Verse 11

إِذْ كُلُّ مَنْ قَلَّدَ فِي التَّوْحِيدِ ... إِيمَانُهُ لََْيََْلُ مِنْ تَرْدِيدِ

Whoever follows another in matters of Tawhid…
his faith is not free of doubt

Idh kullu man qallada fi l-Tawhidi…Imanuhu lam yakhu min tardidi

Section: On the definition of Taqlid

The word taqlid is derived from the root word qalāda, which is a necklace fastened around a neck, according to the Arabic lexicons. It is as though the follower fastens the ruling around the neck of the expert [mujtahid], like a necklace.

Technically, taqlid is the acting upon another’s words without evidence. Imam al-Ghazali said, “Taqlid means to follow the legal opinion of a scholar without gaining knowledge of the detailed evidences for those opinions.”¹

Other said that taqlid means to put a leash around the neck of an animal in order that it may be restrained. Similarly, the follower [muqallid] ties himself to the expert [mujtahid]. The muqallid is the one who performs taqlid.

¹ Al-Mustasfā, Imam al-Ghazali pg.579
IN MATTERS OF TAWHID [fi l-Tawhidi]

Section: On Taqlid in Aqida

The meaning of Taqlid in Aqida is to believe in everything the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought, without exercising one's own abilities of deduction. The view of the Hanafis and Maturidis is that this is acceptable and such a person will be considered a believer - even though he may be committing a sin for not exercising his own ability of deduction. Some of the Asha’ris, on the other hand, hold the opinion that this type of belief is insufficient, with scholars within the school holding slightly different opinions.

HIS FAITH IS NOT FREE OF DOUBT [imanuhu lam yakhlu min tardidi]

Section: On the status of the muqallid

The muqallid is one who has solid faith but lacks the detailed proofs for it. There is difference of opinion regarding the status of a muqallid. The best opinion [asah] is that a person is obliged to search for proofs until he reaches knowing-awareness, no matter what his capacity for understanding it is. There is also difference of opinion regarding whether the taqlid of the mass of believers (who follow those with proofs in the fundamentals of religion) is sufficient or not. Most theologians say that it is sufficient if they have resoluteness concerning the truth, especially those who have difficulty in understanding the proofs.

Imam Bajuri said: The faith of the one who follows another without clarity and proof [bila burhan wa dalil], then his faith is tainted with indecisiveness and doubts. The Imam mentions six views from various scholars on the matter:

1. Taqlid is not valid and the muqallid is considered kafir.
2. The muqallid is considered Muslim, but is a sinner ['asi].
3. The muqallid is sinful if he is capable to use his own intellect [ahliyat al-nadhr], else, if he is not capable then he is not considered sinful.
4. Both types of muqallid's are considered Muslim and this is the relied upon opinion [mu'tamad].
5. The one making taqlid (in Tawhid) of Quran and hadith of Continuous mass testimony [mutawatir] has proper Iman, but not someone who makes taqlid of a scholar.

6. Taqlid is valid even if following a scholar.

7. Taqlid is fine, and the opposite of taqlid is forbidden [haram].

Verse 12
فِيْهِ بَعْضُ الْقَوْمِ يََْكِي خُلْفَا ... وَبَعْضُهُمْ حَقَّقَ فِيهِ الْكَشْفَا

Regarding the status of the muqallid, some theologians differed, while others clarified and shed light on the matter

Section: On Belief on the authority of others [Iman bi l-taqlid]

Imam Bajuri said: Regarding the soundness of faith [sihhati Imani] of the muqallid without proof [bila dalilin], there is difference of opinion amongst the theologians. Some of them said that it is not valid, while others said that it is valid while the muqallid is a sinner, since he lacks the necessary proofs, and some of them have shed light on it and have explained the difference of opinion [wa l-bayan fi l-khilaf], one of them being Imam Taj al-Din al-Subki

Some say that it is required that he (the muqallid) should have detailed proof, but the common opinion is that a general proof suffices.

