

## Original Article

# Darshane as an Epistemological Ecosystem: Reconstructing Muslim Identity Through the Thought of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi

Mohamad Zaidin Mohamad <sup>1\*</sup>, Faizuri Abd Latif <sup>2</sup>, Mohamed Fathy Mohamed Abdelgelil <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Institute for Islamic Products & Civilization (INSPIRE), UniSZA – Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>Department of Aqidah and Islamic Thought, UM – Malaysia

<sup>3</sup>Faculty of Usuluddin, UNISSA,– Brunei Darussalam

\*Corresponding author: [mzaidin@uniza.edu.my](mailto:mzaidin@uniza.edu.my)

## Abstract

*This article examines the darshane namely study circles inspired by the Risale-i Nur corpus, as a dynamic epistemological ecosystem that cultivates holistic Muslim identity formation in the contemporary world. Drawing on the intellectual legacy of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi (1877–1960), the study situates Tullab al-Nur, a global community of learners, within the broader framework of tawhidic epistemology, where knowledge ('ilm) is spiritually rooted, ethically directed, and communally embodied. Through a qualitative and reflective analysis, the paper identifies three key mechanisms by which darshane nurtures identity: (1) the internalization of metaphysical principles such as tawhid, hikmah, and hizmet; (2) dialogical learning (sobbet) that connects classical Islamic texts to modern dilemmas; and (3) the adaptive use of digital platforms without abandoning sacred pedagogical values. The article argues that darshane transcends conventional models of Islamic education by integrating intellectual inquiry, spiritual refinement (taẓkīyah), and public service into a coherent educational philosophy. In addition, it critically works with the modern critiques which denounce the movement as either liberal or outmoded, and which claim that its epistemological faith makes it possible to synthesize creatively and not to take sides. The research comes to the conclusion that the concept of darshane provides a repeatable example of the Islamic educational model. intelligent, neurotically sound, and spiritually oriented–based on. tradition but sensitive to world realities. Practical implications provide the necessity of shared structures between educators, technologists and civil society participants to maintain. this integrative model both formally and informally.*

**Keywords:** Badiuzzaman Said Nursi; Darshane; Epistemology; Muslim identity.

## Introduction

Young Muslims go through a difficult identity crisis in the era of globalization, which is defined by the collision of values and supremacy of secular narratives. This need to conform to materialistic standards and the power of digital media contributing to individualism, have led to the loss of commitment to Islamic spiritual and moral values <sup>1</sup>. This fact undermines individual identity and the ontological consistency of the *ummah* as a moral community. In this crisis, Islamic education is desperately demanded to devise strategies that do not simply impart information, but create complete persons- those who can balance the pull of the world ruler with the sense of spirituality.

In the contemporary digital context, Muslim identity formation is increasingly shaped by complex cultural interactions facilitated by social media and digital communication technologies. These platforms function not merely as tools of information exchange, but as influential environments that mediate values, modes of self-representation, and patterns of religious engagement. As a result,

<sup>1</sup> Lena Barth and others, 'Veiling and Unveiling: Identity Formation in Young Muslim Women Living in Germany', *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 33.3 (2024), 174–83  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0803706X.2022.2126519>.



identity is often negotiated across overlapping religious, cultural, and digital spaces, creating new epistemic and ethical challenges for Muslim communities, particularly among younger generations. Within this setting, the *darshane* model inspired by the thought of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi may be understood as an epistemological and pedagogical response that emphasizes reflective learning, communal knowledge transmission, and moral orientation. By situating knowledge within a *tawhidic* framework and sustaining dialogical modes of engagement, *darshane* offers a structured environment through which Muslim identity can be cultivated with greater coherence and continuity amid the fluid and plural cultural landscapes of the digital age.

*Tullab al-Nur* is a particular educational movement that presents a way out of this predicament, relying on the epistemological and spiritual legacy of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi (1877-1960), a Turkish philosopher who mediated classical and modern Islamic metaphysics. Central to this approach is the revival of a *tawhidic* epistemology a system of knowledge grounded in the unity of God (*tawhid*), where all forms of knowledge must ultimately lead to the recognition of divine reality and moral action<sup>2</sup>.

