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Activating Embellishement Objectives (Al-Maqasid al-Tahsiniyyah) in Regulating Contemporary Consumer Behavior: A Foundational and Ethical Study

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Abstract :

This study explores the efficacy of "embellishment objectives" (*al-maqasid al-tahsiniyyah*) as a methodological and ethical framework to counter contemporary consumerism in the digital age, where consumption has shifted from a means of survival to an end in itself. It addresses the "inversion of the maqasid hierarchy," where luxury consumption eclipses core necessities, fueling digital waste and conspicuous materialism.The methodology integrates three approaches: the inductive method, tracing classical discourses (e.g., al-Shatibi and Ibn Ashur); the analytical method, deconstructing modern consumer values; and the applied method (*al-manhaj al-tanzili*), linking universal legal maxims like moderation and chivalry (*muru'ah*) to contemporary digital and fashion trends.The findings reveal that embellishments are not a dispensable luxury but a "protective shield" safeguarding the entire livelihood ecosystem. Disrupting them compromises both complementary needs and core necessities. Furthermore, *muru'ah* serves as a flexible benchmark regulating consumption according to righteous custom. The study advocates for a "jurisprudence of consumption" that aligns divine gratitude with material action to preserve ecological sustainability and fulfill the stewardship of the earth.

Keywords: Embellishment objectives, Contemporary consumer behavior, ‹Chivalry, Digital consumerism, Environmental sustainability.

1. Introduction

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. To Him belongs all beautiful praise and finest glorification. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone, without partner; He speaks the truth and guides to the straight path. I bear witness that our master Muhammad is His servant and messenger, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, his family, and all his companions.

To proceed: Contemporary humankind faces unprecedented challenges amidst an overwhelming materialistic revolution that has inverted "consumption" from a mere survival mechanism and a means to satisfy innate needs into an ultimate "end" in itself, and a lifestyle that feeds upon infinite desires. In the face of this massive influx of goods and services, the boundaries separating what is necessary for self-preservation from what is luxurious—which depletes resources and distorts human nature—have dissolved. This has culminated in a lifestyle characterized by material greed and moral squandering, known as the "consumer society."

Islamic Sharia, in its authentic essence, did not manifest solely to secure the necessities that preserve human existence, or to organize the complementary needs that alleviate hardship; rather, it elevated human perception toward broader horizons concerning behavioral aesthetics and refined practices. Islamic jurisprudence is an integrated system that does not merely demand superficial compliance from the legally accountable individual (*al-mukallaf*); instead, it aspires to elevate him to the ranks of spiritual excellence (*ihsan*) and perfect character. These sublime ranks transform daily conduct—including eating, drinking, and dressing—into an expressive portrait reflecting balance and moderation through meticulous adherence to embellishment objectives.

Hence, an urgent need arises to re-examine the ethical constraints established by divine revelation to refine the human soul in its interaction with matter. Invoking the ethical and aesthetic dimensions of consumer behavior is not an intellectual luxury; it is an imperative necessity to restore discipline to contemporary societies engulfed in extravagance. This necessitates investigating those "legislative subtleties" and "ethical virtues" that aim to adorn human life with tranquility and dignity, detached from the clamor of greedy materialism, so that consumption remains a civilized act combining the enjoyment of wholesome things with the preservation of human dignity and the rights of future generations.

This research seeks to transition "embellishment objectives" from abstract jurisprudential theorization into the realm of practical activation, positioning this specific tier of objectives as the "ethical regulator" of contemporary consumer behavior. In Sharia, embellishments are not superfluous; they form a protective fence around complementary needs and core necessities, ...and their disruption poses a significant risk that predisposes contemporary lifestyle toward systemic imbalance. Within this conceptual framework, the present study investigates how reclaiming the 'spirit of the maqasid' can offer a normative framework to rationalize contemporary consumer patterns under the title: *Activating Embellishment Objectives in Regulating Contemporary Consumer Behavior: A Foundational and Ethical Study*. From this vantage point, this study comes to investigate how to reclaim the "spirit of the maqasid" to regulate contemporary consumer chaos under the title: ***Activating Embellishment Objectives in Regulating Contemporary Consumer Behavior: A Foundational and Ethical Study.***

Research Problem

The core problem lies in the existence of a "**behavioral and ethical gap**" within contemporary consumer patterns dominated by excessive materialism and waste. Although Islamic jurisprudence has established an integrated system of objectives, "**embellishment objectives**" are still treated in jurisprudential studies as an "academic luxury" or a secondary tier that does not entail binding legal rulings.

Consequently, the core research problem crystallizes in the following question:

How can embellishment objectives be transformed from "supplementary descriptions" into methodological "regulatory tools" capable of rationalizing consumer behavior and rectifying its contemporary deviations?

From this primary problem, the following sub-questions emerge:

1. What is the fundamentalist grounding of embellishment objectives, and what is their organic relationship to preserving core necessities and complementary needs?
2. What are the primary manifestations of disruption in contemporary consumer behavior (luxury, folly, hollow imitation) from a jurisprudential perspective?
3. How can fundamentalist legal maxims associated with embellishments (such as blocking the means/*sadd al-dhara'i*, custom/*urf*, and chivalry/*muru'ah*) be activated to construct a robust jurisprudence of consumption?
4. What are the applied models that demonstrate the efficacy of embellishment objectives in regulating consumption (such as energy consumption, fashion, and digital luxury)?

Research Objectives:

1. Grounding the concept of embellishment objectives as an integral part of the legislative system rather than marginal improvements.
2. Exposing the negative impacts of modern consumer patterns on the individual and society from a maqasid perspective.
3. Deriving fundamentalist criteria and constraints that assist individuals and institutions in practicing "ethical" consumption aligned with the spirit of Sharia.

Research Methodology

The methodology employed in this study is operationalized through the following approaches:

- **The Inductive Approach (*Al-Manhaj al-Istiqra'i*):** Applied to systematically trace and survey the treatises of fundamentalist jurists (*al-usuliyyun*) regarding

the hierarchies of Sharia objectives (*maratib al-maqasid*), with a specific focus on embellishment objectives (*al-tahsiniyyah*).

- **The Analytical Approach (*Al-Manhaj al-Tahlili*):** Utilized to deconstruct contemporary consumer phenomena and trace them back to their foundational jurisprudential origins.
- **The Applied Projection Method (Al-Manhaj al-Tanzili):** Distinct from a descriptive case-study approach, this method is operationalized as a structured normative framework consisting of three core steps: (1) isolating the usuli maxim or objective (al-maqsad) and its underlying rationale, (2) analyzing the factual reality (manat al-waqi') to identify its contemporary consumer drivers, and (3) applying the legal rule while balancing benefits and harms. The limitation of this method lies in its reliance on conceptual normative projections rather than empirical measurement or absolute legislative edicts.

