

## **THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE WORKS OF NURSI<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

In this study Nursi's thought of theological anthropology will be examined. Nursi's works of theological anthropology includes three basic topics. These are origins and purposes of human beings, their epistemology and ethics. Nursi's conception of the origins and purposes of human beings can be grounded and justified by the Qur'an. In Nursi's perspective the ethical values and codes of human conducts can be searched and found in the Qur'an. In Nursi's arguments the Qur'an sufficiently and explicitly explains all ethical values and codes of human conducts demanded and approved by God for human beings. In Muslim theological history Ash'arism has similar justifications like Nursi does. Nursi's understanding of the Qur'an is fully confident, sufficient and complete in that ethical values and codes of conducts for human beings related to the good and bad or evil, useful and harmful can be explained within the scope of the Qur'an.

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**Öz**

### **Nursi'nin Eserlerinde Teolojik Antropoloji**

Bu çalışmada Nursi'nin teolojik antropoloji düşüncesi incelenecektir. Nursi'nin teolojik antropoloji çalışmaları üç temel konuyu içerir. Bunlar, insanın kökenleri ve amaçları, epistemolojileri ve ahlakıdır. Nursi'nin, insanın kökenleri ve amaçları hakkındaki anlayışı, Kuran'a dayandırılıp haklı çıkarılabilir. Nursi'nin perspektifinde insan davranışlarının etik değerleri ve kodları Kuran'da aranabilir ve bulunabilir. Nursi'nin argümanlarına göre Kuran, Allah'ın insanlara uymasını istediği ve onayladığı tüm ahlaki değerleri ve insan davranışlarını yeterince ve net bir şekilde açıklar. Müslümanların teolojik tarihçesinde Eş'ârîliğin de Nursi gibi benzer gerekçelendirmeleri vardır. Nursi'nin Kur'an'a dair anlayışı, insanlık için iyi ve kötü ya da fena, yararlı ve zararlı olan etik değerlerin ve davranış kurallarının Kuran'ın kapsamı içerisinde açıklanabileceği konusunda tam emin, yeterli ve eksiksizdir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Nursi, Kur'an, Teolojik Antropoloji, Epistemoloji, İnsanların Amaçları

## **1. Introduction**

Human beings have to change their perceptions and values towards sexuality, homosexuality and means for richness through prostitution, gambling and drug trafficking if they would like to avoid many serious maladies spread among human societies in the East and West such as HIV and AIDS. Both HIV and AIDS are evidently related to the abuses of human sexuality and drug addiction. "The major causes behind HIV/AIDS epidemic that is ravaging the globe is [sic are] homosexuality, drug injecting practices and sex with multiple partners. It has become one of the major health problem worldwide. Physicians

and big pharmaceutical companies are feverishly busy in finding cure for this deadly disease.” (Bhat 2004: 67). Some human beings have used the vice and evil means such as prostitution, gambling and drug trafficking to gain the material prosperity and richness because they have been greatly influenced by materialism rather than spiritualism. For sure, materialism is incapable of bestowing happiness to human beings and their communities.

For the change to take place gradually and effectively, human beings have to turn to theological anthropology. Basically theology is the study of God and other religious topics and anthropology is the study of man or humans. The term “theological anthropology” is a combination of the two disciplines namely theology and anthropology or a combination of the two doctrines namely the doctrine of God and the doctrine of man. Professor David Norman who designed the course entitled “Theological Anthropology” described the course in the Christian tradition. He described the course as “The Christian understanding of evolution and of the human person; a study of the origin, the structure and the condition of the person in the world; the relationship of the person to God, to others and to the environment. Sin and the origin of evil. The role of grace and love. Hope and the final end of the person.” (Norman 2004). Prof. Dr. Anton Houtepen whose research interest is on theological anthropology has differentiated theological anthropology from other fields of anthropology such as philosophical anthropology, cultural anthropology or biological anthropology although all of them indeed “related of course to what we may know about human life and human persons in their epistemology, psychology, their various cultures and their specific biological conditions. Theology cannot do away with all this anthropological knowledge, but has a specific vision on human origin, human life and human destiny, based on faith in the relation of God and humankind, man and woman created to the image

