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# Toward a Unified Framework for *Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān*: The Need for Addressing Fragmentation Through Consensus Building

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## Abstract

This study investigates the persistent fragmentation in identifying the *Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān* (higher objectives of the Qur'an) and argues for the necessity of developing a unified, evidence-based framework through scholarly consensus. Despite extensive intellectual efforts from al-Ghazālī's *Jawāhir al-Qur’ān* to contemporary thinkers, no agreed methodology or comprehensive list of objectives has emerged. In essence, the discourse on *Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān* is hindered by conceptual inconsistency, methodological vagueness, and lack of validation, which together result in fragmented, speculative, and non-replicable outcomes. These weaknesses obscure rather than illuminate the Qur'an's higher purposes, making it difficult for scholars and practitioners to derive coherent, evidence-based insights. Addressing these interlinked problems through a unified and scientifically grounded framework is therefore essential to re-establishing the Qur'an's higher objectives as the central guiding paradigm for knowledge, ethics, and civilization. Employing a qualitative, historical-textual, and comparative approach, the study analyzes the works of twenty-one classical, reformist, and modern scholars to trace thematic, numerical, and methodological diversity in their interpretations. The analysis reveals wide variation, from one to over two thousand identified objectives, and six recurring methodological orientations: theological, ethical-spiritual, legal, reformist, holistic, and exegetical. Common themes such as *tawḥīd*, guidance, justice, and human welfare appear across periods, yet the absence of consistent evidence and methodological rigor continues to hinder synthesis. The study concludes that consensus on *Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān* is an intellectual and practical imperative, as it would bridge revelation and reason, unify fragmented interpretations, and establish the Qur'an's higher objectives as a coherent framework for education, law, ethics, and civilizational development in addressing modern human challenges.

**Keywords:** *Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān*, Consensus Building, Qur'anic Interpretation, Higher Objectives, Islamic Scholarship

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## Introduction

The necessity of developing a shared, evidence-based scholarly consensus on the higher objectives of the Qur'an (Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān) on the basis of rigorous textual and methodological evidence stems from the need for a coherent framework to guide Qur'anic interpretation, education, and the systematic application of Qur'anic principles to modern challenges in Islamic thought, thereby unlocking their profound potential to shape the future of Islamic scholarship. Such a consensus should not be the product of isolated efforts, but of a collective, global process involving qualified scholars and academics in Qur'anic studies, especially specialists in *tafsīr* and *uṣūl al-tafsīr*, from diverse regions, schools of thought (madhāhib), and academic traditions. A convincing number of such scholars worldwide must participate so that the resulting framework attains at least a minimum threshold of scholarly credibility and recognition and can reasonably be treated as a credible reference point for subsequent work on Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān.

This consensus is a step forward measure to ensure that the rich legacy has left by the scholars of the field for over a millennium finds a new avenue of development. The intellectual history of Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān can be traced back to al-Ghazālī (1111 C.E.), who was likely the first Muslim scholar to explicitly use the term in his treatise *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān* (al-Ghazālī, 1111/2005). Since then, the field has undergone several stages of methodological and conceptual development, gradually expanding its scope and depth. Its horizon broadened significantly, eventually capturing the attention of leading figures in modern Islamic scholarship. Some of the most pioneering contributions have been made by prominent thinkers such as Muḥammad 'Abduh, Rashīd Riḍā, Badi'uzzamān Sa'īd Nursī, Ibn 'Āshūr, Ḥasan al-Bannā, Muḥammad Iqbāl, Sayyid Quṭb, Abul A'lā Mawdūdī, Izzat Darwazah, Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, and Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, among others. The evolution of this science—from early inklings in classical exegesis to a formal discipline in contemporary Qur'anic studies—is well documented in the literature (Islam, 2013).

Yet this rich trajectory has also produced fragmentation. Differences in disciplinary lenses (kalām, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *tafsīr*, reformation), theological orientations, and civilizational contexts (pre-modern empire, colonial modernity, post-colonial nation-states) have led scholars to privilege distinct sets of higher objectives. In many cases, maqāṣid were inferred implicitly from selective textual evidence, without shared criteria for inclusion or exclusion. The absence of a common methodological framework for moving from textual data to higher objectives has therefore normalized conceptual and numerical diversity, and, at times, mutual incommensurability between lists of maqāṣid.

The central problem in identifying *Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān* lies in the absence of a clear, evidence-based, and systematic methodology. Scholars across centuries have produced conceptually and numerically diverse lists—ranging from a handful of objectives to more than two dozen—but most of these identifications lack consistent grounding in Qur’anic narratives or logical justification. Many proposed *maqāṣid* are shaped by theological leanings, personal interpretations, or selective use of verses, without transparent criteria or methodological rigor. This has resulted in overlapping, sometimes contradictory claims, leaving the field fragmented and incoherent. Compounding the issue, no genuine scholarly consensus has ever been built around a unified framework of higher objectives, making the discourse vulnerable to vagueness, subjectivity, and weak evidential support.

Practically, this fragmentation means that Qur’ān-based frameworks and discourses often rely on author-specific lists of objectives. It also generates a disconnect between *maqāṣid al-Qur’ān* and the more consolidated discourse of *maqāṣid al-shari‘ah*, thereby weakening the Qur’anic anchoring of contemporary legal, social, and civilizational projects. In the absence of a shared framework, the Qur’ān’s higher objectives risk remaining largely symbolic or rhetorical, rather than serving as an operational compass for interpretation and policy making.

## 2. Literature Review

**Diversity of Scholarly Opinions on Identifying Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān:** The identification of *Maqasid al-Quran* by traditional Muslim scholars, as mentioned above, is mostly imprinted by Islamic theological color. In their views, the major issues of Islamic theology such as *Tawhid*, Prophethood, reward and requital in the Hereafter, divine Determinism, etc. (al-Ghaznawī, 1998) are detected as universal *Maqasid* of the Quran. In contemporary literature, there is paramount conceptual and numerical extension over the identification of *Maqasid al-Quran* in pre-modern era. The numerical variation ranges between one and more than twenty-five (al-Ansārī, 1973),, and the conceptual diversity exceeds the theological boundary and reaches ethics, education (*tarbiyah*), socio-political reforms, Quran’s inimitability, civil rights, establishment of Quranic laws and others (Islam, 2013).

**Thematic Diversity:** Scholars have corroborated their views by relating verses from the Quran without revealing enough methodological supports in favor of their compatibility to represent as the universal *maqāṣid* of the Quran. This fundamental gap may undermine the soundness and authenticity of their views or at least raise a question about their acceptability. Surely, some of their views such as *Tawhid*, Prophethood, Hereafter and Justice are cardinal issues of the Quran and can undoubtedly be represented as its universal purposes, but some of their views like ridding of slaves, rights of women and military rules may not fall

in the universal *maqāṣid* of the Quran (Islam, 2012). Rather, they come under other universal issues, for instance, ridding of slaves and rights of women fall under “human rights”. Thus, introducing these types of secondary purposes as the universal purposes may not be logically acceptable because it may undermine the universality of Quran’s *maqāṣid* (Islam, 2018). Yet, the range of their views widens the functional scope for *Maqāṣid al-Quran*.

**Methodological Diversity:** From a methodological standpoint, many of these formulations tend to conflate universal ends with historically contingent means. For instance, Riḍā’s inclusion of ‘ending slavery’ and detailed political unities as primary *maqāṣid* reflects his engagement with colonial modernity and early 20th-century nation-state formation, rather than clear Qur’anic universals. By contrast, Ibn ‘Āshūr’s eightfold typology remains closer to core categories (‘aqīdah, akhlāq, ahkām, polity, lessons, education, warning, inimitability) that can be mapped consistently across the Qur’anic corpus. This comparison suggests that contextual pressures strongly shaped what some scholars elevated to the level of *maqāṣid*, thereby reinforcing the need for an explicit, shared methodology for distinguishing universal objectives from their historical applications.

