

Maqasid as a Strategic Project for the Muslim Ummah: Dr. Jamal Barzinji's Legacy

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Summary

This essay is a narrative of my journey with one of the strategic assets of the Muslim Ummah and our Ustadh, Dr. Jamal Barzinji, *rahimahullah* (Allah bless his soul), starting from hearing about the Islamic work he did in the eighties of the previous century, up until I worked with him on a number of strategic intellectual projects during the last decade of his blessed life. I will specifically discuss the following projects: IIIT Maqasid Publication Series project, the International Peace College South Africa Graduate School, and the Maqasid Institute. I will also explain how his legacy continues, *rahimahullah*, in a number of ways.

Introduction

“To Allah we belong and to Him we return. The Muslim Ummah lost this morning one of its strategic assets, visionaries, leaders and pioneers, Dr. Jamal Barzinji, President of the International Institute of Islamic Thought, and a dear brother and mentor”. This was the opening statement of the obituary that I wrote on the day we and the Muslim Ummah lost Dr. Jamal Barzinji, *rahimahullah*, on September 26, 2015. The Muslim Ummah, to me and to Muslim leaders of Islamic thought and action like Dr. Jamal, is not made up of “countries”, nations, races or tribes, but rather made up of the followers of Prophet Muhammad (*p.b.u.h.*) and all the other Prophets of Allah, worldwide and in every era. It is true that Dr. Jamal *rahimahullah* during his life was identified with Kurdish, Arab, Iraqi, American and other labels, and did live in several countries and travel all over the world, yet I observed that he identified first and foremost as a Muslim.

However, Dr. Jamal Barzinji was not just a regular Muslim; he was one of the rare Muslims who carried the burden of working, and more importantly strategizing, for the Muslim Ummah. There are so many Muslim strategists in every government, company and organization all over the world. However, very few of them - if any - take the role and responsibility of strategizing for the Muslim community/Ummah wherever it exists around the world, and for the Islamic Thought that is at the heart of the perception of Islam and action for its cause. And the Muslim “community” for him was not the Muslim majority or minority anywhere, including the United States where he ended up living, but rather the Believers in the Truth from all backgrounds and walks of life, i.e. the Quranic Arabic concept of the “Ummah”. Allah says in the Quran (21:92): “Verily, this community (*Ummah*) of yours is one, and I am your Lord; therefore worship Me”.

I have also witnessed how he naturally and smoothly included all humanity in this scope of good-will and hard work, and how he believed that any good that Muslims do in the world is for the best interest of the whole humanity. In all of these senses, Dr. Jamal Barzinji, *rahimahullah*, was a strategic asset for the Ummah and humanity: a visionary, leader and pioneer whom we lost - as I wrote.

Amongst the countless blessings of Allah Almighty on me is that I had the chance to meet, learn from and work with a number of Muslim scholars and leaders from the generation that preceded my generation in loving and serving Islam, including Dr. Jamal. I first knew of him through a lecture that discussed the scope of the “Islamization of Knowledge” project, delivered by our late teacher, Sheikh Muhammad Al-Ghazaly, *rahimahullah*, which he later published in Cairo - back in the eighties of the previous century.¹ Sheikh Al-Ghazaly explained to us that the Islamization of Knowledge call is not a movement against contemporary sciences, but rather an attempt to correct the mistakes that some philosophers, scientists and historians made in understanding humans, life and history - especially the history of Islam.² These mistakes, the Sheikh explained, should be corrected by the Revelation, i.e. the Quran, and consequently Muslims should build on the rest of the contemporary human achievements in all facets of knowledge and not deny their merit.

The introduction of the idea of “Islamization” by the late Sheikh Al-Ghazaly in these lectures and later books that he published at IIIT³ - mended a gap that I personally felt at that time as a university student; between the traditional Islamic knowledge that I was learning in the study circles of Al-Azhar Mosque, and “secular sciences” that I was also learning at the time in Cairo University. I was looking for an intellectual project that could mend the gap between these two worlds which I was living in: religious and worldly, old and new, Islamic and non-Islamic, east and west, etc, and I thought that I found an answer in that “Islamization” project that our Sheikh was talking about. This made me go and research the project and the institute that was promoting it: The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT).

