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# Compatibility of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with Maqasid al-Shariah: Are there any Missing Goals

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## Abstract

After the partial success of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs-2015), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) introduced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs-2030) for the next fifteen years. The seventeen SDGs have been adopted by almost all member countries of the UN. These goals mainly cover three dimensions of sustainable development, namely social, economic and environmental, and they aim to ensure the sustainability of resources and life on earth. Muslims constitute more than 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the total world population and there are fifty-seven sovereign states in the world with a Muslim majority. This paper is an attempt to evaluate SDGs in the light of Islamic teachings pertaining to environmental sustainability and human development. The Islamic vision of peace, progress and its continuity was expounded by early Muslim thinkers in the form of *Maqasid al-Shariah*. The objective of this paper is to show how SDGs are compatible with *Maqasid al-Shariah*. It also identifies the gaps in the existing SDGs in the light of Islamic teachings. This study used primary Shariah sources to show the similarities between SDGs introduced by UNDP and the axioms of *Maqasid al-Shariah*. Additionally, the shortcomings of SDGs when compared with the axioms of *Maqasid al-Shariah* are identified. These shortcomings are related to justice, ethics, and humanity. The improvements suggested in this study may make SDGs universal. Hence, this is a distinctive study which has attempted to augment the globally recognized socio-economic objectives of SDGs. Consequently, it allows for a better understanding of SDGs and ensures their applicability in Muslim societies.

**Keywords:** *Maqasid al-Shariah* (MS), Missing Goals (MS), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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## Introduction

Islam is a divine religion that offers guidance to all human beings in all fields of life. Islam's teachings are flawless in the sense that these are complete and applicable to all peoples of the world at all times (Quran; 5:3)<sup>1</sup>. This feature makes Islam's teaching so broad that it covers all challenges that one might encounter or is already encountering in the world. Islamic doctrines define its adherents as a single group or body from the beginning. Any injury to any portion of the body must be felt throughout the entire body (Quran; 49:10; 3:103). The Holy Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said, “*The example of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, cooperation, and sympathies is that of one body; when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches, because of sleeplessness and fever*” (Sahih Muslim, No. 6586).

Islam requires governments to establish institutions for public welfare as Almighty Allah says, “*Those (Muslim rulers) who, if We give them power in the land, (they) order for Iqamat-as-Salat. [i.e. to perform the five compulsory congregational Salat (prayers) (the males in mosques)], to pay the Zakat and they enjoin Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do), and forbid Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism and all that Islam has forbidden) [i.e. they make the Quran as the law of their country in all the spheres of life]. And with Allah rests the end of (all) matters (of creatures)*” (Quran; 22: 41). In one of his comments, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) also gave advice on how to live a peaceful and dignified life. In this statement the Prophet (SAW) said, “*By the one in whose hand is my soul! You will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I inform you of a matter which if you do it, will love one another? Spread Salam among each other*” (Al-Tirmidhi, No. 2904).

Based on the above given *Ayaat* and *Ahadith*, it can be inferred that Islam sets a very clear agenda to achieve peace, progress, and prosperity for human beings. The purpose of this paper is to examine the extent to which Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs – 2030) are in conformity with the

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<sup>1</sup>The first number in the references represent surah number and second number represent ayah number

Islamic vision of development.<sup>2</sup> The Islamic doctrine of socioeconomic development compiled by early Muslim scholars in the form of *Maqasid al-Shariah*, originally presented by Imam al-Juwayni in his book *al-Burhan fi-Usul-ul-Fiqh*. Afterwards, a five-dimensional classification of the *Maqasid* was proposed by Imam Abu-Hamid Al-Ghazali and Imam Abu Ishaq Al-Shatibi. These objectives are based on five dimensions, namely protection and development of *faith (deen)*, self (*nafs*), intellect (*aql*), progeny (*nasl*), and property (*maal*).

Different experts have attempted to map the SDGs against *Maqasid al-Shariah*. However, such efforts have frequently resulted in the establishment of a set of connections between them. We use primary Shariah texts, such as the Quran and the Ahadith, to investigate the relationship between SDGs and *Maqasid al-Shariah* in this study. We also offer a critique of the SDGs by pointing out several socioeconomic development components that are absent. These are morals, ethics, and justice-related issues. An overview of a few papers that explore sustainable development in the perspective of Islamic law is provided below before we begin this debate.

Al Haq and Abd Wahab (2019) related the three aspects of development namely sustainability of resources, attainment of *Maqasid al-Shariah*, and poverty alleviation. According to the authors, sustainability benefits the future generation since it conserves resources used during current development. It is the same as *Hifz ul Nasl*, which is the fourth dimension of *Maqasid al-Shariah*. They claim that according to the *Shariah*, the conservation of worldly resources entirely depends upon human beings. According to the authors, current generations are trustees of resources and accountable for the unjustified use of the given resources.

