

The Purposes of Repetition in the Qur'an According to the Risale-i Nur

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Introduction

All praise be to God, and His blessings and peace be upon our master, Muhammad, His Messenger.

Since repetition is a style widely used in the Qur'an, some people who lack literary knowledge have supposed that it mars the eloquence and should be avoided in expression of the meanings. This mistaken idea prompted the Qur'anic commentators and scholars to expound the purpose of the repetitions in the Qur'an, and to explain their importance. For repetition is a style widely used in Arabic, for emphasis and for impressing intended meanings on the mind, and is an element of good style and a sort of eloquence.

Ustad Said Nursi was a scholar who expended considerable effort to expound various aspects of the Qur'an's miraculousness, one of which was what he called "the miracle of repetition." He dealt with this in depth in many places in the Risale-i Nur, and his approach is such that it persuades his readers to share his view that the Qur'an displays an aspect of its unique miraculousness with its style of eloquent repetition.

In this paper, I study and analyze repetition in the Qur'an in two main sections:

Part One: Repetition in the Qur'an and the ideas concerning this of the commentators and scholars.

Part Two: Repetition in the Qur'an and its purposes according to the Risale-i Nur.

My intention is that by answering some people's queries about repetition in the Qur'an, and assisting in understanding it, Part One will serve as an introduction to the analysis and exposition in Part Two of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's ideas on the subject in the Risale-i Nur. Success is from God alone, and our return is to Him.

PART ONE

The word takrar¹ in Arabic has the meaning of something occurring successively. Thus, karrartu al-shay'a² means 'I repeated something or did it over again. Badruddin al-Zarkashi defined it as follows: "Takrar means repeating a part of speech either identically or synonymously for the purpose of emphasis."³

One may divide the repetitions in the Qur'an's verses into the following sorts:

1. 'Literal' Repetition

Repetition of both words, and phrases, and whole verses is called 'literal' (lafzi). Literal repetitions may be classified as:

- i. Adjacent literal repetitions, where words or phrases are repeated consecutively.
- ii. Disjoined literal repetitions, where other words or phrases intervene between the repeated words or phrases.

2. Repetition of meanings

This is the repetition of a meaning or of stories with words or phrases that are either synonymous or different.

Firstly, I shall give some verses containing repetitions, then I shall describe some of the findings of the Qur'anic commentators and scholars, and shall summarize their ideas concerning these verses.

Firstly: The Sorts of Repetition in the Qur'an

1. Adjacent Literal Repetitions

This sort includes repetition of words, phrases, or whole verses.⁴ We may give the following as examples of repetition of words:

- i) Heyhata hayhata lima tu'adun (Far, very far is that which you are promised)(23:36)
- ii) ..kanat qawarira * Qawarira min fidda (and goblets of crystal * Crystal-clear, made of silver...)(76:15-16)
- iii) Kalla idha dukkati'l-ard dakka dakka * Wa ja'a Rabbuka wa'l-malaku saffan saffa (Nay! When the earth is pounded to powder, * And your Sustainer comes and His angels, rank upon rank)(89:21-2)

We may give the following verses as examples of repetition of phrases:

- i) Fa-qutila kayfa qaddara * Thumma qutila kayfa qaddara (And woe to him! How he plotted! * Yea, woe to him; how he plotted!)(74:19-20)
- ii) Awla la-ka fa-awla * Thumma awla la-ka fa-awla (Woe to you, [o man!], yea, woe! * Again, woe to you, [o man!], yea, woe!)(75:34-5)
- iii) Kalla saya'lamun * Thumma kalla saya'lamun (Verily, they shall soon [come to] know! * Verily, verily, they shall soon [come to] know!)(78:4-5)
- iv) Wa ma adraka ma yawmu'l-din * Thumma wa ma adraka ma yawmu'l-din (And what will explain to you what the Day of Judgement is; * Again, what will explain to you what the Day of Judgement is?)(82:17-18)
- v) Fa-inna ma'a'l-'usri yusra * Inna ma'a'l-'usri yusra (So, verily, with every difficulty there is relief; * Verily, with every difficulty, there is relief.)(94:5-6)
- vi) Kalla sawfa ta'lamun * Thumma kalla sawfa ta'lamun (But nay, you soon shall know [the reality]. * Again, you soon shall know!)(102:3-4)

2. Disjoined Literal Repetitions: This includes repetition of a phrase, or a verse, or several verses. The following are examples of this sort:

- i) Inna fi dhalika la-ayatan wa ma kana aktharahum mu'minin * Wa inna rabbaka la-huwa'l-'aziz al-rahim (Verily, in this is a sign; but most of them do not believe. * And verily, your Sustainer is He, the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.)(26:8-9) These two verses are thereafter repeated seven times in this sura.⁵
- ii) A' ilahun ma' Allah ([Can there be another] god besides God?)(27:60) This phrase is thereafter repeated four times in this sura, in verses 61-64.

iii) Wa la-qad yassarna'l-Qur'an li'l-dhikri fa-hal min muddakir (And We have indeed made the Qur'an easy to understand and remember; then is there any who will receive admonition?)(54:17) This verse is thereafter repeated three times in this sura, verses 22, 32, 40.

iv) Fa-kayfa kana 'adhabi wa nudhur (But how [terrible] was My penalty and My warning)(54:16, 18, 21, 30).

v) Fa-bi-ayyi ala'i rabbikuma tukadhdhiban (Then which of the favours of your Sustainer will you deny?)(55:13). This verse is thereafter repeated thirty times in this sura.

vi) Waylun yawma'idhin li'l-mukadhdhibin (Ah woe, that Day, to the rejecters of the truth)(77:15). This verse is thereafter repeated seven times in this sura.

vii) Wa la antum 'abiduna ma a'bud (Nor will you worship that which I worship)(109:3, 5).

3. Repetition of Meaning: Subjects in the Qur'an like the stories of the prophets such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses (PUT), the resurrection of the dead, Paradise and Hell, and certain cosmic phenomena and evidences of Divine unity are described in various suras. Just as verses such as these are not repeated in all the suras, so they are not repeated literally. For the same subjects are expressed with different words and meanings, which means that it cannot be placed among the literal repetitions. What drove me to classify these as 'repetition of meanings' was on the one hand what the scholars of the past had written about repetition of the stories, and on the other the importance Bediuzzaman Said Nursi had given the question and his discussion of it in many places in the Risale-i Nur. Examples of this sort are too many to comprehend at this stage, so God willing we shall indicate some of them in the examples of the purposes of the repetitions.

Secondly: The Views of Previous Scholars Concluded from their Study of Repetitions in the Qur'an

The repetitions in the Qur'an attracted the attention of very many of the scholars of previous times. Among these were Qur'anic commentators, scholars of the Qur'an's miraculousness, and the scholars of rhetoric. It appears that criticisms of atheists concerning the repetitions drove these scholars to investigate the reality of the question, and to set out the reasons for it.

