

BADIUZZAMAN SAID NURSI'S APPROACH TO MODERN EDUCATION -INTEGRATING SCIENCES WITH RELIGIOUS SCIENCES-

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Abstract

Badiuzzaman Said Nursi was a great reformer in the twentieth Century Turkey. He played a significant role in the transformation of Turkish society. Like many educated Muslims, Said Nursi was not satisfied with the alternatives represented by both the new secularist westernizing visionaries...new secular intellectuals... and the traditionalists who failed to comprehend the nature of change in all its dimensions. He criticized existing institutions and mentalities and worked to provide an alternative ...an authentically Islamic and modern approach to meet the challenges of the times. He developed his ideas on educational reform and created his own method of teaching, combining the religious science with modern science. To declare that ignorance is the leading enemy and to think that this enemy can be eliminated only through education Badiuzzaman Said Nursi presented a well educated model of community. Nursi's views on unifying educational system by his Madrasatuz Zehra approach are original and unique. His views that religious subjects should be taught in the secular schools (mektebs) and the positive science in the religious schools (medreses) so that the structure of secular education are salvaged from irreligious behavior and the religious schools from bigotry, are very progressive. Moreover, his views about integration of science and theology with education are very futuristic and rewarding given the pathetic situations of Muslims in educational field worldwide. Education based on faith was the central point of Nursi's educational philosophy. Nursian concern with knowledge based on belief in God is very much worthy of consideration. He believed that the conscience is illuminated by the religious sciences and the mind is illuminated by the science of civilization and wisdom occurs from the combination of these two. Nursi says, "The light of conscience is religious sciences (ulum-u- diniya). The light of mind is civilized sciences (funun-u-medeniya). Reconciliation of both manifests the truth. The student's skills develop further with these two sciences (ulum-u-diniya and funun-u-medenye) but when they are separated superstition from the former and corruption and skepticism from the latter is born" . The educational model given by Said Nursi was very comprehensive and progressive and caters needs both of religion, science and morality and thus makes a harmonious blend of all the three in a holistic manner. Nursian model of education surpass all the Educational models, presented and practiced by his contemporaries in South Asia, where both the objectives of empowerment through education and integration of religion with science and technology can comfortably be realized practically and in a convincing balance. The unique civilization features of Medresetu'z-Zehra model make it a most suitable and culturally viable model for Muslims in its global perspective as well. Therefore studying this model in depth is highly desirable in the context of the consumerist tendencies emerging in the spheres of education and technology by relegating spiritual and moral values to margins. Nursian model provides an alternative which meets the

demand of modern times but does not neglect the much needed values the education should imbibe to face the civilization challenges in the wake of the onslaught of atheism and materialism in name of development, modernization and progress.

This paper on "Badiuzzaman Said Nursi's Approach to Modern Education" will focus on all these issues and arrive at conclusion through sustained objectivity and analysis.

Keywords: unique educational reforms, integration of Science and Theology, modern sciences and religious sciences, mektebs and medrese, Madrasatuz Zehra, morality and scientific temper

1. INTRODUCTION

Education based on faith was the central point of Nursi's educational philosophy. Nursian concern with knowledge based on belief in God is very much worthy of consideration. This interrelationship between knowledge, love and belief forms the basis of Nursian view of Education. He believed that the conscience is illuminated by the religious sciences and the mind is illuminated by the science of civilization and wisdom occurs from the combination of these two. Nursi says, "The lights of conscience is religious sciences (*ulum-u-diniya*). The light of mind is civilized sciences (*funun-u-medeniya*). Reconciliation of both manifests the truth. The student's skills develop further with these two sciences (*ulum-u-diniya* and *funun-u-medenye*) but when they are separated superstition from the former and corruption and skepticism from the latter is born" (Said Nursi, 2007, p 507). Thus Said Nursi developed his ideas on educational reforms and created his own method of teaching, combining the religious science with modern science.

