Ibn Ashur’s Concept of Maqasid Sharia-Finding Method

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Abstract:
This paper aims to reveal the concept of maqasid sharia-finding method according to Tahir ibn Ashur. It argues that Ibn Ashur’s approach to search for maqasid sharia revolves around three methods. The first is inductive method. This method can be done through the induction of many ‘illat (reasons) that have the same hikmah (goals) and the induction of many dalil (provisions) that have the same ‘illat (reasons). The second is al-bayan al-nashshi method. This method refers to understanding of explicit provisions (dalil) in the Qur’an as they leave no room for alternative interpretations according to Arabic language traditions. The third is sunnah mutawatirah method. This method is divided into mutawatir ma’nawi and mutawatir ‘amali. Mutawatir ma’nawi is an inference resulted from testimonies of many shahaba (the Prophet’s companions) concerning a Prophet’s particular action. Actions that are considered mutawatir ma’nawi include those that are clear, bright and axiomatic in nature (ma’lum min al-din bi al-dharurah), or at least close to ma’lum min al-din bi al-dharurah. Meanwhile, mutawatir ‘amali is an inference resulted from a testimony of one shahaba concerning actions always repeated by the Prophet.

Key Words: Tahir Ibnu Ashur, Maqasid Sharia, Inductive Method, Al-Bayan Al-Nashshi Method, Sunnah Mutawatirah Method

INTRODUCTION
Allah has created men with the best possible creation. He has bestowed them ‘aql (reason), so that they are able to think and form abstract ideas. The ‘aql given by Allah makes humans able to develop in response to the changing world, including religious life. That is why humans alone are obliged by Allah to perform religious duties, whereas other creatures are not. With their mind, humans are able to develop and improve their standard of living from time to time. They have the capacity to produce knowledge to adapt to new situations.

Humans experience a very rapid development in living religious life; they learn, understand and practice religious teachings. New methods have been made in order to facilitate their religious life, including Muslims with their Islam. In fact, the development of science and the advance of technology sometimes create problems for Muslim society. The way they respond to the development of science is generally patterned into three attitudes.
There are those who accept it as a whole, there are those who reject it as a whole and there are those who act selectively by taking only what is seen positive for the progress of Muslim society. These three Muslim groups are equally adamant that their own opinions are better and more useful.

Allah does understand the basic characters of human beings and, therefore, has revealed the Qur'an in accordance with their characters. In this sense, the Qur'an accommodates the possibility of various interpretations of some verses from the Qur'an that look ambiguous. Such multiple interpretations occur because a particular word is open to more than one interpretation or understanding, which in usul fiqh is referred to as lafitz musytarak or lafitz musykil. This case can be found, for instance, in the word quru’ as mentioned in Surah al-Baqarah verse 228 (Syarifudin, 1999: 15). In understanding this verse, there are inescapable differences of opinion among Muslim scholars and even among shahaba (the Prophet’s companions). Umar ibn Khattab, for example, interpreted quru’ in this verse to mean baidh, while Zaid ibn Thabit interpreted it as cleanliness to perform worship. Umar’s opinion was followed by Imam Abu Hanifa, while Zaid’s opinion was followed by Imam al-Shafi’i. This difference of opinion did not result in the two of them at odds, nor physical clash. The two shahaba and the two mujtahid respected each other and valued opinions that differed from their own (Zain, 1998: 277).

For the usul fiqh experts, exploring the Islamic teachings can be done with a variety of approaches. Some classify the approaches into two, some into three and some others into four. The two approaches are usually named textual and contextual; the three approaches involve linguistics, analogy and benefits; and the four approaches are based on literal meaning (harfiah), understanding (mafhum), signaling (isyarah) and objectives (maqasid). All of these approaches have been carefully studied in the science of usul fiqh. If made simple, the approaches to understanding the Islamic teachings are precisely grouped into three, i.e. textual, contextual and maqasid. The most interesting study of the three is the study of the maqasid approach (Zein, 2005: 177). It is interesting because the use of maqasid was not only as the spirit or soul of ijtihad, but also later as the method of ijtihad, especially after the coming of al-Muwafaqat authored by al-Syathibi.