of God, guided by the Holy Spirit of God and called to obey the will of God, living according to the commandments of God, being aware of the final judgement of God, awaiting the reward of eternal life in the company of God.”(Houtepan 2004). According to Karl Elisabeth Borresen, “The principles constructors of Western theological anthropology are Augustine and Thomas Aquinas.... Thomas retains Augustine’s scheme of human history, unfolding from *ordo creationis*, through *poena peccati* towards *ordo salutis*, but their descriptions of created, fallen and redeemed humanity differ in terms of their philosophical anthropology, respectively neo-Platonic and Aristotelian.”(Borresen 1993: 15). It has been academically and honestly admitted that there are similarities and differences between theological anthropology in the Christian and Muslim traditions. For example, K. E. Borresen and Karl Vogt write, “Although their theology and theological anthropology differ, the Christian and Islamic traditions share a common basic androcentrism, with corresponding legal and cultic incapacity for women.”(Borresen and Vogt 1993: 9).

Based on the topics discussed in theological anthropology in the Christian tradition, theological anthropology can be designed and described from the Muslim tradition since both Christian and Muslim traditions persistently and clearly admit that God has created all human beings and He has determined the true order of humanity, human life and human destiny. Hence, this paper aims at presenting theological anthropology in the Muslim tradition as presented in the works of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1877-1960). Since his works are many, the references are made to some of his works. Moreover, this paper is unable to cover many topics of theological anthropology in Nursi’s works. This paper covers some topics of theological anthropology namely the origins and purposes of human beings, their epistemology and ethics.

## **2. The origins and purposes of human beings**

The Arabic words for a man or human being are al-nas, al-insan and bashar. In the Qur'an, the three words are found in many verses and surahs. For example, the word al-nas is found in the second surah (al-Baqarah 2: 8, 13, 21, 24, 44, 83, 94, 96, 142-143, 161, 164-165, 168, 200, 204, 207, 213, 221, 224), in the third surah (Ali'imran 3: 9, 46, 68, 79, 87, 96-97, 140, 173), in the fourth surah (al-Nisa' 4: 1, 77, 105, 108, 114, 142) and in the one hundred and fourteenth surah (al-Nas 114: 2-3 and 6). The word al-insan for example is found in the fourth surah, (al-Nisa' 4: 28), the tenth surah, (Yunus 10: 12), and the eleventh surah (Hud 11: 9). The word bashar for example is found in the third surah (Ali'imran 3: 47 and 79), the fifth surah, (al-Ma'idah 5: 18), and the sixth surah, (al-An'am 6: 91).

In understanding and presenting the origins and purposes of human beings, Nursi makes the Qur'an his source book. He looks up to the Qur'an to find the answers for the questions related to the origins and purpose of human beings. He poses the questions, "Oh son of Adam! From where? To where? What do you all do? Who controls you? Who speaks to you?" The answers for those questions can be found in the Qur'an, Surah al-Rahman (55: 1-4) as cited by Nursi (Nursi 1994, 5: 23). The Qur'an (55: 1-4) says, "(Allah) Most Gracious! It is He who has taught the Qur'an. He has created man: He has taught him speech." `Ali 1996:1397)

God has created everything on the earth for human beings. Everything on the earth is subservient to human beings. Nursi cites and interprets the Qur'an (2: 29) that man has highest value since the earth and heavens are subservient to him and for his benefits. It also indicates that man has highest or greatest responsibility since God does not create man for other created creatures but they are all for man and God does not create the universe except for man and God creates man to worship God. (Nursi 1994, 5: 222).

Man is created by God with a purpose. Man has to worship and serve God. Nursi cites the Qur'an (51: 56) saying "I created not jinn and mankind except that they might worship me." Nursi further explains that "According to the meaning of this mighty verse, the purpose for the sending of man to this world and the wisdom implicit in it, consists of recognizing the Creator of all beings and believing in Him and worshipping Him. The primordial duty of man and the obligation incumbent upon him are to know God and believe in Him, to assent to His Being and unity in submission and perfect serenity." (Nursi 2003: 114).

