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THE CONCEPT OF MAQASID AL-SHARIAH
AND ITS EVOLVING ROLE IN A DYNAMIC LANDSCAPE

This article addresses the concept of Maqasid al-Shariah (the objectives of Islamic law) and its evolving role in responding to the challenges of a rapidly changing modern world characterized by globalization, technological development, and shifting social realities. This research is grounded in current Islamic legal and ethical debates, where Maqasid al-Shariah is being more frequently utilized as a foundation for interpretation, adaptation, and renewal. The aim of this study is to elucidate the genuine meaning, extent, and boundaries of Maqasid al-Shariah, to differentiate it from subjective or manipulated interpretations, and to show its appropriate methodological application. The research primarily aims to define Maqasid al-Shariah, analyze the goals of creation (maqasid al-khalq) in relation to Shariah rulings, and assess their use through examples from both traditional and modern perspectives. This research work makes the case that Maqasid al-Shari'ah is not an independent alternative to textual sources (the Quran and Sunnah), but rather an integrative interpretive framework based. This study's scientific worth is derived in its thorough, integrated analysis of "Maqāṣid al-Shariah", where fundamental legal principles are carefully balanced with contemporary settings, avoiding both oversimplification and overstatement. In terms of methodology, the study uses qualitative textual analysis, inductive inference, and a comparative approach that critically examines both traditional legal writings and their contemporary interpretations and applications. The study's conclusions show that Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah serves as a dynamic, principle-based methodological paradigm that protects fundamental Islamic values while allowing for contextual flexibility. This study enhances Islamic jurisprudence by providing a sophisticated framework for the application of Maqāṣid in the ethical, legal, financial, and social domains through the articulation of a cogent and methodical methodology, thereby connecting classical theory with modern practice.

Keywords: Maqasid al-Shariah, Islamic jurisprudence, objectives of Shariah, contemporary Islamic thought, Shariah methodology.

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Мақасид әш-Шария түсінігі және
оның динамикалық әлемдегі дамушылық рөлі

Бұл мақалада Мақасид әш-Шариға (ислам құқығының мақсаттары) тұжырымдамасы және оның жаһандану, технологиялық даму мен әлеуметтік шындықтардың өзгеруімен сипатталатын заманауи, қарқынды өзгермелі әлемдегі сын-қатерлерге жауап берудегі эволюциялық рөлі қарастырылады. Зерттеу қазіргі ислам құқықтық және этикалық дискурсы аясында жүргізіледі, мұнда Мақасид әш-Шариға түсіндіру, бейімдеу және жаңғырту әдіснамалық негізі ретінде барған сайын кеңінен қолданылуда. Зерттеудің негізгі мақсаты – Мақасид әш-Шариғаның шынайы мәнін, ауқымы мен шектерін айқындау, оны субъективті немесе құралдандырылған түсіндірмелерден ажырату және оның дұрыс әдіснамалық қолданылуын көрсету. Зерттеудің басты бағыттарына Мақасид әш-Шариға ұғымын анықтау, жаратылыс мақсаттарын (мақасид әл-халқ) және шариғат үкімдерінің мақсаттарын талдау, сондай-ақ олардың классикалық және заманауи мысалдар арқылы қолданылуын зерделеу жатады. Мақалада Мақасид әш-Шариға мәтіндік дереккөздердің (Құран мен Сүннеттің) орнына дербес балама емес, керісінше сол дереккөздерге негізделген интегративті түсіндіру шеңбері екендігі негізделеді. Жұмыстың ғылыми маңызы Мақасид әш-Шариғаны жүйелі әрі теңгерімді түрде қарастыруымен, классикалық фиқһ теориясын қазіргі шындықтармен ұштастыра отырып, асыра сілтеушілік пен редукционизмнен аулақ болуымен айқындалады. Әдіснамалық тұрғыдан зерттеу сапалық мәтіндік талдауға, индуктивті ой қорытуға және классикалық құқықтық дереккөздер мен олардың заманауи қолданылуын салыстырмалы түрде қарастыруға сүйенеді. Зерттеу нәтижелері Мақасид әш-Шариғаның негізгі исламдық құндылықтарды сақтай отырып, сонымен қатар контекстік икемділікке мүмкіндік беретін динамикалық әрі қағидатты әдіснамалық негіз ретінде қызмет ететінін көрсетеді. Зерттеу ислам

ислам құқықтану саласына этикалық, құқықтық, қаржылық және әлеуметтік мәселелерде Мақа-
сидті қолданудың айқындалған әдіснамалық үлгісін ұсыну арқылы үлес қосады.

