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**THE RECONSTRUCTION OF ISLAMIC
THOUGHT IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
AND BEDIUZZAMAN SAID NURSI**

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by Şükran Vahide

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Bediuzzaman's Ideas on the Language Aspects of the Qur'an's Miraculousness

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In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

I expended great effort, after learning of Bediuzzaman's knowledge, to find anyone similar to him among the scholars of the early period and those who came later, and I understood finally that it was difficult to compare any Islamic scholars with him or to find any resembling him. For among the earlier scholars of the Umma, Bediuzzaman was neither the most virtuous, nor the one with the most advanced knowledge; there have been many thinkers, mujahids, scholars, and specialists in law through out the history of Islam who will be remembered with honour and respect as long as the world continues. But with all aspects of his life, both public and private, and his knowledge, learning, extensive powers of reasoning, his striving in God's way, and his cause, Bediuzzaman has a place of his own in the Umma. He grasped the Islamic culture of the past in its entirety, embraced all the new developments of the age in which he lived, and without denying the legacy of the past or ignoring the new, brought together in himself the old and the new in perfect harmony.

It might occur to one that Bediuzzaman's knowledge was one-sided, and that he had the capacity to extend a limited knowledge. For he was a man of striving, who had a cause, and offered guidance. He had to acquire the knowledge he could utilize in his striving and cause. This need could have been met by the

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sciences of Islam and the Shari'a like Qur'anic exegesis, Hadith, and *fiqh* (jurisprudence). Anyone who studies the learned works he produced carefully will lose any anxieties concerning his knowledge of the necessary sciences. For he had extensive knowledge of the modern sciences, in addition to profound knowledge of the sciences of the Shari'a.

One aspect of Bediuzzaman's extensive learning was his profound knowledge of the Arabic language together with its grammar and syntax, and rhetoric, and his thorough grasp of its philological aspects, literature, prose, poetry, and similar parts. When he speaks of grammar and syntax, he is the Mibrad of his times, when he speaks of the Arabic language, he is the Khalil of his age, when he speaks of Arab eloquence and the Qur'an's miraculousness, he is the al-Jurjani of the 'ulama and the al-Sakkaki of the eloquent.

I have attempted to write this paper fearing that I would not obtain sufficient information and material. Thus, so that I would feel confident about presenting a paper of sufficient weight as regards both content and length, I was obliged to make extensive research into all branches of the Arabic language such as grammar, philology, and rhetoric. In Part One I have discussed various aspects of Bediuzzaman's life so that the matter discussed in the paper will be worthy of being presented on the Panel. At the end of the paper I said: "An observation: this paper may be changed if necessary." This is the best justification for any changes that may be made in the discussions of the paper. Doubtless, it would not be desirable to write long discussions about all the branches about which Bediuzzaman had knowledge, eloquence, grammar and syntax. It is most appropriate to study his treatment of eloquence (rhetoric). In fact, if someone was to write a scholarly article on this, he could earn for himself the title of 'Master' or 'Doctor.'

PART ONE

(is about Bediuzzaman's life, and is not included here)

PART TWO

The language aspect of the Qur'an's Miraculousness according to Bediuzzaman

Through an extraordinary instance of Divine grace, Bediuzzaman spent the first years of his life as a student, from 1882-1888, studying the Arabic language. He did not study only grammar at this time, as we may understand from the following conversation he had with the well-known Fethullah Efendi. Molla Fethullah said to Molla Said:

"Last year you were studying Suyuti (that is, *Kitāb al Bahjat al-Marḍiyya fī Sharḥ al-Alfiyya*), are you studying Molla Jami this year?"

Molla Said replied that he had finished 'Jami.' Then Fethullah Efendi was amazed, for whichever book he asked about, he received the same answer; he

could not understand how Molla Said had studied so many books in such a short time. So he tested the young Molla Said. And when he received convincing answers to all his questions, his amazement increased even further.

This anecdote shows Bediuzzaman's knowledge of the Arabic language, and its grammar, syntax, and rhetoric, and how much he loved the language. For he received great pleasure from the sweetness of the Qur'an and the beauties of the Arabic styles, and he believed that it was the language of worship, the means to gaining God's pleasure.

Anyone who studies the *Risale-i Nur* closely will see that the miraculousness of the Qur'an in respect of language is dealt with extensively and convincingly. This doubtless shows its conciseness and his expertise and subtle insight into the Arabic language. It would need much time and space to explain this aspect fully, so I shall suffice with giving some examples, especially of those subjects illustrating his view, choices, and detailed interpretation (*ijtihad*).

The Arab letters in the Qur'an

It was Bediuzzaman's opinion that Almighty God had given each Arabic letter in the Holy Qur'an a miraculous meaning and that only specialists and those with knowledge of them could understand these. He explained them with examples from various verses.

• The Arabic letters at the beginning of some suras

Bediuzzaman said that Almighty God made the 'disjointed letters' the openings to a number of suras and deposited in them numberless instances of miraculousness, in regard to both language and meaning. They had left speechless with wonder the most eloquent orators of the age in which it was revealed.

Bediuzzaman said the following when expounding *Alif. Lām. Mīm.*, the beginning of Sura al-Baqara:

Firstly: Together with their brothers, the letters at the start of the *Alif. Lām. Mīm.* suras, form half the consonants. These letters are basic elements of all words. At the same time, the number of these single letters at the start of suras is seventy-eight. If those which are repeated are disregarded, fourteen letters remain. These are *alif, lām, mīm, šād, rā', kāf, hā', yā', ṭā', sīn, ḥā', qāf, nūn, 'ayn.*

"1. Not counting the quiescent *alif*, the number of letters in the alphabet is twenty-eight. The Qur'an of Mighty Stature mentioned half of them at the start of suras and left half.

"2. The half the Qur'an took, are more frequently used than those it left.

"3. Among the letters mentioned at the start of suras, the Qur'an most repeated *Alif. Lām.*, which are the easiest on the tongue.

"4. The [number of] suras in which the Qur'an deposited the letters corresponds to the number of letters of the alphabet.

"5. Half of each sort of the pairs of the letters of the alphabet were again taken, (...) like the concealed (*mahmūsa*), the emphatic (*majhūra*), the stressed (*shadīda*), the soft (*rakhwa*), and the *musta'liya, munḥafīza, munṭabaqa, and munḥafīḥa* letters. (...)

"6. Of those which have no pairs (*awtār*), few have been taken of the 'heavy' and more have been taken from the 'light,' like the tremolo (*qalqala*) and labiolinguals (*dhawlāqiyya*)."¹

Bediuzzaman used the term *azwāj* (pair) for letters bearing opposite characteristics and *awtār* for letters that were not thus.

Bediuzzaman attempted other ways of proving the miraculousness of the Qur'an's letters, some of which are as follows:

"Through showing the material and source of the art to those it addresses, the disjoining and enumerating of these letters challenges those who seek to dispute it. It says: 'I made miraculous art from the order and embroideries of these letters that you see. What can you say to this?', alluding to their insulting verbal assaults."

"The mention of these letters, stripped of meaning, indicates that its opponents have been left without proof. Yes, through the tongue of these meaningless letters, the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition proclaims: I don't want elevated speeches and addresses from you expressing eloquent meanings and truths. Just compose the like of these letters I have enumerated; what you compose may even consist of lies and stories!

"Spelling out letters syllable by syllable is particular to learners (*mubtadī*) of reading and writing. It is understood from this that the Qur'an is acting as teacher to an illiterate people and primitive (*mubtadī*) environment."²

"Mentioning letters by their names, for example, *alif. lām. dāl.*, is a method followed by scholars and writers. It is understood from this that since both speaker and listener were unlettered, these phrases did not spring from the one saying them and were not his property; they came to him from somewhere else."³

The order of the letters

Bediuzzaman sees the order of the letters in the words of the Qur'an as one of the reasons for the clarity and eloquence of its words, and as an example of this gives verse 154 of Sura Al-i 'Imran. In this verse, Almighty God says:

Then after the distress He sent down on you a feeling of peace and drowsiness, which overcame a group of you... For God knows best the secrets of your hearts.

Bediuzzaman expounded the miraculousness of these Arabic letters as follows:

"In this verse, all the letters of the alphabet are present. But, see, although all the categories of emphatic letters are together, it has not spoilt the smoothness of style. Indeed, it has added a brilliance and harmonious, congruent and eloquent melody issuing from varied strings. Also, note carefully the following flash of eloquence: of the letters of the alphabet, *alif* and *yā'*, since they are the lightest and have been transposed with one another like sisters, they have each been repeated twenty-one times."⁴

1. For examples of this, see, Nursî, Bediüzzaman Said, *İşârâtü'l-İ'caz*, Istanbul, Sözlür Yayınevi 1978, 32ff.

2. Ibid., 33-4.

3. Ibid., 34.

4. For examples, see, Nursî, Bediüzzaman Said, *Sözlür*, Sözlür Yayınevi 1980, 351-2 / *The Words* [Eng. trans. Şükran Vahide], Sözlür Publications 1992, 389-90.

The Arabic wording of the Qur'an

Bediuzzaman paid great attention to the Arabic wording, stating that all the Qur'an's words had been placed with a very fine balance, and that each of its phrases, and words, and even its letters and sometimes even the pauses possessed many different aspects. It presents numerous aspects so that all those it addresses can enter it through the various doors of its verses and receive their share and pleasure.

As an example of this, Bediuzzaman gives the verse *And the mountains [its] pegs*⁵ explaining that it contains different aspects for each class of those it addresses.⁶ Numerous other examples of this are to be found in the Qur'an.

Transition from the true, literal meaning of the words to the metaphorical, conventional meaning

It is well-known that words themselves bear their original meanings, and the Arabs used words with their original meanings in the true sense. But in time the language developed, and these words came to have legal, customary and other usages, and acquired technical meanings. Thus, because of the tie between their true meanings and metaphorical meanings, such words started to be used metaphorically.

Scholars of the Arabic language attached great importance to this matter, discussing it in their works. One of these was Abu'l-Husayn Ahmad b. Faris, who died in 39/659-60. In his work *al-Şahābī*, he discussed the subject at length, allotting it a section entitled Chapter on Arab Practices Concerning Speech and Metaphor.⁷ In addition, in the section entitled Chapter on Metaphor, he mentions the Arabs' rules on metaphor, saying that they applied these by using a word in different contexts, for example, when they thought about leaving, they said: "The staffs have been split." Similarly, as an example of this art in the Qur'an, he cited the phrase "What! Shall we indeed be returned to [our] former state?"⁸

Bediuzzaman mentions the same subject while discussing the phrases "the Merciful, the Compassionate" in "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate." As follows:

"If you say: like their similes Merciful and Compassionate, tender-heartedness for example, is impossible to use when referring to God, and I want to conclude something from them; what is the reason for the metaphor?

"*The Answer:* it is the wisdom of parabolic illustration; and it is Divine condescension to human intellects; making something familiar to the mind and making it understand, like one speaks to a child with what he is accustomed to and familiar with. The mass of the people gather their information from their senses and they do

4. For examples, see, *Sözler*, 351-2 / *The Words*, 389-90.

5. Qur'an, 78:7.

6. *Sözler*, 363 / *The Words*, 402-3.

7. Ibn Fāris, *al-Şahābī*, 321.

8. Qur'an, 79:10.

not look at sheer truths except in the mirror of what they imagine them to be and from the point of view of that to which they are accustomed. Moreover, the aim of the phrase is to convey the meaning, and this is not achieved except by affecting the heart and emotions, and by clothing the truth in a style familiar to the one addressed; in this way his heart is prepared to accept it."⁹

The word '*al-Dīn*' and its philological and Shar'ī meanings

In Arabic, the word *dīn* carries the meanings of requittal, reward and punishment. It is said: "I rewarded you and gave you requittal for what you did." Similarly, *Yawm al-Dīn* means "the Day of Requittal; the day on which recompense shall be given for what has been done." There is the saying in Arabic, "It shall be done to you what you have done."¹⁰ The word *dīn* also holds the meaning of 'obedience.' Amr b. Kulthum said:

"We were deceived by those days on which we were honoured;

"We rebelled against the king when we should have obeyed him (*nadīnā*)."

