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Research Article

Islamic Eschatological Discourses: Comparing Between The Conceptions Of Badiuzzaman And Al-Attas

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Abstract. The present paper aims to portray a metaphysical and theological understanding of the Islamic eschatology, comparing between two contemporary scholars, Badiuzzaman Said Nursi and al-Attas. Through library research and content analysis, this paper looks deeply into the views and explanations made by the two versatile scholars regarding Islamic eschatology. Initially, the paper introduces the concept of eschatology in *The Words* of Badiuzzaman, followed by the explanation by al-Attas referring to his works including *Prolegomena to Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam*, *The Meaning and Experience of Happiness in Islam*, and *Islam and Secularism*. After presenting the two scholastic narrations, they are compared looking to their content, articulative methodologies, and linguistic aspects. The meticulous analysis showed that in the works of both, the conceptions and terminologies related to the end of this world and beginning of an unending other world have been discussed, whereas it is extensive in Badiuzzaman's contentions. Also, despite of the theological similarities in their corpus, they differ in the mentioned aspects to a great extent. This understanding would contribute to the body of knowledge as well as the pedagogical approaches one should adopt towards eschatology as a subject.

Keywords: Eschatology, Badiuzzaman, al-Attas, happiness, comparison, methodology

In the whole world there is no truer report, no firmer claim, no more apparent truth than this. The world is without doubt a field, and the resurrection a threshing-floor, a harvest. Paradise and Hell are each storehouse for the grain. (Nursi, 2008; p. 95)

INTRODUCTION

The term "eschatology" relates to notions of the 'last things' throughout religious history, including the immortality of the soul, rebirth, resurrection, migration of the soul, and the end of time. All these have been a matter of discussion in all theological discourses, including that of Islam since the revelations and scriptures have widely commended on *al-ḥashr* and *al-akhirah* at various contexts (See for instance, Al-Qur'an: 2: 102, 114, 130, 200, 201; 3: 77, 85, 145, 148, 152, 176; 5: 5, 33, 41; 6: 32; 7: 147, 156, 169; 8: 67; 9: 38; 10:64). According to Islamic conception of reality and life of human being, the ultimate purpose of living a worldly life is to arrive at the real destination, which is *akhirah*, pleasantly. As Chittick (1987) pointed out, it is a *maḥad* (return or place of return) for all living creatures. The discussions on *maḥad* pairs with that of *mabda'* (the beginning or the place of beginning) as both leads to the questions regarding the human origin, his purpose of life on earth etc. *Al-ḥashr* in this regard is a moment of satisfaction for the believers, who are confident in front of their only God, Allah. In another sense, Muslims believe that *akhirah* is a venue for all to be treated with justice from the one who created it. One of the main factors that make a believer faithful is the idea of *akhirah* and *al-ḥashr* whereby he realizes that the *dunya* is a place where not everybody is given justice, and it cannot always be expected from this world of turbulence and suffering. These ideas also have secular analogues, such as in one's life's pivotal moments and perception of death. These ideas are frequently compared to the reality of suffering in the world. Eschatological ideas flourish in times of crisis, offering solace to people who want for a better future or inspiring a radical overhaul of society. In Islamic conception, as a matter of fact, no subject can be approached without touching upon some eschatological elements in them (Chittick, 1987) since Islam is the religion of the world (*dīn al-dunya*), of the governance, society, morals, and orders, in the same way it is the religion of faith and belief as well as of the next world (*dīn al-akhirah*) (Taylor, 1968). The life after the first world, *dunya*, and its incumbent consequences are labelled differently by the Qur'anic terms such as *al-ḥashr* (the gathering), *al-Sā'ah* (the moment), *yawm al-dīn* (the day of doom), *yawmun alīm* (a painful day), *yawmun aẓīm* (a great day) (Gunther, 2020; Taylor, 1968).

This paper will attempt to shed light on the conceptions of two scholars, Badiuzzaman and Naqib al-Attas in relation to eschatology, with special references to their respective works, including *Risale-I Nur* and *Prolegomena to Metaphysics of*

Islam, The Meaning and Experience of Happiness in Islam, and Islam and Secularism. Specifically, the paper will do a comparative analysis of their views on the two worlds and find out on what ground they come into common terms as well as on what matters they differ. The eschatological narrations are abundant in *Risale-I Nur* as Badiuzzaman has contented widely on the topic. The longest discussion on life after death can be found in the *Tenth word* of *THE WORDS*, followed by the *Twenty Ninth Word*, and the *Seventh Topic* of *Eleventh Ray*. To describe a deep metaphysical dimension of Islam, i.e., the question of what happens to humans after death, in the most understandable and sensible manner to the public, especially the youth, Badiuzzaman has used different styles of narrations, utilizing analogies, deductive reasoning, and a variety of aspects related contemplative thoughts. For instance, as an analogical expression, Badiuzzaman calls death as the elder brother of sleep. The logical flow of his narrations not only conveys the reality to the audience, but also convinces them in a peaceful and scientific manner. This makes the present paper to reflect upon his method of narration related to *al-ḥashr* and compare that with al-Attas' styles of philosophical explanations.

Interestingly, Badiuzzaman has metaphorically pointed out that we are witnessing *al-ḥashr* on a daily basis, knowingly or unknowingly, as the resurrection is happening in every second in our current world. Since this *dunya* is a created world where everything is in constant change, it is a form of resurrection. The almighty God is creating and destructing whatever he wishes. This, according to Badiuzzaman indicates that resurrection is not a matter of future only, but also a thing of past and present as well. That is to say, resurrection is not something that will only happen in future, but we all are living in the midst of a resurrection process. This idea leads us to think deep on the time dimensions and the limit of human intellect in understanding the divine existence out of time-space dimensions. Badiuzzaman indirectly postulates that since we are living within the frame of time, we are already limited to fully grasp the reality of a timeless matter, which is an end of something, but also a beginning of something else. And we are limited to the extent that we cannot even get a basic understanding of the idea of resurrection without putting the past-present-future time frame into it, same as done in the Qur'anic discourses.

