



## **Said Nursi's Thoughts and Its Contribution in Mainstreaming Moderation at Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

*This research focuses on the study of the spectrum of Said Nursi's thought who became an important figure in the dynamics of Islam in Turkiye during the transitional period leading up to the collapse of the Ottoman Caliphate and the founding of the Republic of Turkiye. Said Nursi with the cultural movement "Risale-i Nur" prefers to inflame meaningful jihad as the path of his da'wah struggle rather than face to face confrontation against the newly established secular government of the Turkish republic structurally and radically. This paper will also focus on studying the current Risale-i Nur movement which began to be officially printed in Turkiye in the 1950s and then, 50 years later, around the 2000s, it has spread to hundreds of other countries, including Indonesia. The indications of this can be seen in the translation of the books "Risale-i Nur" into more than 150 world languages. The methodology used in this study is library research with literature sources related to Said Nursi's spectrum of thought and the Da'wah movement of the Risale-i Nur community as the main object of research. In addition, this research was also carried out through interviews with informants who were directly related to the research focus. In the Indonesian context, the Risale-i Nur movement can be studied through the center for the study of Nursi's thoughts which is under the auspices of the Nur Semesta Foundation and the publishing institution Risalah Nur Press. This study also explores reading corners and centers for the study of Said Nursi and his works in several Islamic colleges and universities, both private and public. This study concludes that Said Nursi Corner is a symbol of the moderate movement that contributes to developing knowledge, solidarity in social life and fraternal networks and as an inspiration for lecturers and students to explore the character of Said Nursi and his phenomenal work Risale-i Nur in mainstreaming moderation in Indonesia.*

**Keyword:** Moderation, Risale-i Nur, Islamic Higher Education

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini fokus pada kajian spektrum pemikiran Said Nursi yang menjadi tokoh penting dalam dinamika Islam di Turkiye pada masa transisi menjelang runtuhnya Kekhalifahan Ottoman dan berdirinya Republik Turkiye. Said Nursi dengan gerakan kultural "Risalah Nur" lebih memilih mengobarkan jihad ma'nawi sebagai jalan perjuangan dakwahnya dibandingkan harus berhadapan langsung dengan konfrontasi terhadap pemerintahan sekuler republik Turkiye yang baru terbentuk dengan cara struktural dan radikal. Tulisan ini juga akan fokus mengkaji gerakan Risalah Nur, karya yang mulai resmi dicetak di Turkiye pada tahun 1950-an

dan kemudian 50 tahun kemudian, sekitar tahun 2000-an, telah menyebar ke ratusan negara lain, termasuk Indonesia. Indikasinya terlihat pada penerjemahan kitab “Risalah Nur” ke lebih dari 150 bahasa dunia. Metodologi yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah penelitian kepustakaan dengan sumber literatur yang berkaitan dengan spektrum pemikiran Said Nursi dan gerakan dakwah komunitas Risalah Nur sebagai objek utama penelitian. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga dilakukan melalui wawancara terhadap informan yang berhubungan langsung dengan fokus penelitian. Dalam konteks Indonesia, gerakan Risalah Nur dapat dikaji melalui pusat kajian pemikiran Nursi yang berada di bawah naungan Yayasan Nur Semesta dan lembaga penerbitan Risalah Nur Press. Kajian ini juga mengeksplorasi pojok baca (corner) dan pusat kajian Said Nursi dan karya-karyanya di beberapa perguruan tinggi Islam di Indonesia, baik swasta maupun negeri. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa Said Nursi Corner merupakan simbol gerakan moderat yang berkontribusi dalam mengembangkan ilmu pengetahuan, solidaritas dalam kehidupan bermasyarakat dan jaringan persaudaraan serta menjadi inspirasi bagi dosen dan mahasiswa untuk mendalami karakter Said Nursi dan karya fenomenalnya Risalah Nur. dalam mengarusutamakan moderasi di Indonesia.

**Kata Kunci: Moderasi, Risalah Nur, Pendidikan Tinggi Islam**

## **Introduction**

Indonesia is a large nation with a variety of wealth not only in natural potential and resources, but also in the diversity and differences of its people. Starting from religion, language, culture to ethnicity and race which are so diverse, supported by a large population as a tremendous potential for the progress of a nation.

However, on the other hand, the potentials and challenges as a nation that is plural and full of diversity need to be managed and arranged appropriately. The potential for conflict, disunity and even acts of violence between elements of people is still open and might occur if there is no adhesive for shared values that are committed and unifying. Among the important values that must be prioritized in the midst of the plurality of the Indonesian people are the values of moderation.

Moderation itself in the perspective of Islam, as an element of the nation that is the majority in this country, is a basic characteristic and main character in the religion of Islam whose roots and origins can be easily traced through various sources and main references in the treasury.<sup>1</sup>

The equivalent of the word moderation (moderatism) in Islam is usually equated with *al-wasathiyah* which means justice, a middle position between two boundaries, which is also defined as standard or mediocre. In the dictionary (Mu'jam al-Wasith), for example, the meaning of simple (*'adulan*) and chosen (*khiyaran*) is found. In the Qur'an itself, the verse that is often used as the basis for disclosing the definition of moderation (*wasathiyah*) is surah al-Baqarah verse 143 which displays the expression

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Munir Mufi, Aminullah Elhadi, and Mursalim, ‘Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Beragama: Toleransi Aktif Dan Harmoni Sosial Dalam Pendidikan Di Indonesia’’, *Jurnal El-Tarbawi*, 16.1 (2023), 4 <<https://journal.uin.ac.id/Tarbawi/article/view/28117>>.

