

Research Article:

Between Traditionalising and Futuring: Applying The Broader Maqasid Paradigm to Hadith Studies

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ABSTRACT

There are two major points of contention in modern *hadith* studies. The first concerns the phenomenon of re-authenticating *hadith* by scholars, both traditionalists and rationalist modernists. The former seeks to maintain originality and utilise authentic sources for religious purposes. The latter's ethos is primarily — though arguably — one of objectivity, with occasional goals of replacing outdated traditional legal positions. Nonetheless, both approaches have revived practises related to authentication, such as studying the *ruwāt* (transmitters), refining the principles of *al-jarh wa al-ta'dil* (discreditation and accreditation of traditionists), and examining the 'ilal (hidden flaws) in *hadith*, among others. Modernists, however, place greater emphasis on rational criticism. Academic departments in Muslim societies have been established to study *hadith* for both critical and practical purposes. The cumulative result is what can be termed "traditionalising." The second major point of discussion relates to the exploration of the space-time dimension in interpreting religious commandments. This stems from the modern era's emphasis on change. The theme of change, along with technological advancement, has gradually led to the concept of "futuring." A key question arises: if "futuring" has introduced new methods and technology for verification, particularly through the use of artificial intelligence, what does this mean for the current practice of "traditionalising" in religious education? Should *hadith* scholars and students engage in continuous re-verification of *hadith*, or could this responsibility be delegated to technology? This paper attempts to define both "traditionalising" and "futuring" within the context of Islamic religious education, particularly in *hadith* studies. It also analyses potential tensions between these two approaches in the near future. The paper argues that the broader *maqasid* (objectives of sharia) framework could help conceptualise and reconcile these two goals. The research draws on existing literature about traditional learning and the future of *hadith* studies, and addresses the critical role this issue plays in shaping the agendas of Islamic religious education in the future.

Keywords: Traditional education, futuring, *hadith* studies, Islamic education, technology in education

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INTRODUCTION

“The more the new technology transforms the classroom into its own image, the more a technical logic replaces critical, political and ethical understanding. The discourse of the classroom will centre on technique, and less on substance. Once again ‘how to’ will replace ‘why’,” articulated Michael Apple, an esteemed Emeritus professor specialising in curriculum and instruction, and educational policy. Addressing the endeavour to infuse entertainment into education, Neil Postman formerly expounded, “mainly, they (children) will have learned that learning is a form of entertainment or, more precisely, that anything worth learning can take the form of an entertainment, and ought to.” Joanne Olson concluded, “So although technology often fascinates students, it has an unintended effect of battering habits congruent with serious learning.” Zühal Okan excerpted the above statements and others as she voiced the potential jeopardy that edutainment poses to the process of learning (Okan, 2003). She underscores the unintended consequences that may arise from the uncritical embrace of the ‘innovative’ educational trend, emphasising the need to first scrutinise its underlying pedagogical and didactic philosophies.

Undoubtedly, there has been a proliferation of literature on unintended effects in the current world provided by social observers as well as scholars. Discourse similar to the above also illustrates how the adoption of edutainment in education could unintentionally impede the development of resilience among learners. Similarly, in a different context, the concept of sustainability has emerged as an unforeseen outcome of previously glorified capitalism (Bradford, 2000). The concepts of progress and development have undergone a sudden realisation of their historical neglect of sustainable development. Educational institutions are now progressively embracing the framework of education for sustainability. However, a consistent observation is that the issue of paradigm remains centrally pertinent to education, including religious education. A crucial question arises: how can we guarantee that the above present paradigm does not result in yet another sequence of unanticipated outcomes? Acknowledging the inevitability of change in the continuum of time, this paper endeavours to scrutinise two primary areas of contention within the realm of contemporary and prospective hadith studies and in the light of the discourse of paradigm. The initial area revolves around the concept of “traditionalising,” its current manifestation, and the strategies for its perpetuation. The second focal point delves into the concept of “futuring,” examining its interplay with “traditionalising” in the context of hadith studies and education. The objective is to envision a fundamental paradigm that best accommodates the treatment of both traditionalising and futuring within the broader concept of Islamic scholarship and education.

