all his subtle inner powers were devoted to human cause. In this article, Nursî’s life and thinking will try to discuss shortly.
Biography in short

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî was born in the village of Nursî in Hizan, in the city of Bitlis in the year of 1876/1877/1878. He received education in a neighborhood Madrasha at his very early years. Due to exceptional intelligence and remembrance witnessed with him, he soon became famous as Molla Said, meaning the Well-Known. Later, he was celebrated with the heading of ‘Bediüzzaman’ referred as ‘the wonder of the time’.

In his school years, he memorized 90 books on basic Islamic knowledge. He used to repeat one of them every night. These repetitions served as a step for him to comprehend the meanings of Qur’anic verses profoundly and considered the verses embracing the whole universe. Actually, he learnt the ways and means of methodology of reading and understanding the Qur’ân from previous scholars and through his education in Madrasha. Truly, he knew what he was doing and much aware of why these abilities were given to him, and therefore, he used his knowledge to the cause of that awareness.

At the age of 20, he was capable of debating with the academics of the time. So, he drew the attention of local governors, like Tahir Pasha, who knew several languages. Nursî was hosted in the palace of Tahir Pasha for about three years. The governor discovered Nursî’s intellectual capacity of socio-political matters, specifically on education. In that time, the educational system of Ottoman State was diversified. Madrasah (religious sciences), Maktab (physical sciences) and Tariqah Orders (oral culture) were taught there. Conflicts among these three schools were very common during that period. Deliberations with the governor, Nursî congregated information about materialistic western education. In adding up, he gained knowledge on western values such as democracy, free-

7 Ibid., p. 3
dom, the problems emerged with modernity, multicultural-mixed society, nationalism and other related matters.

In the beginning of 1900, Nursî came to Istanbul\(^8\), which was then the center of Caliphate, bearing an idea of establishing an Islamic University namely Madrasatuz-Zahra, to be a centre of religious knowledge and optimistic sciences simultaneously\(^9\). He made efforts to reach this aim throughout his life. Though, he failed to establish a university as he dreamt, but he was able to establish a wide-spread system of Madrasha education with branches that functioned all over the country.

He served as a deliberate division commandant in the East Front during World War I\(^10\). He was wounded in war and imprisoned in Russia for two and a half years. Taking benefit of turmoil during Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, he escaped captivity. After returning back to his country, he was given the responsibility of administering Daru’l-Hikmeti’l-Islamiyya, a premier midpoint of religious discussion in Ottoman Empire, by the then General Staff\(^11\). In the years of British attacks in Istanbul, he published a book against them, titled Hutuwat-i Sitta.

**Said Nursî and his thinking**

Bediüzzaman was a worrying-enough power for the emerging leader of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kamal Ataturk\(^12\), to consider it necessary to seek control over him with offering the position of ‘Minister of Religious Affairs’ for the eastern provinces of Turkey, a post that Nursî prominently refused\(^13\).

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11 Ian S. Markham; Suendam Birinci; Suendam Birinci Pirim, *Ibid*, p. 46
He supported the Independence War started in Anatolia. While he was busy with educational activities in Van in 1925, he was exiled firstly to Burdur and then to Isparta and Barla as a safeguard during Sheikh Said Riot, even though he opposed this movement. He continued there for eight years. He wrote most of his Interpretation of the Qur’ân named Risale-i Nur there. He was charged to Eskisehir Court because of his books and ideas.

He continued writing his books in Kastamonu, where he was exiled. Nursî was accused by Denizli Court in 1943 and also by Afyon Court in 1948. Trials ended with his pardon. When the multiparty political system put into practice in Turkey in 1950, religious rights and freedoms were expanded. Alarmed by the growing popularity of Nursî’s teachings, which had wide influence among the intellectuals and even the military officers, the government mistakenly arrested him allegedly accused of breaching laws mandating secularism and sent him to exile. He was released of all these charges in 195614.

Said Nursî settled in the city of Isparta in his last decade of life. After the introduction of the multi-party system, he advised his followers to vote for the Democratic Party of Adnan Menderes, which had returned some religious freedom15. Said Nursî was a hinder anti-Communist, disapproving Communism as the greatest danger of the time. In 1956, he was allowed to have his writings printed. His books are collected under the name Risale-i Nur (“Letters of Divine Light”).

Nursî expired on 23rd March 1960 and buried in Urfa16, a city supposed to be the homeland of Prophet Ibrahim (A.)17. However, four months after his death his grave was damaged and his body was taken to an unidentified location by military government officials. Still it is unknown today.

17 Ibid., p xxiii
Nursî’s thinking

Nursî was a versatile and visionary scholar. His thinking and writings were also most powerful, important and very much significant for the welfare of humankind all over the world. According to Nursî, religious and physical sciences should be taught together and in the light of the Qur’ān. He emphasized on equality and lawfulness under democracy. He talked about loopholes of the world order and its remedy. Universal belief and true happiness are found through belief and knowledge of Allah as per Nursî’s thought. He showed miraculousness of the Qur’ān and highlighted peaceful approach by following Sunnah. Nursî opined that entire education system should obviously be reoriented and incorporated in accordance with the requirement of time and the necessity of the society. In fact, Nursî showed his broadness and greatness in all the aspects of human being. Some ideas of Nursî are given below:

Madrasatuz Zahra

Governor Tahir Pasha was very much influenced by Nursî’s view on combining educational system by Madrasatuz Zahra approach where Nursî proposed that religious and physical sciences to be taught in an integrated way. This will eliminate conflict and will bring moderation and balance into education. The Human Concept by Nursî has two important faculties;

a. Brain–Mind–Intellect and


According to Nursî the first, i.e. mind is related with physical sciences and the latter, the consciousness with religious sciences. If the first is missing, fanatism will come out and if religious sciences are missing, then doubts and cunningness will emerge. His Madrasatuz Zahra project is based on a combined education that the Qur’anic and Physical Sciences to be taught in an amalgamation way. For Nursî, the physical sciences are the reflections of the names of Allah.
Modern Values

Nurî also had a very sharp magnetic approach on modern values such as: Democracy means legality, legal conditions, and lawfulness. It is well known, the basics of so-called democracy are: Election (eligibility), Consultation (Shura) Power at the Law, and Equality in front of Law (justice). As per Nurî these things are well experienced during the early Islamic golden era. In his writings as early as 1907, he emphasized on equality, lawfulness (to be equal in front of law), consultation and eligibility. He upheld some exemplary evidences during the early time of Islam to demonstrate how Khulafai Rashidin (the first four Khaliphs) was just and practiced law equally for Muslims and Non-Muslims. In this regard, he took two clear verses of the Qur’ân ordering mashwarah-consultation, like:

18 Al Qur’ân, 3:159
19 Al Qur’ân, 42:38

Nurî argued for a politically stable Turkey and proposed principles to be employed in the government offices and for election ruling in the then Turkey. He says that governance is a worldly thing and looks like this: If you have a watch to be repaired, you do not go to Imam you go to watch maker. The ability is central here, similarly in the case of electing a ruler, ability should be important matter not piousness. If a pious and able person is there is good otherwise able should be elected. Nurî’s these kinds of quality thoughts made the governor Tahir Pasha to write a letter to Sultan Abdul Hamid II and sent along Nurî with. Nurî went to Istanbul in 1907 in order to present his projects (Madrasatuz Zahra Projects) to the Sultan Abdul Hamid II.

However, unluckily due to his young age and possibly other causes of the time and conditions around palace, Nurî could not meet with Sultan and he was rejected. He spent a few years in Istanbul and wrote some articles and books mostly related to so-
cio-political matter and education and also about modernization of Ottoman state without losing spiritual values. He confessed that he was disappointed with the treatment he received from the Palace in Istanbul and did not meet his opportunities. He returned to his hometown and went to Damascus, on the way he met with the scholars of the province and tribe leaders. The discussions with scholars were written as muhkamat–reasoning and the discussions with the tribe leaders printed as munazarat–the debates. He teaches the compatibility of modern values with Islam, such as; Democracy, Freedom, Lawfulness, Human rights etc.

The Damascus Lecture

In Damascus, Nursî gave a talk at the Umayyad Mosque in 1911 known as Damascus Lecture (Khutba-i Shamiyah). He talked there about the basic disabilities, in his term sicknesses of Muslim World in particular and the whole world in general. These indications–sicknesses and the remedies that Nursî’s thought are: ‘In the conditions of the present time in these lands, I have learnt a lesson in the school of humankind’s social life and I have realized that what has allowed foreigners, Europeans, to fly towards the future on progress while it arrested us and kept us, in respect of material development, in the Middle Ages are six dire sicknesses. The sicknesses are these:

i. Misery and hopelessness in social life,

ii. Death of truthfulness in social and political life,

iii. Love of opposition,

iv. Not knowing the brilliant bonds that bind the believers to one another,

v. Autocracy, which spreads like various contagious diseases and

vi. Restricting effort to what is personally beneficial.

Nursî said, ‘I shall explain, by means of six ‘Words’, the lesson I have learnt from the pharmacy of the Qur’ân, which is like a faculty of medicine. This lesson constitutes the medicine to cure our social
life of those six dire sicknesses. He went from Damascus to Istanbul via Beirut in June 1911. Sultan Abdulhamit II was removed and Sultan Reshad just ascended to the power. There was some wavering in the Balkan part of Ottoman and the Sultan was preparing to give a visit to Balkan provinces such as Albania, Macedonia and Serbia etc. for peaceful situation. Sultan asked Nursî to join him to represent eastern provinces of the Ottoman. During this visit, Nursî was able to present his educational Project to Sultan Reshad and got the promise of 19,000 golden Lira for the Madrasatuz Zahra project. Later on the 1st World War broke, and this project could not be realized.

**Qur’anic commentary: the *Risale-i Nur***

Nursî’s prominent Tafseer of the Qur’ân, namely *Risale-i Nur* was written between 1910-1950 with different periods which discloses major theological, spiritual, social and educational issues and provides solution to address them. This commentary of the Qur’ân has been compiled in an exclusive style making a change from the classical / traditional style to a new method of thought. The explanation does not keep clarifications to the order of the Ayah (verse to verse) as it is done in the classical Qur’anic explanation that explains the literary, methodological and theological dimensions of a verse and reasons various instructions.

*Risale-i Nur* is about 6000 pages of Qur’anic commentary generally focused on faith matters. With the fall down of Ottoman Empire and the rise of a new secularist state it was necessary to have this kind of writings to protect the faith of the people. The major agenda of the new emerged secularist administration was di-Islamization of the nation and people. So Nursî concentrated his affords to the rebirth and resurgence of Islam within the heart and spirit of the people from the remainder of Ottoman. When he was exiled and subjected to enforced settlement in Barla, he was first hosted by security people, later by an Imam namely Muhazir

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Haftiz Ahmed who was a migrant from Hungary. Nursî’s first risalâh (booklet-treatises) shows the very existence of Resurrection and the hereafter written on hearing that in Ankara there were some literary works to deny the existence of life after death. This booklet was published in Ottoman Turkish (by Arabic scripture) in printing. Soon it reached to Ankara; a ban was enforced on printing it with Ottoman. Then the whole 6000 pages of Risale-i Nur about faith based on Qur’ânic commentary were written by hand. Some other books of Nursî were also reproduced by hand and more than 500 copies of Risale were continued till first hand-driven hectographed technology came into service in 1947.

Nursî’s writings were mainly based on Qur’ân and Hadith, unlike other written materials not very much compartmentalized. No copy of his early readings was visible yet there was a strong authenticity of Qur’ânic taste. The Risale does not deal with science and source of knowledge only; it is beyond that of a combination of mind with heart and prosperity of spirituality. As mentioned earlier he mastered major Islamic texts in terms of his intellectual nourishment and he had connection with major spiritual masters. Somewhere in his writings he says, ‘I have received lessons from thousands of teachers including wings’.

In the Risale-i Nur, he also speaks of a ‘general belief’ (îtikad-I umumi) made up of those elements of faith shared by Jews, Christians and Muslims and argues that this general belief must come from the revelation of the same God. An example of this general belief is the common acceptance of spiritual beings by the followers of all three religions. Nursî had identified the most vital points which could form the best borders of any dialogue among civilizations and which oppose the materialistic and aggressive atheistic principles like: force vs. truth, self-interest vs. virtue, God’s pleasure, conflict vs. mutual assistance, racism, nationalism vs. the relationship of unity created by religion, class and the nation as well.

The importance of the Risale-i Nur cannot be overestimated, through which Bediüzzaman Said Nursî played a major role in preserving and refreshing the Islamic faith in Turkey in the very darkest
days of his history. And indeed, it has still a profound importance till today. In addition to this, the Risale-i Nur is exclusively fitted to tackle not only all Muslims but indeed all mankind for several reasons. First, it is written in accordance with the contemporary mentality of human beings a mentality that, whether Muslim or not, has been deeply filled by materialist philosophy. Risale-i Nur specifically answers all the questions, doubts and confusions that arise with common course of the present system. It answers to all the ‘why’s’ that mark the questioning mind of modern man. Also, it explains the most profound matters of belief, which formerly advanced scholars studied only in detail in such a way that everyone, even those to whom the subject is new, may understand and gain something without causing any difficulties or harm.

A further reason is that in explaining the true nature and purposes of man and the universe, the Risale-i Nur shows that true happiness is only to be found in belief and knowledge of Allah, both in this world and the Hereafter. And it also points out the serious pain and unhappiness that unbelief causes in man’s spirit and conscience, which generally misguided attempt to block out through negligence and avoidance, so that anyone with any sense may take refuge in belief.

**Dream on the WWI**

Nursî wrote in one of his letters before the 1st World War, or around the beginning of it, ‘I had a true vision. In it, I was under the famous mountain of Agri, known as Mount Ararat. The mountain suddenly exploded with a terrible blast. Pieces the size of mountains were scattered all over the world. I looked and saw it in that dire situation, my mother was beside me. I said to her: “Don’t be frightened. This is happening by Almighty Allah’s command, and He is All-Compassionate and All-Merciful.” Suddenly, while in that situation I saw that a person of importance was commanding me: “Explain the miraculousness of the Qur’ān”. I awoke and understood that there was going to be a great blast, and after that explosion and tur-
moil, the walls surrounding the Qur’ān were going to be destroyed. The Qur’ān would then protect itself directly. It was going to be attacked, and its miraculousness would be its steel armour. And in a way surpassing its ability, someone like me was going to be appointed at this time to disclose a sort of its miraculousness; and I understood that it was me who had been designated.

Mission of Nursî

Nursî’s mission was to express and prove the miraculousness of the Qur’ān to the World; and therefore in general, Nursî’s way of deepening faith methodology cannot be defined by his writings only. The practical function of his mind–heart training methodology also should be considered very sincerely. His approach is not a matter of knowledge only, it is beyond that. It is a kind of combined knowledge and practice, the Ders–Dersane model. The role of Dersane and Ders in Nursîan methodology is very critical. In early years of Turkish republic, there were very aggressive attacks on Islam, Qur’ān and related values. As reading of the Qur’ān was banned, Nursî did not setup institutions how to read the Qur’ān or how to memories it. But rather he gave more emphasize on teaching Qur’ānic values and what is the Qur’ān, what it stands for. According to Nursî Qur’ān means, ‘the Qur’ān is an endless translation of the great Book of the Universe and the everlasting translator of the ‘languages’ in which the Divine laws of the universe’s creation and operation are ‘inscribed’; the interpreter of the books of the visible, material world and the World of the Unseen...

Nursî said, Suddenly, we hear from the Qur’ān’s inspiring speech such verses as:

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	ext{يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِ الأَْرْضِ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ}
\]

(Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth glorifies Allah, the Sovereign King, the Holy one, the Almighty,


Nursî said, see how the world’s lifeless or sleeping creature’s spring to life in the minds of the audience at the sound of glorifies how they wake, spring up and begin to worship Allah by mentioning His Names.

**Nursî’s evaluation of the Qur’ân with materialistic philosophy**

Wisdom as per materialist philosophy and science are:

1. Philosophy as a ‘force’ contributes to life in society.
2. It aims ‘benefits’ to the social causes.
3. The principle of philosophy is recognized to be ‘conflict’.
4. It holds the bond between communities through ‘racialism and narrow nationalism’.
5. Its fruits are ‘rewarding the desire of the soul and increasing human needs’.

As for the Qur’ânic wisdom:

i. Its point of support is ‘truth’ instead of force.
ii. It takes ‘virtue and Allah’s pleasure’ as its aims in place of benefits.
iii. It takes the principle of ‘mutual assistance’ as the principle of life in place of the principle of conflict.
iv. And it takes ‘the ties of religion, class, and country’ to be the ties bonding communities.
v. Its aim is to form a barrier against the desires of the soul, recommend the spirit to sublime matters, satisfy the high emotions and influence man to the human perfections and make him a true human being. And the mark of ‘the truth’ is harmony. The mark of virtue is ‘solidarity’. The mark of mutual assistance is ‘hurrying to assist one another’.

The mark of religion is ‘brotherhood’ and ‘attraction’. In addition, the mark of reining in and tethering the soul and leaving the

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23 Al Qur’ān, 62:1
spirit free and urging it towards perfections is ‘happiness in this world and the next’.

The Qur’ān sees and shows the truth of kindness and supervision expressed in: َّمَا يُْسِكُهُنَّ إِلۚ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَ الطَّيِّ فَوْقَهُمْ صَافَّاتٍ وَيَقْبِضْنَ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَْءٍ بَصِيٌّ (Have they not seen the birds above them spreading out their wings and also folding them in? None upholds them except Allah, the Most-Beneficent. Verily, He is the Beholder of everything)\textsuperscript{26}; the truth concerning His overseeing, expressed by: َوَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ (and He is with you wherever you may be)\textsuperscript{27}; the all-embracing truth expressed by: ۖۖوَهُوَ الأَْوَّلُ وَالْخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ (He is the First and the Last, and the Manifest, and the Hidden, and He is the All-Knower of everything)\textsuperscript{28}; His being nearer to beings than themselves, expressed by: ۖۖوَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الِْنسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ (And We have indeed created man, and We know what his soul whispers within him and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein)\textsuperscript{29}

**Peaceful approach**

In many contexts and places, Nursî wrote on peaceful struggle and methodology but in one place where he very openly supports his peaceful approach on the Sunnah of Prophet Muḥammad (saw) in an exemplary case. Nursî remembers the Hudaybiya peace treaty. It was in the 19th year of the prophethood, one night Prophet (saw) dreamt of going for Umra and visiting Ka’bah. He asked his companion to prepare and set on journey to Makkah. However, on the way around Hudaybiya they were stopped by Makka’s Mushrikin. After long discussions, there was a kind of peace treaty and for long years of peace, the Muslims would not visit Makkah for those years having many other outwardly disgraceful conditions. Except peace in being, most of the ten conditions were against Muslims.

\textsuperscript{26} Al Qur’ān, 67:19
\textsuperscript{27} Al Qur’ān, 57:4
\textsuperscript{28} Al Qur’ān, 57:3
\textsuperscript{29} Al Qur’ān, 50:16; Said Nursî, The Risale-i Nur, Ibid., pp. 209–210
Nursî suggested to search and read these conditions. He knew that most of us know it well and yet requested to kindly read one more time with this vision. Most companions did not like this peace and opposed Prophet (sws). But in less than two years’ time, Makkah was surrounded willingly. It is said that, the number people who convert into Islam in 21 months’ time was more that was happened in the past 19 years. We see these narratives in Nursî’s own words in the 8th Flash:

‘And He granted besides this, a victory soon to come’ is stating that although the treaty of Hudaybiya was apparently opposed to Islam’s interests and the Quraysh were victorious to a point, in reality it was a great victory and the key to further conquests. For with the treaty the physical sword was temporarily hung up, but the flashing diamond sword of the Qur’ân was unsheathed and it conquered minds and hearts. Because of it, the two sides mixed with one another. The virtues of Islam and lights of the Qur’ân rent the covers of determination and tribalism and prevailed. For example, people like Khalid bin–Walid, a brilliant warrior, and ‘Amr ibn al– ‘As, a brilliant politician, who could not accept defeat, were defeated by the Qur’ânic sword manifested through the treaty of Hudaybiya. They submitted in perfect obedience to Islam in Madina and Khalid became a ‘Sword of Allah.³⁰’

Thinking on politics

Nursî was far–away from politics and advised his students never rely their works on politics. For Nursî, people who are aiming to serve Islam they should be very careful with their relations with politics and politicians. He takes example of Ahl Al bayt ‘If you ask: What was the reason for Imam ‘Ali’s (R.) lack of success in regard to the Islamic Caliphate comparatively to his precursors, despite his extraordinary capabilities, unusual intelligence and great deservedness? The Answer is – that blessed person was deserving of

³⁰ Said Nursî, The Flaheds, 8th Flash from Risale–i Nur Collection, (Istanbul: Soz Basim, 2009)
heavy duties other than politics and rule. If he had been completely successful in politics and government, he would have been unable to acquire fully the meaningful title of King of Sainthood. Whereas he speaks of a spiritual law far exceeding the external, political Caliphate and that became a Universal Master; in fact, his spiritual rule will continue even until the end of the world. As for his war with Mu‘awiya at Siffin, it was a war over the Caliphate and rule. That is to say, Imam ‘Ali (R.) gave priority to the restrictions of religion, the truths of Islam and the hereafter and sacrificed some of the laws of government and merciless demands of politics. Whereas Mu‘awiya and his supporters, in order to strengthen Islamic society with their governmental policies, left away confidence and privileged progressiveness; they supposed they were obliged to in the political territory; choosing permissiveness, they fell into error.

**Vision for future world**

Nursî views about education and science and the integration of science and technology with ethical values and religious instructions is most important dimension of his holistic thought. He says for example, ‘The light of the conscience is the religious sciences. The light of the mind is exact sciences. Reconciliation of both manifests the truth. The student’s skills develop further with these two (sciences). When they are separated, from the former superstition and from the latter corruption and disbelief is born’.

Bediüzzaman as one of the contemporary reformers felt that the whole system of education must be reoriented and integrated in accordance with the demand of time and necessity of the society. In his view, in the course of time, the Madrasha syllabuses had become narrow and disinfected with modern developments in science being rejected all in all. So that at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Madrashas were producing ‘ulama who believed, collectively with the Europeans, that there was a clash and disagreement between certain ‘externals’ of Islam and certain matters of science, for instance, the Earth being round. This false idea had caused feelings
of hopelessness and dejection and had shut the door of progress and civilization. He argued, ‘Islam is the master and guide of the sciences, and the chief and father of all true knowledge’. For combination of knowledge, his view is that religious subjects are taught in the new secular schools (maktabs) and that the positive sciences are taught in the religious schools (madrasas). He states the following in another short expression: ‘Our enemies are ignorance, poverty and disagreement. We will fight against these three enemies with the weapons of art, knowledge and unity’.

The spirit of Bediüzzaman’s proposals lay in reconciling the three main branches into one. The embodiment of this rapprochement was the Madrasatuz Zahra. Bediüzzaman attached the greatest importance to establish this university where the religious sciences and modern sciences would be taught side-by-side and ‘combined’ and pursued it until the end of his days.

The second very considerable dimension of his thought was his encouragement of dialogue instead of clash among civilizations. Though Said Nursî lived long before Huntington, but his presenting the dialogue as the best way to solve the problems in most suitable, credible and philosophically well-articulated manner makes him the real competitor of western thinking of conflict and clash theories by Huntington.

Said Nursî, in his Damascus Lecture (Khutba-i Shamiyah) underlined the need for Muslim-Christian dialogue, which he felt, had a potential to resolve world problems. Said Nursî suggests that Muslims should unite ‘not only with their fellow-believers, but also with the truly pious Christians. We can apply this to all other religions as well. The point of unity is to be able to go beyond tolerance towards genuine interest in and admiration for each other’s religious traditions. Nursî saw the Divine Name of All-Just rising like the sun in the sign of All-Wise, the Name of All-Merciful rising in the sign of Munificent, the Name of All-Compassionate rising in the sign of, that is, in the meaning of, All-Forgiving, the Name of

Revive or rising in the sign of Inheritor, the Name of Giver of Life rising in the sign of Bountiful, and the Name of Sustainer rising in the sign of Owner. They lit up the entire world of humanity and all the worlds within it’. Nursî makes extensive use of correlation to appeal his cause. For example, he draws the following parallel between ‘intention’ and ‘point of view’ in turning scientific knowledge into knowledge of Allah: “Just as through intention, permissible habitual actions may become worship, so according to the point of view, the physical sciences may become knowledge of God.

He says, ‘The thing looks to itself alone,’ If you look thus at the universe, whatever the extent of your scientific knowledge, it will be ignorance. He states that all living creatures can only come into existence ‘through an unlimited wisdom, infinite knowledge and all-inclusive will’. With such reasonbased arguments, Nursî intends to satisfy the mind by overcoming all possible objections and to establish satisfaction in the heart.

Guideline for women

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî expressed the nature and purity of women in the best way in his Risale-i Nur. In Risale-i Nur, he attracts the attention to the morals and virtues of women as their real accomplishments in response to Materialism’s perspective which has restrained women only to the outer and materialistic beauties. Woman is the source of high morals by nature and a blessed creature created to lead happy lives in the family. Allah created women innocent by nature but the desire of dark powers to use them as a weapon lowered them as symbols of immorality.

Religion and Science is not contradictory

While the modern age has been marked by the rise of science and the miraculous advances, it has brought the human life in material

civilization but there is also witness a decline in religion, morality and spiritual life. This has led not to increased happiness and prosperity for humankind as a whole, but to greater utilization, injustice and deprivation. One of the vital reasons of this has surely been the supposed inappropriateness and clash between science and religion and the dislocation of religion by science. With the growth of materialistic philosophies, science was even deliberately set up as the standard of truth in human life in place of the religion and was used to dishonor and displace religion. Bediüzzaman thus observed that the Qur’ān and Islam were in great threat so whilst explaining the message of the Qur’ān, therefore he demonstrated in Risale-i Nur that there is no contradiction between science and religion.\[34\]

Conclusion

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî is one of the versatile geniuses of the ‘Islamic Schools of Thought’. His devotion to the peace for mankind through religious belief in the twentieth century and the subsequent periods made him well famous to study further. His thought of a religious harmony among the people of the world is quietly justified for the unrest among the inhabitants of the present world. Regarding the ‘Clash of Civilization’ that takes now more prominent issues in the present political affair, Nursî settles the humanity to solve any dissent views through dialogue, the most democratic way out to progress of civilization. Nursî proposes modern thinking in the light of religious value and his view on moral teaching guides the fellows in light with religion and science. Nursî, therefore, is no doubt, a scholar of modern philosophy as well as a reformer in Islamic ideology. Democracy, gender dignity, state policy including justice and electoral reform on the value of equal rights of the citizens are widely discussed by Nursî in his several writings and lectures. Nursî himself tried to establish these principles during his lifetime making efforts against the tyranny shown by the government of that time.

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ABSTRACT

Ongoing crimes against humanity in the contemporary world is a big question and concern for entire human society. The reason for this rapid escalation across the globe and its dangerous consequences in the society are to be examined. Whether the people carry out crimes as a symbol of pride and mighty or they have been compelled to do for their survival, forgetting human qualities and moral ethics? It is a big question mark on these points. Many intellectuals and experts have debated and discoursed on this vital issue but as the time passes its splinters are spreading into new areas. Hence there is no full stop of this problem has been noticed. The crime against humanity occurring everywhere in the world for different reasons in different times. Likewise nature of crime has been noticed in different manner – lynching, killing, rape, kidnapping, beheading innocent individuals for personal or regional interests in the name of religion, cast, doubt, belief and so on. Though the system of government and mindset of the society are partially responsible side by side the religious leaders, head of family as well as social disunity, poverty, illiteracy etc. are also responsible for this evil tendencies. Said Nursî, has predicted long years ago and called upon humankind towards peace and harmony, to observe kindness and morality, referring to the Holy verses of the Qur’ân. The time has come to discuss and debate on this burning issue like humanity crisis and to find out ways in view to overcome the problem. The paper focuses on these important issues and comes up with a conclusion in the light of Resale-i Nur.

Ongoing crimes against humanity in the contemporary world is a big question and concern for entire human society. People across the casts and religion in the glob are worry about the current escalation of humanity crisis in each and every stages of the society.
Human being in today’s world seek the way out to be escaped from this evil tendencies and to live peacefully in the society. Let us start the discussion with the etymological and religious definition of crimes and humanity in the modern-day perspective.

According to the International Criminal Court (July 2002): “Crimes against humanity” include any of the following acts committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack:

- Murder;
- Extermination;
- Enslavement;
- Deportation or forcible transfer of population;
- Imprisonment;
- Torture;
- Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity;
- Persecution against an identifiable group on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious or gender grounds;
- Enforced disappearance of persons;
- The crime of apartheid;
- Other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering or serious bodily or mental injury.

On the other hand, Humanity is the human race, which includes everyone on Earth. It’s also a word for the qualities that make us human, such as the ability to love and have compassion and be creative. The word ‘humanity’ is from the Latin ‘humanitas’ for “human nature, kindness.” Humanity includes all the humans, but it can also refer to the kind feelings, often have for each other. However, when we talk about humanity, we could just be talking about people as a whole. When people do bad things, it tests our faith in humanity. When people ask for money to help and feed the starving children, there comes to us a sense of humanity.
Humanity in the Holy Qur’an

There are five major divine ideas expounded in the Qur’an that human beings have now begun to realize as the essence of their humanity. Those five ideas are – oneness or unity of humanity, dignity of human beings, universalization of natural resources, justice and peace. No human society can live peacefully without accepting these ideas and making efforts to live by them.

1. Oneness of humanity

The Holy Qur’an emphasis on the oneness of human beings. It introduces the idea of common human origin and ancestry and says that humans have their origin in a single cell or soul. “O mankind! Reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single soul, created, of like nature, the mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women; - reverence Allah, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for Allah ever watches over you.” (Qur’an 4:1)

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (Qur’an 49:13)

Thus the purpose is to ensure that the unity of humanity is never compromised and the differences that exist among people are resolved through a process of mutual understanding on the basis of ideas that are divine revealed. The Qur’anic assertion about the oneness of humanity is a powerful message for all those who still want to live in their own tribal, national and ethnic arena without any respect and regard for the other. The Qur’an does not want a person to cancel one’s identity by birth but wants that identity to enhance inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness.

2. Dignity of human beings

The Qur’an places great emphasis on the dignity of human beings regardless of their gender or race or even status. It says:
“We have bestowed dignity on the children of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of our creation.” (Qur’ān 17:70)

The dignity comprises rights and duties. It means that all human beings are created equal by the One Creator, and no one is superior to another on the basis of his or her birth or family or tribe. It is only the divine that alone is the judge to decide who lived up to his/her dignified status accepting the dignity of the other. The dignity also means that human beings have a right to life, right to freedom of religion, right to freedom of lifestyle, right to labour, right to security and right to family.

People were discriminated on the basis of their ethnicity or gender or status and religious scholars and political experts were providing justification for these discrimination. A classic case of this denial of dignity can be found in India where according to religious scripture a group of people were categorized as low castes or untouchables because of their birth in a particular social group. Even though, India has banned that in its constitution and legally such a discrimination is punishable, yet it is still practiced widely in the country. But no one in the world today can argue for segregation and discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender etc. The world has begun to realize and implement the Qur’ānic message of the dignity of humankind. This message is relevant in our time more than ever before, regardless whether Muslims practice it or not because it certainly can inspire people of all faith to stand with each other in defence of human dignity of all.

3. Universalization of natural resources

The third Qur’ānic message relevant for humanity at large is its emphasis on the universality of natural resources. Earth, oceans, skies water, and wind are for the benefit of all. No one can monopolize them for their exclusive use. No one can use their access to these resources to deny others the rights bestowed to them. Thus the Qur’ān states:
“It is He Who has created for you all things that are on earth; moreover His design comprehended the heavens, for He gave order and perfection to the seven firmaments; and of all things He has perfect knowledge.” (Qur’ān 2:29)

The distribution of these human resources in a manner that would ensure the dignity and oneness of humanity is a major challenge for human beings. Wars have been fought for land and access to natural resources such as water, land or gas without realizing that none of these natural treasures were created by humans, yet human beings have always fought over their greed to control them.

The Qur’ān explains that the purpose to provide these resources is to ensure that human beings are not deprived of their basic needs for survival. It asks human beings not to use them to exploit fellow human beings. People are deprived of drinkable water even though there is plenty of fresh water resources. People are still forced to live on streets and under open skies even though there is plenty of land to provide housing to everyone. In religious circles everyone talks about removing poverty or at least ensuring that people’s basic needs are addressed. The Qur’ānic message certainly gives guidance in this matter and invites people to work together to ensure that no one sleeps hungry and no one is homeless.

4. Justice for all

The Qur’ān not only emphasizes justice but also recommends a step above justice, i.e., working for the good of others at the expense of one’s interest.

The Qur’ān recommends a simple maxim for justice:

“O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.” (Qur’ān 4:135)

“O ye who believe! stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong
Every human society accepts justice as its core value, yet we find that every human society violates its own declared values and promotes injustice on the basis of divisions that people have created among themselves. So much inequality, indignity and denial of basic human rights take place in our world simply because people tend to view justice for others as not binding. However, without adhering to justice, it is impossible to think of dignity, unity or universality of humanity.

5. Peace is the goal

The ultimate goal of humans in this world is to secure a peaceful human society so that a peaceful family can protect the interests of a peaceful individual for achieving his or her true potential in deliberating on the purpose of this life and preparing for a life that is eternal in every sense of the term. The unity of humanity, the dignity, the justice and the universality of human resources pave the path for peace. They liberate humans from the ordinary and irreligious and take them to the dominion of inspiration and sacred. They ensure that the human beings reconcile between their greed and their need.

Defining the purpose of his guidance the Qur’an says: “through which Allah shows unto all that seek His goodly acceptance the paths leading to peace and, by His grace, brings them out of the depths of darkness into the light and guides them onto a straight way. (Qur’an 5:16)

The Qur’an repeats the message several times that the purpose of human efforts is to enable humans to dwell in an abode of peace,

“theirs shall be an abode of peace with their Sustainer; and He shall be near unto them in result of what they have been doing.” (Qur’an 6:127)

Thus, the message of the Qur’an is universal and eternal. The divine sets the standards through messages delivered to human beings. It was left to individuals to seek the path of unity, dignity, universality, justice and peace not the path to argue with each who
is better than the other or who would qualify for the grace of Allah and who would not.

**Causes of social illness for humanity crisis**

The Social problems which are abundant and have become the order of the day everywhere in the world, whether at the local, national, regional or international levels. Undesirable social conditions, cultural shocks, political turmoil, environmental problems, and economic uncertainties are affecting individuals, families, communities, and societies at large, whether Muslims or non-Muslims worldwide. People in general are trying to make sense of the radical changes in the global environment and struggling with the many socio-cultural, technological, political and economic challenges of the 21st century. Even the most basic concept of “family” which has been traditionally understood, is being challenged by so-called human rights activists lobbying at the level of the United Nations for the concept of ‘family’ to include homosexual couples as well as men and women living together and having children without marriage. The family institution is further weakened by domestic violence, mental and physical abuses, juvenile social problems, poverty, and social crimes among the neglected and attention-deprived children of poor or broken families.

**Some of the Social evils**

There are numbers of alarming problems that plaguing the world in the 21st century, referring to them here are some of the major evils: 1. Teen pregnancy: The developed countries like the U.S. and Britain have the highest teen pregnancy rates and there are million teenagers become pregnant each year in the world’s richest countries. This means millions of children are born out of wedlock each year. 2. Domestic violence: There are thousands of women have been killed each year in the society across the countries as a result of domestic violence. On the other hand millions of women are physically abused by their husbands or boyfriends, be beaten,
forced into sex or otherwise abused during their lifetime. 3. Drug addiction and drug trafficking: Now a days trade of illegal drugs and consuming drugs and alcohol among the yours are common phenomena everywhere in the world. This practice have directly or indirectly responsible for crimes in the society. 4. Pornography: More than 70 percent of adult movies are made in Los Angeles, in the USA; that Americans spend billions dollars per year on pornographic materials. Other developed and under-develop countries also produce pornographic movies in the world. Adults as well as minors are addicted with pornographies that leads the younger generation to the heinous crime like rape, violence on women etc. in the society. Other identified “facts” include homosexuality and same sex marriages, abortions, divorces, irreligion, poverty, illiteracy and malnutrition etc.

The common problems in this shrinking world ...: drug and alcohol abuse, divorce, teenage violence and crime, ethnic and racial prejudice, the problems of the aged and the poor; the challenge of the growing sense of anarchy and rampant materialism; the sexual degradation of women and children; the exhaustion of our natural resources and ecological concerns.

Root causes according to al–Qur’an & Hadith

The causes and effects of human infirmities and many social ills have long been addressed directly and indirectly in the Holy Qur’an and Traditions of the Prophet (PBUH).

Subjugation and colonisation for years, there are Muslims who are inflicted, colonised by the West and wholeheartedly accept the Western way of life without any reservation. They proudly discard all Islamic values and teachings, dismissing them as irrelevant and out of date with modernity. They unashamedly follow the West blindly without even thinking of its relevance to the Muslim society. This phenomenon is rightly mentioned in a Hadith, as follows:

Narrated by Abu Said al–Khudri: The Prophet (PBUH) said, “You will follow the ways of those nations who were before you, span by
span and inch by inch so much so that even if they entered a lizard hole, you would follow them.” We said, “O Allah’s Messenger! (Do you mean) the Jews and the Christians?” He said, “Who else?” (Sahi al-Muslim, Chapter 3, No.6448)

The subjugated person is always infatuated, and imitates the conqueror in his motto, his clothes, his religion and all his conditions and habits as well. The reason is that the human personality always thinks that the power, the priority and the excellence are always with the one who conquered it, so it glorifies him in imitation.

All these social problems reflect mankind’s increasing irreligiosity and spiritual weaknesses, but it would not help change things merely by talking by mouth and being blind to the Truth.

Allah has given the humankind the Al-Qur’ān more than 1430 years ago through our Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH). There are verses in the Qur’ān that refer man to his reason, saying:

“Use your intelligence! Think! Consult your mind and your heart! Confer with them so that you may know this fact!” The Al-Qur’ān has all the remedies, but since we have been looking elsewhere for the cure, the crises and dilemmas of the world have escalated. Despite our blindness, we are kept reminded by Allah, our Creator, “Do not despair of Allah’s Mercy” (QS 39: 53).

The Islamic approach to combating crime

The ultimate objective of every Islamic legal command is to secure the welfare of humanity in this world and the next by establishing a righteous society. This is a society that worships Allah and His Prophet (PBUH) and to build a civilized society wherein every human being can live in a climate of peace, justice and security. This is a civilization that allows a person to fulfil his every spiritual, intellectual, and material need and cultivate every aspect of his being. This supreme objective is mentioned by the Holy Qur’ān in many places. Allah says: “We have sent our Messengers with clear signs and have sent down with them the book and the criterion so that man can establish justice. And we sent down iron of great strength and many benefits for man…” (Qur’ān 57:25) Allah says:
“...Allah wants ease for you, not hardship...” (Qur’an 2:185) And Allah says:

“Allah wants to make things clear for you and to guide you to the ways of those before you and to forgive you. Allah is the All knowing, the Wise. (Qur’an 4:26–28)

Solutions for humanity crisis from Said Nursî’s “Damascus Sermon”

Imam Bediüzzaman Said Nursî (1877–1960) lived to witness the decline of the Islamic world and the weakening of the Islamic faith as a result of colonisation and the ensuing interest in materialism as well as atheistic agnosticism, using science as the material index. He was seriously concerned about the social ills that were destroying mankind. In the Risale-i Nur, he re-emphasised the fact that true happiness can only be found in the belief and knowledge of Allah, both in this world and the hereafter. On the contrary, the act of unbelief would cause grievous pain and unhappiness, often reflected in heedlessness and escapism.

When Said Nursî was invited by the religious authorities in Damascus, Syria, to give a sermon in the Umayyad Mosque in 1911, he not only addressed a gathering of close to 10,000 people (including 100 religious scholars of the time) but he also left behind a valuable legacy, a prophetic sermon that transcended geographical boundaries and time.

At the Damascus Sermon, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî diagnosed some of the fundamentals ills afflicting the Islamic world and gave the remedies from the everlasting “pharmacy of the Qur’ân”. He addressed six “dire sicknesses” and described the medicine to cure each one of the sicknesses in what he termed as a lesson in mankind’s social life. He reached out to Muslims to pay heed to the truths of the Al-Qur’ân and to rebuild society based on the foundations of the Islamic faith, in order for man’s civilization to become a true civilization.

In the Damascus Sermon, Imam Said Nursî expounded on “the veils that had eclipsed the sun of Islam”, preventing it from illum-
nating mankind in the past. Most impactful of all, he gave Muslims hope with his optimistic convictions that the true dawn of Islam will be witnessed soon because of the following signs:

1. The virtues of knowledge and civilization have removed three obstacles — the Europeans’ ignorance, their barbarity, and their bigotry in their religion.
2. The idea of freedom and the desire to search for the truth have begun to erase two obstacles — the domination and arbitrary power of the European clergy and religious leaders.

Man in this 21st century has perceived that his greatest need is for moral and spiritual strength, solace, and fortitude. Therefore, for him to abandon Islam and the truths of belief at this time, which are a point of support and secure the moral strength, solace and happiness he needs, and, instead of benefiting from Islamic nationhood, under the pretext of becoming westernized, for him to rely on misguidance, dissipation, and lying politics and diplomacy, which completely destroy and annihilate all moral strength, solace and fortitude, are acts far from all benefits and profits for mankind.

What Said Nursî prophesied in his Damascus sermon 100 years ago has become increasingly significant in this decade of the third millennium. As he said:

If you want success, obey the rules to the Divine laws! Otherwise you will be unsuccessful. Religion may not be sacrificed for the sake of this world... This nation’s heart disease is weakness in religion; it will regain its health through strengthening it.

The way of our society is love for love and enmity towards enmity. That is, assisting love between Muslims and routing the soldiers of hostility.

Islam has begun making a comeback, true to what Bediüzzaman Said Nursî believed 100 years ago he said that “Our future will be with Islam, and this century will be a century for Islam”. However, we cannot merely dream a world of peace and harmony without working for it. Nurturing our youth with Islamic ideals is the only way to ensure that Islam regains its place in the world.
Ustaz Said Nursî has set an example of forbearance and Islamic morality even toward his enemy in the battlefield during the World War-I. He fought with exceptional heroism with his volunteer forces against the Russian militarises. The Armenians actively collaborated with the Russians and committed immeasurable crimes against humanity killing innocent people including slaughtering women, children and elderly Muslim subjects in the Ottoman Empire. When the Armenians massacre the Muslim women and children as well as the men, Armenian children would sometimes be killed in retaliation. But Bediüzzaman has restrained himself from this barbaric practice and was able to bring some humanity to the Armenians. By this he has shown best example of morality of Islam and has exposed his heterogeneous sentiment against crime.

Today’s humanity crisis have been increasing due to absence of moral, ethical and religious values among the people of this present world. Across the countries in general and India in particular, numerous incidents are happening everyday due to lack of education, proper knowledge of religion and poverty. The political and personal benefit of some sections of people are also responsible for heinous crimes like lynching and killing of innocent people in the name of religion, discrimination among the casts and communal feelings. No religions of the world insists crimes against humanity and whatever the incidents are happening are due to lack of proper knowledge of religion, mind-set of society, misunderstanding, superstitions and absence of moral and ethical values. On the other hand, in the International scenario, wars against the Islamic countries in the name of terrorism and to offer a taste of so-called democracy to the misguided youths, killing thousands of people including women and children, destroying houses of numerous people and making them helpless refugees are the evil intention and practice of the U.S. and its alleys against Islam and Muslims. In spite of these atrocities of the West, the light Islam has been spreading rapidly in Europe and America because of the truth of Qur’ân and values of Islam. People of today’s world have been facing numerous problems in the society. We, as a member of a society
have responsibility to ponder about these social evils. Awareness among the people across the religions and casts regarding universal brotherhood, unity, human values, respect to the other religion and person are highly necessary. If the people learn to love others and let other to live peacefully then a light of remedy from humanity crisis can be obtained. We pray to Almighty Allah for well-beings of entire humanity and look forward towards the better tomorrow.

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Concept and Initiative of Bediüzzaman Said Nursî’s Madrasat-uz Zahra and madrasha education in Bangladesh: an observation

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ABSTRACT

Bediüzzaman said Nursî of Turkey, one of the legend star among the contemporary scholars of the Islamic World. He allocated his thought in all aspect of human being at the 1st half of twentieth century. He clearly observed Ottoman Empire was sinking due to their unpopular, olden and radical policy. Education system of the empire divided general and classical Madrasha system. Nursî believed Religious ethics based technological education and intellectual unity of Muslim nations should save and protect soul of Ummah. He tried to remove duel system of education and plan to establish Madrasatuz zahra and Islamic university for produce expert and unified skill people in term of Islamic Dawah and human development. Total education system of Bangladesh was as like as same Ottoman Empire even more divided then modern Turkey. 1878 British ruler established Alia Madrasha at Calcutta Western part of Bengal. Deoband method Qoumi Madrasa established nock and corner of the country of Bengal at the same time. Both systems were going simultaneously in East Pakistan last day of the Pakistan regime. After 1971, independence of Bangladesh Madrasha system has received new policy and dimension for modernization. Islamic University, Madrasha Education Board and Madrasha reform Commission established during first decade of freedom. Now a day’s around 38000 Madrashas, two hundred thousand teachers and around 50 lacks students are studying in this system. Interestingly inform here, 50 percent students are girls. Gradually this system becomes as like general education of the country. I will examine in this article influence of Nursî’s thought in ongoing Madrasha system of Bangladesh and how we will modernize and more combine in-between Madrasha and technological education.
We will forward some points for further development of Madrasha education based on Nursî’s philosophy end of the article.

Keywords: Madrasha, Aliya, Qoumi, Curriculum, Oriental, Noorani, Khankas

Introduction

Generally Madrasahs are religious schools that offer religious education along with modern and human needs related subjects as like main stream education. There are two type of Madrasha in the country 1. Aliya and 2. Qoumi. Aliya Madrasha historically controlled and financially supported by government. Qoumi Madrashas are not recognized by the state and do not receive any financial support from the government. While the curriculum of the Aliya Madrashas has a mix of general and religious subjects there is no uniform curriculum in the later type of Madrasas although the weight is heavy on religious subjects. All Aliya Madrashas, apart from three government regulated aliya Madrashas, are managed by local communities. The Aliya Madrashas have over 4 million students in about 14000 institutions under the supervision of BMEB\(^1\). On the other hand there is no official estimate about the total number of Qoumi Madrashas. The Qoumi Madrashas supervised by unspecified number of regional Qoumi madrasha education Boards. While most of the Aliya and Qoumi Madrashas are located in rural and semi urban areas. Aliya madrashas carried co-education system but in Qoumi Madrasha system students majorly are male and about half of all students are boarding.

Historical background of Madrasha in sub-continent:

One time Madrasha education was the only form of education in the Muslim world, where both religious and secular education was imparted. In the case of sub-continent majorly Islam speared

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\(^1\) Bangladesh Madrasha Education Board regulate all government funded Aliya Madrashas as an in depended body. http://www.bmeb.gov.bd/ 24th December 2015
through the preaching of Sufis and Arabs Dayee and traders. They not only setup Mosque, places of worship but also khanka and maktabs. Khankas were center of Islamic Dawah and Maktabs were primary institutional place of Islamic Knowledge. In course of time Madrasha became center and branches all kind of knowledge. Not only were the Qur’an and Hadith taught but Madrasha were the center of learning in science, mathematics, philosophy and other natural sciences.\(^2\) Sultanate of Muslim India emphasizes this education system. Madrasha authority was independent and they enjoyed autonomy to decide what curriculum should be.

**Madrasha education in colonial period**

In 1757, British East India Company captured power of sub-continent as result Muslim rule were declined. Madrasha educations were back sided as like Muslim community. Farsi Language was the main language of Madrasha education. East India Company introduces English language instead of Farsi Language. Muslim community took a twist condition in history after 1857, hundred years later of colonial rule. First response came from Sir Syed Ahmed, who was in favor of imparting modern education to the Muslims. He founded Muslim college in Aligarh\(^3\), but most of the Islamic community differed with him. The second response came from Mollah Nizamuddin. He build-up a curriculum for the Muslims that include all branches of knowledge. This curriculum well-known as Darse-e-Nizami. This came to be known as Nadwatul Ulum, Lucknow.\(^4\) The another response came from from Shah Waliullah and his followers whose reform response to the drastic anti-Muslim measures by the East India Company was launched in post 1757. They wanted to consolidation of the house of Islam and the followers of Islam in India.

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The basic idea was to create a class of imams, ulamas, preachers, muftis who would hold Muslims to the basics\(^5\). They established Darul Ulum in Deoband in 1867. They calculated their curriculum major in Sharia secondly rational sciences. This institution is totally private funded and independence in their activities rather than state intervention. Darul Ulum Deoband became a term of Islamic Education and created an educational movement in Indian.

**Aliya Madrasha and Islamic education in Bengal**

The Calcutta Aliya Madrasha was setup by the British in 1780 with a focus on Muslim law and jurisprudence.\(^6\) Officially English language was introduced in the Madrasha curriculum 1826. In 1910 Madrasha education was divided into two streams 1. Old schemes 2. New schemes. Old schemes curricula major on religious education and the other hand new schemes curriculum major on natural sciences. In 1946 the Moazzem Uddin Committee recognized the Madrasha education structure and laid the foundation of the present day Aliya Madrasha stream in Bangladesh. Moazzem Uddin Committee divided 16 years of Madrasha education into five phases from Ebtedayi (Primary) to Kamil (Post-Graduate).

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<th>Madrasha Level</th>
<th>Equivalence with General system</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Kamil</td>
<td>Post-Graduate</td>
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Table source: Moazzem Committee Report, Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, 1983


\(^{6}\) Satter, Md, D, (2004), *Madrasha education in Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, p.120
During the India–Pakistan partition in 1947, the Calcutta Aliya Madrasha, with all its documents, valuable books and furniture, was transferred to Dhaka, capital of Bangladesh. After 1947 Madrasha education system in East–Pakistan advanced gradually. By the time of Bangladesh independence in 1971 the total number of Madrashas was about 6000. Maximum of this were primary and secondary level.

**Aliya Madrasha in independent Bangladesh**

Government funded Aliya Madrashas gradually modernized day by day even at yet. Madrasha are incising quickly. Noted that before independence of Bangladesh Madrasha education system produce Imam, Muzzin and religious leader. But now a day this system going to be analogous with main stream education. Science, commerce and natural science based curriculum introduced in Madrasha system that was actually philosophy of Said Badiuzzam Nursî in his Madrasatuz Zahra Thought. Another beauty of modern Madrasha system in the country is gender discrimination gradually removing. Now altogether 50% of total students are women. The total number of Aliya Madrashas increased from 1518 in 1970 to 9466 by 2014.  

**Qoumi Madrasha in Bangladesh**

The Qoumi Madrasha of Bangladesh generally followed Darul Uloom Deoband tradition in their academic and administrative activities. Since independence both Pakistan and Bangladesh state have in effect left them to their own tricks. At yet their numbers are unknown. But some private sources said Qoumi Madrasha in the country 15000. However, the Qoumi Madrasha education Board puts the total number of Qoumi Madrashas in the country 4000. According to Ahmed, the total number of Qoumi Madrashas in the country is 6500 at the secondary, higher secondary and above with about

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1.5 million students and 130,000 teachers. 8 There source of funds. Majority are now registered with one and other Qoumi Boards of which the main one, the Befakul Madarishil Arabia Bangladesh 9.

The Qoumi Madrasha curriculum can be characterized as subject based rather grade based. The aim is to make the student proficient in fields of study that will ensure a graduate become followers on Islamic life style. The pace and sequence of learning depend on both the institution and the learners ability. Students can be admitted as young as age six and graduate finally with a high level qualification at age 22 or later. It clears to me after thoroughly diagnosis curriculum of Qoumi Madrasha `the aiming of instilling a clear sense of morality and Islamic spirituality in their students, training future religious leaders but they are unable to face challenge of modern job markets. 10 Distribution of Qoumi Madrasha Degree by Levels:

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Qoumi Level</th>
<th>Equivalence with General system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tahfizul Qur’ān</td>
<td>Hafizia/ Memorizing Qur’ān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ebtedayee</td>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mutawassitah</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sanubia Ammah</td>
<td>Higher Secentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fazilat</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Takmilat</td>
<td>Masters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Source: Befakul Madarishil Arabia Bangladesh Annual Report–2013

The Qoumi system of education in the country is increasing and approximately 500 female Qoumi Madrasha were established. Although Basic Islamic traditional education is spreading in the society but social status of Qoumi graduates are below of the slan–

9 Befakul Madarishil Arabia Bangladesh is the largest Qoumi Madrasha education board in Bangladesh. It was founded in April 1978. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Befaql_Madarisil_Arabia_Bangladesh, 27th of December 2015
dered, they are generally very weak in term of economy because absence of natural sciences in their education policy. There was a similar condition in Ottoman Turkey in the early 20th century and Nursî realized that only installation of natural science and technological education with Islamic education situation can be changed11. If the Qoumi authority realize the circumstance and requirement of the era than of course putting in the philosophy of Nursî in Qoumi education system.

There are some modern Madrasha education system were developed in private sector. Noorani12 system, independent ebtadayee13 and cadate14 system Madrashas. Some modern and elevated cadet Madrasha established in capital city Dhaka and Chittagong second largest city of Bangladesh. Tanjimul Ummah one of the leading cadet system Madrasha in the country. The management system is independent and digitalized15. They followed combined curriculum for their students as like as Nursî’s desire. They averted attention of common people of the county as a result they have gotten there students from Bangladeshi origin from Europe & America.

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12 Noorani is a basically primary stage of Qoumi and Hafizia Madrasha System. Modern noorani system built up combined curricula with religious and secular subjects. http://www.amaryellowpages.com/listings/noorani-garden-adar-sha-shishu-shikkhaloy/
13 Independent Ebtadayee mostly established in rural area of the country. This type of Madrasha totally relation free with Qoumi or Aliya System. The authority of Ebtadayee introduce their children with basic concept of Islam. http://ndc.gov.bd/lib_mgmt/webroot/earticle/2377/Madrasha_Edn_in_Bangladesh.pdf
14 Cadet Madrasha thought were established with last few years in Bangladesh. Few Islamic scholars thank to establish primary & secondary level cadet that offer majorly modern science based Islamic education. This system connected with Aliya Madrasha. http://www.tanjimulummah.org/ourfamily_details.php?catagory=Tanjimul%20Ummah%20Cadet%20Madrasha, 28th December, 2015
Market demand of two systems of Madrasha

There are debates about the usefulness of Madrasha education in terms of its ability to train students for the job market continue to rage even today, reflecting, a root, “two very different conceptions of education and indeed of life and its very purpose.” The situation in Bangladesh is that Aliya Madrasas prepare students in both general and religious subjects. The Qoumi outputs have depth knowledge and demand in religious education job market but without recognized certificate they become unproductive. On the other hand, Alia students, boys and girls, generally, have edge over Qoumi outputs when competing for position in the modern labor markets. Their main competition comes from those emerging from general education stream. A recent study carried out by World Bank reveals how student performance in both Aliya and Qoumi system is poor in general subjects like English math and science. The findings obviously raise the issue to teacher Quality. Most Madrasha teachers are no included in an effective training network. Only one training institute named BMTTI\textsuperscript{16} operates their training program for the Madrasha teachers.

Islamic University, Bangladesh:

Islamic University is one of the major public universities in Bangladesh and largest seat of higher education in the south-west part of the country, established in 1978. It is a major international centre for an excellent integration of Islamic Studies with the general studies and studies of modern science and technology.\textsuperscript{17} The main objective for establishing Islamic university is “To provide for instruction in theology and other fields of Islamic Studies and cooperative jurisprudence and such other branches of learning at graduate and post


\textsuperscript{17} http://www.iu.ac.bd/, 28th of December, 2015
graduate level as the university may think fit and make provision for research and training for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge.”18 2006 interim government of country considered *Fazil* and *Kamil* degree equivalent Bachelor and Masters Degree. Islamic University authorized by government as affiliating authority of the *Fazil* and *Kamil Madrasha* and shall exercise all the powers conferred by the act.19 Actually Islamic University installed major education thinking of *said Nursî* and fulfills the demand of *Ulemas* of Bangladesh. In 2013 government of Bangladesh advanced more by establishing Islamic Arabic University for affiliate *Fazil* and *Kamil* level of *Madrasha*. This university started operation 1st July 201520. The people of Bangladesh believe this university becomes excellent center of Islamic education for the betterment of Muslim *Ummah*.

**Education thought and concept of Nursî**

When the law for the unification of education came into force 1924 in Turkey, the long story of religious education came to temporary end and it continue up to 1950. However, a number of sectors were striking in that they continued to provide the people religious education. One of the most important of these was *Risale-i Noor*. Said Nursî provide four type of religious education in transitional period.21 1. Private Religious School 2. Do not avoid finally Sufi Orders 3. Writing Religious Books that should solve today’s problem and 4. Relationship between Religious education and Politics. İihan Yıldız wrote in his article *Transitional Period (1924–1950) For a Religious Education Model* method of *Risala-i Nur`s* for successful combined education policy is 1. Use of Language 2. Individual Differences 3. Good word and deeds 4. Gradualness 5. Providing a

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18 Bangladesh National Parliament, Act (clause 5(a) of Islamic University act 1980 (37).
19 Bangladesh National Parliament, Act (clause 4(2) of Islamic University (Amendment) act 2006.
20 http://iau.edu.bd/, 25th of December 2015
21 Major Researcher on Nursî agreed transitional period is 1924–1950. Some one said it may be 1925–1960.
good Example. He again explains why Nursî emphasize on combination in between religious and technological education. He briefly discussed 1. Risale-i Nur’s chief source of education policy is 1. The Noble Qur’an. 2. Risale-i Nurs function is Saving Belief. 3. Risale-i Nur’s aim is founding a religious community and 4. Risale-i Nur’s ultimate goal is Defense Islam. Based of all thinking he delivered Madrasat-uz Zahra and Islamic University project.

**Said Nursî’s Madrasat-uz Zahra concept**

There was a uncontrolled and unspecified Madrasha in ottoman empire and it was continue under Kamal Ataturk regime. Nursî persuaded that Turkish Madrasha education system was classical and inadequate in nineteenth century. He always netting dream to establish natural science based curriculum for Islamic education. He bought out a combined plan for Madrasha education in the name of Madrasat-uz Zahra and its foundation were laid in 1913 by the permission of Sultan Abdul Hamid. He always think product of Madrasat-uz Zahra become a good Imam, religious leader and competence in specific required modern fields. Separation of religious education from the natural science against of the teaching of the noble Qur’an and Sunnah. So he stimulates built up bridge in-between religious education and Science. But his project fumed for fist world war and impossible to execution.