### 3. Methodology

**Research Design:** This study adopts a qualitative, historical-textual, and comparative research design. It investigates the writings of classical, modern, and contemporary Muslim scholars on *Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān*, seeking to identify, analyze, and systematize the diversity of objectives articulated across time. The design is exploratory in nature and does not aim at hypothesis testing, but rather at constructing a conceptual framework from existing scholarship.

**Population and Sample:** **Population:** The population of this study is situated within the broader discourse of Qur’anic scholarship that explicitly engages with *Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān*. This focus is deliberately distinguished from the literature on *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah*, as the two represent related but distinct intellectual frameworks. By delimiting the population to Qur’anic scholarship, this study avoids conceptual conflation and ensures that the analysis remains anchored in the Qur’ān’s own purposive framework. **Sample:** Twenty-one representative scholars were purposively selected based on their explicit or implicit contributions to the discourse of *Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān*. This includes classical authorities such as Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī, Izz al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Salām, Ibrāhīm al-Shātibī, and Burhān al-Dīn al-Biqā‘ī; early modern reformist figures such as Muḥammad ‘Abduh, Muḥammad Rāshīd Riḍā, and Muḥammad Iqbal; and contemporary contributors such as Fuzlur Rahman al-Ansārī, Sayyid Abul A’lā Mawdūdī, Ḥasan al-Bannā, Bediuzzaman Sa‘īd Nursi, Mahmūd Shaltūt, Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī, Muḥammad Bahī, Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīm al-

Zarqānī, Muhammad Tāhir ibn ‘Āshūr, Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, Ṣalāḥ ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Khālidī, Ṭāhā Jābir al-Alwānī, Ḥanān Lahḥām, and ‘Abd al-Karīm Ḥāmidī.

The number of scholars was capped at twenty-one for both representativeness and analytical manageability. Preliminary scoping showed that beyond these twenty-one figures, additional authors tended to reproduce existing thematic and methodological patterns rather than introduce qualitatively new orientations. The sample therefore reflects a saturation point in the discourse across classical, reformist, and contemporary phases, while also including those scholars who are most frequently cited or institutionally influential in present-day discussions on Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān.

**Data Sources: Primary Sources:** Original works of scholars such as *Jawāhir al-Qur’ān* (al-Ghazālī), *Qawā’id al-Āḥkām fī Maṣāliḥ al-Anām* (Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām), *al-Muwāfaqāt fī Uṣūl al-Shari‘ah* (al-Shāṭibī), *Maṣā’id al-Naẓar li-l-Ishrāf ‘alā Maqāṣid al-Suwar* (al-Biqā’ī), *Durūs min al-Qur’ān* (‘Abduh), *al-Wahy al-Muḥammadī* (Riḍā), *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Iqbal), *The Qur’ānic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society* (al-Ansārī), *Fundamentals of Islam* (Mawdūdī), *Hadīth al-Thulāthā’* (al-Bannā), *Kulliyāt Rasā’il al-Nūr* (Nursi), *Ilā al-Qur’ān al-Karīm* (Shaltūt), *al-Wahy wa-l-Qur’ān al-Karīm* (al-Dhahabī), *Nahwa al-Qur’ān al-Karīm* (Bāhī), *Maṇāhil al-‘Irfān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān* (al-Zarqānī), *al-Taḥrīr wa-l-Tanwīr* (Ibn ‘Āshūr), *Kayfā Nata’āmal ma’ al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm* (al-Qaraḍāwī), *Mafātiḥ li-l-Ta’āmul ma’ al-Qur’ān* (al-Khālidī), *Nahwa al-Tajdīd wa al-Ijtihād* (al-Alwānī), *Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān: Dirāsah Mawdū’iyah* (Lahḥām), and *Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān al-Karīm* (Ḥāmidī).

**Secondary Sources:** scholarly works like peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and thesis on Maqāṣid Al-Quran which have been produced dealing with primary sources of the field.

**Data Collection:** Data was collected through a literature survey and textual analysis of the selected works. The procedure involved: a. Identifying explicit statements of maqāṣid where enumerations are provided; b. Organizing the extracted data into a structured dataset, maintaining consistency across scholars. Below is a comprehensive description of the maqāṣid al-Qur’ān identified by each of the 21 scholars, arranged chronologically. Each entry has the *core maqāṣid*, *approach/method*, and *notes*.

No.	Core Maqāṣid Identified	Approach / Method & Notes
1	<b>Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (1983/1111). <i>Jawāhir al-Qur’ān</i>.</b> 1. Introducing the One to whom humanity is called. 2. Introducing the	<i>Approach:</i> Spiritual-philosophical. <i>Notes:</i> Focuses on knowledge of

	Straight Path to Him. 3. Explaining the state of arrival with God. 4. Describing the state of those who respond to the call. 5. Describing the condition of deniers and their abasement. 6. Teaching how to prepare for the journey to God (way-stations, provisions, awareness).	God; neglects action/civilizational side.
2	'Izz al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Salām (1999/13th c.). <i>Qawā'id al-Ahkām fī Maṣāliḥ al-Anām</i> . 1. Qur'anic commands aim at achieving benefits ( <i>maṣāliḥ</i> ). 2. Qur'anic prohibitions aim at preventing harms ( <i>mafāsid</i> ).	<i>Approach:</i> Jurisprudential, fiqh-based. <i>Notes:</i> Restricts maqāṣid to Sharī'ah lens; no independent taxonomy.
3	Ibrāhīm al-Shāṭibī (n.d./14th c.). <i>Al-Muwāfaqāt fī Uṣūl al-Shari'ah</i> . - No numbered maqāṣid, but emphasizes that <b>tadabbur</b> (reflection) on the Qur'an reveals its purposes, accessed holistically rather than piecemeal.	<i>Approach:</i> Methodological-usūlī. <i>Notes:</i> Provides method, not taxonomy.
4	Burhān al-Dīn al-Biqā'ī (2002/15th c.). <i>Maṣā'id al-Naẓar li-l-Ishrāf 'alā Maqāṣid al-Suwar</i> . 1. Divinity (recognition of God). 2. Prophethood. 3. Hereafter. 4. Determinism ( <i>qadar</i> ).	<i>Approach:</i> Exegetical; maqāṣid as tafsīr criterion. <i>Notes:</i> Not corroborated; anticipates tafsīr maqāṣidī.
5	Muhammad 'Abduh (1984/1905). <i>Durūs min al-Qur'ān</i> . 1. Divine unity (tawhīd). 2. Reward for believers and punishment for rejecters. 3. Worship affirming tawhīd. 4. Explanation of the Straight Path. 5. Stories of obedient and disobedient peoples.	<i>Approach:</i> Reformist-ethical. <i>Notes:</i> Stories are illustrative, not maqāṣid in themselves.
6	Muhammad Rāshīd Ridā (1306 AH / 1935). <i>Al-Wahy al-Muhammadi</i> . 1. Tawhīd, afterlife, righteous deeds. 2. Prophethood. 3. Perfection of intellect (sound nature, wisdom, conscience). 4. Humanistic and socio-political reform (eight unities: ummah, humanity, religion, law, worship, polity, equality, language). 5. Responsibility/accountability in Islam. 6. Principles of governance. 7. Financial reform (wealth as test, protection, zakāt, obligations). 8. War reform (eliminating its	<i>Approach:</i> Reformist, socio-political. <i>Notes:</i> Inflates secondary aims into main maqāṣid; lacks direct Qur'anic proofs.

