

Received : 25 February 2024, Accepted: 28 July 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33282/rr.vx9i2.12>

A Comparative Study of the Scope and Impact of Ijtihad and Modernity

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Abstract

This research paper presents a comparative analysis of the scope and impact of ijthihad and modernity, highlighting their respective roles in addressing contemporary moral, economic, and social challenges. Ijthihad, rooted in Islamic jurisprudence, leverages foundational principles from the Holy Quran and Hadith to inform human intellect and guide the development of solutions tailored to societal needs. In contrast, modernity, which emerged in the Western context, prioritizes reason and empirical evidence, often marginalizing religious insights. This study underscores the necessity of exploring this topic, given the increasing complexity of global issues that demand multifaceted approaches. By examining how ijthihad integrates divine guidance with human reasoning and how modernity relies on rational thought and scientific progress, we aim to identify their contributions to human development. The paper investigates the potential for harmonizing these paradigms to foster a balanced approach to solving contemporary problems. The findings suggest that integrating ijthihad's spiritual and moral insights with the empirical rigor of modernity can enhance our capacity to address today's challenges, promoting a more holistic and sustainable path to progress.

Key Words: Tradition, Modernity, Ijtihad, Islamic Thought, Current Situation

Introduction

The world is currently facing numerous moral, economic, and social issues. To address these, we have two important sources at our disposal: divine revelation and human intellect. By divine revelation, we refer to the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which do not explicitly mention the details of modern inventions and scientific knowledge. However, these primary sources provide foundational principles. To benefit from these foundations, Allah has endowed human intellect with the ability to think, understand, and create new pathways, enabling the development of new inventions according to societal needs. The Holy Quran provides principles for resolving intellectual and social issues. By keeping these principles in mind and utilizing their intellect, humans can reach great heights of progress. However, there are some matters that cannot be comprehended solely through human intellect and require the guidance of divine revelation. For example, it is difficult to answer the questions about the Creator of the universe, Allah, by purely on intellect. Similarly, no one has experiential knowledge of what happens to a person after death, and intellect alone cannot provide a satisfactory answer to this question. Modernity, which emerged in the West a few centuries ago, attempted to answer these questions and solve human problems purely through reason, setting aside all religious teachings.

Methodology

This research employs a qualitative comparative analysis to explore the scope and impact of ijtihad and modernity on contemporary moral, economic, and social challenges.

The Foundation of Modernity

The term 'Jadeediyat' in Urdu is used to denote 'modernity' in English but is often misunderstood when presented out of context, creating the impression that it lacks a solid foundation. Modernity is based on rational thought, with human reasoning playing a key role in sustaining moral principles. However, modernity is sometimes interpreted in a way that disregards moral values and rejects external authority or divine revelation. This interpretation suggests that individuals should evaluate the morality of actions solely through reason and personal experience, which may be either direct or borrowed from others, rather than accepting the original insights from authoritative sources. Consequently, this approach can lead to a framework where traditional moral guidance is overlooked in favor of a more narrowly defined rat. (Ahmad)

To address this, it is crucial to analyze historical challenges faced by humanity and assess the effectiveness of their resolutions. Reason, which relies on the five senses, operates within certain limitations and is prone to error. This is evident in daily life, where theories once deemed definitive are later replaced by new theories, rendering the previous ones obsolete. This phenomenon, particularly prevalent in scientific knowledge, illustrates the evolving nature of our

understanding and highlights the fallibility of reason when not tempered by more enduring sources of insight. (R.A)

It is evident from this discussion that a form of modernity based solely on reason, without the influence of divine revelation and moral values, yields unsustainable results. Thus, integrating reason with moral values is essential for achieving meaningful and lasting outcomes. These moral values, which provide necessary ethical guidance, can only be derived from traditional sources.

The Foundation of Tradition

Tradition encompasses ancient practices rooted in history, art, culture, and social customs, reflecting the established habits and beliefs of specific groups or societies. In contrast, 'modernity' refers to new and contemporary developments that often diverge from these traditional customs. Both concepts are applied across various social, cultural, and intellectual contexts, and they have continuously influenced each other over time and across different regions. While tradition represents enduring practices that remain relatively unchanged, modernity introduces novel ideas and innovations that challenge or evolve beyond established norms.

