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**A Reading of Q.S. An-Nas Verses 4-5 and the Concept of
Original Sin:
An Analysis of the Qur'an and the West by Kenneth Cragg**

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Abstract

*This study investigated Surah Al-Nas verses 4-5, which describe the concept of original sin in Christianity and compare it to the concept of original sin in Islam. This study employed the Qur'anic text analysis approach and compared it to Kenneth Cragg's ideas in his book *The Qur'an and the West*. The Qur'anic text analysis method was utilized to thoroughly understand the verse's content. In contrast, Cragg's thought approach examines the perceived concept of original sin in Western tradition. The outcomes of this study demonstrate a fundamental distinction between the concept of original sin in Christianity, which regards sin as an inheritance from Adam, and the concept in Islam, which emphasizes individual responsibility for one's acts. This study adds to the knowledge of the fundamental distinctions between the two major religious traditions in their views on the original sin and their recognition of the human concept of God.*

Keywords: *Original sin; Religious Understanding; The Qur'an and The West.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis Surah Al-Nas ayat 4-5 yang menggambarkan konsep dosa asal dalam agama Kristen, dan membandingkannya dengan konsep dosa asal dalam Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan analisis teks al-Qur'an dan membandingkannya dengan pemikiran Kenneth Cragg dalam bukunya The Qur'an and The West. Metode analisis teks al-Qur'an digunakan untuk memahami makna ayat secara mendalam, sedangkan pendekatan pemikiran Cragg digunakan untuk melihat bagaimana konsep dosa asal dipahami dalam tradisi Barat. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan perbedaan mendasar antara konsep dosa asal dalam agama Kristen, yang menempatkan dosa sebagai warisan Adam, dengan konsep dalam Islam, yang tekanan tanggung jawab individu atas perbuatannya sendiri. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi pada pemahaman kita tentang perbedaan esensial antara dua tradisi agama besar dalam pandangan terhadap asal mula dosa dan kesadarannya terhadap pemahaman manusia tentang dasar-dasar dengan Tuhan.

Kata Kunci: *Dosa Asal; Pemahaman Agama; The Quran and The West.*

A. Introduction

In today's globalized world, the study of the Qur'an has evolved beyond its traditional focus to include religious science, literary studies, and philosophy. One of the verses that has received much attention is Q.S. An-Nas: 4-5, which mentions the concept of original sin. This concept is especially intriguing because it corresponds to Western conceptions of original sin.¹

Kenneth Cragg's work *The Qur'an and The West* examines the concept of original sin from a Qur'anic perspective and compares it to Western philosophy. Cragg contends that the Qur'an provides a distinct and different viewpoint on original sin,

¹ Abu Anwar, "Al-Qur'an dan Modernitas: (Pergeseran Paradigma Pemahaman Al-Qur'an)," *Al-Fikra: Jurnal Ilmiah Keislaman*, Vol. 9, no. 2 (2010): hlm. 196-206, <http://dx.doi.org/10.24014/af.v9i2.3828>

demonstrating that each man is responsible for his deeds, not because of Adam's guilt, as is the concept of original sins.²

At this point, the researchers have not found any papers that address this topic. However, several studies have discussed a similar theme, including "Original Sin: Based on the Exegesis of Romans 5:12-21" by Bartholomeus Diaz Nainggolan,³ "Forgiveness of Sins According to Islam and Christianity (A Comparative Study)" by Bakri M. Marzuki,⁴ and "Christian Views on Sin: Its Origin and How to Redeem It" by Tarpin.⁵ Pada penelitian yang sudah ada, belum ada yang membahas tentang konsep *original sins* dalam pandangan Kenneth Cragg dalam bukunya *The Qur'an and The West*.

This study aims to investigate the relationship between the reading of Surah an-Nas verses 4-5 and the concept of original sin in Christian theology, specifically through an examination of Kenneth Cragg's book *The Qur'an and The West*. At the same time, this study aims to better comprehend Kenneth Cragg's interpretation of the verse and how it connects to the concept of original sin in Christian theology.

Meanwhile, the research problem is formulated as follows: How is the relationship between the reading of surah an-Nas verse 4-5 and the concept of original sin in Christian theology, especially through the analysis of Kenneth Cragg's work in *The Qur'an and The West*? Can Kenneth Cragg's understanding of the verse

² Kenneth Cragg, *The Mind of the Qur'ān: Chapters in Reflection* (1st ed.), 1973, Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003254720>

³ Bartholomeus Diaz Nainggolan, "Dosa Asal: Berdasarkan Eksegesis Surat Roma 5:12 – 21", *Jurnal Koinonia: Fakultas Filsafat Universitas Advent Indonesia*, Vol. 10 No. 2, 2015. <https://jurnal.unai.edu/index.php/koinonia/article/view/190>, <https://doi.org/10.35974/koinonia.v7i2.190>

⁴ Bakri M. Marzuki, "Pengampunan Dosa Menurut Agama Islam Dan Kristen (Suatu Kajian Perbandingan)", *Hunafa: Jurnal Studia Islamika*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2006. <https://jurnalhunafa.org/index.php/hunafa/article/view/251>, <https://doi.org/10.24239/jsi.v3i2.251.101-116>

⁵ Tarpin, *Pandangan Kristen Tentang Dosa: Asal Muasal dan Cara Menebusnya*, *Jurnal Ushuluddin*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2010. <https://ejournal.uin-suska.ac.id/index.php/ushuludin/article/view/677>, <http://dx.doi.org/10.24014/jush.v16i2.677>

provide a deeper understanding of the concept of original sin in Christian theology?

