

## **Ethical Politic in the View of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi: A Response to Political Pragmatism**

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**Abstract:** This article discusses political ethics according to Bediuzzaman Said Nursi as a response to political pragmatism. This research departs from the increasing number of cases that reflect the pragmatic attitude of political elites. They prioritize profits and benefits above values and rules, resulting in abuse of authority. This is because the political elite has abandoned religious values as the basis for political ethics. Said Nursi has an exciting concept to answer the problem of political pragmatism. Nursi offered a political ethic based on Islamic values. This qualitative research uses a critical analysis method using *Risale-i Nur* as the primary and secondary reference in related scientific works. The results of this article reveal that Said Nursi's political ethics are based on six fundamental principles, including monotheism, consultation, freedom, justice, equality, and nationalism. For Nursi, politics must be based on religion as a moral force that can control human desires and passions; religion is a solid foundation for creating prosperity and stability in the country. Thus, the aim of politics is not self-satisfaction but rather to achieve pleasure and realize the benefit of the people.

**Keywords:** *Said Nursi; Politics; Ethics; Pragmatism*

**Abstrak:** Artikel ini membahas tentang etika politik menurut Badiuzzaman Said Nursi sebagai respon terhadap pragmatisme politik. Penelitian ini berangkat dari maraknya kasus yang mencerminkan sikap pragmatis para elit politik. Mereka mengutamakan keuntungan dan manfaat di atas nilai dan aturan sehingga mengakibatkan penyalahgunaan wewenang. Hal ini disebabkan elit politik meninggalkan nilai-nilai agama sebagai landasan etika politik. Said Nursi mempunyai konsep menarik untuk menjawab permasalahan pragmatisme politik. Nursi menawarkan etika politik berdasarkan nilai-nilai Islam. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan metode analisis kritis dengan menggunakan *Risale-i Nur* sebagai referensi utama dan sekunder berupa karya

ilmiah terkait. Hasil artikel ini mengungkapkan bahwa etika politik Said Nursi didasarkan pada enam prinsip dasar antara lain tauhid, konsultasi, kebebasan, keadilan, kesetaraan, dan nasionalisme. Bagi Nursi, politik harus berlandaskan agama sebagai kekuatan moral yang mampu mengendalikan keinginan dan hawa nafsu manusia, agama menjadi landasan kokoh bagi terciptanya kesejahteraan dan stabilitas negara. Dengan demikian, tujuan politik bukanlah untuk kepuasan diri sendiri melainkan untuk mencapai keridhaan dan mewujudkan kemaslahatan umat.

**Kata Kunci : Said Nursi; Politik; Etika; Pragmatisme**

## INTRODUCTION

With the development of more advanced and modern eras, the number of human populations is also growing and the number of needs for shelter, security, food sources, and others is also increasing. So the need for a government that is able to regulate, manage and account for its performance properly does not escape the attention and expectations of the people, especially politicians who expect votes from the people so that they become their representatives in government.<sup>1</sup>

Not a few politicians, even those who have been elected and get positions in the government through their parties, use various methods to get votes and even justify these methods so that positions can be won. Like the exchange of positions by a regent so that he was arrested by the KPK,<sup>2</sup> case of abuse of authority by a village head,<sup>3</sup> and the number of bribery cases of ASN revenue so that it reached Rp. 350 billion.<sup>4</sup> Political polemics as a vehicle for conveying worldly interests will continue to occur according to the dynamics of the era. Merely achieving world goals through various means seems to continue to be used by people who want to take only worldly benefits in a way that is seen as helping to achieve their goals, that is Political Pragmatism.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> M. Sidi Ritaudin, *Etika Politik Islam* (Jakarta: Transmisi Media, 2009). 34.

<sup>2</sup> Tim detikNews, "Ditangkap KPK, Ini Tarif Jual Beli Jabatan Bupati Bangkalan," detik.com, 2022, <https://www.detik.com/sumut/berita/d-6449401/ditangkap-kpk-ini-tarif-jual-beli-jabatan-bupati-bangkalan>.

<sup>3</sup> Whisnu Pradana, "Tersangka Penyalahgunaan Wewenang, Kades Di KBB Diberhentikan," news.detik.com, 2021, <https://news.detik.com/berita-jawa-barat/d-5758933/tersangka-penyalahgunaan-wewenang-kades-di-kbb-diberhentikan>.

<sup>4</sup> Wildan Noviansyah, "KPK Ungkap Marak Suap Jual Beli Jabatan ASN Hingga Rp 350 M," news.detik.com, 2022, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-6409267/ssstt-kpk-ungkap-marak-suap-jual-beli-jabatan-asn-hingga-rp-350-m>.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Mawardi, *Adab Al-Dunyâ Wa Al-Dîn* (Kairo: Mathba'ah al-Amîriyyah, 1955). 44.