**Nursî’s Islamic University concept**

Islamic University Concept was the extended version of Madrasat-uz Zahra that become advanced and intellectuals study place that means center of excellence for combined higher study like Al-Azhar in Cairo. In the first decade of twentieth century, Nursî become much more serious to establish Islamic University in the city of Van

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23 Suhil, Mohammed, (2012), Practicability of Nursî Methodology in the Social Reform of Indian Muslims, Kerala: Darul Huda Islamic University, p. 85–87
eastern Anatolia of Turkey. He had planned and designed curriculum for the proposed university that the modern science would be taught together with the religious science in the university and skepticism, negativism from context should be removed. He viewed the Islamic unity and brotherhood goes ahead together and *Ummah* become like one body based his proposed education system. All contemporary leaders of Turkey including Ataturk support his educational reformulation plan. He received support 163 deputies out of 200 as well. But Later on Ataturk’s reformist secularist order closed all *Madrashas* that’s way his attempts became unsuccessful. Actually in influence to establish *Madrasat-uz Zahra* and *Islamic University* to built-up universal true nationhood like *Al-Azhar*. Some western scholar agreed that if his plane were established then the Islamic World become more advanced in modern education and development.

**Bangladesh Education Policy 2010 and development of Madrasha education:**

Education policy 2010 that in implementation process recommended for objectives and goals for *Madrasha* education:

1. *Madrasha* education is an inseparable part of the National Education System.
2. Measures will be taken to modernize *Madrasha* education keeping its own identity, so that is education system develops with new life-blood.
3. Alongside the teaching of Islam, arrangements will be made for the students to acquire appropriate knowledge in science and other modern disciplines to prepare them in various professionals.
4. The *Madrasha* education will recognized so that students are able to compete equally with mainstream general education or English medium students.

Basis of the above objects Bangladesh government requested ADB\(^\text{24}\) for complete assessment of *Madrashas* of the country. ADB

thoroughly research three fiscal years problem and prospects of Madrashas. They were visited thousand of Madrasha both Aliya and Qoumi and engaged with all levels people of the country. After completion their gorgeous and fruitful study, they submitted 500 pages report to the government. Their Madrasha Sector Study (MSS) group found thousands of obstacles. Major Six are:

1. The lack of adequate training in teaching methodology of the majority of Madrasha teachers.
2. Failure to use the same textbooks and examination questions as general education schools for non-religious subjects at all levels of Madrasha education.
3. The lack of capacity of the BMEB to plan, manages, monitor and evaluate Aliya Madrasha education.
4. Failure of Students to complete their education cycles.
5. Failure to teach Dakhil Madrasha students in good facilities that are equipped for learning.
6. Failure to teach independent Ibtedayee Madrasha student in good facilities that are equipped for learning.

Asian Development Bank strongly recommended some steps:

1. A massive teacher training for 50,000 teachers over 6 years.
2. Adoption, after vetting of the curriculum and textbooks of the national curriculum and Textbook board for general subjects, and revision of the textbooks for religious subjects.
3. A capacity development plan for BMEB involving substantial training, local international and on-the-job.
4. Conditional cash transfers for the poorest students of the poorest upazillas to encourage sustained attendance and prevention of drop-out.
5. A re-building program at 120 Dakhil Madrasahs in the poorest areas pucca facilities that can act as “flagships” to other communities.
6. A package of improvements to some 200 independent Ibtedayee Madrashas including enhancement of facilities, teacher and head teacher training.
Women in Madrasha education of Bangladesh:

In Islamic point of view education is obligatory for man and women. The noble Qur’an, Sunnah of the Prophet (s) and all sources of Islamic culture and civilization emphasize on female education. Women education was generally less importance before independence 1971. Now female student become integral part of Madrasha education system. Show in the following tables that indicate perfect position of female in Madrashas of Bangladesh.

Table: 3, Dakhil Madrasha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name of division</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Co-education</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Barisal</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chittagong</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dhaka</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>1144</td>
<td>1365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Khulna</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rajshahi</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>1043</td>
<td>1164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rangpur</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>1128</td>
<td>1211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sylhet</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>5507</td>
<td>6549</td>
</tr>
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Source: Bangladesh Madrasha education Board, Annual report 2014

Table: 4, Alim Madrasha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name of division</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Co-education</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Barisal</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chittagong</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dhaka</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Khulna</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rajshahi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rangpur</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sylhet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>1372</td>
<td>1525</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bangladesh Madrasha education Board, Annual report 2014
### Table: 5 Fazil Madrasha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name of division</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Co-education</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Barisal</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chittagong</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dhaka</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Khulna</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rajshahi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rangpur</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sylhet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1014</td>
<td>1093</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bangladesh Madrasha education Board, Annual report 2014

### Table: 6, Kamil Madrasha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name of division</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>co-education</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Barisal</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chittagong</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dhaka</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Khulna</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rajshahi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rangpur</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sylhet</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bangladesh Madrasha education Board, Annual report 2014

### Total Madrasha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys Madrasha</th>
<th>Girls Madrasha</th>
<th>Co-education</th>
<th>All together</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>227</td>
<td>1106</td>
<td>8033</td>
<td>9366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bangladesh Madrasha education Board, Annual report 2014
The table above shows that total number of Madrasha 9366, girl students has random excess for study in everywhere except 227 boys Madrasha. Total number of students in Madrasha in all levels 2935348 among which 1163513 are female – about 49% of female students in Dakhil, Alim Fazil and Kamil level are 46%, 37%, 27%, and 13% respectfully. Total number of teachers is 100800 and 2773 are female. Above all indicate shows female students, teachers in Madrashas in ever increasing. This table indicates that there has been vast change in the Madrasha regarding female education25. Although at yet few radical Ulamas campaign against women education in Madrasha system.

Conclusion

Risale-i Nur one of the leading guide for every individuals of the Muslim Ummah. It is a unique book has brought intellectual and logical solution for the Muslims of modern era based on the noble Qur’ān and Sunnah. His political, educational, interfaith and social reformation thought influenced Turkeys Muslim for re-installation Islamic society in modern Turkey. Thinkers and researchers of the world were observed his tolerance and Cosmo-cultural policy for the better peaceful future of the Ummah. Always he wants co-exist with other believers specially wants dialogue with Christians.26

Nurs`s reformation policy in education combined bipartite Muslims and forward them to common unity that is in Islamic term “Wahdatul Ummah Al-Islamiyah”. The education system of Turkey in early 20th century was totally divided by the name of secular and religious education. Kamal Ataturk always attempt to remove Islamic culture and education from Turkish society. Nusi didn`t like divided policy in education. He knew divided education policy oriental conspiracy against Muslim Ummah. He preferred to establish unique and model Madrashas, Islamic colleges and higher

institutions as like Islamic University on the basis of combine and balance curriculum in-between religious and natural science. Marasatuz-Zuhra and Islamic University outcomes of this thought.

Bangladesh is an over populated majority Muslim country. Historically Madrasha education is inseparable part of the Bengal society. Different type of Marasha curriculum system established here as same as early 20th century that happened in Turkey. Government funded Aliya and private funded Qoumi are in the leading position. Before 1971 Aliya totally religion based education but after independence all education reformation committee recommended “integrated education policy Madrasha system”. Education report 2010, Aliya system treated as mainstream education of the country. Education committee think as like as thought of Nursî. He always emphasize on marriage in-between secular and religious education. Aliya system is advancing day by day in Bangladesh. But we need to look and protect Islamic Character inside and outside of the reform Madrashas. The Qoumi Madrasha at yet postponing in term of curriculum and management system. Authority of the country always desire to reform the Qoumi system as like as Aliya and they setup a Qoumi Madrasha reformation committee March 2015 for report to the government how will establish recognition and reformation process. We hopeful Qoumi Ulema-Mashaiks and leaders will work properly and produce proper and job market oriented skill Islamic graduate for bringing Islamic Ummah in top leadership of the world.

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Bangladesh National Parliament, Act (clause 4(2) of Islamic University (Amendment) act 2006


Korim Mohsinul, Wadud Musfique, (2013, October 29), Cabinet drops Qawmi madrasa draft law, Dhaka Tribune.


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Yoginder Sikund, Moulana Tariq Rashid Firangi Mahal on Darse Nizami and Madrasha in South Asia


http://www.iu.ac.bd/

http://iau.edu.bd/
Bediüzzaman Said Nursî’s approach to modern education

Dr. Qazi Mohd. Jamshed
Associate Professor, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

To declare that ignorance is the leading enemy and to think that this enemy can be eliminated only through education, Bediüzzaman presented a well educated model of community. Nursî’s views on unifying educational system by his Medresetu’z Zehra approach are original and unique. Nursî’s views that religious subjects should be taught in the secular schools (mektebs) and the positive science in the religious schools (medreses) so that the structure of secular education are salvaged from irreligious behaviour and the religious schools from bigotry, are very progressive. Moreover, his views about integration of science and theology with education are very futuristic and rewarding given the pathetic situations of Muslims in educational field worldwide.

The unique civilization features of Medresetu’z Zehra model make it a most suitable and culturally viable model for Muslims in its global perspective as well. Therefore, studying this model in depth is highly desirable in the context of the present threat from the ills of educational system in Muslim societies. Nursî’s model provides an alternative which meets the demands of modern times and at the same time does not neglect the much needed value of education. His model of education surpasses all the models of education, presented by his contemporary and later.

This paper on “Bediüzzaman Said Nursî’s Approach to Modern Education and his Medresetu’z Zehra project” will focus on all these issues and arrive at conclusion through sustained objectivity and analysis.

Education based on faith was the central point of Nursî’s educational philosophy. Nursian concern with knowledge based on belief in
God is very much worthy of consideration. This interrelationship between knowledge, love and belief forms the basis of Nursîan view of Education. He believed that the conscience is illuminated by the religious sciences and the mind is illuminated by the science of civilization and wisdom occurs from the combination of these two. Nursî says, “The lights of conscience is religious sciences (ulum-u-diniya). The light of mind is civilized sciences (funun-u-medenye). Reconciliation of both manifests the truth. The student’s skills develop further with these two sciences (ulum-u-diniya and funun-u-medenye) but when they are separated superstition from the former and corruption and skepticism from the latter is born”1. Thus Said Nursî developed his ideas on educational reforms and created his own method of teaching, combining the religious science with modern science.

Education rests at the very center of building prosperous civilization. Nursî is of the belief that knowledge, education and faith form the prime ingredients for renewal of civilization whose integration provides the platform for development and perfection. This linking of ilm (Knowledge) and iman (faith) forms the core of Nursîan model of Educational system. These terms ilm and iman although had been examined by scholars individually but their deep-seated interlink between them had rarely been explored. In this regard Nursîan concept of Education based on belief in God and Education produced from belief in God is very much worthy of consideration2. Said Nursî believed that the Education system of the society should be the integration of knowledge and faith. By faith he meant the strong belief in Allah and the proper practicing of religious virtues. Because without practicing, faith is nothing. According to him it is essential that faith and knowledge complement each other. For, if any one of these two factors of education, i.e. knowledge and faith, lose then that education system or concept cannot make any difference or progress3. Will Grant in his masterpiece Pleasures of Philosophy is in complete accord with Said Nursî’s views on Education. He observes, “Education that is entirely scientific and materialistic can produce nothing but tools and
modern machines. It alienates man from beauty and estranges him from wisdom”

Nursî was aware of a need for education in knowledge as well as education in character. He believed that the knowledge and faith in God should be fused and integrated to bring real happiness and spiritual pleasure. He says, “You should definitely know that the highest aim of the human’s innate character (hilkat) and the most sublime result of the human’s inborn disposition (fitrat) are to have faith in God. And the most exalted position and the greatest status in the ranks of humanity are to attain the love of God within faith in God.”

The 20th century has witnessed unprecedented attacks on the foundations of faith by materialists in the name of sciences and advancement. Nursî responded to these attacks by devoting all his efforts to save and strengthen belief, which he viewed as the most important matter for a better humanity. And he did this by trying to establish that there is no enmity between any science and faith but they are allies. “What makes human into human,” claims Nursî, “is indeed faith”. As he firmly states; the happiness of humanity in this world and the next world depends on their faith, “Faith necessitates affirmation of Divine unity, which in turn necessitates submission to God, which in turn necessitates reliance on God, which in turn necessarily leads to happiness in this world and the next.”

Sukran Vahide says: “Bediüzzaman Said Nursî was distinguished from other religious leaders in the Islamic world in recent times by his seeking to reverse its decline vis-à-vis the West not through political struggle or the establishment of the Islamic state or other means, but through the revitalization of faith or belief (iman). He identified the gravest danger to “the edifice of Islam” as coming from the decay of its intellectual underpinning, which had been weakened over the centuries by currents of alien thought and was then facing renewed threats in the form of materialist philosophy and modernity, which he expressed in terms of “philosophy” and “modern civilization.” The greatest danger these posed was to the faith of the mass of believers. Hence in Nursî’s view, the
restatement of the basic tenets of the Islamic religion, and “the renewing and strengthening of belief” through new methods, were of paramount importance and took precedence over every other form of struggle aimed at reconstruction.”7 “Belief in God and its necessary corollaries, knowledge of God and worship, are, according to Nursî, the purpose of man’s being “sent to this world.” They are also his innate or primordial duty. So belief in God is “the highest aim of creation and its most important result.”8 By virtue of these complementary facts, it is only through belief that human beings can find happiness and fulfillment. This constitutes one of the main themes of the Risale-i Nur, which Nursî elaborates with numerous allegories, comparisons, and arguments. It is also an area in which he points out the paradoxes and failures of “philosophy” and “misguided science,” which, although their stated aim is the conquest of human happiness, have rather brought humanity pain and suffering, since they have sought it in worldly pleasures and through their false principles and viewpoint.9

Nursî argues that the main purpose of the creation of the humanity is to be perfect by means of knowledge and supplication based on belief. “The highest aim of creation and its most important result is belief in God. The most exalted rank in humanity and its highest degree is the knowledge of God contained within belief in God. The most radiant happiness and sweetest bounty for jinn and human beings is the love of God contained within the knowledge of God” 10

Said Nursî was not satisfied with the system of Education prevalent at that time in Turkey. Education was mostly given through dual institutions; mekteb and medrese. The system offered by the former was western oriented, with a focus on positivist approach to sciences, whereas the latter institution a classical Islamic education. During this time there was no system of Education in the country offering both scientific and religious training. Mekatîb and medaris as the places of popular education at that time seemed to carry pride in their separate curricula, each being critical of the other.
Nursî was deeply troubled with this schism. Nursî who himself completed and excelled in medrese education reaching to its heights, realized the need to improve himself in the sciences of the time to find answer to many questions. He often expressed his frustration towards traditional religious scholars whose discussion could not provide solutions to the major problems of the time. Nursî was convinced that religion did not consist solely of faith matters but due to its comprehensiveness it is also connected with world of science including sociology, politics and economics. To comprehend the understanding of religion knowledge of all these subjects are also necessary. But at the same time he gave religion a position of primacy over all types of sciences. He argued that “Islam is the master and guide of the sciences, and the chief and father of all true knowledge.” This led him to evolve his own scheme of ideal system of education. For integration of knowledge, his view is that religious sciences are taught in the new secular schools (mektebs) and that the positive sciences are taught in the religious schools (medreses). He argued that if the students are taught in this method, those in the secular schools will be saved from being without religion, while those in the religious schools will be saved from bigotry. A fine combination of scientific and religious sciences as envisaged by Nursî can be seen from the conclusion he drawn: ‘The Religious sciences are the light of the conscience and the modern sciences i.e. sciences of civilization are the light of the reason; the truth becomes manifest through the combination of the two. The student’s endavour will take flight on these two wings. When they are separated it gives rise to bigotry in the one, and wiles and skepticism in the other.” He wanted to integrate the science of modern times with Islamic thought. But his theory of integration was the new exegesis of the Qur’ān to be written, almost exclusively, in the light of the findings of modern science, and he tried to put it into practice with an added enthusiasm.

Thus, the integration of religious and modern sciences was the tool used by Said Nursî to revitalize the Muslim culture and tradition. Here also the faith and religious values of students were main concerns of Nursî. One of his most important views related to ed-
ucation is the approach of uniting religion and sciences. He says: “We should mold the science brought from Europe and America, which, in fact, belongs to Islam, with the light of oneness and view it from the point of view of the contemplation and signified meaning mentioned by the Qur’an, that is, on behalf of its maker and master”¹⁶. Bediüzzaman felt that existing Educational system was not addressing the need of the society, it was rather furthering gap between two sections of the society, intelligentsia of religious sciences and that of modern sciences. Not even that, but the both streams had misunderstandings about each others. In his view, students of the modern education system should be trained in religious subjects, and similarly, products of the religious schools should be well equipped with the modern trend of the world, so that the two sections of the society could have enough opportunity to understand both the sciences utilizing their skills. The main purpose of his initiative was to produce a sincere and committed Muslim citizen in order to get rid of the crisis of the Muslim intelligentsia and to develop science and technology in the Muslim world.¹⁷ The main purpose of his project, ‘Madrasatu’z Zehra’ was also the reconciliation of religious sciences and secular knowledge. He states it clearly, “The people of (medrasah) religious schools accuse the people of modern schools of weakness of belief due to their outward appearance. The people of modern schools regard the people of religious schools as insufficient and ignorant because they do not know about the new branches of science. The differences in the views and methods unsettled the Islamic ethics and prevented people from contemporary civilization. The only solution to this is to teach religious sciences properly in modern schools, to teach new branches of exact sciences instead of ancient Greek philosophy, which is unnecessary now, in religious schools and to have very competent scholars in dervish lodges. When they are realized, those three branches will develop in harmony and reach high ranks.”¹⁸ For him the main purpose of learning of science is to understand the Qur’an and prove its truths. Understanding the Qur’an should be the main aim and purpose of learning science and object of life. Thus the Qur’anic miraculousness should become the guide, teacher and master for the entire humanity.
It is worthy of consideration that efforts of Said Nursî were against the modernization and the secularization process occurred in Turkey in his time. He was of the firm belief that these satanic processes diminished and took away the faith of Muslim society, which gave them power and energy to fight and struggle against all satanic efforts. It was Mustafa Kemal’s, the father of modernization and Westernisation in Turkey, declared aim “to achieve an unconditional transformation to Western civilization,” and to build a modern nation-state. Such a project required the rapid modernization, Westernisation, and therefore secularization of Turkey. To make this process easy Kemal brought a radically reformed “national” education system, the function of which was to inculcate “universal, humanist, secular, positivist” principles. His intention was to eliminate all existing religious identities, and create a uniform secular, nationalist identity. Bediüzzaman Said Nursî declared an intellectual and spiritual war against all these dangerous propagandas by trying to reconstruct the educational settings through faith and religious values.

To give practical shape to his thoughts on Educational reforms Said Nursî went to Istanbul at the end of the year 1907 to present his proposals before the Sultan, Abdulhamid II. According to Sukran Vahide, Nursî’s intention in returning to the Ottoman capital was to try to gain official support for his ideas of an Islamic University, the Medreset’uz Zehra in eastern Anatolia. Serfin Mardin, however, suggests that it was Nursî’s desire to present a series of reform proposals to the Sultan which prompted him to move to Istanbul. However, Nursî’s stay in Istanbul and his activities from the end of 1907 to the middle of 1908 as well as his conversation with the Doctor suggests that his main concern was the propagation of his Medreset’uz Zehra project, for which he worked so tirelessly till as late as 1950. Another intention was also ‘to engage with a broader spectrum of scholars, intellectuals and politicians there. Istanbul was the heart of Ottoman intelligentsia, the center of Muslim world and an important axis in the world’s power balance’.

Unfortunately, Said Nursî was not allowed to talk to the Sultan. Sefik Pasha, the Minister of Internal Affairs, however, talked to
him. Said Nursî did not regard this talk sufficient. He expressed his views through articles in the newspapers and his speeches. He wanted the Sultan to give importance to education instead of establishing cavalry troops and to spend the taxes collected from people on treating ignorance, the illness of the nation. He gave great importance to expressing the intense need of the community for education because “the nation thirsts for a new education system that complies with Islam”\textsuperscript{23}. Finally with the active support of the Governor of Van and Bitlis, Tahir Pasha, Nursî was introduced to the Sultan\textsuperscript{24}. According to Vahide it was Ferik Ahmad Pasha, the Major General, with whom Nursî stayed for two months, may have assisted him in preparing the petition seeking support for his educational projects in Kurdistan to be presented to the Palace and secured the necessary introduction. However the actual presentation did not take place till May or June 1908”\textsuperscript{25}. However, Nursî’s suggestion for radical reforms in the existing educational systems of the time under \textit{Abdulhamid II} were not taken well. His bold denunciation of the policies of Sultan evoked strong reaction amongst the State authorities. He was sent to a mental hospital for presenting “this much courage” which was not found to be “comfortable with sanity” by the officials\textsuperscript{26}. Later in 1911 Nursî finally convinced Sultan Mohd. Resad about the greater need of establishing a university in the Eastern provinces. He was given the initial amount of a thousand gold liras in advance out of the nineteen gold liras allotted to the proposed university. Constructions had started on a site on the shores of Lake Van at Edremit in 1913. But due to the outbreak of the First World War shortly afterward and nonpayment of the rest of the promised funds and the apathy of the Ministry of the Pious Foundations, despite the favourable response from the Grand Vizir’s Office, construction was halted and it never resumed\textsuperscript{27}.

The text was later printed in the \textit{Sark ve Kurdistan Gazetesi} (East and Kurdistan Gazette), dated November 19, 1908.\textsuperscript{28} The heart of these proposals was the bringing together and joint teaching of the traditional religious sciences and the modern sciences. He attached great importance to the restructuring of the curriculum which
was extremely modern in approach. He laid down certain guiding principles to be followed in the functioning of the Medrese. The instructions should be given in a language known by the student. In another work, Munazarat, Nursî stated that they should be tri-lingual, with Arabic being “compulsory”, Kurdish ‘permissible’, and Turkish “necessary”. In the same work, he also stated that Kurdish scholars who were trusted by Turk and Kurd should be selected as teachers, as well as those who knew the local languages and it was necessary to take into account the capacity and cultural level of the community they were to serve. These medrese should be on an equal footing with the official secular schools and like them their examinations should be recognized. In his views, on the wider scale, the Medresetu-z Zahra would unite the three traditions in the Educational system by representing ‘the most superior mekteb by the reason, the very best medrese by heart, and the most sacred zawiye by the conscience’. In course of time it would gain financial independence by reason of the donations and pious bequest it would receive. Nursî suggested eastern Anatolia, with two major campuses in two important cities. He wanted to connect the distant communities of the empire to the center. Rebellion were growing in every corner of the empire and for Nursî the solution was to provide an enriched education for all.

At another place Said Nursî highlighting the benefit of the educational curricula of the Medresetu’z Zehra pointed out that ‘it would ensure the future of the ulama in the eastern provinces, at the same time it would be step towards the unification and reform of general system. So it would deliver Islam from the bigotry, superstitions, and false beliefs which had encrusted parts of it over the centuries. And, importantly, would be a means of introducing modern learning into the medreses in a way which would allay the ulama’s suspicions concerning modern science. Also, it would “open the door to spreading the beneficial aspects of constitutionalism.”

Bediüzzaman wished for Islam to function like a consultative council, that is to say, through the mutual consultation (sura) of
“the three divisions of the army of Islamic education”, those of the medreses, the mektebs, and the tekkes, so that “each would complete the deficiencies of the other”. His aim was for the Medresetu’z-Zehra to be an embodiment of this.

According to Bediüzzaman, this transforming the medreses from being ‘single-faculty’ institutions into being ‘multi-faculty’ and putting into practice ‘the rule of division of labour’ was in accordance with wisdom and the laws of creation. The failure to practice it in previous centuries had led to despotism and the exploitation of learning in the medreses, and the teaching being undertaken by those not qualified to do so. It had headed the medreses towards their destruction.

In many places, Bediüzzaman stresses the need for students to specialize in one subject for which they have an aptitude, and in addition only study subjects which complement it. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that specialization in particular subject represented a radical break with traditional methods. Finally, a further point which could be thought of as radical was Bediüzzaman’s view that “public opinion” should prevail among both the ulama and the students. That is to say, he believed that it was “scholastic despotism”, an offspring of political despotism, “which has opened the way to blind imitation (taklid) and barred the way to searching for the truth.” For the problems of the modern age to be grappled with and progress to be secured. “constitutionalism among the ulama” should be established “in the ulama state.” In the same way, among the students, “public opinion” or the prevalent ideas emerging from debate and the exchange of ideas between students of varying disciplines should be taken up by master. Bediüzzaman predicted that this would provide a strong stimulation and incentive for progress. Thus, “just as public opinion predominates in the state, so too should the prevailing opinions of the ulama be müfti, and the prevailing opinions of the students be master and teacher.”

During his conversation with the Doctor Bediüzzaman described in some detail the need for creative study, debate, and a re-
turn to the study of the essential religious sciences by the students. He examined various reasons for the divergence and differences between the various branches of the educational system, which he states were major cause of the backwardness of Islamic civilization, which constitutes true civilization, in relation to modern civilization. He says: “Those in the medreses accuse those in the mektebs of weakness in belief because of their literalist interpretation of certain matters, whereas those in the mektebs consider the former to be ignorant and unreliable because they have no knowledge of modern science. While those in the medreses look at those in the tekkes as though they were following innovations...” While recognizing the differences in their ways, he stresses that the barriers between them should be broken down and by way of a remedy modern science be taught in the medreses “in place of obsolete ancient philosophy”, religious sciences be taught “fully” in the secular schools, and scholars from the medreses, “some of the most learned ulama”, be present in the Sufi tekkes.37 He then goes on to analyze the reasons for the ineffectiveness of the preachers, who played such a vital role in educating the mass of the people, and suggested remedies. He wanted the preacher to be both searching scholars, so that they can prove what they claim, and subtle philosophers so that they do not spoil the balance of the shariah, and to be eloquent and convincing.38 He introduced new methodology of teachings: the lesson given to students should not contain academic words only and be made more interesting; it should be given in a language they understand and through simple sentences and concrete examples.39 It is the responsibility of the teacher to arouse curiosity and interest of the students in the subject.40 In one of the Munazara, Nursî insistently stated that madrasahs should abandon the old style of studying and start a new method and content. The students should be closely monitored and properly guided based on their performance. It is necessary to teach in the form of debating so that students will develop constructive, synthesizing and discovering intelligence. With this view, Nursî implies teaching in the form of question and answer. Bediuzzaman criticizes scholars who live among the pages
of the books and do not proceed beyond theory; he wants scholars to give importance to application and experiments in education. He therefore rejects the education approach based on memorization and wants to introduce an education approach that gives importance to practical thoughts and development of inquisitive thinking in the minds of the students. Moreover the teacher should adapt the topic he instructs into life, should make the lesson lively through attractive examples and should convince the students that the knowledge he gives will be needed in life. In order to obtain positive results from students it is necessary to make them have a feeling of responsibility and conviction that education is necessary. It is also necessary to have ethical values for a successful education career. The education and control of a child whose spiritual aspect is neglected becomes impossible in all aspects.

As a teacher in his own cave-like medrese in the citadel of Van, where he taught for about two years, Nursî treated his students more as friends than as students. This is clearly evident in his dialogues with his students such as Ali Cavus and Molla Hamid. Sometimes he even played games with them. He often visited the rural areas in the company of his students. In his medrese which he called Horhor, Nursî used to dictate the instrumental knowledge to his students from memory. The curricula of this medrese was very modern and progressive, where Nursî taught his students engineering, accounting, algebra, physics, History and geography as well as religious lessons. Prior to this, Nursî had been overwhelming medrese ulama in debates. After coming to Van in 1897, he started to overwhelm the School teachers in debates in physics and Chemistry because of his vast knowledge of modern sciences. His idea of integration of religious and modern sciences originated from this time. After 1900, Nursî’s ideal of medrese became more intense, especially after Europe used science and philosophy against religion.

In this way the educational model given by Said Nursî was very comprehensive and progressive and caters needs both of religion, science and morality and thus makes a harmonious blend of all the
three in a holistic manner. His ideas about integration of science and technology with education is very futuristic and rewarding given the pathetic situation of Muslims in education field. The unique civilizational features of Medresetu’z Zehra model makes it a most suitable and culturally viable model for Muslims in its global perspective also. Nursian model provides an alternative which meets the demands of modern times but does not neglect the much needed values the education should imbibe to face the civilizational challenges and the onslaught of atheism, materialism and westernization on Islam and its civilization. The education models envisaged by Sir Syed, Shibli Nomani and Maududi have met but with less success in convincing the traditional Muslim clergy about the tenacity of modern sciences vis-a-vis religious sciences. But Medresetu’z Zehra model presented by Nursi are very appropriate, rewarding and progressive. Sir Syed, a resplendent personality and a great visionary, envisaged a model based on western standards of morality and scientific temper but he ignored the basic religious elements which were being trampled over under its feet because western secularism and atheism was the leading educational undercurrents at that time in the west. Sir Syed’s own ways on religion, his own interpretation of Islam, and the endeavors which his own mind was making to synthesize and harmonizes his religious traditions with the spirit and knowledge of modernity, were unacceptable to most of his fellow Muslims. Although Sir Syed too believed in the compatibility of religion with modern science but as opposed to Sir Syed’s views Nursi had a different perspective on science. Nursi argued that “Islam is the master and guide of the sciences, and the chief and father of all true knowledge.” Maulana Maududi’s model of education system is more a critique of Sir Syed’s model of secular education than providing a practicable alternative. Except his experiment with the Thanavi Darasgah of Rampur no other full-fledged scheme of education could be implemented by him which could convince Muslims world to adopt it or make it a model. His suggestions remained just recommendatory and were not implemented fully anywhere in the world. Viewed
in these perspectives Nursian model of education surpass all these model where both the objectives of empowerment through education and integration of religion with science and technology can comfortably be realized practically and in a convincing balance. The unique civilizational features of Medresetu’z–Zehra model make it a most suitable and culturally viable model for Muslims in its global perspective as well. Therefore studying this model in depth is highly desirable in the context of the consumerist tendencies emerging in the spheres of education and technology by relegating spiritual and moral values to margins. Nursian model provides an alternative which meets the demand of modern times but does not neglect the much needed values the education should imbibe to face the challenges in the wake of the onslaught of atheism and materialism in name of development, modernization and progress. Bediüzzaman twice received funds for the construction of his university, and its foundations were laid in 1913, it could not be completed due to war and apathy of the Ministry of Pious Foundations and the inability of the State to bear the promised fund in view of financial crunch. When the Republic was founded Nursi again approached the Turkish Grand National Assembly and with the signature of 163 members of Parliament out of 200, a fund of 150,000 liras was allotted for it but it was never released because of the strained relations that had developed between Nursi and Mustafa Kemal Pasha, due to latter’s progressive and un-Islamic policies. However, the Democratic Party Government, which came to power in 1950, showed respect to the demands of the people and to Said Nursi, established Erzurum University. Thus fulfilled Nursi’s cherished long life dream. At the opening of the University Nursi expressibg his happiness said, “My University would be like he wanted in the course of time. The higher education institution that was desired to be established was going to serve primarily to Anatolia and to the Middle East countries like Iran, Arabia, Pakistan, Turkistan and Afghanistan and it was going to render an important service to realize peace and fraternity.”
ENDNOTES

5. The Letters, op. cit.
8. The Letters, op. cit.
10. The Letters, op. cit.
18. Ibid.
19. Sukran Vahide, op. cit., p. 34.
22. Ian S. Markham and Suendam Birinci Pirim, op. cit., p. 11.
25. Ibid., p. 38.
26. Ibid., 42; Ian S. Markham and Suendam Birinci Pirim, op. cit.
28. Ibid., p. 42.
30. Ibid., p. 74.
31. Ibid., p. 70.
32. Ibid., p. 74-76.
33. Ibid., p. 76.
34. Ibid., p. 46-47.
35. Ibid.
38. Nursi, Muhakemat, p. 47.
40. Muhakemat, op. cit., p. 47.
41. Munazarat, op. cit., p. 79.
42. Emirdag Lahikasi, vol. 1, p. 40
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. See, Hamidullah Marazi, Empowering Education with values and integration of Religion and Science: Madrasat-uz-Zahra, for a lucid comparative study of the educational ideas of these personalities.
51. Ibid., p. 326.
52. Ibid.
Nursî’s approach on religion and science

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to discuss the approach of a great Turkish Scholar, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, regarding religion and science. Said Nursî observed all scientific events through the eyes of a theologian and he explained his approach successfully within the boundaries of the reasoning of the mind. He stated that the Qur’ân included exact sciences and encouraged them. The decree of Islam about the outcomes of science is important in that it shows what causes those results. To carry out scientific studies with the name of Allah does not mean that mind is put aside or neglected. On the contrary, mind should step in to see the creative power of Allah.

For Nursî, there are two major sources of Islamic sciences: the nature and the Qur’ân. In his view, developing sciences is part of a means to prove the authenticity of the Qur’ân. Nursî puts a very strong emphasis on the importance of science and technology in the life of human being. Clearly, Nursî wants Muslims to be realistic and objective about their past and pay more attention on their future. Muslims must accept that being up and down in many aspects of worldly live, including in science development, is a normal experience of the circle of life. Nursî believes that Qur’ân is the true civilization of the future which will be peace and happiness to mankind.

Keywords: Nursî, Approach, Religion, Science, Future Significance

Introduction

Science is the important source of knowledge and wisdom. Science has its own limitations, there is always some scope for improvement, even change in it. Science is a dominant factor in determining the beliefs of educated men and history proved it that any
country or community having scientific knowledge, dominates all over the world.

According to different scientists, science is the systematic knowledge of natural phenomena and the mutual relations among them. It is the investigation or endeavor to find the inherent cause of any event and the knowledge obtained from such endeavor.

More importantly, science and technology have transformed the way people learn, communicate, think, behave, and work. They allow people to disclose the laws of the natural world or rules regarding the relationship between facts or events in the natural world. Above all, science and technology allow people to understand the mastermind behind the wonderful design of the universe.

This paper aims to discuss the ideas of a great Turkish Scholar, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, regarding the importance, the success, the failure, the characteristics, and the future of science development in human affairs with particular reference to Muslim countries.

**Life of Said Nursî in brief**

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî was born in 1877 in eastern Turkey (Fedotoff, 2004, 252). A remarkable child endowed with a prodigious memory, Bediüzzaman completed a traditional Madrasha education at the early age of fourteen and then studies physical sciences, mathematics and philosophy. In the course of the second decade of his life, he became extremely convinced that the Turkish Madrasha education was inadequate and his own interest in natural sciences led him to construct a new curriculum for the Islamic educational system. He prepared a blueprint for the establishment of a university, Medrestu’ Zehra, (the Resplendent Madrasha) in the Eastern Provinces. In 1917, he arrived in Istanbul and met Sultan Abdul Hamid. Subsequently, he received some funding for the construction of the university and its foundations were laid in 1913. But the beginning of World War I and the subsequent events made it impossible for this project to materialize.

During the War, he had led the militia forces on the Caucasian Front against the invading Russians for which he was later awarded...
a War Medal. He was taken prisoner in March 1916 and was held in Russia for two years. In early 1918, he escaped from the prison and made his way back to Istanbul via Warsaw, Berlin and Vienna.

His Resale-i Nur: A combination of religion and science

It was during the first two years of War that he composed his first works on the Qur’ān. Spoken while sitting on horseback and dictated hoes “commentaries” on various chapters of the Qur’ān attempted to combine the religious knowledge with natural sciences. This was the beginning of his major work, Risale-i Nur. But the work was interrupted when Bediüzzaman was captured and imprisoned by the Russians. Risale-i Nur is not a tafsir (commentary) on the Qur’ān in the usual sense of the term; rather, it attempts to establish links between the Qur’ānic verses and the natural world. It also attempts to show that there is no contradiction between religion and science.

It is said that Risale-i Nur has been Nursî’s the greatest work that he wrote in exile after his Divine Illumination (Nursî, 2010, 9). Nursî substantiates Islamic faith on the basis of the certainties of modern physical sciences and reads the cosmic verses of the Qur’ān in the light of modern science. Over all, Risale-i Nur is works that explain and expound the basic tenets of belief, the truths of the Qur’ān, to modern man. It provides clear and simple scientific explanation of stories, comparisons, explanations, and reasoned proofs that strengthen religious truths and belief. According to Turner the uniqueness of Risale-i Nur is that as he writes: “Risale-i Nur is not a tafsir (commentary) on the Qur’ān in the usual sense of the term; rather, it attempts to establish links between the Qur’ānic verses and the natural world” (Iqbal, 2002, 2).

Purpose of origin of human being

The Arabic words for a man or human being are al-Nas, al-Insan and Bashar. In the Qur’ān, the three words are found in many verses and surahs (The Qur’ān, al-Baqarah, 13, 21, 44, 83,168 etc, al-Nisa, 4:28).
In understanding and presenting the origins and purpose of human beings, Nursi makes the Qur’ān his source book. He looks up to the Qur’ān to find the answers for the questions related to the origins and purpose of human beings. He poses the questions, “Oh son of Adahm! From where? To where? What do you all do? Who controls you? Who speaks to you?” The answers for those questions can be found in the Qur’ān, surah al-Rahman (55:1–4) as cited by Nursi (Nursi, 1994b, 23). The Qur’ān says:

“Allah Most Gracious! it is He who has taught the Qur’ān. He has created man; He taught him speech”. (Yusuf, 1996, 1397)

According to the concept of Nursi in the purpose of creation of Man, Man is created by God with purpose. Man has to worship and serve God. Nursi cites the Qur’ān saying

“I created not Jinn and Mankind except that they might worship me.”
(The Qur’ān, 51:56)

Nursi further explains that “According to the meaning of this mighty verse, the purpose for the sending of man to this world and the wisdom implicit in it consists of recognizing the Creator of all beings and believing in hum and worship pin Him. The primordial duty of man and the obligation incumbent upon him are to know God and believe in Him, to assent to His Being and unity in submission and perfect certainty.

**Nursi’s motivation of modern sciences**

Bediüzzaman Said Nursi plays a unique and important role in inspiring science development in Muslim countries. Being well grounded in traditional Islamic sciences, Nursi was “aware of the apparent discrepancy between traditional cosmology articulated by Muslim philosophers and Sufis, and the Newtonian world-view, but instead of rejecting the mechanistic view of the universe presented by Newtonian science, he tried to appropriate it by appealing to the classical arguments from design” (Iqbal, 2002, 4). Nursi put a very strong emphasis on the importance of science and technology in the life of human being. “For sure,” he said,
“At the end of time, mankind will pour into science and technology. It will obtain all its power from science. Power and dominion will pass to the hand of science” (Nursî, 1977, 275).

Scientific approach is the most effective way to persuade the civilized world. In his words:

“Through the endeavours of science, what will prevail entirely in the present and totally in the future, is truth instead of force, proof instead of sophistry, and reason instead of nature” (Nursî, 1977, 32).

Nursî adds that in the future, truth and justice will take the place of the gun and the sword. He opines that just as in former times Islam’s progress was obtained through weapons and the sword, by smashing the enemy’s bigotry, destroying their obstinacy, and repulsing their aggression, in the future the immaterial swords of true civilization and material progress and truth and justice will defeat and rout the enemy in place of weapons and the sword (Nursî, 1960, 79).

Clearly, Nursî wants Muslims to be realistic and objective about their past and pay more attention on their future. Muslims must accept that being up and down in many aspects of worldly live, including in science development, is a normal experience of the circle of live. What seems to be more important in Nursî’s view is for Muslim nations to look at the future (Nursî, 1960, 80). Nursî believes that Islam is the true civilization of the future which will being peace and happiness to mankind.

Nursî was very optimistic about the ability of his fellow Muslims to acquire sciences. As he suggests:

“For the Muslims it is a great adventure that the West has acquired science and knowledge, and Islam can therefore appeal to them more easily than at any time before” (Nursî, 1960, 78).

Indeed, Nursî himself was an authentic example of a truly devout Muslim whose love for science is in line with his love for Islamic faith. For him, Muslims must stand on their own feet before they can manage their science development. Nursî adds that “the Qur’ânic themes of the regularity and harmony of the natural or-
der, when combined with the predictability of Newtonian physics, disproved the triumph of the secularists and positivists of the nineteenth century and provided a solid rock on which to construct a new understanding of the message of the Qur’ān” (Iqbal, 2002, 4).

According to Nursî, Qur’ān is the book of sciences. It points clearly to the true goal of the sciences and branches of knowledge, which are truth and reality, as well as the perfections, attainments, and happiness of this world and the next. (Nursî, 1998, 272).

For scientists, Nursî suggests, nature must be seen as a fabric of scientific symbols that must be read, realized, and understood. The Qur’ān, he further stresses, must be positioned as the counterpart of nature. In this way, Nursî believes, all sciences will speak about the Power of the Almighty and Divine Unity, because they provide a good understanding of His creation. Indeed, the Qur’ān encourages all Muslims to read and understand nature. Reading the Qur’ān will allow scientists to find hints and some basic concepts of sciences. In this regard, Nursî’s view is shared by the well-known writer, Maurice Bucaille, when he stated in his book, *The Bible, The Qur’ān and Science*:

“The relationship between the Qur’ān and science is a priori a surprise, especially as it turns out to be one of harmony and not of discord” (Bucaille, 1975110).

Nursî was also well aware of the exploitation of science and technology and its progress for ideological purposes in materialist philosophy. In his observation, the materialist has made the progress of science and technology as the tool of its own ideology of materialism and irreligion or the denial of creator and belief in the pre-eternity of matter. In the face of the pragmatic and materialist currents of thought, Nursî suggests a method in conformity with the understanding of the present century. For him, science must be used as a means to look to God Almighty. Nursî suggests: “Continue make your sciences and your progress steps by which to ascend to those heavens” (Nursî, 1977, 270).
In the light of his awareness, Nursî suggests that sciences in Muslim counties must be based on an Islamic world-view of the relationship between science and Islamic teachings. For him, Islam is the father of all the sciences. It is “the lord and guide of knowledge, and the chief and father of all the true sciences” (Nursî, 1977, 18). Thus, there is no boundaries between Islam and science. “History”, Nursî notes, “testifies that whenever the people of Islam have adhered to their religion, they have progressed relatively to former times. And whenever they have become slack in their adherence, they have declined.” (Nursî, 1977, 251).

Inseparability of Religion and Science

When sciences are accepted as evidence for the existence of Allah, the union and inseparability of religion and science become obligatory. This principle should form a basic starting point in terms of education policy. Bediüzzaman draws attention to two sources in searching the truth; prophethood; that is, the truths that prophets convey and the views that philosophy puts forward. According to him, whenever philosophy is based on religion.

Prophets have always been messengers that have shed light to humanity. The principles of philosophy that regard only the mind as the guide lead communities to darkness and crises.

The development and outcomes of those sciences show that everything is handled by a single creator with a purpose and will. That is, Islam is always in harmony with science, which is the product of the mind.

In the long search to answer the relationship between science and religion, a great scientist like Einstein has expressed his understanding in a simple sentence: “Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.” In Nursî’s view, science and human knowledge in general is legitimate, noble, and acceptable to Islamic teachings if it is subordinated to Divine Wisdom. For him, Muslims must look at science as a subset of religion. Religion is a majestic river, and the science is a tributary to the river (Nursî,
In science, Nursî explains, no exact results exist, and only the probabilities for the results are attainable. Science, he further explains, does not provide all the answers, only certain answers can be provided for practically an infinite number of enquiries (Nursî, 1998, 262). This view is shared by Maurice Bucaille (1975, p. vii) when he claims that “in Islam, science and religion have always been “twin sisters.” (Iqbal, 2002, 2) also shares Nursî’s view when he notes that Risale-i Nur shows that “there is no contradiction between religion and science.”

For Nursî, being exposed to modern sciences is a must for every Muslim. However, being exposed to modern science does not mean that a Muslim is pulled away from his culture. In his view, science development in Muslim countries will be successful and beneficial if it is culturally bond. In this regard, Nursî explicitly admires Japanese people and urges his fellow Muslims to follow them. As he writes: “In acquiring civilization we have to follow the Japanese, for together with taking from Europe the virtues of civilization, they preserved their national customs, which are the means by which every people is perpetuated” (Nursî, 1978, 62).

Attributing the conflicts and discords between modern schools, religious schools and dervish lodges in the last periods of the Ottoman State to the lack of information, Said Nursî presented solutions to reconcile them. Therefore, he gives great importance to his project “Madrasat-uz Zahra” (Great Islamic University).

**Progress in Good Civilization**

What Nursî means by good civilization is when in a society the truth takes the place of force and proof the place of sophistry. As he explains: “Through the endeavours of science, what will prevail entirely in the present and totally in the future, is truth instead of force, proof instead of sophistry, and reason instead of nature” (Nursî, 1977, 32). In Nursî’s view, good civilization is a civilization that is free from bigotry, obstinacy, and aggression. As he further explains: “Yes, “just in former times Islam’s progress
was obtained through weapons and the sword, by smashing the enemy’s bigotry, destroying their obstinacy, and repulsing their aggression” (Nursî, 1960, 79). “In the future,” Nursî believes, “the immaterial swords of true civilization and material progress and truth and justice will defeat and rout the enemy in place of weapons and the sword” (Nursî, 1960, 79).

After asking the question, “Why should the world be a place of progress for everybody but a place of decline for us?,” Bediüzzaman states that we progressed when we stuck to Islam and that we went backwards when we slackened off:

“Indeed, the facts that European civilization is not founded on virtue and guidance but rather on lust and passion, rivalry and oppression, and that up to the present the evils of civilization have predominated over its virtues, and that it has been infiltrated by revolutionary societies like a worm-eaten tree are each like powerful indications and means for the supremacy of Asian civilization. And in a short period of time it will prevail.

You may expect from Divine Mercy to see real civilization within universal peace brought about through the sun of the truth of Islam.” In this sentence, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî gives some good news about the future and states that there will be universal peace and widespread civilization in the future.

Conclusion

In this paper we have focused on the Nursî’s view on religion and science. In describing the motions of the particles he has brought to light the Relation between Islam and the modern issues. In short, the result of this article is very useful for human being especially to establish peace in our society.

His approach is unique, combining theistic and rationalistic styles. Due to its uniqueness, Nursî’s approach needs to be understood within the context of its social, political, and historical setting. Like many other Muslim reformers of the nineteenth century, Nursî’s ideas seem to be inspired by a need to reform Muslims’
perspective on science development in the light of the threat of bigotry, secularization, and westernization at local, national, and international level.

In other words, the progress of science development in Muslim countries depends on the commitment of Muslim scientists to expend all their efforts and energy for their countries. This unselfish manner is considered by Nursî as the fine characteristics that made Muslims reached the superiority of science development for nearly four centuries in the middle age.

It could be said in concluding remarks, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî has a great contribution to the Islamic thought for the Modern society. And his philosophy and the thought would be useful for the Muslim Ummah, especially in the present contemporary society.

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The miraculous eloquence of the Qur’an and its exclusive rhetoric style: special reference to *Risale-i Nur* of Bediüzzaman Said Nursî

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**ABSTRACT**

The Holy Qur’an is synthesised of miraculous eloquence and an exclusive rhetoric style of God’s word that is beyond man’s power to produce anything similar. Furthermore, the miraculous of the Qur’an chiefly in its eloquence have become trustworthy fact. Thus the basic purpose of this study is to explore the new aspects and elements of the Qur’anic miraculous eloquence divulged by Bediüzzaman Said Nursî who deliberated the general principles and elements of eloquence of the Qur’an through his masterpiece *Risale-i Nur*, which is a gleaming interpretation on the Qur’an according to the demand of the age. Additionally, the significance and essence of the Qur’anic eloquence will also be dissected critically to enlighten the conception. Moreover, descriptive and analytical methods have been taken into consideration in finalizing the paper. A comprehensive study of various pertinent articles, books written on Nursî’s thoughts as well as his written book *Risale-i Nur* will also be taken into consideration. It is predicted that the study will show that no single letter can replace the Qur’an’s miraculous phrases and words, which have been manifested every level of ages for human being regardless of level, time and civilization.

*Keywords: Eloquence of the Qur’an, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, Risale-i Nur, Qur’an*
Introduction

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî was an influential scholar, intellectual, thinker, reformer of religion in Islamic world whose very important contributions are being recognized in the modern world. He is “thought to be one of the foremost assemblages of important ideas among Islamic thinkers. It is not simply Nursî’s intellectualism and piety that touch the reader, but the deep human respect inherent in his ideas (Mardin, 2003:45).” His attention was primarily in the field of Qur’ānic interpretations and commentaries; embodied in a book known as the Risale-i Nur which introduces his scholarship and makes him a source of inspiration in the Muslim world. His style and explanations of Qur’ānic commentaries includes basic texts, interesting and rich perspective for understanding religion which bridge different times and situations and shape a new sense of community and society. However, the present paper will introduce a short biography of him and to discuss the miraculous eloquence of the Qur’ān which he mentions in his masterpiece Risale-i Nur.

A brief biography of Nursî: Author of Risale-i Nur

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî was born early one spring morning (Vahide, 2011) in the village of Nurs, a historical city of Bitlis in eastern Anatolia (Balci, 2011), Turkey. There are various dates for his birth in different sources, but according to Rumi calendar the year was 1293 which was used during that time in the Ottoman Empire, in 1877 (Vahide, 2011), while Markham and Pirim (2011) mentions in 1878. Nursî comes from a Kurdish family. He was the fourth of seven children of his parents. His mother Nuriye Hanim was popularly known as “Nure” and his father Mirza was well known to people as “Sofi Mirzo” or “Sofi Mirze” (Balli, 1998:71), whose forefathers came from Jizre on the Tigris (Sahiner, 1977). Both of them were practicing Muslims, devout and virtuous. One can understand his family’s environment through his acknowledgement, “From my mother I learnt compassion, and from my father, orderliness and regularity (Sahiner, 1977:68).” One of the
reports shows that Nursî himself claimed that his forefathers comes from the Prophet through both of his parents (Turner & Horkuc, 2009) but there is no official document on the argument.

Nursî grew up and spent his childhood with his family. He started his education at the age of nine. He took his education from traditional madrashas and felt that the Turkish madrasha education was insufficient which led him to make a new curriculum for the Islamic educational system. He travelled to many madrasha for about five years but his experience was unsatisfied and looked for quality and attentive education. During his two years in Mardin, in 1892, he had the opportunity to study all the important classical texts to improve his knowledge of the Islamic sciences and natural sciences (Turner & Horkuc, 2009). He received education with many Ulama or Scholars which helped him to gain knowledge from different perspectives and expertise. Sometimes he expressed his frustration toward religious scholars who were not able to give solutions to the major problems of the time. According to him religion is not only about faiths but also it has a connection with sociology, politics and economics. He obtained an excellent moral character helped by the fact that he was under the keen observation of many scholars and Ulama. His mother’s training and teachings plays a vital role for the success of his entire life.

Nursî received his diploma in three months and became known as ‘Molla Said’. He was challenged by local scholars and was successful in debating with them. The famous Molla Fethullah Efendi, who “gave him the title Bediüzzaman, nonpareil or wonder of the age (Turner & Horkuc, 2009:9)”, examined him on the texts what he read and learnt. He was able to answer all questions and became known as ‘Said-i Meshur’—the ‘famous Said’ (Turner & Horkuc, 2009).

Although Nursî involved himself in political and social work and established a madrasha in Mardin (Markham & Pirim, 2011) where he initiated to reform the educational system based on the traditional religious and modern science. He dedicated his life to demonstrate the source of true knowledge and progress. His greatest aim was to establish a university and prepared a proposal for the
university named as, *Medrestu’z Zehra*, (the Resplendent Madrasha) after the Azhar University (Vahide, 2011) in the Eastern Provinces where modern sciences would be taught with the religious sciences. In 1907 he came to the Istanbul for government support to establish his university but the attempt lead to his arrest. Finally, in 1913 he laid down the foundation of *Medrestu’z Zehra* on the shores of Lake Van but the project didn’t reach completion due to the beginning of World War I. During the war he was appointed the commander of chief of a militia force in the Eastern Provinces. He was captured by Russian army after the fall of Bitlis and sent to prison. He escaped in the spring of 1918 and came back to Istanbul. The first phase of Nursî’s life in the Ottoman Empire is called the period of the “Old Said”, as he would later call it.

At the time Nursî realized that Qur’ân would be the guidance for his life and he freed himself from the influence of secular philosophy. He also felt that Islamic principles are the best way to adhere for Turkey. That is why he rejected all kind of offers from Mustafa Kemal due to emphasis in the Westernisation and secularization of society. He understood that the new Turkish military was attempting to set up a secular republic in which Islam was to be ignored. In 1924, the caliphate was abolished and *Shariah* related orders were banned. Nursî retired himself from all kinds of political activities and social affirm. Keeping him with a small group of students and boundaries and he confined himself in worship and contemplation. People who knew about him became amazed by these changes of the “New Said”. He advised the leaders of the rebellion to give up the political involvement although he had been exiled in western Anatolia with other religious and tribal leaders. He had been forced to move to several places during his period of exile due to popularity of his teachings.

During his exile, Nursî wrote many treatises and articles to answer the questions of people who were deprived of religious teachings and education. He wrote the explanation of various chapters of the Qur’ân and attempted to combine the religious knowledge with natural sciences. This was the beginning of his major work
later called “The Risale-i Nur Collection”, the main aim of which was to explain and prove the principles of Islam and began to spread his message secretly through the region. He dedicated himself to writing Risale-i Nur and finally, he had dictated three quarters, a total of 119 pieces. “After having written out and distributed the original copies by hand, these were then copied again and passed on to others, who would write out further copies. In this way the words passed from village to village, and in the course of time, from town to town, and eventually throughout Turkey. According to some sources, the number of hand written copies of the various parts of Risale-i Nur totals some sixty thousand (Turner & Horkuc, 2009:26).” After a long time, he was released from prison in 1949 and the next period of his life is called “The Third Said”. Nursî didn’t allow his students to be directly involved in politics. In the last decade of his life, he visited many places and tried to preach his ideas and thoughts among people. According to Vahide (2005), ‘in many respects of these last ten years of his life may be seen as directing and training the young students and preparing some of them to lead the Risale-i Nur movement in later years.’ His final journey was in Urfa in Southern Anatolia at 21 March 1960 but he was too ill. He died at 23th March 1960 in the early morning in the Ipek Palas hotel in Urfa and the funeral took place the following day with a huge crowd of people gathered in the Ulu Mosque. He was buried in the Hililurrahman Dergah (Vahide, 2011) but after two months his remains were taken from there to an unknown place in Anatolia by the orders of so called “National Unity Committee”.

**The miraculous eloquence of the Qur’an: reference to Risale-i Nur**

The Holy Qur’an is God’s Word, a literary masterpiece, is a miracle of countless eloquence and guidance for everyone till the end of time. It deals with humanity and its duties, the universe and its Creator, the heavens and earth, this world and the next, and the past, future and eternity. It explains all essential comprehensive
subject matters related to our creation and life (Nursî, 2005). This is the great book of the universe where the divine laws of the universe’s creation and operation, the world of the unseen, visible, individual, spiritual and material world are discussed which took over a period of twenty three years to be revealed. It constantly repeats its words, sentences and meanings in a sort of historical manner, example of animals and immaterial things, certain events like slaughtering a cow and even naming a surah by “The Cow” (al-Baqara) and natural conditions of things. It also mentions the conversation between Allah and angels what was unseen. Moreover, it is beyond man’s power to produce anything similar like this (17:88) expresses its pure explanation, eloquent expression, comprehensive meanings, and sublime and sweet styles. Together, these constitute one of the Qur’an’s most brilliant aspects. Thus, scholars and researchers have sought its miraculous qualities mainly in its eloquence which means speaking with the outstanding requirements of the situation and articulating the meaning, appropriate language in the most effective way. It also means conveying the messages with very clear, beautiful, poetic, and meaningful terms. The Beauty of the Qur’an’s sequence of words, perfection of its conciseness, marvels of its style, the excellence of its expression, the power and truth of its meanings and the purity and fluency of its language are the evidences of the eloquence. (http://www.thepenmagazine.net/the-miraculousness-of-the-holy-Qur-an-1/).

It is neither poetry nor prose but something unique. Some people claim that Prophet was a poet but is refuted (36:69) by Allah in the Qur’an. The most renowned critics of their time (when the Qur’an was being revealed) – Waleed bin Mugayarah Makhzumi, Utba bin Rabia’, and Tufail bin Amr – testified that the Qur’an was more eloquent and superior than all other works. (http://www.erfan.ir/9876.html). There is a Hadith narrated by Abu Huraira: “I heard Allah’s Apostle saying, “I have been sent with Jawami al-Kalim (i.e., the shortest expression carrying the widest meanings), and I was made victorious with awe (caste into the hearts of the enemy), and while
I was sleeping, the keys of the treasures of the earth were brought to me and were put in my hand.” Muḥammad said, Jawami’ al-Kalim means that Allah expresses in one or two statements or thereabouts the numerous matters that used to be written in the books revealed before (the coming of) the Prophet (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 9, Book 87, Number 141).” Thus, this tradition means that the Qur’ān conveys its ideas in the easy and clear way. So whenever the Qur’ān addresses an idea to its readers and audiences then it makes understand and removed any confusion from its audiences.

Said Nursî, however, spent a long time of his life with the Qur’ān and tried to enlightened people through the pure and exclusive teachings of it which were related to the modern sciences. He was fluent in Arabic although it was not his mother tongue. He was knowledgeable of its grammar and syntax, and achieved a high level of understanding in both its philological and rhetorical aspects while still very young. A part of his works in his life is on the miracle of the Qur’ān what he discussed clearly in Risale-i Nur especially in the Mu’cizat-i Kur’aniye Risalesi (The Miraculousness of the Qur’ān—the Twenty-Fifth Word) and in Isharat al-I’jaz (Signs of Miraculousness). He mentioned many aspects of miraculous eloquence of the Qur’ān with reason and arguments boldly. It was his main aspect of Qur’ānic miraculousness that the Qur’ān is in its word-order which is explained in his commentary, named Isharat al-I’jaz, in order to explore and clear this aspect. At first he explains the verse; describes the word-order and connections into the previous and later verses. He also describes the relation between sentences, clauses, manners of explanations, words, and letters.

**Universal principles and general laws are enclosed in the immaterial events**

The Qur’ān contains many apparently insignificant events, each of which hides a universal principle, guidance, instructions and present the tip of a general law (Nursî, 2006). For instance, the Qur’ān mentions in 2:30–34 about an exclusive conversation among Allah
and angels where the obedience of angels and refusal of Satan’s is discussed. This is a small event but bears a universal principle. In these verses men’s superiority over angels and other things have been shown. On the other hand, the Qur’ān also states a historical event in the time of Moses through sacrificing a cow (2:67–71) which is an important miraculousness, and explains it as a most essential lesson of wisdom for everyone at all times. The Qur’ān comprises numerous indications of guidance through the example of animals and birds as honey bees and silkworms to promote humanity. It also shows the ultimate goal of scientific progress and technological developments, and specifies their final aims, toward which it urges humanity. Thus the Qur’ān narrates various events related to individual, historical events and others are the miraculous expression of the Qur’ān.

