

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi
and **Risale-i Nur**



YUHİB

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Who is Bediuzzaman Said Nursi?

Said Nursi was born in 1878 in a village known as Nurs, within the borders of the town of Hizan, and the city of Bitlis in the Eastern part of Turkey. He died on 23 March 1960 in Şanlıurfa, a city in the Southeastern Turkey.

Said Nursi, having a keen mind, an extraordinary memory, and outstanding abilities had drawn the attentions upon himself since his childhood. He completed his education in the traditional madrasah system in a very short time about three months, which takes many years to complete under normal conditions. His youth passed with an active pursuit of education and his superiority at knowledge and science was evident in the discussions with the scholars of the time on different occasions. Said Nursi who had made himself with his capacity and

abilities accepted in the scientific and intellectual circles has begun to be called Bediuzzaman, “the wonder of the age”.

After completing his expertise in the education of Islamic sciences at the madrasah, Said Nursi conducted research in various modern sciences; followed the newspapers of the time and concerned himself with the developments in the country and the world. On the other hand by direct experience, he observed the problems of the Eastern lands, where he was born and grew up, and came to conclusion that the education was the most necessary one. Therefore he went to Istanbul in 1907 in order to demand the establishment of a university in the East where the modern and religious sciences would be taught together. There he made himself known in the scientific circles in a very short time and by writing articles in the newspapers; he joined the discussions on freedom and constitutionalism which reverberated in Istanbul and the Ottoman lands in those days and he supported constitutionalism in the name of Islam. Although he played a soothing role in an event, which broke out on the 31st of March in 1909, he was put on trial in the Martial Court with false accusations, but after making a heroic defense he was acquitted. After that he left Istanbul and returned to the East.

When the First World War began Bediuzzaman was in Van and he immediately founded a

volunteer militia regiment made up of his students and joined the battle front in the Eastern Anatolia against the invading Russian army. He was of great help in the defense of the country against the enemy and many of his students became martyrs in the battle; finally he became wounded and fell prisoner to Russians while defending the city of Bitlis. Having lived for about three years in a Russian camp as a prisoner of war, he was able to escape and come to Istanbul by way of Warsaw, Vienne, and Sophia.

Upon his return he was received with great enthusiasm by the statesmen and scholarly circles and immediately appointed to the membership of Dar al Hikmah al-Islamiyyah which was formed with the aim of solving novel religious issues and developing refutations against movements which worked against Islam in the 20th century, within the framework of Islamic principles. Bediuzzaman used the income from this official duty, in printing his books and distributed them to people for free. When Istanbul was under occupation he did a great service by distributing his brochure Hutuvat-ı Sitte (Six Steps) and ruined the plans of the occupation forces of the Allied Countries. Similarly against the fatwa declaring the National Forces in Anatolia as rebels, given by the Shaykh Al-Islam under the oppression of the invaders, he announced a counter-fatwa and declared the legitimacy of the action

of the national liberation. Due to these services by Bediuzzaman, he was appreciated by the National Assembly founded in Anatolia and invited persistently to Ankara.

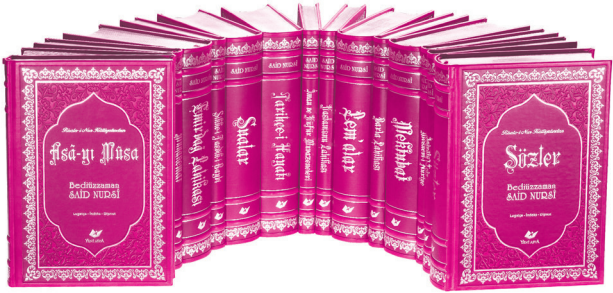
Eventually he came to Ankara towards the end of 1922 and he was welcomed with an official ceremony in the Assembly. During his stay in Ankara seeing that the approach of the dominant political administration to religion was unfavorable, he wrote a 10-item declaration and delivered it to the members of the Assembly. In this declaration he calls the architects of the new reformation to protect the symbols and representative practices of Islam; after that he had several meetings with ⁶ Mustafa Kemal. He was offered the positions of the Eastern Public Preacher, deputy, and the membership of the Board of the Religious Affairs; but after rejecting all these offers Bediuzzaman returned to Van.

Bediuzzaman had no connection with the uprising of Sheikh Said, and even he tried to dissuade Sheikh Said from his intention when he had demanded support from Bediuzzaman. Despite that after the rebellion Bediuzzaman was taken from his seclusion in Van and sent as exile first to Burdur and then to Barla, a village of Isparta. There he started the service of the “spiritual jihad” by enunciating the fundamentals of belief in his works he writes one after another. These works have seen

the favor and approval of the people who felt their faith in danger; they spread quickly by circulating from hand to hand. The total number of books that were written by hand exceeded 600.000 in those days. As the favor and tendency of the people to this service disturbed those in power, Bediuzzaman had to stand trials in courts in Eskişehir in 1935, in Denizli in 1943, in Afyon in 1947, and in Istanbul in 1952. As these trials did not bring the desired achievement, he was not left in peace; he was compelled to live under close watch and control in Kastamonu, Emirdağ, Isparta.

Bediuzzaman who was continually subject to arbitrary treatment and persecution until the last days of his life, continued carrying out the service of belief with great determination; succeeded in completing and disseminating the collection of the Risale-i Nur, which exceeded 6000 pages. These works which are the fruits of his troublesome life have been written with the divine inspiration and guidance, prove the truths of the Qur'an and its miraculousness in accordance with the understanding of the modern age.





What is Risale-i Nur?

“Taking inspiration directly from the Qur’an, we must introduce Islam to the new age.”

This ideal expressed by Mehmet Akif, a poet who explored themes such as religion, motherland and freedom in the name of the Muslim World hoping a light and a good message from our holy book, the Qur’an has become realized through the collection of the Risale-i Nur, the books you hold in your hands, which have been written by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. Thus the messages of the Qur’an to the people of this age have been announced by means of these books.