Unlike Islamic movements polarized between conservatism and liberalism, Nursi emphasized an integrative faith–reason–science paradigm in which nature, society, and scripture are understood as mutually reinforcing signs (*ayat*) of the Divine. This worldview aligns with Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas’s concept of *‘ilm* (true knowledge) as that which instills *adab* (right action) and leads to the recognition and acknowledgment of the proper place of God, self, and creation<sup>3</sup>.

*Tullab al-Nur* is not a formal institution but a global community network rooted in Nursi’s *Risale-i Nur* (Epistles of Light), which functions not only as a theological text but also as an epistemological framework<sup>4</sup>. Through it, *Tullab al-Nur* seeks to reassert a sacred view of knowledge integrating intellectual pursuit (*‘aqb*), spiritual introspection (*qalb*), and righteous action (*‘amal*) as a counter-narrative to secular models of identity formation.

## Method

This study adopts a narrative inquiry methodology framed within a *tawhidic* epistemological lens, which affirms the inseparability of knowledge (*‘ilm*), ethics (*akhlaq*), and purpose (*maqсад*). Drawing inspiration from Islamic scholars such as Badiuzzaman Said Nursi and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, the methodology recognises that knowledge is not value-neutral, but is always embedded within a spiritual and ontological vision of reality.

The information used in this study was based on a mix of reflexive reading of the *Risale-i Nur*, observation of *darshane* events (both physical and digital), and recorded oral reflections (*sobbet*) of *Tullab al-Nur* participants in Southeast Asia. Rather than seeking statistical generalisation, this study privileges epistemic coherence, depth of meaning, and spiritual authenticity core principles in Islamic educational research.

The narrative inquiry choice enables a thick description of the internalisation of metaphysical concepts like *tawhida*, *hizmet* and tafakkur as an example of lived practice. This aligns with the Qur’anic and Prophetic traditions, where knowledge transmission is experiential, dialogical, and aimed at ethical transformation. The methodological orientation thus mirrors the form and function of *darshane* itself: dialogical, reflective, and purpose-driven.

## Results and Discussions

### *Darshane as a Space for Identity Formation*

The *darshane* functions as a spiritually infused epistemic space where members of *Tullab al-Nur* engage with *Risale-i Nur* not merely as a text, but as a dynamic framework for cultivating personal

<sup>2</sup> N. F. Zamri and others, ‘Badiuzzaman Said Nursi and His Excellence in Modern Science in the Post-Caliphate Era’, *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah*, 2024, 241–53 <<https://doi.org/10.7187/GJATSI122024-16>>.

<sup>3</sup> Elit Ave Hidayatullah and Syamsuddin Arif, ‘Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas’ Exposition on the Concept of Ethics’, *Journal of Islamic Faith & Thought*, 24.1 (2022), 409–46 <<https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol24no1.12>>.

<sup>4</sup> Muhammad Faiz, ‘Said Nursi’s Concept of Sufism: Implementation of Islamic Moderation Values’, *Millah*, 19.2 (2020), 199–224 <<https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol19.iss2.art2>>.



and collective identity in the face of modern epistemic fragmentation<sup>5</sup>. Rooted in Said Nursi's *tawhidic* worldview, the *darshane* operates on the principle that all knowledge when properly oriented must ultimately lead to the recognition of divine unity (*tawhid*), ethical awareness, and social responsibility<sup>6</sup>. This resonates with the epistemological vision articulated by classical scholars such as Al-Ghazali and later by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, who assert that knowledge (*'ilm*) is valid only insofar as it instills *adab* and leads the knower toward proximity with the Divine<sup>7</sup>.

Within this framework, Nursi's exposition of *tawhid* goes beyond abstract theology. It is deployed as a hermeneutical lens through which science, nature, and contemporary social realities are interpreted. For example, in responding to the perceived dichotomy between scientific rationalism and religious belief, *darshane* discussions frequently invoke Nursi's explanation of *tanzih* (divine transcendence) to assert that natural laws are ayat kauniyyah signs that point toward the unity and intentionality of the Creator<sup>8</sup>. In such an epistemological re-arming, the students are prepared to work with scientific knowledge in an Islamic metaphysical context, without seeing any contradiction between scientific inquiry and spiritual insight<sup>9</sup>.

