

## Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Views on Europe

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### Abstract

*Contemplations on Europe and European civilization in humans' world of thoughts constitute a whole themselves. However, the views of Said Nursi, a Muslim scholar from the Ottoman geography and the pioneer of a movement, on Europe deserve to be examined under a separate title. In this study, Said Nursi's views and evaluations on Europe, European civilization, and the West-Islam relationship in his works, which he compiled all his life, will be discussed. The views of Said Nursi, who is still influential with his works and views on Turkey, the Islamic World, and Muslims all over the world, on Europe are significant references in terms of the past, present, and future of the West-Islam relationship. We hope this study will contribute to the development of the relationship between the two civilizations on a firm basis.*

**Keywords:** Said Nursi, Risale-i Nur Collection, Europe, Islam, Christianity, Turkey

### Introduction

Can the views and evaluations of any person about continental Europe be the subject of an article alone? Or if we ask the question as follows: Do the views and evaluations of a person who lived a century ago on Europe mean anything today? Basically, the subject of our study is the effort to find an answer to these questions.

Europe has been the subject of thought systems and works in many aspects, such as philosophical, political, social, religious, economic and historical aspects, and it has been contemplated extensively. Bediüzzaman Said Nursi also expressed his evaluations and views on the concept of Europe in the treatises he wrote throughout his life. Before mentioning Nursi's views on Europe, we find it useful to briefly focus on his personality, life, works, and the "Nurcu movement" shaped around these works.

### 1. Said Nursi, The Nur Treatises, And The Nurcu Movement

Said Nursi was born in Nurs village of Hizan District in Bitlis Province, which is located in the Eastern Anatolian region of Turkey. Although different sources provide different dates regarding his date of birth, the year 1876 has been generally accepted (Turner-Horkuç, 2009: 5). Nursi, who was born in the last century of the Ottoman Empire, studied Islamic sciences from different scholars in different madrasahs within the traditional madrasah education system of the period. However, some of Nursi's characteristics prevented him from continuing in line with this formal education. Therefore, his education life was interrupted, and he had to change madrasahs/schools frequently. Nevertheless, he completed his education in Islamic sciences and received a certificate/diploma in accordance with the madrasah method (Vahide, 2010: 19-21).

Nursi, who had a certain scientific reputation in Eastern Anatolia despite his young age, started to be known among the Ottoman ulema when he came to Istanbul, the capital of the empire, in 1907. He had a signboard with the statement "*Every difficulty is dissolved here, every question is answered, but no question is asked*" hung on the door of his place of residence (Şahiner, 2018: 47). In a sense, this statement was a challenge to the Ottoman ulema of the period. However, Nursi's main purpose in coming to Istanbul was to demand the necessary support and resources from the administration of the period for the construction of a madrasah (Medresetü'z-Zehra) where science and religion sciences were taught together in Eastern Anatolia (Vahide, 2010: 47). During the same years, the imperial capital was perhaps experiencing the most turbulent days in its history. The proclamation of the Second Constitutional Monarchy in 1908, the March 31 Incident in 1909, the Balkan Wars, and then World War I made Nursi's Medresetü'z-Zehra project unsuccessful.

Said Nursi actively participated in World War I as a volunteer militia commander in the Ottoman army, lost many of his students on the Eastern Front, where he fought, and was captured by the Russians and remained in captivity for two years and three months in Kosturma. Nursi, who escaped from the prison camp, succeeded in reaching Istanbul through Germany in the spring of 1918 (Saritoprak, 2008: 398). During this captivity, Nursi stayed in the same camp as German

and Austrian soldiers with European soldiers who were captured by the Russians, and from these soldiers, he obtained information about the political and social developments in their countries (Ağcakulu, 2015: 29).

Said Nursi himself divides his life into two, the 'Old Said' and 'New Said' periods. While he called the first 45 years of his life the Old Said period, the New Said period, when he completely withdrew from political and social life and worked for the "service of faith" through the NurTreatises, started as of the early 1920s. With his own statements, while Old Said was struggling with the materialist philosophy and European positivism, he somewhat attempted to struggle by accepting their principles and using their arguments. However, New Said abandoned this method since he did not find it suitable for the spirit of Islam and started to serve the faith directly with the truths of the Qur'an (NurTreatises) (Vahide, 2010: 169).