It is possible to find in the Risale-i Nur, a wonderful exegesis of the Qur’an, for individuals living in the modern age. It is characterised as maintaining the fundamental message of the Qur’an while illuminating verses in a way that is in accordance with this century. Risale-i Nur in this context assumes

the role of renewal in understanding the message of the Qur'an that is directed at this century.

Bediuzzaman who analyzed the characteristics of this age and diagnosed its spiritual diseases with a deep insight, met those spiritual needs from the treasury of belief with the books of the Risale-i Nur that he put on paper with the formula "it is time to save the belief."

Why is it time to save belief?

Because belief is being threatened in a way which has never taken place in previous centuries. In the past the belief had never come face to face with such great dangers. The communities predominantly accepted the tenets of the belief with submission. For that reason the sayings of the great men gained acceptance even without evidence. However with the prevailing of the materialist movements in this age, suspicions threatening the belief have reached to a level that deeply engaged the minds of many people. Suspicions, objections and doubts have accumulated against the Qur'an for centuries using modern means received approval by many people.

Thus Bediuzzaman Said Nursi seeing that these developments would endanger the belief of even the Muslims, have succeeded in building a strong fortification like writing the collection of the Risale-i Nur with a direct inspiration from the Qur'an against the indoctrination of the flooding disbelief.

These books give persuasive answers to questions like “Who am I? Where did I come from? Where do I go? What is my duty in this world?”, which engage everybody’s mind and which the modern man can not be indifferent; they explain and prove all tenets of belief beginning with the belief in Allah; answer in a convincing style all the questions asked on the part of science and philosophy; defend religion by disproving the claims about its inconsistency with science; disappoint the destructive attempts of distorting religion; treat the wounds opened by the spiritual crises of the human beings caused by the civilization based on a materialistic understanding by means of mind persuading, soul touching and heart convincing sweet explanations about the large truths of the Qur’an like the Unity and the Hereafter; remove through the messages of the Qur’an, the states like dissipation, aimless straying and disturbances brought about by the malfunctioning of mind and heart.

Another important characteristic of the Risale-i Nur is its providing sound and consistent solutions to the social and political problems of our age; making mind opening and globally valid interpretations on issues like religion and democracy, religion and politics, jihad and terror; leading an exemplary and original service method based on positive action and giving priority to democracy, rights, freedoms, and civil society.

Nursi in the Writings of Scholars

“I found in Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the life of someone who with his life and works implicitly challenged this modernist dogma. Not because he turned his back to the world, but because he had submitted himself to a higher discipline and because he subsisted through an order outside of man. This discipline and order are found in the Qur’an, whose eternal truths have been verified by science.”

*Fred A. Reed,
Journalist Writer - CANADA*



“Said Nursi does a lot more than just note the differences between what he sees as the materialist point of view, and that of belief. He spends a great deal of time arguing against materialism, and his arguments take two forms. One is to suggest that materialism is rationally flawed because it interprets the world incorrectly. These are interesting

arguments and they run right throughout the writings of the New Said.”

Prof. Dr. Oliver Leaman
Kentucky University - USA



“Said Nursi does not respond to this critique of religion by hurling condemnations. Rather, he admits that some of the diagnosis is correct. Religious communities are themselves to blame for the malaise that afflicts them. He notes six dire illnesses that must be confronted if religious believers are to make a positive contribution to human progress in the coming decades. While noting the failures of believers, he also rejects the godless and materialist solutions proposed by the critics, which he foresees will lead to disaster, a claim which the subsequent history of the century proved to be only too accurate.”

Prof. Dr. Thomas Michel S.J.
Georgetown University - USA



“The above characteristics of the Risale-i Nur shows that it has a true share of the Qur’an, and explains it suitable to the understanding of the age. ... In this paper we have discussed the dictionary definitions of compassion and mercy, and attempted to describe their various sorts as put forward in the Risale-i Nur. We saw that Almighty God’s mercy

encompasses all beings, even the unbelievers. We saw next the mercy of God's Messenger (pbuh) for his community, and how it is reflected in worldly life and will be shown on the Day of Resurrection. We discussed then the importance of the kind treatment of parents, especially when elderly."

*Prof. Dr. Abd al-Qadir
Muhammad, Khartoum University - SUDAN*



"Said Nursi demonstrates that as a rational being who can comprehend the world and universe, man's true nature can be understood only through belief. Only through belief can man traverse the stages of creation, undertake the vicegerency of the earth, ascend the steps of perfection, and reach high rank by studying and pondering over all the bounties of his Sustainer and Lord, Moreover, on attaining to perfection, all the secrets of the creation are unfolded to him."

15

*Prof. Dr. Abd al-Aziz Chabbar
Tatwan University - MOROCCO*



"Looking at the contemporary discourse of Turkish Muslims in general and the followers of Said Nursi in particular, it is obvious that science and especially natural sciences take a considerable role in their religious discourse. ... In this understanding of science, one studies science as a kind of religious duty, i.e. for the sake of God. Science

explains the nature surrounding man, which, from a religious point of view, means the creation. By getting knowledge of the creation man can get knowledge of the Creator, an activity which is seen as the religious duty of man. This understanding of science was formed and formulated by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and had a great impact on the positions that pious Muslims take in the structure of Turkish society today.”

Bekim Agai

B. Chum University - GERMANY



“Then a deep questioning came up in my heart: Why do we suffer? Why do we have emotional, mental, and material problems when we have in front of us the Qur’an and the Risale-i Nur, that have all the answers we need to make our lives (and consequently, our society) full of harmony, health and peace? ... Because the Risale is perfect and complete, but the reader is the object of transformation, the flower to burst into blossom by the exercise of his own transformation towards a higher level of his own being.”

Dr. Cecilia Moreira

Psychologist - BRAZIL



“The Qur’anic discourse on time is characterized by the use of very diversified terminology which indicates the existence of two different kinds

of time metaphysical and physical. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of physical or this-worldly time for man. Said Nursi in the Risale-i Nur discussed both dimensions of time. In metaphysical realm, he has related time to Divine Knowledge, Power, Determining and Creation. In physical realm, he has specifically discussed the influence of time on man and the world and the importance of present time, which if lost cannot be recaptured."