Abdullah (2018) examined the potential of *Waqf* in the field of development by discussing *Waqf*, SDGs, and *Maqasid al-Shariah*. According to the author, the Islamic institution of *Waqf* plays a significant role in realizing many vital goals of SDGs which are consistent with the

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<sup>2</sup>The Islamic perspective on development emphasizes both material and spiritual growth. Morals, ethics, and humanism are all part of spiritual development.

axioms of *Maqasid al-Shariah*. The study provides a framework for a possible collaboration between the institution of *Waqf* and SDGs.

Hasan (2010) discussed the meaning of sustainable development and its implications both from the conventional and Islamic perspectives. His definition of sustainable development is focused on environment friendly growth. According to the author, in the conventional approach of growth and development, there is a tradeoff between output maximization and environmental degradation. He particularly mentioned the definition of sustainable development given by the Brundtland Commission, formerly the World Commission on Environment and Development, in 1987. It states that sustainable development “*meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*” (UN, n.d.). The author mapped the Islamic perspective onto material growth and environmental concerns by frequently quoting references from the *Holy Quran* and *Ahadith* of the Prophet (SAW)<sup>3</sup>. In his opinion, the variation in Islamic and non-Islamic approaches is due to the difference in their worldviews. He concluded that the Islamic approach is more protective of the environment since it incorporates the moral, ethical, and social responsibilities of all inhabitants of the planet.

Dariah et al. (2016) discussed how SDGs can be effectively implemented in Muslim countries with a different ideological perspective. They explored three relationships: human beings and *Allah (SWT)*, human beings and other human beings, and human beings and the environment based on the *Shariah* perspective. They developed a connection between the above three relationships using SDGs. According to the conclusion reached by the worthy authors, Islamic sources not only provide enough details regarding the three above mentioned relationships but also pave the way forward on how to implement these relationships to achieve successful end-ups.

According to Ismail and Sheikh (2017) SDGs are in line with the Islamic spirit and philosophy. According to the authors, the Islamic approach to welfare is a combination of spiritual, intellectual, and economic perspectives. *Maqasid al-Shariah* strengthen moral consciousness, develop

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<sup>3</sup>For example, see (Quran 28:77, Sunan Abu Dawood, No. 2038)

pro-social behavior and raise environmental concerns that ultimately lead to the fulfilment of SDGs. Moreover, Islamic socioeconomic institutions of *Zakat* and *Waqf* work informally and effectively to achieve many non-viable but commercially vital projects.

This article looks at how Muslim countries with various socioeconomic, cultural, and spiritual contexts might implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The basic contrast between the Islamic vision of development and the SDGs must be understood here. Spiritual or moral well-being, according to the Islamic perspective on growth, is the key to all forms of progress. For this purpose, we look more closely at the UNDP's SDGs to see how they relate to the *Maqasid al-Shariah* proposed by Imam Shatibi and others.

### **Compatibility of SDGs with *Maqasid al-Shariah***

Sustainable Development Goals are opted by a much wider group of people because of their focus on human capabilities and development. All of these goals are directly meant to improve the human condition and circumstances. This human centered approach, which has rightly been incorporated into SDGs, seems to be very compatible with the five stated dimensions of *Maqasid al-Shariah*,

In what follows, we first determine the alignment of SDGs with the axioms of *Maqasid al-Shariah*. In this section, a brief description of each individual goal and its corresponding dimension of *Maqasid al-Shariah* is provided. Further, in the proceeding section, some important dimensions (related to morality and ethics) of socioeconomic development are identified and discussed.

#### **SDG 2.1**

“End poverty in all its forms everywhere” According to the Global Multidimensional Report 2020, across 107 countries of the world which are home to 76% of the population, 1.3 billion people (22%) are multidimensionally poor. Two-third of multidimensionally poor people live in middle-income countries (OPHI, [2020](#)).

This objective is categorically addressed under *Hifz ul Maal*, which is the fifth dimension of *Maqasid al-Shariah*. Islam views poverty as a curse

that needs to be eradicated through productive efforts. It is considered a collective responsibility (*farad kifayah*) of the society to take care of the needs of all of its disadvantaged members. The common term used in the *Shariah* sources for charity is *Sadaqah*. It is known as *Zakat* when it takes the form of a compulsory levy required to be paid by eligible rich Muslims. Also, when *Sadaqah* results in the flow of benefits of a permanent nature, it is known as *Waqf* or *Sadaqah Jariah* (Hassan & Ashraf, [2010](#); Ali et al., [2015](#); Shirazi & Amin, [2009](#)).

## SDG 2.2

“End hunger, through food security and sustainable agriculture”. Hunger is also measured through undernourishment, which is an inability of the victims to meet the necessary calorie requirements. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization’s (FAO – UN) statistical pocket report of 2019, the situation of people facing undernourishment has further deteriorated in recent years, where more than 820 million people come under the definition of hunger (10.08% of the world population).