Ibn Qutayba (d. 276H) notes that certain atheists saw the repetitions as an opportunity to defame the Qur'an and they criticized the verse Then which of the favours of your Sustainer will you deny?(55:13) and the stories of the prophets.⁶ al-Khattabi (d. 388H) records that they said: "There are numerous omissions and much conciseness in the Qur'an which render it difficult to understand... Then there are repetitions, like the verses Then which of the favours of your Sustainer will you deny? in Sura al-Rahman and Ah woe, that Day, to the rejecters of the truth in Sura al-Mursalat. These two styles are not commended by the scholars of language."⁷ al-Sakkaki (d. 626H) refuted the slanders against the Qur'an of the atheists, saying: "Some of them say that the repetitions are faulty and devoid of benefit, and that the Qur'an contains numerous repeated phrases. They include among these the story of Pharaoh, the verses Then which of the favours of your Sustainer will you deny? and Ah woe, that Day, to the rejecters of the truth."⁸

These criticisms alerted the commentators to the need to set out the reasons for the repetitions, and impelled others too to investigate them. Among these were various schools of the 'ulama of the early period, who investigated its mysteries and evidences in the light of the Qur'an and the Arabic language. The most important of these were the following:

1. The Qur'anic Commentators: The Qur'anic commentators gave more importance than others to expounding the repeated verses and elucidating the reasons for their repetition. As far we know, some of the earliest scholars busied themselves with this. For example, al-Farra (d. 207H) examined numerous repeated verses in his work Ma'ani'l-Qur'an.⁹ The commentators discussed various different points. al-Baghawi (d. 516H) and al-Qurtubi (d.

671H) dwelt to a greater extent than others on the repetitions in their commentaries called respectively Ma'alim al-Tanzil and al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an.

2. Authors of Works on the Qur'an's Obscure (or Allegorical) Verses: In Qur'anic studies the word mutashabih is given two meanings: the first has the meaning of 'obscure,' and the second, 'resembling' or 'similar.' These two meanings were borne in mind by the scholars who wrote about repetition. Some of the most famous of their works are Ta'wil Mushkil al-Qur'an of Ibn Qutayba (d. 276H); Durrat al-Tanzil wa Ghurra al-Ta'wil of al-Khatib al-Iskafi (d. 420H); al-Burhan fi Mutashabih al-Qur'an (this work was printed under the title of Asrar al-Takrar fi'l-Qur'an) of Mahmud ibn Hamza al-Kirmanji (d. 505H); Milak al-Ta'wil of Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Zubayri (d. 708H).

3. Authors of Works on Rhetoric: In the course of time, repetition came to be included as a sub-section of the style of prolixity (itnab) in the science of rhetoric. Authors of works on rhetoric discussed the subject giving a number of verses as examples. This is to be seen in the work of Abu Hilal al-'Askari (d. 305H) al-Sina'atayn;¹⁰ and Jalal al-Din al-Qazwini's (d. 739H) al-Idah fi 'Ulum al-Balagha.¹¹

4. Authors of Works on the Qur'an's Miraculousness: Some of the scholars who wrote works on the Qur'an's miraculousness touched on the question of the repetitions in connection with their being a rhetorical style and an eloquent type of Badi' (figures of speech). However, this did not continue, and is to be seen in al-Khatibi's (d. 388H) Bayan I'jaz al-Qur'an,¹² al-Baqillani's (d. 403H) I'jaz al-Qur'an.¹³

5. Authors of Works on Linguistics and Arabic: Many people who worked in this field noted the place of repetitions in Arabic, giving examples from poetry and the Qur'an. Among these were Ibn Faris (d. 395H) in his al-Sahibi fi Fiqh al-Lugha,¹⁴ al-Tha'alibi (d. 430H) in his Fiqh al-Lugha and Sirr al-'Arabiyya.¹⁵

6. Authors of Works on the Qur'anic Sciences: The term 'Qur'anic sciences' was first used in early works about the Qur'an. It is used in the work al-Fihrist of Ibn Nadim, written in 377H, and refers to all areas of Qur'anic study. Subsequently to the works Burhan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an by al-Zarkashi (d. 794H) and Suyuti's (d. 911H) al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an, works on the Qur'anic sciences were given their own particular forms. These two scholars included in their works most of what had previously been written about the repetitions in the Qur'an, and they quoted from various works that have not come down to the present day.¹⁶

The above are the most important points I have gleaned from the works of earlier scholars about repetition in the Qur'an. I have to say that there are other works that I not been able to refer to. However, it should be noted that these became more detailed and diversified, till finally independent works were written on the subject. Of these we might mention al-Muqtanas fi Fawa'id Takrar al-Qasas of Badruddin Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Jama'a (d. 733H),¹⁷ and Nukhbat al-Adhhan fi ma Waqa'a Min al-Takrir al-Qur'an by Muhammad 'Abd al-'Azim, who was known as Ibn 'Atiq.¹⁸

Thirdly: The Views of Early Scholars Concerning Interpretation of the Repetitions in the Qur'an

The early scholars of Islam (May God have mercy on them) expounded and analyzed all the Qur'an's verses containing repetitions. It would exceed the limits of this paper to relate all they said. However, our purpose in mentioning their approach to the repetitions is by way of being an introduction to Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's views concerning the purposes of the repetitions. We shall therefore give here in summary form the key terms in the study of the repetitions: adjacent literal repetitions, disjointed literal repetitions, and repetitions of meaning.

1. Adjacent Literal Repetitions

The purpose of this sort of repetition is to emphasize and strengthen the general meaning. al-Farra (d. 207H) gave a clear description of this while analyzing verses containing repetitions of this sort. In his discussion of the verse Verily, they shall soon [come to] know! * Verily, verily, they shall soon [come to] know!(78:4-5) he said: "Sometimes in order to emphasize a meaning and intensify it, the Arabs repeat a word exactly; this verse is such a repetition."¹⁹

Ibn Farra studied the verse So, verily, with every difficulty there is relief; * Verily, with every difficulty, there is relief(94:5-6) in the same context, and said:

"Other verses containing repetition for emphasis are the repeated verses in the sura, Qul ya ayyuha'l-kafirun * La a'budu ma ta'budun (Say: O you that reject faith! * I worship not that which you worship)(109:1-2). The repetition here retains the same meaning."²⁰

Abu'l-'Abbas Tha'lab (d. 291H) held a different opinion about repetitions of this sort, which was that even if the words were the same, the meanings they bore differed. It is related that he expounded the verses Say: O you that reject faith! * I worship not that which you worship as follows: "The repetition here is extremely apt, for underlying every word is a second meaning."²¹

Ibn Qutayba (d. 276H) also ascribed an emphatic meaning to 'adjacent literal repetitions,' and said:

"As for repetition of words of the same sort, they are normally interchangeable, as in the sura, Say: O you that reject faith! * I worship not that which you worship... As we said before, the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic and it employs Arabic usages. One of the characteristics of Arabic is repetition, the purpose of which is emphasis and to impress a meaning on the mind. Almighty God says: Verily, they shall soon [come to] know! * Verily, verily, they shall soon [come to] know!(78:4-5); So, verily, with every difficulty there is relief; * Verily, with every difficulty, there is relief.(94:5-6); Woe to you, [o man!], yea, woe! * Again, woe to you, [o man!], yea, woe!(75:34-5); And what will explain to you what the Day of Judgement is * Again, what will explain to you what the Day of Judgement is?(82:17-18). The purpose of all these repetitions is to emphasize the meaning and impress it on the mind."²²

Authors of works on the allegorical and obscure verses of the Qur'an tended to favour Tha'lab's view concerning the repetitions. For example, al-Khatib al-Iskafi (d. 420H) said this when expounding the verse So, verily, with every difficulty there is relief: "If it had not been for this, there would have been no repetitions."²³ al-Kirmani (d. 505H) said about the same verse: "This is not repetition."²⁴ While about the repetition in sura, Say: O you who reject faith!(109:1), al-Khatib al-Iskafi (d. 420H) said:

"The answer if one is asked about the repetition in this sura, we gave it at length in our work Jami' al-Tafsir, and here I want to mention one of them... what is called repetition here, is not repetition. And in regard to the aspects mentioned in Jami' al-Tafsir, it also is not repetition."²⁵

Abu Ja'far al-Zubayri (d. 708H) said about this same subject:

"If one is asked about the repetitions in this sura, the answer would be this: if it is agreed that every verse of the sura bears a different meaning, there are no repetitions. Thus, what appears to be repetition, are sentences containing different words, expressing different meanings, even if the words appear to be the same. Thus, the four verses bear four different meanings, so there is no repetition."²⁶

However, when expounding verses about injunctions (ahkam) later commentators began to collate all that previous scholars had written, and ideas on the subject multiplied, and debates diversified. Thus, in order to reach sound conclusions in the midst of this wealth of evidence, the reader is compelled to give it prolonged thought. Now, I shall investigate the commentators' methods of expounding the repetitions in Suras al-Kafirun and Inshirah, and

give brief summaries of what they wrote. This is only to set forth their methods, not their views.

Ibn Khazin (d. 725H) said:

"There are two views concerning the verse *La a'budu ma ta'budun* (I worship not that which you worship): the first is that there is no repetition of this verse... and the second is that there is repetition..."²⁷

Abu Hayyan said:

"The commentators have put forward various views concerning these phrases: the first is that the repetition serves the purpose of emphasis... And the second is that it is not for emphasis. They have differed concerning it. al-Ah'fash said: 'The verses have the meaning of I do not worship what you are worshipping at the moment, And you do not worship what I am worshipping this year, And I shall not worship what you are going to worship in the future, And you will not worship in the future what I shall worship. The repetition is therefore not for emphasis, and each sentence refers to a different time.

"Abu Muslim says: 'The pronoun *ma* (what) in the first instance of the verse has the meaning of *alladhi* (those) and what is meant is 'objects of worship' (*ma'bud*). While the same pronoun in the last two verses [in which it appears] it is used in the sense of a verbal noun and has the meaning of I do not worship your worship(ping)...'

"Ibn 'Atiyya says: ...

"al-Zamakhshari says: ...

"Of their two views, I prefer this...."²⁸

al-Baghawi (d. 516H) said when expounding the verse, *Fa-inna ma'a'l-'usri yusra* (So, verily, with every difficulty there is relief)(94:5-6):

"In this verse the word *'usr* (difficulty) is repeated together with the definite article, so because it is the same, it is as though there is only one 'difficulty.' The word *yusra*, however, is repeated in the indefinite, thus because they are different, it is as though there are two 'reliefs'. As though the verse wanted to say: So, verily, with every difficulty there is relief; * Verily, with every difficulty, there is relief."

The theorist of versification, Abu 'Ali al-Husayn ibn Yahya ibn Nasr al-Jurjani said:

"People say about this verse, 'You can't overcome a difficulty with two easy things,' and they base this on the word 'difficulty' being definite, and 'relief' being indefinite, and say that the verse implies that there is one difficulty and two 'reliefs.' But this is not an accurate interpretation, for if someone was to say: *Inna ma'a'l-farisi sayfan*, *inna ma'a'l-farisi sayfan*, it does not mean that there are one horseman and two swords... .. The verse So, verily with every difficulty there is relief may be interpreted as meaning: Do not let what they say upset you, for there is relief together with difficulties in this world... Then it repeats Verily, with every difficulty, there is relief to recall the further favours of the hereafter."²⁹

al-Zamakhshari (d. 538H) says:

"The second sentence may be a repeat... A second possibility is that while the first verse is Verily, with every difficulty, there is relief, the second is a 'recommencement' (*isti'naf*) meaning, immediately after every difficulty, there is relief. Since this is inferred, it means there are two 'reliefs.'"³⁰

Abu Hayyan (d. 745H) says about the same verses:

"It is understood that as we said before, the repetition of verses is for emphasis. An unsubstantiated view, however, is that the 'relief' refers to place. Thus, of the two 'reliefs,' one refers to this world, and one to the hereafter. Another view is that since 'difficulty' is definite and 'relief' is indefinite, it has the meaning of 'there are two reliefs for every difficulty.' Thus, the two 'reliefs' are different. There is in fact a Hadith which says: 'One difficulty does not dispel two instances of relief.'"31

2. Disjoined Literal Repetitions

The dominant view of the scholars about repetitions of this sort is that they serve purposes of emphasis and confirmation. The context necessitates the repetition of a particular verse, and the repetition is different to the first verse. It is therefore only an apparent repetition and in reality bears a different meaning.

Ibn Qutayba (d. 276H) says:

"The reason for the repetition of the verse, Then which of the favours of your Sustainer will you deny?(55:13) is this: in this sura Almighty God recalls the bounties He bestows on His creatures, and His power, and He completes each bounty with the above verse; He places it between two bounties so that men should know the magnitude of the bounties that are being recalled, and they should be rooted in their minds. The repetition of the verse fa-hal min muddakir(54:17) is of this same sort, and means then is there any who will receive admonition?"32

al-Khatib al-Iskafi (d. 420H) says:

"Although what succeeds the verse Waylun yawma'idhin li'l-mukadhdhibin (Ah woe, that Day, to the rejecters of the truth)(77:15) confirms it and is similar, the meanings differ, so there are no repetitions."33

al-Nasafi says in expounding the verses Inna fi dhalika la-ayatan wa ma kana aktharahum mu'minin * Wa inna rabbaka la-huwa'l-'aziz al-rahim (Verily, in this is a sign; but most of them do not believe. * And verily, your Sustainer is He, the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.(26:8-9):

"These verses are repeated before and after every story in this sura, thus the meanings they express are firmly impressed on the heart, and a more powerful style of exhortation and reprimand is obtained. Moreover, each story is like a Qur'an, containing admonition and instruction different to the others. It is therefore appropriate that each should begin with the same opening expression as the others, and conclude with the same expression."34

al-Qadi al-Baydawi (d. 795H) says about the verse Wa la-qad yassarna'l-Qur'an li'l-dhikri fa-hal min muddakir (And We have indeed made the Qur'an easy to understand and remember; then is there any who will receive admonition?(54:17):

"This verse is repeated in every story to indicate that the denial of Divine messengers and subsequent visitation of chastisement should be heeded as lessons, and that repeated warning is necessary to prevent people slipping off into heedlessness and forgetfulness. The underlying reason for the repetition of the verses Then which of the favours of your Sustainer will you deny?(55:13), Ah woe, that Day, to the rejecters of the truth)(77:15) and so on, is the same."35

Many scholars have suggested various reasons for the repetition 31 times of the verse Then which of the favours of your Sustainer will you deny?,³⁶ and the numbers of repetitions of other verses. However, Fakh al-Din al-Razi (d. 604H) says that such interpretations are based on nothing authentic. He points out these repetitions are revelation, and man cannot

penetrate their mysteries with his mind. It is best therefore for man not to make exaggerated interpretations of God's Word.³⁷

3. Repetition of Meanings

The repetition of meaning is the restating in different words and in different places of the same story or subject. In this way a story is frequently repeated, and its repetition is apparent. The early scholars studied repetitions of this sort in their discussions about repetition in the Qur'an.