Prof. Dr. Fikret Karcic
International Islamic University - MALAYSIA



"Nursi considers that one of the aspects of the trust or the responsibility undertaking by the man through I, the manifestation of individuality of each man is the key to the Most Beautiful Names which represent the quintessence of divinity characteristics, and finally, to the understanding of Divine Creation."

Prof. Dr. George Grigore,
Bucharest University - ROMANIA



"This paper illustrates the tajdidi links between two illustrious Muslim personalities of the last and their responses on behalf of Islam of the Qur'an and Sunnah to the question, what the relationship between God and human being is. Especially, when the question came under pressure

of transformation due to the emergence of new interpretations rising from both within the old of Islam as in the case of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and through the emergence of modern scientific and technical age in the case of Said Nursi”

Dr. Imtiyaz Yusuf

Prince of Songkja University - THAILAND



“Said Nursi was a contemporary of Iqbal, but there is no reason to suggest that they met each other, or influenced each other. It seems that they have both reacted to the intellectual challenges of the twentieth century in essentially different ways. They have both attempted to reconcile the apparent contradiction between human free will and divine predestination. Unlike Iqbal, who derived inspiration from modern philosophy, Nursi seems to have been inspired by the classical tradition and used it as a point of departure for the challenges of secular modernity.”

Prof. Dr. Yasien Mohamed

Western Cape University - SOUTH AFRICA



“Bediuzzaman Said Nursi wrote with his heart and his imagination as well as with his head and his intellect. One of the reasons that he has endured through the 20th century and into the 21st as a highly revered interpreter of Islam and the

Qur'an is his ability to speak, through his writing, in words that are straightforward yet rich in interpretive symbolism."

Prof. Dr. Jane I. Smith
Hartford Seminary - USA



"Nursi depicts brilliantly the aims of human and explains that the effort to achieve these aims causes the model human being to reflect the manifestations of the divine names and attributes; indeed, it makes him the point of focus of dominical light. The believer who truly proceeds from the affirmation of divine unity attains eternal life and happiness in this world, employing in the best way the faculties for acquiring knowledge with which God has armed him, and the ways of guidance."

19

Dr. Musa al-Bast
Al-Quds University - PALESTINE



Nursi suggests that man should first adopt a positive attitude towards things around him and look at everything with a penetrative or internal eye (basira) and not just with the physical eyes. Only then he becomes aware of the balance of justice pervasive in all creation. For to such a spiritually powerful eye, all the creatures, he proclaims, will appear as an obvious sign of and hence a

visible testimony to God's wisdom, justice, generosity and mercy.

Prof. Dr. Bilal Kuşpınar
Mc Gill University - CANADA



Bediuzzaman is not a utopian; he is a realist. While his heart bled for the injustices that he saw in his own society, he knew that the imposition of the shari'a in a social context where belief was lacking, or, indeed, absent, would be counter productive. His way was the way of the perfection of belief on an individual level: the way of evolution rather than revolution; the way of building Muslim society from bottom up rather than top down. Again, his was the way of "Fastaqim kama umirte (Qur'an: 11/112)", be it on the level of man's relationship with God or man's relationship with his fellow men. Bediuzzaman did not make the mistake of reducing Islam to the question of governance, but rather to the question of personal responsibility before God: the responsibility of self-knowledge. God-knowledge and the love and worship of the Creator. Social justice is impossible without justice that is assimilated on a personal level. Across the whole of the Muslim world today, Muslims are 'dreaming of Medina', of recreating the so-called golden age of the Prophet. However, they wish to do so without having endured the hardships of Mecca, where the real lessons of

justice were taught. In this sense, Bediuzzaman is calling us all back to Mecca, for once Mecca has been experienced, Medina can take care of itself.

Prof. Dr. Colin Turner
University of Durham - UK



The majority of Christian theologians in the West tend towards universalism (i.e. the belief that ultimately all are saved) and therefore a deep suspicion of hell and judgment. The Risale-i Nur is an interesting challenge to this position. For Nursi, a sense of judgment at the end of the life is the heart of moral accountability. The fact that ‘death’ is a test, when we will be held to account, is vitally important. Justice for Bediuzzaman Said Nursi requires evil to be judged by God. Christians should take this argument more seriously. If we do so, then it will lead Christians to a more nuanced understanding of God’s action after death.

Prof. Dr. Ian Markham
Virginia Theological Seminary - USA



The teachings of Nursi readily function to explain, “in accordance with the understanding of the age, the truths of the Qur’an” (Nursi 1985). Nursi insisted that books, not people, wage a “battle against unbelief” (S. Mardin 1989: p.4). Nursi’s style is readily accessible to multiple audiences,

and women are taking an increasingly active role in promoting the message. For some readers, the specifics of Turkish historical development help explain the nuances of certain passages and the context for which they were originally intended. For others, however, the rich metaphors and imagery offer a point of departure for religious understanding that requires only minimal familiarity with the specifics of the times and places in Turkey where the various elements of the Risale-i Nur first came into existence.

Prof. Dr. Dale F. Eickelman
Dartmouth College - USA



We regard Nursi as representing one of the new human types in Muslim society. This was a type that cultivated modern knowledge while rooting it in the value system of Islam. Furthermore, this type was driven by an ideal of excellence. The examples of the ideals of excellence discussed by Alatas are derived from earlier periods of Muslim history. In Nursi, we find an historical case of an ideal of excellence from modern history.

Prof. Dr. Syed Farid Alatas
National University of Singapore - SINGAPORE



Books in the Collection



The Words

The Words is the first and the most essential work in the Risale-i Nur Collection. In this work the relationships between Allah, universe and man are explained with the inspiration from the Qur'an and Hadiths of the Messenger Muhammad (pbuh) in a style appropriate to the understanding of our age. This work provides answers for many questions that keep the minds occupied such as, "Why were the universe and man created? How can the created things and beings be evidence to the existence of the Creator? How can it be that Allah, though being one, be present everywhere at the same time? How can we understand with our mind and logic the resurrection after death? Why does man need to worship and pray Allah? What is destiny? Is man obliged to the destiny? Why and how is the Qur'an a miracle?"

