

Cross-disciplinary Approach in the Field of Sharī'ah: Roots, Significance and Manifestations

Rostom Boukermouche

University of Ghardaia, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences,
boukermouche.rostom@univ-ghardaia.edu.dz

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Abstract:

The field of Islamic studies aims at the conception of working scholars, influential thinkers, ambitious reformers, and great leaders. These outputs are not attainable without a cross-disciplinary approach within the sharī'ah sphere on the one hand, and between sharī'ah and the fields of study needed by its specialist, on the other hand, for a better understanding of the complexity of reality in the aim of a successful guidance of it.

That being said, this article tries to answer the following question:

How important is the cross-disciplinary approach in the sharī'ah field? What is the reality of this complementarity? What are its manifestations and effects?

The aim of the article is to investigate the concept of cross-disciplinary approach, its importance and its roots back to the dawn of the Islamic era. Also, it aims at discussing the reality of such complementarity and its implications for the sharī'ah field and its specialists as well.

Keywords: Cross-disciplinary approach, Sharī'ah, fiqh, ḥadīth, uṣūl al-fiqh.

1. Introduction:

The cross-disciplinary approach in different fields has been one of the most interesting and investigated topics in the academic arena in recent years. This debate concerns many fields, as the aim is the opening of fields of study on each other for the sake of mutual collaboration. Inquiring about the complementarity between the different fields of study and the sharī'ah disciplines in particular by sharī'ah specialists is of great importance from a methodological stand point .

The objective is to conceive a viable and productive approach for the sharī'ah field as the ultimate objective of its disciplines -irrespective of their branches- is to reach or -at least- approach the right judgment dictated by Allah, the almighty, and this to achieve the highest purpose of the sharī'ah, which is Muslims' slavery to Allah, the almighty. Indeed, this cannot be realized without deploying the efforts necessary to conceive the best approaches for the proper Islamic scientific research. The field of Islamic studies aims at the conception of working scholars, influential thinkers, ambitious reformers, and great leaders. These outputs are not attainable without a cross-disciplinary approach both within sharī'ah sphere, and between sharī'ah and the fields of study needed by the specialist for a better understanding of the complexity of reality in the aim of a successful guidance of it.

Sharī'ah scholars were at the time interested in mental and empirical fields of study too, deeming them complementary to their training, such as logic, astronomy and medicine . . . Those fields assisted them in understanding the sacred text and the reality around them. Over time, the sharī'ah disciplines gradually broke away from each other, and the need for specialization emerged. Moreover, the ties with some mental and experimental fields were weakened, leading to them being an attack target.

That being said, this article tries to answer the following question:

How important is the cross-disciplinary approach within the sharī'ah field? What is the reality of this integration? What are its manifestations and effects?

The question above can be broken down into the questions below:

- What is the cross-disciplinary approach?
- What is the legitimacy of the approach in question?
- What is the reality of interdisciplinary collaboration between sharī'ah disciplines? What are its impacts?

This article aims at studying the concept of interdisciplinary collaboration and its importance, tracking back its roots to the dawn of legislation era. We also inquire about the reasons behind the necessity of such approach, as well as finally discussing the reality of such integration, and its implications for the field of sharī'ah and its specialists as well.

Many contributions to approach this problem have taken place, including the international scientific conference on the epistemological complementarity and its role in enabling university education to contribute to the efforts of promoting renaissance in the Islamic world, organized by the World's Institute of Islamic Thought in cooperation with Abubakr Belgaid University

in Tlemcen, Algeria, and the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars on April 14-16, 2010. It is noteworthy that the conference focused on the interdisciplinary collaboration of religious and cosmic knowledge spheres, including the human and social sciences, and thus excluding the complementarity within the sharī'ah field, which is a different research problem.

2. Cross-disciplinary approach in the Islamic studies and the rationale behind:

2.1. cross-disciplinary approach in the different fields of study:

Cross-disciplinary approach is a modern term with its concept being as old as centuries ago, as we will see later. A number of definitions are given in the following :

a) It is the cooperation and exchange of scientific benefits between disciplines. In other words, it is the inter-exchange of insights between disciplines through taking and giving for the best interest of man and the universe (Shahid, 2013).

b) It is an intellectual trend aiming at removing the boundaries between fields of study and reorganizing the fields of knowledge through the synthesis of disciplines. (Al-‘Āmirī, 2018, p.985)

c) It is the gathering of multiple and distinct elements, in research or education, taken from two or more disciplines to achieve new intellectual performance that cannot be obtained otherwise. (Al-‘Āmirī, 2018, p.985)

These definitions are close to each other with regard to the concept in question, indicating that epistemological integration is the mutual benefit between disciplines. After being distinct and far apart from one another, the need arose to reconnect the fields of study, with the aim of achieving novel knowledge and a beneficial outcome that could not be achieved without that integration.