Identity construction in *darshane* is achieved by organizing dialogical pedagogy (*muzakarah* and *sobbet*), in which the participants do not just internalize important ideas but recalibrate them to contemporary challenges<sup>10</sup>. As an example, the process of secularism, or the elimination of religion out of societal life of the state, critically evaluated is presented in terms of iman haqqi (genuine faith), defined by Nursi. This principle has it that intellect (*aq'l*) and revelation (*wahy*) should work simultaneously, and that they need to reestablish the epistemic harmony lost under modern dualisms. Such phenomena as materialism, consumerism and environmental degradation during such sessions, are explained in analogies of Nursi cosmology whereby all creatures are considered a letter (*harf*) that points to Allah Names and Attributes<sup>11</sup>.

What is more, identity construction in *darshane* does not remain on the intellectual plane. It is realized in the form of *hizmet* (selfless service), which is one of the most significant moral requirements of the legacy of Nursi. That is congruent with Islamic ideal that knowledge should be coupled with *amal* salih (right action). Therefore, *darshane* encompasses not just textual research, but also praxis-based projects including community outreach, work with refugees, and environmental work<sup>12</sup>. In one example, following the reading of reflections about ukhuwwah Islamiyyah (Islamic brotherhood) by Nursi, participants in the course frequently participate in solidarity work with the marginalized populations illustrating that knowledge and action cannot be separated<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Sujiat Zubaidi Sholeh and Dahniar Maharani, 'Al-Bu'du Al-Tajididi Fi 'ardi Mabahits Al-Iman Fi Rasail Al-Nur', *Tasfiyah*, 3.2 (2019), 109 <<https://doi.org/10.21111/tasfiyah.v3i2.3500>>.

<sup>6</sup> Mohamad Zaidin Mohamad and others, 'The Importance of Nursi's Thought in Empowering Muslim Identity', *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences (PJLSS)*, 22.1 (2024) <<https://doi.org/10.57239/PJLSS-2024-22.1.0037>>.

<sup>7</sup> Sophia Vasalou, *Al-Ghazali and the Idea of Moral Beauty* (London: Routledge, 2021) <<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003196556>>.

<sup>8</sup> Hasan Khalawi, Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi and Mudjia Rahardjo, 'Signs of Nature in Bediuzzaman Said Nursi: A Significant Contribution to Islamic Semiotics', *LITERA*, 23.1 (2024), 37–49 <<https://doi.org/10.21831/ltr.v23i1.70648>>.

<sup>9</sup> Datu Mohammed and others, 'Assimilate The Qur'an's View with Science and Technology Perspectives', *Aptisi Transactions on Technopreneurship (ATT)*, 3.1 (2021), 42–47 <<https://doi.org/10.34306/att.v3i1.141>>.

<sup>10</sup> Tonny Ilham Prayogo et al., "Badiuzzaman Said Nursi's Perspective On The Neo-Tasawwuf Issue Of *Risale-i Nur* In Urban Muslim Society," *Academica: Journal of Islamic Thought* 29, no. 2 (September 19, 2024): 175–94, <https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v29i2.9587>.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Shumaila Majeed, 'An Analytical Study of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Intellectual Development and Composition of *Risale-i Nur* (a Thematic Qur'anic Exegesis)', *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization*, 10.2 (2020) <<https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.102.10>>; Şükran Vahide, 'Reconciliation with Christianity and the West in Said Nursi's Thought and Practice: An Overview', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 19.1 (2008), 17–23 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13510340701770253>>; Zamri and others.

<sup>12</sup> Salih Yucel, 'An Islamic Perspective of the Natural Environment and Animals: Said Nursi and His Renewalist Philosophy', *UMRAN - International Journal of Islamic and Civilizational Studies*, 5.2 (2018) <<https://doi.org/10.11113/umran2018.5n2.236>>.