Al-Syathibi has been excellent in formulating the theory of maqasid in his book al-Muwafaqat. Generally speaking, he said that the Islamic sharia was revealed by Allah with the aim of providing benefits to human beings. The benefits are generally referred to five aspects, i.e. religion, soul, reason, descent, and property (Syah, 1992: 67). In his book, al-Syathibi explains these five types of benefits, called maqasid sharia, very well. Al-Syathibi is popularly known as the founding father of maqasid sharia.

The method of ijtihad most widely used by ulema in exploring Islamic law, especially those with human dimension, is the benefit-based method or maslabat method. That is why discussion over this method is very much found. This benefit-based method is the most popular method among Muslims. In using this method, some are superfluous, some are selective and some refuse. However, when observed more carefully, these three attitudes in principle seem to use the same maslabat method, but with different names. The Shafi’i School, for example, rejects the idea of maslabat mursalah and replaces it with istiddlah. In general, at the usage level, almost all schools use the theory of maslabat though some of them may prefer to different names.

The maslabat method is the method most formulated by ulema. Hundreds of pages and even volumes of books have explained this method. The method is so widely discussed because of (1) the difficulty in formulating the concept of maslabat and (2) its status as the
most fundamental method. This is so because all Islamic teachings are certainly grounded in the concept of benefits or maslabat, both those related to the worldly life and the hereafter, as well as material and spiritual life. Among the scholars who are concerned with discussing the maslabat theory is al-Ghazali in his book al-Mustashfa. This book is very interesting and becomes the standard reference for the science of ushul fiqh. Many ulema's works were born after they were inspired by this book, including those who specifically studied this book and those who studied theories contained in this book. Therefore, it is very reasonable that al-Mustashfa becomes one of the most popular books of ushul fiqh.

Equally excellent is the book of al-Muwafaqat by al-Syathibi. This book was written half a century before the fall of Granada, the last Muslim city in Andalusia. The book invites Muslims to revive Islamic law, prioritize the general benefits, and direct them to pay attention to the reality and the universe. At first, al-Syathibi named this work with al-Ta’rif bi Asrar al-Taklif until one day he met a syeikh or teacher of ilm makrifat. The syeikh said to him: "Last night I saw you in dream that you held in your hand a book that you have compiled. I asked you about it, and then you said that it was the book of al-Muwafaqat." The syeikh again said: "I ask you about this good naming, and you say that with that you want to unite the school of Ibn al-Qasim and Abu Hanifah." Since then, al-Syathibi called his work al-Muwafaqat (Al-Syathibi, 2006: 19). In al-Muwafaqat, al-Syathibi succeeded in formulating the theory of maqasid sharia. He also explained the method to trace the maqasid sharia.

Among the latest developments on the theory of maqasid sharia is the concept proposed by Muhammad ibn Ashur (1879 AD - 1973 AD) in his book Maqasid Shari’ah Islamiyyah. Ibn Ashur was called upon to write his renewal ideas that focused on the most fundamental realm of Islamic law, namely ushul fiqh. According to him, there are some methodological problems in ushul fiqh as the fundament of Islamic law, so that improvements need to be done; otherwise, it will be difficult to maintain Islamic law as the law capable of adapting and responding to the various demands of the times and places.

**DISCUSSION**

**Uncovering the Birth of Maqasid Sharia Theory**

Among ushul fiqh studies interesting to examine is the study of maqasid sharia. It is so because maqasid sharia is the most important topic in the science of ushul fiqh. This is the reason of why al-Syathibi in his al-Muwafaqat focuses on only the issue of maqasid sharia. Since the early time of Islam and even the Prophet period, the theory of maqasid sharia gained great attention.

