

A CURRICULUM GAP IN UNDERSTANDING THE QUR'ĀN: *MĀQAŞID AL-QUR'ĀN* AS A NEW COURSE IN '*ULŪM AL-QUR'ĀN*

Tazul Islam, M. Y. Zulkifli, Abul Kalam &
Amina Khatun

Abstract

Understanding the higher objectives of the Qur'ān (*Maqāşid al-Qur'ān*) is an essential issue in Qur'ānic studies. The current curriculum design in Sciences of the Qur'ān ('*Ulūm al-Qur'ān*') partially contributes to this topic; yet there is hardly any course that deals exclusively with understanding the objectives of Qur'ānic discourse. This omission is made clearer when contrasted with another *maqāşidic* study, i.e. *Maqāşid ash-Sharī'ah*, a branch of learning exclusively concerned with the objectives of the normative portion of the Qur'ān, which has earned a dignified place in the curriculum of Islamic studies. If this latter subject, with its limited scope, deserves to be a specialized course, then it logically follows that *Maqāşid al-Qur'ān*—whose scope covers the objectives of the entire Qur'ān—should be given a similar place in the curriculum. Hence, in view of fulfilling this existing gap, this study presents a curriculum framework for *Maqāşid al-Qur'ān* in the Qur'ānic sciences ('*Ulūm al-Qur'ān*'), including an introduction, a conceptual background, a discussion of the importance, rationale and benefits of this subject and a course outline. It is expected that this study would encourage academic debate on the issue concerned.

Keywords: *Maqāşid al-Qur'ān*, Qur'ān, *Maqāşid al-Sharī'ah*, Objectives, '*Ulūm al-Qur'ān*', Curriculum, *Tafsīr*.

Introduction

“Sciences of the Qur'ān” ('*Ulūm al-Qur'ān*') is one of the most appropriate subjects in Islamic higher education. It is being taught in many Islamic institutions worldwide, at Bachelor and postgraduate levels. Apart from being a specialized area of study, it has even been an academic department or faculty in many universities around the world. However, the sole objective of this academic discipline is to promote a better understanding of Qur'ānic concepts, precepts, structure, style, methods and exegesis. An investigation into the academic curriculum for this discipline in many universities

shows that the courses that are popularly taught cover a basic understanding of the Qur'ān, such as the definition of the Qur'ān, its names and its differences from *ḥadīth al-qudsī*; basic understanding of the revelation (*waḥy*), such as meaning, means, manner, stages, transmission and compilation; various aspects of the form, language and styles of the Qur'ān; issues in understanding the Qur'ānic scriptures, such as phases of revelation, context of revelation, abrogation and various readings (*qirā'ah*); and issues in the interpretation of the text, such as *tafsīr*, its kinds, principles and methodologies. All these subjects, along with their exclusive roles in understanding the issues of their own domain, have a certain role in promoting an understanding of the objectives (*maqāṣid*) of the Qur'ān; yet at present none of them plays an exclusive role in this connection. As a healthy understanding of any discourse always relies on understanding its objectives, the same may be true in understanding Qur'ānic discourse. In other words, a robust understanding of the Qur'ān fundamentally rests on understanding its objectives. This is because the objectives represent the nucleus of the Qur'ān, which is asserted by classical and contemporary scholars (Al-Ghazālī, 1989, p. 23; Darwazah, 1963, p. 157). If this perspective is accepted as valid, then its implication for understanding the Qur'ān should be essential. However, the essential nature of this subject could be seen in the sizeable literature on *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* produced by prominent Muslim scholars spanning more than one thousand years (Islam, 2011, p. 190). This long nurtured and rich legacy of scholarship has hardly any place in the existing curriculum of Sciences of the Qur'ān. However, this present study argues that in order to understand the core of the Qur'ān, *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* is an essential methodological device that is no less important than other issues that are taught in Sciences of the Qur'ān. If this device is studied as an academic course, a new perspective of Qur'ānic understanding might be born and justice might be done to the contributions made by scholars for the past thousand years. Hence, this study finds it logical to introduce an academic subject that directly and exclusively deals with the objectives of the Qur'ān. However, this study also aims to present a framework for *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* as an academic course in Qur'ānic or Islamic studies so that this neglected scholarship can find congenial room for its further development.

Rationale for *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* to be an academic course

An emerging science

Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān has been introduced as an Islamic science by Al-Ghazālī, though such designation still did not get official recognition from Islamic academia. However, the attention of scholars to this subject notably increased after the Ghazālīan period, as Al-Baghawī, Al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Abd al-Salām (d. 1261 C.E.), Ash-Shāṭibī (d. 1388 C.E.), Al-Biqā'ī (d. 1480 C.E.) and others made notable contributions. This legacy has continued and kept abreast with every fresh development in Qur'ānic literature, finally reaching a stage where its inclusion in the prerequisite principles of Qur'ānic exegesis (*adab al-tafsīr*) has been asserted by some prominent exegetes of the Qur'ān, such as Al-Tāhir ibn 'Āshūr (d. 1973) and 'Izzat Darwazah (d. 1987) (Islam, 2011, p. 190). Muḥammad 'Abduh has argued that a desired exegesis of the Qur'ān is its understanding according to its higher objective, which is guiding mankind toward happiness in this world and the hereafter. According to him, *tafsīr*