2.2. reasons for complementarity among Islamic disciplines

One of the intellectual phenomena evident in the history of the Islamic heritage is the complementarity between various sharī'ah disciplines. This complementarity (integration, interdisciplinary collaboration, cross-disciplinary approach) was a dominant feature, leading many scholars to

explore the reasons and motives behind it, as well as its impact. The main reasons for this integration can be summarized as follows:

2.2.1. Integration is an inherent characteristic of Islam as a whole:

Islam is a comprehensive religion that addresses all aspects of human life—both religious and worldly, including beliefs, ethics, and behavior. Islam does not accept a selective approach to religion, where some aspects are embraced while others are neglected; rather, it urges adherence to all aspects in a balanced and holistic manner. The integration between Islamic disciplines is a manifestation of this principle.

2.2.2. The simplicity of the disciplines at their inception and the lack of clear distinctions between them:

At the early ages of their formation, the disciplines had not yet been separated or become distinctly defined. For example, the term *fiqh* (jurisprudence) originally referred to understanding religion in general, rather than being limited to legal rulings; it encompassed practical, ethical, and doctrinal aspects.

2.2.3. The centrality of the Quranic text:

which is the primary reference for Muslims. The Quran is a comprehensive book of guidance that includes theology, jurisprudence, ethics, legal rulings, methodology, and even references to natural sciences. This necessitated that scholars engage with various fields of knowledge to achieve a deeper understanding of the Quran. Since the Quran is a complete and perfect book, fragmenting its study can lead to misunderstandings. This explains why such integration is particularly evident in *tefsīr* (Quranic exegesis). (Al-‘Āmirī, 2018, p.985; Benaomar, 2016)

Additionally, the Quranic verses addressing the areas of worship, beliefs, spirituality, and humans’ purification are interconnected and not isolated from social, political, or cosmic references. The Quran aims to shape a balanced and holistic human being and a cooperative, ethical society. Without this integration, the Quran’s intended impact on individuals and communities alike would be diminished, potentially leading to unintended negative effects.

2.2.4. The uniqueness of the reference for Muslims:

The Muslim’s life is founded on the divine law (*Sharī’ah*), which is primarily based on the Quran. The Quran serves as the ultimate source from

which Muslims derive their goals, regulate their actions, and develop their knowledge. It is the foundational text of the Islamic civilization and the central reference for intellectual and scientific efforts. As a result, all fields of Islamic knowledge, despite their diversity, ultimately trace their intellectual framework back to the Quran and serve its objectives (Benaomar, 2016). Ibn Juzayy states: "Know that discussing the Quran requires knowledge of twelve disciplines: tefsīr, qira'at (recitations), aḥkam (legal rulings), naskh (abrogation), ḥadīth (prophet's speeches), qasas (historical narratives), tasawwuf (spirituality), uṣūl al-dīn (theology), uṣūl al-fiqh (jurisprudential principles), language, grammar, and rhetoric. Tafsīr is the primary focus, while the other disciplines serve as tools to aid its understanding or are related to it or derived from it". (Ibn Juzayy, 1995, vol.1, p.15)

2.2.5. The contributions of polymath scholars who mastered multiple sciences:

Many scholars accumulated knowledge in various Islamic disciplines, such as tefsīr, ḥadīth, uṣūl al-fiqh, fiqh, maqasid (higher objectives of sharī'ah), linguistics, and kalam (Islamic theology). Some specialized in one field while excelling in others, such as Ibn Ḥazm, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Ḥajar, Ibn al-ʿArabi al-Maliki, Al-Ghazali, Al-Warjalani, Al-Nawawi, Al-Suyūti, and Muhammad Atfiyyash. Others bridged the gap between Islamic disciplines and logic or empirical sciences, such as medicine, engineering, astronomy, and philosophy, for example, Abu Ya'qub Al-Warjalani, Al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Abu Bakr Al-Razi, and Al-Kindi. Their intellectual synthesis led to cross-effect between different sciences. One manifestation of this was the tradition of encyclopedic scholarship, where Islamic scholars - irrespective of their school affiliation- produced comprehensive works covering multiple disciplines. (Al-ʿĀmirī, 2018, p.986; Benaomar, 2016; Aqilah Hussein, 2012, p.159)