Education rests at the very center of building prosperous civilization. Nursi is of the belief that knowledge, education and faith form the prime ingredients for renewal of civilization whose integration provides the platform for development and perfection. This linking of *ilm* (Knowledge) and *iman* (faith) form the core of Nursian model of Educational system. These terms *ilm* and *iman* although had been examined by scholars individually but their deep-seated interlink between them had rarely been explored. In this regard Nursian concept of Education based on belief in God and Education produced from belief in God is very much worthy of consideration (Ahmad Anees, 2014,). Said Nursi believed that the Education system of the society should be the integration of knowledge and faith. By faith he meant the strong belief in Allah and the proper practicing of religious virtues. Because without practicing faith is nothing. According to him it is essential that faith and knowledge complement each other. For, if any one of these two factors of education, i.e. knowledge and faith, lose then that education system or concept cannot make any difference or progress (The Letters, 1997, pp. 265). Will Grant in his masterpiece *Pleasures of Philosophy* is in complete accord with Said Nursi's views on Education. He observes, "Education that is entirely scientific and materialistic can produce nothing but tools and modern machines. It alienates man from beauty and estranges him from wisdom"(Grant, Will , 1953, pp. 168-169)

Nursi was aware of a need for education in knowledge as well as education in character. He believed that the knowledge and faith in God should be fused and integrated to bring real happiness and spiritual pleasure. He says, "You should definitely know that the highest aim of the human's innate character (*hilkat*) and the most sublime result of the human's inborn disposition (*fitrat*) are to have faith in God. And the most exalted position and the greatest status in the ranks of humanity are to attain the love of God within faith in God (The Letters). The 20th century has witnessed unprecedented attacks on the foundations of faith by materialists in the name of sciences and advancement. Nursi responded to these attacks by devoting all his efforts to save and strengthen belief, which he viewed as the most important matter for a better humanity. And he did this by trying to establish that there is no enmity between any science and faith but they are allies. "What makes human into human," claims Nursi, "is indeed faith". As he firmly states; the happiness of humanity in this world and the next world depends on their faith, "Faith necessitates affirmation of Divine unity, which in turn necessitates submission to God, which in turn necessitates reliance on God, which in turn necessarily leads to happiness in this world and the next" (The Words, 2002, pp. 322-323).

Sukran Vahide says: "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi was distinguished from other religious leaders in the Islamic world in recent times by his seeking to reverse its decline vis-à-vis the West not through political struggle or the establishment of the Islamic state or other means, but through the revitalization of faith or belief (*iman*). He identified the gravest danger to "the edifice of Islam" as coming from the decay of its intellectual

underpinning, which had been weakened over the centuries by currents of alien thought and was then facing renewed threats in the form of materialist philosophy and modernity, which he expressed in terms of "philosophy" and "modern civilization." The greatest danger these posed was to the faith of the mass of believers. Hence in Nursi's view, the restatement of the basic tenets of the Islamic religion, and "*the renewing and strengthening of belief through new methods, were of paramount importance and took precedence over every other form of struggle aimed at reconstruction.*" (Vahide, Sukran, 2002, p.180) "Belief in God and its necessary corollaries, knowledge of God and worship, are, according to Nursi, the purpose of man's being "sent to this world." They are also his innate or primordial duty. So belief in God is "*the highest aim of creation and its most important result*"^(The Letters) .By virtue of these complementary facts, it is only through belief that human beings can find happiness and fulfillment. This constitutes one of the main themes of the *Risale-i Nur*, which Nursi elaborates with numerous allegories, comparisons, and arguments. It is also an area in which he points out the paradoxes and failures of "philosophy" and "misguided science," which, although their stated aim is the conquest of human happiness, have rather brought humanity pain and suffering, since they have sought it in worldly pleasures and through their false principles and viewpoint (Vahide) .

Nursi argues that the main purpose of the creation of the humanity is to be perfect by means of knowledge and supplication based on belief. "*The highest aim of creation and its most important result is belief in God. The most exalted rank in humanity and its highest degree is the knowledge of God contained within belief in God. The most radiant happiness and sweetest bounty for jinn and human beings is the love of God contained within the knowledge of God*" (The Letters)

