

# RE-ENVISIONING ISLAMIC SCHOLARSHIP MAQASID METHODOLOGY AS A NEW APPROACH

JASSER AUDA

*Re-envisioning Islamic Scholarship* is a pioneering and timely contribution that deserves wide readership. Jasser Auda masterfully focalises the Quran and Sunnah in a work that integrates scholarship across time and disciplines to demonstrate the connectivity of human thought and action within a purposeful universe of infinite possibilities.

Through a five-step holistic methodology, he urges scholars and practitioners in all fields of knowledge and endeavour to seek revelational guidance by performing continuous cycles of reflection on the revelation that reveal this connectivity.

Here, the maqasid or objectives of revelational guidance manifest through a process of emergence that is premised on deep understandings of the concepts, objectives, values, commands, universal laws, groups and proofs that implicitly or explicitly shape our understandings and help re-envision research agendas, educational institutes and organisational strategies.

In a world that has become accustomed to individualism, inequality, fragmentation and loss of meaning this book is a paradigm shift, a beacon of light and a very welcome guide to a better future for humanity.



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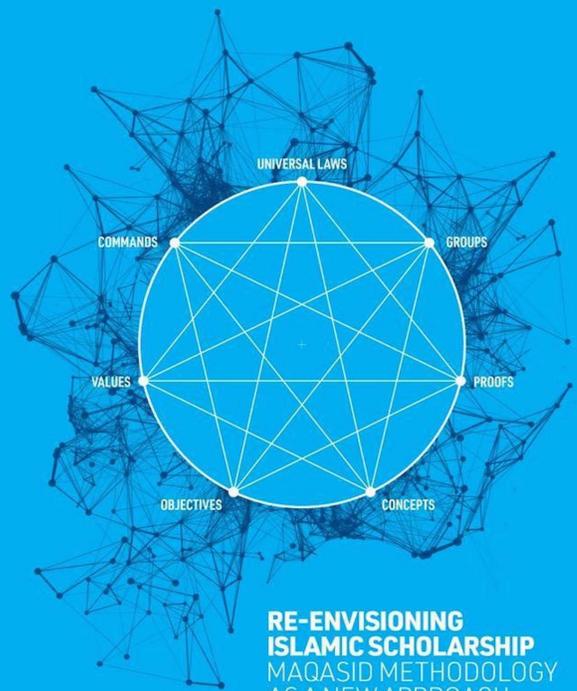
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The Maqasid Methodology aims to introduce an approach that avoids the limitations of imitation, partialism, apologism, contradiction and deconstruction. Before presenting the details of the methodology and the framework that lies at the heart of it, a re-orientation of the Islamic worldview is necessary. The next chapter explains.

## CHAPTER 3

## Re-orienting the Islamic Worldview

### SCHOLARSHIP: APPLYING KNOWLEDGE TO REALITY

This project is a reconstruction of the Islamic approach to contemporary questions and phenomena in all fields of human endeavour based on a new articulation of the Islamic worldview. It is a new articulation in the sense of bringing familiar elements in a new structure, define new connections, and approach *fiqh* in a comprehensive and principles-based way. This methodology is intended to contribute to a long overdue renewal (*tajdid*) in the fundamentals of *fiqh*, whereas *fiqh* is re-oriented back to its original Quranic and Prophetic concept, as explained earlier.

The three most fundamental aspects of this re-orientation are: (1) knowledge (*ilm*); (2) reality (*waq*); and (3) scholarship (*ijtihad*).<sup>59</sup> The dimensions related to knowledge in the Islamic worldview are: its source, its logic and conceptualisations. Awareness of the reality includes the dimensions of assessing past and present and planning for the future. Scholarship, the role of which is to translate knowledge into an impact on the reality, includes the dimensions of its scope, scholars and the desired outcome. While these re-orientations are entry points for explaining the methodology, they are also outcomes of its application, that is, they emerged from the construction of Rev-

relational webs of meaning that are generated by applying the Maqasid Methodology itself.

### 1. Knowledge: source, logic and conceptualisations

The new Maqasid Methodology is not apologetic, meaning that it does not seek to draw upon and thereby legitimise knowledge frameworks that do not emerge from the Revelation. Revelation (*wahy*) is the central Islamic concept in terms of knowledge. It is the link between Divine and human knowledge, between the unseen and seen domains, and between the realm of truth and the realm of speculations. Prophets are given their messages of truth, light and guidance through a Revelation. Allah says: “And it is not for any human being that Allah should speak to him/her except by revelation” (42:51). Allah ordered Prophet Muhammad ﷺ: “Say: I only warn you by Revelation” (21:45). Divine Revelation could also be inspired to non-Prophets, for example, Allah says: “And We revealed to Moses’ mother: Breast-feed him” (28:7), and to non-humans as well, such as: “Your Lord revealed to the bees” (16:69), “We said to the fire: Be coolness and peace for Ibrahim” (21:69), “Allah directed Himself to the heaven and it is a vapour, so He said to it and to the earth: Come both, willingly or unwillingly. They both said: We come willingly” (41:11), and “That day, her [the earth’s] news will say: Your Lord has revealed to her” (99:4-5).

*The Revelation is an essential component of the Islamic worldview. In terms of sources of knowledge, revealed knowledge is the only knowledge that reigns over other knowledge, in order to maintain faith and justice.* That is why distorting Revelation is the highest form of injustice. Allah says: “And who is more unjust than one who invents a lie about Allah or says: ‘I have received revelation’, when he has received none” (6:93). This does not mean that other sources of knowledge are invalid. The next sections explore this further.

### SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

Any comprehensive Islamic framework must place knowledge of Allah that is transmitted through Revelation at the centre of human knowledge, while acknowledging His worship as the ultimate human objective. Human-gained knowledge must, then, be built around what the Revelation teaches about the seen and unseen universe. Truthful authority is only given to knowledge additions that recognise the centrality of Revelation and does not contradict with it. This is the direct implication of the Words of Allah that state: “We have not overlooked anything in the Book” (6:38), and Abu Dhar’s ﷺ assertion that the Prophet ﷺ taught his companions knowledge related to everything, “including birds” (Ahmad 21361). The Maqasid Methodology, therefore, positions the Revelation as the primary source of all truthful and valuable knowledge.

The Islamic worldview re-orientates the idea of knowledge (*ilm*) in three ways, namely, (1) how Allah is the primary source of true knowledge, (2) how the state of the heart impacts receiving and utilising knowledge, and (3) how knowledge (*ilm*) is connected to a complex web of fundamental meanings.