Man serves and worships God if he performs the duties and obligations according to the Divine trust, *al-amanah*, One of the Divine trust is man as God's vicegerency on the earth. Nursi cites and interprets the Qur'an (2:30) that man is the world caliph and judge, *anna al-bashar khalifah al-ard wa-hakimuha*. (Nursi 1994, 5: 233).

### **3. Man and his epistemology**

In brief, epistemology is the study of knowledge and its nature, possibility, and justification. From Muslim epistemological tradition, knowledge is divided into two, the eternal knowledge, *al-'ilm al-qadim* that belongs to God and the temporal knowledge, *al-'ilm al-hadith* that belongs to man. In other words, there are God's knowledge and man's knowledge. In Muslim theology, God is the sole and original creator of all created creatures and man is one of God's created creatures. Man is receiver of knowledge and God is creator, originator and giver of knowledge. One of the many privileges granted by God to man is knowledge. With knowledge man excels over other created creatures.

Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwayni (d. 478 A.H./1085 A.C.) writes about epistemology and he divides knowledge into the eternal, *al-qadim*, and the created or temporal, *al-hadith*. The eternal knowledge is an attribute of the eternal God by itself knowing the infinite knowable,

and it is necessary to God and His knowledge is neither al-daruri nor al-kasbi. The temporal knowledge is divided into three namely al-daruri, al-badihi, and al-kasbi. The daruri is the temporal knowledge not acquired by man existing spontaneously and simultaneously when there is a need or a harm. The badihi is similar with the daruri but it does not relate to a harm or a need. Sometimes the daruri and badihi are called the badihi. The examples for the badihi knowledge are the knowledge about al-mudrikat (the five senses), the knowledge of someone about himself, the knowledge about the impossibility of meeting two contradictions or contraries. The third division of the temporal knowledge is al-kasbi. Al-`ilm al-kasbi is the temporal knowledge within human capacity through his temporal or created power, al-qudrah al-hadithah. Every kasbi knowledge is nazari (theoretical, speculative, abstract) that contains al-nazar al-sahih fi al-dalil (true or correct thinking of proof, evidence, indication). (al-Juwayni 1950: 13-14).

Abd al-Rahman bin Ahmad al-Iji (1280-1355) also writes about epistemology and he divides the temporal knowledge, al-`ilm al-hadith, into two namely the daruri and the muktasab. There are many definitions of daruri and muktasab knowledge listed by al-Iji but he prefers his own definitions for both knowledge. For him, the daruri knowledge is what takes place or happens not within the capacity of all the created creatures. The kasbi knowledge is the opposite of daruri knowledge. (al-Iji: 11). What al-Iji means by the daruri knowledge is a type of knowledge given to human beings not through their intended powerful efforts. This knowledge exists in human beings for their own sake. This daruri knowledge is not within human power because it is given without any need of human efforts and power. Meanwhile, the kasbi or muktasab knowledge is acquired by man through his given power or capacity that enables him to acquire such knowledge. In other words, it is very possible to differentiate between the acquired and non-acquired

knowledge. Man has the temporal or created knowledge that is acquired and non-acquired. For the acquired knowledge, there is a need of human efforts to get it. For the non-acquired knowledge, there is no need of human efforts.

Nursi writes about epistemology in his works. He is fully aware that man's knowledge has to rely on God's knowledge found in the Qur'an and in the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). God communicated with human beings through various means such as God directly spoke to His prophets Adam and Musa as explained in the Qur'an, God directly inspired His prophets, and God made the Angel named Jibril or Gabriel the messenger between Him and His prophets. Regarding the revelation from God delivered by His angel to His prophets and the inspiration from God to His prophets, Nursi explains that the large number of revelation sent down to the prophets is through the angel and the inspiration is without any intermediary." (Nursi 1992, 1: 149). The Arabic word for the inspiration is *al-ilham*.

With regard to God's directly speaking to Adam, God directly taught Adam knowledge essential for human beings to have such knowledge. In this case, man's knowledge is taught directly by God to the first human being created by God to be his first prophet of God. He is called Adam in the Qur'an. That God directly taught Adam the knowledge is explained in the Qur'an, the second surah (*al-Baqarah* 2: 31).

