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# MAQASHIDI TAFSIR: AN EFFORT TO UNVEIL THE INTENT AND PURPOSE OF THE QUR'AN IN CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

# Samsir

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## Abstract

Maqashidi Tafsir is an approach to interpreting the Qur'an that emphasizes uncovering the intents and purposes (maqashid) within the Qur'anic verses while considering the contemporary context. This study examines the concept, methodology, and application of Maqashidi Tafsir and its importance in solving contemporary problems. The research findings show that Maqashidi Tafsir offers a new perspective for understanding the universal values of the Qur'an and applying them in a contemporary context. This approach also plays an important role in providing solutions to social, economic, political, and environmental problems based on Qur'anic principles. Although Maqashidi Tafsir is a significant and meaningful approach, its application requires caution to avoid subjectivity and reductive understanding of the Qur'anic verses.

Keywords: Maqashidi Tafsir, Maqashid al-Syari'ah, Contemporary Context

## Abstrak

Tafsir Maqashidi merupakan suatu pendekatan tafsir Al-Qur'an yang menitikberatkan pada upaya mengungkap maksud dan tujuan (maqashid) dalam avat-avat Al-Qur'an dengan memperhatikan konteks kekinian. Kajian ini mengkaji konsep, metodologi dan penerapan Tafsir Maqashid serta pentingnya dalam memecahkan permasalahan kontemporer. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Tafsir Maqashidi menawarkan perspektif baru untuk memahami nilai-nilai universal Al-Qur'an dan menerapkannya dalam konteks kontemporer. Pendekatan ini juga berperan penting dalam memberikan solusi terhadap permasalahan sosial, ekonomi, politik, dan lingkungan hidup berdasarkan prinsip-prinsip Al-Qur'an. Meskipun Tafsir Maqashidi merupakan pendekatan yang signifikan dan penuh makna, namun penerapannya memerlukan kehati-hatian untuk menghindari subjektivitas dan pemahaman yang reduktif terhadap ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an.

Kata kunci: Tafsir Maqashidi, Maqashid Al-Syari'ah, Konteks Kekinian

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### A. Introduction

The Qur'an, as the primary source of Islamic teachings, contains guidance and directions for humanity to live in this world and the hereafter. However, achieving a holistic and contextual understanding of the Qur'an's messages is challenging, especially when faced with the ever-evolving dynamics of the modern era. Qur'anic interpretations that focus solely on linguistic and literal aspects are often seen as inadequate in addressing the complex issues of today.

In this context, maqashidic tafsir (interpretation) emerges as a new approach to Qur'anic exegesis that seeks to uncover the meanings and objectives (maqashid) of Qur'anic verses. Maqashidic tafsir goes beyond literal textual understanding, aiming to extract the universal values and principles within the Qur'an that can be applied in contemporary contexts. This approach is based on the premise that Islamic laws, including those in the Qur'an, were revealed for the welfare of humanity (maqashid al-shariah). Therefore, interpreting the Qur'an should strive to reveal these objectives and adapt them to modern realities.

As it evolves, maqashidic tafsir has garnered the attention of many contemporary Islamic thinkers as a method of interpretation relevant to current challenges. However, this approach has also sparked criticism and controversy among scholars regarding its validity and limitations in interpreting the Qur'an.

Given this background, it is crucial to conduct research on "Maqashidic Tafsir: Unveiling the Intent and Purpose of the Qur'an in a Contemporary Context." This research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the concepts, methods, and application of maqashidic tafsir for comprehending the Qur'an contextually and addressing contemporary issues. The results of this research are anticipated to contribute to the development of tafsir studies and enrich Islamic perspectives on life according to the Qur'an's guidance. The term "maqashid al-Qur'an" is used by scholars to study Allah's intentions in revealing the Qur'an to all humanity. Although the study of maqashid al-Qur'an has not developed into a distinct discipline among classical and modern scholars, the term frequently appears in scholarly works. For instance, classical scholar Abu Hamid al-Ghazali in his work Jawahir al-Qur'an posits that the ultimate purpose of Allah in revealing the Qur'an is to call His servants to the One True God. Similarly, I'zzuddin Abd al-Salam states that the essence of maqashid al-Qur'an is Allah's command to seek good for humanity and prevent harm. Al-Razi notes that the main goals of the Qur'an are Tawhid (recognition of God), Shariah laws, and understanding the conditions of the afterlife.