The issue of food and hunger is related to the second (*Hifz ul Nafs*) and third (*Hifz ul Nasl*) dimensions of *Maqasid al-Shariah*. There are a number of *Shariah* sources which deal with the issue of agriculture and food security. On the importance of charity in the fight against hunger, *Allah* (SWT) said, “*And they give food, in spite of their love for it (or for the love of Him), to Miskin (poor), the orphan, and the captive, (Saying): "We feed you seeking Allah's Countenance only. We wish for no reward, nor thanks from you"* (Quran; 76:8-9). The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: “*Give food to the hungry, visit the sick and set free the captives.*” (Sahih Al-Bukhari, No. 552). The Holy Prophet (SAW) said, “*He does not have faith in me who spends the night satiated while he knows that the neighbor to his side is hungry*” (Al-Silsila-tus-Sahihah, No.387). Hence, the existence of *eeman* (faith) encourages caring behavior among people.

## SDG 2.3

“Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages”. This goal deals with the treatment of fatal diseases and ensuring overall happiness which comes under the ambit of the protection of life, intellect, and family (*Hifz ul Nafs, Hifz ul Aql, and Hifz ul Nasl*). Islamic teachings

emphasize healthcare and provide principles for a safe, secured, and healthy life. The Prophet (SAW) exhorted Muslims to seek medical treatment and discouraged the use of any unlawful (*haram*) objects. Narrated Abu al-Darda: The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, “*Allah has sent both the diseases and the cure and he has appointed a cure for every disease, so treat yourself medically but use nothing unlawful*” (Sunan Abu Dawood, No.3874).

Indeed, a believer with a good health would be more proficient in fulfilling his duties towards *Allah* (SWT) and towards his fellow human beings. The Prophet (SAW) said: “*The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah SWA than the weak believer, although both are good*” (Sunan Ibn-e-Majah, No.79). Several dinner etiquettes and guidelines have been prescribed by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to advocate a healthy lifestyle. He advised against over-eating and encouraged the sharing of food with the destitute and the deprived (*Fuqra o Masakeen*). Similarly, the majority of *Ulema* claim that smoking is highly undesirable if not altogether *haram*. Indeed, over eating and smoking both are sources of wastage and cause serious medical issues.

## SDG 2.4

“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. This goal focuses on providing optimum education for all without any discrimination since it is a basic right. It is the third objective of *Maqasid al-Shariah* and is known as the protection of intellect (*Hifz ul Aql*). Islamic emphasis on learning and education is evident from the very first revelation (*Wahi*) which started with the word read, “*Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists)*” (Quran; 96:1). Almighty *Allah* admires knowledgeable people. He says, “*It is only men of understanding who will remember (i.e. get a lesson from Allah's Signs and Verses)?*” (Quran; 39:9).

On the importance of education and learning, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) used to pray that “*My Lord! Increase me in knowledge*” (Quran; 20:114). He also said, “*Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim*” (Sunan Ibn-e-Majah, No. 224). On the significance of the dissemination of knowledge, the Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said,



“A father gives his child nothing better than a good education” (Sunan Al-Tirmidhi, No. 1952). Similarly, in another *Hadith*, it is mentioned, “When a man dies, his acts come to an end, but three, recurring charity, or knowledge (by which people benefit), or a pious son, who prays for him (the deceased)” (Sahih Muslim, No.4223).

The two Ahadith mentioned above draw an interesting parallel between education and a running charity (Waqf), both of which provide a steady stream of reward to their facilitator. Throughout Islamic history, the institution of Waqf has prioritized providing free education. Waqf funds have helped to create a number of world-class Muslim universities. Egypt's Jamiat ul Azhar is one example. In reality, in today's commercialized and corporate world, it is critical to develop better educational institutes so that everyone can receive a high-quality education.

## SDG 2.5

“Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. The subject of women empowerment is covered under the heading of *Hifz ul Nasl*, which is the fourth dimension of *Maqasid al-Shariah*. Superficially, it seems that the world has achieved a lot in terms of gender equality, however, women are still facing discrimination both inside and outside their homes. Islam designates men and women with different social roles. Indeed, they should balance each other to form an ideal family unit. The Quran declares that human beings are created in pairs. This is evident from the following verse, “And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect” (Quran; 30:21).

The Quran has clearly described the rights of women. Men are advised to treat them gently. For example, in one verse it is narrated “O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will, and you should not treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the Mahr you have given them, unless they commit open illegal sexual intercourse. And live with them honorably. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings through it a great deal of good” (Quran; 4:19).

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is reported to have said in his farewell pilgrimage to men to treat their women kindly. The men have accepted them (the women) as trust from GOD (Sahih Muslim; No. 2590). He warned the men against usurping the rights of women since they are the weak party in the contract. *“I forbid usurpation of the right of two weak persons – the orphan and the woman”* (Sunan Ibn-e-Maja, No78). In line with the Islamic vision of a balanced society, women are entitled to have an equal access to health, education, job opportunities, and fair participation in economic activities and decision-making.

