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The Meaning of *al-maysir* from the Perspective of Middle Eastern Mufasirs and Its Contextualization in Contemporary Contexts

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Abstract: This paper examines the perspectives of Sayyid Quṭb, Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, Muḥammad ‘Abduh, and Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī regarding the meaning of *al-maysir* and its contextualization in contemporary settings. The study stems from the issue of modern prize-based draws, which share characteristics with the concept of *al-maysir*. The research aims to present a balanced interpretation to address these challenges. It explores the relationship between prize-based draws and *al-maysir* as outlined in Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 219 and Surah al-Mā’idah [5]: 90-91. A thematic tafsir approach is employed to capture the exegetical views, gathering related verses under a single theme for comprehensive analysis. The findings indicate that, according to Sayyid Quṭb, Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, Muḥammad ‘Abduh, and Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī, not all forms of prize-based draws are deemed haram from a Quranic perspective. As technology has evolved, prize-based draws manifest in various forms, offline and online. The study concludes that draws associated with *al-maysir*—particularly those involving betting, fostering enmity, or causing negligence of religious duties—are impermissible. Among these exegetes, only Muḥammad ‘Abduh, in *Tafsir al-Manār*, specifically discusses *maysir al-yanāṣīb*, or lottery gambling, which closely resembles modern prize-based draws. Although contemporary draws may occur without direct interaction and may seem less prone to causing animosity compared to pre-Islamic gambling practices, they still involve elements of gambling as they represent the unjust acquisition of wealth without legitimate exchange or benefit.

Keywords: *al-maysir*; Prize-Based Draws; Modern Exegesis; Islamic Law; Thematic Interpretation



INTRODUCTION

Al-maysir, commonly understood as gambling, is explicitly prohibited in Islamic teachings, including the Quran. This prohibition is rooted in Islam's ethical and moral framework, emphasizing justice, honesty, and harm prevention. The Quran addresses gambling in several verses, one of which is Surah Al-Ma'idah [5]: 90, categorizing intoxicants and games of chance as acts of Satan that believers should avoid. This prohibition extends beyond religious decrees, supported by socio-economic considerations that underscore the harmful effects of gambling on individuals and society at large (Muhamad et al., 2023)

Research has explored the social and economic impacts of *al-maysir*. Velayutham (2014) and Aziz et al. (2020) have discussed the link between gambling, social injustice, and economic instability due to its speculative nature. Al-augby et al. (2015) highlight how gambling disrupts social order and exploits individuals through false promises of quick wealth. Islamic finance principles strictly prohibit *maysir*, *riba* (interest), and *gharar* (excessive uncertainty) because these elements undermine the moral fabric of society and exacerbate economic disparities. (Abdul Wahab et. al, 2017; Ferdiansyah et. al., 2019; Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia dkk., 2023)

There is limited research on contemporary interpretations of *al-maysir* in the context of prize-based draws and modern gambling phenomena in Indonesia. Lubis (2023) and Agha (2007) emphasize responsible financial behavior and how Islamic principles promote social welfare. Other studies discuss the adherence of financial institutions to Sharia law (Sharairi, 2020; Wahab et al., 2016). However, few studies have delved into the interpretations by modern exegetes such as Sayyid Quṭb, Muḥammad 'Abduh, Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, and Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī concerning *al-maysir* and its relevance to modern gambling practices.

From this context arises an academic concern necessitating scientific investigation. This study seeks to understand how *al-maysir* is interpreted and applied within the Islamic world, focusing on Indonesia. It further explores the interpretations of Sayyid Quṭb in *Tafsir fi Zilāl al-Qur'an*, Muḥammad 'Abduh in *Tafsir al-Manār*, Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī in *Tafsir al-Marāghī*, and Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī in *Tafsir al-Munīr*, and their contextual relevance in modern Indonesia.

