



Ideology, *Maqāṣid*, and Politics: The Paradox of Al-Qaraḍāwī's Islamist Thought

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Abstract

The renewal of *maqāṣid* (Islamic legal objectives) emphasizes the substance and purpose of the law, in contrast to ideology, which compels adherence to non-negotiable commitments. This study investigates Yūsuf Al-Qaraḍāwī's reluctance to apply *maqāṣid*-based hermeneutics to *qaṭ'īyyat al-dilālah* (texts with definitive meaning), situating this reluctance within the ideological framework of Islamism to which he remained committed. Through a combined textual and contextual analysis of Al-Qaraḍāwī's writings and relevant secondary literature, the study demonstrates that his resistance to contextual reinterpretation—reinforced by the status of these texts as *qaṭ'īyyah al-wurūd*—derives from their construction as immutable foundations of orthodoxy that safeguard the unity of the ummah. This stance serves a dual ideological function: it preserves *qaṭ'īyyah* texts as fixed boundaries within an Islamic polity and mobilizes them as symbols of pan-Islamic solidarity. Although Al-Qaraḍāwī's vision of a supranational Islamic state evolved into a transnational authority network through the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS), the underlying ideological imperatives of unity and divine sovereignty remained intact. The article concludes that Al-Qaraḍāwī's thought exemplifies both the possibilities and limitations of *maqāṣid* reasoning when situated within the doctrinal commitments of Islamism. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how Islamic legal thought is transformed into an instrument of ideological legitimation within modern Islamic reformism.

Keywords

Al-Qaraḍāwī;
Ideology; *Maqāṣid*;
Politics; Islamist
Thought

Introduction

The discourse surrounding *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (Islamic legal objectives) has long been recognized as a dynamic framework that enables Islamic law to maintain its relevance across different temporal and spatial contexts. By prioritizing underlying purposes over literal interpretations, *maqāṣid*-based renewal necessitates flexibility, inclusivity, and openness to dialogue.¹ However, intellectual renewal within Islamic thought seldom occurs in isolation. The complexity of ideas derived from thought is closely related to ideology.² This tension is particularly pronounced in the case of Yūsuf

¹ Ahmad Imam Mawardi, *Fiqh Minoritas: Fiqh al-Aqalliyāt dan Evolusi Maqāshid al-Syari'ah dari Konsep ke Pendekatan* (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2010), 280.

² Slavoj Žižek, "Introduction: The Spectre of Ideology," in *Mapping Ideology*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 1994), 9.



Al-Qaraḍāwī, a prominent Muslim scholar whose intellectual identity is situated at the nexus of reformism and Islamism.³ The dialectic between reformist adaptability and ideological rigidity is thus exemplified in Al-Qaraḍāwī's work, where *maqāṣid*-oriented reformism intersects with the ideological imperatives of Islamism.

Al-Qaraḍāwī actively advocates for interpretations grounded in *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, emphasizing the substantive objectives and higher purposes of Islamic law,⁴ particularly in his writings concerning Muslim minorities and contemporary governance. Simultaneously, as a longstanding intellectual leader of *Al-Ikhwān Al-Muslimīn* (the Muslim Brotherhood, hereinafter IM),⁵ he consistently regards certain legal principles—such as the prohibition of *ribā*, Qur'anic and prophetic injunctions on *ḥudūd* punishments, and norms of gender hierarchy—as fixed identity markers that must remain impervious to contextual reinterpretation. For example, in his discussions on *ribā*, he explicitly classifies the Qur'anic verses addressing usury as *qaṭ'īyy al-wurūd wa al-dalālah*, asserting that modern bank interest falls within their purview.⁶ In the domain of criminal law, he advocates for limiting the practical application of *ḥudūd* punishments while maintaining the definitiveness of their textual foundations.⁷ Regarding women's political participation, he supports an expanded public role for women, albeit conditioned by the preservation of a patriarchal family structure and state-centered Islamist politics.⁸

This pattern of selective flexibility prompts a critical inquiry: how does Al-Qaraḍāwī reconcile his *maqāṣid*-based reformist hermeneutics with his persistent ideological commitments? Although he explicitly endorses the classical *uṣūlī* distinction between *qaṭ'ī* and *ẓannī* texts and, consistent with the majority of jurists, restricts extensive contextual reinterpretation to the latter, his stance on *qaṭ'īyyah al-dilālah* cannot be attributed solely to methodological conservatism. For instance, in his discussions of *ribā*, Al-Qaraḍāwī categorizes Qur'anic prohibitions as *qaṭ'īyy al-wurūd wa al-dilālah*, portraying them as immutable boundaries that delineate Islamic morality from capitalist materialism.⁹ This characterization corresponds with his broader ideological agenda within the Muslim Brotherhood, wherein the defense of fixed legal principles functions to safeguard Islamic authenticity and the unity of the ummah against secular and Western paradigms.¹⁰

³ David L. Johnston, "Yusuf Al-Qaradawi's Purposive Fiqh: Promoting or Demoting the Future Role of the 'Ulamā,'" in *Maqasid al-Shari'a and Contemporary Reformist Muslim Thought: An Examination*, ed. Adis Duderija (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 39–40.

⁴ Akhmad Sulaiman, *Ijtihad Maqasidi dan Politik Pengetahuan: Fatwa Yusuf al-Qaradawi Vs Ali Jum'ah dalam Gejolak Revolusi Mesir* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Gading, 2024), 7.

⁵ Ane Balén Soage, "Yusuf Al-Qaradawi: The Muslim Brothers' Favorite Ideological Guide," in *The Muslim Brotherhood: The Organization and Policies of Global Movement*, ed. Barry Rubin (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

⁶ Yuli Utami, "Banking Interest in the Contemporary Jurist's Perspective: A Yusuf Al-Qaradawi's Economics Thought," *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 2 (2014): 126–48, <https://doi.org/10.18196/aijis.2014.0034.126-148>.

⁷ Gaber Mohamed, "Sheikh Al-Qaraḍāwī's Independent Reasoning (Ijtihād) in Reformulating Contemporary Islamic Criminal Jurisprudence within the Framework of the Modern State," *Journal of College of Sharia and Islamic Studies* 43, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.29117/jcsis.2025.0408>.

⁸ Sulastrī Caniāgo et al., "Gender Integration in Islamic Politics: Fiqh Siyasah on Women's Political Rights since Classical to Contemporary Interpretations," *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 3, no. 2 (2024): 411–31, <https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v3i2.9962>.

⁹ Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam (Al-Halal Wal Haram Fil Islam)* (American Trust Publications, 1999).

¹⁰ David Warren, "The 'Ulamā' and the Arab Uprisings 2011-13: Considering Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, the 'Global Mufti,' between the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic Legal Tradition, and Qatari Foreign Policy," *New Middle Eastern Studies* 4 (2014): 1–33, <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.4789.6562>.

Literature Review

Global scholarly attention to Al-Qaraḍāwī's thought is extensive. Khalaf¹¹ and Auda¹² have provided comprehensive overviews of his life and his contributions to *maqāṣid* studies. Mawardi,¹³ Aḥmad and 'Abd al-Ḥaqq,¹⁴ Balahñish,¹⁵ and Sulaiman¹⁶ have concentrated on the role of *maqāṣid* in his fatwas. In contrast, Opwis, Ibrāhīm,¹⁷ Shāwīsh, and Shaham have highlighted methodological aspects of his thought. For instance, Opwis¹⁸ and Ibrāhīm examined how Al-Qaraḍāwī and other reformers restructured the conceptualization of *maqāṣid* as an epistemological response to modernity, while Shāwīsh¹⁹ and Shaham²⁰ explored its methodological applications. This study aligns with the latter strand of scholarship focusing on methodology but aims to advance the discourse by offering a critical assessment of the limitations inherent in Al-Qaraḍāwī's renewal. The central research questions are twofold: first, how does Al-Qaraḍāwī conceptualize the intellectual relationship between *maqāṣid*-based renewal and the ideology of Islamism in his interpretation of *qaṭ'īyyah al-dilālah* texts? Second, what ideological narrative does Al-Qaraḍāwī construct regarding these texts?

This article addresses these questions by employing Slavoj Žižek's theory of ideology as its primary analytical framework. Žižek conceptualizes ideology through three dimensions: the complexity of ideas, externality, and the spontaneity of action. Within this framework, Al-Qaraḍāwī's renewal project is analyzed in relation to the Islamist ideology he espouses. His social praxis—including his roles as jurist (*muftī*), Islamist activist, ideological guide, and leader of global organizations—is understood as the external manifestation of his ideological commitments.²¹ Furthermore, his uncompromising stance toward alternative interpretations is interpreted as a spontaneous expression of his ideological alignment.