### **SDG 2.6**

“Ensure access to water and sanitation for all”. Water is a need that can’t be substituted. This is the reason that the provision of water is considered the collective responsibility of the society. Throughout Islamic history, the provision of water has been regarded as a basic need fulfilled through the institution of *Waqf*. The provision of water is based on the principles of the protection of life and future generations and is therefore discussed under *Hifz ul Nafs* and *Hifz ul Nasl*. When the early Muslims migrated to Madina, they faced water shortage. Hence, they approached the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to resolve this issue. Based on the directions of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), the only well of drinking water in Madina was bought by Hazrat Uthman bin Affan (RTA) from a Jew and water was made available free of cost to everybody in Madina. This noblest of examples set by the companion of the Prophet (SAW) imparts two lessons: firstly, the importance of the institution of *Waqf* in the provision of the basic necessities of life to everyone and secondly, it acts as a deterrence against profiteering from the provision of the basic necessities of life such as water. It is important to mention here that back then the provision of water was not discriminatory and water was available to both Muslims and non-Muslims (Sunan Nisai; No. 3637).

There are numerous passages in Islamic literature – including the Quran and Ahadith – that attempt to maintain excellent cleanliness and health. Cleanliness and purification are not optional in Islam; rather, they are stated to be a part of the faith. Five times a day, all Muslims are obligated to pray. They must clean themselves completely before saying their prayers, which involves going to the bathroom and making ablution. As a result, cleanliness

is a must for praying. Allah Almighty says in the Quran, “*Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves (by taking a bath and cleaning and washing thoroughly their private parts, bodies, for their prayers, etc.)*” (Quran; 2:222).

### **SDG 2.7**

“Affordable and clean energy”. Human productivity and growth depend upon the availability of renewable energy and power. Additionally, a clean and affordable source of energy would ensure the ease of access and opportunities of growth for everyone. Renewable energy increases the infrastructure and capability of developing countries by supplying up-to-date and sustainable energy services. The accessibility of a healthy and high-tech environment has been taken up in the fourth and fifth dimensions of *Maqasid al-Shariah*, which demand the protection of life and the wealth of nations (*Hifz ul Nasl and Hifz ul Maal*). The teachings of *Shariah* encourage the use of innovative and affordable ways of making a living and argue for an accessible and convenient living environment for everybody.

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, “*Facilitate things to people and do not make it hard for them, and give them good tidings and do not make them run away*” (Sahih Bukhari, No. 69). For this purpose, cooperation and coordination between people at all levels is necessary.

### **SDG 2.8**

“Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all”. The contemporary world suffers from lack of decent work opportunities. In the Islamic context, social contract translates into a collective obligation called *Fard Kifayah* and has been discussed under *Hifz ul Maal*, the fifth dimension of *Maqasid al-Shariah*. As per the Islamic teachings, the provision of the basic necessities of life to everyone is a collective responsibility.

Similarly, there is instruction that pushes followers to be more productive and to play a useful role. “*And when the prayer is ended, then disperse in the land and seek of Allah's bounty, and remember Allah much, that ye may be successful*” (Quran; 62: 10). The Prophet (SAW) underlined the significance of earning a livelihood when he said, “*The best of your*

*provision is what you earn, and your children are part of what you earn”* (Ibn-e-Majah, No.2290).

Islam encourages the well-off members of the society to look after the poor. It has institutionalized the phenomenon of charity by establishing a permanent flow of resources from the very rich to the very poor. It is important to mention here that while Islam promotes charity and philanthropic behavior in the rich people from the giver’s point of view, at the same time, it discourages the dependence of capable individuals on charity from the recipient’s point of view.

### **SDG 2.9**

“Industry, innovation and infrastructure”. Industry, infrastructure, and innovation are incredibly important factors. They include better facilities for roads, information and communication technologies, sanitation, electrical power, and water. The low infrastructure of developing countries decreases their productivity by roughly 40%. A strong infrastructure provides better job opportunities to the masses. It is said that every job in manufacturing creates 2.2 jobs in other sectors.

Industry, innovation and infrastructure are jointly covered in the dimensions of *Hifz ul Nasl* and *Hifz ul Maal*, which involve the protection and progression of progeny, business, and property. Islamic teachings related to commerce also strongly recommend fairness in trade dealings. In this regard, the Qur’an says, “*And give full measure when you measure and weigh with a balance that is straight. That is good (advantageous) and better in the end*” (Quran; 17:35). In another place, the Holy Qur’an says, “*Woe to Al-Mutaffifin [those who give less in measure and weight (decrease the rights of others)], Those who, when they have to receive by measure from men, demand full measure, and when they have to give by measure or weight to men, give less than due. Think they not that they will be resurrected (for reckoning),*” (Quran; 83:1-4). Furthermore, Islam also emphasizes fulfilling contractual obligations in mutual exchange. The Qur’an says, “*O you who believe! Fulfill (your) obligations*”, (Quran; 5:1).

