The Relevance of Maqasid Al-Shariah in Addressing Humanitarian Crises: Insights from Surah Al-Fil

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Abstract
This article examines the preservation of human values in Islam through the framework of Maqasid al-Shariah, particularly in response to modern humanitarian crises. Using a qualitative research approach, the study employs content analysis to explore Islamic texts and contemporary literature, focusing on the integration of key Islamic values such as justice, mercy, dignity, and the sanctity of life. It also highlights the relevance of Surah Al-Fil, emphasizing devotion to God, the alleviation of hunger, and the importance of peace as essential elements for creating sustainable human and environmental well-being. The research demonstrates how the objectives of Maqasid al-Shariah—protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property—serve as a guiding framework for addressing issues such as economic inequality, environmental degradation, and social unrest. The findings suggest that through the application of these principles, Islamic teachings offer practical solutions to contemporary crises, advocating for ethical leadership, social equity, and environmental stewardship. The article concludes by affirming the enduring relevance of Islamic values in fostering a just, compassionate, and sustainable society.
Keywords: Human Value, Maqasid Syariah, Humanitarian Crisis, Sustainable

Introduction
Islam provides a comprehensive ethical and legal framework designed to preserve human values and ensure the welfare of individuals and societies. Central to this framework is the concept of Maqasid al-Shariah, the higher objectives of Islamic law, which encompass the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. These objectives are not mere theoretical ideals but practical principles meant to guide human behavior, governance, and social systems.

However, in the face of modern challenges such as armed conflict, poverty, political instability, and environmental degradation, the application of these values has been

increasingly tested. Humanitarian crises in regions such as Syria, Yemen, Palestine, and Myanmar have demonstrated the fragility of human dignity and the urgent need for a return to core Islamic principles.

This article explores how the values embedded in Maqasid al-Shariah, supported by insights from Surah Al-Fil, offer solutions to these contemporary issues. The article also examines the role of Islamic teachings in fostering a just, sustainable, and peaceful society amidst the global crises that threaten the stability of humanity and the environment.

Human Values in Islam: An In-Depth Exploration
At the heart of Islamic ethics are several fundamental human values that are rooted in divine revelation. These values not only promote the well-being of individuals but also ensure societal harmony and collective prosperity. Among these values, justice (adl), mercy (rahmah), dignity (karamah), and the sanctity of life stand out as universal principles that Islam calls upon its followers to uphold. These values are universal and apply to all human beings, irrespective of faith, ethnicity, or social status, emphasizing inclusivity and equity.
The Qur'an states: "We have certainly honored the children of Adam" (Qur'an 17:70). This affirmation highlights the intrinsic worth of every human being. Islam recognizes the divine creation of humans as being endowed with dignity and moral responsibility.

Human beings are not only stewards (khalifah) of the earth but also the bearers of a moral obligation to uphold justice, protect the environment, and safeguard the rights of others (Rahman, 1980). This understanding of human value is essential, particularly when responding to global challenges that threaten human dignity and rights.

The Role of Maqasid al-Shariah in Safeguarding Human Values
The concept of Maqasid al-Shariah provides a systematic framework to protect these core human values. According to classical Islamic scholars, the objectives of Islamic law aim to preserve the essential elements of human existence: religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. These objectives are not only interdependent but also comprehensive in their scope, as they address both individual and collective well-being.

1. Protection of Religion (Hifz al-Din): The preservation of religious freedom and the promotion of ethical values are crucial for social cohesion and moral guidance. This principle ensures that individuals are free to practice their faith without fear of persecution. Religion is also seen as a source of guidance in establishing just and moral societies (Al-Shatibi, 1997).
2. Protection of Life (Hifz al-Nafs): Islam strongly emphasizes the sanctity of human life. The Qur'an states: And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right" (Qur'an 17:33). This principle calls for safeguarding life through healthcare, security, and social justice. It also entails promoting conflict resolution mechanisms to prevent violence and protect the vulnerable (Khan, 2014).
3. Protection of Intellect (Hifz al-'Aql): The preservation of knowledge and intellect is paramount in Islam. This includes promoting education, critical thinking, and intellectual development while prohibiting substances that impair cognitive functions such as drugs and alcohol (Al-Ghazali, 2015). An educated society is seen as one capable of making informed decisions that contribute to the well-being of all its members.

4. Protection of Lineage (Hifz al-Nasl): Islam stresses the importance of family and lineage in preserving societal cohesion. The family unit plays a central role in transmitting values, ethics, and social responsibilities to future generations. The breakdown of family structures, particularly in conflict zones, leads to long-term social instability (Ibn Ashur, 2006).