3. Manifestations of integration among Islamic disciplines:

Despite the diversity of disciplines in Islamic civilization, they completed each other. One of the clearest manifestations of this integration is their interdependence—rarely does a discipline exist without relying on one or more other disciplines. (Haider, 2018, p.1331) Among the fields that best exemplify this interconnection are the Islamic disciplines in all their branches and forms, including fiqh, uṣūl al-fiqh, theology (kalam), tafsir, and others. These disciplines are among the most prominent in reflecting the

principle of interrelation that exists between the various fields of knowledge developed in the Islamic civilization. In the following, we will attempt to highlight some of the manifestations of this integration, focusing on selected examples.

3.1. the concept of shari'ah and fiqh

Shari'ah has two meanings: a general one and a specific one. The specific meaning refers to practical legal rulings (*aḥkām shar'īyyah 'amaliyyah*), while the general meaning encompasses both creed (*'aqidah*) and jurisprudence (Al-Bashir, 2018, p. 1077). Ibn al-Athir states: "The term *shar'* and *shari'ah* were mentioned repeatedly in ḥadīths in different contexts. They refer to what Allah has legislated for His servants in religion, meaning what He has prescribed and made obligatory. It is said: He legislated for them (*shara'a lahum*), and thus He is a legislator (*shari'*). When Allah legislates a religion, it means He manifests and clarifies it". (Ibn Al-Athir, 1979, p.2/460) Ibn Taymiyyah also says: "The terms *shari'ah*, *shar'*, and *shir'ah* encompass everything Allah has legislated, whether in beliefs or deeds". This latter meaning is the original one for the term *shari'ah*, as it refers to everything revealed in the religion of Allah through divine revelation, covering creed, jurisprudence, and ethics.

The term *fiqh* was also initially used to refer to all religious rulings. This is evident in the early definition by Imam Abu Ḥanifah, where he says: "Fiqh is knowing oneself, what it owes, and what is owed to it". (Al-Mahbubi, 1996, p.1/16) According to this definition, *fiqh* broadly refers to the understanding of the religion as a whole, including aspects of belief, practical rulings, interpretation, and more. In fact, *'aqidah* was originally referred to as "*al-fiqh al-akbar*" (the greater jurisprudence), confirming that it was considered part of *fiqh* in its wider sense. Later on, the term *fiqh* became restricted to practical legal rulings, while creed evolved into an independent field under the name of *'ilm al-kalam* (Islamic theology) or *uṣūl al-din*. One of the well-known definitions that limited *fiqh* to legal matters is: "Fiqh is the knowledge of practical legal rulings derived from detailed evidence". (Al-Isnawī, 1999, p.11)

If both terms—*shari'ah* and *fiqh*—originally referred to the comprehensive understanding of the religion, it means there was no separation between the various disciplines of the *shari'ah*—they were all seen as parts of one unified science, for every religious ruling is part of the *shari'ah* and every understanding of the religion is *fiqh*.

The Ibadis, for example, across different eras, have preserved this comprehensive understanding of fiqh in their writings. Al-Tiwajani remarks: “What is noticeable to whoever studies Omani fiqh is the preservation of Omani scholars of the correct view of Islamic sharī’ah, which is characterized by unity and comprehensiveness. For them, as for the prophet’s companions, their successors, and those who followed them, fiqh is knowing what the oneself owes and what is owed to it, without separating creed, ethics, acts of worship, or interactions from each other. Discussions on monotheism were part of fiqh, referred to as al-fiqh al-akbar before becoming independent under the label of science of kalam. In general, Ibadi works, particularly those from Oman, did not recognize this separation. Their books typically begin with chapters on monotheism or al-fiqh al-akbar, followed by knowledge and etiquette for the sharī’ah learner, then rulings on worship and interactions”. (Al-Tiwajni, 1996, Vol.3, p.123)

This concept was also summarized by Al-‘Awtabi in his book *Al-Dīya’* when describing his approach to authorship: “I have made this book one of principles and etiquettes, with chapters and sections. I did not exclude from it wondrous wisdom, rare sayings, notable proverbs, exquisite verses, traditions and reports, exhortations and poetry, since sciences intertwine in following one another, meanings overlap in their breadth, and disciplines call upon other disciplines. Every topic brings along further sub-topics”. (Al-Awtabi, 2015. Vol.1, p.198)

3.2. uṣūl al-fiqh, jurisprudence, and creed

The relationship between uṣūl al-fiqh and fiqh is well known and widely acknowledged. The primary objective of uṣūl al-fiqh is to establish the foundations and tools that assist the mujtahid (independent jurist) in deriving legal rulings.

