

A Review of Muslim-Christian Relations in Light of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Works

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Abstract--- *The article attempts to highlight the views of the Turkish scholar and reformer Said Nursi (1876-1960 AD) on Muslim-Christian relationship with reference to his writings. The article specifically discerns that the non-legalistic and positive understanding of certain verses of the Qur'an (5:51) on the subject is unique and of immense significance not only for the healthier cooperation and dialogue between the two communities but also for the world peace at large, as Islam and Christianity are two major contemporary religions.*

Keywords--- *Muslim-Christian Relationship, Said Nursi, The Damascus Sermon, Isaratal-I'jaz, Europe-America-Islam.*

I. INTRODUCTION

All through the fifteen centuries of Muslim-Christian engagement, followers of each tradition usually lived peacefully with one another. Simultaneously, Muslim ventures into Christian domains and Christian dominion in Muslim lands have inflicted pain and malevolence on either side. Consequences of the crusades despite everything reverberate in the upholders of each faith. As of late relations among Muslims and Christians over the world turned out to be continuously polarized, disseminated by hostile to Islamic talk and fearmongering. While numerous commandments within the Qur'an infer approaching Christians and Jews with deference as beneficiaries of God's perfect message, for most Muslims it turned out impossible not to consider Christians to be polytheists because of their philosophy of the Trinity. Christians, on the other side, have seen the Qur'an as false and Muhammad as a faker. Clashes in Asia, Africa, the Inside East, et al generally of the twentieth century were commonly marked as ethnic, political, or philosophical propagations of enduring battles over land, force, and influence. These contentions are currently associated, in general, to the religious allegiance of each faithful.

The two extraordinary Semitic religions have impacted the globe for many years and are unceasingly taking part and playing an important role within the international affairs. Per se one amongst the foremost serious theme worldwide is that of Muslim-Christian relationships. The current article means to concentrate on Said Nursi's views on this vital issue with his distinctive and constructive interpretation of specific stanzas of the Qur'an on the topic that are of utmost significance for the modern world.

The Holy Qur'an urges all to create constructive relationship by acknowledging one another. No doubt that acknowledging and knowing is a good beginning in any helpful engagement. An Arabic maxim states, 'An individual is the adversary of what he doesn't apprehend.' With this general standard in perspective, al-Qur'an effectively recognizes discourse between all people as a common guideline, and among Muslims and Christians particularly. The known Qur'anic stanza on human connections looks to be crucial for any discourse among two people or among the followers of any religion of the globe. The Qur'an evidently suggests that individuals are

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formed in a several shapes and hues so they identify one another, not that they struggle or fight against each other: O men, We have created you from male and female and constitutes you into peoples and tribes that you might know and cooperate with one another. In the eye of God, highest among you is the most virtuous. God is omniscient and all-wise (The Qur'an, 49:13). There are alternative verses that encourage Muslims to interact in dialogue with others found on common pedigree and brotherhood: O humankind, fear your God, who made you from a single person and made out of it his mate and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women. Furthermore, fear god, through whom you raise each another, and also the bellies. To be sure, Supreme Being ever watches over you, an Eyewitness (The Qur'an, 4:1; 5:48).

Foremost, it'll be pertinent to draw the eye towards the fourth and fifth verse of the Chapter II (al-Baqarah) of the Qur'an. In step with his interpretation of the verses Nursi describes 'the spared' (al-muflihun) as the individuals who have confidence in the wahi (revelation of the Qur'an) given to Muhammad (SAW) in addition to the wahi send to the messengers prior to him. These sections evidently state that faith in pre-Qur'anic sacred writings is a indispensable portion of religion and piousness in Islam. In order to be a Muslim, one should accept all the wahi of God, just as the wahi of the Qur'an and furthermore the wahi of sacred texts before the Qur'an. In his far-famed incomplete exegesis of the Qur'an, Isarat al-I'jaz (The Indications of Miraculousness), Nursi remarks that the language of the Qur'an is quite soft towards the upholders of earlier wahi, specifically Jews and Christians. In step with Nursi, this reference urges all individuals to acknowledge the wahi of the Qur'an notably 'Ahl al-Kitab' (People of the Book-Jews and Christians) because of the established truth that the Qur'an itself is proof and observer to the honesty of the Jewish and Christian sacred writings. This verse pronounces the respectable state of these 'Ahl al-Kitab', who returned back to accept the Qur'an and urges others to track their model. Nursi's announcement on this command further explains the significance: "O people of the Book! As you believe in the past prophets and also the divine books, believe Muhammad and also the Qur'an additionally. That's as a result of the former prophets and their scriptures offer excellent news of his coming. The proofs that show the honesty of these prophets and their books are honestly and spiritually found within the Qur'an and within the disposition of Muhammad. Therefore, the Qur'an is the word of God. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is the messenger of God" (Nursi 1175). Nursi proceeds with his understanding of this short refrain with relevance to Christians and Jews, underlining that the Qur'an demonstrate towards them softness, recognition, and flexibility. He remarks that the refrain has the subsequent meaning:

