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From Al-Azlam to Digital Gambling: Ibn Kathir's Interpretation of Qur'an 5:90 and Pseudo-Random Number Generators

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Abstract

Objective: This study aims to analyze the transformation of gambling practices from conventional forms to digital gambling. The focus is on comparing the practices of Al-Azlam in QS. Al-Maidah verse 90 with the Pseudo-Random Number Generator (PRNG) mechanism. **Theoretical framework:** The theoretical framework uses the perspective of Islamic theology and law through the concept of qiyas. Ibn Kathir's interpretation of Al-Azlam is used as a basis for comparison with the PRNG mechanism in digital gambling**. Literature review:** The literature review includes classical interpretations of Al-Azlam's practices as well as technical literature on PRNG and the Return to Player (RTP) system. This literature is used to explain the theological and technical aspects of digital gambling. **Methods:** This study uses a qualitative method with the type of library research approach. The analysis was carried out comparatively using the qiyas approach. **Results:** The results of the study show that PRNG is a modern form of Al-Azlam practice. The difference is only in the media, from arrows to digital algorithms. However, both have something in common with 'illat, which is to rely on speculative mechanisms without rational causes. **Implications:** These findings show that digital gambling has the same substance as gambling, which is forbidden in Islam. This practice has the potential to damage the value of monotheism and human rationality. **Novelty:** The novelty of the research lies in the integration of the study of Qur'an interpretation with the technological analysis of digital algorithms. This research relates the concept of Al-Azlam to the PRNG mechanism in modern gambling.

Keywords: digital gambling, pseudo-random number generator (prng), al-azlam, qur'an 5:90, ibn kathir's tafsir.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of digital gambling, or better known as "online gambling," has become a very troubling social issue in various walks of modern society. The ease of access through gadgets and the promise of instant profits have ensnared millions of people in a vicious cycle of addiction that undermines the economic and mental order. Although visually, this gambling looks modern with sophisticated graphics, in essence, it brings back the ancient patterns of speculative behavior that have been banned since the early days of Islam [1].

The heart of this digital gambling operation lies in a computing system called the Pseudo-Random Number Generator (PRNG). The system is designed to generate a sequence of numbers that appear random, but it is technically deterministic because it works based on mathematical algorithms and initial values (seeds) controlled by the system. Through PRNG, the bookmaker can set winning parameters, such as Return to Player (RTP), to guarantee a mathematical advantage for the manager, so that the randomness felt by the player is just a visual illusion [2].

Substantially, the mechanism of human dependence on random results produced by PRNG bears a very strong resemblance to the practice of al-azlam (drawing lots with arrows) that is prevalent in the Jahiliyah Arab society. At that time, important decisions were made based on the results of the lottery of arrows stored in sacred places, which were theologically considered a form of wickedness and deviation of the faith because it negates rational efforts and tawakkal to Allah [3].

This study aims to analyze the transformation of al-azlam practices from traditional physical forms to digital algorithmic forms in the form of PRNG. By using the perspective of Ibn Kathir's Tafsir on QS. Al-Maidah verse 90, this article will prove that even though the medium has metamorphosed from wood to binary code, the 'illat (legal reason) of prohibition remains the same. Through a comparative approach, this paper is expected to provide a deep understanding that PRNG-based digital gambling is a modern manifestation of the speculative structure of Jahiliyah that damages man's spiritual relationship with God [3].

In classical Islamic scholarship, the prohibition of al-azlam is explicitly mentioned in Qur'an Surah al-Māidah verse 90, which categorizes intoxicants, gambling, idols, and divining arrows as abominations of Satan's work that must be avoided. Classical exegetes such as Ibn Kathir explain that al-azlam functioned as a tool for determining fortune or decisions through a system that relied on chance rather than rational deliberation and ethical responsibility. According to his interpretation, the prohibition is not merely directed at the physical arrows themselves but at the epistemological structure behind them: dependence on speculative mechanisms that obscure accountability and encourage unjust enrichment. This conceptual foundation becomes particularly relevant when examining contemporary forms of gambling mediated by digital technology [4].

Although modern online gambling platforms employ advanced programming, animation, and interactive interfaces, the structural logic remains analogous to earlier speculative systems. The algorithmic operation of PRNG simulates randomness while remaining mathematically controlled, creating a probabilistic environment that sustains player engagement while ensuring long-term profit for the operator. From a jurisprudential perspective, such a mechanism can be interpreted as reproducing the same speculative uncertainty (gharar) and unjust gain associated with classical gambling practices. Therefore, the transformation from physical divining arrows to algorithmic number generation represents not a change in substance but merely a shift in technological medium [4].