(1) The Revelation informs us that Allah is the source of knowledge. When Allah ﷻ created Adam, the very first illustrative action that establishes Revelation as the fundamental source of human knowledge was His teaching Adam ﷺ the “names of all things” and instilling in him the capacity to convey that knowledge. Allah states:

*And He taught Adam all the names. Then He presented them to the angels and said: ‘Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful’ (2:31).*

*He said: ‘O Adam, inform them of their names.’ So, when he informed them of their names, He said: ‘Did I not tell you that I know the unseen of the skies and the earth and I know what you reveal and what you have concealed’ (2:33)*

These verses in connection with the entire narrative and other tex-

tual expressions reveals the intimate relationship between Allah, humans, knowledge and truth. Humans are essentially born in a state of ignorance. Allah states: “And Allah has extracted you from the bellies of your mothers not knowing a thing, and He made for you hearing and vision and intellect, that perhaps you may be thankful” (16:78). Thus, all the faculties and media that a human requires to attain knowledge are part of the process of building knowledge throughout the human’s life.

Nevertheless, the Revelation also confirms that humanity as a whole started with Adam ﷺ and his children at a high point of language, knowledge and commands, and not from scratch. This is a different history of knowledge from sciences that do not acknowledge this Divine source. Some humans in some eras, perhaps post-the-great-flood might have lived in a ‘stone age’ and used a primitive language.<sup>60</sup> Yet, the Revelation points to the possibility of a much more complex human history with knowledge. For example, Allah says: “They followed [instead of the Revelation] what the devils had recited during the reign of Solomon. It was not Solomon who disbelieved, but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic. But magic was not part of what was revealed to the two angels at Babylon, Harut and Marut.<sup>61</sup> The two angels did not teach anyone unless they say, ‘We are a trial, so do not disbelieve’. And yet they learn from them both that by which they cause separation between a man and his wife. But they do not harm anyone through it except by permission of Allah” (2:102). This is an interesting account of two angels who taught people advanced knowledge, sometime in the ancient history of Babylon.

Moreover, the Islamic worldview does not restrict knowledge, and consciousness, to humans and angels. *The Islamic worldview actually includes an affirmation of knowledge and consciousness possessed by all creations.* Reflect, for example, upon Solomon’s ﷺ communication with the hoopoe and the ant. Allah says: “But the hoopoe stayed not long and said [to Solomon], ‘I have encompassed in knowledge that which you have not encompassed, and I have come to you from Sheba with certain news’” (27:22), and “When they reached the Valley

of the Ants, an ant exclaimed: O ants! Enter your dwellings lest Solomon and his soldiers crush you, unintentionally” (27:18). Even rocks and mountains, according to the Revelation, have knowledge, consciousness, emotions and will. Allah says: “verily among the rocks are those that sink in awe of Allah” (2:74), “Indeed, we offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but the human undertook it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant” (33:72) and, “Surely We made the mountains to sing the glory of Allah in unison with him [David] at the evening and the sunrise” (38:18).

The act of knowing and the capacity to convey knowledge is fundamentally rooted in divine instruction. It is only Allah ﷻ, the Creator, who can teach the true essence of things including the bestowal of proper names and the relationships among them. The commencement of the message of Islam with the command to read in the name of the Creator revives the objectives of the narrative between Allah, the angels and Adam. Allah states:

*Read in the name of your Lord who created; Created the human from a substance that clings; Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous; Who taught by the pen; Taught the human that which he knew not (96:1-5)*

The invocation of Allah’s name, The Creator, places emphasis on the source of all truthful knowledge and necessity of turning to Revelation to attain it. The instrument of the pen and hence written conveyance of knowledge is also highlighted in the Revelation as an indispensable element. Elsewhere in the Quran, Allah states: “And let a scribe write it between you with justice. Let no scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him” (2:282). The Prophet ﷺ instructed his companions: “Preserve knowledge by writing it” (Suyuti1 6149). Allah is the ultimate source of true knowledge, which makes Revelation, the textual expression of such knowledge, the most reliable and indispensable source for humanity.

(2) In the Islamic worldview, knowledge is also associated with the

state of the heart of the reader. It is the very organ by which we understand all things, with an intent to establish truth and justify belief. This attitude is not a spontaneous act stemming from evolutionary or abstract thought, but rather is a gift from Allah and a divine inspiration to every human being. Allah states: “And He inspired every soul its corruption and heedfulness” (91:8). Such inspiration can be understood through the Islamic moral code that ensures that humanity strives toward a common norm. Following this moral code is the way to purify one’s heart (*tazkiyah*) and hence develop a better capacity to receive higher levels of knowledge, i.e. wisdom. “Certainly did Allah confer favour upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses and purifying them (*yu-zakkihim*) and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although they had been before in manifest error” (3:164). Vice versa, diverting from the moral code with sins and lusts, is a barrier from true knowledge that “covers the heart” (83:14). In the Islamic worldview, the heart is the organ that deals with knowledge. In order to deal with knowledge adequately, the heart must be nurtured through: faith (49:14), mercy (57:27), repentance (50:33, 66:4), remembrance of Allah (50:37), brotherhood/sisterhood (3:103, 8:63), tranquillity (3:126, 8:10, 13:28, 16:106, 48:4, 48:18), purity (5:41, 26:89, 33:53, 37:84), understanding (7:179, 9:87), reconciliation (9:60), heedfulness (22:32, 49:3), awe of Allah (8:2, 22:35, 23:60), thankfulness (17:3, 25:62, 42:33), humbleness (22:54), vision (22:46), steadfastness (28:10), reflection (47:24), etc. And in order to avoid deviations in dealing with knowledge, the heart must be protected from: sin (83:14), hypocrisy (2:10, 4:63), harshness (2:74, 3:159, 5:13, 22:53), ignorance (2:118), false witnessing (2:283), misplaced regrets (3:156), lying (3:167), confusion (6:110, 33:4), doubt (9:45, 9:110, 24:50), envy (9:8), deviation (9:117), aggression (10:74, 33:5), denial of truth (16:22, 39:45), heedlessness (16:108, 18:28), hate of the believers (59:10), partisanship (59:14), lust (33:32, 45:23), rumour (33:60), arrogance (40:35), etc. Preserving the health of the heart according to all of the above is part of developing the capacity of the scholar.

(3) The Revelation provides us with webs of meanings related to

knowledge that enable us to understand its interaction with other essential elements – concepts, objectives, values, commands, universal laws, groups and proofs – making Revelation knowledge’s truthful source. Through these connections and the wholistic understandings to which they give rise, we can develop more accurate perceptions of reality and the gap between that reality and the guidance in Revelation. By understanding the diverse and extensive expressions of knowledge, knowers, and know-how in the Quran and Sunnah, we are better able to grasp its truth in our specific historical moment.