"*ummatan wasathan*" which means a mediating people (namely people who are just and chosen).<sup>2</sup>

As for the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad, several narrations can be found which allude to the values of moderation in Islam, including a hadith which reads: "*khairu al-umur ausathuha*" and in another history with a somewhat different editorial "*wa khairu al-a'mal ausathuha*" which substantively explains the basic character of Islam which is moderate, not rigid but not too weak, always oriented in the middle between two extreme sides, both the extreme right (*ifrath*) and the extreme left (*tafrith*).

Today's discourse on moderation appears to be increasingly prominent in at least the last two decades. In fact, some researchers call it a big issue in this century, especially when faced with issues of radicalism, terrorism and acts of violence in the context of religion, more specifically those targeting Islam. However, the emergence of discussions of moderation in Islam or what is termed moderate Islam is not necessarily agreed upon by all groups and does not encounter opposition.

It turns out that there are also those who reject this term by seeing it as a product of a Western conspiracy which is often tendentious towards Muslims who are more in line with Western policies. Meanwhile, Muslims who do not agree or even oppose Western propaganda will be labeled as immoderate, intolerant and even radical in a negative impression and tend to be a one-sided stereotype.<sup>3</sup>

As for this paper, the intended context of moderation is the values that are embedded as the fundamental character of Islam. Namely a view or attitude that always tries to take a middle (moderate) position between two excessively opposing attitudes, so as to be able to offer value and a proportional attitude towards the other party. Thus Islamic teachings fundamentally position humans away from extreme attitudes and place them in a reasonable, just and balanced position.

Quoting from Yusuf Al-Qardhawi's view that in Islamic teachings there are several main elements, namely elements of divinity (*rabbaniyyah*) and also humanity (*insaniyyah*), a combination of materialism (*maddiyyah*) and spiritual values (*ruhaniyyah*), a combination of revelation and reason, as well as an element of balance between public benefit (*al-jamaiyyah*) and also personal interests (*al-fardiyyah*) on the other side. So as a consequence of the implementation of these Islamic moderation values is the absence of disadvantaged parties or groups.<sup>4</sup>

This study attempts to examine the thoughts of a reformist figure from Turkiye who fought in two different periods, namely at the end of the Ottoman Empire and at the beginning of the Republic of Turkiye, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1877-1960). Nursi's ideas and thoughts were moderate in style and put forward dialogue. Likewise the movement of Nursi's followers and students, which at first only spread in Turkiye, always put forward a persuasive and cultural da'wah strategy.

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<sup>2</sup> Rizal Ahyar Mussafa, 'Konsep Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Islam Dalam Al-Quran Dan Implementasinya Dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam' (UIN Semarang, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Asep Abdurrohman, 'Eksistensi Islam Moderat Dalam Perspektif Islam', *Jurnal RUSYAN FIKR*, 14.1 (2018), 36.

<sup>4</sup> Abdurrohman, p. 37.

Until today's development of the Risale-i Nur movement, which takes its name from the phenomenal work "Risale-i Nur" written by Nursi, has been spread, translated and studied in more than 70 countries and 150 world languages, including those already in Indonesia. This research will trace the Risale-i Nur missionary movement both through international organizations that are based and active in Turkiye, IFSC/IIKV (Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture/*Istanbul İlim Ve Kultur Vakfı*), as well as inter-local institutions that operate nationally with offices in Jakarta (*Yayasan Nur Semesta/Risale-i Nur Press*).

### **Offering the Concept of *Jihad Ma'nawi***

The true moral struggle for Nursi is the struggle against destructive actions that are non-material in nature, therefore the necessary solutions must also be carried out through positive actions that are meaningful or immaterial as well. According to him, the culmination of this meaningful struggle is sincere service in strengthening the faith of Muslims from absolute disbelief (atheism). In fact, he values this devotion to faith as one of the greatest symbols of a positive action that a person can take. This is because according to Nursi, atheist ideology is one of the main triggers for the enactment of acts of anarchism and terrorism that appear (*al-faudha wa al-irhab*).

The idea of jihad ma'nawi is basically a transformation of the meaning of jihad which in practice is widely misused and exploited by radicals and terrorists. They in their actions always inject the doctrine of "holy jihad" as a justification for the acts of terrorism that they carry out, both to attract interest in the process of recruiting new members and in the framework of executing their actions.

The wrong interpretation of the term "jihad" which is believed by a small number of circles is an internal problem for Muslims themselves, but forms a negative image and impression, both towards the term jihad (which is appropriate according to Islamic teachings) and towards the Muslim community all over the world who participate feel the excess negatively. So that it cannot be avoided as a result of the meaning of jihad which is synonymous with terrorism which is often associated with Muslims, which often this view arises from the perspective of Western scholars.<sup>5</sup>

That's why Said Nursi came up with the idea by diverting the people's physical struggle in defending religion towards a non-material (moral-spiritual) struggle, namely by means of a jihad of words (*al-jihad al-ma'nawi*) by strengthening faith in the heart and practice positive actions in social life in order to achieve harmony in human life that is full of peace.<sup>6</sup>

### **Encouraging Deradicalization and Counter Terrorism Efforts**

Semantically, radicalism is an ideology or flow that wants social and political change or renewal by violent or drastic means. The origin of "radicalism" is taken from the English "radical" which means "down to the roots". While other opinions state that radicalism comes from the word "radix", which also means "root". Thus radical people are people who want

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<sup>5</sup> Lukman Arake, 'Pendekatan Hukum Islam Terhadap Jihad Dan Terorisme"', *ULUMUNA*, 16.1 (2012), 190.

