

## **QUR'ANIC SCIENTISM IN BEDIUZZAMAN SAID NURSI'S RISALA – I- NUR**

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### **Abstract**

*One of the prominent factor leading to the continuing decline of the Muslim Ummah is rivalry between scientific mind and traditional mind-set. The modern Muslim intellectuals are fascinated by scientific developments in the West and discouraged by the inability of Ummah. The process of re-emergence as developed community is imbedded in re-Islamization of scientific knowledge. The rise of Muslim Ummah is tied with integration of Shari'ah based knowledge and scientific knowledge. The focus of the Muslim intellectual pursuits must once again gravitate towards these two fountains of true knowledge. To achieve this goal, Said Nursi a versatile personality, a true representative of Islam came with all-inclusive ideas for integration of both the knowledge's. He advocates the Qur'anic Scientism and discussed faith based research (iman tahqiqi) relying on positive action (jihad Manaavi) in Risal-i Nur. In this paper an Attempt has been made to acme the Qur'anic Scientism in Risal-i- Nur, to prove Qur'anic Scientism highly applicable while as Said Nursi as admirably a true representative of Qur'anic Message in the modern era.*

**Keywords:** *Qur'anic, Said Nursi, Risal-i- Nur*

## **A. Introduction**

From the time when man first appeared on earth, he has always been interested in gaining mastery over his physical environment as a means of finding a way to both worldly and eternal happiness. According to Nursi, to achieve this goal, man has chosen the negative philosophy in the light of reason for it or the way of those who followed the Prophet-hood in the light of Revealed Scriptures (Nursi, 2005: 561). In such conditions a polarization emerged in the life of human beings which can be divided as a struggle of substantiation versus belief, or reason versus revelation has sometimes caused disputation (Kant, 1990: 775-781). Consequently scientism and religion have generally been considered as natural and eternal opponents. However, Said Nursi was particularly opposite to this thought and tried to find an association between them (Nursi, 2005: 565). One of the philosophies which Nursi dealt with most often was materialism, 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 (Stenmark, 2001: 126-29). He was strongly opposed to science and technology being the tool of materialism and irreligious because scientism appears to leave no place for Divine action (Tatli, 1993: 92).

In 1924, Caliphate was abolished by Mustafa Kamal (Called Ataturk) in Turkey which is considered a strong setback to Muslims at political level. The cause of this defeat was their less inclination towards scientific temperament which helped Muslim antagonists to build their war machine. To realize this dilemma, Said Nursi tried to initiate a relationship between science and religion and came with the thought that theology has scientific character too. He viewed science in consonance with the realm of religion and attempted a dialogue in favour of religion because he believe all knowledge is religious whatever the source and considered science without religion as ignorance (Nursi, 1996: 63-64). Nursi, was assertive in using scientific terminology. His

efforts in this field are what we call the “Sacrelisation of Science” (Kalin, 2002: 53).

Nursi upholds the Qur'anic Scientism and perceived all scientific procedures from the eyes of Quran and clarified them successfully within the boundaries of the reasoning. He perfectly put forth an approach for Muslims to live in resonance with post-modern era without violating their faith. Nursi's magnum opus “Risale-i Nur” collection is an interpretation of the Quran written for all modern men in order to bring their thought with in the enquiry of Qur'anic methodology of knowledge so as to challenge materialist and positivist philosophy. According to him

*“We should mould the science brought from Europe and America, which, in fact, belongs to Islam, with the light of oneness and view it from the point of view of the contemplation and signified meaning mentioned by the Quran, that is, on behalf of its maker and master.”*  
(Vahide, 2005: 36)

From early twenties in Turkey up to 1980's, faith oriented knowledge was considered bleak and valueless. At a time when science and philosophy were used to mislead young generations in the name of civilization, modernization and contemporary thinking. Those who tried to resist them were subjected to the painful persecution. Under such conditions, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi wrote explained basic tenets of belief, the truths of the Qur'an, to modern man and attempted to explain the verses of the Quran with empirical approach. A scientific explanation of the Quran which revolutionized the modern Muslim thought in academic, Resale-i Nur is the collection of six thousand pages known as scientific exegesis of the Quran. In this collection Nursi tried to answer all the contemporary challenges put forth by the Modern Sciences to religion in general and Islam in particular. He stated that Holy Qur'an includes scientific thoughts and encouraged all modern men to search for it. He very determinedly worked to substantiate conformity of Islam's message with modern science.

