

*The*  
MAQASIDIC  
TAFSIR

VOLUME 1

Pursuing the Higher Aim of  
The Quranic Scripture

Introduction to  
The Maqasidic Tafsir

2<sup>ND</sup> EDITION



BY  
KARIM ABU ZAID



## Editor's Note



Phonetic spelling of any language using other than its native alphabet cannot be standardized except by the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet, which is a specialized code unknown to most readers. The following text, therefore, attempts the use of spelling of Arabic words in the Latin script (English alphabet) using the commonly known spellings in English language print, and electronic resources. Vowel length markings, and the use of doubled vowel characters have been eliminated for simplicity. Glottal stops of any degree are marked with a single apostrophe. For example, references to the Kutub as-Sittah are spelled as follows: Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmizi, Ibn Majah, Nasa'i, and Abu Dawud. Citations of Hadith from the six books, and Ibn Kathir are from Darussalam in ascending numerical order from narration (Hadith) number one in volume one, and increasing until the last volume. Translation into English of the meaning of the Quran is taken from Mohsin Khan, unless otherwise noted.

References of third-party contemporary, or classical scholarship within volume one of this book, or subsequent volumes are not intended as an endorsement of any book, author, creed, or ideology, but only as contextual information. The author encourages students of knowledge to exercise critical thinking, and to pursue knowledge from reliable texts under the direction of known scholars (Ulama), and upon the method of the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin).



## مقدمة

إن الحمد لله نحمده ونستعينه ونستغفره، ونعوذ بالله من شرور أنفسنا وسيئات أعمالنا، من يهده الله فلا مضل له ومن يضل فلا هادي له، وأشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له، وأشهد أن محمدا عبده ورسوله

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾﴾

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ؕ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِءِ

وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴿١﴾﴾

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٧٠﴾﴾

﴿يُصَلِّحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧١﴾﴾

إن أصدق الحديث كتاب الله، وأحسن الهدي هدي محمد ﷺ، وشر الأمور محدثاتها، وكل محدثة بدعة، وكل بدعة ضلالة، وكل ضلالة في النار



## Table Of Contents

Preface .....	I
Abstract.....	III
Introduction .....	1
Part One — Introduction to Tafsir .....	10
Chapter One — Tafsir & Mufassir .....	11
Chapter Two — Tafsir Bil-Ma'thur .....	20
Chapter Three — Tafsir Bil-Ra'yi.....	34
Chapter Four — Types of Tafsir Bil-Ra'yi.....	39
Part Two — Introduction to Maqasidic Tafsir.....	47
Chapter One — Maqasid in Islam .....	48
Chapter Two — Maqasid Ash-Shari'ah .....	54
Chapter Three — The Science of Maqasid Al-Quran.....	66
Chapter Four — Levels of the Quranic Maqasid .....	103
Chapter Five — The Evolution of the Maqasidic Tafsir .....	126
Part Three — The Process: Step-By-Step Guide.....	132
Chapter One — Five-Phase Process of Maqasidic Tafsir .....	133
Chapter Two — Step-By-Step Guide .....	147
Conclusion.....	190



## Preface



All thanks, and praise are due to Allah ﷻ. We seek His help, and forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah ﷻ from the evil within ourselves, and the consequences of our evil deeds. Whomever Allah ﷻ guides will never be led astray, and whomever Allah ﷻ leads astray will never find guidance. I bear witness there is no God but Allah ﷻ alone Who is without any partners, and I bear witness that Muhammad ﷺ is His servant, and His Messenger. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا اتَّقُوْا اللّٰهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهٖۚ وَلَا تَمُوْنُوْا اِلَّا وَاَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿۱۰۴﴾﴾

**“O you who have faith (Iman), fear Allah as it is His right to be feared, and do not die except as Muslims.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَّخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيْرًا وَّنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوْا اللّٰهَ الَّذِيْ تَسَّءَلُوْنَ بِهٖۚ وَاَلْرٰحِمَ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلٰیكُمْ رَقِيْبًا ﴿۱﴾﴾

**“O people, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul, and created from it its mate, and dispersed from both of them many men, and women. Fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and maintain family ties. Verily, Allah is ever watching over you.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

Allah ﷻ also said:

---

(1) Quran (3:102).

(2) Quran (4:1).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٧٠﴾ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا

عَظِيمًا ﴿٧١﴾

**“O you who have faith (Iman), fear Allah, and speak upright words. He will correct your deeds, and forgive your sins. Whoever obeys Allah, and His Messenger has won a tremendous victory.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

Verily, the most truthful speech is the Book of Allah ﷻ, the best guidance is the guidance of our beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and the worst of affairs are newly invented matters. Every newly invented matter is a religious innovation (Bid’ah)—every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the Hellfire (Jahannam).



---

(1) Quran (33:70-71)



## Abstract

The process of *The Maqasidic Tafsir* is used to explain the higher aims of the Quranic scripture (Maqasid Al-Quran), inclusive of the traditional evidenced-based exegetical process (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur). *The Maqasidic Tafsir* seeks to implement a structured method to present the intended higher ideals behind the Quranic scripture, based on casuist explanations from sources of the Quran, the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah), and the explanations of the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin). The characteristics of a higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) have origins in the processes of the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin), followed by understanding the meaning of events based on the Revelation. That process is indicated in several examples from the earliest, and most renowned scholars (Ulama) of Islam.

Abdullah ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه was the Prophet's ﷺ immediate cousin, and had unique regular access to prophetic guidance. One day, the Prophet ﷺ invoked Allah ﻻ ﻳﺮﻭﻥ to grant him the skill of interpreting the Revelation, which meant realizing and reaching the intended greater ideals behind the Revelation—the higher aims (Maqasid). Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه narrated, **“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ put his hand on my shoulder and said, ‘O Allah, make him comprehend the religion and teach him at-Ta’wil (interpretation of the Revelation).’”**<sup>(1)</sup>

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه later exhibited the idealization of **at-Ta’wil** in an anecdote, in which he explained the higher aim (Maqsid) of a Quranic chapter (Surah) to senior companions (Sahabah), **“Umar asked the people regarding Allah’s Statement, ‘When there comes the Help of Allah (to you O Muhammad against your enemies) and the Conquest (of Makkah)...’ They replied, ‘It indicates the future conquest of towns and palaces (by Muslims).’ Umar [asked], ‘What do you say about it, O Ibn Abbas?’ I replied, ‘[(This chapter (Surah)] indicates the termination of the life of Muhammad. Through it, he was informed of the nearness of his death.’”**<sup>(2)</sup> Umar bin Al-Khattab said, **“I do not know anything about it other than what you have said.”**<sup>(3)</sup>

Abdullah ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه emphasized the intended message behind the entire chapter (Surah). However, the others engaged in the apparent meanings of the words. What is manifest in social ailments, disorders, and diseases of the heart of the Muslims of today is a need for an understanding of the higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran) as exemplified by ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه.

(1) Ahmad (2874), trans. unknown.

(2) Bukhari (4969); also see Bukhari (3627, 4294, 4430).

(3) Bukhari (4970).

**The method** of *The Maqasidic Tafsir* entails first identifying present-day challenges, phenomena, and problems, then establishing a process of sourcing one or more verses (Ayat), chapters (Suwar), or parables that address these contemporary issues. This requires the exegete (Mufasssir) to relate the reality of contemporary Muslims to an evidence-based understanding of the state of the first Muslim community (Ummah) who witnessed the Revelation. The Quran was revealed to rectify their condition, give guidance to the Prophet ﷺ, and his companions (Sahabah), and document a method for the successive generations of Muslims to inherit. This method is the higher aim-based (Maqasidic) process, further illustrated by the interpretation of Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه.

The first genuine difficulty the nascent Muslim community (Ummah) encountered was the severing of cohesive community after the death of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Shock unsettled most of the companions (Sahabah) who could neither stand nor speak. In his forthcoming style, Umar ibn Al-Khattab رضي الله عنه expressed his reaction and threatened anyone who said the Prophet ﷺ was dead. He said, **“The Messenger of Allah did not die, but went to his Lord in the same way as Musa ibn Imran (Moses) did. He stayed away for forty nights, but finally came back though they said he had been dead. By Allah, the Messenger of Allah will come back and he will cut of the hands and legs of those who claim his death.”**<sup>(1)</sup> Then the succeeding leader of the Muslim community (Ummah), Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, returned from outside Madinah and showed his leadership skills. He managed the grievance of the Prophet’s ﷺ companions (Sahabah) effectively. and resolved their differing. Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه implemented his understanding of the Quran to use one verse (Ayah) which Allah تعالى revealed after the Battle of Uhud, almost eight years earlier. In the Battle of Uhud, Shaytan (Satan) incited a rumor that the disbelievers (kafirun) killed the Prophet ﷺ. Consequently, many companions (Sahabah) retreated from the battleground, and Allah تعالى admonished them. Allah تعالى said:

﴿وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ ۚ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَىٰ عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ﴾

﴿١٤٤﴾

**“Muhammad is not but a Messenger. [Other] Messengers have passed on before him. So if he was to die or be killed, would you turn back on your heels [to unbelief]? And he who turns back on his heels will never harm Allah at all; but Allah will reward the grateful.”**<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Ibn Hisham (2/655), trans. unknown.

(2) Quran (3:144), Sahih International trans.

With the comprehension and application of the higher aim (Maqsid) of one verse (Ayah) from the Quran, Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه remedied the division, and restored balance to a helpless, and hopeless community just as the verse (Ayah) restored the community in unity during the Battle of Uhud. Immediately upon hearing, and understanding Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, the Prophet's ص companions (Sahabah) recovered their strength, and effectively dealt with the unprecedented tragedy. This application of the Quran in a time of challenge was implementing our directive to use Divine Guidance functionally, seeking the higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran). Access to this exegetical method is essential to today's Muslims. The time passed between the Revelation and the present is quite extensive, and the Muslim community (Ummah) is no longer closely bound to the Quran and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah). Hence, the process of application of the higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran) has been neglected. Eventually, the application of the meaning of the Quran ceased to exist in the lives of Muslims. There is a considerable difference between the previous age and the modern age. In the contemporary age, the process of application needs an academic approach, while those who lived in the time of the Revelation had a naturalized attachment to the rope of Allah ﷻ.

Academic comprehension of the Quran, and application of suitable verses (Ayah) to our present deficiencies can reconcile our weaknesses into strengths. However, reconciliation between today's Muslims, and the Quran is not a choice. It is crucial to amend and reform our ailing community conditions, and restore our destined position as teachers of Monotheism (Tawheed) and leaders amongst humankind. The hope to correct our state is in Allah ﷻ alone. However, the rope between Allah ﷻ and us is the Quran. Therefore, a functional approach to the higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran) is our mandate.

**The academic pursuit** of the higher aims (Maqasid) of the Revelation will adopt a **five-phase process**:

1. The exegete (Mufassir) is to identify a real, and present problem, or relevant higher aim (Maqsid).
2. Presentation of the issue to the Quran to identify existent relevant major, and supporting higher aims (Maqasid), and logical, and textual evidence behind the chosen higher aim (Maqsid).
3. Expound and analyze the nature of the problem and present an outline of the concept of the higher aim (Maqsid).

## The Maqasidic Tafsir – Volume I

4. Review of the body of a relevant chapter (Surah) to identify the supporting means to achieve the relevant higher aim (Maqsid).
5. Production of an executable action plan for an individual Muslim or a community.



# Introduction



Allah ﷻ bestowed upon nations precedent to the Muslim community (Ummah) the great privilege of the frequent presence of Prophets, Messengers, and guidance. In some cases, Allah ﷻ blessed a community with a plurality of coinciding Messengers, such as the dwellers of the town in chapter (Surah) Yasin of the Quran. Allah ﷻ said about them:

﴿إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ مُّرْسَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾﴾

**“When We sent them two Messengers, they belied them both, so We reinforced them with a third, and they said: ‘Verily! We have been sent to you as Messengers.’”<sup>(1)</sup>**

Allah ﷻ sent Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and referred to him as the final, and the seal of all Messengers, and Prophets. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٤٠﴾﴾

**“Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah, and the Prophets' last (end). And Allah is Ever All-Aware of everything.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

Thus, only one Messenger, and Prophet has been established to guide this Muslim community (Ummah). However, Allah ﷻ recompensed the Muslims with the great favor of preserving this guidance in both the Quran, and the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah), a preservation which He did not award the previous nations.

Allah ﷻ pledged to preserve the Revelation, and to emphasize the perfection of this preservation, and He did not delegate the task of protecting it to anyone from among the creation. Allah ﷻ said:

---

(1) Quran (36:14).

(2) Quran (33:40).

﴿ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾ ﴾

“Verily We: It is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (i.e., the Quran), and indeed, we will guard it (from corruption).”<sup>(1)</sup>

Allah ﷻ placed learned scholars (Ulama) in charge of preserving the Revelations in the previous nations. Allah ﷻ commanded them to protect the Revelation from corruption, and change, but relegated them the freedom to choose to fulfill the command, or be disobedient. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتُحْفِظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ فَلَا تَخْشَوُا النَّكَاسَ وَأَخْشَوْنَ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ ﴾

“Surely We revealed the Torah, wherein there is guidance, and light. Thereby did Prophets—who had submitted themselves (to Allah)—judge for the Jews, and so did the scholars, and jurists. They judged by the Book of Allah for they had been entrusted to keep it, and bear witness to it.”<sup>(2)</sup>

Reconciliation of the Muslim community (Ummah) to Quranic guidance is not an option—it is imperative. It is essential to reform the condition of Muslims, and restore obedience to Allah ﷻ as a central goal amongst humanity. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾ ﴾

“You are the best nation raised for humanity. You enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong, and you believe in Allah. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would

(1) Quran (15:9).

(2) Quran (5:44).

have been better for them [though] among them are believers, but most of them are disobedient.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Muslims are the best of humanity because they actualize the three qualities Allah ﷻ mentioned in the above verse (Ayah). First, they enjoin what is right through lawful, and accepted means, and forbid evil without causing a greater evil, and they do that based on the firm belief in the Mercy of Allah ﷻ. They hope in Allah ﷻ alone to rectify the Muslim community (Ummah), but the rope between Allah ﷻ, and His Mercy is binding ourselves to the Quran.

The Quran is the real, uncreated Word of Allah ﷻ, and is one of the Attributes of Allah ﷻ—the Attribute of Speech (Kalamu Allah ﷻ), which we affirm in a way that suits His Majestic Greatness. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ. ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦﴾﴾

“And if any one of the polytheists (mushrikun) seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allah. Then deliver him to his place of safety. That is because they are people who do not know.”<sup>(2)</sup>

The Quran is a unique gift from Allah ﷻ to the Muslim community (Ummah)—He gave nothing similar to the believers before this community. The Quran replaces the need for successions of living Messengers, and Prophets, such as those who guided the previous nations.

Pursuit of the higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran) through the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) begins with understanding the virtues of the Quran.

### The necessity of the Quran in our lives

Allah ﷻ extolled the attributes of the Quran with many laudable descriptions. Scholars (Ulama) documented over ninety illustrations. Each example indicates a function that the Quran might contribute to our individual, and collective lives. Hence, if one of the Quranic attributes is not actualized in our lives, then the loss of its virtue is substantial.

(1) Quran (3:110).

(2) Quran (9:6).

**First**, Allah ﷻ described the Quran as guidance. Hence, if the Quran is absent from our lives, it means we are not guided. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا ﴾ (1)

**“Verily, this Quran guides to that which is most just, and right.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

Allah ﷻ revealed a command to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, while he debated the disbelievers (kafirun):

﴿ قُلْ إِنْ ضَلَلْتُ فَإِنَّمَا أَضِلُّ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِي وَإِنِ اهْتَدَيْتُ فِيمَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ قَرِيبٌ ﴾ (2)

**“Say: ‘If (even) I go astray, I shall stray only to my own loss. But if I remain guided, it is because of the inspiration of my Lord to me. Truly, He is All-Hearer, Ever Near (to all things).’”<sup>(2)</sup>**

**Second**, Allah ﷻ described the Quran as a means to insight. Hence, if the Quran is absent from our lives, that means we do not have the proper means to reach the truth. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَصَائِرٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ عَمِيَ فَعَلَيْهَا ۚ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ ﴾ (3)

**“Verily, means to insights have come to you from your Lord, so whosoever sees, will do so for (the good of) his own self, and whosoever blinds himself, will do so to his harm, and I (Muhammad) am not a watcher over you.”<sup>(3)</sup>**

**Third**, Allah ﷻ described the Quran as a spiritual inspiration (Ruh) that directly touches, and nourishes our souls. Hence, if the Quran is absent from our lives, we will be spiritually dead, although we are still physically alive. Allah ﷻ said:

(1) Quran (17:9).  
(2) Quran (34:50).  
(3) Quran (6:104).



﴿وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكُتُبُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَٰكِن جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَن نَّشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا وَإِنَّكَ

لَتَهْدَىٰ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٢﴾

“And thus We have revealed to you an inspiration of Our command.”<sup>(1)</sup>

**Fourth**, Allah ﷻ described the Quran as a criterion. It distinguishes right from wrong, and the truth from falsehood, and it differentiates between the lawful, and unlawful. Hence, if the Quran is absent, we will be in complete chaos. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا ﴿١﴾﴾

“Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His Servant that he may be to the worlds a warner.”<sup>(2)</sup>

**Finally**, Allah ﷻ described the Quran as the source of mercy, healing for our hearts, and illumination for the misguided. Hence, the absence of the Quran from our lives means a lack of guidance, serenity, and mercy. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَنُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٨٢﴾﴾

“And We send down of the Quran that which is a healing, and a mercy to those who believe.”<sup>(3)</sup>

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي هَدَىٰ ءَامَنُوا هُدًى وَشِفَاءً ﴿٤٤﴾﴾

“Say: It (The Quran) is for those who believe, a guide, and a healing.”<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Quran (42:52).

(2) Quran (25:1).

(3) Quran (17:82).

(4) Quran (41:44).

Allah ﷻ also said:

هُوَ الَّذِي يُزِلُّ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ آيَاتٍ يَبْتَغِي لِيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٩﴾

**“It is He Who sends down manifest Ayat (proofs, evidence, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) to His servant (Muhammad) that He may bring you out from darkness into light.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

The Quran had a functional role in safeguarding the nascent Islamic community (Ummah). The absence of the Quran would have left the community (Ummah) vulnerable to collapse in many incidences. Recitation of verses (Ayat) from the Quran led to the recovery of the entire Muslim community (Ummah) from crises, and leadership challenges.

The Revelation was sent in pragmatic times, and sometimes there were deliberate pauses in the Revelation due to the Divine Wisdom of Allah ﷻ. Amongst many examples of this Divine Wisdom was the pause of Revelation to test the Muslim community (Ummah) with the slander of Aishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, as related in chapter (Surah) An-Nur. Another example of functionalism in the pausing of Revelation came after the Treaty of Hudaibiyah. Some companions (Sahabah) had dismay regarding the treaty terms, and conditions the Prophet ﷺ agreed to with the Makkan disbelievers (kafirun). The Revelation of chapter (Surah) Al-Fath came to remove all doubt, and describes this truce as a great victory.

The Muslims who witnessed Revelation in the life of the Prophet ﷺ understood how vital the Quran was for their individual, and collective welfare. Let us reflect upon a concise story narrated by Anas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to grasp the depth of this point.

Anas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ reported after the death of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, “Abu Bakr said to Umar, ‘Let us visit Umm Ayman as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to visit her.’ When we came to her, she was weeping. They (Abu Bakr, and Umar) said to her, ‘What makes you weep? What is with Allah is better for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.’ She said, ‘I weep not because I do not know of the fact that what is with Allah is better for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, but I weep because the Revelation which came from the Heaven has ceased to come.’ It moved both of them to tears, and they began to weep along with her.”<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Quran (57:9).

(2) Muslim (6318).

The weeping was because of the cessation of Revelation with the Prophet's ﷺ death. The Revelation influenced their lives for twenty-three years, and it was a living, and dynamic communication that touched the hearts instantaneously because it came at the right time to deal with existing challenges.

The challenge we face as Muslims today is how to return to, and implement the Quran as a dynamic, and living communication. We need the presence of the Quran in our lives to guide us, and impart insight regarding our individual, and community challenges.

### Bridging the gap between the Quran, and us

Allah ﷻ established, and completed Islam on earth during the life of the Prophet ﷺ, and after the death of the Messenger, Revelation ceased. The legacy of Revelation in the Quran, and Sunnah was secured by early Muslims who applied this guidance, and insight in their lives. Hence, they gained dominance, and strength on earth because they were able to implement the Quran in contemporary challenges in the manner of Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه.

The first genuine difficulty the Muslim community (Ummah) encountered was the severing of the cohesive community at the death of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Shock unsettled most of the companions (Sahabah), who could neither stand nor speak. Umar Ibn Al-Khattab رضي الله عنه, in his forthcoming style, was able to express his reaction, and said, **“I swear by Allah, if any of you says, ‘The Prophet ﷺ is dead,’ I will kill him with my sword. The Prophet ﷺ has gone like Musa (Moses). He went to meet Allah, and he will return.”**<sup>(1)</sup>

Then the succeeding leader of the Muslim community (Ummah), Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, returned from outside Madinah, and showed his leadership skill. He managed the grievance of the Prophet's ﷺ companions (Sahabah) effectively, and settled the differences between them. Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه implemented his understanding of the Quran by using one verse (Ayah), which Allah ﷻ revealed after the Battle of Uhud, almost eight years past. In the Battle of Uhud, Shaytan (Satan) incited a rumor that the disbelievers (kafirun) killed the Prophet ﷺ. Consequently, many companions (Sahabah) retreated from the battleground, and Allah ﷻ admonished them. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَىٰ عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴾

<sup>(1)</sup> Sahih Al-Bukhari (3667)

**“Muhammad is not but a Messenger. [Other] Messengers have passed on before him. So if he was to die, or be killed, would you turn back on your heels [to unbelief]?, and he who turns back on his heels will never harm Allah at all; but Allah will reward the grateful.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

With comprehension, and application of one verse (Ayah) from the Quran, Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه was able to remedy the division, and restore balance in a helpless, and hopeless community. Immediately upon hearing, and understanding Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, the Prophet's ﷺ companions (Sahabah) recovered their strength, and effectively dealt with the unprecedented tragedy. This application of the Quran in a time of challenge was implementing our directive to use this guidance functionally, as Allah ﷻ said:

﴿فَإِنْ نُنزِعْكُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا﴾

**“And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah, and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah, and the Last Day. That is the best [way], and best in result.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

Much time has passed since the Revelation, and the Muslim community (Ummah) is no longer closely bound to the Quran, and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah). Hence, the process of reapplication took a backseat. Eventually, the application of the meaning of the Quran ceased to exist in the lives of Muslims. There is a huge difference between the previous age, and the modern age. In the modern age, the process of application needs an academic approach.

Academic comprehension of the Quran, and application of suitable verses (Ayat) to our present deficiencies can change our weaknesses into strengths. Reconciliation between today's Muslims, and the Quran is not a choice. It is crucial to amend, and reform our conditions, and restore our destined position as teachers of Tawheed (Monotheism), and leaders amongst humanity—hope to correct our condition is in Allah ﷻ alone, but the rope between Allah ﷻ, and us is the Quran. Therefore, a functional approach to the higher aims (Maqasid) of the Quran is our mandate.

### The higher aim-based exegesis — Maqasidic Tafsir

Maqasidic Tafsir stems from the higher aims of the Quranic script as a means to recover the bond between the Muslims of today, and the Quran. We must understand that each verse (Ayah), and

<sup>(1)</sup> Quran (3:144), Sahih International trans.

<sup>(2)</sup> Quran (4:59), Sahih International trans.

chapter (Surah) of the Quran has an aim, purpose, objective, goal, and wisdom, which we call *Maqsid*.

Skilled scholars (Ulama) of exegesis (Tafsir) derive comprehensive meanings of *the higher aims* (Maqasid) of the one hundred and fourteen chapters (Suwar) of the Quran, and execute progressive and functional action plans. Only through such reference, and implementation of knowledge of the Quran, and the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) can the Muslim community (Ummah) gradually realize improvement of faith (Iman), a return to dignity, and inheritance of leadership by the will of Allah ﷻ.

Exegesis (Tafsir) is the most important topic in the sciences of Quranic study. It is of the most exceptional, and rewarding services to explain the Book of Allah ﷻ hoping for guidance, and I ask Allah ﷻ to aid me in achieving this objective. The goal of this exegesis (Tafsir) is to derive the higher aims (Maqasid) of all one hundred and fourteen chapters (Suwar) in the Quran.

I ask Allah ﷻ to accept this work, *The Maqasidic Tafsir: Pursuing the Higher Aim of the Quranic Scripture*, and make it beneficial to my beloved Muslim community (Ummah).

I may have surprised some readers with the title I chose for this work. There is some negative association with the higher aim-based (Maqasidic) approach to exegesis (Tafsir) of the Quran due to earlier efforts by scholars (Ulama) who were not firmly grounded in knowledge, and who deviated from the method of the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin). Therefore, part one of this introductory volume will contextualize the meaning of the higher aim-based (Maqasidic) trend of exegesis (Tafsir), its evolution, and its status among the scholars (Ulama) of exegesis (Tafsir). Part two will discuss the role of deriving the higher aims (Maqasid) in Islamic, and Quranic sciences, and part three will outline the method of applying higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) to the Quran. If Allah ﷻ wills, this overview of the subject of higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) will prepare the reader for the study of the higher aims (Maqasid) of each chapter (Surah) of the Quran in the subsequent volumes.





# Part One

# Introduction to Tafsir



# Chapter One

## Tafsir & Mufasssir



### Introduction

The Quran is the word of Allah ﷻ, which originated from Allah ﷻ, and will return to Him. Allah ﷻ uttered the Quran, Angel Jibreel عليه السلام (Gabriel) heard this speech, and was tasked to bring the Revelation down to Muhammad ﷺ.

The Quran is the Speech of Allah ﷻ, which means it is one of His Attributes, and is from Him, and not from the created world. Deviant sects who negate the Attributes of Allah ﷻ claim that the Quran is created. According to the orthodox Islamic position of Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah,<sup>(1)</sup> **“Whoever says the Quran is created, and not speech is an apostate (kafir).”**<sup>(2)</sup>

At-Tahawi ؒ said in his famous book *Al-'Aqeeda at-Tahawiyya* that the believers affirm, **“The Quran is the Word of Allah. It originally came from Him, without ascribing modality to His Speech. He sent it down upon His Messenger as Revelation. The believers accept all of that as the truth. They are certain that it is the Word of Allah the Exalted in reality. It is uncreated, unlike the speech of creatures.”**<sup>(3)</sup> Therefore, we affirm that whoever says Allah ﷻ does not have speech has disbelieved. There are many pieces of evidence for this statement. Most importantly, the claim that Allah ﷻ does not have speech negates, and rejects what Allah ﷻ said concerning the hypocrites (mushrikun):

- 
- (1) Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah refers to Muslims who strive to follow the example of the first three best generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin), and the Prophet ﷺ declared their superiority in understanding, interpreting, and applying the Quran, and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah).
  - (2) The four Imams stated that calling the Quran ‘created’ is disbelief (kufr); it is the position of the well-grounded jurists before, and after them.
  - (3) *Al-Aqeedah Tahawiyya* by the Hanafi jurist Abu Ja'far Ahmad at-Tahawi (792 -843 AH), Abu Amina Elias trans.

﴿يُرِيدُونَ أَن يُبَدِّلُوا كَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ﴾

“They wish to change the words of Allah.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Our goal as believers is to submit to the Speech of Allah ﷻ, and to strive with our short time to understand, and implement this Quran.

### Definition of ‘Tafsir’ — exegesis

The word ‘Tafsir’ is a form of the verbal noun derived from the Arabic verb ‘Fasara,’ which means to clear up, or explicate. Its contextual meaning is to explain words, sentences, actions, or information, and to lift the cover of obscurity to bring clarity. We will use the English word “exegesis,” which has the closest meaning to it.

Exegesis (Tafsir) of the Quran refers to authentic knowledge to explain, or interpret the words, verses (Ayat), structure, and etiology of the Quran. The objective of exegesis (Tafsir) is to derive the apparent meanings of the Speech of Allah ﷻ so that Muslims might benefit from useful knowledge, and implement the guidance, and illumination of the Quran. Exegesis (Tafsir) of a verse (Ayah) is inseparable from the context in which that verse (Ayah) was revealed. Hence, knowing the etiology of each, and every phrase consequently results in a better understanding of the Quran, and its verses (Ayat). Exegesis (Tafsir) is also an essential tool in elucidating Islamic law from the Quran.

An exegesis (Tafsir) does not negotiate hidden meanings, or embedded codes with mystical power as many Muslims view the Quran. They assert, without valid evidence, that if you say a specific chapter (Surah) ten times, for example, it will mystically cause a particular effect. This is, of course, untrue. Such use of the Quran foments the collapse of Monotheism (Tawheed), elicits polytheism (shirk), and belies the contextual meanings for which the verses (Ayat) were revealed.

### Definition of a ‘Mufassir’ — exegete

The noun ‘Mufassir’ (exegete) refers to the qualified individual who explains, and clarifies an unknown, or an abstraction. Hence, a Mufassir is the author of Tafsir. He employs the Quranic sciences to explain, interpret, and provide context for the verses (Ayat) of the Quran.

---

(1) Quran (48:15), Sahih International trans.



When the exegesis (Tafsir) of the Quran is not based on a scientific method, then ambiguity, and contradiction are surely to rise. Reliable exegesis (Tafsir) of the Quran is known for its citations of evidence, and foundations in a scientific method of analysis of the verses (Ayat). This standard decreases the chance of ambiguous exegesis (Tafsir), and consolidates agreement, while it minimizes conflicting conclusions. An exegete (Mufasssir) with integrity, and useful knowledge will derive clear explanations, instead of ambiguous opinions. He aims to show where, when, and why a Quranic subject was broached in a manner consistent with the meaning understood in the time of the Prophet ﷺ, his companions (Sahabah), and subsequent successors (Tabi'un). He achieves excellence, and a continuing reward if he succeeds in making the text communicate meaningfully, and functionally within his own time, and cultural framework.

### The mandate of an exegete (Mufasssir)

The virtues of seeking Islamic knowledge are many. The greatest of all aspects of knowledge are those concerning the explanation of the Speech of Allah ﷻ—this is the exegesis (Tafsir). Exegesis (Tafsir) of the Quran requires mastering a diverse knowledge base, which the scholars (Ulama) classify as sciences of the Quran. It is not viable, nor is it commendable for an exegete (Mufasssir) to attempt to pursue the explanation of the Quran without employing the necessary Quranic sciences. The evidence is in the statement of the Prophet ﷺ who said, **“The one who speaks about the Book of Allah relying only on his own opinion with no knowledge, then let him take his seat in Hell (Jahannam). Even if his opinion matched the correct exegesis (Tafsir) of the Quran.”**<sup>(1)</sup> The meaning is supported by a consensus of the firmly grounded scholars (Ulama) in the principle that knowledge must come before action. This is known because Allah ﷻ said:

﴿فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَثْوَاكُمْ﴾

**“So know, [O Muhammad], that there is no deity except Allah, and ask forgiveness for your sin, and for the believing men, and believing women.”**<sup>(2)</sup>

All acts of worship, such as seeking forgiveness, and inviting to Allah ﷻ by writing an exegesis (Tafsir), must be done according to three criteria. The first is to be a believer, the second is to have the sincerity to perform the act only to please Allah ﷻ, and the third is to perform the act with

(1) Sunan At-Tirmizi 5/2950 (Darussalam). While Za'i graded this Hadith weak due to scholastic differences over some individuals in the chain, al Imam at-Tirmizi labels it Hasan Sahih according to his criteria. Similar is reported by Ahmad, Nasa'i, at-Tabarani in *Al-Kabir*, and Ibn Jarir at-Tabari in his Tafsir. All reports have weak chains according to Al-Albani, but the meaning is correct, and known.

(2) Quran (47:19), Sahih International trans.

fidelity to the method that is known from the Tradition of the Prophet ﷺ (Sunnah). Therefore, the exegete (Mufasssir) must begin an exegesis with authentic knowledge.

### Necessary skills of the exegete (Mufasssir)

Numerous scholars (Ulama) have discussed the science of explaining the Quran. Of note are *Al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*, by Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti, and *Muqaddimah fi Usul at-Tafsir* by Shaykh al-Islam ibn Taymiyyah ر. A concordance may be drawn to derive the prerequisite sciences to explain the Quran with fidelity.

An example of these skills heavily stresses linguistic knowledge:

1. The science of **Qira'at**, which demonstrates the various methods of reading the Quran that the Prophet ﷺ conveyed to his community (Ummah).
2. The science of **Tajweed**, which deals with enunciation; how to start, stop, prolong, or shorten individual letters.
3. The science of **Gharib al-Quran**, which deals with explaining the meanings of unfamiliar words in the Quran. These words are not part of the Arabic vocabulary, nor contained in everyday conversation.
4. The science of **I'rab al-Quran**, which refers to the system of nominal, adjectival, or verbal suffixes of classical Arabic, which are articulated in formal recitation, but are absent from contemporary spoken dialects of Arabic.

Other skills must include:

1. The science of **al-Muhkam**, and **al-Mutashabih**, which distinguishes between **Muhkam al-Quran**, the verses (Ayat) that have one denotation, and **Mutashabih al-Quran**, the ambiguous verses (Ayat) that may have multiple meanings.
2. The science of **an-Nasikh**, and **al-Mansukh**, which explains the verses (Ayat) that abrogate, or are abrogated.
3. The science of **I'jaz al-Quran**, which explains the linguistic strength of the structure, and content of the Quran with such detail that it silences the most eloquent of contemporary Arab writers.

4. The science of **Tanasub Ayat-ul Quran**, which explains the rapprochement, or reconciliation between a verse (Ayah), and the preceding, and succeeding verses (Ayat).
5. The science of **al-Aqsam** (Quranic oaths), which explains the meaning, and purposes of the adjuration of Allah ﷻ contained in the Quran.
6. The science of **Adab al-Quran**, which describes the method, and courtesy that we should follow when reading the Quran.
7. The science of **Makki**, and **Madani Quran**, which identifies chapters (Suwar), and verses (Ayat), which Allah ﷻ revealed in Makkah, and Madinah, and their characteristics.
8. Science of **Hadith** (Prophetic Narration), which includes the body of the text, the chain of narrators, and the biography of narrators.
9. Knowledge of **Shari'ah** (Islamic law), its origins, and its application.
10. Knowledge of the reasons for the Revelation.
11. Knowledge of conceptual organization, and the intellectual prowess to support this.

Application of the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir), in pursuit of the higher aims of the Quranic script (Maqasid Al-Quran), involves unique sciences of the Quran vital to this individual trend of exegesis (Tafsir). Some examples are as follows:

1. Distinguishing between types of verses (Ayat).
2. The character of preliminary, and concluding verses (Ayat) of a chapter (Surah), and their relationship to the body of the chapter (Surah).
3. The arrangements of the chapters (Suwar) of the Quran.
4. Analysis of the significant main themes of individual chapters (Suwar).
5. Structural analyses of groups of similarly themed verses (Ayat), and their relation to the main chapter (Surah).

### Specialized skills of a higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir)

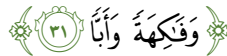
The first of the special skills of a higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir) is the ability to categorize verses (Ayat) by type. Each type of verse (Ayah) has limits to the scope of analysis that govern its study. Failure to understand this science separates an exegesis (Tafsir) from being useful knowledge, or useless, and blameworthy innovation (Bid'ah). This is a special science because it involves a balance of other fields of expertise, including Prophetic Narration (Hadith), Islamic belief system (Aqeedah), and linguistics.

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه categorized the Quranic verses (Ayat) into four types which are approached differently by a skilled exegete (Mufasssir).

### Distinguishing knowable verses (Ayat)

The first category of verses (Ayat) mentioned by Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه is that which the Arabs can understand because of their knowledge, and command of the Arabic language, vocabulary, and grammar. One might assume that knowledge of contemporary Arabic is enough to understand the Quran. However, there are some words in the Quran that were unknown to the companions (Sahabah) at the time of Revelation. Furthermore, Arabic dialect, and syntax have evolved since the time of the Revelation, so there are more verses (Ayat) that are unknown to the contemporary Arabic speaker without explanations found in Prophetic Narrations (Ahadith).

Anas Ibn Malik رضي الله عنه narrated, “Umar bin Al-Khattab recited chapter (Surah) Abasa until he reached the verse (Ayah):



Allah said, ‘and fruits, and *Abba*.’<sup>(1)</sup>

Umar commented, ‘We already know what the word fruit is, but what is al-Abb?’

He concluded, ‘What infliction will befall you ibn Al-Khattab, this is something over-burdensome (unnecessary to ask about).’<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Quran (80:31).

(2) *Tafsir Ibn Jarir*, Surah Abasa.

This statement is crucial because it highlights that an exegete (Mufassir) must evaluate which words, or verses (Ayat) have a meaning that are within their academic capacity. This is a skill that is essential today because contemporary Arabic dialects differ greatly from ‘Quranic Arabic.’ The enormous difference in syntax between modern forms of Arabic has brought some scholars (Ulama) to infer that those contemporary dialects should be viewed as a separate language from Quranic Arabic. Of the large corpus of vocabulary in the Quran, which is unknown to a contemporary Arabic speaker, some words can be known by an exegete (Mufassir) who has knowledge of the Quran, and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah), while other words have meanings that are unknown, and seeking them is ‘over-burdensome.’ This issue also borders on the sciences of Islamic belief system (Aqeedah), as many nouns which describe features of the Paradise (Jannah), or Hellfire (Jahannam) are not analogous to any object in our corporeal world. Thus, the pursuit of the meaning of their essence is unknowable in this life.

A higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) must have the ability to identify vocabulary upon a scale of intelligibility. The exegete (Mufassir) must sometimes abandon the meaning of unknown words. Anas رضي الله عنه said, **“We were with Umar ibn Al-Khattab, and he said, ‘We were forbidden to concern ourselves with matters that are not of great benefit.’”**<sup>(1)</sup> This means that the pursuit of knowledge must electively overlook some information, and favor other information. The amount of Islamic knowledge available is large, and our time on Earth is short. Therefore, we need to use wisdom to bely the pursuit of information that is secondary, and meanings that are unattainable. This is a unique skill set of the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir).

It was narrated from Abu Tha'labah al-Khushani رضي الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said, **“Allah has enjoined some obligatory duties, so do not neglect them. He has set limits, so do not transgress them. He has forbidden some things, so do not violate those prohibitions, and He has kept quiet about some things out of mercy towards you, not out of forgetfulness, so do not concern yourself with them.”**<sup>(2)</sup>

### Affirming the known, and clarifying the knowable verses (Ayat)

The second type includes verses (Ayat) which everyone must understand because they have one meaning. They are the Pillars of Islam (Arkan Al-Islam), the commands, the lawful, and unlawful, and the penal code in Islam—the meanings must be known, affirmed, and implemented. Failure to engage all three aspects is blameworthy, and opens the door to falling into innovation (Bid'ah), or disbelief (kufr).

---

(1) Bukhari (7293).

(2) Sunan Al-Daraqutni (4316), classed Sahih (Authentic) by Ibn al-Qayyim. Italics added.

### The ambiguous verses (Ayat) which only the well-grounded scholars (Ulama) can explain

The third type consists of verses (Ayat) that have more than one ambiguous meaning—they are not entirely clear. Only scholars (Ulama) who are well-grounded in knowledge would be able to identify their implications. The obscurity of these verses (Ayat) may be at the conceptual level, or at the lexical level, such as in the example of the verse (Ayah) from chapter (Surah) Abasa mentioned above:

﴿وَفَكَهَأَ وَأَبَا﴾

“And fruits, and Abba.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه, who was a well-grounded scholar, identified ‘Abba’ as forageable grasses. He referred to the second, and third types of verses (Ayat) to the statement of Allah ﷻ:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخْرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ ۗ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ ءَأَمَّنَّا بِهِ ۗ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ﴾

﴿الْأَلْبَابِ﴾

“It is He Who has sent down to you (Muhammad) the Book (Quran). In it are *Muhkamat* verses (Ayat), and other verses (Ayat) which are *Mutashabih*.”<sup>(2)</sup>

### Avoidance of interpreting the intangible

The fourth category of verses (Ayat) is that where the verses (Ayat) contain knowledge that can only be grasped by Allah ﷻ. For instance, the verses (Ayat) refer to the signs of the hour, the essence of the Attributes of Allah ﷻ, and the individual letters at the opening of some Quranic chapters (Suwar).

The knowledge of the real essence of things, and events referenced in these verses (Ayat), and the meaning, and implications of the language is known by Allah ﷻ. No one should indulge in, or

(1) Quran (80:31).

(2) Quran (3:7).

interpret the meaning of these verses (Ayat), or the essence of their referents. Therefore, a sound Islamic belief system (Aqeedah) is imperative to the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir).

The average Muslim will be surprised to know that there exist thousands of different works of exegesis (Tafsir). They vary greatly in style, and virtue. The exegete (Mufassir) may emphasize specialized styles, or methods to explain the meanings of the types of verses (Ayat) identified by Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه. These methods can be broadly divided into two categories: evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur), and opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi).

In evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur), the exegete (Mufassir) explains the Quran by reference to teachings narrated from the first three generations of believers (as-Salaf us-Salihin). The Prophet ﷺ declared their superior understanding, and interpretation of the Revelation.

In opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi), the exegete (Mufassir) employs his independent intellectual thinking (Ijtihad) to form an opinion-driven explanation of the Quran.

In the next two chapters, we will briefly explain the two classes of exegesis (Tafsir).



# Chapter Two

## Tafsir bil-Ma'thur



The evidence-, or narration-based interpretation of the Quran is the type of exegesis (Tafsir) in which the exegete (Mufassir) does not contribute personal opinion, or bias. He explains the Quran using **five means**:

1. The Quran
2. Explanations reported with a chain of transmission from the Prophet ﷺ
3. Interpretations reported with a chain of transmission from the companions (Sahabah) of the Prophet ﷺ
4. Understanding of the students of the companions (Sahabah)
5. Reference to the Arabic language.

### Explaining the Quran by use of the Quran

The exegete (Mufassir) employs the Quran itself. One must recognize that the Quran is from a perfect speech because it is attributed to Allah ﷻ, and it is from Him. One of the universal qualities of every human language is the arbitrary ascription of sounds to meaning. The Quran is free from arbitrary language, and has no redundancy, or contradiction because Allah ﷻ intends it to be understood. This is why verses (Ayat), and words of the Quran can frequently be employed to explain another part, and can inform an exegete (Mufassir) of the meaning of ambiguous verses (Ayat). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا﴾



**“Then do they not reflect upon the Quran? If it had been from [any] other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

The Quran is from Allah ﷻ, and is His Perfect Speech, hence, the first resort as evidence. Narration-based exegesis (Tafsir) must seek to explain the Quran by use of the Quran itself. Accordingly, we often come across some verses (Ayat) in certain chapters (Suwar) defined, or explained elsewhere in another chapter (Surah). An example would be the explanation of the disbelievers (kafirun) in Hell (Jahannam). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَتْنَا اثْنَيْنِ وَأَحْيَيْتَنَا اثْنَيْنِ فَأَعْرَفْنَا بِدُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَىٰ خُرُوجٍ مِّن سَبِيلٍ﴾ (١١)

**“They will say, ‘Our Lord, You made us lifeless twice, and gave us life twice, and we have confessed our sins. So, is there to an exit any way?’”<sup>(2)</sup>**

Abdullah ibn Mas’ud رضي الله عنه was asked about the meanings of living twice, and dying twice. He referred to what Allah ﷻ said in Chapter (Surah) Al-Baqarah:

﴿كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمُوتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ﴾ (٢٨)

**“How can you be ungrateful to Allah Who bestowed life upon you when you were lifeless. Then He will cause you to die, and will again bring you back to life so that you will be returned to Him.”<sup>(3)</sup>**

### Explanations of the Prophet ﷺ

The exegete explains the Quran by employing the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah), which is the account of the words, deeds, traditions, and actions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, which is received, and revered as the second primary source of Islamic law (Shari’ah), and moral guidance, second only to the authority of the Quran.

Allah ﷻ entrusted His Prophet ﷺ with explaining the Quran to the people. Allah ﷻ said:

(1) Quran (4:82), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (40:11), Sahih International trans.

(3) Quran (2:28).

﴿ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴾

“And We have also sent down unto you (O Muhammad) the reminder, and the advice (the Quran), that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them, and that they may give thought.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Hence, when lacking a Quranic account to explain the Quran’s meanings, who else can explain the Quran better than the Allah’s Messenger ﷺ? He was the direct recipient of the Revelation, and he would review, and perfect his account of the Quran with the Angel Jibreel عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام (Gabriel) at least once a year during Ramadan.

Furthermore, the Prophet ﷺ comprehended, and assimilated the message of the Quran to the extent that his character was a manifestation of the Quran. Sa’d ibn Hisham said to Aishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, “O mother of the believers, tell me about the character of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.” Aishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا said, “Have you not read the Quran?” [He] said, “Of course.” Aishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا said, “Verily, the character of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ was the Quran.”<sup>(2)</sup>

Therefore, almost all the authors of Prophetic Narrations’ (Ahadith) collections named one of the sections *Kitab at-Tafsir*, or The Book of Exegesis, wherein they quoted statements, and actions of the Prophet ﷺ in the context of explaining certain verses (Ayat) of the Quran.

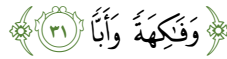
### Statements of the companions (Sahabah)

The exegete (Mufasssir) explains the Quran with reports of sayings, and actions of the Prophet’s ﷺ companions (Sahabah). They are third in authority after the Quran, and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah). The companions (Sahabah) witnessed the coming of the Revelation unto the Prophet ﷺ from Angel Jibreel عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام (Gabriel). He ﷺ would immediately disseminate this knowledge to his companions (Sahabah). Hence, if we lack evidence-based interpretation from the Quran, or the authentic Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah), we resort to the testimony of the companions (Sahabah).

Furthermore, they were extremely cautious when speaking of the Quran, and they never explained the Quran without knowledge. Ibn Al-Qayyim رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ mentioned in his book the statement of Ibn Abi Mulaika رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, who explained how Abu Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ responded to the meaning of the verse (Ayah):

(1) Quran (16:44).