<sup>6</sup> Sukran Vahide, *Biografi Intelektual Bediuzzaman Said Nursi Transformasi Dinasti Usmani Menjadi Republik Turki* (Jakarta: Anatolia, 2007), p. 346.

changes to the existing situation by taking sporadic actions to the roots. As for the Indonesian National Encyclopedia, radicalism literally means an extreme, fundamental or deep-rooted movement.<sup>7</sup>

Radicalism can be understood as an attitude or position that wishes to change the status quo by completely destroying it and replacing it with something completely new. Usually these actions are drastically revolutionary through violence and extreme behavior. Other opinions add to the characteristics of radical thinking that are characteristic of the group, including: intolerant attitudes towards different beliefs and understandings, fanatical attitudes by feeling that only they are right, exclusivity and reluctance to dialogue, and revolutionary actions in achieving goals even by using violence.<sup>8</sup>

Conceptually, the term radicalism actually experiences a development of meaning. According to Farish A. Noor, as in Abdul Mukti's study, he explained that there has been a shift in paradigm and discourse which has caused a mix-up between the concepts of radicalism and "militantism". The definition of radicalism according to Abdul Mukti's narrative, must first be placed in an academic-neutral manner as defined by Sartono Kartodirjo, namely as "a social movement that completely rejects the prevailing social order marked by strong moral agitation to oppose and be hostile to privileged and powerful people".<sup>9</sup>

Because the definition is generally a concept that always includes the possibility of change, the concept of radicalism can also change to positive and negative meanings.<sup>10</sup> According to Emna Laisa's study, radicalism does not automatically become synonymous with extreme actions which always end in violence. Because it can have a positive meaning if it is carried out with a comprehensive understanding of religion and practiced in the private sphere.<sup>11</sup> In this paper, the notion of radicalism in question is an understanding that bases action on violence and coercion in the (inter)religious realm as well as in religious nuances that are negative and destructive.

While terrorism is generally understood as an act that causes terror (fear). In Arabic it is called the term *al-irhabiyyah*. Etymologically the word "al-irhab" comes from the verb *arhaba-yurhibu* which has the root word *rahiba*, which means intimidating or threatening.<sup>12</sup> Synonyms with this root word are *akhafa* (to create fear), and *fazza'a* (to create horror/shock). Meanwhile, in terms of terminology, the meaning of *al-irhab* is the fear caused by acts of violence, such as killings, bombings and vandalism. The meaning of *al-irhabi* (terrorist) is a person who takes the path of terror and violence.<sup>13</sup>

According to Imam Mustofa's report, as in Loudewijk F. Paulus's study, terrorism can arise due to various motives and causes. Among the main motives driving the rise of terrorism are rational, psychological and cultural reasons. The other reasons are only the expansion and elaboration

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<sup>7</sup> Abdul Mukti Ro'uf, 'Mengurai Radikalisme Agama Di Indonesia Pasca Orde Baru', *ULUMUNA*, 11.1 (2007).

<sup>8</sup> M.Amin Rais, *Cakrawala Islam* (Bandung: Mizan, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> Emna Laisa, 'Islam Dan Radikalisme', *ISLAMUNA*, 1.1 (2014), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ro'uf, p. 161.

<sup>11</sup> Laisa, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Ahmad Warsono Munawwir, *Kamus Al-Munawwir* (Surabaya: Pustaka Progresif, 1997), p. 539.

<sup>13</sup> Kasjim Salenda, 'Terorisme Dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam', *ULUMUNA*, 13.1 (2009), 83-84.

of the three main motives. Including acts of terrorism that occur for religious reasons and motivations as disclosed in Whittaker's study. The emergence of religious sentiments can of course also trigger the growth of radicalism and acts of terrorism.<sup>14</sup>

De-radicalization is an effort to overcome religious misguidance which prioritizes irrational, rigid, oppressive actions and often uses violence, in which religion should show its face which is full of values of tolerance (*tasamuh*), moderation (*tawassuth/wasathiy*), straight within the framework of justice (*i'tidal*) and be a mercy to nature (*rahmah li al-'alamin*).

As Mustofa's report in Jeffrie Geovanie's study "religious deradicalization is an effort to instill a friendly and peaceful understanding of religion in a diversity perspective so that every believer of a religion is willing to accept differences fairly (sincerely) and gracefully. Because responding to differences radically, without compromise is contrary to the teachings of religious peace".<sup>15</sup>

Impressive deradicalization certainly requires a lot of time, because it also includes the de-ideologicalization process of understanding that has been built before. Thus, deradicalization must be carried out by using various positive approaches both in terms of psychology, religion, socio-culture, economics, law and power (politics) over a long period of time.

Meanwhile, counter-terrorism is an effort to overcome terror disturbances launched by terrorists who want to destabilize the condition of society, break social integration and impose group agendas which often use acts of violence in their actions. This terrorism can be born from the seed of puritanism which then turns towards radicalism and extremism.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, the rampant acts of radicalism and terrorism to this day have reinforced the urgency of deradicalization and counter-terrorism by encouraging all parties to continue to actively participate in reducing violent means in their respective capacities as citizens who love the integrity of their nation and state.

Efforts to deradicalization and counter-terrorism using a religious approach, for example, will encounter several challenges of its own, because people who have been exposed to radical doctrines will depend very much on their response and acceptance of this deradicalization program on the background of their previous understanding of religion.

Indoctrination of radical ideas to people who are lay and have minimal understanding of religion will certainly be easier than transforming radical teachings to people who have broad insights and religious dialectics. Even the tendency to be infected with a radical virus will be very small if someone is basically open-minded and willing to read different sources of literature.