Meanwhile, al-Attas has attempted to deal with the topic at a highly advanced level of philosophy, establishing his views through a sophisticated and advanced linguistic expression. Apparently, the audience he targeted is a learned community who are capable of understanding the truth and reality standing on their high ground of thought and reflection. Al-Attas has also used analogies and examples to explain his conceptions of *dunya* and *akhirah*, as he mentioned that *dunya* functions as a sign board that help human beings arrive their destination, i.e., *akhirah*. And as such, anyone who is excited to see the beauty of the sign board and stop his journey, forgetting his real destination is a stupid. To this end, the paper will expand the views and reflections of al-Attas and compare them with that of Badiuzzaman. Specifically, this paper is an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What is the philosophical understanding of eschatology according to Badiuzzaman?
2. According to al-Attas, how is eschatology understood?

3. What are the similarities and differences in the methods used by these both scholars while contenting on *al-ḥashr*?

METHOD

The research is qualitative in nature using content analysis through library research. For analyzing and understanding the texts, a hermeneutic approach is employed by the researcher. Understanding a text necessitates that we comprehend the language that the author is utilising; we must pay attention to its syntactical rules, linguistic meanings, and potential discrepancies between the definitions of certain words that we may have today and the definitions they may have had at the time the author used them. Contrarily, comprehension necessitates that we comprehend the environment in which an author's statement or utterance was made, and as a result, interpret it in terms of the life and individuality of the author (Warnke, 2016). Thus, the paper extensively delves into the views and explanations made by the two versatile scholars, Badiuzzaman of Turkey and Al-Attas of Malaysia, a living modern Sufi polymath, mainly referring to *Risale-I Nur* of the former and *Prolegomena to Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam, The Meaning and Experience of Happiness in Islam, and Islam and Secularism* of the latter. First, eschatology is conceptualized referring to the mentioned sources, followed by detailing their conception of the *dunya* and *akhirah*, the worldly life of human and the life after death. Then, the paper reflects on the method of narrations used by the two scholars in their works, to explain the religious philosophy concerning life after death, putting forth some relevant examples. The further step is to provide a comparative understanding related to the two methods, which leads to apprehend the similarities and differences in their styles and patterns of reflection, reasoning, and expressions connected to the main topic. Such a comparison is significant to establish a hypothesized premise that, both scholars have dealt with this metaphysical dimension of Islam from a philosophical point of view, yet their method of conveying the philosophy drastically differs from each other.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Eschatology in 'The Words'

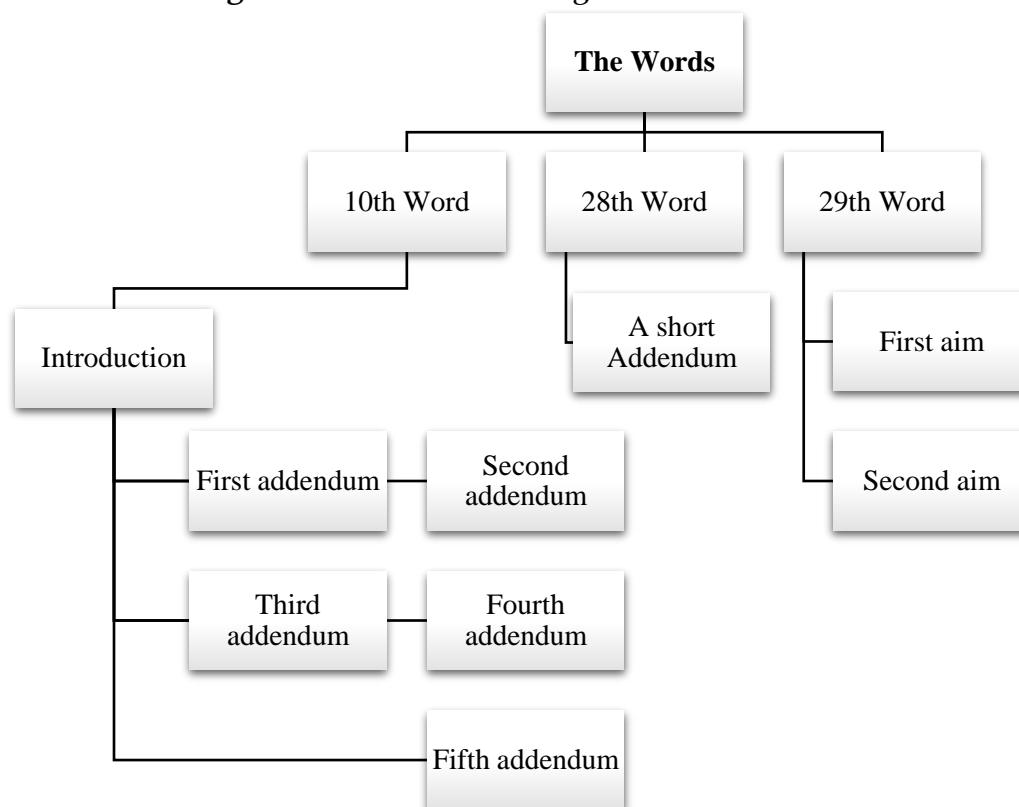
Having explained extensively on the life after death, Badiuzzaman's 'The Words' is abundant with different aspects of the hereafter. He has not merely explained the metaphysical dimensions of that world; instead, standing at a layman's platform, he also tried to make the *'ālam al-ghayb* something convincing to the human understanding in the best possible manner. For this purpose, he put forth different allegories, contextual examples, and extended explanations underpinned by the Qur'anic verses.

The depth of his narrations in relation to the eschatology is to be acknowledged by looking to the contents of 'The Words'. Starting from the tenth word, he narrates on resurrection and hereafter, comparing in the form of twelve 'aspects' containing proofs of resurrection of the dead. This is followed by an introduction consisting of four 'indicators' explaining the comparison and demonstrating the existence and unity of God, the function of prophethood and the

Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be peace), the importance of man, and the necessity of the Eternal Creator of this transitory world creating a permanent realm. Then he gives twelve truths consisting of detailed proofs of the resurrection of the dead and the hereafter based on the Divine names, which is followed by a conclusion and five additional explanations (addendum), including an introduction about the significance of the belief in hereafter for the human social life, and the need of other pillars of faith for resurrection; the connection of life with six faith pillars including resurrection; three matters explaining the accidental occurrence of the resurrection; explanation of the Qur’anic verses that content about resurrection; and the testimony to resurrection and hereafter of the prophets, saints, the spring, and man’s desire for eternity.