The Qur’ānic eloquence lies in its word’s beauty, order and composition

The Qur’ānic language and speech is harmonious, balanced and not incoherent. Some scholars have said that, the eloquence is focussed only on the Arabic words. Others have said that the eloquence has powerful ties in some aspects with the words, and in others with the meanings. In regards to eloquence Nursî (2006:63) focussed and explained clearly on its word–order. He showed the relationships between the verse’s words. Nursî states that “This is the Qur’ān’s miraculous eloquence, which originates in its words’ beauty, order, and composition; its textual beauty and perfection; its stylistic originality and uniqueness; its explanations’ superiority, excellence, and clarity; its meanings’ power and truth; and its linguistic purity and fluency. Its eloquence is so extraordinary that its eternal challenge to every individual to produce something like it.” In his book, Isharat al-I’jaz expresses this eloquence and conciseness in the word–order. He said concerning this: “An important aspect of the miraculousness is manifested in its word–order; the most brilliant miraculousness consists of the embroideries of the Qur’ān’s
word-order (Nursî, 1978:11).” Nursî (1998:451) also says that “the words of the Qur’ân have been positioned in such a way that all its phrases, words even, and even letters, and sometimes even an omission, has many aspects. It gives to all those it addresses their share from a different door.” He quotes the Hadith: ‘Each verse has an outer meaning, an inner meaning, a limit, and an aim, and each has roots, and boughs, and branches,”

He mentions that to understand the miraculous eloquence of the Qur’ân one has to know the literary eloquence, the role of language and linguistic composition of ancient Arabs. They were very careful in their choice of words and articulate in their speech, thoughts and expression of ideas. They adored rhetoric and diction and effective communication. On this particular point, Professor Hitti (1967:90) writes: “No people in the world manifest such enthusiastic admiration for literary expression and are moved by the word, spoken or written, as the Arabs. Hardly any language seems capable of exercising over the minds of its users such an irresistible influence as Arabic.” The ancient Arab people defend their tribal superiority and history through their oral poetry and respected of all tribes was the one who was the best in eloquence. They also learnt by heart the eloquence meaningful and unique expression and sometimes they held competition between two tribes.

At this time when they first heard it, they were fascinated by its eloquence and listened in amazement. Never before in their life had they heard such a striking and outstanding speech. They convinced that such a noble and impressive discourse could only be a divine speech, not a human creation. The Qur’ân challenged them to figure out a surah (Qur’ân, 2:23) like that of the Qur’ân but none could make a duplicate. However, it is a wonder that the Qur’ân was revealed in the most eloquent, articulate, and elaborate style and does not look like the words of human being. And the eloquence is apparent for all in various places in the Qur’ân. In the Surah Baqara it is mentioned “And spends out of what we have provided for them” (2:3). The word ‘what’ (ma) refers a general meaning not a restricted meaning. It states that whatever God
bestows is part of one’s livelihood. Thus believers must give out of whatever they have. This short sentence contains and suggests a broad range of meaning for alms and offers it to our understanding. The sequence of the Qur’ān’s sentences has many similar aspects, and the words have a wide range of relationships with one another.

**Eloquence in the meaning (balagha) of the Qur’ān**

The meaning of the Qur’ān is clear from the word itself which means saying many ideas in a few words. In explaining the meaning of eloquence, Nursî (1977:83) says: “The power and strength of a speech is achieved by its parts answering each other and its meanings assisting each other; by them all indicating the basic aim to its own extent; and by each pointing with its finger to that aim, representing the rule. Our phrases are confused but your beauty is one, and all indicate your beauty. “That is to say, the parts are like streams or ditches and the aim like a pool at the centre of them which seeks assistance from them.”

According to him, there is a wonderful eloquence in the Qur’ān’s meanings. Each verse has outer and inner meanings; and its words include and intend various meanings. Each phrase, word, letter and diacritical point has many aspects. Each person who hears it receives his or her share through a different door (Nursî, 2006). There are several verses of the Qur’ān which are same sentence and similar in meaning: “whatever is in the heavens and on earth, - let it declare the praises and glory of Allah. For He is the Exalted In Might, the wise.” (Qur’ān, 57:1, 59:1, 61:1). To realize the eloquence in the meanings of these verses of the Qur’ān one can see a situation like “pre-Islamic Arabia” when everything is surrounding by the darkness of ignorance and injustice. At the moment these verses had been revealed. Everything like land, sea, each plant and animals are as a word of glorification. However, like this, thousands of Qur’ānic commentaries prove its wording’s extraordinary comprehensiveness.
Qur’an follows unique, fresh and original styles

It is common from Arab literary custom that they do not carry on in one style in their speech; rather they move from one style to another, even in a single passage. In Arabic style the speaker may introduce himself in the first or second person and the singular and plural number. Dr ‘Abd al-Muhsin al-Mutayri says in his book Da’aawa al-Taa’ineena fi’l-Qur’ān al-Kareem: One of the literary styles of the Arabs is for the speaker to refer to himself in the first person and in the third person (http://Islamqa.info/en/209022). Like this the Qur’ān was not revealed in a one style but in various styles. The Qur’ān is so wonderfully comprehensive in style that one surah may contain the whole ocean of the Qur’ān in which the universe is contained. One verse may make understand that sura’s concepts and ideas. This difference is the part of miraculous nature, eloquence and excellent style. Nursi (2006:74–75) states “The Qur’ān has unique, original styles that are both novel and convincing. Its styles, which still preserve their originality, freshness, and “bloom of youth,” do not imitate and cannot be imitated.” Surah al-Naba’ mentions a brief discussion of the Last Day and the Resurrection, Paradise and Hell. Through this presentation an original and unique style has been followed by which people become convinced that the day and every aspect what are mentioned will become reality. To prove the day the Qur’ān states the signs of the day (78:6–17) very exclusively and attractively. Surah Al-Imran (3:26–27) also attracts the attention of people through a brilliant, eminent and comprehensive style to present the divine acts, operations, manifestations, world’s changes, renewals and transformation, alteration of the day and night and control of life and death. There are several verses in surahs where the elevated and unique styles have been expressed.

However, the Qur’ān includes all knowledge needed by humanity: explanations, aspects, and varieties of true knowledge, commands and prohibitions, promises and threats, encouragement and deterrence, restraint and guidance, stories and parables,
Divine knowledge and commands, natural sciences, and the rules and conditions of our personal, social, spiritual, and otherworldly lives. Thus, it gives people whatever they need. This is the Book that is the absolute guide of all perfected people thorough unique and original style.

Bediuzzaman indicates that he considers the extraordinary originality of its styles to be an aspect of its miraculousness. He writes: “The Qur’ān’s style is both strange, and original, and wonderful, and convincing. It has imitated nothing and no one. No one has been able to imitate it. Its style has always preserved the freshness, youth and singularity it possessed when first revealed and continues to preserve them (Nurṣi, 1980:346).”

**Surprisingly fluent and pure in Qur’anic expression**

The Qur’ānic explanation is so wonderful, beautiful, and fluent that anyone can understand easily. Its manner of expression is the most superior level of address. The Qur’ān is wonderful in fluency, soundness, coherence, harmony, proportion, interrelation, and correspondence; these factors enrich the Qur’ān’s fluency, soundness, and pureness. No one feels bored to recite but it gives them pleasure and happiness, feels relief and comfort upon hearing even though they recite and hear it thousands of times. It feeds the hearts, gives power and wealth to the minds and spirits and cures the illness of souls. The Quraysh sent one of its eloquent leaders to listen to the Qur’ān. When he returned, he said: “It is so sweet and pleasing that no human tongue can resemble it. I know poets and soothsayers very well. The Qur’ān is not like any of their work. We should describe it as sorcery so that it may not deceive our followers (Nurṣi, 2006:85).” The Qur’ān is a book of perfect fluency, superb clarity and soundness, firm coherence, and well established harmony and proportion (Nurṣi, 2006). There is a strong, mutual support and interrelation among its sentences and their parts, and an elevated correspondence among its verses and their purposes.
Qur’anic expression holds a superiority, power and magnificence

Nursî says that, superiority, power, and magnificence eloquent and pure composition and word order, as well as eloquent meanings, and original and unique styles are the Qur’ânic expressions which lead to the highest degree as well as excellence in its explanations (Nursî, 2006). In the beginning of Surah Mumeenun (23:1–11) insists and encourages good deeds while Surah al-Ghashiya produce threat for misguided people like boiling ears, fire burning in their brains, Zaqqum scalding their palates, Hellfire assaulting their faces, and a bitter, thorny tree in their stomachs. On the other hand five suras: al-Fatiha, al-An’am, al-Kahf, al-Saba’, and al-Fatir explain with the praise of God. Surah Qaf (50:6–11) proves the Resurrection in a brilliant, beautiful, lovely, and elevated manner of expression.

The Qur’ânic expression teaches all people in an easy but most skilful and comprehensible way, and convinces them of its truth. It is consisted of intellectual and spiritual foods that beings of all levels of intellect, reason, heart, and spirit can find their food and please their desires therein. Nursî wishes that, the Qur’ânic expression has many more treasures of meaning and truths that will be opened by future generations. Moreover, it cannot be compared with other words and speeches, for there are different categories of speech. In regard to superiority, power, beauty, and fineness, speech has four sources: the speaker, the person addressed, the purpose, and when it is spoken. So it should not consider only the speech itself. The speech derives its strength and beauty from these four sources, if the Qur’ânic expression’s sources are studied carefully, the degree of its eloquence, superiority, and beauty will be understood (Nursî, 2006).

Findings on the discussions

- The Qur’ânic expression is an extraordinary book which contains comprehensive aim, subject matter, meaning, style, beauty, and universal principles and general laws through a particular event where there are no contradictions. “It also includes all
types of eloquence, all varieties of fine speech, all categories of elevated style, all examples of good morals and virtues, all principles of natural science, all indexes of knowledge of God, all beneficial rules of individual and social life, and all enlightening laws of creation’s exalted reasons and purposes (Nursî, 2006:130).”

• Qur’ān is not a book like produced by human being. No one can find any replication, duplication and reproduction in it but is a miraculous prediction whose pureness, freshness, beauty and ability address all levels regardless of times, ages, civilizations, cultures and spaces. It has a sweetness which is absent in any literatures of the world. No one can be bored to recite it repeatedly. Although 1400 years have passed since its revelation but it seems that it is addressing the issues of each century.

• Although the Qur’ān was revealed into various parts over 23 years for different needs, occasions, events, situations, styles, levels of understandings, moods, situations and purposes but it has a perfect harmony, explanation, beautiful correspondence, balance, fluency and each part has united, perfect order and harmony with each other that seems it were revealed all at once.

• From the first day, the Qur’ān’s eloquence has captivated literary people. Many geniuses of literature and the science of eloquence, like ‘Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani, al-Sakkaki, and al-Zamakhshari, have concluded that the Qur’ān’s eloquence is unequalled. Moreover, it has challenged all geniuses of literature and eloquence to dispute with it. However, it is superior to all human works. It revealed to Prophet who conveyed his messages to mass people and turned their minds exclusively because of attractive poetry, eloquent speech, beautiful composition and excellent and unique characteristics of its literature that was beyond the capacity of the human being to reproduce. No other book even comes close to resembling it. This leaves us with two options: either
it is inferior or superior to all other books. As no one can honestly claim that it is inferior, it must be superior.

Conclusion

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî possesses a vast knowledge in many fields but his purpose and endeavours of his diverse long life was to serve and dedicate in with the Qur’ān for the advancement and prosperity of Muslims and Islamic world. He made his position and success in the science of Arabic, which focus on the sciences of grammar, syntax, and eloquence. He interpreted the Qur’ān in new ways: rhetorical, grammatical and philological terms and explained the eloquence of Qur’ān’s miraculousness which had not been explained so before him.

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Suggesting the God and man relation as the medicine for all human ailments with reference to Nursî’s contributions

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ABSTRACT

Apart from the onerous tasks which had and have been subtly mapped out and executed by the world think tanks to de-construct ethics and socially and more often than not logically approved and cleared traditions, and apart from the robust efforts which have been exhausted by the global scientific synergy to transfer the existing world to a fully-fledged global village, the quest for a peaceful, crime-less and safe atmosphere still looks ceaseless. At present, the technically well advanced world draws the attention to the whirlwind which intends to decriminalize homosexuality in terms of individual liberty and freedom, once not more than years before; the same freedom was defined with its limits. This mood of change may result at losing of cosmopolitan nature of the globe, to the extent that everything looks white or black. The contradictions even, look complicated in such a world. Moreover, the human crisis will appear more strong and dangerous.

Here, Nursî’s approach of the human problems through establishing the God and Man relation and suggesting it as the medicine for all human ailments apparently looks more relevant and applicable. He says “Belief in the All-Mighty Creator and the Hereafter is precious, since such belief is used to reveal the universe and open the door to happiness. Patiently relying on the Creator, beseeching the Provider in gratitude, and seeking refuge in Him are invaluable medicines for all ailments”. This paper is an attempt to explore this approach through analysing some of his contributions.
Defining the problem

Suggesting the God and man relation as the medicine for all human ailments is not at all a new synopsis but it is a topic of past, present and even future. This idea explicitly states that our entire ailments or deceases can be cured by the process of spiritual enlightenment, in other words, through consolidating our relation with God. This suggestion might be put forward firstly, not unprecedentedly, by the theological wing of religious scholars, writers and thinkers irrespective of their differences in case of their religion, ideology and their field of study. Since the world looked in urgent need for such kind of spiritual capsule which can console the depressed and gloomy minds and pacify their capricious nature, many religious scholars including Sufi leaders experimented their hands in promoting this way of recovery. But unfortunately, the business oriented world tried to leave its marks on this field as the fake Sufis used this chance to fill their pockets. This eventually left the people in confusion.

Return to God for healing the problems is truly carried out by many important figures of Muslim world as Qur’an and the Prophetic traditions include a wide range of verses which vigorously accommodate this message. Qur’an says “Those who believe and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction” (13:28) and we read in Prophetic traditions:

« وما تقرب إلي عبدي بشيء أحب إلي مما افترضته عليه، ولا يزال عبدي يقترب إلي بالنوافل حتى أحبه، فإذا أحببته كنت سمعه الذي يسمع به، وبحر الذي يبصر به، ورجله التي يمشي بها، ولنن سألن لأعطيه، ولنن استعذنن لأعيده»

In sum, this is a message that has been shedding light over the hearts of Muslim world for decades and centuries. We are right to say that it dates back to the Prophetic period, and then the Islamic scholars and leaders inherit-edit and passed from mouth to mouth; the list of such scholars, leaders and Sufis, if they are noted down here, will not spare even one page of this article, thereby I prefer...
to skip it all, except confining to naming some of them like Imam Gazali, Al Shiekh Abdul Qadir Jilani, Jalal al Din Rumi, Ibn al Arabi and definitely Said Bediüzzaman Nursî who is now core of our discussion. However, this idea of the spiritual medicine mattered much in the modern period which witnessed spread of materialism, domination of nihilistic mentality, highly advanced scientific inventions and above all, the fast waving negligence of religion. It is noteworthy that Said Nursî was a child of the century just after the Enlightenment\(^1\) – the period in the 18\(^{th}\) century when many writers and scientists began to argue that science and reason were important than religion and tradition. Thus it was not strange to watch Said Nursî coming out with his sublime ideas molded in the combined mold of religion and reason or wisdom, with the ideas which can communicate to the modern society of 20\(^{th}\) century. This 20\(^{th}\) century reformer of Muslim world exhausted his scholarly apparatus for the spiritual enlightenment of his community. But the way that he has chosen to deal with the crisis which his community faces, truly looked ideal and pertinent. I quote M. Sait Ozervarli to underscore Said Nursî’s ideal method; he says “Nursî found the Qur’ânic approach a ‘remedy’ in reviving his own Islamic beliefs and decided to transmit, through a series of writings, his personal healing experience to the public, whom he believed to be on the edge of losing their faith. What he did was to reconstruct the Qur’ânic practical theology, which offers solution to the urgent problems of the modernized Muslim community, rather than strengthen the classical logico – philosophical theology”\(^2\).

**Said Bediüzzaman Nursî: the 20\(^{th}\) century reformer of the Muslim world**

After having defined the problem, the rest of our efforts are restricted to analysing some of the wonderful and outstanding works

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of Said Nursî who honestly identified the threats of the materialistic and positivistic aspects of modern European philosophy to the moral values of the Qur’ān and the religious faith in general. The religious moreover intellectual stalwart who won hearts of millions when materialism was at its peak, and the nihilistic attitudes had a wide appeal, undoubtedly had connected between the God and Man to meet the challenges of human being or we say his way of treatment left it looking cemented. We can even shortly conclude that Said Nursî was a man of syntheses which include synthesis of God and man, synthesis of tradition and modernity.

He treated human being’s deceases as “he analysed why the Muslim world was stuck in the “Middle Ages”: growing despair, the loss of truthfulness in social and political spheres; the love of belligerency and ignorance of the bonds proper among believers; pervasive despotism; and egocentricity”\(^3\) He deliberately couched in an ideal way the view that the backwardness which engulfed the Muslim community could be crossed out only through the synthesis of modern scientific and religious knowledge along with systematic thought. He urged his audience to acquire knowledge not to get deviated from the right path under the impact of materialistic concepts. My words here wish to sound the typically quoted description of Said Nursî, thinking that it is capable to depict this spiritual but moreover, intellectual figure in brief, “Bediüzzaman Said Nursî (1877 – 1960) is an important twentieth century Muslim figure, Islamic intellectual with straight forward, reason sounded and text oriented method and is characterized with all noble qualities including simplicity, austerity, tenderness, modesty and contentedness”

He tasted the blows which targeted the entire Muslim community as his own first and they left him sleepless but this genius never quit his tough task and subsequently triggered his reformative project through his writings and preaching. This point will be touched along with fact that he lived in a time when materialism

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\(^3\) Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, *The Words: The reconstruction of Islamic belief and thought*, Pg xiii, The Light – New Jersey, USA, 2005
was triumphant, communism was popular and Muslims were being urged to reject Islam. He said “I feel each blow delivered to the Muslim world as delivered first to my own heart. That is why I have been so shaken”

His remarkable initiatives to inculcate in people a strong hope of an overall revival deserve to be tabled for consistent and creative debates.

**The God and Man Relation as the Medicine:**
**Analysis of Nursî’s Contributions**

The God and man relation as the medicine is an idea that indisputably encompassed the world of Nursî’s contributions. But before going to the details it would be better to notice the inevitable perception that Said Nursî as a reformer of Muslim world would have tried to connect between God and a Muslim rather than God and a Man. In other words he convinced his audience that the Muslims’ adherence to Islam bought them success and the history ratified that they suffered decline, disaster, and defeat proportionate to their neglect of it. “This is not the case with other religions, for history shows that their increase in civilization was proportionate to their neglect of religion, while their decline was proportionate to their adherence to it”

This contradictory looking comment is, nevertheless, result of years - long experiments and observations executed by the great spiritual and intellectual figure Said Nursî. By the initiatives which worked out quit well, he intended mainly to prove the pillars of Islam, the necessity of belief, worship, morality, and good conduct; and socio – economic issues of contemporary Muslim community. His perception extends to the point “ignorance was a source of Muslim poverty, internal conflict and other problems” – ignorance of Islam’s truth and that of science and tech-

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6 Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, *The Words: The reconstruction of Islamic belief and thought*, Pg xiv, The Light – New Jersey, USA, 2005
nology. These assessments will be read with the fact that Nursi’s contributions as a whole accommodate the entire humanity.

Said Nursi called his community to the spiritual empowerment, underlining that the adherence to the Almighty would result in their success and would heal their ailments. He explains in his Sunuhat (Inspirations) and Lemeat (Gleams) the Muslim world’s collapse and the Western world’s domination “Destiny allowed this calamity because we did not adhere to Islam’s commandments.”

This is the major aspect upheld by Said Nursi in his important works including Risale-i Nur. It is noteworthy that he has employed his particular way of using allegories and analogies to clarify the connection between a Muslim’s developments or his ups and downs and his adherence to the Almighty. The connection is further emphasized in his observation of the reason for the triumph of unbelievers over believers. The fourth reason that he puts forward reads “Muslims gradually deprived of Islam of its force, allowed it to become diluted, and caused it to lose its purity and authenticity. Just as a hawk’s attacks causes a sparrow to develop its power of defence, God allows unbelief to attack Islam successfully so that Muslims will restore to its original purity and force.”

We may feel here that we listen to the observations delivered by Abu al Hasan Ali al Nadvi in his very famous book ماذا خسر العالم بانحطاط المسلمين (Why did the world get lost with fall of Muslims).

Said Nursi explicitly states in many places of his “The Words, The Letters, and Lahikalar (Addenda)” the importance of the knowledge of God “Creation’s highest aim and most sublime result is belief in God. The most exalted rank of humanity is knowledge of God. The most radiant happiness and sweetest bounty for jinn and humanity is love of God contained within knowledge of Him; the spirit’s purest joy and heart’s delight is spiritual ecstasy contained within love of God. All true happiness, pure joy, sweet bounties, and unclouded

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8 Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, *The Words: The reconstruction of Islamic belief and thought*, Pg xv, The Light – New Jersey, USA, 2005
pleasure are contained within the knowledge and love of God”\(^9\)

According to Said Nursî, the adherence to God never means blind imitation; rather it should appeal to both the intellect and the heart. Thus it is not the rejection of science and technology but the power to see God’s Attributes everywhere and in everything. This point of view distinguishes Said Nursî’s suggestion of the God and Man relation as the medicine for entire human ailments. He frankly stressed that science and religion are not fighting elements, since they are two different expressions of the same truth. Science enlightens the minds and religion illuminates the hearts. We quote Dr. Colin Turner, he says the *Risale-i Nur* affirms that “he (anyone who sincerely wishes to look upon the created world as it is) will see that the created world is thus a book of names, an index, which seek to tell about its Owner”\(^10\)

I would like to note here a recently published article, entitled “Those big questions of life and god”\(^11\), in which the writer Suyash Saxena try to reinstate the philosophical theory of Chance and God. In this article, he even surmises “it is thus the human being who has created the idea of God to harmonize the contradictions of life and it may not be the other way round”. By upholding the arguments and theories of the philosophers like Durant and Jean Paul Sartre, the writer attempts indefatigably to restore the idea of chance, but he hardly succeeds as he, by the way, says “Because there is uncertainty in life and no amount of rational knowledge can pre-empt the twists and turns life is going to take in the future, we inevitably have to resort to the idea of chance” and even admits the great failure of philosophy or rationality in defining the life itself “Had life been completely defined by rationality and reason, we would not have needed ideas of Chance and God”. Here, Dr. Colin Turner’s observations of The *Risale-i Nur*’s treatment of these concepts are worthy note “The materialist, however, see

\(^9\) Ibid. Pg xvi  
\(^10\) Ibid. Pgxxi  
things differently – they do not see different things. They ask us to believe that this cosmos, whose innate order and harmony they do not deny, is ultimately the work of chance... The Risale-i Nur destroys these myths and superstitions”.

Dr. Turner illuminates Said Nursî’s call for the revival of faith and his sharp criticism of ego centricity which causes more often than not abjection, wretchedness, and unhappiness of man “History records the conflicts between these two flows of human life or these two main branches of the tree of humanity, namely religion and human ego. Rejecting to follow the Divine Revelation, ego claims self–ownership in haughtiness, appropriating for itself whatever is given to it by the creator, and attributing to itself all the accomplishments God Almighty confers on it. This, however, results in the abjection, wretchedness, and unhappiness of man”. 12

According to Dr. Turner, the Risale-i Nur diagnoses the real and very dangerous diseases that afflict modern men and women, and offers cure. Risale-i Nur exposes the belief and unbelief and itself remains as the medicine for the human diseases.

Said Nursî proves that the religion puts forward a peaceful happy world and its practicing results in the human happiness. His comments on religion are extremely remarkable as he writes down “The Qur’ān accepts “right” as the point of support in social life. The aim is virtue and God’s approval, and its principle is mutual assistance. The only community bonds it accepts are those of religion, profession, and country. Its aim is to control and thus weaken carnal desires by urging the soul to sublime matters, satisfying our exalted feelings so that we will strive for human perfection and true humanity. Right calls for unity, virtue brings solidarity, and mutual assistance means helping each other. Religion secures brotherhood, sisterhood, and cohesion. Restraining our desires and urging the soul to perfection brings happiness in this world and the next” 13

12 Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, The Words: The reconstruction of Islamic belief and thought, Pg xxiii, The Light – New Jersey, USA, 2005
13 Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, The Words: The reconstruction of Islamic belief and thought, Pg148, 427, The Light – New Jersey, USA, 2005
The seventh word in the volume “The Words” exclusively proposes belief as the door to happiness. It begins with the sentence “Belief in the All Mighty Creator and the Hereafter is Precious, since such belief is used to reveal the universe and open the door to happiness”. While elaborating this idea, Said Nursî, audibly suggests the God and Man relation as the medicine for the entire human problems “Patiently relying on the Creator, beseeching the provider in gratitude and seeking refuge in Him are invaluable medicines for all ailments”.14 “The first medicine is patience and trusting in God, relying on His Power, and having confidence in His Wisdom”. Said Nursî confidently argues “Surely there is pleasure in the fear of God” drawing an analogy “If a one year old was asked what is the most pleasant thing he or she knows, the reply would be: “Taking refuge in my mother’s warm embrace, conscious of my weakness and helplessness – from her sweetest slap”. He counts this compassion of mother as a mere small spark from that of God and concludes “people of perfection take great pleasure in their helplessness and fear of God”.

Sincerity is one of the major themes in Risale-i Nur collection. While speaking about the hypocrisy of the religious groups and followers of Sufi ways or the conflicts among them Nursî suggests “The cure for this dreadful disease is sincerity. That is by preferring to the truth to self – love, always holding the truth over selfish motives, following the Prophetic rule, (My wage is only due from God) (10:72) remaining indifferent to nay material or immaterial wage that comes from people”15. The hurdles before attaining God’s pleasure include the lack of sincerity in the duties and the bubble of egotism and self – centeredness. Said Nursî verily scrutinizes the greedy nature of human being and its consequences and presents the trust in God as a means to tranquillity “Greed shows its evil consequences wherever there are animate beings.

14 Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, The Words: The reconstruction of Islamic belief and thought, Pg43, The Light – New Jersey, USA, 2005
15 Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, Sincerity and Brotherhood, P.3, the Risale-i Nur Collection, Tughra Books, New Jersey, USA
In contrast, seeking one’s provision with contentment and trust in God is a means to tranquillity and displays its good effects everywhere”.\textsuperscript{16} Nursi highlights always the view of getting rid of human miseries through obeying God’s laws and rules as he explains the social calamity after the world war and connects it to the undoing of Islamic practices like Zakah while talking about Turkish social problems of poverty, hunger and financial loss.

Nurşî presents supplication as the best means to realize our sublime goals and needs. He says “Supplication is the spirit of worship and the result of sincere belief. For one who makes supplication shows through it that there is someone who rules the whole universe; One Who knows the most insignificant things about me, can bring about my most distant aims”\textsuperscript{17}. Lucinda Mosher quotes Said Nursî in her talk of the supplication which the later dealt with (“God, he continues, has equipped us with means by which we can satisfy the smallest circle of needs through reliance on our own will and power. However, other needs constitute a circle so large that its diameter stretches eternally from past to future and its radius from the centre of the earth to the Throne of God”. To deal with these needs, Nurşî explains, “God has provided (us) with Dua’”)\textsuperscript{18}

Thomas Michel makes some significant remarks on spirituality in his essay, entitled “For You, Illness is Good Health” Said Nursî’s Spirituality in his Approach to Physical Illness”\textsuperscript{19}. We need to have read them together to evaluate the perception that the God and Man relation is the remedy for the entire problems of human being. His comments cover the following points:

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 58
\textsuperscript{17} Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, Twenty fourth Letter, Letters, Pg 357
\textsuperscript{19} Ibrahim M. Abu–Rabi, Spiritual Dimensions of Bediüzzaman Said Nursî’s Risale­i Nur, Pg 175 –176
1. A working definition might assert that spirituality is the way one internalizes the teaching and practice of religion so that it shapes, informs, and transforms that person’s behaviour.

2. It is spirituality that gives depth and roots to one’s experience of God, without which that experience remains ephemeral.

3. Spirituality provides a solid foundation on which one can build habits of behaviour and persevere at times of discouragement, boredom, and doubt.

4. However, through spirituality the believer is rooted in the divine message and nourished by faithful practice and as a result has access to additional resources of God’s guidance that can strengthen a believer to face the critical moment.

Said Nursî, in a way, regards Sufism as an effective remedy for treating the sickness of the heart. According to Thomas Michel, “He (Nursî) goes on to note that the prayer inspires him to see the world as a huge hospital, full of sick people, who come before God as the compassionate healer who answers the needs of all” “His spirituality leads him to understand that since both health and illness come from God, true faith consists of accepting willingly and patiently whatever God sends and placing one’s trust in God who is the healer of bodies and souls”. 20 Nursî quotes the proverb “Light is indebted to darkness; pleasure is indebted to pain; there is no health without illness”. Thus illness is the way to assess the great gift of God, health. Nursî presents God as the Compassionate One who consoles the sick, the healer who takes away illness, and the provider who gives food to the hungry.

Michel speaks of Nursî’s remedies “The reflections that Nursî offers are not remedies in the sense of medicinal and physical cures meant to remove the illness, but rather remedies for the types of despair and distress to which those in poor health are often inclined. As such, they are spiritual remedies for the sickness of the soul that can sometimes follow upon that of the bodies”. He adds “By internalizing the implications of faith in God, the sick person

20 Ibid.179
can achieve peace of mind that, since it is conducive to physical well-being, can also help to bring about bodily recovery."\(^{21}\) These assessments clearly back the point that the mental health which the man attained through his spiritual contact with God, eventually results in the physical health.

Nursi’s view is clear in his quoting of Ibn Ataillah Iskandari’s famous couplet.

“When a person finds God, what does he lose?
What does he find if he loses Him”\(^{22}\)

This perception of Nursi’s view is plainly described by Bilal Kuspinar when he says “So, according to Nursi, man in the first place must find God. Once he finds Him, he will lose nothing; however, in finding Him he will incur at the same time the affliction (bala’) that he has to endure in this life.”\(^{23}\) So the trust in God makes the man capable to meet any challenge. Said Nursi’s imagination hovers in the sky when he deeply investigate the essentials of the faith, he says “Belief is both light and power......Relying on God, they travel safely through the mountainous waves of events in the ship of life. They voyage through the world comfortably until their last day, since they entrusted their burdens to the Absolutely Powerful One’s Power.”\(^{24}\) The main point Said Nursi always stresses on is that “we reach the highest degree of perfection and become worthy of Paradise via the light of belief”\(^{25}\)

\(^{21}\) Ibid.183

\(^{22}\) Nursi,S.Altinci Mektub, 357; Cf. Eng.,44. And see for the original version of the poem, Ibn Ata’lallah al Iskandarani, SharhHikam al –Ataiyyab, 208


\(^{24}\) Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, The Words: The reconstruction of Islamic belief and thought, Pg 330, The Light – New Jersey, USA, 2005

\(^{25}\) Ibid. 327
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Ethics of social solidarity and brotherhood: unveiling the views of Said Nursî

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ABSTRACT

The term *akh* (brother) is used in several senses in the Qur’ān and its definition varies ranging from blood relationships (in biological sense) to associations and groups (in metaphorical sense). Akh in its strict literal or biological sense means a male who shares one or both parents with another sibling. But Islam redefined the concept of *akh* and *akhuwwah* in a new and profound manner by changing the relationship from one based on close degree of kinship to a permanent bond based on faith and acceptance of Islam. Allah reminds the same in the Qur’ān that before accepting the faith, you were enemies of one another, “then Allah unified your hearts so that through His bounty you became brothers” (Al-Qur’ān, 3:103). So, in the larger scheme of things the relation, solidarity, and ties created by Allah are more vital and significant than those mentioned above. However, unfortunately whole humanity in the current times is in deep crisis for it has rejected and repudiated these divinely given values. It could not attain peace and happiness until and unless it is truly united from within. That is only promising if the teachings of Islam at large, especially those related to the ethics of social solidarity and brotherhood are followed in their real spirit.

For Bediuzzaman Said Nursî (1877–1960) ‘solidarity’ and ‘brotherhood’ are the vital components of Islam for curing the grievous sicknesses besetting the humanity in general and the Muslim community in particular. Focusing on these ethical values, the paper is an attempt to examine, explore, and emphasize explicitly in an analytical way the comprehension/understanding of Said Nursî towards the concept of solidarity and brotherhood in light of his *magnum opus* Risale-i Nur.
Introduction

The last decades of the nineteenth century and the starting decades of the twentieth century were crucial for the Muslim world. Except the territory of modern Turkey, all Muslim lands had been colonized by European powers. European Imperialism did not threaten unity and oneness of the Muslim ummah alone, but the Western way of life and its educational system started to undermine the traditional Muslim concepts and educational institutions as well. As a result, Western ideas such as nationalism, secularism and atheism began to spread among Muslim nations. Moreover, Orientalist scholars initiated an enormous attack on the very foundations of the Islamic belief. Many Muslim scholars realized the urgent need for finding solutions to these crucial problems. As a response to these challenges, Muslim scholars expended great efforts to prevent splitting up of the Muslim ummah and devoted their entire lives to keep various Muslim ethno-cultural groups within their common nationhood, Islam, and reinforce unity of Muslims.

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, a religious reformer, saw the secret of strength of the ummah in unity and solidarity of its fellow members. He believed that solidarity among Muslims existed constantly throughout Islamic history and also asserted that unity was the essence of the religion of Islam and the nature of the Islamic way of life. In Letters, Said Nursî stated that the principle of the Islamic Shari‘ah is mutual assistance, the mark of which is accord and solidarity (Nursî, 1928–1932, 548). While comparing the underlying principles of Western and Islamic civilizations, he noticed that the civilization which the Shari‘ah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) comprises and commands will unfold again after the disintegration of present-day civilization. It lays down positive principles as compared to the former: its point of support is truth instead of force, which is manifested in the values of justice and equity. Its purposes are virtue and Allah’s pleasure in place of benefit and self-interest exhibited as love, brotherhood and friendly competition. Its means of unity are the bonds of religion
and not racialism and nationalism. The principle in life is that of mutual assistance and cooperation instead of conflict and discord (Davutoglu, 1995).

The Islamic solidarity is the most important issue which concerns all Muslims in accordance with their degrees and social positions. This solidarity starts from the bonds and unity between two Muslims due to their brotherhood—in—faith and reaches to the cooperation and mutual assistance among all the Muslims throughout the whole globe. Islam and Islamic countries can only be protected from all kinds’ of dangers and enemies through the enormous power which will be generated by the religious brotherhood and solidarity of Muslims, thus, serving to the general global peace.

The following Āyāt of the Qur’ān are attracting our attention to the fact that great mischief and disasters will take place if mutual assistance and solidarity amongst the Muslims is not maintained.

> And the unbelievers are allies (protectors) of each other. Unless you do this (protect each other), there would be Tumult and Oppression on Earth, and great Mischief (Al-Qur’ān, 8: 73).

> Indeed the believers are brothers (Al-Qur’ān, 49: 10).

The religion of Islam has brought important onuses and rules which result in mutual assistance. Of particular relevance is the Pilgrimage (Ḥajj) which in inevitable for developing the spirit of mutual assistance, brotherhood and the solidarity among the Muslims.

**The perception of the pilgrimage**

A truthful dream (Ru‘yā al—Sādiqah) of Said Nursî gave good—news for the consequences of the First World War, but came to silence about the Pilgrimage regrettfully. He mentions about the silence of the dream as follows:

> The dream came to silence at the Pilgrimage because the negligence of the Pilgrimage has attracted the calamity and Divine wrath (Qahr). And its penalty did not help the expiation of sins, but rather
made our sins excessive. It is the negligence of the high politics of Islam and the extensive social benefits within the Pilgrimage, which comprehends especially the unity of opinions through acquaintance and cooperation … paved the way for enemies to employ millions of Muslims against Muslims. Millions of Muslims have been forced to travel long distances over the World under the enemy flag which is entirely evil, since they did not take a rush departure for the journey of Pilgrimage which is entirely favourable (Occurrences Improvisations Indications, 52–54).

A great insight in Pilgrimage (Ḥajj), hence, it is a kind of Supreme Consultation (Assembly) to be held once a year, in order to protect the independence and security of the World of Islam. Said Nursî tells us that the utmost responsibility of this great duty is upon the shoulders of Ottomans (Turks) and Arabs.

Lawful freedom and lawful consultation have demonstrated the sovereignty of our true nationhood and the foundation and spirit of our true nationhood is Islam. In so far, as they have carried the standard of the Ottoman caliphate and Turkish army in the name of that nationhood, the two true brothers, Arab and Turk, who are like the shell and citadel of the nationhood of Islam, are the sentries of that sacred citadel. Thus, through the bond of this sacred nationhood, all the people of Islam are like a single tribe. Like the members of a tribe, the groups of Islam are bound and connected to one another through Islamic brotherhood. They assist one another morally and, if necessary, materially. It is as if all the groups of Islam are bound to each other with a luminous chain (Nursî, 2002a, 54).

The prescription for a glorious though unfortunate Continent, an illustrious though hapless State, a noble though owner-less people, is Islamic Unity (Nursî, 2001, 542). He says in an article published in 1909:

The greatest obligatory duty in this time is to work for the Islamic solidarity. The aim and objective of the solidarity are to vibrate such a long luminous (blessed) Chain that connects the Islamic centres and Mosques/Masjids and Milieus which are
branched out in subdivisions and thereby to awake those who are tied to that chain and to lead them towards the Path of Development with desire and command of conscience (Nursî, 2002a, 90).

Ways and means to achieve peace and security

Said Nursî is of the view that the sole means to exterminate ‘anarchy’ was the Islamic solidarity. In a letter, warning the government officials during the rule of the Democrat Party in Turkey in 1950s, Nursî affirmed:

Communism, Free-Masonry, atheism and irreligion are directly resulting in anarchism. Against these terrible forces of destruction, only and solely the Islamic unity surrounding the truths of the Qur’ân can endure. And it is the only way to save this land from the occupation of foreigners and this nation from falling into anarchy and the means to save the mankind from these dangers (Nursî, 1959, 24).

Congratulating the feast of his students, Said Nursî welcomes the positive developments towards the Islamic cooperation and unity after 1950s (Regional Cooperation between Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan and Islamic Conferences of the Heads of States).

My Dear Truthful Brothers! We congratulate your Blessed Bairam Feast with all our souls. Insha Allah you live long enough to see the Great Feast of the world of Islam too. There are many signs and indications that the Qur’ân which is the source of the Holy constitution of the United Republics of Islam- will rule completely in the Future and will bring a true feast to the mankind (Nursî, 1959, 76).

Said Nursî warned against the great dangers and harms to the Islamic solidarity and brotherhood. The Muslim world would feel an aversion for the Muslim Turkish nation if European civilization is advocated in the region instead of the truths of the Qur’ân.

The Turkish Nation which rejoiced the World of Islam with its heroism for a thousand years and protected the unity of Muslims and served as a great means to save the World of humanity from absolute infidelity and corruption ... Should you not stand now as
protector of the Qur’ân and the truths of belief heroically as in the old times and advocate the truths of the Qur’ân and belief directly, instead of propagating the (Western) civilization at the harm of the religion (Nursî, Letter I, 218–219).

Therefore, through Risale-i Nur (The Treatises of Light), we have been endeavouring to ward off the two greatest dangers of this country and its future. The first danger, anarchy, is trying to enter into this country forcefully from abroad and we have been engaging in building a wall before this. The second danger which is more serious is the hatred of the million Muslims. Our duty, therefore, is to turn this hatred into brotherhood and thereby ensure the greatest point of maintenance for this country (Nursî, Letter I, 128). According to Nursî, his Risale-i Nur was not concerned with the politics. However, its aim and objective is to destroy atheism and anarchism (Nursî, 2002b, 128).

Mutual cooperation with the world of Islam

Said Nursî attempted vehemently to impress upon the people/government of Turkey that it is a necessity that they must consider seriously the establishment of the Islamic union, rather than turning towards Europe. For Islam and the Muslims, in order to envision the dream and win the favour of Allah, it is necessary that brotherhood of the four hundred million brothers and the path of the billions of our ancestors should be considered seriously. The Qur’ânic injunctions which time and again command us to establish brotherhood, solidarity, and unity are the foundations of the Islamic mutual-assistance and a Divine rule and the bond and the Holy constitution from Allah (Nursî, 1959, 83).

And hold fast all together to the bond of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves (Al–Qur’ân, 3: 103).

Do not engage in disputes with one another, lest you lose courage and become insignificant and your Power depart (Al–Qur’ân, 8: 46).
There are some prerequisites, according to Nursî, for the realization of the Islamic unity and brotherhood. One of these is to base on the principle of Islamic nationality and refrain from negative racism and tribalism which are the root-causes of fragmentation and disintegration. Said Nursî, has also authored many articles regarding this matter with a basic purpose of warning and guiding the Muslims. This whole discussion unveils that Nursî stood for mutual cooperation and his aim was to develop and establish an Islamic union with the Muslim world.

**The Importance of Shûrâ (Collective Consultation)**

There are different ways and means which, according to Said Nursî, can help in bringing the Muslims and the Muslim world together. Shûrâ (mutual consultation), in this regard, can be of particular relevance. The very important requirement for the realization of the Islamic solidarity and unity is a genuine and virtuous collective consultation within the framework of Shari‘ah. The consultation which will be carried out by the gathering of the genuine scholars and spiritual guides in the world of Islam and will be based on the methods of Shari‘ah, can serve a legitimate and competent authority as in the meaning of the Consensus of the ‘Nation’s Scholars’ (Al-Ijmā‘ al-Ummah) for all the Muslims. This Council will surely determine the rules of activity and organization of the Consultation and the Islamic Union.

United Republics of Islam as designated by Said Nursî reflects the importance of the Council of Consultation and the top-necessity of its establishment. His view and vision signifies his concern about the Muslims. For instance, in *Sunuhat*, published in 1919, Nursî discussed the setting-up of a learned body made up of specialists in different fields and based on the principle of consultation, to tackle the problems facing not only the Ottoman Empire, but the Islamic World as well. He pointed out that in modern complex society and in the face of the myriad problems facing the Islamic World, it was beyond the capacity of a single individual to perform
the duty of Shaykh al-İslam effectively. Therefore, a voice of such strength and authority was required and it could only be supplied by a learned Council like the one described above. He, moreover, suggested that with the addition of further ‘Ulamā (Scholars), both Ottoman and from other parts of the Islamic World, an up-graded Assembly of Islamic Scholars (Dār al-Hikmah al-Islāmiyyah) can be established (Nursî, 1977, 30).

In the same vein, Said Nursî stated that we are not living in the old times in which the ruler was a single person and the Mufti (the official expounder of the Holy Law) of that ruler was also an individual person. The situation currently is entirely different and now it is the time of the community. It is, thus, highly significant that the ruler should be a ‘collective personality’ which emerges from the spirit of the community and the Councils represent that spirit (Nursî, 1977, 31).

The establishment of the Supreme Council of Islam will be based upon the Islamic caliphate (Khilāfah) which will be supported by the Islamic solidarity. Said Nursî opines the necessity of the consultation in one of his works, as follows: The key to Muslims’ happiness in Islamic social life is the collective consultation enjoined by the Shari‘ah (al-Mashwarah al-Shari‘ah). The Āyat, Whose rule is consultation among themselves (Al-Qur‘ān, 42: 38), orders consultation as a fundamental principle. This message calls the attention towards the matter that just as individuals should consult one another, so must nations and continents also practice consultation.

Nursî attempted to answer many questions raised in connection with the significance of Shūrā. He also attempted to highlight the importance of this institution of Islam, especially in terms of bringing the Muslim world together and establishing the Islamic brotherhood. These questions, among others, include: Why so much is given to Shūrā? And how can the life and progress of mankind, particularly Islam and Muslims, come about through the institutionalization of Shūrā? While providing the answers to these questions, Nursî opined that Shūrā results in sincerity and solidarity in a similar way as three ‘alif’s’ become one hundred and
eleven. Thus, three men between whom there is true sincerity and solidarity may benefit the nation as much as a hundred men. Many historical events inform us that as a result of true sincerity, solidarity, and consultation, ten men may perform the work of a thousand men. Man’s needs are endless and his enemies innumerable, and his strength and capital insignificant, and the number of destructive, harmful humans who have become like monsters through lack of religion are increasing. Just as, in the face of those endless enemies and innumerable needs, man’s personal life can continue only through the point of support and point of assistance that proceed from belief, so, too, can his social life endure only through the Shūrā (Collective Consultation) enjoined by the Shari‘ah. This is the method by which man can halt those enemies and open up a way to secure his genuine needs and desires (Nursî, 2002a, 62).

Refraining from dispute among the religious groups

The Islamic groups and communities which are the point of support of the Islamic harmony and unity must take the principles and the essentials of Islam as the foundation of the cooperation. According to Said Nursî, it is essential to unite on the basic principles of the Shari‘ah. Answering to the question that what is the solution that will correct the disunity and disagreements in the Islamic World, Said Nursî says:

For, Our Allah is one and the same, our Prophet is the same, our Qur’ân is one and the same, and we all are in unanimity. The details outside of the essentials of the religion or differences in modes of interpretation or ways of perception cannot upset this unity and union, and cannot be preferable...If “Al Hubbu Fillah” (the Love in the way of God) is taken as a guiding principle and if the love of truth governs all our actions (which Time is also helping much), then disagreements and disputes can be channelled towards a sound direction (Nursî, 1977, 83).

It is well known that obstinacy and partisanship are extremely harmful to the social life. However, if taken in positive sense and
positive way, this difference can also deliver keeping in view the Ḥadīth that: “Difference among my people is an instance of Divine Mercy”. It is also from the difference of opinions and the contradiction of views that truth becomes apparent in its full measure. Further, the difference intended in the Ḥadīth is a positive difference which is embodied in the thing that each party strives to promote and diffuse its own belief; it does not seek to tear down and destroy that of the other, but rather to improve and reform it. Negative difference is rejected by the Ḥadīth, for it results in the emergence of such type of partisanship aimed to destroy mutual cooperation. The partisanship, biased and self-centred, emerging currently can only be a refuge for the unjust.

If one does not embrace the exalted rules: ‘Love for the sake of Allah, dislike for the sake of Allah, and judgment for the sake of Allah’ (Nursî, 2001, 317), then without any doubt one’s conduct will result in dispute and discord. Moreover, if a person does not give due recognition to these principles, then his attempts to do justice will result in injustice (Nursî, 2001, 317).

Said Nursî often condemned Muslims for criticizing other fellow Muslims for it may cause enmity and disunity among them. He saw solidarity, brotherhood and unity among members of the Muslims as the essential factor for establishing a healthy society. In The Flashes Collection, Nursî calls Muslims as members of a collective personality and compared this community with different organs of one body. According to him:

Each of his members completes the deficiencies of the others, veils their faults, assists their needs, and helps them out in their duties. Otherwise man’s life would be extinguished, his spirit flee, and his body be dispersed (Nursî, 2004a, 214).

Said Nursî imagined Islamic society in the form of a factory containing many wheels and machines (Nursî, 2002a, 43). He asserted that the components of machinery in a factory cannot compete with one another in rivalry, take precedence over each other, or dominate each other. They rather assist each other’s motions with all their capacity in order to achieve the common goal; they march
towards the aim of their creation in true solidarity and unity. If the slightest aggression or desire to dominate interferes, then it would throw the factory into confusion, causing it to be without product or result. Only sincere solidarity will grant Muslims with real unity, the only source of strength (Nursî, 2004a. 214-215, 218-219).

Considering Islamic brotherhood and unity to be essential for the happiness in this life and hereafter, he maintains that “We are truly intensely in need of this unity for the happiness of this world and the next, for we have no nationality other than Islam” (Akhmetova, 2009). He also realized the most urgent need for strengthening of unity because his age witnessed the colonization of the majority of Muslim lands by Western powers.

In the view of Said Nursî, the contemporary disunity among Muslims was the main reason for their backwardness, and intellectual, military, political and economic colonization by European powers. There was only one remedy capable to recover Muslim nations from slavery and chaos and that was/is cloaked in regaining of unity and solidarity. In Emirdag Lahikasi, he declared:

Against these terrible forces of destruction, only and solely the Islamic Unity surrounding the truths of the Qur’ān can endure. And it is the only way to save this land from the occupation of foreigners and this nation from falling into anarchy and the means to save the mankind from these dangers (Berghout, 2005, 10).

This whole discussion, therefore, reveals that Said Nursî optimistically called upon on the one hand his fellow Muslims to be united and necessitated on them on other hand not to pay attention to one another’s personal faults that will result in discord and disunity (Nursî, 2002a, 44). If love is truly found in a heart, by virtue of the predomination of the causes that produce it, then enmity in that heart can only be metaphorical, and takes on the form of compassion, says Nursî (Nursî, 2001, 212-213). He goes on to say that the believer loves and should love his brother, and is pained by any evil he sees in him. It is for this reason that the Ḥadîth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) says: “No believer should be angered
with another and cease speaking to him for more than three days” (Bukhari, Adab 57, 62).

Conclusion

The above discussion on brotherhood and solidarity, in the context of Said Nursî’s life and writings especially Risale-i Nur, suggests that this value was not only an efficient tool in the struggle against Western Imperialism but was also the essence of Islam and the nature of a healthy society. This is the reason that he placed on Muslims the duty of achieving solidarity. In his view it is the religious obligation because belief demands love and Islam demands brotherhood (Nursî, 2002a, 125).

Thus, in order to achieve unity, Nursî suggested initial urgent transformations on religious, moral, and social spheres. He enthusiastically believed in probability of Muslim solidarity, and, in order to accomplish it, invited his fellow Muslims to reform their moral, religious, social, political and economic lives on both, personal as well as public levels. Yet, he considered religious and moral reforms to be the most important elements in the way of achieving solidarity. According to Nursî, returning to the fundamentals of Islam constituted a key for prosperity, success, and progress in the Muslim world. In short, Said Nursî opines that unity and social solidarity was the essence of Islam, and also the nature of a healthy society. Brotherhood, harmony, accord, and solidarity among the members of the Muslims make their society able to function justly and further reinforce it toward progress. Disunity, discord and antagonism if prevails for long will lead to weakness and, consequently, to the collapse of civilization. Thus, the present-day weakness in the Islamic world is because of disunity among Muslims, and, in order to re-attain its previous glory, establishment of brotherhood and unity is then a must task. Last but not the least, it is, therefore, necessary to turn to Said Nursî today and give consideration to his diagnoses of the problems and the remedies he put forward.
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Said Nursî’s vision about education

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the vision of Badiuzaan Said Nursî about the education. Firstly he is a religious scholar. He presented exceptional originality through his views that showed his familiarity which exact science under the pace of religion.

He strongly advised that Muslims especially local people shall understand Islam by achieving combined education literally material and regional. One of his most important views related with education is his approach of unifying religion and science. He indicated that mankind especially Muslims should turn towards knowledge and science in this age because only through the help of knowing under the basics of science one could understand almighty Allah and it will help him to find out the existence of Allah.

He believed that the Islam and science and are never in conflict and he believed that through science and its apparent and secret corner makes one in contact with his creator. The Madrasathu Zahra is the best example of his vision about education. He want to teach in Madrasathu Zahra about Islam and contemporary science and he want to give the much knowledge in combined education.

He gave a new model in teaching method and he advised to teach the students by taking psychological condition of students and he indicated that students should be taught tolerantly so this method will help them to find interest in study and it will make them success in education. In my full paper I want to talk more about his vision and ideology about education and its influence in Islamic world.

Introduction

Said Nursî was an Islamic scholar leader and founder of a religious movement in Turkey. He believed that the conscience is illu-
minated by religious science and the mind is illuminated by the sciences of civilization. He advised that Muslims especially local people shall understand Islam by achieving combined education literally material and regional and by only this one could make contact with his creator and one could understand the existence of almighty Allah and also Said Nursî believed that Islam and science are never in conflict.

Nursî drew all thing from his studies of philosophy, Sufism and the Qur’ân and also he observed all scientific events through the eyes of a theologian and he started athat Qur’ân include exact sciences and encourage them. The degree of Islam about outcomes of science is important in that it shows what causes those results.

Said Nursî proclaimed several things about education and teaching. Primarily the teacher should be a parent for a pupil; teaching is for sake of god. And the duty of a teacher is to make sure that what him or her teachers are pursed in his or her own life. He states consequently not all teachers are educators as he asserts “education is different from teaching most people can teach, but only very few con educate”. Thus teaching is a spiritual activity and to enable students to embarrass change from failure to victory or make them optimists.

And lastly the objective of said Nursî’s education vision was to raise a “Golden generation” a generation of ideal universal individuals who love truth, for benefit society and he called such persons as Zul-canahain. “One who possess two wings”.

Only solution to make his dream fulfil the students teach religious and sciences properly in modern schools instead ancient Greek philosophy, so they can realize the world and his religion, if they realize, a new philosopher’s generation of scholars and scientist would been such Plato, Avicenna, Bismarck and Taftazani. Almost be won to make the people as dreamt. The–Nur community born and lives as he admire and taught the community. And we are also the Bediuzzaman’s community we have to fulfill his dream completely. So let’s start to study has educational vision and implement it in our own lives.
Historical background

During the time in which Nursî lived materialism and communism were at their peak and the psycho-sociological condition the world was disturbing, viz. the world was in great crisis on other hand there were enormous advances in the field of modern science. Then these scientific advances were used as a tool for irreligion to create doubts about religion in minds of people especially Muslims.

A point of interest which should be mentioned here is that when Nursî was 14 years old during the period in which Nursî received a three month full time course and or the supervision of Shaykh “Muhammed Jalali”, he studied all books which were taught in Madresas at that time but only in general then his master asked why only in general. He replied, I am not able to read and comprehend all these books. But these books are caskets of jewels, treasure chests and you have its key.

So from the early age Said Nursî started to grasp the realities of the age of science and implications and he started to state that both are stands for the educational system and material progress of Islamic world. So he advised that all over the world especially Muslim world. So he advised that all over the world especially Muslim world should grasp the combined education religious and science and also the advice the way how the students should taught – students should every time taught tolerantly not forcefully and he knew its important in that age and also coming age of revelation of information technology .and also these education should be in the belief and faith that the positive sciences would corroborate and strengthen the truths of religion. Therefore he rejects the education based on memorization and uncombined and he wanted to introduce an education which helps to shed light to world and Muslims.

SAID NURSÎ’S VISION ABOUT EDUCATION

Firstly we can say that Madrasathu Zahraa was his vision about education. He wanted that the whole people especially Muslims should turn towards the combined education and everyone should
experience religious education and science. And only by the combined education one could find the existence of his creator and could make contact with his god. So the science and scientific researchers are essential element in the faith and religion and by these all one could propagate his religion and one could communicate about his religion with the world.

**Importance of combined education**

The religion and science are brothers both are two sides of a single coin. The knowledge and science became dominant in this age, Bediüzzaman said Nursî expressed his views in terms of both content and methods related to how to learn and demonstrate some of the principles because he knew the important of combined education. One of his most important views related to education the approach of uniting religion and experimental science. He indicated that mankind especially Muslims would turn towards the knowledge and science completely in this age and that would obtain strength from them although he was a religious scholar and he presented his familiarity with exact science in the name of religion.

Said Nursî observed all scientific events through the eyes of a theologian and he explained his approach science successfully within the boundaries of reasoning of the mind. Her started the Qur’ân included exact sciences and encourages them. He states that the approach of science that neglects belief in Allah and overlooks the lace and function of religion brings about “literal meaning” that is viewing being on behalf of themselves in terms of causes. The scientific approach that takes into consideration the power of creation and effect of Allah is related to “signified meaning” that is viewing things on behalf of Allah is the correct approach.

**Inseparability of religion and science**

The Qur’ân is the basic of the religion and faith and also it’s the base of the all sciences. All scientists grasped everything from Qur’ân.
And also every invention which invented in the world is only by shed light of Qur’ân to it. And also prophetic words are the base religion and modern sciences as well as Qur’ân are.

Prophets have always been messengers that have shed light humanity the principles of philosophy that regard only the mind as the guide lead communities to darkness and crisis and also they were the interpreters of Qur’ân and first teachers of religion and science. Thus sciences and religion never in conflict. Islam protects and encourages exact sciences. The following expression of Said Nursî has very original view “all the sciences make known the creator, each with its own particulate tongue. When sciences are accepted as evidence of Allah, the union and inseparability of religion and science of religion and science become obligator. This principle should form a basic starting point in term of education policy.

According to him, whenever philosophy is based on religion “the world of humanity has experienced a brilliant happiness and social life. However, that is very clear when they have become separated, goodness and light have been drawn to the side of prophet hood and religion and evil and misguidance to the side of the line of philosophy. So religion and science are not separated both are connected each other as the two sides of a single coin. The religion and science if they combined we can understand more thing about faith and ethics and also we see the religion is the master of all sciences.

So that’s why he dreamt about the Madrasathu Zahara (The Great Islamic University) and also its necessary when attributing the conflicts and discords between modern schools, religious schools and dervish lodges in the last periods of Ottoman state to the lack of information then he presented solutions to reconcile them. Therefore he gave great important to his “Madrassathu Zahra”

Education of students and the structure of teaching
It is on important thing issue to educate students by taking psychological condition of students into consideration. His vision about education greatly reflects on the structure of teaching and educates the students.
Bediüzzaman Said Nursî states that when an adult who talks in childish language, he will make the child more alert. The capacity of understanding of child will start to be familiar with his worlds. He will listen to and understand what the adult says. Otherwise, there will not be exchange of knowledge between student and a teacher.

**Theory of education**

In evaluating Nursî’s views on education, we may note his linking knowledge and Islam. The terms knowledge and Islam had been examined individually but the fundamental interlink between them had rarely before been explored. In this regard, Nursî’s concern with knowledge based on belief in God, and knowledge produced from belief in God is very much worthy of consideration.

He states “The light of conscience is religious sciences the light of the mind is civilized sciences. Reconciliation of both manifests the truth. The student’s skills develop further with these two (sciences). When they are separated, from the former superstition and from the latter corruption and scepticism is born.”

