

Core Curriculum

5 The Qur'an and Hadith

5.11 **Taqlid and Tawḍīh Al Masail Genre of Literature**

Few people have the time or ability to become scholars of Islamic law. Knowing the law and how it is derived is not an easy thing to do. It takes years of study, practice and time.

No one can know everything, except for Allah. Muslim jurists or scholars of Islamic law, are just like doctors. They are a group of people who have studied the law for years in order to uncover truths about divine law.

The process of following a scholar of law is called taqlīd, which literally means to “imitate” where we imitate his laws. For taqlīd to be valid, the scholar in question must hold a number of characteristics. These characteristics include, among other things, being just, not having committed major sins and being knowledgeable about Islamic law.

Since we're not experts, it is obligatory to do taqlīd. We must do personal research or ask knowledgeable members of the community on who the most knowledgeable marja' is. A marja' is a jurist whom one does taqlīd of.

When a marja' gives a definitive verdict on a legal matter, this verdict is called a fatwa. Fatwas can be obtained in various ways. A popular way to get a fatwa nowadays is online. A person can find his or her marja's website and look through the question and answer section of the site.

A Marja's fatwas and legal views can usually be found in a genre of legal literature called Tawḍīḥ al-Masā'il, which can also be pronounced as Tawzīḥ al-Masā'il - meaning “explication of legal questions/problems.”

The word Tawḍīḥ al-Masā'il is usually used when the contents of the work are in Persian. Arabic versions of Tawḍīḥ al-Masā'il are usually called Minhāj al-Sālihīn which means "the path of the righteous."