After such a lengthened explanation of the hereafter in the ‘tenth word’, Badiuzzaman mentions about the paradise with its several dimensions as well as the hell in the twenty eighth word. Then again in the twenty ninth word, he elaborates some other aspects of resurrection. He starts explicating the immortality of man’s spirit, the angels, and the resurrection of the dead, followed by clarifying two aims, of which the second aim is about the resurrection of the dead, the end of this world, and the life of the hereafter, in four ‘fundamental points’, and an introduction. The four points include the definite immortality of man’s spirit, ten points proving the essential eternal happiness, three matters pertaining to the divine power, and four matters as a proof for the world’s potential ability to resurrect the dead. An organizational chart of eschatological narrations in *The Words* is given below (Figure 1):

Figure 1. Flow of eschatological narrations in *The Words*



As mentioned in our introduction, resurrection, according to Badiuzzaman is not a thing of future, but it was and is also happening at each moment of human life and universe. In other words, the process of resurrection is something of the past, present, and future as explained in the following statement by him:

In each of many different things, in night and day, and winter and spring, in the skies, and even in man's personalities and in the bodies which he changes throughout his lifetime, and in sleep, which resembles death, is a different sort of resurrection resembling the resurrection of the dead; they all tell of and allude to the reality of the Day of Resurrection. (p. 539)

Furthermore, he narrates how we human beings experience different types of resurrection in our daily lives.

There are many varieties of resurrection that a person experiences during his lifetime. Just as he sees the signs of the resurrection through a sort of dying every night and rebirth every morning, so it is agreed that he undergoes what resembles a resurrection every five or six years by changing all the particles in his body, and even undergoes a gradual resurrection twice a year. Also, every spring, he witnesses more than three hundred thousand sorts of resurrection and rising to life in the animal and plant kingdoms. (p. 539)

Methodological Peculiarities

Badiuzzaman is also versatile in using different methods and approaches to articulate and establish what he puts forth with clarity. As such, he has employed that of allegorical expressions, comprehensive and comparative analysis, interrogative statements, different reasoning techniques, and analogies to expound the idea of Islamic eschatology. It should be noted that his allegorical expressions outnumber all other methods since his attempt was to convince and connect the target audience including the laymen to all the metaphysical aspects of Islam in the most understandable way. As an introductory note to the beginning of *The Words*, he stated:

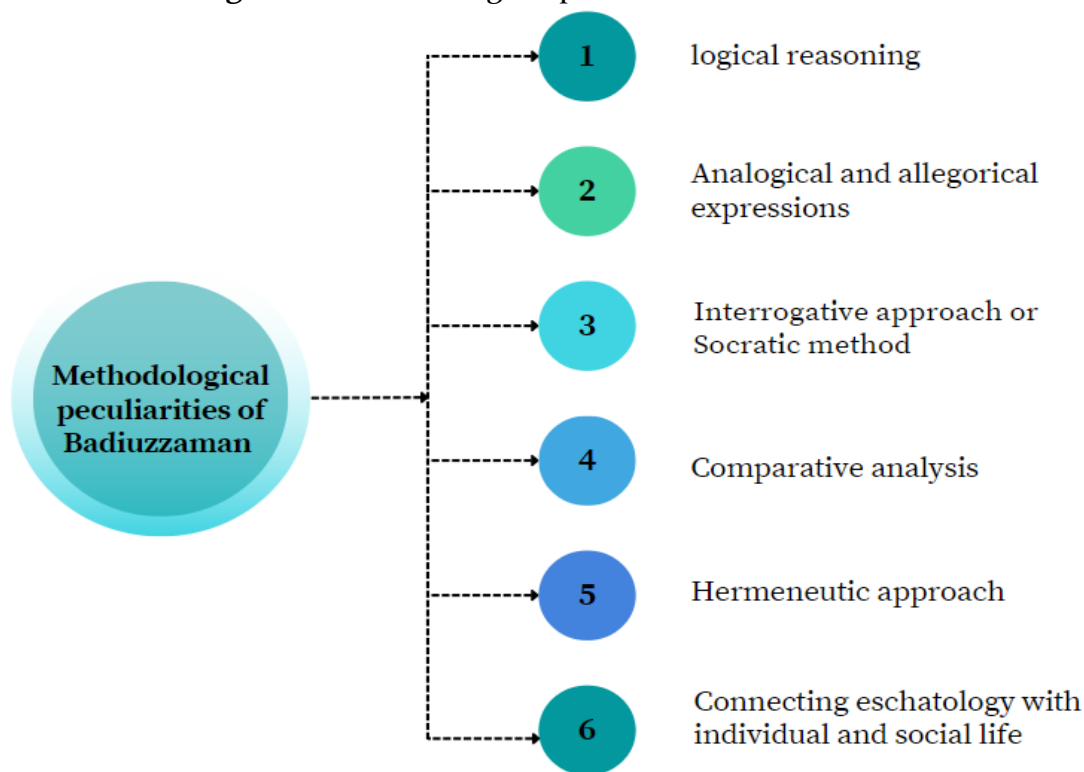
The reasons for my writing these treatises in the form of metaphors, comparisons and stories are to facilitate comprehension and to show how rational, appropriate, well-founded and coherent are the truths of Islam. The meaning of the stories is contained in the truths that conclude them; each story is like an allusion pointing to its concluding truth. Therefore, they are not mere fictitious tales, but veritable truths. (Nursi, 2008; p. 59)

However, he has never claimed that, by his meticulous narrations and proof-backed arguments to establish the upcoming process of resurrection, one can fully comprehend the idea. Instead, referring to his great ancestors among the philosophers, including Ibn Sīnā and other Islamic scholars, he admitted that nobody can rationally grasp the total idea and reality of resurrection since it cannot be

empirically examined with our rational criteria; the only option we have is the traditional proof from the religious scriptures (Nursi, 2008).¹

Here, six major articulative methods employed by him are graphed below (Figure 2) and explained them further with relevant examples.

