The World Is Reading

Risale-i Nur
The World Is Reading

Risale-i Nur
WHO WAS BEDIUZZAMAN SAID NURSI AND WHAT IS THE RISALE-I NUR?

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi was born in eastern Turkey in 1877 and died in 1960 at the age of 83 after a life of exemplary struggle and self-sacrifice in the cause of Islam. He was a scholar of the highest standing having studied not only all the traditional religious sciences but also modern science and had earned the name Bediuzzaman, Wonder of the Age, in his youth as a result of his outstanding ability and learning.

Bediuzzaman’s lifetime spanned the final decades of the caliphate and Ottoman Empire, its collapse and dismemberment after the First World War, and after the setting up of the Republic the twenty-five years of single-party rule followed by ten years of Democrat rule, when conditions eased a little for Bediuzzaman.

Until the years following the First World War, his struggles in the cause of Islam were active and in the public domain. He not only taught many students and engaged in debate and discussion with leading
scholars from all over the Islamic world, but he also commanded and led in person a volunteer regiment against the invading Russians in eastern Turkey in 1914 for nearly two years until taken prisoner. Furthermore, up to that time he sought to further the interests of Islam by actively engaging in public life. However, the years that saw the transition from empire to republic also saw the transition from the ‘Old Said’ to the ‘New Said’. The ‘New Said’ was characterized by his withdrawal from public life and concentration on study, prayer and thought for what was required now was a struggle of a different sort.

After a period of some two years, in 1925, Bediuzzaman was sent into exile in western Anatolia although he had committed no crime or misdemeanour. For the next twenty-five years, and to a lesser extent for the last ten years of his life, he suffered exile, imprisonment, and isolation, but these years saw the writing of the Risale-i Nur, the Treatise of Light, and its dissemination throughout Turkey. To quote Bediuzzaman himself, “Now I see clearly that most of my life has been directed in such a way, outside my own free-will, ability, comprehension and foresight, that it might produce these treatises to serve the cause of the Qur’an. It is as if all my life as a scholar has been spent in preliminaries to these writings, which demonstrate the miraculousness of the Qur’an.”
Bediuzzaman understood an essential cause of the decline of the Islamic world to be the weakening of the very foundations of belief. This weakening, together with the unprecedented attacks on those foundations in the 19th and 20th centuries carried out by materialists, atheists and others in the name of science and progress, led him to realize that the urgent and overriding need was to strengthen, and even to save, belief. What was needed was to expend all efforts to reconstruct the edifice of Islam from its foundations, belief, and to answer at that level those attacks with a ‘peaceful jihad’ or ‘jihad of the word.’

Thus, in his exile, Bediuzzaman wrote a body of work, the Risale-i Nur, that would explain and expound the basic tenets of belief, the truths of the Qur’an, to modern man. His method was to analyse both belief and unbelief and to demonstrate through clearly reasoned arguments that not only is it possible, by following the method of the Qur’an, to prove rationally all the truths of belief, such as God’s existence and unity, prophethood, and bodily resurrection, but also that these truths are the only rational explanation of existence, man and the universe.

Bediuzzaman 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, he proved in the Risale-i Nur that science’s breathtaking discoveries of the universe’s functioning corroborate and reinforce the truths of religion.

The importance of the Risale-i Nur cannot be overestimated, for through it Said Nursi played a major role in preserving and revitalizing the Islamic faith in Turkey in a period of rapid social change, and indeed its role has continued to increase in importance to the present day. But further to this, the Risale-i Nur is uniquely fitted to address not only Muslims but all mankind for several reasons. Firstly it is written in accordance with modern man’s mentality, a mentality that whether Muslim or not has been deeply imbued by materialist philosophy: it specifically answers all the questions, doubts and confusions that this causes. It answers too all the ‘why’s’ that mark the questioning mind of modern man.

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.

A further reason is that in explaining the true
nature and purpose of man and the universe, the Risale-i Nur shows that true happiness is only to be found in belief and knowledge of God, both in this world and the hereafter. It also points out the grievous pain and unhappiness that unbelief causes man’s spirit and conscience, which generally the misguided attempt to block out through heedlessness and escapism, so that anyone with any sense may take refuge in belief.