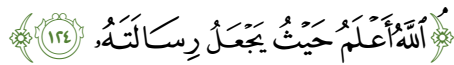
(2) Muslim (1739).



“And fruits, and Abba.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه said, “What earth will carry me, and what sky will give me shade if I say about the Book of Allah a meaning that Allah did not intend.”<sup>(2)</sup>

This humility, and caution, which was exemplified by the companions (Sahabah), prepared them to carry, and disseminate Islamic knowledge. We refer to them for the explanation of the Quran because Allah ﷻ said:



“Allah is most knowing of where He places His message.”<sup>(3)</sup>

**Statements of the Tabi’un — successors, or followers of the Prophet’s ﷺ companions (Sahabah)**

In the absence of the first three sources, the exegete (Mufassir) explains the Quran using the statements of the students of the companions (Sahabah), known as at-Tabi’un. They are the successive generation to the companions (Sahabah) of the Prophet ﷺ, and thus, received their teachings secondhand.

The companions’ successors (Tabi’un) were the second, and third best generations after the companions (Sahabah) of the Prophet ﷺ. They learned the exegesis (Tafsir) of the Quran directly from the Prophet’s ﷺ companions (Sahabah). Therefore, their statements have great importance in the science of exegesis (Tafsir) since they have standardized, and emphasized the process of collecting, and writing narrations (Ahadith) in unbound manuscripts. However, a difference of opinion among scholars (Ulama) exists on whether the statements of the companions’ successors (Tabi’un) are considered decisive in exegesis (Tafsir). Their contributions to the exegesis (Tafsir), nonetheless, cannot be denied.<sup>(4)</sup> The virtues of this generation were mentioned by the Messenger

(1) Quran (80:31).

(2) *I'lam al-muwaqqi'in 'an Rabb al-'Alamin* (p. 127); Ad-Darimi رحمته الله mentioned it in his Sunan; Al-Baghawi رحمته الله mentioned it in explaining the Sunnah without a chain of transmission; Ibn Hajar رحمته الله mentioned it in *Fath al-Bari*, and stated that Abd bin Hamid narrated it from two paths. Thus, his chain becomes stronger.

(3) Quran (6:124), Sahih International trans.

(4) *Al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Quran*, As-Suyuti (2:179).

of Allah ﷻ. He said, **“The best people are those of my generation, then those who come after them, then those who come after them. Then, there will come people after them whose testimony precedes their oaths, and their oaths precede their testimony.”**<sup>(1)</sup> This narration (Hadith) reported by Ibn Mas’ud رضي الله عنه means that the students of the companions (Sahabah) were considered among those whose testimony, and scholarship were meritorious. This is the understanding of the jurists who came after them.

Qadi Abu Yusuf رحمته الله said, **“I heard Abu Hanifah say: ‘If a narration (Hadith) of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ reaches us by way of trustworthy narrators, then we take this narration (Hadith). And if a narration (Hadith) reaches us from the companions (Sahabah), then we do not exceed their statements, and if a narration (Hadith) reaches us from the successors (Tabi’un), then we are rivals to them.’”**<sup>(2)</sup> What is meant by ‘rivals to them’ is explained by a similar statement by Imam Ahmad رحمته الله, who said, **“Whatever comes from the Prophet ﷺ, and his companions (Sahabah), take it; and proceeding [from] them are their successors (Tabi’un), where a man has a choice.”**<sup>(3)</sup> This choice has a caveat that the exegete (Mufassir) has scholarship, and intellect sufficient to form a sound opinion, and if not, the explanation of the companions’ successors (Tabi’un) may suffice. This Mujtahid level of scholarship is necessary for a higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir).

### Exegesis (Tafsir) based on Arabic linguistics

The Arabic language is the next tool the exegete (Mufassir) uses to explain the Quran. Since the Quran was revealed in Arabic, it is necessary to have complete linguistic mastery to accurately interpret the script of the Quran. As mentioned above, the explanation of the Quran requires a specialized form of the Arabic language.

There are several verses (Ayat) of the Quran for which there is no attending circumstance of the Revelation (Asbab an-Nuzul), or reasons for their Revelation to help contextualize the meaning. Furthermore, for some verses (Ayat), the exegete (Mufassir) has no evidence-based explanations from the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah), the statements of the companions (Sahabah), or their successors (Tabi’un). In the presence of seemingly conflicting evidence, then linguistic sciences are used to examine conformity between varying opinions.

(1) Narrated by Abdullah ibn Mas’ud. Bukhari (3651); Muslim (6469). There are multiple other references.

(2) *Al-madkhal ila al-sunan al-kubra*, Bayhaqi (1/46), as cited in *Al ‘T’ibba’a*, Shaykh Wasiullah Abbaas (p. 166), Faruq Post trans.

(3) *Masaa’il al Imam Ahmad*, Abu Dawud (276-277), as cited in *Al ‘T’ibba’a*, Shaykh Wasiullah Abbaas, (p. 122), Faruq Post trans.

The final means through which the exegete (Mufassir) may explain verses (Ayat) is the Arabic language, but this means it is not prioritized above the four means mentioned earlier. An exegete (Mufassir) with integrity should never use linguistic sciences in exclusion of existing evidence from the Quran, Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah), and narrations (Ahadith) of the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin). We have witnessed many examples of the loss of Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) due to this disingenuous manipulation. For example, the issue of the start of an Islamic month. The Islamic month is a lunar month that begins with the crescent of a new moon. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ﴾

**“The month of Ramadhan [is that] in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for the people, and clear proofs of guidance, and criterion. So, whoever sights [the new moon of] the month, let him fast it.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

A scholar who is not well-grounded in the use of all five means of exegesis (Tafsir), or a scholar who manipulates the evidence to fit a sectarian bias might interpret this verse (Ayah) using linguistics only to support a meaning which is innovative. They might say that the word شَهِدَ can mean whoever ‘becomes aware’ of the month (through calculations), or whoever is ‘present’ at home should fast—such as suggested in the Yusuf Ali translation:

**“So, every one of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

A well-grounded exegete (Mufassir) will know that the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) explains, and expands on the meaning of ‘witness’ so that it is not misinterpreted as ‘present’:

﴿فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ﴾

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said concerning the determination of the month of Ramadan, **“When you see [the new moon of Ramadan] then fast, and when you see**

(1) Quran (2:185), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (2:185), Yusuf Ali trans.

[the new moon of Shawwal] then break the fast, and if [the sky] is cloudy, then count it as thirty [days].”<sup>(1)</sup>

Failure to consider the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) in interpreting the meaning of the word **شَهْدًا** opens the door for some to innovate the use of scientific calculations to determine the start, and finish of Islamic months. This is a loss of Islamic heritage that has been known for more than 1400 years, and it is a bastardization, and neglect of Revelation, and it is an evil innovation (Bid'ah). Hence, the importance of a higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) is to understand how, and why to use linguistic sciences.

### Examples of evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur)

There are no perfect books of exegesis (Tafsir). Each of the known works has strong, and weak points giving a student the benefit of diversity. The most accurate, and inclusive exegesis (Tafsir) might be so very large as to make it unreadable. Among the evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur) works, there are some that more heavily stress a narrative approach, and some that lean towards other sciences.

### Exegesis (Tafsir) by at-Tabari

Muhammad ibn Jarir at-Tabari (d. 310 AH) was from Tabriz, now western Iran, and was a well-known narration (Hadith) expert, and historian.

*Tafsir at-Tabari*, also called *Tafsir Ibn Jarir*, is the oldest published orthodox exegesis (Tafsir). The earliest expressions of exegesis (Tafsir) by the companions (Sahabah) were oral traditions. Earlier partial, or complete manuscripts by noble scholars (Ulama), such as those by Sa'id ibn Jubayr (d. 95 AH), and Sufyan ibn Uyaynah (d. 107 AH), were not preserved through the passage of time. The earliest known complete manuscript called *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir*<sup>(2)</sup> by Muqatil ibn Sulayman al-Balkhi (d. 150 AH) has yet to be fully evaluated, and rendered useful to the general public.

Ibn Jarir utilized his many branches of knowledge to deduce different religious rulings, and verdicts. He included many Isra'iliyat (narrations from Jewish, and Christian sources) in his exegesis (Tafsir). He refuted the baseless, and unfounded opinions of the deviant sects, such as the Mu'tazilah, whose methods were influenced by polytheistic Hellenism. *Tafsir at-Tabari* became

(1) Muslim (2517).

(2) Not to be confused with *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir* by Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi. *Tafsir Muqatil* existed only in manuscript form referenced by Orientalists, and historians until a 2002 printing by Abdullah Mahmoud Shehata: - دار إحياء التراث - بيروت الطبعة: الأولى - 1423 هـ

the source, and example for many books of exegesis (Tafsir) that followed, such as *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim* by Isma'il ibn Umar ibn Kathir ؒ which were built upon *Tafsir at-Tabari*, and simplified its style, and notation of narration (Hadith).

### Exegesis (Tafsir) by Ibn abi Hatim ar-Razi ؒ

Ibn abi Hatim ar-Razi (d. 327 AH) wrote *Tafsir al-Quran al-'Azim*, which is a compilation of narrations (Ahadith) on the exegesis (Tafsir) from the Prophet ﷺ, the companions (Sahabah), the companions' successors (Tabi'un), the students of the successors (Tabi At-Tabi'un), and one more generation of students after them.

The author is a famous Hadith expert, and one of the Imams of Jarh wa Ta'dil.<sup>(1)</sup> Among his notable students were the narration (Hadith) compilers Abu Dawud as-Sijistani ؒ, and Abu Abd-ur-Rahman an-Nasa'i ؒ.

The author kept his comments to a minimum, and compiled thousands of narrations (Ahadith) from the Prophet ﷺ, and the first three praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin).

### Exegesis (Tafsir) by As-Samarqandi ؒ

Abu al-Layth as-Samarqandi ؒ (d. 375 AH) was better known as 'The Imam of India' (Imam al-Hind). He based his exegesis (Tafsir) on narrations from the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah), the companions (Sahabah), and their successors (Tabi'un).

However, experts criticized his work mainly due to several narrations (Ahadith) included without the chain of narrators (Isnad) to verify their authenticity. Although he always quoted narrations (Ahadith) from the first three praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin), he neglected to properly document chains of transmission, or ascribe specific known names to crucial steps of a chain. This makes the exegesis (Tafsir) of Abu al-Layth ؒ difficult to fully benefit from because we cannot be sure of the authenticity of his pieces of evidence. A final problem with this exegesis (Tafsir) is the inclination in the content to expressions of mysticism that are contradictory to an evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur).

---

(1) Jarh wa Ta'dil is the science of assessing, and categorizing the narration (Hadith) transmitters, and narrators based upon their acceptance, and reliability.

### Exegesis (Tafsir) by Al-Baghawi

The author of *Ma'alim at-Tanzil* is Abu Muhammad al-Husayn ibn Mas'ud al-Baghawi (d. 516 AH). Although Al-Baghawi was a very famous narration (Hadith) scholar, he is more well-known for his book *Sharh as-Sunnah*. Major contemporary scholars (Ulama), such as Muhammad ibn al-Uthaymeen have referenced Al-Baghawi in their lessons.

Ibn Taymiyyah said about *Ma'alim al-Tanzil*, “**Al-Baghawi summarized, and produced a better version of Ath-Tha'labi's work in the field of exegesis (Tafsir).**”

Al-Baghawi avoided the majority of weak, and fabricated narrations (Ahadith) found in *Tafsir Ath-Tha'labi*. He mentioned all the chains of narrators to verify their authenticity, and he did not include the baseless, and unfounded heretical concepts mentioned in *Tafsir Ath-Tha'labi*.

He also included the linguistic element in his exegesis (Tafsir) in brief mentions of various styles of recitations, and explanations of their grammatical constructions where necessary. Some problems with his work are the mention of a few Isra'iliyat narrations without critical analysis, and the citation of conflicting opinions of early scholars (Ulama) with no evaluation.

### Exegesis (Tafsir) by Ibn Kathir

The famous scholar Ibn Kathir ad-Dimashqi (d. 774 AH) was a student of Ibn Taymiyyah. He was a narration (Hadith) expert, and a historian as well as an exegete (Mufassir). His book *The Beginning, and the End* is one of the best books written on Islamic history.

*Tafsir Ibn Kathir* is the most famous work globally because it is easier to read than *Tafsir Ibn Jarir*. It is second in popularity only to *Tafsir Ibn Jarir* amongst the scholars (Ulama). *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* is the ideal model for following the five means to produce an evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur). He begins with the Quran, then the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah), then the views of the companions (Sahabah), and their successors (Tabi'un), and then his view at the very end.

Ibn Kathir simplifies the explanation for the reader with an analysis of the various narrations from the companions (Sahabah), and their successors (Tabi'un). He also warns against the dangers of referring to Isra'iliyat, and other unreliable information commonly found in other exegesis (Tafsir) sources.

In the year 1980, an abridged version of this exegesis (Tafsir) was published. This recent version did not include inauthentic narrations.



*Tafsir Ibn Kathir* extensively summarizes the different opinions that Ibn Jarir at-Tabari رحمته الله quoted, usually only giving the most decisive view. Ibn Kathir رحمته الله also shares the opinion of Ibn Jarir رحمته الله concerning the authenticity of narrations (Ahadith).

### Exegesis (Tafsir) by As-Suyuti رحمته الله

The author is Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti رحمته الله (d. 911 AH). He collected several evidence-based exegeses (Tafasir bil-Ma'thur) from narrations (Ahadith), but did not include the chains of transmitters in the final version of his exegesis (Tafsir). To maximize the benefits of these narrations (Ahadith), one needs the skill to differentiate the authentic narrations (Sahih Ahadith) from weak narrations (Daeef Ahadith), a skill that most readers will not possess.

Initially, As-Suyuti رحمته الله wrote a four-volume work titled *Turjuman Al-Quran*. He included over ten thousand narrations (Ahadith) with their chains. Unfortunately, when he saw that the size of the work was burdensome, he deleted the chains, and only mentioned the narration (Hadith). He seems to have been more concerned with compiling the most considerable possible quantity of narrations (Ahadith) without discriminating between the accurate, and the weak. This means his exegesis (Tafsir) is suitable for reference by scholars (Ulama), or students of knowledge with the skillset to distinguish authenticity. This stylistic choice is not entirely blameworthy, but rather it reflects the ethos that existed amongst the scholars (Ulama) of narration (Hadith) at the time of as-Suyuti رحمته الله.

Shaykh Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani رحمته الله explains in his notes to the book *Iqtidaa-ul-'Ilm al-'Amal* by Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi رحمته الله, **“If all of the scholars of Hadith were to devote their attention to verifying, and distinguishing the authentic Hadith from the weak, they would not, and Allah knows best, be able to preserve for us this tremendous wealth of Ahadith, and its chains of narrations. This is why the main concern of a majority of them was geared to just narrating, except in those situations where Allah willed. And the rest of them devoted themselves to criticizing, and verifying (Hadith), along with memorizing, and narrating them—and how few they are.”**<sup>(1)</sup>

Al-Albani رحمته الله further suggested that the verification of a narration (Hadith) is best done after amassing a great corpus of narrations (Ahadith), and their chains. He said, **“The authenticity, or weakness of many Ahadith is not readily visible unless all of their paths, and chains of narration are gathered together. This is one of the things that will assist one in coming to**

---

(1) *Iqtidaa-ul-'Ilm al-'Amal*, Al-Ibaanah Publishing, 2006, (p. 5).

realize the defects of a Hadith, and which Ahadith are authentic based on supporting narrations.”<sup>(1)</sup>

### Exegesis (Tafsir) by Ash-Shanqiti

*Adwa' Al-Bayan Fi Iidah Al-Qur'an Bi Al-Karim* by Muhammad Al-Amin Ash-Shanqiti (d. 1393 AH), has been endorsed by many notable scholars (Ulama). He was a prominent scholar in Riyadh, and Madinah, and the teacher of Shaykh 'Abdul-'Aziz ibn Baz, Shaykh Uthaymeen, and Shaykh Rabi Al-Madkhali, among others. His influence is apparent in the styles of his students. This exegesis (Tafsir) is an ideal model for interpreting the Quran by employing the Quran. Ibn Taymiyyah said, “**The most authentic form of exegesis (Tafsir) is to explain the Quran by the Quran.**”<sup>(2)</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah championed this method himself in his work *Muqaddima fi Usul al-Tafsir*. *Tafsir ash-Shanqiti* has great merit academically; the means by which the Shaykh negotiates the Arabic language is artistry, and this is not lost in the English translation, although only a small part of the first part (Juz')<sup>(3)</sup> of the Quran is translated, and available online.

### Analysis of evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur)

As was mentioned, there are **two main classes** of exegesis (Tafsir): evidence-based (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur), and opinion-based (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi). Both have indications, and counter-indications. Therefore, before examining the opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi), we need to consider three main areas of criticism, or allegations (mentioned below) against the evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur). The rationalists who propagated these objections are individuals who give precedence to opinion (intellect) over evidence. They are similar to the early sect, which emerged into the Muslim world known as al-Mu'tazilah. The rationalists made **three main allegations** against the evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur):

1. They include many contradicting, and varying positions
2. They have a large number of weak, and fabricated narrations.
3. They contain a large number of Isra'iliyat (Judeo-Christian) narrations.

(1) *Iqtidaa-ul-'Ilm al-'Amal*, Al-Ibaanah Publishing, 2006, (p. 5).

(2) *Muqaddima fi Usul al-Tafsir*, Al-Hidaayah Publishing, and Distribution Ltd., (p. 155).

(3) There are 30 parts, or Ajza' (singular: Juz') of the Quran.

### The first allegation

The first concern the challengers of the evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur) have is that the narrative framework includes many contradicting, and varying positions regarding the explanation of verses (Ayat) of the Quran. However, they fail to understand that differences of opinion regarding the explanation of verses (Ayat) are actually within the praiseworthy differing between multiple correct, and authentic realities. It is not from the blameworthy type of differing due to conflicting opinions on a verse (Ayah) with an ambiguous meaning.

For example, one companion (Sahabi) might explain one verse (Ayah) using his, or her statement, while another uses a different expression; but both are identical in meaning with different wordings.

Similarly, one companion (Sahabi) may use a similitude, or a parable to explain a verse (Ayah). Another companion (Sahabi) may use another one, but again both are collaborating, and reinforcing the one meaning. Some of the companions (Sahabah) may mean the general sense of the verse (Ayah), but the others may refer to the specific substance. However, none of the previous situations result in providing opposing, and differing meanings of the Noble Quran. Opposing, and inconsistent explanations of one verse (Ayah) are considered very unusual, and strange in the evidence-based method.

### The second allegation

As for the **second allegation**, the challengers of the evidence-based method say it has ‘many weak, and rejected accounts.’ The answer to this is straightforward by the grace of Allah ﷻ. The scholars (Ulama) of narration (Hadith) developed the necessary tools to authenticate, and distinguish weak narrations (Da'eef Ahadith) from authentic narrations (Sahih Ahadith). Some of these tools verify the actual text of the narration (Hadith) for contradiction with any authentic narration (Sahih Hadith), belief, or tradition known from the religion by necessity. After identifying supporting evidence, the narration (Hadith) can be verified, or managed as weak, and compromised.

### The third allegation

As for the **third allegation**, detractors of the evidence-based method say it has become corrupted by many Isra'iliyat (Judeo-Christian) oral traditions, or other cultural narrations. The Isra'iliyat are the various narrations that reached us through the Jewish, and Christian, and other communities. The existence, and preservation of these narrations is not a ‘fifth column’ bent on destroying Islam from within. Rather, some companions (Sahabah), and their successors (Tabi'un) were reverts from Judaism, or Christianity. After becoming Muslims, they learned the Quran, and were surprised to

find similarities between the Quran, and biblical accounts. This view appears to have been adopted by Ibn Kathir رحمته الله, who said, **“Isra’ili narrations are mentioned for supporting evidence, not to be relied on in, and of themselves.”**<sup>(1)</sup> These narrators (Muhadditheen) were among the earliest scholars (Ulama) of Islam who were keen on preserving all narrations (Ahadith), regardless of their validity. They cited these narratives with their chain of transmitters, which helped subsequent generations of scholars (Ulama) of narration (Hadith) to classify them into one of **three categories** which the majority of scholars (Ulama) agree upon:

1. Those Isra’iliyat narrations which are in agreement with our Islamic law (Shari’ah). It is permissible to mention these references in the context of the understanding of the Quran. This is because the Prophet ﷺ said, **”And tell others the stories of Bani Israel (which have been taught to you), for it is not sinful to do so.”**<sup>(2)</sup>
2. Isra’iliyat narrations which contradict our Islamic law (Shari’ah). Our position is to reject these references, and refrain from citing them. Most of the scholars (Ulama) of exegesis (Tafsir) have taken this position.
3. The final category of Isra’iliyat is the type that neither agrees, nor conflicts with our Islamic law (Shari’ah). Our position is to never use them as a foundation for explaining the Noble Quran, but we may still cite them because there is no harm in doing so. The evidence is the narration (Hadith) quoted above.

Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir رحمته الله presented a valid, and common opinion widely accepted on Isra’iliyat. Authentic accounts are only those which are validated by the Quran, and the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah). Scholars (Ulama) compiled them in their books of narrations (Ahadith) with verified chains of transmitters, and the Prophet ﷺ approved their contents. There is evidence to prove them from the Quran, and the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah). For example, the story of Ibn Jurajj<sup>(3)</sup>, and the story of the people of the trench.

False accounts are found to have no validation by a chain of reliable transmitters, and the contents are contradictory to our religion. For example, the false claim that Prophet Suleiman عليه السلام (Solomon) had become an apostate (kafir) in his later years. Such narrations are built on an incorrect understanding of the biblical verse:

---

(1) *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, (vol 1, p. 31), Darussalam: 2003.

(2) Bukhari (3461).

(3) He was a monk (devout worshiper) from Bani Israel. The Prophet ﷺ mentioned his story in an authentic narration in Sahih Muslim (259).

**“When Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away to follow other gods. He was not wholeheartedly devoted to the Lord his God, as his father David had been. Solomon followed Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom, the abhorrent idol of the Ammonites.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

Accounts in the Talmud are conflicting regarding the meaning of this version. Folk narrations are supported by such statements as:

אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל: בשעה שנשא שלמה את בת פרעה, הכניסה לו אלף מיני זמר, ואמרה לו כך עושין לעבודה זרה פלוגית, וכך עושים לעבודה זרה פלוגית, ולא מיחה בה.

**“Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: When Solomon married Pharaoh’s daughter, she brought to him a thousand musical instruments, and said to him: This is the way we do it for this idolatry, and this is the way we do it for that idolatry, and he did not protest that talk.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

Evidence in the Quran refutes this completely. We believe Prophet Suleiman عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام (Solomon) was a Muslim, and successfully established Monotheism (Tawheed), and we make no distinction between him, and the other Prophets. Allah سُبْحَانَ said:

﴿وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمٰنُ وَلٰكِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ كَفَرُوْا﴾

**“It was not Suleiman (Solomon) who disbelieved, but the devils disbelieved...”<sup>(3)</sup>**

The allegation of infidelity upon Prophet Suleiman عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام (Solomon) is a blatant lie, and taking such narrations to be false is imperative.

The Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) is silent concerning other accounts from the traditions of Isra'iliyat, which the Prophet ﷺ neither validated, nor falsified. Islamic scholars (Ulama) differed on whether we may cite such narrations. However, Hafiz ibn Kathir رحمه الله has given a decisive ruling that transmission is permissible, but has no benefit because they cannot be used as foundational evidence.<sup>(4)</sup>



(1) Christian Standard Bible, 1 Kings 11:4-5.

(2) Shabbat 57a (14). Other texts defend Suleiman, with Jewish scholars stating that he was moved to establish idol worship but did not.

(3) Quran (2:102), Sahih International trans.

(4) *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, (Vol. 1, p. 31), Darussalam, 2003.

## Chapter Three

### Tafsir bil-Ra'yi



#### Opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi)

Opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi) is the interpretation employing independent rational, and individual reasoning (Ijtihad). It often stresses the nuances, and flexibility of the Arabic language.

The opinion-driven exegete (Mufassir) develops his exegesis (Tafsir) primarily on deliberation, and deduction using various resources of the Quran, narrations (Ahadith), the Prophet's ﷺ life (Seerah), reasons for the Revelations, the Arabic language, and other associated sciences.

#### Criteria of acceptance of opinion

The opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi) should not contradict the evidence-based explanation of the Quran—otherwise, it is blameworthy, and denied. An authentic, legitimate reflection, deliberation, and deduction of the Quran, which may form a valid explanation, is one of the blessings that Allah ﷻ may bestow upon some individuals. Insight into diverse sciences helps an individual understand, and explain the Quran. The mature scholarship may uncover efficacious ways of describing the meanings of the Quran, which may attract, and attach a reader to the Book of Allah ﷻ. It should be noted that commentary which presents a novel, and attractive perspective does not necessitate that it was a worthy scholarship. A worthy result must not violate the limits established by Allah ﷻ.

Suggestive, or symbolic views of the Quran must not be based on esoteric language; neither can an exegesis (Tafsir) be independent, or contrary to the evidence in the Quran, Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah), the consensus of scholars (Ulama), and the statements of the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin). An exegesis (Tafsir) in violation of these established principles is rejected, and is considered worthless.

Exegesis (Tafsir) founded on hidden meanings, dreams, and symbolic iconicism by some mystics, are rejected by the consensus of the well-grounded scholars (Ulama) of the Muslim community

(Ummah). Opinions that oppose the basic principles of the Quran, Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah), and Islamic law (Shari'ah) have no scholastic weight, no matter how pious, or enlightened one may act.<sup>(1)</sup>

Well-grounded scholars (Ulama) differ regarding accepting opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi). Some disapprove of it in order to lock the door in the face of undisciplined explanation of the Book of Allah ﷻ, and others allow it with certain restrictions, and guidelines.

### Twelve imperatives of opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi)

1. The exegete (Mufassir) can form an opinion-based explanation only on the crystal-clear verses (Ayat) of the Quran (Muhkamat types of verses).
2. An opinion can only be formed if no explanation already exists from the Prophet ﷺ.
3. The opinion is not based on whims, and desirous inclination (Hawa), but rather originates from valid evidence.
4. The exegete (Mufassir) holds sound beliefs (Aqeedah).
5. The exegete (Mufassir) is knowledgeable of the sciences of the Quran.
6. The exegete (Mufassir) provides evidence to support their opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi), or at least does not oppose the evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur).
7. The exegete (Mufassir) does not interpret the real essence of unseen matters, such as the Names, and Attributes of Allah ﷻ.
8. He does not interpret the verses (Ayat) which can only be known by Allah ﷻ.
9. He does not take the verse (Ayah) meanings out of the context of the previous, and following verses (Ayat).
10. He does not violate the Arabic language's linguistic rules when explaining a word's meaning, such as assuming a hidden meaning to the term, instead of its apparent meaning without evidence.

---

(1) *Al-Itqan*, (2/184) with abridgment.

11. He does not explain the Quran in a way that supports the corrupt, deviant sects' belief systems, or those who promote innovations, and misguidance.
12. He does not come up with an interpretation that contradicts Islamic orthodoxy in content, meaning, and higher objectives.

### Contraindications of opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi)

Those who discard opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi) take the position that the explanation of Revelation should originate from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. It should be transmitted to us blended with the understanding of the three praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin): the companions (Sahabah), and their successors (Tabi'un), and the students of the successors (Tabi At-Tabi'un). Evidence of this position is in the statement of Allah ﷻ when He says:

﴿ وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْعُورًا ﴾ (36)

“Do not pursue that of which you do not know.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Allah ﷻ commanded the Prophet ﷺ:

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّي الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ قُلُوبًا ﴾ (33)

﴿ مَا لَا نَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

“Say, ‘My Lord has only forbidden immoralities—what is apparent of them, and what is concealed—and sin, and oppression without right, and that you associate with Allah that for which He has not sent down authority, and that you say about Allah that which you do not know.’”<sup>(2)</sup>

Furthermore, Allah ﷻ said to the Prophet ﷺ:

﴿ يَا بَيْنَتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ ﴾ (44)

(1) Quran (17:36).

(2) Quran (7:33), Sahih International trans.



“And We revealed to you the message that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them.”<sup>(1)</sup>

### Indications for the use of opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi)

The well-grounded scholars (Ulama) who are permissive of the opinion-driven exegesis (Tafsir) refute the evidence used by its detractors, and they provide other pieces of evidence to support their position. They state that the Prophet ﷺ did not explain every verse (Ayah) of the Quran, leaving a need to develop opinion, and interpretation. Moreover, verse (Ayah) forty-four of chapter (Surah) An-Nahl, which is used as evidence that the Quran's explanation is mandated only to the Prophet ﷺ, ends with an invitation to reflect upon the Prophet's ﷺ explanations. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾

“And that they might give thought.”<sup>(2)</sup>

Furthermore, the following verses (Ayat) invite us to reflect upon the Quran, and form a valid opinion backed up by evidence.

﴿أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْءَانَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا﴾

“Then do they do not reflect upon the Quran, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?”<sup>(3)</sup>

﴿كُنْتُ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ﴾

“[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its verses (Ayat), and that those of understanding would be reminded.”<sup>(4)</sup>

﴿وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَى أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنبِطُونَهُ﴾

(1) Quran (16:44).

(2) Quran (16:44).

(3) Quran (47:24), Sahih International trans.

(4) Quran (38:29).

**“But if they had referred it back to the Messenger, or to those of authority among them, then the ones who [can] draw correct conclusions from it would have known about it.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

The correct conclusion from these opinions is that these pieces of evidence do not prescribe using expert opinion over authentic transmitted evidence. It is prescribed in the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) to use specialist opinions with specific guidelines beginning with the absence of revealed evidence. This is known from the narration (Hadith) of Mu’adh رضي الله عنه. Before the Prophet ﷺ sent Mu’adh رضي الله عنه to Yemen to call to Islam, teach the foundations of faith (Iman), and establish just leadership, he ﷺ tested Mu’adh رضي الله عنه about the sources of sound judgment. Mu’adh رضي الله عنه mentioned the Quran, and then the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah), and in the absence of revealed evidence, he would employ his opinion. The Prophet ﷺ approved for Mu’adh رضي الله عنه to deliberate, and deduce if he lacks evidence.<sup>(2)</sup> Shaykh Al-Albani رحمته الله said that this narration (Hadith) has a weak chain. However, we may view the meaning of this narration (Hadith) as supported by the understanding of Umar ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه. Umar رضي الله عنه advised Shuraih رضي الله عنه, **“Judge according to what is in the Book of Allah. If it is not (mentioned) in the Book of Allah, then (judge) according to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah. If it is not (mentioned) in the Book of Allah, or the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah, then pass judgment according to the way the righteous passed judgment. If it is not (mentioned) in the Book of Allah, or the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah, and the righteous did not pass judgment concerning it, then if you wish, go ahead (and try to work it out by yourself), or if you wish, leave it. And I think that leaving it is better for you. And peace be upon you.”<sup>(3)</sup>**



(1) Quran (4:83), Sahih International trans.

(2) Bukhari; Abu Dawud (3592), Daef by Al-Albani; Abu Dawud (3593); Tirmizi (1327) similar to wording in the Musannaf of Ibn abi Shaybah (22988); Ahmad (22007, 22100); Bayhaqi in *Sunan as-Saghir* (3250); Tabarani (362/20); Sunan ad-Darimi (1/170). All reports are from weak chains because the names of the companions (Sahabah) who took the Narration (Hadith) from Mu’adh رضي الله عنه are not mentioned except a statement that the Narration (Hadith) was heard by the associates of Mu’adh رضي الله عنه. A break in the chain only at the level of a companion (Sahabi) may raise up the reliability because the associates of Mu’adh رضي الله عنه were among the highest in scholarship, and the understanding of ahl Sunnah in general is to accept the reliability of the companions (Sahabah) due to the great virtues of them which are mention in the Book of Allah ﷻ.

(3) Nasa'i (5401), Sahih.

## Chapter Four

### Types of Tafsir bil-Ra'yi



#### Blame-worthy opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi)

The opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi) can be blameworthy, and rejected, or praiseworthy, and accepted. The distinction between the two is based on the criteria of evidence, and orthodoxy.

The opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi) becomes blameworthy when it falls into any of twelve errors regarding the twelve imperatives of opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi) (previous chapter):

1. The exegete (Mufassir) formed an opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi) from other than the crystal-clear verses (Muhkamat Ayat) of the Quran.
2. An opinion is formed while an explanation already exists from the Prophet ﷺ.
3. The opinion is based on whims, and desirous inclination (Hawa), and does not originate from valid evidence.
4. The exegete (Mufassir) holds deviant beliefs (Aqeedah).
5. The exegete (Mufassir) abandons the sciences of the Quran.
6. The exegete (Mufassir) does not provide evidence to support their opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi), or he/she opposes the evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur).
7. The exegete (Mufassir) interprets the real essence of unseen matters, such as the Names, and Attributes of Allah ﷻ.
8. He interprets the verses (Ayat) which can only be known by Allah ﷻ.

9. He takes the verse (Ayah) meanings out of the context of the previous, and following verses (Ayat).
10. He violates the Arabic language's linguistic rules when explaining the meaning, such as assuming a hidden meaning to the term, instead of its apparent meaning without evidence.
11. He explains the Quran in a way that supports the corrupt, deviant sects' belief systems, or those who promote innovations, and misguidance.
12. He comes up with an interpretation that contradicts Islamic orthodoxy in content, meaning, and higher objectives.

This criterion can identify many flaws in the works of exegesis (Tafsir) among some of the most popular contemporary volumes. Opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi) works must be rejected if they fail in one, or more of the above conditions. In general, all the exegesis (Tafsir) works representing the Shi'a, the Batiniyah (mystic Sufis), and the Mu'tazilah fail to meet the conditions of legitimate scholarly opinion because they seek out the 'hidden meanings' of the Quran, among other serious flaws.

### At-Tafsir al-Ishari / al-Batini — exegesis based on hidden meanings

Exegesis (Tafsir) based on hidden meaning is popular amongst extreme mystic Sufis, and Shi'a. At-Tafsir al-Ishari (al-Batini) explains the Quran according to perceived 'hidden meanings,' which may, or may not be supported textually. This is a subcategory of opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi). When such explanations fulfill the conditions for acceptance, then they are acceptable.

At-Tafsir al-Ishari (al-Batini) is of **three types**. The subclasses are based on the legitimacy of the result, and the legitimacy of the method.

**The first type** with accepted hidden meanings is exegesis (Tafsir) of verses (Ayat) which have hidden meanings to most, except those who are highly knowledgeable in authentic Quranic sciences. The meanings of verses (Ayat) are correct, and the method of pursuing meaning from the text at hand is also correct.

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه explicated the hidden meaning of chapter (Surah) An-Nasr (The Victory):

﴿إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ ﴿١﴾ وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا ﴿٢﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ  
وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا ﴿٣﴾﴾

**“When the victory of Allah has come, and the conquest, and you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes, then exalt [Him] with praise of your Lord, and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever accepting of repentance.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه said, **“It was a sign from Allah to His Messenger indicating the approach of the end of his life.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

**The second type** of At-Tafsir al-Ishari (al-Batini) is blameworthy. The meaning is correct, but the attempt to pursue the meaning with the text at hand is not valid. The meaning is accepted since it is valid, but the legitimacy of the exegete (Mufassir) is questioned because the method to derive meaning is unknown, or unsupported by authentic pieces of evidence. This scholarship should not be followed, as it introduces innovative methods, and results which are uncertain.

**The third type** of At-Tafsir al-Ishari (al-Batini) has derived a meaning that is false, and the attempt to find, or legitimize that meaning in the text is not supported by rational, or orthodox scholarship. Both the meaning, and the effort to link that meaning to that text are rejected. This is from a deviant scholar, and a misguided caller, and this exegete (Mufassir) must be refuted, and warned against.

Blameworthy exegesis (Tafsir) of hidden meanings built upon unorthodox scholarship is the germination of deviant sectarianism, as in the example when Allah ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذَبْحُوا بَقْرَةً﴾<sup>(3)</sup>

**“Allah is commanding you to slaughter a cow...”<sup>(3)</sup>**

Shaykh al-Islam ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله wrote in *Minhaj As-Sunnah An-Nabawiyyah* that the rejectors (rafidah),<sup>(4)</sup> such as Jamal ad-Din al-Hilli postulated that the ‘cow’ meant Umm al-Mu’minin Aishah رضي الله عنها.<sup>(5)</sup> This deviant interpretation, no doubt, inspired the acceptance of apostasy (kufr), and slander against Aishah رضي الله عنها in the Shi’a culture. Muhammad Baqer Majlesi, one of the most

(1) Quran (110:1-3).

(2) Bukhari (4430).

(3) Quran (2:67).

(4) Rafidah (lit. rejectors) is a derogatory term that broadly refers to Shia Muslims who reject (rafd) the caliphates of the first two successors of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ: Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, and Umar رضي الله عنه.

(5) *Minhaj as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah* (p.118), Ibn Taymiyyah. Shaykh Abdullah al-Ghunaiman abridgment, Nasiru Garba trans.

influential Shi'a scholars, wrote that Aishah رضي الله عنها, and Hafsa رضي الله عنها were hypocrites, and infidels.<sup>(1)</sup> Almighty Allah ﷻ said

﴿وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ﴾

**“But Allah has endeared to you the faith (Iman), and has made it pleasing in your hearts, and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance, and disobedience.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

Misguided, and deviant scholars of some of the Shi'a sects disseminate a false hidden meaning from a dubious interpretation of unknown origins that ‘disbelief’ represents Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, ‘defiance’ represents Umar رضي الله عنه, while ‘disobedience’ represents Uthman رضي الله عنه.<sup>(3)</sup>

Such distorted exegesis leads to a deviant belief system (Aqeedah) in which cursing the dead has more prominence as a virtuous act than imploring for the Mercy of Allah ﷻ. An example of this is the shocking statement the likes of which was made by many of the rejector (rafidah) clergy that, “Imam Mehdi will come out of the cave before the Dooms Day. He will exhume Abu Bakr, and Umar from their graves, and bring them to life. In one day, and night, he will kill them one thousand times, and revive them one thousand times.”<sup>(4)</sup> An additional real-world implication of deviant exegesis is the statement of Ayatollah Khomeini from a public pulpit: “...when as a conqueror I will enter Makkah, and Madinah, the first thing to be done at that time by me would be to dig out two idols (Abu Bakr, and Umar) lying by the side of the Prophet’s grave.”<sup>(5)</sup>

### The Mu'tazilah interpretation

Al-Mu'tazilah is another deviant sect that places the intellect ahead of the Revelation. *Tafsir Al-Kashaf* by Az-Zamakhshari is an example of the Mu'tazili style of opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi). Az-Zamakhshari is very popular for his exceptional linguistic eloquence (Balaghah). However, scholars have refuted his exegesis (Tafsir) due to many innovations, displays of bad etiquette, and disrespect to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and the people of his Tradition (Sunnah). Despite the deviancy in *Al-Kashaf*, many orthodox scholars continue to refer to Az-Zamakhshari for his mastery of the Arabic language.

(1) *Hayat-ul-Quloob*, (vol. 2, p. 900), Ansariyan Publications, 2010.

(2) Quran (49:7).

(3) *Tafsir Numani* (2/399), an alleged exegesis (Tafsir) built on narrations (Ahadith) from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq.

(4) *Haq-ul-Yaqeen*, (p. 371); *Al-kafi* (vol. 6, p. 32), Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni.

(5) *Khomeinism, and Islam*, Abu Rehan Farooqi, (p. 8).

Alternatives exist with similar linguistic strengths, such as *Al-Muharrar al-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Kitab al-'Aziz* by Ash'ari Ibn Atiyah ؒ, *Al-Bahr al-Muheet* by Ashari Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi ؒ, and *Ad-Durr al-Masoon* of Sameen al-Halabi ؒ, which is an exposition on Quranic grammar written to refute the opinions of recitation postulated by Abu Hayyan ؒ. These works can supply us with exceptional linguistic eloquences without violating the conditions of acceptance of the opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi).

Another example of the Mu'tazili works is *Tanzih Al-Qur'an 'an al-Mata'in*, by Qadi Abd al-Jabbar al-Hamadani (d. 415 AH), one of the leading scholars of the Mu'tazilah, and a contemporary of Ibn Sina. His work is objective-driven to defend, and advance the deviant theology of Al-Mu'tazilah, which stresses that intellect has precedence over the Revelation.

An example of a rejected Shi'a exegesis (Tafsir) is *Majma'ul Bayan Fi Tafseerul Qur'an*, by Abu Ali al-Fadl ibn Hasan at-Tabarsi (d. 538 A.H). This exegesis (Tafsir) is said to be the greatest of the Shi'a works, although it was based on *Al-Tibbyan Fi Tafsir al-Quran* by Muhammad Ibn Hassan Tusi. Exegesis (Tafsir) works by the Shi'a, and the Mu'tazilah have two main failings, which bring them into the category of blameworthy Tafsir al-Ishari. First, they support sectarian bias through exegesis of hidden meanings, which contradict reports from the companions (Sahabah), and their successors (Tabi'un), and second, they establish an objective, and then distort the grammar, and meanings of pieces of evidence, to support the sectarian objective. A preliminary read of a short section of these works would find them in violation of many of the twelve points which are necessary for an acceptable opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi).

### **Praiseworthy opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi)**

For an opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi) to be praiseworthy, it must fulfill the twelve imperatives (previous chapter). In short, it must be based on authentic sciences, without sectarian bias, without contradicting the apparent linguistic meaning, the known higher objective, or the known meanings as explained by the Prophet ﷺ, and the praiseworthy generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin).

In reality, the praiseworthy opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi) is a combination of both evidence, and opinion-based explanation of the Quran. It must pay extra attention to referencing the evidence which explains the verses (Ayat). It will undoubtedly include the proof transmitted to us from the Quran, the Sunnah, and the three praised generations' (as-Salaf us-Salihin) opinions, and practices.

Consequently, we can confidently say that our work, *The Maqasidic Tafsir: Pursuing the Higher Aim of the Quranic Scripture*, pursues the higher aim of the Quranic scripture (Maqasid Al-Quran), and is a type of praiseworthy opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi). A higher aim-based

exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) intends to generate higher aims (Maqasid) for each chapter (Surah) of the Quran by utilizing deliberation, reflection, and reasoning of trustworthy evidence.

### Exegesis (Tafsir) by al-Jalalayn

Jalal ad-Din al-Muhallah (d. 864 AH) started the work, but died before completing it, and his student Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti (d. 911 AH) completed the work. This particular exegesis (Tafsir) is more popular amongst the masses, primarily due to its simplicity, and modest size.

### Exegesis (Tafsir) by Al-Andalusi — *Al-Muharrar al-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Kitab al-'Aziz*

The author of this exegesis (Tafsir), Ibn Atiyah al-Andalusi (d. 546 AH), was an Ash'ari Maliki scholar, and judge in both Spain, and Morocco. His exegesis (Tafsir) contains a summary of accurate narrations found in the earlier *Tafsir bil-Riwayah*. He also included many examples from classical literature, and extensively discussed the grammatical wonders of the Quran.

### Exegesis (Tafsir) by ash-Shawkani

Muhammad ibn Ali ash-Shawkani (d. 1250 AH) was a famous scholar (Aalim) of Yemen, and one of the greatest scholars of his time. This exegesis (Tafsir) is an excellent combination of explanation, based upon narrations, and disciplined opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi). He has condensed the narration (Hadith) chains, and has mentioned the books in which each narration (Hadith) may be found, and most opinions are attributed to their sources. It has a unique quality of perception from an author who was educated as a Zaydi<sup>(1)</sup> student of knowledge, and abandoned the Batini<sup>(2)</sup> for the evidence-based method of the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin).

### Exegesis (Tafsir) by as-Sa'di — *al-Kalam al-Mannan*

Abd ar-Rahman as-Sa'di (d. 1376 AH) was one of the most famous scholars of Arabia, one of the teachers of Shaykh al-Uthaymeen at-Tamimi, and a defender of the belief system (Aqeedah) of our righteous predecessors (as-Salaf us-Salihin).

---

(1) Zaidiyyah is a Shia branch, and emerged in the eighth century from Shia Islam.

(2) Batini are those who believe the hidden meaning of the Quran.



It is available in ten volumes<sup>(1)</sup> by the International Islamic Publishing house. This exegesis (Tafsir) is perhaps the most useful work for the layman who does not wish to go into any detail about the various explanations of the Quran. If a person wishes to understand the Quran in plain, and simple language, this is the reference that he should obtain. The aim of this exegesis (Tafsir) was to present the meanings without any detailed discussions of evidence from other sources. Hence, while the meanings presented are authentic, because the presentation lacks citation of source narrations, it is included in the category of opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi). Although, this should not be taken as diminutive of its value.

Shaykh al-Uthaymeen at-Tamimi ؒ said about *Tafsir al-Kalam al-Mannan*, also known as *Tafsir as-Sa'di*, that among its merits is the avoidance of unnecessary length, and avoidance of mentioning the disagreement between scholars' opinions, except for the important ones.

### The Maqasidic Tafsir — higher aim-based exegesis

The term 'Maqasid' (plural of Maqsid) refers to a purpose, objective, principle, intent, goal, end, higher aim, and wisdom behind things, actions, and sayings.

The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir) is motivated by considering what Allah ﷻ may have intended from legislating certain religious rulings. The exegete (Mufasssir) then identifies an evenhanded, and moderate path toward achieving the legislated rulings, and the related social benefits.

Early higher aim-based exegetes (Maqasidic Mufasssirun) used other terms interchangeably with the term "Maqasid," such as Al-Juwaini ؒ (d. 478 AH/ 1185 CE), who referred to Maqasid ash-Shari'ah with the words 'al-Masalih al-Ammah,' which means the higher aim of public interest. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali ؒ (d. 505 AH/1111 CE) used the term 'al-Masalih al-Mursalah,' which means common interests. The concept has been known, and firmly established in Islamic scholarship.