	evils). 9. Women's human, religious, and civil rights. 10. Ending slavery.	
7	<b>Muhammad Iqbal (1996/1938).</b> <i>The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.</i> 1. Awakening higher consciousness of humanity's manifold relations with God and the universe.	<i>Approach:</i> Philosophical-existential. <i>Notes:</i> Singular, programmatic aim; no list.
8	<b>Muhammad 'Abd al-'Azīm al-Zarqānī (1996/1948).</b> <i>Mañāhil al-'Irfān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān.</i> 1. Qur'an as guidance ( <i>hidāyah</i> ) for mankind and jinn. 2. Qur'an as prophetic miracle ( <i>mu'jizah</i> ). 3. Qur'an as recitation in worship.	<i>Approach:</i> Qur'anic sciences. <i>Notes:</i> Restricts maqāṣid to functions.
9	<b>Hasan al-Bannā (n.d./1949).</b> <i>Hadīth al-Thulāthā</i> . 1. Comprehensive exposition of Islamic rulings. 2. Introduction of Islam as complete social code. 3. Preservation of true belief in God during atheism. 4. Guiding the mind against materialism.	<i>Approach:</i> Preaching; da'wah-driven. <i>Notes:</i> Contextual to Islamic movement.
10	<b>Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1996/1960).</b> <i>Kulliyāt Rasā'il al-Nūr.</i> 1. Divine unity. 2. Prophethood. 3. Resurrection. 4. Justice.	<i>Approach:</i> Spiritual-exegetical; multi-level (universal, sūrah, verse). <i>Notes:</i> Demonstrated via <i>tafsīr</i> of al-Fātiha, al-Baqarah.
11	<b>Mahmūd Shaltūt (1985/1963).</b> <i>Ilā al-Qur'ān al-Karīm.</i> 1. Belief system ('aqā'id). 2. Ethics ( <i>akhlāq</i> ). 3. Laws ( <i>ahkām</i> ).	<i>Approach:</i> Exegetical-thematic. <i>Notes:</i> Adds "means": reflection, stories, conscience revival.
12	<b>Muhammad Husayn al-Dhahabī (1986/1977).</b> <i>Al-Wāḥy wa-l-Qur'ān al-Karīm.</i> 1. Qur'an as miracle testifying prophethood. 2. Qur'an as constitution for ummah.	<i>Approach:</i> Qur'anic sciences. <i>Notes:</i> Simplified.
13	<b>Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdūdī (1982/1979).</b> <i>Fundamentals of Islam.</i> 1. Establish God's law on earth. 2. Make mankind God's vicegerents. 3. Qur'anic followers as leaders of the world.	<i>Approach:</i> Political-activist. <i>Notes:</i> Action-oriented; tied to socio-political context.
14	<b>Muhammad Bahī (1985/1982).</b> <i>Nahwa al-Qur'ān al-Karīm.</i> 1. Refuting paganism. 2. Correcting Ahl al-Kitāb distortions. 3. Establishing Islamic society.	<i>Approach:</i> Concise reformist. <i>Notes:</i> Highly condensed maqāṣid.

15	Fazlur Rahman al-Ansari (1973). <i>Qur'anic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society</i> . 25 maqāṣid in full: 1. Obliterate anthropomorphism; establish monotheism. 2. Foster living relation with God for spiritual refinement. 3. Teach human theomorphism (ascent to God, vicegerency via Divine Attributes). 4. Restore women's equality. 5. Resolve dichotomies (faith-reason, religion-science, etc.). 6. Replace salvation with fulfillment. 7. Free religion from superstition. 8. Distinguish spirituality from mysticism. 9. Provide philosophy of integration (unity-ism). 10. Create integralistic civilization. 11. Make morality basis of development. 12. Inaugurate science era. 13. Highlight inductive reasoning. 14. Stress empirical knowledge as worship. 15. Make religion social alchemy for welfare society. 16. Harmonize truth, justice, love, mercy. 17. Ground social justice in collective life. 18. Wealth for welfare. 19. Eradicate poverty/disease. 20. Crown labor with dignity. 21. Value labor/productivity. 22. Balance capitalism and communism. 23. Guide human progress in all healthy directions. 24. Close doors to religious/secular perversions. 25. Confer further divine blessings.	<i>Approach:</i> Reformist-philosophical, integrative. <i>Notes:</i> Expansive, civilizational; mixes core and secondary aims.
16	Muhammad Tāhir Ibn 'Āshūr (2000/1973). <i>Al-Tāhrīr wa-l-Tanwīr</i> . 1. Belief reform. 2. Purification of morals. 3. Legislation. 4. Preserving polity. 5. Historical lessons. 6. Contextual education. 7. Advising/warning. 8. Qur'an's inimitability.	<i>Approach:</i> Exegetical-methodological. <i>Notes:</i> Extracts maqāṣid systematically at sūrah level.
17	Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī (1997). <i>Kayfa Nata'āmal ma'a al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm</i> . 1. Reform beliefs. 2. Affirm human rights. 3. Worship of God. 4. Purify soul. 5. Sound family/women's rights. 6. Build model ummah. 7. Mutual cooperation.	<i>Approach:</i> Reformist-practical. <i>Notes:</i> Some maqāṣid narrow (family).
18	Taha Jābir al-'Alwānī (2008/2016). <i>Nahwa al-Tajdīd wa-l-Ijtihād</i> . 1. Tawḥīd. 2. Tazkiyah	<i>Approach:</i> Holistic, tafsīr maqāṣidī; IIIT

	(purification and growth). 3. 'Imrān (civilizational development).	methodology. <i>Notes:</i> Broad, programmatic; requires operationalization.
19	Şalāh 'Abd al-Fattāh al-Khālidī (1985). <i>Mafātiḥ li-l-Ta'āmul ma'a al-Qur'añ</i> . 1. Guidance. 2. Balanced personality. 3. Qur'añ-based society. 4. Struggle vs jāhiliyyah.	<i>Approach:</i> Pedagogical, practical. <i>Notes:</i> Evidence from companions' lives.
20	Ḩanān Lahhām (2004). <i>Maqāṣid al-Qur'añ: Dirāsah Mawdū'iyyah</i> . 4 maqāṣid categories (~2200 sub-aims): 1. Individual welfare. 2. Ummah welfare. 3. Civilization. 4. Religion.	<i>Approach:</i> Thematic, sharī'ah-influenced. <i>Notes:</i> Over-expansive; low methodological rigor.
21	'Abd al-Karīm Hāmidī (2009). <i>Maqāṣid al-Qur'añ al-Karīm</i> . 1. Personal welfare. 2. Social welfare. 3. Universal welfare.	<i>Approach:</i> Modern maqāṣid lens. <i>Notes:</i> Overlaps maqāṣid al-sharī'ah; lacks Qur'añ-specificity.

Table 1: Dataset of Maqāṣid al-Qur'añ Identified by 21 Scholars

#### 4. Data Analysis

##### Data Analysis:

- The thematic grouping is useful but could benefit from more critical analysis
- Some of the tables could be condensed or moved to appendices