5. Protection of Property (Hifz al-Mal): The protection of economic stability and the equitable distribution of wealth is another key objective of Maqasid al-Shariah. Islam prohibits theft, exploitation, and fraud, advocating for the ethical use of resources and fair trade practices. The economic dimension of Maqasid al-Shariah also addresses poverty and calls for the redistribution of wealth through mechanisms like zakat and waqf (Ibn-Taymiyyah, 2010).

Together, these objectives form the cornerstone of Islamic governance and societal order. In modern times, their application serves as a guide to address challenges such as humanitarian crises, environmental destruction, and social inequality.

Insights from Surah Al-Fil: A Model for Contemporary Issues
The aforementioned Maqasid are strongly connected to Surah Al-Fil in preserving the sustainability of both humans and the environment. It outlines three main principles for maintaining harmony in human life, both individually and collectively.
1. Devotion to God as the Foundation for Moral Action The story in Surah Al-Fil narrates the divine intervention in protecting the Kaaba from the forces of Abraha. This event highlights the importance of complete reliance on God and serves as a moral anchor for Muslims. In the context of contemporary crises, devotion to God translates into ethical behavior and accountability.

The Qur'an teaches that actions driven by a deep sense of faith are those that contribute to the greater good, avoid harm, and uphold justice. This principle has profound implications for contemporary governance and social systems.

Leaders are reminded of their accountability to God, and their actions are to be judged not only by their legality but also by their ethical and moral implications for society as a whole (Ibn Kathir, 2013).

2. Combating Hunger and Economic Injustice Islam teaches that wealth is a trust from God, and its proper distribution is a moral duty. Surah Al-Fil, through its narrative of divine justice, emphasizes the importance of addressing inequality and ensuring that the basic needs of all people are met.

The Qur'an explicitly commands: "And they give food, despite their love for it, to the needy, the orphan, and the captive" (Qur'an 76:8). This guidance is operationalized through Islamic institutions such as zakat (charity) and waqf (endowments), which provide sustainable mechanisms for wealth redistribution (Siddiqui, 2015).

Modern applications of these principles can help mitigate the economic disparities seen in many regions, particularly in conflict zones where hunger and poverty are widespread (*Islamic Relief*, 2023).

3. Peace and Reconciliation: A Pathway to Sustainable Societies

Surah Al-Fil also teaches the value of peace and security. The divine protection of the Kaaba symbolizes the ultimate preservation of sacred values, a reflection of the importance of peace for societal stability. Islam encourages the peaceful resolution of conflicts through dialogue, justice, and reconciliation. The Qur'an advises: "And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also]" (Qur'an 8:61).

Peace is not merely the absence of conflict; it is a dynamic state of justice and harmony that allows individuals and communities to flourish. Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of working toward peace, not just for the immediate cessation of violence, but as a sustainable state for human development and environmental preservation (Hallaq, 2009).

Challenges in the Modern World: The Erosion of Human Values

In today's rapidly changing world, humanity faces significant challenges that threaten the core values of human dignity, justice, and security. Humanitarian crises, particularly those caused by armed conflicts, economic inequality, and environmental degradation, play a crucial role in eroding these fundamental principles. These challenges also severely undermine Islamic values, which emphasize justice, mercy, and the protection of human rights.

The ongoing conflicts and injustices in various parts of the world expose the gap between the ideal values presented in Islam and the harsh realities of the modern world. This article examines how humanitarian crises undermine Islamic values and the consequences of this erosion on global stability, with particular reference to the concept of Maqasid al-Shariah (the objectives of Islamic law).

The Impact of Humanitarian Crises on Islamic Values

Humanitarian crises, such as armed conflicts, widespread poverty, and environmental degradation, present serious challenges to the preservation of Islamic human values. Core Islamic principles, such as human dignity (karamah), justice (adl), and security (aman), are deeply embedded in Islamic teachings. These values are meant to guide human behavior and governance, and they are reflected in the Islamic legal framework, specifically within the concept of Maqasid al-Shariah. Maqasid al-Shariah refers to the overarching goals of Islamic law, which aim to protect and preserve five essential values: religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property.

However, in many conflict zones around the world, these core values are routinely violated. For example, in war-torn regions, innocent civilians suffer from violence, including killings, abductions, and torture, often perpetrated by both state and non-state actors. These violations directly contradict Islamic teachings, which call for the protection of human life and dignity, even in times of conflict. The Quran (Al-Baqarah, 2:190) states, "Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors," underscoring that violence should have clear limits and that the sanctity of human life must be maintained.

