**Sunnah, Ijma, Qiyas and Ijtehad**

**1. Sunnah**

* **Definition and Importance**: The term "Sunnah" means "way" or "path" and refers to the actions, sayings, and approvals of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Sunnah is essential in Islam, as it complements the Qur'an and offers practical applications of its teachings. Allah says,   
  ***“Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah, you have an excellent example”* (Quran 33:21)**, reinforcing the Sunnah as a model for Muslim conduct.
* **Role as a Source of Shari'ah**: The Sunnah is the second primary source of Islamic law after the Qur'an. It clarifies Qur'anic teachings, specifies general instructions, and offers explicit details on ambiguous commands. Many of the Prophet's sayings were meticulously compiled by his companions and later verified through chains of narration to ensure authenticity, making the Sunnah a reliable source of legal and ethical guidance.
* **Complementary Role with the Qur'an**: The Qur'an gives general directives, while the Sunnah provides specifics. For instance, the Qur'an commands prayer but does not detail its procedure, which is clarified in the Sunnah. The two are intertwined, with the Sunnah serving to elaborate on and exemplify Qur'anic injunctions.  
  ***“Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allah.” [Surah An-Nisa:80]***

**2. Ijma (Consensus)**

* **Definition**: Ijma, or consensus, means the unanimous agreement of Islamic scholars on a legal matter after the Prophet's death. This agreement provides flexibility for the Muslim community to address new issues, ensuring that Islamic law remains relevant in changing circumstances.
* **Conditions for Valid Ijma**:
  + Must involve qualified scholars (mujtahids).
  + Requires unanimity among all scholars on a specific legal issue.
  + Consensus must be formed after the Prophet's death and on matters not explicitly covered in the Qur'an or Sunnah.
* **Types of Ijma**:
  + **Explicit Ijma (Ijma’ Sarih)**: This occurs when all scholars openly agree on a ruling.
  + **Silent Ijma (Ijma’ Sukuti)**: When one or more scholars express a legal opinion, and others remain silent, indicating implicit agreement.
* **Examples of Ijma**:
  + **Compilation of the Qur'an**: After the Prophet's death, the Muslim community agreed on compiling the Qur'an in a single book.
  + **Prohibition of Riba (Interest)**: Scholars unanimously agree that interest-based transactions are forbidden, based on explicit Qur'anic verses.
  + **Friday Prayer (Jumu'ah)**: It is unanimously accepted that Friday prayer is obligatory for adult, male Muslims not traveling, demonstrating the importance of communal worship.

**3. Qiyas (Analogical Reasoning)**

* **Definition**: Qiyas, or analogy, is applied to issues not explicitly addressed in the Qur'an or Sunnah. Scholars use Qiyas to extend known rulings to new situations based on shared reasoning or cause, ensuring that Islamic law adapts to evolving circumstances.
* **Authority of Qiyas**: Scholars rely on verses like *“Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you”* (Quran 4:59) to justify the use of Qiyas, arguing that analogical reasoning follows divine guidance when directly applicable rulings are absent.
* **Pillars of Qiyas**:
  1. **Asl (Original Case)**: The original situation with a known ruling in the Qur'an or Sunnah.
  2. **Far’ (New Case)**: The new issue to which the ruling will apply.
  3. **Illah (Effective Cause)**: The common attribute between the original and new case.
  4. **Hukm (Ruling)**: The legal ruling applied to the original case, extended to the new one.
* **Conditions for Valid Qiyas**:
  1. **Original Ruling** must be based on Qur'an or Sunnah.
  2. **Illah** must be clearly applicable to both the original and new cases.
  3. **New Case** should lack a clear ruling in primary sources.
* **Example of Qiyas**: Selling goods after the call to Friday prayer is forbidden, and by analogy, all distracting transactions are prohibited, emphasizing dedication to worship during designated times.

**4. Ijtehad (Independent Reasoning)**

* **Definition**: Ijtehad is the intellectual exertion by qualified scholars to derive rulings for new situations based on the principles of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Derived from "jahada," meaning "striving," Ijtehad plays a critical role in addressing unprecedented challenges within Islamic jurisprudence.
* **Types of Ijtehad**:
  + **Qiyas**: As an extension of Ijtehad, analogical reasoning applies known rulings to new cases.
  + **Istihsan (Juristic Preference)**: Choosing an interpretation that better aligns with the objectives of Shari'ah over rigid application.
  + **Maslahah (Public Interest)**: Decisions made based on moral considerations or the welfare of the community.
* **Qualifications for a Mujtahid**:
  + Deep knowledge of Arabic and the Qur’an, particularly in legal verses (ayat al-ahkam).
  + Familiarity with the Sunnah, specifically legal Hadiths.
  + Understanding of consensus and previous scholarly views.
  + Competence in Qiyas to apply rulings to new cases.
  + Upright character, as Ijtehad entails interpreting divine guidance.
* **Conditions for Valid Ijtehad**:
  + **Competency** in language and religious knowledge.
  + **Comprehension** of legal sources, their context, and abrogations.
  + **Application of Qiyas** and other legal principles without contradicting established texts.
* **Examples of Ijtehad**:
  + **Tayammum**: In one incident, two men performed tayammum (dry ablution) in place of wudu (ritual purification) and prayed. Upon finding water later, one repeated his prayer while the other did not. The Prophet (PBUH) affirmed both choices, showing Ijtehad’s role in flexible rulings.
  + **Apostasy after Prophet's Death**: When some tribes renounced Islam after the Prophet’s passing, Caliph Abu Bakr (RA) decided to confront them, using Ijtehad to emphasize the importance of Zakat, even when others hesitated.

**5. Pattern of Deriving Legal Rulings in Islam**

* **Sequential Process for Legal Rulings**:
  1. **Consult the Qur'an** for guidance.
  2. **Refer to the Sunnah** for further clarification.
  3. **Seek Consensus (Ijma)** among scholars if primary sources lack explicit rulings.
  4. **Use Qiyas** to address new issues by analogy.
  5. **Apply Ijtehad** as the final resort for unresolved matters.
* **Reward for Ijtehad**: The Prophet (PBUH) said that a scholar who exercises Ijtehad and arrives at a correct conclusion is doubly rewarded, while one who errs is still rewarded for their effort, emphasizing the value placed on sincere judgment.