Said Nursi completed the compilation of the NurTreatises, which he started in the 1920s, in approximately 35 years (Algar, 2003: 13). It is possible to divide these works known as the "Risale-i Nur Collection" into three main categories, consisting of the first and broadest part called "truths of faith," the second part called "court defenses," and the third part called "addendums," which are the treatises on Nursi's correspondence with his students. These three parts are collected in four main books: The Words, The Flashes, The Letters, and The Rays. While answering hundreds of questions in his works, Nursi touched upon many issues related to theology, Sufism, the relationship between religion and science, fiqh and social life within the framework of the verses of the Qur'an (Sarıtoprak, 2008: 399).

Said Nursi, who was forced to reside in the town of Barla in Isparta (Mardin, 1992: 240), where he was exiled by the Republican Government in the 1920s, laid the foundations of the "Nurcu movement" consisting of his students, whom he named "Risale-i Nur Student." During the eight and a half years he spent in exile in Barla, Nursi compiled most of the Risale-i Nur Collection (Turner-Horkuç, 2009: 25). Other parts of the treatises were also written in Said Nursi's exile and prison wards, which would continue almost until the end of his life.<sup>1</sup>

The Nurcu movement, which was formed on the basis of the Risale-i NurCollection, and Said Nursi's intellectual struggle can be considered a continuation of the tradition known as *tajdid* or revival in Islamic thought and a part of the innovation movement seen among the late Ottoman scholars (Açıkgeç, 2018: 567). In this respect, the influence of Nursi was not limited to his period but continued with his followers throughout Turkey and the Islamic World after his death. Nevertheless, the followers of Nursi, who spent a significant part of his life in exile, courts and prisons, had to hide their identities for years so that they would not be accused of illegal religious propaganda (Mardin, 1992: 10). Therefore, as a result of the modern Turkish Republic's strict and uncompromising interpretation of secularism, the exact quantitative limits of the Nurcu movement, whose numbers are estimated to reach millions in Turkey and worldwide, cannot be determined.

In general terms, Said Nursi aimed to serve the main purpose in writing his works: to prevent the penetration of Western materialism (and atheism) into Islamic culture (Mardin, 1992: 20). Nursi, who considered that the most effective way to do it was to strengthen the faith of Muslim individuals, envisaged that a believer with a strong faith could resist all kinds of problems (Mesnevi-i Nuriye, p.110). Accordingly, the most practical method for it was to read the NurTreatises, establish a connection between the faith and the truths of the Qur'an, and continuously keep this connection alive.

## **2. Ottoman-European Relations In The 19th Century**

Before presenting Said Nursi's views on Europe, we think it is useful to mention the Ottoman-European relations and especially the main views and evaluations about Europe among the Ottoman ulema in the last century of the Ottoman Empire when Nursi was born.

### **2.1. Ottoman-European Relations in the Post-Tanzimat Period and the Ulema's Views on Europe**

In the Ottoman-European relations in which periods of war and peace followed each other, the general view for the Ottoman Empire as of the Tanzimat period (1839) was based on the acceptance of European superiority. Although some efforts were made to preserve the Ottoman tradition and maintain its commitment to Islam, the general trend was to take Europe as a model in reforms. The state organization and the relevant legislation and partially the judicial organization were changed according to the European model (Karpas, 2013: 49). This process, which started with the

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the works he wrote, Nursi was tried in Eskişehir, Denizli, and Afyon provinces and was imprisoned and convicted. Nursi described the prisons as "Madrassa-i Yusufiye" because the Prophet Yusuf (as) was also imprisoned (Sarıtoprak, 2008: 400).

proclamation of the GülhaneHatt-ı, led to large-scale movements within the empire and caused deep shocks in the traditional social structure (İnalçık - Seyitdanlıoğlu, 2017: 172).