Modernity, in contrast to tradition, embodies new developments, ideas, and beliefs designed to address contemporary needs. It is characterized by a trajectory of change and renewal, encompassing social, political, and intellectual transformations that align with current conditions. (Zubair)

Application of Tradition and Modernity

The interplay between tradition and modernity is evident across various times and occasions. Often, conflict arises when contemporary developments challenge traditional beliefs and practices. However, there are also instances where tradition and modernity coexist harmoniously, with new ideas enriching and evolving from age-old customs. Distinguishing between what is traditional and what is modern can be complex. A solution deemed innovative and relevant by one person or society might be considered outdated and impractical by another. This divergence in perspectives highlights the subjective nature of progress and tradition. An essential insight is that just as an individual's life is sustained by the balance between body and soul, a nation's vitality depends on preserving its historical traditions. The decline of an individual occurs when their life force diminishes, and similarly, a nation faces decline when it abandons its foundational principles and heritage. Understanding and navigating the relationship between tradition and modernity is crucial for cultural and societal development. It ensures that progress does not come at the cost of losing valuable traditions. (Iqbal, 1964)

Tradition is a symbol of a nation's life; without it, the nation becomes lifeless and soulless. Modernity, on the other hand, consists of ideas relevant only for a specific time. Once that time passes, those ideas lose their significance. However, when tradition and modernity are

interconnected, new paths to progress open, providing excellent solutions to contemporary issues.

The Fundamental Objectives of Tradition and Modernity

The fundamental objectives of tradition are rooted in various social, cultural, and intellectual trainings. These objectives are typically achieved through standardizing practices, customs, traditions, and laws, as well as through social and individual training. They encompass the preservation of beliefs and religious doctrines, entertainment, arts, and education. One key objective of tradition is to view modern issues through the lens of contemporary jurisprudence, citing religious texts (Nusus Shar'iyah) as evidence to provide solutions on a solid foundation. Contemporary scholars and jurists have initiated this crucial task. For instance, Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhayli has undertaken this work in his book "Al-Fiqh Al-Islami wa Adillatuh," providing a strong foundation for jurisprudence. (Zubair) With changing times, tradition itself does not change; rather, its application is adjusted to new circumstances. Adapting new elements according to tradition aligns with the requirements of Islam. For example, when Ilm al-Kalam (Islamic theology) gained prominence in the past, the four Imams did not adopt it, considering it a Greek conspiracy against Islam. However, later scholars like Ibn Rushd, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Taymiyyah made significant efforts to align Greek Ilm al-Kalam and philosophy with Islam. (<https://www.youtube.com/c/DrHafizMuhammadZubair>, n.d.)

The fundamental objectives of Western modernity vary for different people, but its most important goals include educational, research, economic, and environmental development. Both tradition and modernity aim to provide solutions to contemporary issues, whether termed modernity in the Western context or ijihad and tradition in the context of Islam.

Unfortunately, modernity has strayed from its original objectives and has become focused on subsidiary goals. Its current central objectives include viewing humans as the center of the universe, idealizing absolute individual freedom, and treating rationality as the ultimate standard. Modernity promotes the idea that every person should be completely free to act as they wish, advocating the liberation of all human desires. This perspective leads some to perceive themselves as god-like and above divine law. The Encyclopedia of Philosophy describes this idea as: "To be autonomous is to be free in the sense of self-governing and independent." (Encyclopedia of philosophy)

The objectives of modernity are rooted in two fundamental values: freedom and reason. Freedom implies that everyone has the autonomy to define their own standards of good and evil. In setting these standards, they must rely solely on reason as the basis. Complete freedom is achieved when individuals use reason as their guiding principle. (Touraine, 1995)

Another significant objective of modernity is to encourage skepticism toward religion and God. Some Western thinkers dismissed religion entirely; for instance, Voltaire rejected it outright. Hegel, while acknowledging religion, subordinated it to reason, suggesting that religious truths

are as mutable as other rational hypotheses. Additionally, Western philosophers like Nietzsche expressed contempt for the concept of God, famously declaring Him "dead" and asserting that, apart from wise individuals, the idea of God cannot be conceived at all. (George, 1965)

Ijtihad and Modernization

Islamic thought provides comprehensive guidance on all aspects of life and has the flexibility to incorporate new ideas as needed. Modernity, in this context, aligns with the intellectual demands and principles arising from contemporary social, economic, technical, and political changes. Key aspects of modernity in Islamic thought include integrating contemporary issues with Islamic principles, promoting social justice, connecting modern sciences and arts with Islamic values and ethical standards, and addressing various forms of inequality.