This study is predicated on the assumption that Al-Qaraḍāwī's *maqāṣid*-based approach to renewal must be understood in relation to both his ideological affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood (IM) and the broader, non-Islamist developments in *maqāṣid* thought. While reformers such as Ibn 'Āshūr, Aḥmad Al-Raysūnī, and Jasser Auda have explored the potential of *maqāṣid* to recalibrate positive law—occasionally by expanding the hermeneutical scope surrounding texts traditionally regarded as *qaṭ'īyyat al-dilālah*—Al-Qaraḍāwī's project remains

¹¹ Muḥsin 'Alāwī Khalaf, "Yūsuf Al-Qaraḍāwī Wa Ri'ayātuḥu Li al-Maqāṣid al-Syar'īyyah," *Majallah Jāmi'at al-Ambār Li al-'Ulūm al-Islāmiyyah* 12, no. 1 (2011): 2078–112.

¹² Jasser Auda, *Multaqā' Al-Imām al-Qaraḍāwī Ma'a al-Aṣḥāb Wa al-Talāmīz: Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah Ind al-Syaikh al-Qaraḍāwī* (Funduq Rīdazkālirtūn, 2007).

¹³ Ahmad Imam Mawardi, *Fiqh Minoritas: Fiqh al-Aqalliyāt Dan Evolusi Maqāshid al-Syarā'ah Dari Konsep Ke Pendekatan* (LKIS, 2010).

¹⁴ Uthmānī Aḥmad and al-Miṣrī 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, "Al-Manhaj al-Maqāṣidī Ind al-Shaikh al-Qaraḍāwī Min Khilāl Fatāwāḥ" (MA Thesis, University of Ahmed Diroyah, 2019).

¹⁵ Maḥfūz Balahñisy, "Murā'at al-Maqāṣid Fī al-Ijtihād al-Mu'Āṣir: Ijtihādāt al-Majlis al-Ūrabā Li al- Iftā' Wa al-Buḥūth Ānmūdhajān" (M.A Thesis, University of Batna, 2015).

¹⁶ Akhmad Sulaiman, "Ijtihad Maqasidi dan Politik Pengetahuan: Pergumulan Diskursus Keagamaan Revolusi Mesir Yusuf al-Qaradawi dan 'Ali Jum'ah" (Disertation, Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2022), <https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/53671/>.

¹⁷ Yasir S. Ibrahim, "An Examination of the Modern Discourse on Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'a," *Journal of the Middle East & Africa* 5, no. 1 (2014): 39–60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21520844.2014.882676>.

¹⁸ Felicitas Opwis, "New Trends in Islamic Legal Theory: Maqāṣid al-Sharī'a as a New Source of Law?," *Die Welt Des Islams* 57, no. 1 (2017): 7–32.

¹⁹ Muḥammad Shāwīsh, *Al-Manhaj al-Maqāṣidī 'ind al-Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī* (Dār al-Fikr, 2009).

²⁰ Ron Shaham, *Rethinking Islamic Legal Modernism: The Teaching of Yusuf al-Qaradawi* (Brill, 2018).

²¹ Slavoj Žizek, "Introduction: The Spectre of Ideology," in *Mapping Ideology*, ed. Slavoj Žizek (Verso, 1994), 9.



more circumspect at this juncture.²² This study posits that the IM ideological framework operates as a constraining structure, limiting the extent to which Al-Qaraḍāwī can apply contextual, purpose-oriented interpretation to the domain of *qaṭʿiyyah al-dilālah*. Instead, it encourages him to reinterpret these texts as inviolable pillars of communal identity and cohesion, as well as foundational bases for the public enforcement of Islamic law. Consequently, Al-Qaraḍāwī’s work simultaneously demonstrates the productive potential of *maqāṣid* for Islamic legal renewal and delineates the boundaries that arise when *maqāṣid* is integrated within an Islamist political-ideological framework.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology, primarily utilizing library-based analysis. The principal corpus consists of the works of Al-Qaraḍāwī, encompassing *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *uṣūl al-fiqh* (Islamic legal theory), Qur’anic exegesis, hadith interpretation, and political thought. These primary texts are analyzed not merely as isolated doctrinal statements but as discursive expressions that elucidate the development of his intellectual and ideological project (see Table 1). Secondary sources—including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic monographs, and biographical studies—are employed to situate Al-Qaraḍāwī’s writings within the broader discourse of Islamism and contemporary Islamic reform.

Table 1. Primary Works of Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī Analyzed in This Study.

No.	Al-Qaraḍāwī’s Work	Discipline/Focus	Year
1	<i>Al-Marjīʿiyyah al-ʿUlyā Fī al-Islām Li al-Qurʾān Wa al-Sunnah</i>	Qur’an–Sunnah authority, epistemology of revelation, hermeneutical limits	1992
2	<i>Al-Qaraḍāwī, al-Siyāsah al-Sharʿiyyah fī Dauʾ Nuṣūṣ al-Sharīʿah wa Maqāṣidihā</i>	Islamic political theory, <i>siyāsah sharʿiyyah</i> , <i>maqāṣid</i> -oriented governance	2000–2001
3	<i>Dirāsah Fī Fiqh Al-Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah: Bayn al-Maqāṣid al-Kulliyyah Wa al-Nuṣūṣ al-Juzʿiyyah</i>	<i>Maqāṣid</i> theory, <i>uṣūl al-fiqh</i> , method of reconciling universals & particulars	2006
4	<i>Min Fiqh Al-Daulah Fī al-Islām</i>	Islamic state, democracy, pluralism, civil rights, minorities & women	1997
5	<i>Naḥnu wa al-Gharb: Asʿilah Shāikhah Wa Ajwibah Ḥāsimah</i>	Muslim–West relations, identity, coexistence, <i>daʿwah</i> & civilizational dialogue	2006

The analysis unfolds across two interconnected levels. The first level is textual-hermeneutical, which involves tracing the internal logic of Al-Qaraḍāwī’s *maqāṣid*-based reasoning and elucidating how *maqāṣid* serves as a contextualizing instrument in the interpretation of *ẓannī* texts, while its application becomes limited when addressing *qaṭʿiyyāt al-dilālah*. The second level is ideological-critical, situating his hermeneutics within the broader ideological framework of Islamism. At this juncture, *maqāṣid* is considered not solely as a juristic methodology but as a discursive strategy that

²² M. Nasikhul Umam Al-Mabruri et al., “Children Born out of Wedlock Inherit the Lineage of Their Biological Father: Auda’s *Maqāṣid* asy-Syarīʿa Perspective,” *Asy-Syarīʿah: Jurnal Ilmu Syarīʿah dan Hukum* 55, no. 2 (2021): 415–38, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajish.v55i2.415>.

functions within and perpetuates the ideological commitments of the Muslim Brotherhood.

This study employs Slavoj Žižek's theory of ideology as its theoretical framework to interpret the dialectic under examination. Žižek conceptualizes ideology through three analytical dimensions: (1) the complexity of ideas, wherein ideology sustains contradictions that allow reformist and orthodox tendencies to coexist; (2) externalization, whereby ideology is manifested through institutions and practices, as exemplified by Al-Qaraḍāwī's roles as *mufīī*, activist, and leader of transnational Islamic organizations; and (3) spontaneity of action, which denotes the unreflective naturalization of ideology in actions and judgments, illustrated by his categorical rejection of alternative interpretations. Utilizing this framework, the study integrates textual analysis and ideological critique to reveal how *maqāṣid*-based hermeneutics simultaneously facilitates reform and perpetuates ideological closure within Al-Qaraḍāwī's thought.

