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Two Initiatives of Qur'anic Methodological Interpretation in Contemporary Indonesia: A Study of *Tafsīr Maqāsidī* and *Maʿnā-cum-Maghzā*

Iffah

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia
iffahmuzammil@uinsa.ac.id

Fejrian Yazdajird Iwanebel

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia
iwanebel@uinsa.ac.id

Abd. Kholid

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia
a.kholid@uinsa.ac.id

Abstract

This article examines the *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* and Maqāsid-based interpretation approaches initiated by Indonesian Muslim scholars. While most existing research predominantly focuses on applying these two methodologies, this article critically analyzes the construction of both methodologies to understand their methodological applications and the extent of the contributions offered by these interpretation methodologies. The study argues that, firstly, the conceptual framework and methodology of *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* and Maqāsid-based interpretation still heavily rely on the previous scholars' ideas

and have yet to find relatively new grounding and expansion, despite both claiming to extend beyond the boundaries of legal verses in the Qur'an. Secondly, in terms of practical implementation, the *ma'nā-cum-maghzā* methodology appears to be more structured in its formulation, while the Maqāsid-based interpretation, on the other hand, still lacks a concrete formulation of its interpretative steps. Mustaqim, in this regard, only formulates principles for interpreting the Qur'an based on *maqāsid*. Thirdly, although they may differ conceptually and terminologically, both methodologies converge and share similarities in seeking the main message of the Qur'an. Mustaqim refers to it as *maqāsid*, while Sahiron terms it as historical phenomenal significance. Similarly, in terms of contextualization perspective, Mustaqim refers to it as the movement of text (*harakiyyat al-nass*), while Sahiron terms it as dynamic phenomenal significance.

Keywords: The Qur'an, Methodological Interpretation, *Ma'nā-cum-maghzā*, *Tafsīr Maqāsidī*.

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji pendekatan *ma'nā-cum-maghzā* dan *tafsīr maqāsidī* yang diinisiasi oleh sarjana Muslim Indonesia. Jika mayoritas penelitian yang ada lebih dominan untuk mengaplikasikan kedua metodologi tersebut, artikel ini hendak menelaah secara kritis terhadap konstruksi kedua metodologi itu untuk melihat bagaimana aplikasi metodologi dan sejauh mana kontribusi yang ditawarkan dari kedua metodologi penafsiran tersebut. Penelitian ini berargumen bahwa, pertama, bangunan konsep dan metodologi *ma'nā-cum-maghzā* dan *tafsīr maqāsidī* masih sepenuhnya berpijak dari konsepsi-konsepsi pemikiran ulama sebelumnya, dan bahkan belum menemukan titik pijakan dan perluasan yang relatif baru, meskipun keduanya mengklaim melampaui batasan ayat-ayat hukum dalam Al-Qur'an. Kedua, dalam wilayah aplikatifnya, metodologi *ma'nā-cum-maghzā* terlihat lebih terstruktur dalam perumusan metodenya. Sedangkan *tafsīr maqāsidī*, tampaknya masih belum terumuskan secara konkret langkah-langkah penafsirannya. Mustaqim dalam hal ini, hanya merumuskan prinsip-prinsip dalam menafsirkan Al-Qur'an dengan berbasis pada *maqāsid*. Ketiga, meskipun terlihat berbeda secara konsep dan terminologis, keduanya menemukan titik persinggungan dan persamaan dalam mencari pesan utama teks al-Qur'an. Dalam bahasa Mustaqim disebut dengan *maqāsid*, sedangkan dalam terminologi Sahiron disebut dengan signifikansi fenomenal historis. Demikian juga dengan perspektif kontekstualisasi, yang dalam bahasa Mustaqim disebut dengan gerak teks (*harakiyyat al-nass*), sedangkan dalam terminologi Sahiron disebut dengan signifikansi fenomenal dinamis.

Kata kunci: Al-Qur'an, metodologi penafsiran, *ma'nā-cum-maghzā*, *Tafsīr Maqāsidī*.

Introduction

The discourse on the study of the Qur'an in the modern era has been characterized by various approaches and methodologies in reading the text of the Qur'an. Its development has been significant, in line with the social demand for the significance of

the Qur'an in addressing the challenges of modern society. The Qur'an has truly become the point of discourse in Islamic studies. According to Saeed's observation, the discourse debate involves at least three groups: textualists, semi-textualists, and contextualists (Saeed, 2006). Each group has assumptions and paradigms in reading the text of the Qur'an. They also claim to be able to address the challenges of modern society with their various interpretations. In this context, the discourse of interpreting the Qur'an becomes a field of negotiative discourse.

In the context of Indonesian studies, the initiation of Qur'anic interpretation methodologies has not been sufficiently apparent, at least until the 21st century. The discourse on the methodology of interpreting the Qur'an in Indonesia has been preceded by classical scholarly discourse that has been established, such as the study of *'ulūm al-Qur'ān* and *'ulūm al-tafsīr* (Anshori, 2013; Drajat, 2017; Suma, 2013; Teungku Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy, 2009). In the 1990s, thematic interpretation methods also emerged since they were introduced by Quraish Shihab (1992). Genealogically, this thematic method conceptually adopts its interpretation format from the Egyptian scholar, 'Abd al-Hayy al-Firmāwī (Iwanebel, 2020). In the next stage, in the early 2000s, the study of the methodology of interpreting the Qur'an began to flourish with the emergence of 'hermeneutics' in Qur'anic studies. At this point, the intellectual power network that was originally oriented towards the East began to face new challenges from Western scholarly discourse.