Moreover, modernity in Islamic thought extends beyond these aspects to seek solutions for both religious and worldly issues through *ijtihad*, a process applicable to both individual and collective life. This is exemplified by a hadith where the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) encouraged *ijtihad* for resolving contemporary issues. When sending Hazrat Muadh ibn Jabal (May Allah be pleased with him) to Yemen, he asked how he would judge cases. He replied he would follow the Qur'an, then the Sunnah if the Qur'an provided no guidance, and if neither provided a solution, he would use his best judgment. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ praised his commitment, highlighting the importance of *ijtihad* in addressing new challenges. (Al-Ash'ath)

This hadith offers insight into *ijtihad* and its broad scope, which encompasses all aspects of life. In the context of hadith, tradition and modernity are represented by two key terms: *riwayah* (narration) and *dirayah* (understanding). *Riwayah* involves the transmission of words and texts, while *dirayah* focuses on addressing contemporary issues by considering the context and circumstances of the time, as well as the capabilities of individuals. (Tayyab, 1989) Therefore, it can be said that *riwayah* represents the ancient and original beliefs, while *dirayah* defines the scope of modernity in Islamic thought, specifically *ijtihad*. In the contemporary era, attempts to classify Islamic sciences in terms of Western modernity are misguided. Modernity is a Western concept designed to distance humanity from core religious beliefs and to evaluate life solely through reason. In contrast, Islamic sciences encourage the use of reason in harmony with fundamental beliefs, clear Quranic texts, and authentic traditions.

In the context of Islamic sciences, only *ijtihad* can be considered modernity. The study of Islamic teachings indicates that the fundamental beliefs and the clear, consistent, and non-contradictory commands of the Quran and Sunnah remain unchangeable. However, certain rulings may be temporarily adjusted based on societal interests, personal circumstances, and conditions of coercion and necessity. While the consumption of what is lawful and pure is generally mandated, limited exceptions may be allowed in cases of necessity. Similarly, while enforcing limits (*hadd*) is essential to deter crimes under normal circumstances, these limits may be suspended according to the time. An example from Islamic history provides a direction, during the caliphate of Umar Farooq (may Allah be pleased with him), some slaves stole and slaughtered a she-camel. When Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) learned of this, he chose not to punish them for theft due

to specific reasons. Imam Malik (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated the incident as follows: “The slaves of Hatib stole and slaughtered a she-camel belonging to a man from the Muzaynah tribe. This case was presented to Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), who initially ordered Kathir bin Salat to cut off their hands. However, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) reconsidered and said, 'I think you keep them hungry.' He added, 'By Allah, I will impose such a penalty on you that you will feel its burden.' Then he asked the man from Muzaynah, 'What is the price of your she-camel?' The man replied, 'By Allah, I would not have sold it for four hundred dirhams.' Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) then instructed, 'Give him eight hundred dirhams.’”

(Anas)

In the study and analysis of Hadith, Islamic history has produced two types of scholars: general muhaddithin (Hadith scholars) and fuqaha muhaddithin (jurist-Hadith scholars). General muhaddithin focuses on adopting the solutions provided by experts in the field. In contrast, mujtahid muhaddithin consider the conditions of their time and, while adhering to Hadith principles, use reconciliation and preference to apply ijihad and find practical solutions to emerging issues in every era.

The Scope of Western Modernity

In the West, the scope of modernity is extensive, covering a wide range of life’s domains, including arts and literature, science, architecture, philosophy, and technology. When it comes to its relationship with religion, Western modernity encompasses beliefs, worship, and ethics. It aims to liberate humanity from religious constraints and seeks to address human issues and shape thoughts based on rational foundations. One of its primary objectives is to develop ideas and solve problems through reason, valuing laws and societal norms that rationality deems beneficial for society. (Farooq, n.d.)

Western modernity has shifted the focus away from the concept of the hereafter, concentrating instead on this world. Materialism has been so heavily promoted that it is often seen as the ultimate goal. Professor Khurshid Ahmad notes, “All the movements that arose in the West and the overall perspective that emerged focused on this world rather than the hereafter. The new values were centered around worldly gain, profit acquisition, pleasure-seeking, and materialism.” (Ahmad K.) The scope of Western modernity also extends to politics and economics. It sought to redefine individualism in political contexts, challenging monarchy and authoritarian rule. Rather than advocating for collective rights, it emphasized individual rights, which led to a society divided into individuals. To promote the idea of popular government, a secular democratic system was established. Instead of creating a universal state with a nominal religious aspect, the concept of nationalism was emphasized, resulting in the formation of nation-states.