Result

Al-Qaraḍāwī's Socio-Political Sphere: Contextualizing Egypt and Qatar

Yūsuf ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Alī Al-Qaraḍāwī was born on 9 September 1926 in the village of Ṣaft Turāb, located in Egypt's Nile Delta, into a poor peasant family. Orphaned at an early age, he was raised by relatives who encouraged his pursuit of religious education.²³ Having memorized the Qur'an during childhood, he subsequently studied at Al-Azhar's preparatory and secondary institutes. He later graduated from Al-Azhar University with degrees in Al-Qur'an and Sunah studies and completed a doctorate with dissertation on *al-Zakāh wa Asrāruhā fī Ḥall al-Masyākil al-Ijtimā'iyah*.²⁴ Al-Qaraḍāwī matured during the period of British protectorate rule in Egypt (1882–1956) and the republican era under President Gamal 'Abd al-Nāṣir (1956–1970). At the age of sixteen, he joined Al-Ikhwān Al-Muslimīn (the Muslim Brotherhood, IM), to which he remained ideologically and reformatively committed throughout his life. In 1949, shortly after the assassination of Ḥasan al-Bannā, the founder of IM, Al-Qaraḍāwī was briefly imprisoned. In the early 1950s, he participated in student demonstrations opposing British rule.²⁵ Following the 1952 coup, he was detained multiple times under Nāṣir's Revolutionary Command Council, including in 1954, before his release in the mid-1950s. These experiences significantly influenced his integration of religious scholarship with Islamist activism.²⁶

Following his release, Al-Qaraḍāwī intentionally opted to pursue an academic career rather than reengage directly in political activities with the Muslim Brotherhood (IM). His activism within the movement was effectively suspended during the latter half of the 1950s, primarily due to state-imposed restrictions that prohibited him from teaching and lecturing publicly. In 1957, he enrolled in the Department of Arabic Language and Literature at the Arab League's Institute of Higher Studies, and in 1958, he undertook a master's degree in Qur'anic and Hadith studies at Al-Azhar University.²⁷ These experiences demonstrate how his early career as a young cleric in Egypt was significantly hindered by state repression targeting individuals affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. Consequently, the Egyptian political context shaped Al-Qaraḍāwī as an oppositional

²³ "Yusuf Al-Qaradawi," Obo, accessed November 7, 2025.

²⁴ Akhmad Sulaiman, *Ijtihad Maqasidi dan Politik Pengetahuan: Fatwa Yusuf al-Qaradawi Vs Ali Jum'ah dalam Gejolak Revolusi Mesir* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Gading, 2024), 114–15.

²⁵ "Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, an Influential Islamic Scholar of the Present Age," IslamOnline, September 27, 2022.

²⁶ Bettina Gräf, "Yusuf Al-Qaradawi," in *Key Islamic Political Thinkers*, ed. John L. Esposito and Emad El-Din Shahin (Oxford University, 2018), 178–79.

²⁷ "Al-Sīrah al-Dhātīyah,"; Gräf, "Yusuf Al-Qaradawi," ed. Esposito and Shahin (Oxford University, 2018), 179.



intellectual whose reformist aspirations, particularly through the framework of *maqāṣid*, were constrained within a repressive domestic environment.²⁸

In stark contrast, Qatar provided a considerably more favorable social environment for both Al-Qaraḍāwī and the Muslim Brotherhood (IM). Although Qatar remained under British protection until 1968,²⁹ the country welcomed and even appointed individuals affiliated with the IM to prominent educational positions. Prior to Al-Qaraḍāwī's arrival, key members of the IM had already established their presence in Qatar: Abdul-Badī Ṣaqr was appointed Director of Education in 1954; Aḥmad al-ʿAssāl joined as a teacher and lecturer in 1960; and Abdel-Muʿāz al-Sattār initially served as a school inspector before becoming Head of Islamic Sciences at the Ministry of Education.³⁰ In 1961, Al-Qaraḍāwī was invited to Qatar following a request from ʿAbdullāh ibn Tukrī al-Subaī, then Head of Islamic Sciences at the Ministry of Education, who petitioned Al-Azhar to send qualified religious instructors.³¹

In Qatar, Al-Qaraḍāwī swiftly rose to positions of significant influence. Early in his tenure, he founded religious secondary schools³² and served as tutor to the crown prince, Shaikh Khalīfah ibn Ḥamad Āl Thānī, who subsequently ruled as Amir from 1972 to 1995.³³ By 1973, Al-Qaraḍāwī had been appointed Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies at Qatar University.³⁴ His influence extended beyond academia; beginning in 1970, he appeared weekly on Qatar's national television, and his Friday sermons at the ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb Mosque in Doha were broadcast to the public. With the expansion of broadcasting networks in 1993, his reach extended well beyond the Gulf region. His prominence culminated in 1996 with the launch of the program *al-Sharīʿah wa al-Ḥayāh* (Sharia and Life) on Al Jazeera, which established him as one of the most visible and influential Muslim scholars throughout the Arab world.³⁵ Over time, however, the program's influence diminished, partly due to his explicit alignment with the Muslim Brotherhood and Qatar's foreign policy objectives.³⁶

Al-Qaraḍāwī's migration from Egypt to Qatar highlights the critical role of "social space" in shaping a scholar's intellectual and political trajectories. Following multiple detentions under President Gamal ʿAbd al-Nāṣir's regime, he relocated to Qatar in 1961 at the invitation of Al-Azhar authorities to oversee religious education.³⁷ While political repression in Egypt constrained his academic and reformist initiatives, Qatar provided a broader platform that enabled him to develop a dual identity: as a reformist advocating for renewal grounded in *maqāṣid* (objectives of

²⁸ Professor Yousef Al-Qaradawi – *King Faisal Prize*, n.d., accessed November 7, 2025.

²⁹ Cathlessn Stasz et al., *Post-Secondary Education in Qatar: Employer Demand, Student Choice, and Options for Policy* (RAND Corporation, 2007), 8.

³⁰ David B. Roberts, "Qatar and the Brotherhood," *Survival* 56, no. 4 (2014): 23–32.

³¹ David B. Roberts, "Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood: Pragmatism or Preference?," *Middle East Policy* 21, no. 3 (2014): 84–94.

³² "Al-Sīrah al-Dhātīyah."

³³ Gräf, "Yusuf Al-Qaradawi," ed. Esposito and Shahin (Oxford University, 2018), 180.

³⁴ "Al-Sīrah al-Dhātīyah."

³⁵ Gräf, "Yusuf Al-Qaradawi," ed. Esposito and Shahin (Oxford University, 2018), 185–87.

³⁶ David H. Warren and Christine Gilmore, "One Nation under God? Yusuf al-Qaradawi's Changing Fiqh of Citizenship in the Light of the Islamic Legal Tradition," *Contemporary Islam* 8, no. 3 (2014): 217–37, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-013-0277-4>.

³⁷ Usaama al-Azami, "Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, the Muslim Scholar Who Influenced Millions," Al Jazeera, accessed November 6, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/9/27/yusuf-al-qaradawi-the-muslim-scholar-who-influenced-millions>; *Islam and Islamism Today: The Case of Yusuf Al-Qaradawi - Foreign Policy Research Institute*, E-Notes, n.d., accessed November 6, 2025, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2010/01/islam-and-islamism-today-the-case-of-yusuf-al-qaradawi/>; Moustafa Elqabbany, *Yusuf Al-Qaradawi - The Muslim 500*, May 27, 2018.

Islamic law) and as an ideologue promoting the Muslim Brotherhood's vision through education, state institutions, and mass media.³⁸ Significantly, Qatar afforded him a global stage that earlier Muslim Brotherhood leaders—such as Ḥasan al-Bannā and Sayyid Quṭb—had not accessed. According to Al Jazeera and ResetDOC, whereas al-Bannā and Quṭb remained confined to Egypt's political sphere, Al-Qaraḍāwī expanded his influence internationally via Qatar's media and educational infrastructures.³⁹ His long-running Al Jazeera program, “al-Sharī‘ah wa al-Ḥayāh” (The Sharia and Life), disseminated his ideas throughout the Muslim world, establishing him as one of the most prominent Muslim public intellectuals. Furthermore, the establishment of the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS) in 2004 institutionalized his influence on a transnational scale. Thus, Qatar functioned not merely as a place of refuge but as a transformative environment that enabled Al-Qaraḍāwī to integrate his reformist and ideological roles and to project Islamism within a truly global framework.

Al-Qaraḍāwī's Maqāṣidī Interpretation: A Limited Renewal

The concept of *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*—literally denoting the higher objectives or purposes of Islamic law—originated as a juristic endeavor to elucidate the divine wisdom (*ḥikmah*) and public welfare (*maṣlahah*) underpinning legal rulings.⁴⁰ Foundational contributions by classical theorists such as Al-Juwaynī, Al-Ghazālī, and Al-Shāṭibī identified five essential objectives (*al-ḍarūriyyāt al-khams*) that the Sharī‘ah aims to preserve: religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. In the modern era, scholars including Ibn ‘Ashūr and ‘Allāl al-Fāsī expanded this framework to encompass governance, justice, and human rights, thereby transforming *maqāṣid* into a tool for contextual legal reform.⁴¹ Within this intellectual tradition, Al-Qaraḍāwī emerges as a pivotal figure whose juristic reasoning—articulated in works such as *al-Ḥalāl wa-l-Ḥarām fī al-Islām*, *Fiqh al-Zakāh*, and *Dirāsah fī Fiqh Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah* (2005)—consistently emphasizes that the Sharia is animated by overarching purposes aimed at securing human welfare and moral equilibrium. For Al-Qaraḍāwī, *maqāṣid*-based renewal (*al-tajdīd al-maqāṣidī*) constitutes a reformist methodology intended to revitalize Islamic law by recovering its higher objectives (*al-maṣāliḥ al-‘ulyā*)⁴²—notably justice, mercy, public interest, and human dignity—while simultaneously upholding the normative authority of revelation.⁴³ Consequently, this approach represents both a hermeneutical and civilizational project: interpretive in method yet preservative in intent.