It also bears the meaning of 'custom' and 'mark'. The Arabs say: "Our '*dīn*' and customs are still thus." Arabic scholars mention other meanings for the word besides these.¹¹

Bediuzzaman gave two meanings for the phrase revealed by God, *Yawm al-Dīn*. One of these was philological and one connected with the Sharī'a. He stated that the philological meaning of the word *dīn* is requittal, that is, it refers to the Day when requittal shall be given for all deeds, whether good or bad. Regarding its Shar'ī meaning, this refers to the totality of the truths of religion and Divine order which God has burdened on man, according to which man has recourse to causes, bringing about their effects. Similarly, he establishes connections between them and his deeds, words, and beliefs.¹²

Bediuzzaman's choice of words

As far as is possible, Bediuzzaman chooses between the various indications of the Arabic words, setting forth as much of the meanings as he can, and sometimes choosing one meaning rather than the others. For example, in Arabic, the word *rabb* expresses meanings like 'lord' or 'one who has rights over something.' The *rabb* of something is therefore its owner and master. It may be used for those other than God on condition it is restricted. The expression *al-rabb al-muṣliḥ* is used for someone if he puts something in order, adjusts it, or makes it thrive.¹³

Bediuzzaman chose the latter meaning of the word *rabb*. He wrote:

"That is, the One Who sustains the universe together with all its parts, each of which is like a world within a world, and with all its atoms, like its stars dispersed, in motion, in order."¹⁴

9. *İşârâtü'l-İ'caz*, 16.

10. *Lisân al-'Arab*, xiii, 169.

11. *Ibid*.

12. *İşârâtü'l-İ'caz*, 20.

13. *Lisân al-'Arab*, i, 399.

14. *İşârâtü'l-İ'caz*, 18.

Additions to the words' meanings

Bediuzzaman employed various means of setting forth the miraculousness of the Qur'an's words. One of these was expanding the philological meaning of a word and trying to make its meaning include a larger group of those it addresses, speakers, and those not present.

In the Divine words *Ihdinā al-ṣirāṭ* (Guide us to the [Straight] Path),¹⁵ we find the meaning of right-guidance as the meaning of guidance, and the way of guidance is made clear. Guidance is 'not deviating from the right way' (*rashād*), the opposite of misguidance.¹⁶ Bediuzzaman adds to these meanings and expounds the verse in four different ways: Guide us! meaning:

"Consolidate us if we are a society;

"Increase us if we a community;

"Make us successful if we are a tribe;

"Give to us if we are as a family."¹⁷

Including a word in the meaning of another (*taḍmīn*)

Taḍmīn is one of the styles employed by the Arabs. Scholars are punctilious in discussing this style. It means including one word in the meaning of another and thus changing its channel. There are numerous purposes in doing this, one of which is to express two meanings simultaneously. This is more powerful than expressing a single meaning. If a verb is intransitive and its implicit meaning is transitive, the verb will then be transitive. It could be the reverse of this: in one way a verb might be transitive, then according to its meaning be doubly transitive. In such a case, both meanings would be possible.

For example, *ḥafara*, to dig, is a singly transitive verb. But in the form of 'I dug a well' it becomes doubly transitive, because its implied meaning is *ṣayyara*, to make (something into something else). Thus, it could be used as "I dug a well in the middle of the house." Here, because the word 'well' is not implied rather than the pronoun 'who' (*man*), it is not defined as definite.

Also for example, the verb *ʿazama*, to be resolved, decide, is an intransitive verb, but if it is used in the sense of 'intend to' it becomes transitive. The following verse has this meaning: *nor resolve on the tie of marriage*.¹⁸

As the scholars of language said, *taḍmīn* is not the implication of a missing syntactical part (*taqdīr*).¹⁹

Bediuzzaman mentioned this subject while expounding the verse *God has set a seal on their hearts*.²⁰

"The verb *khatama* (to seal) being mentioned with the preposition *ʿalā* (on) despite being a transitive verb, hints that it is not the door of the sealed-up heart which

15. Qur'an, 1:5.

16. *Lisān al-ʿArab*, xv, 353.

17. *Ishārāt al-Ijāz fī Miẓān al-Ijāz* [Arabic—*taḥqīq*: Ihsan Qasim al-Salihi], Istanbul, Sözlür Yayinevi 1994, 31.

18. Qur'an, 2:235.

19. For further details of *taḍmīn*, see, Suyūṭī, *al-Ashbāh wa'l-Naẓā'ir fī'l-Nahw*, i, 241-253.

20. Qur'an, 2:7.

looks to this world that is blocked up, but its door which looks on the hereafter. Similarly, it indicates that it includes being stamped or stigmatized, which expresses the allusive meaning of being sealed. It is as if that stamp, that seal, is stamped permanently on their hearts and is an ineradicable sign which is continually visible to the angels."²¹

The same interpretation might be applied to the following verse: *Then let those beware who withstand the Messenger's order.*²² Here, the verb *khalafa* (oppose, withstand) comprises the verb *kharaja* (to go out, depart, secede), and while being intransitive has become transitive, having the meaning of "Those who go out from or abandon his Sunna or practices."

PART THREE

Bediuzzaman's views on the Qur'an's miraculousness from the grammatical point of view

I mentioned at the beginning of Part Two that Bediuzzaman started to study the sciences of the Arabic language at an early age and that he mastered these in all their depth. In this part, I shall discuss his mastery of grammar and syntax and give examples proving his proficiency in this and how he set forth the Qur'an's miraculousness in respect of the rules of Arabic grammar. Bediuzzaman started the study of grammar at truly a very early age, and memorized the chief texts of this science and their commentaries. His study of grammar and syntax was restricted to a few years, and moreover, he studied no other sciences related to the Shari'a besides this. For he stated that the linguistic sciences were fundamental to understanding the sacred texts and injunctions of the Shari'a.

Bediuzzaman's views on Arabic grammar and syntax

Bediuzzaman said:

"Syntax has a philosophy similar to the philosophy of the science of style. It shows the wisdom of its author. The things mentioned in the books of syntax are established on well-known relationships. For instance, there cannot be two 'doers' in a single thing 'done.' And the word [interrogative particle] *hal* cannot contain itself in patience when it sees the verb; it wants to be united with it. Moreover, the 'doer' is powerful, seizing the [orthographical sign] *damma*, which is powerful, for itself. The matter is a reflection of the external laws in force in the universe.

"*Reminder:* Even if they do not have the value of the philosophy of the science of style, this clear wisdom of these syntactical and grammatical relationships is still great. For instance: through induction, they transform the scriptural (transmitted) sciences, which are constant, into the forms of the speculative sciences."²³

The definite article (*al*)

Grammarians defined the definite article as being of three sorts:

21. *İşârâtü'l-İ'caz*, 85.

22. Qur'an, 24:63.

23. Nursî, Bediuzzaman Said. *Muhâkemat*, İstanbul, Sözlük Yayinevi 1977, 92.

1. That used to define 'ahd, that is, 'something known.'

2. That used to define 'sort' (*jins*).

3. That which denotes generality (*istighrāq*).

• There are two sorts of definite article used for 'ahd.

a) *al-'Ahd al-dhikrī*: as in this verse: "God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is as if there were a niche and within it a lamp; the lamp enclosed in glass; the glass as it were a brilliant star."²⁴

b) *al-'Ahd al-dhihnī*: as in this example: like your saying: "The judge has come" when there is an agreement or compact between you and the person you are addressing concerning a particular judge.

• As for the definite article used to define 'sorts', it is used to describe something without regard to individuals, as in the verse: "We made from water every living thing."²⁵ Similarly, in the expression "men are better than women," the superiority of one sex over the other is being mentioned.

• There are two sorts of definite article called '*istighrāq*':

a) *Istighrāq* with reference to individuals as they are in reality (expresses generality), as in the verse: "For man was created weak."²⁶ The mark of this is its being correct in respect of all aspects of that reality.

b) *Istighrāq* with reference to the attributes of individuals. An example would be the phrase: "You're a good person." This has the meaning of your having the characteristics of someone worthy of respect. So its referring metaphorically to all aspects is correct.²⁷

Scholars have put forward two opinions concerning the definite article in the verse *Wa ūlā'ika humu'l-muflīhūn* (And it is these who shall prosper).²⁸

First view: It is used for an external '*ahd al-dhikrī*, and has the meaning of "the God-fearing people made known to you will be saved in the hereafter."

Second view: The definite article is used to define 'sort' and specify a fact, and the situation of those saved, which they deserve, is described. Another example is if you ask your friend: "Do you know the lion and the mountain it is on, for you are going too far like that?"²⁹

Bediuzzaman subscribes to the second view, when he writes:

"The definite article in *al-muflīhūn* alludes to its depicting their true state. It is as though it is saying through the tongue of disposition: if you want to see the true state of 'those who shall prosper,' look in the mirror of *ūlā'ika*, and it will be represented to you. Or else it alludes to their being specified. It is as if it is saying: if you want to recognize "those who shall prosper," consider the *ūlā'ika*, for they are within it. Or else it alludes to the statement being clear and self-evident."³⁰

24. Qur'an, 24:35.

25. Qur'an, 21:30.

26. Qur'an, 4:28.

27. Ibn Hishām, *Sharḥ al-Qur'*, 113; *Sharḥ al-Ashmūnī*, i, 186.

28. Qur'an, 2:5.

29. Zamakhsharī, *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf*, i, 147.

30. *İşârâtü'l-l'caz*, 69.

Indefinite nunation (*tanwīn*) as a 'substitute' (*'iwaḍ*)

Scholars of Arabic stated that there are numerous sorts of 'nunation' attached to nouns, one of which is the *'iwaḍ tanwīn*. It is used in place of an omitted letter, word, or phrase. An example of an omitted letter is in the nominative and genitive of the word *qāḍī*, a judge, which are written *qāḍīn* in stead of *qāḍīyun* and *qāḍīyin* respectively. An example of the *'iwaḍ tanwīn* in place of a word is the verse, *kullun āmana* (Each one [of them] believes),³¹ in which *kullun āmana* means *kullu vāḥidun āmana*. While an example of substituted sentence is the verse *wa antum ḥīna'idhin tanzurūn* (And the while you [sit] looking on).³² Here, "When the spirit reaches the throat" has been omitted.

Bediuzzaman makes an addition to the *'iwaḍ tanwīn*, which I reckon is novel. He uses it in place of an attribute. An example of this is the verse *ra'dun wa barqun* (thunder and lightning),³³ where it is "*ra'dun qaṣifun wa barqun khāṭifun*" (crashing thunder and flashing lightning).³⁴

The use of the *Yā'* and *Nūn* in *al-'ālamīn*

Almighty God says: *al-hamdulillāhi Rabbi'l-'ālamīn* (All praise be to God, the Sustainer of all the worlds).³⁵ When parsing the word *al-'ālamīn*, grammarians stated that the letter *yā'* was a substitute for the *kasra*, which is the mark of the genitive construction. However, they disagreed on the question of the *nūn*. Sibawayh and al-Mibrad stated that it was used in place of (*'iwaḍ*) the genitive *tanwīn* sign, prevented because of its being in the plural.³⁶

It may be said that the *nūn* is used in place of the genitive *tanwīn*, as was stated by al-Zujjaj.³⁷ The statements of the scholars of grammar about the use of the sound masculine plural, used for rational beings, is as above. The word *'ālamūn* was added to this plural, because the necessary conditions for a plural are not met here. Its singular is *'ālam*, and refers to other beings as well as rational beings. While the masculine sound plural is generally used only for rational beings. Thus it is declined like the plural suffix. The *yā'* is the sign of the inflection, while the *nūn* is a sign of the plural.