The pressure of the European states regarding the rights of the non-Muslim minorities living under the imperial administration accelerated the change against the religious law in the public administration, judiciary and education system. The rapid change led to a decrease in the influence of the ulema at the state level and a gradual reduction in the power of the ulema in religion-state relations (Okumuş, 1999: 254). Three main political tendencies, including the ulema, on protecting the Ottoman presence and ensuring unity against Europe emerged in this process;

- Uniting all Muslim and non-Muslim nations under the 'Ottoman nation,'
- Ensuring 'Islamic unity' (pan-Islamism) by uniting all Muslims with the spiritual power of the caliphate,
- Establishing Turkic unity (pan-Turkism) based on the common ground of race (Akçura, 2020: 23).

However, the rapid dissolution process of the Ottoman Empire did not allow these three political tendencies to succeed. During this period when Europe's technical, economic, and military superiority over the Ottoman Empire became evident and its pressures increased, heated debates around the question "Is the religion of Islam an obstacle to development and progress?" emerged among the Ottoman intelligentsia. Prominent figures such as ElmalılıHamdiYazır and Musa KazımEfendi, who were Islamic scholars of the period, opposed this argument, which was used by the proponents of Westernization with reference to Ernest Renan, with a totally opposite argument, and they argued that Muslims fell behind because their commitment to the religion had weakened. Said Halim Pasha approached the issue from another perspective and indicated that Muslim countries realized their backwardness after being colonized by Europeans and that Europeans showed the religion of Islam as responsible for this situation due to their former hostility to Islam (Gültekin, 2019: 224-225).

On the other hand, Tunisian Hayreddin Pasha, who was one of the grand viziers of Sultan Abdulhamid II and an intellectual educated in Europe, put forward a different perspective by arguing that the knowledge and technology accumulation of Europe was once the property of Islam and this property, which was taken from the Muslims, should be taken back again (Karlığa, 1995: 82). In this respect, Hayreddin Pasha found a consideration that Islam was an obstacle to progress meaningless.

The views of the intellectuals and intelligentsia on Europe and Westernization are expressed in general terms in order to give an idea about the view of the Ottoman ulema on the West/Europe. Otherwise, a separate study will be required to compile all the views put forward on this subject in all aspects and different manners.

### **3. Said Nursi's Views On Europe**

As is indicated above, Said Nursi divided his life into two separate periods, Old Said and New Said. Nursi, who compiled works in both periods, recorded his views on Europe in these two periods. Therefore, it would be appropriate to review his works in the Old Said and New Said periods under separate headings while tracing Nursi's views on Europe.

#### **3.1. Nursi's Views on Europe in His Works in the Old Said Period**

During the Old Said period, Nursi was closely interested in the social and political problems of the period as well as religious issues, thought over them and expressed his views through newspaper articles, recorded speeches, and books. In his work entitled Sunuhat, which was compiled during this period, Nursi interestingly analyzed the reasons that resulted in Europe's superiority over the Ottoman Empire. Nursi gathered these reasons under two headings as material and spiritual reasons. The material reasons, which usually originate from geographical conditions, are the narrowness of the European continent compared to the population, its natural beauty, the richness of its iron mines, the indented and protruding coasts, the abundance and coldness of its rivers. According to Nursi, while Europe constitutes 2% of the earth's surface area, it has attracted a quarter of the total world population with its beautiful geography, and this population density has resulted in an increase in needs. This increase in needs has led to art, curiosity, and science, whereas boredom/mental depression has caused the search for entertainment. The coastal structure of the continent and the abundance of rivers provided convenience for natural transportation and communication, accelerated trade and mutual assistance, and triggered the exchange of views and also competition. Underground mines and especially iron mines provided such a strategic weapon to the continent that Europe seized the other underdeveloped civilizations of the world and disturbed the global balance in favor of Europe (Works of the Old Said Period, Sunuhat: 384-385).

Here, the interesting point in Nursi's approach was that he explained that population density was the most important reason among the material factors in the development of Europe at the beginning of the 20th century. However, the Malthusian approach was predominant in the debates explaining the relationship between population and development

almost until the middle of the 20th century. Malthus explained population density as a factor that hindered development, stopped economic growth, and decreased the general level of wages and, therefore, demand (Eren, 2020: 142).