**To Conclude**

The Holy Qur’an addresses the intellect, as well as man’s other inner faculties. It directs man to consider the universe and its functioning in order to learn its true nature and purposes as the creation and thus to learn the attributes of its Single Creator and his own duties as a creature. This, then, is the method that Bediuzzaman employed in the Risale-i Nur. He explained the true nature of the universe as signs of its Creator and demonstrated through clear arguments that when it is read as such all the fundamentals of belief may be proved rationally.

When this method is followed, a person attains a true belief that will be sound and firm enough to withstand any doubts that may arise in the face of the subtle attacks of materialism, naturalism and atheism, or the materialist approach to scientific advances. For all scientific and technological advances are merely the uncovering of the workings
of the cosmos. When the cosmos is seen to be a vast and infinitely complex and meaningful unified book describing its Single Author, rather than causing doubt and bewilderment, all these discoveries and advances reinforce belief, they deepen and expand it.

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 manifested in the universe and His prophets. In explaining the message of the Qur’an, Almighty God’s final Revealed Book, brought and perfectly expounded by His final Prophet, Muhammad (Upon whom be blessings and peace), and Islam, the complete and perfected religion for mankind, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi 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’an.

ANOTHER BRIEF LOOK AT
BEDIUZZAMAN SAID NURSI’S LIFE AND
THE RISALE-I NUR

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi was born in 1877 in eastern Turkey and died in 1960 in Urfa in Turkey. Readers may refer to his biography for details of his long and exemplary life, which spanned the
last decades of the Ottoman Empire, its collapse after the First World War and the setting up of the Republic, then the twenty-five years of Republican Peoples’ Party rule, well-known for the measures taken against Islam, followed by the ten years of Democrat rule, when conditions eased a little for Bediuzzaman.

Bediuzzaman displayed an extraordinary intelligence and ability to learn from an early age, completing the normal course of medrese (religious school) education at the early age of fourteen, when he obtained his diploma. He became famous for both his prodigious memory and his unbeaten record in debating with other religious scholars. Another characteristic Bediuzzaman displayed from an early age was an instinctive dissatisfaction with the existing education system, which when older he formulated into comprehensive proposals for its reform. The heart of these proposals was the bringing together and joint teaching of the traditional religious sciences and the modern sciences, together with the founding of a university in the Eastern Provinces of the Empire, the Medresetü’z-Zehra, where this and his other proposals would be put into practice. In 1907 his endeavours in this field took him to Istanbul and an audience with Sultan Abdulhamid. Although subsequently he twice received funds for the construction of his university,
and its foundations were laid in 1913, it was never completed due to war and the vicissitudes of the times.

Contrary to the practice of religious scholars at that time, Bediuzzaman himself studied and mastered almost all the physical and mathematical sciences, and later studied philosophy, for he believed that it was only in this way that Islamic theology (kalâm) could be renewed and successfully answer the attacks to which the Qur’an and Islam were then subject.

In the course of time, the physical sciences had been dropped from medrese education, which had contributed directly to the Ottoman decline relative to the advance of the West. Now, in the 19th and early 20th centuries, Europe had gained dominance over the Islamic world, and in efforts to extend its dominance, was attacking the Qur’an and Islam in the name of science and progress in particular, falsely claiming them to be incompatible. Within the Empire too was a small minority which favoured adopting Western philosophy and civilization. Thus, all Bediuzzaman’s endeavour was to prove and demonstrate the falseness of these accusations, and that far from being incompatible with science and progress, the Qur’an was the source of true progress and civilization, and in addition, since this was the case, Islam would dominate the future, despite its relative decline and regression at that time.
The years up to the end of the First World War were the final decades of the Ottoman Empire and were, in the words of Bediuzzaman, the period of the ‘Old Said’. In additions to his endeavours in the field of learning, he served the cause of the Empire and Islam through active involvement in social life and the public domain. In the War, he commanded the militia forces on the Caucasian Front against the invading Russians, for which he as later awarded a War Medal. To maintain the morale of his men he himself disdained to enter the trenches inspite of the constant shelling, and it was while withstanding the overwhelming assaults of the enemy that he wrote his celebrated Qur’anic commentary, Signs of Miraculousness, dictating to a scribe while on horseback. Stating that the Qur’an encompasses the sciences which make known the physical world, the commentary is an original and important work which in Bediuzzaman’s words, forms a sort model for commentaries he hoped would be written in the future, which would bring together the religious and modern sciences in the way he proposed. Bediuzzaman was taken prisoner in March 1916 and held in Russia for two years before escaping in early 1918, and returning to Istanbul via Warsaw, Berlin, and Vienna.

