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## Journal of Contemporary Maqasid Studies (JCMS): Methodological Aspirations

All praise is due to Allah Almighty.

This new journal, Journal of Contemporary Maqasid Studies (JCMS), aims at studying, developing, disseminating, critiquing, expanding and realizing the “Maqasid Methodology”. Maqasid Institute is introducing this methodology to the Muslim *ummah* and humanity in general, based on the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger, peace be upon him. Explaining the features and details of this methodology is a much larger task than these introductory remarks, and is one of the tasks of this issue and upcoming issues, by the will of Allah. However, the following outlines of the main features and objectives of the Maqasid Methodology aims at familiarizing the reader with the purposes of this new addition to the world of Islamic thought:

1. Logic of purposeful connectivity;
2. Overcoming shortcomings in the current approaches to Islamic scholarship and building on their achievements;
3. Quran-based fundamentals of knowledge, awareness and scholarship;
4. General methodological steps and building an Islamic framework;
5. Re-envisioning Islamic Studies in order to fulfil current Islamic needs in research, education and organization.

### 1. Logic of purposeful connectivity

Purposeful connectivity is the logical depth of the studies that this journal aims to promote. Allah Almighty created this universe in a connected and webbed fashion on all levels. He ordered humanity to preserve these connections and called severing them corruption on earth. These universal interconnections are not purposeless but rather, ordained for the achievements of the highest wisdoms and objectives on all levels. Therefore, a true Maqasid Methodology is essentially a methodology that integrates, looks towards the future and critiques based on the fulfilment of the purposes of connections or the lack thereof. The maqasid or objectives are utilized to integrate all phenomena, disciplines, dimensions, proofs and the signs of Allah in the Book and the universe. These objectives are also the basis of critically assessing current realities and planning for future rectification.

## **2. Overcoming shortcomings in the current approaches to Islamic scholarship, and building on their achievements**

This journal aims at serving new research in Islamic scholarship by critiquing shortcomings and promoting their achievements in approaches and methodologies. The following are the dimensions of these shortcomings versus achievements: (1) blind imitation of the Islamic heritage without reference to the Revelation versus utilizing criteria from the Revelation to critique the Islamic intellectual history in a nuanced and balanced way; (2) fragmentation and partialism in the Islamic approach versus promoting synergy and integration between evidences, disciplines and specializations; (3) apologism for the status quo on all levels versus promoting critical studies of modernity and all systems that it produced in the current realities; (4) contradiction in referencing between “transferred knowledge” and “rational knowledge” defined according to historical and secular views, respectively, versus the integration of these references under the guidance and hegemony of the revealed knowledge; and (5) deconstructionist critiques without differentiating between Revelation and culture, given that the Revelation—Quran and its illustration in the Sunnah—is outside the realm of this critique, versus human interpretations that would benefit from this level of critique in Islamic scholarship. It is to be noted that these 5 dimensions of critique apply as well to the new studies in the Maqasid field.

## **3. Quran-based fundamentals of knowledge, awareness and scholarship**

The fundamentals related to methodology that are derived from the Quran could be divided into three realms, namely knowledge, awareness and scholarship: (1) The fundamentals of knowledge are defined based on three dimensions of centrality: the centrality of the Revelation in learning, the centrality of objectives in logic, and the centrality of the Arabic language in conceptualization. (2) The fundamentals of awareness are defined in three circles: the circle of lived reality, of which an authentic cognition is necessary; the circle of history, in which the false dichotomy between human and Islamic history is refuted and the rise and fall of civilizations are assessed correctly; and the circle of future planning, in which the indices of success are built on the criteria set in the Revelation. (3) The fundamentals of Islamic scholarship must expand in order to comprehend a wider scope, a wider definition for scholars and a wider expectation of outcomes. The scope of Islamic scholarship must return to covering all disciplines, specializations, phenomena and forms of organization. The definition of Islamic scholars, therefore, must expand accordingly to include all researchers and activists, each in their respective field and level. The outcomes of Islamic scholarship must be primarily formative principles and theories in all realms of thought and action. These formative principles and theories are the basis of rules, whether they are legislative rules ranging between the obligation and prohibition, or public good rules ranging between benefit and harm. The development of these formative principles and theories should be the purpose of the methodological steps of research.

#### **4. General methodological steps and building an Islamic framework**

The Maqasid Methodology proposes 5 intersecting steps for carrying out research on all levels: (1) Starting with a research purpose and not a research problem, since perceiving a problem without a correct framework might lead to misdefining the problem, a common error in the current literature of Islamic scholarship; (2) Cycles of reflection upon the Quran and Sunnah, in order to identify the following 7 elements that are relevant to the research: objectives, concepts, groups/parties, universal laws, values, proofs and commands. This journal has a special interest in reading these 7 elements of perceptualization in the Quran and Sunnah and applying them to all realms of Islamic scholarship; (3) Building an objective-based composite framework premised on the analysis and synthesis of the identified elements; (4) Surveying previous Islamic and non-Islamic literature and current realities, using a critical and objective-based lens; and (5) Formative theories and principles would emerge based on connecting and integrating all of the above elements and steps.

#### **5. Re-envisioning Islamic Studies in order to fulfil current Islamic needs in research, education and organization**

This journal ultimately aspires to restructure Islamic scholarship in a way that fulfills the intellectual and practical needs of our times. Current classifications - Islamic and secular - of knowledge into disciplines are quite problematic according to the Quranic framework. Hence, we propose a reclassification of Islamic Studies into: Usuli Studies, Disciplinary Studies, Phenomena Studies and Strategic Studies. They all interact via the primary research project of the Maqasid Institute: Maqasid Research Networks. Member researchers of these networks are the main source of research papers and reports that we publish in this journal. The next few issues will pay special attention to foundational research in the foundational areas of Quranic exegesis, Hadith studies and jurisprudence.

The above are concise highlights of the methodology that the Maqasid Institute develops and promotes, that is Maqasid Methodology. We have a particular concern for the methodological dimension of Islamic Studies in general, and studies that utilize the Islamic maqasid or objectives for the sake of renewal in particular. We warmly welcome contributions in any of the themes, elements and fields of research mentioned above, whether they agree, hence develop, or disagree, hence critique, the ideas that the Maqasid Institute promotes on its platforms. Every human thought or project is subject to error and therefore to correction and improvement. The only complete human model is the Prophet's, peace be upon him.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank all my brothers and sisters who built the Maqasid Institute and allowed the Journal for Contemporary Maqasid Studies (JCMS) to materialize. Special thanks to Maqasid Institute Executive Director Dr.

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All praise is due to Allah and peace be upon His Messenger.

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