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Said Nursi's Ideal for Human Society: Moral and Social Reform in the Risale-i Nur

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By
Hasan Hörküç

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University of Durham, Durham
July, 2004



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Abstract

This thesis presents a critical analysis of the writings and discourse of Said Nursi of Turkey (1876-1960), an important figure in the 20th century Muslim World, with special reference to "ideal society". Among the many writings on Nursi's life and ideas, unfortunately none have specifically discussed his ideas regarding "ideal society" in an academic context. This thesis is an attempt to trace an understanding of the foundations and origins of the footsteps of Nursi's thought system, in which he deals with ideas linked to "ideal society". Priority is given to his socio-theological rather than theological aspects of his writings.

The main objective of the thesis can be roughly summarised as an exploration of the impact of religion, science and social factors in the thoughts of Nursi on "ideal society" by employing a combined theoretical framework consisting of modernist and contemporary approaches.

The study is divided into two parts. The first part presents a general overview of the concept of "ideal society" throughout history. The second chapter sets out the background to his life and his ideas, examining the varied writings in each period and aiming to find the parallels between the general course of the Islamic world in the 20th century and the course of Nursi's life. The second part takes up the main themes of his discourse. Belief as the bedrock of society is outlined together with the dichotomy between *iman* and Islam. Particular attention is given to his intellectual methodology and main influences. Later social reform and social change is also considered. It

assesses whether Islam is something which can be imposed from top or bottom; with particular reference to a-political Islam and the phenomenon of social change. Furthermore, religion, science and scientism are addressed, applying the new terminology of "Sacrelisation of Science". By providing a composite picture of Nursi's ideas of "ideal society" in a detailed part, the thesis also deals with his views on politics, the West and civilisation.

In addition, the study is supported by two appendices, containing a full bibliography of his works and studies.

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Standardisation of Transliteration

As the writings of Said Nursi were originally written in Ottoman, later in his lifetime they were translated and published in Turkish; it started to be translated especially after the 1980s into English and other major languages (now they have been translated into more than 20 languages). There was no internal standardisation of transliteration. Since in most of this thesis we use Sukran Vahide's translations, which apply some forms of transliteration, when there is an inconstancy between them and the major academic rules then the transliteration system of "Library of Congress" has been followed herein.

However this will be applied by a few justifications: the first, since the modern Turkish language has adopted the Latin alphabet, the modern Turkish spelling of the words which have Arabic or Persian origin will be used in italics. Terms which have found their way into common English usage have been used in that agreed form with minimal diacritical points, e.g. Qur'an. As such they have not been accorded italic face. This list also includes proper names, especially where variant spellings occurred in the corpus, such as Muhammad Abduh. Words of non-English origin are rendered in accordance with the Library of Congress system of transliteration for the language in question

As a general rule, in the Qur'anic quotations we use Shakir's Qur'anic Translation, however while directly quoting from Vahide's translation of Nursi we rely upon Vahide's own translation. Her translations have been given priority when appropriate

and are identified with the note [SV]. At other times, when an interpretation is required from a standard text, the translation of Shakir's Qur'anic Translation has been preferred and is identified with nothing but stating the chapter.

Introduction

Said Nursi (1876–1960) known as *Bediüzzaman* (regenerator or *nonpareil* of his times), an Islamic philosopher, scholar and one of the most distinguished educators of the contemporary world, lived in Turkey. The main collection of Nursi's writings, the *Risale-i Nur* (The Epistle of Light), is a six-thousand-page commentary on the Qur'an. He is the founder of the most important religious movement in Turkey. The *Nur* movement, that became known as *Nurculuk*, seeks to set up religious consciousness through a system of education, civilisation and reason, based on Nursi's ideas. *Nurculuk,* one of the most noteworthy Islamic religious movements in the present century, is now becoming the subject of serious study by academics aiming to produce a picture of what is truly religious in *Nurculuk* and what really attracts people to this movement, founded by a man who spent most of his life in jails and in exile. The impact of Nursi's life and work has been felt within Turkey and far beyond. He was profoundly concerned with how Islam should shape the lives of contemporary Muslims. Although entirely a scholar of modern times, in terms of a critical acceptance of the religious and social consequences of twentieth-century life he was rooted in the classical disciplines of Islam, educated in the late *Medrese* system of the Ottomans, and rewarded with *mahreç* as his qualification in the Islamic sciences.

He received his first education mainly from Naqshbandi *Madrasas*, and this left a great impact on his later discourse. He then studied philosophy, and until a fundamental change occurred in his life he considered the philosophical approach as the only way of renewing the Islamic sciences. He served as a member of *Darü'l-Hikmeti'l-Islamiye* (an Academy of Higher Islamic Studies) as a nominee of the

Army. He first started writing in the early years of the twentieth century. His first writings were mostly political, concerning the revival of the Ottoman Empire.

Nursi underwent a crisis of conscience through the 1920s. He underwent radical changes in his thought system, a switch from a political system of thought to a faith-based apolitical one. He was faced with an intellectual challenge which forced him to impose a radical distance between politics and religion, or to rethink religion in a way that would allow him to "grasp the bedrock of the *mysterium tremendum*". Mardin writes, "For him, faith now overtook religion as 'reasonable'".[1] Having undergone this fundamental change, seeking solitude and a transition from a politically-based discourse to an internal faith-based apolitical one, Nursi wrote his *magnum opus*, the *Risale-i Nur* collection.

Nursi was aware of the major currents within the Muslim world. More importantly, he witnessed the most radical changes for centuries in the lives, not only of Muslims but of all human beings: the First World War, the end of the multi-nationalist Empires, (including the Ottoman), and the abolishment of the Sultanate and the Caliphate. In his native country, the successors of the Ottoman Empire founded the Turkish Republic, basing their principles on a propagandising atheistic philosophy based on westernisation.[2] Nursi never challenged the democratic structure of the new Republic, and this perhaps was the most important reason why his life was spared in the cautious early years of the Republic. Throughout the rest of his life he was many times tried and acquitted, while it was reportedly said that many *hojas*, *shayks* and *mollas* were executed. Yet throughout rest of his life he challenged the 'irreligious agenda" of the founders of Turkish Republic. The movement he has founded is said to

show elements of continuity between the Ottoman past and modern Turkey. Above all, however, it is said to be a movement of faith aimed at securing a common ethical standard between the state and citizens.[3] At the end of his life (1960), Nursi left a legacy for nearly half a century which still attracts the masses: he is said to have now more than 6 million followers among Turkish Muslims, though this is a controversial and probably exaggerated figure.

The present work began as a study of Said Nursi's contributions to the idea of the ideal society. It gradually became clear that this idea is throughout Western history bound up with utopian thought, whereas in the Islamic world it is associated with political power and Islam imposed from the top. Although acquainted with the distinction between the faith-based internalist tradition and "externalism" (the – largely political – orientation of contemporary Islamic thought), I then began to see that Islamic history embodies utopianism from the very beginning. One of the striking features of this difference was the internal and external teachings of Islam, that is, *iman*. According to Turner, "These two aspects have usually been cleaved apart, with two distinctive groups of scholars emerging ...".[4] In fact, the period of the Prophet Muhammad and the original Islamic state in Medina remained the ideal paradigm, for in this tradition is to be found the political writings of al-Farabi, al-Ghazali, ibn Taymiyya, ibn Khaldun and Abdul-Wahhab, and of Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb of Egypt, Abu Ala Mawdudi of Pakistan, Khomeini, and, more recently, Hasan al-Turabi, Rashid al-Ghannoushi (Tunisia), Abbasi Madani (Algeria) and numerous others. These writers spoke about an Islamic state, Islamic law, Islamic education and Islamic society. On the other hand, exceptional discourses like Nursi's took an evolutionary approach, seeking to *iman*-ise society rather than to Islam-ise the masses

or political institutions. This tradition has determined the individual and social evolution of Muslims, leading them from political Islam to apolitical Islam, from the outward indulgence of Islam to a faith-based view, from blind faith to reason, from a stable faith to a gradualist, progressive outlook. Something similar started in the West with the Enlightenment, with the difference that scientism in the West became the new religion of modern times. Later, I began to explore the difference between *islam*/Islam and *iman* in presenting two approaches to the idea of the ideal society. More importantly, it became clear that this subject has received little or no attention from Western scholars.

The so-called externalists approached the issue mainly by following the exoteric facet of the Islamic revelation, adhering to the Shari'a and seeking reform through the political institutions of the masses, with the aim of achieving the ideal *ummah*.[5] This has given rise to the politically-oriented understanding of Islam. It has found followers among the *ulama* of the Ottomans and the Shi'i Safavids, and in the contemporary world among the followers of the Muslim Brotherhood, Necmettin Erbakans' National Outlook (*Milli Gorus*) and the mullahs of Khomeini's Iran, and has represented itself in the so-called 'Islamic states'. Or has it? Internalists tackled the issue through the self-renewing of individuals and through faith-seeking revolutions: compare the first period of the Prophet Muhammad's Meccan life.[6] Throughout history, the best examples of this category are without doubt the Sufists, among whom are al-Jilani, Naqshbandi, and Sirhindi. There are also, however, individuals who had no direct connection to any Sufi orders. We may call them the non-Sufi brotherhood, affiliated Sufis or middle-roaders,[7] and among them are Ghazali, Mulla Sadra,[8] Fakhr al-Din Razi[9] and, I would claim, Nursi.[10] Our second

category of revivalism, that of the internalist tradition, comprises those who believed the revival of the Islamic tradition should be from within, the aim being to return to the heart of the Islamic tradition to provide answers, and to revive the Islamic world as a spiritual reality.[11] This theoretical exploration has provided us with a perfect backdrop against which Nursi can be placed.

Following on from this is a study and detailed analysis of Nursi's life, divided into four parts. The first part discusses Nursi's formative education in the late-Ottoman *madrasa* system, mostly by Naqshbandi *takkas*, his involvement with politics and the early phase of his writings. The second is devoted to Nursi's inner crisis and his discovery of the fundamental changes affecting the future of his native country, the end of the Ottomans and the foundation of the Turkish Republic. The third part begins with Nursi addressing this fundamental change, seeking solitude and deliverance from a politically-based discourse by means of an internal, faith-based apolitical one. It considers the biographical approach of his *magnum opus*, *the Risale-i Nur*. The fourth part discusses Nursi as an established master, addressing and advising politicians concerning worldly matters. He has become someone who, though previously not interested in politics at all, approaches politics in order to further his ultimate aim of building a culture of belief, gain some relief from the trials and exile he faced for years, and win the freedom to have the *Risale-i Nur* published.

Given Nursi's stature, one thing is clear: that Nursi in present-day Turkey is a focus for argument and controversy. He is well-respected among simple people, whereas he is still seen as a reactionary and anti-laicist among the elite, in particular among high-ranking military officials. The time during which Nursi lived may be described as the

apogee of positivist ideology. We can see a reflection of this on early Republican policies. This helped to define Nursi's discourse.

The middle section of this thesis comprises a study of Nursi's methodological development and his definition of the "problem". This definition presented Nursi with the most substantial change in his moral-reform project, and he devoted his reforming energies to "belief as the bedrock of society". Nursi's fundamental focus was thus on *iman* rather than on Islam, and the centre of his activity was his efforts to renew and strengthen the most important Muhammadan truth: *iman*. Nursi stresses the necessity of *iman* before Islam, and of the individual before society, and defines the sickness of his age as being the need for *iman*. This was not the only issue on which Nursi differed from his contemporaries, but it is, this thesis argues, the most powerful one in terms of his developing thought. We attach the highest importance to his method of discourse, searching for his basic influences and the process he underwent (embracing philosophy, mysticism, and the Qur'an-icism) before he arrived at his new method of discourse.

I shall attempt to show that Nursi undertook to renew the belief of Muslim individuals, and to form a community or group of these individuals, rather than re-establishing the political structure of the Islamic world. He explores the question of social change as a human phenomenon, viewing social change as a gradual and evolutionary progress towards a perfection or ideal.

Finally, Nursi's discussion of science, scientism and religion and his consideration of '*ilm*, and the dichotomy between *naqli* (transmitted) and *aqli* (rational/intellectual)

knowledge and *raison d'être* of knowledge, are appraised and analysed in depth. A new term is applied to distinguish Nursi's approach to this issue: the 'sacralisation of Science'. The main argument is that, in the age of science, Nursi devised a methodology which would show that religion and science could not be stated in a dichotomous, "competitive" way, and that the person who is deeply religious should feel strengthened in his religious beliefs and encouraged by the prospect that his value-questions, including those concerning the *mysterium tremendum*, can be more firmly answered than ever before.

Possible Subjects of Research

In structuring a research project on Said Nursi, I could have studied a variety of subjects. It would have been possible to devote a whole study to Nursi's reinterpretation of the Qur'an, and his turning from an atomistic, classical, verse-by-verse treatment to a thematic, subject-based one. Similarly, a critical study could be undertaken to examine Nursi's criticism of naturalistic philosophy and its atheistic outcomes, together with the influence of positivistic terminology on his discourse. A fascinating study could be constructed on Nursi's main influences, a subject which as yet is untouched. Tracing the interaction between his ideas and his acts would have been a good subject. To facilitate precisely such studies by future students, a brief examination of these issues has been undertaken

It would also be possible to devote a study to Nursi's defence transcripts and expert reports about the trials of Nurcu-ism. It was reportedly said that there were more than one thousand of these between the years 1935 and 1975.[12] In addition, it is clear that

many people from different layers of society were influenced by and followed Nursi. An entire study could be devoted to the impact and basis of this influence.

Other Muslim scholars have struggled with the question of Islam, reform, renewal, modernity and post-modernity, giving rise to a need for a comparative study of Said Nursi's work alongside such figures as Afghani, Abduh, Qutb, Iqbal and Khomeini. Similarly, themes such as *tajdid* as renewal, and *islah* as reform, *ijtihad* as the independent or original interpretation and *icma* as scholarly consensus could have given rise to a comparative study of Nursi based on a classical understanding. Another possible subject could have been that of the influence of his work on the lives and careers of some of his Turkish students who involved in politics as they struggle to preserve their *Nurcu* identities. Finally, another subject could have been the plurality of the groups of Nursi's followers within the *Nurcu* community, there being more than ten such groups.

The present author has decided that, fascinating as all these and lines of study are, the prior requisite is for a more general study which attempts to set Said Nursi's life and work within the context of his biographical and intellectual setting, tracing the development of his ideas in relation to a broad canvas of subjects but focusing on the idea of an "ideal society". Indeed, the in-depth analyses of Nursi's ideas provide a useful focus for a description of "ideal society".

Justification for the Present Research

A few seminal thoughts have guided the delineation of the structure of the present study. First, many who criticised Nursi's ideas did not share his profound

qualifications in traditional Islamic sciences. His detractors were satisfied to regard him as anti-laicist, reactionary, an enemy of the Republic or an opponent of revolutions. This they did in the early Republican period, without any critical analysis.

Although, in nearly all scholarly work on the recent Turkish Republican period, there is mention of Said Nursi and his movement, so far none has treated the subject in a comprehensive way or given detailed information about his discourse. This study aims to redress this omission. [13]

Mardin writes: "One would have expected that the success of a religious leader like Said Nursi would have aroused the curiosity of his very detractors and that they would have made an attempt to unravel the intricacies of his influence. Such adjectives as reactionary, tricky, and exploitative do not fill this need."[14] Thus Nursi's opponents limited their own ability to enter into a fully informed judgement. On the other hand, his admirers have so far written nothing but hagiographic studies. Therefore, it is the aim of this study to raise as many questions as possible. In doing so, it employs as its main sources the works of Said Nursi himself and those written by his supporters, as well as critical works on Nursi, recent academic criticism, newspapers, and legal materials.

It was not only in Turkey that Nursi failed to receive attention; he also did not get any attention from Western orientalists and academics until recently. Abu Rabi writes: "... the Islamist discourse in (Turkey) the first part of the twentieth century was considered to be a backward one, to say the least, it did not receive any attention from

orientalist or secularist Turkish scholarship. As a consequence, we know more about secularist Turkish thought in post-1924 Turkey than we do about Islamic thought in the same period."[15] With the collapse of the Soviet system and the end of the Cold War, Islamist discourse is more popular than ever. Of course there might be other reasons for this, such as the coming of the "New World Order" and other major strategic international factors. Nursi's discourse is now receiving the attention it deserves. Nevertheless, there is still no study of the theological dimension of Nursi's Islamic thought.[16]

Secondly, the political climate at that time, and the language in which Nursi wrote, a mix of Ottoman Turkish, Arabic and Persian (Nursi knew Ottoman Turkish, Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic and Persian, and some say French and Russian as well), meant that many of his detractors had access only to *pericopes* on which to form a judgement, rather than to the fullness of his thought, which was often expounded in more than one place. Although the new generation of Nurcus have forced the *abis* (elders, or Nursi's lifelong students) to edit the *Risale-i Nur* in order to make it more accessible to the masses, they have resisted all the pressure coming from the younger generation to edit the Turkish version of the *Risale-i Nur* that Nursi himself edited in his lifetime. Besides, Nursi used the classical Islamic scholars' oratorical language, a rhetoric that was elusive, obscure, imagistic and highly metaphorical.[17]

Third, the agenda for Nursi's writings was often set by the contemporary needs of his fellow Muslims; unlike the rest of his contemporaries, however, Nursi believed there was a need to emphasise and strengthen the faith. In addition, it is difficult to place his writings within a single discipline. With the exception of *Isharat al-I'jaz* (The Signs

of Miraculousness), they have to be considered as a subjective commentary bearing their own particular characteristics, whether in regard to method, contents, composition or style. Rather than being expounded verse by verse, they are mostly related to the truths of belief and its fundamentals. Therefore, Nursi's works fall for the most part within the bounds of the science of *kalam*.[18] Nevertheless, they have their own style of composition peculiar to themselves.

Fourth, Nursi's focus was more on the interplay of ideas and sequential thought than on the *minutiae* of public polity or the implementation of *Shari'a*. Finally, Nursi was always said to be the unique scholar of Islam for his times. Thus his thought demands critical appraisal and a mature synthesis, rather than to be adopted wholesale without critical analysis. In attempting this, I have necessarily omitted many important facts through lack of space.

The methodology of listing topics from Nursi's corpus and not treating them *seriatim* was rejected, as it would have broken with the need to see his corpus against the canvas of his life and activity. Similarly, although his book *The Words*[19] could be held to constitute an agenda for further research, and thus could have provided a structure for the whole study, this would have militated against treating the influence of his practical involvements, which shaped the areas about which he wrote. Instead, an essentially biographical approach has been adopted which combines an analysis of his life-engagements with the writings which were prompted thereby.

The method used in this study comprises descriptive, text-based, source-critical analyses of Nursi's writings. Throughout, I have focused on a particular subject and

isolating systematically the most important information so as to interrelate it with the main subject in hand.

The present study, then, seeks to undertake a critical, text-based analysis rather than entering a judgement on the man or his scholarship. It would be wholly inappropriate for the present author to perform such a task, which is essentially the function of the Muslim community as a whole. Nursi's contribution to the life of Muslim society represents his personal struggle to articulate truth, an articulation which he offered for the mature reflection and judgement of his co-religionists. In the light of this, Nursi's own writings form the major source for this study and are given priority of place both sequentially, as the basis for the short sections used throughout, and methodologically, as the copious quotations and references indicate. As far as possible, Said Nursi has been allowed to express his own ideas in his own way, through his *ipsissima verba*. The present author can vouch for the complexity and terseness of Nursi's language; accordingly, this study attempts to "translate" Said Nursi's corpus into English. Its main objective is to read Nursi's work as a modern Muslim theological text, which grapples with historical and philosophical problems, and which attempts to construct a Muslim identity in order to form an "ideal society".[20]

Supportive documentation is appended to this study in the form of appendices. The first is a full bibliography of Nursi's works which provides written and publication dates for his treatises, together with bibliographic contextualisation in two tables. The second appendix provides a unique record of Ph.D., MA, and Bachelor's degrees, articles and published works on Nursi in several languages among the available

sources, together with the publishers and distributors of Nursian studies. The second appendix in particular has been adopted from the *Risale-i Nur* CD,[21] the new thesis and later publications having been combined with the new symposia contents. However, we have found it important not to draw attention away from the substantial core of the text, and therefore have recorded these appendices on a floppy disk.[22] We believe that this will prove a helpful resource for Nursian scholars. Of course, the disk may need to be upgraded soon after this study.

A Note on Sources

First, for background information, I started reading books and articles on philosophy and sociology, on social psychology, and on the ideal society, utopia and social change, obtained mainly from the University Library and electronic libraries via the internet. It is sociological sources that have been made the most use of for background. Socio-theology, religio-psychology, social psychology, the utopian tradition and socio-politics have been traced and critical analyses made. In Chapter 1, of course the Qur'an and Qur'anic exegesis constituted the major source material. A selection of Qur'anic commentaries (particularly modern interpretations) has been consulted. This applies not only to the question of the 'ideal society' and the *iman*/Islam distinction, but also to that between *ilm* and knowledge. In the context of the latter chapters, secondary sources such as the works of Muslim modernists (e.g. Fazlur Rahman, Shariati) have also been used. In analysing Islamic ideas about the ideal society I have taken Nasr, Arjomand, Abu Rabi, Cragg, Robinson, Esposito and Turner as my other secondary sources. This reading list is included in the bibliography at the end of this thesis. These books have provided me with a background to an understanding of the subject in hand, a historical contextualisation,

and methodologies for investigating the issue. This has shown how untouched the issue is in the Islamic world.

For Chapter 2, all the available biographical sources have been studied, but the most academic ones have been those chiefly used (especially Mardin, Mermer, Vahide and Abu Rabi). This chapter is not simply a rehearsal of existing material, but rather a fresh juxtaposing of facts which aims to provide a new view of a well-explored area of research. Other primary source materials have been used, as have the works of Nursi's detractors who wrote about or against him (e.g. Ozek, Golpinarli).

In Chapter 3, Nursi's works have been critically analysed drawing upon his *ipsissima verba*. But the main four books of his collection which are available in English, the Words, the Letters, the Flashes, and the Rays, have also been utilised. All the available secondary sources, and panel and symposia articles, have been studied. Mardin was again a point of reference, together with Turner, Leaman and Rahman.

In Chapter 4, wherever needed sociological and socio-political sources have been applied to draw the socio-theological conclusions (e.g. Fromm, Gellner, Giddens). Again, I have availed myself of the standard secondary works of Mardin, Vahide and Yavuz. Nursi's own works have also been critically analysed.

For Chapter 5, scientific and religio-scientific sources have been used to derive the necessary information to make my conclusion regarding science and religion connect with sociological facts. Turner, Abu-Rabi, Acikgenc, Nasr, Rosenthal, Robinson, Stenberg and Sardar have been the main secondary sources.

Throughout the research, newspaper articles (from 1935 to 1960 and from 1960 to the present), court defences and expert reports on *Nurculuk* have been utilised and analysed. Source-critical examinations have been scrutinised.

By far the most important "search mechanism", however, as well as means of learning, has been provided by the vast range of Nursi's writings. Some of these were available in the University Library (there is a CD of all Nursi's writings available in the main library, albeit an old version), and all have been provided for me by the Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture.

It should be mentioned also that all Nursi's writings are available via the internet in more than one language. In addition, a number of internet libraries have been used in this study, especially in the early stages. These, together with the researcher's earlier education in the School of Modern Thought, have provided the researcher with the philosophical reading requisite for the subject in hand.

Among the internet libraries which have been used in the formation of this study are the following:

- The Internet Public Library: http://www.ipl.org/ (In particular the link http://www.ipl.org/div/books/ is very useful for a keyword search.)
- The Library of Congress: http://www.loc.gov/
- A Sociology Timeline From 1600: http://www.ac.wwu.edu/~stephan /timeline.html

- The On-Line Books Page: http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/
- Net Library: http://www.netlibrary.com/
- Islamic On-Line Books By Subject: http://www.wponline.org/vil/Books/

Among the websites used in the early stages of this study to gather information about Nursi and Nursian studies are the following (the key phrase "Said Nursi" elicits more than 7,700 search results):

- http://www.nesil.com.tr/
- http://www.bediuzzaman.org/
- http://www.risaleinur.com/
- http://www.saidnursi.com/
- http://www.yeniasya.org.tr/html/kulliyat.html

These are the official and most-visited Nursian websites hosted by Nursi's admirers. They include a vast range of information, such as Nursi's biography, his collection of writings and symposia, and more than one language is represented.

Several distributors and publishing houses publish Nursi's so-called *Risale-i Nur* (the Epistle of Light) in different formats. In this study, we have preferred the Nesil Basim Yayin (Nesil Printing and Publishing House) edition, a two-volume Turkish edition which includes all the writings of Nursi. The main part of Nursi's writings, as mentioned above, have been translated into several languages. The English edition published by Sozler Nesriyat, containing the main parts of the collection, is the edition mainly used in this study. The Kaynak English edition, however, has also been

used. When the translation is presented a reference is given to the page number of the two-volume Nesil edition. Since Nursi's works number more than forty, while referring to the Nesil edition the book chapters are cited.

NOTES

[1] See Serif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 146.

[2] See Ali Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey" (Doctor of Philosophy, University of Durham, 1985), 508.

[3] See Camilla Trud Nereid, *In the Light of Said Nursi: Turkish Nationalism and the Religious Alternative* (London: C. Hurst & Co (Publishers) Ltd, 1997), 104.

[4] C.P. Turner, "The Rise of Twelver Shi'ite Externalism in Safawid Iran and Its Consolidation under Allama Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (1037/1627-1110/1699)" (Doctor of Philosophy, The University of Durham, 1989), XI.

[5] See for the history and "The Political Form: Problematics of Religion and State" in Hasan Askari, *Society and State in Islam* (New Delhi: 1978), 75-120.

[6] Colin Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran* (Curzon Press, 2000), 43-44. Also see and compare with Ahmed Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 301-04.

[7] See for this "Part IV" in M.M Sharif, ed., *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, 2 vols. (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999).

[8] See chapter 48 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Sadr Al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra)," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999). It is a matter of interest we should mention here that it is not a matter of disregard Mulla Sadra's discourse do not find a place in the following part of this chapter; it is because of that he is almost completely unknown outside Persia, even in other Muslim countries. See for this Nasr, "Sadr Al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra)," 933.

[9] See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Fakhr Al-Din Razi," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 642-56.

[10] See and compare with Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 45.

[11] See Cyriac K Pullapilly, *Islam in the Contemporary World* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Cross Roads Books, 1980), 16-17.

[12] See Bekir Berk, *Nurculuk Davasi(the Trials of Nursi-ism)* (Istanbul: Yeni Asya Yayinlari, 1975), XIX.

[13] See and compare with Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", 1.

[14] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 2.

[15] Ibrahim Abu-Rabi, ed., *Islam at the Crossroads: On the Life and Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Albany: Suny Press, 2003), XI.

[16] See and compare with Ibid.

[17] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 163.

[18] See Niyazi Beki, *Kur'an Ilimleri Ve Tefsir Acisindan Bediuzzaman Said Nursi'nin Eserleri* (Istanbul: Timas Yayinlari). Also see Simsek being of the same opinion in Ümit Simsek, "The Style of Reflective Thought in the Risale-i Nur," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1995), 28.

[19] Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Words*, trans. Sukran Vahide (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1992).

[20] See and compare with Abu-Rabi, ed., *Islam at the Crossroads: On the Life and Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, IX.

[21] Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *Risale-i Nur 1.0 Cd*, 1.0 ed. (Istanbul: Yeni Nesil, 2000).

[22] Hasan Horkuc, *Risale-i Nur Study Guide*, 1 ed. (2004).

PART I

Chapter I THE CONCEPT OF 'IDEAL SOCIETY'

Oscar Wilde wrote: "A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the country at which humanity is always landing."[1]

The subject of this chapter is 'ideal society' which is equated with 'utopia' in the West and political power in the East. The chapter will explore the differences between Nursi's 'gradualist', 'progressive' approach and his contemporaries' mostly 'revolutionary' approach to generating such a society, with the aim of clarifying the main objective of this thesis.

Since the thesis is concerned with Nursi's ideals for a society, rather than an objective study of the concept of an ideal society throughout history or philosophy, it will draw on accounts of the conception of an ideal society – reform and renewal – given by classical and modern thinkers throughout the Islamic world. However, the accounts of an ideal society among the pioneers of classical and modern scholars will be drawn upon briefly, not extensively. A short chapter of this kind cannot hope to do full justice to such a complex and many-sided subject as an ideal society, yet it is worth pointing out the scope of recent research. The chapter that follows may be open to criticism for omissions and silences, and experts in the field will appreciate how much is left unmentioned, but we find the small scale of the map a serviceable introduction to the business in hand. Only the major figures of their times are included, and their socio-political and socio-theological aspects will be concentrated on for the sake of brevity. The section on the Islamic world in modern times will also address gradualism versus revolutionarism and the debate on Islam as imposed from top or bottom. Besides this we will consider and address the issue of social change in

the Islamic world, particularly in the contemporary world, so that we can draw a distinct line between Nursi's gradualism and the rest's politico-religious revolutionarism.

Put simply – although also questionably and subjectively – an ideal society is one where there is liberty, justice, kindness, order and peace. It could be also defined in the utopic sense that it is nowhere (*outopia*) and it is also somewhere good (*eutopia*).[2] It is a world to live in that cannot be but where one fervently wishes to be. In Thomas Moore's *Utopia* it was somewhere which existed in the imagination and accordingly futile to seek out, as stated by Kumar, but which nevertheless existed tantalizingly on the edge of possibility.[3] Throughout history an ideal society has been and still is a long distant dream of mankind. Having said that, virtually all societies have some myth or memory of an ideal (utopian, anti-utopian) society in which individuals live in a state of perfect happiness and fulfilment and where there is harmony between man, society and nature.[4] That is to say, an ideal society, whether by philosophers, prophets, conquerors or lawmakers, has always been imagined and sought and is still being imagined, I believe, and will continue to be through to the very end of time. Since all philosophies, religions, and human beings have a different type of ideal society in their minds, paradise may be the utopia or ideal society in the mind of a religious man. Plato's *Republic* was the ideal city for the Greek philosophers. The idea of the ideal society has sometimes been framed as in the philosophical writings of Plato's *Republic*, which has influenced Cicero's *De Republica*, Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, and also certain religious writings such as St. Augustine's *City of God*, *The* Jean Isolah's *Sacred City* and Al Farabi's *Ara Ahl al-Madina al- Fadila* (*The Model City*), and the Shi'ites' conception of the Society of Universal Justice which will come into being' at the end

of time: all offer representations of an ideal society. Besides, sometimes, it is present in the structure of religions regardless of how their adherents implement their faith in their daily lives. Such basic values as love, respect, tolerance, forgiveness, mercy, human rights, peace, brotherhood and freedom are all exalted by religion. Most of these values are accorded the highest importance in the messages brought by Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, as well as in the messages of Buddha, Zarathustra, Lao-Tzu, Confucius the Hindu prophets or reformers, and the scholars or proponents of all the world religions – including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism – such as Luther, Calvin, al Ghazali, and Jamal al Din al Afghani. It is a fact that human beings have always dreamed of an ideal society.

To begin with, in order to be sure of certain technical details in our discussion of the idea of an ideal society, we must ask one or two central questions. Is a perfect society at all attainable in an imperfect world? While the question may never be answered definitively, it will not be for lack of trying to achieve an ideal society. And the answer, as much as we are concerned, is attached to reform and renewal in society to maintain such a thing.

It is therefore necessary to take a closer look at the history of those doctrines. This chapter does not look at the roots of the history of the concept of an ideal society, but at the ideas of reform and renewal that played an important part in its development in the Islamic world, and at the elements that make up today's dream of an Islamic ideal society (ummah).

The definitions what we are going to use are very much centred on the West and particularly the Islamic World. They may not apply to other parts of the world very well. They also tend to represent political and social reform and revivalism of the elite in society. In practical terms, they have something to do with the amount of

sources that survive. In this research, I shall try to analyse an Islamic scholar's approach to a good society of Islam, whose discourse defines the West as being primarily European and the East as being the Islamic world.

A closer look at the concept of an ideal society in the West will help us to understand the main aim of this chapter. Division one of the chapter provides an overview of the origins of the idea of an ideal (utopian, anti-utopian) society and of the general themes that recur in descriptions of ideal societies in philosophy, and then provides an overview of the Judaeo-Christian world. Finally the concept of an ideal society will be examined throughout the modern world. The second part of the chapter, after looking at the theory of the ideal society in Islam, will provide a general survey of those who, by their efforts to build, develop or reconstruct an ideal society, have a significant place in Islamic history.

1.1 THE WEST

George Orwell wrote of "the dream of a just society which seems to haunt the human imagination ineradicably and in all ages, whether it is called the Kingdom of Heaven or the classless society, or whether it is thought of as a Golden Age which once existed in the past and from which we have degenerated."[5]

While considering the West, we will equate the idea of an ideal society with utopian thought. Without going into deep analysis, in the West it has been considered that throughout history since the ancient era humankind has made 'gradual progress' through to a higher stage as a result of science and civilisation and the ideas of equality, freedom, and independence. Arguably, gradually people are making their way to perfection.[6] Progress is not continuous, and a crystallised product; in fact, is an unfinished human condition.[7] It cannot be said that every society passes from lower to higher stages.[8] However, major opinion in the West is as Lasch states, "The Western

world found it easy to imagine history as a "process generally moving upwards by a series of majestic stages"".[9] In the development of modern civil society, humankind has passed beyond the primitive form of individual life[10] and as a result of different needs of social life, society has evolved towards perfection.[11] According to Dunbar, "Every effort, beyond what is merely animal, has reference to a community..."[12] Every society has participated in this unilinear process of social evolution, although they have progressed differently.[13] Modern civil society has evolved through a process of a very subjective better-ness. The evolution we talk about here is a historical, social and cultural evolution – not a biological one. No society can remain untouched by this process.[14] There is a relationship between evolution in this sense and progress which may at the end lead to "The True and Only Heaven".[15] There are similarity and difference between the two. The difference, according to Hobhouse, is that evolution means any sort of growth, while social progress is the the growth of social life in respect of those qualities to which human beings attach or can rationally attach value. Hobhouse also states that "the fact that a thing is evolving is no proof that it is good, the fact that society has evolved is no proof that it has progressed."[16] The characteristic modern state, with all its imperfections, exhibits the most complete yet achieved on the large scale of social evolution.[17] However, the idea of progress towards an ideal society has been seen by some as "a secular religion" or that it "represents a secularised version of the Christian belief in providence".[18] In short, it could be said that the Western Enlightenment idea of gradual progress combined with social evolution is a late contextualisation of the idea of an ideal society or utopia.

One thing I should mention here is that all utopian or anti-utopian concepts of an ideal society grow out of a time and place in response to a need. It is now worth glancing at the idea of ideal society throughout Western history.[19]

Among the Classical philosophers, Plato's *Republic* is the one which first comes to mind as a representation of the conception of an ideal society or state. As said above, Plato may be regarded as the "doyen" or leader of a goodly band of followers; for in the Republic is to be found the original of Cicero's *De Republica*, St. Augustine's *City of God*, the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More, al Farabi's *Ara Ahl al-Madina al-Fadila* (The Model City), and numerous other descriptions of imagined ideal societies. Plato's model was based on the "just" state. Under the protection of the state, society is divided into classes because men are unequal by nature. In this society education should sift individuals, discovering what they are for, and supplying a method of assigning each to the work in life for which his nature fits him, so that each fulfils his own role and never transgresses the order and unity of the whole. For Plato, life was a cave and needed to be enlightened by a well-educated elite.[20]

It was this tradition that was followed by some political philosophers and theorists of later years, such as Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. They established some constitutional propositions about the relationship between the individual, society and the state and from these they derived some principles for creating a state that would best serve the idea of a natural order of society or an ideal society. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1662) saw a need for the state to exercise control for the welfare of all.[21] He wanted a tightly ordered commonwealth (not a tyranny), ruled by law and order. John Locke's (1632-1704) psychology and epistemology lie behind his conception of society: government should try to mould behaviour with pleasure and pain by means of manipulating the environment, and using education to make better people. Man's natural state was one of harmony with each other and equality. But without a government there are "inconveniences", such as an absence of law and judges. People therefore make a contract with government to protect their rights.[22] Voltaire (1694-

1778) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) are also worth mentioning here. Rousseau wanted to make people good. For Rousseau the 'Social Contract' was the basic law of society. Liberty is obedience to the law you have accepted, and equality means all are equally dependent on society and not on any other individual. Rousseau wanted civil liberty and equality in society to be granted by the state.[23]

At the end of the Middle Ages intellectual discussions arose about what a monarch should be or do for the prosperity of society. In the intellectual field great writers like Nicolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) and Thomas More (1478-1537) lived in this period. Machiavelli in his masterpiece *The Prince* deals with the eternal problems between the ruled and their rulers.[24] Also from this period another masterpiece, Thomas More's *Utopia*, addressed the subject of society, state, and politics. Designedly fantastic in suggestion of detail, and beneath the veil of an ideal communism, *"Utopia"*[25] is the work of a scholar who had read Plato's *"Republic"*, Unlike Plato's ideal society', More's Utopia is an entirely human construction inhabited by ordinary individuals rather than by people who are exceptionally blessed or virtuous'. He is said to have brought the ideal society out of the realm of the hereafter into the realm of earthly possibility. However in its Greek roots, Utopia still means both "good place" and "no place."

Following Plato's prototype there is a huge tradition of writing describing an ideal society. 'Included in this tradition are Tommaso Campenalla's *City of the Sun .(1623),* Francis Bacon's scientific utopia *New Atlantis (1627),* Edward Bellamy's state-socialist utopia *Looking Backward (1888),* William Morris's alternative vision of socialism, *News from Nowhere (1890),* H. G. Wells's *A Modern Utopia (1905).* Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels (1726),* Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe (1719),*

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World (1932)* and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* might be added to the list.

On the other hand, starting from the earliest point in history, religion reconciles opposites that seem to be mutually exclusive, such as religion–science, this world–the next world, order–disorder and spirit–body. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, religion means, "Belief in or sensing of some superhuman controlling power or powers, entitled to obedience, reverence, and worship, or in a system defining a code of living, esp. as a means to achieve spiritual or material improvement; acceptance of such belief as a standard of spiritual and practical life; the expression of this in worship etc."[26] That is to say, religion comprehends various aspects of human life, such as society's way of life, political and economical heritage. Since the main theme of this chapter is to draw attention to the concept of an ideal society found in Nursi', whose life and thought system were very religious, the effects and significance of religion in social life therefore will be left to the following chapters. However, it is necessary to point out a few more points here, one of which Dr Maslow draws attention to in the thirty-fifth volume of his "*Kappa Delta Pi Lecture Series*" when he declares that the revelations of those dissenting from the followers of those prophets who claimed direct revelation from God, and from the nineteenth-century scientists who denied not only direct revelation but God himself, were "peak-experiences" which are characteristic not only of specially ordained emissaries of God but of mankind in general. Dr Maslow considers these revelations valid psychological events worthy of scientific, rather than metaphysical, study, and keys to a better understanding of a peculiarly "human" aspect of man's existence.[27] David Hume, on the other hand, in his famous "*Natural History of Religion*"[28], compares various aspects of polytheism and monotheism to show that neither is

superior to the other. Both contain points of absurdity. From this he concludes that we should suspend belief on the entire subject.[29] He writes, "It appears to me, that, if we consider the improvement of human society, from rude beginnings to a state of greater perfection, polytheism or idolatry was, and necessarily must have been, the first and most ancient religion of mankind."[30]

Some of the verses of Holy Scripture teach social values and general ethics, which contain specific guidance for building a peaceful, prosperous and just society, whether on a utopian or anti-utopian model. According to these precepts, individuals have responsibilities beyond their private lives to contribute to the public good. Rulers and governments are likewise admonished to use their office and authority to promote justice and common welfare in accordance with Divine Law. Public authority is not to be taken lightly; the scriptures testify to God's providential hand, which controls the destinies of nations and brings them to judgement according to their ways.[31] Some of the verses state that the chief concern of any government should be the welfare of its citizens – in other words, the prosperity and wealth of the society.

> Therefore the ruler, and hence the government, should be a servant to the people, putting their concerns and needs ahead of his own. He is called the Father and Mother of the People in the Chinese tradition and a Shepherd in the Judaeo-Christian and Muslim traditions; titles which express the principle that the ruler should give the people his highest consideration. He should, whenever possible, lighten the people's burdens and abide by the will of the majority. He should give special consideration to the poor and destitute and provide them sufficient means of support. Such a government will be respected by the people, who then will easily submit to its rule.[32]

Having pointed out that in the Judaeo-Christian tradition the ideal society is to be realised in the future, at the consummation of history, with the establishment of 'the 'Kingdom of Heaven' following the resurrection and the day of judgement. In Christianity, at first it may seem that there is a contradiction between religion and the

idea of a utopia or ideal society. The outcome of religion is totally an other-worldly concern; whereas the interest of the concept of an ideal society is entirely something relating to this world. In this regard Jesus' saying, "My Kingdom is not of this world" is worth mentioning here. In this sense, paradise lies ahead of us, and in an imperfect world a perfect society's attainability is not necessary, even though Christian history includes a tradition of striving for it. The Golden Age or the Garden of Eden is something to explain the existence of evil and the necessity of living with it. Paradise is a hope of perfection and eternity to come. But for some there was a contrary view from the very beginning of Christianity. Jesus's example of God-like human perfection has sustained the idea of human perfection and the concept of an ideal society.[33] For Jews the perfect state would be on earth, for according to the Covenant the rewards and punishments are to be experienced not in heaven or hell but here, with Jehovah's coming down and dwelling among people.[34]

It is worth noting that it is impossible to deal with philosophical or religious ideas, opinions, historical events and books apart from the time in which they were produced. In other words, to appreciate their real significance it is necessary to view events in relation to their historical causes, and in their actual sequence.

Having said that, in the medieval era, Saint Augustine defines the ideal society as a "City of God" that is bound by belief, love and Christ's forgiveness . Because of the original sin of Adam, humans are naturally sinful. By asking God for forgiveness, humans can be absolved of their sins. It was believed that this society would be created on earth and would include citizens of all nations, regardless of their languages, manners, laws and institutions. The citizens of this society would be drawn from the beginning of human time. Thus, the ideal society would not be realised until the final judgement in which God will judge the living and the dead. In doing so, two

kingdoms/societies would be created: one belonging to Christ' and the other to the devil'. Both societies would last for eternity. Christ's society would be without sin, while the devil's endured constant misery.[35] In the early 16th century, at the beginning of the early modern era, intellectuals became involved in the 'Reformation'. Martin Luther (1483–1546) and John Calvin (1509–64) began to challenge Rome's Catholic Church. Luther's main concern was with personal salvation. The Lutheran Reformation gave very great respect to the state. In effect Lutheranism allowed a separate morality for individuals and the state.[37] Most of Calvin's thought is implicit in Luther, but Calvin was more rigorous.[38] He conceived of the doctrine of predestination to salvation or damnation. The saved or the elect were a major part of his thought.[39] In Calvin's ideal society the state was a means of repression for carrying out the teachings of the Scripture. In other words, the authority possessed by kings and governors over all things upon earth was not a product of the perverseness of men, but of the providence and holy ordinance of God, who was pleased to regulate human affairs in this manner. Calvin' was concerned with obedience to God and Scripture, and hence to the state. Thus the state was a mystification of an ideal society or 'Lost Eden' in the form of state. If, however, state rule conflicted with Scripture, it was incumbent upon the saints to resist. The saints also had an active role in the new forms of government.[40] With Calvinism came the idea that politics was work, and required active citizens to participate and to be fully productive and moral.[41]

Later on the 'Scientific Revolution' reached its high point at the end of the 17th century with the work of Newton. It was the work of scientists from many different countries (Italy, Germany, Denmark, Holland, Poland, England, and France). The early modern era was said to be the time of the scientific revolution. The changing of the scientific world-view and the acceptance of science as a major source

of knowledge was the single most characteristic change that led to the modern world and today's modern society. With the scientific revolution the mould of thinking began to break, which led to a modern concept of an ideal (utopian or anti-utopian) society.[42] By the 17th century modern ideas had affected all aspects of social life. The scientific world-view had a lasting effect on the relationship between religion, the state, science, and daily social life, and consequently on the concept of an ideal society. The 'Enlightenment', then, was a cultural movement, which applied the insights of the 'scientific revolution' to the wider world: to politics, to religion, and to art. The 'scientific 'revolution involved some really deep thinking about the nature of the universe as well. Although it was important, there were probably no more than a few hundred people in all Europe at that time who understood what was happening. The 'Enlightenment' can be thought of as a process of making the findings of the 'scientific revolution' much more widely available. The 'Enlightenment' took place in the 18th century and was dominated by France, which was also by far the most powerful state of the period. One useful way of thinking about the 'Enlightenment' is as a project to remake society in accordance with the values of reason, tolerance and natural law, or, in other words, to realise the idea of an 'ideal society'.[43] The greatest change in modern Western society was in how we lved compared to how people lived in the past in terms of material culture. '"Material culture'" refers to how we work, what we eat, what we wear, and where we live. All these aspects of our lives are part of the economy. Thinking in these terms, the first great transformation in human history was the 'agricultural revolution' of the Neolithic period (it occurred in a number of different places around 8000–4000 years ago). That was when humans stopped "collecting" food by gathering and hunting, and began "producing" it by agriculture and animal husbandry. In this regard the second great transformation was

the 'Industrial Revolution' of the 18th and 19th centuries, which affected all manner of human relations.[44]

In the modern era as a consequence of these developments, the development of a concept of an ideal society changed and took a historical and scientific form with faith in reason rather than God. The new was better than the old, the future would be closer to perfection than the past, for history was the record of growth, and the progressive fulfilment of humanity was the new vision and philosophy of the time. It was thought that a hidden plan of a perfect society was in the process or realisation. Leibniz, Kant, Hegel and Marx might be mentioned here in this regard. Saint-Simon's and Comte's 'Positive Philosophy' was similarly optimistic, as seen in the following declaration of Saint-Simon: "The Golden Age of the human race is not behind us but before us; it lies in the perfection of social order. Our ancestors never saw it; our children will one day arrive there; it is for us to clear the way."[45] As Kumar says, "The Christian consummation in the millennium or the heavenly city was now turned into the advent of a classless communist society or the reign of the positivist religion of humanity."[46] For the 19th century theorists it became self-evident that the perfection of society was at the point of realisation. History had prepared the way with science and socialism. For some the socialist concept derived its effectiveness from this.[47]

So far our theme in this section has been the idea of an ideal society throughout Western history. We have done this in the light of the conceptions of the doyens of their times. According to a contemporary social theorists, Mr. Fukuyama, "'the history of modern society ended with the end of the Cold War the collapse of the Soviet Union. Whether or not this is the case'', it is clear that the spiritual, metaphysical and material problems of modern society are still getting more serious day by day.[48] More human beings were killed in the wars of the 20th century than in

the previous twenty centuries of war. But the fear of death[49] – indeed universal in the human condition – is still there and keeps alive the idea of an 'ideal society' for'' the coming generations.

1.2 THE ISLAMIC WORLD

This section aims to address the concept of an 'ideal society' (ummah) throughout the Islamic World from its beginnings in the 7th century to the very early days of the 21st century'', while also providing a concise survey of social reform, and Islamic revivalism up to now. However, it is impossible in a study like the one in hand to trace all the various concepts and movements which the Muslim world has undergone throughout its past, and only a historical selection can be made for the purpose of illustration. But it is important to keep in mind the differences between the *Shi'a*, the *Khawarij* and the *Sunnite*; the views of the legalists and the Sufis; the attitude of the rationalists and the traditionalists; and the opinions of the reformists and the conservatives.[50]

The first part of this section provides an overview of Islam as a religion and an ideology, which have fundamental views on humankind, society and history. Some of its teachings are applied to the collective aspects of human life and how Islam regulates various aspects of human interaction to create the 'ideal society' for this life and the hereafter. The second part lays down a general survey of externalists and internalists[51] –alternatively one may use the terms exoteric and the esoteric – in order to show how Nursi's approach to attain such a society was different from that of his contemporaries. The summary of how the idea of an ideal society was implemented in practice throughout Islamic history is far beyond the scope of this study. Since it is clear that Islam has been very familiar with utopianism from the very beginning of its history, it is not our intention, in this section, either to discuss the Islamic teachings

about an ideal society or to discuss whether any of the attempt to implement such a society succeeded or not. Instead we aim simply to convey some idea of the concept of an ideal society in Islam and to make some general observations. Finally, the chapter will address politically oriented externalist ideas of social reform and faith-based internalist ideas of moral reform in order to clarify Nursi's different approach to social change.

> "Most surely man is in loss, except those who believe and do good, and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience." (Qur'an, [103: 2-3]).

For Islamic discourses Islam is a universal order, an integral religion of harmony and a unique system, which is able to harmonise the physical with the metaphysical, the rational with the spiritual. In its belief system all dimensions of man's earthly life have particular places of their own within the matrix of Islam in such a way that each can perform its own function within the comprehensiveness of Islam and enable man to be at peace with himself, his community and nature and ultimately gain happiness in both this world and the next. According to Al-Turabi, Islam is a comprehensive, integrated way of life that comprehends all the various aspects of life.[52]

> Today I have perfected your system of belief and made full my favours bestowed upon you and chosen al-Islam as the creed for you. (Qur'an, 5: 3)

That is to say, for some Islam is not merely a 'religion' but an elaborate 'social order', which it is the central aim of Islam to establish''.[53] However it is a point of interest that the Qur'an does not speak about an ideal society. It speaks of a middle or median society.[54]

> Thus We have appointed you a middle nation, that you may be witnesses upon mankind. (Qur'an, 2:143)

But we will continue using the term 'ideal society' because it signifies the middle society and serves the aim of illustration. I equate the Qur'anic middle society with the 'ideal society'. One could say that it is a Qur'anic aim to bring into being an ideal community that surrenders itself to God. The community the Qur'an calls the median community is squarely charged as God's vicegerent with the mission of 'creating a moral social order on earth The Qur'an describes this mission as a '"trust"'.[55]

> We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it. (Qur'an 33.72)

Firstly, Islam requires the individual Muslim to surrender himself to God.[56] According to the Qur'an, humankind is a vicegerent of God on earth (Qur'an 2.30) but whenever there is more than one human being there is a relationship between them (Qur'an 58.7). Therefore the society that is constituted of such individuals ought to be revived constantly. One of the central concepts in Islam is the ummah, the community of the believers.[57] The ummah is the Islamic ideal[58] and subject to the *shari'a*, which means in short, social, political, legal and economic concepts and systems regulating daily Muslim life. ''Individual conscience and the community are the twin pillars of the ummah, and cannot be separated.[59] However which of the two should be the first to reform in order to realise an ideal society has been the subject of much discussion.[60] Rahman writes, "There is no doubt that the Qur'an wanted Muslims to establish a political order on earth for the sake of creating an egalitarian and just moral-social order."[61]

> Allah has promised the righteously striving believers to appoint them as His deputies on earth, as He had appointed those who lived before. He will make the religion that He has chosen for them to stand supreme. He will replace their fear with peace and security. They will worship their Lord without fear and will not submit to anyone other than Him and will associate nothing with His worship and obedience. (Qur'an 24:55)

The so-called externalists approached the issue mainly according to the exoteric aspect of the Islamic revelation, adhering to the Shari'a and seeking reform through the political institutions of the masses, so that achieving the aim of an ideal ummah would be possible.[62] This has given rise to the politically oriented Islamic understanding, which has found followers among the *ulama* of the Ottomans, and Shi'i Safavids, and in the contemporary world among the followers of the Muslim Brotherhood, Necmettin Erbakans' National Outlook (*Milli Gorus*) and the mullahs of Khomeini's Iran and represented itself in the so-called 'Islamic states'. Internalists, on the other hand, tackled the issue through the self-renewing of individuals and faith-seeking revolutions, thus emulating the first period of the Prophet Muhammad's Meccan life.[63] Throughout history, the best example of this category is without doubt the Sufists – among whom are al-Jilani, and Sirhindi – although there are individuals who had no direct connection to any Sufi orders, whom we can call the non-Sufi brotherhood, affiliated Sufis or middle-roaders;[65]such as Ghazali, Mulla Sadra[66], Fakhr al-Din Razi.[67] We would claim that Nursi is among these.[68] In this second, internalist, category of revivalism, it was believed that the revival of Islamic tradition should be from within in order to return to the heart of the Islamic tradition to provide answers and to revive the Islamic world as a spiritual reality.[69]

According to Nasr,

> Their theatre of action has been not mass meetings or political gatherings but the hearts and minds of individuals gathered in small circles.... To this group it is Islamic metaphysics which provides an answer to problems posed by such modern ideologies and isms as rationalism, humanism, materialism, evolutionism, psychologism and the like. For them the revival of the Islamic world must come with the revival of the Muslims themselves... This group believe in inner revival (tajdid) which is a traditional Islamic concept and not external reform (islah). The model for this group is an al Ghazali, Abd al Qadir al Jilani, or Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi... This group acts without acting in the sense that its function is more that of knowledge and presence than action but it is from this group that there has flowed and continues to flow some of the most profound and religiously significant Islamic responses to the modern world.[70]

However, it cannot be said that either internalists or externalists remain unaffected by the ideas of the other.[71] At different times both types of proponents of Islam have been misidentified or misinterpreted, or their theories practised incorrectly. For example, Qutb became viewed as an externalist, as were Khomeini and Erbakan. Those considered to be externalists by some can be called internalists by others. The difference between the two approaches to Islam in some degree corresponds to the difference between the Prophet Muhammad's Meccan and Medinan periods. It is widely known that a high proportion of the Qur'anic verses revealed in Mecca were concerned with the fundamentals of belief, while the emphases of the verses in Medina chiefly relate to the regulations governing a Muslim's life. It could be said that *islam* was institutionalised as Islam in Medina.[72] However, as Turner states, "It is an oversimplification to suggest that the Meccan verses represent *iman* and the Medina verses Islam, for among the predominantly legalistic verses revealed in Medina one still encounters passages with a markedly Meccan tenor, replete with expositions of the Divine Names and Attributes, examples of God's workings in the cosmos, and divine imperatives to deliberate, acquire knowledge and belief."[73] But one thing is for sure: *islam* found its place, acceptance and state structure, and become Islam in Medina.[74] Maybe this is the reason why the Medinan period of the Prophet's life and its environment of communal submission

has found the great number of adherents among Muslims and appealed to the imagination of the masses. In this tradition, their idea of reform begins with the outward which wishes always to reform the world but never man himself.[75] As Rahman states,

> The primary concern of all these movements was with the socio-moral reconstruction and reform of society. Although it would be a bold denial of facts to say that any of these movements gave up or even underplayed the concept of the afterlife, yet it is significant to note that the emphasis had shifted more towards the positive issues of society, whether mainly in political or spiritual terms..All of these movements were politically active and most of them resorted to jihad to realise their ideals.[76]

At this point it is necessary to offer a concise history of externalist and internalist tradition throughout Islamic history.

1.2.1 THE CLASSICAL PERIOD THROUGH THE 6TH TO 14TH CENTURY

A century after the Prophet's death, a need for reform and for a restoration of faith in community, to establish the original purity of the early times of the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs[77], or the dream of "the Golden Age" or the ideal society (ummah), was widely discussed in the Islamic world.[78] All scholars have underlined the rift between the ideal concept and the political reality.[79] In one of the available sources it has been stated,

> The idea of an ideal Islamic state in the political history of Islam has been used as a key element in the critique of the given state of affairs in any one society. The ideal Islamic state, however, is as much of a mystification as that of the ideal community, the umma. This mystification was apparent during the period of the Caliphate of Medina up until the rule of the fourth Caliph Ali. This period, known as the golden or true Islamic era...[80]

Islamic history is replete with attempts by religious persons to actually take over political power and govern society to establish the ideal society or recall "the Golden Age" according to their interpretation of Divine Law (*Shari'a*). In this concern, a brief survey of politico-religious revivalist tradition and the writings of Islamic scholars is worthwhile, in order to consider the concept of an ideal society and social reform in the Islamic world. The cornerstones of this tradition are the idea that religion is integral to politics, law, and society, and that it involves a return to the original sources of Islam, and Islamic society, a call for Islamic law and an Islamic social order, and a struggle against corruption and social injustice.[81]

Although political rule is not sacred or divine in Islam, as neither the Prophet nor his successors ever claimed to be sacred rulers, nevertheless, state affairs were supposed to be a tool of mystification of the concept of an ideal society. It is therefore worthy to glance at the affairs of the ruler and the ruled or, in other words, at the concept of the state in the early writings of Muslim scholars. Weiss writes,

> Since all ultimate authority rests in Allah as the sole ruler of the *umma* in combining spiritual and political rule, the Prophet and his successors, as Allah's vice regents on earth, also combined both functions, namely both that of imam, the religious head of the *umma*, and *Amir al-Mu'minin*, the political head of the *umma*.[82]

As pointed out, the core argument for all scholars has been to underline the rift between the ideal concept and the political reality which arose in the early writings of Muslim scholars in their discussions of the ideal ummah. Among them Abu al-Hasan al-Mawardi's (974-1058) contributions in political science and sociology are considerable. He wrote three majestic works: *Kitab al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya, Qanun al-Wizarah,* and *Kitab Nasihat al-Mulk*.[83] Al-Mawardi in those books tried to formulate the principles of political science. In his masterpiece *Kitab al-Ahkam al-*

Sultaniyya (*Ordinances of Government*) he deals with duties of the Caliphs, the chief minister, the cabinet, and the responsibility of and relationship between the government and citizens.[84] He discusses the affairs of state in both peace and war. He tries to reconcile the reality with the ideal, saving the Islamic character of the state by demanding that government should not contravene *Shari'a,* which he believed was essential to the ideal society (ummah). His writings cover the areas of Qur'anic interpretation, religion, government, public and constitutional law, language, ethics and belles lettres. His '*Ordinances of Government*' has been long recognised as a classic in its field and has been a major reference much discussed by Arab authors and orientalists and quoted in courses on Islamic law and government. It has also given rise to speculation not only regarding the motivation for writing it or the intentions of its author, but also in relation to many of the points it contains. While, for instance, it has been described by many scholars as the standard formulation of the Sunni or orthodox Islamic theory of government, others have argued that there is no such thing as a single received Sunni theory. They view the book as an attempt by the author to reconcile a certain interpretation of Islamic law, the *Asharite* doctrine, which is one of several existing or possible theoretical positions on the subject, with the political realities under the *Buyids*.[85]

In this regard, Nizam al-Mulk Tusi (1018-1092),[86] grand vizier of the Seljuk Empire for thirty years, must be mentioned. He was not only a vizier; he was a scholar and patron of arts. On the commendation of the king, Nizam al-Mulk considered the condition of the country and society and made a compilation of past and present principles and laws so that the duty of the king could be correctly discharged, and all the wrong practices could be discontinued in order to serve the idea of the ideal ummah. In his masterpiece, *Siyar al-Muluk* (*Rules for Kings*), which is also known in

Europe as the *Siyasat-nama* (*The Book of Government*), Nizam al-Mulk deals with the issues of state affairs. According to Hassan, it is a realistic political theory which emerges out of an actual political situation and therefore helps us to understand the stage in the development of Muslim polity that had been reached in the eleventh century.[87] He suggests that in every age God chooses one person endowed with virtues to rule as king to serve the idea of an ideal society. His concept of an ideal society is a mystification of a theory of kingship. His writings in this regard present a vindication of autocracy mainly on the basis of the appointment and purpose of kingship in a political community.[88]

Also in this regard, according to Weiss, the common argument among critical scholars (such as al-Ghazali[89] during the twelfth century and Ibn Taymiyya[90] (1263-1328) during the fourteenth century) was that the rulers of their time were perceived as unjust and oppressive, failing to promote the idea of the ummah in accordance with the rules of the Qur'an, the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad and the Shari'a. Al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyya also took a stand against the ulamas for depending on the government,[91] and their failure to truly serve the idea of ideal society. These scholars, according to Weiss, pointed out that political and administrative development in the Muslim world had become un-Islamic and a cause of societal problems, and they called for a return to, or a revival of, the ideal society of the Prophet and the four Righteous Caliphs. Al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyya were neither the first nor the last scholars to criticise the worldly affairs of the rulers. In Ibn Taymiyya's ideas about the implementation of the *Shari'a,* or the reformulation of Islamic law in society, some institutions were required, the most important of which was the state.[92] This simple idea inspired a great number of later generations to develop state-ist concepts of an ideal society. According to Rahman,

> For Ibn Taymiyya it is necessary that governance be used as a means of attaining the goals of religion and to draw nearer to God. This is the best way of attaining proximity to God, because it at the same time also improves and reforms the condition of the people.[93]

Contrary to the earlier jurists, who tried to place the state within the legal-religious sphere[94], Ibn Khaldun[95] (1332-1406) clearly recognised the distinction between *Mulk Tabi'i* (natural sovereignty) and *Mulk Siyasi*, the latter being subdivided into two types: *Siyasa Aqliyya* (rationally derived nomocracy) and *Siyasa Diniyya* (religiously derived nomocracy), such as the caliphate.[96] Owing to this idea of the separation of religious affairs from the state, he is regarded by some as the first secularist among Islamic thinkers. On the other hand, Ibn Khaldun remarked that the importance of religion is in unifying and bringing progress and development to society. He also thought society impossible without a state.[97] The philosophical view that "man is political by nature" is expressed in his discourse by the saying, "association is necessary for man".[98] He formulated a theory that requires a ruler and a law based on the rational understanding of men, and their common needs and interests in this world, or a divine law based on their common good in this world and the next in order to serve the idea of an ideal society.[99] He pointed out that injustice, despotism, and tyranny are clear signs of the downfall of the state and corruption of society. According to Ibn Khaldûn, *mulk*-rule should be based upon the use of political-military power and coercion whereas the *ulama* were to assume a subsidiary position within government.[100] According to Weiss,

> The rule of the caliphate was to be based upon the application of religion and shari'a. However, Ibn Khaldûn's distinction between kingship and caliphate was more than an ex post description, because it resulted in an analysis of the cyclical behaviour of the rise and fall of states, by emphasising that the

caliphate-rule had been replaced by mulk-rule as part of a specific political cycle.[101]

In the context of a discussion of this politico-religious revivalist tradition, and attempts to recall "a golden age" and ideal society, it is worth adding the contributions of Farabi in this field. Abu Nasr Muhammad al-Farabi[102] (870-950) believed that human natures are different, and so he recommended esoteric teachings for the elite, who should govern society and manage the political hierarchies.[103] His sociological book of *Ara Ahl al-Madina al-Fadila*[104] (The Model City or the Perfect State) is worth mentioning in this regard. It is a significant early contribution to sociology and political science. In this masterpiece Farabi does not deal with an ethereal, imaginary world. He is concerned with real life, as Plato himself had been in *The Republic* in his own day. For an idea of the ideal society, he suggested that the best philosopher should also be a king in an ideal society.[105] He blamed political upheavals in the Islamic world on the fact that the state was not run by philosophers, whose superior powers of reason and intellect would result in ideal leadership.[106] In his masterpiece, he discusses man's physical and moral nature, then aspects of the human intellect (what the material and active intellect are and why it has been named the active intellect, etc). Following that, man's need for association and co-operation (in other words, the structure of human society and its problems) are considered, then the perfect state and an excellent ruler. Furthermore, he deals with the different states of the souls after death, how the roles should be in the perfect state, the difference between religious and philosophical symbolism, and finally, he gives a detailed account of the kinds of ignorant views and wrong principles from which current views in his own days are derived.[107] He went beyond the city-state to the nation or world-state.[108] Al-Ma'sumi also provides us with some insights about Farabi's 'city-

state', 'family-state', state, society, ideal society, nation, and ideal nation. His "model city" aims only at happiness pursued by men through politics and ethics.[109] It appears the criteria and qualities which the ideal state[110] or leader should have are something impossible to attain. Therefore they are utopic and non-applicable. This ideology also appears to appeal to an outward understanding of Islam.

Finally, like Ibni Sina[111] and Ibni Rushd[112], other prominent Muslim scholars of the time, Farabi tried to reconcile philosophy and religion in many of his works by understanding the origins and early doctrines of philosophy in the eminent classical Western philosophers. By such an exploration of their theological and philosophical works he sought to demonstrate that true happiness for man and society surely could be achieved.[115]

Meanwhile, the internalists in the classical Islamic period pursued the idea that an inner reform of Islamic society and a restoration of the Prophet's message in the Muslim community (ummah) could be achieved by changing or rectifying the internal state of individuals.[116] Included among those with this concern were the Muslim jurists and thinkers such as Abu Hanifah (699-767), Malik bin Anas (711-796), Shafii (767-820), and Ahmed ibn Hanbal (780-855)[117], and later on al-Ghazali (1058-1111), Abd al Qadir al Jilani (1077-1166). They paid less attention in their writings to the political dimension of Shari'a than to its theological inner aspects. These thinkers did not examine the duties and functions of an Islamic government in detail. They were of the opinion that the Islamic society's way of life needed to be revived and renovated. Therefore they paid attention to creating such a society based on ideal individuals, seeking to raise their personal awareness. Hence it is more possible to see socio-theological, religious revivalism and social reformism in their writings rather than politico-revivalism.

In the revivalist tradition Abu Hamid Ibn Muhammad Ibn Muhammad al-Tusi al-Shafi'i al-Ghazali (1058-1111) was a cornerstone in his time and thereafter. Apart from his politico-religious view mentioned above, early in his life he was a devoted Sufi. He tried to bring the more eccentric views within Sufism into line with orthodox Islam.[118] Yet he stressed the importance of genuine Sufism, which he thought was the genuine path to absolute truth. Ghazali's teaching encouraged the deepening of one's personal faith by putting morality at the centre.[119] Deepening one's faith must translate itself into good action. This vital experience of religion, he thought, was dead without good works.[120] He is the best known Muslim writer on moral subjects, and especially the personal virtues.[121] According to Rahman,

> Although he took the then existing community as his referent – and not the Qur'an or the real Muhammad – he did not call for social or community virtues that would once again prepare the community as such to play the role in the world that the Qur'an required of it... I mean the collective effort of community to inculcate the purity of moral orientation (*taqwa*) at the individual level and then to direct this collective effort to found an ethical, social and political order on the earth.[122]

Shaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (1077-1166), known as *al-Ghawth al-'A'zam* (The Supreme Helper) was the traditional founder of the Qadiriyah order of the mystical Sufi branch of Islam.[123] Jilani's understanding of ideal ummah was based upon the personal path of truth, stressing philanthropy, humility, piety and moderation. The emphasis of his discourse was that of a holy war, or jihad, waged against one's own will in order to conquer egotism and worldliness and to submit to God's will. The good society is the result of harmonious development of an individual's personality.[124] A personal perfection and spiritual increase were at the centre of Jilani's thought system. Al-Jilani specialised in the sciences of purification of the heart. As a prominent Sufi leader, like al-Ghazali, his concept of an ideal society was

based upon the individual's spiritual purity and wisdom.[125] Among this period's other Sufis and puritan internalists are Hasan al Basri (d.728), Ibrahim b. Adham (d. 777), Abu Yazid al-Bistami (d. 874), Junaid of Baghdad (d.910), a Sufi woman, Rabi'a al-Adawiya (d.801), and Jalal ad-Din Rumi[126] (1207-1273), known as "Mawlana" (our Lord or Teacher).

The foregoing overview has shown that the Islamic world, from its beginnings in the 7th century to the 13th century, was very familiar with the idea of an ideal society. In Islam the ideal society was the ummah of the time of the Prophet and the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs. This was considered by the eminent thinkers of the time. Some were in favour of reviving the state concept, since there was no specific state definition in Islam, that indicated how the Golden Age of the ummah could be established". On the other hand, there were those, mainly Sufis but not all, who believed in individual wisdom and faith to revive an ideal society. In aiming to re-establish the ideal society (ummah), externalist revivalism pursued the concept of a politico-religious state (as in Plato's *Republic*). The alternative tradition of faith-based socio-religious revivalism hoped to revive society's Islamic life by the inner revival and moral reform individuals. In the first tradition the socio-moral reconstruction of Muslim society was the primary aim, whereas the second tradition stressed the individual, not the society or the state, and emphasised the esoteric understanding.[127] It also maintained that Islamic revivalism was not only something relating to the hereafter, but also concerned individuals and society in this world.

1.2.2 THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD THROUGH THE 14TH TO THE 19TH CENTURY

It has been stated that

> Late in the 18th and early in the 19th centuries almost every part of the Muslim world was somewhat stirred as a result of political, military, economical, social and intellectual contacts with the West. Whether we call it aggression, impact, or challenge, it was there and the Muslim world reacted certainly to a lesser degree because it was weaker and less experienced. Its reaction was at least in the early stages emotional but has always been enthusiastic.[128]

These sufferings gave birth to political, puritanical, and revolutionary movements of pre-modernist externalist Islamic revivalism.[129] Like the first revivalist movements, they were conservative if not reactionary. Commonly based on ibn Hanbal's and ibn Taymiyya's teachings, pre-modernist Islamic revivalists were of the opinion that Muslims should return with full vigour to a puritanical form of Islam so as to defeat the non-Islamic forces and escape the punishment that they were receiving at the hands of God for their negligence of their religion.[130] Ibn Taymiyya's message, which Rahman explains as follows, provides an example of their thinking:

> Man on earth must discover and implement the will of God. The will of God lies enshrined in the Qur'an and embodied in the Sunna of the Prophet. This will of God is the shari'a. A community, which consciously sets out the implement the shari'a, is a Muslim community. But in order to implement the shari'a the Muslim society must set up certain institutions the most important of which is the state... It will be seen that this message emphasises not merely the individual but the collective being of the community and therefore lays greater stress on social virtues and justice than on mere individual virtues... Now the reform movements which burst upon the Muslim world during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries exhibit this common characteristic that they bring into the centre of attention the socio-moral reconstruction of Muslim society as against Sufism which had stressed primarily the individual and not the society.[131]

Following in this politico-religious tradition, pre-modern externalist movements, such as the Wahhabi movement in Arabia and the Sanusi and Mahdi movements, likewise considered that the old regime was corrupt and that they should

revive the ummah of the Prophet in Medina. Thus, according to Esposito, "We see its militant, even revolutionary potential as both a moral and a political force, as witnessed by the wave of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century religio-political revivalists movements."[132] They thought this was the way to achieve the ideal ummah, which was said to have been the one just society on earth.

The "Wahhabi" movement, founded by Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab (1700-1787)[133] –was perhaps the first Islamic revolutionary reform movement. The simple message of Wahhabism was a return to classical Islam.[134] In another source it has been said, "Wahhabism was a revivalist movement, based on Ibn Hanbal and the theologian Ibn Taymiyya imposing a strong asceticism and militating fiercely against all Sufi pietistic accretions. It has remained a significant factor in shaping Muslim reactions in the direction of "Zealotism"."[135] The ways of the Prophet Muhammad and his community at Medina were the only acceptable models for the Wahhabis, and all Muslims would be compelled to follow them. Although they aimed to return to earlier days of Islamic teachings, they mostly tackled the outward practices of Islam. Thus they labelled certain practices of Muslims as *bida'* ("objectionable innovations"), such as the building of minarets (acceptable today) and the use of funeral markers. Wahhabi zealots even tried to destroy the tomb of the Prophet in Medina.[136] He started a campaign against the superstitious practices which he thought were eating into the vitals of faith.[137] Following the legal school of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the Wahhabi *ulama* accepted the authority only of the Qur'an and Sunna. The Wahhabi *ulama* rejected reinterpretation of the Qur'an and Sunna in regard to issues settled by the early jurists and shifted their attention to the study of the two main sources of Islamic teachings.[138] By rejecting the validity of reinterpretation, Wahhabi doctrine is at odds with the Muslim reformation movement of the late nineteenth and

twentieth centuries.[139] The Wahhabis went on an uncompromising campaign against Sunnis, Sufis, Shiites and all others deemed unfaithful to the Wahhabis' strict interpretation.[140]

Originally a Sufi order, the Sanusis wanted to reform the Muslim world, beginning with a small group and spreading their teaching into the world at large. Al-Sanusi (1787-1859)[141] based his ideas for the revivalist movement on those of the great Hanbalite jurist ibn Taymiyya and of al-Ghazali who attempted to reconcile the methods of the *ulama* and the Sufis.[142] Sanusi strictly advocated a view similar to 'Abd al-Wahhab, purifying the religion of Islam of heresies and alien beliefs and practices. It concerned itself essentially with political matters.[143] Sanusi tried to reconstruct the Islamic way of life in society but it was a traditional and conventional revivalist movement. According to Rahman, "It was basically a reform movement, aiming at the purification of society from degenerate beliefs, and particularly from corrupting malpractices. Above all, it sought to promote a sense of moral solidarity based on honesty, egalitarianism and economic justice."[144] Some modern scholars assume that *Sanusiyyah* was a copy of Wahhabism. It tried to lead a life similar to that of the first century of Islam, while its followers actually lived in the 19th century AD.[145] According to Esposito, the Sanusi program pursued a path of militant activism and was committed to the creation of an Islamic state.[146]

Another important form of externalism is the social idealism of Mahdism, which is somewhat similar to Christian millenarianism.[147] Mahdism stimulated a number of movements such as Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of India, the Babi Bahai movement in Persia, and the Mahdi movement of Sudan. The Mahdi (the God-guided one) for the Sunnis was simply a reformer who will restore society's Islamic way of life to the original purity it had in early times. This perfect society would come to

fruition at the end of time, as has been described by the Prophet in his tradition.[148] Thus the key idea of Mahdism was to revive the ummah of the Prophet and the Four Rightly Guided Caliphates' time. The Islamic tradition which foretold of the imminent appearance of the Mahdi and the final eschatological events leading to the end of the world stimulated such figures as Abdul Qadir in Algeria, Usman dan Fadio of Nigeria and al Hajj Umar of Futa Toro in East-Africa, and gave birth to a number of movements.[149]

Among them the Ahmadiyya Movement was established in 1889 by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908), who claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, and later claimed his prophethood and direct revelation from God. In 1891 he claimed himself to be the Mahdi and the Messiah. His followers thought that the truth and the beauty of Islam must be shown through one's practical life and the example of the founder of the sect, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the chosen one for the end of time.[150] The finality of Muhammad as the seal of the prophets is a fundamental and very sensitive point of Muslim belief, and Ghulam Ahmad has been severely criticised for diverging from it, to the extent that he and his movement have been declared a non-Muslim minority by some orthodox Muslims. Also, more to the point, Cragg states, "Some of the vigorous points of its propagation were its reliance on heretical or at least dubious theology to break the authority of the Mullah conservatism, its will to carry warfare into the enemies' camp, and the strange pretensions and career of its founder."[151] His aim of an ideal society appears to have been to synthesise all religions under Islam, for he declared himself to be not only the manifestation of the Prophet Muhammad but also the Second Advent of Jesus and of Krishna for the Hindus.[152]

The Mahdist "Revolt" which began in 1881 against Ottoman Rule, assumed the Ottoman Rule to be failing and neglecting its role in Islam. Therefore it was condemned and, in the end, lost its grip on the Islamic world. The Al Mahdi (of Sudan), Mohammad Ahmed Ibn Abdullah (1844-85) headed a religious-political movement for the revival and reform of Islamic society with a view to restoring, on the basis of the Qur'an and the Sunna, the Islamic theocracy that prevailed in the days of the Prophet Muhammad and the righteous Caliphs (*al-Khulafa' ul-Rashidun*).[153] He had divine sanction to overthrow the old order and to establish a true Islamic state and society (ummah).[154] The Mahdi's ultimate goal was to unify the Islamic countries under one caliphate, that is, the caliphate of the chosen. His concept of an ideal society was centred on the urgent need for Muslims to regain the spiritual and political vigour which had characterised the age of the first four caliphs (632–661).[155]

Throughout this period, a representative of the internalist tradition, Shaikh Ahmad Farrooqui (1563–1624), better known as *Alif-i-Sani Imam-i Rabbani* (Renovator of the second millennium) and also called Sirhindi, lived at a time when Islam's existence was considerably weakened in India owing to the irreligious practices of the Mughal Emperor Akbar whose ""new syncretistic faith (*Din-e-Ilahi*) sought to combine the various mystical forms of belief and religious practices of the many communities.[156] He was acclaimed as the renewer of Islam for the second millennium of the *Hijra* Era. As a prominent Sufi leader, Sirhindi concentrated on the purification of hearts and strengthening of faith, believing that this emphasis was the only solution for his time.[157] He used Sufistic techniques to control 'the lower passions. According to Farman, his approach was neither antagonistic nor equivalent to religious law, but "is rather subservient to it."[158] He argued that the Muslim community must be circumscribed by carefully defined rules of orthodoxy and the

central government should support this endeavour. As a result, in later years his ideas contributed to the political re-shaping of Islam in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. He was said to have induced the divines of Islam to study the Qur'an and hadith, which they had neglected for a long time.[159]

Soon after Sirhindi, Indian scholarship produced *Qutb al-Din Ahmad*, known as Shah Wali Allah of Delhi (1703–1762)[160] who followed a broadly similar line.[161] Wali Allah thought that Shari'a had to cater for the majority of humankind in order to usher in a Golden Age or ideal society '.[162] Without going into deep analysis of the sources that survive, his aim was to develop the human personality and to cultivate perfection. Man could achieve his full potential by his own exertion in a universe that was determined by God. Since the political situation of India had changed from the time of Sirhindi, he believed that the Muslim polity could be restored to its former splendour by a policy of religious reform that would harmonize the religious ideals of Islam with the changing social and economic conditions of India.[163] According to Iqbal, Wali Allah's role was to rethink the whole system of Islam without in any way breaking away from its past.[164] He saw Islam as a religion which not only aimed at individual righteousness, but also provided a framework that all individuals could follow.[165] Like his precursors al Ghazali and Sirhindi, Wali Allah centred his concept of an ideal society on the faith-based socio-Islamic revivalist tradition.[166]

Among contemporary movements with the most similarities to Nurcus, the *Tablighi Jama'at* founded by Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas (1885–1944), is the last one in this period to be included in the internalist tradition. The *Jama'at* today has followers and supporters almost all over the Muslim World and the West. As a Sufi reformer, influenced by Sirhindi and Shah Wali Allah, Ilyas urged people to build a society that sought the reawakening of faith and reaffirmation of religio-cultural

identity. His main concern was to promote piety within the Muslim community. It has been said that,

> They discovered it was more important to live Islam than to study it. Internally, the missions sought to create an egalitarian atmosphere in which members emulated the dress, speech, and habits of the Prophet Muhammad. Externally, they emphasized not preaching but practice: much of their energy was focused on encouraging other Muslims to assemble in community prayer, quietly inviting passers by to join them either in large outdoor rallies or at smaller gatherings in public buildings such as airports (rather like Hare Krishnas). Increasingly, Tabligh missions stressed the importance of faith and dedication rather than formal learning as the foundation of religious life.[167]

Their ideology is based on some fundamental principals, the first of which is the exclusive focus on the individual. It seems the *Jama'at* have no concern about social issues or reforming political and social institutions but seek the transformation of individuals. The socio-policial developments in Islamic societies have a rather small importance to them. They have been encouraged by many Muslim and non-Muslim governments as a barrier to politically active Islamic movements. The *Jama'at* is said to have supported secular politics and the legitimacy of secularism. According to Metcalf,

> "The Tabligh movement is similar to apolitical pietistic movements in other religious traditions that seek to minimize social distinctions and relations with the larger society in favor of cultivating personal piety and a shared religious community. Tabligh participants, in withdrawing from all physical or ideological contests and focusing on injunctions from the revelation, shape and interpret their behavior in ways that arguably bear no reference to the hegemonic nation-state-oriented ideologies that surround them. While critics in Pakistan may lump them with "fundamentalist" Islamic political tendencies, and critics in India may label them "communalist," such categories conflate movements that forcefully instruct Muslims about Islam with the Tablighis, who consider themselves the most gentle of reminders. Labels such as communalism and fundamentalism also distort the distinctiveness of a movement that eschews political involvement in favor of cultivating religious piety among women and men."[168]

In conclusion, until the 14th century, the Muslim community enjoyed an internal equilibrium in which its own laws and intellectual life were felt to be completely satisfactory and sufficient, and there was considered to be no need for any intellectual effort to search for the ideal. Until the 14th century, as pointed out above, Islamic intellectuals sought to combine religion and philosophy and to pursue issues concerning religious preferences, sects and schools of law rather than to challenge Western thought. As long as this equilibrium was not disturbed these conditions prevailed. But it was disturbed eventually at different times throughout the world of Islam.[169] The result was that Muslims started questioning the ideal and its attainability. Hence the first Islamic movements in this period were protests against the internal corruption of Muslims, and attempts to call Muslim society back to its first purity in the first century of Islam. There were also some internalist movements but they were small in number.

1.2.3 THE MODERN TIMES

When it comes to the contemporary Islamic world, the issue of an ideal society (ummah) or recalling of the Golden Age of Islamic history is somehow very complicated and difficult to approach. The contemporary world has seen both faith-based internalist tradition and externalist, largely political orientation of contemporary Islamic thought, a classification into which however none of the movements fit neatly. It should be emphasised that whether they are called fundamentalist, modernist (pre-modernist, neo-modernist, and post-modernist), Mahdist or traditionalist Islamic revivalists, these tendencies have mixed with and influenced each other, and therefore their teachings about an ideal society is a complex subject. Sometimes it has led to the

rise of religious movements that seek to address questions of faith through politicised interpretations of religion such as in the case of Mawdudi.

All contemporary Islamic movements have a common point of departure: purify the faith on the basis of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, and return to the model of Islamic behaviour and personality of the early Muslim community in the time of the Prophet and the Four Rightly Guided Caliphates. However, there have been differences in their approaches about how to achieve these aims. Modernist Islamic scholars such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Rashid Rida were of the opinion that many practices acceptable in the past were no longer relevant, and that therefore Islamic society's way of life needed to be revived by formulations of *shari'a*. They therefore advocated an adaptation of Islam to the changing conditions of modern society. In the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, neo-revivalist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, the Jama'at-i Islami and Khomeini saw Islam as "a comprehensive ideology for personal and public life, the foundation for Muslim state and society".[170] Meanwhile, traditionalists opposed reforms and reacted to the Western based concepts.[171] These are what we can call the externalists of the modern times. In this tradition, Islam can be instrumental in changing a given situation or overthrowing a given socio-political order in order to achieve the ideal ummah: that is to say, Islam has been imposed from above.[172] The pursuit of an ideal society is implied in their drive to political power. As Mitchell has pointed out they believed "that the power to reform was inextricably tied up with the power to rule".[173] Without doubt all these social movements have had their roots in dissatisfaction with the present situation and they have similarly posed an alternative model; a 'golden age' or an 'ideal society'.[174]

The political debate in Islam from top or bottom largely being set by the Islamic radicals[175] (such as Ayatollah Khomeini, Sayyid Qutb, and Mawdudi[176]) is nothing other than a mystification of the ideal ummah. Banna and Khomeini, like Mawdudi, saw the early Muslim community as the political model and have radically reinterpreted *jahiliyya*,[177] making this, rather than the historical period before God's revelation to the Prophet Muhammad, the normative standard by which to judge today's rulers'.[178] It could even be said that today's externalist Islamist movements have to some extent transcended the dividing line between Sunnis and Shi'ites.[179] They were all called Islamist religio-political thinkers.[180] Other externalists include Afghani, a pan-Islamist or pro-Islamist and Abduh and Rida, who were defined as modernists.[181]

A point of interest which should be mentioned here is that Muslims before the modern age had with rare exceptions lived in Muslim ruled states. However, during the last two centuries in particular, a number of Islamic movements have been both an expression of defense and resistance against western domination and a protest against moral decline and disintegration within Muslim societies themselves.[182] The shock which they have experienced with the great military and technological superiority which the Europeans had over the Muslims has produced the so-called revolutionary movements, which have tried to recover 'the "golden age" of the past.[183] Therefore they were reactionary if not antipathetic.[184] The vision of the new millennium in the hands of this tradition was a utopia based on a mystification of the state and an Islamic society created from the top rather than the bottom. Being aware that such movements should be studied in their particular socio-political and economic setting and that internal and external causes and influences should be taken into account, we will use the available sources only for the purpose of illustration. "Attention should

also be paid to the dynamics of the cultural tradition where religious norms and values play such an important role, not only locally but also through the constant reference to the Qur'an and Sunna as the basis for the "great tradition" or normative Islam."[185]

This vision has led to revolutionary movements which undertake concerted action to bring about what is sometimes called an Islamic revolution, and may be considered as radical movements. They call for the establishment of a radically different "Islamic" kind of state which will be the panacea for all existing problems and will re-generate an ideal ummah.[186] Such movements have come to power in Libya, Iran and in a sense also Pakistan.