The next challenge lies in the appropriate concept of deradicalization and counterterrorism so that it has a positive impact in reducing acts of violence that sacrifice humanity until today. It is for this reason that this short article will explore Said Nursi's concept in efforts to fight radicalism and terrorism with "Positive Action" as its jargon. The solution offered by Nursi is the essence of *Risale-i Nur*'s magnum opus which includes reforms

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<sup>14</sup> Imam Mustofa, 'Deradikalisme Ajaran Agama: Urgensi Problem Dan Solusinya', *AKADEMIKA*, 16.2 (2011), 4.

<sup>15</sup> Mustofa, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Laisa, p. 15.

in the field of education<sup>17</sup>, prioritizing love and affection for fellow human beings<sup>18</sup> and inflaming Jihad Ma'nawi as an alternative to the meaning of jihad which is widely applied and misinterpreted by radicals and terror worshipers.<sup>19</sup>

### **Encouraging the Integration of Spiritual, Intellectual and Moral Values**

While living in Van, Nursi had pioneered an educational institution called the "*Khur Khur*" madrasa as a forum for his struggle to maintain the tradition of teaching religious sciences that had been going on for hundreds of years and had become an integral part of the treasures of Islamic civilization under the Ottoman caliphate in Eastern Turkiye especially<sup>20</sup>. In Nursi's view, these religious educational institutions (*al-madaris al-fiqhiyyah*) are the scientific foundation for Muslims, because knowledge of Islamic law and basic sciences in Islam is provided. More than that, Nursi emphasized that the purpose of teaching religious knowledge is to learn the values of faith (*al-tarbiyah al-imaniyyah*) and not just to study the routine of worship without exploring the meaning so that it does not reflect spiritual values.<sup>21</sup>

Nursi believed that religious knowledge is the light of the heart that illuminates the soul from the darkness of ignorance and can avoid fanaticism and narrow thinking. He gave an example of religious knowledge as one wing, while the other wing is science which is studied in modern institutions (*al-madaris al-hadithah*). So according to him one cannot fly with perfect spirituality without flapping both scientific wings.<sup>22</sup>

According to Sukran Vahide's observations, the term spiritual (*ruhani*) that Nursi often used always referred to discussions about the discourses of Sufism, guardianship and *waliyullah*. Although in many other discussions Nursi did not agree with the views of some people who stated that the religious sciences (*shari'a*) only function externally and are exoteric (outer dimension) separate from the science of Sufism which is the core of Islam and is isoteric (inner dimension).<sup>23</sup> Because Nursi has a more comprehensive stance on the relationship between the two, namely that Shari'a is the basis of all Sufism practices and is the ultimate goal and the relationship between the two is not preferable or which one is more important than the other but both are an inseparable whole.<sup>24</sup>

From the explanation above it appears that the teaching of religious sciences which promotes spirituality cannot be separated from the doctrine of Sufism taught by the *thariqa* community in their "tekke" (*al-zawaya al-*

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<sup>17</sup> Vahide, *Biografi Intelektual Bediuzzaman Said Nursi Transformasi Dinasti Usmani Menjadi Republik Turki*, pp. 24–36.

<sup>18</sup> Said Nursi, *Shayqal Al-Islam* (Kairo: Syarikat Sozler, 2011), p. 478.

<sup>19</sup> Vahide, *Biografi Intelektual Bediuzzaman Said Nursi Transformasi Dinasti Usmani Menjadi Republik Turki*, pp. 24–36.

<sup>20</sup> A. Siddiq, 'Badi'uzzaman Said Nursi on Philosophy of Education and Its Implications for the Muadalah Pesantren Model in Indonesia', *Tasfiah: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, 5.2 (2021), 9 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21111/tasfiah.v5i2.6439>>.

<sup>21</sup> Hasan Irzal, *Badiuzzaman Said Nursi Wa Masyru'uhu Al-Ishlahiy Fi Al-Tarbiyah Wa Dalam Majalah Al-Nur Al-Ta'lim* (Istanbul: Mega Basim, 2011).

<sup>22</sup> Said Nursi, *Sirah Zatiyah* (Kairo: Syarikat Sozler, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Sukran Vahide, *A Survey of The Main Spiritual Themes of The Risale-i Nur, Dalabuku "Spiritual Dimension of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Risalei Nur"*, ed. by Ibrahim M. Abu Rabi' (New York: State University of New York Press, 2008).

<sup>24</sup> Said Nursi, *Al-Maktubat* (Kairo: Syarikat Sozler, 2011), p. 575.

*sufiyyah*).<sup>25</sup> Because it is with this blended concept that will give birth to a generation of scholars who are not only reliable in arguing in religious knowledge but also have morality that keeps them on the ground and not empty of heart.<sup>26</sup>

As the metaphor used by Nursi to describe the importance of basic religious knowledge (*al-ulum al-diniyyah*) and modern (cosmic) science (*al-ulum al-kauniyyah al-haditsah*) as two pairs of inseparable bird wings and he stressed that religious knowledge is a light for the heart, so modern science is also a light for reason that saves from various suggestions of thought and deception of reason.<sup>27</sup>

This paradigm is somewhat different from that put forward by some contemporary scientists who still think distortedly and consider the nature of religious knowledge to have no correlation of truth with modern science. Nursi openly denied this viewpoint, because in Nursi's concept modern science is a means of serving (*khidmah*) to the faith, revealing the depth of knowledge that has not been revealed in the Qur'an and explaining the essence of Islam. In the belief of Nursi, Islam is the master and guide for all knowledge, Islam is the source and womb for the birth of all knowledge.<sup>28</sup>

One of the explanations mentioned in the Risale-i Nur regarding Physics in accordance with applicable laws is that energy cannot be destroyed and cannot be created, but can be changed from one form to another, such as electrical energy which can be changed to heat energy, energy gas can change into motion energy, motion energy changes into electrical energy and so on. This applies throughout nature. However, only that is what is explained in schools and colleges, even though there is an explanation that is left behind which can actually increase one's faith in God.<sup>29</sup>

Changes in true energy require an unchanging arrangement, an energy center that can move the tiniest particles (ether) throughout the entire galaxy. This powerful energy core that is capable of creating, regulating, changing and destroying the existence of objects in the universe, this almighty energy core is God. An explanation like this is a method of knowing God through Physics, that is the educational method taught by Nursi through his work.