Bediuzzaman made a very subtle choice concerning this: both the *yā'* and the *nūn* are signs of the case endings like in the numbers twenty and thirty, *'ishrīn* and *thalāthīn*, and they are signs of the plural. The sign of the plural indicates that *'ālamīn* may be added to the masculine sound plural without meeting the conditions, as it is in *ahlayn*. And in may be a plural noun like *'ishrīn* and *ūlā*.

According to the first view, when declining the word *'ālamīn*, the *wāw* and *nūn* are nominative, and the *yā'* and *nūn*, the genitive and accusative. This is a declining it with the letters.

31. Qur'an, 2:285.

32. Qur'an, 56:84.

33. Qur'an, 2:19.

34. *Ishārāt al-I'jāz*,

35. Qur'an, 1:1.

36. *Kitāb Sihawayh*, i, 8; iii, 311: al-Mibrad, *al-Muqtaḍab*, i, 5.

37. al-Nuḥās, *I'rāb al-Qur'ān*, i, 120.

According to the second opinion, it is declined according to the apparent vowels (*harakāt*) of *nūn* and the necessity of the *yā'*, as in *hīna*. This was considered permissible by some grammarians like al-Farra'. He stated that this should be applied to both declinable and non-declinable words. Is this summary sufficient for making further analogies? The two views are these.³⁸

Pronouns of distinction (*ḍamīr al-faṣl*)

Pronouns of distinction are those by means of which the predicate is distinguished from a relative clause without the relative adjective (*sifa*), as in the example, *Zayd hūwa al-qā'im*, the one standing is Zayd. This is how the Basrans defined it. The Kufan scholars however disregarded the resemblance between the predicate and the relative clause without a relative adjective, and called it '*imād*', 'support', in reference to the thing on which the speaker based his statement.

The majority of the grammarians stated that these pronouns are not declined. Although they called them pronouns, this is only metaphorical and due to their similarity in form and construction.

It is said that these pronouns are nouns which are not declined, similarly to verbal nouns.

It is also said that they are nouns declined like the words preceding them.

It is also said that they are declined like the words following them.

Pronouns of distinction are in the nominative of the pronominal form agreeing with the second and third persons singular, dual, and plural preceding them.

There are numerous advantages in this, some of which are as follows.³⁹

i) First of all, they make it known that what follows them is not a relative clause without the relative adjective, but the predicate.

ii) Rather than tying the sentence together, they give force to what is being said.

iii) They limit or restrict the subject with what is being ascribed to it.

There are two ways of parsing the sentence forming the verse *wa ūlā'ika humu'l-muflīḥūn* (And it is these who will prosper):⁴⁰

The First: *Ūlā'ika* is the subject, *hum* is the second subject, and *al-muflīḥūn* is the predicate of the second subject. While the nominal clause is the predicate of the first subject.

The Second: *Ūlā'ika* is the subject and *al-muflīḥūn* is its predicate. *Hum* is a pronoun of distinction and is not declined.⁴¹

Bediuzzaman chose the second of these, stating that this pronoun was a pronoun of distinction, the use of which is to specify the subject by means of the

38. *Sharḥ al-Ashmūnī*, i, 97-8.

39. al-Subbān, marginal notes on *al-Ashmūnī*, i, 292.

40. Qur'an, 2:5.

41. al-Nuḥās, *I'rāb al-Qur'ān*, i, 133; al-'Akbarī, *al-Tibyān*, i, 21; al-Shihāb, marginal notes on *al-Bayḍawī*, i, 251; *Iṣṣārātū'l-l-'caz*, 67.

object. That is to say, those given the happy news that they will attain happiness are being specified by this pronoun, and this is being corroborated. There is at the same time in the pronoun an allusion to those who do not believe in the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Bediuzzaman therefore chose the school of those who said that the pronoun of distinction limited or restricted the subject in the absolute sense by the thing ascribed to it.

On the other hand, others said that the pronoun of distinction had the function of restricting only if the predicate was indefinite, and if it was not, the restriction of the subject had to be expressed by the predicate being qualified by the definite article (*lām al-jins*), then no need remained for the pronoun of distinction. As in the examples of *Zayd al-Emīr* and '*Amr al-Shujā'*'.

Omission of the subject

The necessary or permissible omission of the subject, and every governing part of a sentence having a place, are matters accepted by grammarians. Nevertheless, as Bediuzzaman said while expounding the following verse, the subject may be omitted: *hudan li'l-muttaqīn* (Guidance sure to those who fear God).⁴² Here, *huda* is the predicate of the omitted subject, Book. What is implied here is *hūwa hudan li'l-muttaqīn*. Bediuzzaman says that the subject and predicate have been combined, as though the subject is contained in its own predicate. In fact, they cannot be thought of as separate. This inseparable totality suggests that it is permissible to omit the subject.⁴³

Bediuzzaman's choice above, is one of six ways of parsing the verse. The grammarians stated that four of these put the subject in the nominative and two in the accusative. Those with the nominative:

i) *Hudan* is the predicate of *dhālika*. That is, what is meant is *Dhālika hudan. al-Kitāb* is the substitute of *dhālika*.

ii) *Hudan* is the second predicate, while the first is *lā rayba fīh*.

iii) *Hudan* is the subsequent subject, while *fīh* is its preceding predicate. al-Zujjaj stated its inferred order was *Fīhi hudan wa lā rayba*.

iv) *Hudan* is the predicate of the omitted subject. This is Bediuzzaman's view, described above.

To come to the accusatives:

i) *Hudan* has been put in the accusative with an implied *fatha*, for it is the 'state' or 'condition' (*hāl*) [which takes the accusative] of the pronoun in *fīhi*. That is, *lā rayba fīhi hāl ... hādīan* (there is no doubt that it is the giver of guidance)."

ii) *Hudan* is the 'state' (*hāl*) of *al-Kitāb* (the Book).⁴⁴

42. Qur'an, 2:2.

43. al-Baydawī, *Tafsīr*, i, 203; *Sharḥ al-Ashmūnī*, i, 224; *Iṣārātū'l-l-'caz*, 39.

44. al-Nuḥās, *I'rāb al-Qur'ān*, i, 130; al-'Akbarī, *al-Tibyān fī l'rāb al-Qur'ān*, i, 16.

Verbal noun predicates from the subject

According to Sibawayh and Jumhur, if a verbal noun is a 'state' (*ḥāl*), this is interpreted as a derivative. For example, *Zayd rakḍan* (*Zayd came running*), meaning, *jā'a Zaydun rākiḍan*. And another example, *Zaydun 'adala* (*Zayd is just*), meaning, *Zaydun 'ādilun*.

While expounding the verse, *hudan li'l-muttaqīn* (Guidance sure to those who fear God),⁴⁵ Bediuzzaman said that here the verbal noun is the predicate. *Hudan* is a verbal noun and is the predicate of the unexpressed subject. It is therefore interpreted as an active participle. Its implied form is *hūwa hudan li'l-muttaqīn*.

This view of Bediuzzaman alludes to the embodiment of the light of guidance and its being the very substance of the Qur'an.⁴⁶

Tamyīz al-Mahūl

Tamyīz (specification) refers to inanimate, indefinite, explicatory nouns.

The *tamyīz* defines the relationship. It may, or may not be, a 'state' (*ḥāl*). The following are examples of the former:

i) The 'state' of the subject of the verb: *Wa'shta'ala'r-ra'su shayban* (And the hair of my head doth glisten with grey).⁴⁷ Normally, *wa'shta'ala shaybu'r-ra's*.

ii) The 'state' of a passive participle: *Wa fajjarnā'l-arḍa 'uyūna* (And We caused the earth to gush forth with springs).⁴⁸ Normally, *Wa fajjarnā 'uyūna'l-arḍ*.

iii) The 'state' of a governed noun of a genitive construction: *Ana aktharu minka mālan* (More wealth have I than you).⁴⁹ Normally, *mālī aktharu mālin*.

An example of the latter above is *imtilā'u'l-inā'u mā'un* and *wa li'llāhi dur-ruhu fārisan*.

Bediuzzaman expounds the verse *Fazādahumu'llāhu maraḍan* (And God has increased their disease)⁵⁰ in the light of this point. He states that *marāḍan* is *tamyīz mufassir li'l-nisba*, but it is the 'state' (*ḥāl*) of the object of the verb. Normally, it would be *fazādahumu'llāhu marāḍahum*.

Bediuzzaman gives the Qur'an's miraculousness as the reason for this interpretation. For not only inner sickness of the heart is alluded to, but also the fact that the sickness affects the outer man and all his actions. As though this malignant sickness has spread to the whole body so that the person has become the sickness itself. With the wounds of this sickness worsening, so it increases in the very beings of those affected. He gives an example here of "the house is burning" (*ishta'ala'l-baytu nāran*). The meaning here is that having caught fire, the flames have spread to the whole house and it is burning furiously. It may not be

45. Qur'an, 2:2.

46. *İşârâtü'l-İ'caz*, 39; *Sharḥ al-Ashmūnī*, ii, 178.

47. Qur'an, 19:4.

48. Qur'an, 54:12.

49. Qur'an, 18:34.

50. Qur'an, 2:10.

said *ishta'ala nārun al-bayta*, because this expresses only the report of someone who has seen it.⁵¹

Replacement of prepositions

It is well-known by grammarians that on occasion prepositions may replace each other in order to express a particular meaning. There are numerous examples of this in the Qur'an and sayings of the Arabs. Almighty God says: *Idhā nūdiya li's-ṣalāti min yawmi'l-jumu'ati* (when the call is proclaimed to prayer on Friday).⁵² That is, *fi yawmi'l-jumu'ati*. Another example is, *Fa-raddū aydiyyahum fi afwāhihim* (but they put their hands up to their mouths).⁵³ That is, *ilā afwāhihim*. And another, *Wa la-qad naṣarakumu'llāhu bi-badr* (God helped you at Badr),⁵⁴ which should be *fi badr*.⁵⁵

Bediuzzaman discussed this matter in an unprecedented way as far as I understand it. He quotes from the grammarians and Sibawayh and lists the meanings of prepositions like *min* (from), *ilā* (to, towards), and *bā* (with). He was of the opinion that the prepositions have more allusive meanings than those listed under the heading of "joint allusive meanings." They may have only one meaning, but other meanings may emerge out of the various relationships between them. This is to be seen more in metaphors and other figures of speech. Like the word *'ayn*, which besides meaning 'eye,' may have other meanings like 'water source' or 'spring.'

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi says that prepositions may replace each other as the meaning requires.⁵⁶ He gives the verse *bi-mā unzila ilayk* (in the revelation sent to you)⁵⁷ as an example. He says this about the preposition *ilā*: "the use of *ilayk* instead of '*alayk* alludes to God's Messenger (PBUH) having undertaken the duty of messengership voluntarily, and to his being more elevated than Gabriel, since it was Gabriel who performed the duty of informing him of it. Because since '*alā* (on) does not express will, it suggests that the means of revelation is higher."⁵⁸

Bediuzzaman interprets the preposition *ilā* in the verse *Wa idhā khalaw ilā shayāfīnīhim* (But when they are alone with their evil ones)⁵⁹ as meaning *ma'* (with), and says *khalwatu ma'hu wa bihi and ilayhi*; that is, they gather together around the verb 'being alone.'⁶⁰

It is indicated here that governed by their weakness and impotence, they seek refuge and governed by corruption and trouble, they divulge the secrets of the believers to the disbelievers.⁶¹

51. *Ishārāt al-I'jāz* [Arabic], 96.

52. Qur'an, 62:9.

53. Qur'an, 14:9.

54. Qur'an, 3:123.

55. *Sharḥ al-Ashmūnī*, ii, 226.