According to Said Nursi, besides the material reasons, the spiritual factor in Europe's superiority over the Islamic world is the European civilization, which is the mainstay of all its activities. This civilization, which consists of a mixture of Christian values and materialist philosophy to some extent, forms the basis of the activities and efforts of the Europeans, with the pride of superiority over other civilizations (Works of the Old Said Period: 385).

In the Ottoman Empire, which acknowledged European superiority with the Tanzimat period, one of the main debates was about how these superior aspects should be transferred to the Ottoman Empire. In this regard, Said Nursi thought that the beauties accepted by Islam should be taken and the ugliness that Islam rejects should be kept away from the Islamic society instead of imitating Europe as it was. Thus, Nursi exemplifies Japan in this regard. According to him, Japan preserved its national values, which are the nature of its national survival, while taking the beautiful sides of European civilization (ibid: 175).

Another interesting determination of Nursi about Europe in the Old Said period stands out in a dialogue between him and BahîEfendi, the Sheikh of Câmîü'l-Ezher from Egypt and the Chief Mufti of Egypt. The Sheikh BahitEfendi;

- "What do you think of liberty in the Ottoman government and what are your views on Europe?"
- Nursi;
- "The Ottoman government is pregnant with Europe and will give birth to a government like Europe. Europe is also pregnant with Islam and will give birth to an Islamic state."

This dialogue and this determination of Nursi belong to the year 1908 (Vahide, 2010: 81). Fifteen years after this response, the new Turkish Republic was established as the remnant of the collapsed and disintegrated Ottoman Empire and almost entirely on the European legal system. Thus, the pregnancy of the Ottoman Empire, which Nursi included in his response, resulted in the birth of the Republic of Turkey. However, Europe's pregnancy with Islam and the birth of an Islamic state, which were mentioned in the same response, still remain uncertain to a certain extent and are open to different interpretations. Nevertheless, from the perspective of the World Islamicity Index published by the Islamicity Foundation since 2015, we come across the data confirming Nursi's determination about Europe in a different dimension. According to the relevant index, which can be summarized as "the list of countries where the basic values of Islam can be experienced freely," the top 38 countries in the 2021 index consisted of only European and other Western (Australia, New Zealand, the USA) countries. In fact, only 17 of the Islamic countries with a Muslim majority were able to enter the top 100 ([islamicity-index.org](http://islamicity-index.org)).

### 3.2. Nursi's Views on Europe in His Works in the New Said Period

As is stated above, Said Nursi entered a period, which he called the New Said, when he stayed away from social and political life and the relevant issues and focused more on religious and Qur'anic issues, in the 1920s. In the Risale-i Nur Collection that arose as a work of this period, Nursi also expressed his views on Europe and European civilization from time to time. However, these views were related to a comparison of the basic values of the Qur'an and Islam with the European civilization, in accordance with the concept of the new period.

During the New Said period, Nursi made the most comprehensive "settling of account" with Europe in his work entitled "The Flashes." In the 17th Flash, Nursi compared the Islamic civilization with the European civilization, divided Europe into two and pointed to two Europes, one positive (good, beneficial) and the other negative (harmful):

*"Do not get it wrong, Europe is two. I am not addressing this first Europe that follows the arts and sciences that serve justice and equity, benefiting people's social life with the inspiration it receives from the true religion of Christianity. Perhaps, I am addressing the second corrupted Europe which has mistaken the sins of civilization for beauty with the cruelty of materialist philosophy and led humanity to debauchery and heresy."* (The Flashes: 203).

After making this distinction at the beginning, Nursi addresses the second Europe in a tone that can be considered violent.