There are three main reasons for choosing these four scholars. *First*, Sayyid Quṭb, Muḥammad 'Abduh, Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, and Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī have established their academic and intellectual credentials, recognized both locally and internationally. Their exegeses serve as fundamental references for Quranic studies, particularly in Indonesia, influencing works such as *Tafsir al-Azhar* by Buya Hamka, *Tafsir al-Misbah* by M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Furqan* by Muhammad Yunus, and *Tafsir al-Huda* by Bakri Syahid. *Second*, the historical connection between Indonesian and Egyptian scholars has fostered a solid intellectual bond, making these exegetes essential references. *Third*, Egypt has long been a center of Islamic scholarship, contributing to the emergence of reformist thoughts in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, pioneered by Muhammad 'Abduh, which have significantly influenced Indonesian exegetical perspectives. (Wely Dozan, 2020),

This study analyzes how modern Middle Eastern scholars interpret the meaning of *al-maysir* and its relation to phenomena in Indonesia today. When discussing the law of gambling in the Qur'an, it is clear that the law is haram, and the scholars agree. However, what is highlighted here is the phenomenon that occurs in the contemporary era, such as lucky draws and the like. It is necessary to analyze the law related to the practice of lucky draws and the like by linking to the meaning of *al-Maysir* from the perspective of modern Middle Eastern

mufasir whether the phenomenon can be associated with *al-Maysir* or even have properties or criteria that contradict.

METHOD

The research employed a library research method to collect data and information from existing literature sources (Zed, 2024). The primary focus of the study was on past publications and research findings presented descriptively through written language. Consequently, this research falls under the category of qualitative research.

This study used thematic interpretation, which involves interpreting the Quran by collecting and analyzing verses related to a specific theme. (Sja'roni, 2014). In this study, the theme of prize-based draws was chosen, ensuring that the collected data and sources were relevant to this topic and subsequently analyzed from the perspectives of the scholars included in the research.

Data collection was carried out using documentation, which involves tracing and recording existing data relevant to the research theme (Yusuf, 2015). The objective of the documentation method is to seek documents related to people, groups, historical events, or social phenomena pertinent to the selected theme.

The primary sources used included classical and modern tafsir literature, including works by Sayyid Quṭb, Muḥammad 'Abduh, Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, and Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī, as well as academic publications that explore *al-maysir* and its implications. Secondary sources included scholarly articles, journals, and relevant research papers that provided additional context and supported the analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive analysis technique. This involved synthesizing the interpretations provided by the selected exegetes and examining their applicability to contemporary issues related to *al-maysir* and prize-based draws in Indonesia. The thematic approach ensured that the discussion was cohesive and directly related to the research objectives.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Biographies of Mufasirs

Sayyid Quṭb

Sayyid Quṭb was an Egyptian intellectual, literary figure, and renowned exegete. His full name was Sayyid Quṭb Ibrāhīm Ḥusayn al-Shādhilī, and he was born in Asyūṭ, Egypt, on October 9, 1906. He was the son of al-Ḥājj Quṭb Ibrāhīm, a well-known political figure. Sayyid Quṭb demonstrated exceptional intelligence from a young age, memorizing the Quran before the age of ten. His educational journey began in 1918, followed by a move to Cairo in 1921 to pursue secondary education. After completing his secondary studies, he continued at the Teacher Training Institute and graduated with a bachelor's degree in education from Cairo University in 1933.

Following his graduation, Sayyid Quṭb worked as an instructor at Dār al-'Ulūm and held a position in the Egyptian government as an education inspector. He was later sent to the United States to study Western educational thought for approximately three years, attending institutions such as the University of Washington in Columbia, Stanford University, and Northern Colorado University (al-Mehri, 2006). Upon his return to Egypt, he re-engaged in politics by joining Ḥasan al-Bannā's movement, the *Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* (Muslim Brotherhood).

Throughout his life, Sayyid Quṭb authored numerous works, including *Muhimmat al-Shi'r fi al-Hayāh* (1932), *Al-Salām al-'Ālamī wa al-Islām* (1951), *Ma'rakat al-Islām wa Ra'sumāliyyah* (1961), *Nahwa al-Mujtama' al-Islāmī* (1952), and his magnum opus, *Tafsir fi Zilāl al-Qur'an* (1952-1964). His intellectual outlook was influenced by scholars such as 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ḥasan al-Bannā, Abul A'lā Maudūdī, and 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī. In 1966, Sayyid Quṭb was executed by the Egyptian government under President Gamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir, accused of conspiring to overthrow the government. (Khalidi, 2016).

Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī

Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī was an influential Egyptian scholar, born in 1883 in al-Marāghā, a town along the western bank of the Nile. He was the son of Syaikh Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, a prominent jurist, which rooted his family's reputation as a lineage of judges and scholars. (Parlina & Abdussalam, 2021).