## **B. Discussion**

The scientific developments in relation with politics gave rise to colonialism and Orientalists raised finger directly on the Qur'anic knowledge being obstacle on the way of progress and prosperity. The Qur'anic knowledge has been considered as misrepresentative of the modern science which guides humans only for spiritualism (Dogan, 2014: 1). The decline in thought among Muslims gave a setback to Ummah which resulted as political decline of Muslim Ummah in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the effects of the Western civilization have raised a serious "tumult" among the Muslims of all the countries and regions. This tumult is different from that of the past in a way that it is not confined to a single Muslim country but it has engrossed the whole Muslim world into its grip. Moreover previous objections and assaults on Islam were raised in an age when Muslims had not collapsed politically and culturally. But at present Muslim world has to overcome present circumstances in all spheres of life; Politico-Economic and Socio-Intellectual (Saulat, 1977: 12). Consequently, the hitting of anti-Islamic forces have taken Muslim domain at odd ends. In this condition the Muslim scholars all over have to fulfill their duties according to their respective capacities to defend the Islamic faith. The person who discharged this duty in Turkey in the previous century is Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. He succeeded in changing the status of his country from an anti-religious state to a liberal Muslim state at present (Saulat, 1977: 12). Turkey as republic had set all in support of positivistic scientific approach and left no space for religion in any matter of life. They considered scientific secularism as order of life and tried to barrow everything from western antagonists of Islamic knowledge. This era gave a huge setback to religious knowledge and Muslims were exasperated how to retort such an odd state of affairs. This was time when science and philosophy were used to produce young atheists and nihilism was popular all over and all this was done in the name of civilization, modernization, and contemporary thinking. Said Nursi worked for

revival infusing modern and traditional education thought as well as spiritual training in the minds of people. Said Nursi diagnosed the Muslim world's long-standing "diseases" and offered the most effective cures. Basing his activity on the Qur'an and Sunnah as well as the Islamic tradition and natural phenomena, he concentrated, respectively, on proving the pillars of Islam; the necessity of belief, worship, morality, good conduct and socio-economic issues facing contemporary Muslims (Nursi, 2005: xii).

His approach of Islamic revival in Turkey is really unique perhaps in the whole Islamic history. His idiosyncratic character in contemporary Muslim world has changed the secular discourse "things changed" by his apolitical methodology to academic jihad for Islamic resurgence. Maryam Jamila a scholar of great repute and true aromatic Islamic revival aware about the conditions prevailing during first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Muslim world. Shw understood Nursi's mission in-depth and wrote a letter to "Nur" magazine America published in 1975, in which she praised the distinct character of Said Nursi among his contemporaries:

"The basis of Nursi's strength lies in the fact that he had grasped his own difficulties and pitfalls and he had realistically evaluated the conditions which Muslims were suffering from". (Saulat, 1996: 10-15)

He realized the situation and came with the thought that unless scientific and Qur'anic knowledge will not be integrated it is not possible to overcome the prevailing situation of the Muslims. He rejected the positivist theory of Western world and even the blind imitation of the Eastern world. His thought of knowledge is not based on mere imitation and blind faith but was more pragmatic which could lift Muslim world from shambles to ruling status of the world.

He was of the opinion, Muslim students of the Qur'an, follow proof. We do not abandon proof for blind obedience and imitation of the clergy, as do some adherents of other religions. Therefore when reason, science, and knowledge prevail in the future, the

Qur'an will gain ascendancy, for it relies on proof and calls upon reason to confirm its pronouncements (Nursi, 1996: 62).

