

## THE CONCEPT OF *WASILAH* IN THE QUR'AN: ANALYSIS OF *TAFSĪR MAQĀSĪDĪ'S* OF QS. AL-MĀIDAH [5]: 35 AND QS. AL-ISRĀ' [17]: 57

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**Abstract:** In navigating life cannot be separated from a problem, the problems of Muslims are also different, both problems regarding themselves or problems from social aspects. *Wasilah* is a term used by Muslims as an intermediary to pray to Allah so that their prayers will be answered and their needs can be resolved. The majority of Muslims in understanding *wasilah* tend to give meaning as a means of intermediary, namely making certain things to be intermediaries to Allah. *Wasilah* is not something that must be done nor is it a cause for prayer to be answered, but the most important and essential thing is to pray absolutely to Allah. The term *wasilah* is also explained in Q.S Al-Māidah [5]: 35 and Q.S Al-Isrā' [17]: 57. This research uses descriptive qualitative method with *maqāṣidī* interpretation approach. Checking the validity is done by looking directly at the text of the book or the original book which discusses the interpretation of Q.S Al-Māidah [5]: 35 and QS. al-Isrā' [17]: 57. The results of the study found: aspects of *maqāṣid*

*biḥḥ al-dīn* and *biḥḥ al-naḥs* as well as human values and values of responsibility.

## **Keywords**

Wasilah, Tafsīr Maqāṣidī, Al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah

## **Introduction**

In the era of globalization, one of the issues that are still hotly discussed by humans, especially Muslims, is *wasilah*, an intermediary for getting closer to Allah. Generally, Muslims think that they allow it, and there are also those who do not; there are even those who think it is an act that is heretical and contrary to Islamic beliefs (Chalim, 2012).

In navigating life, we cannot be free from problems; the problems of Muslims are different, both problems related to themselves and problems from social and other aspects. Muslims are creatures who have a high dependence on their God. To solve problems and their lives, they usually interact and pray to Allah directly or indirectly. This is usually referred to as *wasilah/tawasul*. The *wasilah* often used in prayer is the spirit of pious people, so most Muslims make pilgrimages to graves and the like (Nafiah & Bakri, 2018).

The scholars agreed to be *wasilah* to Allah by using righteous deeds such as fasting, offering prayers, reading the Qur'an, and giving alms. Even using good deeds as an intermediary for prayer is a great thing to achieve hope. This is proven by the evidence of a hadith, which tells of three people trapped in a cave. One trusted Allah through an intermediary (good deeds), being devoted to his parents. The second person believes through intermediaries (good deeds) to avoid committing adultery, even though he can do it. The third person performs *tawasul* through intermediaries (good deeds), like the mandate to look after other people's property and give it to them ideally. Then Allah gave them a way out according to the conditions they experienced (Al-Maliki, 2016).

However, some groups do not allow doing *wasilah* with other than the pious deeds of people who are *tawasul*, because they will do *wasilah* with substances or people. As he said: O Allah, indeed I send my trust to the intermediary of the Prophet Muhammad, or I put my trust in you with Abu Bakr or with Umar bin Khaththab or with Uthman or Ali (Al-Maliki, 2016). The differences of opinion above, of course, raise the question of what is meant by *wasilah* in the Qur'an, which is the primary source of guidance for Muslims.

Thus, this research aims to search for and discover the concept of *wasilah* in the Qur'an based on the QS. Al-Māidah [5]: 35 and QS. Al-Isrā' [17]: 57, as two thematic verses. The hope is that in the end, a conclusion will be produced that justifies the practice of *wasilah* if it is by the guidance of the Qur'an and corrects the practice of *wasilah* if it turns out not to be by the guidance of the Qur'an.