Whether they are called the great movements of protest, militant Islam, or revolutionary Islam, these reform movements[187] are of the opinion that by reference to Qur'an and Sunna it could be shown that government was not being conducted according to God's will. According to Waardenburg, "Sometimes this led to armed insurrections and revolts, especially such movements as could serve the specific interests of a political opposition; mostly, however such movements condemned the current government practise as un-Islamic but maintained their obedience on pragmatic grounds, though without much inner loyalty to the government."[188] Protests in these movements seem to have a transcendentalising tendency and a nostalgia for an ideal religious society.[189] Waardenburg writes, "An underlying nostalgia and longing can be felt for a truly Islamic society and state based on the sharia and God's ordinances contained in it."[190] Such movements in Egypt, for instance, are the *Ikhwan al-Muslimin*, the *Jamaat-i Takfir wal-Hijra, al-Jamaati Islami, al-Jihad, Shabab Muhammad, Hizb at-Tahrir, Hizbullah.*[191] Changes from the above always put these movements in conflict with political regimes.[192]

In the rise of these movements certain causes cannot be denied; such as, the first of all, the failure of contemporary ideologies of modernisation that have been practised in Muslim societies in the last two centuries. To this can be added: 1. the failure of western liberalism, 2. the failure of state socialism, 3. the failure of traditional Marxism, 4. the failure of tribal ritualism.[193] None of these alien ideologies has been adapted to an Islamic culture. Secondly, it could be said that the rise of these movements gained further impetus from external factors such as Orientalism. Myths and misjudgements based on Orientalism – including the negation of Islamic revelation, the forgery of the Qur'an, the epilepsy and polygamy of Muhammad, Islamic propagation by the sword, *Ahl El Dhimma* as second class citizens, Muslim imitation of the Greeks, the Persians, the Hindus and the Romans, Islamic deformation of Greek philosophy and science, and confusion between Plato, Plotinus and Aristotle – have helped to foster Muslim conservatism or what some may call Islamic fundamentalism.[194] Choueiri states,

> The writings of three twentieth-century Muslim thinkers and activists - Sayyid Qutb, Ayatollah Ruhollah al-Khumayni and Abu al-'Ala al-Mawdudi - provide authoritative guidelines delineating the philosophical discourse of Islamic fundamentalism... Consequently Islamic fundamentalism is opposed to the Enlightenment, secularism, democracy, nationalism, Marxism and relativism...The premises of Islamic fundamentalism are rooted in an essentialist world view whereby innate qualities and attributes apply to individuals and human societies, irrespective of time, historical change or political circumstances. Hence, an immutable substance governs human existence and determines its outward movement.[195]

Now we can move on to the brief accounts of those doyens of modern times to clarify the issue in hand.

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897) was one of the most prominent Islamic political leaders[196] and activists of the 19th century to expend great effort to recover the ideal ummah. For some, he was the one whose call for Muslim solidarity lay

behind Egypt's nationalist movement, Turkey's *Tanzimat* reforms, as well as Iran's constitutional and Islamic revolutions. He was also the pan-Islamist who believed unity under the Caliph to be the clue to destiny and the fulfilment of society.[197] He has also been seen as a thinker and activist who worked to transform Islam into the prototype of modern fundamentalism.[198] Keddie considers that, as an Islamist utopist, Afghani's vision of "Virtuous City" depends on a hierarchically structured society whose cornerstones are shame, trustworthiness, and truthfulness, and whose aspirations are the ideals of intelligence, pride and justice. In the progress of society, al-Afghani argued that higher intelligence leads to new capabilities and advanced civilisations; pride leads to competition and progress; and justice leads to global peace and harmony among nations. Afghani argues that materialism has brought many harmful ideas into social life and has led people to behave in evil ways, such as attacking belief in the Day of Judgement and the habit of shame.[199] By doing so, Afghani argued that Naturalists (neicheris) discourage men from practising the virtue that is the most important foundation of social order and that they tended to destroy the solidarity of the "Virtuous City" through egoism, division and sectarianism. Keddie states, "His main role was rather to use Islam as an ideology to strengthen its position as a focus of identity and solidarity against the attacks of Christian West, and to use it as a rallying point for the repulsion of Western conquerors."[200] In appealing to the ideal ummah his aim was to strengthen and unite Muslims[201] against the imperialism of Europe.[203]

Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905)[204] was an Egyptian religious scholar, mufti and reformer who sought to regenerate the ideal Islamic society. He was the founder of the modernist movement in Islam, known as the *Salafiyya*, which has dominated Egyptian religious life up to the present day. He wondered how one could bridge the

gap between what Islamic society should be, and what it actually was. In this regard, Smith writes,

> Generally...Islam has become distorted from its original condition and intent...here we see pan-Islamism so important to al-Afghani translated in the thought of Abduh from a political orientation to a religious one. This is supported by Rida when he expounds Abduh's ideas in the biography Ta'rikh in such sections as that entitled "al-Wahdah al-Islamiyah".[205]

Abduh felt, like his predecessor Afghani, that in order for society to be better, it had to conform to some legal and moral principles of Islam, otherwise it would self-destruct.[206] Abduh wanted to show that Islam could be the tool for social change while simultaneously also controlling that change. For Abduh, Islam must be guarded by the *'ulama'* (elite), who would articulate and teach the real Islam in society, and provide the basis for a stable and progressive society. Abduh believed that Islam contained in itself a basis for modern life. Two things, however, were required: the first was a restatement of what Islam really was, and the second was a consideration of its implications for modern society.[207] According to Hourani, 'Abduh believed this ideal society once existed, in the golden age of Islam, where one could find a "political success and an intellectual development almost without parallel in the speed and manner of its flowering"'.[208] His essential thesis was that a true Islam freed from un-Islamic accretions was perfectly reconcilable with modern thought and life. Therefore Islam needed the recovery of itself.[209] Like Afghani he believed Islam had the potential to be a school of thought and guiding ideology for Islamic society as a whole.[210] Abduh's ideas were met with great enthusiasm but also by tenacious opposition. They are still a subject of contention today, nearly a 100 years after his death, as questions of modernism and tradition in society re-emerge in conflict in the Muslim world. Although he did not achieve his goals, Muhammad Abduh remains a

continuing influence. Together with Abduh, the founder of the *Salafiyya* movement, the Syro-Egyptian Islamic thinker Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865–1935)[211] was another reformer of modern times.[212] In the journal founded and led by himself for 37 years, titled *al-Manar*, Rida dealt with Islamic polity, society, dogma, and law.[213] For Rida, Islam has needed reform and he insisted that it should consist of a return to the Qur'an and the practice of the Prophet so that it would be possible to restore the Islamic "golden age" of the time of Muhammad. Rashid Rida's theory of successful religious propaganda grew towards a sharper conservatism.[214]

These three ideologues of the *Salafiyya* movement could be considered as the forerunners of the so-called 'fundamentalists'. On the level of doctrine, according to Abun-Nasr, militant Islam is a simplified version of the *Salafiyya* teachings and derives its uncompromising rigour predominantly from the fact that it has become a mass ideology, preached by popular religious leaders, and is not bound, like the *Salafiyya* ulama, by the strict methodology of fiqh (science of the law) or indeed by any intellectual doubt.[215] In short, "militant Islam is a popularized and simplified version of reformist teachings of the *Salafiyya*, and it appeals specially to the urban masses."[216] Their conservatism generates fundamentalism and discovers politics as the only viable opinionated system for Muslims in the modern world.[217] Kielstra states, "They claimed the right to develop new interpretations of the rules of the shari'a more adapted to modern conditions, but they did not advocate the reduction of substantial rules to abstract ethical principles."[218]

Hasan al-Banna[219] (1906-1949), an Egyptian schoolteacher founded a neo-revivalist Islamic movement called the Muslim Brethren (*Ikhwan al Muslimun*) in 1928. From an early date he sensed that the real task of revitalising Muslim society would demand a rigorous crusade among the masses rather than student and literary

classes. His movement started puritan social movement with the aim of purifying the alien, and the corrupted Egyptian Westernised society and of urging them to return to the Islamic morals and ethics that would lead them to the long-awaited ideal society.[220] The Muslim Brotherhood had from the very early beginning a social and political colour. According to al-Banna there are three principles: first, there must be a single Islamic community, *Dar-ul* Islam; second, Islam legislates in the shari'a for all human affairs; third, Islam is a brotherhood among all nations and classes.[221] It has been said,

> For the Ikhwan Islam offered a total philosophy which explained this world and the next and regulated human life in its totality... For this very reason any exclusion of Islam from public life would be in opposition to the order of the universe, i.e. to the Will of God. This would certainly lead to crisis, which could not be overcome except by acceptance of the shari'a, Islamic law as the regulative principle. Once the shari'a restored social justice and political freedom, i.e. the Muslim virtuous city would fully materialise.[222]

Was Hasan al-Banna therefore an Ikhwan utopist? According to Abu-Rabi, "The Ikhwan's ideology, as a reflection in large measure of an embattled state of mind, especially in its early phase, is inevitably utopian. The utopia of ascendant Ikhwan was the idea of establishing an Islamic state..."[223] No doubt in the eyes of the Ikhwan, the state was the mystification of the ideal ummah: the goal, means and aim of an ideal society. This idea has been widely used in the pursuit of an ideal society by the religio-politically minded, who have included Abd al-Qadir Awdah, an early follower of al-Banna, Yusuf al-Qardawi of Egypt, Mustafa al-Siba'i of Syria, Said Hawwa of Syria, Hasan al-Turabi of Sudan, and Rashid al-Ghanoushi of Tunisia.[224]

Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) was one of the neo-revivalists. Following the way of al-Banna he was one of the outstanding figures of 20th century Islam. Qutb's discourse had previously been of a 'moralist'. It was after his two years at Sojourn

(1948–1950) for further education in the US that Qutb changed into a revolutionary with a full understanding that Islam was a complete way of life, and that the establishment of Allah's order on earth was every Muslim's primary responsibility. After his return to Egypt he resigned his job in the Education Directorate and devoted himself to the idea of bringing a total change in the political system. The Ikhwan gained ideological vitality when Sayyid Qutb in his jail cell wrote a book in which he revised Hasan al-Banna's dream of establishing an Islamic state in Egypt. Sayyid Qutb recommended that a revolutionary vanguard should first establish an Islamic state and then, from above, impose Islamisation on Egyptian society. For Qutb, Islamic society is "not a mere historical form that is hidden in the memories of the past, it is a demand of the present and the hope of the future."[225] According to Haddad this is not a fixed historical entity. "It can take a variety of shapes and forms as long as it adheres to the basic eternal values, which include the total subordination of all things to God, the adherence to the ideology, the affirmation of the humanity of man over materialism, the domination of human values over animal instincts, the inviolability of the family, the vicegerency of man on earth according to God's covenant and prescription, the governance and supremacy of God's system and laws in the affairs of the world."[226]

In order to achieve the ideal society, the central point of the Muslim Brethren's (*Ikhwan al Muslimun*) policies is a belief that ruling a government should be the step which follows preparing (most of) society for accepting Islamic laws which would lead to an ideal ummah. According to Waardenburg, the Muslim Brotherhood exhibits a stronger character of protest leading to more violent action than is the case with other reformist movements, and they are more politically involved and better organised to undertake political action than the others.[227] According to Abun-Nasr,

"The mystical religious drive and the popularization of the *Salafiyya* teachings, which combine to give militant Islam its dynamic character, are both reflected in the organization of the Muslim Brethren."[228] The teachings of the organisation of the Muslim Brethren, developed by al-Banna and some other of its leaders, have special significance in relation to the political role which the organisation played in the Muslim world and stress that the revival of Islam would proceed not so much from the formulation of a new theology, but from the political institutions' renewal.[229] The main emphasis was placed on the centrality of the sharia in the life of Muslims. Adherents, writes Smith, "strictly observe the injunction of religious law" in their life.[230] And there were no distinction between state and religion. Sayyid Qutb sums up the attitude of the Muslim Brethren on this matter as follows: "Islam is a word including in its total meaning religion, politics, economics, society, etc. ... *dawla* (state) is not the equal or opposite of *din* (religion); both are expressions of Islam".[231] Abun-Nasr maintains, "The uncompromising insistence with which the Brethren pursued their effort to induce Muslim rulers to follow Islamic principles, and the public criticism which they directed against them, made the Brethren the enemies of the political establishments in the new Islamic nation-states."[232]

The militant Muslim groups in general, even those that reject any identification with the organisation of the Muslim brethren, have in common with the Brethren a mystical vision of Islam, a utopian conception of ideal Muslim society.[233]

By rejecting the separation of religion from the state, they affirm that the Islamic state is one governed according to the commandments of the religion. The revival of Islam, according to them, is dependent upon the construction of a truly Islamic system of government. "The principle functions of the Islamic state consist of applying the *Shari'a* in the Muslim society, and spreading Islam in other parts of the

world."[234] In this context revolution against rulers who do not follow the *Shari'a* is not only justified, but a duty. "Such a revolution is not an anti-Islamic act, but a liberational one, since its purpose is to restore the eternal Islamic order."[235] Among groups espousing such views are Hizbut Tahrir and Hizbullah.

For Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979) the solution was that Islam must come to terms with modern life but must do so by pure discipline and must also be entire and fundamentalist.[236] Mawdudi's aim of the *tafseer* (interpretation) of the Qur'an, is to discover the relevance of the Qur'anic instructions to the contemporary situation of Muslim society rather than to discuss academic and historical matters. His vision of Islam has a major and overriding facet of religious life relating largely to man's outward behaviour, especially on the societal plane.[237] According to Ahmad, "This effort aims at reconstruction of human life as a whole and leads to the building of a new society and state, to the establishment of a new order, an order which in its ideal form is characterised by Mawdudi as *Khilafah ala Minhaj al-Nubuwah* (Caliphate on the Prophetic pattern), and serves as the ideal pattern of socio-political order which Muslims ought to try to actualise in their lives."[238] According to Adams,

> One of the implications of the organic understanding of the Shariah that is repeated over and over again in Mawdudi's writings, almost like a refrain, is that the Islamic Shariah does not recognise any division between religion and other aspects of life, and most specifically between religion and the state. There is he insists, no area of man's activity and concern to which the shari'a does not address itself with specific divine guidance. Thus the cultivation of private piety, worship, and the ordering of the individual's relationship with God, the matters that are normally identified as religion in popular parlance, do not satisfy the demands of the Shariah. True Islamic faith must issue into social actions and attitudes, must strive for the creation of an Islamic society as well as for personal righteousness.[239]

Another major contribution made by him was to launch such a social movement called *Jama'at-i Islami* in the sub-continent of Pakistan. The primary

objective of the movement was unlike the traditional approach to self-purification, acquiring spirituality, or causing a popular movement for change the movement founded by him focused on a comprehensive change in society. This indeed included a political program. His books "*Islamic State, Islamic law and Constitution, Khilaft-o-Mulukiat, How to Establish an Islamic State*", and many other articles he wrote about applied aspects of the Islamic political system, provide an illustration of his observation that the idea of an ideal society would be realised through political institutions.[240] Mawdudi left a legacy of ideas relating to his articulation of an Islamic vision of a society, economy, and state which gave imagination to the later generation of militant Muslims for the actualisation of an ideal society.

Dr Ali Shariati (1933-1977) was a Muslim sociologist and one of the Islamist utopists whose ideas influenced the Iranian revolution of 1979. Knowledgeable about the conditions and forces of his time, he began his Islamic revival with enlightenment of the masses, particularly the youth.[241] A mass group of young people attended his lectures and were influenced by Shariati's use of Western sociological terms on Islamic topics. Dr. Shariati constantly fought to create humanitarian values in the younger generation, whose values had been undermined by science and technology. He vigorously tried to re-introduce the Qur'an and Islamic history to the youth so that they could find their true selves, fulfil all their human potentials, and fight the decadent forces of society.[242] He believed that if these elements of society had true faith, they would totally dedicate themselves and become active Mujahid elements who would give everything including their lives-for their ideals.[243] Sachedina states,

> The special relationship and affinity between man and God implies man's individual as well as social responsibility in his capacity as God's vicegerent for creating a new life, a just social order – Nizam-i tawhid – that tawhid demanded. The two dimensional man is the true reflection of the challenge of Islamic revelation which explicitly requires the creation of an ideal social

> order as the necessary outgrowth and context of the personal dimension of human responsibility. Shariati maintained that only Islam, the two dimensional religion with orientation to this world and the next, could enable man to discharge his supreme responsibility.[244]

Shariati proclaims man's need of a model to follow in order to fulfil his responsibility, and the model is the founder of Islam, Muhammad and his religio-socio-political community of the ideal Islamic ummah. In order to create a just society, Shariati believed in a need for *mujtahid* (an authority on the interpretation of Islamic law), an educated and enlightened intellectual who reinterprets Islam in the context of the needs of modern times.[245] Shariati's purpose among Iranian society during the 1960s was to work on a project for a humane and socially just Islamic order. For this he was both admired and criticised – admired among the Iranian socialists for his propagation of a link between Islam and socialism, and criticised for his excessive argumentation within the context of Shi'i dogmatics, and for appearing to exclude Sunni communities from the process of revolutionising society.[246]

Ayatullah Ruhullah al Musavi Khomeini (1902-1989) followed the tradition that Islam is an all-embracing ideology, which guides and shapes community in both religious and political terms. He is a figure in the tradition of Plato's philosopher ruler. As stated by the sociologist Said Amir Arjomand, "Khomeini set out to create ... a traditionalist political movement which was to be led by the clergy as the guardians of the Shi'ite tradition".[247] According to Fischer, he succeeded through the 1979 constitution in becoming the first Caesar-Pope in Shiite history.[248] For Khomeini, Islam needed to be strengthened in order to resist Western political, economical, social and cultural intrusion.[249] He always believed that the leadership of political activities should be in the hands of the foremost religious scholars. Fischer states,

Two sets of polar arguments about the relation between ideals and actualisation are often debated in Muslim scholarship:

1a – Once each individual becomes truly Muslim, all need for social cohercion and oppressive state structures will wither away; versus

1b – The Quran speaks of justice and iron (the sword) in Sura Hadid (Sura on Iron), i.e., force may be required to establish the social conditions to foster the development of true Muslims and a true Muslim society.

2a – Knowledge is accessible to all reasonable men and so society can rely on consultation among men; versus

2b – Divine knowledge is the privilege of the few (an imam or amir; a body of ulama) and so society must be ruled by a tutelage dictatorship/oligarchy. Khomeini's writings have increasingly stressed the second of each pair.[250]

By 1970 Khomeini, according to Fischer, argued that monarchy is incompatible with Islam, and in this regard cited the crimes of the Iranian monarchs. The argument over *ulil amr* the Qur'anic formula in Sura Nisaa: 59 ("Oh who you have faith, obey God, obey the prophet of God, and obey the *ulil amr* [the issuer of orders]") was merged with the discussions over the formula *Velayet-e Faqih*[251] (Mandate of the Clergy, or the Sovereignty of the Jurist). The latter in traditional jurisprudence primarily referred to guardianship over persons not competent to look after their own personal financial affairs (orphans, widows, the mentally deficient, communal religious property lacking a designated administrator); and occasional references in the literature hint at extending this meaning to political guardianship. It was Khomeini's purpose in Islamic government to try to build a case for this expansion.[252] A line can also be drawn from those ideas that the preachers and clerical publicists readily borrowed from Shari'ati and from the translation of such works as the Muslim Brotherhood leader Sayyid Qutb's *Social Justice in Islam*. And these ideas, with their enormous appeal to the uprooted masses, came to occupy a prominent place in the revolutionary rhetoric of the traditionalist party, and to enhance the paternalistic populism of its leaders.[253] According to Arjomand,

Khomeini's theory of the *Velayet-e Faqih* is a major innovation in the history of Shi'ism that converted a highly technical and specific legal discussion of the rights of the gerent into a theocratic political theory.[254] Khomeini was deeply imbued with the traditionalist worldview of Shi'ite Islam, but he was of the view that the revolution he had led and the republic he had founded would lead to the ideal ummah.[255] For Khomeini maintains,

> Some say the government may remain in the hands of those who have it, but they must get approval (ijaza) from the legal experts (faqih). Yes, but a mujtahid can give such approval only under condition that the law of the country is the law of God. Our country does not meet this condition since the government is neither constitutional nor the law of God. Yet bad government is better than no government, and mujtahids do not simply attack it, but if necessary help it.[256]

On 12 February 1979 the chain of events was finally ended with the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime, when the organs of the regime (political, administrative, and military) collapsed. The foundation of the Islamic Republic triumphed with the revolution. Khomeini's Islamic government was nothing other than the mystification of the ideal society (ummah). Or was it? Fischer points out, "Khomeini unintentionally has fulfilled Shariati's charge of practising the Safavid Shi'ism, which would institutionalise the power of a clerical profession and find justifications for traditional folk practises used to subordinate the masses to that power."[257] In the hands of Khomeini, Iran witnessed an apocalyptic change through the agency of militant Islam and the revolutionary politicisation of Shi'ite traditionalism.[258] Khomeini agrees with other militant Muslims in condemning the separation of religion from the state and restricting the jurisdiction of the Shari'a.[259]

Afghani's, Abduh's and Rashid Rida's *Salafiyyah* movement, al Banna's and Qutb's *Ikhwan*, and Mawdudi's *Jamaat-i Islami* still continue to attract many

Muslims in other Muslim countries beyond Khomeini's Iran. Apart from the re-packagers of the Islamic neo-revivalist tradition, more recently there have been some other Islamic intellectuals who have sought to reform, renew and reconstruct the way of Islamic life for the dream of an ideal society or "golden age". These might be called the most contemporary Islamic utopianists, and they include the French Muslim, Roger Graudy, Izzat Begovic of Bosnia, Rashid Ghannoushi of Tunisia and Hassan al-Turabi of Sudan. With some of the academics, these scholars follow the politico-religious revivalism of the early reformists, and try to observe Islam and reconstruct the Islamic way of life to create an ideal society.

Among them a prominent author and figure in Islamic revivalism is Rashid al-Ghannoushi (b. 1941), the exiled leader of the Tunisian Islamist *an-Nahda* (Renaissance) movement. Influenced by modern western philosophers, Descartes, Bacon, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Althusser, he teaches his own understanding of the ideas of Mawdudi, Banna, and Qutb.[260] He uses "western" tools such as democracy and freedom of thought to show Muslims "[how] to achieve their community goals and defend its interests." His commitment to the line of thought is only a "concession" and "community [the Ummah] remains the ultimate reality and objective." Hence, all his talk about individuality and the question of civil liberties and their protection under an Islamic governance is nothing other than a mystification of "the "Virtuous City". Another prolific writer and thinker of the present time is Dr Hassan al-Turabi (b. 1932) of Sudan. In one of his essays, "The Islamic State", Turabi states,

> An Islamic state cannot be isolated from society because Islam is a comprehensive, integrated way of life. The division between private and public, the state and society that is familiar in western culture, has not been known in Islam. The state is only the political expression of an Islamic

> society. You cannot have an Islamic state except insofar that you have an Islamic society.[261]

Roger Garaudy is a Muslim philosopher, who used to be one of the top European Marxist thinkers for decades before his conversion to Islam. He has written extensively on a wide variety of topics (on problems of Marxism, religion, morality, aesthetics, and the dialogue between civilisations). However, it is difficult to say that Garaudy has an Islamic ideology that would serve the idea of an ideal ummah.

Contrary to all these categorisations it is worth noting what Khurshid states in his essay entitled "the Nature of Islamic Resurgence",

> It also deserves to be noted that these Islamic movements seek for comprehensive reform that is changing all aspects of life, making faith the central point. The relationship between the eternal and the temporal, the moral truth and the contemporary socio-political reality is then a central issue. Mawlana Mawdudi and the others have addressed themselves to this issue. They have shown the relevance of faith for individual morality as well as for social ethics, for political life, for economic relationships and for the establishment of a just social order.[262]

As we said earlier, someone who is categorised as an externalist by some might be categorised as an internalist by others. It is such a difficult issue on which to make a judgement. We have so far relied upon the available academic sources. As one could also say that notoriety given to the political activities of the *Ikhwan* has tended to overshadow the fact that it has been a deeply pious movement, strenuously opposed to the *taqlid* and partisanship against which Abduh and Rida wrote so vigorously, and striving for religious renewal and an increased interest in the social welfare of the masses.[263] According to Smith, "Not all of Sayyid Qutb's writings are considered revolutionary, of course, and many of them are widely accepted as thoughtful and appropriate statements of the principles of Islam."[264] A similar view for Khomeini could be put forward.

Following the internalist tradition throughout the contemporary world, Muhammad Iqbal (1876-1938) was one of the most outstanding figures in 20th century Islam. He warred against Western materialism and *mullah* ignorance with equal zeal. He is said to have studied Al-Ghazali and Rumi in particular, along with Bergson, Nietzsche, McTaggart and Freud to reconstruct an Islamic philosophy of religion with references to contemporary developments.[265] The Nietzschean unity of ego with super ego gives a name to the Qur'anic principle of *tawhid* in his thought.[266] As well as in many compilations of his poetry, Iqbal's message is also very eloquently delivered in his foremost book, in English, "*Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,*"[267] which was intended to provide a vision of the spirit of Islam. For Iqbal, Islamic life and society cannot be established without a firmly-rooted belief and the practice of religion. His philosophy is based on the concept of *khudi*, or the self, and for him, the fundamental fact of human life is to raise the consciousness of one's own being.[268] He thought Islamic society could be renewed only through reintroducing the fundamentals of belief and its role as the comprehensive guideline for a society of believers.[269] One of the ideals in the thought of Iqbal, according to Esposito, is that the individual is the basic unit of Muslim society and is Qu'ranically charged as God's vicegerent on earth with the mission of carrying out God's will on earth. Interdependence exists to produce a model society which will be emulated by others. The individual is elevated through the community and the community is organised by individuals.[270] For such a society, Iqbal states, as quoted by Esposito:

All his (man's) nature is entranced
With individuality,
Yet only in society he finds security
And preservation.

Also in this regard he writes,

> The link that binds individual
> To the society a Mercy is,
> His truest Self in the Community
> Alone achieves fulfilment.

Esposito also states, "Due to his string need and desire for association, the individual forms the basic unit of the *millat* (community). An interdependence exists between the two: the individual is elevated through the community is organised by individuals. In mystical language Iqbal spoke of individual losing his "self" in the community and thus discovering that his personality had become an embodiment of past traditions and a bridge between his past and future":

> Tis like a drop which, seeking to expand,
> Becomes an ocean. It is strong and reach
> In ancient ways, a mirror of the past
> As to the future, and the link between
> What is to come, and what has gone before."[271]

Iqbal was the Muslim scholar in the twentieth century with the greatest number of similarities to Nursi's approach to the idea of an ideal society. However, there are substantial differences between their discourses. One could say that Iqbal's ideas lie behind the political structure of the new Pakistan.[272]

1.3 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Islamic history is very familiar with utopianism from the very beginning of its history. From a century after the Prophet's death, the Muslim world met with utopianism in the guise of "the golden age" or the ideal Ummah Thereafter

Islamic utopianism is found in the legacies of the politico-Islamist revivalist tradition or faith-based socio-Islamic revivalist tradition. According to Esposito, Islam, like all religious traditions, is an ideal which has taken many forms historically and which has found expression in multiple levels of discourse conditioned by reason, varying interpretation, and historical or social contexts.[273] It is a fact that the period of Prophet Muhammad and the original Islamic state in Medina remained the ideal paradigm –a tradition to be found in the political writing of al-Farabi, al-Ghazali, ibn Taymiyya, ibn Khaldun, Abdul Wahhab, Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb of Egypt, Abu Ala Mawdudi of Pakistan, Khomeini, and more recently, Hasan al-Turabi, Rashid al-Ghannoushi (Tunisia), Abbasi Madani (Algeria) and numerous others. Islamic history is replete with attempts to restore or to reform Islamic society's way of life, whether by calling for an Islamic state as the mystification of ideal society (ummah) based upon the re-implementation of the classical formulations of Islamic law (*Shari'a*) or by arguing for the need to reformulate law in light of contemporary society. At the same time, an ideal Islamic society has also been framed in the writings and practices of the founders of four Sunni schools, (Abu Hanifa, Malik bin Anas, Shafii, and Ahmed ibn Hanbal), or in the social faith-based tradition of al Ghazali, Abd al Qadir al Jilani, Mulla Sadra, Shaikh Ahmad Farrooqui Sirhindi, Muhammad Ilyas of India, and in recent times Muhammad Iqbal.

In the present century the ideal Islamic society has been structured on the reforms of modernists such as al-Afghani, Abduh and Rida or on the writings of neo-revivalists such as Mawdudi, Iqbal, al-Banna, Qutb and finally Khomeini. Islam is a strictly monotheistic religion, but that does not mean it is monolithic in its understanding of the concept of an ideal society. Despite enormous areas of agreement in faith and practice among those mentioned above, many differences exist

between their understandings of how to achieve the ideal society. However, an important common point of understanding among externalists is that Islam is not only a religion in the usual sense of the word – guiding private life and ordaining rituals – but covers the totality of collective life. They therefore talk about an Islamic state, Islamic law, Islamic education and Islamic society.[274]

One thing that should be stated here is that the majority of Muslims in many parts of the Islamic world continue their lives in the traditional manner without having being involved in any of the theological, religious or political movements mentioned above that have attempted to realize the ideal ummah. The vast number of Muslims belonging to the Islamic tradition is still defined in terms of the traditional Islamic categories rather than contemporary Islamic revivalist movements.[275] As formulated for us by Nasr, a brief survey of Muslim people in general will help to conclude the subject in hand. In general public life there are Muslims who never miss their daily prayers and live as closely as they can to the requirements of *shari'a*. Yet there are some Muslims today who, although they do not practise their religion properly or take the *shari'a* as the central point of their life, however definitely consider themselves as Muslims. There are others who do not do anything specifically Islamic but would protest if called anything other than Muslims. Another group of Muslims are those who normally perform religious rituals but break many of the moral injunctions.[276] Lastly, adding to the above group, there are some others who follow the traditionalist life of their parents' Islamic life blindly, as they have grown out of questioning their religious beliefs and rituals. In other words there are some Muslims who believe in and practise atavistic Islam without questioning anything. We will address this form of Islamic practice in the third chapter.

Throughout Islamic history, the ideologies advanced have been presented in the terminology of classical political thought, which is based on a selective idealisation of Islam's "golden age" at the time of the Prophet Muhammad and the early Muslim community. These have become the basis for Islamic discourses seeking political revolution.[277] Such discourses do not constitute a unitary movement, though they are all agreed on the necessity of reintegrating Muslim society through the restoration of the supremacy of the *Shari'a* in all spheres of life.[278]

Modern utopian ideological superstructures built upon the teachings of the politico-religious externalist tradition have kept alive the idea of an ideal society. Traditional Islam, modelling itself on its own golden age in the first seven centuries (1st-7th), and based on discourses seeking an Islam imposed from above has stayed in the heart of the masses.[279]

The Muslim masses are waiting for a radical change in their lives. The failure of the so-called ideologies, economic crises, and western domination of scientific and military developments are still making the indifferent masses fertile ground for Islamic militarianism. This idea appeals to the imagination of the masses and the internalist tradition does not get the attention it deserves. Externalist Islam appears to be the foundation of a new world order. The leaders and members of Islamic groups of this type become more highly respected each day. The downfall of the Shah of Iran by a religious leader has given all young leaders of Muslim groups more self-confidence in social and political change.[280] But no one speaks about internal and individual change anymore. Muslims do not question what they really believe in, what they really pray for and what the real and ultimate aims of this life and the hereafter are.

We cannot say the one or the other tradition is better or has succeeded in realizing utopia of the 'golden age' or 'ideal society'. The Muslim world still suffers from centuries of' so-called technological and scientific backwardness, maybe more so from an intellectual backwardness. The main difference, though perhaps an oversimplified one, between these traditions is while one has sought to Islamicise society, the other has aimed to *iman*-ise society through individuals.[281] It is the main objective of this thesis hereafter to show that such discourses as Nursi's, which does not get the attention it deserves, attempt to achieve the old 'legacy of "a golden age" or 'ideal society' through faith-based individual awareness, and through attempting to revive Islam from below.

Nursi's evolutionism has prescribed an individual and social evolution for Muslims, leading them from political Islam to a-political Islam, from the outward expression of Islam to a faith-based religion, from blind faith to reason, and from immutable tradition to progressive gradualism. Something similar began in the West with the Enlightenment,[282] though with the difference that scientism in the West became the new religion of modern times.[283] He set in motion a process of rational inquiry that gradually altered the nature of Islamic dogmas, developing the concessions and compromises towards other faiths upon which a civil society rests. The following chapters will explore this idea further.

NOTES

[1] As quoted in Krishan Kumar, *Utopianism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1991), 95.

[2] See Ibid., 1.

[3] As cited in Ibid.

[4] See "The Elements of Utopia" in Ibid., 1-20.

[5] As quoted in Krishan Kumar, *Utopia& Anti-Utopia: Modern Times* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 2.

[6] See and compare with Christopher Lasch, "The Idea of Progress Reconsidered," in *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics* (Newyork: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), 40-81.

[7] At this point we find it useful that any study pretends to some relevance to human experience, its description, interpretation, or evaluation, must at some time come to grips with the question of what man is and to what purpose if any, he exists; should note "the Fellowship of Being". See John B. O'Malley, *The Fellowship of Being: An Essay on the Concept of Person in the Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel* (Netherlands: The Hague Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), 95-130.

[8] See and compare with Leonard T. Hobhouse, *Social Evolution and Political Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1922), 152-53.

[9] Lasch, "The Idea of Progress Reconsidered," 40.

[10] See and compare with Robert Trivers, *Social Evolution* (California: The Benjamin/ Cummings Publishing Company, Inc., 1985), VII.

[11] See and compare with Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics* (Newyork: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), 530-32. It should be also mentioned here that today's modern civil society did not come out in 1700 as contrary to that Ernest Gellner argues that civil society did exist in 17th century England. It goes back thousands of years.

[12] See James Dunbar, "Essay I: On the Primeval Form of Society," in *Essays on the History of Mankind in Rude and Cultivated Ages* (London: Available on-line: displayed in http://www.socsci.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/dunbar/dunbar01.txt, MDCCLXXXI). Also see "The Sociological Tradition and the Idea of Community" in Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics*, 120-67.

[13] Social evolution is a term newly invented and traced back to the enlightenment period. It is one of those concepts which are permanently present and discussed in social science and in anthropology for more than a century. In this regard it is worth having a glance at the first chapter of Gordon V. Childe, *Social Evolution* (London: Watts & Co., 1951), 1-16.

[14] See for "the Meaning of the Progress" Hobhouse, *Social Evolution and Political Theory*, 1-16.

[15] See Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics*.

[16] Hobhouse, *Social Evolution and Political Theory*, 8.

[17] See as cited in Ibid., 148.

[18] See Lasch, "The Idea of Progress Reconsidered," 40.

[19] It is, at this point, another useful source to take a note of Karl Manheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Culture* (London: Lowe and Brydone Ltd, 1962). to understand the subject in hand.

[20] See for this and more in Thyge Winther-Jensen, "Society, Individual Man, and Education," *UltiBase* (October 1998 Edition). Paper originally presented at Education in late modernity: Beyond Narrowing Agendas, Institute of Education, University of London, 10 - 12th June 1998. Available on-line: displayed in http://ultibase.rmit.edu.au/Articles/oct98/winther1.htm

[21] For his famous work, Leviethan see Thomas Hobbes, *Leviethan* (Displayed in http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/h/h68l/), passim.

[22] See as cited in "Brooklyn College Core Curriculum: Section 14: World War I and Cultural Anxiety," in *The Shaping of the Modern World* (Displayed in http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/virtual/core4-14.htm, 2003).

[23] See "Section 5: The Enlightenment," in *Brooklyn College Core Curriculum: The Shaping of the Modern World* (Displayed in http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/virtual/core4-5.htm, 2003), passim. Also see Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract or Principles of Political Right*, trans. G. D. H. Cole (Displayed in http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon.htm, 1762).

[24] See Nicolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. W. K. Marriott (Available on-line: displayed in http://rit.minsk.by/cgi-bin/showtext.pl/Philosophy/Machiavelli/Prince.txt-ps50-pn7), 7.

[25] Thomas More, *Utopia* (New York: The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1975). Available on-line: displayed in ftp://sailor.gutenberg.org/pub/gutenberg/etext00/utopi10.txt

[26] See Oxford Talking Dictionary, *Cd* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1998).

[27] See as cited in Abraham H Maslow, "Editorial Introduction," in *Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences* (Penguin Books Limited. Displayed in http://www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/lsd/maslow.htm, 1964).

[28] See Hume, David. *The Natural History of Religion*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976.

[29] See David Hume, "Editor's Note," in *The Natural History of Religion* (Available on-line: http://www.rosinstrument.com/cgi-bin/showtext.pl/Philosophy/1700-1799/hume-natural-730.txt).

[30] David Hume, "That Polytheism Was the Primary Religion of Men," in *The Natural History of Religion* (Available online: http://www.soci.niu.edu/~phildept/Dye/NaturalHistory.html and http://www.rosinstrument.com/cgi-bin/showtext.pl/Philosophy/1700-1799/hume-natural-730.txt), 23.

[31] See as cited in Andrew Wilson, ed., *Chapter 20: Good Government and the Welfare of Society, World Scripture, a Comparative Anthology of Sacred Texts* (Available on-line: Dispalyed in http://www.tparents.org/Library/Unification/Books/World-S/WS-20-00.htm), passim.

[32] "Consideration For The People" Ibid.

[33] See Kumar, *Utopia& Anti-Utopia: Modern Times*, 10-19 passim.

[34] See Ibid., 17-19 passim.

[35] See Ibid., 10-19 passim. Also see Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, *The City of God* (Available on-line: Displayed in http://www.ccel.org/fathers/NPNF1-02/).

[37] For an article (extracts) on "the Freedom of A Christian" by Luther, Martin see http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/REFORM/FREEDOM.HTM

[38] For the biography of Calvin and more on his discourse see G.R. and Greengrass Potter, M., *John Calvin* (London: Edward Arnold Ltd, 1983).

[39] See articles on Calvin in Richard C. Gamble, *Calvin and Hermeneutics* (Newyork & London: Garland Publishing, 1992).

[40] See "Section 4:The Scientific Revolution: Copernicus to Newton," in *Brooklyn College Core Curriculum: The Shaping of the Modern World* (Displayed in http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/virtual/core4-4.htm, 2003), passim.

[41] See Gamble, *Calvin and Hermeneutics*.

[42] See and compare with "Section 4:The Scientific Revolution: Copernicus to Newton."

[43] See as cited in "Section 5: The Enlightenment," passim.

[44] All the information in this paragraph has been obtained from the following web source. See "Section 8:The Industrial Revolution," in *Brooklyn College Core Curriculum: The Shaping of the Modern World* (Displayed in http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/virtual/core4-5.htm, 2003), passim.

[45] As quoted in Kumar, *Utopia& Anti-Utopia: Modern Times*, 45.

[46] Ibid.

[47] See for more on 'The Socialist Utopia' in Ibid., 49-65.

[48] For the Spiritual Problem of Modern Man see chapter X in C.G Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (London: Percy Lund, Humhires Co. Ltd., 1941).

[49] See Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: The Free Press, 1973). Also see the book Ernest Becker, *Escape from Evil* (New York: The Free Press, 1975). as a companion volume to *The Denial of Death*.

[50] In this regard see "Theological Differences and Schisms" in Abul Ala Maudoodi, "Political Thought in Early Islam," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 665-72.

[51] See for the definition and appearance of externalism and internalism Colin Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran* (Curzon Press, 2000), 43-49.

[52] See Hassan Al-Turabi, ed., *The Islamic State, Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University, 1983), 241.

[53] See and compare with Fazlur Rahman, "Man in Society," in *Major Themes of the Quran* (Chicago: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980), 17.

[54] See for more detail in Ibid., 37-64.

[55] See Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Quran* (Chicago: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980), 18.

[56] See for more on this in Fazlur Rahman, "Man as Individual," in *Major Themes of the Quran* (Chicago: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980), 17-36.

[57] Rahman states "The second aspect which is equally a sine qua non for the Qur'an to achieve its goals concerns the community that surrenders itself to God (Umma Muslima). This is a community constituted of individuals... The Qur'an calls it the mediam community, the best community that has been produced for mankind, for you command the good and prohibit evil and you believe in God." Fazlur Rahman, ed., *Islam: Legacy and Contemporary Challenge, Islam in the Contemporary World*

(Notre Dame, Indiana: Cross Roads Books, 1980), 405. In this regard also see Abdo A. Elkholy, "The Concept of Community in Islam," in *Islamic Perspectives: Studies in the Honour of Mawlana Sayydi Abul A'la Mawdudi*, ed. Khurshid and Zafar Ishaq Ansari Ahmad (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1979), 171-81.

[58] See "The Ideal Society – the Umma" in Ali Shari'ati, *On the Sociology of Islam*, trans. Hamid Algar (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1979), 119-21.

[59] See Rahman, ed., *Islam: Legacy and Contemporary Challenge*, 410-12. Also see John L Esposito, ed., *Introduction: Islam and Muslim Politics*, *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University, 1983), 3-5.

[60] We use the term of renewal as tajdid and reform as islah. We will turn back to differences and interconnections between them at the end of this section.

[61] Rahman, *Major Themes of the Quran*, 62. See and compare with John L Esposito, "The Muslim Community in History," in *Islam: The Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University, 1988), 37-67. Also see "Fazlur Rahman: The Islamic concept of State" in John J. and John L Esposito Donohue, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 261-71.

[62] See for the history and "The Political Form: Problematics of Religion and State" in Hasan Askari, *Society and State in Islam* (New Delhi: 1978), 75-120.

[63] Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 43-44. Also see and compare with Ahmed Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 301-04.

[65] See for this "Part IV" in M.M Sharif, ed., *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, 2 vols. (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999).

[66] See chapter 48 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Sadr Al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra)," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999). It is a matter of interest we should mention here that it is not a matter of disregard Mulla Sadra's discourse do not find a place in the following part of this chapter; it is because of that he is almost completely unknown outside Persia, even in other Muslim countries. See for this Nasr, "Sadr Al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra)," 933.

[67] See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Fakhr Al-Din Razi," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 642-56.

[68] See and compare with Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 45.

[69] See Cyriac K Pullapilly, *Islam in the Contemporary World* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Cross Roads Books, 1980), 16-17.

[70] Seyyid Hossein Nasr, "Islam in the Islamic World Today, an Overview," in *Islam in the Contemporary World*, ed. Cyriac K. Pullapilly (Notre Dame, Indiana: Cross Roads Books, 1980), 16-17 passim. Nasr's idea here has been adapted to support the issue in hand.

[71] See for "internalism and externalism defined" and the critical analyses of it in Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 43-49.

[72] For the dichotomy between islam and Islam see section 3.3.6.

[73] Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 43-44.

[74] See and compare with "Muhammad and the Medinan State" in John L Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (New York: Oxford Un iversity, 1988), 37-40.

[75] See Nasr, "Islam in the Islamic World Today, an Overview," 16-17.

[76] Fazlur Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam," in *The Oxford History of Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999), 640 passim.

[77] It was, according to one of the available sources, this period described as luminous tower towards which the learned and pious of all succeeding ages have been looking back as symbolic of the religious, moral, political and social orders of Islam *par excellence*. See Maudoodi, "Political Thought in Early Islam," 665.

[78] The idea of renewer (mujaddid) has its origin in the hadith: "At the eve of every century, God will raise, a person in this nation (Islam) who would revive the religious way of life." (Abu Davud, Sunan, 36 -Kitab al-Mulahim-, el-hakim, el-mustedrek, 4:522; el-munavi, feyzul-kadir, 2:281 hadith no: 1845)

[79] See for "The Political Thought in Early Islam" chapter 33 in Sharif, ed., *A History of Muslim Philosophy*. Also see Syed Abid Ali Abid, "Political Theory of the Shi'ties," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999).

[80] Holger Weiss, "The 1889-90 Famine and the Mahdiyya in the Sudan: An Attempt to Implement the Principles of an Islamic Economy," *Studia Orientalia* 85, no. 4 (1999). Available on-line: displayed in http://www.valt.helsinki.fi/kmi/Julkais/WPt/1999/WP499.htm

[81] See in "Ideological Worldview of Revivalism" in Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 169-75.

[82] Weiss, "The 1889-90 Famine and the Mahdiyya in the Sudan: An Attempt to Implement the Principles of an Islamic Economy." Available on-line: displayed in http://www.valt.helsinki.fi/kmi/Julkais/WPt/1999/WP499.htm

[83] See for his life and works Muhammad Qamaruddin Khan, "Al-Mawardi," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 717-19.

[84] See and compare with Ibid., 719.

[85] For this and more see Abu al-Hasan Al-Mawardi, *The Ordinances of Government*, trans. Wafaa H. Wahba (Lebanon: Garnet Publishing Ltd., 1996), XIV and so on.

[86] See M. Rukunuddin Hassan, "Nizam Al-Mulk Tusi," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999).

[87] See Ibid., 750-51.

[88] See Ibid., 752-54. Also see Sanderson Beck, *History of Ethics: Age of Belief (Islamic Culture 750-1095)*, vol. Volume 2: 30 BC To 1453 (E-book: Available on-line), passim.

[89] Contrary to how we will consider Ghazali; see al-Ghazali as political theorist in Leonard Binder, "Al-Ghazali," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 778-87.

[90] See for his life and works Serajul Haque, "Ibn Taimiyah," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999).

[91] See Weiss, "The 1889-90 Famine and the Mahdiyya in the Sudan: An Attempt to Implement the Principles of an Islamic Economy."

[92] See and compare with Fazlur Rahman, ed., *Revival and Reform in Islam: A Study of Islamic Fundamentalism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000), 164.

[93] Ibid.

[94] See among the early jurists Abu Hanifah and Abu Yusuf as political thinkers in Abul Ala Maudoodi, "Abu Hanifah and Abu Yusuf," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999).

[95] See chapter 49 Ibn Khaldun as political thinker Muhsin Mahdi, "Ibn Khaldun," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 961-84.

[96] See Malcolm H Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1966), 29. See and compare with Charles & O. Leaman Issawi, "'Abd Al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman and Edward Craig (Routledge, 1998), 4: 623-24.

[97] See and compare with Issawi, "'Abd Al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun," 4:623-26 passim.

[98] See and compare with Mahdi, "Ibn Khaldun," 899.

[99] See for this and more in Ibid., 979 and so on.

[100] See "The ideal state and the reality" in Weiss, "The 1889-90 Famine and the Mahdiyya in the Sudan: An Attempt to Implement the Principles of an Islamic Economy."

[101] Ibid.

[102] See Ian Richard Netton, "Abu Nasr Al-Farabi," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman and Edward Craig (Routledge, 1998).

[103] See and compare with Muhammad Saghir Hasan Al-Ma'sumi, "Al-Farabi," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 704-05. In writing commentaries on the works of the ancient Greeks, Al-Farabi has been one of the most controversial figures of Islamic history; especially with his idea that human reason, the tool of the philosopher, was superior to revelation, the tool of religion, resulting in the advantage of philosophy over religion. For a brief trio (Plato, Aristotle and al-Farabi) extracts on two key ideas: (1) Aristotle's idea of Nature as a source of development toward a mature state; (2) Aristotle's distinction between demonstrative argument and merely persuasive argument see "Islamic political philosophy: Al-Farabi, Avicenna, Averroes" in http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/arab-y67s11.html

[104] Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, *Al-Farabi on the Perfect State (Mabadi Ara Ahlal Madina Al Fadila)*, trans. Richard Walzer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

[105] See and compare with "The Chief' in Al-Ma'sumi, "Al-Farabi," 710-13.

[106] See and compare with Ibrahim Madkour, "Al-Farabi," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 463-64. Also see University of Calgary The Applied History Research Group, "The Arts, Learning, and Knowledge: Farabi," in *The Islamic World*

to 1600 (the Tutorial) (The Department of History in the University of Calgary, 1998). Available on-line: displayed in http://www.ucalgary.ca/applied_history/tutor/islam/learning/

[107] See for more detail Al-Farabi, *Al-Farabi on the Perfect State (Mabadi Ara Ahlal Madina Al Fadila)*.

[108] See and compare with Al-Ma'sumi, "Al-Farabi," 717.

[109] See and compare with Madkour, "Al-Farabi," 467.

[110] See Al-Ma'sumi, "Al-Farabi," 713-15.

[111] See Fazlur Rahman, "Ibn Sina," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999).

[112] See Ahmed Fouad El-Ehwany, "Ibn Rushd," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999).

[115] See and compare with Netton, "Abu Nasr Al-Farabi."

[116] See and compare with Pullapilly, *Islam in the Contemporary World*, 16-18.

[117] It should be noted we have found it difficult to categorise the jurists whether internalists or externalists, since their intention of purifying the religious belief from *bidas* we have mentioned them here.

[118] This view is very similar to Nursi's view of Sufism which we will consider in the third chapter. In this regard see and compare with Kojiro Nakamura, "Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman and Edward Craig (Routledge, 1998).

[119] See Rahman, ed., *Revival and Reform in Islam: A Study of Islamic Fundamentalism*, 130-32. Also see Abu Hamid Al Ghazali, *The Foundations of the Islamic Belief*, trans. Ibn Muhammad Ibn Muhammad (e-Book: Available on-line: displayed in http://www.wponline.org/vil/Books/AG_FIB/default.htm, 1962).

[120] See and compare with M. Saeed Sheikh, "Al-Ghazali," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 621.

[121] See "Ethics" in Abdul Khaliq, "Al-Ghazali: Ethics," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 624-25.

[122] Rahman, ed., *Revival and Reform in Islam: A Study of Islamic Fundamentalism*, 131.

[123] For a useful on-line source of an article about Sufism, its history and the famous orders; among them the Qadiriyah, the Naqshbandiya, the Mawlawiyah, the Bektashiya, the Tijaniya, the Rifa'iya, the Shadiliya, the Chishtiya, the Sanusiya, and the Ahmadiya see "Sufism" in http://www.angelfire.com/az/rescon/SUFIMYSTIC.HTML or http://www.jafariyanews.com/articles/sufism2.htm

[124] See B. A Dar, "'Abd Al-Qadir Jilani and Shihab Al-Din Suhrawardi," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 350, 53 passim. Also see some of his available books in English "The Sublime Revelation (Al-Fath ar-Rabbani)", "Utterances of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (Malfuzat)", "Revelations of the Unseen (Futuh al-Ghaib)", and "Sufficient Provisions for the Seeker" displayed in http://www.isn1.net/bookbyabdalg.html

[125] See Ibid., 352-54.

[126] See chapter 42 Khalifah Abdul Hakim, "Jalal Al-Din Rumi," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999).

[127] See and compare with Rahman, ed., *Revival and Reform in Islam: A Study of Islamic Fundamentalism*, 632-36.

[128] Nicola Ziadeh, *Sanusiyah: A Study of a Revivalist Movement in Islam* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1958), 3.

[129] See for "An Ideology of Revolution" in Islam Martin Kramer, "Fundamentalist Islam at Large: The Drive for Power," *Middle East Quarterly* (June 1996). Available in http://www.meforum.org/article/304

[130] See Nasr, "Islam in the Islamic World Today, an Overview," 7.

[131] Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam," 636-37 passim.

[132] See Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 119.

[133] See for his life Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, "Renaissance in Arabia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon: Muhammad Bin 'Abd Al-Wahhab and His Movement," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 1446-47.

[134] See Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "Arabia.Wahhabis," in *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957). Also see Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 120.

[135] See Kenneth Cragg, "Notes," in *Counsels in Contemporary Islam* (Edinburgh: The University Press, 1967), 199. Also see Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 119.

[136] See "the Islamic Revival in Saudi Arabia" in Pullapilly, *Islam in the Contemporary World*, 151-57.

[137] See and compare with Siddiqi, "Renaissance in Arabia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon: Muhammad Bin 'Abd Al-Wahhab and His Movement," 1447-48.

[138] See and compare with Ibid., 1450.

[139] See Wahhhabi theology in Saudi Arabia, in the website contains the on-line versions of books previously published in hard copy by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress under the Country Studies/Area Handbook Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Army. Available on-line: displayed in http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/satoc.html In this regard also see Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 121.

[140] See and compare with Ibid., 120.

[141] For a historical contextualisation and background see Muhammad Khalil, "Renaissance in North Africa: The Sanusiyah Movement," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 1457-59.

[142] See Ziadeh, *Sanusiyah: A Study of a Revivalist Movement in Islam.*

[143] See Khalil, "Renaissance in North Africa: The Sanusiyah Movement," 1467.

[144] Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam," 639.

[145] See Ziadeh, *Sanusiyah: A Study of a Revivalist Movement in Islam*, 127-35.

[146] See Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 122.

[147] See for the millenarist concept of society Kumar, *Utopianism*, 7-11.

[148] See for more on Mahdism and Millenarian Islamist movements Akbar S Ahmed, *Discovering Islam: Making Sense of Muslim History and Society* (New York: Routledge& Kegan Paul, 1988), 61-64.

[149] See Nasr, "Islam in the Islamic World Today, an Overview," 7-8. See and compare with Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 121.

[150] For the teachings of Ghulam Ahmad see Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam* (Islamabad: Islam International Publications Ltd., 1989).

[151] See Kenneth Cragg, *Counsels in Contemporary Islam* (Edinburgh: The University Press, 1967), 156-58.

[152] Also on Ahmadiyyat see written by one of his admirers, M.Z Khan, *Ahmadiyyat: The Renaissance of Islam* (Oxford: Tabshir Publications, 1978).

[153] See Aharon Layish, "The Legal Methodology of the Mahdi in the Sudan, 1881-1885: Issues in Marriage and Divorce," *Sudanic Africa: A Journal of Historical Sources* Available on-line: displayed in http://www.hf.uib.no/smi/sa/08/8Layish.pdf. Also for a number of available on-line sources on "Mahdi, Sudanese" see http://www.hf.uib.no/smi/IndexM.html#M Also see Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 122-23.

[154] See and compare with Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 122-23.

[155] As cited in Heather Sharkey, "Ahmad Zayni Dahlan's Al Futuhat Al Islamiyye: A Contemporary View of the Sudanese Mahdi," *Sudanic Africa: A Journal of Historical Sources* Available on-line: displayed in http://www.hf.uib.no/smi/sa/08/8Layish.pdf. In this regard, also see Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 123.

[156] See and compare with his life and studies in Muhammad Farman, "Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 873-74. Also see and compare with Serif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 54-56.

[157] See Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam," 637-38. Also see Farman, "Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi," 876. Furthermore for more information about him and his works see the web-site published by his adherents, in http://www.jaihoon.com/sirhindi/

[158] See Farman, "Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi," 882.

[159] See for this and more details on his achievements, influence and his conception of tawhid see Burhan Ahmed Faruqi, *Imam-i Rabbani Mujaddid-i Alf-i Thani Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi 's Conception of Tawhid or the Mujaddid's Conception of Tawhid* (Lahore: Ripon Printing Press, 1940).

[160] See for his life and works Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, "Renaissance in Indo-Pakistan: Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 1557-58.

[161] See for Shah Wali Allah being the spiritual successor of Sirhindi and more in Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 56-57.

[162] See Mi'raj Muhammad, "Shah Wali-Allah's Concept of the Shari'ah," in *Islamic Perspectives: Studies in the Honour of Mawlana Sayydi Abul A'la Mawdudi*, ed. Khurshid and Zafar Ishaq Ansari Ahmad (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1979), 343-57.

[163] See for the above discussions Rahman, ed., *Revival and Reform in Islam: A Study of Islamic Fundamentalism*, 187-202 passim.

[164] See as cited in Siddiqi, "Renaissance in Indo-Pakistan: Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi," 1577. He is said that to be precursor of Iqbal; anyone delving deep into Iqbal's "*Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*" will find the spirit of Shah Wali Allah pervading this work from beginning to end.

[165] See Ibid., 1578.

[166] See and compare with Hafiz A. Ghaffar Khan, "Shah Wali Allah," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman and Edward Craig (Routledge, 1998), 8: 732-35.

[167] Yahya Sadowski, "Just "a Religion": For the Tablighi Jama'at, Islam Is Not Totalitarian," *Brooking Review* 14, no. 3 (Summer 1996).

[168] Barbara Metcalf, "Islam and Women: The Case of the Tablighi Jama'at," *Stanford Humanities Review, SEHR* 5, no. 1 (1996). Available on-line displayed in http://www.stanford.edu/group/SHR/5-1/text/metcalf.html

[169] See for more on this issue in Ziadeh, *Sanusiyah: A Study of a Revivalist Movement in Islam,* 1-10.

[170] See "Modern interpretations of Islam" in Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 117161.

[171] In his article, Arjomand takes a closer look at to the historical contextualisation of Shi'ite traditionalism in a comparative way and gives us some insights about revolutionary politicisation of Shi'ite traditionalism. Said Amir Arjomand, "Traditionalism in Twentieth Century Iran," in *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand (London: Macmillan Press, 1984), 195-232.

[172] See and compare with Jacques Waardenburg, "Islam as a Vehicle of Protest," in *Islamic Dilemmas: Reformers, Nationalists and Industrialization the Southern Shore of the Mediterranean*, ed. Ernest Gellner (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1985), 22.

[173] See as cited in Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, "Militant Islam: A Historical Perspective," in *Islamic Dilemmas: Reformers, Nationalists and Industrialization the Southern Shore of the Mediterranean*, ed. Ernest Gellner (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1985), 87.

[174] See and compare with Arjomand, "Traditionalism in Twentieth Century Iran," 196.

[175] See L. Carl Brown, *Religion and State : The Muslim Approach to Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 81.

[176] See Ibid., 141, 76.

[177] A term which is only a pale reflection of the original when translated as "Ignorance": understood by Mawdudi as the erroneous attitude, the essence of which is to deny the overriding authority of the prophetic guidance in human life. See for more Khurshid and Zafar Ishaq Ansari Ahmad, "Mawlana Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi: An Introduction to His Vision of Islam and Islamic Revival," in *Islamic*

Perspectives: Studies in the Honour of Mawlana Sayydi Abul A'la Mawdudi, ed. Khurshid and Zafar Ishaq Ansari Ahmad (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1979), 367.

[178] See Brown, *Religion and State : The Muslim Approach to Politics*, 49, 176.

[179] See Ibid., 139.

[180] See Ibid., 175.

[181] See L. Carl Brown, "The Historical Bases of Traditional Muslim and Christian Political Theory," in *Religion and State : The Muslim Approach to Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 43-51, and 139 respectively.

[182] See Waardenburg, "Islam as a Vehicle of Protest," 26. Also see Brown, *Religion and State : The Muslim Approach to Politics*, 176.

[183] See and compare with Abun-Nasr, "Militant Islam: A Historical Perspective." Also see Waardenburg, "Islam as a Vehicle of Protest."

[184] See and compare with Said Amir Arjomand, ed., *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam* (London: Macmillan Press, 1984), 25.

[185] As cited in Waardenburg, "Islam as a Vehicle of Protest," 26. About the endogenous factors in the emergence and growth of social movements, together with the shift from nationalism to revolutionary Islam in the contemporary Islamic world, see Arjomand, ed., *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam.*

[186] See and compare with Waardenburg, "Islam as a Vehicle of Protest," 33.

[187] About the direct forms of religious protest within Islam; the reform movements see Ibid., 30-34. Out of the consideration here it is worth having a look at John O. Voll, "Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: *Tajdid* and *Islah*," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L Esposito (New York: Oxford University, 1983) and Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam" for the difference between *islah* (reform) and *tajdid* (renewal) in Islam.

[188] Waardenburg, "Islam as a Vehicle of Protest," 31.

[189] See and compare with Ibid., 37.

[190] Ibid., 41.

[191] See Ibid., 38.

[192] See and compare with Hassan Hanafi, "The Origin of Modern Conservatism and Islamic Fundamentalism," in *Islamic Dilemmas: Reformers, Nationalists and Industrialization the Southern Shore of the Mediterranean*, ed. Ernest Gellner (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1985), 98.

[193] See as cited in Ibid., 93-99.

[194] See Ibid., 99-100.

[195] Youssef Choueiri, "Islamic Fundamentalism," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver and Edward Craig Leaman (Routledge, 1998), 5: 9.

[196] See Elsayed Omran, "Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver and Edward Craig Leaman (Routledge, 1998), 1: 94. Also see Osman Amin, "Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 1484.

[197] See Cragg, *Counsels in Contemporary Islam*, 33. Also see for Afghani's political thought Amin, "Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani," 1487-88.

[198] For this and Afghani as a fundamentalist forerunner of Islam see Kramer, "Fundamentalist Islam at Large: The Drive for Power." Available on-line: http://www.meforum.org/meq/issues/199606 See and compare this with Donohue, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, 16-24.

[199] See Nikki R Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal Ad-Din Al-Afghani* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), 77-81. Also see and compare with Omran, "Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani," 1: 94-96.

[200] Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal Ad-Din Al-Afghani*, 97.

[201] See and compare with Vanessa Martin, *Creating an Islamic State: Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2000), 100.

[203] See Waardenburg, "Islam as a Vehicle of Protest," 28.

[204] See for his life Osman Amin, "Renaissance in Egypt: Muhammad Abdu and His School," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 1490-95.

[205] Jane I Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islam" as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'an Commentaries* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Scholars Press, 1975), 188. Contrary to this idea Abduh being educational and moral reformer see and compare with Amin, "Renaissance in Egypt: Muhammad Abdu and His School," 1502-05.

[206] See Kenneth Cragg, "Muhammad Abduh and Two Successors," in *Counsels in Contemporary Islam* (Edinburgh: The University Press, 1967), 33-47.

[207] See Alber Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age (1798-1939)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 140.

[208] Ibid., 149.

[209] See Cragg, *Counsels in Contemporary Islam*, 33-47.

[210] See Martin, *Creating an Islamic State: Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran*, 101.

[211] He is considered to be the interpreter of the religious school of Muhammad Abduh. See for this and more Amin, "Renaissance in Egypt: Muhammad Abdu and His School," 1509.

[212] Also see for "Rashid Rida: Patriotism, Nationalism, and Group Spirit in Islam" in Donohue, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, 57-59.

[213] See Cragg, "Muhammad Abduh and Two Successors," 43-47.

[214] See Juan R. I. Cole, "Rashid Rida on the Baha'i Faith: A Utilitarian Theory of the Spread of Religions," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (1983).

[215] Abun-Nasr, "Militant Islam: A Historical Perspective," 73-74.

[216] Ibid., 85.

[217] See Hanafi, "The Origin of Modern Conservatism and Islamic Fundamentalism," 101.

[218] Niko Kielstra, "Law and Reality in Modern Islam," in *Islamic Dilemmas: Reformers, Nationalists and Industrialization the Southern Shore of the Mediterranean*, ed. Ernest Gellner (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1985), 14.

[219] See "Hasan al-Banna: The New Renaissance" in Donohue, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, 78-83.

[220] See for these Ibrahim Ibrahim, "Islamic Revival in Egypt and Greater Syria," in *Islam in the Contemporary World*, ed. Cyriac K. Pullapilly (Notre Dame, Indiana: Cross Roads Books, 1980), 162 passim.

[221] See Cragg, *Counsels in Contemporary Islam*, 113-20 passim.

[222] Ibrahim, "Islamic Revival in Egypt and Greater Syria," 162.

[223] Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi, *Intellectuals Origions of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 87. Approaching al-Banna with an unexpected attitude than usual, searching his Sufi transcendents and influence Abu-Rabi provides us some insights into the mind of the great founder of the Ikhwan movement in Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi, "Hasan Al-Banna and the Foundation of the Ikhwan: Intellectual Underpinnings," in *Intellectuals Origions of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 62-91.

[224] For a useful derivation of the sources on those mentioned above see number 3-8 footnotes in Abu-Rabi, *Intellectuals Origions of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World*, 284-85.

[225] As quoted in Yvonne Y Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L Esposito (New York: Oxford University, 1983), 87.

[226] Ibid.

[227] See Waardenburg, "Islam as a Vehicle of Protest," 33 passim. Also see for the main objectives of the movements http://www.ummah.org.uk/ikhwan/

[228] Abun-Nasr, "Militant Islam: A Historical Perspective," 85.

[229] See and compare with Ibid., 86.

[230] See Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islam" as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'an Commentaries*, 204.

[231] See as quoted in Abun-Nasr, "Militant Islam: A Historical Perspective," 86.

[232] Ibid., 87.

[233] See and compare with Ibid.

[234] Ibid.

[235] As cited in Ibid., 88.

[236] See Cragg, *Counsels in Contemporary Islam*, 120-24.

[237] See Ahmad, "Mawlana Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi: An Introduction to His Vision of Islam and Islamic Revival," 371.

[238] Ibid., 374, and also see 71.

[239] Charles J Adams, "Mavdudi and the Islamic State," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 113.

[240] See Ibid. See and compare with Donohue, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, 94-97.

[241] See "The Lectures" in Shari'ati, *On the Sociology of Islam.*

[242] See the official web site of Shariati by his admirers in http://www.shariati.com

[243] See and compare with Ali Shari'ati, "The Ideal Society - the Umma," in *On the Sociology of Islam* (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1979).

[244] Abdulaziz Sachedina, "Ali Shariati: Ideologue of the Iranian Revolution," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L Esposito (New York: Oxford University, 1983), 202.

[245] In this regard, see "Man and Society" in Ibid., 196-205. Also A quoted passage of Shariati on the ideal society is worthy to see the understanding of the concept of an ideal society. In short, the following passage by Shariati is a summary of what I have attempted to explain so far: "The ideal society of Islam is called the Umma... The political philosophy and the form of regime of the Umma is not the democracy of heads, not irresponsible and directionless liberalism which is a plaything of contesting social forces, not putrid aristocracy, not anti-popular dictatorship, not self-imposing oligarchy. It consists rather of "purity of leadership" (not the leader, for that would be fascism), committed and revolutionary leadership, responsible for the movement and the growth of society on the basis of its world-view and ideology, and for the realization of the divine destiny of man in the plan of creation. This is the true meaning of Emamate!" Shari'ati, *On the Sociology of Islam*, 119. From "The Ideal Society - the Umma" By Dr. Ali Shariati Mazinani (Sham') (Translated from Islamshenasi, Vol 1, pp 97-98)

[246] See Reinhard Schulze, *A Modern History of the Islamic World*, trans. Azizeh Azodi (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 2000), 176-79.

[247] See "Revolutionary Politicisation of Shi'ite Traditionalism' in Arjomand, ed., *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*, 221.

[248] As cited in Micheal M.J Fischer, "Imam Khomeini : Four Levels of Understanding," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L Esposito (New York: Oxford University, 1983), 163.

[249] See Martin, *Creating an Islamic State: Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran*, 100-03.

[250] Fischer, "Imam Khomeini : Four Levels of Understanding," 166.

[251] About the belief in the Shi'ite traditionalism that legitimate authority resides in the imam, and the faqihs have authority merely as his deputies see Arjomand, "Traditionalism in Twentieth Century Iran," 221-28. Compare with Abun-Nasr, "Militant Islam: A Historical Perspective," 89-90.

[252] See Fischer, "Imam Khomeini : Four Levels of Understanding," 167 passim.

[253] See Arjomand, ed., *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*, 227.

[254] See Ibid., 222.

[255] See and compare with Arjomand, "Traditionalism in Twentieth Century Iran," 195-96. Also see for "Islamic Government" in Donohue, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, 314-22.

[256] As quoted in Fischer, "Imam Khomeini : Four Levels of Understanding," 167.

[257] Ibid., 171.

[258] See Arjomand, ed., *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*, 221-28. Compare with Abun-Nasr, "Militant Islam: A Historical Perspective," 89.

[259] See Abun-Nasr, "Militant Islam: A Historical Perspective," 89.

[260] See Kramer, "Fundamentalist Islam at Large: The Drive for Power."

[261] Al-Turabi, ed., *The Islamic State*, 241.

[262] Khurshid Ahmad, "The Nature of the Islamic Resurgence," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 223.

[263] See Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islam" as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'an Commentaries*, 204.

[264] Ibid., 205.

[265] See and compare with Riffat Hassan, "Muhammad Iqbal," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman and Edward Craig (Routledge, 1998), 4: 863-68.

[266] See Cragg, *Counsels in Contemporary Islam*, 48-66.

[267] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Javid Iqbal : Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1951). Available on-line: http://www.wponline.org/vil/Books/MI_RRTI/Default.htm

[268] See and compare with "Philosophy of the Self" in Hassan, "Muhammad Iqbal," 4: 865.

[269] See and compare with Jalal Jalalizade, "A Comparison of the Ideas of Bediuzzaman and Muhammad Iqbal," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 171.

[270] See Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 141.

[271] John L Esposito, "Muhammad Iqbal and the Islamic State," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L Esposito (New York: Oxford University, 1983), 177-78.

[272] See and compare with Iqbal's "Political Philosophy" in Hassan, "Muhammad Iqbal," 4: 866. Also see and compare with "Muhammad Iqbal: A separate Muslim State in the Subcontinent" in Donohue, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, 91-93.

[273] See John L Esposito, "Claiming the Center: Political Islam in Transition," *Harvard International Review* 19 (Spring 1997): 8.

[274] See Rahman, ed., *Islam: Legacy and Contemporary Challenge*, 410-12.

[275] See Nasr, "Islam in the Islamic World Today, an Overview," 18.

[276] See and compare with Ibid., 4, 18.

[277] See and compare with Brown, *Religion and State : The Muslim Approach to Politics*, 176.

[278] See and compare with Abun-Nasr, "Militant Islam: A Historical Perspective," 88.

[279] See and compare with Hanafi, "The Origin of Modern Conservatism and Islamic Fundamentalism," 101.

[280] See Ibid., 101-02 passim.

[281] For more on these see chapter 3.

[282] See and compare with Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 205.

[283] See chapter 5 for more on this issue.

Chapter II SAID NURSI: HIS LIFE AND WORKS

2.1 SAID NURSI'S LIFE (1876–1960)

According to his followers, Said Nursi was the *mujaddid* (renewer of Islam) for the fourteenth century in the *Rumi* (lunar) calendar, and was given the title "Bediuzzaman" (regenerator or nonpareil of our times).[1] Nursi was said to be divinely appointed by Allah (God) in order to renew Islamic rules in accordance with the mentality of the age.[2] To the Nurcus, he was "an exceptional religious scholar who held up a light both to the period in which he lived, and to today, and to the future".[3] "Just as almost all the prophets can be cited as examples of this claim of ours, so too Muslims scholars like Imam-i A'zam and Ahmed ibn Hanbel are examples corroborating it. The best example in our own century of those who have not been properly understood in their times is Bediuzzaman Said Nursi."[4] On the other hand, Nursi's detractors have called him variously a hypocrite and a liar,[5] one whose life is full of contradictions,[6] one who wished to restore a theocratic Islamic state,[7] 'a Kurd who served Communists', and one who led people to anarchy.[8] For others, Nursi is the religious leader who opposed the secularist reforms of the Republic,[9] one involved in reactionary activities,[10] the leader of the most organised and widespread group opposed to the secular system of government, and one with scant formal or informal education.[11] In contrast with these views, according to the German orientalist Professor Ursula Spuler, Nursi was a great scholar of the twentieth century.[12] To Professor Anna Masala, Said Nursi was one of the great religious masters of Anatolia, comparable with Mevlânâ (Rumi) and Yunus Emre,[13] the one charged with the duty, in the second half of the nineteenth century, of renewing and

reforming Islam.[14] He was also one of the most prominent of the great *mujahids* to have waged *jihad* to preserve the values of Islam[15], the great Islamic propagandist,[16] and the *kalam* (theology) scholar of the modern age.[17] Hakan Yavuz, Professor of Political Science at The University of Utah, describes Nursi as the founder of the most powerful text-based faith movement active in Turkey,[18] while Professor Serif Mardin of Sabanci University has maintained that "Said Nursi's contribution was a reaffirmation of the norms set by the Qur'an in such a way as to re-introduce the traditional Muslim idiom of conduct and of personal relations into an emerging society of industry and mass communications."[19]

Concerning the many recent studies have been carried out on Said Nursi's life, the objection could be raised that the writings are mostly "hagiographic": in other words, the biographies have been written either by his admirers or by opponents who used the events described in them to cast doubt on Nursi's reputation. The earliest hagiography, an eight-page pamphlet published in 1918, was *'Bediuzzaman' in Tarihceyi Hayatindan Bir Hulasadir* (A Summary of the Life of 'Bediuzzaman').[20] The second was written the following year by Nursi's nephew, Abdurrahman, and is entitled *'Bediuzzaman' in Tarihceyi Hayati* (The Biography of 'Bediuzzaman').[21] The first Latin Turkish script book was Edip Esref Fergan's *Risale-i Nur Muellifi Said Nur* (The Author of the *Risale-i Nur*: Said Nur),[22] published in 1952. *The Official Biography of Said Nursi* was written by a group of his closest students, primarily Mustafa Sungur and Zübeyir Gunduzalp, in 1958.[23] It was then included in the collection of *Risale-i Nur* and has become one of the main sources of information about his life, especially for his followers. Consisting mainly of letters written by Nursi and his followers, it also includes records of legal defences. According to the biographers, their account was not written to present Nursi as a person possessing

supernatural powers. Rather, it was written to point out the function and significance of the *Risale-i Nur*, quoting Nursi himself: "No need to give personal details. Let only the subjects in regard to the cause of the *Risale-i Nur* be mentioned."[24] Throughout much of his writings, Nursi wants attention to be focused either on the *Risale-i Nur* or on the collective personality of a community rather than on a single personality such as himself.[25] Nevertheless, the official biography still includes a great amount of detail in relation to Nursi's personal life.

Two English hagiographic studies followed the official biography. The first was a pamphlet published in 1963,[26] and the second was a summary published in 1974 of the Official Biography, entitled *The Author of Risala-i Nur.*[27]

The first serious chronological account of Nursi's life was written by a second-generation Nurcu, Necmeddin Sahiner. Sahiner undertook meticulous research of Nursi's life and visited many places where he lived or stayed during court actions, imprisonment or periods of exile, as well as interviewing his students and numerous people who saw or visited him. For more than thirty years, Sahiner has been researching on Said Nursi. He published his first study in 1974, a biography entitled *Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediüzzaman Said Nursi* (Bediuzzaman Said Nursi together with His Unknown Aspects), which is one of my three sources for this chapter.[28] Sahiner has published seven books of interviews and memoirs connected with Said Nursi: *Nurs Yolu*[29] (The Nurs Road); *Bediüzzaman Said Nursi ve Nurculuk Hakkinda Aydinlar Konusuyor* (Intellectuals Speak About Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and the *Risale-i Nur* Movement); *Türk ve Dunya Aydinlarinin Gozuyle Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Bediuzzaman Said Nursi in the Eyes of Turkish and Other Intellectuals); and five volumes of *Son Sahitler Bediuzzaman Said Nursi'yi Anlatiyor* (The Last Witnesses Speak about Bediuzzaman Said Nursi).[30] Sahiner's works have become the

main source for works in other languages such as English, Italian, Arabic and Urdu.[31] In 1976, a sixteen-page pamphlet in English, giving a very brief account of Nursi's life, was written by Maryam Jameelah entitled *A Great Islamic Movement in Turkey: Badee-u-Zaman Said Nursi,* and in 1978 Professor Anna Masala wrote an Italian biography of Nursi entitled *Bediuzzaman Said Nursi of Turkey.*[32] In 1980 a prominent Turkish historian, Cemal Kutay,[33] published the first of his several books on the subject, *Cagimizda Bir Asri Saadet Muslumani: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kuran Ahlakina Dayali Yasama Duzeni)*[34] (A Muslim of the Era of the Prophet in Our Times: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi).

Since the 1980s, much has been said and written about Said Nursi's life and the Nur movement. Most of these books, articles, conference proceedings and MA and Ph.D. theses[35] give at least a brief account of Nursi's life.[36] Among the books, which number more than ninety,[37] are: *Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* by Yavuz Bahadiroglu, *Son Devrin Din Mazlumlari*, by Necip Fazil Kisakurek,[38] *Said Nursi*, by Osman Yuksel Serdengeçti,[39] and *Anatolia Junction* by Fred Reed.[40] A number of these books have been published by Nurcu publishing houses. Ali Mermer's Ph.D. thesis, entitled "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey Today", as well as dedicating an entire appendix to Nursi's life based on Sahiner's six-edition *Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediüzzaman Said Nursi* (Bediuzzaman Said Nursi Together with His Unknown Aspects), examines current Nurcu publications.[41] Mermer estimates that, by the end of 1982, just one publishing house, Yeni Asya, currently one of more than ten, had published 286 books[42] on various subjects.[43] He also remarks that

these books serve Nurcus in different ways: firstly they are the second source of the culture for the Nurcus and their children; secondly most of these books are intended to increase the readers' capacity to understand the *Risale-i Nur* better; and thirdly depending on the profession and position of the person to whom Nurcus may want to introduce Nurculuk, when it is not suitable to give him the *Risale-i Nur*, then one of these books may be used to arouse his interest in it.[44]

In 1989, Professor Serif Mardin wrote a book entitled *Religion and Social Change in Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi,*[45] arguably the best current study of Nursi and Nurculuk[46] and the second of my sources for this chapter. Professor Mardin commenced his sociological research on the subject of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and Nurculuk (the *Risale-i Nur* movement) at the suggestion of the thinker Cemil Meric,[47] one of the most famous Turkish intellectuals. His book is the fruit of ten years' work in this field. It was translated into Turkish and published in Turkey in 1992 under the title *Turkiye'de Din ve Toplumsal Degisme: Bediüzzaman Said Nursi Olayi.*[48]

Mardin deals with parallel developments in a number of fields, such as the world communications revolution, political and social reform in Turkey, Turkish intellectual development and religious history, relevant to a study of Said Nursi's life.[49] He also attempts to clarify the origins of his influence. "My choosing him", writes Mardin, "as the subject of a biography was his understanding this world problem before others, as much as for the wide dimensions of his Islamic thought."[50]

The third main source for this chapter is the hagiographic study *The Author of the Risale-i Nur, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, written in English by Sukran Vahide and published in 1992.[51] All the books mentioned above, like Nursi himself, divided his life into three quite different periods.[52] In the present chapter, these periods will be linked to four different periods dealing with the crises and developments of

intellectual and social life and the struggle which the Islamic world passed through in the twentieth century.[53] One problem which any biographer of Nursi's encounters is that some details of Nursi's life, particularly in the the "Old Said" period, are still unknown. There are also some undated treatises.

Since this thesis is an attempt to understand the foundations of Said Nursi's thought system and his ideals for "human society", in this chapter it will be necessary to link his life to his ideas and varied writings in each period and to find "the parallels between the general course of the Islamic world this century and the course of Nursi's life".[54] It is not possible to abstract Nursi's life from the political and social conditions which affected him, since in the age in which he lived radical political and social changes occurred.[55]

In the first period, during which Said Nursi was growing to manhood, the Islamic world was undergoing various crises, involving Western domination over the whole Muslim world, the two Balkan Wars, the Trablusgarb resistance, the First World War and the Ottoman collapse, the War of Independence in Turkey, and the Caliphate movements based in India.[56] Moreover, while theoretical debates concerning the political reconstruction of the Islamic world mostly involved the Istanbul–Egypt–India axis, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani was striving at reform, and ideas of constitutionalism and freedom were current. From his early life until 1918, with these events occurring around him, Nursi became actively involved in politics in the first period of his life, which he referred to as the period of "Old Said". During this period, he believed that the only way to serve religion was through politics.[57]

The period between 1918, when he returned from captivity in Russia, and 1925, when he began to experience internal crises, represents the second phase of

Nursi's life, referred to as the "Crises of Conscience"[58] or "Transition" Period.[59] During this time he was exploring a new method of Islamic service which was characterised by a turning away from political involvement, despite the dramatic events occurring around him: the Ottoman collapse, the War of Independence in Turkey and the collapse of the Caliphate. The third main period of his life, that of the "New Said",[60] began in 1925 and continued till 1949. This period saw the abolition of the institution of the Caliphate, symbol of the unity of the Islamic world. All the Islamic lands were colonised with the exception of Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan, and in these countries the political cultures and institutions which ensured that Islam was a true political and social force were abandoned.[61] After the founding of the Turkish Republic and the coming to power of a new regime whose basic intention was to westernise Turkey and extirpate Islam, the next twenty-five years represented for Said Nursi a period of exile, imprisonment and oppression.[62] He responded with a new method of service to Islam as a "New Said", turning away from politics, concentrating on the struggle to save and strengthen belief in God and other truths of belief, and writing the *Risale-i Nur* collection, [63] which is the main source of the present thesis.[64]

The emergence of a "Third Said" coincided, in late 1949, with the fourth and final phase of his life. A very interesting similarity between the general direction of the Islamic world and his own emergence as the "Third Said" is mentioned by Nursi himself at the time of his Afyon prisonment.[65] These last ten years of Nursi's life differed from the period of the "New Said" in so far as Nursi again took a closer interest in social and political matters, synthesising his former thought in the figure of an "Ustad" (Master) who "guides politicians and shows them the right path".[66] In this

period, Nursi also points to the society which called the Nurcus and comments on certain events that occurred in Turkey and elsewhere.[67]

2.2 THE FIRST PERIOD AND THE OLD SAID (1876–1918)[68]

Said Nursi was born in a small village of Nurs, in the province of Bitlis in eastern Turkey. A few different dates of his birth are given in available sources, but mostly it is reported as 1293 in the Rumi calendar then in use in the Ottoman Empire, that is, 1876.[69]

Nursi's father's name was Mirza and his mother was called Nuriye. His father was an Eastern Turkey village *molla* with seven children. They were a Kurdish family, and Nursi was the fourth child. The girls were Dürriye and Hanim, who were the two eldest, and Mercan, who was the last in the family. The boys were his elder brother, Abdullah, and his two younger brothers Mehmed and Abdülmecid. All Nursi's brothers and sisters, except for the youngest brother, Abdülmecid, died before him.[70] Nevertheless, there is no record of his family containing a "*Sayyid*" (a direct descendant of the Prophet) family on either side, although in several places in Nursi's works he traces his ancestry to the family of the Prophet Muhammad.[71]

Up until the age of eight or nine, Nursi lived with his family in Nurs. He began his education at the age of nine. Since Nurs was a very small village there was no *medrese*, so Nursi left his family for the village of Tag and Molla Mehmed Emin Efendi's *medrese*. Following a fight with another student, however, he did not remain there long. After one year, he went to the village of Pirmis to continue his studies full-time, and then set off for the Hizan Shaykh, the Naqshbandi Seyyid Nur Muhammad Efendi,[72] the grandson of the second person in the chain of authorised successors of Mevlana Halid.[73] After remaining for a while in this *medrese*, Nursi

went to the village of Nurshin with his elder brother, Abdullah. During the winter he spent in Nurs, Nursi had a powerful dream of the Prophet and, filled with the desire for education, he decided to leave his home village again. He set off for the village of Arvas, and thence travelled to Shaykh Emin Efendi's *medrese* in Bitlis in 1888.[74] Because of his unsettled personality he again left and set off for the Mir Hasan Veli *medrese* at Müküs, whose principal was Molla Abdülkerim. He saw that the new lower-grade students were accorded no importance, and once more felt impelled to leave, this time for Vastan, near Van. After a month in Gevash, he set off for Dogu Bayezit, a small town in the province of Erzurum. Up until this time he had only studied the principles of Arabic grammar and syntax.[75] According to Sahiner, he started his real studies here, in Dogu Bayezit.[76]

Nursi undertook a three-month full-time course under the supervision of Shaykh Mehmed Jalali, with whom he studied all the books being taught in the *medreses* at that time, but only in a general way. When asked about this by his master, he replied:

> I am not able to read and comprehend all these books. But these books are caskets of jewels, treasure chests, and you have its key. What I need is a clue to its contents so that at first I want to know what topics these books mention and then I will choose those which are appropriate to my character.[77]

By means, however, of this three-month course, Nursi had provided himself with the foundations of the religious science on which his later thought and works were based. At the end of the three months he received his *icazet* (diploma) from Shaykh Mehmed Jalali, the Principal of Beyazid *medrese*, and became Molla Said.[78] Afterwards, he wanted to go to Baghdad to visit its famous religious scholars, and

particularly the tomb of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani, the first of Nursi's two spiritual masters. On his way to Baghdad, he came upon Bitlis, where he attended the lectures of Shaykh Mehmed Emin Efendi for two days. The shaykh asked him to wear the dress of a scholar. In eastern Anatolia at that time the turban was the sign of the supreme diploma and was the exclusive right of teachers. Molla Said did not assent, answering that, since he was not yet mature, he did not think it was fitting for him to wear the dress of a respected teacher. How could he be a teacher while still a child?[79] Molla Said did not achieve his aim of visiting Baghdad. Instead, he started to travel from place to place and to visit a number of famous local *ulema*. At his first stop, in Siirt, Nursi was challenged by the local *ulema* for the first time, and was successful in debating with them and answering all their questions. He then went to the *medrese* of the famous Molla Fethullah Efendi and was examined by Molla Fethullah on the books he had read and learnt, answering all the questions perfectly. Hereafter, he became known as "Said-i Meshur" (Said the Famous).[80]

Nursi set off for Bitlis again, and remained there for a time in the *medrese* of Shaykh Emin. During this time, as his fame grew, so did his difficulties. A number of the local *ulemas* became jealous of him on account of his fame and popularity. It is reported that he was once more tested by Shaykh Emin. After he passed the test, he went to the Kureysh mosque and began to preach. This opportunity provided him with a set of followers and made him more popular.[81] As a consequence, two factions formed in the town, those who supported him and those who supported Shaykh Emin. Finally, owing to pressure from the local political authorities he made his way to Tillo. From there he continued his travels, journeying to Cizre and then Mardin.