In modern times, scholars like Ibn Ashur define the primary aim of the Qur'an as improving individual, societal, and civilizational conditions. Rashid Rida emphasizes the Qur'an's purpose of enriching individuals, society, and humanity, guiding them towards righteousness, and fostering intellectual and spiritual development. Similarly, Abd al-Karim al-Hamidi articulates that the maqashid al-Qur'an aim to realize the welfare of Allah's servants.

Understanding the meanings of the Qur'an is crucial for studying it authentically, as interpretations over time have been influenced by ideological and political interests, leading to distortions. This is where tafsir began losing its vitality, deviating from its role as a discipline meant to uncover the authentic meanings of the Qur'anic verses.

Maqashidic tafsir is a product of Islamic civilization and can be seen as the most epistemological foundation of scholarly traditions, both in general Islamic studies and in Qur'anic exegesis. It integrates theories from various disciplines to form a coherent interpretation aligned with the maqashid al-Qur'an and maqashid al-shariah. It serves as both a dynamic and moderate interpretive philosophy and as a critique of interpretations that neglect maqashid dimensions.

Abdul Mustaqim mentions the study of Qur'anic tafsir through the maqashid asy-syari approach, coining the term maqashidic tafsir, which

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became the title of his book "At-Tafsir al-Maqashidi: al-Qadhaya al-Mu'ashirah fi Dhau'i Al-Quran wa as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyah." This book serves as a modern thematic study guide using maqashid asy-Syariah as the philosophy, method, and product of tafsir. It examines Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions thematically in line with the current themes of maqashid asy-Syariah.

Maqashidic tafsir explains the universal meanings of Qur'anic verses, aiming to achieve the objectives of shariah (maqashid al-shariah) and the Qur'an (maqashid al-Qur'an) in general. In the contemporary context, this approach is essential for a deeper understanding of the Qur'an and for developing more contextual interpretations.

#### B. History of Maqashidi Tafsir

Magashidic Tafsir Practiced by the Prophet SAW. The Prophet never ordered the hand of a thief to be cut off when considering magashid (context of welfare). The companions also practiced magashid, typically understanding and applying magashidic tafsir to comprehend the commands and prohibitions in the Qur'an and Hadith. Abdul Mustaqim argues that the emergence of magashidic tafsir has a strong historical foundation, and it can serve as a necessary basis for magashidic interpretation in Islamic moderation. Historically, the development of "Magashidic Tafsir" can be divided into several periods as follows: **First**, the Period of Practical Reform (Time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and the Companions). Historical records indicate that the magashidic tafsir paradigm existed since the Qur'an was revealed and was applied by the Prophet SAW. During this period, the magashidic interpretation was primarily limited to practical implementation and theoretical construction in concept. Therefore, this era is also referred to as the era of implementing magashid theory in the time of the Companions. Al Shatibi, quoted by Abdul Mustaqim, mentions that companions like Al-Khulafa Al-Rashidin, Aisha, and Muadh bin Jabal were equipped with knowledge of Asrar al-Shari'ah (the secrets of Sharia) in addition to their command of Arabic. Although magashidic tafsir was not discussed

theoretically, the companions applied maqashidic tafsir to understand the Qur'an and Hadith's commands and prohibitions. Thus, they did not remain confined to textualism but discovered the spirit and maqashid behind the texts. **Second**, the Period of Theoretical-Conceptual Foundation (3rd Century H) Following the companions, the discourse on maqashid theory was somewhat underdeveloped. At that time, maqashid theory was not understood independently as it remained a part of usul fiqh (principles of Islamic jurisprudence). The maqashid discourse continued to use reasoning in legal derivation through qiyas (analogical reasoning), istihsan (juristic preference), and maslahah mursalah (unrestricted public interest) as formulated by classical jurists. Moreover, the theoretical and conceptual study of maqashid began to develop between the 3rd and 8th centuries H through the works of several scholars:

#### Al-Qaffal Al-Kabir (d. 365 AH)

His book "Mahasin al-Shara'i" examines Islamic jurisprudence from the chapter on purity to the chapter on emancipation, adding maqashid and wisdom to all these laws. Al-Qaffal explains that his purpose in writing the book is to reveal the beauty of Islamic law in terms of ethics, ease, and harmony with common sense. This book contributes to the development of maqashid theory. During its inception, this theory was still a simple application of maqashid in specific fields, especially fiqh, and had not yet developed into a standard theory of maqashid concept. However, by that time, maqashid studies had entered literary works. **Third,** the Era of Conceptual Development (5th–8th Centuries H).

#### Abu al-Ma'ali al-Juwayni (d. 478 AH)

In his work "Al-Burhan fi Ushul al-Fiqh," he elaborates on the hierarchical theory of maqashid, namely necessities, societal needs, moralethical behavior, and recommendations. The essence of maqashid at this level is fundamentally about preserving faith, life, spirit, family, and property. This is explained in his books "Maqashid al-Salah," "Maqashid al-Sawm," and "Qawa'id al-Ahkam fi Masalih al-Anam." The comparative term is the

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acquisition of benefits and all means to mediate them, as well as the avoidance of anything that causes harm (mafsada). Furthermore, he combines the standards of legal competence with maqashid, prohibiting any action that violates maqashid.

### Al-Tirmidhi Al-Hakim

In his works "Al-Salah wa Maqasiduha" (Purposes of Prayer) and "Al-Hajj wa Asraruhu" (Hajj and Its Secrets), he emphasizes the movements of prayer as one of the forms of maqashid. For example, he interprets the command to face the qiblah as an intention to focus on worship, the movement of takbir (declaring Allah's greatness) as intending humility, and the utterances to avoid disasters. Al-Raysuni appreciates the term maqashid in Al-Tirmidhi's book as an early sign of the emergence of maqashid studies, first introduced in the concept of maqashid al-shari'ah. Abu Zayd Al-Balkhi (d. 505 AH) A distinguished scholar and Islamic thinker from Iran. His work "Al-Ibanah an Ilal al-Diyana" discusses the maqashid of transactions. Another of his works, "Masalih Al-Abdan wa Al-Anfus," examines the benefits of Islamic law for the physical and mental health of society.

#### Shihab al-Din al-Qarafi (d. 684 AH)

He introduced the terms "Fath al-dhara'i" (opening means) and "sad aldhara'i" (blocking means) as ways to gain benefits. Additionally, he reveals the secrets and wisdom of Sharia and addresses controversial statements. He also proposes the theory of "sunnah shari'iyyah" and "ghair shari'iyyah" to distinguish between prophetic traditions based on Arab practices and those with legislative intent. His contributions are recorded in his book "Al-Furuq: Anwa al-Buruq fi Anwa al-Furuq."