Ideas of maqasid sharia have a strong historical reference, though as an independent scientific discipline it was known only when al-Syathibi wrote his al-Muwafaqat. He dedicated one volume of his book to study maqasid sharia. However, embryo of studies concerning maqasid sharia has existed since the time of the Prophet, such as the following hadith:

> عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما أنه قال: قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لنا لما رجع من الأحزاب: لا تصلّيان أحداكم العاصرا إلّا في بنية قربية، فذكر بعضهم العصر في الطريق، فقال بعضهم: لنصلي حتى نأتيها، وقال بعضهم: بل نصلي! لم يرد منّا ذلك (أي أنه أراد الأسراع). فذكر للنبي فلم يعنّف واحدا منهم. وفي رواية مسلم: وقال أخرون: "لنصلي إلّا حيث أمرنا رسول الله وإن فاتت الوقت"
"Narrated from Ibn 'Umar, he said: "The Prophet PBUH said to us when returning from the Battle of Ahzab: Let none of you pray Ashr except in the Bani Quraizah village. Later, some of them met the time for Ashr prayer in the middle of the way. Then said some of them: We (may) not pray until we get there. Another shahaba said: Instead, we should pray right now. That (the literal meaning) is not what the Prophet wants from us (what the Prophet wanted was for us to speed up the journey). After that, the case was reported to the Prophet PBUH, and he did not denounce one of them. (In the narrative by Imam Muslim, there is an additional line: Another shahaba said: We do not perform the prayer except in accordance with what the Prophet PBUH commanded, even though the time for Ashr prayer is up)." (Al-Bukhari, 1407: 321; Muslims, 1998: 1391)

The above Hadith tells of two groups of shahaba who differed in their understanding of the Prophet's order. The first group perceives the order with textual approach, i.e. not to perform the Ashr prayer before reaching the Bani Quraizah village even though the prayer time is up. Meanwhile, the second group understands it with maqasid approach, i.e. the Prophet wanted them to walk faster.

Muslim scholars have different opinions in response to this hadith. The majority of them (jumhur) support those who use maqasid approach, while Dhahiriyyah scholars support those who use textual approach. Ibn Qayyim describes the view of the jumhur as follows: "Both groups are equally rewarded for their intentions to obey the Prophet's order. However, the maqasid group has two virtues, i.e. due to their obedience to speed up the journey and their obedience to perform the prayer in time. The Prophet's affirmation towards the textual group was simply because he understood their limitations in understanding the implied meaning of the order."(Al-Asqalani, 2002: 410).

In other words, Ibn Qayyim argues that the textualists’ stance is tolerable because of their weakness in knowledge, not because of their correct interpretation. Unlike the jumhur, Dhahiriyyah scholars as represented by Ibn Hazm's statement argue: "If we were present at the Banu Quraizah event, we would not perform the Ashr prayer, even after midnight, unless we arrived in that village." Such a view is in line with the principles of their school that reject the maqasid method (Al-Raisyuni, 2005: 8).

At the time of shahaba, thoughts on maqasid became clearer as can be seen from the policies adopted by al-Khulafa al-Rasyidin (Babakr, 2002: 8). If observed more carefully, many policies made at that time are based not only on the explicit message of the Qur'an and the Hadith, but also on the objectives (implicit message) of the Qur'an and the Hadith (Al-Saifi, 2010: 35, and Al-Uwaid, Vol. 25, 2011: 15).

After the shahaba period, thoughts on maqasid were continuously practiced and formulated by the ulema. Although maqasid sharia was not explicitly used as a standard term for a specific scientific study, the ulema had been considering the implementation of maqasid sharia in formulating Islamic laws. Terms that were relevant to the spirit of maqasid at that time included the theories of giyās, istihsān and maslahat nawsalab (Al-Yubi, 1998: 44).

In the 3rd century H, works that specifically studied Islam from the aspect of maqasid were born, although they were still scattered in various books and disciplines, such as sufism, kalam or theology, comparative religion and fiqh. Some prominent figures included al-Tirmizi al-Hakim (d. 296 H/ 908 AD), Abu Zaid al-Balkhi (d. 322 H/ 933 AD), al-Qaffal al-Kabir (d. 365 H/ 975 AD), Ibn Babawaih al-Qummi (d. 381 H/ 991 AD), and al-'Amiri al-Failasuf (d. 381 H/ 991 AD), as they conducted profound studies of maqasid sharia.
According to Abdallah ibn Bayyah, the 5th century Islamic hijri calendar marked the birth of Islamic legal philosophy (Auda, 2008: 16). In this period, theories of *maqasid sharia* have emerged as part of *ushul fiqh*. The *ulema* who first discussed *maqasid sharia* was al-Haramain al-Juwaini (d. 478 H/ 1085 AD), although he didn’t explicitly mentioned *maqasid sharia* in his writings. Al-Rayuni called this period as *al-wiladah al-kaminah*, or the birth period. Al-Haramain al-Juwaini’s thoughts were then continued by his disciple named Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, al-Razi, and so on up to al-Syathibi.