Pragmatism is fundamentally opposed to the concept of idealism. If idealism is based on moral values, ethics, truth, decency, honesty, and other values of political ethics, then pragmatism moves on existing social realities, interests, benefits and conditions experienced by society.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, pragmatism can lead to merchant politics that enforces market laws in politics. In this era of political pragmatism, supply and demand has become the motto of every political event. The occurrence of market laws or merchant politics provides a great opportunity for capitalists to become winners in political competition.<sup>7</sup>

Based on this phenomenon, political ethics seem to no longer apply, and even tend to disappear. The existing reality shows politics as an arena for power and interest struggles, so that there is a general tendency to justify any means to achieve goals. In fact, Nietzsche loudly shouted that the essence of ethics built in politics is determined by good and bad judgments. However, political pragmatism has already damaged the political ethics of politicians. The behavior of the political elite like this really does not educate the people. They set a bad example in politics. If this continues to happen, then there will be no ethics in politics. Political elites should be good role models for the people they lead, namely good morals and political behavior, having patience, simplicity, upholding equality, justice, and so on.<sup>8</sup>

The study of political thought of ethics here does not only talk about the problem of the behavior of political elites, but also related to views on people and power. In addition, political ethics is closely related to law and power. Political ethics is metaphysical and considered unrealistic by philosophers, so they are

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<sup>6</sup> Kholili Hasib, "Konsep Siyasah Dan Adab Bernegara Menurut Imam Al-Ghazali," *FALASIFA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 8, no. 1 SE-Articles (September 19, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.36835/falasifa.v8i1.35>; Al-Imam and Ghazali, *Etika Berkuasa: Nasihat-Nasihat Imam Al-Ghazali*, ed. Arief B. Iskandar (Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 1988). 23

<sup>7</sup> Firman Noor, "Perilaku Politik Pragmatis Dalam Kehidupan Politik Kontemporer: Kajian Atas Menyurutnya Peran Ideologi Politik Di Era Reformasi," *Masyarakat Indonesia* 40, no. 1 (2014): 57–74.

<sup>8</sup> Rashda Diana, Siswanto Masruri, and Surwandono Surwandono, "Etika Politik Dalam Perspektif Al-Mawardi," *TSAQAFAH* 14, no. 2 (November 27, 2018): 363, <https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v14i2.2433>.

often indifferent. However, philosophers are credited with criticizing the legitimacy of political power. In an ethical view, politicians must act correctly, responsibly, and be argumentative in their political behavior.<sup>9</sup> Because, good and bad conditions of the social environment are very dependent on political decisions.<sup>10</sup> In this case, it is clear that the function of political ethics is to criticize political legitimacy in a rational, objective and argumentative manner. The task of political ethics is not to interfere in practical politics, but to help so that ideological problems can be carried out objectively. Political ethics as a benchmark for orientation and normative views for politicians to carry out power in a dignified manner.<sup>11</sup>

In response, Said Nursi divided politics into two categories, affirmative or positive and utilitarian or negative. Positive politics helps to ease people's daily lives, creating better social conditions, while negative politics is regarded by Nursi as a disease. He likened it to politics in Istanbul being under the influence of foreign powers between 1918 and 1922, he rhymed the words 'Istanbul' and 'Ispanyol' (Turkish for 'Spain') and said, 'Istanbul politics is like Spanish influenza.'<sup>12</sup> In addition, Islamic ethics in politics are seen as necessary in realising a just state and humanity. Nursi stated, "Consultation adorned with Islamic ethics would defeat all kinds of tyranny in the Islamic world".<sup>13</sup> His great concern about the moral foundation of political authority led him to support a system based on consultation, that is to say republicanism, rather than authoritarianism. On humanity, according to him, will find the cure for its sickness in the Qur'an, and the Qur'an can provide this cure if human beings do not bring an early destruction upon themselves before the end of time.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Franz Magnis Suseno, *Etika Politik: Prinsip-Prinsip Moral Dasar Kenegaraan Modern* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1994). x-2

<sup>10</sup> Muhammad Azhar, *Etika Politik Islam: Studi Kritis Pemikiran Muhammed Arkoun* (Yogyakarta: New Transmedia, 2014). 5

<sup>11</sup> Franz Magnis Suseno, *Etika Politik: Prinsip-Prinsip Moral Dasar Kenegaraan Modern*. 2-3

<sup>12</sup> Zeki Saritoprak, "Islam and Politics in the Light of Said Nursi's Writings," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 19, no. 1 (January 21, 2008): 113–26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510340701770337>.

<sup>13</sup> Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1996). 197

<sup>14</sup> Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, *Risale-i Nur Kulliyati* (Istanbul: Nesil, 1996). 60

The author is interested in discussing this topic because the thought of political ethics conveyed by Said Nursi is inseparable from his strong desire to make the Qur'an the main reference and the dangers of secularisation so that Said Nursi's political thought has a Qur'anic character and is based on tawhid belief. From here, the author tries to answer the problem of the phenomenon of political pragmatism with political ethics initiated by Said Nursi comprehensively so that healthy, ethical and dignified politics are born.