In the post-hermeneutic period, we can at least see two methodological initiatives introduced by Indonesian Muslim scholars in the discourse of interpreting the Qur'an, namely: Sahiron Syamsuddin with the *ma'nā-cum-maghzā* methodology and Abdul Mustaqim with the *tafsīr maqāsidī* methodology. The popularity of these methodologies has been appreciated by the academic community in Indonesia, as evidenced by the numerous citations and studies on their ideas (Al Baihaqi, 2022; Anshori, 2022; Musfiqoh et al., 2022; Najiyah & Nurhaedi, 2022; Rifqi & Thahir, 2019).

Ma'nā-cum-maghzā is an initiative in the methodology of interpretation proposed by Sahiron to emphasize the importance of reading the text from two perspectives: *ma'nā* (literal meaning) and *maghzā* (inner meaning). Both are inseparable aspects in the reading of the Qur'an. On the other hand, *Tafsīr Maqāsidī,* initiated by

Abdul Mustaqim (Mustaqim, 2019b, 2019a), emphasizes the importance of the philosophical framework of *maqāsid al-sharīʿah* (the objectives of Islamic law) in interpreting the Qur'an. At first glance, these two methodologies share similarities in paradigm, but they form a distinct demarcation in their applicative realm.

Both methodologies are relatively new in the discourse of Qur'anic interpretation in Indonesia. However, the majority of scholarly works written in this field tend to apply these methodologies rather than subject them to research. There are few scholars who critique these methodologies. For example, Asep Setiawan (2016) views the *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* methodology as a reflection of hermeneutics that he believes stems from skepticism and relativism, ultimately producing uncertain meanings. The strong influence of Western traditions, such as Fazlur Rahman, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, is seen as a 'weak point' in the structure of the *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* methodology. In contrast to Setiawan's concerns, Fadli Lukman, in his brief writing, shows a more enlightening prospect for *maʿnā-cum-maghzā*. Furthermore, Lukman (2020) 'challenges' this methodology not to be merely a 'scientific method', but to go further and become a 'philosophy' (a way of life).

From the above description, both responses do not delve deeper into the epistemological structure of the methodologies offered by these two prominent figures. The first response is more preventive in nature and seems to be dominated by strong 'Islamist' reasoning, thus raising acute concerns about something new and appearing anti-'Western civilization'. On the other hand, the second response, although very brief, has been able to show a positive side that envisions a brighter future projection from the interpretation methodologies. Overall, both have not yet touched on the 'episteme' aspect of the two methodologies offered. It is in this context that this writing seeks to fill this void by critically examining the construction of the methodologies offered by these two renowned scholars.

Theoretical Framework

The shift in the paradigm of interpretation in the modern era is characterized by the emergence of an Islamic movement initiated by Muh}ammad ʿAbduh (d. 1905) (ʿIyazi, 1373 H). In his writings, he emphasizes the importance of the guidance paradigm as the

foundation for interpreting the Qur'an. This paradigm assumes that the Qur'an is a book that serves as guidance for humankind. According to 'Abduh, this guidance should be used as inspiration to explore the contextual messages of the Qur'an, providing guidance to readers that is relevant to their time (Nawawi, 2002).

In the modern era, we can see many scholars making efforts to re-read the Qur'an through the lens of modernity. Farid Esack and Nasr Hamid Abū Zayd, for example, also strive to open new discourse in the direction of contemporary interpretive paradigms. For them, interpretation not only preserves old content but also produces new meanings. In this context, Esack aims to build a liberation paradigm as an interpretive framework based on the argument that the Qur'an is a progressive revelation (Esack, 1997). Similarly, Abu Zayd demonstrates the progressiveness of revelation through his formulation of two conceptions of the descent of the Qur'an: *marhalat al-tashakkul*, the phase in which the Qur'an was revealed and dialectically engaged with its surroundings, and *marhalat al-tashkil*, the phase in which the Qur'an reconstructs its cultural system (Abu Zayd, 2014).

Method

This study adopts a qualitative approach aimed at elucidating the methodologies of *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* and *maqāsidī* interpretation. It focuses on a comprehensive analysis of existing literature through library research. The selected materials for analysis encompass a diverse array of written documents, including both primary and secondary sources. The primary emphasis of this study will be on the works of Sahiron Syamsuddin and Abdul Mustaqim. It is important to note that Sahiron Syamsuddin has not yet published a comprehensive book on ma'na cum maghza; his writings on this subject remain dispersed across various publications. The most thorough exposition of this concept can be found in his book, *Hermeneutika dan Pengembangan Ulumul qur'an (Edisi Revisi dan Perluasan)* (Syamsuddin, 2017a), as well as in the introductory section of the anthology *Pendekatan Maʿnā-cum-maghzā atas Al-Qur'an dan Hadis: Menjawab Problematika Sosial Keagamaan di Era Kontemporer*, which he edited. In contrast, Abdul Mustaqim's maqāsidī interpretation is primarily derived from his inaugural professorship paper titled *Argumentasi Keniscayaan Tafsir Maqashidi sebagai Basis Moderasi Islam.*

Given that the research is predominantly based on written documents, the researchers employ content and textual analysis methods to meticulously examine these texts. This content analysis is further enhanced by a contextualist interpretation approach that incorporates insights from various scientific disciplines, including language, literature, and *maqāsid al-sharīʿah*. During the analysis phase, the researcher utilizes a comparative framework to juxtapose the works of these two scholars, who not only lived during the same period but also resided in the same city and participated in the same academic environment.