Moreover, uṣūl al-fiqh has a strong connection with theological discussions and certain creedal concepts. Servitude and submission to Allah Almighty is one concept, among others, serving as the foundational pillar upon which the principles of uṣūl al-fiqh are built. Once this belief is affirmed, it naturally leads to accepting the authority of the Qur’an and the obligation to adhere to its commands and guidance.

Another example is the belief in the prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ and faith in his attributes such as truthfulness and trustworthiness—this is a theological matter upon which the authority of the Sunnah in uṣūl al-fiqh is

built. Imam al-Shafi'i states: "The perfection of faith—upon which everything else depends—is belief in Allah and His Messenger". (Al-Shafi'i, 1940, p.73) These foundational beliefs affirm the authority of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which are the two primary sources of Islamic legislation.

Furthermore, *maqasid al-shari'ah* (the meta-objectives of Islamic law), which are part of the broader scope of *uṣūl al-fiqh* and jurisprudential research, provide a valuable framework for correctly deriving legal rulings and ensuring the continuity and relevance of the divine law. However, excessive reliance on *maqasid* can lead to deviation from the divine law, as some may exploit these objectives to fulfill personal desires and whims. (Al-Khadimi, 1998, vol.2, p.109) The primary cause of such deviation is the neglect of the devotional aspect of legal rulings. Worship and servitude to Allah should always take precedence over all meta-objectives and interests. Indeed, there are legal rulings whose wisdom or objective may not be apparent to the Muslim or the mujtahid, and this obscurity itself has a divine purpose: to fulfill the ultimate meta-objective of all meta-objectives, being servitude to Allah.

Likewise, the jurist is in need of correcting his understanding and in being well-grounded in the fundamentals of creed, for it is this very creed that guides his behavior in the process of *ijtihad* and the derivation of legal rulings. If there is a flaw in his belief, it becomes a potential source of deviation and error in his jurisprudential efforts. Among the key elements he must internalize are an awareness of the worshiping aspect of legal rulings, and a constant consciousness of his accountability before Allah for the rulings he issues, as he attributes them to Allah Almighty. These two perspectives act as safeguards, preventing the jurist from taking his task lightly or rushing through his reasoning. Instead, they instill in him caution and diligence, steering him away from fanaticism and blind imitation, and encouraging him to continuously purify his intentions and refine his character.

Doctrinal concepts and theological understandings also play a vital role in breathing life and spirit into legal rulings. Without them, these rulings would become hollow shells—lifeless and inert—failing to impact those who are legally responsible, and contributing nothing to their spiritual or moral growth. In fact, this is the method of the Qur'an itself, which unites faith and belief on the one hand, with practical legal rulings on the other, never separating the two.

This integrated approach is clearly reflected in the Ibadi scholarly tradition. Many of their works combine various disciplines, especially theology and jurisprudence. Often, these works begin with a discussion on creed and its foundational principles before transitioning to jurisprudential topics. One example is *Kitab al-Wad'* by Abu Zakariyya al-Jannawni, which opens with *Kitab al-Tawhid* (The Book of Monotheism), followed by *Kitab al-Taharat* (The Book of Purifications) and other chapters on the various forms of worship. Similarly, *Talqin al-Subyan ma Yalzam al-Insan* by Imam al-Salimi begins with a section on what one must believe in the heart, then moves on to the required physical acts of worship.

3.3. Fiqh and Tafsir:

Tafsir plays a significant role in many legal rulings (*ahkam fiqhiyyah*), since the primary source of Islamic legislation is the Qur'an; the function of tafsir is to understand the text and derive meanings and rulings from it. Thus, it is essential to rely on the science of tafsir in the process of conceiving legal judgments. A flaw in understanding the Qur'anic text can lead to errors in legal deduction—for example, by failing to consider the overall objective of a surah, overlooking the broader aims of the Qur'an (*maqasid al-Qur'an*), or neglecting the verse's context—what comes before and after it.

3.4. ḥadith and fiqh

Hadith also has a significant impact on fiqh. A jurist must possess knowledge of the principles and terminology of ḥadith—its classifications such as *sahih* (authentic), *hasan* (good), *da'if* (weak), and *mawdu'* (fabricated). Based on this knowledge, the jurist judges whether or not a prophet's speech can be relied upon. Any deficiency in this regard may lead to reliance on weak or even fabricated ḥadiths, which in turn results in attributing rulings to Islamic law without a sound and authentic basis—an encroachment upon the integrity of the *sharī'ah*.