In *Dirāsah fī Fiqh Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah*, Al-Qaraḍāwī articulates five fundamental principles that shape this reformist hermeneutic approach.⁴⁴ First, the mujtahid must ascertain the objectives of the law prior to issuing any legal ruling. Second, each text should be interpreted in consideration of its *asbāb al-nuzūl* (circumstances of revelation) and the socio-historical context in which it was

³⁸ “Religion, Politics and the Challenge of Reforms: The Case of Yusuf al-Qaradawi,” *Reset DOC*, n.d., accessed November 6, 2025.

³⁹ “Religion, Politics and the Challenge of Reforms”; al-Azami, “Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, the Muslim Scholar Who Influenced Millions.”

⁴⁰ For example, *al-Ḥalāl wa al-Ḥarām fī al-Islām* (1960), *Fiqh al-Zakāh* (1973), *Taisīr al-Fiqh* (1993), and *Fī Fiqh al-Aqalliyyāt* (2001).

⁴¹ Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Al-Ijtihād Fīl-Sharī‘ah al-Islāmiyyah Ma‘a Nazariyyāt Taḥlīliyyah Fīl-Ijtihād al-Mu‘āṣir* (Dār al-Qalam, 1996), 43.

⁴² For example, *al-Ijtihād fī al-Sharī‘ah al-Islāmiyyah* (1996), *Naḥw Uṣūl Fiqh Muyassir* (1996), and *Dirāsah fī Fiqh Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah* (2005).

⁴³ See *Kayfa Nata‘amal ma‘a al-Qur‘ān al-‘Azīm* (1997).

⁴⁴ Auda, *Multaqā Al-Imām al-Qaraḍāwī Ma‘a al-Aṣḥāb Wa al-Talāmīz: Maqāṣid al-Syarī‘ah Ind al-Syaikh al-Qaraḍāwī*, 29–32.



revealed. Third, a clear distinction must be maintained between immutable ends (*ghāyāt*) and contingent means (*wasā'īl*). Fourth, interpretive equilibrium should be achieved between Islam's enduring constants (*thawābit*) and its variable elements (*mutaghayyirāt*). Fifth, the hermeneutical approach should differ between acts of worship (*'ibādāt*), which require stability and literal adherence, and social transactions (*mu'āmalāt*), where contextual adaptation is both feasible and desirable.⁴⁵ Collectively, these principles establish a methodology aimed at preserving the sanctity of the sacred text while allowing its moral objectives to address contemporary realities.

A closer examination of Al-Qaraḍāwī's interpretive framework reveals its significant continuity with the classical principles of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. Consistent with the majority of jurists (*jumhūr al-'ulamā'*), he restricts *ijtihād* and interpretive reasoning to texts characterized by *ẓanniyyat al-dilālah*—those whose semantic content allows for multiple interpretations—while explicitly excluding *qaṭ'īyyat al-dilālah* from reinterpretation. In this regard, his methodology does not represent a fundamental departure from the traditional epistemological limits of interpretation; rather, it constitutes a measured extension of these boundaries. Consequently, his contextual hermeneutics functions within the accepted parameters of orthodoxy, reaffirming that renewal (*tajdīd*) must occur without violating the domain of definitiveness (*qaṭ'īyyah*).

This methodological conservatism assumes additional significance when examined within the context of Al-Qaraḍāwī's ideological environment. His enduring association with the Muslim Brotherhood (IM) imparts an ideological dimension to his *maqāṣidī* reasoning—one that emphasizes communal solidarity, moral uniformity, and the public enforcement of Sharia. Within this framework, *qaṭ'īyyah al-dilālah* texts function not merely as immutable legal principles but as markers of identity, symbolizing collective cohesion and delineating moral boundaries that protect the Muslim polity. Therefore, his reluctance to apply contextual hermeneutics to this domain cannot be attributed solely to juridical prudence; rather, it reflects a deeper ideological commitment to preserving the textual foundations that underpin the IM's conception of Islamic authenticity and social order.

The interaction between *maqāṣidī* reform and ideological constraints engenders a fundamental paradox within Al-Qaraḍāwī's thought. Although his writings advocate for the revitalization of *ijtihād* through purposive reasoning, his interpretive methodology ultimately perpetuates the very textual rigidity that *maqāṣid* was intended to overcome. This tension aligns with broader critiques of *maqāṣid*-based interpretation in contemporary Islamic legal theory. Scholarly analyses of Al-Qaraḍāwī's application of *maqāṣid* in areas such as *fiqh al-aqalliyāt* and democratic governance frequently emphasize its adaptive and facilitative aspects; however, they also recognize that this flexibility is constrained by his adherence to classical *uṣūl* frameworks and inviolable textual boundaries.⁴⁶ Concurrently, critical discussions of *maqāṣid*-based reform more broadly—including those edited by Duderija, decolonial critiques of *maqāṣid*'s liberal-human-rights orientation, and recent efforts to integrate *maqāṣid* within comprehensive normative legal frameworks—highlight how appeals to higher objectives can simultaneously challenge and reinforce existing hierarchies of authority.⁴⁷ This study departs from this paradox by aiming to elucidate how Al-Qaraḍāwī's

⁴⁵ Yūsuf Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Dirāsah Fī Fiqh Al-Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah: Bain al-Maqāṣid al-Kullīyyah Wa al-Nuṣuṣ al-Juz'īyyah* (Dār al-Syurūq, 2006), 155–215.

⁴⁶ Amir Sahidin and Muhammad Alif Rahmadi Muhammad Alif Rahmadi, "The Implementation of Maqasid Al-Shariah in Shaykh Yusuf Al-Qardhawi's Fiqh al-Aqalliyat," *Jurnal Hukum Islam* 19, no. 2 (2021): 295–312, <https://doi.org/10.28918/jhi.v19i2.4724>.

⁴⁷ Duderija, *Maqasid Al-Shari'a and Contemporary Reformist Muslim Thought*.

synthesis of *maqāṣid* and Islamist ideology both expands and restricts the potential for Islamic legal renewal.

Discussion

The Anomaly of Maqāṣid-Based Interpretation

In the classical discourse concerning certainty (*qaṭʿ*) and conjecture (*ẓann*), any revealed text can be assessed along two dimensions: its historical authenticity (*wurūd*) and its semantic implication (*dilālah*). A text that is certain in its transmission (*qaṭʿiyyat al-wurūd*) is one whose attribution to the Prophet or the Qurʾanic corpus is indisputable—such as all Qurʾanic verses and *ḥadīth mutawātir*—whereas texts transmitted through *āḥād* or *mashhūr* reports are classified as *ẓanniyyat al-wurūd*.⁴⁸ Although this distinction holds significance for questions of epistemic authority, it is not the primary focus of the present study. More pertinent to Al-Qaraḍāwī's hermeneutics is the second dimension: the degree of definitiveness or openness in a text's semantic indication, namely, *qaṭʿiyyat al-dilālah* versus *ẓanniyyat al-dilālah*.⁴⁹

Al-Qaraḍāwī adheres to the predominant *uṣūlī* perspective that a text is considered *qaṭʿī al-dilālah* when its linguistic form reasonably supports only a single, definitive meaning and a singular legal ruling—referred to in classical *uṣūl al-fiqh* as *al-muḥkam*.⁵⁰ In such instances, he maintains that the apparent meaning must be implemented; alternative interpretations are neither pursued nor entertained, and the resulting ruling is regarded as fixed and binding. Conversely, a text is classified as *ẓannī al-dilālah* when its wording does not produce an exclusively definitive meaning but rather indicates probabilistically one among several plausible interpretations. For Al-Qaraḍāwī, these *ẓannī* texts represent the appropriate domain of *ijtihād*: they may be reinterpreted, specified, restricted, or re-evaluated in light of contextual factors, linguistic evidence, and the overarching objectives of the Sharia.⁵¹

At the semantic level, Al-Qaraḍāwī applies his *maqāṣid*-based methodology with particular rigor. In areas where the relevant texts are characterized by *ẓanniyyat al-dilālah*—especially in *muʿāmalāt*, family law, and the jurisprudence concerning Muslim minorities—he permits significant interpretive flexibility. He invokes principles of public welfare, human dignity, and social justice to prioritize certain interpretations over others, favor more facilitative rulings (*taysīr*), and justify legal adaptations responsive to contemporary social and political contexts. This dynamic application of *maqāṣid* is exemplified in his treatment of financial transactions, citizenship, and participation in non-Muslim political systems, wherein he regards the foundational textual evidence as subject to contextual negotiation, provided that the essential objectives of Sharia are maintained.