After al-Syathibi time, the development *maqasid sharia* as a discourse experienced acute stagnation. The discourse, which was first systematically codified by al-Syathibi, suddenly disappeared until later in the first half of the 20th century AD Ibn Ashur reformulated the *maqasid* studies. Ibn Ashur offered a new approach in studying *maqasid sharia* that had been adapted to the reality of modern context. This reformulation is evident in his brilliant work named *Maqasid Syari'ah Islamiyyah*, which was first published in Tunisia in 1946 AD.

Moreover, Ibn Ashur also called for making *maqasid sharia* an independent scientific discipline (fann ‘ilm mustaqill). This call is believed to have triggered the development of the study of *Maqasid sharia* afterwards. Since his time, studies on *maqasid sharia* with emphasis on methodology and approach, rather than a collection of value concepts, began to spread (Mawardi, 2010: 197). That is why Ibn Ashur was named the third pillar of *maqasid sharia* (Al-Yubi, 1998: 70) due to his great contribution in bringing this discipline in the top popularity. *Maqasid sharia* is now the new *prima donna* in Islamic studies. Al-Rayuni maintains that *maqasid sharia* has been experiencing a perfect birth (al-wiladah al-kamilah), especially in the Maghreb or the birthplace of Ibn Ashur.

Contemporary *ulema* are now pioneers of the study of *maqasid sharia*, such as Ahmad al-Raisuni, Nuruddin Mukhtar al-Khadi, Abdullah bin Bayyah, Muhammad Habib ibn Khaujah, Ismail al-Hasani, Thahir al-Misawi, Nu’man Jughaim and so on. Besides Maghreb regions including Tunisia, Morocco and Aljazair, another region that is now the center of the study of *maqasid sharia* is Malaysia. Like in Maghreb, support of the local *ulema* in Malaysia is both in individual and institutional levels. In the said countries, *maqasid sharia* becomes a separate department in several well-known universities.

**Intellectual Background of Ibn Ashur**

Portrait of one’s intellectual background cannot be separated from his sociological, political and geographical stance. It is always necessary to understand his family, how he was born and raised, where he lived and grew up, what situation and conditions he has encountered, what he has learned and who influenced him.

**Background of The Writing Maqasid Syari’ah Islamiyyah**

Ahmad al-Raisuni stated that Ibn Ashur was the second teacher of *maqasid sharia* after al-Syathibi. He has succeeded in making *maqasid sharia* meet a perfect birth, that is, a discipline that is studied independently. As *Maqasid Syari’ah Islamiyyah* becomes the first book talking about *maqasid* after a period of acute stagnation, it also brings significant impact on the later generations to study, theorize and dialogue *maqasid sharia* with contemporary issues. Indeed, this achievement is not a coincidence, but a product of the context that surrounds the life of Ibn Ashur.

The first factor deals with Tunisia’s academic atmosphere. From a sociological perspective, Ibn Ashur’s love of *maqasid* is inseparable from the academic atmosphere of
Maghreb regions known to have many experts in the study of maqasid. Abderrazak Belabes reports that for a long time the Maghreb regions (Andalusia/Spain, Morocco, Tunisia, Aljazair, Libya and Mauritania) have given birth to utilitarian (maqasidi) thinkers. Thinkers of classical period included Abu Imran al-Fasi (d. 430 H), Abu al-Walid al-Baji (d. 471 H), Ibn al-'Arabi (d. 543 AH), Ibn Rusyd (d. 595 H) and of course Abu Ishaq al-Syatibi (d. 790 H). Among the scholars who were in the same period with Ibn Ashur were Muhammad Aziz Bu'tur (1825-1907 AD), Salim Bouhabib (1827-1924 AD), Muhammad Khidr Husein (1874-1958), Muhammad' Aziz Ja'it (1886-1970 CE) and Abdul Hamid bin Badis (1889-1940 CE). Ibn Ashur was born into a family of ulama with the Islamic scholarship atmosphere. His complete name is Muhammad Tahir ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad Ibn Ashur. His grandfather, i.e. Muhammad Ibn Ashur, who died in 1868 AD, 11 years before the birth of Ibn Ashur, was an expert in fiqh, ushul fiqh, linguistics, literature and Arabic grammar.