Al-Marāghī began his education in a local madrasah and, by age 13, had memorized the Quran, completing his primary education in 1897. He then continued his studies at al-Azhar University and Dār al-'Ulūm University, mastering disciplines such as Arabic language, astronomy, jurisprudence, rhetoric, and ethics. He completed his education at both institutions by 1909.

His intellectual development was shaped by notable scholars including Syaikh Muḥammad 'Abduh, Rashīd Ridā, Syaikh Muḥammad al-Muṭī'ī, Aḥmad Rifā'ī al-Fayūmī, and Ḥusayn al-'Adawī. Al-Marāghī's significant works included *al-Ḥisbah fi al-Islām*, *'Ulūm al-Balāghah*, *Muqaddimah al-Tafsīr*, *Risālah al-Zaujāt al-Nabī*, and *Tafsīr al-Marāghī*. He passed away in the month of Ramadan in 1364 H.

Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī

Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī was a distinguished scholar of Islamic jurisprudence and a Quranic exegete. Born in 1932 in Dair 'Aṭīyyah, Damascus, he was the son of Muṣṭafā al-Zuḥaylī, a respected scholar. Despite being from a modest background, al-Zuḥaylī was known for his perseverance in learning. He completed his primary education in Damascus and pursued higher studies in Syria, earning a bachelor's degree in Sharia.

He later moved to Egypt to continue his studies simultaneously at 'Ain Shams University (Sharia) and al-Azhar University (Sharia and Arabic Language). He obtained a master's degree in Islamic Law in Cairo and completed his doctoral program in 1963 with a dissertation titled *Atsar al-Ḥarb fi al-Fiqh al-Islāmī: Dirāsātun Muqāranatun*. His intellectual influences included Syaikh Muḥammad Hāshim al-Khaṭīb al-Shāfi'ī and Syaikh 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Khāliq, among others.

Al-Zuḥaylī authored numerous significant works such as *Juhūd Taqnīn al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, *al-Wasīṭ fi Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, and *Tafsīr al-Munīr*. He passed away at the age of 83 in 2015 in Syria.

Muḥammad 'Abduh

Muḥammad 'Abduh was a reformist scholar and Quranic exegete born in the Nile Delta, Egypt 1849. His father, 'Abduh Ḥasan Khairullāh, was of Turkish descent, while his mother descended from Sayyidina 'Umar bin Khaṭṭāb. 'Abduh's early education began under his father's guidance, and he memorized the Quran before 12. He attended formal schooling at the Masjid Aḥmadī in Ṭanṭā but left due to dissatisfaction with its methods and returned home to assist his father in farming (Abduh, 1996).

At around age 20, he married, and shortly after that, his father encouraged him to resume his studies in Ṭanṭā. On his way, he visited his uncle, Syaikh Darwīsh Khāḍir, who inspired him to pursue his education with renewed enthusiasm. During this time, he delved into Sufism and later completed his studies in Ṭanṭā.

‘Abduh furthered his education at al-Azhar University, graduating in 1877. Influential figures in his academic journey included Syaikh Ḥasan al-Ṭawīl and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī. His notable works include *Risālah al-Wāridāt*, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, *Risālah al-Tawḥīd*, and *Tafsīr al-Manār*. He passed away in 1905 at the age of 56 in Egypt. (Zuhri, 2023).

Types of Prize-Based Draws

There are various types of prize-based draws in Indonesia. Historically, draws such as lotto (totalizator lottery), lobena (national large lottery), nalo (national lottery), porkas, tail lotteries, and SDSB (Sumbangan Dana Sosial Berhadiah) were permitted by the government as official state-sanctioned draws. However, during President Gus Dur's administration, the department responsible for these draws, namely the Department of Social Affairs, was dissolved. Currently, prize-based draws may be allowed or prohibited, depending on how they are conducted.

The practice of lucky draws in Indonesia is also mainly in commercial promotions such as minimarket promotions. Minimarkets such as Indomaret often use lucky draw programs to attract shoppers. Typically, customers who spend a certain amount of money (for example, Rp50,000) are entitled to a lucky draw coupon. Giveaways are drawn on social media through platforms such as Instagram and are often conducted by businesses to promote products or increase followers on their social media accounts. For example, they are using a mechanism where participants only need to fulfill simple requirements such as giving likes, following accounts, or sharing content. Giveaways by Islamic Banks Islamic banks also often utilize lucky draw programs to attract customers.

