



**The Qur'ānic Verses of Bequest and the Apparent Conflict of Texts:
A *Maqāṣidī Tafṣīr* Approach to *Ta'āruḍ al-Nuṣūṣ***

الوصية القرآنية وإشكالية تعارض النصوص : مقارنة التفسير المقاصدي

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Abstract

This article examines the apparent conflict (*ta'āruḍ al-nuṣūṣ*) between Qur'ān 2:180 concerning bequest (*waṣiyyah*) and Qur'ān 4:11–12 regarding fixed inheritance shares (*farā'id*), through the lens of *tafsīr maqāṣidī*. Classical exegetes largely viewed the verse of bequest as abrogated (*mansūkh*) by inheritance verses, whereas contemporary scholars tend to reject total abrogation, interpreting the relationship as specification (*takhṣīṣ*) or restriction (*taqyīd*). By employing a *maqāṣid*-based hermeneutical framework, this study argues that the perceived conflict is not substantive but methodological and semantic. The article concludes that Qur'ānic legislation on bequest and inheritance represents an integrative legal-ethical system aimed at preserving justice, social solidarity, and family equilibrium.

Keywords: *Ta'āruḍ al-Nuṣūṣ, Waṣiyyah, Farā'id, Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, Tafsīr Maqāṣidī*

1. Introduction

The Qur'ān, as *kitāb hudan li al-nās*, establishes foundational legal and ethical principles governing all aspects of human life, including inheritance and bequest. Among the most debated issues in Islamic legal theory is the apparent contradiction between Qur'ān 2:180, which mandates bequest to parents and relatives, and Qur'ān 4:11–12, which delineates fixed inheritance shares.

Classical *uṣūl al-fiqh* scholars introduced the concept of *ta'āruḍ al-nuṣūṣ* to address such tensions. However, leading theorists such as al-Shāṭibī emphasized that real contradiction cannot exist within divine revelation, as all texts originate from divine wisdom (*al-ḥikmah al-ilāhiyyah*).^[1] This article argues that the problem lies not in the texts themselves but in the methodology of interpretation.

2. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative-analytical method, combining:

1. Textual analysis of Qur'ānic verses on bequest and inheritance
2. Comparative tafsīr between classical and contemporary exegetes
3. Maqāṣid-based hermeneutics to reconcile apparent textual tension

Primary sources include classical tafsīr works (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Rāzī) and contemporary maqāṣid-oriented scholarship (Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Zuḥaylī, al-Raysūnī). The analytical framework prioritizes *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* as the interpretive criterion (*mīzān al-ta'wīl*).

3. Discussion

3.1 Ta'āruḍ al-Nuṣūṣ in Uṣūl al-Fiqh

Al-Āmidī defines *ta'āruḍ* as the meeting of two equally authoritative legal proofs whose reconciliation appears impossible without abrogation or preference.[2] al-Shāṭibī rejects literalist readings of such conflicts, asserting that genuine contradiction in revelation is inconceivable.[3]

In the context of verses on wills and inheritance, *ta'āruḍ al-nuṣūṣ* when Verse 180 of Surah al-Baqarah instructs parents and relatives to leave a will, while Verses 11-12 of Surah al-Nisa' emphasize the definite distribution of inheritance, raising the question of whether the first verse has been abrogated by the second.

The Qur'an, as a book of guidance for mankind, contains basic legal principles that govern all aspects of human life, including inheritance and wills. Verses on wills occupy a significant position in the structure of Islamic law because they concern ownership rights and the distribution of property after death. In this case, Verse 180 of Surah al-Baqarah is the conceptual starting point of the will command: "It is obligatory upon you, when one of you comes (signs of) death, if he leaves a large amount of property, (make a will) for his parents and close relatives in a ma'rūf manner; (this is) an obligation upon those who are pious.

However, this verse raises a hermeneutic problem when faced with the inheritance verses in verses 11-12 of Surah al-Nisa' which explicitly stipulate certain parts for heirs. These verses appear to give rise to a phenomenon that by The scholars called *ta'āruḍ al-nuṣūṣ*, which is the impression of a conflict between the Islamic texts.[4] A classic debate arose: is the will verse in al-Baqarah annulled by the faraidh (inheritance) verses in al-Nisā', or are the two complementary in the context of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*?