Similarly, modernity extended its influence on economics, significantly shaping it. With the support of the Industrial Revolution, modern capitalism emerged, granting individuals unrestricted freedom for economic competition. Capital became the primary source of power, and the pursuit of personal profit became the central objective. (Ahmad N. , 1997)

Effects of Modernity on Islamic Thought and Western Thought

Modernity has caused a blending and reshaping of concepts in both Islamic and Western intellectual traditions. For Islamic thought, this has meant addressing new interpretations and challenges to traditional beliefs and practices. In Western thought, modernity has fostered increased skepticism and relativism, distancing it from its classical foundations. (Askari) Modernity and its methodology impact every aspect of life, including religion, politics, economics, society, and ethics. A brief overview of its effects on Islamic and Western thought can be summarized as follows:

I. Effects of Modernity on Islamic Thought

Modernity has influenced Islamic thought from multiple perspectives, including religion, politics, economics, ethics, and society. Religiously, modernity has primarily targeted Islam by focusing on three fundamental components: the Quran, the personality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his teachings, and Jihad fi Sabilillah.

Impact on the Quran: Modernity has challenged the authority of the Quran, leading to debates that cast doubt on core aspects of Islam. As a result, a group of Muslims emerged that denied the authority of the Quran.

Impact on Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and His Teachings: Modernity has made significant efforts to influence the personality and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), aiming to create controversy about his character and teachings among Muslims. Consequently, some Muslims have emerged who question the authenticity of the Prophet's Hadith.

Impact on Jihad: The sacred concept of Jihad, originally intended to establish peace, has been disassociated by Western modernity with oppression, barbarism, and chaos. This has led some individuals to seek a complete rejection of the concept of Jihad.

In short, Western modernity has influenced Islamic thought, resulting in groups that deny the Quran and are known as "deniers of the Quran," and others that reject Hadith, known as "deniers of Hadith." However, the impact of modernity on Islamic thought has not led to a complete rejection of beliefs, practices, and ethics. Its effects are limited to a small number of individuals and remain within a narrow scope. (Gahlan)

Western modernity has significantly impacted Islamic thought and economics. It has challenged core Islamic concepts such as the Quran, the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and Jihad, leading to some Muslims rejecting these elements. In economics, Western modernity introduced an interest-based banking system and shifted academic focus from Islamic to modern economics, contributing to ongoing issues of hunger and poverty in the Muslim Ummah. Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi highlighted that Western influence has made Islamic countries economically dependent and emulative of Western practices, worsening their economic conditions. (Hasan)

Western modernity has sought to separate politics from religion, causing unrest and despair in societies with Islamic traditions. It has increased the dependence of Islamic rulers on Western nations, undermining genuine democratic practices and harming individuals. Additionally, Western modernity has distorted Islamic ethical principles, replacing truth with lies, trust with betrayal, and integrity with corruption. (Mawardi, 2009) Modernity has deeply affected the Islamic social structure, particularly the family unit. Respect for parents and reverence for the elderly have diminished compared to the past societal norms. Despite these changes, the core beliefs, practices, and rituals of Islam remain intact. The teachings of Islam continue to uphold their original foundations.

II. Effects of Modernity on Western Thought

Western modernity has profoundly impacted Western thought across all areas of society, including religion, politics, economics, ethics, and family life. Religiously, modernity has undermined Christian beliefs, reducing religious practices to mere rituals and customs. It has also led some proponents to deny the existence of religion, viewing it as a private matter, which has entrenched secularism deeply within Western society.. (Modernity and Postmodernity, 2008) The Enlightenment is often considered the embodiment of modernity, marking a shift in Western focus from religion to materialism. It has asserted dominance over all aspects of life, including thought, perspective, psychology, ethics, community, knowledge, literature, government, and politics. While this viewpoint does not entirely deny the existence of God, it diminishes the significance of divine teachings within its intellectual framework. (Asad, 2023)

Modernity has shaken the foundations of politics, establishing three key pillars that have widened the gap between politics and religion: secularism, nationalism, and democracy. These pillars often prioritize the sovereignty of the people in ways that primarily serve the interests of a few elites. (Monthly Hamdard Sihat, 1999)