## **METHOD**

There are several researchs with the same topic such as *Pemikiran Tasawuf Said Nursi dalam Pemberdayaan Politik (Al-Tamkin Al-Siyasi) Masyarakat Muslim Turki*<sup>15</sup> dan *A Political Analysis Of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Damascus Sermon*,<sup>16</sup> But both studies did not examine political ethics. Another article titled *Pemikiran Politik Kebangsaan Said Nursi Di Tengah Transisi Turki Menuju Republik*, which similarly discusses Said Nursi's political thought but does not relate it to political pragmatism. There are other articles, titled *Etika Politik dalam Perspektif al-Mawardi*,<sup>17</sup> although it discusses the same title, but the figure is different.

This research is a qualitative research (*library research*)<sup>18</sup> and uses analytical and critical methods.<sup>19</sup> In the analysis method, the researcher will observe a research object in detail by describing and assembling these components for further study.<sup>20</sup> In critical method, researcher must first doubt what is obtained

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<sup>15</sup> Suhayib, "Pemikiran Tasawuf Said Nursi Dalam Pemberdayaan Politik (Al-Tamkin Al-Siyasi) Masyarakat Muslim Turki (Studi Atas Kitab Al-Matsnawi An-Nuri)," *An-Nida'* 38, no. 1 (2013).

<sup>16</sup> Kamil Fadel and Eren Tatari, "A Political Analysis of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Damascus Sermon," *Humanities and Social Sciences Review* 5, no. 3 (2016): 303–22, <http://www.universitypublications.net/hssr/0503/pdf/T6N652.pdf%0Ahttps://www.researchgate.net/publication/312016279%0AA>.

<sup>17</sup> Diana, Masruri, and Surwandono, "Etika Politik Dalam Perspektif Al-Mawardi."

<sup>18</sup> Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2004).

<sup>19</sup> Mariano M. Ariola, *Principles and Methods of Research* (Manilla: REX Book Store, 2006); Gyung-Jin Park, *Analytic Methods for Design Practice* (London: Springer, 2006).

<sup>20</sup> Kenneth M. Sayre, *Plato's Analytic Method* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969). 22-25.

from research sources in conducting research.<sup>21</sup> Then questioning, comparing, and suspending conclusions before solid evidence is obtained.<sup>22</sup> The primary data source is *Kulliyat Rasail Nur* by Badiuzzaman Said Nursi along with several related journals, books and articles as secondary data. This study will use this work to analyze Said Nursi's concept of ethical politic as a responseto political pragmatism. These data were obtained using content analysis techniques.<sup>23</sup>

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Said Nursi and His Contribution to Islam and Politics

Said Nursi is one of the figures who tried to formulate Qur'anic ideas to respond to the development of the Islamic world, both politically and intellectually, which was hegemonic by Western civilisation which in some ways was considered contrary to the spirit of universality of Qur'anic ideas. He was born in 1293 H/1876 M. on the village of Nurs, which is one of the Khaizan villages in the Bitlis located in eastern Anatolia. His father, Mirza, was known as a member of the *Khalidiyyah* branch of the *Naqsyabandiyyah* Sufi order, and his mother is Nuriye.<sup>24</sup> Said Nursi was born during the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, at the end of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>25</sup>

Said Nursi started seeking knowledge from the age of nine. His penchant for studying makes it easy for him to master a lot of knowledge. This then becomes the background of his frequent move of learning from one place to another. The places he visited to study were Tagh, Birmis, Nurshin, Arvas, Muks, Gewash, and Buyazet. In these various places, Said Nursi met with teachers who influenced him in science. Among them are: Shyakh Muhammad Amin Afandi, Shyakh Sayyid Nur Muhammad, Shyakh Muhammad al-Jalali, Shyakh Muhammad al-

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<sup>21</sup> Robert D. Denham, *Northrop Frye and Critical Method* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978); Arthur John Alfred Waldock, *Hamlet a Study in Critical Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931). 1-10.

<sup>22</sup> Lorraine Greaves and Sandra Kirby Colleen Reid, *Experience Research Social Change: Critical Methods* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017). 20-21.

<sup>23</sup> Hamzah Amir, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Jakarta: Literasi Nusantara, 2020).

<sup>24</sup> Sukran Vahide, *Biografi Intelektual Bediuzzaman Said Nursi: Transformasi Dinasti Usmani Menjadi Republik Turki* (Jakarta: Anatolia, 2007). 8

<sup>25</sup> Ihsan Qasim ash-Shalihi, *Risalah Kebangkitan: Pengumpulan Makhluq Di Padang Mahsyar*, ed. Fauzi Faisal Bahreisy (Jakarta: Anatolia, 2011). V.