Research regarding *wasilah* and its relationship to the Al-Qur'an is familiar regarding its theme. Several previous studies with the same theme, such as research conducted by Indra Aris Munandar titled "*Makna Wasilah dalam Al-Qur'an (Studi Tafsir Al-Qurthubi)*". In the research in the form of a thesis, Munandar examined the meaning of *wasilah* and its interpretation according to Al-Qurṭubī in the book *Tafsir Jāmi' Li Ahkām al-Qur'ān* with the conclusion that according to Al-Qurṭubī the meaning of *wasilah* is Al-Qurbah (self-approach) and Al-Ṭalab (request), which also means the self-approach that is required through it when making a request requires media, where the media are people whose goodness has been determined by Allah (Munandar, 2022). Sofiya Ramadanti also conducted research titled "*Konsep Wasilah dalam Al-Qur'an (Studi Komparasi antara Tafsir Al-Maraghi dan Tafsir Al-Misbah)*". In the research in the form of a thesis, Ramadanti compared the concept of *wasilah* according to Al-Marāghī and M. Quraish Shihab, which finally concluded that the two

commentators above had similarities and differences in views regarding the word *al-wasilah*. Each *mufassir* agrees to interpret it as a means or way to get closer to Allah, but they have different views on the law of *wasilah*. Al-Marāghī does not allow to pay *wasilah* to people who have died, while M. Quraish Shihab has no problem with it (Ramadanti, 2021). Almost the same as Ramadanti, Zulfi Widia Fitri also researched M. Quraish Shihab's *wasilah* perspective with the research title "*Interpretasi Makna Wasilah Dalam Alquran: Studi Terhadap Penafsiran M. Quraish Shihab Dalam Tafsir Al Misbah*", which ultimately concluded that it was okay to pray with mentioning the name of the Prophet Muhammad both when he was alive and after his death with the understanding that it is still Allah who grants wishes (Fitri, 2022). Finally, there is a thesis research in Arabic written by Zaini with the research title "*Fahm Maḥmūd Ḥāṣil Li Āyat al-Wasilah fi al-Qur'an: Dirāsah Tablīyiyah 'an Manhajī al-Tafsīr*". In this research, Zaini reviewed Mahmud Produk's opinion on *wasilah* using an interpretive approach. The emphasis is on the use of interpretive methods, not on the results of the interpretation (Zaini, 2020).

Of the several studies above, the research has yet to focus on the concept and understanding of *wasilah* using a *maqāṣidi* interpretation perspective, so it can be ascertained that this research has nothing in common with previous studies.

Furthermore, as a methodological step, this research uses qualitative methods by collecting from library research through the tafsir books of ulama as primary data and from various books, journal articles, reports, and the like related to the theme of this research as primary data source. Furthermore, to determine the verses that serve as a benchmark for *wasilah* research, this research used the thematic method (*mauḍu'ī*) which ultimately found two verses that were considered to talk about *wasilah*, namely QS. Al-Māidah [5]: 35 and QS. Al-Isrā' [17]: 57. Furthermore, in the explanation and explanation of the two verses, the *maqāṣidi* interpretation approach is used as a step to

contextualize the verses and the construction of *wasilah*, which has become deeply rooted in culture, including in Indonesia.

The steps in using the *maqāṣidī* interpretation approach include at least several stages, namely: 1) understanding the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'an first, 2) understanding the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, 3) developing the dimensions of *maqāṣid min haits al-'adam and min haits al-wujūd*, 4) collecting verses with the same theme to see their *maqāṣid*, 5) considering the concept of verses, 6) understanding the basics of *ulūm al-Qur'ān* and *qawā'id tafsīr*, 7) taking a Nahwu-Ṣaraf approach and related to language, 8) distinguishing between *wasilah*, *ghāyah*, *uṣūl*, and *furu'*, *al-tsaḥābit* and *al-mutaḥayyarāt*, 9) interconnecting the results of interpretation with social sciences and science in order to obtain comprehensive conclusions, and 10) Always being open to criticism and does not claim that the findings of his interpretation are the only truth (Mustaqim, 2019).

## Understanding and Brief History of Tafsir Maqāṣidī

Tafsir Maqāṣidī combines two words, each of which must be defined first to get a complete understanding. The two words are *tafsīr* and *maqāṣid*, added with *ya' nisbah*. Linguistically, *tafsīr* comes from *fa-sa-ru* (فسر), which means explaining, explaining, and revealing something closed. Meanwhile, in terms of terms, *tafsir* is the science that discusses the Qur'an from the perspective of its interpretation, based on the intention desired by Allah with the level of human ability (Al-Zarqani, 1995).