This investigation is structured according to the following outline:

Introduction

1. The Essence of Embellishment Objectives and Their Relationship to Consumption

- **1.1** The Reality of Embellishment Objectives and Their Position in the Maqasid Hierarchy.
- **1.2** The Impact of Embellishment Objectives on Defining Legal Rulings (*Al-Ahkam al-Taklifiyyah*).
- **1.3** Sharia Maxims Governing Consumption (The Maxim of Extravagance, the Maxim of Chivalry/*Muru'ah*, and the Maxim of Moderation).

2. The Reality of Contemporary Consumer Behavior: A Critical Jurisprudential View

- **2.1** Characterizing "Consumerism" in the Digital Age and Its Psychological and Material Dimensions.
- **2.2** The Evils Resulting from Neglecting Embellishment Constraints (Waste, Conspicuous Display, Consumer Debt).
- **2.3** The Crisis of the "Absence of Maqasid" in Modern Economic Models.

3. Strategies for Activating Embellishment Objectives: Applied Case Studies

- **3.1** Activating the Objectives of "Moderation" and "Beauty" in Adornment and Fashion Consumption.
- **3.2** Regulating Digital Consumption (Entertainment and Data) in Light of the Objective of "Preserving Time and Wealth."

- **3.3** The Role of Embellishment Objectives in Promoting "Ethical and Sustainable Consumption" (Protection of the Environment and Resources).

Conclusion: Key Findings and Recommendations

2. The Essence of Embellishment Objectives (*Al-Maqasid al-Tahsiniyyah*) and Their Relationship to Consumption

2.1. The Reality of Embellishment Objectives and Their Position in the Maqasid Hierarchy

Definition of Embellishment Objectives

First: The Lexical Definition

The word *al-tahsiniyyah* (embellishment) is linguistically derived from *al-husn* (beauty/goodness), which is the antonym of *al-qubh* (ugliness). *Al-tahsin* denotes the adornment, beautification, and optimization of something, bringing it to its finest state. It also implies attaining what is better and more complete. Ibn Manzur stated: "*Al-Husn* comprises everything that is delightful and desirable" (1).

Second: The Technical Definition

Fundamentalist jurists (*al-usuliyyun*) have provided several closely aligned definitions for embellishment objectives, the most prominent of which include:

1. **Imam al-Shatibi's Definition:** They refer to "adopting what is appropriate of finest customs, and avoiding stained conditions that sound intellects disdain, all of which are encapsulated within the domain of noble virtues."(2)
2. **Imam al-Ghazali's Definition:** He characterized them as "those public interests (*masalih*) that do not stem from a necessity (*darurah*) or a complementary need (*hajah*), but rather serve the purpose of adornment, beautification, and facilitation."(3)

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(1) Ibn Manzur, Muhammad bin Makram, Lisan al-Arab, root: (H-S-N).

(2) Al-Shatibi, Ibrahim bin Musa, Al-Muwafaqat fi Usul al-Shari'ah, edited by Mashhour bin Hasan Al Salman, Vol. 2, p. 22.

(3) Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid, Al-Mustasfa min 'Ilm al-Usul, edited by Muhammad Abd al-Salam Abd al-Shafi, p. 258.

3. **Ibn Ashur's Definition:** Ibn Ashur contends that embellishments are not mere "luxuries" for the individual; rather, they constitute a public interest for the entire Muslim nation (*al-ummah*) to exhibit a fitting civilized image. He stated: "They are what achieve the perfection of the state of the *ummah* within its systemic order, enabling it to live in peace and tranquility, while maintaining a fine appearance in the eyes of other nations, thereby inducing them to integrate into it or emulate its system."(1)

While classical scholars (such as al-Shatibi) focused primarily on the individual dimension (such as the etiquette of eating), Ibn Ashur elevated embellishments to the societal and civilizational level through several dimensions:

- **The Civilizational Objective:** He posited that Islamic legislation aims to make Muslims a "refined" nation in their customs, attire, and conduct, as this constitutes a silent form of calling to the faith (*da'wah*).
- **The Correlation with Chivalry (*Muru'ah*):** He emphasized that embellishments represent "conducting affairs in accordance with the mandates of chivalry (*muru'ah*) and the finest customs."
- **Complementing Other Tiers:** They surround core necessities and complementary needs like a protective fence that safeguards and beautifies them.

The Position of Embellishment Objectives Within the Maqasid Tiers

Embellishment objectives occupy the third tier in the hierarchy of public interests (*masalih*) that Sharia manifested to preserve. Although they appear "supplementary" on the surface, they embody the civilizational refinement and ethical beauty of Islam. Furthermore, they serve as a protective shield for "complementary needs" and "core necessities"; if the etiquette of consumption (an embellishment) is violated, it inevitably drives the individual toward squandering wealth, thereby compromising the core necessity of preserving wealth (*hifz al-mal*).

Imam al-Shatibi—may Allah have mercy on him—stated: "Embellishments operate within core necessities and complementary needs as a supplement and clarification."(2) Imam Ibn Ashur observed: "Embellishment objectives are what grant Sharia its splendor

(1) Ibn Ashur, Muhammad al-Tahir, Maqasid al-Shari'ah al-Islamiyyah, edited by Mohamed El-Tahir El-Mesawi, pp. 380-390.

(2) Al-Shatibi, Al-Muwafaqat, Vol. 2, p. 11 .

and majesty in the hearts of people; without them, legal rulings would appear dry and devoid of spirit."(1)

Accordingly, a disruption in the embellishment tier can, in some way, lead to a disruption in the complementary or necessary tiers. An example of this is the prohibition of consuming filth (an embellishment), which ultimately preserves human life from diseases (a necessity).(2)

2.2. The Impact of Embellishment Objectives on Defining Legal Rulings (*Al-Ahkam al-Taklifiyyah*)

Embellishments derive their legal authority from the universal principles of Sharia that call for chivalry (*muru'ah*) and noble virtues. They influence defining legal rulings by transforming a "permissible" act (*mubah*) in consumption into a "recommended" act (*mandub*) if intended for legitimate beautification, or into a "reprehensible" (*makruh*) or "prohibited" (*haram*) act if it leads to vanity and pride. This impact of embellishments on legal rulings manifests in various aspects, including:

1. **The Transition of a Ruling from "Recommended" (*Nadbh*) to "Obligatory" (*Wujub*):** An act may be legally recommended and categorized under embellishment objectives, yet its ruling changes to becomes obligatory if this embellishment serves a necessity that cannot be fulfilled without it. Thus, whatever embellishment is indispensable for fulfilling a necessary objective becomes obligatory. *Example:* Washing hands before and after meals is an embellishment/recommended act. However, during the outbreak of a fatal, contact-transmitted pandemic, the ruling shifts to an obligation because the embellishment objective (cleanliness) has become the sole means to preserve the necessary objective (life). This is grounded in al-Shatibi's principle: "If an embellishment becomes linked to a necessity, it rises to the status of a necessity." (3)
2. **The Transition of a Ruling from "Permissibility" (*Ibahah*) to "Prohibition" (*Tahrim*):** An action may be fundamentally permissible, yet because it violates a universal embellishment objective (such as chivalry or public decorum), its ruling shifts to prohibition. *Example:* Commercializing a media or artistic medium that provides "debased" content might not destroy a necessity or a complementary need, but it violates public modesty (an embellishment objective). Here, the ruling changes from the permissibility of buying and selling

(1) Ibn Ashur, Maqasid al-Shari'ah al-Islamiyyah, p. 225
(2) Al-Mustasfa,p.174

(3) Al-Shatibi, Al-Muwafaqat, Vol. 2, p. 15.

to prohibition, safeguarding the objective of "noble virtues." Hence, al-Ghazali maintains that the Lawgiver may prohibit permissible matters if they become a means to abandoning embellishments, which protect necessities.(1)

3. **The Transition of a Ruling from "Prohibition" (*Tahrim*) to "Permissibility" (*Ibahah*) in Cases of Conflict:** A prohibition enacted to realize an embellishment objective may change to permissibility to attain a higher necessary or complementary objective. *Example:* Covering the private parts (*awrah*) is obligatory for the sake of an embellishment objective, which is maintaining a proper appearance. However, in cases of medical necessity, the ruling shifts from the prohibition of exposing the *awrah* to permissibility, as preserving life (a necessity) takes precedence over the embellishment objective (covering the *awrah*).

2.3 Sharia Maxims Governing Consumption

First: The Maxim of Prohibiting Extravagance (*Tahrim al-Saraf*)

The maxim of prohibiting extravagance (*saraf* or *israf*) is a universal legal maxim deeply rooted in embellishment objectives. It extends beyond mere financial economy to serve as an ethical and legislative constraint that protects resources and maintains psychological and social equilibrium. Extravagance is defined as spending wealth on unlawful avenues, or expanding in the consumption of permissible things beyond the bounds of moderation.

Scholars link this maxim to the embellishment objective from the perspective of "adopting the finest customs." A Muslim is commanded to practice moderation, which is the hallmark of this *ummah*. The Almighty said: وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَٰلِكَ قَوَامًا *"And [they are] those who, when they spend, do so not excessively or stingily but are 'between that' justly."* (Surah Al-Furqan: 67)

Imam al-Shatibi asserts that extravagance breaches the protective wall of embellishment objectives. If the legally accountable individual (*al-mukallaf*) persists in extravagance, it leads to the disruption of core necessities (the preservation of wealth). His established rule states: "Whatever serves a foundational principle becomes prohibited if its execution leads to the nullification of that principle."(2)

Similarly, Izz al-Din ibn Abd al-Salam considered extravagance an evil that must be warded off, while moderation is a benefit that must be acquired. He categorized

(1) Al-Ghazali, Al-Mustasfa, p. 174.

(2) Al-Shatibi, Al-Muwafaqat, Vol. 2, p. 25.

extravagance into prohibited (wastefulness in sins) and reprehensible (excess in permissible matters that constricts oneself or others). (1)

Ibn Ashur highlights that the prohibition of extravagance is a general embellishment objective aimed at preserving the wealth of the *ummah*, because private wealth, from a maqasid perspective, ultimately belongs to the collective wealth of the nation.(2)

Among the applications of this maxim in consumer issues: the consumption of food and clothing is fundamentally "permissible," yet the maxim of prohibiting extravagance shifts the ruling to "prohibition" if the expenditure is driven by vanity or ostentation, as the Prophet ﷺ said: "Eat, drink, give charity, and wear clothes, as long as it is not mixed with extravagance or vanity."(3)

Second: The Maxim of Chivalry (*Muru'ah*)

Linguistically, *al-muru'ah* is derived from *al-mar'* (the human being), denoting the perfection of manhood or humanity. Technically, it is defined as: "Adopting what adorns and beautifies the servant of Allah, and avoiding what defiles and dishonors him." Imam al-Bahuti stated: "*Al-Muru'ah* is performing what beautifies and adorns, and abandoning what defiles and dishonors... Thus, whoever eats meat or bread in a marketplace in front of people in a manner not customary, or walks bareheaded in a place where such is not custom, has breached his chivalry."(4)

The impact of chivalry on the jurisprudence of consumption manifests in several aspects:

- **Aspect One: Chivalry as the Scale of Moderation Between Extravagance and Stinginess:** Chivalry is not merely an internal trait; it is a material benchmark that determines the socially "acceptable" level of consumption. Imam al-Mawardi observed: "*Al-Muru'ah* is the observance of conducts to their finest states, so that no ugliness manifests intentionally, and no blame is directed... Among the aspects of chivalry regarding wealth is that one should not constrict

(1) Al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam, Qawa'id al-Ahkam, Vol. 2, p. 165.

(2) Muhammad al-Tahir bin Ashur, Maqasid al-Shari'ah al-Islamiyyah, p. 242.

(3) Narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari as a mu'allaq (suspended) report in "Kitab al-Libas" (Book of Dress), Chapter: The Saying of Allah Almighty: {Say, "Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has produced for His servants"}. Also narrated by Imam Ahmad, No. (6695); Al-Nasa'i in "Kitab al-Zakat" (Book of Zakat), Chapter: Giving Charity from Lawful Earnings, No. (2559); and Ibn Majah in "Kitab al-Libas" (Book of Dress), Chapter: Dressing Without Extravagance or Conceit, No. (3605).

(4) Al-Bahuti, Kashshaf al-Qina' 'an Matn al-Iqna', Vol. 6, p. 411.

oneself in meeting necessities, nor squander it excessively where it is undeserved." (1)

Thus, chivalry acts as an indicator preventing consumption from deviating toward two blameworthy extremes:

1. *The Upper Extreme (Vanity/Ostentation):* Chivalry restrains a person from purchasing goods that provoke the feelings of others or aim solely at superiority, because pride tarnishes human dignity.
2. *The Lower Extreme (Stinginess):* Conversely, chivalry restrains a wealthy person from wearing tattered clothes or constricting his family's livelihood, as such conduct represents a baseness that contradicts the dignity of one upon whom Allah has bestowed blessings.