Kafrawi, Shyakh Abd al-Rahman, Shyakh Fahim, Mulla Abdullah, Mulla Ali al-Sawran, and Mulla Fathullah.<sup>26</sup>

At the age of 14, Nursi was nicknamed “*Molla*” because he was able to complete his studies in six months, which usually takes fifteen to twenty years.<sup>27</sup> . By the time he was 16, Said Nursi had memorised and mastered *turats* (traditional) books such as *Jam'u al-Jawami'*, *Sharh al-Mawafiq*, *Risalah as-Syamsyiah*, and several other *turats* books.<sup>28</sup> In addition, Said Nursi was also able to master modern sciences such as history, geography, mathematics, geology, physics, chemistry, astronomy, and philosophy. The title *Badiuzzaman* was given to Said Nursi as a form of recognition by scholars and scientists in Turkey for his glory in mastering all kinds of knowledge. With the depth of knowledge he achieved, Nursi then wanted to teach, develop, and combine religious knowledge with modern science to Muslims, especially in Turkey.<sup>29</sup>

He was planning to establish *Madrasatuz-Zehra* that teaches not only Islamic sciences but also other social and natural sciences. And the medium language would be Turkish, Arabic and Kurdish. In Nursi's view, he considered that the decline of Islam at that time was due to Muslims being allergic to the progress of modern science so that in the end Muslims were kept away from the progress of the times. This view then encouraged Nursi to establish a school with a system that combines religion and modern science in Anatolia.<sup>30</sup> In order to have such a modern madrasah he needed funding and permission from the authorities. Thus he went to Istanbul at the very beginning of 20th century. He found quite a political environment. He joined several political formation

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<sup>26</sup> Vahide, *Biografi Intelektual Bediuzzaman Said Nursi: Transformasi Dinasti Usmani Menjadi Republik Turki*. 30

<sup>27</sup> Akhmad Rizqon Khamami, “Kontribusi Gerakan Nurcu Dalam Kebangkitan Islam Di Turki,” *Islamica: UIN Sunan Ampel* Vol. 10, no. 1 (2015): 10–19. 5

<sup>28</sup> Habiburrahman El Shirazy, *Api Tauhid: Cahaya Keagungan Cinta Sang Mujaddid* (Jakarta: Republika, 2014). 202

<sup>29</sup> Ihsan Kasim Salih, *Said Nursi Pemikir Dan Sufi Besar Abad 20; Membebaskan Agama Dari Dogmatisme Dan Sekularisme Said Nursi* (Jakarta: Murai Kencana, 2003). 14

<sup>30</sup> Vahide, *Biografi Intelektual Bediuzzaman Said Nursi: Transformasi Dinasti Usmani Menjadi Republik Turki*. 25

including the Young Turk movement and Kurdish Teali Community. Nursi was arrested for the rebellion of 1909. He delivered a speech at his trial “defending the virtues of constitutionalism and freedom.” Nursi was writing for newspapers in Istanbul and his writings were in favor of constitutionalism and freedom. These would be the principles that he would also defend in the Republican period, when his writings “Risale-i-Nur” would become the basis of Turkey’s largest religious movement.<sup>31</sup>

Tracing the life history of Said Nursi cannot be separated from the state of Turkey when he lived. His thoughts were a product of the Turkish reality that was shackled by Western influence. Among Nursi's challenges at that time was the meeting of Islam with Western civilisation, the influx of European thought and culture, and the erosion of Islamic values, until the end of the Ottoman dynasty and became the Secular Turkish Republic. The period of Said Nursi's life can be divided into three parts; First, Old Said (*Sa’id al-Qadim*) which is a long period of Said Nursi's life who struggled and was directly involved with political movements in the Ottoman government. Old Said was the Said who took up practical politics by immersing himself in the turmoil of Turkish culture, it lasted till 1920s. His political career stopped when he was always dealing with political interests, most of which, for him, denied the teachings of the Quran. The phenomena of friends and foes in politics, for Nursi, were all far from Qur'anic morality, especially when the issue of secularism and communism developed in Turkey which was full of pragmatic interests. On that basis he withdrew from politics, he prayed, “O my Almighty, keep me away from politics and Satan”. This is the transition period from Old Said to New Said.<sup>32</sup>

Second, New Said (*Sa’id al-Jadid*) which is a period full of intellectual contemplation about the fate of the Muslim Ummah in dealing with modern ideologies with systematic efforts to erode faith. Said Baru is a period of devotion

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<sup>31</sup> M Akyol, “The Context of the Gülen Movement: The Exceptional Story of Turkish Islam,” in *Gülen Conference* (Washington, 2008).