THE TRADITIONAL AIMS OF HADITH STUDIES AND EDUCATION

The exploration of aims in Islamic scholarship today often intersects with the concept of *maqāsid* (higher aims or objectives), and specifically in hadith studies, *maqāsid al-sunnah*.

However, a recent lecture by the renowned *maqasid* scholar, Ahmad al-Raysūnī, titled “Unlocking the Maqasid of Islamic Revealed Knowledge: Why and How?” raised questions among punctilious Muslim academics (FINTERRA, 2020). The title’s Arabic phrase “*taqsīd al-’ulūm al-shar’iyyah*” appeared to suggest a new revelation, implying that early scholars were unaware of the educational objectives in Islamic scholarship of revealed knowledge. This contradicts prevailing traditional Muslim stances. While the intent of the speaker is comprehensible, the absence of historical examples from the speaker’s talk diminishes the efficacy of the endeavour to reinterpret the *maqasid* of Islamic sciences. Moreover, the terminology, particularly “*maqasid*” and “*maqasid shar’i*,” used by modern researchers is relatively recent. Early scholars, especially from the medieval era, seldom used “*maqasid*” or “*maqasid*” to expound the aims of any field of study. Furthermore, the complexities present in contemporary *maqasid* discussions are absent in classical writings. Nevertheless, it can be posited that the concept of *maqasid al-sunnah* carries both historical roots and contemporary dimensions. Throughout history, scholars have delineated the aims of instructing and acquiring knowledge in the field of hadith sciences. However, the modern complexities embedded within the discourse of *maqasid* have definitely introduced an innovative facet to this domain.

Initially, exploring the concept of “*al-muqaddimāt al-’asharah*” or “*al-mabādi’ al-’asharah*,” often referred to as “the ten points of departure” or “the ten principles,” emerges as a valuable pursuit. This guiding strategy, frequently invoked by traditional pedagogues, serves to establish foundational underpinnings across various fields of scholarly endeavour. These foundational principles are often encapsulated within didactic rhythmic compositions. One such instance reads as follows (Newlon, n.d. with slight modification):

For every science, there are truly ten principles as its roots:
its defining limits, structured contents, and its mastery’s fruits,
its relation to others, its virtues, and its original framer,
its name, its sources, and its status according to the Lawgiver,
lastly, its issues and some will reckon only part of these,
but whosoever knows them all has attained the highest of degrees.

These principles are typically introduced in the beginning of specific courses. Their application extends across various realms of Islamic scholarship, encompassing theology, jurisprudence, spirituality, grammar, and more. Despite the absence of the explicit term *maqasid*, the notion of purpose remains implicit through the reference to “mastery’s fruits,” connoting the consequential outcomes of didactic efforts. Hence, contemporary instructors might posit that the culmination of studying *’ulūm al-hadith* results in the recognition of sound hadith. This perspective is useful for specific courses. However, challenges arise when trying to connect different courses under a broader field of concentration. Despite addressing connections between courses, the ten-principles model tends to treat each course

separately. In essence, while the model effectively defines instructional objectives within delimited dimensions of hadith studies, it may not inherently encapsulate the overarching objectives intrinsic to the broader spectrum of hadith scholarship.

Furthermore, it is pertinent to observe that this strategy is a comparatively contemporary advancement, whereas early scholars did not articulate their teachings using this specific model. Hence, in our pursuit of a deeper comprehension of the traditional aims of hadith studies and educational undertakings, a deliberate examination of notable scholarly contributions is imperative. A case in point is found within al-Suyūṭī's (d.911H) *Alfiyat al-Hadīth* (The Thousand Poetic Lines on Hadith Sciences), wherein he expounds:

علم الحديث ذو قوانين تحد يُدرى بها أحوال متن وسند
فذلك الموضوع، والمقصود أن يُعرف المقبول والمردود
The science of Hadith has its laws defined,
to grasp the status of texts and chains confined.
So goes the subject, yet the *maqṣūd* (goal) intended,
to unveil the accepted, the rejected's clarified

