

Moral Philosophy in the Qur'an From the Viewpoint of the *Risale-i Nur* Said Nursi

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Abstract

The content of moral philosophy in *Risale-i Nur* Said Nursi which is derived from the Qur'an is abundant. This paper is an attempt to elaborate that moral philosophy of the Qur'an explained thoroughly in *Risale-i Nur*. The topics discussed here include the idea that evil is not fundamental to the world; it is only a means of knowing good, while men are the source of moral evil. In the *Risale-i Nur*, Nursi describes the hardships of his life in exile, the difficulties he suffered, and the distress he felt at the inhuman treatment meted out to his brothers, his country, and all humanity even. It is because what regarded as evil such as death is actually an instance of good and the gate of mercy. The plausible question is whether man is free to do and to desire something. For Nursi it is obvious that human freedom can be conducted only within the limits of divine determination. Nursi compares the wisdom of the Qur'an and that of philosophy, the training and education both offer to mankind. One of the things the *Risale-i Nur* teaches us is that what we suppose to be life is in reality only a small slice of time. Because for us, the past and future are non-existent and dead.

Keywords: Moral Philosophy, Goodness, Evil, Will, Wisdom of al-Qur'an

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Abstrak

Kandungan filsafat moral dalam *Risale-i Nur* yang diambil dari al-Qur'an sungguh banyak. Makalah ini adalah upaya untuk mengkaji filsafat moral al-Qur'an yang dijelaskan secara menyeluruh dalam *Risale-i Nur*. Topik yang didiskusikan disini termasuk ide tentang kejahatan sebagai tidak mendasar bagi dunia; kejahatan hanyalah sarana untuk mengetahui kebaikan, sedangkan manusia adalah sumber kejahatan moral. Di dalam *Risale-i Nur*, Nursi menggambarkan kesulitan hidup di pengasingan, penderitaan, dan perlakuan tidak manusiawi yang dijatuhkan kepada saudara-saudara senegarannya, bahkan semua umat manusia. Hal ini karena apa yang dianggap jahat, seperti kematian, sebenarnya adalah contoh dari kebaikan dan pintu dari rahmat. Pertanyaan yang masuk akal adalah apakah manusia bebas untuk melakukan dan menghendaki sesuatu. Bagi Nursi jelas bahwa kebebasan manusia hanya dapat dilaksanakan dalam batas-batas takdir Tuhan. Nursi membandingkan kearifan al-Qur'an, filsafat, pelatihan, dan pendidikan baik ditawarkan untuk umat manusia. Salah satu hal yang diajarkan *Risale-i Nur* adalah bahwa apa yang kita kira akan hidup dalam kenyataannya hanya sepotong kecil waktu. Karena bagi kita, masa lalu dan masa depan tidak ada dan mati.

Kata kunci: Filsafat Moral, Kebaikan, Kejahatan, Kehendak, Kearifan al-Qur'an

Introduction

I cannot describe how amazed and bewildered I felt, intellectually and in myself, when I first read the *Risale-i Nur*, or I thought I had read it. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that when one keeps on reading it, fresh meanings continuously unfold to one. The *Risale-i Nur* is an undiscovered treasure trove. When one reads and reflects on it and lives together with it –rather, when one shares life with it–one discovers knowledge and learning of astonishing variety. This stems from its being a bunch of flowers gathered from the garden of the Qur'an, which encompasses the whole universe. This was a gift and favor bestowed by God Almighty on Nursi.¹

¹What eloquent expressions there are in the *Risale-i Nur*! Look for example at this one: "...the qualities of delicious bunches of grapes should not be sought in their dry stalks. I resemble such a dry stalk. If my voice were strong enough, I would shout out to the whole earth: "The Words are beautiful; they are truth, they are reality; but they are not mine. They are rays shining out from the truth of the Noble Qur'an". I cannot praise the Qur'an with my words, rather my words become praiseworthy through the Qur'an..." (Letters, 434-5). Nursi says in the *Risale-i Nur* that the Qur'an's truths are manifested in three ways: in its own truths,

The *Risale-i Nur* is replete with knowledge derived from divine revelation, and it is corroborated by rational cosmic (scientific) truths. From it waft the scented breezes of the garden of the Most Merciful, and the beams of its scintillating lights. Both Devine Beauty and Devine Glory are reflected in its words and lines. Beauty raises us to elevated thought, honorable justice, love or right, passion for virtue, and devotion to the Trust and our obligations. Then Glory imparts to us abounding strength, making us bold and courageous; filling us with zeal and fervor, so that we conquer cowardice and fear.² Yes, I lived with the *Risale-i Nur* and studied it for this paper, "Moral Philosophy in the Qur'an From the Viewpoint of the *Risale-i Nur*," and I can find no better way of expressing my amazement at it than the below words of Ibrahim al-Dabbagh. He wrote them in a letter to ustadh Ihsan Qasim al-Salihi when the latter's biography of Said Nursi, *Sira Dhatiyya*, appeared: "Certainly, a pen that writes about the truth has to be fervent and eager, otherwise the truths it expresses will be dull and lusterless and will lack the power to stir its readers.

We write about someone who like a flashing flam was overflowing with vitality, and burning with the exuberant ideas he produced. Firstly, when writing the truths he left as a legacy, he never descended to the commonplace or to imitation of others. Secondly, when writing about him one was to proceed cautiously, so that what one writes is not ineffective or still-born. Doubtless, scholarship is necessary for writing, and as for the truth, it weighs heavily on the writer and pushes itself forward. Nevertheless, the pen writing it has to be ardent and flowing, than it may capture its tumbling thoughts and living truths'. 'This was reason I felt bewildered. Said Nursi was a fiery, vigorous, zealous, genuine thinker; he caused hearts to leap, and illuminated minds; how could any writer do him justice? This paper therefore is a humble attempt to disclose the thought of

in the truths of the universe, and in those apparent in the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) words and actions. Another point worth mentioning is that although the *Risale-i Nur* has spread everywhere and is readily available, it has not been criticized by either scholars, or philosophers, or righteous saints and holy men. On the contrary, the first reaction of virtually everyone is appreciative amazement. This shows what in the words of the Sufis, it consists of effusions pouring forth from Bediuzzaman's heart, and in the words of one of his students, it consists of "flashes of the Perspicuous Book's (the Qur'an's) light."

²Edib Ibrahim Dabbagh, "Bediuzzaman and the Literature of Belief", in *International Symposium on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, 1992 (Eng.Trans.) (Istanbul: Sozler Publication, 1993), 236-245.