In Turkish situation to work for the Islamization of the society in its any form means to take risks one who works for it needs clearance of thought and approach, otherwise it will turn authorizes hostile to him. The approach of said Nursi was thought clear, Maryam Jamila explains his approach as;

“Therefore he quite wisely, refrained himself from establishing a rigid and inflexible organization because such an organization could easily be banned by some dictator, unlike this, Said Nursi strengthened the roots of faith in the hearts of millions of Turks through his preaching and his writings. This was such a revolution as could not be banned and even a despotic dictator could not constraint its teachings” (Nursi, 1996: 15).

Said Nursi paid complete thoughtfulness to the revival of Islamic belief among the Turkish nationals through “non-physical jihad or jihad of the word,” (Vahide, 2009: 6-7) because intelligent naturalist philosophers violently attack the Qur'an and its truths and essentials of belief, condemning whatever they cannot grasp as superstitious, and base their thought on nature. The fact is that they cannot grasp the reality of the Quran; *Their Messengers said: “Can there be any doubt about God, the Originator of the heavens and the earth?”* (14: 10) To which we reply:

“O foolish one! Lift your head out of the swamp of naturalism, and turn round! You will see the Maker of Majesty, to Whom all things, from atoms to galaxies, testify, each with its own tongue, and at Whom they point, each with its own finger. Behold the manifestation of the Eternal Designer, Who has made that palace and written its program in that “notebook”! Lend an ear to His Book—the Qur'an—and be saved from your nonsensical words!” (Nursi, 2009: 26)

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi put all his efforts to explain every aspect of Qur'anic knowledge according to academic way. The philosophical challenges related to origin of life, universe and scientific developments faced by Turkish society were answered and explained in a scientific manner.

“My proud soul! You are the traveler, and this world is a desert. Your impotence and poverty have no limit, and your enemies and needs are endless. Since it is thus, take the name of the Pre-Eternal Ruler and Post-Eternal Lord of the desert and be saved from begging before the whole universe and trembling before every event. I saw one manifestation in the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate as follows: On the face of the universe, the face of the earth, and the face of man are three Stamps of dominicality one within the other and each showing samples of the others. Divine Names in the vast sphere of the universe weave such a seal of compassionateness, tapestry of clemency, and seal of benevolence within a Stamp of Mercy that it demonstrates itself to minds more brilliantly than the sun (Nursi, 2005: 8).

It is in order to express this mighty mystery and clearly point out the seal of divine mercy that the All-Wise in the Qur'an suddenly mentions the smallest sphere and most particular matter when describing the vastest sphere of the universe, for example, the creation of the heavens and the earth. He it is who has created for you all that is on earth, and has applied His design to the heavens and fashioned them into seven heavens and He alone has full knowledge of everything. (2: 29) And so that the mind does not wander, nor the heart drown, and the spirit may find directly its True Object of Worship, it opens the subject of man's creation and man's voice, and the subtle details of the bounties and wisdom in his features, for example, while mentioning the creation of the heavens and earth.

“And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and in your colours demonstrates this truth in a miraculous fashion”. (Qur'an, 30: 22)

He explored such type of verses within the context of empirical approach and try to highlight the scientific significance of these verse. He augmented that “Belief is not restricted to a brief affirmation based on imitation; rather, it has degrees and stages of development. While belief based on imitation can be refuted through doubt and questions raised by modern thought, belief based on argument and investigation has as many degrees and grades of manifestation as the number of divine names. Those who attain certainty of belief coming from (Akarsu, 1996:

xvi) direct observation of the truths on which belief is based to study the universe as a kind of Qur'an. The Qur'an, the universe, and humanity are three kinds of manifestations of one truth. The Qur'an, issuing the Divine Attribute of Speech, may be regarded as the written or composed universe. The universe, originating in the Divine Attributes of Power and Will, may be considered as the created Qur'an. Since the universe is the Qur'an's counterpart and, in one respect, the collection of Divine laws of creation, sciences that study the universe must be compatible with Islam. Therefore now (when science prevails) and in the future (the age of knowledge), true belief should be based on argument and investigation; on continual reflection on God's "signs" in the universe; and on natural, social, historical, and psychological phenomena. Belief is not something based on blind imitation; rather, it should appeal to both the intellect or reason and the heart, for it combines reason's acceptance and affirmation with the heart's experience and submission. A *hadith* relates that it is better for you if one embraces belief through you than for you to possess the world (Akarsu, 1996: xvii).