<sup>32</sup> Said Nursi's disappointment with politics is reflected in his expression, “*a’ûzu billâhi min al-shaytân wa al-siyâsah*”. Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Words* (Istanbul: Nesil, 2005); Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Letters* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1997); Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Rays* (Istanbul: Nesil, 2004). 457



to the Qur'an by interpreting it and then disseminating it in the form of treatises. The whole content of his interpretation of the Qur'an is a direct response to the development of a materialistic, positivistic and even atheistic mindset. Nursi's teachings were able to awaken the spirit of Islam in Anatolian Turkey, known as *Nurculuk*. Since he considered politics and Satan equally, some of his followers such as Writers, Zehra Foundation and to some extent Gulen movement strongly refrain from politics. Yet, since he supported and even sometimes advised the Democrat Party (DP) in 1950s, Yeni Asya (neo-Asia) has almost always supported DP, Justice Party (AP) and True Path Party (DYP) political line. It's claimed that since Bediuzzaman was given importance to education, Gulen Movement, the biggest Nurist group, also has focused on education and today they have hundreds of education facilities in all over the world. After the death of Nursi in 1960, his followers divided into several groups with differing views on how to interpret his legacy and, also, how to engage with politics. Among them are Gulen Movement, Yeni Asya, Zehra Foundation and Writers.<sup>33</sup>

Third Said (*Said al-Tsâlits*) is the period that whole life was entrusted to the development of Muslims by teaching the Quran to the public regarding the importance of faith for the establishment of eternal peace in the world and the hereafter.<sup>34</sup> One of Said Nursi's monumental works is *Risālah al-Nūr*. It is an interpretation of the Quran which focuses on matters of faith with main source of his work is Qur'an.<sup>35</sup> On this basis, Said Nursi's goal in writing *Risālah al-Nūr* was to dispel the doubts of Western-educated people about the Quran and the Islamic religion because many Turkish students have swallowed knowledge of secular Atheism western thought. Said Nursi was determined to make people

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<sup>33</sup> Nezir Akyeşilmen and Arif Behiç Özcan, "Islamic Movements and Their Role In Politics In Turkey," *Selcuk University Journal of Institute of Social Sciences*, 2014, 29–38.

<sup>34</sup> Salih, *Said Nursi Pemikir Dan Sufi Besar Abad 20; Membebaskan Agama Dari Dogmatisme Dan Sekularisme Said Nursi*. 50

<sup>35</sup> Wan Jaffree Wan Sulaiman, *Mujaddid Islam Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Kedah: Hizbi, 1987). 3.

aware that they would not be eroded by Western culture.<sup>36</sup> At that time, the writings of *risalah nur* were increasingly being spread and accepted by the Turkish population because of the efforts of Said Nursi and his students through government support. Furthermore, after the Kemal regime was vanished, Said Nursi stayed with his close students to guide and teach the *da'wah* method of *Risālah al-Nūr*.<sup>37</sup>

### **Ethical Politic in Said Nursi's View: a Response to Political Pragmatism**

The spread of political pragmatism has certainly caused ethics in politics to be underestimated. From here Said Nursi gave a response to the loss of ethics in politics with politics based on Islamic Sharia. The interesting thing from Nursi's political ethics view is the spectrum of thoughts colored by faith and Sufism. In this case, Said Nursi argues that social bonds will be truly effective in reducing conflicts that arise from within and at the same time being able to create prosperity for its citizens with religious beliefs as a guideline and the basis of social life. The function of religion is as a moral force that can control human desires and passions, as well as controlling and controlling various human desires, so that it becomes a solid foundation for creating prosperity, peace of mind and the state. As for what underlies Said Nursi's political ethical thoughts are six basic principles; *Tawhid*, *Musyawah*, Freedom, Justice, Equality and Nationalism.

First, *Tawhid* (Monotheisme). It is the basic principles in political thought. According to Nursi the universe is a system ranging from particles to galaxies. Therefore, this system with all its parts is actually a material in achieving a social and political system for humans. Nursi stated:

*“Throughout the universe the mystery of co-operation is both concealed and pervasive; intimated in every part of it are mutual assistance and the reciprocal answering of needs. Only an all-encompassing power could do this, and create the particle, situating it suitably to all its relations....*

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<sup>36</sup> Salih, *Said Nursi Pemikir Dan Sufi Besar Abad 20; Membebaskan Agama Dari Dogmatisme Dan Sekularisme Said Nursi*. 24-25

<sup>3737</sup> Vahide, *Biografi Intelektual Bediuzzaman Said Nursi: Transformasi Dinasti Usmani Menjadi Republik Turki*. 342-345

*Wherever they come from, they respond to the call for help; in the name of Divine unity, they meet with their surroundings.*"<sup>38</sup>

According to him, order, balance, and beauty in the universe show the existence of Allah SWT. From the above statement it can also be understood that the state is also a manifestation of a system in which there must be the principle of monotheism so that the state can operate in an orderly and systematic manner, just as the universe can move in such an orderly manner because of the spark of monotheism. According to him, good changes in a society can start from the individual to the community through this *tauhid haqiqi*. So it can be understood that monotheism is the foundation of the Islamic political system to build a society that upholds cosmopolitan Islamic values.