An approach to teaching science like this is the right rule and ideal in the world of contemporary education where every student is always encouraged to use logic and be able to use dialectics appropriately in solving every problem, instead of looking for problems that cause doubts but instead answering every problem with confidence.

Said Nursi explains in his Risale-i Nur about his views on Sufism by providing nine notes (*al-talwihat al-tis'ah*) which formulate his concept and perspective in interpreting Sufism. In his first note (*al-talwih al-awal*) Nursi gives a definition of Sufism as "a way to know the essence of faith and the

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<sup>25</sup> Ihsan Qasim Al-Salihi, *Nazrah Ammah An Hayat Badi'izzaman Said Al-Nursi* (Kairo: Sozler Publication, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> N H Ihsan, N Huringiin, and N Indah, 'IMAN AS THE FOUNDATION OF AKHLAQ IN THE PHENOMENON OF MODERN LIFE: Analysis of Said Nursi's Thought on Akhlaq'', *TAJDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 22.1 (2023), 120–21 <<https://doi.org/10.30631/tjd.v22i1.324>>.

<sup>27</sup> Nursi, *Sirah Zatiyah*, pp. 568–72.

<sup>28</sup> Nursi, *Shayqal Al-Islam*, p. 21.

<sup>29</sup> Siddiq, pp. 6–7.



nature of the Koran through a spiritual path under the guidance of the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, which starts from the steps of the heart so that it reaches a feeling (*zauq*) that draw closer to the level of witness (*syuhud*) to Allah".<sup>30</sup>

The definition of tasawuf explained by Said Nursi above places more emphasis on the goal of the science of tasawuf itself, namely the attainment of the essence of faith and the revelation of the essence of the Koran as the foundation and guide of human life. In addition, it can also be understood that the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad is a guideline that guides a person's sufistic journey to reach a level of closeness to Allah, known in the tradition of Sufism as *ma'rifatullah*.

According to Nursi, tasawuf and thariqa (Sufi order) are only *wasilah* (intermediaries) in serving Islamic law and are not the goal in the journey of mysticism. Therefore, he always emphasized that the implementation of a *fardhu* practice on the basis of obedience to Allah's law is more noble and important. This cannot be equated with the practice of remembrance and the practice of the *thariqa* let alone believing that the practice of the *thariqa* is more important than the commandments that are *fardhu* in religion (*shari'a*).<sup>31</sup>

However, on another occasion Nursi also gave a high appreciation of Sufi orders, especially by looking at historical facts that no one could deny that the *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood) between Muslims that was built was due to the services and the great role of the congregation's brotherhood in maintaining the headquarters of the Islamic caliphate until it was able to survive for more than 550 years during the reign of the Ottoman dynasty in Istanbul in the face of a large Christian empire that was hostile to Islam.<sup>32</sup>

Nursi in his stance was quite objective and moderate in assessing Sufism and the teachings of the *thariqa*. Although personally he lived a strictly ascetic life (*zuhud*) he refused to be called as a Sufi. Nursi also did not make generalizations (*al-ta'mim*) on the teachings of Sufism as a wrong doctrine without any truth in it, but also did not accept all the teachings that came from the *thariqa* community raw<sup>33</sup>. According to Nursi, the parameter of truth is the Koran, which he makes as the only murshid (syekh). For Nursi, the true practice of the *thariqa* is like a fruit or a supplement for the body, while what is more important than that is about faith, which he likens to the need for rice or basic food for the body. According to him, people will enter heaven with faith, but not everyone who is committed will be guaranteed to enter heaven.

The journey of Sufism (suluk) should aim to reach the highest degree of morality with the guidelines outlined by the Qur'an. In terms of Sufism, it is recognized by an adage "behaving with the morals of Allah" (*al-takhalluq bi akhlaqillah*), namely according to Nursi it means to be servants of Allah who are pure servants of Him<sup>34</sup>. Therefore, in Nursi's concept, the main education is the education of the soul to obey and serve (*al-tarbiyah al-sulukiyah*) to the Creator of the universe. Moral education is defined as the development of the

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<sup>30</sup> Nursi, *Al-Maktubat*, p. 563.

<sup>31</sup> Al-Salihi, p. 147.

<sup>32</sup> Nursi, *Al-Maktubat*, pp. 81–82.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Salihi, p. 148.

<sup>34</sup> Said Nursi, *Al-Kalimat* (Kairo: Syarikat Sozler, 2011), p. 329.

Muhammad Faiz

human soul so that it is in harmony with the morals of the Koran.<sup>35</sup> Education is not only in mastering science and technology or studying religious sciences theoretically, but both are likened to two wings, one of which cannot be unequal.<sup>36</sup>

### **Mainstreaming the Moderation Movement through Said Nursi Corner in Indonesia**

Said Nursi Corner is a reading corner that is usually placed in several universities in collaboration with the Nur Semesta foundation and the Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture. Most of the corners are under the management of state or private Islamic Higher Colleges (PTKIN/PTKIS) library which established the MoU and this collaboration and some of the others are in the faculty.