He very vehemently opposed the modern scientific thought based on irrationality and rejected false presuppositions. However he proposed a faith based scientific model and will help to create harmony between science and divinity or between rationality and revelation which has power to yield better results for the humans. The Muslims neglect of science and technology caused them to fall behind the West in every respect. But the same science and technology that enabled the West to achieve global military and economic superiority caused Western people to lose their belief and traditional moral and spiritual values, and fall into pessimism, unhappiness, and spiritual crisis.

Said Nursi viewed nature as the collection of Divine signs. Thus science and religion could not be in conflict, for they are two apparently different expressions of the same truth. Minds should be enlightened with science, and hearts need to be illumined with religion.



Some lamps (stars and planets) in this palace of the world's roof, in this city of the universe, are far larger than Earth. They move with amazing speed, but in a very delicate order. They do not collide with each other, become extinguished, or run out of fuel.

*"...and [that it is He who] holds the celestial bodies [in their orbits], so that they may not fall upon the earth otherwise than by His leave? (22: 65)*

*The celestial bodies ((stars and planets) which are held on their courses by the God-willed laws of cosmic movement. (Tafsir al-Maraghi: XVII, 137)*

Astronomers say that our sun, a lamp and stove in the All-Merciful One's guest-house, is several billion years old and a million times larger than Earth. To keep burning, each day it needs as much oil as the seas of Earth, as much coal as its mountains, or as many logs and wood as 10 Earths. Such lamps point with their finger of light to an infinite power and sovereignty that, in turn, illuminates the sun and other similar stars without oil, wood, or coal. It does not allow them to be extinguished or collide with each other, even though they are larger than those lamps and are managed more perfectly. The science of electricity and the stars' testimony make known this vast exhibition's Monarch, Illuminator, Director, and Maker. They also make Him loved, glorified, and worshipped (Nursi, 2005: 171).

Scientism and materialistic philosophy have strayed from the path of truth. As the Qur'an was not revealed to prove science. It contemplates creation only for the sake of knowledge of its Creator. Science, which considers creation only for its own sake, usually addresses scientists. The Qur'an, however, addresses humanity, via scientific facts as evidence and proof to guide humanity. Most of whom are common people who need evidences to understand the reality of life easily. For example, it calls the sun "a moving lamp." It does not mention the sun for its own sake but because it is the "mainstay" of the order and the centre of the universe's system. The order and system are two ways of learning

about the Creator. By saying: And the sun runs its course (36: 38), it suggests the well-ordered disposition of Divine Power in the revolutions of the seasons, day and night, and so implies the Maker's majesty (Nursi, 2005: 255).

“Heaven is a wave stretched and restrained,” they were created in such a way that stars and planets can move easily within them. Wisdom and reason require that all heavens should consist of seven levels in different states and formations, each being a heaven to a world (e.g., from the World of Earth to the Intermediate World and the World of Symbols or Ideal Forms, and to the World of the Hereafter) (Nursi, 2005: 585).

And We have built above you seven firmaments and have placed [therein the sun,] a lamp full of blazing splendour. The sun runs its course to its place destined that is the determining of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing. (36: 38)

At the outset of his thought, Said Nursi tried to defend religion and Qur'anic truths by arguments derived from modern Western philosophy. Observing the nature of western scientific Philosophy, he realised that this way Islamic truths will be tarnished and its essentials could not be reached by the principles of human philosophy. So he utterly reverted to the Qur'anic scientific truths:

Islam's essentials are much profound for the principles of philosophy of science to reach to reality. In arguing with Islam's opponents, in resisting and overcoming modern (materialistic) trends of thought, the Qur'an is enough: “While there is a permanent miracle like the Qur'an, searching for further proof appears to my mind as superfluous. While there is a proof of reality like the Qur'an, silencing those who deny it would not weigh heavily on my heart?” (Nursi, 2005: xxi)

He is of the view that abundant examples show that if the sciences of belief are experienced directly as cures from the mysteries of the All-Wise Qur'an as a consequence of need and as healing for wounds, those sciences of belief and spiritual cures are sufficient for those who perceive their need and make use of them with earnest sincerity. Whatever the chemist and herald is like who sells and announces them -be he commonplace, or bankrupt,

or rich, or a person of rank, or a servant- it does not make much difference (Nursi, 2005: 318).