### Examples of the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir)

Multiple contemporary exegeses (Tafasir) works cast a noteworthy focus on the higher aim-based (Maqasidic) explanation of the Quran while not entirely following a higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir). This reflects the need of the community to orient social action on the basis of the Revelation. The bias, and shortcomings of some of the following works reflect a lack of

---

(1) IIPH edition is translated into English by Nasirudin al-Khattab, while an earlier incomplete English edition from Darussallam was translated by Shaykh Jalal Abualrub.

supporting narrative evidence, and organizing structure upon the understanding of the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin). This is not an endorsement of any of the following:

1. *Tafhim al-Qur'an*, an analytical study of Quran by Abu Ala Maududi رحمہ اللہ (d. 1979 CE).
2. *Tafsir al-Tahrir wa'l Tanwir* by Ibn Ashur رحمہ اللہ (d. 1973 CE).
3. *Tafsir al-Manar* by Muhammad Rashid Rida رحمہ اللہ (d. 1935 CE).
4. *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* by Syed Qutb رحمہ اللہ (d. 1966 CE by execution).
5. *Tadabbur-e-Quran* by Amin Ahsan Islahi رحمہ اللہ, who continued exploring this style after his teacher Hamiduddin Farahi رحمہ اللہ (d. 1930 CE).
6. Our current book: *The Maqasidic Tafsir* by Karim Abu Zaid.

With this work, *The Maqasidic Tafsir: Pursuing the Higher Aim of the Quranic Scripture*, the author intends to produce a praiseworthy effort seeking the face of Allah ﷻ, to assist this Muslim community (Ummah) to hold to the rope of Allah ﷻ while maintaining an evidence-based structure to support analysis, while respecting the belief system (Aqeedah) of the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin), and averting a trajectory hermeneutic influenced by social-political biases.





## Part Two

# Introduction to Maqasidic Tafsir



# Chapter One

## Maqasid in Islam



### Introduction to Maqasid — the higher aims

Islamic knowledge is antecedent to a focus on actions as a means through which Muslims achieve particular objectives. The sources of Islamic knowledge—the Quran, and the traditions of the Prophet ﷺ (Sunnah)—make it crystal clear that if we do not strive to achieve the higher aim (Maqsid) behind the commands, and prohibitions, then our time in this world (Dunya) will remain devoid of substance, and will be filled with meaningless actions. Fudayl ibn Iyad ؓ said, **“A person with knowledge will not cease to be ignorant of what he knows until he acts upon it. So, when he acts upon it, then he becomes a person with knowledge.”**<sup>(1)</sup>

The higher aims (Maqasid) of the Revelation are to identify wisdom, discipline our use of knowledge, and maximize benefits through praiseworthy action. The application of this process to exegesis (Tafsir) is the focus of part three (next) of this introductory volume. This present section—part two—is focused on defining the scope of higher aim-based (Maqasidic) thought because the purpose of defining is to establish tools with which to destroy ignorance, and bring clarity; it has been the tradition of the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin) to begin every explanation with definitions.

Muslims are more familiar with higher aims (Maqasid) in the study of Islamic law (Shari’ah), which addresses the higher aims of the divine legislative system (Maqasid ash-Shari’ah). This science pinpoints the objectives, and the higher purposes of Islamic law (Shari’ah)—commands, and prohibitions.

The higher aims (al-Maqasid) subject is of exceptional benefit because of the several pressing difficulties confronting the Muslim community (Ummah) in recent years. The rapid, and constant changes from one generation to another, and the increase of trials, and tribulations are a unique test for all of humanity. The Prophet ﷺ described this test when he said, **“The Hour will not begin**

---

(1) *Iqtidaa-ul-Ilm al-Amal* (p. 18), Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Ali Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Ibaanah Publishing, 2006.

until knowledge is taken away, earthquakes increase, time passes quickly, tribulations appear, and there is a lot of Haraj (which is killing), and until there will be a lot of wealth among you, and it will become abundant.”<sup>(1)</sup>

For this community (Ummah), there is a greater need to seek knowledge, interpret the Revelation, and develop an action plan, even if the action is to remain patiently in our homes, and avoid tribulation. Contending with the tribulations of the end times without guidance is destruction. As the Prophet ﷺ said, **“There will be tribulations during which one who is sitting is better than one who is standing, and one who is standing is better than one who is walking, and one who is walking is better than one who is running. He who exposes himself to them will be drawn to them, and whoever finds refuge from them, let him seek protection therein.”**<sup>(2)</sup>

The social, political, and economic tests we face as a community (Ummah) today are a great spiritual threat because these tests of the modern age are of a nature that misleads us to cling to the material for refuge. It is only through Guidance from Allah ﷻ, and then learning the higher aims of Islam that we can apply an action plan to face the tribulations of social strife, and disorder in a way that draws us closer to our Creator, and prepares us for success in these tests. Application of the science of higher aims (Maqasid) to our current needs arms us with full awareness of the higher aims of Islamic law (Maqasid ash-Shari’ah), and prepares us for an approach that can bring about guided revision, and explicit improvement, being conscious, and thoughtful of the realities before us.

We need to realize the weight of the subject of higher aims of the divine legislative system (Maqasid ash-Shari’ah), particularly for Muslim jurists. They are responsible for deducing, and disseminating legal rulings, and verdicts (Fatwas) for every action, and saying from the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah). They rely on authentic evidence, and in-depth comprehension of diverse pieces of literature, such as Prophetic Narration (Hadith), exegesis (Tafsir), and Arabic linguistics. They are mandated to do their best to understand the evidence at hand, and to secure the higher aims of the divine legislative spirit in their verdicts. This insight is necessary in the current times of rapidly evolving tests, and trials. New technology, and social change bring new legal questions, and the solution must be in harmony with what Allah ﷻ intends for His servants. In these times, the knowledge of the higher aims of the divine legislative system (Maqasid ash-Shari’ah) helps jurists to rightly understand legal texts—the Quran, and the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah)—and guides their deliberation, and deduction (Ijtihad) to arrive at a sound, and reasonable rule that benefits people.

---

(1) Bukhari (1036).

(2) Bukhari (3601); Muslim (2886).

The pillars of Islam (Arkan Al-Islam), the Islamic legislative law (Shari'ah), and the Quran are three fields where scholars (Ulama) concentrated on pointing out the higher aims (Maqasid), as a means of finding ease for the servants of the Most Merciful.

### The higher aims (Maqasid), and the pillars of Islam (Arkan Al-Islam)

It is first within the pillars of Islam (Arkan Al-Islam) that the layman Muslim can find ease in the identification of higher aims (Maqasid). It is the role of the Muslim jurist, and scholar to interpret the means to this for the layman because the common Muslim might struggle to establish the letter of the law, and never benefit from the depths of its wisdom. The Quran, and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) place much weight on the spirit of the law, besides its letter. In the context of seeking the Maqsid, the spirit of the Islamic law refers to the intended higher aims behind specific legislations. The Quran, and the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) are blunt on the significance of the higher aims (Maqasid), as indicated in the corpus of Shuruh<sup>(1)</sup> on prayers (Salah), obligatory charity (Zakat), keeping fasts (Saum), and annual pilgrimage (Hajj)—the higher aims (Maqasid) are equally sought by a student of knowledge in enjoining good, forbidding evil, calling to Islam (Dawah), religious struggle (Jihad), and all the other aspects of establishing the religion (Deen).

Sometimes, the higher aims are implicit, and easily deduced from the Quran, and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah). In such circumstances, the scholars (Ulama) derive meaning by following general guidelines in making conclusions, and the higher purposes they identify are within the paradigm of Islam.

On several occasions, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ pointed out the significance of striving to actualize the objectives of prescribed actions. According to Prophetic narrations (Ahadith), rituals are valueless if the practitioners fail to attain their intended goals. Striving to attain the higher aims (Maqasid) of the five pillars (Arkan) is the content of the average Khutbah (scholarly speech), and it follows that this is among the easiest means of bringing the heart of the common Muslim closer to worship.

### Prayer (Salah)

Allah ﷻ mentions that one of the higher aims of prayer (Salah) is to help protect us from enslaving our *self* (Nafs) to lusts, whims, and desires. Allah ﷻ said:

---

(1) Sharh (pl. Shuruh) is an Arabic term used in book titles, it literally means "expounding of," and is usually used in commentaries on non-Quranic works.

﴿ أَتْلُ مَا أُوْحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ ۖ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۗ ﴾

﴿ ٤٥ ﴾ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ

“... and establish prayer (Salah). Indeed, prayer (Salah) prohibits immorality, and wrongdoing, and the remembrance (Zikr) of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do.”<sup>(1)</sup>

In chapter (Surah) Maryam, Allah ﷻ compared the first generation who performed the prayer (Salah) timely, and adequately with their successors who failed to do so. Consequently, the successors failed to achieve the higher aim (Maqsid), and they followed their lusts. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ خَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهَوَاتِ فَسُوفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غِيًّا ﴿٥٩﴾ ﴾

“Then, there has succeeded them a posterity who have neglected their prayer (Salah) by delaying it, or not offering it correctly, or by not offering them in their proper fixed times, and have followed lusts. So, they will be thrown into Hell (Jahannam).”<sup>(2)</sup>

### Obligatory charity on wealth (Zakat ul-Mal)

The higher aim (Maqsid) of obligatory charity (Zakat), and almsgiving (Sadaqat) is to purify the giver, and his wealth, to purify his soul (Nafs) from stinginess, and his wealth from unlawful earnings. A believer has certainty that purification through obligatory charity (Zakat), and almsgiving (Sadaqat) will lead to an increase in his wealth. Obligatory charity (Zakat) also cleanses the recipient from envying the wealthy in the community. Hence, there will be a bond between members of the Muslim community (Ummah), which shatters the socially constructed class, and caste divisions. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾ ﴾

“Take alms (Sadaqah) from their wealth to purify them, and sanctify them with it, and invoke Allah for them. Verily! Your invocations are a source of security for them, and Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower.”<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Quran (29:45), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (19:59).

### Obligatory charity at the end of Ramadan month (Zakat ul-Fitr)

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه mentioned the higher aim (Maqsid) of Zakat ul-Fitr when he said, “**The Messenger of Allah made Zakat ul-Fitr obligatory as a means of purifying the fasting person from idle talk, and foul language, and to feed the poor. Whoever pays it before the prayer, it is accepted Zakat, and whoever pays it after the prayer, it is just a kind of Sadaqah.**”<sup>(2)</sup>

### Fasting

Regarding fasting, Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, “**Allah has no interest in any person's abstention from eating, and drinking if that person does not give up lying, and dishonest actions.**”<sup>(3)</sup>

In another tradition, Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ asserted, “**There are people who fast, and get nothing from their fast except hunger, and there are those who pray, and get nothing from their prayer but a sleepless night.**”<sup>(4)</sup>

Hence, the higher aim (Maqsid) of fasting is to develop good character, and not merely abstaining from food, water, and sexual desires.

### Hajj (obligatory annual pilgrimage)

Regarding Hajj, evidence in the Quran affirms that the rituals performed by pilgrims should be meaningful, and fruitful, and lead to the attainment of righteousness (al-Birr). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهْلِ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحِجَّةِ وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾<sup>(1)</sup>

“**They ask you (O Muhammad) about the new moons. Say: These are signs to mark fixed periods for humanity, and the pilgrimage. It is not al-Birr (piety, and righteousness) that you**

(1) Quran (9:103).

(2) Abu Dawud (1609), graded Hasan by Al-Albani; Ibn Majah (1827).

(3) Bukhari (6057); similar wording in *al-Mu'jam al-Sagheer*, and *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, At-Tabarani; Hasan by Al-Albani in *Saheeh al-Targheeb wa'l-Tarheeb*.

(4) Ibn Majah (1690); Ibn Khuzaymah (1996, 1997); also in *Musnad Ahmad*.



enter the houses from the back but al-Birr (is the quality of the one) who fears Allah. So, enter houses through their proper doors, and fear Allah that you may be successful.”<sup>(1)</sup>

As for the sacrificial animals (Qurbani), Allah ﷻ said:

﴿لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهُ لُحُومَهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤها وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْكُمْ كَذَٰلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ لِشُكْرٍ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَيْكُمْ وَبَشِّرِ

الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

“It is neither their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah, but it is piety from you that reaches Him. Thus, have We made them subject to you that you may magnify Allah for His Guidance to you. And give glad tidings (O Muhammad) to the Muhsinun (doers of good).”<sup>(2)</sup>

Aishah رضي الله عنها narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily, circumambulation (Tawaf) around the House (Kaabah), and between As-Safa, and Al-Marwah, and throwing the Jamrat (the three stone walls) had been enjoined to establish remembering Allah.”<sup>(3)</sup>

These rituals (Manasik) of annual pilgrimage (Hajj) are established to develop obedience to Allah ﷻ, and have a higher aim (Maqsid) to affirm through these rituals (Manasik) a remembrance of Him, and a firmness upon establishing Monotheism (Tawheed).



(1) Quran (2:189).

(2) Quran (22:37).

(3) Tirmizi (902), Hasan Sahih by Abu 'Isa; Abu Dawud (1888), classed da'if by Al-Albani; Classed Sahih by Ibn Qudamah in *Al-Kaafi fi fiqh al-Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (1/516); Ash-Shanqiti said the transmission chain might be weak, but the meaning is considered authentic for agreeing with the Quran; Ibn Baz said in *Majmoo'al-Fatawa*, the meaning is proven (16/186).

## Chapter Two

### Maqasid Ash-Shari'ah



#### The higher aims of the Islamic legislative system (Maqasid Ash-Shari'ah)

To determine the higher aims (Maqasid) of the Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah), we need to consider why Allah ﷻ revealed the Divine Law. We can summarize that the higher aim (Maqsid) of this system is to obtain, and ensure benefits, and prevent harm for both individuals, and communities in both this world (Dunya), and the hereafter (Akhirah).

The Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah) is that of mercy, and justice—all its rulings, and teachings bestow mercy, and justice upon humanity. Although some of the legal mandates, and required rituals may appear to be harsh, they are feasible for individuals with ordinary abilities, and excusable for individuals with lesser abilities.

The Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah) encompasses commands, and prohibitions which intend to actualize benefit, prevent some harm, or free one from some evil, or transgression. The commands included in the body of the Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah) aim to actualize the general goals of happiness, preserve law, and order, and ensure immediate, or long-term benefits, and the prohibitions are to prevent harm, and evil.

#### Palatial benefits of the Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah)

It is only reasonable to assert that Allah ﷻ honors Prophet Adam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, and us, his offspring, provides benefits for us, and reveals means by which justice, and happiness can be maintained in our societies. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا ﴾

“And indeed We have honored the Children of Adam, and We have carried them on land, and sea, and have provided them with lawful good things (At-Taiyibat), and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preference.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Also, Allah ﷻ revealed a religion whose body contains a legal system that aims to bring about benefits, and prevent harm. The application of this system will protect, and enhance His servants’ welfare. Furthermore, Allah ﷻ made this system easy to implement in any case. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ﴾

“Allah intends for you ease, and does not intend for you hardship.”<sup>(2)</sup>

Some Muslim scholars (Ulama) of jurisprudence, such as Ibn Taymiyyah ربه, said that Allah ﷻ revealed such an Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah) to achieve justice. Other jurists said the goal of the Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah) is to facilitate the achievement of happiness.

Abu Hamid al-Ghazali ربه said that Allah ﷻ revealed the Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah) to reach, and realize every benefit of the human being on earth. If we look closely at the three perceptions, they are not contradictory. Rather, they complement one another. Humankind's happiness necessitates justice, and justice is one of the essential benefits people derive from the system Allah ﷻ revealed.

Experts in the field of the principles of jurisprudence (Usul al-Fiqh) have developed a comprehensive approach that divides the higher aims of the Islamic legislative system (Maqasid ash-Shari'ah) in terms of their vitality, importance, priority, benefits, and interests into **three classes**:

- A. The necessities (Dharuriyat).
- B. The needs (Hajiyat).
- C. The complementary, or embellishments (Tahsiniyat).

---

(1) Quran (17:70).

(2) Quran (2:185).

## A. The necessities (Dharuriyat)

They are primary, and pressing higher aims (Maqasid) for the existence, survival, and well-being of humankind in this world (Dunya), and the hereafter (Aakhirah). They are the foundation upon which the religion, and worldly affairs of the people depend. Scholars (Ulama) divided necessities (Dharuriyat) into five fundamental values (ad-Dharuriyat al-Khams). All rulings, and prescriptions in the affairs of humankind will fall into one of these values. The well-grounded scholars (Ulama) determine how to interpret rulings to uphold the greater value, and facilitate the palatial benefits for the people. The **five necessities** are as follows:

### 1. Protection of the religion (Deen)

Religion (Deen) is the intent behind the creation of humankind, and is a contractual obligation taken in good conviction upon all humans that our purpose of existing is worship in submission to our Creator. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ٥٦ ﴾

“And I did not create the jinn, and humanity except to worship Me.”<sup>(1)</sup>

This worship is a purpose that does not fulfill a need for Allah ﷻ, as He does not need our worship. Rather, it means we must worship our Creator, and will benefit from fulfilling this contract. Hence, Muslims must fulfill their duties, and avoid apathy. It is an individual, and communal duty to preserve the religion (Deen).

Individuals can secure the religion (Deen) by establishing the obligatory acts of worship, such as the five daily prayers (Salah), fasting in Ramadan, paying the obligatory charity (Zakat), and performing the annual pilgrimage (Hajj). Religion (Deen) is also secured by learning the pillars of faith (Arkan Al-Iman), and reflecting on these pillars, while regularly observing acts of worship. We maintain our integrity by amending, and improving our efforts, seeking protection from apostasy, and shielding from indulging in lewdness, and indecencies. Allah ﷻ illustrated this connection between securing religion (Deen), and performing worship when He ﷻ said:

﴿ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ ٤٥ ﴾

(1) Quran (51:56).

**“Perform prayer (Salah). Indeed, prayer (Salah) will help prevent from al-Fahsha (the major sins of every kind, and unlawful sexual intercourse), and Al-Munkar (disbelief, polytheism, evil, and wicked deeds), and the remembrance of Allah is greater indeed in preventing sins. And Allah knows what you do.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

The religion (Deen) is secured by collective efforts when the community (Ummah) actualizes the mandate of enjoining righteousness as it is known in the Revelation, and forbidding the antithesis of righteousness: what is evil, and what is unknown from the orthodox. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾<sup>(104)</sup>

**“Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good (Islam), enjoining al-Ma'ruf (Islamic Monotheism, and all that Islam orders one to do), and forbidding al-Munkar (polytheism, and disbelief, and all that Islam has forbidden). And it is they who are successful.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri رضي الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, **“Whoever sees any evil (Munkar), he has to change it by his hand (using of force). If he is unable (has no power) to do so, then he has to change (the evil) by his tongue (speaking). If he cannot do so, he has to hate the sin in his heart, which is a lesser degree of faith (Iman).”<sup>(3)</sup>**

This narration (Hadith) substantiates the communal duty to preserve the religion (Deen), but if the community (Ummah) at large fails to fulfill this crucial duty, then it turns back to being an individual duty.

## 2. Protection of life (an-Nafs)

Allah ﷻ created the human being, and He placed the soul into the body for a fixed term, which only He knows. Allah ﷻ has complete sovereignty over the beginning, and end of all His creation. No one has the right to end another innocent person's time in this creation, and not even his own life.

(1) Quran (29:45).

(2) Quran (3:104).

(3) Muslim (177); Muslim (178) with additions to 177, and narrated by Tariq ibn Shihab; Nasa'i (5009); Ibn Majah (4013); Abu Dawud (1140), Sahih by Al-Albani.

Individuals, and communities must preserve human life under all conditions. Because of that, the Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah) does not distinguish between the life of the rich, and poor, the strong, or weak, and Muslims, or non-Muslims. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوْلِيهِ سُلْطٰنًا فَلَا يُسْرِفُ فِي الْقَتْلِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ

مَنْصُورًا ﴿٣٣﴾

“And do not kill anyone which Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause. And whoever is killed (intentionally with hostility, and oppression, and not by mistake), We have given his heir the authority [(to demand Qisas, Law of Equality in punishment, or to forgive, or to take Diya (blood-money)]. But let him not exceed the limits in taking life (i.e., he should not kill anyone except the killer only). Verily, he is helped.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Also, Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا ﴿١٩﴾

“And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful.”<sup>(2)</sup>

The Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah) is a deterrent, which protects life through the establishment of severe punishment for those who murder others. The punishment for those who intentionally kill innocent human beings is the death penalty. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُنِبْ عَلَيْكُمْ الۡفِصَاصُ فِي الۡقَتْلِ الۡحُرِّ بِالۡحُرِّ وَالۡعَبْدُ بِالۡعَبْدِ وَالۡأُنثَىٰ بِالۡأُنثَىٰ فَمَن عَفَىٰ لَهُ مِنۡ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ فَأِنۡبَاعٌ

بِالۡمَعۡرُوفِ وَأَدَاةٌ إِلَيۡهِ بِإِحۡسَنٍ ذَٰلِكَ تَخۡفِيفٌ مِّنۡ رَبِّكُمۡ وَرَحۡمَةٌ فَمَنۡ أَعۡتَدَىٰ بَعۡدَ ذَٰلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٨﴾

“O you who have believed, prescribed for you is legal retribution for those murdered—the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. But whoever overlooks from his brother anything, then there should be a suitable follow-up, and payment to him

(1) Quran (17:33).

(2) Quran (4:29).

**with good conduct. This is an alleviation from your Lord, and a mercy. But whoever transgresses after that will have a painful punishment.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

These pieces of evidence illustrate the higher aim behind the establishment of the law of retribution (Qisas), besides punishment for the crime. While the punishment may be severe, or unsettling in sentiment, the legal application will undoubtedly lead to saving many lives because the Muslim community (Ummah) members will realize that there will be retribution for killing innocent people. This may be why Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَوةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴾ (179)

**“And there is (a saving of) life for you in al-Qisas (the Law of Equality in punishment), O men of understanding, that you may become al-Muttaqun (the pious).”<sup>(2)</sup>**

### 3. Preservation of dignity, lineage, and progeny

This necessity directly impacts the Muslim family, which is the first building block in the Muslim community (Ummah). The Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah) implements intense defense of the next generation—the progeny. This is apparent in pronouncements to protect the rights of children, and pregnant, or nursing mothers, the pieces of evidence of which are too numerous to mention. Most importantly, the rights of the progeny are protected with the non-negotiable prohibition of adultery, or any behavior which brings one near to adultery.

The immoral practice of adultery infringes on the next generation's rights because it leads to an increase in social problems, such as the birth of illegitimate children, irresponsible parents, and the loss of known links of consanguinity. The Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah) seeks to protect the Muslim community (Ummah) from such problems. Therefore, it encourages, and facilitates the process of marriage, and maintains the taboos, and prohibitions which regulate marriage transactions. The risk of violating commandments, and norms is regulated by powerful incitements to enter into permissible marriage as a shield from lewdness, and adultery.

The Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah) mandates severe punishment of fornication as a deterrent executable at varied levels upon both married, and unmarried individuals. A practical result of this strict control of the integrity of the family unit is the protection of a documentable lineage. Marriage is the only way to maintain accurate ancestry. This is significant in exacting inheritance dispensation with justice. The rulings, and applications on inheritance are, unfortunately, a greatly

(1) Quran (2:178), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (2:179).

overlooked science in the contemporary Islamic world, despite having been established, and protected by specialized scholars from early Islam, such as Zaid ibn Thabit رضي الله عنه.

The three praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin) used mastery of the sciences of inheritance as one of the criteria to accept, or refuse a student to a circle of knowledge; this emphasis is known from a narration (Hadith) in which, if authentic, the Prophet ﷺ said, **“Oh Abu Hurairah! Learn about inheritance, and teach it, for it is half of knowledge, but it will be forgotten. This is the first thing that will be taken away from my nation.”**<sup>(1)</sup> While the narration (Hadith) is ruled weak (Daef), its content reflects the understanding the three praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin) had of the importance of honoring the lineal bonds.

What follows from the preservation of lineage is the social structure to protect the dignity, and honor of the members of the Muslim community (Ummah). Protection of dignity includes protecting individual privacy rights. This includes not unjustly, or recklessly exposing shortcomings, or accusing others of misbehavior. It also means ensuring that relationships between men, and women are respectful, and responsible.

Muslims are prohibited from accusing others of wrongdoing, such as committing adultery, or other immoral behaviors. The general principle that applies to any accusation toward another person is the maxim: ‘Evidence is for the person who claims (accuses), and the oath is for the person who denies (the charge).’

Based on this principle, each allegation must be substantiated by proof. Otherwise, the accuser will suffer the punishment for a false allegation. The penalty for such behavior, which is termed as ‘al-Qazf’ in Islamic law, is eighty lashes, based on the statement of Allah ﷻ:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٤﴾﴾

**“And those who accuse chaste women, and then do not produce four witnesses—lash them with eighty lashes, and do not accept from them testimony ever after. And those are the defiantly disobedient.”**<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Ibn Majah (2719), weak (Daef).

(2) Quran (24:4), Sahih International trans.



#### 4. Protection of the intellect, or mind (al-Aql)

Intellect (Aql) is the means to benefit ourselves, and humankind. It is one quality that separates the human from the animal. Allah ﷻ commanded us to protect, and improve our intellect (Aql). Protection of the intellect (Aql) requires safeguarding it from anything that might harm our mind, ability, and function. Protecting our intellect (Aql) includes the prohibition of the consumption of liquor, or similar substances that are an abomination to our mental health, and intellectual performance. Allah ﷻ forbade us from the consumption of intoxicants. He ﷻ said:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾

**“O you who believe! Intoxicants (in all forms), gambling, al-Ansab, and al-Azlam (arrows for seeking luck, or decision) are an abomination of Shaytan’s (Satan) handiwork. So, avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) so that you may be successful.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

Even though the Quran specifies the consumption of liquor in this verse (Ayah), similar intoxicants, such as hashish, marijuana, and cocaine can come under this ruling through the application of the principle of analogical deduction (Qiyas). Consumption of intoxicants is a punishable offense.

A sound education is a means to improve human intellectual capabilities, and discernment. More importantly, we must protect our intellect from wicked, and distorted knowledge, which may corrupt it. Finally, the necessity of protecting the intellect (Aql) must include protecting against emotional corruption, or apathy, as what is toxic to the mind is toxic to the spirit. Indeed, mental, and emotional health is one holistic part of holding onto a moral, or essential truth, and the one who is away from the truth will become aware of his deviancy empathetically, and intellectually. Wabisah ibn Ma'bad رضي الله عنه reported, **“The Messenger of Allah said to me, ‘Have you come to ask about righteousness, and sin?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ The Prophet clenched his fist, and struck his chest, saying, ‘Consult your soul, consult your heart, O Wabisah. Righteousness is what reassures your soul, and your heart, and sin is what wavers in your soul, and puts tension in your chest, even if people approve it in their judgments again, and again.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

(1) Quran (5:90).

(2) *Sunan Ad-Darimi* (2575), graded authentic (Sahih); Ahmad (29/523), graded good (Hasan) by An-Nawawi, and Al-Albani.

## 5. Protection of property (al-Mal)

Hard-working people wish to own properties, and keep cash as savings. There is no prohibition in Islam to seeking, and accumulating wealth through legitimate means; neither is it blameworthy nor in contradiction to spirituality. However, a few conditions govern the gains, holdings, and trade of wealth. First, the Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah) institutes a mandatory charity tax (Zakat al-Mal) on excess non-circulating wealth. Secondly, the Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah) establishes means of protecting individual ownership from fraud, manipulation, cheating, stealing, bribery, and other violations. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتُدْلُوا بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (188)

**“And eat up not one another's property unjustly (in any illegal way, stealing, robbing, deceiving), nor give bribery to the rulers (judges before presenting your cases) that you may knowingly eat up a part of the property of others sinfully.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

The Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah) has established punishments, and severe deterrents for those who steal the properties of others. The punishments for those convicted of shoplifting, or common theft are mentioned by Allah ﷻ, who said:

﴿وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جِزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِّنْ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ﴾ (38)

**“Cut off (from the wrist joint) the (right) hand of the thief, male, or female, as a punishment for that which they committed, a punishment by way of example from Allah. And Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

In conclusion, the Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah) is fundamentally structured to preserve, and strengthen these **five necessities** (Dharuriyat), and establish all actions required for their preservation, and elevation. Individuals, and communities must maintain these principles within individual actions, and within polity by all means because failing to do so will result in total loss of the higher means, and collapse of the intended Divine Order.<sup>(3)</sup>

Our purpose in this creation is to fulfill the intent of Allah ﷻ, Who said:

(1) Quran (2:188).

(2) Quran (5:38).

(3) Abstract from “Understanding Maqasid ash-Shari’ah A Contemporary Perspective,” by Musfir ibn Ali al-Qahtani.

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴾

“And I did not create the jinn, and humanity except to worship Me.”<sup>(1)</sup>

The **five necessities** (Dharuriyat) are the primary, and pressing higher aims (Maqasid) for the existence, survival, and well-being of humankind in this world (Dunya), and the hereafter (Akhirah). Moreover, they are the foundation upon which worship, and worldly affairs are facilitated, and the norms, and rules by which they are established are found only by pursuing the higher aims (Maqasid) of Revelation.

### B. The needs (al-Hajiyat)

After the establishment of necessities (Dharuriyat), the next class of higher aims (Maqasid) is the one that secures complimentary needs (Maqasid al-Hajiyat). These needs establish, by the Mercy of Allah ﷻ, comforts, and pleasures in our life, and worship through the securing of ease, and convenience, and the removal of hardship, and difficulty. They are an extension that complements, and enhances the five necessities. Neglecting these needs does not nullify benefits in day-to-day life, but it will lead to hardship for the individual, or community.

The needs (Al-Hajiyat) are those things that are meant to relieve people of hardship, as Islamic law is founded upon the promotion of ease, and the prevention of discomfort, and difficulty, whether concerning worship, daily customs, social, and monetary transactions, or criminal procedures. Hence, they are things whose absence would only cause some inconvenience, disrupt acts of worship, or cause some disturbance to their otherwise untroubled lives. Needs are of less importance than essentials (Dharuriyat).

In the category of the needs (Al-Hajiyat) are such higher aims (Maqasid) as exemptions, or legal excuses (Rukhsah) from specific acts of worship, and regulations of some transactions. Rukhsah are known for the shortening, and combining of prayer (al-Jam' wal-Qasr) for travelers. Secondly, it is known that the physically ill, or the travelers may break their fasts during the month of Ramadan. Third, an ill, or disabled person can pray in the sitting, or reclining position. Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “**Verily, Allah loves for you to take His concessions, just as He loves you to fulfill his edicts.**”<sup>(2)</sup> Imam Malik رضي الله عنه reported in *Al-Muwatta*, “**If there is a necessity, the [Deen] of Allah is ease.**”<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Quran (51:56).

(2) Ibn Hibban (354), Sahih according to Al-Arna'ut.

(3) *Al-Muwatta*, Imam Malik (Book 29, #29.33.106), A'isha Abdarahman, and Ya'qub Johnson trans.

As for the higher aim (Maqsid) of bringing ease through regulation, the prohibition of trade in alcohol prevents harm by outlawing alcohol sales to prevent its use.<sup>(1)</sup> These needs are higher aims (Maqasid) which are often found in the finer points of knowledge from the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah). This stands as evidence for those who claim that religion (Deen) is meant to bring ease. They use such a claim to reject details from the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah)—even saying that those who call to the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) are extremists. Rather, we see that the Maqasid Al-Hajiyat are met by gaining knowledge of the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah). This is, in many cases, the higher aim (Maqsid) of the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah)—the actions, and statements of the Prophet ﷺ. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿فَمَا رَحْمَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ لَئِن لَّمْ يَكُنِ لَّهُمَّ لَوْلَا كُنْتَ فَظًا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ۗ﴾ (109)

**“Only through the Divine Mercy have you (Muhammad) been able to deal with your followers so gently. If you had been stern, and hard-hearted, they would all have deserted you a long time ago.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

Moreover, the Prophet ﷺ instructed his companions (Sahabah), **“Make things easy for the people, and do not make things difficult for them, and give them glad tidings, and do not repel them. Obey each other, and do not differ amongst yourselves.”<sup>(3)</sup>** This statement attaches ‘ease’ with the prohibition of differing from the established Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah).

### C. The complementary embellishment (Tahsiniyat)

At-Tahsiniyat, or enhancing, and elevating the higher aims (Maqasid), refers to embellishing benefits, while achieving higher aims (Maqasid). At-Tahsiniyat are things that, while they are not necessary for a person's survival, nevertheless, serve to make life easier, and more pleasant. For example, embracing a culture of good character, and shunning a culture of base character improves the quality of life, and betters the individual. Individuals, and society will not suffer any major problems if these enhancements are missing. At-Tahsiniyat are extraneous acts, or understandings which, if lost, will not affect the action which carries the main benefit. Complementary enhancements include such things as the promotion of individual hygiene when performing acts of worship, giving extra charity, and covering the Awrah.<sup>(4)</sup> This class of higher aims (Maqasid) also includes leaving details with the intent to enhance the action, which carries the main benefit. An

(1) Abstract from “Understanding Maqasid Ash-Shari’ah A Contemporary Perspective,” by Musfir ibn Ali al-Qahtani.

(2) Quran (3:159), Sarwar trans.

(3) Bukhari (69).

(4) The Arabic word ‘Awrah’ refers to the parts of the body which must be covered with clothing.

example of enhancement by removing is the action of leaving consumption of meat that has not been slaughtered by the neck with the recitation of the Name of Allah ﷻ; another example is removing unfavorable character traits, such as stinginess, and extravagances.

In conclusion, while implementing these **three classes** of higher aims (Maqasid), the necessities (Dharuriyat) have priority over the needs (Hajiyat), which then have priority over the complementaries (Tahsiniyat).

Among the **five necessities**, the protection of the religion (Deen) has an intuitive prioritization. The intuitive response is to preserve, and protect religion over the protection of life; likewise, life has a higher priority than lineage, lineage is before the intellect, and intellect is preferred over the property.<sup>(1)</sup> This intuitive prioritization is viewed as a simplification of a complex process that a Mujtahid may follow to determine prioritization on a case-by-case basis. The conditions which determine the prioritization will come from the analysis of public interest (Maslaha), and public harm (Mafsadah). Therefore, scholars (Ulama) differed in prioritizing the essential higher aims (Maqasid). Imam Muhammad-Al-Ghazali ﷺ (d. 505 AH) favored the prioritization mentioned above, as well as others, such as Taqi ad-Din as-Subki ﷺ (d. 756 AH). The Andalusí scholar Imam Abu Ishaq ash-Shatibi ﷺ (d. 790 AH) favored a different order of priority. Neither is there a consensus on limits to the essential higher aims (Maqasid), meaning that they did not agree on the order of them. As-Subki ﷺ, and Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ favored a list of essentials that were not limited to only five necessities.<sup>(2)</sup>



---

(1) Abstract from “Understanding Maqasid Ash-Shari’ah A Contemporary Perspective,” by Musfir ibn Ali al-Qahtani.

(2) *Beyond the Five Essentials: A Study of Ibn Taymiyyah's Extension of Maqāsīd al-Sharī'ah*, (p. 6), Gowhar Quadir Wani, 2016.

## Chapter Three

# The Science of Maqasid Al-Quran



### Character of the higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran)

Part of the character of higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) is the deriving of meaning from the structure of the Quran. This is analogous to the derivation of meaning in the Islamic legislative system (Shari'ah) from the analysis of the higher aims (Maqasid) of legal rulings. Both higher aim-based (Maqasidic) sciences search for higher meaning respective to the divine structure.

Higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran) are known in two ways. First, by its own efflorescence as a specialized tool of advancing essential, complementary, and enhancing higher aims (Maqasid) for the servants of Allah ﷻ. Second, it is known by what it is similar to, and what it differs from. There are trends in exegesis (Tafsir) that are contradictory to the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir), and others that are compatible with the higher aim-based (Maqasidic) method. An explanation of the sciences of higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) must, therefore, begin with distinguishing the method categorically from its field of scholarship.

An exegesis (Tafsir) that is contradictory to the higher aim-based (Maqasidic) trend is often dedicated to specific interests, such as philosophical, and mystical trends. The mystical, for instance, paints the interpretations of the verses (Ayat) with the philosophy of the gnostics. Thus, the objectives of the Quran are hardly reflected; rather, the objectives of obfuscation for elitist, and status seeker gains are emphasized. In this connection, Adh-Dhahabi رحمته points out, **“While interpreting the Quran, a mystic (Sufi) interpreter often goes beyond the outward, or explicit indications of the verse, and manipulates them to support the mystical views in the name of so-called inner meanings. *Al-Futuhāt Al-Makkiyah* (The Openings in Makkah) by Ibn Arabi are the best examples of this [blameworthy] kind.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

Adh-Dhahabi رحمته added, **“Numerous examples of mystical interpretations revealed that this trend of exegesis (Tafsir) has an apparent contradiction to the higher aim-based (Maqasidic)**

---

(1) *Siyar A'lam Al-Nubala'i*, Adh-Dhahabi, (p. 252), 2000 CE edition.

**approach.”** He asserted that a speculative mystic trend of exegesis (Tafsir) often takes the Quran out of its objective. The Quran aims to reach out to a particular purpose with its texts, and verses (Ayat). In contrast, the Sufi aims at a specific goal through his speculations, and perspectives. This uneven direction of the objective shows contradiction, and inconsistency. He lowers the Quran from its intended aim, and purpose.<sup>(1)</sup>

There are other notable exegeses (Tafasir) trends that share little resemblance with the higher aim-based (Maqasidic) trend. These include the scientific, linguistic, and jurisprudential trends. The exegetes (Mufassirun) did not fully develop these trends to analyze the higher aims (Maqasid) in the Quran. In other words, reflecting on the higher aim-based (Maqasidic) aspect does not fall into their primary, or secondary goals due to their objective-based exegesis (Tafsir) with scientific, linguistic, and jurisprudential lenses.

Some exegesis (Tafsir) trends, which could be seedbeds for higher aim-based (Maqasidic) thought, are identifiable by the analytical (Tahlilee), and thematic (Mawdhu'ee) trends. They complement higher aim-based (Maqasidic) thought, and serve as a source to identify the higher aim (Maqsid), and the means (Wasail) to achieve these aims within the Quranic text. These are neither devoid of higher aim-based (Maqasidic) color nor exclusively represent it, as both carry shared components, while maintaining their own distinguishing, exclusive dimensions.

These trends are significant sources for the higher aim-based (Maqasidic) trend of exegesis (Tafsir). Most of them are limited to outlining the higher aims (Maqasid) of a verse (Ayah), or a series of verses (Ayat). In other words, they usually do not mention, or expound upon the means (Wasail) that could lead to achieving those higher purposes, or implementing an action plan.

### **Discipline of the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir)**

In the first part of this volume, we identified, and categorized the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) as that which is the accepted, and praiseworthy opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi). We also emphasized the Quranic sciences needed to aid an exegete (Mufassir) in pursuing the meaning of the Quran within the evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur), or the opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi).

Likewise, the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) must be disciplined by specific sciences of the Quran that are particular to this exegesis (Tafsir) trend. Below is a list of essential sciences that the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) must obtain to legitimize his deduction, and deliberation:

---

(1) *Siyar A'lam Al-Nubala'i*, Adh-Dhahabi, (p. 256), 2000 CE edition.

- Knowledge of the valid exegesis (Tafsir) trends.
- Extensive study of the Prophet's ﷺ life (Seerah).
- The current order of the *written Quran* (Mus'haf).
- The science of *connectivity* (al-Munasabah).
- The science behind the *circumstances of the Revelation* (Asbab an-Nuzul).
- Significance of Makki, and Madani classes of chapters (Suwar).
- The science of *crystal clear verses* (al-Muhkam Ayat), and *ambiguous verses* (al-Mutashabih Ayat).
- The science of the *knowledge of the abrogating, and the abrogated* (Ilm al-Nasikh wa'l-Mansukh).
- Names of the chapters (Suwar).
- The stories, and parables of the Quran.
- Authentic virtues of the chapters (Suwar).
- Higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran).

### Valid exegesis (Tafsir) trends

The Prophet ﷺ was the first exegete (Mufasssir) of the Quran. His explanation to his companions (Sahabah) of the revealed verses (Ayat) is known as *at-Tafsir al-Ijmali* (the concise explanation), which is an overall synoptic exegesis (Tafsir). The examination of the Prophet's ﷺ brief exegesis (Tafsir) of the Quran developed into other phases of development, leading to different exegesis (Tafsir) trends, such as analytical (Tahlilee), and thematical (Mawdhu'ee), which then evolved into the comparative approach. The complexity of constructed social, and political systems, especially in the West, has influenced a higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) trend in an early adopter phase.

The exegete may adopt different methods to explain the Quran based on the objectives they seek to achieve. For example, the exegete (Mufasssir), who aims to reveal the miraculous nature of the sacred texts, will be concerned with linguistic clarity, and eloquence (Balaghah). In that case, he will emphasize how the meanings were eloquently, and effectively presented using various linguistic methods. This is the exegete (Mufasssir) who aims to reveal the scientific miracles of the Quran to establish its authenticity as the Divine Words of Allah ﷻ. This type of exegesis (Tafsir) will exhibit that it is beyond reason that the Quran could have been composed by a human fourteen hundred years ago, before several scientific discoveries that can only be proven with today's sophisticated devices, and methods. Pieces of evidence in the content of the Quran will be drawn to illustrate this objective.

There is no doubt that the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) derives from all valid trends. They can all be instrumental, and of great benefit to the exegete (Mufasssir), and it may be



considered necessary to diversify the means of approaching exegesis (Tafsir) due to the statement of Allah ﷻ:

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ نَصْرَفُ الْآيَاتِ وَلِيَقُولُوا دَرَسْتَ وَلِنُبَيِّنَهُ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (105)

“And thus do We diversify the verses (Ayat), so the disbelievers will say, ‘You have studied,’ And so We may make the Quran clear for a people who know.”<sup>(1)</sup>

However diverse the means, two paired, and closely related methods are critical. The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir) cannot reach the higher aims of the Quranic texts (Maqasid Al-Quran) without first the analytical (Tahlilee) approach, and secondly, the thematic (Mawdu'ee) approach.

### The analytic exegesis (Tafsir Tahlilee)

In this approach of exegesis (Tafsir), the exegete (Mufasssir) deals with the Quran verse by verse, following the compiled sequence of the written Quran (Mus'haf). They expound on explication, clarification, and analysis of the literal meanings of the Quran, verse by verse, and passage by passage from chapter (Surah) Al-Fatihah to An-Nas.

The analytical exegete (Tahlilee Mufasssir) has the primary duty to gradually facilitate comprehension of the meanings of the Quranic text through lexical analysis, and contextual implications in the light of any signs that are available within the specific text, or outside it.

Examples of this trend of exegesis (Tafsir) are the works of Ibn Majah رحمته الله, and Ibn Jarir at-Tabari رحمته الله, both of whom Adh-Dhahabi رحمته الله said were the most prominent scholars (Ulama) of exegesis (Tafsir) during the analytical (Tahlilee) stage of its development.

### The thematic (Mawdu'ee), and analytic (Tahlilee) approaches

The analytical approach of exegesis (Tafsir Tahlilee) begins with the texts of the Quran, word by word, and section by section. The contextual, and meta-textual elements of the Quran drive this work. The exegete (Mufasssir) registers the correct meanings, while adhering to the rules of dealing with vocabularies, sentences, and paragraphs.

(1) Quran (6:105).

Among the various trends of exegesis (Tafsir), the thematic (Mawdhu'ee) approach is the closest to the higher aim-based (Maqasidic) approach. This is because deduction in a thematic exegesis (Tafsir Mawdhu'ee) could evolve into focus upon higher aims (Maqasid) by diversifying, and refining interdisciplinary sciences. The thematic exegete (Mawdhu'ee Mufassir) seeks to study the Quran by taking up a particular theme that the Quran addresses, such as theology, society, economy, history, and science. Through such a trend, the thematic exegete (Mawdhu'ee Mufassir) seeks to determine the Quranic perspectives on these essential matters. The exegete (Mufassir) begins with an outline of these realities of life, and then moves to the Quranic text. They identify a problem, concept, or subject relevant to individuals, and society, and explore such topics through a scientific, or sociological lens. The danger of overemphasis on a thematic (Mawdhu'ee) approach is that the presupposition of a theme may lead to discovering supporting evidence only. The exegete (Mufassir) employs the collected results of the human experience concerning that subject, the current pressing defects, the solicited inquiries, and the proposed resolutions. Afterward, exegesis shifts to the Quranic text, where he presents before the Quran the subject under study supplemented with the human perspective to establish a conversation where the exegete (Mufassir) questions, and the Quran answers his queries.

We must bear in mind that the exegete (Mufassir) needs to present the outcome of the human experience regarding the suggested topics before the Perfect Speech of Allah ﷻ, while recognizing the limited, and imperfect human intellectual capacities. In other words, after exhausting, and completing research, and inquiry, the exegete (Mufassir) should set aside the results of the work, and turn to the Quran as one entering a conversation. In an investigative, and thoughtful manner, the virtue of the exegesis is weighed in light of the Revelation.

We can summarize the process of the thematic exegesis (Tafsir Mawdhu'ee) in the following **three steps**:

1. The exegete (Mufassir) seeks to compile the relevant Quranic texts to the subject under study.
2. The exegete (Mufassir) ponders, and reflects upon the compiled Quranic text, considering the human experience to reach the correct Islamic, and Quranic position on the subject under study.
3. The exegete (Mufassir) proposes outcomes, and resolutions to influence, or improve the human experience in light of the Quranic scripture, and the relevant thematic lens.

The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) differs in that it naturally builds on the structure of a thematic exegesis (Tafsir Mawdhu'ee), and raises the depth of study through a plurality of tools, and an inductive approach to all aspects of evidence. The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) searches for the higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran) in an objective-

based approach. The transformation of the thematic exegesis (Tafsir Mawdhu'ee) into higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) opens the dynamic, and active Quranic text to deal with actual existing challenges, and divine resolutions to problems in the Muslim community (Ummah).

### Notable works of thematic exegesis (Tafsir Mawdhu'ee)

Many contemporary works highlight the thematic (Mawdhu'ee) trend, such as:

1. *Tafsir al-Quran al-Hakim al-Mustahir bi Tafsir al-Manar* by Muhammad Abduh ﷺ (d. 1323 AH).
2. *Thematic Tafsir of the Quran* by Muhammad al-Ghazali as-Saqqa ﷺ (d. 1417 AH).
3. *Major Themes of the Quran* by Fazlur Rahman Malik ﷺ (University of Chicago Press, 2009 CE).