Ibn Qutayba (276H) says:

"As for the stories and tales about past peoples, Almighty God revealed the Qur'an over a period of twenty-three years piece by piece... representatives of the Arab tribes would come to the Prophet (PBUH) to become Muslims, and the Muslims would teach them a part of the Qur'an. The amount they learnt was sufficient for them. Similarly, the Prophet would send envoys to the tribes to teach them various suras. If the stories about the peoples of the past had not been scattered through various suras and had not been repeated, the story of Moses (PUH) would have been related to one group, the story of Jesus (PUH) to another, the story of Noah (OUH) to another, and the story of Lut (PUH) to yet another. But through His grace and mercy, Almighty God broadcasted these stories to every corner of the earth by scattering them through the suras, establishing them in everyone's minds, and through the stories manifested the message He wished to give to all the people who lived contemporaneously with the Qur'an."³⁸

Ibn Faris (d. 395H) says:

"Many interpretations have been made of the stories in the Qur'an about the peoples of the past. One of the most accurate is this: The fact that Almighty God made the Arabs powerless to produce anything similar to the Qur'an was a miracle proving the veracity of Muhammad's (PBUH) prophethood. By repeating the same story in various places, Almighty God informed them of their impotence to do this in whatever form or style. This interpretation is the soundest of those put forward about this subject."³⁹

Both al-Zarkashi (d. 797H) in his *Burhan*, and al-Suyuti (d. 911H) in his *Itqan* discussed the question of the repetition of the stories of the prophets. al-Zarkashi enumerated many of their benefits, then al-Suyuti repeated most of these exactly, and quoted openly from the work mentioned earlier, *al-Muqtanas fi Fawa'id Takrar al-Qasas*.

The points al-Zarkashi and al-Suyuti mentioned may be summarized as follows:⁴⁰

i) In every repetition of a story is a meaning not found in the previous one. Although it appears that the story is being repeated, in fact there is no repetition. However, on each occasion, a certain amount is repeated which is necessitated by the context.

ii) Since the Companions were to be found in places distant from each other, and most of them did not have the opportunity to learn the whole Qur'an, if the stories had not been repeated, the story of Moses (PUH) would have gone to one community, the story of Jesus (PUH) to another, and so on. In this way Almighty God willed that everyone should receive a share of the stories, and when a community learnt a new story, it further established in their minds the one(s) they already knew.

iii) As was noted above in the quote from Ibn Faris, the fact that Almighty God made the Qur'an an evidence for the veracity of His Messenger's (PBUH) prophethood, and mentioned each of the stories in various styles, and although they were familiar with these styles, the Arabs were powerless to produce the like of the Qur'an, and this question clearly demonstrated their impotence.

At the end of this section we may summarize as follows the most important points made by the scholars of the early period about repetition in the Qur'an:

i) The scholars of the early period distinguished between three sort of repetition, which as mentioned above, were 'adjacent literal repetitions,' 'disjoined literal repetitions,' and 'repetitions of meaning.'

ii) The variety of the interpretations of a single aspect, particularly of the later scholars, makes it very difficult for the reader to choose one over the others.

iii) In their interpretations of the adjacent repetitions they were divided into those who said their purpose was emphasis, and those who said they indicate different meanings. They mostly agreed that the disjoined repetitions express different meanings and are therefore only apparent repetitions. As for repetition of meanings, some interpreted them in the light of the situation of the Companions, stating that they are in fact repetitions. But others interpreted the repetitions as containing different elements and thus as not truly being repetitions.

iv) We have not described in detail the interpretations of repetition in the Qur'an of the scholars of the early period, nor their views, for to do so would exceed the limits of this paper. We have merely put forward their general trends as an introduction to Said Nursi's views on the subject.

PART TWO

Repetition in the Qur'an According to the *Risale-i Nur*

Firstly: The Risale-i Nur is Based on the Qur'an

It should be pointed out that Bediuzzaman took the Qur'an as a source of inspiration, and as something to be studied and investigated. In the first stage of his intellectual life, he felt at a loss in the face of the multitude of possible ways, till finally the way of the Qur'an was unfolded to him. He described this in Mektûbat:

"While thus bewildered, it was imparted to my heart by God's mercy that 'the head of these various ways and the source of these streams and the sun of these planets is the All-Wise Qur'an; the true single qibla is to be found in it. In which case, it is also the most elevated guide and most holy master.' So I clasped it with both hands and clung on to it."⁴¹

Thus, Bediuzzaman stated explicitly that "the true master is the Qur'an."⁴² He declared:

"Know that so long as there is breath in my body I shall say like Mawlana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi 'I shall be a servant of the Qur'an for as long as I live * I have chosen to be the dust on the path of Muhammad.' For I see the Wise Qur'an to be the source of all lights and effusions, and whatever truths there are in my works and whatever beauties, they are all derived from the Qur'an's effulgence. It is because of this that my heart does not consent to any of my works containing no aspects of the Qur'an's miraculousness."⁴³

The Qur'an's guidance led Bediuzzaman to proclaim that the *Risale-i Nur* is a valuable Qur'anic commentary,⁴⁴ and that whatever virtues it has are "inspired from the Qur'an's effulgence."⁴⁵

Another manifestation of Bediuzzaman's concern for the Qur'an was his intense desire to prove the Qur'an's miraculousness, and demonstrate up to forty aspects of it.⁴⁶ Of these he proved five in detailed fashion in his work *Mu'cizat-ý Kur'aniye* (The Miraculousness of the Qur'an).⁴⁷ One of these are the repetitions in the Qur'an, which he considers to be one of its

miracles, for it is "an ocean of miracles."⁴⁸ A piece describing the extent of the Qur'an's comprehensiveness, which embraces both the world of the unseen and the manifest world, and this world and the hereafter, and men and jinn, is his definition of the Qur'an, which he gives in his discussion of the Qur'an's miraculousness and its repetitions. If the space had been available I would have included it in full.⁴⁹

Secondly: Said Nursi's Principles for Studying the Repetitions

It is understood that Bediuzzaman was faced with a situation in which people were abandoning the religion of Islam and its culture, and trying to awaken doubts about the Qur'an's eloquence and its repeated verses. This prompted him to explain the wisdom in and purposes of the repetitions, just as criticisms of them in the past made by atheists had driven the scholars of that time to busy themselves with them.

One of the methods he follows in his treatises is not to include lengthy expositions of the doubts and criticisms themselves, despite the importance he gives to dispelling such doubts. In his work *Isharat al-I'jaz*, he says: "In any event, contrary to other 'ulama, it is the way of the *Risale-i Nur* not to mention the doubts of opponents lest they taint the minds of readers, and to give such answers that no place remains for suspicion or doubts. Like in the *Risale-i Nur*, so as not to confuse the minds of readers, the Old Said gives importance in this commentary [*Isharat al-I'jaz*] to indicating the words only in respect of eloquence."⁵⁰ While in *The Miraculousness of the Qur'an*, he says: "In order not to cause aversion, decisive answers have been given without mentioning their doubts."⁵¹ For this reason, when discussing repetition in the Qur'an, we see that he does not dwell at length on the doubts raised about them: "Consider the flashes of miraculousness in its repetitions, which are imagined to be a fault..."⁵² While he says in the footnote at the beginning of the Tenth Topic of *The Fruits of Belief*, "By explaining one instance of wisdom in the repetitions in the Qur'an, it dispels the poisonous, putrid illusions of the people of misguidance."⁵³ While on the subject, I should say that what I have written here is based on Bediuzzaman's works in Arabic and those works that have been translated into Arabic, and this is only a small part of his works, which run to thousands of pages. Nevertheless, the information I have gleaned about repetition in these is sufficient to give a general outline of his ideas on the subject.