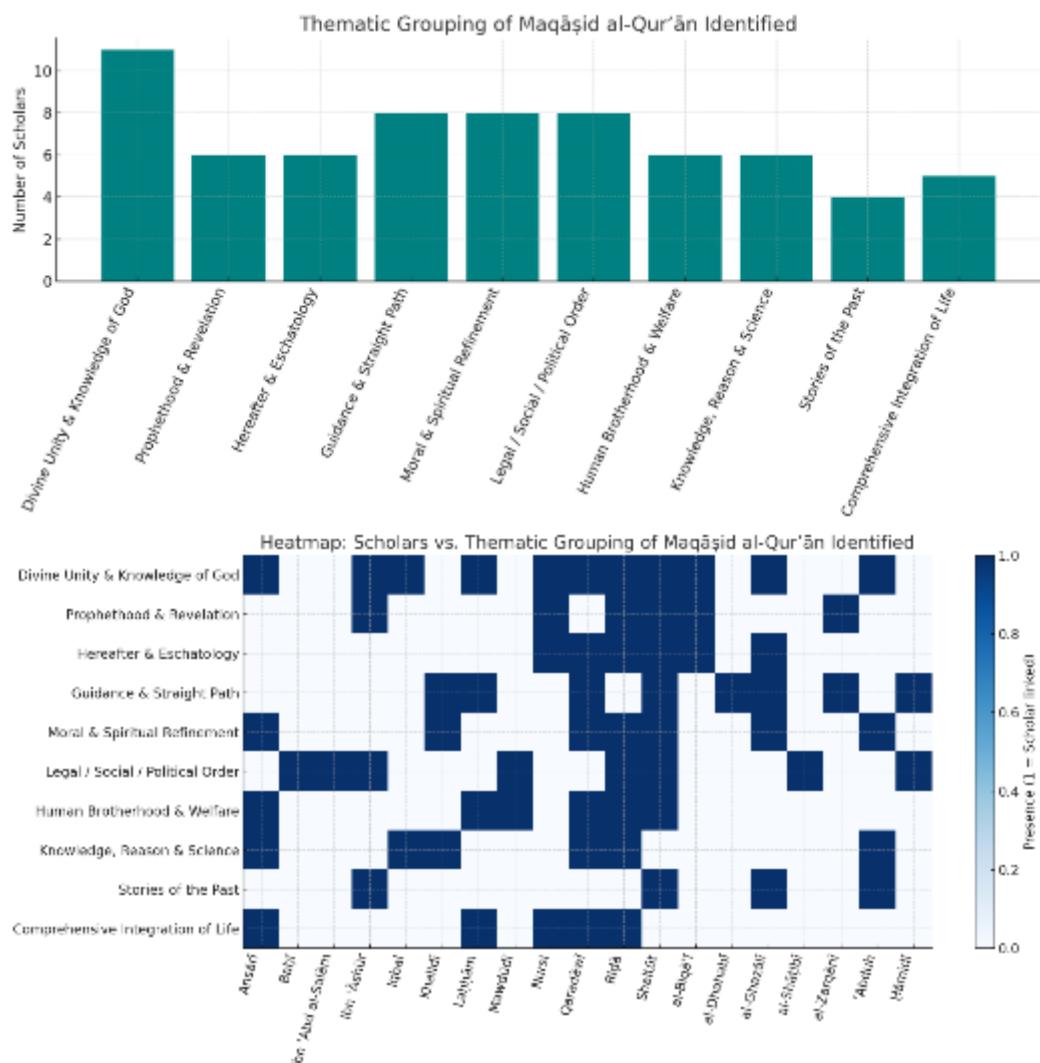
The analysis employed three interrelated strategies namely 1. numerical, 2. thematic, 3. methodological analysis. While the first examines how many maqāṣid each scholar identified, the second categorizes the identified objectives into broader categories such as theological, moral-spiritual, epistemological, socio-political, economic. Finally, the third classifies the approaches such as theological/doctrinal, socio-political reformist, epistemological-scientific, integrative. Comparative tables, thematic matrices, and chronological mappings were constructed. The analysis also traced continuities and shifts in the discourse across historical periods.

To enhance clarity and detect patterns, several visualization techniques were employed. For numerical diversity, Bar and line charts were used; to show overlaps of scholars with themes, Heatmaps were used; to display interconnections and centrality among scholars, Network graphs were used; to trace historical progression and quantify maqāṣid diversity over time, Timelines were used.

## Thematic Grouping of Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān Identified:

- I. **Divine Unity (Tawhīd) and Knowledge of God:** scholars like al-Ghazālī, al-Biqā’ī, ‘Abduh, Riḍā, Iqbal, Nursi, Shaltūt, Ansārī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, Qaradāwī, Lahḥām commonly weigh their opinions that Qur’ān’s primary aim is to establish sound belief in the Oneness of God, remove anthropomorphism, and nurture knowledge of Him.
- II. **Prophethood and Revelation:** Affirming the role of Prophethood, validating the Qur’ān as divine revelation, and guiding humanity through messengers were championed by the by scholars al-Biqā’ī, al-Zarqānī, Riḍā, Nursi, Shaltūt, Ibn ‘Āshūr.
- III. **Hereafter and Eschatology:** Teaching about resurrection, requital, accountability, Paradise, and Hell as part of moral-spiritual consciousness are commonly seen as a higher objective of the Quran by al-Ghazālī, al-Biqā’ī, Riḍā, Nursi, Qaradāwī, Shaltūt.
- IV. **Guidance (Hidāyah) and Straight Path:** The Qur’ān as a book of divine guidance leading humanity to the straight path in belief, worship, and life are expounded by several scholars namely al-Ghazālī, al-Zarqānī, al-Dhahabī, Shaltūt, Khalidī, Qaradāwī, Lahḥām, Hāmidī.
- V. **Moral and Spiritual Refinement:** Purifying the soul, building strong character, promoting truthfulness, patience, justice, and spiritual closeness to God are identified as higher objective by al-Ghazālī, ‘Abduh, Riḍā, Ibn ‘Āshūr, Qaradāwī, Khalidī, Shaltūt, Ansārī.
- VI. **Legal, Social, and Political Order:** Establishing laws, justice, rights, and governance structures for healthy societies are considered as core purpose of the Quran by Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām, al-Shāṭibī, Riḍā, Ibn ‘Āshūr, Shaltūt, Mawdūdī, Bahī, Hāmidī.
- VII. **Human Brotherhood, Justice, and Welfare:** Promoting social justice, equality, women’s rights, freedom, dignity of labor, eradication of poverty and suffering are introduced as higher objective by Riḍā, Shaltūt, Qaradāwī, Ansārī, Mawdūdī, Lahḥām.
- VIII. **Knowledge, Reason, and Science:** Encouraging inductive reasoning, empirical knowledge, scientific progress, integration of reason and revelation are viewed by Riḍā, ‘Abduh, Iqbal, Ansārī, Qaradāwī, Khalidī as higher purposes of the Quran.
- IX. **Stories of the Past (‘Ibar wa Qiṣaṣ):** Narratives of previous nations serve to inspire and warn, not storytelling for its own sake were identified as higher purposes of the Quran by al-Ghazālī, ‘Abduh, Ibn ‘Āshūr, Shaltūt.
- X. **Comprehensive Integration of Human Life:** Scholars such as Nursi, Riḍā, Ansārī, Qaradāwī, Lahḥām supported that Qur’ān aims at holistic human development—spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, political, and civilizational.

Taken together, these ten thematic clusters reveal a high degree of convergence around core theological and ethical themes (tawhīd, guidance, hereafter, moral refinement), but much less agreement on socio-political, economic, and epistemological objectives. This suggests that while the vertical (theological-spiritual) dimension of maqāṣid al-Qur’ān is relatively stable across centuries, the horizontal (civilizational-social) dimension remains contested and highly sensitive to historical context. Any attempt at consensus-building must therefore address not only the ‘lowest common denominator’ of shared beliefs but also the methodological conditions under which contextual aims can be elevated to the status of universal maqāṣid.



**Heatmap:** Rows = thematic categories, Columns = scholars, and the blue marks show where a scholar emphasized a given theme. Here are the top overlaps in thematic maqāṣid between scholars:

Scholar 1	Scholar 2	Shared Themes
Qaradāwī	Riḍā	6
Riḍā	Shaltūt	6
Ansārī	Qaradāwī	5
Ansārī	Riḍā	5
Qaradāwī	Shaltūt	5
Shaltūt	al-Ghazālī	5
Qaradāwī	al-Ghazālī	4
Ibn 'Āshūr	Shaltūt	4
Nursi	Riḍā	4
Lahhām	Qaradāwī	4

### Numerical Diversity of *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* Identified

Category	Scholar	Death (A.H./C.E.)	Number / Type of <i>Maqāṣid</i> Identified	Remarks / Distinctive Features
Classical Scholars	al-Ghazālī	505 / 1111	6 (3 core + 3 complementary)	First explicit theorization of <i>Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān</i> in <i>Jawāhir al-Qur'ān</i> .
	Ibn 'Abd al-Salām	660 / 1262	Not numbered	Linked to <i>maṣlahah</i> and <i>mafsadah</i> ; foundational for later <i>maqāṣid</i> logic.
	al-Shāṭibī	790 / 1388	Not numbered	Methodological approach; tied <i>maqāṣid</i> to <i>tadabbur</i> (reflective reasoning).
	al-Biqā'ī	885 / 1480	4	Focused on divinities, prophecies, hereafter, and <i>qadar</i> (divine decree).
Early Modern Reformists	Muhammad 'Abduh	1323 / 1905	5	Ethical-rational reform emphasis; early modern articulation.
	Rashīd Riḍā	1355 / 1935	10	Broad reformist and socio-civilizational orientation.
	al- Zarqānī	1367 / 1948	3	Concise theological structure.