56. *Ishārāt al-I'jāz* [Arabic].

57. Qur'an, 2:4.

58. *Iṣṣārāt al-I'caz*, 52.

59. Qur'an, 2:14.

60. *Lisān al-'Arab*, xiv, 238.

61. *Ishārāt al-I'jāz* [Arabic].

The partitive preposition *min* (from)

Bediuzzaman expounds the *min* in the verse *Wa mimmā razzaqnāhum yunfiqūn* (and spend out of what We have provided for them)⁶² as follows: "The partitive *min* alludes to the rejection of wastefulness, the precedence of *mimmā* to almsgiving being out of one's own property and not other's, and *razzaqnāhum* to there being no imposition of obligation. For the giver is God, and His servant is [only] the means."⁶³

The 'connected word' and the genitive in *Bismillāh*

It is established by the rules of grammar that in order to express the required meaning both elements of the genitive construction have to be connected to either a verb or a derivative of a verb. The word connected to the genitive elements may be either general or particular, and these may be a verb or a derivative. The verb may be imperfect or imperative, and it may either precede or follow the genitive construction.

When particular, the connected word may be expressed, or if it indicates itself, may be omitted. When general, it is usually omitted, since it is clear.⁶⁴ Examples of general verbs are *kāna*, *istaqarra*, *thabata*, *ḥaṣala*, and *wajada*; and of derivatives, *kā'in*, *mustaqarrun*, *thābitun*, *ḥāṣilun*, and *mawjūdun*.

If something particular and specified is mentioned in a sentence, the connected word has to be appropriate to the meaning signified by the preposition.⁶⁵

The *bā'* of *bismi'llāh* is connected with an omitted word. However, scholars have disputed its meaning. Their views are as follows:

i) Some scholars stated that the connected word is a particular imperfect verb, follows it, and is unexpressed. Zamakhshari said it should be: *bismi'llāhi aqra'u* or *atlu* (I recite or read in the Name of God).

ii) Others said it was a following particular verb in the past tense: *bismi'llāhi qara'tu* (I recited in God's Name).

iii) Still others stated that it was an implied imperative verb preceding the *bismi'llāh*: *Iqra'* or *iqra'u bismi'llāh* (Recite (sing. or pl.) in God's Name!) al-Farrā' said this, because "Almighty God put this first in order to urge His servants to perform this act."

In the above three instances of unexpressed words, the genitive construction has been made accusative by the verb.

iv) Some scholars of Basra stated that the connected word was an omitted verbal noun. The manner of its not being expressed was this: *ibtidā'i bismi'llāh*, I start in God's Name. The genitive construction is in the positive of the nominative here because it is the predicate of the unexpressed subject.⁶⁶

62. Qur'an, 2:3.

63. *İşârâtü'l-I'caz*, 47.

64. al-Shihān al-Khafājī, marginal notes on *Tafsīr al-Bayḍawī*, i, 32.

65. *Sharḥ al-Ashmūnī*, i, 212.

66. al-Nuḥās, *I'rāb al-Qur'ān*, i, 116.

In Bediuzzaman's opinion, the connected word of the *bā'* is an unexpressed verb. But this verb did not remain in a single mood, the imperative was implied. That is to say, *Qul bismi'llāh* (Say, in the Name of God!). Or a verb in the past tense was to be understood, for example, *Asta'īnu bismi'llāh* (I seek assistance in the Name of God) or *Atayammanu bismi'llāh* (I swear in the Name of God).

A following verb in the imperfect was unexpressed in the same way. That is, *Bismi'llāhi aqra'u* (I recite in God's Name).

It is understood from this that Bediuzzaman was in agreement with those who said that the particular verb which is the word connected to the *bā'*, is a verb which is unexpressed and either precedes or follows the *bismi'llāh*.⁶⁷

The connected word of the *lām* of *li* in *al-ḥamdulillāh*

The predicate may be an adverb or either parts of a genitive construction. For example, *Zaydun 'indaka* (Zayd is with you) or *Zaydun fi'd-dār* (Zayd is in the house). These have to have a connected word, so there may be a predicate and its pronoun is transposed to the adverb or genitive construction.⁶⁸

The unexpressed connected word may be either general or particular. In order that the subject of the sentence *al-ḥamdulillāh*, that is, *al-ḥamd* should have a predicate, scholars stated that active participles like *kā'in* or *thābit* or forms expressing generality were unexpressed.

It was Bediuzzaman's view that the connected word of the *bismi'llāh* had benefited from the meaning of the definite article, which infers particularity and specification. What is unexpressed here is the sentence *al-ḥamdu mukhtassun li'llāh* or *mustahaqqun li'llāh* (praise is particular or specific to God, or due to Him), which is an allusion to sincerity and the affirmation of Divine Unity.⁶⁹

The addition of *bā'* in the predicate of the negating *mā*

Bā' is a preposition and has numerous uses, one of which is its being added before the predicate following a negation. For example, *laysa Zayd bi-qā'im* (Zayd is not standing). The same construction is used in the verse *wa mā'llāhu bi-ghāfilin* (And God is not unmindful).⁷⁰ The preposition *bā'* is for intensification of the meaning.⁷¹

When expounding the preposition *bā'* in the verse *wa māhum bi-mu'minīn* (But they do not [really] believe),⁷² Bediuzzaman draws attention to two points. He says that the two sentences *mā Zaydun sakhīyun* and *mā Zaydun bi-sakhīyun* should not be confused, because the meaning of the first is that even if Zayd is a generous person he does not actually act generously, while the second means that he is not by nature generous and that even if he treats one well, he is not a

67. *Işârâtü'l-f'caz*, 13.

68. *Sharḥ al-Ashmūnī*, i, 209.

69. *Işârâtü'l-f'caz*, 17.

70. *Qur'an*, 2:74.

71. *Ibn Hishām, Muḡnī'l-Labīb*, i, 149.

72. *Qur'an*, 2:8.

generous person. Those referred to by the above verse are the dissemblers in particular, for even if they say that they believe, they have no innate propensity to believe.⁷³

The *hamza* of 'equalization' and *am* of 'equality'

The *hamza* of equalization (*hamzat al-taswiya*): this is part of a sentence, but it is replaced by the verbal noun, as in the verse, *sawā'un 'alayhim astaghfirta la-hum am lam tastaghfir la-hum* (it is equal to them whether you pray for their forgiveness or not).⁷⁴ That is, it is the same whether or not you pray for their forgiveness.⁷⁵

The 'linking' *am* (*am al-muttasila*): This is a particle which is together with what precedes and follows it and is not independent of either. It is also called the *am* of equality (*am al-mu'ādila*) since it is the equivalent of the *hamza* in expressing equality.

The *hamzat al-taswiya* is placed before the *am al-muttasila* only between two sentences and requires no answer. And the two sentences explain the two particles.⁷⁶

Sawā'un is a verbal noun meaning equal, equality, or sameness. It is qualified by this the same as other verbal nouns are qualified. Its meaning is then *mustawin* (equal, straight, even), as in the verse *Fī arba'ati ayyāmin sawā'un li's-sā'ilīn* (In four days, in accordance with [the needs of] those who seek [sustenance]).⁷⁷ What is meant here is *ayyāmin mustawiyatin*.

Bediuzzaman concludes the subtlety of the Qur'an's miraculousness from his discussion of this subject, giving the following verse as an example: *innā'lladhīna kafarū sawā'un 'alayhim a' andhartahum am lam tundhirhum lā yu'minūn* (As to those who reject faith, it is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them; they will not believe).⁷⁸ We may parse the sentences comprising this verse before mentioning Bediuzzaman's analysis of its grammatical parts and how he views their miraculousness.

i) *Sawā'un* is the predicate of *inna*. It is in the nominative because it is followed by the subject of a verbal clause (*fā'il*). It is as though what is wanted to be said is "It makes no difference whether or not you warn those who do not believe." However, objections have been made to this interpretation, because here a sentence is the subject, where, as al-Jumhur states, only a singular noun could be.

ii) *Sawā'un* is the subject (of a nominal clause). The clause following is the subject of the verb and replaces the predicate. The unexpressed meaning is "For them there is no difference whether or not you warn them." In this sentence, *sawā'un* and the phrase following it are the predicate of *innā*. It is permissible

73. *Ishārāt al-f'jāz* [Arabic].

74. Qur'an, 63:6.

75. Ibn Hishām, *Mughnī'l-Labīb*, i, 24.

76. Ibn Hishām, *Mughnī'l-Labīb*, i, 61.

77. Qur'an, 41:10.

78. Qur'an, 2:6.

for a verb to the predicate, for what is intended is its phrase, or an implied absolute phrase which may be extended. But its position is not intended altogether.

iii) *Sawā'un* is the preceding predicate and the clause following it, the subsequent subject. In its entirety, the clause is the predicate of *innā. Lā yu'minūn* has no place in this analysis, in which case the meaning is "your warning them or not warning them is of no difference for them."⁷⁹

If we take a close look at Bediuzzaman's views on this verse, we see that he preferred the third of the analyses. He said:

"It is because of this that it is indicated with the word *sawā'un* that your warning them is as fruitless as your not warning them. Since the *hamza* and *am* in the clauses *a' andhartahum am lam tundhirhum* express equality, they corroborate or strengthen the word *sawā'un*. Or, one meaning of equality is meant by the word *sawā'un*, and a second meaning of it is intended by the *hamza* and *am*. For it is either the means of equality, or it is fruitless, or it is the absence of a necessitating factor."⁸⁰

PART FOUR

The Qur'an's miraculousness in respect of eloquence, according to Bediuzzaman

With its parts of the significations of terms, grammar, and verbal embellishments, the science of eloquence is among the sciences of Arabic, its place in relation to those sciences being as the head is to the body. Concealed within eloquence are the mysteries of Arabic. While expressing the intended meaning, Arabic contains fine points add to the written or spoken word magic, beauty, and subtlety.

Eloquence is a science the rules of which have been laid down by scholars. In doing this, they have discovered the various aspects of the Qur'an's miraculousness, and gained understanding of its manner of exposition, the harmony of its words, its beauties, the fluency of its word-order, the faultlessness of its phraseology, the sweetness of its expressions, and the purity of its words. The Arabs were astonished at these and realized their inability to reach its level and powerlessness to produce its like. Despite all his arrogance, denials, and obduracy, one of them, Walid b. Mughira, exclaimed: "By God! What a sweetness it has, what a beauty! Below it is abundant water, above it abundant foliage. It is superior to all, there could be nothing superior to it. It is not the word of man!"

The scholars were enabled to comprehend the Qur'an's miraculousness by means of the science of eloquence, and to understand its superiority and that it was at a station unattainable by any science. One should not be surprised therefore at the *ulama* and investigative scholars of various centuries directing their attention to it, applying eloquence and its rules to the Word of God, and as a

79. See, Zamakhsharī, *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf*, i, 151; al-'Akbarī, *al-Tibyān*, i, 21; Ibn Hishām, *Mughnī'l-Labīb*, i, 189; Baydawī, *Tafsīr*, i, 266.

80. *İşârâtü'l-İ'câz*, 74-5.

result composing works on the subjects which its supreme miraculousness brought to light.

Bediuzzaman also studied the science of eloquence in depth, stamped his seal on the study of it and the Qur'an; he discussed profound truths related to the Qur'an's eloquence. Pushing open with God's help one by one the doors before it, he expounded the Qur'an's verses in unparalleled fashion in his works, in respect of eloquence, the Shari'a, and reason. Applying the rules of eloquence, he expounded the Qur'an's miraculousness. Anyone who finds the opportunity to study Bediuzzaman and his discussions of the Qur'an's eloquence closely will see that he is one of the great scholars of eloquence, just like Abu 'Ubayda Ma'mar ibn al-Muthanna, al-Jurjani, and al-Sakkaki.

