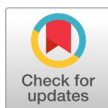
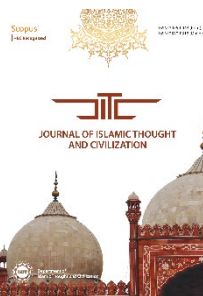


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# Spiritual Governance and Ethical Politics: Reconstructing Islamic Political Thought in the Works of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi

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## Abstract

The ethical crisis in contemporary politics—characterized by systemic corruption, moral disintegration, and the instrumentalization of power—demands the exploration of alternative models of governance grounded in spiritual and ethical values. This study aimed to reconstruct key Islamic political principles from the thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi to formulate a comprehensive framework of ethical-spiritual governance. Utilizing a qualitative library research method, the study applied hermeneutic-philosophical and content analysis approaches to Nursi's seminal works, particularly the *Risale-i Nur* and his epistles, supplemented by contemporary academic literature on his political philosophy. The findings identified six central principles in Nursi's political thought: (1) *tawhīd* as the metaphysical and ethical foundation of governance, (2) *amānah* as a moral responsibility in leadership, (3) justice and *maslahah* as the guiding objectives of public policy, (4) *shūrā* (consultation) as a participatory political mechanism, (5) anti-corruption ethics grounded in *zuhd* (asceticism toward power), and (6) prophetic leadership based on *tazkiyah* (spiritual purification). These principles collectively form a normative structure for governance that emphasizes divine consciousness, moral accountability, and inclusive civic participation. This ethical-spiritual governance model, rooted in Nursi's thought, offers a critical and constructive alternative to secular and technocratic paradigms—particularly in the context of Muslim-majority nations, such as Indonesia. By reintroducing spirituality into political ethics, this study contributed to the advancement of Islamic political theory and offered actionable insights for reforming governance towards justice, transparency, and public service.

**Keywords:** Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, Islamic governance, political ethics, *Risale-I-Nur*, spiritual leadership

## Highlights

- This study reconstructs the political principles of Islam as articulated in the thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, offering a normative framework of ethical and spiritual governance.
- It identifies six core principles central to Nursi's vision: *tawhīd* as the metaphysical foundation of governance, *amānah* as moral and spiritual responsibility in leadership, justice and *maslahah* as central policy orientations, *shūrā* as a participatory mechanism in decision-making, anti-corruption ethics reinforced by *zuhd* (asceticism toward power), and prophetic leadership grounded in personal integrity and *tazkiyah* (spiritual purification). These principles converge into a coherent model of spiritual governance that integrates divine consciousness, ethical responsibility, and civic participation.

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- The article highlights the contemporary relevance of Nursi's thought for addressing systemic ethical failures in modern political systems, especially in Muslim-majority societies such as Indonesia. In doing so, it contributes to the development of Islamic political theory by offering conceptual resources for reimagining a just, participatory, and morally grounded governance.

### Introduction

In the contemporary political landscape, the ethical crisis has emerged as a global phenomenon that undermines legitimacy<sup>1</sup> and integrity of governance systems, both in Muslim-majority and non-Muslim-majority countries.<sup>2</sup> Symptoms, such as systemic corruption, abuse of power, legal manipulation, and the erosion of moral accountability among leaders have contributed to a growing trust deficit between the public and state institutions. Politics, which ought to serve as an instrument of public service and the enforcement of justice, is frequently reduced to a mere arena for power struggles and the pursuit of short-term interests.<sup>3</sup>

The roots of this crisis lie in the disconnection between power and morality. Power is exercised without a solid ethical and spiritual foundation, resulting in governance that tends to be pragmatic, opportunistic, and lacking a transcendent direction. In the context of Islamic political thought, values, such as *sidq* (truthfulness),<sup>4</sup> *amānah* (responsibility),<sup>5</sup> *‘adl* (justice),<sup>6</sup> and *khidmah* (service)<sup>7</sup> which are supposed to constitute the normative foundation of governance, have been increasingly marginalized by the dominance of a secular-technocratic paradigm.

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<sup>1</sup>Gema Budiarto, "Indonesia Dalam Pusaran Globalisasi Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Krisis Moral Dan Karakter (Indonesia in the Vortex of Globalization and its Influence on the Moral and Character Crisis)," *Pamator Journal* 13, no. 1 (2020): 50–56, <https://doi.org/10.21107/pamator.v13i1.6912>.

<sup>2</sup>Zeeshan Noor, Rafeel Wasif, Shariq Siddiqui JD, and Sabith Khan. "Racialized Minorities, Trust, and Crisis: Muslim-American Nonprofits, Their Leadership and Government Relations during COVID-19," *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 32, no. 3 (2021): 341–64, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21486>.

<sup>3</sup>Roland Imhoff et al., "Conspiracy Mentality and Political Orientation across 26 Countries," *Nature Human Behaviour* 6, no. 3 (2022): 392–403, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-021-01258-7>.

<sup>4</sup>Maulana Yusuf et al., "Etika Islam Dalam Ranah Politik: Respon Dan Tinjauan Kritis Nahdlatul Ulama Dan Muhammadiyah Provinsi Jambi Terhadap Penyelenggaraan Pilkada Langsung, 2005-2015 (Islamic Ethics in the Political Sphere: Responses and Critical Perspectives of Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah in Jambi Province toward the Implementation of Direct Regional Elections, 2005–2015)," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 41, no. 1 (2017): 139–154, <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v41i1.306>.

<sup>5</sup>Farhah and Achmad Farid, "Prinsip Etika Politik Pemimpin Dalam Islam (Ethical principles of political leadership in Islam)," *Dauliyah: Journal of Islam and International Affairs* 4, no. 2 (2019): 66–84.

<sup>6</sup>Muhamad Fajar Pramono, Mohamad Latief, and Chandra Dwisetoyo Widodo, "Ethical Politic in the View of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi: A Response to Political Pragmatism," *Dialogia* 22, no. 1 (2024): 23–44.

<sup>7</sup>Rashda Diana, Siswanto Masruri, Surwandono, "Etika Politik Dalam Perspektif Al-Mawardi (Political ethics in the perspective of al-Mawardi)," *Tsaqofah Jurnal Peradaban Islam* 14 (2018): 363–384.

In this context, the thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1877–1960) becomes highly relevant for renewed examination. As a prominent 20<sup>th</sup>-century Muslim scholar and intellectual reformer,<sup>8</sup> Nursi offers an ethical-political framework grounded in *tawhīd* (divine unity), individual piety, social justice, and collective responsibility. His ideas, articulated in his monumental work *Risale-i Nur*, are not merely theological or doctrinal in nature<sup>9</sup> but also encompass applicable political concepts,<sup>10</sup> such as ethical leadership, public participation (*shūrā*), and a firm rejection of authoritarianism. Nursi's spiritual framework positions political power as a divine trust (*amānah*) that must be exercised with honesty, sincerity, and a strong commitment to the public good (*maṣlahah al-ummah*).