In contrast, when Al-Qaraḍāwī classifies a text as *qaṭʿī al-dilālah*—for example, in matters such as fixed inheritance shares, specific *ḥudūd* penalties, or categorical prohibitions—his flexibility grounded in *maqāṣid* diminishes. In these instances, he tends to reposition *maqāṣid* from a tool of interpretive transformation to one of confirmation and reinforcement: the definitive text is regarded as an immutable constant (*thābit*), serving as a boundary marker of communal identity and a foundation of the public moral order. Rather than reinterpreting such texts in response to

⁴⁸ ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Khalāf, *ʿIlm Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (Al-Haramain, n.d.), 42.

⁴⁹ Zubair Rahman Saende et al., “Ijtihad Ulama dalam Merumuskan Metode Memahami Maqāṣid Al-Syarīʿah,” *Indonesian Journal of Shariah and Justice* 3, no. 1 (2023): 73–94, <https://doi.org/10.46339/ijjs.v3i1.43>.

⁵⁰ ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Khalāf, *ʿIlm Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, 168.

⁵¹ Al-Qaraḍāwī Yūsuf, *Al-Siyāṣah al-Syarʿiyyah Fī Ḍauʿ Nuṣūṣ al-Syarīʿah Wa Maqāṣidihā* (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1998), 74.



changing circumstances, he frames the circumstances themselves as requiring adjustment to the demands of the definitive text. Consequently, *qaṭʿiyyat al-dilālah* functions for Al-Qaraḍāwī as a hermeneutical boundary beyond which contextual *ijtihād* may not extend, even though *maqāṣid* remains central within the interpretive domain associated with *ẓanniyyat al-dilālah*.

This section thus explores not only how Al-Qaraḍāwī conceptually differentiates between *qaṭʿi* and *ẓanni* texts at the level of *dilālah* but also how he implements this distinction in practice—employing his *maqāṣid*-based hermeneutics assertively where implications are conjectural, and suspending it where implications are considered definitive. Prior to examining specific examples of Al-Qaraḍāwī’s interpretive reasoning, it is essential to elucidate the concept of *ẓanniyyat al-dilālah* within his *maqāṣidī* framework. Al-Qaraḍāwī adheres to the classical *uṣūl al-fiqh* distinction between *qaṭʿiyyat al-dilālah*—texts whose wording permits only a single definitive meaning—and *ẓanniyyat al-dilālah*, which refers to texts that accommodate multiple plausible interpretations due to linguistic ambiguity, contextual flexibility, or competing juristic analogies. Throughout his writings, Al-Qaraḍāwī consistently emphasizes that *ijtihād* is valid exclusively within the latter category, where interpretation is informed by the objectives (*maqāṣid*) and higher wisdom (*ḥikmah*) of revelation.

Several instances exemplify this category within his thought. Among Qur’anic verses, he frequently references those pertaining to economic and social conduct—such as the permissibility of trade and the prohibition of usury (Q. 2:275), the directive to “consult them in affairs” (Q. 3:159), and the exhortation to “prepare whatever force you can” (Q. 8:60). He contends that each of these verses conveys a clear moral purpose while allowing for contextual specification in their practical application. Similarly, within the corpus of Prophetic traditions, Al-Qaraḍāwī classifies reports related to governance, social customs (*urf*), and methods of promoting communal welfare as *ẓanni al-dilālah*. He argues that their wording and application were frequently influenced by specific circumstances, rendering them amenable to reinterpretation in evolving contexts. Building upon this conceptual framework, Al-Qaraḍāwī advances to concrete applications of *maqāṣidī* reasoning. A notable example is his analysis of the hadiths concerning the determination of the beginning and end of Ramadan.⁵² He compiles two principal narrations: “When you see the crescent of Ramadan, begin fasting; and when you see the crescent of Shawwāl, end your fast.”⁵³ If the sky is obscured, complete thirty days of Shaʿbān; and an alternative version stating, “if the sky is obscured, then estimate it.”⁵⁴

According to Al-Qaraḍāwī, these narrations collectively convey both an objective (*maqṣid* or *ghāyah*)—namely, that Muslims fast for the entire month of Ramadan—and the means (*wasīlah*) to achieve this objective, specifically the sighting of the crescent moon (*ruʾyat al-hilāl*). Since the means is contingent while the objective remains constant, the *maqāṣidī* principle dictates that when the traditional means no longer effectively serves the objective, alternative methods may be employed. Consequently, Al-Qaraḍāwī interprets the phrase “estimate it” (*faqdurū lah*) as permitting the use of astronomical calculations (*ḥisāb*), a solution deemed contextually appropriate

⁵² He wrote three books on these issues. Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Kayfa Natāʿamal Maʿa al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyyah*, 165–75. Al-Qaraḍāwī, Pengantar Studi Hadis, p. 227–238. Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Dirāsah Fī Fiqh Al-Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah: Bayn al-Maqāṣid al-Kullīyyah Wa al-Nuṣuṣ al-Juzʿīyyah*, 179–89. He also describes this matter on his television program. See *Al-Sharīʿah Wa al-Ḥayāh..Kayfīyah Taḥdīd Bidāyah Shahr Ramaḍān*, accessed November 23, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PcklCeRZfM>.

⁵³ Al-Bukhārī No. 1810. *Ṣūmū li-ruʾyatihī wa-aftirū li-ruʾyatihī fa-in ghumma ʿalaykum fa-akmilū ʿiddata Shaʿbān thalāthīn*.

⁵⁴ Al-Bukhārī No. 1807. *Fa-in ghumma ʿalaykum faqdurū lah*.

in modern circumstances.⁵⁵

Al-Qaraḍāwī contends that during the Prophet's era, reliance on naked-eye sighting was a reflection of the epistemic and technological limitations of the time; although computation was theoretically feasible, it would have introduced unnecessary complexity.⁵⁶ In contrast, in the contemporary context—characterized by established scientific precision and global communication—he argues that continued dependence on local sighting undermines the Sharia's fundamental objectives of unity and certainty.⁵⁷ Consequently, he advocates for the adoption of computation as the primary method, or at minimum as a decisive tool for verifying or refuting claimed sightings. This interpretation exemplifies Al-Qaraḍāwī's pragmatic application of *maqāṣid* within the domain of *ẓannī al-dilālah*. In this framework, he reinterprets textual sources in light of higher objectives, prioritizing the *maqṣid* (unity and certainty in worship) over the literal *wasīlah* (sighting).⁵⁸ Nonetheless, his ultimate stance remains cautious: computation is endorsed as an auxiliary criterion rather than an independent determinant, reflecting his characteristic balance between *tajdīd* (renewal) and *iltizām* (textual adherence).⁵⁹

To comprehend Al-Qaraḍāwī's restrictive approach to certain legal texts, it is essential first to elucidate the concept of *qaṭ'īyyat al-dilālah* within his hermeneutical framework.⁶⁰ Consistent with classical *uṣūl al-fiqh*, he defines a text as *qaṭ'ī al-dilālah* when its wording can reasonably support only a single, determinate meaning, such that no alternative interpretation is linguistically or contextually plausible. This category includes, for instance, Qur'anic verses whose normative content is articulated through explicit, unambiguous legal formulations with numerically fixed or categorically defined rulings: the prescribed shares of inheritance in Q. 4:11–12, the mandatory penalty of one hundred lashes for *zinā* in Q. 24:2, and the command to amputate the hand of the thief in Q. 5:38. In these instances, the text is regarded as conveying a definitive legal judgment that is not subject to contextual reinterpretation at the level of *dilālah*. In contrast, texts whose phrasing permits multiple plausible legal interpretations—whether due to their generality, conditionality, or reliance on custom (*'urf*)—fall outside the domain of *qaṭ'ī* and may be regarded as *ẓannī al-dilālah*. According to Al-Qaraḍāwī, this conceptual distinction carries direct hermeneutical implications: *maqāṣid*-based reasoning may legitimately be applied within the realm of *ẓannīyyat al-dilālah*, but it must not be employed to revise or relativize what he considers definitive rulings established by *qaṭ'īyyat al-dilālah*.⁶¹

This perspective informs Al-Qaraḍāwī's interpretation of the Qur'anic injunction to amputate

⁵⁵ Al-Bukhārī No. 1780. *Innā ummah ummiyyah lā naktubu wa-lā naḥṣabu, al-shahru hakadhā wa hakadhā, ya'nī marratan tis'atan wa- 'ishrīna wa marratan thalāthīn.*

⁵⁶ In this case, Al-Qaraḍāwī quoted the hadith explaining about the ease of Islamic teachings. (Muslim No. 2703). *Inna Allāha lam yab'athnī mu'annitan wa-lā muta'annitan, walākin ba'athanī mu'alliman muyassiran.*

⁵⁷ Four mazhab agree that the beginning and the end of Ramadan are determined based on seeing the crescent. However, they disagree on the number of witnesses acceptable. Read completely al-Sayyid 'Alawī ibn 'Abbās al-Mālikī and Ḥasan Sulaimān al-Naurī, *Ibānat Al-Aḥkām: Syarḥ Bulūgh al-Marām*, vol 2 (Indonesia: Al Bidayah, 2018), 524–26.