As far as I have been able to ascertain it, Bediuzzaman dealt with the subject of repetition in the Qur'an in many of his works. Among these are the following:

Firstly, the section he wrote in *al-Mathnawi al-'Arabi al-Nuri* (Turkish: *Mesnevi-i Nuriye*) in which the repetitions are studied in six 'Points'.⁵⁴ Bediuzzaman also mentions these points in *The Miracles of Muhammad*.⁵⁵

Secondly, the Tenth Topic of *The Fruits of Belief*, called *A Flower of Emirdağ*. He described this as "An extremely powerful reply to objections raised about repetition in the Qur'an."⁵⁶

Bediuzzaman made this piece the 'Second Addendum' to *The Miraculousness of the Qur'an*.⁵⁷ Similarly, there is mention of the subject scattered through his works *al-Mathnawi al-'Arabi al-Nuri*, *The Miracles of Muhammad*, *Isharat al-I'jaz*, and *The Miraculousness of the Qur'an*.⁵⁸

As it is understood from the above-mentioned six 'Points' and as Bediuzzaman states clearly in *A Flower of Emirdağ*, he discussed the question in general terms:

"Due to my wretched situation, this Topic is confused and graceless. But I knew definitely that beneath the confused wording is a most valuable sort of miraculousness, though unfortunately I was incapable of expressing it. But however dull the wording, since it concerns the Qur'an, it is both worship in the form of reflection, and the shell of a sacred, elevated, shining jewel. The diamond in the hand should be looked at, not its torn clothes. Also, I wrote it in one or two days during Ramadan while extremely ill, wretched, and without food, of

necessity very concisely and briefly, and including many truths and numerous proofs in a single sentence. Its deficiencies, then, should be overlooked!"⁵⁹

It appears from this, that as is stated in the first discussion above, the repetitions are not classified according to 'repetition of meaning,' 'adjacent literal repetitions,' and 'disjoined literal repetitions,' for Bediuzzaman was preoccupied with interpreting the repetitions generally, not with giving particular examples. The scholars of the past studied the repetitions in the light of the sequence of the verses, in their comprehensive commentaries on the entire Qur'an. It was possible therefore for them to expound all the repeated verses in detail. However, this was not possible for Bediuzzaman when writing his commentary *Isharat al-I'jaz*, for he was able to complete only thirty or so verses from Suras al-Fatiha and al-Baqara. Since this is the case, we shall discuss his method in the light of the six points mentioned above and his discussions in *A Flower of Emirdağ* and his other works.

Thirdly: The Basis of Bediuzzaman's Ideas About Expounding the Repetitions

One may deduce from many of his treatises the basis of Bediuzzaman's ideas about setting out the purposes of the repetitions. They are based on defining generally the function of the repetitions in speech. Bediuzzaman puts these functions at two: emphasis and establishment; that is, the repeated word or phrase either emphasizes the first mention of it, or it establishes a new meaning. This is to be seen clearly in his discussion of the phrases *Subhanullah*, *al-Hamdulillah*, and *Allahu akbar*, which are repeated thirty-three times each after the prescribed prayers. He says:

"I observed -as is indicated in the Chapters above- that these blessed words that are repeated after the prayers are not only repeated; they are establishing meanings; or, they are establishing meanings not through their unity [as a whole] but to emphasize them through their mutual support [each of them contributing to the whole]."⁶⁰

The reciter repeats "God is Most Great! God is Most Great! God is Most Great!," but according to Bediuzzaman each repetition bears a different meaning, in which case the words are not the same in the reciter's spiritual world. Bediuzzaman expresses this idea in other words, saying: "Similarly, the repetitions emphasize the meaning, and establish the aims and the fruits."⁶¹

If we think of someone shouting "Zayd! Zayd! Zayd!," we can understand this idea of Bediuzzaman more easily. For here, the second and third times the name is uttered, no new meaning is being expressed; the meaning expressed by the first is being repeated. In any event, the intention of the repetition is not to establish any new meaning, but to emphasize what the first expresses. To ring a doorbell three times is the same. For the second and third rings are the same as the first, both in form and aim; the repetition is for emphasis.

As for repetition to establish or express a new meaning, it resembles the shots of someone shooting; the second, third, and subsequent shots resemble the first, but they achieve something that the first did not achieve. Someone eating with a spoon is the same; for in lifting the spoon to his mouth, the person does so in the same manner, but the second, third, and subsequent times he raises it, he is doing something different to the first time.

It was in consequence of this idea that Bediuzzaman said clearly that "what appears to be repetition is in fact not repetition."⁶² And he says: "it demonstrates a sort of miraculousness through making understood in a single sentence and a single story through its agreeable repetitions numerous different meanings to numerous different classes of people."⁶³

Generally speaking, the explanations of repetition in the *Risale-i Nur* are along these lines. However, someone who studies them attentively may perceive a second meaning, which is repetition for purposes of emphasis. Bediuzzaman says regarding this: "Reiteration in the All-Wise Qur'an is to establish [meanings], and repetitions are for emphasis."⁶⁴ It may be understood from this that these observations of Bediuzzaman are based on examples of

repetition in the Qur'an the purpose of which is emphasis, or they are based on the sense of emphasis the repetition inspires in the hearer through others of its indications.

Fourthly: The Purposes of Repetition in the Risale-i Nur

It is my opinion that Said Nursi's presentation of the six 'Points,' in which he analyzes and explains the repetitions and their meanings -similarly to A Flower of Emirdağ and other pieces- corroborates the basic idea that we mentioned above about the repetitions. This, together with his linking a number examples with some subtle points and general aims and purposes of the repetitions, demonstrates the dimensions of his thought. Moreover, he does this in a way that dispels doubts and hesitations and demonstrates the purposes, eloquence, and miraculousness of the repetitions in the Qur'an.