Nursî argues that man came to this world to be perfected by means of knowledge and supplication based on belief. According to Nursî God Almighty, in order to display His infinite power and the endless embroideries of His Names has created man–like cosmos in order to be called upon and remembered. That is the Man has been granted the ability to analyses, read and interpret the index. His superiority over all creatures lies in this. Nursî also views all sciences and arts as based on and relying upon a Name; such as the true science of philosophy is based on the Name of All-Wise, the true medicine on the Name of Healer, and geometry on the Name of Determiner, and so on. In short in the understanding of Nursî the whole of the cosmos is, as it were, a vast open book which is to be pondered, understood and interpreted. The Divine Names and Attributes are the keys for this. If humanity submits to knowledge that he has acquired concerning the Creator of the cosmos, that is where İman starts.
Knowledge of God has a social or civilization dimension. In this regard Barguth states “It may be said of this power and influence of knowledge arises from its ability to conform to the structure of social civilization, natural values, the principles of the life, and the laws of the universe. The more knowledge is extended towards those laws and the nature of things; its effect deepens and becomes more beneficial for man’s activities related to civilization and the culture. But when it is in opposition to the nature of things, in respect of its content and progression, it is devoid of sound criteria to the extent of its opposition, and besides being ineffectual, becomes destructive of culture.” Nursî agrees with this saying:

“He who seeks success in some matter has to conform sincerely to the Divine laws, be acquainted with the natural laws, and connected to the ties of society. Otherwise, creation will respond to him negatively and he will remain without success. Similarly, he should not oppose the general current in society. If he does, he will fall under its cogs and wheels and remain there.”

Belief are very much interrelated. This interrelationship forms the basis of Nursî’s view of education.

“Bounty for jinn and human beings is the love of God contained within the knowledge of God.” Knowledge of God is thus the essence of reality, and the fruit of man’s existence, and its aim. According to this idea, knowledge, love and “The highest aim of creation and its most important result is belief in God. The most exalted rank in humanity and its highest degree is the knowledge of God contained within belief in God.

**Ethics of education**

In his discourse Nursî’s greatest concern was for materialism’s “moral and spiritual destruction” of both the individual and society. According to Mardin, “of all the themes he presented in the *Risale-i Nur*, Said Nursî was most adamant about the necessity to revitalize Islamic ethics.” One of the most disturbing facts in moral life at this century is the startling contrast between private and collective interests in morality.
Man has lost his appetite for being one of the herd anymore and become selfish and egotist. It is at this point where we attach the importance of Nursî’s discourse on his emphasizing of morality and his thesis of being a part of the society. In the time of “ism” – I mean the origins of ‘isms’ – widespread ideologies such as materialism, post-modernism, feminism, capitalism, communism, and individualism, but there has been never no society-ism or morality-ism. So Nursî tried to re-establish the moral charters of Islamic ethics in social life. To enlighten people and to re-establish the old times legacy of the good society, and faith in god Nursî has set up or more correctly re-invented some of the values and limitations of Islamic teachings for collectivities. Nursî diagnosed that a fearful egotism arising from heedlessness and love of this world rules at this time, he attempts to re-set up society by balancing his worldly appetites with the other worldly morals and ethics.

It should be pointed out that Nursî does not present any detailed picture of the socio-moral system. As said only those problems, which seem important from his moral point of view and related to the time he involved, are discussed by him, in detail, the rest covered by powerful general statements. Nursî was most adamant of the effect of such an interrelation that is on a psychological and not on a supernatural level. Nevertheless, for Said Nursî the Qur’ân is primarily a means of placing restraints on the dangerous appetites of man.

Nursî locates the problem in the Muslim world at the individual level. His solutions started with reforming and transforming individual by education based at individual level. It is in this sense where we recognize Nursî’s difference and state that he was setting this self-aware belief based individuals as basis for his moral character based, good conduct intertwined society. That is to say Nursî’s individualism is more like being one of the herd rather than being one of own self.

Nursî re-set up some moral virtues and moral limitations of collectivities to found a humane and good society. Nursî was of the opinion only solution of Islamic resurgence for the time begins with individuals but these individuals need to be a part of the society.
They burden their egotisms and become the self-aware members of the belief based moral charters shaped society. To achieve the ultimate aim of creating the good society Nursî produces some values and principles to re-form the society springe from the Qur’ân. Nursî thought “This nation’s heart disease is weakness in religion; it will regain its health through strengthening it”. Nursî was not blaming the external forces. Muslims themselves had a greater share in the situation of political, economic and civilizational backwardness. Eradication of the identity of Muslims throughout the time viewed from the perspective we observe what is called immoral reasons captured the minds of Muslims who do not realize even the change taking place within themselves. This is in a sense self-criticism. Caused by alienation of Islamic values in society, Muslims did not even realize what they lost. Immorality of the society which Nursî attached the most importance throughout his discourse was the diagnosis of Nursî for the Islamic resurgence.

For a great extent Nursî had his own reasons to seek personality character education based civil society. In fact, his choosing a method of service concerning individuals and seeking this one of the herd being individuals’ character education is one of the most original and important aspects of his thought and ideas, and that’s why he made his own style in education and it accepted the world

**Conclusion**

My paper deals with vision and perception of said Nursî about education. by my vision about his vision one could understand what does he meant by education and teaching he walked through the footprints of imam Nawavi the Mujadid of eleventh century and he tried to implement his visionaries about knowledge in the world. imam Nawavi said that knowledge exists potentially in the human soul like the seed in the soil by learning the potential becomes actual.

And we can understand that before all he was a religious scholar and he was master of visionaries about education he knew how
to study and how to approach with knowledge and how to teach students and he tried to implement these visions in the world, he taught us Islam and science never in conflict and he presented that only by the combined education one could understand about his creator and it will help him to find out the existence of the god and it will lead him to worship him with sincere and full mind.

And we can understand that he had a good perception about teaching the students and he states that education is different from teaching. Students must be taught tolerantly not forcefully and more people can teach but only very few can educate the students.

He dreamt about a golden generation with rich culture and much education with faith so he presented the Madrathu Zahra great Islamic university to fulfil his dreams and make universe awesome with knowledge and culture but he couldn’t do it. So we have to fulfil his dreams by doing the things what he meant by education and students. And we have to making seminars about his life and his visions and we have to try to bring his ideas all over the world.

Here I conclude my presentation about Bediüzzaman said Nursi's about education and I hope I did my best and I hope this will help to readers and audience... and I wish apologies if any mistakes occurred in my paper.

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A comparative study of philosophical, socio-political and educational theme of Qur’anic exegesis of Said Nursî and Abul Kalam Azad

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ABSTRACT

This textual analysis is mainly aimed at investigating the approach used by twentieth century’s well known two Muslim thinkers, the exegete and scholar, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî (1877-1960) and Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958). This discourse on philosophical and socio-political views of *Risale-i Nur*’s and *Tarjuman ul-Quran* is mainly focused on his lively scriptural approach to the moral educational values, which makes one’s life meaningful and purposeful. This work also aims to highlight distinctive aspects and features of his approach and methodology used in his Qur’anic exegesis, *Risale-i Nur*, and *Tarjuman ul-Quran* of Azad which are related to philosophical aspects. It discusses the background of how influences their Qur’anic translations made, to emerge the society in socio-political sphere and educational scenario.

Abul Kalam Azad’s philosophical and socio-political views are inexorably linked with religion like Nursî’s concepts. Above all, it has an obvious connection to the characteristics of India’s historical and socio-economic evolution in nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Likewise Nursî’s philosophical and socio-political educational concepts have inevitable link with a spiritual action of religion in emerging to Turkish’s day to day lives.

Abul Kalam Azad ensures in his Qur’anic translation that neither science nor philosophy can decide a person’s calibre or educational eligibility. And when he entered the arena of political struggle, he understood that there is necessity of religious guidance also which is used by Nursî in Second World War, in order to deal with political problems of the day.
Finally, this research proposes a comprehensive analysis of Imam Bediüzzaman’s and Abul Kalam Azad’s approaches which provide a profound understanding and interpretation of the concept of morality and its impact on one’s life using solid evidence from *Risale-i Nur* and *Tarjuman ul-Quran*’s view on this area.

**Said Nursî**

Said Nursî, popularly known as Bediüzzaman (1876–1960) was a Muslim scholar, leader and founder of Nur community in Turkey. He believed that the conscience is illuminated by the religious sciences, the mind is illuminated by the sciences of civilization and wisdom occurs from the combination of these two. The Nur community seeks to raise individuals’ religious consciousness, which leads to ethical harmony of society, through educational system based on Nursî’s ideas.

Said Nursî was aware of a need for education in knowledge, as well as education in character. To him, education is one’s achievement to a degree of perfection in psychology, belief, moral and all aspects of life. His concern with educational theory is not with man’s worldly life, but with him as the Divine vicegerent on earth.

Humans are created for three main purposes; first stage is recognizing God using the knowledge given, second stage is belief in Him and the last stage is worshipping Him. The spiritual instruments are bestowed to them, in order to be used properly to fulfill the goal for which God created the human beings.

Said Nursî realized that an essential cause of the decline of the Islamic world was the weakening of the main foundations of belief. This weakening, together with the constant attacks on those foundations in the 19th and 20th centuries carried out by materialists and atheists, led him to realize that the urgent and over-riding need was to strengthen, and even to save belief.

Imam Bediüzzaman’s aim with *Risale-i Nur* is to offer proofs and explanations of the main truths and tenets of belief taught by the Qur’ān, in order to strengthen the faith of believers, along with the
moral renewal, so that Muslims’ belief would not be spoilt by the rapid implementation of Westernising and Secularizing reforms.

The combination of intelligence and piety of Said Nursî together with the challenges of his time gave birth to brilliance in many fields. His ideas on the discourse of Education and Ethics can be utilized to serve as the foundation to build a self-developed person in rich culture, civilized and religious communities worldwide.

**A critical analysing on Azad and Nursî’s educational thoughts**

When we analysing two legends educational thoughts, we can understand a lot of natural similarities, which entered through their life on same century to make up them more intellectual and academic.

Maulana Azad represented a glorious synthesis of cultures, civilizations thoughts and philosophies which have powerfully influenced India’s history. He was a bridge between the old and new. Indeed he was a strikingly outstanding son of soil.

He was a scholar thoroughly trained in the traditional Islamic sciences, with great intellectual abilities and eloquence of pen and speech. He had, in addition, remarkable openness to modern western knowledge even as he strongly opposed western rule over Indian struggle for independence and then in the government of the Indian republic, remaining a symbol of Muslims will to co-exist with men of other faiths in modern India.

On that time Nursî tried to bring up more valuable educational system In Turkey. Because the Turkey faced destructing political environment which enact some moral educational values their day to day life. On that occasion Said Nursî was aware of a need for education in knowledge, as well as education in character. To him, education is one’s achievement to a degree of perfection in psychology, belief, moral and all aspects of life. His concern with educational theory is not with man’s worldly life, but with him as the Divine vicegerent on earth.
Humans are created for three main purposes; first stage is recognizing God using the knowledge given, second stage is belief in Him and the last stage is worshipping Him. The spiritual instruments are bestowed to them, in order to be used properly to fulfil the goal for which God created the human beings.

**Vision and education of Azad**

a) Removal of illiteracy through universalisation of elementary education up to secondary standard and a drive for adult education including education for women.

b) Equalizing educational opportunities in Indian society where exploitation on the basis of class and caste divisions were rampant;

c) Three language formulae where the state language and Hindi would be medium of instruction but English will remain as an impotent second language.

d) Sound primary education through country.

Azad viewed every individual has a right to an education that will enable him to develop his faculties and live a full human life. Such education is the birth right of every citizen. A state cannot claim to have discharged its duty till it has provided for every single individual means to the acquisition of knowledge and self-betterment. This dream of Azad is likely to be fully realized now as the historic RTE Act has finally been approved by the parliament and its promulgation is going to start soon.

**Educational policies’ actions**

a) Making of Man

Character building: Education should help the individual in realizing his immense potential. The context of education, influence of home and religion and the role of the teacher should aim to building of the character and the choice and the practice of moral and cultural values. He stressed the importance of seven values which contributed to the making of man and his society in per suite of excellence.
• The quest of truth is the principal aim of education, but one should not impose one’s truth upon others through violence and dogmatism. It comes from openness to different points of view and through tolerance of belief other than one’s own.

• The concept of justice is another aim of education which is related to appreciation of rights and performance of duties as necessary condition to the discipline of individual and the good society.

• Spread of enlighten through right type of education, for true civilization and equality of life.

• Co-operation and unity must be learnt through togetherness and friendship thus laying the foundation for peace and harmony.

• The practice of courtesy and chivalry is a grace of life and enriches its quality.

• The spirit of daring is the most valued asset of youth – society and school should give scope and encouragement to the flowering of the spirit of pioneering and creativity.

• Quality of humility which chastens and sustains the spirit of man and striving of his mind.

**Education for Democracy**

• Azad stressed the defences of newly-won freedom which has opened new opportunities had t be built in the minds of free man. This was to be built in the minds of free man. This was done through social education which was accorded a highest priority in his scheme of educational reconstruction. He set up a section of social educational reconstruction. Linking social education with adult education he emphasized three aspects

  • Imparting literacy
  • Inculcating a lively sense of rights and duties of citizenship,
  • Creating an educated mind in the masses which are deprived of literary education.
Education for development

Azad enhanced the role of education in national development and encouraged growth of science and technology at all level of education. His vision was to make India self-sufficient in higher technical education to meet all our needs and looked forward to a day when people from abroad will come to India for scientific and technical education. He expressed these views while inaugurating the IIT Kharagpur in August 1951. Keeping this in view he reorganized the structure and activities of the AICTE and set up advanced research centre in science and technology.

There is no doubt that Azad’s educational perspective was fundamentally Islamic in inspiration, yet he synthesized happily anything of value anywhere. He was not ‘exclusively an “Islamic” mind or even an “oriental” mind, unacquainted with, or insensitive to, the rich streams of influences emanating from other sources’6. He was deeply impressed by the advances made in the West in the realm of elementary education for children. He was firmly committed to what was scientific in the Western system, and the two factors that most inspired him were the idea of freedom as the technique of education, and the all-embracing importance of primary education.

Particularly impressed by the French philosopher Rousseau, he was in an agreement with him in the innate goodness of man. He even wrote about this in his paper al-Ḥilal, where he looked upon Rousseau as one who revolutionized the entire intellectual and social life of his age. Azad agreed with Rousseau in his advocacy of the child’s necessity and ability to grasp the truth through his own insight. In his article on Azad’s philosophy of education, this is precisely the point made by Saiyadain. He says that Azad’s educational ideas are grounded in his understanding of Islam. He also says Azad’s was not an exclusive “Islamic mind” or even an “oriental” mind.

He was equally conversant with all other aspects of his cultural heritage – the Indian heritage and modern heritage which cuts
across the East West barriers. The most often quoted Syeda Hameed pronouncement on this relationship between his Muslim heritage and Indian heritage was made in 1946 during his Presidential address at the Ramgarh session of Indian National Congress. The importance of this address lies in the fact that it throws light not only on the communal problem and the problem of relations between the minorities and majority but also indirectly on the educational problems which we have to face in forging a living sense of unity in the country of religious and cultural diversity. He said, “I am a Muslim and profoundly by conscious of the fact that I have inherited Islam’s glorious traditions of the last 1300 years. I am not prepared to lose even a small part of that legacy.

Islam, its arts and letters, its civilization and culture are all part of my wealth and it is my duty to cherish and guard them. As a Muslim, I have a special identity within the field of religion and culture with which I cannot tolerate any undue interference. But with all these feelings, I have another equally deep realization, born out of my life’s experience, which is strengthened and not hindered by Islam. I am equally proud of the fact that I am an Indian, as essential part of the indivisible unity of Indian nationhood, a vital factor in its total make up without which this noble edifice will remain incomplete. I can never give up this sincere claim…” These lines, and there are others, sprinkled across.

**Said Nursî’s education methodology**

In evaluating Nursî’s views on education, we may note his linking *ilm* (knowledge) and *iman/Islam*. The terms *ilm*, *iman* and Islam had been examined individually but the fundamental interlink between them had rarely before been explored. In this regard, Nursî’s concern with knowledge based on belief in God, and knowledge produced from belief in God is very much worthy of consideration.

He states “The light of conscience is religious sciences (*ulûm-u dîniye*). The light of the mind is civilized sciences (*funûn-u medeniye*). Reconciliation of both manifests the truth. The student’s skills
develop further with these two (sciences). When they are sepa-
rated, from the former superstition and from the latter corruption
and scepticism is born.”

Nursî argues that man came to this world to be perfected by
means of knowledge and supplication based on belief. “The high-
est aim of creation and its most important result is belief in God.
The most exalted rank in humanity and its highest degree is the
knowledge of God contained within belief in God. The most radiant
happiness and sweetest bounty for jinn and human beings is the
love of God contained within the knowledge of God.” Knowledge of
God is thus the essence of reality, and the fruit of man’s existence,
and its aim. According to this idea, knowledge, love and belief are
very much interrelated. This interrelationship forms the basis of
Nursî’s view of education.

According to Nursî God Almighty, in order to display His infinite
power and the endless embroideries of His Names has created man-
like cosmos in order to be called upon and remembered. All of the
Divine Names manifested in the macro Anthropos that is the world
also have manifestations in the microcosm that is man. That is to
say, as man is a small world, the microcosm, so is the world a large
human being, the macro Anthropos. Small man is an index and
summary of the macro Anthropos. Man has been granted the ability
to analyse, read and interpret the index. His superiority over all
creatures lies in this. Nursî also views all sciences and arts as based
on and relying upon a Name; such as the true science of philosophy
is based on the Name of All-Wise, the true medicine on the Name
of Healer, and geometry on the Name of Determiner, and so on. In
short in the understanding of Nursî the whole of the cosmos is, as
it were, a vast open book which is to be pondered, understood and
interpreted. The Divine Names and Attributes are the keys for this.
If humanity submits to knowledge that he has acquired concerning
the Creator of the cosmos, that is where Iman starts.

Knowledge of God has a social or civilisational dimension. In this
regard Barguth states “It may be said of this power and influence
of knowledge arises from its ability to conform to the structure of
social civilization, natural values, and the laws of the universe. The more knowledge is extended towards those laws and the nature of things; its effect deepens and becomes more beneficial for man’s activities related to civilization and the vicegerency. But when it is in opposition to the nature of things, in respect of its content and progression, it is devoid of sound criteria to the extent of its opposition, and besides being ineffectual, becomes destructive of culture.” Nursî agrees with this saying:

“He who seeks success in some matter has to conform sincerely to the Divine laws, be acquainted with the natural laws, and connected to the ties of society. Otherwise, creation will respond to him negatively and he will remain without success. Similarly, he should not oppose the general current in society. If he does, he will fall under its cogs and wheels and remain there.”

A trust has been granted to man with whom he may discover secret treasures and open them. Man’s powers of discovery have not been limited; they are absolute and infinite. In consequence he possesses a sort of universal consciousness whereby he perceives the resplendent majesty and grandeur of the Sultan of Pre-Eternity.

Conclusion

It may be justifiably claimed that Islamic pursuit of knowledge was responsible for the blossoming of a culture of free inquiry and rational scientific thinking that encompassed the spheres of both theory and practice within the belief in God. It was education as a necessity of life and had a social function as well as scientific. It is a means for direction and growth for a good and more humane civilized society.

Nursî’s concept was focusing on reading. He dare to read everything and impugn to his followers also. Nurses believe that reading these texts is required to keep stability and a sense of community. In a way, reading becomes a way of understanding and discovering (not creating) the self and developing a moral position to cope with social issues and diversity. An act of reading becomes
an act of self-discovery. The major divergence between religious reading and regular reading of novels, magazines, and textbooks is that in the latter forms of reading one reads to get information, to be entertained, or to cultivate one’s humanity with the goal of discovering a vocation in life; in the Worst form of reading, one seeks spiritual fulfilment. The RNK’s readers stress reading more than writing, and they even memorize some of the essays, which they recall during their debates and discussions to develop an argument.

Nurşî saying in his Risale-i Nur “Reading creates a community, and collective reading becomes a ritual activity to arm this communal gathering”.

Readers not only are trained to think about the Nurşî’s books are written in allegorical comparisons and in narrative form. Knowledge about the Creator and the created is embedded in these narratives.

His style thus is not disquisitional, and the stories are re-enacted with the goal of telling the bigger story about the Creator.

By utilizing Azad’s and Nurşî’s scientific knowledge they aimed to demonstrate that not only is there no clash or conflict between science and true religion, but also if the pages and words of the book of the universe are given their Qur’ānic meaning, they lead to increased knowledge of God. Almost every part of Nurşî’s Risale-i Nur of Nurşî and Tarjuman-ull-Qurān attempts to teach how to look at and “read” the physical universe.

Educational thoughts of Nurşî and Azad were same in every angle of their lives. These two legends rewrite the history of education from the grass root level for the purpose national willingness of their own countries. They lived same century for one aim that applied their countries without any crucial eyes. Finally this paper telling that these two countries have an educational connection which emerged from their own vision of endless.
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Religious co-existence in Kerala: significance of Said Nursî’s teachings on peace and communal harmony

ABSTRACT

Hindu-Muslim relation in Kerala state is noteworthy in terms of its peaceful co-existence since the early Muslim presence in the region. However, recently, the state has started to witness serial deliberate attempts to polarize the people communally by a minority. It seems that it has been brought in to the relatively peaceful soil of Kerala as part of a national agenda of Hindu extremists who are supposed to implement all over India. The purpose of the paper is to investigate the teachings of Said Nursî on religious co-existence and tolerance in order to retain and preserve the religious harmony of the state in the wake of new threats posed by communalists. The paper would discuss the relevance of Said Nursî’s teachings based on Risal-e-Nur, especially his views on religious tolerance in a contemporary plural society like Kerala where Muslims and Hindu live peacefully relatively better position than any other states of India. Since the Qur’anic teachings have always propounded the message of communal amity and peaceful coexistence as a universal principle, Said Nursî, elaborates the idea through an insightful exposition and through its practical implication in to contemporary society. Moreover, this paper is an attempt to bring the message of Risale-i Nur to the contemporary Kerala society. For this purpose, this paper relies primarily on Risale-i Nur commentaries and the books written on Nursî besides the socio-historical analysis of Kerala history and contemporary trends. This paper concludes asserting the need for a peaceful inter-religious ambience in a society where people of different faiths live together. The paper promotes the idea that the sustenance of the peaceful co-existence can be realized only in the societies where practical implication of Qur’anic teachings is being materialized.
1. INTRODUCTION

Religious co-existence has become a common theme of almost all religious and political discourses. The term Religious co-existence means “many communities living together side by side in a society”¹ and it is the peaceful co-existence of different religious communities enjoying the freedom of faith and worship and right to practice their religious rituals. Religious scholars have realized the importance of religious co-existence and began to take initiatives in making a social atmosphere of harmonious co-existence between different people of faith.² This paper investigates the history of religious coexistence in Kerala and the present threats to it. The Teachings on religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi seemed to have highly significant and fitting to the social environment of Kerala where majority of the people live peacefully and wish the communal tension and religious fanatic to be kept away from this region.

1.1. Religious Co-Existence and Kerala

The diversity of in culture and religions may be the most extra-ordinary feature of India. It is the land of diversified race, region, religion and language. Apart from the geographical, linguistic and racial diversity of India, religious sphere possess great diversity. Almost all the principal religions of the world like Hinduism,
Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, Islam and Christianity are found here. Unfortunately, the diversity of Indian culture has not been ratified by a minority and therefore the result is communal riots, communal tensions that have been occurring concurrently in many parts of India especially in the central and northern states of India like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. However, the south-western state of Kerala in India is unlike the other state of India. Kerala has a distinct place for its religious harmony and great diversity. The Kerala Government Official website states; “Religious tolerance, hospitality, cleanliness, simple life and broad outlook of the people have attracted many foreigners to the State from time immemorial.” Kerala tourism department asserts; “Kerala boasts of a peaceful coexistence among the diverse religious faiths and communities. The state stands testimony to the concept of communal harmony and religious tolerance from the very beginning.” The state represents a unique picture of multi-religious lifestyle. Nowhere else do adherents of the three major world religions live side by side in. While Hindus represent a definite majority, Muslims and Christians are powerful minorities. Hindus made up of 56.2%, Muslims 24.7% and Christians 19.0% of the population. Inter-religious living is an outstanding feature of Kerala and it is an everyday fact of the social life of Kerala. Communal tensions and riots are almost unheard in Kerala. People of different religious groups are living peacefully and harmoniously here. They do not

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make separate living colonies for each community; rather they live together within the same premises or colonies peacefully.

1.2. Attempts of Communal Polarization and Threats to the Religious Harmony

Despite of all these facts, recently, some deliberate attempts of communal polarization have begun to appear in Kerala. In India in general, there have already been deliberate attempts to polarize its people communally and it unleashed a major threat to the secular approach of this country. The Hindu extremists’ communal polarization agendas take momentum even in the soil of Kerala. A group of organizations and its people disseminate the spores of communalism in the minds of people and somehow have succeeded in creating suspicion in the minds of ordinary people about other communities. They have been sowing the seeds of communal hatred among the people and trying to teach the people to see and approach everything through communally.

The former defence Minister of India, AK Antony, warned recently “Deliberate efforts are being made to polarise the state on communal lines,” — he continues; “Vested interests are waiting to make use of every opportunity to add fuel to the fire and conscious efforts are going on to divide people on communal lines.”

B F Firos a political observer and columnist portrays the picture of how the Hindutva group try to divide the people in Kerala on the basis of religion. He states; “the stage has been set for communal polarization in the state quite some time now with the state BJP

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8 Hindu Extremists groups like Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and its offshoots.
9 Indian Express, 22nd August 2015.
10 http://Indianexpress.com/article/India/India-others/a-k-antony-claims-deliberate-attempts-to-polarise-kerala-along-communal-lines/#sthash.DIVL87xJ.dpuf
12 Bharatiya Janata Party, Hindu Communal Party in India
leadership and Vellappally peddling the absurd theory of Hindu marginalization in the state”

In short, the Kerala state has also began witnessing a trend of transgressing the boundaries of sacredness. This situation increasingly becomes a major threat to the state’s historical position of religious harmony which our forefathers irrespective their religions, had developed and maintained over the centuries. In this particular context, the writer realizes the significance of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi’s teachings on religious tolerance in this multi-religious plural society. In order to retain and stabilize the communal amity of the state, the researcher takes the ideas of religious tolerance and harmony proposed by Said Nursi inspired from the Qur’anic teachings. Through his monumental work, Risale-i Nur, Nursi clearly envisaged the idea of tolerance which possibly applicable not only this state where Muslims are minority, but also any multi-cultural society where different people of different faith live side by side.

Before the exposition of Nursi’s ideas in this regard, it is imperative to point out the Qur’anic concept on Religious pluralism. In fact on the premise of these Qur’anic principles, which is universal, Nursi, articulated his theory and vision.

1.3. The Qur’anic Principles of tolerance and Peaceful Co-existence

The Islamic doctrines have given much emphasis on the notion of peaceful co-existence. Qur’an says that,

“Let there be no compulsion in religion”\(^{14}\)

“If it had been the Lord’s Will, they would all have believed all who are on earth! Wilt thou then compel mankind against their will, to believe!”\(^{15}\)

\(^{13}\) The Chairman of Sree Narayana Dewaswam Paripalana Yogam, an organization of Ezhava community

\(^{14}\) Qur’an (al-Baqarah: 256)

\(^{15}\) Qur’an (al-Yunus: 99)
“God forbid you not, with regard to those who fight you not for your faith, nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for God loveth those who are just.”

“Mankind was one single nation, and God sent messengers with glad tidings and warnings; and with them He sent the book in truth, to judge between people in matters wherein they differed...”

The above verses of the Qur’ān clearly testify that mankind is originally made of up of single nation and the Qur’ān laid the foundational basis of the peaceful co-existence accepting the diversity in religious faiths. Therefore, the non-Muslims are completely free to practice their own religions. Islam prohibits its followers to coerce others accepting Islam.

In Islamic history, we have had many great examples of peaceful co-existence. Perhaps the ideological basis of Islam itself may be the reason of such incidents. Islam came and survived in the different corners of the world in different times due to its nature of peaceful co-existence. One’s religion or the ideology is the main content that determines the world-view of that person. It is the ideology of a religion that is the foundational philosophy of how one deal with life and with other human beings. When two people have different opinions, views, perceptions, answers to the questions of life related matters, there is bound to be conflict of some sort. This conflict or ideological clash can range from a friendly disagreement to a life and death battle, depending on the people involved.

The teachings of Hindu religion also have contributed towards the religious tolerance in Kerala from the time of settlement of Semitic religions namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The Hindu rulers have always welcomed these foreign people and have given the permission to practice and even to propagate their religions freely. This is very important factor to be noteworthy in this regard. Unless the tolerant and open attitude of Hindu rulers, no foreign religion would not have flourished in this soil.

16 Qur’ān (al-Mumtahinah: 8)
17 Qur’ān (al-Baqarah: 213)
2. Teachings of Nursî on religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence

2.1. Life, message and contemporary relevance

Said Nursî was born in the small village of Nurs, in eastern Turkey in 1877. His father Mirza was a village Mullah. He began his early education from his households at the age of nine since in Nurs there were not schools. Even in the childhood days he showed his leaning to the spiritual matters and at the time of his study in Pîrmîr he affiliated with Naqshabandi tariqa. He had shown unusual ability of memorizing even in the childhood days which gave him the title of Bediüzzaman (Miracle of the age) from one of his teachers. From a span of 85 years of lengthy and eventful life, it has been divided in to two stages Old said, new said. For Nursî, his works and thoughts have begun to come in the light significantly in the recent years. Until recently, not much attention has been paid to Said Nursî and his ideas in the West and rest of the Muslim world out of Turkey. As Ian Markham states; Nursî’s name has only recently started to appear in books dedicated to modern Islamic thought and Muslim Intellectuals.

He was original in his ideas and thoughts. He was profound in belief and feelings as he was wise and rational in his ideas and approach to problems. As mentioned in the preface of Risale–i Nur, he was the most serious and important thinker and writer of the twentieth–century Turkey or even of the Muslim world.

2.2 A Mujaddid in the 14th Century Hijri

Twentieth century has witnessed great Islamic scholars and reformers. Some of them have inspired the Ummah significantly and influenced momentously through their awakening thoughts and revolutionary reforms. Nursî distinguished himself from oth–
er contemporary reformers in many aspects of his monumental services to the *Ummah*. While others exerted efforts to change socio political fields in accordance with Islamic teachings, Nursî focused all his attention on the faith based reformation since he realized that change cannot brought ultimately unless the change taking place in the minds of the people. In the Epistle of *Risale-i Nur*, therefore, Nursî emphasized more on the ascetic and spiritual aspects of Islam. In one way he was challenging the notion of unity of *Din wa Dawla* (Religion and state) which has been evolved by the early scholars over the past centuries. As Zynep Akbulu states, For Nursî, Islam focuses on Individual belief in and relation with God, rather than being concerned with state policies. His faith based activism is very significant in a society where other people of faiths are also co-existing with them. In Kerala society, therefore his faith-based activism is so significant and can to produce much fruitful results.

As Colin Turner pointed out, “To say that Nursî stands like a colossus above twentieth century Muslim scholarship in Turkey is no overstatement.” He has been considered as Mujaddid or reformer by many Muslims at least for his disciples and followers, who number now in their millions.

It would be interesting to investigate the Nursî’s intellectual and personal qualities akin to the mission of a *Mujaddid* who come at the beginning of every century for the revival of Islam. As Maulana Maududi illustrated about the features of *Mujaddid* “He is characterized by a clear mind, penetrating vision, unbiased straight thinking, special ability to see the Right Path clear of all extremes and keep balance, power to think independently of the contemporary and centuries-old social and other prejudices, courage to fight against the evils of the time, inherent ability to lead and guide,

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23 Ibid.
and unusual competency to undertake Ijtihad and the work of reconstruction. Besides these great qualities he must have acquired a thorough and comprehensive grasp of Islam.\textsuperscript{24} From the above descriptions about the eligibility of being a Mujaddid, has great significance in the case of Nursî whom we see many of the qualities of a renewer more or less. Harun Yahya, A Turkish scholar and scientist says in his book “Jesus will return”, it is our conviction that, in terms of reviving the religion, the Risale–i Nur is in the position of a mujadid.\textsuperscript{25}

2.3. Nursî’s teachings on religious tolerance and pluralism

One of the most outstanding contributions of Said Nursî in social science is his engagement with dialogues and his appeal for the realization of religious diversity. Contrary to the secular world view on religious pluralism and diversity, he clearly asserted that the ethics of diversity should be drawn from the religious sources. The fundamental ethics of multi-cultural diversity which framed out of religious principles should be the basics of religious pluralism. For Nursî, Religious pluralism was not a notion which claims for altruism or the equal truth for all religions rather he believed that all people of different religions should equally be treated and considered. It is quite natural that one believe that my religion is right and true.

The major theme of Risale–i Nur, as we know before, is the purification of soul. He focused on transforming the human soul from all kinds of its inherent deceases through elevating to a status of ecstasy. He illustrated the various ways of removing “I”ness or sense of self. His major themes itself is a remedial way towards the communal harmony. A society in which each and every one live for not themselves but for others, and for the benefits of others warding off the philosophy of confining to ourselves. In this context according to Vol.1, Nursî’s approach to interpretation is pluralistic: In terms

of Qur’anic commentary, Said Nursî argues that the verses of Qur’ân reflect the vastness of God’s message and depths of meanings.

Nursî’s views on religious pluralism and religious co-existence

His message to the world is that “we are devotees of love; we do not have time for enmity. Our way is to adopt the morality of Muḥammad (Upon whom be blessings and peace) and revive his practices. Our guide is the illustrious Shari’a, our sword its decisive proofs, and our aim to uphold the Word of God. The way of this Union is love; its enmity is only for ignorance, poverty, and strife. Non-Muslims should feel sure that this Union attacks only those three facts. Our actions towards non-Muslims consist only of persuasion, for we know them to be civilized. And we suppose them to be fair-minded, so we should demonstrate that Islam is lovable and elevated.”

Said Nursî explains the communal harmony in a beautiful way,

“the person who does not understand the true meaning of co-operation is more lifeless than a stone. For some stones arch themselves to co-operate with their brothers. Such a stone, despite being a stone, leans towards his brother in the dome when he leaves the builder’s hand and bows his head so it touches his brother’s head, and so they keep from falling. That is, the stones of domes stand shoulder to shoulder so as not to fall.”

Ian S Markham has summarized Nursî’s stance on pluralism in to four important points:

1. Said Nursî is committed to the truth of Islam and the importance of persuading other of that truth.
2. Nursî finds in his tradition several reasons why it is important to commit to constructive co-existence with other faith traditions.
3. Nursî believes that the resort to violence by Muslims against non-Muslims demonstrates a lack of self-confidence in Islam. Self-confident Muslims who are strong in their faith do not need to resort to violence.

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26 Excerpt from “The Damascus Sermons”.
4. Nursî believes that the state needs good citizens and pious believers make good citizens. 

Even though Nursî has accommodated pluralism significantly, for Nursî, the meaning of pluralism was not simply all the religions are true. As the pluralism is generally viewed today that there are many truths about God and that the Qur’ān is just one such truth. This was not the way of Nursî, we cannot see any postmodern cultural relativism in the Risale-i Nur.

He admits and allowed an adequate space even the intra faith diversity which possibly shape within the community. It is applicable to all religions and community. Once he was asked about the diversity of schools of thought. Thus he replied.

The same water governs in five different ways in five ill people of different disposition, thus: for one, the water is a cure for his illness, and according to medicine, necessary. For another, it is like poison for his sickness and harmful, and medically prohibited. For another, it causes a small amount of harm, and is reprehensible medically. For another the water is beneficial and without harm; according to medicine that is Sunna for him. And for yet another it is neither harmful nor beneficial, he can drink it with good health, nor for him it medically permissible, thus, here the truth has become numerous; all five are true. Are you able to say: the water is only a cure, only necessary, and it governs in no other way?28

He says about the conversion of people into Islam. For Jews and Christian while they convert into Islam, they are, in fact, not abandoning their religion rather they complete their religion with ultimate truth of Qur’ān. He says;

“When urging people of the Book to believe in Islam, the Qur’ān shows them in this verse (Qur’ān 2:4)” a familiar aspect and a facility. That is, it implies: O People of Book! There is no difficulty for you in accepting Islam; do not let it appear hard to you. For the Qur’ān does not order you to abandon your religion completely, it proposed only that you complete your faith and build it on the fundamentals of religion you already possess. For the Qur’ān combines in itself the

virtues of all the previous books and the essentials of all the previous 
religions; it is thus a modifier and a perfecter of basic principles. 29

It has been a subject of debate that whether the Hindus in India 
could be considered as the people of book. One of the great Muslims 
writer in Kerala T. Muḥammad through his monumental study, 
Bharateeya samskarathinte adiyozhukkukal, 30 (the undercurrents 
of Indian culture) analysed the possibility of Hindu Gods such as 
Krishna and Rama were likely to be the prophets who had been 
sent by God to Indian continent.

2.4. Not negative approach but positive

He considered resorting to violence is a negative and destructive 
way in the pursuit of reforming a society. According to him, the 
pivotal reformation should be taken place in the mindset of the 
people. It evidently seen in his last advice–farewell letter– given 
to his students. The letter opens with the following statement:

“Dear Brothers, our duty is to do positive action and not negative 
action. It is to serve faith in accordance with what pleases God. 
We should not interfere with the duty of God. We must respond 
to all the difficulties we face during our service to faith with pa-
tience and thankfulness. Such a service will protect society from 
disorder. “To overcome violence, he warned against the desire of 
power and possession.” 31

In the form of “Six W ords,” Bediüzzaman describes a number of 
those positive truths of Islam, which form the cure for the grievous 
sicknesses besetting the Muslim community, viz. hope; honesty; love 
and brotherhood; self–sacrifice; awareness of the luminous bonds 
uniting the believers; mutual consultation. These are not the qualities 
that may be dispensed within the face of the difficulties or threats; 
on the contrary, they form the very foundation of Muslim society. 32

30 T. Muḥammad, Bharateeya samskarathinte Adiyozhukkukal, (Undercurrents of 
31 Dr. Parvez, Peace and Brotherhood in Risale–i Nur,
32 The Damascus Sermon by Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, tr from Turkish “Hute–I Samiye” 
by Sukran Vahide, 1996.
2.5. Due consideration on human inherent traits and longing for peace

Said Nursî, envisioned human nature in a philosophical way, Vaffi Foday Sheriff Depicted how Nursî approaches the issue of human creation, by which he establishes men, from its basic nature longs for peace and security. He summarized nature of human in ten points in Nursî’s treatment. Four among them is quite relevant to our discussion.

1. Man does not like oppression and terror”
2. “Man thinks of and remembers those he loves”
3. “Seeking refuge with, and help and forgiveness from almighty Allah (God), and prayer and supplication are essential to his nature”
4. “By nature, man wants to be treated in a way worthy of humanity”33

Since Nursî was reformer who exerted his efforts to reform the inner qualities of human, he had to examine all human psychological traits properly. He could content that; without reforming mindset of the people, no change would be perpetuated in the society. For this purpose, he treated the minds and its deceases. His advocacy for truthfulness and honesty is pertinent to all communities who wish the peace and order to be established in the society. According to him; as the foundation of the life of our society, we must bring to life truthfulness and honesty, and cure moral and spiritual sickness with them.34 His commitment and call for the truthfulness from Muslim society in particular and other communities in general will lead the society a secure and peaceful. The initiatives we take in the name of religious harmony will be worked effectively only at the time its members themselves keenly committed to be trustworthy on what they have swayed for.

3. The contextualization of Nursî’s teachings in Kerala society and some recommendations

Nursî’s teachings of religious co-existence seems to be more significant in the contemporary context of Kerala. He conceptualized his idea of non-violent activism presenting Faith-based activism keeping away from the political motives. He chose the positive and constructive way of activism in order to bring the changes in the mindset of society. For him, the faith based activism goes deeper than simply refraining from violence. As Parvez Manzor pointed out, Nursî cared everyone in his heart including those who persecuted him.\textsuperscript{35} It is evident from his life itself that he was a pacific, who never wanted to react even to those who poisoned him seventeen times, in the same way his enemies treated him.

In the Kerala context, we Kerala Muslims can adopt many of his ways in order to sustain the peaceful atmosphere of Kerala. Primarily, According to Nursî, the way of non-violence is the best way to propagate the message of Islam to non-believers. As he pointed out the non-violence is not simply refraining from the forceful actions rather it means we would not be provoked, and in turn, should not respond violently at any offensive situation which, in turn leads to leave the scars and wound in the minds of people who in fact, strongly long for peace and serenity.

3.1. Need of interfaith dialogues

Nursî was an great advocate of interfaith dialogue. Emulating the ideal of Nursî, we Muslims in Kerala, can take initiative to organize inter faith dialogue which would enable the different people of faith to know better. The dialogue must not be for establishing dominancy of one religion over another conducting polemical debates on theological issues of different religions.

Besides the dialogues in the intellectual level, there should have the chances of mutual engagement between the people of different faith. It is unlikely happen in Kerala the interfaith dialogues. Nursî

\textsuperscript{35} Parvez A MIR, Peace and Brotherhood in \textit{Risale-i Nur},
has emphasized the importance of an alliance between Islam and sincere Christians in the face of aggressively atheistic philosophies and ideologies such as communism. He wrote in his book The Gleams:

> It is even recorded in authentic traditions of the prophet that at the end of time the truly pious among the Christians will unite with the people of the Qur’ān and fight their common enemy, irreligion. And at this time, too, the people of religion and truth need to unite sincerely not only with their own brothers and fellow believers, but also with the truly pious and spiritual ones among the Christians, temporarily refraining from the discussion and debate of points of difference in order to combat their joint enemy—aggressive atheism.\(^{36}\)

Taking the lessons from Nursî advice, we Muslims and other religious community in India, seek the collective conscience and efforts jointly in order to combat the fascism in the country.

Analysing the problems of Indian Muslims in generally, Dr. Abdul Quddoos, Asst. Professor in Assam University has outlined a conceptual frame work for the solution to the crisis of Indian Muslims. It is worthy to mention his major views here. According to him, the main thing the Indian Muslims have to do in the context of communal violence and heartedness is to avoid the confrontation and encounter with communalists. It would not be worked in this situation rather call for peaceful dialogue and sharing ideas.

He stressed the point that Indian Muslims who live in a plural society, can take lessons from Nursî’s works on matters of religious tolerance and inter-faith dialogue, and on how societies living with tolerance and mutual respect of differences can build up a powerful and vibrant modern state.

### 3.2. Obedience to law and Need of Collective Effort for Peace

While his contemporaries were seeking revolutionary change in the face of aggressive regimes, including in later years the secular state founded by Atatürk, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî saw obedience to the law as preferable to the possibility of anarchy.

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\(^{36}\) Said Nursî, Lem’alar (The Gleams), 152.
Instead of disunited efforts for peace, all communities should be united in order the peace to be established. The communalists should be marginalized whoever it be either from Muslims or from Hindus.

4. Conclusion

Nursî’s teachings of religious co-existence seems to be more significant in the contemporary context of Kerala. He conceptualized his idea of non-violent activism presenting Faith-based activism keeping away from the political motives. He chose the positive and constructive way of activism in order to bring the changes in the mindset of society. For him, the faith based activism goes deeper than simply refraining from violence. Nursi was an ardent advocate of interfaith dialogue. Emulating the ideal of Nursi, we Muslims in Kerala, can take initiative to organize inter faith dialogue which would enable the different people of faith to know better. The dialogue must not be for establishing dominancy of one religion over another conducting polemical debates on theological issues of different religions. Taking the lessons from Bediuzzaman Said Nursî, Muslims in Kerala should strive to flower peaceful relation with all other communities as much as they can. They have to be vigilant not to slip from this middle and moderate path in to the horror of extreme approaches which consequently lead to the conflict and chaos. As Bediuzzaman emphasized, since we are living in a systematic secular democratic nation, we are bound to abide the law and order of the state.

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Said Nursî’s perspective of peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society
A Reading in Contemporary Indian Context

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ABSTRACT
Bediüzzaman Said Nursî was one of the profound Muslim thinkers of 20th century. Having lived in a tumultuous time of Muslim history, he dedicated his life to save the Islamic faith from the currents of Westernisation and secularization. This paper aims to make an analysis of Nursî’s perspective of peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society. Nursî has built this perspective on the fundamentals of humanity, love, compassion, tolerance, respect for, openness to and acceptance of the other in their otherness and dialogue. This article examines the Qur’anic perspective of living in a pluralistic society. After giving a brief description of Said Nursî and his Risale-i Nur, the article discussed Nursî’s perspective of peaceful coexistence. Finally, the article makes a reading of Nursî’s ideas in the contemporary Indian context.

Keywords: Coexistence, Plurality, Diversity, Tolerance, Nursî, Risale-i Nur

Introduction
Amidst the relentless efforts by certain forces to radicalise some Muslims, an overwhelming majority of Muslims still believe that to respect the diversity in its all forms or to peacefully coexist in any form of society is a religious obligation. Ustad Bediüzzaman Said Nursî represents such an understanding and tradition.

This paper tries to put forth Said Nursî’s perspective of peaceful coexistence by describing, analysing and interconnecting his teachings contained especially in his Risale-i Nur. The following questions will be attempted: What is Nursî’s attitude towards the
followers of other faiths and beliefs? How shall the issues of cultural diversity and religious plurality be dealt with? Can those who practice different religions coexist in the same society? Is there any way to cope with the disagreements and differences?

Living in a Pluralistic Society: Qur’anic Perspective

Qur’ān deems the differences of opinions as a well-knelt plan of God. The abolition of such differences is not its purpose nor were the prophets sent for that purpose. Allah says, “‘If your Lord so willed, He could have made mankind one community.’” At the same time Qur’ān accepts all, not excluding anyone. It says, “And indeed We have honoured the children of Adam.” Moreover, Qur’ān paints the picture of a pluralistic society and shows the inherent nature of diversity and plurality in the creation, by declaring, “O mankind, We have created you from a single (pair) of male and female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other.” This diversity and plurality may cause conflicts. But, the Qur’ānic phrase ‘know each other’ implies tolerance. Because tolerance is the best way to know others and to live with them. Further, the Qur’ānic verse of “There is no compulsion in Islam” accepts freedom of religions and beliefs and shows that there is more than one religion.

Said Nursî and Risale-i Nur

Born in 1877 in eastern Anatolia of Turkey, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, was what his name meant. Truly, he was a wonder of age. A social

1 Surah Hud: 118
2 Surah Al-Isra’a: 70
3 Surah Al-Hujurat: 13
5 He was called ‘Bediüzzaman’ because of the speed with which he mastered the new secular sciences and religious sciences, and he was called ‘Nursî’ in
reformer and distinguished scholar, he was the embodiment of the personality predicted by Prophet (PBUH) as he said, “Verily Allah sends to this ummah at the head of every hundred years someone who will renew its Deen”\(^6\). Brought up under the shadow of pious parents, Mirza bin Khizr and Nuriya bint Mulla Tahir\(^7\), his lifespan stretched through the tragic and pathetic experiences of two world wars, the decline of Ottoman Empire and the intellectual and ethical challenges of rapid secularization and Westernisation in Turkey. It was a period of humiliation for Muslim world and the European powers were convincingly demonstrating their military and intellectual supremacy. Identifying the gravest threat to Islam as coming from the weakness of faith and the decay of its intellectual base, he gave his full attention to ‘renewing and strengthening of faith through new methods’ and ‘restatement of basic tenets of Islamic principle’. A man with his ultimate goal as the establishment of Qur’\’an as the source of true knowledge and progress, he dedicated his life to restore Islam to its rightful position as the ‘master of all sciences’ and the origin of ‘true civilization’. Nursî believed that “the conscience is illuminated by religious sciences and the mind is illuminated by the sciences of religion”. The light he lit up remains ablaze through his followers, popularly known as Nur Movement.

Known for his extraordinary wisdom and memory, he learned more than 80 key texts in Islamic sciences by heart and he was regarded as one of the leading religious scholars before the age of 18. Unlike some orthodox ulamas, he mastered almost all modern physical and mathematical sciences also at a time Qur’\’an and Islam were unprecedently attacked in the name of science and materi-

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\(^6\) This Hadith is narrated by Abu Dawud, and is verified as sahīh by al-Albani, al-Zarqani, al-Suyutti, al-Iraqi, al-Bayhaqi, al-Shakhavi, al-Nawawi and etc.

\(^7\) His father Mirza was so pious that he never tasted haram and never feed his children from haram. He was too devout that he tightened the mouth of his cattle not to eat from others’ farms. When his mother Nuriya was asked about her amazing style of child rearing and the secret behind her child’s extraordinary intelligence, she replied, “I have never avoid tahajjud throughout my life except in the days excusable legitimately, and I haven’t breastfed my child without cleanliness and ablution”.

connection to his birth place at the Eastern Anatolian Kurdish village of Nurs.
alism, particularly the Positivist philosophy of August Comte. He could leave behind him a school of thought for the revitalization of Islamic civilization and a movement which has become the resort of millions across the world.

His encyclopedic work on Qur’an, Risale-i Nur, was a new method of expounding the Qur’anic teachings on ‘the truths of belief’, incorporating the traditional religious sciences and modern secular sciences and refuting the underpinnings of materialist philosophy.

Religious plurality, cultural diversity, disagreement and intolerance: the case of Said Nursî

A primary reason why Said Nursî is so acceptable in this 21st century in countries like India is his attitude towards religious plurality and cultural diversity. It is obvious that wherever human beings fail to cope with disagreements or differences, there break out conflicts, riots or wars. The inability of people, especially of those in key posts, to deal with a disagreement effectively has claimed the lives many innocent ones in different parts of world. No doubt one’s belief has become a factor –among many others– in the eruption of destructive violence between communities.

In a broader sense we can find two conventional approaches towards plurality. First one is a ‘religious theocracy’ which neglects pluralism and tries to bring ‘rule of God’ and which in practice imposes the rule of certain religious authorities. Second one is an ‘aggressive secularism’ which agrees plurality but only a certain form of religion which can be better named as a ‘religion of unbelief’. The main problem behind the first approach was the existence of significant minorities who believe differently and would like to have equal treatment, an impossible one in the mindset of theocrats. What makes the second approach a failure is the fact that a vast majority of people in the world is highly religious and wouldn’t like to live under a social organization which disapproves their cherished values and morals.
It is where these two approaches fail, that Said Nursî becomes acceptable. According to Nursî, it is impossible to live in a world free of moral and religious conversations as promoted by the advocates of western secularists. At the same time, he believes that one particular religion can’t dominate the public space. Instead, he promoted interfaith dialogue in which one can try and persuade the other. Thus he has given paramount importance to man’s capacity to ‘reason, converse and persuade’.

Ian Markham summarizes Nursî’s perspective of peaceful co-existence in four points:

1. He is committed to the truth of Islam and the importance of persuading others of that truth. He admitted that the most powerful weapon of the future would be eloquence and the power to persuade, and that the era of natural or physical courage has passed, and that the courage of science has taken its place. He wrote, “Our action towards non-Muslims is persuasion, for we know them to be civilized, and to show Islam to be elevated and worthy of love”.

2. He finds in his tradition several reasons why it is important to commit to constructive coexistence with other faith traditions.

3. He believes the resort to violence by Muslims against non-Muslims demonstrates a lack of confidence in Islam. Self-confident Muslims who are strong in their faith do not need to resort to violence.

4. He believes that the state needs good citizens and pious believers make good citizens.

Humanity, love, compassion, tolerance, respect for, openness to and acceptance of the other in their otherness and dialogue are fundamentals of Nursî’s perspective of peaceful coexistence.

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8 See: Said Nursî, The Damascus Sermon, First Addendum, Third Part P.78
10 See: Ian S. Markham and Suendam Birinci Pirim, An Introduction to Said Nursî: Life, Thought and Writings, Ashgate Printing Ltd., 2011
A celebration of the importance of love can be seen throughout the writings of Nursi. He holds that one’s commitment to peaceful coexistence is interconnected with his commitment to love. In his famous Damascus sermon, Nursi said, “The thing most worthy of love is love, and that most deserving of enmity is enmity. That is, love and loving, which renders man’s social life secure and leads to happiness are most worthy of love and being loved. Enmity and hostility are ugly and damaging, have overturned man’s social life”.11

According to Nursi, both Islam and humanity call for love and peace. For this, he brings an analogy comparing love with the mountain of Uhud and the hostility with small pebbles. “Both Islam and humanity which call for ‘love’ are like the mountain of Uhud and the factors causing hostility are nothing but small pebbles. One who chooses hostility and belittles love is committing a great folly, just like one who underestimates the value of mountain ‘Uhud’ and makes it lower than that of pebble”12.

Nursi stated that there is no harm in loving non-Muslims. He was of the opinion that when we love an unbeliever we don’t love his unbelief, rather those qualities which are worthy of love. He wrote, “Yet a man is not loved for himself. Maybe the love comes from his attribution or art. It therefore does not necessarily be right that all the attribution of a Muslim is Islamic and contrary to this all the attribution of an unbeliever is un-Islamic”.13

Nursi was well aware of the fact that the peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society is possible only by accepting others in their own position and by accepting social, cultural, and religious diversity. On acceptance of the other, Nursi wrote, “When you know your way and opinions to be true, you have the right to say, “My way is right and the best.” But you do not have the right to say, “Only my way is right.””14

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12 See: Said Nursi, Sayqal al-Islam, P–423
13 See: Said Nursi, “Mnazarat”, in Risale –i- Nur
To ensure coexistence, Nursî makes two simple but powerful statements.

1. To act positively, that is, out of love for one’s own outlook, avoiding enmity for other outlooks, not criticizing them, interfering in their beliefs and sciences, or in any way concerning oneself with them.

2. To adopt the just rule of conduct that the follower of any right outlook has the right to say, “My outlook is true, or the best,” but not that “My outlook alone is true,” or that “My outlook alone is good,” thus implying the falsity or repugnance of all other outlooks.15

While expounding the Qur’ānic verse 49:13, Nursî asserts that coexistence in the pluralistic society is a fact implied from our creation itself. He says “I (Allah) created you as peoples, nations, and tribes, So that you should know one another and the relations between you in social life, and assist one another; not so that you should regard each other as strangers, refusing to acknowledge one another, and nurturing hostility and enmity.16

A beautiful illustration of Nursî’s commitment to coexistence and tolerance can be seen when Kurdish tribesmen in Eastern Anatolia became worried about freeing Greeks and Armenians. Nursî’s reply was “freedom of non-Muslims is a branch of our own freedom”17.

Nursî’s vision: relevance for Indian society

India has a rich and long tradition of peaceful coexistence and multiculturalism or religious plurality has been the basic tenet and hallmark of its ancient civilization and history. For centuries, people of different faiths and beliefs have lived in India side by side in peace and tranquil. Her rich tradition of religious plurality has been a symbol of social and religious harmony. However, things

15 See: Said Nursî, “The Flashes”, in Risale-i Nur, P-203
17 See: Said Nursî, “Mnazarat”, P-29
have been turning upside down in recent years as India has been hit by waves of growing religious and social intolerance. Religious violence has increased in recent years in several parts of India. Moreover, the growing environment of religious intolerance and violence have already claimed many lives in India. As a sign of protest, a number of writers, artists, scientists and other eminent personalities have returned their awards to government.

Said Nursî’s message of peaceful coexistence is very relevant in contemporary India. His famous quotation of ‘Our enemies are ignorance, poverty, and conflict. We shall wage jihad against these three enemies with the weapons of industry, learning, and unity’ needs to be paid special attention in contemporary Indian context. These three evils can be seen as the epicentre of all problems in India. In other words, people are being exploited at the expense of these three evils by some people for their vested interests. According to Nursî, a true believer can’t resort to violence in the name of religion. He condemns it as a form of weakness and it shows a lack of confidence in one’s faith.

Nursî’s model of Inter-faith dialogue between Indian Muslims and others, particularly Hindus, can contribute a lot to ensure peaceful coexistence in multi-religious Indian society.

As Islam is the second largest practiced religion in India, Nursî’s teachings would add a new dimension here. Moreover, there is an old connection between Indian Muslims and Nursî. Imam Ahmad Sirhindi, the pride of Indian Muslims was a source of inspiration for Nursî.

Nur Movement which renders its services to people of all faith is a good example for Indians to create an inclusive civil society.

**Conclusion**

Nursî was of the opinion that it is one’s religious obligation to peacefully coexist in any form of society. Regarding plurality and diversity, he takes a middle path between that of religious theocrats and aggressively secularists. He promotes interfaith dialogue and
ma’nevi jihad (jihad of the words) in the struggle against atheism and irreligion. Humanity, love, compassion, tolerance, respect for, openness to and acceptance of the other in their otherness and dialogue are fundamentals of Nursî’s perspective of peaceful coexistence.

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Imam Bediüzzaman Said Nursî and Moulana Abul Kalam Azad: a comparative study on their reformist movements

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ABSTRACT

In every time, God sent someone to inscribe pride and dignity of the Ummah on the portals of history by redefining society and reforming religious awareness. Every Muslim is responsible to concern these genius scholars reviving their memories and works as they were the protectors of Ummah paving the way for freedom, saving pure belief, inviting them to single one of unity and dispelling, and sawing the seeds of unity, freedom and identity. Bediüzzaman Said Nursî and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad were the most influential reformers of the same time in Turkey and India respectively. Azad was born on 1888 and passed away in 1958 while Bediüzzaman was born in 1876 and was no more in 1960. Whoever studied the works and views of these two great scholars can summarize that although they never met and were not most probably aware of each other’s idea, it is amazing that they, the two intelligentsia from different parts of the world, put forward similar views on many aspects. This is a study on the reformist roles undertaken by the two great scholars; Imam Nursî and Moulana Azad with special reference to their reformist views because people would get a better understanding of the significance of both scholars on shaping modern religious Muslim society. In this paper, I attempt exactly to draw on wonderful similarities of these Muslim intellectuals of 20th century, who lit up the social and religious sky of Muslim Ummah splitting the suffocating darkness of backwardness.

Introduction

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have undergone to a lot of educational, religious, social and political reforms as result
of the crucial inventions and technological leap and this trend was reflected all over the world. This reformist tendency was the real outcome of creative interference of some intellectuals raised on this time. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century were very significant and crucial in the history of Turkey and India as this time has undeniable role on moulding the later history and intellectual development of both countries. In this time, Turkish and Indian Muslim society had undertaken for a lot of intellectual evolutions and social and political reformist ideology. The deep research on the question about the basic resource and background of such religious and educational reformist movements leads us to the most influential and eminent scholars from both countries – Imam Bediüzzaman Said Nursî from Turkey and Moulana Abul Kalam Azad from India. It is very accidental that both of them lived in about same time, even though they didn’t meet or even were not familiar with each other. However, we could simply find out some accidental similarities among their thoughts, ideology and activism, especially on their reformist spirits. And it is very wonderful that Risale-i Nur, the detailed interpretation of Holy Qur’ân, is the magnum opus of the master Nursî while the Tarjumanul Qur’ân is masterpiece of Moulana Azad and both genres based on the real interpretation of Qur’ân in modern perspective. So that the researcher is very keen to conduct a deep study comparing the both intelligentsias.