The second factor is concerned with the socio-political context. In general, the portrait of the life of Ibn Ashur is divided into two main phases. The first phase is the era of French colonial rule over the Maghreb countries (Morocco, Aljazair and Tunisia) which ranged from 1881 to 1956. The second phase is the period of Tunisian independence in 1956 up to 1973, in which he died. The first phase of his life was marked by various major events in the Islamic world, such as the weakening of the Ottoman Empire over his territories. This situation leads European imperialists to colonize Islamic countries in the Middle East, including Tunisia.

According to Ismail al-Hasani, there were three factors that helped shape Ibn Ashur’s intellectual background the way he is now. The first is the renewal movement initiated by Muhammad Abduh in Egypt. Al-Urwah al-Wuthqa, the magazine that Abduh managed, gave a strong influence on the people of Tunisia to rise up against the colonial authority. The people's awareness to fight the authority grew even stronger after Abduh's visit to Tunisia in 1884 and 1903. The second is the thoughts of a Tunisian reformer, Khairudin al-Tunisy (1810-1890 AD), who initiated to advance the nation through education. The steps taken by al-Tunisy include the spreading of liberation ideas through his writings in various magazines and the printing of inexpensive books to be distributed to the public. He also establishes Khalduniah and al-Sadiqiah University to study modern sciences. The third is educational reforms echoed by Zaitunah University. The post-independence phase marked by the rise of Habib Borgouiba as president has brought many changes in Tunisia. For the sake of bettering the country's underdevelopment, Borgouiba actively promoted secularization campaigns everywhere and claimed that it was the only way to bring the country towards progress. Islam was set aside from political arena and even public spaces. As a result, religious endeavors or syiar are almost invisible in daily life, except for official rituals like Friday prayers or religious holidays. On the other hand, Western tradition is seen as the ideal prototype worth following. On the basis of human rights and freedom, a portrait of liberal and humanist Islam was increasingly displayed, and issues of human rights were designed to become learning materials in all educational institutions (Muhammad, 2015: 20).

**Methodological Problems of Ushul Fiqh**

In the academic perspective, the motive prevailing the writing of Maqasid Syari'ah Islamiyyah was Ibn Ashur’s intellectual anxiety towards the Islamic sciences, especially ushul
Ibn Ashur argues that the science of *ushul fiqh* is relative in nature, so that it cannot provide definite conclusions, as with the natural sciences.

Three criticisms have been raised by Ibn Ashur to *ushul fiqh*. Firstly, *ushul fiqh* is seen incapable to provide definitive arguments and solutions (dharuri or qat'i) in dealing with different opinions. This notion is due to the fact that the principles of *fiqh* (qawaid fiqiyyah) are induced and formulated precisely from particular problems that exist in the schools of *fiqh* (fiqh madzahih). In other words, such principles are formulated for the purpose of defending the opinions of certain *fuqaha* of madzhab. Secondly, most of the themes of in *ushul fiqh* revolve only around how to extract law from religious texts, but are still far from efforts to understand main objectives of the law, both general and specific objectives. Thirdly, the themes of *ushul fiqh* that are related to *maqasid*, such as *qiya*, *maslahat mursalah*, *munasabah*, *ikhlab* (masalik al-‘illah), are generally placed at the end of the book, when readers are generally bored and so is the writer.