The Letters

The Letters is one of the most important works of the Risale-i Nur Collection that puts forth convincing explanations for various issues that concern individuals and society such as the nature of life and death, the death's being a beauty and a blessing for a believer, the mystery behind the never ending and stunning activities in the universe, the miracles of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), explaining the apparently negative incidents taking place among the companions of the prophet from the destiny's perspective, the great bonds of unity that connect the believers to one another, reform in Islam, nationalism, feasting, and sufism-tariqat.



The Flashes

The principles of life and belief that are necessary for the young, the old, the ill, students, scientists, and women, in other words necessary for everybody, are found in this work. Other issues that are dealt with in this work are, that the nature and causes have no influence in terms of creation, the road of happiness led and experienced by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the principles of happiness in family life, the fundamentals strengthening the brotherhood of belief, the reasons and benefits of calamities and disasters, the reasons

behind the creation of the devil, the psychological analysis of sin and ways of salvation from the sin.

... ❦ ...

The Rays

An important book of the Risale-i Nur Collection that covers issues like the observations of a traveler asking his Creator from the universe, the evidences of the Unity in the languages of all beings, the purpose and reasons of man's life on the Earth, the signs of the doomsday in the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh), explanations about the nature of the dreadful persons like Dajjal and Sufyan.

... ❦ ...

25

The Staff of Moses

This wonderful work of the Risale-i Nur Collection articulates that just like the staff of Moses which swallowed the magic objects of the sorcerers, the evidences of belief based on the Qur'anic inspiration, invalidates the ideas of disbelief and atheism. It also deals with topics like proving the existence and unity of Allah through sciences, worshipping, teenage, the relationship between the happiness in the world and the belief in the resurrection and Hereafter.

... ❦ ...

Comparisons of Belief and Disbelief

This work of the Risale-i Nur Collection compares through samples, the consequences of belief in Allah and His denial, reflected in the life. It is explained and proven with convincing parables that belief in Allah and worshipping Him, leads to happiness in both lives but the way of sin and denial causes troubles; that even in this world the belief enables man to taste the life of a spiritual Heaven, while the denial causes experiencing the suffering of a spiritual Hell.



The Biography of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi

26

This is a very precious and important work of the Risale-i Nur Collection that comprises his essays, letters, and defenses which were proofreaded by himself. It presents with a plain style the biography of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi from his birth to his death, his services, endeavors, efforts, and self-sacrifice.



The Epitomes of Light

This book which can be considered as the index and seedbed of the Risale-i Nur Collection is one of the first works of Bediuzzaman, where the ways for man to explore his Creator, the principles to

follow in combatting with soul and explanations of the truths of belief take place.

... ❦ ...

The Signs of Miraculousness

It is an extraordinary exegesis of the Qur'an (tafsir) written on the battlefield during the First World War. It is a work that contains the facts understood through the exploration of sciences, the new interpretations, delicate meanings of the Qur'an needed by the men of the present age. It is also a unique work that expounds the miraculousness of the Qur'an in many ways, especially by describing the fine and miraculous relations in the arrangement of the verses, phrases, words and even letters of the Qur'an.

27

... ❦ ...

Barla Letters

This book which contains the letters of the first students of the Risale-i Nur, which express their sincere feelings, their spiritual and sentimental benefits and the corresponding replies of Bediuzzaman that were written in Barla where the Risale-i Nur begins to spread. It determines the method and ways of serving to the task of the belief and the Qur'an by means of the Risale-i Nur.

... ❦ ...

Kastamonu Letters

This book which consists of the letters written by Bediuzzaman and his students while he was obliged to reside in Kastamonu, is a sort of summary of the service of belief and the Qur'an and a social lesson given in a certain period. These letters are accounts of carrying out the service of belief and its development; they throw light on the nature of the Risale-i Nur as an exegesis, the characteristics of the students of the Risale-i Nur, the styles of serving the task of the belief, and the patterns of struggling with the opponents of religion.



Emirdağ Letters

This book is composed of the letters written by Bediuzzaman during his residence in Emirdağ to university students and his followers living in Istanbul, Isparta, Kastamonu, and Ankara, sometimes as answers to their questions and their letters. These letters demonstrate various aspects of the service of the belief and the Qur'an especially regarding the social and the political life as well.



The Approval Seal of the Unseen (Sikke-i Tasdik-i Gaybî)

It is a book that explains the signs by thirty three verses of the Qur'an, and of unseen references by

Hazrat Ali (ra) and Abd el-Qadir Gilani (ks) to the Risale-i Nur and that mentions the samples of the divine blessings and supports granted during the service of the belief and that considers the significance and position of the Risale-i Nur Collection in the spiritual realm.



The Reasonings

The Reasonings is a unique work of Bediuzzaman written in his early ages as a scholar. It builds up connections among man, universe, literature and rhetoric based on belief and unity; it gives the fundamentals of speaking and writing well, efficiently and appropriately and of thinking and reasoning logically and firmly, where each statement has the value of a principle.



Some Parts From The Twenty-Third Word

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. (Qur'an: 95/4-6)

First Point

Through the light of belief, 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 a position fit for Hell. For belief connects man to the All-Glorious Maker; it is a relation. Thus, man acquires value by virtue of the Divine art and inscriptions of the Dominical Names which become apparent in him through belief. Unbelief severs the relation, and due to that severance the Dominical art is concealed. His value then is only in respect to the matter of his physical being. And since this

matter has only a transitory, passing, temporary animal life, its value is virtually nothing. We shall explain this mystery by means of a comparison:

For example: among man's arts, the value of the materials used and that of the art are entirely different. Sometimes they are equal, sometimes the material is more valuable, and sometimes it happens that five dollars' worth of art is to be found in material like iron worth five cents. Sometimes, even, an antique work of art is worth a million while the material of which it is composed is not worth five cents. And so, if such a work of art is taken to the antiques market and related to a brilliant and accomplished artist of former times, and announced mentioning the artist and that art, it may be sold for a million dollars. Whereas if it is taken to the scrap dealers, the only price received will be for the five cent's worth of iron. Thus, man is such an antique work of art of Almighty God. He is a most subtle and graceful miracle of His power whom He created to manifest all his Names and their inscriptions, in the form of a miniature specimen of the universe. If the light of belief enters his being, all the meaningful inscriptions on him may be read. As one who believes, he reads them consciously, and through that relation, he causes others to read them. That is to say, the Dominical art in man becomes apparent through meanings like, "I am the creature and artefact of the All-Glorious Maker.