Said Nursi in his *Risale-i Nur* concerning moral philosophy of the Qur'an.

Said Nursi's Life

Said Nursi is too famous to need any introduction. For he was "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi." Bediuzzaman was a title (meaning Wonder of the Age), Said was his name, and Nursi was his surname, derived from Nurs, his native village. Nurs is near Hizan in the province of Bitlis. He wrote 17 works in Arabic, and the rest were in Turkish.³ He knew Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, and Persian. Nursi was born in 1294/1877, and died on Wednesday, 25 Ramadhan 1379/23 March 1960 in Urfa. He was buried in the Ulu Mosque in Urfa, and five months later was disinterred by government officials and reburied in an unknown spot.⁴

Nursi's life followed a course entirely outside his own will and consciousness, being directed in such a way he would to serve the Qur'an by means of the *Risale-i Nur*.⁵ In his humility, he described this as follows: "It has now become absolutely clear in my view that most of my life has been directed in such a way, outside my own will, ability, comprehension, and foresight, that it might produce these treatises to serve the All-Wise Qur'an. It is as if all my life is a scholar had been spent in preparation and preliminaries, the result of which was the exposition of the Qur'an's miracle through the Words."⁶

Thus, his whole life was like the seed of his service of the Qur'an. Nursi studied various sciences that might convey people to Almighty God, including *kalam*, philosophy, and Sufism. However, he did not restrict himself to any one of these; he thought that none was sufficiently powerful to save people's belief his age, and himself opened up a new way derived from the Qur'an. This was the shortest and most direct way to the truth, which answered man's innate needs,

³Isharat al Ijaz, Ta'liqat, Qizil Ijaz, al-Khutbah al-Shamiyya, and so on. Those in Turkish include, Nokta, Suaat, Sunahat, Muhakemat, Taluat, Lemaat, Rumuz, Isarat, Hutufat Sitte, Divan-I Harb-I, Orfi, hakikat Cekideklery. See, Ihsan Qasim al-Salihi, *Sirah Dhatiyya* (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1419/1998), 35-6.

⁴Ihsan Qasim al-Salihi, *Badi'uzzaman Sa'id al-Nursi, Nazara 'Ammalian Hayatihi wa Atharihi* (Al-Mansura:Matba' al-Wafa, 1988), 132-6.

⁵Ihsan Qasim, *Sirah Dhatiyya*, 10.

⁶Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *Lettters 1928-1932* (Eng. Trans.) (Istanbul: Sozler Publication, 1997), 441.

stimulated minds searching for the truth and moved hearts that found peace in advancing and progressing; a way in harmony with both man's nature and the laws in force in the universe.⁷

The *Risale-i Nur* sets out numerous truths of the Qur'an. For in the Qur'an, which is a pre-eternal translation of the universe, man can find out the truth both about himself and his life. The *Risale-i Nur* does this with great clarity and simplicity and supports its claims with scholarly proofs.

Nursi compares the wisdom of the Qur'an and that of philosophy,⁸ and the training and education both offer to mankind. He says: "Philosophy accepts 'force' as its point of support in the life of society. It considers its aim to be 'benefits'. The principle of its life it recognizes to be 'conflict'. It hold the bond between communities to be 'racialism and negative nationalism'. Its fruit are 'gratifying the appetites of the soul and increasing human needs'. However, the mark of the force is 'aggression'. The mark of benefit-since they are insufficient for every desire-is 'jostling and thrusting'. While the mark of conflict is 'strife'. And the mark of racialism-since it is has negated the happiness of mankind."⁹

As for the Qur'anic wisdom, its point of support is 'truth' instead of force. It take 'virtue and God's pleasure' as its aims in place of the principle of conflict. And it takes 'the ties of religion, class, and country' to be the ties bonding communities. Its aim is to form a barrier against the lusts of the soul, urge the spirit to sublime matters, satisfy the high emotions and urging man to the human perfections, make him a true human being. And the mark of 'the truth' is accord. The mark of virtue is 'solidarity'. The mark of mutual assistance is 'hastening to assist one another'. The mark of religion is 'brotherhood' and 'attraction'. And the mark of reining in and tethering the soul and leaving the spirit free and urging it towards perfections is 'happiness in this world and the next'.¹⁰

Said Nursi is not hostile towards philosophy, for he is well aware that man's reason is one of the ways of acquiring knowledge. What

⁷Ihsan Qasim, *Sira Dhatiyya*, 10.

⁸Bediuzzaman's views on this subject show his profound knowledge about philosophy, and particularly modern philosophy. But he only accepted that philosophy which acknowledges the truths of religion and submits to them, and is useful for the life of humanity. See, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Words* (Eng. Trans.) (Istanbul: Sozler Publication, 1998), 561.

⁹Nursi *The Words*, 146.

¹⁰Nursi, *The Words*, 146.

he has opposed to was the rationalism that denying divine revelation, had deviated from religion, and was doomed to dissolve and disappear in the crucible of materialist philosophical currents. What he said was this: "The philosophy of the *Risale-i Nur* strikes at fiercely and attacks, is not absolute, but the harmful sort. For the philosophy and wisdom that serve the life of human society, and morality and human attainments, and industry and progress, are reconciled with the Qur'an. Indeed, such philosophy serve the Qur'an's wisdom, and does not oppose it. This sort The *Risale-i Nur* does not bother with.

As for the other sort, since it both leads to misguidance, atheism, and the swamp of nature, and is the cause of vice and dissipation, heedlessness and misguidance; and since with its spellbinding wonder it opposes the Qur'an's miraculous truths; the *Risale-i Nur* attacks and deals at it with me powerful proofs in the comparisons contained in most of its parts. It does not attack beneficial, rightly-guided philosophy. Members of the secular schools can therefore embrace the *Risale-i Nur* without hesitation or objection."¹¹

Said Nursi adhered to the truths he had drawn out of the Qur'an's heart, penetrating to the deepest corners of its inward signs, than he rose to the highest peaks of the outside world. He linked together these elevated truths and the beings of the universe so effectively that he filled the intellect with enthusiasm and satisfied the heart. The ideas he worked through the effusions of the divine names strengthened the Muslims' relations with both society, and life, and the universe, and won for them a brand new point of view. He pointed out the traces of God's mercy in every area of life, weighed up humanity's value in this context, and thus saved contemporary man from his loneliness and terrible alienation.¹²

In his more than 130 works, which pour forth from the guidance of the Qur'an and Sunnah and reflect their light, Nursi

¹¹Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Staff of Moses* (Eng. Trans.) (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 2002), 8. See also, *The Words*, 450, 537, 564-7. Another point to mention is that Nursi's stand towards the science and technology of Western civilization was that of a Muslim who wants his society to have a high standard of living. He therefore considered it necessary for Muslims to profit from Western science and technology. But there was nothing devious in this view, unlike with some people, for he looked on them as universal and not part of any religion.