In classical tafsir literature, the majority of commentators, such as al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 AH), al-Qurṭubī (d. 671 AH), and Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 AH), held the view that the will verse

was *mansūkh* (abrogated) by the *faraidh* verse in Surah al-Nisā'. [5] They asserted that after the revelation of detailed inheritance provisions, a will was no longer necessary for heirs who had already received a fixed share. On the other hand, contemporary commentaries such as Muḥammad Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āshūr (d. 1393 AH) and Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī (d. 1436 AH) reject the existence of total *naskh*, interpreting that wills remain valid for non-heirs or in the context of family benefits that are not covered by the *faraidh* system. [6]

The *maqāsidī tafsir* approach offers an integrative alternative to this problem. *Tafsir maqāsidī* seeks to understand the meaning of the verse not only in the text (*lafz*) and context (*siyāq*), but also in the objectives of the *shari'a* (*maqṣad al-sharī'ah*) that underlie it, such as justice, benefit and protection of rights. In this framework, *ta'āruḍ al-nuṣūṣ* is not seen as a substantial contradiction, but rather as a semantic dynamic that shows the breadth of Islamic law in addressing human needs across time. This study is important because an overly textual interpretation of the will verses can create a rigid impression and limit the ethical function of the will as a form of moral responsibility to family and society. [7] Conversely, the *maqāsidī* approach opens the possibility of a more contextual interpretation, without ignoring the normative principles of the Qur'an. Ibn 'Āshūr, in *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, emphasized that the will verses have a *maqṣad insānī* (humanitarian purpose) that cannot be completely eliminated, as they contain values of social solidarity and compassion between family members. [8]

3.2 Classical Exegetical Approaches

Al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, and Ibn Kathīr maintain that Qur'ān 2:180 was abrogated by inheritance verses. [9] Ibn Kathīr, however, nuances this by asserting that the moral value of bequest remains, even if its legal obligation was transformed. [10] Al-Rāzī interprets this shift as *tadarruj al-tashrī'*, not cancellation of purpose. [11]

Classical exegetes such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, and Ibn Kathīr emphasized the existence of *naskh*, while contemporary exegetes such as Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Marāghī, and al-Zuḥaylī reject this view. These, and call them simply *takhṣīṣ* (specialization) or *taqyīd* (restriction). [12] Thus, understanding *ta'āruḍ al-nuṣūṣ* requires a comprehensive reading—not stopping at the external form of the text, but also understanding the objective orientation of the *Shari'a* (*maqāsid al-sharī'ah*).

The concept of *nasikh-mansukh* is a mechanism for resolving the impression of conflict between verses. Linguistically, *naskh* means to delete or replace something with another. [13] In the context of the Qur'an, *naskh* means the abolition of the law established by the previous verse by the verse that comes after it on the grounds of changes in

conditions and the benefit of the people. The Qur'an itself mentions this concept in QS. al-Baqarah [2]:106: "Whichever verse We have entrusted or We have caused (humans) to forget, We will surely bring a better one." Thereof or something equivalent to it.[14]

Within this framework, some commentators, such as al-Tabarī and al-Qurṭubī, believe that verse 180 of Surah al-Baqarah is annulled by verses 11-12 of Surah al-Nisa', because the detailed inheritance system in Surah al-Nisa' is considered to supersede the general provisions in the will verse. However, this view has been criticized by commentators.[15]

3.3 Contemporary Perspectives

Ibn 'Āshūr argues that abrogation should not be assumed where harmonization is possible.[16] He contends that bequest retains its normative relevance for non-heirs. Similarly, Wahbah al-Zuhaylī describes the tension as *ta'āruḍ maḥzarī*, resolved through restriction rather than nullification.[17]

Contemporary scholars such as al-Zuhaylī and Ibn 'Āshūr argue that there is no substantial naskh, because the will verses still apply to those who do not inherit.[18] According to Ibn 'Āshūr, naskh should not be used indiscriminately, because no verse completely negates another.[19] Instead, they merely limit (*taqyīd*) and specify (*takhṣīṣ*) the application of certain verses. Thus, the law of wills in Surah al-Baqarah, verse 180, retains normative relevance in certain social contexts.