It was the start of a studentship with a number of scholars - who were contributing to the IIIT Arabic publications and lecture series - back in the eighties and nineties, including Dr. Taha Al-

¹ In his book, *Al-Haqq Al-Murr* (The Bitter Truth), first published in 1988 by Dar Al-Shuruq, Cairo.

² Ibid. vol. 4, 1992, “*Islamiyyat al-Ma’rifah*”.

³ For example, *Kayfa nata’amal ma’a al-Quran al-Kareem* (How do we deal with the Blessed Quran?), published by the International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1991.

Alwani, Dr. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, Dr. Muhammad Emara, Dr. Muhammad Kamal Imam, Dr. Mona Abul-Fadl, in addition to IIIT's co-founder Dr. Ismail Al-Faruqi. Over the years, I started to learn more about the other co-founders of IIIT, in addition to Dr. Faruqi and Dr. Al-Alwani, namely, Dr. Jamal Barzinji, Dr. Abdul-Hamid Abu Sulayman, Dr. Hisham Al-Talib and Dr. Ahmed Totonji. When I immigrated to Canada in the early nineties and got involved in the leadership of the Muslim Students Association of the United States and Canada (MSA), I learnt that members of the same group have founded the MSA and several other key western-Muslim organizations as well. As I became more active within the western-Muslim movements and organizations in the US, Canada and the UK, I became more interested in IIIT and its thought, which ended up being a major resource for the Masters and Ph.D. theses in Islamic law that I wrote afterwards.

I followed the projects, writings, lectures of the IIIT founders and scholars, including Dr. Jamal Barzinji, throughout the nineties and 2000's. However, I did not have the honour of meeting Dr. Jamal one-on-one until 2005. At that time, I was living in London, UK, directing a new research center under Al-Furqan Foundation, which was called, Al-Maqasid Research Center in the Philosophy of Islamic Law,⁴ and I had published my first book, *Fiqh Al-Maqasid (Teleological Jurisprudence)* with IIIT.⁵ I knew from IIIT-UK Director, Dr. Anas Al-Sheikh-Ali, that Dr. Jamal Barzinji is visiting London and I requested to meet with him to discuss a manuscript of a new book.⁶ I sent a copy of the draft before hand to Dr. Jamal.

When we met in London and I gave him a presentation on my new book, he told me, "This is not a book. It is an intellectual project. What are you trying to achieve with it?". I answered: "My objective is to re-structure the current understanding of Islam as a way of life via its objectives/*maqasid*". He said: "But this is a book only on the theory of the Islamic law". I answered: "This book is only starting with the fundamental theory of Islamic law, but I would like in future research and books to extend the systems approach that I am proposing in it to various sciences and disciplines". I explained how I view the "Maqasid Project" as a continuation of the Islamization of Knowledge Project and we discussed the dire needs of the Islamic movements and organizations to the renewal of Islamic thought. He asked me about my academic background and I pointed out that - like him - I have a PhD in engineering that is only

⁴ Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation is a London-based non-profit institution which is primarily concerned with promoting, "the study, cataloguing, publication, preservation and conservation of Islamic manuscripts throughout the world." It was founded by the late Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, *rahimahullah*, in 1988.

⁵ Jasser Auda, *Fiqh al-Maqāsid: Inātat al-ahkām al-shar'iah bimaqāsidihā* (Teleological Jurisprudence: Basing Islamic Rulings on their Purposes), International Institute of Islamic Thought, Virginia, 2005.

⁶ which was published later as: Jasser Auda, *Maqasid al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*, International Institute of Islamic Thought, London-Washington, 2008.

a background education and not a career. I told him that I was soon defending a PhD in Islamic Studies at the University of Wales, UK. Then, I outlined the path I took with the traditional and professional streams of knowledge that I studied, and explained how my PhD in Systems Analysis informed the “systems approach” that I took in my PhD research in Islamic jurisprudence, and the Islamic organizations that I was active in, etc. He was very supportive, Allah bless his soul.