Although a detailed analysis of the elements that form clusters and webs of meaning around knowledge is important, its extensive nature makes it beyond inclusion here. We may, however, offer some indication of what we find when we examine Revelation through multiple Cycles of Reflection, keeping in mind that we may proceed from the basic examination of words with the same root, to more complex connections with verses, chapters, and Quranic techniques that include narratives, metaphors, questions, challenges, etc., to the general meanings of the entirety of the texts. More details are presented in the next chapters. The ubiquitous nature of a concept like knowledge necessarily means that it will be associated with both positive and negative elements in the Revelation as demonstrated below.

### Knowledge as an Objective

Knowledge as an objective is connected - in the Revelation - to a large number of other objectives. These include: faith (*iman*), worship (*ibadah*), education (*talim*), to bring to understanding (*tafhim*), detailing (*tafsil*), tidings (*bisharah*), warning (*nitharah*), purification (*tazkiyah*), guidance (*huda*), mercy (*rahmah*), establishing truth (*qawi-ul-haqq*), to mention a few.

### Knowledge as a Concept

Knowledge (*ilm*) as a concept is connected - in the Revelation - to a large number of other concepts. These include: sign (*alamah*), reading (*qira’ah*), information (*ma’lumah*), learning (*ta’allum*), action (*amal*), pen (*qalam*), reason (*aqf*), deep understanding (*fiqh*), un-

derstanding (*fahm*), illustration (*bayan*), thinking (*tafakkur*), reflection (*tadabur*), accounting (*hisab*), seeking proof (*hijaj*), deduction (*istinbat*), hearing (*sama'*), vision (*basar*), comprehension (*ihatah*), tightening (*ihkam*), heart (*qalb*), intellect (*lubb*), word (*kalimah*), secret (*sirr*), voiced (*jahr*), unseen (*ghayb*), witnessed (*shahadah*), book (*kitab*), wisdom (*hikmah*), remembrance (*zikr*), spending (*infaq*), disbelief (*kurf*), magic (*sihir*), astray (*dalal*), injustice (*zulm*), doubt (*zann*), whim (*hawa*), and so on.

### Knowledge as related to Groups

The above-mentioned dimensions of knowledge are connected - in the Revelation - to a number of groups. These include: scholars (*ulama*), activists (*amilun*), believers (*mu'minun*), heedful (*muttaqun*), rectifiers (*muslihun*), sound intellects (*ulul-albab*), strugglers (*mujahidun*), governors (*wulah and hukkam*), scribes (*katibun*), witnesses (*shuhud*), corruptors (*mufsidun*), hypocrites (*munafiqun*), tyrants (*taghut*), devils (*shayatin*), unjust (*zalimun*), arrogant (*mustakbirun*), egotistical (*farihun*), and so on.

### Knowledge as related to Universal Laws

Knowledge is connected - in the Revelation - to a number of divine universal laws. These laws include: only Allah has complete knowledge; unity (*tawhid*) of all created matter; diversity (*tanawu*) of humans, different species of plants and animals, of things in nature and human-made objects; duality (*zawjiyah*) of plants and animals; circulation (*tadawul*) of events, fortunes, natural cycles; checking (*tadafu*) of one people by another, of other elements and species against each other; sanction (*jaza*) in the moral, legal and divine realms; to drive or desire to know one another (*ta'aruf*); and so on.

### Knowledge as related to Values

Knowledge is related to many values in the Revelation. These include: utility or benefit (*naf'*), morals (*khuluq*), beauty (*jamaal*), fairness and equity (*qist*), truth (*haqq*), balance (*tawazun*), giving (*ita* or *ata* or *infaq*), and so on.

### Knowledge as related to Commands

Knowledge is associated with a large number of commands in the Revelation that not only reveal many of the connections between the elements mentioned above, but also how positive and negative connotations of knowledge come into existence. The Revelation opens with a command to "read", demonstrating the centrality of knowledge in the Quran (96:1). Rulers must be knowledgeable (2:247). People must not follow that of which they have no knowledge (17: 36). Prophet Muhammad ﷺ advised believers that "knowledge is the lost inheritance of the believer; wherever the believer finds it, he should take it." (Tirmidhi 2687).

### Knowledge as related to Proofs

Knowledge is also a central theme in many of the Quranic proofs. These include: "and these are the boundaries of Allah, we clarified them for a people of knowledge" (2:230); "even if their fathers know nothing and were not guided?" (5:104); "Say, 'Verily, Allah is capable of sending down a proof/sign but most of them do not know'" (6:37); "and those We have given the Book know that it was sent down from your Lord with truth" (6:114); "it is as such that We detail the proofs/signs for a people that know" (7:32); "Verily, their omen is with Allah but most of them do not know" (7:131); and so on.

The positioning and connectivity of knowledge with all of the above elements in infinite combinations of clusters and web arrangements gives rise to wholistic and dynamic meanings, while the particular truth of every element provides stability in both the textual expressions of knowledge and their manifestations in life. Every element associated with knowledge is associated with every other element by degrees of connectivity. These degrees are determined by the nature of the precise inquiry regarding knowledge with which we approach the texts. For example, the web of meanings that we would be interested in if we sought to examine the nature and role of knowledge in establishing truth (an objective), might emphasise references to the concepts of truth (*haqq*), illustration (*bayan*), witnessing (*shahadah*); the parties of scholars (*ulama*), believers (*mu'minun*), heedful (*mut-*

*taqun*), intellects (*ulul-albab*); universal laws such as the checking of one group by another (*tadafu*), and sanction (*jaza*); values such as benefits (*naʿf*), connectivity (*tawasul*), and justice (*adl*); commands such as saying the truth even if against oneself; and proofs such as knowledge of those who have the Book recognise the truth.

This comprehensive and compound understanding of knowledge clearly reveals the most fundamental source of knowledge is the Revelation, i.e., Quran and Sunnah. As such, Revelation must occupy the centre of the entire enterprise of human knowledge. This does not mean to negate human knowledge gained from direct inquiry and interaction with the universe. Rather, it means that reference frameworks that are derived from the revealed knowledge about the Creator and all creation must reign over readings of the Revelation, cognition of reality in space and time, and action.

To accept Revelation as the fundamental source of knowledge is to re-orient our worldview to remove the distinction between what is religious (*dini*) and what is worldly (*dunyawi*), what is Islamic (*islami*) and what is civil (*madani*), and what is material (*maddi*) and what is spiritual or metaphysical (*ruhi, ma warai*). From this perspective, there is only a singular reading of the revealed and lived 'books', and the signs (*ayat*) of the Quran guide us to explore and encourage us to study the signs (*ayat*) in the horizons of the universe and the souls that Allah created. This reading insists on the fluidity of the formation of the concepts, objectives, values, commands, universal laws, parties and proofs of the revealed and lived truths.