The Qur'anic verse (*al-Baqarah* 2: 31) stating God taught Adam all names is explained by Nursi that teaching the names to Adam is one of the miracles for Adam and to manifest his readiness to become the leader or the caliph in this world. The teaching of various knowledge to man made him eligible to attain superiority not only over the angels but also over the heavens, the earth and the mountains in shouldering the greatest trust, *al-amanah al-kubra*. The Qur'an mentions human lead-



eranship, khilafah al-insan, on the earth is spiritual leadership, khilafah ma'nawiyah. (Nursi 1992, 1: 270)..

Nursi explains that human beings and angels would not possess any knowledge if God did not provide them with knowledge. The two divisions of knowledge namely God's knowledge and His creatures' knowledge are evident from Nursi's reference to the Qur'an, the second surah (al-Baqarah 2: 32) in the last part of his ninth word saying "Glory to Thee: of knowledge we have none, save what Thou has taught us; in truth it is Thou who are perfect in knowledge and wisdom".(Nursi 1992, 1: 46). The same verse of the Qur'an (al-Baqarah 2: 32) is repeated many times by Nursi in his work (Nursi 1992, 1: 179, 201, 210, 220, 272) to indicate his awareness and acknowledgement that human knowledge is given by God.

Nursi makes the Qur'an as the revealed, reliable, true and authentic knowledge for human beings based on the Qur'anic verses themselves such as in surah (al-Kahf 18: 1) saying the Qur'an contains no crookedness, and in surah (Ibrahim 14:1) saying about the Qur'an revealed to the prophet to lead mankind out of darkness to the light with God's permission. (Nursi 1992,1: 832)

For Nursi, after the Qur'an, another source of knowledge for human beings is the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him, pbuh), his life, sayings and deeds known collectively as his Sunnah. The Qur'an explains about his mission to human beings in many verses such as in surah (al-Fath 48: 28-29) saying that God sent His prophet Muhammad with guidance and true religion, and in surah (al-A'araf 7: 158) saying that Muhammad is God's prophet for all human beings. (Nursi 1992,1: 831).

The other sources of knowledge mentioned by the Qur'an such as human reason, human senses and human experiences which are not

going against the commandments of the Qur'an and the Sunnah are acceptable and reliable. Nursi does not deny that human beings can acquire knowledge through their reason, senses and experiences since those sources are also mentioned in the Qur'an. However, the sources of knowledge should not be used by human beings to contradict the teachings of the Qur'an since the Qur'an was taught by God to man. Nursi cites the Qur'an (55: 2) stating God taught the Qur'an. (Nursi 1994, 5: 23). For Nursi, the Qur'an is everything. The Qur'an is the eternal translation for these existences, the eternal translation for their successive tongues for the signs of creation, the interpreter of the universe, the revealer for those hidden and unseen in the heavens and the earth, the key for the realities of hidden affairs of events. The Qur'an is also the hidden tongue in the witnessed universe, the treasury for the eternal and glorified spoken words and the merciful eternal attractions, and also the foundation, engineering, sun for this Islamic spiritual domain. The Qur'an is also the map for eschatology, the explained word for God's essence, attributes and names, and the educator for humans....(Nursi 1994, 5: 22). Muhsin `Abd al-Hamid said about the sources of knowledge believed by Nursi are "the Qur'anic principles themselves, which confirm each other in respect of man's feelings and intellect, blending them in a Qur'anic combination." (`Abd al-Hamid 2000: 410).

#### **4. Man and his ethics**

Ethics has subdisciplines include meta-ethics, value theory, theory of conduct, and applied ethics. In `ilm al-kalam, the science of Kalam, there are topics on ethics such as the values of good and bad, al-husn wa-al-qabh or al-tahsin wa-al-taqbih, their sources and criteria. Literally the Arabic word qabh or qabh means ugliness, unsightliness, hideousness, repulsiveness and the Arabic word husn means beauty, prettiness, loveliness, goodness, excellence, fineness and hasan means good, fine, well, beautiful, pretty, nice, good-looking. For the ethical

purposes, the words al-hasan or al-husn and al-qubh or al-qabh mean good and bad or evil related to human voluntary actions or deeds.