The significance of the analytical (Tahlilee), and thematical (Mawdhu'ee) trends to the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) should now be clear. The analytical (Tahlilee) approach is the foundation of the thematic exegesis (Tafsir Mawdhu'ee), whose subjects should originate from mounting real-life challenges, such as adultery, that should be relevant to the present. Afterward, the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir) examines the aims of various Quranic chapters (Suwar) to determine which one addresses the subject of adultery, such as chapter (Surah) Al-Nur, bearing in mind the place, time, and circumstances of its Revelation.

Hence, we can conclude how the relationship between the three works with the following statement: The analytic exegesis (Tafsir Tahlilee) provides the thematic (Mawdhu'ee) method with the determined, and ensured meanings of the verses (Ayat) related to the chosen subject under study. The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) benefits from both trends since it seeks to identify the higher aims (Maqasid) in light of its joint, and collaborative themes without contradicting the textual analysis. Nevertheless, the three works by these authors/exegetes (Mufasssirun) remain different in their features, purposes, and ideational characteristics.

In the thematic exegesis (Tafsir Mawdhu'ee) of the Quranic chapters (Suwar), the exegete (Mufasssir) focuses on all the central themes that the selected chapter (Surah) contains. He analytically interprets all the topics, and presents the main objectives of the chapter (Surah) so that it appears as a body of unity. On the other hand, the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) emphasizes the unity of the objectives of the Quran, which consists of a higher aim (Maqsid), its means (Wasail), and how it was displayed, and revealed in the nascent Muslim community (Ummah).

Many previous, and contemporary works combined analytic (Tahlilee), thematic (Mawdhu'ee), and higher aim-based (Maqasidic) methods, such as:

1. *Tafsir Al-Kabir* by Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi.
2. *Nadhm Ad-Durar fi Tanasub al-Ayi wa as-Suwar* by Ibrahim bin Umar al-Biqai'.
3. *Tafsir Al-Manar* by Rashid Rida.
4. *Al-Tahrir Wal Tanwir* by Ibn Ashur.
5. *Fi Zilal Al-Quran* by Syed Qutb.
6. *Tafhim Al-Quran* by Abul Ala Maududi.
7. *Tadabburi Quran* by Amin Ahsan Islahi.

### **Building blocks: Importance of Prophetic Biography (Seerah) to the author (Mufasssir)**

The Prophetic Biography (Seerah) is one of the crucial gates to unlock the treasures of the Noble Quran. It is exceptionally vital to know the place, time, and circumstances surrounding the Revelation before explaining the meaning. This knowledge will guide the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir) to equate the current condition of the Muslim community (Ummah) with the exact period from the Prophetic Biography (Seerah). Hence, to reach the ideal higher aim (Maqsid) of the Quranic chapter (Surah) as it applies to present challenges, the Quran becomes a lively, and active text in a Muslim's life.

In the twenty-three years of the Revelation, many verses (Ayat) of the Quran dealt directly with the Prophet's ﷺ life. Hence, for someone to fully grasp the aims of these verses (Ayat), he needs to master the science of the Prophetic Biography (Seerah).

One needs to realize that the condition of the Muslims evolved through many trials, and from weakness to strength. The Muslim community (Ummah) began with the calling of individuals in secret for almost three years, and private gatherings in the house of al-Arqam ibn Abi'l-Arqam ؓ just east of the Safa end of the Sa'i in Makkah. The effort moved to a public call to revert from idolatry to Islam, lasting nearly ten years. Towards the end of this period of publicly calling people to Islam (Dawah), the Prophet ﷺ started seeking protection for the community outside Makkah. Finally, the new Muslims undertook the effort to establish a home for the first Muslim community (Ummah) in the troubled city of Yathrib (the old name for Madinah), where the Prophet ﷺ lived for the remainder of his life. The fabric of society in the city of Yathrib (Madinah) was unique. Unlike Makkah, Yathrib (Madinah) was home to both Jews, and some Christians living side-by-side with pagan Arabs. The Prophet ﷺ assumed leadership of the diverse communities, and Yathrib, which was renamed Madinat an-Nabi (City of The Prophet), or simply Madinah, became a refuge for the Muslims.

The residents of Madinat an-Nabi (City of The Prophet) signed the Charter of Madinah to bind them together, to clarify the rules of pluralism, civic defense, communal living, and legal dealings. The community began to grow, despite its differences. For almost six years, Madinah suffered repeated attacks from the Pagan Arabs of Makkah. After many battles, and a unifying truce, reverts to Islam increased tremendously. By the end of the tenth year in Madinah, the Arabian Peninsula had become a unified Islamic community. Soon after, the world superpowers outside of the peninsula felt threatened by the unified Muslim community (Ummah), and mobilized to fight them. For every stage of the evolution of the Muslim community (Ummah), verses (Ayat), and chapters (Suwar) in the Quran detail the time, place, and lessons to be learned until the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Akhirah). No doubt, the Muslim community (Ummah) today will shift between similar stages that the first Muslim community evolved through, such as rising from positions of weakness to challenge the hegemony of world superpowers.

If the Muslim community (Ummah) is experiencing weakness, and oppression, they can learn, and seek guidance from what was revealed during the early years of oppression in Makkah.

For example, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) government is currently persecuting the Muslim minority ‘Uighurs’ in the Xinjiang province of China. The CCP held many Uighur Muslims in detention because of their practice of Islam.<sup>(1)</sup> The Uighur community could benefit from the study, and implementation of verses (Ayat) revealed during the long three-year secret stage of Islam—they would benefit by patterning their actions according to the actions known from the Prophetic Biography (Seerah).

Allah ﷻ has sent down the Quran as His ultimate guide to humanity until the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Akhirah). Since the Quran is for all times, it is a very profound book containing general teachings. The Prophetic Biography (Seerah), and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) interpret the details of the overall lessons in the Quran.

Moreover, the Prophetic Biography (Seerah) is often irreplaceable as a tool for interpreting the Quran. There are verses (Ayat) in the Quran which must be interpreted with the Prophetic Biography (Seerah) to avoid becoming utterly twisted. Such as the verse (Ayah) of the sword in chapter (Surah) At-Taubah. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿فَإِذَا أَنْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرَ الْحُرُمَ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخَذُوهُمْ وَاحْصُرُوهُمْ وَأَقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصِدٍ  
فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

(1) “Is China Detaining A Million Uyghur Muslims?” *New Internationalist*, 14 September 2018, Nithin Coca.

**“Then when the sacred months (the 1st, 7th, 11th, and 12th months of the Islamic calendar) have passed, then kill the polytheists (mushrikun) wherever you find them, and capture them, and besiege them, and lie in wait for them in each, and every ambush. But if they repent, and establish prayer (Iqamat-as-Salat), and give obligatory charity (Zakat), then leave their way free. Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

Anyone who does not interpret this verse (Ayah) within its Prophetic Biography (Seerah) context will wrongly assume that Muslims may kill others recklessly without a justified cause.

### The current order of the written Quran (Mus'haf)

The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) must have certainty in the structure of the Quran because the order of the chapters instructs the exegete (Mufassir) as to the intended higher meaning from Allah ﷻ, and the means by which the Revelation can be used for guidance.

There are **two theories** concerning the appropriate order of the written Quran (Mus'haf), that the arrangement is either ‘Tawqifi,’ or ‘Ijtihadi.’ The **Tawqifi theory** asserts that the current order of the written Quran (Mus'haf) is a result of Divine Instruction, and cannot be changed, or rearranged. The **Ijtihadi theory** understands that the current order of the written Quran (Mus'haf) is a result of scholarly deliberation, and deduction. Therefore, the order is subject to change, as intellectual deliberation depends on varying human standards, and abilities.

Confirmation of the Tawqifi position, which is more favored, assures the sanctity of the Speech of Allah ﷻ, and provides the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) with a validated science. The exegete can deliberate over the Divine Wisdom behind the Tawqifi order, and the significance of the order to the higher aim for every chapter of the Quran.

Scholars (Ulama) who promote the Ijtihadi opinion believe that the current order of the chapters (Suwar), and verses (Ayat) is not divine. They hold that the Prophet ﷺ did not leave the Muslim community (Ummah) with the Quran in arrangement, and Muslims deliberated, and standardized the current order we have in hand today. This confusion has transpired because the Quran in the current order in the written form (Mus'haf) is not identical to the chronological order of the Revelation. The first Revelation of the Quran consisted of verses 1-5 of chapter (Surah) Al-Alaq, yet Al-Alaq is the ninety-sixth chapter (Surah) in the current Quranic order. Furthermore, the Muslims did not compile the Quran into book form during the life of the Prophet ﷺ. The compilation was not done until upon the order of the Caliph Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه after the Battle of

---

(1) Quran (9:5).

Yamama (632 CE). The Tawfiqi theory suggests the absence of evidence of an early documented order, and this theory contradicts Divine Decree.

This reckless Ijtihadi opinion aids the critical Orientalists in explaining the Quran in isolation of contexts. We must understand that anytime we explain a verse (Ayah), or a few verses (Ayat) in isolation from the preceding, and following verses (Ayat), there is a likelihood of manipulation, and misinterpretation. It is correct that the current order of chapters (Suwar) is not in the chronological order of the Revelation. However, we have received no other reported order of the Quran from the time of the companions (Sahabah). Hence, we conclude that this is the only intended order having divine approval. Suppose Allah ﷻ, and His Messenger ﷺ left the arrangement of the Quran to the later Muslim generations to decide. We would have received several copies with different orders, precisely like the existence of different descriptions of prayer built on diverse evidentiary reports, or diverse understandings of evidence.

We understand that for twenty-three years, while the Prophet ﷺ was still receiving the Revelation, scribes from among the companions (Sahabah) held individual copies of the Quran in a separate order. Uthman رضي الله عنه produced the final written form (Mus'haf) with the chapter (Surah) order as found today. He commanded these companions (Sahabah) to burn all copies of the Quran which may contain discrepancies, and they did not object at all. Had there been another divine order of the Quran, the companions (Sahabah) of the Prophet ﷺ would have opposed any effort made for the change in the arrangement.

Allah ﷻ pledged to preserve the Quran from any temperance, and corruption. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾ ﴾

**“Verily We: It is We Who have sent down the Zikr (i.e., the Quran), and indeed, we will guard it (from corruption).”<sup>(1)</sup>**

The significance of divine preservation of the Quran is the acceptance that the present arrangement of the Quran must be what Allah ﷻ meant for us. Furthermore, Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْءَانَهُ ﴿١٧﴾ ﴾

**“Indeed, upon Us is its collection [in your heart], and [to make possible] its recitation.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

(1) Quran (15:9).

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً كَذَلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْتِيلًا ﴾

“And those who disbelieve say: Why has not the Quran been revealed to him all at once? Thus, that We may strengthen your heart by it, and We have arranged it well in arranging.”<sup>(2)</sup>

During the time of Divine Revelation, whenever Allah ﷻ revealed a verse (Ayah), or a chapter (Surah), the Prophet ﷺ would assemble his scribes, dictate to them the contents he just received, and instruct them where to place it in the chapter (Surah). He instructed his scribes to insert a newly revealed verse (Ayah) before such and such verse (Ayah), and after such and such verse (Ayah). He was thus indicating its place, and position in the Quran as a Divine Order.

Ma'dan ibn abi Talhah رضي الله عنه reported that Umar ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه said, “There is nothing that I asked the Messenger of Allah about its meaning more than the Kalalah.<sup>(3)</sup> Until he stabbed me with his finger in my chest, and said, ‘The verse (Ayah) that is at the end of chapter (Surah) An-Nisa should suffice for you.’”<sup>(4)</sup> This is evidence that the Prophet ﷺ identified a specific order other than chronological.

The Orientalists, and those who cite that the Quran was compiled in book form in the times of Caliph Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, and Caliph Uthman رضي الله عنه intend by this to say that the Prophet ﷺ did not authenticate an arrangement during his lifetime. It follows from their suggestion that those who collected the Quran, and compiled it might have changed the Quran's order. The reason why the Prophet ﷺ did not compile the entire Quran in a book form during his lifetime was that the Revelation continued until his death, and there was always the possibility of more Revelation during his lifetime. He ﷺ could not have standardized a book form unless Allah ﷻ informed him that no more Revelation would descend. The absence of a standardized book form during the life of the Prophet ﷺ does not mean that he did not pass the order of the Quran to his companions (Sahabah), which he received under Divine Guidance. The companions (Sahabah) knew that there was a divinely revealed order in the Quran. Yusuf ibn Mahk رضي الله عنه narrated, “While I was with Aishah, the mother of the Believers, a person from Iraq came, and asked, ‘What type of

(1) Quran (75:17), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (25:32), Shakir trans.

(3) Al-Kalalah refers to anyone whose son, or father, or brother doesn't (exist to) inherit him.

(4) Ahmad (179); Muslim (1258).



shroud is the best?’ Aishah said, ‘May Allah be merciful to you! What does it matter?’ He said, ‘O mother of the Believers! Show me (the copy of) your Quran.’ Then Aishah took out the copy of the Quran for the man, and dictated to him the verses (Ayat) of the chapters (Suwar) (in their proper order).”<sup>(1)</sup>

Our mother Aishah رضي الله عنها also reported that the Prophet ﷺ would review the Quran annually with the Angel Jibreel عليه السلام (Gabriel).<sup>(2)</sup>

As stated earlier, the Prophet ﷺ always instructed his scribes where to place the new pieces of the Revelation he received. Uthman رضي الله عنه said, “**The Messenger of Allah used to receive the Revelation of chapters (Suwar) with many verses (Ayat). When they were revealed, he would call his scribes, and tell them, ‘Put these verses (Ayat) in the chapter (Surah) where such-and-such is mentioned.’**”<sup>(3)</sup> The companions (Sahabah) memorized the Quran, and recited it in the five daily obligatory prayers (Fard Salat), and other voluntary prayers, as per the order the Prophet’s ﷺ instructions. Hence, there remains no doubt that the present arrangement, and order of the Quran is the intended one according to the Will of Allah ﷻ, and in this Tawqifi order, there is a pearl of great wisdom. Therefore, we must seek that wisdom, and never accept an exegesis (Tafsir) of a verse (Ayah) that does not conform to the contextual order as known by the Prophet ﷺ.

### Asbab an-Nuzul — circumstances around the Revelation

Asbab an-Nuzul refers to the events, or reasons which preceded the Revelation of a verse (Ayah). It is a field of study, and specialized form of literature devoted to relating the circumstances of the Revelation to the text of a verse (Ayah). Not only can the Asbab be events that happened during the life of the Prophet ﷺ, but the Revelation also descended from Allah ﷻ after someone asked the Prophet ﷺ a question. Asbab an-Nuzul presents to the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir) a comprehensive portrayal behind the Revelation of particular verses (Ayat), or chapters (Suwar) that can become a model to solve problems, or form an action plan in the present. Wisdom learned from the Revelation has relevance to the pursuit of the higher aims (Maqasid) of the Quran, and the application of those aims to the present times. Hence, the Quranic text becomes dynamic, and active in a Muslim’s life.

The process of utilizing this tool began when scholars (Ulama) of exegesis (Tafsir) identified certain keywords in the Quran which were referenced in a Prophetic narration (Hadith), or sayings (Athar) of the companions (Sahabah). These keywords are explicitly, or implicitly linked to the

(1) Bukhari (4993).

(2) Bukhari (6285, 6286).

(3) Ahmad; Abu Dawud (786); Tirmizi (3086), Hasan Sahih; Nisa’i; Ibn Hibban; Al-Hakim.

reasons for the Revelation. The narrator (Muhaddith) would state that such and such happened, so Allah ﷻ revealed such and such.

Another means of identifying Asbab is to refer to a narration (Hadith) that isn't explicit to only one particular verse (Ayah). This expression allows for more than one application, for it could refer to the Revelation of other verses (Ayat) with the same characteristics, and definitions as the first explicit expression.

The language used in such an example may be, "Such-and-such purpose is one of the things included in the overall purpose of this verse (Ayah)," or that "the Revelation of this verse (Ayah) includes a such-and-such application."

### Al-Muhkam (crystal clear), and Al-Mutashabih (ambiguous)

The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir) must become familiar with two types of verses (Ayat) of the Quran, whether they are from the Al-Muhkam (crystal clear), or the Al-Mutashabih (ambiguous) category. Allah ﷻ said:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ ۗ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ ءَأَمَّنَّا بِهِ ۗ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٧﴾

“It is He who has sent down to you, [O Muhammad], the Book; in it are verses [that are] precise—they are the foundation of the Book—and others unspecific. As for those in whose hearts is deviation [from truth], they will follow that of it which is unspecific, seeking discord, and seeking an interpretation [suitable to them]. And no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah. But those firm in knowledge say, ‘We believe in it. All [of it] is from our Lord.’ And no one will be reminded except those of understanding.”<sup>(1)</sup>

The above verse (Ayah) is the foundation for the subject of distinguishing the Al-Muhkam, and the Al-Mutashabih. Allah ﷻ classifies the Quranic verses (Ayat) into **two types**:

1. **Al-Muhkam** refers to verses (Ayat) that are clear-cut, with known accurate explanations. In this type of Quranic verse (Ayah), the truth is distinct from falsehood, and the straight path

(1) Quran (3:7), Sahih International trans.

is separate from the wrong way to the extent that there is no difference of opinion. The clear-cut verses (Ayat) are commands (Ahkam), obligatory duties (Fard, and Wajib), legal laws, and penal code (Hudud). We must act upon verses (Ayat) which are Al-Muhkam.

2. **Al-Mutashabih** have a general, and particular meaning. The general meaning refers to a conceptual similarity to one, or more verses (Ayat) that carry commands (Ahkam) that confirm one another. We must not act on al-Mutashabih verses (Ayat) based on our independent reason. We must believe they are from Allah ﷻ, and we may ask a scholar (Aalim) who is capable of explaining their meaning.

We must heed the severe warning regarding the Al-Mutashabih to not seek out hidden meanings which none can know except Allah ﷻ.

### The science of Makki, and Madani

Another science that the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir) needs is developing the skill to identify the Makki, and the Madani verses (Ayat). Knowing the place, time, and circumstances of the Revelation guides our understanding, and exegesis (Tafsir) of the Noble Quran. Hence, the in-depth knowledge of this science will help the exegete (Mufasssir) provide the proper, and suitable higher aim (Maqsid) for each chapter (Surah).

Scholars (Ulama) define Makki, and Madani differently. The science of Makki, and Madani explains the order of the Revelation of verses (Ayat), and chapters (Suwar) of the Quran one by one, from beginning to end, based on the socio-political stage of development in which the Revelation came. The most accepted method determines that the Revelation from before the Prophet's ﷺ migration (Hijrah) to Madinah belongs to the Makki type, and the Revelation which came after the migration (Hijrah) is classified as Madani, even though Allah ﷻ may have revealed it outside of Madinah.

This particular science of the Quran is remarkably relevant to the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir). Makki, and Madani verses (Ayat) have distinctly different styles of presentation in structure, and contents since the recipients, and their conditions were different in each place. The people surrounding the Messenger of Allah ﷺ were the people addressed in the Revelation, and there were different people surrounding the Makki Quran, and the Madani Quran. The nature of the two contrasting classes does not reflect anachronism, or dissonance such as in the

contradictory accounts of creation in what exists today of the Torah.<sup>(1)</sup> A benefit of the contrasting Makki, and Madani characteristics is setting a chronology of the evolution of rulings to determine which are abrogating, amending, or abrogated.

### The Makki Quran

The content of the Makki Quran builds the foundation of faith (Iman) by the emphasis on foundational elements of theology. First, the Makki Quran introduces elements of Monotheism (Tawheed): asserting the unique monotheistic nature of Allah ﷻ in His Lordship, Names, Attributes, and the rites of worship of Him without associationism. Secondly, the Makki Quran introduces concepts of the Divine Message, the Messengers, the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah), accountability before Allah ﷻ, Paradise (Jannah), and Hellfire (Jahannam).

The Makki Quran conveys the above messages through historical accounts of the response of earlier communities to the Divine Message, and Messengers. These stories were used to emphasize accountability for acceptance, or rejection of pillars of faith (Arkan Al-Iman).

The Makki Quran illustrates the fallacies of disbelievers (kafirun) through their delusions, superstitions, and polytheistic beliefs (shirk). These illustrations, and accounts in the Makki Quran are presented as tools to be used to engage in proselytizing the polytheists (mushrikun), advising them to believe, refuting their suspicions, and straying.

The Makki Quran also offers affirmative answers to the most crucial questions that engage every sincere, and introspective human. These questions revolve around the meaning of sentient existence, and the significance of humanity in the encircling world. Submitting our desires to the reality of these themes, as revealed in the Makki Quran, places us amongst those who walk upright, and straight. Meanwhile, denying, or choosing obfuscation about these issues ranks us amongst those who walk on their faces in abject humility, and self-defeat. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿أَفَن يَمْشِي مُكِبًّا عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَىٰ أَمَّن يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾ (22)

**“Then is one who walks fallen on his face better guided, or one who walks erect on a straight path?”<sup>(2)</sup>**

(1) The YHWH account, the Elohim account, and the ‘P Text’. See “A fresh look at two genesis creation accounts: contradictions?” Jiří Moskala, Andrews University Press, 2011, and *JEDP: Lectures on the Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, Allan A. MacRae, Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1994.

(2) Quran (67:22), Sahih International trans.

These foundational issues of theology in the Makki Quran were revealed to prepare the Muslims to accept the Revelation of commandments (Ahkam), and rulings in the Madani Quran.

### The Madani Quran

The Madani Quran comprises many practical rulings to help build individual character, protect family, regulate relationships, and more. These verses (Ayat) go beyond dogmatism, and rhetorical proselytization to invite the Jewish, and Christian communities of Madinah to enter Islam. The practical, and pragmatic nature of Madani verses (Ayat) were tools of envoys to kings, and presidents, inviting wisdom, and the universalism of Islam.

Aishah رضي الله عنها said, **“The first thing that was revealed thereof was a chapter (Surah) from Al-Mufassal, and in it was mentioned Paradise (Jannah), and the Fire (Jahannam). When the people embraced Islam, the verses (Ayat) regarding legal, and illegal things were revealed. If the first thing to be revealed was: ‘Do not drink alcoholic drinks.’ people would have said, ‘We will never leave alcoholic drinks,’ And if there had been revealed, ‘Do not commit illegal sexual intercourse,’ they would have said, ‘We will never give up illegal sexual intercourse.’”**<sup>(1)</sup>

The Madani Quran reflects the establishment of an independent Islamic society, and nation, with equitable, and just regulations for the harmony of diverse peoples of ethnic, and religious differences. Verses (Ayat) revealed in this period focus on building the pillars of the society, organizing, and uniting sectarian groups, and teaching a message of patience, and submission to prepare the believers for leadership. These goals are reinforced by the Revelation of political, and economic legislations to determine the internal, and international policies.

The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) must identify the Makki, and Madani verses (Ayat), and understand the themes within them, to facilitate the higher aims (Maqasid), and action plans for any group of people, regardless of time, place, and social characteristics.

### Makki, and Madani identification

The Prophet ﷺ identified the Makki, and Madani characterizations of the Quran. Hence, what we have now of classification of each chapter (Surah) is the result of scholarly deliberations, and discussions based on opposing weak, and sound narrations (Ahadith). It is important to form a decisive opinion on the place of the Revelation to aid in identifying a higher aim (Maqsid) but also to inform the exegete (Mufassir) of the significance in adjacent Makki, and Madani verses (Ayat),

---

(1) Bukhari (4993).

and chapters (Suwar). The scholars (Ulama) have some disagreement on the criteria of designating Makki, and Madani chapters based on narrations (Ahadith), chapter (Surah) content, and rhetorical style. However, as mentioned above, most scholars (Ulama) regard the Makki as the Quran revealed before the Prophet's ﷺ migration (Hijrah), and the Madani as all of the Quran revealed after the migration (Hijrah). According to specialists, the standard mentioned above is the most reliable, and accepted standard to distinguish the Makki from the Madani.<sup>(1)</sup>

The later editorial scholars (Ulama) identify **three main categories** involved in identifying chapter (Surah) type, as listed on the following page:

1. Thirteen disputed chapters (Suwar).
2. Twenty indisputable Madani chapters (Suwar).
3. Eight-one indisputable Makki chapters (Suwar).

In many of the classified chapters (Suwar), there are one, or more verses (Ayat) that belong to the alternate category; predominantly, Makki chapters (Suwar) may contain Madani verses (Ayat), or the transverse. The identification discussed here is of the overall chapter (Surah) content, and the primary nature of the chapter (Surah). The identifications were organized, and standardized in a poem by the six-century exegete (Mufasssir) Abu al-Hasan al-Hassar ؒ, which was authorized, and referenced by later scholars (Ulama).<sup>(2)</sup>

### **The disputed thirteen chapters (Suwar)**

Most scholars (Ulama) recognize that this unique condition applies to thirteen chapters (Suwar) but concede categorizing these chapters (Suwar) according to the general nature of the chapter (Surah). Scholarly opinions may differ as to the number of disputed chapters (Suwar). Ibn Ashur ؒ evaluated the disputed chapters (Suwar) to identify them according to the **two definitive categories** based on overall content, and this standard can be used by the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir).

### **Surat Al-Fatihah**

It is more likely a Makki chapter (Surah) as Allah ﷻ commanded it as a part of prayer (Salah) in the first year of the Revelation. The majority of scholars (Ulama) agree that it is Makki, according to Ibn Ashur ؒ.<sup>(3)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> Zarkashi (d. 794 AH) in *Al-Burhan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*; As-Suyuti (d. 911 AH) in *Al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*; Zurqani (d. 1710 CE) in *Manahil al-'Irfan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*.

<sup>(2)</sup> As-Suyuti, *Al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an* (vol. 1, p. 44-45).

<sup>(3)</sup> Ibn Ashur, *At-Tahrir wa at-Tanwir* (vol. 1, p. 136).

### Surat Ar-Ra'd

It is more likely a Makki chapter (Surah) with some Madani verses (Ayat), such as verse (Ayah) forty-three. Additionally, the overall structure is highly similar to the Makki chapters (Suwar). It is also reported to be Makki in sound narrations (Ahadith) on the authority of Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه, Mujahid رضي الله عنه, Abu Talha رضي الله عنه, Qatadah رضي الله عنه, Sa'id ibn Jubayr رضي الله عنه, and others. Disagreement remains because of weak, and fabricated narrations (Ahadith).<sup>(1)</sup>

### Surat Ar-Rahman

It is a Makki chapter (Surah), according to the majority of reports from the companions (Sahabah), and their successors (Tabi'un). Many reliable narrations document the cause for its Revelation. Ibn Ashur رحمه الله noted, **“The more likely view is that it is a totally Makki chapter (Surah), and it is one of the first [revealed].”**<sup>(2)</sup>

### Surat As-Saff

It is overall a Madani chapter (Surah) as supported by its structure, and authoritative narrations (Ahadith) but contains several Makki verses (Ayat). Ibn Atiyah رحمه الله, and Ibn Ashur رحمه الله noted, **“It is a Madani chapter (Surah) according to the majority (of scholars); it seems it contains the Makki, and Madani (verses) as well.”**<sup>(3)</sup>

### Surat At-Taghabun

According to the majority of exegetes (Mufasssirun), it is a Madani chapter (Surah), but according to Ibn Atiyah رحمه الله, and others, verses (Ayat) 1-13 are Makki.<sup>(4)</sup>

### Surat Al-Insan

A minority of scholars (Ulama) label this chapter (Surah) as Madani, based on **two pieces of evidence. First**, verses (Ayat) 8-10, which were seemingly revealed after the Battle of Badr, and therefore, Madani, although the style could be Makki. **Second**, based on a weak narration (Hadith)

---

(1) Ibn Ashur, *At-Tahrir wa at-Tanwir* (vol. 13, p. 76).

(2) Ibn Ashur in *At-Tahrir wa at-Tanwir* (vol. 27, p. 227-228).

(3) Ibn Ashur in *At-Tahrir wa at-Tanwir* (vol. 28); Ibn Atiyah in *Al-Muharrar al-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Kitab al-'Aziz* (vol. 5, p. 301).

(4) Ibn Ashur in *At-Tahrir wa at-Tanwir* (vol. 28, p. 258); Ibn Atiyah in *Al-Muharrar al-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Kitab al-'Aziz* (vol. 5, p. 317).

relating the cause of the 8<sup>th</sup> verse (Ayah) to Ali ibn Abi Talib عليه السلام donating his Iftar<sup>(1)</sup> to the poor, and remaining hungry after his fast (Saum). The fast (Saum) referred to was due to an oath regarding the health of Al-Hassan عليه السلام, and Al-Hussein عليه السلام, who were born after the Prophet's ﷺ migration (Hijrah). The primary textual source for this narration (Hadith) with a weak chain is in *Tafsir Al-Kashaf*, with no reference in any of the orthodox compilations of narrations (Ahadith).

Imam Az-Zarkashi رحمته الله emphasized the general principle that when the companions (Sahabah), and their successors (Tabi'un) spoke about the Revelation's coming because of a particular issue, or event, they often referred to the condition necessitating the ruling, not the Asbab (causes of Revelation) of the specific verses (Ayat). The above principle has also been confirmed by As-Suyuti رحمته الله, Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله, and others. The majority of scholars (Ulama), including Ibn Kathir رحمته الله, and the exegete (Mufasssir) Imam Al-Alusi رحمته الله, view chapter (Surah) Al-Insan as Makki, as the subject matter, and style are early Makki.<sup>(2)</sup>

### Surat Al-Mutaffifin

There are three main views regarding this chapter (Surah): it is the last chapter (Surah) revealed in Makkah, or the first chapter (Surah) revealed in Madinah, or it was revealed on the route to Madinah. Ibn Atiyah رحمته الله argued the former, and Ibn Ashur رحمته الله took the latter position. By content, it seems it was revealed in Madinah as it contains the story of a trader who cheats the scale in a commodity sale, or exchange, which is the main story in this chapter (Surah), after which it was named.<sup>(3)</sup>

### Surat Al-Qadr

There is no definitive evidence as to where it was revealed—there are narrations (Ahadith) from Ibn Abbas عليه السلام that support both categories. Known scholars (Ulama) such as Al-Wahidi رحمته الله, and Abu Hayyan رحمته الله believe it is Madani, while Al-Mawardi رحمته الله, and As-Suyuti رحمته الله differ in opinion. Others, such as Al-Waqidi<sup>(4)</sup> رحمته الله noted that it was revealed in Madinah after the legislation of fasting, and the urging of Muslims to enjoin prayer (Salah) to seek specific rewards of the Laylat Al-Qadr (Night of Power). The latter argument, and the context as an address to a believing community support chapter (Surah) Al-Qadr as Madani.<sup>(5)</sup>

(1) The meal eaten by Muslims at sunset to break the fast (Saum).

(2) As-Suyuti in *Al-Itqan fi Ulum Al-Quran* (vol. 1, p. 31).

(3) Ibn Ashur in *At-Tahrir wa at-Tanwir* (vol. 30, p. 187); Ibn Atiyah in *Al-Muharrar al-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Kitab al-'Aziz* (vol. 5, p. 449).

(4) He was Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Omar ibn Waqidi al-Aslami (d. 207). A qadi of the Caliph al-Ma'mun. Best known as an early Islamic historian.

(5) Ibn Ashur in *At-Tahrir wa at-Tanwir* (vol. 30, p. 455); Ibn Atiyah in *Al-Muharrar al-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Kitab al-'Aziz* (vol. 5, p. 504).



## Surat Al-Bayyinah

The majority of exegetes (Mufasssirun) argue it is a Makki chapter (Surah). Some opinions maintain it is Madani, based on an authentic narration (Hadith) that mentions the context of the Revelation where the Messenger ﷺ was asked to recite it before Ibn Ubbay رضي الله عنه, who was known to only have met the Messenger ﷺ in Madinah.<sup>(1)(2)</sup>

The chapter (Surah) context also shows it discusses some issues with the People of the Book (Ahl al-Kitab), which is one of the characteristics of Madani chapters (Suwar).

## Surat Az-Zalzalah

The majority of the companions (Sahabah) believed it is Makki, notably Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه, and Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه. Many of the successors (Tabi'un), such as Mujahid رضي الله عنه, Ata رضي الله عنه, and Dhaq رضي الله عنه, report it is a Makki chapter (Surah). Qatadah رضي الله عنه, Muqatil رضي الله عنه, and Ibn Atiyah رضي الله عنه differ, as they believe it may be Madani, based on a narration (Hadith) from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri رضي الله عنه concerning the meaning of the last verse (Ayah).<sup>(3)</sup>

## Surat Al-Ikhlās

A narration (Hadith) established that the Messenger ﷺ was asked by either a group of Quraysh in Makkah, or a group of Jewish Rabbis in Madinah to describe Allah عز وجل to them, so Allah عز وجل revealed chapter (Surah) Al-Ikhlās.

The majority of scholars (Ulama) argue that chapter (Surah) Al-Ikhlās is Makki because of sound narrations (Ahadith), reporting that it was revealed in Makkah, and has Makkan characteristics, such as the emphasis on concepts of Monotheism (Tawheed), which were the foundation of the calling to Islam (Dawah) by the Messenger ﷺ for the first thirteen years of his Prophethood (Nabuwwah).

Some scholars (Ulama) like As-Suyuti رضي الله عنه argued the chapter (Surah) was revealed twice, or it was revealed in Makkah, but used in Madinah as though it were newly revealed.<sup>(4)</sup>

---

(1) Bukhari (4959-4961).

(2) Ibn Ashur in *At-Tahrir wa at-Tanwir* (vol. 30, p. 467).

(3) *Tafsir Ibn Abi Hatim* (19439, p. 3456).

(4) Ibn Ashur in *At-Tahrir wa at-Tanwir* (vol. 30, p. 611); Ibn Atiyah in *Al-Muharrar al-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Kitab al-'Aziz* (vol. 5, p. 536).

## Verses of Refuge (Al-Mu'awwidhatayn) — Chapters (Suwar) of An-Nas, and Al-Falaq

Chapters (Suwar) an-Nas, and al-Falaq are used as purifying verses (Ayat) against what is identified as evil in this world. There are varied narrations (Ahadith) regarding the place of the Revelation. Some reports establish that Allah ﷻ revealed these two chapters (Suwar) after the disbelievers (kafirun) inflicted harm upon the Prophet ﷺ by a Madinan magician named Lubayd ibn al-A'sam. More reliable narrations (Ahadith) of Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه reported that Makkan pagans wanted to inflict harm upon the Prophet ﷺ by the 'evil eye,' and the Verses of Refuge (Al-Mu'awwidhatayn) were revealed as a means to seek protection with Allah ﷻ. The Makkan origin is attested by Hassan al-Basri رضي الله عنه, Ikrimah ibn abi Jahl رضي الله عنه, Wasil ibn Ata رضي الله عنه, Jabir ibn Zaid al-Azdi رضي الله عنه, and Abdullah ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه. The former narrations (Ahadith) seem to apply more to the case, as Ibn Ashur رضي الله عنه suggested.<sup>(1)</sup>

### Categorizing the disputed place of the Revelation

Thus, the Madani chapters (Suwar) from this disputed category are:

1. As-Saff.
2. At-Taghabun.
3. Al-Mutaffifin.
4. Al-Qadr.
5. Al-Bayyinah.

The Makki chapters (Suwar) from this disputed category are:

1. Al-Fatihah.
2. Ar-Ra'd.
3. Ar-Rahman.
4. Al-Insan.
5. Az-Zalزالah.
6. Al-Ikhlās.
7. Al-Falaq.
8. An-Nas.

### Madani chapters (Suwar)

---

(1) Ibn Ashur in *At-Tahrir wa at-Tanwir* (vol. 30, p. 624).

Scholars mostly agreed that 20 chapters (Suwar) are Madani, based on sayings (Athar) of companions (Sahabah), their successors/followers (Tabi'un), and later scholars (Ulama). An additional 5 disputed chapters (Suwar) are classified as Madani by style, and evaluation of the majority of the verses (Ayat)—so a total of 25:

No	Chapters Name	Verses
<b>2</b>	Surat Al-Baqarah	286
<b>3</b>	Surat Al-'Imran	200
<b>4</b>	Surat An-Nisa	176
<b>5</b>	Surat Al-Ma'idah	120
<b>8</b>	Surat Al-Anfal	75
<b>9</b>	Surat At-Taubah	129
<b>22</b>	Surat Al-Hajj	78
<b>24</b>	Surat An-Nur	64
<b>33</b>	Surat Al-Ahzab	73
<b>47</b>	Surat Muhammad	38
<b>48</b>	Surat Al-Fath	29
<b>49</b>	Surat Al-Hujurat	18
<b>57</b>	Surat Al-Hadid	29
<b>58</b>	Surat Al-Mujadilah	22
<b>59</b>	Surat Al-Hashr	24
<b>60</b>	Surat Al-Mumtahana	13
<b>61</b>	Surat As-Saff	14
<b>62</b>	Surat Al-Jumu'ah	11
<b>63</b>	Surat Al-Munafiqun	11
<b>64</b>	Surat At-Taghabun	18
<b>65</b>	Surat At-Talaq	12

## The Maqasidic Tafsir – Volume I

<b>66</b>	Surat At-Tahrim	12
<b>97</b>	Surat Al-Qadr	5
<b>98</b>	Surat Al-Bayyinah	8
<b>110</b>	Surat An-Nasr	3

### Makki chapters (Suwar)

The Makki chapters (Suwar) are 81 by consensus, and 8 disputed chapters (Suwar) are classified as Makki by style, and evaluation of the majority of the verses (Ayat)—so a total of 89 chapters (Suwar):

No	Chapters Name	Verses
<b>1</b>	Surat Al-Fatihah	7
<b>6</b>	Surat Al-An'am	165
<b>7</b>	Surat Al-A'raf	206
<b>10</b>	Surat Yunus	109
<b>11</b>	Surat Hud	123
<b>12</b>	Surat Yusuf	111
<b>13</b>	Surat Ar-Ra'd	43
<b>14</b>	Surat Ibrahim	52
<b>15</b>	Surat Al-Hijr	99
<b>16</b>	Surat An-Nahl	128
<b>17</b>	Surat Al-Isra'	111
<b>18</b>	Surat Al-Kahf	110
<b>19</b>	Surat Maryam	98
<b>20</b>	Surat Ta ha	135

21	Surat Al-Anbiya	112
23	Surat Al-Mu'minin	118
25	Surat Al-Furqan	77
26	Surat Ash-Shu'ara'	227
27	Surat An-Naml	93
28	Surat Al-Qasas	88
29	Surat Al-'Ankabut	69
30	Surat Ar-Rum	60
31	Surat Luqman	34
32	Surat As-Sajdah	30
34	Surat Saba'	54
35	Surat Fatir	45
36	Surat Ya Sin	83
37	Surat As-Saffat	182
38	Surat Sad	88
39	Surat Az-Zumar	75
40	Surat Ghafir	85
41	Surat Fussilat	54
42	Surat Ash-Shura	53
43	Surat Az-Zukhruf	89
44	Surat Ad-Dukhan	59
45	Surat Al-Jathiya	37
46	Surat Al-Ahqaf	35
50	Surat Qaf	45

51	Surat Adh-Dharyyat	60
52	Surat At-Tur	49
53	Surat An-Najm	62
54	Surat Al-Qamar	55
55	Surat Ar-Rahman	78
56	Surat Al-Waqi'ah	96
67	Surat Al-Mulk	30
68	Surat Al-Qalam	52
69	Surat Al-Haqqah	52
70	Surat Al-Ma'arij	44
71	Surat Nuh	28
72	Surat Al-Jinn	28
73	Surat Al-Muzzammil	20
74	Surat Al-Muddathir	56
75	Surat Al-Qiyamah	40
76	Surat Al-Insan	31
77	Surat Al-Mursalat	50
78	Surat An-Naba'	40
79	Surat An-Nazi'at	46
80	Surat 'Abasa	42
81	Surat At-Takwir	29
82	Surat Al-Infitar	19
83	Surat Al-Mutaffifin	36
84	Surat Al-Inshiqaq	25

## The Maqasidic Tafsir – Volume I

<b>85</b>	Surat Al-Buruj	22
<b>86</b>	Surat At-Tariq	17
<b>87</b>	Surat Al-A'la	19
<b>88</b>	Surat Al-Ghashiyah	26
<b>89</b>	Surat Al-Fajr	30
<b>90</b>	Surat Al-Balad	20
<b>91</b>	Surat Ash-Shams	15
<b>92</b>	Surat Al-Layl	21
<b>93</b>	Surat Adh-Dhuha	11
<b>94</b>	Surat Ash-Sharh	8
<b>95</b>	Surat At-Tin	8
<b>96</b>	Surat Al-'Alaq	19
<b>99</b>	Surat Az-Zalzalah	8
<b>100</b>	Surat Al-Adiyat	11
<b>101</b>	Surat Al-Qari'ah	11
<b>102</b>	Surat At-Takathur	8
<b>103</b>	Surat Al-'Asr	3
<b>104</b>	Surat Al-Humazah	9
<b>105</b>	Surat Al-Fil	5
<b>106</b>	Surat Quraish	4
<b>107</b>	Surat Al-Ma'un	7
<b>108</b>	Surat Al-Kawthar	3
<b>109</b>	Surat Al-Kafirun	6
<b>111</b>	Surat Al-Masad	5

<b>112</b>	Surat Al-Ikhlās	4
<b>113</b>	Surat Al-Falaq	5
<b>114</b>	<b>Surat An-Nas</b>	<b>6</b>

### **The science of connectivity (al-Munasabah)**

Al-Munasabah is an important term in the Quranic terminology which is used to investigate the special organization of each chapter (Surah) with reference to arrangement, and structure, and shows the secrets behind the arrangement of the verses (Ayat). The science of connectivity (Munasabah) is the study of the harmonious connection between verses (Ayat), and distinguishing the wisdom of the apparently incongruous verses (Ayat). It is one of the primary disciplines of the Quranic sciences, which explains the coherence, and consistency between verses (Ayat), and chapters (Suwar). The science of connectivity (Munasabah) investigates the textual perspectives of verses (Ayat), which affirms the **Tawqifi** concept of the order of the Quran.

The term Munasabah linguistically refers to relationships, links, and connections, but the meaning of al-Munasabah in Quranic sciences is that Allah ﷻ determined the final position of the verses (Ayat), and chapters (Suwar) in the Quran. The science of connectivity (Munasabah) investigates the followings components:

- The relationship between two neighboring chapters (Suwar) in the present order of the Quran.
- The connection between the beginning, and the end of the chapter (Surah).
- The relationship between the ending, and beginning verses (Ayat) of adjacent chapters (Suwar).
- The wisdom behind the sequence of the verses (Ayat) of the chapter (Surah).
- The link between the first, and second, and the second, and the third verses (Ayat).
- The relationship between a chapter (Surah) name, and its central theme, and higher aim (Maqsid).
- The general connection between all verses (Ayat) within a chapter (Surah).
- The unity between the end of a chapter (Surah), and the beginning of another in terms of content, and themes.
- Seemingly incongruous verses (Ayat) within a chapter (Surah), which contribute to higher meanings within the chapter (Surah).

Few scholars (Ulama) dismiss the need for such an approach to the Quranic scripture. Those who challenge this theory argue that the science of connectivity (Munasabah) allows distorted exegesis (Tafsir) in dealing with the Quranic scripture—this view is weak. Although theories of al-



Munasabah have been used by innovative academics to twist evidence into supporting their biases, a well-grounded scholar (Aalim) should support theories on al-Munasabah using other sciences of the Quran.<sup>(1)</sup> Valid theories on the meaning of the Quran must not contradict other evidence from the Quran. Shaykh al-Fawzan رحمته الله reminds us in his explanation *Sharh us-Sunnah*<sup>(2)</sup> that there are no contradictions in the Quran—rather, if a contradiction is identified, it is a contradiction in our own intellect, or understanding. This is because the Word of Allah ﷻ is perfect, while our intellect is imperfect.

The third position is the one that falls between the above two extremes, and is the most balanced position. There are themes of individual chapters (Suwar) that are evident, and make themselves clear to the expert scholar of exegesis (Tafsir). These themes lead to discovering relevance between the neighboring chapters (Suwar) in the Quran. Likewise, some of the Quranic verses (Ayat) have clear meanings, and a connection between them is feasible.

If the themes of chapters (Suwar), and the verses (Ayat) are evident, then there is no harm in expressing, and sharing relationships between them. This approach will prove the fulfillment, completeness, perfection, and total harmony of the Book of Allah ﷻ.

Given that the arrangement of the Quran was determined by the Prophet ﷺ under Divine Guidance (Tawqifiya), Allah ﷻ certainly embedded meaning in the order of collected chapters (Suwar) in the written form (Mus'haf). The exegete (Mufasssir) must interpret this meaning by considering indicators signifying the places of the Revelation—the Makki chapters (Suwar) indicate stages of weakness, and the Madani chapters (Suwar) describe the stepping stones towards spiritual strength, and the establishment of a mature Muslim community (Ummah). The sequence of connecting chapters (Suwar) is as follows:

1. Al-Fatihah is Makki/Madani.
2. Four Madani chapters (Suwar) are spread through multiple stages of community evolution. Al-Baqarah, and Al-'Imran are early Madani, An-Nisa is middle Madani, and Al-Ma'idah is late Madani.
3. Two Makki chapters (Suwar): Al-An'am, and Al-A'raf.
4. Two Madani chapters (Suwar): Al-Anfal is early Madani, and At-Taubah is late Madani stage, yet these chapters (Suwar) were not separated by the Basmalah.<sup>(3)</sup>

---

(1) See *Al-Burhan fi Munasabat Tartib Ay al-Quran* of Ibn az-Zubayr al-Ghirnati (d. 708 AH).

(2) *Sharh us-Sunnah*, (vol. 1, p. 142), Dar Makkah International, Abdus-Sami' Abdus-Salam trans.

(3) Basmalah is the Islamic phrase: “In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.”