O people of the Book! There's no problem for you to embrace Islam, as there shouldn't be. That's Islam doesn't ask you to abandon your faith entirely. It permits you to complete your creeds and rest on the principles of faith that you simply have already got. This is as the Qur'an contains all the beauties of the previous revelations and also the principles of early non-secular systems. Basically, the Qur'an balances and completes them. In spite of the fact that in the changed times and space it establishes some new details that contain no illogical or unreasonable ingredient (Ibid.).

Nursi then explains on another verse of the Qur'an directly associated with Muslim-Christian relationships. In the verse, the Muslims are invited by the Qur'an to dialogue their disparities with 'Ahl al-Kitab' in civilised manner. Undoubtedly, this is a concern for a genuine comprehension of contrasts. The stanza states, 'And discuss with the

Individuals of the Book within the manner that is most appropriate' (The Qur'an 16/125). The command clarifies that there'll be arguments among Muslims and Christians with respect to teachings and may be alternative problems, however says, the conversation should consistently follow in a helpful way. As indicated by Mahmoud Ayoub, a widely known researcher of Islam in USA, this could be understood within the Qur'anic utilization of the expression 'don't overstate' (la-taghlū) (The Qur'an 4:171), when it discusses the Christian way of thinking of the Trinity. Ayoub advocates that the Qur'an regards this way of thinking as outrageous, however not out and out kufr (Ayoub 313).

The other stanza of the Qur'an that Nursi expands on is the one that disallows the consideration of Christians or Jews as *awliya'* (companions or supporters): O ye who accept! Try not to consider the Jews and the Christians as allies (The Qur'an, 5:51). The stanza is perhaps one among the foremost discussed in the exploration of Muslim-Christian relationship. Said Nursi's version of this stanza appears at a period when the greater part of the Muslim world was under the Colonization. In his societal surroundings, there have been Armenian Christians of assorted identities and Catholic Church Christians, also the Sephardic Jews. Amidst the huge disarray regarding the commencement of Constitutionalism, a fresh arrangement of governance into the Ottomans, several of Nursi's counterparts gave this as a reference against growing affable relationship with non-Muslims, notably '*Ahl al-Kitab*'.

One of the vital terms employed in the aforementioned stanza is *awliya'*, that contains a diversity of implications in several sections of the Qur'an. Ahead of explaining on Nursi's statement, it is vital to offer an etymological foundation of the term. The far-famed Middle Easterner language specialist Ibn Manzur, in his notable dictionary, offers numerous implications of the term, like love, fellowship, and coalition. To explain, he utilizes two inverse terms: *muwala*, a deduced kind that originates from identical root as *walaya* (harmony), and *mu'ada*, a deduced kind that originates from identical root as '*adawa* (enmity), articulating that the fundamental consequence of the roots makes *muwala* contrary to *mu'ada*. Along these lines, in step with Ibn Manzur, *awliya'* is the plural type of *wali* that is something contrary to '*aduwa* (foe). If the section is taken virtually, as a few analysts did in the past, there is an undeniable restriction on Muslims setting up constructive relations with '*Ahl al-Kitab*'. Notwithstanding, Nursi has a completely diverse way to deal with the understanding of this stanza. There's no question that his profound information of Shari'a and furthermore the method of Qur'anic interpretation have added to his statement. Says Nursi, "First there ought to have been an explicit implication as ought to have definite form. Thus, there's the simplest way to interpret this verse with several potential meanings. For the Qur'anic prohibition isn't '*amm* (a general rule applicable to all or any and not be contradicted) however *mutlaq* (the laws that are general however needn't be applied in each circumstance). Unlike '*amm*, *mutlaq* may be restricted. In this instance, time may be a distinguished interpreter. If it puts a limitation on the verse, no one would object to that" (Nursi, Munazarat 70).