The novelty of this study lies in integrating classical Qur'anic exegesis with contemporary technological analysis by linking the concept of al-azlam in Ibn Kathir's tafsir to the computational mechanism of PRNG in digital gambling systems. Unlike previous studies that discuss gambling primarily from sociological or legal perspectives, this research bridges classical Islamic interpretive tradition with modern algorithmic structures.

The implications of this research are twofold. Theoretically, it contributes to the development of contemporary Islamic legal discourse by demonstrating the continuity of legal reasoning across historical contexts. Practically, it provides a conceptual framework for policymakers, scholars, and religious authorities in evaluating emerging

E-ISSN: 2988-3512

digital gambling technologies within the ethical and theological principles of Islamic law.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on gambling (maysir) within Islamic scholarship have long occupied a significant position, particularly in discussions concerning ethical conduct, economic justice, and theological integrity [5]. Classical Islamic jurists and exegetes consistently classify gambling as a prohibited activity due to its speculative nature, the negation of rational effort (ikhtiar), and its tendency to generate social harm. Qur'anic prohibitions against gambling are most explicitly articulated in QS. Al-Mā'idah (5):90, where maysir is grouped alongside intoxicants and divinatory practices as manifestations of moral deviation (fisq). Within the broader exegetical tradition, this verse is understood not merely as a legal injunction but as a theological correction aimed at purifying human reliance and decision-making from non-divine determinants [6].

A recurring theme in classical tafsir is the prohibition of al-azlam, the practice of divination using arrows prevalent in pre-Islamic Arab society. Ibn Kathir, in Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm, explains that al-azlam represents a form of speculative determinism that transfers human agency to arbitrary objects believed to reveal fate [7]. This practice is condemned because it undermines tawḥīdic belief by attributing causal power to created entities rather than to divine will. Several contemporary studies emphasize that the prohibition of al-azlam is rooted in its underlying 'illat, namely the suspension of rational causality and ethical responsibility in favor of chance-based outcomes [8].

In modern academic discourse, gambling has increasingly been examined through interdisciplinary lenses, particularly within Islamic economics and digital ethics. Scholars of Islamic finance argue that gambling contradicts foundational principles such as risk-sharing, transparency, and value creation, instead promoting zero-sum transactions and exploitative structures [9]. Recent literature extends this critique to digital gambling platforms, highlighting how technological sophistication masks the same speculative logic that characterized traditional gambling practices [10]. These studies suggest that digitalization does not alter the moral substance of gambling but merely transforms its external form.

On the technological side, computer science literature explains that digital gambling systems rely heavily on Pseudo-Random Number Generators (PRNGs) to simulate randomness. While PRNGs are designed to produce sequences that appear random, they are, in fact, algorithmically deterministic and dependent on an initial seed value [11]. Research in gambling technology demonstrates that PRNGs are systematically calibrated through parameters such as Return to Player (RTP) to ensure long-term profitability for operators, thereby structurally disadvantaging players [12]. This technical determinism challenges popular narratives of "fair chance" frequently promoted by the gambling industry.

Despite the growing body of literature on Islamic prohibitions of gambling and technical analyses of PRNGs, few studies attempt to integrate these two domains. Existing research often treats gambling either as a moral-legal issue divorced from its technological mechanisms or as a technical system detached from ethical and theological evaluation [13]. This gap has been noted by scholars advocating for a more holistic Islamic digital ethics framework that engages directly with the internal logic of algorithms rather than their surface applications alone.

Applying the principle of qiyās (analogical reasoning), several contemporary Islamic legal theorists argue that modern digital phenomena can be evaluated by identifying continuity in their operative 'illat with classical prohibitions [14]. Within this framework, PRNG-based gambling may be understood as a digital transformation of al-

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azlam, where wooden arrows are replaced by binary code, yet the speculative structure remains intact [15]. Both systems rely on perceived randomness, obscure causal mechanisms, and the displacement of human agency toward controlled yet hidden determinants.

Thus, the existing literature provides a conceptual foundation for examining PRNG-based digital gambling as a theological and ethical continuation of pre-Islamic divinatory practices [16]. However, a focused analysis that explicitly juxtaposes Ibn Kathir's interpretation of al-azlam with the internal mechanics of PRNG algorithms remains underexplored [17]. This study seeks to address this gap by demonstrating that digital gambling represents not a rupture from past practices, but rather a reconfiguration of the Jahiliyyah speculative mindset within modern technological systems.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative method with the type of library research approach. This method was chosen because the object of the research study is sourced from religious normative texts and written scientific literature, without involving field observation [18]. This research aims to analyze the meaning and legal implications of QS. Al-Māidah verse 90 is related to the practice of al-azlam, as well as its relevance to digital gambling practices based on Pseudo-Random Number Generator (PRNG) [19].