I do not intend to discuss Bediuzzaman's views of the Qur'an's miraculousness with respect to eloquence in hasty fashion. I shall rather point out his ideas and points of view touching on a number of points as I see them, for one would have to write many volumes in order to be able to consider the subject in detail.

The eloquence of the Qur'an's word-order

The order of Arabic words is a question over which Arab scholars have exercised their minds. They have produced works in the fields of the miraculousness of the words and the Qur'an's eloquence. The first to study this in detail was Abu 'Ubayda Ma'mar ibn al-Muthanna.⁸¹ Shaykh 'Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani⁸² also wrote works illuminating this question, namely, *Dalā'il al-I'jāz* and *Asrār al-Balāgha*.

The question of word-order is dealt with at length in the latter two works. But the works of subsequent scholars concerning the eloquence of the word-order, and especially the word-order from the point of view of eloquence, have continued down to the present.

Some scholars have stated that the eloquence is focussed only on the Arabic words. Others have said that the eloquence has powerful ties in some aspects with the words, and in others with the meanings. They called these ties or relationships "word-order" (*naẓm*). This is the conclusion reached by al-Jurjani and those who succeeded him.

Eloquence is not found in the words alone. It is realized in the shadow of assemblages of words and meanings which have brotherly closeness. Words and phrases on their own cannot be a cause of miraculousness. On the contrary, miraculousness can be manifested only in the order of the words.⁸³

All the passages I quote from Bediuzzaman related to word-order are packed with meaning. For it was his opinion that the Qur'an's miraculousness looks to its eloquence and word-order. In two different works, he describes in the following way how the word-order is the basis of the miraculousness:

"Our aim in this work entitled Signs of Miraculousness is to expound the signs and

81. Died 206/821-2.

82. Died 471/1078-9.

83. al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il al-I'jāz*, 30.

indications of the Qur'an's miraculousness which look to its word-order, words, and phrases. For an important aspect of miraculousness is manifested in its word-order. And the most brilliant miraculousness consists of the embroideries of the Qur'an's word-order."⁸⁴

In another place, he says:

"This is the eloquence of the Qur'an, which is at the degree of miraculousness. Its eloquence is a wonderful eloquence born of the beauty of its word-order, the perfection of its conciseness, the marvels of its style, its singularity and pleasantness, the excellence of its expression, its superiority and clarity, the power and truth of its meanings, and from the purity and fluency of its language..."⁸⁵

Bediuzzaman describes the word-order like this:

"The natural channel of ideas and emotions is the order of the meanings. And the order of the meanings is strongly reinforced with logic. And logic's style is turned towards consecutive facts. The ideas that enter those truths penetrate the natures of those they face. And those natures assist the perfect order of the world, and seek help from it. Sheer beauty, the source of all loveliness, is included in the perfect order, and is the garden of the flowers of eloquence known as virtues and fine points. The garden of those flowers is the song of the nightingales called poets, who flutter in the gardens of creation, adoring the flowers. And what bestows harmony on the songs of the nightingales is the order of the meanings."⁸⁶

However, Bediuzzaman regrets that the weakening of the sense of eloquence has resulted in the degeneration of true eloquence into mere preoccupation with the words. He says:

"Inexperienced and puerile non-Arabs have attempted to pass themselves off as masters of the Arabic eloquence, and the matter has got out of hand... As a result, the order of the [mere] words, which is far too inadequate and dry to be a channel for ideas and a garden for the flowers of eloquence, has come to be on a par with the order of the meanings, their natural channel, and thrown eloquence into confusion."⁸⁷

The meaning of eloquence (*balāgha*)

In Arabic, the word *balāgha* infers arrival or reaching the desired point. When such a point is reached, one may say *balaghtu'l-ghāyata* (I have reached my goal). According to the terminology of the scholars of eloquence, however, there were two schools of thought:

i) According to the earlier school of scholars like al-Jurjani, it is a quality with which a speech may be qualified after the grammatical meanings between the words have been expressed in respect of their aims.⁸⁸

ii) According to the later school followed by Sakkaki, Ibn Athir, and those like them, it is speaking in conformity with what any situation demands, with all the parts of the speech being eloquently correct.⁸⁹

84. *İşârâtü'l-l'caz*, 11.

85. *Sözler*, 341 / *The Words*, 378.

86. *Muhâkemat*, 77.

87. *Ibid.*, 78.

88. al-Jurjani, *Dalâ'il al-l'jâz*, 30.

89. al-'Askari, *al-Şanâ'atayn*, 17.

Bediuzzaman preferred the latter of these:

"Eloquence consists of [speaking] in conformity with what is demanded by any situation. Those the Qur'an addresses are the various classes [of men] in the different centuries. In order to extend the conversation and dialogue to those centuries suitably to the classes, it omits things, thus making them general, and in many places leaves the order of the speech absolute. Due to this, aspects and possibilities which are excellent in the view of the scholars of eloquence and sciences of Arabic may multiply and every century all the classes may receive their share in accordance with their understanding."⁹⁰

In explaining the meaning of eloquence, Bediuzzaman says:

"The power and strength of a speech is achieved by its parts answering each other and its meanings assisting each other; by them all indicating the basic aim to its own extent; and by each pointing with its finger to that aim, representing the rule '*Our phrases are confused but your beauty is one, and all indicate your beauty.*' That is to say, the parts are like streams or ditches and the aim like a pool at the centre of them which seeks assistance from them."⁹¹

The miraculousness of the Qur'an's word-order in the *Bismi'llāh* and *Sūra al-Fātiḥa*

Bediuzzaman demonstrates the eloquence of Qur'an's word-order to be the basis of its miraculousness, and divides it into two; part of it he likens to 'ornament' (*hilya*), and part, to 'raiment' (*hulla*).

The First, like strung pearls, scattered adornment, and intricate embroideries, is the source from which issues the literal and grammatical meanings between the words.

The Second are like fine raiment or a robe of glory. It is a style appropriate to the meanings. The science of style (*'ilm al-bayān*), important for the questions of metaphors, had undertaken this.⁹²

Bediuzzaman paid great attention to the word-order so that almost to the exclusion of all else his discussion of the Qur'an's verse concerns the aspect of word-order and mystery of its miraculousness, between its words, between the verses, and the verses that precede and follow them. We shall give examples of these.

Bediuzzaman sees that the word-order in *bismi'llāh* contains degrees of the miraculous eloquence. We may list as follows the unprecedented order in this verse as he describes it:

(1) Bediuzzaman states that the word connected (*muta'allaq*) with the *bā'* in *bismi'llāh* is not restricted to a single form, and may be one of a number of verbs in either the perfect or imperfect tenses, or imperative mood, as the order dictates. He says:

"The *bā'* is related to the verb which is implicit in the meaning of *bā'*; that is,

90. *İşârâtü'l-İ'caz*, 50.

91. *Muhâkemat*, 83.

92. *İşârâtü'l-İ'caz*, 25.

asta'īnu bihi (I seek help from it), or the meaning usually associated with it, that is, *atayammanu* (I swear by it); or it is related to the unexpressed *qul!* (say!), which necessitates the subsequent *iqrā'* (recite!) to denote sincerity and the affirmation of Divine unity."⁹³

(2) "*Al-Rahmān al-Rahīm* (Merciful and Compassionate); their positioning: just as *Jalāl* (Glory) and its concomitants are manifested from the Name of Allah, so *Jamāl* (Beauty) and its concomitants become apparent from *al-Rahmān al-Rahīm*: Since Glory and Beauty are two sources, there appear in sequence from them by virtue of their being manifest in every world, branches like command and prohibition, reward and punishment, inducement and threat, glorification and praise, fear and hope, and so on....

"If you ask: The precedence of Merciful, which indicates great bounties, over Compassionate, which indicates minute bounties, is *ṣan'at al-tadallī*, while in *ṣan'at al-taraqqī*, the eloquence demands it is from the lowest to the highest?

"The Reply: Its being made subsequent in order to be completed is like the brows to the eye and the reins to the horse. Also, when the great depends on the minute, the minute gains the superiority, like the key to the lock and the tongue to the spirit. Moreover, the aim is to draw attention to the bounties, because the less explicit needs to be pointed out more. So *ṣan'at al-tadallī* is in the position of indebtedness and enumeration, and *ṣan'at al-taraqqī* is that of indication."⁹⁴

(3) Bediuzzaman says in connection with the above two attributes following the phrase "Sustainer of all the worlds" in Sura al-Fatiha, that their positioning displays a very fine point of eloquence. He says:

"There is a relationship necessitating the positioning of these two attributes (*al-Rahmān al-Rahīm*) in respect of what preceded them, which is that there are two fundamentals in raising and nurturing, one of which is the attraction of benefits and other, the repulsion of harm. These have been tied to each other since Merciful, which has the meaning of Provider, points to the first principle, and Compassionate, which expresses the meaning of All-Forgiving, indicates the second."⁹⁵

(4) Bediuzzaman states that there is a strong tie with the *Bismillāh* (In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate) and the *al-ḥamdulillāh* (All praise be to God) at the beginning of Sura al-Fatiha. He says that in the following phrase, that is, "the Merciful, the Compassionate," are two attributes alluding to the vast and subtle bounties of the Creator, and that these necessitate thanks and praise for the bounties. It is for this reason that these two attributes come immediately after "All praise be to God," and this sura comes right at the beginning of the Qur'an. Bediuzzaman says:

"In accordance with the verse *I did not create the jinn and men except that they might worship*,⁹⁶ worship is the purpose and aim of the universe's creation, and therefore of man's creation. Praise is a summary form and small copy of worship. 'All praise be to God' being mentioned here alludes to thinking of the purpose of creation."⁹⁷

93. *Ishārāt al-I'jāz* [Arabic], 25.

94. *Ishārāt al-I'jāz* [Arabic], 26.

95. *Iṣṣārātü'l-I'caz*, 19.

96. Qur'an, 51:56.

97. *Iṣṣārātü'l-I'caz*, 17.

(5) Bediuzzaman describes with great eloquence the aspects of the Qur'an's miraculousness which arises from its conciseness. This occurs through the diverse subtleties of the word-order, which is not only of one form. He says:

"The positioning of the Qur'an's words like pearls, is not on one string, but is in a multiplicity of embroideries resulting from the interweaving of lines of different relationships, close and distant, apparent and hidden. Because the basis of the miraculousness after the conciseness is this embroidery."⁹⁸

Bediuzzaman offers other examples to explain this further:

"For example, 'The way of those whom You have blessed' has a relationship with 'All praise be to God' because bounty is the corollary of 'All praise,' and with 'Sustainer of all the worlds' because perfect sustaining and raising is through continual bestowal of bounties; and with 'the Merciful, the Compassionate,' because the recipients of bounty—I mean the prophets, the martyrs who witness to the Truth, and the righteous—are a mercy to the worlds and evident examples of mercy; and with 'Owner of the Day of Judgement (*māliki yawmi'd-din*),' because religion (*din*) is the perfect bounty; and with 'do we worship,' because they are foremost in worship; and with 'do we seek help,' because they have been graced with success in response to their request for help; and with 'Guide us,' because according to the meaning of 'Follow their guidance,' [6:90] they are the best examples; and with 'the Straight Path,' because the straight path is restricted to their way."⁹⁹

(6) Bediuzzaman explains the positioning of the phrase 'Owner of the Day of Judgement' after the two attributes 'the Merciful, the Compassionate' in this way:

"It is as though it is the result of what precedes it, for mercy (*rahma*) is one of the proofs of resurrection and eternal felicity. For mercy can only mercy, and bounty can only be bounty when the Resurrection arrives and eternal felicity comes about. Otherwise, on the realization of eternal separation, intelligence, which is one of the greatest bounties, would be a calamity for mankind, and affection and compassion, which are the most refined kinds of mercy, would be transformed into severe pain."