## BASIC LOGIC

Logic, in the context of this work, is the process through which signs (*alamat*) lead to truths (*haqaiq*). The Arabic word '*mantiq*' denotes both, the true designation of sounds to meanings, which is linguistic implication, and the true designation of premises to realities, which is logical implication in the philosophical sense. In both cases, when we consider textual expressions in a connected and wholistic sense, we are engaging in a process of logic, i.e. discovering truths from signs. In the Islamic worldview, believers start from the logical premise that

the Quran is truth. Believing in the Quran requires reason and reflection, but once belief is established, any reasoning and reflection must start with a basic premise that the Quran is true. The Quran challenges detractors to produce the like of the Quran or creation (2:23, 16:20), or to find fault in Allah's words or creation (4:82, 67:3).

Our concern when approaching the text, therefore, is to understand the truth via the logical proofs of the Revelation itself. A distinguishing feature of this logic is the *Maqasid* or purpose-oriented arguments. This is not an exercise in binary thinking of truth or falsehood, but rather a multidimensional and complex reflection process in search of how webs of meaning are established, what truths such webs give rise to and why such meanings are critical to our understanding of Revelation and its implications for everyday life and future visioning.

*To argue via a purpose (maqsid) is the most central and deepest logical argument in the Quran and Sunnah.* Therefore, keeping in mind that the Revelation is truth, we direct our lives towards the highest purpose (*maqsid*) of our existence; the worship of Allah ﷻ. Allah states: "And I did not create the jinn and humankind except to worship Me" (51:56). The worship and glorification of Allah ﷻ is not limited to humans. All creatures in the skies and on earth worship Allah ﷻ and glorify His praises (21:19; 57:1; 59:24). In fact, several chapters of the Quran open with this factual statement (59:1; 61:1; 62:1; 64:1). The purpose of worship and glorification, while at the pinnacle of all purposes, is connected to an extensive and dynamic web of other purposes that penetrate all fields on all levels. The overriding logic of the existence of a purpose (*maqsid*) or multiple purposes (*maqasid*) for every concept, every objective, every value, every universal law, every command, every party (human and non-human) and every proof, renders the *maqasid*-logic or purposefulness, the most salient feature of Revelational logic.

The Maqasid Methodology, therefore, is a *maqasid*/purposes methodology because without this central logic, the wholistic integrity, appeal to human intellect, and indeed, the very meaning of all the other elements, is compromised. It is also through these higher *maqasid* that we were able to develop the framework or elements of

perceptualisation, as the next chapter explains.

In the Quran, the Quran itself is given rationale through a number of purposes including guidance, heedfulness, good news, warning, confirmation, rationalisation, illustration, equity, among many other purposes (2:158, 5:101, 6:19, 9:111, 10:37, 12:2, 15:1, 17:9, 17:82, 10:113, 25:32, Muslim 5427, Ibn Hibban 2126) to mention a few. Similarly, the Arabic language in which the Revelation was revealed is justified with a number of purposes such as exposition, reflection, comprehension and heedfulness, among others (12:2, 20:113, 43:3).

Creation is justified through a number of purposes that the Creator mentions or refers to every time He mentions creation. Even the unseen (*ghayb*) is justified by purposes. For example, hidden beings (*jinn*) are created for the objective of serving Allah (*ibada*) in the comprehensive sense (51:56). Night and day are created with a purpose of alternating between tranquillity and hard work, knowing the count of years and making calculations, thinking, planning, enabling human ingenuity, thanking, serving, believing and remembering (10:6, 17:12, 23:80, 28:73). The mountains are created with the purpose of stabilising the earth (16:15, 21:31) and the wind was created with the purpose of pollination, carrying glad tidings, facilitating the sailing of ships and the search for Allah's providence, all for the purposes of mercy, gratitude, faith, and comfort among numerous other *maqasid* (2:164, 7:57, 25:48, 30:46, 35:9, 45:5). Nothing is mentioned in the Quran and/or illustrated by the Sunnah expect with a purpose that is either explicitly mentioned or potentially inferred from connecting meanings and dimensions.

Purposefulness does not mean that the Revelation precludes other forms of logic from the Islamic worldview. For example, causation can be considered as a secondary method of logic in the Revelation. The experience of causation emerges in all those instances where the Revelation gives reasons for the occurrence of events. For example, there is a series of Quranic narratives, where the absence of heedfulness (*taqwa*) among several ancient communities leads to their demise. In every narrative a different messenger is sent to each community to ask the same question of their people – “Will you not

heed?” – with each making the same demand of their people, “So heed Allah and obey me” (26:108,110,126,131,144,150,163,179). In other words, the *cause* (*sabab, illah*) of their demise was their collective lack of heedfulness, which was the source of rampant injustice with the fall of each community, caused by the widespread practice of one or more prohibited acts.

Day to day causal relations are referred to in the Revelation, albeit not as extensive as purposes, such as fire and burning, water and plantation, food and feeding hunger, force and defence, and so on. It is important in the Islamic worldview, however, not to forget that it is Allah who made the causes and not to fall in disbelief by associating events solely to causes. When the two angels of Babylon taught people certain causal processes, they made sure to tell them: “We are a trial, so do not disbelieve” (2:101), i.e. do not think that you are the ones producing these outcomes instead of the the power of Allah. And when a rainy storm happened during the time of the Prophet ﷺ, he told his companions that Allah said: “This morning, some of my servants are believers and some are not. The one who said: ‘We had rain because of Allah’s mercy and providence’, is a believer, and the one who said: ‘We had rain because of a star or a storm’ is a disbeliever” (Bukhari 846).

Causes, however, push events from the past to the present while purposes, more notably, push the present to the future. This is a significant feature of *maqasid* thinking. It is, as mentioned earlier, suggestive of the wholistic, comprehensive and future-oriented nature of the Maqasid Methodology and the way that it attempts to re-orient the Muslim mind and worldview via the Revelation.

## CONCEPTUALISATIONS

So far, two fundamental premises of the Islamic worldview are established. First, that Revelation is the indisputable source of higher knowledge, i.e. the centrality of Revelation to knowledge; and second, the *maqasid*/purposes are the overriding logic when correctly reflecting upon the Revelation, i.e. the centrality of *maqasid* to Revelational logic. We now turn our attention to the third fundamental

premise related to knowledge: the centrality of authoritative names (*asmaa dhat sultan*) in theoretical and practical conceptualisations.