Nursi draws out into the open the significance of time and space in exegesis of the Qur'an. He discusses the surroundings within which this specific Qur'anic verse was discovered and the way in which the contemporary surroundings are significantly different: "During the time of the Prophet there was a sizable religious revolution. Everyone's ideas at that point were inevitably involved with faith. People unloved and adored one another only thanks to faith. Therefore, a detailed relationship with non-Muslims was thought of a form of hypocrisy. Today there's a civilizational and secular revolution. The human mind is occupied by civilizational progress and worldly

life” (Ibid.).

Nursi therefore acknowledges that we, as people, are essentially historical creatures, existing in time and space. He regards time as mediator of the Qur’an. He’s alert to the real factors of current system and furthermore the need for positive connections among Muslims and Christians. This isn’t to constrain the significance of the Qur’an, however to grasp it as never-ending wahi of Allah that is meant for all times.

Appropriately, Nursi’s understanding, employing a robust Islamic technique, is that the stanza shouldn’t be a proscription of friendly relationship with ‘Ahl al-Kitab’:

“One may be beloved not because of his essence but because of his attributes and profession. Therefore, it’s not necessary that a Muslim’s attributes be thought of Muslim too. And likewise, it’s not necessary that a non-Muslim’s attributes are non-Muslim. Thus, it’s likely that a non-Muslim individual may have a Muslim attribute and a Muslim profession. Why should this essentially be impermissible? And why would the Muslim attributes of a non-Muslim not be a cause for praise and imitation?” (Ibid.).

Here Nursi clarifies the significance of individuality instead of one’s religious association. In step with Nursi, smart attributes are smart wherever they’re and whoever achieves them, in spite of individual’s religious affiliation, will be thought of commendable. In view of this rule advanced by Nursi, one will contend that Muslims should gain from the incredible individuality of Christians and disciples of different religions and should build up positive connections dependent on those characteristic that are thought of Islamic notwithstanding the place they happen. To supplement his understanding, he points to related legal standard on wedding, remarking that this Qur’anic preclusion of friendly relationship is restricted by the appliance of the Muslim rule that allows a Muslim to wed a Christian or Jewish lady, besides bolstered by script of the Qur’an and furthermore the Hadith of the Messenger (SAW). He says, ‘If a Muslim has a Christian or Jewish partner, would he say he is not implied to cherish her? In reality, definitely he will cherish her.’ If the restriction were outright, there would be no authorization for Muslims to wed Christian or Jewish ladies. Wrapping up his understanding of this section, Nursi says, “therefore our friendly relationship with them (Christians and Jews) is at present from the position of positiveness at their civilization and progress and borrowing it from them. Also, it’s from the point of view of the protection of social order that is the basis of all happiness in human life. Thus, it’s sure that such a friendly relationship isn’t enclosed within the Qur’anic prohibition” (Ibid.).

Although Nursi doesn’t talk directly regarding the Qur’anic verse that calls on the ‘Ahl al-Kitab’ to similarities, one will see the ramifications of this section all through his compositions. In several of his personal letters to his students that are printed independently as attachment, Nursi discusses association among Muslims and Christians. He recommends that Muslims, notably his understudies, shouldn’t concentrate on the lines of dissimilarity; rather they ought to think about the commonalities. It seems that Nursi is very concerned regarding collaboration with Christians for shared objectives like equity, the battle against destitution, the spread of information, and modern issues as environmental security. In other words, Muslims and Christians, who represent over half humankind, may carry a decent improvement within the world through discourse and collaboration. To open such a discourse, the Qur’an lauds some Christian characteristics, like humbleness. It says, “But you will find greater friendliness among

those who state ‘Lo, we are Christians’. For they, especially the monks and priests among them, do not take to false pride” (The Qur’an 5:82-83).

