

## Chapter 2: Taqlid in Ideology

Another problem which must be reconsidered before we embark on our discussion of convictions and the principles of Islamic beliefs is that of *Taqlid*<sup>1</sup> in articles of faith from the point of view of both reason and Islam.

As a first step let us see how we acquire the basis of our beliefs if we rely purely on the judgement of reason. Does reason permit us to take as gospel. What we learn from our parents, political parties, or organizations, scholars and trustworthy persons and so on, as the basis of our beliefs on matters of convictions and worldview? In other words, does reason permit a person to practise *Taqlid* in convictional matters or must he investigate for himself?

Once reason has supplied the answer to this question we must see what Islam has to say on the matter. Is the Islamic response the same as that of reason, or Islam supply another answer?

Let us begin with the first question. We shall assume the case is being argued by reason in the court of conscience. We ask reason which is the right course to adopt in matters of convictional principle. Independent investigation or *Taqlid*? Before considering reason's reply we must interpret *Taqlid* more closely.

### What Is Taqlid?

*Taqlid* consists of accepting the theories and judgements of another person or persons without demanding proof, "without considering or thinking." As the al-Munjid, a celebrated medieval Arabic dictionary puts it.

Based on this definition the question is whether reason permits a person to accept other people's theories in convictional matters without demanding proof, or not? Does it, in other words, demand that a person should acquire his beliefs through investigation, and accept other people's theories only after the investigation has taken place and on the basis of rational proof?

## The Rational View Of Taqlid

Keeping in mind our definition of *Taqlid* we see that reason unquestionably forbids a person from acquiring his beliefs through *Taqlid* because in matters of basic principles science<sup>2</sup> is and *Taqlid* is not conducive to science.

And yet the necessity of science in matters of convictions is beyond question, and since belief is the basis of action, and reason most definitely does not permit one to base his individual and social actions on beliefs without personally confirming their validity and agreement with reality.

Now it is obvious that *Taqlid* is not conducive to science, since if it were, all schools of thought, all beliefs and religions, whether existing now or hitherto, would be scientifically correct and in accordance with reality.

## Taqlid, Fictitious Knowledge!

*Taqlid* is indeed not conducive to science, and a *muqallid*<sup>3</sup>, when all is said and done, thinks that he is a learned man, but he is learned only in the world of his imagination, not the real world. In other words, he is a person of imaginary knowledge not a man of learning.

The followers of every religion think of their own beliefs as correct and free of error, and that only their own beliefs are sound and in accordance with reality, and call them “scientific” and “certain”.<sup>4</sup>

If the followers of every religion allowed themselves to think about their beliefs, and remove the veils hiding true knowledge and investigate rather than take on a blind trust, differences between various schools of thought would disappear from human, society, and everyone would arrive at a single common nation and a single religion. Since differences occur only when fictitious knowledge takes the place of true knowing where true science reigns there is no room for difference of divergence.

## Taqlid in Belief, The Islamic View

Now that the rational view of *Taqlid* in convictional matters has been expounded let us see what Islam has to say on the subject. Does Islam, like reason, condemn *Taqlid* or permit it?

First of all we must state that in general Islamic beliefs are divided into two categories, principles (primary beliefs) and subsidiaries (secondary beliefs), which we may also term basic and non-basic beliefs.

The principles of Islamic belief (*Usul al-din*)<sup>5</sup> consist of the articles of faith which forms the infrastructure of questions of Islamic jurisprudence, politics, mortality, society, economics and culture, such as *Tawhid* (monotheism), *Nubuwwah* (belief in prophethood), *mo'ad* (resurrection of the dead), *'adl* (divine justice)

and *Imamah* (belief in the imamte).

Susidary or non–basic beliefs (foru’ al–din) consist of the ordinaries which Islam has decreed to regulate the relationships between man and God, and man and his fellows, such as prayer, fasting, *khoms* (Islamic system if tithes), *zakat* (almsgiving), *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) ane the like.

In the Islamic view, with respect to non–beliefs *Taqlid* is not only permitted but obligatory. The authority for *Taqlid* in non–basic beliefs is secifically vested in the Prophet Muhammad or the Imams, and in their absence, for those who do not have the specialized knowledgeto solve Islamic problems for the words of the Prophet or the Imams in a Mujtahid al–jame’ol–sharayet.<sup>6</sup>

What we are concerned here with is position of Islam on *Taqlid* regarding basic beliefs;whether Islam, like reason, rejects *Taqlid* absolutely in matter of principle, or permits it. In other words, in the Islamic view, ought people to investigate convtional peinciples personally or practise *Taqlid* in this respect.

