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## Identifying the Higher Objectives (*Maqāṣid*) of the Qur'ān: A Search for Methodology

Tazul Islam\*

**Abstract:** This research aims at defining some methodological tools that could help in understanding the higher objectives (*maqāṣid*) of the Qur'ān. It seems that there exists a lack of methodological identification in the previous literature. This could lead to confusion among readers of the subject to pinpoint the real objectives of the Qur'ān as a wide diversity in scholars' identification of *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān prevails in this regard and as of views are influenced by scholars' personal and socio-contextual make-up. Consequently, the objectivity in identifying *maqāṣid al-Qur'an* is impaired. Such situations become major obstacles to the development of *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* as a science of understanding the Qur'ān. If some well-defined methodological tools are developed, an objective identification of *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* may be possible. A methodological identification of *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* seems to be essential. Thus, this study explores some methodological approaches that could help in identifying the higher objectives of the Qur'ān.

**Keywords:** *Quran, Objectives of the Quran, maqāṣid al-Qur'ān, themes of the Quran, understanding Quran.*

**Abstrak:** Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti beberapa metodologi yang dapat membantu dalam memahami objektif utama *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*. Hal ini didapati bahawa masih terdapat kekurangan dalam pengenalpastian metodologi daripada kajian-kajian lepas yang telah dilakukan sebelum ini. Ini dapat mengakibatkan kekeliruan dalam kalangan pembaca untuk mengetahui secara jelas mengenai objektif *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* yang sebenar memandangkan terdapat pelbagai pendapat dalam pengenalpastian metodologi yang diguna pakai oleh cendekiawan-cendekiawan, di mana pendapat-pendapat tersebut dipengaruhi oleh pendapat peribadi dan kesan sosio-kontekstual. Implikasi daripada perkara ini, objektif pengenalpastian *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* dilihat kurang jelas. Situasi yang berlaku ini merupakan halangan terbesar untuk perkembangan *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* sebagai ilmu dalam memahami al-Qur'ān. Sekiranya pengenalpastian metodologi yang jelas dibentuk, objektif pengenalpastian *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* akan dapat dilakukan. Selain itu, pengenalpastian metodologi untuk *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* adalah penting untuk diperhalusi dan dilakukan. Kesimpulannya, kajian ini menengahkan pendekatan beberapa metodologi yang dapat membantu mengenal pasti objektif utama *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*.

**Kata kunci:** *Qur'ān, objektif Qur'ān, maqāṣid, tema Qur'ān, kefahaman Qur'ān*

### Introduction

Muslim scholars have suggested different methods and approaches to understanding the major objectives of the Qur'ān. Sayyed Quṭb, for example, asserts that the prerequisites of understanding the aims of the Qur'ān is to understand the dimensions of Islamic dogma (*'aqidah*) the denotations of *Lā 'Ilāha 'Illā Allāh* and the significance of worshiping Allah (swt) (*'ibādah Allah*) (Qutb, ND). However, Ibn 'Abd al-Salam relates the theory of *maṣlaḥah* with the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān. He argues that most of the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'an include the command of gaining welfare (*maṣāliḥ*) and their means and warning against evils and their causes or means (Ibn Abd al-Salam, ND). It

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is clear here that he does not differentiate between *maqāṣid* (objectives) and *wasāi'l* (means). Thus, gaining welfare and the means leading to it, jointly consist of *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*. *Maṣlaḥah*, according to Islamic jurists, is a tool which is used in understanding the objective or intent of the Lawgiver as Ibn 'Āshūr argues that “the objectives (general aims of the *sharī'ah*) can be achieved only by acquiring what is good and beneficial (*maṣāliḥ*) and warding off what is evil and harmful (*mafasid*) as far as the meaning of *maṣlaḥah* and *mafsadah* can be understood” (Ibn 'Āshūr, 2006). Abū Ishāq al-Shāṭibī draws a link between induction and the discovery of the objectives of the Law. He argues that all of the objectives of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* rest on the notion of tracing the Law and its rulings to the bases which gave rise to them – that is, on the notion of *ta'līl* (Raysūnī, 2006). Al-Shāṭibī explains, while a *maqṣad* may not be identifiable from a single verse of the Qur'an, the reading of multiple verses on a certain issue will reveal an associated purpose, intent, or objective. Affirming this point, Mohammad Hashim Kamali mentions that “there may be various textual references to a subject, none of which may be in nature of a decisive injection. Yet their collective weight is such that it leaves little doubt as to the meaning that is obtained from them. A decisive conclusion may, in other words, be arrived at from a plurality of speculative expressions” (2006).

Al-Shāṭibī, Ibn 'Āshūr and others argue that the most reliable method for understanding the Qur'an and identifying its objectives is to undertake an inductive, thematic reading of the text or *istiqrā'* (Ibn 'Āshūr, 2006). The nature and structure of the Qur'an necessitate that verses in question are analyzed collectively to enable the realization of common themes, overriding objectives, and more thorough understanding.