Western modernity has profoundly impacted Western society, effectively erasing the concept of universal truth. Truth, moral values, beauty, and emotions have been reduced to mere superficialities. This perspective has fragmented Western thought. Professor Arshad Siraj notes, "The advocates of modernity set out in search of universal values through reason and science. They demonstrated that these efforts were simplistic and superficial. Lacking a solid foundation, modernity led to the fragmentation of religion and tradition and ultimately discredited itself. This situation has posed a significant challenge for the West." (Ashrafi, 2007)

In short, modernity has had a more profound impact on the West than on Islam, resulting in significant changes to Western beliefs, practices, and societal affairs.

The Scope of Accepting Modernity in Islam

The foundation of Islam is based on divine revelation, with eternal and immutable principles. A society structured on divine revelation is neither uncivilized nor backward. In the last century, the "modernity" generated by European thinkers has significantly affected ideological, cultural,

political, and social fronts, primarily based on reason, which Islam rejects. This modernity has left not only Muslims but every human being in a state of uncertainty.

Considering the global impact of Western modernity, two major groups of contemporary Muslims have emerged. One group, swept away by the tide of modernity, has begun to accept every idea from the West as a symbol of progress and heightened awareness, attempting to reconcile Islam with this overwhelming movement. Where they have failed to create outward compatibility, they have resorted to apologetic justifications.

On the other hand, a second group has taken an extreme stance by opposing Western modernity, declaring every new idea as conflicting with religion and a threat to faith. This group has played a role like the clergy before 561 CE. Due to their unreasonable strictness and irrational attitudes, modern Muslim youth have struggled to reconcile contemporary demands with religious values, leading some to seek refuge in atheism. (Habib, n.d.)

Islamic teachings invite us to adopt a moderate path between these two extremes. They encourage the adoption of new concepts and inventions over time, provided they do not conflict with fundamental principles. The tragedy is that, in contrast to the modern world, innovation in the Muslim world has been labeled as "bid'ah" (innovation) and misguidance. Those holding this stance have deviated from true Islamic teachings, leading to the failure of Muslims to advance on the path of progress in the modern world. (Iqbal J. , n.d.)

When examining the ideas of modernity, it is clear that anything contradictory to the foundation of Islam should be discarded, while what does not conflict can be adopted in religious matters without hesitation. Regarding the adoption of inventions and technology, there is no objection to utilizing them for positive purposes. For everyday products, if they are consumables, their permissibility will be assessed: if they are halal, they will be accepted; if they are haram, they will be completely rejected.

One beautiful aspect of Islam is that it does not prohibit the adoption of good practices from other religions and societies; rather, it encourages their acceptance. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated, "The wise statement is the lost property of the believer, so wherever he finds it, then he is more worthy of it." (Tirmidhi)

Every statement and action that contains wisdom and insight is essential for believers. They seek it out everywhere, just like a person whose ride has been lost. Similarly, they remain in search of every positive thing and act upon it as soon as they find it. In acquiring this wisdom, they do not concern themselves with its current possessor. Like the person who has lost their ride, when they find it, they only care about reclaiming it. In this hadith, the term "الحكمة" (wisdom) encompasses all matters related to knowledge and intellect. (Al-Suyuti, 2003)

It seems reasonable to conclude that Islam does not completely oppose modernity. Rather, it aims to integrate modern advancements within its framework, accepting new ideas and practices if they align with its core principles.

Effects of Modernity on Society and Human Life

In the world, nothing exists without both positive and negative aspects. Whether it's changing circumstances, the evolution of time, ancient sciences, or modern knowledge, each has its beneficial and adverse sides. The evolution of time includes modernity, which has its own set of positive and negative facets. The following lines aim to review these aspects, acknowledging the benefits while discarding the shortcomings.

1. Positive Effects

Western modernity has become a social necessity, bringing both benefits and challenges. It has introduced technological conveniences and standardized products that have improved quality and created a competitive atmosphere. Despite issues like inflation, modernity has fostered self-development and global advancement, motivating individuals to strive for progress.

The emergence of new ideas and perspectives has enhanced the ability to generate innovative thoughts. While not all ideas may be fully agreeable, partial acceptance is often possible. Many Muslim thinkers, such as Ibn Rushd, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Taymiyyah, integrated Greek logic and Aristotelian philosophy with Islamic thought. They used rational foundations to defend Islamic beliefs and counter purely rational critiques. Following their example, instead of completely rejecting modernity, it is important to leverage its positive aspects. (Gahlan A. N.)