This study's research method includes an examination of the Qur'an and Kenneth Cragg's work, as well as a review of relevant literature. The Qur'anic text analysis method was utilized to thoroughly understand the verse's content. In contrast, Cragg's thought approach examined how the concept of original sin is perceived in Western tradition.

This state-of-the-art study aims to comprehend the concept of original sin in Christian theology and the Islamic perspective of human connection with God. Some earlier works have addressed the concept of original sin in these two religions, but few have linked it to Surah an-Nas verses 4-5.

This study's hypothesis is that reading Surah an-Nas verses 4-5 can provide a better understanding of the concept of original sin in Christian theology, particularly through an examination of Kenneth Cragg's work. This study can help to expand the literature on the Qur'an and religious thought in an increasingly open and interconnected global society.

B. Brief Biography

Albert Kenneth Cragg, the author of *The Quran and the West*, was born on March 8, 1913. He began his education at Blackpool Grammar School and later obtained the Grafton Scholarship to Jesus College, Oxford, where he graduated in 1937. Three years after finishing his studies, 1940 he married Melita Arnold.

Kenneth Cragg is an Anglican academic and bishop who has spent more than 50 years researching religious issues, notably those between Muslims and Christians. His career exemplifies this dedication. He began his career as Curacy at Higher Tranmere Parish Church in Birkenhead, previously serving as a Chaplain in Lebanon. Kenneth later served as Longworth's rector and a professor of Islamic studies and Arabic at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut. He also taught at St. Augustine's College in Canterbury before becoming the assistant bishop of Jerusalem in 1970.

When there was no bishop in Egypt, Kenneth was tasked with administering the country's Anglican Congregation until 1974, when the Anglican Church in the Middle East was reorganized, and a new bishop was chosen. Kenneth went on to become a research fellow in religious studies at Sussex University, as well as a diocesan assistant in the Wakefield Diocese. He wrote several books during his lifetime, producing a large body of work on religious subjects. On November 13, 2012, Kenneth passed.⁶

Kenneth is quite a productive person, as evidenced by the amount of literature he has written. Some of his works are as follows:

- *The Call of the Minaret (1956).*
- *Sandals at the Mosque - Christian Presence Amid ISLAM (1959).*
- *Alive to God - Muslim and Christian Prayer compiled with an Introductory Essay by Kenneth Cragg (1970).*
- *The Event of the Qur'an - Islam in its Scripture (1971).*
- *The Mind of the Qur'an - Chapters in Reflection (1973).*
- *This Year in Jerusalem - Israel in Experience (1982).*
- *Muhammad and the Christian (1984).*
- *The Pen and The Faith - Eight modern Muslim writers and the Qur'an (1985).*
- *The Christ and the Faiths (1986).*
- *Readings in the Qur'an - Selected and Translated by Kenneth Cragg (1988).*
- *Troubled by Truth - Life-Studies in Inter-Faith Concern (1992).*
- *Returning to Mount Hira' (1992).*
- *The Arab Christian - A History in the Middle East (1992).*
- *The Lively Credentials of God (1995).*
- *Palestine - The Prize and Price of Zion (1997).*
- *Muhammad in the Qur'an - The Task and the Text (2001).*

⁶ Peter Sedgwick, "Anglican Moral Theology Today," *Anglican Theological Review*, Vol. 103, no. 4 (2021): 450-467. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000332862111020611>

- *Am I not Your Lord - Human Meaning in Divine Question (2002).*
- *The Quran and The West (2006).*
- *The Iron in the Soul - Joseph and the Undoing of Violence (2009).*

All of his works are related to religious studies. The religions that are the focus of his studies are Islam and Christianity. Therefore, it is unsurprising that Kenneth also produced works about the Qur'an.

C. Kenneth Cragg's Orientalism Model

In the third century AH or 9 AD, non-Muslim intellectuals became increasingly interested in studying the Qur'an. This passion has persisted from generation to generation until now. Their study covers various topics, including objectives, trends, analytical methodologies, and research models and views.

Their study objectives fall into three categories: apologetic studies, imperialist-oriented studies, and academic studies.⁷ Kenneth Cragg can be considered an academic in this respect because his research has no apologetic or imperialist aspects. Instead, he is more concerned with identifying similarities and common ground between the two religions rather than ignoring the differences.⁸

Kenneth Cragg's scholarly studies demonstrate his genuine interest in identifying common threads and similarities between the two religions, with no apologetic or imperialist connotations. This is evident in his meticulous and objective writing, such as examining the relationship between Islam and Christianity. Kenneth's work, *The Call of the Minaret*, exemplifies this technique by extensively exploring both religions without favoring one.

When examining the relationship between humanity and the Qur'an, Farid Essack recommends a broad category. This

⁷ M. Nur Kholis Setiawan dan Sahiron Syamsuddin, *Orientalisme al-Quran dan Hadis* (Yogyakarta: Nawasea Press, 2007), page. v.

