

كُنْ سَلَفِيًّا عَلَيَّ الْجَادَّةُ

BE A SERIOUS SALAFĪ

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BE A SERIOUS
SALAFĪ

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Authorised translation by 'AbdulHaq ibn Kofi ibn Kwesi al-Ashanti

Translation checked by Shaykh Muhammad al-Mālikī



Stick to the path and the Sunnah, for there is no servant who follows the path of Allāh and the Sunnah remembering Allāh, his eyes overflowing with tears out of fear of Allāh, except that the Fire will never touch him. A minimal course in the path of Allāh and the Sunnah is better than striving hard in a path contrary to the path of Allāh and the Sunnah and consenting to innovation. See that your actions - whether they are striving or minimal - are on the path of the Prophets and their Sunnah.

- 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b رضي الله عنه

Be patient on the Sunnah and stop where the people stopped and speak with what they spoke with, avoid what they avoided with and traverse the way of the Salaf us-Sālih, what is good for you is that which was good for them.

- Imām Al-Awzā'i رضي الله عنه

CONTENTS



Foreword by Shaykh Muhammad bin ‘Abdullah al-Mālikī	7
Shaykh Muhammad al-Mālikī’s Request to Shaykh ‘AbdusSalām as-Sihaymī to Publish his Book in English, With the Shaykh’s Handwritten Consent.....	9
Preface by the Noble Professor, Dr ‘Ali bin Nāsir Al-Faqīhī (hafidhahullāh).....	12
Preface by the Noble Shaykh, ‘Ubayd bin ‘Abdullāh al-Jābirī (hafidhahullāh).....	13
Introduction.....	17
The Intended Meaning of the Sunnah.....	31
Legislated Names for Ahl us-Sunnah wa’l-Jamā’ah.....	34
Defining the Names of Ahl us-Sunnah wa’l-Jamā’ah, in Summary.....	39
Firstly: “Ahl us-Sunnah wa’l-Jamā’ah” (the People of Sunnah and Jamā’ah).....	39
Secondly: “Ahl ul-Hadīth” [the People of Hadīth].....	40
Thirdly: “al-Athariyyah” or “Ahl ul-Athar” [the People of Narrations].	41
Fourthly: “al-Firqat un-Nājiyyah” [the Saved Sect].....	43
Fifthly: “at-Tā’ifah al-Mansūrah” [the Aided Group].....	43
Sixthly: “as-Salafiyyah” and “as-Salafiyyūn” [the Salafis].....	44
The Intended Meaning of ‘the Salaf’	45
The Manifestation of the Madhhab of the Salaf and an Explanation of their Position against the People of Innovation.....	49
The Permissibility of Ascribing to the Salaf and Using the Name ‘Salafi’	52
Some Evidence Which Indicate the Obligation to Follow the Salaf us-Salih and Adhere to their Madhhab	56
The Manhaj of the Salaf in ‘Aqīdah	60
The Manhaj of the People of Innovation and Desires.....	64

The Path to Success is in Following and not Innovating	65
Some Principles of the Salafī Manhaj	79
Firstly: Commanding the Good and Forbidding the Evil [al-Amr bi'l-Ma'rūf wa'n-Nahy 'an al-Munkar]	79
Secondly: The Principle in Acts of Worship.....	81
Thirdly: The Principle of Basing the Religion upon Beneficial Knowledge and Righteous Actions	82
Fourthly: The Principle that Preventing the Harms Takes Precedence Over Achieving the Benefits.....	83
The position of Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah who follow the Manhaj of the Salaf us-Sālih regarding Takfīr of the People of Innovation and those who have corrupted beliefs.....	87
The Position of the Salaf Towards the Innovators	89
Warning against the people of desires and innovation who oppose the Sunnah	89
The Manhaj of the Salaf in Refuting the Opposer	95
Principles which have to be Maintained for Individuals and Groups	100
1. Who must be respected	100
2. Who are permissible to criticise and warn the people against?.....	101
The Times when Backbiting and Criticising is Permissible According to the 'Ulama of Islām.....	108