Imam Abdullah al-Malali, in his commentary on the creed of Imam al-Sanusi, said: By taqlid is meant certainty based on the view of another without reference to the source. Thus a muqallid does not have certainty if this is purely based on the view of another. There is a difference of opinion with regard to the soundness of the faith of the muqallid and the question of his disobedience. The preferred opinion of some of the scholars is that a restricted certainty can exist without a source or proof but the Shaykh (Al-Sanusi) differs with them. Allāh says: “Know that there is no god but God”. [47:19]. Allah (The Most High) commanded us to declare the statement through evidence and proof. Imitation does not constitute knowledge with Him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Allāh (The Most High) has commanded his servants, the believers, with what He has commanded His servants, the Prophets.” It is indisputably known that the
Prophets were not commanded through their being imitators but through their possessing certainty. And from Allâh comes success.

Verse 13

قَالَ: إِنْ يََْزِ مْ بِقَوْلِ الْغَيِْْ...

Saying: If the belief (of the muqallid) is unwavering by the saying of another…then it suffices, else his faith is at risk

Faqala: in yajzim bi-qawli l-ghayri...kafa wa ilâ lam yazal fi l-dayri

Imam Bajuri said: This means that Imam al-Subki said [qala al-Subki]: the faith of the muqallid is valid [maqbulun] if he is certain regarding the saying of someone else [in jazma bi-qawli l-ghayri] to the extent that if the one who is followed were to change his opinion, the muqallid remains steadfast and does not follow him. However, if he (the muqallid) doubts when the one whom he follows reverts or changes his opinion, and subsequently also changes his opinion, then his faith is not accepted, [fa innama Imanuhu ghayru baqbuli] and he is still in the danger of the doubt which negates faith.

Since certainty of a thing without the necessary proofs is not in reality ‘certainty’, we find Imam al-Sanusi holding the view that taqlid in Belief is strictly forbidden. The problem with this view is that the majority of Muslims believe without having detailed proofs. How do we characterize the faith of the Muslim masses socialized into Islam by their parents and teaches? The Prophet (peace be upon him), indicated in numerous hadiths, that most of the dwellers of the Jannah are be from his community [Ummah].

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say, ‘A group of my ummah (seventy thousand strong) will enter Paradise, with their faces shining like the moon’” an from Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah, “... then the believers will be saved and the first group to be saved will have faces like the moon when it is full, they will be seventy thousand, who will not be brought to account. Then will come those who shine like the stars in the sky...”

Imam al-Sanusi clarifies what he means by proof and mentions two types,
detailed proof [dalil tafsili] and general proof [dalil ijmali]. As for dalil tafsili, it involves a careful and detailed exposition of the arguments for and against a particular doctrine, as well as a thorough refutation of any objections raised against them. Dalil tafsili is therefore a degree of evidence which produces sufficient knowledge of, and conviction in, the truth of the basic principles of faith. As for dalil ijmali, it is by default at the disposal of the general masses and it does not require detailed proofs. Ma’rifah, according to Imam al-Sanusi, is rational knowledge gained from dalil ‘ijmali and not from dalil tafsili. The Imam stands firm with his argument that ma’rifah is wajib but in the limited sense i.e. the general proofs are sufficient.

**Verse 14**

وأَجْزِمْ بِأَنَّ أَوَّلًا مِّمَّا يََِبْ ... مَعَرِفَةٌ وَفِيهِ خُلْفٌ مُنْتَصِبْ

And have certainty that the first obligation is to know… and on this issue there is confirmed difference of opinion.

*Wa j-zim bi-anna awwala mimma yajib..ma’rifabtun wa fibi khulfun muntasib*

**AND HAVE CERTAINTY THAT THE FIRST OBLIGATION** [Wa j-zim bi-anna awwala mimma yajib]

Imam Bajuri said: Firm belief that ma’rifah of the Attributes of Allah [sifati l-Allahi] is obligatory [wajib] upon every mukallaf. Scholars however differ regarding ma’rifah, is it the first of obligations [hal hiya awwal al-wajibat]? And the well-known position [fa l-mashur] is that of Imam Abu l-Hasan Ash’ari, and that is that ma’rifah is indeed the first obligation [awwalu wajibun] for the mukallaf; since all the remaining obligations [jami’l-wajibat] cannot be sound without it.