Several previous studies have explored the theological<sup>11</sup> and Sufi<sup>12</sup> dimensions of Said Nursi's thought. However, few have systematically reconstructed the principles of Islamic politics from his ethical-spiritual perspective within the context of contemporary governance. Yet, amid the global crisis of political morality, Nursi's ideas on the integration of faith, reason, and public ethics offer a robust conceptual foundation<sup>13</sup> for developing a more humane and transformative model of governance.

Based on the background, this study aimed to reflect upon and formulate the principles of Islamic politics in the thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, which are rooted in the values of *tawhīd* (divine unity), justice, *amānah* (trust), and *tazkiyah al-nafs* (spiritual purification) as ethical foundations for political life.

### 1.1. Research Question

The current study aimed to answer the following research question: How can the principles of Islamic politics in Nursi's thought be reconstructed to establish ethical and spiritual governance.

By posing the above-mentioned research question, this study sought to offer an alternative conceptual framework that integrates spirituality into politics. Additionally, it also aspired to make a scholarly contribution to the discourse on governance reform in both the Muslim world and the broader global context.

### 1.2. Positioning this Study within Existing Readings of Said Nursi's Political Thought

<sup>8</sup>Akhmad Rizqon Khamami, "The Nurcu Movement and Tafsir Risale-i Nur: Formation of Muslim Identity in the Midst of Modernization," *Mashdar: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 5, no. 1 (2023): 79–92, <https://doi.org/10.15548/mashdar.v5i1.6195>.

<sup>9</sup>Nur Hadi Ihsan, Ridani Faulika Permana, and Abdullah Muslich Rizal Maulana, "Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and the Nature of Human Creation in His Major Works: Considering a New Breakthrough in Islamic Philosophy," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 12, no. 1 (2022): 114–37, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.121.06>.

<sup>10</sup>Shumaila Majeed, "An Analytical Study of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Intellectual Development and Composition of Risale-i Nur (A Thematic Qur'ānic Exegesis)," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 10, no. 2 (2020): 170–89, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.102.10>.

<sup>11</sup>Md Abu Sayem, "Badi'uzzaman Said Nursi (1876-1960) and Islamic Eco-Theological Ethics," *Quest: Studies on Religious and Culture in Asia* 5, no. April (2022): 1–16.

<sup>12</sup>Siswoyo Aris Munandar et al., "Nursi's Sufism Without Sufi Order: A Centemporary Debate Among The Ulama," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 28, no. 2 (2020): 155–169, <https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v28i2.9643>.

<sup>13</sup>Nabila Huringiin, Achmad Reza Hutama Al Faruqi, and Siti Nurhalisa, "The Implementation of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi's Concept of Hope in Addressing the Crisis of Public Trust in Indonesian Politics," *Fokus: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman Dan Kemasyarakatan* 9, no. 2 (2024): 136–48, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.29240/jf.v9i2.11294>.

Scholarly engagement with Said Nursi's thought has largely developed along theological and Sufi-spiritual trajectories.<sup>14</sup> Theological readings commonly focus on Nursi's defense of Islamic faith against modern materialism, particularly through his articulation of *tawhid*, prophecy, and eschatology as rational and experiential foundations of belief.<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, Sufi-spiritual interpretations emphasize Nursi's ethical and metaphysical insights, especially his discussions on purification of the soul, sincerity (*ikhhlās*), and spiritual transformation as pathways towards individual moral refinement.<sup>16</sup> While these approaches successfully illuminate the spiritual and doctrinal dimensions of the *Risale-i Nur*, they tend to treat Nursi primarily as a religious reformer and spiritual guide rather than as a thinker whose ideas can be systematically applied to socio-political governance.

Additionally, historical-political studies on Nursi predominantly situate his thought within the socio-political transitions of late Ottoman and early Republican Turkey. Such studies typically examine Nursi's responses to secularization, authoritarian modernization, and the challenges<sup>17</sup> faced by Islamic identity during periods of political transformation.<sup>18</sup> Although these analyses provide valuable contextual understanding, they often remain descriptive and historically bounded.<sup>19</sup> Departing from these interpretative traditions, this study reconstructed Nursi's ethical and philosophical principles into a normative governance framework.<sup>20</sup> Rather than merely interpreting Nursi's ideas within their historical or spiritual contexts, this research systematically synthesized key concepts from the *Risale-i Nur* to formulate an ethical-political model that addresses contemporary governance challenges, particularly regarding integrity, public trust, and moral responsibility in political leadership.

## 2. Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach using the library research method,<sup>21</sup> focusing on a systematic exploration of the works of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. The analysis was conducted through a hermeneutic-philosophical approach to interpret the transcendent meanings<sup>22</sup> and normative principles embedded in Nursi's texts, combined with content analysis to identify key themes<sup>23</sup> related to ethics, leadership, and governance. The primary sources of this research included Nursi's

<sup>14</sup>Şükran Vahide, *Islam in Modern Turkey: An Intellectual Biography of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005).

<sup>15</sup>Colin Turner, *The Qur'an Revealed: A Critical Analysis of Said Nursi's Epistles of Light* (Berlin: Gerlach Press, 2013).

<sup>16</sup>Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi, *Spiritual Dimensions of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Risale-i Nur* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

<sup>17</sup>Şerif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

<sup>18</sup>M. Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey: Movements, Agents, and Processes*, 1st ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin--Madison, 1998).

<sup>19</sup>Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi, "Said Nursi and the Turkish Experience of Modernity," *The Muslim World* 89, no. 3–4 (1999): 218–34, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-1913.1999.tb03692.x>.

<sup>20</sup>Abdullah Saeed, *Islamic Thought: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>21</sup>Iwan Hermawan, *Metodologi Penelitian Pendidikan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif Dan Mixed Methode (Educational research methodology: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods)* (Kuningan: Hidayatul Quran Kuningan, 2019).

<sup>22</sup>Sumaryono, *Hermeneutika, Sebuah Metode Filsafat (Hermeneutics: A philosophical method)*, (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1999).