I manifest His mercy and munificence.” That is, belief, which consists of being connected to the Maker, makes apparent all the works of art in man. Man’s value is in accordance with that Dominical art, and by virtue of being a mirror to the Eternally Besought One. In this respect insignificant man becomes God’s addressee and a guest of the Sustainer worthy of Paradise superior to all other creatures. However, should unbelief, which consists of the severance of the relation, enter man’s being, then all those meaningful inscriptions of the Divine Names are plunged into darkness and cannot be read. For if the Maker is forgotten, the spiritual aspects which look to Him will not be comprehended, they will be as though reversed. The majority of those meaningful sublime arts and elevated inscriptions will be hidden. The remainder, those that may be seen with the eye, will be attributed to lowly causes, Nature, and chance, and will fall utterly from value. While each is a brilliant diamond, each becomes a piece of dull glass. His importance looks only to his animal, physical being. And as we said, the aim and fruit of his physical being is only to pass a brief and partial life as the most impotent, needy, and grieving of animals. Then it decays and departs. See how unbelief destroys human nature, and transforms it from diamonds into coal.

Third Point

Belief is both light and strength. Yes, one who obtains 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 the 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. Later he may fly up to Paradise in order to enter eternal happiness. Otherwise, if he does not rely on God, rather than flying, the burdens of the world will drag him down to the lowest of the low. That is to say, belief necessitates affirmation of Divine Unity, affirmation of Divine Unity necessitates submission to God, submission to God necessitates reliance on God, and reliance on God necessarily leads to happiness in this world and the next. But do not misunderstand this, reliance on God is not to reject causes altogether; it is rather to know that causes are a veil to the hand of power and have recourse to them. Knowing that attempting causes is a sort of active prayer, it is to seek the effects only from Almighty God, recognize that the results are from Him alone, and to be thankful to Him.

Those who place their trust in God and those who do not, resemble the two men in this story:

One time two men loaded heavy burdens onto both their backs and heads, and buying tickets,

boarded a large ship. As soon as they boarded it, one of them left his load on the deck, and sitting on it guarded it. The other, however, since he was both stupid and arrogant, did not put down his load. When he was told: "Leave that heavy load on the deck and be comfortable," he replied: "No, I won't put it down, it might get lost. I am strong, I'll guard my property by carrying it on my head and back." He was told again: "This reliable royal ship which is carrying you and us is stronger, it can protect it better than you. You may get giddy and fall into the sea together with your load. Anyway you will gradually lose your strength, and by degrees those loads will get heavier and your bent back and brainless head will not have the power to bear them. And if the Captain sees you in this State, he will either say that you are crazy and expel you from the ship, or he will think you are ungrateful, accusing our ship and jeering at us, and he will order you to be put into prison. Also you are making a fool of yourself in front of everyone. For the perceptive see that you are displaying weakness through your conceit, impotence through your pride, and abasement and hypocrisy through your pretence, and have thus made yourself a laughing-stock in the eyes of the people. Everyone's laughing at you." Whereupon that unfortunate man came to his senses. He put down his load on the deck and sat on it. He said to the other: "Ah! May God be pleased with you. I've been saved from that difficulty, from prison, and from making a fool

of myself.” And so, O man who does not place his trust in God! You too come to your senses like that man and place your trust in Him, so that you may be delivered from begging before all the universe, trembling before every event, from pride, making a fool of yourself, misery in the hereafter, and the prison of the pressures of this world...

Fourth Point

Belief makes man into man, indeed, it makes man into a king. Since this is so, man’s basic duty is belief and supplication. Unbelief makes man into an extremely impotent beast. Out of thousands of proofs of this matter, the differences in the ways animals and man come into the world are a clear indication and decisive proof. Yes, these differences show that humanity becomes humanity through belief. For when animals come into the world, they come complete in all points in accordance with their abilities as though having been perfected in another world; that is, they are sent. They learn all the conditions of their lives, their relationships with the universe, and the laws of life in either two hours or two days or two months, and become proficient in them. Animals like sparrows and bees acquire in twenty days the power to survive and proficiency in their actions that man only acquires in twenty years; that is, they are inspired with them. This means that the animals’ fundamental duty is not to be perfected through learning and progress

by acquiring knowledge, nor to seek help and offer supplications through displaying their impotence, but in accordance with their abilities to work and act. Their duty is active worship.

As for man, he needs to learn everything when he comes into the world; he is ignorant, and cannot even learn completely the conditions of life in twenty years. Indeed, he needs to go on learning till the end of his life. Also he is sent to the world in a most weak and impotent form, and can only rise to his feet in one or two years. Only in fifteen years can he distinguish between harm and benefit, and with the help of mankind's experience attract things advantageous to him and avoid others that are harmful. This means that man's innate duty is to be perfected through learning and to proclaim his worship of God and servitude to Him through supplication. That is to say, it is know the answers of the questions: "Through whose compassion is my life so wisely administered in this way? Through whose generosity am I so kindly raised? Through whose graciousness am I so delicately nurtured and ministered to?" It is to beseech and supplicate the Provider of Needs through the tongue of impotence and poverty; it is to seek from Him. It is to fly to the high station of worship and servitude to God on the wings of impotence and poverty.

This means that man came to this world to be perfected by means of knowledge and supplication. In regard to his nature and abilities everything

is tied to knowledge. And the foundation, source, light, and spirit of all true knowledge is knowledge of God, and its essence and basis is belief in God.