According to Muhammad Yunus, lucky draws can be classified into three main types (Aulia, 2020):

1. Unconditional Draws

Unconditional draws place no financial burden on participants. Examples include promotional draws in traditional or modern markets where coupons are distributed for free to attract consumers without any additional cost or obligation to purchase goods.

2. Conditional Draws Requiring Purchases

Participation in these draws requires consumers to purchase specific goods set by the organizers. For instance, companies may offer enticing prizes such as Umrah trips, cars, or motorcycles. Coupons are provided to customers after a purchase and entered into a draw. This type of draw has two aspects:

- Purchasing to join the draw: This is categorized as *maysir* and is deemed haram, as consumers intentionally spend money for a chance to win, involving risk with potential loss or gain.
- Purchasing with no intention of joining the draw: If a consumer receives a draw coupon incidentally after purchasing an item without seeking it, this practice is not prohibited.

3. Draws Involving an Entry Fee

Participation in these draws requires payment. For example, finding a prize code under a bottle cap or food wrapper and sending it via SMS to the designated number constitutes this type. (Aulia, 2020)

Types of Draws Based on Benefits and Harm

From the perspective of benefits and harm, scholars classify prize-based draws into two types (Aibak, 2017):

1. Draws with Harmful Elements

These draws result in significant losses for participants, where one party benefits at the expense of another. Typically, the losses incurred are more significant than any potential benefit. Such draws can also negatively impact participants' mental well-being, fostering dependency on luck and leading to unstable thinking and diminished self-confidence.

2. Draws Without Harmful Consequences

These draw benefit participants without causing harm or loss to the organizers, ensuring that neither party faces negative repercussions.

The Concept of Prize-Based Draws in the Quran: Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 219 and Surah al-Mā'idah [5]: 90-91

The Quran does not explicitly mention prize-based draws. Therefore, the discussion is associated with the concept of *al-maysir*. The term *al-maysir* is mentioned three times in the Quran: Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 219, Surah al-Mā'idah [5]: 90, and Surah al-Mā'idah [5]: 91.

1. Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 219

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا

They ask you (O Muhammad) about wine and gambling. Say, 'In them is great sin and (some) benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit.'" (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 219)

This verse underscores that while gambling may offer certain perceived benefits, its harm and sin outweigh these advantages, emphasizing its negative impact on individuals and society.

2. Surah al-Mā'idah [5]: 90

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, (sacrificing on) stone altars (to other than Allah), and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful. (Q.S. al-Mā'idah [5]: 90)

This verse categorizes gambling as one of the abominations from Satan's deeds and urges believers to avoid such practices to attain success and spiritual purity.

3. Surah al-Mā'idah [5]: 91

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ

Satan only wants to cause between you animosity and hatred through intoxicants and gambling and to avert you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. So will you not desist? (Q.S. al-Mā'idah [5]: 91)

This verse highlights that gambling, and intoxicants create division and hostility among people and divert them from remembering Allah and performing prayers, further reinforcing the prohibition.

Interpretation of the Term *al-maysir* According to Modern Exegetes

This section presents the interpretations of *al-maysir* as discussed by modern Middle Eastern exegetes, focusing on Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 219 and Surah al-Mā'idah [5]: 90-91.

Sayyid Quṭb

One of Sayyid Quṭb's most notable works is *Tafsir fī Zilāl al-Qur'an*, which spans 12 volumes (Santi Aji, 2022). In interpreting Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 219, Sayyid Quṭb emphasizes the prohibition of intoxicants (*khamr*) and gambling. He notes that these practices were deeply ingrained habits among pre-Islamic communities, where *al-maysir* provided pleasure and served as a pastime for the people of the Jahiliyyah period. The consumption of intoxicants and gambling were intertwined social practices that required rectification. Although this verse does not explicitly provide a definitive ruling on gambling, it implies prohibition by highlighting that its *mafsadah* (harm) outweighs any potential benefit. The verse indicates that, despite any perceived advantages, the substantial social and personal damages of gambling justify its prohibition (Quṭb, 2003).

In his interpretation of Surah al-Mā'idah [5]: 90-91, Sayyid Quṭb elaborates on the nature of gambling during the pre-Islamic era, where it was often part of gatherings involving drinking or communal events. A prevalent form of gambling at that time involved the sacrifice of animals, where the distribution of the meat was determined through the drawing of arrows (*azlām*). This method created inequities: some participants received a large share, others received little, and some received nothing. The resulting disparities led to significant harm and dissatisfaction among participants. Sayyid Quṭb argues that this inherent unfairness is one of the primary reasons for the prohibition of gambling, as it fosters loss and injustice within the community (Quṭb, 2003).

Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī

Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī is known for his comprehensive work, *Tafsir al-Marāghī*, which spans 30 volumes. His interpretations of *al-maysir* in the Quran offer detailed insights into pre-Islamic practices and the broader implications of gambling.

1. Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 219

In his interpretation of Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 219, al-Marāghī provides an account of the gambling practices among the Arabs during the Jahiliyyah period. He describes how gambling was conducted using ten boxes (*qadah*) containing meat from a slaughtered camel and marked with specific numbers and rules. Numbers one through seven indicated portions of meat, while numbers eight through ten represented no winnings. Participants inserted arrows and pens inscribed with names into the boxes. A neutral party would shake the boxes to determine the outcome. Winners received the allocated meat portions, while losers—those whose boxes had no portion—were obligated to pay for the camel (Al-Marāghī, 1946).

This form of gambling not only reflected an element of chance but also imposed potential financial losses on participants. Al-Marāghī highlights that such practices were rooted in the culture and needed reform through Islamic teachings that promoted justice and community well-being.

2. Surah al-Mā'idah [5]: 90-91

In interpreting Surah al-Mā'idah [5]: 90-91, al-Marāghī elaborates on the reasons behind the prohibition of *al-maysir* or gambling. He states that Allah forbids gambling due to its potential to incite enmity, hatred, and injustice among participants. Additionally, gambling distracts individuals from worship and remembrance of Allah. Al-Marāghī notes that someone who engages in gambling might perform prayers devoid of focus or sincerity, preoccupied with the game (Al-Marāghī, 1946).

Al-Marāghī's interpretation also discusses games like chess and dice. He categorizes them as gambling if they involve monetary stakes. Without financial bets, there is no definitive legal basis for prohibition. However, they are still considered prohibited if such games lead to enmity, hatred, or negligence in fulfilling religious duties. Al-Marāghī cites Imam Shafi'i, who deemed chess makruh (discouraged) due to its potential for wasting time (Al-Marāghī, 1946).

Reasons for the Prohibition of Intoxicants and Gambling

Al-Marāghī explains that intoxicants and gambling are prohibited for several reasons:

- They are considered acts of Satan, leading to wrongdoing, injustice, enmity, hatred, and anger.
- They prevent individuals from remembering Allah and performing prayers, both of which are central to Islamic life and religious practice.
- Islam explicitly forbids intoxicants and gambling as they are seen as highly destructive to one's religious and moral fabric (Al-Marāghī, 1946).

Through his comprehensive approach, al-Marāghī underscores that the prohibition protects social harmony and spiritual integrity, aligning with the broader principles of Islamic law.

Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī

Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī, an esteemed Islamic scholar, is known for his comprehensive work *Tafsir al-Munīr*, which spans 30 volumes. His interpretations of *al-maysir* in the Quran provide a detailed analysis of its implications and the reasons for its prohibition.

1. Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 219

Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī interprets *al-maysir* as an act prohibited by Allah Subḥānahu wa Ta'ālā due to its nature, which violates truth and promotes injustice, resulting in enmity and hatred among people. Although gambling may offer financial gains from betting, the associated harms far outweigh these benefits. The negative impacts include intellectual degradation, increased anxiety, and the wasteful use of time (Hamka, 1989).

Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī's interpretation aligns with that of Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, both describing the method of gambling during the Jahiliyyah era, which involved ten boxes (*qadaḥ*). These boxes were used in a game of chance involving camel meat distribution, where participants engaged in drawing lots. The verse was revealed as a response to the inquiries of some members of the Anṣār, who asked the Prophet Muhammad *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* about the ruling on intoxicants and gambling. This inquiry led to the revelation of Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 219 to address their concerns (Hamka, 1989).

2. Surah al-Mā'idah [5]: 90-91

In his commentary on Surah al-Mā'idah [5]: 90-91, Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī elaborates that Allah prohibits intoxicants, gambling, and divination tools used for making decisions, whether predicting good or bad outcomes. Any form of betting that results in harm to one party is categorized as gambling and is therefore forbidden. This interpretation aligns closely with that of al-Marāghī. However, al-Zuḥaylī extends this understanding by stating that even chess and card games are prohibited if they incite conflict, regardless of whether money is involved. These games can lead to hostility due to competitiveness and potential resentment following a loss (Al-Zuḥayli, 2019).