Nūrsī suggests several methods of indentifying the Qur'an's *maqāṣid* such as looking at the oft-repeated Qur'ānic verses. He argues that “*basmalah*” and the verses “*Then which of the favors of your Lord and Sustainer will you deny?*” (Qur'an: 55: 13, 16, 18). And “*ah woe that Day to the rejecters of truth!*” (Al-Qur'an: 77: 15, 19, 24). And the story of Moses (Nūrsī, 2007) contain the major purposes of the whole Qur'an. Moreover, he yields to the major subject matters of the Qur'an as important tools for finding its *maqāṣid*. He adds another incentive which can lead to the *maqāṣid* which is the summaries mentioned at the end of the verses which contain either the Divine Names of Allah (swt) or their meanings (Nūrsī, 2007). He again mentions another tool which is *ḥikmah*. In fact Nūrsī's interpretation of any verse of the Qur'an basically depends on these four questions: “Who said it?”, “To whom did He say it?”, “Why did He say it?” and “In what form did He say it?” (Nūrsī, 2007). The third question refers to objective and wisdom. He argues that as Allah (swt) is *Hakīm*, so His deeds are objective oriented and every law He ordains must have wisdom. Therefore, through searching the wisdom in the verses of the Qur'an, its objectives can be understood.

Rashīd Riḍā's views of understanding the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'an seems partly similar to Nūrsī's as he seems convinced that the repetitions of Qur'ānic themes around any issue may indicate the purposes of the Qur'an. Yet, there is another tool which seems exclusive in Riḍā's views which is the comparison of any issue upon its pre-Islamic and post-Islamic situation such as the rulings of war, slavery, women rights, belief system, etc.

The above mentioned presentation of scholars' views on the methods of understanding the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān gives us some important and effective tools. Yet, they are not well-defined and systematically categorized. In addition, along with these tools there should be some other tools that could also be effective in understanding the *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*. Thus, a systematic categorization, definition and introduction of the methods of understanding the purposes of the Qur'ān are presented hereinafter.

### **Definition of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* and “*Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*”**

*Maqāṣid* of the *sharī'ah*, according to Ibn 'Āshūr, is “the *maqāṣid* of the *sharī'ah* generally are the meanings and instances of wise purposes on the part of the Lawgiver (Allah, swt) which can be discerned in all cases of legislation or in the majority of them to which the Law applies such that they can be seen not to apply excessively to a particular type of ruling. Included here are the occasions for the Law's establishment, its overall aim, and the meanings which can be discerned throughout the Law. It likewise includes objectives which are not observable in all types of rulings, although they are observable in many of them” (Raysūnī, 2006).

Al-Fāsī defines “*Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* as “the purpose of *sharī'ah* and the underlying reasons that the Lawgiver attached with each of its rulings (*aḥkām*)” (Al-Fasi, 1993).

According to Raysūnī, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* is “the purposes that put forth for actualization in order to bring about welfare for humankind” (1993). Abd al-Karim Hamidi points out that “*Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* is the intents for which the Qur'ān was revealed, so that the interests of people are actualized” (2007). However, “*Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* could be defined as “a science of understanding the Qur'ānic discourse in light of its purposes (*maqāṣid*) which represent the core of the Qur'ān and corroborated by their means (*wasā'il*); and distributed upon the understandable (*muḥkam*) verses of the Qur'ān” (Tazul, 2011).

### **Methods of Identifying *Maqāṣid Al-Qur'ān***

#### **First Method: Effective Cause ('*illah*) and *Tarajjī***

It is perhaps the most effective methodology in determining the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān is '*illah*, an effective cause, or *tarajjī*, a linguistic particle used for expectation, for the Qur'ānic revelation. Moreover, an inductive survey of numerous effective causes ('*illah*) which share an underlying wisdom (*ḥikmah*) is conducted, one specific intended purpose of the Qur'ān could be inferred from them. It is notable that these two methodological tools could be similarly useful in identifying both the basic and secondary objectives of the Qur'ān. However, for the basic objectives, there should be a mentioning of a general '*illah* or *tarajjī* for Qur'ānic revelation. In contrast, if '*illah* or *tarajjī* come for any specific subject, only a secondary objective of the Qur'ān could be understood. The following verses could be better example for the above mention inference.

{كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ}

“(This is) a Scripture that We have revealed unto thee, full of blessing, that they may ponder its revelations, and that men of understanding may reflect.” (Al-Qur'ān, 38: 29)

In the first verse in this section, the particle *lam* in the part of speech “لِيَدَّبَّرُوا” (pondering upon the Qur’ān) is used as a general effective cause (al-Darwish, 1455 A.H) for Qur’ānic revelation. In addition, other verses here are not containing any *illah* or *tarajjī* but they are supporting the idea that pondering is a Qur’ānic directive. As a result, this combination between the general effective cause for Qur’ānic revelation and its general directive, makes it logical that pondering is a basic objective of the Qur’ān.

{بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ}

“(We sent them) with Clear Signs and Books of dark prophecies; and We have sent down unto thee (also) the Message; that thou mayest explain clearly to men what is sent for them, and that they may give thought.” (Al-Qur’ān, 16:44)

{إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ}

“Verily, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an in order that you may understand.” (Al-Qur’ān, 12: 2)

All these verses describe the effective cause of revealing the Qur’ān when a causative particle *la’alla* is commonly used. In the Qur’ān, according to Ibn ‘Āshūr, this particle which denotes expectation refers to the effective cause (*ta’līl*) (Ibn ‘Āshūr, 1997) and the expectation here is to understand deeply the words of Allah (swt) as well as to ponder upon them (Al-Qurṭūbī, 2003).

All these categories of verses mentioned above have specific effective causes or *tarajjī*, and all of them are concerned with the reasons for revealing the Qur’ān. The effective causes above are pondering upon (*tadabbur*), giving thought (*tafakkur*), and deep understanding (*ta’akkul*). Each of these causes represents a style of thinking and they are all in fact, the fundamental elements of thinking. Therefore, with a systematic induction of all the elements, it can be claimed that all these elements constitute a sound method of thinking which should be one of the basic *maqāsid* of the Qur’ān.

Examining the numerous textual proofs of Qur’ānic verses which have a common effective cause (*illah*) could represent an objective intended by Allah (swt). There are verses in the Qur’ān which directly describe the Qur’ānic objectives and every objective is indicated and corroborated by a number of verses whose contexts are different. Thus, the induction of the verses hold an identical objective which can give an irrefutable and definite identification of one of the main objectives of the Qur’ān such as confirming the prophethood of all the Prophets dated back to the very first and specifically to the last Prophet. The following verses would be a good example of this idea:

{نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنْزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ}

“It is He Who sent down to thee (step by step), in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this, as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the criterion (of judgment between right and wrong).” (Al-Qur’ān, 3: 3)

{ وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّدِينِ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَنَتْلُوهُ مِنْ حَوْلِكَ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَهُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ }

“And this is a Book We have revealed, blessed, verifying that which is before it, and that you may warn the metropolis and those around her; and those who believe in the hereafter believe in it, and they attend to their prayers constantly.” (Al-Qur’ān, 6: 92)

Linguistically, the word “مُصَدِّقًا” (*muṣaddiqa*) is used in the above-mentioned verses as a circumstantial phrase (*hāl*) which poses emphasis in a way that gives meaning that the Qur’ān can be nothing but a confirming Book for previous Scriptures as well as for itself (Ibn ‘Āshūr, 1997). From the grammatical perspective, the word “تَصَدِّقًا” (*taṣdīqa*) in verse 10: 37 is used as a causative object (*maf’ul lahu*) (Abū al-Baqā’, ND). With these two sound grammatical tools, it should be asserted that all these verses focus on one objective which is “confirming the prophecy”. In addition, these verses introduce the Qur’ān as a “confirming Scripture” of what divine truths were revealed to the Prophets who came before Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) (Al-Ṭabarī, 2000). These truths include the promise and good tidings about sending him as a prophet, revealing the Qur’ān to him, (Ibn Kathīr, 1999) *tawhīd*, prophecies, stories and some selected laws (Al-Baghawī, 1420 AH) which can bring welfare to mankind regardless era. In Qur’ānic concept, the prophecy is indivisible (Al-Qur’ān, 2: 136) as all the Messengers have preached essentially the same message of *tawhīd* (Al-Rāzī, 2000). It therefore becomes evident that one of the major purposes of the Qur’ān is the confirmation of the prophecy in general and its connection to the last Prophet.

### Second Method: Thematic Induction

In identifying the objectives of the Qur’ān, the use of induction may be of great help. Given its significance, this method has been placed first in al-Shāṭibī’s list of ways to ascertain the objectives of the Lawgiver. According to him, the thematic induction is one of the most crucial and powerful tools with which objectives of the Law can be identified (Al-Raysūnī, 1995). The essence of this induction is to look into rational backgrounds of the evidences appeared differently in manners and in different terms to meet various objectives scattered in different chapters. Yet, they share in common meaning and complement each other. Al-Shāṭibī stated in his *al-Muwāfaqāt* how he actualized this task saying “I proceeded to record its wonders and gather together its scattered pieces from the most specific to the most general, citing the evidence thereof from the sources of Islamic rulings with attention to every detail. In so doing, I relied upon all-inclusive inferences rather than limiting myself to isolated particulars, demonstrating the textual and rational foundations [of Islamic rulings] to the extent that I was enabled by grace to elucidate the objectives of the Qur’ān and Sunnah.” (Al-Raysūnī, 1995).