Another positive aspect of modernity is its facilitation of global connectivity through electronic media and the internet. This has enabled individuals from diverse political, social, cultural, and religious backgrounds to communicate and share expertise easily. This interconnectedness, known as globalization, has significantly enhanced productivity through advancements in science and technology. (htt8)

2. Negative Effects

Before Western modernity, humanity universally recognized God's sovereignty. However, modernity has shifted focus to reason alone, sidelining the concept of God. This shift has been accompanied by widespread violence and brutal conflicts in regions like Vietnam, Bosnia, Iraq, Palestine, Kosovo, and Afghanistan, with death tolls surpassing those of the previous 7,500 years.

Modernity has distorted human relationships, human nature, and rational thought, fueling conflicts among secular philosophies and intensifying economic and commercial rivalries. While capitalism and consumer culture have improved living standards, they have also led to moral decline. Traditional communities, including clans, tribes, and families, are declining, resulting in erosion of relationships, increased dissatisfaction, terrorism, apathy, helplessness, and despair. These negative effects of modernity are evident in expressions of hopelessness and despair among people. (Maan, 2005)

A significant drawback of modernity is the widespread lack of belief systems or ideologies among individuals. Many people dismiss conversations about life after death as irrelevant,

prioritizing only what is tangible and immediate. They consider anything beyond the material world to be speculative or unimportant, addressing it only if it becomes necessary. This has given rise to what can be termed an "Age of No Ideology," where existential and spiritual questions are often overlooked. (Durant)

It is crucial to harness the positive aspects of modernity rather than outright rejecting it as a challenge of the contemporary era. By centering our values on Allah and His teachings, we can adopt new ideas and innovations while maintaining sound reasoning. Addressing the negative effects of modernity requires a collective effort. We must tackle the harmful impacts on family structures and safeguard the younger generation, guiding them through the modern challenges they face. Both the state and individuals within society have vital roles to play in this endeavor, working together to uphold traditional values while navigating modern influences.

Islam's Concept of Ijtihad and Its Scope

Ijtihad in Islamic jurisprudence refers to the process of making a scholarly effort to derive legal rulings for issues not explicitly covered in the Sharia texts. It involves interpreting the Quran and Sunnah to address new or unclear issues. However, ijthid is not applicable to matters with definitive and clear texts.

Essential and self-evident religious principles, such as core beliefs, acts of worship, and specific legal prohibitions and punishments outlined in the Quran and Sunnah, do not allow for ijthid. For instance, the belief in Allah's oneness, the requirements for prayer and zakat, and the prescribed punishments of 100 lashes for offenses like adultery are clearly defined and not subject to reinterpretation through ijthid. (Dr. Wahba Zaheili)

In cases where the Sharia texts in the Quran and Hadith do not provide explicit guidance, the concept of ijthid becomes essential. Ijthid is used to address issues not directly covered by clear texts, allowing scholars to apply various methods to find solutions. When neither a specific textual reference nor a consensus is available, scholars utilize rational arguments to derive rulings. They may also employ analogy (qiyas) to draw parallels between established rulings and new issues. Preference (istihsan) allows them to select the more appropriate option based on principles of justice and welfare. Public interest (masalih mursala) considers the broader benefits for the community, while blocking the means (sadd al-dhara'i) involves preventing potential harm by prohibiting actions that could lead to negative outcomes. Local customs ('urf) are considered, and continuity (istishab) relies on established norms and principles in the absence of new evidence. These methods ensure that ijthid remains a dynamic and responsive approach to addressing contemporary issues within Islamic jurisprudence. (Khalid)

Conclusion

In conclusion, while modernity has deeply influenced Western thought, leading to significant shifts in beliefs, practices, and ethics, its impact on Islamic thought has been more nuanced. Modernity, as a Western concept, cannot be directly applied to Islamic thought but can be understood through the lens of ijthid. This process of independent reasoning allows Islam to

address contemporary issues while adhering to its core principles. While Western modernity has led to moral decay and skepticism in many areas, ijihad has contributed to the growth and refinement of Islamic knowledge, demonstrating the dynamic and enduring nature of Islamic thought in navigating the challenges of the modern world.

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