At this point a historical contextualisation of the Eastern province of late Ottoman is required.[82] A missionary, Mrs Isabella Bird Bishop, who visited Bitlis and the area in 1891 wrote:

> Bitlis is one of the roughest and most fanatical and turbulent of Turkish cities, but the present government, Rauf Pasha, is a man of energy and has reduced the town and neighbourhood to some degree of order.[83]

The Eastern province in late Ottoman times was under the political and economic subjection of tribally organised Kurds, so that tribal structure was superimposed on relations of quasi-feudal dominance.[84] In the nineteenth century, the chieftains of big tribes competed with each other for a following among the tribesmen and for power derived from the Ottoman state. According to Bruinessen, the only exception was action led by the shaikhs, the only authorities enjoying the loyalty of sections of the populace numbering more than one tribe.[85] The shaikhs in the region derived their political and economic leverage from association with the Divine.[86] Through the religious orders in the region they were in contact with the other parts of the region and were therefore potentially capable of mobilising large masses. According to Bruinessen, although many *dervish* orders existed in the Islamic world, in the Eastern region in the late Ottoman period only two were present, the Qadiri and the Naqshbandi orders.[87] Bruinessen, in his study *Agha, Shaikh and State*,[88] offers us some insights into the socio-political changes in the region and gives us some clue as to why many people turned to religion (i.e. to the shaikhs) to find the security and assurance that was so lacking in their lives. He also deals with the question of why the Naqshbandi order spread so rapidly in the region.[89]

In Mardin, Molla Said was "awakened politically" for the first time when he became aware of the wider issues facing the Islamic world through meetings with travellers who were passing through Mardin.[90] The first was a follower of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, one of the prominent architects of the Muslim reformist tradition; the second was a member of the Sanusi *tarikat*, which had provided a religious framework for the formation of a modern nation state in North Africa.

The Governor was not pleased with Nursi's activities in Mardin and sent him to Bitlis under guard in 1892 or 1893. His abilities and his characteristically fearless defence of right impressed the Governor, Omer Pasha, who invited him to stay in his residence in order to teach his children. During this stay, he had an opportunity to study all the Muslim classics and to improve his knowledge of the Islamic sciences. He also began to examine the physical sciences. After staying two years at the Governor's residence in Bitlis, he moved to Van, where he stayed for the next fifteen years at the invitation of the Governor, Hasan Pasha. After the appointment of Ishkodrali Tahir Pasha as Governor, he stayed with him in the Governor's residence for a long period. Tahir Pasha was a respected official of Sultan Abdulhamid II and was a patron of learning. He also followed developments in modern science and owned an extensive library. He was the first state official to perceive Nursi's great talent and potential and continued to encourage and support him up until his death in 1913.[91] While in Van, Molla Said continued studying Islamic sciences in depth. During this time, it is said, he repeated eighty-ninety books which he had memorised and they became for him steps via which he was able to ascend to the truths of the Qur'an directly. He then stated: "I do not need any other thing any more. The Qur'an alone was sufficient for me."[92] He also took the opportunity to read the newspapers and journals supplied to the Governor's office and to use the Tahir Pasha's library. As

a consequence, he gained greater knowledge of the broader issues and problems facing Ottoman society and the Islamic world. It was probably here that he for the first time realised that the traditional form of Islamic theology was inadequate for answering the doubts concerning Islam that had been raised by historical materialism, and also that the study of modern science was necessary. He took advantage of the facilities at his disposal to study the positive sciences, including history, geography, mathematics, geology, physics, chemistry, astronomy and philosophy.[93]

The official biography states that it was during these years that he was given the title "Bediuzzaman"[94] by the *ulema*, owing to the speed with which he comprehended the new secular sciences. Believing in the necessity of establishing a new method of teaching, he developed his ideas on educational reform and created his own particular method of teaching, combining the religious sciences with modern sciences in the belief that the positive sciences would corroborate and strengthen the truths of religion.[95] This objective was of the utmost importance to him.

One of the trusted advisers of the Ottoman palace, Yahya Nuzhet Pasha, must have noticed Molla Said's activities and popularity in eastern Anatolia, and after meeting with him in Erzincan he decided to suggest him as an adviser to the select group of the Sultan Abdulhamid II. He therefore wrote a letter of recommendation to Sultan Abdulhamid's Imperial "Birdkeeper", Kuscubasi Mustafa Bey, and gave it to Nursi.[96] Nursi also had his own reasons for moving to the capital city of the Ottoman Empire. For he was of the opinion that establishing a university in eastern Anatolia where his new method of teaching would be practised, that is, where modern science would be taught side by side with the religious sciences, was essential in order to deal with the ignorance and backwardness of the eastern provinces, and with social and political problems.[97] Although Nursi was not successful on this occasion, he

nevertheless began a friendship with Mustafa Bey's son, Esref Sencer Kusçubasi, who in later years became a leading figure in the secret service of the Young Turks (*Teskilat-i Mahsusa*). Nursi's ideas concerning education are explained in greater detail in Chapter 5. After spending a year and a half in Istanbul, he set off for Van again, where he remained, teaching in his *medrese* (*Horhor Medresesi*) and reading newspaper articles about Islam and the Islamic world. He returned to Istanbul in 1907.

According to one of the available sources, Said Nursi's aim in going to the Ottoman capital a second time was to try to gain official support for his idea of an Islamic university, the Medresetü'z-Zehra, in eastern Anatolia.[98] On the other hand, Professor Mardin suggests that it was Nursi's desire to present a proposal for reform to the Sultan which prompted him to move to Istanbul.[99] Nursi settled in a *han* called Shekerji Han[100] which, according to Mardin, was a centre for Muslim intellectuals such as Mehmed Akif, the poet who supplied the words of the Turkish national anthem and one of the theoreticians of an Islamic revival. Nursi put an attractive sign on the door of his room in the Shekerji Han: "Here all questions are answered, all problems are solved, but no questions are asked."[101] As expected, many people and scholars visited him to ask the questions which they had prepared. The ensuing debates made him famous among religious and political leaders, who even "sought his assistance in connection with questions asked of them by the Commander in Chief of the Japanese Army".[102]

Nursi's stay in Istanbul represented his greatest opportunity to publicise the social and educational problems facing the East. On this occasion he succeeded in presenting a petition reporting his ideas on reform to the Sultan.[103] In it he wrote:

> The religious sciences are the light of the conscience, and the modern sciences are the light of the reason. The truth becomes manifest through the combining of the two. The students' endeavour will take flight on these two wings. When they are separated it gives rise to bigotry in the one, and wiles and scepticism in the other.[104]

Nursi's educational revivalism will be dealt with in more detail below.

Towards the end of the existence of the Ottoman Empire Istanbul and the Sultanate were at the centre of political intrigues. As Nursi became respected by many people and by the Istanbul *ulama*, there were of course rivals who were jealous of his success. So, when in the meeting with Sultan Abdulhamid the language Nursi used and the petition he proposed were extremely strong and bold, he was sent to the Yildiz Palace Court Martial and from there to the Topkapi Mental Asylum.[105] Declared sane, he was then offered some money and a monthly salary, which he rejected saying: "I am not a beggar after a salary; I could not accept it even if it is a thousand liras. I have not come here for myself. I came for my nation. Also this bribe that you want to give me is hush-money."[106]

Later we find Said Nursi in Salonica, where he stayed as a guest in the house of Manyasizade Refik Bey, who was to be Minister of Justice in the first Cabinet following the proclamation of the Constitution, and who was at that time Chairman of the Central Committee of the Committee of Union and Progress in Salonica. Three days after the Young Turks' military coup against Abdulhamid, Said Nursi delivered a speech entitled "Address to Freedom" in Beyazid in Istanbul, later repeating it in Hurriyet Meydani (Freedom Square) in Salonica. It was organised by the Committee of Union and Progress, but although Nursi was one of the committee's supporters he nevertheless criticised the corrupting social consequences of their misrule.[107]

Said Nursi actually saw the support of constitutionalism as a religious obligation, for as long as it was within the sphere of the Islamic injunctions, it was "the means of upholding the might of Islam and exalting the Word of God."[108] In his view, upholding the Word of God (*Ila-yi Kelimetullah*) is dependent on material progress, and since constitutionalism was the way to achieve progress, it was incumbent on all to work for it.

Nursi became very involved in political and social life. Between the years 1908 and 1910, making use of the new freedom of thought and expression, he delivered speeches, addressed gatherings, and published many articles in the newspapers of the day and in journals.[109] He also took part in the activities of two societies, Talebe-i Ulum Cemiyeti (Society for Students of Science) and Ittihadi Muhammed-i Cemiyeti (Society for the Unity of Muhammadans).[110] The latter organisation was accused of inciting the 31 March Incident. Said Nursi had been present at its opening ceremony. He subsequently delivered a speech there and became active in the society, publishing articles in its famous newspaper, *Volkan*. After the 31 March Revolt, he was arrested and placed on trial by the Military Court. The leading members of the society were tried and hanged. Said Nursi expected to be hanged too, but after his long defence speech, later published under the title *Iki Mektebi Musibetin Sehadetnamesi veya Divani Harbi Orfi ve Said Nursi* (The Testimony of Two Schools of Misfortune or the Military Court and Said Nursi),[111] he was acquitted. Afterwards, he did not stay long in Istanbul and set off for his native Van.

During the next two years, Nursi travelled throughout the Eastern Provinces and addressed gatherings in the towns to explain and give lessons on the freedom movement and constitutionalism, maintaining that these principles were not contrary

to Islamic injunctions. He invited questions, which he then answered, collecting these debates under the title *Munazarat* (Debates), and *Muhakemat* (Reasonings), which were published in 1913 and 1911, respectively.[112] In early 1911 he visited Damascus, where (at the insistence of the Damascus *ulema*) he preached his famous Damascus Sermon[113] in the Umayyad mosque. Ten thousand people were reported to be present, including a hundred *ulema.*[114] The sermon was printed twice in the following week in Damascus. It considered the backwardness of the Islamic world, and prescribed "six words" taken from "the pharmacy of the Qur'an" as the remedy for the "six dire sicknesses". These Nursi diagnosed as follows:

> Firstly, the coming to life and rise of despair and hopelessness in social life. Secondly, the death of truthfulness in social and political life. Thirdly, love of enmity. Fourthly, not knowing the luminous bonds that bind the believers to one another. Fifthly, despotism, which spreads like various contagious diseases. And sixthly, restricting endeavour to what is personally beneficial.[115]

The treatment for these dire sicknesses consisted of hope and moral endeavour.[116]

Said Nursi again set off for Istanbul via Beirut and Izmir, to realise his dream of founding the Medresetuz Zehra, or Eastern University, in eastern Anatolia. This time he almost succeeded. When Sultan Mehmed Reshad set out on his famous Rumelia journey, Nursi was invited as the representative of the Eastern Provinces of the Ottoman Empire. During this journey he was granted 19,000 gold liras to establish the University.[117] On his return to Van, he personally selected a site for the university, but soon afterwards the project was abandoned owing to the Balkan War.[118]

Before being sent to Tripoli by the Young Turks to encourage the Sanusi resistance against the Italian occupiers, Nursi was a very active member in the Young

Turks secret service.[119] This was founded in 1897 in Mecca to produce Islamic unity and to support pan-Islamic policy. The head of the service was one of Nursi's old friends, Esref Sencer Kuscubasi. Nursi served in the secret service until 1922, when he went to Ankara, accompanying a group of twenty members. Nursi was one of five who signed the Jihad Fetva, calling all Muslims to join the war in support of the Caliph against the Central Powers of the First World War.[120]

Enver Pasha, Minister of War between 1914 and 1918, wanted Said Nursi to mobilise a militia, consisting of four to five thousand men, on the Caucasian front. Nursi made his own students the centre of this force, and led them on the Caucasian front in 1916.[121] During the war he wrote the incomplete Qur'anic commentary *Isharatul Icaz* (Signs of Miraculousness), despite the unfavourable physical conditions at the front.[122]

Nursi was wounded in battle, and after the fall of Bitlis was captured and sent to a prisoner-of-war camp in Kostroma. For the next two years he was a captive, but, taking advantage of the disorder caused by the Communist Revolution, he managed to escape and, via Petersburg, Warsaw, Berlin and Vienna, he arrived back in Istanbul. He was awarded a War Medal for his war service.[123]

CONCLUSION

When we look at the first period of Nursi's life from another angle, some internal and external factors are revealed which have a bearing on his personality. Said Nursi was born in the last years of the Ottoman Empire. The Caliphate had become the main target of foreign forces, and the collapse of the "sick man" was now imminent. Said Nursi grew up in such an atmosphere.

He received his early education from various *medreses* in the eastern province, some of them associated with the Naksibendi order.[124] At the age of 8 or 9, despite the fact that all his relatives were members of Naksibendi, Nursi started to take sides against them in favour of Abdulkadir Ceylani (Abd al Qadir al Jilani) and Imam Rabbani Ahmad Sirhindi, whom Nursi called among the highest saints.[125] As Professor Mardin points out, this detail might have been added to his biography later, by Nursi himself. However, Mardin also argues that this would have been to underline the idea that Nursi had brought many new elements to Halidi teachings and therefore deserved to be seen as the founder of a new branch. Such a claim of originality is, according to Mardin, supported by Nursi's practice of citing Sirhindi more often than Mevlana Halid.[126] Nevertheless, as will be argued in later chapters, Nursi always pointed out that he understood the modern age not to be the age of Sufism.[127] In relation with this there was another notable evidence to restate that is the conversation held by between Nursi and Shaykh Mehmed Jalali of Dogu Bayezit *medrese* mentioned earlier in this chapter.[128] In his conversation Nursi gives a clue to the reasons for his inability to settle in any *medrese*. According to Professor Mardin this showed a psychological process, namely a remarkably modern perception of a peasant boy born in a village of twenty houses of the insufficiency of the existing education system.[129] Professor Mardin concludes: "Gradually, then, Said was moving towards a rejection of the *sheyhly* social structure into which he was born and was gathering strength from sources which were part of that world but which hovered above the existing set of social relations controlled by seyhs."[130]

This was the period when he commenced his "first political life". The expression is, according to Mardin, possibly related to a widening of his intellectual

horizons which resulted from meetings with two students of theology who were passing through Mardin.[131]

During this first period of his life, "Said Nursi began to sense the growing need for a fresh exposition and defence of the Qur'anic message in the face of modern materialism".[132] It was probably after these educational experiences that he realised the need for a new Qur'anic commentary, which he thought would prove the truths of belief by a new method which would blend science and the truths of religion, addresses the mentality of modern man and confront materialist philosophy.[133]

In this period, in the early years of the twentieth century, Nursi also made the transition from teaching to writing.[134]

2.3 THE SECOND PERIOD: INTERNAL TRANSITION (1918–1925)

After arriving in Istanbul, Said Nursi was immediately appointed a member of the Darü'l-Hikmeti'l-Islamiye (Academy of Higher Islamic Studies) as a nominee of the Army.[135] Darü'l-Hikmeti'l-Islamiye was a learned institution, founded in order to determine solutions to the problems facing the Islamic world and to respond to attacks upon it, to issue publications informing the people of Turkey about their religious duties, and to uphold Islamic morality. Branches were opened in all provinces and major towns. It comprised nine members, including Mehmed Akif, its first Secretary (Baskatip), Izmirli Ismail Hakki, Elmalili Hamdi Yazir, Mustafa Sabri Efendi and Saadettin Pasha. The members, all prominent *ulema*, were divided into three committees: jurisprudence (*fiqh*), ethics (*ahlak*), and theology (*kalâm*).[136] It was at this time that Said Nursi, with the support of Enver Pasha, the Minister of War, had his Qur'anic commentary *Signs of the Miraculous* published.[137]

In 1920, Nursi was appointed to the rank of Mahrec by Sultan Vahdettin on the recommendation of Musa Kazim Bey, the Shaykhü'l-Islam,[138] and continued to publish writings dealing with the causes of the Ottoman debacle. *Sunuhat* (1920), *Hakikat Cekirdekleri* (1920), *Nokta* (1921), *Rumuz* (1922) and *Isarat* (1923) were written during this period.[139] Nursi also assisted the foundation of organisations and societies such as the Yesilay (Green Crescent Society) founded in 1920, and the Medrese Teachers' Association (Cemiyet-i Müderrisin), founded in January 1921.[140] Invited to take part in the setting up of a Kurdish state, he reportedly replied: "Rather than establishing the Kurdish state, it is necessary to revive the Ottoman Empire."[141]

Against the Shaykhü'l-Islam Dürrizade Abdullah Efendi's *fatwa* which condemned the national independence groups as outlaw bodies, Nursi issued a counter-*fatwa*, justifying the national independence groups and declaring the national struggle to be a *jihad*, a Holy War.[142] Professor Mardin writes: "The Ankara government formed in opposition to that of the Sultan seems to have been impressed, and invited him to join the movement."[143] Nursi joined the independence groups a week before the Id al-Adha, the Feast of the Sacrifices, arriving at Ankara railway station in the summer of 1922 to a big welcome.[144]

According to available sources, on the invitation of Mustafa Kemal, the President of the Grand National Assembly, Said Nursi set off for Ankara, arriving on 4 August. After the National Army had won the war of independence, Said Nursi was given an official welcome in the Grand National Assembly on 9 November 1922.[145] But Nursi was disappointed with the present situation in Ankara. As Vahide reports, before leaving Istanbul Said Nursi was of the opinion that "[i]t was the beginning of a new era and exactly the time to marshal their forces to make the new Republic the means for bringing about a renaissance of Islam and Islamic civilisation, and make it

a centre and source of support for the Islamic world".[146] Instead, however, the Government pursued the politics of secularisation.[147] Atheistic ideas of philosophic materialism were being propagated; deputies had a lax attitude towards Islam and their religious duties. Nursi issued a declaration, demanding they adhere to Islam and perform their religious duties. As a consequence, 50–60 deputies began to perform daily prayers regularly.[148] But despite the above event, Nursi decided to leave Ankara. Mustafa Kemal had asked him to be either a deputy for Mus or to perform a function similar to that undertaken by Shayh Sanusi in Libya, both of which Nursi declined.[149] According to Abu Rabi, the meeting Nursi had with Kemal Ataturk was the most momentous event in Nursi's life following his transformation into the "New Said" several years before. Abu Rabi says that Nursi affirmed that Turkey was indeed at the crossroads, and his ideas about the role of religion in the new Turkey were almost diametrically opposed to those of Mustafa Kemal and his like.[150]

Whilst in Ankara, Nursi succeeded in publishing two works, entitled *Zeylü'l-Zeyl* and *Hubab*, which both had the aim of combating atheism.[151] He also obtained 150,000 liras for his Eastern University.[152]

Said Nursi stayed nearly two years in Van, during the summer on the mount of Erek, where he devoted himself entirely to contemplation rather than writing or teaching, and in the winter in Nurshin Mosque in the Toprakkale district of the town.[153] He again attracted many students, and the attention of large numbers of religious scholars and shaykhs. He preached at the mosque on Fridays on the fundamentals of belief rather than on political and social developments.[154] This was a new direction for him, because up until this time he had been seeking to revive Islam and society by means of politics.

In February 1925, some time after the abolition of the Caliphate, the Shaykh Said Revolt broke out.[155] Shaykh Said of Palu, the Naqshbandi shaykh, had requested Nursi to join the revolt, but Nursi rejected this, replying in a letter:

> The Turkish nation has acted as the standard-bearer of Islam for centuries. It has produced many saints and given many martyrs. The sword may not be drawn against the sons of such a nation. We are Muslims, we are their brothers, and we may not make brother fight brother. It is not permissible according to the Shari'a. The sword is to be drawn against external enemies, it may not be used internally. Our only salvation at this time is to offer illumination and guidance through the truths of the Qur'an and belief; it is to get rid of our greatest enemy, ignorance. Give up this attempt of yours, for it will be fruitless. Thousands of innocent men and women may perish on account of a few bandits.[156]

The Revolt was put down in two months, ending with the exile, imprisonment and execution of its organisers.[157] Nursi's warnings saved many lives in the Van area,[158] but Nursi himself was accused of having contacts with the rebels.[159]

After being questioned in Istanbul about the revolt, Nursi was taken to Antalya by boat and from there to Burdur, a small town in south-western Anatolia, where he stayed for the next seven months. It was the beginning of exiles and a life of compulsory residences for Nursi authorised by the government. During his stay in Burdur he settled in the Haji Abdullah Mosque in the Degirmenler district of the town and again started teaching and writing and attracting people's attention. Every day, after afternoon prayers, he preached to people, later collecting these *dersler* (preachings) for a book entitled *The First Door of the Risale-i Nur* (Nur'un Ilk Kapisi).[160] According to Vahide, these were the first fruits of Nursi's period of deep thought and contemplation in Van which were to find full expression in the *Risale-i Nur*, and represented the first instruction the "New Said" received directly from the Qur'an.[161]

Nursi's increasing popularity perturbed the authorities and led them to take him to another province of south-western Anatolia, Isparta, in 1926. There he remained in the Müftü Tahsin Efendi's *medrese* for twenty days, but during his stay he once again began to teach and attract students. The authorities then decided to send him away to some tiny and remote place where he would not attract attention and where, deprived of all company and civilisation, he would just fade away and be forgotten. The place they chose was the village of Barla, a tiny hamlet made up of 15–20 houses in the mountains near the north-western shore of Lake Egridir.[162]

Conclusion

Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to describe the course of the general evidences during this period, it will nevertheless be helpful to glance at them for the purpose of understanding the background to Nursi's inner crises. The period began some time after the First World War, the biggest and most savage war in human history, and the end of the multi-nation Empires, including the Ottoman Empire. In Nursi's native country the successors of the Ottoman Empire, after the war of independence, founded the Republic and based their principles on an atheistic philosophy of westernisation urged by propaganda.[163] The Sultanate and the Caliphate were abolished at this time.[164]

After escaping from the prisoner-of-war camp, Nursi, according to his nephew who acted as his secretary during the time, was an active member of Darü'l-Hikmeti'l-Islamiye. But Nursi had been severely shaken by the war; several times he attempted to quit this duty, but he continued the duties expected of him, allegedly ascribing this to his sense of responsibility towards "the nation".[165] He never

described in detail either the two and half years he spent in the prisoner of war camp in Kostroma or the manner of his escape and his journey back to Istanbul, and he did not permit his nephew to write about it. According to Vahide, this was due to Nursi's desire to emphasise those things which seemed to represent the "fruit" of his life: the *Risale-i Nur* and its service to belief and the Qur'an.[166] Nevertheless it might be stated that one of the reasons for Nursi's crises of conscience was that he had confronted the ideological background of historical materialism, either in Kostroma or during the months he was in Germany and Austria on his way to Istanbul. We can see, for instance, that in many places of his later works he described historical materialism as the *dajjal* (anti-Christ) of the times.[167] Another factor he hints at in one of his later works is the pessimism he drew from the philosophy. Whereas, in the former period, he had granted equal status to the philosophical sciences and to religion.[168] In the following passage Vahide offers us a clue about Nursi's thought system and the later stages of his life:

> Thus, we can say that Bediuzzaman's enlightenment occurred in three stages. Firstly, he realised the deficiency of the "human philosophy" he had studied and how it had been an obstacle to his enlightenment and progress. And secondly, as Bediuzzaman himself confessed, through the "bitter medicine" of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir Geylani's Fütûhu'l-Gayb: "I understood my faults, perceived my wounds, and my pride was to a degree destroyed." Then to complete the process of his transformation into the New Said, he understood through the Mektûbat of Imam-i Rabbani that he should take the Qur'an as his sole master. The instruction in Divine Unity he then received from the Qur'an through the phrase "There is no god but God" was "a most brilliant light" scattering the darkness in which he had been plunged and allowing him to breathe easily.[169]

Throughout this period, when he was an active member of Darul Hikmeti'l Islamiyye and affected by spiritual crisis, he regularly withdrew from social life and sought solitude in places far removed from Istanbul life, such as Yusha Tepesi, a high

hill on the Asian side of the Bosphorus.[170] Also about this time, another factor which affected his inner crises was his being abandoned by his nephew, who was, in Nursi's own words, "his student, his servant, his secretary, his adopted child".[171] A further factor which affected Nursi in this period was the neglect and abandonment by government officials of religious obligations. This, he thought, was due to the inadequacy of the education system and to doubts concerning Islam caused by the materialist philosophy.[172] Nursi's inner struggles resulted in the crystallisation of his ideas and the birth of the "New Said".

2.4 THE THIRD PERIOD: NEW SAID (1926–1949)

Nursi was exiled to Barla, where he remained nearly eight and a half years. Here he wrote the greater part of the one hundred and thirty parts of his *Risale-i Nur*. According to Vahide, the authorities' main aim was to isolate him in just such a village, a remote spot removed from easy contact with the outside world. They had him watched and followed, and tried to prevent the local people approaching him by spreading rumours about him. Although after a time the Government granted an amnesty to those exiled with Nursi, they denied him this right, too.[173]

Throughout his eight-and-a-half-year stay in Barla, Nursi dedicated himself to the writing of *Risale-i Nur*, and by the end of his stay had dictated three quarters, a total of 119 pieces. The first sections of *Risale-i Nur* written in Barla were a treatise proving the Resurrection of the Dead and the existence of the Hereafter. After that, *The Miraculousness of the Qur'an* was written, and by 1929 the first collection of the treatises entitled *Sözler* (The Words) was finished. Also, *Mektubat* (Letters), the second main book of *Risale-i Nur*, was completed during this time.[174] Vahide writes: "Thus began Bediuzzaman's silent struggle against the forces of irreligion."[175] The

method of promulgation of the *Risale-i Nur* was as follows: after having been written out and distributed by hand, the original copies were then copied and passed on to others, who would write out further copies. In this way the 'Words' passed from village to village, and in the course of time from town to town, and throughout Turkey. According to some sources, the number of handwritten copies of the various parts of the *Risale-i Nur* is 60,000.[176] According to Mardin, although this figure was obviously exaggerated it was a sign that Nursi's message was spreading around the country.[177] Through the works he wrote during this period, he gained a widespread following.[178]

Besides the main parts of *Risale-i Nur*, the supplementary letters Nursi wrote to his students and some of those they wrote to him were assembled in three volumes and called *Lahikalar* (Appendixes). In later years they were included in the *Risale-i Nur*, one of which was entitled *Barla Lahikasi* (Barla Appendix).

The increasing attraction of the *Risale-i Nur* and the increase in Nursi's students forced the authorities to increase their pressure on Nursi and *Risale-i Nur* students, especially after the new law prohibiting the reciting in Arabic of the Ezan (call to prayer). At the end of summer 1934, Nursi was taken from Barla back to Isparta, where he spent the next nine months. He continued to write while he was in Isparta and finished writing the third book of the *Risale-i Nur*, entitled *Lemalar* (Flashes), in the Eskisehir prison.[179]

On 25 April, 120 of his students from all over Turkey, including in Van, were arrested and held in custody. Two days later Nursi was arrested. The officials were alarmed by false reports started in the press of a "countrywide network of reactionaries".[180] Rumour had it that Nursi and his followers were to be executed. It was claimed they had founded "an illegal secret society, to be against the present

regime, and try to destroy the fundamental principles of the state". The Home Affairs Minister, Shükrü Kaya, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Gendarmerie moved to Isparta from Ankara at the head of a detachment of gendarmes. Control of Isparta was guaranteed by the military units, and cavalry were positioned along the road all the way from Isparta to Afyon. Then, for the criminal court action, they were taken to Eskisehir in lorries. There they were held in Eskisehir prison for the duration of the trial. As well as completing the collection of Lemalar (Flashes), Nursi started to write the fourth book of *Risale-i Nur*, called *Sualar* (Rays). Nursi called this prison period "Medrese-i Yusufiye" (the School of Joseph), recalling the Prophet Joseph, who had been the patron of prisoners.[181]

Nursi was sentenced to eleven months of imprisonment for a short treatise expounding some Qur'anic verses concerning Islamic dress. Fifteen of his students were sentenced to six months' imprisonment and the remaining 105 were acquitted. Nursi objected to the decision, saying that this sentence could only be given to a horse thief or a kidnapper, and demanded either to be given his freedom or, if guilty, sentenced to execution or 101 years of imprisonment.[182] He was released from Eskishehir Prison in the spring of 1936 and was again sent into exile, in Kastamonu in the south of the Black Sea region of Anatolia.

In Kastamonu, Nursi at first stayed in the police station as a "guest" for three months, and then moved to a rented house opposite the police station for the next seven years. He again began to attract new students. He maintained his correspondence with his students, especially in Isparta and elsewhere. These letters can be found under the title of *Kastamonu Lahikasi*, or the Kastamonu Appendix[183] in the *Risale-i Nur*.

It was in Kastamonu that he also wrote one of his most important treatises of the *Risale-i Nur*, entitled *Ayetul Kubra* (Supreme Sign).[184] Nursi also completed some parts of the *Sualar* (Rays) collection, one of which was the Fifth Ray concerning Hadiths about the signs of the end of time. Vahide writes: "The final draft of this treatise had been made in 1938 from a first draft made while Bediuzzaman was a member of the Darü'l-Hikmet from pieces some of which were taken from Muhâkemat, published in 1909."[185] This treatise led to his arrest, together with a number of his students, on 31 August 1943.

Along with twenty-two of his students, Nursi was arrested and held in custody in the police station at Kastamonu. For their trial they were sent to Denizli through Ankara and Isparta, and there, with others arrested in Isparta and elsewhere, a total of 126 students were imprisoned. Vahide writes:

> As with the Eskishehir affair, the matter was taken up by Ankara and blown up out of all proportion. President Ismet Inönü, Prime Minister Shükrü Saraçoglu, and Education Minister Hasan Ali Yücel were directly concerned. Instructions were sent to Isparta and Kastamonu in particular, and the houses of numerous *Risale-i Nur* Students searched. Then the arrests started in Isparta.[186]

The criminal court appointed a committee of experts to deal with the latest action. Nursi objected that this first committee of experts was drawn from among local officials, and requested that a committee of qualified scholars be set up to examine the *Risale-i Nur* in Ankara, saying:

> A high committee of well educated experts should examine the *Risale-i Nur* in Ankara. Philosophers should be brought from Europe (to participate in the committee). If they find any offence against the law (in the *Risale-i Nur*) I will not object to the heaviest penalty.[187]

The charges were of creating a new Sufi *tarikat*, forming a political society, opposing the reforms, and exploiting religious feelings, in particular through the Fifth Ray of his writings on Hadiths concerning the end of time. The committee of three well-educated scholars was made up of: Professor Yusuf Ziya Yorukhan of the Advisory Board for the President of Religious Affairs; Necati Lugal, Director of the Middle East Institute for the Faculty of the Language, History and Geography; and Yusuf Aykut, a member of the Council for Collecting Islamic Books of the Turkish Historical Society. The report of the committee was unexpectedly favourable, stating that 90 per cent of the *Risale-i Nur* was made up of scholarly explanations of the truths of belief, and that these parts were purely religious, and that there was no need for them to be proscribed. The Court therefore cleared all Nursi's works, acquitted all the prisoners, including Nursi, and ruled that they be released immediately. The decision was made on 16 July 1944 after nine months of imprisonment, during which two of his students had died.[188] According to Vahide, the imprisonment and trials served Nursi's goals. Because of the publicity surrounding it, the trial aroused widespread interst in Nursi and his students. The trial also ended with a favourable report and with the *Risale-i Nur* being widely studied in official circles.[189]

As usual, during his imprisonment Nursi continued to write, but this time in the greatest secrecy and with extreme difficulty, since paper was banned. Sometimes, although this might be an exaggeration, matchboxes were used for writing.[190] Then restrictions were eased by the prison administrators owing to the writings' generally beneficial effect on the prisoners, and the Nurcus were allowed to copy and distribute them among the prisoners. Among these writings, the Fruits of Belief, the Eleventh Ray and the defence speeches of Nursi and his students were added to the *Risale-i Nur*.[191]

At the behest of the Government, after nearly two months in the Shehir Hotel in Denizli, Nursi was taken to Emirdag, a small provincial town situated between Afyon and Eskisehir, for compulsory residence. Nursi stayed in Emirdag for the next seven years, with a break of twenty months in Afyon prison between January 1948 and October 1949.

Owing, probably to the widespread publicity arising from the Denizli trials and the favourable decision of the committee of experts, Nursi and the *Risale-i Nur* became famous all over Turkey. Vahide confirms that a considerable expansion in activities connected with the *Risale-i Nur* took place. Up until this time activity had been mainly concentrated in two or three areas, but now many thousands of people in different areas of Turkey became *Risale-i Nur* students and began to serve it and the cause of the Qur'an in various ways. In addition, in 1946 or 1947 two of the first duplicating machines to come to Turkey were purchased by students. One was set up in Isparta, the other in Inebolu, and copies of the *Risale-i Nur* now became available on a far wider scale.[192]

Nursi continued to attract many students and carried on with his writing. The Tenth Matter of the Fruits of Belief (the first nine had been written in Denizli Prison), a reply to objections raised about repetition in the Qur'an, and a further part of the fruits of belief concerning the Angels, were all written. The *Risale-i Nur* was approaching its completion with these treatises, except for Elhüccetü'z-Zehra. Nursi also wrote the collections of *The Staff of Moses* (*Asa-yi Musa*) and *Zülfikar*, gathered from several parts of the main collections of the *Risale-i Nur*, that is the Words, the Letters, the Flashes and the Rays, with the aim of combating atheism and unbelief. With the same purpose *A Guide for Youth*, for schoolchildren, was printed in 1947 in Eskishehir.[193] For these latter writings the new Latin alphabet was used for the sake

of the younger generation, who did not know Arabic. The Arabic script, however, was still being used to publish the majority of the *Risale-i Nur* collections.[194]

During this time, the *Risale-i Nur* began slowly to spread to the wider Islamic world. Nursi prepared two copies of the *Staff of Moses* and *Zülfikar* collections to be sent to al-Azhar in Egypt, to Damascus, and Medina, and to Indian *ulama*. His students also established relations with American missionaries and gave them copies of the Staff of Moses and Zülfikar collections to counter the growing threat of communism. In accordance with certain Hadith, Nursi believed in co-operation with Christians against this threat.[195]

During his stay in Emirdag, Nursi spent most of his time correcting copies of the *Risale-i Nur*, both handwritten and duplicated. He also wrote many letters to his students. These letters were later added to the *Risale-i Nur* under the title *Emirdag Appendix 1* (Emirdag Lahikasi 1).[196]

Nursi, along with 15 of his students from Afyon and 39 from elsewhere, were arrested and entered Afyon prison on 23 January 1948.

Nursi and his students were indicted on almost identical charges to those brought during the former trials: founding a secret political society, being against the present regime, and trying to destroy the fundamental principles of the state. Nursi was placed in solitary confinement in a 60-person ward, described as having 40 small windows of which only 15 had intact glass. Despite the winter cold, no heat was provided. According to some sources, Nursi was poisoned seventeen times during his periods of exile, including during this imprisonment. One of his closest students, Mustafa Sungur, recorded his words: "Perhaps I will not be able to survive. Let my whole being be sacrificed to the fatherland, nation, youth, and the Muslim world and

also for the sake of eternal well being and the felicity of mankind. If I die, let my friends not seek any vengeance for me."[197]

His supporters called this imprisonment the third School of Joseph (Medrese-i Yusufiye). They continued writing out copies of the *Risale-i Nur*, and Nursi wrote *Elhüccetü'z-Zehra*, the fifteenth of the Rays collection and the completion of the *Risale-i Nur* collection. Scrap paper and paper bags were used for the writing.[198]

On 6 December 1948 the Afyon criminal court delivered its verdict, and sentenced Nursi to twenty months of imprisonment and 20 of his students to six months. The verdict was immediately sent to the Supreme Court, which overturned the lower court's decision and acquitted him. After spending twenty months in prison, the duration of the trial, Nursi was released on 20 September 1949.[199]

Conclusion

This period, from the adoption of the Swiss Civil Code in the republic of Turkey and the disestablishment of Islam up until the end of the Second World War, was a time when the Islamic world lost its unity and gradually became colonialised. It was a period when philosophy-based ideologies were becoming increasingly influential in political systems and when Islamic societies underwent the most radical changes in the whole history of Islamic civilisation.[200] Dursun writes: "The period in which the *Risale-i Nur* was written, which constituted Said Nursi's most important activity, was the single party period, during which religion was excised from politics and the social structure wrenched out of people's hearts, and Positivism gradually began to be influential."[201]

Nursi was not unprepared for the radical changes and developments occurring in Turkey. After a brief experiment in Ankara, he left Ankara realising that any attempt in the political field would be fruitless. The policies of Turkey's new authorities were based on materialism. Nursi responded with his belief that the Qur'an is the truth and reality, and that man's true happiness and progress can only be achieved through a new form of education and theology. Thus, in this period he dedicated his life to writing new treatises in which, according to Vahide, he dealt with the irrefutable truths of belief and demonstrated the logical absurdity of materialist philosophy, making it possible to gain a belief so firm that it could withstand any doubts caused by science or philosophy.[202]

Up until this, the "New Said" period, it is clear that his struggle in the name of Islam was conducted by means of active involvement in social and political life. From this time (1926) on, we do not see Said Nursi as an activist on the political and social stage. Instead, he lived a solitary life of persecution, a period of total opposition to positivism and materialism.[203]

An interesting perspective which should be mentioned here is that of Davutoglu, who writes:

> The distinction Bediuzzaman made between the periods of the Old Said and the New Said reflect the difference between the first and second periods of the Islamic world. Bediuzzaman, who as the Old Said in the first period was actively involved in trying to bring about the political reforms necessary for the Islamic world, in the second period as the New Said, undertook to renew the belief of Muslim individuals, and to form a community or group of these individuals, rather than re-establishing the political structure of the Islamic world, which had entered a period of complete political suspension (*fetret*).[204]

Nursi's main concern was the strengthening of individual belief, and the proffering of solutions to questions related to life. He considered serving Islam by means of politics to be in tenth place after serving belief.[205]

Along with Nursi's main writing, the *Risale-i Nur*, there was continual correspondence between Nursi and his students. In his letters, Nursi encouraged his students to write out the *Risale-i Nur*. Also he guided them and built up a society from individuals, warning them to be cautious in the face of their enemies. He also dealt with the necessity of avoiding political involvement of any kind, and with the need for them to develop complete sincerity in their service.[206]

During this period, according to Vahide, Nursi was responsible for informing officials about Communism, which had overrun Russia and Eastern Europe, and which could have led to destabilisation and anarchy. Nursi was also of the opinion that, through atheistic organisations, the establishment of absolute unbelief in Turkey was being planned and enacted.[207]

By the end of this period, as the *Risale-i Nur* spread and became established, Nursi had some of its parts gathered together in the form of collections, and in 1942 and 1943 he had some of these typed out in the new alphabet. He was, in particular, happy that the *Risale-i Nur* elicited an enthusiastic response from women and children, and began to have readers even among schoolboys.

2.5 THE FOURTH PERIOD: THE THIRD SAID (1949-1960)

In the early morning of 20 September 1949, after being released from Afyon prison Nursi was escorted by two police officers to a house which had been rented by some of his students. He stayed here for around two months before moving back to his former house in Emirdag.[208] When he came back to Emirdag one of his first acts was

to write a letter in which he requested the Directorate of Religious Affairs, Ahmed Hamdi Akseki, to do all he could for the *Risale-i Nur*'s free circulation, and also to print photographically the "miraculous" Qur'an Hüsrev had written showing the "coincidings" (*tevafukat*) between the word 'Allah' and other Divine Names. Although Ahmed Hamdi agreed in principle to publish the *Risale-i Nur*, this project never came to fruition.[209]

After the Democrat Party of Adnan Menderes came to power and won the General Election of May 1950, the Turkish Republic saw a real multi-party democratic system for the first time since its establishment.[210] Throughout this period, Nursi, his followers, and the ever-expanding activities connected with the *Risale-i Nur* witnessed an easing in conditions and a growth in the *Risale-i Nur* movement.[211]

With all legal restrictions on the *Risale-i Nur* removed, a new generation of young students, based primarily in Istanbul and Ankara, set about printing and publishing the entire *Risale-i Nur* collection on modern presses in the new alphabet. This activity further expanded the number of readers and students, so that they now ran into many hundreds of thousands.[212]

Nursi frequently said: "... from now on there is no need for me to work in the service of the *Risale-i Nur*. That is to say the *Risale-i Nur* and its students will perform my duties."[213] While he was living in Emirdag after his release from Afyon prison, some of his students who had known him formerly noted certain changes in his life. Nursi kept company with his students in the same house; his food was prepared by his students rather than by the Çaliskan family in Emirdag. Vahide writes: "In fact, in many respects these last ten years of Bediuzzaman's life may be seen as directing and training these young Students and preparing some of them to lead the *Risale-i Nur* movement in later years."[214] He also started to read daily

newspapers and paid attention to social life and developments in Turkey and the wider Islamic world.[215] When the Democrat Party came to power, the ban on the Arabic call to prayer and the restrictions on his movements were lifted. He was therefore able to attend with the congregation in the Çarsi Mosque for the *tarawih* prayers each of the thirty nights of Ramazan. On the day the Democrats won the election, Nursi sent the following telegram to Celâl Bayar, who was soon to be elected the new President of the Republic:

> To: Celâl Bayar, President of the Republic.
>
> We offer our congratulations. May Almighty God give you every success in the service of Islam, and the country and nation.
>
> In the name of the Students of the *Risale-i Nur*, and one of them,
>
> Said Nursi.[216]

He received this reply by telegram:

> To: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, Emirdag.
>
> I was exceedingly touched at your cordial congratulations and offer my thanks.
>
> Celâl Bayar[217]

Following the general amnesty issued by the Democrat Party, Nursi and his followers were now theoretically free and saw an easing in conditions, although they were still subject to pressure by officials. Court actions against them continued during the 1950s. The public prosecutor once more opened a case against Nursi, and against a young *Risale-i Nur* student, Muhsin Alev, who had had *Genclik Rehberi* (A Guide for Youth) published in Istanbul. The charge was of illegal religious propaganda owing to the book allegedly contravening Article 163 of the penal code and contravening the principle of secularism. It was Nursi's first visit to Istanbul for twenty-seven years.[218] Mardin writes: "Said Nursi's trial became a public event of huge proportions."[219] Vahide adds: "The three court hearings – and particularly the second and third – attracted literally thousands. Once again the trial served to publicise Bediuzzaman and the *Risale-i Nur* movement in a way those who had instigated it can scarcely have wished."[220] Throughout the court hearings, Nursi and the trial attracted a huge number of young Nurcu university students. The trial ended in acquittals. Nursi was also acquitted the following year in another case.

In late 1953 Nursi set off from Istanbul for Isparta, where he wished to spend the remaining years of his life, and where he wanted to be buried in either Barla or Sav (villages in Isparta).[221] It was at this time that he started holding readings and formal group study sessions (*ders*) examining the *Risale-i Nur* in Isparta.

Nursi received the final decision of the Afyon court in 1956. It cleared the *Risale-i Nur*, ruling that "there is nothing against the law in the *Risale-i Nur*", and returning all the seized copies.[222] The *Risale-i Nur* then began to be printed on modern presses in the new alphabet. Said Nursi had wanted the Prime Minister, Adnan Menderes, to have the *Risale-i Nur* published officially by the state, and

although Menderes favoured this, the plan never came to fruition. The only help they received from the Prime Minister was to secure the paper. Then Dr. Tahsin Tola, a deputy for Isparta, addressed the matter himself. Dr. Tola first of all had *Sözler* (The Words) printed, followed by Flashes (*Lem'alar*) and Letters (*Mektûbat*). At the same time, students in Istanbul started printing 10,000 copies of The Short Words, 2,500 of which they immediately posted to various places in Anatolia. Also printed were five thousand copies of *A Letter to Women*. Nursi declared: "Now is the time of the *Risale-i Nur*'s festival. My duty is finished. This is the time I have long waited for. Now I can go."[223]

On 12 April 1957, at the invitation of military officers, Nursi attended a ceremony to lay the foundation for the mosque of the third military division in Isparta.[224] In 1958, the authorised biography of Nursi was published and began to sell, at a relatively high price.[225]

In late 1959, Nursi embarked on a series of trips to Ankara, Konya and Istanbul. According to Vahide, this showed more than anything Nursi's extraordinary perseverance and self-sacrifice, at the age of 83, in continuing his struggle against unbelief and his service to belief and the Qur'an.[226] At the invitation of his students from all over Turkey, Nursi visited them and also the "*Risale-i Nur* study centre" (*dershane*), which was his main reason for the trips. During the last few months of his life, Nursi visited Istanbul once, Konya three times, and Ankara four times. On one of his trips to Konya, Nursi wanted to visit the tomb of Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi. He became surrounded by a large crowd of people and police, even in the tomb in Konya, which the Director of the Museum opened to the public specially for him. It is recorded that Nursi said to the police:

> You serve the country's order and security physically, while we serve it in a non-material way. We know you as fellow-officials, so look upon us as fellow officials, not in any other way. For twenty-eight years I have served this country's peace and security, despite imprisonment, exile, and oppression.[227]

Nursi's second visit to Ankara on 30 December 1959 gained much attention from the newspapers, with sensational headlines such as "The Said Nursi Event has started to grow" (*Cumhuriyet*), and "Said Nursi has again come to Ankara ..."(*Milliyet*). According to the accounts of his speeches to journalists, Nursi's aim in coming to Ankara was to remove the suspicions of officials and deputies against the *Risale-i Nur*, after it had been cleared by numerous court verdicts. Nursi was visited by a huge number of people while staying in Ankara, including by three deputies of the Democrat Party who had invited him to come to Ankara.[228]

On the occasion of his last attempt at visiting Ankara, Nursi was not permitted to enter the city. His car was stopped by police outside the city. It was announced by radio broadcast that he was to rest in Emirdag on the advice of the Cabinet, and this he did.[229]

After Nursi had spent some time in Emirdag, the preparations were made for his return to Isparta. He made a sorrowful farewell to the faithful Çaliskans and all his students in Emirdag, but it was an occasion unlike all previous ones. In the early morning of 20 March 1960, Nursi and a few of his closest students set out from Isparta to Urfa for his last trip.[230]

Arriving in Urfa on 21 March 1960, Nursi was settled into the Ipek Palas hotel by his students. Scuffles broke out between, on the one hand, the police and government representatives, who on the orders of the Interior Minister in Ankara wanted Nursi to leave Urfa for Isparta again, and, on the other, Nursi's students, the

people of Urfa, and some officials, who categorically refused to allow the extremely ill and weak Nursi to be moved.[231]

Despite his weakness, Nursi received all the visitors who came to see him. On his third day at Urfa, in the early morning of 23 March 1960 at three o'clock, Said Nursi died in the Ipek Palace Hotel in Urfa. The estate lawyer listed his personal effects: a watch, a gown, a prayer mat, a teapot, glasses, and 20 Turkish *liras*. Since Said Nursi had never married, his personal effects were given to his only surviving brother, Abdülmecid.[232]

The funeral took place on 24 March 1960, and a huge crowd of people gathered together in the Ulu mosque. The Governor of Urfa, the Mayor, the local Garrison Commander, the people of Urfa, and those *Risale-i Nur* students who had been able to reach Urfa in time for the burial were present at the funeral prayers. He was buried in Halilürrahman Dergah where the Prophet Abraham lies. During the funeral process, security measures were tightened within and around Urfa by gendarme and police forces.

Two months after his burial, on 27 May 1960, a military coup occurred. Nursi's remains were taken from Halilürrahman Dergah on the night of 12 July 1960 to an unknown spot in Anatolia by the order of a so-called "National Unity Committee". During this action the town had been taken over by the army. There was a strict curfew, with no one allowed on the streets. Tanks and armoured vehicles had been positioned at all key points in the town and the Dergah was surrounded by a tight cordon of soldiers.[233]

CONCLUSION

The fourth period of Nursi's life continued from some time after the Second World War up until the fourth-last decade of the century. In Nursi's own country this period may be characterised as the beginning of a real multi-party democratic system after a period in which it had taken the path of radical Westernisation and had eradicated Islam from the social field. After the Second World War, the world divided into two different structures: the Western bloc led by the USA, and the Eastern bloc led by the young USSR. Turkey made its way on the side of the West and therefore adjusted its internal political regime to meet western standards.[234] In addition, it carried out a series of reforms of social and political structures. The fourth period of Nursi's life was also marked by the emergence of numerous Muslim nation-states after anti-colonial revolutions. According to Davutoglu, theoretical debate focused on the characteristics of these nation-states and the place of Islam within them, and it was against this background that debate on the Islamic state superseded debate on the Caliphate.[235]

These developments affected Said Nursi's outlook and marked the start of a new period of his life, that of the "Third Said". As Dursun points out, Said Nursi appears as a leader of society who was closely concerned with political developments, and who informed the Government of his appreciation of some of its positive measures, wrote letters to government leaders, including to the President and the Prime Minister, and met with a number of ministers and deputies.[236] In the preceding period, by contrast, Nursi had appeared as one who opposed the government's irreligious policies, and who asserted that this was a natural right and

that no one can be held answerable for any thought that does not disturb public order and security.[237]

The change during this period in Said Nursi's method of serving the cause of Islam related closely to tendencies in society in general. Nursi became closely involved in social and political matters. But his involvement took the form of support and guidance for the Democrats, for throughout his life he eschewed active involvement. Also he did not permit his students to engage in politics in the name of the *Risale-i Nur* movement.[238] This will be considered in the next chapter in more detail. Nursi saw the Democrats as those who would take a firm stand against Communism or irreligion. In a letter he wrote to Adnan Menderes, the Prime Minister of the time, he described him as a "champion of Islam". Thus he gave his physical and non-physical support to the Democrat party, even giving them his vote in the elections of 1957.[239]

Nursi placed great importance on re-establishing and strengthening relations with the Islamic world in this period.[240] He strongly supported the Democrat Government's decision to sign the international Baghdad Pact between Turkey and Iraq, which subsequently was joined by Pakistan, Iran, and Britain in 1955, seeing this as an important step towards establishing peace in the area and among Muslim countries. He continued to encourage the Government regarding its decision to establish good relations with Muslim states.[241]

One further event must be mentioned. During the 1950s, the *Risale-i Nur* found numerous new students and readers in many different parts of the world. Vahide writes: "The last section of Nursi's 'official' biography, published during his lifetime in 1958, is devoted to these developments and includes letters from *Risale-i Nur* students from as far afield as Finland and Washington, as well as various Islamic

countries."[242] Nursi sent his students to foreign countries for the purpose of making the *Risale-i Nur* known, for example, in Germany, Korea, Pakistan and Syria. He also sent copies to other countries including Germany, Finland, America, Japan, India, Indonesia and some African countries.[243] He believed in co-operation between Muslims and Christians in the face of aggressive atheism. He sent one copy to the Pope in Rome. In response to this last initiative, Nursi received a letter of thanks from the Vatican dated 22 February 1951.[244] He also visited the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Istanbul, Patriarch Athenagoras, in the spring and summer of 1953. Nursi was also visited by religious scholars and figures from the Islamic world.[245]

It was during this period that the *Risale-i Nur* began to be printed on modern presses in the Latin alphabet. Thousands of copies of the *Risale-i Nur* were printed and posted to various places in Anatolia. In 1953, a book entitled *A Key to the World of the Risale-i Nur* was written and published, consisting of the letters Nursi wrote while in Isparta and Istanbul. Nursi attached considerable importance to translation, both from Turkish into Arabic – to further spread the *Risale-i Nur* in the Islamic world – and from Arabic into Turkish. He himself translated the Damascus Sermon into Turkish in 1951, and his younger brother Abdülmecid, who was then Mufti of Ürgüp, near Kayseri, translated the Staff of Moses collection into Arabic at Bediuzzaman's suggestion. Later, in 1955, Abdülmecid translated Bediuzzaman's Qur'anic commentary written during the First World War, "Signs of Miraculousness" (*Ishârâtü'l-I'jaz*), and his *Mesnevî-i Nuriye*, from Arabic into Turkish. The Turkish translation of *Ishârâtü'l-I'jaz* was then printed in Ankara in the new alphabet.[246]

The increasing availability of the *Risale-i Nur* led to a considerable growth in the number of its students. This period saw the opening of *Risale-i Nur* study centres, known as Dershanes, all over Turkey.[247]

Nursi died having founded the most powerful text-based faith movement in Turkey,[248] the numbers of Nurcu students at the time of his death having been estimated at more than one and a half million.[249] Without doubt, the main themes of his life were adversity, strife and mental tribulations, but out of this adversity was born one of the most influenceful philosophers of the twentieth century.[250]

NOTES

[1] See Serif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 23.

[2] For this and these kind of claims to approve Nursi's being mujaddid see his book Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Sikke-i Tasdik-i Gaybî," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 2060-110. Also see and compare with Ali Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey" (Doctor of Philosophy, University of Durham, 1985), 474. In this regard Dursun writes "Up to the present, Said Nursi has been the subject of much research and debate, and many studies, from different angles. Various evaluations have been made of him, some in favour, some against; while have been condemnatory, others have elevated him to sainthood, ascribing to him qualities above the ordinary." Davud Dursun, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi as the Representative of Social Opposition," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 311-12.

[3] Nevzat Yalçintas, "Bediuzzaman's Call to Brotherhood and Unity," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1995), 15.

[4] Ahmet Akgunduz, "The Genius They Tried to Misrepresent," in *Panel I: Beiduzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1991), 130-31.

[5] Ali Gozutok, *Muslumanlik Ve Nurculuk* (Ankara: Altinok Matbaasi, 1971), 10 and 113.

[6] Abdulbaki Golpinarli, *100 Soruda Turkiye'de Mezhepler Ve Tarikatler* (Istanbul: Gercek Yayinevi, 1969), 227.

[7] Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 83.

[8] See as cited in Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", 474.

[9] Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy* (London: C. Hurstand Co. Ltd., 1977), 222. Also see Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey*, 83.

[10] Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy*, 379. Also Ozek being very critical of Nursi, shares the same sentiments with Ahmad in "Nurcu Lideri:Said-i Kurdi" (The Leader of Nurcus: Said-i Kurdi)

have a brief account of Nursi's life. See Cetin Ozek, *Turkiyede Gerici Akimlar Ve Nurculugun Icyuzu (Reactionary Movements in Turkey and the inside Story of Nurcu-ism)* (Istanbul: Varlik Yayinevi, 1964), 243-49.

[11] Mehmet Yasar Geyikdagi, *Political Parties in Turkey: The Role of Islam* (New York: Praeger, 1984), 9. Also see Abdullah Manaz, *Dunyada Ve Turkiye'de Siyasal Islamcilik* (Istanbul: Ulusal Birlik icin Dusunce ve Eylem Vakfi, 1999), 349-55.

[12] Ursula Spuler, "Message to the Panel" (paper presented at the Panel I: Beiduzzaman Said Nursi, Istanbul, 1991), 179.

[13] Anna Masala, "The Line from Mevlânâ to Bediuzzaman" (paper presented at the Panel I: Beiduzzaman Said Nursi, Istanbul, 1991), 20.

[14] Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali al-Hasani Al-Nadwi, "Bediuzzaman and His Cause," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1995), 219.

[15] Ali Al-Kattani, "Jihad in Bediuzzaman's Thought," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 231.

[16] Muhammad Said Ramadan Al-Buti, "Bediuzzaman's Experience of Serving Islam by Means of Politics," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 111.

[17] See Muhsin 'Abd Al-Hamid, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi: The Kalâm Scholar of the Modern Age," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995).

[18] Hakan M. Yavuz, "Towards an Islmaic Liberalism: The Nurcu Movemet and Fethullah Gulen," *The Middle East Journal* 53, no. 4 (Autumn 1999): 586.

[19] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 13.

[20] See Necmeddin Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," (Istanbul: Yeni Nesil, 1998), 32.

[21] See Ibid., 194.

[22] See Ibid., 447.

[23] See for the whole text of the official biography of Said Nursi Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Tarihçe-i Hayat," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 2110-241.

[24] See Ibid., 2118-19.

[25] See Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, II vols., vol. II (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1571 and 706. Chapter 4 will take a closer look at these ideas.

[26] See as cited in Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", 477.

[27] See Sukran Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publication, 1992).

[28] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)." Also in this regard Prof. Mardin points out the importance of Shiner's biography of Nursi; for anyone attempting to study the Nur Movement see, Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, viii.

[29] Necmeddin Sahiner, *Nurs Yolu* (Istanbul: Yeni Asya Yayinlari, 1977).

[30] For all these and the other books about Nursi and Nurculuk see Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *Risale-i Nur 1.0 Cd*, 1.0 ed. (Istanbul: Yeni Nesil, 2000).

[31] Also see for the books about Nursi and Nurculuk which are published in other languages such as English, Arabic, Spanish, French, Deutsch, Russian, Farsi and Hindi and etc. http://www.bediuzzaman.net/risaleler/index.htm or http://www.saidnursi.com/international.html

[32] See as cited in Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", 477 and 78.

[33] For brief information about Cemal Kutay see, Ibid., 154.

[34] Cemal Kutay, *Cagimizda Bir Asri Saadet Muslumani: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kuran Ahlakina Dayali Yasama Duzeni)* (Istanbul: Yeni Asya Yayinlari, 1980).

[35] For a list of these books, and proceedings, and a list of MA and Ph.D. theses see Nursi, *Risale-i Nur 1.0 Cd.*

[36] Among the most recent acądemic studies done Haldun Canci, "Islam Siyasal Dusuncesi Cercevesinde Bir Siyasal Ideoloji Olarak Milliyetcilik Ve Said Nursi" (PhD, Marmara Universitesi, 1998), 174-84. and Murat Ergin, "Cagdas Islam Akimlarindan *Risale-i Nur* Hareketine Sosyolojik Acidan Bir Bakis" (Ph.D., Harran Universitesi, 1998), 25-76. have some accounts of his biography.

[37] Also for the whole list of this books see Nursi, *Risale-i Nur 1.0 Cd.*

[38] Kisakurek is known as one of the most popular Turkish poets and writers.

[39] Serdengecti is known as a foremost nationalist.

[40] It is the voyage of a Canadian born international journalist and correspondent that Fred A. Reed undertook a series of journeys to discover "hidden Turkey" – its ethnic, spiritual, historical diversity – and guides reader to eastward, to Erzurum and to Van; to Bitlis and to Mardin where "Muslim preacher, revivalist .and ascetic Bediuzzaman Said Nursi" lived. Fred A Reed, *Anatolia Junction:A Journey into Hidden Turkey* (Burnaby, Canada: Talon Books, 1999).

[41] See Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", 474-563.

[42] See ibid., 150.

[43] See Nursi, *Risale-i Nur 1.0 Cd.*

[44] Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", 150-51.

[45] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi.* Also see the review of this book in *The Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 12, no. I (January 1991).

[46] Yavuz describes it as the best study on Nurculuk. Hakan M. Yavuz, "Print-Based Islamic Dis course and Modernity: The Nur Movement," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 325.

[47] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi,* viii.

[48] Serif. Mardin, *Turkiyede Din Ve Toplumsal Degisme: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi Olayi* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 1992).

[49] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi,* vii.

[50] Serif Mardin, "The Collective Memory and Consciousness," in *International Symposium: The Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1992), 15.

[51] Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi.*

[52] See Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2120-21, 201., and Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 355. Also see Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, vii-viii.

[53] See Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", 478. Also see Ahmed Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 286.

[54] For the connections between his writings and his life periods see Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2120-22.

[55] See Dursun, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi as the Representative of Social Opposition." Also for a detailed analysis of the political and social changes in the Muslim countries in this period of history see Ahmed Davutoglu, *Civilizational Transformation and the Muslim World* (Kuala Lumpur: Quill, 1994).

[56] See Ahmed Davudoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1995), 286-87.

[57] See Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", 478. Also see Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, viii.

[58] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi,* 90.

[59] See Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", 479.

[60] See Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2201. Also see Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, viii.

[61] See Davutoglu, *Civilizational Transformation and the Muslim World*, 287.

[62] See Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", 479.

[63] We will use one of the last edition of this collection in which all his books and treatises are gathered together in 2 volumes. Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*.

[64] See and compare with Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 91.

[65] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 329. Also see and compare with Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 304.

[66] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 355.

[67] See Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2233-41. Also see Dursun, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi as the Representative of Social Opposition," 322.

[68] For an out-lined the table of the life periods of Said Nursi, look at the end of this chapter for appendix 1 on a floppy disk.

[69] For more on his birth date see Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 43.

[70] See Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 1899.

[71] See as cited in Sükran Vahide, "The Life and Times of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," *The Muslim World (The Special Issue: Said Nursi and Turkish Experience)* LXXXIX, no. 3-4 (July-October-1999): 208.

[72] See appendix, chart V, "Other influential Naqshbandi Families" for the family tree of Naqshbandi sheikh Nur Muhammad in Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd, 1992), 324-25.

[73] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 68.

[74] Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 58.

[75] See as cited in Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 9.

[76] Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 59.

[77] See Ibid., 60. Also see Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 68.

[78] Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 11.

[79] See Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2124.

[80] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 66.

[81] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 72.

[82] For a brief historical contextualisation of the Eastern province of late Ottoman see Serif Mardin, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1873-1960). The Shaping of a Vocation," in *Religious Organization and Religious Experience*, ed. J Davis (London: Academic Press, 1982), 73-77.

[83] As quoted in Ibid., 73.

[84] For the tribal and non-tribal diversity of the region see Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 50-122.

[85] See Ibid., 193. Also for the growth of the administrative network and the breaking up of large autonomous units in the periphery, see fig. 6 in Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 194.

[86] See Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 205.

[87] See Ibid., 210. Also see for the history of the Qadiri order as an example Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 216-22. Furthermore see for the Naqshbandi tariqa and the Naqshbandi order Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 222-28.

[88] Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*.

[89] See Ibid., 224-34.

[90] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 18-19. Also see Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2128. Furthermore see Mardin, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1873-1960). The Shaping of a Vocation," 69.

[91] See Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 23.

[92] Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 81.

[93] See Ibid., 77.

[94] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 24. Also see Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 77.

[95] See Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2129. Also see Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 77. For more in this regard see Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 77.

[96] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 78. Elsewhere Mardin writes "Nursi must have convinced either his audience of bureaucrats or his followers that he did, indeed, have something to contribute to the defence of Islam because shortly thereafter (1896) he was taken in tow by one of Sultan Abdulhamid's advisors, Yahya Nuzhet Pasa, who was in Iraq in an administrative capacity." See Mardin, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1873-1960). The Shaping of a Vocation," 71.

[97] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 85-86.

[98] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 33.

[99] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 79.

[100] For more information on Sekerci Hani see Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", 546 endnote 104.

[101] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 91.

[102] See as cited in Vahide, "The Life and Times of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 214.

[103] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 97.

[104] Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 1956.

[105] See Vahide, "The Life and Times of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 215. See and compare this with Ozek, *Turkiyede Gerici Akimlar Ve Nurculugun Icyuzu (Reactionary Movements in Turkey and the inside Story of Nurcu-Ism)*, 244.

[106] Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 103.

[107] See Vahide, "The Life and Times of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 217. Also see Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 107.

[108] See as cited in Vahide, "The Life and Times of Bediuzza man Said Nursi," 216.

[109] See for some of his articles later included at the end of his edited work Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, trans. Sükran Vahide (Istanbul: Sozler, 1996).

[110] See Vahide, "The Life and Times of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 217.

[111] For the whole text of this speech see Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Divan-i Harb-i Örfî," in *Kaynakli-Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1918-35.

[112] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediu zzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 157. Also for the whole text of the books see Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Münazarat," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1938-59. and Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Muhakemat," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1984-2038. respectively.

[113] For the original text of the Damascus Sermon see Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Hutbe-i Sâmiye," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1960-79.

[114] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 148.

[115] As quoted in Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 26-27.

[116] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 97.

[117] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 155-56. Also see Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 1886-87.

[118] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 87.

[119] See Ibid., 88.

[120] Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", 503.

[121] Vahide, "The Life and Times of Bediuzza man Said Nursi," 220.

[122] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 125-26.

[123] Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 192.

[124] See Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 257.

[125] See Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2084.

[126] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 66.

[127] Vahide, "The Life and Times of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 213. We will turn back to this issue and address Sufi impact and influence on Nursi's discourse later in this study.

[128] See pg. 9.

[129] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 69.

[130] Ibid., 68. Elsewhere Mardin writes, "He did not spare his criticism for the leading figures among the Seyhs (Sheikhs) of Bitlis whom he accused of fleecing the poor and later, in the 1920s, he stated that he understood how one could criticize the "bourgeoisie" for its egotism."Serif Mardin, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1873-1960). The Shaping of a Vocation," in *Religious Organization and Religious Exprience*, ed. John Davis (London: Academic Press, 1982), 67.

[131] See Mardin, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1873-1960). The Shaping of a Vocation," 69.

[132] As cited in Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", 486.

[133] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, viii.

[134] Vahide, "The Life and Times of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 213.

[135] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 193-94.

[136] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 146. Also see Mikail Tasdemir, "Political Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi" (MA, The International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), March, 1999), 4 footnote 7. and Sadik Albayrak, *Son Devrin Islam Akademisi:Dar-Ul Hikmet-Il Islamiye* (Istanbul: Yeni Asya Yayinlari, 1973), 7-9.

[137] Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 191-92.

[138] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 196. Also see for the meaning and significance of 'Mahrec' Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", endnote 181.

[139] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 89.

[140] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 224, and 41 respectively.

[141] Ibid., 228. From this point on Nursi was always targeted to be a Kurdish nationalist and mistaken by the identity of a Naqshabndi sheikh, Shaikh Said, led a revolt with the explicit aim of establishing an independent Kurdish state. See and compare with Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 258, 65, and 81.

[142] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 250.

[143] As cited in Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 94. Also see for more on this counter-*fatwa* in Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", 510-11.

[144] Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 253.

[145] See Ibid., 253-54.

[146] See as cited in Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 178. Also see Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2138.

[147] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 95.

[148] Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2138. Also see Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 255.

[149] Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 262.

[150] Ibrahim Abu-Rabi, ed., *Islam at the Crossroads: On the Life and Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Albany: Suny Press, 2003), 64. See and compare with Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 258.

[151] Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 263.

[152] See Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 1886-87.

[153] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 187-88.

[154] Vahide, "The Life and Times of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 223.

[155] In his study Bruinessen gives us some clue why and how the revolt began and how it affected the roles of sheikhs and aghas in interaction with the state thereafter. Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 265-305. He elsewhere states in relation to Nursi's

connection to the revolt that "He (Nursi) seems not to have had any association with Shaikh Said's Kurdish rebellion, but was nevertheless exiled to western Turkey in the wave of repression following that revolt. Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 258.

[156] See for this and more Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 191-93.

[157] About the revolt and its effect on thereafter see and compare with B. Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 259-60.

[158] Vahide, "The Life and Times of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 224.

[159] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 274-75.

[160] Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *Nur'un Ilk Kapisi* (Istanbul: Sozler Yayinevi, 1977).

[161] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 197. Also for more see Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 272-77.

[162] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 198.

[163] See for this and more Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", 508.

[164] The arguably best study exa mining this time and later times of the Turkish Republic see Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*.

[165] Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 201-02.

[166] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, viii.

[167] See Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 242-43, 636.

[168] See Ibid., 643-46. Also see Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 92.

[169] Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 167.

[170] Ibid., 165.

[171] See Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 710.

[172] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 255-62. Also Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2138.

[173] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 227 and 01.

[174] Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 314.

[175] Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 204.

[176] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 328.

[177] See and compare with Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 97.

[178] See Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", 519.

[179] See Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, "*Risale-i Nur*'un Te'lif Tarihleri," in *Risale-i Nur 1.0 Cd* (Istanbul: Yeni Nesil, 2000).

[180] See for some of the articles gathered about this and more Hasan Koksal, *Turk Basininda Bediuzzaman Ve Rislae-i Nur Hareketi* (Forthcoming), 42. Also see "Mürteci Bir Seyh Ve on Bes Müridi Tutuldu," *Aksam Gazetesi* 5 Mayis 1935. and "Tarikatçilar", *Aksam Gazetesi*, 7 Mayis 1935.

[181] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 315. Also see Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2148.

[182] Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2149. Also Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 325.

[183] Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Kastamonu Lahikasi," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1570-677.

[184] Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Rays*, trans. Sukran Vahide (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1998), 123-98. Vahide writes "The Supreme Sign is a key to understanding Bediuzzaman's own view of existence and his way of worshipping, for he said of it that he wrote it for himself according to his own understanding." Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 251-52.

[185] For this and more of his writings completed in this period see Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 269-70.

[186] Ibid., 271.

[187] Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2182. Also see Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 341.

[188] See Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2182. Also see Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 342.

[189] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 277.

[190] See Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2182.

[191] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 342. Also see Vahide, "The Life and Times of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 237.

[192] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 292, 96.

[193] See Ibid., 295.

[194] Ibid., 296.

[195] See Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 1744, 82.

[196] Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Emirdag Lahikasi-1," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1678-807.

[197] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 368.

[198] See as described by Sahiner Ibid., 370.

[199] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 324-25.

[200] See Davutoglu discusses these in more details Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 287.

[201] Dursun, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi as the Representative of Social Opposition," 317.

[202] See Vahide, "The Life and Times of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 226.

[203] See Dursun, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi as the Representative of Social Opposition," 316-21.

[204] Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 301.

[205] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 260.

[206] See Vahide, "The Life and Times of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 234-35.

[207] See Ibid.: 238-39.

[208] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 371.

[209] See Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 1810-11. Also see Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 333.

[210] Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey", 529.

[211] Vahide, "The Life and Times of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 241.

[212] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 334-35.

[213] Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 1094.

[214] Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 334.

[215] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 413.

[216] Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 1813. As quoted in Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 334.

[217] Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 1832. As quoted in Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 334.

[218] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 390-91.

[219] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 98.

[220] Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 337.

[221] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 410-11.

[222] Ibid., 413-14.

[223] See Ibid., 414-15. As quoted in Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 350.

[224] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 417.

[225] See Ibid., 415. Also Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 101.

[226] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 365.

[227] Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 421.

[228] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 367.

[229] See Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 421-29.

[230] Ibid., 436-37.

[231] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 371-72.

[232] See for this account of his biography Sahiner, "Bilinmeyen Taraflariyla Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Kronolojik Hayati)," 440-51.

[233] See Ibid., 454-64.

[234] See Dursun, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi as the Representative of Social Opposition," 321.

[235] See Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 288.

[236] Dursun, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi as the Representative of Social Opposition," 321.

[237] As cited in Ibid., 320.

[238] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 330.

[239] See Ibid., 331, 53.

[240] See for "the *Risale-i Nur* and the Outer World" in Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2233.

[241] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 331, and 53-55.

[242] Ibid., 343.

[243] See Nursi, "Tarihçe-i Hayat," 2234.

[244] Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Emirdag Lâhikasi(2)," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1834.

[245] Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 344.

[246] Ibid., 351.

[247] Vahide, "The Life and Times of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 243.

[248] See Hakan M. Yavuz, "Search for a New Social Contract in Turkey: Fethullah Gulen, the Virtue Party and the Kurds," *SAIS Review* 19, no. 1 (1999).

[249] See "Iki Yil Sibirya'da Esir Kalan Said Nursî, Ruslara Düsman Olmustu," *Aksam* 24.03.1960.

[250] See and compare with Mardin, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1873-1960). The Shaping of a Vocation," 71.

PART II

Chapter 3 MORAL REFORM: BELIEF AS THE BEDROCK OF MORAL AND SOCIAL REFORM ACCORDING TO SAID NURSI

3. 1 THE PROBLEM AND THE CURE

Nursi dedicated his life to the safeguarding and strengthening of belief in God, which for him was the most important issue of the time and was at the heart of religion and the societal system. He believed religious belief faced severe and combined attacks and was being weakened by unreligious ideologies. Nursi sought to strengthen belief by transforming it from imitative belief into certain belief. He maintained that to be occupied with the fundamentals of belief over and above everything was an absolute necessity and compelling need.[1] This definition of the problem gave direction to his discourse, and in all his writings Nursi pursued the renewal, revival and strengthening of the truths of belief, rather than trying to rebuild Islamic political authority and Islamic institutions or expounding Islamic *shari'a* rules. This is the most important single issue that distinguishes Nursi from his contemporaries. This will be clearer after subsection 3.4.1 on the *iman*/islam dichotomy. According to Nursi the need of the time was to explain and expound to modern man the basic tenets of belief and truths of the Qur'an, such as God's existence and unity, prophethood, and bodily resurrection, and to win adherence to these beliefs by means of an alliance of mind and heart. For Nursi these truths were the only rational explanation of existence, man and the universe. He writes, "There are many who enter Paradise without belonging to a Sufi order, but none who enter it without belief. It is therefore the time to work for belief."[2] Elsewhere, he states,

> If persons like Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir Gilani (May God be pleased with him) and Shah Naqshband (May God be pleased with him) and Imam-i Rabbani (May God be pleased with him) were alive at the present time, they would expend all their efforts in strengthening the truths of belief and tenets of Islam. For they are the means to eternal happiness. If there is deficiency in them, it results in eternal misery. A person without belief may not enter Paradise, but very many have gone to Paradise without Sufism. Man cannot live without bread, but he can live without fruit. Sufism is the fruit, the truths of Islam, basic sustenance. In former times, through spiritual journeying from forty days to as much as forty years, a person might rise to some of the truths of belief. But now, if through Almighty God's mercy there is a way to rise to those truths in forty minutes, it surely is not sensible to remain indifferent to it.[3]

Nursi's aim is said to corroborate, prove, publish the truths of the Qur'an and pillars of belief, and to build up a 'culture of belief'.[4] Belief, he thought, would form the basis of a project of social and scientific civilisation.

This chapter deals with the theory, definition, essentials and proofs of belief according to Nursi. It approaches the topic of discussion from the point of view of socio-theological discourse; the impact of theological outcomes on social life. We will attempt to study and analyse Said Nursi's profound philosophical arguments for the existence of God, the beneficial impact of such belief on the life of a believer, the difference it makes in the worldview of those who deny it, and Nursi's place among his contemporaries. The chapter covers Nursi's approach to the problems facing modern man; what man is; the man/Creator relationship; the *iman*/islam dichotomy; reform through *iman*; man as the microcosm; and perfectibility. We will draw mainly from the third period of Nursi's writings, which is covered by the *Risale-i Nur* (*The Epistle of Light*) Collection.

Section 3.2 is a brief attempt at describing the historical context in order to understand Nursi's emphasis on a strictly belief-based discourse for society. The method proposed for attaining belief is discussed in section 3.3. Some of the key questions we will address are: How does one cultivate belief? What is the process? How does Said Nursi view the sequence? Was he prompted to address the problem of

man initially because of the problems of society? In other words, did he see the problems of society as stemming from unbelief, and from man's not acting in accordance with how he was created, i.e. to believe? Nursi's understanding of 'cosmology' and the doctrine of the 'Names' as the instructors God makes known to us: Creation, Conscience, Prophet, and the Qur'an will be examined in order to clarify Nursi's distinctive place in the contemporary Islamic revivalist tradition.

3. 2 THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Nursi's thoughts, method and writings did not develop independently of time and place, but were closely connected with the time he was living in and the historical changes that challenged the Muslim world during his lifetime. Significant among these was the establishment of a legislative system governing Muslims, which was based on materialistic and scientific worldviews. According to Agai, this change took place via the establishment of direct imperial control of the countries, i.e. new western, nationalistic state-systems.[5] Materialism and communism were at their peak, and the psycho-sociological condition of the world was disturbing, for the world was in great crisis. There were enormous advances in the field of the modern sciences, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries. Improvements in science were used as a tool for irreligion, and created doubts about religion in the minds of Muslims, Christians and Jews. As Ashur states, "The sciences, which are reconciled with Islam, were deliberately being used against it. They were endeavouring to show that Islam, the religion of civilisation, was opposed to progress and technology."[6] Society embraced multiple gods yet somehow called itself either atheism or existentialism. Ubayd states,

> And certainly many philosophers have worshipped gods in some form. Rijson saw life itself as a god, while Darwin deified evolution. Hegel thought the absolute spirit was god, while Marx recognized dialectic materialism as god.

> Others are society, which Durkheim deified, sexuality, which Freud deified, the individual, which Sartre made into a false god. All these are nothing other than names given to acts and events pertaining to society, life, man, and the universe, which God has created.[7]

The Darwinian view, for example, implied that human beings' moral nature and religion had both developed naturalistically. Now there was no need for a God or religion to explain life. Darwinism contradicted some ideas in the Holy Scriptures and was viewed as a threat to revealed religions. Sigmund Freud, on the other hand, considered sex as being at the heart of the personality. In his view civilisation depended on the sublimation of sexual energy.[8] Philosophers, psychologists and artists increasingly became aware of the basic problem of modern humanity that we had lost faith, but were in no agreement as to how to replace it? Titus Burckhardt summarised the argument thus:

> The sun-centred system bears a clear symbolism, for it situates the light-source at the centre. However, Copernicus' rediscovery of this system did not bring any new spiritual view. It was in fact the popularization of an esoteric truth to a dangerous extent. The sun-centred system has no shared aspect with people's subjective experiences. Religious belief has no organic place in this system. In place of pointing out to man's intellect the ways it could surpass itself and ensuring the evaluating of everything within the extraordinariness of the cosmos, it merely opened up the way to a materialist Prometheanism which was not even human, let alone superhuman.[9]

The world in general and the new Turkish Republic in particular were experiencing social depression. It was a great turning point in the history of humanity. Until then the revealed religions had had a great effect on all kind of relations, from governmental to societal, but now there was a new 'religion' declaring that there was no need of messages, moral limitations, arising from the unknown outer world. For some, humanity suffered spiritual crises and alienation, lost his centrality and became an instrument for the purposes of economic or sexual aims. This idea was called either

freedom or the victory of reason or science and was contextualised under capitalism or communism. In his great book, "The Sane Society", Erich Fromm defined the problem of modern times as follows:

> Christianity has preached spiritual renewal, neglecting the changes in the social order without which spiritual renewal must remain ineffective for the majority of the people. The age of enlightenment has postulated as the highest norms independent judgement and reason; it preached political equality without seeing that political equality could not lead to the realization of the brotherhood of man if it was not accompanied by a fundamental change in the social-economic organization. Socialism, and especially Marxism, has stressed the necessity for social and economic changes, and neglected the necessity of the inner change in human beings, without which economic change can never lead to the "good society".[10]

So, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century humanity was in great crisis. Alienation from their fellow men and nature was more apparent in human beings than ever before. Man became selfish, dependent on approval, and felt insecure, dissatisfied, bored, anxious and, more importantly, his lack of belief in the hereafter made him distracted.[11]

The philosopher Karl Popper, writing about the rise of imperialism after the Industrial Revolution and its impact of such ideas as the survival of the fittest, and about scientific activities being exploited for ideological aims, commented:

> the Naturalist revolt against God, which preceded the historians' revolt, replaced God with Nature. Apart from this, almost everything remained the same. Naturalism replaced theology, natural laws replaced Divine laws, natural will and power (the forces of Nature) replaced Divine will and power, and finally Natural Selection replaced the Divine order and judgement. Naturalist determinism replaced theological determinism, that is, Nature's being omnipotent and omniscient replaced God's being omnipotent and omniscient.[12]

Nursi might have absorbed the ideological background of Positivism, Materialism, and Naturalism while studying science and philosophy during his stay in Van in Tahir Pasha's Konak.[13]

Nursi's ideas appeared at the time of the explosion of materialistic writings in the Ottoman Empire. The first period of his life was the time of the Second Constitutional Period. Subsequent to the Tanzimat, there had been various political, literary, and philosophical ideologies which had emerged in the West slowly and began to influence Ottoman intellectual life. Among these Materialism, Positivism, Darwinism, Freudianism, Naturalism, Socialism and atheism left profound negative effects on many Ottoman intellectuals. Muslim intellectuals reacted in various ways, but mostly (according to Bolay) through refutations or inadequate statements caused by lack of knowledge.[14] These writers came to be known as antipathy Islamists.[15]

After the foundation of the Turkish Republic, materialism, Freudianism, and existentialism had a long running influence on the new Turkish Republic's policy-makers. They attributed Turkey's problems to Islam without understanding the spiritual crises of modern man in the West. It was Islam and the Islamic way of life that was responsible for centuries of backwardness and lack of development in science and technology. Islam had to be removed from social, public and political structures.[16] After the collapse of the Ottomans and the foundation of the Turkish Republic, religion was excised from public life, wrenched out of people's hearts, and Western philosophy based 'positivist-materialism' and 'communism' gradually began to influence social life. According to Ayduz,

> It was a period in which every sort of religious enterprise was labelled "a reactionary movement;" religiously minded people who performed worship even privately were disturbed; when both reading and teaching the Qur'an were forbidden; blameless religious scholars were sent to the scaffold due to unfounded suspicions; and severe penalties were inflicted for the teaching of religion. Yes, it was a time when the religious schools and sufi meeting-

> places were closed down, which for hundreds of years had been the watchmen of this nation's spiritual life, honour, and all they hold sacred; when anywhere thought to be a place of religious learning was extinguished; when all religious instruction was prohibited; and when some shaykhs and religious scholars were intimidated into "selling themselves" and accepting various positions...[17]

Mardin discusses the role of religion in modernisation and building individuals' selfhood and their identity. Beginning early in the eighteenth century, the secularising reform movements of the Ottoman Empire, and later the Turkish Republic, created a disconnected society. Educational reforms neglected rural society, in which for centuries Islam had occupied a central place.[18] Islam could not be replaced by merely blaming the *ulema* for the decline of the Ottoman Empire. This gave Nursi an important lacuna in which to develop his new commentary and build up a belief-centred society. Mardin concludes that the secular primary education in the Republican educational system, which had no place for religion and was based on a positivistic world view, clashed with the Islamic moral universe at the individual level. Nursi had fertile ground on which to sow his ideas concerning the total involvement of the individual in Islam.[19]

THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION, AND BELIEF

We now conduct further examinations into the importance of religion and belief according to Nursi, in order to examine his place in the revivalist tradition. It should be recalled that Nursi lived in a time in which all religious belief was under attack from ideas based on positivist or materialist philosophy. For Nursi, religion was of the utmost importance: "The revival of religion is the revival of the nation. The life of religion is the light of life."[20] In a treatise on the true nature of religion, this world, man, and belief in God, Nursi compares the way of the Qur'an with that of unbelief

and their results for man's heart and spirit and he concludes that man cannot live without religion and without serving some object of worship.[21]

Nursi regards religion as examination, a test, proposed by God so that, in the arena of competition, elevated spirits and base spirits may be distinguished from one another. He gives as an example the plunging of minerals into fire so that diamonds and coal, gold and earth, separate out from one another. So too religion is a trial concerning the obligations placed on man by God and a drive to competition. In this way he likens those who have religious belief to elevated jewels in a mine in that man's finer qualities become separated out from the dross.[22] The wisdom of the examination or test set by God is illustrated by Adam's expulsion from paradise, and concerns the charging of duties. Adam was sent with a purpose and charged with the duty of manifesting all mankind's spiritual progress and revealing all mankind's potentialities. As will be considered in the following part in more detail, man's nature is a comprehensive mirror to all the Divine Names. This is the wisdom behind his creation. If Adam had remained in Paradise, his rank would have been fixed like that of the angels and man's potentialities would not have developed. According to Nursi, the difference between the angels and Adam is that while the former are unchanging in rank since they do not have the ability to sin, sin is a requirement of man's nature. Divine wisdom required a realm of accountability appropriate to the potentialities of man. Just as Adam being expelled from Paradise was pure wisdom, the key for reaching the highest of the high was by experiencing this life as a test, in other words, as it is understood by religion. As a result of the test a believer should be sent to heaven and unbelievers should be sent to Hell.[23]

That is to say, Nursi tries to demonstrate the numerous spiritual benefits and vital consequences of beliefby discussing how necessary – indeed essential – it is for

human life, particularly social life, and by showing how self-evident and indubitable a matter is belief.[24] In this demonstration he uses what may be termed the mytho-poetic dimension of religion and symbolism, encouraging people to embrace religion by its association with traditional sets of positions. This method, according to Mardin, had an important effect on people, Nursi firstly addressed himself after the revolution occurred around 1925, to those who had some education – part modern, part traditional – and were searching for something missing very deep inside them: the religious motive.[25]

3. 3 THE METHOD OF DISCOURSE

With all their complexity and unsystematic style Nursi's writings still attract many people from various backgrounds. There could be a variety of reasons for this. In this section we attach the most importance to his method of discourse. In this regard we will examine Nursi's understanding of *iman* and *islam*/Islam, and his emphasis on *iman* rather than Islam, outlining and considering the following issues: first, the process Nursi underwent before he appeared as the "New Said" and started writing the *Risale-i Nur* collection, together with his main influences; secondly, his discourse on the importance of belief in personal and social life, together with the effect of his mytho-rhetorical language on such psychological integration and reform through *iman*; thirdly, his place in the scheme of the revivalist tradition.