Түйін сөздер: Мақасид әш-Шариға, ислам құқықтануы, шариғаттың мақсаттары, қазіргі ис-
ламдық ой, шариғат әдіснамасы.

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Концепция макасид аш-шариа и
ее меняющаяся роль в динамичном ландшафте

В статье рассматривается концепция макасид аш-шариа (цели исламского права) и её эво-
люционирующая роль в реагировании на вызовы современного, стремительно меняющегося
мира, характеризующегося глобализацией, технологическим развитием и трансформацией со-
циальных реалий. Исследование выполнено в рамках современного исламско-правового и эти-
ческого дискурса, где макасид аш-шариа всё чаще используется как методологическая основа
интерпретации, адаптации и обновления. Целью исследования является уточнение подлинного
смысла, объёма и границ макасид аш-шариа, его разграничение с субъективными или инстру-
ментализированными интерпретациями, а также демонстрация корректного методологического
применения данного подхода. Основные направления исследования включают определение по-
нятия макасид аш-шариа, анализ целей творения (макасид аль-халк) и целей шариатских предпи-
саний, а также рассмотрение их применения на классических и современных примерах. В статье
обосновывается положение о том, что макасид аш-шариа не является самостоятельной заменой
текстовым источникам, а представляет собой интегративную интерпретационную рамку, уко-
ренённую в Коране и Сунне. Научная значимость работы заключается в системном и сбалан-
сированном рассмотрении макасид аш-шариа, сочетающем классическую юриспруденциальную
теорию с современными реалиями и избегающем как чрезмерного расширения, так и редукци-
онному. Методологической основой исследования послужили качественный текстологический
анализ, индуктивный метод и сравнительное изучение классических правовых источников и их
современных применений. Основные результаты показывают, что макасида аш-шариа функци-
онирует как динамическая система, однако принципиально она является фиксированной мето-
дологической системой, позволяющей сохранять базовые исламские ценности и одновременно
обеспечивать контекстуальную гибкость. Исследование предлагает методологическую модель,
уточняющую применение макасид в этических, правовых, финансовых и социальных вопросах,
что вносит вклад в развитие исламской юриспруденции.

Ключевые слова: исламское право, макасид аш-шариа, цели шариата, методология шариата,
современная исламская мысль.

Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving world, marked by
unprecedented technological advancements, global-
ization, and shifting social structures, the question
of how to effectively implement religious principles
has become increasingly urgent. Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah,
or the objectives of Islamic law, provides Muslims
with a vital framework to navigate these changes
while remaining authentic, sincere, and steadfast in
their faith. Over recent decades, Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah
has attracted significant scholarly attention within the
Muslim world. However, some researchers have at
times misappropriated this concept, using it to justify
diluting Islamic teachings or misinterpreting Shariah
texts, often to align them with Western social and eco-
nomic norms. The literature on Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah,
which emphasizes the proper interpretation and
practical implementation of Shariah teachings, has
become increasingly popular among Muslims. How-
ever, this literature frequently presents al-Sharīʿah
as a cure-all that can solve any problem the Muslim
ummah has, and it is occasionally prone to hyperbole
and misrepresentation. However, it is crucial to ac-
knowledge that the ideas of Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah have
been ingrained in the Quran and Sunnah since the be-
ginning. Genuinely achieving these goals requires a
deep comprehension of Shariah laws and how they
are applied in daily life. We can determine the goals
by comprehending the Shariah writings. The meaning
and concept of Maqasid al-Shariah, as well as its two
essential components that is the objectives of creation
(maqasid al-khalq) and the objectives of Shariah
(maqasid al-Shariah), which are further divided into
three divisions that will be covered in detail later will
therefore be the exclusive focus of this article, since
Maqasid al-Shariah is one of the most important and
intricate branches of Shariah.

