The Concept of "MAQĀṢID AL-QUR'ĀN": Its Genesis and Developments

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ABSTRACT

"Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān" is an approach to understanding the Qur'ānic discourse. This research aims to explore its genesis and conceptual development throughout the ages of the Qur'ānic literature. To fulfill this objective, it firstly explores the origin of this concept and then its developmental trends in early, formative, classical and modern period of the Qur'ānic Literature. The findings are expected to contribute to introducing a compact idea of this very concept which has yet to emerge as a completely functional concept. However, this study will follow an analytical and historical method.

KYEWORDS: Maqāṣid, Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān, Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah, Qur'ānic Literature.

INTRODUCTION

Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān denoting "higher objectives of the Qur'ān" is another term like *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah* (higher objectives of Islamic law) that has been using by the prominent Muslim scholars for more than 1000 years. The precise use of this very term is coincided with a brilliant breakthrough conceptual development. A prolonged succession of the use of this term and its conceptual development left a rich legacy of a sizable and insightful literature on *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān.* The prominent Muslim scholars[1] considered "*Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*" as a kind of Islamic science, lofty axis of the Qur'ān and a particular approach to the Qur'ān that promotes an exclusive maqāṣidic (purposive)

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[1] Al-Ghazālī (d.1111C.E.), ʿIzz al-Dīn ibn ʿAbd al-Salām (d.1261C.E.), al-Rāzī (d.606A.H.), Ibn al-Qayyim (d.751A.H.), Al-Shāṭībī (d.1388C.E.), Al-Biqāʿī (d.885A.H.) Muḥammad ʿAbduh (d.1905C.E.), Rashīd Riḍā (d.1935C.E.), Badīʿuzzamān Saʿīd Nūrsī (d.1960C.E.), Ibn ʿĀshūr (d.1973C.E.), Ḥasan al-Bannā (d.1949C.E.), Muḥammd Iqbāl (d.1938C.E.), Sayyid Quṭb (d.1966 C.E.), Abul ʿAla Mawdūdī (d.1989C.E.), ʿIzzat Darwazah (d.1987C.E.), Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d.1996C.E.), Yusūf al-Qaradāwī (b.1926C.E.)

understanding of Qur'ānic discourse. The genesis of this concept formally came to the light when an apparent use of the precise term "*Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*" perhaps for the first time occurred in al-Ghazālī's (d.1111C.E.) treatise *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān*. Since then, this very term keeps abreast with every pace of the fresh development in Qur'ānic literature and finally reached at a stage where it is argued to be included in the prerequisite principles of Qur'ānic exegesis *('adab al-tafsīr)* by some prominent exegetes of the Qur'ān like al-Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āshūr (d.1973C.E.), 'Izzat Darwazah (d.1987C.E.). Moreover, a popular maqāṣidic trend is almost commonly appeared in a number of contemporary *tafsīr* works such as Rashīd Riḍā's (d.1935C.E.) Tafsīr al-Manār, Ibn 'Āshūr's *Tafsīr al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, Abul 'Ala Mawdūdī's (d.1989C.E.) *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān*, Sayyid Quṭb's (d.1966C.E.) *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān*, 'Izzat Darwazah's *al-Tafsīr al-Ḥadith* and others.

MAQĀṢID AL-QUR'ĀN IN THE EARLY QUR'ĀNIC LITERATURE

It is hard to trace the precise term *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* in very early era of Qur'ānic literature. Yet this absence does not necessarily mean that the maqāṣidic understanding of the Qur'ān was absent during this era. It rather has been keeping abreast with every fresh development of Qur'ānic literature. The Qur'ān itself certifies the beginning of this particular art of Qur'ānic understanding in the time of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his Companions. The Qur'ān categorically defines that one of the purposes of the Prophet Muhammad is to explain clearly the purposes of the Qur'ān to mankind. "This (the Qur'ān) is a *bayān*." (al-Qur'ān, 3:138), "And We have revealed unto thee the Remembrance that thou mayst explain (tubayyina) to mankind." (al-Qur'ān, 16:44) "Then lo! upon Us (resteth) the explanation (bayānahu) thereof." (al-Qur'ān, 75:19)

In the above verses, the Qur'ān is characterized as a *bayān* which signifies "exposing purpose in an eloquent language."[2] In fact, *al-bayān* is an expression by which something's purport is manifested.[3] It is a manifestation of the intent of a speaker to the audience. A speech could be characterized as *bayān* when it manifests an intended meaning.[4] Moreover, *"li tubayyina",* in the above mentioned verses, contains a causative case which refers to the meaning that one of the purpose of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is to interpret and convey the purposes of the Qur'ānic message.[5]

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[2] Ibn Manẓūr, Muhammad bin Mukarram, *Lisān al-'Arab* (Iran: Qum, Adab al-Hawza, 1405 A.H.), vol.7: 134.

[3] Al-Rāzī, Muḥammad bin 'Abī Bakr, *Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāḥ* (Beirut: Maktabah Lubnān, 1995), vol. 1: 73.

[4] Al-Munāwī, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raū'f, *Al-Tawqīf 'Alā Muhimmāt al-Ta'ārīf* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1410 A.H.), 148-149.

[5] Ibn 'Āshūr, Muhammad al-Tāhir, *Tafsīr al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr* (Tunis: al-Dār al-Tunisia, 1984), vol. 14: 196.