In the context of *maqāṣidī* interpretation, *ta'āruḍ* resolution places greater emphasis on maintaining universal sharia values such as 'adl (justice), raḥmah (compassion), and ḥifẓ al-māl (protection of property). These principles demonstrate that the meaning of Qur'anic law does not simply change, but transforms according to the needs of the public interest. With this approach, verses that appear *ta'āruḍ* (such as those on wills and inheritance) can be understood as two sides of a single, broader goal: maintaining a balance between individual and family rights in the distribution of property. Therefore, an interpretation that emphasizes *maqāṣid* can help us understand that the verses on wills are not abolished but rather are given functional limitations to align with the principles of justice and public interest.

Al-Ṭabarī views that the *ta'āruḍ* between the verses on wills and the verses on inheritance is not a fundamental contradiction, but rather a *naskh bayānī* (abolition of the law with a new explanation). Wills are still prescribed for non-heirs, as stated in the hadith of the Prophet ﷺ: «لَا وَصِيَّةَ لَوَارِثٍ» "There is no will for the heir." Thus, the meaning of verse al-Baqarah [2]:180 is not completely abolished, but its function is shifted to be a will

for non-heirs.

In *al-Jāmi‘ li Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, al-Qurṭubī emphasizes that the verse on wills has two layers of law: first, as a moral obligation for the deceased; and second, as *syar’i* law that is specific to the condition of Muslims before the *faraidh* decree. He considers that the *ta’āruḍ* that appears between the will verse and the inheritance verse can be reconciled with a *taqyīd* (restriction) approach. The will verses are *mutḥlaq* and then limited (*‘muqayyad*) by the inheritance verses. This means that the testamentary order remains valid as long as it does not conflict with the inheritance rights that have been determined by Allah.^[20]

Ibn Kathīr in *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm* also stated that the will verse initially required every Muslim who had property to write a will for their parents and relatives. However, after the revelation of the *faraidh* verse, this law became *sunnah*, not obligatory.^[Ibn Kathīr emphasized that the *naskh* here is *tadbīrī* (replacement of the legal system), not *naqḍ al-ḥukm* (cancellation of moral values). This shows that the Qur’an does not cancel the principle of will, but transfers its function and object so as not to cause inequality in the rights of heirs.^[21]

In *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, al-Rāzī argues that the testament verse has high *maqāṣid* value, namely protecting the rights of families who did not have an inheritance share in the early days of Islam. He sees the relationship between the will verses and the inheritance verses not as a contradiction, but as a stage of *tadarruj al-tashrī‘* (legal gradualism).^[According to al-Rāzī, each text has a certain *maqṣad* (*shar‘i* goal); When the *maqṣad* has been achieved through another text (such as the *faraidh* verse), the previous law is transformed, not erased. This is a form of harmonization of *ta‘āruḍ al-nuṣuṣ* according to the *maqāṣidī*.^[22]

Musthafa al-Marāghī, in his *Tafsīr al-Marāghī*, emphasizes the social and moral aspects of the will verse. He rejects the notion that the verse has been completely abolished, as the will remains relevant for strengthening social solidarity, especially for poor relatives and non-heirs.^[According to him, the will and *faraidh* verses complement each other, not contradict each other. *Ta‘āruḍ* only occurs if someone understands the text literally without considering the *maqṣad* and the context in which the verse was revealed.^[23]

In *Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān*, Sayyid Quṭb highlights that wills are a moral instrument in the Islamic social system to ensure justice between generations. He views that the change in law from obligatory to *sunnah* is not a form of *naskh*, but rather the evolution of *maqāṣid sharī‘ah* towards a balance between individual and social rights.^[Sayyid Quṭb also

considers that ta'āruḍ al-nuṣūṣ in this context actually shows the dynamics of shari'a in regulating human life, not a contradiction of the revealed text.[^][24]