Justification of the choice of articles and goals and objectives

The selection of sources for this study is justified by the need for methodological reliability and doctrinal authenticity in examining Maqasid al-Shariah. Priority is given to primary textual sources, the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah, because Maqasid are epistemologically derived from revelation. Classical works of usul al-fiqh, particularly those of Al-Ghazali, Al-Shatibi, Al-Amidi, and Ibn Ashur, are selected due to their foundational role in formulating and systematizing Maqasid theory through inductive reasoning (istiqrā'). Contemporary scholarly works and institutional standards are included to analyze modern applications while assessing their consistency with classical methodology. The research objectives are defined accordingly: to clarify the authentic meaning, scope, and limits of Maqasid al-Shariah; to distinguish principled methodological use from subjective or instrumentalized interpretations; and to demonstrate responsible application in contemporary contexts. This focused selection ensures analytical coherence, prevents methodological deviation, and acknowledges that conclusions are normative and interpretive rather than empirical.

Scientific research methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, theoretical, and analytical research methodology appropriate for examining Maqasid al-Shariah as a normative and interpretive framework. In addition to traditional usul al-fiqh writings and the Qur'an and Sunnah, the study also draws from modern scholarly literature. It uses textual analysis to look at the intertextual coherence, contextual backdrop, and linguistic subtleties of Shariah writings. Inductive reasoning is applied in a methodical manner to extract broad goals from specific legal decisions. After that, a comparative approach is used to assess traditional legal formulations in light of their contemporary implementations. While acknowledging that the results are interpretive and non-empirical in character, this methodology guarantees both conceptual accuracy and academic rigor.

Results and discussion

The meaning and concept of Maqasid al-Shariah (Objectives of Shariah)

Maqasid is the plural of maqsad from the root word (ومَقصدا قصدا يقصد قَصَدَ). The word al-maqsid

(الـمَقْصِد) is the intended place or destination. Accordingly, what is meant by maqasid al-Shariah (the objectives of Shariah) are the ends and goals that are intended to be achieved though the teachings of Shariah. Allal Al-Fasi's description of Maqasid al-Shariah, "Purposes and the secrets that the Lawgiver laid down for each of its rulings," is among the best technical definitions (Al-Fasi, 1963).

The objectives of creation (maqasid al-khalq)

Humanity's existence in this universe serves inherent purposes, meticulously derived by Muslim scholars from various Quranic verses using inductive reasoning. This is yet another objective of creation, as Allah says: "And it is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days – and His Throne had been upon water – that He might test you as to which of you is best in deed..." (11:7). This verse clearly conveys that the reward for obedient servants who achieve this objective, and the punishment for those who fail, is based on the outcome of these tests.

The objectives of Shariah (Maqasid al-Shariah)

These objectives are related to the scriptural texts of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Based on the methodology of Imam Al-Shatibi, they are composed of three divisions, namely: a) the objectives of Shariah texts; b) the objectives of Shariah rulings; and c) the objectives of the Lawgiver in legislation (Al-Shatibi, 2004).

The objectives of Shariah texts (Maqasid al-Khitab al-Shar'i)

The objectives of Shariah texts constitute their intended meanings. The Shariah texts (the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet) serve as the channel of communication between God, the Creator, and human beings. The primary objective of divine scripture is to guide mankind, directing them towards achieving their well-being, warding off evils, and accomplishing the mission for which they were created. Therefore, understanding the objectives of these texts requires a proper method of interpretation. While each text of the Qur'an and the Sunnah has its own specific objective(s), providing a detailed exposition of each is beyond the scope of this article. Consequently, this article will focus on the general objectives of Shariah texts and the requirements for their proper understanding.

General objectives of Shariah texts

The general objectives of Shariah texts may be summarized in the followings:

Introducing man to the realities of this universe including: the oneness of God the Creator, the facts of the unseen world, how the universe was created,

the aim of that creation, and the fate of this universe and the creatures in it.

Introducing people to the history of the Messengers of God to mankind.

Setting moral, social and legal norms and rules that govern human affairs on the individual as well as social level.

Determining rights and duties.

Nourishing souls and spiritual life.

Guiding and motivating people to follow the path of faith and achieve the mission they were created for.

Requirements for a proper understanding of the objectives of Shariah texts

It is also important to realize that for a proper understanding of the objectives of Shariah texts, certain requirements must be observed:

Approach Shariah texts as a source of knowledge, not a tool to justify preconceived ideas or the status quo.

Develop the ability to free yourself from the influence of deception and preconceived ideas. You must dare to rethink your personal views and opinions in light of Sharia texts, without attempting to circumvent these texts to misinterpret them or justify existing concepts.