<sup>13</sup> L.B. Ahmed, 'The Effect of Bearing the Difference in Achieving Positive Action According to Badi Al-Zaman Al-Nursi', *Zanco Journal of Humanity Sciences*, 27.6 (2023) <<https://doi.org/10.21271/zjhs.27.6.2>>.



The second important aspect of *darshane* is that it cultivates the shared spiritual identity of people during practices and rituals. Periodic group readings of *Risale-i Nur*, organized *sobbet* meetings and international *ijtima'* known as *ijtima' al-tariq* inwards to cultivate the feeling of being part of a transnational cemaat (community of thought and practice). In this respect, the idea of cemaat, as developed by Nursi, is not just sociological, but spiritual: every person is a so-called social angel, the presence of which strengthens the overall movement to seek proximity to God<sup>14</sup>. This common identity is both inclusive and dialogical, and the circles of *darshane* often engage in inter-faith activities that recount Nursi an ideal of universal peace that is based on theological humility.

Finally, the *darshane* model can be understood as the realization of an educational ecosystem and the process of genuine education (*ta'dib*), which, in terms of the definition given by Al-Attas, is integrative and which aligns intellectual, ethical and spiritual growth. As Tullab seeks to resist the secular diminishing of knowledge as well as the fetishizing of tradition, he provides an exemplar of identity constructions that are both foundational, applicable, and transformative

### ***Continuity and Adaptation***

Within the contemporary social media environment, Muslim identity increasingly emerges through ongoing negotiations between religious meaning, cultural plurality, and digitally mediated forms of self-expression. Social media platforms expose individuals to diverse theological interpretations, ethical discourses, and lifestyle narratives that circulate globally and instantaneously, often blurring the boundaries between religious commitment, cultural affiliation, and personal branding<sup>15</sup>. In such spaces, identity formation tends to be fluid, episodic, and shaped by visibility, immediacy, and peer recognition rather than sustained ethical cultivation<sup>16</sup>. Against this backdrop, the *darshane* model functions as a stabilizing epistemic framework that enables Muslim identity to develop through continuity rather than fragmentation. By privileging dialogical engagement (*sobbet*), reflective learning, and communal accountability, *darshane* allows participants to critically engage with contemporary digital cultures while remaining anchored in a *tamhidic* understanding of knowledge and selfhood. Muslim identity, therefore, does not emerge in isolation from digital cultural intersections, but through an interpretive process in which online influences are consciously filtered, reoriented, and integrated within a coherent moral and spiritual worldview.

The adaptability and persistence of *darshane* shows its active status with regard to Islamic tradition but also its responsiveness to the digital ethos of the modern youth in the Muslim community. Although the fundamentals of *sobbet* (heart-to-heart spiritual communication) and *ta'dib* (spiritual cultivation of the self) are maintained, *darshane* is actively utilizing new technological mediums as the means of *tabligh*, *ta'lim* and *tazkiyah*. In doing so, it exemplifies what Al-Attas describes as a “de-westernized epistemology,” wherein technology is not blindly mimicked but subordinated to the higher aims of Islamic knowledge *ma'rifah*, *bikmah*, and ultimately *taqwa*<sup>17</sup>.

Despite the transition to digital tools such as webinars, podcasts, and social media *darshane* retains the ontological essence of *sobbet*: dialogical, reflective, and spiritually immersive. Participants are not passive recipients of information but active seekers of truth within a communal search for meaning. Webinars are thus designed not as one-way lectures but as participatory *halaqahs*, where students are encouraged to activate both *'aql* and *qalb* in engaging Nursi's texts. This aligns with the Islamic

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Michel, 'The Risale-i Nur', *Hanwa*, 13.2 (2015), 184–97 <<https://doi.org/10.1163/15692086-12341280>>.

<sup>15</sup> Christopher B. Barnett, Clark J. Elliston and Trevor B. Williams, *Theological Discourses on Social Media* (London: Routledge, 2025) <<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003368106>>.