The defeat of the Ottomans saw the end of the Empire and its dismemberment, and the occupation
of Istanbul and parts of Turkey by foreign forces. These bitter years saw also the transformation of the Old Said into the New Said, the second main period of Bediuzzaman’s life. Despite the acclaim he received and services he performed as a member of the Darü’l-Hikmeti’l-Islamiye, a learned body attached to the Shaykhu’l-Islam’s Office, and combatting the British, Bediuzzaman underwent a profound mental and spiritual change in the process of which he turned his back on the world. Realizing the inadequacy of the ‘human’ science and philosophy he had studied as a means of reaching the truth, he took the revealed Qur’an as his ‘sole guide.’ In recognition of his services to the Independence Struggle, Bediuzzaman was invited to Ankara by Mustafa Kemal, but on arrival there, found that at the very time of the victory of the Turks and Islam, atheistic ideas were being propagated among the Deputies and officials, and many were lax in performing their religious duties. He published various works which successfully countered this.

Remaining some eight months in Ankara, Bediuzzaman understood the way Mustafa Kemal and the new leaders were going to take, and on the one hand that he could not work alongside them, and on the other that they were not to be combatted in the realm of politics. When offered various posts
and benefits by Mustafa Kemal, he declined them and left Ankara for Van, where he withdrew into a life of worship and contemplation; he was seeking the best way to proceed.

Within a short time, Bediuzzaman’s fears about the new regime began to be realized: the first steps were taken towards secularization and reducing the power of Islam within the state, and even its eradication from Turkish life. In early 1925 there was a rebellion in the east in which Bediuzzaman played no part, but as a consequence of which was sent into exile in western Anatolia along with many hundreds of others. Thus unjustly began twenty-five years of exile, imprisonment, and unlawful oppression for Bediuzzaman. He was sent to Barla, a tiny village in the mountains of Isparta Province. However, the attempt to entirely isolate and silence him had the reverse effect, for Bediuzzaman was both prepared and uniquely qualified to face the new challenge: these years saw the writing of the Risale-i Nur, which silently spread and took root, combatting in the most constructive way the attempt to uproot Islam, and the unbelief and materialist philosophy it was hoped to instil in the Muslim people of Turkey.

The Risale-i Nur

As the New Said, Bediuzzaman had immersed himself in the Qur’an, searching for a way to relate its truths to modern man. In Barla in his isolation
he began to write treatises explaining and proving these truths, for now the Qur’an itself and its truths were under direct attack. The first of these was on the Resurrection of the Dead, which in a unique style, proves bodily Resurrection rationally, where even the greatest scholars previously had confessed their impotence. He described the method employed in this as consisting of three stages: first God’s existence is proved, and His Names and attributes, then the Resurrection of the Dead is ‘constructed’ on these and proved.

With these writings, Bediuzzaman opened up a new, direct way to reality (haqiqat) and knowledge of God which he described as the highway of the Qur’an and way of the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) through the ‘legacy of Prophethood,’ which gains for those who follow it ‘true and certain belief.’ He did not ascribe the writings to himself, but said they proceeded from the Qur’an itself, were ‘rays shining out of from [its] truths.’

Thus, rather than being a Qur’anic commentary which expounds all its verses giving the immediate reasons for their revelation and the apparent meanings of the words and sentences, the Risale-i Nur is what is known as a mânevî tefsir, or commentary which expounds the meaning of the Qur’anic truths. For there are various sorts of commentaries. The verses mostly expounded in the
Risale-i Nur are those concerned with the truths of belief, such as the Divine Names and attributes and the Divine activity in the universe, the Divine existence and Unity, resurrection, prophethood, Divine Determining or destiny, and man’s duties of worship. Bediuzzaman explains how the Qur’an addresses all men in every age in accordance with the degree of their understanding and development; it has a face that looks to each age. The Risale-i Nur, then, explains that face of the Qur’an which looks to this age. We shall now look at further aspects of the Risale-i Nur related to this point.