Since *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* is concerned with understanding the Qur'ān from *maqāṣidic* perspective, it is therefore important to explore the maqāṣidic dimension in the Qur'ānic interpretive traditions and literatures in order to find its historical development. However, the development of disciplines and branches of knowledge related to understanding the Qur'ān began in the era of the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions.[6] Evidently, the Prophet (pbuh) was entrusted to explain the Qur'ānic discourse and it was a divine provision to him as Allah (swt) says in the Qur'ān:

{وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاس مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ }النحل44

With clear proofs and writings; and We have revealed unto thee the Remembrance that thou mayst explain to mankind that which hath been revealed for them, and that haply they may reflect. (al-Qur'ān, 16: 44)

{ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ }القيامة19

Then lo! upon Us (resteth) the explanation thereof. (al-Qur'ān, 75: 19)

The companions of Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) in the early Islamic period, were able to understand the genuine message of the Qur'ān by virtue of their high literary taste for the Arabic language which enabled them to have direct access to the lofty literary standards of the Qur'ān;[7] the Qur'ān is revealed in their native tongue with utmost explicitness so that they can easily understand it;[8] they got to follow a role model (the Prophet) who was an practical embodiment of the Qur'ān; they were being developed as a model Qur'ānic generation for their successive generations whose entire life - thoughts and actions - had undergone a paradigm shift by its light; and their familiarity with the context of Qur'ānic revelation and being direct addressees of its guidance. During this period, the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) spent their time studying and memorizing the Qur'ān word by word to gain a proper understanding of its meanings and implications, which were vital for their personal and social life.[9] Al-Shāṭibī states that the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) by virtue of their profound skill in Arabic linguistics and their companionship with the Prophet (pbuh) obtained a direct understanding of the Qur'ān's *maqāṣid* and secrets.[10] Among the Prophet's companions, the best known for their knowledge and contribution to the field of *tafsīr* were Ibn Masʿūd, Ibn ʿAbbās,

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[6] Ahmad Von Denffer, *ʿUlūm al-Qur'ān: An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'ān* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1983), 5.

[7] The conversion of the majority of the Arab masses from their traditional religion to Islam was a prime effect of understanding the message of the Qur'ān. Mere listening of its recitation sometimes caused their acceptance of Islam. The second Caliph ʿUmar is a best example of this. And even the Arabs who did not accept Islam but understood its message such as al-Walīd ibn Mughīrah al-Makhzūmī, the Qur'ān itself narrates his understanding and evaluation: "Verily, he thought and plotted (18), Then he thought (21), Then frowned and scowled (22), Then he turned back and was proud (23) Then he said: "This is nothing but magic from that of old;(24)." (al-Qur'ān, 74: 18-24).

[8] "Verily, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an in order that you may understand." (al-Qur'ān, 12: 2), "In the perspicuous Arabic tongue."(al-Qur'ān: 26: 195).

[9] Fadzli Hj Adam & Asyraf Hj Ab Rahman, *Tafsīr and Mufassirūn: an Overview*, (Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Noordeen, 2003), 3.

[10] Al-Shāṭibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt*, vol. 1, p. 6-7. Al-Biqāʿī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, vol. 7: 689.

ʹUbay Ibn Kaʻab, Zaid Ibn Thābit, Abū Mūsa al-Ashʻarī, ʻAbd Allāh Ibn Zubair, Anas Ibn Mālik, ʻAbd Allāh Ibn ʻUamr, Jābir Ibn ʻAbd Allāh and ʻĀishah, the Prophet's wife.[11] Their explanations are ranked after the explanations by the Qur'ān itself[12] and by the Prophet (pbuh). Since they were witnesses to the revelations and had been contemporary to the Prophet (pbuh), they gained an exact understanding of the Qur'ānic contents.[13] As far as the companions' understanding of *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān was concerned, there is hardly any theoretical works on this topic produced by them but surely they had been able to understand the *maqāsid* of the Qur'ān both in theory and in practice[14] because they received explanations of their uncomprehending issues of the Qur'ān directly from the Prophet (pbuh);[15] their precise and comprehensive knowledge of the reasons or contexts of revelations; their being concomitant to the events and happenings which the Qur'ān recorded and described their circumstances and implications such as the event of *Badr* war, victory of Makkah and others; and being eye-witnesses and participants in the applications of Qur'ānic directives including moral teachings.[16] Having been privileged of a direct interaction with the two fundamental sources of understanding the Qur'ān: the original context of revelation and the Prophet's direct explanations of the verses to them, and been directly approached by the Qur'ān, they experienced the all-pervasive practical reflections of its objectives.

The period of *Tābiʻūn* was the starting point for the emergence of distinct schools of *tafsīr* in several centers of learning in Makkah, Madīnah and Kūfah. During this period, many disciples of the companions appeared as prominent figures in *tafsir*. They followed in the footsteps of their former teachers in explaining and interpreting the Qur'ān by referring to the Qur'ān itself, the Prophet's explanations, the companions' explanations and by applying reason and *ijtihād*. Among the most prominent figures were *Mujāhid* (d.104/723), ʻAṭā (d.114/732), and *ʻIkramah* (d.105/723)[17]. The earliest exegesis (the period of the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions) was generally transmitted orally. After that period, in the era of *tābiʻūn* and *tābitābiʻūn,* the documentation of *tafsīr* began

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[11] Fadzli Hj Adam & Asyraf Hj Ab Rahman, *Tafsīr and Mufassirūn: an Overviw, ..*9.