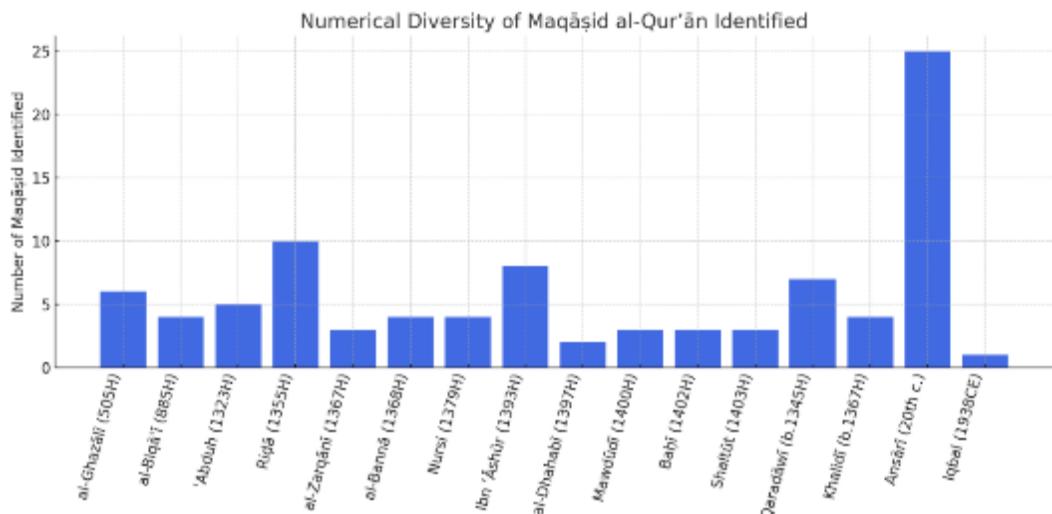


	Hasan al-Bannā	1368 / 1949	4	Integrated spiritual, moral, and social renewal aims.
	Badi'uzza mān S. Nursī	1379 / 1960	4 (core) + layered scheme	Distinguished between universal, sūrah, and verse-level objectives.
	İbn 'Āshūr	1393 / 1973	8	Systematic maqāṣid theorization; major modern reference.
	al-Dhahabī	1397 / 1977	2	Limited formulation within exegetical scope.
	Abul A'lā Mawdūdī	1400 / 1979	3	Social justice and divine sovereignty focus.
	Bahī	1402 / 1982	3	Thematic-ethical orientation.
	Mahmūd Shaltūt	1403 / 1983	3	'Aqīdah, ethics, and law as the triad of maqāṣid.
	'Izzat Darwazah	1404 / 1984	Not numbered	Divided maqāṣid into <i>uṣūl</i> (fundamentals) and <i>wasā'il</i> (means).
Contemporary Thinkers	Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī (b.)	1345 / 1926	7	Systematic balance of personal, social, and universal objectives.
	Şālih al-Khalidī (b.)	1367 / 1948	4	Concise theological and ethical framing.
	Lahhām	2004 C.E.	≈ 2200	Extremely expansive mapping across ≈ 1950 verses.
	Hāmidī	2009 C.E.	General (3 levels)	Classified maqāṣid as personal, social, and universal welfare.
	Ansārī	20th cent.	25	Detailed and multidimensional analytical model.
	Muhammad Iqbal	1357 / 1938	1	Singular focus on awakening higher human consciousness.

### Numerical Spectrum of Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān Identified

Range / Category	Number of Maqāṣid	Representative Scholars	Remarks

<b>Minimum</b>	1	Muhammad Iqbāl	Singular <i>maqṣad</i> emphasizing the awakening of higher consciousness and self-realization.
<b>Small Clusters</b>	2-4	al-Dhahabī, al-Zarqānī, al-Bannā, Mawdūdī, Bahī, Nursī	Focused on concise, often thematic or theological formulations.
<b>Medium Clusters</b>	5-10	Muhammad 'Abduh, Rashīd Ridā, Ibn 'Āshūr, Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, Ṣalīḥ al-Khalidī	Represent mature methodological synthesis, balancing classical depth with reformist breadth.
<b>Large Expansion</b>	25	Ansārī	Multidimensional and analytical, representing modern attempts to systematically categorize maqāṣid.



<i>Scholar</i>	<i>Degree Centrality</i>	<i>Betweenness</i>	<i>Closeness</i>
<i>Qaradāwī</i>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>0.78</b>
<i>Ridā</i>	0.57	0.29	0.70
<i>Shaltūt</i>	0.57	0.29	0.70
<i>Ansārī</i>	0.29	0.00	0.54
<i>al-Ghazālī</i>	0.29	0.00	0.54
<i>Ibn 'Āshūr</i>	0.14	0.00	0.44
<i>Lahhām</i>	0.14	0.00	0.47
<i>Nursī</i>	0.14	0.00	0.44

*The ranking of scholars by centrality in the thematic overlap network.*

The network graph with centrality mapped visually: Larger nodes = higher degree centrality (more thematic overlaps). Qaradāwī stands out as the largest hub, with Ridā and Shaltūt also prominent. Ansārī and al-Ghazālī show mid-size roles, while others remain smaller, more peripheral.

The numerical spectrum—from Iqbāl’s single overarching objective to Lahām’s ≈2200 sub-aims—illustrates the absence of shared criteria for what counts as a maqṣad. Minimalist formulations risk being too abstract for operational guidance, whereas maximalist mappings risk inflation and loss of analytical utility. The mid-range clusters (5–10 maqāṣid) offered by figures such as ‘Abduh, Ridā, Ibn ‘Āshūr, and al-Qaraḍāwī arguably strike a more workable balance between parsimony and richness and could serve as starting points for constructing a consensus framework.

#### **Methodological Diversity of Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān Identified:**

**Theological:** The theological approach to maqāṣid al-Qur’ān centers on fundamental beliefs such as tawḥīd, prophethood, and the afterlife, viewing these as the Qur’ān’s core purposes. Scholars like al-Ghazālī, al-Biqā‘ī, al-Zarqānī, al-Dhahabī, Nursi, and Iqbal represent this trend. Their method is to derive core doctrines directly from Qur’ānic themes and to classify them as maqāṣid.

**Ethical:** The ethical and spiritual approach emphasizes moral purification, spiritual refinement, character-building, and cultivating closeness to God. This orientation is evident in the works of al-Ghazālī, Muḥammad ‘Abduh, Rashīd Ridā, Maḥmūd Shaltūt, Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, and Ṣalāḥ al-Khālidī, who read the Qur’ān primarily as a book of ethics and guidance for self-improvement and spiritual elevation.

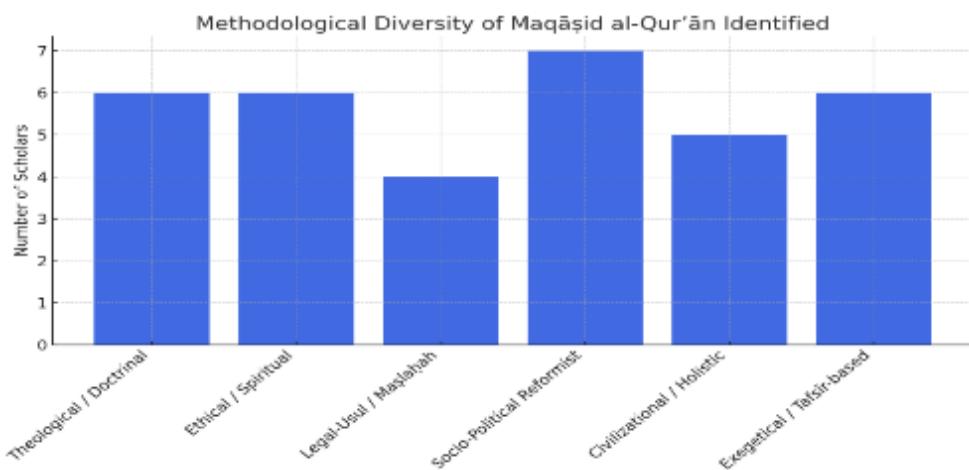
**Legal:** The legal-uṣūl or maṣlaḥah approach connects maqāṣid al-Qur’ān to the broader framework of maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah, particularly in terms of public interest, benefits, and harms. Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām, al-Shāṭibī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, and ‘Abd al-Karīm Hāmidī are prominent figures in this category. Their methodology relies on uṣūl al-fiqh and the concepts of maṣlaḥah and mafṣadah as tools to extract the Qur’ān’s objectives.