PART 1

Said Nursi was not satisfied with the system of Education prevalent at that time in Turkey. Education was mostly given through dual institutions; *mekteb* and *medrese*. The system offered by the former was western oriented, with a focus on positivist approach to sciences, whereas the latter institution a classical Islamic education. During this time there was no system of Education in the country offering both scientific and religious training. *Mekatib* and *medaris* as the places of popular education at that time seemed to carry pride in their separate curricula, each being critical of the other. Nursi was deeply troubled with this schism. Nursi who himself completed and excelled in *medrese* education reaching to its heights, realized the need to improve himself in the sciences of the time to find answer to many questions. He often expressed his frustration towards traditional religious scholars whose discussion could not provide solutions to the major problems of the time. Nursi was convinced that religion did not consist solely of faith matters but due to its comprehensiveness it is also connected with world of science including sociology, politics and economics. (Markham and Pirim, 2011, p. 10) To comprehend the understanding of religion knowledge of all these subjects are also necessary. But at the same time he gave religion a position of primacy over all types of sciences. He argued that "*Islam is the master and guide of the sciences, and the chief and father of all true knowledge*" (Nursi, Muhakemat,p.8). This led him to evolve his own scheme of ideal system of education. For integration of knowledge, his view is that religious sciences are taught in the new secular schools (*mektebs*) and that the positive sciences are taught in the religious schools (*medreses*). He argued that if the students are taught in this method, those in the secular schools will be saved from being without religion, while those in the religious schools will be saved from bigotry.(**Marazi, Hamidullah 2012, p. 16**). A fine combination of scientific and religious sciences as envisaged by Nursi can be seen from the conclusion he drawn: '*The Religious sciences are the light of the conscience and the modern sciences i.e. sciences of civilization are the light of the reason; the truth becomes manifest through the combination of the two. The student's endeavour will take flight on these two wings. When they are separated it gives rise to bigotry in the one, and wiles and skepticism in the other*' (Nursi, Munazarat, 2007, p. 508). He wanted to integrate the science of modern times with Islamic thought. But his theory of integration was the new exegesis of the Quran to be written, almost exclusively, in the light of the findings of modern science, and he tried to put it into practice with an added enthusiasm. (**Marazi**)

Thus, the integration of religious and modern sciences was the tool used by Said Nursi to revitalize the Muslim culture and tradition. Here also the faith and religious values of students were main concerns of Nursi. One of his most important views related to education is the approach of uniting religion and sciences. He says: "*We should mold 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*" (**Badili, 1998, p. 127**). Bediuzzaman felt that existing Educational system was not addressing the need of the society, it was rather furthering gap between two sections of the society, intelligentsia of religious sciences and that of modern sciences. Not even that, but the both streams had misunderstandings about each others. In his view, students of the

modern education system should be trained in religious subjects, and similarly, products of the religious schools should be well equipped with the modern trend of the world, so that the two sections of the society could have enough opportunity to understand both the sciences utilizing their skills. The main purpose of his initiative was to produce a sincere and committed Muslim citizen in order to get rid of the crisis of the Muslim intelligentsia and to develop science and technology in the Muslim world (Ahmad, 2014). The main purpose of his project, 'Madrasatu'z Zehra' was also the reconciliation of religious sciences and secular knowledge. He states it clearly, "*The people of (medrasah) religious schools accuse the people of modern schools of weakness of belief due to their outward appearance. The people of modern schools regard the people of religious schools as insufficient and ignorant because they do not know about the new branches of science. The differences in the views and methods unsettled the Islamic ethics and prevented people from contemporary civilization. The only solution to this is to teach religious sciences properly in modern schools, to teach new branches of exact sciences instead of ancient Greek philosophy, which is unnecessary now, in religious schools and to have very competent scholars in dervish lodges. When they are realized, those three branches will develop in harmony and reach high ranks.*" For him the main purpose of learning of science is to understand the Qur'an and prove its truths. Understanding the Quran should be the main aim and purpose of learning science and object of life. Thus the Quranic miraculousness should become the guide, teacher and master for the entire humanity.

It is worthy of consideration that efforts of Said Nursi were against the modernization and the secularization process occurred in Turkey in his time. He was of the firm belief that these satanic processes diminished and took away the faith of Muslim society, which gave them power and energy to fight and struggle against all satanic efforts. It was Mustafa Kemal's, the father of modernization and westernization in Turkey, declared aim "*to achieve an unconditional transformation to Western civilization,*" and to build a modern nation-state. Such a project required the rapid modernization, Westernization, and therefore secularization of Turkey. To make this process easy Kemal brought a radically reformed "national" education system, the function of which was to inculcate "universal, humanist, secular, positivist" principles. His intention was to eliminate all existing religious identities, and create a uniform secular, nationalist identity" (Vahide, p. 34). Badiuzzaman Said Nursi declared an intellectual and spiritual war against all these dangerous propagandas by trying to reconstruct the educational settings through faith and religious values.