<sup>23</sup>K A L Vieira and G M De Queiroz, "Hermeneutic Content Analysis: A Method of Textual Analysis," *International Journal of Business Marketing and Management* 2, no. 8 (2017): 2456–4559.

exegetical writings and epistles in the *Risale-i Nur* collection, his personal letters, and secondary sources, such as academic works and critical studies that contextualize the socio-political dimensions of his thought. The choice of methodology was grounded in the need to thoroughly understand Nursi's normative ideas and to construct a conceptual reconstruction relevant to the current ethical crisis in modern governance. The validity of interpretation was maintained through source triangulation<sup>24</sup> and critical engagement<sup>25</sup> with the relevant literature, ensuring both breadth and depth in the analysis.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

#### 3.1. Normative Foundations of Islamic Political Ethics in Said Nursi's Thought

##### 3.1.1. *Tawhīd* as the Foundation of Governance

Within the framework of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's thought, *tawhīd* is not merely a theological concept rather an ontological and ethical foundation for all aspects of life,<sup>26</sup> including the domain of governance. In Nursi's perspective, *tawhīd* instills awareness of God's absolute oneness and of the human being's position as a servant, spiritually and morally accountable.<sup>27</sup> This consciousness of divine unity guides those in power to refrain from idolizing personal will, group interests, or power itself. Instead, authority is viewed as a divine trust (*amānah ilāhiyyah*) that must be exercised in the spirit of servitude to God and service to humanity. Thus, the principle of *tawhīd* in politics implies the necessity of a leadership marked by integrity, transparency, and a commitment to divine justice<sup>28</sup> rather than being driven by worldly ambitions. *Tawhīd* becomes the starting point for a public ethic that prevents despotism and abuse of power while fostering a spiritually-grounded, accountable, and civilized model of governance.

In Nursi's thought, *tawhīd* not only underpins the relationship between human beings and God but also serves as a foundational framework for shaping ethical leadership and power structures.<sup>29</sup> The awareness of God's oneness necessitates a socio-political order rooted in the values of honesty, justice, and responsibility. Within this context, *tawhīd* gives rise to the ethos of *amānah*—a concept that emphasizes power as a divine trust which must be exercised with fairness and accountability.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, the principle of *tawhīd* directly leads to the principle of *amānah* as its logical and practical extension in realizing a civilized and ethically-grounded system of governance.

<sup>24</sup>Mudjia Rahardjo, "Meluruskan yang 'Bengkok' dalam Penelitian Kualitatif (Straightening the "crooked" aspects in qualitative research)" (Malang: Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang Repository, 2023), <https://repository.uin-malang.ac.id/15156/>.

<sup>25</sup>Vita Fitria, and Haekal Adha Al Giffari, "The Language of Science and Religion: An Approach to Understand the Encounter between Science and Religion According to Ian G. Barbour," *Humanika* 21, no. 1 (2021): 55–68, <https://doi.org/10.21831/hum.v21i1.40453>.

<sup>26</sup>Siti Norhanani Binti Musni et al., "Secularism: Freedom of Religion or Freedom from Religion?," *Geopolitics Quarterly* 19, (2023): 145–66.

<sup>27</sup>Asif Trisnani et al., "Interpretation of Tau Hīd Verses from Said Nursi's Perspective: An Esoteric Approach and Its Influence on Islamic Thought," *Fikri: Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial Dan Budaya* 9, no. 1 (2024): 40–54, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.25217/jf.v9i1.4650>.

<sup>28</sup>Aldo Redho Syam, "Konsep Kepemimpinan Bermutu Dalam Pendidikan Islam," (The Concept of Quality Leadership in Islamic Education)." *At-Ta'dib* 12, no. 2 (2017): 49–69, <https://doi.org/10.21111/at-tadib.v12i2.1214>.

<sup>29</sup>Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1996).

<sup>30</sup>Kamil Fadel and Eren Tatari, "A Political Analysis of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Damascus Sermon," *Humanities and Social Sciences Review* 5, no. 3 (2016): 303–322.

### 3.1.2. *Amānah* and Responsibility

One of the central principles in Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's political thought is *amānah* (trust), which he understands as a moral and spiritual responsibility inherent in all forms of authorities.<sup>31</sup> For Nursi, governance is not a tool for domination or personal interest, rather a divine trust that must be exercised with honesty, justice, and sincerity. Within this framework, power is seen as a means to serve the people and uphold the values of justice rather than an instrument of oppression or corruption. A leader who bears the *amānah* must be aware of their vertical accountability to God and horizontal accountability to society.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the principle of *amānah* forms the foundation of a clean, accountable, and people-oriented system of governance. At the same time, it offers a critical alternative to modern paradigms of power that often marginalize the ethical and transcendent dimensions of political practice.

Within Nursi's framework of thought, the principle of *amānah* cannot stand alone without being supported by a strong foundation of justice (*'adl*). *Amānah* requires its implementation through just policies that prioritize the comprehensive interests of the ummah. Therefore, justice becomes the logical consequence of upholding *amānah*, as only through justice can power be exercised with genuine responsibility and integrity. For Nursi, a government that carries the trust of leadership must consistently orient itself towards justice as its fundamental basis<sup>33</sup> while also placing public welfare (*maṣlahah al-ummah*) as the ultimate goal of every public policy. The close interrelation between *amānah*, justice, and public welfare illustrates that Islamic political ethics in Nursi's thought are mutually reinforcing and unified within a coherent normative framework.

### 3.1.3. Justice and Public Welfare

In Nursi's thought, justice (*'adl*) is a universal principle that must serve as the primary foundation of governance. It is not merely understood as a formal legality but as a moral-transcendental value that maintains the balance between individual rights, collective interests, and the divine will.<sup>34</sup> Nursi asserts that political decisions lacking a foundation in justice would inevitably lead to oppression, social inequality, and moral decay.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, justice must always be aligned with the orientation towards public welfare (*maṣlahah al-ummah*) as the ultimate goal of any state intervention. In Nursi's perspective, *maṣlahah* is not simply a pragmatic interest but a holistic good—encompassing spiritual, social, and moral dimensions—that is consistent with the principles of the *Shari'ah*.<sup>36</sup> A just government, then, is one that guarantees basic rights, rejects tyranny, and ensures that every policy is directed towards sustainable welfare with an orientation towards the hereafter. Thus, the principles of justice and public welfare in Nursi's thought offer a robust normative framework for establishing an ethical and humane political system.

<sup>31</sup>Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Rays* (Istanbul: Nesil, 2004).

<sup>32</sup>Qaisar Mohammad, "Faith and Revolution: The Case of Islamic Resurgence by Said Nursi in Turkey," *Analisa: Journal of Social Science and Religion* 5, no. 02 (2020): 153–66, <https://doi.org/10.18784/analisa.v5i02.1135>.

<sup>33</sup>Zeki Saritoprak, "Islam and Politics in The Light of Said Nursi's Writings," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 19, no. 1 (2008): 113–126, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510340701770337>.