Foreword by Shaykh Muhammad bin 'Abdullah al-Mālīkī
[Imām of Masjid Barā' ibn Mālīk in Jeddah, KSA]



محمد بن عبدالله المالكي
Mohammed A. Al-Malki

02 مايو 2011

30 مايو 1431 هـ

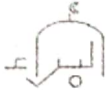
الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله نبينا محمد ، وآله وصحبه ومن وآله
أما بعد فقد سألتني الأخ عبدالحق بن كوفي آل أشانتي أن أقوم بعرض ترجمته كتاب (كُنْ
سلفياً على الجادة) إلى اللغة الإنجليزية للشيخ الدكتور عبدالسلام بن سالم السحيمي الأستاذ بكلية
الشريعة بالجامعة الإسلامية بالمدينة المنورة على الشيخ للحصول على موافقة على إخراج
الترجمة ، وقد قمت بالفعل بزيارة الشيخ عبدالسلام مع الأخوين إسماعيل بومنت ،
وعبدالحكيم ويلسون ، وقد أذن الشيخ في ذلك بشرط أن أقوم أنا بمراجعة الكتاب بعد
الترجمة.

وقد راجعت ترجمة الكتاب فألفيتها ترجمة غنية المعاني قوية المباني إلا في مواضع رأيت
أن تُغَيَّرَ لا من باب عدم صحتها ولكن ليسهل على كل من يقرأ الكتاب مترجماً إدراك المعنى
المراد منها ولدفع توهم معانٍ أخرى غير مرادة في هذا الموضوع أو ذلك. وقد قام الأخ
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المفيدة النافعة دراسةً جيدةً ، يسأل عما جهله ، ويناقش ما فهمه مع من لقيه من طلاب العلم
قل أن يشرع في الترجمة ، وهي طريقة قل أن يوجد من يقوم بها هذه الأيام.
وفقني الله وإياه لكل خير .

وكتبه
محمد بن عبدالله المالكي

Foreword by Shaykh Muhammad bin 'Abdullah al-Mālīkī

[Imām of Masjid Barā' ibn Mālīk in Jeddah, KSA]



محمد بن عبدالله المالكي
Mohammed A. Al-Malki

02 يونيو 2011

30 جمادى الآخرة 1431 هـ

الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله نبينا محمد ، وآله وصحبه ومن آله
أما بعد فقد سألتني الأخ عبدالحق بن كوفي آل أشانتي أن أقوم بعرض ترجمته كتاب (كُنْ
سلفياً على الجادة) إلى اللغة الإنجليزية للشيخ الدكتور عبدالسلام بن سالم السحيمي الأستاذ بكلية
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وعبدالحكيم ويلسون ، وقد أذن الشيخ في ذلك بشرط أن أقوم أنا بمراجعة الكتاب بعد
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قليل أن يشرع في الترجمة ، وهي طريقة قل أن يوجد من يقوم بها هذه الأيام.
وفقني الله وإياه لكل خير .

وكتبه
محمد بن عبدالله المالكي

[Translation]

30 Jumādā al-Ākhir 1432 AH/2 June 2011 CE

All praise is due to Allāh and may prayers and peace be upon Allāh's Messenger Muhammad, his family, his companions and all who are with them.

To proceed:

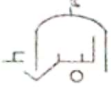
The brother 'AbdulHaq bin Kofi al-Ashanti asked me to present his English translation of the book *Kun Salafīyyan 'ala'l-Jāddah* [Be a Serious Salafī] by Shaykh, Dr 'AbdusSalām bin Sālim as-Sihaymī, Professor at the College of Shari'ah in the Islamic University of Madeenah, to the Shaykh in order to obtain his agreement to publish the translation. As a result, I visited Shaykh 'AbdusSalām, with the two brothers Ismā'il Beaumont and 'AbdulHakīm Wilson [both from South London], and the Shaykh permitted this with the condition that I review the translation of the book.