As the name implies, this corner of course archives the Risale-i Nur collection as works by Said Nursi in addition to other books about Said Nursi. Apart from being a reading corner, Said Nursi Corner at several agencies also held scientific agendas; such as regular studies, seminars on both a national and international scale, including webinars, Turkish language training and other scientific discussions about Said Nursi, as well as about Turkiye and studies related to Islamic civilization in West Asia (Middle East).

Several Said Nursi Corners that have been officially opened and are operating in several PTKIN/PTKIS in Indonesia are:

- 1) UIN Syarif Hidayatullah
- 2) UIN Raden Fatah Palembang
- 3) UIN Imam Bonjol Padang
- 4) UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember
- 5) IAIN Bangka Belitung
- 6) IAIN Madura
- 7) Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo (UMSIDA)
- 8) Universitas Darussalam (UNIDA) Gontor
- 9) UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta
- 10) UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung

#### **1. Said Nursi Corner at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang**

The inauguration of Said Nursi Corner at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang was attended by Deputy Chancellor I, Dean, Head of Units and the academic community of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. Also present were Hasbi Sen, Chair of the Nur Semesta Foundation, Mustofa Baqale, Chair of the Sayyid Burhanuddin Kayseri Foundation and Bayrame Erdogan.

In his remarks, Mustofa Baqale hopes that "Said Nursi's Corner will add insight to UIN Raden Fatah students to get to know Bediuzzaman Said Nursi through his works and of course we are ready to facilitate books to become collections of Said Nursi's Corner", he concluded.

The Rector of UIN Raden Fatah Prof. Drs. H.M. Sirozi, MA, Ph.D in his remarks said "thank you to Hasbi Sen, Chair of the Nur Semesta Foundation, Mustofa Baqale, Chair of the Sayyid Burhanuddin Kayseri Foundation and Bayrame Erdogan, who were willing to attend and facilitate

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<sup>35</sup> Farid Al-Anshari, *Mafatih Al-Nur* (Istanbul: Nesil Matbaacilik, 2004), p. 365.

<sup>36</sup> Nursi, *Sirah Zatiyah*, p. 568.

Said Nursi Corner. which of course will greatly help UIN Raden Fatah students for research both theses, theses and dissertations. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi is known as an Islamic reformer in Turkiye who thinks modern and moderate. Said Nursi's thoughts have had a huge influence not only in the field of education, but in various sciences”, he said.<sup>37</sup>

## **2. Said Nursi Corner at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta**

On Monday (27/07/2020), the Main Library of UIN Jakarta inaugurated Said Nursi's Corner. The inauguration was carried out by Prof. Dr. Hj. Amany Lubis, Lc., M.A, as Rector of UIN Jakarta. The inauguration of Said Nursi's Corner was held at the Main Library of UIN Jakarta, on the seventh floor to be exact. Said Nursi Corner is the sixth corner which in its inauguration was attended by several parties including the Head of the Jakarta UIN Library Center, Said Nursi Indonesia's students, and several other lecturers.

Rector of UIN Jakarta, Prof. Dr. Hj. Amany Lubis, Lc., M.A, said he was happy with the inauguration of Said Nursi Corner. He supports international academic activities and supports the sciences of civilization outside, so that they can be of benefit to students.

“I feel happy and proud with the inauguration of Said Nursi Corner. With the establishment of Said Nursi Corner, at the same time supporting international activities and supporting foreign civilizations, so that special sciences such as the science of Islamic civilization in Istanbul, for example, can be studied,” she said.

She said this was also in line with UIN Jakarta's vision and mission. With the existence of a library, it is hoped that it can provide and present knowledge, especially Islamic principles, because every existing knowledge must have benefits. "With the inauguration of Said Nursi's Corner, it is hoped that all must read it and can provide a very important inner and spiritual color, accompanied by the ratio of integrating this knowledge." she added.

The Head of the UIN Jakarta Library Center, Amrullah Hasbana, S.Ag, SS, MA, said he was grateful to all parties who had worked together to build Said Nursi's Corner. "I thank all parties who have worked hard, so that Said Nursi's Corner can stand majestically in the UIN Jakarta Library. We apologize if in the establishment of Said Nursi's Corner there are still many shortcomings in its implementation, I hope that Said Nursi's Corner can be put to good use." he said.

He hopes that the establishment of Said Nursi's Corner can bring blessings to every UIN Jakarta academic community, especially students. There are many things that can be learned at Said Nursi's Corner. "I need to say, this is a serious rector's mandate. Insha Allah, Said Nursi Corner has values, in it are the works of influential Islamic figure so that they can be read and studied".<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Humas, 'Rektor Meresmikan Said Nursi Corner' (UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, 2020) <[https://radenfatah.ac.id/index.php/front/berita\\_detail/1286](https://radenfatah.ac.id/index.php/front/berita_detail/1286)> [accessed 3 June 2023].

<sup>38</sup> 'UIN Jakarta Launches Said Nursi Corner', *UIN Syarif Hidayatallah Jakarta*, 2020 <<https://www.uinjkt.ac.id/en/uin-jakarta-launches-said-nursi-corner/>> [accessed 3 June 2023].

### **3. Said Nursi Corner at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang**

UIN Imam Bonjol Padang in collaboration with the Nur Semesta Foundation launched the Said Nursi Corner which contains the works of renowned Turkish scholar Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. Said Nursi Corner stands in the campus library displaying books and works by Said Nursi and related journals. UIN Imam Bonjol Padang Rector, Eka Putra Wirman said, Said Nursi as a scholar and philosopher was one of the great figure who had serious concern for Islamic civilization. "There are so many books written by Said Nursi. So, on this occasion I would like to launch Said Nursi's Corner at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang," Eka said in his statement to Anadolu Agency.