As everyone who is familiar with the Quran and other Islamic texts well knows, Islam clearly and explicitly rejects *Taqlid* in matters of basic principles and insists emphatically that people should investigate matter of belief personally and not adopt any opinion without due consideration and rational proof.

In the Quranic view, the creator has never required mankind to accept his word alone, for example, regarding His own existence or the mission of his prophets, as an article of blind faith, without any rational proof. To substantiate His existence and the truth of the prophetic missions, God justifies on rational ground and invites man to let his reason be the judge.

No prophet has ever urged his flock to follow him blindly in matters of basic belief or to accept his word unquestionably as God’s representative. In proving the genuiness of his mission every prophet has relied on rational proof, and asked his followers to let their reason decide and by the same token has requested his adversaries to prove their claims, telling them in the words of the Quran:

***“Show us your proof”<sup>7</sup>***

Today, no Mujtahid or Islamic theologian permits *Taqlid* in matters of fundamental belief. Instead, such scholar exhort people to study the basis of their convictions for themselves.

In order to clarify the precise Islam;s view of *Taqlid* in matters of fundamental belief we must now examine a number of Quranic verses and hadith<sup>8</sup> on this subject.

## **Taqlid: The Quranic View**

The Quran, in numerous verses strongly condemns *Taqlid* in matters of basic belief, and explicitly states that until a person has acquired conclusive knowledge and awareness of a particular theory or opinion

he is not entitled to adopt it or base his individual or collective life on it. Thus:

***“Do not follow that which you have no knowledge of” (17:36).***

This Quranic verse counsels one to follow the explicit dictates of the mind. It says, in effect, “O man hear to what your conscience and mind clearly tell you, and in matters of doctrine do not follow others blindly. Do not take a belief as a criterion for your actions or adopt it until you are quite sure it is correct.”

Another verse states:

***“The most evil of beasts in God’s sight are the deaf, dumb, those who do not reason.” (8:22).***

The words ‘deaf’ and ‘dumb’ here refer not to persons without the sense of physical hearing or the power of speech but to those who do not use their minds, the ones who do not think properly about matters to belief. Of such persons another verse tells us,

***“ They have hearts, but do not comprehend; eyes, but do not see; ears, but do not hear.” (7:179).***

In other words, they are people who do not use their eyes, or their ears, or their tongues follow in the path of others, adopting other people’s opinions without proof, instead of using their own minds and thoughts.

The Quran thus unlinks the chains created by blind imitation of other, and frees man from such fetters of thought. Every individual is granted the independence of thought and permitted expression of ideas. By freeing man from the tyranny of *Taqlid* in convictional matters the Quran thus exhorts him to investigate and contemplate.

This leads us to an extremely important and sensitive point. The Quran strives to eradicate the credence of knowledgeability from people’s minds and make them truly knowledgeable. The Quran wants to cure the followers of every school of thought and those with all kinds of beliefs of the disease of this credence which is the product of blind acceptance of the beliefs of others, and to lead them to true knowledge and knowledgeability<sup>9</sup>. It therefore strongly condemns those, who prefer *Taqlid* and allow traditional beliefs to prevent them from seeking truth.

The Quran has numerous verses on this subject, two of which we will examine here:

***‘When they are told: “Come to what God has revealed, and to His prophet” they say: “What we have inherited from our fathers is enough for us”.... (5:104)***

In other words, when people of traditional beliefs who have always followed blindly the customs and beliefs of their ancestors, tribe or clan are urged to examine the words of God and His Prophet it is as if they were told, “look, you’ve heard everyone else why don’t you hear, what we have to say and when you’ve digested it use your intellects to decide which of all these is correct? If you decide that God and

His Prophet are telling the truth, accept what they say and act accordingly, and if you decide that your parents and the traditions of your tribe or clan or ideals of your party or organization are right then follow them.”