I have reviewed the translation of the book and found it to be a translation rich in meaning and strong in interpretation although I viewed that some issues be amended, not due to its accuracy rather in order to make it easy for all who read the translated book to comprehend the intended meanings and to avert confusion of other meanings which are unintended in the issue.


The brother 'AbdulHaq has performed the required amendments, for he is from the best who I know who are occupied with properly studying beneficial books and asking about what he is ignorant of and discussing what he understands with who he meets from the students of knowledge before he starts the translation, and this is a method which is rare to find these days. May Allāh grant me and you to every good.

Written by Muhammad bin 'Abdullāh al-Mālikī

Shaykh Muhammad al-Mālikī's Request to Shaykh
'AbdusSalām as-Sihaymī to Publish his Book in English,
With the Shaykh's Handwritten Consent



21 يوليو 2011



محمد بن عبدالله المالكي
Mohammed A. Al-Malki

19 رجب 1432 هـ

حضرة فضيلة الشيخ الدكتور عبد السلام بن سالم السحيمي

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

أتقدم لكم بالشكر الجزيل بعد شكر الله تعالى على ما أوليتوني إياه من تقنكم الغالية حيث أسندتم إلي مراجعة ترجمة الأخ عبدالحق بن كوفي آل أشنتي على كتابكم النافع (كُنْ سلفياً على الجادة) إلى اللغة الإنجليزية ، وقد راجعت ترجمة الكتاب فألفيتها ترجمة غنية المعاني قوية المياني إلا في مواضع رأيت أن تُغيّر لا من باب عدم صحتها ولكن ليسهل على كل من يقرأ الكتاب مترجماً إدراك المعنى المراد منها ولنفع توهم معاني أخرى غير مرادة في هذا الموضوع أو ذلك، وقد تم التعديل على ما أشرت له به فجزاه الله خيراً. على أن الأخ عبدالحق هو من خيرة من عرفتهم ممن يشتغلون بدراسة الكتب المفيدة النافعة دراسة جيدة ، يسأل عما جهله ، ويناقش ما فهمه مع من لقيه من طلاب العلم قبل أن يشرع في الترجمة ، وهي طريقة قل أن يوجد من يقوم بها هذه الأيام.

أسأل الله لي ولكم وله التوفيق والسداد ، وأن يعظم أجركم على ما تبذلون من جهود منكورة مشكورة في سبيل تبصير المسلمين بثوابت دينهم ، وأصول عقيدتهم لاسيما ما اختلطت فيه الأفهام ، وكثرت فيه الأوهام في هذه الأيام ، وقد جاء هذا الكتاب ليكون منارة في سبيل معرفة الحق ، وقد سألتني الأخ عبدالحق أن اطلب منكم الأذن له في طباعة الكتاب مترجماً ، بارك الله لكم وزادكم علماً.

وكتبه
محمد بن عبدالله المالكي

لما فتح لدي من طبعها لغة الكتاب
مترجماً بالإنجليزية ندرس
إضافة أي شيء خارج ترجمة
الكتاب ، وقد وقع الجميع للعلم بالسنة والاصول
د. عبد السلام بن سالم السحيمي
عبد السلام

المملكة العربية السعودية - ص ب : ١٠٠٣٥٥ - جدة ٢١٣١١ - جوال : ٠٥٥٥٣٣٧٠٢ - فاكس : ٠٦٦٨٥١٨٠

[Translation]

19 Rajab 1432 AH/21 June 2011 CE

To the noble Shaykh, Dr 'AbdusSalām bin Sālīm as-Sihaymī, may Allāh preserve him:

As-salāmu 'alaykum wa Rahmatullāhi wa Barakātuhu.

I thank you in abundance, after thanking Allāh, for having confidence in my reviewing the English translation of your beneficial book *Kun Salafiyyan 'ala'l-Jādah* [Be a Serious Salafi] by the brother 'AbdulHaq bin Kofi Āl Ashanti.

I have reviewed the translation of the book and found it to be a translation rich in meaning and strong in interpretation although I viewed that some issues be amended, not due to its accuracy rather in order to make it easy for all who read the translated book to comprehend the intended meanings and to avert confusion of other meanings which are unintended in the issue.

