

IN THE TRACES OF RISALE-I NUR: THE PATH ABDULLAH YEĞİN GUIDED NUR STUDENTS ON

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On July 7th, 2023, on the esteemed pages of Risale News, the precious 11-point advice of the late Abdullah Yeğın, one of the closest disciples of our venerable master, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, who imparted teachings through his life and set an exemplary model, once again came to light as if bearing the quality of a will.

These testaments reflect Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's teachings that prioritize spiritual values, a sagacious lifestyle, and an ethical stance. Each point focuses on moral values and personal and spiritual development while concurrently promoting unity, respect, and understanding amongst the disciples. These principles are vital for people to coexist, assist each other, and attain their spiritual goals at both individual and societal levels.

A particularly emphasized theme is **self-discipline and humility**. This implies that the Nur Students should not perceive themselves as superior to others and must remain open to learning, growing, and serving. Furthermore, it is highlighted that the focal point of Nur Students should be the lofty spiritual truths in Risale-i Nur, and they should not expend excessive time on matters beyond these.

In essence, while these testaments encourage the formation of a society rooted in moral values, wisdom, and understanding, they also aid in an individual's personal and spiritual development. All these principles and values are applicable and valuable not only for the Nur Students but also for anyone aspiring to adopt an ethical and moral lifestyle.

The late Senior Disciple Abdullah Yeğın's 11-point advice, which he has termed as a "**request**" and almost appears to be in the nature of a will, commences as follows:

*"Even though it is beyond my place, I have **requests** if my brothers would **listen**. To my brethren residing in the madrasas, I shall write down the points that require attention, to the **best of my knowledge** as a **request and plea**."*

Referring to his words as a "request," Senior Disciple Abdullah Yeğın exemplifies his humility and love and respect for the Nur Students. The term "request" implies that offering advice and making requests is not an "obligation" or "command," but rather a "suggestion" or "wish." This reflects Senior Disciple Yeğın's deep respect and courtesy towards the Nur Students.

Moreover, the term "request" in our language expresses a desire or longing and is generally used within a framework of equality and mutual respect. Senior Disciple Yeğın's use of this term emphasizes the importance of equality and respect in the relationships among the Nur Students. His expression serves as a reminder that the Nur Students should maintain an approach based on tolerance and respect towards each other.

The term "request" is usually employed while demonstrating respect for another person's free will. This indicates that Senior Disciple Yeğın believes the Nur Students should adopt this advice utilizing

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their free will. This accentuates that the advice is not just a necessity but also something to be accepted with one's free will.

Therefore, Senior Disciple Abdullah Yeğın's labeling of these words as a "request" manifests his humility, respect, egalitarian approach, and belief in free will. This further underscores his profound commitment to moral values and his love and respect for the Nur Students.

Everyone recognized or self-identifying as a Nur Student must engage in a deep self-evaluation of their existence, internalizing the minimum requirements of being a Nur Student through the illuminating words of the late Abdullah Yeğın, a devoted disciple of our esteemed master, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. These words should serve as a mirror for them and should open the doors for introspection and self-accountability within their inner world.

Here are those requests:

- 1. A student of Risale-i Nur learns the truths it contains. And if possible, he endeavors to implement them. The truths that primarily concern him are those that fortify faith:** This first point sets forth clearly what it means to be a student of Risale-i Nur, the responsibilities it imposes, and the journey it entails for each individual.

A person who is a student of Risale-i Nur aims to deeply understand and internalize the truths this teaching embodies. This is not merely a theoretical learning process, but a quest for knowledge that can be applied practically. The strengthening of faith is one of the key objectives of the student's journey.

Acquiring this knowledge and putting it into practice is not only a personal quest but also a societal duty. While internalizing the teachings of Risale-i Nur, Nur Students also assume a crucial responsibility to reflect these profound insights in their lives, share them with their surroundings, and contribute to society.