- **Aspect Two: Chivalry and the Constraint of "Social Context" (Custom/*Urf*):** The maxim of chivalry renders consumption "flexible" and socially embedded. Chivalry obligates the consumer to consider the condition of those around him, which is expressed as "altruistic consumption". It dictates that a person should reduce manifestations of luxury during crises or public famines, out of respect for the feelings of the needy. This also includes observing social standing; chivalry requires an individual to consume what befits his position, knowledge, and status, without debasing himself through what is customarily inappropriate.
- **Aspect Three: Chivalry and the Constraint of "Proportionality" in Expenditure:** Chivalry dictates that consumption must be proportional to one's financial standing; the wealthy should not consume like the poor (incurring blame for stinginess), nor vice versa (incurring blame for extravagance). This requires observing righteous custom and financial capacity, ensuring the individual does not engage in consumption that degrades his status or burdens him financially merely to emulate others. Al-Ghazali stated in *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*: "Know that extravagance and squandering vary according to circumstances; what is considered extravagant for one person may not be so for another. The benchmark in this is chivalry, which prevents baseness in obligations and bars ostentation in superfluous matters."(2)
- **Aspect Four: Chivalry and Its Relationship to "Garments of Fame" (*Thiyab al-Shuhrah*) and Pride:** As mentioned in the prophetic tradition: "without extravagance or vanity," scholars have linked vanity to breaking the maxim of chivalry. Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani stated: "The benchmark of chivalry is that one should not wear what makes him conspicuous among people, whether it

(1) Al-Mawardi, Adab al-Dunya wa al-Din, p. 315.

(2) Al-Ghazali, Ihya' Ulum al-Din, Vol. 3, p. 259.

is excessively precious or excessively tattered. Everything that departs from custom and moderation constitutes a breach of chivalry."(1)

Third: The Maxim of Moderation (*Al-Tawassut*) in Consumption

Linguistically, moderation denotes justice and goodness. Technically, it means pursuing a balanced path between excess (*ifrat*) and negligence (*tafrit*). In consumption, it implies satisfying innate and acquired needs without exceeding legislative limits or harming wealth and society. The Almighty said: وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَٰلِكَ قَوَامًا Here, *qawam* means justice, uprightness, and moderation. The Almighty also said: وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُومًا مَّحْسُورًا *"And do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck or extend it completely and [thereby] become blamed and insolvent."* (Surah Al-Isra: 29)

The discourses of scholars regarding this maxim can be summarized in two dimensions:

1. **The Explanatory Dimension (Defining *Qawam*):** Moderation means that an individual is neither a spendthrift who expends beyond need, nor a miser who constricts his family and falls short of their rights; rather, he remains upright (*qawam*), and the best of affairs are those in the middle.(2)
2. **The Jurisprudential Dimension (The Shift of the Scale Based on Individual State):** Moderation is not a fixed quantitative figure for all people; it is relative, varying according to wealth, poverty, and environment. What is considered moderate for a wealthy person may be deemed extravagant for a poor person.(3)
3. **The Social and Psychological Dimension**: This dimension operates on the premise that moderation is a virtue situated between two vices. Thus, anyone who spends wealth on an illegitimate avenue—even if it is a small amount—is considered extravagant (*musrif*). Conversely, anyone who withholds a mandatory right—even if he possesses vast wealth—is considered tight-fisted (*muqattir*). Moderation (*al-wasat*) is defined as directing wealth into its legitimate, Sharia-approved avenues.(4)

Constraints of Moderation in Contemporary Consumption

To project this foundational legal maxim onto contemporary reality, researchers have established several operational constraints:

1. **Prioritizing Core Necessities Over Luxuries:** It is legally impermissible to engage in the consumption of "embellishments" (such as ultra-luxury brands) at

(1) Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 10, p. 26.

(2) Ibn Kathir, Ismail bin Umar, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim, Vol. 6, p. 124.

(3) Al-Shatibi, Ibrahim bin Musa, Al-Muwafaqat, Vol. 2, p. 275.

(4) Ibn Hazm, Ali bin Ahmad, Al-Akhlaq wa al-Siyar fi Mudawat al-Nufus, p. 78.

the expense of "complementary needs" (such as education and healthcare) or "core necessities" (such as housing and food).

2. **Observing the Social Environment:** Consumption must not culminate in "luxury" (*al-taraf*) that breeds rigid social stratification, animosity, and social resentment.
3. **Avoiding Conformity and Emulation:** Consumption driven by social exhibitionism stands in direct violation of the maxim of moderation.

3. The Reality of Contemporary Consumer Behavior: A Critical Jurisprudential View

3.1. Characterizing "Consumerism" in the Digital Age

The digital age has witnessed a radical paradigm shift in the concept of "consumption." It is no longer a mere process to satisfy innate instincts or structural necessities of life; rather, it has transformed into a dominant "ism" (consumerism) that shapes individual identity and dictates social status. The precise characterization of this consumerist drive under the digital transformation manifests through the following dimensions:

1. **The Digitization of Desire and Accelerated Commodification:** In the digital era, consumption has shifted from a "marketplace of place" to a "marketplace of flows." Driven by algorithms and artificial intelligence, consumer desires are predicted before the individual even consciously experiences them. The integration of what is termed "Big Data" has enabled corporations to manufacture artificial needs via hyper-targeted advertising, thereby transforming the human being from a "freely choosing agent" into an "automated respondent" to digital stimuli.(1)
2. **Conspicuous Display and Visual Identity:** Consumption in the digital age is no longer driven by utility; rather, it has become "consumption for the sake of exhibition." Social media platforms (such as Instagram and TikTok) have enforced a consumerist pattern anchored in theatrical display. The individual no longer purchases a commodity for its intrinsic quality, but for the "mental image" and status it projects to their followers. This characterization corresponds to the concept of "Simulation" formulated by Jean Baudrillard, wherein the image

(1) Zygmunt Bauman, Consuming Life, translated by Hajjaj Abu Jabr, p. 45.

surpasses reality, and the sign becomes more valuable than the material object itself.(1)

3. **Liquidity of Purchasing and the Erosion of "Economic Consciousness":** E-commerce and digital payment systems have engineered a frictionless spending environment, severely weakening rational deterrence during the purchasing process. The effortless clicking of the "Buy Now" button has catalyzed what is known as "impulsive consumption"—a behavior entirely devoid of deliberation or the jurisprudential balancing between benefits (*masalih*) and harms (*mafasid*), which constitutes the very cornerstone of the fundamentalist approach to economics.(2)

When evaluating the aforementioned characterization from a fundamentalist, maqasid perspective, the systemic harms of this digital consumerism manifest as follows:

- **Extravagance and Squandering (*Al-Israf wa al-Tabdhir*):** The digital drive impels the individual to cross the boundary of "sufficiency" (*al-kifayah*) into the domain of blameworthy luxury (*al-taraf*). The Almighty said: وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا * إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ *"And do not spend wastefully. Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils..."* (Surah Al-Isra: 26-27)
- **Subservience to Materialism:** Transforming consumption into an ultimate end in itself directly compromises the foundational principle of "human vicegerency over wealth" (*al-istikhlaf fi al-mal*). Man becomes enslaved by his insatiable desires rather than remaining the master of his own sovereign decisions.
- **The Fabrication of Needs:** In fundamentalist jurisprudence, it is an established maxim that "a complementary need may be treated like a core necessity under certain conditions." However, digital capitalism has inverted this hierarchy, elevating the "embellishment tier" (luxuries) to the status of a "core necessity," thus disrupting the proper arrangement of maqasid priorities for both the individual and society.(3)

(1) Jean Baudrillard, The Consumer Society, translated by Khalil Ahmad Khalil, p. 112.