The next decade after that conversation (2005-2015) was a journey with Dr. Jamal, working with him in a number of capacities and meeting with him in several countries, to develop and execute a strategic intellectual project for Islam and Muslims: The Maqasid Project. I am aware that Dr. Jamal worked over many previous decades on many other strategic projects and organizations for the Ummah, and with many others of his students in many other countries. However, I will focus in this essay on my experience with Dr. Jamal Barzinji’s legacy relating to the Maqasid Project as an intellectual project for the Ummah. It is a narrative of my journey that he mentored in three dimensions: research, education and institution-building. I will discuss research - specifically through the IIIT Maqasid Publication Series project, education - specifically through the International Peace College South Africa project, and institution-building - specifically through the Maqasid Institute project.

Maqasid for Islamic Research: IIIT Maqasid Publication Series

The conversations I had with our *Ustadh* Dr. Jamal about the Maqasid Project were largely about how the traditional *Maqasid Al-Shariah* theory could develop to deal with current disciplines and phenomena. Dr. Jamal had a special interest in politics and economics from an Islamic perspective, and they were areas that he asked me to research and lecture on at the IIIT seminars. And since he was in charge of the Research and Publications committee at IIIT, our discussions on the Maqasid approach translated into working on a IIIT Maqasid Publication Series, especially in English as published by the III-UK office. These books - produced between 2006 and 2015 - have had a significant impact on the renewal of Islamic thought in our time.

The term ‘maqṣid’ (plural: maqāṣid) refers to a purpose, objective, principle, intent, goal, end, telos (Greek), finalité (French), or Zweck (German). *Maqasid Al-Shariah* are the objectives/purposes/intents/ends/principles of the Islamic law, the spirit of the law and the wisdom behind the Islamic rulings.⁷ Most of the current Maqasid Studies revolve around the history of the

⁷ Refer to: Jasser Auda, *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah: A Beginner’s Guide*. London: International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), reprints 2008-2016. IIIT kindly supported the translation of this book into: Arabic, Urdu, German, Indonesian, Malaysian, Russian, Azeri, Tamil, Bengali, Turkish, Japanese, Kurdish, Malayalam, French, Bosnian, Italian, Somali, Uzbek, Greek, Spanish, Korean, Thai, Somali, Amharic. Various publishers in collaboration with IIIT: 2009-16.

traditional theories of maqasid as they apply to jurisprudence. Some can be traced back to early theorists, and others to the well-known schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*madhahib*). Yet, seminal works of contemporary Maqasid scholars were hardly known in the Arabic language and simply do not exist in the English language. This was the gap that IIIT under Dr. Jamal's leadership worked to mend.

When the early history of the maqasid is researched or referenced, the focus tends to be on one or more of the following topics: the opinions of the companions related to public affairs during the time of the rightly guided Caliphs; and, the emergence of maqasid as a formal theory based on the positive corollaries of the commands associated with corporal punishments. Al-Hakeem al-Tirmidhi (d. 255H/869CE) and Abu Zayd al-Balkhi (d. 322H/934CE) emphasized what is beneficial for the body and soul. Abul-Ma`ali al-Juwayni (d. 478H/1085CE) suggested that the Islamic Shariah was intended to protect the inviolability of faith, souls, minds, private parts, and the money of people. Based on Al-Juwayni's proposition, early scholars classified the maqasid as essentials (*daruriyyat*), needs (*hajiyyat*) or embellishments (*tahsiniyyat*) based on their urgency and clarity. Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali (d. 505H/1111CE) ordered the objectives of his teacher, Al-Juwayni, and renamed them as the preservation of: faith, soul, mind, offspring and wealth. Al-'Izz Ibn Abdus-Salam (d. 660H/1262CE) placed a spotlight on the link between juridical rulings and their purposes. Shihabuddin Al-Qarafi (d. 684H/1285CE) reasoned that the preservation of honour needed to be added based on the positive corollary for the punishment for slander (*qadhf*) or breaching honour. He also clarified the differences between the prophetic intents, i.e., legislation, judgeship and leadership. Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728H/1328CE) and his students Shamsuddin Ibn Al-Qayyim (d. 751H/1350CE), Najmuddin Al-Tufi (d. 716H/1316CE) and Ibn Kathir (d. 774H/1373CE) contributed to the maqasid approach by providing a detailed critique of juridical circumventions (*hiyal*), studying public interest (*maslahah*) and included wider values such as justice, virtue, rights, and knowledge. Abu Ishaq Al-Shatibi (d. 790H/1388CE) advanced the maqasid in unprecedented ways in his *Muwafaqat* (Correspondences) by treating the maqasid as fundamentals of jurisprudence (*usul ul-fiqh*). Finally, the theories of Abu Bakr al-Qaffal al-Shashi (d. 365H/973CE), Ibn Babawayh al-Qummi (d. 381H/991CE) and Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (d. 1175H/1762CE) uncovered the wisdoms (*hikam*) behind the rulings of the shariah. All of these scholars, among many others who may have been lost in the annals of history, sought to overlay the Islamic Law with the objectives of the Shariah.⁸ Maqasid students who research the contributions of these pioneers from past and present, however, tend to lack sufficient introspection and critique. In fact, most adopt descriptive or documentary