<sup>34</sup>Nabila Huringiin, Achmad Reza Hutama Al Faruqi, and Achmad Wildan Sayyidul Bachr, "Harmonizing Society: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Vision of Islamic Politics," *Muharrrik: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Sosial* 6, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.37680/muharrrik.v6i1.3528>.

<sup>35</sup>Badi'uzzaman Sa'id Nursi, *Mulhaq Emirdag 2 (The Emirdag Letters)*, ed. Husein Utsman (Mesir: Sozler Publications, n.d.).

<sup>36</sup>Elmira Akhmetova, "Said Nursi on Secularism, Religious Rights, Ethics, and Education," *ICR Journal* 12, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.52282/icr.v12i1.816>.

To ensure the establishment of justice and the realization of public welfare in governance, Nursi emphasizes the importance of mechanisms that enable active public participation in the decision-making processes.<sup>37</sup> It is in this context that the principle of *shūrā* (consultative deliberation) is relevant as both a structural and cultural instrument, ensuring that public policy is not determined in an authoritarian manner but through collective processes that reflect the aspirations of the ummah. *Shūrā* serves as an ethical bridge connecting the values of justice and *maṣlahah* with a political practice that is participatory, inclusive, and grounded in shared responsibility under the overarching principle of *tawhīd*.

### 3.1.4. Musyawarah (Shura)

The principle of *shūrā* occupies a central position in Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's political thought as an ethical and spiritual mechanism for public decision-making.<sup>38</sup> For Nursi, *shūrā* is not merely a democratic procedure but an expression of collective responsibility and an affirmation of each individual's dignity as a vicegerent (*khalīfah*) on Earth. In the *Risale-i Nur*, he emphasizes that community involvement in political processes serves as a safeguard against authoritarian domination (Nursi, n.d.), fosters justice, and ensures that power is exercised transparently and accountably. *Shūrā* also reflects Islamic values of equality and brotherhood, in which political decisions must emerge from rational deliberation, consultation, and a commitment to the common good (*maṣlahah al-'āmmah*).<sup>39</sup> Thus, the implementation of *shūrā* in governance not only strengthens political legitimacy but also cultivates a space for active participation grounded in the ethics of *tawhīd* and social responsibility.

### 3.1.5. Anti-corruption and Asceticism towards Power

One of the most distinctive features of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's political thought is his resolute rejection of any form of power abuse for personal gain.<sup>40</sup> Across his works, Nursi consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to anti-corruption principles rooted in sincerity (*ikhhlās*), trust (*amānah*), and accountability before God.<sup>41</sup> He firmly asserts that political authority is not a means for self-enrichment or the expansion of worldly influence but a divine trust to be carried out with *zuhd*—an ascetic attitude that distances oneself from the ambitions of power and material indulgence that erode moral integrity.<sup>42</sup> For Nursi, corruption not only damages the social and political order but also violates the spiritual values that underpin the Islamic community.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, a model of governance inspired by his thought demands transparency, simplicity in the lifestyle of leaders, and a rejection of luxury and nepotism. This principle underscores the necessity of integrating personal morality and public ethics in building a clean, service-oriented, and non-dominative political order.

Public participation through honest and ethical consultation, as emphasized by Nursi, not only strengthens the legitimacy of political authority but also serves as a moral oversight mechanism that

<sup>37</sup>Nursi, *Mulhaq Emirdag 2 (The Emirdag Letters 2)* .

<sup>38</sup>Maisoon Sa id Shaheen, "The Traditional Approach of Sid Nursi to Reform Higher Education in Turkey," *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences* 48, no. 3 (2021): 368–379.

<sup>39</sup>Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Letters* (Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 1997).

<sup>40</sup>Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*.

<sup>41</sup>Tonny Ilham Prayogo et al., "Badiuzzaman Said Nursi ' S Perspective on The Neo-Tasawwuf Issue Of Risale-I Nur in Urban Muslim Society," *Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 29, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v29i2.9587>.

<sup>42</sup>Nur Hadi Ihsan, Muhammad Alif Rahmadi, and Jamal Jamal, "Spirituality as the Foundation of The Hierarchy of Needs in The Humanistic Psychology of Abraham Maslow and Sufi Psychology of Said Nursi," *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 18, no. 1 (2022): 1–28, <https://doi.org/10.18196/afkaruna.v18i1.14495>.

<sup>43</sup>Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *Staff of Moses* (Cairo: Sozler Publications, 2004).

can prevent deviations in political practice.<sup>44</sup> In this context, the principle of *shūrā* is inseparable from a commitment to both personal and collective integrity, which is directly connected to an anti-corruption stance and asceticism towards power. True consultation requires honesty, transparency, and self-restraint from leaders to avoid falling into the temptations of corrupt authority.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, in Nursi's political thought, the spirit of public participation must go hand in hand with a rejection of power abuse to realize a system of governance that is clean, just, and grounded in spiritual values.

The commitment to anti-corruption and asceticism in the political thought of Nursi is inseparable from its underlying spiritual foundation. The rejection of egoistic desires (*hawā nafs*) and worldly luxury is the fruit of a profound process of self-purification, which Nursi refers to as *tazkiyah al-nafs*.<sup>46</sup> In other words, the realization of a clean and accountable government is highly dependent on the inner integrity of leaders shaped by spiritual ethics.<sup>47</sup> This is where the significance of the spiritual dimension in politics becomes evident: it is not a supplementary aspect but a fundamental prerequisite for leadership that is just, trustworthy, and responsible. This notion opens the way for a deeper understanding of the urgency of spiritual ethics and *tazkiyah* as foundational elements of a noble political order within Nursi's intellectual framework.

### 3.1.6. Spiritual Ethics and *Tazkiyah*

Within the framework of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's thought, spiritual ethics constitute the core of legitimate and sustainable leadership. According to Nursi, a leader is not only required to possess intellectual and administrative competence but must first undergo a process of *tazkiyah al-nafs*—the purification of the soul from egoism, base desires (*hawā nafs*), and worldly attachments.<sup>48</sup> This spiritual discipline is not merely a personal endeavour but also serves as the ethical foundation for exercising power with honesty, justice, and accountability. For Nursi, political failure often stems from an inner crisis of leaders who lack training in spiritual discipline.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, the construction of an ethical governance system cannot be separated from the cultivation of leaders who are pure-hearted, sincere in service, and constantly aware of the transcendent dimension of state duties. Such spiritual ethics not only prevent the abuse of power but also foster a political culture grounded in moral values, compassion, and genuine service to the people.