The brother 'AbdulHaq has performed the required amendments, for he is from the best who I know who are occupied with properly studying beneficial books and asking about what he is ignorant of and discussing what he understands with who he meets from the students of knowledge before he starts the translation, and this is a method which is rare to find these days.

I ask Allāh to grant me and you success and do what is right and that Allāh magnifies your reward for your known and thankful efforts in the path of enlightening the Muslims as to the constant of their religion and the principles of their creed, especially in regards to matters in which understandings are confused and self-delusions are manifest in these days. This book has been produced to shed light on the path of understanding the truth and the brother 'AbdulHaq requested that I

seek your permission to print the translation of the book. May Allāh bless you and increase you in knowledge.

Written by Muhammad bin 'Abdullāh al-Mālikī

I have no problem with the English translation of the book being printed without adding anything to it which is outside the remit of the direct translation of the book. May Allāh grant beneficial knowledge and righteous action to all.

Dr 'AbdusSalām bin Sālim as-Sihaymī

**Preface by the Noble Professor,
Dr 'Ali bin Nāsir Al-Faqīhī (hafidhahullāh)**



To the noble brother, Dr 'AbdusSalām bin Sālīm as-Sihaymī, may Allāh grant him success:

As-salāmu alaykum wa Rahmatullāh wa Barakātuahu.

To proceed:

I have read your research entitled 'Be a Serious Salafī' and I found it to be a good piece of research in its area of study and I have no observations against it except for some terms of expression or suggestions that I have made which you will see on some pages. If you view them as suitable then take them into consideration. May Allāh grant you success! As-Salāmu 'alaykum wa Rahmatullāh wa Barakātuahu.

Professor, Dr 'Ali bin Muhammad Nāsir al-Faqīhī
24/2/1424 AH – 26/4/2003 CE

**Preface by the Noble Shaykh,
'Ubayd bin 'Abdullāh al-Jābirī (hafidhahullāh)**



All praise is due to Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds, and may the final reward be for the pious and may there be no repercussion except upon the wrong-doers. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh alone with no partner, The Sustainer of the heavens and the two earths, Who possesses divinity and acts of worship for Him from all of creation. I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger and the seal of the Prophets, the Imām of the pious, may peace and blessings be upon him, his family and purified and good companions.

To proceed:

What is better than what was stated by the Imām, al-'Allāmah, the ocean of knowledge, the brilliant, Muhammad bin Abī Bakr az-Zura'ī ad-Dimishqī, also well-known as "Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah", in his great and blessed book *Zād ul-Ma'ad*:

Whoever spreads statements or forms principles based on his understanding and interpretation then it is not obligatory for the Ummah to follow this or to refer judgement to this (i.e. the man's own principles and interpretations) until it is compared to what the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ came with. If it agrees with it and its authenticity is validated then at that time it (i.e. a person's own principles and interpretations) will be accepted, but if it opposes what the Messenger of Allāh came with then it will be rejected and discarded. If none of these sides are clarified then the matter becomes deferred (and one should hesitate in making a definite decision). The best case scenario (if they do not

contradict the view of the Messenger) is that it is allowed to accept such views and issue fatāwā based on them, or they can be rejected.¹

This is well-established with the Imāms of the Salaf us-Sālih, that the statements of people and their actions have to be weighed up with the texts and consensus, whoever agrees with the text or the consensus will have their view accepted and whoever opposes either of the two will have his views rejected, no matter who he is. From what is known about the Imāms and the callers to guidance from the Salaf us-Sālih – beginning with the Companions, the Imāms of the Tābi'ūn and whoever followed their way and agreed with their narrations – is that they all followed this way and they stood in the face of the people of innovation and desires. They refuted them with the proofs that Allāh had given them with the strong evidences from the Book and the Sunnah. They were rightly guided as is mentioned in the narration:

“This knowledge will be carried by the trustworthy ones in every generation, they will reject the distortions of the extremists, the false claims of the liars and the interpretations of the ignorant.”²

And they were, as the truthful and believed one said (ﷺ):

“There will not cease to be a group from my Ummah manifest upon the truth who will not be harmed by those who abandon them and differ from them until the command of Allāh comes.”

