



TAQLID

التقليد

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Engage in a discussion on scholars and their importance
- Learn about taqlid and its definition
- Revise the commonly used terms in jurisprudence
- Learn the signs of Taklif

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 3

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION TO TAQLID

WHO IS A SCHOLAR?

A scholar is someone who has a lot of (or the most) knowledge about something.

Just like a dentist knows the most about teeth and a doctor knows the most about the body, there are also scholars who know the most about religion (Quran and the teachings of the Prophet and Ahlul Bayt). The scholars of Islam teach us how to live an Islamically healthy life.

WHY DO WE NEED SCHOLARS OF ISLAM?

The only way to know how to live our life is through the Holy Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet (saw) and Ahlul Bayt (as). Sometimes it is a bit difficult to understand exactly what Allah (SWT) tells us in the Qur'an and through the Prophet (saw), so there are certain scholars who have dedicated their lives to studying and understanding Islam and then teaching the rest of us.

Some of these scholars reach a very high level of knowledge and expertise in understanding the Holy Qur'an and narrations of the Prophets and Imams. They become a reference point for us to refer to when we want to know the rules of our religion. We call such a scholar a **MARJA'**

In the same way we go to a doctor when we are sick, or to the dentist when we have a toothache, we turn to a Marja' to help us with our Islamic issues, such as knowing

exactly how to pray, fast, what we can and cannot eat and so on.

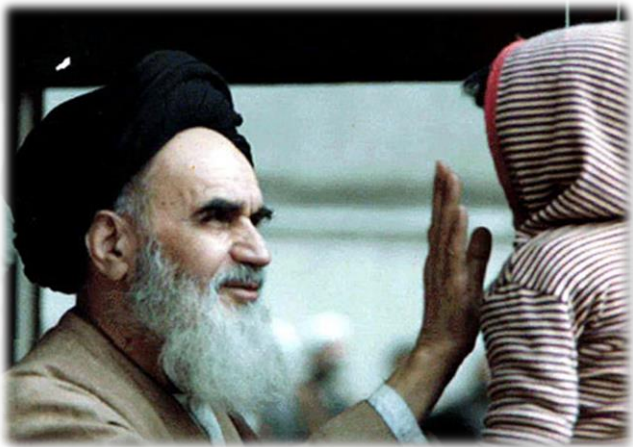


Figure 1. Imam Khomeini - A perfect example of a scholar who dedicated his life to understanding, teaching, and applying Islam

For example, imagine I was playing in the school playground and found some money. What am I supposed to do with it? Can I keep it or do I have to try to find the owner or give it to charity? To know the answer, I need to refer to a Marja'. There are many situations we come across every day that we need to refer to a Marja' about, and therefore, they play a very important role in our lives.

THE SCHOLARS ARE THE HEIRS OF PROPHETS

Prophets pass on knowledge, and the people who inherit that knowledge from the prophets are the scholars. Again, this shows just how important a scholar is to us.

Imam a-lṢadiq (as) says:

“The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets.” (The Scale of Wisdom, p 773)

WHAT IS TAQLĪD?

Taqlīd means to refer to a certain Marja' when it comes to our practical Islamic life.ⁱ If you think back to the example about finding money, we can go to the Marja's website and see what he says about the rules of finding money on the ground. Referring to a Marja' with the intention of finding out an Islamic rule is called Taqlīd.

Review Questions

Q1. Taqlīd means to:

- a) Ask a friend about Islamic rules
- b) Imitate someone's actions
- c) Refer to a highly qualified scholar to learn the practical rules of Islam

Q2. A Marja' is:

- a) A highly qualified scholar who is able to understand the Qurān and the Ḥadith and get rulings from them
- b) Any sheikh
- c) The sheikh who leads the prayer in our community or mosque

Q3. What do Prophets leave as inheritance?

- a) Wealth and property
- b) Knowledge
- c) A good name

Homework

Do some research and find out some facts about the life of a famous scholar who lived in the past or who is alive today. Write one paragraph about his life.

LESSON 2: CHOOSING A MARJA'

In our last lesson, we learnt that it was very important to refer to a highly qualified scholar, a Marja', to learn the practical rules of Islamic life. In this lesson, we will learn how we can choose a Marja'.

HOW DO WE CHOOSE A MARJA'?

There are two main ways for us to know which Marja' to follow:

1. Ask two qualified sheikhs to recommend who is the most knowledgeable
2. If a scholar is so famous in the community for being a Marja' that you become sure that he is one.

Discussion Activity

1. Do you know the name of a Marja' or more than one Marja'?
2. Do you know which sheikh you can ask to recommend a Marja' to you?