Moreover, the various sciences of ḥadith play a vital role in attaining correct understanding and deduction. These include *gharib al-ḥadith* (interpretation of rare or obscure terms), *nasikh wa mansukh* (abrogating and abrogated ḥadiths), *mushkil al-ḥadith* (problematic narrations), and *mukhtalif al-ḥadith* (apparently conflicting narrations). All these disciplines emerged to serve the ḥadith of the Prophet ﷺ and, consequently, to support Fiqh, which relies heavily on Prophetic traditions.

4. Separation between the Islamic disciplines and its negative effects:

After being interwoven during the early stages of codification, the need for separating the Islamic disciplines has gradually emerged over time. This differentiation between various disciplines became necessary due to methodological requirements and the inevitability of specialization, especially in light of the expansion and increasing complexity of knowledge. In fact, distinguishing between different disciplines sometimes plays an important role in highlighting a particular field, drawing attention to it, and enabling deeper research—just as occurred when Imam al-Shāfi‘ī authored works on *usūl al-fiqh*, and Imam al-Shāṭibī wrote about *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*. Prior to their contributions, *usūl* consisted of scattered principles within *fiqh* discussions, and *maqāṣid* were embedded and somewhat obscured within *usūl*. By authoring dedicated works, these scholars helped clarify the importance of these fields, making them easier to grasp, explore, and apply.

Nevertheless, these disciplines do not function in isolation from one another. There must be integration and bridges built between them in order to produce sound knowledge. Without such cross-disciplinary engagement, numerous negative consequences can arise—consequences that can only be avoided through renewed efforts to interconnect these disciplines.

4.1. the separation between ḥadīth and fiqh:

A separation between *ḥadīth* and *fiqh* occurred at an early stage, despite the fact that each discipline is inherently dependent on the other and cannot function in isolation. As a result, there emerged a group of scholars primarily engaged in *fiqh* with insufficient attention to *ḥadīth* and its topics, and another group focused on *ḥadīth* with limited engagement in *fiqh*. A valuable and lengthy testimony to this dichotomy is found in the words of al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388 AH), who expressed his regret over this divide: “I observed that the scholars of our time have split into two factions: those of *ḥadīth* and tradition, and those of *fiqh* and reasoning. Yet neither group can dispense with the other in achieving their respective goals. *Ḥadīth* is like the foundation, while *fiqh* is like the structure that grows from it. A building without a foundation is destined to collapse, and a foundation without a building remains barren and desolate. Despite the proximity between these two groups in rank and location, and their mutual need for one another (...), I found them behaving like estranged brothers, failing to support or cooperate with each other. As for the *ḥadīth* scholars, most of them are overly preoccupied with narrations, collecting transmission routes, and pursuing

rare or odd ḥadīths—many of which are fabricated or distorted. They neglect the content, fail to comprehend meanings, derive rulings, or extract deeper wisdom. Some even criticize jurists, accusing them of opposing the Sunnah (...). On the other hand, the jurists and rationalists often pay attention to only a few ḥadīths, rarely distinguishing between sound and weak ones. They do not assess the quality of narrations and give little concern to using them as proof against opponents—unless those narrations support their favored schools or preconceived views ”...(Al-Khattabi, 1932, vol.1, p.03)

This separation has given rise to many issues, as highlighted by the quote above—such as jurists relying on ḥadīths of questionable authenticity due to their weak grounding in ḥadīth science.

Conversely, problems have also arisen among ḥadīth scholars who neglect *fiqh al-ḥadīth*—the jurisprudential understanding of prophetic traditions. They may overlook the need to interpret a ḥadīth in light of the Qur’an, other ḥadīths, or established legal principles. Even if a ḥadīth is classified as authentic, its authenticity is probabilistic, as it is based on scholarly judgment, which is often correct but still open to error. Thus, among the conditions for accepting a ḥadīth is assessing it in light of the fundamental principles of Islam, the Qur’an, and sound reason.

Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī said in *al-Luma’*: "If a trustworthy person transmits a hadith, it can be rejected for several reasons: the first being if it contradicts rational necessity, for revelation only comes with what reason can accept—not with what contradicts it. The second is if it contradicts the definitive text of the Qur’an or a widely-transmitted Sunnah, in which case it is deemed baseless or abrogated..." (Al-Shirazi, 2003, p.82). Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī similarly states in *al-Kifāyah*: "A solitary hadith (*khbar al-wāḥid*) is not accepted if it contradicts the dictates of reason, the definitive rulings of the Qur’an, well-established Sunnah, actions that carry the weight of Sunnah, or any decisive proof". (Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, p.432)

4.2. the separation between uṣūl al-fiqh and fiqh

Among the disciplines that have undergone separation is *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *fiqh*, despite the fact that their original nature is one of cohesion and integration. *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* was systematized and documented precisely to regulate the process of *ijtihād* and assist the jurist in deriving legal rulings. However, in practice, we observe a detachment of *uṣūl al-fiqh* from *fiqh* and a lack of its direct influence on legal rulings. Imam al-Shāṭibī set a criterion

for determining what belongs to *uṣūl al-fiqh* and what falls outside its scope. This criterion is directly linked to the purpose of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. He states, "Any issue recorded in *uṣūl al-fiqh* that does not lead to practical legal rulings or ethical guidelines, nor serves as an aid in deriving them, is misplaced within *uṣūl al-fiqh*". (Al-Shatibi, 1997, Vol.1, p.37)

The main reason for this separation is the excessive theorization in *uṣūl al-fiqh*, distancing it from practical jurisprudential *ijtihād* and the absence of concrete procedures that clarify how *uṣūlī* principles can be applied to practical legal issues. This is one of the clearest manifestations of the separation and lack of integration among the Islamic disciplines. Over time, an old gap has continued to grow, widening and deepening, between the theoretical approach of the *uṣūlīs* (legal theorists) and the practical approach of the *fuqahā'* (jurists). (Al-Bashir, 2018, p.1080)

Despite the fact that *uṣūl al-fiqh* is intended to provide principles that assist the jurist in deriving rulings, it is found that *uṣūlīs* focus on matters unrelated—or only weakly related—to this goal, instead of concentrating on issues that directly or indirectly impact legal *ijtihād*. As a result, jurists tend to disregard such theoretical discussions and classifications, perceiving them as distant from their realities and practical needs.

Ibn Khaldūn, in his *Muqaddimah*, points out that the deviation of sciences—particularly the instrumental sciences—occurs when they transition from being auxiliary disciplines meant to serve other fields to becoming independent ends in themselves. This deviation leads them away from their intended function and purpose. A prime example of this is logic (*manṭiq*). Originally, logic was meant to aid various sciences by distinguishing between sound and flawed definitions, among other applications. However, it became corrupted when it was treated as an independent discipline rather than an auxiliary tool. The same phenomenon occurred with *uṣūl al-fiqh* as well.

Ibn Khaldūn states: "As for the sciences that serve as tools for other disciplines, such as Arabic grammar, logic, and similar fields, they should only be studied insofar as they serve their intended purpose. Expanding discussions and multiplying subtopics within these fields deviates them from their function, as their true objective is to be instruments for other sciences, not ends in themselves. The further they stray from this role, the more they deviate from their purpose, and studying them becomes futile. Additionally,

their excessive complexity and numerous branches make mastery difficult. This is precisely what later scholars did with the disciplines of grammar, logic, and *uṣūl al-fiqh*. They expanded discussions, introduced excessive subtopics and arguments, and, in doing so, transformed these disciplines from being instrumental sciences into independent ends. As a result, they included analyses and issues that are unnecessary for the sciences they were meant to serve, making such discussions superfluous. This, in turn, has been detrimental to learners in general". (Ibn Khaldun, 1988, p.739)

Among the theoretical issues that *uṣūl al-fiqh* has focused on—without apparent impact on practical reality—are topics such as whether the Prophet (ﷺ) engaged in *ijtihād* before his prophethood and whether it is possible to be burdened with obligations beyond one's capacity. Other issues include theological debates and the imposition of unrealistic or overly strict conditions for *ijtihād* that are detached from practical reality, such as the question of whether *ijtihād* can be partial, despite the fact that reality has already settled this matter beyond doubt. (Al-Bashir, 2018, p.1080) In this regard, Al-Raysuni states: "One of the prevalent flaws among *uṣūl al-fiqh* scholars—especially those influenced by theological discourse—is their tendency toward excessive theoretical abstraction and adherence to logical sequences and necessities, regardless of practical legal application. Thus, we often find that theoretical *uṣūl al-fiqh* studies are in one realm, while practical jurisprudence—in the very same issue—is in another. Specifically, *uṣūl al-fiqh* discourse tends to be characterized by rigidity and restriction, whereas actual jurisprudential practice is marked by flexibility and ease". (Al-Raysuni and others, p.409)