Overall, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's political thought offers a robust and transcendental normative framework in which *tawhīd* serves as the foundational principle, *amānah* as the basis of leadership, *adl* (justice) and *maṣlahah* (public welfare) as ultimate goals, *shūrā* as the participatory mechanism, and anti-corruption along with spiritual ethics as pillars of moral integrity. Through this integrative approach, Nursi articulates a political vision that is not merely functional and legalistic but also spiritual, ethical, and oriented towards public service and collective well-being. This constitutes a significant contribution to the formulation of a civilized and just model of Islamic governance.

<sup>44</sup>Sadettin Orhan, "The Past, Present and Future of Social Stratification from Said Nursi's Perspective," *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 13, no. 1 (2023): 81–108.

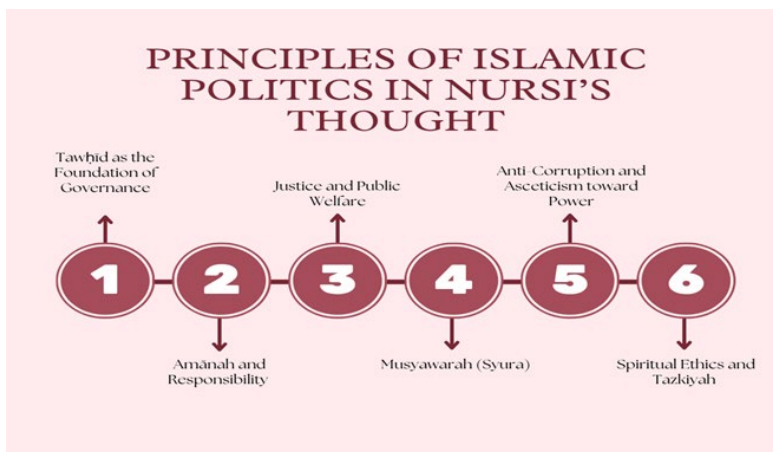
<sup>45</sup>Dedi Masri, "The Concept of Islamic Musyawarah," *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal)* 4, no. 3 (2021): 7395–7403, <https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v4i3.2619>.

<sup>46</sup>Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Flashes* (Istanbul: Nesil, 2004).

<sup>47</sup>Yusrina Dyah Wulandari et al., "The Concept of Tazkiyah An-Nafs Bediuzzaman Said Nursi In Risale-i Nur," *Al-Fahmu: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 3, no. 2 (2024): 221–233, <https://doi.org/10.58363/alfahmu.v3i2.90>.

<sup>48</sup>Nursi, *The Letters*.

<sup>49</sup>Huringiin, Faruqi, and Nurhalisa, "The Implementation of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi's Concept of Hope in Addressing the Crisis of Public Trust in Indonesian Politics."



**Figure 1.** Principles of Islamic Politics in Nursi's Thought

Core principles of Islamic politics in the thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, including *tawhid* as the foundation of governance, *amanah* and responsibility, justice and public welfare, *musyawarah* (*shūra*), anti-corruption and asceticism toward power, and spiritual ethics (*tazkiyah*). These principles collectively reflect a model of governance grounded in ethical, spiritual, and communal values.

### 3.2. Reconstructing Ethical and Spiritual Governance: Concepts and Contemporary Relevance

Having examined the core principles in Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's political thought—such as *tawhīd*, *amānah*, justice, *maṣlahah*, *shūrā*, and spiritual ethics—the next step is to translate these normative ideas into concrete models of governance. Nursi's thought does not remain at the level of theory alone<sup>50</sup> rather it contains practical potential that can serve as a foundation for reconstructing a more ethical, participatory, and spiritually oriented political and administrative system. This section, therefore, explores how these principles can be reformulated in contemporary contexts to build a governance framework aligned with Islamic values while addressing the challenges of modernity.

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's thought reveals a profound relevance between spiritual values and everyday political practice; however, significant challenges arise when these ideas are translated into contemporary systems of governance. This subsection explores how normative principles—from *tawhīd* and *amānah* to *tazkiyah* and *shūrā*—can be reconstructed into a more holistic approach to governance. The primary focus is on the concept of spiritual governance: a model of administration that emphasizes not only rules and procedures but also integrates transcendental ethics into every aspect of state structure, processes, and objectives. By understanding spiritual governance within the framework of Nursi's thought, we open the possibility of formulating a political system that is not only just and accountable but also rooted in moral integrity and spiritual consciousness.

#### 3.2.1. The Spiritual Governance

The reconstruction of Islamic political principles in the thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi opens the way for the articulation of spiritual governance—a model of governance that is not merely

<sup>50</sup>Muhammad Zulqarnain et al., "Interpretation Of Diverse Dimensions of 'Faith' By Bediuzzaman Said Nursi And Its Impact Upon Reawakening Muslim Societies," *Jurnal Webology* 19, no. 3 (2022): 3619–3630.

grounded in legal-formal structures but rooted in transcendental values, such as *tawhīd*, *amānah*, justice, and *tazkiyah*.<sup>51</sup> Within this framework, government is understood as a moral institution that integrates spiritual ethics into the structures, processes, and aims of the state. Nursi's principles encourage the design of a political system that prioritizes participatory consultation (*shūrā*), anti-corruption, ascetic leadership (*zuhd*), and public service founded on *maṣlahah* and spiritual accountability. The model of spiritual governance derived from Nursi's thought does not resemble theocratic rule; rather, it is an ethical form of governance that harmonizes the temporal and the eternal, reason and revelation, individual rights and collective interests.<sup>52</sup> As such, this reconstruction offers a relevant conceptual contribution to addressing the ethical crises of modern politics while reinforcing a normative foundation for a humane, just, and civilized system of governance.

### 3.2.2. The Prophetic Leadership

The concept of prophetic leadership in the thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi emphasizes that the ideal leader is *khādim al-ummah*—a servant of the people—rather than an absolute ruler seeking domination or personal authority.<sup>53</sup> Inspired by the example of the prophets, especially the Prophet Muhammad, Nursi views leadership as a sacred trust (*amānah*) that demands personal piety, sincere devotion, and a steadfast commitment to justice and the welfare of the community.<sup>54</sup> Prophetic leadership entails an ethical relationship between the ruler and society, in which power is exercised not through coercion or manipulation but through moral exemplarity, public participation, and spiritual accountability. Within this paradigm, the leader is not an untouchable figure immune to criticism but one who is open to consultation (*shūrā*), honest in conduct, and guided by divine principles in the governance of public affairs. By rejecting authoritarianism and reaffirming the principle of service, Nursi's notion of prophetic leadership offers a normative alternative highly relevant to addressing the contemporary crisis of leadership in modern political systems.