## Shams al-Din Ibn Qayyim (d. 748 H)

He critiques the theory of "al-hiyal al-fiqhiyyah" (legal tricks or deception) that contradicts the concept of maqashid in his book "I'lam Al-Muwaqqi'in." Ibn Qayyim systematically addresses previous maqashid theories, concluding with more refined applications and principles of Sharia. Imam al-Shatibi (d. 790 AH) His works extensively cover the application and principles of Sharia. He elaborates on the theory of maqashid, including the essence of the maqashid concept, types of maqashid, maqashid hierarchy, categories of kulli (universal principles) and juz'iyyah (particular issues), althawabit (constants), al-mutaghayyirat (variables), al-usul (principles), almajal (fields), and terms like maqulat al-ma'na (rational meanings) and ghair maqulat al-ma'na (non-rational meanings). His contributions significantly advanced the theoretical foundations of maqashid in Islamic and usul-fiqh studies. **Fourth,** the Critical Period of Religious Reform. Maqashid theory emerged and developed in modern times through the contributions of scholars such as Muhammad Tahir bin 'Ashur, Ahmad al-Raysuni, Allal al-Fasi, Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, Muhammad Mahdi Shams al-Din, and Jasser Auda. Abdul Mustaqim also developed maqashid theory, particularly in Qur'anic exegesis. In his studies, maqashidic tafsir does not only interpret legal verses but also non-legal ones, such as narrative verses, love verses, theological verses, and social verses of Islam.

# C. Correlation between the Maqashid al-Qur'an and Maqashid al-Sharia

The Qur'an in the Contemporary Context, The Qur'an can provide guidance and a way of life that is authentic and guaranteed by Allah. As the holy book of Muslims, the Qur'an contains universal values and principles that can serve as a foundation for human life across all ages. In this context, the purpose and objective of the Qur'an are to offer adequate guidance to address various issues and challenges of contemporary life in spiritual, moral, social, economic, and political aspects. Upholding Justice and Equality The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of establishing justice and equality for all humans without discrimination based on race, ethnicity, belief, or social status. In the current situation, the purpose of the Qur'an is to encourage Muslims to actively strive for social justice, protect the rights of marginalized groups, and eliminate all forms of injustice and oppression. Understanding the Welfare and Well-being of Humanity The Qur'an teaches that the primary objective of Islamic law is to bring about welfare (maslahah) and prevent harm (mafsadah). In the present context, the purpose and objective of the

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Qur'an are to call Muslims to pursue both physical and spiritual well-being, both individually and socially. This encompasses areas such as education, health, economy, environment, and sustainable development.

Addressing Contemporary Issues the Qur'an contains fundamental principles that can serve as a foundation for resolving contemporary issues not directly addressed in the text. In the current situation, the purpose of the Qur'an is to provide guidance and inspiration for Muslims in facing modern problems such as globalization, information technology, environmental crises, religious pluralism, and more.

Building a Dignified Civilization the Qur'an calls upon humanity to build a dignified civilization based on the values of faith, morality, and ethics. In the current situation, the purpose and objective of the Qur'an are to encourage Muslims to actively build a just, peaceful, and civilized global civilization and to contribute positively to the development of knowledge, technology, and humanity.

Strengthening Spirituality and Faith the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of building a strong relationship between humans and Allah SWT through worship, prayer, and remembrance (dzikir). In the present context, the purpose and objective of the Qur'an are to strengthen the spirituality and faith of Muslims amidst modern challenges and to make the Qur'an a source of inspiration and inner peace in daily life.

Promoting the Development of Knowledge the Qur'an encourages humanity to develop knowledge and use it for the benefit of the community. In the current situation, the purpose and objective of the Qur'an are to inspire Muslims to continuously learn, research, and develop knowledge and technology that are beneficial to human life and environmental conservation. By understanding the objectives of the Qur'an in the contemporary context, it is expected that Muslims can make the Qur'an a dynamic and relevant guide for life, addressing various issues and challenges of the times based on universal values. This is also expected to strengthen the role of Muslims in building a more just, peaceful, and dignified global civilization.

#### **D.** The Urgency of Maqashid Interpretation

Comprehensive and Contextual Understanding of the Qur'an Maqashid interpretation helps in comprehensively and contextually understanding the Qur'an. This approach not only focuses on the literal interpretation of the text but also strives to uncover the intentions, purposes, and universal values contained within the Qur'an. By understanding the maqashid (intentions) behind the verses, maqashid interpretation enables a deeper and more complete understanding of the messages of the Qur'an and their meanings in the context of modern life.