Erosion of Religious Freedoms in Conflict Zones

In addition to violations of human dignity, religious freedoms are often severely restricted in conflict zones. In many parts of the world, religious minorities, including Muslims, face

persecution, forced displacement, and violence. Religious institutions, including mosques, churches, and synagogues, are destroyed, and individuals are denied the right to practice their faith freely. The erosion of religious freedom exacerbates the human suffering experienced in these regions and stands in direct contradiction to Islamic principles, which emphasize the protection of religious rights.

Islam has always advocated for freedom of belief and the right to practice one's religion without fear of persecution. The Quran (Al-Baqarah, 2:256) clearly states, "There is no compulsion in religion," a verse that upholds the sanctity of individual choice in matters of faith. Unfortunately, in many conflict zones, religious freedom is severely restricted, leading to widespread persecution and forced conversions, particularly against minority religious communities. Reports by organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International highlight how religious minorities suffer in conflict-ridden regions, with severe consequences for both individual rights and societal cohesion.

The Consequences of Ignoring Maqasid al-Shariah
The concept of Maqasid al-Shariah, which serves as a guiding principle for safeguarding public welfare, plays a pivotal role in ensuring justice and stability in society. When the principles of Maqasid al-Shariah are ignored, it leads to further social instability, injustice, and oppression. In many parts of the world, the failure to uphold these values in the face of humanitarian crises has exacerbated suffering and hindered the path to peace.

For example, the principles of justice and the protection of life are fundamental to Maqasid al-Shariah. When these principles are violated in conflict zones, societies become more vulnerable to violence and oppression. Without a commitment to these values, the underlying causes of instability—such as political corruption, inequality, and economic deprivation—persist and grow. The loss of adherence to these principles also leads to the marginalization of certain communities, deepening societal divisions.

The work of scholars like Al-Ghazali in Al-Mustasfa and Jasser Auda in Maqasid al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law highlights how Maqasid al-Shariah can serve as a framework for social justice and peace. When these principles are adhered to, they promote the welfare of all individuals, particularly the most vulnerable, and provide a framework for addressing social injustice. In conflict zones, however, these ideals are often sidelined, leading to further suffering and instability.

The Role of Economic Inequality and Environmental Degradation
Another critical factor contributing to the erosion of human values is economic inequality and environmental degradation. In many conflict zones, there is a stark divide between the rich and the poor, leading to widespread poverty and social injustice. The growing disparity between the wealthy and the impoverished exacerbates the vulnerabilities of the poor, leaving them more susceptible to exploitation and violence.

At the same time, environmental degradation due to human activities, such as deforestation, pollution, and climate change, contributes to the displacement of communities and further exacerbates poverty. Environmental destruction threatens the future of humanity, challenging Islam's teachings on responsible stewardship of the earth. The Quran (Al-A'raf,

7:31) advises humans to "eat and drink, but do not waste by extravagance," emphasizing the importance of sustainable living and care for the environment.

Studies by organizations such as Global Humanitarian Assistance show how environmental degradation and economic inequality are closely intertwined, further compounding humanitarian crises. The unequal distribution of resources and the exploitation of the environment are often the root causes of conflict, which further erodes human dignity and social cohesion.

Applying Maqasid Al-Shariah in a Modern Context
In addressing the challenges posed by humanitarian crises, a solution rooted in Maqasid al-Shariah is essential. Islamic law, with its emphasis on justice, the preservation of life, and the protection of religious and economic freedoms, offers a framework for solving many of the problems facing modern societies. By applying these principles to international relations, conflict resolution, and humanitarian aid, societies can begin to address the root causes of conflict and work towards achieving a more just and peaceful world.

For example, the protection of life and the pursuit of justice should guide all humanitarian interventions. Islamic law's emphasis on the protection of life, intellect, and property can provide a foundation for rebuilding war-torn societies and ensuring that individuals' rights are upheld. Furthermore, environmental sustainability and the equitable distribution of resources should be prioritized to ensure the welfare of future generations.

Mohammad Hashim Kamali, in his work Islamic Jurisprudence, outlines how the principles of Maqasid al-Shariah can be applied to improve humanitarian conditions, particularly in areas affected by poverty and inequality. By focusing on the goals of Islam, it is possible to create policies that promote social justice, safeguard human dignity, and protect the environment.

Conclusion
Applying Islamic Principles to Global Challenges The integration of Maqasid al-Shariah and the teachings of Surah Al-Fil provides a comprehensive framework for addressing contemporary global crises. The devotion to God offers a moral foundation for ethical action, combating hunger addresses systemic poverty, and promoting peace ensures sustainable human and environmental well-being. By upholding these Islamic principles, society can build a more just, compassionate, and sustainable future for all.

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