has been produced on several aspects such as looking into the Qur'ān's styles, syntax, past stories, *gharīb al-Qur'ān* (rare words in the Qur'ān), all kinds of laws, theological discussions, advice and mysticism; however, excessive focus on any of these issues may cause ignorance of the main purpose of the Qur'ān and oblivion of its original meanings ('Abduh, 1993, p. 7). Ibn 'Āshūr, in the fourth introduction of his *tafsīr*, *At-tahrīr wa at-tanwīr*, has asserted that it is vital for an exegete to look into the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān. According to him, the main task of an exegete should be the illustration of the Qur'ān's objectives. He adds that the value of a *tafsīr* should be evaluated on how it approaches the *maqāṣidic* dimension. He has strongly opposed any kind of interpretation contradicting the objectives of the Qur'ān. Thus, an interpreter of the Qur'ān must possess knowledge of its *maqāṣid* (Ibn 'Āshūr, 1997, p. 36). It is apparent that Ibn 'Āshūr has linked the whole concept of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* with the methodology of *tafsīr*, as he has introduced it as a principle of *tafsīr* and regarded it as a criterion for evaluating the value of any Qur'ānic exegesis.

Moreover, a popular *maqāṣidic* trend has almost commonly appeared in a number of contemporary works of *tafsīr* such as Rashīd Riḍā's (d. 1935 C.E.) *Tafsīr al-manār*, Ibn 'Āshūr's *Tafsīr at-tahrīr wa at-tanwīr*, Abū'l-A'ālā Mawdūdī's (d. 1989 C.E.) *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān*, Sayyid Quṭb's (d. 1966 C.E.) *Fī ḥilāl al-Qur'ān*, 'Izzat Darwazah's *Al-tafsīr al-ḥadīth* and others. Along with this *maqāṣidic* trend in *tafsīr*, *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* is treated as a distinctive subject by many prominent scholars such as Muḥammad 'Abduh (d. 1905), Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1935), Badī'uzzamān Sa'īd Nūrsī (d. 1960), Ibn 'Āshūr (d. 1973), Ḥasan al-Bannā (d. 1949), Muḥammad Iqbāl (d. 1938), Sayyid Quṭb (d. 1966), Abū'l-A'ālā Mawdūdī (d. 1989), 'Izzat Darwazah (d. 1987), Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 1996), Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī (b.1926) and others (Islam, 2011, p. 189). In their topical discussion on *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*, they highlighted some salient features that show it as an organized body of knowledge that includes a definition of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*; its classification into main and secondary levels; the identification of the main *maqāṣid* and their illustrations; the methodology of understanding the objectives of the Qur'ān; the relation between *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* and *Maqāṣid ash-Sharī'ah*; and the implications of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* for the exegesis of the Qur'ān. This detailed categorization of the topic involves the whole notion of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* as a distinctive science employed in understanding the Qur'ānic discourse in the light of its objectives. In other words, being a science, *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* represents a *maqāṣidic* framework for understanding any issue concerned with the Qur'ān as it is with its principles and objectives, fundamentals and particulars, types and stages, approaches and means; hence this constitutes a distinguishing methodology of thinking and viewing, analyzing and evaluating, reasoning and formulating a *maqāṣidic* perspective of Qur'ānic understanding (Islam, 2011, p. 204).

However, despite these long-grown developments, beginning with very general concepts, it has gradually gone through the stages of basic understandings with partial application of the *maqāṣidic* approach in *tafsīr* being argued as a criterion of *tafsīr*, it cannot be considered as a full-grown branch of knowledge. The main reason for this may be attributed to the weak methodological strength in the overall scholarship of this subject. In other words, rhetoric tone in most of the issues discussed in *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* is abundantly clear. For example, scholars' identification of major objectives of the Qur'ān, in many cases, seems very much

coloured by their intellectual makeup or by a specific socio-historical context. This fact could be seen through a comparison between two prominent scholars' views on the major objectives of the Qur'ān. A classical *sūfī* scholar, Al-Ghazālī, finds six major objectives as follows: introducing the One whom we call upon; introducing the Straight Path that has to be followed for journey towards Him; and introducing the state whereby He may be reached; giving description of the state of those who respond to the call and of the subtleties of the Divine art revealed to such people; description of the condition of the deniers and their abasement and ignorant obduracy in the face of the truth; teaching how the way-stations on the journey to God Almighty are established and how the provisions necessary for the journey, and the necessary capacity and awareness, may be obtained (al-Ghazālī, 1989, p. 34-35). However, a modern reformist scholar Riḍā identifies ten major objectives as follows: Exposition of the basic pillars of the religion; prophethood and Divine messengership and assignments of the prophets; perfection of man's mind; the humanistic, socio-political and national reforms; exposition of responsibility in Islam and the general advantages of its prohibitions; explanation of manners, foundations and general principles of universal Islamic political ruling; guidance on financial reform; formulating war policy and its philosophy and eliminating its evils and predicaments; giving women all human, religious and civil rights; emancipation of slaves (Riḍā, 1888, p. 194).