[12] This type of interpretation is called *tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr* which is the loftiest in all genres of Qur'ānic interpretations.

[13] Ibn Kathīr, *Mukhtaṣar Tafsir Ibn Kathīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, 1981), 1-3.

[14] Muhammad al-Tahir bin Ashur, *al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir* (Tunis: Dar al-Tunisiyyah, 1984), vol. 2: 48.

[15] When the verse "and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night" (2: 137) was revealed, ʻAdī bin Hātim took a white rope (or thread) and a black one, and when some part of the night had passed, he looked at them but he could not distinguish one from the other. The next morning he said, "O Allah's Apostle! I put (a white thread and a black thread) underneath my pillow."The Prophet said, "Then your pillow is too wide if the white thread (of dawn) and the black thread (of the night) are underneath your pillow!" He then asked, "O Allah's Apostle! What is the meaning of the white thread distinct from the black thread? Are these two threads?" He said, "You are not intelligent if you watch the two threads." He then added, "No, it is the darkness of the night and the whiteness of the day." (al-Bukhārī)

[16] ʻAbd al-Ḥamīd bin Muḥammad, *al-Madkhal Ilā al-Tafsīr* (Cairo: Maktabh al-Zhahrā, 1992), 228.

[17] Fadzli Hj Adam & Asyraf Hj Ab Rahman, *Tafsīr and Mufassirūn: an Overviw, …*10

but not in complete form, for example, *tafsīr Mujāhid* by Mujāhid ibn Jabr (d.104/722)[18] and *tafsīr* Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d.150/767).[19] Qur'ānic exegesis from these two periods was characterized by brief explanatory comments on specific words or phrases of the Qur'ān which appeared unclear, difficult or ambiguous.[20] With this characteristic of *tafsīr*, it is very difficult to find the matter of *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān in their interpretations because *maqāṣid* is a thematic subject which may not be precisely reflected in any concise interpretation of the Qur'ān. Yet, it should be very clear that disappearance of the concept of *maqāṣid* does not refer to their lack of awareness of this issue. The fact is, they were the truly Qur'ānic generation. Their private and social affairs had been regulated by the Qur'ānic directions as the Qur'ān was the constitution of their state. Therefore, it can be argued that the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān in their time was practically reflected in their walks of life and similarly they were the first generation who understood the objectives of the Qur'ān.

MAQĀṢID AL-QUR'ĀN IN THE FORMATIVE PERIOD OF QUR'ĀNIC LITERATURE

A full length of exegetical works covering the whole Qur'ān had started at the second (A.H.) /eighth (C.E.) century. A number of works in this period had been conducted in an extended manner and sequentially organized. The major works of this type are al-Farrā's (d.207/822) *Maʿāni al-Qur'ān*; ʿAbd al-Razzāk al-Sanʿāni's (d.211/827) *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*; al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ's (d. 215/830) *Maʿāni al-Qur'ān*; and others. Along with these, many more "specialized Qur'ānic literatures such as those by al-Kisā'ī's (d.187/803) *Mutasābih al-Qur'ān*; Abū ʿUbaydah (d.210/825), *Majāz al-Qur'ān*; Abū ʿUbayd (d.224/838), *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*; and Ibn Quṭaybah's (d.276/889) *Mushkil al-Qur'ān* and *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, present exegetical material in literary forms dictated by specific concerns (which provide the basis for later *ʿUlūm al-Qur'ān* works)."[21] These works are categorically paraphrastic and linguistic exegesis which provide brief exegetical details and often provide synonyms to specific Qur'ānic expressions. In other words, it is a form of a glossary that provides brief semantic details of Qur'ānic words. In addition, some of them are concerned with delineating grammatical and philological aspects of Qur'ānic words.[22] The lexicographic nature of exegesis might not be an expressive of Qur'ān's universal *maqāṣid*, even a *maqṣad* of any specific verse because it does not leave any room for the indentifying tools of *maqāṣid* such as thematic induction, wisdom (*ḥikmah*), raison d'être *(ʿillah)*, etc. to function. Evidently, mere

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[18] He also interpreted only several hundred verses, mainly focused on the meaning of the words.

[19] His tafsīr comprises five hundred verses regarding several legal topics: prayer, almsgiving, fasting and pilgrimage, marriage and contracts, and punishments related to theft, adultery and alcohol and so on.

[20] Abdullah Saeed, *Islamic Thought: an Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 26-27.

[21] Andrew Rippin, *The Qur'ān: Formative Interpretation* (USA: Brookfield, Ashgate Publishing Company, 1999), xiii.

[22] Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Schools of Qur'anic Exegesis: Genesis and development* (London & New York: Routledge, 2010), 29.

semantic denotation of the verses is so narrow for the full-fledge functional scope of these tools. Hence, the genre of abovementioned exegetical works has little to contribute in the maqāṣidic exegesis of the Qur'ān.