⁸ Lihat Kenneth Cragg, *The Quran and The West* (Washington: Georgetown, 2006). page. 54.

category contains interactions from two perspectives: internal (insider) and exterior (outsider). In his work, Essack classifies Kenneth as a Friend of the Lover.⁹ In this context, Essack agrees with Rahman's position, which states that:

Another scholar in the genre whose work I have found inspiring is Kenneth Cragg, the Oxford-based Anglican clergyman whom Rahman has described as "a man who may not be a full citizen of the world of the Qur'an, but is certainly no foreigner either – let alone an invader!"¹⁰

The statement portrays Kenneth as an orientalist who approached the Qur'an with an open and unbiased mind. According to Fazlur Rahman, despite being a bishop, Kenneth was not actively immersed in Qur'anic research, yet he was not unfamiliar with it. This viewpoint should be studied further by reading Kenneth's Qur'anic writings, as his research may seek to modify one's understanding of the Qur'an.

Kenneth's book, *The Qur'an and the West*, takes a different perspective. He did not address the concerns of authenticity, textual criticism, or the Qur'an because Qur'anic researchers, particularly non-Muslims, face significant risks when dealing with such matters. Orientalists who investigate such themes tend to have a negative view of the Qur'an, except those who remain impartial and rely on existing evidence. Kenneth believed the Qur'an is a historical fact that is still relevant today. He was more interested in discovering the meaning of the Qur'an, particularly in the context of tafsir.

Although opinions on the Qur'an may differ in the field of tafsir, an external researcher will not be considered a member of a group that revises or polemicizes the Qur'an because the Qur'an frequently has many interpretations for a single passage. In an academic setting, errors in interpretation are considered typical. It is crucial to stress that errors in interpretation do not lessen the

⁹ A category of non-Muslim scholars who interact with the Qur'an, where they prioritize pure scientific knowledge in a friendly way rather than revising it or even being polemical (rejecting it outright).

¹⁰ Farid Esack, *The Quran a User's Guide* (England: Oneworld Publication, 2007), page. 7.

worth of the Qur'an because they are the work of the interpreter, not the Qur'an itself.

D. Kenneth Cragg's Interpretation

Surah an-Nas is located near the end of the Mushaf al-Qur'an. Although Neil, Noeldeke, Schwally, and Blachere have differing chronological interpretations, all four scholars believe that Surah al-Nas was revealed early in Meca.¹¹ It is one of the two protection suras (*al-Mu'awwidzatain*) that many dramatists and fights believe Ibn Mas'ud left out of his Mushaf. This is most likely because he did not hear it firsthand from the Prophet Muhammad or receive the story from a credible source. As a result, it is conceivable that Ibn Mas'ud adjusted his position to align with popular opinion.¹² Other companions have claimed that *al-Mu'awwidzatain* should have been included in the Mushaf al-Qur'an, compiled during Uthman's reign.

Despite the argument, surah al-Nas has become an essential component of the Qur'anic text with significant historical relevance. The context of this Surah's revelation (*asbabun nuzul*) provides insight into its history. When Labid bin A'sham bewitched the Prophet Muhammad, he disclosed this Surah. At the time, the Prophet continued to pray without pausing until the angel Gabriel arrived with the letter al-Mu'awwidzatain. The Prophet told A'ishah that at the time, he felt the presence of two entities, one on the side of his head and the other on the side of his feet, discussing the Prophet's ordeal. From there, the Prophet obtained information about how to overcome the spell.¹³

Considering the significance of the Surah, the Prophet once said:

أَلَمْ تَرَ آيَاتِ أَنْزَلْتِ اللَّيْلَةَ لَمْ يَزِ مِثْلُهُنَّ قَطُّ (قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ) وَ (قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ)¹⁴

¹¹ See the table in Taufik Adnan Amal's book, *Rekonstruksi Sejarah al-Quran* (Jakarta: Pustaka Alvabet, 2013) page. 110-111.

¹² Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir* Jilid 8 terj. M. Abdul Ghofar dkk. (Bogor: Pustaka Imam Asy-Syafi'i, 2004). Page. 576.

¹³ Salim bin 'Id al-Halali dkk. *Al-Isti'ab fi bayan al-Asbab Jilid 3* (Beirut: Dar Ibn al-Jauzi, 1435 H), page. 588-589

¹⁴ Muslim, *Shahih Muslim* Jilid 2 (Beirut: Darul Afaq, tt), page. 200.

“Can not you perceive the extraordinary nature of the verses that have been unveiled tonight, unlike anything you have ever witnessed before? Qul a’udzu bi Rabbi al-Falaq and Qul a’udzu bi Rabbi al-Nas.”

The above Hadith, combined with the circumstances around this Surah, demonstrates that it was revealed not for legal purposes but to defend against supernatural threats, particularly witchcraft. In another case, when the Prophet was sick, he recited *al-Mu'awwidzatain* to himself and blew on it. When his condition worsened, Aisha recited it and rubbed her hands against the Prophet. This demonstrates that the beneficiaries of the revelation to this Surah responded first and foremost for the sake of charity rather than for any other reason. This form of response is currently more commonly examined in living Qur'an research. However, no one has investigated the origins of such responses or how they have changed.