Furthermore, since man is subject to endless tribulations and afflicted with innumerable enemies despite his boundless impotence, and suffers from endless needs and has innumerable desires despite his boundless poverty, after belief, his fundamental innate duty is supplication. As for supplication, it is the basis of worship of God and servitude to Him. In order to secure a desire or wish he cannot obtain, a child will either cry or ask for it, that is, he will supplicate through the tongue of his impotence either actively or verbally, and will be successful in securing it. In the same way, man is like a delicate, petted child in the world of al. living creatures. He has to either weep at the Court of the Most Merciful and Compassionate One through his weakness and impotence, or supplicate through his poverty and need, so that the things he wants may be made subject to him, or he may offer thanks for their being made so. Otherwise like a silly child who creates a fuss over a fly, saying: "With my own strength I subjugate things it is not possible to subjugate and things a thousand times more powerful, and I make them obey me through my own ideas and measures," he displays ingratitude for the bounties. And just as this is contrary to man's innate nature, so too he makes himself deserving of severe punishment.

From The Eleventh Ray The Sixth Topic

[This consists of a single, brief proof of the pillar of belief, ‘Belief in God,’ for which there are numerous decisive proofs and explanations in many places in the Risale-i Nur.]

In Kastamonu a group of high-school students came to me, saying: “Tell us about our Creator, our teachers do not speak of God.” I said to them: “All the sciences you study continuously speak of God and make known the Creator, each with its own particular tongue. Do not listen to your teachers; listen to them.

“For example, a well-equipped pharmacy with life-giving potions and cures in every jar weighed out in precise and wondrous measures doubtless shows an extremely skilful, practised, and wise pharmacist. In the same way, to the extent that it is bigger and more perfect and better stocked than the pharmacy in the market-place, the pharmacy of the globe of the earth with its living potions and medicaments in the jars which are the four

hundred thousand species of plants and animals shows and makes known to eyes that are blind even —by means of the measure or scale of the science of medicine that you study— the All-Wise One of Glory, Who is the Pharmacist of the mighty pharmacy of the earth.

“To take another example; a wondrous factory which weaves thousands of sorts of cloth from a simple material doubtless makes known a manufacturer and skilful mechanic. In the same way, to whatever extent it is larger and more perfect than the human factory, this travelling dominical machine known as the globe of the earth with its hundreds of thousands of heads, in each of which are hundreds of thousands of factories, shows and makes known —by means of the measure or scale of the science of engineering which you study— its Manufacturer and Owner.

“And, for example, a depot, store, or shop in which has been brought together and stored up in regular and orderly fashion a thousand and one varieties of provisions undoubtedly makes known a wondrous owner, proprietor, and overseer of provisions and foodstuffs. In just the same way, to whatever degree it is vaster and more perfect than such a store or factory, this foodstore of the Most Merciful One known as the globe of the earth, this Divine ship, this dominical depot and shop holding goods, equipment, and conserved food, which in

one year travels regularly an orbit of twenty-four thousand years, and carrying groups of beings requiring different foods and passing through the seasons on its journey and filling the spring with thousands of different provisions like a huge wagon, brings them to the wretched animate creatures whose sustenance has been exhausted in winter, — by means of the measure or scale of the science of economics which you study— this depot of the earth makes known and makes loved its Manager, Organizer, and Owner.

“And, for example, let us imagine an army which consists of four hundred thousand nations, and each nation requires different provisions, uses different weapons, wears different uniforms, undergoes different drill, and is discharged from its duties differently. If this army and camp has a miracle- working commander who on his own provides all those different nations with all their different provisions, weapons, uniforms, and equipment without forgetting or confusing any of them, then surely the army and camp show the commander and make him loved appreciatively. In just the same way, the spring camp of the face of the earth in which every spring a newly recruited Divine army of the four hundred thousand species of plants and animals are given their varying uniforms, rations, weapons, training, and demobilizations in utterly perfect and regular fashion

by a single Commander- in-Chief Who forgets or confuses not one of them —to whatever extent the spring camp of the face of the earth is vaster and more perfect than that human army, —by means of the measure or scale of the military science that you study— it makes known to the attentive and sensible, its Ruler, Sustainer, Administrator, and Most Holy Commander, causing wonderment and acclaim, and makes Him loved and praised and glorified.

“Another example: millions of electric lights that move and travel through a wondrous city, their fuel and power source never being exhausted, self-evidently make known a wonder-working craftsman and extraordinarily talented electrician who manages the electricity, makes the moving lamps, sets up the power source, and brings the fuel; they cause others to congratulate and applaud him, and to love him. In just the same way, although some of the lamps of the stars in the roof of the palace of the world in the city of the universe —if they are considered in the way that astronomy says— are a thousand times larger than the earth and move seventy times faster than a cannon-ball, they do not spoil their order, nor collide with one another, nor become extinguished, nor is their fuel exhausted. According to astronomy, which you study, for our sun to continue burning, which is a million times larger than the earth and a million

times older and is a lamp and stove in one guest-house of the Most Merciful One, as much oil as the seas of the earth and as much coal as its mountains or as many logs and much wood as ten earths are necessary for it not to be extinguished. And however much greater and more perfect than this example are the electric lamps of the palace of the world in the majestic city of the universe, which point with their fingers of light to an infinite power and sovereignty which illuminates the sun and other lofty stars like it without oil, wood, or coal, not allowing them to be extinguished or to collide with one another, though travelling together at speed, to that degree —by means of the measure of the science of electricity which you either study or will study— they testify to and make known the Monarch, Illuminator, Director, and Maker of the mighty exhibition of the universe; they make Him loved, glorified, and worshipped.

“And, for example, take a book in every line of which a whole book is finely written, and in every word of which a sura of the Qur’an is inscribed with a fine pen. Being most meaningful with all of its matters corroborating one another, and a wondrous collection showing its writer and author to be extraordinarily skilful and capable, it undoubtedly shows its writer and author together with all his perfections and arts as clearly as daylight, and makes him known. It makes him appreciated with

phrases like, “What wonders God has willed!” and “Blessed be God!” Just the same is the mighty book of the universe; we see with our eyes a pen at work which writes on the face of the earth, which is a single of its pages, and on the spring, which is a single folio, the three hundred thousand plant and animal species, which are like three hundred thousand different books, all together, one within the other, without fault or error, without mixing them up or confusing them, perfectly and with complete order, and sometimes writes an ode in a word like a tree, and the complete index of a book in a point-like seed. However much vaster and more perfect and meaningful than the book in the example mentioned above is this compendium of the universe and mighty embodied Qur’an of the world, which is infinitely full of meaning and in every word of which are numerous instances of wisdom, to that degree—in accordance with the extensive measure and far-seeing vision of the natural science that you study and the sciences of reading and writing that you have practised at school—it makes known the Inscriber and Author of the book of the universe together with His infinite perfections. Proclaiming “God is Most Great!”, it makes Him known. Uttering phrases like “Glory be to God!”, it describes Him. Acclaiming Him with words like “All praise be to God!”, it makes Him loved.