Here it’s obvious that Nursi takes a different approach from his essential reference the Qur’an, that has been tantalizing ‘Ahl al-Kitab’ to proximity since the hour of the Messenger: “Say, ‘O People of the Book, come now to a fair principle common to both of us, that we do not worship aught but Allah, that we do not associate aught with Him and that we do not take one another as lords besides Allah. But if they turn away, then say, Bear witness that we are Muslims’” (The Qur’an 3:64).

In his Treatise on Brotherhood, while dealing with the problem of companionship between Muslims, Nursi considers ‘conviction in a same God’ as the most vital knot between faithful. So also, with respect to ‘Ahl al-Kitab’, the Qur’an states, ‘Our God and your God is one’ (The Qur’an 29:46).

This looks to be the foremost vital basis that’s addressed in the abovementioned verse as well.

Since the renaissance of Islam in seventh century Muslims and Christians are in constant communication. Among the primary experiences is once Prophet received the first wahi. It’s described that the Messenger met Waraqa bin Nawfal (d. 611 CE), the first cousin of his spouse, Khadija. Waraqa, a Christian, powerfully encouraged the Messenger and wanted to breathe longer to assist him in his mission. He even forecasted that the individuals of Mekka would force him to migrate.

In the early years of the prophethood of Muhammad (SAW) there have been occasions of positive encounters among Christians and Muslims. A well-known account is the narrative of the migration of mistreated Muslims to the place of Christian King Ashama of Abyssinia, the Najashi. This movement is regarded as a milestone towards the institutionalisation of constructive relations between the individuals from these two religions. In actuality, this is the event of the disclosure of the Qur’anic stanza that commends Christians being the closest to Muslims. The complete verse on the issue referred over in brief, is as follows: Strongest among men in enmity to the believers will thou find the Jews and pagans; but you will find greater friendliness among those who state, “We are Christians.” That is on the grounds that among them are clerics and priest, and they are not presumptuous And when they listen to the revelation received by the prophet thou will see their eyes flooded with tears, as they perceive certainty in it: They say “Our lord we accepted, so consider us as a real part of the witnesses (The Qur’an 5:82-83).

In the headship of Ja‘far ibn Abi Talib (d. 630 CE), the first cousin of the Messenger, eighty three Muslims, male and female, migrated from Mekka to place of safety in King Ashama’s region, present day Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. In spite of the request of the Mekkans on delivering them back by ambassadorial way, the King retained them in his nation in fortification. This occasion comforted the Messenger to the degree that, when Ashama passed away, the Messenger told his companions, ‘Your sibling Najashi has passed away’, and ordered a Muslim ceremonial occasion in his reverence in Medina. In any event, following his demise, the Messenger constantly made efforts to structure a positive association with consecutive Najashi. Some Muslim sources contain a statement of the Messenger’s dispatch to King Ashama, whose matter represents a vital chronicled paper for Muslim–Christian relationship. In his letter, the Messenger mentions Jesus a word of God and a spirit from Him. Noteworthy, he starts with Jesus as a thread among Muslims and Christians. The present Muslim may proceed from

the Messenger's actions on concerning communication with Christians.

Another early incident is that of Messenger's discussion with Najran's Christians. This incident became the context for the revelation of the far-famed decree of the Qur'an-mubahala (common reviling). Even though the controversy was ab initio heated, the Prophet still extended the hand of friendly relationship. What's more he permitted the Christians to implore in his Masjid and consented to an arrangement with them. Since the establishment of Islam, Muslims and Christians are in steady connections through multitude means, as well as coexisting and sharing identical society, mainly peacefully, however on occasions in conflict.