Conducting an induction throughout the Qur’ān in order to discover its universal objectives is a comprehensive task, as its contents are widely diversified. If all the chapters of the Qur’ān are inducted upon their major themes and objectives, the task might be, to some extent easy. Notable works are available on the categorization of the major themes of the chapters of the Qur’ān and their objectives written by renowned



exegetes and scholars. In the contemporary trends of Qur'ānic interpretation, focusing on the objectives and themes in the beginning of interpreting any *sūrah* has become popular. There is hardly any *tafsīr* in the modern era is considered valuable without this method.

The induction of the commonalities of the objectives and themes of all the *sūrahs* could refer to the common and universal objectives of the Qur'ān. It is not necessary that all universal objectives of the Qur'ān must be reflected in one *sūrah*. One *sūrah* could contain one or more objectives. For examples, *Sūrah al-Ikhlās*, an early Makkan *Sūrah*, sums up in a few terse words the Unity of the Godhead (Yūsuf 'Alī, 1992) which can at best constitute only one objective of the Qur'ān whereas, *Sūrah al-Fātiḥa* for example, constitutes most of the major objectives and themes of the Qur'ān, as some of the interpreters of the Qur'ān have claimed. Yūsuf 'Alī (d.1948) asserts that “by universal consent it is rightly placed at the beginning of the Qur'ān, as summing up, in marvelously terse and comprehensive words, man's relation to Allah in contemplation and prayer” (1992). Muḥammad Asad mentions;

“it contains, in a condensed form, all the fundamental principles laid down in the Qur'ān: the principle of God's oneness and uniqueness, of His being the originator and fosterer of the universe, the fount of all life-giving grace, the One to whom man is ultimately responsible, the only power that can really guide and help; the call to righteous action in the life of this world ("guide us the straight way"); the principle of life after death and of the organic consequences of man's actions and behavior (expressed in the term "Day of Judgment"); the principle of guidance through God's message-bearers (evident in the reference to "those upon whom God has bestowed His blessings") and, flowing from it, the principle of the continuity of all true religions (implied in the allusion to people who have lived - and erred - in the past); and, finally, the need for voluntary self-surrender to the will of the Supreme Being and, thus, for worshipping Him alone” (1980).

It is notable that the key incentives of this method are the main or central themes of the *sūrahs* as their themes are seriously utilized in understanding their objectives. Thus, the commonalities of the major themes of all the *sūrahs* could be utilized in understanding the universal objectives of the Qur'ān. The themes of the Qur'ān, in general, can be easily understood through categorizing the major themes of Makkan and Madinan chapters of the Qur'ān. The leitmotifs of these two categories of revelation are different. As priority in Makkah was the establishment of sound faith, the pivotal themes of the Makkan revelations were belief in God, monotheism, eschatology, and reward and punishment (Leaman, 2006). Al-Shāṭibī notes that the axes of the Makkan *sūrahs* are three, first, establishing the truth of *tawḥīd*; second, certifying the Prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) through rebutting false allegations against him such as that he is a liar, mad, wizard, or he is taught by a man, etc; and third, establishing the fact that there is resurrection and hereafter (Al-Shaṭībī, 1997). Whereas, the Madinan revelations, however, included all the *sūrahs* and *āyahs* that were revealed after the *Hijrah* in 622, in or around Madinah whose subject matters include the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*), Islamic legal rulings, social constitution, economic and family

affairs, struggle for the sake of God (*jihād*), martyrdom, and the hypocrites (Leaman, 2006).

### **Third Method: The Repetition of Qur'ānic Themes**

The occurrence of repetition in the Qur'ān is a well-known fact. There are two types of repetitions in the Qur'ān; repetition of words and meanings respectively, and repetition of words and meanings together (al-Fatūḥ, 1995). However, the repetition of meanings or themes is widely found in the Qur'ān and it is more frequent than the words. As a Book of eternal Divine guidance, there must be Divine wisdom behind these repetitions. Since the Qur'ānic messages address the different minds and mentalities to bring about the desired effects in society, a continual emphasis is required on those subjects that are appropriate and fundamental for them. For this reason, the Qur'ān continuously repeats the core issues on which its whole mission is based. According to Mawdūdī, throughout the Qur'ān, these issues i.e. the Unity of Allah and His Attributes, the Hereafter, man's accountability and reward and punishment, Prophethood and belief in revealed Scriptures are oft-repeated. If these ideas are lost, the whole mission will be devoid of its true spirit (Mawdūdī, ND). In fact, these are the major issues discussed in the Qur'ān. Thus, it can be argued that this particular focus through repetitions would indicate the major purposes of the Qur'ān. The rationale of this argument is presented hereinafter.