Here, the focus lies on the word *al-maqṣūd*, as it highlights the objective of studying hadith sciences. Al-Suyūṭī underscores that the *maqṣūd* of this field encompasses the ability to distinguish between acceptable and rejected narrations (al-Suyūṭī, n.d., p. 3). This emphasis suggests that, by the 10th century AH, the general purpose of studying hadith had narrowed to a predominant focus on “authenticity.” However, before al-Suyūṭī, in the 7th century AH, al-Nawawī lamented misunderstandings among hadith students. He stressed that:

The objectives of studying hadith sciences include comprehending the meanings of hadith texts, mastering the intricacies of *sanad* (narration chain), and handling complex defective narrations (*mu'allal*) ... It should not be the primary intention of hadith students to merely obtain *ijāzah* for hadith audition (*samā'*), to narrate to others (*ismā'*), or to compile hadith collections (*kitābah*). The central focus should be on verifying hadith, understanding intricate meanings, contemplating their implications, upholding knowledge, seeking guidance from experts, documenting valuable insights, and so on and so forth. (al-Nawawī, 2012, p. 1: 19)

Al-Nawawī further expounded on aspects such as memorisation, note-taking and intellectual discussions concerning hadith. Here, the objectives of hadith education were articulated in response to challenges and unfavourable attitudes displayed by participants in hadith activities. Notably, al-Nawawī and later al-Suyūṭī, built upon the foundation laid by Ibn al-Salāh. Examining the latter's seminal work, “*A Prolegomena to Hadīth Sciences*,” is expected to yield promising insights concerning the aims of hadith studies. Unfortunately, Ibn al-Salāh did not offer an extensive treatise on the purpose of studying hadith sciences

per se; his focus leaned towards establishing the connection between hadith and *fiqh*. He asserted that the science of hadith "... is one of the sciences with the greatest relevance to the various other sciences, especially substantive law (*fiqh*), which is the central science. For that reason, the errors of those writers on applied law who are unfamiliar with the science of hadith are numerous and the imperfections in the remarks of those scholars who forsake it are plain" (Ibn al-Salāh, 1999, p. 1).

This association between hadith and *fiqh* is undoubtedly procured from his favoured references, particularly the works of al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, who had conveyed: "Understand that accumulating vast amounts of hadith does not automatically make one a jurist (*faqīh*). True jurisprudential understanding arises from delving into profound meanings (*istinbā' al-ma'ānī*) and engaging in thoughtful contemplation (*in'ām al-tafakkur*) (al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, 1988, p. 37)." al-Khatīb's dedication to the interplay between these two disciplines was reaffirmed in his assertion, "Recognise that all sciences are seeds for *fiqh* (*al-'ulūm kulluhā abāzīr li al-fiqh*). There is no science beneath *fiqh* except that the seeker of that science requires lesser than such that expected of a *faqīh*, for the *faqīh* needs to cling himself to a portion of knowledge from every matter of this world and the hereafter (al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, 1996, p. 2: 333)."

In summary, it can be deduced that classical literature has predominantly focused on a legal perspective when discussing the goals of hadith studies and education, even though hadith holds importance in various aspects of life. This could be due to the challenges engaged by early hadith scholars. For instance, al-Shāfi'ī, who is recognised as a key figure in establishing principles for hadith studies, was primarily concerned with the legal authority of hadith. Although he mentioned the importance of medicine in other contexts, he did not elaborate on the relationship between hadith and the field of medicine, possibly because there were no significant challenges in that regard. Furthermore, it was only in subsequent periods that the theological sophistication started to receive comprehensive treatment within hadith scholarly composition (See: Bin Jamil, 2023). Nevertheless, acknowledging the significance of comprehending this traditional aim of hadith studies and education will enhance the ability to effectively navigate the evolving challenges encountered by the discipline over time.

THE TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION OF HADITH STUDIES AND EDUCATION

Within the historical context of Muslims' vision regarding the recording and execution of hadith, the first generation of Muslims encountered the teachings of the Prophet directly from him and proceeded to translate those teachings into practical application. This endeavour is encapsulated by the concept of "*al-adā' al-'amalī*" or practical implementation. A portion of these teachings was acquired through the direct observation of events or firsthand auditions of the Prophet's words. It is only natural that certain teachings were

communicated or relayed to others as well. This subsequent process is encompassed by the concept of “*al-adā’ al-shafāhī*” or oral implementation. Both of these dimensions are intrinsic to the essential nature of humanity as *homo faber* or working being and *homo loquens* or speaking being, thereby necessitating a communal existence of *homo communicans* or beings who communicate. The term “implementation” here should be understood akin to the way *adā’* or *ta’diyah* is comprehended, signifying both the act of execution or practical application, as well as the act of transmission or facilitating the execution by others.

