

CONFERENCE REPORT

REPORT ON THE 1ST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON NURSI STUDIES IN BANGLADESH

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The 1st International Conference on Nursi Studies in Bangladesh was jointly organized by the Department of Arabic, University of Dhaka and the Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture. The event took place at the Nabab Nawab Ali Senate Building in the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh beginning on the 5th of February 2018. The Vice Chancellor of the University of Dhaka, Dr. Mohammad Akhataruz-zaman, inaugurated the two-day long conference. The main theme of the conference was titled **“Living in Peace and Harmony: The Risale-i Nur perspective”**. The chairman of the Department of Arabic and the convener of the conference, Dr. Mohammad Yousuf, presided over the proceedings. The chief guest was the chairman of University of Grants Commission professor Abdul Mannan and the keynote speaker was Prof. Dr. Alparslan Açıkgenç, Member of Turkish Academy of Sciences and professor of Uskudar University, Turkey.

In the conference many distinguished guests presented their scholarly papers, among whom were Associate professor of Alia University, India Dr. Mohammad Mashiur Rahman, professor of the International Islamic University Malaysia Dr. Elmira Akhmitova, professor of Singapore National University Dr. Sayeed Farid Alatas and Prof. of Suleyman Demirel University, Turkey Dr. Ishaq Ozgel. At the beginning of the inauguration program and after projecting a documentary on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, the secretary general of the conference Dr. Abdullah Al Ma'ruf delivered his welcome speech. This was followed by the coordinator of the Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture Dr. Hakan Gulerce, who explained the significance of the first international Nursi conference in Dhaka 2018.

Mr. Said Yüce MP of the Turkish National Assembly & the Director of the Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture was present at the conference as a special guest. In addition, the acting Dean of the Faculty of Arts Dr. Mohammad Shajahan Mia, the commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Md. Asaduzzaman Mia were also present at the conference as guests of honour. Many researchers, scholars and students from Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Turkey and a few other countries attended and took part in this conference.

The Vice Chancellor of the University of Dhaka Dr. Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman welcomed the guests and also paid tribute to the the martyrs of the language movement. He said, “We have to apply the philosophy of peace and harmony of Islam in our daily life. There must not be any kind of religious fundamentalism or extremism in Bangladesh. Bangladesh does not support communalism and always takes its position against terrorism and extremism.” The VC also expressed his hope to continue such joint initiatives with Turkey in the future. He said that Dhaka University is always interested in taking part in similar joint activities of research with Turkey and other international communities.

The Director of the Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture Mr. Said Yüce said that Bediuzzaman Said Nursi tried to treat our diseases from the Holy Quran. He said that Nursi refused to be confined towards the principle of territorial nationalism and had preferred to promote a broad Islamic nationhood which incorporates many people from all over the world. He said nowadays it has been very difficult to control criminal activities via the use of different sophisticated technologies and thus the only effective way to control crime is through creating the fear of Allah in our mind.

The dean of the faculty of Arts Dr. Mohammad Shajahan Mia stated that we all desire and hope for peace and harmony everywhere in this world. He also stated that territorial nationalism is a great threat to humanity, and that this kind of nationalism should be abolished. He mentioned that Said Nursi tried to bring peace and harmony into human culture and society and in religious life, in all places on the globe. He added that that the conference was a good initiative to enable people to understand true Islam.

The chairman of the University Grants Commission, Dr. Abdul Mannan Said, pointed out that every religion came for peace and harmony, but sometimes people use such religions for their own interests. He stated that In 1971 during our liberation war, many innocent people were killed in the name of religion. Besides, many people all over the world for example in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, etc. are being killed in the

name of Islam, but none of this constitutes the real message of Islam. In his opinion, he regarded the the 'Medina Charter' to be understood by everyone as a particularly secular and pluralist constitution and that the Prophet (Peace be up on him) was the most democratic person in history. He said that neither Islam nor any other religion ever preached violence. When muslims kill muslims it is not Islam, rather Islam encourages us all to protect our brothers and neighbors.

The convener of the conference and the chairman of the Department of Arabic, Dr. Mohammad Yousuf said in his speech that the Nursi conference in Bangladesh will demonstrate some new intuitions about the message of the Holy Quran in the light of *Risale-i Nur*, and that it will help us to make our life more peaceful and blessed with Divine happiness. He said that the conference can also inspire us to embrace the diversity of faiths in order to ensure a stable society. He stated that Said Nursi Illustrates the message of the Holy Quran through a distinct approach in his magnum opus, *The Risale-i Nur*, which is unlike any of the other commentaries and that Nursi is an innovative and highly relevant thinker still very relevant in our current century and society. He highlighted also that the range of topics included in *Risale-i Nur* is very diversified and inclusive. He stated his hope that the distinguished scholars from different parts of the world would enlighten the participants with their valuable articles, inspired by the teaching of *The Risale-i-Nur*, and thus make this conference more rewarding. He also said that the conference will help improve the existing relationship between Bangladesh and Turkey to a new level.