(2) Erich Fromm, To Have or to Be?, translated by Muhammad Tashtoush, p. 88.

(3) Youssef al-Qaradawi, Dur al-Qiyam wa al-Akhlaq fi al-Iqtisad al-Islami (The Role of Values and Ethics in Islamic Economics), pp. 154-160.

3.2 The Evils Resulting from Neglecting Embellishment Constraints in Contemporary Consumption

As is well established in fundamentalist thought, "embellishments" occupy the third tier in the hierarchy of objectives. While neglecting core necessities leads to the destruction of life or religion, neglecting the constraints governing embellishments in contemporary consumption yields severe systemic evils (*mafasid*) that plague both the individual and society:

1. **The Evil of Disrupting Core Necessities and Complementary Needs:** It is a settled jurisprudential maxim that "the embellishment serves the complementary need, and the complementary need serves the core necessity." When a consumer drowns in digital consumerism, completely ignoring the constraints of embellishment (such as moderation and economy), they are often forced to sacrifice their core necessities.(1) A stark contemporary example is resorting to usurious loans (*riba*)—which is a destructive evil impacting both religion and wealth—solely to purchase ostentatious luxury commodities (embellishments). Here, neglecting the constraints of the embellishment tier directly undermines core necessities.
2. **The Evil of Luxury Catalyzing Social Corruption:** Unchecked digital consumption entrenches a culture of "opulence" (*al-taraf*). In the Khaldunian paradigm, opulence marks the beginning of the end for blessings and the ruin of civilization. Neglecting embellishment constraints widens the class divide, spreads social animosity, and transforms society into a "society of spectacle" where values of mutual solidarity crumble, replaced by hyper-individualism and egoism.(2)
3. **The Evil of Identity Loss and Cultural Dependency:** Because embellishments in Islam are structurally bound to "noble virtues" and the "dignified appearance of a Muslim," neglecting their constraints in the digital era leaves the Muslim consumer entirely vulnerable to a total dependency on Western patterns of food, dress, and housing. This leads to the systemic evil of the "dissolution of the Islamic personality." Consumption ceases to be a mere economic activity and

(1) Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi, Al-Muwafaqat fi Usul al-Shari'ah, Vol. 2, pp. 22-25.

(2) Ibn Khaldun, Al-Muqaddimah, p. 168.

becomes a cultural act expressing subjugation to whoever owns the tools of digital influence.(1)

4. **The Evil of Ecological Waste and Cosmic Depletion:** Among the defining constraints of embellishments is the "prohibition of extravagance." Neglecting this constraint in our era has produced the evil of "insatiable consumption," which severely exhausts the earth's resources and induces environmental degradation due to the rapid obsolescence and replacement of commodities (such as smartphones and fast fashion). Environmental pollution, in this regard, is a form of "mischief upon the earth" (*fasad fi al-ard*) that Sharia forcefully prohibits and rejects.(2)

3.3 The Crisis of the "Absence of Maqasid" in Modern Economic Models

The core crisis of modern economic models (Capitalism and Neoliberalism) lies in their adoption of the principle of separating ethical value from economic activity, a phenomenon known in philosophical literature as "value neutrality."(3) This systemic exclusion of Sharia objectives (necessities, complementary needs, and embellishments) has generated a purely materialistic paradigm that focuses heavily on means while completely ignoring the grand ultimate ends for which human existence was created. This crisis manifests through the following dimensions:

1. **The Dominance of "Material Utility" as a Substitute for Maqasid Benefit:** Modern models rely on the concept of *Homo Economicus* (the economic man), who acts solely out of the motivation to maximize personal utility. This characterization has entirely eliminated the objective of "purification of the soul" (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) and "realizing servitude to Allah" (*tahqiq al-ubudiyyah*) from financial transactions. Consequently, consumption has become an end rather than a means, and physical pleasure has become the sole benchmark for good and bad, instead of divine legislation and sound intellect.(4)

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(1) Ali Muhyi al-Din al-Qaradaghi, Al-Iqtisad al-Islami: Dirasah Ta'siliyyah Muqaranah (Islamic Economics: A Foundational Comparative Study), p. 412.

(2) Youssef al-Qaradawi, Dur al-Qiyam wa al-Akhlaq fi al-Iqtisad al-Islami, pp. 154-160.

(3) Max Weber, The Methodology of the Social Sciences, translated by Nabil Subayh, p. 57.

(4) See: Shawqi Ahmad Dunya, Al-Islam wa al-Tanmiyah al-Iqtisadiyyah (Islam and Economic Development), p. 44.

2. **Reducing "Economic Rationality" to Quantitative Calculation:** In the fundamentalist worldview, rationality (*al-rushd*) is defined as the simultaneous "rectification of wealth and the preservation of religion." In modern economic models, however, rationality has been reduced to an "instrumental rationality" that seeks the lowest financial cost and the highest material return, even if achieved at the expense of the core necessities of others (such as polluting the environment or monopolizing essential goods). This exclusion of the objectives of "justice" (*adl*) and "harm removal" (*raf' al-darar*) has precipitated suffocating financial and environmental crises.(1)
3. **Decoupling "Monetary Circulation" from Ethical Values:** Among the objectives of Sharia regarding wealth is ensuring the "circulation of wealth" (*rawaj al-amwal*) so that it does not become concentrated exclusively among the wealthy. Yet, modern models have eclipsed this objective in favor of financial "accumulation" and concentration through digital, fictitious instruments. This exclusion has left capital circulating in a closed vacuum detached from real civilization building (*imarat al-ard*), directly contradicting the objective of "preserving wealth" by investing it in real utilities rather than digital gambling. (2)
4. **The Fetishism of "Growth" at the Expense of "Blessing" (*Barakah*) and Sufficiency:** Modern models constantly chase the specter of "infinite growth," driving them to stimulate manic consumption to keep the gears of production turning. This orientation has completely marginalized the maqasid of contentment (*qana'ah*), moderation, and sufficiency (*kifayah*). While modern economics focuses on digital "abundance," Sharia objectives aim at "blessing" (*al-barakah*), which signifies the growth of qualitative benefit rather than a mere quantitative increase, directing surplus wealth to meet the needs of the poor (the objective of solidarity).(3)
5. **Digital Consumption and the Commodification of Man (The Absence of the Objective of Preserving the Intellect):** In modern paradigms, the human being is viewed merely as a "resource" or a "consumer," whereas the maqasid worldview recognizes man as a "vicegerent" (*mubtala/mustakhlaf*). Eclipsing