*"Know, O second Europe! You hold a diseased and heretical philosophy with your right hand and a dissolute and mischievous civilization with your left hand, and argue, "Man's happiness is with these two." Let these two hands of yours be broken and these two dirty gifts of yours will get you into trouble! O miserable spirit that disperses unbelief and ungratefulness! Is it possible for a man who has suffered terrible calamities in his soul, conscience, mind, and heart, and who has been tormented, to be able to attain happiness if his body is outwardly and in deceptive ornaments and wealth? Can he be called happy?"*

According to Nursi, it is impossible for a human being, who is composed of body, heart, soul, mind, and other devices, to find solace and be happy only with physical pleasures.

However, the "second European civilization" addresses people only with their material aspects while providing temporary comfort and pleasure in the body, leaving them in spiritual/mental torment (ibid: 204). Here, Nursi compares the principles of the second European civilization and the Qur'anic civilization and lists the assumptions of the European civilization as follows;

- Each living being is its own owner.
- Every living thing works for its own soul, life and its own pleasure.
- Life is a struggle/battlefield for all living things.

Based on these assumptions, the human, who emerged as a prototype of the second European civilization, would almost become a Pharaoh. However, there will be a "despicable Pharaoh" who worships even the most worthless thing and considers everything that benefits him as his lord/god. This person is also a bully, but he is a very helpless bully who has no moral support in his heart. His sole purpose is to satisfy his own ego's desires and appease his greed and pride. According to Nursi, this type of human being revealed by the second European civilization is a result of moving away from the true religion of Christianity (ibid: 208).

Nursi, who considers the principles of the Qur'an against the second European civilization, includes the following determinations;

- Although human beings are the highest and the most powerful-willed among living beings, the will of man is not even one percent effective even in the simplest tasks such as thinking, talking, eating, and drinking. For example, in the tasks of eating and digestion, the only action of a person consists of taking the food to his mouth. In the next digestion process, there is no involvement of the human being even in his own organs. If a human being, the supreme being, is so helpless, how can every living thing possess itself?
- How can life be a battlefield and struggle when plants help animals, animals help people, the food in the body rushes to help the life of cells, and cooperation is observed everywhere in the universe?

According to Nursi, a human being, who is the "prototype of the Qur'anic civilization," does not possess himself but is a servant/abd human being. However, he is a saintly servant who does not condescend to servitude to even the greatest being. He is also poor, but he is an independent poor who does not open his hand to anyone with the reward that his Lord has prepared for him in the future. He is also weak, but he is a weak one who relies on Allah, who has infinite strength (ibid: 207-208).

Based on this comparison made by Nursi, the following question comes to mind here; Do the members of the second Europe and the Qur'an/Islamic civilization consist entirely of these described prototypes? In response to this question, Nursi also includes the following determination in the final analysis;

*"Yes, the real state of the two sides goes with the declared style. However, the degrees of people in guidance and misguidance are different, and the degrees of unawareness are also different. Not everyone can feel this truth at all levels because unawareness cancels out the feeling. And at this time, it has canceled the feeling to such a degree that the people of civilization do not feel the pain of this tragic torture"* (ibid: 210-211).

It should be noted that Nursi's reckoning with the "second European" civilization is not a political, historical, or ideological reckoning, but a comparison on the ground of "facts of faith." However, almost all of the books describing Islam, especially to the West, primarily describe the history, state order, economic system, and law of Islam. The main issue, the issue of faith, is either included as a footnote in these books or has been completely neglected (Turner, 1998: 85). However, according to Nursi, "the highest truth in the universe is faith" (Tarihçe-i Hayat, 865).

Another criticism of Said Nursi about Europe is that it is the source of the spread of the idea of "negative (harmful) nationalism" to the Islamic World. Nursi defines the idea of negative nationalism, which can be described as racism, as a "European disease" (The Letters: 99). Europe aimed to divide the Ottoman Empire and Islamic states into different nationalities and continue its colonial policy by spreading this harmful idea of nationalism in the Islamic world. Furthermore, the damage of this negative nationalism has affected not only the Islamic world but also Europe itself, resulting in terrible wars such as the First and Second World Wars (ibid: 451-452).