It is by and large established that the two significant occasions that negatively impacted the sentiments of Muslims towards Christians are the Crusades and colonization. It's relevant to state that Nursi saw the time of colonization of the numerous regions of the Muslim lands. In spite of the undeniable reality that the main part of the Muslim world was under the colonization of European forces, Nursi was incredibly confident once he delivered his far-famed Damascus Sermon in 1911, regarded an achievement in his perspicacity of the prospects of Islam, also of Muslims' relationship with Christians. One ought to keep in mind that, as referenced elsewhere, Nursi conveyed his sermon only a few years before the start of the First World War, when clashes and battles were scattering across the world. Because of the Muslim response to colonization, the predominant Muslim talk was that of hostility and pledge to battle for autonomy against Western form of government. In such a troubled time, Nursi centred on the significance of positive relations among Muslims and also among Muslims and Christians. One will distinguish that Nursi approached the topic from a non-legalistic purpose of read.

In the Damascus Sermon, Nursi talks about adversaries that he regards as hindrance in the path of collaboration and comprehension among Muslims and Christians. The adversaries he talks about aren't nations, groups or citizens; however are delineated as some social, moral, and political illnesses. Nursi identifies six fundamental issues that are responsible for the sluggishness of the Muslims and propose remedies to fix too. The issues are: the increase of melancholy among Muslims; the loss of truth inside the public activity of Muslims; love of ill will; unawareness of the indispensable ties between believers; dictatorship; and furthermore the hastiness to attain individual benefits (Nursi, The Damascus Sermon). Nursi desired the Muslim world to visualise primarily its own flaws and shortcomings, and appropriate them, in order to associate productively with the contemporary world. Here, he talks about constructive advancements like the concept of liberty and looking for truth within the universe of Christianity, persuading that there would be Muslim-Christian collaboration later on.

While thinking about the solutions for these illnesses, Nursi talks around one amongst the lost values of Islam in our century: love as a remedy for hostility. One will contend that Nursi's plan of love create the inspiration for optimistic associations with followers of other faiths, notably Christianity. The possibility of affection and love is spoken to here because of a result of his lifetime understanding. Nursi says, 'The characteristic most meriting of love is love itself. And furthermore the trait most justifying of hatred is hatred itself.' Since this can be straightforwardly associated with Nursi's comprehension of Muslim-Christian relations, it's pertinent to think about what he says in his assessment of this treatment. He reexamined his Sermon in the Fifties and made an interpretation of it into Turkish from Arabic once he appreciated how vital it was. At this stage, Nursi's works mirror his dismay

of the devastation produced by the Wars: as a captive of World War I and as horror-struck witness to World War II. In the reconsidered form of the Sermon, Nursi communicates the significance of warmth and furthermore the risk of hatred: “It is time to finish hatred and hostility. The World Wars have shown how ugly hostility is and the way it may be harmful and wrong. It’s been proved that there’s no advantage of hatred. Therefore, the mistakes of our enemies, as long as they are not directly attacking us, shouldn’t persuade us to hate them. The penalization of God in the Afterlife for those that decline is enough” (Ibid).

This eschatological methodology, by depending upon the verdict of God in the hereafter, makes a worldview that is certain to cause absolution and empathy towards all, even one’s foes. Nursi, by way of comparison, relates the explanation for adoration to a mountain, while the explanations for disdain are exclusively tiny, contemptible stones. Little, contemptible stones shouldn’t be generally favoured over mountains. He counts a few of this rationale behind love as ‘faith, Islam, and humanness’ that he depicts as unbreakable chains and combined strongholds that connect individuals to every alternative. Nursi hopes to picture 3 degrees of positive relations. While not sorting out them in any particular preference, they are, at the primary level, constructive relations and adoration among all Muslims. On the subsequent level, there should be sure relations between groups of all religions. On the third level, he presents the significance of constructive relations between all humans. He portrays this thought of friendship as an area of the spirit of Islam (mizaj-i Islamiyet). On the other hand, he contrasts those that hate with pessimists, constantly attempting to locate the negative elements of life. On the other hand if there’s any opportunity of negative sentiments towards others, these cynics can ne’er opt for positive contemplations. Nursi says, ‘Their outlook is to hide ten positive works with one error. This point of view is unmistakably against the Muslim qualities of decency (insaf) and positive frame of mind (husn-i zan)’ (Ibid.).