First Point

"The Qur'an is a book of remembrance of God, a book of supplication, and a book of summons, for which reason the repetitions in its suras are completely apt according to rhetoric and eloquence, and pure wisdom. For what is hoped for from remembrance and supplication is reward and to attract Divine compassion. It is clear that frequent repetition is necessary in such matters so that the reward may increase proportionately, as well as the compassion. Moreover, repeated remembrance of God illuminates the heart. When repeated supplications are confirmed, and to whatever extent one issues a summons, their effectiveness is increased."⁶⁵

This point indicates the subjects in the Qur'an that necessitate repetition; there is therefore nothing strange in some of its verses and phrases being repeated. The idea expressed in this First Point preoccupied Bediuzzaman, and he mentioned it at every opportunity. He says in Mathnawi:

"Know O friend! What necessitates the repetition of some of the Qur'an's parts are the necessary repetition of supplications and invocations. For just as it is a book of reality and the Shari'a, and of wisdom and knowledge; so it is a book of supplication, invocations, and summons. Invocations are reiterated; supplications are repeated; and so are summons repeated."⁶⁶

Then in A Flower of Emirdağ, he says:

"By making known that it is also a book of prayer and summons, of invocation and Divine unity, which require repetition, it demonstrates a sort of miraculousness through making understood in a single sentence and a single story through its agreeable repetitions numerous different meanings to numerous different classes of people."⁶⁷

Second Point

"Since the Qur'an addresses all classes of men and is healing for them, from the most intelligent to the most stupid, the pious and the sinners, those who are ascetic and those who are not, all classes of men have the right to receive this Divine address and to take the medicines from this pharmacy of the Most Merciful. However, not everyone can always read the whole Qur'an, for which reason its necessary aims and proofs are repeated in the long suras in particular, so that each becomes like a short Qur'an and everyone can receive the reward of recitation of the whole Qur'an by reading easily the sura he wants when he wants. Yes, the verse, And We have indeed made the Qur'an easy to remember, then is there any to receive admonition?(54:16, etc.) proves this truth."⁶⁸

The wisdom in or purpose of the repetition in this Point is related to those who are addressed by the Qur'an and to their situation, and indicates the sort of repetition called 'repetition of meanings.' This point is further elucidated in other parts of the Risale-i Nur. In Mathnawi Bediuzzaman says:

"Know O friend! Just as all the suras of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition contain in summary all that is included in the Qur'an, so each contains the aims and important stories mentioned in the other suras. The purpose of this is that those people who do not have the time to read the whole Qur'an, or have the time to read only a part of it or a sura, should not be deprived of the merits that accrue from a whole reading of it. Yes, the unlettered may be able to read only one sura. So in order not to deprive them of earning full reward, the Qur'an's miraculousness followed this point and made every sura like a whole Qur'an."69

Bediuzzaman again mentions this in A Flower of Emirdađ, and explains it saying:

"For this purpose, and since everyone does not always have the time or capability to read the whole Qur'an, it repeats those stories in the same way as the important pillars of belief, in order to make all the long and middle-length Suras each like a small Qur'an. To repeat them then is not excessive, it is required by eloquence, and teaches that the question of Muhammad (PBUH) is the greatest question of mankind and the most important matter of the universe."70

Third Point

"Physical needs change with the change of seasons; they either increase or lessen. For instance, one has need of air every instant. One has need of water when one is thirsty. One has need of food every day. One has need of light, generally speaking once a week. And so on. Similarly, the times of spiritual needs differ. One has need of the word 'Allah' every instant. One has need of 'In the Name of God' all the time. One has need of 'There is no god but God' every hour. And so on. In consequence of this, the repetition of the Qur'an's verses and words arises from the repetition of need. It indicates too the severity of the need for them."71

The purpose of the repetitions mentioned in this point is the repetition of need, for which reason, the repetition is necessitated by eloquence and by the situation of those addressed. Bediuzzaman mentions this in other places in the Risale-i Nur. In his Mathnawi he expresses it similarly, but because it clarifies certain expressions, I am quoting it in full:

"In his physical life, man is in need of air every instant, water all the time, food all the time and every day, and light every week. In reality the repetition of these is not repetition, it arises from the repetition of needs. Similarly, in his spiritual life, man is in need of all the things mentioned in the Qur'an: some he is in need of every instant, like 'Hu Allah,' for the spirit breathes through this. He is in need of some all the time. Thus, it is because of the needs of man's heart that the Qur'an repeats things. For example, because 'Bismillah' satisfies the heart and spirit like a gentle breeze, because of this need, it is repeated frequently in the Qur'an."72

Giving most of the Qur'an's repeated verses, in A Flower of Emirdađ Bediuzzaman says (although the following is a lengthy quote, I have included it in full so that Bediuzzaman's viewpoint in the interpretation of the repetitions can be illustrated in his own words, unaffected by the researcher, and the precision and succinctness of his words become clear):

"With regard to repetition being necessary due to the repetition of need, the repetition of certain verses which, as answers to numerous repeated questions over a period of twenty years, instruct numerous different levels of people is not a fault, indeed, to repeat certain sentences so powerful they produce thousands of results and a number of verses resulting from countless evidences, which describe an infinite, awesome, all-embracing revolution that, by destroying utterly the vast universe and changing its shape at Doomsday, will remove the world and found the mighty hereafter in its place, and will prove that all particulars and universals from atoms to the stars are in the hand and under the disposal of a single Being, and will show the Divine wrath and dominical anger -on account of the result of the universe's creation- at mankind's wrongdoing, which brings to anger the earth and the heavens and the elements, to repeat such verses is not a fault, but most powerful miraculousness, and most

elevated eloquence; an eloquence and lucid style corresponding exactly to the requirements of the subject.

"For example, as is explained in the Fourteenth Flash of the Risale-i Nur, the sentence, In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, which forms a single verse and is repeated one hundred and fourteen times in the Qur'an, is a truth which binds the Divine Throne and the earth, and illuminates the cosmos, and for which everyone is in need all the time; if it was repeated millions of times, there would still be need for it. There is need and longing for it, not only every day like bread, but every moment like air and light.

"And, for example, the verse, And verily your Sustainer is Exalted in Might, Most Compassionate, which is repeated eight times in Sura Ta. Sin. Mim. Repeating on account of the result of the universe's creation and in the name of universal dominicality, the salvation of the prophets whose stories are told in the Sura, and the punishments of their peoples, in order to teach that dominical dignity requires the torments of those wrongdoing peoples while Divine compassion requires the prophets' salvation, is a concise, miraculous, and elevated miraculousness, for which, if repeated thousands of times, there would still be need and longing.

"And, for example, the verse, Then which of the favours of your Sustainer will you deny?, which is repeated in Sura al-Rahman, and the verse, Woe that Day to the rejecters of truth!, in Sura al-Mursalat shout out threateningly to mankind and the jinn across the centuries and the heavens and the earth, the unbelief, ingratitude, and wrongdoing of those who bring the universe and the heavens and earth to anger, spoil the results of the world's creation, and deny and respond slightly to the majesty of Divine rule, and aggress against the rights of all creatures. If a general lesson thus concerned with thousands of truths and of the strength of thousands of matters is repeated thousands of times, there would still be need for it and its awe-inspiring conciseness and beautiful, miraculous eloquence.

"And, for example, the repetition of the phrase, Glory be unto You! There is no god but You: Mercy! Mercy! Save us, deliver us, preserve us, from Hell-fire! in the supplication of the Prophet (PBUH) called Jawshan al-Kabir, which is a true and authentic supplication of the Qur'an and a sort of summary proceeding from it. Since it contains the greatest truth and the most important of the three supreme duties of creatures in the face of dominicality, the glorification and praise of God and declaring Him to be All-Holy, and the most awesome question facing mankind, man being saved from eternal misery, and worship, the most necessary result of human impotence, if it is repeated thousands of times, it is still few.

"Thus, repetition in the Qur'an looks to principles like these. Sometimes on one page, even, with regard to the requirements of the position and the need for explanation and the demands of eloquence, it expresses the truth of Divine unity perhaps twenty times explicitly and by implication. It does not cause boredom, but gives a power to it and inspires an eagerness. It has been explained in the Risale-i Nur with proofs how appropriate, fitting, and acceptable from the point of view of rhetoric are the repetitions in the Qur'an."⁷³

Fourth Point

"You know that the Qur'an both set the foundations of this firm and mighty religion and the pillars of Islam, and transformed the life of society. It is clear that a founder has great need of repetition so that the things he is establishing may be well-founded. For something that is repeated becomes firmly fixed and firmly established, and is not forgotten.