Shariah rulings objectives (Maqasid al-Ahkam al-Shar'iyah)

These goals relate to the basic wisdom underlying the Shariah rules and the benefits that can be gained by applying them. Ibn Ashur classified the goals of the Shariah rules into various categories, such as: general goals, specific goals, individual goals, universal goals, and partial goals. However, this article will focus solely on the general and specific objectives. (Ibn Ashur, 2006)

The general objectives of Shariah (the five universal values) (Al-Ghazali, 1997; Al-Amidi, 1983).

It is common among writers on Maqasid al-Shariah, starting from Al-Ghazali, to relate the objectives of legal rulings to five general objectives, namely: preserving religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth. These five are variously called the five essentials, the five universal values, or the general objectives of the Shariah. Scholars of Usul al-Fiqh offer different justifications for limiting these general objectives to these five values. Al-Amidi, for instance, believed that these five values comprehensively cover all aspects of human life (Al-Amidi, 2015). Indeed, it can be argued that these five values encompass the fundamental needs and foundations upon which human life is based. Religion represents the spiritual aspect of humanity and the guidance by

which individuals achieve the purpose of their existence in this universe. The preservation of life pertains to safeguarding the material aspect of human existence. The preservation of lineage signifies the aspect of continuity in human life. The preservation of intellect represents the safeguarding of the very tool of perception, thinking, and managing life's affairs, and serves as the basis of takleef (obligation). Finally, the preservation of wealth denotes the material sources essential for human life.

It is common among classical and contemporary scholars to describe these five universal values as the five necessities (dharuriyyat). Each of these five universal values is really thought to be preserved on three different levels: i) needs (hajiyyat), ii) requirements (dharuriyyat), and iii) embellishments/ luxuries (tahsiniyyat). In particular, the preservation of religion (hifz al-dīn) includes a basic level (ḍarūriyyāt), which is necessary for a person's religiosity and requires the fulfillment of certain indispensable prerequisites. In addition, it has a secondary level of necessities (ḥājiyyāt), which are bolstered by resources that support and improve religious practice. Finally, religious preservation achieves an enrichment stage (taḥsīniyyāt) at a tertiary level, encouraging progress and refinement in its observance. In a similar vein, the preservation of life (hifz al-nafs) involves a necessary dimension (ḍarūriyyāt) that necessitates vital steps to protect it from destruction, weakness, vulnerability, or other disturbances that could cause serious harm or catastrophe. The enrichment (taḥsīniyyāt), which offers means for a more pleasant, secure, or refined standard of living, is the greatest stage in life preservation. This same three-tiered classification applies to the remaining three universal values: the preservation of lineage, the preservation of intellect, and the preservation of wealth.

It is worth mentioning that the Lawgiver did not give a list of necessities (dharuriyyat) neither in the Quran nor in the Sunnah. However, the Quran and the Sunnah clearly state that human necessities are highly considered to the extent that meeting them may justify committing unlawful things as in the legal maxim: "necessities may justify the unlawful." The Quran gave some examples such as the permissibility of uttering blasphemy, while secretly one remains on the faith, in the event of falling under severe torture, and eating forbidden things under extreme hunger.

Due to the absence of precise boundaries between necessities (dharuriyyat) and needs (Íajiyyat), the distinction between them may be, sometimes,

subject to discretion. Certain necessities are agreed upon among scholars, while some others may be subject to different views. That is because the necessities are not identified by name but rather by features which may be subject to discretion. An example of this is the different views on preserving honour. Some scholars raised it to the rank of necessities, while some others put in the level of needs. However, this difference does not have any impact in practice because all scholars agree on the obligation of protecting honour in all its forms, as well as on the prohibition of any assault on it, "Every Muslim's blood, property, and honor are unlawful to be violated by another Muslim," according to the Prophet (Sahih Muslim).

The specific objectives of Shariah rulings

Specific objectives are those observed by the Lawgiver within individual fiqh chapters or groups of similar chapters. Examples include the objectives of worship, marital relations, fighting, financial transactions, punishments, and the judicial system, among others. However, this article will limit its focus to objectives related to worship, specifically the five pillars of Islam. Worship in Islam fundamentally aims at achieving submission to Allah by establishing a strong relationship with Allah Almighty, following His guidance, being mindful of Him, and feeling the need for His assistance. Ibn Rashid Al-Qafsi eloquently describes the purposes of worship: "Following desires is the origin of moral corruption, and controlling desires is the source of its therapy. If you get that, then acts of worship are the sole remedies for illnesses of the heart, and God Almighty sent them down to show people kindness and to shine the mirror of their hearts so that they could enter His friendly atmosphere in the fold of His holiness (Al-Qafsi, 2011). All of the aforementioned objectives are clearly evident in the five acts of worship traditionally known as the pillars of Islam: prayer, zakat, fasting, pilgrimage, and the declaration of faith (Shahada). Other significant acts of worship, such as remembrance (dhikr) and supplication (du'a), further reinforce these objectives.