The interpretation approach is used to understand the meaning and content of the QS law. Al-Māidah verse 90 comprehensively, especially related to the concept of al-azlam as a speculative practice of pre-Islamic Arab society. The analysis is focused on the interpretation of Ibn Kathir's Tafsir al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm, by examining the mufassir's explanation of the character of the practice of al-azlam, the reasons for its prohibition, and the categorization of the practice as part of rijs and fisq. This approach aims to explore the normative basis and legal 'illat behind the prohibition of al-azlam, not just the physical form of the tools used. In addition, this study uses the qiyās approach to draw legal implications on contemporary practices in the form of PRNG-based digital gambling. This approach is carried out by relying on the practice of al-azlam, which has an explicit prohibition, through the search for similarities of 'illat al-ḥukm, which is an element of speculation that eliminates the rational causality relationship between effort and result, as well as the replacement of human effort with dependence on random mechanisms that are deterministic [20].

The primary data of this study is the text of the Qur'an, especially QS. Al-Māidah verse 90, as well as the book Tafsir al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm by Ibn Katherine. The secondary data includes scientific journals, academic books, and technical articles that discuss the working mechanism of PRNG, digital gambling algorithms, as well as historical and anthropological literature regarding the socio-religious practices of the Jahiliyah Arab community related to al-azlam.

Data collection is carried out through documentation studies by reading, studying, and recording relevant parts of primary and secondary sources. The data obtained was then thematically classified to identify a pattern of similarity in mechanisms between traditional arrow drawing and digital algorithmic lottery systems [21].

Data analysis was carried out using content analysis and thematic analysis combined with the takhrīj al-manāṭ method. This analysis aims to find patterns of meaning, group the main concepts, and formulate legal arguments systematically [22]. The analysis process includes the stage of description of the mechanism of al-azlam and PRNG, the stage of comparing the characteristics of both, and the stage of drawing legal conclusions that affirm that PRNG-based digital gambling is a form of modern transformation of al-azlam because of the similarity of 'illat it has.

E-ISSN: 2988-3512

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Biography of Tafsir Ibn Kathir

Ibn Katherine's nickname was Ismail. His full name is Shaykh al-Imam al-Hafidz Abu al-Fida' 'Imaduddin Isma'il bin Umar Katsir bin Dhau' bin Katsir al-Qurasy al-Dimasyqi. Born in the village of Mijdal in the Bushar (Bashrah) area, in 700 H. / 1301 AD. Therefore, he received the title of Albushraawi (Bushra). Ibn Kathir came from a respectable family. His father, a prominent scholar of his time, Syihab al-Din Abu Hafsh' Amr Ibn Kathir bin Dhaw' ibn Zara' al-Qurasyi, had studied the Hanafi madhhab, although he adhered to the Shafi'i madhhab after becoming a khatib in Bushra. Ibn Kathir said in his father's biography that his father died in 703 AH. When he was three years old.

In childhood, after his father died, Ibn Kathir was taken by his brother (Kamal al-Din' Abd al-Wahhab) from his native village to Damascus. It was in this city that he lived until the end of his life. Because of this move, he received the title of al-dimasyqi (Damascus). Apart from the world of science, Ibn Kathir was also involved in state affairs. His activities in this regard are recorded as follows, at the end of 741 AH. He participated in an investigation that finally sentenced a Sufi zindiq to death, who declared that God was in him. In 572 AH, he succeeded in thwarting the rebellion of Amir Baibughah ' Urus. The time of the Caliph al-Mu'tadid. Together with other scholars in 759 H, he was asked by Amir Munjak to ratify several policies in eradicating corruption, and several other state events.

During his life, Ibn Kathir was accompanied by a beloved wife named Zainab. After living his long life, full of dedication to his God, religion, State, and the world of science, 26 Sha'ban 774 AH, coinciding with February 1373 AD, on Thursday, Ibn Kathir was called by the mercy of Allah.2 Ibn Kathir stated that "his death attracted the attention of the people and spread everywhere. He was buried in his own will, beside the tomb of Shaykh Islam Ibn Taymiyah, in the tomb of the Sufis, located outside the gates of al-Nashr in the city of Damascus.

Tafseer of Ibn Kathir

Ibn Katsir was written by Shaykh al-Imam al-Hafid Abu al-Fida' Imanuddin Isma'il Bin Umar Katsir Dhau' bin Katsir al-Quraisy al-Dimasqy (d. 1373 AD) with the title Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azhim. This commentary is written in the same style as the commentary of Ibn Jarir al-Thabari. This tafsir is one of the most famous books of tafsir. This tafsir is closer to al-Thabari; this tafsir includes tafsir bi al-ma'tsur. Tafsir uses primary sources and explains the verses of the Qur'an in simple and easy-to-understand language.