¹²Muhsin 'Abd al-Hamid, *al-Nursi, Mutakallim al-'Asr al-Hadith* (Cairo: Sozler li'l-Nashr, 1995), 249.

displays his profound knowledge. He Explains The main teachings of Islam about the tenets of belief, supporting his explanations with scholarly and reasoned proofs. He studies Islam's view of the universe, life, society, and man, and discussing these comprehensively, demonstrates Islam's all-encompassing view.

Said Nursi was also concerned with the doubts raised about Islam in the modern period, and clarifying them, showed them to be false. But this was without allowing himself to be restricted by the science of kalam, which with its limited terminology and rational approach, did not answer the spiritual needs of today's muslims nor arouse in them the favor of belief. Similarly, he was unconstructed by the narrow principles of philosophy.

Aspects of Nursi's Character

Nursi passed his life among people who for the most part did not know Arabic. he was not Arab himself, but he elucidates the Qur'an's my stories and the eloquence manifested in its words, word-order, and manner of expression, and the instances of wisdom in these. This alone is miracle, enough to astonish anyone. Another brilliant side of his character was the effect he had on those he addressed. His powers of persuasion were incredible. He could convince anyone, and so tied his students to himself that they spread the *Risale-i Nur* everywhere belief to needed to be strengthened, and people to learn righteous action, and love and co-operation were needed. That is, they undertook every sacrifice so that people could find happiness in this world and next.¹³

Those who make a close study of the *Risale-i Nur* will see that its purpose is to train people's souls, instill the truths of believe in their hearts and imbue them with their hues. For it such people who will reform and reorder the world in line with the principles of god and his prophet. Nursi observed that people had lost their belief and made his mission in life with his works to restore their favor.

The struggle that Nursi embarked on was not political struggle which one party would win and the others lose; it was one of supreme importance, for it was concerned with the plight of Islam itself, not that Islam could be defeated so long as the muslims believed and learnt its truths. In his view, if Europe, as the representative of present-day civilization, Learn these truths, it could become pregnant with

¹³Muhammad al-Tihami, *al-Nursi*, Anwar La Taghib (Cairo: 1318/1998),20.

Islam, and one day give birth to it and Europe would carry the infant in its arms and raise it.¹⁴

Nursi knew exactly what his aims and goal were, and his mission. He devoted everything to realize these aims and relied on God alone. To conduct this fight in God's way and defend His religion, and to save people's belief and arouse them from their slumbers, he sacrificed everything, his life, possessions, position, everything. Inevitably he suffered exile, imprisonment, torture and poisoning. This ill-treatment continued up to his last hours even, though he died a natural death after his long and fruitful life.¹⁵

¹⁴Bediuzzaman spoke of this when only thirty years old, when answering the questions of Shaykh Bahid (d. 1354H). Shaykh Bahid asked: "what is your opinion concerning Freedom and the Ottoman State, and European civilization?"

"Bediuzzaman's unhesitating reply revealed his realism and insight. "The Ottoman State is pregnant with Europe, and it will give birth to an European state one day. And Europe is pregnant with Islam; one day it will give birth to an Islamic state." See, Ihsan Qasim, *Bediuzzaman Said al-Nursi, Nazara 'Amma*, 31.

¹⁵Muhsin 'Abd al-Hamid, al Nursi, *Mutakallim al-'asr al-Hadith*, 51-2. A few examples of Nursi's boldness, courage, heroism, sincerity, powerful belief, and his readiness to sacrifice everything for his cause:

- (a) In 1907 he gave a petition to Sultan 'Abdulhamid for the opening of schools that would teach the religious and modern sciences jointly. But as a result he was sent before a military tribunal. His request was refused, but he was offered a good salary. Nursi rejected this fiercely. The exchange continued like this:

The Minister: "You are rejecting an imperial decree. An imperial decree cannot be rejected."

The Reply: "I am rejecting it, so that the Sultan will be annoyed and will summon me, and I can tell him truth."

The Minister: "The result will be disastrous."

The Reply: "Even if the result is the sea, it will be a spacious grave. If I am executed, I shall rest in the heart of a nation. Also when I came to Istanbul, I brought my life as a bribe; do whatever you like. And I say seriously that I want to give a practical warning to my fellow-countrymen that forming a connection with the State is in order to serve it, it is not order to grab a salary." (Neemeddin Sahiner,

- (b) When threatened with execution after the 31st March Incident: "You called for the Shari'a tool," he said as part of his bold defense in the military court: "If I had a thousand lives, I would be ready to sacrifice all of them for one truth of the Shari'a! For the Shari'a is the source of prosperity and happiness, pure justice, and virtue." (See, Urkham Muhammad, *Sa'id al-Nursi, Rajaul al-Qadar fi Hayat Umma*, 51-55.
- (c) When being held captive in Russia, the camp was visited by the Russian Commander-in-Chief. Everyone with the exception of Nursi rose to their feet, out of respect, of fear. So he was tried for insulting the Russian army and sentenced to death. When some people tried to persuade him to apologize, he replied: "I am eager to travel to the realm of the hereafter and enter the presence of God's Messenger, and I have to have a passport. I cannot act contrarily to my beliefs." Have you ever seen such heroism, courage, and belief?
- (d) When Mustafa Kemal first wanted to have statues erected to himself, he told him: "The statues of Muslims are monuments like hospitals, schools, orphanages, mosques, and roads."

He said the following succinct and meaningful words to those who had fallen into the bog of unbelief, had sold religion for this world, and looked on irreligion as a political imperative, and who claimed Nursi's works attacked their civilization and prevented them enjoying the pleasures and good things of life:

If I head to the number of the hairs on it and every day one was cut off, I would not bow this head, which is devoted to the Qur'an, to atheism and absolute disbelief, I would not and could not give up this service of belief and the *Risale-i Nur*.¹⁶

There is no doubt that someone like Said Nursi who was so bold and brave, so attached to the truth and had such powerful faith, was so devoted a member of a proud religion, and had dedicated everything to striving on God's way and winning His pleasure—surely such a person would be exiled, sent to prison, and would suffer torments. Despite all this, his one goal was to teach the truths of the Qur'an, to draw people towards them, and inspire them with the consciousness of belief, and to call on them to be respectful to the tenets of belief, which people need as much as basic food.