It is apparent that these objectives are broadly related to three-dimensional reforms: belief and thought, socio-political and financial. Like other Islamic reformists, Riḍā's aim was to bring about reforms and remove misunderstanding about Islam. His inclusion of gender, women's rights, slavery, freedom, justice and other issues evidently shows his responses to the misunderstandings which are raised by the orientalist and feminists criticizing the socio-cultural values of Islam (Islam & Khan, 2011, p. 596). However, al-Ghazālī's six objectives are very much theological in nature and concerned with monotheism (*tawḥīd*), Divine message (*risālah*) and Hereafter (*ākhirah*). Having been a theologian and *sūfī* he related the entire enterprise of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* to his intellectual and devotional makeup. One can consider this influence of personal tendency on dealing with a subject as a bias. Where there is a bias there is a lack of objectivity. An objective treatment of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* requires a sound methodological approach. To this end, its inclusion in the academic curriculum may open it to the scholarly attention.

Promising debate on Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān

There is a potential academic debate on *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* that is being staged on several platforms, including conferences, seminars, TV talks, journals and books. The genesis of this debate dates back at least one thousand years, as mentioned above. Since then, its development continues as ideas are becoming diversified, new issues are introduced and old issues are revisited. However, the key issues of this debate are the identification of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*, its classification into primary and secondary objectives, its relation with *Maqāṣid ash-Sharī'ah* and its relation with Qur'ānic exegesis. As to the debate on the identification of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*, there is an enormous disagreement on the numbers and themes of *maqāṣid*. The enumeration and themes range from at least one to twenty-five. For example, while Muḥammad Iqbāl (d. 1938) has pointed out only one major objective of the Qur'ān, "to awaken in man the higher consciousness of his manifold relations with God and

the universe” (Iqbāl, 1996, p. 7), Fuzlur Rahman Ansari (d. 1974) has identified twenty-five objectives of the Qur'ān as the following:

1. To obliterate all anthropomorphic notions about God and to establish perfect Monotheism—not merely as a theological concept but as a full-fledged philosophy of life.
2. To inculcate the establishment and maintenance of a living and dynamic relation with God in order that human beings may attain the highest spiritual and moral refinement and greatness.
3. To teach the truth that human beings are basically theomorphic beings—emphasizing the ‘ascent of Man to God’ as opposed to the ‘descent of God in Man’—and that the goal of every human being is the actualization of his or her potential vicegerency of God through the imitation of Divine Attributes.
4. To give to woman her rightful place in society, as basically the equal of man.
5. To resolve the dichotomy; of faith and reason; of religion and science; of love and law; of beauty and simplicity; of participation in godliness and participation in worldly life.
6. To establish in the domain of the philosophy of religion, the positive concept of fulfillment in place of the universally prevalent negative concept of salvation.
7. To extricate religion from superstitions.
8. To distinguish spirituality from mysticism and psychic phenomena.
9. To give a comprehensive philosophy of integration, based on the teaching of unity, thereby providing sure basis for the integration of the life of the individual as well as of society and, beyond that, of humanity at large.
10. To create an integral culture and an integral civilisation;
11. To make morality the basis for spiritual development, on the one hand and for social evolution, on the other.
12. To inaugurate the era of scientific advancement by means of teaching the requisite fundamental principles.
13. To highlight the role of inductive reasoning as the proper instrument for the pursuit of knowledge.
14. To emphasize the quest for empirical knowledge, as well as the resultant technological advancement and conquest of nature, as an exercise in the worship of God.
15. To bestow on religion the role of functioning as social alchemy for the establishment of a total welfare society.
16. To harmonize truth and justice with love and mercy.
17. To make social justice the very foundation for healthy collective life.
18. To establish the concept of wealth for welfare.
19. To eradicate poverty, disease and human suffering in general.
20. To crown labour with dignity.
21. To proclaim the principle that value lies in labour, productivity and achievement.
22. To provide the golden mean between the extremist philosophies of monopoly capitalism and communism.
23. To open the avenues and provide guidance for human progress in all healthy directions in general.

24. To close the doors on all those perversions in religious and non-religious thought which go to make religion an opiate and the secularistic philosophies atheistic and immoral.
25. To confer on humanity many other blessings (Ansari, 2008, p. XXXIV).

However, other enumerations of identified *maqāṣid*, in many cases, are either entirely or partially dissimilar. For example, a traditional scholar Al-Baghawī (d. 1116 C.E.), a medieval scholar Al-Biqā'ī (1451 C.E.) and a modern scholar Sa'īd Nūrsī (d. 1960) have enumerated the basic objectives of the Qur'ān as four. While Al-Baghawī's view appears to be entirely dissimilar to that of Al-Biqā'ī, Sa'īd Nūrsī's view seems to be partially similar to that of Al-Biqā'ī as can be seen from the following table.