All of this reveals the *uṣūl al-fiqh* scholars' obliviousness to the fact that the purpose of *uṣūl al-fiqh* is to serve legal *ijtihād* by providing guidance for the jurist and protecting them from errors in their legal reasoning. The aim of *uṣūl al-fiqh* cannot be to follow abstract theoretical reasoning or intellectual principles that distort the essence of *uṣūl al-fiqh* and confuse the reader's understanding of its discussions and rules. (Al-Bashir, 2018, p.1080)

Imam Al-Ghazali complained about the inclusion of non-usul (principles) in *uṣūl al-fiqh* when he said: "It was the theologians among the *uṣūl al-fiqh* scholars who most indulged in this, as the predominance of rhetoric in their character led them to blend it with their craft. Similarly, the love for language and grammar led some *uṣūl al-fiqh* scholars to mix a portion of grammar into *uṣūl al-fiqh*, mentioning the meanings of conjunctions and

grammatical interpretations, which are purely part of the science of grammar. Likewise, the love of jurisprudence led a group of jurists to mix many detailed issues of fiqh into the principles". (Al-Ghazali, Vol.1, p.09)

It is certain that learning the principles of *uṣūl al-fiqh* has its role, importance, and impact on *ijtihād*, but this alone is not enough. It is essential to be trained on how to use these *uṣūl al-fiqh* principles in deriving legal rulings. This is perhaps what motivated Imam Al-Zanjani to write his book "Takhreej al-Furoo' 'ala al-Usul", and others who wrote in the same direction with the same goal. In the introduction to his book, he says: "The evidence from which these rulings are derived is what we call *uṣūl al-fiqh*. It is clear to you that the branches are built upon the *usul*, and one who does not understand how to deduce them and does not grasp the connection between the rulings of the branches and their foundation, which is *uṣūl al-fiqh*, will not have the ability to deal successfully with the branches. The issues in the branches, despite their vastness and distant objectives, have known foundations and established rules; whoever does not know their principles will not have knowledge of them. Since I have not seen any of the scholars of the past or early jurists addressing this goal directly- but rather *uṣūl al-fiqh* scholars focused on the abstract principles- and the scholars of the branches transmitted the scattered issues without pointing out how they are linked to these principles, I wanted to offer a treatise to the researchers and scholars. Thus, I wrote this book, revealing the definite truth, clarifying the concerns of the inquiry, starting with the *uṣūl al-fiqh* issue to which the branches are referred in every rule, incorporating the *uṣūl al-fiqh* evidence from both sides, and then linking the branches that arise from them back to the *usul*... And I titled it Takhreej al-Furoo' 'ala al-usul to reflect its meaning". (Al-Zanjani, 1977, pp.35-34)

According to the text, one of the negative consequences of the separation between these two disciplines is the sterility of the method, as the learner is unable to produce and discuss legal rulings. The branches are studied independently of the *usul*, and the *usul* are studied separately from the branches, making it difficult to connect them. In the same context, Al-Isnawi wrote his book "Al-Tamhid fi Takhreej al-Furoo' 'ala al-Usul", and Al-Sharif al-Tilmassani also wrote a book titled "Miftah al-Wusool ila Binaa' al-Furoo' 'ala al-Usul."

4.3. separation between maqāṣid and fiqh

Closely linked to the separation between fiqh and uṣūl is also the separation between fiqh and maqāṣid. Originally, maqāṣid were part of uṣūl al-fiqh. However, some jurists tend to focus excessively on the literal wording of texts in their pursuit of legal rulings, neglecting the objectives behind those rulings—a tendency typical of the traditionalist (atharī) approach. On the other hand, some overly emphasize the maqāṣid to the point of partially neglecting the textual sources themselves. In fact, both approaches suffer from imbalance. The correct methodology necessitates considering the objectives and benefits, but within the boundaries of the textual wording and its linguistic possibilities.

Applying texts without regard to their intended objectives will inevitably lead to problems. Language is open to multiple interpretations, and it is not possible to narrow down the scope of disagreement in understanding a text, nor to arrive at the soundest opinion, without considering the maqāṣid-based context and the meanings that the text originally emerged within, whether from the Qur'an or the Sunnah. Ijtihād is not a purely mechanical or automatic process that relies solely on strict logical and linguistic rules to yield necessarily correct outcomes. Rather, it is a complex, integrated process that draws on a wide array of sciences and disciplines, while taking into account various contextual factors and variables in order to approach the truth as closely as possible.