⁵⁸ This is actually not the original thought of Al-Qaraḍāwī, but he cites the opinion of Aḥmad Syākīr and al-Marāgī.

⁵⁹ The method of computation is only proposed for the uniformity of the beginning of fasting and the feast day for Muslim minority in Europe. Abdul Mufid, "Metode Yusuf Al-Qaradawi (1926 M-2017 M/1345 H-1439) dalam Memahami Hadis Rukyat Hilal dan Implikasinya" (Ph.D Thesis, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2018), 275.

⁶⁰ QS. al-Māidah (5): 38. *Wa al-sāriqu wa al-sāriqatu fa-qṭa'ū aydiyahumā jazā'an bimā kasabā nakālan mina Allāh, wa Allāhu 'azīzun ḥakīm.*

⁶¹ According to Al-Syāṭibī, *al-darūriyyāt al-khams* which is the result of induction (*al-istiqrā'*) is definite. He also claimed that *al-darūriyyāt al-khams* is also agreed by the adherents of other religions Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Dirāsah Fī Fiqh Al-Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah: Bayn 'l-Maqāṣid al-Kullīyyah Wa 'l-Nuṣuṣ al-Juz'īyyah.*



the hand of thieves. Contrary to many contemporary *maqāṣid* theorists, Al-Qaraḍāwī does not primarily conceptualize this command as a contingent means (*wasīlah*) aimed at the higher objective of protecting property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*), despite the fact that this objective is widely recognized within the *maqāṣid* tradition—following Al-Shāṭibī—as a definitive (*qaṭ‘ī*) purpose of Sharia. In both classical and modern *maqāṣid* discourse, the punishment is frequently understood as serving *ḥifẓ al-māl* “from the side of negation” (*min jānib al-‘adam*),⁶² meaning it functions to deter property violations through a severe and exemplary sanction. Furthermore, some contemporary scholars, such as Abdullah Saeed, advance this view by categorizing the amputation penalty as an “implementational value,” whose specific application may be historically and socially contingent rather than eternally fixed in form.⁶³

Al-Qaraḍāwī, however, refrains from engaging in this particular line of inquiry. He neither addresses the question of why amputation was specifically divinely ordained nor subjects the relevant verse to the contextual and historical analysis that he readily applies to cases he categorizes as *ẓannī al-dilālah*, such as the hadiths concerning the determination of the beginning of Ramadan.⁶⁴ Instead, he treats the verse as possessing both certain transmission (*qaṭ‘īyyat al-wurūd*) and definitive implication (*qaṭ‘īyyat al-dilālah*). In his view, the wording of the verse admits no interpretation beyond the explicit command to amputate; consequently, the ruling must be upheld as it stands. This position implicitly narrows Al-Shāṭibī’s more dynamic conception of definitiveness, which situates *qaṭ‘ī* not solely in the literal reading of a single text but in the cumulative force of converging proofs and objectives. Furthermore, it contrasts with the approach of Al-Jābirī, a modernist interpreter of Al-Shāṭibī, who advocates for the rationalization of Islamic law through sustained engagement with *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation), social context, and public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*). In works such as *al-Dīn wa al-Dawlah wa Taṭbīq al-Sharī‘ah*, Al-Jābirī contends that rational, context-sensitive lawmaking not only preserves the spirit of the Sharia but also enhances its capacity to legislate effectively for contemporary realities.⁶⁵

Al-Qaraḍāwī explicitly rejects such approaches when they pertain to *qaṭ‘īyyat al-dilālah* (definitive legal texts). He directs his criticism, for example, at scholars such as Nūr Farḥāt, who argues that amputation was appropriate within the Prophet’s mercantile society—where manual labor was not universally essential for economic survival—but is incongruent with modern industrial and post-industrial economies, in which the use of hands is indispensable for work and livelihood. According to Nūr Farḥāt, this sociological transformation justifies treating the amputation penalty as context-dependent and subject to revision in its specific application. Conversely, Al-Qaraḍāwī contends that this line of reasoning constitutes a significant methodological error, as it subordinates a definitive legal text to external, human-constructed considerations and thereby, in his view, compromises the inviolability of divine legislation.⁶⁶

Consequently, while Al-Qaraḍāwī is prepared to employ *maqāṣid* extensively in contexts characterized by *ẓanniyyat al-dilālah* (probable indication), he establishes a clear boundary at

⁶² Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā al-Shāṭibī, *Al-Muwāfaqāt Fī Uṣūl al-Sharī‘ah*, ed. ‘Abd Allah Darāz, vol. 1 (Beirut: DKI, 2011), 7-8.

⁶³ Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur‘ān: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (Routledge, 2006), 134.

⁶⁴ Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Dirāsah Fī Fiqh Al-Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah: Bayn ‘l-Maqāṣid al-Kullīyyah Wa ‘l-Nuṣuṣ al-Juz‘īyyah*, 179-89.

⁶⁵ Muḥammad ‘Abid al-Jābirī, *Al-Dīn Wal-‘Dawlah Wa Taṭbīq al-Syarī‘ah* (Markaz Dirāsāt al-Waḥdah al-‘Arabiyyah, 1996), 174-79.

⁶⁶ Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Dirāsah Fī Fiqh Al-Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah: Bayn ‘l-Maqāṣid al-Kullīyyah Wa ‘l-Nuṣuṣ al-Juz‘īyyah*, 24-29.

qaṭ' iyyat al-dilālah (definitive indication), where *maqāṣid* may serve to explain and support but not to alter or relativize the explicit legal ruling. Within this domain, the role of *maqāṣid* in his thought transitions from a mechanism of legal adaptation to a justificatory framework that upholds the permanence and non-contingency of certain fundamental rulings. This interpretive stance exemplifies both the strengths and limitations of his *maqāṣidī* approach: it is expansive when textual indications are conjectural, yet notably restrictive when such indications are considered definitive.

Ideology, Politics, and the Paradox of Maqāṣid Renewal

Al-Qaraḍāwī exemplifies two fundamental characteristics that critically influence his intellectual development: he functions both as a reformer and as an ideologue. As a reformer, he frames his project of *tajdīd* within the context of *maqāṣid*, aligning with other scholars in the tradition of religious utilitarianism.⁶⁷ He has produced extensive writings on this subject across multiple disciplines, as demonstrated in earlier sections of this study. His ideas have been warmly received by reformists such as Ṭarīq al-Biṣrī, Rāshid al-Ghannūshī, Hiba Raūf Izzat, and Aḥmad al-Raysūnī.⁶⁸ According to Auda, from his earliest work, *al-Ḥalāl wa al-Ḥarām fī al-Islām* (1960), Al-Qaraḍāwī consistently engaged with discussions of *maqāṣid* and, in his doctoral dissertation defended in 1973, exhibited a profound concern with the *ḥikmah* (legal wisdom) underpinning Islamic rulings, particularly in his reinterpretation of *zakāt*.⁶⁹

As an ideologue, Al-Qaraḍāwī stands out as one of the most prominent expositors of the Muslim Brotherhood's (IM) ideological doctrine. Soage characterizes him as “the ideological guide of the IM,”⁷⁰ emphasizing his pivotal role in systematizing and disseminating its doctrines. Notably, he joined the Brotherhood at the age of sixteen.⁷¹ Al-Qaraḍāwī articulated the IM's ideology through two major book series: the tetralogy *Ḥatmiyyat al-Ḥall al-Islāmī* (The Necessity of the Islamic Solution) and the hexalogy *Waḥdah Fikriyyah li al-ʿĀmilīn li al-Islām* (Intellectual Unity for Islamic Activists). The tetralogy *Ḥatmiyyat al-Ḥall al-Islāmī*—comprising *al-Ḥulūl al-Mustawradah wa Kaifa Janat ʿalā Ummatina* (1971),⁷² *al-Ḥall al-Islāmī Farīdah wa Ḍarūrah* (1974),⁷³ and *Bayyināt al-Ḥall al-Islāmī wa Shubhāt al-ʿIlmāniyyīn wa al-Mutagharrībīn* (1993)—articulates the Brotherhood's fundamental conviction that Islam constitutes a comprehensive solution to all societal problems.⁷⁴ This reflects the application of the first principle of the IM's “Twenty Fundamentals,” which asserts that Islam encompasses every domain of life.⁷⁵

The hexalogy *Waḥdah Fikriyyah* systematically articulates the intellectual foundations of the Brotherhood. *Shumūl al-Islām* (1991) elucidates the first principle, which posits Islam as a

⁶⁷ Wael B. Hallaq, *A History of Islamic Legal Theories: An Introduction to Sunnī Usūl al-Fiqh* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 214–30.

