

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BEDIUZZAMAN SAID NURSI'S THOUGHT ON WASATIYYAH AND AN EXEMPLARY SOCIETY

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Organized by

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Since the demise of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the Muslim ummah has gone through substantial transformations throughout centuries. Especially in the last few centuries when the world has witnessed tremendous changes, the Muslim world has also been profoundly affected by global developments in social, economic, political, religious, moral and other aspects. Those developments have made Muslims to be sensitive, reactive and even violent at times in their responses to such events.

Those developments have made substantial impacts on Muslims in terms of their mode of thinking and actions/reactions on individual and social dimensions, sometimes rendering them to resort to extremism in their thoughts and actions, through either excessiveness (ifrat) or laxity (tafrit). At this juncture, Muslims should remember the prescriptions of the Qur'an that form their individual and social lives.

The Qur'an calls on people to apply the method of *Wasatiyyah*. *Wasatiyyah* is presented in the text in different forms and meanings such as excellence, justice and moderation. One such example from the Qur'an is, "*Thus have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves...*" (Qur'an, *al-Baqarah*: 143).

In relation to moderation, the Prophet said: "*Narrated Abū Hurairah: The Prophet said, Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So, you should not be extremists but try to be near to perfection and receive the good things that you will be rewarded and gain strength by worshipping in the mornings, afternoons and during the last hours of the nights*" (Al-Bukhārī, 1986; 1: 34).

Wasatiyyah can only be understood and practised after a correct understanding of Islam is achieved. Hence, numerous academic studies and researches must be conducted on this topic in order to enlighten and train the individuals and societies of the Muslim ummah accordingly.

In his magnum opus "Risale-i Nur", Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, a prominent Islamic scholar who lived in late 19th and first half of the 20th century in Turkey, elaborately expounded faith and worship related and social issues in order to train individuals and societies that will apply the method of *wasatiyyah* and not engage in violence, extremism, radicalism and terrorism which unfortunately take place in the contemporary Muslim world. Bediuzzaman stresses the importance of the strength of *iman* in the sense that it is what makes a Muslim individual to implement his/her Islamic knowledge and stay firm and straight as Allah commands.

As a matter of fact, the readers of Risale-i Nur maintain and ensure security in their environment and do not engage in anarchy. Even in the past when they were under great pressure by secular government officials due to their Islamic activities, they maintained their mode of *wasatiyyah* in their

responses. Furthermore, Risale-i Nur reflects the method of moderation in Islamic discourse with Muslims as well as non-Muslims in order to establish an exemplary Islamic society.

In this sense, this conference will aim at achieving the following objectives:

- Identifying and expounding key issues and values that are necessary to sustain an exemplary society
- Pointing out and reflecting on the importance of verified faith for an exemplary individual and society
- Emphasizing on the direct relationship between true iman and practice
- Exploring the comprehensive definition of Islam
- Understanding the role of worship (*ibadah*) in regulating the life of exemplary individual and society
- Discovering the nature of the human beings
- Reviewing the selfish desires that corrupt the life of an individual and society and discussing how to instil key ethical axioms and norms in an individual for achieving *wasatiyyah*
- Discussing the exemplary relationship with Muslim and non-Muslim societies
- Identifying the problems and factors that lead to all sorts of extremism and exploring appropriate solutions