Objectives of Prayers

Allah has ordained prayer for several objectives. We know some of them, while some others may be hidden. In this section, we limit our discussion to several objectives which are explicitly expressed in Shariah texts:

Humility towards Allah. The performance of bowing down, prostration, and supplications is the highest rank of submission to Allah: "O you who have believed, bow and prostrate and worship your Lord and do good – that you may succeed." (22:77). The rationale for ordaining prayer, according to Ibn Rashid Al-Qafsi, is "humility and submission to Allah, Who is Worthy of glorification, and softening hearts by Allah's remembrance"(Al-Qafsi, 2011).

Refining behaviour: "And establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do." (29: 45).

Strengthening the bond of brotherhood among Muslims. This can be achieved especially through congregational prayer: "The believers, both men and women, are allies of one another. They enjoin good, forbid evil, establish Prayer, pay Zakah, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Surely Allah will show mercy to them. Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise." (9:71)

The correct observance of prayer leads to purification from sins and moral offenses. According to Uthman ibn Affan's account, the Messenger of Allah said that a Muslim's prior minor transgressions are forgiven as long as they refrain from committing large transgressions (Muslim) when they complete ablution correctly and offer prayer with humility and proper kneeling at the appointed hour.

Achieving harmony and inner peace: "In this world, women and perfume have been made dear to me, and my comfort has been provided in prayer," revealed the Messenger of Allah (al-Nasai).

Fasting Objectives

A related prophetic tradition confirms that fasting has an expiatory effect. According to a well-known hadith, anyone who fasts during Ramadan with genuine faith and the goal of seeking heavenly benefit will have their past transgressions forgiven. According to Sahih al-Bukhari, fasting is therefore required by Islamic law with particular goals, such as achieving spiritual reward and repentance for misdeeds (al-Buhari).

In the Quran, Allah says: "O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous." (2:183)

Ethical conduct: A person who fasts exhibits forbearance by refraining from the most potent desires in the human spirit, such as food, drink, and sexual activity. He also strives to restrain his desire for retribution.

Objectives of Zakat

Zakat also has certain objectives which can be summarized as follows:

Purification of the soul and elevating it from avarice and love of money: Allah says in Quran:

"Take, [O, Muhammad], from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase, and invoke [Allah 's blessings] upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing" (9:103).

Fostering brotherhood and harmony among community members. This happens when zakat payers become compassionate to the poor and share a portion of their wealth with them. On the other hand, the poor feel gratefulness and affection which purify their souls from envy and hatred towards the rich.

Materialising gratefulness to God. Expressing gratitude to Allah is not a mere statement but rather a God pleasing act. The rich must express gratitude to God by spending some money on helping others: "Work, O family of David, in gratitude. And few of My servants are grateful" (34:13).

Building social solidarity by helping the poor and needy: the Prophet said in relation to zakat: "then inform them that Allah has made a duty to them of alms taken from their rich and given to their poor" (al-Bukhari).

Building social solidarity by helping the poor and destitute: The Prophet is said to have said, "Then inform them that Allah has ordained a charity upon their wealth, which is to be taken from the rich among them and given to the poor among them" in reference to zakat.

Pilgrimage Objectives

Furthermore, the fifth pillar of Islam, the pilgrimage, has the following goals: Faith in Allah: In order to respond to the call to pilgrimage by declaring, "I am here answering Your call, O Allah" (Labbaika Allahumma labbaika) and to seek Allah's grace and forgiveness, a person doing the Hajj leaves behind their family, their money, and their nation and travels to the Sacred House in Makkah. Quran says: "And proclaim to the people the hajj [pilgrimage]; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass ". (22:27)

Honouring Allah's sacred rites: The basis of this is that the Sacred House (البيت الحرام) is the symbol of uniformity and submission to Allah, and it is the first of God's houses founded on earth, as Allah says: "Indeed, the first House [of worship] established for mankind was that at Makkah – blessed and a guidance for the worlds. In it are clear signs [such as] the standing place of Abraham. And whoever enters it shall be safe. And [due] to Allah from the people is a pilgrimage to the House – for whoever is able to find thereto a way. But whoever disbelieves – Allah is free from need of the worlds." (3:96-97)

