

Islamic Constructs of Nursi's Perspective and Their Impacts on Psychology

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ABSTRACT: *This study proposed new constructs to the field of Islamic psychology. It is particularly noteworthy to articulate the views of Said Nursi in the context of Islamic psychology. Based on fundamental aims of Qur'an, it clearly shows that Tawhid (Belief in God), Nubuwwa (Awareness of Prophetic Teaching), Hashr (Belief in Resurrection), and Ibadah (Worship) as for main constructs of Qur'an greatly influential on a person's belief and thought. The proposed four constructs were thoroughly scrutinized to determine the possible meanings with human belief and thought. In line with chosen method, this paper applies the views of Nursi as a device for synthesizing arguments. Islamic psychology clearly indicates the Tawhid and Nubuwwa, called shahadah, are fundamental of Islamic belief and thought and included with awareness of hereafter and doing worship. The other constructs of Hashr and Ibadah are also essential for an Islamic psychology model for understanding human personality. They were conceptually evaluated within the context of psychology, as indicatives of the concept of Islamic personality. These four constructs can be interpreted as inner experience depicting human's emotions, desires, wishes, and intentions. Thus, they are strongly suggested to employ in newly developing Islamic personality scales.*

Keywords: *Belief in God, Awareness of Prophetic Teaching, Belief in Resurrection, Worship, Islamic psychology.*

ABSTRAK: *Studi ini mengusulkan konstruksi baru ke bidang psikologi Islam. Sangat penting untuk mengartikulasikan pandangan Said Nursi dalam konteks psikologi Islam. Berdasarkan tujuan dasar*

Alquran, ini dengan jelas menunjukkan bahwa *Tauhid* (Keyakinan akan Tuhan), *Nubuwwa* (Keyakinan akan Nabi) *Hashr* (Yakin akan Kebangkitan), dan *Ibadah* (Ibadah) untuk konstruksi utama Al Qur'an sangat berpengaruh. Atas kepercayaan dan pemikiran seseorang. Empat konsep yang diajukan diteliti secara seksama untuk menentukan kemungkinan makna dengan keyakinan dan pemikiran manusia. Sejalan dengan metode yang dipilih, naskah ini menerapkan pandangan Nursi sebagai alat untuk mensintesis argumen. Psikologi Islam dengan jelas menunjukkan *Tauhid* dan *Nubuwwa*, yang disebut *shahadah*, adalah dasar kepercayaan dan pemikiran Islam dan disertakan dengan kesadaran akan akhirat dan melakukan ibadah. Konstruksi lain dari *Hashr* dan *Ibadah* juga penting untuk model psikologi Islam untuk memahami kepribadian manusia. Mereka dievaluasi secara konseptual dalam konteks psikologi, sebagai indikatif konsep kepribadian Islam. Keempat konstruksi ini dapat diartikan sebagai pengalaman batin yang menggambarkan emosi, keinginan, keinginan, dan niat manusia. Dengan demikian, mereka sangat disarankan untuk menggunakan skala kepribadian Islam yang baru berkembang.

Kata kunci: Beriman Pada Tuhan, Beriman pada Rasul, Beriman Pada Hari Kiamat, Penyembahan, Psikologi Islam.

Preliminary

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1876-1960), an important figure in the field of Islamic studies, incredibly contributed to the knowledge of religion and human studies. In brief, his perspective to religion is needed to investigate further points to apply some fields, especially psychology. His ideas and works are more related to belief and thought. Therefore, the theoretical framework underlying this study rested on a basis of the view of Nursi on understanding of the belief and thought in Islam. It is an integration process of one whole view of Islam, which includes the impact on human behavior.

In many ways a distinctive figure, Nursi was an innovative theologian and scholar whose important contributions to contemporary Islamic thought in Turkey are now being acknowledged

in the Islamic world, but are still unknown in the West relatively. But his contribution towards the building of Islamic psychology, Islamic vision and Islamic awakening in Turkey is greatly unique in Islam¹. The most important achievement was to bring back the way of expounding the teachings of the Qur'an on the truths of belief that integrates the traditional Islamic sciences and modern scientific knowledge². In his writings, he developed a movement for the renewal of belief that is almost unique in the Islamic world³. Thus, his purpose was to analyze both belief and unbelief and to determine through clearly reasoned arguments that not only is it possible, through following the method of the Qur'an, to prove that all the truths of existence, the universe and human being have rational explanations⁴.