Following this, Bediuzzaman says that the addition of 'Owner' to 'the Day of Judgement' is not to specify it, because God Almighty is the Owner of everything, but to exalt Him. In connection with the word 'Day' (*al-yawm*), he writes:

"And in the term '*al-yawm*' is an allusion to one of the conjectural signs of the resurrection, due to the evident correspondence between a day and a year, and the life of man and the cycle of the earth. So it is between the hands of the clock which count the seconds, the minutes, the hours, and the days. Similarly, the person who sees that one hand has completed its revolution will surmise that the function of the others is also to complete their revolutions, even if with delay. So too, the person who sees the repeated resurrection of the species in the examples of the day and the year will surmise that the spring of eternal felicity will be born on the morning of the Day of Resurrection for mankind, one individual of which is like the species."¹⁰⁰

98. *İşârâtü'l-l'caz*, 25.

99. *İşârâtü'l-l'caz*, 25-6.

100. *İşârâtü'l-l'caz*, 19.

(7) Bediuzzaman sees four matters in the verse 'You alone do we worship and from You alone do we seek help.'

Firstly: 'do we worship' is an elucidation and explanation of 'all praise,' and is the necessary result of 'Owner of the Day of Judgement.' For worship is an active interpretation of 'praise,' and due to the One Who is the Owner of the Day of Judgement.

Secondly: 'Do we worship' is in the first person plural of the imperfect tense because it includes three aspects of the attributes of worshippers, and embraces the following assemblages:

a) "We worship, all of us members and atoms of this microcosm, which is me, with the customary thanks which is the obedience of these members and atoms to that which they have been ordered."

b) "Secondly, all of us monotheists worship You through obedience to Your Shari'a.

c) "And all of us, the creation, worship Your supreme Shari'a of Creation, and we prostrate in bewilderment and love at the Throne of Your awesomeness and power."

Thirdly: The precedence of 'You alone (*ıyyāka*) in two places over the three assemblages is in order to specify and restrict, and is an allusion to sincerity, which is the essence of worship.

Fourthly: "The relationship of 'do we seek help' with 'do we worship' is like the relationship of wages with service, because worship is the right of God over His servant, and the help is His bounty for him... It is like the positioning of the precedent and the aim, because the help and grace are the preliminary to worship."¹⁰¹

(8) Bediuzzaman asks the following question concerning the differences in the three Qur'anic expressions:

"What is the reason for mentioning the following three words in different forms: *an'amta* (You have blessed or bestowed bounties on) as a verb, *al-maghḍūb* (have received Your wrath) as a passive participle, and *al-dāllin* (those who have gone astray) as an active participle? Also, what is the reason for mentioning the attribute of the third group, the consequence of the attribute in the second group, and the attribute's title in the first group in regard to its consequences?"

Again he himself provides the answer:

"The title of bounty is chosen because bounty is a delight to which the spirit inclines, and it is in the past tense to indicate that the mark of the Absolutely Generous One is that He does not take back what He gives. By demonstrating the custom of the Bestower of Bounty, it also alludes to the way of reaching what is requested, as if one was saying: since bestowing bounties is Your mark and You have bestowed bounty previously, bestow it on me too.

"As for 'Not those who have received your wrath,' by it is meant those who exceed the limits of the power of passion, and have committed injustice and

101. *Iṣṣārātü'l-l'caz*, 21-2; *Iṣṣārāt al-l'jāz*, 30.

depravity by abandoning the rules, like the rebellious Jews. Since there is in the essence of depravity and injustice an evil pleasure and a vicious pride which do not sicken the soul, the Qur'an mentions the consequence that does sicken it and which is the descent of God's wrath. The fact that a passive participle has been chosen implies continuation and this is an indication that rebelliousness and evil become ineradicable characteristics if they are not halted by repentance and forgiveness.

"As for 'And not those who have gone astray,' it means those who have strayed from the path because delusion and passion have overridden the intellect and the conscience, and they have fallen into hypocrisy through false belief, like the sophistry of Christianity. The Qur'an has chosen to describe thus because misguidance is itself pain, the soul is sickened by it, and the spirit avoids it even it has not seen the result. And an active participle has been chosen because misguidance will be misguidance so long as it is not halted."¹⁰²

The subject's (*musnad*) being either an verb in the imperfect or an active participle

An active participle is a derived word unlimited by time used to indicate a person qualified definitely. While an imperfect verb expresses a continuous situation or state in the present or future. Bediuzzaman therefore differentiates between verbs and participles for expressing an idea. For example, when expounding the verse, "*Indeed, we were mocking*,"¹⁰³ he says that because mockery is a constant state with them, and even an inseparable characteristic, the predicate (*musnad fih*) is an active participle. While in "*But God is mocking them*,"¹⁰⁴ the predicate's (*musnad fih*) being a verb in the imperfect is in order to indicate God's mocking them. This is so that such people will be pained by such expressions and be regretful. There is a similar situation in the verse "*Those who believe in the Unseen*," where the imperfect rather than the active participle is used.

The subject's (*musnad*) being indefinite

The scholars of eloquence stated that as necessitated by the rules of eloquence, at various places in a sentence the subject could be either definite or indefinite. One of the reasons for its being indefinite was to honour and exalt. This was also Bediuzzaman's view, and he mentioned it in various places, one of which is his discussion of the verse *hudan li'l-muttaqin* (Guidance to those who fear God):

"It is understood from the indefinite 'nutation' (*tanwīn tankīr*) that the Qur'an's guidance has reached a point so fine its reality cannot be perceived and it covers an area so extensive it cannot be comprehended. For the indefinite (*nakra*), which is the opposite of the definite (*ma'rifa*), arises from either intense concealment or wide appearance. It is in consequence of this that it is sometimes said that the indefinite form sometimes expresses insult, and sometimes exaltation."¹⁰⁵

102. *İşārātü'l-I'caz*, 29; *Ishārāt al-I'jāz* [Arabic], 36.

103. Qur'an, 2:14.

104. Qur'an, 2:15.

105. *İşārātü'l-I'caz*, 41.

A relative pronoun being definite

Required by the relative pronoun, an object may be definite, and expressing the present, its meaning becomes specific. For example, *Alladhī kāna mā'nā ams sāfara* (He who was with us yesterday set out on a journey). Its noun is therefore not definite. But if it has become specific in some other way, the relative pronoun has another purpose. This is the point on which the scholars of eloquence agree. One of the reasons for the relative pronoun is to warn the one addressed against error, as in the verse, *Innā'lladhīna tad'ūna min dūni'llāhi 'ibāda amthālikum* (Those on whom you call in place of God are servants like yourselves).¹⁰⁶ Another use of the relative pronoun is to exalt the one governed by it. For the object (*musnad ilayh*) is known by those listening. Bediuzzaman says that the verse *alladhīna an'amta 'alayhim* (Those whom You have blessed)¹⁰⁷ is an example of this:

"And in *alladhīna* —because it is a relative pronoun and it is the function of the relative pronoun to describe things known to the listener— is an indication to the exaltedness of their rank, and their brilliance, which illuminates the darkness of mankind, as if they are obvious to all listeners, even if they do not search or enquire."¹⁰⁸

*He who made the farthest heavens a building for us
The pillars of which are most lofty and high.*

Use of the perfect and imperfect tenses

One of the forms of eloquence and speech being in conformity with what the situation demands is the use of the perfect tense when intending the imperfect, and use of the imperfect when intending the perfect. Bediuzzaman explains this rule with the verse, *wa'lladhīna yu'minūna bi-mā unzila ilayka wa mā unzila min qablik* (And who believe in the revelation sent to you, and sent before your time).¹⁰⁹ *Yu'minūna* is a verb in the imperfect tense, and what is intended is *alladhīna āmanū*. Similarly, *unzila* is in the past tense, and what is intended is the imperfect, that is, *yunzilu*. Bediuzzaman continues:

"Concerning the matter *unzila*: it shows that belief in the Qur'an is belief in its being revealed by God. Likewise, it means belief in God, belief in God's existence, belief in the hereafter, and in the coming of the hereafter.

"Concerning the tense of *unzila*, which infers the past; it is an indication that the revelation of that which has not yet been revealed is as certain as that which has been. Moreover, the future alluded to by *yu'minūna* compensates for the deficiency resulting from *unzila*'s indication of the past. That is to say, even if it is not included in the comprehensiveness of *unzila*, the part which is not yet revealed is within that of *yu'minūna*. This question of revelation occurs in many places in the Qur'an. Sometimes the past (perfect) comes as a guest to the future. And sometimes the imperfect visits the country of the past (perfect). The eloquence of this is a very subtle:

106. Qur'an, 7:194.

107. Qur'an, 1:7.

108. *Isārātū'l-I'caz*, 26.

109. Qur'an, 2:4.

"When someone hears something which is in a tense that indicates the past although it has not yet happened, he feels an excitement in his mind and he comes to his senses; he understands that it is not only himself who is being addressed. There being behind him at various distances numerous different groups and ranks, it occurs to him that all of them as though hear the addresses and cries that are being directed at him."¹¹⁰

Conjunctions and the non-use of these

Bediuzzaman says that where sentences of the Qur'an are strongly tied to one another and are mutually bound, sentences are not connected by means of conjunctions. This is shown in the verses *Alif. Lām. Mīm. * Dhālika'l-kitāb lā rayba fih hudan li'l-muttaqīn* (Alif. Lam. Mīm. * This the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear God).¹¹¹ The sentences here are firmly tied to each other, and each is in harmony with the ones preceding and following it. Each is the proof of the other. In consequence, each is also the result of being the proof of another.

These are principles laid down by the scholars of eloquence, according to which, if sentences are restricted by conjunctions, it indicates that they will change. It is said: "Conjunctions necessarily cause change, only in this way can they be copulae between sentences."¹¹²

'*Ilṭifāt*'

The dictionary meaning of *ilṭifāt* is turning toward, regard, consideration. It is said: "*Ilṭafattu ilṭifātan*" or "*Ilṭafattu ilayhi*."¹¹³ As a technical term in rhetoric, it means a transition from the third persons to the second or first, or vice versa,¹¹⁴ as in the verses *ḥattā idhā kuntum fi'l-fulki wa jarayna bi-him bi-rīhin* (so that you even board ships—they sail with them with a favourable wind)¹¹⁵ and *Wa'llāhu'lladhī arsala'r-rīyāha fa-tuthīru saḥāban fa-suqnāhu* (It is God Who sends forth the winds, so that they raise up the clouds, and We drive them...)¹¹⁶

Ilṭifāt is one of the deeply-rooted Arabic styles, which confers beauty on a piece and instils it in the listener. Because passing from one style to another causes an excitement in the listeners. It therefore became an art-form with the Arabs.

Like other scholars, Bediuzzaman pointed out that the style of *ilṭifāt* is used in numerous places in the Qur'an, although this was not in connection with its being a miraculous aspect of its eloquence. One of these was in the verse *īyyāka na'budu* (You alone do we worship). For when considered together with what preceded it, *al-ḥamdu li'llāhi rabbi'l-'ālamīn*, it constitutes a transition from the

110. *Iṣṣārātü'l-f'caz*, 51-2.

111. Qur'an, 2:1-2.

112. *Iṣṣārātü'l-f'caz*, 39.

113. *Lisān al-'Arab*, ii, 84.

114. *Mu'jam al-Muṣṭalahāt al-Balāghiyā*, 94.

115. Qur'an, 10:22.

116. Qur'an, 35:9.

third person to the second. If this had not occurred, *ıyyāhu na'budu* would have been said.¹¹⁷

Taghlīb (making a word dominate in use over another)

Taghlīb is one of the doors opening onto the arts of the Arabic language. The Arabs make one thing dominate over another, also making the masculine dominate over the feminine. For example, mother and father are called *abawān*, the sun and moon, *al-qamarān*. The same rule makes single words dominate compounds, like the Caliphs 'Umar and Abu Bakr being called *al-'Umarān*.