⁸ Refer to: Jasser Auda, *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*, International Institute of Islamic Thought, London-Washington, several reprints: 2008-14. IIIT kindly supported the translation of this book into: Arabic, Bosnian, Italian, Turkish, Malaysian and Indonesian. Various publishers in collaboration with IIIT: 2010-15.

approaches. The absence of direct reference to the Quran and Sunnah as the standard and basis of critique is common, although there is a number of contemporary scholars who used the Quranic concepts and objectives to critique blind imitation of the inherited theories of maqasid and develop them in a way that helps the realization of maqasid in our time. However, it is common for scholars to generally overlook the impact of political, philosophical and scholastic environments of the past and present on the output of these forerunners. It is precisely in these blind spots that the keys to truth and knowledge needed for contemporary challenges may be found. This is not to question the scholars' sincerity or belittle their contribution, but rather to better understand them and build on them for the present and future. Those who shaped the Maqasid Studies during its long and rich history broke the mold of imitation, suffered ridicule and loneliness, and left a legacy of standing with the truth however unpopular it is. Contemporary maqasid scholarship must continue to honour this legacy by benefiting from and building on all their contributions while remaining critical and cognizant of contemporary needs in all fields of knowledge.⁹

Therefore, the IIIT Maqasid Publication Series aimed at introducing the topic through the contributions of contemporary scholars. Sheikh Taha Jabir Al-Alwani, *rahimahullah*, was a pioneer in the field of maqasid and an early contributor, especially in the Arabic language.¹⁰ Reviewing his books in English, and translating his seminal works were amongst the objectives of the Maqasid Publication Project.¹¹ Another contemporary was Sheikh Mohammad Al-Tahir Ibn Ashur, who made a major contribution to the field of Maqasid through his seminal work, *Maqasid Al-Shariah*. The first book in the Maqasid Publication Project was the translation of Ibn Ashur's book to the English language by Professor Mohammad Tahir Al-Mesawi, and the first edition was published as a collaborative effort between IIIT and Al-Furqan Foundation in London. I had the honour of writing the introduction of this book, which was also published by IIIT in several later editions. In addition to my book mentioned above, *Maqasid al-Shariah: A Systems Approach*, several seminal books in the same series followed, including: *Imam al-Shatibi's Theory of the Higher Objectives and Intents of Islamic Law*, by Professor Ahmad al-Raysuni (published in English by the IIIT in 2005); *Towards Realization of the Higher Intents of Islamic Law: Maqasid Al-Shariah: A Functional Approach*, by Professor Jamal Attiah (published in English by the IIIT in 2007), *Maqasid Al-Shariah Made Simple*, by Professor Mohammad Hashim Kamali (published in English by the IIIT in 2008), and many other titles.

⁹ Refer to: Jasser Auda, *Re-envisioning Islamic Scholarship: Maqasid Methodology as a New Approach*, Wales: Claritas and Maqasid Institute, 2021.

¹⁰ Dr. Taha's earliest writing on maqasid was within the research he did for his PhD in Usul Al-Fiqh, which was published in 1980: *Al-Razi's Al-Mahsul*, Imam Muhammad Bin Saud University.

¹¹ For example, I wrote a long review of: Dr. Taha Jabir Al-Alwani, *Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought*, IIIT, 2005.