Result

On the Concept and Methodology of Maʿnā-cum-maghzā and Tafsīr Maqāsidī

The Maʿnā-cum-maghzā

Conceptually, the interpretation based on *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* is derived from two main concepts: *maʿnā* and *maghzā*. Both of these concepts hold significant importance in the discourse of interpretation. Ma'na itself has been the subject of discussion among scholars of interpretation, particularly in relation to the meaning of interpretation itself. For example, al-Zarqānī (2010) defines interpretation as "a science that discusses the holy book of the Qur'an from the perspective of its revelation, chain of transmission, recitation, its words, and its meanings related to the words and also related to the law." From this definition, the meaning in the context of interpretation is not different from what is referred to as interpretation itself. In other words, the meaning of the Qur'an is a product of an interpretation of the Qur'an. This view is reinforced by Ibn al-Faris, as quoted by al-Zarkashi (2006) in *al-Burhān fī 'Ulum al-Qur'an*, stating that there is a close relationship between *maʿnā*, interpretation, and *ta'wīl*. This understanding has led to extensive discussions on the Qur'an and the subsequent emergence of theories in the field of tafsir.

Furthermore, in the context of ijtihad, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (1994) distinguishes between *maʿnā* and *maghzā*. According to Nasr Hamid, *maʿnā* is the understanding obtained directly when reading the text in a textual manner through its arrangement,

structure, and language style. Ma'na cannot be separated from the historical meaning produced at that time, which distinguishes it from *maghzā*. Nasr Hamid asserts that the difference between the two lies in two aspects. First, *maʿnā* has a historical nature, meaning that one cannot recognize and understand the *maʿnā* unless they deeply understand its internal and external context at the time the text was produced. On the other hand, *maghzā* has a contemporary nature, in the sense that the result of reading the text is more influenced by the contemporary context of the reader, rather than the context in which the text was produced. *Maghzā* cannot be detached from *maʿnā*, as it touches and processes from it. Nasr Hamid emphasizes that if *maghzā* does not originate from *maʿnā* or deviates from it, it is susceptible to becoming talwīn (mixing with reader ideologies) rather than ta'wīl. Second, *maʿnā* has a high level of stability in its meaning, which differs from *maghzā* that has a characteristic of change (*mutaharrik*) that adapts to the reader's context, although it cannot be completely detached from *maʿnā*.

Based on the above explanation, the *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* approach initiated by Sahiron most likely refers theoretically to the reasoning of interpretation initiated by Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid. Textually, the names are not significantly different, as Sahiron still uses the same two terms, *maʿnā* and *maghzā*. The question then arises: what is the difference between the *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* approach initiated by Sahiron and the theory of meaning initiated by Nasr Hamid? If there is a difference, what modifications did Sahiron make through the *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* approach in the discourse of contemporary Qur'anic interpretation?

Maʿnā-cum-maghzā, according to Sahiron (2020), is an approach where one explores or reconstructs the historical meaning and main messages, namely the meaning (*maʿnā*) and the significance (*maghzā*) that may have been intended by the text's author or understood by the historical audience, and then develops the significance of the text for contemporary and future contexts. In this, it can be emphasized that at first glance, the meaning and understanding of *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* do not find significant differences from previous thinkers, such as Fazlur Rahman, Muhammad Talbi, and Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid. However, according to Sahiron, the above Muslim thinkers did not pay much attention to its significance (maghzā). They have focused on the contemporary aspects that must be included in the interpretation of the Qur'an. In this context, Rahman refers to the main message that can be implemented in the contemporary context with ratio

legis, Talbi refers to it as *maqāsid*, and Nasr Hamid refers to it as maghzā. In this context, Sahiron seems to contribute to the scholarly treasury in this aspect of significance.

Furthermore, the novelty aspect intended to be brought out by the *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* approach is based on the framework of interpretation methodology initiated by Rahman and Saeed, which, according to Sahiron, is still limited to legal verses. *Maʿnā-cum-maghzā* is then considered capable of bridging contextual interpretations of the Qur'an, covering all verses of the Qur'an, not limited to legal verses only. Sahiron (2017) firmly explains:

> *"However, both Rahman's double movement and Saeed's contextualist approach seem to be applied only to the interpretation of Qur'anic legal verses. On the other hand, the Maʿnā-cum-Maghzā approach is supposed to be appropriate for the whole Qur'an."*

Furthermore, to elucidate the significance within religious texts, Sahiron divides significance into two: 'phenomenal significance' and 'ideal significance'. He further divides phenomenal significance into two parts: phenomenal historical significance and dynamic phenomenal significance. The former, according to Sahiron, is the main message of a verse or collection of verses understood and applied at the time of revelation, while dynamic phenomenal significance is the message of the Qur'an understood and defined when a specific verse or collection of verses is interpreted, and subsequently applied in the contemporary life context of the interpreter. In Sahiron's view, historical phenomenal significance can be obtained through an examination of the contexts surrounding the Qur'anic text during the time of revelation, both at the macro and micro levels. Sahiron emphasizes the importance of understanding the *asbāb al-nuzūl* (reasons or context at the time of the revelation of the Qur'anic verses). For him, the asbab al-nuzul composed and documented by earlier scholars can provide an overview of the context when specific verses were revealed to the Prophet. On the other hand, to understand dynamic phenomenal significance, an interpreter needs to comprehend the development of thought and the spirit of the era (*zeitgeist*) during interpretation. As for the second, ideal significance, in Sahiron's understanding, it represents the ideal accumulation of understandings of verse significances. This accumulation can be acquired or known at the end or purpose of human civilization as intended by God (Syamsuddin, 2017b).