Rational beings dominate other beings, as in the verse *yadhra'ukum fīhi* (by this means does He multiply you).¹¹⁸ The address here is to rational beings and animals. But rational beings are those addressed (second person) and dominate those absent (third person) and animals.

Another verse is *fa-minhum man yamshī 'alā baṭnihi* (of them there are some that creep on their bellies).¹¹⁹ Here the pronoun *man* is used to show the domination of rational beings over non-rational animals.

Bediuzzaman offers the word *'ālamīn* as an example of *taghlīb*. It is the plural of *'ālam* (world), and is used to refer to all beings, rational or otherwise, other than God. He says:

"As in the verse *ra'aytum lī sājidīn* (I saw them prostrate themselves to me),¹²⁰ here (in the word *'ālamīn*) too the plural particular to rational beings has been used for non-rational beings. Is this not opposed to the rules?

"No, for conceiving of the world as comprising members all of which are rational and with the power of speech is one of the most acceptable principles of eloquence. For the universe being called 'the world' is due to its pointing and testifying to, and indicating its Maker."¹²¹

The eloquence in the Qur'an's repetitions

The repetitions in the Qur'an are connected to its eloquence and miraculousness. Although repetitions in stories, injunctions, and other parts form a difficulty in so far as art is concerned, they renew the style and conceptions in respect of the conciseness and prolixity, and afford diversity in the expressions and their meanings.

Repetition fulfils a function connected with the self, for the thing repeated sinks into the unconscious, which psychology gives as the reason for a person's actions and reactions. We see the same thing in the means of advertising used by businessmen and marketing experts. For they continuously repeat their promotions in various ways thought to be most effective.

The repetitions in the Qur'an are directed more at establishing the tenets of b

117. *İşârâtü'l-I'caz*, 15.

118. Qur'an, 42:11.

119. Qur'an, 24:45.

120. Qur'an, 12:4.

121. *İşârâtü'l-I'caz*, 18.

elief and the Creator's unity than the matters of social relations and the injunctions of religion. Scholars do not see them as boring, mistaken, or opposed to art. On the contrary, the repetitions are eloquent and in conformity with what the situation requires. By means of repetitions, the Qur'an shows us a single truth in various positions and in new apparel. There is not the slightest conflict between these repetitions. On the contrary, they assist the perfection and ensure the wholeness.

Bediuzzaman discussed thoroughly the Qur'an's repetitions, and said they contained numerous meanings and statements. He says:

"*Al-ḥamdulillāh* has been repeated in four suras in the Qur'an, each repetition referring to one of the principle bounties, which are the first creation and the continuation of it (*al-Raḥmān*), and the last creation and its ensuing continuation (*al-Raḥīm*)."¹²²

In this way, Bediuzzaman describes the mysteries of the repetitions in summary form. But he does not offer explanations of where they are found and their aims. The absolute number of *al-ḥamdu* is anyway greater than this. If what is meant is the form *al-ḥamdulillāh*, it is repeated around forty times. I believe Bediuzzaman meant the form it is found at the beginning of suras. But with the addition of Sura al-Fatiha, the number rises to five. They are:

- Sura al-Fatiha: *All praise be to God, the Sustainer of all the worlds.*
- Sura al-An'am: *All praise be to God, Who created the heavens and the earth.*
- Sura Kahf: *All praise be to God, Who has sent to His servant the Book, and has allowed therein no crookedness.*
- Sura al-Saba': *All praise be to God, to Whom belong all things in the heavens and on earth.*
- Sura al-Fatir: *All praise be to God, Who created [out of nothing] the heavens and the earth.*

While touching on the subject of repetitions in the Qur'an, Bediuzzaman implies an objection, which he answers like this:

"Numerous verses like '*Then which of the favours of your Sustainer will you deny?*' and '*Ah woe, that Day*' are repeated. But such repetitions are opposed to eloquence and cause boredom?

"*The Answer:* Friend! Everything that shines is not blazing fire. Yes, repetition sometimes causes boredom, but this is not general; it does not include all speech and all books. Many apparent repetitions which are reckoned to be boring, are appreciated and applauded in the science of eloquence."¹²³

Comparison and allegory (*tashbīh*)

The dictionary meaning of *tashbīh* is to resemble or liken, such as *hādha shabiha hādha* (This resembles this). Its technical meaning is to find resemblances between one or more attributes and two or more things due to their shared qualities, in the way the speaker intends.

122. *İşârâtü'l-l'caz*, 16.

123. *İşârâtü'l-l'caz*, 31.

Comparison is an old-established style with the Arabs. Pointing out resemblances between two things aims to prove clearly and exaggeratedly the attribute qualified. As when it is said: "*Fulānun tushbiḥu fulānan fi't-tūl*" (So-and-so resembles so-and-so in height), or, *Innā'l-arḍa tushbiḥu'l-kurata fi'sh-shakl* (In shape, the earth resembles a ball). These examples illustrate the matter with great clarity.

Bediuzzaman considers comparison to be one of the most important aspects of the Qur'an's eloquence and miraculousness. Because through them, delusions are defeated by the reason and the imagination is compelled to obey thought. Thus, what is unseen becomes present, what is reasonable is felt, and the meaning is embodied. By means of comparison, the diverse are made whole, things jumbled up together combine, the various are united, things broken off from each other are joined together, the detached are armed.¹²⁴

According to Bediuzzaman, the aims of comparison are as follows:

i) Praise and applause, as in this verse, referring to the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH): *And their similitude in the Gospel is like a seed which sends forth its blade, then made it strong; it then becomes thick, and it stands on its own stem, [filling] the sowers with wonder and delight.*¹²⁵

ii) Censure, as in the verse: *His similitude is that of a dog: if you attack him, he lolls out his tongue, or if you leave him alone, he [still] lolls out his tongue.*¹²⁶

iii) Proof and deduction, as in the verse: *Their similitude is that of a man who kindled a fire; when it lighted all around him, God took away their light and left them in utter darkness, so they could not see.*¹²⁷

iv) Pride, while depicting grandeur and sublimity, as in the verse: *No just estimate have they made of God, such as is due to Him: on the Day of Judgement the whole of the earth will be but His handful, and the heavens will be rolled up in His right hand.*¹²⁸

v) Apology and excuse, as in the verse: *They say: "Our hearts are under veils, [concealed] from that which you do invite us, and in our ears is a deafness, and between us and you is a screen."*¹²⁹

vi) Admonition, as in the verse: *Here is a similitude; how rain and the growth which it brings, delight [the hearts of] the tillers; soon it withers; you will see it grow yellow; then it becomes dry and crumbles away.*¹³⁰

vii) Description and portrayal, as in the verse: *See you not how God sets forth a parable? — a goodly word like a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches [reach] to the heavens— * It brings forth its fruit at all times, by the leave of its Sustainer. So God sets forth parables for men, in order that they may receive admonition.*¹³¹

124. *Ishārāt al-I'jāz* [Arabic].

125. Qur'an, 48:29.

126. Qur'an, 7:176.

127. Qur'an, 2:17.

128. Qur'an, 39:67.

129. Qur'an, 41:5.

130. Qur'an, 57:20.

131. Qur'an, 14:24-5.

Bediuzzaman defines comparison like this: "The basis of comparison is simile, and the mark of similes is to arouse feelings of disgust, longing, desire, aversion, wonderment, and awe."¹³² In another place, he says:

"Know, O friend! The Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition sets forth its truths by means of comparison and allegory, for the abstract truths of the sphere of Godhead can be represented and made clear in the sphere of contingency only through similitudes. Contingent and wretched man looks at the similitudes in the sphere of contingency, and ponders over the works and states of the sphere of necessity above it."¹³³

PART FIVE

Bediuzzaman's method, style, and terminology

A scholar encounters great difficulties in defining the method that Bediuzzaman followed. Nevertheless, his method in respect of education, training, and conduct is as clear as daylight. He was a religious scholar, a specialist in *fiqh*, a Qur'anic commentator, and a regenerator of religion. He called people to the truth and to the straight path, and chose for himself a moderate way, free of all extremes. One would have to write another paper to discuss his method.

To come to the method Bediuzzaman followed in composing his works, it contains many various aspects and aims. For the works he produced were both books of ethics and morality, and of the tenets of belief, and Qur'anic commentaries and the sciences of the Qur'an, and of eloquence, grammar and syntax, and of Islamic thought, and books of the Prophet's biography and sciences of Hadith, and of similar branches of knowledge.

The method Bediuzzaman followed in the works he wrote have both general characteristics, and a number of particular characteristics, some of which are as follows:

i) The subjects Bediuzzaman discusses are based on the knowledge he acquired when studying in his youth. Many of his works are not based on one specific source, but on any number of them. This demonstrates his powerful mind, the profundity of his knowledge, and the speed with which he could utilize it. Another matter, which I find amazing, is that he wrote most of them without referring to any published work, or visiting the libraries stocked for research scholars, but on the battlefield and in prison. In my opinion, one of the many reasons for this scholarly ability of Bediuzzaman, was his *taqwa* before God Almighty in the question of knowledge and learning. This characteristic endowed him with a state of mind and spiritual animation, and a Divine limpidity, so that most of the sciences poured forth from his heart, confirming the verse: *So fear God; for it is God that teaches you. And God is well-acquainted with all things.*¹³⁴

132. *Ishārāt al-I'jāz* [Arabic].

133. *Mesnevi-yi Nûriye*, 96.

134. Qur'an, 2:282.

ii) Another of the characteristics of Bediuzzaman's method was his subtle use of the modern sciences in serving the Qur'an and calling to Islam, thus expounding the Qur'anic verses in a way that was convincing, in conformity with the understanding of the age, and might be sincerely submitted to by both the one teaching and the one learning.

iii) A further characteristic of his method was its comprehensiveness in setting forth the questions of the Shari'a, and in calling people to these and advising and admonishing them. Bediuzzaman's works address simultaneously intellectuals, ordinary people, and the learned, expressing the matters completely, yet in a way suitably to each. These works address all classes of men, generally and particularly. Whatever his rank or position, the reader thinks that Bediuzzaman is addressing only himself, and no one else.

iv) As far as I can see, most of the works he wrote on various subjects, pour into a single river, and from there flow into a single ocean, which is the Holy Qur'an. The purpose of all his works is to serve the Qur'an, whether by the sciences of Qur'anic exegesis, the Qur'an's miraculousness, ethics and the tenets of belief, or by those of philology, the Shari'a, reason, philosophy, history, economics, and others.

v) One of the most distinctive characteristics of the method Bediuzzaman followed is replying in certain, logical, and convincing manner to the people of misguidance and those who persist in denial; his silencing his enemies, and his inviting them to admit to the truth. In this way he defended Islamic thought and dispelled the seeds of doubt sown by the Qur'an's enemies.

Bediuzzaman's method in the questions of language

We see that Bediuzzaman defended Arabic in very bold fashion, despite its not being his native tongue. This shows us clearly his wide knowledge of its grammar and syntax, and the high level he reached in both its philological and rhetorical aspects while still very young. Indeed, very many matters connected with language are included in his books.

Because of his deep love of Arabic, he was pained at a number of things that had befallen the language. He complained of this saying, "Inexperienced and childish non-Arabs have attempted to infiltrate the literary masters of the Arabic eloquence, and the matter has therefore got out of hand."¹³⁵

We may say that a sign of Bediuzzaman's love of Arabic was his writing some of his works in the language, rather than Turkish or Kurdish. Examples of these are *Ishārāt al-I'jāz fī Mazānn al-Ījāz* and *al-Mathnawī al-'Arabiyya'l-Nūrī*, which comprises various treatises in Arabic, and a number of other works which Ihsan Qasim al-Salihi mentions in his introduction to these two works, which he annotated.