**Ibn Ashur’s Maqasid Sharia-Finding Method**

One of the most fundamental elements in *maqasid sharia* discourse is concerned with the method of understanding and tracing the *maqasid sharia*. This is as to avoid misdiagnosis by assuming *maqasid* not as *maqasid*, and vice versa. Those who review *maqasid* complained of the lack of explanation about it in classical literatures. Numan Jugheim in his dissertation entitled *Thuruq al-Kasiyf 'an Maqasid al-Shari‘* states that from a number of literatures on *maqasid*, including the books of *ushul fiqh*, there are only two books that specifically discuss the method to understand *maqasid*, i.e. *al-Muwafaqat* by al-Syathibi and *Maqasid Syar’i‘ab Islamiyyah* by Tahir ibn Ashur (Jugheim, 2002: 10). Likewise, according to Jamaluddin ‘Athiyyah (2006: 15), the majority of contemporary *ulema*‘s works in explaining the method of understanding *maqasid sharia* only recycles the thoughts of al-Syathibi and Tahir ibn Ashur. That is why Ibn Ashur has a crucial position in the study of *maqasid sharia*. He maintains three methods to determine law based on *maqasid sharia*:

**The Inductive Method (Istiqra‘)**

The Arabic word *istiqrā‘* is equivalent to *induction*. In the Great Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), the term *induction* has three meanings that almost have something in common: a) a method of thinking that departs from a specific rule (thing or event) in order to determine a general rule; b) a way of drawing conclusions based on a special case to be used for general case; c) an inference of a general law from particular instances. Viewed from the philosophical perspective, induction is a form of reasoning, which is different from deduction, abduction and dialectical reasoning (Lubis, 2014: 41-46).

There are three keywords in understanding Ibn Ashur’s *istiqrā‘*, namely *nushush al-abkam al-już‘iyat*, *tawatur* and *natijah*. *Al-abkam al-już‘iyat* is the texts of particular laws which are the objects of observation; *tawatur* refers to the quantity of objects observed; and *natijah* refers to the result of observation. *Tawatur* has a close relationship with *natijah* in that the more the number of the objects, the stronger the result produced. *Natijah* is a universal principle (kulliyyah) which is the objective (*maqasid*) of the particular laws being observed.

Based on these three keywords, Thir ibn Ashur classifies the inductive method to determine *maqasid sharia* into the following two parts:

**Induction of Many ‘Illat (Reasons) That Have The Same Hikmah (Goals)**

Example of this point is *maqasid sharia* concerning the elimination of deception (gharar) and the maintenance of brotherhood among fellow Muslims (ukhuwwah...
islamiiyyah). Gharar is any form of transactions whose results are unclear, is inability to hand over goods to the buyer, and is incorrect size or scale of goods being sold (Al-Jauziyyah, 1987: 818). The elimination of gharar is the objective of Islamic law in the field of muamalab which is taken from inductive approach to laws that have different illat or reasons, but leads to one common goal, namely the elimination of gharar (ibthal al-ghurar).

Based on maqasid sharia of the elimination of gharar, Prophet Muhammad forbade 'urban (transaction based on deposit systems), bashat (speculative transaction), muzabanah (transaction with imbalanced barter), ma'dum (transaction where the goods do not yet exist), ijon (transaction over fruits that are still young or unripe) and all forms of transaction that contains ghabin or fraud. Likewise, the Prophet forbade transaction in which the goods sold could not be handed over to the buyer, such as selling off a cow that is not known to exist, a bird that flies in the air, or a fish in open waters.

Based on maqasid sharia of maintaining brotherhood among fellow Muslims, the Prophet obliged to explain the defects of goods being sold, the possibility to return defective goods not explained during the transaction, the prohibition on selling musharrab (animals that deliberately do not milked so that they may look fat or pregnant).

In addition to the inductive method towards particular reasons (illat) as explained above, i.e. the elimination of gharar and the maintenance of brotherhood, the inductive method is also strengthened with kulli provisions from the Qur'an and the hadith, such as Surat al-Nisa' verse 29 and Surat al-Baqarah verse 188. If observed carefully, the reasons (illat) for the cases above vary, but they all lead to one goal, namely the elimination of gharar in transaction (ibthal al-ghurar fi al-mu'amalat). Therefore, it can be concluded that one of the maqasid sharia in the field of muamalab is the prevention and elimination of gharar. That is why every transaction that contains fraud or is potentially detrimental to one party (seller or buyer) is prohibited in Islamic teachings.