While al-Marāghī initially does not consider chess a prohibited game, he concedes that it should be avoided if it fosters enmity and resentment. Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī takes a stricter stance, emphasizing that any activity fostering discord contradicts Islamic values and should be categorized under prohibited acts.

Muḥammad ‘Abduh

Muḥammad ‘Abduh, alongside Rasyīd Riḍā, is known for the influential work *Tafsir al-Manār*, which spans 30 volumes. His interpretation of *al-maysir* provides a comprehensive view of gambling within the Quran, focusing on its broader societal impacts.

1. Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 219

In discussing Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 219, Muḥammad ‘Abduh refers to the *asbāb al-nuzūl* (context of revelation) as noted by Imam al-Suyūfī. Aḥmad narrates it from Abū Hurairah that, upon the Prophet Muhammad *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa Sallam*’s arrival in Medina, many people consumed intoxicants and played dice, known as *al-maysir* (gambling). They inquired about the ruling on such practices, prompting the revelation of this verse. The reason behind the prohibition of *khamr* (intoxicants) and gambling is that they contain significant sin despite some benefits; however, their harm far outweighs their benefits (Rida & Abduh, 1947).

The term *al-maysir* derives from *yassara*, meaning “to make easy,” indicating the acquisition of wealth without effort. Gambling provides the opportunity to gain without labor, hence its name. The practice in pre-Islamic Arabia often involved ten *qadah* (lots), with participants drawing numbered lots to receive specific portions. Those holding numbers one to seven received shares, while eight to ten received nothing, creating disparity and tension. This understanding aligns with the descriptions provided by Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī (Rida & Abduh, 1947).

There is debate among scholars regarding whether *al-maysir* refers to specific forms of gambling or encompasses all types. However, the consensus holds that nearly all gambling forms are forbidden, with exceptions for competitions like horse racing or archery, considered preparatory for jihad. Gambling is viewed as a major sin due to its potential for significant harm to individuals and communities. It can damage physical and mental health, financial stability, and social relationships. Thus it is generally avoided in Islamic teachings (Rida & Abduh, 1947)

Muḥammad ‘Abduh and Rasyīd Riḍā’s *Tafsir al-Manār* also addresses *maysir al-yanāshib* (lottery gambling). This practice involves collecting funds through ticket purchases managed by the government, charitable organizations, or companies, where large sums are pooled from many participants. The proceeds are then distributed among winners, with the remainder often retained by the organizers (Rida & Abduh, 1947).

Lottery tickets resemble small notes, priced at one dinar each, with a unique number on each. Winners are chosen through a draw, where numbered slips are placed in a metal container and drawn. The first drawn number wins the most significant prize, followed by smaller prizes for subsequent numbers. This method echoes the practices of ancient Arabs, where only some benefited while others received nothing (Rida & Abduh, 1947).

While some forms of draws may not cause enmity or distract from prayer and remembrance of Allah—especially when participants are not physically present—such activities still involve exploiting wealth without legitimate exchange, making them fall under the definition of gambling (Rida & Abduh, 1947).

Impacts of Gambling as Interpreted in *Tafsir al-Manār*:

- Distracting individuals from remembering Allah and performing prayers.
- Encouraging laziness and reliance on uncertain income sources.
- Reducing mental resilience and neglecting productive work.
- This causes significant economic damage in the agriculture, industry, and trade sectors.
- Depleting personal wealth rapidly, leading to poverty.

- Creating situations where financial ruin can occur overnight (Rida & Abduh, 1947).
2. Surah al-Mā'idah [5]: 90-91
- Muḥammad 'Abduh, in Tafsir al-Manār, interprets *al-maysir* as synonymous with *qimār* (gambling), encompassing all types of betting that result in one party's loss. Islam strictly prohibits gambling due to its inherently harmful nature. In his interpretation, 'Abduh emphasizes that any form of wager involving the risk of unjust loss or gain constitutes *al-maysir* and is forbidden (Rida & Abduh, 1947).

He also forbids accepting money or goods obtained through gambling, whether individually or in groups, arguing that such practices involve acquiring wealth unlawfully. This prohibition is based on the principle of avoiding unjust enrichment, which contravenes Islamic teachings on fairness and can lead to moral and financial decline (2017; Rida & Abduh, 1947).