**Said Nursî and Reformist Ideology**

Imam Bediüzzaman Said Nursî was a distinguished Sunni Muslim intellect, theologian and above all a prominent educationalist lived in late nineteenth and early twentieth century. He gained great reputation by his reformist approaches towards the educational and subsequently to social issues on religious perspective through an impressive intellectual movements consuming his in depth

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1. Ahmad, Dr. Ibrahim Khalil. The Movement For Renewal in Contemporary Islamic Thought and Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, article retrieved from www.iikv.org on 25 December 2015.
knowledge and unquestionable intelligence. He believed that the significance of Islam on the scientifically matured era should be induced on the support of modern science and logic and the very religious education completely bared of material education could be insufficient. The master Nursi exposed most apt and creative solution for this great concern by planning an educational system in which the religious and material education combined in practical way and advocated teaching religious sciences in secular schools and modern sciences in religious schools as he wrote in his magnum opus Risale-i Nur collection.

Basically Said Nursi stimulated a faith movement concentrating on the revival of Islam and Muslim society in modernized post Kemalian Turkey and that has played a vital role in the creative renaissance of Islam in Turkey and now the movement influenced the young people as it has millions of followers worldwide who deeply influenced by the creative leadership and inspiring practical thoughts on reviving a religious oriented Muslim community.

At first, Imam Nursi analysed the possibility of reformation in Islam and Muslim society. And then he asserted that Islamic society was afflicted with sickness and this could only be cured by following the Holy Qur’an. According to him, despair, the death of truthfulness, love for enmity, the believers not knowing the luminous ties binding them to one another, despotism, and limiting efforts to what is personally beneficial are some of this diseases. And he emphasized that the belief in the truths of religion had to be strengthened, the call to belief had to be renewed, and the pure essence of Islam had to be returned to by means of saving the belief of others.

3 Dr. Muhammed Yusuf, Integration of Knowledge in Theory and Practice: The Contribution of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, article retrieved on 20 December 2015.
5 Serif Mardin, Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, p. 23.
7 Hisham Sharabi, Arab and Western Intellectuals, (Beirut, 1978) p 37–8.
So, Bediüzzaman believed that his responsibility was to serve the community on the perspective of belief, as he convinced that all problems is returning to the foundation of belief. He underlined that the problem start from each person, and that is why the solution should start from each one and individual. Everyone should train his soul to adopt all kinds of virtues. Said Nursî theoretically put forward six principles to combat all these deficiencies suffered by Ummah: these are hope, truthfulness, love, justice, brotherhood, and consultation.\(^8\)

Said Nursî already understood that the Turkish community which had completely engrossed by the secularist way of life stimulated by Europe, could be more effectively fascinated to the religious awareness by step by step and therefore he focused on social order and believed on gradual change as it could have perpetual influence on society. That is why, he did not support an organizational movement or Jihad. He emphasized that the jihad could be employed on external enemy and the jihad within community could only please the enemy.\(^9\)

So, everyone– either man or woman– was very important in his mission and that is why he allotted a significance position for women folk as he promoted religious awareness, mutual trust, respect and loyal love between every members to form a genuine family.\(^10\) On the case of women, he especially stressed on the firm religious sense and piousness for a good Muslim women. Because, he believed that a pious woman only could shape an ideal family.\(^11\)

The first and foremost thing to do was to correct the misunderstandings about Islam, Muslim and belief. Said Nursî and his students undertook this duty in most proper way. Turkey has big trace on the Islamic history and Khilafat and had the majority of

\(^8\) Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, Haqiqat al-Tawhid (Trans. Ihsan Qasim al-Salihi) (Baghdad, 1985).
\(^9\) Dr. Ibrahim Khalil Ahmad, The Movement For Renewal in Contemporary Islamic Thought and Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, article retrieved on 25 December 2015.
\(^10\) The flashes 257
\(^11\) Dr. Ibrahim Khalil Ahmad, The Movement For Renewal in Contemporary Islamic Thought and Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, article retrieved on 25 December 2015.
Muslims. So, Imam Nursî believed that the justice and Shariah could be realized through constitution. Because all problems in his time were either directly or indirectly connected to the western secularist influence\textsuperscript{12}.

On the same time, Imam Nursî led a life of religious scholar and spiritual leader by training people and strengthening their belief and spirituality, even though he was an expert in material knowledge and promoted it. He never tried to have direct interference in politics. Even he did not permit his students to challenge the government\textsuperscript{13}. Said Nursî was not an intolerant and narrow-minded Islamist who basically argued only for the legacy of Islamic civilization and fervently opposed all that oriented to the west. On the contrary, he stimulated to take western technology which is very important to preserve the renewal of Muslim society and to keep it progressing and did his best to make his followers convinced with this reality\textsuperscript{14}.

Many of Muslim thinkers of this time were very eager to reform the religious notions itself instead of the reviving the society and social issues and therefore they argued that the door of independent judgement of religious law – \emph{Ijtihad} – should be remained open. But Said Nursî vehemently opposed this argument to protect the belief in its essence from those mean to destruction\textsuperscript{15}.

Imam Nursî, however, fervidly opposed the European culture and civilization which completely based on materialist philosophy, which is always contradicts to religious ethics. He explained that Europe is two: one that follows the science of justice and right and all the moralities and ethics through the inspiration of true Christianity; it is not to be discussed about. But the second one: which is following

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} Sukran Vahide, The Author of the \textit{Risale-i Nur} Collection Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, (Istanbul: Rehan Ofset, 2004), p 10
\textsuperscript{14} Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, The words on nature and purposes of man, Life and all things (Turkey: Sözler Publications, 2008) p 496.
the darkness of philosophy of naturalism; it is misguiding the people out of all the virtues that mankind should follow\textsuperscript{16}.

The western culture contracted the link of brotherhood and relations and endorsed a selfish and benefit oriented society rather than the ethics and morality oriented. To solve these issues and to arrange a well-designed community, Imam Nursî looked on mutual assistance and solidarity between people to secure all kind of unity and happiness in life\textsuperscript{17}. On the same time, he promoted the people to work emphasizing that works end on happiness and laziness culminate only in unhappiness\textsuperscript{18}.

As a community committed scholar, Said Nursî supported equality, right and complete justice for all people and opposed anarchy, tyranny and despotism. Once, he said: “Yes, by birth and the way I have lived I am from the class of common people, and I am one of those who by temperament and intellectually have accepted the way of ‘equality of rights.’ And due to compassion and the justice proceeding from Islam, I am one of those who for a long time have opposed and worked against the despotism and oppression of the elite class called the bourgeoisie. I therefore support total justice with all my strength, and oppose tyranny, oppression, arbitrary power, and despotism.”\textsuperscript{19}

Besides the powerful writings themselves, a major factor in the success of the movement may be attributed to the very method Bediüzzaman had chosen, which may be summarized with two phrases: that is, ‘jihad of the word’ or ‘non-physical jihad’. Bediüzzaman considered the true enemies of Islam in this age of science, reason, and civilization to be materialism and atheism, and their source, materialist philosophy.\textsuperscript{20} Thus just as he combated and ‘utterly defeated’ these with the reasoned proofs of the \textit{Risale-i}

\textsuperscript{17} The flashes p189–199
\textsuperscript{18} The flashes p171.
\textsuperscript{19} The flashes 226
\textsuperscript{20} Ian S. Markham, Suendam Birinci, An Introduction to Said Nursî: Life, Thought and Writings. p 46.
Nur, strengthening the belief of Muslims and raising it to the level of ‘true, verified belief,’ and the *Risale-i Nur* was the most effective barrier against the corruption of society caused by these enemies. Bediüzzaman insisted that his students avoided any use of force and disruptive action. Through the maintenance of public order and security, he supposed that all damage caused by the forces of unbelief could be ‘repaired’ by the ‘healing’ truths of the Qur’ān\(^{21}\).

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî’s thoughts and his ideology got immense influence among Turkish Muslim community. After the religious vacuum created by overflow of secularist ideology and western civilization which spread a satisfaction-dried life style, Turkish people were eagerly waiting for a solution. Timely, Said Nursî put forward a fantastic ideology sponsored a religious oriented lifestyle merged with western technology and advancement and above all, this ideology represent moderation and tolerance, instead of extremist and violent movement. The very aim of all his mission was the creation of an ideal Islamic society, the preservation of the Muslims’ identity and of the Islamic sciences in Turkey, not the political power or the establishment of Islamic state or regime and therefore, he always forbade his student from political activism and armed military rebellion\(^{22}\).

Along his works, Said Nursî celebrated the advantages of *Shariah*, but all these intended to preserve religious laws and notions in private life. So it is very obvious that the *Risale-i Nur* was not a political movement, but was an unorganised mission to reform and revive the Muslim community in all cases. The followers of this movement recognized Imam Bediüzzaman Nursî as their spiritual guide and Ustad– the master and teacher and they spare no effort to effectively spread his thoughts and ideology in its perfect\(^{23}\).

\(^{21}\) Dr. Ibrahim Khalil Ahmad, The Movement For Renewal in Contemporary Islamic Thought and Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, article retrieved on 25 December 2015.

\(^{22}\) Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Khalil Ahmad, The movement for renewal in contemporary Islamic thought and Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, article retrieved on 20 December 2015.

\(^{23}\) Dr. Muhammed Yusuf, Malaysia International Islamic University, Integration of Knowledge in Theory and Practice: The Contribution of Bediüzzaman Said Nursî. article retrieved on 20 December 2015.
Moulana Abul Kalam Azad and reformist ideology

Moulana Abul Kalam Azad is a famous Muslim scholar and political leader from India, who had played a vital role in the Indian independence movement and in moulding the current situation on the education system in India and shaping a good Muslim society in subcontinent. Moreover, he was a great Muslim scholar and one of the Muslim intellectuals from the early twentieth century. He translated the Holy Qur’ān and contributed a many for the renaissance and reformation of society by his brain and pen.24 From childhood, he earned a distinguished expertness in Urdu, English, Persian Bengali and Arabic languages and in addition to the religious knowledge, he mastered in mathematics, philosophy, history and science.

As a politician, Azad stirred up a big challenge against imperial and colonial power and played a significance role on uniting all religious classes under the Indian independence movement25. As a child, Azad was trained in a Muslim orthodox family and submissive to all traditional religious disciplines. But, later he tried his best to revive such tradition that made enough enemies on his way26. Even though, he always made intellectual attempts to clarify his argument on the basis of Qur’ān and Hadith. His significant work “Tarjumanul Qur’ān” was his greatest achievement and intelligible Urdu translation with commentary of Holy Qur’ān redefining the Islam on the modern scientific perspective, and above all, it was a meaningful defence against those who criticized him on account of modernized reformist views27. Moulana Abul Kalam selected ‘azad’ which means ‘free’ as his pen name as he fought for physical and thinking freedom; political freedom from all imperialist powers and freedom to think and express opinion freely – that he meant

25 Ramin Jehanbegloo, From Islamic Revivalism to Universal Humanism: The political and philosophical itinerary of Abul Kalam Azad. Article retrieved from jehanbegloo.com on 19 December 2015.
27 Ibid.
to revive the orthodox traditional customs and way of thought and reform the community according to the modern concepts\textsuperscript{28}.

The whole life of Moulana Azad was an ideological journey. At the first leg of the journey, he observed the backwardness, challenges and deficiencies of Muslim \textit{Ummah} in his mother country and all over the world and he concluded that the basic problem of society in India is lack of education. And from this analysis, he concentrate his maximum on the education of society and later he credited the name of father education in India\textsuperscript{29}.

Azad started his career of politician and activist as a revivalist Muslim and upholder of pure Islam. His early time from 1906 to 1920 was severely influenced by religious teachings. During this time, Azad was a Muslim fundamentalist who argued that the Muslims were the leaders of the world and they should be back on their position\textsuperscript{30}. In all his early writings, Azad emphasized an Islamic way to the independence and superiority for Muslims over the followers of other religions. He made an attempt to merge politics to religion and he wrote in his Al-Hilal that “we have developed our political thinking from religion….we believe that every thought which draws inspiration from any institution (including politics) other than the Qur’àn is \textit{Kufr} (infidelity)”\textsuperscript{31}.

Azad learned religion and its all aspects and formed all over view on each and every issues. For the revival of knowledge and reformation of society, Azad tried to wipe out all the communal and traditional equations from the society and to purify the essence of religion. Along through the vast and wide reading, he was deeply influenced by the modernist thoughts of Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan, Jamaludheen Afghani and Shaykh Abdu and he tried to discuss and

\textsuperscript{28} Syeda Syedain Hameed, Islamic seal on India’s Independence; Abul Kalam Azad – A Fresh look. (Karachi: Oxford University Press,1998) p 7.

\textsuperscript{29} Irfan Engineer, Glimpses into nationalist Muslim- Moulana Abul Kalam Azad. Article retrieved from ummid.com on 19 December 2015.

\textsuperscript{30} Ramin Jehanbegloo, From Islamic Revivalism to Universal Humanism: The political and philosophical itinerary of Abul Kalam Azad. Article retrieved from jehanbegloo.com on 19 December 2015.

\textsuperscript{31} Abdul Waheed Khan, India Wins Freedom, the other side (Karachi, 1961) p 22–23
explain the Islamic ideology and notion on the modern perspective. After a long time research and study, Moulana Azad dramatically undergone for a drastic change in his concept renewed his faith and acquired a distinguished personality and Azad emerged as a committed Muslim and creative reformist with practical methods on reviving society. 

As a reformist, he spread his ideology through his speeches and writings and could not find creative way to make it practical in society successfully and attract a majority of followers. Moulana Azad focused on the society, rather than the individual and family. As a young, he was influenced by Muslim nationalism and the theory of Pan Islamism produced by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī. Insisting on the political separation of Hindus and Muslims Azad wrote that every Indian Muslims are first of all a member of world Muslim brotherhood. There is no greater shame for Muslims than to beg from others for political education. The Muslims must not join any political party. They were the leaders of the world. If they submit to God, the whole universe will bend to their will. But astonishingly, the same Moulana Azad began to argue for Hindu Muslim unity in last two decades of his life.

After 1920, he had undergone for a radical change and he reformed as a revivalist Muslim and accepted Indian secular nationalism as his political philosophy. Then he primarily focused on the politics of Muslim community and even represent the passion of Muslims in Indian politics. Then his all attempts were centralized to bring the Muslims into the mainstream of the Indian society as he was convinced that the power and development of a society in independent India relies upon the political power that possesses.

Non-violence was the main factor of the secular nationalism Azad put forward. He promoted dialogue among faiths with spirit of peace. But he did not believe non-violence as the article of reli-

32 Rahil Khan, Abul Kalam Azad, article retrieved from 20 December 2015.
33 Ramin Jahanbegloo, From Islamic Revivalism to Universal Humanism: The political and philosophical itinerary of Abul Kalam Azad. Article retrieved on 19 December 2015.
gion, but only as the matter of policy. He severely opposed the use of arms for religious needs as the fundamentals of every religion is same- the humanism and peace\textsuperscript{34}. However Azad never demand for Shariah based government or Shariat law for Muslims in India, even he was not ready to support a special nation for Muslims and he vehemently opposed that and he declared the safe for the Muslim ummah in subcontinent is Indian secularist government which would consider all the religious passion of all people.\textsuperscript{35}

According to him the main three messages Qur’ān emphasize is 1- salvation depends upon faith and good works, not on ritual or custom or group affiliation 2- revealed religion is one for all man-kind and therefore there should not be sectarianism 3- worship of God should be direct, without any intermediary\textsuperscript{36}.

Azad explained that the secularism was not in confining religion to observances of certain ritual within home, but in religion inspiring followers to live righteous path and seeking guidance of almighty in understanding what that right path is. Therefore every human being has to struggle to become a better follower of their respective religion and Moulana Azad wanted to codify Islamic law and reform Islamic law, but he breathed his last before undertaking this task\textsuperscript{37}.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî and Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, two Muslim intellectual scholars lived of early twentieth century, had contributed a lot to the social, political and educational advancement of the Muslim ummah with religious notion. The reformist

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{36} Irfan Engineer, Glimpses into nationalist Muslim- Moulana Abul Kalam Azad. Article retrieved from ummid.com on 19 December 2015.

\textsuperscript{37} Ramin Jahanbegloo, From Islamic Revivalism to Universal Humanism: The political and philosophical itinerary of Abul Kalam Azad. Article retrieved on 19 December 2015.
thoughts and methodology both extended were different as the political and geographical conditions both had to face. Imam Nursî had to face a nation of Muslim majority while the Moulana Azad had to meet a nation where his community was minority. On the eve of emerging of Said Nursî, Turkish people were severely engrossed to the western secularism, culture and philosophy and the religion was suffocating under the Kemalian ideology. So, insisting on religious awareness, he gradually made an obvious guidance for Muslims and he started his mission from each and every person, then family, then society and at last to the nation.

On contrary, in case of Moulana Azad, his minority community had felt complete backwardness in all cases. The Muslim community in India were loyal and extremely connected to the religion. But the system they followed was thoroughly fulfilled with baseless traditions, customs and rituals. And the other problem affected them was the fervid rejection and lack of material education. Moulana Azad analysed the problems and he tried to modify the essence of Islam out of all impurities. But he challenged and severely criticized by orthodox ulama in India as he fervently opposed the culture and customs that the Indian Muslims and ulama practiced for long years.

Moulana Azad, conclude that the problem that Indian Muslims face from external is more dangerous than the internal and for the peaceful existence and proud identity, the community needs significant and influential power in future Indian politics. By this observation, he gave central attention on the politics and called upon all Muslims to actively participate in independence movement. He believed that the community could achieve its high performance in education and in all other cases through cementing its power on politics and government otherwise the interest of community may be rejected on the pressure of majority.

On the case of secularism, Said Nursî vehemently opposed it and Moulana Azad completely accepted it. But the concept of secularism was utterly different in their cases; that is the secularism in case of Nursî was the European which promote the quite
rejection of all religious notions and in the case of Azad it was Indian secularism which promote all the religious notions and to keep mutual tolerance among all classes. In Turkey, the secularism challenged Islam and that is why Said Nursî tried to sweep it away while in Indian case secularism built a wall of protection for Islam and other religions from the communal conflicts and intolerance and resultantly Azad supported it.

In short, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî and Moulana Abul Kalam Azad were the influential Muslims thinkers who advanced to empower the Muslim *Ummah* through reforming the society and reviving the religious knowledge combining it with materialistic education, especially modern science and technology. Both scholars did their best to renew the religious awareness of community and called upon the whole *Ummah* to the Qur’ānic lifestyle. The thoughts and intention of both scholars was same but as per the historical, geographical and political situations, there were differences on the methodologies and reformist ideologies both experienced.

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Gnosis of Allah (Ma‘rifatullah): some insights from Said Nursî’s Risale-i Nur

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ABSTRACT
The term ‘Ilm (Knowledge) and its respective branches—educational institutions, scholars and students few to mention—are being highly revered and there are ample deliberations in diverse discourses coming very frequently both in Qur’ân and Hadith. Inquisitive seeking and search for knowledge (Talab al-‘ilm) is the prime duty assigned to the Muslims. The terms like ‘Ilm, ikmah, ma‘rifah, etc and their verbs and verbal derivatives, time and again—find their representation in the Qur’ân, that further adds to the characteristic beauty of ‘Ilm. Ma‘rifah in Bediüzzaman’s thought emerges from Islam. Ma‘rifah is knowledge which designates a thing together with all its qualities as something different from everything outside it. Mar‘ifatullah (Knowledge of God) leads to purity of heart and struggling with the soul, so that level of purification is attained that the senses and reason could not attain on their own. In Bediüzzaman’s thought, Ma‘rifah is one of the fruits of belief (Iman), and is considered to be one of the results of being on the straight path in religion. According to him the foundation, source, light, and spirit of all true knowledge is knowledge of God, and its essence and basis is belief on God. In Bediüzzaman’s thought the worship, servitude to God taught by many verses of holy Qur’ân is only realised by recognising God and loving Him.

In this context, this paper as a humble attempt will bring to lime-light the concept of knowledge in reflection to the writings of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, whether, it may be his concept of integration of religious knowledge with scientific knowledge or the Ma‘rifah (knowledge of God) in recognizing God.
Introduction

The Risale-i Nur consists of the works written by Bediüzzaman Said Nursi (1877–1960) for the purpose of propounding in all its details the Islamic view of existence, which is total and all-embracing. Said Nursi’s keen intelligence, creative imagination, his genuine sincerity before almighty Allah, and besides his wide knowledge of Islamic culture, his comprehensive learning in many sciences, as well as his unsurpassed capacity and the faculty for profound reflective thought paved the way for him to write his magnum opus Risale-i Nur which is in one hundred and thirty parts (Hamid, p.1). The philosophy of Said Nursi was revolving round the Qur’an. He did not take history as his source, which represents man’s material interests and ambitions on the face of the earth. He tried to find a way to build a new society based on Islamic ideals (Ibid).

Knowledge of God (Mar‘ifatullah)

Before dwelling into the main topic “Concept of Knowledge in Islam: A Brief Review of Said Nursi’s Risale-i Nur” with a special focus on the “Knowledge of God”, it becomes very important to discuss the Islamic concept of knowledge is? There are many definitions describing the nature of knowledge, but what is of relevance here is the epistemological definition, since it is important to understand what the Islamic epistemological context involves and implies. Perhaps its greatest implication lies in its effect upon our vision of Reality and Truth and our research methodology; our intellectual scope and practical application in planning for what is called ‘development’, which all bear upon our understanding of education (Attas, 1977, p.5). Knowledge is the awareness of a thing with reference to its reality (Qadri, 2007, p.17).

The very first revelation of the Qur’an based on five verses contain the note of knowledge. Man knew nothing but He the all-powerful blessed him with knowledge. He started knowing (the reality of the things). He was brought to light from the darkness and deep ditches of ignorance. It was light of awareness that was
Knowledge is, in truth, a journey towards light and awareness:

知识就是向光明和觉醒的旅程。

Proclaim! (Or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created, Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful He Who taught (the use of) the pen, Taught man that which he knew not. (Al-Qur’ān, 96:1-5)

Knowledge means to be aware but only that awareness becomes knowledge in the real sense which brings divine gnosis and nearness to Allah (Qadri, 2007, p. 23-24).

Western thought advocates numerous theories and understandings of knowledge, which have taken the form of pragmatism, romanticism, Marxism, positivism, secularism, liberalism, and democracy. Another point that we should be aware of is that these theories and ideals emerged as a result of the western mind endeavouring to adopt a way of life where religion has no part to play. (Al-Sayih, 1995, p.2).

The theory of knowledge in Western thought is dominated by ‘conception’ (tasawwur) whose fundamental source is reason or the sense. This form of conception was not born of modern age, but is the product of ancient idol-worship (Ibid). A person studying this, therefore, has to note in particular that Said Nursî’s understanding of ma’rifah is not a theory like those of Al-Farabi (870–950 C.E.) and Ibn-Sina (980–1037 C.E.), but a basic matter affecting man’s conduct in life (Ibid). Nursî in his book Sozler (The Words) writes:

This strange world must have someone to regulate it, and this orderly country must have a lord, and this fine town, an owner, and this finely made palace, a master builder. We must try to know him, for it is understood that the one who brought us here was He; If we do not recognise Him, who will help us? (Nursî, 2008, p.287)

The sole purpose hidden in sending the man to this world (earth) and the wisdom implicit in it consists of recognising the
Creator of all beings and believing in Him and worshipping Him (Nursi, 2007, p.125) ‘Ilm, the knowledge is the basis of Islam. ‘Islam’ connotes submission, recognition, surrender and obedience to the will of Allah. This will of Allah can be known through Knowledge, ‘Ilm (Gilani, 2002, p.4).

In Nursi’s thought, ma‘rifah is one of the fruits of belief (Iman), and is considered to be one of the results of being on the straight path in religion. While Mar‘ifatullah (knowledge of God) leads to purity of heart and struggling with the soul (al-Sayih, 195, p.2). Belief is an affirmation where by the servant’s heart achieves stability and certainty. When the heart feels this assurance and attains stability in divine unity (Tawhid) and admits that He is man’s sustainer and man His servant and that there is no god other than Allah, then the servant will worship none other than Him (Ibid). According to Bediüzzaman said Nursi:

[T]he true affirmation of Divine unity which, through seeing on everything the stamp of His power, the seal of His dominicality, and the inscriptions of His pen, is to open a window directly onto His light from everything and to confirm and believe with almost the certainty of seeing it that everything emerges from the hand of His power and that in no way has He any partner or assistant in His Godhead or in His dominicality or in His sovereignty, and thus to attain to a sort of perpetual awareness of the Divine presence (Nursi, 2008, p.300).

The knowledge of God gained through theology does not afford a complete knowledge and a complete sense of the divine presence. However, when gained through the method of the Qur’ân of Miraculous Exposition, it affords both complete knowledge and a total sense of the divine presence. Risale-i Nur perform the duty of an electric lamp on that light-filled highway of the Qur’ân of Miraculous Exposition. The knowledge of God attained by the Sufi way is deficient to the same degree in relation to the knowledge obtained through the meaning of the legacy of Prophethood directly from the All-Wise Qur’ân (Bediüzzaman, 2008, p.388).
There are numerous “instructors” (maʿarif) to guide man, in knowing his Creator and to carry out his duty of worship. According to Said Nursî these instructors can be broadly categorised under four main headings:

1. **The Prophet Muḥammad**, in whose person was brought together the “knowledge” of all the Prophets;
2. **The Qur’ān** which is the supreme expression of the truth taught by all the revealed scriptures;
3. **The universe**, which includes all creatures; and
4. **The conscience**, as man’s “conscious nature” which is like the centre of all his senses, having the capacity to recognize God.

Despite the fact that there are numerous “instructors”, acquainting man with his sustainer in respect to His worship, the true aim of the journey in this world, the four discussed here are universal instructors (Nursî, 2008, p.243).

1. **Muḥammad**

The first of the universal instructors who describe our sustainer to us and acquaints us with Him is Muḥammadﷺ, the reason for the world’s creation. It is Muḥammadﷺ who provides convincing answers, acceptable to all. Heﷺ is an articulate proof of His magnificence (Ibid). When we go through the Aḥadith of this beloved Prophetﷺ it shows us the way to know our God. His saying change the state of one’s belief and elevates one from the lowest of the lows to the highest of the highs. Heﷺ seeks eternity because heﷺ wants to be in the eternal one’s presence for ever. He sees all human beings as mirrors, in which are to be seen all the sacred Names of our creator, and their true everlasting beauty. Heﷺ directs our supplications to our sustainer, who is Known by His attribute (Ibid).

In the *Risale-i Nur*, this universal Instructor has been called *Sirāj al-Nur* (The Illuminating Lamp) and referred to us as a detailed proof of this elevated truth Divine unity (Nursî, 2007, p.14). Moreover, Muḥammadﷺ being awarded the Station of Praise and Glory points to his supreme intercession for all his community.
He is concerned also with the happiness of all his community. It is therefore pure wisdom to seek endless benedictions and prayers for mercy for him from all his community (Ibid., p. 122). A being who in addition to noble characteristics and perfections has all these luminous miracles to demonstrate, must certainly be the most truthful in speech of all men. It is inconceivable that he would stoop to trickery, lies and error, the deeds of the vile (Ibid., p. 152).

The duty of people of consciousness and intelligence in this world, everything of which our sustainer created full of art and purpose, is to ponder over His beauties reflected in the art and to proclaim them wonderingly. It was Muḥammadﷺ who performed this duty, which is described in the Risale-i Nur as the basis of worship, most perfectly. In this respect, all the words and acts of Muḥammadﷺ are seen in the Risale-i Nur as words and acts making known our sustainer; and is announced as the chief of “the sphere of worship” (Nursî, 2008, p.243).

2. The Qur’ān

The Qur’ān is another universal instructor, all of which have great importance and are inseparable from one another. Qur’ān, being “the guide” of the Risale-i Nur, holds an endless importance. The Risale-i Nur may be summarised as demonstrating the Qur’ān’s truth under the guidance of the Qur’ān and from this point of view its definition of the Qur’ān is extremely meaningful:

The Qur’ān which comes from God’s infinite knowledge, is a translation of the universe, which appears as a vast book. All the beings in the vast universe are signs of creation, translating them into a language the man can understand. The Qur’ān is the pre-eternal translator of the mighty Book of the Universe; the post-eternal interpreter of the various tongues reciting the verses of creation; the commentator of the book of the Worlds of the manifest and the Unseen; the revealer of the treasuries of the Divine Names hidden in the heavens and on the earth; the key to the truths concealed beneath the lines of events (Ibid., pp. 376-77).
The Qur’an is the Word of God, it is a Divine decree, it is an address in the name of the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, it is a pre-eternal discourse on account of universal Divine sovereignty, it is a notebook of the favours of the Most Merciful from the point of view of all-embracing, all-encompassing Divine mercy, it is a collection of addresses at the start of which are certain ciphers in respect of the tremendousness of Divine majesty; and through its descent from the comprehensiveness of the Greatest Name, it is a holy scripture full of wisdom which looks to and inspects all sides of the Sublime Throne (Ibid., p. 377).

This is the eloquence of the Qur’an, which is at the degree of miraculousness. Its eloquence is a wonderful eloquence born of the beauty of its word-order, the perfection of its conciseness, the marvels of its style, its singularity and pleasantness, the excellence of its expression, its superiority and clarity, the power and truth of its meanings, and from the purity and fluency of its language, which for more than 1400 years has challenged the most brilliant men of letters of mankind (Ibid).

The Qur’an, therefore, invited the Arabian orators of that time to reply to even one of the shortest of the Suwar (sing. Sūrah). It challenged them with the decree of

وَإِن كُنتُمْ فِ رَيْبٍ مِّمَّ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُواْ بِسُورَةٍ مِّن مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُواْ شُهَدَاءكُم

And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a Sūrah like there unto; and call your witnesses or helpers (If there are any) besides Allah, if your (doubts) are true (Al-Qur’an, 2:23).

While describing our maker to us, the Qur’an puts forward proofs in two different ways. One of these is “the proof of wisdom and purpose”. In brief this proof is the fact that, as the perfect order of the universe shows, faultless art is exhibited in creation and wise purpose and benefits. This proves the makers intention and wisdom, and refutes definitively the notion that it was created by
chance. For there can be no perfection and intention without will and choice (Mermer, 1995, p.5).

The Qur’ān’s second proof is the proof called “dalīl-i ikhtira’”. Unconscious, lifeless, simple causes could not be the creator of beings, all of which are miracles of power and wondrous works of art leaving everyone is amazement. In its verses that mention creation and giving of existence, the Qur’ān points out that the true effective agent is God alone and that causes have no true effect, and it establishes this proof in people’s minds (Ibid).

The first, and most direct and shortest way, leading to knowledge of God, the highest point of perfection man can reach, is the way of the Qur’ān. In fact, the Qur’ān teaches how we can address ourselves to the other three ways. For instance, with many of its verses, the Qur’ān invites man to consider “how beings are created.” It makes known the Creator of the heavens and earth and all they contain as an All-Glorious One possessing absolute knowledge, absolute power, and absolute will. It points out that nothing can be a partner to God

3. The Book of Universe

The Risale-i Nur describes the universe as a vast book or a vast human being (macro-anthropos). Each word of this book, and even each letter, is created so miraculously that infinite power sufficient to create the whole universe is necessary in order to create even the minutest particle in exactly the right place. Life connects one thing with everything else. There is an order in the universe which embraces all beings and ties each single being to all the other beings as though weaving a web for each. It is a compounded impossibility to suppose that blind, simple, lifeless, natural causes which are themselves in need of being made and do not know where they are going and why, are the cause of this perfect order (Ibid., p. 6).

While presenting the universe as vast, universal evidence for Divine unity, the All-Wise Qur’ān most frequently uses evidence that the mass of people will understand easily. Examples of this are the earth, sky, stars, moon, rain, water, clouds, the bee, the
ant, and the wind. In the *Risale-i Nur* the author has also adopted this method and style. In accordance with the *Qur’ānic* approach, which may be summarized as “demonstrating Divine Oneness within Divine unity,” it shows that all beings from minute particles to the stars are brilliant proofs of the existence of the Necessarily Existent One, Who possesses absolute power (*Ibid*).

4. The Conscience

The fourth instructor describing our Sustainer to us and making Him known is man’s conscience, known as “man’s conscious nature,” which has been deposited in his self as a trust.

Man’s needs encompass the whole universe. They exceed it even. Man has intense need for life after death, and all his senses want immortality and eternity. However, on his own he does not have the power to meet any of these needs. And such power is not to be found in anything else, since everything is created like himself. Man has been adorned with extremely fine senses, and all the time feels the need to find a point of support in the face of his obvious impotence. He sees, in fact, that his life, youth, senses, the food which he enjoys, his clothes, in brief all the bounties bestowed on him, are day by day being lost to him, that they are leaving him. He can find no power in himself to prevent their departure. He longs for his youth not to depart, for those he loves not to abandon him, but he can do nothing apart from desiring these things. In the face of this helplessness, his conscience hopes for a point from which it can seek help, a support from which it can find strength (*Ibid.*, p. 3).

The *Risale-i Nur* sees man’s need for both a support and point of assistance as part of the order in the universe, and says that in this way two windows have been entrusted to the conscience. It says concerning the conscience that from these two windows, which it calls “the point of support and point of assistance”, “perpetually manifest knowledge of the All-Glorious Maker in man’s heart.” “Even if the eyes of the mind are closed, those of the conscience are always open” (*Ibid*).
The *Risale-i Nur*, in every part of which the truths of belief are elucidated and proved to the intellect, refers to the conscience so that man will perceive the reality of these truths in his own self as well. Man’s innate being and his conscience, are a window to the mind. The conscience is used as a unit of measurement, and after making it confirm a truth, the heart, the centre of the emotions, finds satisfaction. For “the conscience does not forget the Maker; even if it denies its self, it sees Him (the Creator). It thinks of Him, and is turned to Him” (*Ibid.*, p. 4). *Risale-i Nur* described it as a place of transit where the World of the Unseen and this Manifest World come together and where the thoughts and inspirations from those two worlds meet (*Ibid*).

The *Risale-i Nur* likens the conscience to the laws of nature. That is, “the essential nature of things does not lie.” When a handful of water freezes, the inclination to expand in its nature necessitates that it takes up more space. It expands even if it is in an iron container and it splits the iron. Strong iron cannot prevent what the water’s nature necessitates. Inclinations such as this are the appearances and manifestations of the commands related to creation which God has laid down with His will (Nursî, 2009, pp. 171-72).

As was seen, the knowledge reached through revelational knowledge and its interpretation and by applying its method exactly is knowledge. Being based entirely on revelation, its aim is the same as that of revelation. Its aim and purpose is not to acquire knowledge about the universe, like the physical sciences. What we understood from the above verses was that the concept of knowledge in the Qur’ân is used to refer to both the knowledge brought by revelation, and the knowledge man may obtain from revelation, and the knowledge man may obtain about the universe (which here we defined as the physical sciences.) Thus we may claim that we have arrived at these three most general categories of knowledge from the Qur’ânic angle (Acikgencan, 1995, p. 6).

According to *Risale-i Nur*, “everything has many aspects that give onto God like windows and discusses the universe as a window opening onto knowledge of God. Thus it explains to those it
addresses how this window should be looked through and what may be seen from it here and now (Nursî, 2008, p. 690). The reality of everything looks to the manifestation of one of God Almighty’s Names, and is bound to it, and is a mirror to it; whatever beauty is apparent in each, it is due to the Name; the Name requires it to be thus. Whether or not the thing is aware of it, in the view of reality the beauty is demanded. And from this truth, the tip of a most mighty ‘Law of Beauty and Making Beautiful’ is apparent (Ibid., p. 579).

It is clear that Said Nursî considered that we possess all the implements necessary for ma’rifah, and that we should use them for this purpose. In the Twenty-Sixth Word, he writes:

If you want knowledge of reality and true wisdom, gain knowledge of Almighty God. For the realities of beings are rays of the Divine Name of Truth and the manifestations of His Names and attributes. The reality of all things, whether physical, non-physical, essential, non-essential, and the reality of all human beings, is based on a Name and relies on Its reality. Things are not merely insignificant forms without reality (Ibid., pp. 488-89).

If we study Nursî’s Words carefully, we could easily understand his conception of using the mind, senses, and heart, and that this way may easily convey a believer to knowledge of God.

It is to be observed that the effort of numerous Islamic thinkers to expound the question of ma’rifah has been within the framework of this conception. The majority of them have been united in the view that ma’rifah is based on the senses, the mind, sight, and revelation.

Conclusion

In this paper a humble endeavour has been made to bring to light the phrase “knowledge of God” which is ambiguous in English, since it may have God as either the subject or object of knowing.

This general conclusion shows clearly that the Qur’ânic and Sunnah give importance to knowledge (‘ilm) without categorising it. However, whether science, or philosophy, or technological knowl-
edge, if it has not been qualified by revelation, it means it has not risen to the level of Qur’anic enlightened knowledge. Enlightened knowledge is knowledge which revelation has infused with belief, and in the Islamic framework, is a level which all sorts of knowledge have to reach. The opposite of this knowledge is ignorance. However, knowledgeable a person is, and of whatever knowledge he is informed to the very highest degree, if he does not reach this level of knowledge, his knowledge is the equivalent of ignorance and harmful to mankind. That is to say, knowledge that is not enlightened by revelation causes harm to people rather than benefit.

Since those who seek knowledge are happy with what they do, the angels overspread them with their wings. Whatever there is on the land and in the heavens, even the fishes in the seas, pray for forgiveness for those with knowledge. The superiority of the learned over the one, who worships, is the superiority of the moon (due to its light) over the other stars. The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets. For the Prophets left not riches and possessions as their legacy, but knowledge. Let those who desire to acquire this, hasten after it gratefully.

In Risale-i Nur much has been talked about the concept of knowledge and in various ways, “Without the light of the heart the light of the mind will not shine; so long as the two lights are not combined, all is darkness.” The following fact, emphasized strongly by Bediüzzaman, throws light on the subject: “The sciences of religion are light of the conscience.” For the sciences of religion are the product of revelation, and they illuminate the heart as a result of the relationship between revelation and knowledge. And the great need of the enlightened heart for knowledge being stated indicates the attitude towards the knowledge we have called enlightened knowledge.

This qualified knowledge, which we may call “enlightened knowledge”, is not merely a mental state which is combined with God’s absolute knowledge, which comes with revelation, it is at the same time an existential level of existence tied to practice, reflecting conduct and a way of life. It is because of this that a Muslim
A scholar cannot be unbiased towards His knowledge; His knowledge necessitates that he acts in accordance with it, and it is also his duty to seek the knowledge which he has to act in accordance with.

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Said Nursî’s concept of responsibility and accountability

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ABSTRACT

This paper will discuss Said Nursî’s concept of responsibility and accountability in the light of Risale–i Nur focusing mainly on faith. The discussion will be around Bediüzzaman Nursî’s view about the sense of responsibility and accountability and how this responsibility and accountability gets developed and understood by humans with respect to faith. In the same context Bediüzzaman Nursî draws people’s attention to the importance of faith. From the readings of Risale–i Nur, it’s clear that the belief in Islam is the most urgent need. According to Islam, there is no God but God, is the first and must article of faith. After that believe in His angels, His books, His all messengers and the last day and to believe in destiny, whether good or bad. Those who have believe in the above discussed articles are called believer. And are responsible for some duties and accountable before Allah.

In this paper, I would try to explain Bediüzzaman’s concept about belief as well as sense of responsibility and accountability in a comparative way and main articles of faith. The paper will focus on the discussions and arguments which said Nursî has mentioned in Risale–i Nur relating to the responsibility and accountability for which mankind can easily be rewarded or punished. And what role does it play in developing a sense of responsibility or accountability in modern man or woman in the global world? It is with these questions that the concept of belief will first be considered.

Introduction

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî (1876–1960) was born in a small village near Hezan in the province of Bitlis in eastern Turkey. Said Nursî was a scholar of the highest learning having studied not only in
the traditional religious sciences but also modern sciences and had earned the name, Bediüzzaman, wonder of the age. Said Nursî was dynamic personality among intellectuals of his age. Said Nursî played a significant role in the transformation of the Turkish society and revival of the Islamic culture in modern Turkey.

Said Nursî was against ‘Westoxification’ of Muslim Society. He opposed western style secularism. He approached the Qur’ān in the light of modernity in his Risale-i Nur. Through these treatises he answered the spiritual, psychological academic and rational doubts arising in the minds of young people. (IOS, 2005)

According to Said Nursî, through the light of faith man rises to the highest of the high and acquires a value worthy of paradise. And through the darkness of unbelief, he descends to the lowest of the low and falls to apposition fit for hell. Belief is both light and strength. Belief makes man into man, indeed, it makes man into a king. Here Said Nursî try to convince, man’s basic duty is belief and supplication. According Said Nursî, here belief meant is to know Allah and His attributes. (Nursî, 2015)

The Risale-i Nur, a contemporary commentary on the Qur’ān’s message by Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, offers numerous solutions for these problems. Its method is based on acquiring knowledge and harnessing it in the best of ways; that is, as a means of attaining to “belief by investigation,” and on constructing a morality understanding proceeding from these principles. Bediüzzaman Said Nursî developed his theological and ethical stand points in response to the events of his time. He formulated an accessible faith-based perspective and applicable understanding of religion that could be practiced in contemporary secular settings. The ethical, political, and social theories he developed continue to influence generations after him.

Nursî built his theology and ethics on the creational link between God and humans through the offering and acceptance of amanah, the Divine Trust. For Nursî, this relationship between the Divine and humankind is the very source of ethics. He argues in the voluminous Risale-i Nur that the call for responsibility and
the fact of accountability are rooted in a scriptural understanding of humanity’s role on the earth as vicegerents of God.

This paper is an attempt to map Nursî’s ethical theories at personal and social levels with a focus on his interpretation of the Trust; Khilāfah, human vicegerency; anâ, the human ‘I;’ and the responsibilities falling upon the shoulders of humankind as a result of their acceptance of the Trust. The paper will consider that other branches of an ethical life are nourished by the qualities of human ‘responsibility’ and ‘accountability.’ Special attention will be paid to the bond between belief and these central qualities.

**Belief and Sense of Responsibility**

For Nursî, the most important objective of his endeavours was safeguarding and strengthening belief in Allah. Said Nursî wished to strengthen the faith of his Muslim brethren by transforming it from pure imitation into belief based on investigation (tahqiq) and conviction.

According to Said Nursî, there is a pressing need to explain to the modern man the basic tenets of the Qur’ân– The unity of Allah, Prophet hood, and the existence of hereafter, in such a way both heart and intellect are satisfied. And after acceptance of unseen belief a man become aware towards its responsibility and duties for both creator and creation. And human being is found answer to the existential dilemma facing all human beings: who am I? Where am I from? What must I do have? Where am I going? What will happen when I die? Said Nursî said, the cultivation of the belief, provide answers of these existential dilemma to his/her satisfaction. (Horkuc, 2009)

The ability of each human individual to talk about him or herself as ‘I’, Said Nursî contends was given to man as part of the divine ‘trust’. Allah says in the Qur’ân:

*We did indeed offer the trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof; but man undertook it—he was indeed unjust and foolish.* (Qur’ân, 33:72)
A trust is something that is given to an individual, and over which he has power of disposal: he is expected to use it in the manner prescribed by the giver of the trust, although he also has the power to against the giver’s wish and dispose of the responsibility in any way that he likes. In the context of the creator and creature relationship, what is this responsibility that man agreed to take upon himself, after cosmic phenomena such as the heavens and the mountains had refused it? According to Said Nursî man takes it upon himself to act as a ‘representative’ of the Allah on the earth. (Horkuc, 2009)

The ‘trust’, then, offers whoever accepts it the ability to know Allah and to ‘experience’ Him through His beautiful names and attributes of perfection. But whoever accept trust must also undertake the responsibility to dispose what he/she is given in accordance with the wished of the giver: should he discharge his responsibility successfully, he will reap the reward; should he fail, he must face the consequences. In the context of the trust offered by the Allah, the responsibility is a momentous one, for what it actually means in practice is assuming the attributes of Allah and acting not only in His name, but in complete accordance with His will. According to Said Nursî Allah gives us ability to display those attributes consciously and, in so doing, act as Allah’s ‘representative’ on earth. In other words, man is able to recognise divine attributes of perfection such as power, wisdom, mercy, beauty and the like simply by virtue of the fact that he is in one sense, created in Allah’s image.

For Nursî, the key belief consists, *inter alia*, of deciphering the science which exist in the self and on the horizons (Qur’an 41:53) in order to unlock the talisman of creation and revealed the true worth of man, which is his position as vicegerent of God. By knowing what he is, and, more importantly what is not, he can, to paraphrase the words of the Ḥadith, come to know his lord. From the Nursian perspective the attainment of belief, and the strengthening of belief once it is attained, is contingent upon man’s ability to read the cosmic text ‘in the name of god’ or *bismillah*—a phrase
which he must assimilate in to his consciousness if he is to sustain the vicegerency interested to him:

Yes, this phrase is a treasury so blessed that your infinite impotence and poverty bind you to an infinite power and mercy; it makes your importance and poverty a most acceptable intercessor at the court one all powerful and compassionate. The person who acts saying in the name of god, resemble someone who enrolls in the army. He acts in the name of government; he has fear of no one; he speaks, performs every matter, and withstands everything in the name of the law and the name of the government (Nursî, the words)

**Function of Human Being**

Throughout the *Risale-i Nur* is the Qur’ānic notion that God created everything with a purpose. Based on this belief God charged human beings with certain duties placed them on the transient earth for trial and examination and gave them faculties to discover His attributes that are manifested throughout the universe in various forms. The highest aim of humanity is to complete their faith with knowledge and love of God. As Said Nursî says:

Be certain of this, that the highest aim of creation and its most important result are belief in God. The most radiant happiness and sweetest bounty for Jinn and human beings are the love of God contained within the love of God. And the purest joy for the human spirit and the sheerest delight for man’s heart are the rapture of the spirit contained within the love of God; indeed all of true happiness, pure joy, sweet bounties and untroubled pleasure lie in the knowledge of God and love of God; they cannot exist without them. Based on Qur’ānic verse Said Nursî concludes that humankind is a responsible agent of God (Nursî, 2015).

**Belief and Sense of Accountability**

Belief is a key concept in Nursî’s writings and it is vital to strengthening one’s moral stance. A firm belief in the hereafter, is a main article of faith motivating a believer to act as a responsible and
accountable of all their deeds. The status of vicegerency and acceptance of trust makes human beings responsible and accountable for their deeds in the sight of God.

According to Said Nursî, it is only through the belief in life of hereafter, human beings accept that they are accountable before Allah.

All the miracles, truths and proofs proving foremost the veracity of the Qur’ân and the miraculous expositions testify to prove the realization and occurrence of resurrection. For almost one-third of the Qur’ân is about resurrection, and at the beginning of its short Surahs are powerful verses about it. It expresses the same truth explicitly and implicitly with thousands of its verses, and proves and demonstrates it for example:

*When the sun is folded up. (Qur’ân 81:1)*

*O men, fear your Sustainer; the trembling of the hour is an awesome event. (Qur’ân 22:1)*

*When the earth is convulsed (Qur’ân 99:1)*

*When the heavens are torn asunder (Qur’ân 82:1)*

*When the heavens are torn apart (Qur’ân 84:1)*

*Concerning what they dispute (78:1)*

*Has the story reached you, of the overwhelming event? (Qur’ân 88:1)*

These all verses declare that resurrection is the most important and the necessary truth in the universe. Here resurrection means ‘accountability’ of this world (Nursî, 2015).

**Conclusion**

To conclude, throughout whole writings, teachings and thoughts, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî’s key subject was belief (*Iman*). According to Said Nursî all types of abilities, attributes and qualities of human beings are developed by firm belief in Allah; like sense of responsibility, sense of accountability and sincerity and so on. According to Said Nursî without belief no one could get the true happiness, rapture of the heart and freedom from the slavery of the other
creation. Belief creates morale, confidence that is necessary for human beings to survive in this world. The responsibility and accountability of humans, whether enacted on a small or large scale, between two individuals or at the level of a national or international levels, is to be informed by the awareness of humanity’s position in relation to God and the sources of guidance that have been provided for them. This awareness comes from a continuous remembrance, hence connection, to God.

The development of personal and social ethics is an expression of the role of vicegerency. These ethics are rooted in human vicegerency, which revolves around the fact that humans bear the attributes of God in their souls and exert their lives in knowing and worshipping their Creator. For Nursî, a personal and social ethic based on these founding guides would likewise reflect the attributes of God and fulfil the responsibilities of vicegerency in the best ways.

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Reinventing knowledge tradition and social renovation in contemporary South Asia from the alternative lessons of Medresetuzzehra

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ABSTRACT

South Asia is one of the most eminent regions that history has gone through its glorious past. This geographic area was one of great cultural achievements with reformist ideas and new approach to life. Parallel to these paradigmatic cultural and scientific changes, the normative patterns also changed, culminating, for instance, in the reform and standardization of education.

It was the Madrassah movement in South Asia that helped to bind such a great heritage and civilization of the religion. Religious schools have been the target of reforms in this region. It is evident that there is a variety of ulama institutions like mosques, khanqahs, shrines, maktabs, waqf and madaris. All of them have long tradition especially religious schools were of utmost importance both for the national as well as cultural integration process. Traditionally, madaris also have cultural and political significance because of their potential as a nucleus for Muslim reform, development and mobilization.

To understand the speech and the policy of the crack-down, it seems proper to scan the structural, formative and normative developments in the field of Islamic education in the subcontinent that have been regarded for the latest scenario. Medresetuzzehra is an alternative education mission which set in motion at the auspicious of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi.

This paper tends to focus on the relevance of Medresetuzzehra model intellectual engagements in contemporary south Asia, even it had been considered as the breeding ground of globally acclaimed Islamic educational tradition in history. To extend the study towards a wide variety of spaces the author dares to look
forward with the topic on a comparative study about countries, socio-cultural negotiations and hopes to find common platform for both systems of approaches in the world today, especially the possibility of such madrassah in south Asian landscapes.

Introduction

The contemporary era is on its revolution in the forms of providing education to the total population in order to define wisdom and morality from the bottom of every individual’s heart in regaining the eternal peace on this world. Education is the most important character in defining each and every individual and therefore differentiates them from the animal world. When studying about the educational processes, its developmental projects and the benefits through that on the contemporary basis having south Asia as the platform for those discussions, both positive and negative components can be brought out that education has been able to bring out great cultural achievements and new reforms to life. The Madrassas in south Asia had a prominent role in shaping the culture and education of the region but as time and tide moved forward, the Islamic schools or the Madrassas lacked in many grounds due to different reasons and circumstances.

It is here where the concept of Medresetuzzehra has a prominent role to play in developing the perfection of the south Asian Madrassas. The great thinker and reformist trained by the soil, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî played a critical role in developing the concept of Medresetuzzehra for the betterment of his people and their development in educational statuses. The nine-year-old Bediüzzaman Said Nursî charged nearly twenty years with the start of life to visit Madrassas, to take lessons, giving lessons, passed over the region’s problems being detected. After receiving the ratification of Hazrat Sheikh Jalal Mehmet Beyazit in the East in fifteen years he toured the eastern Madrassas, serious problems were detected on important problems and especially problems
were seen in training in the eastern and south eastern provinces. There were a lot of Madrassas in the east but all had their own demerits. They were far from meeting the needs on different basis.

All the Madrassas in the region lacked on many grounds in providing a well equipped, facilitated education. In most Madrassas, sufficient amount of teaching staff were not available. Therefore, this leads to many problems. For instance, students studying different disciplines may have only one teacher which leads to the wastage of time of the students. More than seeing the religious teaching as a profession, it was for the spiritual purpose but only few look for that because this profession did not meet the financial needs of the teaching staff and hence when this brings them only financial difficulties, only few joined to be a teacher wishing virtues in the hereafter. Due to the lack of financial resources, the Madrassas could also not meet the needs in providing good salary for the teaching staff as the financial incomes were very much limited like donation which had to be utilised for all the needs of Madrassas. This economic choking also affected on the infrastructural conditions of the Madrassas. The Madrassah buildings were deemed too primitive. As infrastructural facilities play a major role in the growth of education, here these needs could not be met which led to regular drop outs and illiteracy in religious knowledge of elite classes. The Madrassas also continued to operate in very primitive conditions. The teachers had a crucial role in this as they feared the bringing of changes in the Madrassas or the teaching pattern may change the religious beliefs or may affect the traditional aspect of the religion. Training methods in the Madrassas were outdated and did not meet the needs of the era. Providing only religious education lead to the illiteracy in modern subjects and increased the gap of the population in relating the religious education with modern education or modern science. Bediüzzaman Said Nursi realised this lack of education and opportunities foreseeing that this can cause great difficulties in the future and came forward in rectifying these adverse conditions and providing sufficient training that is required. In this context the Medresetuzzehra was born as a necessity.
The concept of Medresetuzzehra

As a solution to all the contemporary problems in the time of Bediüzzaman, Nursî put forward a fantastic project that can overcome the problems in his era. It was the Medresetuzzehra project for which he sacrificed the rest of his life in meeting the needs of the religion and modernity fruitfully. Medresetuzzehra was then in its plan on certain objectives which includes renewing and improving the Madrassas as well as merging training and management, both in terms of curriculum in the Madrassas. This project also aimed to ensure the future of Kurdish and Turkish scholars. Requirements of modern methods of education and science, which is to open a way to get to the Madrassas. At the same time create a pure source of science to remove the central reasons keeping them away from science were among the objectives of the Medresetuzzehra project. Its official status is characterized as equivalent to official schools but has a special thought and not an official institution of the state. In brief, it shall be considered to be an official level private organisation. Financial resources will be from the Medresetuzzehra foundations and donors such as alms, charity, sacrifice, personal gratification and offerings, and other benefits. Medresetuzzehra as spiritual will feed the zeal and enthusiasm of the people in the region. This project also includes Dârülmuallimin, where teacher training faculties will be included here.

The educational training style of Medresetuzzehra includes the culmination of the knowledge of religion with the knowledge of science. Modern science with the wisdom and knowledge of religion will be taught in Madrassas along the Medresetuzzehra. Branches in Medresetüzzehra (faculties, different departments) shall be considered to be, and specialization also. However, one part among them will be found in close association with science and will take courses related to their area of expertise that will help their respective areas. They will remain completely ignorant towards other disciplines. Medresetüzzehra suggests the study in three languages - Kurdish local languages, science and communication in Arabic and Turkish is
also to be regarded as official and political language. *Risale-i Nur* will be used as a textbook in Medresetuzzehra. The professors (teaching staff) of Medresetuzzehra will embrace certain features that literalist and esoteric knowledge (religious and worldly knowledge) to be the foundation and shall be familiar with the local language and Kurdish states that Kurds and Turks should also be chosen from among whom he had confidence. These were some among the plans produced by Said Nursî in building the Medresetuzzehra and coping up the problems of the era in which he lived.

**The South-Asian Madrassas**

Madrassas in south Asia has a very great potential in meeting the needs of the generation on the basis of education. They can be important partners to meet ‘Education for All’ targets. Madrassas are prominent providers of education in South Asia, especially for children with limited access to regular schools in Muslim communities. Madrassas in South Asia remain an important area of study for both academics and policy makers. Hosting two largely Muslim countries, namely Pakistan (98 per cent) and Bangladesh (90 per cent), and an equally large Muslim population in the multi-religious India (12 per cent), South Asian Madrassas have been at the centre of concerns about militancy. At the same time, the number of Madrassas in the three countries is large enough to make some argue the potential benefits of using Madrassas to impart secular education given the challenges faced by the region in meeting Education for All (EFA) targets. There are 16,000 registered Madrassas in Pakistan, 9000 in Bangladesh and while no government-recognised data on Indian Madrassas is available, all estimates place the figure at several thousands. Having such a great potential in developing the educational sector in south Asia, they are still lagging behind in many ways, progress towards Education for All goals in the three most populated South Asian countries (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) remains slow. In all three countries, the inability of the state to ensure quality education for all
has created room for non-state actors to play a prominent role, including private providers and NGOs. Development agencies have generally focused on successful NGO models, such as Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) in Bangladesh, and have supported replication of these low-cost innovative models to reach marginalised groups. They are also increasingly directing attention towards the potential of low-fee private schools to reach the poor. However, little attention has been paid to Madrassas that remain prominent actors within the non-profit education sector in most Muslim communities. Of these three South Asian countries, the madrasa education system features most prominently in the state education-sector plan in Bangladesh, where there are two types of Madrassas: Aliya (reformed) and Qoumi (unreformed). Aliya Madrassas are ones that have registered to receive state support, in return for covering the same secular subjects as taught in secular primary, secondary, and post-secondary schools. They differ from secular schools by accommodating Islamic subjects, and so allocate less time for the teaching of secular subjects. There are over 9000 of these Madrassas registered with the government’s Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board, offering education from primary to Master’s levels. The Qoumi (unreformed) Madrassas primarily focus on religious subjects and work completely independently of the government, that is, they neither follow a state-approved curriculum, nor do they receive financial support from the state or are registered with it. By contrast, in Pakistan, despite state actors debating plans to introduce a reform agenda for Madrassas as early as 1960s, a madrasa-modernisation programme was implemented only in 2002 as a result of official support from the USA. In India, state support to Madrassas for teaching secular subjects differs among states, with some states providing support through separate madrasa boards. The West Bengal Board of Madrasa Education presents one of the most developed madrassah-support programmes in India. In all three countries, the majority of the Madrassas continue to operate independent of government support and opt to register
with *wafaqs* – umbrella organisations of Madrassas, which can be established in the name of a specific school of Islamic thought.

Studies suggest that total student population in Madrassas in India and Pakistan is relatively low: 4 per cent of Muslim children in India and less than 1 per cent of the school-age population in Pakistan are estimated to be in Madrassas. However, two considerations make Madrassas significant for policy analysis. First, in terms of absolute numbers, these percentages reflect a large number: in Pakistan, for example, the officially recognised number of students in registered Madrassas is 1.5 million. In Bangladesh, according to Ministry of Education data, there are 1.77 million students within the *Aliya* (reformed) madrasa system alone, operating across the six divisions of the country. Second, their share in education provision in some instances, such as Pakistan, is larger than that of NGOs. It is therefore important to understand their potential to become partners in education provision.