We have to say therefore that Nursi was the recipient of abounding divine grace and favor. The most faithful witness to this was his declaration: "I shall prove and demonstrate of the world that the Qur'an is an undying, inextinguishable sun!" Now look at these fine words: "The triumph divine favor has permitted the *Risale-i Nur* have reconciled me with the hardships of this worldly life, and made me thank Almighty God times without number." That is indeed a fact. He sacrificed everything for the *Risale-i Nur* and his students.

The Problem of Evil

Evil is not fundamental to the world; it is only a means of good knowing. Nursi says: "Know that perfection, good, and beauty are essentially what are intended in the universe, and are in the majority. Relatively, defects, evil, and ugliness are in the minority, and are insignificant, secondary, and trivial. Their Creator created them interspersed among good and perfection not for their own sakes, but as preliminaries and units of measurement for the appearance,

¹⁶Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Rays Collection* (Eng.trans) (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1998),374.

or existence, of the relative truths of good and perfection.¹⁷ Good is the basic to the universe. Some things appear to bad, but display the manifestations of some of the divine names, and so are good. And “since life displays the impresses of the divine names, everything that happens to it is good.” So the tribulations and distress man suffers are flashes of the Creator’s mercy, who give us life¹⁸.

In the universe, in the vast majority of cases, misguidance and evil are negative, destructive, and pertain to non-existence. While for the most part, guidance and good positive, constructive, repairing, and pertain to existence.¹⁹ However, so long as there is life, good and evil will be found together. Although they are opposites, they will travel the same road until the end of the world, when they will receive requital for what they have done. According to Said Nursi, good and evil are two elements which are found everywhere. There is constant struggle between the two since their results and fruits are different, and this will continue in all fields till the end of the world. Finally they will be separated and good will pour into Paradise, and evil into Hell.²⁰

No one’s mistakes remain secret. But it is wrong to inquire why they make mistakes and commit sins, and what the reasons are for their falling into this degradation? No, because if we can learn these things, we can try not to make the same mistakes. We shall now investigate Nursi’s ideas about evil more closely, for they are taken directly from the Qur’an. They teach us that the only way to avoid mistakes and sins is to take the path of divine unity consciously with sincere belief and love.

In the *Risale-i Nur*, Nursi describes the hardships of his life in exile, the difficulties he suffered, and the distress he felt at the inhuman treatment meted out to his brothers, his country, and all humanity even. Because of the excessive compassion in his nature, given to him by God Almighty, he was pained and distressed at the suffering of his country and the Islamic world, and even at that of

¹⁷Badi’uz-Zaman Sa'id al-Nursi, *Isharat al-I'jaz fi Mazann al-Ijaz* (Tahqiq: Ihsan Qasim al-Salihi) (Istanbul: Sozler Nesriyat, 1414/1994), 35,87. For English trans., see. *Sura al-Fatihah, The Opening Sura of the Qur'an* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications,2002), 27-8.

¹⁸Nursi, *The Words*, 487; Nursi, *The Flashes Collection* [Eng. Trans.] (Istanbul: Sozler Publications,2000),

¹⁹ Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 103-4

²⁰ Nursi, *The Words*,552.

animals.²¹ His purpose in describing this was to show the effectiveness of the Qur'an's cures and healing of such wounds.²²

Nursi also explains other matters in relation to moral values which are thought to be evil (at least by simple-minded people like ourselves), such as disaster, illness, earthquakes, floods, and death. His point of view is that everything is good. He says: "Through the light of the Qur'an, I saw that...this world is a temporary place of trade, is formed of mirrors reflecting and renewing the manifestations of the All-Glorious Maker's names..."²³ His interpretations of evil, whether moral or natural, is based on divine attributes such as knowledge, power, will, mercy, compassion, and wisdom. In many places in the *Risale-i Nur*, he explains the concept of evil from this standpoint for considering things to be good on them, there are some examples:

For sure in everything in the universe there is good and beauty, while evil and ugliness are minor, with the function of being units of measurement and to show the degrees of good and beauty and augment and multiply their realities. In this way the evil becomes good and the ugliness, beauty.²⁴

It is absolutely certain in the view of sound minds that in creation good and essential and evil is secondary. Thus, as is testified to by science and confirmed by inductive reasoning, which is based on seeing the wisdom and purposes of things, what is intended in the world's creation and what predominates absolutely are good, beauty, truth, and perfection. Evil, ugliness, and futility are secondary, dominated, and overwhelmed. Even if they attack, it is temporary."²⁵

In everything, even the things which appear to be the most ugly, there is an aspect of true beauty. Yes, everything in the universe, every event, is either in itself beautiful, which is called 'essential beauty,' or it is beautiful in regard to its results, which is called 'relative beauty.' There are certain events which are apparently ugly and confused, but beneath the apparent veil, there are most shining instances of beauty and order.²⁶

²¹Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 310-321

²²Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 314

²³Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 299

²⁴Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 429

²⁵Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *Muhakemat* (Istanbul: Sozler Yayinevi, 1977), 34-5

²⁶Nursi, *The Words*, 429.

The Qur'an points out these questions clearly. *"But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and that you love a thing which is bad for you. But God knows and you know not."*²⁷ We may be deceived by a superficial viewpoint or ideas, due to which we consider bad, things that in reality are not bad. Nursi alerts us to this misunderstanding. He teaches us the wisdom in good and evil being found together, and says that evil has a function of showing up good. This is true; how could we know the value of good health if there was no illness? It is difficult for a person who has not experienced illness and its suffering to understand the pleasures of good health. He says:

The evils in the universe are not essential aim, but are created as units of measurement so that a single good may have numerous degrees. Satan even was created and inflicted on men so that they might progress towards infinite perfection. For progress of this kind is possibly only through striving and competition, and this requires the existence of an opposing force. All the evils to be observed in the world are minor, and have been given existence to assist the emergence of good and beauty, which are universal and predominant.²⁸

A single instance of ugliness which results in or shows up numerous instances of beauty is indirectly an instance of beauty. While the non-existence of an ugliness, or its being invisible, which then conceals numerous instances of beauty and does not permit them to be seen, is not a single, but a manifold, ugliness.²⁹ A lesser evil may therefore be forgiven, approved even, for the sake of the greater good. For to abandon the greater good because it contains some lesser evil, is a greater evil, the lesser evil becomes a relative good.³⁰

As eternal benevolence and pre-eternal wisdom necessitated, the Pre-Eternally All-Wise One created this world to be place of trial, an arena of examination, a mirror to His Most Beautiful Names, and a page for the pen of Divine Determining and power. Thus, since it was for mysteries such as these, and for other most subtle and elevated instances of wisdom which we do not yet know of the that

²⁷Qur'an, 2:216.