### **SDG 2.10**

“Reduce inequality within and among countries”. Gross inequality counteracts social justice and equity and is close to *Hifz ul Maal* (the fifth

dimension). Societies across the globe have experienced significant economic growth in recent years. Still, gross inequalities in income and in access to health and education still exist. In many countries, a large share of income goes to the top one-two percent of the population. Scholars are increasingly concerned and inclined to change the focus of policies from generating mere economic growth to an inclusive approach based on the dimensions of justice, equity, and sustainability of the environment.

The just distribution of resources is a key focus in the Islamic economic approach. Several Quranic verses and *Ahadith* of the Prophet (SAW) address this issue. In essence, Islam recognizes the concept of private property ownership and progeny inheritance. It identifies income disparities between persons based on their different abilities and resources. In Islam, however, redistributive mechanisms such as Zakat, Sadqah, and the institution of Waqf, which moderate and diminish inequality, are available to ensure economic fairness. (Quran; 59:7). For example, in the Holy Quran it is said, *“And in their properties there was the right of the beggar, and the Mahrum (the poor who does not ask the others)”* (Quran; 51:19).

According to Islamic resource distribution, returns should be proportional to the amount of labour put in, and not created through resource monopoly or other illegal / illegitimate ways such as interest, gambling, or hoarding. In addition, Islam encourages the adoption of pragmatic and practical methods for wealth generation and distribution, such as trade (Bai) and cooperation (Mudarabah, Musharakah).

Islam also deals with disparity at a spiritual level by labelling such inequality as a test. It is said in the Holy Quran, *“And wish not for the things in which Allah has made some of you excel others. For men, there is a reward for what they have earned, (and likewise) for women there is a reward for what they have earned, and ask Allah of His Bounty. Surely, Allah is Ever All Knower of everything”* (Quran; 4: 32).

## **SDG 2.11**

“Sustainable cities and communities”. The Islamic approach to peaceful and progressive societies highlights the significance of interdependence and mutual reliance of all living species on the planet. *“There is not a moving*

*(living) creature on earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you” (Quran; 6: 38)*

The Quran advises human beings not to play with the Creator’s divine balance (here referred to as ‘measure’) when it says, *“And the heaven He has raised high, and He has set up the Balance. In order that you may not transgress (due) balance, and observe the weight with equity and do not make the balance deficient” (Quran; 55: 7-9)*. The protection and prosperity of cities and communities is the inherent purpose of the fourth objective of *Maqasid al-Shariah* known as *Hifz ul Nasl*.

### **SDG 2.12**

“Responsible consumption and production”. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN, almost half of the total food produce goes wasted, while one out of every nine people in the world suffers from hunger. The implication of this goal required people to avoid food wastage during consumption and production. It intends to use worldly resources in an efficient way and to preserve them for generations to come. This goal is comparable with *Hifz ul Maal* and *Hifz ul Nasl*, which are the fourth and fifth dimensions of *Maqasid al-Shariah*.

Islamic principles are very clear regarding the usage of resources and discourage conspicuous consumption and unnecessary spending. On this subject, the Quran says, *“and waste not by extravagance. Verily, He likes not Al-Musrifun (those who waste by extravagance)” (Quran; 6: 141)*. Conversely, the Quran promotes an attitude of moderation while dealing with worldly resources when it says, *“And those, who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly, but hold a medium (way) between those (extremes)” (Quran; 25: 67)*

On the topic of production, Islam allows ownership rights, profit motive, the use of profits for consumption, and further investment. However, it discourages the accumulation of wealth and hoarding. Indeed, the Quran says, *“And those who hoard up gold and silver (Al-Kanz: the money, the Zakat of which has not been paid), and spend it not in the Way of Allah, -announce unto them a painful torment” (Al-Quran; 9: 34)*.

### **SDG 2.13**

“Climate action”. The climate and the natural environment of the world is deteriorating rapidly. It is affecting severely people’s lives and businesses. If this trend continues, more destruction will follow in the future. Due to environmental degradation, sea levels are rising, weather patterns are changing, and the emission of greenhouse gases is at the highest level. It has been forecasted that if necessary measures are not adopted, the world’s temperature can rise up to three degree centigrade in this century (United Nation, [2019](#)).

Huge efforts are required to preserve and conserve the environment. Islamic philosophy of life and living provides the necessary motivation and deterministic rewards for favorable action towards promoting positive externalities in the environment. In this regard, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, “*Whoever plants trees, God will give him reward to the extent of their fruit*” (Musnad Ahmed, No. 415). This objective is rightly addressed in *Hifz ul Nasl*, which is the fourth dimension of *Maqasid al-Shariah*. Human beings, as vicegerents of God on earth, have the mission of faithfully observing the injunctions given by their Creator.

Due to the Islamic view of life and death, Muslims believe that they can enter heaven (Jannah) if they pray, repent on their wrongdoings, and actively do good for the sake of others. This belief promotes socially responsible behavior among Muslims. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, “*If the Resurrection were established upon one of you while he has in his hand a sapling, then let him plant it*” (Musnad Ahmad, No. 12776).