Post World Wars, having seen the calamities brought about by nationalism and racism, Nursi was concerned of the harmful results of nationalism that usually ends up in abhorrence towards a whole nation or ethnies. He powerfully backs a positive connection between every Muslim country, albeit their nationalities and ethnicities. He says, ‘the basis and furthermore the soul of our nationality is Islam. Arabs and Turks are genuine siblings and that they are the protectors of the fort of Islam’. Nursi acknowledged that Muslims, whenever live as one, would have more encouraging associations with Christians and accordingly, on a several events, he prompted that Western nations, particularly the US, should work for the solidarity of Muslims to institute advanced relations among Muslims and Christians. Christians and Jews were a minority in the Ottomans that acknowledged constitutionalism as an arrangement of rule towards the beginning of the 20th century. Nursi’s initial works accentuate the prerequisite for Muslims to regard the equivalent lawful privileges of ‘Ahl al-Kitab’ under this new arrangement of the government. He defended the possibility of constitutionalism as an Islamic rule and a rampart against authoritarianism. A few Muslims of his time, prominently the Kurdish clans of Asia Minor, were apprehensive that constitutionalism would carry extra benefits to non-Muslims. He headed out to the area to convert tribals of the significance of the new model of administration and to answer to their numerous apprehensions, as well as the standing of non-Muslims in the Ottomans. In his interactions, one will see anyway, Nursi encountered tough battle to change over his host. (Nursi, Munazarat) On one event, when he was enquired as to how a Muslim and a non-Muslim might be comparable in a Muslim society, Nursi reacted as follows:

Equality is't in virtue and honor, however it's in law. Before the law, a king and a slave are equals. Is it reasonable for a Shari'a law, that forbids stepping on or tormenting an ant, to permit its followers to ignore the rights of human beings? Never! Yes, the leader of Muslims, Hadhrat Ali, (RA), was equal to a Jew inside the court. Similarly, Salahaddin Ayyubi (Saladin) of who you're proud (most of his audience was of Kurdish origin) was as well equal to a poor Christian inside the court. These examples, I assume, serve to correct your mistake (Ibid.).

On another event on an identical venture, Nursi was enquired regarding the non-Muslims being on high positions inside the Turkish Domain because of constitutionalism. They asked, 'Aren't non-Muslim Armenians right now rising as governors or senior officials of a locale?' Nursi response was pragmatic: "Just as they will be watchmen, mechanics or janitors. This can be because of the constitutional government, where the ruler is the people and also the government is the servant of the people. If the system of constitutionalism is enforced properly, the governors and senior officers won't manage the people, however will be paid servants of the people" (Ibid.).

Nursi recognised this with a Hadith: 'The leader of the nation is the servant of the nation'.

In the above responses, it's evident that Nursi was much occupied regarding the appliance of justice to minorities—especially Christians and Jews—under Muslim command and the similar concern is observed in Sunnah of the Messenger of Islam while he focused on the security of minorities in Muslim society. Nursi promotes this idea as a part of his pietistic comprehension of Shari'a and standards, and then continually advanced tranquil beingness between Muslims of the Turkish Domain and minorities, as well as Christians of Greek and Armenian background. One will see this methodology reemphasized in the Damascus Sermon, and with added accentuate on the significance of Muslim-Christian relations in the reviewed addition of Fifties. He was of the view that world harmony would be achievable through collaboration among Islam and Christianity (Nursi, The Damascus Sermon).

One will make out a gradual development in Nursi's thought concerning Muslim-Christian relationships. Post 1920's with the new period of the overwhelming of universal philosophical materialism, he moved his accentuation from issues with equality to collaboration among Muslims and Christians against this materialistic way of thinking. The new spiritualistic Nursi requested that his understudies work together with Christian spiritual leaders against the spreading out of irreligiosity. Nursi understood that collaboration would fortify every religion. It's interesting that this collaboration was to be exclusively against materialistic way of thinking, not against the other faith or position. As referenced before, he acknowledged that Islam and Christianity, jointly, would cause the foundation of world harmony. In one among his letters to his understudies, Nursi prompts subsequently: "Missionaries, Christian religious leaders and Nurcus (a term used for Nursi's students which suggests, 'the followers of light') should be vigilant. Sooner or later the northern movement (communism) can try and break down their alliance so as to defend itself against their joint storm. This movement might deceive some Muslims to follow it by its false claims that it permits lay individuals additional freedom, promotes the Muslim principle of charity, prohibits interest, and guarantees equality of wealth" (Nursi, Maktubat 371).