Table 1: Views of different scholars

<i>Al-Baghawī</i>	<i>Al-Biqā'ī</i>	<i>Sa'īd Nūrsī</i>
Remembrance (<i>tadhakkur</i>)	Divinities	<i>Tawhīd</i>
Teaching a lesson (<i>i'tibār</i>)	Prophecies	Prophethood
Pondering (<i>tadabbur</i>)	Hereafter	Resurrection
Thinking (<i>tafakkur</i>)	Determinism	Justice
(Al-Baghawī, 1999, p. 45)	(Al-Biqā'ī, 1995, p. 211)	(Nūrsī, 2007, p. 19)

This problem of disagreement and inconsistency in identification might have motivated the scholars of Qur'ānic studies to further research on this subject, exploring the methodology for identifying *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*, its relation with *Maqāṣid ash-Sharī'ah* and its implication for *tafsīr*. Several recent books are found that deal with these issues. For example, 'Abd al-Karīm Ḥamīdī has published two books, *Madkhal ilā Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* and *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān al-Karīm min tashrī' al-Aahkām*. The content of these books includes a definition of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*, its relation with *Maqāṣid ash-Sharī'ah*, methods of identification, classification, *maqṣad* of the Qur'ān in the actualization of personal welfare, social welfare and finally universal welfare (Ḥamīdī, 2007, p. 1-3). Furthermore, Ḥanān Lahhām produced *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, in which the author has categorized the verses of the Qur'ān according to their *maqāṣid* and has classified *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* into the welfare of the individual, the welfare of the *ummah*, the development and progress of civilization and the protection of religion. She then has discussed secondary *maqāṣid* under every class. The academic value and contemporary relevance of this subject prove that it deserves to be taught as an academic course in Qur'ānic studies or Sciences of the Qur'ān.

Centralizing the understanding of the Qur'ān

Understanding the Qur'ān is the prime object of teaching academic courses in '*Ulūm al-Qur'ān*'. In a modern curriculum of Qur'ānic studies, the following courses are commonly taught: the basic understanding of the Qur'ān, its revelation, style, language, forms, inimitability, seven readings, aspects of *tafsīr*, etc. All these subjects are important for understanding a specific angle of the Qur'ān and none is exclusively engaged in understanding its objectives. Thus, each subject promotes a peripheral understanding of the Qur'ān. To centralize a Qur'ānic understanding, there needs to

be an approach that pushes the peripheries to the center. Hence, scholars suggest a *maqāṣidic* approach. To them, *maqāṣid* (objectives) of a thing represent its essence or core, and the core of the Qur'ān is its objectives (al-Ghazālī, 1989, p. 34). Thus, the objective-based understanding of the Qur'ān is, in fact, a centralized understanding of its discourse. *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*, as an academic course, could be a facilitating device in this connection. Hence, inclusion of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* in the academic courses of '*Ulūm al-Qur'ān*' could be justified.

Rich literary background and the gap in study

The discussion of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* began in the tenth century. Since then, prominent Muslim scholars have focused repeatedly on this subject. As a result, a considerable amount of literature has been produced, which provides some important basic concepts of the topic. Despite these basic developments, in the previous literature there seems to be reluctance to treat *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* as a complete concept or an organized body of knowledge. This problem may be attributed to the lack of a sound methodological foundation to deal with this subject. As a result, the term *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* is not yet scholarly defined and the scholars' views on *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān are confusingly inconsistent, diversified and uncorroborated by sufficiently convincing evidence. In other words, scholars have seldom explained why and how their identified major objectives of the Qur'ān really represent the objectives as they are presented in the Qur'ān. For example, emancipation of slaves is introduced by Riḍā as a major objective. But he did not mention how and why it is so. If a justification for this claim is explored in the Qur'ān, it would be difficult to find adequate evidence in support of this because this topic neither covers a significant share of the Qur'ānic contents nor is presented as *raison d'être* for Qur'ānic revelation in general. A topic of this nature may not be seen as a major objective.

In addition, although some literature has clearly related *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* to the methodology of Qur'ānic interpretation, there is hardly any framework for *al-tafsīr al-maqāṣidī*. Above all, while the available literature conveys some important fundamentals of this subject, there is yet the need for its further development into a complete concept and a specialized field of knowledge in Islamic studies. This prospective development could be actualized if the subject is brought into broad academic debate through placing it in the curriculum of Qur'ānic studies.

Competitiveness with another maqāṣidic discipline

Maqāṣid ash-sharī'ah (general objectives of Islamic law) has become a popular science, which is now being taught as an academic course in higher education in Islamic studies, especially in Islamic jurisprudence, in many academic institutions around the world. Operationally, this discipline of study is concerned with either exploring Islamic legal rulings, based on the theory of general objectives of *sharī'ah*, on issues where no clear-cut ruling is provided by the prime sources of *sharī'ah*, or by prioritizing a suitable ruling where there are a number of rulings available on any particular issue. The restriction of *Maqāṣid ash-Sharī'ah* to Islamic legal concerns is clearly reflected in scholars' definition of this science. According to Ibn 'Āshūr, "the *maqāṣid* of the *sharī'ah* generally are the meanings and instances of wise purposes on the part of the Lawgiver (Allāh, s.w.t.) which can be discerned in all cases of

legislation or in the majority of them to which the Law applies such that they can be seen not to apply excessively to a particular type of ruling. Included here are the occasions for the Law's establishment, its overall aim and the meanings which can be discerned throughout the Law. It likewise includes objectives which are not observable in all types of rulings, although they are observable in many of them" (Ibn 'Āshūr, 1946, p. 50). According to the logic of this idea, the aims are all the meanings and instances of wisdom foreseen by the Lawgiver in all cases of legislation, or most of them. The act of legislation is not devoid of these meanings and instances of wisdom (Qutb, 2000, p. 381-382). Al-Fāsī defines *Maqāṣid ash-Sharī'ah* as "the purpose of *sharī'ah* and the underlying reasons that the Lawgiver attached with each of its rulings (*aḥkām*)" (Al-Fāsī, 1993, p. 7). According to Raysūnī, *Maqāṣid ash-Sharī'ah* is "the purposes that are put forth for actualization in order to bring about welfare for humankind" (Raysūnī, 1995, p. 18). If it is believed that *sharī'ah* is a "body of laws" (Ḥasan, 2005, p. 10) and code of behavior explained in the Qur'ān (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1987, p. 22), it does not necessarily represent the totality of the Qur'ān in a sense that only five hundred (Al-Qaradāwī, 1993, p. 11) of its verses are normative in nature.