In numerous of its verses, the Holy Qur’an invites man to observe the universe and reflect on the Divine activity within it; following just this method, Bediuzzaman provides proofs and explanations for the truths of belief. He likens the universe to a book, and looking at it in the way shown by the Qur’an, that is, ‘reading’ it for its meaning, learns of the Divine Names and attributes and other truths of belief. The book’s purpose is to describe its Author and Maker; beings become evidences and signs to their Creator. Thus, an important element in the way of the Risale-i Nur is reflection or contemplation (tefekkür), ‘reading’ the Book of the Universe in order to increase in knowledge of God and to obtain ‘true and certain belief’ in all the truths of belief.

Bediuzzaman demonstrates that the irrefutable
truths, such as Divine Unity, arrived at in this way are the only rational and logical explanation of the universe, and making comparisons with Naturalist and Materialist philosophy which have used science’s findings about the universe to deny those truths, show the concepts on which they are based, such as causality and Nature, to be irrational and logically absurd.

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 Bediuzzaman’s knowledge of it. The Risale-i Nur shows that there is no contradiction or conflict between religion and science.

In addition, all these matters discussed in the Risale-i Nur are set out as reasoned arguments and proved according to logic. All the most important of the truths of belief are proved so clearly that even unbelievers can see their necessity. And so too, inspired by the Qur’an, even the most profound and inaccessible truths are made accessible by means of comparisons, which bring them close to the understanding like telescopes, so that they are readily understandable by ordinary people and those with no previous knowledge of these questions.
Another aspect of the Risale-i Nur related to the face of the Qur’an which looks to this age, is that it explains everything from the point of view of wisdom; that is, as is mentioned again below, it explains the purpose of everything. It considers things from the point of view of the Divine Name of All-Wise.

Also, following this method, in the Risale-i Nur Bediuzzaman solved many mysteries of religion, such as bodily resurrection and Divine Determining and man’s will, and the riddle of the constant activity in the universe and the motion of particles, before which man relying on his own intellect and philosophy had been impotent.

While in Barla, Bediuzzaman put the treatise on Resurrection and the pieces that followed it together in the form of a collection and gave it the name of Sözler (The Words). The Words was followed by Mektûbat (Letters), a collection of thirty-three letters of varying lengths from Bediuzzaman to his students. And this was followed by Lem’alar (The Flashes Collection), and Şualar (The Rays), which was completed in 1949. Together with these are the three collections of Additional Letters, for each of Bediuzzaman’s main places of exile, Barla Lahikası, Kastamonu Lahikası, and Emirdağ Lahikası.

The way the Risale-i Nur was written and disseminated was unique, like the work itself.
Bediuzzaman would dictate at speed to a scribe, who would write down the piece in question with equal speed; the actual writing was very quick. Bediuzzaman had no books for reference and the writing of religious works was of course forbidden. They were all written therefore in the mountains and out in the countryside. Handwritten copies were then made, these were secretly copied out in the houses of the Risale-i Nur ‘students,’ as they were called, and passed from village to village, and then from town to town, till they spread throughout Turkey. Only in 1946 were Risale-i Nur students able to obtain duplicating machines, while it was not till 1956 that various parts were printed on modern presses in the new, Latin, script. The figure given for hand-written copies is 600,000.

It may be seen from the above figure how the Risale-i Nur movement spread within Turkey, despite all efforts to stop it. After 1950, the period of what Bediuzzaman called ‘the Third Said,’ there was a great increase in the number of students, particularly among the young and those who had been through the secular education system of the Republic. At the same time the number of students outside Turkey increased.

Besides these powerful writings themselves, a major factor in the success of the movement may be attributed to the very method Bediuzzaman
had chosen, which may be summarized with two phrases: ‘mânevî jihad,’ that is, ‘jihad of the word’ or ‘non-physical jihad’, and ‘positive action.’ For Bediuzzaman considered the true enemies in this age of science, reason, and civilization to be materialism and atheism, and their source, materialist philosophy. Thus just as he combatted and ‘utterly defeated’ these with the reasoned proofs of the Risale-i Nur, so through strengthening the belief of Muslims and raising it to the level of ‘true, verified belief,’ the Risale-i Nur was the most effective barrier against the corruption of society caused by these enemies. In order to be able to pursue this ‘jihad of the word,’ Bediuzzaman insisted that his students avoided any use of force and disruptive action. Through ‘positive action,’ and the maintenance of public order and security, the damage caused by the forces of unbelief could be ‘repaired’ by the healing truths of the Qur’an.
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.

**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, impotency through your pride, and abasement and hypocrisy through your pretence, and have thus made yourself a laughingstock 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 all 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.