5. A long sequence of Makki chapters (Suwar): Yunus, Hud, Yusuf, Ar-Ra'd, Ibrahim, Al-Hijr, An-Nahl, Al-Isra', Al-Kahf, Maryam, Ta-ha, and Al-Anbiya.
6. One Madani chapter (Surah) Al-Hajj, followed by one Makki chapter (Surah) Al-Mu'minun, followed by a Madani chapter (Surah) An-Nur.
7. A long sequence of Makki chapters (Suwar): Al-Furqan, Ash-Shu'ara', An-Naml, Al-Qasas, Al-'Ankabut, Ar-Rum, Luqman, and As-Sajdah—followed by one Madani chapter (Surah) Al-Ahzab.
8. A long sequence of Makki chapters (Suwar): Saba', Fatir, Ya Sin, As-Saffat, Sad, Az-Zumar, and then the seven 'Ha Mim' chapters (Suwar): Ghafir, Fussilat, Ash-Shura, Az-Zukhruf, Ad-Dukhan, Al-Jathiya, and Al-Ahqaf.
9. Three Madani chapters (Suwar), beginning with Muhammad, Al-Fath, and Al-Hujurat.
10. A Makki sequence of chapters (Suwar): Qaf, Adh-Dhariyat, At-Tur, An-Najm, Al-Qamar, Ar-Rahman, and Al-Waqi'ah.
11. A long sequence of Madani chapters (Suwar): Al-Hadid, Al-Mujadilah, Al Hashr, Al-Mumtahana, As-Saff, Al-Jumu'ah, Al-Munafiqun, At-Taghabun, At-Talaq, and At-Tahrim.
12. Makki chapters (Suwar): Al-Mulk, Al-Qalam, Al-Haqqah, Al-Ma'arij, Nuh, Al-Jinn, Al-Muzzammil, Al-Muddathir, Al-Qiyamah, Al-Insan, Al-Mursalat, An-Naba', An-Nazi'at, 'Abasa, At-Takwir, Al-Infitar, Al-Mutaffifin, Al-Inshiqaq, Al-Buruj, At-Tariq, Al-A'la, Al-Ghashiya, Al-Fajr, Al-Balad, Ash-Shams, Al-Layl, Adh-Dhuha, Ash-Sharh, At-Tin, and Al-'Alaq.
13. Two Madani chapters (Suwar): Al-Qadr, and Al-Bayyinah.
14. Makki chapters (Suwar): Al-Zalزالah, Al-Adiyat, Al-Qari'ah, At-Takathur, Al-'Asr, Al-Humazah, Al-Fil, Quraish, Al Ma'un, Al-Kawthar, and Al-Kafirun.
15. One Madani chapter (Surah) An-Nasr.
16. The final sequence is all Makki: Al-Masad, Al-Ikhlās, Al-Falaq, and An-Nas.

Allah Willing (In sha Allah), we will explain through volume two until the end of *The Maqasidic Tafsir* series the wisdom behind placing each chapter (Surah) in this particular order, and the

Divine Wisdom behind the grouping of the Makki, and Madani chapters (Suwar) in a certain way, and Allah ﷻ knows best.

### The science of knowledge of ‘the abrogating, and the abrogated’ (an-Nasikh wal-Mansukh)

Abrogation (Naskh) of verses (Ayat), or rulings in the Quran does not reflect a mistake, or a contradiction. Rather, it may be viewed as a documentation of the pattern of growth of the community which surrounded the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Therefore, to understand the contemporary development of the Muslim community (Ummah), and the stages of challenges they contend with, it is essential for the exegete (Mufasssir) to understand the rulings, and verses (Ayat) which may facilitate, and direct the development. Abrogation (Naskh) reflects the great Mercy of Allah ﷻ for this Muslim community (Ummah) because the lifting of rulings always brought something easier, or greater in reward. Scholars (Ulama) categorized the rulings which Allah ﷻ abrogated in the Quran into **three types**.

**First**, Allah ﷻ abrogated rulings before Muslims could carry them out. An example of this type of abrogation is the command for Prophet Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام (Abraham) to sacrifice his son Prophet Ismail عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام (Ishmael). Another example of an order which was abrogated was the command for the believers to purify themselves with a sincere act before having a private consultation with the Prophet ﷺ. Allah ﷻ said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَجَّيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدِمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَتِكُمْ صَدَقَةٌ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ فَإِن لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

**“O you who have believed, when you [wish to] privately consult the Messenger, present before your consultation a charity. That is better for you, and purer. But if you find not [the means]—then indeed, Allah is Forgiving, and Merciful.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

**Second** is the abrogation (Naskh) of specific rulings that Allah ﷻ mandated upon previous nations, but lifted the obligations from the Muslim community (Ummah) of His beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. An example is the legislation of collecting blood money in lieu of the law of capital punishment (Qisas). Mujahid رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, **“Al-Qisas (the Law of Equality in punishment) is prescribed for you in case of murder: the free for the free. The rule for the Children of Israel was Qisas, and not Diah (blood money). Then Allah, the Mighty, and Sublime, revealed the**

(1) Quran (58:12).

Diyah to them, and He revealed this ruling to this community (Ummah) as an alleviation of the ruling that applied to the Children of Israel.”<sup>(1)</sup> Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ذَلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ﴾

“This is an alleviation from your Lord, and a mercy.”<sup>(2)</sup>

Another example of abrogation (Naskh) from what was commanded upon previous nations was the direction of prayer (Qiblah). The community (Ummah) of Muhammad ﷺ faced Masjid Al-Aqsa in Jerusalem in prayer (Salah) for almost seventeen months until it was abrogated with facing the Kaabah in Makkah.

The **third** type of abrogation (Naskh) of rulings were those which Allah ﷻ commanded due to a specific condition which then ceased to be a causal condition—the initial ruling is lifted. The ruling is not abrogated in the sense of nullification, but remains abeyant until the initial conditions return. An example of this is the statement of Allah ﷻ:

﴿يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَن ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾﴾

“O you who have believed, upon you is [responsibility for] yourselves. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided. To Allah is your return all together; then He will inform you of what you used to do.”<sup>(3)</sup>

This verse (Ayah) was revealed early on before the Muslims had the strength to implement positive change for the society, and were expected primarily to improve their own conditions, which in itself is a wise place to start reform. When the Muslims became stronger, they were required to command good, forbid evil, and engage in battle. The Prophet ﷺ informed us that we would indeed return to a position of weakness when he said, “Islam began as something strange, and will return to being strange just as it began.”<sup>(4)</sup> In this prophesized environment, we would return to the earlier ruling. The Prophet ﷺ said, “When you see avarice being obeyed, and whims being

(1) Nasa'i (4786), also from Ibn Abbas; Ibn Kathir mentioned similar reported from Sa'id ibn Jubayr, Muqatil ibn Hayyan, and Ar-Rabi' ibn Anas.

(2) Quran (2:178).

(3) Quran (5:105), Sahih International trans.

(4) Muslim (372).

**followed, this world being preferred, and everyone admiring his own opinion; then you should take care of your own self...”<sup>(1)</sup>**

Allah ﷻ, Exalted, and Elevated, is The All-Wise. When the Muslims were in a position of weakness, He revealed what was fitting for that state to the Prophet ﷺ, which was kindness, and mercy to those who followed him. Had it been otherwise, it would certainly have brought about much hardship, and difficulty. But then, when Allah ﷻ strengthened, elevated, and gave victory to Islam, He addressed the people in a way that was appropriate for that situation.

As for the abrogation (Naskh) of the Quran by the Quran, which most of the exegetes (Mufasssirun) agree does take place, then often it is not abrogation (Naskh) of a ruling. Instead, it was a change in the expression of the ruling in a verse (Ayah) that explicates a previous verse (Ayah). This is important for an exegete (Mufasssir) to understand because often, verses (Ayat) do have specific, or general meanings, and misinterpreting these meanings may lead to irresponsible leadership. The **three classes** of abrogation (Naskh) of Quran by Quran are:

1. Deferral, or delay of the Revelation, when something is initially revealed in less defined terms whose clarification was delayed until the need arose.<sup>(2)</sup>
2. An injunction that has been interrupted mid-address by another injunction, or something that initially applied generally, but was later specified.<sup>(3)</sup>
3. A ruling with wording that is general, but its ruling is only applicable to a specific group.<sup>(4)</sup>

There are many different types of legal injunctions, and because of this, people sometimes think that abrogation (Naskh) had occurred when it had not. An exegete (Mufasssir) must know both forms of verses (Ayat), the general, and specific, and the reason for the explication.

### **The names of the chapters (Suwar)**

The names of the chapters (Suwar) are signifiers that symbolize, or endorse their higher aims (Maqasid). The interpretation of this device is a tool of the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir). Al-Biq'a'i ؒ, the famous exegete, said, **“After completing ten years in authoring my**

---

<sup>(1)</sup> Ibn Majah (4014); Sunan Abu Dawud (4341) narrated by Abu Thalabah al-Khushani

<sup>(2)</sup> See exegesis (Tafsir) of Quran (18:103). It was revealed in Makkah before the Quran addressed Jews, and Christians; it was also revealed before the Khawarij existed yet was later explained by the Sahaba to refer to them.

<sup>(3)</sup> See Bukhari (4990) on the excusing of the disabled for struggle in the cause of Allah ﷻ.

<sup>(4)</sup> *Al-Adab al-Mufrad* (871) on blameworthy poetry.

**book, and only when I am about to explain chapter (Surah) Saba, I discovered that the higher aims (Maqasid) of the chapters (Suwar) are hidden in their names.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

For example, chapter (Surah) Al-Fatihah was named the Mother of the Book (Umm Al-Kitab) because it outlines, in summary, the meanings of the Quran, and the rest of the Quran details, and explains its implications.

This theory is built on a firm acceptance that the chapter (Surah) names are Tawqifi, and not Ijtihadi—it is prudent to set higher aims (Maqasid) based on the chapter (Surah) name. Ahl as-Sunnah wal Jama'ah believe that the divinity of the Quran, and its authenticity is an issue beyond any doubt, as it has been proven through many textual, and intellectual pieces of evidence. Other books are alleged to be divinely revealed by their adherents, but no other existing book claims in its own text, and proves in its perfection to be divinely revealed. This is something that no other book can claim, as other books were written, or manipulated by the hands of men.

The Tawqifi nature of the Quran is known not only because of its miraculous nature, but also because it was revealed as the final, and everlasting source of guidance for all humankind, and this guidance is apparent, and perfect beyond what human sociological constructs can offer. Muslims passed on the exact text of the Quran, memorized, and in writing, from one generation to another in the same absolute form in which it was revealed.

The majority of Muslim scholars (Ulama) agree that the names of the chapters (Suwar) were based on the Revelation. It means that Almighty Allah ﷻ sent Angel Jibreel عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام (Gabriel) down with the names of the chapters (Suwar) to the Prophet ﷺ, who told the companions (Sahabah) about them. This opinion has been adopted by most Muslim scholars (Ulama) specializing in the sciences of the Quran. As Jalal ad-Din As-Suyuti رحمه الله said, **“It has been proven that the chapter (Surah) names have all been given through Tawqifi (Divine Guidance through the Revelation).”<sup>(2)</sup>**

As-Suyuti رحمه الله makes this claim because it is proven by many Prophetic narrations (Ahadith) that the chapter (Surah) names as we know them today were known by the companions (Sahabah), or mentioned by the Prophet ﷺ. For instance, An-Nawwas ibn Sim'an رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, **“The Quran will be brought on the Day of Resurrection (Yawm Al-Qiyamah), as will its people who used to act in accordance with it, led by chapter (Surah) Al-Baqarah, and Al-'Imran ...”<sup>(3)</sup>**

(1) *Tafsir Nazm al-Durar fi Tanasub al-Ayat Was-Suwar* (vol. 1, p. 18-19).

(2) As-Suyuti in *Al-Itqan fi Ulum Al-Quran* (vol. 1, page 170).

(3) Muslim (1876).

Abd ur-Rahman ibn Yazid رضي الله عنه narrated that he heard Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه saying, “Chapter (Surah) Bani Israel, Al-Kahf, (The Cave), Maryam, Ta-ha, and Al-Anbiya (The Prophets) are among my first earnings, and (in fact) they are my old property.”<sup>(1)</sup>

This shows that the same names we know were known during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ, who gave them the names based on the Revelation from Almighty Allah ﷻ, as is the opinion of the majority of Muslim scholars (Ulama).

One important point to be highlighted here is that multiple names are known for some chapters (Suwar). For instance, chapter (Surah) Ash-Sharh, the ninety-fourth chapter, is also called Al-Inshirah, and Alam Nashrah. The chapter (Surah) names written in the written Quran (Mus'haf) to identify them are different from other names that Muslims have used to refer to the chapter (Surah) for several reasons. First, alternate common names could be the first words of the chapter (Surah), or another derivative of its name. This does not contradict the fact that the Quran is preserved, and protected because the revealed chapter (Surah) name remains the same in its written form (Mus'haf), and will remain unchanged, and protected.

Secondly, names may differ if the Prophet ﷺ identified one chapter (Surah) with more than one name. Although it is permissible to use any of these names, we still prefer to use what is mentioned in the written form of the Quran (Mus'haf), as this is the most common name used among people.

For example, we quote the fact that chapter (Surah) Al-Isra' was also called Bani Isra'il by the Prophet ﷺ, chapter (Surah) Al-Fatihah was called Umm Al-Quran, or Sab'a min Al-Mathani, and so on.

We can identify other names of the chapters (Suwar) by looking into specialized books. Yet, the fact remains that these names were revealed to the Prophet ﷺ, and he chose from among them specific names to use more frequently.

An indication of the care, and accuracy with which the Muslims protect the Quran is that they narrated multiple names, and practice referring to the chapter (Surah) by multiple names. The recommendation is that we use the chapter (Surah) titles in the written Quran (Mus'haf), as these are the names that have always been mentioned in Quran's written form (Mus'haf), and none of them have been subjected to any change. The simple reason for this is that Allah ﷻ has promised that the Quran is a protected Book.

---

(1) Bukhari (4994).

### The authentic virtues of the chapters (Suwar)

The authentic narrations (Ahadith) that establish the virtues of certain chapters (Suwar) of the Quran paired with the best time to recite them are sure signs that can guide the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) to reach the most equitable higher aim (Maqsid) of the chapter (Surah). For example, reciting from the chapter (Surah) Al-Kahf, and its virtues regarding protection from the greatest trial of Ad-Dajjal, the Antichrist. Abu Darda' رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, **“Whoever memorizes ten verses (Ayat) from the beginning of chapter (Surah) Al-Kahf, will be protected from the tribulation of Ad-Dajjal (Antichrist).”**<sup>(1)</sup> This leaves no doubt that the exegete should assume that the higher aim (Maqsid) of this chapter (Surah) is immunity from trials, and tribulations (fitn).

However, we need to emphasize the necessity to verify the evidence used to establish the merits, and virtues of the chapters (Suwar) since many weak, and fabricated sayings have circulated amongst the Muslim community (Ummah) in this particular field.

Leading scholars (Ulama) wrote numerous books about the virtues of the Quran, all of which bear the name *Fada'il al-Quran*. The most notable authors of such books are:

- Al-Qaasim ibn Salam.
- Abu'l-Fadl ar-Razi.
- Al-Diya' al-Maqdisi.
- Al-Faryabi.
- Ibn ad-Durays.
- Al-Mustaghfiri.
- Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab.

These books contain both authentic (Sahih), and weak (Da'ef) narrations (Ahadith). Therefore, some are considered more reliable than others. The soundest books that have been compiled about the virtues of the Quran include the following:

- *Fada'il al-Quran* by al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir ad-Dimashqi رحمته الله.
- *As-Sahih wa's-Saqim fi Fada'il al-Quran al-Karim* (Jama'iyat al-Hadith ash-Sharif).
- *As-Saheeh al-Musnad min Fada'il as-Suwar* by Hassan ibn Abd ar-Rahim رحمته الله.
- *Sahih Fada'il al-Qur'an* by Mu'ayyad Abd al-Fattah Hamdan رحمته الله.

---

(1) Muslim (1883).



## The stories, and the parables of the Quran

The Quranic stories, and parables are another valuable, and exceptional means to identify, and confirm the higher aims (Maqasid) of Quranic chapters (Suwar).

One must realize that the Quran is speech, not like a typical book constructed to engage the emotion from the introduction through a body, a climax, and a conclusion.

The Quran is the Speech of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ conveys a variety of messages such as the virtues of Monotheism (Tawheed), the danger of polytheism (shirk), and the importance of prayer (salah), and good character. These virtues are expressed through various means, such as direct speech, admonitions, or emphasizing the reward, and the punishment of behavior. Quranic stories, or parables are amongst these means dispersed throughout the Quran. According to scholars (Ulama), almost a third of the Quran is made up of stories, including over forty parables—these stories are interspersed with the balance of the Quran, which consists of information about rituals, legal rulings, and admonishments.

The stories in the Quran are often mentioned in different chapters (Suwar) of the Quran. For example, Prophet Musa عليه السلام (Moses) is mentioned 136 times in more than two dozen places. It is a mistake to consider this a repetition. Instead, Allah ﷻ recounts part of a story in different chapters (Suwar) in ways relevant to the main theme of that chapter (Surah). This episodal, and variant dispersal of Quranic stories is evidence of the need for the science of connectivity (al-Munasabah) in the tool kit of the exegete.

The roles of both the Quranic stories, and parables in conveying the message of the Quran are exceptional because people are attracted to stories by intuition (Fitrah). The parables make sophisticated matters simple, and easy to grasp.

Quranic stories differ from stories expressed by people. The stories in the Quran are real, and accurate without rhetoric, or bias. Quranic stories are intended to serve as an example, explain facts, cause reflection, impart knowledge, establish lessons, and create peace.

The remembrance of these valuable Divine Messages in the forms of stories, and parables in the Quran is easy to recall, and simple to relate to the universal human condition for the purpose of calling others to Islam (Dawah).

### The higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran)

The next chapters of this volume I of the book *The Maqasidic Tafsir: Pursuing the Higher Aim of the Quranic Scripture* will be dedicated to this noble science of exegesis (Tafsir) to seek the higher aims of the Quranic scripture (Maqasid Al-Quran). Every speech must have a higher purpose, or a unified message to convey—elements of the speech become means to emphasize the higher aim (Maqasid). Wherever there is representation in language, there is ideology. The ideology expressed in the Quran is of the highest order, as it is neither arbitrary nor biased, yet it has a definitive, essential message for humankind.

We affirm that individual chapters (Suwar) of the Quran have higher aims (Maqasid), and one proof of this is the deliberate division of the Quran into a hundred and fourteen chapters. This fact is an indication that several unique messages are to be conveyed in each chapter (Surah).

According to Ibn Ashur رحمته الله, **“If the exegesis (Tafsir) is confined within the illustration of Quran’s semantics, it will be insignificant, and limited.”**<sup>(1)</sup> Ibn Ashur رحمته الله maintained that a higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir) must perfect the tool of seeking the higher aims (Maqasid) of the Revelation in the semantics, and the structure.

The higher aim-based exegete seeks to find purpose behind the Quranic semantics, which goes beyond the work of analytic exegetes (Tahlilee Mufasssirun). Knowledge of the higher aims (Maqasid) enables the reader of exegesis (Tafsir) to maximize real-life benefits by distinguishing between the explanations that illustrate the higher aims (Maqasid), and those that only elaborate on the meanings of the text.

The higher aim (Maqasid) of the Revelation is to deliver to humanity abundant goodness in this world (Dunya), and the hereafter (Aakhirah), which can only be achieved through actualizing the commands (Ahkam) of Allah ﷻ, and abstaining from His prohibitions. Under this fundamental objective behind the Revelation come several higher aims (Maqasid) of each individual chapter (Surah). The dynamics of higher aims (Maqasid) between, and within varying levels of the Quran is the subject of the coming chapters of this book.



---

(1) *Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir*, Ibn Ashur (vol. 1:8).

## Chapter Four

### Levels of the Quranic Maqasid



#### Introduction

The Noble Quran has goals, and objectives. Allah ﷻ revealed the Quran to guide humanity, help them attain righteousness, and piety in this world (Dunya), identify their duties, and responsibilities, and answer questions about our higher purpose.

The Noble Quran emphasizes the significance of higher aims (Maqasid). If one carefully examines the Quran, one will find that the Speech of Allah ﷻ is full of higher purposes, promoting human welfare, both in this world (Dunya), and the hereafter (Aakhirah).

One of the Names of Allah ﷻ is Al-Hakim (All-Wise), which implies the Attribute of Divine Wisdom; such an Attribute requires that His Revelation is ordained purposefully. Consequently, Allah ﷻ named His Speech Al-Hakim as well. Allah ﷻ said:

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿٢﴾

“These are verses (Ayat) of the Wise Book (the Quran).”<sup>(1)</sup>

We may find that some of the elite-level intellectuals have speeches, or writings devoid of wisdom, and purpose due to a lack of insight, capability, and experience. But this does not suit the Exalted Nature of Allah ﷻ, and it cannot apply to Him because He is All-Knowing (Al-Alim), and has full control over all things. He is Almighty, and All-Capable (Al-Aziz, Al-Qadir).

---

(1) Quran (31:2).

We have many verses (Ayat) where Allah ﷻ informs us that He has done ‘such and such’ for ‘such a reason.’ For example, let’s take a look at the purpose behind the creation of the universe. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَنْزِلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا﴾<sup>(1)</sup>

“It is Allah who has created seven heavens, and of the earth, the like of them. [His] command descends among them so you may know that Allah is over all things competent, and that Allah has encompassed all things in knowledge.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Allah ﷻ emphasizes the higher aim (Maqsid) behind creating the human being as the most important, and unique creation in the universe. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ثُمَّ إِنِّي أَنشَأْتُ لَهُمُ الْبَنِينَ وَالنَّسَاءَ لِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا إِنشَاءُ رِزْقِي وَإِنِّي جَارٍ لَّهُمُ الْبَاقِينَ﴾<sup>(2)</sup>

“And I (Allah) created not the jinns, and humans except they should worship Me (Alone).”<sup>(2)</sup>

Allah ﷻ mentioned that the higher aim (Maqsid) behind the Quran is to pinpoint these attainable useful purposes. Allah ﷻ described the Quran to be ‘al-Bayan,’ which means illustration. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿هَذَا بَيَانٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾<sup>(3)</sup>

“This [Quran] is a clear statement to [all] the people, and a guidance, and instruction for those conscious of Allah.”<sup>(3)</sup>

One of our early scholars (Ulama), Ibn Manzur ؒ, pointed out that what is meant by ‘Bayan’ in the verse (Ayah) above is that the Quran is characterized as an illustration that signifies “**exposing objectives in an eloquent language.**”<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Quran (65:12), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (56:51).

(3) Quran (3:138), Sahih International trans.

Ar-Razi رحمته commented on the term ‘al-Bayan’ by saying it is an expression by which purpose is manifested to the audience by a speaker.<sup>(2)</sup> Al-Munawi رحمته said, “**A speech could be characterized as Bayan only when it manifests an intended meaning.**”<sup>(3)</sup> Therefore, Allah ﷻ has declared His Own Speech to be purposeful with a meaningful objective. The term ‘Maqasid’ is synonymous with the usage of ‘Bayan’ in the 138<sup>th</sup> verse (Ayah) of chapter (Surah) Ali-'Imran.

Maqasid Al-Quran refers to the higher aims, intents, and purposes for which Allah ﷻ revealed His scripture. The exegete (Mufassir) seeks the objective, or illustration of the Divine Rulings in the two forms of the Revelation sent upon the Messenger ﷺ. The objectives of the Islamic legislative law (Shari'ah) are a part of the higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran). However, there are several differences between them both. The most credible position concludes that both sciences address various subjects significant to a Muslim, but they do not use the same process. Higher aims (Maqasid) related to the Islamic legislative law (Shari'ah) refer to what Allah ﷻ intends from legislating specific religious rulings. Higher aims (Maqasid) associated with the Quran refer to the collective higher purposes behind the Quranic Revelation.

The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) struggles to identify the ultimate higher aims (Maqasid) of each chapter (Surah) of the Quran, and then interpret them, and facilitate change in our lives. The pursuit of higher aims of the Quranic script (Maqasid Al-Quran) is a means to recover a bond between the Muslims of today, and the Quran. Therefore, we must understand that each verse (Ayah), and chapter (Surah) of the Quran contributes to that goal.

### Levels of higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran)

Exegetes (Mufassirun) of higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) seek to extract different levels of higher aims (Maqasid) from the Quranic texts. Meanwhile, they identify harmony, consistency, coherence, and balance between each one of these levels. The levels of the higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran) are categorized as follows:

1. General higher aims (Maqasid) of the Quran.
2. Holistic higher aims (Maqasid) of the Quran.
3. Higher aims (Maqasid) of individual chapters (Suwar).
4. Higher aims (Maqasid) of groups of chapters (Suwar).
5. Higher aims (Maqasid) of individual verses (Ayat) within a chapter (Surah).

---

(1) Ibn Manzur Lisan Al-arab the letter (ب)

(5) Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghayb by Al-Razi (volume 9, p. 11)

(6) Fayd Al Qadir Sharh Al-Jami Al-Saghir by Al-Manawi

6. Higher aims (Maqasid) of Quranic stories, and parables.

### 1. General higher aims (Maqasid) of the Quran

The Prophet ﷺ was the first exegete (Mufassir) to explicate the collective higher aims (Maqasid) of the Quran since he taught his companions (Sahabah) the Revelation in a concise manner. This concise explanation later became the fountain that generated all other exegeses (Tafasir) trends.

Quranic exegetes (Mufasssirin) identify the general Quranic objectives through investigation of the Quran, Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah), consensus (Ijma), appropriate analogy, and analysis. These are among the significant approaches in deducing the collective higher aims (Maqasid), and the general objectives of the Quran.

Before we identify the higher aims (Maqasid) of parts of the Quranic scripture, we must specify the primary, and founding higher purpose for which Allah ﷻ revealed the Quran. Allah ﷻ revealed the Quran to encourage Muslims to listen to its recitation, practice its recitation, and implement its guidance. The Quran is not an ordinary piece of literature. It is meant to be understood, and contemplated so that its judgments can benefit our lives, cure our maladies, and refine our humanity. Failure to understand, and follow Divine Guidance renders us as base as animals.

Allah ﷻ chastised the individual who attributes himself to the Revelation, but fails to understand, and implement it. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

**“The example of those who were entrusted with the Torah, and then did not take it on is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]. Wretched is the example of the people who deny the signs of Allah. And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

Allah ﷻ also chastised those who follow their own desires rather than guidance, and the analogy posed is that such a person is like a dog that never feels at ease, and is without refinement, and does not benefit from guidance. Allah ﷻ said:

(1) Quran (62:5), Sahih International trans.

﴿ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحِمَلَ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثَ أَوْ تَرَكَهُ يَلْهَثَ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَاقْصِصْ الْقِصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٧٦﴾ ﴾

“And if We had willed, we could have elevated him thereby, but he adhered [instead] to the earth, and followed his own desire. So, his example is like that of the dog: if you chase him, he pants, or if you leave him, he [still] pants. That is the example of the people who denied Our signs. So, relate the stories that perhaps they will give thought.”<sup>(1)</sup>

## 2. Holistic higher aims (Maqasid) of the Quran

The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) does not intend to beleaguer Muslims in minor issues that will distract them from understanding the higher objectives, and general messages of the Quran. Rather, an objective of prioritizing higher aims (Maqasid) will show a focused clarity of the associated issues. Muslims need to rearrange their priorities, and values according to the real significance of the comprehensive Quranic objectives. This step is necessary to reform the Muslim mentality of apathy, and rearrange priorities. Focusing on the holistic, instead of minor details is the best way to engage the average Muslim with the Noble Quran, and ease the way to fulfill the objective of Allah ﷻ.

Regarding this step, the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) will benefit from other trends in exegesis (Tafsir), such as the analytical, thematic, linguistic, rhetorical, and social interpretations. The selected higher aim (Maqasid) must be a verified, and proven higher purpose. Among the accepted higher purposes of the Quran, which are known by comprehensive analysis, are listed as follows:

- Reformation (Islah).
- Monotheism (Tawheed).
- Prophethood (Nabuwwah).
- Guidance (Hidayah).
- Rectifying morals (Tazkiyah).
- Developing, and improving the earth.
- Steadfastness.
- Character building.
- Community building.
- God-consciousness (Taqwa).
- Lessons from the previous nations.

(1) Quran (7:176), Sahih International trans.

- Affirming the Lordship of Allah ﷻ.
- The wisdom behind rulings.
- Loving, fearing, and hoping in Allah ﷻ.
- Admonitions, and warnings.
- Glad tidings.

### Reformation of the belief system (Aqeedah)<sup>(1)</sup>

Reformation (Islah) is to make better the condition of human beings in all areas through the reformation of their belief system (Aqeedah). Rectification of the belief system (Aqeedah) is the leading tool to reform the morals of society because it purifies the mind, and soul from the illusions, and false convictions of paganism, atheism, and the like. Reformation (Islah) signifies making things upright, and the opposite meaning is leaning in self defeat (ilhad). The question of reform usually comes in the context where something is corrupted, and deformed (fasad). The Quranic focus on the reform of beliefs proves that the prevailing dogmas, and beliefs before the Revelation of the Quran were not in an upright, and correct form.

The Quran stands as a reformation for people towards the right path, bringing them from the shadows to the light, and the Quran informs mankind about the Oneness of Allah ﷻ, and gathers them to worship Him alone with no associate.

Other sub-categories of reformation (Islah) may come under this all-inclusive higher aim (Maqsid), which can sometimes be primary higher aims (Maqasid), and other times, collaborative higher aims (Maqasid), such as:

1. Elements of Monotheism (Tawheed).
2. Means to obtain knowledge about Allah ﷻ.
3. Guidance, and its types.
4. God-consciousness (Taqwa).
5. Loving, fearing, and hoping in Allah ﷻ.
6. Sincerity, and supplication.
7. Polytheism (shirk), disbelief (kufr), and hypocrisy (nifaq).

---

(1) The entire section is adopted from Objectives of the Quran by Ibn Ashur ﷺ with abridgment. The section was published by Journal of Ma'alim al-Quran wa al-Sunnah as an article. Volume 14 – Nov. 2 (2018)



### The promotion of good character<sup>(1)</sup>

One of the major higher aims of the Quranic text (Maqasid Al-Quran) is to develop, and enhance good character. The Quran widely demonstrates moral virtues, and good character. The rectification of morals is a key issue in the Quran, and it has a deep correlation with the mission of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Allah ﷻ said on the tongue of Prophet Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام (Abraham):

﴿رَبَّنَا وَأَبْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٢٩﴾﴾

**“Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your verses, and teach them the Book, and wisdom, and purify them. Indeed, You are the Exalted in Might, the Wise.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

In the above verse (Ayah), the following have been mentioned as the duties of a Prophet ﷺ towards the people: to recite the Revelation, teach the Book, and its wisdom, and facilitate the purification of their souls. Furthermore, the Prophet ﷺ mentioned that the essence of his Prophethood (Nabuwwah) is to perfect the character. Abu Hurairah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“I was sent to perfect good character.”<sup>(3)</sup>**

Sub-categories that may come under this all-inclusive higher aim (Maqsid):

1. Rectifying morals (Tazkyiah).
2. Types of character.
3. Dangers of ignorance, and anger.
4. Steadfastness.
5. Character, and community building.
6. The relationship between belief system (Aqeedah), and character.
7. The relationship between rituals, and character.

(1) The entire section is adopted from Objectives of the Quran by Ibn Ashur with abridgment. The section was published by Journal of Ma’alim al-Quran wa al-Sunnah as an article (Volume 14 – Nov.2 (2018)

(2) Quran (2:129), Sahih International trans.

(3) Al-Muwatta (Book 47, Number 47.1.8); Ahmad (8729); Al-Adab al-Mufrad (273), Sahih by Al-Albani.

### Source of legislation<sup>(1)</sup>

Another higher aim (Maqsid) of the Quran is to be the primary source of the Islamic legislative law (Shari'ah). Islamic scholars (Ulama) unanimously agree that the Quran is the first source of legislation, and all other sources are considered subordinate. The Quran repeatedly stresses that believers must judge by what is revealed. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ﴾<sup>(٤٨)</sup>

“And We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture, and as a criterion over it. So, judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their inclinations away from what has come to you of the truth.”<sup>(2)</sup>

Ibn Ashur ﷺ maintained, “The objective of the Islamic legislative law (Shari'ah) is to establish a strong community with a stable social system, and promote the orderly functioning of its affairs by achieving its welfare, and preventing evil.”<sup>(3)</sup>

The Quran as a legal source also aims to achieve welfare, and prevent evil through the clarification, and update of many truths that have been omitted, or changed (tahreef) in the ‘Old Testament’ and ‘New Testament’ by Jewish, and Christian scholars.<sup>(4)</sup> This clarification is a higher aim (Maqsid) that must be interpreted by the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) to protect our community (Ummah) from falling into the misguidance of interfaith endeavors. The action plan of guarding against interfaith follows from an understanding that the Quran as a legal source commands perfect justice, clarifies the truth, and resolves conflict.

Sub-categories that may come under the legal aims of the Quran:

1. The connection between creating, and governing.
2. The wisdom behind rulings.
3. Higher aims of the Islamic legislative law (Maqasid ash-Shari'ah).

(1) The entire section is adopted from Objectives of the Quran by Ibn Ashur with abridgment. The section was published by Journal of Ma'alim al-Quran wa al-Sunnah as an article (Volume 14 – Nov.2 (2018)

(2) Quran (5:48), Sahih International trans.

(3) *Maqasid al-Shari'ah*, Ibn Ashur, (p. 16). Muhammad El-Tahir El-Mesawi trans., IIIT:2013.

(4) See Quran (2:75), (2:79), (3:78).

4. The gradation of rulings.
5. The five necessities (Dharuriyat).
6. Blocking the lawful means to an unlawful end (Sadd adh-Dhara'i'), and facilitating lawful means (Fath adh-Dhara'i').
7. The continuity, and progression of the Islamic legislative law (Shari'ah) of the previous Messengers.

### Training (Tarbiyah), rectifying morals (Tazkiyah), and Tasfiyah<sup>(1)</sup>

Another major higher aim (Maqsid) of the Quran is to educate people by means which are understood in their time so that they might be able to assimilate, and propagate the teachings of Islam. The Quran attaches overwhelming importance to the pursuit of knowledge, and considers it the basis of human development, and the key to the growth of culture, and civilization. This can be seen from the fact that the first Revelation began with the subject of learning. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾﴾

**“Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists), He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read!, and your Lord is the Most Generous, Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. He has taught man that which he knew not!”<sup>(2)</sup>**

These verses (Ayat) clearly show that humans who are created from very low, and humble origins can rise to great heights through learning, and acquiring knowledge. Allah ﷻ revealed that humanity could achieve higher knowledge than Angels, and thus, seeking knowledge has a high virtue. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣٢﴾﴾

**“And He taught Adam the names—all of them. Then He showed them to the Angels, and said, ‘Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful.’ They said, ‘Exalted are You; we**

(1) Al-Tasfiyah, according to Shaykh Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn Al-Albānī ؒ, is “the work of returning to the pure Islām, [cleansed] of all that has entered into it [of things contrary to the Qur’ān, and Sunnah].” (Fatāwá Rābigh, tape 3, fatwá 3)

(2) Quran (96:1-5).

have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise.”<sup>(1)</sup>

The objective of all the previous Messengers was to impart knowledge of right, and wrong to the people, guide them to the path of righteousness, and establish justice, and goodness on earth. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was also sent with the same objective. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢﴾﴾

“It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses (Ayat), and purifying them, and teaching them the Book, and wisdom—although they were before in clear error.”<sup>(2)</sup>

Teaching of the Book, and wisdom is inclusive of teaching balanced use of intellect, and the correct method of reasoning upon multiple aspects of knowledge. Each aspect of knowledge has an appropriate level of emphasis, and means of dissemination. Teaching knowledge of Islamic legislative law (Shari'ah), for example, is a higher objective of the Quran, but it must be viewed as a function of Prophethood (Nabuwwah). Allah said ﷻ:

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٢١﴾﴾

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern [to follow] for anyone whose hope is in Allah, and the Last Day, and (who) remembers Allah often.”<sup>(3)</sup>

This means the exegete (Mufassir) must explain the higher aim (Maqsid) of knowledge by respecting the five means of exegesis (Tafsir) as mentioned in part one, chapter two. The higher aim (Maqsid) of seeking knowledge will not be derived from the Quran by means of opinion, while an explanation exists from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Sub-categories that may come under the higher aim (Maqsid) of educating, and preparing the Muslims:

- The significance of education.

(1) Quran (2:31-32), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (62:2), Sahih International trans.

(3) Quran (33:21), Sahih International trans.

- The significance of raising Muslim children.
- The work of Tasfiyah, returning to the pure Islam, cleansed of all that has entered Islam which is contrary to the Quran, and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah).
- The development, and the training (Tarbiyah) of people in various aspects.
- The concept of leadership in Islam.
- Obeying Allah ﷻ, and the Messenger ﷺ, and those Muslims who are in authority.

### Admonitions to mankind

Another higher aim (Maqsid), which is a large part of the Divine Message, are admonitions in the Quran. Admonitions comprising of both warnings, and glad tidings are the dominant content of the Quran. Legal rulings are found in roughly five-hundred verses (Ayat), while rarely a page of the Quran can be found without admonishment.<sup>(1)</sup>

Admonishments accompany almost all other Quranic concepts from beliefs, ethics, and morality, stories of past nations, the hereafter (Akhirah), righteous deeds, religious rituals, natural phenomena, and others.

Both the Quran, and the function of Prophethood (Nabuwwah) are implicated with an admonition, which can be found in the following verses (Ayat). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَالْحَقُّ أَنزَلْنَاهُ وَالْحَقُّ نَزَلَ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا﴾ (١٠٥)

**“And with the truth We have sent the Quran down, and with the truth it has descended. And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a bringer of good tidings, and a warner.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿رُسُلًا مُّبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا﴾ (١٦٥)

**“[We sent] Messengers as bringers of good tidings, and warners so that mankind will have no argument against Allah after the Messengers. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might, and Wise.”<sup>(3)</sup>**

(1) Ibn al-Qayyim in *Madarij As-Salikin*; As-Suyuti in *Al-Itqan*.

(2) Quran (17:105), Sahih International trans.

(3) Quran (4:165), Sahih International trans.

These verses (Ayat) advocate those liable to follow the Revelation, and apply the admonishments, and rulings to awaken the liable from their ignorance. This higher aim (Maqsid) is through the sending of good tidings to the believers, and admonishment to those who err, or disbelieve.

The admonition is often through lessons, and stories which explain, and convey teaching to people, such as through explanation of the resurrection, accountability, and reward, and punishment. This is so that the believer will increase in faith (Iman), and God-consciousness (Taqwa), and that the disbeliever may find guidance.

Sub-categories that may come under the higher aim (Maqsid) of admonishments are numerous:

1. Paradise (Jannah), and Hellfire (Jahannam) descriptions.
2. Scenes from the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah).
3. Life in the grave (Barzakh).
4. The moments of death.
5. The people of Paradise (Jannah), and the people of Hellfire (Jahannam).
6. The Mercy, and Forbearance of Allah ﷻ.
7. The concepts of repentance (Tawbah), and forgiveness.
8. The benefits of following guidance in this world (Dunya).
9. Consequences of deserting the guidance in this world (Dunya).
10. Promises, and warnings.
11. The significance of the heart (Qalb).
12. The Quran, and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) as sources of admonition.

### Developing, and improving the Earth

The Quran comprises numerous textual pieces of evidence that motivate, and encourage the development of the earth as part of the human vicegerency on earth. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ﴾

**“It is He who has appointed you vicegerent on the earth...”<sup>(1)</sup>**

One of the higher aims of the Quranic text (Maqasid Al-Quran) is to generate, and promote good character, not only with other people, but far beyond the human, to include other universal

---

(1) Quran (6:165).

elements, such as the earth. Good character comprises both the greater efforts, and the least Muslims must do to preserve the order on which Allah ﷻ created the heavens, and the earth. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾ (٥٦)

**“And cause not corruption upon the earth after its reformation. And invoke Him in fear, and aspiration. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

To refrain from contributing to corruption in the creation of Allah ﷻ is the first step to correction of its condition. The Muslims must mitigate excess, and wastefulness, and be caretakers of the environment.

Although Allah ﷻ created the earth to facilitate the human being, He warns humanity against corrupting the earth in any way, or shape, such as unmitigated pollution, or exploitation of resources. Furthermore, the utilization of any natural resources cannot surpass a sustainable yield. Additionally, we must distribute the earthly resources with equity, and avoid imbalanced monopolies.

The Quran opposes using resources in excess to pursue a luxuriant lifestyle—extravagant luxury uses elitist access to resources for selfish benefit while depriving others of a basic standard of decent, and sustainable living. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا﴾ (٦٣)

**“The servants of the Lord of Mercy are those who walk gently upon the earth...”<sup>(2)</sup>**

### Equity of resource use

The story of ‘The Well of Rumia’ is a piece of evidence with qualities of reminder, and encouragement of Fath adh-Dhara’i. The well was owned by a Jew named Rumat al Giffari, who charged a high price to the Muslims to access its water during the life of the Prophet ﷺ. Thumamah رضي الله عنه narrated that Uthman رضي الله عنه said, “The Prophet ﷺ said, ‘Who will buy [The Well of Rumat]

(1) Quran (7:56).

(2) Quran (25:63).

with his own wealth, and his bucket will be like that of the Muslims (i.e., donate the well to the Muslims, and share it with them), and he will have something better than it in Paradise (Jannah).’ So, I bought it with my own wealth.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Uthman ibn Affan رضي الله عنه purchased the well for 38,000 dirhams, and donated it to the Muslim community. This endowment still operates today with a total value that some estimate at SR 50 million monthly, including the well, a hotel, and at least 15,500 date palms.<sup>(2)</sup> One needs to realize the motive behind the request of the Prophet ﷺ was to open control of a crucial resource from one individual to facilitate benefit for the community, and the environment.

### Inviolable zone, or protected area (Hima)

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِن رِّزْقِهِ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ﴾<sup>(3)</sup>

“It is He who made the earth tame for you—so walk among its slopes, and eat of His provision—and to Him is the resurrection.”<sup>(3)</sup>

Only by Allah’s ﷻ Mercy, and then the bestowal of ability, and custodianship can we move through varied biospheres, and cultivate, and nurture gardens of beauty, and bounty. This custodianship is inferred in several verses (Ayat) of the Quran, and is part of the higher aim (Maqsid) of environmental responsibility. We will be held responsible on the Day of Resurrection (Yawm Al-Qiyamah) for how we managed this responsibility, but the good news is we have been given guidance to interpret the environmental higher aims (Maqasid) through the establishment of a protected area (Hima) in the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah).

‘Hima’ is an inviolable zone, but it is not equivalent to unlawful (Haram). The word ‘Haram’ is primarily preserved for human function, while a ‘Hima’ is a managed natural wildlife area protected from private exploitation. ‘Hima’ was known before the mission of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Therefore, the concept was understood by Abu Abdullah an-Nu'man رضي الله عنه, who narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ made an analogy between ‘Hima’ and a religious matter that is unclear. He ﷺ said, “Many of the people do not know whether it is lawful, or unlawful. So whoever leaves it to protect his religion, and his honor, then he will be safe, and whoever falls into something

(1) Tirmizi (3703), Hasan; *Al Isabah*, Ibn Hajar (2771); Ahmad (555), Sahih.

(2) The General Authority for Awqaf, KSA.

(3) Quran (67:15).



**from them, then he soon will have fallen into the unlawful. Just like if someone grazes (his animals) around a sanctuary, he would soon wind up in it. Indeed, for every king is a sanctuary (pasture), and indeed Allah's sanctuary is what He made unlawful.**<sup>(1)</sup>

This analogy of a nature preserve with a religious mandate establishes the example in the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) of the higher aim (Maqsid) intended in the Quran that humanity should be custodians of the earth. Violation of such a zone is sinful.

The people of An-Nu'man رضي الله عنه had a traditional form of Hima, but the Hima that was re-established by the Prophet was Tawqifiya (divinely revealed). Imam Shafi'i رحمته الله said that the pre-Islamic Hima was monopolized by powerful leaders, and was used oppressively to support their partisans, and suppress the poor, and the enemies. The Prophet of Allah ﷺ established the Hima to protect resources from private exploitation, to conserve nature, and to allow the pasturage of animals which were held in trust by the Muslim leadership for community benefit, or distribution.

As-Sa'b ibn Jaththama رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“No Hima except for Allah, and His Messenger.”** Ibn Jaththama continued, **“We have been told that Allah's Messenger made a place called an-Naqi' as Hima, and Umar made ash-Sharaf, and ar-Rabadha Hima (for grazing the animals of Zakat).”**<sup>(2)</sup> This narration (Hadith) tells us that the establishment of Hima is part of facilitating a pillar of worship.

The Prophet ﷺ made a Hima circling around the sacred area of al-Madinah with different functional zones. Hunting within a radius of four miles was forbidden, and the destruction of trees, and shrubs was forbidden within twelve miles. Outside of these Hima boundaries, the custodianship of uncultivated wildlands was encouraged, and such cultivation constituted private ownership. Without the Hima, the higher aim (Maqsid) of conservationism would lack authentic spiritual rewards, and motivations.

### The Quranic miracle

Another higher aim (Maqsid) of the Quran is to reveal its miraculous nature. The miracle of the Quran is in its complex lexical expression with layered embedded meanings. The Quran is inimitable in style, and structure—the scientific, and historical content is a sign of the authenticity of the message of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ—and evidence of its miraculous nature.

(1) Bukhari (52); Tirmizi (1205), Hasan Sahih; Muslim (4094); Abu Dawud (3329, 3330); *al-arba'in al-nawawiyah* (6); Uthaymeen in *Sharh Riyadh us-Salihin* (588), Darussalam.

(2) Bukhari (2370).

This higher aim (Maqsid) is the self-validating expression of the miraculous message, which proves the authenticity of the Messenger ﷺ. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ ۚ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾﴾

**“And if you (Arab pagans, Jews, and Christians) are in doubt concerning that which We have sent down (i.e., the Quran) to Our servant (Muhammad), then produce a chapter (Surah) of the like thereof, and call your witnesses (supporters, and helpers) besides Allah, if you are truthful. But if you, do it not, and you can never do it, then fear the Fire (Jahannam).”<sup>(1)</sup>**

The Quran asserts the Divinity of its origin, and the surety of its preservation—the evidence of this is the quality of the text itself in clarity, perfection, integrity, and comprehensive construct. The evidence of Divine origin is also in the content, which includes balanced rulings that are adequately firm, flexible, and just with no deficiencies, or contradictions.