Allah ﷻ states: “We have not overlooked anything in the Book” (6:38), and also states: “Say: if the sea was an extension to the words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the exhaustion of the words of my Lord, even so if We were to bring its like to extend it” (18:109). Therefore, if nothing has been overlooked, and yet Allah’s words are clearly not exhausted, then what we experience in the textual expressions of the Quran must both be efficient and sufficiently encompassing of the truths required for human success and rectification in space and time.

To capture this comprehensiveness, the Quran employs what it labels as authoritative names (*asmaa dhat sultan*). These are names and associated meanings connected to them upon which Allah has bestowed truth (*haqq*). This truth provides humanity with a stable, divinely defined worldview, to which it can consistently return without flaw or change. The names and their essence are not generated by humans, which serves to protect against human whims and false biases as well as to continually drive humanity toward a divinely ordained normative order. Those who claim that ‘non-normativity’ is a methodological virtue, they themselves necessarily come from one ‘normative’ perspective or the other. For example, contradiction is embedded in the terms ‘non-normative disciplines’ and ‘non-normative gender studies’, since the words/concepts ‘Islam’ and ‘gender’ are normatively meaning- and action-laden.

Authoritative names and concepts are essentially hegemonic over humanly devised theoretical and practical conceptualisations. Allah states:

*... you do not have any authoritative truth [sultan] for this; do you say about Allah what you cannot possibly know? (10:68)*

*You do not worship, with exception to Him, but names that you have designated yourselves and your fathers; Allah has not sent down for such any truthful authority [sultan]; such*

*judgement is reserved only for Allah; He commanded that you may not worship but Him; this is the invaluable religion but the majority of people know not (12:40)*

*Or do you have truthful authority [sultan]? (37:156)*

*Those who dispute the proofs of Allah without haven been given authoritative truth [sultan] from Him; such is greatly hated by Allah and by those who believe (40:35)*

Every Revelational name helps to build a piece of the Islamic worldview via its conceptual understanding. It is to be noted here that a name (*ism*) in the Arabic language is a word constructed from a root (*jadhr, asl*) in order to signify a title, person, meaning, adjective, place, time, tool, etc. Using names (*asma*) is the default Arabic expression, and verbs (*af'al*) are words that are derived from the same roots of names (*asma*) to denote an action in certain time, past, present or future. Arabic verbs do not have different structures as they do in other languages such as Latin-based languages. For example, the name *kitab* is a book but the verb *ka ta ba* is to write, ordain, judge or tie, depending on the context. *Maktabah* is a library, *maktub* is a script or destiny, *katib* is a writer or scribe, etc. Sentences that start with names (*jumal ismiyyah*) are the default Arabic sentences and starting with a verb (*jumal fi'liyyah*) is a secondary expression. In other words, the Revelational ‘names’ (*asma*) include all forms of linguistic expressions and meanings and not just titles.<sup>62</sup>

*The process of definition in the Islamic worldview is, therefore, a cumulative and relative process that is tied to all the conceptual dimensions defined by the relationships within the webs of meanings of the Revelation.* Because of this cumulative, integrative and dynamic process, it is not possible to claim inclusive and exhaustive knowledge of any particular definition. This is by no means a deconstructionist exercise, but rather an awareness of the capacity of the Islamic concepts to evolve and take new dimensions, on top of their core meanings, as human knowledge grows and as more

connections are made between the concepts and the rest of the Revelational web of meaning.

Moreover, vertical and horizontal consistency are assured in the webs generated by this process by virtue of the unified source of knowledge, i.e. Revelation. No addition to any web emerging from the Revelation, stemming from the different fields on inquiry, can introduce contradictions to the webs despite their overlapping and extensive character. For example, in defining the meaning of equity (*qist*) scholars may introduce those dimensions that emerge from the Revelation in relation to their area of concern, social, economic, political, etc. When done properly and in earnest all additions to the definition will form a complementary whole and in no way can contradict the core meaning of equity as forming the basis of all extensions. In other words, the cluster on equity must be consistent, and connections of that cluster to others in the web must be similarly consistent. The door of reasoning (*ijtihad*) when it comes to any definition therefore can never be closed, as long as the new definitions or extensions of definitions do not contradict the central and stable parts of the worldview.

Moreover, people can create suitable instruments and institutions that address important dimensions of their condition and give such institutions suitable names, even ones not mentioned explicitly in the Quran. This is something unavoidable in the course of human affairs. The hegemony of the authoritative names, however, suggests that any human innovation must yield to the meanings that do have authority/*sultan* in Revelation. Not finding any name, concept, theme, phenomena, etc., in the Quran that we think is related in any way to our inquiry, means that we have to delve more deeply into the wisdom of textual provisions. In such cases, we might have to reformulate our inquiry or reconsider our premises, until we find that dimension that exhibits *sultan* in the textual expressions of the Revelation. This does not invalidate the original inquiry but rather guides the scholar to examine core as opposed to peripheral issues, serious as opposed to superficial questions, genuine as opposed to fraudulent concepts.

The truthful authority of the revealed Arabic names (*asma*) and concepts (*mafahim*) in the Islamic worldview must be in constant

dialogue with each other and with relevant dimensions of temporal experience. Because of their authority, these concepts reign over and if necessary, redefine or even void human-made concepts that emerge from other worldviews. Whether a concept is invented based on an Islamic or non-Islamic approach, as long as it does not have an authority from the Revelation, the new concept can only base its authority on its respect or conformance to Revelational truths. This is how the entire conceptual framework of existence and the universe is formulated according to the Maqasid Methodology. This is how the third dimension of knowledge is re-oriented towards the original Islamic worldview.

## 2. Reality: past, present and future

The Maqasid Methodology leads to an awareness of purposes in both textual expressions and the reality (*waqi*) to which they apply. The word *waqi* is used in the Revelation in a participle form (*waqi*) and in a verb form (*waqa'a*) to denote the happening of an event (7:134, 7:171, 10:51, 42:22, etc). It is the awareness of the event that the English word 'reality' is meant to capture here. The reality in this sense includes events in the past, present and future. Thus, through the construction of composite frameworks that reflect our understanding of the wholistic meanings that emerge from the integration of the Seven Elements of the Maqasid Framework – concepts, objectives, values, commands, universal laws, groups and proofs – the Maqasid Methodology allows us to re-orient our awareness of reality as follows: (1) to situate Islam as the gage of advancement or regression in human history, (2) to perceive complexity of the current reality accurately, and (3) to unravel divine criteria necessary for future visioning.