**FIFTH POINT**

Belief necessitates supplication as a certain means of securing needs, and just as human nature has an intense desire for it, so too Almighty God decrees,

Say, ‘My Sustainer would not concern Himself with you but for your supplication,’ which has the meaning of: What importance would you have if you did not offer Me supplications? He also commands:

Call upon Me and I will answer you.

If you say: “We frequently offer supplications, but they are not accepted. But the verse is general, it states that every supplication is answered.

The Answer: To answer is one thing, to accept is something quite different. Every supplication is answered, but its being accepted and exactly what was sought being given is dependant on Almighty God’s wisdom. For example, if a sick child calls the doctor, saying: “Doctor! Doctor!”, and he replies: “Here I am, what do you want?”, and the child says: “Give me that medicine!”, the doctor will either
give him exactly what he asks for or something better and more beneficial for him. Or knowing that it is harmful for his illness, he will give him nothing.

Thus, since Almighty God is all-present and all-seeing, He responds to the supplications of His servants. Through His presence and response, He transforms the desolation of loneliness and solitude into familiarity. But He does this, not in accordance with man’s capricious and importunate demands, but in accordance with the requirements of Dominical wisdom; He gives either what is sought or what is better than it, or He gives nothing at all. Also, supplication is a form of worship and recognition of man’s servitude to God. The fruits of this pertain to the hereafter. The aims pertaining to this world are the times of a particular sort of supplication and worship. For example, the prayers and supplications for rain are a form of worship. Drought is the time for such worship. Worship and supplications of this sort are not in order to bring rain. If they are performed with that intention alone they are not worthy of acceptance, for they are not sincere worship. Sunset is the time of the evening prayers. And eclipses of the sun and moon are the times of two particular prayers known as salat-i kusuf and salat-i khusuf. That is to say, with the veiling of the two luminous signs of the night and day, God’s tremendousness is proclaimed, so Almighty God calls his servants to a
sort of worship at those times. The prayers are not so that the sun and moon will be revealed (whose appearance and how long the eclipses will continue have anyway been reckoned by astronomers).

In just the same way, drought is the time for the prayers for rain. And the visitation of calamities and infliction of harmful things the times of certain supplications when man realizes his impotence and through his supplication and entreaty seeks refuge at the Court of One Possessing Absolute Power. Even if the calamities are not lifted despite many supplications, it may not be said that they were not accepted. It should rather be said that the time for the supplication is not yet over. If through His graciousness and munificence Almighty God removes the calamity, light upon light, then the time for that supplication is over and done with. That is to say, supplication has the meaning of worship and man’s acknowledging his servitude to God. As for worship and servitude to God, it should be purely and sincerely for God’s sake. Man should only proclaim his impotence and seek refuge with Him through supplication, he should not interfere in His Dominicality. He should leave the taking of measures to Him and rely on His wisdom. He should not accuse His Mercy. Indeed, what is in reality established by the Qur’an’s clear verses is that just as all beings offer their own particular
glorification and worship, so too what rises to the Divine Court from all the universe is supplication. This is either through the tongue of innate ability like the supplication of all plants and animals by which each, through this tongue, seeks a form from the Absolute Bestower and to display and manifest His Names. Or it is through the tongue of innate need. These are the supplications for all their essential needs beyond their power to obtain offered by all animate beings. Through this tongue, each animate being seeks certain things from the Absolutely Generous One for the continuance of its life, like a sort of sustenance. Or it is supplication through the tongue of exigency, through which all beings with spirits who find themselves in some plight or predicament make supplication and seek urgent refuge with an unknown protector; indeed, they turn to the All-Compassionate Sustainer. If there is nothing to prevent it, these three sorts of supplication are always accepted. The fourth sort of supplication is the most well-known; it is our supplication. This too is of two sorts: one is active and by disposition, and the other, verbal and with the heart. For example, having recourse to causes is an active prayer. To gather together causes is not in order to create the effect, but through the tongue of disposition to take up an acceptable position in order to seek the effect from Almighty God. To
plough a field is to knock at the door of the treasury of mercy. Since this sort of active supplication is directed towards the Absolutely Generous One’s Name and title, it is accepted in the great majority of cases. The second sort is to offer supplication with the tongue and the heart. It is to seek certain wishes which the hand cannot reach. The most important aspect, the most beautiful aim, the sweetest fruit of this is this: “The one who offers the supplications knows that there is Someone Who hears the wishes of his heart, Whose hand can reach all things, Who can bring about each of his desires, Who takes pity on his impotence, and answers his poverty.” And so, O impotent, needy man! Do not neglect a means like supplication, which is the key to the treasury of mercy and to an inexhaustible strength. Cling to it! Rise to the highest peaks of humanity! Include in your supplications those of all the universe, like a king! Say, From You alone do we seek help, like a servant and deputy representing all the universe! Be on the Most Excellent Pattern of creation!
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 waggon, 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.
EXCERPTS FROM THE RISALE-I NUR BY BEDIUZZAMAN SAID NURSI