Subsequently, historical accounts displayed inconsistency in their depiction of the prevalence of writing or *kitābah* among the early generations, despite its alignment with the notion of humans as *homo symbolicus* or symbolic beings, which usually transpires in a writing system. Arab culture is reported to have placed a strong emphasis on memorisation, a practice that offers greater protection against foreign alterations. Consequently, the exploration of “*al-adā’ al-kitābī*” or written implementation has become a subject of deliberation within subsequent literature. A multitude of inquiries emerged: Was hadith transcribed into written form? Did written material serve as a medium for transmitting hadith? Were the early generations inclined toward writing or was such practice discouraged? What was the nature of these written documents? Unfortunately, with regard to artifacts, none of the purported original written manuscripts have endured through time. Simultaneously, contemporary archaeology persists in its pursuit of tangible evidence pertaining to early Islam.

Ultimately, the historical trajectory of hadith studies and education has been primarily illuminated by the hadith corpus itself. The practical implementation of hadith teachings by the early generations is recorded in the hadith corpus. The oral implementation, encompassing both the execution such as the recitation of specific hadith prayers and the transmission of hadith content to others, is learned solely from the hadith corpus. The issue was only with the chronological establishment of the systematic transmission method known as *isnād* (Bin Jamil, 2022). Nevertheless, there has never been a dispute regarding the fact that certain hadiths were committed to memory by the early generation. As previously alluded, the Arabic term for memorisation is *hifz*, derived from a root that signifies sustaining and safeguarding. *hifz* presents a broader spectrum encompassing control, preservation, exclusivity and sincere commitment. From a religious standpoint, while the Quran does not explicitly advocate for the memorisation of hadiths, the known authentic hadiths also lack explicit endorsements in this regard. Despite this, certain hadiths do promise significant rewards for those who diligently audit and convey hadiths to others. It is more intriguing to observe that the religious significance of memorising hadiths is scarcely touched upon in later primary works belonging to the domain of hadith terminology and criticism, often known by the titles *’ulūm al-hadīth*, *mustalah al-hadīth*, *usūl al-riwāyah*, etc. Nonetheless, within the evaluative criteria set forth by hadith scholars,

the quality of retentive memory in a transmitter is recognised as a pivotal complement to moral integrity. This memory capacity serves as a cornerstone for ranking the authenticity of the reported hadith. Despite all these, the prevailing confidence in the body of hadith literature underscores that the dominant mode of practice within the early generation was centred on memorisation, albeit accompanied by a limited use of memory aids in written form.

The primary challenge then revolves around the hand-written compilation and codification of hadith, denoted in Arabic as “*al-jam*” and “*al-tadwīn*.” In addition to the ongoing debate about the permissibility or prohibition of *kitābah* (writing), the effort to compile and organise hadiths introduces the potential challenge of conflicting with the tradition of *riḥlah* (traveling to personally acquire knowledge from authoritative figures). Additionally, transforming knowledge into handwritten records raises concerns about its accessibility to individuals lacking the capacity for comprehension or those who might exploit it for various motives. Concurrently, an argument emerges that to validate knowledge, its *sanad* (chain of transmission) must be obtained from a blessed living authority who, in turn, received it from a previous living authority, as opposed to relying solely on written sources (See: G. Davidson, 2023). The tension between the use of books and the practice of memorisation is partially explored in al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī’s work *Taqyīd al-’Ilm*. From this perspective, prioritising memorisation aligns with the act of traditionalising, while the creation of books and compilation embodies a futuring perspective (See also: H. A. Davidson, 1992, p. 89; Compare the terms ‘retentive imagination’ and ‘compositive imagination,’ coined by Harry Wolfson [Wolfson, 1935]).