<sup>16</sup> Caoimhe O'Reilly and others, 'Social Identity Emergence in Attitude Interactions and the Identity Strengthening Effects of Cumulative Attitude Agreement', *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 54.1 (2024), 97–117 <<https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.3000>>.

<sup>17</sup> Nabila Huringiin and Halimah Nisrina Azfathir, 'The Concept of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas on De-Westernization and Its Relevancy toward Islamization of Knowledge', *KALIMAH*, 16.2 (2018) <<https://doi.org/10.21111/klm.v16i2.2867>>.



pedagogical principle that *'ilm* must be internalized, not merely memorized; it must shape the soul before it informs the intellect<sup>18</sup>.

The move to online platforms is not seen as a discontinuity but rather an ijthadi response—where technological affordances are reviewed in terms of *maslahah* (public benefit) and *maqasid al-Shariah* (higher aims of the law). As an example, the podcasts on such topics as Science and Faith or Tranquility in Crisis Liberates younger Muslims to pursue metaphysical questions of in the Islamic tradition. Every episode of the podcast is also purposefully introduced using Qur'anic verses and followed by effective considerations (*a'mal yaumiyyah*), so that learning does not result merely in passive transformation. This reflects an important hallmark of Islamic know-how<sup>19</sup>.

However, *darshane* recognises the epistemic dangers of the digital shredding age such as the commercialization and superficiality of knowledge. In response, it adopts a dual approach: (1) microlearning, where modules are delivered with digital convenience yet never at the expense of *ta'ammul* (intensive reflection); and (2) compulsory face-to-face *sobbet* sessions to preserve spiritual proximity and nurture genuine spirituality something technology can never fabricate. This two-fold temporal wisdom reminds us that while practices may adapt to the times, the spirit must remain sacred.

The preservation of the *abla/agabey* (senior mentor) system rooted in the theologia of the Islamic school tradition is another means of maintaining spiritual depth. Small *cemaat* groups even exist in the virtual sphere. The follow-up process for podcast sessions or online lectures is also carried out at the individual level, with mentors considering the practical implications for the participants' daily lives. This approach revives the classical Islamic knowledge that, without *hal* (a genuine spiritual state), would otherwise be deemed empty or false.

The approach is similar to that of the Nursi movement in Southeast Asia, where printed *Risale-i Nur* books are supplemented by online educational resources provided through social media and other platforms. But even in these adaptations the guiding standard is *haqiqah*: whether the medium is a service to the transmission of truth, ethical discipline and God consciousness. It may be seen as a set of steady adherence to *tawhid* as the metaphysical key and epistemological guide<sup>20</sup>.

Altogether, it is possible to conclude that the adaptive measures of *darshane* confirm that technology innovation, through the prism of an Islamic view of the metaphysical world can enrich the religious learning as opposed to dilute it<sup>21</sup>. By introducing digital technologies into a *tawhidic* epistemology, *Tullab al-Nur* is bound to make sure that the world of modernity is used to reach divine purposes, which requires showing that progress does not necessarily mean a total break with the past, and modernization does not necessarily involve any diminished religious commitment.

### Contemporary Challenges

The *Tullab al-Nur* movement finds itself at a very important crossroad, as it is criticized by both ends of the ideological spectrum: as either liberal or outdated by modernists. These competing charges reveal underlying epistemological dissonances of the world Muslim *ummah*—the unsolved problem of *taqlid* (blind following of tradition) versus *tajdid* (renewal), and a holy authenticity versus

<sup>18</sup> Husni Laili, Abd Mukti and Asnil Aidah Ritonga, 'Internalization Strategies for Islamic Educational Values Thru Quran Memorization Learning for Students at Junior High School', *Journal Evaluation in Education (JEE)*, 6.4 (2025), 1111–18 <<https://doi.org/10.37251/jee.v6i4.2193>>.

<sup>19</sup> Claire Alkoutli, 'Pedagogies in Becoming Muslim: Contemporary Insights from Islamic Traditions on Teaching, Learning, and Developing', *Religions*, 9.11 (2018), 367 <<https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9110367>>.