The Quran is a miraculous testimony that proves the authenticity of the final Messenger ﷺ, and challenges the polytheists (mushrikun), Christians, and Jews, and all other people to submit to the message.

### 3. Higher aims (Maqasid) of individual chapters (Suwar)

Allah ﷻ divided his Speech into one hundred and fourteen chapters (Suwar), and there is a border between each of them. Hence, each chapter (Surah) must have its own message to convey. This is because whenever there is a deliberate representation, then it conveys an idea. Our Lord ﷻ is not arbitrary. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَمَكْرُؤٌ وَّمَكْرَأَةٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ الْمَكْرِيْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾﴾

**“...Allah is the best of planners.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) can deduce the higher aims of a chapter (Surah) by identifying the connectivity between the adjacent chapters (Suwar), both before, and after. The sequence of several chapters (Suwar) in the arrangement can suggest continuity of

(1) Quran (2:23).

(2) Quran (3:54), Sahih International trans.

themes. The science of connectivity (Munasabah) greatly influences the modern exegesis (Tafsir) trends, but cannot be a means to bring conclusions independent of context.

Certainly, many conditions must apply before an alleged higher aim (Maqsid) can be considered valid:

1. The higher aim (Maqsid) must be comprehensive, and applicable to the entire content of the chapter (Surah).
2. The higher aim (Maqsid) should not be facile, and obvious. It has a hidden meaning like the soul inside a body—its essence runs throughout the entire body, yet it is not seen. This higher meaning must be identified through a knowledge-based process, not through dreams, or divination.
3. The higher aim (Maqsid) must point out the purpose behind the composite narratives, parables, and admonitions inside the chapter (Surah). Without this essential connection, the proposed higher meaning will have failed to identify the mission to prepare, educate, warn, or give glad tidings to the believer.
4. The higher aim (Maqsid) of a chapter (Surah) must be from a sub-category in the list of the holistic Quranic higher aims (Maqasid Al-Quran) mentioned above.

The proposed higher aim (Maqsid) cannot be amongst the rejected, or innovated constructs. A condemned higher aim (Maqsid) would fall in one of the following areas:

1. The higher aim (Maqsid) must not indulge in one of the unseen areas of which only Allah ﷻ has full knowledge, and of which He ﷻ did not reveal any evidence in the Quran, or the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) to substantiate the meaning.
2. The higher aim (Maqsid) must not identify the essence of the Names, and Attributes of Allah ﷻ in His true Nature, and Reality. This would be a quality of a blameworthy opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi), as it would advance the beliefs of deviant sects who deny, and distort the Divine Attributes.
3. The higher aim (Maqsid) must not identify the time of 'The Hour,' or the nature, and reality of the major signs which portend 'The Hour.' These details are known only by what is apparent in revealed evidence, and are not discoverable in verses with hidden esoteric meanings.

4. The higher aim (Maqsid) must not contradict the Quran, and the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah), or existent evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur) in any form, or shape.
5. The higher aim (Maqsid) must not suggest a political agenda that contradicts authentic Islamic teachings, or seeks to replace, or reform the Divine legislative law (Shari'ah) with man-made legislation.
6. The higher aim (Maqsid) must not advance the agenda of the people of innovation, whether in the area of the Islamic belief system (Aqeedah), such as the unity of being (Wahdat ul-Wujud), or the performances of innovated rituals.
7. The higher aim (Maqsid) must not be based on personal opinion, logic, or linguistic interpretation extrinsic of the context, period of the Revelation, and explanation of the companions (Sahabah), and their students (Tabi'un).

#### 4. Higher aims (Maqasid) of a group of verses (Ayat)

Every chapter (Surah) of the Quran can be divided into sections that comprise groups of verses (Ayat). Each set of verses (Ayat) is bound by a higher aim (Maqsid), which falls in harmony under the higher aim (Maqsid) of the chapter (Surah), which consequently coheres with the collective higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran).

Every chapter (Surah) contains a diversity of issues with overlapping themes. However, each chapter (Surah) has a unique higher aim (Maqsid). The Quran gathers together a unity of chapters (Suwar) themes through linking between the similar elements of different chapters (Suwar). Each component part in a chapter (Surah) serves as complementary to other parts to achieve, and deliver the ultimate message of the higher aim (Maqsid) of the chapter (Surah). Each chapter (Surah) links together to form a higher aim (Maqsid) of the corpus.

The thematic exegesis (Tafsir Mawdu'ee) of a chapter (Surah) can help the exegete (Mufassir) identify the higher aims (Maqasid) based on the different subjects of that chapter (Surah). However, the higher aims (Maqasid) of a chapter (Surah) are not like its subject. The themes are subjects that a chapter (Surah) covers. Meanwhile, higher aims (Maqasid) are the objective behind the citation of these subjects.

#### 5. Higher aims (Maqasid) of individual verses (Ayat) within a chapter (Surah)

The exegete (Mufassir) needs to understand that every verse (Ayah) has a higher aim (Maqsid). This is known because Allah ﷻ separated each chapter (Surah) into individual verses (Ayat) distinguished by structure, and form. The verses (Ayat) were honored by the Prophet ﷺ as separate

linguistic units. Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها said, “The Messenger of Allah would separate his recitation reciting: ‘*Al-Hamdulillāhi Rabbil- ‘Alamin,*’ then he would stop. ‘*Ar-Rahmānir-Rahmim,*’ then he would stop. And he would recite it: ‘*Maliki Yawmid-Din.*’”<sup>(1)</sup>

### Incongruous verses (Ayat)

As mentioned above, Shaykh al-Fawzan رحمته الله said in his book *Sharh us-Sunnah*, that contradiction in the Quran is only in our understanding, and not in its composition. Therefore, incongruous verses (Ayat) have a meaningful connection that many are unaware of, except those scholars (Ulama) who are well-grounded in knowledge. Part of the miraculous beauty of the Quran is that the individual verse (Ayah) has a higher aim (Maqsid) that serves the aim of a section of verses (Ayat), and a section contributes to the higher aim (Maqsid) of the parent chapter (Surah) which serves the collective higher aims (Maqasid) of the Quran, and the objective of the Quranic Revelation upon the servants of Allah ﷺ to read, reflect, and actuate its guidance. This intricate structure came without an unbent first verse (Ayah) to the latest pattern of the Revelation, and without any mistake, or contradiction.

The connection, harmony, and consistency amongst each verse (Ayah), the unit of verses (Ayat) where it is placed, the parent chapter (Surah), and the entire Quran reveals, and confirms that the Quran cannot be a product of human composition. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿الرَّكَنُ أَحْكَمُ آيَاتِهِ ثُمَّ فَضِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ﴾

“Alif, Lam, Ra. [This is] a Book whose verses are perfected, and then presented in detail from [one who is] Wise, and Acquainted.”<sup>(2)</sup>

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا﴾

“Do they not then consider the Quran carefully? Had it been from other than Allah ﷻ, they would surely have found therein many contradictions.”<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Abu Dawud (4001), Sahih by Al-Albani; Tirmizi (2927); similar report from Hafsa in Ahmad (26470), Sahih by Al-Albani.

(2) Quran (11:1), Sahih International trans.

(3) Quran (4:82).

## 6. Higher aims (Maqasid) of Quranic stories, and parables

The narrative of past nations contains lofty purposes of encouraging successive nations to emulate their righteous affairs, and eschew following their evil deeds. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِن كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ﴾

**“We relate to you, [O Muhammad], the best of stories in what We have revealed to you of this Quran although you were, before it, among the unaware.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

Ibn Ashur ؒ points out that the Quran does not present stories of the past nations for any limited purposes. These stories carry many lessons, and provisions for the Muslim community (Ummah), and host multiple themes. For this reason, we see that the Quran does not narrate most stories according to chronological order as a conventional history book, nor are most stories related fully in one place. Rather, Allah ﷻ revealed, and ordered narrative verses (Ayat) within the most significant groups of verses (Ayat) relative to the parent chapter (Surah). Consequently, Ibn Ashur ؒ mentioned the benefits, and lessons that can be derived from the Quranic stories as follows:

1. Knowledge about the People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab), and other past nations allows Muslims to know about [divine] sanctions unto them. The knowledge of previous nations enables the bearers of the Quran to refute the claims of Jews, and others who characterize Muslims as an illiterate (Ummiyah), or ignorant (Jahiliyah) nation.
2. Knowledge of the Divine Laws of the previous Prophets, and nations provides a scope of justification of the unique Islamic legislative law (Shari'ah) in comparison to others.
3. Knowledge of the principles of cause, and effect, good, and evil, construction, and destruction, enables the Muslim community (Ummah) to follow the right way, and be aware of the wrong, and harmful deeds.
4. Lessons in the consequences upon the people who rejected the Divine Messages, and confronted the Prophets, and their followers.
5. Reminders for the believers about how Allah ﷻ empowered, and established the as-Salaf us-Salihin of previous nations.

<sup>(1)</sup> Quran (12:3), Sahih International trans.

6. Knowledge of world affairs, and the characteristics of the big, and powerful nations provides examples of a beneficial process for this Muslim community (Ummah).
7. Encouragement for the Muslim nations to make an effort in holding positions of global leadership.
8. Knowledge that the Power of Allah ﷻ is superior to all powers, and He helps those who help His cause, although He is not in need from creation. Any nation which adopts the proper causes of sustainability will be safe from the domination of other nations.
9. The history of legislation, and civilization could benefit in opening the Muslim minds to move towards refining Islamic civilization.
10. These lessons hold some key precepts of the Quran that are generally described as its purposes, such as belief (Aqeedah), Prophethood (Nabuwwah), reward (Targheeb), and punishment/fear (Tarheeb), legislation, taking lessons, and more. In Ibn Ashur's ﷺ view, all these issues are also regarded as higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran). Therefore, it appears that the universal purposes of the Quran are distributed in the stories it contains. In fact, the stories of the Quran are not distinctive entities as they are not isolated narratives of events. Rather, they always come in conjunction with Quranic precepts in order to give a tangible connotation to them. Moreover, stories of the Quran occur following its universal purposes.

### Beneficial advice

Muslims should pay attention to some general guidelines which are consistent for nearly every chapter (Surah) of the Quran. These are brief words of advice for those who desire to understand the Quran correctly. Shaykh Abd ar-Rahman ibn Nasir as-Sa'di ﷺ wrote:

1. Whoever wants to understand the Quran correctly should sincerely contemplate the meaning, work to understand the guidance, and implement change in their life.
2. One should not become consumed with the circumstances, or reasons behind the Revelation (Asbab an-Nuzul). One should focus their attention on the general meaning of a verse (Ayah), and know that the reason for the Revelation, even if authentic, is just one piece, and one portion of the meaning conveyed.
3. When there are several different explanations from the exegetes (Mufasssirun), the intelligent person should, as much as possible, try to understand them all within one overarching message, and meaning, in so much as all those meanings can be supported by

the language used. Reconciling explanations are favored above treating different explanations as conflicting. Many authentic exegeses (Tafasir), which may appear to conflict all, ultimately go back to one shared general meaning.

4. When Allah ﷻ ties a religious ruling to a Quranic message, then the efficacy, or deficiency of that ruling is linked to how much a person actualizes the message. Consider the varied, and variable nature of the qualities of faith (Iman), Islam, pursuing excellence (Ihsan), God-consciousness (Taqwa), piety (birr), steadfastness, fear, hope, truthfulness, humility, prayer (Salah), fasting, charitable giving (Zakat, and Sadaqat), and more. If a person perfectly embodies one of these traits, they may receive the full reward for it, while falling short of perfection means the reward may, likewise, be less. Allah ﷻ rewards as much as He sees fit, and He is The Most Just. The opposite of this also applies to the qualities of disbelief (kufr), hypocrisy (nifaq), deceitfulness, wrongdoing, and more. Their effects, and punishments will, likewise, be in proportion to the extent to which a person embodies them.
5. Avoid misinterpreting a specific meaning for a general statement. Examine the definitive Arabic attachment ‘al’ to certain words. When it is attached to the name of a class of things such as al-Insan (humans), it refers to all individuals within that class, or about that characteristic in general.
6. If a singular noun is attached to another noun, the first noun classifies all attached nouns, just as occurs when a plural noun is connected to another noun.
7. When a noun *without* the definite article ‘al’ comes after a negation, a prohibition, a rhetorical question, or a conditional statement, the noun conveys the meaning of all items within its class.
8. If Allah ﷻ commands us to do an action, then that command entails whatever is needed to accomplish the action.
9. If Allah ﷻ prohibits us from something, that prohibition also entails a ban on all things that lead to, or follow it.
10. If Allah ﷻ informs us of something, then that means that the causes, and means of that information have taken place, and every path leading up to it is implicitly included in that information.



11. Quranic exegetes (Mufasssirun) use the term Makki to refer to any chapter (Surah) revealed either entirely, or primarily before the Prophet's ﷺ migration to Madinah (Hijrah). Most of these chapters (Suwar) focus on affirming core beliefs, and principles. The exegetes (Mufasssirun) have used the label Madani to refer to any chapter (Surah) that was revealed either entirely, or primarily after the Prophet's ﷺ migration to Madinah (Hijrah). These chapters (Suwar) also affirm core beliefs, and principles, while containing many matters shooting off from them, as you shall see shortly, and Allah ﷻ knows best.<sup>(1)</sup>



---

(1) *Majmoo' al-Mu'allafat as-Sa'di* 3/8-9, with modifications from Abu'l-Yaman Khalil Klopfenstein trans.

## Chapter Five

# The Evolution of the Maqasidic Tafsir



### Introduction

After introducing in parts one, and two the subject of exegesis (Tafsir) in general, and the specialized focus on higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir), respectively, we affirmed by evidence that this work, *The Maqasidic Tafsir: Pursuing the Higher Aim of the Quranic Scripture*, is of the praiseworthy, accepted class of opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi). Moreover, we have outlined the need to use such an approach to tie the Muslims to the rope of Allah ﷻ.

Higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) is an expression of opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi), authenticated, and supported by evidence of the higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran). This method has yet to be treated exclusively in the field of exegesis (Tafsir), and has been subject to only partial, and inclusive discussions by contemporary scholars (Ulama) who were not grounded in the evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur) method, or the authentic belief system (Aqeedah) of the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin).

An exclusive, and comprehensive higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) follows a functional approach of evaluating the higher aims (Maqasid) of each chapter (Surah), then describes how the contents of each chapter (Surah) reveal harmony between the higher purpose, and the means to achieve it. The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) takes an interest in the method of reading the Quranic text as a unified body in terms of its themes, principles, and higher values.

The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) of the Quran is one of the most critical intellectual means, and methodologies for reformation, and revival. It is known within Islamic sciences as the exegesis (Tafsir), which addresses intersectional domains of the Islamic ethos, and reflects the comprehensive nature of a complete religion (Deen). This approach draws our attention to the objective, purpose, and wisdom behind creation, human life, the continuity of Prophets, and the Revelation. The higher aim-based (Maqasidic) approach to interpreting the Quran, and developing Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) is not a modernist innovation, but evolved from Quranic Revelation based on principles of interpretation, and a disciplined methodology.

A historical context of the evolution, and development of this type of exegesis (Tafsir) indicates the necessity of a disciplined, and functional approach to the higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran), specifically to address the increasing contemporary socio-political afflictions (fitnah) facing the Muslim community (Ummah).

### The evolution of the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir)

The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) as a branch of praiseworthy opinion-based explanation of the Quran did not emerge as an exclusive trend until the opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi) emerged.

Although early exegesis (Tafsir) began mainly with comprehensive narratives from Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, there was little reference to any higher aim (Maqsid) contents. It does not mean that the Prophet's ﷺ companions (Sahabah) did not understand the higher aims (Maqasid), but rather the functional explanation was known by their lived experience in the context of the Revelation. In the period after the Prophet ﷺ, his companions (Sahabah) established various schools of exegesis (Tafsir) to impart their knowledge, and lived experience. Their precise, comprehensive knowledge of the reasons, or contexts of the Revelations, and their personal relation to the Quran enabled them an intrinsic understanding of the higher aims (Maqasid).

The followers/successors (Tabi'un) of the companions (Sahabah) comprise two generations. They carried on the three primary schools of exegesis (Tafsir), which were founded earlier in Makkah by Abdullah Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه, in Madinah by Ubbay ibn Ka'b رضي الله عنه, and in Kufah by Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه. They explained the works of exegesis (Tafsir) inherited from the statements of the companions (Sahabah), and their students (Tabi'un).

For almost three hundred years, there was neither an exclusive, nor inclusive higher aim-based (Maqasidic) approach to the explanation of the Quran for the following **three reasons**:

- The first generations were fully aware of the higher aims (Maqasid) inclusive in the text of the Revelation, therefore, leaving no key to interpret the functional structure of the Revelation.
- The Quran treated their immediate issues, and there was neither a need, nor an interest to produce casuistry for unrealized, or hypothetical issues.

- Every succeeding generation must generate higher aims (Maqasid) to treat primary, and contemporary challenges through the lens of the Quran by scholastic reference to the first generations, though not through the shifting norms of poor scholarship.

### The inclusive higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir)

After the three praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin),<sup>(1)</sup> the need arose for a formal exegesis (Tafsir) of the Quran. Consequently, various approaches emerged. The most famous of these works was the evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur) of Ibn Jarir at-Tabari رحمه الله, which became the framework, and a primary source for several other exegeses (Tafasir) trends. These various works of exegesis (Tafsir) included aspects of pursuing the higher aims (Maqasid). They used similar terms to the term ‘Maqasid,’ such as ‘al-Murad,’ which means ‘the intended,’ ‘al-Ma'ani,’ which means ‘the meaningful,’ and ‘ad-Dalalah,’ which means ‘the evidence for something.’ While these terms do not linguistically suggest the independent meaning of higher aims (Maqasid), they were considered substitute expressions for them. The term ‘Maqsid’ itself is known in the context of the deeper meaning of the Quran. The root form of the word Maqsid is found in the context of exegesis (Tafsir) in the saying of Allah ﷻ:

﴿وَعَلَى اللَّهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَائِرٌ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَاكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ﴾

“And upon Allah is the responsibility to explain the Straight Path.”<sup>(2)</sup>

Another translation of the above verse (Ayah) would be:

“And upon Allah is the direction of the [right] way.”<sup>(3)</sup>

The first mention of the specific term ‘Maqasid Al-Quran’ as applied to Quranic exegesis is in *Jawahir Al-Quran*, by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali رحمه الله. Pursuit of the higher aim (Maqsid) was inclusive, and orthopraxic in the pursuit of the meaning of the Speech of Allah ﷻ, but it was pursued without a functional method, or framework, although it was of increasing importance, and relevance.

(1) The Sahabah, their successors, and the students of their successors; see Muslim (6469-6476); Bukhari (6428-6429).

(2) Quran (16:9).

(3) Quran (16:9), Sahih International trans.

### The need for an exclusive higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir)

Identifying the higher aims (Maqasid) within the Quran is necessary, and a basis for a balanced means to achieve the aspired goals. Hence, a functional approach to exegesis (Tafsir) requires a new kind of it that exclusively focuses on revealing the higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran). The higher aim-based (Maqasidic) approach of the Quran was historically non-exclusive, but it still received significant attention from prominent exegetes (Mufasssirun). The period of **inclusive** higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) as a trend can be described as the developmental stage in exegesis (Tafsir).

A breakthrough in the higher aim-based (Maqasidic) trend was brought about by prominent contemporary scholars (Ulama) such as Muhammad Abduh rahimahullah (d. 1905 CE), Ibn Ashur rahimahullah (d. 1973 CE), Abul Ala Maududi rahimahullah (d. 1979 CE), and Sayed Qutb rahimahullah (d. 1966 CE). A parallel trend fluoresced in Indonesia by the pens of Quraish Shihab rahimahullah in his work *Al-Mishbah*, and Dr. Hamka rahimahullah in his 1979 work *Tafsir Al-Azhar*. These scholars strongly supported the higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran) as one of the principles of exegesis (Tafsir).

Muhammad Abduh rahimahullah presented an understanding of the Quran driven by its higher objectives that guide humanity toward happiness in this world (Dunya), and success in the hereafter (Aakhirah). He asserted that an over-emphasis on Quranic styles, syntax, past stories, legal discussion, theological debates, advice, and mysticism might overshadow the supreme purpose of the Quran, and shroud its original meanings.

The scholars (Ulama) of the **exclusive** higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) have a structural approach to exegesis (Tafsir) that first describes the primary higher aim (Maqsid) of a chapter (Surah) as a foundation, and then builds on the foundation by focusing on groups of individual verses (Ayat) to form a secondary purpose derived from the primary higher aim (Maqsid). The relation to the primary, and secondary aim has been outlined in part two, chapter four of this book. Sovereign groups of verses (Ayat), which are secondary aims, support the higher aim (Maqsid) of the chapter (Surah). This approach is gradually becoming a phenomenon in modern methods of exegesis (Tafsir).

### The benefits of an exclusive higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir)

There are several benefits gleaned from an **exclusive** higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) for both the individual, and the community:

The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) is a functional tool to achieve the higher aim (Maqsid) for which Allah ﷻ revealed the Quran —to ponder its verses (Ayat). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ كُنْتُ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ ۖ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٩﴾ ﴾

“(This is) a Book (the Quran) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings that they may ponder over its verses (Ayat), and that men of understanding may remember.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Allah ﷻ is commanding us to seek the purpose behind His Words, and to take action upon the meanings behind them. The exegete (Mufasssir) is duty-bound to reflect upon what is intended by Quranic verses (Ayat), and chapters (Suwar) in light of the time, and the circumstances of the Revelation, and in connection with present time, and events.

The exegete (Mufasssir) delivers the undeniable coherence, harmony, and unity within a chapter (Surah), a group of verses (Ayat), and an individual verse (Ayah) since it treats the chapter (Surah) as a holistic entity. It is analogous to the structure of a tree that has different branches, and each branch has leaves. The trunk is the chapter (Surah), the branches are the different groups of verses (Ayat), and the leaves are the individual verses (Ayat). The coherence, and consistency between the leaves, branches, and the tree are necessary for this fine tree to exist, and the tree itself is functionally connected to the environment through aspiration, and photosynthesis, while nourishment is delivered through the trunk, and branches. So too is the chapter (Surah) gestalt as a tool of the exegete (Mufasssir).

It is like a building that is made of different pillars, and bricks. The building symbolizes the chapter (Surah), the pillars represent the other groups of verses (Ayat), and the bricks symbolize the individual verses (Ayat), which construct the pillars which complete the structure. Coherence, and consistency between the bricks, pillars, and building are necessary to produce the right building to serve the intention for which it was constructed.

The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) is an excellent means to connect current events with the Quranic scripture because one of the required sciences is the science of the context of the Revelation, which can be obtained from extensive study of the life of the Prophet ﷺ (Seerah).

The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) reveals the structural perfection of the Quran. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ الرَّكْنُ الْكِنَانُ أَحْكَمَتْ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَيْرٍ ﴿١﴾ ﴾

(1) Quran (38:29).

**“Alif, Lam, Ra. [This is] a Book whose verses (Ayat) are perfected, and then presented in detail from [one who is] Wise, and Acquainted.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) proves this perfection when they reveal the consistency, and blending between the objective, and component parts of a chapter (Surah), and brings contemporary relevance to the most effective Quranic interpretation method to explain it.

Quranic interpretation, or exegesis (Tafsir) based on valid, identifiable higher aims (Maqasid) avoids the egoistic interpretation of the Quran, eschews motivation by desires, and blameworthy opinion, and thus, avoids falling into a deviant schism.

Higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) cultivates the needed discipline, and etiquette when dealing with the Revelation. Since the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) identifies an authentic higher aim (Maqsid) for a chapter (Surah) that must have a holistic harmony with the Quran, this methodology guarantees that Muslims will not be innovative away from evidence when trying to explain, and interpret the Divine Revelation.

Higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) is a means to boost our faith (Iman) by implementing solutions to pressing, real-world problems. An example is the leading cause of the mounting divorce rate (explained in detail in part three) in the Muslim world is our failure to follow the Divine Guidance regarding marriage, and spousal issues. This particular benefit of the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) is contingent upon the skill used in identifying relevant objectives, and guidance from the Quranic scripture.

The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) trend enhances the field of exegesis (Tafsir) tremendously by examining the different opinions of past exegetes (Mufassirun), and present preference for some views over the others based on the approved selected higher aim (Maqsid).

The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) trend helps the Muslims eschew insignificant, or useless knowledge, which may distract the seekers of this crucial knowledge. Also, it provides an academic, and practical focus on understanding, and memorizing the Quranic scripture.

The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) views the Quranic scripture as functional, progressive, and executable to facilitate Divine Guidance for individuals, and implement change in communities. This process is the domain of the exegete (Mufassir) but is the inheritance of all Muslims, and can be understood by the student of knowledge, and the layman through a **simple five-phase process** (next chapter).

---

(1) Quran (11:1), Sahih International trans.



## Part Three

# The Process: Step-by-Step Guide





# Chapter One

## Five-Phase Process of Maqasidic Tafsir



### Executable objectives

Muslims must recognize the higher aims (Maqasid) behind the Revelation. Our goal must be to recite, understand, contemplate, and then fulfill Quranic teachings in our lives. Allah ﷻ described those who do not understand His Book due to a lack of sincerity as donkeys carrying volumes of books, and Allah ﷻ also described those who understand it, and know its meanings, but refrain from acting upon it like dogs. This diminutive is because they have failed to acknowledge, or realize a higher aim (Maqasid).

The higher aim-based (Maqasidic) trend of exegesis (Tafsir) achieves the noble objective of understanding, and implementing the Revelation, while other trends are more concerned with the textual interpretation of the Quran. The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) will complement these trends by introducing a well-guided, and steered process to contemplate, ponder, and explain the Quran by every verse (Ayah), chapter (Surah), and structure. The primary objective of the contemplation process is to generate relevant, and contemporary higher aims (Maqasid) for every chapter (Surah) to current events after contemplating the characteristics, and circumstances surrounding the initial Revelation.

The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) paves the way to implementing the executable part of the Quranic Revelation in our lives by generating attainable, and relevant higher aims (Maqasid). Hence, the Quranic scripture shifts from just a theory to practice.

The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) model will protect the Muslims from being absorbed in unimportant details by deriving much-needed higher aims (Maqasid) agreeable with the comprehensive Quranic message. Preoccupation with less significant secondary issues over the higher purpose of the Quran feeds negative debate, which usually leads to more disunity, and sectarian divisions. Consequently, the Muslim community (Ummah) would then suffer from many failures on various levels.

When we highlight the Quranic higher aims (Maqasid Al-Quran), and turn them into executable, and achievable objectives, we will create the incentives to reproduce a somewhat similar transformation in contemporary societies identical to the first Islamic community by turning the Revelation into a living, and dynamic source of guidance.

Allah Willing (In sha Allah), throughout the remaining pages of this chapter, you shall find process details of the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir), which we intend to implement in every chapter (Surah) of the Quran.

### Primary objectives

We believe firmly that the first three praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin) of Muslims actualized most of the higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran) because the Prophet ﷺ was the practical illustration of the Quran, and his companions (Sahabah) represented the Quranic generation. The higher aims (Maqasid) influenced their character, and the Quran shaped their lives. Individual growth, and societal progression toward an ideal community in that period were the real results of pursuing the means that led to fulfilling identified higher aims (Maqasid).

The lengthy distance of time, and space between the present, and the first Muslim generations, which Allah ﷻ, and His Messenger ﷺ praised, has been an obstacle in the face of developing an efficient Quranic outline that can impact individuals, and society. However, the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) can bridge this gap by comparing the circumstances of the Revelation with the present to find similarities, and variations, and generate a valid, relative, and energetic relationship between the Quran, and reality.

The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) must generate intelligible, and comprehensive higher aims (Maqasid) so that the layman Muslim can implement an action plan consistent with how the first three generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin) realized the Quranic Revelation. The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) can generate relevant, accepted, and dynamic higher aims (Maqasid) to help the Muslim community (Ummah) redirect their wasted negative energy from sectarian conflicts, or debates towards community-building proposals. For example, we may find several variations regarding essential postures in prayer (Salah) according to the different schools of thought, or interpretations of the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah). However, we rarely see any dispute regarding the higher aims of prayer (Maqasid Al-Salah)—the intention to establish a connection with Allah ﷻ.

Another priority for a higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) is to strive wholeheartedly to disenfranchise the Muslim community (Ummah) from a desire-driven interpretation of the Quran, and cultivate authenticated, and validated knowledge. It is essential to call to knowledge by

encouraging Muslims to disregard sectarian, and intolerant Quranic interpretations that deviants extracted from the Quran to justify their distorted ideologies. Furthermore, the higher aims (Maqasid) approach will help us focus on broader levels of understanding, which is a contemporary need to address a diverse demographic in this Muslim community (Ummah). Hence, we must reset our priorities, and adjust our order of values.

When the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) focuses on comprehensive Quranic objectives, and raises awareness of these significances, and characteristics, it will lead to a realistic, and complete system that will protect the Muslim community (Ummah) from defects, and deviations. Focusing on the primary, instead of secondary details, is the best way to connect knowledge seekers with the Noble Quran. Once we adjust our order of values, we will undoubtedly be on our way to achieving the objectives of the Revelation.

The success of higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) depends mainly on how the exegete (Mufassir) approaches the Noble Quran. One must have two eyes—one on the context of the Revelation, and the other eye on the current challenges, and problems. Then the exegete (Mufassir) analyzes both perceptions to find similarities, and to generate executable, and achievable higher aims (Maqasid). The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) provides a new provision for us in the contemporary world, and we must strive to implement our positive response. This higher aim-based (Maqasidic) approach may illuminate the path to a practical, and meaningful method of returning to the example of the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin) without anachronism, romanticism, or self-defeat.

### The process of the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir)

The sole objective of this book, *The Maqasidic Tafsir: Pursuing the Higher Aim of the Quranic Scripture*, is to pair the higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran) with the means to achieve them. This connection forms a functional unity with the Quran, which other trends of exegesis (Tafsir) have been presenting inclusively, but are reluctant to provide exclusively.

According to theories postulated by Al-Ghazali رحمه الله, a higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) reveals the essence of the Quran, and all other explanations, whether analytic (Tahlilee), thematic (Mawdhu'ee), or other than them, are external.<sup>(1)</sup> Muhammad Musa explained, **“Holistic interpretations of the Quran, a departure from traditional commentaries of its text, allowed al-Ghazali to formulate compositions of specific themes that recovered the ideal Islamic moral dimensions.”**<sup>(2)</sup>

---

(1) Muhammad Al-Ghazali (d. 1996 CE).

(2) *A Discourse Analysis of Muhammad Al-Ghazali's Thought: Between Tradition, and Renewal*. University of Exeter, 2012.

In a holistic sense, the Quranic subjects are presented in the form of how they are co-related concerning a single higher aim (Maqsid) of the Quran—a revealed moral imperative upon the creation.

The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) brings the Quranic understanding from the exterior to the core because the higher aims (Maqasid) of the verses (Ayat), and the chapters (Suwar) constitute the heart, or focus of the Revelation. Other details of a chapter (Surah) are surface meanings with specific individual purposes. The higher aim-based (Maqasidic) perspective of Quranic interpretation could be a means for transforming human ritual functions into developing values, and character because the higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran) are mostly described as either values, or qualities. The application of a formula of blending the chapter (Surah) subjects with a holistic higher aim (Maqsid) will lead to the birth of a comprehensive higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) trend.

### The scope of the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir)

The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) foundation is identifying a higher aim (Maqsid) for the individual chapter (Surah), then reconciling the collaborative means to achieve this higher aim (Maqsid) from the verses (Ayat), or group of verses (Ayat) within the chapter (Surah). The scope of the study includes understanding the diverse meanings of the chapter (Surah), the period of the Revelation, the locus of the Revelation, the particular surrounding circumstances that accompanied it, and the parables, and stories mentioned in the chapter (Surah)—these are among the tools mentioned in parts one, and two which help reveal a higher aim (Maqsid). The next step is to identify the means that lead to achieving the higher aim (Maqsid). The benefit of setting an objective, and standards side by side is that a reader could gain a clear direction of ideal Islamic moral dimensions. The absence of this dimension in exegesis (Tafsir) results in a deficiency, or intellectual vacuum which would be filled selectively by desire, or the ignorance of sectarianism. The means (Wasail) of achieving identified objectives must be presented in an exclusive higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) since we can never achieve goals by means of Divine Guidance without their corresponding authentic means.

The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir) is obligated to identify the higher aims (Maqasid), and their means (Wasail) to facilitate for the Muslim community (Ummah) an understanding of the maximum number of higher aims (Maqasid) from each selection of text, and to implement a functional change in the community. Identification begins with evaluating each unit of the Revelation to classify its scope of focus within a **three-level system**.

It is essential to understand that every verse (Ayah) has its own higher aim (Maqsid). Likewise, several verses (Ayat), or a group of verses (Ayat) revolving around a theme could share one higher aim (Maqsid). Hence, the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) has **three levels**:

1. First, **one verse (Ayah)** could carry a single higher aim (Maqsid), or more. Interpretation of the higher aim (Maqsid) found in one verse (Ayah) could be one aspect of the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir). For example, in the second verse (Ayah) of the chapter (Surah) Al-Baqarah:

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢﴾

“This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah.”<sup>(1)</sup>

This verse (Ayah) indicates that constituting a guide (Huda) is one of the objectives of the Quran. It also has a meaning that the guidance is perfect, and cannot be called into doubt.

2. Secondly, a **group of verses (Ayat)** could carry a single higher aim (Maqsid). For example, all the verses (Ayat) of chapter (Surah) Al-Ikhlās comprise a single higher aim (Maqsid), which is Monotheism (Tawheed).
3. Finally, **several scattered verses (Ayat)** could carry an identical causative particle, or a theme that could indicate a higher aim (Maqsid), such as establishing justice, which is mentioned in several scattered verses (Ayat) in different chapters (Suwar) of the Quran, such as the meanings derived from 57:25, 4:105, 2:213.

Each of the **three levels** is a valid source to identify a holistic higher aim (Maqsid), and means within a **five-phase process**.

### Phase one: identify the higher aim (Maqsid) of the chapter (Surah)

The exegete (Mufassir) responds to an actual phenomenon, leadership challenge, or social crisis within the Muslim community (Ummah), and they turn to the Quran, and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) to find reconciliation. He may begin by identifying a relevant higher aim (Maqsid) found in the Quran. The socio-political scenario is ideal since the **five-phase process** will originate from a real situation, or problem, seeking a solution to please Allah ﷻ through a method consistent with the response of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The exegete (Mufassir) will look in the Quran for a chapter (Surah) that can become the ideal lens by which to view the phenomena in the community (Ummah).

(1) Quran (2:2), Sahih International trans.

In a second scenario, the objective of the exegete (Mufassir) is to provide a higher aim-based (Maqasidic) explanation to a particular chapter (Surah) of the Quran. The exegete (Mufassir) identifies the higher aim (Maqsid) through a methodological process. The exegete (Mufassir) generates a dynamic higher aim (Maqsid) from a chapter (Surah) that *reveals* present, and real difficulties, obstacles, and challenges. This is a relevant scenario, as societies may fall into error through neglect of the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah). Hassan ibn Atiyyah rah said, **“The people do not introduce an innovation (Bid’ah) into their religion except that Allah withdraws its like from their Sunnah.”**<sup>(1)</sup> RasulAllah ﷺ said, **“He who does not follow my As-Sunnah (legal ways) in religion, is not from me (not one of my followers).”**<sup>(2)</sup> This highlights the reality that when the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) is abandoned, it is filled with other than the Islamic guidance. The obligation of an exegete (Mufassir) is to provide leadership, and they must be aware of the major theological, ethical, intellectual, and moral problems in the community to suggest solutions drawn from the Revelation.

In the process of identifying the higher aims (Maqasid), the exegete (Mufassir) can benefit tremendously from various contemporary social sciences, such as anthropology, economics, geography, political science, psychology, and sociology. However, they must analyze the extant societal phenomena through the eyes of the Revelation. Their analysis must be construed from the Quran, and the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah), and their lens upon community challenges, and problems should be from an Islamic perspective.

During the first phase, the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) will have the same goal as the thematic exegete (Mawdu’ee Mufassir), which is the identification of subjects, and themes. However, there are **two key differences**:

1. The thematic exegete (Mawdu’ee Mufassir) is typically more occupied with theoretical subjects, which are not necessarily relevant to the present such as, ‘how was the world created?’ or ‘is there a plan for our lives?’ and ‘is there an afterlife?’ The common *thematic* motivation is to provide emotional comfort in times of crisis, or unfortunately, many rejected thematic exegetes (Mawdu’ee Mufassirun) called universal revolution a placation of the social morass. The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) must avoid engaging in political, and social analysis of any ideology other than that governed by the Revelation. The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) must be governed by the Quran, and the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) in subjective, dynamic, and lively higher aims (Maqasid) relevant to reality while engaging the thematic findings functionally, and considering the means (Wasail) to change the condition.

---

(1) *Sunan ad-Darimi* (98).

(2) *Bukhari* (5063).

2. The thematic exegete (Mawdhu'ee Mufassir) may search the entire Quran to find the Revelation that defines, or reveals various aspects of the chosen theme. In other words, they may look at every single chapter (Surah) of the Quran to find any references. However, the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) is restricted to finding the higher aim (Maqsid) in one chapter (Surah), or a group of adjacent chapters (Suwar), as it is recognized that the organization of the Quran is Divinely instructed (Tawqifiya), and the linguistic structure is meaningful to the message.

A higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) views an increase in divorce as an existing problem—it is a real crisis that affects families, and communities. The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) must identify the root causes of divorce from an Islamic perspective, such as the wrong choice of spouses, which is mainly a result of marriage for other than spiritual growth. Marriage without a spiritual motive results from a deficiency of knowledge regarding marital objectives, but also ignorance of spousal rights, deficiency in self-discipline, and abandonment of character development. The increase in divorce rates, and associated social ills are known to religious leaders (Imams), and community leaders. A thematic exegete (Mawdhu'ee Mufassir) may postulate universal questions regarding self-actualization, and identity, but a higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) will search for Divine Guidance, and a functional plan for reform.

At this stage, the exegete (Mufassir) identifies which chapter (Surah) defines, and discusses the devastating consequences of divorce, whether explicitly, or implicitly.

### Signs of condemned higher aims (Maqasid)

If qualities within a proposed higher aim (Maqsid) contradict the correct belief system (Aqeedah), the authentic understanding of the Speech of Allah ﷺ, or the tradition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (Sunnah), these referents will indicate a condemned, and wholly rejected exegesis (Tafsir). The qualities of a rejected higher aim (Maqsid) were introduced in part two, chapter four of this book. They are similar qualities to that which nullify an opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi). These rejected qualities include:

1. Casuistry which is not found among the comprehensive higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran). For example, the exegete (Mufassir) presents democratic elections, or legislation as a higher aim (Maqsid).
2. The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) must not generate a higher aim (Maqsid) to justify indulging in explaining one of the unseen areas of which only Allah ﷻ has full knowledge. Explanations of these issues, and the pillars of faith (Arkan Al-Iman) must not be based on reason, and intellect without introducing evidence from the Quran, or

the Sunnah as the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin) understood them. For example, identifying the day, and time of The Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah) is unknown to authentic scholarship. Major, and minor signs of the coming of The Hour are known through evidence, but their nature, and essence are unknown in manifest details.

3. The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) must not produce a higher aim (Maqsid) that attempts to identify the essence of the Names, and Attributes of Allah ﷻ in His true Nature, and Reality. This would be a quality of a blameworthy opinion-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ra'yi), as it would advance the beliefs of deviant sects who deny, and distort the Divine Attributes.
4. The higher aim (Maqsid) must not contradict the evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur), or oppose the Quran, and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) as the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin) understood them.
5. The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) must not suggest a candid political agenda in the higher aim (Maqsid) that contradicts authentic Islamic teachings, or seeks to promote man-made law while ignoring the benefits of the Islamic law (Shari'ah); neither may they seek to replace the Divine Laws with man-made laws.
6. The higher aim (Maqsid) must not advance the agenda of the people of innovation (Bid'ah), whether in the area of belief (Aqeedah) such as interfaith worship, or 'the unity of being' (Wahdat ul-Wujud), or the performances of related innovated rituals.
7. The higher aim (Maqsid) must not be based on the personal opinion, logic, or linguistic interpretation of the exegete (Mufassir) extrinsic of the context, period of the Revelation, and explanation of the companions (Sahabah), and their students (Tabi'un).

### Contemporary challenges, and threats

The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) has a highly evolved functionalism, and relevance through the creation of links between present contemporary challenges, and individual Quranic higher aims (Maqasid Al-Quran). At the time of writing this book, the socio-political challenges to the Muslim community (Ummah) were great, and diverse. Below is a brief list of **contemporary problems, challenges, and threats** the Muslims are currently facing, whether on an individual, or community level. A sincere reader must recognize that Islamic leadership has failed to address these issues comprehensively. Allah Willing (In Sha Allah), all of the following, and more will be addressed in volume II until the end of *The Maqasidic Tafsir* series:

1. Atheistic tendencies of the youth.



2. Inferiority complex in the Muslim culture.
3. Character crises at the family, and community level.
4. Absence of effective leadership.
5. The spread of religious misconceptions in the media.
6. Islamophobia.
7. Divorce.
8. Pornography, and lewdness.
9. Loss of identification with the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah).
10. Lack of authentic Islamic knowledge.
11. Ignorance of the pillars of Islam (Arkan Al-Islam), and the pillars of faith (Arkan Al-Iman).
12. Disunity, conflict, and sectarianism.
13. Love of worldly things.
14. Neglecting the rights of Muslim children.
15. Absent, or sub-standard Islamic education.
16. The spread of polytheistic practices (shirk).
17. Loss of confidence in the call to Islam (Dawah), or its methodology (Manhaj).
18. The absence of positive role models.

### Phase two: textual, and logical evidence

The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir) should present substantial, and compelling logical, and textual evidence behind their choice of the higher aims (Maqasid). The exegete (Mufasssir) will travel metaphorically to the place, and time of the Revelation of a chapter (Surah), then coexist with the people who received the Revelation, and analyze the surrounding circumstances. There are **two passwords** to unlock the gateway to the time, and place of the chapter (Surah), and they are conditional classes of the Revelation labeled as **Makki**, or **Madani**.

**The Makki Quran** addressed those individuals who deserted their ancestral religion, ethics, values, and traditions. They suffered psychological, and physical abuse because of their rejection of idolatry. The Makki Quran inspires believers to steadfastness, and perseverance. This form of the Revelation intensifies a believer in certainty (Yaqeen), and reminds them of the nature of true success in this world (Dunya), and ultimate success in the hereafter (Aakhirah).

The Makki Quran guides the believer in methods of response to polytheism (shirk), and its adherents, and methods of reducing, or avoiding the harm of opposition while calling to Islamic teachings.

The Makki Quran emphasizes the pillars of faith (Arkan Al-Iman). It also emphasizes the importance of faith (Iman) through several narratives from the previous sixty-nine nations,

showing the fruit of perseverance of the believer, and pointing out the loss in this world (Dunya), and the hereafter (Aakhirah) for the disbeliever.

**The Madani Quran** provided Muslims with a different type of guidance. Since they migrated to Madinah, and started their independent community, they faced another deceptive, and hypocritical campaign of opposition alongside the terrorism of the disbelievers. The Muslims were negotiating with a diverse community from different religious, and ethnic backgrounds. They needed legislation, and standards of living to organize the new Muslim community (Ummah) in harmony, despite ethnic, and religious differences.

The Madani Quran focuses on moral, and ethical community building by application of political, social, and economic legislations—it inspired a model community exemplar to the rest of the world. The Madani Quran also addressed the People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab) through outreach, and refutation of their secularized belief system (Aqeedah).

The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir) must identify the Makki, and Madani Quran to connect contemporary community challenges, and problems with the nascent Muslim community (Ummah) at the time, and place of the Revelation. Alongside the Makki, and Madani analysis, other leading variables can help the exegete (Mufasssir) identify, and benefit from a valid higher aim (Maqsid).

### Leading variables to validate the higher aims (Maqasid)

1. The authentic name of a chapter (Surah).
2. The inaugural, and concluding verses (Ayat) of a chapter (Surah).
3. Adjacent chapters (Suwar), before, or after a key chapter (Surah).
4. The order of the chapter (Surah) in the written form of the Quran (Mus'haf).
5. Events surrounding the Revelation of a chapter (Surah).
6. Events that preceded specific key verses (Ayat).
7. Parables mentioned in the chapter (Surah).
8. The context of stories cited in the chapter (Surah).
9. Authenticated, and verified virtues of the chapter (Surah).
10. The recommended times, or circumstances to recite the chapter (Surah), or verse (Ayah).
11. Seemingly incongruous verses (Ayat) of the chapter (Surah).
12. Emphasized, or repeated Actions, Names, and Attributes of Allah ﷻ in the chapter (Surah).

A higher aim (Maqsid) must have analytical, and textual support to substantiate taking action. Failing to identify the higher aim (Maqsid) precisely would make it very difficult to proceed to the next step.

### Phase three: an outline of the higher aim (Maqsid)

This phase of analyzing the higher aim (Maqsid) is crucial since the exegete (Mufassir) must familiarize Muslims with the higher aim (Maqsid) to earn trust, and legitimize leadership upon an action plan. The exegete (Mufassir) should present a higher aim (Maqsid) through a conceptual outline. The objectives during this phase are:

**To generate commitment, and enthusiasm** to address the community's needs through the lens of the Revelation. For example, chapter (Surah) Al-Hujurat has a higher aim (Maqsid) to reform moral decay, and promote decency, and integrity. A conceptual outline using pieces of evidence, and explanations of Al-Hujurat focuses the community on a positive plan of action, and a guided means to purify character.

An exegete (Mufassir) forms engagement in the higher aim (Maqsid) of Al-Hujurat, and shows the community a pattern of increasing decline in morality, and its destructive consequences. The exegete (Mufassir) should provide an overview of the problem, starting with the signs of its presence. The most apparent signs of moral decay are the increasing ratio of out-of-wedlock children, a profligate increase in the divorce rate, and increasing illegal, and wicked activities. Furthermore, other symptoms are a decline in accountability to rectify the situation, a lack of integrity in public, and private life, and an increase in civil litigation.