²⁸ Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, "Ta'liqat," in *Saiqal Islam* [Tahqiq: Ihsan Qasim al-Salihi] (Istanbul: Sozler Yayinevi, 1416/1995) 250

²⁹ Nursi, *The Rays Collection*, 39.

³⁰ al-Nursi, *Isharat al-I'jaz*, 35/ *Sura al-Fatiha*, 28

the Pre-Eternally All-Wise One willed the world in this form, He also willed the change and transformation of this world for those instances of wisdom. He mixed together opposites for its change and transformation, and brought them face to face. Combining harm with benefit, including evil with good, and mingling ugliness with beauty. For the eternal wisdom and pre-eternal beneficence of the All-Glorious Maker necessitate truths like the results of the examination and trial, the truths of those divine name's manifestations. They require the purification of those opposites in order to deliver the world from change and transience, transformation and extinction, and to separate out the causes of change and the matters of conflict. And most certainly they will bring about the resurrection and purify those opposites in order to obtain these results.

Thus, as a result of this purification Hell will take on its eternal and dreadful form, and its inmates will manifest the threat: *And get you apart this day, O you sinners!* (36:59) while Paradise will assume its everlasting and majestic form, and its people and companions will manifest the address of : *Peace be upon you! Well have you done! Enter here to dwell for ever* (39:73).³¹ According to Said Nursi, evils are minor and arise from the universal laws in force in the universe, which are manifestation of the divine will. But God Almighty hastens with His mercy to assist those constrained by these minor evils.

Everything in the universe is a manifestation of the divine names, as a result of which, Nursi asserts that calamities, illness, old age, and death are all instances of good.³² The creation of Satan even is good since it is a means of competition, which leads to striving and the emergence of varying spiritual degrees in people. How instructive is this statement: "Life led monotonously on the couch of ease and comfort resembles not so much the pure good that is being, as the pure evil that is non-being; it tends in fact in that direction."³³

Death as Good and Gate of Mercy

Nursi says: "Yes, since God exists and His knowledge encompasses everything, in the view of reality, in the world of believers there is surely no non-being, extinction, nothingness,

³¹Nursi, *The Words*, 553-4

³²Nursi, *The Rays Collection*, 40.

³³Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 23.

annihilation, and transient, while the world of unbelievers is full of non-existence, separation, nothingness, and transience.

"In Short: Just as belief saves man from eternal extinction at the time of death, so it saves everyone's private world from the darkness of annihilation and nothingness. Whereas unbelief, and especially if it is absolute unbelief, both sends man and his private world to not-existence with death, and casts him into infernal darkness. It transforms the pleasures of life into bitter poisons."³⁴

"Death is not terrifying as it appears to be superficially. Through the light afforded by the All-wise Qur'an, in many parts of the *Risale-i Nur* we have provided in completely certain and indubitable fashion that for believers death is to be discharged from the burdensome duties of life. And for them it is a rest from worship, which is instruction and training in the arena of trial of this world. It is also means of their rejoining friend and relation, ninety-nine out of a hundred of whom have already departed for the next world. And it is a means of entering their true homeland eternal abodes of happiness. It is also an invitation to the gardens of Paradise from the dungeon of this world. And it is the time to receive their wage from the munificence of the Most Compassionate Creator in return for service rendered to Him. Since the reality of death is this, it should not be regarded as terrifying, but on the contrary, as the introduction to mercy and happiness."³⁵

Nursi says that by frequently mentioning verses like "*in the end unto Him will be your return*,"³⁶ "*and again to Him will you return*,"³⁷ "*And unto Him is the final goal (of all)*,"³⁸ and "*And unto Him is my turn*,"³⁹ the Qur'an is both uttering fearsome threats at the rebellions, and encouraging with good news. For they say: death is the gate to eternal separation and non-existence, and a descent into the darkness of nothingness; whereas it is to enter the presence of God Almighty, the Monarch of pre-eternity and post-eternity.⁴⁰ For the true student of the Qur'an, death is a step towards a higher and better life; it is to pass from the difficulties of this life to the pleasures of next.

³⁴ Nursi, *The Rays Collection*, 273-4

³⁵ Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 272.

³⁶ Qur'an, 6:60

³⁷ Qur'an, 2:28.

³⁸ Qur'an, 5:18.

³⁹ Qur'an, 13:36.

Nursi makes interesting comments on verse, "*Take my soul (at death) as one submitting to You will (as a Muslim), and unite me with the righteous,*"⁴¹ which is about the death of Joseph (PBUH). He says: "... although this verse tells of Joseph's death just at the most brilliant part of his story, when he is the ruler of Egypt, united with his mother and father, fondly meeting with his brothers, is an experiencing the greatest happiness and joy of this world, it does so in such a way as to say: Joseph himself asked for his death from Almighty God in order to experience an even more happy and brilliant state; and he did die and did receive that happiness."⁴²

Death has existence and is created, like life. It too is bounty, as is shown by the verse, "*Who creates death and life that He may try you, which of you is the best of conduct.*"⁴³ Nursi says: "... death is a discharge from the duties of life; it is a rest, a change of residence, a change of existence; it is an invitation to an eternal life, a beginning, the introduction to an immortal life. Just as life comes into the world through an act of creation and a determining, through a wise and purposeful direction."

There are several ways in which death is bounty:

"The first: It is a great bounty because it is to be freed from the duties and obligations of life.

"The second: It is a release from the narrow, irksome, turbulent, and agitated prison of the world (...)

"The third: they are numerous factors like old age which make the conditions of life arduous and show death to be a bounty far superior to life (...)