Along with the expanding interpretation of the Qur'an, the response to this Surah has evolved beyond cultural factors into a more profound hermeneutical response.¹⁵ This is mirrored in the interpreters' approach to this verse, where they appear to prioritize comprehending the linguistic meaning of the Qur'anic text through the use of pertinent Hadith and narrations.

Surah an-Nas is primarily about seeking refuge with God against the devil's temptations. Several verses in this letter require close examination, particularly verses 4-5. It contains two variables: *al-waswas al-khannas* and *shudur*. These two variables are significant since they correspond to what Kenneth discusses in his book.

Kenneth is interested in exploring the meaning of the Qur'an. As a reader, he approaches the Qur'an with his preconceived notions and mindset, which significantly shapes his interpretation. This section will discuss how his methodological-practical

¹⁵ It can also be said to Hermeneutic Reception, which is a human reaction when interacting with the Qur'an by tracing the activities of the text itself. See: Hamam Faizin, *Sejarah Pencetakan al-Quran* (Yogyakarta: Era Baru Pressindo, 2012), page. 18-19.

reasoning and interpretation process led to his interpretation's outcome.

1. Linguistics Approach

Linguistic examination of the Qur'an is extremely important, given that it is an Arabic text from the seventh century AD. This is especially significant given the cultural and linguistic distinctions between today and when the Qur'an was revealed. As a result, language analysis is seen as a valuable method for accessing, comprehending, and interpreting the Qur'an. Many Qur'anic scholars utilize linguistic analysis to interpret the verses, and this practice has been present for ages.¹⁶

Kenneth, an orientalist, began his research into the identity of 'whispers' (master-mischief-maker/whispers) in the Qur'an. Kenneth's research of the Qur'anic language reveals that the Qur'an employs the doer-noun (*fā'il dhamir*) to refer to *al-waswas al-khannas*, which implicitly portrays the devil who retreats and fears when someone remembers God. The term *al-khannas* has a hidden or covert connotation, referring to Satan's attempts to distort words and sow doubt, or as a liar.¹⁷ This understanding is consistent with the tafsir Jami' al-Bayan interpretation, which states that *al-waswas al-khannas* is a demon that sometimes conceals and speaks. This devil only hides when someone does dhikr to Allah.¹⁸

Kenneth explains that the Qur'an's internal relationship, which focuses on humans and jinn as targets, can sometimes be conceptually puzzling. He observes that in 7th century Arabia, mysterious phenomena were difficult to explain, such as people exhibiting unstable behavior and performing strange actions that appeared to be beyond their control, as if they were being manipulated by something that took over their personality and made them appear insane. Although the classical interpreters

¹⁶ Abdullah Saeed, *Al-Quran Abad 21 Tafsir Kontekstual terj. Ervan Nurtawab* (Bandung: Mizan Pustaka, 2015), page. 160.

¹⁷ Kenneth Cragg, *The Quran and The West* (Washington: Georgetown, 2006). Page. 51

¹⁸ Al-Thabari, *Jami' al-Bayan fi Ta'wil al-Quran jilid 24* (TT: muassasah al-Risalah, 2000), page. 709.

linked this to jinn, Kenneth contends that the derivation *majnun* (crazy) better describes a condition in which a person loses self-awareness.¹⁹ This phrase demonstrates Kenneth's desire to underline that the term *majnun* does not always refer to someone possessed by a jinn, but can also refer to someone who has lost their sense of self.

Kenneth appears to employ the inductive method in his approach to studying *al-waswas*, which aims to get a deeper knowledge of the verse by examining reality beyond the text. In this scenario, he ignores the link between verses (*munasabat al-ayat*), which should aid in comprehending how the verses of the Qur'an complement one another. Kenneth may have been puzzled by the internal relationship of the Qur'an. Still, on closer investigation, *surah an-Nas* verse 4 is related to *Surah al-An'am* verse 112, which reads as follows:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيْطِينَ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ
غُرُورًا.....

“Likewise did We make for every Messenger an enemy- evil ones among men and jinns, inspiring each other with flowery discourses through deception...”

From this explanation, it appears that *al-waswas* was targeted at jinn and humans. This opinion is in line with that expressed by Fahrudin al-Razi in his work, *Mafatih al-Ghaib*, where he explains that there are similarities between jinn demons and human demons. Sometimes, both whisper, and sometimes, both hide.²⁰

Furthermore, Kenneth added:

“Certainly the machinations of *al-Khannas* for present reading of *surah 114* have squarely to do with the moral realm, with ‘the desires and intents of the heart’.”²¹

¹⁹ Kenneth Cragg, *The Quran and The West* (Washington: Georgetown, 2006). Page. 51.

²⁰ Fahrudin al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghaibi* jilid 32, (Beirut: Dar al-Ihya' al-Turats, 1420 H). Page. 377.

²¹ Kenneth Cragg, *The Quran and The West* (Washington: Georgetown, 2006). page. 51.