MAQĀṢID AL-QUR'ĀN IN THE CLASSICAL QUR'ĀNIC LITERATURE

In this period, two different approaches of exegesis became crystallized: "traditional" (*tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr*) and "hypothetical" (*tafsīr bi al-rāy'*).[23] Al-Ṭabarī's (d. 310/923) *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān* was perhaps the first born of this genre. Some other notable tafsīrs of this period are Abu al-Layth al-Samrqandī's (d.375 A.H.) *Baḥr al-ʿUlūm*, Al-Baghawī's (d.510 A.H.) *Maʿālim al-Tanzīl*, Ibn al-ʿAṭiyyah al-Andalusī's (d.542 A.H.) *al-Muḥarrir al-Wajīz*, al-Rāzī's (d.606 A.H.) *Mafātīḥ al-Ghaib*, al-Qurṭubī's (d.671 A.H.) *al-Jāmiʿ li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Kathīr's (d.774 A.H.) *tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿAẓīm*, and al-Thaʿālibī's (d. 875A.H.) *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥassān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*. The distinctive feature of these voluminous commentaries is that they include long philosophical and theological discussion on matters in accordance with the writers' standpoint.[24]

In their woks, there are some implicit indications to the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ānic verses. The term *maqāsid* is rarely used in their works but other synonymous terms like "*al-Murād*", "*al-Maʿanī*", "*al-Dalālah*", etc. are notably used. Although these terms do not denote exactly what the term *maqāsid* signifies, they should be regarded as substitute expressions of *maqāsid* because what al-Ṭabarī means by "*al-maʿānī*" is phrased by contemporary scholars as *maqāsid*. For example, he points out that the Qur'ān contains all the "*al-maʿānī*" of previous divine Books such as the import of "advice" (*mawaʿiẓ*) in *al-Tawrah*, the import of "extolment" (*taḥmīd*) in al-Zabūr, the import of "advice and reminders" (*mawaʿiẓ and tadhkir*) in *Injīl*. The Qur'ān gathers all these specific imports and adds some more such as "encouragement" (*targhīb*), "warning" (*tarhīb*), "commands" (*ʾamr*), "admonition" (*zajr*) and such.[25] Most of these above mentioned themes are randomly identified as *maqāsid* of the Qur'ān by medieval and contemporary scholars of Qur'ānic studies.

While the all-encompassing commentary marks the formativeness of exegetical activity in the classical period, the field of specialized Qur'ānic sciences was emerging at the same time, providing a number of sub-disciplines within *tafsīr*. Some of these are continuation of the earliest developments; others arise under new impetuses. General compendia of information on these sciences arise in the discipline known as *ʿulūm al-Qur'ān* (the sciences of the Qur'ān), represented by such works as *Nukat al-Intiṣār li-Naql al-Qur'ān* (Gems of Assistance in the Transmission of the Qur'ān) by al-Baqillānī (d.1012); *al-Burhān fī ʿUlūm al-Qur'ān* (The Criterion for the Sciences of the Qur'ān) by

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[23] Abdullah Saeed, *Islamic Thought: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 27.
[24] W. Montgomery Watt, *Bell's Introduction to the Qur'ān* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1970), 171.
[25] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān,* vol. 1: 198-99.

Zarkashī (d.1391); and *al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm al-Qur'ān* (Perfection about the Sciences of the Qur'ān) by Suyūṭī.[26]

During this period, *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* is received a significant treatment by both exegetical and non-exegetical literatures. Exegetes and scholars of the sciences of the Qur'ān ordinarily provided general ideas about the topic, while others paid a standard treatment. Moreover, this era witnessed the use of the very term "*Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*" and its basic conceptual outline. Some important scholarly works are scrutinized hereinafter.

Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505A.H/1111 C.E.): He expresses his own understanding of the Qur'ān through the composition of a work, *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān*.[27] It is of course not a commentary on the Qur'ān in the general usage of the term, although it does comment upon certain important Qur'ānic *sūrahs* and verses in various connections. Throughout this book, there is an emphasis upon employing what the author considers to be the correct method of apprehending the Holy Book, i.e. upon penetrating into the depth of the inner, hidden pearls and treasures. A very clear-cut but brief theory concerning the aims (*maqāṣid*) of the Qur'ān is given in this book. Firstly, al-Ghazālī portrays the Qur'ān's *maqāṣid* as its core and assumes that a substantive understanding of the Qur'ān depends on understanding this core. Secondly, he classifies the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān into two: cardinal and complementary, and each category contains three *maqāṣid*. These six *maqāṣid* in fact represent the six classifications of all verses in the Qur'ān.[28] Finally, he explains *Sūrah al-Fātiha*, *ayāt al-Kursī* and some other verses in light of his concept of *maqāṣid*. Therefore, his concept of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* is enriched by both theory and application.

Al-Baghawī (d.510 A.H./1116 C.E.): He does not categorically define or classify *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* but he makes some interesting points in this regard such as specification of some Qur'ānic major themes and issues followed by a specific *maqāṣid*. Finally, he outlined how these *maqāṣid* could be known. The *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān in his views are as follows: in the Qur'ān, there are commands, warnings, good tidings and advice which are aimed by remembrance (*tadhakkur*); there are stories of past nations aimed by teaching a lesson (*ʿitibār*); there are examples aimed by pondering (*tadabbur*); and there are indications to the Unity of Allah (swt) aimed by thinking (*tafakkur*). According to him, these *maqāṣid* could not be known without sound knowledge of Qur'ān's exegesis,

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[26] Andrew Rippin, *The Qur'ān and its Interpretive Tradition* (USA: Bulington, 2001), 13.
[27] Muhammad Abul Quasem, *The Jewels of the Qur'ān: al-Ghazālī's Theory* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1989), 11.
[28] Muhammad Abul Quasem, *The Jewels of the Qur'ān: al-Ghazālī's Theory*...11.

context of its revelation, comprehension of its abrogation, and an understanding of its generality and particularity.[29]