Meanwhile, the meaning of *maqāṣid* itself is the plural form of *maqṣad*, from the root word *قصد*, which means to intend or go towards something. Meanwhile, in terms of terms, this is what Shari' aims for in establishing Islamic Sharia laws to benefit His servants, both in this world and in the afterlife. About the science of interpretation, *maqāṣid* can mean *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* and *maqāṣid*

*al-shari'ah*. Two terms need to be distinguished. *Maqāṣid al-Qur'an* is the basis of *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* itself. All *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* return to the *maqāṣid al-qur'an* (Zayd, 2003). *Maqāṣid al-shari'ah*, as defined by Allal al-Fasy, is the ultimate goal to be achieved by sharia and the secrets behind every provision in sharia law (Al-Fasi, 1993). In line with al-Fasy, al-Raisuny defines *maqashid al-shari'ah* as the goals to be realized in establishing shari'ah for the benefit of servants (Al-Raisuni, 1995).

The *maqāṣid* of the Qur'an also has its meaning. Ridlwan Jamal and Nisywan Abduh, after observing various opinions of scholars regarding the *maqāṣid* of the Qur'an. They both define *maqāṣid al-Qur'an* as wisdom, secrets, and goals to be realized by the revelation of the Qur'an for the benefit and to avoid damage (Jamal & Abduh, 2011). The combination of these two words forms the term *tafsir maqāṣidi*. Because this interpretation is still a new type in the discipline of interpretation, experts are still trying to define it correctly. Jamal independently defines it as a type of interpretation that discusses the meanings of the *lafadz* of the Qur'an and the expansion of its *lughawi* meaning, accompanied by an explanation of the wisdom and goals to be realized through the revelation of the Qur'an and the enactment of Islamic laws (Jamal & Abduh, 2011). Meanwhile, Waṣfi Ashūr Abū Zayd defines it as one of the various styles of interpretation that discusses the disclosure of the meanings and wisdom surrounding the Qur'an, both universal and partial and explains how to use it to realize the benefit of servants (Zayd, 2003).

Meanwhile, the history of *tafsir maqāṣidi* must be distinct from the history of the development of interpretation itself. This means that, although the emergence of *tafsir maqāṣidi* only occurred recently, the seeds of the application of *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* as a paradigm for interpretation had already occurred in the early days and phases of interpretation. Zinal Hamam and Halil Tahir trace the history of *tafsir maqāṣidi* from the early phases of the

development of Qur'an interpretation to the *tajdid* period. Each phase has had a *maslahi*-based interpretation of the Qur'an, which later became the root of the *tafsir maqāsidī* (Hamam & Thahir, 2028). The use of the term *maqāsid* as a theory of Islamic law was introduced by Imam al-Haramain al-Juwainy and then developed by his student, al-Ghazali. The following Islamic legal theorist who specifically discussed *maqāsid al-shari'ah* was Izzuddin ibn Abd. al-Salam from among the Shāfi'iyah. Al-Syatibi carried out a systematic and explicit discussion from the Malikiyah circle in his book *Al-Muwāfaqāt*. Then *maqāsid al-shari'ah* matured and became an independent scientific discipline through the hands of Ibn Ashūr (Jamal & Abduh, 2011). It is from this historical series that *tafsir maqāsidī* was then formulated into an independent scientific term by contemporary scholars and has the most significant possibility of becoming the most dynamic tafsir compared to other types of tafsir.

### **Classification of Tafsir Maqāsidī**

Ali Hasabullah (Hasabullah, 1971) divides *maqāsid* into three levels, namely: (1) *Al-Maqāsid al-darūriyah* (necessity), (2) *Al-maqāsid al-hājiyah* (necessity), and (3) *Al-maqāsid al-tahsīniyah* (completeness). *Al-maqāsid al-darūriyah* is a level of needs that must exist or is also called primary needs. If this level of need is not met, then the safety of humanity will be threatened, both in this world and in the afterlife, which consists of; *hifẓ al-dīn* (protection of religion), *hifẓ al-nafs* (protection of body and soul), *hifẓ al-māl* (protection of property), *hifẓ al-'aql* (protection of reason), *hifẓ al-nasl* (protection of descendants), and *hifẓ al-'ird* (protection of honor). These levels of necessity are basic human needs. According to Maslow, human needs shift from basic physical and security needs to love and self-esteem needs to self-actualization.