LEARNING SOME DEFINITIONS

When we want to find out whether we should perform a certain action or stay away from it, we can refer to our Marja's website or book. There are some words that we will come across which we need to know the meanings of:

WĀJIB (Obligatory): something that we have to do, for example: prayers, fasting and Hajj. Things are *wājib* for us to do because there is a benefit in these actions for us (either physically, spiritually or both). We are rewarded for performing these acts. If we do not do them there will be a punishment for us.

MUSTAḤAB: something that is recommended to do, for example reciting the *adhān* before prayers. We do not have to perform *Mustaḥab* acts and we will not be punished for not doing them. However, there will be extra rewards and benefit for us if we do them. They also help to bring us closer to Allah (SWT) and improve our spirituality.



Figure 2. Praying is WĀJIB; Praying in Jamā'ah is MUSTAḤAB

MUBĀH (permissible): something that we are allowed to do and that has neither reward nor punishment. For example, drinking a cup of tea in normal situations is *Mubāh*.

MAKRŪH (disliked): something that is better not to do. If we stay away from it, we get reward, but if we do it, there is no punishment. For example, it is *makrūh* to urinate while standing or to eat too much. These actions are harmful for our body and spirit.

ḤARĀM: something that is forbidden to do, such as eating pork or drinking alcohol. Allah has made it forbidden to do so that we can stay protected from any type of physical or spiritual harm. There is punishment for committing a *ḥarām* act and rewards for staying away from it.

Review Questions

Q1. We can find a Marja' by:

- a) Asking two qualified sheikhs to recommend a Marja' to us
- b) Finding out if there is anyone who is widely known as being a Marja' among our community
- c) Both a & b

Q2. Wājib means:

- a) Something that is recommended to perform
- b) Something that we must perform
- c) Something that we should not do

Q3. Ḥarām means:

- a) Something forbidden and that we should not do
- b) Something that we must perform
- c) Something that is better not to do

LESSON 3: TAKLĪF

WHEN DO WE NEED TO START FOLLOWING THE ISLAMIC LAWS?

We need to start following the rules in Islam by the age of taklīf. This means the age at which we become responsible for all the actions that we perform.

TAKLĪF

- Taklīf means the time at which we become responsible for our actions. This is when the commands of Allah (SWT) apply to us.
- It is the time in our life when Allah (SWT) is inviting us to the honour of worshipping Him. Allah (SWT) says that at this time, we are able to get to know Him and serve Him with all our actions. We usually try to impress and do as much as we can for a best friend or someone we think is extremely important. What about trying to impress and serve the One who created us, protected us, and guided us so caringly throughout our life?
- When we become responsible for our actions, we have to do the *wājib* (obligatory) things and stay away from the *ḥarām* things.
- The angels start to write down all our good and bad actions. The record of our actions will be shown to us in the next world.
- When we reach the age of taklīf, we become **MUKALLAF** (for a boy) or **MUKALLAFA** (for a girl).

WHEN DO WE BECOME MUKALLAF?

GIRLS:

Taklīf for girls begins when at least one of the following occur:

- She completes 9 lunar (Islamic) years
- Growth of rough hair on the pubic area

It is important to note that for girls, the start of menstruation is not a condition for becoming mukallafa.

Why girls before boys?

Girls become physically and mentally mature before boys do.

It is not a burden but a blessing from Allah to a girl that He is inviting her to worship Him before the boys.

It does involve a bit of difficulty sometimes, but Allah (SWT) does not want you to waste your life (especially your younger days) without remembering Him.

BOYS:

Becoming mukallaf can begin at different ages for different boys. It is based on experiencing at least one of any of the following:

- Growth of rough hair on the private part
- Discharge of semen (while awake or asleep): in other words, having a wet dream. This is when you have a certain type of dream and wake up to find that you are wet - not with urine but with a sticky whitish substance called semen.
- Completing 15 lunar (Islamic) years- which is about 14.5 years of the Gregorian (Western) calendar.

Homework:

Q1. Becoming Mukallaf means:

- a) Being old enough to drive
- b) Reaching the age where we are responsible for all our actions and God will reward or punish us for them

Q2. Girls:

- a) Usually become Mukallaf at a younger age than boys
- b) Usually become Mukallaf at the same age as boys
- c) Usually become Mukallaf at an older age than boys

Q3. Which of the following is NOT a sign of becoming mukallafa for girls?

- a) Reaching 9 lunar years of age
- b) Starting to menstruate
- c) Growth of rough hair on the private parts

Extra Homework Activity

There are currently different Marāji' whom we refer to for our Islamic queries. Some of them include Ayatullāh Sayed Ali Khamenā'i, Ayatullāh Sayed Ali Sistāni, and Ayatullāh Makārem Shirāzi. Use the internet and other resources (such as books at your local Islamic Centre) to research the biographies of these personalities.