The meaning of Al-Azlam, and its concept in Tafsir Ibn Katsir, Q.S Al-Maidah Verse 90

Verses and Translations

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْاَنْصَابُ وَالْاَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطٰنِ فَاجْتَنِبُوْهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ٩٠

O you who have believed, indeed drinking, gambling, (sacrificing to) idols, and casting lots with arrows are abominable deeds (and) include the deeds of Satan. So, stay away from them so that you may be lucky.

E-ISSN: 2988-3512

Asbabun Nuzul

QS. Al-Mā'idah (5): 90 is a verse that affirms the total prohibition of khamr, maysir, al-anshāb, and al-azlām. This verse descends in the final phase of tasyri', after a gradual process (tadarruj) in the prohibition of khamr and speculative practices in the Arab society. Before Islam came, the Arabs did their customs, such as; consuming khamr as part of social culture, gambling (maysir) to gain wealth quickly, using al-azlām (lottery arrows) to determine fate, making important decisions, claiming the will of gods/gods or knowledge about the supernatural, This practice is not considered reprehensible, even seen as a mechanism of social and religious legitimacy.

According to the narration of Ibn 'Abbās, Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, and other companions, the prohibition of khamr and maysir was gradually reduced: The Arabs in the era of jahiliyah were very fond of drinking liquor (khamr). It is as if khamr is a culture that cannot be separated. A few people don't drink it. Therefore, Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala forbids khamr gradually. Not immediately. When the people asked the Messenger of Allah about khamr, Allah sent down His words:

Q.S Al-Baqarah 2:219

يَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِۗ قُلْ فِيْهِمَآ اِثْمٌ كَبِيْرٌ وَّمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِۖ وَاِثْمُهُمَآ اَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَّفْعِهِمَاۗ ۞
وَيَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُوْنَ ەۖ قُلِ الْعَفْوَۗ كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمُ الْاٰيٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُوْنَۙ ٢١٩

They ask you (the Prophet Muhammad) about khamar and gambling. Say, "In both, there is great sin and some benefit to man. (However,) The sin of both is greater than the benefit." They ask you what they have done. Say, "(What is given is) excess (of what is needed)." Thus Allah explains His verses to you so that you may think.

This verse shows that khamr is sinful, but it is not strictly forbidden. So, there are still Muslims who drink it. In fact, once someone finished drinking khamr and then prayed and recited, it became a mess. Thus, God sent down His words:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارَى حَتَّى تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ

O you who have believed, do not pray while you are drunk, so that you may understand what you are saying... (QS. An-Nisa: 43)

For some people, this verse is also not strictly forbidden, so they told the Prophet that they would not drink khamr when it was close to the time of prayer. The Prophet was silent until Allah sent down Surah Al Maidah, verses 90-91, which affirmed the haram of khamr. When this verse came down, the Prophet's companions who still had a stock of khamr immediately spilled and threw it away.

Al-Azlam, according to Tafsir Ibn Katsir in QS Al-Maidah verse 90

Etymologically, the word "الأزلام" is the plural, while its singular form (mufrad) is identified as the word "زلم". Al-azlam is one of the religious and social practices of pre-Islamic Arab society, which is used as a means of decision-making through the mechanism of drawing with arrows. The word al-azlam is the plural form of zalam, which refers to an arrow without an iron point.

This practice is a tradition inherent in the Arabs during the jahiliyah period, in which the arrows are kept in a place that is considered sacred, namely, in the Kaaba. When a person was about to do a great or important business, they would ask the Kaaba guard to take one of the arrows, usually with contradictory instructions on each arrow: one read "do" or "Amaranī rabbī" (My Lord commands me), while the second read "do not do" or "Nahānī rabbī" (My Lord forbids me). As for the third arrow, it was left plain without any writing." If what appears is an arrow that says command (do nothing), then

E-ISSN: 2988-3512

it will do it; if it appears with the prohibition (do not do it), then it will leave (do not do it); and if it appears as a third arrow that does nothing, then it will repeat it. This practice is known as al-istiqsām bil-azlām, which is to ask for decisions through the lottery of arrows.

The practice of physically drawing lots with arrows (al-azlam) may have become extinct with the advent of Islam, which destroyed idols in the Kaaba. However, the human desire to depend on luck and bypass the process of endeavor has never completely disappeared; it only metamorphoses. In the digital era, the 'idol' where the question is asked is no longer Hubal, but a computer server, and the 'arrow' now manifests itself in the form of an algorithmic code known as the Pseudo-Random Number Generator (PRNG) [23].

