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Define Ijma and explain its types. Highlight its importance in the light of Holy Quran and Sunnah.

Introduction to Ijma

Ijma is an Arabic word, its literal meaning is agreeing upon or uniting in opinion. It refers to the decisions that are made together by Islamic scholars on an issue whose solution is not available in ^{the} primary source (The Holy Quran) and the secondary source (Sunnah) therefore it is called the third source of law in Shariah. During the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, countless issues were clarified with the help of divine guidance. The word ijma was first used by Hazrat Umar after the Holy Prophet passed away. ~~With the passage~~ and the companions exercised ijma on many occasions.

The importance of Ijma.

As the time is passing, technological and social evolution is taking place, multiple questions are being raised by Muslim Ummah to provide them guidance. For instance, Online Nikkah, test-tube baby, freelancing, genetic engineering, etc did not exist at the time of the Prophet. The scholars are putting their ^{serious} efforts to resolve the modern issues while adhering to the principles of Islam. This consensus is called Ijma and those who do Ijma are called ~~Mujtahids~~ Mujtahids.

Conditions for doing Ijma.

There are certain conditions for those who do Ijma. The person must be a Muslim, adult, sane, characterful, impartial, scholar of the Holy Quran and Sunnah, capable of conducting Qiyas and Ijtihad, expert in Arabic, and having modern knowledge and historical knowledge on contemporary matters. His reasoning should be easily comprehended by people. According to Allama Mohammad Iqbal in his book "Reconstruction of religious thoughts in Islam" "Ijma is the duty of the Parliament". Abu Kalam Azad said, "Ijma is the responsibility of the cabinet". Dr Hamidullah said "At world council, a council should be formed to do Ijma". Consequently OIC is responsible for it.

Types of Ijma.

There are several types of Ijma. Among them the two main types are Ijma Sarih (explicit Ijma) and Ijma Sukuti (tacit or silent Ijma). The others are Ijma of companions, Ijma of Imams, Ijma of scholars, and Ijma of local Muslim community.

a) Explicit Ijma (Ijma Sarih).

It is a type of consensus where all Mujtahids show their consent explicitly over a solution of a legal issue. This kind of Ijma can also occur when all the Mujtahids gather at one place, examine a situation, and finally express their unanimous opinion. This type of Ijma is definite and binding. For instance, the appointment of the new Caliph after Holy Prophet ﷺ .

b) Tactic Ijma (Ijma sukuti).

Ijma Sukuti occurs when some of the Mujtahids express their consent openly and some remain silent. They neither object it nor overtly acknowledge it. One or more Mujtahid can ^{also} do Ijma and the rest of them are informed about it to express and provide their opinion. For example.

c) Ijma of Companions.

When the companions agreed on one thing, considering all the principles of Islam that is called Ijma of Companions. They also decided that one companion can amend the Ijma made by another companion who was equal or greater than him. i.e. the addition ~~of~~ ⁱⁿ Fajr ~~Sat~~ Azan by Hazrat Umar. Taraweeh in 20 rakats, compilation of the Holy Quran into a book by Hazrat Abu Bakr, etc.

d) Ijma of the Imams.

The four Imams - Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Shafai, Imam Malik, and Imam Hunbai - their consensus on the matters is called Ijma of the Imams.

For example.

The issue of Mafqud (lost person) - at first the gap was longer but now it is considered for 7 years, after that he is declared dead. The time period for a wife, if her husband is imprisoned for several years, for how long the marriage is considered valid and when she can re-marry, etc.

e) Ijma of Scholars

It is true that there are not many scholars in Islam as the centuries ~~are~~ ^{have} passed. But, Holy Prophet said "A Mujtahid will be sent to Muslim Ummah every century to revive Islam and faith of the believers". Today the ijma of the scholars can be exemplified as the translation of Quran into Persian by Shah Waliullah with consensus is called Ijma. Today, in modern era, scholars are trying hard to find solution for newly born issues such as prayer timing for

those who live in North and South Poles, Online Nikkah etc. This type of Ijma is not binding and can be revised according to new circumstances.

f) Ijma of local Muslim community

This type of Ijma is based on individuals where Imams and pious people agree on some issues like timing for Salat-ul-Jumma or Salat-ul-Eid. It is non-binding and can be changed according to local conditions.

The importance of Ijma in the light of Holy Quran and Sunnah.

Islam is a universal deen, it has panacea for all. It provides solutions to all people of all times. Quran and Ahadith highlight the importance of Ijma in many places. As it is a practical deen and based on rationalism, Ijma is permissible.

1) Ijma in the light of the Holy Quran

The term Ijma can be traced from the commandments of the Holy Quran of "consulting each other". Islam does not remain still at the time of innovative problems but it emphasizes the need of ijma to resolve modern problem with modern solution.

Allah says in the Holy Quran in Surah Nisa verse 59.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَاطِيعُوا
الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

"O you who believe Obey Allah, obey His messenger, and those charged with authority among you."

This Ayah clearly states that when your leaders reach a consensus, they need to be obeyed after the Holy Quran and Sunnah.

On another occasion, Allah says in Surah Al-Imran: Ayah 103

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا

"And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided."

The rope is used as a simile for the principles of Islam and this rope refers to the right path (الطريق المستقيمة) in Surah Fateha. Agreeing on the matter will ensure security of the

Ummah which is contrary to sectarianism.

The significance of ~~those~~ Mujtahids in Quran.

Islam has always highlighted the significance of those scholars who comply with Islamic rules. Allah has summed up the relationship between Holy Quran, ^{and} Sunnah, and authorities who possess knowledge.

فَسْئَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

سورة نحل 43

"Ask those who possess knowledge if you do not know."

2) Ijma in the light of Hadith

There are many Ahadith in which the Holy Prophet has drawn attention to the need of Ijma and highlighted its importance.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَجْعَلُ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ضَلَالَةٍ وَيُرِيدُ اللَّهُ

مَعَ الْجَمَاعَةِ

"Verily, Allah will not let my nation agree upon misguidance. The hand of Allah is over the united community."

On another occasion, Anas bin Malik quoted the Hadith of the Holy Prophet

إِنَّ أُمَّتِي لَنْ تَجْتَمِعَ عَلَى ضَلَالَةٍ فَإِنَّا رَأَيْتُمْ اخْتِلَافًا

فعلية بالشورى الاعظم .

"My nation will not unite on misguidance so if you see them differing, follow the great majority"

3). Holy Prophet valued Ijma during his lifetime

Although the Holy Prophet was provided Allah's guidance, he never imposed his opinion on his Ummah. To show the importance of consensus, he agreed with the majority on some occasions.

For example a) During the Battle of ~~the~~ Uhud

~~when~~ At the time of the Battle of Uhud, Holy Prophet wanted to fight inside the city of Madina, but he valued the majority's view about having the fight outside Madina. Holy Prophet ~~was~~ developed Ijma ~~and~~ for their guidance.

b) The Battle of trench.

Holy Prophet ^{was} given advice to dig a trench around Madina to protect the city from the enemies attack. This advice was provided by Salman the Persian. Holy Prophet approved it and 3000 Muslims participated in the battle.

Conclusion.

Ijma is the third source of law in Shariah after the Holy Quran and Sunnah. It is a ^{source of} guidance to the Muslim Ummah and its importance is expressed in the Quran and Ahadith. There are many issues that have been arisen in this modern era dominated by science and technology and these ^{modern} ~~modern~~ ^{innovative} problems need innovative solutions. Islam is a universal deen which allows consensus and the Islamic scholars are ~~beginning~~ ^{striving} to provide answers while adhering to the ^{the} principles of Islam.