Cycles of Reflection on the Revelation reveal that proper understanding of history – one that is not expressed in superficial terms or biased toward the narratives of the group with the greatest coercive power – demands knowledge of the purposes of Revelation. The continuous struggle of forces of truth and falsehood, belief and disbelief, rectification and corruption, good and evil is, and will remain, at the core of history's march from the Islamic worldview. This is not a sim-

plistic statement and indeed assessing manifestations of the forces over the course of time and space is complex. The Maqasid Methodology helps us deal with such complexity by introducing the seven analytical elements mentioned earlier and their interdependencies. The methodology provides us with a tool that is faithful to the Islamic worldview, with which we can assess the past, understand the present, and project into the future.

### RE-DEFINING ISLAMIC HISTORY

The reconstruction of the concept and scope of 'Islamic history' in accordance with the Revelation, is long overdue. This project should be primarily based on the concept of Islam itself. Islam is the original disposition (*fitrah*) of all creation and the faith of all prophets, messengers and their followers since the time of Adam, to the time of Muhammad ﷺ and until the present moment. Allah says about the disciples of Jesus ﷺ: "I revealed to the disciples, 'Believe in Me and in My messenger.' They said, 'We have believed, so bear witness that indeed we are Muslims'" (5:111), and says about the followers of Moses ﷺ: "And Moses said, 'O my people, if you have believed in Allah, then rely upon Him, if you should be Muslims'" (10:84). This means that the history of Judaism and Christianity has to be studied - from the Islamic perspective - as part of the study of the history of Islam, regardless of the fact that some followers of these Muslim prophets invented other religions - from the Islamic perspective.

In fact, the history of Islam includes the history of prophets in every region and era. It is the history of humanity with the truth since the beginning of time on earth, not just the history of faith in predominantly Muslim societies since the days of the message of Muhammad ﷺ. *The true history of Islam is the struggle of all individuals, communities and nations to nurture consciousness of the Creator and how this ought to guide human behaviour in relation to their Creator and all created matter.*

This is a much larger scope than the military and political history of the Arab peninsula and surrounding regions, which is the usual scope of Islamic history books. Allah says: "There is not a community (*um-*

*mah*) but a warner has gone among them" (35:24), and "And We sent messengers about whom We have related their stories to you before and messengers about whom We have not related to you. And Allah spoke to Moses with direct speech" (41:164). Viewing history from this lens offers a truthful and unifying perspective for rewriting history based on a worldview that is informed by the Revelation.

Reconceptualising history in this way will not only reshape human and Muslim identity but will do so within a comprehensive framework that incorporates all the elements that the Maqasid Framework brings to the fore. The rise and decline of communities (*umam*) are based on Revelational criteria. The Maqasid Methodology offers a detailed framework for this study based on a web of objective-based indicators, namely: the concepts, objectives, values, commands, universal laws, groups and proofs. Such criteria define legitimate standards and principles for the glorification or debasement of personalities, communities and civilisations. Whether we are considering individual achievements or those associated with broader socio-cultural and economic changes, the Maqasid Methodology forces us to remain focused on how these developments measure up to the *maqasid* of Revelation. In other words, the extent to which they conform to the purposes for which their Creator not only intended for them, but also facilitated through divine guidance in nature, textual expressions and the lessons exemplified in the lives of the messengers. Allah states: "Indeed, in their stories there are lessons for people of intellect" (12:111). The composite frameworks as well as the formative theories and principles to which they give rise, must therefore reign over all human narratives related to actors, ideas, institutions and processes of history.

Clearly, this conceptualisation liberates us from superficial divisions that are based on human interpretations to manage, simplify and politicise history. The Revelation shapes this part of the Islamic worldview by speaking of various regions, of ethnicities and tribes, or towns and nations, of governors and governed, kings and subjects, of humans and jinn, of wealthy and poor, of landowners and the landless, of strong and weak, of residents and refugees, etc., but

it does so without fundamentally attributing simple categorisations of good and evil, truth and falsehood, to any of these categories and their numerous sub-categories. Instead, their value is presented in accordance with the conformance of their intentions and actions to divine criteria. Truth and falsehood can be exercised by any of these categories with the exception of the messengers whose infallibility is strictly ordained by Allah ﷻ.

The conceptualisation of history that the Maqasid Methodology calls for drives humanity to recognise that conflict is ultimately a struggle between truth and falsehood or good and evil. Becoming aware of the fundamental nature of conflict encourages movement toward rectifying reality and achieving success (*falah*) in the future in a way that is connected to the Creator and not the biases of human narratives, which the victors propagate to further worldly gains for themselves and their heirs.

This methodology places Islam, pre- and post-Prophet Muhammad's message, at the centre of historical narratives that seek to establish truth, not taking for granted that even the actions and role of those identified as Muslims must be analysed in accordance with this methodology. Muslims are not passive bystanders, nor were they ever outside historical processes as many commentators and historians have suggested. The pervasive and inextricable presence of Islam, however much neglected or denied, presupposes the place and role of Muslims in history, whatever label such a group is given in any moment in history.

Awareness of history must be carried through to the reconceptualisation of all disciplinary knowledge and not just in historical studies. The integration of truthful histories is critical to understanding the legitimate contribution of these fields of study versus those that are developed, propelled and imposed under a significant influence of tyranny, interest parties, or other inequitable social arrangements that seek the reinforcement of unjust power relations in society, as opposed to a search for truth and respect for faith. This applies to both the traditional Islamic disciplines as well as other disciplines.

## ASSESSING LIVED REALITY

A truthful understanding of history provides a seamless connection to the present with all of its new forms and diverse manifestations. It is a deep conviction in the Islamic worldview - as expressed in the Revelation - to liberate the human mind from false perceptions of reality that are constructed through unfounded criteria, approaches, pre-assumptions and terminologies. False perceptions of reality emerge when conceptualisations are based on human standards and principles without guidance from the authority of the Revelation. As a result, they are severed from the highest objectives for humanity, which is to serve Allah ﷻ in all of the forms that are explained in the relation web of heart and physical actions.

Similar to the approach to history, the Maqasid Methodology applies to studying lived reality through integrating concepts, objectives, values, commands, universal laws, groups and proofs in order to generate a worldview that shifts the perception of present reality in a paradigmatic way. This allows scholarship in all of its forms to be based on an assessment of reality that is coherent with the web of composite frameworks and therefore to introduce creative ways of rectifying disciplines, sciences, systems and phenomena of our current historical moment.

Today, the dire need - and golden opportunity - for deep change on all fronts is obvious to any observant conscience. Allah states: "Corruption has arisen on land and sea due to what the hands of people have earned; so that they may taste some of what they did, perchance to return" (30:41). Whether we consider disbelief, promiscuity, poverty, environmental degradation, pandemics, greed, tyranny, corruption, oligopoly, etc., or the counter-movements towards faith, family values, charity, social justice, environmental awareness, equity, etc., the Maqasid Methodology demonstrates that all phenomena are interrelated and complex. It directs us to reconsider how we determine objectives, define concepts, prioritise values, respect universal laws, contextualise commands, classify parties and understand proofs.