Generally speaking, repetition has an exalted place in any eloquent language. Muḥammad Asad mentions that “many classical philologists point out that this (repetition) is linguistically permissible for the sake of special stress, and is equivalent to an emphatic repetition of the imperative in question (Asad, 1980) and repetitions refer to an emphasis on any particular issue (Habīb, 1938).” Al-Rāzī, however, explains the necessities of repetitions are making emphasis, affirmation, rebuttal of doubts and elucidation of the facts (Al-Rāzī, 2000). Moreover, if any speech elongates, there is a possibility for its essence to be forgotten. Therefore, repetition and reiteration may give a fresh feeling toward the issue (Muḥammad, 1997)

In Qur'ānic usage, repetitions are not idle presentations as al-Shāṭibī states that the repetitions of Qur'ānic themes in accordance with the circumstances aim to reach their objectives (Al-Shāṭibī, 2003) and the function, reason and wisdom of repetition are discussed by scholars. According to Sayyid Quṭb, a statement is often repeated in the Qur'ān in a variety of ways aimed at establishing a certain fact (Quṭb, ND). However, repetition in the Qur'ān is of two types, firstly, repetition of words or sentences; secondly, repetition of themes such as stories and events in the Qur'ān. The first kind serves emphasis (Ibn 'Āshūr, 1997) or for any particular purpose (al-Azrari, 1987), for example, to refuse and reprimand which is reflected in the verse {فبأي آلاء ربكما تكذبان} to rule something out which is reflected in the verse {هيئات هيئات لما نوءدون}, and other purposes. In Arabic rhetoric, this style of repetition has an enormous effect in materializing the above mentioned purposes. For example, in verse 34-35 of *Sūrah al-Qiyāmah*, the word *'awlā* is repeated four times and the purpose behind it is to emphasize in threat and requital. Similarly in *Sūrah al-Balad*, the repetition of the word *al-balad* occurs for the glorification of the holy territory of Allah (swt). Secondly, thematic repetition includes stories and a verity of other events which mainly contain the subject of reward and requital, *tawhīd*, prophethood, ethos, etc. This type of

repetition also holds a number of reasons and multiple purposes for its occurrence, such as alarming and threatening the requitals (al-Azrari, 1987), emphasizing, adding excessiveness to the denotation (Abu Ḥafs, 1998) magnifying advice, establishing the factual argument against the opposition, or reminding the grace and rewards of Allah (swt), obligating gratitude to Him and increasing awareness, etc. (al-Rafi', 1974). According to Ibn Sayyiduh, repetitions in the Qur'ān might be intended for emphasis or introducing the greatness of the repeat topic. For example, Qur'ānic verses overwhelmingly repeated the issue of establishing well-being (*ṣalāh*) in order to introduce its importance and distinction within the Islamic obligations (ND).

Turning to the relation of repetition with the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān, the above mentioned statements about the functions, reasons and wisdom show that there is a deep relation between these two because the repetitions mostly revolve around the major themes of the Qur'ān. It should be mentioned here that the major themes are tied to certain purposes. According to Rashīd Riḍā, repetition is a significant element to identify the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān. He argues that the purposes of the Qur'ān are i.e. reforming individuals, communities and their institution, leading them to a matured level, knitting them in human brotherhood and unity, developing their mindset and rectifying their hearts. These purposes might not be attained except by making sufficient repetitions of them. Some of these purposes need to be repeated once, twice and even several times in order to uproot the inherent bad traditions from people's minds and replace them with the right ones (Riḍā, 1990). Furthermore, the Qur'ān was revealed for the purpose that people's actions are conducted in accordance with its directions and the essential means of action is knowledge which could be achieved by reading and deeply thinking about it. As much as repetition occurs, the understanding gets stronger. For this reason, the first generation of Islam was used to recite it repeatedly and excessively i.e. the second Caliph 'Umar studied *Sūrah al-Baqarah* for eight years. So, repetition promotes understanding and deep thinking (*tadabbur*) which are some of the purposes of the Qur'ān.

The Qur'ān states or discusses a thing only to the extent relevant to its aims and objects and leaves out unnecessary and irrelevant details to its aims and objectives and turns over and over again to its central theme and to its invitation around which every other topic revolves (Mawdūdī, 1990).

#### **Forth Method: The Situational Change in the First Period of Islām**

Revelation is primarily a source of beliefs, values, ideas and purposes which the process of reformation aspires to realize. Reform, hence, represents the actions taken and the energy exerted by those who desire to bring about a profound change in society (Safi, 1998). Thus, the relationship between revelation and situational change or reform is complementary. One's presence invokes the presence of another. Revelation comes in response to prevailing chaos, injustice, violations of rights and massive corruption which require a rightful comprehensive reform in order to rescue and rediscover a true and just social transformation from its deformation. Thus, it is logical to claim that the situational transformations or reformations from the deformations of *jāhiliyyah* that took place in the light of Qur'ānic directions in the first Islamic society can be a clue to indentify the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān, because if the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān have ever been reflected in any period of time or in any generation, the first period and the first

generation should be unquestionably regarded for that. The fundamentals and dynamics on which these situational changes took place should be considered as the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān because the deformations may differ from period to period and society to society but the fundamentals of their remedy will always remain unchanged as the Qur'ānic principles are beyond any change. Taking this arguments home, the major changes that came to view in the first Islamic society as well as their dynamics should be scrutinized.