**Reformist:** The socio-political reformist approach regards the Qur’ān as a program for social justice, political reform, nation-building, and the advancement of human dignity, including women’s rights, labor, and welfare. Scholars such as Rashīd Ridā, Sayyid Abul A’lā Mawdūdī, Muḥammad Bahī, Maḥmūd Shaltūt, Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, Fazlur Rahman al-Ansārī, and Ḥanān

Lahḥām represent this line of interpretation, which reads maqāṣid through the lens of societal and governance reform.

**Holistic integration:** The civilizational or holistic integration approach expands the maqāṣid discourse to include science, reason, culture, economics, and civilization, portraying the Qur’ān as a comprehensive blueprint for human progress. This orientation is found in the works of ‘Abduh, Rīdā, Iqbāl, Ansārī, and Nursī, who sought to bridge revelation and reason and to demonstrate the Qur’ān’s role as the foundation for civilizational development.

**Exegetical:** Finally, the exegetical or tafsīr-based approach identifies maqāṣid by analyzing sūrahs and verses directly in Qur’ānic exegesis, often assigning specific objectives to each sūrah. Al-Biqā’ī, with his *Maqāṣid al-Suwar*, Ibn ‘Āshūr in *al-Tahrīr wa-l-Tanwīr*, Shaltūt in *Ilā al-Qur’ān*, along with Darwazah, al-Khālidī, and Lahḥām, exemplify this category. Their methodology is tafsīr maqāṣidī, where exegetical work is consciously oriented towards extracting and systematizing Qur’ānic objectives.



*The chart for Methodological Diversity of Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān Identified.*

**Limitations and Potential Biases:** This study has several limitations. First, it is restricted to Arabic and English primary sources, which may under-represent contributions in other languages, such as Turkish, Urdu, or Malay. Second, the selection of twenty-one scholars focuses on those whose works are widely cited or institutionally influential, potentially overlooking lesser known but methodologically innovative contributions. Third, the process of extracting and coding maqāṣid, particularly from texts that do not explicitly use the term, necessarily involves interpretive judgement by the researcher. While efforts were made to ensure consistency and transparency, some degree of subjectivity remains unavoidable. These limitations suggest that the findings should be

viewed as a representative mapping rather than an exhaustive census of all possible positions.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a dense but fragmented landscape of Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān. While there is strong convergence on a small set of theological and ethical objectives, significant divergence persists in socio-political, economic, and epistemological domains, as well as in the numerical and methodological formulations of maqāṣid. The network analysis identified a handful of scholars (e.g., al-Qaraḍāwī, Rīdā, Shaltūt, Ansārī, al-Ghazālī) as hubs in the thematic overlap network, suggesting that contemporary discourse is implicitly structured around their contributions, even in the absence of formal consensus. These patterns underscore the urgency and feasibility of a structured consensus-building project.

### **The Necessity of Consensus Building on Maqāṣid Al-Qur’ān:**

Central to understanding the Qur'an's message is subject to understanding its *maqāṣid*—the higher objectives, wisdoms, and divine purposes embedded in its revelation. In popular *maqāṣid* studies, a well-defined *maqāṣid* theory namely *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (objectives of Islamic law) has seen widespread consensus in defining higher objectives of *sharī'ah* in the modern era and it has eventually emerged as tool or framework to address the contemporary problems in different spectrums. *Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān* has not yet achieved a similar level of clarity, systematization, or scholarly agreement. The field remains rich in potential but underdeveloped in terms of formal framework. As scholars continue to debate and propose various interpretive models, the absence of consensus on defining higher objectives of the Quran (*maqāṣid al-Qur’ān*) has become a major limitation to its application in addressing contemporary global challenges. Therefore, achieving consensus on this issue is not just desirable, it is an intellectual, spiritual, and practical necessity. Here are some problems and prospects discussed below.

**From Subjectivity to Objectivity:** Historically, diverse scholarly attempts to identify the higher objectives of the Qur'an have led to an array of opinions. However, these efforts, though significant, remain largely subjective and biased rather than objective opinions collectively agreed upon. This subjectivity and individual influence can be tackled through a well-grounded consensus. Therefore, objectivity would reign over subjectivity to garner the maximum benefit from an individual opinion.

**From Fragmentation to Framework:** The absence of a shared taxonomy or consensus over the higher objectives of the Quran has created a fragmented landscape in maqasid based Qur'anic exegesis. A consensus-driven approach

would unify these scattered perspectives, creating a coherent vision of the Qur'an's objectives. Without consensus, scholars and institutions often operate in silos, producing overlapping or conflicting visions of the Qur'an's ethical and philosophical outlook. A unified *maqāṣid* framework would help consolidate this intellectual diversity into a coherent field of inquiry, encouraging cross-disciplinary dialogue and integration across *tafsir*, *usūl al-fiqh*, ethics, education, and policymaking.

**From Abstract Hermeneutics to Active Policymaking:** One of the foundational roles of *maqāṣid* is to serve as a compass for *ijtihād*—the process of deriving rulings and guidance in new circumstances. While *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* has proven effective in this regard, *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* has yet to emerge with the similar capacity. Without an agreed set of Qur'anic objectives, *ijtihād* risks becoming overly dependent on hermeneutical discourse, potentially divorced from policymaking or policy analysis. A consensus on *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* would have far-reaching implications for educational systems, governance, and community development. It would enable guiding governments and institutions in crafting policies based on universal values like justice, compassion, and the welfare of humanity.

**From Classic Narratives to Future-Facing Hermeneutics:** A consensus on *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* would contribute to the development of a Qur'an-based hermeneutic that prioritizes purpose over literalism, essence over form, and divine wisdom over ritualistic formalism. This is particularly important in contemporary contexts where literal interpretations can sometimes produce rigidity, intolerance, or social harm. A shared understanding of the Qur'an's higher objectives would function as a guiding principle for balanced, value-oriented, and future-facing interpretation.

**From Theme to Academic Discipline:** While *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* has established as a potential academic field, a consensus on *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* would transform this area into a formal and structured academic discipline, similar to how *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* has evolved into a recognized field of study.

**From Interpretation to Applications in Problem-Solving:** An agreed-upon list of Qur'anic objectives would revolutionize the Qur'anic instruction which is often dominated by memorization and classical *tafsir* without a broader understanding of divine intent. Introducing *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* as a core framework would allow learners to engage with the Qur'an as a purpose-driven revelation, cultivating not only textual knowledge but also critical thinking, moral insight, and social responsibility. At the institutional level, consensus would enable standardized frameworks for policy analysis, research, fatwa development, and interfaith dialogue. Institutions such as international Islamic organizations, Qur'anic universities, and fatwa councils could adopt a shared *maqāṣid* framework,

improving unity, credibility, and practical relevance. A well-defined and consensus-based set of higher objectives would provide an effective framework for addressing contemporary global problems, such as social injustice and inequality, environmental degradation, extremism and moral decay, family disintegration and loss of values, ethical dilemmas in science and technology.