Seeking Allah's bounty: It's about seeking Allah's blessings in both worlds: "That they may witness benefits for themselves and mention the name of Allah on known days over what He has provided for them of [sacrificial] animals. So eat of them and feed the miserable and poor." (22:18)

Teaching patience in the obedience of God: The pilgrimage journey, especially in ancient times, was a difficult one. Travelling, standing at Arafatt, sleeping in mina for 3 days, crowding into throwing the pebbles (jamarat) and performing circumambulation, and most importantly showing extreme patience by not responding to any mistaken rude or inappropriate behaviour of other pilgrims: "Hajj is (during) well-known months, so whoever has made Hajj obligatory upon himself therein (by entering the state of ihram), there is [to be for him] no sexual relations and no disobedience and no disputing during Hajj." (2:197)

Objectives of the Lawgiver in the legislation methodology (Maqasid Al-Shari' fi manhaj al-tashri')

This part refers to the principles and criteria the Lawgiver considered in legislating Shariah rulings such as consideration of the fitrah (human nature), ease and tolerance, the universality of Shariah rulings, balancing between interests and evils, and consideration of the consequences of actions and rulings. However, this article will focus on consideration of the fitrah (human nature), ease and tolerance. (Qur'an 22:78; Al-Bukhari, 2002)

Consideration of fitrah (human nature)

Ibn Attiya defined fitrah as: "The creation, character and appearance that is inside the child's soul, which was prepared to distinguish the creatures of God, to lead him to his Lord, to know his laws, and to believe in him (Ibn Attia al-Andalusi (n.d.). Fitrah is the mental, physical and psychological dispositions of a person as he was created. Ibn Taymiyah says: "Allah created people with the capability of knowing and believing the truth, knowing the falsehood and disbelieving in it, knowing the appropriate benefit and loving it, as well as knowing the harmful and naturally detest it." (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2005). The basic criterion in determining what is compatible with the human fitrah and what is contrary to it is the teachings of the divine revelation. What the Shariah imposes on believers represents the human fitrah, and on the contrary, what Shariah forbids is contrary to the human fiĬrah. Allah says: "So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fiĬrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation

of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know." (30:30). God's religion is innate, since the fitrah is based on monotheistic belief in Allah and readiness to do good (Al-Razi, 2018). Our Creator acknowledges peoples' need to satisfy their innate desires as males and females, love for children and money: "Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire – of women and children, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return." (3:14). The Shariah permits the fulfilment of pleasure and the satisfaction of human needs. However, it explicitly rejects immoralities and vices that lead to the corruption of human nature and cause harm to individuals. Simultaneously, every believer is required to balance their own rights, the rights of Allah, and the rights of others.

Ease and tolerance

The Holy Quran stated in several verses that the Shariah is easy and tolerant, and that Allah did not intend to legislate the Shariah to overwhelm and tire people but rather to facilitate and ease their lives: "And strive for Allah with the striving due to Him. He has chosen you and has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty. [It is] the religion of your father, Abraham. Allah named you "Muslims before [in former scriptures] and in this [revelation] that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you may be witnesses over the people. So, establish prayer and give zakat and hold fast to Allah. He is your protector; and excellent is the protector, and excellent is the helper." (22: 78). In one of his Hadiths, the Prophet emphasized the significance of this issue: "The most beloved religious practice to Allah is tawheed (monotheism) and tolerance" (al-Bukhari). It does not, however, imply complete lack of weariness and adversity, as that is not achievable in this life. Life is by its very nature full of challenges and exhaustion. Every desire has a price. In this case, Allah: "We have certainly created man to face hardships." (90: 4). However, the difficulty that is not covered by Shariah is an uncommon burden that could mislead people, alter their behavior, and increase their anxiety about how to deal with it. The Shariah provides concessions (rukh'ah) for these kinds of afflictions. However, such acts are prohibited if the hardship stems from extreme and exaggerated religious ritual performance, which is burdening oneself. People were required to exercise moderation and carry out their rites in a way that did not put them under undue strain. "You should do what you are able to do, for Allah does not get tired of giving you rewards and

He continues to do so until you are exhausted," the Prophet expressed. Therefore, a believer would be better off doing something modest but consistently until they achieve their goals rather than exhausting themselves by performing God-pleasing deeds and then stopping entirely. The activities that are performed most consistently are the ones that Allah finds most pleasant (al-Bukhari). The difference between the usual bearable hardship and the real laborious hardship in performing religious rituals is the effect: if continuing with rituals leads to interruption and causes real harm to one's body, wealth, or mental condition, the hardship is out of the ordinary. If there is none of that, it is a usual hardship that should be tolerated.