Eka hopes that Said Nursi's Corner can provide many benefits for students, lecturers, and those who want to understand Said Nursi's thoughts and ideas. "I believe Said Nursi is very important to build Islamic civilization in the world, now and in the future. This is the basis for why it is important and necessary to establish Said Nursi Corner at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang," he explained.

During this launch, UIN Imam Bonjol Padang also held an international webinar with the theme "Islam and Civilization Post the COVID-19 Pandemic" with the Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture.

In this webinar, Said Yuce as Chairman of the Board of Management of the Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture was pleased and proud of the establishment of Said Nursi Corner at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang. He hopes that Said Nursi's thoughts can make an important and real contribution to students and the academic community.

Alparslan Açıkgenç, lecturer at the Institute of Alliance of Civilizations at Ibn Haldun University, highlighted the importance of spirituality based on Islamic teachings in the development of civilization. Said Nursi, said Açıkgenç, has explained that the most important human nature is instinct like an angel. "This is a human who prioritizes the aspect of spirituality in his life. In *Risale-i Nur*, Said Nursi had taught human spirituality," he said.<sup>39</sup>

### **4. Said Nursi Corner at UMSIDA Sidoarjo**

Sidoarjo Muhammadiyah University (Umsida) inaugurated Said Nursi – International Turkish Corner, Tuesday (9/3/2021). This activity was carried out via zoom and live YouTube. In the event entitled "Modernization of Islamic Education in the Perspective of Said Nursi and Ahmad Dahlan", attended by Dr. Hidayatulloh M Si. Also present; Hunu Bayramoglu, Dr. Mehmet Riza Derindag and Doni Septi, Lc, Mpd.

Hidayatulloh appreciates the establishment of Said Nursi Corner. This is in line with Muhammadiyah's mission as a socio-religious organization which is currently growing and developing not only in the country. "Now Muhammadiyah is starting to spread its wings to various countries in the world," said Hidayatulloh. According to him, the greatness of Muhammadiyah can be seen from two characteristics. First, movement and thought that continues to grow. Second, through thoughts and discussions with world leaders, Muhammadiyah reflects on the results of its thoughts in the form of Muhammadiyah Business Charity (AUM). "What is very strategic

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<sup>39</sup> Gozali Idrus and Pizaro, 'UIN Padang Resmikan Said Nursi Corner', *Anadolu Ajansi*, 2021 <<https://www.aa.com.tr/id/nasional/uin-padang-resmikan-said-nursi-corner/2124546>> [accessed 3 June 2023].

Muhammad Faiz

is educational institutions. This is Muhammadiyah's form of building civilization," said the man who won the International Council for Small Business (ICSB) award in 2018.

Hidayatulloh added, the existence of Said Nursi Corner was an important facility for UMSIDA. Where, the academic community, students and the community need to develop and build ideas by discussing. "There is a representative library at Said Nursi-Turkish Corner," said the Deputy Chairperson of the Muhammadiyah Regional Leadership (PWM).

Hidayatulloh revealed that the library at Said Nursi Corner is in a very strategic location. Located on the 2nd floor of Campus 1 UMSIDA. This library provides hundreds of thousands of books from various disciplines. Apart from books, there are also digital books that can be accessed free of charge for students and the general public. "We are indeed concerned about building a culture of science and technology," he said.

He emphasized that the inauguration of Said Nursi Corner could contribute to building a new world of thought. "I hope Umsida residents can make the best use of this facility," concluded Hidayatulloh.<sup>40</sup>

## **5. Said Nursi Corner at UIN Sultan Alauddin Makassar**

UIN Alauddin Makassar inaugurated a special room which accommodated the works of the Turkish scholar, Said Nursi, to enrich the treasures of Islamic thought. The room named Said Nursi Corner is located on the second floor of the Syaech Yusuf Library Campus II UIN Alauddin Makassar.

Said Nursi Corner was established in collaboration between UIN Alauddin Makassar and the Istanbul Foundation and the Nur Semesta Foundation. Said Nursi Corner has a Turkish-Indonesian nuance because of its distinctive color combination, namely red and white.

Chairman of the Nur Semesta Foundation, Hasbi Sen said, Said Nursi Corner contains Nursi's works in four languages, namely Turkish, Indonesian, Arabic and English. "We hope that the presence of Said Nursi Corner can enrich Islamic intellectual treasures in Indonesia," said Hasbi Sen, when inaugurating Said Nursi Corner through a ribbon-cutting procession, Wednesday (9/11/2022).

He hoped that Said Nursi Corner will also include the scientific works of academics who write about the thoughts of the Turkish cleric. "In the near future we will try to present scientific works by academics who write about Said Nursi's thoughts," he explained.

Meanwhile, the Rector of UIN Alauddin Makassar, represented by the Dean of the Faculty of Adab and Humanities, Dr. Hasyim Hadade, M.Ag, expressed his gratitude for the presence of Said Nursi Corner. According to him, the campus which is nicknamed the Campus of Civilization needs to gain knowledge from the great Turkish figure. "I hope everyone can read Said Nursi's work comprehensively," he said.

He further said that the opening of Nursi's works at the UIN Alauddin Makassar Library should be a momentum for cooperation between Indonesia

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<sup>40</sup> 'Said Nursi - Turkish Corner Is in Umsida'' (UMSIDA: Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, 2021) <<https://umsida.ac.id/said-nursi-turkish-corner-ada-di-umsida/>> [accessed 3 June 2023].