At the socio-ethical level, there was not a single nation in the whole world of the 6<sup>th</sup> century of the Christian era that could be called healthy in temperament, not a single society that was imbued with high ethics, nor a single state that was based on principles of justice, equality and fairness, nor a leadership that possessed knowledge and wisdom, nor a religion that represented the pure teachings of the prophets of God. The word of God had become corrupted. True knowledge and right action had become rare and moral teachers who could guide men along the sublime path of godliness...scarce (Nadwī,1977). The whole land of Arabia was plunged in a sea of ignorance and darkness. Justice and truth, the two fundamentals of civilized life, were unknown. Mortality was at the lowest ebb. Religion was at its lowest depth. Cruelty, unjust practices and depriving others of their rights by force went unpunished. These inevitably led to tension, which was bound to undermine the fabric of the Makkan society. Women were treated as far inferior to men. They were not allowed any share of inheritance (Salaḥī, ND). Inter-tribal relationships were fragile. Avarice for wealth and involvement in futile wars were the main objectives that governed their chiefs' self-centered policies (Al-Mubārakpūrī, 2005). There were good characters and virtues in their character but these few virtues and good qualities were easily drowned in an extravagance of sin, free and open indulgence in adultery, gambling, drinking, highway robbery, uncleanness, and every kind of abomination (Siddīqī, 1993). The Holy Qur'ān depicts this world-wide darkness and chaos in the following verses:

{الر كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ }

*“Alif. Lam. Ra. (This is) a Scripture which We have revealed unto thee (Muhammad) that thereby thou mayst bring forth mankind from darkness unto light, by the permission of their Lord, unto the path of the Mighty, the Owner of Praise.” (Al-Qur’ān, 14: 1)*

In response to these unwanted circumstances, the Prophet's guidance on his reforms covers the entire life of human beings, i.e. political, social, economic and religious (Choudhury, 1993). He wanted the power to bring about the downfall of the corrupt and disorderly world of his day and laid the foundations of a new and better world (Mawdūdī, 1990). Thus, he organized a social order on the ideals of Qur'ānic teachings based on the fundamental principles of righteousness, equality, justice and fair play to everybody, irrespective of race, color, gender or any other distinctions (Choudhury, 1993). A new impulse provided by Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) created changes of diverse nature and unparalleled dimensions based on the principles of the Qur'an. The most striking achievement of the Prophet (pbuh) was that man was changed from within and completely transformed. The self-seeking animal that existed in the shape of man was totally effaced by the power of truth and in his place emerged a God-fearing, righteous and principled man (Siddiqi, 1994). As a result of this change, the meaning of

justice, virtue and piety was given entirely new dimensions. (2: 177, 3: 92, 2: 244, 90: 91 and 4: 58). All false ideas and systems thrust upon man had to go and pave way for a good and fair system where everyone's rights would be well-preserved and guarded with justice (Rahman, 1995). Consequently, a complete form of social justice and righteous community was established. It can be learned from the above that the presentation of socio-ethical changes took place in the first Islamic society and the changing factors of social and ethical changes were righteousness and social justice. According to Sayyed Quṭb, social justice is only a branch of Islamic sciences to which all Islamic doctrines must revert (Quṭb, 2000) and there is no doubt that a central aim of the Qur'ān is to establish a viable social order on earth that will be just and ethically based (Rahman, 2009). So, it is evident that one of the Qur'ān's purposes is establishing justice in society.

At the religious and intellectual levels, before the Prophet (pbuh) brought about change to the external order, he changed the beliefs, hearts and minds of man and produced a new character in the people a person (Ilyas & Syed, 2008). However, the religious life of the Arabians before the advent of Islam was so marginal; in fact, it was next to nothing. The polytheists, who faked Abrahamism, were so far detached from its precepts, and were totally oblivious of its immanent good manners. They plunged into disobedience and ungodliness, and developed certain peculiar religious superstitions that managed to leave a serious impact on the religious and socio-political life in the whole of Arabia (Al-Mubarakpuri, 2005). For example, one of the most absurd beliefs was their claim that Allah (swt) had married the Jinn and begot angels as His daughters through that marriage. They therefore, worshiped the angels, whom they considered Allah's daughter, and the Jinn, whom they claimed to be related to Allah (swt) by marriage (Salāḥī, ND). They lived according to their whims rather than reason.

However, this superstitious mind and inherent stagnated intellect were replaced by free and rational thinking encouraged by the Qur'ān. The changing factor of this situation is the method of thinking formulated by the Qur'ān. It encourages the study of the concrete universe of Allah (swt) through observation, study and research laying out the basis for an experimental method leading to the growth of new knowledge and new sciences. It was the emergence of this new order in the life of man that overcame the existing stagnation. In short, the old-aged corruptive beliefs, inherent traditions of intellectual stagnation of the Arabs had been removed through a systematic methodological thinking suggested by the Qur'ān which incurs rational thinking and openness of mind. This changing factor can be a clue to understanding the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān because it is resultant from the Qur'ānic contribution.