"The Fourth: Just as sleep is a comfort, a mercy, a rest, particularly for those afflicted by disaster and the wounded and the sick..."⁴⁴

That is, "Death is not destruction, or nothingness, or annihilation; it is not cessation, or extinction; it is not eternal separation, or non-existence, or a chance event; it is not authorless obliteration. Rather, it is being discharged by the Author Who is All-

⁴⁰ Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *al-Mathnawi al-'Arabi al Nuri* [Tahqiq: Ihsan Qasim al-Salihi] (Istanbul: Sozler Yayinevi, 1414/1994), 374; Mesnevi-I Nuriye [Turk.trans. Abdulkadir Badili] (Istanbul: 1998), 515.

⁴¹ Qur'an, 12:101.

⁴² Nursi, *Letters*, 334-5

⁴³ Qur'an, 67:2.

Wise and All-Compassionate; it is a change of abode. It is being dispatched to eternal bliss, to your true home."⁴⁵

"See! Just as life as a proof of Almighty God's oneness, so is death evidence for His eternity and perpetuity. Just as through their existences beings testify to the necessary existence of the Necessary Existence, so too since the similar beings that succeed them disappear together with their apparent causes, they testify to His eternity and oneness."⁴⁶

Nursi's analyses of death reflect a truly profound knowledge, and are useful in many respects. Firstly, from the point of view of belief, they reflect an elevated truth. Death is portrayed as evidence for the existence of the hereafter, a world of the unseen that all believers believe in; it is shown to be the gate to that world. His analysis is very important psychologically. For it is entirely convincing and satisfying, and reconciles a person with death.

Moreover, it refutes materialist philosophy and is in conformity with Nursi's own philosophy. For contrarily to materialist philosophy's claims that death is non-existence, it proves that it marks the passage to another life. It thus demonstrates the falsity of materialist philosophy, which give rise to despair, distress, and mental crises, and solves man's most grievous problem. The verse, "*But verily the home in hereafter—that is life indeed, if they but knew*"⁴⁷ consoles man and proclaims this truth, thus lightening the burden of death and showing that it is not a monster devouring people. This heartens people, giving them the strength to perform even the most difficult tasks. How fine these words of Nursi:

"Everyone's most precious possession and the one over which they most tremble, is their spirit. I felt sure that to surrender it to strong and trustworthy hand thereby preserving it from being lost and annihilated and from aimlessness, afforded a profound joy."⁴⁸

Man is The Source of The Moral Evils

According to Said Nursi, it is not the creation of evil that is evil, but the perpetration (acquisition—*kasb*) of it. For creation looks

⁴⁴Nursi, *Letters*, 24-5.

⁴⁵Nursi, *Letters*, 268.

⁴⁶Nursi, *al-Mathnawi al-'Arabi al Nuri*, 50; *Mesnevi-I Nuriye* [Turk.trans. Abdulkadir Badili], 33-4

⁴⁷Qur'an, 29:64.

⁴⁸Nursi, *The Rays Collection*, 277.

to all the results. "since the existence of one instance of evil is the introduction to numerous good results, with regard to those results, the creation of the evil becomes good, and is as though good."⁴⁹ As usual, in order to make this easily comprehensible and to fix it in people's minds, Nursi makes use of a comparison. For example, fire has a hundred goods, but certain people who throw themselves to fire wrongly make the fire evil for themselves, and he cannot say that fire create evil.

In the same way, the creation of devils has numerous wise result like human progress; so if a person is defeated by Satan due to his desire for wrong and mistaken inclinations, he cannot say that the creation of Satan is evil. For he did evil to himself due to his own inclination. "⁵⁰ Because people do not appreciate properly the good from god almighty, which is absolute good, they commit evil. For man's soul continuously prompts him to evil, and Is the source of all immorality.

What he says about his own soul is probably applicable to every self-centered person: "O my foolish soul, charmed at glory, enamored of fame, addicted to praise, and without equal in egotism! If it is just claim that the source of the pig and its thousand of fruits is its tiny seed, and that all the grapes in their hundred bunches hanging from a dry branch of the vine are produced through the skill of the branch, and that those who benefit from them should praise and esteem the branch and the seed, then perhaps you have the right to be proud and conceited about the bounties with which you are loaded. But in fact you deserve to be constantly chided, because you are not like the seed and the branch: since you have the faculty of will, you reduce the value of those bounties through your pride. Through your conceit, you destroy them; through your ingratitude, you nullify them; through claiming them as your own, you lay hands on them unlawfully.

Your duty is not glory in your deeds, but to offer thanks. What is fit for you is not fame, but humility. Your right is not praise, it is repentance and to seek forgiveness. Your perfection lies not in self-centeredness, but in recognizing god. "⁵¹ It is a fact that a person cannot create his own good actions nor be the source of them. His is

⁴⁹ Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 110.

⁵⁰ Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 110.

⁵¹ Nursi, *The Words*, 2391

merely the recipient. He was created to accept good and be the source of evil. But he is effective in one thing, and that is being the cause of evil when he does not appreciate good as he should do. Nursi continues:

"And do not say: Among people I was chosen. These fruits, these fine works, are shown through me. That means I have some merits.' No! God forbid! Rather they were given to you first because you are more bankrupt, needy, and sad than everyone else!"⁵² Said Nursi points out that man has a large capacity for both good and evil, because of which Almighty God has made him answerable and accountable and bestowed a rank on him superior to all creatures. He says in this connection:

"Yes, O man! You have two aspects,: one is that of creation, good, acts, and positivity. The other is the aspect of destruction, non-existence, evil, negativity, and positivity. In regard to the first aspect, you are lower than a bee or sparrow, and weaker than a spider or fly. Whereas in regard to the second aspect, you surpass the mountains, earth, and skies in regard to destruction and evil, the evil-commanding soul may commit infinite crimes, but concerning creativity and good, its power is extremely little and partial. Yes, he may destroy a house in one day, while it cannot be built in a hundred. However, if the soul gives up egoism and seeks good and existence from Divine assistance, and if it foregoes evil and destruction and relying on the soul, and seeking forgiveness becomes a true slave of God's, then it will manifest the meaning of the verse, God will change their evil into good.⁵³ its infinite capacity for evil will be transformed into an infinite capacity for good. It will acquire the value of the most excellent of pattern and ascend to the highest of the high."⁵⁴

Thus, while addressing his own soul. Nursi instructs us how to confront our own ignorant and arrogant souls, and teach them thanks, shame, repentance, to seek the truth, and other good moral qualities; in other words, to be God's servant. With his soul, man is indeed the source of immorality, and he has to reform it so that it gives up its rebellion and other evils. However, the worst calamities are those that affect religion, the chief of which is unbelief. In Nursi's

⁵² Nursi, *The Words*, 240.