In one amongst his significant works, Maktubat (The Letters), Nursi expounds on the emblematic connotation of the far-famed Hadith of the Messenger on the descent of Prophet Jesus, from a religious point of view. While not

putting off the overall understanding of traditionalists, he talks about the descent of prophet as emblem of Muslim-Christian participation. That is as a result of some interpretation of Hadith it's related that Jesus and also the Mahdi, the Muslim deliverer, would worship alongside within a same Masjid. Nursi considers this to be an indication of future Muslim-Christian participation and provides eschatological importance to the current coalition for the explanation that each figure is thought of distinguished end-time figures in Islam. In one among his versions, he states, 'A committed Christian culture, legitimately justifying the title of Christian Muslims, can endeavour to connect the two—Christianity and Islam' (Ibid.).

With an explicit interpretation of the religious issues Nursi comprehends these Hadith of the Messenger as employing allegoric rather than exacting language. This comprehension is obvious in his examination of Europe. When he scrutinizes European human progress, he fastidiously recognizes its two angles. From one viewpoint, Nursi acclaims the positive side of European human progress that is galvanized by the divine teachings. On the inverse, he reprimands what he calls the negative side of European human progress galvanized by materialistic way of thinking. He states, "Not to be misunderstood, Europe is two. One is galvanized by true faith of Jesus and has brought useful arts, justice, and honesty to the social existence of humanity by following the sciences. In my critical address, I don't mean this Europe. My address is to the second Europe, that through the darkness of naturalistic philosophy, thinking of the evil aspects of civilization pretty much as good has escorted humanity to indulgence and off track. My address is to the present corrupt Europe" (Thomas 14).

Continuing, he censured this Europe for coming up short on the course of action for otherworldliness, gaining practical experience in the materialistic side of life, and guaranteeing that people are more pleased through materialism. Reacting to the current case, Nursi communicated his certainty that human bliss isn't likely without religious life. Here, similar to a few genuine Christians, Nursi also reprimanded the materialistic qualities of human advancement. Nursi's analysis of Western materialistic human advancement might be found almost seventy years back once he asked, 'Is it plausible for someone whose body is in heaven and whose soul is in hellfire to be glad?' (Ibid.) By this Nursi was demonstrating that, through the entertainment biz, western progress places people's bodies in heaven like conditions while their soul is tormented in damnation like things.

In spite of the fact that he was disparaging of the progress, he was optimistic that Europe and America would work together with the universe of Islam later on. He cited the assessments on Islam of the many recognized Western scholars like historian Thomas Carlyle (d. 1881) and Otto Ruler Otto von Bismarck (d. 1898). In addition, in his statement on the Qur'an, *Isaratal-I'jaz*, he cited avowal by forty Americans and European intellectuals' praise of Islam.¹ (Nursi, *Risale-i Nur*) He found that these intelligent people galvanised confidence in constructive relations among Muslims and Christians. Regarding them, Nursi said that, since the scholarly environment of America and Europe had encouraged the rise of honest characters, similar to Carlyle and Bismarck, he was sure that in the future there would be more inspirational mentality towards Islam in America and Europe, even more such characters (Ibid.).

Nursi, thus, saw the association of Muslims and Christians from a greater spectrum for he saw it in tandem with the Europe-America-Islam relationship. He would, as such, often encourage his students to support dialogue with

Christians. The scholars thus galvanized played vital role to disperse the message of Nursi. Distinguished among them being Fathullah Gulen, who advanced the foundation for Muslim-Christian cooperation. Besides, few years back two ministers of spiritual affairs in Turkey, Mehmat Nuri Yilmaz and Ali Bardakoglu, have met with two popes, John Paul II and Benedict XVI, to advance Muslim-Christian relationships. Therefore, the tendency to grow such relations is extremely alive within the Turkish-Islamic setting. Post 9/11, to fortify the relationship with Muslims and Christians it is more imperative and need of the hour. The survival of the humanity of the twenty first century will rely on the closer cooperation between Muslims and Christianity, as advocated by Said Nursi, for the lasting peace in the world.

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