It has been claimed that Nursi's 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 for him that these truths are the only rational explanation of existence, man and the universe with the social order in community.[26] He states,

> If misguidance arises from ignorance, it is easy to dispel. Whereas if it proceeds from science and learning, it is difficult to eliminate. In former times, the latter were one in a thousand, and of these only one in a thousand could come to the way through guidance. For such people fancy themselves. And they do not know, but they suppose that they do know. I think that Almighty God has bestowed the Words at this time, which are flashes of the Qur'an's miraculousness, as an antidote to this atheistic misguidance.[27]

Therefore, according to Vahide, he thought the conscience should be illuminated by the religious sciences, and the mind should be illuminated by the sciences of civilization. Combining or synthesising the two was the new way and method of understanding in his *Risale-i Nur.* She writes that Nursi proceeded, "Through an alliance of mind and heart" with his new method.[28] That is to say the method Nursi has said to develop in his *Risale-i Nur* cultivates religion and science together side by side, arguably a clue to understanding the *Risale-i Nur*'s widespread popularity and continuing success.[29]

Nevertheless, Nursi's methodology is a very complex issue. Since, there has so far been no study of his method; the next part of this study, following no particular systematic theory, will address his discourse and idiom. We will address the issue, after examining some of his basic influences, by considering Nursi's understanding of the indicators of God. This will demonstrate his approach to *iman*. Then Nursi's understanding of *iman*, man and life will be examined. At the end of this part, we will study the cultivation of *iman* to see what 'belief as the bedrock of society' is.

To analyse Nursi's method comprehensively would require examination of the historical and psychological background of the people whom he addressed at that time. That is something to be left for another study. A few brief comments will suffice here. The changes, which occurred in the late Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat, and continued during the Republic, as Mardin remarks, attacked the traditional

Ottoman system by "de-personalizing" it. Nursi tried to appeal to a large number of persons for whom "customs and rules" were either deficient or had been impoverished or proclaimed to be illegitimate.[30] Mardin states, "The Anatolian population to which he addressed himself, on the other hand, had for long been living in a twilight zone where poetry, religion and mythology blended easily."[31] Elsewhere he writes,

> The role of patriarch, the father, the patrimonial ruler was gradually eroded and bonds of personal allegiance were replaced by western type contractual ties or by the type of affiliation that prevailed in a society of blocks ... this gap which Said Nursi filled by setting out to repersonalize Turkish society through the personalized stamp of the *Risale-i Nur*... What the young Turks and later the Republic had done was to eliminate the discourse based on non-propositional means which gave life inter-personal relations for the average Ottoman. Said Nursi's contribution was a reaffirmation of the norms set by the Qur'an in such a way as to reintroduce the traditional Muslim idiom of conduct and of personal relations into an emerging society of industry and mass communications. I consider that a large part of his appeal was due to this philosophical-sociological approach.[32]

Before 1925, Nursi's writings generally consisted of his scholarly questions, answers, arguments and debates with Islamic scholars with whom he had discussed the future of Islam, or proposals relating to current developments. Among them Debates (Munazarat) (1910) is a scholarly argument and the Damascus Sermon (Hutbeyi Samiye) (1911) is a sermon given in the historic Umayyad Mosque of Damascus. There Nursi is said to have addressed a gathering of close to ten thousand people, including one hundred scholars, on Muslim societies, and on his description of the disease afflicting Muslim society and the treatments required. An exception is his "The Signs of Miraculousness" (Isaratul Icaz) (1916) in which he interprets Qur'anic verses in the classical form, verse by verse. At the 33rd verse, he decided to leave this kind of commentary to be done by a later generation of Islamic scholars which would include scientists, mathematicians, physicists and theologists. After

1925 his Qur'anic commentaries were written in the form of a collection dealing only with the verses concerning faith.

After 1925 Said Nursi began to produce new commentaries on the Qur'an using a method, some said peculiar to him[33], involving an alliance of the heart and the intellect, thus combining mysticism and philosophy.[34] The audience Nursi addressed after this time differed from that which he addressed in his earlier life. In his former life, Nursi generally addressed those intellectuals with whom he had discussed the future of Islam and other people gathered around him, such as his students at the Horhor Medrese of Van. After 1925, he found himself surrounded by peasants, craftsmen, small traders and their sons from the first generation of the Republican educational establishment. This of course had an effect on his style of writing and method of interpretation. He now used a very metaphorical language and native idiom to attract these people.[35] Mardin writes

> Said Nursi's reliance on the undiluted message of the Qur'an, the fact that he addressed himself to the rural population, and his use of a Sufi resonance to try to devise a social ethic may have been influenced by the preceding background. However in a striking departure from this setting, he shunned the obviously Durkheimian scaffolding that appeared in the ideas of some of the religiously influential thinkers of the years 1908-1918, and which one can even find in the program of the Dar ul-Hikmet il-Islamiye. We now get a better understanding of the transformation that was involved when the "old" Said shed his persona to become the "New" Said. The New Said was taking leave from the intellectualization of religion to grasp the bedrock of the "mysterium tremendum". For him, faith now over-took religion as "reasonable, although the latter still occupied an important place in his teachings.[36]

A point that must be mentioned here is that the revolution that occurred in 1925 overhauled his ideas and changed the direction of his interest. Before 1925, Nursi sought the enlightenment of heart through the philosophical sciences. That is to say, for him the philosophical sciences were the basis for spiritual progress and enlightenment. After 1925, it is reportedly said, the way of the Qur'an led him to

conceive of spiritual enlightenment through the physical sciences, but taking reason as a source and not a basis. He understood that "he should make all the various sciences he had learnt steps by which to understand the Qur'an and prove its truths, and that the Qur'an alone should be his aim, the purpose of his learning, and the object of his life. Thus the Qur'an's miraculousness became his guide, teacher, and master." Together with this, elsewhere he says, "My heart combined with my mind and urged me to the way of reflective thought which the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition commands..."[37]

Before 1925, Nursi, as explained in the previous chapter, saw the Islamic solution in the upholding of political Ottomanist authority and he tried to "make politics serve religion."[38] But later, he was aware that there was no possibility of serving the Islamic cause through political involvement under a totalitarian regime of one party government. Instead, he sought revival through faith-based issues. His works written in these periods were therefore different in form from each other. In later works, he was seeking to "*iman*-ise" society, rather than to Islamicise the political authority and institutions, as in the Makkan period of Prophet Muhammad's life. There is said to be a difference between the Makkan period of Prophet Muhammad's life when he received his first revelation which was concerned with belief and the Madinian period when the revelations were mostly related to the way of Islamic life.[39] In the earlier period he emphasised the renewal of belief in God, the hereafter, and the resurrection; with this he aimed to build up a good society surrounded by good conduct, worship and knowledge. This does not mean that these were the only issues he considered. He dealt with all the issues, sometimes more than once, relating to Islamic belief. In one of his later works, explaining the repetitions he said that during his life he has had a job to do, and one who has such a job needs to

repeat some things. By being very much aware of the conditions and context surrounding him, his work takes on pragmatic overtones, and that may be why he did not deal with such issues of *fiqh*, *sharia* rules or politics.

Another crucial point in understanding Nursi's method is his concern with the diversity of understanding itself. According to Nursi, there is not one single understanding of Islamic truth; the understandings may be many and can have different forms according to time and place. He states that even sacred laws change according to the ages. Indeed, he says, in one age different prophets may, and have, come. There were even different prophets and laws in the same continent in the same century.[40]

> It is as though the All-Wise Qur'an is every century turned directly towards all the classes of humanity, and addresses each particularly. Indeed, since the Qur'an summons all mankind with all its classes and instructs them in belief, the highest and most subtle science, and in knowledge of God, the broadest and most luminous branch of learning, and in the laws of Islam, which are the most important and various of the sciences, it is essential that it should instruct every class and group appropriately. What it teaches, however, is the same; it does not differ. In which case, there have to be different levels in the same lesson, and according to its degree, every class takes its share from one of the veils of the Qur'an.[41]

In this regard Michel comments on Nursi's view that Qur'anic proscription is not general but absolute and, as such, can be restricted. "Time," he cites, "is a great interpreter; if it determines its limits, it cannot be gainsaid. That is, when a matter becomes clear in the course of time, one cannot object to it. Moreover, if the judgment is based on derived evidence, the source of the derivation shows the reason for the judgment."[42] Regarding the diversity of Islamic schools of law, Nursi replies:

> *If you say:* The truth is one; how can the different ordinances of the four, or twelve, schools be true?
>
> *The Answer:* The same water governs in five different ways in five ill people of different disposition, thus: for one, the water is a cure for his illness, and

> according to medicine, necessary. For another, it is like poison for his sickness and harmful, and medically prohibited. For another, it causes a small amount of harm, and is reprehensible medically. For another the water is beneficial and without harm; according to medicine that is *Sunna* for him. And for yet another it is neither harmful nor beneficial; he can drink it with good health, and for him it is medically permissible. Thus, here the truth has become numerous; all five are true. Are you able to say: 'The water is only a cure, only necessary, and it governs in no other way'?[43]

In this context, Nursi's approach to interpretation is, according to Voll, pluralistic. Voll writes, "In terms of Qur'anic commentary, Said Nursi argues that the verses of the Qur'an reflect the vastness of God's message and depths of meanings." He cites the following passage in support:

> As the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition expresses truths through its explicit, clear meanings and senses, so it expresses many allusive meanings through its styles and forms. Each of its verses contains numerous levels of meanings. Since the Qur'an proceeds from all-encompassing knowledge, all its meanings may be intended. It cannot be restricted to one or two meanings like man's speech, the product of his limited mind and individual will. It is because of this that innumerable truths contained in the Qur'an's verses have been expounded by Qur'anic commentators, and there are many more which have not been expounded by them.[44]

According to Voll, "This openness to many different levels of understanding reflects a pluralism that is not a relativist position, but rather emphasizes the importance of the role of the individual in the interpretation."[45]

To conclude this section, Nursi believed that the road to God Almighty could not be limited to one particular form of right action, for methods differ in respect of their length or brevity. In Nursi's new method and in his writings, the problem to be tackled was to expose the truths of belief, among which the most important was the unity of God. The method of presentation has to be based on both the heart and mind. This was the first and most important step of the *iman*-isation process of society and the cure and the solution for the times. The discourse starts with an individual but aims to *iman*-ise society in general. In this sense Nursi is exceptional among his

contemporaries. This will be clearer in the following chapters dealing with the effect of his discourse on social change, from the top or bottom, and also his approach to the relationship between science and religion.[46]

One last thing before further examination is that the widespread popularity and continuing success of the *Risale-i Nur*, according to Smith, may in part be due to the liberal use of the *temsils* (allegorical comparisons), that attract and hold the attention, making truths, which might otherwise be difficult to grasp, easily comprehensible.[47] For Nursi, images and metaphors are basic teaching tools as for most of the religious leaders throughout the ages.[48] As Smith states, "Nursi's purposes are homiletic and didactic rather than descriptive, offered for one primary purpose: to contrast the ultimate experiences of existence of the faithful with those who are without faith."[49] Also, she writes,

> 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. The reader feels Nursi's passion, comprehends his instruction, and experiences his understanding of truth through his graphic and sometimes even startling use of words and images. In the extended *Risale-i Nur* collection one finds frequent use of what are called temsil or allegorical comparisons, which he himself admits to using so as to facilitate understanding and specifically to help illustrate the truths of the Qur'an.[50]

Mardin points out that, "When Nursi was re-establishing himself from that of "Old Said" to that of "New Said" the transformational possibilities of his discourse were a conceptualization of social relations as personalistic, a folk cosmology with imagistic moorings and an allusive obscure, highly metaphorical rhetoric."[51] Nursi used such an idiom replete with oratory style.

3. 3.1 THE PROCESS OF NURSI'S ATTEMPTS TO FIND A CURE

To understand Nursi properly it is necessary to begin by considering some of his basic influences. Otherwise, this neglect, together with the complexity of his thought and his use of "idiom" and "discourse"[52] might lead to misunderstanding. For example, on the one hand he is called a Quranicist by some scholars, because in the main body of his work, the *Risale-i Nur* collection, he did not refer to any book other than the Qur'an, whereas, on the other hand he is criticised by others for his using some narratively weak hadiths to support his arguments. Moreover, for some of his writings he is called a reactionist without proper analytical study in this regard.[53]

Nursi was in search of a method to revive, renew and strengthen the bases of belief. During his search, he read, studied, dealt with, observed and experienced diverse methods and resources. Some two years after his return to Istanbul from the prisoner-of-war camp in Russia, he underwent an inner transformation, which he described as the major turning-point of his life. Until then according to Vahide, he had "filled his brain with the philosophical as well as the Islamic sciences"; for he thought that "the philosophical sciences were the means to spiritual progress and enlightenment."[54] Nursi describes this in one of his later writings as follows:

> Sixty years ago, I was searching for a way to reach the truth and reality at the present time. That is, I was searching for a short way to obtain firm faith and belief and a complete understanding of Islam, which would not be shaken by the attacks of the numerous negative and damaging currents. Firstly, I had recourse to the way of the philosophers; I wanted to reach the truth with just the reason. I reached it only twice with extreme difficulty. I looked and saw that even the greatest geniuses of mankind had gone only half the way, only one or two had been able to reach the truth by means of the reason alone. Then I said: 'A way which even the greatest geniuses had been unable to take cannot be made general for everyone', and I gave it up... Then I had recourse to the way of Sufism and studied it. I saw that it was most luminous and effulgent, but that it needed the greatest caution. Only the highest of the elite could take that way. And so, saying, neither can this way be a way for everyone at this time, I sought help from the Qur'an. And thanks be to God, the *Risale-i Nur* was bestowed on me, which at this time is a sound and short way of the Qur'an for the believers.[55]

While searching for a direct and productive way to the truth, Nursi went through three steps; philosophy, mysticism and finally the Qur'an. Nursi was aged nearly 50 when he started writing his new commentary on the Qur'an, the so-called *Risale-i Nur* epistle. It was in the *Risale-i Nur* that his new method[56] appeared to some to make him a Mujaddid.

Vahide outlines the three steps as follows. Firstly, Nursi realised the deficiency of "human philosophy" that he had studied and how it had been an obstacle to his enlightenment and progress. Secondly, as Nursi himself confessed, through the "bitter medicine" of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir Geylani's Fütûhu'l-Gayb: "I understood my faults, perceived my wounds, and my pride was to a degree destroyed." To complete the process of his transformation into the New Said, he came to understand through the *Mektûbat* of Imam-i Rabbani that he should take the Qur'an as his sole teacher. The instruction in Divine Unity he then received from the Qur'an through the phrase "There is no god but God" "a most brilliant light" scattering the darkness into which he had been plunged, and allowing him to breathe easily. Nursi describes how the Devil and his 'evil-commanding soul' would not brook this, and "relying on what they had learnt from philosophers and the people of misguidance, attacked his mind and his heart". The ensuing debate resulted in "the heart's victory."[57] That is to say, the shortest and safest way to find truth and obtain belief was by the direct path of Qur'an.[58]

PHILOSOPHY

Nursi was aware of certain negative effects of various philosophical movements. Therefore, on the one hand, he was trying to penetrate the views of these philosophical schools, and on the other, to remove the negative effects of their ideas,

which he considered harmful. Nursi distinguishes philosophy which challenges the revealed scriptures and philosophy which does not.[59] From the time of Adam, two great currents, two lines of thought, have always been and will continue. Nursi likens them to two mighty trees, that have spread out their branches in all directions and in every class of humanity; the first is the line of prophethood and religion, the other that of philosophy in its various forms. He was of the opinion that whenever philosophy follows the way of prophethood and does not challenge sacredness, it produces fruitful outcomes for humanity's social life, however if it does not, it leads people into misguidance, atheism, and the swamp of nature.[60] It is also important to understand such a religiously minded person's approach of philosophy and his new method. Nursi, in his writings, uses the terminology of "positive" and "negative" philosophy.[61] According to Bolay, although he attacks this deviant sort, he does not attack rightly-guided, beneficial philosophy, but instead encourages this "positive philosophy."[62] In a letter, Nursi had added to the beginning of Âsâ-yi Mûsa (The Staff of Moses)[63], he differentiates between the two sorts of philosophy more clearly:

> The philosophy at which the *Risale-i Nur* deals severe blows and attacks is not absolute; it is rather its harmful sort. For the sort of philosophy which has served human society and morality and achievement, and the advance of arts and industries, is reconciled with the Qur'an. Indeed, it serves the Qur'an's wisdom and does not contest it. The *Risale-i Nur* does not attack this sort.[64]

Nursi's learning gave him no light, no hope. Realising his inner turmoil, he wrote, "The spiritual darkness arising from the sciences of philosophy plunged my spirit into the universe, suffocating it. Whichever way I looked seeking light, I could find no light in those matters, I could not breathe..."[65] Later, unhappy at these activities, he gave up that method of enquiry. Nursi attacks and criticises negative philosophy particularly in his later writings. He likens it to a tree of *Zaqqum*,

scattering the darkness of ascribing partners to God and misguidance on all sides. It produces the fruit of atheism, Materialism, and Naturalism for the consumption of the human intellect. And in the realm of animal appetites, it nurtures and bears the fruit of goddesses, idols, and those who claim divinity.[66]

After 1925 he generalised negative philosophy as a threat to social and moral life, exploring the difference between the way of the Qur'an and philosophy, which is based on the ego and contests religion. In one of his treatises, he dealt with the issue in the form of four 'Principles', concise comparisons illustrating the wisdom of the Qur'an and that of philosophy, the instruction they both give to individual life, the principles they advance for social life, and the superiority of the Qur'an.[67]

In his later writings, there is some confusion concerning Nursi's generalisation of the two different divisions of philosophy.[68] Sometimes he opposes philosophy and its outcomes without mentioning which sort he is referring to, the one that does not contest revealed scriptures or the one that does. It is understood his objections referred to the second sort. This problem is prevalent especially in his writings after 1925. Probably, the reason for the confusion was that in Nursi's time philosophy was generally defined as the one that challenges revelation.

Many times, Nursi emphasised philosophical issues such as the importance of reason, the significance of the modern sciences of civilization, and the power of free choice. His earlier writings are very philosophical. *Muhakemat* (*Reasonings*) (1911), and *Munazarat* (*Debates*) (1910), are the ones in which Nursi deals with contemporary Islamic issues using philosophical method. Bolay states,

> Right at the beginning of *Muhakemat* (Reasonings), in which in one respect he traced the main outlines of reflective thought, praising "the Pre-Eternal All-Wise One, Who guided us to the straight path with the Illustrious Shari'a," he defines the Shari'a like this: "Such a Shari'a that, uniting hand in

> hand the speculative sciences [reason] and transmitted sciences [those based on Divine revelation] confirms the veracity of its truths.[69]

On the value of reason and the importance of using it, Nursi described himself as "opening the door to reason, but not taking the will from it." Religion based only on reason or emotion cannot reach God, it only opens the way to personifying God, and associating of partners with Him, or materialism. On the other hand religion without reason and reasoning faculties is fruitless and lacking.[70]

Nursi pays great attention to free use of reason and un-pressured capacity for power of choice. As Bolay cites, "Belief is attained through the reason's power of choice."[71] In *Muhakemat* (*Reasonings*) Nursi wrote: "If the speculative and transmitted sciences conflict, the speculative sciences should be taken as basic and the transmitted sciences interpreted. But in such a case, reason must be [true] reason." Also worthy of note is his insistence on "truth instead of bigotry, proof instead of false arguments, and reason instead of natural disposition;" and his warning, "do not be deceived by embellished claims; ask for proof!"[72] In describing "the degrees of mind," he says: "First is imagining, then conception, then reasoned thought." Attaining to 'belief by affirmation' is tied to the condition of using reason; he sees reasoned thought and investigation as conditions for reaching affirmation. He considers belief without use of reason to be "bigotry." On the other hand, he says man is "unbiased in using his reason" and defends freedom of thought against the possible objection of: "The more I use my reason, the more doubts I have; it's better not to think too much."[73]

In short, Nursi saw negative philosophy as a threat to daily life and a danger for belief in the hereafter. According to Bolay, he stresses that the happiness of mankind lies in combining or synthesising positive philosophy and religion.[74]

It is clear that in his early writings, Nursi was very much affected and influenced by the outcomes of modern philosophy, naturalism and materialism, but that in his later writings he opposed the philosophical way to the truth. For Nursi, if only science and reason are used, there are doubts, scepticism and denial, and where religion is dominant there are bigotry and ignorance.[75] In conclusion, we might describe him as an Islamic philosopher who, on the one hand, rejects the harmful outcomes of (negative) philosophy, but on the other hand welcomed other outcomes of philosophy such as reason, science and progress.

MYSTICISM

During the methodological search that Nursi experienced, Sufism was the second path and solution he examined. Especially during his formative education Nursi was influenced by the writings of Al-Jilani, al-Ghazali and Imam Rabbani (Sirhindi). In his words, they were the spiritual poles of Nursi.[76]

Around 1920, Nursi was seeking solitude in a spiritual crisis that forced him to withdraw from society and look for places removed from Istanbul life. Whereas the "Old Said" had pursued the rational and philosophical sciences, he now started to look for a way to the essence of reality that followed the approach of the Sufis (*ahl-i tarikat*) and the mystics (*ahl-i haqiqat*). He retreated to Yusha Tepesi (a high hill on the Asian side of the Bosphorus near its junction with the Black Sea). The first source that Nursi sought help from was *Gawth-i A'zam*, 'Abd al-Qadir Geylani's copy of his *Fütûhu'l-Gayb*. The followings lines came up coincidently:

> "*Anta fi dari'l-hikmati fa'tlub tabiba yudawi qalbak*"[77]

Nursi's interpretation of this is: "Oh, you unfortunate! As a member of the *Darü'l-Hikmeti'l-Islamiye*, you are as though a doctor curing the spiritual sicknesses of the people of Islam, whereas it is you who is sicker than anyone. You first of all find a doctor for yourself, then try to cure others!" Continuing, Nursi maintained that although the book seemed as though it were addressing him and benefited him greatly, he remained unsatisfied. The second source, which was one of the means of transforming the "Old Said" into the "New Said", was the *Mektûbat* of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, Imam-i Rabbani. Nursi came across two letters in this work which he thought were addressed directly to him. They told him, 'Make your Qibla one'.[78] But Vahide states that this advice of the Shaykh seemed to Nursi inappropriate, and on once he felt unsatisfied.[79] None of the great figures, such as Imam Gazzali, Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi, or Imam-i Rabbani, answered all of his needs, according to Vahide. Nursi decided that the one true master should be the Holy Qur'an. He states that, "The head of these various ways and the source of these streams and the sun of these planets is the All-Wise Qur'an; the true single Qibla is to be found in it. In which case, it is also the most elevated guide and most Holy Master. So I clasped it with both hands and clung on to it."[80]

It is clear from the above discussion that Nursi could not be satisfied with the Sufistic way and method of reaching the truth. He found it difficult to attain at this time and slow to achieve. He concluded that it was not the time for Sufism.[81]

However, Nursi was very much influenced by mysticism during his formative early educational years, and it made a great impact on his subsequent writings. His use of metaphorical idioms perhaps comes from mysticism. Indeed, there are echoes of mysticism in his worship. He once stated that in 15 days, he recites personal prayers of saints and Sufis that normally take 3 or 4 months to recite. In addition, after

1925, and in common with Sufis, Nursi emphasised the importance of reflective thought on the universe all over his *Risale-i Nur*.[82]

More relevant to the "New Said" and the writings of the *Risale-i Nur* collection was Nursi's exposure during his early education in the writings of Sufists. Those whom he refers to are: Al-Ghazali, Shah Naqshband, Imam Rabbani and Mawlana Halidi. Further, Nursi found models for people to follow in the lives of the Imams of the Prophet's Family, such as Ali ibn Abi Talib, Hasan and Husayn, and in the persons of the spiritual poles, such as Junayd al-Baghdadi and Abd al-Qadir Gilani.[83]

While moving to intellectual maturity, Nursi received his early education from and showed interest in various prominent Sufi Shaikhs of Eastern Anatolia. Among them, according to Algar, are Shaykh Muhammed Kufrevi, (Naqshbandi), Sayyid Nur (Qadiri)[84], and Shaykh Fehim (Naqshbandi).[85] The three who receive most mention in Nursi's writings are al-Jilani, the founder of Qadiri tarikat[86]; al-Sirhindi (known as Imam-i Rabbani in Turkey), the founder of *muceddidi*[87] or the renewalist order; and Mevlana Halid[88] (1776-1827) the successor of *Muceddidi* tradition and said to be the link between Sirhindi and modern Naqshbandi activism.[89] But Nursi's insistence that according to Mardin, he was not simply a Naksibendi but also a Kadiri and his frequent references to Imam-i Rabbani lead one to think that by skipping lightly over the Halidi link in his spiritual ancestry he was trying to justify the novelty and the distinguishing characteristics of his own movement.[90] The first sign of the Kadiri influence was the daring decision of Said Nursi during his early education to pick as patron the saintly man who had founded the religious order of the Kadiri[91], who were rivals of the Naksibendi. Mardin elsewhere writes, "In a region where the Naksibendi had established control by ousting the Kadiri this was a real act of defiance... One of

the recurring themes in his later writing (and one which shows his universalism particularly well) is that one should have no special allegiance to any of the orders since all have something to contribute to Islam."[92] According to Algar, "Although he never submitted formally to the guidance of any shaykh, and regarded the structure and concern of the *tarikat* as inappropriate to the circumstances of the age, the influence of Sufism upon him was profound and can be seen to have permeated the entirety of his writings."[93] It is clear from discussions below, regarding for example the indicators of God, that mysticism was reflected in his terminology and even methodology. Mardin states,

> Even though Said was educated in the tradition of the mystic orders he assumed an antagonistic stance towards them because he believed that re-instilling faith in the hearts of Muslims was more important than subtle arguments about the ways in which the divine showed itself. Nevertheless, his understanding and especially his interpretation of the Qur'an is marked by the mystic style.[94]

However, in response to the times Nursi criticised the tendency of some people to attach too much importance to Sufism at the expense of serving the cause of spreading the truths of belief. He pointed out three sorts of sainthood and asserted that the way of 'greater sainthood', the third category, at that time was following the practices of the Prophet and making direct service to the truths of belief.[95] Nursi maintained that his new way of the *Risale-i Nur* was included in the third category. In support he said, "In his Letters (*Maktubat*), Imam-i Rabbani, the hero and a sun of the Naqshbandi Order, said: "I prefer the unfolding of a single matter of the truths of belief to thousands of illuminations, ecstasies, and instances of wonder-working."[96] On the necessity and the need of the way of *Risale-i Nur* in defence of an accusation of the *Risale-i Nur* being a Sufi order, he states,

> Since the reality of the matter is thus, my conjecture is that if persons like Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir Gilani (May God be pleased with him) and Shah Naqshband (May God be pleased with him) and Imam-i Rabbani (May God be pleased with him) were alive at the present time, they would expend all their efforts in strengthening the truths of belief and tenets of Islam. For they are the means to eternal happiness. If there is deficiency in them, it results in eternal misery. A person without belief may not enter Paradise, but very many have gone to Paradise without Sufism. Man cannot live without bread, but he can live without fruit. Sufism is the fruit, the truths of Islam, basic sustenance. In former times, through spiritual journeying from forty days to as much as forty years, a person might rise to some of the truths of belief. But now, if through Almighty God's mercy there is a way to rise to those truths in forty minutes, it surely is not sensible to remain indifferent to it.[97]

According to Nursi, the purpose of all the Sufi ways is the expounding of even a single matter of the truths of belief. This is the highest aim and achievement. But in Nursi's time it was a difficult and long way to attain the truth through the spiritual purification of Sufism. In old times, people believed in God and were in need of raising their level of belief, since in the tradition, belief has many levels. The spiritual and individual life of dervishes served Islam in the victorious times and helped many people's belief in God become stronger and stronger. But now, people were in need of attaining belief and searching for a faith, for many people had lost their faith after the attacks of philosophy-based materialism.[98] Therefore, he insists that in modern times, the method of search needs heart and mind together.[99]

While mysticism usually expresses the theoretical or philosophical aspect of the search for the truth, its practical aspect is usually referred to under the term *darwish* (the individual who tries to live as a Sufi).[100] It was probably in this sense that Nursi opposed Sufism, for at the time it was difficult to experience the spiritual journey as an individual. On the other hand, one could say Nursi was a new kind of modern Sufi whose methodology and discourse were full of 'sufistication'.

Despite his criticism of Sufism, Nursi does not oppose it. He tried to legitimise it at a time when Sufi institutions and orders were proscribed by the political

authority. In one of his letters, he records how sainthood is a proof of prophethood, and the Sufi way, a proof of the Shari'a, and how both are a means to happiness.

> The aim and goal of the sufi path is -knowledge of God and the unfolding of the truths of belief- through a spiritual journeying with the feet of the heart under the shadow of the Ascension of Muhammad (PBUH), to manifest the truths of belief and the Qur'an through illumination and certain states, and to a degree by 'witnessing;' it is an elevated human mystery and human perfection which is called 'the sufi path' or 'sufism.'[101]

Nursi's ambivalence towards Sufism and the Sufistic way may have resulted from the conditions of the time in which he lived. Since all the *medreses* and *tekkes* where the teaching of Sufism took place had been closed down by the political authority of the time, and *shayk*-ism or *darwish*-ism and *murid*-isim described as illegal, Nursi distinguishes his new way from the way of the Sufists.

In short, Nursi himself and the movement he founded cannot be defined as a Sufi order, but yet showed an influence of Sufism, and Nursi himself could be described as a non-Sufi brotherhood affiliated Sufi. One may object that since the source of all the Sufis and Islamic scholars is the same, shared characteristics may not amount to influence.[102] According to Mardin, Nursi first appears as an aspirant Naksibendi savant, and then as a Muslim ideologist.[103] The *Risale-i Nur* movement is not a Sufi order, but a new kind of movement which, despite all the affection Nursi had for Sufism, could be included in the category of faith-based-text movements. Another distinctive point for Nursi compared to his contemporaries is that his contemporaries were either Sufis or opposed Sufism. Nursi was neither a Sufi nor an opposer; more rightly a middle-roader.

THE QUR'AN

Finally, Nursi sought help for his own inner sicknesses and for the Islamic *ummah's* from the Qur'an. Nursi had his own way of understanding the Qur'an. Some of his interpretations are highly metaphorical and rhetorical.[104] Since he commented only on verses, with the aim of strengthening belief, his *Risale-i Nur* has been categorised as a subjective interpretation.[105] For him, the Qur'an's importance comes from its foundation as the basis of the Clear Religion, its foundation of the world of Islam which is simply based on having faith in God. Of the Qur'an he writes:

> All six sides of this luminous proof are transparent and clear: there is the seal of manifest miraculousness on it, beneath it are logic and evidence; to its right side is the testimony of conscience. Before it is good or happiness in both worlds and it is founded on pure Revelation.[106]

From 1925, Nursi took only the Qur'an as his sole master for interpretations and did not refer to any other book. The Qur'an's centrality in Nursi's writings is apparent wherever he discusses issues related to faith, and to strengthening of belief; proof of the Single Maker (the aim of Divine unity); proof of Muhammad's prophethood (the aim of Divine messengership); proof of the possibility of the resurrection of the dead (the aim of resurrection and the requital of the Day of Judgement); and proof of Divine justice in this world and the next (the aim of absolute justice). He argues that there are four main themes in the Qur'an: *tawhid* (affirmation of Divine Unity), prophethood, resurrection, and justice and worship of God.[107] His commentary, appears unsystematic, but there are recurrent themes: the verses mostly interpreted in the *Risale-i Nur* are those concerned with the truths of belief, such as the Divine Names and attributes, and Divine activity in the universe, Divine existence and Unity, resurrection, prophethood, Divine Determining or destiny, and man's duties of worship. Among the issues stressed through repetition in the Qur'an, the most

repeated subject is belief in God. In this regard, according to Nursi, repetition is necessary for a founder in order to establish and to consolidate. Confirmations and repetitions in the Qur'an are necessary to strengthen foundations.[108] Nursi states that, "Since the Qur'an is both a book of invocation, and a book of prayer, and a book of summons, the repetition in it is desirable, indeed, it is essential and most eloquent. The mark of invocation is illumination through repetition... The mark of prayer is strengthening through repetition. The mark of command and summons in the Qur'an is confirmation through repetition."[109]

> The All-Wise Qur'an is wise. It affords everything a position in relation to its value. Thus, one thousand three hundred years ago, the Qur'an saw concealed in the darkness of the future, man's hidden fruits and progress, and showed them in a form better than we see and shall see. That means the Qur'an is the Word of One Who sees at the same instant all time and all within it.[110]

There was some criticism of Nursi's exclusive reliance on the Qur'an, eschewing other Islamic sources, such as al-Ghazali's writings. Nursi argues that it is not a matter of not being pleased with other sources, it is a matter of defining the problem and cure for that time. He sought the same objective as the older sources, but with a different solution and method in a different time, surrounded by a different environment and conditions. In the past, truths of belief were not under attack by the people of misguidance, but now the problem is that people have difficulty over belief in God. He thought that with the inspiration he received from the Qur'an, he was trying to cure this disease. Perhaps, he argued, the solutions they sought in their time were difficult to attain in the present, or it takes some time to achieve a solution by the way they followed, but with the way of the *Risale-i Nur* and its method, it is safer, shorter and sharper to deal with the doubts brought by current ideologies. Also, it was the Qur'an that was the source and master for all these scholars of Islam as well as a

guide and master for the *Risale-i Nur*. He reminded his cities that others actively engage in the study of other scholars. This duty is left to them. But he saw the *Risale-i Nur* as the last defender of belief.[111]

> Since the *Risale-i Nur* has taken from the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition weapons that are swift, accurate, and powerful enough to rout the enemy, it does not apply to the shops of those holy, blessed persons. For the Qur'an, their source, reference, and master, is the *Risale-i Nur*'s master in the full meaning. And because time is short and we are few, we cannot find the time to profit from those luminous works.[112]

According to Mardin, for Said Nursi, the Qur'an was primarily a means of placing restraints on the dangerous appetites of man. As Nursi states it;

> The aims of the Qur'an are to provide a barrier against the appetites of man (*hevesat-i nefsaniye*) thus encouraging him to engage in higher pursuits, giving satisfaction to his higher aspirations and directing him towards the achievements of human perfection.[113]

In the understanding of Nursi, the Qur'an addresses all men in every age in accordance with the degree of their understanding and development. In his *Risale-i Nur*, he aimed to explain and expound the basic tenets of belief, the truths of the Qur'an, to modern man who, he thought, was in urgent need. Nursi teaches the Qur'an, expounds it, and makes it comprehensible in a way that shows his concern for belief and devotion to it. And by having recourse to the testimonies of the Qur'an's miraculous *suras* and verses, his teaching is itself derived from the Qur'an, in order to build ideal culture of life and belief.

3. 3.2 THE INDICATORS OF GOD

Nursi emphasises four proofs – out of countless others – of the existence of God: cosmology, the conscience, the *Insan-i Kamil,* the Prophet, and the Qur'an.[114] None of his contemporaries dealt with indicators of God in as much detail as did Nursi. We also need to point out that, although we have tried to examine the indicators one by one in different sections, they are very much interconnected and interrelated. It is, we believe, important to analyse these indicators, because we believe they are at the very heart of his concept of belief.

THE COSMOLOGY OR THE CREATION (THE UNIVERSE AS MACROCOSM)

The most widely known proof of God, for Nursi, is the cosmology or the creation itself. Nursi describes the cosmos as a vast book or a vast human being (macroanthropos), showing the oneness and divinity of God.[115] He uses many metaphors when discussing the universe, such as "an exhibition," "an arable field," "a guest-house," and "a palace," but the metaphor of "a book," that is, something "to be read," is among them.[116]

According to Nursi, God Almighty, in order to display His infinite power and the endless embroideries of His Names, has created a man-like cosmos in order to be called upon and remembered.[117] All of the Divine Names manifested in the macroanthropos that is the world also have manifestations in the microcosm that is man.[118] That is to say, as man is a small world, the microcosm, so is the world a large human being, the macroanthropos. Small man is an index and summary of the macroanthropos. The great originals of the samples in man will necessarily be found in the macroanthropos.[119] Man has been granted the ability to look at this index, and read and interpret it.

The universe is likened to a tree, with the elements as its branches, plants as its leaves, animals as its flowers, and a vast book containing the pages of the heavens and the earth and of the seasons, the lines of night and day, the words of the creatures on the earth. The addressee or its fruit is man; its aim is to be read and get a response with universal worship, love, and thanks. All the Divine Names are manifested within it.[120] Man's disposition is to have the potentiality to manifest all the Names manifested in the cosmos. His superiority over all creatures lies in this.[121] The process of discovering the universe has a long way to go, according to Nursi. According to this interpretation, day by day, man, by discovering the universe, will see and realise the Qur'an's freshness and this discovery will strengthen his belief.[122]

In his interpretation of the verse, "*And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise*" (Qur'an, 17:44), Nursi writes that everything has numerous aspects that give up knowledge of God like windows.[123] He discusses that the reality of everything in the universe is based on the Divine Names. Sometimes as many as twenty manifestations of the Divine Names may be seen on a single living creature. All sciences and arts are also based on and rely upon a Name, the true science of philosophy is based on the Name of All-Wise, true medicine on the Name of Healer, and geometry on the Name of Determiner, and so on.[124]

In the *Risale-i Nur*, Nursi puts it as follows:

> ...All attainments and perfections, all learning, all progress, and all sciences, each have an elevated reality which is based on one of the Divine Names. On being based on the Name, which is concealed under numerous veils and has various manifestations and different spheres, the sciences and arts and attainments find their perfection and become reality. It is not some incomplete and deficient shadow.[125]

The whole of the cosmos is, as it were, a vast open book to be pondered, understood and interpreted. And the Divine Names and Attributes are the keys to

this.[126] Nursi tries to persuade man's intellect and spirituality to know the meaning of the 'Book of Creation', for the cosmos is replete with 'signs' (*ayat*) which point to its Creator. The cosmos speaks to man as God's revelation. It is not meaningless. However, knowledge of the cosmos is of use only if it leads man to the realisation that there is a Creator. Man may submit to the knowledge he has obtained through his belief or he may choose to ignore it through unbelief and deny the divine origin of the cosmos. If he does submit to the knowledge he has acquired concerning the Creator of the cosmos, that is where *iman* starts.[127] This view is very similar to that of al-Arabi's that the cosmos as a whole – the totality of existent entities – manifests all the divine names but does so in a diffuse way, whereas man, as a microcosm endowed with consciousness, brings them into sharp focus as a unity.[128] In al-Arabi's opinion, "The universe which, like a mirror, reflects the divine attributes and names in a multiplicity of forms, manifests them separately or analytically".[129] Also, like Nursi in this matter, Razi says God's attributes and names must be interpreted symbolically in order to be understood.[130] However, it should be stated here that ibn-Taymiyya was very critical of these symbolic interpretations.[131]

The concept of the book of the universe was not original to Nursi; it has sealed itself in the long tradition of Sufis. The originality of Nursi's method and discourse, according to Vahide, comes from his interpreting the Qur'an by way of reflective thinking[132] on the universe based on reasoning, science and its interconnections with man, the Prophet and the Qur'an.[133]

MAN'S CONSCIENCE

The second universal instructor that makes the Creator known to man, according to Nursi, is the conscience. Man's "conscious nature", like the centre of all his senses,

has the capacity to recognise God. The human conscience or consciousness, he says, is the juncture of the world of the unseen and the material, visible world, and it influences the intellect from which the ray of belief in Divine Unity issues.[134]

> Even if the reason neglects to work properly and see the truth, conscience does not forget the Creator. Even if man's selfhood denies Him, conscience sees him, reflects on him and turns toward him.[135]

In this regard, to know God through his conscience, man has been decked out with some senses other than the five known senses. Drive and energy are two of his other senses. He has many "windows" opening on the world of the unseen.[136]

In the view of Nursi, since the universe displays the beauty of art and the finely ornamented forms of beautiful creatures, the Fashioner must possess a significant will to make beauty and a powerful desire to adorn. This will and desire in turn shows that the Maker possesses an elevated love and sacred inclination towards the perfections of the art He displays in His creatures. This love and inclination must be turned towards, and concentrated, on man, the most enlightened and perfect individual among beings. For man is the conscious fruit of the tree of creation, the most comprehensive creation, the one with the most general view and most universal consciousness. And the one with the most comprehensive view and most universal consciousness should be the most elevated and brilliant individual to meet with and be addressed by that Beauteous Maker. He should expend his universal consciousness and comprehensive view entirely on the worship of his Maker, the appreciation of His art, and in offering thanks for His bounties.[137] In response, God asks for an enlightened and illuminated sphere of worship, and a broad and comprehensive signboard of thought and reflection, admiration, thanks and belief.[138]

> It is man who will perform this duty, for although he is a dark and ignorant thing, he possesses such abilities he is worthy of being a sample and model of the world. Also, a trust has been granted to man with whom he may discover secret treasures and open them. Also, man's powers have not been limited; they are absolute. In consequence he possesses a sort of universal consciousness whereby he perceives the resplendent majesty and grandeur of the Sultan of Pre-Eternity.[139]

Although Nursi himself did not mention them together when he discussed the indicators of God, the relation between man's conscious nature and the *ana* (ego), suggests they could be dealt with together. Recalling Nursi's argument that man is a creation like the world, we can deduce that all of the Divine Names manifested in the macroanthropos also are manifested in the microcosm that is man. That is to say, as man is a small world, the microcosm, so is the world a large human being, the macroanthropos. Small man is an index and summary of the macroanthropos, the conscious fruit of the tree of creation.[140] The fruit that is most comprehensive is that with the most general view and universal consciousness.[141] The *ana* is the most conscious part of the human being. In the interpretation of the verse;

> "We did indeed offer the Trust to the heavens, and the earth, and the mountains; but they refused to undertake it being afraid thereof. But man assumed it; indeed, he is most unjust, most foolish." (Qur'an, 33:72)

Nursi maintains,

> The 'I' is one component, one aspect, of the numerous aspects of the 'Trust', from the bearing of which the sky, earth, and mountains shrank, and of which they were frightened. Indeed, from the time of Adam until now, the 'I' has been the seed of a terrible tree of *Zaqqum* and at the same time, of a luminous tree of *Tuba*, which shoot out branches around the world of mankind.[142]

The key to the world is in the hand of man, states Nursi, and is attached to his self. The 'I' comprises indications and of the truths of the attributes and functions of His dominion, so that the 'I' might be a unit of measurement and the attributes of

dominion and functions of Divinity might be known.[143] One may say that the relation between *vicdan* (consciousness) and *ene* (ego) is that the first one is for finding God and the second is for knowing and comprehending God.

In short, according to Nursi, man's consciousness looks to and points to eternal happiness. And man's most conscious part is the "I". For consciousness to be attracted and drawn in this way is possible only because it is attracted by a true aim and captivating truth.[144]

PROPHETHOOD, IN PARTICULAR THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD, AS THE *INSAN-I KAMIL* (THE PERFECT MODEL OF HUMANITY)

The third indicator that makes God known to man, according to Nursi, is Muhammadan truth[145], which is furnished with the Messengership and Islam. "Messengership contains the testimony of the greatest consensus and most comprehensive agreement of all the prophets, and Islam bears the spirit of the Divinely-Revealed religions and their confirmation based on Revelation."[146] The Prophet explains to mankind the existence of God and His Unity. He manifests the light of Divine Unity in the name of the purified, excellent ones among humankind.[147] For Nursi,

> The Prophet Muhammad is the seal of the prophets, the reason of the existence of universe, the most beloved creature of the Fashioner of the cosmos and the one in whose person the desire for perpetuity existing in all men by virtue of their very nature, a desire that lifts men from the lowest of the low to the highest of the high, is the greatest of all desires and petitions, fit to be presented to the Provider of all Needs only by the greatest among His servants.[148]

Nevertheless, in Nursi's view, the only exemplary model for mankind was the Prophet Muhammad, as the *Insan-i Kamil*, the recipient of Divine revelation. The

Prophet's life was always a source of inspiration for Nursi's writings about the truths of belief, right action and good conduct. In fact, as Sulayman states, giving numerous examples of the Prophet's miracles, Nursi aimed to instil inner, spiritual truths in people's hearts at a time when materialism and atheism were destroying all their values.[149] He was the *Insan-i Kamil*, the perfect model of humanity. Nursi states that the Prophet Muhammad was the one who answers the three awesome questions that from the very beginning have occupied the mind of every conscious being and bewildered it: Who are you? Where do you come from? What is your purpose or final destination?[150] In accordance with Nursi's understanding, the Prophet solves the riddle of the universe.[151] Khalil says,

> He concentrated on its dimension which looks to belief, aiming to strengthen faith in the face of unbelief and atheism, which he said was his chief goal. This forced him to break the shell surrounding historical events, penetrate to the inner spirituality, pass over the apparent face of things and reach their essence; in short, to leave aside the externals in favour of their unseen inner face.[152]

Nursi's treatment of this subject is not classical. He did not write a chronological biography of the Prophet or embrace the comprehensive information about his *Sunna* (practices). It was Nursi's aim to explore the fundamental side of the Prophet Muhammad in order to build up a culture of belief. Nursi offers us a practical and ideal model by which we can glimpse the actual embodiment of the Names and their practical implications: the example of the Prophet.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, IN PARTICULAR THE QUR'AN

According to Nursi, the Qur'an is a revealed scripture, containing a summary of the books of all the prophets, the writings of all the saints, and the works of all the

purified scholars. It is a source of inspiration and the pre-eternal guide. Its aspects are purged of the darkness of doubts and scepticism. One of the Qur'an's most important aims is eternal happiness and, in this respect, it is pure guidance to the necessary lights of belief, based on evidence and proof. It leads to surrender of the heart and conscience based on reason and intellect.[153]

As a universal teacher, the Qur'an, according to Nursi, makes known to man his Sustainer. It is the pre-eternal translator of the great book of the universe; the key to open the treasures of the Divine Names concealed in the pages of the earth and the heavens. Its importance comes from its being the treasury of the World of the Unseen beyond the veil of this Manifest World, the plan of the spiritual world of Islam, and the map of the worlds of the hereafter; the clear interpreter with lucid exposition, articulate proof of the Divine Essence, attributes, and deeds.[154]

> It is both a book of wisdom and law, and a book of prayer and worship, and a book of command and summons, and a book of invocation and Divine knowledge - it is book for all spiritual needs; and it is a sacred library offering books appropriate to the ways of all the saints and veracious, the purified and the scholars, whose ways and paths are all different.[155]

There exists a connection between the Qur'an which is the pre-eternal guide, the cosmos and man, transmitted through the *Insan-i Kamil*, the Prophet Muhammad. For the Qur'an is the guide showing how to read the Names manifest in the cosmos and how to attain belief by observing the cosmos. It is the pre-eternal translator of the Book of the Universe; the interpreter of the verses of creation. It comments on the book of the Worlds of the Seen and the Unseen. And its addressee is man and its means is the Prophet.[156]

In the understanding of Nursi, there is also an interlocked relationship between the Qur'an and the universe. That is to say, "The universe is dependent on the Qur'an for

its meanings to be understood; it only gains meaning through the Qur'an. And with its verses about natural phenomena and their orderly, purposive changes, the Qur'an is the interpreter, expounder, and translator of the book of the universe."[157] His approach to the Qur'an, as the interpreter or translator of the signs of creation, has been expressed in the following passage:

> The Qur'an is the pre-eternal interpreter of the creational signs [or verses] which the universe recites through the tongues of its beings. And just as it is the expounder of the book of the world, so it is the discloser of the Most Beautiful Names concealed in the pages of the heavens and earth... the All-Wise Qur'an... explains the meanings of the book of the universe to make known its Creator.[158]

According to Nursi, the cosmos, the Qur'an, human conscience and the Prophet Muhammad himself, with the knowledge he or they carry or brought, or the teaching within itself or themselves, are indicators clear enough to make God known to humans and to demonstrate Divine Unity. All these indicators are very much connected to Nursi's method and understanding of *iman*, based on *tafakkur* of the cosmos.

3. 3.3 NURSI'S UNDERSTANDING OF MAN AND LIFE

Central to Nursi's concept of *iman* is his understanding of man and life, his purpose and its nature and purpose. According to Nursi, God created the angels as pure good, the devils as pure evil; the animals and plants as those who have no knowledge of good and evil. Through His Wisdom he created man with a nature capable of knowledge of good and evil.[159] Then human beings have been granted the capability of ascending to the highest rank in all the creatures by being Divine vicegerent on the earth.[160] He also took up the Supreme Trust, from which the heavens and mountains

both shrank. God created him entrusting him with the regulation of the nature and life upon earth. So man, according to Nursi, is the most thoughtful recipient of God's address, the most comprehensive mirror to the manifestation of His Names, the most beautiful miracle of His power in the fairest of forms. In order to receive the manifestation of the Greatest Name, and in order for him to assess and perceive the contents of His treasuries of mercy; making him an investigator of secrets with balances and instruments; He made him the most needy of all creatures with respect to His infinite gifts, the one suffering most from annihilation and the one most desirous of immortality; the most delicate, the poorest and neediest of animals, most wretched and subject to pain in his worldly life but most sublime in disposition, in the highest of forms and characters.[161]

It will be recalled that in the understanding of Nursi, man has the capacity to perform all the functions of all the species of animals.[162] The world is a guest-house for man and he remains there only a short time. He has many duties and in a brief lifetime and is charged with preparing all the necessities for eternal life.[163]

Life, according to Nursi, is the product of the universe, thanks and worship, the product of life and the ultimate reason for the universe's creation. Without life, this universe and everything within is meaningless. Life witnesses the six pillars of belief and proves them; it points to their truth. Life is a shining seal of Divine Unity on the face of the universe.[164]

> The perfection of existence is through life. Rather, the true existence of existence is through life. Life is the light of existence, and consciousness is the light of life. Life is the summit and foundation of everything. Life appropriates everything for living beings; it is as though it makes one thing the owner of everything. Through life, a living thing may say: "All these things belong to me. The world is my house. The universe is my property, given to me by my owner.[165]

According to Nursi, having the potentiality of knowing God, reading and looking for attributes and names of God, man has the key in his *ene* (ego) entrusted to him by his creation. Just as beings are visible through light, their existence, according to Nursi, is known through life. Both reveal, he says.[166] Here we see Nursi's metaphysical theory of man coincides with the theory of mysticism and is similar to al-Arabi's.[167] However, it is clear that Nursi was not a pantheist and although he calls Arabi the miracle of Islamic sciences[168] and one of the greatest Islamic scholars of all the time, like al-Ghazali, al-Jilani and Sirhindi.[169] Sometimes Nursi criticises him, especially for his comments on the levels of existence appearing contrary to the reality in this Manifest World and his pantheistic view. "There is no existent save He," he writes, going so far as to deny the existence of the universe.[170] Elsewhere though, he defends al-Arabi, on the questions raised about his being a believer, stating, "Yes, himself, Muhyiddin was rightly-guided and acceptable, but in all his works cannot be the guide and instructor… However, he himself is free of misguidance. Sometimes, a word may appear to be unbelief, but the one who spoke it is not an unbeliever."[171]

3. 3.4 *IMAN*

Hijazi wrote, "Belief in Divine Unity is the principal teaching of all the Divinely revealed religions. It forms the basis of Islam, together with declaring there is nothing similar to Almighty God or contrary to him."[172] For Nursi, belief is a journey to be taken, beginning with one's declaration of Islam through one's stating '*La ilaha illa Allah*' (there is no god but Allah).[173] Nursi defines faith as a light resulting from affirmation of the essentials of the religion and all details that the Prophet Muhammad brought. It is the affirmation of God's unity and has degrees and stages. It is not

limited to brief affirmation based on imitation.[174] Nursi states, "Faith is a light Allah places into a human's heart in response to free will."[175]

The following extract from Nursi sets out both the true nature of belief, and the boundaries for the relations between man, the universe and God that should result from such belief:

> To know God, however, means to have certain belief in His dominicality encompassing all beings, and in all things, particular and universal, from the atoms to the stars, being in the grasp of His power, action, and will; it means believing in the truths of the sacred words, 'There is no god but God,' and assenting to them with one's heart. For simply to say, 'God exists,' and then to divide His sovereignty among causes and Nature and attribute it to them; to recognize causes as sources of authority, as if-God forbid- they were partners to God; to fail to perceive His will and knowledge as present with all things; to refuse to recognize His strict commands, and to reject His attributes, and the messengers and prophets He has sent - this has nothing to do with the reality of belief in God. The person who does all this, then says 'God exists,' does so only in order to find some relief from the torment he suffers in the world after his unbelief has made it a hell for him. Not to deny is one thing; to believe is something completely different.[176]

In the *Risale-i Nur*, Nursi maintains, "That all beings, on all levels, are interrelated, interlocked and interdependent for a reason that they have come into existence as though from nowhere, and, during their brief lives, each with its own particular purpose, goal and mission, act as mirrors in which various Divine Attributes, and countless configurations of Divine Names, are displayed."[177] There is nothing in the cosmos that is meaningless or created without purpose. Everything in the cosmos signifies God and belief makes this connection visible and meaningful.

Yusuf points out that, according to Nursi, belief is something that sets human beings on the path of knowledge inspiring them to learn about and view the universe as a book of wisdom. He stresses that belief in God is something that has to be built on experiential proof. It is a proof, which does not merely argue or make claims, but is invitational in approach. Yusuf states, "It is a realistic and powerful argument based

on observation."[178] It gives the believer the world as an exhibition surrounded by order, harmony, beauty, justice and mercy. Nursi's aim could be summarised, as Yusuf points out, as making Muslims convinced believers whose faith is based upon certainty through knowledge, rather than through mere imitation.[179] In this regard Mardin writes "The "New Said" was taking leave from the intellectualization of religion to grasp the bedrock of the *mysterium tremendum*. For him, faith now overtook religion as 'reasonable', although the latter still occupied an important place in his teachings."[180] Nursi was using the dialectic method to rationalise belief. There seemed to be attacks on faith coming from irreligious bases and he attempted to defend faith by using rationally ascertainable proofs to determine and to teach them.[181] His discourse was based on "experiential" arguments for the existence of God and his aim was to corroborate and prove pillars of belief.

CULTIVATION OF *IMAN*

For Nursi, faith was a reflective activity always requiring fresh contemplation and requiring to be continuously renewed. It is not stable, it needs to be refreshed. Man needs to constantly renew his belief.[182]

Belief in God has some degrees, in the understanding of Nursi, as it is in the Qur'an. This is not unique to Nursi. In one of his earlier works Nursi argues that belief in God's Unity has two degrees; one being superficially that God has no partners and the universe can belong to none other than Him. The other is that God is One and that everything belongs to Him exclusively, and that only He gives existence without any partners whatever and without needing any means to do so.[183]

Believers should seek to bring about the realisation of belief through reflective thought, knowledge and worship, not only engage in imitation.[184]

TEFEKKÜR (TAFAKKUR)

For Nursi, *iman* takes us from the point where man begins searching for the Divine Wisdom behind the creation of all beings and ends in the realisation that everything serves a purpose and displays Divine Wisdom in its creation. *Tafakkur* is seeing the Divine hand in creation and acknowledging how beautiful the cosmos has been created.[185]

According to Nursi, the *Risale-i Nur*'s essence and occupation is *tafakkur* and compassion.[186] The act of *tafakkur*, combined with the way of impotence, poverty, and compassion, shapes the spiritual side of Nursi's method.[187] The way of reflective thought was one of the most important elements of the *Risale-i Nur*, and according to Vahide, the necessary complement of 'the book of the universe.'[188] Nursi expresses this idea in his preface to the Twenty-Ninth Flash, which is in Arabic and which he called a '*Tefekkürname'* or 'piece on which to reflect:'

> Thirteen years ago, my heart combined with my mind and urged me to the way of reflective thought which the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition commands with such verses as,
>
> 'That you may consider.' 'Perchance they may reflect.' 'Do they not reflect in their own minds, did God create the heavens and the earth?' 'There are signs for those who consider.'
>
> The Hadith the meaning of which is "An hour's reflective thought is better than a year's [voluntary] worship" states that on occasion an hour's reflection may be equivalent to a year's worship. It also offers powerful encouragement for reflective thought. ... I realized recently that the powerful source of life and brilliant lights in the various parts of the *Risale-i Nur* are flashes of those sequences of thought.[189]

Nursi's "way of reflective thought" developed through the years.[190] At the beginning of this process, just after 1925, as stated by Vahide, Nursi describes how in his forty-year lifetime and thirty years of study, he had learnt only "four words" and

"four phrases." The "words," were "*Mâna-yi harfî, mâna-yi ismî*, intention (*niyet*), and point of view (*nazar*).[191] These are the cornerstones of Nursi's understanding of *tafakkur* thereafter. Of the four, it is the first that holds greatest importance, for it is directly related to the concept of the book of the universe and *tafakkur*. Briefly, Nursi defines this as follows:

> All things other than God, that is, the universe, should be looked at as signifying something other than themselves (mâna-yi harfî) and on His account. It is an error to look at them as signifying only themselves (mâna-yi ismî) and on account of causes. Yes, everything has two faces. One looks to the Creator, the other to creation. Like a lace veil or transparent glass, the face looking to creation should direct the gaze to the face looking to the Creator beneath it. Thus, when considering bounties, the Bestower of the bounties should spring to mind ... when looking at causes, one should think of the True Causer of Causes.[192]

Nursi regarded the things in the universe as signifying God rather than themselves. This stems from the Qur'anic view of looking at beings not for themselves, but for what they signify.[193]

The intention and viewpoint change the nature of things. Sciences become a means of acquiring knowledge about God.[194] The fourth of the "words" that the "New Said" had learnt in the forty years of his life, was "point of view" (*nazar*), which he defined as follows:

> As for 'point of view,' it can transform the physical sciences into knowledge of God and impel them towards their true goal. This means that if the 'view' is on account of causes and intermediaries, it is compounded ignorance, but if on account of God, it becomes knowledge of God.[195]

As the man being the traveller travels through the universe questioning each of its realms and learning of their testimony to the Divine existence and Unity, his belief gains universality and strength with each degree, and passes from being "imitative

belief" to the degree of "certain and true belief".[196] According to Nursi, this is only possible through the way of *tafakkur*. The universe and *tafakkur* are interrelated, interconnected, interdependent and interlocked.[197]

Nursi makes use of what, according to Giddens, Weber calls motive explanation, which can only be attained via a prior grasp of the subjective meanings that men can attach to their action in order to understand the realities of the things they perceive.[198] While internalising and revitalising the religion, the most important frame Nursi uses is *tafakkur*, which is particular to his way of understanding *iman* and it is in this context that *tafakkur* functions as a motive combining religious figure and maybe positivist one at the same time in order to cultivate *iman* and internalise the religion.

Among the ways of reaching the truth through the heart, it was necessary to examine Nursi's understanding of *tafakkur* (reflection), since it has a comprehensive bearing on the other two, as Nursi himself states. Nursi argued that belief starts with *tafakkur* and ends, and reaches its completion and highest point with *tafakkur* as well.

KNOWLEDGE

One of the distinguishing features of Nursi's understanding of belief in God is its relationship with knowledge of God. As Turner points out, the crucial link between *ilm* (knowledge) and *iman*/islam has hardly, if ever, been explored[199], especially among Nursi's contemporaries. The terms *ilm*, *iman* and Islam have rarely been examined one by one and the fundamental interlink between them has never been explored.

Man, according to Nursi, has been sent to this world to recognise the Creator of all beings and believe in Him and worship Him. The primordial duty of man and

the obligation incumbent upon him, according to Nursi, is to know God.[200] 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.[201] For Nursi,

> The highest aim of creation and its most important result is belief in God. The most exalted rank in humanity and its highest degree is the knowledge of God contained within belief in God. The most radiant happiness and sweetest bounty for jinn and human beings is the love of God contained within the knowledge of God.[202]

Knowledge of God is thus the essence of reality, and fruit of man's existence, and its aim. Belief in God, in other words understanding of the knowledge of God, makes this miserable life meaningful.

That is to say, the reason behind the creation of man is to know his Creator, and to worship Him. To know his Creator requires the knowledge of God. To advance in belief in God, it is also important to have knowledge of God. In other words, to know or to read God's most beautiful names which have been manifested in the universe through his intelligence, his conscience and 'I', and which have been given to him in trust, is the way for man to ascend to the highest point in the creation. He attaches a difference between knowing the path and walking the path. He seems to hold the view that '*ilm* is a prerequisite of *iman*. Therefore he uses '*ilm* in its general sense as being the knowledge of God. He also maintains that the Divine Unity of God must and cannot be attained without *tafakkur* based on the knowledge of the deliberation of the things. Therefore, in order to renew and strengthen belief, acquisition of knowledge of all things is necessary. In this view, *tafakkur* and knowledge are intertwined.[203]

Nursi relates knowledge to the question of 'the teaching of the names,' which forms the pivot of the vicegerency. In expounding the verse, "And He taught Adam the names, all of them" [2:31], Nursi clearly states that the names are the basis and the source of science and attainment and steps for progress.

> Adam's (Peace be upon him) greatest miracle in the question of the supreme vicegerency was the teaching of the names. ... "Since as a proof of their superiority over the angels in the question of the vicegerency, I taught your forefathers all the names, you too, since you are his sons and the inheritors of his abilities, should learn all the names and in your position as holder of the Supreme Trust demonstrate your worthiness before all creatures. For the way is open to you to rise to exalted rank such as holding the highest positions over all beings in the universe, and for vast creatures like the earth to be subjected to you. Come on, step forward, adhere to all My names, and rise!"... "Continuously raising your head and studying carefully my most beautiful names, make your sciences and your progress steps by which to ascend to those heavens. Then you may rise to My dominical names, which are the realities and sources of your sciences and attainments, and you may look to your Sustainer with your hearts through the telescope of the names."[204]

The following part is the summary of Barguth's analyses of Nursi's approach to the place of the theory of knowledge in the vicegerency. Since teaching of the names forms a basic element of the vicegerency, it is an essential element of consciousness of the vicegerency. Man's ultimate duty in his temporary life is to examine and search for the names presented in the universe under the form of knowledge. Man's intellectual, mental, and spiritual faculties are the means by which the treasuries of wisdom, consciousness, and good are opened to him, and through which the horizons of civilization and the vicegerency unfold.[205] According to Barguth, "It is these faculties which represent the crown of man's abilities, and enable him to be God's vicegerent on earth. For God Almighty deposited in man a vast innate capacity and potential vicegerency which render him capable of assuming the Trust and struggling with its requirements and conditions by means of consciousness,

reason and thought, which affect the universe and life."[206] Nursi elucidates this as follows:

> By describing under the title of 'the teaching of the names' all the attainments of learning and scientific progress and wonders of technology which man manifests through his comprehensive disposition, this wondrous verse contains the following subtle and elevated allusion: all attainments and perfections, all learning, all progress, and all sciences, have an elevated reality which is based on one of the Divine Names.[207]

One of the most significant points that distinguishes Nursi from his contemporaries is his understanding of the names; in other words, his applying this idea to all the attainments that human beings have achieved. According to Barguth, "Contrary to most of the great Qur'anic commentators, Imam Nursi endeavours to attach a new and very profound meaning to the teaching of the names, through which are unfolded to us the means of acquiring an advanced degree of knowledge, through the development of the mental and spiritual faculties."[208]

> And He taught Adam the names, all of them [2:31]; that is to say, Almighty God made Adam (PUB) with an elevated nature containing the sources of all attainments and perfections; He created him with a large capacity as the tillage for the seeds of all meanings; and He equipped him with an elevated conscience and comprehensive ten senses which embrace all beings. And bestowing on him these three qualities, He prepared him so that He might teach him the realities of all things, then He taught him all the names.[209]

The names are linked to man's vicegerency on earth. That is to say, man's learning of them assists him in bringing to realisation the vicegerency of earth. Thus, the teaching of the names influences his conduct and behaviour, life, culture, thought and being.[210] This linking of the names with man's actions opens up broad horizons for the enterprise of civilisation in the fields of power, proficiency, mercy, security, peace, dignity, knowledge, and so on.[211] For example Nursi says;

> The All-Wise Qur'an strikes the hand of encouragement on man's back, urging him to the highest peaks, the furthest limits, the final degrees, which he is far behind at the present degree of his progress.[212]

Nursi consistently points out the significant place of 'the teaching of the Names' in all the attainments of learning and scientific progress and wonders of technology and the prophets' significant place in doing this.[213]

In his thirty second word, he says that the reality of the universe and all beings is based on the Divine Names and how the Names are manifested, and he describes how to 'read' them.[214] In the twenty-fourth word in the *Risale-i Nur,* Nursi clarifies his understanding of the Divine Names and their attributions and manifestations in the universe and human beings.[215]

God created Adam with a capability containing the sources of all attainments and perfections and equipped him with an elevated conscience and comprehensive ten senses which embrace all beings. And bestowing on him these three qualities, He prepared him so that He might teach him the realities of all things. Then He taught him all the names.[216]

Knowledge is connected to man's various abilities and different desires. Man searches for reality among thousands of veils and barriers. Some people cannot by-pass the barriers. The abilities of some cannot support the revealing of some of the truths of belief.[217] Knowledge of God has a social dimension too. In this regard Barguth states,

> It may be said of this power and influence of knowledge arises from its ability to conform to the structure of social civilization, natural values, the principles of the vicegerency, and the laws of the universe. The more knowledge is extended towards those laws and the nature of things, its effect deepens and becomes more beneficial for man's activities related to civilization and the vicegerency. But when it is in opposition to the nature of things, in respect of

> its content and progression it is devoid of sound criteria to the extent of its opposition, and besides being ineffectual, becomes destructive of culture.[218]

Thus, says Barguth, one who possesses knowledge will have a vigorous, active capacity and propensity to assimilate at a high level the method of revelation, and its *Shari'a* and beliefs. "One who knows and loves God Almighty is potentially able to receive endless bounties, happiness, lights, and mysteries."[219]

WORSHIP

According to Nursi, the supreme goal in the creation of the universe and man is to worship God.[220] In interpreting the verse;

"And I have not created the *jinn* and the men except that they should serve Me." (Qur'an 51:56)

Nursi states, "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."[221]

Concerning the creation, Nursi describes two spheres, or signboards. One is a magnificent, well-ordered sphere of dominion, an exquisitely fashioned, bejewelled signboard of art. The other is a sphere of worship, a broad and comprehensive signboard of thought and reflection, admiration, thanks, and belief. According to him, this second sphere acts with all its power in the name of the first sphere.[222]

The first aspect of worship focuses on the sovereignty apparent in the universe and its perfections and virtues. In the second aspect, man passes from the work to the producer of the work and sees that an All-Beauteous Maker wants to make himself

known through the miracles of His art. Man responds with knowledge and belief. In this sense, worship is the conjunction of *tafakkur* and knowledge, where the spiritual side and the intellectual side come together and function together.

But Nursi's understanding of worship is very pragmatic, for man will realise that this beautiful art around him needs appreciation and, as a consequence of offering thanks, man will gain eternal life in response. [223]

Worship forms the basis of man's life and vicegerency. According to Barguth in this view, worship put man's consciousness, inner world, and actions into harmony with God's wishes, and His laws and rules. Barguth writes, "Thus his function of renewal is realised and he becomes a righteous, luminous vicegerent."[224] In this sense, worship has both a spiritual and a social dimension.

Mardin writes, "Said Nursi would have agreed (had he been cognizant of Weber) that *ibadet* rationalizes life by framing it in a set of moral constraints which switch all persons who worship simultaneously in the same direction."[225]

These three cultivation elements are something Nursi used psychologically to gain a Muslim identity. Through them a Muslim could connect with life and the cosmos he is in, and at the same time keep in touch with the Divine.

3. 4 REFORM THROUGH *IMAN* AND PERFECTIBILITY

The conceptual and perceptual differences and terminological differences are not the subject of discussion here. Rather, our concern is just to state that the term 'reform' has a positive meaning in Western literature whereas it has a negative meaning in Islamic terminology. Calling for any change in religion is fundamentally declined by all Islamic scholars without exception, whether they be traditionalist, modernist, neo-modernist or post-modernist.[226] This issue is far beyond the the scope of the present

section. We will only address and clarify how Nursi approaches reform and renewal issues. We will use the term *tajdid* for renewal and *islah* for reform.

Nursi in this regard is in line with most Islamic scholars, with, however, some fundamental differences. The conceptual differences throughout his life did not affect his opinions on this issue. Neither earlier nor later did he speak in favour of religious reform as understood in the West.

Nursi, regarding reform in the West, was of the opinion that most of the injunctions concerning social life and secondary matters of the Law were formulated by the disciples and other spiritual leaders; only the fundamentals of religion were taken from Jesus. Therefore the fundamentals of the Christian religion, he thought, were as though clothed with the garment of common laws and civil rules taken from outside, having been given a different form and called 'Christian law'. If this form is changed, Nursi states, and the garment transformed, the fundamental religion of Jesus may persist. It does not infer denying or giving the lie to Jesus. However, Nursi was of the opinion that Muhammadan *Shari'a* of Islam, was the sovereign of the two worlds: East and West, Andalusia and India. He states that the prophet Muhammad himself demonstrated both the fundamentals of the religion of Islam, and determined the secondary matters and other injunctions of the religion, including even those concerning the most minor matters of conduct; he himself taught and commanded them. Therefore he thought they were not like a garment capable of change. They have blended and combined with Islam such that they cannot be separated.[227]

Whereas in accordance with this matter of renewal and reform, he states elsewhere,

> As for the differences in the schools of law; this has arisen from differences in the way of understanding the theoretical principles shown by the *Shari'a*'s owner. Principles called 'the essentials of religion' which are not open to

> interpretation, and those called 'incontrovertible,' cannot be changed in any way and may not be interpreted. One who does change them leaves the religion, being included under the rule: 'They renounce religion as the arrow flies from the bow.'[228]

For Nursi, knowledge based on *iman* is the basis and most important aim of guidance. He uses knowledge as the catalyst of his renewal project. According to Acikgenc, in Nursi's understanding, renewal is the re-statement of the truths of revelation without their being changed, on the level of and in the style of the sciences of the century in question. Acikgenc says, "That is to say, 'renewal' is not 'change' or 'substitution'; it is merely expression of the truth in conformity with the understanding of the age."[229]

According to Nursi, man came to this world to be perfected by means of knowledge and supplication based on belief. He states,

> Humanity becomes humanity through belief. 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. However human being has been sent to this world to recognise his God and to be perfected through learning and progress by acquiring knowledge... [230]

As discussed above, belief in God has dimensions of *tafakkur*, knowledge, and worship, which affect behaviour and action. Belief in God requires reflection on the creation, knowledge of God and worship of God and results in truthful acts and harmonious behaviour. The behavioural dimension of belief is central as a guide to all man's actions.[231] It seeks self-control and harmony within man's life and corrects man's actions. In social life, this will influence the production of a moral society. Nursi emphasises the importance of knowledge for perfecting actions. He describes how man acquires value through belief by manifesting the Divine Names; how belief illuminates both man and the universe, and the past and future; how belief affords man

strength; and how belief makes man a true man, making his essential duty belief and supplication.[232]

Although it is not peculiar to Nursi, in the idea of perfect man, Nursi uses *iman* as the catalyst to achieve the highest of the high. This idea of perfect man in Sufi tradition is traced back to Husain B. Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 309/922) and eventually found its place in the theory that came to be known in the writings of ibn Arabi.[233] However it was revitalised and idealised in the twentieth century in Nursi's writings and became apparent with *iman*-centred conceptualisation. For Nursi, man in general, and the Prophet in particular, is the perfect man. In a particular sense, the Prophet Muhammad was the *par excellence* of perfection. Every human being has the capacity to be unique and to be perfect by the level of his/her faith. This is a similar view to that of ibn Taymiyya.[234] However, man as the microcosm, and the universe as the macroanthropos have similarities, according to Nursi, and the connection point is *iman*. All of the Divine Names manifested in the macroanthropos that is the universe, being also manifested in the microcosm that is man get their true meanings by the levels of each individual's *iman*. This is where Nursi differs from the above mentioned Sufis with his fundamental foci on the sensibility of all these with *iman*.[235]

In Nursi's understanding, a connection between man, universe and God is necessary. Without it, the mystery of the creation cannot be solved. The connection makes life meaningful. Hence, belief in the existence of God and following religion solves the mystery of life and world. He points out that our view of the world is determined by faith, or lack of it.[236] In this view, according to Yusuf, belief in God leads to personal integration, contentment, confidence, peace and security.[237] The believer, conscious of God, chooses the good and moral way. Strengthening belief assures personal integrity, composure and being at peace with oneself. Belief

establishes a lot more than a mere life-long relationship between God and his creation.[238]

By making belief based knowledge central to all man's actions and behaviours, Nursi establishes knowledge as the guide in all actions.[239] Belief based knowledge is a chief element of renewal and its vitality, and of the vicegerency and its effectuality. Man's mission is to link knowledge and the vicegerency.[240] According to Barguth, in Nursi's thought, deposited in man's inner self are the truths, values, and means of renewal, change, and transformation. He also states that, within him are the keys of consciousness, progress, and civilization.[241]

Belief also strengthens personal relations, is beneficial and looks to society. Man in belief, according to Nursi, will not exploit his relationships for the worthless matters of this world, with its petty hatreds and interests. He uses belief as social security.[242] Belief instils in its members sincere respect, love, and compassion for each other, loyalty and disregard for each other's faults, not because of their relations, closeness, kindness, and love, but for their continuation in the realm of the hereafter. Their good manners and morals increase accordingly. With belief, the happiness of true humanity starts to unfold in the family.[243]

> [Belief] shows its favourable effects in every group, particular and universal, and illuminates them. The sociologists and moralists, who are concerned with the social life of mankind, should take special note.[244]

It must be mentioned however, that according to Nursi religion does not consist only of belief; its second half is righteous action based on belief. Nursi believed that unbelief makes people anarchists and makes society an area of terror. A man who sees the graveyard as a door for non-existence can do all the crimes in the world. Nursi believed that he served the country with his writings. Interfering with the

public service provided by the *Risale-i Nur*, he thought, may thus open up the way to anarchy.[245] Nursi states,

> Is fear of imprisonment or being seen by a government detective sufficient to deter those who commit numerous grievous sins which poison society, like murder, adultery, theft, gambling, and drinking? If that was so, there would have to be a policeman or detective stationed permanently in every house, or at everyone's side even, so that obdurate souls would restrain themselves from those filthy acts.[246]

Nursi thought that only belief can solve this dilemma. The formation of the individual or society through worship, spiritual matters and knowledge produced by belief in God is, for Nursi, a fundamental and necessary way to become the Divine vicegerent. Worship is necessary for man's life, particularly in distressing or difficult times. The knowledge dimension of belief is also necessary to discover his limits, aims and goals, to observe the world, and to seek out the right and the good. The behavioural dimension of belief is the way for man to uphold the trust given to the Divine vicegerent. Nursi argues that belief in God provides security, closing off the way to anarchy. Through belief, people become harmless and beneficial to the nation.

3. 4.1 IMAN/ISLAM DICHOTOMY

One of the earliest theological speculations among Muslim scholars was the relationship between belief (*iman*) and submission (Islam), and whether there is a distinction between them or not. The debates mainly centred upon two issues. The first is whether certain sins will lead those who committed them to lose their faith or not. The second, more famous issue concerns the verse revealed about the tribe of *Banu Asad.*

> The desert Arabs say, "We believe." Say, "Ye have no faith; but ye (only) say, 'We have submitted our wills to Allah,' For not yet has Faith entered your hearts. (The Qur'an 49:14)

This dichotomy between *iman* and Islam has received little attention from Western and Muslim scholars. Even though the terms *iman* and Islam have been covered extensively and the term *ilm* is prevalent over the Islamic world, the crucial difference between *iman* and Islam and the link between *ilm* (knowledge), *iman* and Islam has hardly, if ever, been explored.[247] It should be first stated that as there exists a substantive conceptual difference between *iman* and Islam, there also exists a difference between *islam* and Islam.[248] Nursi's concern with Islam in his commentaries and his emphasise on *iman* rather than Islam necessitates analysis of the *islam*/Islam distinction.

No distinction between *islam* and Islam was made in early commentaries, partly because in Arabic there is no concept of capital and small letters. Therefore, Muslims have been able to convey both of these aspects in a single term.[249] So any attempt to distinguish between the communal and the personal aspects of this term, between Islam and *islam*, was inadequate. They have been traditionally indistinguishable. This changed in the 20th century. According to Smith, while Islam originally meant in its broadest sense the personal relationship between man and God and in its narrowest sense the community of those acknowledging this relationship, it often has come to be used as one or the other, with a greatly increased emphasis on the objectified systemization of religious beliefs and practices.[250] Turner writes, "The verses revealed in Medina, where Muhammad finally succeeded in creating an environment of 'communal submission' – *islam* institutionalised as Islam – contain the bulk of the Koranic commands germane to the social, political and economic aspects of the Muslim's daily life."[251]

In theory, the distinction could be explained in the following way: *islam* is the internal stage of submission or acceptance of and adherence to the commands of the Creator revealed through the Prophet Muhammad, whereas Islam concerns the outward display of obedience and manifests itself in the code of social, economic and political regulations produced by humans, containing personal acts of obedience such as prayer, fasting, almsgiving and pilgrimage – the outward regulations of *islam.*[252] Islam is therefore, either a set of personal acts of worshipping or a political, economic and social set of regulations. However, *islam* is the internal acceptance of the Muhammadan truth, which contains the truths of belief, among which are belief in God, the prophets, angels, the Holy Scriptures, divine destiny and bodily resurrection and internal submission to the fundamentals of Muhammadan truth, the principles of worship and servitude, which consist of fasting, five-daily prayers, pilgrimage, and almsgiving.[253]

Iman on the other hand is having faith in the following principles: God, His angels, His messengers, His books, the last day, the decree in its totality and resurrection, as proclaimed through the word of the Prophet as real and valid.[254] *Iman* is most commonly defined as the specific act of faith known as *tasdiq* or *iqrar* of God's revelation.[255] Coming from the verbal noun of the fourth form of the root *amana*, *iman* means to believe and to protect or place in safety.[256] According to Esposito, belief is a set of basic principles established by the Qur'an, which provide, "The foundation of its worldview and the criterion for belief versus unbelief: belief in God and His Prophet, previous prophets and revealed Scripture, angels, and the Day of Judgment (4:136). Acceptance of these beliefs renders one a believer (*mumin*); to reject them is to be an unbeliever (*kafir*). Faith places the Muslim on the straight path; acts demonstrate commitment and faithfulness."[257] Turner states,

> In the Qur'an, the word 'Allah' appears more than 2500 times, the word 'Islam' less than ten. In a good deal of modern Muslim writing, the ratio is roughly reversed. In the Qur'an, the ratio between *iman* and *islam* is 5:1 in favour of *iman*. In Arabic book titles until the end of the 19th century, Islam slightly outnumbers *iman* in a ratio of 3:2. By the Sixties, this has had jumped to 13:1, and today it is undoubtedly higher. Inevitably, then, the approach to the West has centred on Islam as a system, as an alternative 'ideology', presented almost totally without reference to the realities of belief.[258]

In this sense, Islam can exist without *iman*. There could be some Muslims praying five times a day, fasting, performing pilgrimage and living under the rule of an Islamic government, without having real belief in what they do.[259]

The understanding of *islam* as either external or internal leads us to the bond between *iman* and internal submission referred to as *islam*. A huge majority of Islamic scholars have agreed that *islam* and *iman* have at least some areas of identification. The external manifestation of Islam is practically synonymous with the internal act of belief and submission referred to as *islam* is admitted by Muslim and non-Muslim scholars alike.[260] Other commentators have indicated, however, that they understand some basic difference between Islam and *iman*, that Islam can have a purely external meaning while *iman* always refers to internal confirmation and faith.[261] According to Turner,

> This tendency to ignore, or inability to recognise, the difference between *iman* and the two types of islam has served to divert scholarly attention from the fundamentals of the faith (*usul al-din*) to the secondary principles (*furu al-din*): since *iman* is internal and cannot be gauged by others it has gradually been overshadowed by Islam, which is external and governed by a code of rules and regulations, the derivation, interpretation and implementation of which constitute the domain of highly specialised knowledge occupied by the *faqih* or jurist.[262]

Also according to Turner, confusion in belief, whether it comes from ignorance or misguidance have taken Muslims away from exploring and expounding

the fundamental articles of faith and other related essentials of belief, in other words from the category of knowledge known as *fard al-kifaya* to those secondary principles which on the individual level relate to matters of personal conduct and on the social level to questions of state and society.[263] Although the Qur'an affirms that belief is susceptible to increase and decrease, when belief is equated with Islam, the fact that a believer's *iman* is either on the increase or the decrease tends to be ignored: since Islam is a static concept, *iman* is also understood to be static. As a result, commands in the Qur'an that call on believers to examine themselves and their belief constantly, are either overlooked or misinterpreted.[264] The precise meaning and practical implications of the terms Islam/*islam* and *iman* have changed and been misunderstood.[265] Consequently the core point of Islam, that of inviting people to belief, of renewing and strengthening their belief, has been forgotten and Islam is focused erroneously on non-believers both outside and within the Islamic community to instruct them in Islam but not in *iman*. This use of the term Islam has predominated in contemporary commentaries by Islamic scholars. Also, we believe Nursi's emphasis on *iman* makes him exceptional among his contemporaries and is one of the most significant points distinguishing him from them..

It is still a subject of discussion among Islamic scholars as to what is the difference between 'Islam' and *'iman'*. According to Nursi "One group has said that they are the same, while another has said that they are not the same, but that there cannot be one without the other. They have expressed various ideas similar to this."[266]

Nursi states,

> I myself have understood the following difference: Islam is a preference, while belief is a conviction. To put it another way, Islam is taking the part of the truth and is submission and obedience to it, and belief is acceptance of and assent to the truth. Long ago I saw certain irreligious people who fervently supported the injunctions of the Qur'an. That is to say, such people

> by in one respect taking the part of the truth were Muslim, and were called "irreligious Muslims." Then later I saw certain believers who did not show any support for the injunctions of the Qur'an, they did not take the part of them, and they reflected the term "non-Muslim believers."[267]

What could be concluded here is that Islam is different from *iman* but not separate from it.[268] This is comparable with the view of al-Razi, that *islam* is coterminous with *iman* and that while *iman* and *islam* are different in generality, they are one in existence.[269] The relationship between *iman* and Islam, according to Nursi, is concentric rather than intertwined. With Islam, man submits to the truth whereas *iman* is acceptance of the truth. It seems that here Nursi refers to *islam* rather than Islam. Pointing to this, elsewhere he writes; the pillars of Islam and the truths of *islam* are different. The truths of *islam* are the six pillars of belief, with the principle of worship and servitude, which consist of fasting, performing the five daily prayers, pilgrimage, alms, and the creed, by saying that '*La ilaha illa Allah*'. He says "the *Risale-i Nur*" consists of the proof of six pillars of belief with the principle of worship or servitude".[270] Smith states,

> Islam and *iman* have a fairly distinct line. The former consists almost exclusively of performance of the (five) specific duties prescribed by God through His Prophet for the Muslim; the latter is faith in (acceptance and affirmation of) the various elements proclaimed through the word of the Prophet as real and valid.[271]

On the issue of whether *iman* without Islam can be the means of salvation, Nursi says, "I have seen some irreligious people who agreed on and supported the outcomes of Islam and Islamic *shari'a* as beneficial for society and especially for the politics of the Ottomans." Nursi declares them to be Muslims, that is to say, they were taking the part of the truth but they were not believers. They are called un-believer Muslims. Nursi continues, "On the other hand I have seen some people who in the

name of the West and civilization were taking the part of innovations and supporting un-Islamic ideologies yet they have faith in God, the hereafter, the Prophet, and in fact consider themselves believers. Since they have not submitted to the laws of Muhammad they are non-Muslim believers." Nursi points out that, as Islam without belief cannot be the means of salvation, it might be said neither can belief without Islam be the means of salvation.[272] In this regard, Turner states, "There are basically two kinds of Islam described by the Qur'an – the real and the nominal – and the fact that it is possible to be a Muslim without being a believer in the Qur'anic sense of complacency amongst most Muslims with respect to their duties vis-à-vis the commands made by the Qur'an concerning knowledge and belief."[273] Nursi did not pay much attention to the *islam*/Islam distinction. He mainly referred to Islam as submission to the truth and taking the part of truth and prescribed iman as the Islamic solution of the time. He made a distinct line between *iman* and *islam*, for although what he thought was *islam* without belief cannot be the means of salvation, neither can belief without *islam* be the means of salvation.[274] The circle between them was concentric.