⁵³ Qur'an, 25:70.

⁵⁴ Nursi, *The Words*, 329-30.

words: "True and harmful misfortune is that which affect religion."⁵⁵ Unbelief is such that it transforms man's essential nature from diamonds into coal. For it is an insult towards the whole universe, and denigrates all the divine names' manifestations. It is therefore aggression against the rights of beings.⁵⁶

The sole remedy for this awesome calamity is belief. The believer recognizes the right of all beings and affords them their rightful position. "Since we have an infinitely precious bounty like belief, both old age is agreeable, and illness, and death. If there are things are disagreeable, they are sin, vice, innovations, and misguidance."⁵⁷ A result of belief is resignation at fate and divine determining, "... In which case, case, rend the egotism of your soul and show him!"⁵⁸

As was stated previously, existence is pure good and light. Almighty god is the necessary existent, the Absolutely Powerful and All-Knowing Creator, the One of Glory and Bestowal.⁵⁹ Then come His Most Beautiful Names. "Since the All-Glory Maker exists and He is Eternal, and since His attributes and impresses are renewed, affording a sort of perpetuality; they are not destroyed and transitory, departing for non-being."⁶⁰

It will be useful at this point to mention Nursi's stand towards the 'Unity of Existence' school. Since Almighty God has names and this is a true fact, of course their manifestations are a true fact. Since the universe consists of the manifestations of the names, the existence of being is not imaginary; it is true, although in relation to God's existence, their existence are exceedingly pale shadows:

"Thus, the sovereignty of Divinity necessitates in actuality numerous sacred names like All-Merciful, Provider, Bestower, Creator, Doer, Munificent, and Compassionate.. And those true and actual names require actual mirrors. For sure, if their mirrors and spheres of applications were not real and were imaginary and non-existent, it would not harm them. And perhaps if there was no color of existence in the mirror of true existence, they would be purer and more brilliant, but the manifestations of names like

⁵⁵Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 26.

⁵⁶Nursi, *The Words*, 472; *The Rays Collection*, 40.

⁵⁷Nursi, *The Fashes Collection*, 304.

⁵⁸Nursi, *The Words*, 369.

⁵⁹Nursi, *The Words*, 694.

⁶⁰Nursi, *Letters*, 340.

merciful, Provider, Subduer, Compeller, and Creator would not be real, they would be hypothetical, however, those names are realities like the name of Existent, they cannot be shadows; they are essential, not secondary.”⁶¹

All the exquisiteness, all the virtues, all the perfections, all the attraction, all the yearning, all the compassion known and seen in the universe are meanings, significations, immaterial words. They necessarily and self-evidently show to the heart and thrust in the mind's eye the manifestations of the All-Glorious maker's favor and kindness, benevolence and munificence.”⁶²

Human Will

Said Nursi has respect for human will, but he believes that man is free within the limits of divine determining. As in other subjects, his view points is Quranic, going to neither one extreme nor the other. He neither looks on it as non-existent, nor conceives of it as all-powerful. He says man can strengthen his will through belief, and freely perform his obligations, persevering in practicing what God commands and avoiding what He forbids. He calls on people, maintaining moderation through their wills, to avoid despair, greed, groundless fears and anxieties, precipitations, obduracy, blind imitation, laziness, wastefulness, conceit, and egotism.

According to the *Risale-i Nur*, man is a work of divine art, a delicate miracle of divine power. He is created as a miniature copy of the universe that reflects the manifestations of all the divine names their inscriptions.⁶³ He is “the fruit of the tree of creation, its furthest part.”⁶⁴ His position as the pivot of all the bounties thus shows his value in God's eyes. “Is it all possible an all wise maker who created the heavens and the earth would leave without purpose human beings, who are the most important result of the heavens and the earth and the most perfect fruit of the universe? Is it at all possible that he would hand them over to causes and chance, that he would transform his self-evident wisdom into futility?”⁶⁵

Among animate species the most needy for the varieties of sustenance is man. Almighty god created man as a comprehensive

⁶¹Nursi, *Letters*, 108.

⁶²Nursi, *The Words*, 541.

⁶³Nursi, *The Words*, 320.

⁶⁴Nursi, *The Words*, 193.

⁶⁵Nursi, *Letters*, 281.

mirror to all his names as a miracle of power with the capacity to weigh up and recognize the contents of all his treasures of mercy and his vicegerent on earth possessing the faculties to draw them to the scales all the subtleties of the different manifestations of his names.⁶⁶ Man's free will is accorded great respect within the framework of divine determining. Nursi does not say anything different on the points on which the Islamic schools of thought are agreed, but in a way that reflects his profound knowledge, draws the question out from the theoretical to the practical.

The question of determining (or predestination) has always taxed the minds of philosophers, scholars, and men of religion. It is allude to in various places in the Qur'an,

..and there is not thing but its [sources and] treasures [inexhaustible] are with us, but we only send down there of in the due and ascertainable measures."⁶⁷ * "and of all things have we taken account in a clear book."⁶⁸ * "nor can a soul die except by god's leave. The term being fixed as by writing."⁶⁹ * "whatever good happens to you is from god, but whatever evil befalls you is from yourself."⁷⁰

Nursi states that all related verses in the Qur'an indicate clearly the existence of divine determining; that everything is directly in gods power.; all the stages of a person's life are written on the preserved tablet; a person is answerable for all his action, and that paradise and hell-fire are the recompense for either the proper use or abuse of his free will. The following is a passage from the treatise he wrote on divine determining and man's will, the twenty sixth words:

According to Nursi divine determining and the power of choice are aspects of a belief pertaining to state and conscience which show the final limits of Islam and belief; they are not theoretical and do not pertain to knowledge. That is to say, a believer attributes everything to almighty god, even his action and self, till finally the power of choice confronts him, so he cannot evade his obligation and responsibility. It tells him: 'You are responsible and under

⁶⁶Nursi, *Letters*, 431.

⁶⁷Qur'an, 15:21.

⁶⁸Qur'an, 36:12.

⁶⁹Qur'an, 3:145.

⁷⁰Qur'an, 4:79.

obligation.' Then, so that he does not become proud at his good deeds and his achievements, divine determining confronts him, saying: 'know your limits; the one who does them is not you.'"