I say: Our noble brother Dr 'AbdusSalām as-Sihaymī bin Sālim as-Sihaymī - Associate Professor at the Department of Fiqh in the Sharī'ah College of the Islamic University of Madeenah – has done exceptionally well and greatly benefitted because he has outlined the principles, foundations and characteristics of the true Salafī Manhaj in a frank and

¹ Zād ul-Ma'ad, vol.1, p.38.

² Reported by Ibn 'Adiyy and others.

academic way, in his book entitled 'Be a Serious Salafi'. May Allāh thank him and reward him and put the book in his scales of good actions on the Day of Judgment.

From the principles, foundations and characteristics (mentioned in this book) are that:

1. Ahl ul-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah are the most deserving to be described with balance and the middle way.
2. Imām Muhammad bin 'AbdulWahhāb was a Mujaddid of Islām and of the Salafi Da'wah.
3. The enmity of the kuffār towards Islām and the Salafi da'wah.
4. The effects of partisan Islamic propagation on Islām generally and on the Salafi da'wah specifically.
5. The obligation of manifesting the Madhhab of the Salaf.
6. The permissibility of ascribing oneself to the Salaf and using the name Salafiyyah.
7. The most important distinguishing characteristics of the Salafi Manhaj.
8. The Manhaj of the Ahl ul-Bida' wa'l-Ahwā (the people of innovation and desires).
9. Some principles of the Salafi Manhaj regarding:
 - i. Refuting the opposer.
 - ii. The occasions when it is allowed to backbite and criticise – according to the scholars of Islām.
 - iii. The punishment for allying with an innovator.

I also say: our brother Shaykh 'AbdusSalām (hafidhahullāh), may Allāh keep him firm in speech and action, has depended on evidences from the Qur'ān, the Prophetic Hadīth and narrations from the Salaf within his book. This book, and all praise is due to Allāh, has strong and trustworthy contents which are affirmed, by the will of Allāh, in His Book.

I ask Allāh to grant me and the brother 'AbdusSalām, and all of the Muslims, with sincerity in speech, actions and in following the

guidance of the Salaf us-Sālih who held firm to the Book and the Sunnah. And I ask Allāh to show us the truth as it truly is and suffice us to follow it and to show us the falsehood as what it is and suffice us to stay away from it. And I ask Allāh to not make anyone confuse us so that we become misguided, may Allāh keep us on the right path and be Kind and Merciful with his servants.

May prayers and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon his family and all his companions.

'Ubayd bin 'Abdullāh bin Sulaymān al-Jābirī
Former Teacher – Islamic University of Madeenah
Saturday 30th Rabī' al-Awwal 1423 AH (31st May 2002 CE)

INTRODUCTION



Indeed, all praise is due to Allāh, we praise Him, we seek His aid, and we ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh from the evil of our actions and from the evil consequences of our actions. Whomever Allāh guides, there is none to misguide and whoever Allāh misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and Messenger of Allāh.

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴾

“O you who have believed, fear Allāh as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims (in submission to Him).”
{Āli-Imrān (3): 102}

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴾

“O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allāh through whom you ask things from each other, and (respect) the wombs. Indeed Allāh is ever, over you, an Observer.” {an-Nisā (4): 1}

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ۖ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴾

“O you who have believed, fear Allāh and speak words of appropriate justice. He will amend for you your deeds and forgive your sins. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger has certainly attained a great attainment.” {al-Ahzāb (33): 70-71}

To proceed:

Allāh sent Muhammad ﷺ as a mercy to the worlds,

﴿ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴾

“And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds.” {al-Anbiya (21): 107}

And Allāh made the Ummah a balanced nation,

﴿ وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ

عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۗ ﴾

“And thus we have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you.” {al-Baqarah (2): 143}

Meaning: just and neither inclining towards extremism or negligence, rather they are balanced and fair. Therefore, the religion of Islām warns against extremism and negligence and commands balance and justice in all affairs.