In several places of his writings he draws parallels between the Meccan period of Prophet Muhammad and the time in which he lived, and strongly emphasises expressing the pillars of belief and degrees in the affirmation of Divine unity with a powerful and elevated rhetorical style.[275]

3. 5 NURSI'S PLACE IN THE REVIVALIST TRADITION

Among Nursi's contemporaries, generally it could be said there were two lines of Islamic understanding. The first was neither modernist nor traditionalist, but described as antipathetic or reactionary Islamists, who were trying to respond to westernised

arguments. They were opposed to *taqlid*, and wished to replace Islam as a precursor of the need of the time. The second line, the so-called modernists, were interested in the social implications of Islam and a politically oriented Islamic understanding. Beginning in the late 1800s, Islamic scholars' general concern had been with understanding Islam according to the way of the ancestors of the community, before the introduction of division and a return to the acquisition of knowledge from the earliest sources. [276]

In the first category, we can put Afghani, Abduh and Rida. They generally supported an understanding of *al-din* according to the way of the ancestors of the community before the introduction of division, and a return to the acquisition of knowledge from the earliest sources.[277] Actually, in *Manar*, according to Smith, Rida approaches the *iman*/Islam dichotomy when he states that Islam in its perfection is the fruit and the objective of *al iman*. For Rida, *al-islam* and *al-iman* linguistically are dissimilar. But they are a single reality. External *islam* is not true Islam. Islam and iman converge in the '*din*' approved by and acceptable to God. In Rida's *al Manar*, he drew the attention to true *islam* while emphasising its difference to habitual Islam, and he was critical of the followers of *taqlid* and ethnic *islam*. This was so-called reactionary *islam*. With Abduh and Afghani, he was against the blind following and acceptance of dogmas and traditions without critical thinking.[278] According to Smith, "There can be no question but that the true meaning is individual, personal surrender to God... the object of his attack is habitual *Islam,* the conventional religion characterised by *taqlid*."[279] Although Rida maintains that both *iman* and *islam* are considered to constitute 'specialised belief' (in Nursi's terminology that of certain belief), his overemphasising the communal aspects of *islam* dominated his discourse.[280]

In the second category, Sayyid Qutb, known as the leader of the *Ikhwan* movement, which became a powerful fundamentalist organisation, strenuously opposed *taqlid* and partisanship. He emphasised the social implications of Islam. While striving for religious renewal and for an increased interest in the social welfare of the masses, Qutb sought to observe the injunction of religious law, and the harmonising of the duties of Islam with the requirements of modern life; he saw Islam as a constantly recurring theme linking the individual with society.[281]

> Say: we have faith in God, and what was revealed to us, and what was revealed to Ibrahim and Ismail and Ishaq and Yaqub and al-Asbat, and what came to Musa and Isa and what came to the Prophets from their Lord. We do not distinguish between any of them and we are *muslimun* to Him. This great unity [*al-wahdah al-kubra*] amongst all the revelations [*risalat*], and all the Messengers, is the foundation of the Islamic idea [*al tasawwur al-islami*], and is that which makes the Muslim community inheriting the legacy of the creed [*aqidah*] based on the din of God on the earth, bound to this deep-rooted source, remaining on the pathway of guidance and light. And it is that which makes the Islamic system [*al-nizam al-islami*] the universal system ruling under its protection, without partisanship [*taassub*] or oppression [*iqtihad*]. And it is that which makes of the Islamic society [*al-mujtama al-islami*] a society open to all people gathered in love and peace. (I, 161-162)[282]

This understanding of the term Islam and of the relationship between the individual and the community, was representative of Qutb's thought and predominant among the commentaries of contemporary Islamic scholars.[283] According to Smith,

> These words, spoken in exegesis of 2:135 of the Quran, offer an excellent introduction to what we shall find to be the main thrust of Sayyid Qutb's understanding of Islam. He is not only particularly interested in its communal form, but as we shall see below he feels that Islam is not fulfilled apart from the context of the group. Interwoven in his commentary are the two strands of the real and the ideal, the Islamic community as it exists in its actual form and in its perfect form, and it will soon become clear that unlike Rida (and Abduh), Sayyid Qutb does not distinguish in his writing between these two aspects.[284]

Other contemporary Islamic scholars likewise defined *islam* as part of *iman* and constituting one element in the acceptance and confirmation (*tasdiq*) of the

Divine Unity (*tawhid*), thus favouring an external understanding of Islam as a basis for their conception of an ideal society.[285]

Nursi had an exceptional place among his contemporaries. Whereas they were mainly concerned with the social implications of Islam, Nursi emphasised the importance of belief in his discourse.

When we look back, we see most of the main influences on Nursi had similar experiences while propounding the new approaches to Islam. First, the way of philosophers in trying to enlighten and revive religion and a period of internal crises and then they had the appearance of mystics. Among them we can consider the example of al-Ghazali and of his discourse on *iman* in particular, in order to make the subject in hand clearer. Al-Ghazali's treatment of the subject seems to be more theoretical than Nursi's; however, it is also more concise. First of all, it should be stated that the historical context was very different and that the people to whom Ghazali addressed himself did not have the problems associated with Nursi's time, when Muslims faced irreligious attacks. However, like Nursi, Ghazali was trained in philosophy and was very active in politics earlier in his life.[286] Later, we see him appearing as a mystical, non-Sufi brotherhood affiliated Sufi. In particular, one of his works is dedicated to *iman*, its exposition, stages, increase and decrease, together with definitions of it. According to al-Ghazali, the Qur'an and prophetic quotations, sometimes use the two terms interchangeably, sometimes with different but related meanings, one being a part of the other.[287] According to both Ghazali and Nursi, belief, once it exists, may vary, and is subject to increase and decrease. Increase is accomplished by the influence of good deeds upon the heart, a thing which is not perceived except by those who meditate over their different inner states during hours of worship, and apply themselves solely to it through the presence of the heart at the

time of inactivity and languor, as well as realizing the variations which are inherent in devoting oneself in these states to the articles of belief, so that the tie which binds him to his belief might become firmer and consequently harder to undo by anyone wishing to loosen it with doubt.[288]

Among Nursi's other main influences, Ibn Taymiyya's desire to purify Islam of later accretions and return to the essentials of the faith should be noted here, although he is mostly known for his political opinions.[289]

Nursi, in various places in his writings, uses the analogies of of al-Jilani, al-Ghazali, al-Arabi and Sirhindi in interpreting the Qur'an as a spiritual and subject-based, one-thematic book, whose main aim was to serve the notion of an ideal society.[290] In this regard, he strongly emphasises al-Rumi's *tafsir* to be one of the best of its kind. He then, in several places of his writings, clearly explains why he refers mostly to the Meccan period of revelation and attempts to justify his rhetorical style as following that of the Qur'an. He argues that the Meccan *suras* and verses are in the highest style of eloquence and the most elevated, concise and miraculous; being written for the idolaters of the *Quraysh* and untaught tribesmen and were based on the high principles of religion and pillars of belief, expressed in a simple, clear style; transforming the simple, unlettered style of ordinary people, into an elevated, attractive, and general language for the purpose of guidance.[291] He then, throughout his masterpiece, thoroughly deals with the issue of *iman* and its bases; and uses a very oratorical style of language, which is at first difficult to grasp, but impressive. It should be stated here that, as stated also by Turner, it will be an over-simplification to suggest that the Meccan verses represent *iman* and the Medinan verses Islam, for among the predominantly legalistic verses revealed in Medina one still encounters passages with a markedly Meccan tenor, replete with expositions of the Divine Names

and Attributes, examples of God's workings in the cosmos, and divine imperatives to deliberate, acquire knowledge and belief There is, however, a clear line of difference between these interpolations and the fundamental emphasis in the Meccan period on belief.[292]

It is in consequence of this that Nursi has been acknowledged as producing a new science of *kalam*.[293] Jalalizade states,

> Religion consists of three spheres: the first is that of worship and the secondary precepts; the second are the matters of belief; and the third and central principle consists of the religious practices. However, very few thinkers have understood this point, and only a few have discussed it in their works. However, [Nursi] understood that without belief and the practice of religion being firmly rooted, Islamic life and society cannot be established.[294]

3. 6 CONCLUSION

One of the difficulties faced while writing this chapter has been the definition of terms. Nursi, in his writings, did not pay much attention to definitions. In conclusion, he was a reformist in the social field, whereas he rejected reform in the theological sense. This will become clearer in the following chapter.

Nursi stresses the necessity of *iman* before Islam, and of the individual before society.[295] He dedicated his life to strengthening religious belief so that people would achieve happiness in this life and the next. He used belief and portrayed religion as a catalytic force in the gradual progress of humanity.[296] This simple sounding idea has been his main objective for the revival of an Islamic ideal society.

In keeping with the principle of *ipsissima vox*, Nursi wrote,

> The highest aim of creation and its most important result are belief in God. The most exalted rank in humanity and its highest degree are the knowledge of God contained within belief in God. The most radiant happiness and sweetest bounty for *jinn* and human beings are the love of God contained

> within the knowledge of God. And the purest joy for the human spirit and the sheerest delight for man's heart are the rapture of the spirit contained within the love of God. Indeed, all true happiness, pure joy, sweet bounties, and untroubled pleasure lie in knowledge of God and love of God; they cannot exist without them.[297]

In this metaphor, belief is different to submission. It requires *tafakkur*, knowledge, and worship. Cosmology is the field on which to exercise *tafakkur*, knowledge and worship of God. The Qur'an reveals the method of exercise. The Prophet is the exerciser. *Iman* is the source of becoming good. The believer takes the necessary steps to engage in a journey of self-realisation leading to good conduct.[298] Such variations in the degree of *iman* also exist in the realisation of the ideal, and *tafakkur*, knowledge and worship influence the development and growth towards perfection. Nursi explains all these as the basis for the methodology in his belief-centred thematic commentary, the so-called *Risale-i Nur* Epistle, which he used to stir society into action towards an ideal.

By this Nursi aimed to de-personalise his importance for the time after him. In several places in his writings he describes the *iman*-isation of society as a long running process. The *Risale-i Nur* is his contribution to later times and the process of building up a culture of belief. Nursi was therefore targeting different audiences in different times. His use of idioms and metaphors in the writing of the *Risale-i Nur* reflected this intention.[299] It also shifted importance from the interpreter to the interpretation. Furthermore, with its new oratorical style addressed to a text-based society, it contributed to the transition from "an oral culture to a print culture".[300]

None of the Muslim scholars among his contemporaries made such a direct connection between *ilm*, *iman* and Islam as did Nursi. He also believed that the way a humane society acquires its values is through religious values. The path to a good society is to have faith in God.[301] What could be concluded here is that Nursi

proposed a sound philosophical, social, and scientific civilisation based on belief. The chief condition is belief in God and sincere worship of Him.

Another distinctive point in comparing Nursi with his contemporaries is that his contemporaries were either Sufis or opposed Sufism. Nursi was neither a Sufi nor an opposer.

As a reviver of religion, Said Nursi took on the task of explaining epistemological problems about God, religion and society. He attempted to prove the validity of belief in the existence of God; he presented what could be categorized as "experiential" arguments for the existence of God. [302] He appealed to the imagination of the masses, in particular the young generation of modern Turkish Republicans by drawing an explicit correlation between revelation and reason. In containing both particularities, according to Mardin, Nursi's discourse was superior to the more orthodox Islamic reformists'.[303]

NOTES

[1] See Sukran Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publication, 1992), 260. and Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Kastamonu Lahikasi," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1578. Also see Ahmad Abdurrahim Al-Sayih, "The 'Bediuzzaman Factor' in the Strengthening of Belief," in *International Symposium: The Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1992).

[2] See as quoted in Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 240.

[3] Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Letters*, trans. Sukran Vahide, Second (revised) ed. (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1997), 41.

[4] See Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Rays*, trans. Sukran Vahide (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1998), 200. and Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Suâlar," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 932. Also see Imtiyaz Yusuf, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Discourse on Belief in Allah: A Study of Texts from Risale-i Nur Collection," *The Muslim World (The Special Issue: Said Nursi and Turkish Experience)* LXXXIX, no. 3-4 (July-October-1999).

[5] See Bekim Agai, "The Religious Impact of Science in the Writings of Bediuzzaman," in *Fifth International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Qur'anic View of Man, According to the Risale-i Nur* (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 2000), 341-42.

[6] Husayn Ashur, "Bediuzzaman's Defence Strategy against the Naturalists" (paper presented at the The Reconstruction Of Islamic Thought In The Twentieth Centry And Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, Istanbul, 1992), 232.

[7] Muhammed Rushdi Ubayd, "Methods of Teaching in the Risale-i Nur," in *International Symposium: The Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1992), 250.

[8] See "Brooklyn College Core Curriculum: Section 14: World War I and Cultural Anxiety," in *The Shaping of the Modern World* (Displayed in http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/virtual/core4-14.htm, 2003).

[9] Burckhardt, T., Cosmology and Modern Science, 184-5, as quoted in Ismail Killioglu, "The Concept of the 'I' in the Establishment of Nature in Bediuzzaman's Works from the Point of View of Naturalist Philosophy," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. The Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1995), 284.

[10] Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1956), 272.

[11] See and compare with Ibid., 270.

[12] As quoted in Süleyman Hayri Bolay, "Bediuzzaman's View of Philosophy," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 254.

[13] See and compare with Serif. Mardin, *Turkiyede Din Ve Toplumsal Degisme: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi Olayi* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 1992), 124, 234. Also see Serif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 75.

[14] See Bolay, "Bediuzzaman's View of Philosophy," 253.

[15] For more about a background Said Nursi's view, see Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 141-42.

[16] See Sukran Vahide, "The Book of the Universe: Its Place and Development in Bediuzzaman's Thought," in *A Contemporary Approach Towards Understanding the Qur'an: The Example of Risale-i Nur* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 2000), 469.

[17] Davud Aydüz, "Guidance and Teblig in the Risale-i Nur," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1995), 190.

[18] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 169.

[19] See Ibid., 155 and 78-79. Also see Mardin, *Turkiyede Din Ve Toplumsal Degisme: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi Olayi*, 246.

[20] Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, "Seeds of Reality," in *The Letters* (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1997), 548.

[21] Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Words*, trans. Sukran Vahide (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1992), 50.

[22] See Ibid., 274.

[23] See Nursi, *The Letters*, 62.

[24] See Nursi, *The Words*, 109. Also see Nursi, *The Letters*, 443.

[25] See and compare with Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 17.

[26] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, VIII.

[27] Nursi, *The Letters*, 40.

[28] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 167.

[29] We will examine Nursi's approach of religion and science, together with his ideas on scientism in the 5th chapter.

[30] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 3.

[31] Ibid., 176.

[32] Ibid., 12-13.

[33] See Ibid., 158. Also see Vahide, "The Book of the Universe: Its Place and Development in Bediuzzaman's Thought," 472.

[34] See Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Flashes*, trans. Sukran Vahide (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1995), 306. Also see Vahide, "The Book of the Universe: Its Place and Development in Bediuzzaman's Thought," 470.

[35] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 156-57.

[36] Ibid., 146.

[37] As quoted in Vahide, "The Book of the Universe: Its Place and Development in Bediuzzaman's Thought," 468, 70 respectively.

[38] This will be dealt in detail in the following chapter.

[39] We will turn back to this issue, however see and compare with Ahmed Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 301-02.

[40] See Nursi, *The Words*, 500-01. Also see Hasan Horkuc, "New Muslim Discourses on Pluralism in the Postmodern Age: Nursi on Religious Pluralism, and Tolerance," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 19, no. 2 (Spring, 2002).

[41] Nursi, *The Words*, 424.

[42] See as cited in Thomas S.J. Michel, "Muslim-Christian Dialogue and Co-Operation in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," *THE MUSLIM WORLD* LXXXIX, no. 3-4 (1999): 332.

[43] Nursi, *The Words*, 501.

[44] John Obert Voll, "Renewal and Reformation in the Mid-Twentieth Century: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and Religion in the 1950s," *The Muslim World* LXXXIX, no. 3-4 (1999): 255-56.

[45] Ibid.: 256.

[46] His concern of individual and society will also be examined in the 4th chapter.

[47] See Jane I Smith, "Similies and Metaphors of Life and Death in the Writings of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," in *Fifth International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Qur'anic View of Man, According to the Risale-i Nur* (Sozler Nesriyat, 2000), 255.

[48] For this and more on the similes and metaphors in the writings of Nursi see Ibid., 255-65.

[49] Ibid., 256.

[50] Ibid., 255.

[51] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 163.

[52] For more on Nursi's use of idiom and discourse see Ibid., 3.

[53] See and compare with Ibid., 2.

[54] For this and more on the birth of New Said see Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 164-68.

[55] As quoted in Ibid., 168.

[56] Mardin likens Nursi's process of finding a new method to using the symbolic resources of mysticism had operated in early Renaissance. See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 204-05.

[57] As cited in Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 167.

[58] Elsewhere Nursi states this in a different way. There are those who follow the path of intellectual thought, those who follow the path of sainthood, and those who follow the path of prophethood. See and compare for this with Nursi, *The Words*, 345. In this regard also see Ahmed Akgündüz, "The Risale-i Nur as a New School of Belief," in *International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi: The*

Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Centry and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Istanbul: Sozler, 1992).

[59] See Bolay, "Bediuzzaman's View of Philosophy." In this regard it is useful to see "Reason and Revelation" in Oliver Leaman, "Concept of Philosophy in Islam," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman and Edward Craig (Routledge, 1998), 5: 7-9. It is also worthy of seeing Oliver Leaman, "Islamic Philosophy," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman and Edward Craig (Routledge, 1998), 5: 13-16.

[60] Nursi, *The Words*, 561.

[61] See Süleyman Hayri Bolay, "Bediuzzaman's View of Philosophy" (paper presented at the Third International Symposium On Bediuzzaman Said Nursi The Reconstruction Of Islamic Thought In The Twentieth Century And Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, Istanbul, 1995), 258.

[62] See Ibid.

[63] Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Asâ-Yi Mûsa," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996).

[64] As quoted in Bolay, "Bediuzzaman's View of Philosophy", 258., as in Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Emirdag Lahikasi-1," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1754.

[65] Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 165.

[66] See Nursi, *The Words*, 561.

[67] See Ibid., 143-49.

[68] See for the critics of Nursi's generalisations Bolay, "Bediuzzaman's View of Philosophy," 268-69.

[69] Ibid., 255.

[70] See Nursi, *The Letters*, 249. Also see Bolay, "Bediuzzaman's View of Philosophy," 256.

[71] As cited in Nursi, *The Letters*, 257.

[72] See as cited in Bolay, "Bediuzzaman's View of Philosophy," 255.

[73] See as cited in [[Bolay, 1995 #12@255]

[74] See Bolay, "Bediuzzaman's View of Philosophy," 258.

[75] See Ibid., 277. In contrast with one of Nursi's predecessors, Ibn Al-Arabi, whose epistemology appears at first to be distinctly subordinate role given to reason, Nursi sacrelise reason. See and compare this with Neal Robinson, "Muhyi Al-Din Ibn Al-`Arabi (1164-1240)," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman and Edward Craig (Routledge, 1998), 4: 602. Also for the "Sacrelisation of Science" see chapter 5 in this study.

[76] See the previous chapter on his biography.

[77] With the original reading see as cited in Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 166.

[78] See Ibid.

[79] See for the details Ibid., 166-67.

[80] As in Ibid., 167.

[81] See Nursi, *The Letters*, 40.

[82] In this regard it will be necessary to see and compare with A. E. Affifi, "Ibn 'Arabi," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 415-18. Also see and compare with Robinson, "Muhyi Al-Din Ibn Al-`Arabi (1164-1240)," 4: 601-03.

[83] See Ashrati Sulayman, "Said Nursi and the Qur'An," in *A Contemporary Approach Towards Understanding the Qur'an: The Example of Risale-i Nur* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 2000), 82. See for his use of idiom of mysticism Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 176.

[84] Although Sayyid Nur here is described as Qadiri we find it contrasting with early in the biography relying on the available source he is descendant from Naqshbandi family.

[85] See Hamid Algar, "Said Nursi and the Risale-i Nur: An Aspect of Islam in Contemporary Turkey," in *Islamic Perspectives: Studies in Honour of Sayyi Abu'l Ala Mawdudi*, ed. K. Ahmad, Ansari, Z.I. (Leicester: 1979), 315.

[86] See for the history of Qadiri order and Qadiri impact in the late Ottoman time of Eastern province Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd, 1992), 216-21.

[87] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 54.

[88] See Ibid., 57-59.

[89] For the overall success of Naqshbandi *tarikat* in the Eastern province of late Ottoman see Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 224-33. Compare with Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 54-60. Also see "the Naksibendi Order" in Serif Mardin, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1873-1960). The Shaping of a Vocation," in *Religious Organization and Religious Exprience*, ed. John Davis (London: Academic Press, 1982), 77-78.

[90] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 60.

[91] For his mystical background see and compare with al-Jilani in B. A Dar, "'Abd Al-Qadir Jilani and Shihab Al-Din Suhrawardi," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 351-53.

[92] Mardin, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1873-1960). The Shaping of a Vocation," 72.

[93] Algar, "Said Nursi and the Risale-i Nur: An Aspect of Islam in Contemporary Turkey," 315.

[94] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 176.

[95] See Nursi, *The Letters*, 40. Nursi said: "The final point of all the Sufi ways is the clarification and unfolding of the truths of belief", and "Sainthood is of three sorts: one is the 'lesser sainthood,' which is the well-known sainthood. The others are the 'middle sainthood' and the 'greater sainthood.' 'Greater sainthood' is to open up by way of the legacy of prophethood a direct way to reality without entering the intermediate realm of Sufism."

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid., 41.

[98] See Ibid., 518-35.

[99] See and compare this that according to one of the most known Sufis and predecessors of Nursi, al-Jilani holds the view that mystic intuition gives the recipient knowledge of reality that is not possible to gain through reason. Dar, "'Abd Al-Qadir Jilani and Shihab Al-Din Suhrawardi," 353.

[100] As cited in M. Fethullah Gulen, *Emerald Hills of the Heart: Key Concepts in the Practise of Sufism* (Izmir: Kaynak A.S.), 1.

[101] Nursi, *The Letters*, 518.

[102] An objection raised by the Mermers in an interview in September the 25th, 2000.

[103] See Mardin, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1873-1960). The Shaping of a Vocation," 66.

[104] See and compare with Sulayman, "Said Nursi and the Qur'An," 84.

[105] See Niyazi Beki, *Kur'an Ilimleri Ve Tefsir Acisindan Bediuzzaman Said Nursi'nin Eserleri* (Istanbul: Timas Yayinlari), 23-43. Compare with Jane I Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islam" as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'an Commentaries* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Scholars Press, 1975), 187.

[106] Said Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, trans. Ali Unal (Izmir: Kaynak, 1999), 446.

[107] See Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Isârâtü'l-I'câz," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1159. Also see Ali Mermer, "The Ways to Knowledge of God in the Risale-i Nur," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1995).

[108] See Nursi, *The Words*, 251.

[109] Ibid., 250.

[110] Ibid., 274.

[111] See Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, II vols., vol. II (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1638.

[112] As quoted in Sulayman, "Said Nursi and the Qur'An," 84.

[113] As quoted in Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 168. Also see Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Sözler," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 138-39.

[114] Although Nursi refers to man's consciousness as one of the most known indicators in his earlier life, in his later works after 1925, he does not mention consciousness. The reason for this may be that earlier Nursi defined the mind or intellect as the basis for religious enlightenment but later clearly states that the heart is the basis for enlightenment. Compare this with Nursi, *The Words*, 243. and Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, 439.

[115] See Nursi, *The Words*, 303-04. Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, 440-46. Also see Mermer, "The Ways to Knowledge of God in the Risale-i Nur," 60-61.

[116] See for more Vahide, "The Book of the Universe: Its Place and Development in Bediuzzaman's Thought," 466.

[117] See Nursi, *The Words*, 303.

[118] See Nursi, *The Flashes*, 28.

[119] See Ibid., 118.

[120] See as cited in Sükran Vahide, "The Importance of the Risale-i Nur for the West," in *Panel I: Beiduzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1991), 173.

[121] See as cited in Ibid.

[122] See Nursi, *The Words*, 714.

[123] See Ibid., 655. Also see Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, 75.

[124] See Nursi, *The Words*, 655-58. Also see and compare with Mermer, "The Ways to Knowledge of God in the Risale-i Nur," 65.

[125] Nursi, *The Words*, 270.

[126] In this regard among the prominent Sufis al-Arabi held the view that the cosmos as a whole is the locus of manifestation of all God's attributes and it is only through it that their properties can be seen and understood. See and compare with Robinson, "Muhyi Al-Din Ibn Al-`Arabi (1164-1240)," 4: 602.

[127] See and compare with Colin Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran* (Curzon Press, 2000), 1.

[128] See for this and more Robinson, "Muhyi Al-Din Ibn Al-`Arabi (1164-1240)," 4: 603.

[129] See Affifi, "Ibn 'Arabi," 415-16.

[130] See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Fakhr Al-Din Razi," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 648.

[131] See Serajul Haque, "Ibn Taimiyah," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 803, 04.

[132] We will examine in the following part of this chapter.

[133] See Vahide, "The Book of the Universe: Its Place and Development in Bediuzzaman's Thought," 483.

[134] Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, 439.

[135] Ibid., 451.

[136] As cited in Ibid., 450.

[137] See Nursi, *The Words*, 241-42.

[138] See Ibid., 242.

[139] As quoted in Ümit Simsek, "The Style of Reflective Thought in the Risale-i Nur," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1995), 29.

[140] See Nursi, *The Flashes*, 28,118 respectively.

[141] Nursi, *The Words*, 242.

[142] Ibid., 557.

[143] See Ibid., 558.

[144] See Ibid., 541.

[145] See and compare with "The 'perfect man' and the Muhammadan reality" in Robinson, "Muhyi Al-Din Ibn Al-`Arabi (1164-1240)," 4: 601-505.

[146] Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, 439.

[147] See Ibid. Nursi's writings have a great detail of space, on the Prophethood of Muhammad. In Nursi's writings the issue is generally a subject for numerous treatises. A few of them are as follows: They are, of the second treatises of the Epitomes of the Light, fourteen droplets on the knowledge of the Prophet, the Nineteenth Word, On the Messengership of Muhammad (PBUH); the section of the Twenty-Fourth Word which enumerates principles to assist in understanding *Hadiths* about the signs of the end of time and the merits and rewards of certain actions; the Thirty-First Word, about the Ascension of the Prophet (PBUH); the Nineteenth Letter, called The Miracles of Muhammad (PBUH); the Fourth Flash, called The Highway of the Practices of the Prophet ; the Eleventh Flash, called The Stairway of the Practices of the Prophet and Antidote for the Sickness of Innovations; the section of the Fifteenth Ray about the witnesses of Prophethood. The subject is mentioned in numerous other parts of the Risale-i Nur.

[148] Nursi, *The Words*, 81, footnote.

[149] See Sulayman, "Said Nursi and the Qur'An," 82-83.

[150] See Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, 19.

[151] See Mermer, "The Ways to Knowledge of God in the Risale-i Nur," 56. In the treatise called, "The Fruits of Belief", a similar argument is given for all the prophets. See Nursi, *The Rays*, 257.

[152] Imaduddin Khalil, "God's Messenger (Pbuh) in the Risale-i Nur," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 12.

[153] See Nursi, *The Words*, 378.

[154] See Ibid., 250, and also 74.

[155] Ibid., 250.

[156] See Ibid., 376.

[157] Vahide, "The Book of the Universe: Its Place and Development in Bediuzzaman's Thought," 474. Also see Mermer, "The Ways to Knowledge of God in the Risale-i Nur," 59.

[158] As quoted in Vahide, "The Book of the Universe: Its Place and Development in Bediuzzaman's Thought," 474.

[159] See Nursi, "Isârâtü'l-I'câz," 1268.

[160] Nursi, *The Letters*, 390.

[161] See Nursi, *The Words*, 100. Simsek states, "In a *Hadith* it states that God has ninety-nine Names and those that count them are promised Paradise. However, scholars have stated that what is intended by this is that the Divine Names are not limited to ninety-nine, but these have to be understood as "the most virtuous ninety-nine Names." Just as in the *Jawshan al-Kabir*, which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH), around a thousand of the Divine Names are mentioned. And the great Qur'anic

commentator Fakhruddin Râzî states in his al-*Tafsîr al-Kabîr* that the Divine Names are infinite." Ümit Simsek, "'Flashes' of the Divine Names in the Risale-i Nur," in *The Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Centry and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Yeni Nesil, 1992), 178.

[162] Nursi, *The Letters*, 390.

[163] Nursi, *The Words*, 274.

[164] See Nursi, *The Flashes*, 430-36.

[165] Nursi, *The Words*, 523.

[166] Nursi, *The Letters*, 544. Also see Nursi, *The Words*, 242.

[167] See and compare with "Man and God" in Affifi, "Ibn 'Arabi," 415-17.

[168] See Nursi, *The Flashes*, 371.

[169] See Nursi, *The Letters*, 104-05.

[170] See Ibid., 388-89.

[171] Nursi, *The Flashes*, 371.

[172] Sami 'Afifi Hijazi, "Tawhid (the Affirmation of Divine Unity) in Bediuzzaman's Thought" (paper presented at the Third International Symposium On Bediuzzaman Said Nursi The Reconstruction Of Islamic Thought In The Twentieth Century And Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, Istanbul, 1995), 68.

[173] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 252. Also see Yusuf, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Discourse on Belief in Allah: A Study of Texts from Risale-i Nur Collection," 342.

[174] See Nursi, "Isârâtü'l-I'câz," 1172. Compare this with Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 3-12.

[175] Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Emirdag Lâhikasi(1)," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1765. Also see and compare this definition of iman with that Ghazali in Abu Hamid Al Ghazali, "Belief, Submission and Ihsan ("Sunni Sufis")," in *The Foundations of the Islamic Belief* (e-Book: Available on-line: displayed in http://www.wponline.org/vil/Books/AG_FIB/ch4.htm, 1962).

[176] As quoted in Ibrahim Özdemir, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Approach to the Environment," in *A Contemporary Approach Towards Understanding the Qur'an: The Example of Risale-i Nur* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 2000), 695.

[177] Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, XV.

[178] As cited in Imtiyaz Yusuf, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Discourse on Belief in the Existence of God: A Study of Texts from the Risale-i Nur," in *A Contemporary Approach Towards Understanding the Qur'an: The Example of Risale-i Nur* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1998), 156.

[179] Yusuf, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Discourse on Belief in Allah: A Study of Texts from Risale-i Nur Collection," 343.

[180] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 146.

[181] See and compare this attitude with that of ibn Khaldun whom opposed to the such way of dialectic methodology based faith province Muhsin Mahdi, "Ibn Khaldun," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 973-74.

[182] Nursi states, 'For in reality each individual human being consists of many individuals. He may be considered as a different individual to the number of the years of his life, or rather to the number of the days or even the hours of his life. For since a single individual is subject to time, he is like a model and each passing day clothes him in the form of another individual. Furthermore, just as there is within man this plurality and renewal, so also is the world in which he lives in motion. It goes and replaced by another. It varies constantly. Every day opens the door of another world. As for belief, it is both the light of the life of each individual in that person, and it is the light of the world in which he lives. And as for 'There is no god but God,' it is a key with which to turn on the light. Then the instinctual soul, desire, doubts, and Satan exercise great influence over man. In order to damage his belief, they are much of the time able to benefit from his negligence, to trick him with their wiles, and thus to extinguish the light of belief with doubts and uncertainty. Also, man is prone to act and utter words which apparently oppose the Shari'a, and which in the view of some religious authorities are no less then unbelief. Therefore, there is a need to renew belief all the time, every hour, every day." Nursi, *The Letters*, 391.

[183] Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, 2. Also see Nursi, *The Words*, 300.

[184] See as stated, Yusuf, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Discourse on Belief in Allah: A Study of Texts from Risale-i Nur Collection," 343.

[185] See 'The Seventh Ray' 'The Supreme Sign' Nursi, *The Rays*, 123.

[186] Nursi, "Suâlar," 846.

[187] See Nursi, *The Words*, 491.

[188] See Vahide, "The Book of the Universe: Its Place and Development in Bediuzzaman's Thought," 470.

[189] See as quoted in Ibid., as in Nursi, *The Flashes*, 380-81.

[190] See Vahide, "The Book of the Universe: Its Place and Development in Bediuzzaman's Thought," 476-77.

[191] '*Mânâ-yi Harfî*:' the Qur'anic view that things bear the meaning of one other than themselves, that is, point to their Maker, and His Names and attributes, like a letter or word signifies its writer, as opposed to '*Mânâ-yi Ismî*,' the view that things signify themselves alone. See Ibid., 471.

[192] As quoted in Ibid.

[193] See Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, 71. See and compare with Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 1.

[194] See Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, 72.

[195] As quoted in Vahide, "The Book of the Universe: Its Place and Development in Bediuzzaman's Thought," 478.

[196] As cited in Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 252., as in Nursi, *The Rays*, 172. Also see for more on this and Nursi's concern of the stages of iman and its connection to tafakkur Nursi, "Emirdag Lâhikasi(1)," 1721.

[197] According to Vahide, the new "untravelled" way led Nursi from the Qur'an to the universe, it enjoined him to contemplate and ponder over the universe, and directed him to look at it for the meaning, as though it was a book that was there to be read and understood... It is in consequence of these facts that Bediuzzaman has been acknowledged as producing a new science of kalam."Vahide, "The Book of the Universe: Its Place and Development in Bediuzzaman's Thought," 472.

[198] See and compare with Anthony Giddens, *Studies in Social and Political Theory* (London: Hutchinson of London, 1977), 179.

[199] See Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, IX.

[200] Nursi, *The Rays*, 125.

[201] Nursi, *The Words*, 324.

[202] Nursi, *The Letters*, 265.

[203] See and compare this with Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 29.

[204] Nursi, *The Words*, 270 passim.

[205] See Abd al-Aziz Barghuth, "The Place of the Theory of Knowledge in the Vicegerency and Civilizational Process in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," in *A Contemporary Approach Towards Understanding the Qur'an: The Example of Risale-i Nur* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 2000), 27.

[206] Ibid.

[207] Nursi, *The Words*, 270.

[208] Barghuth, "The Place of the Theory of Knowledge in the Vicegerency and Civilizational Process in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 28.

[209] As quoted in Ibid.

[210] See Ibid., 29.

[211] See as cited in Ibid.

[212] Nursi, *The Words*, 271.

[213] See Ibid., 97, 260-69.

[214] See Ibid., 655.

[215] He writes "For sure, man is the place of manifestation of all the Names, but the Names being various has resulted in the universe's variety and the differences in the angels' worship, and has also caused a degree of variety among men. The different laws of the prophets, the different ways of the saints, and the different paths of the purified scholars has arisen from this mystery. For example, together with the other Names, the Name of All-Powerful was predominant in Jesus (Peace be upon him). And in those who follow the path of love, the Name of Loving One prevails, and in those who follow the path of contemplation and reflection, the Name of All-Wise. Thus, if someone is both a teacher, and a policeman, and a clerk of the court, and an inspector in the civil service, in each office he has both relations, and duties, and obligations, and salaries, and responsibilities, and promotion, and enemies and rivals who are the cause of his failures. He appears before the king with many titles, and he sees the king. He seeks help from him with many tongues. He has recourse to many of the ruler's

titles, and seeks his help in many forms in order to be saved from the evil of his enemies. In just the same way, man, who manifests many Names and is charged with many duties and afflicted with many enemies, invokes many of the Names in his prayers and supplications. Like Muhammad the Arabian (Peace and blessings be upon him), the cause of pride of mankind and truly the most perfect man, supplicated with a thousand and one Names in his prayer, *Jawshan al-Kabir*. It is due to this mystery that the Sura, *Say, I seek refuge with the Sustainer and Cherisher of men, * The Sovereign of men, * The God of men, * From the evil of the whispering, elusive tempter* commands that we take refuge with God through three titles, and, *In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate* shows the seeking of help through three Names." Ibid., 343-44.

[216] See Nursi, "Isârâtü'l-I'câz," 1271. Also see as quoted in Barghuth, "The Place of the Theory of Knowledge in the Vicegerency and Civilizational Process in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 28.

[217] See Nursi, *The Words*, 345.

[218] Barghuth, "The Place of the Theory of Knowledge in the Vicegerency and Civilizational Process in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 30-31.

[219] Ibid., 23.

[220] See Nursi, "Isârâtü'l-I'câz," 1161.

[221] Nursi, *The Rays*, 125.

[222] Nursi, *The Words*, 242. See and compare with Simsek, "The Style of Reflective Thought in the Risale-i Nur," 29.

[223] See Nursi, *The Flashes*, 179-80.

[224] Barghuth, "The Place of the Theory of Knowledge in the Vicegerency and Civilizational Process in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 34.

[225] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 165.

[226] In this regard some of the useful sources are John O. Voll, "Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: *Tajdid* and *Islah*," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L Esposito (New York: Oxford University, 1983)., Fazlur Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam," in *The Oxford History of Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999) and Fazlur Rahman, ed., *Revival and Reform in Islam: A Study of Islamic Fundamentalism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000).

[227] See Nursi, *The Letters*, 508.

[228] Ibid., 509.

[229] Alparslan Acikgenc, "An Evaluation of the Risale-i Nur from the Point of View of Knowledge and the Categorization of Knowledge," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1995), 111.

[230] Nursi, *The Words*, 324.

[231] See and compare with Barghuth, "The Place of the Theory of Knowledge in the Vicegerency and Civilizational Process in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 24.

[232] See Nursi, *The Words*, 319.

[233] See Affifi, "Ibn 'Arabi," 415.

[234] See Ibid., 415-16. Also see Haque, "Ibn Taimiyah." and James Pavlin, "Taqi Al-Din Ibn Taymiyya," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman and Edward Craig (Routledge, 1998), 4: 655-56.

[235] See and compare with Affifi, "Ibn 'Arabi," 415-16. Also 'the perfect man' (*al-insan al-kamil*) being the prophets and saints, according to al Arabi, see and compare with Robinson, "Muhyi Al-Din Ibn Al-`Arabi (1164-1240)."

[236] See Nursi, *The Words*, 45, 46, and 319.

[237] See Yusuf, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Discourse on Belief in the Existence of God: A Study of Texts from the Risale-i Nur," 155.

[238] See Yusuf, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Discourse on Belief in Allah: A Study of Texts from Risale-i Nur Collection," 343, 45, and 46 respectively.

[239] See Nursi, *The Words*, 559.

[240] See Barghuth, "The Place of the Theory of Knowledge in the Vicegerency and Civilizational Process in the Thought of Bediuzza man Said Nursi," 24.

[241] See Ibid., 33. Also see Nursi, *The Words*, 559.

[242] One of the a few exemplifyings in this regard he uses is "If the youth, one third of mankind, lose their faith in the hereafter and do not recall the torments of Hell, it puts in danger the property and honour of the upright people in society, and the peace and self-respect of the weak and elderly. Belief can change this situation to a feeling of sympathy and respect for those a man wanted to cruelly assault..." Nursi, *The Rays*, 245.

[243] See Ibid., 246.

[244] Ibid., 242.

[245] See Ibid., 378.

[246] Ibid., 310 and also in this regard see 242.

[247] See C.P. Turner, "The Rise of Twelver Shi'ite Externalism in Safawid Iran and Its Consolidation under Allama Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (1037/1627-1110/1699)" (Doctor of Philosophy, The University of Durham, 1989), XII.

[248] See and compare with Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 1.

[249] See Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islam" as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'an Commentaries*, 1.

[250] See Ibid., 2. Elsewhere she states, "Basically they have proceeded along two "axes" of investigation (1) the relation between the external and the internal aspects of surrender, i.e. between islam as tasdiq and islam as external conformity; and (2) between the individual and the group aspects of Islam." Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islam" as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'an Commentaries*, 222. She also states, "In the traditionalists there has been a recurring emphasis based particularly on the commentary and traditions of the early centuries after the Prophet, on the two meanings of personal submission and the group of those who have submitted, incorporated into the one

term Islam." Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islam" as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'an Commentaries*, 203.

[251] Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 43.

[252] See and compare with Ibid., 2.

[253] For different explanations and elements which Islam/islam consists of see and compare with Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islam" as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'an Commentaries*, 13, 19-20. Also for the definition and more on the concepts of islam as presented in the Qur'an see Turner, "The Rise of Twelver Shi'ite Externalism in Safawid Iran and Its Consolidation under Allama Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (1037/1627-1110/1699)", 5-8.

[254] See Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islam" as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'an Commentaries*, 13.

[255] See Ibid., 223.

[256] For the definition and more on the concepts of iman as presented in the Quran see Turner, "The Rise of Twelver Shi'ite Externalism in Safawid Iran and Its Consolidation under Allama Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (1037/1627-1110/1699)", 5-8. Turner states, "There are over five hundred and seventy references in the Quran to words which are derived from the root *amana*. Of these almost half describe "those who believe". The most superficial study of the Quran reveals that the derivatives of the root *amana* preponderate to an overwhelming degree over the derivatives of the root *aslama*, to submit. That belief and submission are different is clear, the constant use of the word belief or believers would suggest quite conclusively that iman is the most crucial element in a believer's make-up. Hundreds of verses in the Quran contain counsels of wisdom, commandments or admonitions beginning with the phrase "O ye who believe!" the definition of a believer – one who has *iman* – can be found in many verses in the Quran."

[257] John L Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University, 1988), 69.

[258] Colin Turner, "The Risale-i Nur: A Revolution of Belief," in *Panel I: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Yeni Nesil, 1993), 155-56. Also see and compare this with Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Quran* (Chicago: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980), 1-16.

[259] See and compare with Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 2.

[260] See Ibid. and compare with Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islam" as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'an Commentaries*, 223.

[261] See Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 2. and Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islam" as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'an Commentaries*, 223.

[262] Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 2-3.

[263] See Ibid., 3. .

[264] See as cited in Ibid.

[265] See Turner, "The Rise of Twelver Shi'ite Externalism in Safawid Iran and Its Consolidation under Allama Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (1037/1627-1110/1699)", 362.

[266] Nursi, *The Letters*, 52.

[267] Ibid., 53.

[268] Compare with Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islam" as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'an Commentaries*, 21.

[269] See Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 11.

[270] See Nursi, "Kastamonu Lahikasi," 1645.

[271] Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islam" as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'an Commentaries*, 13, also see 14.

[272] See Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Barla Iâhikasi," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1553-54.

[273] Turner, "The Rise of Twelver Shi'ite Externalism in Safawid Iran and Its Consolidation under Allama Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (1037/1627-1110/1699)", 2.

[274] See Nursi, *The Letters*, 53-54. Nursi states: "Just as Islam without belief cannot be the means of salvation, neither can belief without Islam be the means of salvation. All praise and bounty is God's, through the grace of the Qur'an's miraculousness, the comparisons of the Risale-i Nur have demonstrated the fruits and results of the religion of Islam and Qur'anic truths in such a way that even if someone without religion does not understand them, it is not possible for him not to be sympathetic towards them. And they have shown the evidences and proofs of belief and Islam in such powerful fashion that if a non-Muslim even understands them, he is certain to assent to them. Although he would be a non-Muslim, he would believe. Yes, the Words show the fruits of belief and Islam to be sweet and delectable like the fruits of the Tuba-tree of Paradise, and show their results to be pleasant and agreeable like the pleasures of happiness in this world and the next. They therefore induce in those who see them and know them a feeling of infinite partiality, support, and surrender. And they have demonstrated proofs as powerful as the chains of beings and numerous as minute particles so that they afford infinite conviction and strength of belief."

[275] See Nursi, *The Rays*, 266. Also see Nursi, "Isârâtü'l-I'câz," 1273.

[276] See and compare with Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islam" as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'an Commentaries*, 188-90.

[277] See Ibid., 190.

[278] See Ibid., 196, 97, and 99.

[279] Ibid., 202.

[280] See and compare with Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 11.

[281] See as cited in Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islam" as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'an Commentaries*, 204-10.

[282] As quoted in Ibid., 207.

[283] See for this and more in Ibid., 214.

[284] Ibid., 207.

[285] See Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 11.

[286] See for Ghazali's short biography and a brief information about his works, the introductory chapter in Imam Huccetul Islam Gazali, *Ihyau Ulumi'd-Din*, trans. Ahmed Serdaroglu, 4 vols., vol. 1 (Bedir Yayinevi). Also see and compare with Montgomery Watt, *The Faith and Practise of Al-Ghazali* (Liverpool: C. Tinling and Co. Ltd., 1953), 11-15.

[287] See Al Ghazali, "Belief, Submission and Ihsan ("Sunni Sufis")." displayed in http://www.wponline.org/vil/Books/AG_FIB/ch4.htm

[288] In this regard also see the 5th on 'tawhid' in Gazali, *Ihyau Ulumi'd-Din*.

[289] See Neal Robinson, "Muhammad 'Abduh," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver and Edward Craig Leaman (Routledge, 1998), 1: 6.

[290] See Nursi, "Isârâtü'l-I'câz," 1273.

[291] See Nursi, *The Rays*, 266-68.

[292] See Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 43-44.

[293] See Muhsin Abd al-Hamid, "Bediuzzaman Said Nurs: The Kalam Scholar of the Modern Age," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995). Also see Vahide, "The Book of the Universe: Its Place and Development in Bediuzzaman's Thought," 472.

[294] Jalal Jalalizade, "A Comparison of the Ideas of Bediuzzaman and Muhammad Iqbal," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 170.

[295] We will deal with his concern of 'individual and society' in the following chapter.

[296] See and compare with Elsayed Omran, "Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver and Edward Craig Leaman (Routledge, 1998), 1: 94-95.

[297] Nursi, *The Letters*, 265.

[298] See M. Hakan Yavuz, "The Sufi Conception of Jihad: The Case of Said Nursi" (paper presented at the Peace, Jihad and Conflict Resolution, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, awailable in http://www.iiit.org/iiitseminar/AMSS,%20IIIT,%20ISESCO%20Seminar.htm, November 2 -3, 2002).

[299] See Smith, "Similies and Metaphors of Life and Death in the Writings of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi."

[300] See Hakan M. Yavuz, "Print-Based Islamic Discourse and Modernity: The Nur Movement," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 326. See and compare with Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 181-82.

[301] See as cited in Yavuz, "The Sufi Conception of Jihad: The Case of Said Nursi".

[302] See and compare with Yusuf, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Discourse on Belief in the Existence of God: A Study of Texts from the Risale-i Nur," 151.

[303] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 181.

Chapter 4 SOCIAL REFORM AND SOCIAL CHANGE ACCORDING TO NURSI

Social change is an ever-present phenomenon in any society. It is a process, which may be defined in the broadest sense as any change in social relations. According to social psychologists, some forms of change are systematic and predictable and others random or coincidental. In the specific meaning, social change depends first of all on the social entity considered. Also, social change depends on the time it has taken place; most short-term changes are negligible if a social transformation is studied in the long run. It has been stated, "Even if one abstracts from small-scale and short-term changes, social change is a general characteristic of human societies: customs and norms change, inventions are made and applied, environmental changes lead to new adaptations, conflicts result in redistributions of power."[1]

The concept of social change has no one generally accepted meaning. It embraces such issues and concepts as the natural environment, demographic processes, technological innovations, economic processes, theoretical ideas, social movements and political processes, all of which are involved in the redevelopment of civil society as a process of social change and transition. Nursi's integrated study of these is the focus of this chapter. Examining social change and social transition as Nursi saw them involves addressing numerous highly complex and interrelated factors such as ethics, technology, politics and economics. In this chapter it is possible only to review briefly some of the major issues surrounding social change, in particular those to which Nursi paid the most attention, from a socio-theological angle. As the previous chapter showed, according to Nursi man is a creature of God who constitutes the most exalted species among God's creation. He is destined to eternity, and has

been sent into this world so that he can perfect his abilities in order to deserve happiness in this life and in his eternal life. Accordingly, this chapter will examine in detail Nursi's views about man, society, change, and the relationship between these and religious belief.

It is important to stress at this point that Nursi's manner of interpretation parallels that of the Qur'an, in that he addresses his subject matter, and also individuals, very directly. The issues he discusses are, in the most general sense, those relating to belief, issues which are clearly relevant for all people at all times. One may say that it has got the same percentage with the Qur'an approaching the similar issues.[2] As was indicated in the previous chapter, Nursi's writings (called the *Risale-i Nur*) are commentaries based on the Qur'an. Approximately one tenth of the Qur'an is concerned with worldly (*dunyasal*) matters; the remaining nine-tenths concern matters of faith, resurrection, the hereafter, Judgement Day, etc.[3] In order to grasp Nursi's socio-theological perspective on social-transition and social change, one must remember that his discourse is based on "other-worldly" (non-*dunya*) premises rather than on worldly ones.[4] However, Nursi, as someone working for eternal happiness yet living in this world, was also aware of worldly issues, embracing sociology, (social) psychology and social engineering. He knew he had to examine such issues, and these, accordingly, always featured in his writings. The statement of man and religion form an inseparable whole and religion appearing on the scene with the first man as a way of life are featured throughout Nursi's *Risale-i Nur*. For such a thing is complicated enough to give rise to numerous issues for both the individual and society. Another issue which Nursi discusses extensively is the purpose of Creation in terms of everything being centred on man, and in terms of the things told to man by

the Book of the Universe. In every age, God has called men to a religion-centred way of life, and He continues to do so.[5]

Nursi does not present any "normative" picture of Islamic society. He discusses in detail only those problems which seemed important from his moral point of view and which related to the time in which he lived, the rest being covered by powerful general statements. Therefore we must regard recent commentaries on Nursi by his admirers as overreadings, in that they have sought to find everything in his writings from politics to international affairs, from state governance to military advice.[6] Perhaps here we can see another parallel between Nursi's *Risale-i Nur* and the scriptures upon which Nursi modelled himself. As far as society is concerned, the Qur'an deals in generalisations. It does this because the question of social structure is tied to time and place, and what is suitable for seventh-century Arabs will not be suitable for twenty-first-century urban dwellers. In modelling himself on the Qur'an, Nursi may have been taking this into consideration

The first section of this chapter attempts to unfold an understanding of Nursi which holds that each age has particular social and moral needs, and emphasises Nursi's views as to the importance of the individual's interpreting the Qur'an in this regard, since for him a morally based, humane society should consist of self-aware individuals. The section takes a closer look at Nursi's understanding of the individual, society, and the "collective personality", and discusses whether individualism or personal relations strengthen the collective personality. The second section of this chapter deals with Nursi's conception of social change. It discusses the moral principles and values that Nursi upheld in his attempt to found a humane society: respect, love, sincerity, compassion and communal brotherhood. Later in this section Nursi's own politics, and his understanding of the nation and nationalism, will also be

considered. We will also consider order, conflict and power in society and in Islam, and examine evolution, revolution or *jihad* in order to evaluate the phenomenon of social change based on a culture of belief. The relationship between social, political and economic issues will be discussed, and I shall also briefly review issues relating to social change in order to establish whether, in the understanding of Nursi, Islam is a universal panacea or not. We will also seek to clarify whether the Nursian way of thought tackles particular issues individually and therefore whether its formula is descriptive or prescriptive, and whether change in Islam comes from the top or the bottom. Herein lies the key difference between Nursi and his contemporaries. While Nursi was of the opinion that society evolves from individuals, his contemporaries were involved with revolutionising and radicalising the masses.

To evaluate the phenomenon of social change, it is necessary to relate it to the time in which it takes place and the source on which it is based. Social change is a process which operates over time. Living as he was in a modern age in which scientific advancements and developments promoted nihilistic and modernistic ideas, according to which there is no longer a need for God and religion in social life, Nursi advocates Islamic principles as being the only solution to the problems of social life which, unlike other religious scriptures at the time, properly takes into account scientific advancements.[7]

In many places in his writings, Nursi emphasises the different needs of the time. According to Mardin, "In the most general sense, Said Nursi is aware that his time, the time of modernity, bears a special mark. He sees the three concepts which characterize these times as *malikiyet* (private property), *serbestiyet* (freedom), and the growth of science."[8] This influences all his interpretations of the Qur'anic verses, including his decision to abandon the classical method of verse-by-verse (atomic)

exegesis in favour of a thematic interpretation of the Qur'an using selected verses to explore his diagnosis. Nursi points out that each age has particular needs and characteristics and that Qur'anic knowledge includes all these needs. According to Nursi, in this age of neglect misfortune has changed its form and affected religion and one's involvement with religion.[9] It was therefore his main goal to maintain the healthy state of people and society in this world. Religiously-based moral conduct is the issue with which he deals throughout his interpretation.

It is important to note Nursi's pluralistic approach to interpretation in order to grasp the issue of social change.[10] According to Nursi, there is not just one truth: understandings of truth may be many, and can take different forms according to time and place. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, according to Nursi even sacred laws change over time. Indeed, in one age different prophets may, and have, come. There were even different prophets and laws in the same continent in the same century.[11] In this context, Nursi's approach to interpretation is, according to Voll, pluralistic. Voll writes: "In terms of Qur'anic commentary, Said Nursi argues that the verses of the Qur'an reflect the vastness of God's message and depths of meanings." In addition:

> As the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition expresses truths through its explicit, clear meanings and senses, so it expresses many allusive meanings through its styles and forms. Each of its verses contains numerous levels of meanings. Since the Qur'an proceeds from all-encompassing knowledge, all its meanings may be intended. It cannot be restricted to one or two meanings like man s speech, the product of his limited mind and individual will. It is because of this that innumerable truths contained in the Qur'an's verses have been expounded by Qur'anic commentators, and there are many more which have not been expounded by them.[12]

Therefore, according to Voll, "This openness to many different levels of understanding reflects a pluralism that is not a relativist position, but rather

emphasises the importance of the role of the individual in the interpretation."[13] Elsewhere, Nursi argues that the phrases of the Qur'an are not restricted to a single meaning; rather, since the Qur'an addresses all levels of mankind, its phrases are like universals or wholes which comprise meanings for each level. Every Qur'anic commentator, every adept, mentions one part of the whole.[14]

In short, Nursi was of the opinion that Islam needs to be re-thought in accordance with the needs of the age, and the Qur'an needs to be reinterpreted according to the spiritual and moral needs of man. In his understanding, this necessitated the writing of the *Risale-i Nur* and the reforming of society, starting with individuals. Thus, faith-based morality stemming from individuals was Nursi's main concern. According to Nursi, the moral society is predicated on the evolution and growth of belief among its members.

Nursi believed that, at this time, belief and religion, social life and the Shari'a, and public law and Islamic politics, were all in need of a renewer of great stature. But for him the most important thing was to conserve individuals' belief. He was of the opinion that it is not possible for these three duties to be found together in perfect form in one person or community at the same time without them damaging one another. They can only be brought together at the end of time.[15] He believed also that the *Risale-i Nur* itself has been given the duty of renewing belief and preserving society from distractions: that is, of fulfilling the first of these three duties.[16]

Before turning to Nursi's understanding of the individual, society and social change, it should be mentioned here that Nursi claimed that the only formula for the social and scientific, and the material and spiritual, progress of the East (of which Islam was a part) was not philosophy (negative) or reason (atheistic), but the heart and religion. In his view negative philosophy and reason, which has been a tool for

irreligion, do not embrace all of humanity, but look to material needs. Religion, however, with its universal principles, can satisfy man's desires, which stretch to eternity. The need of people for religion is, he thought, greater than their material needs, which consist of their livelihoods.[17]

4.1 THE INDIVIDUAL, SOCIETY AND COLLECTIVE PERSONALITY

According to social psychologists, any study of social change involves both persons and groups:

> As the basic constituent of any society the person is essential but ambiguous, for one can turn inward in a self-centered manner; hence it is important to add that any resolution of the social problem requires that the individual be endowed with moral values. Further, these are not simply functions of external circumstances; indeed the ideological effort to construct in these terms a "new socialist man" proceeded to destroy the inner person. Hence, there is need for an inner reconstruction that includes one's emotional life as well as intellect and will, and which must be reflected further in the values which guide one's options and the culture which emerges as the complex of values and virtues of one's people.[18]

It is in this perspective that Nursi's concept of individual and society will be analysed in this section. The individual is the basic constituent of any society, and so will be considered together with Nursi's elaboration of the collective personality.

The moral and political confusion of our age must, according to Niebuhr's diagnosis, be partly due to a misunderstanding of human nature, writes Veldhuis in his book *Realism Versus Utopianism*:

> Because people do not know themselves, they come to cherish unwarranted expectations or to acquiesce too soon in existing situations. By overlooking some aspect of humanity they tend either to overrate or to underestimate man and his possibilities. Both tendencies are equally dangerous.[19]

According to some sociologists, at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, humanity was in great crisis. Man's alienation from his fellow man and from nature was more apparent than before. He became selfish and dependent on approval, and started feeling insecure, dissatisfied, bored and anxious. More importantly, his disbelief in the Hereafter made him more distracted. The modern age has therefore rightly been called the age of anxiety or of individuality.[20]

Nursi's unique approach towards the individual and society, and his solutions to the problems besetting an age of anxiety and individuality, will be considered first; the "collective personality" will be considered later in this section. According to Mardin, whoever gathered around Nursi, whether aged mystical seekers or those of the younger generation who had received a secular primary education , were deprived of a resource which operated at a deep individual level, namely the Islamic teachings. Mardin observes that the positivistic world view promoted by Kemalism and the early republican governments clashed with people's understanding of Islam, and thus Nursi had a fertile ground on which to sow his ideas concerning the total involvement of the individual in Islam as a solution for the tensions generated in the individual.[21] In this regard, Nereid writes: "After the Kemalist takeover, all religious brotherhoods were closed down and each individual was thus left on his own, to loneliness."[22] Nursi's role here was to fulfil the needs of individuals, who in the end form society. The question here is whether Nursi was in favour of individualism in the time of modernity or not. According to Mardin, "Neither Said Nursi nor the idiom he is trying to revive have anything good to say for individualism. Rather they bank on the *gemeinschaftlich* aspect of interpersonal relations."[23] Nursi's *gemeinschaftlich* concern for society puts forward the idea that individuals are socially united, and related to their families, relatives and neighbourhood by moral values based on

Islamic teachings. In this sense, Nursi's discourse is personalistic and not individualistic.[24]

Unlike his contemporaries, Nursi argued that the human as an individual has a core purpose. Nursi puts individuals at the centre of his new discourse. In doing so, since the Qur'an focuses on man, he addresses individuals in particular and society in general. According to Mardin, Nursi's belief is that "Since Adam was the first man to be taught the name of Allah, which embraces all of his other names (theophanies), the concept 'descendants of Adam' is [that] through which society should be apprehended."[25]

Nursi locates the problem afflicting the Muslim world at the level of the individual. His solutions started with reforming and transforming the individual. He tried to renew self-confidence of the individual through psychological renewal based on stressing faith.[26] As was pointed out in the proceeding chapter, according to Nursi the human being as the "divine vicegerency" has a mission, the first task in which is to recognise and to know God and to worship Him. Life is a test: man has to earn eternal happiness and deserve heaven. To do this he has to show and perfect his abilities through the capacities which he has been granted by his creation. According to Nursi, in this sense each individual has a universal human role that transcends natural, social and cultural boundaries.[27] Man has to experience this life, this world and everything relating to it. He has been given the capacity to rise to the highest of the high, and also to descend to the lowest of the low.[28]

Discussing the process of modernising the social structure, Mardin argues that Nursi succeeded in making faith something that was cultivated by truly autonomous individuals. He regarded Islam as the external, ideological "canopy" beneath which the internal thrust would come from individuals. He writes: "The importance of this internalisation followed logically from the personalistic system, for where there are no

holistic conceptions of society to work with – other than 'Islam' – then the end one pursues is not to change society as a whole but the individual and his 'heart'." Also, Mardin argues that it was this idea that Nursi seems to have had in mind when he shifted from politics, which had occupied him in the first period of his life, to the conversion of individuals, when he appeared as "New Nursi".[29]

The principle of community in Islam is the opposite of that of individualism, which implies that man (as an individual) is the centre and measure of everything. According to the Islamic view of community, everybody has an awareness of being personally responsible for all others.[31] In the Islamic tradition, every individual is responsible for what he has done. In this sense Nursi never was individualistic. For Nursi, it is in the nature of man to have a place in the framework relating to the vicegerency. Each individual has to be equal to conveying its meanings, aims and message to people.[32]

In many of his writings Nursi either starts or finishes by saying: "I have written down my own observations, according to my own understanding, and for myself", or, "I mostly address firstly my own soul". This shows that Nursi's addressee was man himself rather than society.[33] In the most important part of his writings, the treatise called *The Supreme Sign*, Nursi, in the form of a traveller, questions the universe about his Maker. He wrote the work for himself.[34] This treatise represents Nursi's view of man's relation with the cosmos and its interconnection with the idea of the Creator, harmony, peace and prosperity. He questions the universe as an individual man and observes it as a traveller.[35] This is a common theme in the *Risale-i Nur*. Nursi takes man as an individual and attempts to educate him. In this regard Mardin states, "Two characteristics may be underlined which I believe are relevant to an understanding of what is "truly" religious in Nurculuk: one is the centrality of the

symbolic store in a person's involvement in religion. A second is the malleability of the set of religious symbols at an individual level."[36] Elsewhere, Mardin states in this connection:

> Personalism in the sense in which we see it used by Said Nursi has a number of further connotations. Since Adam was the first man to be taught the name of Allah, which embraces all of his other names (theophanies), the concept "descendants of Adam" is the conceptual unit through which society should be apprehended. A speculation of Bediuzzaman which is related to this trend of thought is his assertion that one should remember that one of the Names of God (through which the phenomenal works is activated) is Farid, or "The Individual" (BSN, 271). Thus even individuality has as its referent, the divine and not the person's make-up or characteristics.[37]

According to Nursi, the chief concern of Islam was the strengthening of the individual's belief, leading him to seek belief-based solutions to every question relating to life.[38]

Mardin argues that the transformation Nursi underwent from the "Old" to the "New" Said also transformed his discourses, which centred on three 'second orders'. These were "a conceptualisation of social relations as personalistic, a folk cosmology with imagistic moorings, and an allusive, obscure, highly metaphorical rhetoric".[39] In a time of social and psychological unhappiness and distraction, Nursi's solution appealed, in the first step, on a psychological level and aimed to increase Muslim spirituality by transforming it from "imitative belief" into "certain belief", which he believed to be the key to eternal life, and to social happiness in this world.[40] Nursi seeks to revive society through the promotion of self-aware individuals endowed with firm belief. Thus, according to Mardin, "the personalistic element explains some aspects of the religious strategy of Said Nursi, i.e. his special emphases on changing man's inner world as the touchstone of a revitalised Islam".[41]

Nursi never defines individualism or personalism in his writings. As Mardin argues, however, the issues Nursi addresses are more rightly termed personalistic. Nursi developed a methodology which he thought would create the good society by fostering "collective personality.[42] This is what he felt to be necessary in the modern age, that the students of the *Risale-i Nur* should renounce all the demands of the ego and transform their 'I's into 'We' – that is, give up egotism and work for the collective personality:[43]

> This time is not the time for egotism and the personality for those who follow the path of reality (*ehl-i hakikat*); it is the time of the community (*cemaat*). A collective personality emerging from the community rules, and may persist. In order to have a large pool, the ego and personality, which are like blocks of ice, have to be cast into the pool and melted ...[44]

The individual, so Nursi thought, can live his religion alone. He maintains that "[i]n early times the social collectivity and its collective personality had not developed as it has at the present and the idea of the isolated individual was predominant; the extensive attributes and widescale actions of the community, therefore, were ascribed to the persons who led them".[46] The present time, however, is the time of social collectivity. The importance and value of individuals must accord with collective personality.[47] In this sense, Nursi's fundamental fear was that the "I" in a Muslim's life would take over.[48]

According to Nursi, in the age in which he lived, an individual, even one of the greatest spiritual stature, cannot successfully combat the awesome collective personality of irreligion based on the materialist philosophy of this century, and cannot completely remove the doubts caused by unbelief and misguidance. A collective religious personality, Nursi thought, is a necessity in order to combat the collective personality of irreligion.[49] According to Vahide, this consciousness of a

joint or corporate personality is one of the distinguishing marks of Nursi's *Risale-i Nur,* and Nursi himself offered the finest example of it by always putting this collective personality before himself.[50] Nevertheless, Nursi does not see himself as a subject who states propositions about an external entity "society" without taking into account his personal involvement in it; for him society is, as Mardin states, not an "It" but an "I".[51] For Nursi there is no society as an abstract "it": society is something in which individuals take part. Nevertheless, Nursi urged the forming of groups and communities (*cema'at*), and considered it to be the time of communities or social collectivities.

Along with the principles of belief, Nursi endeavoured to strengthen the psychological infrastructure of the individual, and to develop a secure social system through the socialisation of the individual in a balanced, individuals-based society.[52] In this context Nursi tries to develop social collectivity, making individuals self-aware of themselves first, and then secondly aware of society. Through his writings Nursi undertook to renew the belief of Muslim individuals, and to re-form a community or group of these individuals, rather than re-establishing the political structure of the Islamic world. His endeavour may be seen as reviving belief and forming community with this spirit.[53] Mardin states:

> A summary of findings concerning the sociological imagination of Said Nursi would emphasize one main point: Bediuzzaman does not have a holistic understanding of society: he sees society as made up of persons. But here we have to emphasize another feature which runs counter to this first finding: these persons are not real but "virtual" persons. They are defined not as individuals but as positions or roles that those persons would fill. The "Good Society" is one where this pyramid of roles – derived from the Quran –is constituted.[54]

Mardin argues that Nursi's ideas have their own holistic dimension: "They are not those of a society viewed as a machine but those of a community interlinked with

ties of personal obligation. And at still another level, rules for the control of bodily expression."[55] However, even though it is true that the roles of individuals and interpersonal relations "complete the pyramid", nevertheless, contrary to what Mardin has written, in Nursi's understanding *persons* are not virtual, but actual.[56] For instance, Nursi maintained the view that it was a barbaric principle of present-day society that for the sake of society an individual might be sacrificed, or that for the sake of a nation a society's rights might be dispensed with. According to Nursi, 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, in the view both of the Divine Power and 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 will wipe out mankind.[57] In this context, then, Nursi's individuals are very much actual. Mardin himself ststes that *insan* (man) was more important than *erkan* (orders).[58] It is clear that Nursi's main concern was man, not society.[59] This makes man actual rather than virtual. In addition, even though some of Nursi's ideas may have their own holistic dimension, this is not the case where society is concerned.

Under these circumstances, Nursi was very successful in building up the malleability of the set of religious symbols at an individual level in order to get people involved in religion. These settings have strong connections starting from the individual level through society.[60]

While his contemporaries were busy using Islam as a vehicle of protest, Nursi sought to reform society in the direction of drawing power away from individuals in order to form a collective personality so that he could achieve his ultimate aim of building a good society based on belief, and was never involved with such hostility or with revolutionary activities.[61] In conclusion, then: Nursi attempted to reactivate

Islamic teachings in society via autonomous individuals, and harnessed interpersonal relationship within the so-called "collective personality" in order to mobilise and revitalise Islam.

4.2 SOME ISSUES AND SOCIO-POLITICAL CONCEPTS IN SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Nursi wrote a good many of his treatises in order to uphold the society that he was trying to reform, to hold it together and keep it safe from conspiracies. His writings after the 1940s, in particular, called "Appendices", are mostly concerned with the principles and rules relating to collective personality, sincerity, brotherhood, and how to maintain a peaceful, integrated society. Of the moral qualities Nursi dealt with in this regard, the positive ones are mutual love, brotherhood, sincerity, social tranquillity, and solidarity between youth and the elderly; the negative ones are envy, backbiting, discord, rancour and enmity. Nursi put forward solutions to the problems facing children, young people and the elderly. In this regard, Nursi, having very different attitudes from the prevailing ones, deals with some of the socio-political concepts he regards as necessary to reform society, and we attach importance to this both to clarify the subject at hand and to indicate the differences between Nursi and his fellow Islamic thinkers.

Moral and human values do not develop parallel with scientific and technological advances. On the contrary, it is generally accepted that the latter have in this century usually led to man becoming arrogant and tyrannical.[62] Nursi was of the opinion that the materialistic philosophy of the capitalist and socialist systems ignored the reality of man and society and was therefore compelled to use oppressive methods.[63] Regarding the kind of environment in which such systems could be maintained, he writes:

> Since socialism destroyed certain sacred matters, the ideas it inculcated were finally transformed into bolshevism, and because bolshevism also destroyed numerous sacred matters pertaining to morality, the heart, and humanity, for sure the seeds it sowed will produce the crops of anarchy, which recognizes no restrictions or respect. For if respect and compassion leave the human heart, reason and intelligence turn such people into most fearsome, tyrannical beasts. They can no longer be governed through politics. And where anarchy will find its place will be the plundering tribes which are both oppressed and populous, and are backward in civilization and sovereignty.[64]

The period in which Nursi lived was one in which positivism and materialism had a greater prominence than ever before in human history.[65] Nursi displayed total opposition to positivism and materialism, which in his view ignored God and religion.[66] In this connection, Nursi states elsewhere, regarding the beginning of the Cold War period when materialist philosophy and socialist movements were gaining strength:

> With the powerful awakening brought about in mankind by two ghastly world wars, and man being awakened completely, most certainly no nation can exist without religion; Russia too cannot continue without religion ...[67]

This was written in the 1940s, when Soviet Russia was in the ascendent.

The following section attempts to analyse some of the issues and approaches Nursi dealt with in seeking to reform society and achieve the building of a good society founded on collective personality, with religion as its basis. Nursi paints a graphic picture of the society of which he dreamed:

> The parts of the *Risale-i Nur*, which consists of the sciences of belief, establishes and maintains public order and security. Yes, belief, the source of good character and virtues, certainly does not disturb public order, it is unbelief with its bad character that spoils it.[68]

4. 2.1 MORALITY

Nursi expressed some moral virtues and re-established Islamic injunctions in order to found a humane and good society. In so doing he re-emphasises values and principles which sprang from the Qur'an. According to Nursi, the disease which afflicted the very 'heart of the nation' was its laxity in religion. A cure would come, he claimed, only with the revival of religion in the hearts of the masses.[69] Unlike most of his contemporaries, Nursi did not blame external forces. Muslims themselves had a great share in the situation of political, economic and social backwardness. The eradication of their historical identity afflicted the minds of Muslims, who did not even realise the change taking place within themselves. This was, in a sense, self-criticism. As a result of the alienation of Islamic values in society, Muslims did not even realise what they had lost. Nursi attached great importance to his diagnosis of Islamic society as immoral as a precondition for Islamic resurgence.[70] Nursi does not present any detailed picture of the socio-moral system. He discusses in detail only those problems which seem important from his moral point of view and which relate to his time. That is to say, he does not deal with how to structure society bit by bit, or with how to build a state structure.

While dealing with the issue of morality in society, Nursi stressed the sociological inheritance according to which, so he believed, the East responds more to religion than does the West. According to him, most of the Prophets appeared in the East and in Africa, while most philosophers emerged in the West and in Europe. He took this to be a sign of a divine pre-ordaining that in Asia religion is dominant and philosophy takes second place. He points out the importance of dealing carefully with

the socio-moral facts of Eastern or Western society. He repeatedly said that the resurgence of the East would depend on upholding religious teachings and ethics.[71]

As Mardin argues, one of the significant points in Nursi's philosophy was the idea of the rationality of Muslim ethics:

> The thesis that religion could not any more be simply declarative (one of Said's oft-repeated statements) but had to rely on convincing arguments (which, incidentally does not mean the arguments of philosophy) was, no doubt, an aspect of his shrewd understanding of the process of modernization as it grew in Turkey after 1908.[72]

Nursi's main aim, especially in the second part of his life, was to demonstrate that via the Qur'an, with its reasoned proofs and certain evidences, not only Muslims but all humanity could find a way to happiness in this world and hereafter. It was for this reason, according to Vahide, that he was always optimistic about the future.[73] Mardin draws attention also to his softening of the orthodox Sunni stress on the torments of hell which are promised to sinners: "There is conversely, a new stress on the benevolence of God and on *sefkat* (affection) as the bond that links God and the believer."[74] Nursi's discourse places significant emphasis on the divine names *Rahim* and *Rahman* (merciful and compassionate) as well as on God's forgiveness. He also maintains that his way, or the *Risale-i Nur,* has the attributes of the Divine Names *Hakim* and *Rahim*.

In a period when philosophy-based, materialistic ideologies, whether capitalist or communist, were becoming increasingly influential, the importance Nursi attached to preserving individual belief by making all Muslims aware of long-forgotten Islamic ethics furnished his basic solution It is difficult to find considerations of institutional or structural renewal in Nursi's writings.[75] His concern was materialism's moral and spiritual destruction of both the individual and society. He thought that the

implementation of Islamic ethics would repair the harm caused by negative, philosophy-based ideologies.[76] According to Mardin:

> Of all the themes he presented in the Risale-i Nur, Said Nursi was most adamant about the necessity to revitalize Islamic ethics. Sometimes this emphasis had pragmatic overtones, as when he described religion as a balm to the wound suffered by individuals. More often it was a theme which underlined the harmony that one would achieve by remaining in tune with the frame of the universe as thought by Islam.[77]

One further thing needs to be clarified here. From the above statement it could be inferred that religion, according to Nursi, is a kind of cure, an ointment for healing a sore. Religion in this view is reactive to the practical and sociological issues in society, so that it may give relief to people. Contrary to this, Nursi saw religion as pro-active and self-sufficient; by means of it, people can safeguard their mortal and eternal lives. Nursi thought that the solution for the Islamic world's backwardness was to reactivate pro-active Islamic ethics and injunctions. He elaborates on a number of issues relating to the reactivation of Islamic injunctions, and maintains that immorality gives rise to the following:

> Firstly: The rising to life of despair and hopelessness in social life. Secondly: The death of truthfulness in social and political life. Thirdly: Love of enmity. Fourthly: Not knowing the luminous bonds that bind the believers to one another. Fifthly: Despotism, which spreads, becomes widespread as though it was various contagious diseases. Sixthly: Restricting endeavour to what is personally beneficial.[78]

According to Fromm, one of the most disturbing facts in moral life in the contemporary world is the startling contrast between private and collective interests in morality, and also the fact that man has lost his appetite for being a part of society anymore and become selfish and egotistic.[79] In opposition to this, Nursi endeavoured to re-establish the moral injunctions of Islamic ethics in social life. He was of the

opinion that a fearful egotism arising from heedlessness and from love of this world rules at this time, and he attempted to re-establish the good society by an empahsis on practical worldy issues balanced with a view of the hereafter. Nursi was particularly adamant about reviving Islamic ethics in order to build up a culture of belief. Among the first things he opposed as the consequence of modern morality was egotism. According to Nursi, egotism is man's most dangerous vein:[80]

> A fearful egotism arising from heedlessness and love of this world rules at this time. The people of reality, therefore, have to give up egotism and selfishness, even if it is in a licit form. Since the Risale-i Nur students dissolve their egotism, which is an ice-block, in the joint pool of their collective personality, they will not be shaken by this storm, God willing.[81]

From his youth Nursi emphasised the importance of prevailing moral and spiritual needs. He believed that humanity's greatest present need is for moral and spiritual strength, solace and fortitude.[82] Nevertheless, for Nursi the Qur'an is primarily a means of placing restraints on the dangerous appetites of man:

> The aims of the Quran are to provide a barrier against the appetites of man (*Hevesat-i Nefsaniye*) thus encouraging him to engage in higher pursuits, giving satisfaction to his higher aspirations and directing him towards the achievements of human perfection.[83]

In this regard it is worth mentioning some of the moral values Nursi discusses, especially after the 1920s. Nursi's emphasis on the different moral values underwent change, but they mainly consisted of the following. Throughout the *Risale-i Nur*, among the issues mentioned most frequently in relation to the Islamic ethics are: sincerity (defined by Nursi as the most important principle in works pertaining to the hereafter), love (stated by Nursi as the way of our society is love for love and enmity towards enmity), and brotherhood. He speaks of strengthening love between Muslims and of "routing the soldiers of hostility".[84] Among the other oft-repeated issues Nursi

dealt with are *taqwa* and respect. In response to the decline in moral standards, Nursi urged the adoption of the Qur'anic concept of *taqwa*, fear of God or piety, as the basis of actions in the face of corruption and destruction. Elsewhere, he defines *taqwa* as "the avoiding of sins and what is forbidden, and acting within the sphere of obligatory good works", and said that those who fulfilled their obligations and did not commit serious sins would be saved.[85] Nursi, in many places in his writings, emphasises the significance of *taqwa* as the greatest strength appertaining in social life:

> And so, after sincerity (ihlas), our greatest strength at such a time in the face of these fearsome events is, in accordance with the principle of 'sharing the works of the hereafter', for each of us to write good deeds into 'the righteous-act books' of the others with our pens, and with our tongues, to send reinforcements and assistance to the 'forts' of the others' taqwa.[86]

In this regard, he thought that will, mind, emotion, and the subtle inner faculties which he thought constitute the four elements of the conscience and the four faculties of the spirit, each has an ultimate aim. The ultimate aim of the will is worship of God; that of the mind is knowledge of God; that of the emotions is love of God; and that of the inner faculties is the vision of God. He believed that perfect worship, known as *taqwa*, comprises all four elements: Islamic injunctions correct these and direct them towards their ultimate goals.[87]

Nursi deals with the question of man's perfecting of his abilities and, on the other hand, with the shortness of his life which serves as a counterbalance to his countless desires and appetites. As regards sensual pleasures, according to Nursi man may sink to a level a hundred times lower than the animals. He therefore was of the opinion that those who wish to be eternally happy, in this world and the next, should take as their guide the instruction of the Prophet Muhammad, within the bounds of belief.[88] Nursi here is appealing on a psychological level.

According to Ozbek, "In many places in the *Risale-i Nur* attention is drawn to man's inborn disposition, and methodical information is given as to how it should be guided."[89] Nursi affirmed that he was seeking to save men from anarchy and establish social harmony through the *Risale-i Nur*, by helping to plant belief-focused individuals in society.[90] In his view, social tranquillity can be assured only through the continuous production of religiously-minded young people.[91] According to Vahide, "The *Risale-i Nur* was a 'repairer' resisting the destruction."[92] Nursi writes:

> Our aim and programme is to save first ourselves, then our nation, from eternal extinction and permanent solitary confinement in the Intermediate Realm; to guard our fellow citizens against anarchy and aimlessness; and to protect ourselves with the steel-like truths of the Risale-i Nur against atheism, which destroys our lives in this world and the next.[93]

Nursi first appeals to the psychological level of the individual and then to the psycho-social level He was especially adamant that this interrelation operates on a psychological and not on a supernatural level. He employs the *Risale-i Nur* as a means of training and educating people by means of Islamic ethics and injunctions, with the ultimate aim of building a good society founded on belief.

POLITICS IN RELATION TO SOCIAL CHANGE ACCORDING TO NURSI

We cannot here discuss in detail the various historical views regarding the nature of an Islamic political system.[94] Rather, we will discuss the subject from a socio-theological angle to clarify Nursi's views on social change. Since Nursi saw social change as a gradual progress, I shall investigate how Nursi approached political authority.

In the hands of its present-day adherents, Kramer states, Islamic discourses, like all modern political ideologies, are obsessed with the acquisition of political power, and largely indifferent to the means used to acquire it.[95] It is necessary, however, to keep in mind the political theory of Islam. The Islamic period of the Prophet and the four rightly-guided caliphs stands alone as the significant model to which Muslims must revert. According to Brown, even the Shi'i political tradition ascribes overwhelming importance to this same period, although different interpretations are placed on the same historical facts as a result of the view that Ali and his lineal descendants should have succeeded the caliphate.[96] Among Nursi's contemporaries, all varieties of Islamist looked back to Islam's earliest years, and to the religio-political history of the early Muslim community, for their political model. Brown argues that the Muslims' early historical experience of political success has a vital importance for nearly all later Muslim generations. It is this period that they take as the basis for Islamic resurgence. In this regard, according to Brown, the neo-traditionalist Hasan al-Banna, who founded the Muslim Brethren in 1928, emphasised the early Muslim community as a political model to be imitated. So too did the radical Shi'a political activist Ayatullah Khomeini. At the same time, states Brown, the modernist Ali Abd al-Raziq, arguing for a Muslim equivalent of separation between church and state, attempted to make his case by reinterpreting the religio-political history of the origins and early development of the caliphate. Political Islam, in all its varieties, has looked back and seen the early period as the only period of success As Brown maintains, also, the radical *alim* from Egypt's al-Azhar, Khalid Muhammad Khalid, set out to justify a socialist approach to politics by appealing to examples from the time of the early Muslim community:[97]

> Indeed observers of Muslim political thought in modern times have often noted, sometimes with patronizing sympathy, sometimes with superciliousness, that those Muslims who seek democracy argue that Muhammad was the first democrat and the early Muslim community the first democracy, those advocating socialism depict Muhammad as the first socialist and the early community as the first socialist state, and so on as political styles change. Even certain Muslim communists went so far as to urge that Muhammad and the early community prefigured the idealized communist society.[98]

In the early Second Constitutional Period, Nursi was involved with politics, yet afterwards, one may object to that,[99] he gave them up completely.[100] It is therefore our aim to concentrate on Nursi's political concerns after the 1920s, since it was then that the fundamental change occurred in Nursi's discourse.[101] I shall consider Nursi's approach to politics from the point of view of social change. At a time when his contemporaries were politically active, Nursi alone kept his distance from politics. A brief examination of Nursi's pre-1920s conception of politics, however, will shed light on his concerns. Nursi's concern with politics is one of the controversial issues over which Nurcus have subsequently disagreed and which has been the cause of dissension among them.[102] Even in Nursi's lifetime the issue of how to approach politics was controversial for his followers. In addition, Nursi and his followers were often accused of founding a political society which aimed to threaten the current regime, even though they were acquitted on all charges.[103] Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that, even in the first period of his life, Nursi was never involved in politics as a politician. He had, according to Vahide, tried to revive the Prophet's *Sunnah* while making political use of religion and initiating a widespread movement for moral renewal – the "opposite of politics".[104]

Although the periodisation of Nursi's life does not imply a change of ideas in his thought system, Nursi himself admits a need for editing and correcting some of the errors which appeared in his earlier writings. In later life he edited the general corpus

of his writings, and he also included some of the earlier works in the *Risale-i Nur*. In order to clarify the subject we will consider some of Nursi's early works which he later edited.[105]

Politics

In the first period of his life, Nursi was to a great extent involved with politics and favoured this method for teaching the truths of Islam to the masses. During this period, he believed that the only way to serve religion was by means of politics.[106] However, according to Vahide he was never involved in politics as a politician, but tried to "make politics serve religion".[107] Nursi's involvement in politics represented a reaction against atheists' attempts to make politics the tool of irreligion; in response, Nursi tried to make politics a tool of Islam and its truths. He states that a number of religious politicians were attempting to make religion the tool of Islamic politics. However, in later life he was of the opinion that Islam cannot follow and be the tool of something that is worldly and dedicated to material needs. To do this, he believed, is to diminish Islam's intrinsic value.[108]

However, we need to look at Nursi's earlier efforts to make politics the tool of religion in order to situate him in the "gradualism" versus "revolution" context. Nursi's first period of life overlapped with the following historical events: Abdulhamid II's strategy of using Islamic Unity or Pan-Islamism to resist colonialist pressure; the Young Turks' idea of Ottomanism; the two Balkan Wars; the Trablusgarb resistance; the First World War; the War of Independence; the collapse of the Caliphate and the Caliphate movements based in India. These were theoretical debates concerning the political reconstruction of the Islamic world. They were most lively on the Istanbul–Egypt–India axis, and centred on the reforming efforts of Jamal

al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh on and the ideas of constitutionalism and freedom.[109]

A summary of the basic political theories of this period might help us to understand the politically active first period of Nursi's life. According to Davutoglu, some rejected outright the political message and characterisation of Islam, which forms the basis of the Caliphate. There were also other approaches, the basis of which was the reforming of the chief Islamic institutions, foremost among them the Caliphate. Rashid Rida's work *Khilafa* can be situated here. This, according to Davutoglu, 'stresses the necessity of such institutions' existence, as well as their reform". Finally, others again dealt with the question of politics within a general philosophical/theoretical framework, the main aim of which was the renewal of moral principles. Davutoglu writes: "Iqbal's assertion in his work *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* that the Republican Spirit could be realized through consensus is an example of this approach."[110]

Nursi was embedded in this political environment. He also, at this time, as we mentioned earlier in the second chapter, had numerous politically-minded friends. According to Al-Buti, "He was compelled to pursue his Islamic activities in this atmosphere, and use the same politics as a shield to counter the political stratagems and designs against religion and religious dominance"."[111] Nursi at this time saw the dangers coming from the political arena and tolerated them.