⁶⁸ Bettina Gräf, “Yusuf Al-Qaradawi,” in *Key Islamic Political Thinkers*, ed. John L. Esposito and Emad El-Din Shahin (Oxford University, 2018), 188.

⁶⁹ Auda, *Multaqā Al-Imām al-Qaraḍāwī ma ʿa al-Aṣḥāb Wa al-Talāmīz: Maqāṣid al-Syarīʿah Ind al-Syaikh al-Qaraḍāwī*, 29–32.

⁷⁰ Soage, “Yusuf Al-Qaradawi: The Muslim Brothers' Favorite Ideological Guide.”

⁷¹ Gräf, “Yusuf Al-Qaradawi,” ed. Esposito and Shahin (Oxford University, 2018), 178–79.

⁷² Yusuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Al-Ḥulūl al-Mustawradah Wa Kaifa Janat ʿalā Ummatina* (Muassasah al-Risālah, 1971).

⁷³ Yusuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Al-Ḥall al-Islāmī Farīdah Wa Ḍarūrah* (Maktabah Wahbah, 1974).

⁷⁴ Yusuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Bayyināt Al-Ḥall al-Islāmī Wa Shubhāt al-ʿIlmāniyyīn Wa al-Mutagharrībīn* (Maktabah Wahbah, 1993).

⁷⁵ 20 fundamentals of IM can be read in al-Qaraḍāwī Yusuf, *Shumūl Al-Islām* (Maktabah Wahbah, 1991), 12–16.



comprehensive system encompassing all facets of existence.⁷⁶ *Al-Marji'iyah al-Ulyā fī al-Islām* (1992) elaborates on the second principle, asserting that the Qur'an and Sunnah constitute the ultimate sources of guidance for every Muslim.⁷⁷ *Mauqif al-Islām min al-Ilhām wal-Kashf...* (1994) addresses the third and fourth principles by rejecting mystical inspiration, dreams, and occult practices as legitimate legal sources.⁷⁸ Finally, *al-Siyāsah al-Shar'iyah* (1998) explicates the Brotherhood's fifth principle, which outlines the epistemological framework through which Islamic law must inform political authority.⁷⁹ In *al-Siyāsah al-Shar'iyah*, the following principle is articulated:

“The opinion of the *imām* or his deputy holds authoritative weight in matters not explicitly addressed by the primary texts, in issues subject to multiple interpretations, and in cases of *maṣlaḥah mursalah*, provided that such opinions do not contravene the fundamental principles of sharia. These rulings may vary depending on circumstances, traditions, and customs. In acts of worship (*‘ibādāt*), the guiding principle is obedience without inquiry into underlying meanings, whereas in worldly affairs (*‘ādāt*), the emphasis lies on consideration of wisdom, underlying purposes, and objectives (*maqāṣid*).”⁸⁰

This formulation explicitly asserts that texts with definitive meanings (*qaṭ‘iyyah*) fall outside the interpretive authority of the *imām*. This stance reflects not only a juristic prudence but also an ideological codification of textual sanctity, thereby transforming *qaṭ‘iyyah* rulings into symbols of collective obedience and doctrinal unity central to the IM's agenda.⁸¹ This principle of the Brotherhood significantly influenced Al-Qaraḍāwī's *maqāṣid*-based hermeneutics, particularly his emphasis that “the interpreter must reconcile the fixed (*thawābiṭ*) and the variable (*mutaghayyirāt*) elements of the religion.” In *Dirāsah fī Fiqh al-Maqāṣid*, he emphasizes that *qaṭ‘iyyah* texts remain beyond the scope of *ijtihād* and interpretation, with *ẓanniyyah* texts necessarily subordinated to them. For Al-Qaraḍāwī, these limited *qaṭ‘iyyah* texts serve as markers of communal identity, safeguards of unity, and defenses against external normative encroachment.⁸² In this regard, the preservation of *qaṭ‘iyyah* functions as a theological articulation of IM's political vision, wherein upholding the inviolability of divine law is tantamount to protecting the sovereignty of the Islamic ummah (*ḥākimiyyah lillāh*).

From this perspective, Al-Qaraḍāwī emerges as a reformist who rationalizes Islamic law through the framework of *maqāṣid*, while simultaneously functioning as an ideologue who enforces a rigid “red line” at the level of *qaṭ‘iyyah*. In this context, Žižek's analysis proves insightful: ideology operates not only through explicit doctrines but also through the prohibition of certain inquiries. Within Al-Qaraḍāwī's project, the expansion of interpretive space via *maqāṣid* in the domain of *ẓanniyyah* is structurally constrained by an “empty ideological space” surrounding *qaṭ‘iyyah*, a sphere that remains insulated from contestation.⁸³ In *al-Siyāsah al-Shar'iyah*, Al-Qaraḍāwī endeavored to renew his conceptualization of *maqāṣid*. While in *Fiqh al-Awlawiyyāt*

⁷⁶ Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Shumūl Al-Islām*.

⁷⁷ Al-Qaraḍāwī Yūsuf, *Al-Marji'iyah al-Ulyā Fī al-Islām Li al-Qur'Ān Wa al-Sunnah* (Maktabah Wahbah, 1992).

⁷⁸ Al-Qaraḍāwī Yūsuf, *Mauqif Al-Islām Min al-Ilhām Wa al-Kashf Wa al-Ru'yā Wa Min al-Tamāim Wa al-Kahānah Wa al-Ruqā* (Maktabah Wahbah, 1994).

⁷⁹ Al-Qaraḍāwī Yūsuf, *Al-Siyāsah al-Syar'iyah* (Maktabah Wahbah, 1998).

⁸⁰ Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Al-Siyāsah al-Syar'iyah*.

⁸¹ Al-Qaraḍāwī Yūsuf, *Al-Siyāsah al-Syar'Iyyah Fī Ḍau' Nuṣūṣ al-Syarī'ah Wa Maqāṣidihā* (Maktabah Wahbah, 1998), 74–80.

⁸² Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Dirāsah Fī Fiqh Al-Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah: Bain al-Maqāṣid al-Kulliyyah Wa al-Nuṣūṣ al-Juz'iyyah*, 198.

⁸³ Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Al-Siyāsah al-Syar'iyah*.

(1994),⁸⁴ he adhered to the classical definition of *maqāṣid* as the preservation of five essentials—namely, religion, life, intellect, progeny, and property—he subsequently expanded its scope to include values relevant to contemporary democratic societies, such as honor, security, human rights, freedom, justice, and collective solidarity.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, this expansion remains ideologically constrained: despite the broadening of *maqāṣid*, the immutability of *qaṭ‘iyyah* remains non-negotiable. This dynamic exemplifies what Žižek describes as overdetermination, wherein reformist discourse is simultaneously enabled and constrained by the ideological framework that underpins it.