Addressing Contemporary Issues Maqashid interpretation is crucial for addressing contemporary issues not specifically discussed in the Qur'anic text. By studying the maqashid of the Qur'an, this approach can provide guidance and solutions to various contemporary problems such as social justice, human rights, religious pluralism, ecology, and more. Thanks to this approach, the Qur'an can continue to be a significant source of inspiration and guidance in facing the challenges of the times.

Developing a Dynamic Interpretation Methodology Maqashid interpretation helps develop a more dynamic and responsive methodology for interpreting the Qur'an in light of scientific advancements and social changes. This approach encourages dialogue between the Qur'anic text and various disciplines such as social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences. By integrating new perspectives into Qur'anic interpretation, maqashid interpretation can enrich the interpretive resources and open up broader and more comprehensive understandings.

Strengthening the Meaning of the Qur'an in Current Life Maqashid interpretation helps to reinforce the relevance of the Qur'an in contemporary life. By explaining the meanings and purposes behind the Qur'anic verses, this approach demonstrates that the teachings of the Qur'an are universal and applicable to various life situations. Maqashid interpretation also encourages Muslims to renew the values of the Qur'an in their daily lives, making the Qur'an not just a holy book to be read but also a dynamic guide for life.

Encouraging the Renewal of Islamic Thought Maqashid interpretation plays an important role in encouraging the renewal of Islamic thought. This approach invites Muslims to critically reflect on the religious concepts and practices they adhere to and to promote ijtihad (independent reasoning) and reinterpretation of Islamic teachings in line with contemporary contexts. Maqashid interpretation also opens up dialogue and cooperation between Muslims and other communities to solve global humanitarian issues.

Strengthening Ethical and Moral Foundations Maqashid interpretation strengthens the ethical and moral foundations of Islamic life. By uncovering the universal values and fundamental principles contained within the Qur'an, this approach helps Muslims develop character and personality in accordance with Islamic teachings. Maqashid interpretation also encourages Muslims to be agents of social change, actively striving for justice, equality, and the well-being of all humanity. By recognizing the urgency of maqashid interpretation in Qur'anic studies, Muslims can develop a deeper, more contextual, and transformative understanding of their holy book. Such an approach will also help reinforce the role of the Qur'an as a significant source of inspiration and guidance in facing contemporary challenges and encourage Muslims to become positive agents of change in building a more just, peaceful, and valuable global civilization.

#### **E.** Contemporary Context

The Importance of Maqashid Interpretation Maqashid interpretation is crucial for a deeper understanding of the Qur'an and the development of more contextual interpretations. This approach can help uncover the purposes of the Qur'an in a modern context and develop interpretations that are more meaningful and relevant.

The Purpose and Objectives of the Qur'an in a Modern Context the Qur'an provides precise guidance and direction because it contains universal values and principles that can be applied as guidance in human life at all times. In this context, the purpose and objective of the Qur'an are to provide adequate guidance for addressing various problems and challenges in modern life, including spiritual, moral, social, economic, and political aspects.

Upholding Justice and Equality the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of establishing justice and equality for all humanity without discrimination based on race, ethnicity, belief, or social status. In the current situation, the Qur'an aims to encourage Muslims to actively fight for social justice, protect the rights of marginalized groups, and eliminate all forms of injustice and oppression.

Understanding Human Welfare and Well-being the Qur'an teaches that the primary purpose of Islamic law is to produce good (maslahah) and ward off evil. In the current situation, the purpose and objective of the Qur'an are to invite Muslims to strive for physical and spiritual well-being, both individually and socially. This includes aspects such as education, health, economy, environment, and sustainable development.

Solving Contemporary Issues the Qur'an contains fundamental principles that can serve as a basis for solving contemporary issues not directly addressed in the Qur'anic text. In the current situation, the purpose and objective of the Qur'an are to provide guidance and inspiration to Muslims in solving modern problems such as globalization, information technology, environmental crises, religious pluralism, and others.