Regarding the sources and natures of the good and bad, there two different Muslim theological schools, the Ash`arites and the Mu`tazilites. According to the Ash`arites, human reason, al-`aql, does not indicate something good or bad in respect to responsibility. Indeed what makes things good and bad comes from the Divine sources necessarily by hearing or listening. The basic view in this is that something is not good because of itself, its genus and an attribute essential for it. Likewise is said to something bad. Sometimes something good according to the Divine law but bad according to human reason. For the People of Truth, ahl al-haq, the good and bad both do not refer to genus and a substantial attribute. The meaning of good is what the Divine law praises its actor and the meaning of bad is what the Divine law dispraises its actor. (al-Juwayni 1950: 258). In other words, the good and bad are both decided by God through His revealed law to human beings. Human beings have to listen to what God had revealed in the Qur`an and the Sunnah regarding the good and the bad since the good is the action rewarded by God and the bad is the action punished by God. Here, the Ash`arites stressed on theory of conduct and applied ethics. Both, the theory of conduct and applied ethics are decided and indicated by God`s law, not by human reason.

Regarding the ethical values of good and bad in Mu`tazilite theology, al-Juwayni says that the good and bad are understood by human reason in general and to understand the good and bad, there is no need for the Divine law since for the good is an attribute of goodness and for the bad is an attribute of badness. (al-Juwayni 1850: 258).

What is said about the Mu`tazilite concepts of good and bad is that the Mu`tazilites hold that there are substantial intrinsic attributes of goodness and badness and their attributes are permanent or unchange-

able. The good is the opposite of the bad. What is good is not bad and what is bad is not good. Human reason understands both good and bad in that general, lexical or literal sense.

In the other hand, in the Ash`arite school, it is God's law that decides on what is good and evil. What is commanded by God's law is good and what is prohibited is bad or evil. `Abd al-Rahman bin Ahmad al-Iji (d.1355), one of the Ash`arite later leaders, writes about the good and the bad and he clearly defines that the bad is what is prohibited by God's law and the good is its contrary. There is no rational judgement for the good and bad of things, and it does not refer to actual action unveiled by God's law but it is actually God's law that decides on and explains about the good and the bad action. If God's law would need otherwise, it would make the good bad and the bad good. There is nothing that can prevent God from changing His law regarding the good and bad. (al-Iji: 323).

In Mu`tazilite theological school, human reason decides on the good and bad since in its own nature an action is either good or bad. God's law unveils and explains the good and bad actions and there is no way for God's law to reverse the nature of good and bad actions. (al-Iji: 323).

After presenting the opinions of the Ash`arites and the Mu`tazilites on the good and bad, al-Iji explains the three meanings of good and bad. The first meaning is an attribute of perfection and imperfection such as knowledge is good and ignorance is bad. Both are understood by human reason. The second meaning is suitable and unsuitable purposes or they are also said to be al-maslahah (interest, benefit, advantage, good welfare) and al-mufسادah (blight, evil, bane). Both are understood by human reason. However, human reason is different in deciding on the maslahah and mafsadah for certain actions such as killing. For example, if Zaid is killed, his death is good for his enemies but

his death is bad for his relatives. The third meaning is related to praise and reward or blame and punishment. The point of contention between the Ash`arites and the Mu`tazilites is on the third meaning of good and bad. For the Ash`arites, it is God's law that decides on and explains about the good and bad actions leading their actors to be praised and rewarded or blamed and punished by God. The Mu`tazilites insist on the human reason that decides on the good and bad for their third meaning. The Mu`tazilites say that every action is either good or bad and sometimes it is necessarily understood such as a beneficial truth is good and a harmful lie is bad, and sometimes it is reflectively understood such as a harmful truth is good and a beneficial lie is bad, and sometimes human reason does not apprehend the good and bad except when God's law explains such as it is good to fast during the day in the month of Ramadan and it is bad to fast the first day of the month of Shawwal. (al-Iji: 323-324).

Ethically, man has to be thankful and grateful to his Creator, God or Allah in Arabic language of the Qur'an. Man has to worship God since God has created human beings. In his third word, Nursi cites the Qur'an (al-Baqarah 2: 21) demanding human beings to worship their God who has created them and the human generations before them. (Nursi 1992, 1: 12). Nursi explains that worshipping God is the greatest business and the greatest happiness, *anna al`ibadah tijarah `azma wa-sa`adah kubra*. (Nursi 1992,1: 12). He thinks that man indeed needs to worship God because the weak, poor and deficient human soul longs for the realities of worshipping God and trusting in Him as well as longs for His monotheism and surrendering to Him. (Nursi 1992, 1: 14).