Bediuzzaman's passion for Arabic arose from his love of the Holy Qur'an, which God Almighty revealed in Arabic, and of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), whom He sent to all humanity as a warner and bringer of good news.

135. *Muhākemat*, 78.

The method Bediuzzaman followed when setting out its matters has a number of distinctive qualities, some of which are as follows:

i) It was based on the main sources and great scholars. Bediuzzaman relied on the *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf* of al-Zamakhshari, Sibawayh's work, the *Miftāḥ al-'Ulūm* of al-Sakkaki, the *Dalā'il al-I'jāz* of al-Jurjani,¹³⁶ and many other important scholars and works, all of which he had memorized in his youth. He profited from these when elucidating many matters.

ii) In numerous places he discusses Arabic and its subtleties, grammar, syntax, the miraculousness of the eloquence of the Qur'an's word-order, and the relationships of the verses. He was influenced in this by the style of Zamakhshari's *al-Kashshāf*.

iii) Bediuzzaman's method of expounding the Qur'an's miraculousness in respect of eloquence was focussed on its word-order. There is no verse he expounded but he expounded it explicitly with a view to its word-order. He shows the relationships between the verse's words, then between the verses preceding and following it, and then constructs on these relationships the matters pertaining to conduct, beliefs, and the Shari'a.

iv) While discussing the Qur'an's eloquence, Said Nursi bases his discussion on Arabic grammar, for he considered this science to be fundamental to understanding the eloquence, which emerges from the rules of the language.¹³⁷

v) Bediuzzaman puts forward Qur'anic verses as evidence when expounding the rules of philology, grammar, and eloquence. He uses less frequently other sources such as poetry and prose.

vi) Bediuzzaman mentions infrequently the beauties of rhetorical embellishment and figures of speech. For

"According to eloquence, an important condition for the virtues of the sciences of *Ma'āni* (the significations of terms) and *Bayān* (style) is to point out what is intended through alluding to the object and putting it in the accusative. The condition of the sciences of *Badi'* (metaphor and figures of speech) and embellishment is chance and the absence of intention, or to be close to the true meaning by chance."¹³⁸

vii) For the most part, Bediuzzaman likens non-material matters to emotional things in order to bring one close to an idea connected with eloquence. He expounds the mentioning of the Names Merciful and Compassionate at the beginning of Sura al-Fatiha with the following comparison:

"Yes, like eyebrows complete the eyes, and the bridle the horse, and they perfect their deficiencies, so small bounties complete large bounties. Similarly, when the great depends of the minute, the minute gains the superiority, like the key to the lock and the tongue to the spirit."¹³⁹

136. *Isārātū'l-I'caz*, 44.

137. *Muhākemat*, 79.

138. *Ibid.*, 100.

139. *Isārātū'l-I'caz*, 15-16.

Bediuzzaman's style

Bediuzzaman's style in his works is a firm and precise style, confirmed by scholars and writers, who set him apart from other writers of his age. Bediuzzaman described himself with two different names in two different periods: that of the 'Old Said,' from before he started writing treatises to 1926, and that of the 'New Said,' from when he started to write the *Risale-i Nur*.

We see that Bediuzzaman's style was different in these two stages. In the first, he chose an extremely concise and succinct style, for he was influenced by conditions during the first years of the First World War. Bediuzzaman fought in the war as a commander. He started to compose a work at that time, despite having no books of reference. Due to its conciseness and compression, it is a work which differs greatly from other works. For the conditions did not permit much explanation and elucidation.

During this period, he had in mind his own students, who were of high intelligence and swift comprehension, and did not think of the understanding of others. The expressions he used were very succinct, and contained numerous meanings that were in need of explanation.

Similarly, at that time, he discussed the subtle matters of the Qur'an's language, word-order, and conciseness, which are in need of lengthy explanations. But he used extremely concise expressions for the meanings composed of the words. We may see all these characteristics in *Ishārāt al-I'jāz fī Maẓānn al-Ījāz*. A large part of this consists of concise, fine points which only specialists can understand.¹⁴⁰

In the second period, that of the New Said, he used lengthy expressions, explanations, detailed discussion, numerous sections, comparisons and allegories, and elucidation of the subjects. While doing this, he employed a manner of exposition that all his students, indeed everyone, could understand. In consequence, many people were affected by this, and started to take his way. It is understood from this that the *Risale-i Nur* forms a great agglomeration of the sciences and laws of life. In his view,

"The fluency of a piece results from its not being conceited and entangled in emotion, its imitating nature ... and having a distinct aim. So to lash out with both hind feet at once in the piece and combine with the other without the emotions being complete will spoil its fluency."¹⁴¹

Bediuzzaman says there are three sorts of style:

"The first is an abstract style, like the plain, smooth styles of Sayyid al-Sharif and Nasir al-Din al-Tusi.

"The second is an elaborate style, like the glittering style of 'Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani in *Dalā'il al-I'jāz* and *Asrār al-Balāgha*.

"The third is a lofty style, like in some magnificent writings of al-Sakkaki, al-Zamakhshari, and Ibn Sina."¹⁴²

140. *Īshārāt al-I'jāz*, 3.

141. *Muhākemat*, 96.

142. *Ibid.*, 98.

Bediuzzaman was not frightened to place himself in one of these styles, and explained that "the Arabic phrases in this book, especially those in Part Three, are like confused but firm pieces. For the loftiness of the subject poured this book into the lofty [third] style. The effect of my own art was very minor."¹⁴³

Interpretation of the philological aspects and those pertaining to eloquence

Bediuzzaman takes certain verses of the Qur'an in order to demonstrate the power of the miraculousness of its words, and analyzes and expounds them from the point of view of eloquence and language. An example of this is the verse *But if a breath of your Sustainer's punishment touches them*.¹⁴⁴

"In this sentence, it wants to point out the terribleness of the punishment by showing the severity of the least amount. That is to say, it expresses littleness or fewness, and all the parts of the sentence also look to this littleness or fewness, and reinforce it.

"Thus, the words, 'But if' (*in*) signify doubt, and doubt looks to littleness or fewness.

"The word 'touches' (*massa*) means to touch lightly and expresses a small amount.

"And just as the word 'a breath' (*nafha*) is merely a whiff, so is it in the singular form. Grammatically it is a *maṣdar al-marra* and signifies once. Also the *tanwīn* indicating indefiniteness in 'a breathe' expresses littleness or fewness and means it is so insignificant that it can scarcely be known.

"The word 'of' (*min*) signifies division or a part; it means a bit and indicates paucity.

"The word 'punishment' (*adhāb*) points to a light sort of punishment in relation to chastisement (*nakāl*) or penalty (*i'qāb*), and suggests a small amount.

"And by alluding to compassion and being used in place of Subduer, All-Compelling, or Avenger, the word 'Sustainer' (*Rabb*) indicates littleness or fewness. It says, if the small amount of punishment suggested in all this paucity has such an effect, you can compare how dreadful Divine chastisement would be."¹⁴⁵

Interpretation in respect of eloquence and grammar

Almighty God says: "This is the Book, without doubt (*Dhālīka'l-kitāb lā rayba fih*)."¹⁴⁶

Bediuzzaman says that there is a very subtle purpose of eloquence concealed in this verse through all its parts and the way they are put together. He expounds it thus:

1. *Dhālīka*: "Since *Alif. Lām. Mīm.* is an oath, it indicates the Qur'an's sublimity, and since beneath it are concealed the above-mentioned subtle points, it indicates proof of the case. Similarly, since *dhālīka* points to the essence and attributes, it indicates both the Qur'an's sublimity, and the attributes of perfection, which

143. Ibid.

144. Qur'an, 21:46.

145. *İşârâtü'l-I'caz*, 37; *Sözler*, 343 / *The Words*, 380-1.

146. Qur'an, 2:2.

prove the sublimity. Similarly, the *dhālika*'s being used in an allusion which addresses the reason rather than the emotions —despite the latter being particular to it— it expresses exaltation and importance. So too its indicating the Qur'an — which is reasonable— specifically and presenting it to people's minds and gazes to be studied demonstrates that it is free of trickery, weakness, and all ugly things — which ought to be hidden— and makes this admitted to. Similarly, the distance *dhālika* expresses by means of *lām*, indicates the Qur'an's elevated rank, which points to its perfection.

2. "Likewise, since the definite article 'al' of *al-kitāb* expresses restriction, it indicates the Qur'an's sublimity and that, gathering together in itself the virtues of all other books, it is superior to them. Similarly, the word *al-kitāb* indicates that it is not the product of a literary person, but someone unlettered.

3. "Likewise, in consequence of both the possibilities of the pronoun in *lā rayba fīh*, it proves or corroborates the Qur'an's perfection. Similarly, by the signs in every corner of the Qur'an and proofs and evidences in every part of it repelling the doubts and misgivings which move into to attack, the *lā*, which expresses generality, proclaims that the Qur'an is free of all stains of that sort.

4. "Likewise, the word *fī*, which expresses adverbiality (or function of a receptacle) (*ẓarfīyya*), indicates that if any doubt alights on the surface or exterior of the Qur'an, it can repulse them with the truths within it."¹⁴⁷

A number of applications of eloquence

Almighty God says: *But their commerce is profitless and they have lost true direction.*¹⁴⁸ In connection with eloquence, Bediuzzaman deduced the following from the above verse:

"That is, 'they earned no profit from their trade.' It suggests that a clever merchant should not embark on unprofitable commercial transactions, and that since it is not profitable, capital is essential and preferable. It indicates that there is no benefit, particular or general, for them in their commerce, neither in its parts, nor in its conditions and means. Yes, in some business there may be benefits, many or few, in its conditions and means, even if it does not produce the desired profit. But the trade here is pure evil, a total loss, devoid of all benefit."¹⁴⁹

Some conclusions of this study

After a lengthy journey with Bediuzzaman and his ideas, knowledge and classifications, I reached the conclusion that he possessed extensive knowledge in many fields old and new. I can list as follows a number of superior characteristics which I observed:

1) He made a number of new interpretations in the field of grammar, which were in need of careful study.

2) His use of certain words and old compounds are very possibly unknown by the majority of specialists in the matter.

147. *İşârâtü'l-I'caz*, 38-9.

148. Qur'an, 2:16.

149. *Ishārāt al-I'jāz* [Arabic].

3) He used certain grammatical, philological, and rhetorical terms particular to himself which had not been used previously by others.

4) He benefited from the rules of grammar and eloquence in expounding the Qur'an's miraculousness.

5) He penetrated to the subtleties of the sciences through his powerful knowledge and study, and did not hesitate to reject ideas when necessary, even if they had been put forward by great scholars of the past in the field. For instance, he refuted in his work *Muhâkemat*, a number of statements from page 116 of the work *Maqâmât* by al-Hariri.

6) Despite the influence of the conditions of the time and the fact that Arabic was not his mother tongue, the works he wrote in Arabic were not inferior to the works of former scholars in respect of style, wording, composition, and method.

7) He considered grammar to be basic to understanding the eloquence of the Qur'an.

8) He began his scholarly life by studying the basic texts and their commentaries.

9) He had a passion for Arabic, as the language of the Qur'an.

10) He felt great regret at the gradual corruption of the Arabic language due to the intervention of non-Arabs and their introducing a number of extraneous matters.

Some recommendations

I recommend that studies of Bediuzzaman and his works are not restricted due to their being published solely for profit, and that the below-mentioned two conditions are met:

Firstly: That Bediuzzaman's works are studied with great precision and classified accurately; that an index is made according to academic principles, showing whatever each of his works contains in the way of the sciences and learning; and that analyses and critiques are made of those parts of them that have not so far been adequately expounded.

Secondly: That some specialist studies are made of Bediuzzaman's position and success in the sciences of Arabic, which focus on the sciences of grammar, syntax, and eloquence. My advice to post-graduate students is that they do research on Bediuzzaman's ideas on eloquence and word-order in the Qur'an.