This series contributed greatly to a new research direction in Islamic Thought worldwide. Since their publication, they have been regularly cited in Maqasid-related research all around the world. Different regions focus on different themes, depending on their local and regional needs and their vision for Islam to address those needs. For example, in the Arab world, many research projects focused on the Islamic political theory (*al-siyasah al-shar'iyyah*), and how Maqasid al-Shariah could be a methodology for new thought in this area. This interest in Maqasid became much clearer since the "Arab Spring" due to a number of considerations. First, Islamic political movements lacked an agenda that is both authentically Islamic yet appealing to the masses. The traditional opinions and the heritage of ideas in this area were not up to the aspirations of the revolutionary movements, especially the youth in the Islamic movements, and Maqasid promised a way forward. When constitutional debates were at their highest over issues of the application of the Shariah and national identities, Maqasid was quite commonly used argument, especially as a common ground that the revolutionary forces could agree on. As the years go by and the anti-revolutionary forces win this round over traditional Islamic voices, Maqasid still offers a hope for a more balanced and relevant Islamic ideology for the next wave of change in the Arab world. On the other hand, the Arab world witnessed the recent failures of the Salafi extremist ideology to produce thought that touch people's lives and is faithful to their concerns. The Shia extremist ideology also proved to have failed to be relevant to the average Muslim's life and his/her concerns. Maqasid is one of the foremost methodologies that could face both of these extreme ideologies and the terrorist movements that they both produce in the Middle East.¹²

In the west, the Islamic studies in academic circles witnessed a growing interest in maqasid studies, and the Maqasid Series that Dr. Jamal strategized for was a major catalyst. A growing number of courses are including works on maqasid, especially in the English language, in the curricula on Quranic Studies, Islamic law, Islamic thought, Muslim women and Islamic political movements. In South East Asia, there are two growing applications of maqasid research, Islamic finance and Islamic governance. In Muslim majority ASEAN countries, the tension between the Islamic national identity and a growing sense of multi-culturalism has encouraged more researchers to look for common ground for governance in the ideas of maqasid. The commonalities between the maqasid principles and national common values, such as the Indonesian Pancasila (the five principles of divine unity, civil humanity, national unity, wisdom,

¹² For a long discussion on this issue, refer to my book: Jasser Auda, *Al-Dawlah al-Madaniyya: Nahwa tajawuz al-istibdad wa tahqeeq maqasid al-shariah (Civil State: Towards overcoming authoritarianism & realizing maqasid al-shariah)*, Al-Shabakah Al-Arabiyyah, Beirut, 2015. Translated to: English, Italian, Malayalam, Bengali, & Malaysian 2016-2021 (also abbreviated and published by Tawasul, Rome, under the title: Lessons on Civil Society: Post-Islamism and Post-Secularism, 2020).

and justice) resulted in more interest in maqasid studies in national universities and research centers. Similarly, politicians and Islamic activists have been calling for the principles of maqasid as grounds for national unity in Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines. In India, although Shah Waliullah Dahlawi has applied maqasid thinking to his well-known seminal works on Islamic law, and despite the “maqasidi” thought of Allama Iqbal, maqasid has not been activated in the legal thinking in the Indian sub-continent, which remains largely and traditionally Hanafi. However, there has been a growing movement of translating the same works on maqasid from the Maqasid Series Project into the Indian languages. These initiatives are taken by the new generation of Muslims scholars, who are keen to bring the Islamic thought in the region to contemporary times, especially given the isolation of the Muslim community in India and its negative impact on their social and economic status.

On the other hand, and with a lot of input from the ideas that the IIIT Maqasid Publication Series offered, a new field of Islamic education that could be labelled “Applied Maqasid Studies” emerged, which I will discuss next within a theme of Maqasid for Islamic Education, a project at the International Peace College South Africa that Dr. Jamal, *rahimahullah*, supported in a major way during its foundational phase.

Maqasid for Islamic Education: International Peace College South Africa

In side discussions during an international conference in Amman, Jordan, dedicated to the life and works of Dr. Ismail Faruqi, *rahimahullah*,¹³ Dr. Jamal Barzinji told me about the dynamics of his working with Dr. Faruqi on the first draft of the Islamization of Knowledge proposal.¹⁴ At the heart of the project was an attempt to renew Islamic education, hence the project of the International Islamic University of Malaysia, which Dr. Jamal eventually moved to Malaysia to work on as a Dean of the Kulliyyah (Faculty) of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences during the nineties. Based on these discussions with him, as well as other discussions on the experiment of Al-Sharq University in Beirut, and given the complications in the Arab World since the “Arab Spring” of 2011, I proposed an educational project to embody the maqasid thought in South Africa, particularly at the International Peace College South Africa (IPSA).