Figure 2. Methodological peculiarities of Badiuzzaman



Logical Reasoning

One of the main articulation methods he used throughout his works to describe and establish the Islamic idea of resurrection is logical reasoning, utilizing both inductive and deductive types. Evidently, the *tafakkur* aspect of Islamic rational conceptions has been vastly promoted in all relevant contexts to establish the truth of *al-ḥashr*. As an example, see the following argument made by him, under the second point of the introduction to *The First Part of an Important Supplement and Addendum to the Tenth Word*:

...just as all the proofs demonstrating the veracity of the revealed scriptures, and all the miracles and evidences proving the prophethood of God’s Beloved (PBUH) and of all the prophets, indirectly prove the reality of the hereafter, which is what they teach above all else; so most of the evidences for the existence and unity of the Necessary Existent testify indirectly to the existence and opening up of an eternal realm of bliss, which will be the supreme manifestation of dominicality and divinity. For as is explained and proved in the following paragraphs, both the existence of the Necessarily Existent One,

¹ See *The Words*, p. 106

and most of His attributes, functions and Names, like dominicality, Godhead, mercy, grace, wisdom, and justice, necessitate the hereafter with the utmost certainty, and demand an eternal realm and the resurrection of the dead and Last Judgement for the granting of reward and punishment. (Nursi, 2008, p. 114)

The flow of narrations goes on as he continues that since there is a God who is pre-eternal and post-eternal, it is to be certain that there is a hereafter, which is the everlasting means of His sovereignty. And since there is a most majestic, wise, and compassionate absolute power in this universe and among its living beings, it is certain that there is a realm of happiness that saves all from abasement, a wisdom that saves from purposelessness, a compassion that saves from cruelty.

Again, he asserts that the death of this universe is possible since if something is included in the process of perfection, there will be a growth development bound to it; if there is growth and development in it, that thing is bound to have a natural life span. And if it has a natural life span, it is limited to a specific timeframe for a natural death. Just as man is a microcosm that is bound with death, this universe is a macro-Anthropos waiting for its natural end, followed by a resurrection, as is inductively reasoned and established.²

Allegorical and Analogical Expressions

The works of Badiuzzaman are abundant with different allegorical expressions and analogies. This is not different when he explains the idea and process of *al-ḥashr* through *The Words*. The beginning of *The Words* itself is with an allegory, as he compares the life of *dunya* that leads to *akhirah*. He compares this reality with two men travelling on dessert suffering from different calamities and trajectories. The one who starts his *In the name of God*, is safe being that proclamation functions as a protection from such calamities. Meanwhile, the other person does not get that privilege since he has not pronounced it. One of the most convincing allegories that Badiuzzaman used was when he clarified the question of how instantaneous the process of resurrection is, and how such an instantaneous manner is even possible since there are countless human spirits to be resurrected. Also, what it really meant when God stated: '*It will be naught but a single cry*' (al-Qur'an, 36:29, 49, 53; 38:15; 54:31) and '*The command of the Hour will be like the glance of an eye*' as the procedural nature has been repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'an (al-Qur'an: 16: 77)?

As a response to all these, he explained in the SECOND MATTER of the third part of the addendum to *The Words*:

An example for the revivification of bodies is the springing to life in an instant of the hundred thousand electric lights of a large city on a festival night, switched on from one centre. It would be possible to light up in the same way a hundred million lamps scattered over the face of the earth from one centre. Since through the training and instruction in regularity and order it has received from its Creator, a creature of Almighty God like electricity — a

² See p. 550

servant and candleholder in His guest-house— possesses this quality, surely the resurrection of the dead could occur in the twinkling of an eye within the bounds of the regular laws of Divine wisdom which thousands of luminous servants represent, like electricity. (Nursi, 2008, p.125)

In the same vein, the first, second, and fourth matters of the same addendum give clear metaphors and analogies to respond the previous questions in a maximum convincing style.

Another interesting analogy can be seen when he interpreted the Qur'anic verse: "When the pages are spread out" (Qur'an: 81:10) as he contents:

God Almighty expresses the following: "Upon resurrection, everyone's deeds will be revealed on a written page. This appears to be very strange, and totally beyond the reach of reason. But as the Sura indicates, just as the resurrection of the spring is a parallel to other matters, so too the 'spreading out of pages' has a very clear parallel. Every fruitbearing tree, every flowering plant has its deeds, actions and functions. It performs a certain kind of worship, depending on the fashion in which it glorifies God through the manifestations of His Names. Now all of its deeds and the record of its life are inscribed in all the seeds that are to emerge next spring in another plot of soil. With the tongue of shape and form, the seeds make eloquent mention of the origins of those deeds, and spread out the page of deeds together with branch, twig, leaf, flower and fruit. He Who says: "When the pages are spread out" is the same Being That performs, before our eyes, these wise, preserving, nurturing and subtle acts. (Nursi, 2008, p. 129)

He has also compared the remaking of bodies with the seasonal appearance of life in plants such as that happens in spring (p. 126), and equalled those who negate the truth of the hereafter world with men who enter the city of Istanbul, watching a factory with its inhabitants, but without seeing the palace behind it with its inhabitants; they reject the reality of the palace because they could not see it due to the distance from their eye sight (p. 525, 526). In addition, Badiuzzaman compared the possibility of God's omnipotence to create and destroy this earth with his ultimate power with someone who is capable of building and destroying a palace of his own. As long as it can be rightly proven that he can build, destroy, and rebuild the same palace from the scratch, it is not impossible to prove that the God is all-powerful to create, destroy, and resurrect the universe from the scratch (p. 533, 534).

Interrogative Approach or the Socratic Method

The Socratic method of posing questions to find the truth was the first among the interrogative approaches introduced by Socrates to the scholastic tradition. His disciple, Plato systematized it and applied into a practice of questioning games and used it in academy to train his students of philosophy and scientific thinking. It was followed by Aristotle, who developed a theory of interrogative argumentation, realizing its usefulness for scientific purposes (Hintikka *et al.*, 2002).