Madrassas having all types of possibility in the growth of educational sector in south Asia, they are still facing many challenges in meeting the peaks of their needs. In Bangladesh, the government pays for the salary of the core teaching staff within the *Aliya* (reformed) Madrassas for secular as well as religious subjects – amounting to 72 per cent of total madrassa expenditure. By comparison, the financial incentives offered by the state in Pakistan and India have been more limited. In Pakistan, the reform programme provides for the training of 28,000 madrasa teachers for the teaching of secular subjects, and gives textbooks, stationary, computers, and furniture to the Madrassas. However, in terms of core costs, it only provides for the salaries of the teachers of secular subjects and not the numerous religious-subject teachers who constitute the core of madrasa teaching staff. The national-level reform programme in India similarly offers relatively weak financial incentives: the scheme includes 100 per cent support for two qualified teachers per madrasa on a salary of Rs. 3000 ($65) per month, less than half the salary of teachers appointed in government schools, a one-time lump sum grant for science and
maths teaching kids, and another amount for the establishment of a book bank. As in Pakistan, it does not provide for the salaries of religious teachers. Given that in a madrasa the majority of teachers are engaged to teach religious subjects, in Pakistan and most states in India the reform programmes leave the main financial burden on the madrasa administration. Given that the governments were primarily concerned with the introduction of secular subjects into the madrasa curriculum, it is understandable why they have refrained from supporting salaries of religious-subject teachers.

In contrast to Bangladesh, the state in Pakistan and India did not have any active religious body supporting the reform programme. In Pakistan, the reform programme implemented since 2002 has suffered from serious distrust from the religious community, because of it being seen as part of US-led ‘war on terror’, where the objective is to control the Madrassas rather than support them. Post-educational profession was also a point of concern that was badly affected in many south Asian countries. In Bangladesh and many parts of India, Madrassas were financially weak in the 1980s. More importantly, they were giving education in Urdu and they were losing students as they were not getting jobs anywhere and the curriculum was also very biased towards certain kind of jobs. The ulama ideological commitment also played a role in being a blockage for the growth of Madrassas. The ulama and state officials clashed on the very conception of what knowledge is. For senior ulama, knowledge demands the pursuit of truth for its own sake with little consideration of employment matters, while the state is more concerned with education to produce a productive workforce. Additionally, the ulama repeatedly recorded concerns that acceptance of state funds could, in the long term, lead to compromises on core religious principles, even if in the initial phase the reforms were within acceptable limits. There was a recognition that, once the head of a madrasa becomes used to a regular income from the state, the comfort of that regular income can lead to compromise on religious beliefs; therefore, it is thought best not to get used to such comfort. Further, in Bangladesh and West
Bengal, *ulama* from orthodox Madrassas repeatedly expressed the view that the reformed Madrassas had lost their original purpose, namely to promote Islam, and become just another form of regular school. Maulana Abdul Razak Alhabadi from Rabata-ul-Madaris in West Bengal argued, ‘Their name is Madrassas but they are actually high schools. Hindu boys also study there’. Other factors like infrastructural facilities also affect the Madrassas system in south Asia.

**Conclusion**

In a nutshell, south Asian Madrassas faced almost same problems faced in the time of Bediüzzaman Said Nursî. Thereby the primary solutions applied by Said Nursî in coping up the problems of his era are primarily applicable in the case of south Asia also. Bediüzzaman let go the ideal of Medresetuzzehra until his death. Medresetuzzehra did not happen as the ideal health institutions. One of the important duties left to a Nursî student is the realisation of the establishment as these both contexts are not totally different and go parallel on almost all paths. Thus, the ideals of Medresetuzzehra can be brought into south Asia also for the better growth in the educational sector.

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ABSTRACT
Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, a social and religious reformer in the contemporary times, can be studied in the Universal context as he provides the solutions to the various educational problems which the Muslims are facing today. By providing the concepts of faith based education and integration of religious and scientific knowledge, said Nursî’s thinking is very applicable and most rewarding in overcoming the educational crises in the Muslim world. Said Nursî is of the opinion that modern sciences should be taught in the Madrasas and religious subjects should be taught in the secular or modern schools. Moreover, his ideas about integration of science and technology with religious education are very innovative and rewarding in keeping the pathetic situation of Muslims in educational field into consideration. Said Nursî laid the great importance of integration of knowledge and argued that the light of the conscience is the religious sciences and the light of the mind is exact sciences, and reconciliation of both manifests the truth. The student’s skills develop further with these two (sciences) and when they are separated from the former superstition and from the latter corruption and scepticism is born.

The paper will evaluate the views and ideas of said Nursî on integration of knowledge. The paper will conclude that the faith based integrated model of education given by Said Nursî will provide a concrete and best possible solution for the crises which the world is facing today. ‘Madrasatu Zahra’ model will help in secular schools to save them from being without religion, while those in the religious schools will be saved from bigotry. The paper will confer that only through the concept of faith based education and the faith based integration of knowledge, Muslim world will regain its glorious past.
Introduction

Today the world is facing the intellectual challenge of knowledge as the knowledge is disseminated and dispersed throughout the world by west, and the nature of western knowledge has become problematic for the whole humankind as it didn’t possess the true purpose as being unjustly disseminated with biased approach and thus brought confusion in man’s life rather than peace and justice which is the real meaning of knowledge (Naquib Al Attas, 1979, p19). Many Muslim scholars like Sir Syed Ahmad khan of India and Muḥammad Abduhu of Egypt worked for the modern education for Muslims based on western scientific temper and methodology, and paid less attention towards basic religious teaching necessary for the development of morality. The curricula of universities and colleges get changed, and Muslim youths were being Westernised by Muslim teachers in Muslim universities (Al–Fārūqi, 1982, p 14). The building of Islam according to western lines created chaos in Muslim Ummah in which one group of Muslims were favoring modernity and another group opposed it. So the changing of curricula in Muslim universities according to the lines of west and totally neglecting the religious aspect brought confusion in the Muslim world (Naquib Al Attas, 1979, p 155). These all changes, although produced a change in science and technology but resulted in the loss of morality and Muslim identity. Said Nursî opposed all these changes and tried to reconstruct the modern educational system on religious lines. Many other Muslim thinkers tried to find the solution of this confusion and concluded that the knowledge which the west is disseminating should be developed according to the principles of Islam. The Nursî’s model of education—Madrasat–uz Zahra which stands for integration of knowledge, is the best solution for these intellectual crises. The Nursî’s model of faith based education has taken full caution of Muslim needs in the modern times, trying to integrate religious sciences and modern sciences (Al–Fārūqi, 1982, p 1). Said Nursî educational thought is very comprehensive and provides the necessity of both religion and science for the morality development.
Islamic Concept of Education

Knowledge (‘ilm) has played an important role in the Islamic intellectual thought throughout the history. The belief of Muslims is based on knowledge about God’s existence and His revelation. Knowledge on the earth began with the creation of first man on earth—Hazrat Adam (AS). According to the Qur’ān, Almighty Allah has provided man with certain amount of knowledge due to which man was made as Ashraf al Makhlukāt (best creation) and has been given the trusteeship (Khilāfat) of the earth. When angels argued about the man’s creation, then Allah taught ‘Adam (AS) the names of certain things, and ‘Adam recited the names which the Angels did not know which lifted his status, that is by knowledge. The Holy Qur’ān says:

And He taught Adam the names of all things; then He placed them before the angels, and said: “Tell, They said: “Glory to Thee, of knowledge We have none, save what Thou Hast taught us: In truth it is Thou Who art perfect in knowledge and wisdom.” He said: “O Adam! Tell them their natures.” When he had told them, Allah said: “Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of heaven and earth, and I know what ye reveal and what ye conceal?” me the nature of these if ye are right (Al– Qur’ān, 2: 31–33).

This shows the importance of acquiring knowledge from the Qur’ānic point of view. In context of the above Qur’ānic verse, the word ‘Names’ we conclude that it means the knowledge and nature of everything, hence no differentiation between scientific knowledge and worldly knowledge. About this verse, Nursî writes that, “it was the teaching, due to man’s comprehensive disposition, of countless sciences and numerous all-embracing branches of knowledge about the universe” (Said Nursî, The Words, 2015, p 254). The knowledge not only refers to the spirit or religious but it refers to the knowledge of the accidents and attributes pertaining to things sensible and intelligible so as to make man known about the relations and distinctions existing. Revelation on Prophet Mohammad ﷺ started with the word iqrā’, which means ‘read!’ or ‘recite!’ Furthermore, it is inspiring that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ himself was ummī (unlettered person); all this gives us clue about
the importance of knowledge in Islam. The Qur’ān reports the first revelation as:

*Proclaim! (or Read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created—Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful, — He Who taught (the use of) the Pen, — Taught man that which he knew not* (Al- Qur’ān, 96:1-5)

The beginning of the first revelation with the word ‘Iqrā’ signifies the importance of seeking knowledge in Islam. Allah has used the words like pen, book, writing, reading etc. at various places in the Qur’ān (Al-Qur’ān, 68:1-2, 2:282, 2:31–33, 4:54, 12:22, 21:74, 27:15, 62:2, and 9:122.), which further increases the significance of acquisition of knowledge. However, in the Holy Qur’ān these words have not been used in their literal sense but they have much deeper meanings (Maudūdī, 1993, p 54). We should keep in mind that Islamic concept of knowledge is not confined only to religious or spiritual knowledge, but it encompasses the entire scientific, modern and secular knowledge. The Islamic history bears testimony about laying the foundation of scientific knowledge. The Muslim scientists were inspired by the following Prophetic tradition:

*Getting knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim (man and woman).*

(Ibn Mājah, Hadith No., 224)

With the Qur’ānic revelation, Muslims brought a revolution in human history and developed their own civilization, with the help of knowledge. According to Syed Abu Ala Maududi, “Education is the sum total of knowledge gained. A man who does not make use of these faculties falls behind others, whereas he who makes use of them excels. Similarly a nation assumes leadership when it devotes itself unsparingly to the pursuit of knowledge handed down to it from the past as well as present” ((Maudūdī, 1993, p 55).

He further argues that knowledge is the only factor which made Egypt, China, Greece, the Muslims or Europeans the leaders of the world, that is to say leadership only depends on knowledge. This progress is the manifestation of what Allah has mentioned in the Qur’ān:
Nursî’s Faith based education

From the childhood Said Nursî was in constant search to know the realities of science, for dismissing the false illusions and misunderstandings about the Islam that resulted in conflict between Islam and science, and worked for the progress of the Muslim world, both spiritually as well as materially. His educational ideas were mainly based on the combination of the two systems of knowledge; religious sciences and modern sciences, in the belief that the science can never be in conflict with the religion of Islam as both have been created by Almighty Allah and understanding of the two sciences will definitely help in the strength of the religious beliefs, if properly understood. He believes that, “You should definitely know that the highest aim of the human’s innate character and the most sublime result of the human’s inborn disposition (fitrat) are to have faith in God. And the most exalted position and the greatest status in [the ranks] of humanity are to attain the knowledge of God within faith in God. The most delightful happiness and the sweetest bounty for jinn and human beings are to attain the love of God within the knowledge of God. The purest joy for the human spirit and the finest pleasure for the human heart are to experience the spiritual taste contained within the love of God. Surely, all true happiness, pure joy, pleasant bounty, and sheer taste are all found in and experienced through the knowledge of God and the love of God.” (Said Nursî, the Letters, 2015, p 265)

Nursî writes that, “The light of the conscience is the religious sciences. The light of the mind is exact sciences. Reconciliation of both manifests the truth. The student’s skills develop further with these two (sciences). When they are separated, from the former superstition and from the latter corruption and skepticism is born.” (Hamidullah Marazi, 2015, p 64) Nursî felt that the modern education system is not full filling the needs of society and is creating
the gap between the religious sciences and modern sciences. The model for integration of knowledge provided by him has much emphasis on spiritual and moral values. This exclusive model is culturally more viable for Muslims at global level, thus needs to be studied in depth to make it viable in the spheres of education and technology and Muslims and non-Muslims can equally benefit from it (Hamidullah Marazi, 2015, p 64). When science is used as the proof for the existence of God, it confirms the compatibility of the two (Religion and science), which in turn should apply for the framing of educational policies. Said was in the search of this reality that science should be used for searching the truth, and for knowing this reality he suggested that union between the two is necessary. The aim of education in Islam is to, “cultivate in man a personality that abides by the teachings of religion, and is hence assured of salvation and happiness in the eternal life of the Hereafter.” (Naquib Al Attas, 1979, p 171).

Faith based Integration of Knowledge

Said Nursî educational ideas were rooted in the combination of modern sciences and religious sciences, the integration of which will result in the strengthening of belief, and knowing the religious truths. He believed that there can be no progress when education is devoid of human and spiritual values, “Education that is entirely scientific and materialist can produce nothing but tools and modern mechanics. It alienates man from beauty and estranges him from wisdom” (Anees Ahamed, September 2014, p 220). Nursî devoted his whole life in responding the secular ideas and tried to save and strength the religious character among the Muslims. For this he believed that there are no sciences like religious and secular sciences, but they are one and should be studied as one science. Science only can’t make human only but it is faith which makes humans as humans. “Faith necessitates affirmation of Divine unity, which in turn necessitates submission to God, which in turn necessitates reliance on God, which in turn necessarily leads to happiness in this world
and the next” (Said Nursî, the words, 2015, pp. 322–323). According to him, “knowledge without the insight of the heart turns into a form of ignorance. The heart disease of the nation is religious weakness; it can be treated through strengthening it” (Anees Ahamed, September 2014, p 219). Said Nursî was the great patron of the reason, logic and the greatness of the modern sciences of its free will and he was of the view that the truth can only be confirmed by the integration of the *shari‘ah* sciences and reason based sciences. Thus Nursî was in favour of combination of the both. He is of the opinion that human knowledge has limitations, and everything can’t be explained through reason which in turn can be explained by the religion. Religion without reason cannot help to find the truth about the God and often leads to associating partners to Allah and on the other hand logical science without religion is fruitless and lacking as he states that, “Belief is attained through reason’s power of choice” (Bolay, 1995). He held that the integration of both the knowledge and belief in God, will result in actual happiness and spiritual inclination. In Islam reason and revelation are equivalent and are united in the Islamic sources and doctrines as a facet of truth in the unity of Allah, and in Islam there is no possibility of contradiction between science and revelation. Nursî is of the view that there is a great miss understandings between religion and science, although if studied in proper way these misunderstandings can be removed. Allah has made the whole creation subservient to man, and commanded man to use it and make its fruits available to all. Obliviously this necessitates mastery and manipulation of the elements and forces of nature and in turn, a real and complete knowledge of them. For achieving this purpose Nursî suggests, “Students of the modern education system should be trained in religious subjects, and similarly, products of the religious schools should be well equipped with the modern trend of the world, so that the two sections of the society could have enough opportunity to understand both the sciences utilizing their skills.” (Anees Ahamed, September 2014, p 220). Science and technology can’t help man in overcoming the present crises unless and until it is not guided by the eternal laws that is Islamic revelation.
Nursî model of education—Madrasat-uz Zahra

Nursî lived in the time of materialism, communism and atheism, and the whole world was in crises, which enforced Said Nursî to draw the educational model known as Madrasat-uz Zahra. The aim of the Madrasat-uz Zahra was to make reconciliation between religion and science. The modern basis of knowledge are atheistic and irreligious which created doubts in the minds of Muslim students. Said Nursî stands for integration of knowledge, that is “religious sciences should be taught in the secular schools (Maktabs), and positive sciences in the religious schools (Madrasa), so that the students of secular education are salvaged from irreligious behaviour, the religious schools from bigotry, are very progressive. Moreover, his ideas about integration of science and technology with education are very futuristic and rewarding given the pathetic situation of Muslims in educational field worldwide.” (Hamidullah Marazi, 2015, p 63). Nursî provides the much needed model which challenges the plague of materialism and waves of atheism. Madrasat-uz Zahra is an appropriate model for inculcating the moral values in the students, “The unique features of Madrasat-uz Zahra model make it one of the most suitable and culturally viable models for Muslims in its global perspective also. Therefore studying this model in depth is highly desirable in the context of the consumerist tendencies emerging in the spheres of education and technology alarmingly, with no exception of Muslims and non-Muslims, by relegating spiritual and moral values to margins.” (Hamidullah Marazi, October, 2015, p 7). The Nursî’s educational model provides faith based education system, which has the capacity to face the modern challenges, and in inculcating moral values by reading both the religious sciences and modern sciences.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is clear that only through ‘faith based education’ and ‘faith based integration’, Muslim world can overcome the present crises and regain its glorious past. The Nursî’s
model of knowledge based on belief in God, is of worthy consideration and will help in the contribution for setting of the Muslim education system. Today the education system of the Muslim world is based on western secular education system which needs to be changed into the Islamic ones by applying the Nursî’s model of education system that is Madrasat-uz Zahra model. Said felt the need for education in knowledge, as well as education in character. The Nursî’s model of education is based on the integration of knowledge, faith and education, which will help in the renewal of civilization, as education is in the centre for building civilization. The Nursî’s concept of faith based education and knowledge are equally instrumental and helpful for researchers, educational reformers and the educational institutions who are in the search for integration of knowledge to inculcate moral character among the learners. The Madrasat-uz Zahra model presented by said Nursî provides the most rewarding and appropriate educational model, which provides the unique and convincing methodology for integration of knowledge, modern sciences with religious sciences. By applying the Nursî’s model of faith based education model in the educational institutes, students will develop a sound moral character with gaining the mastery over the science and technology. In short the writings of Nursî will help in the advancement and prosperity for Muslims, both in this world and hereafter. Education based on faith is the only solution for the dangerous disease of secularization and. The traditional social sciences when incorporated with the modern one will defiantly help in understanding the man and will help in improving the conditions of humans.

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Advaita Vedanta of Shankaracharya and Nursî’s philosophy: a critical reading on ethics and philosophy

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ABSTRACT

The quest of sages made it possible to frame many philosophies in the long lasting Indian context. As an eternal rebellion against the notions of Nasthika Veda (Heterodox) such as Carvaka, Buddhist and Jain religiosity, Asthika philosophy took its form and existed together with importance of Vedas and existence of an everlasting ultimate reality. It has reached its sublime peak with the fruition of a philosophy expounded by Shankaracharya which is known as Advaita Vedanta. He made his luminous treatise commenting on the ‘Upanishads’ that contain revealed truths concerning the nature of ultimate reality and describing the character and form of human salvation. This commentary is known as Vivekachudamani. It clearly expounds the significance of Self Realization and teaches the way to attain this. According to this, Brahman, the ultimate reality, is the only truth, the world is unreal, and there is ultimately no difference between Brahman and individual self. The same concept was commented and referred to in the Nursî’s Qur’ânic commentary Risale-i Nur in the term of ‘Unity of existence’. But, on the contrary to the concept of Advaita that the divinity is being represented and the man is the part of the Ultimate reality, Nursî explores the concept that divine power is beyond the man and world. Both of them guide us to give up all blind desires for worldly and finite objects, purify our intellect and live a righteous life for realizing the self or soul. The perspectives regarding the salvation are too different in these two. This paper does aim to project these two diverse and similar philosophical teachings. In doing so, it would also deal with the same and underlying precepts of their ethical philosophy and aesthetic narrative of philosophic
and mystic systems. It would, indeed, discuss the comparative and discussable relevance of sameness in the Indian philosophy.

Keywords: Indian philosophy, Advaitha, Shankaracharya, Nursî’s thoughts, unity of existence, salvation

Introduction

Questioning the very foundations of moral values and social ethics, secularism, as a disastrous evil of materialism, came in to force in the time of Kemalist reign of Turkey. Therefore, almost all the signs of Islam became forbidden in the public, identity of religion was questioned, religious thoughts were marginalized and the darkness of moral vacuum began to spread. In response to the vital need of this turmoil, a reformer rose in. His life itself was a portrait of struggling life for religiosity in the devilish mouth of secularist time. This reformer, Said Nursî, made a revolution for the social well being in accordance with religious teachings. Its representation is still active in the form of *Risale-i Nur*.

As his teachings present the humidity of living through the religion, Nursî thoughts, differently from others, are very significant one to be equated with the Shankaracharya for being ethical in nature and positive in theory. European culture was in sterile land for religiousness after the immense impact of industrialization. Following inventions and other techno-developments, the society gained much more but, they were definitely losing their peace and comfort. This industrial trend of Europe made a society, of everything is not impossible, possible. It revolutionized transition from traditional systems to the modern world of machineries and chemical products. Steam engine, coal and textile manufacturers disclosed vital and modern chapters of human history contributing extensively to mining, metallurgy and chemicals. With this progress, society started to concentrate on science and experimental formulas and to question, especially, things which are inaccessible and unreasonable to them. This radical thought eagerly necessitated the irrelevance of god and religious beliefs
to them unfortunately. The existence of humanitarian values was largely relied upon the mere concepts of religion. After religious culture was being intensively threatened, revival of religion in its legacy becomes necessarily needed. Bediüzzaman Said Nursî is a master model for the pursuit of retrieving the noble existence of Islam in its real manner from the attacks of materialist philosophies of western power. In the post industrialization world, ideas of Nursî are needed to prioritize the social goodness even he was against an- ti-religious materialism. He stated concisely that “the aim of those working to impose materialist philosophy, the atheists who were trying to uproot Islam, was destruction of moral and immaterial nature.” The materialistic approach offered consequential road map to a valueless society questioning the goal and path of living.

Such a seminal intervention to guide the Hindus to the morality and religious harmony through the attention he paid to other sects with the introduction of preaching of a monotheistic religiosi- ty.

His seminal work on Qur’ân, containing an inner light of belief, forms a drastic movement to present the reality of Islam. With wisdom and timely conscious understanding, the Qur’ânic com- mentary, known as Risale-i Nur having six thousands of pages, of Said Nursî has the importance of presenting Qur’ânic ideas in a well crafted manner and in making the religion Islam an organic entity in this material world. At the same time, it’s to be noted that the Vivekachudamani of Sri Sankara is a meticulous commentary of Gita and Upanishads. This also serves almost the same duty.

**Concept of ethics**

Both were adamant followers of an indoctrination of morality and traditional ethics. Both were trying to give solvents for the philo- sophical questions. It is obviously comprehended in the treatises of both that their ethical problems can’t be displaced without a humanist precept like religious belief, although the religion had become so brute and ritual-ridden. Through making clear aim and visible path by real faith in religion, life becomes meaningful,
unless society may be fragmented abhorrently without morality and ethics. This has an added duty of transmitting positive ideals and instilling ideal visions of happiest philosophical living.

“The revival of Qur’anic values and ethics thus affected would strengthen bonds of society”, consequently, it will make a new social order possible. Said Nursî has here a prominent role in revitalizing and representing belief and spiritual ethics, more than presenting a mere surviving religiosity in the Kemalist corridor of secular rampage. He could substantiate the real essence of life and its enjoyments in aesthetic manner.

**Nursian approach**

Nursî has been credited for revitalizing the code of belief with wisdom and common reasons accessible to the modern society. Along with all these he was also credited for the setting up a philosophical and ethical school. “Arguably, in his early works there is a discernible influence of modernist trends, especially in his emphasis on science and rationalism. The distinguishing mark of the new Said was the primacy he gave to revelation over reason.” This primacy is the distinguishing line wanted for a real and perfect approach to this code of Sufî spiritual ethics. On the contrary, the revitalizing religion in the sketch of reason and empiricism may dangerously become a fallacious move.

Beginning from the fun and sorrow, Said Nursî’s contemplations were touching multi-dimensions of belief and complexities of creator, the everlasting One. He cunningly analyses the spiritual values and ethical notions of a believer in the *Risale-i Nur*. It was capable enough to reach out into the ordinary mass that makes it distinguished and sublime. Nursî forcefully prescribes the mode of his school of philosophy in the reforming period of religious entity: “Concerning the truths which the one-eyed genius proceeding from the sick philosophy of Europe sees wrongly, the guidance of the Qur’ân, which looks at the two worlds with two shining eyes familiar with the unseen and points with two hands to the
two happiness’s for mankind, says: O man! The self and property which you gave is not yours; it is in trust to you. The owner of the trust is an all –compassionate and munificent one, powerful over all things and with knowledge of all things. He wants to buy from you the property you hold so that he can guard it for you and it will not be lost.”

“That, is belief, which consists of being connected to maker, makes apparent all the works of art in man. In this respect, insignificant man becomes God’s addressee and a guest of the sustainer worthy of paradise superior to all other creatures”.

As in response to the safety seeking trend of modernity, Nursî writes that “Belief is both light and strength. Yes, one who acquires true belief may challenge the whole universe and be saved from the pressure of events in accordance with the strength of his belief. Saying, “I place my trust in God”, he travels through mountainous waves of events in the ship of life in complete safety. He entrusts all his burdens to the hand of power of the absolutely powerful one, voyages through the world in ease, then takes his rest in the intermediate realm.”

**Difference in the philosophical conception**

According to this, Brahman, the ultimate reality, is the only truth, the world is unreal, and there is ultimately no difference between Brahman and individual self. The same concept was commented and referred to in the Nursî’s Qur’ānic commentary ‘Risale-i Nur’ in the term of ‘Unity of existence’. But, on the contrary to the concept of Advaita that the divinity is being represented and the man is the part of the Ultimate reality, Nursî explores the concept that divine power is beyond the man and world. Both of them guide us to give up all blind desires for worldly and finite objects, purify our intellect and live a righteous life for realizing the self or soul.
Conclusion

Nursi’s approach to re-framing and readdressing the religious philosophy of Islam with a distinguished momentum and mystic touch is a valuable treasure. Shankaracharya too situates his area under this common theme. But, there is a very unique division that is the existence of an everlasting non-human and non-creatures entity in Nursi’s treatise, contrary to that of Adishankara.

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Approaches of Muslim scholars to the modern education
Bediüzzaman Said Nursî and Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan

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The paper will focus on Bediüzzaman Said Nursî of Turkey and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan of India. Nursî is born in 1877 in eastern Turkey and died in 1960 in Urfa. Sir Sayed Ahmad khan is born in British India in 1817 Delhi, Died: 1898 Aligarh. He was son of Saiyad Muḥammad Muttaqi, And Azizun Nisa Begum.

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî was born in 1877 in eastern Turkey early one spring morning in the village of Nurs, a small hamlet in the province of Bitlis in eastern Turkey and died in 1960 in Urfa–Turkey. Said’s mother was called Nuriye, and his father, a villager with a small-holding of land, was Mirza. They were a Kurdish family. Really both were very famous in recent past. Both have dedicated their lives for the upliftment of Muslim community, Sir sayed dedicated almost for the Indian Muslim community but Said Nursî’s was completely to Turkish people.

The circumstances into which he was born were humble; the house, of sun-dried brick, one of twenty or so built against the south-facing slope of a valley in the towering Taurus Mountains hills to the south of Lake Van.

Even at his birth the child displayed signs of being exceptional. It was the beginning of a new world, it coming into the world he peered around attentively, his look fairly frightening those present. It was as if he was going to speak. He did not cry, just clenched his fists. Then they chanted the call to prayer in his ears, and named him SAID. By his parents death he started to say that Said was to say: “From my mother I learnt compassion, and from my father, orderliness and regularity.” He was unusually intelligent, always
investigating things, questioning and seeking answers. Years later when he was explaining how scholarly metaphors may degenerate into superstition “when they fall into the hands of the ignorant”, he himself described an occasion which illustrates this.

One night, on hearing tin cans being clashed together and a rifle being fired, the family rushed out of the house to find it was an eclipse of the moon. Said asked his mother:

“Why has the moon gone like that?” She replied: A snake has swallowed it.” So Said asked:

“Then why can it still be seen?”

“The snakes in the sky are like glass; they show what they have inside them.”

Said was only to learn the true answer when he was studying astronomy a few years later.

Whenever the opportunity arose, and especially in the long winter evenings, Said would go and listen to any discussions being held by students and teachers of the medreses, that is, the religious schools, or by religious figures. These discussions, often about the famous scholars, saints, and spiritual leaders of the past, usually took the form of contest and debate. If any of the students or scholars displayed more intelligence than the others, or was victorious in debate, he was made much of by the others, and was held in great esteem. This appealed to the young Said, too.

Said started his studies at the age of nine. He appears now as a pugnacious child, prone to quarrelling with both his peers and his elders. But this sprang not from any innate fault, but from the frustration at bearing within him a great and brilliant spirit which as yet could find no way to express itself, and at the incomprehension which he often met with, from both his teachers and his fellows.

Mulla Abdullah his elder brother first urged Nursî for starting studying, Abdullah had gradually improved because he was with his father. He saw Nursî always mingling with the village students playing and wandering here and there they had not studied. With this intention, he set off with him for Molla Mehmed Emin Efendi’s medrese in the village of Tağ, near Ispartit.
He had a great esteem to life but he couldn’t grasp the word from usthad because Nursî was too young. He could not endure even the smallest word spoken to him in a commanding tone, so he returned to his own village Nurs, where he told his father that he would not attend any more medreses until he becomes older, because the other students were all bigger than him. Due to its small size, Nurs had no medrese, so Said’s lessons were then restricted to the one day a week that by his elder brother.

Let us see how in later years Bediüzzaman described himself at this age.

“When I was ten years old, I had great pride in myself, which sometimes even took the form of boasting and self-praise; although I myself did not want to, I used to assume the air of one undertaking some great work and mighty act of heroism. I used to say to myself: ‘You are not worth tuppence, what is the reason for this excessive showing-off and boasting, especially when it comes to courage?’ I did not know, and used to wonder at it. Then, a month or two ago the question was answered: the Risale-i Nur was making itself felt before it was written: ‘Although you were a seed like a common chip of wood, you had a presentiment of those fruits of Paradise as though they were actually your own property, and used to boast and praise yourself.’

There, his independent spirit and the fact that he could not endure being dominated in any way made him fall out with four other students in particular. They would join forces and harass him constantly. So, one day Said went to Seyyid Nur Muhammed and said: “Seyh Lokman Efendi! Please tell them that when they fight me to come two at a time and not all four at once.” This courage on the part of the ten-year-old Said pleased the Seyh greatly, who smiled and said: “You are my student, no one shall bother you!” And from then on Said was known as ‘the Seyh’s student’.

Bediüzzaman felt that the existing educational system was not addressing the need of the society, it was making gap between two sections of society. In the Islamic madrassa, student should be trained with the modern sciences and schools, madrassas should
be well equipped with modern trend of the world, it could have opportunity to understand both the sciences utilizing their skills in. The main purpose of his initiative was to produce a sincere community of Muslims, it committed to get rid of the crisis of the Muslim intelligentsia and to develop science and technology in the Muslim world.

So he advocated for the establishment of an Islamic university in Eastern Anatolia, which he named “Medresetü’z-Zehrâ” where he planned the positive and religious sciences to be studied together to raise scholars and scientists for the needs of the age. He said, “The light of wisdom is positive sciences; the light of conscience is religious sciences. When two are combined, truth arises thereupon.”

This Islamic University was to serve three goals:
1. Eradicate the conflict between so-called scientific thought and religion by teaching Islamic and positive sciences together.
2. Finish the conflict between the regular school (maktab), the theology school (madrasa), and the dervish lodge (takkah).
3. Attract students from the entire Islamic world to promote the unity and solidarity between Muslims.

He went to Istanbul to realize this idea. However, he could not completely accomplish what he wished for. He did not return home and preferred to stay in Istanbul, and initiated a struggle in social affairs.

Really it was the main goal of Said Nursî for the uplift of Muslims because firstly he said about that the, schools and madrassasa should equipped with science and modern Muslim trends, and science, culture, technology, astronomy etc.

“I tell you certainly in accordance with numerous indications and my own firm conviction that in the near future this country and nation and its government will have extreme need of works like the Risale-i Nur before the world of Islam and the rest of the world, and though presenting it will demonstrate its existence, honour, pride, and historical glory.”
It is interesting to note that the “expected model university” visualized by Bediuzzaman likely to be established like al-Azhar University. However, the model of his university is found with its aim, organizational structures, syllabus, and pattern in the 20th century in many Muslim countries, including the well-managed International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Established in 1983, the mission of this university is the “integration of knowledge between religious sciences and modern sciences with the vision of Islamisation of human knowledge. This is a comprehensive institution of higher learning in which all branches of knowledge are taught with the Islamic principles and values and the philosophy of knowledge. This is a fully residential University and open to all students from all-over the world. Students and teachers must observe Islamic obligations in everyday life and supervised by the authority. Arabic and revealed knowledge courses are taught in Arabic, but their minor courses are offered in English. The university also offers major and minor courses for students of various disciplines. For instance, economic students can take Islamic subjects as minor courses and Islamic studies students are allowed to take economic as minor courses. At IIUM, all professional courses are taught in English, but students are required to reach the level of advanced Arabic proficiency. IIUM has also well-established “Research Centre”, which promotes researchers to publish scholarly, innovative and scientific research within the university through publications and various training programs. IIUM aims to produce an ideologically-sound and internationally-qualified Islamic leadership from the “Garden of Knowledge and Virtue”. Nursî’s aim was such a university like IIUM and Al-Azhar Cairo.

At the time of Nursî, Turkey was ruled by the Mustafa Kemal Pasha who was a modernist and was not in terms with the Islamic sharia, so, Nursî did not approach Mustafa Kemal. In 1893, he went to the city of Van upon the invitation of the governor, and for 15 years gave lectures there. During those years he studied and mastered positive sciences, as well. He even won debates against the teachers of chemistry and geography.
In 1898, he read news in a paper the governor showed, which would be a turning point in his life.

In that news British Minister of Colonies Gladstone had said to the British Parliament as he held the Qur’ān: “We cannot rule over the Muslim as long as this Qur’ān remains in their hands; we must do everything possible to remove the Qur’ān away from Muslims, or alienate them against the Qur’ān.”

Those words distressed him, but caused him to take a decision that would change his life: “I will show and prove to the entire world that the Qur’ān is a never-fading, inextinguishable spiritual Sun.”

*Risale-i Nur*

The *Risale-i Nur* collection is a six-thousand-page commentary on the Qur’ān, written by Bediüzzaman Said Nursî in accordance with the mentality of the age. Since in our age faith and Islam have been the objects of the attacks launched in the name of so called science and logic, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî therefore concentrated in the *Risale-i Nur* on proving the truths of faith in conformity with modern science through rational proofs and evidence, and by describing the miraculous aspects of the Qur’ān that relate primarily to our century. This collection now has millions of readers both in and outside of Turkey. The Turks managed to maintain their religion despite the most despotic regimes of the past decades. Although its author faced unbearable persecution, imprisonment, and exile, while no effort was spared to put an end to his service to faith, he was able to complete his writings compromising the *Risale-i Nur* and raise a vast group of believers who courageously opposed the oppression and preserved the dominance of Islam in the country. At the time of Said Nursî the Turkey ruling by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who was a anti Islamic *sharia* and tried to install the Westernisation in Kemalist Turkey.

Bediüzzaman understood that the Turkey leads by materialists, atheists and others in the name of science and progress and Westernisation. By this, the Islam being weakening and losing
the foundational beliefs with the unprecedented attacks on those foundations in the 19th and 20th centuries.

In exile, Bediüzzaman wrote his work the *Risale-i Nur* that would explain and expound the basic tenets of belief, the truths of the Qur’ān, to modern man. His method was to analyse both belief and unbelief and to demonstrate through clearly reasoned arguments that it is possible, by following the method of the Qur’ān, to prove rationally all the truths which are the only rational explanation of existence, man and the universe.

Bediüzzaman thus demonstrated in the form of easily understood stories, comparisons, explanations, and reasoned proofs that, rather than the truth of religion being incompatible with the findings of modern science, the materialist interpretation of those findings is irrational and absurd. Indeed, Bediüzzaman proved in the *Risale-i Nur* that science’s breathtaking discoveries of the universe’s functioning corroborate and reinforce the truths of religion.

Also, it explains the most profound matters of belief, which formerly only advanced scholars studied in detail, in such a way that everyone, even those to whom the subject is new, may understand and gain something without it causing any difficulties or harm.

Also, through his *Risale-i Nur* he explains and presents the importance and value of morality. And every Man should keep the morality in our life, and morality leads to heaven by purification of hearts. Really by the *Risale-i Nur* he tells us about the purification of hearts and he tried to install this also in routine life. Man’s most fundamental need is the need for religion, the need to recognize and worship Almighty God with all His Most Beautiful Names and attributes, and to obey His laws; Those manifest in the universe and those revealed through his prophets. In explaining the message of the Qur’ān, Almighty God’s final Revealed Book, brought and perfectly expounded by His final Prophet, Muḥammad (PBUH), and Islam, the complete and perfected religion for mankind, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî demonstrated in the *Risale-i Nur* that there is no contradiction or dichotomy between science and religion; rather, true progress and happiness for mankind can, and will, only be achieved in this way, the way of the Qur’ān.
Nursî was a pioneer in all fields of knowledge and hard-working personality, he worked hard for the Turkish Muslim community and he tried to uplift the Muslims of Turkey by education and morality especially by the *Risale-i Nur*. It was the major part of the Nursî, he explained his planning through the *Risale-i Nur*. He was known in Turkey as mash hoor Nursî and Quthubuzzaman also.

I have just one purpose. That is; as I get nearer to my grave, we hear the sounds of Bolshevik owls (supporters) in this country of Islam. These sounds damage the tenets of faith of the Islamic World. It captivates the public, particularly the youth, by making them faithless. Fighting against them with all my strength, I am inviting the youth and the Muslims to faith. I am struggling against these faithless masses. Allah willing, I wish to enter Allah’s presence through this struggle of mine. This is all I do.” – Bediüzzaman Said Nursî

**Sir Syed Ahmad Khan**

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan born in Oct. 17, 1817 at Delhi and died in 27 March, 1898, at Aligarh, was a Muslim educator, jurist, and author, founder of the Muhammedan Anglo Oriental College at Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh India, and the principal motivating force behind the revival of Indian Islām in the late 19th century. His works, in Urdu, include *Essays on the Life of Mohammed* (1870) and commentaries on the Bible and on the Qur’ān. In 1888 he was made a Knight Commander of the Star of India.

Influential Hindu and Muslim politicians of his time looked at Sir Syed with great suspicion, since he called upon Muslims to loyally serve the British Empire. He denounced nationalist organization such as the Indian Congress for giving only token representation to the Indian Muslim community. Sir Syed promoted the adoption of Urdu as the lingua franca of all Indian Muslims and mentored a rising generation of Muslim politicians and entrepreneurs. Prior to the Hindi–Urdu controversy, he was interested in the education of both Muslims and Hindus, and visualized India as a “beautiful bride, whose one eye was Hindu and, the other, Muslim”. As a result of this view, he was regarded as a reformer and nationalist leader.
Vision and education revolution

The supreme interest of Sir Syed’s life was education in its widest sense. He wanted to create a scientific temperament among the Muslims of India and to make the modern knowledge of Science available to them. He championed the cause of modern education at a time when all the Indians in general and Indian Muslims in particular considered it as sin to get modern education and that to through English language. He began establishing schools, at Muradabad in 1858 and Ghazipur in 1863. A more ambitious undertaking was the foundation of the Scientific Society, which published translations of many educational texts and issued a bilingual journal in Urdu and English. It was for the use of all citizens and were jointly operated by the Hindus and Muslims. In the late 1860s there occurred some developments that were challenges to his activities. In 1867 he was transferred to Benares, a city on the Ganges with great religious significance for Hindus. Thus during a visit to England (1869–70) he prepared plans for a great educational institution. They were “a Muslim Cambridge.” On his return he set up a committee for the purpose and also started an influential journal, Tahzib al–Akhlāq “Social Reform” for the uplifting and reforming the Muslims.

These institutions were for the use of all citizens and were jointly operated by the Hindus and the Muslims. In the late 1860s there occurred developments that were to alter the course of his activities. In 1867 he was transferred to Benares. A Muslim school was established at Aligarh in May 1875, and, after his retirement in 1876, Sayyid devoted himself to enlarging it into a college. In January 1877, the foundation stone of the college was laid by the Viceroy. In spite of conservative opposition to Sayyid’s projects. In 1886 Sayyid organized the All–India Muḥammadan Educational Conference, which met annually at different places to promote education and to provide the Muslims with a common platform.

Sir Syed finally reached to the conclusion that lack of education was the main cause of the backwardness of the community. Sir Syed became successful in his mission and gave a firm foundation
of Aligarh College (Mohammedan Anglo–Oriental College) which afterwards became Aligarh University. Sir Syed got moral and financial support from a cross section of the society. Amongst the first 120 people who gave valuable donations for the construction of School Building were several Hindus. Their names still decorate the old Buildings of Aligarh Muslim University.

Sir Sayed wanted MAO College to act as a bridge between the old and the new, the East and the West. While he fully appreciated the need and urgency of imparting instruction based on Western learning, he was not oblivious of the value of oriental learning and wanted to preserve and transmit to posterity the rich legacy of the past. He, therefore, decided to keep a fine balance between the two. The College he founded was the visible embodiment of reason and progress.

The aim of Sir Syed was not merely restricted to establishing a college at Aligarh but at spreading a network of Muslim Managed educational institutions throughout the length and breadth of the country. To this end, he instituted All India Muslim Educational Conference.

In his now infamous “Minute on Indian Education” (1835), Macaulay had belittled both Sanskrit and Arabic learning. For him ‘a single shelf of good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.’ As the colonial power gained greater strength after the Revolt of 1857 and English education became popular, Sir Syed understood not only the practical need of English education for his community but also the intellectual challenges that faced the Islamic learning.

**Literary and intellectual Activities**

Sayed Ahmad’s position as naib munshi at Agra gave him an opportunity to promote his professional competence. He sharply grasped the procedures of land settlement, and prepared a handbook for the guidance of the settlement officials. In 1840, he wrote *Jami–Jam*, a historical manual in Persian that gives accounts of the forty–three
How do we judge Sir Syed?

His detractors call him an Anglophile, a man too much in awe of everything English. He is also called an apologist for rationalism. Conservatives find faults with his views on Islam. Unfair remarks are also made about his views on women. However, in passing a judgement on a past icon it must be remembered that thinking very often is trapped in the epistem of its time. That Sir Syed could go beyond the accepted discursive norms of his time in many respects, speaks volumes about his vision. More importantly, it baffles us how one single person could combine so successfully the roles of an administrator, reformer, thinker, educationalist, journalist, writer, religious scholar, devoted family man and above all a humanist. He was truly, to use Pierre Bourdieu’s coinage, a collective intellectual.

It is high time that we realize the message of Sir Syed and the spirit behind the Aligarh movement. Let us expand and propagate the Aligarh Movement for creating a modern society with a scientific outlook.

Sir Syed was not happy that Muslims should send their children to the Christian missionary schools and colleges. He not only dis-
approved of the idea but also believed it to be a shame for Muslims to hand their children over to others to educate. He wanted that Muslims should instead have their own schools and colleges without the interference of any university or government, pointed in a lecture at Jalandhar in 1894, and he stressed:

Dear friends, we will achieve comprehensive education only when we have our education in our own hands and gain freedom from the control of the universities. We will then fully control our educational institutions and disseminate knowledge within a short time. We will hold philosophy in our right hand and natural sciences in our left, and a crown of La-īlah Ilīlah Muḥammadur Rasul Allah on our head.

Today Aligarh Muslim University is a symbol and a nerve centre for unity in the subcontinent. Students not only from India but from abroad are joining the university and completing their studies without suffering any prejudice on account of religion, caste, or colour. Sir Syed’s mission is very much alive today.

“Sir Syed was an ardent reformer and he wanted to reconcile modern scientific thought with religion by rationalistic interpretations and not by attacking basic belief. He was anxious to push new education. He was in no way communally separatist. Repeatedly he emphasized that religious differences should have no political and national significance.” – Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

Nursî and Sir Sayed was contemporary both were thinking and hard working personalities for the Muslim community and also the purification of the hearts also by the Ethics.

Nursî faced a lot of problems from his own country even the government was a Turkish, which was Kemalist, Mustafa Kemal Pasha, who really opposed and banned the Islamics and Islamic shariath in Turkey utterly. But Sir Syed was an Indian but the government was not from India, they were Britishers. They opposed what they faced and tried to stop the rule over them not only on Islam but also completely rule over the India.

The similarities which were obvious from both the Movements in Turkey by Nursî and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in India. That both
were highly impressed by the developments and Innovations in Western countries and tried to build those in their working field. Particularly in the field of Education. Thought about the coming generation and need of moral education. It wanted to bring all those developments in their own countries and dedicated them to the Upliftment of the Muslim ummah. However, both the reformists faced several challenges to infuse the sense of education and modernity within Islamic fold in the hearts and minds of their followers.

Nursî lives in the minds of all Muslims of the world as a renovator of Islam in the Turkey but Sir Syed lives as a educational reformer of India. Both are known as the fathers of their country, Nursî is the father of modern Turkey and Sir Syed known as the father of architecture of modern Muslim India.
Knowledge toward bridging religious and modern sciences: Bediüzzaman Said Nursî’s approach

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ABSTRACT

In the recent past, the world has witnessed a massive progress and development in the field of science and technology. So many factors like technological know-how, new inventions and discoveries, enhancement of health and hygiene, globalization, and others govern the current trend. Bediüzzaman Said Nursî expressed that the current period—dominated by the scientific developments—demands to weld religious knowledge and the one based on experiments—scientific knowledge—together. Said Nursî endeavored vehemently to revitalize the prevailing system of education and the proposal of the university—Madresatü’z Zehrâ—was a step toward the accomplishment of the aforementioned dream. Nursî’s own life as well as his writings (Risale-i Nur) greatly contributed to the need and necessity of the integration of knowledge.

In this context, the current study is a humble effort to present, besides the concept of Knowledge, an overview of Said Nursî’s attempt and approach toward the integration of religious and scientific knowledge for the prosperity and all-round development of the humanity. Therefore, the emphasis will be more on Said Nursî’s thoughts than on his proposed model/university (Madresatü’z Zehrâ). The study will also highlight that these efforts, meant to revitalize the concept of Knowledge in a broader sense, were aimed to solve religion-science controversy or religion science compatibility.

Knowledge: understanding the concept

In various Islamic discourses the term ‘ilm appears very frequently both in Qur’ân and Ḥadîth. ‘Ilm derived from the root word ‘-l-m
means the cognitive understanding of a particular thing and there after its acquisition (Walker, 2003, 3: 100). The terms like ‘ilm, ḥikmah, ma’rifah, fiqh etc. and their verbs and verbal derivatives—time and again find their representation in Qur’ān and Ḥadīth (Ibid., pp.100-101) that further adds to the characteristic beauty of ‘ilm. ‘Ilm and ma’rifah seem to be synonymous terms “but because of the various derivatives of ma’rifah such as ‘ārif or ‘arrâf it intended to be used for the knowledge acquired through reflection and experience presupposing a previous ignorance” (Gilani, 2002, p. 5). In Islam, the scholars who are dedicated and pious come under the category of “those who know” and are assigned the title ‘ulamâ’ (sing. ‘ālim). Inquisitive seeking and search for knowledge is the prime duty assigned to the Muslims (talab al-‘ilm).1 Yunus Gilani while defining the term ‘ulamâ’ says:

‘Ulamâ’ (sing. ‘ālim) are the possessors of ‘ilm (knowledge, science, scholarship) of whatever kind and from whichever source, provided they work under the hidâyah, revealed divine guidance, communicated through the Rusul (Messengers of Allah ﷺ), final in the line being Muḥammad ﷺ; and now finally contained in the Qur’ān and Sunnah. Thus, every scientist, scholar, intellectual and social engineer with the ṣalâhiyyah (capability) in his field along with ṣalihiyyah (piety and virtue) derived from his ʿimān (belief in) and ‘amal (action) according to the Qur’ān and Sunnah is an ‘ālim and all such leaders are ‘ulamâ’ on the path of righteousness (Gilani, p. xxi).

Said Nursî demonstrates that the ‘ulamâ’ are those whose actions are in complete harmony with what they propound and are also adorned with the pearls of sincerity. Validating the argument, Nursî quotes the Ḥadīth of the Messenger (ﷺ)

All men will perish, except the scholars, and all scholars will perish except those who act in accordance with their knowledge, and all of them will perish except the sincere (Cf. Nursî, 2009, 200)

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1 It means to seek knowledge and this term is used commonly for those who are heavily engaged in seeking the religious knowledge.
For Said Nursî the term ‘lim is not merely concerned with the religious knowledge but it represents knowledge in the broadest sense. However, he has divided it into two broad categories viz. aqlî and naqlî wherein the former is connected with the religious sciences and the later with physical sciences. Apparently it looks as if Said Nursî approach is dichotomous but he makes it clear by saying that in fact all the knowledge is religious irrespective of its source or nature. According to him, religious sciences (aqlî) and the physical sciences (naqlî) are not antagonistic, rather they complement one another (Hörkürc, 2004, 336).

Scholars, philosophers, and intellectuals have defined the term knowledge according to their own understanding and know-how. For Sayyid Qutb knowledge is something that is beyond mere understanding. Knowledge is in the real sense an absolute comprehension and understanding of a particular thing by the mind, linked and interlinked with the soul and conscience, and is finally realized by way of the actions. In general sense, knowledge means a total harmony between mind, soul, and the body (Hörkürc, 2004, 88). Plato, a famous Greek philosopher, articulates that “knowledge is of the world of forms or ideas which exist in the mind of a person”. (Epistemology, 2015) As per Imām Ghazālī “Knowledge is like the fruit of a tree and it flows from intellect, or like the light of the sun or like the vision of the eye. Why should it not be honoured when it is the cause of the fortune in this world and the next?” (al-Ghazali, 1982, 1: 9). One of the famous Muslim sociologists Ibn Khaldūn asserts that the knowledge can flourish only in a society that is civilized and the same is achievable through the faculty of reasoning. He further states: “Man is a social animal and his prosecution of learning is conditioned by the nature of the material, intellectual and spiritual forces of the civilisation in which he lives” (Tibawi, 1972, 42).

Said Nursî in a philosophical way endeavours to show that the fountain-head of all the knowledge is the one who has created this Universe–Allah. The same becomes apparent from the below passage taken from ‘The Rays’ wherein he says:
All the beautiful creatures which display the manifestations of an eternal beauty and loveliness especially in the spring on the face of the earth, for instance the flowers, fruits, small birds and flies, and especially the gilded, sparkling flying insects... show their craftsman’s wondrous proficiency, that they point decisively to a truly comprehensive knowledge... While the phrase “and careful decoration” means that those fine artefacts are adorned in a way so agreeable, are decorated in a way so sweet, display a beauty and art so attractive, that their maker could create these works only through an infinite knowledge. This attentive adorning and beautifying self-evidently point to a boundless and all-encompassing knowledge... Throughout the earth we see the making of wondrous living machines, some instantaneously and some in a minute or two, in orderly and measured fashion, each different from its fellows, with the greatest ease, arising from a thorough knowledge and skill, all of which point to an infinite knowledge and testify that the perfection of knowledge is proportionate to the ease resulting from the skill and knowledge in the art (Nursî, 2009, 619).

It can be pointed out from the above discussion that the spring of all the knowledge is Allah which reaches to the Messengers through wahy. It is through the wahy that Allah invites and appeals the mankind to make use of the reason and perception (‘Ayn al-Yaqīn). This has been illustrated in different Ayāt of the Qur’ān. For example:

والبَصَرَّاءِ الَّذِينَ كَفَّارَةً فِي الْعَرَاشِ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّنْ مِثْلِهِ

And if you are in doubt concerning that which We have sent down to Our slave (Muḥammad ﷺ), then produce a Sūrah of the like thereof. (Al–Qur’ān, 2:23)  

إِنَّ فِ اخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ لََيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَّقُونَ

Verily, in the alternation of the night and the day and in all that Allah has created in the heavens and the earth are Ayāt for those people who keep their duty to Allah, and fear Him much. (Al–Qur’ān 10: 06)

2 Al–Qur’ān, Sūrah al–Baqarah, Āyat no. 23; In this paper while rendering the Ayāt into English I have used Al–Ḥilālī, Taqi–ud–Din and Khan Muhammad Muhsin’s Interpretation of the Meanings of The Noble Qur’ān (Riyadh: Maktaba Dar–us–Salam, 1996)
And Allah has brought you out from the wombs of yours mothers while you know nothing. And He gave you hearing, sight, and hearts that you might give thanks (to Allah). (Al-Qur’an, 16: 78)

Likewise, in many Aḥādīth one finds the significance and thus inevitability of the acquisition of knowledge coupled with the invitation to comprehend and understand the reality of the things by using the faculty of mind (‘aql). For example in a Ḥadīth narrated by Abū Mūsā (رضی اللہ عنہ) that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

The example of guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was fertile soil that absorbed rain-water and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance. (And) another portion of it was hard and held the rain-water and Allah benefited the people with it and they utilized it for drinking, (making their animals drink from it) and to irrigate the land for cultivation. (And) a portion of it was barren, which could neither hold the water nor bring forth vegetation (then the land was of no benefit). The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allah’s religion and gets benefit from the knowledge, which Allah has revealed through me and learns and then teaches it to others. The (last example is that of a) person who does not care for it and does not take Allah’s Guidance revealed through me (He is like the barren land.) –(Bukhārī, 1: 103)

The first above mentioned Āyat and the reference from the Ḥadith reflects that the wāḥy is the main source of knowledge and the subsequent three Āyāt signify the fact that the very knowledge can be realized by making use of the faculty of mind, senses and as well as through empiricism. There is no harm at all if a person acquires knowledge by making use of his mind–rationality or reasoning–provided it is guided and enmeshed within the very knowledge revealed by Allah. The fact is that the faculty of mind (‘aql) and thereafter its use in gaining knowledge either through rationalism, logic, or through empiricism, has undoubtedly serious limitations. Therefore, owing to this fact if the intellect is not
made subservient to the revealed knowledge then it can mislead
and misdirect the entire humanity.

Integration of religious and modern sciences:
Said Nursî’s approach

The unprecedented and unusual emergence of the modern sci-
cence and later on its encounter with the Islamic World during
the colonial and post-colonial era created chaos, confusion, and
uneasiness among the Muslim masses. Consequently, the Muslims
got heavily engaged in defining their approach and methodology
vis-à-vis Western Civilization. The new, rather, alien Civilization
for the Muslims was predominantly based on material knowledge,
technical know-how, innovation, invention and the dominance
of the world markets with its products. However, dominating the
entire globe, it still failed miserably to provide the human soul a
ray of light, a hint of (spiritual) inspiration or a strand of faith. It
though achieved an unexpected economic and technological ad-
vancement, but at the same time failed to cure the anxious souls.
Abû al-Ḥasan Alî Nadî, who regards Western Civilization as one
of the mightiest one, has artistically summarized the wholesome
development of the Western Civilization as well as the threat it
posed to the Muslims. In the following lines he has expressed:

Towards the middle of the Nineteenth Century the Islamic World
was called upon to face a grave and intriguing problem [due to the
encounter with the fresh Civilization], on its approach to which
hung the very question of its survival as a free and self-respecting
unit in the world and possessing distinctive personality of its own.

It was the problem posed by the civilization that was fresh, en-
ergetic and ambitious and overflowing with the potentialities of
expansion and progress–we mean, Western Civilisations which
deserved to be ranked among the mightiest civilisation known to
the history of mankind. (Nadî, 1979, 9)

In the modern times, the Muslim thinkers were and still are
engaged in presenting their views on the issue of modern science
and its compatibility with the religion. While observing the approach of the Muslims in tackling this problem, one comes across three significant methods and approaches. The first one is that of rejection and opposition to the Western Civilization in toto and complete refusal to enquire ‘positives’ and ‘negatives’ of this powerful civilization. The second approach is a neutral one; that neither supports and nor opposes the above Civilization (approach of indifference). (Nadwi, 1979, 10–11) The third method is the moderate one in which one delves deep and enquires and explores fully the bedrocks of this Civilization. What is significant in the approach is to take that ingredient from the Western Civilization which is fruitful and beneficial and accordingly, reject and refrain from that which is detrimental and fruitless.

The first two approaches are by far ‘negative’ in all the senses as they can only lead the Muslim World toward further backwardness and remoteness. So, what is needed is to implement the third approach for having far reaching consequences and if desiring to solve the problems, the Muslim World is currently experiencing. One finds, while comprehending what Said Nursi has said Risale-i Nur, the advocacy of the aforementioned third method, thus, therein rests the uniqueness of the reformative activities of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi.

Before reflecting on the views and approach of Said Nursi regarding the problem, it is demanding to briefly mention the environment in which he lived. Said Nursi encountered a period in which scientific advancements, technological development, materialism and communism were at their climax. On the other hand, these very developments were used as a tool for spreading immorality as well as for raising doubts in the minds of the Muslims vis-à-vis Islam. Also, in his homeland—Turkey, in the late Ottoman period attempts were made aimed at large to modernize the country. The situation presented such a picture as if the Western Civilization was the only model left to be imitated in order to achieve the success (Lewis, 1961, 21–26). Isra Yazicioglu writes:
While the nineteenth and early twentieth century was a time of great enthusiasm about science and technology in both the Western and the Muslim worlds, it was also a time when the ideas of atheism and materialism were becoming much more pronounced than ever before. In fact, many of the Western-educated elite in Nursî’s milieu of late Ottoman and early Turkish period saw the successes of science and technology as lending support to a materialist and an atheistic world-view. (Yazicioglu, 2013, 342)

In the times of Said Nursî, a good number of Muslim intellectuals stood for the integration process of religious and modern sciences “in such a way that sheds light not only on the relevance to the present situation, but also in a way that defines universal principles” (Bediuzzaman, 2015) Among them, the prominent one was Muḥammad Abdūh, who believed that “Science was a way of life rooted in freedom and progress; in its pure form, science, when properly married to religion, brings society to fulfilment” (Amir, 2012, 151)

Bediuzzaman Said Nursî—the Turkish religio-spiritual reformer—was greatly “interested in reconciling faith and reason, and Islam and science” (Yazicioglu, 2013, 342). His early life which he refers as ‘Old Said’ represents a figure who is excited more than enough about scientific progress and technological advancement. It proved to be this period, wherein one observes Said Nursî welcoming the modern science with lot of enthusiasm and passion, “albeit not without exhortations on maintaining faith and serving humanity in God’s name” (Ibid.). The ‘Old Said’ besides highlighting the significance of reason invited the Muslims to study meticulously modern science and its underpinning values so as “to appreciate the Creator better” (Ibid.)

Said Nursî displayed a complete dissatisfaction toward the division of education system between maktab and madrasah in the country. Maktab system dealt with the modern sciences and the madrasah with the religious sciences. His showing of discontent represents in some way or the other that the union and inseparability of religious and modern science is in the current times an obligatory
act. It is this principle that should form a basic starting point in terms of education policy. In an endeavour to weld and reform these two seemingly conflicting systems, Said Nursî dreamed of establishing a University in eastern Anatolia namely Madresatü’z Zehrā, with an intention to endow the seekers with both religious and modern education and accomplish his dream thereof (Nursî, 2007, 678).