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d.606A.H/1209C.E.): In interpreting *Sūrah al-Fātiha* in his *tafsīr Mafātih al-Ghaib*, al-Rāzī points out that this *sūrah* is named mother of the Qur'ān because it comprises the whole Qur'ānic theme and its *maqāṣid*. The *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān according to him are the affirmation of four facts: the theology (*al-ilāhiyyāt*), Last day (*al-Mī'ād*), prophesy (*al-Nabawāt*) and divine determinism (*al-qaḍā wa al-qdar*). According to him, "All praise is due to God alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds, The Most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace" indicates the theology; "Lord of the Day of Judgment!" which refers to the Last day; "Thee alone do we worship; and unto Thee alone do we turn for aid" and "Guide us the straightway. The way of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings" indicate divine determining.[30]

ʿIzz al-Dīn ibn ʿĀbd al-Salām (d.660 AH/1261C.E): He has a very comprehensive work on *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah* which mainly focuses on the theory of *maṣlaḥah* and *mafsadah*. He points out that most of the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān reflect on the command to achieve welfare and their means, and warning of adopting evils and their means.[31]

Burhān al-Dīn Abu al-Ḥasan Ibrāhīm al-Biqāʿī (d.885A.H): Al-Biqāʿī is perhaps the first traditional Muslim scholar who authored two works, namely *Maṣāʿd al-Naẓr li al-Ishrāf ʿAla Maqāṣid al-Suwar* and his tafsīr *Naẓm al-Durar* which exclusively focus on *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*. The first book is overwhelmingly devoted in outlining the specific *maqṣad* of every *sūrah* of the Qur'ān. According to him, every *sūrah* has a particular purpose and all the verses in it are instances of that purpose.[32] Moreover, he places *maqāṣid* in an attributive position while pointing to the reasons why the Qur'ān is glorious. He then includes "the highness and abundance of purposes (*maqāṣid*)" in some other reasons such as the Qur'ān's miraculous reach to the unity of meanings, sublimity of synthesis, grandness of vocabularies, harmony in alphabets, loftiness of coherence and artistic beauty of minute exposition which attribute the Qur'ān to be exalted.[33] However, al-Biqāʿī's views of the higher purposes of the Qur'ān seem inconsistent because he, with the same tune of al-Rāzī, mentions that Qur'ān's higher purposes are recognition of four fundamentals: divinities, prophecies, hereafter, and determinism.[34] With apparent variation of the first, he further mentions similarly as al-Ghazālī that the higher purpose

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[29] Abū Muḥammad al-Husain al-Baghawī, *Maʿālim al-Tanzīl*, ed. by Abd al-Razzaq al-Mahdi (Beirut: dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, 1420 A.H., vol.1), 45.

[30] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīh al-Ghaib* vol.1: 144.

[31] ʿIzz al-Dīn ibn ʿĀbd al-Salām, *Qawāʿid al-Ahkām fi Maṣāliḥ al-Anām* (Beirut: Dar al-Maʿārif, vol.1), 7.

[32] al-Biqāʿī, Burhān al-Dīn Abu al-Ḥasan Ibrāhīm, *Maṣāʿd al-Naẓr li al-Ishrāf ʿAla Maqāṣid al-Suwar* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Maʿārif, 1987), vol. 1: 182.

[33] Al-Biqāʿī, *Maṣāʿd al-Naẓr li al-Ishrāf ʿAla Maqāṣid al-Suwar*, vol. 3: 14-15.

[34] Ibid., vol. 4: 282.

of the Qur'ān is to enlighten the minds with knowledge.[35] He however asserts that *maqāṣid* are centralized within the illustration of belief system, stories and laws mentioned in the Qur'ān.[36] As he frequently quotes al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī it should be assumed that his view of higher *maqāṣid* is influenced by these two scholars. Al-Biqāʿī's outstanding contribution is that he is the first who introduced the application of maqāṣidic interpretation of the Qur'ān and its necessity to understand the Qur'ān's contents. Thus, the integration of *maqāṣid* with *tafsīr* is clearly reflected in practical.

In short, *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* in the classical period of Qur'ānic literature has received very significant treatment from prominent Muslim scholars. This period could be seen as a formative period of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* because it witnessed the development of some basic understandings of the topic such as the precise use of the term *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*; its categorization as main and secondary sources which indicates that the Qur'ān has some universal or cardinal *maqāṣid* representing the whole of it, likewise its secondary *maqāṣid* that are concerned with specific *sūrah*; its identification and illustrations, though they mostly are not corroborated by sufficient evidence from the Qur'ān or sound persuasive logical arguments; its function and relation with the exegesis of the Qur'ān, which mainly remains within indication to the rank of maqāṣidic exegesis without referring to any methodological formula. These are in fact the ground works which encourage its further development aiming for the pinnacle of this specialized aspect of Qur'ānic studies.

MAQĀṢID AL-QUR'ĀN IN THE MODERN QUR'ĀNIC LITERATURE

Qur'ānic literature - exegetical and non-exegetical - in contemporary time recieved a breakthrough development as Qur'ānic issues have been treated with new approaches and new perspectives. However, *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* in this era could grab attention from Islamic scholarship. The most pioneering works on this subject are produced by prolific authors and pioneers of contemporary Islamic scholarship such as Muḥammad ʿAbduh (d.1905), Rashīd Riḍā (d.1935), Badīʿuzzamān Saʿīd Nūrsī (d.1960), Ibn ʿĀshūr (d.1973), Ḥasan al-Bannā (d.1949), Muḥammd Iqbāl (d.1938), Sayyed Quṭb (d.1966), Abul ʿAla Mawdūdī (d.1989), Izzat Darwazah (d.1987), Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 1996), Yusūf al-Qaradāwī (b.1926) and others. The noteworthy developments in this period are discussed further.