The Islamic view is that life must be illuminated with the principle of Qur'an. Nursi emphasizes that the fundamental aims of the Qur'an and its main elements are four constructs: *Tawhid* (Belief in God), *Nubuwwa* (Awareness of Prophetic Teaching), *Hashr* (Belief in Resurrection), and *Ibadah* (Worship)⁵. Thus, these were explained as psychological constructs to explore the human behavior in this study. The purpose of this study is to provide the theoretical framework to develop a new scale considering the proposed constructs of Nursi in the context of Islamic psychology.

Materials and Method

The current analysis was derived primarily from the Nursi's ideas. This review revealed four constructs of Holy Qur'an that can be of psychological significance: *Tawhid*, *Nubuwwa*, *Hashr* and *Ibadah*. Each one of these constructs is discussed thoroughly in a separate subsection. This paper applies the views of Nursi as a device for synthesizing arguments.

¹Hassan M. Nursi's Approaches to Morality and the Future of Humanity. *International Journal of Society and Humanities* 2014;4: 132-137.

²Ismail NAH, Tekke M. The Relations between Islam and Secularism: The Impact on Social Behavior in Turkey. *International Education Studies* 2016; 9: 66-74.

³Vahide S. Islam at crossroads: On the life and thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. In: Abu-Rabi IM, ed. *Islam at crossroads: On the life and thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*. Albany: State University; 2008. p.1-32.

⁴Ansari M. *The concept of sharia in the thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*, University of Sydney; 2009.

⁵Nursi S. *Isarat'ul I'caz (The Sign of Miraculous)*. Istanbul: Sozler; 1918/1999.

Results

It is the testimony of Islam that Allah/God is the One and only one worthy of worship and prophet Muhammad is the final messenger of Allah. Prophet Muhammad is the one who answered and interrogated questions, as shown in Table 1, originating from main constructs of Qur'an, as such: "Who is your ruler? Who is your spokesman? Where are you going?, and what are you doing?"⁶.

Table 1. Main Constructs of Qur'an and Their Questions

No	Question Statement	Construct
1	Who is your ruler?	<i>Tawhid</i>
2	Who is your spokesman?	<i>Nubuwwa</i>
3	Where are you going?	<i>Hashr</i>
4	What are you doing?	<i>Ibadah</i>

The most important part is viewed as the spiritual aspect of human being in measuring his/her personality by great Muslim scholars (i.e., Ghazali and Mawlana). These are the essential questions among each individuals to realize their life circumstances. In fact, some of these questions are well-known since Greek philosophers introduced. In this format, Nursi demonstrated the fundamental sources of questions of Muslims that can be associated with the understanding of psychology, seeing that feeling, intention, emotion are basically shaped by the awareness of such questions. Thus, it is strongly suggested that the aforementioned constructs are directly or indirectly essential for an Islamic psychology model for understanding human personality. We evaluated the four Islamic constructs in the context of psychology, as indicatives of the concept of Islamic personality.

Discussion

In what follows, the researcher critically summarize the four constructs of Qur'an according to the view of Nursi in the context of Islamic psychology.

Tawhid (Belief in God)

Tawhid comes from the Arabic verb *wahhad*, which literally means "to unite". In Islamic terminology, it means to realize and maintain the unity of God in one's actions (inwardly and outwardly)⁷.

⁶*Ibid*, p.19.

