

The Risale-i Nur

The Risale-i Nur collection is a six-thousand-page commentary on the Quran written by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi in accordance with the mentality of the age. Since in our age faith and Islam have been the objects of the attacks launched in the name of so called science and logic, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi therefore concentrated in the Risale-i Nur on proving the truths of faith in conformity with modern science through rational proofs and evidence, and by describing the miraculous aspects of the Quran that relate primarily to our century. This collection now has millions of readers both in and outside of Turkey. Thanks to the Risale-i Nur, the Turks managed to maintain their religion despite the most despotic regimes of the past decades. Although its author faced unbearable persecution, imprisonment, and exile, while no effort was spared to put an end to his service to faith, he was able to complete his writings compromising the Risale-i Nur and raise a vast group of believers who courageously opposed the oppression and preserved the dominance of Islam in the country.

Bediuzzaman understood an essential cause of the decline of the Islamic world to be weakening of the very foundations of belief. This weakening, together with the unprecedented attacks on those foundations in the 19th and 20th centuries carried out by materialists, atheists and others in the name of science and progress, led him to realize that the urgent and over-riding need was to strengthen, and even to save, belief. What was needed was to expend all efforts to reconstruct the edifice of Islam from its foundations, belief, and to answer at that level those attacks with a ‘manevi jihad’ or ‘jihad of the word.’

Thus, in exile, Bediuzzaman wrote a body of work, the Risale-i Nur, that would explain and expound the basic tenets of belief, the truths of the Quran, to modern man. His method was to analyse both belief and unbelief and to demonstrate through clearly reasoned arguments that not only is it possible, by following the method of the Quran, to prove rationally all the truths are the only rational explanation of existence, man and the universe.

Bediuzzaman thus demonstrated in the form of easily understood stories, comparisons, explanations, and reasoned proofs that, rather than the truth of religion being incompatible with the findings of modern science, the materialist interpretation of those findings is irrational and absurd. Indeed, Bediuzzaman proved in the Risale-i Nur that science’s breathtaking discoveries of the universe’s functioning corroborate and reinforce the truths of religion.

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

Also, it explains the most profound matters of belief, which formerly only advanced scholars studied in detail, in such a way that everyone, even those to whom the subject is new, may understand and gain something without it causing any difficulties or harm.

A further reason is that in explaining the true nature and purposes of man and the universe, the Risale-i Nur shows that true happiness is only to be found in belief and knowledge of God, both

in this world and the Hereafter. And it also points out the grievous pain and unhappiness that unbelief causes man's spirit and conscience, which generally the misguided attempt to block out through heedlessness and escapism, so that anyone with any sense may take refuge in belief.

To conclude

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

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

Man's most fundamental need is the need for religion, the need to recognize and worship Almighty God with all His Most Beautiful Names and attributes, and to obey His laws; those manifest in the universe and those revealed through his prophets. In explaining the message of the Quran, Almighty God's final Revealed Book, brought and perfectly expounded by His final Prophet, Muhammad (PBUH), and Islam, the complete and perfected religion for mankind, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi demonstrated in the Risale-i Nur that there is no contradiction or dichotomy between science and religion; rather, true progress and happiness for mankind can, and will, only be achieved in this way, the way of the Quran.