This form of transformation, which encompasses the interplay between traditionalising and futuring, persists with the advent of modern printing technology. Copies of scholarly works that were transcribed by hand commonly faced limitations in terms of their availability, leading to a plethora of issues concerning authorship, variations, and inconsistencies. These intricacies contribute to the emerging interrelation between “*makhtūṭ*” (hand-written manuscript) and “*matbū*” (printed publication). Contemporary experts in hadith studies are compelled to adeptly navigate the principles and methodologies of “*tahqīq*” (critical analysis) applied to these manuscripts. A substantial body of scholarly research within higher education institutions revolves around “*tahqīq al-makhtūṭāt*,” encompassing meticulous manuscript editing, validation of authorship and content, and preparation for print publication. Nevertheless, the challenges tied to “*matbū*”, or printed books are distinctive. Academics in the field wrestle with instances of “*tab’ah tijāriyyah*,” where manuscripts are printed in their contemporary form without undergoing scholarly refinement, driven by commercial motivations. Furthermore, the printed format introduces complexities such as content manipulation, including intentional omissions from the manuscript, often motivated by ideological or other non-scholarly factors. The rapid progression of technology and the demands of modern lifestyles for convenient access and streamlined experiences have diminished the prominence of manuscript-focused endeavours. Nonetheless, educational institutions are consistently reminded of the necessity of incorporating skills to engage with classical manuscripts within hadith education. Elements like “*asānid al-kitāb*”

(chains of transmission of scholarly work), “*samā’āt*” (certifications of audition) inscribed on manuscript leaves, and other crucial details, are illustrative of the information often overlooked in contemporary academia. This neglect exemplifies yet another facet of the tension between traditionalising and futuring.

The transition from *hifz* (internal memorisation) to *kitābāb* (external memorisation) to *makbtūt* (manuscript) to *matbū’* (printed publication) finds continuity with the emergence of digital technology. While digitalisation encompasses both manuscript and printed forms and, to some extent, facilitates the practice of *hifz*, the dynamics of digitalisation have induced modifications in both formats and introduced a new form. Customers can independently manipulate the contents and customise the boundaries of thought and schemes. In the initial stages of digitalisation, or *tarqīm* in Arabic, numerous errors were identified in software and applications related to hadith studies. For instance, a name mentioned in a chain of transmission (*sanaad*) might correspond to multiple possible narrators, yet it was associated with just one of them. This form of fixation and standardisation challenges or erodes the nature of scholarly effort (*ijtibād*) within the realm of hadith studies, especially for those who perceive *takhrīj* as both an art and a science. From a traditional perspective, while *public*-ation might signify the democratisation of knowledge, digitalisation tends to lead towards the dehumanisation and “technicalisation” of knowledge. Furthermore, the advent of social media has facilitated the potential for hadith to be taken out of its contextual framework, a scenario that can result in significant misunderstandings. These tensions are further compounded by the introduction of artificial intelligence, which propels hadith studies deeper into the domains of scientific methodology, mechanisation, and materialism. At the crux of this context lies the possibility of diminishing the practice of *takhrīj* (verification), especially if it is perceived merely as citation skill. Nonetheless, the past experiences characterised by numerous cycles of dialogue between traditionalising and futuring compel Muslims to persist in engaging with the present challenges through continued dialogue.

THE CURRENT DIALOGUE OF AIMS & TRANSFORMATIONS

As elaborated above, much of the discourse centred on traditionalising within the domain of hadith studies has given rise to two primary objectives: verification and legalisation (On the traditional emphasis on hadith and fiqh, see: Bin Jamil, 2017). Verification entails the evaluation of the authenticity of a given hadith, encompassing processes such as compiling all transmission chains and their variations, referencing primary sources containing these chains, assessing the credibility of involved narrators, and determining the most accurate wording of the hadith. This verification exercise also entails the identification and exclusion of fabricated and spurious hadith. If we view these endeavours primarily as the management of factual information, it becomes apparent that a significant portion of these tasks could potentially be delegated to information technology. Given the impossibility of generating new authentic hadiths or unexamined hadiths, the domain of hadith education confronts

a substantial challenge, particularly in light of the contemporary shift from a knowledge acquisition-oriented learning approach to one that emphasises knowledge construction. In simpler terms, what purpose does learning all the techniques and skills of verification serve if all available hadiths have already been evaluated, and some of these skills can be substituted with technology?