⁷Crane RD. Shaping a future for Muslims in America. The American Muslim. 2003 [cited 2014 July 15]. Available from:

Tawhid comprises “the essence and spirit of Islam, purpose of life and the most fundamental truth in Islam”⁸. *Tawhid* gives Islam its spirituality by reminding its followers of the ultimate goal as the testification to and manifestation of the oneness of God⁹. In Islamic view, the principle of *Tawhid* must be guide of Muslim`s life¹⁰. Acknowledgment of *Tawhid* is such that Allah is the One and only Allah worthy of worship. This means obedience to the commands of Allah would set a criterion in advance to streamline life of a Muslim. Earning a sense of divine presence in the heart helps individual enhance the capital of their life all the time for good deeds¹¹. This is likely called "outcome" by Nursi, namely doing good deeds after realization and revealing the unity of God. Thus, the way of finding the Divine unity is easiness accordingly that increases the sense of keeping of a promise or glorifying of His uluhiyyah (divinity) and doing good deeds for Allah¹². The affirmation of *Tawhid* based on the view of Said Nursi is of two sorts:

“One is the superficial and common affirmation of Divine unity which says: "Almighty God is One, He has no partner or like. This universe is His."

"The Second is the true affirmation of Divine unity which, through seeing on everything the stamp of His power, the seal of His dominicality, and the inscriptions of His pen.”¹³.

With this explanation, Nursi demonstrates this pure and elevated true affirmation of *Tawhid*, referring second type of understanding *Tawhid*. In addition, he points out that as long as the shortage of affirmation of *Tawhid* grows the sense of conceited, self-centred, and pessimism increases; “if you rely on your ego and own power and abandoning reliance on God and supplication, deviate into

<http://theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php>

[/features/articles/shaping_a_future_for_muslims_in_america.](#)

⁸Nursi S. *Mesnevi Nuriye* (Mathnawi-al Nuriye). Istanbul: Sozler; 1923/2001, p.235.

⁹Al-Zeera Z. *Wholeness and holiness in education: An Islamic perspective*. Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought; 2001.

¹⁰Al-Faruqi IR. *Al-Tawhid: Its implications for thought and life*. Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought; 1992.

¹¹Kuspinar B. The chief characteristics of spirituality in Said Nursi`s religious thought. In: Abu-Rabi IM, ed. *Islam at crossroads: On the life and thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*. Albany: State University; 2008. p. 151-166.

¹²Nursi S. *Sozler* (The Words). Istanbul: Sozler; 1930/2003.

¹³*Ibid*, p,300.

pride and boasting...”¹⁴. In contrast, strength of belief helps the individual be religious, devout, fair-minded, and have fine morals¹⁵. To Nursi, belief and affirm in Allah strongly will provide a person a view of positive regard to any circumstances. Therefore, Nursi, in his collection of books, focuses on the existence and unity of Allah through creation¹⁶; it is constructive and selective: a man's commitment to Allah.

***Nubuwwa* (Awareness of Prophetic Teaching)**

Nubuwwa, in brief, is defined as the bearer of the God's commands to the humanity (1). The prophet of Islam, according to Iqbal, is the be-all and end-all of Islam¹⁷. He underlines that in the spiritual pathway of Islam, prophet is the first and the last or the origin and the destiny. Reaching the prophet authentically constitutes the sum and substance of Islam as a way of life. The prophet is a model of attaining perfection¹⁸. Such a perfection elevates man up to the stage of being a locus for the manifestation of God's names and attributes, a stage where he/she embodies in his/her personality all the qualities of God¹⁹. Naturally, *Nubuwwa* represents the *amal saleh* (virtuous behavior), model of practicing of faith. Modeling congruently consists of thinking, talking and or acting or everyday life²⁰.

Nubuwwa is an essential dimension in Islam as much as *Tawhid*. More particularly, *shahadah* (there is no god but God, and Muhammad is His messenger) constitutes both belief in Allah and prophet Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. One stands for belief and the other one represents virtuous behavior. Nursi emphasized that both concepts in Islam are inevitably interconnected to each other - “If you love God, you will follow the Prophet. If you don't follow him, it

¹⁴*Ibid*, p.330.

¹⁵Krauss SE, Hamzah AJ, Juhari R, Hamid JA. The Muslim religiosity-personality inventory (MRPI): Towards understanding differences in the Islamic Religiosity among the Malaysian youth. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 2005; 13: 173-186.

¹⁶Markham IS, Pirim SB. *An introduction to Said Nursi*. Burlington: Ashgate; 2011.

¹⁷Iqbal. *The reconstruction of religion thought in Islam*. Lahore, Pakistan: Iqbal Academy Pakistan; 2012.