During our finite lifetime, we must utilize and protect the given resources of the planet as trustees. While benefitting from everything that has been provided, we should not forget to pass on the resources to the next generation in the same condition that we inherited them. Ideally, we should also be caring about animals, birds, and even insects which are also created for the benefit of human beings.

### **SDG 2.14**

“Life below water”. Our weather, rainwater, drinking water, coastlines, climate, much of our food, and the oxygen in the air we breathe are all

provided and regulated by the sea. This goal is covered under *Hifz ul Nasl* (the protection of progeny).

Holy Quran provides direct instructions regarding the responsible use of the planet's resources since their preservation would keep the earth habitable for generations to come. The Quran says, "*Evil (sins and disobedience of Allah, etc.) has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of men have earned (by oppression and evil deeds, etc.), that Allah may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return (by repenting to Allah, and begging His Pardon)*" (Quran; 30:41).

### **SDG 2.15**

"Life on Land". Owing to unjustified human behavior, deforestation has caused several forests to disappear, forever. Forests cover almost 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the earth's surface. They do not only provide food to human beings and animals but are also a source of tackling climate change and maintaining biodiversity. If the trend of deforestation continues, it will become a serious threat to the goal of sustainable development. The significance of environment and forests is addressed under the following saying of the Prophet (SAW), "*If any Muslim plants any plant and a human being or any animal eats of it, he will be rewarded as if he had given that much as charity*" (Sahih Bukhari, No. 6012). In this regard, there are many verses of the Holy Quran and many traditions of the Holy Prophet (SAW) that provide a line of action to conserve resources and protect the environment. It is the supreme duty of human beings to maintain the balance of life on earth in order to keep it habitable for the future generations. This duty is a part of the divine objectives of the *Shariah*. The sustainability of life on earth is very much related to the objective of posterity (*nasl*) and a better future for human beings.

### **SDG 2.16**

"Peace, justice and strong institutions". Peaceful, just and inclusive societies are a prerequisite to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the UN. The notions of peace, justice, fairness and strong institutions are inherent to the Islamic vision of success (known as *Falah*). The Quran asserts, "*It is those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah and*



*worship none but Him Alone) and confuse not their belief with Zulm (wrong i.e. by worshipping others besides Allah), for them (only) there is security and they are the guided” (Quran; 6:82).*

In the *Shariah* law, it is important that people of all ethnicities and faith feel safe and secure enough to live freely without fear. This notion is described in *Hifz ul Nafs* and *Hifz ul Nasl* (the protection of life and society), which comprise the second and fourth dimensions of *Maqasid al-Shariah*. In order to improve the application of SDGs, we need to create operational and inclusive public institutions that can deliver quality education and healthcare and implement fair economic policies.

The highest level of injustice in Islam is the killing of an innocent human being. An act so grave that it is said that killing someone for no cause is the same as killing all of humanity and sparing one person's life is the same as saving all of humanity. Almighty Allah says, *“Because of that We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone killed a person, not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind. And indeed, there came to them Our Messengers with clear proofs, evidences, and signs, even then after that many of them continued to exceed the limits (e.g. by doing oppression unjustly and exceeding beyond the limits set by Allah by committing the major sins) in the land”* (Quran; 5:32). Islam rules out any form of discrimination based on race, color, sex, and nationality. In another *Hadith*, the Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said, *“O People, surely, your Lord is one and your father is one, no Arab has any superiority over Ajmi and no Ajmi has any superiority over Arab, no Red has any superiority over Black and no Black any superiority over Red but on the basis of piety”* (Musnad-e-Ahmad, No. 9732).

## **SDG 2.17**

“Partnership for the goals. Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”. No doubt, partnership and cooperation are very important for the successful execution of the sustainable development agenda. An inclusive strategy based on common values and vision at the global, national, and regional levels would keep people of all backgrounds safe and make life on this planet incredibly appealing. The idea of

cooperation and partnership is fundamental to Islamic societies. This 17<sup>th</sup> goal of cooperation and partnership has the same role as *Maqasid al-Shariah*. Mutual cooperation and solidarity is a norm central to Islamic ethics. The second verse of *Surah Al Maida* in the Holy Quran says, “*Help you one another in AlBirr and AtTaqlwa (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Severe in punishment*” (Quran; 5:2).

A *Hadith* by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) reinforces this principle of cooperation and mutual assistance as narrated by Abu Musa, “*A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts reinforce each other. The Prophet then clasped his hands with the fingers interlaced (while saying that)*” (Sahih Bukhari, No. 2446).