¹³ in which I presented a critical review of Dr. Faruqi’s Ph.D thesis in Philosophy, titled: *On Justifying the Good*, from Indiana University in 1952, and analyzed its impact on his later thought in the Islamization of Knowledge project as well as the Atlas of the Islamic World project. My article was published as: Jasser Auda, “*Qira’ah fi utrouhat al-doctoura lil-marhoum Ismail al-Faruqi: hawla ithbat al-khair*” (A Critical Reading of Ismail al-Faruqi’s PhD Thesis: On Justifying the Good), Islamization of Knowledge Journal, International Institute of Islamic Thought, Virginia, Fall 2013.

¹⁴ Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan, by Ismail al-Faruqi, originally published in 1982 by IIIT.

My links in South Africa were also initiated by Dr. Jamal, *rahimahullah*. In a visit in 2009 to Cape Town's Governor at the time, Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool, Dr. Jamal kindly gifted him a copy of my book, *Maqasid al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*. Ambassador Rasool found the approach to be very useful for coming up with new ideas that balance the principles of Islam with the needs of modern governance, as he mentioned in several forums.¹⁵ More importantly, this kind gesture from Dr. Jamal started a special friendship between me and Ambassador Ebrahim, whom I later met in LA, California, in 2012, and since then co-lectured with him on many fora in a number of countries. He was also the first Chairman of the Board of the Maqasid Institute, which I will talk about next.

And given that Ambassador Ebrahim was a former Chancellor of the International Peace College South Africa (IPSA), he invited me to establish an Honours Degree and a Graduate School there. We met several times in Doha, Qatar, Cape Town, South Africa, and Virginia, USA, and we finally proposed to Dr. Jamal a project for that Graduate School and a proposal for "Al-Shatibi Chair for Maqasid Studies", which I have been occupying since that time until today. It was one of the last recommendations, which IIIT considered to be a will, from Dr. Jamal, *rahimahullah*, that IIIT-Board approves the funding that we needed to start the project. After his passing, *rahimahullah*, they were kind enough to offer funding for one year - may Allah reward them. So far, this program graduated over 100 students (with the Honours Degree, in addition to 12 students from the Masters Program who are currently writing their theses). The credit of this achievement goes to the ideas and support of Dr. Jamal, *rahimahullah*.

Maqasid for Building institutions: Maqasid Institute

In 2012, while I was teaching at the Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies,¹⁶ Dr. Jamal invited me to move to Virginia and work with him at IIIT, with a mandate to establish programs for development of the Maqasid Thought. After consultations with the IIIT Stakeholders, I was invited as a "Visiting Scholar" with a purely-research mandate. I met with Dr. Jamal in Doha, Qatar, in 2013, and discussed with him the prospects of building a Research Center of Maqasid Studies at Qatar Foundation, as well as the idea of opening an office/branch of IIIT in Qatar. When both ideas did not meet success in the Doha decision-making circles, I talked with Dr. Jamal online and suggested forming a new and independent research center - in the UK - that would focus on the research, education and dissemination of the maqasid thought. He asked

¹⁵ Watch for example this lecture that Amb. Ebrahim Rasool gave at the IIIT Hospitality Suite at the ISNA Convention 2016: "Maqasid Al- Shariah as a Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach by Jasser Auda".

¹⁶ Now merged into the College of Islamic Studies under the Hamad Bin Khalifa University.

me how I was going to fund it, and my answer was that I was going to write up a proposal and send it to him. He was kind enough to smile and agree, even though I did not have a chance to meet with him afterwards due to his illness, *rahimahullah*. At the end of 2015, Dr. Basma Abdelgafar and I made a plan for a new research center, the Maqasid Institute. It was first registered in the UK, with help from Sheikh Sharif Banna, who is currently a Board Member at the Maqasid Institute, then eventually, since 2017, registered in the United States.