Wide Diversity in Detection of Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān: The identification of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* by traditional Muslim scholars, as mentioned above, is mostly imprinted by Islamic theological color. In their views, the major issues of Islamic theology such as

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[35] Ibid., vol. 2: 191.
[36] Ibid., vol. 8: 593.

Tawḥīd, Prophethood, reward and requital in the Hereafter, divine Determinism, etc.[37] are detected as universal *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān. In contemporary literature, there is paramount conceptual and numerical extension over the identification of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* in pre-modern era. The numerical variation ranges between one and ten, and the conceptual diversity exceeds the theological boundary and reaches ethics, education *(tarbiyah)*, socio-political reforms, Qur'ān's inimitability, civil rights, establishment of Qur'ānic laws and others. A brief detail of these variations is presented in the following paragraphs.

Muḥammad Iqbāl (d.1938) detects only one main purpose of the Qur'ān which is to awaken in man the higher consciousness of his manifold relations with God and the universe.[38]

Muḥammad Husaīn Al-Dhahabī (d.1977) indentifies two universal purposes of the Qur'ān: firstly, to be the miracle (*M'ujiza*) for the Prophet (pbuh) and giving testimony to the authenticity of *D'awah* and his messengership; secondly, to be a constitution for the Islamic *Ummah* where *hīdayah*, righteousness, dignity in this world and happiness in the hereafter are derived from.[39]

Abul 'Ala Mawdūdī (d.1989) is the proponent of three fundamental purposes of Qur'ān: establishing God's law on His earth; making mankind true vicegerents according to His guidance on the earth; and making Qur'ānic observers superior in this world.[40]

Maḥmūd Shaltūt (d.1963) also finds three purposes: 1. Belief system: it purifies the mind from the seeds of polytheism and paganism, encompasses it with the policy of pure spirituality and it comprises what is obligatory to believe in Allāh and His attributes, Revelation, angels, divine Books, prophets, resurrection and requital, 2. Ethics: it disciplines mind, upraises honor of persons and society, strengthens brotherhood and cooperation among mankind, it includes truthfulness, patience, fulfillment of covenant, tolerance, etc, 3. *Aḥkām*: the rulings of Allāh (swt) mentioned in the Qur'ān. It includes sets of worships, social norms, judicial laws, financial interactions, military rules, etc.[41]

Sa'īd Nūrsī (d.1960) sees the universal purposes of the Qur'ān as *tawḥīd*, Prophethood, Resurrection and Justice.[42]

Ḥasan al-Bannā' (d.1949) is also a proponent of four purposes: Exposition of Islamic rulings comprehensively and practically in conjunction with contemporary style; introduction of Islam as a complete social code, not merely a theoretical dogmatic

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[37] Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad bin Muḥammad, *al-'Aqīdah* (Damascus: Dār Qutybah, 1408 A.H.), 1-123. al-Ghaznāwī, Jamāl al-Dīn Aḥmad, *Kitāb Usūl al-Dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Bshāi'r al-Islāmiyyah, 1998), 57. Discussion of these issues may be found in any general book of Aqīdah, 'Ilam al-Kalām, or Usūl al-Dīn.

[38] Muhammad Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, ed. M. Saeed Sheikh (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1996), 7.

[39] Al-Dhahabī, Muḥammad Husaīn, *Al-Waḥy wa Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm* (Cairo: Maktab Wahbah, 1986), 39.

[40] Abul A'la Mawdūdī, *Fundamentals of Islam* (Pakistan: Lahore, Islamic Publication, 1982).

[41] Maḥmūd Shaltūt, *'Ila Al Qur'ān Al-Karīm* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq), 5-6.

[42] Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *Signs of Miraculousness*, ..19.

religion; preservation of true belief in Allah (swt) in times of atheism; and helping human mind in the period of transgression of materialism.[43]

Muḥammad ʿAbduh (d.1905) points out the main purposes are divine unity; the promise of a generous reward for embracing the Qur'ān, and admonition of those who do not embrace it and threatening them with punishment; worship, which revives the heart with the affirmation of Divine unity and establishes it firmly in the soul; explanation of how that path should be followed, which is the way of happiness and leads to the bounties of the hereafter; stories of those who obeyed the path of Allah and those who did not.[44]

Ibn ʿĀshur (d.1973) finds eight purposes: The amendment of beliefs and education of the intellect in line with the straight path; the purification of morals; legislation, consisting of general and particular rulings; welfare of the *Ummah*, and observing its order so that a sound unity is shaped; stories and information about past nations for the purpose of encouragement to emulate good and warning against evils; educating its addressees suitably to the conditions of the ages in which they live; advising, warning, restraining, and encouraging; and the Qur'ān's inimitability as a sign of the Prophet's (pbuh) veracity.[45]

Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī (b.1926) also identifies the following eight purposes: The correction of beliefs, and of the conceptions of the Deity, prophethood, and requital; the acknowledgement of man's position on the earth and rights, particularly those of the weak; inspiring humanity to worship God and fear Him; inviting men to purify their souls; the establishment of a sound family structure, and the preservation of women's rights; the building of a model *Ummah*; and summons to mutual assistance in the world of humanity.[46]