**Bridging the Gap between Revelation and Reason:** Modern intellectual and scientific advancements have pushed many religious traditions to reevaluate their foundational texts in light of new realities. In this context, *maqāṣid al-Qur’ān* can serve as a bridge between revelation (*naql*) and reason (*‘aql*), offering a purposive, principle-based approach that welcomes interdisciplinary dialogue and integrative thinking. Consensus on *maqāṣid* would allow scholars to engage confidently with modern sciences, humanities, and ethical discourses, interpreting the Qur’ān not only as a spiritual guide but also as a living text relevant to medicine, psychology, environmental studies, economics, and governance. Such engagement requires clarity of purpose, shared epistemic values, and theological coherence—goals that can only be achieved through a unified *maqāṣid* framework.

**Strengthening the Connection with Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah:** While *maqāṣid al-shari‘ah* is often derived from the Qur’ān and Sunnah, its application sometimes lacks a direct link to the higher objectives of the Qur’ān itself. A consensus on *maqāṣid al-Qur’ān* would provide a foundational basis for legal reasoning, ensuring that the spirit of divine revelation is fully integrated into the derivation of laws and rulings. This would bring harmony between the ethical, spiritual, and legal dimensions of Islam.

#### **A Roadmap for Consensus-Building on Maqāṣid Al-Qur’ān:**

Operationally, consensus-building on Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān could proceed through a multi-stage process. An initial stage would involve a focused expert workshop to agree on methodological criteria for elevating specific themes to *maqṣad* status. A second stage could employ Delphi-style rounds of consultation, allowing a wider circle of scholars to iteratively refine a proposed list of higher objectives without the pressures of face-to-face debate. A third stage would test the framework across disciplines (fiqh, education, ethics, social sciences) and regions, ensuring both theological robustness and global relevance. Finally, the resulting framework would need to be institutionalised through curricula, research programs, and advisory bodies, with mechanisms for periodic review and revision.

Scholars’ identification of *maqasid* is widely diverse and often not sufficiently supported by the textual evidence from the Quran. They have come up with their own narratives which, however, these unambiguous terms are mostly overlooked in current literature. Quran is outspoken about its own objectives with clear terms and narratives which are oft repeated. Thus, Maqasid

identification needs further systematic investigation. For this process, there is complexity in dealing with evidence for maqasid identification. For overcoming this challenge, it requires to develop Methods of Systematic Evidence Reviews so that an Evidence-Informed Consensus Methods for maqasid consensus-building is developed.

## Phase 1 – Preparation & Foundation

### Step 1. Define Scope & Objectives

- To build a scholarly consensus on the higher objectives of the Qur'an (Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān) as:
  - Overarching values, ends, and purposes of revelation.
  - A guiding framework for interpretation, education, ethical reasoning, and policy.
- Scope Clarification
  - Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān:  
Higher purposes embedded in the *text of the Qur'an* as a whole (e.g., guidance, justice, mercy, remembrance, cultivation of intellect and heart).
  - Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah:  
Objectives of the legal system derived from Qur'an and Sunnah (e.g., preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, property).
  - The project focuses primarily on maqāṣid al-Qur'ān, while recognizing overlap with maqāṣid al-shari'ah but not reducing one to the other.

### Step 2. Agreement on Maqṣad Criteria (Variables Elaborated)

These criteria are used to decide whether a candidate theme qualifies as a higher maqṣad:

1. Qur'anic Explicit Evidence
  - Definition: The degree to which the Qur'an explicitly states a purpose (e.g., "so that...", "in order that...") using causative particles (ل, كي, لعل, etc.) or clear teleological phrasing.
  - Operationalization:
    - 1–3: Only distant or interpretive indication.
    - 4–6: Strong implied purpose across multiple verses.
    - 7–9: Clear explicit wording identifying it as a purpose.
2. Universality Across Contexts
  - Definition: Whether the objective applies beyond specific peoples, times, or events, and can be reasonably read as a universal aim of revelation.
  - Operationalization:
    - Examine cross-sūrah distribution and recurrence in varied contexts.
    - Score higher when it transcends particular historical circumstances.



### 3. Value-Based Theme

- Definition: The maqṣad is articulated as a value or principle (e.g., justice, mercy, guidance, truthfulness, taqwā) rather than a very specific rule or practice.
- Operationalization:
  - Prioritize abstract, normative values with a wide range of applications.
  - Exclude narrow, contingent rulings as “higher maqāṣid.”

### 4. Supported by Secondary Maqāṣid

- Definition: The candidate maqṣad is reinforced by subsidiary objectives, which function as sub-goals serving it (e.g., forgiveness, patience supporting mercy and justice).
- Operationalization:
  - Map a hierarchy: show how multiple sub-objectives cluster around and serve the proposed higher objective.

### 5. Interconnectedness

- Definition: The degree to which a maqṣad is connected to other maqāṣid, forming a coherent system rather than standing alone.
- Operationalization:
  - Use semantic and thematic mapping to show links.
  - Higher scores if it is a node around which many other themes revolve.

### 6. Framework Capacity

- Definition: The ability of the maqṣad to organize, explain, and unify diverse Qur'anic themes and rulings into a readable structure.
- Operationalization:
  - Test: “Can this maqṣad serve as a top-level category in a maqāṣid framework or index?”
  - Higher scores when it can act as a structuring principle.

### 7. Supported by Sunnah

- Definition: The maqṣad is reinforced by Prophetic sayings and actions, where the Prophet explicates or embodies this purpose.
- Operationalization:
  - Identify hadith that confirm, expand, or operationalize the Qur'anic purpose.
  - Higher scores where Qur'an + Sunnah jointly reinforce the same objective.

## Phase 2 – Evidence Foundation (Qur'an-Centered)

### Step 1. Fresh Qur'anic Survey

- Purpose: Construct a Qur'an-first evidence base for candidate maqāṣid.
- Methods:

- Thematic coding: Identify verses where purposes are explicit or strongly implied.
- Root-word analysis: Track key maqāṣid-laden roots (e.g., عدل, رحمة, هدى, تقوى, تزكية).
- Frequency tables: Quantify occurrence of themes across sūrahs and contexts.

### Step 2. Scholarly Mapping

- Purpose: Situate the project within the heritage of maqāṣid thought.
- Actions:
  - Collect maqāṣid lists from:
    - Classical works (al-Ghazālī, al-‘Izz ibn ‘Abd al-Salām, al-Shāfi‘ī, etc.).
    - Modern maqāṣid theorists (Ibn ‘Āshūr, contemporary scholars).
  - For each maqṣad:
    - Note exact wording, context, and rationale.
    - Tag textual support as:
      - Explicit: directly keyed to Qur’anic teleological statements.
      - Implicit: inferred from patterns of rulings and values.
      - Speculative: based heavily on reasoning, with weak textual anchoring.

### Step 3. Integrated Evidence Set & Initial Coding

- Integration:
  - Merge the Qur'an-derived set + scholarly lists into one comprehensive list.
- Initial Coding:
  - Tag each candidate maqṣad as:
    - Core: Qur'an-explicit, strong cross-text evidence.
    - Probable: Qur'an-supported, strong but indirect indication.
    - Speculative: Highly interpretive, opinion-heavy, or conceptually useful but textually lighter.
- Deliverable:
  - An Integrated Evidence Dossier provided to all experts in Phase 3.

## Phase 3 – Expert Panel & Delphi Consensus Rounds

### Step 1. Expert Panel Formation

- Composition:
  - Qur'an scholars.
  - Maqāṣid theorists and uṣūl specialists.
- Orientation:
  - Provide:

- Integrated evidence dossier.
- Criteria definitions.
- Scoring rubrics.

#### Step 2. Delphi Round 1 – Individual Rating with Evidence Anchors

- Each expert independently scores every candidate maqṣad on Maqṣad Criteria, such as:
  - Qur'anic Explicitness (1–9)
    - 1–3: weak/indirect; 4–6: strong implied; 7–9: explicit.
  - Universality Across Contexts (1–9)
    - 1–3: limited/local; 4–6: broad but not fully universal; 7–9: clearly universal.