Regarding the exploration of historical meaning and phenomenal historical significance, Sahiron delineates several methodical steps as follows: First, linguistic study of the Qur'anic text, encompassing aspects of diction, vocabulary, structure, and style of the Qur'anic language. In this regard, Sahiron asserts that the language to be scrutinized by an interpreter when dealing with the Qur'an is the Arabic language of the 7th century, not contemporary Arabic. The emphasis on the historical linguistic context is underscored by Sahiron considering the diachrony (development) of language. He exemplifies the concept of *ikhlās*, which has undergone a change in meaning, originally signifying purity and monotheism, and later shifting to obedience and devotion. Second, intra-textual analysis, involving the study of a thematic concept or specific linguistic expression in a Qur'anic verse by comparing it to other similar verses. At this stage, Sahiron also introduces semantic analysis. Third, inter-textual analysis, comparing the Qur'anic text with other texts from the time of revelation or slightly earlier. For example, comparing the Qur'an with hadith texts, Arabic poetry, and texts from other religious communities such as Jewish and Christian texts. Fourth, studying the historical context of the revelation of the Qur'anic verses, both at the micro and macro levels. Analysis at this stage is crucial and serves as a foundation for subsequent analysis. This is because at this point, an interpreter is required to draw out the historical phenomenal significance from the interpreted Qur'anic text. Fifth, exploring the main purpose or message (*maghzā al-āyah*) of the verses being interpreted. At this stage, Sahiron notes that sometimes the main purpose of a verse is explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an, but often the purpose is veiled or implied. In this context, the analysis of the revelation context, both micro and macro, plays a significant role in understanding the main purpose of a verse.

Subsequently, after explaining the methodical steps to find historical meaning and phenomenal historical significance, the *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* methodology framework does not stop there. The next step, according to Sahiron, is crucial and serves as authentic evidence of the interpretation process. The subsequent step is to construct dynamic phenomenal significance. Efforts to construct this interpretation are not easy, as an interpreter is required to engage in a dialogue between the text's horizon and the interpreter's own horizon. The strong textual horizon generally dictates the preconditions of the interpreter's horizon. This is the point of criticism from the progressive quasi-objectivist group towards the conservative quasi-objectivist group. For the latter group,

the text and its literal meaning are paramount, and the text guides humanity to the truth. In contrast, the former group emphasizes the spirit behind the textual meaning of the Qur'anic verses, such that the universal aspects are the values and spirit of the verses, not the rigid and limited textual meaning. The issue then arises of how to apply the values and spirit of the verses if the verses clearly regulate details of Islamic jurisprudence, such as inheritance rights, polygamy, testimony, laws regarding theft and flogging, and so on.

In response to this, Sahiron then explains the methodical steps in applying or contextualizing dynamic phenomenal significance (*al-maghzā al-mutaharrik*), namely: First, by determining the categories of verses. The categorization of verses is not based on thematic categories, but rather on conceptual categorization of verse characteristics. In this regard, Sahiron quotes al-Zarkashi (2006), who divides the categories of verses into three: (1) verses about monotheism, (2) verses about law, and (3) verses about the stories of prophets and past communities. Additionally, Sahiron also cites verse categorization by Abdullah Saeed (2006) related to law. Saeed's categorization, in his thinking, is referred to as a value hierarchy. Second, by developing the essence and scope of 'historical phenomenal significance' (al-*maghzā al-tārikhī*) for the interests and needs of the contemporary context faced by an interpreter. Third, by capturing the symbolic meanings of the verses in the Qur'an. In this regard, Sahiron quotes a common belief in the world of exegesis and Sufism, that the words of the Qur'an have four levels of meaning: apparent, hidden, *hadd* (legal meaning), and *matla'* (peak or spiritual meaning). According to Sahiron, it is these last three meanings (hidden, *hadd*, *matla'*) that constitute the symbolic meanings intended in this third level. Finally, fourth, by developing interpretations using a broader scholarly perspective, such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, politics, and others.

Tafsīr Maqāsidī

Conceptually, *maqāsidī* interpretation is an effort to interpret the Qur'an using the framework of *maqāsid al-shari'ah* (objectives of Islamic law). The term "*maqāsidī*" cannot be separated from the paradigmatic framework of *maqāsid al-shari'ah*, which plays a significant role in the discipline of *usul al-fiqh* as the basis for juridical reasoning. According to Abdul Mustaqim, the terminology of *maqāsidī* interpretation is considered relatively new. Generally, the Muslim community is more familiar with *maqāsid al-*

shari'ah in the discourse of usul al-fiqh studies. Although existing interpretations have essentially applied the *maqāsid* as a framework for interpretation, the term "*maqāsidī* interpretation" is not yet widely recognized. Interpretation is generally understood as an attempt to understand the word of God in accordance with His will. In this endeavor, the tools developed have generally been identified as part of the study of Qur'anic sciences. Nevertheless, the connection between *usūl al-fiqh* and *usūl al-tafsīr* cannot be overlooked. They share similarities, and it is highly probable that many traditions of *usūl al-tafsīr* have borrowed theories from *usūl al-fiqh*.