**Induction of Many Dalil (Provisions) That Have The Same Illat (Reasons)**

Among examples of this type of inductive method is al-rawaj (smooth transaction in the market) that are induced from the legal provisions, such as a hadith forbidding talaqqi al-rukban (transaction in the middle of street), al-mudharr (transaction on the basis of compulsion) and ibtkar (stockpiling the merchandises). Hence, it can be concluded that one of the maqasid sharia in the field of muamalab is smooth transaction that allows the distribution of essential goods to run fairly and evenly. There is no significant price disparity between one region and another, between one community and another, and between one time and another.

At glance, the two forms of inductive method (istiqa') look similar, but if observed closely, the difference between the two is obvious. In the former, the object of induction is ‘illat, while the inference is the similarity of bikmah. In the latter, the object of induction is dalil, while the inference is ‘illat.

**Al-Bayan Al-Nashshi Method**

Al-bayan al-nashshi method is an understanding of provisions in the Qur'an with a clear designation (al-wadiah al-dalalah) as they leave no room for alternative interpretations according to Arabic language traditions. For example, the verse katibna 'alaikum al-shiyam is usually understood as 'it is obliged upon you all to fast'. Here, if anyone thinks that the said verse is intended to mean fasting has been written on the board, then everyone knows this is incorrect meaning. Thus, the parameter in understanding the sacred
text of the Qur’an is according to Arabic language use (bi hasab al-isti’mal al-arabi). In other words, Ibn Ashur does not let the Qur’an speak for itself. Abdul Majid Najjar states that this method is the most original method. Meanwhile, Nu’man Jugheim in his dissertation explained that what is meant by 

nasb (sacred text) explanation is not to merely take literal meaning of the text (‘ibarah al-nash) by negating the possibility of other meanings that can be taken through izyarah (signaling), iqti’dah (implicative meaning) or dilalah (implied meaning); rather, non-literal meaning of the text that can only be done if there are indicators leading to the intended meaning.

Abdul Majid Najjar maintains that this method can be carried out by detailing the level of clarity of the 

nasb into three types. The first is bayan al-nas, which is an explanation from the 

nasb with only one possible interpretation; the second is bayan al-dhabir, which is an explanation from the 

nasb with more than one possible interpretation (ikhimalat); and the third is bayan bi al-ima’ wal-tanbih, which is an explanation from the 

nasb by means of signaling and warning.

**Sunnah Mutawatirah Method**

Sunnah mutawatirah can be found in the two conditions, i.e. mutawatir ma’nawi and mutawatir ‘amali. Mutawatir ma’nawi is an inference resulted from the testimonies of many 

shahaba (the Prophet’s companions) in unlimited numbers concerning the Prophet’s actions. From this point, a common knowledge was born among the many 

shahaba about the implementation of certain actions as they can witness from the Prophet. Actions which are seen 

mutawatir ma’nawi refer to those that are clear, bright and axiomatic in nature (ma’lum min al-din bi al-dharurah), or at least close to 

ma’lum min al-din bi al-dharurah. An example of 

mutawatir ma’nawi is the prescription of 

shadaqah jariyah, which is partly in the form of 

al-babs (waqaf). This particular action was stated by Imam Malik in response to Syuraih saying that 

al-babs (waqaf) was not part of obligations to Allah. Imam Malik then said: Syuraih spoke in his country (Kufa/ Iraq) and did not come to Medina. If he came to Medina and saw the 

atsar (relics) of the Prophet’s wives, companions and the tabi’in, and what they have given (waqaf) from their possessions as well as these seven plots as 

shadaqah from the Prophet. One should not speak about Allah’s laws unless he has proper knowledge of 

khabar (hadith of the Prophet). There are many examples of actions that are 

mutawatir ma’nawi in matters of 

ibadab (religious services), such as 

khutbah (speech) in the two Eids carried out after the Eid prayer (Ashur, 2012: 21-22).