In the first period of his life, Nursi appears as one whose efforts to publicise the problems of the East, on education and seeking government backing, established his reputation as a scholar among the Istanbul *ulema* and intellectuals.[112] With his political stance of aiming to save the Ottoman Empire solely through freedom and

constitutional government, he became an active supporter of constitutionalism. Vahide writes:

> Nursi's support for constitutionalism was not limited to the theoretical; in the early days of the 'revolution' he worked together with the *Ittihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Committee for Union and Progress-[CUP]), giving speeches in Istanbul and Salonica explaining these concepts, which were alien to most of the people, and persuading them of their manifold benefits. Together with this, Nursi's main concern -and because the majority of the CUP later deviated from this aim he became a strenuous opponent of them- was to emphasize the conformity of constitutionalism with the Shari'ah and to insist that the Shari'ah be made the basis of it.[113]

At this time Nursi involved himself in politics via speeches, newspaper articles and other writings, believing these to be only means of reviving the Ottoman state, in other words of ensuring the dominance of religion. Among the issues with which Nursi dealt in this period, constitutionalism, consultation, freedom, legitimacy, despotism, progress and nationhood were among the most important. However, none of these efforts led Nursi to any direct involvement in politics as such.[114]

One important reason for the differences between the ideas of the Old and the New Said relates to the situation of the Ottoman Empire, and to the long-running earnest debate concerning how the decline of the Empire could best be halted: in the era of the "New Said" there was no Ottoman state, Caliphate or religiously powerful state to be saved. In his first period, according to Vahide, Nursi was caught up in this debate, and for a time worked alongside the CUP to establish constitutional government. Later, after the fundamental change in his life had occurred, Nursi switched from politics to transforming individuals' hearts. This represented a change in terms of his methodology and his active participation in the constitutional movement, not as regards his intellectual concepts themselves. We see Nursi supporting constitutionalism and adopting related ideas and terminology. He did not

see a problem here, in so far as these represent injunctions within Islam. His ultimate aim in this period was securing the unity and progress of the Empire. Vahide writes: "His concern was to demonstrate that constitutionalism and associated concepts could be deduced from the Shari'ah and were in essence Islamic, and to work for their popular acceptance."[115] Of course, these concepts were accepted anyway by many intellectuals of the day, the difference being that Nursi used his intellectual background to persuade people that these were already in Islam. The only thing that mattered was the method of persuading, and here it was Japan on which Nursi modelled his ideas.[116]

With regard to this period, Yavuz maintains that Nursi observed "political parties as the pillars of democracy" and argued that parliamentary constitutionalism and the rule of law provide the best environment for the rejuvenation of Islam. For Nursi too, political participation and the rule of law were the two pillars of justice. Nursi defended parliamentarism and constitutionalism as the best means for the realisation of justice.[117]

It is clear by now that, in his first period, Nursi was politically active and involved with politics to a great extent, but not as a politician. He used politics to persuade the masses to accept Islamic truths, which in his view already included most of the political concepts discussed in his time.

Apolitical Islam and Nursi's own politics

To define Nursi's approach after the 1920s, there is no better phrase than this section's title. Throughout his discourse, Nursi considers the avoidance of politics to be basic to his manner of serving the Qur'an.[118] In other words, after the 1920s politics never found a place in Nursi's gradualist approach to social change. A full

examination of this question is beyond the scope of the present study. This, however, is one of the most important differences between Nursi and his contemporaries. In a period of politically motivated Islamic movements, Nursi's distance from politics is another factor differentiating him from his caste. The following part of this section aims to situate Nursi among his contemporaries in terms of his different approach to social change, that of strengthening Islam from the bottom rather than from the top.

With the 1920s Nursi's attitude for politics changed completely. He no longer appeared to believe that politics could be made to serve religion. He had experienced politics and learnt as a result, and did not see any good in politics at all. In several places in his writings he proclaims: "I seek refuge with God from Satan and politics."[119] Some, among them Yavuz, classified his attitude as one of passive resistance or civil disobedience.[120] Even after the change to the multi-party system, Nursi did not return to the active politics he had pursued in the first period of his life, but neither did he remain entirely outside politics. We will return to this issue later in this section.

Nursi was of the opinion that people have forgotten how to live in accordance with their religion and that under these circumstances there was no point in involvement in politics. The issue of Nursi's apolitical stance needs more detailed analysis than can be offered here. However, because of its relevance to the subject in hand I shall attempt briefly to evaluate Nursi's apolitical approach towards Islam.

There are several reasons for Nursi's abandonment of politics. Paradoxically, his not getting involved with politics in a sense represented for Nursi his own "political" strategy for dealing with politics.[121] In one of his treatises, he sets out in detail the reasons why as the 'New Said' he has chosen to avoid politics. Among these the first, according to al-Buti, is a conclusion Nursi reached through his experience of

political activity and the political games he saw being played around him. Nursi was of the opinion that the comprehensive establishment of the edifice of Islam and the performance of sincere *da'wa* (invitation to faith) are tied to making known God's religion in its full meaning, and making people love it truly, and for this reason not getting carried away by the attractions of politics or joining some groups to the exclusion of others.[122] In terms of the period when Nursi appeared as 'New', the most important reason for this lack of interest in and avoidance of politics was, he states, sincerity. According to Nursi, his ultimate aim was to teach the *Risale-i Nur*, which consisted of pillars of belief based on the Qur'an, its aim being Divine pleasure. Moreover, Nursi was of the opinion that political partisanship damages this meaning and destroys sincerity.[123] When one enters into politics, he thought, one cannot preserve one's independence and sincerity. He appealed to people that they should, in order to maintain objectiveness and remain unprejudiced, give up politics and the material struggle completely and have no involvement in it whatsoever.[124]

We now arrive at the most powerful reason why politics does not find a place in Nursi's discourse. This is because it does not match Nursi's method. It is said that the instrument of politics receives its power to social problems from the masses. Its addressee and its concern is people rather than the individual, whereas Nursi after the 1920s is concerned particularly with individuals. As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, his main concern was to revitalise Islam starting from the heart of the individual, working outwards to family, relatives and society. This is a gradual process and Nursi was a gradualist. In making a comparison between political methods and his own Nursi uses the image of the concentric circle to explore his ideas:

> There are spheres one within the other, from those of the heart, stomach, body, and house to those of the street, town, country, globe of the earth, and mankind. But the greatest, most important and constant duties are in the smallest sphere, that of the heart. While in the largest sphere are the least important, temporary, and occasional duties. But the largest sphere is more attractive...With its attraction, it occupies the curious with itself, and makes them forget their true and important duties. It stimulates an inclination towards partisanship, is lenient towards the tyranny of oppressors, and becomes a partner in it.[125]

Nursi likens politics to the largest concentric sphere, which causes heedlessness, drowns a person in the world, and makes them forget the Hereafter. He is of the opinion that politics stands or falls on the basis of its potential to affect public opinion. It sometimes makes ostentatious promises that are sometimes fundamentally wrong.[126] In this sense, the political method was not in harmony with the formula Nursi was trying to propagate. The gradual process of social change did not have a place for politics in Nursi's discourse in this period. He maintained at this time the view that the truths of belief come before everything else.[127]

According to Dilek, Nursi also opposed politics from the point of view of the individual's psychological health. He believed that complete involvement in political matters corrupts the innocent spirit and confuses the mind. It corrupts the heart and leaves nervous spirits in torment, and therefore those who want sound hearts and peaceful spirits should ignore politics.[128] This is a similar view to that of Muhammad Abduh. Unlike his mentor, Jamal-ad-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh tried to separate politics from religious reform. He opposed the politicisation of Islam. For Abduh, politics could not be allowed to suppress religion. It always had to submit to the aim of theology, which was to protect religious belief: "May God preserve me from politics, from the word politics and from the content of politics."[129]

Al-Buti argues that while Nursi answered a question concerning politics, he described with great clarity another reason why he had given up politics. Despite

having previously used it himself to a large degree, Nursi states that it is the most basic "fundamental law" of human politics that "[i]ndividuals may be sacrificed for the good of the nation – persons may be sacrificed for the well-being of the community". According to al-Buti, Nursi was therefore of the opinion that, having no specified limit, this man-made law has opened the way to numerous abuses and led people into two World Wars, thus overturning a thousand years of human progress. So too it had sanctioned the annihilation of ninety innocents on account of ten criminals. Nursi comes to the conclusion that no innocent can be sacrificed without his consent, even for the whole of humanity.[130]

Another powerful reason why Nursi avoided politics in this period, according to Davutoglu, was not that he thought Muslims should practise Islam as individuals and not participate in the life of society, but that the principles on which political life at that time was based on did not confirm to Nursi's moral beliefs and formula. Thus his preference, according to Davutoglu, was that the Muslim individual who would found a new Medina should revive the belief and community spirit of Mecca, rather than a collective personality floundering within the political machinery of false Medinas.[131] It is a highly significant that although most of his contemporaries sought the political success of an early Islamic community, only Nursi desired that the Muslim individual who would found a new Medina would revive the belief and community spirit of Mecca. In this connection Davutoglu writes:

> Thus, The New Said's withdrawal from politics in the second period, -as in 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq's approach- should not be seen as dissociating the Islamic religion from its political and social aspects, which are part of its comprehensiveness. In this sense, Bediuzzaman parts from 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq's attitude, which reduced the Islamic scope, and from that of Rashid Rida, who sought solutions in institutional renewal. And although he draws close to Iqbal in some questions, he differs from him in his insistence on re-establishing the individual's belief.[132]

With the coming power of the Democrat Party in the 1950s, Nursi's approach to politics changed almost totally. Nursi, who previously had met with no politicians or statesmen, met a number of them during his third period of life, informed the Democratic Party government of his appreciation of some of their positive measures, wrote letters to government leaders, and met with a number of ministers and deputies. It was inferred from these activities of Nursi after 1950 that he considered it necessary to be concerned with political matters.[133]

According to Vahide, Nursi's involvement with politics in this period took the form of his offering support and guidance to the Democrats, whom he described as "the lesser of two evils" when religion is concerned.[134] Nursi's defining of the Democrats as "the lesser of two evils" seems to mean that, even though he favoured the Democrats over the Republican People's Party (which he felt had Islamic sympathies but not Islamic roots, and within which he thought there was a strong current of Communism), he believed that Islam could not be served by their understanding of it. According to Yavuz, Nursi fully supported a multi-party system and did not support those marginal parties which had a more pro-Islamic agenda than the Democratic Party. Also, his support for the Democrats, according to Yavuz, was based on pragmatism rather than principle.[135] Although Nursi did not take an active stand in the 1950 and 1954 elections, in the 1957 elections, he openly supported the Democrats. In fact, his students played an active role in the elections and in the coming-to-power of the Democrat Party in 1957. It should be said that although Nursi favoured the Democrats he was also critical of them on occasion. His last visits to various towns in Anatolia in this time drew increasing attention from the large mass of society. His steadily increasing power worried the Democrat government in power, as much as it did the Republican People's Party because of his pro-Democrat stand.

The Republican People's Party harshly criticised the government and the media on account of Nursi's support for the Democrats. As a result, the government took steps to control his power and he was once again forced to live in Emirdag and not to continue his journeying, which in the end led to his becoming disenchanted with the Democrats.[136]

Some of Nursi's activities at this time that were considered political included his praise for the Democrat Government, the various recommendations he made to them, the warnings he gave them about what he saw as their mistakes, and his comments on certain events that occurred in Turkey and elsewhere. He was said to have sent a telegram to congratulate the new President Celal Bayar. He also wrote a letter to Adnan Menderes, the Prime Minister, whom he described as a "champion of Islam". But he did not permit his students to engage in active politics until the very end of his life.[137] Nevertheless, according to Dursun, Nursi's behaviour during this period showed that he considered it a necessity to concern oneself with political matters. Dursun nevertheless defines his approach as "cautious". [138] It was indeed in this time that Nursi appeared as a "master" who could advise and affect government policy. He never tried to interfere with government policies, but tried to promote what he believed to be best for society via the current system. During this period, according to Dogan, Nursi had had to form relations with the lowest sectors of society and to spread his ideas among them.[139] It was at this point that the divisions began among the Nurcus. After Nursi's lifetime, some Nurcus saw his cautious approach to politics as the proper manner in which to approach politics, whereas others continued to have no involvement with politics whatsoever.[140]

On the other hand, after the 1920s Nursi was accused of being "political" or at least of building a secret society or clandestine group which had as its aim changing the regime. He was subsequently tried, and was acquitted of all charges.[141]

Nursi, at the end of his life, was of the opinion that pious people should make up to 60 or 70 per cent of the nation, before Muslims engage in active politics in an organised manner in the name of religion.[142] According to Tasdemir, for Nursi any political system or form of government (no matter what name it assumes) is legitimate and should be supported as long as it is in line with Islamic injunctions. In other words, any political system, either adapted or developed by Muslims, which is consistent with the general knowledge embodied in the Qur'anic doctrines and the Prophetic traditions, may be considered Islamic:

> To Nursi, those systems which have common elements with the Islamic system should not be rejected fully. Therefore Nursi was not a revolutionary but rather an educator in the sense that he looked for Islamic principles in the existing system and adopted them, then rejected the improper ones.[143]

To a great extent Nursi had his own reasons for not involving himself in politics. As was mentioned above, this is a complex issue. What is important in this context is that Nursi avoided active politics, and considered such avoidance intrinsic to his manner of serving the Qur'an. His choosing a method of service unconnected with politics is one of the most original and important aspects of his thought.

Finally, it should be said that Nursi sought an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary approach to politics, and this meant that given the circumstances appertaining at the time there was no possibuility of an involvement with politics.[144]

4.2.2 UNDERSTANDING NATION AND NATIONALISM IN NURSI'S THOUGHT

Nursi was a Kurd by origin, and on many occasions throughout his life was accused of being a Kurdish nationalist, whereas the truth is that he addressed himself mainly to Turks, and most of his students were and still are Turks. Also, there has sometimes been confusion between him and Sheikh Said, who was to be the Kurdish leader of the revolt earlier in the Republican period and who was captured and executed.[145] In exploring nation and nationalism issues as Nursi saw them, we will examine the first period of Nursi's life as well as the later stages. There was not as big a contrast between these two phases as there was regarding his political activities.[146]

Nursi was a religious scholar. This is important because nationalism has a complex relationship with religious thought. Recent theorists have suggested that, because nationality became increasingly dominant in the form of the world order whereas religious communities have lost their importance and sunk to second or third place in social and political significance, nationalism is ultimately inimical to religion. State structures in today's world are mainly based on nationalistic values rather than religious ones. However, today religion as well as nationality clearly plays a significant role in conflicts and political struggles, from Indonesia to Bosnia.[147]

According to Nursi, the idea of nationalism has greatly advanced in this century. For him, the matters that demonstrate nationhood are: language, religion and country. Even if one is lacking it is still included within the bounds of nationalism. These factors need not all be present, and what is important according to Nursi are the relationships between language, religion and country, but not race.[148] Celik argues that Nursi opposes the centring of nationalism on race, and he considers Nursi's views as set out in a discussion of the idea of 'decentralisation' as put forward by Prince Sabahaddin Bey, in which Nursi writes: "If we have to have 'nationalism', Islam is

enough for us." Furthermore, Celik states: 'Bediuzzaman used the words 'nation' (*millet*) and 'nationhood' (*milliyet*) in accordance with their Arabic meanings – as is well-known, the word *millet* was originally used to denote a religion and membership of it; today, the word *Ummah* is used in its place."[149] In Nursi's understanding, nationhood is a body; its spirit is Islam and its intellect is the Qur'an and belief.[150] According to Lewis, "The Western concept of the nation as a linguistic, racial and territorial entity was not unknown to the Islamic orient, but was never the primary basis of group identity." Lewis continues: "This was the brotherhood of faith within the religious community, reinforced by common dynastic allegiance."[151]

Nursi, in the first period of his life, was aware of the absolute necessity for achieving Islamic unity. After the Second Constitutional Revolution, many formulas were put forward to halt the decline and division of the Ottoman Empire. The best-known of these were Ottomanism, Islamic Unity, and Turkism. Ottomanism had been the official ideology of the *Tanzimat* period, but it survived only briefly into the Second Constitutional Period. The ideals most widespread among intellectuals at that time were Islamic unity and Turkism. Turkism was included within the idea of Westernisation.[152] All these concerns at this time may be summarised under the following heads: (1) Ottoman nationalism; (2) Arabic nationalism; (3) Turkish nationalism; (4) seekers of Islamic unity.[153]

It was at this time that Nursi first made his voice heard on the matter of Islamic unity, along with those of Ali Suavi and Namik Kemal, Tevfik Fikret, Hoja Tahsin Efendi, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh.[154] Muhammad Abduh's and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's idea of Islamic Unity is well-known. Almost all the names Nursi mentioned were controversial figures in the Islamic world, either because of their activities or because of their ideas. Nursi, according to Celik,

accepted them as his predecessors, at least on the issue of Islamic unity. According to Celik, "Although their ideas on various subjects may be thought to be extreme in one way or the other, they had embraced the ideal of Islamic Unity wholeheartedly."[155] Thus we can see that, earlier in his life, Nursi had been following contemporary currents in terms of securing Islamic unity.[156]

Nursi expended great efforts throughout his life in trying to prevent the Islamic world from splitting up. He strove to keep alive the idea of Islamic nationhood. He affirms that "the strongest bond of Arab, Turk, Kurd, Albanian, Circassian and Laz, and their firmest nationhood, is nothing other than Islam".[157] He believed that Islamic brotherhood towards unity was one of the means of Islamic resurgence. According to Celik, Nursi saw this belief as primarily a Divine command and desire rather than a means of serving political ends.[158]

According to Nursi's sociological observation, every nation requires a dress suitable to its particular stature. "Even if the material is the same", he writes, "the style has to be different. A woman cannot be dressed in a gendarme's uniform. And likewise an elderly *hoja* (preacher) cannot be clothed in the dress of a tango-dancer; blind imitation also very often makes people into laughing-stocks."[159] In several places in his writings, Nursi emphasises how inappropriately Asian countries were blindly imitating Europe as regards the idea of nationalism, and how they were sacrificing many of their sacred concerns relating to Islamic unity. As a result, the people of the East, he thought, were becoming characterless. Nursi was not rejecting every idea produced by Europe. He was in favour of Europe's many democratic and humanistic institutions; he spoke earlier in his life in favour of constitutionalism, and later of republicanism, etc. But he was against blind imitation. He suggests that Islam has religious unity and that countries are its basis, not the bond of race. In this regard

he writes: "We are truly intensely in need of this unity for the happiness of this world and the next, for we have no nationality other than Islam."[160]

Nursi brought new terms and ideas into the Islamic concept of nationalism. According to Nursi, nationalism is of two kinds. One is negative, inauspicious, and harmful; it is nourished by devouring others, persists through hostility to others, and is aware of what it is doing. It is the cause of enmity and disturbance. According to Nursi, positive nationalism arises from an inner need of social life and is the cause of mutual assistance and solidarity; it ensures a beneficial strength, and is a means for further strengthening Islamic brotherhood.[161] Loving one's fellow "root members" is a positive and necessary nationalism so as to ensure internal strength of brotherhood, but claiming superiority over others is wrong. There is no place for "negative nationalism" that is, considering a particular race to be superior, or giving priority to race over religion.[162]

Nursi regarded nationalism as a "bigger egotism" in society. Throughout his life, Nursi pointed out that there are three main enemies: ignorance, poverty and conflict. The "conflict" here is the conflict between Muslims. Nursi said that, just like personal egotism, nationalities too should be melted and dissolved in the great pool of the waters of Islam. He was drawing attention to the negative side of nationalism, that of racism.[163]

Davutoglu argues that, according to Nursi, the unity between religion and nationality necessitates the Islamic identity having the highest position in the identity hierarchy. According to Davutoglu, Nursi attacked by all means at his disposal the idea that negative nationalism was a superior identity, and stated that the power inherent in the idea of nationalism could be used in a positive fashion, at the command of Islamic identity. From the point of importance we attach establishing a

direct link between belief and Islamic nationhood and unity. Davutoglu's analyses take us to the point that, (as we earlier referred to Celik for a similar observation) Nursi considered working for Islamic brotherhood and unity to be a religious obligation.[164] This idea is supported by Nursi's interpretation of the verse *"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (Qur'an, 49:13)"*. Nursi's commentary on this is as follows:

> That is, 'I created you as peoples, nations, and tribes, so that you should know one another and the relations between you in social life, and assist one another; not so that you should regard each other as strangers, refusing to acknowledge one another, and nurturing hostility and enmity.

According to Nursi, division into groups and tribes should lead to mutual acquaintance and mutual assistance, not to antipathy and mutual hostility.[165]

The core of Nursi's discourse, that Islam must arise "from the bottom", can be seen clearly in an ethical point relating to nationalism that Nursi made when he stated that a person's value is relative to his endeavour. If a person's endeavour is his nation, that person forms a miniature nation on his own. For Nursi, an individual with a great quality, whatever his or her background, is as important as society itself.[166] This should be borne in mind during an examination of how Nursi approaches the social transformation issue.

At every opportunity, Nursi tried to evaluate how harmful racism is and can be. Also, he tried to convince the constituency to which he addressed himself that, since ancient times, his own country had seen numerous migrations and changes of population, many people having been drawn to it and settling there. To construct movements and patriotism on the idea of race is both meaningless and extremely

harmful, because only the Preserved Tablet can reveal the races truly. Nursi emphasises that, just as people cannot appoint their parents, so they cannot chose to which race they belong. Thus he issued serious warnings about the idea of racialism.[167]

Despite all the accusations he faced throughout his life, Nursi resisted the nationalistic demands that were being spread among the Kurds, and strongly rejected the setting up of a Kurdish state out of the remains of the Ottoman Empire. It is possible to argue that he worked for Kurdish nationalism under the cover of Islam, but, according to Nereid, there is nothing in his writings or actions to support the idea.[168] Abu Rabi writes: "Even when the Ottoman Empire was abolished, Nursi refused to overplay his Kurdish card. He saw himself, first and foremost, as a Muslim scholar ..."[169] Nursi thought that nationalism of any kind was a tribalist secular political movement which would break the Islamic bonds between Muslims.[170] Thus, contrary to most Western-educated intellectuals of his time, both earlier in his life at the end of Ottoman period and later in the early republican period, Nursi idealised Islamic unity rather than the Western idea of nationalism.[171]

4.2.3 ORDER, CONFLICT AND POWER: GRADUALISM VERSUS REVOLUTIONARISM

It has been one of the main objectives of this thesis to demonstrate that Nursi, not only with his approach to social change, but together with most aspects of his discourse, was a gradualist, whereas his contemporaries were revolutionists. Owing to its relevance to the subject in hand, Nursi's concern with order, conflict and power will be dealt with from a socio-theological perspective in order to clarify whether, in the process of social transformation, Nursi favoured any use of armed force or not.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, it has been controversial for any Islamic leader to be in favour of using force to change current regimes and create Islamic revolutions. This is one of the points where a fundamental difference occurs between Nursi and his contemporaries. Nursi stands alone among all other Islamic scholars and fully opposes revolutionism.

Revolutionary movements undertake a concerted action to bring about what is sometimes called an Islamic revolution.According to Waardenburg, they call for the establishment of a radically different "Islamic" state which will be the panacea for all existing problems.[199] It cannot be denied that religion, and in particular in Islam, has played a significant role in internal revolts seeking to overthrow national governments.[200] Examples are Libya, Iran and in a sense also Pakistan. Islam has also been a vehicle of protest in Egypt in the movements known as the *Ikhwan Al-Muslimin, Jamaat-i Takfir Wal-Hidjra, Al-Jama-a Al-Islamiyya, A -Jihad, Hizbullah, Shabab Muhammad, Hizb At-Tahrir Al-Islami Djund Allah,* and in Pakistan the *Jamaat-i Islami.*[201]

While his contemporaries were seeking revolutions in the face of aggressive regimes, Nursi defended obedience to the law in the face of anarchy.[202] Believing Islam to be the middle way, Nursi advocated the importance of moderation and keeping away from want and excess, saying, "Too much or too little of anything is not good. Moderation is the middle way."[203] One instance of his applying the notion of moderation is provided by his defence of Muhyiddin-i Arabi, an Islamic scholar of the Unity of Existence, excessively criticised by Islamic scholars and alleged to be a *kuffar* (unbeliever). Nursi says

> Yes, himself, Muhyiddin was rightly-guided and acceptable, but in all his works cannot be the guide and instructor... However, he himself is free of

> misguidance. Sometimes, a word may appear to be unbelief, but the one who spoke it is not an unbeliever.[204]

He also quotes Muhyiddin himself: "Those who are not one of us and do not know our station should not read our books, for it may be damaging for them."[205] This is a very moderate view that tries to legitimise the criticisms that were directed at al-Arabi. He presents similar views on the criticisms of Farabi and Ibn Sina.[206]

Nursi's efforts in legitimising Sufism, and his attempts to reach common understandings with the Shi'a also manifest his moderate views. Though on the one hand he expressed the opinion that some people attached too much importance to Sufism at the expense of serving the cause of spreading the truths of belief, on the other hand he paid attention to legitimizing sainthood and Sufism and choosing the middle way.[207]

Maybe it has been because of this moderate approach that Nursi, and in particular Nurcus after Nursi, have been criticised for being soft, light, state-ist by other Islamic scholars and groups in Turkey.[208] It has been also claimed by one prominent Turkish historian that Nursi was a government agent from the time of the Ottoman period.[209]

Nursi, with his writings, sought public order and security to attain the best available environment for social change. He avoided any sort of action that would make the people harden their attitudes to one another, produce feelings of partisanship, or destroy public order and security. He states "The *Risale-i Nur* cannot be broken; when attacked it grows stronger. It never has been used against this nation and country, and is not being used against them, and cannot be used against them."[210] He used the term of positive action in order to maintain social harmony that would help him to achieve the ultimate aim of building a good society by renewing the faith

of the individual. Contrary to his contemporaries, he never sought any action to take over the state or seek political power. According to Yavuz,

> Said Nursi, unlike Mawdudi, Qutb, or Banna, did not seek a political collective movement to control the state. He stressed the formation of an individual consciousness as a precondition for a just society. He wanted to offer a new conceptual ground to Muslims to defend their inner world against the expanding ideologies of the West.[211]

According to Basar, for Nursi the maintenance of public order is positive, whereas causing conflict and differences, and disturbing public order and security is a negative action. Besides, to act in the service of belief is positive, while to work for unbelief and immorality is negative. Patience and thanks are positive; impatience and rebellion are negative actions.[212] Nursi was of the opinion that social calm is essential for implementing the truths of the Qur'an in hearts and minds. In Nursi's understanding, according to Dilek, "If events are considered not in the sequence 'reason-logic-reasoned thinking' but through the emotions 'excitement-physical force-partisanship' clashes become more violent and the social pulse races."[213] In this regard it is important to point out that the last time Nursi taught his students before his death, he spoke about 'positive action'. He said:

> Our duty is positive action, not negative action. It is purely to carry out the service to belief in accordance with Divine pleasure, and not to interfere in God's duty. We are charged to respond with thanks and patience to every difficulty within the positive service to belief, which preserves public order.[214]

Nursi considered the prevention of unruliness, which leads to anarchy, to be the first step in establishing the order of the ideal society. Throughout his life there have been a few examples recorded where Nursi tried to maintain public order and social calmness.[215] However, it has to be stated here that Nursi displayed passive resistance.

In his earlier years he opposed the aggressive and despotic policies of Sultan Abdulhamid II because he thought these were against religious teachings. He supported the CUP (the Committee of Union and Progress) in the early stages of its founding, but later he harshly criticised those members who favoured violence over policies. After the foundation of the republic, he was against the irreligious policies of governments that turned people into atheists rather than secularists. Although Nursi strongly and harshly criticised the materialist irreligious policies of republican governments, he never encouraged revolutionary activism in his writings in order to support his ideal of an Islamic society.[216] Despite having written a very controversial treatise by which some people interpreted him as defining Mustafa Kemal Ataturk as being *dejjal* (anti-Christ)[217], it should be pointed out here that throughout his life, even in exile and imprisonment, he always sought positive action. Yavuz states,

> Nursi's life and teachings always preach non-violence and he asks his followers to pursue civic resistance. He derives this commitment to non-violence from the tenets of Islam and the Sufi perception of human dignity. Human dignity is the key and organizing principle of Nursi's writings. Although he invites Muslims to non-violence, Nursi examines the sociological background of violence. He identifies a number of conditions that impel people to resort to violence: ignorance, poverty and the lawlessness. Nursi argues that violence exists because power is not constrained and controlled by religious teachings.[218]

Contrary to most of his contemporaries, use of force within the country is something which Nursi never favoured or wrote even a single treatise about. During his lifetime and afterwards, until now, there has never been a case of Nursi or any of his admirers using any kind of force as a means to implement Islamic truths. The use of force within 'the realm of Islam' is, according to Nursi, not permissible. Force may be used only against external aggression. Again, quoting the Qur'anic verse "No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another" (6:164; 17:15, etc.), he stated that at

this time there was a great difference between external *jihad* and internal *jihad,* which we will deal with in the following section. Action within the country, that is, within 'the sphere of Islam,' he believed, has to be "positive action." Since destruction is not physical or material but moral and spiritual (*mânevî*), the struggle against it has to be of the same nature, he states. He also states "Our duty is 'positive action,' not 'negative action.' It is solely to serve belief (in the truths of religion)." He states, "In accordance with divine pleasure, and not to interfere in God's concerns ... the positive service is to maintain belief, which results in the preservation of public order and security ..."[219]

He thought that in order to convince people and strengthen the relationship between God and divine vicegerency, public order and social harmony was essential. Also it was not belief, but unbelief, with its bad character, that disturbs public order and spoils it.[220] Nursi thought he was trying to save men from anarchy and establish social harmony with his work entitled the *Risale-i Nur,* and to create belief-centred individuals in society. The following principles he thought to be necessary: "Five principles are necessary, essential, at this strange time in order to save the social life of this country and nation from anarchy: respect, compassion, refraining from what is prohibited (*haram*), security, the giving up of lawlessness and being obedient to authority."[221] These principles are mostly concerned with the life of society, and are aimed at strengthening the foundation-stone of public order. The best evidence for this, he states, was that over the last twenty years the *Risale-i Nur* has made one hundred thousand people into harmless, beneficial members of this nation and country.[222] Nursi uses Islamic injunctions as the means to secure the happiness of individuals and society. He primarily aims to protect the belief of the individual, as well as religion, life, the young, and the mind.

We now come to a very important point that Nursi makes in relation to the value of each single life. He maintains the view that from a Qur'anic perspective, for the sake of society, an individual cannot be sacrificed, and for the sake of a nation, parts of society's rights are not dispensable. He states

> 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.[223]

Some other factors resulting in social calmness, according to Nursi, are feelings of mutual tolerance, love, respect and compassion, and their being kept alive in the life of society. For Nursi, if the natural desire for these things, which make man human, were satisfied in all social institutions from the family to the state, mental tensions would be reduced to a minimum.[224] The importance Nursi attaches to this matter is demonstrated by the following excerpted paragraph:

> What I am certain of from my experience of social life and have learnt from my life-time of study is the following: the thing most worthy of love is love, and that most deserving of enmity is enmity. That is, love and loving, which render man's social life secure and lead to happiness are most worthy of love and being loved. Enmity and hostility are ugly and damaging, have overturned man's social life, and more than anything deserve loathing and enmity and to be shunned ... The time for enmity and hostility has finished. Two world wars have shown how evil, destructive, and what an awesome wrong is enmity. It has become clear that there is no benefit in it at all.[225]

Jihad (*Manevi*, Metaphorical)

Nursi's concern with *jihad* will be dealt with from a socio-theological approach to show its relevance to the issue of social change. According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *jihad* is defined as a religious duty imposed on Muslims to spread Islam

by waging war, and has come to denote any conflict waged for principle or belief and is often translated to mean "holy war." It also classifies *jihad* into four categories, according to whether it is waged by the heart, the tongue, the hand, or the sword.[226] Jihad is also translated as "struggle in the cause of Allah".[227] There has always been controversy around the term *jihad.* Over the last century, the word has been invoked by a succession of Muslim movements and groups to justify their violence. Some believed and advocated *jihad* as the justification for their political or ideological aims, whereas some others tried to convince people that *jihad* was not an armed struggle on the battlefield. It is worth mentioning here that according to Jitmoud, the emphasis of *jihad* for the twentieth century Muslim scholars has been the revolutionary and political nature of the struggle.[228]

Although it is beyond the scope of this section, according to classical theory *Jihad Akbar* is meant to be a striving against the desires of the ego (*nafs*) and *Shaitaan* whilst *Jihad Asghar* (Lesser or external) is against the disbelievers or external enemies on the battlefield.[229] However, as Kramer points out, there is a contemporary tendency among Islamic scholars, academics and their Western counterparts, who have picked and chosen their way through the Qur'an and Islamic legal theory, to to demilitarise both forms of *jihad,* and even to turn Islam into a pacifist faith—a kind of oriental Quakerism. They also believe that the external or lesser *jihad* should be defensive rather than offensive.[230] These complicated arguments need not concern us here, but we will try to show how Nursi is different from his contemporaries in his approach to *Jihad Akbar* and *Jihad Asghar* and to social change.

Nursi defines *jihad* as being internal and external. Sacrificing individual egos or 'I's' for the 'we's' of the collective personality, he thought, is internal or greater jihad. He also, according to Vahide, believed that the modern age demanded this

struggle of the soul (*jihad-i akbar,* the greater jihad), for it is only a collective personality of this kind that can successfully combat the collective personalities of the forces of misguidance and unbelief.[231]

Nursi's concern with physical or external *jihad* is something very peculiar to him. As Nursi points out, in the past Islam's progress indeed occurred through weapons and the sword, but in the future, in place of weapons, the immaterial, moral swords of real civilization, material progress, truth and justice will defeat and scatter its enemies.[232] It is extremely important to state that according to Nursi, in the Middle Ages, Islam was compelled to respond to the Europeans' savagery and hostility with the same means they used but it nevertheless maintained its justice and moderation. It never, in Nursi's view, instituted inquisitions or the like. Nursi maintained the view that force and enmity should only be used to combat the barbarity of savages. This approach to *jihad* is not apologetic; however, neither is it not offensive. In this time of modern civilisation, Nursi states that the Europeans are civilised and powerful, and harmful hostility and bigotry have therefore disappeared. For in respect of religion, he thought the civilised are to be conquered by persuasion, not force, and by showing in actions and conduct that Islam is elevated and lovable.[233] In the following chapter there will be a section in which we will consider the civilisation issue in more detail. We can only say this much here, that the Nursian understanding of what exactly 'civilised' means or who the civilised are is not clear. He defined Europeans as being civilised but did not give any details of what the pillars of civilisation are. Defining Europeans as civilised without elaboration might show the influence of Western scientific and technological advance on Nursi.

Nevertheless it should be stated that according to Vahide, Nursi in the time of the First World War participated in a number of 'physical *jihads'* while defending his

country. Yet Vahide states, "Nevertheless in his view the basic and most essential struggle in the modern age was one of science, progress, and civilization together with the revival of the Prophet's *Sunna* and Islamic morality."[234] According to al-Kattani, Nursi's *jihad* was always to enjoin the good and to restrain from evil, and to serve his religion by calling others to believe in God.[235] However, when it came to the defence of his country, Nursi was a commander for a volunteer militia force, served at the front, was injured and later captured and taken to the province of Kosturma in North-Western Russia as a prisoner of war.[236] On this subject Michel writes,

> Writing during one of the most tragic periods in the history of Anatolia, Said Nursi could not ignore the reality of the deaths of so many innocent persons. It is to his great credit that he rose above sectarian loyalty to address the question of innocent Christians as well as Muslims who fell victim to the times. "Even if those innocent people were unbelievers," he stated, "In return for the tribulations they suffered due to that worldly disaster, they have such a reward from the treasury of Divine mercy that if the veil of the Unseen were to open, a great manifestation of mercy would be apparent in relation to them and they would declare, 'O Lord, thanks be to You! All praise belongs to God.[237]

From his early twenties until the very end of his life, according to Dilek, Nursi's *jihad* was to educate people through his writings and to stress the centrality of the concept of *'mânevî jihad'* (metaphorical jihad).[238] Thus, a greater part of Nursi's endeavour was concerned with education and educational reform, at the heart of which lay the bringing together and reconciliation of the religious and modern sciences, as we will see in the following chapter.

Nursi was one of the few at that time to criticise Muslims themselves for Islamic backwardness.[239] Nursi pointed out that the primary enemies of the Muslims at that time were ignorance, poverty and conflict. He considered these to be the cause of the Islamic world's scientific and technological backwardness relative to the West, and he wanted war to be declared on them with the weapons of industry, learning and

unity.[240] It was these "pitiless" enemies and their consequences, he thought, that had been the cause of the Islamic world's decline, and prevented Muslims performing the duty of upholding the Word of God.[241] An excerpted paragraph taken from one of Nursi's early newspaper articles of that time explains:

> All believers are charged with upholding the Word of God. At this time, the most effective means of this is material progress, for the Europeans are crushing us under their 'immaterial' tyranny with the weapons of science and industry. We therefore shall wage *jihad* with the same weapons against 'ignorance, poverty, and conflicting ideas,' the most fearsome enemies of upholding the Word of God... [and] from the point of view of religion, the civilized are to be conquered through persuasion, not by force, and by showing through complying to its commands by act and good morals, that Islam is elevated and worthy of being loved.[242]

In short, although it is unclear what and who exactly the civilised are in Nursi's view, his approach to *jihad* seemed to condone physical *jihad* in the classical and medieval period, but considered a purely metaphorical external *jihad* to persuade the civilised to be more appropriate in the modern period. In this he stood alone among contemporary literature.

4. 3 OTHER ISSUES RELATED TO SOCIAL CHANGE

Although the causes of social change is a vast issue, in general it involves religion, politics and culture as well as socio-economical issues.[243] Having examined Nursi's commitment to a culture of belief and his political thought, we shall now evaluate the Nursian approach of economics together with some other issues which are related to social change. It has to be admitted that this is the weakest point of Nursi's discourse, for he deals with socio-economics in a much less detailed manner than he does with other issues. There are identifiable reasons for this, though. Among them, in Dogan's view, is the fact that Nursi developed his opinions under 'minimum conditions'.[244]

Throughout most of his life he was forced to live in remote parts of Anatolia isolated from the rest of the world. That is to say, he was lacking all resources in particular economical ones. It could even be said that he had no need for economic considerations. Also, Nursi at the end was a man of his time and and felt the pressing need was to build a culture of belief. Besides, as Nursi himself states, one cannot be an expert in all fields.[245]

Nursi, although believing *iman* to be the fundamental engine of social change, also put forward some secondary issues, together with economics, which might contribute to social transformation. Furthermore, besides setting forth *iman* as the central point of his discourse, he also drew attention to the practical weaknesses of the Islamic world and to ways of rectifying these weaknesses. He took great pains, according to Davutoglu, to differentiate between the deficiencies of the Islamic world and Islam itself. This is illustrated clearly in his saying, quoted by Davutoglu, "I saw that Islam, which comprises true civilization, was materially backward in relation to present-day civilization; as though Islam was vexed at our bad conduct and was departing for the past."[246] Among the most oft-repeated secondary issues Nursi deals with in the first period of his life are constitution, right of free speech and absolutism, whereas in the second period he spoke of *zakat*, brotherhood, sincerity and avoiding unlawfulness. It is clear that there are qualitative differences between his concerns. Nursi, especially in the 'New Said' period concerns himself with the qualitative attributes mostly related to his culture of belief; whereas in the first period he was mostly concerned with the quantitative values concerning the politics of the time. Since we have already dealt with the details of Nursi's concern with these terms earlier in this section we will not go into details again. The point here is the

differences between those periods, particularly that in his 'New Said' period he deals mostly with qualitative issues.

In the first period of his life Nursi was to a great extent involved with practical issues. Later, with the fundamental change that occurred in his discourse, Nursi began seeking one thing– the building of a culture of belief. In aiming to reform Islam from the bottom rather than the top, Nursi carefully selected his subjects in the light of the time and conditions. In order to build up the so-called good society, he addressed other issues related to society from the Islamic point of view, especially after the 1920s. According to Mardin, "In the same vein, in Said Nursi's writings, social security is conceptualised as a function of the elaboration and support of strong family ties: the feeling of responsibility of the young for the old takes the place of social insurance. *Zekat* (obligatory almsgiving) emerges as a contribution to equity, social order and stability..."[247] Mardin also points out how Nursi's discourse deals with the practical weaknesses of Islamic society and makes some general points about daily life that might help to build up a culture of belief.

Regarding the economic aspect of social change, Atasoy explains that Nursi attempted to articulate an Islamic ideology with reference to the organising principle of Western economic development strategies. According to Atasoy, what Nursi was mainly rejecting was the stimulation of mass consumerism, which created conditions of poverty among large segments of the population.[248] Nursi had concerns about the injustice inherent in Western civilization and felt that the remedy for its grievous consequences could be provided by Islam. He summarises the root cause of the great social upheavals man has suffered, particularly this century, in two phrases. One is: "So long as I'm full, what is it to me if others die of hunger?" And the other is: "You struggle and labour so that I can live in ease and comfort." He thought these, by

giving rise to a struggle between the wealthy and poor, capital and labour, were the cause of class challenges, wars and the destruction of public order and security in the contemporary world. Without offering detailed elaboration, he maintains that eradication of these injustices is only possible by applying the Qur'anic injunction of almsgiving and prohibition of usury and interest. The solution he proposes is making the payment of *zekat* obligatory and prohibiting interest, which would maintain order and balance between the rich and the poor in society.[249] All these arguments recall Fromm's famous idea of "to have" or "to be" mode. It seems Nursi subconsciously rejects the contemporary idea of having in favour of being.[250] From morality to economics, he uses other-worldly arguments to counter man's desire to have more. With a culture of belief he aimed to reform the individual to being worth tens of thousands in quality.[251] Fromm maintains the view that 'The trinity of unlimited production, and unrestricted happiness formed the nucleus of a new religion, Progress, and a new Earthly City of Progress that was to replace the City of God."[252] He explains this idea as follows:

> I want everything for myself; that possessing, not sharing, gives me pleasure; that I must become greedy because if my aim is having, I *am* more the more I *have*; that I must feel antagonistic towards all others: my customers whom I want to deceive, my competitors whom I want to destroy, my workers whom I want to exploit. I can never be satisfied, because there is no end to my wishes; I must be envious of those who have more and afraid of those who have less. But I have to repress all these feelings in order to present myself (to others as well as to myself) as the smiling, rational, sincere, kind human being everybody pretends to be. The passion for having must lead to never ending class war ...[253]

Fromm is harsher about human acquisitiveness than Nursi, saying, "As long as everybody wants to have more there must be formations of classes, there must be class war and there must be international war."[254] However, Nursi does not elaborate

his economic point of view in detail as Fromm does. Nor does he discuss modern-day financial systems and values such as usury, interest and the free market economy.

It should not be understood that Nursi was totally opposed to modern civilisation, as we will elaborate in the following chapter. In fact, Nursi was of the opinion that true civilization served mankind's progress and development.[255]

Nursi sought social change to free society from the negative outcomes of the present civilisation. Throughout his life, Nursi used a variety of arguments and methods to extend and propagate *iman*-based individual awareness. His arguments had the pragmatic aim of achieving social change based on a renewal of individual faith.

Another issue which should be mentioned here is Nursi's approach to pluralism, for this also relates to societal change. First of all, defining pluralism as the theory that all religions constitute varying conceptions of, and responses to, one ultimate, mysterious divine reality, we must say it also comprehends different races and age groups. It concerns the legitimacy of religious diversity and the idea that no single religion has a monopoly of religious truth. As stated earlier in this chapter, according to Nursi, there is not just one truth. Perceptions of truth may be many and can have different forms according to time and place. Although he discusses the variation in sacred laws and prophets over time, he maintains the view that with the coming of the Prophet at the end of time, man will have advanced from the primary to the secondary stage, and through numerous revolutions and upheavals reached a position at which all the human race could receive a single lesson. Then there will be no need for different laws or different teachers. But because people are not all at the same level and achieve societal reform at different rates, the schools of law have become numerous.[256] Although the above discussion does not imply an absolutist

view of pluralism, it does not imply a relativist view either. Nevertheless on the diversity of Islamic faith Nursi says,

> When you know your way and opinions to be true, you have the right to say, "My way is right and the best." But you do not have the right to say, "Only my way is right." According to the sense of "The eye of contentment is too dim to perceive faults; it is the eye of anger that exhibits all vice;" your unjust view and distorted opinion cannot be the all-decisive judge and cannot condemn the belief of another as invalid.[257]

According to Nursi one 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.[258] In this regard Nursi was not an absolutist nor was he a relativist. He was sensible in his approach to pluralism.

Another issue related to pluralism, according to Nursi, is that man is the place of manifestation of all the Divine Names, but the Names being various has resulted in the universe's variety and the differences in the angels' worship, and has also caused a degree of variety among men. He thought the different laws of the Prophets, the different ways of the saints, and the different paths of the purified scholars have arisen from this mystery.[259] Therefore society should be open to differences.

Finally, Nursi's recognition of pluralism might be summarised by the metaphor of different personalities in the same individual. The following paragraph clarifies this issue,

> If someone is both a teacher, and a policeman, and a clerk of the court, and an inspector in the civil service, in each office he has both relations, and duties, and obligations, and salaries, and responsibilities, and promotion, and enemies and rivals who are the cause of his failures. He appears before the king with many titles, and he sees the king. He seeks help from him with many tongues. He has recourse to many of the ruler's titles, and seeks his help in many forms in order to be saved from the evil of his enemies. In just the same way, man, who manifests many Names and is charged with many duties and afflicted with many enemies, invokes many of the Names in his prayers and supplications. Like Muhammad the Arabian (Peace and

blessings be upon him), the cause of pride of mankind and truly the most perfect man, supplicated with a thousand and one Names in his prayer, *Jawshan al-Kabir*.[260]

4.4 THE PHENOMENON OF SOCIAL CHANGE AND PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE

It has been the main goal of this chapter to evaluate Nursi's different approaches to social transformation and his primary aim of reforming Islam society from the bottom rather than from the top. Nursi seeks a gradual and evolutionary process of social change. At this point it will be necessary to make a few comparisons with his counterparts. The political debate on Islam from top or bottom is largely being set by the Islamic radicals as represented by the likes of Ayatollah Khomeini, Sayyid Qutb, and Mawdudi.[261] Also included in this category is Afghani, who was a pan-Islamist or a so-called pro-Islamist. Abduh and Rida, defined as so-called 'modernists', could also be included under this umbrella.[262] These reformers (Afghani, Abduh, Rida) claimed the right to develop new interpretations of the rules of *shari'a* that would be better suited to modern conditions, but they did not advocate the reduction of substantial rules to abstract ethical principles in order to promote social change.[263] Banna, Qutb and Mawdudi were also defined as radicals. Banna and Khomeini saw the early Muslim community as their political model. It could even be said that today's Islamist movements, which sprang from from top-seeking radical discourses, have to some extent transcended the divide separating Sunnis from Shi'as. Both sects have thrown up revolutionary Islamist religio-political thinkers.[264] The ideologies advanced have been presented in the terminology of classical political thought, which is based on a selective idealisation of Islam's golden age, the time of the Prophet Muhammad and the early Muslim community.[265]

All these reformers were trying to find a solution for the centuries of backwardness in the Islamic world. Among them Afghani, Abduh and Namik Kemal gained some of Nursi's early support on the matter of Islamic unification.[266] Afghani is generally known for seeking the political revitalisation of the Islamic authorities around the Khilafa or unification of the Islamic *ummah*. In other words the revitalisation of Islam would only be achieved through the revitalisation of Islamic states and the recovery of their strength on the international scene.[267] Afghani's disciple Abduh also expressed a politically-oriented reformist view that might have had an effect on Nursi's early writings. Moreover, Abduh's approach to the idea of the unity of God, with his recommendation that Muslims must study the Qur'an and immerse themselves in its idiom to recapture this primal element in the Islamic faith, might have had an impact on Nursi's later work. Namik Kemal, the third precursor of Nursi in his earlier life, is also known as a representative of the pan-Islamist trend of upholding Islamic political authority by appealing to the unity of the Islamic *ummah*.[268] Influenced by this ideological background in his early life, Nursi was very active in politics, but also involved in philosophical discussions and debates through his writings.

Sayyid Qutb was the Islamic scholar who has come to embody the radical-revolutionary Islam. Zeidan argues that Sayyid Qutb endorsed a violent takeover of power. According to Zeidan, Qutb's radical reinterpretation of several key Islamic concepts inspired many of today's radical Islamists to use his writings to legitimise violence against various regimes. For example, according to Zeidan, Qutb argued that the existing society and government were not Muslim but rather dominated by "pagan ignorance" (*jahiliyya*). Therefore the duty of righteous Muslims was to bring about

God's sovereignty (*hakimiyya*) over society, denounce the unbelief (*takfir*) of the current national leaders, and carry out a holy struggle (*jihad*) against them.[269]

Whatever the outcomes of revolutionary movements are, there is a clear difference between Nursi's approach to social change and theirs. While re-establishing social change and promoting social transformation, Nursi used common terms of brotherhood, sincerity, love, permitted and prohibited conduct, positive action, metaphorical *jihad*, and obedience to law. Having adopted different approaches at different times to achieving the good society which all Muslims have long been dreaming of, he eventually espoused a gradualist approach. In the understanding of Nursi, *iman* is something that is connected with all aspects of human life. A believer must fully understand why he or she is created, how one comes to exist, and what the purpose of existence is. After becoming conscious of these questions, he thought Muslims could become part of a self-aware community. Five things come out of such a belief: respect, love, permitted (*helal*) and prohibited (*haram*) conduct, law and order, and communal life.[270] In this regard, according to Yavuz, "Shari'a is the legal externalization of this consciousness..."[271] Nursi was not of the opinion that only by re-implementing the 'human-made' Islamic *Shari'a* would the perfect society be brought into being. Nursi's usage of the word of *Shari'a* follows that of the Sufis, and assumes that Divine rules and laws run through the universe. Nursi never referred to the *Shari'a* in the sense understood in classical terminology, which considered the rules to have been set by human beings to obtain worldly order.[272] Nursi believed in the idea that society could be reformed only through the reform of its members. In Nursi's opinion the individual person is a mirror of society. In this view a virtuous society is one which owes its existence to virtuous individuals. According to Beki, from Nursi's point of view reform movements should start from

individual people, for it is only through their correction that society can be corrected.[273] If the heart of the faithful is fully imbued with the feeling of God, then good morality and good conduct could flourish. Thus, faith-based morality was Nursi's main concern in social transformation.[274] Nursi also believed that social tranquillity can be assured only through the continuous raising of religiously-minded young people.[275]

In a time of materialistic ideologies, Nursi was of the opinion that to save the individual's belief was the great necessity of the time, and the first step towards social transformation. According to Davutoglu, "In a period when philosophy-based ideologies were becoming increasingly influential on the political system, the importance Bediuzzaman attached to saving the individual's belief shows that he considered the basic solution to lie in making all Muslims points of resistance against ideologically based Western expansionism, rather than in institutional renewal, by saving the belief of numerous individuals."[276] It should be clear by now that throughout his discourse Nursi was evolutionary rather than revolutionary.[277]

However, according to Nursi there are three stages in this gradual social transition. In the progression from individuals to society, transformation has a long way to go. The first step, Nursi maintains, is to strengthen the Muhammadan truth of belief in God. He emphasises that through a collection of self-aware individuals the togetherness and collective personality of society can grow. He states,

> Also, there are three matters: one is life, another is the *Shari'a*, and another is belief. In the view of reality, the most important and the greatest is the question of belief. But in the view of most people at this time, compelled by the world situation, the most important appear to be life and the *Shari'a*.[278]

Nevertheless, unlike other scholars, Nursi was of the opinion that the greatest matter was *iman*, and he did not want service to *iman* be the tool for other aims.[279] Also Nursi believed that the three matters referred to above were something that could not be represented by one exceptional figure or personality or society at the same time. Therefore he decided his greatest job was to work in the service of belief.

In addition, we should state that in Nursi-ism, all age groups and genders were represented in the community that Nursi tried to reform. It is important in this regard to mention that, contrary to most of the contemporary Islamic movements, the Nurcu movement gave women an active role.[280] Also, Nursi viewed Islamic society as having a hierarchical structure like that of the "student-brother-friend" in *Risale-i Nur*. Nursi's idealised society consists of students in the closest circle who devoted themselves to the cause, brothers who know the Nursian way and share the same goals with the students, and friends who have heard of Nursi-ism and are respectful to it. It is like a concentric circle which opens out one within the other from the centre to the periphery.[281]

It has been the fundamental focus of this chapter to evaluate Nursi's individual approach to social transformation. That is one of the most important objectives of this thesis. We maintain that, contrary to all his contemporaries, Nursi saw social transformation as a gradual and long-running process, and recommended the reform of Islam from the bottom rather than the top. His was also outstanding among the politically-oriented discourses. He sought no political achievement, and as Nereid also states, his methods were non-violent and followed democratic principles – he did not wish for an Islamic take-over.[282]

It is clear that Nursi was among the first to dismiss his own spiritual authority and any personal claims or underlying *qotbiyat*. Although he had many followers and

admirers, his teachings were always more important than his authority. Although nowadays a minority of his followers exaggerate the importance of the *Risale-i Nur*, putting it even above the Qur'an, there is no warrant for this in his writings. Although the spiritual authority of the *shaykh* or religious leader was emphasised among his contemporaries, especially among Sufis, Nursi rejected this idea in order to make his teachings the central focus.[283] He did not establish a certain social order nor did he define himself as a *shaykh* or sufi leader. Rather, his writings became the core of his teachings. He was an educator. According to Atasoy, in his writings he brought forth the Qur'an as the only guide in order to develop natural laws. In this effort she states there was no place for individualism.[284]

4.5 Conclusion

Durkheim writes, "Civilisation is immoral, but one can be certain that if it has a positive and favourable influence in the moral life, it is quite weak."[285] In this regard Giddens states, "If the modern society is and must be a moral order it is distinct from the traditional form."[286] Despite all the technological improvements and progress, according to Hanafi, the West did not or could not offer any model of ethical behaviour, and the moral crisis in the West, as well as in the East, has left the youth in a complete spiritual vacuum in this time of modernity. The crisis of the East appears no smaller than that of the West, with non-collectivism, oppression of the individual, lack of production, basic imitation of the life-style of the West, and compromises on principles.[287]

The distinction Nursi made between the periods of the 'Old Said' and the 'New Said' reflects his changing understanding of social change. Nursi, who as the Old Said in the first period of his life, was actively involved in trying to bring about

the political reforms necessary to save the Ottoman state, initially dealt with quantitative issues. In the second period, as the New Said, he undertook to renew the belief of Muslim individuals, and to form a community or group of these individuals, rather than re-establishing the political structure of the Islamic world. Yet, according to Kramer, in the hands of its present-day adherents, Islam has been remade into something militant and monolithic: fundamentalism, or what some prefer to call Islamism, is obsessed with the acquisition of political power, and largely indifferent to the means used to acquire it.[288]

On the other hand, Nursi showed a tendency to interpret traditional religious rules of conduct into much more general and abstract ethical concepts, which may be applied in various ways according to the historical context. Although this sometimes seems to be difficult to understand because of the highly rhetorical language he uses, he was of the opinion that to discuss social change it is necessary to consider human nature as a whole. This chapter has therefore been a continuation of the former chapter. Nursi uses Qur'anic religious answers discussing social change. However, for Nursi, the ramifications of social life occupy only a small part of life as a whole in religion. He also was of the opinion that the establishment of a certain kind of social order was not the ultimate goal of religion. Nursi sought a gradual and evolutionary progress in social change. Laws of nature and religion have been harmonised in the progress towards perfection. Nursi's gradualism derives from his understanding of both human frailty and his own desire to be more perfect every day.[289] He was not a sociologist in the sense that Durkheim, Weber and Marx were sociologists. He was an Islamic scholar. However, he made use of sociological facts. He was aware of the differences of nature between the peoples of the East and West and the differences between terminologies and sociological heritages. In the East, he believed, religion

had more influence than science and philosophy. He thought it was a pre-Eternal design that prophets would teach people in the East and philosophers would teach them in the West. Nursi's comparison of the socio-theological heritages of West and East is something which needs to be examined with careful analyses. He thought negligence in religion was a tool for one's enemies. Any substantial movement of reform needed to be achieved through adherence to the principles of Islam. Negligence in religious duties harmed both worldly and religiously lives. He also thought neglect of religious tenets an indication of national weakness.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, Islam has been a potent ideological force against colonialism, and many Muslim reformers have produced militant and fundamentalist interpretations of Islam. However, Nursi rejected the use of Islam as a political ideology dominated by fundamentalists, and stressed the universality and pluralistic aspects of Islam. He is not the only or the last person to have such moral stature but we believe he was outstanding among his contemporaries. I do not claim that Nursi has been exceptional in every aspect when compared to his contemporaries. He shared the same ideas on Islamic unity and nationalism, to some extent, with his caste. However, in areas ranging from from politics to pluralism, morality to self-criticism he was exceptional. It has been a goal of this chapter to show that Nursi had a distinctive discourse among his contemporaries, especially with his approach to Islam that sought reform from the bottom rather than the top. However, this does not mean he achieved every goal that he sought for social change.

He was of the opinion that now is the time for community. Nursi's endeavour was centred around the establishment and fortification of the Islamic faith in the hearts and minds of individuals so that it would necessarily manifest itself on their

behaviour. If a Muslim abandoned Islam, he maintained, he would fall prey to anarchism.

His concern with the use of force, revolution and *jihad* is something that in today's world, we believe, needs to be re-examined and practised. His proposals for the solutions of the Islamic world, together with his ideas for long-term social change (while everybody else was in a hurry to begin a revolution) are uniquely inclusive and have not had the attention they deserved.

By advocating a middle way, Nursi raised the voice of reasonableness and pluralism in the Islamic world in the early 20th century. By viewing each person as having numerous personalities, all of which display different qualities, he accepted diversity in understandings of the truth, and from religiosity to ethnicism, from moderation to salvation, he was neither an absolutist nor a relativist. However, for him, pluralism or tolerance did not mean integration or conversion, but rather the necessity to promote universal life. He never abandoned moderation and fairness. His political attention was focused mainly on the preservation of the ground whereon to carry on his Islamic work with full freedom. The number of pious people should make up 60 or 70 per cent of the nation before the Muslims engage in active politics in an organised fashion in the name of religion. Only then can Islam be served by politics. Until then, the Nurcus attitude in political affairs is to act as a pressure group over the conservative party that holds the majority votes.

Nursi's reform movement starts with individuals, for it is only through their correction that society can be corrected. He always maintained a progressive and gradual approach to social change in Islamic work. He was evolutionary in his approach to social transformation rather than revolutionary.

NOTES

[1] See on-line version of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2002, for "Social Change", displayed in www.britannica.com. Also see *Social Change*, vol. 20, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 869-70.

[2] He states "The Risale-i Nur does not discuss the broad sphere of religion which encompasses the laws regulating social life; its chief subject and aim is discussion of the mighty pillars of belief, which are the choicest and most elevated part of religion." As quoted in Davud Dursun, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi as the Representative of Social Opposition," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 318. In this regard also see Resit Haylamaz, "Islam's Universality and the Risale-i Nur's Method of Interpreting the Qur'an's Universality," in *A Contemporary Approach Towards Understanding the Qur'an: The Example of Risale-i Nur* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1998), 85.

[3] Besides the previous chapter for this in particular see Haylamaz, "Islam's Universality and the Risale-i Nur's Method of Interpreting the Qur'an's Universality," 285-300.

[4] In a place he states "We love religion, and we love this world for the sake of religion. There is no good in this world without religion." Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, trans. Sükran Vahide (Istanbul: Sozler, 1996), 83.

[5] See Haylamaz, "Islam's Universality and the Risale-i Nur's Method of Interpreting the Qur'an's Universality," 285.

[6] Among such examples in particular see Safa Mursel, *Bediuzzaman Said Nursi Ve Devlet Felsefesi (Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and Philosophy of State)* (Istanbul: Yeni Asya Yayinlari, 1976).

[7] See and compare with Ibrahim Ozdemir, "A Study of the Views of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and J. P. Sartre on Existence and Man," in *Fifth International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Qur'anic View of Man, According to the Risale-i Nur* (Sozler Nesriyat, 2000).

[8] Serif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 172.

[9] See Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Flashes*, trans. Sukran Vahide (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1995), 27.

[10] Just to mention here that during the past decade, pluralism has been one of the most contemporary issues among the Islamic reformers, some of whom are Abdol-Karim Soroush, Mohsen Kadivar, Ayatollah Mohammad Mojtahed-Shabestari in Iran, Sheikh Rashid Ghannouchi from Tunisia, and Fethullah Gulen of Turkey, whereas Nursi dealt with the issue nearly a century ago, at the beginning of 20th century. For more details on Nursi's discourse on pluralism see, Hasan Horkuc, "New Muslim Discourses on Pluralism in the Postmodern Age: Nursi on Religious Pluralism, and Tolerance," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 19, no. 2 (Spring, 2002).. Also see Hasan Horkuc, "Reconsidering Islamic Pluralism in the Contemporary World," *Fountain* April-June, 2003.

[11] However it is worth mentioning here that according to Nursi, with the coming of the Prophet of the end of time, man as though advanced to the stage at which all the human peoples could receive a single

lesson and listen to a single teacher and act in accordance with a single law. He considered no need remained for different laws, neither was there a necessity for different teachers. However he also states that because humanity were not all at completely the same level and did not proceed in the same sort of social life, the schools of Islamic law became numerous. For this and more see Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Words*, trans. Sukran Vahide (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1992), 500-01.

[12] As quoted in John Obert Voll, "Renewal and Reformation in the Mid-Twentieth Century: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and Religion in the 1950s," *The Muslim World* LXXXIX, no. 3-4 (1999): 255-56. In this concern elsewhere Nursi states, time is a great interpreter; if it determines its limits, it cannot be gainsaid. That is, when a matter becomes clear in the course of time, one cannot object to it. Moreover, if the judgment is based on derived evidence, the source of the derivation shows the reason for the judgment." As quoted in Thomas S.J Michel, "Muslim-Christian Dialogue and Co-Operation in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," in *A Contemporary Approach Towards Understanding the Qur'an: The Example of Risale-i Nur* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1998), 559.

[13] Voll, "Renewal and Reformation in the Mid-Twentieth Century: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and Religion in the 1950s," 256.

[14] See Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Letters*, trans. Sukran Vahide, Second (revised) ed. (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1997), 386.

[15] At this point one thing needs to be pointed out; that of Nursi's concern and understanding of the Mahdi issue. Because it is something that differs Nursi from his contemporaries. Similar approaches appear in different contexts in a number of Nursi's works. According to Nursi the Mahdi is not an only individual, but it may be a movement, school, or community. Although he speaks of the Great Mahdi in human form, Nursi, according to Saritoprak, was not in expectation of an extra-ordinary figure who will set everything in order miraculously with his sword. He believed that everything should be within the framework of the universal laws. In the modern times the Mahdi should function the following duties (a) silencing completely the idea of materialism and atheism; this is also called the stage of belief; (b) reviving the marks of Islam, which is also called the stage of life; (c) with the assistance of all believers and support of Islamic unity, he should strive to carry out that great function and renew the Islamic law; this is also called the stage of the Shari'a. However he states this impossible in these modern times to be gathered in one individual's personality and therefore assigns this duty to a community, or even to some text – because in some places when he is called 'Mahdi', he passes this attribute to the text of the *Risale-i Nur*. In short, contrary to the classical understanding of the phenomenon of the Mahdi, in the Nursian way the Mahdi is not one, he may be many and may come for different times. More importantly, elaboration of approach of Mahdi in Nursian way takes us to the point that the Mahdi may be a movement, school, text or community whose activities are spread over a considerable period of time. See Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Emirdag Lâhikasi(1)," in *Kaynakli-Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1793-94. In particular for "Etymology", "The Mahdi concept in history", "The Mahdi question in the Qur'an and Sunna" and Nursi's view and place in it see Zeki Saritoprak, "The Mahdi Question According to Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the*

Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1995).

[16] See Sukran Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publication, 1992), 258-60.

[17] See Wahbi Zuhayli, "The Qur'an's Universality and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," in *A Contemporary Approach Towards Understanding the Qur'an: The Example of Risale-i Nur* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1998), 215.

[18] See online version of eBook, George F. McLean, "Preface: The Value Base of Civil Society," in *Civil Society and Social Reconstruction*, ed. George F. McLean (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1997). displayed in http://www.crvp.org/book/Series01/I-16.htm

[19] Ruurd Veldhuis, *Realism Versus Utopianism? Reinhold Niebuhr's Christian Realism and the Relavence of Utopian Thought for Social Ethics* (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1975), 24.

[20] See and compare with Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1956), 270, 04 respectively. Also see for man's alienation and mental health in capitalistic society from seventeenth to twentieth century Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 191-209. It is another useful source in this regard to be noted here that considering health and pathology and commenting on religions, values and peak experiences, it is worth mentioning Abraham H Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (Arkana: Penguin, 1993).

[21] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi,* 179.

[22] Camilla Trud Nereid, *In the Light of Said Nursi: Turkish Nationalism and the Religious Alternative* (London: C. Hurst & Co (Publishers) Ltd, 1997), 31.

[23] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 12.

[24] See for more details in "A Personalistic View of Society" and "Personalism and Ethics" in Ibid., 163-71.

[25] Ibid., 167.

[26] See for more M. Hakan Yavuz, "The Sufi Conception of Jihad: The Case of Said Nursi" (paper presented at the Peace, Jihad and Conflict Resolution, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, awailable in http://www.iiit.org/iiitseminar/AMSS,%20IIIT,%20ISESCO%20Seminar.htm, November 2-3, 2002).

[27] See for more in this concern in Abd al-Aziz Barghuth, "The Place of the Theory of Knowledge in the Vicegerency and Civilizational Process in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," in *A Contemporary Approach Towards Understanding the Qur'an: The Example of Risale-i Nur* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 2000), 21.

[28] See Nursi, *The Words*, 319-31.

[29] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi,* 165.

[31] See "For an Islam of the 20th Century" by Roger Garaudy, available online. The text is an English translation of the report presented by Roger Garaudy, on the request of the Muslim Community of

Andalusia, at the First International Congress of Muslims of European origin held in Seville from the 18th to 21st July 1985.

[32] See and compare with Barghuth, "The Place of the Theory of Knowledge in the Vicegerency and Civilizational Process in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 21. Also according to Barguth in Nursi's thought it was a time that the man bearing its mission has drawn away from the divine revelation, which comprises the standpoint, project and method of man as regards belief, action, conduct, and culture. See for more details Barghuth, "The Place of the Theory of Knowledge in the Vicegerency and Civilizational Process in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 21.

[33] See Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Rays*, trans. Sukran Vahide (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1998), 123. and also Dursun, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi as the Representative of Social Opposition," 318.

[34] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 252.

[35] See for the treatise called "The Supreme Sign" Nursi, *The Rays*, 123-200.

[36] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 21.

[37] Ibid., 167.

[38] In this regard see for more details Ahmed Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 301.

[39] Ibid., 163.

[40] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 251.

[41] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 165.

[42] For Nursi, numerous things take on the form of a collectivity and if such a collectivity fuses and becomes a unity, it will have a collective personality. He exemplifies this as "consider the plane-tree in front of my room here, a mighty word of the mouth of Barla and the tongue of this mountain: see how many hundreds of tongues of smaller branches there are on the three heads of the three main branches of its trunk. Study carefully how many hundreds of words of well-ordered and balanced fruits it has, and how many hundreds of letters of well-proportioned winged seeds; just as you hear and see how eloquently it praises and glorifies the All-Glorious Maker, the Owner of the command of *"Be!" and it is*, so too the angel appointed to it represents its glorification with numerous tongues in the World of Meaning. Wisdom necessitates that it is so." See Nursi, *The Words*, 179.

[43] See for more details in this regard Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 263-66.

[44] As quoted in Ibid., 264.

[46] Nursi, *The Rays*, 101.

[47] See Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 303.

[48] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 168. Elsewhere in this regard he maintains "In any event, the service of the Qur'an around which we are gathered does not accept the 'I', it requires the 'we.' It says: "Don't say 'I', say 'we.'" Nursi, *The Letters*, 497.

[49] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 264. Also see Sener Dilek, "The Risale-i Nur's Method and Aim," in *International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi: The Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Centry and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1992), 127.

[50] See for more details in Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 260. Another point of interest which should be mentioned here, is Nursi's statement in relation to socio-politics that for Nursi however great a genius an individual is, even a hundredfold genius, if he is not the representative of a group and if he doesn't represent the collective personality of a group, he will be defeated in the face of the collective personality of an opposing group. See Nursi, *The Letters*, 554.

[51] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 170.

[52] See and compare with Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 298.

[53] See Ibid., 301.

[54] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 171.

[55] Ibid., 13.

[56] See and compare with 'Sense of Identity-Individuality vs. Herd Confirmity" in Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 60-63.

[57] See Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, "Seeds of Reality," in *The Letters* (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1997), 549 and Nursi, *The Letters*, 75.

[58] See and compare with Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 166.

[59] See and compare this with Giddens writes "society is not a creation of the (pre-social) individual but exists 'prior' to him and moulds him..." Anthony Giddens, *Studies in Social and Political Theory* (London: Hutchinson of London, 1977), 285.

[60] In this regard see Ibid., 21.

[61] See Jacques Waardenburg, "Islam as a Vehicle of Protest," in *Islamic Dilemmas: Reformers, Nationalists and Industrialization the Southern Shore of the Mediterranean*, ed. Ernest Gellner (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1985), 22-49.

[62] See for "The Great Promise, Its Failures and New Alternatives", together with "The End of an Illusion" in Erich Fromm, *To Have or to Be* (London: Cox & Wyman Ltd, 1978), 11-25.

[63] Compare this with Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 110-20, 276-99 respectively.

[64] See as quoted in Safa Mürsel, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Position on Relations between the Blocs and Systems," in *International Symposium: The Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1992), 207.

[65] See "the Age of Science" in Husayn Ashur, "Bediuzzaman's Defence Strategy against the Naturalists" (paper presented at the The Reconstruction Of Islamic Thought In The Twentieth Centry And Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, Istanbul, 1992), 232-33. Also see Ismail Killioglu, "The Concept of the 'I' in the Establishment of Nature in Bediuzzaman's Works from the Point of View of Naturalist

Philosophy," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. The Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1995).

[66] See Dursun, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi as the Representative of Social Opposition," 316.

[67] As quoted in Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 309.

[68] As quoted in Niyazi Beki, "The Qur'an and Its Method of Guidance," in *A Contemporary Approach Towards Understanding the Qur'an: The Example of Risale's Nur* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1998), 96.

[69] See Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 76. In this context he also states, "Our way is also to adopt the morality of Muhammad (Upon whom be blessings and peace) and revive his practices." Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 76.

[70] See Mikail Tasdemir, "Political Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi" (MA, The International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), March, 1999), 41-49.

[71] See Nursi, *The Rays*, 399.

[72] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 173.

[73] See Sukran Vahide, "Toward an Intellectual Biography of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," in *Islam at the Crossroads : On the Life and Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, ed. Ibrahim M Abu-Rabi (Suny Press, 2003), 27.

[74] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 172. Also see for more on this in Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, II vols. (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 650.

[75] See Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 302.

[76] In this regard see Vahide, "Toward an Intellectual Biography of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 27.

[77] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 168.

[78] Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 26-27.

[79] See Fromm, *The Sane Society*, 202-08.

[80] See Nursi, *The Letters*, 497.

[81] Nursi, *The Rays*, 343.

[82] See Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 66.

[83] As quoted in Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 168. Also see Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 185.

[84] See the twenty-second letter in Nursi, *The Letters*.

[85] See as cited in Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 262.

[86] See as quoted in Ibid.

[87] See Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 117.

[88] See Nursi, *The Words*, 157-59.

[89] Abdullah Özbek, "The Importance of Knowing Man," in *A Contemporary Approach Towards Understanding the Qur'an: The Example of Risale's Nur* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1998), 60.

[90] See Beki, "The Qur'an and Its Method of Guidance," 96.

[91] See treatise for 'youth' Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Genclik Rehberi," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996).

[92] Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 262.

[93] As quoted in Ahmed Akgündüz, "The Risale-i Nur Movement: Is It a Sufi Order, a Political Society, or a Co mmunity?," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 167.

[94] See for the historical bases of traditional Muslim political theory in L. Carl Brown, "The Historical Bases of Traditional Muslim and Christian Political Theory," in *Religion and State : The Muslim Approach to Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000). Also see Tasdemir, "Political Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi". and Haldun Canci, "Islam Siyasal Dusuncesi Cercevesinde Bir Siyasal Ideoloji Olarak Milliyetcilik Ve Said Nursi" (PhD, Marmara Universitesi, 1998). In despite of fact that Tasdemir's study entitled as "Political Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi" we find it difficult to make much use of it here, because of our different concern of Nursi's politics from the point of view social change perspective. However the thesis concerns theoretical and conceptual frameworks for state and caliphate and discusses the general outlines of an Islamic political system as utilised by Nursi.

[95] See for more Martin Kramer, *Arab Awakening & Islamic Revival: The Politics of Ideas in the Middle East* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 10.

[96] See L. Carl Brown, *Religion and State : The Muslim Approach to Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 48.

[97] See Ibid., 296.

[98] Ibid.

[99] We will turn back to this issue later in this section.

[100] See Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 126. Also See "Conclusion" in Canci, "Islam Siyasal Dusuncesi Cercevesinde Bir Siyasal Ideoloji Olarak Milliyetcilik Ve Said Nursi", 259.

[101] However according to Vahide the fundamental change occurred in Nursi's life dates back to 1913. A personal interview made with Vahide in September 2002.

[102] See the fifth period of his life in the biographical chapter for the details.

[103] See Rusen Cakir, *Ayet Ve Slogan (Verse and Slogan)* (Istanbul: Metis Yayinlari, 1990), 80-81. Also see Bekir Berk, *Nurculuk Davasi (the Trials of Nursi-ism)* (Istanbul: Yeni Asya Yayinlari, 1975). Furthermore Nursi's later writings among them the Rays and Appendices are replete with the testimonials and previous acquaintance decisions.

[104] See Vahide, "Toward an Intellectual Biography of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 6.

[105] See for this and that is why says Tasdemir Nursi edited the general corpus of his writings and included early works in the Risale-i Nur. Tasdemir, "Political Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi", 3.

[106] See Muhammad Said Ramadan Al-Buti, "Bediuzzaman's Experience of Serving Islam by Means of Politics," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 112.

[107] See Vahide, "Toward an Intellectual Biography of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 6-7.

[108] See Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 46.

[109] See for more and for the three main approaches, which were centred on three persons, the basic currents related to the Muslim groups' search for political theory of this period Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 287. In particular for the socio-historical background, together with the Young Ottomans' political thoughts and Abdulhamid II's Pan-Islamism see Serif. Mardin, *Jon Turklerin Siyasi Fikirleri 1895-1908 (Political Thoughts of Young Turks)* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 1983).

[110] See Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 287.

[111] Al-Buti, "Bediuzzaman's Experience of Serving Islam by Means of Politics," 113.

[112] See Vahide, "Toward an Intellectual Biography of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 5. Also see the second chapter about his biography for more details.

[113] Ibid., 6.

[114] For the detailed picture of Nursi's thought on these subjects and more see the followings Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*. Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Muhakemat," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996). Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Münazarat," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996). Also see Vahide, "Toward an Intellectual Biography of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 6-8.

[115] Vahide, "Toward an Intellectual Biography of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 26.

[116] We will turn back to this issue later in the following chapter for the details of his choosing Japan as model of adoption.

[117] See Hakan M. Yavuz, "Print-Based Islamic Discourse and the Modernity: The Nur Movement," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 340-41.

[118] In an interview with Vahide, she said Nursi's inner changes and therefore his attitude of apolitical Islam started earlier in 1913. See and compare this with his approach of giving the politics up started in 1920s with his resign from Darü'l-Hikmet in Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 304.

[119] Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 46.

[120] See Yavuz, "The Sufi Conception of Jihad: The Case of Said Nursi".

[121] For the treatise explaining that service of the Qur'an forbad Nursi from any involvement in politics see Nursi, *The Letters*, 83-100.

[122] See Al-Buti, "Bediuzzaman's Experience of Serving Islam by Means of Politics," 118.

[123] See and compare with Dilek, "The Risale-i Nur's Method and Aim," 127.

[124] See Al-Buti, "Bediuzzaman's Experience of Serving Islam by Means of Politics," 116.

[125] As quoted in Dilek, "The Risale-i Nur's Method and Aim," 130.

[126] See and compare with Ibid., 129-31.

[127] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 260.

[128] See Dilek, "The Risale-i Nur's Method and Aim," 131.

[129] As cited in Reinhard Schulze, *A Modern History of the Islamic World*, trans. Azizeh Azodi (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 2000), 30.

[130] See Al-Buti, "Bediuzzaman's Experience of Serving Islam by Means of Politics," 116.

[131] As cited in Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 301-02.

[132] Ibid., 302. See for al-Raziq's view on the 'Caliphate and the Bases of Power' in John J. and John L. Esposito Donohue, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 29-37.

[133] See Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 304-06. and Dursun, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi as the Representative of Social Opposition," 321-23.

[134] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 330.

[135] See Yavuz, "Print-Based Islamic Discourse and the Modernity: The Nur Movement," 340-41.

[136] See Dursun, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi as the Representative of Social Opposition," 322-23.

[137] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 330-34. Also see Nursi, "Emirdag Lâhikasi(1)," 1813.

[138] See Dursun, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi as the Representative of Social Opposition," 322.

[139] As cited in Mehmet Dogan, "The Means of Communicating Islam in 20th Century Turkey and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, in the Face of Efforts to Eradicate Islam," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 283.

[140] It is a matter of interest which should be mentioned here that according to Mardin, "Today, the Nur movement has become a factor to reckon with in Turkish politics, for although there is no political party which was formed around the group, its support is said to be crucial in electoral contests in parts of Eastern Turkey." Serif Mardin, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1873-1960). The Shaping of a Vocation," in *Religious Organization and Religious Exprience*, ed. John Davis (London: Academic Press, 1982), 66.

[141] See Berk, *Nurculuk Davasi(the Trials of Nursi-ism)*. Also part of Nursi's defence speeches given in Denizli Court against the accusations made about his forming a political society to change the regime see Nursi, *The Rays*, 318-70. Whereas another approach to these acquaintances comes from Ozek who is very critical of Nursi and Nursi-ism in negative sense; he states that it has been difficult to barrier Nurcu activities by the Criminal Law paragraph 163 and therefore they grew up in society. See "Nurculuk ve Hukuk" (Nurcu-ism and Jurisprudence) Cetin Ozek, *Turkiyede Gerici Akimlar Ve Nurculugun Icyuzu (Reactionary Movements in Turkey and the inside Story of Nurcu-Ism)* (Istanbul: Varlik Yayinevi, 1964), 282-84.

[142] See Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Emirdag Lâhikasi(2)," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1878.

[143] Tasdemir, "Political Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi", 9.

[144] See and compare with Ibid.

[145] Although Nursi's link with the revolt could not be found however with the cautious approach of the young Republic he was exiled from his home region of East to the West Turkey for an isolated life.

Later in his life, either because of ignorance or some other reasons, his name many times used by some of the newspapers to be meant as the revolutionis t shaykh Said.

[146] However though it should be stated here that there is a PhD thesis evaluating nationalism as a political ideology and Nursî's concern of it; we have to say that with all due respect to outcomes of the thesis, it concerns Nursi and nationalism in approximately 40 pages out of 274 pages. With all our reservations and objections we have to state that it is not a detailed study what we think we should make much use of it and also our concern of Nursian way of nationalism is much more related to the social change issue. See Canci, "Islam Siyasal Dusuncesi Cercevesinde Bir Siyasal Ideoloji Olarak Milliyetcilik Ve Said Nursi". There is another source we could not make much use of it but it is worth of mentioning here is Zekeriya Yildiz, *Bediuzzaman Ve Milliyetcilik (Bediuzzaman and Nationalism)* (Istanbul: Timas Yayinlari, 1995).

[147] See and concern for more on the theory of nation and nationalism in Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher Limited, 1983).

[148] See Nursi, *The Letters*, 380-84. Also see for the general overview of the theory of nationalism - roots, elements and qualities of it- and its intercourse with the religion and Turkey see Canci, "Islam Siyasal Dusuncesi Cercevesinde Bir Siyasal Ideoloji Olarak Milliyetcilik Ve Said Nursi", 6-50.

[149] See Hüseyin Çelik, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and the Ideal of Islamic Unity," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 250-54.

[150] See Haylamaz, "Islam's Universality and the Risale-i Nur's Method of Interpreting the Qur'an's Universality," 285.

[151] For this and the impact of the ideas of French Revolution on Muslim leaders and thinkers see B. Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 53-55.

[152] See Canci, "Islam Siyasal Dusuncesi Cercevesinde Bir Siyasal Ideoloji Olarak Milliyetcilik Ve Said Nursi", 93-99.

[153] See for more Çelik, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and the Ideal of Islamic Unity," 250-54.

[154] See Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Divan-i Harb-i Örfî," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1922.

[155] See Çelik, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and the Ideal of Islamic Unity," 248-49.

[156] Compare this with that out of the consideration here according to Yildiz during the rule of Abdulhamit (1878-1908); the Islamic concept of Ottomanism became the ideology of nationhood. She states "As an Ottomanist, Said Nursi saw the Ottoman empire as the last and most powerful Islamic state, one capable of unifying all Muslims under one nation, regardless of cultural-linguistic origin". Yildiz Atasoy, "Islamic Revivalism and the Nation-State Project: Competing Claims for Modernity," *Social Compass*, no. 1 (March 1997): 87.

[157] See Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 83.

[158] See Çelik, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and the Ideal of Islamic Unity," 251. Besides for the elaboration of Islamic unity matter and Nursî's proposals in this concern particularly see Nursi, *The Letters*, 311-21.

[159] Nursi, *The Letters*, 382. In this regard also see Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 60.

[160] As quoted in Çelik, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and the Ideal of Islamic Unity," 254.

[161] See Nursi, *The Letters*, 380-81.

[162] In this regard also see Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 296-97.

[163] See for more on this issue Çelik, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and the Ideal of Islamic Unity," 255.

[164] See Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 295-97.

[165] See Nursi, *The Letters*, 379-80.

[166] In this regard he states, "Because of the heedlessness of some of us and the foreigners' damaging characteristics that we have acquired, and, despite our strong and sacred Islamic nationhood, through everyone saying, "Me! Me!, and considering personal benefits and not the nation's benefits, a thousand men have fallen to become like one man... Because of the idea of nationhood which those foreigners obtained from -us, an individual becomes as valuable as a nation." Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 55.

[167] See Nursi, *The Letters*, 384.

[168] See Nereid, *In the Light of Said Nursi: Turkish Nationalism and the Religious Alternative*, 70., together with the related sections in the biographical chapter. Also see for more Ali Al-Kattani, "Jihad in Bediuzzaman's Thought," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 235.

[169] See Ibrahim Abu-Rabi, ed., *Islam at the Crossroads: On the Life and Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Albany: Suny Press, 2003), 62.

[170] As cited in Yildiz Atasoy, "Islamic Revivalism and the Nation-State Project : Competing Claims for Modernity" (http://www.bsos.umd.edu/css97/papers/competin.html http://www.iol.ie/~afifi/Articles/revival.htm 1997-03-05).

[171] See and compare with Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 55.

[199] See Waardenburg, "Islam as a Vehicle of Protest," 33.

[200] See for "the Religion and Internal Revolt", in particular, "the Muslim Brotherhood and the Egyptian Revolution" in Donald Eugene Smith, ed., *Religion, Politics, and Social Change in the Third World* (New York: The Free Press, 1971), 122, 33-40 respectively.

[201] See for the "revolutionary movements" in Waardenburg, "Islam as a Vehicle of Protest," 33-42.

[202] See Nursi, "Divan-i Harb-i Örfî," 1930.

[203] Nursi, *The Flashes*, 43. In this regard also Voll, "Renewal and Reformation in the Mid-Twentieth Century: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and Religion in the 1950s," 254. Furthermore see for more details of Nursi's approach of moderation in Horkuc, "New Muslim Discourses on Pluralism in the Postmodern Age: Nursi on Religious Pluralism, and Tolerance," 80-81.