To give practical shape to his thoughts on Educational reforms Said Nursi went to Istanbul at the end of the year 1907 to present his proposals before the Sultan, *Abdulhamid II*. According to Sukran Vahide, Nursi's intention in returning to the Ottoman capital was to try to gain official support for his ideas of an Islamic University, the *Madresetu'z Zehra* in eastern Anatolia Serfin Mardin, however, suggests that it was Nursi's desire to present a series of reform proposals to the Sultan which prompted him to move to Istanbul . **Mardin, 1989, p. 79**). However, Nursi's stay in Istanbul and his activities from the end of 1907 to the middle of 1908 as well as his conversation with the Doctor suggests that his main concern was the propagation of his *Medreset'uz Zehra* project, for which he worked so tirelessly till as late as 1950. Another intention was also 'to engage with a broader spectrum of scholars, intellectuals and politicians there. Istanbul was the heart of Ottoman intelligentsia, the center of Muslim world and an important axis in the world's power balance'. (**Markham, p. 11**)

Unfortunately, Said Nursi was not allowed to talk to the Sultan. Sefik Pasha, the Minister of Internal Affairs, however, talked to him. Said Nursi did not regard this talk sufficient. He expressed his views through articles in the newspapers and his speeches. He wanted the Sultan to give importance to education instead of establishing cavalry troops and to spend the taxes collected from people on treating ignorance, the illness of the nation. He gave great importance to expressing the intense need of the community for education because "the nation thirsts for a new education system that complies with Islam" (Vahide, p. 37) Finally with the active support of the Governor of Van and Bitlis, Tahir Pasha, Nursi was introduced to the Sultan. According to Vahide it was Ferik Ahmad Pasha, the Major General, with whom Nursi stayed for two months, may have assisted him in preparing the petition seeking support for his educational projects in Kurdistan to be presented to the Palace and secured the necessary introduction. However the actual presentation did not take place till May or June 1908. However, Nursi's suggestion for radical reforms in the existing educational systems of the time under *Abdulhamid II* were not taken well. His bold denunciation of the policies of Sultan evoked strong reaction amongst the State authorities. He was sent to a mental hospital for presenting "this much courage" which was not found to be "comfortable with sanity" by the officials (Markham, p. 35). Later in 1911 Nursi finally convinced Sultan Mohd. Resad about the greater need of establishing a university in the Eastern provinces. He was given the initial amount of a thousand gold liras in advance out of the nineteen gold liras allotted to the proposed university. Constructions had started on a site on the shores of Lake Van at Edremit in 1913. But due to the outbreak of the First World War shortly afterward and nonpayment of the

rest of the promised funds and the apathy of the Ministry of the Pious Foundations, despite the favorable response from the Grand Vizir's Office, construction was halted and it never resumed (**vahide, pp. 102-108**).

The text was later printed in the *Sark ve Kurdistan Gazetesi* (East and Kurdistan Gazette), dated November 19, 1908. (**Vahide, p. 38**) The heart of these proposals was the bringing together and joint teaching of the traditional religious sciences and the modern sciences. He attached great importance to the restructuring of the curriculum which was extremely modern in approach. He laid down certain guiding principles to be followed in the functioning of the *Medrese*. The instructions should be given in a language known by the student. In another work, *Munazarat*, Nursi stated that they should be tri-lingual, with Arabic being "compulsory", Kurdish 'permissible', and Turkish "necessary". In the same work, he also stated that Kurdish scholars who were trusted by Turk and Kurd should be selected as teachers, as well as those who knew the local languages and it was necessary to take into account the capacity and cultural level of the community they were to serve. These *medrese* should be on an equal footing with the official secular schools and like them their examinations should be recognized (**The Munazarat, 2007, p. 71**). In his views, on the wider scale, the *Medresetu-z Zahra* would unite the three traditions in the Educational system by representing 'the most superior *mekteb* by the reason, the very best *medrese* by heart, and the most sacred *zawiye* by the conscience'. In course of time it would gain financial independence by reason of the donations and pious bequest it would receive. Nursi suggested eastern Anatolia, with two major campuses in two important cities. He wanted to connect the distant communities of the empire to the center. Rebellion was growing in every corner of the empire and for Nursi the solution was to provide an enriched education for all.

At another place Said Nursi highlighting the benefit of the educational curricula of the *Medresetu'z Zahra* pointed out that 'it would ensure the future of the ulama in the eastern provinces, at the same time it would be step towards the unification and reform of general system. So it would deliver Islam from the bigotry, superstitions, and false beliefs which had encrusted parts of it over the centuries. And, importantly, would be a means of introducing modern learning into the medreses in a way which would allay the ulama's suspicions concerning modern science. Also, it would "open the door to spreading the beneficial aspects of constitutionalism."