Bediuzzaman a versatile Scholar of religious advocated the integration of both scientific and religious knowledge because of their relationship. The relationship has numerous values put forth by Qur'an. The Qur'an is the original source of this integration. Nursi declared, "I shall prove to the world that the Qur'an is a spiritual sun that cannot be extinguished." It was in such an atmosphere that Said Nursi worked toward the construction of an indestructible fortress around the Qur'an, undeterred by the blasts detonated internally or externally, and thus opted to be a tireless servant in the implementation of the Divine declaration,

*"Indeed it is We, We Who send down the Reminder (i.e. the Qur'an), and it is indeed We Who are its Guardian" (al-Hijr, 15: 9).*

Almost all the positive or natural sciences of his time were studied by him and tried to build a bridge between modern science and Qur'anic teachings by his self-created logic but later on he said;

"Only what has been sanctified by the Qur'an may act as validation for the Qur'an. Substantiating the Qur'an with whatever is not in accord with it means devaluing it to a degree." However, he never despised or ignored any truth wherever it is found, in accordance with the Prophetic Tradition: "Wisdom is like the lost property of believers. Wherever they find it, they have a greater right to take it." (Al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, "Ilm" 19)

Since truth-seeking scholars and the science of eloquence agree that each Qur'anic verse contains guidance and instruction, it follows that verses relating the Prophets' miracles, the most brilliant of all verses, should not be considered mere historical events. Rather, they comprise numerous indications of guidance. By relating these miracles, the Qur'an shows the ultimate goal of scientific and technological developments, and specifies their final aims, toward which it urges humanity (Nursi, 2005: 270).

According to Nursi like every element in nature, fire performs a duty under a command. This command was proved

when Hazrat Ibrahim was put into fire and but didn't burn him, for God commanded it not to do so. One type of heat burns through coldness. Through the phrase "*Be peace*", God Almighty ordered the cold: "Like heat, do not burn him." It is simultaneously fire and cold. Science has discovered a fire called "white heat," which does not radiate heat. Instead, it causes the surrounding area to become cold enough to freeze liquids and in effect burns them through its cold. (Hell, which contains all degrees and sorts of fire, also must have this intense cold. System/ design (Nursi, 2005: 273). "At the end of time, eloquence and beauty of expression, the most brilliant sciences and branches of knowledge, will be most sought after in all their varieties. People will find that when it comes to making each other accept their opinions and exercise their rule, their most effective weapon will be eloquent expression; their most irresistible force will be fine oratory." In short, most Qur'anic verses are keys to a treasury of perfections and a store of knowledge." (Nursi, 2005: 376)

He eloquently viewed that Science alone cannot provide consolation to human beings. The scientific and philosophical doubts created by positivists has ruined the human character for greedy ends. The sole purpose of science is to fashion the worldview of the human life but cannot provide any solution to life after death, because it ignored that part of life and erected its edifice on the material existence. When said Nursi studied the natural sciences he felt the need of teachings have the power to get rid humans from the greed and up-liftment human aspiration from worldly desire for "*falah*" of the both the worlds. He is of the view;

"Then, before all else, I had recourse to the learning I had been studying for so long, and searched for a consolation, a hope. Unfortunately, up to that time I had filled my mind with "natural" sciences and the sciences of philosophy as well as Islamic ones, and had mistakenly imagined those philosophical and "natural" sciences to be the source of personal development and means of enlightenment. However, those philosophical issues had greatly muddled my spirit and hindered my spiritual development. Suddenly, thanks to the Mercy and Grace of God Almighty, the

sacred wisdom contained in the wise Qur'an came to my aid. As explained in several parts of the *Risale-i Nur*, it washed away and cleansed the dirt of those philosophical issues. Ignorance was a source of Muslim poverty, internal conflict, and other problems. Ignorance of Islam's truth, when added to ignorance of science and technology, resulted in vast uncultivated plains and the Muslims' natural wealth flowing to foreigners. Although the Qur'an demands unity, Muslims remained divided even as their lands were being invaded and their people humiliated." (Nursi, 2005: xiv)

In this statement Nursi tried to explain his psychological change from complete dependence on materialistic empiricism to spiritual or fitrah based knowledge which acquired from signs of Qur'an for the gratification of the soul. So one can say it was a kind of fight between haves and more haves. The base of modern science is actually between these have's in order to snatch the rights of weak ones.