Related to the current context of political ethics, the problems faced by society can actually be overcome by achieving at the level of true faith. The principle of monotheism gives awareness to leaders that all policies they carry out will be accountable before Allah SWT. With monotheistic awareness, leaders and officials do not suppress people's rights and are careful in every decision they make. By reaching the level of *tauhid haqiqi* faith mentioned by Nursi above, the public can criticize the leader's policies for the benefit of the people. Because humans are only servants of Allah and do not humble themselves to anyone.

Second, *Musyawah*. Nursi understood the concept of consultation (*Musyawah*) not only from an economic and social perspective. He believes that consultation is a mechanism for making the right decisions in Islamic affairs. According to him, the concept of consultation is based on nature, argumentation, and rational thinking. He also believes that through a process of consultation, Muslims can face and respond to the challenges of modern civilization.

*"The key to Muslims' happiness in the life of Islamic society is the mutual consultation enjoined by the Shari'a. The verse, Whose rule is consultation among themselves {Qur'an, 42:38.} orders consultation as a fundamental*

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<sup>38</sup> Nursi, *The Words*. 731

*principle... so too one reason for the backwardness of Asia, the largest continent, was the failure to practise that true consultation. The key and discloser of the continent of Asia and its future is mutual consultation.*"<sup>39</sup>

According to Nursi, to actualize consultation, an example must be taken from the time of the Prophet, where the mechanism for making decisions was accepted based on human rationality and consultation supported by revelation, so that there were no doubts and mistakes. Then, consultation is not only limited between individuals, but also needs to be implemented between groups and even between countries and continents. With this consultation system, Muslims can face the challenges of the times.<sup>40</sup> Nursi explained that it is sincerity and solidarity that arise from consultation that can give meaning to life and progress. Besides consultation can eradicate despotism, the values of Islamic freedom (*al-hurriyyah ash-shar'iyah*) which originate from the spirit and affection of faith can also offset the negative side of progress and Western civilization which tends to be pragmatic, materialistic and atheist.<sup>41</sup>

In today's modern political context, the principle of consultation can be practiced to oppose elitism which assumes that only certain people can become leaders. Through the principle of consultation, the people have the right to elect their own leaders. Consultation also prevent the country's deviation towards an authoritarian system, despotism and various other systems that kill people's political rights. Because in consultation, people can participate fairly in the world of politics in particular. The principle of consultation can also be a tool to control government policies. Because, through people's representatives who sit in government, the community can control government policies and direct them according to the needs of the community which is none other than to improve people's welfare.

Third, freedom (*Hurriyyah*). According to Nursi, freedom must be above principle, because of that no one is allowed to judge other people, all must be

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<sup>39</sup> Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*. 56

<sup>40</sup> Nursi. 56-57

<sup>41</sup> Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, *Shaiqal-l-Islam* (Egypt: Sozler Publications, 2012). 483.

above the legal regulations and accepted societal norms and not conflict with religious norms. All people's rights must be guaranteed, everyone has freedom of action in accordance with Islamic teachings. There may be those who interpret freedom as absolute freedom and action without limits, but differ in Bediuzzaman's view. For him, there is no freedom that is absolute and without limits. Nursi added that freedom must be under the Shari'a which will produce two principles, namely rejecting tyranny and despotism.

*“The freedom born of the Shari'a, which arises from belief, enjoins two principles: Belief necessitates not humiliating others through oppression and despotism and not degrading them, and secondly, not abasing oneself before tyrants. Someone who is a true servant of God cannot be a slave to others. Do not make anyone other than God lord over yourselves... the freedom born of the Shari'a is a bounty of Almighty God through the manifestation of His Names of All-Merciful and All-Compassionate; it is a characteristic of belief.”<sup>42</sup>*

Tawhid certainly forbids the unjust enslavement of another person, similarly, it forbids placing another person in a position where they will respect you, as opposed to Allah. Such shirk cannot be allowed under the freedom promoted by Said Nursi. He explained that freedom must be bound by Islamic teachings. Otherwise, freedom will follow wild desires and come close to animal freedom in the sense of unlimited freedom, *“The freedom outside the bounds of the Shari'a is either despotism, or slavery to the soul, or animality, or savagery.”<sup>43</sup>*

In today's modern political context, freedom of thought and opinion is a tool for politicians to issue government policies, convey constructive criticism of these policies to direct things that are better and the interests of the people themselves. Limiting freedom with legal regulations and Islamic values can actually guarantee the harmony of society where individuals do not take other people's rights, they

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<sup>42</sup> Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*. 56.

<sup>43</sup> Nursi. 86

are free to act in accordance with the limits of positive law and do not conflict with Islamic sharia.