Pseudo-RNG and Its Mechanism on Outcome Determination in Digital Gambling

At the heart of any online gambling operation, particularly in the slot machine and virtual casino types, is a computing system known as a Random Number Generator (RNG). By definition, an RNG is a software or microprocessor algorithm designed to generate a sequence of numbers or symbols that do not have a pattern that can be predicted by the naked eye. However, in the context of digital gambling, the type of RNG used almost exclusively is the Pseudo-Random Number Generator (PRNG) [24].

The word "Pseudo" or "Pseudo" here becomes a crucial key; It indicates that the resulting randomness is not pure randomness derived from natural phenomena, but the result of deterministic mathematical calculations made by humans [25].

Pseudo-Random Number Generator (PRNG) refers to an algorithm that uses mathematical formulas to generate a sequence of random numbers. The PRNG produces a sequence of numbers that approximates the properties of random numbers. A PRNG starts from an arbitrary initial state using the seed state [26]. Many numbers are generated in a short period of time and can also be reproduced later if the starting point in the sequence is known. Therefore, the numbers are deterministic and efficient. Generate pseudo-random numbers using mathematical and seed algorithms [27]. Almost all online gambling uses PRNG because it is faster, more resource-efficient, and easier to program. PRNG works by taking the initial value referred to as the seed. This seed is usually a value taken from the internal state of a computer system that changes very quickly, such as the system time in milliseconds [28].

The Seed value is then put into a very complex mathematical formula (algorithm). This process happens at an incredible speed; An online gambling server can generate thousands to millions of sequences of numbers per second non-stop, even when there is not a single player playing [29]. When a player presses the spin or "spin" button on the app's interface, he or she is not actually spinning a physical reel. The act of pressing the button is simply a command for the system to "retrieve" the last number generated by the RNG exactly the millisecond the button is pressed [30]. The numbers are then mapped into a visualization of symbols on the screen, for example, a picture of a fruit, a number, or a mythological character. Therefore, a wheel spin animation that takes a few seconds is just a visual illusion or "cosmetic" designed to manipulate the player's psychology into feeling the tension, even though the outcome of winning or losing is already decided by the server in a fraction of a second when the button is pressed [31].

In this ecosystem, RNG does not work alone, but rather is tied to parameters called Return to Player (RTP) and House Edge. RTP is the theoretical percentage of the total bet money that the machine will return to the player over a long period of time (millions of spins) [32]. If a game has an RTP of 96%, it means that the RNG system has been deprogrammed in such a way as to ensure that out of every 100 million rupiah that comes in, the machine will save 4 million rupiah (4%) as the house edge advantage

E-ISSN: 2988-3512

and only replay the rest. This proves that RNG in online gambling is not a fair chance voting tool, but a program that guarantees a mathematical victory for the bookmaker [33].

Al-Azlam's Transformation: From the Arrow of Jahiliyah to Digital Algorithms

The practice of drawing fate with arrows (al-azlam) has indeed become extinct physically, along with the collapse of the jahiliyah belief structure after the arrival of Islam. However, the loss of the physical medium does not necessarily erase the speculative thinking pattern that is at the core of al-azlam's practice. In the historical perspective of ideas, al-azlam does not stop as a cultural artifact, but transforms according to the development of the medium and technology. If during the Jahiliyah al-Azlam period it was present in the form of a sacred arrow, then in the digital era it metamorphosed into an algorithmic system known as the Pseudo-Random Number Generator (PRNG) [34].

In its classical form, al-azlam uses a physical medium in the form of arrows without iron eyes that are stored in sacred places such as the Kaaba. The arrow does not simply function as a lottery tool, but is positioned as an intermediary of the divine will. The decisions resulting from the lottery are considered to represent God's voice, so that man completely strips away the role of reason, effort, and rational consideration. In this context, individuals do not gain or lose based on traceable causes, but rather through a purely speculative symbolic mechanism [35].