If spiritual governance provides the systemic framework for a model of governance grounded in transcendental values, then prophetic leadership emerges as the central element that animates and directs this system in practical terms. In Nursi's view, the success of spiritual governance does not depend solely on structures and regulations but is fundamentally shaped by the moral and spiritual quality of its leaders.<sup>55</sup> Accordingly, leaders who embody prophetic principles—such as sincerity (*ikhhlās*), trustworthiness (*amānah*), and a spirit of service—become the primary agents in realizing a just and dignified form of government.<sup>56</sup> In other words, spiritual governance and prophetic leadership are complementary dimensions: the former emphasizes the architecture of values in governance, while the latter highlights the character and integrity of powerholders within a divine ethical framework.

### 3.2.3. Constructing an Ethical Political System

The construction of an ethical-political system based on the thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi requires the integration of spiritual values into legal frameworks, public policy, and internal

<sup>51</sup>Fabio Vicini, "Rescuing the Muslim Collective Self: The Nur Case in Light of the Modern Muslim Subjectivities Project," *Asiatische Studien-Études Asiatiques* 75, no. 3 (2021): 811–830.

<sup>52</sup>Maria Edesco, "Affect, the State, and Political Subjectivity among the Nur Community in Turkey," *Political Theology* 25, no. 3 (2024): 186–202.

<sup>53</sup>Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*.

<sup>54</sup>Salih Yucel, "Purpose-Driven Life in Islam and Emotional Stability: Examining Said Nursi's Perspective," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (2024): 19–36.

<sup>55</sup>Sadettin Orhan, "Said Nursi's Cause-Wisdom Congruence Method as a Method of Social Analysis," *Cogent Social Sciences* 11, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2025.2502603>.

<sup>56</sup>Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*.

mechanisms of state accountability. Within this framework, law is not merely a tool of social control but a manifestation of divine justice that upholds human dignity. Public policy, according to Nursi, must be grounded in the principles of *maṣlahah* and honesty, and oriented towards strengthening public morality and empowering society.<sup>57</sup> This necessitates a clean, responsive, and corruption-free bureaucracy. Furthermore, the internal oversight mechanisms in Nursi's ideal vision of governance must be both reflective and spiritual<sup>58</sup>—relying on self-surveillance (*murāqabah*) and an acute awareness of ultimate accountability in the hereafter, alongside transparent and participatory institutional control. Thus, the ethical-political system proposed by Nursi is not merely a reaction to the moral crisis of contemporary politics but a normative model that reorders the relationship between power, morality, and transcendental responsibility within the modern public sphere.<sup>59</sup>

The construction of an ethical-political system in the thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi provides a strong conceptual foundation for establishing a model of governance that integrates spiritual dimensions with public institutions. However, the strength of Nursi's thought does not lie solely in its theoretical propositions; it also offers contextually relevant responses to the political challenges faced by contemporary Muslim societies.<sup>60</sup> In this regard, the ethical-transcendental principles he advocates—such as justice, *amānah*, and self-accountability—are highly pertinent to addressing the democratic dilemmas of Indonesia and the wider Muslim world, particularly in the struggle against systemic corruption and the moral crisis of leadership. By uniting normative frameworks with applicable solutions, Nursi's thought not only guides the design of a just and humane political system but also paves the way for the transformation of political culture towards a more civilized, inclusive, and spiritually accountable form.



<sup>57</sup>Mohamad Zaidin Mohamad et al., “The Importance of Nursi’s Thought in Empowering Muslim Identity,” *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences* 22, no. 2 (2024): 518–24.

<sup>58</sup>Mustafa Gokhan Sahin, *Spirituality and Social Justice in Islam*, ed. Vincent J. Cornell and Bruce B. Lawrence (the Wiley Blackwell Companion to Islamic Spirituality, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118533789.ch13>.

<sup>59</sup>Muhammad Maksum, “Implementation of Al-Ghazali Maslahah Concept In Islamic Economic Activities,” *Salam: Jurnal Sosial Dan Budaya Syar-I* 9, no. 2 (February 17, 2022): 481–490, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sjsbs.v9i2.24825>.

<sup>60</sup>Orhan, “Said Nursi’s Cause-Wisdom Congruence Method as a Method of Social Analysis.”

## Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of Ethical and Spiritual Governance

Conceptual relationship between the ethical-political system, spiritual governance, and prophetic leadership, illustrating their intersection in forming a model of ethical and spiritual governance inspired by the thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi

### 3.3. Relevance to the Indonesian and Muslim World Context

The political thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi is highly relevant to the ethical dynamics of governance in both Indonesia and the broader contemporary Muslim world.<sup>61</sup> In the Indonesian context—a Muslim-majority nation with a democratic system that continues to struggle against corruption, populism, and the erosion of moral values—principles, such as *amānah*, justice, *shūrā*, and prophetic leadership, as developed by Nursi, can serve as normative foundations for constructing a clean, participatory, and service-oriented model of governance. Nursi’s spiritual values also offer a meaningful complement to the limitations of secular-modern approaches to democracy, which often neglect the transcendental dimension.<sup>62</sup> In the wider Muslim world, which is grappling with a crisis of trust in political elites, value disorientation, and tensions between religion and the state, Nursi’s thought presents an ethical-political model that harmoniously integrates spirituality, rationality, and humanism.<sup>63</sup> Thus, the reconstruction of Islamic political principles from Nursi’s works functions not only as a theoretical reflection but also as a practical proposal for building a civilized, inclusive, and transformative political civilization.

By reconstructing the principles of Islamic politics through the thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, new opportunities emerge for envisioning a model of governance rooted in spiritual ethics, prophetic values, and a commitment to the public good (*maṣlahah*). Concepts, such as spiritual governance, prophetic leadership, and an integrated ethical-political system offer both conceptual and practical alternatives for addressing the moral crisis and political disorientation affecting many Muslim-majority countries, including Indonesia. Nursi’s thought invites us to reinsert transcendental values into the public sphere—not through rigid religious formalism or extreme secularism but through a balanced approach that reconciles revelation and reason, law and compassion, authority and service.<sup>64</sup> As such, Nursi’s intellectual legacy deserves to be regarded as a foundational reference in articulating a new direction for a political civilization that is more humane, just, and dignified amid the challenges of modernity.

### 3.4. Empirical and Practical Reflections: Contemporary Governance Cases

Although this study is primarily conceptual and normative, the ethical-political framework reconstructed from Said Nursi’s thought can be illustrated through several contemporary governance practices that reflect similar moral orientations.<sup>65</sup> These illustrative cases are not presented as empirical field research rather as reflective examples that demonstrate how ethical principles rooted

<sup>61</sup>Huringiin, Faruqi, and Nurhalisa, “The Implementation of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi’s Concept of Hope in Addressing the Crisis of Public Trust in Indonesian Politics.”