This is Kenneth's first step in contextualizing the verse text, allowing readers to consider the linguistic meaning and how reading the verse can bring solutions to modern challenges. This method is consistent with Gadamer's hermeneutics idea of *Anwendung* (application) theory, which states that signals from previous texts can be interpreted, applied, and implemented in the present situation. In other words, the message conveyed during interpretation is not the precise meaning of the text but a more meaningful meaning with broader implications.²² As a result, Kenneth's interpretation focused on moral ideals relevant to the current setting.

In the study of interpretation, a reviewer who contextualizes usually has a first foothold in the form of original meaning while reading the Qur'an today. The original meaning is based on systematic techniques such as information on the Arab world's macrohistorical background (*asbabun nuzul*), *munasabat al-ayat*, linguistics, modern literature, and hermeneutics.²³ However, in this case, Kenneth does not use *munasabat al-ayat* or *asbabun nuzul* in his search for the original meaning. He is just constrained to slog through the verbal order. Perhaps his notion of Q.S. An-Nas, as understood by the initial recipient, will not fit the concept he wishes to develop. This letter provided healing measures for the Prophet Muhammad against magical magic attacks rather than directly telling him about the moral world.

Fahrudin al-Razi, in *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, indicates that Q.S. An-Nas serves a distinct purpose than Q.S. Al-Falaq. According to him, Q.S. Al-Falaq aims to provide spiritual and physical security, while Q.S. An-Nas aims to assure religious security. According to Al-Razi, Q.S. An-Nas advises that religious concerns, no matter how tiny, are more essential than worldly matters, no matter how large. This explanation demonstrates that al-Razi's *tafsir* attempts to lead the knowledge of Q.S. An-Nas toward moral qualities, which he defines as religion. Kenneth

²² Sahiron Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika dan Pengembangan Ulumul Quran* (Yogyakarta: Pesantren Nawesea Press, 2009). Page. 50-52.

²³ Sahiron Syamsuddin, Page. 73-75.

provides examples from traditional interpreters that this Surah is significantly related to morals.²⁴

2. Comparing Holy Scriptures

Kenneth occasionally connected one religious community to another while reading from a linguistic perspective. The most notable was the comparison of Islam with Christianity. Thus, this comparison necessitated a comparison of their holy scriptures.

Kenneth discussed the challenges in all religions and attempted to examine how Islam and Christianity offer solutions. The issue concerned the regulations that exist in religion. Every religion has rules that serve as the foundation for its followers. However, the approach to getting people to want to adopt it is entirely different.

Kenneth wanted to elaborate on this. He assumed that the Qur'an was aware of the issue concerning the law (life laws). In this situation, the Qur'an can naturally confer authority on humans, allowing them to accept the law, guidance, reminders, adoration for reward, and fear of wrongdoing. This can operate because of the habit of discipline and unity (congregation). All of this is incorporated into the five pillars of Islam that serve as their guide: *shahada*, prayer, *zakat*, fasting, and hajj, all of which will be counted in the afterlife.²⁵

According to him, the dilemma of the laws in the new covenant differs from that of the Qur'an. The guidelines are based primarily on sin awareness or making it easier to avoid mistakes. Christians believe in their religion's rules less than Muslims do, particularly in terms of providing solutions and guidance. This makes him realize that these flaws must be addressed quickly, just as a mistake must be repaired immediately.²⁶

²⁴ Tatan Setiawan & Muhammad Panji Romdoni, "Analisis Manhaj Khusus dalam Tafsir Mafâthih al-Ghaib Karya Al-Razi," *Jurnal Iman dan Spiritualitas*, Vol 2, No 1 (2021): 49-60. <https://doi.org/10.15575/jis.v2i1.15829>

²⁵ Kenneth Cragg, *The Quran and The West* (Washington: Georgetown, 2006). 53.

²⁶ Kenneth Cragg, Page. 54.

3. Interpretation with Contemporary Texts

Kenneth repeatedly compared the meaning of Qur'anic verses to Western literary literature. For example, when examining Q.S. An-Nas: 4-5, which deals with the whisper in the chest (shudur), he compared it to the language style of a French poem by Charles Baudelaire that was popular with the English poet T.S. Eliot. The poem discusses original sins.²⁷

Kenneth employed elements from Western literary poetry to explain original sin through the lens of the Qur'an (Q.S. An-Nas: 4-5), offering the Arabic version without translation. According to him, traditional Muslims frequently ignored and misunderstood the concept of original sin. The Qur'an explicitly states that original sin can fool people's hearts, choices, intentions, and, ultimately, deeds. According to him, this is at the heart of the debate over original sin.

Kenneth's technique had serious shortcomings when it came to interpretive methods. It differed significantly from the widely utilized intertextuality technique. The intertextuality approach to the Qur'an seeks to unearth the deeper meaning of Qur'anic verses relating to language by tracing other texts outside the Qur'an that appeared before or at the time of its revelation. However, Kenneth's approach focuses more on external notions, which are then used to understand the Qur'an by following the flow of pre-existing concepts, giving the impression that the Qur'an is used to legitimate pre-existing concepts.²⁸

Kenneth's research methods can still be considered reasonable. This is because, as evidenced by his book, *The Qur'an and The West*, he directly seeks to convey a general grasp of the comparison between Western and Qur'anic notions. Furthermore, his book's target audience is Western readers, not Muslims in general. This technique may be the best way for Kenneth to avoid

²⁷ Kenneth Cragg, *The Quran and The West* (Washington: Georgetown, 2006). Page. 50.