¹⁸Jana-Masri A, Priester PE. The development and validation of a Qur'an-based instrument to assess Islamic religiosity: The Religiosity of Islam Scale. *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 2007; 2; 177-188. doi:10.1080/15564900701624436

¹⁹*Ibid*.

²⁰Nursi S. *Lem'alar (The Flashes)*. Istanbul: Sozler; 1932/2004.

points to the conclusion that you don't love God"²¹. Among all prophets, prophet Muhammad is especially important because of the following reasons, as stated in *The Sign of Miraculous*²²; a) he is the Messenger; b) he is the greatest of prophets; c) he is the final of prophets; d) his messengership is for all humanity; e) his Shari'ah (law) is for all humanity. Unlike other prophets, the messenger Muhammad is greatly playing a major role in guiding the people on the path of commands of Allah. For example, this even can be small act of wearing clothes to be modelled in daily life. Thus, following the teachings of Prophets is able to help to shape behavior and thought of Muslim.

***Hashr* (Belief in Resurrection)**

Hashr is defined as the great gathering after end of life and the place called *Mahshar*²³. It is universal fact that what preoccupies human is the reality of death. From another point of view, the thought of death shapes man's philosophy of life. The attitudes to life of those who look on death as annihilation or non-existence (e.g., the view of atheism or nihilism) and those who look at it as the passage to a new life or invitation to the next world, is completely different.

The clear fact is that in the Qur'an (29:57); "Every soul will taste death. Then to Us you will be returned". Seeing that it is impossible not to accept this, clear evidence of human life indicates there is certainly death. Therefore, modern psychology and the other sciences that deal with human being, however, begin from human's conception and end with his death. However, the Qur'an states that the chief substance of human's creation is earth, and his subsequent creation is the result of fertilization. Nursi elaborated on death with example as followed in the *Risale i Nur*:

*"The death of the seed is the start of life of the shoot; indeed, since it is like life itself, this death is created and well-ordered as much as is life"*²⁴.

Even considered as an individual, Hocaoglu stated that the "original hometown" of humans is the next world (hereafter)²⁵.

²¹Garzanli R. Hasir Meydanina Yolculuk Nasil Olacak? [cited 2014 June 5]. Available from: <http://www.nurnet.org/hasir-meydanina-yolculuk-nasil-olacak/>.

²²Nursi, *The Sign of Miraculous*, p.51.

²³Nursi S. *Lem'alar* (The Flashes). Istanbul: Sozler; 1932/2004.

²⁴*Ibid*, p.7.

²⁵Hocaoglu D. Islam and modernity. In Markham IS. İbrahim Ö eds. *Globalization, Ethics, and Islam: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*. Burlington, NJ: Ashgate; 2005. p. 38-53.

Furthermore, he continues that this world lacks the capacity to meet one's need of eternity. If man had not been created for eternity, God would not have given that sense. In this view, death is challenging in life and seeking the ultimate truth of death, to affect positively the thought²⁶. The reality of death gains importance with being aware of Hereafter. In other words, knowing the journey of hereafter is beneficial to relieve death or future anxiety.

Nursi highlights the importance of *Hashr* because of that manifestation of the name of the Preserver and Life-Giver. In other words, Almighty God weighs up deeds with absolute justice on the supreme scales at the Last Judgment, He is absolutely expected to judge in accordance with the predominance of good deeds over evil and vice versa. Thus, this is a certain indication that supreme manifestation of His preservation at the resurrection of the dead and Last Judgment that will be manifested respectively. In this light, individual response to death or hereafter in the context of psychology shapes the pattern of belief, emotion and thought. What is expected from a Muslim individual is to get familiar to any sort of preparation as stated in Holy Qur'an and narrated by Hadith.

Worship (Ibadah)

Ibadah is described as the total obedience to the commands of Allah²⁷ and adherence to the teachings of the prophet²⁸; it would set criteria par excellence in the life of a Muslim. The essence of *Ibadah* is to associate with our daily life actions as revealed in the Qur'an and Hadith to the guiding lights and principles of life²⁹. In literal terms, the Qur'an states that people's greatest concern should be worshipping God. An allegorical interpretation, on the other hand, might suggest that following the practices associated with being a devout Muslim could lead to a state to self-actualization and experience of the true self in Islam. This in fact is sort of stage considering final section after

²⁶Şimşek ÖF. Paths from fear of death to subjective well-being: A study of structural equation modeling based on the terror management theory perspective. Retrieved from Albert Ellis Institute. Middle East Technical University, Ankara; 2005.