One reason for this separation lies in the lack of early scholarly writing specifically dedicated to maqāṣid. This field was not systematically developed during the early centuries of Islamic scholarship, and only began to receive focused attention in the 8th century AH with the compilation of al-Muwāfaqāt by Imam al-Shāṭibī (d. 790 AH), who devoted a significant section of his work to the discussion of maqāṣid. Moreover, the nature of authorship in this field, and its tendency toward theoretical expansion and detailed abstraction, has limited its practical impact. This has led to calls for the activation and development of this discipline, and for linking it more closely to the practice of legal reasoning and ijtihād.

4.4. negative consequences of the separation between the Islamic disciplines:

The separation that has occurred between the various Islamic disciplines—including those previously mentioned and others not addressed—has led to several significant issues and negative consequences, including:

-The call to close the door of *ijtihād*: This arose due to the inability to find scholars proficient in the various interconnected disciplines of *sharī'ah* .

-Excessiveness, fanaticism, and division among scholars of different disciplines: For instance, scholars of *ḥadīth* often criticized jurists (*fuqahā'*) and those inclined to rational opinion (*ra'y*), while jurists criticized *ḥadīth* scholars in return. This is despite the fact that sound *ijtihād* requires proficiency in both fields. As Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī stated: “The application of *ḥadīth* is not sound without opinion (*ra'y*), and the application of opinion is not sound without *ḥadīth*.” (Al-Sarakhsi, 1993, Vol.2, p.113) Furthermore, as Imam al-Ghazālī observed: “A learner of knowledge should not abandon any discipline or branch of knowledge without at least exploring its purpose and methodology. And if life permits and circumstances allow, he should strive for depth in it, for all sciences are interconnected and mutually supportive. Even basic familiarity prevents one from becoming hostile toward a field due to ignorance—since people tend to oppose what they do not understand. Allah says: ‘And since they did not accept guidance from it, they will say: This is an ancient falsehood’ [Qur'an, 46:11] ”. (Al-Ghazali, 1964, p.348)

- Missed opportunities for intellectual and civilizational progress: In the early centuries of Islamic history, the integration of disciplines contributed to creativity and scholarly productivity across various fields. However, as each science became isolated from the others, scholars became overly preoccupied with theorizing within their own respective disciplines. This led to compartmentalization and stagnation, with knowledge confined to increasingly narrow areas, and scholars became distracted from the true purposes of their fields by excessive theorization and branching into unnecessary details.

- Imbalance and distortion in presenting Islamic legal rulings: For example, there is often a disproportionate focus on the punishment for theft—though it is mentioned in only one Qur'anic verse and a handful of *ḥadīths*—while ignoring the broader system of teachings related to wealth. These include methods of lawful acquisition and growth of wealth, its role and impact on life, channels for its spending, mechanisms for social solidarity, cooperation and integration, and the obligations of justice and aiding the needy. . . The legal ruling on theft was intended to protect this broader system, not to be the starting point for its establishment—as might be mistakenly assumed from an isolated and narrow emphasis on the punishment alone.

5. Conclusion

Several key findings can be deduced from the discussion above:

- Integration between sciences in general—and among Islamic disciplines in particular—holds great importance, especially considering that legal and religious issues are inherently complex and cannot be resolved from a single perspective. Rather, achieving the most accurate understanding requires the convergence of multiple viewpoints through the incorporation of various disciplines and fields.
- Among all fields of knowledge, Islamic disciplines are the most naturally suited to such integration, due to several inherent factors. These include their shared service to the Islamic faith—whose core characteristics include harmony and interconnectedness—the unity of source and reference (foremost among them the Qur’an), and the common objective of all these disciplines: to serve the Qur’an, a comprehensive guide for all aspects of human life.
- This integration among Islamic disciplines has taken on various forms and manifestations. It was a lived reality in the early Islamic era but gradually gave way to increasing specialization and separation over time.
- Separation between various Islamic disciplines, such as ḥadīth, fiqh, uṣūl, and maqāṣid dates back to an early age—something that should not have happened. This disconnection has led to a number of negative consequences.
- Educational and training institutions have played a role in reinforcing this divide. At the same time, however, they are also in a position to play a pivotal role in restoring integration. These institutions are entrusted with shaping future scholars in the field of sharī’ah, but doing so requires serious efforts and possibly a departure from the conventional educational models used in other fields and specializations.

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