**Table 1**

*Tabulated Summary of the Association of SDGs with Maqasid al-Shariah*

SDGs (1-17)	<i>Maqasid al-Shariah</i> Dimensions
SDG 1: End poverty in all forms	<i>Hifz ul Maal</i> Protection of wealth
SDG 2: End hunger through food security and sustainable agriculture	<i>Hifz ul Nafs, Hifz ul Nasl</i> Protection of life (individuals and society) from all perceived threats including hunger
SDG 3: Good health and wellbeing	<i>Hifz ul Nafs, Hifz ul Aql, Hifz ul Nasl</i> Protection and provision of a healthy life and living
SDG 4: Inclusive equitable quality education	<i>Hifz ul Aql</i> Protection and provision of useful knowledge for all
SDG 5: Gender equality and women’s empowerment	<i>Hifz ul Nasl</i> Protection and fair treatment of women and family
SDG 6: Water and sanitation	<i>Hifz ul Nafs, Hifz ul Nasl</i> Protection and provision of the needs of life including water

SDGs (1-17)	<i>Maqasid al-Shariah</i> Dimensions
SDG 7: Affordable and sustainable clean energy	<i>Hifz ul Nafs, Hifz ul Nasl, Hifz ul Maal</i> Protection of life, family and business
SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth	<i>Hifz ul Maal</i> Protection and progression in wealth and business
SDG 9: Industries, innovation, and infrastructure	<i>Hifz ul Maal, Hifz ul Nasl</i> Protection of lives and development of businesses
SDG 10: Inequality within and among nations	<i>Hifz ul Maal</i> (when restricted to financial resources) Establishment of social justice and equity among individuals and nations
SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities	<i>Hifz ul Nasl</i> Protection and advancement of societies
SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production	<i>Hifz ul Maal, Hifz ul Nasl</i> Protection and preservation of resources for current and future generations
SDG 13: Climate change	<i>Hifz ul Nasl</i> Protection and preservation of environment for current and future generations
SDG 14: Life below water	<i>Hifz ul Nasl</i> Protection and preservation of progeny based on water resources and environment
SDG 15: Life on land	<i>Hifz ul Nasl</i> Protection and preservation of progeny based on land resources and environment
SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions	<i>Hifz ul Nafs, Hifz ul Nasl</i> Peace, protection and advancement of individuals and societies
SDG 17: Partnership for the goals	<i>Hifz ul Din</i> + Other four dimensions The first dimension of <i>Hifz ul Din</i> is the key which ensures cooperation and commitment regarding all other dimensions of <i>Maqasid al-Shariah</i>

## Missing Goals of SDGs

Spiritual and moral human growth are not mentioned in any of the SDGs' seventeen goals. Being a follower of the correct road (*Sirat-e-Mustaqeem*) is the highest blessing for Muslims because it increases all of his other abilities. Before possessing material resources, one should have the understanding of how to use them honestly to make them a true blessing. Similarly, one must be capable and honest enough to use power in the best interests of society before gaining power and a successful position.

Human beings are made up of both matter and soul, and as a result, they have material and non-material needs (Ahmed, 2011). The ultimate logical necessity is a balance between the two. If a person's materialism overcomes his spiritualism, his soul will suffer and cause sadness in some way. This personal conflict will have ramifications for those in society who are reliant on one another. As a result, someone driven by selfish and greedy desires will be unconcerned with other people's feelings and well-being. A spiritual person with a morally and socially responsible attitude, on the other hand, will concentrate on his own development while keeping his responsibilities to others in mind. With this backdrop, it is evident that development should not be based simply on physical and material accomplishments.

There are certain objectives that require further efforts in terms of better visibility and implementation. The sixteenth goal, for example, is about 'peace, justice, and strong institutions.' Due to its broad effect on all other goals, this might be the first goal of SDGs. There are several examples that can be taken from the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) life to explain this point. For example, on an occasion, while strongly rejecting the request of favor for a woman of an influential tribe who had committed theft, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, "*What destroyed the past nations preceding you, was that if a Nobel amongst them stole, they would forgive him, and if a poor person amongst them stole, they would inflict Allah's legal punishment on him. By Allah, if Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad stole, I would cut off her hand*" (Sahiah Bukhari, 3475). The current political agenda of the world is rooted into a capitalist system that divides the workforce into two principal classes, that is, capitalists and the working class. The success of capitalism lies in maintaining this divide. The working class is treated unjustly on social, political and economic fronts. In capitalism, the rule of

law is based on the ‘might is right’ principle. There are recessions and deprivations only for the poor. We cannot expect any change until the structural issues of the capitalist system related with growth and distribution are fixed. Social justice needs to be implemented before economic justice within and among the nations.

The fourth goal is about ‘inclusive and equitable education’. Education perhaps is the key to all achievements, however, no difference between useful and useless knowledge is made in the contemporary academia. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) prayed for beneficial knowledge and sought protection from useless knowledge (Sunan Ibn-e-Majah, No. 3843). There is an urgent need to adapt education to promote character and humanity so that people are aware of the reality of this life and the universe. We need education that helps people to become human beings, rather than human resources. In recent years, life has become easier and more luxurious due to technological development. Still, peace and tranquility have not been achieved. More money is currently spent on wars and weapons than on fighting hunger and poverty.