Not only so, but in studying these elements we must see the relationships among them, the guidance to which they give rise and the

applicability to our present context. We cannot continue to perceive reality in fragmented ways as if imbalance and injustice in one realm has no impact on the whole of which it is necessarily a part. Whether we are engaged in the rectification of the *Usuli* Studies, Phenomena Studies, Disciplinary Studies or Strategic Studies (Chapter 6), the Maqasid Methodology insists that we embed our efforts within interconnected and expansive webs of meaning that include all dimensions of the lived reality.

Today, our lived reality is far from the path of achieving the higher objectives of the *ummah* and humanity more broadly. Even a cursory consideration of current affairs – wars, white supremacy movements, natural disasters, pandemics, unhindered markets, domestic violence, environmental degradation, occupation, ethnic cleansing, false media and information, hunger, fear, illiteracy, etc., – demonstrates how far humanity has deviated from divine objectives. These deviations are fertile ground for the application of the Maqasid Methodology and will be the subject of proposed research.

### ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

The awareness of history and present realities through the lens and guidance of Revelation offers important lessons for future visions and paths. Generally, disciplines that include or suggest a future vision suffer from deep methodological errors since they emerge from uncritical perceptions of success, either in the past or present. For example, perceptions of the success of an ‘Islamic state’ are often based on the right-of-kings during the middle ages or even state formations that emerged in the post-colonial era and have erroneously influenced Islamic political thought as it plans for future political scenarios. These perceptions are based on specific interests, that upon closer scrutiny, may be contrary to true Islamic objectives of governance (*hukm*) as expressed in the Revelation, even if they call themselves ‘Islamic’.

Projecting into the future demands an awareness of history’s underlying drivers, or the nature and role of diverse forces in affecting change. Revelation draws our attention to moral, material, natural

and divine forces which have shaped our past, continue to shape our present and will certainly influence the future. The Maqasid Methodology tells us that the manifestations of these forces, their timing and intensity, are associated with the interplay of the Seven Elements of perceptualisation and the extent to which their expression over time moves toward or away from the guidance of the Revelation. Allah ﷻ states: “Allah does not change the bounty with which He has graced a people, until they have changed what is in their own selves, He is the hearer the knower” (8:53). He ﷻ also states: “They have arrogance and evil intrigue in the land, but evil intrigue does not envelop except its own fraternity; so, do they then wait for the way of their predecessors? Because you will not find an exchange in Allah’s universal law and you will not find a circumvention in Allah’s universal law” (35:43). These universal laws and related objectives and values apply to all of humanity in every place and time including its future.

The rectification of an Islamic future cannot be separated from the rectification of the future of all humanity, if our vision is accurate and according to the Revelation. This is because the web of meanings around the objective of rectification of humanity and earth in the Revelation is based on both the original disposition (*fitrah*) and universal laws (*sunan*) and not only for Muslims. Moreover, the scope of rectification is not only concerned with the temporal needs of any one generation because the search for mercy, justice, equity, balance, etc., extends through time. Earthly life is only one dimension of the future vision that Islam and the Maqasid Methodology suggest. Success (*falah*), with all of its implications, as it emerges from the Revelation, applies as much to this life as it does to the next life, which is the more important part of our future.

### 3. Scholarship: scope, scholars and outcome

The Maqasid Methodology aims to return Islamic scholarship (*ijtihād*) to its comprehensive role as defined in the Revelation. In order to accomplish this, it suggests that three shifts must occur in disciplines: scope, scholars and outcome. First, the concept and scope of scholarship itself must be reconsidered. Deep understanding, in-

tellec and leadership (*fiqh*) is not exclusively related to juristic matters - however important they are - but must extend to any area of inquiry that focalises Revelation and takes seriously the hegemonic character of its content. Second, and as a result, the concept and scope of a scholar must be reconstituted. Scholars with deep understanding and wise leadership (*fuqaha*) are not solely the class of Muslim jurists - despite their important role - but all those scholars in all fields of knowledge undertaking scholarship (*ijtihad*) to achieve a commendable understanding of their subject matter as just noted. Legitimacy is not the sole purview of jurists or those dedicated to the Islamic disciplines as they are currently defined, despite the importance of these disciplines - after restructuring them - within the area of *Usuli* (Foundational/Fundamental) Studies. Third, the outcome of the process of scholarship (*ijtihad*) carried out by a scholar (*mujtahid*) is composite frameworks, formative theories and principles that result from their construction, and then either rulings or judgements of benefits and harms in the wider sense - depending on the question at hand and the purpose pursued.

## SCOPE

*The Maqasid Methodology debunks the long-held misconception that Islamic scholarship (ijtihad) is limited to legal or ethical studies most often associated with the various schools of jurisprudence (madhahib).* While such studies have made major contributions to the advancement of Islamic jurisprudence, they are not the only feature or topic of Islamic scholarship that falls under *fiqh*, as discussed earlier. The scope of *fiqh* is every field of knowledge and every type of human endeavour.

Muslim scholars in the Islamic civilisation, as mentioned earlier, included all fields of inquiry in their times - medicine, mathematics, astronomy, biology, architecture, politics, trade, geography, etc. - as part of *fiqh*. This is the same comprehensive scope that the Maqasid Methodology aims to return to. *Ijtihad* as a terminology is the expending of effort (*juhd*) in a field of inquiry, i.e. it is not limited to a specific field. When the Prophet ﷺ sent Moadh ibn Jabal as a governor in

Yemen, he asked him: "How do you judge if you have to judge a public matter?" Moadh replied: "By the Book of Allah". The Prophet ﷺ asked him: "If you cannot find what you are looking for in the Book of Allah, what would you do?" Moadh replied: "By the Sunnah of His Messenger". The Prophet ﷺ asked him: "If you cannot find what you are looking for in the Sunnah of His Messenger, what would you do?" Moadh replied: "I exert all my effort to form an opinion (*ajtahidu ra'yi*)" (Abu Daud 3592, Bayhaqi1 10/114).

The Prophet ﷺ approved Moadh's approach and his concept of *ijtihad* to form an opinion on public matters. This is how *ijtihad* is defined in the Maqasid Methodology, given the fact that the 'opinion' is going to be based on the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger, albeit via an inferred step by step methodology. Moreover, the division of knowledge into Islamic and secular streams is a historical innovation that has no basis in Revelation. As discussed previously, knowledge in Islam is characterised by extensive webs of meaning that do not admit such a division.

