

Define Ijma and explain its different kinds. Highlight its importance in the light of Quran & Sunnah.

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1) Introduction:

Islam is a not merely a religion, it is complete code of life (deen) which that it provides instructions about every aspect of

human life and it also ensures that man finds answers to his queries that are not explicitly mentioned in Quran and Sunnah. For that purpose it has tools like Ijma

2) What is Ijma?

Ijma comes from Arabic word "Jam'ah" which means to collect or aggregate at a point. In terms of Islam, this means unanimous agreement of several Muslim jurists, of any period (on an issue) following the demise of Holy Prophet (PBUH). Ijma is the third most important source of Shari'ah.

3) Rules for Ijma

Following are the basic rules laid out for carrying out Ijma.

a) Necessity of Ijma
The concept of Ijma has been substituted to cater to the needs and demands of changing times. Although every basic human-related issue and principle has been defined well in Quran and Sunnah, yet new questions can arise. For that purpose Islam has allowed man to carry out Ijma.

b) Shouldn't be against Quran and Sunnah

This basic rule implies that collectively deciding on something that goes against Quran & Sunnah is not allowed.

Leave a line space between headings for neatness

c) Who can be a Mujtahid?

Anyone who is able or qualified to do Ijma is called Mujtahid. From the very outset, it is agreed by all jurists that a Mujtahid needs to be a ^{madani} adult with sane mind and characterful personality. He/she should have a basic knowledge of Quran and Sunnah and an awareness of the current world.

Regarding the eligibility of Mujtahid, several opinions are available -

i) Dr. M. Allama Iqbal is of the view that legislative assembly is entitled to conduct Ijma in the modern world.

ii) Abul Kalam Azad says "In today's age, Ijma is the duty of the cabinet"

iii) Dr. Hamidullah believes that a world-level council should be instituted (with equal membership) for conducting Ijma -

4) Kinds of Ijma

There are five distinct kinds of Ijma.

a) Explicit Ijma

As the name indicates, this form of Ijma entails clear consensus between mujtahids where they express their agreement through words or actions -

b) Implicit Ijma

Implicit or tacit Ijma means silent agreement on an issue - Modern international law accepts that remaining silent is considered a form of consent. In this form, one mujtahid presents an opinion and others agree by remaining silent.

c) Ijma-ul-Ulema

This is the most-practiced form of Ijma in the modern age - As the name indicates, Ijma-ul-ulema has the consensus of ulema who decide and issue based on their expert knowledge of Islamic law and jurisprudence. Council of Islamic Ideology is an institution that conducts Ijma-ul-ulema in Pakistan.

d) Ijma-ul-Ummah

Ijma-ul-ummah is the best form of Ijma as it tries to decide on an issue based on the consensus amongst the whole muslim ummah. Dr. Hamidullah has highly stressed on developing a global entity ^{that} can conduct Ijma-ul-ulema.

e) Ijma-e-Medinah

This form is based on the opinion of Imam Malik according to whom muslims should always try to solve their issues based on the opinions of people of Medinah since they can never be wrong.

Add examples/references against your arguments

5) Importance of Ijma

There are several indications in the Quran and Sunnah that urge the Muslims to develop a consensus when deciding on critical issues and problems -

a) As highlighted by Quran

Quran at several instances urges the Muslims to conduct ijma. In Surah Al-Imraan, Allah (SWT) directs Muhammad (PBUH) to decide issues with mutual consultation.

"Consult them in the matter."

Try to add the Arabic of quranic ayats as well (Al-Imraan)

The subject matter of entire Surah Al-Shura is based on how Muslims should develop consensus over critical issues. The idea is to prevent authoritarianism and develop a harmonious Muslim community based on consensus.

"And those who have responded to their lord and established prayer and whose affair is [determined by] consultation amongst themselves..." (Al-Shura)

Add multiple arguments in this part

b) As highlighted by Sunnah

In the Sunnah of Holy Prophet (PBUH) we find several instances where he preferred consultation over solo decisions. The Battle of Trench is a great example

where he (PBUH) consulted his companions to decide the course of action. It was decided with consensus that Muslims will dig trenches to tackle enemy's attack.

He clearly explained that Ijma is next best way to make decisions when no clear rule/direction is found in Quran and Sunnah.

"If you don't find any ruling in Quran and Sunnah, then develop a consensus. My following will never agree on what is wrong."

During the reign of 1st Caliph, the decision of compilation of Quran was decided by Ijma. Also the decision of Travelling prayer during the time of 2nd Caliph was through Ijma.

6) Conclusion:

Short answer

The reason why most of the religions of the modern world have adopted secularism in worldly affairs is because they find it hard to reconcile their ancestral teachings with the demands and tendencies of the modern world. Islam being a perfect Deen has avoided such issue by equipping the Muslims with tools like Ijma through which they can find innovative solutions to their emerging problems while also sticking to the basics of Shariah.