In his work entitled "The Letters," Nursi compares Europe and Asia, the two civilizations from a different perspective. According to Nursi, it is a sign of destiny that prophets generally appeared in Asia (and Africa) throughout human history and that most of the philosophers grew up in Europe. Accordingly, it is the religion and the heart that will awaken, develop, and govern Asian societies. Philosophy and wisdom are secondarily helpers to religion and the heart. In Europe, philosophy and wisdom dominate in the first degree because religion in Europe caused intercontinental wars

for three hundred years and also became a tool to oppress the people and thinkers in the hands of cruel despots, which made European societies offended against religion (ibid: 455).

Another issue that Said Nursi considers in relation to Europe is about Islam's order of zakat and the interest prohibition. According to Nursi, the reason for the revolutions, uprisings, and disturbances in Europe and the world of humanity, in general, can be reduced to two sentences;

- *Let me be full; What would happen to me if someone else died of hunger!*
- *You work, I will eat!*

These two sentences caused conflict, hatred, and hostility between the rich and the common people (workers, the poor). As is stated by Nursi, the European civilization could not relieve this conflict between labor and capital despite so many charities, religious/moral schools, and violent security measures. While Islam blocks the first sentence with the order of zakat, it also eliminates the second sentence with the prohibition of interest (riba) (The Words: 549). Here, Nursi accepts social stratification as a result of nature and a fact but argues that the conflict between strata is preventable and this requires the arbitration of the divine revelation.

In the Risale-i Nur Collection, we see another contemplation of Said Nursi on Europe in a letter he wrote in Kastamonu during the Second World War. Nursi, who expressed that he was spiritually hurt because of his compassion for the children, the elderly, and the oppressed, who were affected by the war in Europe, shares a truth as consolation:

*"For three or four months, when I had no idea about the situation and the war in the world, I felt sorry for the children in Europe and Russia. (...) Those who died and were devastated by that heavenly calamity, the calamity that came as a result of the murder of the oppressor, if they were up to the age of fifteen, are considered martyrs regardless of their religion. (...) Those who are above fifteen, if they are innocent and oppressed, have a great reward, maybe it will save them from Hell because in the end time, a veil of indifference came to religion and the religion of Muhammad at the level of interregnum. And since the true religion of Hadrat Isa (a.s.) will prevail in the End Times, it will come shoulder to shoulder with Islam. Of course, it can be said that the disaster suffered by the oppressed Christians belonging to Hadrat Isa (a.s.), who remained in the dark like interregnum, is a kind of witness to them. In particular, the elders and victims, the poor and the weak suffer under the force and violence of the great tyrants."* (KastamonuAddendum: 141)

This view of Nursi on civilian people who were the victims of war and especially the oppressed in Europe and Russia should be considered quite a bold move in terms of Islamic thought tradition. Indeed, Nursi became the target of severe criticism from some Islamist circles in Turkey because of this view (Akgündüz, 2017: 89).

With regard to the Second World War, Said Nursi, in another letter he wrote to his students, includes some contemplations regarding the post-war period in the context of Europe and America (New World). After indicating the moral damages of unnecessarily following wars and similar struggles, he states the following;

*As a result of these extensive struggles, a greater damage than the damage caused by the First World War is the antichrist brutality in Europe, which is the wall and source of civilization. To console this concern, with the full approval of the world of Islam and the New World's (America) adopting the true religion of Christianity as its motto, its alliance with the world of Islam and its adherence to the Bible and the Qur'an will endure with a heavenly help against the two terrible currents that will come and insha'Allah it will prevail."* (EmirdağAddendum: 87).

Here, Nursi points to the mission that America will carry out to compensate for the horrific consequences of the Second World War in Europe. This mission can only be achieved with the true Christian principles and a heavenly help as a result of the adherence to Islam.<sup>2</sup>

Another assessment of Said Nursi about Europe is included in the letter he wrote to the president and prime minister of the period (Turkey) in the last years of his life. In this letter, Nursi brings forward the construction of a university (Medresetü'z-Zehra) where science and religion sciences are taught together in Eastern Anatolia, which he dreamed of throughout his life, again in relation to Europe because, in addition to other benefits, such a university would also serve for the incorporation of philosophy and religious sciences and the full reconciliation of the European civilization with the truths of Islam (Tarihçe-i Hayat: 883). Here, it is remarkable that Nursi gave the mission of reconciliation of both civilizations to a university, not to states or political actors, since the convergence of civilizations that do not reconcile on the basis of values and ideas, with some political and cyclical moves, will not be permanent and will not bring true

