

SOURCES OF ISLAMIC LAW: THE QUR'AN, THE SUNNAH, IJMA', AND QIYAS

Maharam Kutbidinova

Independent researcher at the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan

Teacher at the "Khadichai Kubro" women's secondary specialized

Islamic educational institution

E-mail: qutbiddinovaposhshohonopa@gmail.com

Abstract. *This article provides a scholarly analysis of the primary sources of Islamic law – the Qur'an, the Sunnah, Ijma' (consensus), and Qiyas (analogical reasoning) – their formation, legal significance, place in juristic methodology, and their evaluation by Islamic scholars. These sources constitute the fundamental pillars of the legal system and serve as reliable evidences for Sharia rulings.*

Keywords: *Qur'an, Sunnah, Ijma', Qiyas, fiqh, ijihad, legal evidence, legal methodology.*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic law is a complex and comprehensive system that regulates the religious, social, and spiritual life of Muslim society. The foundation of this system rests upon evidences such as the Qur'an, the Sunnah, Ijma', and Qiyas. These sources ensure the reliability, stability, and scholarly grounding of Sharia rulings. Considering that Islamic law encompasses not only religious commandments but also social relations, economic activities, governance, and moral principles, researching its primary sources is extremely important. This article analyzes each of these sources separately, reveals the relationship between them, and highlights their role in the science of fiqh.

MAIN PART

The Qur'an is considered the primary and most important source of Islamic law. It consists of the words of Almighty Allah and serves as a source of guidance, legal rulings, and practical instructions for human life. The Qur'an sets forth judgments on many matters such as worship, social and commercial transactions, criminal law, inheritance, family issues, and economic activities. Some rulings are presented in a general form, while others are explained in detail. The fundamental principles of Sharia are also embodied in the Qur'an, and all scholars place it at the highest rank among legal evidences.

The Sunnah consists of the sayings, actions, and approvals of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It explains and elaborates on the rulings that are concise or general in the Qur'an and adds further normative meaning to them. The Sunnah is the practical exposition of the Qur'an and holds an essential place in the acceptance and application of Sharia rulings. Without the Sunnah, fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) cannot be complete, because the details of acts of worship, economic and moral guidance, and many aspects of social life have reached us precisely through the hadiths. The classification of hadith sciences, the reliability of narrators, and the continuity of the chain of transmission are among the criteria that further strengthen the legal authority of the Sunnah.

Ijma' is the consensus of qualified jurist-scholars (mujtahids) on a particular legal issue during a certain period. In Islamic law, ijma' is recognized as a definitive proof, and its conclusions are not rejected. The agreement of scholars on an issue indicates closeness to the truth and conformity with the objectives of Sharia. Many instances of ijma' emerged during the era of the Companions, which later served as a foundation for subsequent juristic decisions. The strength of ijma' lies in the fact that it does not contradict the Qur'an and the Sunnah. It ensures stability, unity, and social balance in religious and legal life.

Qiyas is the process of deriving a legal ruling for a new issue that is not explicitly mentioned in the primary texts by comparing it to a similar case based on a common effective cause ('illah). If the ruling of a matter is clearly stated in the Qur'an or the Sunnah, the same ruling is applied to a similar matter. Qiyas is regarded as one of the most subtle and logical methods in the science of fiqh. Although the Hanafi school applied qiyas extensively, other schools of thought also recognize it as a legal proof. The use of qiyas contributes to the development of ijtiḥad, the expansion of jurisprudence, and the discovery of Sharia-compliant solutions to new issues.

These four main sources of Islamic law complement one another, function harmoniously, and create a solid foundation for legal rulings. The Qur'an is the principal evidence, the Sunnah is its practical interpretation, ijma' represents collective validation, and qiyas embodies rationality and the logic of ijtiḥad. The perfection of this system is evidenced by the fact that it has not lost its significance over centuries. Even today, Islamic law relies on these sources in addressing contemporary issues. In new fields such as financial technologies, medical ethics, artificial intelligence, and environmental

problems, Sharia rulings continue to be developed on the basis of these foundational sources.

Although the Qur'an and the Sunnah contain permanent and unchangeable rulings, qiyas (analogical reasoning) and ijma' (consensus) are dynamic tools through which fiqh preserves its flexibility. The primary objectives of Sharia – the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property – are realized through these sources. Therefore, Islamic law, while relying on definitive texts, also creates broad opportunities for independent juristic reasoning (ijtihad).

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Qiyas is the process of deriving a legal ruling for issues whose judgments are not explicitly mentioned in the primary religious texts by identifying a similar effective cause. If the ruling of a matter is clearly stated in the Qur'an or the Sunnah, the same ruling is applied to a comparable matter. The method of qiyas is considered one of the most subtle and logical approaches in the science of fiqh. Although the Hanafi school made extensive use of qiyas, other schools of thought have also recognized it as a legitimate legal proof. The application of qiyas contributes to the development of ijtiḥad, the expansion of jurisprudence, and the discovery of Sharia-compliant solutions to new issues.

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explicitly established in the Qur'an or the Sunnah, it is extended to similar cases. Qiyas is considered one of the most refined and rational methodologies in Islamic jurisprudence. While the Hanafi school is particularly known for its extensive use of qiyas, other legal schools also acknowledge it as a valid source of law. Its application supports the growth of ijtihad, broadens the scope of fiqh, and enables the formulation of Sharia-based solutions for emerging issues.

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CONCLUSION

The primary sources of Islamic law – the Qur'an, the Sunnah, ijma', and qiyas – constitute a comprehensive system that ensures the stability and scholarly foundation of Sharia rulings. The harmony among these sources has led fiqh to develop as a complete legal system. Even today, the Sharia solutions to socio-economic issues are determined precisely on the basis of these sources.

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