*Al-maqāṣid al-hājiyah* is a secondary need. Human safety will not be threatened if this need is not met, but he will experience difficulties. Meanwhile, *al-maqāṣid al-tabsiniyah* is a tertiary need. This need does not threaten the existence of one of the six main things of *al-maqāṣid al-darūriyah* and only causes difficulties if it is met. This level of need is in the form of complementary needs.

## Methodological Steps of *Maqāṣid* Based Interpretation

Regarding the steps of *tafsīr maqāṣidī*, in his professor's inauguration document, Abdul Mustaqim wrote three ontological hierarchies of *tafsīr maqāṣidī*. The three levels are: (1) *tafsīr maqāṣidī* as philosophy, (2) *tafsīr maqāṣidī* as methodology, and (3) *tafsīr maqāṣidī* as product. As a methodology, he constructed ten principles including: (1) Knowing the three domains of *maqāṣid al-Qur'an*, including the values of personal benefit (*iṣlāḥ al-fard*), social-local problems (*iṣlāḥ al-mujtamā'*), and benefit universal-global (*iṣlāḥ al-'alam*), (2) Knowing the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, namely realizing benefit (*jalb al-maṣāliḥ wa dar' al-mafāsīd*), which is framed in *al-uṣūl al-khamsah* (*hifẓ al-dīn, alnaḥs, al-'aql, al-nas, al-māl*) plus two more points, namely *hifẓ al-daulah* (defending the country) and *hifẓ al-bi'ah* (caring for the environment), all of which become *al-uṣūl al-tis'ah*, (3) Developing protective (*maqāṣid min baits al-'adam*) and productive (*maqāṣid min baits al-wujūd*) dimensions, (4) Collecting verses with the same theme to then find *maqāṣid* verses, both *kulliyah* and *juḥūdiyyah*, (5) Considering the context of the verse, both macro and micro, internal and external, past (*qadīm*) and present (*jadīd*) contexts, (6) Understanding the basic theories in the *'ulūm al-Qur'an* and *qawā'id al-tafsīr* with all the theoretical complexity therein, (7) Considering aspects and linguistic features of Arabic (such as: using the *balagh*, *nahw-sharf*, pragmatic, semiotic, semantic, and even "hermeneutic" approaches), (8) Distinguishing between the dimensions of *uṣūl*



(main) and *furū'* (branches), *wasilah* (means) and *ghāyah* (goal), *al-thawābit* and *al-mutaghayyirāt*, (9) Interconnecting the results of the interpretation of studies conducted with social science theories-humanities and science, in order to produce more comprehensive interpretation product conclusions so that they can reflect the integrative-interconnective scientific paradigm (*manhaj al-takāmul wal iẓdimāj*), and (10) Always be open to criticism and input, and not legitimize the results of the interpretation of the study carried out as the only truth (Hakim, 2023; Mustaqim, 2019).

### **Analysis of the Concept of *Wasilah* in Q.S Al-Māidah [5]: 35 and Q.S Al-Isrā' [17]: 57 Tafsir Maqāsidī Perspective**

In the Qur'an, the term *wasilah* is mentioned twice, first in Q.S Al-Māidah [5]: 35 commands to look for an intermediary who will bring you closer to Allah and strive for jihad in His path. Second in QS. Al-Isrā' [17]: 57 calls to seek intercession with God by seeking mercy and fearing his punishment.

Q.S Al-Māidah [5]: 35:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ  
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

“O ye who believe! Be mindful of your duty to Allah, and seek the way of approach unto Him, and strive in His way in order that ye may succeed”.