[204] Nursi, *The Flashes*, 371.

[205] Ibid.

[206] See for this and more Nursi, *The Words*, 565-66.

[207] See for more on this issue Nursi, *The Letters*, 518 and on.

[208] The most contemporary one among those is a journalist for a religious newspaper which have been the voice of Erbakan, the leader of political Islam in Turkey, Mehmet Sevket Eygi who believes the major writings of Nursi have been changed through softening and to be state-ist.

[209] See Nilüfer Kas, "Said Nursi, Teskilati Mahsusa'dandi (Said Nursi Was fro m Teskilati Mahsusa - the Intelligence Service of Ottomans-)," *Tempo displayed in http://www.tempodergisi.com.tr/toplum_politika/01505/*2003.

[210] As quoted in Dilek, "The Risale-i Nur's Method and Aim," 129.

[211] Yavuz, "Print-Based Islamic Discourse and the Modernity: The Nur Movement," 349. See and compare this with according to Smith preaching an ideology of Islamic fundamentalism, the Muslim brotherhood at first made common cause with the revolutionaries, but was too powerful and too ideologically distinct for partnership with Nasser, and was soon outlawed. Donald Eugene Smith, "Religion and Internal Revolt," in *Religion, Politics, and Social Change in the Third World* (New York: The Free Press, 1971), 122.

[212] See Alaaddin Basar, "A Lifelong Principle: Positive Action," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 148.

[213] As cited in Dilek, "The Risale-i Nur's Method and Aim," 129.

[214] As quoted in Ibid., 128.

[215] Among the few examples for Nursi to maintain public order and harmony, the first one as quoted in the autobiography: There are many examples, such as the following. The first major blows to the Empire under the new regime occurred soon after the Constitution was proclaimed. On 5 October, 1908, Austria annexed Bosnia-Herzogovina, and Bulgaria proclaimed independence, while on the 6th, Greece annexed Crete. In response to this, on the 10th October, the people of Istanbul declared a boycott on all Austrian goods and the places where they were sold. The twenty thousand or so Kurdish porters on whom the commercial life of Istanbul depended defied their foremen and were preparing to go on strike. The whole business started to get out of hand. To avert this threat to Istanbul's trade and business life, Bediuzzaman went immediately to the tea-houses and places the porters frequented and persuaded them to avoid any extreme action. In one place, the Ashiret Han, immediately gain ing command of the situation with his fine voice, Bediuzzaman said the following to the porters: "You are all from the East like me, and you have all crossed the Tigris and the Euphrates on rafts. You know too that on one occasion a group crossing the Tigris on a raft tried to get rid of some of the ropes and cross-beams of which the raft was composed in order to lighten the load and move more swiftly. Of course, on doing this the main planks of the raft came apart and both themselves and their belongings ended up in the water. "In the same way, your foremen are like the ropes and cross-beams; they do not appear to serve any purpose but in fact they are vital. If they were to go, your harmony would be spoilt and your work confused. Just like the raft that sank, you would be compelled to split up and disperse." With this the insurrection came to nothing. The porters understood their mistake, and obeying their foremen, returned to work immediately. The Istanbul Chief of Police later came in person to offer his thanks to Bediuzzaman for preventing a harmful situation developing. As cited in Vahide, *The Author of the*

Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, 68. Later he was again maintainer of public order, at the time of 31st March incident. Later years once again we saw Nursi's this attitude coming life when he was invited to be a part of the revolt by Shaykh Said at the beginning era of Turkish republic. He rejected this invitation and faced exile in return. Another example of this was his attitude in exile when the incident called *Menemen* occurred. See for more details about these slices of his life, in the biographical chapter.

[216] In this regard according to Nereid, Nursi's opposition against the regime was a case of civil disobedience. However she defines his methods as non-violent. See Nereid, *In the Light of Said Nursi: Turkish Nationalism and the Religious Alternative*, 2 and 80.

[217] For this and "On the Signs of the End of Time" see Nursi, *The Rays*, 97-114. For the writing of this treatise Nursi were and acquitted.

[218] See Yavuz, "The Sufi Conception of Jihad: The Case of Said Nursi".

[219] Sükran Vahide, "Jihad in the Modern Age: Bediuzzaman's Interpretation of Jihad," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 138.

[220] See Beki, "The Qur'an and Its Method of Guidance," 96.

[221] Nursi, *The Rays*, 372.

[222] Ibid. Also see Beki, "The Qur'an and Its Method of Guidance," 96-99. One has to be also stated here, that as said before it has been a controversy that on the one hand Nurcus even nowadays have been criticised by other Islamic movements to be passive and governmental, on the other hand there is a few who still think that they are in some form of preparations for the Islamic revolution. To claim that Nursi favoured positive action and civic resistance for the sake of religion is something, to claim the anti-thesis of this needs to be proved that during more than a century of Nurcus history there has been no cases of using any kind of force to push public through how to live Islam.

[223] Nursi, "Seeds of Reality," 549. In this regard elsewhere in the interpretation of the Qur'anic verse "If any one slew a person -unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land- it would be as if he slew the whole people, (Qur'an, 5:32)" Nursi states "The rights of an innocent man cannot be cancelled for the sake of all the people. A single individual may not be sacrificed for the good of all. In the view of Almighty God's compassion, right is right, there is no difference between great and small. The small may not be annulled for the great. Without his consent, the life and rights of an individual may not be sacrificed for the good of the community. If he consents to sacrifice them in the name of patriotism, that is a different matter. As for relative justice, a particular is sacrificed for the good of the universal; the rights of an individual are not considered in the face of the community. A sort of relative justice is attempted to be applied as the lesser of two evils. But if it is possible to apply pure justice, to attempt to apply relative justice is wrong. It may not be attempted." Nursi, *The Letters*, 75.

[224] See and compare for this with Beki, "The Qur'an and Its Method of Guidance," 96-98. and Dilek, "The Risale-i Nur's Method and Aim," 129.

[225] Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 49-50.

[226] See "Jihad," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*. The online version, displayed in (http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?eu=44627&tocid=0&query=jihad&ct=) Also on the meaning of Jihad see Douglas E. Streusand, "What Does Jihad Mean?," *Middle East Quarterly* IV, no. 3 (September 1997). displayed in http://www.meforum.org/article/357

[227] See and compare this with Linda K. Kolocotronis Jitmoud, "An Intellectual Historical Study of Islamic Jihad During the Life of Muhammad and in the Twentieth Century" (Doctor of Philosophy, Ball State University, 1985), 2. For a detailed discussion of theory of Jihad in Qur'an and Sunnah and the time of Prophet Muhammad and furthermore more importantly from the point of view related to the subject in hand examination of the writings of outstanding twentieth century Muslim scholars among them Sayyid Qutb, Mawdudi, and Khomeini on Jihad see Jitmoud, "An Intellectual Historical Study of Islamic Jihad During the Life of Muhammad and in the Twentieth Century", 19-26, 55-98, 135-66 respectively.

[228] See Jitmoud, "An Intellectual Historical Study of Islamic Jihad During the Life of Muhammad and in the Twentieth Century", 145 and so on.

[229] A hadith which this argument based on is related by Al-Khatib Al-Baghadadi from Jabir, which states: "the Prophet (s.a.w), at the time he returned from a battle said: 'We have all just returned to the best of places, and you have returned from *Jihad Asghar* (the lesser Jihad) to strive in *Jihad Akbar* (the greater Jihad)'. The companions asked: 'What is Jihad Akbar Rasulullaah?' He answered: 'The Jihad of someone against his desires'." [Tarikh al Baghadadi 13/493] This hadith has been reportedly said to have been weak because of its Sanad (chain of narrators) including a narrator whose hadiths are unreliable according to the hadith scholars.

[230] See among those Roy Mottahedeh, the Gurney Professor of History and chairman of the Committee on Islamic Studies at Harvard. Roy Mottahedeh, "Islam and the Opposition to Terrorism," *The New York Times*, Sept. 30, 2001. According to Kramer the author was more cautious in a study that informed the op-ed: Roy Parviz Mottahedeh and Ridwan al-Sayyid, "The Idea of the Jihad in Islam before the Crusades," in Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh, eds., *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 2001), pp. 23-29. Together with this also see Barbara Stowasser, professor of Arabic at Georgetown University; as being one of the apologetics according to Kramer see as cited in Martin Kramer, "Jihad 101," *Middle East Quarterly* IX, no. 2 (Spring 2002).; the article displayed in http://www.meforum.org/article/160/

[231] See Vahide, "Jihad in the Modern Age: Bediuzzaman's Interpretation of Jihad," 135-36. Also for Nursi's own view Vahide quotes, "Our way is concerned only with morality and religion... The way of our society is love for love among Muslims, and enmity towards enmity among them; its path is to be moulded by the moral qualities of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and to revive his practices (Sunna); its guide is the Illustrious Shari'a; its sword, decisive logical proofs; and its aim, to uphold the Word of God." "The Society's .... way is to wage the greater jihad (*jihad-i akbar*) with one's own [instinctual] soul, and to guide others. Ninety-nine percent of [its] aspiration is directed, not to politics, but to licit aims that are the opposite of politics like fine morals and right conduct, and such like..." As quoted in Vahide, "Jihad in the Modern Age: Bediuzzaman's Interpretation of Jihad," 129.

[232] In the original text he states, "Kiliçlarinizi, fen ve san'at ve tesanüd-ü hikmet-i Kur'âniye cevherinden yapmalisiniz." See Nursi, "Divan-i Harb-i Örfî," 1929.

[233] See Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 85. Elsewhere concerning the external jihad Nursi wrote, "Our action towards non-Muslims is persuasion, for we know them to be civilized, and to show Islam to be elevated and worthy of love." Nursi, "Divan-i Harb-i Örfî," 1930.

[234] See Vahide, "Jihad in the Modern Age: Bediuzzaman's Interpretation of Jihad," 130.

[235] See Al-Kattani, "Jihad in Bediuzzaman's Thought," 239.

[236] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 119-29. Also see the biographical chapter.

[237] Thomas S.J. Michel, "Muslim.-Christian Dialogue and Coopeation in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," *The Muslim World: Special Issue, Said Nursi and The Turkish Experience* (July-October-1999): 330-31.

[238] See Dilek, "The Risale-i Nur's Method and Aim," 128.

[239] This is a point of interest because as we stated he was accused to be backward himself, whereas he claims Muslims themselves to be backward. It is particularly ironic and logically absurd that two impossibilities is not possible. Therefore claiming him by only stating to be backward contrasts with his proposals for Muslims' being itself backward.

[240] See Çelik, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and the Ideal of Islamic Unity," 255.

[241] See as cited in Vahide, "Jihad in the Modern Age: Bediuzzaman's Interpretation of Jihad," 127.

[242] As quoted in Ibid.

[243] See Smith, ed., *Religion, Politics, and Social Change in the Third World.* Also see and compare this with "The Economic Necessity for Human Change" in Fromm, *To Have or to Be*, 17.

[244] See Dogan, "The Means of Communicating Islam in 20th Century Turkey and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, in the Face of Efforts to Eradicate Islam," 283.

[245] We will elaborate this issue in the following chapter.

[246] As quoted in Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 291.

[247] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 167.

[248] See Atasoy, "Islamic Revivalism and the Nation-State Project : Competing Claims for Modernity," 91.

[249] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 160-61.

[250] To see the difference and distinction between "To Have or To Be" see Fromm, *To Have or to Be*, 25.

[251] See the treatise as "the Twenty-third Word" in particular Nursi, *The Words*, 319-41.

[252] Fromm, *To Have or to Be*, 12. Also see for the importance of the difference between having and being mode Fromm, *To Have or to Be*, 25-37.

[253] Fromm, *To Have or to Be*, 15-16.

[254] See Ibid., 16.

[255] See Nursi, "Divan-i Harb-i Örfî," 1928.

[256] See Nursi, *The Words*, 500-01.

[257] Nursi, *The Letters*, 314.

[258] See Nursi, *The Flashes*, 203.

[259] See Nursi, *The Words*, 343.

[260] Ibid., 344.

[261] See Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, "Militant Islam: A Historical Perspective," in *Islamic Dilemmas: Reformers, Nationalists and Industrialization the Southern Shore of the Mediterranean*, ed. Ernest Gellner (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1985), 81.

[262] See together with the historical bases of traditional Muslim and Christian political theory in Brown, *Religion and State : The Muslim Approach to Politics*, 139 and 43-52 respectively.

[263] See Niko Kielstra, "Law and Reality in Modern Islam," in *Islamic Dilemmas: Reformers, Nationalists and Industrialization the Southern Shore of the Mediterranean*, ed. Ernest Gellner (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1985), 14. Also see for "Islam and Social Change" in Donohue, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, 179-236.

[264] See Brown, *Religion and State : The Muslim Approach to Politics*, 141, 49, and 75 respectively.

[265] Also see Ibid., 176-77.

[266] See Nursi, "Divan-i Harb-i Örfî," 1922.

[267] See as cited in Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 140.

[268] See for these and more Ibid., 123.

[269] See for more in this concern available on-line David Zeidan, "Radical Islam in Egypt: A Comparison of Two Groups," *MERIA* 3, no. 3 (September 1999). displayed in http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/1999/issue3/jv3n3a1.html

[270] In this regard see Yavuz, "Print-Based Islamic Discourse and the Modernity: The Nur Movement," 339.

[271] Ibid.

[272] See for Nursi's different usages of shari'a mainly Divine rules and laws set by Allah for the order of the universe rather than human made rules and conducts set to rule the world, in Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Risale-i Nur Indeksi," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 59.

[273] See Beki, "The Qur'an and Its Method of Guidance," 95.

[274] See Yavuz, "The Sufi Conception of Jihad: The Case of Said Nursi".

[275] There are a few examples of this that Nursi emphasises the importance raising of religiously minded young people; among them one is the treatise written to warn his students and servants of the Qur'an according to Nursi, so that they should not be deceived by satanic stratagems. See Nursi, *The Letters*, 494-95.

[276] Davutoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 302.

[277] See Tasdemir, "Political Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi", 9.

[278] As quoted in Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 259.

[279] See Ibid., 259-60.

[280] See Nereid, *In the Light of Said Nursi: Turkish Nationalism and the Religious Alternative*, 35. The status of women and its place in social change has been particularly controversial for any Islamic revivalist discourse. Women were allowed an active role in the Nurcu movement that Nereid states. See for the status of women in Nursi's discourse Nereid, *In the Light of Said Nursi: Turkish Nationalism and the Religious Alternative*, 36-41. Compare this with that Mardin discusses that although there is an authoritarian aspect between Nurcu woman and her relation to her family as the case for children towards parents, when placed within the total system of Islamic relations appears to be greater than the burdens it generates. See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 167. Also for the contemporary discussions on women and gender issues in Islam see Yvonne Yazbeck and John L. Esposito Haddad, ed., *Islam, Gender and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[281] See Nursi, *The Letters*, 404-05. It needs to be stated here that although it contradicts to Nursi's writings it is one of the criticisms directed to today's Nurcus that Nurcu-ism produces one dimensional, stereotyped people. On the other hand it has been claimed that "Nursi's societal structure does not produce 'one-dimensional' 'stereotyped' people". See and compare this with Dilek, "The Risale-i Nur's Method and Aim," 128.

[282] See Nereid, *In the Light of Said Nursi: Turkish Nationalism and the Religious Alternative*, 2, 35 respectively.

[283] See Nursi, *The Letters*, 404. Also see and compare in this concern "A Modern Iranian Shiite Friend of God: Nur'alishah II (1867-1918)" by Matthijs van den Bos, unpublished conference paper.

[284] See Atasoy, "Islamic Revivalism and the Nation-State Project : Competing Claims for Modernity," 88.

[285] Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1947), 51.

[286] Giddens, *Studies in Social and Political Theory*, 285.

[287] See Hassan Hanafi, "The Origin of Modern Conservatism and Islamic Fundamentalism," in *Islamic Dilemmas: Reformers, Nationalists and Industrialization the Southern Shore of the Mediterranean*, ed. Ernest Gellner (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1985), 100-02. Many philosophers make declarations about the so-called "the decline of the West", describe the phenomenon, attest it and warn against it. According to Hanafi among such ideas of Sheler's reversing of values, Husserl's banktrupcy of soul, Nietzsche's, Heidegger's, Sartre's total nothingness and Bergson's matter creator of God which are some nihilistic ideas have their conservatist and spiritual philosophies reacting to this in the Muslim world as inside witnesses from the West. See and compare this with "Why Did the Great Promise Fail?" together with "The End of an Illusion" Fromm, *To Have or to Be*, 11-17. Contemporary psychology has finally started to consider a new inspiration something of a 'Freud is Dead movement'. According to Braden, led by Abraham Maslow a new group of psychologists defines Freudian psychology as preoccupied with pathology; it is primarily a sick psychology, or a psychology of sickness. See for this and more in "Humanistic Psychology" William Braden, "The Pearl of Great Price," in *The Private Sea: Lsd and the Search for God* (http://www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/lsd/braden.htm).

[288] See Kramer, *Arab Awakening & Islamic Revival: The Politics of Ideas in the Middle East*, 10.

[289] See Nursi, "Muhakemat," 1987.

CHAPTER 5 SCIENCE, SCIENTISM AND RELIGION

Before starting at the discussion of the relation and interaction between science, religion and scientism a few things need to be said about these terms. In its etymological context science means any sort of knowledge, but in its religious context it refers to the modern endeavour of scientists in fields like physics, biology and geology. In other words, science is understood as requiring the systematic application of principles through the "scientific method" rather than relying on traditional rules, intuition and acquired skill.[1] Scientism is given a number of different meanings by its adherents and opponents.[2] A common way of defining Scientism is to say that it is the idea that science tells us everything that there is to know about reality,[3] or excessive belief in the power of scientific knowledge and techniques, or in the applicability of the methods of physical science to other fields, especially human behaviour and the social sciences.[4] If science is understood as providing the only reliable answers to questions about the world, then scientism can be best described as embracing belief systems and ritual practices based on the scientific theories known as "facts".[5] It is also, according to Rustum Roy, to take science as your theology and technology as your day-to-day religion.[6] It is useful to differentiate the subjective, naturalistic or faith-based religious experience and attitudes from the institutionalised ritualism of organised Religions by using lower case for the former and capitals for the latter.[7] It should be mentioned also that Nursi's usage of the term "religion" signifies the former "small r" religion. However, religion has been contemporarily redefined as "a set of habits, behaviours, dogmas, forms, which at the extreme becomes entirely legalistic, bureaucratic, conventional, empty, and in the truest meaning of the word, anti-religious."[8]

This chapter does not address all facets of the rich and intricate discourse on the relationship between science, scientism and religion – in fact no single thesis could.[9] Neither does it attempt to establish dialogue between them. The chapter, however, does attempt to present a broad overview of Nursi's approach to the relationship between science, scientism and religion. The chapter aims to discuss the relationship between science and religion – science and scientism in Nursi's approach. It takes a closer look at causality, technology and progress in Nursi's writings, together with the distinction between rational and transmitted sciences. It also searches the reason for Muslims' backwardness in science and technology. The West and its scientific progress in recent times, together with Nursi's very different approach to the Prophets' miracles will also be dealt with in this context.

Nursi tried to initiate a dialogue between science and religion. He considered theology as scientific in character and hence, it shared at least in part, the same domain as the natural sciences. He is challenging us to develop a theological understanding of nature that relies on both modern science and Islamic truths. This may in a sense re-iterate Pannenberg's[10] efforts in Christian theology.[11] However it cannot be said that Nursi viewed science as something apart from religion or outside of the realm of religion. His attempts at dialogue were in favour of religion because he considered all knowledge is religious knowledge whatever the source; science without a religious perspective he considered as nothing but ignorance.[12]

In modern times Muslim scholars are fixated on the issue of science and whether it is compatible with religion; some may say it is a fixation bordering an obsession. Nursi, on the other hand, was confident that all knowledge, including sciences, were religious and he was confident in using scientific terminology.[13] His efforts in this field are what we call the "Sacrelisation of Science".[14] Ultimately, the

main goal of this chapter will be Nursi's attitude towards science and scientism and a comparison of his attitudes with his contemporaries.

According to Peters, the following questions or types of knowledge are those that science and religion separately consider. Scientists ask how. Theologians ask why. Scientists deal with fact, whereas theologians deal with value. Scientists search for proximate causes, whereas theologians search for ultimate origins.[15] It should be mentioned here that according to Einstein, "science can only ascertain what is, but not what should be", and "religion, on the other hand, deals only with evaluations of human thought and action: it cannot justifiably speak of facts and relationships between facts."[16] Today some people say that "Christianism, Islam, Judaism and many other organized beliefs should be abolished, because they are dogmatic (i.e. they assert facts without proof, and force one to accept or reject the whole system) and intolerant (i.e. do not accept other beliefs, or the lack of belief)".[17] In this chapter we search for Nursi's understanding and exploration of science, scientism and religion and their interconnection, together with their interactions, and by doing we will explore the social value of this interaction. However, in this context it should be said that for some people religion facilitates a role in which belief systems and ritual practices provide them with solace and contributes to social stability as a powerful attractor and supporting force for all people's needs.[18] In other words some sociologists have agreed on the social value of religion.[19] Without a religion a person may find themselves lost and depressed. They may feel that their life is meaningless and that there is nothing to hope for.[20] As Hill writes, "Religion is at the core of the understanding of all social cohesion and much social change."[21] In this sense religion has a social function which, as Flores points out, may unfortunately be fulfilled through non-ethical means, in which case it is unfairly compared with pure reason.[22]

In this context it is important to see Nursi's approach to science, religion and scientism in order to understand his ideal for human society.

Having said that, the relation between science and religion can be categorised into different groups, such as "warfare models and non-warfare models"[23] or "scientism and religious authoritarianism."[24] Because of the subject in hand we will here consider "scientism" as being included in the warfare model, that is to say we will take the extreme spectrum in order to demonstrate Nursi's approach to science and scientism.[25] It must be first stated that although the term "scientism" is frequently used, it is not often clear what it signifies. We must therefore point out here different understandings, forms and meanings of the word.[26] Scientism, also known as "naturalism" or "positivism" typically is a combination of certain scientific theories and a particular ideology or world view, namely, naturalism or materialism.[27] Stenmark says scientism in one version or another has probably been around as long as science has existed.[28] In its most ambitious form scientism states that science has no boundaries and will eventually answer all our problems.[29] Peters states,

> The military goal of scientism--sometimes called 'naturalism' or 'scientific materialism' or 'secular humanism' or even 'atheism'--is to pursue war against religion, declaring total victory over the forces of superstition, dogma, and pseudo-knowledge. Scientism, like other '...isms', is an ideology. This ideology is built upon the assumption that science provides all the knowledge that we can know. There is only one reality, the natural, and science has a monopoly on the knowledge we have about nature. What theologians have to say about things supernatural is only pseudo-knowledge--that is, false impressions about non-existent fictions. Accordingly, "*scientism* is a secular religion, in the sense of generating loyal commitments (a type of faith) to a method, a body of knowledge, and a hope for a better future."[30]

"Scientism," writes Pope John Paul II, "is the philosophical notion which refuses to admit the validity of forms of knowledge other than those of the positive sciences; and it relegates religious, theological, ethical and aesthetic knowledge to the

realm of mere fantasy."[31] Peters states scientism claims total victory on the grounds that science is the sole source of trustworthy knowledge.

> There is only one reality, the natural world, and experimental science provides the only trusted methods for learning the truth about this reality. Religion, in contrast, provides no knowledge. The best it can do is create fictions about nonexistent realities. Thus, what the theologians say is only pseudo-knowledge, not the real thing. [32]

In an extreme form of scientism, science is viewed as a religion and given different names, such as materialism, positivist philosophy, naturalism, or even atheism.[33] What exactly is the rationale behind scientism is hard to determine as Stenmark says, but it gives the false impression that science can be one's religion and replace both traditional religion and ethics.[34]

The danger we face at the present time is being forced to choose between two extremes – religion or scientism. The Islamic world for centuries suffered from this dilemma.

Nursi believes that "the conscience is illuminated by the religious sciences, and the mind is illuminated by the physical sciences and wisdom occurs through the combination of these two."[35] In this model the distinction between transmitted and intellectual/speculative sciences is clear but the combination of both is a strong necessity.[36] Nursi's integrated study of science is the subject of this chapter. Nursi has his own interest in retrieving a sense of cooperation between science and religion. We will concentrate on Nursi's model of religious intercourse with science that rejects any form of scientism, whether in the form of materialism, naturalism, negative philosophy, atheism or communism.[37] Nursi's main aim was to prove on the one hand the existence and unity of God and other truths of religion, and on the other, the

irrationality and logical absurdity of the concepts on which materialist philosophy is based, namely, random chance and coincidence, nature, and causality.

Nevertheless during the time in which Nursi lived (1876–1960), materialism and communism were at their peak and the psycho-sociological condition of the world was disturbing. On the other hand, there were enormous advances in the field of the modern sciences. These improvements in science were used as a tool for irreligion; to create doubts about religion in Muslim people's minds as well as Christians' and Jews'.[38] A major change in the Islamic world which arose from these doubts was the establishment of legislative systems that governed Muslims and was based on materialistic and scientific worldviews. According to Agai this took place as a result of direct imperial rule on the countries or new nationalistic state-systems.[39] It was in such a world that Nursi was born and raised.[40]

How to approach the concept of science has caused a great deal of discussion as well as confusion in Islamic intellectual circles. It will not be possible in this limited chapter to reproduce the whole debate about science in the Islamic world which has taken place in the course of history, nor to describe in detail the development of modern Islamic scientific approaches. Nursi's thoughts on this subject were closely connected with his time and place and with the historical changes that challenged the Muslim world in particular.[41] In the late Ottoman period there were some attempts at modernisation, in engineering, the military, health and scientific fields. Western civilisation was the model to be copied in order to achieve worldly success.[42] Ottoman intellectuals involved with the issues of science and scientism were impressed and influenced by the positivistic terminology which was dominant at the time.[43] It was during the early constitutional period that Turkish society was confronted with the materialism and idealism of the Young Turks, who with their

positivist Durkheimian world view established a new sociology.[44] Westernisation or modernisation started at the beginning of the early eighteenth century. Elements of Western civilisation[45] – industry, science, factories and schools – were the talismans by which they tried to conjure up the wealth and power of Europe. Lewis states "The same basic ideas have underlain the work of many subsequent reformers and innovators."[46] But when the matter comes to the science, scientism and religion issue it is quite difficult to draw an outline for this in the Islamic world because there is not a general consensus.[47] It can be approached from many different perspectives, and may vary according to the region, period or discipline under consideration.[48] However, at this stage it will be worth recalling the basic theories that concern us. In doing so we will consider the modern Islamic approacheswith which Nursi himself grew up. Kalin proposes three categories of Islamic scientific views: "Without pretending to be exhaustive, they can be classified under three headings: ethical, epistemological, and ontological/metaphysical views of science."[49] Epistemological perspectives were pioneered by Karl Popper in the Western world and Muhammad Abduh in the Islamic world, sociological perspectives were proposed by T. S. Kuhn in the West and Ziauddin Sardar in the Islamic world, and ontological perspectives were led by Nasr.[50] There are also the various modern Islamic movements to consider, such as political Islam, progressive Islam, revolutionary Islam, public Islam, official Islam, each of which has its own attitude to science.[51] The subject can be broken down still further by dividing the modern era into periods that differed in the effects of science on the Islamic. The first period is 1875–1918, in which colonisation by Westerners increased and an early reaction to it and its science. The second period is 1914–1945, during which time freedom movements arose against Western occupation and their building of nation states. Official Islam's approach to science was mainly based on

positivism at this time and religion was disregarded. The third period runs from 1945 up to now, in which revolutionary activities against Western cultural values and an alternative Islam have flourished.[52] Throughout these periods the Islamic concern with science and scientism has changed. The premises that shaped the scientific thinking of Islamic intellectuals in these times were based on Islam and the Qur'an, which led them to avoid innovations and the observations of rationalism, even while they studied Western civilisation closely.[53] In this regard Mardin states, "Indeed, during the nineteenth century, science had been one of the major areas on which the defensive and apologetic attitude of Muslims had been focused."[54] The entire generation of 19th century Muslim scholars, intellectuals, and activists at the time in which Nursi lived were influenced by modern science and positivism. The main figures to mention here are Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muhammad Abduh because of their influence on the next generation. Ahmad Khan is known as the pioneer of naturalism.[55] He used rationalist philosophy to build up a structural renewal movement. His aim was to form a belief structure based on the laws of nature and truths of the Qur'an. He saw the Qur'an as the word of God and nature as the creation of God. Therefore there cannot be any inconsistency between the two.[56] Abduh was of the opinion that there was an urgent need to save Muslim minds from imitation of the West with the help of rationalism. While he tried to adopt innovations in the fields of political, social, and intellectual sciences; he used positivism and advocated separation of church and governance.[57]

What concerns us here is where Nursi fits among these very complex and confusing categorisations and approaches to Islamic science and scientism. Nursi shares the same approach as Afghani to the ethical approach to science:[58] he uses the language of Newtonian physics as a powerful way of deconstructing the metaphysical

claims of science,[59] while in his attitude to science he also follows the mystical tradition.[60] Nursi's discourse on scientific concepts is also similar to that of Khan, Abduh and Ismail Faruqi. Another point of view, it should be pointed out here, is that Nursi in his earlier life was an Ottomanist, and his usage of such positivist terminology is in part a reaction to the impact of the West on Ottoman decline.[61] At the end of this chapter we are hoping to reinstate Nursi among his contemporaries by defining his scientific project as "Sacrelisation of Science".

One also needs to be point out here that the main question as far as all the Islamic scholars (from Afghani to S. Ahmad Khan, Muhammad Abduh to Shakip Arslan),[62] including Nursi, are concerned is, "Why should the world be the world of progress for everyone else, and the world of decline and retrogression only for us?"[63] The answer to this question is very much related to the main object of this chapter. They all answered this question differently but some of their answers shaped later Islamic intellectuals' systems of thought. Discussion centred around the different responses and understandings of the question of the relation between reason and revelation. These intense debates were often characterised by abusive exchanges and name-calling, including "so and so" are *'kuffar'* (unbelievers). Numerous scholars have joined the argument, including Afghani-Ahmad Khan, Shaykh Tahir el-Cezairi, Abdullah Nedim, Abdulkadir el-Maghribi, Rashid Ridha, Ismail Faruqi, Ziauddin Sardar, Seyyid Hussein Nasr, Nakib al Attas, Hassan al-Turabi, Fethullah Gulen and Rashid al-Ghannushi.[64] The following section evaluates Nursi's understanding of this issue and his solution to the backwardness of Muslims in the field of science and technology.

5.1 SCIENCE, SCIENTISM AND RELIGION ACCORDING TO NURSI

According to Mardin, the first of two dimensions of Nursi's effectiveness as a leader is linked to a world-wide development which is the so-called "communications revolution".[65] As stated in the previous chapter, the way in which Said Nursi received information about the ideas of Muhammad Abduh from students passing through the province of Mardin, gives us an inkling of the consequences of the global communications change for its inhabitants.[66] Nursi was well aware of the technological and scientific developments going on around the world at that time. Living in such a world there appeared to be three major areas of study on the current world situation: development, progress, and a shift towards a knowledge-based society. An interpretation of the Qur'an which linked it to the new condition of the world found an eager audience for reasons that went back to features of folk Islam as well as for reasons linked to modernization and the spread of communications.[67] According to Kalin, unlike many of his contemporaries, Nursi had a considerable knowledge of almost all the physical and mathematical sciences, and later studied philosophy.[68] He believed that only with such knowledge could he assist in the renewal of Islamic theology (*Kalam*) and successfully answer the attacks to which the Qur'an and Islam were then subject.[69]

Nursi of course was influenced by the terminology of positivism. For example, he uses the terms *ulûm-u diniye* (religious sciences) and *ulum-u musbete* (positive sciences).[70] This is by itself sufficient to show that he accepts the classification of sciences into positive and metaphysical sciences or physical sciences and religious sciences. According to Acikgenc this classification is evidently based on the positivist concept of science.[71] As a religious scholar well grounded in traditional Islamic sciences, Nursi was aware of the apparent discrepancy between traditional cosmology

articulated by Muslim philosophers as well as the Sufis and the Newtonian world-picture which contained no religious references.[72] His terminology is full of terms such as "the physical world is described as a *fabrika-i kainat*" (factory of the universe) or, "life is a machine of the future from the exalted benchwork of the universe" (*hayat kainatin tezgah-i azaminda ... bir istikbal makinesidir*),[73] or "collective personality of students is described as the components of machinery in a factory...".[74] *Risale-i Nur* is replete with similes and parables that use this kind of terminology to improve the effectiveness of his theistic rhetoric.[75] It is in this sense that, as Mardin writes,

> "It is much more rewarding to see Said as using both the Qur'an and residues of Anatolian mysticism as a transformational medium which allow him to engage in a number of simultaneous operations, establish contact with popular religion, draw followers of the folk variety of Islam in the direction of a belief focused on the unicity of God, shift the dead weight of traditional Islamic orthodoxy and join the stream of an understanding of the laws of nature as it appears in modern Western European thought."[76]

The issue here is whether or not Nursi saw positivist terminology as a threat to his understanding of Islam and his ideals. It is quite difficult to answer this because I do not think Nursi worried about these things. He had the ultimate aims of building a society of which belief in God would be the bedrock, and to achieve those aims he used science and morality and worked for social change. This is a very pragmatic attitude which is partly a product of the positivist time in which he lived. However, in the understanding of Nursi, the secularists and positivists of the 19th century posed no threat to a theistic conception of the universe, and he was very confident in using

positivist tersm to propound his own theistic worldview.[77] Nursi's theistic view of science and nature was based on scripture rather than reason. He is therefore not a deist. Although he refers to man's intellect, this reference is only through the scripture upon which Said Nursi models himself. In this view, God is not a being who set the clock and watches how it runs. He "continues creation". In Nursi's view all the particles in the universe are acting under the command, and at the will of an All-Wise and Glorious Maker, an All-Generous and Beauteous Creator.[78]

However, Nursi also stated that "At the end of time, mankind will spill into science and learning. It will obtain all its strength from science. Power and rule will pass to the hand of science."[79] Power and rule passing to the hand of science (knowledge) is nothing other than his admission of its influence on and power over cultural and social fields as well. This is an acceptance of science but not scientism.

As mentioned earlier, according to Nursi all sciences and arts are based on and rely upon a Divine Name and the reality of the universe and all beings is also based on the Divine Names, so therefore they are nothing but religious. He writes,

> The true science of philosophy is based on the Name of All-Wise, he says and true medicine on the Name of Healer, and geometry on the Name of Determiner, and so on. And in the same way that each science is based on and ultimately ends in a Name, the realities of all arts and sciences, and of all human perfections, are based on the Divine Names.[80]

As we have emphasised in the previous chapter, according to Nursi, the Qur'an's and therefore religion's main aim and goal is to give light on the hereafter. It therefore speaks of certain phenomena discussed in sciences in a rather simple and superficial manner because its actual purpose is to explain the meanings of the universe laid in front of us as a great book in order to make known its Creator. For this, like Acikgenc, he thought that the Qur'an "uses a language which leads man to

form a habit of mind to look at things not for themselves but for their Creator, and this is what he thought to be the true guidance; while the state of mind which results from the language of secular philosophy and science leads man to look at beings for themselves.'"[81] It is clear that Nursi admits and acknowledges the power of science and its outcomes. However, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, for Nursi "all science and human progress outside religion and belief is worth nothing, like the heroism of Rustam and Hercules", for he thought that "all it does is to administer injections to deaden the senses so that through drunkenness and dissipation those grievous fears may be temporarily forgotten."[82] For Nursi Islam was the master and guide of the sciences, and the chief and father of all true knowledge.[83]

'*Ilm*, and the Dichotomy between *Naqli* (Transmitted) and *Aqli* (Rational/Intellectual) Knowledge

We will now consider the dichotomy between *aqli* and *naqli* knowledge in Nursi's approach and try to clarify his concern with *'ilm* in general. It has been stated that "'*ilm* (knowledge) is one of the most fundamental concepts in Islam."[84] Over time the notion of '*ilm* has gradually broadened to mean 'science', and the numerous definitions and expositions of '*ilm*, produced especially during the classical period, further expanded the notion of '*ilm*.[85] In this respect Turner says, "Thus *'ilm* has been understood to mean various things: the received revelation or Koran; the revealed law (*shari'a*); the *sunna*; Islam; *iman*; spiritual knowledge (*'ilm al-ladunni*); wisdom (*hikma*); gnosis ('*irfan*); thought (*tafakkur*); science (to which the plural *'ulum* is applied); and education."[86] According to Sardar, knowledge "In its various derivations, it is one of the most frequently occurring terms in the Quran; indeed, only two other words appear more frequently: *Allah* (God) and *Rabb* (the Creator, the

Sustainer).'"[87] We will not go into the details of religious, philosophical and mystical meanings which emerged to expand the boundaries of *'ilm*. We will consider Nursi's approach of '*ilm* as *aqli* and *naqli*.[88]

One may say that from the perspective of human history there have been two basic ways of learning and reaching scientific and religious knowledge.[89] Each kind has its proper method.[90] The method proper to *naqli* knowledge is defined as *taqlid*, or imitation, and the method proper to *aqli* learning is *tahqiq*, or verification and realisation.[91] The basic proof in the *naqli* learning of religion is "God said so." The basic proof in the *aqli* learning is "It is self-evident."[92]

Although the classical separation of *naqli* knowledge (transmitted) and *aqli* knowledge (rational/intellectual) is attributed largely to al-Ghazali[93], Nursi was among those to draw attention to it.[94] Nursi followed other contemporary Muslim writers when he used the term *'ilm* to denote not merely 'religious' knowledge or knowledge of God but knowledge in its broadest sense.[95] He, however, divides *aqli* and *naqli* into two sciences: the religious sciences and the physical sciences.[96] It cannot be said he went into details about these sciences but treated them theoretically. Indeed he writes of the Islamic Shari'a: "Such a *Shari'a* that, uniting hand in hand the rational sciences [reason] and transmitted sciences [those based on Divine revelation] confirms the veracity of its truths."[97] This clearly shows the distinction Nursi made between transmitted and intellectual knowledge and the need for a combination of both. However, he approaches this dichotomy in his own peculiar way. He points out that, although the distinction may seem to be clear, in fact all knowledge is religious whatever its source or nature. According to Nursi, the relationship between *aqli* and *naqli* learning is complementary, not antagonistic. For Nursi the purpose of knowledge is to solve the mysteries of, first, the individual's own world and then the

universe's, so that one can reflect on the existence of the Great Creator in everything and thus strengthen one's faith. He is of the opinion that Islam has always embraced every sort of knowledge. According to Nursi, to know something outside the Divine context means nothing. In accordance with this idea he thought that if we think that we know, we do not in fact know and are most probably afflicted with the disease of compound ignorance.[98] For Nursi when someone learns *naqli* knowledge that they have not verified for themselves, they do not in fact know what they think they know. He believed the verification of *naqli* knowledge was a necessity. Most people hold their knowledge without verifying it, whereas he was of the opinion even the knowledge of faith needed verification and renewal. He states,

> Knowledge is of two kinds: There is one kind of knowledge which will suffice, if it is grasped once and reflected upon a few times. But the other kind of knowledge is like nutrition and water; man constantly needs to reflect upon it. He cannot say: 'I have grasped it once and that is sufficient.' The sciences of belief are of this second kind.[99]

Raison d'être of Knowledge

According to Nursi, animals come into the world complete in all points in accordance with their needs, and they discover all the conditions of their lives in a few hours or days or months of time and become proficient in them. He maintains the view that it is not their duty to seek perfection through learning and progress by acquiring knowledge, whereas man, he argues, needs to learn everything when he comes into the world and cannot completely grasp the conditions of life in twenty years or so. Man's innate duty according to Nursi is to be perfected through learning and seeking knowledge.[100] Actually it is quite interesting that Nursi maintains that humans' quest for knowledge is ultimately an attempt to be more perfect. He also argues that if a human being's wrongdoings do not incur the Divine wrath before the appointed time,

there is much he can achieve in knowledge and science. This is very much in-line with his gradualist approach. Yet once again, because of his somewhat unspecific discourse, we are not sure what exactly he means by "perfection".

The *raison d'être* of knowledge according to Nursi is to arrive at *tawhid* (the assertion of the unity of God). Therefore knowledge is a prerequisite of *iman*.[101] In Nursi's thought this means that all and everything in the universe are signs pointing to God and must refer to man's knowledge of God. Also, according to Nursi, everything in the universe is utterly and absolutely dependent upon God for knowledge. Knowledge connects the Divine vicegerency with his Creator.[102] Knowledge of any kind, according to Nursi, opens up a window on to knowledge of God.[103] The positivistic claim that the only kind of knowledge we can have is scientific knowledge and that the only things that exist are the ones science has access to is something that Nursi never favoured.[104] For him, scientific knowledge of the natural world is knowledge about that which God has created. In this view knowledge gained about the natural world should contribute to what we know about God, and conversely, what we know about God should influence how we understand the natural world.[105]

As stated, Nursi argues that man has come to this world to be perfected by means of knowledge and supplication based on belief. That is to say knowledge has an inner dimension in which the highest aim of creation is the knowledge of God contained within belief in God. Its most important result is the love of God contained within the knowledge of God.[106] Knowledge of God is thus the essence of reality, and the fruit of man's existence, and its aim. According to this idea, knowledge, love and belief are very much interrelated. This interrelationship forms the basis of Nursi's view of education, and we will consider this matter in the following section. Also, as stated in the previous chapter, according to the understanding of Nursi, the whole of

the cosmos is, as it were, a vast open book which is to be pondered, understood and interpreted. The Divine Names and Attributes are the keys for this. As mentioned before, man has been granted the ability to analyse, read and interpret the index. His superiority over all creatures lies in this.[107] According to Vahide, his *Risale-i Nur* "besides looking inward, looks mostly to the outer world, opening up a broad path leading to the knowledge of God."[108] If humanity submits to knowledge that he has acquired concerning the Creator of the cosmos, that is where *iman* starts.[109]

According to Nursi human beings have a unique role to play in the universe as a result of being the Divine vicegerent. It is an Islamic belief that God has created man in his own image and taught him all the names.[110] Nursi says:

> Man was appointed God's vicegerent on the earth in order to carry out His decrees and apply His laws, which is dependent on complete knowledge ... In the word 'allama' (learn) is an indication to the elevated stature of knowledge and its loftiness and its being the pivot of the vicegerency.[111]

Another *raison d'être* of knowledge is therefore to enable humans to function as the Divine vicegerent. In regard to this point Barguth states, "knowledge becomes a chief element of renewal and its vitality, and of the vicegerency and its effectuality."[112] Nursi connects knowledge with man's being the Divine vicegerent on earth so that man may advance in the inner and outer worlds, in personal and daily social life. Therefore knowledge plays a role in social cohesions, social concepts and actions. In connection with this Nursi writes:

> He who seeks success in some matter has to conform sincerely to the Divine laws, be acquainted with the natural laws, and connected to the ties of society. Otherwise, creation will respond to him negatively and he will remain without success.[113]

He also believed that the truths of the Divine *Shari'a* have preserved a balance between the laws of creation relating to this world and to the hereafter. He argues that the truths of *Shari'a* have thus maintained the relationships necessary for the bonding of society, despite all the terrible clashes and upheavals of the past.[114] However it should be mentioned here that Nursi's usage of the term *"Shari'a"* mostly refers in its mystical cues: the Divine laws of creation. We will consider this in the following section.

One of the primary goals of knowledge, according to Nursi, is to signify the objectives and limitations of human achievement in science and civilisation. His *Risale-i Nur* on the Miracles of the Prophets demonstrate that, just as the Prophets were leaders of communities in regard to spiritual and moral progress, so were they masters in some craft or industry, taught them by means of a miracle.[115] In mentioning this, Nursi thought the Qur'an was urging man to imitate them in order to attain scientific and technological progress.[116] According to Nursi the miracles of each of the prophets indicates a wonder of human art or craft. In this regard, he cites Adam's miracle of being taught the Divine Names and becoming the supreme vicegerent, which represents in concise the human ability to discover the bases of crafts, the index of the sciences and all the branches of knowledge. Humankind is thus impelled to seek the mysteries of the wonders and perfections, which Nursi thought of these as the keys to a treasury of perfections, and guides to a store of knowledge.[117]

It can be seen clearly that a number of cues found in the mystical tradition have been used by Nursi, although he was very critical of mysticism.[118] Nursi, whether consciously or not, set out to combine mystical and secular scientific thought in a way which, according to Mardin, also characterised the thought of Renaissance Europe and modern science.[119]

In short, it can thus be concluded that for Nursi, the term '*ilm* must refer to man's knowledge of God. It is clear by now that according to Nursi all sciences and knowledge are religious, and that scientific and religious knowledge are complementary disciplines. His emphasis is on the knowledge which yields happiness in this world and the one to come. In the following section we will attempt to clarify Nursi's approach to scientism.

5.2 REASON VERSUS BELIEF (SCIENTISM VERSUS RELIGION)

Ever since man first appeared on earth, he has always been interested in gaining mastery over his physical environmentas a means of finding a way to both worldly and eternal happiness. In doing so, according to Nursi, he has either chosen the way of those who followed the negative philosophy in the light of reason or the way of those who followed the Prophethood in the light of Revealed Scriptures.[120] And this polarisation of reason versus belief, philosophy versus propethood, flesh versus spirit, earth versus heaven (others may call it a conflict of evidence versus dogma, or reason versus revelation) has sometimes caused contention and challenge.[121] Thus scientism and religion have generally been considered as natural and eternal opponents. It is this opposition which we will now consider in Nursi's discourse.

Nursi notes that the representatives of the first group, which yielded the fruits of the schools of atheistic philosophy, are the like of the Materialists, Naturalists, Illuminists and Sophists. However, it should be mentioned here that the kind of philosophy that Nursi was particularly opposed to was the kind that finds association and equality between all causes and intermediaries, Divine ones included.[122]

One of the philosophies which Nursi dealt with most often was materialism, or more correctly 'atheistic scientism'[123] and especially claims like "reason alone is

sufficient enough to answer the mystery behind life; matter in motion or physical nature is what is ultimately real, and a natural cause necessitates and creates it."[124] He was strongly opposed to science and technology being the tool of materialism and irreligion because he thought scientism appears to leave no place for Divine action.[125] Modern science, says Clayton, presupposes that the universe is a closed physical system, that interactions are regular and law-like, that all causal histories can be traced, and that anomalies will ultimately have physical explanations.[126] It was this view that Nursi repeatedly countered, as, for example, in his famous treatise *Tabiat Risâlesi* (*The Treatise on Nature*).[127]

Nursi encouraged his students to be investigative in any issue related to either religion or science. He stated that no aspect of Islam was contrary to reason. On the contrary, it was possible to prove and explain all its aspects rationally. In an early work, entitled *Muhakemat* (Reasonings), Nursi paid a lot of attention to the importance of reason, saying "If the speculative and transmitted sciences conflict, the speculative sciences should be taken as basic and the transmitted sciences interpreted."[128] This means that if revelation appears to conflict with reason then reason should be taken as the basis and revelation should be interpreted, but in such a case, according to him reason must be genuine. He was very questioning of knowledge. He insisted on "truth instead of bigotry, proof instead of false arguments, and reason instead of natural disposition;" and warned "do not be deceived by embellished claims; ask for proof!"[129] In describing "degrees of the mind," he says: "First is imagining, then conception, then reasoned thought." He thought reasoning across religious boundaries was possible. The nature and implications of reasoning inevitably become prominent in his discourse. For him, Islam considers everything through reason and thought. Attaining to 'belief by affirmation' or verification is tied

to the condition of using reason; he sees reasoned thought and investigation as a precondition of affirmation, and belief without reason as "bigotry."[130] He declares man to be "unbiased in using his reason" and defends freedom of thought against objections such as, "the more I use my reason, the more doubts I have; it's better not to think too much."[131] He emphasised the importance of reason, the greatness of the modern sciences of civilization and the power of free choice. He believed reason would find a way "to persuade the deniers" to believe. But, as said before, Nursi's philosophy of knowledge leads him to be watchful of the serious limitations and dangers of relying solely on reason. Reason alone has human limitations: he recommended "opening the door to reason, but not taking the will from it."[132] Acikgenc quotes him "the revealed truth is reasonable, but reason on its own cannot attain it."[133] Religion based only on reason or emotion cannot reach God, he thought; it only leads to an embodying of God, or claiming partnership with Him, or materialism. On the other hand religion without reason is according to him fruitless and lacking. Elsewhere he states, "Belief is attained through reason's power of choice."[134] For he thought "If knowledge lacks the insight of the heart, it is ignorance. Taking the part of something is one thing, belief is something else".[135]

It is important to note that Nursi also believed in the necessity of specialising in science. He thought one person could specialise at most in a few subjects but not in all; trying to learn everything means not learning them at all. He also makes the point, however, that specialisation should come after a general knowledge of all. That is to say that Nursi was of the opinion that splitting your mind into compartments is necessary, one for religious faith and practice, another for scientific or ideological, another for professional expertise. However, he thought all this is to be done under the comprehensiveness of religious faith.[136] One could argue that this way leads to a

secularisation of knowledge, but this is an issue that needs careful analysis far beyond the boundaries of the present study.

Coming back to positivistic claims that, in Nursi's words, "Causes create this", "It forms itself; it comes into existence and later ceases to exist", or "It is natural; Nature necessitates and creates it" – these are something Nursi deals with extensively throughout his Risale-i Nur.[137] He uses logical explanations and arguments to prove their logical absurdity. In 'the Supreme Sign' Nursi argues that the universe had a grand hierarchy of levels in which every domain of reality is present simultaneously and points us to the Supreme Creator.[138] According to Nursi this order and hierarchy is created in a way that impels the intellect to discover the mystery behind them, which is the light of God.[139] In another famous treatise he discusses atoms and minute particles, their motions and duties, and finds a Divine unity in them.[140] For "all the observations of one who views the universe in the name of God are true knowledge. But if one observes the universe heedlessly in the name of causes, what he considers knowledge is indeed ignorance."[141] In this sense, causes point to a Truth that is beyond themselves.[142] In this cosmology of Nursi, nature is a purposeful agent. For Nursi's causes are only agents directly evolving the purposive activity which is involved in the making of the world; however, in this view it can also be shown that will and knowledge are involved.[143] In Nursi's thought, purposive action, free will, and knowledge are defined as agents, and the conclusion he reaches is the required majestic measure which would describe a world-maker – infinite knowledge, perfect will, ever-successful action. Such attributes constitute a definition of an original maker, and it is this majestic figure who is intended when we speak about 'God', according to Nursi.

Although it is beyond the boundaries of this section, Nursi's cosmology may recall one of the earliest views about creation, that of 'atomism' – the notion that matter is made up of small, indivisible particles. This theory explains that the cosmos consists of nothing but identical, indestructible particles (atoms) moving randomly in a void, and that the Earth came about by the chance association of atoms. It also teaches that other Earths and other life-forms originated elsewhere and that they exist both simultaneously and in temporal succession. This worldview has found many admirers among contemporary materialists, of whom the atomists are the most prominent the most successful in applying it in natural science.[144] Nursi's treatment of the issue is in part a response to this worldview, and it is important for us to bear in mind that one of the main objectives of Nursi's Risale-i Nur is to answer the materialists' claims about the non-existence of God or the doubts they have caused.[145] In the above-named treatises, he brings up the classical discussions about causality and necessity in Islamic thought – elaborated by al-Farabi, further articulated by Ibn Sina, and to which objections were raised by al-Ghazali[146] – for reconsideration by modern man. Influenced by the early Islamic *Ash'ariyya* theologists (*kalam* thinkers), whose ideas were similar to Aristotle's refutations of atomism, Nursi employs the idea of God as the real cause of events.[147] Following the *Ash'ariyya* dialectic method of theology, Nursi insisted that reason must be obedient to revelation.[148] The metaphor, also used by Ghazali, that the connection between a cause and its effect is assumed to be the result of God's action is favoured by Nursi.[149] Nursi was defending faith with arguments and reason. Although he uses language which some may say is influenced by positivism, which is based on materialist philosophy, he obtained the primary materials from the Qur'an, the divine revelation.[150] He was rationalising faith, as a necessity, by the use of reason like al-Ash'ari.[151] It is at this point worth noting that

Nursi's concept that knowledge is derived through use of the intellect is similar to Maturidism.[152] Also, the reconciliation between reason and revelation that Nursi sought also reflects his Ash'ari roots. [153] His excessive dependence on intellect to discover the mysteries seems to show some influence from Mu'tazila's rationalism, though a deep analysis is required to discover the full extent of it.[154] However, nearly all of Nursi's followers feel strongly that recognising any connection with Mu'tazilas is unorthodox.[155] It is true that Nursi differs from Mu'tazila on the conception of God and the nature of His attributes and shares the Ash'ariyya view in this regard.[156] Despite various influences, however, Nursi articulated a cosmology particular to him.

Towards the end of the 20th century the war between science and religion ceased in the West, because, says Guiderdoni, religion admitted that is had nothing to say on cosmology. He says, "The fields simply do not overlap because science has colonized the whole of «reality»." He writes, "To do so, it has defined reality as being only what can be studied scientifically". Guiderdoni argues that theologians have tried to explain why God appears to be the hidden ruler under the phenomena. "Old ideas, such as those of Keno-sis and Tzimtzum that flourished respectively in Christian and Jewish theological thinking, have undergone a fascinating revival, and are now used by these theologians to explain why God retires to let the cosmos apparently be ruled by its own laws, without any sign of direct divine intervention."[157] Nursi in his phenomenology insists this argument is false. Even a single particle according to Nursi is directed to a specific goal in accordance with certain laws and ends with many amazing, purposeful consequences by the permission of Divine Power.[158]

> Since a letter cannot exist without showing the one who wrote it, and an artistic inscription cannot exist without making known its inscriber, how is it that an inscriber who writes a huge book in a single letter and inscribes a thousand inscriptions in a single inscription, should not be known through his writing and through his inscribing?[159]

In these analyses of the cosmos, it is also possible to see the effectiveness and the extent of the reaction against positivist philosophy in Nursi's discourse on the unity and existence of Divine Being. Nursi was very much opposed to the approaches of materialists that made the order in the universe the orderer, made the art the artist, made the laws sources of power, and proposed an external reality called Nature. Nursi claims that everything in the universe shows us a sign of the oneness of God.[160] According to Nursi, the laws of the universe exist only as knowledge and have no power to create: "the imaginary and insubstantial thing they call Nature" consists of insignificant laws, proceeding from Divine wisdom.[161]

Furthermore, according to Nursi, Nature is 'the comprehensive Divine Shari'a'[162] established for the order and harmony of everything contained in the visible, material world. He argues that this law of creation is also called the 'way of God' (*sunnatullah*). Nature is the result of all nominal laws in creation. Forces are the principles of this Shari'a, and laws are elements of the same Shari'a. The regularity of its principles and elements leads people to see it as "nature" with a real, external existence, and after that, as an agent. Although, according to Nursi, the human heart or mind cannot be convinced that nature is a true agent, those who deny the All-Majestic Creator and refuse to understand the Divine Power's miraculous works might begin to see this blind, ignorant nature as the origin of things.[163]

As we said, causes are one of the most oft-repeated issues in Nursi's writings. Nursi deals with the issue in order to answer the positivistic viewpoint of science that there is always a non-divine cause behind every creation and the mind is the only means by which to grasp the ultimate realities. For Nursi, on the other hand, causes are only veils and agents before the Divine Power and Its Grandeur and are meant to

prevent the mind from drawing wrong conclusions about the All-Holy Divine Being by seeing with a superficial view the hand of His Power in mundane affairs.[164] He states

> Divine grandeur and dignity require that natural causes are but a screen to the Hand of Power in the mind's eye,
>
> While Divine unity and glory require that natural causes draw back their hands and have no true effect in the works of power.[165]

This means that Nursi thought that causes do not interfere in creation, although they have direct effect in it. Elsewhere he states, "The universality of the pen of power proclaims Divine Unity" and states,

> The skilful works of art found in every corner of creation clearly refute the creativity of causes;
>
> The inscriptions of the Pen of Power in every point of creation necessarily reject the existence of intermediaries.[166]

In Nursi's thought, Mermer states, "Everything from the smallest unit of the universe to the largest – minute particles, cells, plants, animals, man, the land, the seas, the planets, the stars, and so on – must be made the subject of research and be seen as an "ascent in knowledge of God" (a means, or stairway, to knowledge of God)."[167] To sum up, Nursi rejects the claims of atheistic scientism, though not science itself. In short, he was of the opinion that thought and intellect are the watchmen and protectors of belief and that causes are signs pointing to the Maker and making Him known.[168] In this view science becomes sacred and serves divine purposes.

Nursi's defence against those who try to replace God by causality is unique among contemporary Islamic theoreticians, but as Turner states, he was not the first

Islamic theologian to reject causality. Others include al-Ashari, Imam Ghazali, some Sufists and medieval Shi'ists.[169] In this regard, Nursi elsewhere states,

> All the chains of causes are based on Him and rest on His power. They are all merely veils for the disposals of His power. All apparent causes are only screens for preserving the dignity and majesty of His sacred power. They have no effect whatsoever in creation. If it was not for His will and command, nothing, not even a particle, could move or act.[170]

He saw causality as the replacement of the image of God and was harsh in his argument against this kind of philosophy. However, his writings did to some extent include positivistic language, including such terms as "nature", "factory", "machine", "components of machinery", which reflect his new way of attaining belief and truth through reason. His critics were therefore partially right.

5.3 EDUCATIONAL REFORM

The labours, over the past twenty-five centuries of human history, of the great scholars and educators of humanity such as Confucius, Plato, al-Ghazali, al-Farabi, Locke, Rousseau, Mullah Sadra, Piaget, Dewey, Washington and Suzuki, Herbart and Montessori, has brought us to a point where nobody can deny the important role education must play in the modern world.[171] All these thinkers and educationalists review the following central questions: "Is not education itself the very cornerstone of everything else?" "How can a culture survive, much less grow and improve, if it has not learnt how to educate its members?" "How will ideas be communicated and behaviours modelled if we do not know how we should teach our young?" Is anything more necessary then for the survival of human culture than education?"[172] The

scholars whose work we shall examine in this section have a profound understanding of the important role education plays in our world.

Although these educators are of different times and places, different backgrounds and beliefs, amid their disagreements lies a vast fabric of agreement. They have agreed on the absolute foundational importance of education in general. Without a sound foundational education system the structure will collapse and the society supported by it will crumble. They have also agreed that society is the chief benefactor of education. It is actually through a sound education system that the young generation learns about history, social development, science and law. Education is where citizens are socialised in very explicit and direct ways, and therefore is pivotal to whether a society will flourish or collapse. These great educational reformers also agree that society derives major benefits from education. It was they who were the first to point out the failures of traditional education, that the traditional approach to education is not working any more, and they were often victimised by the failures of the formalistic in education: rote memorisation, over-emphasis on testing, etc.[173]

However, it has to be stated that, including as it does the five major branches of logic, epistemology, aesthetics, ethics, and metaphysics, along with their many subdivisions, education is a vast field. All of these are involved in the redevelopment of the education system. Here, I shall briefly review Nursi's educational reform proposals since these may offer us an insight into his ideal for human society.

According to Nursi, who was trying to present the essentials of Islamic belief with all their branches to all the faculties of modern man, including his power of reasoning, the Muslims' present situation required an overall renewal in all the fields of Islam, one basis of which was educational reform. According to Spuler, Nursi had

an extraordinarily positive point of view of science, and hence of critical and unbiased intellectual works, a perspective hitherto unseen anywhere in the Islamic world.[174]

According to Mardin, Nursi developed a modern intellectual outlook during his early years of *medrese* education.[175] He was critical of the existing classical Islamic education system and questioned its adequacy. This can clearly be seen from the following.

When Nursi was fourteen, during the period in which he was enrolled on a three-month full-time course under the supervision of Shaykh Mehmed Jalali, he studied all the books which were being taught in the *medreses* at that time, but only in a general way. When his teacher asked him about this he replied: "I am not able to read and comprehend all these books. But these books are caskets of jewels, treasure chests, and you have its key. What I need is a clue to its contents so that at first I want to know what topics these books mention and then I will choose those which are appropriate to my character."[176] According to Mardin, this showed a remarkably modern psychological outlook for such a peasant boy, born in a village of twenty houses – one which could not be captured, owing to the insufficiency of the prevailing education system.[177] According to Agai, Nursi wanted to find a way of leading people to believe, something which to his mind the classical forms of Islamic learning could not achieve; he sought a method that unites religion with science, which can give certainty in belief, and which therefore serves religion.[178] The method, according to Nursi, should proceed "through an alliance of mind and heart".[179] Nursi prophesied:

> The light of conscience is religious sciences. The light of the mind is modern sciences. Reconciliation of both manifests the truth. The student's skills develop further with these two (sciences). When they are separated, from the former superstition and from the latter corruption and scepticism is born. [180]

Religious sciences should be taught at modern schools, and modern sciences at religious schools. "This way," Nursi thought, "the people of the school will be protected from un-belief, and those of the madrasa from fanaticism." Nursi thought that the profound activities of science and technology would not be ultimately successful without the spirit that can be instilled into them by the system of belief and ethics of Islam.[181] With this reconciliation, according to Acikgenc, Nursi tried to bring spirituality into the physical sciences. In this connection he states: "It is necessary to mix and combine modern science with the religious sciences of the madrasas."[182] Also, according to Vahide, Nursi tried to reformulate the science of *kalam*, which he thought was antiquated and unable either to meet the challenges of modern advances in knowledge or to answer the increasing attacks on Islam made chiefly in the name of science and progress. It was for this reason that he studied and mastered the physical and mathematical sciences.[183]

This method – that the religious sciences and modern sciences would be taught side by side – he called *Medresetü'z-Zehra* (the school project of *Zehra*), and he pursued this proposal until the end of his days. Nursi tried to put this project into practise in his lifetime.[184] Elsewhere in his writings, discussing the reasons for Muslims' backwardness in science and technology, he ascribes these to the diifferences he believed existed between the three main branches of the "general guide": the people of the secular schools, those of the religious schools, and those of the Sufi *tekkes*.[185] It was his dream to seek the reconciliation and fusion of three antagonistic groups.[186] However this was something he could not achieve in his lifetime, whereas it has been something his followers have attempted to put into practice afterwards. The core point of his proposal was to reconcile "the three main branches" of the educational system, the *medreses* or traditional religious schools, the

mektebs or new secular schools, and the *tekkes* or Sufi establishments, and the disciplines they represented. He believed that, on a wider scale, the *Medresetü'z-Zehra* would unite the three traditions in the education system by representing "the most superior *mekteb* by the reason, the very best *medrese* by the heart, and the most sacred *zawiye* by the conscience".[187] The reason the physical sciences had, over the course of time, been dropped from *medrese* education, Nursi thought, was because they had contributed directly to the Ottoman decline relative to the advances of the West.[188]

Earlier in his life, Nursi realised the limitations of classical Islamic teaching. He was critical of it, and produced a project which he thought would unite all three educational institutions. Discussion of its practical applicability is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it provided a sound foundation and therefore served as an inspiration to subsequent generations both inside and outside Turkey.[189]

5.4 NURSI'S UNDERSTANDING OF WESTERN CIVILISATION

Stenmark maintains that "Western society has been much shaped by scientific thought and discoveries".[190] The Western mind has tacitly designated scientific thought as "holy" and the religious as "profane", writes Peters:

> We have come to assume that scientific knowledge is pure, whereas so-called religious knowledge is profaned by subjective feeling or atavistic superstition. We have come to assume that scientific research needs to be rational and empirical and that religious sentiments contaminate our understanding of nature with unfounded prejudices regarding the unprovable reality of God.[191]

While looking at the issue of science, scientism and religion, it would be wrong to not consider Nursi's approach to the West, the region of the world which has mainly shaped modern times.

Nursi's views regarding "the West" and "Western Civilisation" were, on the whole, complimentary. However, this does not make him uncritical of the West and the present form of civilisation. In his opinion, as long as the virtues of this civilisation were adopted after filtering them in the light of the Qur'an, this never occurred to him as a problem.[192] We first would like to start by his critiques of "the West" and "Western civilisation".

Nursi never defines exactly what "civilisation" or a civilised people are. He understood "the West" to be a region, one which has produced a philosophy which he regarded as both harmful (negative) and positive.[193] He was very critical about those aspects of Western civilisation which he saw as being based on a negative philosophy. He thought the present civilisation could not understand human nature in its totality (that is to say the body where the spirit and physical appearance have been combined) has not been considered in its totality.[194] Nursi was of the opinion that some virtues of the present civilisation have arisen through the use of intellect. He was, however, highly sceptical about such a use of intellect, believing it should be employed only after filtering those values that Western civilisation produced through the lens of the Qur'an.[195] Thus he was very critical about the present state of civilisation.

Nursi believed that present-day Western civilisation was based mainly on a genius that had emerged from the earth, rather than on guidance descended from the heavens. According to Nursi, guidance works through the heart and the mind, whereas genius works in the mind and confuses the heart. Although Christianity, time and civilisation have worked hand in hand to combine these two, they have all failed. Only the light of the Qur'an and the guidance of the Shari'a are able to make the reconciliation.[196] Then, the "vigorous field of Asia and *Rumelia*[197] will produce the crops of brilliant men, superior to Plato, Avicenna and Bismark, Descartes and

Taftazani, who are so badly needed". Then also, "The East will be to the West what dawn is to sunset".[198]

His comparisons are mainly based on the differences between the "positive" principles and results of revelation, and the "negative" principles and results of philosophy, or between divine guidance (*hüda*) and genius, meaning 'reason' (*deha*).[199] Similar comparisons of Western and Islamic civilizations appear in different contexts in a number of Nursi's works. From this and other references to the same subject, we may draw the following conclusion on the subject. In order to show why Islam rejects the materialist philosophy deriving from Western civilization, he made a comparison of the principles on which Western civilization and Islamic civilization are based and their results. The present civilization of the West is founded on some principles which Nursi describes as negative. Especially after the 1920s, Nursi began to criticise it as a threat to social and moral life because he thought that it justified force and self-interest in society, which depended on racialism as a cohesive force, and conflict as the principle of life, and that it had consequently destroyed mankind's happiness. For the mark of force is aggression, the mark of self-interest is tussling for benefits, the mark of conflict is clashes, and the mark of racialism is devouring others and aggression. Such a society is devoted to "gratifying the human passions and increasing man's needs." He thought that it had cast the majority of people into hardship and misery, whereas the way of the Qur'an only accepts a civilization that brings happiness and prosperity to all, or at least to the majority.[200] According to Nursi, since Western civilization had become removed from the principles of religion and virtue, it had given rise to the permissive attitude towards "dissipation" and "the appetites of the flesh" and "the appalling extreme inequality in the means of livelihood". He thought these would eventually lead to its destruction.[201]

As we have discussed in the previous chapter, Nursi also criticises the injustice inherent in Western civilization and suggests a remedy for its grievous consequences is offered by Islam. Nursi characterises the Western attitude with these two phrases: "So long as I'm full, what is it to me if others die of hunger" and "You struggle and labour so that I can live in ease and comfort." By allowing the social classes to draw far apart, according to Nursi, this attitude has been the cause of such sedition and strife that it has come close to overturning humanity, has for several centuries destroyed public order and security, and this century, owing to the struggle between capital and labour, has given rise to disaster and disorder on a vast scale and ruined mankind with two world wars.[202] Thus he considered it impossible to approve a civilisation in which its negative points so heavily outweighed its virtues and good points.[203] He was cautious about the sins and evils of the present civilisation and tried to produce a methodology which he thought would protect the youth from distraction.[204]

He admits that there are numerous virtues in Western civilisation, although he argues that they are neither the property of Christianity, nor the invention of Europe, nor the product of this century. But nor do they belong only to Islam. They are common property, produced by the conjunction of minds and ideas, from the laws of the revealed religions, and out of innate need. He says, "No one can claim ownership of them."[205]

However, Nursi considered Europe as having two faces.

> Europe is two. One follows the sciences that serve justice and right and activities beneficial for the life of society through the inspiration it has received from true Christianity. This first Europe I am not addressing. Rather, I am addressing the second, corrupt Europe which, through the darkness of the philosophy of naturalism that considers the evils of civilization to be its virtues, has driven humankind to vice and misguidance.[206]

He does not attribute moral, scientific and technological decline wholly to Westerners. He found decadence in the Islamic world and he did not view Europeans as the sole cause of the disasters visited on the Islamic world. He was critical about the Islamic world itself for this backwardness.[207] We will turn back to this issue in the following section.

Above we have tried to clarify the influence of positivist terminology on Nursi's language. In the writings of the first period of his life there is clear evidence of his his admiration for Western civilisation and scientific advancements. This is expressed in the following quotation:

> The Ottoman State is pregnant with Europe, and will give birth to a European state one day. And Europe is pregnant with Islam, and one day will give birth to an Islamic state.[208]

Nursi viewed Europe more in positive than negative terms. Japan was Nursi's model for adopting Western civilisation while preserving its own national customs, culture and values.[209] For Nursi, concepts such as liberty, freedom, justice, democracy, republicanism, equality, technology and industry, whether they originated in the West or anywhere else, should be adopted as long as they are in conformity with Islamic truths.[210] According to Nursi, Islamic freedom and consultation and Western democracy are not different things. The only problem Muslims have had is how to apply Western concepts to their own society.[211] In this respect, Nursi shared the sentiments of the reformist current of *Tanzimat's* enlightened minds.[212] However, his discussions of these issues have far-reaching implications for the contemporary world. Nursi, and afterwards his followers, have been the more sympathetic to the West than any other scholars in the Islamic world. As Mermer points out, the distinctively Islamic Nurcu movement supports modern Turkey's Western political

orientation, unlike many other Islamic movements.[213] However, one thing is clear despite his highly-rated admiration of the virtues of Western civilisation, Nursi was not fixated with its terminology. He did not use terms like "humanism", "culture", "modernity", which were common currency in the West.[214] Instead he produced his own highly complicated terminology that suited his ultimate aim of building a culture of belief.

In his writings Nursi elaborates the concepts mentioned above in a detailed manner. He regarded freedom as the way to be open-minded and free thinking and as the basis of progress.[215] Earlier in his life Nursi was very much impressed by Europe and its democratic environment and got involved with the discussions taking place about its constitutional structure. In the second constitutional period he defended constitutionalism in the face of the aggressive claim that constitutionalism was unreligious. In all his speeches and writings of the time about the relationship between constitutionalism and Islam; he argued that the 1876 Constitution was in no way contrary to Islam. As Vahide states, he described it as the '*Kanun-u Shar'i*", or the Islamic Constitution, and "the Constitution which is founded on the *Shari'a.*"[216] It is clear from his biography that he opposed any form of despotism. Consequently, he was opposed to the oppressive regime of Sultan Abdulhamid II. According to Nursi, freedom is something apart from the law of justice and punishment, and requires that no one dominates anyone else. Everybody's rights are protected. In their legitimate actions, everyone is totally free. The prohibition, 'Take not one from among yourselves as Lord over you apart from God', is exemplified in his outlook. For example, he states, "Freedom springs from belief in God", for "belief requires not degrading others through tyranny and oppression, and abasing them, and not abasing oneself before oppressors. Someone who is a true slave of God cannot be a slave to

others."[217] According to Vahide, Nursi states that freedom is not to be absolved from all the ties of social life and civilization, and in this concern he states,

> Rather, what shines like the sun, is the beloved of every soul, and is the equal of the essence of humanity is that Freedom which is seated in the felicitous palace of civilization and is adorned with knowledge, virtue, and the good manners and raiment of Islam.[218]

Later in his life, in the Republican period, we cannot see Nursi dealing with issues such as republicanism, secularism or laicism in a detailed manner as he did earlier in his life. There may be two reasons for this. First his life was more oppressed than before so he could not approach the issue clearly. Second, the contemporary understanding of such concepts was not in conformity with Nursi's understanding. Nursi was seen and accused of being a threat and challenge to the newly built republican system and was therefore tried and acquitted many times. Yet he was never able to secure himself from these kinds of accusations. In a sense, it is true that Nursi challenged radical secularism which he thought was taking the Muslim identity apart.[219] His problem was always with unreligious ideology, whatever its form In this sense Nursi challenged Ataturk's radical secularist system but not its democratic or republican structure.

However one thing should be kept in mind. Despite all the accusations of being un-republicanist, anti-laicist, or anti-secularist, Nursi was left alive at the time owing to the extreme cautiousness of the early founders of the Republic. Many *hocas*, *shaykhs* and *dervishes* were tried, found guilty and sentenced to death because of their so-called "Islamic reactionary" activities. Yet in his court speeches and defences Nursi claimed to be a religious republicanist and in favour of the present regime but also having his reservations about its present form and practices based on un-religious

policies.[220] He accepts the 'secular' aspect of the republic as meaning its impartiality; that is, in accordance with the principle of freedom of conscience, it does not interfere with the religiously-minded and pious, just as it does not interfere with the irreligious and dissipated. However, he clearly states his reservations about the un-religious practices of it.[221] It is also worth mentioning that according to Nereid, Nursi's opposition to the regime was focused on the state's implementation of secularism. In other words, one way of seeing the conflict between Nursi and the Kemalists is an expression of a general conflict between religion and the young republic's implementation of secularism.[222] According to Vahide, Nursi saw 'democracy' as an illicit means of achieving gradual change and the gradual achievement of what he states he believed was the inevitable future supremacy of Islam and the Qur'an.[223] As we stated in the previous chapter, he also attached great significance to the maintenance of the status quo, public order and security.

One thing also needs to be pointed out here. From the beginning of the 20th century there have been doubts, suspicions, and question marks about Islamic leaders, who are deemed to be backward, un-democratic, anti-laicist, and I assume these suspicions will be even greater since September 11, 2001.

However, an alliance with Christians to fight atheism was also another point in the understanding of Nursi that brought Judeo-Christian civilisation and Islamic civilisation closer. Nursi believed in cooperation between the 'people of the book' against the common enemy of atheism or other unreligious ideologies. Here Nursi's acceptance of the alliance between the 'people of the book' against the so-called common enemy of irreligion reveals his acceptance of pluralism. He was of the opinion at this time that the people of religion and truth needed to unite sincerely not only with their own brothers and fellow believers, but also with the truly pious and

spiritual ones, temporarily from the discussion and debate of points of difference in order to combat their joint enemy – aggressive atheism. He wrote:

> It is even recorded in authentic traditions of the Prophet that at the end of time the truly pious among the Christians will unite with the People of the Qur'an and fight their common enemy, irreligion. And at this time, too, the people of religion and truth need to unite sincerely not only with their own brothers and fellow believers, but also with the truly pious and spiritual ones the Christians, temporarily from the discussion and debate of points of difference in order to combat their joint enemy -aggressive atheism.[224]

Besides, Nursi was also instrumental in promoting inter-faith dialogue. Michel states,

> In any study of the development of Christian–Muslim dialogue in the 20th century, special attention must be given to the writings and preach-ing of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. As one of the first religious thinkers in the course of this century to propose and promote dialogue between Muslims and Christians, Said Nursi's advocacy of this dialogue dates back to 1911. This was a full half-century before the Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council urged Christians and Muslims to resolve their differences and move beyond the conflicts of the past to build relations characterized by respect and cooperation. Bediuzzaman's repeated promotion of Muslim-Christian dialogue is even more striking in that his recommendations frequently date from times of tension and even warfare between Muslim and Christian communities.[225]

However, other evidence of Nursi's approach to pluralism comes from the following observation about other-ness: Nursi states "I have seen some unreligious people who agreed that the consequences of Islam and Islamic Shari'a were beneficial for social life and especially for the politics of the Ottomans." Nursi considered them as Muslims, that they were submitting to the truth but were not believers. On the other hand, he continues, "I have seen some people who, in the name of the West and civilization, embrace innovations and support un-Islamic ideologies, yet have faith in God, the hereafter, and the Prophet. Since they have not bound themselves by the

laws of Muhammad they are non-Muslim believers."[226] The above discussion also implies a degree of pluralism.

Finally, according to Michel, Nursi communicated a message of hope and tolerance to others when he wrote

> The thing which is most worthy of love is love, and that most deserving of enmity is enmity. It is love and loving -that render people's social life secure and that lead to happiness- it is these which are most worthy of love and being loved ... The time for enmity and hostility is finished.[227]

He maintained the view that there was no harm in loving non-Muslims. He wrote, "Yet a man is not loved for himself. Maybe the love comes from his attributes or art. It is not necessarily true that all the attributes of a Muslim are Islamic, and, conversely, that all the attributes of an unbeliever are un-Islamic. The attributes or the art which are Islamic might be observed by those who are not Muslim."[228] If Muslims find in a Jew or Christian qualities that are in agreement with Islamic teaching, they should consider those qualities praiseworthy. It is those good qualities that form the basis for friendship with Jews and Christians.[229]

In short, Nursi thought the present form of civilisation makes people immoral, self-indulgent and dissipated. However, in his view true civilization serves mankind's progress and development and the realisation of man's potential in abilities. In this regard he says that "to want civilization from this point of view is to want humanity".[230] He was not pessimistic about the future of this civilisation. Instead he thought adaptation and reconciliation were possible.

5.5 THE SACRELISATION OF SCIENCE

The excerpted paragraph (taken from Hanafi's article "The Origin of Modern Conservatism and Islamic Fundamentalism", published in a book edited by Ernest Gellner) is worth quoting here,

> The West has always tried to convince the Muslim world that it will never be able to reach the last stage of development as in advanced, industrial and super-technologized societies. The rate of progress in the West is much higher than the rate of catching up of those countries undergoing development. ... At the same time the Muslim world sees itself a contemporary to what is called in Western literature "the decline of the West".[231]

The question we have put forward at the beginning of this chapter about why unbelievers are triumphant over believers is something Nursi dealt with at length throughout his writings. Although we have to say we cannot deal with the related issues, we can try to evaluate briefly how Nursi approached Muslims' backwardness in science and technology. However, Nursi did not approach the issue by following any scientific theory; he perceived its importance and wrote about it with the ultimate aim of building a culture of belief. Nursi wanted to make the following understood: the only source of inspiration which will exercise an influence on Muslims is the belief and ethical system of Islam together with the support of a theology of nature such as his own 'Sacrelisation of Science'.

The following analyses Nursi reached provide us with deep insights about his criticism of Muslims' scientific and technological underdevelopment and his proposal for a solution. His views are based on two perspectives: material, and abstract or metaphysical[232] First the material ones. Nursi considered the main differences between the West and the East and the cause of Europe's overwhelming triumph could be summarised as follows. The first difference Nursi addresses is geographical

In this regard, according to Nursi, despite Europe's small size it is beautiful, has sources of iron, and its climate is temperate. This reflects upon its people's character. Through its natural charms despite its smallness it has drawn man's attraction and a big population. This is the source of its life. The gathering together of numerous individuals gave rise to different needs. The needs, Nursi thought, resulted in its particular customs and understandings and sciences. These are mainly anthropological conclusions, which are out of the boundaries of this study. They are not something peculiar to Nursi. However they are important to show a psychological approach of a religious man to human science and to the search for an understanding of differences. In this regard he states,

> Yes, the idea of industry and inclination towards science arise from great numbers. Just as, due to Europe's smallness, their getting to know one another and co-operating through travelling around the seas and rivers, its natural means of transport, gave rise to trade and shared activities, so also contact resulted in the meeting of minds, and rivalry also resulted in competition. Since iron, the source of all industry, is found within it in abundance, this gave its civilization such a powerful weapon that it seized and plundered the remains of all the civilizations of the world, made itself felt extremely forceably, and spoilt the balance of the earth.[234]

Besides, according to Nursi, its climate being temperate gave stability and steadiness to their endeavours, and perpetuated their civilisation. He also says, "Through relying on science, the formation of their states, the clashing of their reciprocal forces, the harassment of their cruel despotisms, the oppression of their inquisition-like bigotry, which caused reactions, and the rivalry and competition of parallel elements caused the Europeans' potentialities to develop, and awakened the virtues and idea of nationalism".[235] These are some of the issues Nursi thought to be the reasons for Europeans becoming triumphant over the Muslim world. Nursi also touches many other issues that we believe are to be material reasons. However among

them it should be mentioned here that despotism and freedom, which are interconnected, Nursi pays attention are worth of mentioning here as well. We will not go into the details and elaboration of these concepts. What concerns us here is that Nursi stood up against the separate despotic power residing in a single individual or the domination and arbitrary power of the religious *ulama*.[236]

But Nursi's fundamental focus was on the immaterial reasons that have overwhelmed his discourse to set up a solution focused on the following points. He stood up against the whole idea of externalism. The points are, according to him, rather the failure to adhere to Islam's principles in various areas. In *Sünûhat*, a piece concerned with the Qur'an and the decline of Islam, Nursi considered this to be "the most important cause of the Islamic community's displaying carelessness and negligence in the precepts of religion."[237] In another work, entitled *Muhâkemat*, Nursi considers the reasons for Muslims' decline to be the fact that the very heart of religion has been abandoned, leaving only a shell.[238] He was of the opinion that the true meaning of the teachings of Islam and the fundamentals of belief have been replaced by its externals. He wrote:

> Abandoning the essence and kernel of Islam, we fixed our gazes on its exterior and shell. And through misapprehension and ill-manners, we did not afford Islam its right nor pay it the respect it was due. So in disgust, it swathed itself in clouds of illusion and delusion, and concealed itself. … And what will save us is again its mercy.[239]

He also maintains, in his sermon in Damascus, that the various "sicknesses" in the social lives of Muslims, and in their morality, have held Muslims back. He spoke of "The coming to life and rise of despair and hopelessness in social life; the death of truthfulness and deceit in social and political life; love of enmity; disunity; despotism; and restricting endeavour in seeking what is personally beneficial, in other words

individualism".[240] These are some of the issues Nursi dealt with in 1911, and, in differing ways and with differing frequencies, later. Among the points he made, one is of particular concern here. Nursi lived at a time when the whole of the Ottoman Empire and Islamic world was occupied and colonised by the West, but he nevertheless sought to deradicalise the masses in writing:

> Two world wars have shown how evil, destructive, and what an awesome wrong is enmity. It has become clear that there is no benefit in it at all. In which case, on condition they are not aggressive, do not let the evils of our enemies attract your enmity.[241]

As has been argued throughout this thesis, the Nursian gradualist approach to social change has no place for radicalism. This may furnish one reason why his approach has been criticised by radicals. According to Nursi, enmity and hostility are ugly and damaging elements in man's social life. Indeed they have wrecked that social life, and so more than anything they ought to be loathed and shunned.