"Similarly, the Qur'an is a guide that answers the questions, asked either verbally or by the tongue of disposition, by the various classes of men. And everyone knows that if a question is repeated, its answer is also repeated."⁷⁴

Fifth Point

"You know that the Qur'an speaks of vast matters, and it calls on hearts to believe in them and affirm them. Then it mentions the finest truths, and urges the mind to [acquire] knowledge and exactitude. In order to establish those matters and truths in the heart and mind, it therefore needs to repeat them in various styles in various suras."75

There is a sort of link between the fourth and fifth Points by virtue of the aims and the meanings mentioned being complementary. For he is pointing out the role of repetition in emphasizing the truths of religion, and in establishing them in people's minds and hearts. In my view, the reply Bediuzzaman gives to the answer in A Flower of Emirdað illustrates clearly what he meant by this point:

"Second Question: 'What is the purpose of the Qur'an proving and drawing attention to the hereafter, Divine unity, and man's reward and punishment thousands of times, explicitly, implicitly, and allusively, and teaching them in every sura, on every page, and in every discussion?'

"The Answer: To instruct in the most important, most significant, and most awesome matters in the sphere of contingency and in the revolutions in the universe's history concerning man's duty, the means to his eternal misery or happiness -man who undertook the Divine vicegerency of the earth- and to remove his countless doubts and to smash his violent denials and obduracy, indeed, to make man confirm those awesome revolutions and submit to those most necessary essential matters which are as great as the revolutions, if the Qur'an draws his attention to them thousands, or even millions of times, it is not excessive, for those discussions in the Qur'an are read millions of times, and they do not cause boredom, nor does the need cease.

"For example, since the verse, For those who believe and do righteous deeds are gardens beneath which rivers flow,(85:11) * They will dwell there for ever(5:85 etc.) shows the truth of the good news of eternal happiness, which "saves from the eternal execution of the reality of death, which every moment shows itself to wretched man, both himself, and his world, and all those he loves, and gains for them an everlasting sovereignty," if it is repeated thousands of millions of times and given the importance of the universe, it still is not excessive and does not lose its value. Thus, in teaching the innumerable, invaluable matters of this sort, and endeavouring to persuade, convince, and prove the occurrence of the awesome revolutions which will destroy the present form of the universe and transform it as though it was a house, the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition certainly draws attention to these matters thousands of times times explicitly, implicitly, and allusively, and this is not excessive, but renews the bounty which is like an essential need, the same as the essential needs of bread, medicine, air, and light are renewed.

"And, for example, as is proved decisively in the Risale-i Nur, the wisdom in the Qur'an repeating severely, angrily, and forcefully, threatening verses like, For wrong-doers there is a grievous penalty.(14:22) * But for those who reject [God] - for them will be the Fire of Hell (35:36) is that man's unbelief is such a transgression against the rights of the universe and most creatures that it makes the heavens and earth angry and brings the elements to anger so that they deal blows on those wrong-doers with tempest and storm. According to the clear statement of the verses, And when they are cast therein, they will hear the [terrible] drawing-in of its breath as it blazes forth * Almost bursting with fury,(67:7-8) Hell so rages at those iniquitous deniers that it almost disintegrates with fury. Thus, through the wisdom of showing, not from the point of view of man's smallness and insignificance before such a general crime and boundless aggression, but the importance of the rights of the Monarch of Universe's subjects before the greatness of the wrongful crime and the awesomeness of the unjust aggression, and the boundless ugliness in the unbelief and iniquity of those deniers -in accordance with the wisdom of showing this, if repeating in His decree most wrathfully and severely the crime and its punishment, thousands, millions, or even thousands of millions of times, it still would not be excessive and a fault, because for a thousand years thousands of millions of people have read such verses every day, not with boredom, but with complete eagerness and need.

"Indeed, every day, all the time, for everyone, one world disappears and the door of a new world is opened to them. Through repeating There is no god but God a thousand times out of need and with longing in order to illuminate each of those transitory worlds, it makes There is no god but God a lamp for each of those changing veils. In the same way, in accordance with the wisdom of appreciating through reading the Qur'an the penalties of those crimes and the severe threats of the Pre-Eternal Monarch, which smash their obduracy, and of working to be saved from the rebellion of the soul, so as not to obscure in darkness those multiple, fleeting veils and renewed travelling universes, and not to make ugly their images which are reflected in the mirrors of their lives, and not to turn against them those guest views which may testify in favour of them, the Qur'an repeats them in most meaningful fashion. Even Satan would shudder at imagining to be out of place these so powerful, severe, and repeated threats of the Qur'an. It shows that the torments of Hell are pure justice for the deniers who do not heed them."⁷⁶

Sixth Point

"You know that every verse has an outward aspect, an inner aspect, a limit, and an aim (matla'). And every story has numerous aspects and aims, serves many purposes, and states many things. In which case, any particular verse may be mentioned anywhere for another aspect of it, or purpose, suitable to that place. Thus, even if it appears to be repetition, in reality it is not."⁷⁷

The purpose of the repetition described in this point is connected to the sort mentioned above, called 'repetition of the meaning,' and refers in particular to the stories of the prophets. Bediuzzaman discusses the reasons for the repetitions of these in various places in the Risale-i Nur. He says in his Qur'anic commentary:

"The story of Moses contains numerous virtues and instances of wisdom. It is pure eloquence that every place it is mentioned, an aspect of it should be related suitable to that place. Yes, the Qur'an of Mighty Stature took that famous story as silver into its 'shining hand' and forging it into gold, so embossed it with eloquence that all the masters of eloquence prostrated in wonderment before it."⁷⁸

While in A Flower of Emirdağ he says:

"And, for example, in repeating many times the stories of Moses (Peace be upon him), which contain many instances of wisdom and benefits, like that of the Staff of Moses, and of the other prophets (Peace be upon them), it demonstrates that the prophethoods of all the other prophets are a proof of the veracity of the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), and that one who does not deny all of them cannot in truth deny his messengership."⁷⁹

In addition to the matters related to repetition in the Qur'an discussed in the above six Points, the researcher becomes aware that Bediuzzaman attached particular importance to repeated recital of the Qur'an, and said that the desire to recite it and not becoming bored by its repetition are aspects of the Qur'an's miraculousness. He says:

"Furthermore, the All-Wise Qur'an demonstrates its miraculousness before the uneducated mass of people, who do not understand its meaning, by not wearying them. Indeed, they say: 'If I hear the finest and best known poems two or three times, I become bored of them. But the Qur'an never wearies me; even, the more I listen to it, the more it pleases me. It cannot therefore be written by man.'⁸⁰

Others of the Qur'an's characteristics is this: "...and its all the time being inscribed with eagerness in the hearts of millions of hafizes; and its not causing weariness through its frequent and numerous repetitions;..."⁸¹ Thus, the Qur'an is renewed as times change, and grows sweeter with repetition."⁸² And "when read repeatedly it begins to glow like a pearl, scattering rays of truth and reality on all sides."⁸³

Conclusion and Results of the Paper

1. Scholars of the early period studied repetition in the Qur'an in order to expound the purposes of the repetitions, demonstrate that repetition is an eloquent style frequently used in Arabic, and in this way to dispel the doubts about it sown by atheists.