Initiating a dialogue between science and religion, Nursî attempted to develop a theological understanding of nature, as he revealed that the theology shared if not totally but to a great extent, the same domain as the natural sciences (Hörkürc, 2004, 342). He does not consider science as something that is alien or something that is beyond the realm of religion. According to him, “... man has been awakened and aroused by the modern sciences in particular; he has understood the true nature of humanity” (Nursî, 2010, 32). It means that Said Nursî tried to manifest that all the knowledge is religious irrespective of the source. Going into the Risale-i Nur of Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, one finds at large no opposition or dichotomy between science and religion. This is further explicated and elaborated in ‘The Damascus Sermon’ as below:

Bediüzzaman thus demonstrated in the form of easily understood stories, comparisons, explanations, and reasoned proofs that, rather than the truths of religion being incompatible with the findings of modern science, the materialist interpretation of those findings is irrational and absurd. Indeed, Bediüzzaman proved in the Risale-i Nur that science’s breathtaking discoveries of the universe’s functioning corroborate and reinforce the truths of religion (Nursî, 2010, 9).

At one more place, Said Nursî says that “[a]ll science and human progress outside religion and belief is worth nothing, like the heroism of Rustam and Hercules” (Nursî, 2010, 71). He further says that “at the end of time, mankind will pour into science and technology. It will obtain all its power from science. Power and

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3 Said Nursî intended to model Madresatü’z Zehrā to that of Al-Azhar University of Cairo. Although its foundation was laid in 1913, but because of the circumstances the dream was not realized.
dominion will pass to the hand of science” (Bediüzzaman. (2015c). Said Nursî further holds that “the conscience is illuminated by the religious sciences, and the mind is illuminated by the physical sciences and wisdom occurs through the combination of these two” (Hörkürc, 2004, 327) Before him religious education is the ‘light of conscience’ and modern education the ‘light of mind’ and when the both are combined together the ‘truth’ is revealed and if alienated then the former gives rise to ‘scepticism’ and the later to ‘fanaticism’ (Vahide, 2005, 45–55). The whole discussion makes it quite evident that as per Said Nursî there is no valid contradiction between the two sciences; and that any perceptible disagreement between them is only due to the misunderstanding of either one. In this case, it is very much fitting to quote him:

Indeed, far from contradicting them, in uncovering the order and working of the universe, science broadens and deepens knowledge of the truths of belief. In the Risale-i Nur many descriptions of the Divine activity in the universe are looked at through the eyes of science, and reflect Bediüzzaman’s knowledge of it. The Risale-i Nur shows that there is no contradiction or conflict between religion and science. (erisale, 2015)

To sum up, Said Nursî’s weltanschauung and polemics displays that he was very much keen and interested in salvaging a sense of cooperation and integration between religion and science. It must also be borne in the mind that in the later part of his life (Old Said), he never supported modern science unconditionally and unequivocally, rather necessitated that for the sprouting of a real spiritual development, in addition to embrace the modern science, sticking to the religious principles is inevitable. To be at variance with the teachings of Islam on one side and think of prevailing on the other side is to live in a fool’s paradise. The history is the testimony to the fact that the Muslims progressed and advanced and reached to zenith of their glory as long as they stuck to the teachings of Islam. Its reverse happened not because the Muslims lacked the resources (intellectual or natural) but solely because we pulled off ourselves from the teachings of Islam.
Conclusion

The onslaught of Western Civilization has not only created conflicts and tensions especially among the Muslims but has also resulted in unbalancing the human behavioural and thinking patterns. The Europe’s subjugation of the Muslim lands cemented the way for imbibing of the ‘alien thinking’ by the Muslim masses and thus paving the way to ‘religion–science controversy.’ Such a process ultimately led to the division of the knowledge into religious and modern on the one side and condensed the probabilities–if not fully but to a great extent–of bridging the gap between the two on the other. It was primarily this factor which forced Muslim intellectuals and reformers to make zealous endeavours so as to hook up the two systems.

In the same vein, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî pioneered the movement both practically as well as intellectually so as to integrate and reconcile the religious and modern sciences and thereafter establish a unitary education system through the revitalization of knowledge. His practical approach coupled with the writings on this issue was closely associated and connected with what he himself witnessed in the world in general and in the Muslim countries in particular. The main objective of his what we call ‘inventiveness’ was to produce such a generation of the Muslims who would be totally sincere, devoted, and committed to the advancement of the Islam and the Muslims. To sum up, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî without any doubt deserves all the credit, appreciation, and admiration for revitalizing and reconciling these two apparently repelling systems without making any sort of compromise with the ‘belief’.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Introduction

Islam, especially its divine book holy Qur’an, demonstrates the prominence of peace and harmony among the communities. Through its verses as in the verse 5:16 (where with Allah guides all who seeks his good pleasure to ways of peace and safety) Qur’an seeks a peaceful situation between the communities. In its view point, it is quite illegal to indulge in any kind of corruption or enmity in this earth and it strictly wants those who give any sort of aid to spread disparities between the individuals and also societies.

All commentators of Qur’an urged through their works to ensure communal peace and harmony and to take forward the steps of conflict resolution in this society. Especially in a secular country like India, it has paramount importance to sustain a peaceful existence for all communities. Here we can see the relevance of highlighting the ideologies of Risale-i Nur concerning to communal peace and harmony because Risale-i Nur was written by Said Nursî in Turkey which is a secular country like India. Said Nursî’s Risale-i Nur is well-known and very popular for its various perspectives on individual and social ideologies.

Communal peace and harmony in the modern commentaries of Holy Qur’an

As the holy Qur’an generally accepts the modes of tolerance and fraternal love with non-Muslim communities, its commentators also
explicated the holy verses in an apparent way expounding Islamic values. These interpreters have took down the holy message and called to the path ways of religious and communal peace and ease.

Nowadays, the communal peace and harmony is a buzz word and most lacking theme throughout the globe especially in India. In India peace and love between communities is deteriorating day by day when ongoing gory revolts and blood sheds spread in its cross roads as we heard latest news from Muzaffarnagar. Many commentaries of holy Qur’ān like Fi Zilal al-Qur’ān (in the shades of Qur’ān) of Sayyid Qutub, the Qur’ān translation and commentary of Moulana Wahiduddin Khan, Thafsirul Waseeth of Muhammad Sayyid Tantawy, Qur’ān translation of Abdullah Yusuf Ali and the message of Qur’ān of Muhammad Asad.

Obviously, Qur’ānic teachings can give lead to the rest of the world on the question of race relations. The message of Islam has completely rejected racial prejudice or superiority of one race over the other. Even the western non-Muslim scholars admit this, the historian Arnold Toynbee among them. He writes:

“The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding moral achievements of Islam, and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue. The forces of racial toleration, which at present seem to be fighting a losing battle in a spiritual struggle of immense importance to mankind, might still regain the upper hand if any strong influence militating against racial consciousness were now to be thrown into the scales. It is conceivable that the spirit of Islam might be the timely reinforcement which would decide this issue in favour of tolerance and peace”.

Qur’ānic teachings and prophetic paradigms lead the way to the aisle of the interfaith dialogue as we can witness many historic events happened in the life of prophet (saw) and recorded in the Qur’ānic verses. For example, Interpreting the Sura Kafirun, Moulana Wahiduddin Khan writes that this chapter teaches us to

practice tolerance towards non Muslims and tells us to treat them with respect.\(^5\)

If we fierce our eyes to the translation and commentary of Qur’ân we can a lot of commentators approve of the Islamic principles, peace and love, to non Muslims. Moulana Muhammed Ali in his commentary upon the verse “invite (all) to the way of thy lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious, for your lord knows best, who have strayed from his path, and who receive guidance (Qur’ân 16:125). says: The principle laid down for preaching and religious controversy by the ‘unlearned Arabian’ has yet to be learnt by the most advanced people, whose controversies are carried on with no other object than that of fault-finding and whose preaching only aims at carping at others. It shows the breadth of mind of the Holy Prophet, more especially when it is remembered that the injunction was given at a time when the Muslims were being most severely persecuted and there was the greatest reason for adopting a harsh attitude.\(^6\)

Abdullah Yusuf Ali wrote that “In this wonderful passage are laid down Principles of religious preaching, which are good for all time”.\(^7\) Sayyid Qutb in his commentary of Holy Qur’ân ‘In the shades of Holy Qur’ân’ says interpreting the verse “But to endure patiently is far better for those who are patient in adversity” (16:126) “Islam is the faith of justice and moderation, peace and reconciliation. The Qur’ân calls on believers to endure with fortitude and to forgive. This applies in situations when the believers are able to repel aggression and to eradicate evil. In such cases, Forgiveness and patience are more effective and of greater value to the Islamic message. Their own personal position or prestige is

\(^5\) Wahidudheen Khan, The Qur’ân Translation And Commentary, P. 1745, Good Word Books 2011


\(^7\) Abdullah Yousuf Ali, Translation And Commentary Of Holy Qur’ân, P.65
of secondary importance when the interests of the message are better served by forgiveness and endurance".  

Islam first and foremost approves of religious freedom or freedom of belief through the Qur’anic verses. Islam declared that there is no compulsion in religion. Everyone has his own freedom to accept whatever religion he wants. The verse of Qur’ān 2:256 “there is no compulsion in religion the right way is indeed clearly distinct from error. So whoever disbelieves in the devil and believes in Allah, he indeed lays hold on the firmest handle which shall never break. And Allah is Hearing, Knowing”. Muhammed Ali says that “To all the allegations that the Holy Prophet preached Islam by the Sword, this verse is a sufficient answer. Being assured of success, Muslims are told that when they hold power in their hands their guiding principle should be that there should be no compulsion in the matter of religion. The claim that this passage was directed only to the early converts and that it was abrogated later on is utterly baseless”. Abdullah Yusuf Ali wrote three causes for not having compulsion in religion he says

“Compulsion is incompatible with religion; because;
1. Religion depends upon faith and will, and these would be meaningless if induced by force;
2. Truth and Error have been so clearly shown up by the mercy of Allah that there should be no doubt in the minds of any persons of goodwill as to the fundamentals of faith;
3. Allah’s protection is continuous and His Plan is always to lead us from the depths of darkness into the clearest light”.

Sayyid Qutb wrote in his commentary upon this verse that “It is, therefore, a basic human right to be addressed with the message of Islam. No authority should deny mankind that right and under no circumstances should any obstacles be allowed to prevent that divine message from being delivered. Having received the message, people have the right to freely accept the religion of Islam,

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8 Sayyid Qutb, In The Shades Of Holy Qur’ān . (Vol 11, 91p)
9 Moulana Muhammed Ali, Ibid 62,63
10 Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Translation And Commentary Of Holy Qur’ān, P. 181
and be under no pressure from any quarter to dissuade or prevent them from taking it up. Those who choose not to accept Islam are expected not to impede its progress”.  

In another place he himself declares that “Freedom of belief is the most basic right that identifies man as a human being. To deny anyone this right is to deny him or her humanity. Freedom of belief also implies the freedom to express and propagate one’s belief without fear of threat or persecution; otherwise, that freedom is hollow and meaningless”.  

Imam Sayyid Muḥammad Tantawy wrote in his commentary that “It is an exciting matter that this verse is not abrogated, but still a part of law because embracing a religion is not a matter of compulsion as we denoted earlier. Jihad in Islam wasn’t legitimated to compel people to convert to Islam as there is no compulsion in Islam but it was legitimated to resist and to wind up enmity. Allah and his messenger didn’t order to wage war compelling Arabs to embrace Islam but they did because Arabs started war with enmity”.

Another Quanic verse which ensures religious freedom is verse 6:108 (And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allah, in case, exceeding the limits, they abuse Allah through ignorance. Thus to every people have We made their deeds seem good; then to their Lord is their return so He will inform them of what they did.)

Maulana Muḥammad Ali wrote “Here Muslims are forbidden to abuse even the idols of other people, though their worship is condemned in the strongest terms.”

Muḥammad Asad wrote interpreting this verse “This prohibition of reviling anything that other people hold sacred - even in contravention of the principle of God’s oneness - is expressed in the plural and is, therefore, addressed to all believers. Thus, while Muslims are expected to argue against the false beliefs of others,

11 Sayyid Qutub, In The Shade Of Qur’ān,1:226p
12 Sayyid Qutub, In The Shade Of Qur’ān,1:349
13 Maulana Muḥammad Ali Ibid P 179
they are not allowed to abuse the objects of those beliefs and to hurt thereby the feelings of their erring fellow men”.\textsuperscript{14}

Another verse which emphasizes to keep peace and friendliness with peoples of other religions is 2:62 (Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good, they have their reward with their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve)

Maulana Muhammed Ali interpreted this verse as follows: “The statement made here is that salvation cannot be attained by mere lip-profession by any people, not even by the Muslims, unless they adhere to a true belief and do good deeds. The existence of good people in other religions is not denied by the Holy Qur’ān, but perfect peace, or the state of absolute contentment which is indicated by freedom from fear and grief, is obtainable only in Islam, because it alone is the religion of absolute submission to the Divine Being”.\textsuperscript{15}

Maulan Wahiduddin Khan also wrote commenting this verse: “This verse rules out the community superiority for any given group even Muslims have been bracketed here along with other religious groups”

He quotes Muhammad Husayn Haykal from his book ‘The life of Muhammed’ “The best example for communal peace and harmony is portrayed by the time of the prophet(s). The three scriptural religions thus confronted one another in Madinah. The delegation entered with the prophet(s) into the public debate and these were soon joined by the Jews thus resulting in a tripartite dialogue between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This was truly a great congress which the city of Yathrib had witnessed in it the three religions which today dominate the world and determine its dusting had met, and they did so for the greatest idea and the noblest purpose.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14} Asad, Muhammed Asad, The Message of The Qur’ān, Arthur’s Classic Novels, 2007, 187-188p
\textsuperscript{15} Maulana Muhammed Ali, Ibid, P.15
\textsuperscript{16} Wahiduddin Khan, Islam And Peace, P.90, Goodword Books, 2007
Although the Qur’ānic verses explain peace and harmony, it allows waging war against the enemies but it doesn’t allow to break the laws of jihad and it places some limits that are not to be transgressed. Abdullah Yusuf Ali wrote below the verse 2:190 (Fight in the Cause of Allah, those who fight you, but do not transgress limits;) that “War is only permissible in self-defence, and under well-defined limits. When undertaken, it must be pushed with vigour, but not relentlessly, but only to restore peace and freedom for the worship of Allah. In any case strict limits must not be transgressed: women, children, old and infirm men should not be molested, nor trees and crops cut down, nor peace withheld when the enemy comes to terms.”

Yusuf Ali explains the very situation of the revelation of this verse 2:191 (And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there;) in an apparent way that is as follows: “This passage is illustrated by the events that happened at Hudaybiyah in the sixth year of the Hijrah, though it is not clear that it was revealed on that occasion. The Muslims were by this time a strong and influential community. Many of them were exiles from Mecca, where the Pagans had established an intolerant autocracy, persecuting Muslims, preventing them from visiting their homes, and even keeping them out by force from performing the Pilgrimage during the universally recognized period of truce. This was intolerance, oppression, and autocracy to the last degree, and the mere readiness of the Muslims to enforce their rights as Arab citizens resulted without bloodshed in an agreement which the Muslims faithfully observed.

The Pagans, however, had no scruples in breaking faith, and it is unnecessary here to go into subsequent events. In general, it may be said that Islam is the religion of peace, good will, mutual understanding, and good faith. But it will acquiesce in wrongdoing.

17 Yusuf Ali, Ibid, P. 126
and its men will hold their lives cheap in defence of honour, justice, and the religion which they hold sacred. Their ideal is that of heroic virtue combined with unselfish gentleness and tenderness, such as is exemplified in the life of the Prophet.

They believe in courage, obedience, discipline, duty, and a constant striving by all the means in their power, physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual, for the establishment of truth and righteousness. They know that war is an evil, but they will not flinch from them it if their honour demands it and a righteous Imam (such as Muḥammad was par excellences) commands it, for then they know they are not serving carnal ends. In other cases, war has nothing to do with their faith, except that it will always be regulated by its humane precepts.18

Also Abdullah Yusuf Ali gave an impressive interpretation to the verse 3:103 (for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His grace, ye became brethren;) that “Yathrib was torn with civil and tribal feuds and dissensions before the Messenger of Allah set his feet on its soil. After that, it became the City of the Prophet, Madinah, and unmatched Brotherhood, and the pivot of Islam. This poor quarrelsome world is a larger Yathrib: can we establish the sacred feet on its soil, and make it a new and larger Madinah?”19

Communal Peace and Harmony: Said Nursî’s Perspective through Risale-i Nur

A brief sketch of an eventful life

Said Nursî is the most influential Islamic scholar in modern Turkish history for his intellectual contribution pertaining to his spectacular view point in education, peace and harmony. Throughout his epoch making life time (1876–1960), he strived hard to disseminate the Islamic ideology and values by taking down a lot of books and delivering historic speech in front of a wider audience. Although he was imprisoned, starved and tortured by the secular government

18 Yusuf Ali, Ibid, P.127
19 yusuf ali, ibid, p. 51
of Turkey for more or less twenty five years for his writing about Islam encouraging its practice, which was declared to be a crime against state, Nursî never supported or resorted for the political revolution by the Muslims.

He directed a message of peace and harmony not only by his writings but also by his actions. The most popular work, *Risale-i Nur*, which is collection of many books he wrote while he was in jail or in exile. In 1911, Nursî visited Damascus and delivered his famous Damascus in Umayyad mosque to ten thousand people within week it was printed twice in Damascus\(^{20}\). Another parts; ‘the debates’ and ‘the reasoning’ were published in 1913 and 1911 respectively. Although he was exiled from his home place, Ankara to Anatolia, he continued intellectual revolt against secular state contributing by pen, then he was exiled to Berla, where he spent almost eight and half years during which he wrote most of the one hundred and thirty parts of his *Risale-i Nur*. It was denied to local people to approach because the authority freighted his words rather than his actions.

In Berla, he wrote a total of 119 pieces expounding the resurrection of the dead and the existence of here after. After that the Miraculous of Qur’ān was written and by 1929 ‘the words and the letters were also completed. Therefore he continued his silent struggle against the forces of irreligion. Within the following years, numerous copies of existing parts of *Risale-i Nur* were sold throughout Turkey. At the end of summer of 1934, Nursî was taken from Berla back to Isparta, where he spent next nine months and finished ‘the flashes’ from the prison and begin to write ‘the rays’.

In Kastamonu, he wrote on of the most important treatises that make up *Risale-i Nur* ‘the supreme sign’ an some part of The Rays’. Among these writings, ‘The fruits of belief’ ‘the eleventh ray’ and speeches of Nursî and students’ were added to *Risale-i Nur*. Nursî also produced ‘the staff of Mouses’ a guide for youth and a lot of passages introducing a wider audience.\(^{21}\)

\(^{20}\) Collin Turner, Hasan Horkus, Said Nursî 15p, 2009, Oxford University press
\(^{21}\) Ibid 25–31p
Returning from Isparta to Urfa on 20 March 1960, he and his closest disciples spent in Urfa three days, receiving all the visitors who came to see him despite of his obvious frailty.

On his third day in Urfa at three o clock in the morning of 23 March 1960 Said Nursî died in the Ipek Pales Hotel. Nevertheless his message and his books lives after his sorrowful demise sharing Islamic values through Islamic verses to the coming generations.

Communal peace and harmony in Risale-i Nur

If we take a cursory glance to the themes of Risale-i Nur we can comprehend that this was written to reiterate the Islamic values and to expound it interpreting Qur’anic verses.

Communal peace and harmony is one of the dare needs of this current world as it is facing many communal conflicts deteriorating the safety of humankind.

Nursî emphasized through his works to ensure peace and love between Muslims and non Muslims. He has used these intellectual revolts against secularist government of Turkey to protest against their laws of irreligion not against the principles of secularism but he encouraged the Muslim community to ensure love and peace and also freedom of belief with non Muslims. Nursî’s fifth word mentions two duties “the first creation and maintenance of life are responsibilities of the creator alone. The second is our responsibility – begging from the creator and sustainer relying on him totally......to avoid being a trouble or burden on others thus from the inner duty to practice religion these results an inner freedom granted by religion. After all the freedom of the non-Muslims was for him a branch of our freedom. Interpreting the verse 49-13 (oh! mankind, we have created you from a male and a female and made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that who has attaqwa. Verily Allah is all knowing, well acquainted.) He writes that is to say,

22 Ibid p.40
being in to groups and tribes should lead to mutual acquaintance and mutual assistance not to antipathy and hostility.  

In his book the Damascus sermon he mentions six dire sicknesses. The sicknesses are these.... Firstly, the rising to life of despair and hopelessness in social life, secondly the death of truthfulness in social and political life, thirdly love of enmity, fourthly not knowing the luminous bonds that bind the believers to one another, fifthly despotism which spreads becoming wide spread as though it was various contagious diseases, sixthly restricting endeavours to what is personally beneficial. Through these lines we can understand that he counted the enmity to others as a great sin or sickness of heart in the same book he wrote in fourth word warning enmity and hostility he says: what I am certain of from my experience of social life and have learned from my life time of study is the following: the thing most worthy of love is love and that most deserving of enmity is enmity. That is, love and loving which render man’s social life secure and lead to happiness are most worthy of love and being loved. Enmity and hostility are ugly and damaging have overturned man’s social life and more than anything deserve loathing and enmity and to be shunned......the time for enmity and hostility has finished two world wars have shown how evils, destructive and what an awesome wrong is enmity. It has become clear that there is no benefits in it at all...... since love and enmity are contrary to one another like light and darkness they cannot truly combine..... Love, brother hood and affection are basic to Islam and are its bond. Fairness and favourable thinking are the things which mark the Islamic character. Through this lines we can see that he never approved despotism enmity and hostility towards people be it Muslims or non-Muslims. Always the desired hard to maintain peace and love between the communities not letting them to drown in to the pitfalls of calamity. Interpreting the verse 2: 27 (those who break Allah’s covenant after ratifying it,

23 Nursi, the letters, p.379
24 Nursi, damascus sermon, ihalas nur Nesriyath, p.23–24, 2004
25 Nursi, damascus sermon, p. 49–51
and sever what Allah has ordered to be joined and do mischief on earth, it is they who are the losers.) He wrote that in accordance with the saying the more general the calamities the pleasanter they become a person who becomes depraved and gets embroiled in the morass wants companions who are similarly embroiled so as to alleviate his terrible plight. Likewise if the idea of revolution settles in someone’s heart in will lead for the ruin of its attainment and its high sentiments will gradually decline and desire to destroy will born in it. This will make him feel a pleasure and he will seek the pleasure by spreading corruption and fomenting revolution.

Portraying these lines Said Nursî emphasized on the seriousness of spreading corruption and revolution. Also, he interprets this verse as “they isolated to sickness in personal life; the first attribute indicate this, so too they incite rebellion in the face of social life and break the bonds and laws of society. The second attribute indicates this; they also cause corruption and revolution which spoil the order of the earth as indicated by the third attribute.”

Said Nursî in his book Signs Of Miraculousness writes that “the use of the first person plural in do we worship (na’budu) has three aspects: firstly, we worship, all of us members and atoms of microcosm that is myself, by offering the thanks expressed by all these members and atoms complying with that which they have been commented. Secondly all of us monotheists we worship you through obedience to your Sharia, and thirdly, all of us beings, we submit totally to your supreme Sharia of creation and we prostrate in bewilderment and love at the thrown of your awesomeness and power.”

Through classifying this verse in to three aspects he included all human beings irrespective of communities and religious to the column. In short Said Nursî travelled through the ways humanity and dignity throughout his life by words and by silent actions. He invited all humankind to the Qur’ânic path of humanity and fraternity to take steps forward to build an illuminating future

26 Said Nursî, signs of miraculousness, p. 239–240, sozler publications, 2007
27 Nursî, ibid 27
shoulder to shoulder despite of any religious or communal sects. He protested against the most horrendous enmity and hostility and disencouraged to stage a revolt because it will render to the heavy loss of human lives. It is appreciable that Said Nursî made this best endeavour extracting the ideas from Qur’ânic verses and introducing these coping up with today’s demands.

Conclusion

Delving into the bottom less depths of Qur’ânic verses, we can find out that peace and harmony is one of the recurring themes of holy Qur’ân. Sometimes it may seem to us that the holy Qur’ân was revealed only to preach the peace and harmony between the communities. Every commentators vividly expressed those themes through their works into a wider audience modern Muslim intellectuals like Muhammed Asad, Moulana Muhammed Ali, Moulana Wahiduddin Khan, Sayyid Qutb and Abdullah Yusuf Ali have interpreted those verses in a spectacular way. All of them have written their commentaries of holy Qur’ân introducing the remedies for the dire needs of today’s world.

Said Nursî, world renowned intellectual, from Turkey has also interpreted the holy Qur’ân according to the social, economical, political, cultural and religious demands of the current world he also include and encouraged to live in a peaceful and friendly situation among the multi cultural word. It is the demand of today for every secular country to make communal peace and harmony their motto to attract people to it.

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The relevance of the combined education in this modern era with special reference to Madrasha Al-Zahra of Bediüzzaman Said Nursî; A Critical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The Renaissance and Enlightenment in Europe polarized the religiosity of all types of education into religious and material education as Islam is not of this bifurcation. Since then, both streams of education kept flowing quite apart. As the result, the material education made the people atheists while the religious education led into bigotry. Paradoxically, both religious and material education intersected in Bediüzzaman Said Nursî (1877–1960) and could balance to make an educational revolution by founding the new notion of the Combined Education. He observed that both kinds of educations are necessary to build up a moral society where the religious education enlightens the human minds while the latter safeguards the wisdom. Madrasha al-Zahra was the realization of the Combined Education which was found in 1913. Nowadays this new educational system is widely accepted for it can offer both religious and material schooling along with the moral values and awareness. Being aware of both can make a global exposure as well as it opens new scopes for the interfaith dialogue in this pluralistic society. And it also enables to reread the classical Islamic texts in the context of this globalised world. Nursî also suggests specializing in particular subjects (Takhassus). This combined system of schooling may badly affect on religious education unless a sufficient distance between both educations never be left. Here, the researcher is going to do a research on the relevance of the Combined Education of both material and religious educations in this era, which was firstly realized by Bediüzzaman Said Nursî by laying foundation for Madrasha al-Zahra.

Keywords: Madrasha al-Zahra, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî, Combined Education, Integration of religious and material education.
Introduction

There is no any religion or ideology having a clear and evident stance on the knowledge and education except Islam. Islam has suggested how to study, how to be studied and through what means it should be studied. The major concept of Islam regarding the education is the concept of the Combined or the Integrated Education. This educational concept was conceived at a time when Muslims concentrated only on the traditional religious texts rather than the scientific or secular subjects. Bediüzzaman Said Nursî (1877–1960) was one of the catalysts who materialized this epoch making concept through proposing a system of education which he described as Madrasha al-Zahra.

He found that the material education makes the people atheists while the religious education led them into fanaticism. Paradoxically, both religious and material educations intersected in Bediüzzaman Said Nursî (1876–1960) and could balance to make an educational revolution by founding the new notion of the Combined Education. He observed that both kinds of educations are necessary to build up a moral society where the religious education enlightens the human minds while the latter safeguards the wisdom.

The Concept of education in Islam

In Islamic viewpoint the knowledge is considered as the soul of the religion and he is the real believer who possesses the knowledge. The Qur’anic verses and Prophetic traditions are the solid evidences that reveal the clear ideology of the Islam regarding the knowledge and education. In western ideology there is no any connection between knowledge and belief. But as far as the Islam concerns the knowledge and belief are mutually interrelated.

Islamic perspective on knowledge is complete and comprehensive. Islam simultaneously accepts the divine, secular and human sciences because all these sciences are essential for the spiritual and intellectual enlightenment of the mankind. The Islamic curriculum
should be built based on these three pillars; divine, secular and human sciences. It is Islamic theology which conjoins several subjects altogether. The nucleolus of this belief is the Almighty Allah.

In Islamic viewpoint, the knowledge could be classified into the God-given and acquired knowledge. The God-given knowledge refers to man’s spiritual faculties and senses; while the acquired knowledge refers to his physical faculties and senses. His intellect (Aql) is the connecting link between the physical and the spiritual, for the Aql is in reality a spiritual substance which enables man to understand spiritual reality and truth.

The division of two kinds of knowledge could be summarized into another categorization; the religious sciences and the rational, intellectual and philosophical sciences, where the former includes the holy Qur’ān, the Sunnah, the Shari‘ah, theology (Aqeedha), Islamic metaphysics (al-Tasawwuf) and linguistic sciences, and the latter comprises the human sciences, the natural sciences, the applied sciences and the technological sciences.

The classification of knowledge in Islamic viewpoint

The classification of knowledge into religious and secular subject is the by-product of the clash between the Christianity and the modernization in Europe. The Renaissance, the Enlightenment and the technological innovations doubled this polarization. The Industrial Revolution of 13th century posed a challenge on the clerical hegemony of the Churches in Europe. The instability of the Church hegemony paved the way to the bifurcation of the knowledge into religious and secular subjects where the former was confined on the Churches and only the latter was allowed for the public. The colonialism injected the same ideology of the west all over the world.

But the Duality concept of the Knowledge is unfamiliar to Islam because the bifurcation may question the comprehensiveness of the Islam. As far as the Islam is concerned, all kinds of knowledge are religious without any distinction between secular and religious
subjects. The early Muslim scholars were expert on secular subjects also like astronomy, geography, chemistry and botany etc., though they were never known as the secular or material scholars. They considered all these sciences as Islamic without any polarization between religious and secular subjects.

There are many scholars in the Islamic world who classified the knowledge into several categories like Imam al-Gazzali. As far as the acquisition of the knowledge is concerned, al-Gazzali classifies the knowledge into two; individual duty (Fardh Aayn) and sufficiency duty (Fardh Kifayah). Another categorization is based on the divine revelation. Al-Gazzali says that all knowledge originated through the revelation is praised (Mahmud) and the non-revelation knowledge could be classified into three; praised (Mahmud) – like medicine and mathematics etc, dispraised (Madhmum) – like witchcraft and astrology etc, and permissible (Mubah) – like history and poetry etc. This classification is based only on the goal of the learner; if it is material profits it would be secular subjects and if it is providence of the God it would be religious.

The combined education or integrated education

Islamic education must be holistic that cover religious sciences derived from divine revelation and secular subjects or the acquired sciences which gained through human intellectual faculties. Both types of knowledge should be integrated with the principle of Divine Unity or Tawhidic paradigm. The early Islamic scholars acquired in depth knowledge in Islamic disciplines as well as they proved their calibre in the secular subjects also like astronomy, geography, chemistry and botany etc.

The notion of the Combined Education or the Integrated Education was conceived when the Islamic scholars concentrated only on the traditional Islamic texts. Integrated education is the co-joining between Science and non-Science subjects, irrespective of the languages used or whether they are related to co-curricular or non-curricular activities.
It can be noted that the process of integration in the educational system provides a fertile ground. An Integrated Education emphasizes on the unison of knowledge, not merely the installation of one’s knowledge but somehow follows after or emulates the approach and method of implementation and techniques used in the teaching and learning in a class room. An Integrated Education focuses mainly on implementing Islam as a whole with some philosophies of promoting a strong belief and knowledge, the balance of the physical element and the soul, the world and the hereafter, the thoughts, the heart, the mind and the search and application of Revealed knowledge. Through the Integrated Education, a person can be educated and trained to understand and uphold the Islamic faith, the laws and the morals in his life.

An Integrated Education unifies the different knowledge in life, with congruity between the development of Ummah and its teaching, the relation between human and God, the relation between the different components in oneself, towards creating equilibrium in mind, spirit and body. In general, an Integrated Education’s main aim is to obtain richness of the heart and brilliance of the mind.

The Dualism in education could lead to failure in producing well-balanced individuals. To produce a ‘balanced’ human being, an integrated concept must be practiced. It is a type of education that guides and trains the mind, body and soul of a person based on Islamic values and the revelations (Al-Qur’an and Al-Sunnah) to produce pious human beings who are devoted to God.

Nowadays this new educational system is widely accepted for it can offer both religious and material schooling along with the moral values and awareness. The awareness of the both education can make a global exposure as well as it opens new scopes for the inter-faith dialogue in this pluralistic society. And it also enables to reread the classical Islamic texts in the context of this globalised world.

The integrated education opens the door of the international propagation as well as the sufficient acquaintance with the technological innovations that would be very helpful in the modern juristic discussions. The integration of the knowledge would be the
materialization of the Islamic concept of knowledge. More over it systemises the religious education, and offers the sensitivity and sensibility on how to interact this globalized world.

**Bediüzzaman Said Nursî: a short profile**

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî was born in the village of Nurs, in the province of Bitlis, in eastern Turkey, in 1877. He began his education at the age of nine in Hizan. He was educated through the Madrasah system in the traditional Islamic disciplines but also mastered modern western philosophical and scientific ideas in order to address the challenges Muslims face.

He became familiar as an outstanding intellectual scholar and for his feats in learning and the prodigious amount of knowledge, he became widely known as Bediüzzaman, the ‘Wonder of the Age’. In his magnum opus *Risale-i Nur* he explicitly explained his approach to various dimensions of Muslim life including Tawhid, Risalah, Khilafah and Akhirah, Allah, man and universe and their relationship, man’s position and the purpose of his creation on earth including his sublime concepts regarding the Combined Education.

**Said Nursî and the notion of the combined education**

Said Nursî formulated the ideas on the educational reform and his own particular method of teaching during his stay in Van. He developed these methods through examining the principles of all he had studied together with his experience of teaching religious and scientific subjects, then considering them in relation to the needs of the times. The basis of this method was to combine the religious sciences and modern sciences, with the result that the positive sciences would corroborate and strengthen the truths of religion. Nursî followed the same methodology of education to teach his students in his own Madrasa.

His chief aim was to establish a university in eastern Anatolia where this method would be practiced; that is, where the physical sciences would be taught together with the religious sciences and his
other ideas applied. This university he called the Madrasah al-Zahra after the al-Azhar university in Cairo, as it was to be its sister university in the centre of the eastern Islamic world. He later extended his project to include three such institutions— in Van, Bitlis and Diyarbakir respectively. Having travelled throughout eastern Anatolia, he had seen that not only would they be a sure means of combating the widespread ignorance and backwardness of the region, but would also be a solution for its other social and political problems.

The remark of the Secretary for the colonies in the British Parliament about the Noble Qur’ān “So long as the Muslims have the Qur’ān, we shall be unable to dominate them. We must either take it from them, or make them lose their love of it” inspired him to demonstrate the Qur’ān to be the source of true knowledge and progress and he found two means to realize this ultimate goal; Madrasa al-Zahara and Risale-i Nur. But only the latter became realized.

Influenced by the Europeans, some had even believed that the Islam was responsible Ottoman Muslims’ backwardness. All these brought home to Nursî the urgent necessity of reforming Madrasa education and updating the Islamic Sciences along with the secular subjects. Until the beginning of the First World War, Nursî was chiefly concerned with these issues.

Theory and Practice of Integration; in Said Nursî’s perspective

Said Nursî felt that the whole system of education must be re-oriented and integrated in accordance with the demand of time and necessity of the society. In his view, in the course of time, the Madrasah syllabuses had become narrow and sterile with modern developments in science. According to him, the process of integration means; “to critically analyse the modern sciences, to identify differences and to incorporate them into curriculum of the Muslim universities within the framework of Islam.”

For the Integration Nursî suggested that the religious subjects should be taught in the new secular schools (Maktab) and the positive sciences in the religious schools (Madrasah). He argued that if the students are taught in this method, those in the secular schools will be saved from being without religion, while those in the re-
religious schools will be saved from bigotry. The main purpose of learning of science is to understand the Qur’ān and prove its truths.

According to Said Nursî the integration of both religious and secular subjects means the merging of the three main branches of the educational systems: The Madrasa or traditional religious schools, the Maktab or new secular schools and Sufi schools for making one stream of education. Moreover, it will incorporate the three dimensional elements into the curriculum of educational institutions, which are material dimension, spiritual dimension and moral dimension.

In his view, the wholesale rejection of modern science and the wholesale glorification of traditional Islamic scholarship are wrong perception because rationally educated scholars consider traditionally trained-scholars as ignorant and unreliable and unable to discover and demonstrate the relevance of this heritage to the current problem. He found the answers for those enigmas that baffled the whole Muslim community through the establishment of Madrasha al–Zahra.

**Madrasha al–Zahra**

He realized that the challenges against the Muslims of the period could not confront until they master in both traditional Islamic disciplines and modern secular subjects. Having the experience of both traditional Islamic disciplines and modern western philosophical and scientific ideas, Nursî proposed the concept of the Combined or Integrated Education.

Said Nursî proposed this concept of Integration and reformation of the existing educational system through his writings and speeches and motivated the Caliph Abdul Hamid for integrating religious sciences to modern sciences.

His renowned work, *Risale-i Nur* testifies that the major aim of his life was to establish a new educational system based on the integration of religious and secular sciences. The key purpose of this initiative was to produce a sincere and committed Muslim
society in order to get away from the crisis of the Muslim mind and to develop science and technology in the Muslim world. He described this system as Madrasha al–Zahra and was brought for the first time in Istanbul in 1907.

He also aspired that Madrasha al–Zahra will gather scholars of religion and science as well as the Sufis where they can engage in dialogue and mutual understanding between each other. Rather than the educational enlightenment, Nursî targeted to put together the various tribes and peoples that had been broken to pieces.

In his view, this new educational system should be introduced in already familiar term, namely Madrasah, and must teach religious sciences as well the modern sciences. Each school must have at least 50 pupils. Nursî also suggested that the use three languages as the medium of instruction of education, called “tri–lingual” with Arabic being compulsory and emphasis given on native language, and to value Islam as the master and guide of sciences and the father of all true knowledge in order to make Ulama (Islamic scholars) closer with Europeans who believe that there is a clash and contradiction between externals of Islam and certain matters of science.

Sultan Muhammad Rashad accepted the proposal and promised to open a university in the eastern region. Nursî proposed a fund of 19,000 gold liras to build a university in eastern region. His request was granted, and he was given 1,000 lire as a down payment. He wanted to build in the village Coravanis, but was not given permission by the Governor of Van, Tahsin Pasha. He chose a place on the shores of Lake Van in Edremit, next south of Van, and in 1913 he laid the foundation stone of Medresetuz Zehra. However, the aspired university, Madrasha al–Zahra was never materialized due to World War I.

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An appraisal of Said Nursî’s concept of education

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ABSTRACT

For the development and prosperity of any civilization, education and its related institutions are inevitable. However, what kind of education and policies are necessary for perfect civilisation is a crucial and debatable issue. In this debate Muslim scholars argue that ‘ulûm Naqaliyyah and ‘ulûm ‘aqaliyyah and making the reason subservient to the revelation is essential for human development, while the majority opine that only reason and material based knowledge is the real one. Scholarly speaking both are (if not equally) important to quench ones spiritual as well as material thirst. It is important to note that the classification of ‘ulûm since classical times was not meant for division rather to know and understand the holistic view of human existence and the things related to it. Said Nursî (1876-1960), the prominent Muslim saint-scholar and theologian from Turkey of the recent past engaged himself to put humanity on the right track by making necessary reforms in the educational policy. Sensing the miserable and hazardous effects of secular education that has divorced almost completely from religion, he discussed his proposed educational policies with the then ruler who was convinced by the proposal.

Keeping in view the educational policies of this saint-scholar plus the efficacy and relevance of his thoughts in the contemporary world, the paper is an attempt to highlight and explore: (a) the importance of Nursî’s educational thoughts; (b) efficacy of his educational policy; and (c) analyse the possible measures how his educational ideas could be put into practice and how his dream could be made a reality.

Keywords: Education, ‘ulûm ‘aqaliyyah, ‘ulûm Naqaliyyah, Properity, Humanity, Madrasah, integration
Introduction

It is a well-known fact that education plays a vital role in the development of a civilization (Abuarqub, 2009, 3) and is considered as “the transmission of the civilization” (Ahamed, 2014, 215). The rise and fall of a civilization is also determined by its system of education. Education since the creation of the first man on this earth has a multidimensional impact on the lives of the personalities as well as on the communities they live in. The governments throughout the history have taken care of the system of education and they often, as it is common in modern states, frame such policies of education that would strengthen their state. Modern states and international institutions advocate and emphasis on the availability of educational opportunities that are accessible to all. Quoting the United Nation Universal Declaration on Human Rights declarations, Mamoun Abuarqub maintains, “The right to education is paramount and part of the inherent dignity of all humans; it is a tool to facilitate communication and bring cooperation among societies and, by extension, a means of bringing peace, stability and more mutual understanding between communities and nations.” (Mamoun, 2009, 3)

The significance of education in Islam

Islam, primarily an intellectual ideology, places much importance to education and those who are engaged in the process. The significance of education in Islam can also be understood by the fact the very first declaration of Islam is about education. The creator imparted the human “the knowledge of all names” as mentioned in the Qur’ân (Asad, 1980, 32). Importantly, the very first verse revealed to the final messenger of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) began with the Arabic word “Iqra” (literally ‘read’, al-Qur’ân, 96:1) that implies the concepts of learning, exploring and seeking enlightenment. The process education (teaching–learning process) is endless because it has been taught in the Qur’ân to ask Allah (ﷻ) for more and more knowledge and understanding. The verse reads as, “My Lord! Increase me in knowledge.” (Al-Qur’ân, 20: 114). The Qur’ân also dif-
differentiates the learned from the ignorant by maintaining, “Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?” (al-Qur’an, 39:9; cf. 13:19, 6:50). The question posed here has a logical and definite answer “no”. Similarly, the second source of Islam, the prophetic traditions (Aḥādīth) also evinces the importance of education. The famous saying narrated from Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) reads, “the seeking of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim—male or female”. The world without education and the things related to it is accursed. It has been narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

Behold! Indeed, the world is accursed, and all that it contains except the Dhikr of Allah, and that which brings one closer to Allah, an ‘ālim or a seeker of knowledge. (Kaandhlawi, 1418AH, 225)

Islam recommends the knowledge that is beneficial for the humanity. The Prophet (ﷺ) used to invoke, “O Allah! I seek refuge in You from that knowledge which does not give benefit” (Kaandhlawi, 1418AH, 261). Moreover, the knowledge that is learnt according to the will of Allah has been appreciated in the teachings of Islam. According to one Ḥadīth, “Learning ‘ilm (Knowledge) just for the pleasure of Allah is a proof of the fear of Allah, travelling in search of it is a worship, memorizing it is like glorifying Allah, making research in it is like Jihad, reading it is like charity, and teaching it to one’s members of family promotes nearness to Allah (Kaandhlawi, 2005, 70). In addition, the value of knowledge is extended as it benefits the person in the world Hereafter. According to the Prophet (ﷺ): “When a man dies, his acts come to an end, but three, recurring charity, or knowledge (by which people) benefit, or a pious son, who prays for him (the deceased).” (Bukhari, 12: 4005)

These are few examples how Islam give importance to education and makes its acquisition obligatory upon every man and woman. Education, in Islamic perspective, is not meant only to make this worldly life comfortable but a means to seek the nearness of Allah that is the ultimate purpose of life. Among other words that emphasise the different dimensions of educational process include Tarbiya, Ta’deeb, and Ta’leem. The first of the three refers to the process of
bringing a child up to a state of completeness. The second refers to the process of learning for social behaviour and the third refers to the imparting and receiving of knowledge, usually through training and instruction. After discussing these different dimensions of Islamic education, Halstead sums up the Islamic view of education as the application of these three dimensions, i.e., individual development, understanding the society of which the individual is a part of and the transmission of knowledge (Halstead, 1995, 25–43).

The importance of Nursî’s educational thoughts

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî (1873–1960) was a great saint scholar of the recent past. With his intellectual and spiritual grandeur, he had a serious impact on his students and those who come across his readership. Being a prolific writer, he wrote his magnum opus treatise, Risâle-i Nur aiming at to serve humanity in both spiritual and physical/mundane levels. Said Nursî was a scholar of Islamic traditions—both Qur’ân and Sunnah—with having deep understanding of Western thought and history. When the Muslim world was at crossroads, Said Nursî felt it necessary to save Muslims from moral and material degradation. For this he proposed his educational policy in the beginning of the twentieth century. He advocated the concept of integration of knowledge where religious and modern sciences go hand in hand. He held that knowledge, education and faith are prime ingredients for renewal of a civilization. (Ahmad, 2014, 219)

Said Nursî believed that the education system of the society should be the integration of knowledge and faith and anything without faith is nothing. Arguing faith and knowledge complementary factors of education, he asserted in the absence of any one of these, education system or concept could not make any difference or progress. (Ahmad, 2014, 220). The absence of faith from the educational systems at contemporary times, has commoditised everything even humanity has lost its value. It has been observed by the educationists, “Education that is entirely scientific and materialist can produce nothing but tools and modern mechanics. It alienates man from beauty and estranges him form wisdom” (Durant, 1953, 168).
The Islamic scheme of knowledge is comprehensive one, which its adherents failed to implement as such. For Said Nursî Islam is the master and guide of all sciences, and the chief and father of all true knowledge. To actualize this cause, the integration of all knowledge, he proposed to establish an educational institution which he called by the name, “Medresah al-Zehra”. He compared it with the Al-Azhar University of Cairo and called his university as its sister university (Markham, 2013, 10). The establishment of the institution was multi-dimensional—the comprehensive educational policy to secure the future of Kurdistan, the unity of the empire and the entire Islamic world. He aimed at to engage with a broader spectrum of scholars, intellectuals, and politicians there. Istanbul was the heart of Ottoman intelligentsia, the center of the Muslim world, and an important axis in the world’s power balance. (Ibid. 10–11) The unification of three traditions—medrese, mekteb and tekkes was also included in the scheme. The scheme focused on the reformation of the existing curriculum of the educational institutions—both religious and secular. He urged the medrese institutions should include modern sciences in their curriculum and the secular institutions should accept traditional religious sciences to be imparted as well. By accepting this proposal, the students from the secular institutions will be saved from being without religion whereas those studying in the religious institutions would be updated in the modern sciences (Ibid).

Said Nursî was a visionary scholar of the time who was well aware of the challenges faced by the Muslims at various levels. He took it upon his shoulders to lead the humanity towards the truth. He sought reformation of education at every level including primary level, secondary level, and university level. His proposal of Medresah al-Zehra was mainly focused on the higher educational level, that is, the reformation of the education at university level. He believed that the intellectual directions for social change are guided by the universities. (Vahide, 2004, 43) For him, the integration of religious and secular education is a best tool for Muslim renaissance. He says: “We should mould the science brought from
Europe and America, which, in fact, belongs to Islam, with the light of oneness and view it from the point of view of the contemplation and signified meaning mentioned by the Qur’an, that is, on behalf of its maker and master” (Ahmed, 2014, 221). The main purpose of his initiative was to produce a sincere and committed Muslim citizen in order to get rid of the crisis of the Muslim intelligentsia and to develop science and technology in the Muslim world.

Revisiting the educational policy of Said Nursî

The educational policy advocated or proposed by Said Nursî is very relevant in the contemporary times. He emphasized to identify and examine the reasons for the divergence and differences between various branches of educational system in order to constitute true civilization. He stressed upon the curriculum of the educational institutions should be modified that would cover all dimensions of human personality. (Unknown, 2015, 3) The main purpose of his initiative was to produce a sincere and committed Muslim citizen in order to get rid of the crisis of the Muslim intelligentsia and to develop science and technology in the Muslim world. The unification of three traditions in his proposed university by representing “the most superior mekteb by the reason, the very best medrese by the heart, and the most sacred zawiye by the conscience” (Vahide, 2004, 44). Likewise, the exploration and the examination of the Nursîan concepts on knowledge and education is instrumental not only to researchers interested in issues of Islamic reform, civilizational decline or transformation, but also to the many Islamic institutions working on developing policies and strategies of change and transformation in Muslim societies today. The aim of his writing was for the advancement and prosperity of Muslims, the Islamic world and their happiness in this world and the next, and that of all humanity (Vahide, 2004).

Said Nursî touched the problem of language while discussing his educational policy. He proposed tri-lingual formula while imparting the education. The three languages he proposed are—Arabic, Turkish and Kurdish. The three languages are important because Arabic being
the language of Islam, Turkish the language of central power of the world and the Kurdish being the native language. Accordingly, he made Arabic compulsory, Turkish necessary and Kurdish optional.

**Efficacy of the proposal**

In contemporary times, it is important but difficult to impose the Nursîan education policy. The difficulty is in the sense that modern institutions are not willing to include religion in the curriculum and if they include then which religion should they include and to what extent. The religious institutions, on the other hand, reject the modern sciences as a part of their curriculum. For them, it would cast their religion in accepting such proposals. At elementary levels such contradictions are stronger than on higher levels. However, many educational institutions have attempted to integrate the modern and religious sectors of education. Among such universities comes the name of Aligarh Muslim University that has a prestige to accommodate the students coming from different religious institutions. The university has arranged a bridge-course for those who qualify the eligibility criteria. Many elementary schools are also established to give the students both religious and modern education side by side.

**Conclusion**

Islam presents a holistic view of human development and encourages the acquisition of knowledge for the benefit of humanity and to seek nearness of Allah. Said Nursî tries to explore the comprehensiveness of education and its importance for the Muslim renaissance and the preservation of Islamic civilization. He wishes a Muslim should be well acquainted with the traditional and modern education. The dream that this saint scholar wanted to come true, has yet struggling for the results. There are various issues and problems regarding the application of Said Nursî’s concept of education on various fronts. The nature of such institutions, administration, infrastructure, funding and other issues need to be addressed. However, dream of Said Nursî could not come true
overnight rather it needs a lot of energy and sacrifice of years. The countries that have took steps in this regard are yet far from Said Nursî’s model. In the educational institutions where any sort of integration is seen, the faith-based or moral education is optional and neglected as such. Therefore, to put forward and effective Said Nursî’s model of education, the faith-based education should be made compulsory along with other modern subjects.

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Psychological doctrines of Said Nursî and the role of *Risale-i Nur* in the cognitive process of learning and ethical character formation’

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ABSTRACT

The brain storming teachings of Said Nursî in the disciplines of religion and science are more outstanding than that of any scholar of his age and thereafter. His trajectory words and thoughts are mind blasting as many across the world are attracted like bees to a hive. Thousands of readers whom seek noble paradigms in his collections are changed as his followers because of the mentioned features. *Risale-i Nur*, most widely inspired as a holy book can be treated like an expedient of ethics and morality. But, even his doctrines have much universality; studies related to the psychological perspectives of his teachings are countless.

So, this paper focuses on the contributions of Nursî’s thoughts through *Risale-i Nur* for presenting a learning pedagogy and the formation of ethical behaviour. At first it considers the drawbacks of material and spiritual way of education of the modern context. Then, it analyses the method and encoding techniques of *Risale-i Nur* in general and the impact of its dictums on the readers as a better education in style and perception of matters in particular. The conclusion is that the *Risale-i Nur* doctrines will be effective in cognitive process of education in the modern period.

Introduction

The spiritual arena of the world has always glorified with the presence of scholars, thinkers, and revolutionaries from every religious identity. A fortunate amalgamation of wisdom, purity and renaissance quality in a person may contribute something more for his disciplinarians and the mankind that follows to his
age. Bediüzzaman Said Nursî was such a personal identity who restored the values and immensities of the human existence and satisfied the human starvation for spirituality in a scenario of great decline of spiritual enactment. His words as well as his doctrines featured a touch of divine glory that the Islamic world never experienced before. Lack of the footsteps of such a man is a blank space in the spiritual and ethical character of this century which is signified with unbearable experiences and a great decline in the humanitarian values.

Modern educational systems which are packed with the western cultural hegemony are a threat for the traditional mode of spiritual education which plays a vital role in the construction of ethical and humanitarian concepts. Even the discipline of psychology has developed much in the academia, the contributions to a better pedagogy in education featured by ethical improvement are countless. So, as the historical dictums, teachings and texts of the centuries have an immense role in the mental development and spiritual arousal of the readers, *Risale-i Nur* of Said Nursî can be read as a guide and a teacher for a humanistic personal life.

Every community which has remaining some virtues are questioning for how best to prepare children and youth for successful adulthood in the ongoing century. The question emerges because humanity is immersed in a social and cultural environment that is changing at an accelerating rate. So every society is dealing with issues of preparing children and youth for adulthood and the adult for a better citizenship, by providing the proper learning experiences so that the young people can flourish as intellectual adults. While it is acknowledged that not only schools are the institutions responsible for the education and character formation of the youngsters but the informal and sometimes conflicting learning experiences provided by home, community, readings and larger society make the role. A good vision of making a value rich human being needed to be considered and plans are to be made and implemented. This requires the ability to think beyond the actual to the possible through the use of imagination and cognitive work. Liu and Noppe
Brandon makes an excellent point that the use of imagination is the first step towards developing creative solutions to seemingly intractable challenges. For this mental function, the innate potential of human beings can be awakened and actualized through directed reading, thinking and spiritualising the soul through a book or an influential personality.

This information is important to facilitate development of a broad range of knowledge, attitudes, ethical behaviour related to a successful human. It is intended that the readers of dictums and holy texts will be stimulated to provide more of the types of experiences that will allow the Youngsters especially students to prepare for challenging the times they will face as a better human. Perhaps the most widely accepted approach for identifying a variety of human capacities is Gardner’s [1983–2006] work on multiple intelligences as his new study improved to an eighth intelligence, labelled naturalist (an object oriented intelligence) which is embedded with moral character and the term used to describe the soul/spirit aspect of the human being and also identified as the human capacity for social interaction, morality and the creation of self-views. And a ninth intelligence named as existential is still under consideration for the dimension of citizenship, as that is the role within these capacities will be used. The point is that it involves that ability to search for and connect with universal unknowns. That is in a view can be considered as the spiritual dimension to achieve the unknowns in mind in which a person can achieve using the interactions between books and persons. This is what the modern material education failed to form among individuals, the capacity to inbuilt the ethics and values in human mind. The direction of one’s soul can be made in a systematic way by the connection between holy books and the author who can be considered as one can be followed and guided. So, here emerges the significant role of the Bediüzzaman Said Nursi’s doctrines and his magnum opus Risale-i Nur in building up a better citizen with better thinking.
Doctrines of Said Nursî: a psychological perspective

The basis of Bediüzzaman Nursî’s strength and influence lies in the fact that while the majority of Muslim youngsters have shunned acting on Islam and they have been accepting the hegemony of the west blindly without any prejudice, then it is meaningless to talk about traditional Islamic values and humanitarian aspects. It was a conditioned behaviour for the young Turks to blindly imitate the western culture. As psychology says – many of the behaviours that to perform each day requires little conscious efforts on our own part - This conditioning behaviour is what made the Turks unconsciously slopped to the westerners and the traditional impact of their own culture over them has distorted. But, cognitive psychology also dealt with some behaviours excepted from the daily performances which can be made consciously with the stance of external bodies. This is what Nursî used on Turks to build better consciousness about their culture, the destiny of their life and the requirements for the world here after. By his motivational words and introspective deeds, other than making political or inflexible organization and all, he strengthened the roots of faith in the hearts of millions of Turks through his preaching and writings. He as a revivalist bowled the intellectual revolution; to shape ideas, beliefs, and moral view points of the people in to the Islamic fold. And the fact that attracted his disciplinarians was what he proclaimed and taught can be seen from his own character itself .it is the best quality of a leader to make good affair in the followers view while doing as what says. This character what psychology says is an unconditional positive regards which a distinctive person can only be achieved.

There had a decline of spiritual and religious values in Turkey during his period, because of the interference of materialists and atheist in the name of science and development soon after the industrial revolution. It was a shaped character [shaping is a method for character formation] of Turkish youngsters which is commonly causing in humans to acquire or construct new and more complex
forms of behaviour from simpler behaviours. Thus he gave the method of chunking which a sequence or a chain of responses the last of which leads to a reward. It has a great implication in human behaviour to form a new response instead of the previously acquired. By chunking the themes and teachings of the religion and revitalization of Islamic faith, he drafted a drastic change among the Turks. And one among was the scheme adapted for reviving Muslim society is a “non-physical war or war against the self/soul”. It was using words and thoughtful enactment by providing introspective methods involved in self-inspiration of psychology. In Nursî’s view the retaking of the basic tenets, culture and values of the religion through new methods, were of paramount importance and took precedents over every other form of struggle aimed at rehabilitation. His sermons also distinguished with the style of presentation and variety of matters and instances. His famous Friday sermon on the occasion of his visit to Damascus in 1911 has made a trajectory effect in the thoughts of his audiences. The way of linking matters and ordering the tasks was featured by the methods of learning that psychology proposes for the best perception in cognition. The process of perception can be defined as the way in which we select, organize and interpret sensory input to achieve a grasp of our surroundings. A smooth sensation of the external information through our sensory organs will contribute for the better perception of the information we received. Nursî’s preaches featured this perceptual function that the audience curved their sensational organs as his words are something special that couldn’t heard before. After a better perception of the information they received, audiences consciousness became active for thinking about the facts that Nursî preached. After all they became a relevant part as Nursî’s followers whose character formation took part in an ethical manner.

As far as the methodology of Said Nursî is concerned, he identifies the problem first then gives logical as well as scientific analysis respectively where needed, in accordance with the mental capacity of the follower. For attaining the his desired goals regarding re-
ligious and social reconstruction of the age, Nursî clearly adopted--even without a master knowledge in the discourse of psychology--the problem solving method which is the most relevant task in the cognitive process of human being. The first step is problem identification to recognize that a problem exists and then figure out just what issues, obstacles, and goals are involved. When Turks attitude arouse the passion of antagonism and grew hostile towards the Arabs and their religion, He identified first of all what causes these social insurgencies. The second step is to formulate potential solutions which require thinking critically about the problem and depend heavily on the information at our disposal. This methodology can be observed at the beginning of Said Nursî’s sermon where he identifies the major problem faced by the Muslim Ummah he narrates ‘I have realized that what has allowed foreigners, Europeans, to fly towards the future on progress while it arrested us and kept us, in respect of material development, in the middle ages, are sick sicknesses’ then articulates this sicknesses as:1:Despair 2:Death of truthfulness 3:love of enmity, 4:Unawareness of the bond that bind believers to another 5:Despotism 6:Restricting Endeavour to what is personally beneficial.[23] after the identification of social problems, he suggest the remedy in the form of six words and elaborate each with logical reasoning, which are hope, honesty, love and brotherhood, Islamic unity and mutual consultation. This humanistic remedies and socialistic values may influence highly on the distorted minds of the people as they can feel the presence of a problem solver for their problems.

Reasoning and intelligence: methods of Nursî’s teachings

For exploring the reality and following the style of Qur’ân, Said Nursî approached logical reasoning. In psychology, reasoning often involves the use of certain principles of logic. It also involves inferences or conclusions drawn from other information. He clearly articulates the obstacles and problems of the civilization in general and then the Islam in particular. The obstacles are
1st Europeans ignorance, 2nd their barbarity at that time, 3rd their bigotry 4th domination of clergy and Europeans blind obedience towards them, 6th and 7th which related to Muslims are despotism and degeneracy that arose from opposing the laws, and the 8th is the contradiction between the science and outer meaning of Islam. For these gradually ordered obstacles, he makes remedies very logically and intelligently where as for the first three obstacle remedies by virtues, Knowledge and civilization, the fourth and fifth by idea of freedom and desire to search for truth. Then the sixth and seventh according to Nursi’s reasoning “the separate despotic power residing in a single individual is now declining, Indicates that the fearful despotism of larger groups in society and Committees will also decline [inductive reasoning]. And the eighth which is relevant is only because of the unawareness of the inner meanings of the Qur’anic verses.