²⁸ Isaac Tuffour, "A Critical Overview of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: A Contemporary Qualitative Research Approach," *Journal of Healthcare Communications*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (2017): Page. 1-5.

focusing too heavily on the Qur'an (or Islam) to make it more acceptable to readers who share his beliefs.²⁹

On the other hand, this approach has the advantage of allowing individuals who are unfamiliar with the Qur'an and Islam to better appreciate Kenneth's principles. For example, when analyzing the shudur, he compared its significance to that of the Hebrew psalmist who often sings it.³⁰ This demonstrates Kenneth's attempt to open the door of comprehension for his audience by catering to their common sense.

4. The Concept of the Original Sins

The three most crucial components of the contemporary interpretation paradigm are text, context, and contextualization. Awareness of these three components is essential, especially when creating new meaning. Suppose these three components can operate harmoniously and optimally during interpretation. In that case, the result will be a more accurate and comprehensive interpretation because understanding evaluates the text's context and exact meaning, resulting in a meaning that can be applied.³¹

Kenneth had been through all three phases. However, it has already been stated that he overlooked the historical background, specifically how and in what situation the verses of the Qur'an were revealed. Nonetheless, he was aware of the context, specifically the current context in which he lived, with all the socio-moral issues surrounding him.

As a result, he went beyond simply contextualizing the meaning of the text and context. His contextualization technique led to a new view that Q.S. An-Nas: 4-5 is closely related to the concept of original sins in Christian theology. Concerning this, he stated:

²⁹ Ann Branaman, Kenneth D. Burke (1897–1993). In: Lenz, K., Hettlage, R. (eds) *Goffman-Handbuch*. J.B. Metzler, Stuttgart (2022). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-476-05871-3_16

³⁰ Kenneth Cragg, *The Quran and The West* (Washington: Georgetown, 2006). Page. 50.

³¹ Fahrudin Faiz, *Hermeneutika al-Quran Tema-Tema Kontroversial* (Yogyakarta: elSAQ Press, 2005). Page. 23-24.

"For to be alert to 'insinuating whisperer' within is no more, no other, than what Christianity has always known as the originality of sin."³²

Kenneth Cragg's book examines the Qur'an, which rejects the concept of original sin in the conventional Christian sense. Cragg argues that the Qur'an encourages people's freedom to make their own moral decisions. This is consistent with another Qur'anic verse that indicates that everyone is responsible for their own actions (Q.S. Al-Muddassir: 38).³³

The analysis of the concept of original sin in Q.S. An-Nas: 4-5, as well as Kenneth Cragg's comments in *The Qur'an and The West*, leads to a profound contemplation on human nature according to the Qur'an and its consequences for religious and cultural understanding. The Qur'an emphasizes that everyone can choose and is accountable for his or her acts. This concept promotes the idea that every human has equal moral potential, free of the original sin passed down from ancestors.

The interpretation of Q.S. An-Nas: 4-5 and Kenneth Cragg's ideas also sparks a debate over how humans might reach redemption and salvation. Muslims obtain salvation through repentance, good works, and faith in Allah. This notion says that every person has complete influence over their spiritual destiny.

Original sin is a major notion in Western thought and Christian theology. It teaches that Adam and Eve's sin has been handed down to all mankind, resulting in sin at birth. The Qur'an, on the other hand, opposes this viewpoint, emphasizing that every human is born in a state of fitrah, or sinlessness.³⁴

Also, in Western thought, particularly in the Christian tradition, redemption is accomplished via faith in Jesus Christ as

³² Kenneth Cragg, page. 65.

³³ M. Muzayyin, "Al-Qur'an Menurut Pandangan Orientalis (Studi Analisis 'Teori Pengaruh' dalam Pemikiran Orientalis)," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis*, Vol. 16, no. 2 (2015): hlm. 2023-221, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.2015.1602-04>

³⁴ Tarpin Tarpin, "Pandangan Kristen Tentang Dosa: Asal Muasal dan Cara Menebusnya," *Jurnal Ushuluddin*, Vol. 16, no. 10 (2010): Page. 221-233. <http://dx.doi.org/10.24014/jush.v16i2.677>

the savior who forgives sins. This comparison highlights Islam and Christianity's basic differences in beliefs about the source of salvation and moral responsibility.³⁵

A comparison of the concept of original sin in the Qur'an with the concept of original sins in Western thought reveals significant variations in theological and moral perspectives. Western thought, particularly in the Christian tradition, views original sin as the source of human evil, necessitating salvation via Christ. Meanwhile, the Qur'an asserts that each person is accountable for his or her actions, and redemption is possible via repentance and good deeds.³⁶

In the context of the interaction between religion and culture, this analysis demonstrates how an idea of original sin and moral responsibility can alter social and cultural norms. This reasoning is useful in developing the moral and ethical ideals that govern societal life.

