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Q Elaborate the concept of Ijtihad and its principles in Islam. Explain its importance in modern time.

I. Introduction:

Islam is a deen which guides in all aspects of life. It guides how to spend individual lives, how to behave as a society and how to interact with other societies. The primary sources of Islamic teachings are the Holy Book; the Quran and the Ahadith of the Messenger; ~~Hazrat~~ Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him). However, due to the evolving nature of the world and its circumstances, Islamic teachings encourage Muslims to interpret the primary sources to solve the contemporary issues. This is called Ijtihad. In today's world, the Muslim Ummah is entangled in various challenges and unable to cope with them. That's why, it is necessary to exercise Ijtihad.

II. Ijtihad:

Ijtihad is an Arabic word which is derived from "Juhud". It means to strive. Ijtihad is defined as striving in act to interpret the Islamic law.

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These are various types of Ijtihad, such as Ihtesan, Musalaha, Qiyas (according to Imam Abu Hanifa), etc. Ihtesan is of juristic preference. Musalaha is for society welfare and Qiyas is analogical reasoning.

III. Support of Ijtihad in the Quran and Sunnah of Holy Prophet (Peace be Upon Him):

There are various verses in the Holy Quran that encourage Muslims to employ Ijtihad. In one of those verses, Allah says:

"And We have revealed on you the book as the explanation of everything"
(16:89)

The above mentioned verse shows that in Quran, Allah has explained everything. Muslims need to carefully analyze the book to gain guidance. Similarly, it is written in the Holy book that if Muslims quarrel on anything, they must refer to Allah (i.e. the Quran) and to the Messenger of Allah (i.e. the Abdith of Holy Prophet (Peace

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be Upon Him).

“... If you Quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah (i.e., the Quran) and the Messenger (i.e., the Traditions), if you believe in Allah and the Last Day...”
(Al-Nisa: 59)

It is narrated in Sunan Abi Dawud, when the Messenger of Allah (Peace be Upon Him) intended to send Mu'adh ibn Jabal to Yemen as governor, he asked him that how he will be judge any case. He replied: He will seek guidance from the Quran and the Traditions. Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) asked: what if he did not find his answer from the Quran and the Traditions. The Mu'adh ibn Jabal replied that then he will form his opinion and will spare no effort. The Holy Prophet (Peace be Upon Him) encouraged Mu'adh ibn Jabal.

The above narrated Ahdith shows that the Holy Prophet (Peace be

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Upon Him) also encouraged the use of "Ijtihad".

IV. Principles of Ijtihad:

It is understood that no law should be made against the teachings of Islam. Primary sources of Islamic law has the absolute authority. According to Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah,

The Quran, in use today, is in intact form. It is the same text that was distributed 1,400 years ago in seventh century by Hazrat Uthman (R.A).

(Khutbat-e-Bawalpur, 1891)

That is why, there must not be any doubt about the absolute authority of the Quran. And then the second primary source is the Traditions of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon Him). It includes saying, doings of Holy Prophet (Peace be upon Him), and the approval of other's act.

Procedure of the Ijtihad: The following is the procedure of the Ijtihad:

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i To exercise Ijtihad, Muslims must carefully analyze the existing Islamic laws and must read the text of the Holy Quran carefully to interpret and form laws for challenges of contemporary the world.

ii The another way of performing Ijtihad is using the technique of Analogy. It is also called Qiyas. For example, Alcohol use for non-medical purpose is prohibited in Islam due to its intoxicant nature. Therefore, the use of heroin and cocaine is also prohibited in Islam. Heroin and cocaine are the inventions of modern world. But their use is prohibited based on the teachings of Islam. Similarly, the use of prohibited factories in trade ~~was~~ ^{is} prohibited in Islam. The same rule applies in modern ways of trade i.e. e-commerce etc.

Qualifications of Mujtahid:

The person who exercise Ijtihad is called Mujtahid.

According to the author of Tam ul Jawami (Taqi ul din Al Subki),

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- Mujtahid must have following qualities:
- He must attained the age of majority.
 - He must have sound and rational mind
 - He must have knowledge of Arabic language and Quran and Sunnah.
 - He must have acquaintance with the principles of shariah
 - He must have knowledge of Naskh
 - He must have knowledge of circumstances of Quranic revelations.

(V) Importance of Ijtihad in modern times

i Evolving nature of the world:

The world is in continuous state of evolution. Circumstances that people faced during earlier times were different. Now, they are facing new challenges. Therefore, it is very important for Muslim Ummah - Muslim population around the world to exercise Ijtihad. Furthermore, Today there are a lot of misconception about Islam and Islamic teachings among the Muslims and around the world. Therefore, Ijtihad must be

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exercised to revive the true spirit of Islamic teachings.

ii The role of women needs to be revived.

There is misconception around the world that Islam is conservative. It deprives women from their rights. However, the fact is that Islam gave rights to women 1,400 years ago. Back then, giving rights to women was revolutionary idea. But, it was Islam that gave women their due rights.

In today's world, Muslims have become extremists regarding the rights of the women. It is, therefore need to revive the role of women through ijtehad. Scholars around the world should come forward and clear misconceptions regarding status of women in Islam.

iii Ijtehad is important for the spirit of globalization:

Islamic scholars should practice ijtehad and set Islamic laws clear for the Muslims. So that they have guidance how to maintain peaceful co-existence in this globalized world.

Islam gives freedom of conscience (la ikrafi'deen) that was also

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a revolutionary concept back them.
That's why it is necessary to
practice ijtihad to eliminate
the extremists point of view
regarding other faiths among
Islamic extremists groups that
manipulate Islamic teachings for
their political agenda.

Furthermore, ijtihad is also
important to set rules for
the muslims minorities (one-
third of the Muslim ummah)
living other non-Muslim countries.
So that they know how to
maintain peaceful co-existence
with other non-Muslims.

iv ijtihad is important to resolve
challenges created by the western
economic system:

Islam proposes economic system
that is just, equitable, and interest
free. However, western economic
system that is dominant in today's
world proposes system that
entangled people in complex
system - debt and interests over
debt is making the lives
miserable. Islamic scholars should
come forward to practice
ijtihad to give solution to
Muslim Ummah to handle
such situation, without compromising

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Islamic values and teachings.

Conclusion:

Ijtihad is a concept through which Islamic scholars come forward to make new laws in Islamic jurisprudence according to teachings of Islam. But the scholars should have deep knowledge of the Quran and the Sunnah. Only through Ijtihad, problems of today's Muslims can be solved. Moreover, only Ijtihad can revive the role of women in today's world, can find ways to give alternate system of economy and can ensure peaceful existence with other faiths in this globalized world.