Nursi continues: "Yes, Divine determining and the power of choice are at the final degrees of belief and and Islam; the former has been included among the matters of belief to save the soul from pride, and the latter, to make it admit to its responsibility. Obdurate evil-commanding souls clinging to divine determining in order to clear themselves of the responsibility of the evils they have committed, and their becoming proud and conceited on account of the virtues bestowed on them and their relying on the power of choice, are actions totally opposed to not matters pertaining to knowledge which might give rise to such actions."⁷¹

It is clear from this that Nursi approaches the subject with considerable knowledge and skill. The following point needs to be stressed: Divine determining and man's free will are questions of the greatest importance in the Islam and its belief, for both save a person from committing sins. Divine determining saves the soul from pride by ascribing everything to god, and man's power of choice saves him from irresponsibility.

"As the verse, whatever good happens to you is from God, but whatever evil befalls you is from your selves teaches, the nature of the evil-commanding soul demands that it always considers goodness to be from itself and becomes vain and conceited. Thus, in this step, a person sees only faults, defects, impotence, and poverty in himself, and understand that all his good qualities and perfects are bounties bestowed on him by the all glorious creator. He gives thanks instead of being conceited, and offers praise instead of boasting."⁷²

According to Said Nursi, man's inclination towards good is a manifestation of divine determining. While his desire for evil arises from his own soul. All inclinations toward good, the source of virtue, are divine favors. Man's soul is the source of all base feelings for which reason he is responsible for them. In examining the matter in regard to training and education, Nursi says this: "thus, he knows his own self in this way, and realizes and acts according to it, is in-

⁷¹ Nursi, *The Words*, 477.

⁷² Nursi, *The Words*, 492.

cluded in the good news of, *'truly he succeeds who purifies it.'*⁷³ He truly carries out the trust, and through the telescope of his 'I', he sees what the universe is and what duties it is performing. (...) But if, forgetting the wisdom of its creation and abandoning the duty of its nature, 'I' views itself solely in the light of its nominal and apparent meaning, if it believes that it owns itself, then it betrays the trust, and it comes under the category of, *'and he fails who corrupts it.'*^{74, 75}

Now consider this marvelous passage: "God almighty created pure good, that is, the angels, and pure evil, the devils, and [creatures] that can commit neither good nor evil, that is the beasts. Then the wisdom of absolutely munificent one required the existence of a fourth category that comprised both good and evil, [man]. So if mans power of appetite and anger submit to his power of intellect, because of this struggle, he rises higher than the angles. But if the opposite occurs, he falls lower than the beasts, because he has no excuse."⁷⁶ Here Said Nursi is citing a basic principle in Islamic education: man's struggle with his animal appetites. It is an essential step in attaining to righteous action, and part of the Qur'anic method of education.

A summary of these matters we have mentioned is this: "For since he knows himself and everything to be from Almighty God, he assumes the responsibility, basing it on is power of choice. He accepts that it is the source of evils and proclaims his Sustainer free of fault. He remains within the sphere of worship and undertakes the obligations with which he is charged by Almighty God. Moreover, he does not become proud at his good deeds and achievements; he rather looks to Divine Determining and offers thanks. He sees Divine Determining in the calamities that befall him, and endures them in patience."⁷⁷

With deep understanding, Said Nursi solves the question of divine determining and the power of choice, and points out that the latter saves man from irresponsibility. For, when almighty god made him accountable, he gave him free will. Thus, rather than nullifying the power of choice, divine determining –as a sort of divine knowledge—strengthens it.

⁷³ Qur'an, 91:9.

⁷⁴ Qur'an, 91:10.

⁷⁵ Nursi, *The Words*, 559-60.

⁷⁶ Nursi, *Isharat al-Ijaz*, 237; *Isaratu'l-l caz* [Turk. Trans. Bahaeddin Saglam] (Istanbul: Teblig Yayinlari, 2001), 352.

⁷⁷ Nursi, *The Words*, 480.

Said Nursi supplies answer to the complex question, "how is divine determining compatible with the power of choice?," which preoccupied the scholars of kalam and the principles of religion, and in doing so clarifies it completely. First of all he says: "we do not know many of the numerous aspects of the all just and wise one's wisdom; our not knowing how the power of choice is compatible with divine determining does not prove that is not so." "everyone perceives in himself a will and choice; he knows it through his conscience. To know the nature of beings is one thing; to know they exist is something different, there are many things which although their existence is self-evident, we do not know their true nature... the power of choice may be included among these." "the power of choice is not opposed to divine determining, indeed, divine determining corroborates it, for divine determining is a sort of divine knowledge. Divine knowledge is connected with our will and choice, in which case it corroborates it, it does not nullify it."⁷⁸

Nursi's answer to the classic question: "since so-and-so's death is determined at such-and-such a time, what fault has the man who fired the rifle through his own choice, for if he had not fired it, the other still would have died?" illustrates the *Risale-i Nur* original approach. He asks: "if you suppose that he did not fire the rifle, then you are supposing divine determining had no connection with it, so with what you decree his death?" for divine determining is connected to both cause and effect at the same time. Therefore, "we people of truth say: 'if he had not fired the rifle, we do not know if he would have died.' The Jabriyya say: 'if he had not fired it, he still would have died.' While the Mu'tazilah say: 'if he had not fired it, he would not have died.'"⁷⁹

Conclusion

Bigotry has no place in his system. He addresses all Muslims and all mankind, striving to fill their hearts with the light of belief so they may win happiness in this world and the next. With an approach based on the ummah, his whole aim is to sow seeds of love in humanity's heart and to combat irreligion, its most serious affliction. Readers of the *Risale-i Nur* know that Badiuzzaman Said Nursi and innate knowledge given to him by God almighty, and he also had

⁷⁸Nursi, *The Words*, 480-1.

⁷⁹Nursi, *The Words*, 481-2.

vast acquired knowledge. He work, strove, and struggled ceaselessly. He was also ready to sacrifice everything to win god's pleasure and be useful to others, and to win them the hereafter.

One of the things the *Risale-i Nur* teaches us is that what we suppose to be life is in reality only a small slice of time. Because for us, the past and future are non-existent and dead. We have therefore to slip free of material life, which is thus temporary and narrow, and strive to rise to the life of the spirit and heart, which encompasses the past and future and is infinitely broad. Together with Nursi, we should declare : " *I am ephemeral ; I don't want another who is thus. I am impotent ; I don't want another who is thus I have surrendered my spirit to the most merciful ;I don't want another. I want another, but let him be an eternal friend. I am a mere atom, but I desire an everlasting sun. I am nothing, yet I wish for these beings, all of them.*"[]

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