

PANEL

I

THE IDEAS OF BEDIUZZAMAN SAID NURSI IN THE THIRTIETH YEAR SINCE HIS DEATH AND THEIR PLACE IN ISLAMIC THOUGHT

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to know Islam and the Qur'an through the Risale-i Nur will come to love them.

In addition, the Risale-i Nur makes comparisons of religion and philosophy, belief and unbelief, guidance and misguidance, in many contexts and on many levels, and shows that in every case, truth and reality, as well as true benefit, happiness, and progress for man lie only in the former. Philosophy, in whatever form, cannot answer the fundamental questions it is in man's nature to ask and offer him true happiness. Restricting its view to this world, it drowns in matter, and condemns the world and man to meaninglessness and purposelessness. Thus, a work which points out the contradictions and irrationality of concepts such as Nature and causality by which philosophy attempts to explain existence, and demonstrates by pointing out the grand purposes and instances of wisdom in all things that the only rational explanation of the universe and man is that of Divine Unity, is certainly of the utmost importance for the people of the West. Indeed, as science progresses and man wakes up to the contradictions of Western philosophy, the importance of the Risale-i Nur, which bringing together science and religion, explains so appropriately the Qur'an's message of Divine Unity, will increase.

Footnotes:

1. Nursi, Bediuzzaman Said, *Lem'alar*, Istanbul 1986, 230.
2. —, *Barla Lahikası*, Istanbul 1960, 160.
3. —, *Mektûbât*, Istanbul 1981, 220.
4. —, *Sözler*, Istanbul 1980, 498-9.

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The German orientalist Ursula Spuler's message to the Panel

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I offer my thanks for your kind invitation to join your Panel on 16th March 1991 organized on the occasion of the anniversary of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's death. I hope you and the Panel will meet with a good response, co-operation, and great success.

This century's great scholar Bediuzzaman Said Nursi has become famous outside Turkey. Known with the rank of *Üstad*, the Master, he demonstrated that it was not enough for contemporary Muslims to adhere only to their traditions. In the Risale-i Nur Collection, a commentary on the Holy Qur'an, he attached great importance to striving to interpret Islam, and considered that for scholars to be able to do this it was necessary for them to be aware of this.

Islam has to contain theologically the modern world view together with its complete structure. In this field, Islam's own structure and nature possess this ability. Said Nursi saw this and put forward its basic principles. This was his greatest success. And he developed clear models in the subject.

A most important matter in connection with Bediuzzaman Said Nursi is his dealing with the question of Islamic education.

He thought that the latest findings of the religious and modern sciences had to be represented in conformity with the sciences which the Qur'an puts forward. And acting with this educational programme in mind, he published works which included within a broad spectrum the programme of the Risale-i Nur school of thought, his own school. This educational programme, or Risale-i Nur Model, brought an extraordinarily positive point of view of science and the art of science, and hence of critical and unbiased works, hitherto unseen anywhere in the Islamic world, and ensured that the Risale-i Nur and works taking their inspiration from it were presented to those interested and to the world at large. This new method, which comprises true Islam, shows that, as a question of the very greatest importance, it wants to present Islam as a real alternative to the impasses of capitalism, communism, and socialism. I hope that your conference will contribute significantly to Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and the Risale-i Nur Collection's educational model - which is of the greatest importance - being made better known, and thus to the solving of the problems of our times.

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