The conceptual transformation from classical *Al-Azlam* practices to digital gambling mechanisms based on Pseudo-Random Number Generators (PRNG) can be mapped through a systematic comparison. To facilitate a deeper understanding of how modern technology adopts the structure of Jahiliyah speculation, the transformation flow is illustrated in Figure 1 below:

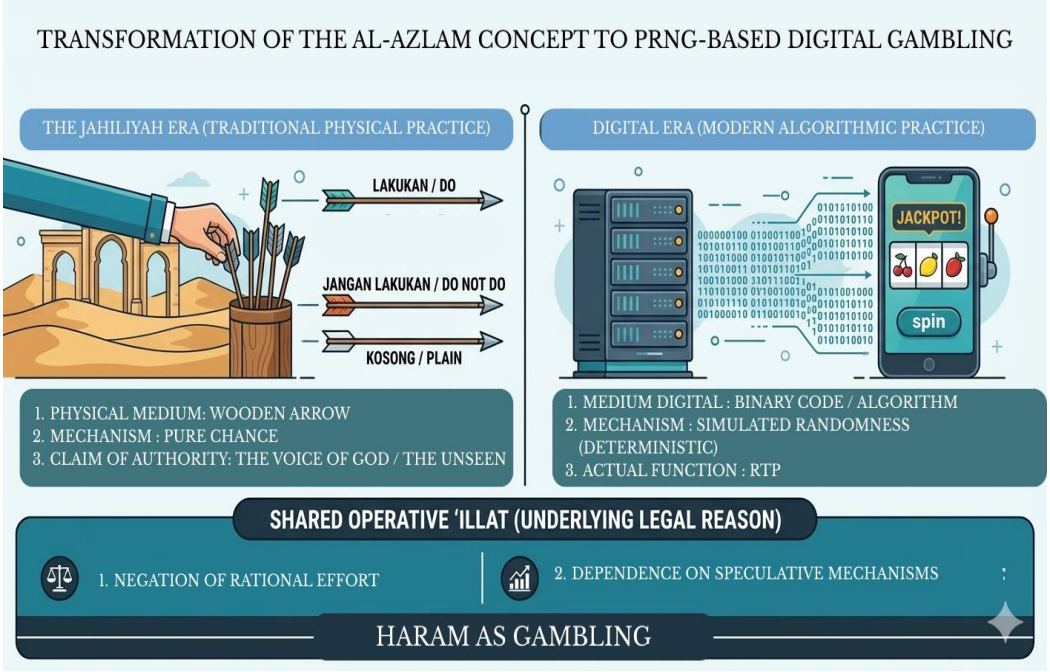

Figure 1. Conceptual Transformation Diagram from Al-Azlam (Jahiliyah Era) to PRNG Algorithm (Digital Era).

Based on the visualization in Figure 1, it is evident that while there is a discontinuity in terms of medium (shifting from physical wooden arrows to digital binary code), there is a strong continuity in terms of *'illat* (legal cause). The diagram demonstrates that PRNG acts as a "modern arrow" that creates an illusion of chance, yet is

E-ISSN: 2988-3512

mathematically orchestrated for the provider's (bookie) profit through the Return to Player (RTP) system. This confirms the relevance of Ibn Kathir's interpretation that the core prohibition of *Al-Azlam* lies not in the object itself, but in the surrender of fate to speculative mechanisms that negate rational effort and genuine human endeavor.

Furthermore, to provide a structured comparison of these two phenomena, Table 1 summarizes the technical and theological parallels between the traditional practice and its digital counterpart:

Table 1. Systematic Comparison of Al-Azlam and Pseudo-Random Number Generator (PRNG) Characteristics

Feature	Al-Azlam (Classical/Jahiliyyah)	PRNG in Digital Gambling (Modern)
Primary Medium	Wooden arrows without heads/feathers	Mathematical algorithms and binary code
Acces/Location	Physical sacred sites (e.g., near the Kaaba)	Digital gadgets and online platforms (high accessibility)
Control Mechanism	Manua physical drawing/shuffing	Deterministic algorithms & RTP (Return To Player)
Human Role	Surrendering fate to inanimate objects	Entrapped in visual illusions and addiction
Final Objectivq	Speculative decision making/fortune telling	Mathematical house edge for provider profit
Legal Status (‘Illat)	Forbidden (Rijsun min ‘amalis-syaitan	Forbidden (Modern manifestation of Jahiliyah structure)

The data presented in Table 1 illustrates that the "digitalization" of gambling does not change its legal essence. The PRNG mechanism, while sophisticated, remains a form of *Maysir* because it fulfills the criteria of *Al-Azlam* mentioned in Surah Al-Maidah verse 90: a process of seeking luck or making decisions through a mechanism that lacks any causal or rational basis. The modern transformation of this pattern is evident in the use of PRNG in digital gambling. PRNG replaces arrows with seed and clock time, and replaces sacred space with a computer server [36]. The system is presented as a fair and random mechanism, even though it is technically deterministic and completely controlled by algorithmic logic. Players only interact through the "spin" button, without having a causal influence on the outcome obtained. Thus, although his claim shifted from "God's will" to "fairness and randomness," the substance of the practice remained the same: the surrender of fate to a system that was beyond the reach of rational human endeavor.