<sup>2</sup>Nursi repeatedly included the alliance of religious Christians and Muslims against the currents of communism which defined as antichrist and atheism, and the subordination of the Bible to the Qur'an, as an explanation of some hadiths (The Flashes: 256, Works of the First Period: 543, The Rays: 714, The Letters: 26).

peace. Thus, Nursi expresses this truth in another place with the following statements: "*To defeat the civilized is possible by persuasion, not by force like savages who do not understand words*" (Works of the Old Said Period: 391).

### ***Evaluation and Conclusion***

Said Nursi witnessed perhaps the most turbulent period in the history of humanity, even when the period of his life (1876 - 1960) is considered. Moreover, he is a character who recorded this witnessing in his works and left a legacy to the next generations. Nursi's views were recorded not only in the works he wrote but also with the court defenses he had to write due to the lawsuits brought against him for years.

Although he received classical madrasa education, Nursi had a unique place in modern Islamic thought with his way of understanding the age in which he lived, society, world, things and events. While most of the works produced in the traditional madrasa education are annotations and explanations of the previous works, almost all of Nursi's works are composed of his own thoughts. Although he represents the Ahl as-Sunnah line, he did not hesitate to use the possibilities of reason and logic in his works. The "Nurcu movement" shaped around these works has reached a dimension whose limits are difficult to determine on a global scale.

In the world of the 21st century, both the European/Western vision of Muslim geographies and the relations of Muslims living in Europe/West with the civilization they live in require constructive references. In this sense, we believe that Nursi's views will give the necessary clues for "sustainable coexistence."

While evaluating Said Nursi's views and thoughts on Europe, it is necessary to take into account the objective and subjective conditions of the period in which he lived. From this point of view, we can summarize the features of Nursi's views and thoughts on Europe and the West as follows;

- As a person of a civilization defeated against Europe both psychologically and on the battlefields (World War I), Nursi did not resort to a way of total rejection or acceptance of Europe. He considered the "positive European" civilization, which was shaped by the religion of Christianity and the beneficial part of philosophy/wisdom, as a servant to Islam and Muslims.
- According to Nursi, materialist/atheistic philosophy, which ignores the spiritual side of man, accepts it as consisting only of body and matter, and is the source of the "negative European" civilization, is a source of disturbance for humanity and Europe itself. According to Nursi, eliminating this disturbance is something that neither Muslims nor Christians can achieve alone. True Christians and Muslims can ensure peace and tranquility in the world by struggling against this common problem together. To this end, the European civilization should "make complete peace" with the truths of Islam.
- According to Nursi, the reconciliation and incorporation of the European civilization with the truths of Islam will not take place on the basis of politics and diplomacy but on the basis of science and scientific institutions (universities, research institutes, non-governmental organizations, etc.). In this respect, Nursi and the Nurcu movement differ from many movements that perceive Islam primarily as a political system and discourse and reduce the Islamic struggle to the political ground.
- After World War II, the alliances that America will develop with the Islamic world based on true Christian values will provide a divine help for the rehabilitation and destruction of the "negative European" civilization. According to Nursi, with this help which will result in the dominance of moral values, negative movements that threaten both Europe and the world, such as racism and conflict between social strata, will also be prevented. As a matter of fact, the social welfare state that developed in Europe after World War II and the interest rate approaching almost zero in European economies are examples of convergence with Islamic values such as zakat order and prohibition of usury.
- The political, economic, and legal system of Islam is explained in the books written with the aim of introducing and explaining Islam to Europe and the West, and the methods of Islamic jihad and struggle are emphasized in detail. However, Nursi's reckoning with Europe/West did not take place on the basis of the ideological system discussions but within the framework of the principles of faith because, according to Nursi, every other issue is of secondary or third importance compared to the issue of faith.

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