The Qur'an insistently draws our attention to natural phenomena, the subject matter of science, and urges their study by pointing towards the plants and animals, he urged the human's to think about the scientific aim of the creation. His Qur'anic Scientism is upholding the cause of spiritual and worldly achievements because the aim of God is to make things possible for the humans in order to achieve good results as he said;

"Also, for the owner of a fruit-bearing tree, the matter of greatest importance is the fruit at the tips of the tree's branches, and for future planting, the seeds in the hearts of its fruits, rather that are the hearts of its fruits. If the tree's owner has any sense, he will not make his ownership go for nothing by handing over the fruits to someone else. In exactly the same way the owner of the tree would in no way hand over to other forces the worship and thanks of those fruits, which are their most important fruits." (The Rays/The Second Ray - Second Station - pp. 29-30)

In the first, five centuries of Islam, Muslims united science with religion, intellect with heart, and material with spirituality. After Muslim decline in thought and due to their internal rivalry and fell prey to outsiders' hypocrisy, West took the initiative in science through its scientists' having no faith on Divine laws of

nature. This disobedience produced the West's domination over the Muslim world, suppressed the Muslim religio-scientific zeal and approach laid the foundation of modern sciences on atheistic lines. Equipped with force through science and technology, the West triumphed over the Muslim world. Muslims gradually deprived Islam and allowed it to become diluted. Just as a hawk's attacks causes a sparrow to develop its power of defence, God allows unbelief to attack Islam successfully so that Muslims will restore Islam to its original purity and force (The Rays/The Second Ray - Second Station - p. xv).

Those who attain certainty of belief coming from direct observation of the truths on which belief is based by studying the universe as a kind of Qur'an. The Qur'an, the universe, and humanity are three kinds of manifestations of one truth. The Qur'an, issuing from the divine attribute of speech, may be regarded as the written or composed universe. The universe, originating in the divine attributes of power and will, may be considered as the created Qur'an. Since the universe is the Qur'an's complement in one respect and the collection of divine laws of creation on the other. Sciences that study the universe must be compatible with Islam (The Rays/The Second Ray - Second Station - p. xvii).

Nursi quotes from the Qur'an and talks about its atoms, red and white corpuscles and even mentions about plant species having too much quantity equal to hundreds and thousands. *"All the cells of the body manifest such orderly processes and incomings and outgoings that their administration is more perfect than the best-run body or palace. All plants and animals bear such a seal on their faces and such machines in their chests that only one who created all of them could situate those seals and machines in their places"*. (The Rays/The Second Ray - Second Station - p. 35)

He eloquently talked about the divine designs of Quran in order to instigate the faith based empirical thinking among Muslims. He quotes numerous verse from Quran in order to bring human mind within the conformity of science and talks about the

creation of universe first through big bang and speaks about the next big bang when the universe will be rolled back.

*Through such verses as: The calamity. What is the calamity? (101: 1-2); When the inevitable event befalls (56: 1); and By the Mount, and a Scripture inscribed (56: 1-2), the Qur'an shatters this world and cards it like wool. Through such verses as: Have they not considered the dominion and inner aspect of the heavens and Earth? (7: 185); Have they not then observed the sky above them, how We have made it? (50: 6); and: Did not the unbelievers know that the heavens and Earth were of one piece, then We parted them? (21: 30), it gives that world a transparency and removes its turbidity. Through its bright, light-diffusing "stars" like: God is the Light of the heavens and Earth (24: 35) and: The life of this world is but a play and amusement (6:32), it melts that solid world. Through its threatening verses that recall death, such as: When the sun is folded up (81: 1), When the heaven is cleft asunder (82: 1), When the heaven is split asunder (84: 1), and The Trumpet is blown, and all who are in the heavens and on Earth fall down senseless, save those whom God wills (39: 68), it destroys the delusion that the world is eternal (Nursi, 2005: 456).*