There is the verse in the Qur'an (Surah al-Dhariyat 51: 56) referred by Nursi about human obligation to worship God because God has created jinn and mankind for that purpose. "According to the meaning of this mighty verse, the purpose for the sending of man to this

world and the wisdom implicit in it, consists of recognizing the Creator of all beings and believing in Him and worshipping Him. The primordial duty of man and the obligation incumbent upon him are to know God and believe in Him, to assent to His Being and unity in submission and perfect certainty.” (Nursi 2003: 114 and Nursi 1993: 135).

How to correctly and religiously worship God is explained in Nursi’s fourth word. Worshipping God is implemented mainly through the prayers described and performed by the Prophet Muhammad himself during his lifetime. Nursi cites the common tradition narrated from the Prophet saying, “Prayer is the pillar of religion”. To explain the value and importance of prayer, Nursi compares between two servants sent by their great ruler to a wonderful and majestic garden after giving each of them twenty-four gold money and each of them can use the money as they wish to enable them to reach their destination that takes two months by walking and stay there for few days before they come back to their ruler. Both servants have to go through a station which has many kinds of transportation such as car, aeroplane, ship and train with their specific and respective ticket price. One servant spent twenty-three gold money that belongs to him for pleasure and alcohol. Meanwhile, another servant invested small amount of his money in a profitable business and he gained huge profits to his small invested capital. Someone who does not perform the prayer is like the servant who spent almost all his money for pleasure and alcohol. Meanwhile, someone who performs the prayer is like the servant who invested some of his money in a very profitable business. Every man has twenty-four hours during his life per day and night. If he spends small portion of his twenty-four hours, he gains huge benefits. The five obligatory prayers take less than one hour to perform them all including the times taken for ablutions. The wonderful garden is analogised as the Paradise and the transportation station is analogised as the grave. The prayer by itself is

the greatest rest for human soul, mind and heart altogether. In addition the prayer does not do any harm to human body. (Nursi 1992, 1: 15-17).

No doubt that the prescribed prayers are one of the most important duties of human beings towards God to express their thankfulness and gratitude to God who has created them and provided them with too many goodness in this world. The prescribed obligatory prayers of five times per day and night are one of the human means to thank God. Another human duty towards God is to avoid committing grave sins. Nursi explains that performing the prayers and avoiding the grave sins are the real duties suitable to human beings. This is what he understands from the Qur'an (Surah al-Nahl 16: 128) saying that God is with those who are righteous and do good. (Nursi 1992, 1: 18). The Arabic words are *ittaqaw* and *muhsinun*.

To make their worshipping God and avoiding the grave sins, human beings have to have faith in God and in the last day or doomsday. This requirement is explained by Nursi in his seventh word. (Nursi 1992, 1: 26-29). Implementing the duties, *ada' al-fara'id*, the most important of them are the five daily prayers and avoiding the grave sins, seven grave sins especially is a correct way leading human beings to the eternal abode. Nursi summarises that all scholars or masters of knowledge, esoterics and exoterics, the learned scholars and the good saints all agree that the provisions for the eternity are implementing the commands of the Qur'an and avoiding its prohibitions. Without doing what the Qur'an commands and without avoiding what the Qur'an prohibits, knowledge, philosophy, skill and wisdom have no value for human beings. They are all left at the door to the graveyard. (Nursi 1992, 1: 29).

Since there are many commands and prohibitions in the Qur'an, some of them are mentioned here especially those related to the prohibitions of prostitution, gambling, homosexuality and drug abuses. The Qur'an prohibits adultery, fornication or prostitution either for pleasure

or money or for both. According to the Qur'an, prostitution is illegal; it is not a way or means for income and living. Sexworkers and sextraders are not permitted. Sex is not to be traded, sold or hired. The Qur'an prohibits women and men from living on the incomes directly or indirectly derived from sexual activities. The Qur'an (Surah al-Isra' 17: 32) prohibits human beings from being associated with adultery because it is a shameful deed and an evil way, *fahishah wa-sa'a sabila*. One Muslim commentator says the following about adultery and its evilness. "Adultery is not only shameful in itself and inconsistent with any self-respect or respect for others, but it opens the road to many evils. It destroys the basis of the family; it works against the interests of children born or to be born; it may cause murder and feuds and loss of reputation and property, and also loosens permanently the bonds of society. Not only should it be avoided as a sin, but any approach or temptation should be avoided." (Ali 1996: 683).