Bediuzzaman wished for Islam to function like a consultative council, that is to say, through the mutual consultation (*sura*) of "the three divisions of the army of Islamic education", those of the *medreses*, the *mektebs*, and the *tekkes*, so that "each would complete the deficiencies of the other". His aim was for the *Medresetu'z-Zehra* to be an embodiment of this.

According to Bediuzzaman, this transforming the *medreses* from being 'single-faculty' institutions into being 'multi-faculty' and putting into practice 'the rule of division of labour' was in accordance with wisdom and the laws of creation. The failure to practice it in previous centuries had led to despotism and the exploitation of learning in the *medreses*, and the teaching being undertaken by those not qualified to do so. It had headed the *medreses* towards their destruction.

In many places, Bediuzzaman stresses the need for students to specialize in one subject for which they have an aptitude, and in addition only study subjects which complement it. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that specialization in particular subject represented a radical break with traditional methods. Finally, a further point which could be thought of as radical was Bediuzzaman's view that "public opinion" should prevail among both the ulama and the students. That is to say, he believed that it was "scholastic despotism", an offspring of political despotism, "which has opened the way to blind imitation (*taklid*) and barred the way to searching for the truth." For the problems of the modern age to be grappled with and progress to be secured. "constitutionalism among the ulama" should be established "in the ulama state." In the same way, among the students, "public opinion" or the prevalent ideas emerging from debate and the exchange of ideas between students of varying disciplines should be taken up by master. Bediuzzaman predicted that this would provide a strong stimulation and incentive for progress. Thus, "just as public opinion predominates in the state, so too should the prevailing opinions of the ulama be *müfti*, and the prevailing opinions of the students be master and teacher" (**Vahide, p. 47, Volkan Gazette, No. 403**).

During his conversation with the Doctor Badiuzzaman described in some detail the need for creative study, debate, and a return to the study of the essential religious sciences by the students. He examined various reasons for the divergence and differences between the various branches of the educational system, which he states were major cause of the backwardness of Islamic civilization, which constitutes true civilization, in relation to modern civilization. He says: "*Those in the medreses accuse those in the mektebs of weakness in belief because of their literalist interpretation of certain matters, whereas those in the mektebs consider the former to be ignorant and unreliable because they have no knowledge of modern science. While those in the medreses look at those in the tekkes as though they were following innovations...*" While recognizing the

differences in their ways, he stresses that the barriers between them should be broken down and by way of a remedy modern science be taught in the *medreses* "in place of obsolete ancient philosophy", religious sciences be taught "fully" in the secular schools, and scholars from the *medreses*, "some of the most learned ulama", be present in the Sufi *tekkes*. (Vahide, p. 45) He then goes on to analyze the reasons for the ineffectiveness of the preachers, who played such a vital role in educating the mass of the people, and suggested remedies. He wanted the preacher to be both searching scholars, so that they can prove what they claim, and subtle philosophers so that they do not spoil the balance of the *shariah*, and to be eloquent and convincing. (Nursi, Muhakemat, p. 47) He introduced new methodology of teachings: the lesson given to students should not contain academic words only and be made more interesting; it should be given in a language they understand and through simple sentences and concrete examples. It is the responsibility of the teacher to arouse curiosity and interest of the students in the subject. In one of the *Munazara*, Nursi insistently stated that *madrasahs* should abandon the old style of studying and start a new method and content. The students should be closely monitored and properly guided based on their performance. It is necessary to teach in the form of debating so that students will develop constructive, synthesizing and discovering intelligence. With this view, Nursi implies teaching in the form of question and answer. Badiuzzaman criticizes scholars who live among the pages of the books and do not proceed beyond theory; he wants scholars to give importance to application and experiments in education. He therefore rejects the education approach based on memorization and wants to introduce an education approach that gives importance to practical thoughts and development of inquisitive thinking in the minds of the students. Moreover the teacher should adapt the topic he instructs into life, should make the lesson lively through attractive examples and should convince the students that the knowledge he gives will be needed in life. In order to obtain positive results from students it is necessary to make them have a feeling of responsibility and conviction that education is necessary. It is also necessary to have ethical values for a successful education career. The education and control of a child whose spiritual aspect is neglected becomes impossible in all aspects (Munazarat, p. 79, The Words, p. 50)