Thus for him science and religion could not be in conflict, for they are two (apparently) different expressions of the same truth. Minds should be enlightened with science, and hearts need to be illumined with religion (Nursi, 2005: xx). Since truth-seeking scholars and the science of eloquence agree, that each Qur'anic verse contains guidance and instruction. By relating these miracles, the Qur'an shows the ultimate goal of scientific and technological developments, and specifies their final aims, toward which it urges humanity (Nursi, 2005: 210).

*In fact there are four stamps of Divine unity on trees; on their origins, ends, outsides and insides, alluded to by the Names of "He is the First, and the Last, and the Outward, and the Inward." (57: 3) As the Name of First suggests, the original seeds of fruit-bearing trees are coffers containing the programmes, indexes, and plans of the trees. They are Work benches for the production of their formation,*

*systems, and necessities; and machines regulating the tiny amounts they take in and expend. (The Rays/The Second Ray - Second Station - p.42)*

From the very beginning, Muslims have taken a rational (or rather, intellectual and cognitive, *'aqli*) and scientific (*ilmī*) approach to matters in both the religious (including, spiritual) and monotonous domains (Gwynne, 2004: 55-59). This integration is a process from time immemorial as the classical Muslim scholars were deducing laws from the verses of the Qur'an for the new situations arising at times (Kamali, 1999: 3). Factually the revelation of the Quran upon the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was extended over a period of time and was seen as a response to situations he faced many a times (Sa'd, 1904: 1-2, 5-6). Later on Muslim Scholarship developed on the same lines and the Muslim world produced galaxy of the scholars who influenced history over a vast period of time. By following him everyone may enter that treasury. It is clear that knowledge, sciences and arts are perfected through conjunction of ideas and blending of minds; through ideas being combined and different works complementing each other. He quotes that "this is why the craftsman who invented the Shishhane rifle was more skillful than the one who invented the machine gun now" (Nursi, 2005: 34)

This thought of Nursi helped to understand that to develop any model from nothing is more important, praiseworthy and conventional on all ways than to modify the pre-existing model. Said Nursi emphasized on the study of subjects as history, geography, mathematics, geology, physics, chemistry, astronomy, and philosophy (probably natural science), as well as current affairs and developments in Ottoman life and the Islamic world. He developed this thought while studying together religious and scientific subjects, then considering them in relation to the needs of the times. The basis of this method was to "combine" the religious sciences and modern sciences, with the result that the positive sciences would corroborate and strengthen the truths



of religion. Said now followed this method when teaching his students (Vahide, 2005: 29).

Said Nursi was reading Newspaper continuously and came across a news report in which the British secretary of state vehemently put forth their desire and very eloquently suggested the House of Commons to devise policy through which the Qur'anic influence will be reduced among Muslims. This resulted as radical change in the thought of said Nursi when he came across the evil intentions of Europe towards Qur'an. He heard that a British secretary for the colonies had even said in a newspaper: "So long as the Muslims have the Qur'an, we shall be unable to dominate them. We must either take it from them, or make them lose their love of it" (Vahide, 2005: 31).

It is noteworthy that he acknowledged the scientific knowledge, medieval religious discourse did not dismiss them as outdated. Instead, he suggests that insofar as their aim to understand the Qur'anic guidance is considered, a medieval commentator's scientific mistake is not a genuine problem in itself. In his words: "Through the endeavors of science, what will prevail entirely in the present and totally in the future, is truth instead of force, proof instead of sophistry, and reason instead of nature" (Nursi, 1977: 32). With respect to a problem subject to discussion in science or art, those who stand outside that science or art cannot speak authoritatively (Nursi, *The Ray/The supreme sign- Introduction*, p. 89). Nursi adds that in the future, truth and justice will take the place of the gun and the sword. Misguidance so debases humanity that no philosophic trend, scientific development, or human civilization and progress can lift people out of that deep pit of darkness. Through belief and righteous deeds, the wise Qur'an takes us out of the lowest pit and raises us to the highest rank (Nursi, 2005: 647).