In reply to this logical argument they say: “No, we don’t need to hear the word of God and His Prophet. The traditional beliefs we’ve inherited from our ancestors are quite enough for us”. The Quran then goes on the reply to them with a clear reference to rule of reason, by saying:

**“...Even though their fathers knew nothing and had received no proper guidance.” (5: 104).**

Is their attitude logical? Can reason accept their view simply because their parents held certain beliefs not based on logic and understanding they should follow them blindly and close their eyes and ears as they tread the same path!?”[10](#)

## Taqlid in Belief According To The Hadith

In the language of the Hadith a person who has no views of his own and accepts the views of others based on no investigation but on *Taqlid*, is called a floater. In the al-Nahaiyeh, a respected collection of Hadith, the Prophet Muhammad is quoted as saying: ‘Wake up in the morning as a scholar or as a student, but do not be a ‘floater’, Ibn Athir commenting in the word *’imma’ah*” used in this hadith says: “The word *imma’ah* is applied to a person who has no views or opinions of his own and therefore follows anyone with an opinion. The form *imma’a* also occurs.”[11](#)

In other words, the term *imma’a* is used in Arabic to indicate someone holding no independent thought, who does not dare to think and express an opinion. His eyes and ears are always glued to others and to what they must have to say. He waits to see what the party’s ideologue says, what the head of his organization thinks, or how public at large reacts to a given situation. A floater is one who never questions what others say or write.

In this Hadith, the prophet is telling people that in matters of doctrine, they should either be learned or at least try to acquire learning, but in no account they should follow blindly what others believe. From this we may deduce that from the Islamic viewpoint a person should either know that his beliefs are correct and in accordance with reality or else he should strive to acquire such knowledge. But on no account may he be a floater and merely follow the beliefs and views of others.

In this connection, we may quote some verses ascribed to Imam Ali: according to one tradition.

“When I am faced with something I don’t know I seek the truth: I seek it high and low, I’m not a floater, who can never choose, and everywhere he goes asks, “What’s the news?” I use analogy and knowledge vast, and often read the future in the past.”[12](#)

So the true followers of the path of Islam and the real disciplines of the prophet and Imam Ali are those

who form their own opinions on matters of faith personally and do not blindly accept the views of this or that. They do not adopt the prevailing view just to avoid being laughed at. The only opinions and beliefs they accept are those that they find to be true after careful consideration, even though the general public may hold the opposite views. They take the path that they find to be true after a thorough study, and they do only what they consider logical, human and wise, which comes as a result of much thought.

Another hadith reported in Tarmadhi's Sahih and related by Hudhdhifa, tells us how the prophet told, his companions 'not to be floaters' and then expounded it in these words: 'Don't be like those people who say: "If others do good, I'll do good, and if others do evil, I'll do evil." Instead be prepared to do good if others do good, but if they do evil don't follow them by doing so". [13](#)

Imam Sadeq the sixth Imam, is also reported to have told his disciples 'not to be floaters' and further explained it by saying: 'A floater is someone who says: "I'm with the people and I'm just like one of the people". [14](#)

What he meant was that in matters of belief and action one should not follow others unquestionably. Regarding what others say and do we should always think if their words and deeds are right or wrong. Do not say I'm with the people and I'm just like one of the people, so I'll say whatever they say and do whatever they do."

In another Hadith, Imam Kazem, the seventh Imam, is reported as telling to one of his followers, a man certain Fadhl bin Yunis: "Do good and speak good and do not be a floater". Fadhl bin Yunis tells us that he asked the Imam what he meant by this and the reply came: 'Do not say: "I'm with the people and I'm just one of the people". The Imam when on the quote ahadith of the prophet, as follows: 'O people, there are two paths to follow, the path of righteousness and the path of evil. You should not be preferring the path of evil to the path of righteousness". [15](#)

The words of the prophet: "verily we have shown them two paths" are an allusion to the Quranic verse **"We have shown him the two paths" (90: 10)**, the implication being that man has been created in a way that is capable of telling the difference between right and wrong. The words of the prophet, alluding thus to the word of God, convey a reprimand. He is saying: "When there are only two paths to choose from why does man forsake the path that reason tells him is correct and choose the path that reason tells him to avoid?" While explaining what the prophet meant by a 'floater' Imam Kazeem's reasoning makes two points.

The first point is that socially what causes a person to choose the path of evil is being a 'floater' and blindly following the opinions and actions of others, and if someone manages to free himself from the bondage of *Taqlid* a great deal of social problems will be solved.

The second point is that man has been created in such a way that if he gets rid of *Taqlid* he can be a man of independent ideas and choose the path of righteousness. Since reasoning can help man to distinguish between right and wrong. Islam too exhorts man to do good and what is just and right and to

shun evil and cruelty. [16](#)

## Adopting The Beliefs Of Distinguished Personalities

An important point which strikes us in perusing hadith relating to *Taqlid* is that in matters of basic belief and articles of faith *Taqlid* is firmly condemned by the Imam, even if those beliefs happen to be correct.