<sup>20</sup> and Hutama Purwaningtyas, Rimapradesi, 'The Genealogy of Turkish Transnational Movement in Indonesia', *Journal of Middle East and Islamic Studies*, 11.1 (2024) <<https://doi.org/10.7454/meis.v11i1.171>>; Meidianas Saputra, Murisal Murisal and Mardenny Mardenny, 'The Influence of Halaqah on Increasing Religiosity Members of the Student Activity Unit for Spirituality and Islamic Studies Ulul Albab University Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang', *Jurnal Syntax Admiration*, 4.4 (2023), 492–507 <<https://doi.org/10.46799/jsa.v4i4.581>>.

<sup>21</sup> M. Sait Özerarli, 'The Reconstruction of Islamic Social Thought in the Modern Period: Nursi's Approach to Religious Discourse in a Changing Society', *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 38.4 (2010), 532–53 <<https://doi.org/10.1163/156853110X517773>>; Şükran Vahide.



a legitimate modernity<sup>22</sup>. According to the conservative perspective, the openness of *darshane* in dialogue with other faiths, the language with scientific expressions, and an interest in modern social problems all tend to be interpreted as theological watering down. The adoption of māna-yi harfī (symbolic explanation of nature as divine signification) of Nursi and his reconciliation of empirical science with *Quran* cosmology are attributed to compromise with secularism. But in a *tanbhidic* epistemology, these encounters are not trade-offs, but required expressions of the unity of God in the sciences and other areas. Nursi did not oppose modern science, according to Vahide, but he re-constructed it as an unlocking of the ayat of Allah written in the universe<sup>23</sup>.

Modernist critics, at the opposite extreme, charge *Tullab al-Nur* with being anachronistic because of its unswerving adherence to classical texts, such as *Risale-i Nur*, and pushiness on contemporary Muslim spiritual practices, such as *sobbet*, *zikir*, and communal reading. The epistemological bias in this case is the dominance of speed, efficiency and instrumental knowledge over reflection, intimacy and spiritual embodiment. According to such critics, sacred knowledge which is not marketable is considered irrelevant. But since ancient times the Islamic tradition has insisted that *hikmah* (wisdom) should be acquired not by eating and drinking but by *tadabbur*, *ta'ammul*, and the educative discipline of the self<sup>24</sup>.

These conflicting forces point to an even greater problem: the hegemony of Western epistemological suppositions in both camps—whether in the literalist rejection of hermeneutics or the modernist rejection of metaphysical continuity. The legacy of Nursi, as inherited by the *Tullab al-Nur*, offers a third path, avoiding both extremes. *Darshane* restores education as a form of religious capital (*amanah*), rather than a mere commodity, grounding itself in *ta'liq mardah* (instruction), *taḥkīyah* (purification), and *hizmet* (service)<sup>25</sup>.

In this balanced way, *Tullab al-Nur* is constantly reminding itself of its original tenets: faith and reason are not opponents, tradition a dynamic legacy, not an ossuary of history, and spirituality embodied in moral service. The arguments about such issues as climate justice, AI ethics, or gender relations are put into the context of the *maqasid al-shari'ah* or the umbrella of Nursi and his prism of interpretation of 'adl (divine justice), rahmah (compassion), and *ikhlas* (sincerity). This approach is a mirroring of the so called civilizational hermeneutics, the way which reconciles revelation to the realities of the contemporary world without losing the theological depth<sup>26</sup>.

In the future, the persistence of the current model will be conditioned by how well the model articulates its vision in an assertive way both intellectually and institutionally. Publication of analytical commentary of *Risale-i Nur* on contemporary matters, building relationships with higher education institutions, and inclusion of curricula materials on Islamic epistemology can assist in making *darshane* not a marginal revivalist movement, but a serious intellectual presence with a tradition that is subject to renewal (*tajdid*). According to al-Attas the sign of genuine Islamic education is not the resistance to change, but rather being able to steer change with the help of the principled knowledge, prudence and will.