The originality of *Risale-i Nur* is based on Qur'anic truths enlightens the mind, soul, and feelings. It heals those wounded by modern trends and defeats, atheists and their anti-Qur'an propaganda. They have banished heedlessness in its most dense,

suffocating, and extensive dimensions, all of which evolved under the broad veil of science, by demonstrating the Light of Divine Unity in a most radiant fashion (Nursi, 2005: 170).

It may be justifiably acknowledge that Islamic pursuit of education/knowledge is a necessary design for the blossoming the culture of free inquiry and scientific thinking that encompasses through the sphere of both theory and practice within the belief on God.

Modern science, according to Clayton (2002: 249), assumes that the universe is a closed physical system that interactions are regular and law like, that all causal histories can be traced and that variances will ultimately have physical explanations. It was this view that Nursi repeatedly countered, as, for example, in his famous treatise *Tabiat Risdlesi* (The Treatise on Nature) (Nursi, 2000: 232- 254).

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* (Reasoning), 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” (Nursi, “Muhakemat,” 1986). 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 emphasized that truth, proof and reason should be used as tool for reaching to reality and people need to remain away from deceived embellishments” (Bolay, 1995). While describing the categories of mind Nursi is of the view that;

“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. 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” (Bolay, 1995). 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” (Horkuc, 2002).

*The inscriptions of the Pen of Power in every point of creation necessarily reject the existence of intermediaries.* (Nursi, 1992: 731)

Acikgenc (1996: 38) quotes him “the revealed truth is reasonable, but reason on its own cannot attain it.” Religion based only on reason or emotion cannot reach God, but leads to an embodying of God, or claiming partnership with Him. On the other hand religion without reason is according to him fruitless and lacking true nature. “Belief is attained through reason's power of choice (Nursi, 2005: 99). For attaining perfection, knowledge of sight is more important. “If knowledge lacks the insight of the heart, it is ignorance. Taking the part of something is one thing, belief is something else” (Nursi, 2005: 545).

According to Mermer (1995: 49) states, “In Nursi's thought everything from microcosm and macrocosm must be made the subject of research and be seen as an “ascent in knowledge of God”.

According to Mardin (1989: 69), Nursi developed a modern intellectual outlook during his early years of medreses education and believe in the necessity of specialising in science. He thought one person could specialise at most in a few subjects but not in all.

According to Agai (2002: 347), Nursi wanted to find a way of leading people to seek a method that unites religion with science, which can give certainty in belief, and serves religion. This

cannot be achieved through classical forms of Islamic learning. According to him this must proceed “through an alliance of mind and heart” (Nursi, 2005: 167).

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, skepticism is born (Acikgenc, 335).

He also makes the point, however, that specialization should come after a general knowledge of both religious sciences and modern sciences. However, he is of the view such composite to be done under the inclusiveness of religious faith (Nursi, 1986: 44-45).

### **C. Conclusion**

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. The success of his project will become clear with time. 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 scientist. 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. 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. He attempted a synthesis of science and revelation in the light of the Qur'an, and of the general perspective on Islam which Medieval Scholarship shared in their different ways. With its distinctiveness his methodology could be defined as the 'Sacralisation of Science' to explain the true nature of the universe as revealing signs of its Creator, and used scientific language to establish a culture of belief in which all the fundamentals of belief might be proved rationally.

To established Qur'anic empiricism in its tangible form, existence is not subject to it. Rather, matter exists by means of meaning, and that meaning is life. Technically it can be recognized through observation and doesn't need to be ascribed to existence. Sensibly, matter exists so that it may perfect a reality, that is life while as Spirit is the foundation of life. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi employed all his efforts to conclude that there is no conflict between science and Quran. It is a mere provocative tactics of positivists who for personal gains created a psychological warfare between the two. Muslim scientists need to revisit the history and try to explore how Muslim scientists establish the Qur'anic Scientism and try to establish its solid base in order to liberate the humanity from the capitalists and positivists' greediness.

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