**Indicate the intention behind the approach** to moral decay, which elaborates the higher aim (Maqsid) of chapter (Surah) Al-Hujurat. The intention is an affirmation of the Divine solutions based on the Revelation, which reformed the moral decay of the companions (Sahabah). The proposed higher aim (Maqsid) is supported by evidence from Al-Hujurat. Therefore, contemplation of Divine Instruction inspires, and motivates the contemporary Muslim community (Ummah). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا ۗ ﴾

“And if two parties, or groups among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Allah ﷻ also said:

---

(1) Quran (49:9).

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُونَ قَوْمٍ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءً مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ

وَلَا تَنَابَرُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ ۗ

“O you who believe! Let not a group scoff at another group, it may be that the latter are better than the former, nor let (some) women scoff at other women, it may be that the latter are better than the former, nor defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Allah ﷻ also said:

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا يَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن

يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ ۗ

“O you who believe! Avoid many suspicions; indeed, some suspicions are sins. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting).”<sup>(2)</sup>

The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir) reveals the benefits both individual, and community will earn from improving ethical, and moral standards, and cultivating the character of the next generations.

The complete discussion should be no more than a summary of the higher aim (Maqsid) of Al-Hujurat. The community leadership could then benefit from other trends in exegesis (Tafsir)—for example, the linguistic, rhetorical, or societal exegesis (Tafsir) that elaborates on aspects of the selected objective.

#### Phase four: means (Wasail) to attain the higher aims (Maqasid)

At this stage, the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir) must look at the chapter (Surah) contents in order to group verses (Ayat) based on unified themes, and define the supporting means to attain the identified higher aims (Maqasid). Verified, and supporting means (Wasail) are usually in the body of the chapter (Surah). These means (Wasail) can be an individual verse (Ayah), or a group of different verses (Ayat) that share one common, and secondary theme, which becomes one of the contributing means to identify, and defend the higher aims (Maqasid) of the chapter (Surah).

(1) Quran (49:11).

(2) Quran (49:12).

The exegete (Mufassir) must also emphasize the functional impact these means (Wasail) had on the practical lives of the first generation of Muslims.

### Combination of higher aims (Maqasid) with their means (Wasail)

Joining, or combining the higher aims (Maqasid), and the means (Wasail) to attain them is logical. As Maududi rah indicated, **“There are essentially two elements to any work. The first is the aim, which is the goal behind performing this particular work. The second element is the particular framework, or the contributing means (Wasail) one has to follow to achieve the higher aim (Maqasid).”**<sup>(1)</sup>

Higher aims (Maqasid), and their means (Wasail) are inter-related, and they complement one another. Hence, scholars (Ulama) must thoroughly examine a chapter (Surah) body to generate the respective means (Wasail) that lead to achieving selected higher aims (Maqasid). The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) should then sort them out, and organize them according to the sequence of their Revelations, and gradual directions (Tadarruj), which the Prophet rah implemented in the first generation of Muslims.

### Phase five: executable action plan

The main objective for which Allah rah revealed the Quran is for humanity to ponder, and reflect upon the semantics, and referents, which should finally lead to implementing the Quran in reality. No one can deny that the primary, and greatest challenge that Muslims face today is their inability to apply the Quran in their present lives. There are many causes of this deficiency.

The Muslims are at a loss of benefit from the Revelation because the Quranic text is not embraced functionally, which is different from the method of the Muslims in the time of the Revelation. The companions (Sahabah) practiced direct application of the Quranic text since the Revelation was concurrent with actual events. The next generations realized the importance of reapplying the meaning of the Quran—this generation requires the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) to implement the **five-phase process** of interpreting the Quran to help vitalize the Muslim community (Ummah) to start actualizing reform, and assimilating the Divine Guidance. We suggest presenting just **five achievable, and executable actions** as the fifth, and final phase of the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) process. The five-phase process is as follows:

1. The exegete (Mufassir) is to identify a real, and present problem, or relevant higher aims (Maqasid).

---

(1) Tafhīm Al-Quran by Abu Al-Ala` Al-Maududi, 1995.

2. Presentation of the issue to the Quran to identify existent relevant major, and supporting higher aims (Maqasid), and logical, and textual evidence behind the chosen higher aim (Maqsid).
3. Expound, and analyze the nature of the problem, and present an outline of the concept of the higher aim (Maqsid).
4. Review of the body of a relevant chapter (Surah) to identify the supporting means (Wasail) to achieve the relevant higher aim (Maqsid).
5. Production of an executable action plan for an individual Muslim, or the community at large.



# Chapter Two

## Step-by-Step Guide



### Introduction

In this part of our work here, we will present two examples to illustrate the step-by-step guide of the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) **five-phase process**. These examples will also reveal various strategies the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) can adapt to benefit from the Quranic scripture with a contemporary understanding. We will present the following illustrations:

1. Divorce (Talaq): The first example is a contemporary social problem that presents a significant threat to the Muslim family, and consequently, the entire Muslim community (Ummah). The exegesis (Tafsir) begins with selecting a chapter (Surah) whose higher aim (Maqsid) can define, and discuss the subject of divorce (Talaq). Although this is a contemporary problem, the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) is able to find a chapter (Surah) that analyzes divorce (Talaq), and offers practical solutions to the phenomenon in light of the Quran.
2. Taming the ego: The second example is a universal issue that is consistent in any time, and place, and it's the importance of taming, subduing, and enslaving the *self* (Nafs). The remembrance of death can inspire our souls to become more enlightened, and provoke our selfhood toward efforts of virtuous deeds.

### **The first example — higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) of chapter (Surah) At-Talaq (The Divorce)**

#### Introduction to the current phenomenon

Divorce (Talaq) ranks amongst the most pressing, and urgent challenges testing the Muslim community (Ummah). Only a long-term solution can mitigate this harm to the family, and community. Short-term solutions such as counseling will not prevent the damage of divorce if the foundational understanding of marriage, and divorce is unbalanced. The higher aim-based exegete

(Maqasidic Mufasssir) is ideally positioned to identify a contemporary problem, and turn to the guidance of the Revelation for a long-term solution. Many chapters (Suwar) of the Quran address divorce. However, chapter (Surah) At-Talaq emphasizes this topic.

It is estimated that almost half of all first marriages will end in divorce in the United States.<sup>(1)</sup> Divorce will negatively impact our Muslim families, and children. Healthy marriages are critical to the future of every society, and nation, given the associated physical, emotional, and financial benefits of marriage. The benefits of marriage are known in the natural inclination of every person, as is apparent by the great diversity of cultural ceremonies, and rituals marking this liminal event. It follows that marriage, and divorce would require guidance to achieve the highest aims (Maqasid) consistent with our purpose in this life.

The subject of divorce is a very sensitive subject because it negotiates the dissolution of a bond Allah ﷻ described to be firm, and strong in the same manner Allah ﷻ described the covenant with the Prophets, and Messengers. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَسْبَدَّالَ زَوْجَ مَكَاتِ زَوْجٍ وَءَاتَيْتُمْ أَحَدَهُنَّ قِنطَارًا فَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهُ شَيْئًا أَتَأْخُذُونَهُ بِهَتْنًا وَإِثْمًا مُبِينًا ﴿٤٠﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَى بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ وَأَخَذْتُمْ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿٤١﴾﴾

**“But if you want to replace one wife with another, and you have given one of them a great amount [in gifts], do not take [back] from it anything. Would you take it in injustice, and manifest sin?, and how could you take it while you have gone in unto each other, and they have taken from you a solemn covenant?”<sup>(2)</sup>**

Allah ﷻ said regarding the covenant with the Prophets, and Messengers:

﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿٧﴾﴾

**“We had a solemn covenant with you (Muhammad), and the Prophets: Nuh (Noah), Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), and Isa (Jesus), the son of Mariam (Mary).”<sup>(3)</sup>**

(1) According to the CDC National Center for Health Statistics 2019. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/marriage-divorce.htm>

(2) Quran (4:20-21), Sahih International trans.

(3) Quran (33:7), Sarwar trans.



Therefore, a couple should not breach a marriage contract (Nikkah) for insignificant reasons, such as tastes in food, or decorating. One must expect some shortcomings in a spouse, and should expect that a strong marriage bond involves each spouse trying to better themselves, and appreciating the efforts of the other. One should be willing to sacrifice some things for other things, and realize that negotiation of permissible things to seek favorable results is a part of living with wisdom. Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, **“No believing man should hate a believing woman. If he dislikes one of her characteristics, he may be pleased with another.”**<sup>(1)</sup>

Some circumstances indicate divorce as the solution to a deadlock in a marriage. Apostasy (kufr) is undoubtedly one of the reasons on the top of the list of reasons indicating divorce. Marriage becomes void immediately as soon as one spouse apostates. Another legitimate ground for divorce is the immoral behavior of one of the spouses, leading to, and including one of the spouses committing adultery. Additional indications that the harm of divorce is lesser than the harm of continuing a union may be the husband refusing to support his family, the inability to fulfill the intimate relationship, domestic violence, and consistent consumption of intoxicants. However, attempts at resolving marital discord are mandatory before jumping to divorce for the reasons mentioned here.

Although spouses may be contemplating divorce, they should still consider reconciliation, especially if there are children in the family. Spouses should try to resolve the problem amongst themselves, but failing that, the marriage union must seek the intervention of family members. Failing this resolution, the spouses should not hesitate to involve other members of the community. They may also consider seeking professional counseling, preferably from a Muslim counselor with knowledge of the Quran, and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah), but if that is not possible, then from a qualified conflict resolution counselor. While seeking marital counseling, spouses should be aware of Islamic guidelines, and be cautious about taking advice that is in line with Islamic values.

### The five-phase process

Divorce (Talaq) must be navigated through appropriate Islamic processes, drawing wisdom where possible from the Quran, and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah). The exegete (Mufassir) has a responsibility as a community leader to call spouses to Islamic guidance in the events of marriage, and divorce. This means seeking the higher aim (Maqsid) of revealed scripture with the **five-phase process**, and in this situation, beginning with chapter (Surah) At-Talaq (The Divorce):

1. The exegete (Mufassir) is to identify a real, and present problem, or relevant higher aim (Maqsid).

---

(1) Muslim (3645).

2. Presentation of the issue to the Quran to identify existent relevant major, and supporting higher aims (Maqasid), and logical, and textual evidence behind the chosen higher aim (Maqasid).
3. Expound, and analyze the nature of the problem, and present an outline of the concept of the higher aim (Maqasid).
4. Review of the body of a relevant chapter (Surah) to identify the supporting means (Wasail) to achieve the relevant higher aim (Maqasid).
5. Production of an executable action plan for an individual Muslim, or a community.

### Phase One: Identifying the issue, and the higher aim (Maqasid) in the Quran

#### Healthy spousal separation

Scholars (Ulama) who address the subject of divorce begin by prioritizing the prevention of divorce so that Muslims realize the virtues of struggling to maintain family values. When a divorce becomes inevitable, the means are sought to facilitate a process that reduces harm, and avoids further damage, especially when children are born into the marriage.

#### Prevention of divorce

Islamic scholars (Ulama) must educate the Muslim community (Ummah) regarding the virtues of marriage as a primary means to seek spiritual reward, and cultivate family values. This emphasis may mitigate the devastating consequences of divorce on the Muslim community (Ummah). A healthy view of marriage is the panacea to endemic divorce, beginning with the choice of the right spouse, mitigation of marital discord, encouragement of sincere communication, and marital counseling if necessary.

Besides educating the community on preventative measures, scholars (Ulama) should emphasize the harm profligate divorce will cause the community. Unfortunately, when many speakers want to emphasize the damage of divorce, they typically narrate a weak narration (Daef Hadith) that the Prophet ﷺ allegedly said, **“The most hated of permissible things to Allah is divorce.”**<sup>(1)</sup>

There are various opinions regarding the reliability of the two chains reporting this narration (Hadith) from Mu’arif ibn Wasil ؓ. Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen ؓ said, **“The narration (Hadith) is**

---

(1) Ibn Majah (2018).

**not authentic (Sahih), but its meaning is sound. Allah hates divorce, but He does not forbid it to His servants, so as to make things easier for them.”**<sup>(1)</sup> If there is a legitimate reason for divorce that does not oppose the Divine Legislation (Shari’ah), then it is permissible to pursue a divorce after evaluating the practicality of maintaining the marriage contract (Nikah). If keeping a spouse will lead to something contrary to the higher aims of the Divine Legislation (Maqasid ash-Shari’ah), then divorce is indicated, and preferred, and viewed as a merciful provision from Allah ﷺ. For example, if an individual lacks religious commitment, or morality, and the spouses cannot reconcile this shortcoming, then, in this case, divorce is favored.<sup>(2)</sup> If there is no apparent, or religiously legislated reason to sever a union, divorce is disliked (Makruh).

With a thoughtful review of Quranic texts on marriage, and divorce, it is easy to conclude that Allah ﷺ does not favor divorce for Muslims. The higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir) would begin the review of relevant Quranic texts for the issue of divorce as follows.

### Regulated separation before divorce

If a husband initiates the divorce, whether implicitly, or explicitly, Allah ﷺ requires the husband to maintain the wife in the home for a three-month waiting period (Iddah). One can easily assume that the prospects of reconciling the marriage during the three-month waiting period (Iddah) are high. Allah ﷺ said:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ لِعَدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ لَا تُخْرِجُوهُنَّ مِنْ بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا يُخْرِجَنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَحِشَةٍ مُبِينَةٍ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ أَمْرًا﴾

**“O Prophet, when you [Muslims] divorce women, divorce them for [the commencement of] their waiting period, and keep count of the waiting period, and fear Allah, your Lord. Do not turn them out of their [husband’s] house[s], nor should they [themselves] leave [during that period] unless they are committing a clear immorality. And those are the limits [set by]**

(1) Ibn Uthaymeen in *Liqat al-bab il-Maftuh* (55/3).

(2) Marriage is viewed as a means of sustaining the necessities of worship if it is in obedience to the divine legislation; and it facilitates ease in seeking increase in reward, therefore, a marriage which fails these higher aims (Maqasid) may have more harm than benefit.

**Allah. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah has certainly wronged himself. You know not; perhaps Allah will bring about after that a [different] matter.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

In addition to this, while it is forbidden to divorce during the wife's menses to avoid falling into sin, the majority of the jurists believe it may be a valid divorce. There is wisdom in the requirement that divorce must be initiated after she finishes her menses, but before the spouses resume intimacy. This small window of permissibility prevents abuse in the process. Usually, the decision to divorce is generated due to excessive anger, and distress. The delay in initiating divorce facilitates sober second thoughts, introspection, and reconciliation. In this Divine Legislation (Shari’ah), there is wisdom for the exegete (Mufassir), while analyzing the issue of divorce.

Nafi رضي الله عنه reported that Ibn Umar رضي الله عنه divorced his wife while she was menstruating. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“Take her back till she [becomes] clean, and when she got another period while she was with him, she should wait till she became clean again, and only then, if he wanted to divorce her, he could do so before having sexual relations with her. And that is the period Allah has fixed for divorcing women.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

### Protecting the marriage bond

Allah ﻻ ﻳﺰﻭﻝ, and His Messenger ﷺ warned us against evil intentions of third parties which attack a marriage union—the Revelation emphasizes the purpose evil has in separating spouses. The first evidence is the sorcery verse (Ayat us-Sihr), wherein Allah ﻻ ﻳﺰﻭﻝ reveals that the most damaging effect of sorcery is to use it to separate a husband, and wife. Allah ﻻ ﻳﺰﻭﻝ said:

﴿فَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ وَمَا هُمْ بِضَارِّينَ بِهِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ﴾<sup>(3)</sup>

**“They learned from them the means to sow discord between man, and wife. But they could not thus harm anyone except by Allah's permission. And they learned what harmed them, not what profited them.”<sup>(3)</sup>**

The second evidence is the narration (Hadith) of Jabir رضي الله عنه, who reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **“Iblis (Satan) places his throne over the water, then he sends out his troops, and**

(1) Quran (65:1), Sahih International trans. Italics added.

(2) Bukhari (5332).

(3) Quran (2:102), Yusuf Ali trans.

the one who is closest in status to him is the one who causes the greatest amount of *fitnah* (tribulation, or temptation). One of them comes, and says: ‘I have done such and such,’ and [Iblis] says: ‘You have not done anything.’ Then one of them comes, and says: ‘I did not leave him until I separated him, and his wife.’ Then [Iblis] draws him close to him, and says: ‘How good you are.’”(1)

Evil is not the only challenge to a marriage union. Allah ﷻ placed great emphasis on legislation, and etiquettes that protect the marriage, and mitigate divorce in chapters (Suwar) At-Talaq, An-Nisa', Al-Mujadalah, and Al-Baqarah. From these chapters (Suwar), an exegete (Mufasssir) can emphasize the importance of protecting the marriage bond from dissolution over ignorant, and abusive behavior.

Chapter (Surah) Al-Mujadalah contains the Revelation about Khuwaylah bint Tha'labah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا who complained against her husband, Aus ibn as-Samit رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. Her husband said to her, “You are to me like my mother,” which is a violation in Islam called *Zihar*. It is a statement of divorce from the time of pre-Islamic ignorance, which abused the rights of a wife while insinuating that something Allah ﷻ permitted is forbidden. The Prophet ﷺ encouraged her to forgive him, and disregard this divorce. Then Allah ﷻ revealed:

﴿قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ﴾ (١) الَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْكُمْ مَنْ نَسَاءِهِمْ مَا هُنَّ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ إِنْ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ إِلَّا الَّتِي وَلَدْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَقُولُونَ مُنْكَرًا مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَزُورًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُوفٌ غَفُورٌ ﴿٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسًا ذَلِكَ تُوعَظُونَ بِهِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٣﴾ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسًا فَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فِإِطْعَامُ سِتِّينَ مَسْكِينًا ذَلِكَ لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٤﴾

“Certainly has Allah heard the speech of the one who argues [i.e., pleads] with you, [O Muhammad], concerning her husband, and directs her complaint to Allah. And Allah hears your dialogue; indeed, Allah is Hearing, and Seeing. Those who pronounce [Zihar] among you [to separate] from their wives—they are not [consequently] their mothers. Their mothers are none but those who gave birth to them. And indeed, they are saying an objectionable statement, and a falsehood. But indeed, Allah is Pardoning, and Forgiving. And those who pronounce [Zihar] from their wives, and then [wish to] go back on what they said—then

(1) Muslim (7106).

[there must be] the freeing of a slave before they touch one another. That is what you are admonished thereby; and Allah is Acquainted with what you do. And he who does not find [a slave] —then a fast for two months consecutively before they touch one another; and he who is unable—then the feeding of sixty poor persons. That is for you to believe [completely] in Allah, and His Messenger; and those are the limits [set by] Allah. And for the disbelievers is a painful punishment.”<sup>(1)</sup>

### The notable mention of God-consciousness (Taqwa)

*Taqwa* is consciousness, or mindfulness of Allah ﷻ, and is mentioned five times in the 12 verses (Ayat) of the chapter (Surah) At-Talaq (The Divorce). Many verses (Ayat) which stress the development of God-consciousness (Taqwa) as a higher aim (Maqsid) encourage the means of continual mention of the Names, and Attributes of Allah ﷻ, and the establishment of regular prayers (Salah). In chapter (Surah) Al-Baqarah, Allah ﷻ mentions together God-consciousness (Taqwa), mindfulness of accountability in divorce (Talaq), and the establishment of prayer (Salah):

﴿وَأِنْ طَلَقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً فَنِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يَعْفُونَ أَوْ يَعْفُوا الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ عُقْدَةُ النِّكَاحِ وَأَنْ تَعْفُوا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَنْسُوا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٧﴾ حَفِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ ﴿٢٣٨﴾﴾

“And if you divorce them before you have touched them, and you have already specified for them an obligation, then [give] half of what you specified—unless they forego the right, or the one in whose hand is the marriage contract (Nikkah) foregoes it. And to forego it is nearer to righteousness. And do not forget graciousness between you. Indeed Allah, of whatever you do, is Seeing. Maintain with care the [obligatory] prayers (Salah), and [in particular] the middle [i.e., Asr] prayer (Salah), and stand before Allah, devoutly obedient.”<sup>(2)</sup>

The mention of God-consciousness (Taqwa) along with divorce (Talaq), and attentiveness to prayer (Salah) in these adjacent verses (Ayat) signifies a higher aim (Maqsid) through the Quranic science of connectivity (Munasabah). This is a reminder to guard ourselves against thoughtlessness, and impulsivity in the dissolution of marriage, and to proceed with God-consciousness (Taqwa), and attentiveness as though we stand in prayer (Salah), conscious of

(1) Quran (58:1-4).

(2) Quran (2:237-238), Sahih International trans.

accountability with Allah ﷻ. Obedience to Allah ﷻ in all He commands, and prohibits is part of God-consciousness (Taqwa).

### Healthy dissolution

The second focus of divorce after our failure to avoid it is mitigation of its real harm in our communities. Endemic divorce is a very real crisis in the Muslim community (Ummah); as testified by communities, it reaches up to 60%.

The devastation of divorce is amplified when there are children as a result of this marriage. Spouses must consider the future of the children in their marriage dissolution decisions. They first need to learn promoting a culture of healthy spousal separation, and second, to decrease the damage of divorce when they cannot eliminate it. The reasons that lead to a complete dissolution are usually weighty, and preclude aspirations of reconciliation. Despite serious cause(s) for divorce, spouses must choose responsible dissolution for the future of their children.

Spouses should part peacefully, and in tranquil terms, following what was revealed to encourage separation with grace, as Allah ﷻ said:

﴿فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ فَارِقُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ﴾ (٢)

**“Then when they are about to fulfill their term appointed, either take them back in a good manner, or part with them in a good manner.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

Allah ﷻ also said:

﴿وَإِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمَّا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِنَعْتَدُوا وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ﴾ (٣١)

**“And when you divorce women, and they have [nearly] fulfilled their term, either retain them according to acceptable terms, or release them according to acceptable terms, and do not keep them, intending harm, to transgress [against them]. And whoever does that has certainly wronged himself.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

(1) Quran (65:2).

(2) Quran (2:231), Sahih International trans.

The context of the next two verses (Ayat) emphasizes healthy spousal separation, mindful of guidance from beyond this world. Allah ﷻ addresses spouses who never lived together a single day to remember their liability in divorce. Allah ﷻ said:

لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَمَتَّعُوهُنَّ عَلَى الْمَوْسِعِ قَدْرَهُ وَعَلَى الْمَقْتَرِ قَدْرَهُ  
 مَتَّعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْحَسَنِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَإِنْ طَلَقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً فَنِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ  
 إِلَّا أَنْ يَعْفُوكَ أَوْ يَعْفُوا الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ عُقْدَةُ النِّكَاحِ وَأَنْ تَعْفُوا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى وَلَا تَنْسُوا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا  
 تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣٧﴾

“There is no blame upon you if you divorce women, you have not touched nor specified for them an obligation. But give them [a gift of] compensation - the wealthy according to his capability, and the poor according to his capability - a provision according to what is acceptable, a duty upon the doers of good. And if you divorce them before you have touched them, and you have already specified for them an obligation, then [give] half of what you specified - unless they forego the right, or the one in whose hand is the marriage contract (Nikkah) foregoes it. And to forego it is nearer to righteousness. And do not forget graciousness between you. Indeed Allah, of whatever you do, is Seeing.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Spouses who have lived together, and have borne children together need to have more God-consciousness (Taqwa), and to learn the higher aim (Maqsid) of harm reduction. Hence, the higher aim (Maqsid) in focusing on divorce is to promote the culture of healthy spousal separation, and to preserve family values, and the future of the Muslim community (Ummah). The main source of deriving this higher aim (Maqsid) is chapter (Surah) At-Talaq (The Divorce).

### Phase two: identification of relevant textual, and logical pieces of evidence

Part of phase two of the higher aim-based (Maqsidic) process is identifying supporting pieces of evidence to defend the chosen higher aim (Maqsid). There are many pieces of evidence to substantiate our choice of higher aim (Maqsid):

- The higher aim (Maqsid) is in the subject of the chapter (Surah) name.

(1) Quran (2:236-237).



- The chapter (Surah) place of the Revelation is Madinah, where many legislations were revealed.
- The harmony between this aim of the chapter (Surah), and other sub-categories of higher aims (Maqasid).
- Alternate name of the chapter (Surah) ‘the minor Surat An-Nisa’ as reported by Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.
- The cause of the Revelation of specific verses (Ayat).
- Anthropological pieces of evidence.
- The body of verses (Ayat) in chapter (Surah) At-Talaq (The Divorce).
- Supporting verses (Ayat) in chapters (Suwar) Al-Baraqah, and An-Nisa.
- Expounding evidence from the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah).

### Phase three: expound, analyze, and outline the concepts of the higher aims (Maqasid)

#### The concept of divorce

Protection of the Muslim family is mandated in several of the **five necessities** for which Islamic law (Shari’ah) was revealed. This means that Islamic law (Shari’ah) has a higher purpose of protecting the mind, body, and lineage of individuals in the family, and ensuring the existence of the family against all possible threats. The right of the child to Islamic knowledge is protected through the institution of the family. The Muslim family is the initial place where the next generation of Muslims will be cultivated, and educated. Allah ﷻ constituted marriage to unite a man, and a woman lawfully, based on their mutual consent with the intention to establish a Muslim home upon the religion (Deen) of Allah ﷻ.

The gravity of divorce is seen in the ruling that if a man divorces his wife three times, it is irrevocable; the husband cannot take her back, and he has closed a door to easily access the rewards of that union. The only opportunity to return to the sanctity of that union may be after the divorcee spends her waiting period (Iddah), and marries another in a union that also later dissolves. The first husband is encouraged to take her back if they are keen on re-establishing the religion (Deen) of Allah ﷻ in one home. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا مَحْلُ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ حَتَّى تَنْكِحَ زَوْجًا غَيْرَهُ، فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يَتَرَاجَعَا إِنْ ظَنَّا أَنْ يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ وَتِلْكَ

حُدُودَ اللَّهِ يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

**“And if he has divorced her (the third time), then she is not lawful unto him thereafter until she has married another husband. Then, if the other husband divorces her, it is no sin on both of them that they reunite, provided they feel that they can keep the limits ordained by Allah. These are the limits of Allah, which He makes plain for the people who have knowledge.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

We can conclude from the above verse (Ayah) that marriage aims to cultivate a state of tranquility, love, and compassion, which is a suitable ground to raise the next Muslim generation. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, and divorce can become the only resolution. Allah ﷻ warns against the ills of divorce, but unlike man-made religions, the religion (Deen) of Islam has provisions for divorce by either spouse.

Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) furnishes both parties with essential guidance that can lead spouses to a healthy separation with minimal damage to any of the **five necessities** protected by Islamic law (Shari’ah). To achieve this, Allah ﷻ obligates both parties to maintain justice, and kindness in realizing the dissolution of marriage with minimal difficulties.

### Reconciliation

In principle, husbands, and wives should not rush into divorce without making serious attempts to reconcile the union, even if the reasons for divorce are manifest. They must defeat their egos, force themselves to sit together, discuss, and negotiate adjustments in their relationship, and agree to specific functional changes; both will contract commitments to renew the union. This step may involve a third party, such as the community religious leader (Imam), or witnesses to an amendment to the marriage contract (Nikkah), if necessary.

### Arbitration

Arbitration, or intervention is meant to formally, or informally involve others to try and make peace between the married couple. Arbitration begins with a relative, or appointed guardian on the side of the wife, and a relative on the side of the husband. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَأِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَأَبْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ يُرِيدَا إِصْلَاحًا يُوَفِّقِ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ اللَّهُ كَانَ

عَلِيمًا حَبِيرًا ﴿٣٥﴾

(1) Quran (2:230).

**“And if you fear dissension between the two, send an arbitrator from his people, and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, Allah will cause it between them. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing, and Acquainted [with all things].”<sup>(1)</sup>**

If reconciliation, and arbitration fail to restore the marriage, both wife, and husband are entitled to termination of the marriage contract (Nikkah) as established in the Quran. If the man initiates the divorce, it is known as **Talaq**, and if the wife initiates the process, it is called **Khula**.

### Talaq

The husband initiates this process with the expression of divorce given verbally, or written. Once the expression of divorce is delivered, there is to be a waiting period of three months (Iddah) before the process is complete. During the waiting period (Iddah), the wife stays under the same roof as her husband, supported by him in goodwill. During this waiting period (Iddah), the husband remains financially responsible for the support of his wife. The marriage environment is maintained without intimacy during the waiting period (Iddah) until the marital discord is resolved, or this duration is exhausted, and the marriage is dissolved. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلَّقُوهُنَّ لِعَدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ لَا تُخْرِجُوهُنَّ مِنْ بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا يُخْرِجَنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَحِشَةٍ مُبَيَّنَةٍ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ أَمْرًا﴾

**“O Prophet, when you [Muslims] divorce women, divorce them for [the commencement of] their waiting period, and keep count of the waiting period, and fear Allah, your Lord. Do not turn them out of their [husbands'] houses, nor should they [themselves] leave [during that period] unless they are committing a clear immorality. And those are the limits [set by] Allah. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah has certainly wronged himself. You know not; perhaps Allah will bring about after that a [different] matter.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

The wisdom behind the three-month waiting period (Iddah) is the prevention of premature terminations due to hasty reasons, or anger, and it allows spouses to revisit their decisions. Another Divine Wisdom of the waiting period (Iddah) is to verify if the wife is pregnant, and, through such means, protect the lineage of the Muslims. If the wife is pregnant, the waiting period (Iddah) is

(1) Quran (4:35).

(2) Quran (65:1), Sahih International trans.

lengthened until she delivers the baby. During this time, the husband, and wife are free to resume their marital relationship, thereby ending the divorce process. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَالَّتِي يَسْنَ مِنَ الْمَحِيضِ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ إِنْ أَرْبَبْتُمْ فَعِدَّتُهُنَّ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْهُرٍ وَالَّتِي لَمْ يَحِضْ وَأُولَاتُ الْأَحْمَالِ أَجَلُهُنَّ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا ﴿٤﴾﴾

“And those who no longer expect menstruation among your women—if you doubt, then their period is three months, and [also for] those who have not menstruated. And for those who are pregnant, their term is until they give birth. And whoever fears Allah—He will make for him of his matter ease.”<sup>(1)</sup>

After the three-month waiting period (Iddah), the marriage contract (Nikah) is dissolved. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ فَارِقُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَأَشْهِدُوا ذَوَى عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ لِلَّهِ ﴿٢﴾﴾

“Then when they are about to fulfill their term appointed, either take them back in a fair manner, or part with them in a reasonable way. And take for witness two just persons from among you (Muslims).”<sup>(2)</sup>

The husband should not take his wife back in the spirit of humiliating, and inflicting harm on her. Instead, he should take her back to promote the atmosphere of justice, kindness, and to make their marriage condition better than before. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَإِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَبْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِنَعْتِدُوا وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ، وَلَا تَنْخِذُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوعًا وَادْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ، وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾﴾

“And when you divorce women, and they have [nearly] fulfilled their term, either retain them according to acceptable terms, or release them according to acceptable terms, and do

(1) Quran (65:4), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (65:2).

**not keep them, intending harm, to transgress [against them]. And whoever does that has certainly wronged himself.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

A new marriage contract (Nikah) must fulfill all the contractual conditions, including the consent of the guardian, who should not hinder their reunion, as the higher aim (Maqsid) of revocable divorce is the renewal of the sanctity of the union. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمَّا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ أَنْ يَنْكِحْنَ أَزْوَاجَهُنَّ إِذَا تَرَاضَوْا بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (٢٣٢)

**“And when you have divorced women, and they have fulfilled the term of their prescribed period, do not prevent them from marrying their (former) husbands if they mutually agree on a reasonable basis. This (instruction) is a warning for him among you who believes in Allah, and the Last Day. That is more virtuous, and purer for you. Allah knows, and you know not.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

The couple may return to the marriage within the waiting period (Iddah), or after it with a new marriage contract (Nikkah) only two times. The third divorce becomes irrevocable, which means he cannot take her back as a renewal of that union. The only opportunity to return to the former husband is if she marries another man by a legitimate contract, and he divorces her, then after the three-month waiting period (Iddah), she may remarry the first husband through mutual consent. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿الطَّلَاقُ مَرَّتَانٍ فَإِمْسَاكٌ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٌ بِإِحْسَانٍ ۗ﴾ (٢٣٣)

**“The divorce is twice; after that, either you retain her on reasonable terms, or release her with kindness.”<sup>(3)</sup>**

Then Allah ﷻ said:

﴿فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدُ حَتَّى تَنْكِحَ زَوْجًا غَيْرَهُ ۗ﴾ (٢٣٤)

(1) Quran (2:231), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (2:232).

(3) Quran (2:229).

“And if he has divorced her (the third time), then she is not lawful unto him thereafter until she has married another husband.”<sup>(1)</sup>

### Khula

When the wife initiates the separation, the process is called **Khula**. In this separation, the husband is not at fault, but the wife may feel there is an incompatibility that calls for the severing of the union. Khula requires that the wife returns her dowry (Mahr) to end the marriage because she is the ‘contract-breaker.’ She does not need to provide reasons other than that she is not happy with her marriage, and she cannot, or is unwilling to continue. There is a reference to such a situation in the Quran. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا مِمَّا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَخَافَا أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ بِهِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾<sup>(2)</sup>

“And it is not lawful for you to take anything of what you have given them unless both fear that they will not be able to keep [within] the limits of Allah. But if you fear that they will not keep [within] the limits of Allah, then there is no blame upon either of them concerning that by which she ransoms herself. These are the limits of Allah, so do not transgress them. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah—it is those who are the wrongdoers.”<sup>(2)</sup>

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه referred to an actual case of Khula during the life of the Prophet ﷺ. The wife of Thabit ibn Qais رضي الله عنه complained to the Prophet ﷺ about her marital situation. She stated in clear terms that she had nothing against her husband, neither with regard to his character, nor to his religion, but was not happily married to him. Thabit ibn Qais رضي الله عنه had given her a garden as her dowry (Mahr), and the Prophet ﷺ asked her whether she was willing to return it to him. She agreed, and the Prophet ﷺ told Thabit رضي الله عنه to accept the garden, and divorce her.<sup>(3)</sup>

However, if she initiates the divorce due to faults, or neglect of the husband, she can present, and prove legitimate reasons to an Islamic court (Shari’ah-compliant), whether formally, or informally. Relevant conditions of an ‘at-fault’ Khula may be consistent domestic violence, cruelty, destruction of property, failure to provide sexual satisfaction, or refusal of the husband to enable the wife to undertake her religious obligations. If the Islamic court (Shari’ah-compliant) accepts these reasons

(1) Quran (2:230).

(2) Quran (2:229), Sahih International trans.

(3) Bukhari (5273).

as a ground for divorce, the wife can keep her dowry (Mahr). In the West, where there is no Shari'ah court, some regional civil courts accommodate, officiate, and enforce family law proceedings based on the Islamic law (Shari'ah) by mutual agreement of all parties involved. Failing this, the negotiations may be made through a community religious leader (Imam), subject to the mutual agreement of all parties, and implemented through the integrity, and goodwill of involved parties.

The waiting period (Iddah) of a wife differs in Khula. The waiting period (Iddah) is only a month until her next menstruation to identify if she is pregnant. Furthermore, the husband is not allowed to initiate a marriage contract (Nikah) during her waiting period (Iddah), and the divorce is irrevocable, according to the majority of the jurists.

### Post-divorce

The most damaging, and long-lasting consequence of divorce is felt by the children. Hence, spouses must respect the divorce process, refrain from manipulating it, and ensure that justice, and kindness are the basis of their divorce. Child custody becomes the most pressing issue that must be dealt with even before the divorce is finalized. In some cases, both parents neglect the interest of custodianship of their children. In other cases, they both fight for sole custody, refusing to share the children with other parents, or they demand conditions of custody that are punitive to the former spouse. In principle, Allah ﷻ instructed parents to consult with one another regarding the welfare of their children. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِّنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ تَسْرِعُوا بِأَوْلَادِكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَا  
ءَانَيْتُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ﴾

**“And if they both desire weaning through mutual consent from both of them, and consultation, there is no blame upon either of them. And if you wish to have your children nursed by a substitute, there is no blame upon you as long as you give payment according to what is acceptable. And fear Allah, and know that Allah is Seeing of what you do.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

Post-divorce issues are particularly challenging because of the absence of explicit evidence to determine the majority of resolutions. Judgment is often referred to as what is customary in the community, which sometimes turns out to be unfair, or based on secular law. In the United States, for example, each state has distinct divorce, and custody laws, but the trend has been to follow the

(1) Quran (2:233), Sahih International trans.

example of Governor Ronald Reagan, who passed the first ‘no-fault’ divorce bill in 1969, which may actually obscure true justice, and divinely bestowed rights. W. Bradford Wilcox, a senior fellow at the Institute for American Values, suggests a rampant increase in divorce followed Reagan’s 1969 bill. Wilcox said, **“No-fault divorce helped to open the floodgates, especially because these laws facilitated unilateral divorce, and lent moral legitimacy to the dissolution of marriages.”**<sup>(1)</sup> Certainly, it is apparent that not only cultural influence, but also secular law, such as ‘no-fault’ divorce, may conflict with, or impede the wisdom of the Revelation in child custody, and other issues of family law. This complication underlines the need for a higher aim-based (Maqasidic) approach through the lens of the Quran, and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah).

Two significant issues need to be discussed in light of our selected higher aim (Maqsid): child custody, and post-divorce financial obligations (Mata'a) of the man towards his ex-wife.

### Child custody

The default Islamic ruling commands parents to grant the mother sole custody of very young children, whether it is a boy, or a girl, provided she does not remarry. Mothers are more prepared to take on this mission due to their compassion, and kindness towards small children inferred through the prenatal bond. In fact, studies show that the prenatal bond significantly affects the strength of the postnatal bond between mother, and child. A recent study showed that mother-to-infant bonding quality earlier in pregnancy, or in the postpartum period is positively associated with mother-to-infant bonding quality later in time, both prenatally, and postnatally.<sup>(2)</sup> It stands to reason that the father will not benefit from prenatal bonding. Therefore, the bond between mother, and small child is usually stronger than the bond with the father.

Mothers must also meet the custody eligibility conditions in Islamic legislation (Shari’ah), which scholars (Ulama) agree are a demonstration of sound mind, good character, and ability to fulfill Islamic obligations towards the child.

The mother's custody period remains until the child reaches the age of maturity, and independence, meaning when the child can recognize what benefits, and harms, and becomes independent in meeting their own personal needs. After the child reaches an age when they no longer need to be looked after by the mother, they can choose to live with either parent.

---

(1) “The Evolution of Divorce.” Wilcox, W.D., *National Affairs*, 48/Summer 2021.  
<https://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/the-evolution-of-divorce>

(2) “Correlates of prenatal, and postnatal mother-to-infant bonding quality: A systematic review,” Tichelman, E., Westerneng, M., Anke B., Witteveen, A. L., Van Baar, H. E., et. al. *Public Library of Science*. September 24, 2019.  
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0222998>



Jurists differed regarding who is responsible for housing the divorced woman who has custody of the young children. Regardless, the correct opinion is that the father is obliged to provide maintenance. The husband must contribute to the livelihood of his children, such as accommodation, food, drink, clothing, school costs, medical care, and all their needs at the level they were accustomed to before the divorce. The estimation of the costs should take into consideration the financial situation of the husband since Allah ﷻ said:

﴿أَسْكِنُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ سَكَنْتُمْ مِنْ وَجْدِكُمْ وَلَا تُضَارُوهُنَّ لِتُضَيِّقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ وَإِنْ كُنَّ أُولَاتٍ حَمْلٍ فَأَنْفِقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ فَإِنْ أَرْضَعْنَ لَكُمْ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ وَأَتَمُّوا بِبَيْنِكُمْ مَعْرُوفٌ وَإِنْ تَعَاَسَرْتُمَ فَمَا تَرْضَعْنَ لَهُنَّ أُخْرَىٰ ﴿٦﴾ لِيُنْفِقَ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّن سَعَتِهِ وَمَنْ قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا ﴿٧﴾﴾

“Lodge them [in a section] of where you dwell out of your means, and do not harm them in order to oppress them. And if they should be pregnant, then spend on them until they give birth. And if they breastfeed for you, then give them their payment, and confer among yourselves in the acceptable way; but if you are in discord, then there may breastfeed for him [i.e., the father] another woman. Let a man of wealth spend from his wealth, and he whose provision is restricted—let him spend from what Allah has given him. Allah does not charge a soul except [according to] what He has given it. Allah will bring about, after hardship, ease [i.e., relief].”<sup>(1)</sup>

### Post-divorce amenity payments (Mata’a)

Allah ﷻ referred to the responsibility of the husband to financially support his ex-wife post-divorce, but a specific formula for the amount of support is left to be determined. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ مَتَّعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢٤١﴾﴾

“And for divorced women is maintenance according to what is acceptable—a duty on the righteous.”<sup>(2)</sup>

This is open for negotiation between parties, and should be in accordance with the financial ability of the husband, the cause of divorce, the condition of the wife, and the length of the marriage.

(1) Quran (65:6-7), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (2:241).

Mata'a refers to a determined sum of money given to a divorced wife in exceptional circumstances. One of these cases is the divorce of a woman before consummating the marriage, whose dowry (Mahr) was not decided at the time of the marriage contract (Nikah). Dowry (Mahr) is the obligation in the form of money, or possessions paid by the groom to the bride at the time of an Islamic marriage. Allah ﷻ said:

لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَمَتَّعُوهُنَّ عَلَى الْمَوْسِعِ قَدْرَهُ وَعَلَى الْمَقْتِرِ قَدْرَهُ مَتَّعًا  
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

**“There is no blame upon you if you divorce women you have not touched nor specified for them an obligation. But give them [a gift of] compensation—the wealthy according to his capability, and the poor according to his capability—a provision according to what is acceptable, a duty upon the doers of good.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

If the husband divorces his wife in an irrevocable divorce, the wife is not eligible for financial support. It was mentioned above that in a revocable divorce, the husband is obligated to maintain her housing, and support. The condition of the wife is considered in the negotiation of the Mata'a, for example, if she is pregnant.

Ash-Sha'bi رضي الله عنه said that Fatimah bint Qais رضي الله عنها said concerning a woman who has been divorced thrice, the Prophet ﷺ said, **“She is not entitled to accommodation nor maintenance.”<sup>(2)</sup>**

According to another narration compiled by Abu Dawud رضي الله عنه, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, said to Fatimah رضي الله عنها, **“You are not entitled to any maintenance unless you are pregnant.”<sup>(3)</sup>**

According to the narrations (Ahadith) reported by Fatimah bint Qais رضي الله عنها, after the husband divorces his wife, whether first, or second Talaq, and has not taken her back before the waiting period (Iddah) ended, she is entitled to financial support, and accommodation during the three months of the waiting period (Iddah). If it was a final, irrevocable divorce, such as a third Talaq, she is not entitled to any maintenance, or accommodation.

(1) Quran (2:236), Sahih International trans.

(2) Muslim (3708).

(3) Abu Dawud (2290), Sahih by Al-Albani.

### Phase four: the means to accomplish the higher aim (Maqsid)

In phase four, establishing the *means*, the exegete (Mufassir) examines the actual body of the chapter (Surah) to gather verses (Ayat) that share the same theme, and support a single higher aim (Maqsid). Some of the verses (Ayat) explored in previous phases may, or may not be retained in establishing the *means*. The exegete (Mufassir) must maintain consistency between sub-categories of higher aims (Maqasid) in different groups of verses (Ayat). All pieces of evidence must be valid according to orthodox Islamic sciences, and must contribute to achieving the primary higher aim (Maqsid) of the key chapter (Surah). Certain conditions invalidate pieces of evidence from qualifying as a *means*, as mentioned in the criteria in part two, chapter four, and at the beginning of part three. In phase four, evidence is weighed against the following criterion to establish a codex that provides our *means*:

- Avoidance of casuistry which is not found among the comprehensive higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran). This has not been violated, as secondary pieces of evidence from the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) are relevant to the verses (Ayat) of the chapter (Surah) At-Talaq (The Divorce), and are authentic narrations (Ahadith).
- Explanation, and exploration of the relevant issues have not been based on reason, and intellect without introducing evidence from the Quran, or the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah).
- The higher aim (Maqsid), and supporting pieces of evidence do not contradict the evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur), or oppose the Quran, and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) as the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin) understood them.
- The pieces of evidence do not suggest a political agenda in the higher aim (Maqsid), such as promoting pre-marital cohabitation, or a so-called 'open-marriage' arrangement. Neither do pieces of evidence support man-made family law.

### Organizing evidence to facilitate the means

We divided chapter (Surah) At-Talaq into **three main parts**:

#### **Part one: The healthy divorce process — 65:1-7**

The first set of verses (Ayat) provides the Divine Guidelines for the healthy divorce process.

يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ لِعَدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ لَا تُخْرِجُوهُنَّ مِنْ بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا يُخْرِجَنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَلْحِشَةٍ مُبَيَّنَةٍ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ أَمْرًا ﴿١﴾ فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ فَارِقُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَأَشْهِدُوا ذَوَى عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ لِلَّهِ ذَلِكَ يُوَعِّظُ بِهِ مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا ﴿٢﴾ وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ ﴿٣﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَلِّغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا ﴿٤﴾ وَالَّتِي يَبْسُنُ مِنَ الْمَجِيضِ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ إِنْ أَرْبَبْتُمْ فَعِدَّتُهُنَّ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْهُرٍ وَالَّتِي لَمْ يَحْضَنْ وَأُولَاتُ الْأَحْمَالِ أَجَلُهُنَّ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا ﴿٥﴾ ذَلِكَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ أَنْزَلَهُ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَكْفِرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهُ أَجْرًا ﴿٥﴾ أَسْكِنُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ سَكَنْتُمْ مِنْ وَجْدِكُمْ وَلَا تُضَارُوهُنَّ لِتُضَيِّقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ وَإِنْ كُنَّ أُولَاتٍ لِحَمَلٍ فَإِنَّفِقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ حَتَّى يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ فَإِنْ أَرْضَعْنَ لَكُمْ فَارْتُدُّوهنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ وَأْتَمِرُوا بِنِكَاحِكُمْ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَإِنْ تَعَاَسَرْتُم فَسَرِّضْهُنَّ لِمَا أُخْرَى ﴿٦﴾ لِيُنْفِقَ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِنْ سَعَتِهِ وَمَنْ قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ مَعْرُوفًا وَإِنْ مَاءٌ آتَاهَا سَيِّجَعُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا ﴿٧﴾

“O Prophet, when you [Muslims] divorce women, divorce them for [the commencement of] their waiting period, and keep count of the waiting period, and fear Allah, your Lord. Do not turn them out of their [husbands'] houses, nor should they [themselves] leave [during that period] unless they are committing a clear immorality. And those are the limits [set by] Allah. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah has certainly wronged himself. You know not; perhaps Allah will bring about after that a [different] matter.