According to Jasser Auda, *maqāsid al-sharī'ah* is the principle that provides answers to questions about the enactment of a law in Islam, such as charity, fasting, prayer, and prohibition of alcohol. *Maqāsid* also includes the wisdom behind the ruling, such as 'improvement of social welfare', which is one of the wisdoms behind charity, and 'increased awareness of God', which is one of the wisdoms behind fasting. *Maqāsid* can also be defined as a good purpose that the law seeks to achieve, either by preventing or allowing something in a certain way. Similarly, the *maqāsid* of 'preserving the soul and spirit of man' explains Islam's total and strict prohibition of alcohol and intoxicants. *Maqāsid* is also a collection of divine purposes and moral concepts on which Islamic law is based, such as justice, human dignity, free will, generosity, comfort and social cooperation. As such, these goals can serve as a bridge between Islamic law, which is perceived as rigid and focused on the products of the past, and contemporary notions of human rights, development and civilization (Auda, 2007).

Abdul Mustaqim explains that *maqāsidī* interpretation is "an approach to interpreting the Qur'an that emphasizes the dimensions of the objectives of the Qur'an and the objectives of Sharia. *Maqāsidī* interpretation does not only focus on explaining the literal meaning of explicit texts (*al-mantūq bih*), but also seeks to uncover the implicit meanings behind the unspoken text (*al-maskūt 'anh*), and the objectives, significance, and moral ideals within each command or prohibition of Allah in the Qur'an. *Maqāsidī* interpretation also considers how the text moves (*harakiyyat al-nass*)" (Mustaqim, 2019b). This concept underlines that Abdul Mustaqim uses two major frameworks in *maqāsidī* interpretation, namely *maqāsid* al-Qur'an and *maqāsid al-shari'ah*. Both of them are the main foundations in doing *maqāsidī* interpretation.

In general, Abdul Mustaqim presents several arguments regarding the importance of *maqāsidī* interpretation as an alternative in the development of Qur'anic studies and the basis for Islamic moderation. Firstly, *maqāsidī* interpretation is deeply rooted in the Islamic civilization and has a stronger epistemological basis within the tradition of scholarly thinking. Secondly, *maqāsidī* interpretation possesses a more advanced methodological framework compared to Western hermeneutics in the context of interpreting the Qur'an. For instance, it incorporates specific terms and unique theories within the *maqāsid* framework that are not found in Western hermeneutical theories, such as the concepts of al-*thāwābit wa al-mutaghayyirāt*, *ma'qūliyyat al-ma'nā wa ghayr ma'qūliyyat*, *usūl-furū'*, *kullī-juz'ī*, *wasīlah-ghāyah*, and others. Therefore, *maqāsidī* interpretation goes beyond merely understanding the text of the Qur'an and connecting it to the historical and contemporary context. It also necessitates an integrative-interconnected approach to the *maqāsid* theories, encompassing the maqās}id of the Qur'an, *maqāsid al-sharī'ah*, as well as scientific and social-humanities theories.

Thirdly, *maqāsidī* interpretation can be regarded as a philosophy of interpretation that serves two functions: a) as a spirit to make Qur'anic interpretation more dynamic and moderate, and b) as a critique of interpretive works that neglect the *maqāsidī* dimensions. Fourthly, *maqāsidī* interpretation can serve as a creative synthesis to overcome the epistemic impasse between the textualist and contextualist models, which often conflict in interpreting the Qur'an. Consequently, the presence of *maqāsidī* interpretation is relatively more accepted by the Muslim community compared to hermeneutics.

From Mustaqim's arguments regarding the urgency of *maqāsidī* interpretation, we can observe the scholarly connection and interpretive contestation between the East and the West, represented by the vigorous discussions on hermeneutics that have occupied the thoughts of Muslim scholars in their efforts to interpret the Qur'an. Mustaqim believes that hermeneutics is not sufficiently robust in unveiling the meanings of the Qur'an, which he sees as the divine word of God that transcends mere human-produced texts. This seems to form the theoretical foundation for Mustaqim in seeking a methodological identity in Qur'anic interpretation drawn from the historical heritage of Islamic scholars. Thus, *maqāsidī* interpretation appears to "negate" hermeneutics due to

the sophistication of the existing scholarly heritage in the Islamic world, although in practice, Mustaqim blends Eastern interpretive traditions with Western hermeneutics.

What is particularly interesting in Mustaqim's conceptual framework of *maqāsidī* interpretation is that he does not view it solely as a set of tools, approaches, and methodologies. Moreover, Mustaqim divides *maqāsidī* interpretation into three ontological aspects: as a philosophy of interpretation, as a methodology of interpretation, and as a product of interpretation. These three ontological formulations are intriguing as they broaden the understanding of *maqāsidī* interpretation beyond being solely a methodological framework.