Fourth, Justice (*al-'Adl*). Nursi's next political principle was justice. According to Said Nursi, Justice is based on three standards: equality, prohibiting discrimination, and obedience based on sharia. First, Nursi reminded that all individuals are equal in the eyes of Allah, this is where the importance of Justice and equality as the basic principles of politics, "*The reward of patience is victory; the punishment for idleness is poverty; the reward of effort is wealth, and the reward of constancy, triumph. Justice without equality is not justice.*"<sup>44</sup> And second, the absolute justice revealed by Nursi does not allow discrimination against the rights of individuals who are victims of the rights of the majority of humanity. In several passages from his book *Damascus Sermon*, Nursi emphasizes the sacredness held by someone who is considered innocent, "*The pure justice of the Qur'an does not spill the life and blood of an innocent, even for the whole of humanity,*"<sup>45</sup>. This view contrasts with the view of pragmatism adopted by most of secular Europe which gave rise to the famous dictum, "*The ends justify the means*".<sup>46</sup> On the contrary, the meaning of justice according to Nursi is to recognize that the value of the whole humanity and one individual is "*the same... in the view of justice*"<sup>47</sup>. The implicit assumption of innocence in Nursi's *Damascus Sermon* comes from his interpretation, "*and no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another*" (QS. Al-An'am: 164).

*Third*, the concept of justice guided by Allah emerges from Nursi's statement that the ideological basis of law is directly from Allah based on the Qur'an and hadith. Thus, political leaders and elites do not have special immunity, especially in court because justice comes directly from God. Judges and lawyers interceding based on Islamic principles are the only way in which punishment and

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<sup>44</sup> Nursi. 111

<sup>45</sup> Nursi. 106

<sup>46</sup> Louis Kaplow, "WHY (EVER) DEFINE MARKETS?," *JSTOR* 124, no. 2 (2010): 437–517.

<sup>47</sup> Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*. 106

social law can be properly enforced for "*Divine Justice*", which conforms to Islamic truths which inherently contain these principles of equality and truth.<sup>48</sup>

The correlation with today's modern era, a government must be fair to its people and give rights to those who are entitled through clear principles of justice. The government must also provide services to all levels of society regardless of religion, race, ethnicity and social status and others. The justice described by Nursi is indeed beautiful and perfect. But enforcing absolute justice in this complex modern society is of course very difficult. Because a government can take a policy that is almost impossible to satisfy all parties, it is very possible that there are parties who are disadvantaged. If absolute justice cannot be practiced, at least relative justice is applied, but the government must try to minimize the negative impacts of applying this relative justice.

Fifth, Equality (*Musawah*). The next principle of Nursi's political thought was the value of equality. Some reflections of Nursi's thoughts on equality are seen in equality before the law and security rights for minorities. Equality before the law applies to all human beings regardless of skin color, gender, position, wealth and religion so that a beggar and a president have equal rights before the law. This is supported by many cases in the trajectory of Islamic history.<sup>49</sup> Then the security rights and assets of minorities are guaranteed as long as they comply with existing laws. They are free to carry out their activities in accordance with applicable law and the application of the law to minorities shows that in general minorities are treated the same as Muslims. So Islam has given basic rights to minorities before the law. Politically, what is meant by "*the collective personality of the government*" is the inclusive nature of Islam and Syari'ah which supports minority groups and ensures the enforcement of justice that is compassionate and binds non-Muslims under the same law, "*gains great value for us by in a short time uniting Arab, Turk, Persian, and Semite; shows the collective personality of*

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<sup>48</sup> Nursi. 71

<sup>49</sup> Nursi. 106

*the government to be Muslim...since its absolute justice is compassionate, reconciles and binds to a greater extent the non-Muslim minorities”<sup>50</sup>*

In the context of modern politics, equality before the law between Muslims and non-Muslims is very important in social life, especially in plural societies such as in Turkey and Indonesia. Therefore, the government must also guarantee the rights of minority groups in matters of religion, so that they live freely with the same basic rights. So that Muslim and non-Muslim communities can live in a state of comfort and harmony under diversity. In principle, Islam does not differentiate human beings on gender, ethnicity, skin color, economic condition or social status. With this principle of equality, the government can act fairly and accept equality before the law without discrimination based on natural differences. With the application of this principle of equality, people can be calm and peaceful in their personal and social lives.

Sixth, Nationalism. The sixth foundation of Said Nursi's political thought is the value of nationalism. According to Said Nursi, nationalism is divided into two kinds, positive nationalism and negative nationalism. Positive nationalism that arises from the essential values of social life. This kind of nationalism creates an attitude of mutual help and solidarity, generates beneficial forces and makes *ukhuwwah Islamiyah* grow stronger. This spirit of positive nationalism must be used to serve Islam and as a solid fortress to protect Islam, *“Positive nationalism arises from an inner need of social life and is the cause of mutual assistance and solidarity. It gives rise to a beneficial strength, and is a way of reinforcing Islamic brotherhood.”<sup>51</sup>*

On the other hand, negative nationalism, which is evil and dangerous and bred with the necessity of eliminating others and is prone to hostility, *“Nationalism is of two kinds: one is negative, inauspicious, and harmful; it is nourished by devouring others, persists through hostility to others, and is aware of what it is doing. It is the cause of enmity and disturbance.”<sup>52</sup>* This kind of nationalism is the cause of mutual hatred and disputes, so that both the Koran and