The Qur'an provides punishment of one hundred lashes or strokes for each man and each woman who commits adultery. The Qur'an (Surah al-Nur 24: 2) says: "The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication flog each of them with a hundred stripes: let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by Allah, if ye believe in Allah and the Last Day: And let a party of the Believers witness their punishment."

The Qur'an asks those who worship only Allah that they should not kill one soul prohibited by Allah and they should not commit adultery. If they do, they will be punished severely and multiply in the Day of Judgement, *yawm al-qiyamah*. (Surah al-Furqan 25: 68-69).

The Qur'an prohibits women from committing adultery if they are true believers in the prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh). The Qur'an (Surah al-Mumtahinah 60: 12) says, "O Prophet! When believing women come to thee to take the oath of fealty to thee, that they will not



associate in worship any other thing whatever with Allah, that they will not steal, that they will not commit adultery (or fornication), that they will not kill their children, that they will not utter slander, intentionally forging falsehood, and that they will not disobey thee in any just matter. Then do thou receive their fealty, and pray Allah for the forgiveness (of their sins) for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

Regarding the prohibition of homosexuality in the Qur’an, there are verses related to them. The Qur’an (Surah al-A’araf 7: 81-84) explains that those who rejected the call of Prophet Lut practised homosexuality and they were finally punished by God whereby God sent down on them a shower of brimstone because they had rejected their Prophet and committed lewdness and they were the transgressors. The Qur’an (Surah al-Naml 27: 54-58) also explains what had happened to the people of Lut who rejected him and practised homosexuality.

With regard to the prohibition of gambling and intoxication in the Qur’an, there are verses asking human beings to avoid both activities because they are among the Satanic activities. Satan’s plan is to prevent human beings from remembering God and from performing the prayers. The Qur’an (Surah al-Ma’idah 5: 90-91) says, O ye who believe! Intoxication and gambling, (Dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows are an abomination of Satan’s handiwork; eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper. Satan’s plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and from prayer; will ye not then abstain?” The Qur’an plainly explains that money comes from gambling and alcohol dealings does not make its proprietor successful and prosperous in the eyes of God.

## **5. Conclusion**

There are topics of theological anthropology in the works of Nur-

si. Three of the topics are presented in this paper namely the origins and purposes of human beings, their epistemology and ethics. For Nursi, the origins and purposes of human beings are clearly explained in the Qur'an and the Qur'an is the most important source of man's epistemology and ethics. Nursi does not classify knowledge into the eternal and temporal knowledge as al-Juwayni does. For the ethical values and codes of human conducts, Nursi appeals to human beings to search and find them in the Qur'an and sincerely and religiously follow them if they really want to attain the purposes of human existence on the earth as explained in the Qur'an. Nursi does not say if certain ethical values and codes of human conducts are already known and discernible by human beings through their reason as advocated by the Mu'tazilites. For sure, Nursi holds that the Qur'an sufficiently and explicitly explains all ethical values and codes of human conducts demanded and approved by God for human beings. The view that God or the Divine revelation, not human reason, is the only source of for human ethical values and conducts is in line with Ash'arism in Muslim theological history. Ash'arism is different from Mu'tazilism in their understanding of the origins and sources of human obligations or responsibilities towards God and human beings. Nursi is sure and confident that the Qur'an has sufficient and complete ethical values and codes of conducts for human beings related to the good and bad or evil, useful and harmful, do and don't that man should follow and should avoid respectively. Human beings have to understand and perform the commands of the Qur'an and they have to avoid the prohibitions of the Qur'an if they really want to travel towards eternity and happiness in the hereafter. Human beings can avoid many maladies, both physical and spiritual, if they understand and follow the commandments of the Qur'an.

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