While the coverage of *Maqāṣid ash-Sharī'ah* seems to be limited to the normative portion of the Qur'ān, *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* goes beyond the legal sphere and covers the extent of the entire Qur'ān, which includes many issues other than legal contents, such as theological, ethical, historical and phenomenal issues. This extensive coverage of the Qur'ān is reflected in scholars' definition of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*. According to Muḥammad Khalīl, *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* is "the intents of Allāh (swt) which are aimed from the Qur'ānic texts due to the fact that those texts consist of sentences and phrases which have connotations of meanings and substances which revolve around an objective or some objectives that form that objective or those objectives" (Khalīl, 2009, 153). 'Abd al-Karīm Ḥamīdī has pointed out that "*Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* are the intents for which the Qur'ān was revealed, so that the interests of people are actualized" (Ḥamīdī, 2007, p. 33). He has further given an explanation of the term "intents" that is used in the definition. According to him, it refers to "intended meanings and wisdoms behind revelation of the Qur'ān which are distributed over general, specific and partial categories" (Ḥamīdī, 2007, p. 33). However, according to the scholars' views and portrayals of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*, it is "a science of understanding the Qur'ānic discourse in light of its purposes (*maqāṣid*) which represent the core of the Qur'ān and corroborated by their means (*wasā'il*); and distributed upon the understandable (*muḥkam*) verses of the Qur'ān" (Islam, 2011, p. 3).

With this distinction between these two disciplines, it can be argued that if a subject (*Maqāṣid ash-Sharī'ah*) dealing with only legal aspects of the Qur'ān, which contains only several hundred verses, deserves to be a specialized field of study, then *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* which generally comprehends the coverage of the whole Qur'ān and promotes a particular understanding of the whole Qur'ānic discourse, should similarly deserve to be an academic subject in Qur'ānic studies or '*Ulūm al-Qur'ān*'.

A prospective approach of maqāṣidic exegesis

Since prominent Muslim scholars have considered *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* to be a kind of science of understanding the Qur'ān from the *maqāṣidic* angle, it is logical for this

area to be developed as a new horizon of Qur'ānic interpretation. However, in the contemporary trends in Qur'ānic exegesis, there are a number of *tafsīr* works such as *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān*, *At-taḥrīr wa at-tanwīr*, *Tafsīr al-manār*, *Fī ḥilāl al-Qur'ān*, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'ān*, *At-tafsīr al-ḥadīth*, which cast a noteworthy focus on the *maqāsidic* dimension of the Qur'ānic verses. But none of them could be considered exclusively *maqāsidic*. Hence, it may be a timely urge, as *maqāsidic* studies are sharply flourishing, to develop an exclusive trend of *maqāsidic tafsīr*. The fundamentals of this trend of *tafsīr* could be as follows: first, identifying an objective (*maqṣad*) from the Qur'ānic text through a methodological process; second, outlining the conceptual background, in the light of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, of the selected *maqṣad*; third, corroborating the selected objective with means; fourth, reflection of that very *maqṣad* in the practical life of the first generation of Muslims; fifth, interrelation between the objectives of the Qur'ān as each of them plays a complementary role in promoting others, no matter whether it is a secondary or a universal one. *Maqāsid al-Qur'ān* as an academic course could motivate the readers to develop a new generation of exclusive *tafsīr* based on Qur'ānic *maqāsid*.

A brief example of the methodology of *maqāsidic tafsīr* may be illustrated with the following verse where we try to show that gaining *taqwā* is introduced as a major objective in the Qur'ān:

أَوْعِظُكُمْ أَنْ جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ وَلِتَتَّقُوا وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ (الأعراف ٦٣)

Why do you deem it strange that a tidings from your Sustainer should have come unto you through a man from among yourselves, so that he might warn you, and that you might become conscious of God, and that you might be graced with His mercy? (Qur'ān 7: 63)

The objective (*maqṣad*) is contained in the phrase *li tattaqū*, meaning, “that you might become conscious of God”. The identification of *taqwā* as a universal *maqṣad* is rationalized by the causative particles or causative case (*ta'līl*) that is directly concerned with Qur'ānic revelation. In other words, if the term “Qur'ānic revelation” (using the words *anzala al-Qur'ān*, *nazzala al-Qur'ān*, *tanzīl*, *wahy*, etc. or in this case, *dhikrun min rabbikum*) occurs in any verse followed by mentioning its reason, it could be considered as a universal *maqṣad* because it is a general reason behind revealing the whole discourse of Qur'ān. All the reasons (*'ilal*) that refer to any specific issues other than the generality of the Qur'ānic discourse should be considered as a secondary *maqṣad* of the Qur'ān. Based on this logic, *taqwā* is introduced as both universal and secondary *maqṣad* of the Qur'ān.