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<sup>50</sup> Nursi. 73

<sup>51</sup> Nursi, *The Letters*. 374

<sup>52</sup> Nursi. 373



the prophetic treatises criticize and reject it. The Western world uses this negative nationalism as a tool to divide and eliminate Muslims. That is why Nursi denounced negative nationalism based on the verse of the Quran which states that Islam prohibits *Ashabiyyah* (ethnicity) as a view of ignorance, “*Remember*” when the disbelievers had filled their hearts with pride—the pride of ‘pre-Islamic’ ignorance—then Allah sent down His serenity upon His Messenger and the believers, inspiring them to uphold the declaration of faith, for they were better entitled and more worthy of it. And Allah has ‘perfect’ knowledge of all things.” (QS. Al Fath: 26)

In Nursi's view, Islam and nationalism cannot be separated. Because Islam gives encouragement to Muslims to maintain their unity. Nursi put forward the concept of positive nationalism that embraced all Muslims and was not hostile to other parties. Positive nationalism does not deny the existence of other nations. In fact, he acknowledged all Muslims as brothers regardless of racial differences. The use of positive nationalism based on Islam does not mean destroying or eliminating other political opponents.

From the analysis above, it can be concluded that the political ethics conveyed by Said Nursi outlined the basic principles which include monotheism, deliberation, freedom, justice, equality and nationalism so that the management of government is in accordance with Islamic teachings and fortifies Muslims from political pragmatism that is rife. Indeed, in Islam there is no text ordering the establishment of an Islamic state, but this does not mean that Islam has absolutely nothing to do with politics. Because, Islamic teachings have a set of values and principles for social life including state and political life. In his explanation he uses Islam as the main reference. In Nursi's struggle, it can be seen that he was trying to fix individuals and society culturally by reciting and spreading his knowledge rather than radical structural changes in politics.

Within the framework of his political ethics, Nursi put forward a moral and spiritual struggle based on Islam in practical politics so as to avoid political

problems that put forward goals in ways that tend to be pragmatic. In fact, according to Nursi's belief, a socio-political system will immediately change into an Islamic system if the majority of people have faith and take actions that are in accordance with Islamic teachings themselves.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, according to him, moral jihad or jihad with words (*al jihad al ma'nawi*) in modern times is now more effective than struggle with a material approach (*al jihad al maddi*).<sup>54</sup> All of Said Nursi's ideas and ideas were actually intended to achieve the pleasure of Allah s.w.t. (*istihshal ar ridha*) and realizing the benefit of the people (*tahqiq al-fadhilah*) by prioritizing positive actions (*al 'amal al ijabi*) and avoiding all negative actions (*al 'amal al salbi*).<sup>55</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1876-1960), one of the hundreds of figures who tried to formulate Qur'anic ideas to respond to such developments in the times that occurred. He lived when the Islamic world, both politically as well as intellectually, was hit by a storm of European civilization which, in several respects, was seen as contrary to the spirit of the universality of the ideas of the Qur'an. Like the plague of political pragmatism that has spread, causing ethics in politics to be underestimated. From here Said Nursi gave a response to the loss of ethics in politics with politics based on Islamic Sharia.

In this case, Said Nursi argues that social bonds will be truly effective in reducing conflicts that arise from within and at the same time being able to create prosperity for its citizens with religious beliefs as a guideline and the basis of social life. The function of religion is as a moral force that can control human desires and passions, as well as controlling and controlling various human desires, so that it becomes a solid foundation for creating prosperity, peace of mind and the state. As for what underlies Said Nursi's political ethical thoughts are six basic principles which include *Tawhid*, consultation, freedom, justice, equality and

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<sup>53</sup> Akhmad Rizqon Khamami, "Kontribusi Gerakan Nurcu Dalam Kebangkitan Islam Di Turki."

<sup>54</sup> Vahide, *Biografi Intelektual Bediuzzaman Said Nursi: Transformasi Dinasti Usmani Menjadi Republik Turki*. 365.

<sup>55</sup> Al-Arabi Busilham, "Min Al-Usus Al-Fikriyyah Wa Al-Hadhariyyah Fi Kitabat Al-Nursi," in *Buhuts Al-Nadwah Al-'Ilmiyyah Al-Dauliyyah* (Istanbul: Nesil Matbaacilik, 1999). 125

nationalism. Within the framework of his political ethics, Nursi put forward a moral and spiritual struggle based on Islam in practical politics so as to avoid political problems that put forward goals in a pragmatic way so that healthy, ethical and dignified politics was born. In fact, according to Nursi's belief, a socio-political system will immediately change into an Islamic system if the majority of people have faith and take actions that are in accordance with Islamic teachings themselves, so that political goals are not self-satisfaction but to achieve the pleasure of Allah SWT and realize the benefit of society.

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