Thus Imam Sadeq is quoted as saying: A person who is converted to this religion in emulation of a strong personliaty may also leave it for the same reason but if a person accepts it as a result of studying the Quran and the sunna [17](#) mountains should be shaken from their seat before he abandons his convictions. [18](#)

Another version of this hadith is as follows: 'One who learns his religion from the Book of od mountains will be moved before he doubts his faith, wheareas one, who gets involved in an affair out of ignorance may also leave it through ignorance.' [19](#)

There are several senitive and valuablepoints to be learned from these hadith: The first point is that following persons of influence in matters of religious belief is condemned and regarded as undesirable: for a person of reason should acquire his beliefs through research and one's own discredment not thorough *Taqlid*.

The second point is that in the cae of those who embrace Islam as a result of following the beliefs of Islamic personalities, for the reaons that the basisof their conversion is tqlid and emulation of an individual they admire and since their beliefs are not rooted in reason or knowledge of one day their hero decides to abandon Islam they too will change their beliefs in order to follow him therefore. Beliefs based on *Taqlid* are always subject to change and decline 'A person who enters this religion in emulation of a strong personality may also leave it for the same reason'.

The third point is that if a person who embrace Islam under the guidance of the Quran and the hadith his religious convictions will be so firmly entrenched in him that they will be stronger than mountains.

In other words mountains may be uprooted from the earth; but the religious beliefs of someone who has found his faith in the uran and the Hadith will never be wrenched from his heart.

'But if a person enters religion as a result of studying the Quran and Sunna, mountains will be moved from their seat before he abandons his beliefs.'

The fourth point is, that the guidance provided by the Quran and the Hadith indicates that a person's beliefs must be founded on reasonable and scientific grounds. If he accepts them on the same basis. "A person who becomes involved in an affair through ignorance may also leave it through ignorance".

The points mentioned by ImamSadeq are confirmed by experience and history. In the last 1400 years of

history of Islam we may find many examples of people who embraced this religion through emulation of a powerful personalities and abandoned it for the same reason.

The history of the divinely inspired religion signifies that following political or religious personalities in matters of beliefs that is the cult of the personality, has caused untold harm to these religions. A study of the history of religion from this aspect although of great interest and indeed of instructive value, is nevertheless beyond the scope of the present introductory discussion. We shall therefore limit ourselves to two examples of the cult of the personality, one taken from the dawn of Islam, and the other from the recent past.

## **The Cult of the Personality in the Dawn of Islam**

In the time when Imam Ali was ruling as Caliph many of his contemporaries, together with a number of political and religious personalities of the day, who have become known as Nakethin, Qasetin and Mareqin, as a result of infatuation by the personality cult abandoned the true Islam. Infact they formed ranks against it and caused great harm to the roots of this young sapling, the bitter effects of which have affected Islamic society to this day.

The Imam was painfully disappointed at how the efforts of the Prophet, himself and the followers of true Islam to establish a government and society worthy of Islam were ending in failure because of the sabotage inflicted by those who had once been his comrade-in-arms.

What vexed Ali more was the fact the many people did not hesitate to think it through to see if what those respected personalities were saying was true or false, or whether the cause of action chosen by them was right or wrong, or whether in claiming to be fighting under the banner of Islam they were really trying to help Islam or they were just using Islam as a stepping-stone to reach to their personal ambitions.

Without a doubt the 'floaters' and blind followers of the deviationists of 'Ali's day caused the Imam greater pain than did the deviationists themselves, because without these followers they would have accomplished nothing. In Chapter 147 of the Nahj-ol-Balagha 'Ali is reported as giving a short but profound analysis of the political and social conditions of his community, which can also provide valuable guidance to understanding our society today. This analysis has two special aspects that are worthy of attention.

One aspect is that in order to explain the matter to Kumayl one of his senior disciples, the Imam took him by the hand and led him to the desert, while full of grief, he expounded to him on what was troubling him. The second aspect is that before embarking on his analysis of society as he saw it, the Imam drew Kumayl's attention to the capacity of people's hearts, saying some can take a great deal and others more, and the greater one is in his heart the better.

It is obvious that the Imam could not tell about his grief to everybody. To hear his words required a

capacity that not everyone had. After all, how he speak of the numbers of true Muslims, those who really understood and were still faithful to Islam? How could he openly say that people with such excellent past, finding their oersonal interests threathened, had abandoned Islam?

How could he say that many of his contemporaries had been seduced in the name of Islam by the establishments of distinguished figures of society, were not real Muslims at all? Or that they did not understand Islam, and their religion was in pawn to the personalities that they trusted and followed, or that their standards of what was right and wrong belonged to those distinguished personlities, not to themselves?