At various contexts, interrogative approach has been used in *The Words* to establish the truth of *al-ḥashr*. The questioning is initiated with the fundamental questions, the most posed by all beings in this universe, i.e., “Where do we come from?”, “Where are we going to?” and “What are we here for?”. These questions are followed by certain other specific questions related to creation, eternity, and the Divine justice on the judgement day, such as “Is it possible that the glory of the Divine power and sovereignty should create a cosmos such as this, to manifest His perfection, with such lofty aims and higher objectives, without promising a reward for those believers who respond to these aims and objectives through their worship and faith? Or that he should not punish those misguided ones who arrogantly reject all the Divine objectives?”³; “is it possible that the so compassionate, powerful, wise, and all-knowing One should not resurrect, should neither gather His creatures together nor be able to do so, should not be able to commence his Supreme Court, should not be able to create heaven and hell?”; “will there be anything impossible or difficult for the One Who does all these; is it impossible for Him to create heaven and earth in six days, and humans in a blast?”⁴; “is there any possibility for the belief in the hereafter to be false? Is the torment of hellfire not necessary for a foolish who negates the fact of resurrection?”⁵; and “is it possible that He should not accept the greatest, the most significant, the worthiest, and the ultimate universal prayer for eternity of human beings by establishing eternal life and creating paradise?” His text contains numerous such questions, as shown by the page numbers in the comparison table below (Table 1).

Additionally, the twenty eighth word is full of questions and answers, which are used to underpin the truth on paradise, discussing its various aspects in detail.⁶ Taking an example, he poses a question referring to a Ḥadīth, that is, “a person is with someone whom he loves.” regarding the presence of the Prophet and layman together in the same paradise. How can this be possible since the layman gets a momentary time with the Prophet while the latter lives with limitless bounties in the heaven? How can it be united with that of a simple nomad? The answer given is an analogy of two men who are invited for a lavish banquet at a splendid garden, arranged by a highly esteemed personality. One of them was in a state of being unable to watch and feel the full adornment of the garden due to his ill-sightedness while he was also weak in feeling the taste of food due to the poor conditions of his senses. Conversely, the other man was in his full capacity with all his sharp senses, physically, mentally, and emotionally, so that he could enjoy the feast as well as the ambiance of the garden at the maximum level. The condition that both of them receive different level of pleasure from the table and the same garden resembles the realm of the bliss given to the human beings according to their different spiritual levels.⁷

³ See p. 74, 75

⁴ See p. 92

⁵ See p. 112

⁶ See pp. 513-513

⁷ See p. 516

Comparative Approach

There are also many examples of his reasonable comparison made in *The Words*, being all of them in a convincing manner without exaggeration or being distant from the common sense. While describing the omnipotence of God, and His ability to resurrect the world in the hereafter, Badiuzzaman compares the versatile beauty and perfection of man, who is created by the most perfect maker and creator, and man's existence in a state of the confirmed death and departure from this world as decided by his creator, with the wise ordering and balanced state of all things in this universe, which are created by a wise maker; the hereafter appears in front of them too. Thus, the author concludes that everything in this universe silently proclaim and cause others to do so that, 'I believe in God and the Last Day'.⁸

Likewise, after comparing those who reject the existence of angels and their spirit as inhabitants of this universe as well the hereafter with those men who deny the existence of the inhabitants of a factory place, Badiuzzaman makes an analysis and conclusion on the matter and the spirit in the following manner: 'As can be empirically established, matter is not essential so that the existence is dependent on it; rather matter exists through a meaning, which is the life and the spirit. And as it can be observed, matter is not something that is served in the way that everything is ascribed to it; rather, it is a servant to the process and perfection of the truth; and that truth is life, whereas the foundation of that truth is the spirit. Also, as is self-evident, matter is not something dominant in a way that resources are made for it and perfection is sought from it; but it is something dominated, and it looks to the decree of some foundations, which are life, spirit, and consciousness. Likewise, matter is neither the seed, the foundation, nor a settled abode upon which the perfection is determined and constructed; rather, it is a shell that is to be split and dissolved.'⁹

Hermeneutic Approach

Hermeneutics is considered as one of the approaches, in doing scientific studies, that was initially used for deciphering the biblical texts. Later it got extended to the interpretations and meaning making of any texts or linguistic materials and subsequently to comprehension in general. In the nineteenth century, the primary objective of this approach was to be seen as to reconstruct the original meaning of the text, though this idea was challenged in the twentieth century by philosophers including Heidegger and Gadamer, as the former argued that hermeneutics is not to be just a meaning, but is grounded in a whole set of background practices and a pre-understanding that makes knowing possible (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014).

Putting forth the verses of Qur'an at relevant times, Badiuzzaman employed the hermeneutical approach to establish the idea, reality, and process of the resurrection. He has not only explained the direct meaning of the verses but also made an in-depth analysis of the given verses, interpreting them according to contexts. In other words, he knew how to interpret and find the closest meaning of every verse he used for this purpose. An example of his such approach can be noticed

⁸ See p. 103, 117, 118, 547, and 548.

⁹ See p. 525, 526, and 527.

in the conclusion of *The Words* (p. 105, 106) and its addendum (p.108, 112,) as he refers to different Qur'anic verses. He utilized the maximum number of the verses for this since he realized that one third of the whole scripture is formed by the resurrection and hereafter, upon which is the foundation of belief made and constructed.¹⁰

The second part of the addendum also starts with indicating his exposition of the Qur'anic verses (*"Glory be to God in the evening and at daybreak, and praise is His in the heavens and earth, at nightfall and when the day begins to decline. It is He Who brings forth the living from the dead, and brings forth the dead from the living, and gives life to the earth after its death; thus, too, will you be brought forth."* Qur'an: 30: 17-19), as he contends that those verses signify the first of nine stations comprising of the nine levels of proofs.¹¹ In addition, referring to different verses, he postulates that the Qur'an has discussed and established the truth of resurrection in seven or eight versatile forms.¹²

Referring to the verse, *"He Who made fire for you from the green tree"* (Qur'an 36: 80), he gives his interpretation like this: By this verse, God reminds humans of every bounties provided to them, and asks, "Will the One who has given to you all the blessings leave you to your own devices, in way that you enter the grave to a permanent sleep without awakening?" the God also points out, "You see how dead trees come to life again. By refusing to consider the resemblance of this dry wood with the re-emergence of your bones into a human being, you misconceive that the whole matter of resurrection is impossible." Furthermore, the Qur'an states that the One who restores you at the time of resurrection is such that the whole cosmos will be like His obedient soldier, who will bow the head submissively when the command is given: *"Be, and it is!"* (Qur'an: 2: 117)."