Rashīd Rīḍā (d.1935) indentifies ten purposes: Exposition of the basic pillars of the religion; Prophethood and Divine messengership, and those of 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 the manners, foundations and general principles of universal Islamic political ruling; guidance to financial reform; reforming of war policy and philosophy and eliminating its evils and predicaments; giving women all human, religious and civil rights; and guidance of Islam to rid of slaves.[47]

Scholars have corroborated their views by relating verses from the Qur'ān without revealing enough methodological supports in favor of their compatibility to represent as the universal *maqāṣīd* of the Qur'ān. This fundamental gap may undermine the soundness

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[43] Ḥasan Al-Bannā', *Ḥadīth Al-Thulāthā'*, compiled by Aḥmad ʿĪsa ʿĀshūr (Cairo: Maktabah Al-Qur'ān).

[44] Muḥammad ʿAbduh, *Fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* in Al-Aʿmal al-Kāmilah li al-Imām Muḥammad ʿAbduh, ed. by Muḥammad ʿImārah (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūk, 1993), vol. 4: 23.

[45] Ibn ʿAshūr, *Al-Taḥrīr Wa Al-Tanwīr*, vol.1: 36.

[46] Al-Qaraḍāwī, Yusūf, *Kayfa Natʿāmal Maʿa Al-Qur'ān Al-Aẓīm* (Qatar: Markaz Al-Buḥūth Al-Sunnah wa Al-Sīrah, University of Qatar, 1997), 63.

[47] Muhammad Rashīd Riḍa, *Al-Waḥy Al-Muḥammadī* (Beirut: Foundation of ʿIzz Al-Dīn, 1306 H), 191.

and authenticity of their views or at least raise a question about their acceptability. Surely, some of their views such as *Tawḥīd*, Prophethood, Hereafter and Justice are cardinal issues of the Qur'ān and can undoubtedly be represented as its universal purposes, but some of their views like ridding of slaves, rights of women and military rules may not fall in the universal *maqāṣīd* of the Qur'ān. Rather, they come under other universal issues, for instance, ridding of slaves and rights of women fall under "human rights". Thus, introducing these types of secondary purposes as the universal purposes may not be logically acceptable because it may undermine the universality of Qur'ān's *maqāṣīd*. Yet, the range of their views widens the functional scope for *Maqāṣīd al-Qur'ān*.

Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān as a Principle of Tafsīr: Muslim scholars have laid down certain basic principles which are required to maintain any acceptable exegesis. Any Qur'ānic "exegesis (which) disregards these principles must be viewed with great caution."[48] Some general and cardinal principles suggested by both traditional and contemporary Qur'ānic scholarship include proper standard of belief in Islam (*ṣiḥḥat al-ʿitiqād*) which keeps an exegete on the right track and saves him from projecting a distortive, false and biased notion;[49] sound knowledge of Arabic language and its branches such as syntax, rhetoric, lexicons etc.; knowledge of other branches of Islamic sciences such as prophetic biography, Islamic theology, principles of Islamic jurisprudence etc.; abstinence from whim and caprice; knowledge of context of revelation and abrogation; putting *tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr* in priority.[50] There is hardly any specific mentioning of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* as a principle of exegesis in addition to the abovementioned principles. Exceptionally, there are some contemporary scholars like Muḥammad ʿAbdu, Ibn ʿĀshūr, Mawdūdī, and ʿIzzat Darwazah who have strongly argued that *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* should be included in the principles of *tafsīr*.

However, Muḥammad ʿAbduh grounds his argument on the logic 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.[51] According to him, *tafsīr* has been conducted on several aspects such as looking into Qur'ān's styles, syntax, past stories, *gharīb al-Qur'ān*, all kinds of laws, theological discussions, advice and mysticism; excessive focus on any of these issues may cause ignorance of the main purpose of the Qur'ān and oblivion of its original meanings.[52] He then divides the *tafsīr* into two; the first is barren and restraining from Allah (swt) and His Book as it exclusively concentrates on semantic details, syntactic and artistic indications of the

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[48] Ahmad Von Denffer, *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān: An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'ān* (United Kingdom: Markfield, Islamic Foundation, 1994), 122.

[49] Muḥammad bin Luṭfī Ṣabbāgh, *Buḥuth fī Usūl al-Tafsīr* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1988), 11.

[50] Al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn *al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm al-Qur'ān* (Lebanon: al-Risalah Publishers, 2008), 763-765.

[51] Muḥammad ʿAbduh, *Muqaddimah fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, vol. 4: 7.

[52] Ibid., vol. 4: 8.

verses. He asserts that this type should not be named as a *tafsīr*. The second type, which cares for the semantic denotation as understood in the first Islamic era, high artistic style, people's life status, aspect of showing the right path to mankind and prophetic biographical knowledge in order to reach the intents of Allah (swt) in His words and to illustrate the wisdom behind Qur'ānic directives in beliefs, ethics and other affairs of human life.[53] 'Abduh seems a proponent of employing all the elements of exegesis in highlighting the purposes of the Qur'ān[54] as it is explicitly reflected in his interpretation of *Sūrah al-Fātihah*, where he illustrates the entire *sūrah* by showing the engagement of five universal *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān.[55]

Ibn 'Āshūr, in the forth introduction of his *tafsīr*, *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, makes it vital for a exegete to look into *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān. He asserts that the main task of an exegete should be the illustration of Qur'ān's objective. According to him, the value of a *tafsīr* should be evaluated on how it approaches maqāṣidic dimension. He strongly opposes any kind of interpretation contradicting the objectives of the Qur'ān. Thus, in interpreting the Qur'ān, an interpreter must possess knowledge of its *maqāṣid*.[56] It is apparent that Ibn 'Āshūr links the whole concept of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* with the methodology of *tafsīr* as he introduces it as a principle of *tafsīr* and regards it as a criteria for evaluating the value of any Qur'ānic exegesis.