“Thus, hundreds of other sciences like these make known the Glorious Creator of the universe together with His Names, each through its broad measure or scale, its particular mirror, its far-seeing eyes, and searching gaze; they make known His attributes and perfections.

“It is in order to give instruction in this matter, which is a brilliant and magnificent proof of Divine unity, that the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition teaches us about our Creator most often with the verses, Sustainer of the Heavens and the Earth, and, He created the Heavens and Earth.” I said this to the schoolboys, and they accepted it completely, affirming it by saying: “Endless thanks be to God, for we have received an absolutely true and sacred lesson. May God be pleased with you!” And I said: “Man is a living machine who is grieved with thousands of different sorrows and receives pleasure in thousands of different ways, and despite his utter impotence has innumerable enemies, physical and spiritual, and despite his infinite poverty, has countless needs, external and inner, and is a wretched creature continuously suffering the blows of death and separation. Yet, through belief and worship, he at once becomes connected to a Monarch so Glorious he finds a point of support against all his enemies and a source of help for all his needs, and like everyone takes pride at the honour and rank of the lord to whom he is attached, you can compare for

yourselves how pleased and grateful and thankful and full of pride man becomes at being connected through belief to an infinitely Powerful and Compassionate Monarch, at entering His service through worship, and transforming for himself the announcement of the execution of the appointed hour into the papers releasing him from duty.”

I repeat to the calamity-stricken prisoners what I said to the schoolboys: “One who recognizes Him and obeys Him is fortunate even if he is in prison. While one who forgets Him is wretched and a prisoner even if he resides in a palace.” Even, one wronged but fortunate man, said to the wretched tyrants who were executing him: “I am not being executed but being demobilized and departing for where I shall find happiness. But I see that you are being condemned to eternal execution and am therefore taking perfect revenge on you.” And declaring: “There is no god but God!”, he happily surrendered up his spirit.

Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.



Some Excerpts From Risale-i Nur Collection

- For everything of yours is preserved, all your actions written down, every service you have rendered recorded. *(The Letters)*
- Whoever relies on Allah finds Him sufficient. *(Seedbed of The Light)*
- Sickness washes away the dirt of sins like soap, and cleanses. *(The Flashes)*
- One who does not reform his own soul cannot reform others. *(The Words)*
- In the same way that you are not left to your own devices, so too, these phenomena and events have a master and a purpose. *(The Rays)*
- Were you created only for this world that you spend all your time on it? *(The Words)*
- Life's capital is very little and the work to be done is much. *(The Rays)*
- You are not immortal. You have not been left to your own devices. You have a duty. Give up your pride, think of the One who created you. Know that you will enter the grave, so prepare yourself for it! *(The Flashes)*

- For those who freely consent to indulge in harmful actions may not be pitied. They are not worthy of it. (*The Words*)
- Man has been sent to this world as an official and guest, and has been given abilities of great significance. And he has been entrusted with important duties in accordance with those abilities. In order to employ man in fulfilling those aims and duties, powerful encouragement and severe threats have been made.
(*The Words*)
- The world your friends have gone to is not dark. They have merely gone somewhere else; you will meet again. (*The Flashes*)
- Your body is not composed of stone and iron, but of various materials which are ever disposed to parting. Leave off your pride, perceive your impotence, recognize your Owner, know your duties, learn why you came to this world. (*The Flashes*)
- For the limits of the permissible are broad, and are quite adequate for man's desire; there is no need to trespass on the forbidden. (*The Words*)
- Worship is the price and the result of creation. (*Signs of Miraculousness*)
- Work for beyond the grave, for it is there that true happiness and pleasure will be found!
(*The Letters*)

- All your good deeds have been preserved and you will receive your reward. (*The Rays*)
- Furthermore, with the right intention, all the other acts of someone who performs the prescribed prayers become like worship. (*The Words*)
- O man! The service you have offered and the worship you have performed are not for nothing. A realm of reward, an abode of bliss, has been prepared for you. An unending Paradise is awaiting you in place of this fleeting world of yours. (*The Letters*)
- The most fortunate person is he who does not forget the hereafter for this world. (*The Letters*)
- Neither good nor bad will remain without recompense. (*The Letters*)
- The Qur'an also says to the believer; "Since your life is brief, think of eternal life. Do not fret! There is an unending life." (*The Words*)
- Time has shown that Paradise is not cheap, and neither is Hell unnecessary. (*The Letters*)
- True, painfree pleasure is found only in belief in Allah, and is possible only through belief. (*The Rays*)
- Your youth will definitely leave you, and if you do not remain within the bounds of the licit, it will be lost, and rather than its pleasures, it will bring you calamities and suffering in this

world, in the grave, and in the hereafter.