This responsibility involves learning the truths in Risale-i Nur and implementing this knowledge in one's life. However, this is not merely a process of acquiring and conveying knowledge; it is also a process of personal development and spiritual progression. A student, by integrating the teachings of Risale-i Nur into all areas of life, gains the capacity to impact both oneself and the surroundings positively. This demonstrates that learning and applying the teachings of Risale-i Nur constitute not just a process of personal growth and transformation but also create substantial value and benefits for society.

Thus, being a student of Risale-i Nur necessitates not only an individual journey but also a commitment and effort dedicated to societal service. This highlights an essential principle that Nur Students, while learning and implementing the teachings of Risale-i Nur, ***should consider not only themselves but also the society.***

- 2. He does not strive to make himself likable or to establish influence among people:** This second point emphasizes a critically important aspect of the character of a Nur Student. This is a call centered on spirituality and morality, a caution aiming to maintain the balance of life here and in the hereafter.

The worth of being a Nur Student does not stem from the pursuit of making oneself likable or establishing influence among people, but rather, it is rooted in devoting oneself to the further

propagation of service and knowledge to broader masses. A Nur Student should not foreground personal desires; instead, the emphasis should be on the effort to disseminate knowledge and wisdom. This requires the Nur Student to be humble and demonstrate modesty.

This point embodies the emphasis on humility and modesty over ego and pride. Ego and pride can obstruct an individual's spiritual development and can lead them astray. Humility and modesty, on the other hand, aid in one's inner growth and capacity to serve others.

A Nur Student endeavors not to influence others or earn their admiration, but to learn and propagate the truth. This stance underscores the student's responsibility towards the society they are part of and fortifies their commitment to serve others and spread knowledge.

Humility and modesty assist an individual in perceiving oneself and others more clearly and realistically. This is of utmost importance both in terms of personal development and the capacity to serve society.

- 3. He regards all Nur Students as superior and purer than himself, and does not expose the faults of those who are hypocritical, even if he is aware of them:** This point reveals the spirit of a Nur Student that cherishes human dignity and the sensitivity towards protecting the honor and worth of others. Here, the importance of establishing thoughtful, respectful, and tolerant relationships among people is highlighted.

The directive is for the Nur Student to always regard other students as superior and purer than themselves. This displays the significance of building a community based on self-esteem and respect as both a means to strengthen interpersonal bonds and to encourage spiritual and personal growth. Such an approach fosters respect and tolerance within the community, making room for understanding and empathy over judgement and condemnation.

Simultaneously, this point obstructs the exposure of mistakes and flaws. Instead of unveiling others' faults within society, it aims to assist in rectifying their errors and enhancing unity and mutual respect among individuals. This represents a stance that preserves the dignity and worth of every individual.

- 4. He does not engage with matters not mentioned in the Risale-i Nur, does not develop interests in other subjects, and does not spend his time on them. He can read topics of faith to those whom he first met:** This point offers valuable guidance on where a Nur Student should expend his time and energy. **The truths and subjects presented in the Risale-i Nur should form the essential focal point of a Nur Student.** This is a reminder that a Nur Student should not waste his valuable time on matters beyond the scope of the Risales.

The Risale-i Nur provides an exemplary set of teachings in this regard, encompassing both religious and moral values for the students. These values and truths are crucial for a Nur Student to take firmer steps in their faith journey.

A Nur Student does not distract his attention with subjects beyond the content of the Risale-i Nur. Instead, the student needs to focus his time and energy on learning, understanding, and applying the valuable teachings provided by the Risale-i Nur. In this way, the student centers on those things that will benefit his spiritual development and the deepening of his faith most.

- 5. He does not attempt to establish himself as a point of authority by exercising dominance over others:** This fifth point underscores the humility and understanding of leadership inherent in a Nur Student. **This means not attempting to declare oneself an authority or ultimate source, but**

instead showing respect for the opinions, thoughts, and experiences of others. This stresses the need for Nur Students to display an attitude based on principles of showing respect to others and tolerating differences, rather than forcefully imposing their own beliefs and ideas onto others.