Nursi also discusses Islamic "internals" in relation to Muslims' "backwardness". In this connection he writes:

> Although every means of truth must be right, it cannot always be so in actual life, whereas it is not necessary for every means of falsehood to be false. Since falsehood may sometimes follow a true, right way, it can be triumphant over truth, which fails in following that way ... Although a Muslim must be Muslim in all his attributes and actions, he cannot always be so in practical life. Likewise, it is not always the case with a transgressor or unbeliever that every attribute and action of his should originate in his unbelief or transgression. Therefore, by virtue of having Muslim attributes and acting in infirmity with Islamic principles more than a Muslim who fails in practising Islam, an unbeliever may be victorious over a Muslim.[242]

The following point relating to science and religion and their interconnection with Muslim "underdevelopment" in science and technology serves to differentiate Nursi from his contemporaries. According to Nursi, God has two kinds of *Shari'a* (laws):

one is the Shari'a known by everybody, which is the group of laws comprising God's laws issuing from His Attribute of Speech, and regulating and governing man's 'religious' life or ordering the acts of the servants issuing from their free will. Nursi thought the reward or punishment in following it or not usually pertains to the afterlife. The other group of Divine laws comprise those governing creation and life as a whole, which Nursi says issued from His Attribute of Will and Power; these are generally (incorrectly) called the 'laws of nature'. The first *Shari'a* "comprises comprehensible laws, while the second consists of the nominal laws, which are wrongly called the 'laws of nature'. The reward or punishment for them mostly pertains to this world."[243] By this, Nursi means that following these laws relates mainly to this-worldly success. According to Nursi, the Qur'an insistently draws attentions to 'natural' phenomena, which are the subject matter of the sciences, and urges their study. Nursi argues that, in the first five centuries of Islam, Muslims succeeded in uniting the sciences with religion, the intellect with the heart, the material with the spiritual. However, in later centuries the West took the initiative in science. This meant people in the West being obedient – albeit unconsciously – to the Divine laws of 'nature', which has resulted in their dominance over the Muslim world, which has failed to practise both the religious and scientific aspects of Islam. Nursi was of the opinion that power and force have some sanction in life. Equipped with force through science and technology, the West, Nursi maintains, has gained the upper hand over Muslims.[244] He was also opposed to the idea that "since certain positive matters of modern science were imagined to oppose and be contrary to the apparent meanings of the truths of Islam, it prevented, to some extent, their prevailing in the past".[245] His differentiation between Islam and the *Shari'a* and the misconduct of Muslims also brings up the subjects of ignorance and the misconduct of the

religious élite and their mistaken attitudes. Nursi recognised the prevailing mood of his time: ignorance about belief, and ignorance of the modern sciences.[246] As Bolay points out, according to Kâtib Chelebi, in the seventeenth century, after mathematics and philosophy had been removed from the *medrese* syllabuses, the country was plunged into profound ignorance, and there was a climate of intense bigotry, and hostility towards the physical sciences.[247] Nursi ascribed this bigotry to the arbitrary and erroneous interpretations of certain sycophants and ignorant external scholars – "knowledgeable" ignoramuses. More importantly, perhaps, Nursi argues that, while the *ulama* of the time were imitating Europe by abandoning the virtues of Europe, which are difficult to acquire, and imitating, like parrots or children, the sins and evils of civilisation, which are agreeable to man's base desires, the Islamic world decayed while the West was victorious.[248] Also Nursi argues that ignorance was one of the most important reasons for poverty and the reason why Muslims had fallen far behind the West in science and technology. It was also ignorance, according to him, which was largely responsible for the internal conflicts and seditions in the Muslim world.[249]

Nursi's main aim, especially in the second part of his life, according to Vahide, was to demonstrate through the Qur'an that not only Muslims but all of humanity could find a way to "happiness in this world and the next". It was for this reason, according to Vahide, that he was always optimistic about the future, and predicted that large numbers of humanity would embrace the Qur'an.[250] In this regard he maintained the view that in the future, power would lie not in the sword, but in science:

> Now what rules is the courage of belief, reason, and science. Sometimes one enlightened person is worth thousands. The Europeans are victorious through this courage. Innate [physical] courage is not enough ... You must forge your swords out of the substance of science, industry, and the solidarity of Qur'anic wisdom.[251]

In short, what Nursi believed gives the West life is hope, and what kills Muslims is despair. He quotes the saying "If I find a point of support, I'll shift the earth from its place", saying of it: "It means, if this insignificant man finds a point of support, he can turn mighty matters like the globe."[252] Unlike most of his contemporaries, however, he concludes with a prophetic statement: "Yes, be hopeful! The loudest and strongest voice in the coming upheavals and changes will be that of Islam!"[253]

It is clear by now that science, and especially the physical sciences, play a significant role in Nursi's discourse. Unlike his political views, Nursi's position on science never changed. From the very early years of his life, Nursi saw the inadequacy of the classical Islamic *madrasa* education system and the need for a reconciliation between science and religion. This is reflected in all his writings, both early and late. Nursi not only advocated such a reconciliation but he also affirmed that a reconciliation between science and religion and between civilisations is possible. This obviously has an important bearing on the present time when there is so much discussion about the clash of civilisations.[254]

5. 5.1 A COMPARATIVE VIEW

> As summed up in the positivist motto, *Love, Order, Progress,* they lead us to the conception of Humanity, which implicitly involves and gives new force to each of them. Rightly interpreting this conception, we view Positivism at last as a complete and consistent whole... Positivism consists essentially of a Philosophy and a Polity. The great object which Positivism sets before us individually and socially, is the endeavour to become more perfect ... The Universe is to be studied not for its own sake, but for the sake of Man or rather of Humanity. To study it in any other spirit would not only be immoral, but also highly irrational ...[255]

The above passage from Auguste Comte's *A General View of Positivism*[256] may help us to evaluate the similarities and differences between positivism and Nursi's approach to the relationship between science, scientism and religion. Similarities may be identified between the approaches of Comte and Nursi. Both discourses maintain that the ultimate aim of knowledge is perfection. Comte thought that love, order and progress lead us to a true conception of humanity;[257] Nursi, in a similar way, thought that true civilisation enables the progress and development of mankind and the realisation of mankind's potential. Therefore, according to Nursi, to desire civilisation is to desire humanity.

However, the basic and perhaps the most important difference between these two approaches lies in the fact that Comte says that the universe is to be studied for the sake of man, or rather of humanity; to study it in any other spirit would not only be immoral but also highly irrational. One could argue that this is evidence of an unreligious attitude towards nature. In Nursi's view, knowledge and the sciences exist for the sake of God; they are an essence of reality, and the fruit of man's existence and its aim. Nursi sanctifies science for the sake of God. This view is in contrast to Comte's very theistic view. It could be said that Nursi's admiration for the West, and the fact that he was influenced by positivist terminology, represented a means of drawing people's attention to the existence of God and that all things in this universe are Divine signs indicating this fact, and the sciences a means to its realisation. According to Agai, Nursi's discourse attributes a religious connotation to science; in this view, science is not to be studied for the sake of science. Rather, science explains the universe of which man is a part as a kind of religious duty, that is, for the sake of God.[258] Because science explains creation, it becomes a sacred duty to study and explore the world scientifically. It must, however, be pointed out that, according to

Kalin, all of Nursi's followers without exception reject any association with positivism.[259]

Over time, however, reflection on the positivist perspective has resulted in the writing of books on Western scientific, democratic, judicial and social values and their similarities with Islam.[260] As Mardin also points out, from the nineteenth century onwards science has been one of the major areas on which the defensive and apologetic attitude of Muslims has focused.[261] Muslims, in particular the Ottomans, who unlike many peoples of the Islamic world have been in direct contact with European powers, came to believe that the main reason for their scientific and military backwardness was a lack of proper scientific advancements. The reforms which took place in the Ottoman Empire were aimed at filling this gap.[262] A similar encounter has simultaneously taken place in the intellectual sphere. More specifically, Muslim intelligentsia's emphasis has been upon the compatibility of modern science with the teachings of the Qur'an: numerous works on this theme have been written by Muslim thinkers and academics throughout the Muslim world.[263]

We can situate here Renan's notorious ethno-centric attack[264] on the "irrationality" of Muslims and their inability to produce works of science and technology, and the responses of Muslim intellectuals, among whom Jamal al-Din Afghani's and Namik Kemal's are well-known.[265] According to Kalin, both responses showed a similar tendency, namely that there has been and could be no true clash between religion and science, whether in the past or modern times, and that it is the materialistic representation of science that lies at the heart of the so-called religion–science controversy. At the same time, there has been a focusing on the scientific achievements of the Muslims, specifically the Muslim scientists of the past.[266] This has been the general trend even in today's Muslim world.

Nursi, in this regard, had similar ideas to those of Afghani, Abduh, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Namik Kemal, namely that science is an objective study of the world of nature, and represents a way of deciphering the signs of God in the book of the universe; and modern science is not a culture-specific enterprise, and as such it is not the exclusive property of any civilisation.[267] Nursi, like Afghani earlier, held that a materialistic view brought many harmful ideas into social life and led people to behave in an evil manner, such as attacking belief in the Day of Judgement and the habit of shame.[268] Also, like Afghani, Nursi emphasised that religious beliefs must be based on a sound foundation and valid proof, without any "supernatural" aspect. This rationalism is an important element in the thought of both thinkers.[269] Also, like Abduh, Nursi accepted the distinction between *necessary being*, *possible things* and *impossible things*, using it to prove the existence of God.[270] He also embraced the same sentiments as the above-named scholars with regard to Muslims' contemporary scientific backwardness. However, unlike the others, he located the problem mainly in immaterial factors, in terms of Islamic personal qualities that stemmed from negligence of the very heart of religion and the replacement of it by externals. Like Abduh and the movement he led, Nursi attached great importance to the use of reason, both in general and, especially, in the interpretation of religious texts, whereas the Muslim Brotherhood makes a more limited use of reason as a critical and self-critical instrument on the basis of specific Qur'anic and *Sunna* texts.[271]

Like Nasr, Nursi also viewed the term "knowledge" as having a more general meaning, and science as being more narrowly related to scientific work.[272] Nevertheless, both are related to religion, and according to Nursi are embraced by religion. However, unlike for Nasr, for Nursi knowledge and science took into consideration the reality of God and studied the world as a totality. Similarly, Nursi

did not favour simply picking words from the Qur'an and connecting them to modern science, like al Farouqi.[273] Nursi's interpretation of the Qur'an mainly served his goals of building a culture of belief. In the same way it could be said that Nasr's thesis that it is wrong to prefix the term "Islamic" to phenomena in modern science and think that this strategy will make modern science Islamic was anticipated by Nursi. Also, most contemporary discussions of al-Faruqi's Islamisation of knowledge and scientific concepts were unfamiliar to Nursi, so he did not discuss these things. The search for knowledge should, according to Sardar, start with the Qur'an and not end with it. This view was also shared by Nursi.[274] Nevertheless it can be said that Nursi was a precursor of these Islamic thinkers (i.e. Nasr, Faruqi and Sardar).

Despite Nursi's criticism of Sufism and its use of mystical connotations to produce a terminology, it cannot be denied that there was a clear Sufist influence in his approach to the theology of nature. Some of the views of the above-mentioned Islamic thinkers – for example Faruqi, Sardar and Bucaille's criticism of Sufism and its mystical interpretation – cannot be said to have been shared by Nursi. Despite his earlier criticism of Sufism, he later recognised its value, and his terminology shows a clear Sufi influence.[275] Also, in contrast to Nasr, Sardar, Faruqi and Bucaille's critique of secularism, Nursi thought that secularism, constitutionalism and democracy are compatible with Islamic understanding as long as they do not contradict Islamic teachings and are not interpreted or practised in an irreligious way. According to Stenberg, all four of the thinkers mentioned above (Nasr, Sardar, Faruqi and Bucaille) are linked through their critique of fundamentalism and secularism and their view that both of these forces may be seen as being dangerous to the authentic understanding of Islam.[276]

In conclusion, Nursi developed an ontological method coping with science as a powerful way of deconstructing its metaphysical claims by using the language of Newtonian physics based on the guidance of Revelation and made it sacred.[277] Mermer provides us with some insights into Nursi's ontological method regarding science and Nursi's view of nature, in discussing *harfi* (logic) and *ismi* (logic paradigms) – the reasoning heart and *nefs* respectively – and claims that it represents a revival of the Qur'anic vision. According to her, Nursi showed how the Muslim should use the universe to witness to the truth of Revelation. The method Nursi used, however, was, according to Mermer, different from that of the theologians and the philosophers.[278] According to Kalin, Nursi, instead of taking an anti-scientific position, incorporated scientific findings within a theistic perspective, that is to say, theistic scientism. Kalin, discussing this, gives examples to support his thesis about Nursi's theistic scientism.[279] In support of this idea in her message to the first panel on Nursi, Spuler states that Nursi 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 …".[280] According to Kalin, in this methodology Nursi developed the idea that the Qur'anic verses may be subjected to a scientific reading, thereby strengthening faith in religion.[281] We cannot disagree with this. Kalin on this account defines Nursi as the true father of what one might call 'Bucaillism' in the Islamic world. Yet Nursi, by attaching a distinctive meaning to the concept of knowledge and linking it to *taqwa*, belief, the Divine laws, causes, subjugation, and behaviour, displays as progressive a spiritual, psychological and behavioural approach to scientific thinking as he does to social change.[282] Nevertheless, Acikgenc is of the opinion that Nursi developed a metaphysical methodology for dealing with the concept of science as it existed in his time. He maintains that Nursi's emphasis on the

scientific achievements of our time "carries the tone of the problem of underdevelopment in such a way that *i'la-yi kelimetullah* is said to depend upon 'material development' which is connected with modern science and technology".[283] Also, according to Acikgenc in Islamic history there have been other works that may be placed in this category, the best examples of which are Abu Talib al-Makki's *Qut al-Qulub* and Ghazzali's *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din.*[284] Ahmad argues that the idea of using the modern language of science in the commentary was not new. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan in the Pakistan subcontinent and several writers in the Muslim world had adopted a similar approach.[285] According to Yildiz, Nursi was an educator who in his writings upheld the Qur'an as the only guide in order to develop natural laws.[286] Another view is that Nursi made use of a number of cues found in the mystical tradition, although he was very critical of mysticism.[287] In short, Nursi attempted, according to Mardin, to produce a methodology, whether consciously pursued or otherwise, which combined and modified mystical and secular-scientific thought in a way, which according to Mardin, was familiar to Renaissance Europe and to which modern science owes part of its origins. He developed this methodology through his understanding of the Qur'anic term "*'ilm*". In this connection Mardin writes: "It is difficult to state outright that Said Nursi came forth with a fully formulated theory about nature, but ... the fact that a latent frame underlies his system of nature cannot be questioned."[288] Nursi saw himself as concerned with the reinterpretation of Islamic knowledge under modern conditions including a new approach taken by science. His effort may have been a response to his times' conviction that Islam was an incongruent model for the development of a civilisation because of its alleged resistance to rational (instrumental) thinking.[289] In the end, Nursi's – for some ontological, for others metaphysical, for some others scientific – commentary has

influenced a whole generation of Turkish students, professionals and lay people, with repercussions outside the Turkish-speaking world. His writings have altered the position that pious Muslims occupy today in the structure of Turkish society, and have become part of the discussion about the role of science in society.

5.6 CONCLUSION

It could be said that Nursi was born in the age of transition, in the Islamic world in particular. In the most general sense, as Mardin points out, he was aware that his time, the time of modernity, bore a special mark, and according to Mardin he saw the three concepts which characterised these times as being *malikiyet* (private property), *serbestiyet* (freedom) and the growth of science.[290] The separation between earth and heavens, flesh and soul, the city of men and the City of God, or, in the age of science, between evidence and dogma, demonstration and revelation, never appeared to Nursi to be a problem. Perhaps unintentionally, he set out to modify the traditional Islamic message and interpret it in a way peculiar to himself.[291]

It may justifiably be claimed that Nursi's Islamic pursuit of knowledge was responsible for the blossoming of a culture of belief and rational scientific thinking that encompassed the spheres of both theory and practice. Education, he believed, is a necessity of life and has a social, a religious and a scientific function.[292] He devoted himself to what he felt to be the cause of Muslim backwardness – the gap between Muslims and actual Islam – and analysed it thoroughly. He interpreted the sacred sources of Islam as an expression of rationality and reason. The message had to be elucidated and made clear to Muslims of his time. The success of his project will become clear with time.[293] His gradualist vision was not realised in his lifetime. Time will tell whether it will succeed or not.

Nursi's discourse has had pragmatic overtones with regard to science and its products. He lived at a time when a materialist philosophy was dominant, and made use of its tools. However, he thought that the correct world view cannot be scientistic. In Nursi's opinion, science and religion can coexist without reciprocal the bashing that science be kept inside the limits of religion without any overlap. Science, in this view, is the realm of observable phenomena, which it must investigate in order to bring happiness and perfection to mankind as a religious duty. Scientists do this in a specific way, seeing science as a God. Nursi brought to attention competing religious paradigms: in the one that he himself favoured there is God, in the other, Nature. The study of science has become a duty for a religious man, so that he may discover the beauty and perfection of the Creator. Therefore, to study and observe the outcomes of science is a sacred task. Science itself in this view is sanctified. Nursi maintained the view that, unless Muslims were enlightened regarding both the human sciences and religious knowledge, and knew how to think systematically, it was impossible for them to recover from the centuries of backwardness under which they laboured.

Nursi not only tried to evolve a philosophy which would show that religion and science could not be viewed in a dichotomous way, but he also produced a methodology according to which a deeply religious person might feel strengthened in his beliefs, and encouraged by the prospect that his value-questions (including regarding the *mysterium tremendum*) might be more firmly answered than ever before.[294] In this respect Nursi succeeded, even if to some extent unintentionally, in modifying the traditional Islamic message via a method which was, according to Mardin, consciously pursued, but which was new and entirely peculiar to him.[295]

Via a metaphorical interpretation of the Qur'an Nursi emphasised the spiritual quality of the esoteric meaning of revelation, and through intellectual intuition he

made rational and discursive thought subservient to the universal truths of the Qur'an. He attempted a synthesis of science and revelation in the light of the Qur'an, and of the general perspective on Islam which Ghazali, Suhrawardi, and later Mulla Sadra, all shared in their different ways.[296]

He used scientific language in a mythical society which was still operating through images, symbols, stories, narratives and all forms of anthropomorphic thought. With its peculiarity his methodology could be defined as the 'Sacralisation of Science'. In short, Nursi in his writings employed a cosmology (though it cannot be said he did so consciously) to explain the true nature of the universe as revealing signs of its Creator, and used scientific language to establish a culture of belief so that nature could be read in such a way that all the fundamentals of belief might be proved rationally.

NOTES

[1] See as cited in CD, *Oxford Talking Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1998). Also see William C. Chittick "Modern Science and the Eclipse of Tawhid" (paper presented at the God, Life and the Cosmos: Theistic Perspectives, Islamabad, Pakistan. Displayed in http://www.kalam.org/, November 6-9, 2002).

[2] See Mikael Stenmark, *Scientism, Science, Ethics and Religion* (Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2001), x.

[3] See Ibid., 133.

[4] See CD, *Oxford Talking Dictionary*.

[5] As cited in Chittick "Modern Science and the Eclipse of Tawhid".

[6] As cited in Ibid. Also for the original paper of Rustam Roy see, Rustam Roy, "Religious Commitment and Its Interaction with Scientific Professions: A Low-Church Real-Science, Critique of "Science" and "Spirituality"," *Technology in Society* 21 (1999).

[7] See Preface, footnote 1 in Abraham H Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences* (Penguin Books Limited. Displayed in http://www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/lsd/maslow.htm, 1964). for more details.

[8] See Ibid.

[9] For reason, conscience and religion also see Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1956), 169 and so on. Furthermore see Ziauddin Sardar, "Philosophy of Science in Islam," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman and Edward Craig (Routledge, 1998), 8: 561-65.

[10] Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928-) is a contemporary Christian Philosophical Theologian. It should eb stated here along the way of course no doubts there are major disagreements between Nursi's and Pannenberg's discourses, however being out of the scupe of this chapter there lies a vast fabric of agreement on the isuue how to approach science. Pannenberg is of the opinion that "the natural sciences and theology are distinct disciplines, with their own understanding of how information is gained and assessed. Nevertheless, both relate to the same publicly observable reality, and they therefore have potentially complementary insights to bring. The area of the "laws of nature" is a case in point, in that Pannenberg believes that the provisional explanations for such laws offered by natural scientist have a purely provisional status, until they are placed on a firmer theoretical foundation by

theological analysis." See as cited in the article published in "The Dictionary of Modern Western Theology", displayed in http://people.bu.edu/wwildman/WeirdWildWeb/courses/mwt/dictionary/mwt_themes_856_pannenberg.htm

[11] See Ted Peters, ed., *Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith/Wolfhart Pannenberg* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminister/John Knox Press, 1993), 2.

[12] See Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, trans. Sükran Vahide (Istanbul: Sozler, 1996), 63-64.

[13] See and compare this with according to Kalin the Risale-i Nur being a scientific commentary Ibrahim Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," in *God, Life and the Cosmos: Christian and Islamic Perspectives*, ed. Ted Peters, Muzaffar Iqbal, and Syed Nomanul Haq (Ashgate, 2002), 53.

[14] See section 5.5.

[15] See Peters, ed., *Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith/Wolfhart Pannenberg*, 5.

[16] In Science, Philosophy and Religion, A Symposium, *published by the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion in Their Relation to the Democratic Way of Life, Inc., New York, 1941.* Available on-line. See also Ibid.

[17] As cited in Pablo David Flores, *Scattered Thoughts About Science and Religion* (2002 [cited The Last Time 15.01.03); available from http://www.geocities.com/finis_stellae/ng/ft/science-and-religion.html or http://www.angelfire.com/ego/pdf/ng/ft/science-and-religion.html.

[18] See Michael Hill, *A Sociology of Religion* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1973), viii. Also see for the relation between "Sociology and Religion" mainly from Weberian view of theory Hill, *A Sociology of Religion*, 1-19.

[19] See its importance for social order Glenn M. Vernon, *Sociology of Religion* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1962), 77.

[20] See Ibid., Preface. Also see for a sociological definition of religion Vernon, *Sociology of Religion*, 43-58.

[21] Hill, *A Sociology of Religion*, vii.

[22] See Flores, *Scattered Thoughts About Science and Religion* ([cited). Compare this with "Everything that the human race has done and thought is concerned with the satisfaction of deeply felt needs and the

assuagement of pain." According to Einstein one has to keep this constantly in mind if one wishes to understand spiritual movements and their development. See for the article appears in Einstein's Ideas and Opinions, *pp.41 - 49. The first section is taken from an address at Princeton Theological Seminary, May 19, 1939. It was published in* Out of My Later Years, *New York: Philosophical Library, 1950. The second section is from* Science, Philosophy and Religion, A Symposium, *published by the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion in Their Relation to the Democratic Way of Life, Inc., New York, 1941 and they are available on-line.*

[23] In his article entitled as "Science and Faith: From Warfare to Consonance" Peters review briefly a number of models for understanding the relationship between science and theology and he divides these models into two categories as "warfare models and non-warfare models". He uses the term of warfare for the ongoing war between science and religion. For full article see Ted Peters, Muzaffar Iqbal, and Syed Nomanul Haq, ed., *God, Life and the Cosmos: Christian and Islamic Perspectives* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), 77-98.

[24] For a different categorizations of this kind see, Stenmark, *Scientism, Science, Ethics and Religion*, x. For scientism and religious authoritarianism see Peters, ed., *Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith/Wolfhart Pannenberg*, 3-4.

[25] A careful critical evaluation of all scientistic claims would be too comprehensive for this study. However it will be worth of mentioning the narrowed down to four key claims focused on the critical examination of science as stated by Stenmark: "(1) the only kind of knowledge we can have is scientific knowledge; (2) the only things that exist are the ones which science has access to; (3) science can alone answer our moral questions and explain as well as replace traditional ethics and (4) science alone can answer our existential questions and explain as well as replace traditional religion." Stenmark, *Scientism, Science, Ethics and Religion*, x.

[26] For more on this issue see Ibid., viii.

[27] See Ibid., ix. Also see and compare this with that Stenmark states "I have found to be most interesting and challenging scientism forms or versions are namely epistemic scientism, ontological scientism, axiological scientism and existential scientism. Stenmark, *Scientism, Science, Ethics and Religion*, 19. For their definition in short see Stenmark, *Scientism, Science, Ethics and Religion*, 133-34.

[28] See Stenmark, *Scientism, Science, Ethics and Religion*, vii. In chapter 1 Stenmark distinguishes between a number of different forms of Scientism.

[29] See for more details in Ibid., 133.

[30] Peters, ed., *Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith/Wolfhart Pannenberg*, 80-81.

[31] See *Fides et Ratio*, 1999. As quoted in Peters, ed., *God, Life and the Cosmos: Christian and Islamic Perspectives*, 96.

[32] Peters, ed., *Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith/Wolfhart Pannenberg*, 3.

[33] While categorising, another category is worth mentioning here that of *scientific imperialism*. The military goals of scientific imperialism says Peters differ slightly from those of scientism. "Rather than obliterating its religious enemy, scientific imperialism seeks to conquer the territory formally possessed by theology and claim it as its own. The assumption is that science can explain religion better than religion can explain itself." Peters, ed., *God, Life and the Cosmos: Christian and Islamic Perspectives*, 81.

[34] See Stenmark, *Scientism, Science, Ethics and Religion*, 142. Compare this that Peters states "Whereas scientism is atheistic; scientific imperialism may actually affirm the existence of something divine. In this context 'God' is like a matter of taste and definition." Peters, ed., *God, Life and the Cosmos: Christian and Islamic Perspectives*, 81.

[35] See Hasan Horkuc, "A Contemporary Case Study of Islamic Civilisation Project: Said Nursi on Education," in *Forthcoming Book* (2003). Also see Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, II vols., vol. I (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1956.

[36] See and compare for a different categorisation and Nursi's place among these categorisations that according to Agai, "Said Nursi -though a pious Muslim- did not belong to the third position, neither did he belong to the supporters of the fist two positions..." in Bekim Agai, "The Religious Impact of Science in the Writings of Bediuzzaman," in *Fifth International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Qur'anic View of Man, According to the Risale-i Nur* (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 2000), 344.

[37] For the refutation of materialism see Sükran (Mary Weld) Vahide, "Bediuzzaman's Works as a Model for Presenting Islam to the West," in *International Symposium: The Reconstruction of Islamic*

Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Istanbul: Sozler, 1992), 169. To compare this see for his great study Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 51-52-53.

[38] As cited in Horkuc, "A Contemporary Case Study of Islamic Civilisation Project: Said Nursi on Education."

[39] As cited in Agai, "The Religious Impact of Science in the Writings of Bediuzzaman," 342.

[40] At this point it will be worth of mentioning that for a full understanding of the complex process of Westernisation, or modernasition its intellectual and political supporters in the Ottoman context in the time period which Nursi was born and raised (1876-1895) see Serif. Mardin, *Jon Turklerin Siyasi Fikirleri 1895-1908 (Political Thoughts of Young Turks)* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 1983), 29-63.

[41] Therefore an analysis of the understanding of science, scientism and religion according to Said Nursi should start as Agai also states with an analysis of the different worldviews that prevailed in the time his thoughts were articulated in. A look at the late Ottoman Empire and the early republican period reveals three main positions. For details of these three positions see Agai, "The Religious Impact of Science in the Writings of Bediuzzaman," 342. Also see and compare this, for Said Nursi's views on the relation between faith and science were formulated at a time when the rude positivism of the late 1900s was made the official ideology of the newly established Turkish republic. Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 52.

[42] See for the decline of the Ottoman Empire B. Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 21-40. and for the impact of the West Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 40-73. and the Ottoman reform Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 73-126.

[43] For a general description of the time in which Nursi lived that various political, literary, and philosophical movements which had emerged in the West slowly began to be introduced into the Ottoman Empire see Süleyman Hayri Bolay, "Bediuzzaman'S View of Philosophy," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 253-54.

[44] See Richard Tapper, ed., *Islam in Modern Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers, 1991), 5. Also see for more details Bahattin Aksit, "Islamic Education in Turkey: Medrese Reform in Late Ottoman Times and Imam-Hatip Schools in the Republic," in *Islam in Modern Turkey*, ed. Richard Tapper (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers, 1991), 152-61. Also see for the Young Turks who

and what their purpose was Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 147-50. In this regard, also see Serif. Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962).

[45] See for the first attempts at Westernisation Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 45. Also see Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 222-29.

[46] Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 128. Also see for the early school and education reforms started in the early eighteenth century Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 48, 82-83-84. and Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 111-12.

[47] Uyanik says, "It is because this terminology is still not clear in our minds." Mevlut Uyanik, *Bilginin Islamilestirilmesi: Cagdas Islam Dusuncesi (Islamisation of Knowledge: Modern Islamic Thought)* (Ankara: School of Ankara Publications, 1999), 9.

[48] For the early emergence of the Islamic scientific conceptual scheme in the time of Prophet see Alparslan Acikgenc, *Scientific Thought and Its Burdens* (Istanbul: Fatih University Publications, 2000), 158-62.

[49] See Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 47, 57-63. Also see for epistemological concern of knowledge by Karl Popper and sociologic concern by T.S.Kuhn in Uyanik, *Bilginin Islamilestirilmesi: Cagdas Islam Dusuncesi (Islamisation of Knowledge: Modern Islamic Thought)*, 10.

[50] See Uyanik, *Bilginin Islamilestirilmesi: Cagdas Islam Dusuncesi (Islamisation of Knowledge: Modern Islamic Thought)*, 10., and also see Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 61. See and compare this particularly for the exploration of the term *'ilm* in traditions and contemporary world Colin Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran* (Curzon Press, 2000), 23, 30.

[51] See Uyanik, *Bilginin Islamilestirilmesi: Cagdas Islam Dusuncesi (Islamisation of Knowledge: Modern Islamic Thought)*, 21.

[52] See for this Ibid., 22.

[53] See Ibid.

[54] Serif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 204.

[55] See for "the Religion of Reason and Nature" in the thought of Khan, in John J. and John L. Esposito Donohue, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 41-43.

[56] See Uyanik, *Bilginin Islamilestirilmesi: Cagdas Islam Dusuncesi (Islamisation of Knowledge: Modern Islamic Thought)*, 47-50.

[57] See Ibid., 26.

[58] See Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 49.

[59] See Yamine B Mermer, "The Hermeneutical Dimension of Sceince: A Critical Analysis Based on Said Nursi's Risale-i Nur," *THE MUSLIM WORLD* LXXXIX, no. 3-4 (1999): 272. Also see Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 53.

[60] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 216.

[61] See for the impact of the West Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 40-73.

[62] See "Amir Shakip Arslan: Our Decline and its Causes" in Donohue, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, 60-64.

[63] See Uyanik, *Bilginin Islamilestirilmesi: Cagdas Islam Dusuncesi (Islamisation of Knowledge: Modern Islamic Thought)*, 23.. Also see Sukran Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publication, 1992), 96.

[64] See and compare for this Uyanik, *Bilginin Islamilestirilmesi: Cagdas Islam Dusuncesi (Islamisation of Knowledge: Modern Islamic Thought)*, 23.

[65] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 15. See for the improvement of communications in the late Ottoman times Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 93-94.

[66] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 148.

[67] See Ibid., 175.

[68] See Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 52.

[69] See Vahide, "Bediuzzaman's Works as a Model for Presenting Islam to the West," 168.

[70] For different versions of usage of mainly positive sciences, as ulum-u musbete being positive sciences or fünun-u cedide-i medeniye as sciences of new civilasition or fünun-u medeniye as (sciences

of civilasition) or fünun-u cedide as modern sciences see respectively Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 1904, 24, 56, 2138. Furthermore in the English text one of the several usages of positive sciences see Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Letters*, trans. Sukran Vahide, Second (revised) ed. (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1997), 95, 516. See also Alparslan Acikgenc, "The Conception of Science in the Risale-i Nur," in *Fifth International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Qur'anic View of Man, According to the Risale-i Nur* (Sozler Nesriyat, 2000), 334. Also see the footnote 5 in which Acikgenc tries to clarify this point Acikgenc, "The Conception of Science in the Risale-i Nur," 334. Also see Adem Tatli, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, the Representative of Contemporary Islamic Thinkers - His Approach to the Questions of Science and Technology," in *Ideas of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi in the Thirteeth Year since His Death and Their Place in Islamic Thought* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1991), 89.

[71] See Acikgenc, "The Conception of Science in the Risale-i Nur," 334. For the impact of Western scientific advances in Nursi's writings see Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 203. Also according to Mardin Nursi's approach to science shows the imprint of what may be termed pre-postivistic conceptualizations. Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 203.

[72] See Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 52. Despite Kalin's claim of the Newtonian world-picture is contained no religious references, there is an ongoing current, over the past twenty-five years - since the very large collection of Newton's papers has become available and begun to be seriously examined - the beginnings of a new picture of Newton has emerged discussing that he believed that there was no real difference between science and religion and claiming he thought that he could reach God, or could achieve some sort of closeness to God by studying nature, and he would look anywhere that he could to find those secrets. In this theory his study of mathematics and alchemy are nothing other than this. In this regard volume of essays builds upon this discussion see James E. Force, Richard H. Popkin, ed., *Newton and Religion: Context, Nature and Influence* (Hardbound: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999).

[73] See as cited in Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 214.

[74] See Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Flashes*, trans. Sukran Vahide (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1995), 214. According to Mardin "Nursi's – and his followers' - vocabularies were infiltrated by conceptions taken from 19th century thermodynamics and electricity... Sabri, one of the first disciples of Bediuzzaman, speaks of "machines which produce the electricity of the Nur factory" when speaking of the work of disciples. Sabri himself is known as Santral (switchboard) Sabri." Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 214.

[75] According to Kalin Nursi in many places of his major works, among them the most known one the Words are replete with references to God as the Great or Absolute Artisan and universe as a machine, the epitome of order and regularity, created by the Divine artisan. See Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 71.

[76] Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 175.

[77] See Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 53.

[78] See Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Words*, trans. Sukran Vahide (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1992), 570-74.

[79] Ibid., 272.

[80] Ibid., 344.

[81] Acikgenc, "The Conception of Science in the Risale-i Nur," 334.

[82] Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 63-64.

[83] Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 1986-87.

[84] For the root and definitions of *'ilm* (knowledge) see Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), 6-12, 46-70 respectively.

[85] In his *Knowledge Triumphant,* Franz Rosenthall outlines eight hundred Muslim definitions of knowledge. See as cited in Ziauddin Sardar, *How We Know: Ilm and the Revival of Knowledge* (London: Grey Seal Books, 1991), 2. 'The Quran often uses synonyms for *'ilm* with many shades of root-concepts like *fkr* (to think), *fqh* (to understand), *dbr* (to consider), *'aql* (to reflect) and *fhm* (to understand). *'Ilm* therefore must signify the end results of intellectual and inspirational labour and processes." As cited in Sardar, *How We Know: Ilm and the Revival of Knowledge*, 5.

[86] Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 19-20. Besides that Turner in this section of his study attempts to overview of how *'ilm* is presented in the Koran and

traditions, and also how the term in its contemporary usage has for the most part been stripped of its original meaning. See Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 19-43.

[87] Sardar, *How We Know: Ilm and the Revival of Knowledge*, 1-2.

[88] Some may call this distinction as intellectual and transmitted or "salvational" and "rational" or essential and superficial knowledge. We will prefer to use aqli and naqli as them being the most commonly used terms by Islamic intellectuals. The word intellectual (aqli) says Chittick was given to this specific tradition partly to differentiate it from another sort of learning that is called "transmitted" (naqli). See Chittick "Modern Science and the Eclipse of Tawhid".

[89] See for the types of knowledge Chapter 5 Arthur J. D'Adamo, *Science without Bounds: A Synthesis of Science, Religion and Mysticism* (Available on-line in http://www.adamford.com/swb/, 1970). Scientific and religious methods of learning compared in Vernon, *Sociology of Religion*, 12.

[90] See for the scientific and religious methods of learning compared in Vernon, *Sociology of Religion*, 12.

[91] See and compare Chittick "Modern Science and the Eclipse of Tawhid". Also see for "Ways of Knowing and Science's and Religion's Ways of Knowing" in Arthur J. D'Adamo, "Introduction," in *Science without Bounds: A Synthesis of Science, Religion and Mysticism* (Available on-line in http://www.adamford.com/swb/, 1970). Also see D'Adamo, *Science without Bounds: A Synthesis of Science, Religion and Mysticism*. Chapter I for the detailed study of "Religion's Way of Knowing" and Chapter 2 for "Science's Way of Knowing".

[92] See Chittick "Modern Science and the Eclipse of Tawhid". Chittick states that "transmitted knowledge may be derived from a variety of sources. It may come from a religious tradition going back to a prophet like Moses, Jesus, or Muhammad. Or, it may be derived from modern traditions of learning that have their own quasi-prophets, people like Darwin, Freud, and Einstein." Chittick "Modern Science and the Eclipse of Tawhid". Also see for "All rational knowledge is either material or formal: the former considers some object the latter is concerned only with the form of the understanding and of the reason itself, and with the universal laws of thought in general without distinction of its objects." In Immanuel Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott (Available on-line, 1785).

[93] See Sardar, *How We Know: Ilm and the Revival of Knowledge*, 4. See and compare this with Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 25-28. Also compare with according to Nasr, among Muslims scholars, attempts to classify the sciences began as early as the third /ninth century with al-Kindi and multiplied thereafter. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Science and Civilisation in Islam* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harward University Press, 1968), 60.

[94] See and compare on the *aqli* and *naqli* sciences and making of the distinction in the 1st book, Imam Huccetul Islam Gazali, *Ihyau Ulumi'd-Din*, trans. Ahmed Serdaroglu, 4 vols., vol. 3 (Bedir Yayinevi).

[95] See and compare this with Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 31. Also for the detailed analyses of knowledge and the categorisation of knowledge according to Nursi, see Alparslan Acikgenc, "An Evaluation of the Risale-i Nur from the Point of View of Knowledge and the Categorization of Knowledge," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1995).

[96] See and compare this division with that of Ibn Khaldun's that we have come across with a very similar division made by Ibn Khaldun and well-treated theoretically in Muhsin Mahdi, "Ibn Khaldun," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 890-91.

[97] Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Muhakemat," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1985.

[98] He also states that "The information in the mirror of man's thought also has two faces: in one respect it is knowledge, in another, it is known. If we suppose the mind to contain what is known, then the known thing becomes something known by the mind; its existence is something different to the mind. If we suppose the mind to be qualified by the thing, it becomes an attribute or quality of the mind; then the thing becomes knowledge and has an external existence. Even if the thing known has an existence, it has an accidental external existence." For he thought the universe is a mirror and the true nature of all beings is also a mirror. They are subject to Divine creation through Pre-Eternal Power. See Nursi, *The Flashes*, 60.

[99] Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Barla Lâhikasi," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1516.

[100] See Nursi, *The Words*, 324.

[101] See and compare with Turner, *Islam without Allah? The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, 29.

[102] See Sukran Vahide, "The Book of the Universe: Its Place and Development in Bediuzzaman's Thought," in *A Contemporary Approach Towards Understanding the Qur'an: The Example of Risale-i Nur* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 2000), 469-71. See and compare this with Chittick "Modern Science and the Eclipse of Tawhid".

[103] See Vahide, "The Book of the Universe: Its Place and Development in Bediuzzaman's Thought," 471.

[104] See for the details of these claims and more in Stenmark, *Scientism, Science, Ethics and Religion*, x.

[105] See and compare with Peters, ed., *Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith/Wolfhart Pannenberg*, 5.

[106] See Nursi, *The Letters*, 265.

[107] See for this Nursi, *The Words*, 254.

[108] Vahide, "The Book of the Universe: Its Place and Development in Bediuzzaman's Thought," 471.

[109] As cited in Hasan Horkuc, "Said Nursi on Interaction between Education and Ethics" (paper presented at the Globalization, Ethics and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Risale-i Nur, Istanbul, 2002).

[110] See and compare this with Chittick "Modern Science and the Eclipse of Tawhid".

[111] As quoted in Abd al-Aziz Barghuth, "The Place of the Theory of Knowledge in the Vicegerency and Civilizational Process in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," in *A Contemporary Approach Towards Understanding the Qur'an: The Example of Risale-i Nur* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 2000), 32.

[112] Ibid. In Nursi's thought according to Barguth knowledge of God has a social or civilisational function as well as religious. In this regard Barguth states "It may be said of this power and influence of knowledge arises from its ability to conform to the structure of social civilization, natural values, the principles of the vicegerency, and the laws of the universe. The more knowledge is extended towards those laws and the nature of things, its effect deepens and becomes more beneficial for man's activities related to civilization and the vicegerency. But when it is in opposition to the nature of things, in respect of its content and progression, it is devoid of sound criteria to the extent of its opposition, and

besides being ineffectual, becomes destructive of culture." Abd al-Aziz Barghuth, "The Place of the Theory of Knowledge in the Vicegerency and Civilizational Process in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi" (paper presented at the A Contemporary Approach Towards Understanding The Qur'an: The Example of Risale-i Nur, Istanbul, 1998), 31.

[113] As quoted in Barghuth, "The Place of the Theory of Knowledge in the Vicegerency and Civilizational Process in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi", 31.

[114] See Ibid. Also in his one of the most important treatises Nursi comprises three 'Points', in which the particular matters mentioned indicate general laws and universal principles deals with this issue. See Nursi, *The Words*, 253-60.

[115] See the related treatise for some examples Nursi, *The Words*, 260-75.

[116] See the treatise Ibid., 260-76. In this treatise he gives examples from the Qur'an's verses for numerous wonders, from electricty, trains, aeroplanes, telegraph, television, artesian wells, and fireproof materials, to radiation, the raising of the dead to life in medicine, and the subjugation and employment of demons and jinn. He maintains that man is encouraged to obtain these wonders and more by imitating in the way of science and industry. Furthermore it has been believed that Nursi pointed out his finger for some scientific facts among them Nursi spoke of twelve planets, ethereal matter that ether is so fine that a Qur'an could be written with its particles on an atom, the coccyx ('ajb al-dhanab) it is said in a Hadith about the resurrection of the dead that a tiny bone which is part of the coccyx ('ajb al-dhanab) will form the base of the second creation and etc. See for these and more Tatli, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, the Representative of Contemporary Islamic Thinkers - His Approach to the Questions of Science and Technology," 96-125.

[117] See for this and more Nursi, *The Words*, 272.

[118] See and compare with Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 201-05. Also see for his allusions about the ways of sainthood and Sufism Nursi, *The Letters*, 518-36. Also see and compare this point with Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 208-12.

[119] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 205, 08. Compare this with that according to Mardin "It is difficult to state outright that Said Nursi came forth with a fully formulated theory about nature, but ... the fact that a latent frame underlies his

system of nature cannot be questioned." Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 208.

[120] It should be clarified that as an Islamic philosopher Nursi maintains that whenever the philosophy follows the way of prophethood and does not challenge sacredness, it produces fruitful outcomes for humanity otherwise leads people into misguidance, atheism, and the swamp of nature. See my forthcoming book chapter or Nursi, *The Words*, 561.

[121] According to Kant 'Human reason, in one sphere of its cognition, is called upon to consider questions, which it cannot decline, as they are presented by its own nature, but which it cannot answer, as they transcend every faculty of the mind." Immanuel Kant, "Section Iii. Of Opinion, Knowledge, and Belief," in *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals* (Available on-line, 1785).

[122] See Nursi, *The Words*, 565. Also see Nursi, *The Flashes*, 235.

[123] It is important to note that what I mean here is the scientism which rejects any "Divine" behind the *mysterium tremendum* of creation. Also there is so-called 'theistic scientism' which according to Kalin Nursi's discourse has been an example of this. We will turn back to this approach in the following section.

[124] See and compare this and also see for scientific naturalism and philosophical naturalism; what they are and comparision of them Stenmark, *Scientism, Science, Ethics and Religion*, 126-29.

[125] See Tatli, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, the Representative of Contemporary Islamic Thinkers - His Approach to the Questions of Science and Technology," 92.

[126] See Philip Clayton, "The Imposible Possibility: Divine Causes in the World of Nature," in *God, Life and the Cosmos: Christian and Islamic Perspectives*, ed. Ted Peters, Muzaffar Iqbal, and Syed Nomanul Haq (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), 249.

[127] See Nursi, *The Flashes*, 232-54.

[128] Nursi, "Muhakemat," 1986.

[129] As cited in Bolay, "Bediuzzaman's View of Philosophy," 255. Elsewhere he states 'No corrupter ever says that he is a corrupter; he always looks truthful. Or else he thinks what is false is true. Yes, no one says that his 'ayran' is sour, so don't you take it without testing it. For there are many defaced words on the market. What I say even; don't give it the benefit of the doubt because I said it, and accept all of it." As quoted in Bolay, "Bediuzzaman's View of Philosophy," 252. For the original text

see as in Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Münazarat," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1940.

[130] It is at this point worth of mentioning that although it is out of the scope of this chapter, nowadays a minority of his followers exaggerate the importance of the Risale-i Nur (the Epistle of Light) even above or just under the Qur'an and refuses to use and read some others books and have left critical approach to the Risale-i Nur. However according to my studies, there is no support for this in his writings.

[131] As cited in Bolay, "Bediuzzaman's View of Philosophy," 255.

[132] See Horkuc, "A Contemporary Case Study of Islamic Civilisation Project: Said Nursi on Education."

[133] Acikgenc, "The Conception of Science in the Risale-i Nur," 336.

[134] Nursi, *The Letters*, 249. Also in this concern Vahide quotes Nursi "We Muslims, who are students of the Qur'an, follow proof; we approach the truths of belief through reason, thought, and our hearts. We do not abandon proof in favour of blind obedience and imitation of the clergy like some adherents of other religions. Therefore, in the future, when reason, science and technology prevail, that will surely be the time that the Qur'an will gain ascendancy, which relies on rational proofs and invites the reason to confirm its pronouncements." Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 99.

[135] Nursi, *The Letters*, 545. Also see for this Tatli, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, the Representative of Contemporary Islamic Thinkers - His Approach to the Questions of Science and Technology," 92. In contrast with one of Nursi's predecessors, Ibn Al-Arabi, whose epistemology appears at first to be distinctly subordinate role given to reason, Nursi sacrelise reason. See and compare this with Neal Robinson, "Muhyi Al-Din Ibn Al-`Arabi (1164-1240)," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman and Edward Craig (Routledge, 1998), 4: 602.

[136] See Nursi, "Muhakemat," 1991-92. Furthermore see his stress on the need for specialising in one subject and his proposal for transforming the *madrasas* from being 'single-faculty' institutions into being 'multi-faculty' and putting into practice 'the rule of division of labour' Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 44-45.

[137] It is this one of the most oft-repeated issues Nursi addressed in his Risale-i Nur; however it is out of the boundaries of this chapter to go through all the logical and philosophical arguments Nursi brought up in several places of His Risale-i Nur. For the most important treatises in this concern see, Nursi trying to prove the logical impossibilities of the claims expressed in these three phrases. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, "The Twenty-Third Flash: On Nature," in *The Flashes* (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1995). Also see Nursi On the nature, On the transformations of minute particles, and their motion and duties, indications to Divine unity in the motion of particles, and five instances of wisdom; the evidences of particles to the Divine existence and unity; a sixth instance of wisdom in the motion of particles Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, "The Thirtieth Word," in *The Words* (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1992). Also see Yamina Bouguenaya Mermer, "Cause and Effect in the Risale-i Nur," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1995).

[138] See Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Rays*, trans. Sukran Vahide (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1998), 130-63.

[139] See and compare with Chittick "Modern Science and the Eclipse of Tawhid". Chittick writes "This hierarchy is ordered in an intelligent way, according to the wisdom of God, and it begins and ends in intellect, which is the shining light of God."

[140] See Nursi, *The Words*, 570-82.

[141] As cited in Acikgenc, "The Conception of Science in the Risale-i Nur," 337.

[142] See and compare this with Mermer states "Causes are only signs and means for making known their Creator". Mermer, "Cause and Effect in the Risale-i Nur," 46, also see for "both causes and effects show the Divine Names" Mermer, "Cause and Effect in the Risale-i Nur," 49.

[143] See Said Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, trans. Ali Unal (Izmir: Kaynak, 1999), 445.

[144] This philosophical worldview was developed in Greece in the fourth and fifth centuries B.C. by Leucippus and Democritus, and later by Epicurus, Metrodorus, and Lucretius. For a discussion of the doctrines of Leucippus and Democritus, as well as for Aristotle's criticism of them, see G. E. R. Lloyd, *Early Greek Science: Thales to Aristotle* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1970). For the surviving writings of Epicurus, see *Epicurus, the Extant Remains*, trans. Cyril Bailey (Hildesheim, New York: G. Olms,

1970). Also for the Lucretius', *De Rerum Natura* (On the Nature of Things) is translated and made available as *Lucretius on the Nature of the Universe*, trans. R. E. Latham (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1951). Also it is a point of interest that we are not sure whether Nursi red Lucretius', *De Rerum Natura* ("On the Nature of Things"), but he has a treatise named similar or after as 'the Treatise on Nature', in which contrary to Lucretius', instead making the creation possible by the chances, he attempts to indicate the Divine Power behind the things. See Nursi, *The Flashes*, 232-54.

[145] See and compare this with the Ibn Taymiyya's disapprovance of theories of atoms and accidents, together with the critiques of the theory of atom in Serajul Haque, "Ibn Taimiyah," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 799-800, and 12 respectively.

[146] See for more in this regard for metaphysical issues, human action and Divine action and natural philosophy in Islam David Burrell, "Causality and Necessity in Islamic Thought," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman and Edward Craig (Routledge, 1998), 2: 241-44. Also see "Casulaity" in M. Saeed Sheikh, "Al-Ghazali," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 614-16. Compare all these with Ibn Taymiyya's refutation of the theory of necessary cause and anti-Aristotelian argumentations in Haque, "Ibn Taimiyah," 814-15.

[147] See for this and more Abdelwahab El-Effendi, "Islamic Theology," in *Islamic Philosophy from the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman and Edward Craig (Routledge, 1998), 5: 25-31.

[148] See and compare with Neal Robinson, "Ashariyya and Mutazila," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman and Edward Craig (Routledge, 1998), 1: 519. Nursi's views on this issue is very similar to Ibn Arabi's approach of the usage of *aql* and reason. See and compare with James Pavlin, "Taqi Al-Din Ibn Taymiyya," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman and Edward Craig (Routledge, 1998), 4: 655-56.

[149] See and compare with Youssef Choueiri, "Islamic Fundamentalism," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver and Edward Craig Leaman (Routledge, 1998), 5: 9-12.

[150] See M. Abdul Hye, "Ash'arism," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 222.

[151] See Ibid., 226.

[152] See and compare with A. K. M. Ayyub Ali, "Maturdism," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 263. Nursi's view in this regard also comparable to that of Razi: "Reason is neither the cause of which knowledge is the effect nor the source which produces knowledge... God creates reasoning which knowledge follows necessarily." As cited in and see for more in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Fakhr Al-Din Razi," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 648 passim.

[153] See and compare with Hye, "Ash'arism," 220-22, 24-26.

[154] In this regard see for the 'Unity of God', and 'Cosmology' in a comparative way by 'Ash'ariyya and Mu'tazila' Robinson, "Ashariyya and Mutazila," 1: 519-23. Also see and compare with Mir Valiuddin, "Mu'tazlilism," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 204. Also for the difference in approaching the usage of mind in kesb (will) idea between Ashariyya and Mu'tazila see Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Islam Düsüncesi* (Istanbul: Ulken Yayinlari, 1995), 40-45.

[155] Interview with Abdullah Aymaz, known as one of the most knowledgeable Nurcus.

[156] See and compare with Hye, "Ash'arism," 226-29.

[157] Bruno Guiderdoni, "The Exploration of the Cosmos : An Endless Quest?" (paper presented at the God, Life and the Cosmos: Theistic Perspectives, Islamabad, Pakistan. Displayed in http://www.kalam.org, November 6-9, 2002).

[158] See Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, 440.

[159] Nursi, *The Words*, 291.

[160] See Vahide, "Bediuzzaman's Works as a Model for Presenting Islam to the West," 170. Also see Nursi, *The Words*, 294.

[161] See Vahide, "Bediuzzaman's Works as a Model for Presenting Islam to the West," 170. See and compare with Nursi, *The Words*, 303.

[162] We will discuss what he means when he uses the word 'Shari'a'. However it is worthy of noting that he mostly uses the Suphistic understanding of literal meaning of the word as the Divine laws regulating the universe.

[163] See Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, 443-44.

[164] See Ibid., 449.

[165] Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, "Gleams," in *The Words* (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1992), 731.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Mermer, "Cause and Effect in the Risale-i Nur," 53.

[168] See Nursi, "Gleams," 766. Also see Mermer, "The Hermeneutical Dimension of Sceince: A Critical Analysis Based on Said Nursi's Risale-i Nur," 272.

[169] Interview with Turner, Colin in 24.06.03, Durham, England.

[170] Nursi, *The Rays*, 572.

[171] See and compare with William Cooney, Charles Cross, Barry Trunk, *From Plato to Piaget: The Greatest Educational Theorists from across the Centuries and around the World* (University Press of America displayed in http://backroom.elpress.com:8081/readittoc.jsp?Book=0819190101, 1993), 271.

[172] See Ibid., 1.

[173] See for more Ibid., 272-74. Also see for revealing some of the disagreements between these great educators Cooney, *From Plato to Piaget: The Greatest Educational Theorists from across the Centuries and around the World*, 271-72. and see Horkuc, "A Contemporary Case Study of Islamic Civilisation Project: Said Nursi on Education."

[174] See Ursula Spuler, "Message to the Panel," in *Panel I: Beiduzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1991), 179.

[175] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 69. It is also worth pointing out that Aksit provides us some insights about the need and emergence of *medrese* reforms in late ottoman with a brief contextualising he maintains that the victory of the scholastic *Ulema* over rational philosophers and observational scientists in the late 16th century was among the first reasons of decline in *medreses*. See for more on the late medrese reforms in Ottomans Aksit, "Islamic Education in Turkey: Medrese Reform in Late Ottoman Times and Imam-Hatip Schools in the Republic," 152-61.

[176] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 9-10.

[177] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 68-69. Abu Rabi also attaches importance on this matter, see Ibrahim Abu-Rabi, ed., *Islam at the Crossroads: On the Life and Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Albany: Suny Press, 2003), xiii.

[178] See Agai, "The Religious Impact of Science in the Writings of Bediuzzaman," 347.

[179] Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 167. We can see in various places of his writings he emphasises this point. "Without the light of the heart the light of the mind will not shine; so long as the two lights are not combined, all is darkness." As quoted in Acikgenc, "An Evaluation of the Risale-i Nur from the Point of View of Knowledge and the Categorization of Knowledge," 106. also see Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 1956-58.

[180] As quoted in Acikgenc, "The Conception of Science in the Risale-i Nur," 335. For the original text, contrary to Acikgenc's reference as he refers to Nursi, "Münazarat," 1934. see for where it should be referred Nursi, "Münazarat," 1956.

[181] See Yilmaz Özakpinar, "Qur'anic Civilization," in *A Contemporary Approach Towards Understanding the Qur'an: The Example of Risale-i Nur* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 2000), 464-65. and compare this with "The final and unavoidable conclusion is that education—like all our social institutions—must be concerned with its final values, and this in turn is just about the same as speaking of what have been called "spiritual values" or "higher values" in Abraham H Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences* Chapter VII. Value-Free Education? (Penguin Books Limited. Displayed in http://www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/lsd/maslow.htm, 1964).

[182] Nursi, "Münazarat," 1956. Also see Acikgenc, "The Conception of Science in the Risale-i Nur," 335-37.

[183] See Vahide, "The Book of the Universe: Its Place and Development in Bediuzzaman's Thought," 467.

[184] For the detailed conditions on which Medresetü'z-Zehra to be built see Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 41-53. Also see and compare with Adem Tatli, "Bediuzzaman's Education Method," in *International Symposium: The Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1992), 107.

[185] See Nursi, "Münazarat," 1957. and also see and compare this with Ibrahim Canan, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's View of Civilization," in *Ideas of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi in the Thirteeth Year since His Death and Their Place in Islamic Thought* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1991), 67-68.

[186] See Hamid Algar, "Said Nursi and the Risale-i Nur: An Aspect of Islam in Contemporary Turkey," in *Islamic Perspectives: Studies in Honour of Sayyi Abu'l Ala Mawdudi*, ed. K. Ahmad, Ansari, Z.I. (Leicester: 1979), 315.

[187] As cited in Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 44. Also see Nursi, "Münazarat," 1956.

[188] See and compare with Aksit, "Islamic Education in Turkey: Medrese Reform in Late Ottoman Times and Imam-Hatip Schools in the Republic," 153. It could be said that Nursi was not the only one who felt this need. Even earlier Abduh felt the strong necessity for an educational reform with a fundamental difference that this educational reform should be the means for Islamic response to the inroads and pressures of Europe, both political and intellectual. He saw two sets of schools in Egypt: the religious schools, best represented by al-Azhar, and the modern schools, based on European models, and usually founded by foreign missionaries, or the government. Education could be the tool for the basis of a stable and progressive society. See and compare with Kenneth Cragg, "Muhammad Abduh and Two Successors," in *Counsels in Contemporary Islam* (Edinburgh: The University Press, 1967), 33-47.

[189] In this regard Kalin states "His position on science ..., influenced a whole generation of Turkish students, professionals, and lay people with repercussions outside the Turkish-speaking world." Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 55.

[190] Stenmark, *Scientism, Science, Ethics and Religion*, vii.

[191] Peters, ed., *Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith/Wolfhart Pannenberg*, 1.

[192] Abu Rabi says "It is clear that in Nursi's mind... Europe did not constitute a problem as long as its virtues were adopted en masse by the Muslim world." Abu-Rabi, ed., *Islam at the Crossroads: On the Life and Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi.*

[193] As pointed out before Nursi differentiated between philosophy that challenges the revealed scriptures and philosophy that does not: in his terminology "the negative" and "the positive" philosophy. He challenged negative philosophy for its denial of revealed knowledge and encouraged

positive philosophy which draws from the Divine source. See as cited in Horkuc, "A Contemporary Case Study of Islamic Civilisation Project: Said Nursi on Education."

[194] See Nursi, *The Words*, 143-46.

[195] See and compare this with Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Sünuhat," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 2052-54. Also see Nursi, "Muhakemat," 1996-97.

[196] In this context before we move further, Nursi's social heritage is something worth of noting here. According to Nursi Ancient Rome and Greece which are supposed to be the basis of present civilisation were two geniuses; twins from a single stock; one fanciful, and the other materialist. Like oil and water, he notes, they never combined. It needed time, civilization worked at it too, and so did Christianity, but none was successful at combining them. Their origins are different: guidance descended from the heavens, genius emerged from the earth. Guidance works in the heart, and works the mind. See for this and more Nursi, "Gleams," 747-48.

[197] He uses Rumelia as meaning Europe.

[198] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 732-34. and Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 58-59.

[199] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 158.

[200] See Nursi, "Sünuhat," 2048-51. For the exploration of these points and analysis of the Western system according to Nursi see Safa Mürsel, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Position on Relations between the Blocs and Systems," in *International Symposium: The Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1992), 200-02. Also see Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 158-59. Elsewhere in this concern Nursi states, Elsewhere "While in a primitive state, man was in need of three or four things. Now tyrannical western civilization has encouraged abuses and wastefulness and the appetites, and making inessential needs into essential ones, has made civilized man in need of twenty things." See as quoted in Canan, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's View of Civilization," 55.

[201] See Nursi, "Muhakemat," 1996-97. Also see Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 158.

[202] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 160-61.

[203] See Mürsel, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Position on Relations between the Blocs and Systems," 202. Also see Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 158. In this regard elsewhere, half a century before its collapse Nursi states "Due to the powerful awakening brought about in mankind as a result of two ghastly world wars and mankind being awakened completely, a nation most definitely cannot live without religion. Russia too cannot remain without religion. And it cannot turn back and become Christian. At the most it may be reconciled with the Qur'an, which destroys absolute unbelief, relies on truth and reality, is based on proof and evidence, and which convinces the heart and mind, and may follow it." See as quoted in Mürsel, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Position on Relations between the Blocs and Systems," 207.

[204] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 58.

[205] See Nursi, "Gleams," 748. Also see Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 61-62.

[206] Nursi, *The Flashes*, 160.

[207] See Horkuc, "A Contemporary Case Study of Islamic Civilisation Project: Said Nursi on Education." Also see Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 25-59. Furthermore in this concern see Ahmed Davudoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1995), 291-92.

[208] Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 67.

[209] See Bediuzzaman Said. Nursi, "Divan-i Harb-i Örfî," in *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)* (Istanbul: Nesil Basim Yayin, 1996), 1932-34. and see Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 58 and also 98. See and compare this with "the Process of Modernisation in Japan" in S. N. (Shmuel Noah) Eisenstadt, *Modernization: Protest and Change* (Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, 1966), 75. Also for a detailed manner of Nursi's understanding of "Comparison between Western civilization and Islamic civilization" and for the analyses "the four clearest factors which had had a role in the making of Western civilization" according to Nursi see Muhammad Rushdi Ubayd, "The Thought of Said Nursi: A Contemporary Approach," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of*

Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1995), 141-49.

[210] See Mikail Tasdemir, "Political Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi" (MA, The International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), March, 1999), 9.

[211] See and compare for this and although Canan remarks according to Nursi Islamic freedom and Islamic consultation and Western democracy and its understanding of freedom are not different things; why should it be sought after? Canan, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's View of Civilization," 75.

[212] See Ibrahim Abu-Rabi, "How to Read Said Nursi's Risale-i Nur," in *Islam at the Crossroads : On the Life and Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, ed. Ibrahim M Abu-Rabi (Albany: Suny Press, 2003). Also worth of mentioning that according to Abu-Rabi 'By the end of the nineteenth century, it was possible to discern three different positions vis-a-vis progress or modernization: the first was a conservative Islamic position that considered modernization antithetical to Islamic values; the second was totally secularist that considered European values to be the only universal ones worthy of imitation, and the third made a distinction between European sciences and European ideas. It accepted the former while rejecting the latter." See Abu-Rabi, ed., *Islam at the Crossroads: On the Life and Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, xii.

[213] Ali Mermer, "Aspects of Religious Identity: The Nurcu Movement in Turkey" (Doctor of Philosophy, University of Durham, 1985), 17.

[214] See Canan, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's View of Civilization," 75.

[215] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 57.

[216] See Ibid., 60.

[217] As cited in Ibid., 62.

[218] As quoted in Ibid.

[219] See Yildiz Atasoy, "Islamic Revivalism and the Nation-State Project: Competing Claims for Modernity," *Social Compass*, no. 1 (March 1997).

[220] See Nursi, *The Rays*, 304. He states here 'They asked me there: 'What do you think about the Republic?" I replied: "My biography, which you have in your possession, proves that I was a religious republican before any of you, with the exception perhaps of the Chairman of Eskishehir Court, was born." In the same place Nursi also defines the early Islamic state as republic and the early leaders of

Islam, the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs as presidents of the republic. Also see Ibrahim Ethem Deveci, *Ben Dindar Bir Cumhuriyetciyim (I Am a Religious Republicanist)* (Istanbul: Yeni Asya Yayinlari, 1994).

[221] See Nursi, *The Rays*, 386.

[222] See Camilla Trud Nereid, *In the Light of Said Nursi: Turkish Nationalism and the Religious Alternative* (London: C. Hurst & Co (Publishers) Ltd, 1997), 1.

[223] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 332.

[224] Nursi, *The Flashes*, 203, footnote 7. In this regard According to Michel "Facing a common enemy, that of "aggressive atheism," Muslims should unite, according to Said Nursi, "not only with their own fellow-believers, but also with the truly pious Christians." Thomas S.J. Michel, "Muslim-Christian Dialogue and Co-Operation in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," *THE MUSLIM WORLD* LXXXIX, no. 3-4 (1999): 326-27.

[225] Michel, "Muslim-Christian Dialogue and Co-Operation in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 325.

[226] See Nursi, "Barla Lâhikasi," 1553-54.

[227] See as quoted in Michel, "Muslim-Christian Dialogue and Co-Operation in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 335.

[228] Nursi, "Münazarat," 1944.

[229] See Ibid.

[230] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 87. Also see Nursi, "Divan-i Harb-i Örfî," 1928.

[231] Hassan Hanafi, "The Origin of Modern Conservatism and Islamic Fundamentalism," in *Islamic Dilemmas: Reformers, Nationalists and Industrialization the Southern Shore of the Mediterranean*, ed. Ernest Gellner (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1985), 100.

[232] See and compare this with Tasdemir, "Political Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi", 41.

[234] As quoted in Canan, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's View of Civilization," 64.

[235] See Nursi, *Kaynakli- Indeksli-Lugatli Risale-i Nur Kulliyati (the Epistle of Light)*, 2052-53. Also see and compare this with "How did the West progress?" and "Reasons for the Muslims' backwardness" in Canan, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's View of Civilization," 62-75.

[236] See Nursi, "Münazarat," 1943. Also see and compare with Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 100.

[237] See Nursi, "Sünuhat," 2045. As quoted in Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 162.

[238] See Nursi, "Muhakemat," 1985.

[239] Ibid. As quoted in Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 162.

[240] For the exploration and elaboration of these issues in a great detail see Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 27-59. Also see Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 97-98. and Canan, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's View of Civilization," 66-67. In particular see the detailed analyses of these points in Thomas S.J. Michel, "Said Nursi's the Damascus Sermon," in *Fifth International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Qur'anic View of Man, According to the Risale-i Nur* (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 2000), 322-29.

[241] See Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 49-50.

[242] Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, VI-VII.

[243] See and compare this with (in 'Man and Society') that for Shariati tawhid-based society ought to submit God's will by following the immutable and scientifically demonstrable laws of nature. Society is like a living organism and governed by these immutable laws. Man is in need of following the norms of society and improving them for the progress of his society.Abdulaziz Sachedina, "Ali Shariati: Ideologue of the Iranian Revolution," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L Esposito (New York: Oxford University, 1983), 203-04 passim.

[244] See Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, VI-VII. Also see Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, 444-45.

[245] See Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 100.

[246] See Nursi, *The Letters*, 511.

[247] See Bolay, "Bediuzzaman's View of Philosophy," 277. Also for the decay of the madrasa system see Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 122.

[248] See Nursi, "Divan-i Harb-i Örfî," 1934. Also see and compare with Davudoglu, "Bediuzzaman and the Politics of the 20th Century Islamic World," 291-92.

[249] See Nursi, *Epitomes of Light (Mathnawi Al-Nuriye): The Essentials of the Risale-i Nur*, V. Also see and compare these with Abu-Rabi, "How to Read Said Nursi's Risale-i Nur," 74.

[250] See Sukran Vahide, "Toward an Intellectual Biography of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," in *Islam at the Crossroads : On the Life and Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, ed. Ibrahim M Abu-Rabi (Suny Press, 2003), 27.

[251] As quoted in Tatli, "Bediuzzaman's Education Method," 106.

[252] See Nursi, "Sünuhat," 2053. See and compare as quoted in Canan, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's View of Civilization," 65.

[253] Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*.

[254] See for Samuel P. Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations" first appeared in Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993).

[255] The passages are taken from *A General View of Positivism*, translated by J H Bridges, Robert Speller and Sons, 1957; about 15 pages from the middle of the first chapter of *General View of Positivism* (1830-42) displayed in http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/comte-positivism.html also displayed in http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/comte.htm

[256] Also see for the fundamentals and the basis of positivist philosophy Auguste Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, trans. Harriet Martineu (Freely Translated and Condensed by), vol. 3 (London: London Goerge Bell & Sons (Displayed in http://socserv2.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/comte/Philosophy1.pdf, 1896).

[257] Also see Mary Midgley, *Evolution as a Religion: Strange Hope and Stranger Fears* (London and Newyork: Methuen & Co., 1985), 15.

[258] See Agai, "The Religious Impact of Science in the Writings of Bediuzzaman," 341.

[259] See Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 71.

[260] See Uyanik, *Bilginin Islamilestirilmesi: Cagdas Islam Dusuncesi (Islamisation of Knowledge: Modern Islamic Thought)*, 23; for among those are Nasr, Tunusi, Abduh, Rashid Ridha, Afghani, Huseyin El Cisr.

[261] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 204. Also see and compare with Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 43.

[262] See "The Ottoman Reform" in Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 73-126. Also see for some deep insights that Mardin provides us for an understanding of the Islamic intellectual heritage and earlier institutional and intellectual antecedents to the reforms in Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*.

[263] Among them see Maurice Bucaille, *La Bible, Le Coran Et Le Science* (Paris: Seglers, 1976). Translation available from French by Alastair D. Pannell and the author (displayed in http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/Books/MB_BQS/default.htm), also for Turkish translation see Maurice Bucaille, *Kitab-i Mukaddes, Kur'an Ve Bilim (La Bible Le Coran, Et La Science)* (Istanbul: TOV Yayinevi). furthermore earlier draft of this book as an essay presented in an usual lecture given at the French Academy of Medicine available as Maurice Bucaille, *The Quran and Modern Science* (Birmingham: U.K.I.M. Dawah Centre, 9 November1976). In this regard also see Ziauddin Sardar, *Science, Technology and Development in the Muslim World* (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1977)., together with Nasr, *Science and Civilisation in Islam.*

[264] For Ernest Renan's lecture given at Sorbonne see published as Ernest Renan, "Islam and Science," *Journal des Débats* (March 29, 1883).

[265] See for Afghani's famous response to Renan translated into Englis h in Nikki R Keddie, "The Truth About the Neicheri Sect and an Explanation of the Neicheris ("Refutation of the Materialists" Co-Translated with Hamid Algar)," in *An Islamic Response to Emperialism:Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal Ad-Din Al-Afghani* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), 130-75. Also see for the analyses and critics of this rebuttal Nikki R Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Emperialism:Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal Ad-Din Al-Afghani* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), 73-84. where Keddie classifies this "Refutation" as an-apologetic and not an attempt to "rethink" Islam. Furthermore see for the detailed analyses of Namik Kemal's influencement of Westem thought, his outlook and ideology in Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 283-337.

[266] Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 44-46. For a similar approach to this see Nasr, *Science and Civilisation in Islam.* where Nasr deals with early classification of the sciences and replaces some of the Muslim scientists from different branches.

[267] See and compare with Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 48-49.

[268] See Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Emperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal Ad-Din Al-Afghani*, 77-81. Also see and compare with Elsayed Omran, "Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver and Edward Craig Leaman (Routledge, 1998), 1: 94.

[269] See and compare with Omran, "Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani," 1: 94-95.

[270] See and compare with "Faith and Reason" in Neal Robinson, "Muhammad 'Abduh," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver and Edward Craig Leaman (Routledge, 1998), 1: 6. Also see for the division of 'being' into 'necessary' and 'possible' traced back to Ibn Sina in "Metaphysical Issues" in Burrell, "Causality and Necessity in Islamic Thought," 2: 241-42. together with "Reason and Reality" in Salim Kemal, "Abu `Ali Al-Husain Ibn Sina," in *Islamic Philosophy: From the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman and Edward Craig (Routledge, 1998), 4: 650. Furthermore for "The Doctrine of Being" according to Ibn Sina see Fazlur Rahman, "Ibn Sina," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 481-86.

[271] See Jacques Waardenburg, "Islam as a Vehicle of Protest," in *Islamic Dilemmas: Reformers, Nationalists and Industrialization the Southern Shore of the Mediterranean*, ed. Ernest Gellner (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1985), 32, 33 respectively.

[272] See Leif Stenberg, *The Islamization of Science: Four Muslim Positions Developing an Islamic Modernity* (Lund: Nova Press, 1996), 148. Also see and compare with Pervez Hoodbhoy, *Islam and Science* (London: Zed Books, 1991), 69.

[273] According to Nasr this is a fundamentally wrong thing to do, see Stenberg, *The Islamization of Science: Four Muslim Positions Developing an Islamic Modernity*, 148.

[274] See Ibid., 295-96.

[275] See and compare with Ibid., 295.

[276] See Ibid., 296.

[277] See and compare with Mermer, "The Hermeneutical Dimension of Sceince: A Critical Analysis Based on Said Nursi's Risale-i Nur," 272. Also compare with Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 52.

[278] Mermer, "The Hermeneutical Dimension of Sceince: A Critical Analysis Based on Said Nursi's Risale-i Nur," 295.

[279] See Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 52-53. In this regard it is worth to see the following section of Nursi's writing in order to perceive how he approaches the issue Nursi, *The Flashes*, 252.

[280] Spuler, "Message to the Panel," 179.

[281] Also according to Kalin although his followers are extremely poor and unprepared when it comes to the philosophical aspects of the subject; they are extremely successful in matters related to sciences and engineering, and continue Nursi's method of integrating the findings of modern physical sciences into the theistic perspective of Abrahamic religions. See he also states "The pages of the journal Sizinti, published by Nursi's followers in Turkish, and its English version Fountain, are filled with essays trying to show the miracle of creation by finding correspondences between the verses of the Qur'an and new scientific discoveries. In this point of view, every new discovery is yet another proof for the miracle and credibility of the Qur'an. He therefore defies Nursi as the true father of what one might call 'Bucaillism' in the Islamic world. See Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World," 55-56.

[282] See Barghuth, "The Place of the Theory of Knowledge in the Vicegerency and Civilizational Process in the Thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," 31-32.

[283] Acikgenc, "The Conception of Science in the Ris ale-i Nur," 335.

[284] See Acikgenc, "An Evaluation of the Risale-i Nur from the Point of View of Knowledge and the Categorization of Knowledge," 116.

[285] As cited in Anis Ahmad, "Ustaz Badi'Uzzaman Said Nursi: His Impact on Contemporary Islamic Thinking," in *Third International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul: Sozler, 1995), 366.

[286] See Atasoy, "Islamic Revivalism and the Nation-State Project : Competing Claims for Modernity."

[287] See for his allusions about the ways of sainthood and Sufism Nursi, *The Letters*, 518-36. Also see and compare this point with Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 208-12.

[288] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 205, 08.

[289] See Atasoy, "Islamic Revivalism and the Nation-State Project : Competing Claims for Modernity."

[290] See as cited in Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 172.

[291] See Ibid., 205.

[292] See Horkuc, "A Contemporary Case Study of Islamic Civilisation Project: Said Nursi on Education."

[293] In this regard see and compare for a similar approach of Ismail Faruqi in Stenberg, *The Islamization of Science: Four Muslim Positions Developing an Islamic Modernity*, 218.

[294] See for a similar approach Abraham H Maslow, "Dichotomized Science and Dichotomized Religion," in *Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences* (Penguin Books Limited. Displayed in http://www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/lsd/maslow.htm, 1964). and compare with William Braden, "The Pearl of Great Price," in *The Private Sea: Lsd and the Search for God* (http://www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/lsd/braden.htm).

[295] See Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 205.

[296] See and compare this with Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Sadr Al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra)," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M Sharif (Delhi, India: Low Price Publications, 1999), 939-40.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine, in a systematic, text-based, analytical way, the contribution of Said Nursi to the idea of the "ideal society". The unusual combination of Nursi's philosophical and spiritual attainments, his familiarity with various languages, the unsystematic style of his writings and the breadth of the subjects covered in his writings, make him an innovative and controversial, as well as a fascinating, subject for research and analysis. An attempt has been made to explore the main points of his methodology and the intellectual ideas underlying it, against the background of his own life-struggle and the times during which he lived.

The dominance of the mystic has been apparent throughout. Although he was initially trained in the religious sciences by Sufis, philosophy was the primary intellectual *maîtrise* of this scholar. Later, he applied a sophisticated, rational and incisive analysis to the subject matter of belief. This was the practical application of his call for a return to reason-based thought in the study of *iman*, without which, he held, there could be no genuine understanding of *iman* at all. His writings make no claim to a monopoly on truth; they represent one ideologue's struggle to express the unboundedness of Islam as he perceived it. Particular attention has been drawn to his intellectual workings, so that his ideas might be debated in full knowledge of the ways in which they were derived.

The rise to predominance of a political understanding of Islam and exoteric motivations has had its implications in terms of having created two major divisions among Muslims that have affected the Islamic approach to the idea of ideal society: internalists and externalists. According to the Qur'an, there is no "ideal society" in a literal sense; perfection exists only in the mind. The Qur'an, as we have pointed out, speaks of the "median or middle society". However, we have equated the Qur'anic "middle society" with the Islamic "ideal society". The externalists' idea of the ideal society has fixed upon political power, whereas internalists have approached the issue through individual salvation and reform through *iman*. During the classical period, soon after the Prophet's death, there was a need to establish the original purity of the dream of the golden age, the early times of the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs or the ideal society (*ummah*). The early Madinian period of the Prophet Muhammad laid emphasis on the politico-religious writings and discussions of the classical thinkers. It was understood that the Muhammadan truth had found its place, and *islam* became Islam in Medina. This has been the dominating idea, and it has found itself a number of followers throughout Islamic history. The core of Muhammadan truth, belief in God and the truth about the Hereafter, has been idealised in imposing Shari'a rules from top through to the bottom. It is Plato's *Republic* which has been the prototype for later, externalist concepts of an "ideal society". The externalist tradition is mainly associated with political power, society governed by well-educated élites or philosophers or lawmakers, rulers, kings, sultans, mullahs, etc. On the other hand the so-called internalists, or those whose discourse has been dominated by the idea of seeking to reform society through

individuals' faith-based, reviving discourses, did not care about imposing the Shari'a from the top. They cared mostly about individual salvation and reform through *iman*.

Throughout Islamic history we have witnessed a number of changes regarding the externalists' viewpoint, as the medieval outlook gave way to the puritanical, politically revolutionary movements which reacted against the new European dominance over the Muslim world. This was a reactionary movement. In the externalists' system, the "ideal society" and its attainability began to be questioned, and there were protests against internal deterioration, to lead Muslim society back to the purity and order that had characterised it in the first century of Islam.

After this came the modern period of Islamic history, which has been our focus throughout this study, concerned as we have been to make the proper comparisons between Nursi and his contemporaries. We have found it difficult to categorise contemporary scholars of Islam as either externalists or internalists. Although they all have a common point of departure (both groups seeking to purify the faith on the basis of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, and return to the model of the early Muslim community in the time of the Prophets and the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs), they have their differences regarding how to achieve this.

Parallel with the changes that took place throughout time in the understanding of the exoteric and esoteric practical implications of *islam* came the transformation of

Islamic society, according to which most Muslims became oriented to the externals of Islam and began to live in a culture of Islam rather than *islam*. There came into existence two groups of scholars, externalists and internalists, who consciously or otherwise led people to embrace respectively a culture of Islam or of *islam/iman*. Internalism was traditionally the preserve of the Sufi brotherhoods, although there were also certain individuals affiliated to non-Sufi brotherhoods who endeavoured to preserve the harmony that is supposed to exist between the internal and external facets of *islam*, placing greater emphasis on *iman* but not forsaking the practical demands of Islam.

The rise to prominence of the political understanding of Islam has its roots in two major factors that have affected an Islamic approach to the idea of the ideal society, parallel with developments in the understanding of *islam*/Islam and *iman*. The precise meaning and practical implications of the terms *islam*/Islam and *iman* have changed over time, leading to ambiguity and confusion as the concepts have been either misunderstood or misinterpreted. Islam overshadowed *islam/iman*, and people started to believe the religion of their forefathers: in other words, they lived in an Islamic culture which was atavistic.

The period of Prophet Muhammad and the original Islamic state in Medina remained the ideal paradigm. In this tradition are to be found the political writings of al-Farabi, al-Ghazali, ibn Taymiyya, ibn Khaldun, Abdul Wahhab, including Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb of Egypt, Abu Ala Mawdudi of Pakistan, Khomeini, and,

more recently, of Hasan al-Turabi, and Rashid al-Ghannoushi and numerous others. Islamic history is replete with attempts to restore or reform society. Some have called for an Islamic state based upon a re-implementation of classical Islamic law (Shari'a). Others argue the need to reformulate law in light of contemporary society. On the other hand, the ideal Islamic society has sometimes been framed in the writings and practice of the Sufis, or those affiliated to the non-Sufi brotherhood such as al Ghazali, Abd al Qadir al Jilani, Mulla Sadra, Shaikh Ahmad Farrooqui Sirhindi, Muhammad Ilyas and, in recent times, Muhammad Iqbal and Said Nursi. Despite enormous areas of agreement in faith and practice, these thinkers exhibit many differences in their understandings of how to achieve the "ideal socicty". All the externalists, however, declared Islam to be not only a religion in the usual sense of the word (guiding private life and ordaining rituals) but a philosophy covering the totality of collective life. They therefore talked about an Islamic state, Islamic law, Islamic education, Islamic society, etc., in order to revive this ideal. The fundamental difference between Nursi and his contemporaries is that Nursi, although he sought to revive the ideal, did not talk about or practise statecraft or law.

Early in his life, we see Nursi as an aspirant political *savant* who aimed to "reawaken the last saviour or citadel" of Islam: the Ottoman Empire. He never acted as a politician, but was involved with politics through his writings and his membership of the different political organisations. Throughout the early period, he was in search of something that did not fully reveal itself until the 1920s. It is also clear from the activities and writings of this period that he was intellectually

challenging. He challenged his fellow pupils while at school, his teachers, political rulers who he thought were misled, the shaykhs of the region, and contemporary intellectuals.

The young Nursi was more provocative than conciliatory, although evidence has been presented here of his attempts to work alongside the Ottoman Caliphate. There is also evidence of him attempting to work with other members of the Muslim intelligentsia in reviving the Ottomans, as a member of *Darü'l-Hikmeti'l-Islamiye.*

If Nursi had been, by temperament, a more thoroughgoing politician, rather than the ideologue of a faith-based movement, his time there might have ended differently, but it remains an open question as to whether he would have been so creative in terms of founding a movement that is now said to have more than six million followers throughout the world.

In the 1920s Nursi experienced a crisis of mind. This was a watershed in his life, when he was faced with deciding whether to continue using philosophy as the only means of renewing Islam. The path he chose as a result of that crisis was to return him to the foundations of revelation, and lead him to use this as the only means of reviving belief in Islam and of providing an interpretation of Islam which could withstand the onslaught of philosophy. The apparent "silent" years of the 1920s produced a fruitful "New Said", a transformation which testified to his reworking the philosophical, theological and mystical dimensions of his own methodology.

Nobody so far has focused on the process Nursi underwent through these years. As a result there has been a failure properly to examine how Nursi devised a methodolo gy which investigated the development of the scientific, materialist philosophy. By this means, the methodology which was later to be applied to the interpretation of the Qur'an was born.

In reviewing Nursi's life it is possible to observe Nursi making a transition from philosopher to ethical thinker. The former strain dominated his early studies and shaped him; the latter occupied his later years as he sought to draw the wisdom of his life to a consummation. His powerful stressing of the ethical principles of the Qur'an, as exemplified by his emphasis on the primacy of *taqwa* as the end to which the Qur'an tends, is a fitting conclusion to his life's work. He attempted to develop guidelines for the appropriate, good or "right" behaviour of individuals within a complex society. He was especially adamant that such an interrelation should operate on a psychological and not on a supernatural level.

We have explored Nursi's methodology and its seminal importance at length. Nursi aimed to discover the socio-historical context of an original impulse, then to see the principle contained therein, and finally to ask how that principle might best be realised in the contemporary context. Such a realisation required the acceptance that a literal application of earlier solutions might in fact violate the underlying principle,

as the contemporary situation might be so different as to produce a deviant effect. This entailed both a certain openness and an ability to withstand the pain of change.

In terms of his mysticism, Nursi was influenced by al Jilani, Sirhindi, and Ibn Arabi. He was also greatly influenced by al Ghazali and ibn Taymiyya. In his *Risale-i Nur*, he mentions these names with great respect. He appears to have shown an interest also in Al Ashari and al Razi. One may, however, find from the study of his mystical thought that although he received inspiration from both Sufis and non-Sufis, his ideas were actually close to neither.

The application of his methodology to the Qur'an required that it be treated in a holistic rather than in an atomistic manner. This has been discussed in the final part of this study. Perhaps the attribute which most strongly characterises Nursi is that of an educationalist. His discourse stresses the centrality of education as the only means of revivifying Islam. Such an education is necessary at the level of pioneering individual awareness, and building a new, structured education system combining the classical *madrasa*, the Sufi *tekke* and the modern school. However, questions may be raised as to whether this so-called education project is as applicable in the future as it has been yesterday and today.

Nursi advocated Islam as a universal panacea, the solution to all problems. He had a sophisticated notion of the all-enveloping nature of Islam. He saw Islam as something that answers all man's questions and needs. He tackled the underlying

cause of modern problems by providing firm answers. On the other hand, although he offered solutions to modern man's social and psychological problems, he did not deal with particular issues individually. He wanted to make people good, but did not deal with how to achieve this in terms of governing.

Offering judgement in terms of reform through *iman*; advocating Islam as a universal panacea, with a sophisticated notion of the all-enveloping nature of Islam; providing firm answers; not dealing with particular issues individually; wishing to make people good but not dealing with how to achieve or implement it – these qualities, together with his place in the revivalist tradition, serve to place Nursi as an internalist, textually-based renewer of faith.

Like that of other great thinkers, Nursi's thought contains both specific and universal (general) elements, and the latter can readily be conveyed to later generations with no more than the usual difficulties of translation from one cultural and historical period to another. However, the complex mystical-philosophical structure of Nursi's thought is difficult to place in a single tradition, thus raising some questions of understanding. Nursi's discourse reminds us that the tendency to translate specific, traditional, religiously based rules of conduct into much more general and abstract ethical concepts may be applied in various ways according to the historical context.

In recent times there has been a rising sentiment in favour of increased communication between, if not the unity of, the religions of the world. Not only have the Protestant groups abandoned their strict sectarian views, but the Ecumenical Council has brought changes giving promise of increased co-operation between the Roman Catholic Church and other faiths. And efforts all over the world have been and are being made to reconcile the views of the great religious leaders of all major religions – Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu. Nursi, it should be said, was one of the very first who put aside these differences.

There are echoes of Islamic universalism in his discourse. He maintained the view that there was no harm in loving non-Muslims as long as this love comes from their attributes or their attainments. He did not believe that all the attributes of Muslims are necessarily Islamic; by contrast, he believed that all the attributes of unbelievers are un-Islamic. He believed that it was these attributes and attainments that determined the form of friendship with other people. However, there are still echoes in his writings of intolerance towards atheists and communists.

Finally, Nursi never talked about an ideal society in the utopian sense. He felt that 65 to 70 per cent of society could be guided to live in accordance with religious belief, but that there will always be some people whom it is impossible to reach or enlighten. There will always be crime, prostitution, partisanship, and people disregarding moral codes. This is how Nursi sees the reality and truth of this life. He aimed to find a methodology which would show that religion and science cannot be

stated in a dichotomous, competitive way, and that the person who is deeply religious should feel strengthened in his religious beliefs, and encouraged by the prospect that his value-questions, including those concerning the *mysterium tremendum*, can be answered more firmly than ever before.

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