#### Step 3. Statistical Analysis of Round 1

For each maqṣad:

- Calculate:
  - Median scores per criteria.
  - Agreement percentage (e.g., % of ratings in 7–9).
- Example classification:
  - Consensus:
    - $\geq 75\%$  of ratings in the 7–9 range, and
    - $IQR \leq 1$ .
  - Near-consensus:
    - $\geq 67\%$  agreement,  $IQR \leq 2$ .
  - No consensus:
    - Below thresholds, large spread.

#### Step 4. Delphi Round 2 – Feedback & Re-Rating

- Round 2 focusing only on items still lacking consensus, to see if closer convergence is possible.

### Phase 4 – Structured Deliberation, Mcda & Classification

#### Step 1. Structured Deliberation (NGT + MCDA)

- Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA):
  - Assign weights to the criteria (e.g., Qur'anic explicitness may have higher weight than contemporary relevance).
  - Compute a composite score for each candidate maqṣad using:
    - Weight  $\times$  score for each criterion.

#### Step 2. Final Classification of Maqāṣid

Using Delphi outcomes + NGT + MCDA scores, classify maqāṣid as:

1. Core Universal Maqāṣid (Qur'an-Explicit + Strong Consensus)
  - High textual explicitness.
  - High universality.
  - High contemporary relevance.
  - High composite MCDA score.
  - Recognized as top-tier objectives of the Qur'an.

2. Complementary Maqāṣid (Qur'an-Supported + Consensus)
  - Strong Qur'anic support, but maybe less explicit or more specialized.
  - Still widely agreed upon.
  - Serve as sub-goals or supportive values that operationalize the core maqāṣid.
3. Scholarly/Speculative Maqāṣid (Retained as Academic Views)
  - Valuable conceptual tools.
  - Lower textual explicitness or weaker consensus.
  - Clearly labelled as scholarly proposals, not as universally binding higher maqāṣid.

### Step 3. Drafting the Provisional List & Framework

- Organize maqāṣid into:
  - Higher (Universal) Maqāṣid.
  - Secondary/Complementary Maqāṣid.
- Present them:
  - As a hierarchical framework (tree/ladder).
  - With cross-references showing interconnectedness.

## Phase 5 – Validation, External Review & Dissemination

### Step 1. Broader Scholarly Review (Global Consultation)

- Circulate the provisional maqāṣid list and methodology to:
  - International Qur'an and maqāṣid scholars.
  - Academic institutions and research centers.
- Invite:
  - Written critiques.
  - Supportive endorsements.
  - Proposals for refinement.
- Quantify External Consensus:
  - Use a simple rating form where external scholars indicate:
    - Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree.
  - Adopt a benchmark:
    - For example, 70–80% “agree or strongly agree” for an item to be considered solidly established as a *higher maqṣad* at the global level.

### Potential Counterarguments to Consensus:

A common concern is that formal consensus on Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān might freeze interpretive creativity, marginalize legitimate ikhtilāf, or privilege certain schools over others. The model proposed here, however, envisages consensus not as a fixed, exhaustive list, but as a tiered and revisable framework. At its core would be a small set of non-negotiable universal objectives (e.g., tawḥīd, guidance, justice, mercy, 'imrān), while secondary and tertiary aims remain open

to contextual elaboration and debate. Such a framework would stabilize the center of the discourse without eliminating its pluralist periphery, thereby preserving space for *ijtihād* while improving communicability and cumulative progress.

### **Implications for Contemporary Islamic Scholarship:**

The establishment of a consensus-based framework for *Maqāṣid al-Qur’ān* offers a transformative foundation for several areas of contemporary Islamic scholarship. Within Qur’anic exegesis, such a framework provides a coherent interpretive scaffold that enables *mufassirūn* to integrate verse-level analysis with *sūrah*-level thematic structure. A shared set of validated higher objectives allows exegetes to avoid fragmented or atomistic readings and to situate narrative, legal, and ethical passages within a unified purposive architecture. This supports the emergence of a more disciplined and methodologically robust *Tafsīr Maqāṣidī* grounded in the overarching aims of revelation.

In legal theory and jurisprudence, a Qur’ān-centric *maqāṣid* framework enhances the internal coherence and contemporary applicability of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī’ah*. As articulated by Taha Jabir al-‘Alwani (2008), higher objectives operate analogously to constitutional principles capable of regulating and renewing derivative rulings. They provide a structural link between fundamental and subsidiary laws, enabling jurists to reinterpret or refine legal positions in response to evolving human needs. Furthermore, anchoring *ijtihād* and *tajdīd* in a clear hierarchy of Qur’anic purposes aids in reconstructing the foundations of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, purifying the juristic heritage of accumulated historical constraints, and elevating Islamic jurisprudence to a universal, globally engaged ethical system. The *maqāṣid* also furnish a critical evaluative criterion through which various forms of knowledge may be assessed for fidelity to Qur’anic values.

The implications for education are equally significant. A consensus-based *maqāṣid* framework provides a foundation for curriculum development across Islamic studies and the social sciences. Educational programs at school and university levels can be structured around core Qur’anic objectives—such as *tawhīd*, guidance, justice, human dignity, and *īmrān*—thereby enhancing curricular coherence and promoting holistic intellectual and moral development. Such a framework also supports broader cultural formation by offering value-based principles through which local and national educational agendas can be aligned with Qur’anic ethical vision while remaining open to global knowledge systems.

In applied ethics and public policy, the framework has the capacity to serve as a normative reference for evaluating and formulating policy across multiple domains. Articulated higher objectives enable systematic engagement

with contemporary challenges in bioethics, environmental governance, artificial intelligence, economics, and public health. The integration of *maqāṣid* into policymaking shifts deliberation from rule-based compliance to value-driven evaluation, ensuring that public decisions remain anchored in the Qur'an's vision for human flourishing. Al-'Alwani further argues that such a *maqāṣid* system revitalizes the ethical qualities of *Shari'ah*, enhances its responsiveness to new realities, and contributes to the articulation of a universal ethical discourse compatible with scientific methodologies.

More broadly, a consensus-driven *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* framework contributes to interdisciplinary knowledge production by functioning as a meta-epistemological structure through which Islamic scholarship can interact with modern scientific and humanistic fields. It offers researchers a principled lens for generating new theories, critiquing existing knowledge paradigms, and engaging with global intellectual traditions. In this capacity, the framework operates not merely as a tool for interpretation but as a civilizational paradigm capable of informing renewal, guiding ethical reasoning, shaping educational practice, and contributing to policy formation at both local and global levels.

## 6. Conclusion

The concept of *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* (the higher objectives of the Qur'an) represents the overarching divine intentions, wisdom, and goals underlying the revelation of the Qur'an. Over the last 1,000 years, numerous scholars have made remarkable contributions to identifying these higher objectives. However, their views often differ, lacking a unified framework or systematic methodology. While *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* (the higher objectives of Islamic law) has gained widespread scholarly consensus and has been effectively applied as a tool for legal reasoning and contemporary problem-solving, *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* remains underdeveloped and fragmented. This situation highlights the urgent need for building consensus among scholars, researchers, and institutions to define, systematize, and operationalize the higher objectives of the Qur'an.

The necessity of consensus on *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* arises from both intellectual imperatives and the demands of our modern context. As a concept, it holds immense promise for revitalizing Qur'anic interpretation, informing legal and ethical thought, shaping education, and offering principled solutions to global challenges. But without scholarly agreement, its potential remains largely theoretical. Building this consensus is not merely an academic endeavor—it is a foundational step toward ensuring that the Qur'an continues to serve as a source of mercy, guidance, and transformative power for all of humanity. Achieving this consensus requires collective scholarly effort, methodological innovation, and interdisciplinary dialogue to uncover and articulate the higher objectives of the Qur'an in a way that resonates with the needs of the present and future.

generations. It would enhance the Qur'an's global relevance and provide a framework for Muslims to engage constructively with modernity while staying true to divine guidance.



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