(1) See: Muhammad Anas Al-Zarka, "Siyaghah Islamiyyah li-Mu'amalat al-Istihlak fi al-Iqtisad" (An Islamic Formulation of Consumption Behavior in Economics), Journal of Research in Islamic Economics, King Abdulaziz University, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1983, p. 22.

(2) Youssef Kamal, Fiqh al-Iqtisad al-Islami: Ghayat wa Wasa'il (Jurisprudence of Islamic Economics: Objectives and Means), p. 76.

(3) Rafiq Yunus Al-Masri, Usul al-Iqtisad al-Islami (Principles of Islamic Economics), p. 118.

this objective in the digital age has enslaved man to algorithms that strip him of his sovereign will, dealing a fatal blow to the objective of "preserving the intellect" (*hifz al-aql*). Critical consciousness is completely systematically disabled in favor of an instinctive, primal response to purchasing and possession. (1)

4.Strategies for Activating Embellishment Objectives: Applied Case Studies

.4.1 Activating the Objectives of "Moderation" and "Beauty" in Adornment an Fashion Consumption

The philosophy of Islam regarding adornment is built on a precise equilibrium between satisfying the innate human calling for aesthetics and enforcing an ethical discipline that restrains material tyranny. This equilibrium is achieved through two primary objectives: Beauty and Moderation.

From the perspective of Usul al-Fiqh, contemporary digital consumption is regulated through specialized mechanisms. Digital contracts governing subscriptions and platform services are bound by the maxims of preventing contractual ambiguity (Gharar) and averting harm. Furthermore, environmental and resource protection is systematically anchored in the classical ecological model of Ḥimā (protected zones), which establishes domains exempt from overexploitation. In addition, integrating the principle of Īthār (altruism) serves as a vital ethical counterweight to the hyper-individualistic nature of modern surveillance capitalism, redirecting surplus resources toward collective well-being rather than unbridled personal gratification.

First: The Objective of "Beauty" (*Maqsad al-Jamal*)

From a maqasid perspective, beauty is not merely a superficial "form"; rather, it is a legitimate Sharia objective meant to manifest the impact of Allah's blessings upon the servant. Engaging in beautiful presentation is legally commanded. Ibn Taymiyyah stated: "Abandoning adornment that is beloved to Allah stems from a corrupted form of asceticism (*zuhd*)." (2) The practical application of this objective is realized through the following measures:

(1) Taha Jabir al-Alwani, Maqasid al-Shari'ah, p. 105.

(2) Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmu' al-Fatawa, Vol. 22, p. 310.

1. **Manifesting Divine Blessing:** This is achieved by evoking the intention of gratitude (*shukr*) to Allah when wearing fine clothes. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Indeed, Allah loves to see the trace of His blessing upon His servant."(1)
2. **The Muslim's Attentiveness to Personal Appearance:** This involves maintaining a clean and dignified appearance in both public and private gatherings, emulating the righteous predecessors (*al-salaf*). It was narrated that Imam Malik would wear his finest clothes and burn incense whenever he intended to narrate the Hadith of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, out of profound reverence for the status of the prophetic tradition.(2)

Second: The Objective of "Moderation" (*Al-I'tidal* – The Equilibrium Between Stinginess and Extravagance)

Moderation acts as the ethical brake that protects embellishment objectives from turning into an exhausting complementary need (*hajah*) or a lost core necessity (*darurah*) due to wastefulness. Hence, Imam al-Shatibi determined that if embellishments compromise a foundational necessary or complementary principle, they must be abandoned; moderation is the scale of sustainability.(3)

This objective is realized within contemporary consumption through the following measures:

1. **Rejecting Vanity in Fashion:** There is no legal impediment to interacting with contemporary fashion in a manner that aligns with public decorum, provided it is free from the intention of arrogance or superiority over people. Ibn Abbas said: "Eat what you wish and wear what you wish, as long as two traits do not escape you: extravagance or vanity."(4)

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(1) Jami' al-Tirmidhi: Narrated in "Kitab al-Adab" (Book of Manners), Chapter "What Has Been Related About: Indeed, Allah Loves to See the Effects of His Blessings on His Servant," No. (2819), Al-Tirmidhi stated: "This is a Hasan (good) Hadith." Sunan al-Nasa'i: Narrated in "Kitab al-Zinah" (Book of Adornment), Chapter "Displaying Blessings," No. (5224). Musnad Imam Ahmad: No. (6738) and (6708) from the Hadith of Abdullah bin Amr. Narrated by Al-Hakim in Al-Mustadrak (Vol. 4, p. 201), who stated: "This Hadith has a Sahih (authentic) chain of transmission."

(2) Al-Qadi Iyad, Tartib al-Madarik, Vol. 2, p. 14.

(3) Al-Muwafaqat, Vol. 2, p. 25.

(4) Mentioned by Imam Al-Bukhari in "Kitab al-Libas" (Book of Dress), (Chapter: The Saying of Allah Almighty: {Say, "Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has produced for His servants"}), and he cited it as a definitive mu'allaq (suspended) report. Ibn Abi Shaybah narrated it in Kitab al-Libas, No. (24878), with the wording: "Eat what you wish, and dress as you wish, as long as two things do not affect you: extravagance or conceit." Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani traced its transmission through Ibn Abi Shaybah and others with an authentic (Sahih) chain.

2. **Financial Equilibrium:** This is achieved by avoiding the consumption of financial resources on "superfluous luxuries" at the expense of the core complementary needs (*al-hajiyyah al-asasiyyah*) of the family.

Third: The Integration Between Beauty and Moderation

In contemporary maqasid thought, these two objectives can be operationalized via what is known today as "ethical fashion" or "conscious consumption," which is achieved through:

1. **Countering Blameworthy Opulence:** Activating moderation here manifests in selecting high-quality attire that lasts long, rather than pursuing "fast fashion" that depletes cosmic resources.
2. **Concealing Beauty Rather Than Revealing Dress:** Activating the objective of beauty requires that clothing serves as an adornment that enhances dignity and prestige, not a means to expose private parts (*awrah*). This is because beauty that leads to an ethical evil (*mfsadah*) ceases to be an "embellishment" and is deemed "vile" in the sight of Sharia.