Brief outline of taqwā: The term *taqwā* is derived from the Arabic root (*waqā*) which signifies protecting, preserving or guarding something from that which causes defects and harms it (Al-Asfahānī, n.d., p. 833). *Taqwā*, a Qur'ānic term which has no precise equivalent in English, is translated as ‘fear of God’, ‘piety’, ‘righteousness’, ‘dutifulness’, ‘God-awareness’ (Leaman, 2006, p. 642), God-consciousness, etc. However, *taqwā* is a central concept running through the Qur'ān. It consists of man's awe of God, consciousness of his duty and an awareness of his accountability towards Him (Mawdūdī, 1984, p. 116). The essence of *taqwā* lies in an attitude of the heart and mind (Q. 22:32, 49:3) rather than its outward forms

(Mawdūdī, 1984, p. 118). It is a high state of the heart, which keeps one conscious of Allah's presence and His Knowledge. Man's sensitivity becomes sharp under its influence. It motivates him to perform the righteous deeds and avoid the forbidden ones. Thus, *taqwā* is not simply a passive idea but it is an active concept that must be reflected in everything a man performs.

Means for gaining taqwā: Belief ('*īmān*): 8:1-4; worship ('*ibādah*): 2:21; fulfilling the promise: 2:177, 2:63; truthfulness and declaration of the Divine Truth: 2:177, 39:33; remembrance of Allah and seeking His forgiveness for sins: 3:135, 7:201, 7:171; mutual cooperation: 5:2; warning of Divine Judgment/Punishment: 20:113; doing justice: 5:8; Divine Guidance (*al-hidāyah*): 47:17.

Reflection of this objective in practical life of the first generation of Muslims: *Taqwā* was a key agent that contributed to developing a strong sense of responsibility for their actions. God consciousness made them watchful of their own actions. The following narration may serve as an ideal example for the effect of *taqwā*: "Malik related to me from Ya'qūb ibn Zayd ibn Ṭalhā from his father Zayd ibn Ṭalhā that 'Abdullāh ibn Abī Mulayka informed him that a woman came to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and informed him that she had committed adultery and became pregnant. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said to her, "Go away until you give birth." When she had given birth, she came to him. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said to her, "Go away until you have suckled and weaned the baby." When she had weaned the baby, she came to him. He said, "Go and entrust the baby to someone." She entrusted the baby to someone and then came to him. He gave the order and she was stoned (Malik, 2004, p. 1119).

A Proposed Course Outline for *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*

A course outline for teaching *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* as a subject is given below (Table 2).

Table 2: Timetable for topics to be taught in different weeks

<i>Weeks</i>	<i>Topics to be Taught</i>
1st & 2nd Weeks	A general introduction to <i>Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān</i> ; The Definition of <i>Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān</i> ; The genesis and historical development.
3rd Week	<i>Maqāṣidic</i> approach to the understanding of the Qur'ān: Its necessity and impacts
4th Week	The difference between <i>Maqāṣid ash-Sharī'ah</i> and <i>Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān</i> .
5th & 6th Weeks	Presentation and analysis of traditional scholars' views: Al-Ghazālī, Al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Abd al-Salām, Waliullāh Dehlawī, Ash-Shaṭībī, and others.

Weeks	Topics to be Taught
7th, 8th & 9th Weeks	Presentation and analysis of contemporary scholars' views: Muḥammad 'Abduh, Rashīd Riḍā, Ibn 'Āshūr, Muḥammad Iqbāl, Nūrsī, Mawdūdī, Ḥasan al-Bannā, Sayyid Quṭb, Shaltūt, Al-Qaradāwī and others.
10th Week	Traditional scholars' method of understanding the <i>Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān</i> .
11th Week	Contemporary scholars' method of understanding the <i>Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān</i> .
12th Week	Determining the <i>Maqāṣid</i> of the Qur'ān: An independent survey.
13th Week	The methodology of determining the <i>Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān</i> : An independent survey.
14th and 15th Weeks	The relation of <i>Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān</i> with the methodology of <i>Tafsīr</i> : The conceptual framework of <i>Al-Tafsīr al-Maqāṣidi</i> . <i>Maqāṣidi</i> approach to the understanding of the Qur'ān: Its necessity and impacts.

Recommended Readings:

- 'Abd al-Karīm Ḥamīdī, *Al-madkhal ilā maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* (Bayrūt: Maktabah al-Rashad, 2007), 33.
- Abū Ḥamid Al-Ghazālī, (1989) *The Jewels of the Qur'ān: Al-Ghazālī's theory*. (Muhammad Abul Quasem, trans.). Kuala Lumpur: the University of Malaya Press.
- Abū 'l-A'la Mawdūdī, (1982). *Fundamentals of Islam*. Pakistan: Lahore, Islamic Publication. Introduction to Understanding the Qur'ān & *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān*.
- Aḥmad Raysūnī. (2006). *Imām ash-Shāṭibī's theory of the higher objectives and intents of Islamic law*. Kuala Lumpur, Islamic Book Trust.
- Aḥmad Raysūnī. (1995). *Nazriyyat al-maqāṣid 'inda al-Imām ash-Shāṭibī*. USA: International Institute of Islamic Thought.
- Aḥmad Raysūnī. (2003). *Al-fikr al-maqāṣidī*. Bayrūt: Dār al-Hudā.
- Al-Biqā'ī, Burhān al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan Ibrāhīm. (2002). *Nazm ad-durar*. (Vol. 1-4). Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub 'Ilmiyyah.
- Ash-Shāṭibī, Ibrāhīm bin Mūsā. (1997). *Al-muwāfaqāt*. (Vol. 3). Dār ibn 'Affān.
- Amīn Aḥsan Islāhī (2006). *Pondering over the Qur'ān*. (Vol. 1). Kuala Lumpur: Petaling Jaya, Islamic Book Trust.
- Hashim Kamali (2008). *Principles of Islamic jurisprudence*. UK: Cambridge, the Islamic Text society.
- 'Izz ad-Dīn bin 'Abd as-Salām. *Qawā'id al-aḥkām fī masāliḥ al-anām*. (Vol. 1). Bayrūt: Dār al-Ma'ārif.
- 'Izzat Darwazah. *At-tafsīr al-ḥadith*. (Vol. 1). Al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah.

- Maḥmūd Shaltūt. (n.d.). *'Ilā al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*. Al-Qāhirah: Dār ash-Shurūq.
- Muḥammad Iqbāl. (1996). *Reconstruction of religious thought in Islam*. (M. Saeed Sheikh, ed.). Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture.
- Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā. (1306 A.H.). *Al-waḥy al-Muḥammadī*. Bayrūt: Foundation of 'Izz Al-Dīn.
- Muḥammad aṭ-Ṭāhir ibn 'Āshūr, (1997) *At-taḥrīr wa at-tanwīr*. (Vol. 1-30). Tunis: Dār Sahnūn.
- Muḥammad aṭ-Ṭāhir ibn 'Āshūr, (2006). *Treatise on maqāṣid ash-shārī'ah*. (Trans., Muḥammad El-Tāhir El-Mesawi). Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust.
- Muḥammad Khalīl. (2009). Al-maqāṣid al-Qur'āniyyah 'inda al-Ustāz Nūrsī. In *Fiqh al-maqāṣid wa al-ḥikam fī Badī'uzzamān al-Nūrsī*. Istanbul: Yenibosna-Bahcelievler.
- Muḥammad 'Abduh. (1993). *Al-'mal al-kāmilah li al-Imām Muḥammad 'Abduh*. (Vol. 4). (Muḥammad 'Imārah, ed.). Al-Qāhirah: Dār ash-Shurūk.
- Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, (1990). *Tafsīr al-manār*. (Vol. 1-12). Miṣr: al-Haī'ah al-Misriyyah al-'Āmmah li al-Kitāb.
- Rahman, F. (1999). *Major themes of the Qur'ān*. Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust.
- Sa'īd Nūrsī, B. (1999). *Epitomes of light: The essentials of the Risale-i Nur*. Turkey: Kaynak [Izmir] A.S.
- Sa'īd Nūrsī, B. (2007). *Signs of miraculousness*. (Trans., Sukran Vahide). Istanbul: Sozler Publication.
- Shah Waliullāh Dehlawī, *Al-fawz al-kabīr*.
- Tazul Islam, *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*: A search for a scholarly definition. In *Al-Bayān: Journal al-Qur'ān and Hadīth*, University of Malaya, May, 2011, Vol. 9, p. 203.
- Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī. (1993). *Madkhal li dirāsah ash-sharī'ah al-islāmiyyah*. Bayrūt: Mu'assasat al-Risālah.
- Yūsuf Al-Qaradāwī, (1997). *Kayfa nata'āmal ma'a al-Qur'ān al-aẓīm*. Qatar: Markaz Al-Buḥūth Al-Sunnah wa al-Sīrah, University of Qatar.

Conclusion

'Ulūm al-Qur'ān (Sciences of the Qur'ān) is a popular academic discipline in Islamic studies that aims to promote different approaches to the understanding of the Qur'ānic discourse. To this end, each of the courses under this discipline plays a distinctive role. In the modern approaches to the Qur'ān, there has developed a *maqāṣidic* trend, a trend that highlights how to deal with the objectives of the Qur'ān. In a brilliant debate over this trend, Muslim scholars, both classical and contemporary, have suggested some basic conceptual fundamentals that apparently fashion *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* as an organized body of knowledge. Despite this notable conceptual and contextual development of this subject, still it has hardly any place in the academic curriculum of Qur'ānic studies. Hence, this research argues that this gap could be fulfilled and the scholarship on objectives of the Qur'ān may develop further if a course entitled *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* is included as an academic course in *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*. The rationale for this course is presented herewith: first, *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* has emerged as a new science for understanding the Qur'ān. Its identity as a science has been recognized by some prominent Muslims scholars like Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī and 'Izzat Darwazah. To make it fashionable as such, it still requires further