As a teacher in his own cave-like *medrese* in the citadel of Van, where he taught for about two years, Nursi treated his students more as friends than as students. This is clearly evident in his dialogues with his students such as Ali Cavus and Molla Hamid. Sometimes he even played games with them. He often visited the rural areas in the company of his students (Badili, pp. 67-77). In his *medrese* which he called *Horhor*, Nursi used to dictate the instrumental knowledge to his students from memory. The curricula of this *medrese* was very modern and progressive, where Nursi taught his students engineering, accounting, algebra, physics, History and geography as well as religious lessons. Prior to this, Nursi had been overwhelming *medrese* ulama in debates. After coming to Van in 1897, he started to overwhelm the School teachers in debates in physics and Chemistry because of his vast knowledge of modern sciences. His idea of integration of religious and modern sciences originated from this time. After 1900, Nursi's ideal of *medrese* became more intense, especially after Europe used science and philosophy against religion.

In this way the educational model given by Said Nursi was very comprehensive and progressive and caters needs both of religion, science and morality and thus makes a harmonious blend of all the three in a holistic manner. His idea about integration of science and technology with education is very futuristic and rewarding given the pathetic situation of Muslims in education field. The unique civilization feature of *Medresetu'z Zehra* model makes it a most suitable and culturally viable model for Muslims in its global perspective also. Nursian model provides an alternative which meets the demands of modern times but does not neglect the much needed values the education should imbibe to face the civilizational challenges and the onslaught of atheism, materialism and westernization on Islam and its civilization. The education models envisaged by Sir Syed, Shibli Nomani and Maududi have met but with less success in convincing the traditional Muslim clergy about the tenacity of modern sciences vis-a-vis religious sciences. But *Medresetu'z Zehra* model presented by Nursi are very appropriate, rewarding and progressive. Sir Syed, a resplendent personality and a great visionary, envisaged a model based on western standards of morality and scientific temper but he ignored the basic religious elements which were being trampled over under its feet because western secularism and atheism was the leading educational undercurrents at that time in the west. Sir Syed's own ways on religion, his own interpretation of Islam, and the endeavors which his own mind was making to synthesize and harmonizes his religious traditions with the spirit and knowledge of modernity, were unacceptable to most of his fellow Muslims (Troll, 1978, p. 34). Although Sir Syed too believed in the compatibility of religion with modern science but as opposed to Sir Syed's views Nursi had a different perspective on science. Nursi argued that "*Islam is the master and guide of the sciences, and the chief and father of all true knowledge*". Maulana Maududi's model of education system is more a critique of Sir Syed's model of secular education than providing a practicable alternative. Except his experiment with the Thanavi Darasgah of Rampur no other full fledged scheme of education could be implemented by him which could convince Muslims world to

adopt it or make it a model. His suggestions remained just recommendatory and were not implemented fully anywhere in the world (Maududi, 2009) . Viewed in these perspectives Nursian model of education surpass all these model where both the objectives of empowerment through education and integration of religion with science and technology can comfortably be realized practically and in a convincing balance. The unique civilizational features of *Medresetu'z-Zehra* model make it a most suitable and culturally viable model for Muslims in its global perspective as well. Therefore studying this model in depth is highly desirable in the context of the consumerist tendencies emerging in the spheres of education and technology by relegating spiritual and moral values to margins. Nursian model provides an alternative which meets the demand of modern times but does not neglect the much needed values the education should imbibe to face the challenges in the wake of the onslaught of atheism and materialism in name of development, modernization and progress. Badiuzzaman twice received funds for the construction of his university, and its foundations were laid in 1913, it could not be completed due to war and apathy of the Ministry of Pious Foundations and the inability of the State to bear the promised fund in view of financial crunch. When the Republic was founded Nursi again approached the Turkish Grand National Assembly and with the signature of 163 members of Parliament out of 200, a fund of 150,000 liras was allotted for it but it was never released because of the strained relations that had developed between Nursi and Mustafa Kemal Pasha, due to latter's progressive and un-Islamic policies. However, the Democratic Party Government, which came to power in 1950, showed respect to the demands of the people and to Said Nursi, established *Erzurum* University. Thus fulfilled Nursi's cherished long life dream. At the opening of the University Nursi expressing his happiness said, "My University would be like he wanted in the course of time. The higher education institution that was desired to be established was going to serve primarily to Anatolia and to the Middle East countries like Iran, Arabia, Pakistan, Turkistan and Afghanistan and it was going to render an important service to realize peace and fraternity" (Vahide, 326)

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