And when they have [nearly] fulfilled their term, either retain them according to acceptable terms, or part with them according to acceptable terms. And bring to witness two just men from among you, and establish the testimony for [the acceptance of] Allah. That is instructed to whoever should believe in Allah, and the Last Day. And whoever fears Allah—He will make for him a way out. And will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allah—then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has already set for everything a [decreed] extent.

And those who no longer expect menstruation among your women—if you doubt, then their period is three months, and [also for] those who have not menstruated. And for those who are pregnant, their term is until they give birth. And whoever fears Allah—He will make for him of his matter ease.

**That is the command of Allah, which He has sent down to you; and whoever fears Allah—He will remove for him his misdeeds, and make great for him his reward.**

**Lodge them [in a section] of where you dwell out of your means, and do not harm them in order to oppress them. And if they should be pregnant, then spend on them until they give birth. And if they breastfeed for you, then give them their payment, and confer among yourselves in the acceptable way; but if you are in discord, then there may breastfeed for him [i.e., the father] another woman.**

**Let a man of wealth spend from his wealth, and he whose provision is restricted—let him spend from what Allah has given him. Allah does not charge a soul except [according to] what He has given it. Allah will bring about, after hardship, ease [i.e., relief].”<sup>(1)</sup>**

#### **Part two: Divorce leads to the downfall of nations — 65:8-10**

In the second set of verses (Ayat) (65:8-10), some may assume an apparent disconnect between this group, and the first group of seven verses (Ayat) provided above. On the contrary, the first set is the cause, and the second is the result. The destruction of nations, and communities is the result when communities do not follow the Islamic legislative law (Shari’ah)—the destruction described in this chapter (Surah) may be avoided when a community follows guidance to reduce the divorce rate, and mitigates damage from the divorce through a healthy separation process. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَكَايْنٍ مِّن قَرْيَةٍ عَنَّتْ عَن أَمْرِ رَبِّهَا وَرُسُلِهِ ۖ فَحَاسَبْنَاهَا حِسَابًا شَدِيدًا وَعَدَّ بِنَهَا عَذَابًا نُكْرًا ﴿٨﴾ فَذَاقَتْ وَبَالَ أَمْرِهَا وَكَانَ عَاقِبَةُ أَمْرِهَا خُسْرًا ﴿٩﴾ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا ۖ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِيَ الْأَلْبَابِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قَدْ أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكُمْ ذِكْرًا ﴿١٠﴾﴾

**“And how many a city was insolent toward the command of its Lord, and His messengers, so We took it to severe account, and punished it with a terrible punishment.**

**And it tasted the bad consequence of its affair [i.e., rebellion], and the outcome of its affair was loss.**

**Allah has prepared for them a severe punishment; so, fear Allah, O you of understanding who have believed. Allah has sent down to you a message [i.e., the Quran].”<sup>(2)</sup>**

(1) Quran (65:1-7), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (65:8-10).

**Part three: Trust Allah ﷻ, and implement Islamic legislative law (Shari’ah) — 65:11-12**

The last set of two verses (Ayat) (65:11-12) is also connected with the first two sets. Muslims are sometimes unaware that the arrangement of verses (Ayat), which are seemingly incongruous to adjacent verses (Ayat), actually has a function with neighboring groups as intended by Allah ﷻ.

Allah ﷻ is emphasizing through verses (Ayat) 11, and 12, two of His Attributes: Ability, and Knowledge. We can easily recognize the Attribute of Ability of Allah ﷻ through His creation, and His Attribute of Knowledge through the way He administers the affairs of the seven heavens, and seven earths. If an individual cannot identify these Attributes through their own intellect, or insight, Allah ﷻ sent us a Messenger to remind us to adhere to His Divine Laws to find a way out of darkness into light. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿رَسُولًا يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مَبِينَاتٍ لِيُخْرِجَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا قَدْ أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ لَهُ رِزْقًا ﴿١١﴾ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَنْزِلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ﴿١٢﴾﴾

“[He sent] a Messenger [i.e., Muhammad] reciting to you the distinct verses of Allah that He may bring out those who believe, and do righteous deeds from darkness into the light. And whoever believes in Allah, and does righteousness—He will admit him into gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide therein forever. Allah will have perfected for him a provision.

**It is Allah who has created seven heavens, and of the earth, the like of them. [His] command descends among them so you may know that Allah is over all things competent, and that Allah has encompassed all things in knowledge.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

**Phase five: executional steps**

The conclusion of identifying a problem, pondering over guidance, and gathering, and analyzing evidence must be taking appropriate action. A key principle of the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin) was that after gaining knowledge, they acted upon it. This is also a key distinction between higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir), and other forms of exegesis (Tafsir). Following are

<sup>(1)</sup> Quran (65:11-12), Sahih International trans.

**five steps** of reform recommended to respond to the endemic, and damaging divorce problem in the Muslim community (Ummah):

1. **Avoid divorce as much as possible, and sever relations only in rare cases.** Allah ﷻ is commanding us to still refrain from divorce even if we have some resentment towards our spouses. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُمْ فَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا﴾

**“If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing, and Allah brings through it a great deal of good.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

Develop self-knowledge before deciding to marry. The Prophet ﷺ advised Muslims to choose a religious spouse because she will not only be a wife, but she will also be the mother of children, and can contribute to establishing family values, and religion (Deen) for the household.

2. **Choose the right spouse.** It is a key to the success of the marriage. The thoughtless choice is not remedied without difficulty, and loss. Divorce should be the last resort in rare cases, as mentioned above. If divorce is the final solution, we must follow the Divine Guidance to have a healthy separation.

Participate in pre-marital educational programs, and counseling. You can also read books, and articles, and participate as a couple in marriage education workshops if such programs do not violate conditions on free mixing between unmarried couples. Marriage is a life-long investment, so seek knowledge to keep your love growing.

3. **Do not rush the marriage process, or ignore red flags about your potential spouse.** Consider finding mutual harmony, asking deep, and sometimes uncomfortable questions, getting to know your potential spouse in various situations, and addressing concerns before becoming emotionally involved.
4. **Expect to experience differences, and disagreements with your spouse.** Expect to learn things you may not like about your spouse. Consider the many qualities you desire, and weigh them against the reality that no individual today will be a perfect spouse.

Strive to refine yourself, instead of trying to change your spouse. Assume individual responsibility for issues within your control. Take your time before making drastic decisions

(1) Quran (4:19).

that may affect your marriage. When there are conflicts in your relationship, don't make an impulsive decision about divorce. Seek guidance from professionals. Equip yourself with available wisdom.

5. **When conflict emerges at some point in your marriage, don't let problems worsen before seeking help.** Do not tolerate abuse in any form, but address it in the first instance. If a decision is taken to end the marriage, then be responsible for learning the divorce process, and its Islamic law (Shari'ah) requirements as diligently as you learned the marriage process.

### The second example — higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) of chapter (Surah) An-Nazi'at

#### Identifying a phenomenon

The contemporary phenomenon that we would like to address through this next Quranic exegesis (Tafsir) is highly crucial since it repeats itself at least twice, or thrice every year.

The arrival of seasons of obedience, such as Ramadan, and the first ten days of Dhul Hijjah, have become challenging to many Muslims because they rapidly change their course of action to accommodate these windows of time. Unfortunately, many of these seasons of obedience bring only short-term change. However, the higher aim (Maqsid) of these extraordinary times is to generate a lasting difference in the lives of Muslims.

The necessary change involves the discipline of the *self* (Nafs),<sup>(1)</sup> whose rigid authority will undoubtedly resist the change because of its nature. How many of us find ourselves in such a situation? Many of us wish to achieve good things during these special seasons, but cannot translate these aspirations, and motivations into actions because they collapse when facing the burden of the *self* (Nafs) against our enlightenment.

There are some suggested remedies to this condition, but these are not overnight solutions.

First, we must remember that this issue is not a unique individual challenge. It is a human issue that exposes our vulnerability. Neither can we blame Shaytan (Satan), and excuse ourselves from culpability since the devils among the jinn are chained in Ramadan. Likewise, it is known by the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin) that the whispering of the *self* (Nafs), and the whispering from the Shaytan (Satan) are two separate challenges. The whispering of the *self* (Nafs) towards desires is the pursuit of disobedience with which the *self* (Nafs) is enamored, and has no remorse.<sup>(2)</sup>

---

(1) 'Self,' or 'Nafs' may be analogous to 'ego.'

(2) Ibn Taymiyyah in *Majmu' al-Fatawa* (17/529-530).



The inability to make lasting changes during these special seasons is due to our submissiveness to the desires of our *self* (Nafs). The hurdle described here is one every single human being faces. We must wage war against our *self* (Nafs) to make it comply with what is known to be Ihsan (attaining excellence, and perfection), and to stop the habit of giving into every low desire. Furthermore, one must begin the implementation process immediately to be sincere, and serious about these goals.

If our *self* (Nafs) has been established at ease with its habit of immediately fulfilling pleasures, then it will certainly resist disciplined change, and will lose all contentment. One will only be capable of succeeding when they manage to enslave their *self* (Nafs) to Allah ﷻ gradually. It takes time to tame, domesticate, subdue, enslave, and train our *self* (Nafs) towards excellence (Ihsan), and away from its irrepressible urges, and unlawful behaviors.

This is not only a contemporary issue, but is something with which our righteous predecessors struggled. One of the predecessors, Muhammad ibn al-Munkadir ؒ said, **“I toiled my *self* (Nafs) for 40 years, after which it complied.”**<sup>(1)</sup>

Thabit al-Banani ؒ said, **“I pushed myself to stand up, and pray for twenty years. Then I found joy in the nightly prayers (Qiyam al-Layl) for twenty years.”** For those twenty years, he had to wage war against his *self* (Nafs) to make them comply with discipline.<sup>(2)</sup>

Lack of disciplining the *self* (Nafs) is a significant hindrance to reaching a lasting benefit from the special times of worship.

### Phase one: identification of higher aim (Maqsid)

#### The remembrance of death

We may arrive at our death at any moment. Therefore, we need to discipline our *self* (Nafs) to achieve almost immediate results, and we do have a powerful, and effective weapon against our *self* (Nafs) in the remembrance of death. Remembering death is, in fact, a Prophetic command—we frequently come across many pieces of Prophetic advice emphasizing the importance of remembering death.

Moreover, the Prophet ﷺ reminded us that nothing will go with us to our graves, except our deeds, and that the constant reminder of death will assist in keeping from distraction, or indulgence in

---

(1) *Hilyat Al-Awliya* (3/146).

(2) *Hilyat Al-Awliya* (2/320).

unnecessary worldly matters. The Prophet ﷺ said, “Frequently remember often the destroyer of pleasures,” meaning ‘death.’<sup>(1)</sup>

The Prophet ﷺ also advised that we should take time to remember those who have made the transition into the ‘afterlife’ (Barzakh), for these too will serve as reminders of our eventual fate.

Phase two includes presentation of the issue to the Quran to identify existent relevant major, and supporting higher aims (Maqasid). This part of the evaluation of the relation between the selected higher aim (Maqsid), and the community phenomena begins with the selection of a chapter (Surah) as the main focus.

The chapter (Surah) of the Quran which can address, and treat this issue is chapter (Surah) An-Nazi'at, and this is apparent in the inaugural verses (Ayat). Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَالنَّازِعَاتِ غَرْقًا ۝١ وَالنَّشِيطَاتِ دُشَطًا ۝٢ وَالسَّيِّحَاتِ سَبْحًا ۝٣ فَالْمُتَبِقَاتِ سَبْقًا ۝٤ فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا ۝٥﴾

“By those (Angels) that pluck out the soul from depths. And gently take it away, and by those that speedily glide along (the cosmos), and vie with the others (in carrying out their Lord's behests); and then manage the affairs of the Universe (according to their Lord's commands).”<sup>(2)</sup>

An-Nazi'at is the seventy-ninth chapter (Surah) in the Noble Quran. It has forty-six verses (Ayat), and is within part (Juz') thirty. It was revealed in Makkah, as is apparent by the style, and content. The name of the chapter (Surah) is derived from its first verse (Ayah).

Chapter (Surah) An-Nazi'at examines some critical points regarding the undeniable truths every human being needs to concern themselves with, such as The Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah), the scene of death, the extraction of the soul out of the body, and the internment in the grave before Judgment Day (Yawm Al-Qiyamah). The chapter (Surah) strongly urges us to ponder these facts to give us a better perspective on this life, and to prepare ourselves in respect of the meaning of this existence.

The inaugural verses (Ayat) are in the form of an oath. Based on what is apparent in the text, Allah ﷻ is swearing by His Angels as they carry out His commands (Ahkam). However, the object of the oath is the conclusion that the resurrection is a certainty. The parallel set forth in the oath is that

(1) Ibn Majah (4258); Nasa'i (1825); Tirmizi (2307), Sahih by Al-Albani.

(2) Quran (79:1-5).

even as the obedience of the Angels is a certainty, so also does Allah ﷻ have the complete command to resurrect, and judge. This is a reality we will know after our death.

Angels are not explicitly identified in the text of the inaugural verses (Ayat). However, many of the companions (Sahabah), and their immediate students (Tabi'un) understood that the reference here is to the Angels. Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, Abdullah ibn Abbas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, Masruq رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, Sa'id ibn Jubair رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, Abu Salih Abud-Duha رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, and As-Suddi رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said that the first five verses (Ayat) of chapter (Surah) An-Nazi'at refer to the Angels, and their designated duties. The majority of exegetes (Mufasssirin) are in agreement.

There are **three reasons** which substantiate their understanding of Angels being the object of the oath, and they are an example of the process of evidence analysis of the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufasssir):

1. The connection with the previous chapter (Surah)—An-Naba'. An-Naba' is replete with apocalyptic references to the coming of the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah), and the life afterward as a response to those who doubted, or denied.
2. The logical connection of the first five verses (Ayat) of An-Nazi'at with its last five verses (Ayat), which address the time of the coming Day. After acceptance of one article (Rukn) of faith (Iman), the reality of Judgment Day (Yawm Al-Qiyamah), a logical motivation is to ask when it will come. Allah ﷻ said:

يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مَرَسَهَا ۚ فِيمَ أَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرِهَا ۚ ٤٣ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ مُنْهَبَهَا ۚ ٤٤ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنْذِرٌ مَنِ يَحْشَسَهَا ۚ ٤٥ كَانَتْهُمْ يَوْمَ  
رَوَّعَهَا لَوْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحًى ۚ ٤٦

**“They ask you [O Prophet] regarding the hour, ‘When will it be?’ But it is not for you to tell its time. That knowledge rests with your Lord [alone]. You only have to warn whoever is in awe of it. On the day they see it, it will be as if they had stayed [in the world] no more than one evening, or its morning.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

3. The Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah) begins with death. Whoever dies, it will seem to them that Resurrection, and judgment have almost immediately come because the time ‘in the world,’ whether life before, or in the grave, will be perceived as ‘no more than one evening, or its morning.’

(1) Quran (79:42-46), Khattab trans.

Point three is understood by inference, and deduction, with little explicit evidence. There is a weak narration (Da'ef Hadith) circulated by people, although its meaning is substantiated. It states that “Judgment commences immediately after one has died.” This statement is substantiated if it refers to **al-Qiyamah as-Sughra**, the accountability in the grave, and those events which precede the major Day of Resurrection (Yawm Al-Qiyamah), starting with death, and the extraction of the soul from the body, ending with the type of life in the grave whether it is one of bliss, or punishment.

The knowledge of the exact time of the major Day is knowable only to Allah ﷻ. However, the mission of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, as the final Prophet, and Messenger, is an indicator of the coming of the Hour. Sahl ibn Sa'id ؓ narrated, **“I saw Allah's Messenger pointing with his index, and middle fingers, saying, ‘The time of my advent, and the Hour (Doomsday) are like these two fingers.’”**<sup>(1)</sup>

### Recalling death motivates the *self* (Nafs)

Muslims are encouraged to contemplate death, and to prepare for it with the performance of good deeds. Ibn Umar ؓ reports, **“A man from among the Ansar got up, and said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, which of the believers is best?’ [The Prophet] said: ‘He who has the best manners among them.’ [The man from the Ansar] said: ‘Which of them is wisest?’ [The Prophet] said: ‘The one who remembers death the most, and is best in preparing for it. Those are the wisest.’”**<sup>(2)</sup>

Imam Al-Qurtubi ؒ said that scholars (Ulama) have agreed that death is not restricted to a certain age, time, or sickness, so that [mankind] would always be ready to receive death, prepared for what comes after it. He said in *At-Tazkirah*, **“Remembering death deters one from committing sins, softens rigid hearts, alleviates indulgence in this worldly life, and decreases the impact of catastrophes.”**<sup>(3)</sup>

Anas ؓ reported that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, **“Remember death recurrently because so doing wipes out sins, and makes you disregard this worldly life.”**<sup>(4)</sup>

Ad-Daqqaaq ؒ said, **“He who frequently remembers death will be granted three things: swift repentance, a content heart, and enthusiasm to worship Allah; and the one who neglects**

(1) Bukhari (4936); Muslim (7403).

(2) Ibn Majah (4259); At-Tabarani in *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir* (417/12).

(3) Qurtubi in *At-Tadhkirah Fiahwalil-Mawta Wal-Akhirah* (p. 30-31), Dar Al-Manarah: 2004. Bedeir trans.

(4) Qurtubi in *At-Tadhkirah Fiahwalil-Mawta Wal-Akhirah* (p. 28), Dar Al-Manarah: 2004. Bedeir trans.

**remembering death will be afflicted with three things: delay in repentance, discontentment, and laziness in worshipping Allah.”<sup>(1)</sup>**

Shaddad ibn Aus رضي الله عنه reported, “**The Prophet said, ‘A wise man is the one who calls himself to account (and refrains from doing evil deeds), and does noble deeds to benefit him after death; and the foolish person is the one who subdues himself to his temptations, and desires, and seeks from Allah the fulfillment of his vain desires.’”<sup>(2)</sup>**

Shaykh Al-Uthaymeen رحمته الله explained: “**A ‘wise man’ is a resolute individual who utilizes opportunities. He is so thoughtful that days, and nights do not pass against him, and he does not waste time. If he perceives lethargy in himself concerning an obligation, he rectifies it; and possibly by carrying it out, or placing another in its stead. Likewise, if he notices his soul violating a prohibition, he renounces it, regrets, becomes penitent, and seeks forgiveness.”<sup>(3)</sup>**

He does not secure himself in the certainty of forgiveness, and thus, abandons the rewards of striving for good deeds.

### **Phase two: identification of relevant textual, and logical evidence**

There are many pieces of evidence to legitimize our choice of higher aim (Maqsid) in chapter (Surah) An-Nazi'at:

- The name of the chapter (Surah).
- The place of the Revelation.
- The theme of the last part of the Quran.
- The subjects of the chapter (Surah).
- Logical process of assimilation to pillars of faith (Arkan Al-Iman).
- Supporting narrations (Ahadith).

### **Phase three: expound, analyze, and outline the concepts of the higher aim (Maqsid)**

#### **Understanding the process of death**

We benefit from visualizing the scene of death for both the disbeliever, and the believer in light of

---

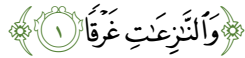
(1) Qurtubi in *At-Tadhkirah Fiahwalil-Mawta Wal-Akhirah* (part 1, p.72).

(2) *Riyadh us-Salihin* (66).

(3) Uthaymeen in *Sharh Riyadh us-Salihin* (vol.1, p. 520).

two pieces of evidence: the verses (Ayat) of the chapter (Surah) An-Nazi'at, and the narration (Hadith) reported by Al-Bara' ibn Azib رضي الله عنه.

Allah ﷻ said:



**“By the pluckers (the Angels of death), violently plucking (the souls of the unbelievers).”<sup>(1)</sup>**

This graphic translation is further visualized by means of the famous narration (Hadith) reported by Al-Bara' ibn Azib رضي الله عنه regarding the scenes of death. This is valuable evidence due to the eloquence, and precision of the prophetic wording Al-Bara' رضي الله عنه reported.

### Death of the disbeliever

Al-Bara' ibn Azib رضي الله عنه said at the beginning of the narration (Hadith):<sup>(2)</sup>

**“We went out with the Prophet for the funeral of a man from the Ansar. When we reached the grave, and the body was placed inside, the Messenger of Allah sat [facing the direction of the Kaabah in Makkah]. We all sat around him, and we were so still, and quiet that it was as if birds were sitting undisturbed on our heads. The Prophet had in his hand a stick with which he was scratching the ground. [He began looking up to the sky, and then back down to the ground, raising his gaze, and lowering it, and he did this three times].”**

**Then the Prophet said, “Indeed the disbelieving (in another narration: wicked, immoral) servant, when he reaches the departure from this life, and the arrival of the hereafter (Aakhirah), Angels [harsh, and severe] come down from the sky to him, their faces dark. They will have with them sackcloth [from the fire]. They will sit as far away from the deceased as the eye can see, then the Angel of Death will come, and sit beside his head, and say, ‘Oh, filthy soul, come out to displeasure, and anger from Allah.’”**

**The disbeliever’s soul will then scatter, dispersing throughout his body, but the Angel of Death will rip it out violently, similar to how a skewer [with many forks] is yanked through**

(1) Quran (79:1), Qarib trans.

(2) The narrative wording is from Ahmad (4/287, 288, 295, and 296), and Al-Ajurri in *Ash-Shari'ah* (367-380) as found in “The Believer & Disbeliever at the Time of Death,” (no. 105, p. 198-202) from *Ahkam al-Janaiz wa Bidau'ha* by Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, Abu az-Zubayr Harrison trans. See also: Abu Dawud (2/281, 70); Al-Hakim (1/37-40); At-Tiyalis (753); Nasa'i (1/282), and Ibn Majah (1/469-470).

wet wool [ripping with it the veins, and nerves]. Every Angel between heaven, and earth, and every Angel in heaven will curse the person. The gates of heaven will be closed, and there will be no group of gatekeepers except that those Angels will call upon Allah, asking that his soul does not ascend by way of them]. The Angel of Death will take the soul, and when he has taken it, the other Angels do not leave it in his hand even for the blink of an eye before they put the soul into that sackcloth. There will emit from the soul a stench more disgusting, offensive than any decaying carcass found on the surface of the earth.

The Angels will ascend with the soul, and will pass no group of Angels except that they will ask, ‘What is this filthy soul?’

The Angels carrying the soul will answer, ‘He is so-and-so, the son of so-and-so,’ calling him the worst names he used to be called in life.

The Angels will continue rising with the soul until they come to the end of the sky of this world. They will seek permission for the next heaven to open for him (the soul), but he will be refused entry. Allah’s Messenger then recited:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا لَا تُفَتَّحُ لَهُمْ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ  
وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُجْرِمِينَ﴾

‘The doors of the sky are not opened to them, nor shall they enter heaven until the camel passes through the eye of the needle’<sup>(1)</sup>

Then Allah will say:

﴿كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَارِ لَفِي سِجِّينٍ﴾

‘Write his book (of deeds) in Sijjin, in the lowest earth.’<sup>(2)</sup>

It will then be said:

﴿مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَى﴾

(1) Quran (7:40).

(2) Quran (83:7).

‘Return my servant to the earth, for surely I promised them that from it I created them, to it I will return them, and from it, I will bring them out once again.’<sup>(1)</sup>

His soul will then be thrown [from the heaven] with a single toss [and fall into his body]. Then the Prophet read,

﴿وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتَخَطَفُهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ تَهْوَى بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ﴾<sup>(2)</sup>

‘And those who associate partners with Allah, they are as one who falls from the sky then is snatched by the birds, or is cast by the wind into a very low place.’<sup>(2)</sup>

And so, his soul will be returned to his body. He will then be able to hear the footsteps of his companions' shoes as they turn, and walk away from him.] There will come to him two Angels [harsh in reprimanding who will chastise him, and] make him sit up. They both ask him, ‘Who is your lord?’

The person will reply, ‘Huh, huh, I don’t know.’

The Angels further ask him, ‘What is your religion?’ And he will again answer, ‘Huh, huh, I don’t know.’

The Angels will then ask him, ‘Then what do you say about this man that was sent to you?’

He will not be guided to remember his name. It will be said, ‘Muhammad!’

Then the person will say, ‘Huh, huh, I don’t know. I did hear the people saying that!’

He will then be told, ‘You did not know, and you did not read.’

A caller will then call out from the heaven, saying, ‘He lied. So, give him furnishing from the fire (of Hell), and open a door for him to the fire.’ Its heat, and scorching wind will then come to him, and his grave will close in on him, tightening around him until his ribs are pressed together. There will come to him (in another narration: there will be portrayed to him the form of) a man with a hideous face, ugly clothing, and a horrible stench. This man will say to the person:

(1) Quran (20:55).

(2) Quran (22:31).



هَذَا يَوْمُكُمْ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

‘Rejoice at that which will sadden you; this is your day which you were promised.’<sup>(1)</sup>

So the person will say to this man, ‘[and you, may Allah give you evil.] Who are you? Your face is the face that brings evil!’

The man will reply, ‘I am your filthy deed. [For I swear by Allah, I only knew you to be hesitant to obey Allah, quick to disobey Allah.] So may Allah reward you with evil.’

A blind, deaf, mute man will then be sent to him carrying a huge hammer in his hand; if a mountain were hit with it, it would become dust. The man will then hit the disbeliever once, and the person will turn to dust. Allah will then return him to his former state, and the man will hit him again. The person will scream so loud that everything will hear it except the humans, and jinn. A door will then be opened for him to the fire, and he will be furnished with furnishings of the fire. He will then say, ‘My Lord, do not establish the last hour.’”

### Death of the believer

“The Prophet said, ‘Indeed, the believing servant, when he comes to the departure of this life, and the arrival of the hereafter (Akhirah), Angels come down to him from the sky, their faces so white, and bright, it is as if their faces were the sun. They will have with them a shroud from Paradise (Jannah), and Embalsms from Paradise (Jannah), and they will sit as far away from the deceased as the eye can see.’

Then the Angel of Death will come, and sit beside his head, and say, ‘Oh, good soul, come out to forgiveness, and pleasure from Allah.’<sup>(2)</sup>

The believer's soul then comes out (easily, and gently) like a drop flow from the spout of a waterskin. The Angel of Death will then take it.<sup>(3)</sup>

The Angel of Death will take the soul, and when he has taken it, the other Angels do not leave it in his hand even for the blink of an eye before they place it in that shroud, and embalsms (from Paradise). And that is like the statement of Allah:

(1) Quran (21:103).

(2) In another narration: “Oh soul, safe, and peaceful.”

(3) In another narration: “And when his soul is taken out, every Angel between the heavens, and earth, and every Angel in the heavens send prayers upon him. The gates of heaven are opened to him, and all gatekeepers will call upon Allah, asking that his soul ascend by way of them.”

﴿وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ ۖ وَيُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمْ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفِرُّونَ﴾ (٦١)

‘Our Messengers (Angel of Death, and his assistants) take his soul, and they never neglect their duty.’<sup>(1)</sup>

And there will come from the soul a scent like the best, most fragrant perfume found on earth. The Angels will ascend with the believer's soul, and will pass no group of Angels except that they will ask, ‘Who is this good soul?’

The other Angels will answer, ‘He is so-and-so, the son of so-and-so,’ calling him the best names people used to call him in life.

The Angels will continue rising with the soul until they come to the end of the sky of this world. They will seek permission for the next heaven to open for him (the soul), and it will be opened for them. The best Angels of every heaven will accompany him until they reach the next heaven, and they will continue in this manner until they reach the seventh heaven. Then Allah will say, ‘Write my servant's book (of deeds) in ‘Illiyun.’

﴿وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا عَلَيْنَا ۚ كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ ۗ يَشْهَدُهُ الْمُرْسَلُونَ﴾ (٢٠)

‘And what will make you know what Illiyun is? A register inscribed. Which is witnessed by those (Angels) brought near (to Allah).’<sup>(2)</sup>

And it shall be said:

﴿مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَىٰ﴾ (٥٥)

‘Return him to the earth, for [I promised them] I have created them from it, and into it, I shall return them, and from it, I shall extract (resurrect) them a second time.’<sup>(3)</sup>

So [he will then be returned to earth, and] his soul will be returned to his body. [He will then be able to hear the footsteps of his companions' shoes as they turn from him, and walk away leaving him behind].

(1) Quran (6:61).

(2) Quran (83:19-21).

(3) Quran (20:55).

Two Angels [harsh in reprimanding] will then come to him. They [will reprimand him, and] will sit him up, and ask, ‘Who is your lord?’

The believer will reply, ‘My lord is Allah.’

They will further ask, ‘What is your religion?’ to which he will reply, ‘My religion is Islam.’

The two Angels will then ask, ‘Who was that man who was sent to you?’

He will reply, ‘He is the Messenger of Allah.’

They will finally ask him, ‘and what did you do?’

The person will say, ‘I read the Book of Allah, I believed in it, and I considered it to be true.’

So he will rebuke him, and ask, ‘Who is your lord? What is your religion? Who is your Prophet?’ And that is the last trial the believer will experience. And that is as Allah says:

﴿يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ<sup>٤</sup> وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا

يَشَاءُ ﴿٢٧﴾

‘Allah will strengthen the believers with a steadfast Word, both in this life, and in the everlasting life (Aakhirah). Allah leads the evildoers astray. Allah does what He wills.’<sup>(1)</sup>

So the person will answer, ‘My Lord is Allah, my religion is Islam, and my Prophet is Muhammad.’

Then a caller from the heaven will call out, ‘My servant has spoken the truth. So give him furnishings from Paradise (Jannah), clothe him from Paradise (Jannah), and open for him a door to Paradise (Jannah).’

The pleasant, and refreshing breeze of Paradise (Jannah), and its fragrance will then come to the person, and his grave will be made spacious, spread out as far as his eye can see.

(1) Quran (14:27).

There will then come to him a man<sup>(1)</sup> with a beautiful face, beautiful clothing, and a beautiful fragrance. This man will say:

﴿هَذَا يَوْمُكُمْ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ﴾<sup>(2)</sup>

‘I bring you glad tidings of that which will make you happy [Rejoice with a pleasure of Allah, and delights that endure]. This is the day that you were promised.’<sup>(2)</sup>

So the person will ask the man, ‘[and you, may Allah give you good,] who are you? Your face is the face that brings good.’

The man will reply, ‘I am your good deed. [For I swear by Allah, I only knew you to be quick to obey Allah, hesitant to disobey Allah, so may Allah reward you with good.]’

A door to Paradise (Jannah) will then be opened for him. A door to the Fire (Jahannam) will also be opened, and he will be told, ‘This is your place if you had disobeyed Allah, but Allah has replaced it with this [Paradise (Jannah)].’

When the person sees what is in Paradise (Jannah), he will say, ‘My lord, speed up the last hour, so I can return to my family, and wealth.’

[He will be told, ‘Rest.’]

#### Phase four: the means to accomplish the higher aim (Maqsid)

In phase four, establishing the *means*, the exegete (Mufassir) examines the actual body of the chapter (Surah) to gather verses (Ayat) that share the same theme, and support a single higher aim (Maqsid). Some of the verses (Ayat) explored in previous phases may, or may not be retained in establishing the *means*. The exegete (Mufassir) must maintain consistency between sub-categories of higher aims (Maqsid) in different groups of verses (Ayat). All pieces of evidence must be valid according to orthodox Islamic sciences, and must contribute to achieving the primary higher aim (Maqsid) of the key chapter (Surah). Certain conditions invalidate the evidence from qualifying as a *means*, as mentioned in the criterion in part two, chapter four, and at the beginning of part three. In phase four of the **five-phase process**, evidence is weighed against this criterion to establish a codex that provides our *means*:

(1) In another narration: “there will be portrayed to him the form of a man.”

(2) Quran (21:103).

- Avoidance of casuistry which is not found among the comprehensive higher aims (Maqasid) of the Quran. This has not been violated, as secondary evidence from the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) is relevant to the verses (Ayat) of chapter (Surah) An-Nazi'at, and are authentic narrations (Ahadith).
- Explanation, and exploration of the relevant issues have not been based on reason, and intellect without introducing evidence from the Quran, or the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah).
- The higher aim (Maqasid), and supporting evidence do not contradict the evidence-based exegesis (Tafsir bil-Ma'thur), or oppose the Quran, and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) as the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin) understood them.
- The exegesis (Tafsir) does not generate a higher aim (Maqasid) which indulges in explaining one of the unseen areas of which only Allah ﷻ has full knowledge. The resurrection, and the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah) are issues from the pillars of faith (Arkan Al-Iman). A praiseworthy exegesis (Tafsir) must not discuss these issues based on reason, and intellect without introducing evidence from the Quran, or the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah) as the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin) understood them. Major, and minor signs of the coming of the Day are known through evidence, but their nature, and essence are unknown in manifest details. The higher aim (Maqasid) of 'remembering death' to encourage us towards good deeds is supported only by explanations of the resurrection, and the Day of Judgment (Yawm Al-Qiyamah) from the Quran, and Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah).
- The higher aim (Maqasid) must not advance the agenda of the people of innovation (Bid'ah). Among the people of innovation (Bid'ah) are some groups who deny the life in the grave, and some who exaggerate it as though it is a life as the present life. A praiseworthy exegesis (Tafsir) of chapter (Surah) An-Nazi'at will affirm life in the Barzakh.<sup>(1)</sup>

Chapter (Surah) An-Nazi'at has seven scenes, all of which focus on death, and are intended to influence our decisions about this life. The individual who is wise will reflect on these seven scenes, and will be quick to reform their actions.

---

(1) Barzakh is the place separating the living from the hereafter (Aakhirah); a veil between the dead, and their return to world of the living, but also to a phase happening between death, and resurrection.

### Organizing evidence to facilitate the means (Wasail)

#### Part one: the oath (79:1-5)

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ عَدَّتْ غَرْقًا ۝١ وَالنَّشِطَاتِ نَشْطًا ۝٢ وَالسَّيِّحَاتِ سَبْحًا ۝٣ فَالسَّيِّقَاتِ سَبْقًا ۝٤ فَالْمُدْبِرَاتِ أَمْرًا ۝٥﴾

“By those [Angels] who extract with violence. And [by] those who remove with ease. And [by] those who glide [as if] swimming. And those who race each other in a race, and those who arrange [each] matter.”<sup>(1)</sup>

#### Part two: the object of the oath (79:6-9)

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الرَّاجِفَةُ ۝٦ تَتَّبِعُهَا الرَّاادِفَةُ ۝٧ قُلُوبٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاجِفَةٌ ۝٨ أَبْصَارُهَا خَاشِعَةٌ ۝٩﴾

“On the Day the blast [of the Horn] will convulse [creation], There will follow it the subsequent [one]. Hearts, that Day, will tremble. Their eyes humbled.”<sup>(2)</sup>

#### Part three: denying the hour in this world (79:10-14)

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿يَقُولُونَ أَإِنَّا لَمَرْدُودُونَ فِي الْحَافِرَةِ ۝١٠ أَمْ إِذَا كُنَّا عِظْمًا فَخِرَةً ۝١١ قَالُوا تِلْكَ إِذًا كَرَّةٌ خَاسِرَةٌ ۝١٢ فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ ۝١٣ فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ ۝١٤﴾

“They say: ‘Shall we indeed be returned to (our) former state of life? Even after we are crumbled bones?’ They say: ‘It would in that case, be a return with loss!’ But, it will be only

(1) Quran (79:1-5), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (79:6-9), Sahih International trans.

a single Zajrah [shout (i.e., the second blowing of the Trumpet)]. When, behold, they find themselves on the surface of the earth alive after their death.”<sup>(1)</sup>

**Part four: do not be like the Pharaoh (79:15-26)**

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى ﴿١٥﴾ إِذْ نَادَاهُ رَبُّهُ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ﴿١٦﴾ أَذْهَبَ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى ﴿١٧﴾ فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَهٌ إِلَّا أَن تَرْكَبُ ﴿١٨﴾ وَأَهْدِيكَ إِلَى رِبِّكَ فَتَخْشَى ﴿١٩﴾ فَأَرَاهُ الْآيَةَ الْكُبْرَى ﴿٢٠﴾ فَكَذَّبَ وَعَصَى ﴿٢١﴾ ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ سَعْيَ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَحَشَرَ فَنَادَى ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَى ﴿٢٤﴾ فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى ﴿٢٥﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِمَن يَخْشَى ﴿٢٦﴾ ﴾

“Has there reached you the story of Moses? When his Lord called to him in the sacred valley of Tuwa. ‘Go to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed. And say to him, ‘Would you [be willing to] purify yourself. And let me guide you to your Lord so you would fear [Him]?’ And he showed him the greatest sign, But he [i.e., Pharaoh] denied, and disobeyed. Then he turned his back, striving [i.e., plotting]. And he gathered [his people], and called out. And said, ‘I am your most exalted lord.’ So Allah seized him in exemplary punishment for the last, and the first [transgression]. Indeed in that is a lesson [i.e., warning] for whoever would fear [Allah].”<sup>(2)</sup>

**Part five: reflect upon the creation (79:27-33)**

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمِ السَّمَاءُ بَنَاهَا ﴿٢٧﴾ رَفَعَ سَمَكَهَا فَسَوَّيْنَاهَا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَأَعْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ ضُغْبَهَا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَالْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ دَحَاهَا ﴿٣٠﴾ أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَاءَهَا وَمَرْعَاهَا ﴿٣١﴾ وَالْجِبَالَ أَرْسَاهَا ﴿٣٢﴾ مَنَّاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ ﴿٣٣﴾ ﴾

“Are you a more difficult creation, or is the heaven? He [i.e. Allah] constructed it. He raised its ceiling, and proportioned it. And He darkened its night, and extracted its brightness. And after that He spread the earth. He extracted from it its water, and its pasture. And the

(1) Quran (79:10-14).

(2) Quran (79:15-26), Sahih International trans.

mountains He set firmly. As enjoyment [i.e., provision] for you, and your grazing livestock.”<sup>(1)</sup>

**Part six: the recompense (79:34-41)**

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الطَّامَةُ الْكُبْرَىٰ ﴿٣٤﴾ يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا سَعَىٰ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَبُرْزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِمَنْ بَرَىٰ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَىٰ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَآثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ﴿٣٨﴾ فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ﴿٤٠﴾ فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ﴿٤١﴾﴾

“But when there comes the greatest Overwhelming Calamity. The Day when man will remember that for which he strove. And Hellfire will be exposed for [all] those who see. So as for he who transgressed. And preferred the life of the world. Then indeed, Hellfire will be [his] refuge. But as for he who feared the position of his Lord, and prevented the soul from [unlawful] inclination. Then indeed, Paradise will be [his] refuge.”<sup>(2)</sup>

**Part seven: the Hour is far off (79:42-46)**

In spite of all this, the disbelievers continued to argue, saying, “The hour is far off.”

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا ﴿٤٢﴾ فِيمَ أَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرِنَهَا ﴿٤٣﴾ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ مُنْهَهَا ﴿٤٤﴾ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ مَنِ يَخْشَاهَا ﴿٤٥﴾ كَانَتْهُمْ يَوْمَ يُزَوَّجُنَا لَهَا ﴿٤٦﴾ يَلْبَسُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ صُحْحًا ﴿٤٦﴾﴾

“They ask you, [O Muhammad], about the Hour: when is its arrival? In what [position] are you that you should mention it? To your Lord is its finality. You are only a warner for those who fear it. It will be, on the Day they see it, as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon, or a morning thereof.”<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Quran (79:27-33), Sahih International trans.

(2) Quran (79:34-41), Sahih International trans.

(3) Quran (79:42-46), Sahih International trans.



**Phase five: executorial steps**

1. Various acts that help in contemplation of death are:

- Visiting the graves. The Prophet ﷺ said, **“Visit the graves, for they will remind you of the hereafter (Aakhirah).”**<sup>(1)</sup>
- Visiting the places where the dead are washed, and witnessing the washing.
- Being around people who are dying to see how they suffer, and to encourage them to utter the testimony of faith (Shahadah).
- Accompanying funerals, and the funeral prayers, and attending the burial of the dead.

2. Reciting the Quran, especially the verses (Ayat) that mention the agonies of death, like the Saying of Allah ﷻ:

﴿وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ﴾

**“And the stupor of death will come in truth: ‘This is what you have been avoiding!’”**<sup>(2)</sup>

3. Having grey hair, and being afflicted with illness, because these are two messengers of death.
4. Pondering over earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, and landslides, reminding one of the nearness of death.
5. Reading about previous nations who died, and have vanished forever.



---

(1) Ibn Majah (1569).

(2) Quran (50:19).

## Conclusion



There is nothing better in this world than comprehending the Speech of Allah ﷻ, and understanding what Allah ﷻ wants from His servants.

The Noble Quran is a Book of Guidance sent down directly from Allah ﷻ with the purpose of guiding believers upon the straight path. The main objective of the Revelation is to establish the means to learn, and understand the Will of Allah ﷻ, and the straight path for the believers. We must invest in a relationship with the Quran to rightly follow the wisdom within. Those who pursue the meaning of the Quran with the intention of following will find understanding, and ease in this life, and the next by the Will of Allah ﷻ.

Allah ﷻ divided His Book into 114 chapters (Suwar). Each chapter (Surah) conveys a particular message, and purpose. If this were not the case, the written Quran (Mus'haf) would be one long chapter (Surah). Therefore, we need to recognize that there is wisdom, and a message in the structure, and organization of the Quran.

The primary responsibility of the higher aim-based exegete (Maqasidic Mufassir) is to employ reasoning, and deliberation (Ijtihad) to derive a higher aim (Maqsid) for the embedded wisdom in each chapter (Surah). This is not a new method. The higher aim-based (Maqasidic) approach has been used for centuries to derive a higher purpose, or aim (Maqsid) from the revealed scripture. Exegetes (Mufasssirun) among earlier scholars (Ulama) conveyed the higher aims (Maqasid), such as Ibn Jarir at-Tabari ؒ, Ibn Kathir ؒ, and others. Their traditions reflect the functional role the Quran played in the lives of the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin).

The first Muslim community underwent positive individual, and societal changes due to their in-depth awareness of the Quranic higher aims (Maqasid Al-Quran). However, there is a long gap of time, and space between the best generations of Muslims who understood, and applied the Quranic higher purposes, and today. The academic deficit between the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin), and this generation is a great loss, and has a tragic impact on society—we will continue to increase in loss unless we re-evaluate how we understand, and follow the Quran.

The higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) trends place a significant emphasis on the Quranic higher aims (Maqasid Al-Quran), and their means (Wasail). The **five-phase process** outlined in this book can generate a well-defined higher aim (Maqsid) of a verse (Ayah), a group of

verses (Ayat), or an entire chapter (Surah) in light of contemporary challenges. However, any well-defined higher objective has to be consistent with the timeless, and comprehensive general higher aims of the Quran (Maqasid Al-Quran). Hence, the higher aim-based (Maqasidic) approach to understanding, and implementing the Quran could reproduce a reasonably similar condition as was known by the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin). This method is well suited to scholars (Ulama), and students who are upon an evidence-based (bil-Ma'thur) method, as one of the most significant benefits of higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) is the balance, and check control it provides against innovative thought. A well-defined higher aim (Maqsid) becomes like a fixed target once it fulfills certain conditions, and the process cannot proceed without harmony between the target higher aim (Maqsid), and revealed evidence. With this structure, the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) process can quickly expose a deviant exegete (Mufassir) who tries to manipulate the Quranic text to advance his corrupt belief system (Aqeedah), or innovation (Bid'ah). If he names a higher aim (Maqsid) based on his whims, and desires, he will find it almost impossible to generate the means to support his proposed unfounded higher aim (Maqsid). As a result, there will appear an inconsistency between the higher aims (Maqasid), and the *means* (Wasail). The resulting deviant exegesis (Tafsir) could never provide positive change toward the ideal that the praised generations (as-Salaf us-Salihin) embodied.

Furthermore, the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) contributes significantly to setting aside facile disagreements in the Muslim community (Ummah), which arise from partisan blind following of differing schools of legal thought (Madhabib). Quranic scholarship, which is dedicated to finding a higher aim (Maqsid), and pursuing a means of implementing change, redirects the efforts of the learned segments toward discussions associated with quality building.

This study argues that the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) lifts scholarship from the secondary issues to the primary issues because the higher aim (Maqsid) of the verse (Ayah) is the core, or center, and the secondary details are its compliment. The higher aim-based (Maqasidic) perspective of Quranic interpretation could be a vehicle for transforming human ritual functions into developing values, and virtues because the higher aims (Maqasid) in the Quran are described, and explained by evidence which brings the means of cultivating community values, and integrity.

When applying the higher aim-based (Maqasidic) **five-phase process**, we gain many benefits. First, we learn the meaning of the Quranic scripture in terms of objective, purpose, and goal. This approach can help all, particularly those new to Islam, young Muslims, non-Muslims, or any seeker of truth who is not familiar with the Arabic language. Finally, in the following volumes of our work, *The Maqasidic Tafsir: Pursuing the Higher Aim of the Quranic Scripture*, we intend to apply the higher aim-based exegesis (Maqasidic Tafsir) **five-phase process** to every chapter (Surah) of the Quran, to generate a higher aim (Maqsid) for each chapter (Surah), starting with chapter (Surah) Al-Fatihah, and ending with An-Nas. We ask Allah ﷻ to facilitate this task for the author, to make easy the path to knowledge for the reader, to guide ourselves, and all the Muslims under

the shade of the Quran, and the Prophetic Tradition (Sunnah), and to shower abundant blessings, and peace upon the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad ﷺ, his wives, his household, his companions (Sahabah), and all who follow him in righteousness until the end of times.



# MORE BOOKS BY

KARIM ABU ZAID

