

Islamic Theology of the 21st Century Enlightened Islam

Preface to the Book in Hand

**Translation
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Facing diverse appearances of Islam, we do right to wonder how Islam is indeed of consequence to us.

There are states which are called Islamic by their leaders and there are many peoples whose members confess to Islam.

Moreover many people in Europe are Muslims. In spite of that, Islam has a vaguely look for outstanding people. Many Muslims and non-Muslims feel overtaxed when they are asked for explanations concerning this wide topic.

Is the Islamic religion a political ideology, whose followers try to receive more and more people? The spread of interpretations of religion including one extremum and its opposite makes it looking difficult to come to an objective view.

Serving as orientation in these topical questions this book tackles fundamental aspects.

In this book a discussion about Islamic principles in theological, philosophical, private and social fields is reflected by a great Islamic scholar of our times.

That brings clarity, because it makes clear what is striking and what is it all about, what people do engage for and what the elementary aspects of Islam are.

Neither studying great books nor any wider pre-knowledge about Islam is required for reading this book. This book offers rich views into the nature and the basis of Islam. Objective, comprehensible and concrete arguments lead us to more objectivity. Objectivity which we need to leave the old paths in discussions which are shaped by superficiality, unilateral nature and repetitions of prejudices.

The role of supremacy of Europeans in younger history of mankind - in the fields of human rights, education and culture - can only be filled out, if Europeans get the right information for orientation.

This book contributes to a necessary differentiated view on ideologies, religions and procedures in order to give the upper mentioned orientation.

Professors and scientists from different countries and regions discuss essential and actual topics oriented on the works of the modern Islamic thinker Said Nursi. Thus contributions gain a more vivid character. Complex

topics regarding Islam and Islamic societies are gone through in an easy way and background knowledge is offered.

Said Nursi's curse of life reflects like no other Islamic thinker's curse of life in this intensive way the dividedness and the desolate state of Islamic societies and there are just a few further life- descriptions which are also suiting to understand the situation of muslims and Islam.

The historical backgrounds since the 18th century- the time when the Ottomans had their Tanzimat-epoche, modernisation and westernisation but also secularization processes are talked about. Developments, which are connected with those emotionally loaded terms, become concrete together with their historical- scientific and social context.

The contributions within this book also reflect in a certain way a beginning international scientific discourse about Said Nursi, his work, the *Risale-i Nur*, its effects and its spreading among the people and the society. Said Nursi (1876/1877 - 1960) is an Islamic scholar and philosopher, who formed today's Turkey in the fields of Islam and furthermore is about to become popular in other regions. Hereby he is more than just an alternative to political and aggressive interpretations of Islam, which are shaped by Sayyid Qutb, Maududi and others.

The relation between religion, reason and science, the influence of religion into civilization and socialization of human beings, the problems of our time and the attempts for their solution and last but not least philosophy and theology in Islam are marked out.

The uprising of nationalism as a replacement for religion describes a dilemma in modernity. Additionally, estrangement and exile belong to the paradigms of the life of Muslims.

The thoughts out of the view of a religion sociologist show the important role, the *Risale-i Nur* fills out as a Koran comment for these days.

On the other hand Said Nursi's clearing effect and influence on theology and on philosophy of religion is illustrated.

The following topics are presented- partly by making parallels and by comparing: Sufism, Tariqa and Haqiqa, mythicism and truth - How do subjectivity and objectivity harmonize in religion? Revealing, reason and truth according to Said Nursi and Paul Tillich, the nature of human being according to Mevlana Jalaladdin and Said Nursi, social theories and their translation into action, the nature of the prayer and the ethical vision,

philosophy and the wisdom of the Koran, the problem of theodicy, the apocalypse, Islam and the environment. An equally important chapter is the article on the interpretation of Jihad. Further articles show the spreading of the ideas and impulses of Said Nursi in society and the developments concerning a civil society.

The book appeared in English at the State University of New York Press 2003 under the title *Islam at the Crossroads. On the life and thought of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi*, also in Turkish in the edition of Ibrahim M Abu-Rabi' at Gelenek, Istanbul.

This German edition differentiates to the English and Turkish version in some points, on the one side in its introducing chapters of the German editor, on the other side in the choose of some articles, f. e. the chapters from the *Risale-i Nur* which are quoted as reading samples. Singular articles are partly actualized and revised with allowance of the authors. Therefore an improved version is in hand.

Surely this book will be of advantage for the critical reader and will serve him, and hopefully will inspire him to complete the book- in the sense of Voltaire's thought: "The most useful books are those which request the reader to complete them."

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