developments. Its inclusion in the curriculum may be an impetus for this desired end. Second, some Muslim scholars have introduced the objectives of the Qur'ān as the core of the Qur'ān. This core, in the current curriculum of Qur'ānic studies, is now exclusively approached. Thus, a course that deals directly with this very core may develop a kind of centralized understanding of the Qur'ān. Third, though brilliant scholarship has developed on this particular subject for more than one thousand years, there is still a methodological and conceptual lack that encourages further studies. If this subject is taught in academic institutions, the available rich scholarship on it would be utilized, studied and then further developed. Fourth, in the current curriculum of Islamic studies, a *maqāṣidic* study called *Maqāṣid ash-Sharī'ah* is popularly taught. This subject is very much concerned with expounding the normative domain of the Qur'ān, which includes only about five hundred verses. If a subject with this limitation can be an academic course, *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*, which generally comprehends the whole of the Qur'ān and promotes a particular understanding of the whole Qur'ānic discourse irrespective of the normative portion, deserves to be treated similarly as an academic subject in Qur'ānic studies or '*Ulūm al-Qur'ān*'. Finally, inclusion of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* could develop a methodology for a new generation of Qur'ānic exegesis from the *maqāṣidic* point of view.

References

1. 'Abduh, Muḥammad. (1993) *al-'amal al-kāmilah li al-Imām Muḥammad 'Abduh*. (Vol. 4). al-Qāhirah: Dār ash-Shurūq.
2. Al-Asfaḥanī, Al-Raghīb. (n.d.). *al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān*. Egypt: Maktabah Anjulu al-Miṣriyyah.
3. Al-Baghawī, Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusain. (1999). *Ma'ālīm al-tanzīl*, (Vol. 1), ed. by 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Mahdī. Bayrūt: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī.
4. Al-Biqā'ī, Burhān al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan Ibrāhīm. (2002). *Naẓm ad-durar*. (Vol. 1-4). Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub 'Ilmiyyah.
5. Al-Fāṣī, 'Allāl (1993). *Maqāṣid ash-sharī'ah wa makārimuhā*. Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī.
6. Al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥamid. (1989). *The Jewels of the Qur'ān: Al-Ghazālī's theory*, translated from Arabic by Muhammad Abul Quasem. Kuala Lumpur: the University of Malaya Press.
7. Al-Qaradāwī, Yūsuf. (1993). *Madkhal li dirāsāt ash-sharī'ah al-islāmiyyah*. Bayrūt: Mu'assasat al-Risālah.
8. Ansari, M. F. (2008). *The Qur'ānic Foundations & Structure of Muslim Society*. (Vol. 1). Islamic Center, Karachi, Pakistan.
9. Darwazah, Muḥammad 'Izzat. (1963). *At-tafsīr al-ḥadīth*. (Vol. 1). Al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah.
10. Ḥamīdī, 'Abd al-Karīm. (2007). *Al-madkhal ilā Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*. Bayrūt: Maktabat al-Rashad.
11. Hassan, H. Hamid. (2005). *An Introduction to the Study of Islamic Law*. New Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributors.
12. Ibn 'Āshūr, Muḥammad aṭ-Ṭāhir. (1997). *At-tahrīr wa at-tanwīr*. (Vol. 1-30). Tunis: Dār Sahnūn.
13. Ibn 'Āshūr. (1946). *Maqāṣid ash-Sharī'ah*, Tunis.
14. Iqbāl, M. (1996). *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. M. Saeed Sheikh (Ed.). Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture.

15. Islam, Tazul & Khan, Israr Ahmad. (2011 b). Identifying *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*: A Critical Analysis of Rashīd Riḍā's views. *Journal of Islam in Asia*, Special Issue, 1. International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM).
16. Islam, Tazul. (2011). *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*: A search for a scholarly definition, in *Al-Bayān: Journal al-Qur'ān and Ḥadīth*, University of Malaya, May, Vol. 9, p. 189-206.
17. Leaman, Oliver. (2006). Taqwā, *The Qur'ān: An Encyclopedia*, Edited by Oliver Leaman. USA and Canada: Routledge, Oxford.
18. Mawḍūdī, Abū'l-A'lā. (1984). *The Islamic Movement: Dynamics of Values, Power and Change*, edited by Khurram Murad. United Kingdom, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation.
19. Mālik ibn Anas. (2004). *Muḥṭāṭ*' (Vol. 5). Abu Dhabi, UAE: Mu'assasah Zaid bin Sulṭān.
20. Khalīl, Muḥammad. (2009). *Al-Maqāṣid al-Qur'āniyyah 'inda al-ustādh al-Nūrsī wa maqṣad al-risālah namūzajan*, in *Fiqh al-maqāṣid wa al-ḥikam fī Badī'uzzamān al-Nūrsī*. Istanbul: Yenibosna-Bahcelievler.
21. Nūrsī, B. S. (2007). *Signs of miraculousness*, trans. from Turkish by Sukran Vahide, Istanbul: Sozler Publication.
22. Raysūnī, Aḥmad. (1995). *Naḡriyyat al-maqāṣid 'inda al-Imām ash-Shāṭibī*. USA: International Institute of Islamic Thought.
23. Sānū, Quṭb Mustafa. (2000). The aims of the Qur'ān in the views of Sa'īd Nūrsī, in *A Contemporary Approach to Understanding the Qur'ān: The example of the Risāle-i Nūr*, trans. from Turkish by Sukran Vahide. Istanbul: Sozler Publications.
24. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Sayyid M. H. (1987). *The Qur'ān in Islam*. London: Zahra Publications.