Connecting Eschatology with the Individual and Social Life

It is also noteworthy how Badiuzzaman connects the life of hereafter to four categories of humans, including children, youth, elders, and family, looking to both individual and social spectrum. In the introductory part of the primary addendum to *The Words*, (p. 109, 110, 111) he explains how essential the fundamental belief in the hereafter and resurrection for all the mentioned categories is. As for the children, if someone among their close relatives, be it a child or adult passes away, they should be convinced that those who are gone will be in a better state in the heaven, flying like birds enjoying the true happiness. Such a positive conversation would make the children happy and feel relaxed, or otherwise the memories and grievous conditions will destroy all their resistance and morale and take away the sense of hope from their entire life.¹³

The youth also should be regularly reminded of the adversities of hellfire in the next world so that they may withhold from wrongdoings and malpractices. Likewise, for the elderly, the thoughts of a better hereafter life with tranquillity, free of calamities and suffering will make them feel peaceful and detached from their

¹⁰ See p. 118

¹¹ See p. 119-124

¹² See p. 128-130

¹³ See p. 109, 110

present world of suffering. They will be also yearning to arrive at their final abode of peace. This is how resurrection becomes significant for them. And in familial relationship, which is the centre of man's life in the present world, each member having a true and everlasting companionship with one another, can think that he or she will be continuing the same level of bond and connection in the hereafter when they are reunited at the heaven.¹⁴

Eschatological Narrations of Al-Attas and His Methodology

When it comes to Al-Attas' contentions of *al-akhirah*, it is neither that he has extensively paid attention to the topic specifically, nor that he has chosen *al-akhirah* as a separate title in any of his works. Yet, while discussing on the philosophical dimensions of Islam, he has outlined how the notion of hereafter is connected to all those dimensions. For instance, going through his *The Meaning and Experience of Happiness in Islam*, he expounds the concept of happiness directly starting with the discussions related to hereafter.

Happiness according to the perspective of Islam is expressed by the term sa'adah, and it relates to two dimensions of existence: to the hereafter (ukhrawiyyah) and to the present world (duniyawiyyah)...With reference to the hereafter sa'adah refers to the ultimate happiness, which is everlasting felicity and bliss, the highest being the version of God, promised to those who in worldly life have lived in willing submission and conscious and knowing obedience of God's commands and prohibitions. This being so, we see that the relation of sa'adah to the hereafter is very closely connected with its relation to the present world. (Al-Attas, 1993, p. 1)

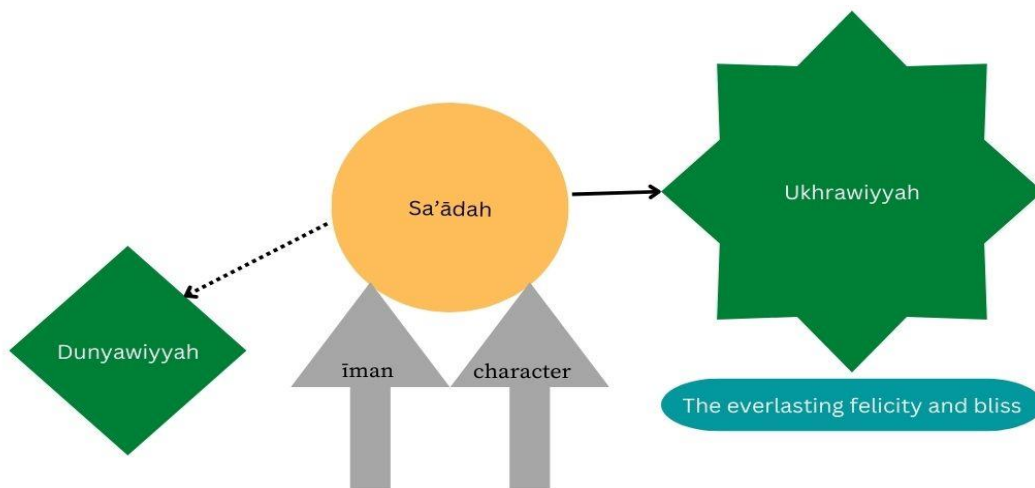
In this sense, like many other scholars, he has counted *dunya* as a tool to arrive at the destination happily, meaning that people are not supposed to live here in this world as hedonists, focusing on worldly pleasure (Kambali, 2020). Also, he has not rejected the significance of the present world in relation to the human existence in there since man is sent to the present world to fulfil the duties which he has been entrusted with, including the *khilafah*, *amanah*, *'adl*, and all types of *'ibadah* while engaging with his worldly affairs. The human character is also connected to the happiness in this world and hereafter as, according to al-Attas, the goal of character is happiness both in this world and in the hereafter. Thus, the other world is highlighted in the mentioned work, as the author continues explaining that 'the relation of happiness to the hereafter has an intimate and considerable bearing upon its relation to worldly life, and since in the former case it is a spiritual and permanent condition, there is...an element of happiness that we experience.' (Al-Attas, 1993, p. 8) In other words, knowing and apprehending the life of *al-akhirah* gives a believer both happiness and a relief, as he believes that the present world cannot give him the true and meaningful happiness to be experienced. That is, for a believer, thinking on the day of resurrection is to be a thing of experiencing the initial form of ultimate

¹⁴ See p. 110

happiness from this world, whereas no other material things are not going to give him the true sense of happiness.

And then, referring to different verses from the Qur'an, al-Attas points out the significance of knowing the opposite of *sa'adah*, which is *shaqawah* and its relation to the hereafter. This term with its different conjugations has been used in relation to the hereafter at some points, and to the present world some other time, and to both at other occasions. A man is *shaqiyy* once he forgets and turns away from his God and His guidance in this *dunya*; the final day for him is a Day of Distress (*yawm al-ḥasrāt*), of sighs and sobs. This happens because he forgot about the life of hereafter and was engaged with the worldly pleasure and momentary happiness. Having no remembrance of the ultimate happiness, for the sake of which man has to suffer and sacrifice tremendously in the present world, he is bound with the material and a closer (*danā*- the root of *dunya*) happiness that is not eternal. And the end result is, man has chosen to fail without being successful in the hereafter. Hence, al-Attas refutes the secular concept of happiness, which is not bound to the religious notion of the present world and hereafter, and establishes that happiness is to be bound to both worlds, and that is too with the robust foundation, *īman* (Al-Attas, 1993). His narration of *sa'adah* could be illustrated as shown by the following figure (Figure 3).