Today, the Maqasid Institute (MI) has its own “New Maqasid Methodology” (NMM) as its intellectual identity; has its own Journal of Contemporary Maqasid Studies (JCMS), which has prominent scholars on its advisory and editorial boards and is already a reference in academic circles; a Maqasid Research Network (MRN) with over 1000 researchers from more than 60 countries; a monthly newsletter to stay in touch with members; trained hundreds of graduate students from all over the world to use NMM in their research; formed 6 specialized research groups with an aim to apply the new maqasid methodology in various disciplines; appointed senior fellows and scholars to teach graduate courses in various subjects in a number of colleges and universities; launched its own Moodle-based MOOCs online program; built its own e-library that has thousands of references on Maqasid research; and last but not least, held its first Maqasid Institute Retreat for its fellows and staff worldwide in Istanbul, Turkey in July 2022.¹⁷

Legacy

It is narrated that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said: “When the son/daughter of Adam dies, his/her good deeds will stop except for seven deeds: 1. knowledge that he/she taught, 2. a pious offspring that he/she left behind, 3. a book that he/she bequeathed, 4. a mosque that he/she built, 5. a shelter for the refugees that he/she constructed, 6. a channel that he/she unblocked, and 7. a charity that he/she decided in their life while healthy, which will continue after their death”.¹⁸ I believe - and Allah knows best - that Dr. Jamal left a legacy in all of these seven areas of perpetual good deeds that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) talked about. The “pious offspring” are his children who continue to pray for him and carry out his philanthropy work on his behalf and through his foundation, The Barzinji Foundation, May Allah bless them all.

¹⁷ Please refer to MI’s website and annual reports at www.maqasid.org

¹⁸ Narrated by Ibn Majah Hadith No. 200. Also narrated by Muslim 1631, Abu Dawud 2880, Tirmidhi 1376, Nasa’i 3651. Ibn Majah: Ibn Majah, Muhammad. Ed. Shu’aib Al-Arna’ut et al. Beirut: Al-Risalah, 2009; Abu Dawud: Abu Dawud, Sulaiman. Al-Sunan. Ed. Shu’aib Al-Arna’ut. Beirut: Al-Risalah, 2009; Muslim: Muslim, Abu al-Hussain. Sahih Muslim. Ed. Mohammad Foad Abdul-Baqi. Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, w.d.; Nasa’i: Al-Nasa’i, Ahmad. Al-Sunan Al-Kubra. Ed. Shu’aib Al-Arna’ut. Beirut: Al-Risalah, 2001; Tirmidhi: Al-Tirmidhi, Mohammad. Al-Jami’ Al-Sahih Sunan a-Tirmidhi. Ed. Ahmad M. Shakir. Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-`arabi, w.d.

However, one of Dr. Jamal's children has a lot to do with the Maqasid as a Strategic Project for the Muslim Ummah, especially the Maqasid Institute. I did not have a chance to meet with Dr. Jamal's son, Dr. Zaid Barzinji, except in 2017 when he took a course with me for the first time. Since then, Dr. Zaid occupied the position of the Executive Director of the Maqasid Institute, and since then the Maqasid Institute grew under his leadership from a small classroom at the IPSA College in South Africa, into a significant international organization, as explained above.

I once had Iftar (Ramadan breaking of the fasting) and prayed *Taraweeh* (Ramadan Night Prayers) with Dr. Jamal in his home in Virginia. It was only the two of us and he insisted that I lead the prayers and recite the Quran for both of us, despite the usual tradition that the most senior and knowledgeable of the congregation leads, especially in his own home. After we prayed, he said he liked my recitation, Allah bless him, and advised me to focus on the studies of the Quran. Combining all the ideas from the projects that I talked about in this essay, I am currently applying his advice and in fact, focusing solely on the Quran in my current research, teaching and advocacy. May Allah reward our *Ustadh* for his precious advice.¹⁹

In this essay, in the spirit of the intellectual and strategic discussions that I used to have with our *Ustadh* Dr. Jamal Barzinji, I mixed discussing some scholarly matters with the narrating of some of my personal memories and impressions. The goal of the essay, however, is to remember our *Ustadh* and pray for him. I owe a great deal to Dr. Jamal, and his reward is only from Allah, for his mentorship and support throughout my journey, especially that decade when I worked with him. It was a decade that I will always be proud of and thank Allah for.

¹⁹ I am grateful to the Barzinji Foundation and Mirza Foundation for their support of the Maqasid Institute and the Quranic Studies project, may Allah bless them all.