Before going into depth about how Kenneth connects the verse under study to the concept of original sin, it is crucial to define original sin. Kenneth feels that many Muslims misinterpret the concept of original sin in Christian theology. As a result, an explanation of original sin will be offered from a Christian perspective.

One of the misconceptions Muslims have regarding original sins in Christian theology is how they perceive the substance of sin itself. In general, Muslims believe that sin is the outcome of human deeds that break God's instructions and prohibitions, which will be compounded and counted on the Day of Judgment to determine whether one enters heaven or hell. This sin estimate is supernatural, as it is based on angels' records. As a result, people are unaware of how many sins they have committed. Humans are obligated to pray for forgiveness and expiation for these sins. This

³⁵ Musa Sinar Tarigan, "Implikasi Penebusan Kristus Dalam Pendidikan Kristen [The Implication of Christ's Redemption on Christian Education]," *Polyglot: Jurnal Ilmiah*, Vol. 15, no. 2 (2019): Page. 2023-222, <http://dx.doi.org/10.19166/pji.v15i2.1409>

³⁶ Ismail Lala, "Original Sin vs. Original Grace: The Adamic Fall and the Primordial Covenant," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 32, no. 1 (2021): 25–51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2021.1882145>

idea of sin, like the prophets, *Ruh al-Quds*, and other Islamic conceptions, cannot be utilized to guide Christian theology's understanding of sin.³⁷

Christian theology distinguishes between primordial sin (peccatum originale) and personal or social sin. This concept of original sin is directly tied to the transgression of God's commands by Adam and Eve. According to some tales, the sin occurred when they ate *khuldi* (the fruit of immortality). As a result of this deed, both lost justice and holiness, transitioning from a state of holiness and happiness to one of utter transformation. Christians regard this as the corruption of human nature against its inherent powers, resulting in Adam and Eve's ignorance (intellectual weakness), suffering, the power of death, and sinful tendencies known as Concupiscence. This sin, which Adam and Eve personally committed, was then passed down to their offspring as a state of sin. Original sin can thus be defined as sin in an equivalent meaning, i.e., sin recognized as a natural state rather than the product of particular actions.³⁸

Furthermore, Adam and Eve's original sin harmed man's relationship with God, further separating them. Jesus Christ's mission on Earth was to save and repair man's relationship with God, which Christians call penance. This penance incorporates Jesus Christ's teachings so humanity can return to justice and holiness, thus reconnecting with God. However, it should be mentioned that there is a common misperception among Muslims that Jesus Christ atoned for the sins of all prior believers by His crucifixion, so freeing the believers who followed Him from their sins. This understanding must be altered to comprehend Kenneth's interpretation, which will be described next.

There are certain similarities between the Islamic and Christian traditions in the account of Prophet Adam, in which both describe Prophet Adam as having sinned. However, Islam does not recognize the concept of original sin, which exists in the

³⁷ Benno van den Toren, "Human Evolution and a Cultural Understanding of Original Sin," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (2016): Page. 12-21.

³⁸ Emanuel Martasudjita, *Pokok-Pokok Iman Gereja* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2013). Page. 99-101.

Christian tradition. According to Islam, the individual is responsible for his or her sins. This viewpoint represents the most striking contrast between the two theologies.

Kenneth tied surah al-Nas to the concept of original sin, beginning with examining the term *Bosom* (*shudur*). He observed that in the Qur'an, the term *shudur* is frequently used to allude to a human rib. Kenneth further underlined that the heart (*qulub*) is a synonym for the word *shudur*, which refers to the location of intentions, wants, and emotions. He also mentioned that people's perception of *shudur* (*bosom*) emphasizes the hazards of whispers that deceive, distort, and defraud.³⁹

Kenneth then explained to Muslims that humans had a purpose as caliphs from the moment they were born. From the Prophet Adam to the people who followed him, all were responsible for being caliph. Every caliph has a heart that is susceptible to the temptation to commit evil.⁴⁰ This temptation has existed since the beginning of human creation, specifically since the time of Prophet Adam. Kenneth observed that this temptation can cause people to commit harmful acts. Thus, Kenneth emphasized the resemblance between this concept and the concept of original sin, as both seek to guide individuals in avoiding temptations in their souls to become closer to God.⁴¹

According to Kenneth, verses 4-5 of Surah an-Nas, both textually and in the context of *asbab al-nuzul*, have nothing to do with Prophet Adam's tale. Kenneth seems to read the text via the lens of his theological idea. However, re-examining the Qur'an with an emphasis on phrases like *waswasa* (whisper) reveals that Satan's temptation is tied to the tale of Prophet Adam. This is

³⁹ Kenneth Cragg, *The Quran and The West* (Washington: Georgetown, 2006). Page. 51.

⁴⁰ Caner Taslaman, *Can a Muslim be an Evolutionist?*. In: Clark, K.J., Koperski, J. (eds) *Abrahamic Reflections on Randomness and Providence*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham (2022): Page. 107-117. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75797-7_6

⁴¹ Peter Hermawan, "Penciptaan, Kejatuhan Manusia dalam Dosa dan Puncak Sejarah Keselamatan pada Kristus dalam Perspektif Gereja," *Felicitas: Jurnal Teologi*, Vol. 2, no. 2 (2022): Page. 107-118. <https://doi.org/10.57079/feli.v2i2.80>

more clearly demonstrated in Surah al-A'raf verse 20, which reads:

فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْءِئِهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَتَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ ٢٠

“Then began Satan to whisper suggestions to them, bringing openly before their minds all the shame that was hidden from them (before): he said: "Your Lord only forbade you this tree, lest ye should become angels or such beings as live forever."