Figure 3. *Sa'adah*



To give an in-depth understanding of what he really meant when he stated that the concept of happiness in the non-Islamic worldview is free of *al-akhirah* and is secular in its dimensions, it seems relevant to quote his own words as follows:

The nearest equivalent to the concept secular is connoted by the Qur'anic concept of al-hayāt al-dunyā: 'the life of the world', or 'the worldly life'. The word dunyā, derived from danā, conveys the meaning of something being 'brought near'; so that the world is that which is brought near to the sensible

and intelligible experience and consciousness of man. By virtue of the fact that what is brought near- the world- surrounds us, as it were, and overwhelms us, it is bound to distract us from consciousness of our final destination which beyond it, what comes after it: al-ākhirah or the Hereafter. Since it comes at the end, al-ākhirah is felt as 'far', and this accentuates the distraction created by what is 'near'. The Holy Qur'an says that the Hereafter is better than the life of the world; it is more abiding, everlasting. (Al-Attas, 1978, p.38, 39)

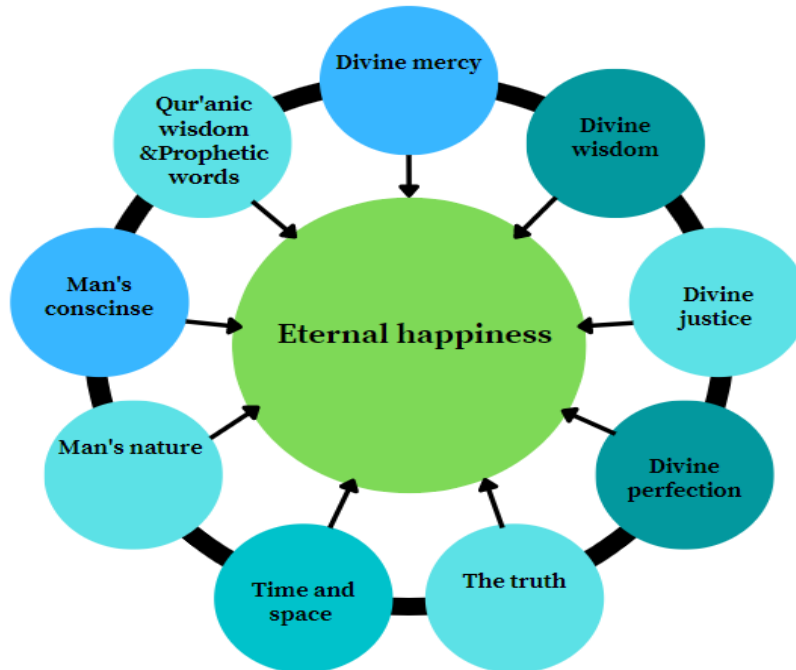
The notion that resurrection is totally connected with the present worldly life of man is not only underpinned by Nursi (2008), but also expanded to another level that, he opined, *al-ḥashr* is not a matter of future only whereas it is that of the past as well as the present. This is inasmuch as the human life is encircled with things and elements which are constantly changing (Nursi, 2008). Everything in this world is dying and being recreated; every moment of time, including second, minute, hour, day, week, and month are being recreated daily, the fact that makes human being think about his existence in the midst of a 'hereafter life'. He is witnessing, consciously or unknowingly, this recreation process.

The eternal happiness is linked to the hereafter and abundantly explained by Badiuzzaman as well, through his 'second fundamental point' of the 'second aim' under the 'twenty ninth word'. The fact that there are matters necessitating the eternal happiness of man is expounded by ten points detailed by him, all of which are directly connected to the life of hereafter. He has counted the Divine mercy, justice, wisdom, perfection, the truth, time and space, man's nature, his conscience, the Prophetic words and traditions, and the Qur'anic wisdom as indicators to the eternal happiness of man¹⁵, as illustrated in Figure 4 below. Taking an example, he perceives the absence of waste-which the mark of perfection- in the creation of God, as a pointer towards the ultimate happiness of human beings, since

the absence of waste in all creation, and in man for instance, which is established by science, demonstrates that man's limitless disposition, and infinite hopes, ideas, and desires will not be wasted either. In which case, man's deep-rooted desire to be perfected points to the existence of a perfection, and his desire for happiness proclaims that he is definitely destined for eternal happiness. (p. 539)

¹⁵ See pp. 539-544 of *The Words*

Figure 4. Eternal happiness and its indicators



Coming to Al-Attas (1995), on another occasion, as seen in the introductory part of his *Prolegomena*, while refuting the non-Islamic worldviews related to the concepts of sacred and profane, he brings the Islamic conception of *dunyā* and *akhirah* into the discussion. He posits that Islam does not underpin the idea of two separate entities such as one being a world of sacred and the other being that of profane or secular. In Islam, both *dunyā* and *akhirah* are significant and connected profoundly with one another as mentioned before. That is, the *dunyā* aspect must be related to the *akhirah* aspect, whereas the latter has the ultimate significance in relation to our life. However, even though the focus is *akhirah* for a believer, he must not forget about his *dunyā* aspect, as stated in the Qur’an: *And seek the (betterment) of the Ultimate abode with what has given to you, and do not neglect your share from this world*¹⁶... (Al-Qaṣaṣ: 77). This is as if God commands to his servants, i.e., human that you live your life in the present world, but with the requisite that you connect it your final abode.

Comparing between the Two Scholastic Narrations

Based on the explanations on the two scholars’ ideas and conceptions on eschatology, a comparison table (Table 1) is made, including possible areas of similarities and difference between the two.

¹⁶ Translations of all Qur’anic verses are taken from ‘Uṣmānī (2007).