The second function arises in response to this question. Legalisation involves the need to comprehend the principles of interpretation and the relevance of hadith within the context of substantive Islamic jurisprudence or *fiqh*. Yet, another question surfaces: is it not adequate for the field of *fiqh* or jurisprudence to handle this responsibility? The study of *fiqh* and its underlying principles has evolved over centuries to effectively manage the process of legalisation. Why is there a necessity for an overlap between hadith studies and *fiqh* studies in the issuance of religious rulings? Moreover, the foundations of religious rulings within the Islamic intellectual tradition extend beyond hadith to encompass sources such as the Quran, local customs, and more. Some responses to this question may draw upon ideological perspectives that differentiate the approach of hadith scholars from that of *fiqh* scholars in matters of legalisation and jurisprudence. However, without actively addressing the current and anticipated challenges of our time, the secondary role of hadith studies risks merely reiterating established facts and information—a role that contemporary educational philosophy suggests could be acquired independently of formal educational institutions, thanks to the advancements in information technology and artificial intelligence.

The aforementioned observations remain theoretical as of now, as the full-scale implementation of Artificial Intelligence in the field of hadith studies and education has not yet materialised. The domain of Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIED) itself is relatively young, with its origins dating back to the 1970s. In the twenty-first century, AI has been proposed in various ways to enhance educational processes, albeit with mixed opinions regarding the potential threats and opportunities it brings. The philosophy of education itself is a subject of ongoing debate across different ideologies, cultures, and inclinations. Within the Islamic context, there is a purported distinct philosophy of education. On the other hand, contemporary sociological perspectives on education reveal three theoretical stances: functionalism, which sees education as serving specific functions; conflict theory, which contends that education perpetuates inequality through its “hidden content”; and symbolic interactionism, which views education as emerging from societal interactions. While it remains unclear how AI will either facilitate or challenge these educational functions, initial assumptions suggest that AI may introduce new challenges to the techno-human condition.

Within the Muslim community, discussions about the objectives, methods, problems, and challenges of Islamic education have been ongoing. One of the key debates revolves around whether education should primarily nurture good individuals or good citizens, distinguishing Islamic education from secular education (See: al-Attas, 2019; Wan Daud, 1998). Scholars have also identified various issues afflicting Islamic education.

The contemporary Muslim thinker, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, for instance, talked of several causes for the crisis of the Muslim mind, such as the intellectual isolation, *taqlid* and backwardness, confused traditionality and *a'alah*, the neglect of social sciences, the conflict between reason and revelation, the absence of a methodological framework of Islamic thought, the misunderstanding of the objectivity of truth and relativity of circumstances, and the lack of understanding of important Islamic concepts such as justice, freedom, causality, *tawakkul*, etc. AbuSulayman pointed out, for example, that,

... the traditional studies of the Qur'an and the Sunnah often confuse the one with the other and actually dispute each other's positions and the ways in which they are interrelated. It is almost impossible to discern in these studies any sort of distinguishing role or any particular contribution for either of them. This is why contemporary Islamic studies have been overshadowed by traditional historical *taqlid* and the concept of abrogation (*naskh*), with the result that the wisdom of the higher purposes of the *Shari'ah* and the concept of a relevant and responsive *fiqh* were lost. (AbuSulayman, 2004, p. 40)

In a recent publication, Jasser Auda traces the methodological limitations of contemporary approaches in Islamic scholarship and expands them beyond *taqlid* (imitation) to include *tajzi'* (partialism), *tabrir* (apologism), *tanāqud* (contradiction), and *tafkik* (deconstructionism) (Auda, 2021, pp. 43–68). There has been no dedicated research, however, on how these limitations could be observed in hadith scholarship. On the other hand, there is a need for a holistic, comprehensive, and dynamic approach in Islamic scholarship. Again, Jasser Auda touched upon the subject whilst maintaining the need for an objective-based *maqāsid* approach. For him,

The *maqāsid* approach for re-envisioning the Islamic scholarship is indispensable for a number of pressing reasons that not only honour the textual sources but that also respond with greater relevance to the challenges of our times. Methodologically, the *Maqāsid* approach exhibits future, critical, and comprehensive orientations. Together, these three orientations represent important shifts from the methodologies of mainstream disciplines, which is much needed on all levels (Auda, 2021, p. 32).