QS. Al-Isrā' [17]: 57:

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ  
رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا

“Those unto whom they cry seek the way of approach to their Lord, which of them shall be the nearest; they hope for His mercy and they fear His doom. Lo! the doom of thy Lord is to be shunned”.

The word *wabtaghū ilayhi al-wasilah*, in Q.S Al-Mā'idah [5]: 35, has the letter *wawu* at the beginning of the word, which has the meaning of *aṭaf*, namely connecting with the previous order of words, which has the same meaning in position as piety (Al-Fauzan, 2016). *Ittaqū Allah*, all of you fear Allah's law by obeying its commands and avoiding its prohibitions. This is followed by the word *wabtaghū*, which is a command sentence derived from a verb, a form of *fi'il māḍī*, meaning an inevitability (Al-Fauzan, 2016). Meanwhile, in the word *ilayhi* there is a *jar* letter that has a meaning (*iitiba' lil ghāyah*) where the end ends. Meanwhile, the word *al-wasilah* is a verb from the lafad *wasala ilaihi bikadzā-wasilu-wasilatan-fahua-yāsilon*, which means to approach and hope. The word *al-wasilah* is in the form of the masdar form of *wasala ilayhi, idha taqaraba ilayhi*, which means *taqārub* (to come closer); this meaning is strengthened by *jasaiduw fīy sabilih* (Munawwir, 1997). So, in this verse, the concept of *wasilah* is implied for believers to find a way (intermediary).

In the Arabic-Indonesian dictionary, it is explained that the word *wasilah* comes from the form of *masdar*, which has no age or time, *wasala-yasilu-wasilatan*, which means a medium for doing good deeds to get closer to others, a degree, a position next to the king, getting closer to Allah. This is confirmed by the words *la'allakum tuflihūn* (Munawwir, 1997).

Meanwhile, Lafad *yabtaghū* in QS. Al-Isrā' [17]: 57 is a verb that has an era or time to come and has the meaning of searching. *Ilā rabbihim al-wasilah*, in this pronunciation there is the word *ilā*, which means (*al-intiba' al-ghāyah makan*) at the end, *wasilah* to their God. So, in this verse, it is implied that people who are called or mentioned are also wary of God by proving whether they

are people who are close to Allah, hope for His mercy, and fear His punishment. This is as the word of Allah “*ayuhum aqrabu wayakbāfūna adhbābab* (Az-Zuhaili, 2001).

From the information above, the term *wasilah* is commonly used to mean *wasilah*, which means approaching. The word comes from three letters: *wawu*, *shin*, *lam*, which linguistically come from *wasala-yasilu-wasilatan fabua wāsilon*, meaning intermediate, degree, approaching. Meanwhile, the term commonly used is *wasilah*, which means intermediary. The word comes from three letters, namely *wawu*, *sin* and *lam*, which morphologically come from the words *wasala-yasilu-wasilatan*, meaning bond, relationship, and affinity. Not only that, but some give media meaning, approach, and hope. Each root meaning of *wasilah* is similar even though it is different in the *ẓābir* word.

If we look at the interpretation of the Qur'an regarding the term *wasilah*, Imam Nawāwī, in his *Tafsir al-Munir* explains that *wasilah* is Allah's command to the pious person to find a way (to get closer to Allah), namely a path that will result in obtaining rewards and love for Allah along with carrying out things that have been required.

## Aspects of *Maqāsidi Wasilah* in the Qur'an

One way to explore the *maqāsidi* or purpose of an interpretation is to do *badi' tauriyah*, that is, by guessing at the deep meaning of the verses of the Qur'an in the language book. *Maqāsidi* theory can be an analytical tool in answering contemporary phenomena and problems (Muzakky, 2021). The following are several *maqāsidi al-shari'a* verses that touch on *wasilah*. In the case of *wasilah*, the author found two *maqāsidi* (purpose) of *wasilah* based on Q.S Al-Māidah [5]: 35 and Q.S Al-Isrā' [17]: 57, namely *hiẓ al-dīn* and *hiẓ al-nafs*.