Table 1. Comparison between the eschatological corpus of Badiuzzaman and Al- Attas

Areas of Comparison	Badiuzzaman	Al-Attas
Content	He has an in-depth explanation on eschatology, with separate chapters and titles, touching its several dimensions.	Limited explanation, though in-depth, having not explained with particular focus on the subject itself. He touches this topic while narrating different primary topics of his discussions; as such, a detailed and focused discourse cannot be found from his writings.
Linguistic aspects	Badiuzzaman has used the language, which is direct, of common people throughout his explanations, for which he justifies as his target audience was not only the elite people with advanced linguistic versatility. He intended that what he postulated should be understood and convinced to even a layman without any background knowledge of Islamic metaphysics.	While explaining his ideas on eschatology, Al-Attas used an advanced level of language with sophisticated terms and terminologies. That is, his language is academic in nature, which is justified as his primary intention was to convey the ideas to the learned group of people, who are well-versed in understanding the philosophy of Islam, with all the pre-requisite knowledge. Also, he did not want his ideas and expressions to be either misquoted out of the context, without proper understanding, or misinterpreted by those having no background knowledge on what he has conceptualized.

<p>Articulative Methodology</p>	<p>He used different styles and methods of articulation to express his ideas and thoughts on eschatology, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) logical reasoning (E.g., p. 67, 94, 114, 115, 117, 121, 122, 129) b) analogical and allegorical expressions (E.g., p. 69, 95, 102, 115, 125, 126, 525, 526, 533, 534) c) interrogative approach or the Socratic method (E.g., p. 73, 74, 75, 84, 90, 92, 96, 100, 112, 120, 28th word, pp. 513-519, while describing about paradise) d) comparative analysis (E.g., p.85, 102, 117, 118, 129, 525, 526, 547, 548) e) hermeneutic analysis, referring to the verses from the Qur'an (see the conclusion of <i>The Word</i>, p. 106, and its addendum, p. 108, 109, 112, 119-124, 129, 130) f) connecting eschatology with individual and social life; children, youth, elderly, and family (pp. 109-111) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Al-Attas utilized the hermeneutic analysis approach to make an in-depth meaning of <i>al-akhirah</i>, interpreting Qur'anic verses. b) He has also used analogy to clarify the ontology of <i>dunya</i> and <i>akhirah</i>, though only at a time. c) His style of narration appears to be too philosophical and advanced.
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As shown by the table, the two scholastic narrations regarding eschatology are compared looking from the aspects of content, language, and articulative methodology. With regards to the content, both have presented an in-depth understanding of the life after death. However, both differ in the sense that Badiuzzaman has tremendously detailed the topic in a multi-dimensional approach, taking life, death, life after death, and conditions of paradise into discussion. In relation to the same, Al-Attas limits his narration with no particular focus on eschatology itself. His explanation functions as supporting sub-dimensions for certain main topics that he discussed in his works, including *Prolegomena, Islam and Secularism*, and *The Meaning and Experience of happiness in Islam*.

When it comes to the linguistic aspects of both, it is improbable to say that both have similitude by any means, since their target audience is different. That is, Badiuzzaman's style of narration is observed to be in a layman's tone, using an informal language. His such adherence to the common language has been explicitly justified by himself as what he tries to convince is meant not only for an elite community with an advanced learning background, but also for the common people with no background on Islamic metaphysics. On the contrary, Al-Attas has presented the content using an advanced and sophisticated language targeting a learned

audience who have proper understanding of Islamic philosophy and other relevant subjects. It is also justified as that by using such an advanced linguistic expression, the latter has restricted and, in a sense, 'preserved' his content from any type of misquotation and misconception by those without adequate knowledge on the given discourses.

Looking to the articulative methodologies employed by the two scholars, it was identified that in their hermeneutical approach using Qur'an and Prophetic traditions both are similar, while Both are explicit in using the *tafsir* and *ta'wil* aspects of Qur'anic interpretation. In other words, they have not only put forth the explicit meaning of the verses, but also used the freedom of finding the inherent indirect meaning of the verses as shown in our previous explanation. Yet, the narrations given by Badiuzzaman stand out by covering a number of verses from the Qur'an, while Al-Attas does not go into such details. The same pattern can be seen in their analogical and allegorical expressions, as *The words* is abundant with it while Al-Attas uses them at a minimal level. However, what makes Badiuzzaman distinguished from Al-Attas in the articulation methodologies is the former's extensive use of logical reasoning, interrogative approach or the Socratic method, comparative analysis, and his way of connecting the eschatological dimensions with the individual and social life of human beings. Al-Attas, like what we see in all of his works, has approached the topic with a philosophical analysis, which is why the content is not arguably meant for a common reader.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The primary aim of this paper was to find out how eschatology is narrated in the works of two Muslim scholars, Badiuzzaman and Al-Attas, referring to their prominent writings. That is, the Islamic eschatological concepts by the two scholars have been detailed in the paper, with comprehensive coverage of their selected works. For that purpose, *The Words* of Badiuzzaman was selected from which the tenth, twenty eighth, and twenty ninth words were thoroughly read and analyzed. To find the views and explanations of Al-Attas on the topic, his works, including *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam*, *The Meaning and Experience of Happiness in Islam*, and *Islam and Secularism* were revisited. After presenting their narrations and methodological peculiarities, both were compared to find out the similarities and differences in their content, language, and articulative methodologies. As explained, both scholars possess the similarities in their approaches to the whole idea of eschatology from an Islamic point of view. That is to say, there is a theological epistemic unity in their discourses since both belong to the Sunni tradition whereas all their explanations represent the third area of Muslim eschatological conceptions (Taylor, 1968), which is contemplative expectations and experiences of a mystical theology, other than detailing on the promises and threats of a didactic eschatology and the symbolic descriptions of an apocalyptic eschatology. And when it comes to their method of articulation, both have very limited similitude while bearing several differences as indicated through a comparative analysis. Nevertheless, it is imperative that these two works should be revisited and researched by all students of knowledge first, as its

general seekers in the Islamic eschatological conceptions, and second, as expert learners of the discipline. And for this purpose, a particular order in reading and understanding the topic should be followed; that is, as an initial knowledge seeker, a student should start with reading *The Words*, focusing on the tenth, twenty eighth, and twenty ninth words. Only after a thorough apprehension of *The Words* he should commence with Al-Attas' mentioned works, so that his learning could be in sequence, understanding the simple discourses before the complex ones.

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