- “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.”
- “Do not suppose yourself to be free and independent. For if you look at this guest-house of the world with the eye of wisdom, you will see that nothing at all is without order and without purpose. How can you remain outside the order and be without purpose?”
- “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. “
- “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.”
- “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?”
• “He who created the eye of the mosquito is the one who created the sun. The one who ordered the stomach of a flea is also the one who ordered the solar system.”
• “What gives life to people is hope, while what kills them is despair.”
• “The revival of religion is the revival of the nation. The life of religion is the light of life.”
• “If you want the pleasure and enjoyment of life, give life to your life through belief, and adorn it with religious duties, and preserve it by abstaining from sins.”
• “Politics which revolves around benefit is savagery. If the laws of government are not combined with the principles of wisdom, and the bonds of force not combined with the laws of truth, they will not be fruitful among the mass of the people.”
• “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.”
• “Time has shown that Paradise is not cheap, and neither is Hell unnecessary.”
“One who recognizes God 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.”

“Christianity will either erupt, or being purified, will lay down its arms before Islam. Christianity was split apart several times, and Protestantism emerged. Then Protestantism was rent, and approached the true affirmation of Divine Unity. It is preparing to be rent again. It will either erupt and be extinguished, or it will see before it the truths of Islam, which encompass the basis of true Christianity, and it will lay down its arms.

The Prophet Muhammad (Upon whom be blessings and peace) alluded to this great mystery when he said: Jesus will appear having descended from the skies; he will be of my community and will act in accordance with my Shari’a.”

“The essentials and incontestable matters of religion, which form ninety-nine per cent, are each diamond pillars, while the controversial matters which are open to interpretation form only ten per cent. Ninety diamond pillars may not be put under the protection of ten gold pillars. Books and interpretations should be telescopes for observing the Qur’an; they should be mirrors; not shadows or deputies!”
• “The origin of all revolutions and corruption, and the spur and source of all base morals are just two sayings:
  
  The First Saying: “So long as I’m full, what is it to me if others die of hunger?”
  
  The Second Saying: “You suffer hardship so that I can live in ease; you work so that I can eat.”
  
  There is only one remedy for extirpating the First Saying, and that is the obligatory payment of zakat. While the remedy for the Second is the prohibition of usury and interest. Qur’anic justice stands at the door of the world and says to usury and interest: “No entry! It is forbidden! You don’t have the right to enter here!” Mankind did not heed the command, and received a severe blow. So it must heed it before it receives one even more severe!”
  
  “The pure justice of the Qur’an does not spill the life and blood of an innocent, even for the whole of humanity. The two are the same both in the view of Divine Power, and in the view of justice. But through self-interest man becomes such that he will destroy everything that forms an obstacle to his ambition, even the world if he can, and he will wipe out mankind.”
  
  “Unfortunate truths become worthless in worthless hands.”
The Risale-i Nur Collection

- The Words
- The Letters
- The Flashes
- The Rays
- Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Biography)
- The Signs of Miraculousness
- The Staff Of Moses

Some Pocket Books

- A Guide For Youth
- The Short Words
- Resurrection And Hereafter
- Belief And Man
- Thirty Three Windows
- The Suprime Sign
- The Fruits of Belief
- On Ramadan, Thanks and Frugality
- Sincerity And Brotherhood
- Nature Cause or Effect
- A Guide For Women
- Message For The Sick
- The Damascus Sermon
Some Web Sites About The Risale-i Nur

www.sozler.com.tr
www.envarnesriyat.com
www.nesil.com.tr
www.istikv.org
www.nur.web.tr
www.nurnetwork.org
www.nuronline.com
www.nursistudies.com
www.risalahnur.com
www.malaysianur.com
www.poslanica.com
www.nurpublishers.com
www.questionsonislam.com