1) *Hifẓ al-dīn*: about his monotheism and fear of Allah

In QS. Al-Mā'idah [5]: 35 there is a *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* to protect religion, considering that the letter and verse explain that Allah commands believers to look for a path that brings them closer (*wasilah*) and strive for jihad in its path so that people who believe in getting good luck. This is normal for believers so that they can easily improve the quality of their faith; they are given facilities and introductory media to get closer to God without neglecting what Allah has prescribed through His messengers, such as carrying out prayers and other obligatory acts of worship, thus making them active. Moreover, persevere in worshipping God.

Allah's command to believers teaches mankind to always look for a way to get closer to Allah and to be serious about Allah, that Allah's command to look for *wasilah* is part of maintaining religion - in whatever form the *wasilah* is, the important thing is that the main goal is to Allah.

2). *Hifdẓu nafs*: fight in the way of Allah

In QS. Al-Mā'idah [5]: 35, apart from *maqāṣid hifẓ al-dīn*, there is also *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* for protecting oneself. In terms of protecting himself, a believer, after being ordered to look for a way to get closer to Allah (*wasilah*) he is ordered to strive for jihad in the way of Allah. When a Muslim should be careful; he must do everything in his power with his soul and property and fear Allah wherever he is, even if he is on a mountain road, and leave people behind from damage. He must also believe in the teachings received by the Messenger of Allah.

Meanwhile, in Q.S Al-Isrā' [17]: 57, the *maqāṣid hifẓ al-dīn* aspect is found as seen from the explanation of the verse, which explains that Allah commands to draw closer to Allah with people who are closer to Allah and guard against causes that are causing his wrath by always maintaining three qualities,

namely fear, hope and love for him. One approach to *tafsir maqāṣidi* is that *tafsir maqāṣidi* is used as a philosophy of interpretation; namely, *maqāṣidi* values here are used as philosophy and spirit in the dynamic process of interpreting the Qur'an. The assumption is that *maqāṣid* itself is always dynamic; the interpretation of *maqāṣid* changes along with the dynamics of human civilization. In this case, the *maqāṣid* referred to are universal moral ideal values which are the goal of the Qur'an to realize *maslahah* and reject *mafsadah*, such as human values (*insāniyah*, humanism), justice (*al-'adālah*, justice), equality (*al-musāwah*, equality), liberation (*al-taharrur*, liberation) and responsibility (*mas'uliyah*, responsibility) (Mustaqim, 2019).

For this reason, understanding the Qur'an is based on its linguistic structure, and the values mentioned above must also be considered (Mustaqim, 2019). After touching on the *maqāṣid shari'ah* of the verses that touch on *wasilah* in the Qur'an, the author can conclude that in these *wasilah* verses, there are several universal moral ideal values in the interpretation of *wasilah*, namely human values and responsibility values, namely: (1) Human values: respect and glorify fellow creatures of God. If seen from the perspective of human values, the researcher finds that in Allah's command to seek *wasilah*, the path or medium for it must be based on piety and always respecting those who have gone before him; (2) The value of responsibility: sincerity in decisions. If seen from the perspective of the value of responsibility, the researcher finds it in Allah's command to the believer after being ordered to look for a path that will bring him closer (*wasilah*). Allah commanded them to strive for jihad in his path.

## Conclusion

From the explanation above, finally, in this research, it can be concluded that the concept of *wasilah* in Q.S al-Māidah [5]: 35 and Q.S al-Isrā' [17]: 57, using *tafsir maqāsidī*, can be classified into two parts, namely aspects of *maqasid hijz al-dīn* and *hijz al-nafs*. Meanwhile, universal moral ideal values in interpreting *wasilah* are human and responsibility values.

With the results of this research, the practice of *wasilah*, which has become a culture, especially in Indonesia, can become a culture that is no longer opposed by those who disagree with it. What needs to be underlined is that *wasilah* is only an intermediary, not the primary goal. The main goal is still Allah, while *wasilah* is only an intermediary to get to Allah.

Lastly, this research only discusses *wasilah* within the scope of Indonesian culture and does not cover cultures outside Indonesia. For this reason, as a recommendation for further research, it can be planned to conduct research in contexts outside Indonesia, both by researchers and readers.

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