Attempting to position oneself as a point of reference or ultimate authority indicates a desire to exercise dominance over others. However, a Nur Student should not pursue such dominance. ***His duty is to adopt the teachings of the Risale-i Nur and present these teachings to others with respect, not to impose himself upon others or position himself as an authority over them.***

This approach teaches a Nur Student to adopt his position and understanding not as a leadership model, but ***as a model of a fellow learner and companion. Instead of a desire to rule over others or establish dominance, a Nur Student should harbor a desire to build a community based on principles of mutual learning and assistance.*** This helps not only his own development but also the development of his community.

- 6. He embraces laborious tasks, wishes to undertake them himself, and can accept assistance if it benefits the public and not his own interests:** This point articulates a Nur Student's desire and willingness to confront complex and strenuous tasks for the general benefit of the community, extending beyond personal comfort and self-interest. It underscores the importance of a commitment to serve the community beyond the quest for personal comfort and tranquility.

By dedicating himself to challenging tasks, a Nur Student can prioritize the general interests of the community over his own personal gains. This represents a way of life predicated on a commitment to serve others and enhance the welfare of the community. This stance reflects an understanding that community service is not an obligation but a privilege and honor.

Being helpful and assisting others is integral to the essence of a Nur Student. He foregrounds the interests of others and the community over his own. This demonstrates his adoption of values of unity and mutual assistance, and his active role in serving others. It emphasizes his commitment to the community and his desire to contribute to its well-being.

This point also imparts the ability of the student to accept assistance from others. However, this should be done not to enhance personal gains, but to serve broader interests. This reflects the student's vision that extends beyond his own interests and incorporates helping others and improving the overall welfare of the community. Such a stance mirrors the ethical and moral values of a Nur Student.

- 7. He does not engage in showiness, self-admiration, or posturing superiority or intellectualism towards others, nor does he appreciate such behaviors. He fundamentally seeks Allah's approval, not the admiration of people's deeds:** This request of Senior Disciple Abdullah Yeğın emphasizes the significance of fundamental values resonating in the heart of a Nur Student, such as humility, modesty, and the quest for divine approval. This principle highlights the need for seeking the pleasure of Allah and exhibiting a humble attitude towards others, rather than self-confidence and intellectualism.

A Nur Student should not perceive himself as superior to others, nor should he harbor self-admiration. ***Instead, the Nur Student should be aware of his own knowledge and capabilities, yet this awareness should not pull him towards a haughty demeanor.*** On the contrary, he should view and utilize his knowledge and skills as ways to serve others and attain Allah's approval.

Moreover, a Nur Student should aim for his actions to be accepted by Allah, rather than seeking approval or praise from people. ***This implies that the only criterion determining the correctness***

and value of his actions and intentions is their acceptance by Allah. This stance declares that the pleasure of Allah is paramount and that all his actions should serve this ultimate objective.

Senior Disciple Abdullah Yeğın's request articulates that a Nur Student does not appreciate those who attribute excessive value to themselves or display a sense of superiority towards others. This signifies that the student's personal values and principles do not accept such behaviors and that such actions can potentially harm the overall welfare of the community. The Nur Student bases his actions and intentions on Allah's pleasure rather than others' admiration, shaping his moral and spiritual guidance.

- 8. He consistently assists those with whom he cohabitates, always striving to share their burdens in every aspect. He endeavors to teach the principles in the Nur, not the individuals:** This request offers an in-depth perspective on the role of a Nur Student within the community and the demeanor he should exhibit. A Nur Student should be sensitive to the needs and troubles of those around him, always ready to assist. He should be a companion in their life journeys, a confidant in their distress.