In al-Tafsīr al-Munīr, Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī considers that the testament verse still has a strong legal basis. He called the relationship between the will and the faraidh verses ta'āruḍ maḥzarī (apparent contradiction). The will verses were not abrogated, but their application was limited by the principle of lā wasiyyata li-wārith.[^] Al-Zuḥaylī emphasized that the principle of maqāṣid in the law of wills is to protect the rights of the weak and prevent economic inequality within the family. He rejects the view that the verse of the will is no longer relevant, because its spirit remains the moral basis of modern Islamic law.[^][25]

Comparative Analysis and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah between Verse 180 of Surah al-Baqarah and Verses 11-12 of Surah al-Nisa> can be understood through the principle of taka>mul (integration) and not ta'āruḍ (contradiction). Both contain maqāṣid that complement each other in maintaining justice and social balance. According to al-Shāṭibī, the maqāṣid of Islamic law has the main purpose of realizing benefit (jalb al-maṣlaḥah) and preventing damage (dar' al-mafsadah). In this context, the verse of al-Baqarah functions as a moral basis to foster awareness of individual social responsibility, while the verse of al-Nisā' functions as a legal regulation that ensures structural justice.[26]

Al-Raysūnī calls this as al-intiqāl al-tashrī'ī al-maqāṣidī, namely the gradual transition from individual morality to social law without erasing the meaning of the previous maqāṣidīyah. Thus, "nasakh" mentioned by some classical scholars does not mean the elimination of maqṣad, but a change in the form of application of law from ijtihād al-afrād to tanzīm al-jamā'ah.[27]

Maqṣad ḥifẓ al-māl (Property Protection) in the will and heirs verse both serve to maintain the economic stability of the family and prevent disputes after death. In al-Muwāfaqāt, al-Shāṭibī asserted that ḥifẓ al-māl does not only mean protecting ownership, but also ensuring the circulation of property in the corridor of justice. Therefore, the detailed division of inheritance in surah al-Nisā' is a manifestation of the systemic maqṣad ḥifẓ al-māl. While his Maqṣad ḥifẓ al-nasl (Protection of Descendants), both wills and heirs are oriented towards the protection of lineage and family relationships. Wills foster love and a sense of responsibility towards weak relatives, while heirs ensure the continuity of the family in financial terms. Ibn 'Āshūr asserted that the inheritance verse contains social wisdom to maintain tawāzul al-'alāqāt al-usariyyah (the balance of family relations).[28]

Maqṣad al-'adl wa al-musāwah (Justice and Equality), that Justice in this context is

not arithmetic, but functional. The two-to-one division between men and women reflects the distribution of social responsibility, not differences in human values. Al-Qurṭubī and Ibn Kathīr both asserted that the main purpose of inheritance law is to ensure 'adl al-taklīf (proportional justice), not nominal equality. Thus, the two verses uphold the same maqṣad in two different levels: al-Baqarah:180 → inculcates the ethics of personal responsibility (maqṣad khuluqī), while al-Nisā':11-12 → establishes social justice and law (maqṣad tashrī'ī).[29] The maqāṣidī tafsīr approach seeks to reveal the divine meaning (maqṣad al-shāri') behind the text of the Qur'an. In the context of a will, the main purpose is to protect individual rights and social balance in the distribution of property. Al-Syātibī asserted that the main maqāṣid of sharia are ḥifẓ al-māl (preservation of property), ḥifẓ al-nasl (preservation of descendants), and iqāmat al-'adl (enforcement of justice).[^][30] This approach does not only look at the text literally, but interprets the verse by considering its purpose, historical context, and social reality. So, ta'āruḍ al-nuṣūṣ — when two verses appear to contradict each other — is resolved through the reading of maqāṣidī, not simply with the concept of nasikh-mansukh.