'Izzat Darwaza outlines an "exemplary methodology of understanding the Qur'ān and its exegesis" in the introduction of his exegetical work entitled *al-Tafsīr al-Ḥadīth* (the Modern Exegesis) and his book "*al-Qur'ān al-Majīd*". He then delineates the best ways of understanding the Qur'ān,[57] among which is "the Qur'ān's fundamentals (*usus*) and their means".[58] These two, according to him, are representing the whole contents of the Qur'ān. The former is the essence, because it comprises the purposes of revelation and the prophet's mission; and the latter is the secondary (means); "observance of this distinction between the fundamentals and (the) means is very important for the reader of the Qur'ān in order not to lose sight of the trunk and get lost in the undergrowth. The

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[53] Ibid., vol. 4: 9-13.

[54] 'Uthmān Amin, *Rāid al-Fikr al-Miṣrī* (Egypt: al-Majlis al-'Alā li al-Thaqāfah, d.n),145.

[55] Muḥammad 'Abduh, *fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, vol. 4: 22-25.

[56] Ibn 'Āshūr, *Al-Taḥrīr wa Al-Tanwīr*, vol.1: 36.

[57] His other exemplary methodologies of understanding the Qur'ān and its exegesis are: connection between the Qur'ān and the biography of the Prophet (pbuh); observance of close connection between the Prophet's milieu and his mission on the one hand, and between Qur'ānic revelation and pre-Islamic milieu on the other; understanding the Qur'ānic language in its vocabulary, idiom, style, and syntax; Qur'ānic stories; the angels and the jinn in the Qur'ān; phenomena of nature and its laws in the Qur'ān; life in hereafter in the Qur'ān; the Self of Allah in the Qur'ān; the sequences and context of the Qur'ānic verses; understanding the Qur'ān through the Qur'ān.

[58] 'Izzat Darwaza, *al-Tafsīr al-Ḥadith*, vol. 1: 141.

exegetes should pay more attention to what is essential, because any discourse about the secondary, auxiliary things leads nowhere."[59]

Maqāṣidic Approach in Qur'ānic Exegesis: Scholars' urge of the application of maqāṣidic approach in the exegesis of the Qur'ān is fairly reflected in a number of contemporary exegetical works such as *tafsīr al-Manār, al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr, tafhīm al-Qur'ān, al-Tafsīr al-Ḥadīth, tadabbur-i-Qur'ān, Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān* and others. Exegetes of the Qur'ān in the modern era generally approach the maqāṣidic trends of exegesis in two ways; firstly, describing the themes and purposes of the whole *sūrah* at the forefront of the exegesis of that very *sūrah*; secondly, focusing on the purpose of any specific verse. This approach is becoming a phenomenon in the contemporary era.

Despite these gradual developments of the theory of *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*, it still lacks a sound methodological approach. As a result, an exclusive maqāṣidic approach of Qur'ānic interpretation has yet to emerge.

CONCLUSION

Through a chronological search in the Qur'ānic literatures throughout the ages, this study finds that there is hardly any theoretical work on *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* produced by the Companions of Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh). Yet, surely they were able to understand the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān both in theory and in practice because the all-exclusive changes that took place in their time were a reflection of the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān. In the formative period of Qur'ānic literature, the exegetical works are mostly dominated by the linguistic aspects which have little to contribute in exposing the maqāṣidic dimensions of the Qur'ān. Thus, there is hardly any explicit discussion of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* in the available literature of this period. The classical period of Qur'ānic literature could be seen as a formative period of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* because the term "*Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*" is born and its basic concepts such as its classification into primary and secondary are outlined. However, the discussion of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* in this period is not corroborated by sufficient logical and methodological process but it works as a cornerstone for further development. In modern Qur'ānic literature, *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* receives a breakthrough as it is popularly dealt with by prominent Muslim scholars. In this period, *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* is argued to be a principle of *tafsīr* by some contemporary scholars like Muḥammad ʿAbduh, Ibn ʿĀshūr, Mawdūdī and ʿIzzat Darwazah. In addition, a maqāṣidic approach in Qur'ānic exegesis is widely manifested in contemporary exegetical works such as *Tafsīr al-Manār, al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr, Tafhīm al-Qur'ān, al-Tafsīr al-Ḥadīth, Tadabbur-i-Qur'ān, Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān* and others. However, despite these gradual developments, *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* is still not

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[59] Ismail K. Poonawala, *Muḥammad ʿIzzat Darwaza's Principles of Modern Exegesis*, in "Approaches to the Qur'ān" edited by G.R. Hawting and Abdul Kader A. Shareef (London and New York: Routledge, 1993). 231.

introduced as a complete concept of understanding the Qur'ān and hardly any exclusive maqāṣidic approach of Qur'ānic interpretation has been produced. Though the salient features of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* portrayed by the prominent Muslim scholars fashion its appearance as a distinctive science of understanding the Qur'ānic core through a methodological process.

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