Building a Valuable Civilization the Qur'an calls on humanity to build a valuable civilization based on the values of faith, morality, and ethics. In the present situation, the purpose and objective of the Qur'an are to encourage Muslims to actively build a just, peaceful, and civilized global civilization and to contribute positively to the advancement of science, technology, and humanity.

Strengthening Spirituality and Faith the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of building a strong relationship between humans and Allah SWT through worship, prayer, and remembrance. In the current situation, the purpose and objective of the Qur'an are to strengthen the spirituality and faith of Muslims amidst modern challenges and to make the Qur'an a source of inspiration and inner peace in daily life.

Encouraging the Advancement of Knowledge the Qur'an encourages humanity to develop knowledge and use it for the benefit of the ummah. In the present situation, the purpose and objective of the Qur'an are to inspire Muslims to continue learning, researching, and developing science and technology that are beneficial for human life and environmental preservation. By understanding the purposes and objectives of the Qur'an in a contemporary context, it is hoped that Muslims can make the Qur'an a dynamic and relevant guide for addressing various problems and challenges of the times based on universal values. This approach is also expected to strengthen the role of Muslims in building a more just, peaceful, and dignified global civilization.

# F. Relevant Applications of Maqashid Al-Qur'an in the Contemporary Context

1. Maqashid Related to Social Justice (Q.S. An-Nahl: 90)

Translation:

"Indeed, Allah commands you to uphold justice, to do good to others, and to give to relatives. He forbids indecency, wickedness, and aggression. He instructs you so that you may be mindful."

In the current context, this verse emphasizes the importance of advancing social justice, eliminating discrimination, and protecting the rights of marginalized groups. This is applicable to issues such as economic inequality, racism, and gender disparities that remain challenges today.

2. Maqashid on Embracing Diversity (Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 13)

Translation:

"O humanity, indeed We created you from a male and a female, and made you peoples and tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted."

This verse encompasses the maqashid of appreciating human diversity, including differences in ethnicity, culture, and religion. In the contemporary context, this message is crucial in addressing issues such as intergroup conflicts, intolerance, xenophobia, and religious fundamentalism, which remain challenges in a pluralistic society.

3. Maqashid on the Advancement of Knowledge (Q.S. Al-'Alaq: 1-5)

Translation:

"Read in the name of your Lord who created. He created man from a clinging substance. Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous—Who taught by the pen—taught man that which he knew not."

This verse contains the maqashid on the importance of reading, learning, and developing knowledge. In the contemporary context, this message is essential for the need for quality education and scientific research. Innovation and the development of human resources are crucial to face the information age and the challenges of globalization.

The examples above demonstrate how the maqashid of the Qur'an is highly relevant to current issues and challenges. Maqashidi interpretation strives to uncover and apply these objectives in a modern context, making the teachings of the Qur'an a dynamic guide and solution to contemporary problems.

## G. Conclusion

Maqashidi Tafsir is an interpretive approach that seeks to understand the purposes and objectives of the Qur'anic verses in the context of the present day, considering the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which the Qur'an was revealed. Maqashidi Tafsir aims to uncover the wisdom and universal values contained within the Qur'an so that they can be applied to modern life. This approach takes into account the promotion of welfare (goodness) and the avoidance of harm (evil) in understanding and applying the Qur'anic verses.

Maqashidi Tafsir requires a comprehensive understanding of the context of the verses, the reasons for their revelation (asbabun nuzul), and the objectives of Islamic law (maqashid shariah). With the Maqashidi Tafsir approach, Muslims can understand the Qur'an in a more contextual and relevant manner to the current situation without losing its essence and values. Maqashidi Tafsir can be a solution to the challenges and problems faced by Muslims today, providing guidance from the Qur'an as the primary source of Islamic teachings.

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