In the first aspect, *maqāsidī* interpretation is positioned by Mustaqim as a philosophical foundation for interpreting the Qur'an. Mustaqim contends that *maqāsid* is dynamic and evolves alongside the progression of human civilization. Within this framework, he interprets the philosophical basis of maqāsidī interpretation as embodying ideal moral values found in the Qur'an, which are universal and applicable at all times and in all contexts. These ideal moral values are perceived as the Qur'an's guiding principles for achieving benefit which encompasses the concepts such as human dignity, justice, equality, liberation, and responsibility. According to Mustaqim, these values serve as essential reference points for an interpreter when engaging with and interpreting the text of the Qur'an. He argues that these foundational values must be adhered to and serve as guiding principles in the interpretative process.

Furthermore, from a theoretical perspective, *maqāsidī* interpretation as a philosophy also aims to advance the scholarly discourse surrounding the Qur'an, particularly concerning the rules of interpretation within the framework of *asbab al-nuzul* (the circumstances of revelation). Mustaqim notes that while traditional terms such as *al-'ibrah bi 'umum al-lafz* and *al-'ibrah bi khusus al-sabab* have been used in the past, a new term has emerged in the context of maqāsidī interpretation, namely *al-'ibrah bi maqāsid al-shari'ah* (Mustaqim, 2019b). This term signifies that the fundamental principle guiding the determination of Islamic legal rulings should consider the intent and purpose of the sharia itself.

In the second aspect, Mustaqim positions *maqāsidī* interpretation as a methodological framework that necessitates the reconstruction and development of

Qur'anic interpretation theories through a *maqāsid* lens. He advocates for a scientific re-evaluation of Qur'anic interpretation that incorporates this perspective. According to Mustaqim, this model of *maqāsidī* interpretation places greater emphasis on jurisprudential aspects. For instance, he discusses the legal ruling regarding the punishment of hand-cutting, questioning whether this punishment is universal or merely illustrative, while asserting that the underlying value of the law is what is truly universal. Mustaqim leans towards the latter interpretation, suggesting that a mufasir should not become "trapped" in a literal understanding of the law, as legal rulings established by the Qur'an may be context-specific, such as the law of hand-cutting. He argues that the methodology of maqāsidī interpretation can unveil the underlying rationale for such laws, which he believes is to safeguard human property. Thus, the maqāsid al-shari'ah perspective, encapsulated in the principle of *jalb al-masalih wa dar' al-mafasid* (achieving benefits and avoiding harm), should serve as a foundational guideline. Mustaqim posits that the intent behind the law of hand-cutting is to create a deterrent effect (*al-rad' al-hasim*) for theft. He contends that this law is merely one of several potential punitive measures that could effectively deter thieves, suggesting alternatives such as life imprisonment or exile to isolated areas, all of which align with the principles of *usul fiqh*, particularly *sadd al-dhari'ah* (closing avenues for potential wrongdoing) (Mustaqim, 2019b).

In the context of this second model of maqāsidī interpretation, Mustaqim asserts that a mufasir should not abandon the methodological frameworks established by scholars of the Qur'an and tafsir, including concepts such as *asbab al-nuzul*, *munasabah*, *'amm* and *khass*, and the analysis of various linguistic features. He emphasizes that if the Qur'an explicitly employs linguistic features to prohibit something, maqāsidī interpretation cannot be invoked to justify its permissibility. For example, Mustaqim refers to the unequivocal prohibition against consuming pork as stated in the Qur'an, arguing that it is inappropriate for a mufasir to reinterpret this prohibition as permissible based on speculative reasoning, such as the argument that the prohibition aims to protect an endangered pig ecosystem. He counters this logic, asserting that the prohibition remains valid regardless of the pig population's status, thereby cautioning against using maqāsid as a pretext for altering established prohibitions.

In the context of this second model of maqāsidī interpretation, Mustaqim asserts that a mufasir does not have to leave the methodical steps that have been initiated by the theoretical experts of al-Qur'an and tafsir, such as *asbab al-nuzul*, *munasabah*, *amm* and *khass*, *mutlaq-muqayyad*, and various linguistic features analysis tools. Mustaqim in this case asserts that if the Qur'an has affirmed by using linguistic features the forbiddenness of something, then maqāsidī interpretation cannot be an excuse for the permissibility of it. For example, Mustaqim describes the prohibition of consuming pigs which is clearly and unequivocally stated in the Qur'an, it is not allowed for a mufasir to change this prohibition into something halal on the basis of assumptive thoughts, such as that the purpose of prohibiting pigs is to protect the pig ecosystem that is about to become extinct. So when the pig population is already so large that it will not go extinct, the prohibition on consuming pigs is allowed. This logic is countered by Mustaqim so as not to use maqāsid as a cover.