### ***The Ethical-Spiritual Epistemology of Hizmet: Knowledge as Responsibility***

In the traditional Islamic epistemology, knowledge (*ilm*) in itself is not the end. Instead it is, *amanah* (trust) which bears moral responsibility (*mas'uliyah*) and spiritual responsibility. This value is reflected in the practice of *hizmet*, selfless service which is not perceived as activism, but as the

<sup>22</sup> Naufal Syauqi Fauzani and others, 'Epistemological Review of the Translation of Tajdid Words in Indonesian: A Contrastive Analysis Study', *Hanifiya: Journal of Religious Studies*, 8.2 (2025), 299–312 <<https://doi.org/10.15575/hanifiya.v8i2.44882>>.

<sup>23</sup> S Vahide, 'Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and the Risale-i Nur', in *Globalization, Ethics and Islam: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (London: Routledge, 2017).

<sup>24</sup> U. Isra Yazicioglu, 'Wisdom in the Qur'an and the Islamic Tradition', in *The Oxford Handbook of Wisdom and the Bible* (Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 221–40 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190661267.013.14>>.

<sup>25</sup> Habib Zainuri, Khojir Khojir and Mukmin Mukmin, 'Modernization of Islamic Education from Said Nursi's Perspective', *Tajūqqub: Journal of Islamic Research and Studies*, 11.2 (2023), 288–306 <<https://doi.org/10.52431/tafaqqub.v11i2.2206>>.

<sup>26</sup> Ainul Asyraf Lokman, 'Historical Approach to the Interpretation of the Quran: Understanding Revelation in the Context of Contemporary Civilization', *Al-Muqaddimah: Online Journal of Islamic History and Civilization*, 13.2 (2025), 1–15 <<https://doi.org/10.22452/muqaddimah.vol13no2.1>>.



logic of sacred knowledge in the *darshane* of *Tullab al-Nur*. Said Nursi made it very clear that knowledge should end in action that will help others, which is also valid in the *Quramic* ethos of “*wa ‘amilu al-salihah*” (and they do righteous deeds) (*Quran*).

It follows this that *hizmet* is an embodied epistemology: it is the way in which the truth absorbed by study (*tafaqquh*) is put into social action. Both in teaching circles, humanitarian relief, environmental stewardship and interfaith dialogue, members of *Tullab al-Nur* are trained to see knowledge as a divine trust which demands service. This can be compared to al-Ghazali who thought that good knowledge is the one that brings about ethical change and fear of God rather than intellectual achievement<sup>27</sup>.

It also concurs with the claim of al-Attas that *adab*, or the identification and practice of right place and right conduct is the product of real knowledge. Further, the meaning of *hizmet* in this context is not restricted to institutional and formal charity. It spreads to the human relations, trusted leading and reforming of the social structures, everything supported by sincerity (*ikhlas*) and humility<sup>28</sup>.

According to Michel, the idea of *hizmet* that Nursi focuses on is not only the spiritual one but the civilizational one too- it is considered to be the society that is revitalized by the inner renewal and social unity<sup>29</sup>. This *darshane*, therefore, nurtures not only epistemically vigilant but also spiritually mobilized: devoted to changing society in quiet, undiscussed, service of them that are ethically grounded.

The fact that Nursi believes that people should serve as the embodiment of divine names through moral behavior shows that service is not an accompaniment to knowledge, but rather part of it<sup>30</sup>. When the commodification of knowledge is increasingly becoming the norm, and activism is increasingly performative, the *Tullab al-Nur* model provides an alternative: *ilm* as illumination, *hizmet* as consequence. This combination of knowing/serving as based on *tawhid* and the Prophetic model is the ethical peak in the form of Islamic identity formation. According to Bakar, knowledge in Islamic worldview can only have meaning when it attracts action that displays the divine features of human existence<sup>31</sup>.