The common thread that connects classical al-azlam and modern PRNG lies in the elimination of the principle of causality (cause-and-effect). In both systems, profits are not obtained through work, skill, or productive contribution, but rather through speculative mechanisms that break the relationship between effort and results. In al-azlam, one can gain without a rational cause; In PRNG, one can get a jackpot without any skills. This loss of causality is what makes the two practices in the same line of law, namely maysir, even though the medium and the narrative of justification are different [37].

Thus, PRNG cannot be understood simply as a neutral technological innovation, but as a modern form of al-azlam speculative structure. He reproduces the logic of ignorance in digital language: replacing wood with code, temples with servers, and myths with statistics [38]. This transformation actually strengthens the destructive power of the practice, because it is packaged rationally, scientifically, and

E-ISSN: 2988-3512

psychologically, making it more difficult to recognize it as a form of speculative gambling that is prohibited by the sharia.

Causes of the Ban of Al-Azlam and the Pseudo-Random Number Generator

The Qur'an expressly prohibits the practice of al-azlam in Q.S. Al-Māidah verse 90 and categorizes it as part of rijs and fisq. This prohibition is not solely aimed at the arrow tool as a material object, but rather at the speculative mechanism contained in it. Al-azlam used the results of the lottery as the basis for determining fate, often even associated with claims to God's will and knowledge of the supernatural. Therefore, the mufassir views al-azlam as a practice that is contrary to the principle of monotheism, because it replaces rational efforts and tawakkal to Allah with dependence on random systems that have no basis in revelation or valid reason [39].

In Tafsir Ibn Katsir, precisely in volume 3, page 144, there is an in-depth explanation of the prohibition of Al-Azlam based on the words of Allah SWT: "And (it is also forbidden) to vote for fate with arrows". This verse explicitly affirms the prohibition for believers to determine their decisions or fate using the medium of arrows. In interpreting the words of Allah, ﴿ ذَٰلِكُمْ فِسْقٌ ﴾ ("Such is wickedness"), Ibn Kathir emphasized that the practice of casting lots with arrows (al-azlam) is categorized as wickedness, deviance, error, ignorance, and even polytheism. This labeling shows that al-azlam is not just a game, but a serious damage to the faith. As an antithesis of dependence on inanimate objects, al-azlam is forbidden in Q.S. Al-Māidah verse 90 because it contains implicit claims to knowledge of God's will and the unseen. This practice makes the results of the lottery a representation of divine decisions, even though Islam affirms that knowledge of the unseen is entirely in the power of Allah. It is this element that makes al-azlam not just a cultural practice, but a theological deviation. The prohibition is understood by the mufassir as a form of rejection of speculative mechanisms in the name of God's will without a valid basis for revelation.

In this case, according to the teachings of the Prophet PBUH, if you want to choose one of the two equally important jobs or choose between performing it or not, then you should perform the istikharah prayer of two rak'ahs. If the ordinary lottery (qur'ah) that does not contain wickedness or superstition is not forbidden, such as a lot to take one of the two piles that have been worked on equally, who has the right from each pile, and then a qur'ah (lottery) is held. In the modern context, similar claims can be found in the Pseudo-Random Number Generator (PRNG) system used in digital gambling. PRNG is presented as a random and fair mechanism, but it is technically deterministic because it works based on algorithms and system-controlled seeds. The randomness displayed is only pseudo-random and does not provide a rational opportunity for players to influence the outcome. This condition shows that PRNG functions as a modern speculative tool that replaces the role of al-azlam in determining profit and loss results [40].

Both al-azlam and PRNG operate on the principle of pure speculation without the involvement of rational business or productive values. Profits and losses are determined by a random mechanism, not by real work or contributions. From the perspective of fiqh, this characteristic fulfills the element of maysir, which is the transfer of property that depends on luck alone. Therefore, even though the medium and technology are different, the substance of the practice remains within the scope of the prohibition of sharia [41]. Furthermore, the PRNG system not only replicates the functions of al-azlam but also develops it into a structured psychological exploitation mechanism. If al-azlam creates superstitious dependence, then PRNG-based digital gambling builds addiction through neuro-psychological engineering, such as the near-miss effect and control illusions [42]. Islam does not negate man's need for certainty, but directs it through legitimate spiritual mechanisms, such as istikharah and tawakkal.

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Thus, this practice not only violates the law but also damages man's spiritual relationship with God.

Analysis

The data presented in this study demonstrate a strong conceptual continuity between the classical practice of al-azlam and the modern mechanism of digital gambling based on the Pseudo-Random Number Generator (PRNG). Although the technological medium has changed significantly—from physical arrows used in pre-Islamic Arabia to sophisticated algorithmic systems operating on digital platforms—the underlying speculative structure remains fundamentally similar. Both systems function by transferring the determination of outcomes from rational human effort to mechanisms perceived as random but ultimately beyond the control of the participant.