Mufti Nuh al-Qudat said: The first obligation for the responsible person [mukallaf] is to know Allah i.e. His attributes. To know that He is present, that He is the One who created the universe and what is in it... These beliefs are known via the Quran and the Sunna, and the majority amongst the Muslims. However, this knowledge [ma’rifah] needs insight [nadhah], contemplation [ta’ammul] and study [bahth]. So, is the first obligation the knowledge [ma’rifah] or the study that leads to the knowledge? The scholars differed on this issue and this is a minor difference. This is because study is not
desired in its essence [li-dhatihi]; rather it is desired because of the knowledge. So what is requested first, is knowledge...  

Shaykh ‘Ali Jumua said: Contemplating [al-nadhar] knowing Allah is an obligation by consensus, whether it is by revelatory means as the Ash’aris say, or by rational ones as the Mu’tazilas say. The primary obligation is to know Allah, and the means to achieving it is speculation [al-nadhar], so it is also an obligation. But speculation is not possible without an intention [niyyah] to engage in it. Therefore, the intention is also an obligation, indeed the first obligation. By al-nadhar is meant the tools and methodologies by which knowledge is organized so as to lead from one piece of information to another. Alternatively, it is defined as abstracting the mind away from insignificant matters and orienting it to the objects of reason. When this is done properly, what results is necessary knowledge. This is an obligation, because in matters of doctrine, following another based on his or her authority is a sin for someone who is capable of engaging in theoretical and rational thought, (as mentioned earlier).

TO KNOW [ma’rifah]tun

Section: On the meaning of Ma’rifah t-Allah

Imam Ahmad Sawi said: The meaning of knowing Allah [ma’rifah t-Allah], is to know His attributes [sifat], and not the reality of His Essence [dhatihi]; for this is not from the necessities; since His Essence is unknown even to the most elevated. The reality is that it is not a possibility, whether leagly or intellectually. This was the view of Imam al-Ghazali in text, sharh al-Kubra. Additionally, there is a hadith from Abu Hurayrah, in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Contemplate on the creation [tafakkaru fi l-khalqi], but not upon the Creator [wa la tafakkaru fi l-Khaliq], for He cannot be comprehended through contemplation [bi l-fikr].”

Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was asked, “How did you come to know Allah?” He replied, “I recognized Allah through Allah, and if it were not for Allah, I would not have known Him.” They asked him, “Is it possible for anyone to comprehend Him?” and he responded, “Knowing that one is unable to perceive Him is perception [fa taraku l-idraki idrak].”

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2 Mukhtasar al-mufid fi sharh jawharat at-tawhid, pg. 27-28
Ibn Ata’illah said: *Ma’rifah* is the perception of something as it is in its essence and attributes. The *ma’rifah* of the Creator, (*The Most High*) is one of the most difficult of all types of *ma’rifah*, for Allah has no likeness. Yet in spite of that, Allah (*The Most High*) has enjoined on the Creation, including mankind, jinn, angels, and devils, the knowing of His Essence, His Names, and His Attributes: it is affirmed with respect to both the animal and non-animal kingdoms.

Everything which has being – except Allah (*The Most High*) – is conscious of the Being of its Creator to the extent of its capacity. Allah (*The Most High*) has said, “*there is not a thing but hymneth His praise*...” [*17:44*]. This includes man, angels, animals, minerals, plants, air, earth, and water. Allah (*The Most High*) praises those who have gnosis of Him and censures those who are ignorant of Him and those who deny Him. *Mari’fah* is of two types: general and particular. General *ma’rifah* of Allah (*The Most High*), which is incumbent upon all who must observe the precepts of religion, is to affirm His Being, to declare Him to be holy in a manner worthy of Him, and to describe Him as He actually is and in the manner in which He describes Himself; for He is known even if He is not subject to conditions and cannot be encompassed.

The second type of *ma’rifah* is particular. It has been said that it is a state that arises from contemplation. The gnostic [*al-’arif*] is the one whom Allah (*The Most High*) causes to contemplate His Essence, Attributes, Names, and Acts, while the knower [*al-’alim*] is the one to whom Allah makes that known, not through contemplation, but rather through certitude. It is said that *ma’rifah* is a type of certitude that occurs through serious effort in religious devotions.