At this juncture, it becomes evident that Mustaqim recognizes the inherent value of subjectivity in the application of maqāsidī interpretation. This subjectivity encompasses the interpretative assumptions of a mufasir, particularly when seeking to understand the motivations, foundations, and reasons behind the Qur'anic obligations and prohibitions. When the underlying motives, foundations, and reasons are no longer applicable, the sustainability of the legal ruling becomes relative. To address this challenge, Mustaqim proposes several methodological principles for maqāsidī tafsir, which include: 1) understanding the *maqāsid al-Qur'an* which includes the values of personal benefit, social/local benefit and universal/global benefit. 2) understanding the principles of maqāsid al-shari'ah, namely realising the benefits framed in *ushul al-khamsah* (five basic needs: protecting religion, soul, mind, dignity/offspring, and property) by adding two other aspects, namely *hifd al-dawlah* (caring for the state) and hifd al-bi'ah (protecting the environment). 3) developing the dimensions of maqāsid *min hayth al-'adam* (protective) and *min hayth al-wujud* (productive). 4) collecting verses that are the same theme to find maqāsid (*kulliyah* and *juz'iyyah*). 5) considering the context of the verse, both internal and external, macro and micro, past and present contexts. 6) understanding the basic theory of ulumul Qur'an and the methods of tafsir with all its complexities. 7) consider the linguistic aspects and features of Arabic through the approaches of nahwu-saraf, balaghah, semantics, semiotics, pragmatics, and even

hermeneutics. 8) distinguishing between the dimensions of *wasilah* (means) and *ghayah* (purpose), *ushul* (main) and *furu'* (branch), *thawabit* (fixed) and *mutaghayyirat* (changing). 9) interconnecting the results of interpretation with theories of social humanities and science, so as to reach a comprehensive point and reflect an integrative-inteconective paradigm. 10) always being open to criticism and not claiming its interpretation as the only truth (Mustaqim, 2019b).

Third, *maqāsidī* interpretation as a product of interpretation entails a specific form of interpretation grounded in maqāsid principles. At this level, Mustaqim elucidates that *maqāsidī* interpretation extends beyond the confines of Islamic law, as typically applied by jurists using the theories of ushul fiqh and *maqāsid*. He argues that this form of interpretation can encompass a broader range of Qur'anic verses, including those related to narratives, theology, social politics, and moral examples. For instance, Mustaqim interprets the story of Prophet Adam and Eve through a *maqāsidī* lens, revealing underlying values such as equality in origin, spirituality, and shared responsibility.

Discussion

Between Ma'nā-cum-maghzā and Tafsīr Maqāsidī: A Comparative Analysis

Methodologically, both approaches initiated by Sahiron and Abdul Mustaqim have the same accentuation. They strive to present the Qur'an as a solution to the societal problems faced in both the present era and the era in which they lived. They apply what is known in modern terminology as the essence of contextual interpretation. Referring to this category, the names Abdullah Saeed and Fazlur Rahman cannot be disregarded. Within the framework of the *ma'nā-cum-maghzā* theory, these names cannot be omitted and clearly have a basis in the structure of the *ma'nā-cum-maghzā* approach. The moral values, ethico-legis principles, and hierarchy of values introduced by these two thinkers are evidently applicable within the methodological structure of *ma'nā-cum-maghzā*. The significance of Rahman's nuances in *maqāsidī* tafsir cannot be easily dismissed. Although Mustaqim does not specifically mention Rahman's name, his academic footprint that intersects with Rahman also inspires several scholarly frameworks that exist in Abdul Mustaqim's thinking. Mustaqim specifically mentions the existence of moral ideals as a

vital element in interpreting the Qur'an, albeit using different terminology such as *maqāsidī*, maqsad, ghayah. This ideal moral construction inspired by Rahman cannot be separated from Mustaqim's intellectual realm.

In terms of methodological formulation, Sahiron is more explicit and structured compared to the *maqāsidī* tafsir, which seems to still be searching for a methodological format. Mustaqim, in this regard, only writes about the principles of interpreting the Qur'an based on *maqāsidī*. However, methodically, Mustaqim has yet to explain concrete steps in interpreting *maqāsidī*. Therefore, in the applicative realm of interpretation, for example, the framework and methodological structure are not sufficiently evident in the methodical steps of interpretation. This may be a weakness of the *maqāsidī* tafsir methodology as it only focuses on discovering the "meaning" behind the verse without explaining how to capture that meaning.

Mustaqim seems to be aware of this condition. One instance is when explaining the prohibition of pork, where he assumes that the prohibition is intended to preserve the pig population from extinction. Therefore, when the population can be assured of sustaining its ecosystem, the prohibition can be revoked from its original ruling. This logic model is essentially not far from the framework of seeking the "intent" of *maqāsidī* tafsir, which is to search for the reasons behind the text. From this perspective, Mustaqim sets a brief parameter that when the rationale used lacks sufficient evidence, contradicts other texts, and seems arbitrary, then essentially the interpretation has not found the desired *maqāsid* of the text. This is what is referred to as *maqāsid wahmiyyah* (illusion), which cannot be used as a basis for interpreting the Qur'an.

Unlike Mustaqim, Sahiron specifically explains the sequence of analyzing the texts of the Qur'an with the *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* methodology, although it cannot be denied that this methodological framework is closely related to the nuances of Fazlur Rahman and Abdullah Saeed. Firstly, from Fazlur Rahman, the movement towards seeking historical meanings and the phenomenal historical significance within the *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* methodological framework is very similar to the initial movement initiated by Fazlur Rahman. Similarly, the process of transitioning from historical analysis to contextual analysis by the interpreter is also similar to the second movement of Fazlur Rahman's method, namely contextualization.