In the political field, pre-Islamic political condition was chaotic and manipulated by the few influential persons in the society. They were the sovereign and the rule of law was determined by them. As a result, the ordinary people were deprived from their rights and even often subjected to injustice and inequality. Islam offered a revolutionary political concept which completely changed the nature, style and scope of the political life. According to Syed Ameer Ali, "It gave a code to the people and a constitution to the State, enforced by the sanctions of religion. It limited taxation; it made men equal in the eye of the law; it consecrated the principles of self-government. It established a control over the sovereign power by rendering the executive authority subordinate to the

law, — a law based upon religious sanctions and moral obligations (Ali, 1873).” The fundamental changing factor was the concept of sovereignty which Mawdūdī defines as, “God is the Creator of the universe. He is its real Sustainer and Ruler. It is His Will that prevails in the cosmoses all around. As all the creation is His, His command should also be established and obeyed in man’s society. He is the real Sovereign and His Will should reign supreme as the Law (Mawdūdī, 1955)”. This is one of the best and most eloquent arguments of *tawhīd* mentioned in many *sūrahs* of the Qur’ān.

The discussion above is an attempt to scrutinize some of the major changes that had taken place in the early period of Islam under the shadow of the Qur’ān, as well as the dynamics which worked behind them, in order to understand the purposes for which the Qur’ān was revealed. It is found in this discussion that the dynamics of these epoch-making changes are i.e. justice and *tawhīd*, which are in fact the central concerns and purposes of the Qur’ān.

#### **Fifth Method: The Synthesis between the Objectives of Sending Muḥammad (pbuh) and *Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān***

The Message (*risālah*) and the Messenger (*rasūl*) are derived from the same Divine source to materialize certain Divine purposes; both are intertwined. However, Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) experienced two stages of his life, pre-prophethood and post-prophethood. The first was the preparatory stage for the second, and the second stage was fully regulated by the directions of the Qur’ān. He was perfectly prepared by Allah (s.w.t) to bear His message, to bring His intention down to earth. Both are interactive and complementary roles. One’s absence proves the solo presence of another meaningless. In terms of function, source and purpose both are tied in a profound coherence and indivisible symbiosis. As far as the purposes of the Qur’an are concerned, there must be a correlation between the purposes of sending the Qur’ān and the purposes of sending Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) as the Qur’ān itself in a number of verses categorically states that one of its purposes is to confirm the truthfulness of the prophethood in general and the Prophethood of the last Prophet (pbuh) in particular as it appears in the following verses:

{ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنْزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ (3) مِنْ قَبْلُ هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ وَأَنْزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ }

“It is He Who sent down to thee (step by step), in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this, as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the criterion (of judgment between right and wrong).” (Al-Qur’ān, 3: 3-4)

{ وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ مُصَدِّقُ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَلِتُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَىٰ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَهُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ }

“And this is a Book We have revealed, blessed, verifying that which is before it, and that you may warn the metropolis and those around her; and those who believe in the hereafter believe in it, and they attend to their prayers constantly.” (Al-Qur’ān, 6: 92)

These verses introduce the Qur'ān as a “confirming Scripture” of what divine truths were sent to the prophets before Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) (Al-Ṭabarī, 2000) as well as the promise and good tidings of sending him as a prophet and revealing the Qur'ān to him (Ibn Kathīr, 1999). In Qur'ānic concept, the prophecy is indivisible (Al-Qur'ān, 2:136) as all the Messengers have preached essentially the same message of *tawhīd* (Rahman, 2009). In addition, the stories and narratives of the previous prophets and their companions occupy a significant portion of the Qur'ān. It therefore becomes evident that one of the major purposes of the Qur'ān is the confirmation of the prophecy in general and its connection to the last Prophet (pbuh). It is notable that the same verses also describe the function and objective of prophethood which is mainly concerned with “warning those who do wrong and bringing good tidings for the righteous.”

This connection between the prophecy with the purposes of the Qur'ān gives an important clue to the chief purposes of the Qur'ān because the functions of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) and directions of the Qur'ān always went hand in hand. This parallelism shows a close harmony between the purposes of the Qur'ān and the purposes the Prophet's mission.