<sup>62</sup>Abdul Ghani and Fatima Ghan, “The Secularization Project in the Light of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi’s Risale-I-Nur,” *South Asian Journal of Religion and Philosophy (SAJRP)* 3, no. 1 (2022): 1–23.

<sup>63</sup>Huringiin, Faruqi, and Bachr, “Harmonizing Society: Bediuzzaman Said Nursi’s Vision of Islamic Politics.”

<sup>64</sup>Khamami, “The Nurcu Movement and Tafsir Risale-i Nur: Formation of Muslim Identity in the Midst of Modernization.”

<sup>65</sup>Jasser Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach* (London: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2008).

in Islamic moral philosophy have been operationalized in modern governance contexts.<sup>66</sup> By examining selected initiatives in Indonesia and Turkey, this section highlights the practical resonance of Nursi's emphasis on moral responsibility, sincerity, social trust, and collective welfare.

One notable example is Indonesia's ethical leadership and anti-corruption education initiatives. Over the past two decades, various governmental and educational institutions have promoted character-based governance through integrity training programs, ethical leadership workshops, and civic education campaigns. Institutions, such as the Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), have integrated moral and religious values into anti-corruption education,<sup>67</sup> emphasizing personal accountability, social responsibility, and moral consciousness as preventive strategies against corruption.<sup>68</sup> These initiatives resonate with Nursi's view that political reform must begin with the moral reform of individuals.<sup>69</sup> Nursi consistently argued that societal justice and political stability cannot be sustained through legal enforcement alone but must be supported by internalized ethical awareness.<sup>70</sup> The Indonesian case illustrates how governance reforms increasingly recognize the importance of moral education as a foundational element in strengthening public trust and institutional legitimacy.

A second illustrative example can be found in Turkey, in civil society movements and educational initiatives influenced by faith-based ethical frameworks.<sup>71</sup> Several non-governmental organizations and educational networks inspired by Islamic intellectual traditions have promoted social service, dialogue, and moral education as instruments of social cohesion.<sup>72</sup> These initiatives frequently emphasize volunteerism, social solidarity, and ethical responsibility in public engagement. Such practices reflect Nursi's concept of "positive action" (*müsbet hareket*), which encourages constructive social participation, peaceful reform, and moral persuasion rather than political confrontation. The emphasis on community-based moral transformation demonstrates how Nursi's ethical principles can strengthen civic responsibility and participatory governance in pluralistic societies.<sup>73</sup>

Beyond specific national contexts, these illustrative cases demonstrate broader implications for contemporary governance. Firstly, they show that ethical governance frameworks grounded in religious moral philosophy can complement rather than contradict modern institutional structures.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>66</sup>Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Citizenship and Accountability of Government: An Islamic Perspective* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2011).

<sup>67</sup>Tim Lindsey and Mas Achmad Santosa, "The Trajectory of Law Reform in Indonesia: A Short Overview of Legal Systems and Change," in *Indonesia: Law and Society*, ed. Tim Lindsey (Sydney: Federation Press, 2008), 3–30.

<sup>68</sup>Jeremy Pope, *Confronting Corruption: The Elements of a National Integrity System* (Berlin: Transparency International, 2000).

<sup>69</sup>Hakan Çoruh, "Celebrating Diversity of Humanity, Struggling for Peace, and Establishing Culture of Coexistence," *Journal of Cultural and Religious Studies* 3, no. 3 (2015): 143–51, <https://doi.org/10.17265/2328-2177/2015.03.003>.

<sup>70</sup>Abdullah Saeed, "Islamic Ethical Principles and Public Governance," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 23, no. 3 (2012): 351–373, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/ets039>; Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi, *Spiritual Dimensions of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Risale-I Nur* (New York: Suny Press, 2008).

<sup>71</sup>M Hakan Yavuz, *Toward an Islamic Enlightenment: The Gülen Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>72</sup>Turner, *The Qur'an Revealed: A Critical Analysis of Said Nursi's Epistles of Light*.

<sup>73</sup>İhsan Yılmaz, "Civil Society and Muslim Democracy in Turkey," *Journal of Civil Society* 5, no. 3 (2009): 211–228, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17448680903351867>.

<sup>74</sup>Wael B Hallaq, *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

Secondly, they highlight the growing recognition that governance challenges, such as corruption, declining public trust, and social fragmentation often require moral and cultural solutions alongside legal and administrative reforms.<sup>75</sup> Thirdly, these examples suggest that Nursi's thought offers a model of governance that integrates spiritual ethics with civic responsibility, thereby bridging the perceived gap between religious values and modern political institutions.<sup>76</sup>

Therefore, while this study does not claim empirical generalization, the selected cases demonstrate the practical viability of ethical governance principles derived from the *Risale-i Nur*.<sup>77</sup> They illustrate how Nursi's normative framework can serve as an intellectual resource for contemporary governance reforms that seek to integrate moral integrity, social trust, and responsible leadership into modern political systems.<sup>78</sup>

### 3.5. What This Framework Adds to Contemporary Political Theory?

The reconstruction of governance ethics derived from Said Nursi's thought offers several important contributions to contemporary political theory, particularly within the discourse on religion, ethics, and governance.<sup>79</sup> While modern political theory has extensively examined institutional structures, power distribution, and democratic participation, this study introduced an integrated ethical-spiritual dimension that repositions moral accountability as a central element of political legitimacy. The framework contributes theoretically, normatively, and practically to ongoing debates about governance in both secular and religiously informed societies.<sup>80</sup>

Firstly, the study contributed to theoretical scholarship by expanding the analytical framework of political theory of integrating spiritual anthropology and ethical metaphysics into governance discourse.<sup>81</sup> Contemporary political theory, particularly in liberal and procedural traditions, often focuses on institutional design, legal frameworks, and rational consensus as primary sources of political order.<sup>82</sup> By reconstructing Nursi's governance principles—rooted in *tawhīd*, *amānah*, *shūrā*, *maṣlahah*, anti-corruption ethics, and *tazkiyah*—this study introduced a model that situates political authority within a broader metaphysical understanding of human responsibility before God and society. This perspective enriches post-secular political theory by demonstrating that religious moral frameworks can function as intellectually rigorous<sup>83</sup> and systematically coherent sources of political philosophy rather than merely cultural or theological supplements to governance studies.<sup>84</sup>

Secondly, the framework offers a normative contribution by articulating a value-based model of governance that emphasizes moral integrity, accountability, and public trust as foundational principles of political legitimacy.<sup>85</sup> Unlike purely procedural models of governance that prioritize institutional compliance and regulatory mechanisms, Nursi's ethical framework highlights the

<sup>75</sup>Mark Philp, *Political Conduct* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

<sup>76</sup>Hallaq, *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament*.