Muhammad Faiz

and Turkiye. In addition, he also hopes that Said Nursi's thoughts can inspire students and the academic community in Indonesia.<sup>41</sup>

## **6. Said Nursi Corner at Universitas Darussalam (UNIDA) Gontor**

Said Nursi Corner at UNIDA Gontor was inaugurated on March 3th 2021 in conjunction with the international academic event "International Conference On Risale-i Nur and Modern Science" (ICRAM). However, in terms of activities regarding the study of the Risale-i Nur, it has started since September 2020 with a webinar on Maqashidul Quran from the perspective of Bediuzzaman. Followed by a study of the Risale-i Nur which presents the theme "the secrets of the universe as *tajally* of the name of Allah al-Qayyum" which was conveyed by the director of Nursi Corner UNIDA, Moh. Isom Mudin.

Academic activities at UNIDA by Nursi Corner was be carried out more massively throughout 2022 with the activities of the Nursi Assembly as an activity to study Said Nursi's thoughts and his work every week, counted at least 7 times. While entering 2023 the study of the Nursi work continues to be carried out and recorded 10 times until June 2023.

All these activities of Nursi Corner at UNIDA Gontor make it the most active and massive Corner in conducting studies of Said Nursi's thoughts and works compared to other Said Nursi Corners throughout Indonesia. Through the website and social media platforms, it also encourages the socialization and dissemination of Said Nursi's thoughts in Indonesia.

## **7. Said Nursi Corner at UIN KHAS Jember**

Historically, the Nursi Corner at UIN Jember was the first corner that was officially opened in East Java. 17th October 2019 was the moment when the MoU was signed in collaboration between IIKV/IFSC represented by Hasbi Sen and UIN KHAS Jember by the Rector, Prof. babun Suharto.. As the first activity, the event that was held with nearly a thousand participants was the National Seminar which presented Habiburrohman Al-Syaerazi, a popular scholar, humanist and novelist in Indonesia as a guest speaker. Apart from Kang Abik, the resource person who enlivened this National Seminar was Hasbi Sen as a representative from IFSC as well as a *dershane* from Jakarta who founded the Nur Semesta Foundation.

Entering the pandemic period, Nursi Corner activities continue to be filled with international webinars. There were at least 2 webinars during 2020 with the theme "Islam and Nationalism" and "Muslim Youth between Moderatism, Nationalism and Radicalism", 1 international webinar during 2021 with the theme "Hamka and Nursi; Dedication and Contribution for Religion and Nation", as well as community service activities by distributing Said Nursi's works to Islamic boarding schools in East Java as well as high schools, madrasah and the community.

Since the establishment of the Corner, the academic community at UIN Jember has welcomed it enthusiastically. There were 2 lecturers who presented their work on Said Nursi at international forum. Meanwhile, from among students, there are 1 student from the Arabic Language and

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<sup>41</sup> Muh. Aswan Sahrin, 'Said Nursi Corner Resmi Diluncurkan, Kini UIN Makassar Lebih Dekat Kaji Ulama Asal TurkiNo Title', *UIN Alauddin Makassar*, 2022 <<https://uin-alauddin.ac.id/berita/detail/said-nursi-corner-resmi-diluncurkan-kini-uin-makassar-lebih-dekat-kaji-ulama-asal-turki-1122/13044>> [accessed 3 June 2023].

Muhammad Faiz

Literature department, Islamic History and Civilization and the Hadith Science department who had written a thesis on Said Nursi. As well as a thesis being written by a Postgraduate student at UIN KHAS Jember.

This phenomenon is certainly a picture of the active movement of academics at UIN Jember who are interested in studying and developing Said Nursi's thoughts that are inclusive, tolerant, moderate and able to deal with global discourse in this contemporary era.

In an effort to develop Said Nursi Corner, there is a coordination forum between corner managers throughout Indonesia which is coordinated directly by the chairman of the Nur Semesta foundation, Hasbi Sen. Online meetings are also held as a forum for friendly relations between managers. Even though it runs spontaneously and has not been held regularly, this forum is very important as an effort to innovate the development of Said Nursi Corner. For example, a corner management forum was held on June 23 2021 which agreed on several points of agreement. The points agreed upon are as follows:

1. Establishing cooperation with NGOs outside the campus to socialize the Risale-i Nur so that it is better known in the general public.
2. Strengthening Said Nursi Studies Indonesia in order to carry out scientific activities around the Risale-i Nur.
3. Agree to make an e-journal that can be published once a year.
4. Collecting theses, theses and dissertations on the Risale-i Nur.

## **Conclusion**

The implementation of moderation that is mainstreamed by the Risale-i Nur movement is not only limited to Turkiye but also to the Islamic world including Indonesia, which can be seen in various models of community activities and agendas. First, in terms of meaning of jihad echoed by Said Nursi, it indicates that the Risale-i Nur movement is a struggle movement that does not have violence and does not prioritize frontal methods. Instead what is being done is with the cultural *jihad* based on scientific, moral and spiritual achievements. Second, positive action (*al-amal al-ijaby*) is used as the main slogan of the movement which always prioritizes constructive steps even in the face of despotic and unjust policies. Third, deradicalization and counter-terrorism are manifestations of the principle of positive behavior. Because according to Nursi's principle, acts of violence and terror will never end only by handling them harshly. Fourth, the importance of integrating spiritual, moral and intellectual values in one breath. Because leaving one of them will only make a person or community extreme and lean towards a pole that is opposite to the value of moderation. Fifth, the manifestation and implementation of Said Nursi's spectrum of thought above in contemporary developments in Indonesia is the emergence of intellectual movements and positive action in several Islamic higher education institutions (PTKIN/PTKIS) which opened Said Nursi Corner as a symbol of the moderate movement that contributes to developing science, solidarity in social life and fraternal networks as well as being an inspiration for lecturers and students to explore the character of Said Nursi and his phenomenal work Risale-i Nur in mainstreaming the life of moderation in Indonesia.

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Muhammad Faiz

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