Methodologically, tafsīr maqāṣidī sees ta'āruḍ al-nuṣūṣ not as a substantive contradiction, but as a difference in the level of purpose (maqṣad). Each sentence has a different but interrelated application space. For example: The will verse (Verse 180 of surat al-Baqarah) asserts al-ḥaqq al-akhlāqī (moral right) to make a will; The faraidh verse (verses 11-12 of Surah al-Nisā') establishes al-ḥaqq al-shar'ī (legal rights) for the heirs; thus, what appears to be ta'āruḍ is actually tawāfuq maqāṣidī the congruence of purpose between moral ethics and positive law. Ibn 'Āshūr emphasizes that maqāṣid must be the mīzān al-ta'wīl (interpretation scale) when there is tension in the text.[^][31]

3.4 A Maqāṣidī Reconciliation

From a maqāṣid perspective, bequest serves *ḥifẓ al-māl* and *ḥifẓ al-nasl* by fostering social solidarity and preventing economic neglect. Inheritance verses institutionalize justice at the structural level, while bequest maintains ethical flexibility. Al-Raysūnī characterizes this evolution as *al-intiqāl al-tashrī'ī al-maqāṣidī*, a transformation of form without negating purpose.[32] Thus, Qur'ān 2:180 establishes moral responsibility (*al-ḥaqq al-akhlāqī*), while Qur'ān 4:11–12 enforces legal entitlement (*al-ḥaqq al-shar'ī*). What appears as *ta'āruḍ* is in fact *tawāfuq maqāṣidī*.

In this context, the maqāṣidī approach gives rise to a new concept, namely the change of legal form without negating its original *maslahah*.[^][33] In other words, inheritance law replaces will law in practical aspects, but the moral value of wills remains

alive as a principle of social justice. The majority of Mufassir in interpreting the sentence *li al-Wa>lidayn wa al-Aqrabi>n* with the meaning for both parents and immediate family which means as recipients of *khairan* (property) so that there is a contradictory assessment with verses 11-12 of *al-Nisa'* and or hadith *la> wasiyyata li> wa>rith*, this is because the letter *la>m* means *li tamlik*. It is different if the letter *la>m* means *ila>* (to) which means both parents and or relatives as recipients of the will message who will carry out the message and who The benefits of inherited wealth will be distributed to the groups mentioned in verse 177 of *Al-Baqarah*.

Furthermore, the rationale for this message is that children send messages to their parents or older relatives, who are automatically more mature and more knowledgeable about social life, regarding the fate of groups in need of assistance from those with excess wealth.

According to the author, there is no *ta'arud* (reconciliation) between verse 180 of *Al-Baqarah* and verses 11-12 of *Al-Nisa'* because the conditions for *ta'arud* are not met. Furthermore, in *Surah Al-Nisa'*, the phrase "*wasiyyah*" is repeated three times, which is the stipulation for the distribution of inheritance after the *wasiyat* is fulfilled. Likewise, the conditions for *ta'arud* are not met between verse 180 of *Al-Baqarah* and the hadith "*la wasiyyat li wa>rith*" (the "*law of wasiyyat li wa>rith*"), because the verse is *qat'i al-wuru>d* (due to *mutawatir*), while the hadith is a hadith.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the apparent conflict between the Qur'ānic verses of bequest and inheritance does not constitute genuine *ta'arud al-nuṣūṣ*. Rather, it reflects a multi-layered legislative system in which ethical responsibility and legal regulation operate synergistically. Through a *maqāṣid*-based approach, the verses are shown to complement rather than negate one another. Consequently, claims of total abrogation overlook the enduring moral and social objectives embedded in Qur'ānic legislation.

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[4] Manna‘ al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāḥith fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān* (Kairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1973), 276.

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- [27] Aḥmad al-Raysūnī, *Nazariyyat al-Maqāṣid ...* , 153.
- [28] Ibid. 155
- [29] Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi‘ li Ahkām al-Qur’ān*, juz 5, 59. Look Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*, juz 2, 136
- [30] Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi‘ li Ahkām al-Qur’ān ...*, II : 254
- [31] Ibn ‘Āshūr, *Maqāṣid al-Syarī‘ah ...*, 193.
- [32] Aḥmad al-Raysūnī, *Nazariyyat al-Maqāṣid ‘inda al-Imām al-Shāṭibī* (Rabat: Dār al-Amān, 1995), 289.
- [33] Aḥmad al-Raysūnī, *Nazariyyat al-Maqāṣid ...*, 167.