Moreover, *al-maysir* fosters hostility and resentment among participants due to the uncertain nature of the outcomes. Muḥammad 'Abduh notes that gambling often provides fleeting excitement followed by regret and conflict. It diverts individuals from their familial responsibilities and can lead to the neglect of parents, spouses, and children. Financially, gambling can result in severe losses, leading to poverty and dependence on others. Fakh al-Rāzī adds that individuals who rely on gambling are often trapped in cycles of poverty, eventually seeking assistance from wealthier individuals but continuing to face significant losses (Rida & Abduh, 1947).

Summarizing the interpretations of *al-maysir* from these exegetes, it becomes evident that their views converge on the belief that gambling is prohibited due to its overwhelmingly harmful nature. These scholars' educational background and intellectual heritage, particularly their ties to al-Azhar University, contribute to their similar interpretations. However, Muḥammad 'Abduh stands out for his specific discussion of *maysir al-yanāṣīb*, which resembles modern lotteries found in contemporary Indonesia. Consequently, prize-based draws that involve pooled funds collected through ticket sales are explicitly deemed impermissible (Rida & Abduh, 1947).

Relevance of *al-maysir* and Prize-Based Draws

The concept of *al-maysir* or gambling has been present from ancient times to the present, evolving in its forms and methods, particularly with technological advancements. These changes have led to various new types of prize-based games in the contemporary era, often involving rewards for winners. Analyzing whether these modern practices align with the characteristics of *al-maysir* or stand in opposition to them is necessary. Prize-based draws, for example, are frequently associated with gambling (Imamuna & Sapol, 2021).

Traditionally, prize-based draws involve participants matching numbers or tickets to win predetermined prizes. Several modern Middle Eastern exegetes have equated such practices with *al-maysir*, but it is crucial to note that not all forms of draws include harmful betting elements. Comprehensive analysis is required to determine whether contemporary draws contain elements of *al-maysir*. Freeman et al. (2021) identify core gambling characteristics, such as participant contributions as the source of the prize, the presence of betting, reliance on chance and luck, chaotic behavior, and the absence of substantial benefits to participants.

Games or practices qualify as *al-maysir* if they include betting that results in potential gains or losses for participants, distracts individuals from their religious duties, or fosters

enmity and resentment. In light of these criteria, interpretations from modern exegetes provide a clearer understanding of prize-based draws within the Quranic context. Prize draws involving mandatory fees or purchasing goods at marked-up prices fall under the prohibition, as they lead to gains for a few at the expense of many. This aspect aligns with the essence of *al-maysir*, marked by risk and financial harm, and is, therefore, impermissible.

Draws that create social discord can also be problematic, even if they do not involve direct betting. For instance, free-entry community draws, such as those at national celebrations, may cause envy and tension among those who do not win. Although these may not involve financial stakes, their negative social impact discourages them. Additionally, draws that interfere with religious obligations, such as those conducted continuously without pause for prayer, lead participants to neglect their worship. Regardless of their format, such practices are deemed unsuitable as they distract from religious duties.

Prize-based draws conducted online, where participants do not meet or interact directly, might initially seem free from *al-maysir* characteristics due to the lack of personal involvement or potential conflict. However, if these draws involve any form of participant contribution or betting, they are still considered impermissible as they entail obtaining something through illegitimate means. Conversely, draws free from betting elements, where prize funding does not come from participant fees, and all participants accept the results without conflict, can be deemed permissible. These acceptable practices do not disrupt religious observances and may bring positive outcomes, such as joy to winners, support for their needs, and rewards without excessive effort. When carefully conducted, such draws can be beneficial, outweighing any potential harm and contributing positively to community support (Hilyatin, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Sayyid Quṭb, Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, Muḥammad ‘Abduh, and Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī are prominent modern Middle Eastern exegetes, all of whom studied at al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. Their interpretations of *al-maysir* as described in the Quran show significant similarities, emphasizing that gambling is prohibited due to its harmful impacts. Regarding prize-based draws, the Quranic perspective indicates that not all such practices are forbidden. Given the various forms of prize-based draws in contemporary times, their permissibility depends on specific criteria. Draws that involve elements of betting, lead to neglect of religious obligations, or cause discord among participants falls under the prohibition associated with *al-maysir*. Conversely, prize-based draws that do not contain such elements and do not conflict with religious teachings are permissible.

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