2. They defined and interpreted the repetitions as 'literal' repetitions (repetition of words and phrases) and repetitions of meanings, and subdivided the former into 'adjacent literal repetitions' and 'disjoined literal repetitions.' They explained the adjacent literal repetitions as being either for emphasis or for indicating a new meaning defined by the context; and the disjoined repetitions they explained by the number of related things; and they interpreted the repetitions of meanings as indicating a meaning not present in the first context.

3. Although Bediuzzaman encountered numerous problems in his life, and suffered untold difficulties in his long jihad to instil the truths of belief in people's hearts, he studied and analyzed repetition in the Qur'an comprehensively and to a high standard.

4. Bediuzzaman interpreted the Qur'an generally in respect of worship and remembrance of God, saying that the repetitions were to establish new meanings, and that every meaning and story that is repeated in the Qur'an expresses different meanings and different lessons.

5. Bediuzzaman stated that the nature of the Qur'an's subject matter, and the basic aims it wants to root in people's hearts, necessitate frequent repetition, so that even if they are repeated thousands or even millions of times, it still would not be excessive or defective from the point of view of eloquence.

6. Bediuzzaman said that since the situations of those addressed by the Qur'an and their capacities are all different, all the Qur'an's suras have to include its main aims, such as Divine unity, prophethood, and the hereafter. In this way, those who can read only a few suras can receive their share of the Qur'an.

7. According to Said Nursi, one of the main reasons for repetition in the Qur'an is the repetition of man's spiritual needs; just as man's physical needs re-occur at particular times, so do his spiritual needs. The Qur'an answers this need with its repetitions.

8. Bediuzzaman interpreted the repetition of the stories of the prophets in the Qur'an as indicating different meanings in each place they are repeated. Thus, while mentioning one meaning in one place, the story touches on other aspects in another place, and while mentioning a particular aim in one sura, in another it presents another aim.

9. Bediuzzaman explained the purposes of repetition in the Qur'an in various places in the Risale-i Nur, and proved the close conformity of the repetitions with eloquence, and how well-placed and harmonious they are. For the repeated truths of the Qur'an are of such high value that they comprise numerous instances of wisdom and purposes at the same time. Thus, anyone of sound mind testifies that the repetitions in the Qur'an are a powerful miracle, but alas, for those whose hearts are sick and consciences afflicted with the plague of materialism, this rule applies:

Man denied the light of the sun due to disease of the eye,

His mouth denied the taste of water due to sickness.⁸⁴

10. Finally, Bediuzzaman's treatment of repetition in the Qur'an saves man from feeling doubt or hesitation about its purposes and affords him a comprehensive understanding that includes words expressing supplication and invocation of God, and prompts him to say this: even if this verse or phrase was to be repeated thousands of times, it would not spoil the eloquence nor mar the language. Similarly, constant recitation of the Qur'an causes no boredom or weariness, for the more the Qur'an is repeated, the more it radiates its lights and the sweeter

it becomes, scattering the rays of truth and reality on all sides. For It is no less than revelation inspired.

And our last prayer is "All praise be God, the Sustainer of all the worlds." And peace and blessings be upon our master Muhammad, and on all his Family and Companions. Amen.

* * *

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FOOTNOTES

1. The verbal noun of the 2nd form of the verb (karra) karrara is takrir. Some scholars say that the (1st form) verbal noun takrar is a form of the verbal noun takrir, and others say that it is derived from the 2nd form of the verb, which expresses causation and intensification of meaning. See, al-Sibawayh, al-Kitab [Tahqiq: 'Abd al-Salam Muhammad Harun] (Cairo: n.p., n.d.) iv, 79; al-Razi, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Istarabadi, Sharh al-Shafiyya Ibn al-Hajib [Tahqiq: Muhammad Zafzaf and others] (Cairo: Matba' al-Majazi) i, 167.

2. See, Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-'Arab, vi, 450; art. Karrara.

3. al-Zarkashi, Badruddin Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah, al-Burhan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an [Tahqiq: Muhammad Abu Fadl Ibrahim] (Cairo: Matba' 'Isa al-Bani al-Halabi, 1972) iii, 10.

4. See, al-Zarkashi, al-Burhan, iii, 9; al-Suyuti, Jalal al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman, al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an [Tahqiq: Muhammad Abu Fadl Ibrahim] (Cairo: Matba' al-Mashhad al-Husayni, 1st edn. 1967) iii, 197.

5. Verses 67-68, 103-104, 121-122, 139-140, 158-159, 174-175, 190-191.

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28. Abu Hayyan, Muhammad ibn Yusuf, al-Bahr al-Muhit (Dar al-Fikr, 1398/1978) viii, 521.
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34. al-Nasafi, 'Abdullah ibn Ahmad, Madarik al-Tanzil wa Haqa'iq al-Ta'wil (known as, Tafsir al-Nasafi) (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi) iii, 195.
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36. See, al-Khatib al-Iskafi, Durrat al-Tanzil, 463; al-Kirmani, Asrar al-Takrar fi'l-Qur'an, 198; al-Nasafi, Madarik al-Tanzil, iv, 214.
37. al-Fakhr al-Razi, Muhammad ibn 'Umar, al-Tafsir al-Kabir (famous as Mafatih al-Ghayb) (Dar al-Fikr, 1405/1985) xxix, 97.
38. Ibn Qutayba, Ta'wil Mushkil al-Qur'an, 232, 234.
39. Ibn Faris, al-Sahibi fi Fiqh al-'Arabiyya, 343.
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47. The Words, 376.
48. The Words, 376-8.
49. Mesnevi-i Nûriye, 230; Ýparat al-l'caz [Turk. trans. Abdülmecid Nursî] (Istanbul: Envar Nefriyat, 1995) 10-11; Letters, 243-4.
50. Ýparat al-l'caz, 6.
51. The Words, 375.

52. Letters, 244.
53. Nursi, The Rays Collection [Eng. trans.] (Istanbul: Sözlcr Publications, 1998) 262 fn 25.
54. Mesnevi-i Nûriye, 230-2.
55. Letters, 244.
56. The Rays Collection, 262-276.
57. The Words, 465-76.
58. In al-Mathnawi al-'Arabi al-Nuri (p. 230-1) Bediuzzaman refers to his work Lema'at, in which are discussed the Qur'an's miraculousness and the purposes of the repetitions, but I have not had the opportunity to study it. [See, The Words, 767-770- tr.]
59. The Rays Collection, 262; The Words, 465.
60. al-Mathnawi al-'Arabi al-Nuri, 141.
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63. The Rays Collection, 264.
64. al-Mathnawi al-'Arabi al-Nuri, 316.
65. Mesnevi-i Nûriye, 230-1.
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67. The Words, 467.
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69. Mesnevi-i Nûriye, 108.
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73. The Words, 467-9.
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75. Mesnevi-i Nûriye, 232.
76. The Words, 471-3.
77. Mesnevi-i Nûriye, 232.
78. Ýparatü'l-Ý'caz, 31.

79. The Words, 473.

80. Letters, 222.

81. The Words, 466.

82. Isharat al-l'jaz fi Mazann al-l'jaz [Tahqiq: hsan Qasim al-Salihi] (Baghdad: Dar al-Anbar, 1st edn. 1409/1989) 277.

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