In any event, ‘Ali began his plaintive analysis for Kumayl who had the heart to hear the social ills of his time. it starts with these words: ‘People are of three classes; those who know God;those who seek the path of salvation; and those who like foolish flies follow every voice that calls, and go on every direction that wind blows, unenlightened and have no firm refuge.

With these words the Imam divides the people of his community, or perhaps people in general, into three groups: The first group consists of those who have recognized the divine truth, and, whose beliefs and deeds, individual and social attitudes are based on sound standards. The Imam cals them “those who know God”.

The second group consists of those who may not yet have recognized the divine truth, but are people of contemplation and thought, and are on the path that leads to divine knowledge. If they continue on this path to the end they will be saved from domination. The Imam, therefore, calls such people ‘those who seek the path of salvation.

The third group consists of those who have neither recognized the divine truth nor emarked on the path that leads to divine knowledge which may be called students on the path of salvation. Rather, they are people who have totally failed to think and investigate such matters for themselves. The Imam calls such people ‘foolish flies’.

The Imam compares this third group, who fail to think for themselves, with the flies and feed on him, they are attracted to the sound of every voice that calls out without stopping to think who that person may be and whether what he says is true or false, flies that are carried along on every direction that wind blows.

The reason why people have become so vulgar and ignorable, in the Imam’s view, is that they have not been illuminated by the light of knowledge and lack of firmconvitional basis.

This categorization by Imam Ali is infact the same as the one that is attributed to the Prophet by Ibn Athir.[20](#) The difference being that prophet’s words are in the form of a statement. The prophet says that Muslims must be knowledgeable or seek knowledge but never a ‘floater’, the Imam states Muslims in his day are of three kinds:those who know God, those who seek the path of salvation and those who are like ‘foolish flies’.

The expression of 'foolish flies' as used by the Imam, is the same as the 'floaters' referred to by the Prophet, namely people, lacking an independent convictional basis, who merely follow the opinions of others. Such people are the most dangerous enemies of those governing based on truth and justice. What grieved Ali so and caused him to sigh to heaven was that his contemporaries were almost without exception, of the third category: 'floaters', 'foolish flies', those who lacked a firm convictional base, and swayed on that way with every passing breeze.

Those who sought the oath of salvation were extremely few in Ali's day. As his subsequent remarks tell us, such persons are characterized by a refusal to misuse knowledge or betray their faith, possessing sufficient insight to deal with doubts and totally rejecting the lust for materialistic life. People of a speculative nature who are endowed with these characteristics were all too few in Ali's day.

Even scarier than those who sought the path of salvation were those who had achieved knowledge of the Divine. As the Imam puts it: 'I swear to God, their number is extremely few'.

'We see, then, that Imam Ali was surrounded by a mass of people who were neither persons of discernment nor seekers after the truth, neither persons of knowledge nor seekers after the truth, neither persons of knowledge nor students of knowledge; rather, they were people whose minds and thoughts, knowledge and ideology, and even their fate, were inextricably tied to the fate of the distinguished personalities they admired most and were pulled in every direction that they wished.

Imam Ali was accompanied by people who did not want to understand, or were incapable of understanding that the personalities they admired were just as fallible as others. They could not understand that Talha and Zaynab might also make mistakes, and that the Holy Men of Nahrawan might err.

Society was in such a deplorable state that some could not even imagine the possibility that Mu'awiyah<sup>21</sup> might be wrong? At the Battle of the Camel one of 'Ali's supporters, a man named Harith bin al-Nadi spoke to the Imam in such terms that show to what a sad level Muslim thinking had declined.

When Harith saw that the leader of the opposite side at this battle was none other than Aisha, the Mother of the Faithful, and that personalities with such a distinguished Islamic background as Talha, and even more distinguished Zaynab, who had sought sanctuary in Ali's house during the Saqifa affair,<sup>22</sup> had chosen to fight on her side he simply could not believe that men with such records of distinction could be wrong to fight against Ali. So he approached the Imam and said:

"O Commander of the Faithful, I cannot believe that Talha and Zaynab and Ayesha could unite unless it were for a just cause".

In another version, Harith's words are reported as being. 'Do you expect me to believe that the companions of the Camel were misled?'<sup>23</sup>

Just imagine, if among the Imam's companions, living as they were in an environment full of the light of knowledge and spiritual awareness, individuals were to be found incapable of believing that personalities with such distinguished records as Talha and Zobeir were wrong to be at war with 'Ali what can we expect of other Muslims of his day who perhaps had not even seen the Imam?