From the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, this similarity becomes particularly significant when analyzed through the principle of qiyās (analogical reasoning). The primary ‘illat identified in the prohibition of al-azlam is the reliance on speculative mechanisms that disconnect results from rational causality, productive labor, and ethical accountability. The textual analysis of Ibn Kathir’s Tafsir al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm confirms that the Qur’anic prohibition in Surah al-Mā’idah (5):90 is directed not merely at the physical arrows themselves, but at the epistemological framework that attributes decision-making authority to arbitrary or chance-based processes. This conceptual foundation allows the prohibition to be extended to modern contexts where similar speculative mechanisms are present.

Technological analysis of PRNG systems further reinforces this conclusion. While digital gambling platforms promote the appearance of fairness and randomness, PRNG algorithms are deterministic and controlled through mathematical parameters such as seeds and Return to Player (RTP) rates. These parameters ensure a long-term structural advantage for the operator, while players interact with the system under the illusion of equal probability. Consequently, the technological sophistication of PRNG does not eliminate the speculative nature of gambling; rather, it conceals it behind algorithmic complexity and digital aesthetics. Thus, the data confirm that PRNG-based gambling represents a technological transformation of the same speculative logic embedded in al-azlam. The shift from sacred arrows to digital algorithms reflects a change in form rather than substance, maintaining the same legal and theological implications within Islamic law.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of gambling practices has undergone a significant evolution of the medium over time, yet it still retains the same speculative essence. This study concludes that the practice of Al-Azlam carried out by the Jahiliyah Arab community is not extinct, but metamorphoses into a digital form through the Pseudo-Random Number Generator (PRNG) system. If in the past people depended on the arrows in the Kaaba, now modern society depends on binary code algorithms on computer servers. This change from wood to software is simply a shift in washilah (meaning), while a pattern of behavior that negates rational efforts persists. Reviewed from the theological aspect based on Ibn Kathir's Tafsir on QS. Al-Maidah verse 90, the practice of casting lots is categorized as *fisq* (wickedness) and serious deviation of faith. Ibn Kathir asserts that *Al-Azlam* is forbidden because it contains implicit claims to supernatural knowledge and tries to usurp God's prerogative in determining destiny. This practice is considered to undermine the principle of monotheism because it replaces tawakkal to Allah with dependence on inanimate objects or mechanisms that are considered to represent the divine will, when in fact it has no basis for revelation or valid logic. Technically, the PRNG system that is the brain of digital gambling has proven to be not a fair or pure random mechanism. This system works deterministically using *seeds* and mathematical formulas that can be controlled and predicted by the system creator. The

E-ISSN: 2988-3512

existence of the *Return to Player* (RTP) parameter proves that the player's wins and losses have been mathematically arranged to guarantee the bookmaker's profit, so that the "randomness" displayed on the screen is just a visual illusion. This confirms that online gambling contains elements of systematic fraud, not just a game of luck. Analysis of *qiyas* (legal analogies) found that there is a strong *similarity between 'illat* (legal reason) and *PRNG*, namely the elimination of the principle of causality (cause-effect). In both practices, material gains are obtained not through hard work, skill, or productive contributions, but through speculative mechanisms that break the logical relationship between effort and results. The loss of this principle of causality is what puts PRNG in the same line of law as *Al-Azlam*, which is haram, because both are included in the category *of maysir*, which is detrimental to the economic order and human rationality. Finally, the study confirms that the dangers of PRNG-based digital gambling are much more complex than conventional methods because they involve psychological engineering. If *Al-Azlam* builds superstitious dependence, then PRNG builds addiction through neuro-psychological manipulation, such as the "*near-miss" effect*. Therefore, Islam closes this speculation gap by forbidding all forms of destiny and offering rational spiritual solutions through *istikharah* and real work, keeping people in the corridor of common sense and upright faith.

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Author's Contributions

Barrel Putra Indra Wijaya conceptualized the study, conducted primary analysis, and drafted the manuscript. Ainur Rhain contributed to literature review, methodological design, and data interpretation. Muzafaru Ssali provided critical revisions, theoretical enrichment, and supervision. All authors discussed the results, approved the final manuscript, and agree to be accountable for the integrity of the research together.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no financial, institutional, or personal relationships that could have influenced the research, analysis, or interpretation presented in this article. The study was conducted independently and objectively. All authors affirm that the manuscript reflects their genuine academic work without competing interests or undisclosed external influence in any form whatsoever here.

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