4.2 Regulating Digital Consumption (Entertainment and Data)

Regulating digital consumption within contemporary maqasid jurisprudence constitutes one of the most prominent applications of the "jurisprudence of balancing" (*fiqh al-muwazanat*) and the "jurisprudence of time" (*fiqh al-waqt*), given that consumption has shifted from tangible matter to "data" and "digital time." This section centers on activating the objective of "preserving time" (*hifz al-waqt*) and the objective of "financial moderation" within cyberspace, avoiding excess in entertainment that might culminate in squandering core necessities.

First: The Objective of "Moderation" in Consuming Data and Subscriptions

Digital consumption is not free; rather, it constitutes a financial expenditure that requires jurisprudential rationalization to prevent wastefulness. Spending on digital subscriptions (such as Netflix, gaming, and internet bundles) falls under the jurisprudential maxim of "expenditure on embellishments." Imam al-Ghazali stated: "Expanding in permissible matters is only prohibited if it leads to narrowing mandatory obligations or culminates in prohibitions."(1)

The objective of moderation in data consumption is achieved through:

(1) Ihya' Ulum al-Din, Vol. 3, p. 235.

1. **Filtering Subscriptions:** Canceling multiple digital subscriptions that are not actively utilized, implementing the foundational prohibition against "squandering wealth."
2. **Avoiding "Purchasing Illusion" in Games:** Exercising caution against excessive microtransactions within electronic games to acquire purely cosmetic or superficial features, which falls directly into the domain of extravagance (*saraf*).

Second: The Objective of "Preserving Time" and Regulating Digital Entertainment

Digital entertainment is fundamentally an "embellishment" meant to provide relaxation for the soul (*ijmam al-nafs*). However, if it consumes all of one's time, it transforms into an evil and a source of negligence. Therefore, Izz al-Din ibn Abd al-Salam asserts that: "Interests are of two types: real interests, which belong to the Hereafter, and metaphorical interests, which belong to this worldly life. The metaphorical interest must not be prioritized if it nullifies the real interest."(1)

Among the applied models to achieve this:

1. **The Strategy of "Digital Fasting":** Allocating specific times for entertainment and prohibiting it during periods designated for core necessities (such as prayer, seeking knowledge, and professional work).
2. **Activating the Maxim of "Soul Relaxation":** Treating entertainment as a means rather than an ultimate end. In this regard, Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "Relax these hearts and seek for them the subtle treasures of wisdom, for they grow weary just as bodies grow weary."(2)

Third: The Objective of "Preserving the Intellect" from Digital Pollution

The dense digital consumption of trivial information induces "attention fragmentation," which compromises the objective of preserving the intellect (*hifz al-aql*) and its capacity for focus. Al-Shatibi noted that preserving the intellect is accomplished by prohibiting whatever corrupts it or weakens its function.(3) Mindless digital consumption diminishes the intellectual capacity for reflection. This objective is realized through:

1. **Content Selection:** Shifting from passive consumption (receiving anything) to selective consumption that serves the intellect and the spirit.

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(1) Qawa'id al-Ahkam, Vol. 1, p. 24.

(2) Ibn Abd al-Barr, Jami' Bayan al-Ilm wa Fadlihi, Vol. 1, p. 125.

(3) Al-Muwafaqat, Vol. 2, p. 10.

2. **Avoiding "Superfluous Digital Gazing":** A Muslim is obligated to reduce tracking the trivial details of others' lives that yield no benefit, operationalizing the saying of the Prophet ﷺ: "Part of the excellence of a person's Islam is his leaving that which does not concern him."(1)

4.3 "Ethical and Sustainable Consumption" (Environmental Protection)

Embellishment objectives forge an intrinsic link between individual behavior and cosmic safety. Extravagance in consuming resources (water, energy, plastic) violates the objective of "vicegerency" (*al-istikhlaf*); hence, ethical consumption is a religious obligation before being a global environmental call. "Ethical and sustainable consumption" in contemporary maqasid jurisprudence embodies the principle of "vicegerency upon the earth," lifting consumption from a personal act into a profound responsibility toward the cosmos and future generations. (2) This requirement stems from operationalizing the objective of "civilization building" (*imarat al-ard*) and preventing "mischief upon the earth," achieved through three basic strategies:(3)

First: Activating the Objective of "Vicegerency" via Rational Consumption

Ethical consumption signifies the realization that man is a trustee over resources, not an absolute owner. Imam al-Raghib al-Asfahani stated: "The vicegerency of Allah is the civilization building of the earth, and its building can only be through what pleases Him, and among the greatest means to that is preserving the foundations of blessings."(4)

This is realized through:

1. **The Circular Economy:** Preferring reusable products over single-use products (such as plastics), operationalizing the legal maxim: "There shall be no harm nor reciprocating harm."
2. **Supporting Fair Trade:** Choosing products whose production does not rely on exploiting workers or destroying forests, because "the means to a prohibition is itself prohibited."

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(1) Narrated by Al-Tirmidhi, No. 2317, and authenticated by Al-Albani.

(2) Jamal al-Din Atiyah, Nahwa Taf'il Maqasid al-Shari'ah (Towards Activating the Higher Objectives of Shari'ah), p. 145.

(3) Jasser Auda, Maqasid al-Shari'ah ka-Falsafah lil-Tashri' al-Islami: Ru'yah Manzumiyyah (Maqasid al-Shari'ah as a Philosophy of Islamic Legislation: A Systems Approach), p. 82.

(4) Al-Raghib al-Isfahani, Al-Dhari'ah ila Makarim al-Shari'ah, edited by Dr. Abu al-Yazid al-Ajam, p. 105.

Second: The Objective of "Preserving Life and Progeny" via Environmental Protection

Sustainable consumption is directly linked to preserving human life by protecting the surrounding biosphere (air, water, soil). Izz al-Din ibn Abd al-Salam grounded the maxim of "observing the interests of animals and plants" as part of the perfection of faith, emphasizing that: "Every action that leads to corrupting a public interest is prohibited."(1)

1. **Rationalizing Water Consumption:** Even during acts of worship; the prophetic tradition states: "Do not waste water, even if you are at a running river,"(2) which establishes a culture of sustainability even in times of abundance.
2. **Reducing Carbon Footprint:** Limiting the insatiable consumption of energy and resources that exacerbate global warming, which falls under the universal legal maxim: "Warding off harms takes precedence over bringing benefits."(3)

Third: The Objective of "Environmental Justice" (The Right of Future Generations)

Sustainable consumption represents cross-generational justice, ensuring that the current generation does not deplete the earth's resources and leave it barren for those who follow. Ibn Khaldon indicated that excess in luxury and consumption leads to the depletion of resources and the ruin of civilization.(4) Thus, contemporary jurists maintain that the rights of future generations fall under the legal framework of "unrestricted public interest" (*al-maslahah al-mursalah*).)