Nevertheless, in reply to Harith, the Imam delivered words which, as Dr. Taha Hussein, the well-known Egyptian writer so aptly put it "Were the epitome of firmness words of such greatness as have never been heard since the Revelation fell silent and the Voice of Heaven spoke no more."<sup>24</sup>

The Imam's reply was this: 'You are in grave error. Truth and falsehood can in no wise be distinguished by the yardstick of personality. Know the truth, you will know who follows the truth; and know falsehood. You will know who follows falsehood.'<sup>25</sup>

In other words, your mistake, and that of others like you, is that instead of using truth and falsehood as criteria to judge personalities, you have used personalities as a criterion for truth and falsehood. You are attempting to understand the truth by the standards of a personality, whereas if you permit yourself to think for yourself you will know that the correct course is quite the opposite: a personality, however exalted and trustworthy, can never be the criterion for truth and falsehood. When a person knows the truth he knows who is the follower of the truth, regardless of the background or status of that follower: and when falsehood is understood the follower of falsehood can easily be identified regardless of their distinguished records or the universal acclaim they may enjoy. or status of that follower: and when falsehood is understood the follower of falsehood can easily be identified regardless of their distinguished records or the universal acclaim they may enjoy.

## [The Cult of the Personality Today](#)

*Taqlid* in ideas and the cult of the personality have continued throughout the course of history. and the changes that have occurred are largely superficial. The main difference is in the form that *Taqlid* takes and the personality that is followed, not in the underlying principle. takes and the personality that is followed, not in the underlying principle.

At one time the cult-figures in matters of belief were their ancestors<sup>26</sup> or their tribal chiefs and kings<sup>27</sup> once they were leading religious authorities<sup>28</sup>. Today, in its modern form the leaders of political parties and organizations are followed by the organizational and non-organizational supporters of these leaders are called 'floaters'. Whose eyes and ears are closed and who do not permit themselves to think for themselves and have no doubts about the soundness, of the beliefs. actions. views and official instructions of the authorities they follow.. Today, in its modern form the leaders of political parties and organizations are followed by the organizational and non-organizational supporters of these leaders are called 'floaters'. Whose eyes and ears are closed and who do not permit themselves to think for themselves and have no doubts about the soundness, of the beliefs. actions. views and official instructions of the authorities they follow.

The difficulties posed to the Islamic Republic of Iran by the organizations, parties and individuals opposed to it or are in armed conflict with are almost practically those which Imam 'Ali was confronted with by his opponents. The problem facing his government was the simple-minded or foolish followers who did not bother to evaluate the beliefs and actions of the personalities they admired." The problem for the Islamic Republic, although nothing like so extensive since a decisive majority of the Muslim people of Iran enjoy considerable intellectual maturity, is that within the confines of the opponents of the Islamic Republic and those groups in armed conflict with it are simple minded and ignorant supporters of these groups, whose infatuation with the personality-cult prevents them from appreciating reality, minded and ignorant supporters of these groups, whose infatuation with the personality-cult prevents them from appreciating reality.

The main factor responsible for the deviation of these simple-hearted supporters from the straight path of the Revolution and Islam, which has led them into the trap of these groups, is this disease- the cult of the personality. Their deviationism is due to the fact that their revolutionary beliefs are based on personality and not discernment, and the positions they have adopted are the result of *Taqlid* and not the quest for truth, and not the quest for truth.

Thus it was that when their ideologues deserted the true path of the Islamic Revolution and joined forces with its enemies they followed their leadership unquestioningly. Matters came to such a sorry pass those, who had once denounced imperialism with such vehemence shamelessly embraced the forces of imperialism and Zionism, embraced the forces of imperialism and Zionism.

Even more shameless were the illicit sexual relations of the leadership in the name of an ideological revolution! This has been presented as a model to these blind followers, the "floaters" and "flies", but they cannot understand that such deeds whatever they are, are certainly not revolutionary! And if that type of relationships are revolutionary they are certainly not an ideological revolution! and "flies", but they cannot understand that such deeds whatever they are, are certainly not revolutionary! And if that type of relationships are revolutionary they are certainly not an ideological revolution!

## [Advice Of Imam Sadeq](#)

Imam Sadeq, the Sixth Imam advised one of his followers, a certain Thamali, in these terms: a certain Thamali, in these terms:

'Be aware not to seek high positions and do not follow, great men blindly!'"

It means that in life we should avoid two common habits: the pursuit of power and the cult of the personality. In society we should try to be neither in the vanguard nor the rearguard neither a leader nor the led! to be neither in the vanguard nor the rearguard neither a leader nor the led!