The methodology adopted by Nursi is involved in cognitive psychology, which invokes human intellect. He talks primarily on the problems and remedies it with significant solutions to overcome the problems and to improve the society. The disciplinarians of his words can observe the element of optimism in his methodology which is an indispensable task of the human psychology. During the condition of stress and high tension in the society of Turkey, despite minding these in a pessimistic manner, Nursi’s approach was quite optimistic and he gives hopes and good news of victory to the audience.

In contrast, the methods adopted by Said Nursi in his sermons and teachings clearly linking with the disciplines of modern psychology even though the contemporary aspects of psychology couldn’t get popularity in his period and in his biography we can’t see any records that states he studied the psychological facts and theory. Anyhow, this is totally distinguishes Nursi from his other contemporaries.

**Risale-i Nur: The book of humanistic guidance**

Occasionally, as Bediüzzaman Said Nursi guided the whole humanity with his psychological teachings and trajectory words,
his greatest written contributions which are contrasted as *Risale-i Nur* also contributes much revolutionary seeds to the humanity.

For awaking the Muslim rationality and rehabilitating what they lose from their glorious civilization, *Risale-i Nur* acts as an intermediary between readers mind and Said Nursi’s thoughts. Even after his obituary, his words and deeds are remaining and pouring revolutionary seeds in the minds of lakhs of readers.

It distinguishes *Risale-i Nur* among other religious books that it adapted inductive reasoning along with deductive methodology which is more acceptable for the contemporary cognitive mind set. It states; “Thus, according to inductive reasoning, the true aim and result of creation prove that good, beauty and being perfected are fundamental in the universe and that they are the true aim. So since men have filthy and disordered the face of the earth to this degree with their wicked godlessness and depart this world without receiving their deserts and without reflecting the true aim present in the universe, they certainly shall not escape to non-existence. They shall rather be dispatched to the dungeons of Hell.” (33)

It gives extreme pleasure and optimistic mind set to the readers and creates hope for the Muslims and causes high morale which is one of the prerequisites for the revival of society. For spiritual growth and ethical life, his main focus is on developing the basic belief in eternity and religious values as his words in ‘The Rays’ and ‘The Flashes’ etc... were clearly articulates.

Another salient feature of the methodology of *Risale-i Nur* is its allegorical methodology. It conveys its messages through instances and examples of surroundings, comparison, simple stories and similar narrations. One of his collections ‘the word’ starts very attractively narrating as ‘Brother’ then interestingly go through a story of two desert travellers then proclaiming at the last that the reader is the traveller and the desert is the world itself. The metaphoric narrative style of the book is very much attractive for the reader to perceive the semantics of the words and thereby appropriating to access the virtue and morality that implied in the book.
Risale-i Nur, instead as a text of a legendary outcome, it acts further as a motivational and guiding collection of dictums which powered the seeds of revolutionary and ethical aspects of a human being. It is equipped with religious, scientific and logical arguments and guides readers to perceive, think, and most importantly to act in the right direction which is guided by social values.

Conclusion

For the ethical development and especially the moral enactment, some driving forces should be existed. It is the history of world that revolutionaries and social revivalists came forward in every community and nation to ideologically makes the people in virtue and the whole society in humanitarian values even under religious background or not. Among these Reconstruction figures and their exemplary contributions, Bediüzzaman Said Nursî and his Dictums remain as a social motive for learning goodness and ethical character formation among youngsters and students.

His techniques are unique in nature which strikes the human intellect and cognitive process provoking as well. Said Nursî, his words and writings with logical and analytical ability, opens new horizons for psychological paradigms in pedagogy of learning and character formation. He convincingly changes the mindset of the people from despair to hope, from lying to truthfulness, from love to enmity to love for brotherhood and from individual interests to communal interests. He provides for the entire humanity a method and technique of integrated form of religion, science and logic which is more seemed in the world of post modernity and most importantly to act in the direction which is more practical in nature and appeals human mind especially a man of modern mind set and dealing with modern aspects of the psychology.

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Solutions of *Risale-i Nur* for an open sore of mankind: the lack of social solidarity and co-existence

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**ABSTRACT**

Bediüzzaman Said Nursî as a mujeddid has brought a new perspective and understanding on interpretation of Qur’ān. Some of the misunderstandings and misinterpretings of some verses of Qur’ān like ‘O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you – then indeed, he is [one] of them. Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people.’ (1) has been removed by his *tafseer Risale-i Nur*. Some of them are like intolerance of coexistence, social and individual injustice, inequality in the society and among societies...etc. In this article I will try to point out the such misunderstandings which are based on belief or culture and will figure out the solutions and remarkable answers of Qur’ān through *Risale-i Nur* perspective. The following quotation from the *Risale-i Nur* collection is a convincing summary for this article:

“Question: How can we be equal with non-Muslims?

Answer: Equality is not based on merit and honour but on law. A sultan and slave is equal in front of the law. How does a law, which says do not hurt even an ant and prohibits of torturing it, neglects the law of human being? Not at all! We did not apply this rule. Yes, I guess the case of Imam Ali (r.a.) with an ordinary Jew and the judicial hearing of your glorious Salahaddin Ayyubi with a simple Christian correct, your mentioned mistake.” (2)
Introduction

Today, even right now some children are dying in front of their parents or they are watching the dead bodies of their parents in many different geographies. Some of people are exiled for no reason. Some of people are exposing injustice because of only they are Muslim. Some of people are exposing cabal because of their religious and political thoughts. Why all these cruel and injustice things are happening in modern world or in a world that has fake modernism? Yes it is a fake modernism as modern (!) people made very much progress on their clothes, hair styles, vehicles, life philosophy, casual sex... etc but egotism, lack of love, mercy, forgiveness, equality, justice...etc are having their golden era. What i understand from Bediüzzaman’s thoughts is reason behind all these negativities is ignorance of mankind about themselves. In this article i will try to get the light of Qur’ān through Bediüzzaman’s Risale-i Nur to explore my lesson for the describing mentioned problems and analysis them by the designation of Risale-i Nur.

The Lack of Social Solidarity and Co- Existence is in our life as an open and bleeding sore of mankind. For designation and solution of mankind problems we need to know about who is mankind and its responsibilities. While trying on this designation as a deep and erudite pedagogist Bediüzzaman’s thoughts will enlighten our path.

What is the reality and definition of human being

Human being is the most important and most developed wealth of world treasure. Human being has a very developed brain and super skills by the comparison of other creates. Sociologists and philosophers define the difference of human being from other created as cognitive skills. This a correct but deficit definition. Cognitive skills differ mankind from other creates but it does not make human beings human in the exact meaning of humanity. The term human being defines a creature with great cognitive skill plus soul ore. Reality of human being is not unidimensional. It is always deficit without inner and moral values study on Risale-i Nur.
because I agree with what one of Bedizzaman’s one of disciples said about him. He completely defines my thoughts on Bediüzzaman’s teachings by his saying “You make a man to analyses himself” about Nursî. Within this context I will present some of human being definitions of Risale-i Nur and the verses of Qur’ân. Because what I believe is two main problems of humankind is as; lack knowledge of them about the reality of what they are and Justice or equality:

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Indeed, We have created man on the most excellent of patterns, Then sent him down to the lowest of the low, * Except those who believe and do good deeds. (3)

Human beings have been created in the most beautiful form and they have values only by making a impression for not only his own kind but also all creatures. According to this Qur’ânic verse, good deeds such as love, mercy, forgiveness, being kind to others, sharing the life with other creatures in respectful way, having respect on existing of differences, keeping good values as morality, equality, justice..etc or making exact opposite of this values make human being good or wicked. As the engineer of a machine knows it better than everybody. Creator of human being knows him better than everybody including human being itself. And this Creator defines the meaning of human being and the aim of his created and sent to this world. According to this verse it is very obvious that mankinds have value as a human being through what they do not what they dress, they eat, where they live, From which nationality they come, what colour they are etc. Believing on God requires to act with a worthy value of being a real servant of Him as being real servant of God makes us real human being. Human being has a value only if he is human being with the meaning related to God order’s about his relations with others. Then only we can call a person human being. Because without this divine values human being’s value is only a matter of physical existence. And this physical existence is temporary and transit as any other animal’s life it has value virtually nothing.
In another Qur’anic verse the Most Almighty commands as:

_I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me._

If our purpose of being in this world is to worship on God, Our relation with other creatures is a nice scale to check our sincerity on our relation with God. Because our philosophy must be as Yunus Emre says: “Love the created for Creator’s sake.

Although in front of Divine Power mankind is the weakest created because of his needs, wishes, sensitive emotions...etc. he has a superiority over living beings with his comprehensive worship and feelings, elevated qualities and his extensive spheres of existence.

As having such amazing abilities mankind is responsible to surround notably his own kind all creatures as well by having justice, mercy, feeling and applying of equality towards other living beings. He has a position in this world as an owner and responsible for the layout and justice of this world and among living beings in the world. He is considered as a shepherd of all living beings. His duty is to take care of all creatures, work for their happiness. If this world is considered as a home, all creatures are as a family, mankind can be considered as parents of this family. Therefore mankind has to act towards each other with mercy and conservativeness including all living beings. Nursî has a delightful exploration of expectations from mankind:

> “Also, do not say: “I am nothing. What importance do I have that the universe should purposefully be made subject to me by an Absolutely All-Wise One, and universal thanks required of me?” Because for sure you are as though nothing with respect to your soul and form, but from the point of view of duty and rank, you are an observant spectator of this majestic universe, an eloquent, articulate tongue of these beings so full of wisdom, a discerning reader of this book of the universe, a supervisor of these creatures full of wonder at their glorifications, and like a foreman of these beings full of respect for their worship.” (5)

By forgetting or neglecting his heart’s and nature’s ore mankind caused all injustices, chaoses, decimations, hunger of Africa, arrogance of Europe, rapes of women in Iraq, tortures in the prisons in
Afghanistan, organ gangsterism in all over the world, corruption, violence for women and children rights, etc.

O mankind! Shake and come to your sense. Do not you look? Do not you see? Do not you think? Do not you feel? You sometimes became a monster and harmed all living kinds does not matter either human being or animal or environment or your own ore.

Do not you get a lesson from the sun that rises to help you everyday. Do not you get a lesson from the rain that rains to end the thirst of your world. Do not you impresses by threes that eat a tasteless land and give you innumerable kind of fruits to help your desires. Do not you look at your God that helps you in each and every way. He is the one who created you from nothing. He is the one who gave you a merciful servant and a sincere friend who is called mother. He is the one who changes the seasons to not to make you bored. He is the one who taught you what you know. He is the one who put the stars on the sky as ornament for you. Do not all these things give you a lesson of solidarity and co-existence?

Yes we humankind is responsible for everything we have and everything we do. We all shall listen together what the master of time says:

“Man has high value as is evidenced by the heavens and earth being subjugated [to him] for his use. He also has vast importance as is evidenced by the fact that Allah did not create him for creation, but created creation for him. He also has a [high] place in Allah’s sight as is evidenced by the fact that Allah did not give existence to the world for itself, but for man, and He gave man existence that he might worship Him. It is to be concluded from this that man is superior and pre-eminent and not like the animals, and that he is worthy of receiving the jewel of “and again to Him will you return.”(6)

Mankind was not created to fight for the cheap, worthless, unnecessary and transit works of this world. His main aim of being in this world is develop his valuable skills, sacrifice, unique ores.

By the definition of Qur’an people from east to west have been created with a lot of differences for developing of solidarity among them:
O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted. (7)

And Nursî enlightens our understanding by saying:

It is, then, this disposition of man -his desires extending to eternity, his thoughts that embrace all of creation and his wishes that embrace the different varieties of eternal bliss- that demonstrates he has been created for eternity and will indeed proceed to eternity. This world is like a hospice for him, a waiting-room for the hereafter. (8)

Yes indeed, mankind is important with his desires extending to eternity. He was created as a comprehensive mirror to the manifestation of His names which makes human being the centre of mould. As it is aforesaid responsibility of human being to show the mercy and the shadow of His great Names. This requires mankind to stop and think what he is before he suffers from jealousy, having unlimited ambition, feeding his ego, and acting with full of hatred.

A famous Arab story narrates: Ones upon time there was a baby lion. He had lost his way and he feel apart from his family. He was found by a sheep herd and he started to live them but he used to run away and try to find a shelter as soon as wolfs used to attack herd. Time flyied and baby lion grew up. But he still used to run away during wolf attacks. One day sheeps gathered to find a solution. They tried a lot to explain him that he was a lion. But it was not possible for him to understand it. Sheeps decided to take him to a lake and show him what he is on his reflection on the lake. He surprised very much for what he saw. After that day no wolf could attack herd.

For the trying to solve the problems such as lack of solidarity and co-existence, suffering from jealousy or greed, behaviours like ego or vanity, lack of mercy and tolerance mankind has to know what he is.

According to many definitions of Nursî on Human being one of them is as followed:
The First Aspect: Like the darkness of the night shows up light, so through his weakness and impotence, his poverty and need, his defects and faults, man makes known the power, strength, riches, and mercy of an All-Powerful One of Glory, and so on... he acts as a mirror to numerous Divine attributes in this way. Even, through searching for a point of support in his infinite impotence and boundless weakness in the face of his innumerable enemies, his conscience perpetually looks to the Necessarily Existent One. And since he is compelled in his utter poverty and endless need to seek for a point of assistance in the face of his innumerable aims, his conscience in that respect all the time leans on the Court of an All-Compassionate One of Riches and opens its hands in supplication to Him. (9)

Equality of all human-beings

We mentioned lack information of mankind about his identification as one of main reasons for non existence of tolerance, peace and love among people. Another main reason is non-existence of equality. It is really hard to understand the mentalities that consider some people superior than others because of their wealth, colour, sex, geography, race, religion, nationality or world view.

There is no need to count the millions of heart touching stories in today’s world. I will simply try to consume the mentality of superiority by explaining the equality of mankind in front of Islam. All divine religions first and foremost Islam provide and support the equality of human beings.

An important and basic factor in the value system of Islam is the principle of equality. Islam point outs that in the sight of God Almighty, all people are equal, nevertheless they are not necessarily identical. There are differences on skills, potentials, ambitions, wealth...etc.

Yet, none of those differences can by themselves, create the status of superiority of a man or his race over another. The stock of man, his skin colour, his wealth and the degree of prestige he enjoys have no any bearing on the character or personality of the individual as far as Allah is concerned. The only distinction, which Allah recognizes is the distinction in piety; the only criterion which Allah applies, is the criterion of goodness and spiritual excellence.
In the Qur’ān, Allah Almighty Says (what means):

“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female, and have made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Indeed the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.” \(^{(10)}\)

First presenters of Islam by their life provide a unique example about the equality in Islam. I give the floor Master of Time here ones again. Lets see what he says:

“Question: How can we be equal with non-Muslims?
Answer: Equality is not based on merit and honour but on law. A sultan and slave is equal in front of the law. How does a law, which says do not hurt even an ant and prohibits of torturing it, neglects the law of human being? Not at all! We did not apply this rule. Yes, I guess the case of Imam Ali (r.a.) with an ordinary Jew and the judicial hearing of your glorious Salahaddin Ayyubi with a simple Christian correct, your mentioned mistake.” \(^{(11)}\)

This is to claim that in Islam, no nation is created to be put on stairs other nations or to rise above them. Man’s value in front of men and in front of God is evaluated by the good he does, and by his being a slave to God.

Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) said: “O mankind, your Lord is One and your father is one. You all descended from Aadam, and Aadam was created from earth. He is most honoured among you in the sight of God who is most upright. No Arab is superior to a non-Arab, no coloured person to a white person, or a white person to a coloured person except by Taqwa (piety).” \(^{(12)}\)

This is an article of belief, which the Muslim takes seriously and to which he must adhere sincerely. The basis of this Islamic value of equality are strongly and deeply rooted in the constitution of Islam. It arises from basic tenets such as the following:

- All men have been created by One and the Same Etern God
- All human beings belong to the human race and share equally in the common parenting of Aadam and Eve.
- God is Just and Merciful to all His creatures. He is not unfair to any race, or religion. The whole Universe is Estate of Him and all people are His creatures.
• All men kind are born with equality, in the sense that no one brings any possession with him; and they die in equality in the meaning that they take back nothing of their worldly materials.
• God Almighty judges everybody on the basis of his own virtues and on the basis of his own deeds.
• God Almighty has bestowed on man, a title of honour and respect.

These are some of the reasons behind the worth of equality in Islam. When this concept is fully realised, it will permit no place for prejudice or persecutions. And when this Divine commands are fully applied, there will be no place for violence or suppression. Concepts of chosen and gentile peoples, words such as ‘privileged’ and ‘condemned’ races, expressions such as “social castes” and “citizens” will all become meaningless and obsolete.

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said:

“O mankind, your Lord is One and your father is one. You all descended from Aadam, and Aadam was created from earth. He is most honoured among you in the sight of God who is most upright. No Arab is superior to a non-Arab, no coloured person to a white person, or a white person to a coloured person except by Taqwa (piety).”

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Bediüzzaman Said Nursî: a paradigm shift in the dimensions of inter-religious dialogue

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ABSTRACT
Inter-religious dialogues have essential role in shaping every civilization with an integrative capacity to formulate and maintain peaceful attributes of living in society. Being peaceful to each other and taking actions to correlate the so called ‘others’ in faiths are triggering human society to get rid of unwanted speculation and preparing ground for intellectual and spiritual toleration.

Nursîan approach was obviously directed towards this notion of understanding every aspect religions and to bridge the gap between people belonged to different theologies and sects. Along with, he was in conversation with secularism evolved in the regime of Ata Turk in Turkey. His message is all about conveying the notion of respecting each other beyond everything. This paper tries to trace the very dimension of Nursîan approach in leading inter-religious dialogues and interfaith activities. His staunch criticism of secular humanism and irreligious activities are also analysed.

Introduction
Interfaith dialogue has its very momentum in every parts of history for it has enabled the peoples belonging to various sects and religions to build up a bridge among them connecting the differences and diversities. Interfaith dialogue is referred as a dialogue between members of different religions for the goal of reducing conflicts between their religions and to achieve agreed upon mutually desirable goals.

To consider and get across with the basic types of interfaith dialogue regarding the mentality of one who initiates the dialogue is
very important to understand the very nature of the dialogue and essentials for peaceful dialogue activities. Let us briefly examine the different attitudes of faith communities in respect of the so-called ‘other’ in interfaith dialogue. There are mainly three types of interreligious dialogues:

1. Inclusivism

Inclusivism is the attitude and mentality that one religion is uniquely true but salvation is accessible to those others who are outside of that faith. The evolution of inclusivism can be traced from Friedrich Schleiermacher’s statement that “God is available, to some degree, in all religions, but that Christianity is nevertheless superior to all”. It is what is today known as ‘Inclusivism’. Though inclusivists affirm that truth and salvation can be found in any religion, they do not accept the claim that all religions are equal. This is clear from the Roman Catholic ‘Vatican II Council’ of the 1960s which has explicitly declared that people of other faiths, including Islam, could be saved.

2. Exclusivism

‘Exclusivism’ means that there is only one way to God and human salvation. Earlier models of religious communities towards the ‘other’ were characterized mostly by exclusivism. While they affirm that other religions possess characteristics of truth, they believe that these do not teach the real truth that is able to save their followers. In fact, they regard much of what is taught in other religions as false. The vast majority of exclusivists consider only their own religion as uniquely and supremely true and all others as false.

3. Pluralism

Religious Pluralism became increasingly popular in the last half of the twentieth century and Hick was the first to have suggested

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1 “Said Nursi’s Approach to Interfaith Dialogue”—Suleman Essop Dangor
2 “Muslim–Christian Dialogue and Cooperation in the Thought of Bediüzzaman Said Nursî.”—Michel, T 2005
that all the great religions are somehow expressions of the same truth, despite their surface differences. According to him, each of the major religious traditions offers a path to salvation or liberation.

Religious Pluralism is the view that all major faiths are equally valid. Thus, no one religion can be considered unique or better to any other religion. William James’ emphasis on the centrality of individual experience in diverse religious milieux Ernst and Troeltsch’s understanding that every culture’s claim can only be viewed as its peculiar apprehension of the divine has ushered in the current school of thought that advocates ‘Religious Pluralism’.

They also point out that there are virtuous people in all the major religions. While pluralists acknowledge that there may be differences in rituals and beliefs among diverse religions which represent great diversities, their central point of view is that on the most important issues, there is great similarity.

**Nursîan model of interfaith dialogue**

Bediüzzaman was obviously optimistic about his initiatives on interfaith dialogue for it has made an unparalleled platform of unity within diversity to recognize and understand so called ‘others’ in faith. It is clear from his notion of reaching out to the public by peace, love and tolerance which are very essentials of dialogues between two distinct communities. Based on his universal action for peaceful society, Bediüzzaman tried to initiate inter-religious dialogue which has triggered against irreligious secular platforms of Modern Turkey.

In his description on the Qur’anic verse,

‘O People of the Book! Come to a common term between us and you, that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with him; that we erect not from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allah’ (3: 64)

In his view, the Qur’anic command to come to a ‘common term’ with the People of the Book indicates that Muslims and Christians far from being alienated by a supposed ‘clash of civilizations’, they
are called to stand together and work to carry on a critical civilizational dialogue with the advocates of modernity. He asserted that they must come to a mutual awareness and understanding that as two communities founded on faith in God, they have a common mission to bear witness to divine values in the midst of worsened Western secular approach.

Nursî stated that ‘modern civilization, which is the product of the thought of all mankind and perhaps the jinn as well, has taken up a position opposed to the Qur’an, which individuals and communities have failed to dispute. Said Nursî argued that there is a need for a common struggle against irreligion, atheism, tyranny and evil.\(^3\)

It is recorded that during his lifetime, he reached out to Christian leaders. Two prominent events that are cited are:
1. He visited the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras in Istanbul in 1953 to request cooperation between Muslims and Christians against atheism and non-belief.
2. Nursî sent a compilation of his works to Pope Pius XII in 1950.\(^4\)

Pathways of dialogue: discovering commonality in differences

Nursî argues that there can be no clash of civilizations between real believers, Christians and Muslims. There is nothing astonishing in this, because both communities believe in the one and only God and both seek to build up society on divine principles and values. Said Nursî advocated that this common point of belief should be used for further peace activities in society so as to construct a clash less civilization. If there is a clash, it is between the civilization envisioned by ‘people of faith’ and a civilization that tries to wash away God from everyday life, from social interaction, economics,

\(^3\) “The Muslim World and the West: Nursî’s Vision for a New Universal Dialogue Culture” – Berghout.

\(^4\) “Muslim-Christian Dialogue and Cooperation in the Thought of Bediüzzaman Said Nursî.” – Michel, T
and politics, and to reduce religion to privately-owned beliefs, to ineffective rituals, to colourful sets of norms.

Nursian approach in maintaining diversity of distinct faith in dialogue is much appreciated. In peoples’ quest for a Divinely-guided way of life in the modern age, Muslims will find common path with Christians who are committed to the teachings of Jesus. Said Nursî was absolutely aware of the fact that the theological differences between Islam and Christianity could not be washed away. However, he acknowledges the commonalities found between them can build up a peaceful society.

As an advocate of peace and reconciliation among the religions, Said Nursî affirmed in his master piece, *Risale-i Nur*, that the enemy of the Muslims was not at all Christians or other religions; rather, real Muslims and real Christians must understand one another as allies in confronting the fundamental challenge to human society, the refusal to believe in God and to respond to God in faith.

He states: It is recorded in Hadith or authentic traditions of the Prophet that at the end of the day, the truly pious among the Christians will unite with the People of the Qur’an and fight their common enemy, irreligion. At this time, too, Muslims need to unite sincerely not only with their own brothers and fellow believers, but also with the truly pious and spiritual Christians, and refrain temporarily from the discussion and debate of points of difference, in order to combat their common enemy – aggressive atheism.\(^5\)

His point of view is that concentrating obsessively on these differences can blind both Muslims and Christians to the even more important common task which they share. Both people have to advocate to the modern world a vision of human life and society in which God is central and God’s will is the norm of moral values.\(^6\)

Nursî finds out some crucial pathways to discover commonality through love. Nursî’s central thesis is that to build a civilisation in which human dignity, justice, and fellowship will be the norm,

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\(^5\) Nursî, “The Flashes,” in *Risale-i Nur*, 203

Muslims and Christians should seek to ground their mutual relationships on love, tolerance and diversity.

Against western secularism: need for dialogue

Nursî was in conversation with secularism evolved in the regime of Ata Turk in Turkey. His message is all about conveying the notion of respecting each other beyond everything. For Said Nursî, the real rival of human happiness and ethical honesty is atheism and irreligion. By this he means the tendency by people to disregard Divine Guidance, their unwillingness to give up their own desires and ideas. In short, Said Nursî sees the need for dialogue as arising from the challenges to Muslims and Christians posed by modern secular society evolved through Western principles.

He was of the opinion that there is a strong need for a common struggle against modern secularism propagated by west, irreligion, atheism, tyranny and evil. After the Second World War Nursî began to call on Muslims to unite and stand up not only among themselves but also with religious and pious Christian brothers for absolute disbelief is on the attack, ignoring questions of disputes and differences.

In his view the major challenge to faith in the modern age lay in the secular approach to life. He was equally critical of communism and capitalism, the communism for rejecting God’s existence and consequently denying religion in any role in society and the capitalism for ignoring the question of God and promoting a consumerist, materialist way of life.

Nursî’s emphasis on the importance of all people of different faiths to unite against their common enemy gained special attention from even non-Muslim scholars. Thomas Michel from Centre for Interfaith Dialogue, Vatican, enthusiastically shares his view on this matter that “at the deepest levels of spiritual striving to do God’s will and build harmonious and peaceful societies, our true enemies are not other persons, but rather the powers of ignorance, poverty, and aggression that cloud our powers of perception and
prevent us from acting as we should. These dark powers lie not outside us, but within our own hearts. Although it was delivered long time ago, He affirms that Nursî’s message is valid any time. “The root of tension and conflict between Muslims and Christians today lays not so much in the evil nature of the other as in our own egoistic desire to dominate, control, and retaliate.”

**Laying platform for dialogue: Nursî’s basis**

For Nursî, the foundation for dialogue has to be Islamic civilization. Even though Nursî advocates religious pluralism he does not go beyond the boundary of Islam in any moment. Rather he is more rooted and deeply concentrated on Islamic theology when he speaks of pluralism. In this view point he obviously differs from Hick. This strong stand may see as an attempt to find out an alternative to the blinded interfaith dialogues and religious pluralism. He tried to prove the pluralism in the light of Islamic fundamental sources, Qur’ân and Hadîth. As an Islamic scholar, Nursî held that ultimate salvation could be obtained only through Islam. This was the foundation of Nursîan interfaith dialogue. When Nursî speaks of salvation he is rooted in Islamic tradition and Qur’ânic versus.

Sulaiman Eris claims that “it is easy for us to extract the principles of interfaith dialogue and alliance from these sections by paraphrasing Nursî’s conflict resolution principles in the context of interfaith dialogue because most of the principles in these sections are not related specifically to Islam, but to human nature in general.”

**Nursî: Inclusivist, Exclusivist Or Pluralist?**

Said Nursî did not propose a clear model of interfaith dialogue. According to him, the pursuit of peace and justice, which he was induced could come about only through the restoration of divine

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8 Sulaiman Eris-Interfaith Dialogue and Alliance Principles in the Works of Said Nursî
values based on morals and holy norms, was a greater preference than attempting to force other faiths to accept Islam or imposing its doctrines on all others. His model of interfaith dialogue falls within the boundaries of Inclusivism discussed above. He does not aims to engage with other faith communities on matters of doctrine, preferring to focus on issues that are common, such as belief in God and core moral values.

Due to the fact that Nursî acknowledged that other faiths possess a partial understanding of the truth, he cannot be considered as an exclusivist. But he was by no means a pluralist like John Hick who recognized the validity of all truth claims. He could be called an inclusivist, a view supported by Ian Markham, scholar and leading figure advocating Muslim-Christian dialogue, who observes:

“Said Nursî is properly labelled as an ‘inclusivist’. He is committed to the truth of Islam. Yet he acknowledges that other traditions have a partial insight into the truth”⁹.

Most of Nursî’s comments on interfaith dialogues and other studies refer to Christianity and Christians. There are few references to Judaism and little to Hinduism, Buddhism or other faiths in the world. This must be attributed to the context in which he found himself. His encounter was with European civilization deeply connected either with Christianity or secularism based on irreligious activities.

‘Reimagined Nursîs’: influence of Nursian thought in interfaith dialogue

Influence of Nursîan approach of interfaith dialogue can be seen widespread among many of his followers. Fethullah Gülen, who is recognised widely as the chief Muslim proponent of dialogue among faiths today is one of the most influenced from the thoughts and visions envisioned by Said Nursî. Regarding his account of living for establishing interfaith dialogues, Gûlen can be said to have one among ‘re-imagined’ Nursî. He is well known for the schools

which he has been instrumental in establishing and maintaining. There are currently between 250—300 Gülen-inspired school of thoughts worldwide. These Gülen schools which admit learners of different faiths and emphasize what is termed ‘universal moral values’ of love, compassion, tolerance, and forgiving, values which were propounded by Said Nursî.

Conclusion

Contemporary initiatives for Inter faith dialogue are stimulating a renewed spirit of unity in different faiths thereby enabling people to live together in peace.. Nur movement of Turkey which was established and advocated by Bediüzzaman Said Nursî paved the way for more religious harmony.

Said Nursî is an ardent advocate of peace and love among people of different faiths. He promoted Inter faith dialogue between people. Even though Nursî promotes pluralism he does not go beyond the boundary of Islam in any moment of his life.

Understanding the so called ‘others’ in faith is essential for survival of existence of peace in the world. To live with mutual understanding for a better world we do not all have to be accepted? We do not have to wipe out all differences, get assimilated in to others or force others to get assimilated into us.

It is very important to note that Nursian approach of interfaith dialogue has gained its momentum in a crucially important period in the development of modern Turkey when secularism rooted on Western civilization had grown.

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Nursî’s concept of integration of sciences: a study of Madrassah al-Zahra

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ABSTRACT
With the onset of modernization and industrialization, the whole world was set into the pace of inventions and discoveries. It has been a great challenge to integrate the revealed knowledge with the modern sciences. Muslim scholars addressed and tried to create a possibility to enhance human intellectualism in their respective ages/ societies. Myriad of Muslim scholars and thinkers rejuvenated the process of amalgamation of sciences taking into consideration the need of time, and they came to the conclusion that without integration of revelation with modern sciences, human progress and development is not possible. These scholars who proposed and professed the integration of revealed and modern sciences had to face the reaction from the traditional scholars.

One such scholar was Bediuzzamān Said Nursî (1876–1960), identifying the lacunae in the education system, proposed theoretical framework for a Madrassah in 1896, which was about to give this process a practical shape in the form of Madrassah al-Zahra, where revealed and modern sciences would be taught side by side, and to play a role of Al-Azhar in the Asia. His aim was to guide Muslim Ummah to confront, and respond to, the contemporary challenges faced by them, besides, reforming exclusively Madrassah education with modern approach. In this direction, keeping in view the significance of the subject, this paper will attempt to make analysis and assessment of Said Nursî’s proposed project vis-à-vis debate of integration of knowledge.
Introduction

The Qur’ân is a book of guidance and at the same time the first-hand source of the Islamic knowledge which leads its believers to the right path and calls to eternal deliverance and declaration of Oneness of Allah:

And that those who have been given knowledge may know that it (this Qur’ân) is the truth from your Lord, and that they may believe therein, and their hearts may submit to it with humility. And verily, Allah is the Guide of those who believe, to the Straight Path (Al–Qur’ân 22:54)

Knowledge (‘Ilm) has played an important role in the Islamic intellectual thought throughout the history. The belief of Muslims is based on knowledge about God’s existence and His revelation. During the course of history, Muslims developed their own epistemology which is different from that of West and is based on Qur’ân and Ḥadīth. Being different from that of western orientation, today Muslim scholars try to understand the epistemological issues developed by the Muslims during the early days of Islam.

Throughout the history, a wide variety of challenges have emerged in the human mind but the greatest challenge in our times is the challenge of knowledge. In the contemporary period, the knowledge is disseminated throughout the world by the West. The nature of western propagated knowledge has become problematic for the whole humankind because it does not possess the true purpose and is being unjustly disseminated with biased approach. It, thus, brings confusion in man’s life rather than peace and justice which are the real purpose of knowledge (Attas, 1979, p. 19). The knowledge produced by the West has albeit led to a remarkable change in science and technology but has failed to produce peace in the world. In short, the knowledge produced by the West has resulted in chaos in the three kingdoms of nature; the animal, vegetable and mineral and caused the disturbance in the whole system (Attas, 1985, p. 127).
Knowledge (‘Ilm)

The fundamental/basic term for ‘Science’ is Knowledge and the Arabic term for knowledge is ‘Ilm which has the dual implication and thus, the Arabic word ‘Ulum can be classified into revealed knowledge and the rational/experimental knowledge. The English word ‘Knowledge’ connotes information about something, while the Arabic word ‘Ilm covers theory, action, education, natural science etc. Rosenthal has pointed out the importance of the term ‘Ilm in Muslim history in which Muslims gained mastery over all fields of knowledge, religious as well as secular and gives the Muslims a distinctive position (Rosenthal, 1970, pp. 47–8). According to Syed Naquib al-Attas: ‘the word ‘Ilm which is a key term in the basic vocabulary of all Islamic languages conveys different connotations in each member of the family of Islamic languages’ (Attas, 1985 p. 171). Basically, Attas wants to convey that in Islamic languages the word ‘Ilm has different meanings and is used differently in different contexts.

Knowledge has two Arabic terms that have overlapping meanings but different connotations, i.e., ‘Ilm and Ma‘arifa. ‘Ilm refers to knowledge or the science or study of a field of knowledge, such as the Qur’ān, prophetic traditions (Hadith), grammar, dialectical theology (Kalām), astronomy, technology etc. The word Ma‘arifa or Gnosticism (secret knowledge), on the other hand, is particularly characteristic of the language of Tasawwuf (Sufism). The mystical Islamic vision of knowledge expresses the celebrated Arabic proverb that “He who knows [has the gnosis of] his soul also knows [has the gnosis of his God” (Morewedge, Vol. 1, p. 497).

The knowledge may be defined as the information, theory, idea, cultural and religious beliefs, facts, narrations and doctrines which one acquires from one’s forefathers and school teachers, and through experience, experimentation and observation/sense perception. For Attas, ‘Ilm (knowledge) implies justice, which means that justice is a harmonious condition where everything or every being is in its proper place and the knowledge of the right
place for a thing or being is wisdom and wisdom is the God given knowledge, which enables one for applying the knowledge for the cause of occurrence of justice (Attas, 1985, p. 35). He goes on to say that, to the Muslims, knowledge means Al–Qur‘ān, the revealed law (Shari‘ah), the Sunnah, faith (Imān), spiritual knowledge (‘Ilm–I ludunniyy), wisdom (Ḥikmah), gnosis (Ma‘rifah), science and education (Attas, 1984, p. 137). The knowledge has been described in two ways by the classical Muslim scholars like Ghazālī, Rāzī and Ibn Ḥazm as: “the one referring to description of the nature of the object defined and the other to a concise specification of the distinctive characteristics of the object defined” (Attas, 1984, p. 137). The knowledge which Almighty Allah has bestowed to human beings through revelation provides better solutions to all human problems as compared to the knowledge which the West is disseminating throughout the world. Further, the Islamic knowledge is more practical and provides better and effective results as compared to Western knowledge (Amin, 2009, p. 22). Besides blessed with revelation, man has been also equipped with intelligence in order to make difference between right and wrong and truth and false. The revelation blended with intelligence, supposed man to be the vicegerent on the earth and the weighty burden of the trust was, thus, placed on him (Attas, 1984, p. 134).

The concept of knowledge in a society gives birth to different disciplines and branches of knowledge, educational philosophy and institutional infra-structure. Knowledge plays a key role in the character building of individuals who in turn make up the society and develop a civilization. Attās, a renowned Muslim scholar, is very keen about the aim of knowledge in Islam. According to him: “The function of knowledge in Islam is to know God so that humankind may serve and worship Him” (Attas, 1979, p. 24).

Islamic concept of knowledge is not circumscribed to religious or spiritual knowledge rather encompasses the entire scientific, modern and secular knowledge. The Islamic history bears testimony about laying the foundation of scientific knowledge.
Knowledge (‘Ilm) has always been a fundamental concept for Muslim scholars throughout the history. Different scholars have differently explained the meaning and nature of knowledge in different times. According to Plato, a famous Greek philosopher, the knowledge is of the world of forms or ideas which exist in the mind of a person (Muslehuddin, 1989, p. 24). So according to the idealists, knowledge is acquired through rational thinking. It is certain that these philosophers have no idea of revealed knowledge. Knowledge is the basis of Islam which connotes that man should be obedient and should submit his will to Almighty Allah, which is possible only if man is knowledgeable in real terms (Gilani, 2002, p. 4). The Islamic theory of knowledge encompassed spiritual, moral and conceptual development of the Muslims during the period of the Prophet (SAW) and the golden period of Muslims. Moreover, they made remarkable advancement in every field of knowledge, including religious, as well as secular knowledge i.e., social sciences, technology and natural sciences, when the European world was in dark period. So, Islam made no distinction between the worldly knowledge and Islamic knowledge, and Muslims made excellence in every field of knowledge throughout the history. With the Qur’anic revelation, Muslims brought a revolution in human history and developed their own very rich civilization. According to Syed Abū A’lā Maudūdī:

> Education is the sum total of knowledge gained. A man who does not make use of these faculties falls behind others, whereas he who makes use of them excels. Similarly a nation assumes leadership when it devotes itself unsparingly to the pursuit of knowledge handed down to it from the past as well as present (Maududi, 1993, p.55).

**Madrasha al-Zahra**

Nursî was not satisfied with the prevailing system of education, he, therefore, formulated his ideas on educational reform based on his own studies and teaching experiences, sensing it a need of time (Vahide, 2005, p. 29). The plinth of his method was to amal–
gamate the religious and modern sciences in order to validate and
tone the truths of religion (Vahide, 2005, p. 29). The system of
education that prevailed during the period of Nursî was composed
of Madrassahs, Maktabs and Tekkes and disseminated knowledge
according to their own values. Nursî wanted to reconcile the en-
tire trio and make his al-Zahra as the embodiment of these three
systems (Vahide, 2005, p. 45). Al–Zahra was to represent, “the
most superior [maktab] by the reason, the very best [madra-
sha] by the heart and the most sacred Zawiya by the conscience”
(Vahide, 2005, p. 46). Nursî aimed at complete restructuring of
the Madrassah education as he foresaw it as pivotal in securing the
future of Kurdistan and unity of the empire (Vahide, 2005, p. 45)
and to play the part of al–Azhar in the center of the eastern Islamic
world and to release the region from the dungeons of ignorance
and poverty (Vahide, 2005, p. 29). Nursî speculated of it gaining
financial independence, as it would receive donations and gifts for
being a unique value in the Islamic world (Vahide, 2005, p. 46).

Ensuring the future of ‘Ulamā in the eastern provinces, it was
to release Islam from bigotry, superstitions and false beliefs. To
combat the suspicions of ‘Ulamā, regarding modern sciences, it
was, thus, aimed to introduce modern sciences in Madrassahs
(Vahide, 2005, p. 46). Nursî wished that Islam should function like
a consultative council of Madrassahs, Maktabs and Tekkes so that
each would complete the deficiencies of the other. Moreover, it
was also supposed that the medium of instruction would be Arabic,
Turkish and Kurdish (Vahide, 2005, p. 46).

Nursî laid the foundation of al–Zahra on the shores of Lake
Van, and the foundation was celebrated with a feast and cere-
mony with speeches (Vahide, 2005, p. 107). With the outbreak of
the Great War–I, the construction was halted and never resumed
thereafter (Vahide, 2005, p. 102). Moreover, due to some political
circumstances this innovative dream of Nursî was not realized.
Nursî planned and sought funds for this project till 1951 (Michel,
2014, p. 66). He aimed to combat the three enemies of humankind
i.e., ignorance, poverty and disunity in this single project (Michel,
2014, p.67). He also found much in modern sciences which was not contradictory to the religious belief and adds that Qur’an does not prohibit Muslims from having “admiration for the civilization and the progress” or from borrowing what is good from other civilization. (Michel, 2014, p. 67). This proposal was to make reconciliation between the science of philosophy and those of religion and make peace between European civilization and the truths of Islam (Vahide, 2005, p. 326).

Endeavors of Said Nursî to envision the dream

In November 1907 Nursî set off for Istanbul with the intention of obtaining official support and backing for his Islamic university, the Madrassah al- Zahrâ. He was now around thirty years of age. From his humble beginnings in the village of Nurs, he had established his reputation among the ‘Ulamā of Kurdistan and was a figure well known not only for his unbeaten record in debate, extensive learning, and extraordinary abilities, but also for his pursuit of justice and defense of right, and his absolute fearlessness before anyone save his Maker. Said Nursî set off for Istanbul via Beirut and Izmir, to realize his dream of founding the Madrassah al- Zahrâ, or Eastern University, in eastern Anatolia. This time he almost succeeded, When Sultan Mehmed Reshad set out on his famous Rumelia journey, Nursî was invited as the representative of the Eastern Provinces of the Ottoman Empire. During this journey he was granted 19,000 gold liras to establish the University. On his return to Van, he personally selected a site for the university, but soon afterwards the project was abandoned owing to the Balkan War (Vahide, 2005, p. 33)

Using the knowledge he had acquired to prove the truths of Qur’ân, he would demonstrate it to be the source of true knowledge and progress, so defending it against the deliberate efforts to discredit it and corrupt the Muslim community. In a letter he wrote in 1955, Nursî stated that he found two means of doing this: one was the Madrassah al- Zahrâ, which took him to Istanbul and even to
Sultan Abdül Hamid’s court, and the second was the *Risale-i Nur* (Vahide, 2005, p. 31).

Bedîuzzamān was of the opinion that the day was close when the different worlds of knowledge would meet and combine to form a single world of knowledge, which with its light would demolish the walls between the universe, life, and man. And so, after this century, which has been called “the age of European enlightenment,” in the abandoned dwelling of the believers’ spirits, weary and suffering doubts, they would be reunited with science. They would leave the journey they have been pursuing ignorantly and beset by doubts through the world from minute particles to the galaxies; deepening their belief and in profound awe and humility, they would affirm the sacred truth of the verse “those of His servants who fear God most are those with knowledge (Debbagh, 1995, p.12).

**Conclusion**

During Nursî’s missionary life, there were many situations demonstrating his deep faith in and high responsibility and great concern with the affairs of the Muslims and their teaching and taking them out of the fold of ignorance they suffered especially in this period and in the eastern Anatolia. While he was roaming in the eastern areas of Anatolia, he observed with his own eyes the extent of poverty and ignorance the eastern lands had gone into. They were living out of date. He insisted upon educating these regions and disseminating knowledge all round these areas and schools, particularly when he felt that the traditional sciences were no longer capable of eradicating the doubts that prevailed against Islam. Consequently, he decided to modern Islamic University in eastern Anatolia to follow the model of al-Azhar in Egypt. Although it is different in that it will teach modern sciences besides the traditional ones in the light of his famous dictum, “the light of the heart is the religious sciences and the light of mind is the modern cosmic sciences, when they are mixed together truths shine, while as by separation the doubts and abdominal particularism generated”. The aim was to
eradicate ignorance, poverty and backwardness that these areas suffered and also to enable those who do not understand the realities of faith except with the language of natural sciences to make them understand. Nursi’s aim was to amalgamate the two systems of education; modern/scientific and religious/traditional.

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The word morality originates from the Latin word mores; meaning ‘manners’ or ‘morals’. Morality is behaviour in accordance with certain standards, as well as ability to distinguish between good and evil. Morality enables man to clear away from indecent and shameful acts and also assists in doing unto others what one likes to be done to one. It assists in acquiring piety, tolerance, forgiveness, self-respect and discipline.

Many theories have arisen over the years in connection with the origin of morality. There are those who hold that morality has its origin in the society. Some others believe that morality is a product of common sense. Some other people hold that morality is the fruit of religion. It is very true that moral standard vary widely from age to age and from place to place but great caution must be taken in order to avoid a misleading situation. One thing that is very clear and certain is that there is a difference between right and wrong. The sense of right and wrong, by the decree of God, has always been part of human nature.

**Education and morality**

Nations do not progress by accumulating information or wealth but by education that implants value and principles that reflect in practical life. Wise men do not regard the goal of education as mere accumulation of information and committing texts to memory without having any respect for their meanings. If we therefore aim at nurturing the generations and making them progress to

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10 A.Y. AbdulKareem, Issues in Nigerian Education, p. 78
perfection, no amount of material information and mechanical expertise can develop a person, make him a complete human being and encourage him to do good if that is not backed with a strong belief in excellent values and concepts. Mere memorisation of the concepts, without allowing that to have impact on the heart or conduct is of no use.

Therefore, learning is more than to memorise a book or to receive information or to attend classes. It is rather making of a generation and implanting of belief, concepts and values. The perpetuity of any nation then lies in its ability to transfer its faith, morals and history to its upcoming generations with its language.

The moral problems of a nation manifest when it neglects education and separates moral education from learning. As Hafiz Ibrahim, a Muslim poet and moralist in one of his poems identifies morality as pre-requisite for success in the human endeavours. He says:

فيما إذا رزقت خليقة محمودة فقد اصطفاك منقسم الأزراق
If you are endowed with a praise-worthy character, you have indeed been blessed by the Dispenser of fortunes.

فالناس هذا حظه وذا علم وذاك مكارم الخلق
Men are gifted differently, some are endowed with wealth and some with knowledge while others are blessed with noble conduct.

والمال إن لم تدخره محصنًا بالعلم كان نهاية الإخلاص
Money if not saved and fortified with knowledge, it will lead to object of poverty.

والعلم إن لم تكنفه شمائل تعالبه كان مطية الإخفاق
And knowledge, if not surrounded with good morals, which will extol it, is just a mount ridden to failure.

لا تحسبن العلم ينفع وحدة ما لم يتوه رئبه بخلاص
Do not expect that knowledge alone will be useful, if its owner is not crowned with virtuous conducts.
RELIGIOUS AND MORAL VALUES IN ISLAM.

The history of mankind, until the present century, illustrates a universal bond between religion and morality. The inextricable link that exits in Islam between religion and morality is reflected in the many passages in the Qur’ān that refer in the same breath to ‘those who believe’ and ‘those who do good deeds’.

وبشر اللذين امنوا وعملو الصالحات أن لهم جنّت تجرى من تحتها النهار

ال اللذين امنوا وعملوا الصالحات فلهم أجر غير ممنون

The implications seen to be that for Muslim faith and moral behaviours are two sides of the same coin, that moral behaviour presuppose faith and that is genuine only if it results in moral behaviour.\(^\text{13}\)

Good manners and noble qualities of mind and character enjoy a place of crucial importance in the Structure of Islamic Teachings. The Prophet Muhammad is considered the perfect moral exemplar. As the Qur’ān itself makes clear:

لقد كان لكم في رسول الله أسوة حسنة لمن كان يرجوا الله واليوم الآخر وذكر

الله كثيرا

‘Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the Praise of Allah .

The prophet himself was quoted to have said: “I have been sent by God to teach moral virtues and to promote them to highest perfection”. Thus the record of his words and actions that is contained in the Hadith has become an important supplement to the Qur’ānic injunctions in providing moral guidance and regulation.

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11 The Quran, 2:25
12 The Quran, 95:6
Morality in Islam is generally understood as a list of rules, duties and responsibilities whose authority derives directly from the Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth. The observance of the five daily prayers undoubtedly occupies the most important position, and is given the greatest prominence in the Qur’ān. Despite this place of paramount importance, prayer is said to be ordained to keep the Muslims away from indecency and evil. Fasting during Ramadan and making the annual zakāt are also considered religious duties, but they have moral dimensions as well: fasting develops piety, and alms-giving encourages empathy and compassion. In other words, these duties are meant to instil morality in the individual Muslims.

In Islam morality is the pair of concept. The first of these is Akhlaq which is normally translated “ethics’ or ‘moral values’. The second term for morality is adab, which combines two different but related ways of understanding good behaviour on the one hand, politeness, courtesy, etiquette, good upbringing, culture, refinement, good breeding and good manners, and on the other, morality and values.\(^{14}\)

Thus we can say the Islamic morality is the name of the obligations, duties and responsibilities set out in the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth. The values and manners associated with good upbringing; and the personal qualities of character that a Muslim is expected to demonstrate in everyday life. Every action, whether a commercial transaction, eating or reading a book, has a moral significance in Islam. This is because any act that is in accordance with the sharīah is an act of worship.

**Bediüzzaman Said Nursi**

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi a prominent Islamic scholar was born in 1877 in Bitlis province in Eastern Anatolia, Turkey. Since his early days, he was very intelligent and a gifted debater. He was educated in religious sciences such as usuluddin, fiqh, and tafsir, as well as in history, philosophy, logic, Sufism and geography.

\(^{14}\) Ibid, p.285
Later, he had also studied modern sciences and mathematics. He was able to master all these disciplines in a short time. Due to this extraordinary intelligence and his ability to defeat a number of scholars of Eastern Turkey in a series of debates, he was given the nickname, Bediuzzaman (Wonder of the Age), the name which stuck to him ever since.

During the time in which Nursi lived, materialism and communism were at their peak, and the psycho-sociological condition of the world was disturbing. Europe had gained dominance over the Islamic world and one of the efforts to expand this dominance was to attack the Qur’ān and Islam in the name of science and progress in particular, claiming that they are irrelevant and incompatible. At that time Said Nursi’s endeavour was to convince that this accusation was false. And the urgent and over-riding need was to strengthen, and even to save belief. For him it was the Qur’ān and Islam that could provide the principles for the true human progress rather than philosophies of human being. He argues that the secret of the enlightening and the everlasting joy lies in the correct reading and study of the book of the universe, and the resulting depend belief that indulges the reader.

Nursi had seen that modern unbelief originated from science and philosophy not from ignorance. Paradoxically, the Muslim’s neglect of science and technology caused them to fall behind the west in economic and military fields. But the science and technology which had provided the west with the power to achieve military and economic superiority in the world, has caused western people to lose their faith and traditional moral and spiritual values and fall into a great pessimism, unhappiness and spiritual crisis. He realized that the urgent and over-riding need was to strengthen, and even to save belief. Instead of taking scripts as indisputable facts, Nursi uses observations and reason to prove the stated facts in the scripts. That is, he closed the door to blind submission that sidesteps the mind and opened the way for convincing via rational arguments by fully engaging the mind. It can even be said that Nursi combined natural theology and revealed theology and

PSYCHOLOGICAL DOCTRINES OF SAID NURSI AND THE ROLE OF RISALE-I NUR IN THE COGNITIVE PROCESS OF LEARNING

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merged revelation with reason. He was of the opinion that nature is the collection of divine signs and therefore science and religion can not be conflicting disciplines. Rather, they are two different expression of the same truth. Mind should be enlightened with science, while hearts need to be illuminated by religion.

**Bediuzzaman Said Nursi’s view on education**

Nursi was eager to free his people ignorance, poverty, conflicts, backwardness, moral degradation caused by tyrant government. He wanted Muslim society to be a respected community guided by the Qur’an and *sunnah* of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). For this purposes, Nursi stressed the importance of religious awareness among Muslims based on *tauhid*, *akhlaq al–karimah*, freedom, knowledge, justice, peace, unity, and brotherhood. He believed that this principles are basic foundation for the developing relationship with Allah and relationship among human beings. According to Nursi, education is man’s achievement to a degree of perfection in psychology, belief, moral and all his aspect of life. Its peak reaches when this man is close to Allah in worship as His servant and he is guided to the happiness in this world and hereafter.

Nursi argued that man came to this world to be perfected through knowledge and knowledge of Allah is the basis of all true sciences, while the belief in Him is its substance. From here it is very clear that one of the reason for sending man to this world is to attain to perfection by way of worship backed up by knowledge and supplication based on belief. He says:

> “Be certain of this, that the highest aim of creation and its most important result are belief in God. The most exalted rank in humanity and its highest degree are the knowledge of God contained within belief in God. The most radiant happiness and sweetest bounty for jinn and human beings are the love of God contained within the knowledge of God. And the purest joy for the human

spirit and the sheerest delight for man’s heart are the rapture of the spirit contained within the love of God.”

Moral values

From his youth Nursi emphasized the importance of prevailing moral and spiritual needs. He believed that humanity’s greatest present need is for moral and spiritual strength, solace and fortitude. He discussed moral terms and studied them. He used them in a way that would ensure the exalting of moral virtues like truthfulness, hope, patience, courage, and self-sacrifice, and the opening of such flowers. He invited his students to tolerance, love, mutual assistance, frugality, and not becoming too involved in the world, and brought about the strengthening of the collective spirit.

Bediuzzaman proved that evil, which particularly at this time is shown to be good, was something ugly and contrary to man’s nature. It is deposited in his creation and being, and is a fundamental determinant of the human character and identity, and to bear the trust as a vicegerent of God on earth, man must equip himself with the perfect morality. This approach is a means of making man abhor evil and avoid it. He was of the view that moral is natural to man. As he writes:

“Since the desire to progress and be perfected has been included in the universe and in man’s essential nature....”

In another place he writes:

“...For by virtue of his very nature, man is inclined to call a lie a lie.”

So it is morality which ensures that man proceeds towards perfection, and the perfect morality is gained through strong belief in God. To achieve the ultimate aim of creating the good society

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16 Nursi, The Letters, 20th Letter. P. 265
17 Nursi, The Damascus Sermon. P. 6
18 Nursi, The Damascus Sermon. P. 39
19 Nursi, The Letters, 19th Letter. P. 153
Nursi produces some values and principles to re-form the society springed from the Qur’an. Nursi thought “This nation’s heart disease is weakness in religion; it will regain its health through strengthening it”.

Nursi insisted that the ultimate source of all moral reflection and teaching is Al-Qur’an. The wisdom of Qur’anic moral teaching is the primary evidence for its truth and value. He writes:

“Since the Qur’an’s principles and laws have from pre-eternity, they shall go to post-eternity. They are not condemned to grow old and die like civilisation’s laws.”

Among the virtues taught in the Qur’an are justice, benevolence, piety, honesty, integrity, gratitude and chastity. Nursi wanted to make reformation his society condition based on Qur’anic doctrines. Nursi seeks to show that man’s true happiness and progress are to be found through the teachings of the Qur’an. For him the Qur’an is primarily a means of placing restraints on the dangerous appetites of man.

“The aims of the Qur’an are to provide a barrier against the appetites of man (Hevesat-i Nefsaniye) thus encouraging him to engage in higher pursuits, giving satisfaction to his higher aspirations and directing him towards the achievements of human perfection.”

Said Nursi saw that application of the Qur’an doctrines about ethic-moral by each Muslim in his life and society as foundation for moral building of nation. The good moral become a foundation of social life. He believed that good moral is innate to all human beings. The evil moral of a society as sources of many conflicts, badness, evils and even wars.

Said Nursi put forward principles like dialogue, and besides this, recommended his students to remain distant from conflict and

20 Nursi, The Damascus Sermon. P. 76
aggression, and conduct that could lead to dissension. He believed that humanity’s greatest present need is for moral and spiritual strength, solace and fortitude.\(^\text{23}\)

By virtue of man’s creation, he is inclined to strive to attain piety, good, truth, perfection and all praiseworthy moral qualities. To attain to this perfection, man has to follow the right guidance. And the only exemplary model for mankind is the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), as the Holy Qur’ān says regarding prophet Muhammad:\(^\text{24}\)

\[
\text{وانك لعل خلق عظيم}
\]

“And you stand on an exalted standard of character”\(^\text{24}\)

In another place Qur’ān mentions that a role model for the whole humanity is the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

\[
\text{لقد كان لكم في رسول الله اسوة حسنة لمن كان يرجو الله واليوم الآخرة و ذكر الله كثيرا.}
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“Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the Praise of Allah.”\(^\text{25}\)

The view of Imam Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, the only exemplary model for mankind is the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), as the insan kamil, for he was the recipient of Divine revelation. Nursi offered a practical and ideal model by which the reader can glimpse the actual embodiment of the Divine Names and their practical implications: the example of the Prophet. He says:

“The Messenger, peace be upon him, was sent to all humanity as an example, an imam, and a leader so that we can learn from him about the social and personal life and its laws, and get used to submitting to the laws of the wise divine will, and bring ourselves into harmony with its divine directives.”\(^\text{26}\)

\(^{23}\) Nursi, The Damascus Sermon. P. 66

\(^{24}\) The Quran, 68:4

\(^{25}\) The Quran, 33:21

\(^{26}\) Nursi, The Words, 27th Word. P. 831--832
Therefore it is clear that Bediuzzaman’s concept of education of perfection of one’s morality is based on two main sources:
1. Al Qur’an, as a truth and a code of laws and regulation.
2. The life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), as a manifestation and practice of Qur’anic ethics.

Nursi was of the idea that the perfection of a human in all aspects of life can only be gained through strong belief in God, backed up by the knowledge of Him and is based on morality. He has developed guidelines for appropriate, good and correct behaviour of individuals in particular, which leads to ethical harmony of society in general.

He endeavoured to found a society in which truth would predominate in place of force; God’s pleasure in place of conflict over interests; mutual assistance in place of mutual struggle; Islamic brotherhood in place of racialism; and inviting the soul to elevated emotions and perfection would predominate in place of gratifying its lusts and desires.

It is deposited in his creation and being, and is a fundamental determinant of the human character and identity, and to bear the Trust as a vicegerent of God on earth, man must equip himself with the perfect morality.

**Conclusion**

Educationalists are heavily responsible for guiding the growing generation, arming them with faith and protecting them against trials and temptations. The young boy who goes to school is like an empty vessel and within days and years; this vessel will be filled with conducts, manners and ways that are learnt from educational institutions. It is these that shape his life and moulds his way of thinking and way of life and it is by this that education embodies the identity of the society and shows her values.

Said Nursi cured the spiritual wounds of this century’s man with the light and truths of the Qur’an. For sure, he did not only save man from losing himself and his true nature, from his desires being
extinguished, from difficulties that sorely try his power of patience, and from fear of death, he offered him belief in God and the Last Day from the feast of belief which the Qur’an presents like a map of the world of the unseen. Thus he made man a happy being who relies on God, with peace in his heart and tranquillity in his soul, and in harmony with the universe and its beings.

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