Although the above discussion centres on the methodological issues in Islamic education and scholarship identified by Muslim scholars, it is crucial to recognise that the transition from methodology to technology, akin to the shift from theology to methodology during the Western scientific revolution, is underway (It is proposed that the contrast between methodology and theology in Western modern thought arises in response to the theological frameworks of the churches. See particularly 'Evolution of the Concept of Method in Islamic and Western Thought' in: Malkawi, 2014, p. 109). Consequently, there is an urgent need to explore whether there are methodological constraints within hadith scholarship and whether it is prepared to embrace technological advancements.

THE GENERAL MAQĀSID PARADIGM

After an in-depth analysis of the Quran, primary Sunni hadith compilations, and scholarly literature on research, it is my contention that Islamic research is steered by two principal objectives (*maqāsid*): the pursuit of the clarity of truth (*tabayyun al-haqq*) and the clear articulation of that truth (*bayan al-haqq*). Within this context, the concept of *haqq* encompasses not only truth but also the fulfilment of the rights (*huqūq*) of all entities in the universe, whether tangible or conceptual. This fundamental principle finds reinforcement in a well-known hadith, which advises, “*fā-a’tī kulla dhī haqq haqqahu*” (give each possessor of a right its due right) (al-Bukhārī, 2001, hadith no. 1968). In the contemporary landscape, the act of disseminating knowledge, often accomplished through scientific writing and academic publications, aligns with the principle of “*khātībū al-nās ‘alā qadr ‘uqūlibhim*” (speaking to people according to their level of understanding). Consequently, it is essential to acknowledge that the tradition and culture of research in Islamic scholarship are deeply rooted in the concept of *haqq*, encapsulating the truth, the reality and the rights.

The subject matter of research can be categorised into three dimensions: firstly, the dimension concerning the universe or the various facets within it; secondly, the dimension related to the human self; and thirdly, the dimension linked to God and His religion. This classification essentially reflects the triad of Nature, Human and God. While numerous scriptural references validate this categorisation, a particularly explicit illustration can be found in verse 53 of Surah Fussilat in the Quran, which asserts: “We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it/He is the truth.” This verse suggests the exploration of *āfāq* (horizons), encompassing various dimensions of physical and abstract matters; the study of *anfūs* (the self), representing the human being; and the study associated with God, including His religion and the Quran, as the Truth. Following this line of reasoning, the *maqāsid* paradigm comprises three dimensions: the *akwānī* dimension (related to the universe), the *insānī* dimension (related to human beings), and the *Rahmānī* dimension (related to the Most Compassionate God’s attributes and His religion). Consequently, the discourse on *maqāsid al-sunnah* or even objectives of hadith scholarship must be carefully tailored to encompass these three dimensions: objectives tied to divine purposes, objectives addressing the nature and functions of human beings, and objectives aligned with the nature and functions of all elements within the universe, whether physical or abstract.

As an illustrative example, when defining the objectives of both hadith studies and education in the context of divine purposes, it is essential to pay particular attention to the statement made by Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri, who served as the initial official compiler of hadith during the reign of Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. Al-Zuhri articulated that this knowledge of the sunnah represents the *adab* of Allah, which He instilled in His Prophet. Subsequently, the Prophet imparted this *adab* to his *ummah* (nation). This knowledge stands as a trust (*amānah*) from Allah to His Messenger, requiring its realisation or implementation (*adā’ ta’diyah*) in the same manner it was embodied in him. Thus, those who acquire this

knowledge should hold it in high regard, positioning it as a mediator between themselves and Allah, the Exalted (al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, 1983, p. 1: 78). Al-Zuhrī's statement finds resonance with the concept of "*al-takballuq bi-akhlāq Allah*," which has been promoted by the Sufis. Despite the various interpretations and debates surrounding this concept, it is evident from this discussion that the fundamental objective of hadith education, as well as Islamic education in a broader context, is closely linked to the recognition of human nature and the realisation of human potential, seen as entrusted with *amānah* by God. Hence, the *maqāsid* paradigm encompasses a more comprehensive outlook compared to the present emphasis on skill acquisition and employability. Such concerns are inherently vulnerable and may prove transient in the face of relentless technological progress and the evolving techno-human landscape, where artificial intelligence has the potential to supplant existing skills and occupations.