Thamali failed to understand what the Imam meant assumed that he was denouncing the position of

leadership in general. For if there is no-one in the vanguard or the rearguard of society, the leadership, even of divinely-appointed leaders is likewise, automatically denied, and teaching and learning are pointless also for it implies that the pupil will not follow the teacher and teacher will not undergo the stages required for his position. So Thamali replied: So Thamali replied:

'May I sacrifice myself for you! I understand what you say about the evils of seeking power and position, but I don't understand what you mean by not following great men. After all, two thirds of whatever knowledge and learning I have is the result of following great men. If I hadn't followed you and people like you, I wouldn't have any knowledge worth mentioning. So why should I avoid following great men.' The Imam replied: "It is not as you have supposed. Because lest you choose a person as your leader and accept whatever he tells you without any reason.[29](#)

The Imam is saying that: "What I meant by following the great man is that you should not choose someone as your leader without the confirming of your mind and without proper proof and accept everything that he tells. You unquestioningly, or blindly submit yourself". [-however great his personality-]. [-however great his personality-].

What an ugly sight it is indeed to see a person who will not think for himself and has put his mind at the disposal of another and allowed himself to be led wherever that person chooses! And how regrettable it is that whenever a person pushes himself to the fore there are people who will follow him blindly and act as his disciples! how regrettable it is that whenever a person pushes himself to the fore there are people who will follow him blindly and act as his disciples!

## Taqlid In Secondary Or Non-Basic Matters

It has by now been clearly established that both from the intellectual point of view and according to the Quran and Hadith *Taqlid* in matters of convictional principles is a practice to be condemned. Here the question may arise: what about *Taqlid* in non-basic matters" Is *Taqlid* in such matters, as in the case of basic or fundamental religious principles, to be avoided or is there a difference between the two cases??

The answer is that *Taqlid* in such non-basic matters is not only correct but mandatory. for those who are not experts in religious jurisprudence and incapable of taking the appropriate action as required by religious beliefs without referring to such experts. Another question that may be posed is: Why is *Taqlid* in basic matters of religion rejected by both the purely intellectual and the theological stand point, yet in nonbasic matters it is held to be mandatory? in basic matters of religion rejected by both the purely intellectual and the theological stand point, yet in nonbasic matters it is held to be mandatory?

In other words, if the explicit dictates of reason. Hadith and the Quran are that a person should not accept the opinion of others without knowledge and science and awareness, and if because it is not conducive to science then *Taqlid* in basic matters of belief is not permissible, why should it be correct and even mandatory in non-basic matters? why should it be correct and even mandatory in non-basic

matters?

Again, if *Taqlid* is not conducive to science, this must be so both for basic and non–basic matters alike; but why is it held that in basic matters of belief it is not correct yet in non–basic matters it is? And finally, why is reference made to the intellect and reason in matters of basic belief while this is not the case in non–basic matters? And finally, why is reference made to the intellect and reason in matters of basic belief while this is not the case in non–basic matters?

## Taqlid In Non–Basic Matters Is A Reference To Reason

There are both a brief and a long and detailed answers to these questions: The brief answer is that *Taqlid* in non–basic matters as well is in fact resorting to one's reason. For an explanation and to provide a detailed answer, consider the following analogy: Imagine you are ill or one of your family is ill, and you want to consult a doctor. What does reason tell you to do? and you want to consult a doctor. What does reason tell you to do?

When it comes to finding a doctor, who is a specialist in the disease in question and one you can place your confidence in, reason tells you that you can find him by consulting reliable acquaintances who know about such matters and in this way get the name of the most experienced specialized and reliable doctor available. When it comes to finding a doctor, who is a specialist in the disease in question and one you can place your confidence in, reason tells you that you can find him by consulting reliable acquaintances who know about such matters and in this way get the name of the most experienced specialized and reliable doctor available.

But once you have his name and have consulted him and he has carried out his examination and given you a prescription reason does not tell you to ask him what the basis for his diagnosis is or why he has prescribed this particular treatment. On the contrary, reason tells you that since you are not a medical specialist yourself you should take whatever prescription he has given you and follow the course of treatment prescribed. Following the doctor's prescription is a form of *Taqlid*.

Just as reason has told you to enquire as to who is the most suitable factor it also tells you that when it comes to acting on the course of treatment prescribed by the doctor *Taqlid* is mandatory. is mandatory.