His subsequent epistemological works both reaffirm and further elaborate upon this tension. In *Ijtihād fī al-Sharī‘ah al-Islāmiyyah* (1996), Al-Qaraḍāwī reiterates the classical principle that the domain of *ijtihād* is limited to issues not explicitly governed by *qaṭ‘iyyat al-wurūd wa al-dilālah*. At this juncture, his stance clearly aligns with that of the *jumhūr*. Nevertheless, he transcends a purely epistemological articulation by characterizing these *qaṭ‘ī* texts as *‘imād al-waḥdah al-fikriyyah wa al-sulūkiyyah li-l-ummah* (the pillar of the intellectual and behavioral unity of the ummah). In this context, *qaṭ‘iyyah* are not merely indicators of certainty in the technical framework of *uṣūl al-fiqh*; rather, they are reinterpreted as symbolic anchors of collective identity, cohesion, and obedience. At this juncture, Al-Qaraḍāwī’s ideological orientation becomes apparent: the preservation of *qaṭ‘iyyah* is framed as a prerequisite for establishing a unified political and moral subject among Muslims, reflecting the Muslim Brotherhood’s concern with maintaining the “Islamic solution” as a comprehensive, non-negotiable alternative to secular modernity. Thus, although the formal boundary he delineates around *qaṭ‘iyyah* is consistent with that of many non-IM scholars, the role he attributes to these texts—as instruments of ideological unity and resistance—reveals a distinctly Brotherhood-inflected interpretation of this otherwise classical principle.

This rationale is further elucidated in *Min Fiqh al-Dawlah fī al-Islām* (1997), wherein Al-Qaraḍāwī endorses democratic procedures while simultaneously asserting non-negotiable boundaries:⁸⁶ parliamentary debate must never transgress *qaṭ‘iyyah*. These texts function both as epistemic constraints on democracy and as ideological consolidators of the ummah.⁸⁷ Consequently, a secondary objective emerges: the preservation of the vision of a supranational Islamic polity (*al-dawlah al-‘ālamīyyah/al-khilāfah al-Islāmiyyah*).⁸⁸ From a Žižekian perspective, this may be interpreted as the articulation of an ideological fantasy—a totalizing unity conceived precisely to obscure the structural fragmentation of the Muslim world into sovereign nation-states.

Al-Qaraḍāwī conceptualized the caliphate as a universal polity transcending geographical boundaries, uniting diverse populations under a shared creed, legal framework, and ethical standards.⁸⁹ However, the post-Ottoman geopolitical context rendered such unity impractical. Consequently, he advocated for a gradual, bottom-up approach whereby Muslim-majority nation-states would first establish Islam as the foundation of their regulatory systems, defend against

⁸⁴ Al-Qaraḍāwī Yūsuf, *Fī Fiqh Al-Aulawīyyāt: Dirāsah Jadīdah Fī Daw’ al-Qur’ān Wa al-Sunnah* (Maktabah Wahbah, 1996), 27–28.

⁸⁵ Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Al-Siyāsah al-Syar‘iyyah Fī Daw’ Nuṣūṣ al-Syarī‘ah Wa Maqāṣidihā*.

⁸⁶ Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī has talked about Islam and democracy since 1985. Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Al-Islām Wa’l-‘Ilmāniyyah: Wajhān Li Wajh* (Maktabah Wahbah, 1997), 185. (this book was first published in 1985)

⁸⁷ Although he lives in Qatar, he publishes his books in Egypt such as through Dār al-Ṣaḥwah, Maktabah Wahbah, and Dār al-Shurūq.

⁸⁸ Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min Fiqh Al-Dawlah Fī’l-Islām* (Dār al-Shurūq, 1997).

⁸⁹ Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min Fiqh Al-Dawlah Fī’l-Islām*, 31–32.



external threats, and subsequently federate into a supranational entity.⁹⁰ This presents a clear paradox: the ideological ideal of unity is realized in practice through a phased, layered federation rather than immediate universality. By 2004, Al-Qaraḍāwī's intellectual orientation had shifted toward institutional pragmatism. He established the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS) with the aim of uniting Muslim intellectuals across sectarian and national boundaries, serving as its inaugural president.⁹¹ According to Zaman, this initiative sought to address the fragmentation within the ummah.⁹² However, in a 2004 interview, Al-Qaraḍāwī acknowledged that complete unification was unattainable; at best, consensus could be reached on key issues such as colonialism, resistance, jihad, and terrorism.⁹³ The subsequent development of the IUMS, particularly its outspoken opposition to authoritarian regimes during the Arab Spring, exemplifies this pragmatic shift.⁹⁴

From a Žižekian perspective, the IUMS represents an ideological compromise: it generates a symbolic unity at the discursive level while the material divisions within the ummah persist unresolved. In summary, Al-Qaraḍāwī's intellectual project is characterized by a distinctive dialectic: as a reformist, he expands the *maqāṣid* to address contemporary realities; as an ideologue, he concurrently limits interpretive autonomy by delineating the boundaries of *qaṭ'īyyah*. Through a Žižekian analytical framework, it becomes evident that Al-Qaraḍāwī's reform efforts are both produced and constrained by ideology itself. His rationalization of Islamic law via *maqāṣid* is sincere but inherently circumscribed by the ideological injunction embedded in the inviolability of *qaṭ'īyyah*. This dynamic results in what may be termed a “limited renewal”—a reform that stops short of radical transformation and remains anchored within the ideological parameters of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Conclusion

The analysis reveals that the relationship between Al-Qaraḍāwī's *maqāṣid*-based renewal and the ideology of Islamism is fundamentally dialectical. On one hand, his reformist hermeneutics expanded interpretive possibilities for *ẓanniyyah al-dilālāh* texts by emphasizing socio-historical context, pragmatic objectives, and the reconciliation of fixed and variable norms. On the other hand, his ideological allegiance to the Muslim Brotherhood significantly constrained this reformist potential with respect to *qaṭ'īyyah al-dilālāh* texts. Within the framework of the Islamic Movement's doctrine, these texts were reconstituted as inviolable foundations of orthodoxy—serving as markers of identity, unity, and the boundaries of democratic deliberation. Žižek's theory of ideology elucidates this paradox: Al-Qaraḍāwī's renewal was feasible only within an ideological structure that both enabled and limited it. His expansive application of *maqāṣid* exemplifies the ideological complexity inherent in ideas; his political writings and institutional leadership externalized the Islamic Movement's ideological project; and his uncompromising position regarding *qaṭ'īyyah* texts reflects the spontaneity of action rooted in ideological conviction. Ultimately, Al-Qaraḍāwī's ideological narrative reframes *qaṭ'īyyah* texts not as arenas of

⁹⁰ Munawir Sjadzali, *Islam Dan Tata Negara: Ajaran, Sejarah Dan Gerakan* (UI Press, 1990), 149.

⁹¹ Gräf, “Yusuf Al-Qaradawi,” ed. Esposito and Shahin (Oxford University, 2018), 184–85.

⁹² Muhammad Qasim Zaman, “The Ulama and Contestations on Religious Authority,” in *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates*, ed. Muhammad Khalid Masud et al. (Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 229–30.

⁹³ Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Yusuf Al-Qaraḍāwī, Naḥnu Wa al-Gharb: As'īlah Shāikhah Wa Ajwibah Ḥāsimah* (Maktabah Wahbah, n.d.).

⁹⁴ Sulaiman, *Ijtihad Maqasidi dan Politik Pengetahuan: Fatwa Yusuf al-Qaradawi Vs Ali Jum'ah dalam Gejolak Revolusi Mesir*, 162.

contestation but as symbolic pillars that safeguard communal unity and legitimize the project of an Islamic order. In this regard, Al-Qaraḍāwī functions simultaneously as reformer and ideologue: a thinker who broadened the scope of *maqāṣid* to encompass modern values while concurrently delimiting its outer boundary at the threshold of *qaṭʿiyyah*. His thought thus exemplifies how ideology, in Žižek’s conception, sustains the fantasy of renewal while precluding its radicalization.

Nevertheless, this study is subject to certain limitations. It has been primarily confined to the epistemological and ideological aspects of Al-Qaraḍāwī’s *maqāṣid*-based hermeneutics, without incorporating empirical or sociological analyses regarding the practical implementation of these ideas within contemporary Islamic movements or legal institutions. Additionally, although the study has underscored the impact of the Muslim Brotherhood’s ideology on Al-Qaraḍāwī’s interpretive framework, it has not examined how his ideas were subsequently reinterpreted by later generations of Brotherhood scholars or by reformists outside the Brotherhood. Future research could therefore expand this investigation in two principal directions: first, by analyzing the institutional application of Al-Qaraḍāwī’s *maqāṣid* theory within legal and educational settings throughout the Muslim world; and second, by conducting comparative analyses of his ideological hermeneutics alongside those of other modern reformers who have utilized *maqāṣid* as a framework for reimagining Islamic law under varying ideological contexts—such as Rashid al-Ghannūshī, Jasser Auda, or secular legal theorists influenced by Islamic ethics. Such comparative and empirical studies would enhance our understanding of how *maqāṣid* remains a dynamic arena in which reformist reasoning and ideological power converge.

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