(1) Qawa'id al-Ahkam, Vol. 2, p. 70.

(2) This Hadith was narrated by Imam Ahmad in his Musnad, and Ibn Majah in his Sunan, from the Hadith of Abdullah bin Amr bin al-Aas (may Allah be pleased with them both). Imam Al-Busiri stated in Zawa'id Ibn Majah: "This chain of transmission is weak due to the weakness of Hayyay bin Abdullah."

(3) Youssef al-Qaradawi, Ri'ayat al-Bi'ah fi Shari'at al-Islam (Environmental Care in Islamic Law), pp. 78-85.

(4) Al-Muqaddimah, p. 175.

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1(This is achieved through:

1. **Investing in Renewable Energies:** Serving as an ethical alternative to the excessive consumption of fossil fuels.(2)
2. **Rejecting Conspicuous Consumerism:** Which leads to waste accumulation and resource squandering without genuine need,(3) operationalizing the words of the Almighty: وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا *"And cause not corruption upon the earth after its reformation..."* (Surah Al-A'raf: 56)

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Al-Maqasid al-Tahsiniyyah (Embellishment Objectives):** Objectives aimed at adopting finest customs, avoiding undignified behavior, and achieving civilizational and ethical perfection.
- **Muru'ah (Chivalry):** A behavioral benchmark and moral framework that regulates conduct to avoid both stinginess and ostentatious vanity.
- **Israf / Isrāf (Extravagance):** Exceeding the bounds of moderation in consumption or spending wealth on unlawful or unnecessary avenues.

(1) Muhammad Sa'd al-Yubi, Maqasid al-Shari'ah al-Islamiyyah wa Elaqatuha bil-Adillah al-Shar'iyyah (The Objectives of Islamic Law and Their Relationship to Shari'ah Evidences), pp. 340-360.

(2) Abd al-Salam Dawud Kouhil, "Maqasid al-Shari'ah al-Islamiyyah wa Tahqiq al-Tanmiyah al-Mustadamah" (The Objectives of Islamic Law and Achieving Sustainable Development), Journal of Sharia and Law, United Arab Emirates University.

(3) Youssef al-Qaradawi, Ri'ayat al-Bi'ah fi Shari'at al-Islam, pp. 78-85.

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- **Īthār (Altruism):** Prioritizing the needs of others over one's own, acting as a corrective mechanism against hyper-individualistic consumption
- **Ḥimā (Protected Zones):** A classical ecological jurisprudence model establishing state or community-managed zones exempt from overexploitation.

5. CONCLUSION

Praise be to Allah, by Whose grace righteous deeds are completed.

To proceed: This research has sought to elucidate the pivotal role of "embellishment objectives" (*al-maqasid al-tahsiniyyah*) in regulating the chaos of contemporary consumer behavior, elevating them from the status of secondary "complements" to the domain of an "ethical necessity." In light of this investigation, the study has yielded a set of significant findings and recommendations:

First: Key Research Findings

1. **The Centrality of Embellishments:** The study demonstrates that embellishment objectives—notwithstanding their complementary ranking—represent the "ethical shield" that safeguards both core necessities (*daruriyyat*) and complementary needs (*hajiyyat*). Consequently, any disruption in consumer etiquette (an embellishment) constitutes the initial step toward the squandering of wealth (a core necessity) and the violation of the threshold of sufficiency.
2. **The Inverted Pyramid Crisis:** The research reveals that contemporary digital consumerism has effectively "inverted the maqasid hierarchy." It has elevated "luxuries" to the status of "necessities" for which individuals strive—even through usurious borrowing—thereby inducing profound psychological and social imbalances.
3. **Chivalry (*Al-Muru'ah*) as an Economic Constraint:** Chivalry emerges as an active fundamentalist principle in regulating consumption. It transcends mere legal rulings (*al-hukm al-fiqhi*) to serve as a "social baseline" that deters the individual from descending into degradation (stinginess) or ascending into vanity (opulence).
4. **The Comprehensiveness of the Aesthetic Objective:** The study clarifies that Islam does not counter "beauty" or "fashion" intrinsically; rather, it channels them to manifest the traces of Allah's blessings, provided that consumption does not degenerate into "material worship" or "cosmic depletion."

5. **Environmental and Digital Responsibility:** The study concludes that "ethical consumption" and "sustainability" constitute the practical application of the objective of "vicegerency upon the earth" (*al-istikhlaf fi al-ard*). Furthermore, the dissipation of time and data within cyberspace represents a form of squandering that ultimately compromises the objectives of preserving both the intellect and wealth.

Second: Recommendations

In light of the aforementioned findings, the researcher presents the following recommendations:

1. **Reformulating Maqasid Consciousness:** It is imperative to integrate the concepts of "embellishment objectives" into educational and pedagogical curricula to cultivate a "jurisprudential disposition" among younger generations, serving as an immunity against the allurements of consumerism.
2. **Activating the Role of the "Rational Consumer":** Jurisprudential and economic institutions are called upon to draft an "Islamic Consumption Charter" that bridges legal verdicts (*fatwa*) with contemporary realities, particularly in the domains of e-commerce and digital luxury.
3. **Promoting the Circular and Ethical Economy:** There is a vital need to support initiatives that foster "sustainable consumption" as a maqasid obligation that protects the rights of future generations, while promoting products that respect ethical and environmental dimensions.
4. **Digital Rationalization:** The study recommends the adoption of "digital minimalism" strategies as a mechanism to preserve the objectives of "intellect and time" from excessive informational and entertainment pollution.

In conclusion, reclaiming the "spirit of maqasid" in our daily behavior remains the singular path to transforming consumption from a material burden that depletes both the soul and the cosmos into a civilizational act that reflects the intrinsic beauty of Sharia and the perfection of its ethics.

Study Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides a robust fundamentalist and ethical framework for regulating contemporary consumer behavior through embellishment objectives, it remains subject to certain conceptual limitations. Chiefly, as a normative theoretical inquiry, it lacks empirical and quantitative measurement of consumer patterns in digital environments. Consequently, future research should focus on conducting empirical studies—such as quantitative surveys or case-

based field analyses—to measure the practical impact of activating *al-maqasid al-tahsiniyyah* on digital consumer habits across different Muslim societies.

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