Making enquiries on matters of non–basic belief is the same as finding the right doctor, and it is what reason tells you to do: it does not tell you to accept the opinion of others and act on them without making through enquiries to find the right consultant. *Taqlid* in non–basic matters, just like following the treatment prescribed by the doctor, takes place after finding the right consultant and being convinced of his expertise and putting your trust in him. in non–basic matters, just like following the treatment prescribed by the doctor, takes place after finding the right consultant and being convinced of his expertise and putting your trust in him.

And justas *Taqlid* with respect to medical consultant, that is following his advice and the course of treatment he prescribes, is not contrary to reason. On the contrary in following the dictates of reason, so too *Taqlid* in matters of non–basic belief with respect to a mojtahid having all the necessary qualifications, who is a specialist in religious matters, is in fact consulting one's reason & following its dictates.necessary qualifications, who is a specialist in religious matters, is in fact consulting one's reason & following its dictates.

[1.](#) Taqlid has no exact equivalent in the European languages, literally it means “Imitation” or “mimic” but in Islamic usage it denotes accepting the opinion of a religious leader on faith without independent investigation. As we shall see, it applies only to the more complex questions of ideology, not to fundamental principles. The English expressions “to take as gospel” and “to accept on faith” partly convey the sense of Taqlid.

[2.](#) The Arabic–Persian world for “science”, ilm or elm’, is more comprehensive’ than its European equivalent, and covers all aspects of knowledge, pure and applied, theoretical and empirical.

[3.](#) One who practices Taqlid, follower of a particular religious leader.

[4.](#) See chapter four “The correction of Belief”.

[5.](#) One of the problems facing the translator of Islamic texts written in Persian is the Transliteration of the specialized terminology which is usually Arabic in origin. This is normally transliterated according to the Arabic pronunciation, but the translator has as a rule chosen to reflect the pronunciation current in Iran today, this is *osul al–din* not *usul ed–din*, *Imamah* not *imamat* and so on. However, in the case of Arabic proper names particularly those of authors a simplified form of the usual Arabic transcription has been preferred.

[6.](#) A mojtahid is one who practices *ijtehad*, defined as exegesis of Islamic law. A mujtahid is this one qualified to give rulings on points of religious jurisprudence, particularly according to the Shi’a rite. A mojtahid who is *jame ‘osh–sharayet’* possesses all the necessary qualifications for the exercise of spiritual authority, in other words he is an Islamic Jurisprudent. This matter is discussed more fully at the end of the chapter.

[7.](#) 2:111; 21:24; 27:64

[8.](#) A hadith is a report of words spoken by the prophet or one of the Imams on a specific subject. There are many collections of such sayings running to tens of thousands in all, with varying degrees of authenticity. They are often referred to as Traditions.

[9.](#) This point will be discussed further in chapter four: ‘The correction of Belief?’

[10.](#) A selection of other Quranic verses with similar content includes.

[11.](#) Ibn Athi, *Al–Nahaiyeh* Vol. 1, is here translated as ‘floaters’.

[12.](#) *Mizan al–Hikma* Hadith No. 16783

[13.](#) *Mizan*, Hadith No, 16780.

[14.](#) *Ibid*, Hadith No. 16781

[15.](#) *Mizan* Hadith No. 20604. According to another version the prophet said ‘Why do you prefer the path of evil to the path of righteousness?’ (Hadith No. 20605).

[16.](#) Truly God bids just & virtue... & forbids prostitution, evil & cruelty.

[17.](#) The Sunna, literally ‘the path’, is the collective actions and sayings of the Prophet.

[18.](#) *Mizan*, Hadith No. 6269.

[19.](#) *Ibid*, Hadith No, 6297

[20.](#) ‘Don’t be a floater’ (see p–above)

[21.](#) Umayyad Caliph and Imam “Ali’s arch–enem.

[22.](#) *Nahj al–Sa’ada* Vol. 1.p. 298

[23.](#) *Mizan al–Hikma*, Hadith No. 4126.

[24.](#) A reference to the Islamic belief that after the death of the Prophet Muhammad no further divine revelations have taken place.

[25.](#) *Mizan*, Chapter 898

[26.](#) They say: "This was what our fathers practiced and we are only following in their foot Steps" (43:22)

[27.](#) On the day of Judgment) 'The depraved masses will say to those who held away over them  
"Had we not followed you we might have been believers." (34:31).

[28.](#) "They (Jews and Christians) worship their rabbis and monk. and the Messiah. Mary's Son, as Gods besides Allah"  
(9.31).

[29.](#) Mizan. Hadith No. 16784.

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