According to the Qur'an, al-waswas has existed since Prophet Adam and will continue throughout human life. One of man's characteristics is a heart in his chest. The heart is the primary reason why humans are susceptible to the devil's temptations (whispers); it is a place where good intentions and bad impulses can be readily reversed.⁴²

Kenneth believed that the existence of this susceptible heart necessitates the establishment of a law that allows it to be readily controlled and directed. As a result, ethics and religion have always been necessary for humans to have guiding principles in their lives. These norms serve as boundaries, preventing humans from living without constraints. However, negative regulations frequently disturb individuals, whereas ethics and religion educate about positive norms through commands and prohibitions and an awareness of what is good and wrong.⁴³

In this context, it has previously been stated that Kenneth believes that the concept of Islam is more solid than Christianity in terms of applying rules because Islam emphasizes the formation of self-awareness' through practices such as the pillars of Islam, which are carried out regularly in daily life, such as prayer. On the other hand, the Christian approach concentrates

⁴² Mohd Zahir Abdul Rahman, Shah Rizul Izyan Zulkiply, & Ahmad Murshidi Mustapha, “The Term Waswas and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) In Islamic Perspectives,” *Al-Hikmah: International Journal of Islamic Studies and Human Sciences*, Vol. 4, no. 3 (2021): Page. 452-469. <https://doi.org/10.46722/hikmah.v4i3.141>

⁴³ James B. Glattfelder, *The Consciousness of Reality*. In: Information—Consciousness—Reality. The Frontiers Collection. Springer, Cham (2019): Page. 515–595. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03633-1_14

more on having to follow the rules. Morals derived from self-awareness are generally stronger than morals derived from rule compliance. Kenneth highlights the significance of habituation in this context. If a beneficial activity is not repeated regularly, it will produce discomfort for the doer.

People's negative prejudices (*zhan*) often lead to a bad reputation for rules (law). As a result, the Qur'an prohibits it in Surah al-Hujurat verse 12. Kenneth underlines the importance of fighting this prejudice courageously and fearlessly. Perhaps the objective is for people to avoid being imprisoned in prejudice throughout their lives and strive for mental and emotional clarity.

According to Kenneth, *al-khannas* does not stop there. He continues to harass and tempt people. He tempts those who aim to do good and those who are thought to be good believers. A believer faces a high risk of temptation. This temptation can arise when a person is overconfident in his or her relationship with God, which can eventually lead to the development of theological pride. This kind of hubris can easily escalate to violence against others, even if religious teachings justify such acts. This theological arrogance threatens the humanist picture of humanity. This applies to all religions, including Islam, Christianity, and others.⁴⁴

Every religion has a history of awful moments when its followers engaged in similar acts. It is a dark period in the history of all religions. In reality, similar methods are still prevalent today, particularly when it comes to current political concerns. Violence is frequently misconstrued for religious teachings when, in fact, it is the result of political forces. Kenneth demonstrates this point by using the circumstances in conflict-affected countries, such as Palestine.⁴⁵ In this context, Kenneth attempts to awaken all religious adherents, particularly Muslims and Christians (West), to reflect and stop blaspheming those who hold opposing beliefs. According to him, every religion essentially has the same purpose in coping with moral crises that arise in it. This is evident in Kenneth's statement:

⁴⁴ Kenneth Cragg, *The Quran and The West* (Washington: Georgetown, 2006). Page. 54-55.

⁴⁵ Kenneth Cragg, Page. 58-59.

"Mutual demonizing is only to be 'the more deceived.' Either could be more discerning about the other; was it more critical of itself?"⁴⁶

This outlines Kenneth's understanding of Surah al-Nas verses 4-5 and their relationship to the concept of original sin in Christian theology. His interpretation of the Surah revolves around human morals. From there, he attempts to draw parallels between Islam and the mainstream religion in the West.

E. Conclusion

Kenneth Cragg has thoroughly researched Surah al-Nas verses 4-5 and linked them to the concept of original sin in Christian theology. Kenneth's research revealed discrepancies in understanding between Islam and Christianity regarding the origin of human sin. Original sin is attributed to Adam and Eve in Christianity, although it is not recognized in Islam. Kenneth also highlights the significance of fully comprehending the background of the Qur'an to avoid misunderstandings. He points out that the Qur'an emphasizes individual accountability for one's deeds rather than the transmission of guilt from ancestors. This illustrates a fundamental difference of opinion between Islam and Christianity regarding humanity's relationship with God and moral duty. Kenneth's insight promotes deeper interfaith dialogue and mutual understanding between Muslims and Christians. This study contributes significantly to comprehending the fundamental distinctions between the two religions in terms of the origin of human sin and the ramifications for morality and the human relationship to God.

⁴⁶ Kenneth Cragg, *The Quran and The West* (Washington: Georgetown, 2006). Page. 65.

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