Scholarship is a comprehensive notion in the Revelation that is shaped by the integrative, wholistic and dynamic interaction of concepts, objectives, values, commands, universal laws, groups and proofs and the webs of meaning to which they give rise. These webs are defined by faith, truth, clarity, the seen and unseen among other significant parameters. Thus, the rulings (*ahkam*) which constitute the common understanding of *fiqh* are only one aspect of knowledge. Even then, they cannot be extracted from Revelation in a way that strips them of the webs of meaning of which they are necessarily a part, and which ultimately legitimise their application to reality.

In seeking to explore, derive, apply and realise Islamic objectives to lived reality, the Islamic scholarship should go well beyond the confines of any of the traditional disciplinary classifications of disciplines. It also goes beyond Maqasid Studies that seeks only to deal with the history of the *maqasid* theories, as mentioned earlier. Instead, it subjects all theoretical and practical endeavours to the elements and associated webs of meanings. It does so to emphasise the dire need to understand connectivity and wholism, bringing all knowledge back to

its unified and divine source. The methodology, thus, aims at reconstructing systems of knowledge in research, education and action.

Islamic Studies can and must, therefore, include studies in all disciplines. Their value and utility are equally applicable to academia and research as it is to the arts and entertainment, business, government and civil society as well as to the hybrid arrangements that are combining the roles, resources and skills of these sectors. The study of phenomena in particular (Chapter 6), can offer great promise in coordinating human response to contemporary challenges on an unprecedented scale.

### SCHOLARS/MUJTAHIDS

The narrow and non-integrating disciplinisation of Islamic scholarship in our time has naturally reduced the definition of the Islamic scholar to an expert in one of the sciences labelled as Islamic or religious. This is in contrast to scholars of other disciplines who are labelled as professionals, worldly, materialistic or secular. This dichotomy between the scholars of religion (*din*) and the scholars of worldly realities (*dunya*) was a low point in the Islamic history that emerged from civilisational decline and colonisation of Muslim-majority societies, as mentioned earlier. It has served to limit the knowledge and expertise of both camps, as well as to promote a belief that sufficient understanding of complex questions can be achieved simply by encouraging the two to 'consult' with each other at a cursory level. In most situations, however, each group goes about their scholarship in isolation of the other. The comprehensive and pervasive nature of knowledge with its rootedness in the sacred makes the continuation of this dichotomy untenable and incompatible with the Islamic worldview.

*Islamic scholars (mujtahids) therefore include all seekers of knowledge, males and females, from all disciplinary backgrounds and at various levels and capacities, who are seeking to make theoretical and practical contributions to any subject matter based on a dedication to the Revelation as the driver of their thoughts and approaches.* Backgrounds, specialisations and levels of expertise obviously dictate what each scholar is qualified to research, and how authoritative

their opinions will be. At the highest level of Islamic scholarship, the Maqasid Methodology aims at developing multi-/trans-disciplinary and encyclopaedic scholars. At the most basic level of Islamic scholarship, scholars work on specific areas or tasks and therefore apply *ijtihad* in a limited way.

The Maqasid Methodology also demands that such approaches, whether of an individual scholar or group of scholars, include the construction or adoption of composite frameworks and associated formative theories and principles as related to their area of concern. The soundness of the frameworks is therefore an indispensable condition for *maqasid* scholars, irrespective of their specialisation, intellectual background and level of achievement.

The application of the Maqasid Methodology will govern the ways in which scholars from diverse backgrounds approach their fields. They shall realise that the methodology will expand the boundaries of their expertise, enabling them to recognise the integrative nature of all knowledge and their unique contribution. Not all *maqasid* scholars will deal with major current phenomena or have the capacity to make seminal contributions to the study of fundamentals of the Revelation or the construction of formative theories and principles.

### OUTCOMES

The comprehensiveness of knowledge and the diversity of *maqasidi* scholars determines the outcomes of *maqasidi* scholarship in a number of significant ways. Outcomes are distinguished by their broad area of concern. In the proposed re-classification of Islamic Studies, in Chapter 6, they are divided into: *Usuli* Studies, Disciplinary Studies, Phenomena Studies and Strategic Studies. All outcomes are determined by their level of sophistication, which ranges from the construction of composite frameworks and associated formative theories and principles at their height, to single applications in their simplest forms.

If the desired outcome of the study is an edict (*fatwa*), which belongs to the area of *Usuli* Studies, formative theories and principles have to be developed first. The scholar, therefore, will orient them-

selves to the research by defining the general purpose, examine the primary related texts of the Quran and Sunnah, build a framework that integrates the elements related to the topic and discuss their application to the lived reality, and also discuss alternative opinions in the literature. Out of this study emerges the formative theories and principles that will guide the development of the *fatwa*. Referring to previous opinions is not enough 'proof' (*hujjah, dalil*) unless they are integrated in the methodological steps described above. An edited or re-published manuscript (*makhtutah*) is not an appropriate outcome of research, unless the historical context of the script and the writer is analysed - based on the framework - and formative theories and principles concluded.

It is to be noted that *fatwa* related to the well-known and constant parts in the Islamic moral code are not part of this exercise of renewal. In these areas, *fatwa* is merely a way of disseminating basic information about Islam, rather than research that investigates new solutions. Keeping the constancy of the constant part of Islam is essential. They are the well-defined (*muhkamat*) or core (*ummahat*) matters that Allah ﷻ refers to: "It is He who has sent down the Book on you [Muhammad], in it are well defined (*muhkamat*) verses that are the core (*umm*) of the Book" (3:7).

In other *Usuli* Studies and other areas of research, the outcome is not a *fatwa*, but rather judgements of benefits (*masalih*) and harms (*mafasid*) that takes different forms, such as decisions, policies, plans, designs, laws, artistic expressions, strategies, etc. Composite frameworks derived using the Maqasid Methodology complement and overlap no matter what issue, phenomena, discipline or visioning exercise is under consideration. This complementarity and consistency allow researchers, scholars and practitioners to communicate with each other, check one another, keep understanding dynamics and expanding their web of connections, while creating a shared historical experience for those adopting this methodology. This is a web approach to knowledge generation (Chapter 6), where anyone working with the methodology can relate to, access, understand, utilise and build upon frameworks, theories, principles and various outcomes developed by others.

So far, three chapters were presented as follows: (1) an introduction to connectivity, wholism and *maqasid*, (2) limitations in the current approaches to the Islamic scholarship and how the Maqasid Methodology aims to deal with them, and (3) a re-orientation of the Islamic worldview in terms of understanding knowledge, lived reality, and how scholarship could realise knowledge in the lived reality. The next two chapters explain the Maqasid Methodology itself and the composite framework in some detail.