The steps initiated by Rahman are essentially further elaborated in more detail by Abdullah Saeed. In the application of his interpretive method, Saeed offers four concrete steps in interpretation. Firstly, the interpreter encounters the world of the text, where at this stage, they are required to read and gather thematically studied verses. This method is also known as the thematic method. Secondly, an interpreter is required to conduct critical analysis by analyzing the text independently, without linking it to historical aspects. This includes examining linguistic structures, literary contexts, literary forms, and text parallelism with other texts that existed close to the time of the text's emergence, as well as identifying and analyzing the text based on the chronology of its revelation. Thirdly, an interpreter is asked to connect the text with the context in which the verse was revealed. Specifically, at this stage, the interpreter is instructed to recognize the "initial meaning when the verse was revealed" by analyzing the relationship between the Qur'anic text and the socio-historical context of the revelation period. Lastly, an interpreter is tasked with discovering and contextualizing the original meaning into contemporary meaning (Saeed, 2006).

From the four methodological steps offered by Saeed, we can observe similarities between the *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* approach initiated by Sahiron and the contextual interpretation model initiated by Abdullah Saeed. This is undeniable, as Saeed seems to have greatly influenced the construction of the *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* theory. In addition to these methodological steps, the five hierarchical values in the Qur'an introduced by Saeed also serve as a foundation for Sahiron in analyzing the phenomenal historical significance. From this, we can see a close connection and scholarly roots in Sahiron's formulation of the *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* approach for interpreting the Qur'an.

The contribution of Maʿnā-cum-maghzā and Tafsīr Maqāsidī in the Discourse of Qur'anis Studies: A Critical Evaluation

In the discourse of interpreting the Qur'an in Indonesia, both of these interpretive methodologies, namely *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* and *tafsīr maqāsidī*, have found a place in the discourse of Qur'anic studies among the Indonesian scholars. These methodologies have inspired numerous writings produced within the frameworks of these methodologies. The application of these methodologies can also be found in various academic works

published in the diverse academic literature available in Indonesia. However, speaking in a global context, these methodologies have not been widely disseminated. It seems that they are not yet widely recognized, as evidenced by the lack of works that discuss or respond to these methodologies at a global level. Nevertheless, the remarkable reception shown by the academic community in Indonesia towards these two methodologies is sufficient evidence of their utility.

Tracking these methodologies in the academic arena in Indonesia, it appears that they are predominantly consumed by scholars. Works from non-academic backgrounds, such as educated members of Islamic boarding schools, inspired by these methodological frameworks, are relatively scarce. Various writings published in anthologies under the title *Pendekatan Ma'nā-cum-Maghzā atas al-Qur'an dan Hadis: Menjawab Problematika Sosial Keagamaan di Era Kontemporer* are all written by academic scholars from various Islamic campuses in Indonesia. Similarly, the methodology of *Tafsīr Maqāsidī*, which is also widely written and produced in various academic journals in Indonesia, is predominantly authored by scholars who have received their education in Islamic higher education institutions.

While these methodologies have received positive responses from various academic circles in Indonesia pragmatically, theoretically, they have not significantly departed from the methodological frameworks of their predecessors. For instance, Sahiron's approach with *ma'nā-cum-maghzā* has not significantly progressed beyond the methodological framework of Fazlur Rahman's double movement or Abdullah Saeed's contextual interpretation. Both figures seem to hold significant positions in the construction of the *ma'nā-cum-maghzā* approach. Sahiron's textual analysis seeking historical meanings, phenomenal historical significance, and dynamic phenomenal significance remains closely aligned with the methodical steps akin to Fazlur Rahman's double movement.

In this context, Sahiron initially explained that the deficiency in his predecessors' theories lies in the emphasis on significance aspects. However, in theoretical terms, what Sahiron initiated has not sufficiently demonstrated a distinctive identity from his predecessors, such as Abdullah Saeed. The methodical steps in *ma'nā*-cum-*maghzā* can be said to bear a striking resemblance to the four methodical steps initiated by Saeed. The

historical meaning search, which, in Sahiron's view, aims to uncover authentic meaning, aligns methodically with the second step of Abdullah Saeed's contextual interpretation.

Similarly, the quest for historical phenomenal significance, aimed at uncovering meaning behind the text or the spirit of the text, also shares similarities with the third methodical step initiated by Saeed. However, Saeed uses the term 'meaning' in his theory to refer to significant meaning. We can also find the same in the framework of dynamic phenomenal significance in the *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* framework, where we encounter methodical similarities in the fourth step of Abdullah Saeed's contextual interpretation. Thus, in theoretical terms, Sahiron has not sufficiently demonstrated a distinct theoretical identity in his methodological formulation. Furthermore, in its application domain, Sahiron does not address texts beyond legal issues. However, one of the aims of the *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* approach is its flexibility to be applied in various domains of verses in the Qur'an, not limited to legal verses.

Conclusion

Based on the elaborated discussions, the research concludes that, firstly, the conceptual framework and methodology of *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* and *tafsīr maqāsidī* are largely grounded in the ideas of previous scholars. However, both methodologies also introduce relatively new points of expansion, extending beyond the confines of legal verses in the Qur'an. The *maʿnā-cum-maghzā* approach initiated by Sahiron, conceptually, aims to reconstruct the meaning (*maʿnā*) and the main message or historical significance (*maghzā*) and then develop that historical significance for contemporary contexts (dynamic phenomenal significance). On the other hand, *tafsīr maqāsidī*, conceptually, is a model for approaching the interpretation of the Qur'an that emphasizes the dimensions of maqashid al-Qur'an and maqashid al-Shariah.

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