A so-called issue of the day is addressed under the fifth goal that deals with ‘gender equality’. In line with the Islamic vision of a balanced society, the provision of necessary help and support to women in gender segregated societies has always been considered commendable. However, there have also been complaints of meddling with moral / social codes and a genuine call to activists to shift their focus from ‘women empowerment’ to ‘family empowerment’. Indeed, the present-day “women only” approach to wellbeing is against Islamic values and culture. Islam promotes family empowerment, where complementary roles of men and women are clearly identified. This is to achieve the socioeconomic wellbeing of the family.

Also, the issue of poverty in all forms has been taken up under the first goal. A number of targets have been agreed upon to reduce the problem of poverty, but nothing has been said on how to motivate people and nations to avoid dependence on others. Whereas, Islamic teachings not only encourage charitable behavior from the giver’s point of view, they also strive to minimize the dependence on charity from the recipient's side. They restrict these benefits for the poorest of the poor and the destitute, who are not in a position to generate any income from any source. In one of his

*Ahadith*, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) explained, “*The upper hand is better than the lower hand, and the upper hand is the one that spends, and the lower hand is the one that asks*” (Sunan Abu Daud, No. 1648).

The modern day economies are judged on the basis of their growth rate. This issue has been discussed under the eighth goal. However, it needs to be understood that economic growth is no longer a problem. The only challenge to the contemporary world is social and economic justice, which would enforce an equitable allocation and distribution of resources. When justice is served, the problems of poverty, inequality and deprivation would be overcome, naturally. In this day and age, we do not need growth to overcome the problem of poverty and hunger. Rather, we need to avoid spending huge sums of money on completely unnecessary things. For example, 29 trillion dollars were spent to bail out the rich and powerful affectees of the Global Financial Crisis 2007. This money was more than enough to fulfil all the food, housing and other needs of the poor all over the world. Similarly, the resources spent on weapons and wars can be used to provide the needful to everyone on the planet. Also, if women start wearing hijab, we can save billions of dollars which are spent by them on their beautification for merely showing off. This money can be used to reduce poverty and hunger. So, the solution does not lie in growth, rather it lies in socioeconomic justice and moral / human development which are exactly what Islam stands for.

Finally, the topic of 'responsible consumption and production' is addressed in the twelfth goal. This is the objective that, once accomplished, will improve the quality of life on the globe in terms of poverty, hunger, economic growth, and environmental protection. Human beings, on the other hand, have a proclivity for ostentatious consumerism if they are not properly guided. In one of his sayings, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, “*If Adam’s son had a valley full of gold, he would like to have two valleys, for nothing fills his mouth except dust of the grave*” (Sahih Bukhari, No. 6436). On another occasion, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, “*The heart of an old man remains young with regards to two things: Love of life and wealth*” (Sahih Muslim, No. 2410). Islam disapproves both miserliness and extravagance in spending and advises an attitude of moderation. *Allah* (SWT) says in the Qur’an, “*And those, who, when they spend, are neither*

*extravagant nor niggardly, but hold a medium (way) between those (extremes)*” (Quran; 25:67). So, Islamic instructions to the followers regarding resource utilization are very clear. They deem human beings responsible for human and environmental concerns.

Finally, it is proposed that the SDGs include a full-fledged goal for moral and spiritual human growth. Other goals, such as 'peace, justice, and strong institutions' (Goal 16), 'inclusive and equitable education' (Goal 4), 'gender equality' (Goal 5), 'end poverty in all its forms everywhere' (Goal 1), 'inclusive and sustainable economic growth' (Goal 8), and 'responsible consumption and production' (Goal 12), should also be expanded by making the suggested improvements.

## Conclusion

The reason for reviewing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to ensure that they are compatible with Islam and acceptable to Muslim societies. In this paper, the seventeen goals of sustainable development formulated by UNDP for addressing the challenges of environmental sustainability and human development are examined using *Shariah* guidelines. Almost all the goals, besides a few exceptions, are endorsed by *Maqasid al-Shariah*. This was exemplified using primary sources such as *Al-Quran* and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The goals which are considered incomplete or unclear are further explained under the title of 'missing goals'. This section discussed the supremacy of ethics and morality and its effect on all other goals. Similarly, justice as the basis of all accomplishments was explored and its Islamic implementation at all levels was determined. We also provided a better exposition of the concept of 'inclusive and equitable education'. Also, for the goal of 'gender equality', we argued for family empowerment, rather than focusing on a 'woman only' approach. It was also concluded that the correlated problems of poverty and inequality are the consequences of capitalism and their solution lies in social justice and equity. The issue of 'growth vs. distribution of wealth' was also determined to be a major economic problem. Last but not least, the goal of 'responsible consumption and production' and the Islamic solution of 'moderation' are compared. The lack of religious and spiritual motivation are identified as one of the key issues holding back the achieving of SDGs in the Muslim world.

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