<sup>77</sup>Vahide, *Islam in Modern Turkey: An Intellectual Biography of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*.

<sup>78</sup>Saeed, *Islamic Thought: An Introduction*.

<sup>79</sup>José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

<sup>80</sup>Jürgen Habermas, "Religion in the Public Sphere," *European Journal of Philosophy* 14, no. 1 (2006): 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0378.2006.00241.x>.

<sup>81</sup>Philp, *Political Conduct*.

<sup>82</sup>John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

<sup>83</sup>Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

<sup>84</sup>Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (United States of America: Harvard University Press, 2007).

<sup>85</sup>Hallaq, *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament*.

importance of internal moral transformation as a prerequisite for sustainable political reform.<sup>86</sup> The normative orientation of this study holds that governance effectiveness is inseparable from the ethical character formation of leaders and citizens. By emphasizing sincerity, justice, collective welfare, and spiritual self-discipline, the framework offers an alternative ethical paradigm that addresses contemporary governance crises, such as corruption, moral disengagement, and declining public confidence in political institutions.

Thirdly, the study provided practical contributions by offering an ethically grounded governance model that can inform policy development, political education, and civic engagement strategies. The reconstructed framework demonstrates how moral education, ethical leadership training, and community-based social participation can serve as complementary instruments to institutional governance reforms.<sup>87</sup> By connecting spiritual ethics with administrative responsibility, the framework offers a multidimensional approach to governance adaptable to modern political systems, particularly in Muslim-majority societies seeking to harmonize religious values with democratic governance structures.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, the framework contributes to policy discourse by suggesting that sustainable governance reform requires not only structural change but also the cultivation of ethical consciousness at both individual and societal levels.

Collectively, these contributions position Nursi's reconstructed governance framework as a bridge between classical Islamic political ethics and contemporary governance theory. By integrating metaphysical, moral, and institutional dimensions of governance, this study expanded the intellectual boundaries of political theory and provided a comprehensive ethical model capable of addressing modern political challenges in an increasingly pluralistic and morally complex global environment.<sup>89</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study reconstructed the principles of Islamic political thought in the works of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi as a foundational framework for ethical and spiritually grounded governance. The key principles identified included *tawhīd* as the basis of value, *amānah* and responsibility in exercising authority, justice and *maṣlahah* as the directions of public policy, *shūrā* as a participatory mechanism, and prophetic leadership that rejects authoritarianism while promoting sincere public service. Furthermore, the concept of *tazkiyah* (spiritual purification) and an ascetic attitude towards power (*zuhd*) are crucial dimensions for shaping leadership morality. When systematized, these principles form an Islamic ethical-political framework that is not only normative but also practically applicable for establishing a dignified model of governance.

The urgency of a spiritual-ethical approach to governance reform becomes increasingly evident, considering the moral crisis afflicting many Muslim-majority countries, including Indonesia. In this context, Nursi's thought offers a significant contribution to the design of legal systems, public policy, and oversight mechanisms for power rooted in transcendental values. Therefore, this study recommended further development of the theoretical framework of spiritual governance in contemporary Islamic political studies, as well as the integration of these values into political education, leadership training, and bureaucratic reform. Strengthening an ethical epistemology within public policy discourse may serve as a bridge between modernity, democracy, and spirituality in building a governance system that is just, clean, and oriented towards the service of the people.

##### 4.1. Limitations

<sup>86</sup>Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Words*, ed. Şükran Vahide (Istanbul: Sözler Publications, 2002); Kamali, *Citizenship and Accountability of Government: An Islamic Perspective*.

<sup>87</sup>Pope, *Confronting Corruption: The Elements of a National Integrity System*.

<sup>88</sup>Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*.

<sup>89</sup>Vahide, *Islam in Modern Turkey: An Intellectual Biography of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*.

While this study offered a conceptual reconstruction of Islamic political principles based on the thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. Firstly, the research adopted a qualitative and text-based methodology, relying primarily on hermeneutic and content analysis of Nursi's writings. As such, it may lack empirical validation in terms of policy implementation or real-world case studies. The conceptual nature of the study limits its ability to measure the direct impact of Nursi's political ideas on contemporary governance practices in Muslim-majority countries, including Indonesia.

Secondly, the interpretation of Nursi's thought is necessarily shaped by the researcher's philosophical and contextual lens. Although triangulation with secondary sources was employed to enhance analytical rigor, the conclusions remain interpretive rather than definitive. Furthermore, Nursi's works, though rich in normative and ethical insights, were composed in specific historical and socio-political contexts—primarily early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Turkey—which may not always directly align with the complexities of today's global political systems.

Lastly, the study did not engage with comparative perspectives from other Islamic or Western political thinkers, which could have further enriched the discussion. Future research could address these limitations by conducting empirical studies on the application of spiritual governance models, engaging in comparative analyses, or exploring Nursi's relevance in broader interfaith or intercultural governance contexts.

#### 4.2. Implications

The reconstruction of Islamic political principles from the thought of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi presents significant theoretical and practical implications for the development of ethical governance models in the Muslim world. Theoretically, this study contributed to the discourse on Islamic political thought by offering a framework that integrates metaphysical, ethical, and participatory dimensions of governance. Nursi's emphasis on *tawhīd*, *amānah*, *'adl*, *shūrā*, and *tazkiyah* challenges dominant secular paradigms and opens new possibilities for formulating a spiritually grounded political theory that is both normative and transformative.

Practically, the study offered guiding principles for contemporary political reforms, particularly in Muslim-majority countries, such as Indonesia, where corruption, leadership crises, and the erosion of moral integrity remain pressing issues. The concept of spiritual governance derived from Nursi's vision can inform political education, leadership training, and bureaucratic reform by embedding ethical and spiritual values into institutional practices. Moreover, the model encourages a participatory and service-oriented governance style that prioritizes public welfare (*maslahah*) and moral accountability.

In the context of rising global interest in values-based leadership and post-secular politics, the implications of this study extend beyond Islamic societies. Nursi's vision contributes to a broader discourse on the integration of spirituality and governance, offering a universal ethical perspective relevant to the pursuit of justice, transparency, and human dignity in contemporary political systems.

#### Authors' Contribution

**Nabila Huringiin:** conceptualization, methodology, investigation, writing-original draft, supervision, project administration. **Muhamad Fajar Pramono:** methodology, validation, formal analysis, writing-review & editing. **Moh. Isom Mudin:** data curation, investigation, writing-review & editing. **Achmad Reza Hutama Alfaruqi:** validation, resources, writing-review & editing.

#### Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

#### Data Availability Statement

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The author(s) used generative AI tools solely for language editing and clarity improvement. All intellectual content, analysis, and interpretation remain the responsibility of the author(s).

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