²⁷An-Nabahani T. The Islamic Personality.4th ed. Beirut: Dar al-Ummah; 1995.

²⁸Saritoprak Z. The legend of al-Dajjāl (Antichrist): The personification of evil in the Islamic tradition. *The Muslim World* 2003; 93; 291–307. doi:10.1111/1478-1913.00024.

²⁹Othman N. Exploring the ummatic personality dimensions from the psycho-spiritual paradigm. *International Journal of Psychological Studies* 2011; 3; 37–47. doi:10.5539/ijps.v3n2p37.

greatly fulfilling Tawhid, Nubuwwa and Hashr. In this perspective, this is behavioral approach in following Islam well.

However, Nursi explains in detail that *Ibadah* can be divided into two kinds, positive and negative. Positive means is normal and regular ones (e.g., performing solat and almsgiving). As for negative worship, this is actually the experience of individuals involving misfortune or sickness, individuals understand their own impotence and weakness so that they seek Creator`s Compassion and look for His Mercy, and thus offer a pure form of *Ibadah*. This sort of circumstance helps a person feel patiently, think of the spiritual reward and offer thanks to the Creator. Therefore, Nursi addresses any circumstance in life should be related to the concept of *Ibadah*.

Furthermore, *Ibadah* is not only limited to the specific acts of rituals but also all activities of Muslim can be considered as *Ibadah*, everyday life actions. In essence, the concept of *Ibadah* is a system of life prescribed by Islam, in order to fulfill the responsibility toward God and improve a person`s relationship with Allah and people³⁰. Thus, *Ibadah* construct in a Muslim`s life considering as a whole, plays a great role to shape Muslim behaviors.

Conclusion

This study puts forth a multi-dimensional concept of Islamic psychology that begins with the Islamic-related constructs, more particularly *Tawhidic* Islamic understanding and ends with the notion of *Ibadah* or the manifestation of Islamic view in daily life that is consistent with traditional and authentic Islamic knowledge (i.e., Qur`an and Hadith).

Psychology of religion and Islamic perspective integration exists through the concepts of *Tawhid* and *Nubuwwa*, *Hashr* and *Ibadah* presents a unified approach and understanding of religious psychology and Islam. Therefore, the Islamic psychology comprised belief and thought including religious behavior that are motivated by ultimate concerns reflecting the desire to recognize God in accordance with the prophet`s teachings. Islamic psychology is a strong predictor of feeling closeness to God and remembering Him and His prophet. The belief the fact of hereafter related human behavior can be interpreted as inner experience depicting human`s emotions, desires, wishes, and intentions. In this way, psycho-spiritual well-being can be enhanced by

³⁰Achour M, Grine F, Mohd Nor MR, MohdYusoff MYZ. Measuring Religiosity and Its Effects on Personal Well-Being: A Case Study of Muslim Female Academicians in Malaysia. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 2015: 54; 984-997. doi:10.1007/s10943-014-9852-0.

a strong sense of Islamic psychology³¹. The spiritual dimension of human psychology assumes that his or her life activities are guided and motivated by generation of strong faith in God and practiced with the way of following the commands of God.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the importance of four aims of Qur'an as stated by Nursi, could be significantly underlying constructs of Islamic psychology. Its limitation of this conclusion is fully dependent on the idea of Nursi, therefore, it is needed to review other Islamic sources, more specifically from Qur'an, Hadith and other Muslim scholars. These four constructs of Islam again comprise unique and special focus to illuminate the field. In order to operationalize these concepts, it is strongly suggested to employ these in newly developing Islamic personality scales.

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³¹Tekke M, Ismail NAH, Adnan MAM, Othman N. Students' *Islamic personality on Amanah : A structural modelling approach*. *Social Sciences & Humanities*, 2015: 23;1–10.

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