This principle also emphasizes that a Nur Student should adopt a teaching role to those around him. However, this implies not merely transmitting personal understandings and interpretations, but primarily conveying the fundamental principles and precepts embodied in the Nur. This necessitates that a Nur Student presents the teachings and principles of Nur, rather than himself, as models to people.

Teaching and assisting constitute significant parts of a Nur Student's responsibilities towards those in his immediate environment and the wider community. This principle requires a Nur Student to perceive his teaching role as contributing to their spiritual and moral development by guiding them, not just transferring knowledge. This contributes significantly to their personal and spiritual journeys and also benefits the overall welfare and unity of the community.

- 9. He channels the conversation towards the truths of faith. Given that eighty percent of people grapple with external phenomena, he curtails topics that increase heedlessness, and sweetly brings the matter to the truths of faith. He always primarily considers the aspect of the world that faces the hereafter:** This principle sketches the foundation of a Nur Student's verbal and intellectual attitudes. It states that every spoken conversation and debate should be guided towards the truths of faith. This implies cutting off subjects generally confined to worldly matters that increase heedlessness prevalent in society, and subtly redirecting the conversation towards the profound realities of faith.

Additionally, this principle denotes that a Nur Student should perceive the world not merely as a temporary habitat but rather as the starting point of our journey to the afterlife. This perspective mirrors the understanding of this world, where everything is finite and transient, as a bridge to the eternal and infinite hereafter. This mindset aims to transpose every conversation and debate to an afterlife-centric perspective and draw people's thoughts towards the infinite outlook of the hereafter.

This approach has the potential to remind and awaken those in society excessively preoccupied with worldly concerns and thus neglecting the afterlife. It also signifies a Nur Student's responsibility to maintain and reflect the eternal perspective even when dealing with worldly matters. This influences people's thoughts and behaviors, guiding them towards higher consciousness, deeper understanding, and a more meaningful life.

10. When leaving the company of others, he informs them of where he is going: This tenth principle narrates the importance of transparency and mutual respect that Nur Students should exhibit towards each other. Every Nur Student should understand that even a simple action like informing others of where he is going promotes mutual trust and respect, alongside the interactions shared within their fellowship.

This principle underscores Nur Students' eagerness to recognize and understand each other's existence, activities, and objectives. Even when it's time to go their separate ways, a student's act of informing others about his destination exhibits his willingness to take an extra step to alleviate others' curiosity and concern.

Moreover, this principle also manifests the unique ethics of respect and transparency of a Nur Student. The consideration for others' emotional and intellectual well-being is a virtue that should reside within every Nur Student. Each student should understand that the connection between himself and others is not merely limited to physical proximity, but they are also interconnected at an emotional and intellectual level.

11. If he sees a fault, he attempts to correct it not with domination but with grace. Incoming guests, students, and other brothers are always met with a smiling face and good hospitality. Worldly affairs not asked about are not mentioned, and if someone does speak of them, they are politely listened to without causing offence. Those who speak of negative things are politely silenced, or a lesson is initiated. If there is a better reader present, listening is preferred: This final principle sheds light on the attitudes of Nur Students regarding handling others' faults and hospitality. It communicates that a Nur Student should strive to correct others' faults not with domination, but with grace and understanding when encountered.

It highlights the need for a Nur Student to always welcome guests and fellow students with a smile, sincere acceptance, and politeness. Nur Students, when one among them veers towards undesired worldly matters, should listen to that individual with grace and delicacy, not hurting their feelings, and entertain them pleasantly without any negativity.

If someone indulges in negative or negativity-provoking topics, they should be gently silenced, or a lesson should be initiated. If a better reader is available in the group, listening is always preferred. This reflects the constant encouragement of respect and humility among students.