(The Words)

- The Qur'an has trained men, purified their souls and cleansed their hearts. And has caused spirits to unfold and progress, given direction and light to minds, and vitality and happiness to life. *(The Words)*
- Nature is an embroidery, and cannot be the Embroiderer. *(The Flashes)*
- Whoever created the mosquito's eye, created the sun. *(The Letters)*
- As time grows older, the Qur'an grows younger; its signs become apparent. *(The Letters)*
- Hell is not unnecessary; there are many things which cry out "Long live Hell!" with all their strength. *(The Letters)*
- Through the light of belief, it shows to the heart of a believer that death is not execution, but a change of abode; that the grave is not the mouth of a dark well, but the door to light-filled worlds; and that for all its glitter, the world is like a dungeon in relation to the hereafter. *(The Words)*
- If your hand is broken, look at theirs, which is severed. If you have only one eye, look at the blind, who lack both eyes, and offer thanks to Allah! *(The Flashes)*

- A person who sees the good in things has good thoughts. And he who has good thoughts receives pleasure from life. (*The Letters*)
- Friends and ranks last only till the door of the grave. (*The Letters*)
- Every pleasurable thing in this world will be found in its highest form in Paradise. (*The Words*)
- Man's happiness and well-being in this world are possible only through justice. As for justice, it can be achieved only through direct application of the way shown by the Qur'an. (*The Damascus Sermon*)
- Who are you? Where have you come from? Where are you going? What is your purpose? (*The Words*)
- Those who search for every truth in corporeality have their intellects in their corporeal senses, but corporeal senses are blind to spiritual things. (*The Reasonings*)
- For if man is not a true human being, he is transformed into a diabolical animal. (*The Flashes*)
- The appointed hour of death is secret, so we could die any day. (*The Letters*)
- Everything about Divine Determining is good and beautiful. Even the evil that comes from it is good, and the ugliness, beautiful. (*The Words*)

- This world is a guesthouse. (*The Letters*)
- The source of Islam is knowledge and its basis is reason, and that it accepts the truth and rejects sophistry and delusion.
(*Signs of Miraculousness*)
- If someone tells me there is a scorpion on my neck or breast or else points it out to me, I should be grateful to him, not offended.
(*The Letters*)
- The oppressor retains his power, and the oppressed, his humiliation, as they both depart and migrate from this realm. Their affairs are, then, left to the Supreme Tribunal (hereafter).
(*The Words*)
- Philosophy is a pair of dark glasses which shows everything to be ugly and frightful. While belief in Allah is a transparent, clear, luminous pair of spectacles which shows everything to be beautiful and familiar.
(*The Rays*)
- The pleasures and enjoyment man receives through licit striving within the sphere of what is lawful are sufficient for him. No need remains to enter the unlawful. (*The Words*)
- It is not burdensome for the memory of a small and simple child; children can memorize it (the Qur'an) easily. (*The Words*)
- Force should always serve right. (*The Words*)

- Politics based on self-interest is savagery.
(*The Words*)
- If mankind wants life, it must put to death usury of every sort. (*The Words*)
- The All-Wise Qur'an is wise. It affords everything a position in relation to its value.
(*The Words*)
- Allah willing, through the strength of Islam in the future, the virtues of civilization will prevail, the face of the earth cleansed of filth, and universal peace be secured.
(*The Damascus Sermon*)
- 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 Him and worshipping Him.
(*The Rays*)
- If a person's good points are greater in regard to quality or quantity than his bad points, he is deserving of love and respect. (*The Flashes*)
- Man possesses vast capital, and he came here to work and do trade for an eternal, everlasting life. The capital given to man is his lifetime.
(*The Flashes*)
- The Qur'an, revealed as a mercy for mankind, only accepts civilization of this kind; happiness for all, or at least for the majority. (*The Letters*)
- Justice without equality is not justice.
(*The Letters*)

- So long as man's dirty hand does not interfere, there is no true uncleanness or ugliness in anything. (*The Flashes*)
- As far as days yet to come are concerned, since they have not yet come, to think now of the illness or misfortune to be borne during them and display impatience, is also foolishness. (*The Flashes*)
- Every supplication is answered, but its being accepted and exactly what was sought being given is dependent on Almighty Allah's wisdom. (*The Words*)
- The Qur'an has imitated nothing and no one. And no one has been able to imitate it. (*The Words*)
- The Qur'an does not weary even if repeated thousands of times; indeed, it gives pleasure. (*The Words*)
- The Qur'an preserves its freshness and youth every age as though newly revealed. (*The Words*)
- For those who believe, the grave is the door to a world far better than this world. (*The Words*)
- Indeed, Paradise is the means both to all spiritual and non-physical pleasures, and to all physical pleasures. (*The Words*)
- Every village must have its headman; every needle must have its manufacturer and craftsman. And, as you know, every letter

must be written by someone. How, then, can it be that so extremely well-ordered a kingdom should have no ruler? (*The Words*)

- Everyday our Creator bestows on us the capital of twenty-four hours of life so that with it we may obtain all the things necessary for our two lives. (*The Rays*)
- The person who makes it his habit to follow the Prophet's (pbuh) practices transforms all his acts into worship, and may make his whole life fruitful and yielding of reward. (*The Flashes*)
- The creation of Satan, even, since he is the cause of striving and competition, the springs of man's spiritual progress, is also good, as is the creation of his species; their creation is beautiful in that respect. (*The Rays*)
- The evil spirits and those who follow them take the path of misguidance, they can cause great destruction with a small act, and they can violate the rights of many creatures and cause much harm with a small deed. (*The Flashes*)
- You should know that value and importance do not lie in quantity and number. (*The Flashes*)
- For genuine sincerity, even for the sake of evil, cannot fail to yield results, and whatever man seeks with sincerity, Allah will grant him it. (*The Flashes*)

- Civilization, however, has drawn women out of their homes, rent their veils, and corrupted mankind. (*The Words*)
- Islamic dress is natural for women, and to cast it aside is contrary to women's nature. (*The Words*)
- Allah Almighty has no need of your worship, nor indeed of anything else. It is you who needs to worship, for in truth you are sick. Worship is a sort of remedy for your spiritual wounds. (*The Flashes*)
- The sole means of saving women's happiness in the hereafter, and their happiness in this world, as well as saving their elevated innate qualities from corruption, is the training given by the religion of Islam; there is no other means. (*The Flashes*)
- Since the hereafter exists and it is everlasting, and it is a better world than this; and since the One who created us is both All-Wise and All-Compassionate; we should not complain and regret our old age. (*The Flashes*)
- If you wish to defeat your enemy, then respond to his evil with good. For if you respond with evil, enmity will increase, and even though he will be outwardly defeated, he will nurture hatred in his heart, and hostility will persist. But if you respond to him with good, he will repent and become your friend. (*The Letters*)

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