The aforementioned dimensions constitute the vertical triad within the framework of the *maqāsid* paradigm. Conversely, the horizontal triad within this paradigm encompasses considerations spanning the past, present, and future. The study of hadith should not be confined solely to historical inquiries or contemporary applications; rather, it should equip students with the ability to anticipate future developments. An expanding body of literature is now delving into the realms of foresight and future studies within an Islamic context. In the context of hadith, the distinguished scholar of *hadith*, al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, compiled traditions that addressed situations that had not yet occurred or presented hypothetical scenarios, indicating the permissibility of the endeavour. Furthermore, the contemporary field of hadith should not be narrowly limited to verification and legislative aspects alone. Instead, it should encompass a broader spectrum, including the study of pedagogical methods for teaching hadith, the management of hadith sources and libraries, the establishment and administration of hadith educational programs and institutions, and various other related domains. Alternatively, the horizontal triad should encompass not only the examination of *riwāyah* and *dirāyah* but also the study of *ri'āyah*, which addresses, among other aspects, the spiritual function of *hadith* (See, for instance: G. Davidson, 2023). From a religious standpoint, the pursuit of knowledge in Islam serves not only material functions, such as acquiring information or issuing religious rulings, but it is also considered a form of *ibādah* (worship). This perspective underscores the spiritual enrichment derived from activities like writing, counting and reading, including the reading of *sanad*, etc. In light of this perspective, traditional educators do not perceive any hindrance in repeating or revisiting well-established facts or subjects. This is because, within this framework, the acquisition of knowledge itself is deemed secondary to the spiritual development of the student, which is religiously believed to enhance cognitive abilities and problem-solving skills in real-life situations.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this preliminary discussion serves as an initial step in elucidating the fundamental elements of a comprehensive framework for hadith studies and education

within the context of the *maqāsid* paradigm. The primary objective is to underscore the necessity for systematic and in-depth research on the *maqāsid* (objectives) of hadith studies and to delineate the evolving technological landscape that this field has witnessed over time. It is essential to clarify that the *maqāsid* of hadith studies encompass broader aims, including the fulfilment of *maqāsid al-bi'thab* (the objectives of sending Prophets) and *maqāsid al-sunnah* (the objectives of the prophetic tradition). These overarching objectives should not be confused with the narrower focus (*maqasid juz'ī*) of particular hadiths, such as those concerning specific practices like using *siwāk* (brushing the teeth). The comprehensive *maqāsid* paradigm necessitates the alignment of contemporary hadith education with objectives linked to divine purposes, objectives addressing the inherent qualities and functions of human beings, and objectives in harmony with the qualities and functions of all entities within the universe, whether they are physical or abstract. For example, concerning the latter objectives, there should be an exploration of the intricate connections between hadith and fields such as psychology, political sciences, history, and other branches of the human sciences. More accurately, the connections should be observed between hadith and the phenomena of life, as they represent abstract facets of the universe. The Islamic worldview maintains that divine signs exist in the “horizons” of these fields or phenomena.

The pedagogical ramifications of this study accentuate the necessity of expanding Hadith education to encompass facets such as pedagogical methodologies, library management, and software development, integrating the *maqāsid* paradigm to harmonise traditional and innovative approaches. Educators are encouraged to critically analyse educational trends, balance tradition with innovation, and foster continuous learning to ensure a holistic approach. Furthermore, it is imperative to view “education as spiritual enhancement” as a broader perspective juxtaposed with the “education as knowledge-acquisition” paradigm. However, the current study is limited by its reliance solely on theoretical discussions without empirical evidence or case studies to support its pedagogical implications. Subsequent research endeavours should shift focus towards empirical inquiry to grasp practical challenges and opportunities, delving into innovative pedagogical approaches to enhance Hadith education and further its scholarly discourse. Such investigations should be conducted within the framework of the *maqāsid* paradigm proposed in this exposition. Refining the *maqāsidic* vision of hadith studies will offer a more effective roadmap for experts to navigate ongoing technological transformations, striking a balance between “traditionalising” and “futuring” in Islamic education.

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