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Risale-i Nur Students are a **special community** that exemplifies an exemplary stance in applying his teachings and adhering to moral values. The students' lives reflect both their spiritual wisdom and moral values, **thereby demonstrating the applicability and significance of these values.**

Drawing from the precious advice in 11 points, reminiscent of a will, given by the late Abdullah Yeğın, one of the closest students of our revered master Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, the minimum moral characteristics that should exist in a Nur Student can be summarized as follows:

- 1. Openness to Learning:** A Nur Student must be open to learning the teachings of Risale-i Nur and strive to incorporate these teachings into their life.

2. **Humility and Modesty:** A Nur Student should not see themselves as superior to others, should not seek popularity or self-flattery, and should display an attitude free of arrogance and filled with humility.
3. **Respect and Understanding:** Instead of exposing the mistakes of other Nur Students, it is crucial to perceive their faults as one's own and to meet their mistakes with understanding.
4. **Focus:** A Nur Student must concentrate on the teachings of Risale-i Nur and should not spend time on matters beyond these teachings.
5. **Egalitarianism:** Not putting oneself at the center and not imposing on others demonstrates the need for a Nur Student to exhibit an egalitarian attitude.
6. **Responsibility and Duty Consciousness:** The willingness to voluntarily participate in and assist with strenuous tasks indicates that a Nur Student needs to possess a sense of responsibility and duty.
7. **Honesty and Sincerity:** Avoidance of pretentiousness and self-satisfaction signifies an honest and sincere demeanor.
8. **Helpful and Empathetic:** The efforts of Nur Students to assist each other, to share each other's concerns, and to strive to teach reflect their helpfulness and empathic qualities.
9. **Application of Religious Consciousness:** The truths of faith should be placed at the center of one's life, and even in worldly affairs, these truths should be taken as the foundation.
10. **Openness and Transparency:** Actions such as disclosing one's whereabouts, addressing faults with grace and understanding, and welcoming guests with a smile denote openness and transparency.

We discern that Bediuzzaman Said Nursi was not merely an ordinary teacher; he was an artist of life, a moral guide. We understand that the light he diffused was not confined merely to ideas and thoughts but was also adorned with the subtleties of the heart, moral virtues, and humanistic values. When contemplating the invaluable testament that Nur Student Senior Disciple Abdullah Yeğin bestowed upon Risale-i Nur Students, ***we all once again recognized that this journey is not solely a process of gaining knowledge, but also a discipline process that seeks to shape character and make us better human beings.***

The moral path trodden traces the footprint of a human structure that sees oneself and others as a whole; it keeps at a distance from ego, arrogance, and know-it-all-ness and places humility at its core. The Nur Students' centering on the teachings of Risale-i Nur, rather than on themselves; their voluntary participation in challenging tasks; their endeavor to help, to share burdens, and to teach; and their demonstration of themselves as equals by always considering Allah's satisfaction; all form the basis of our examination.

On the journey of Risale-i Nur, these values that each one of us needs to apply in our daily lives and which will enhance moral maturity add profound meaning to the identity and character of the Nur Students. The way in which a Nur Student defines themselves points to the necessity of their story being unique. This story should be crafted with a minimum of moral principles such as not exposing another's mistakes, always being helpful to those around, staying aloof from worldly affairs, and turning every conversation towards the truths of faith.

As Nur Students, we are learning to detach ourselves from worldly affairs and personal interests, to cleanse ourselves from the weight of arrogance and ego, to care more about things beyond ourselves,

and to act with empathy and humility. We are enhancing our capacity to transcend the limits of our own ego and become part of a larger whole.

The minimal moral values that Bediuzzaman, through the mediation of Abdullah Yeğın, sought to instill in the Nur Students, are in fact universal principles that all of humanity should adopt. They serve as a guide to improve ourselves and others, and to make the world a better place. We appreciate these values and are grateful for the expansion and enrichment of our teachings in this manner.

Each one of us sees that we have a greater potential for change on an individual and societal level when we carry these moral principles into every area of our lives. We are called to embark on this inspiring journey to make a positive impact in our inner world and the world around us. Therefore, we should collectively continue on this significant and valuable journey.