### Establishing Justice

Everything in this world operates on the principle of a balance within it. If the balance is upset in anyway, the thing goes wrong. This sense of balance, especially for human beings, is called 'adl or justice. It has to be maintained in all the matters, whether religious or moral in all worldly affairs. The ordainment of the prophets is so that they maintain this 'adl or balance. In the Qur'ān, there are over 200 admonitions against injustice expressed in such words as *zulm*, *ithm*, *ḍalāl*, and others, and the notion of justice in such words as 'adl, *qist*, *mizan*, and others, or in a variety of direct expressions. Moreover, the idea of justice was of a particular interest to the Prophet (pbuh), and he dealt with the problems of his day with uprightness, balance, and fairness. Allah (swt) says:

{ كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ }

*“At one time all people were only one nation. God sent Prophets with glad news and warnings. He sent the Book with them for a genuine purpose to provide the people with the ruling about disputed matters among them. No one disputed this matter except those who had already received evidence before. Their dispute was only because of their own hostility. To deal with this dispute, God, through His will, sent guidance to the believers. God guides to the right path whomever He wants.”(Al-Qur'ān, 2: 213)*

{ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَاكَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَكُنْ لِلْخَائِتِينَ حَصِيمًا }

*“We have sent down to thee the Book in truth, that thou mightest judge between men, as guided by Allah: so be not (used) as an advocate by those who betray their trust.”(Al-Qur'ān, 4: 105)*

These verses declare in parallel that establishing justice is a shared purpose of the Prophet (pbuh) and the Book revealed to him. A paradigm of this reality is found in a conversation between a Muslim envoy *Rabi' ibn Amir* and a Persian army chief of staff of Rostam. He asked *ibn Amir* "Why did you Muslims come here?" The reply was, "Allah (swt) sent us to get rid of worshipping human beings and to worship Allah (swt) the Almighty.....and to get them out from injustice of religions and enter them into justice of Islam (Ibn Kathir,1988)". From these historical references, the reality appears that establishing justice was one of the purposes of the Prophet (pbuh) that once gave rise to a just ruler, just community and civilization.

### Bearing of Glad Tidings and Warning

Many verses in the Qur'an repeatedly declare that the purpose of sending the Prophet (pbuh) is to warn people about the consequence of following the path of deviation and convene good tidings for the rightly guided people. The following verses are good examples:

{وَبِالْحَقِّ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ وَبِالْحَقِّ نَزَلَ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا }

*"With truth have We sent it down, and with truth hath it descended. And We have sent thee as naught else save a bearer of good tidings and a Warner."* (Al-Qur'an, 17: 105)

{تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا }

*"Blessed is He Who hath revealed unto His slave the Criterion (of right and wrong), that he may be a Warner to the peoples."* (Al-Qur'an, 25: 1)

These verses show that it is the Qur'an which is an incentive for the Prophet (pbuh) to be a warner and bearer of good tidings. In addition, the Qur'an contains the matter of the Hereafter, specifically, Heaven and Hell in the biggest proportions. The scholars, however, describe these Qur'anic contents as *targhib* and *tarhib* which are almost unarguably presented as the purposes of the Qur'an. Thus, this correlation between the purposes of sending the Prophet (pbuh) and the Qur'an may strengthen the idea that examining the objectives of sending the Prophet (pbuh) would be a clue for understanding the central *maqāsid* of the Qur'an.

As presented in the examples above, it is obvious that each and every objective of the sending the Prophet (pbuh) has a similar correlation, with the *maqāsid* of the Qur'an. For example, the prophets appeared in chaotic and deviated social conditions to establish a perfect human order confronting man's nature. In this way, 'truth' replaces 'falsehood'. Throughout history, ignorance and prejudice have reserved the way of humanity and imposing inhuman systems has taken man out of his natural course (falsehood). Thus, the prophets had to lead him to the straight path (Khamenei, 1990). Similarly, the Qur'an is characterized as a *Furqān*, distinguishing truth and falsehood. Furthermore, man is created with a rich background of goodness and virtue, but only through proper education will he be able to bring this potential power into action and achieve a higher degree of evolution. The aim of the prophets was to provide such an education. The Qur'an mentions this idea with the words "purification" and "teaching".



The correlation of other objectives of both the Prophet (pbuh) and the Qur'ān could be seen in the same manner.

### Conclusion

In short, according to the above discussion, *'illah* and *tarajjī* could be used in understanding the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān. These tools are similarly applicable in understanding both the basic and secondary *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān. But to understand the basic or chief *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān, it is conditioned that *'illah*, an effective cause, or *tarajjī*, a linguistic particle used for expectation, must be linked to the Qur'ānic revelation as a whole. Anything otherwise would be effective for the secondary ones instead of the basic ones. Moreover, a thematic induction of the Qur'ān would indicate its *maqāṣid*. In addition, the selected scholars in this study are unanimous on the matter that the oft-repeated issues in the Qur'ān refer to its higher purposes. Again, finding the major situational change in the early Islamic era is arguably another methodology for understanding the higher purposes of the Qur'ān because all the contextual changes took place in that particular period were nothing but a reflection of the purposes of the Qur'ān. Thus, from the major transformations in that era, the major purposes of the Qur'ān can be understood. Finally, this study found that there is a close relation between *maqāṣid* of the Qur'ān and purposes (*maqāṣid*) of sending Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) and a number of Qur'ānic verses to prove this reality. Thus, the purposes of sending the Prophet (pbuh) could be an indicator to the higher purposes of the Qur'ān. However, these methodologies give *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* a methodological value which is vital for its appearance as a distinctive science for understanding the essence of the Qur'ān.

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