The Evolving Role of Maqasid al-Shariah

Maqasid al-Shariah is not a static concept but a dynamic framework that allows for the adaptation of Shariah norms to changing circumstances, in certain situations, while remaining true to its core principles. The following examples composed of historical as well as modern cases illustrate how Maqasid al-Shariah has been applied to address evolving challenges.

For example, a story about the legal treatment of lost property is reported by Ibn Ḥibbān. According to this account, a man asked the Prophet Muhammad about the ruling on luqaṭa (lost items). The Prophet gave the finding instructions to take particular note of the item's unique characteristics, such as its fastening and container, and to publicly disclose the find for a year. The finder was allowed to utilize the item for personal purposes if the genuine owner did not come forward during that time. In response to the questioner's specific inquiry regarding a lost sheep, the Prophet said that such an animal might be seized because it would otherwise be vulnerable, either helping the finder or another person or being prey to a wild animal. When questioned about a lost camel, the Prophet advised against seizing it, stating that a camel could survive on its own by carrying its own water and moving to grazing and watering locations until its owner found it. According to this narrative, it was forbidden at the time to retrieve missing camels as there was no fear of theft and they were not in urgent danger. However, further historical events changed the practical application of this decision. ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān issued instructions that stray camels should be collected and sold as public trust waned and they were vulnerable to loss or misappropriation. This was a context-sensitive implementation of the original legal premise.

If the owner subsequently appeared, they would be given the sale price. The underlying objective of the initial prohibition against picking up stray camels was to prevent their theft; but when they became unsafe, this specific objective of prohibition ceased to exist. Consequently, the practical application of the underlying objective shifted to whether stray camels should or should not be picked up, demonstrating how the means to achieve the objective adapt to new realities. According to Imam Mālik, Ibn Shihāb claimed that stray camels were common during 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb's reign and were purposefully left unattended, with no one stepping in to claim or manage them. Up to the caliphate of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, who instituted an alternative administrative strategy, this practice persisted. According to Ibn Shihāb, 'Uthmān commanded that these camels be made public and then sold; if the owner subsequently came forward, he was to be paid with the sale proceeds (al-Muwaṭṭaň). This report, which was conveyed under Imam Malik's authority through Ibn Shihab, shows a change in policy in response to evolving societal circumstances (al-Muwatta; Malik ibn Anas, 1985; Ibn Hibban, 1993).

As another example the fundamental prohibition of usury (Riba) in Islam is well-known and clear, as stated in Quranic verses and Hadiths of the Prophet. However, the development of Shariah-compliant financial standards by institutions like the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI) demonstrates the application of Maqasid al-Shariah in the modern context. Criteria such as the 30% debt-to-market capitalization ratio seek to balance the need for economic activity with the avoidance of excessive debt and its potential harms, thus upholding the broader objectives of economic justice and stability. It should by no means be understood that contemporary Muslim scholars permit Riba in every situation simply because it falls within this 30% threshold. Instead, such allowances are applied on a case-by-case basis under certain strict conditions (AAOIFI, 2023).

Conclusion

The Maqasid al-Shari'ah represents a fundamental paradigm by which Muslims can meaningfully address the complex issues of our time by placing Islamic teachings within a comprehensive ethical framework. Grounded in the Qur'an, Sunnah, and classical usul al-fiqh, it provides a methodology for interpreting Shariah texts, rulings, and legislative objectives while maintaining their essential purposes. Textual analysis, inductive reasoning, and comparative assessment show that Maqāṣid adapts to changing circumstances. Historical examples, such as the legal handling of lost property, and contemporary cases, such as Shariah-compliant financial standards, demonstrate how objectives guide practical solutions while safeguarding justice and welfare. The framework emphasizes ease and tolerance, ensuring that religious obligations remain achievable and consistent with human nature. By clarifying the authentic meaning, scope, and methodology of Maqāṣid, this study strengthens Islamic jurisprudence, linking classical theory with modern practice. Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah provides a principled and adaptable guide for ethical, legal, financial, and social decision-making, maintaining the objectives of Islamic law in a changing world.

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