

International Journal of 'Umrānic Studies
Jurnal Antarabangsa Kajian 'Umrān

المجلة العالمية للدراسات العمرانية

Journal homepage: www.unissa.edu.bn/ijus

Vol. 8, Issue 2 | July 2025

Book Review:

Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah: A Civilizational Perspective

**Mazen Hashem, London & Washington: The International Institute
of Islamic Thought, 1445 AH / 2023 CE. xix + 219 pp.**

Anis Malik Thoha

*Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University
Negara Brunei Darussalam*

malik.thoha@unissa.edu.bn

In *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah: A Civilizational Perspective*, Hashem reimagines Islamic legal theory as a civilizational force, rooted in ethical purpose and responsive to contemporary global challenges. Drawing from classical jurists such as al-Shāṭibī and using the inductive method (*istiqrāʾ*), Hashem aligns the *maqāṣid* (objectives of Sharīʿah) with Ibn Khaldūn's notion of *'umrān* (civilizational vitality), proposing that Sharīʿah's role extends far beyond law into institution-building and social ethics (p. viii).

While earlier scholars like Ibn ʿĀshūr and Jasser Auda have revitalized *maqāṣid* discourse, Hashem advances the field by grounding these objectives in sociology and institutional theory. He critiques the conventional fixation on the five necessities (*ḍarūriyyāt*)—religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth—arguing for an expanded, contextualized model that reflects the complexity of contemporary Muslim societies (p. 43).

Hashem contends that each objective must function within institutional domains: religion within moral-spiritual systems; intellect within education and knowledge production; family within kinship and gender equity; wealth within economic justice; and governance as an integrative structure (p. 75). His framework situates *maqāṣid* at the intersection of individual meaning and social architecture.

Crucially, Hashem warns against reducing Sharīʿah to codified law, cautioning that “legalism is not inherently Islamic—it is a result of specific political formations. Sharīʿah's universality lies in its moral grammar, not in statute books” (p. 99). He urges Muslim reformers to move beyond text-centric approaches and re-engage with the moral, institutional, and civilizational missions of Islamic law.

One of the book's strongest contributions is its interdisciplinary methodology. Hashem advocates for an empirical and systemic approach—integrating sociology, political theory, and ethics—stating that it is no longer sufficient to recover classical doctrines; scholars must reconstruct *maqāṣid* through a contemporary episteme (p. 94). His argument resonates with Auda's systems theory but is distinctively anchored in *ʿumrān*.

In addressing contemporary relevance, Hashem connects *maqāṣid* to urgent issues: ecological degradation, authoritarian governance, consumerism, and the moral crises faced by Muslim youth. He argues that *maqāṣid* must evolve into what can be termed a “theory of transformation, not merely of textual interpretation” (p. 112).

Nevertheless, Hashem is transparent about the unresolved questions his framework raises: How can civilizational *maqāṣid* be translated into policy? What mechanisms ensure fidelity to these ethical ideals? Can a diverse Muslim world agree on shared priorities? He frames his proposal not as a final blueprint but as a point of departure for rethinking Shariʿah in our age (p. 123).

In sum, *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah: A Civilizational Perspective* is an ambitious and timely scholarly work. It bridges classical legal theory and modern social science, providing scholars, policymakers, and educators with a refreshed vision of Islamic law—one rooted in ethics, responsive to history, and committed to human flourishing.

Anis Malik Thoha
Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali, Brunei Darussalam

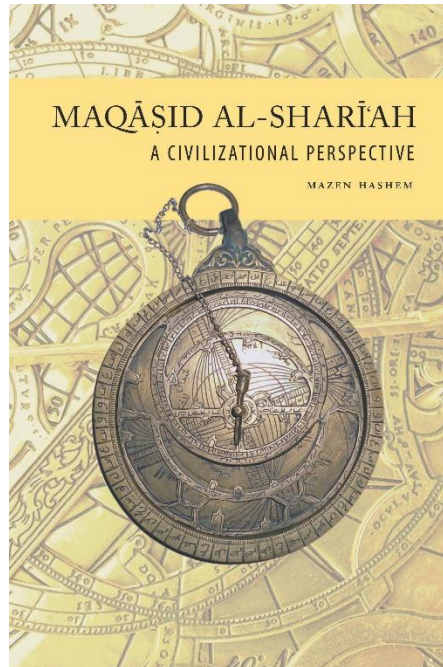


Figure: Front Page of the Book