Meanwhile, mutawatir ‘amali is an inference resulted from a testimony of one 

shahaba concerning actions always repeated by the Prophet. Such a testimony then give 

birth to the intention or objective of sharia (maqasid sharia). An example of 

mutawatir ‘amali is a hadith contained in the book of 

Saheeh al-Bukhari as narrated by al-Azraq bin Qais. He said: we are performing a prayer by the river in the Ahwaz area where the water is receding. Then came Abu Barzah al-Aslamiy riding a horse; he joined the prayer and took off his horse, then the horse left. Then Abu Barzah left his prayer and chased his horse until he found it again and bound it. Then he came and did his prayer again. Among us was a clever person and said: look at this old man. He left the prayer because of his horse! Then Abu Barzah came in and said: no one has reproached me since separating from the Prophet. Abu Barzah said: actually my house is far away. If I keep praying and let my horse go, then I am not sure that I can reach my family tonight. Abu Barzah said that he had accompanied the Prophet and witnessed the ease he provided. Therefore, Abu Barzah’s testimony of the repeated action by the Prophet could give birth to 

maqasid sharia, namely 

al-ta’isir (the ease).
In this case, Abu Barzah thought that breaking the prayer to chase his horse and then starting the prayer was more important. This is because continuing the prayer contains difficulties as consequently he has to return to his home on foot. This kind of maqasid, for Abu Barzah, is a dhān (presumption) approaching qath‘i (certainty), while for others the action is muhtamal (doubtful) because it is based on taqlīd and kind-minded (Ashur, 2012: 21-22).

The difference between mutawatir ma‘nawi and mutawatir ‘amali is located in the subject and the object. In mutawatir ma‘nawi, the subject are many (a number of shahāba), while the object is single (a particular Prophet’s action). In the other hand, in mutawatir ‘amali, the subject is single (one shahāba), while the object is many (the repeated actions by the Prophet).

**CONCLUSION**

Ibn Ashur argues that there are some methodological problems in ushul fiqh, which is the fundamental pillar in Islamic law. If such problems are not corrected, it would be difficult to maintain Islamic laws capable of adapting and responding to the various demands of the times and places. One of the things that must be given a special attention in the science of ushul fiqh is concerned with the theory of maqasid sharia. Ibn Ashur has made great efforts to conduct a serious and in-depth study concerning the theory of maqasid sharia.

Ibn Ashur’s important achievement in studying the theory of maqasid sharia cannot be separated from the following two contexts. The first factor deals with the academic atmosphere in Tunisia known to have many experts in the study of maqasid. Ibn Ashur was also born into a family of ulema with the Islamic scholarship atmosphere. His complete name is Muhammad Tahir ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad Ibn Ashur. His grandfather, i.e. Muhammad Ibn Ashur, who died in 1868 AD, 11 years before the birth of Ibn Ashur, was an expert in fiqh, ushul fiqh, linguistics, literature and Arabic grammar. The second factor is concerned with the socio-political context. In general, the portrait of the life of Ibn Ashur is divided into two main phases. The first phase is the era of French colonial rule over the Maghreb countries (Morocco, Aljazair and Tunisia) which ranged from 1881 to 1956. The second phase is the period of Tunisian independence in 1956 up to 1973. In addition, Ibn Ashur’s intellectual background is also influenced by the reform movement initiated by Muhammad Abduh in Egypt, the reformist thoughts of Khairudin al-Tunisy and the educational reform echoed by the University of Az-Zaitunah.

Ibn Ashur’s approach to search for maqasid sharia revolves around three methods. The first is inductive method. This method can be done through the induction of many ‘illat (reasons) that have the same hikmah (goals) and the induction of many dalil (provisions) that have the same ‘illat (reasons). The second is al-bayan al-nashshi method. This method refers to understanding of explicit provisions (dalil) in the Qur’an as they leave no room for alternative interpretations according to Arabic language traditions. The third is sunnah mutawatirah method. This method is divided into mutawatir ma‘nawi and mutawatir ‘amali. Mutawatir ma‘nawi is an inference resulted from testimonies of many shababa (the Prophet’s companions) concerning a Prophet’s particular action. Actions that are considered mutawatir ma‘nawi include those that are clear, bright and axiomatic in nature (ma‘lum min al-din bi al-dharurah), or at least close to ma‘lum min al-din bi al-dharurah. Meanwhile, mutawatir ‘amali is an inference resulted from a testimony of one shababa concerning actions always repeated by the Prophet.
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