## Conclusion

The *darshane* of *Tullab al-Nur* initiates a very interesting and contextualized model of Islamic education based on the epistemological vision of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi. Never to be confused with a simple kind of pedagogy, *darshane* is a whole system of education--the combination of intellectual investigation (*aqil*), spiritual development (*qalb*), and practical ethics (*amal*) in the context of God oneness (*tawhid*). This model is assertive of the perennial applicability of Islamic metaphysics in the cultivation of strong, spiritually-based individuals in an era of epistemic confusion, fragmentation of identities and commodification of knowledge. Operationalizing the ideas of *hizmet* (selfless service), *tafakkur* (contemplative reflection), and *sobbet* (dialogical learning) presented by Nursi, *darshane* reforms the process of Muslim identity formation around a united vision of truth in which knowledge is not only passed down, but internalized, lived, and embodied. The way it has employed its digital platforms without losing its traditional values of *ta’dib* and *talaqqi* shows that adaptation to technology does not have to trade off with sacred authenticity. Instead, guided by *tawhidic* values and epistemic intentionality, contemporary tools may be used in the divine purposes of *dakwah*, reflection, and transformation. In this regard, the thought of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, as operationalised through the *darshane* model, demonstrates enduring relevance in addressing

<sup>27</sup> Bayu Mujrmin, ‘Al-Ghazali’s Epistemology in Islamic Religious Education: The Integration of Knowledge, Faith, and Morals’, *Multidisciplinary Journal*, 01.01 (2025), 11–28.

<sup>28</sup> Nirhamna Hanif Fadillah, Amir Reza Kusuma and Najib Rahman Rajab al-Lakhm, ‘The Concept of Science in Islamic Tradition: Analytical Studies of Syed Naquib Al-Attas on Knowledge’, *Tasfiyah: Journal of Islamic Thought*, 7.1 (2023), 25–62 <<https://doi.org/10.21111/tasfiyah.v7i1.8456>>.

<sup>29</sup> Alizaman D. Gamon and others, ‘Interpretation of Youth from the Thinking of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi (Pengertian “Belia” Dalam Konteks Pemikiran Badiuzzaman Said Nursi)’, *Journal of Islam in Asia (E-ISSN 2289-8077)*, 17.4 (2020), 220–39 <<https://doi.org/10.31436/jia.v17i4.879>>.

<sup>30</sup> Ian S. Markham, ‘The Qur’an Revealed: A Critical Analysis of Said Nursi’s Epistles of Light, Colin Turner, Gerlach Press, 2013 (ISBN 978-3-940924-28-5), Xii + 619 Pp., Hb €99’, *Reviews in Religion & Theology*, 22.3 (2015), 281–83 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/rirt.12529>>.

<sup>31</sup> Khairudin Aljunied, ‘Osman Bakar And Epistemological Renewal in the Muslim World’, *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC)*, 27.1 (2022), 1–27 <<https://doi.org/10.31436/shajarah.v27i1.1388>>.



contemporary challenges of Muslim identity formation within digitally mediated cultural environments. Rather than functioning as a nostalgic revival of pre-modern religious education, *darshane* offers a reflective and ethically grounded framework through which Muslims may navigate the plural, accelerated, and often fragmented realities of social media. By anchoring engagement with digital cultures within a *tawhidic* epistemology that integrates knowledge, spirituality, and moral responsibility, the *darshane* model illustrates how classical Islamic intellectual traditions can remain responsive and meaningful in the context of late modernity.

However, continuing to straddle the thin line between conservative and modernist/neoprotestant fronts, *Tullab al-Nur* nevertheless occupies an epistemological and civilizational niche: the denial of false dichotomies between tradition and progress, faith and reason, revelation and science. It reflects the vision of education as amanah, a trust, to produce souls who know, act and serve with purpose and sincerity, through its stable accent on ma'nawi (inner meaning) and community ethics (ukhuwwah) and its metaphysical world view. Because the global *ummah* operates in the face of unfamiliar crises-ecological, philosophical, technological-the *darshane* model offers us a formidable and spiritually sound model of formation. In order to guarantee its survival and intellectual viability, more effort has to be made to record, theorize, and institutionalize its wisdom in institutional educational establishments and policymaking. At last we are brought back to the challenge advanced by Ghazali, Tirmizi, and the whole Tirmizi-Ghazali tradition: the renewal (*tajdid*) of the Islamic education must start with the renewal of the soul, in the service of truth, through wisdom, with the inspiration of service.

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