Imam Ghazali (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Allah is much too great for the senses to reach Him or for reason and logic to plumb the depths of His Majesty. Indeed, He is much too great for anyone but Himself to plumb the depths of His Majesty or for anyone but Himself to know Him. Verily, no one knows Allah but Allah.

The highest degree of gnosis that His servants can attain is the realization that true gnostic knowledge of Him is impossible for them. Furthermore, no one can know that in its totality except a Prophet or a righteous saint [*siddiq*]. As for the Prophet, he has clearly expressed this by saying, ‘I cannot enumerate the ways
of praising Thee; Thou art as Thou has praised Thyself’. As for the righteous saint, he says, ‘The incapacity to attain realization is a realization’.³

AND ON THIS ISSUE THERE IS CONFIRMED DIFFERENCE OF OPINION [wa fihi khulfun muntasib]

Section: On what the scholars said regarding the mukallaf’s first obligation. Is it ma’rifah, al-nadhar, al-niyyah or something else?

Imam Bajuri said: This means that there is an established difference of opinion regarding what the first obligation is [awwal ma yajibu] amongst the scholars of the Sunnah [bayna l-a’immah sunnatayn]. The difference is not about the obligation to have ma’rifah, but rather regarding the very first obligation. Is it ma’rifah or is there an obligation preceding it? ...

There are 12 opinions regarding the first obligation:

1. What al-Ash’ari said, the Imam of this field [imam hadha l-fann], that it is ma’rifah. This is also the opinion of al-‘Iji and ibn ‘Arabi.

2. It is what Ustadh Abu Ishaq al-Isfarini said that it is the contemplation [al-nadhar] which leads to ma’rifah and this is also ascribed to Al-Ash’ari. This is also the view of Imam al-Juwayni as found in the kiab al-irshad. In al-Shamil he mentioned that the first obligation is both contemplation [al-nadhar] and deduction [al-istidal].

3. It is what Qadi al-Baqilani said: it is the beginning of contemplation [nazar] i.e. the first premise. This is referred to as the [muqaddimah al-ula]. An example is that the universe has is created [al-‘alamu hadith]. Every beginning must have a Creator [wa kullu hadith la budda lahu min muhdath]. So both premises [al-muqaddimayn] are contemplation and the first premise is the first contemplation [awwal al-nazar].

4. What Imam al-Haramayn said: it is the intent [al-qasd] to contemplate [ila al-nadhar] which means to free the heart [tafrigh al-qalb] from distractions. This view is also ascribed to al-Qadi al-Baqilani.

5. Some of them said it is imitation [taqlid].

³ The Key to Salvation [Miftah al-Falah], Imam Ibn ‘Ata’illah al-Iskandari
6. It is the utterance of the two testimonies of faith \([al-\text{ntqu bi-shahadatayn}]\).

7. What Abu Hashim of the Mu\’tazila and others have said: it is doubt \([al-shakk]\). We are actually required to remove doubt, since doubt in any part of belief leads to disbelief and thus cannot be a primary obligation. Perhaps they meant to repel the thought so it is interpreted as contemplation.

8. It is belief \([\text{Iman}]\).

9. It is Islam. These two statements (Islam and Iman) are near to each other \([al-mutaqariban]\) and are rejected \([al-mardudan]\) with the argument that everything from Iman and Islam is in fact from \(ma’rifah\).

10. The belief \([al-\text{’I}itiqad]\) of the obligation of contemplation \([nazar]\).

11. It depends on the time \([wadhifatu \text{ waqt}]\), like the prayer when its time becomes narrow \([dhaqa waqtuha]\), so it comes first.

12. It is \(ma’rifah\) or \(taqlid\) i.e. either of the two. One may choose between the two.

The most correct stance \([wa l-\text{asah}]\) is that the first obligation is \(ma’rifah\). The first and closest obligation as a means to \(ma’rifah\) is contemplation \([nazar]\). And the remote means is to intention \([niyyah]\) to contemplate. So this way the three opinions are combined.\(^4\)

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\(^4\) Hashiya, al-Bajuri; pg. 82, translated by Sidi Irfan Ahmed