From the most prominent features of this religion is: justice and fairness and ruling with them in a balanced way, and an avoidance of oppression. The best example of those who have practise balance in their statements, actions and beliefs, in accordance to Islam, are Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah; they are the ones who practice it in all of their affairs based on the guidance of the Prophet ﷺ and of his Khulafā' ar-

Rāshidīn in following the Book and the Sunnah; they also agree with the understandings of the Salaf of the Ummah as their understanding is the first to have balance and justice, so if every meaning of balance is affirmed for the Ummah then Ahl us-Sunnah have a good share of this.

(Ahl us-Sunnah) represent the portion of the Ummah which Allāh made a balanced nation and informed were the best nation sent for the people because they are the group who truly follow the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ, as opposed to other sects and groups of the Ummah. There is no sect or group except that it has statements and beliefs which oppose the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger.¹

For that reason, Ahl us-Sunnah are the best group of this Ummah and the most balanced of the sects, for they are the aided group and “the saved sect.”² They are as how Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله stated:

“They are the balanced ones among the schisms just as how Islām is balanced among the religions.”³

It is well-known that: Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah are the companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and the ones who followed them in goodness (the Tābi'ūn) and whoever follows their way and methodology until the Last Day. Ahl us-Sunnah were not known by this name of 'Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah' except after the emergence of innovation and the development of numerous sects of misguidance who, while outwardly ascribing themselves to Islām, used to [covertly] call to their innovation and desires.

¹ Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said:

The sincere truth which has no falsehood in it is with Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah and this is well-known when tracing the many creeds and principles. [See *Tariq ul-Wusul ila'l-'Ilm al-Ma'mul*, p.22]

² *Wastiyyah Ahl us-Sunnah Bayn'l-Firaq*, p.278.

³ *Al-Fatāwā*, vol.4, p.140.

As a result, the people of truth had to be known by names which would distinguish them from others from the people of deviated and innovated beliefs, herein they were named with names from the Divinely Legislated texts such as “Ahl us-Sunnah”, “Ahl us-Sunnah wa’l-Jamā’ah”, “Firqat un-Nājiyyah”, “at-Tā’ifah al-Mansūrah” and “Ahl ulHadīth wa’l-Athar”. However, when some of the groups of innovation named themselves “Ahl us-Sunnah” - even though they did not have the beliefs of Ahl us-Sunnah wa’l-Jamā’ah - the actual Ahl us-Sunnah then began to use the name “Salafi” and their da’wah: “ad-Da’wah as-Salafiyyah,” and made a restriction to follow the Book and the Sunnah with the understanding of the Salaf us-Sālih from the companions and the Tābi’ūn and whoever followed them in goodness and were known for holding firm to the Sunnah from the Imāms (of the past) and staying away from innovation and warning against it. Allāh instructed us to follow the Companions, their narrations and to traverse their manhaj,

﴿وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ﴾

“...and follow the way of those who turn back to Me [in repentance].” {Luqmān (31): 15}

Ibn ul-Qayyim رحمه الله stated:

All of the Companions turned to Allāh in repentance, so it is obligatory to follow their way, statements and creed which are the most important of His path. The evidence that they turned in repentance to Allāh is because Allāh guided them and said,

﴿وَهَدِيَ إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُنِيبُ﴾

“..and guides to Himself whoever turns back [to Him].” {ash-Shūrā (42): 13}¹

¹ *I'lām ul-Muwaqqi'in*, vol.4, p.120.

Allāh was pleased with the Companions and with whoever followed them in good, Allāh says:

﴿وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ﴾

“The Foremost to embrace Islām from the Emigrants and the Helpers and also those who followed them in good conduct, Allāh is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide by forever. That is the great success.” {at-Tawbah (9): 100}

Thus it is not an innovation at all to name Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah by the name 'Salafi' as the term "Salaf" is exactly the same as the term "Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah" and that is understood by contemplating all of the terminologies related to the Sahābah for they are the Salaf us-Sālih and they are Ahl us-Sunnah.¹

So just as it is correct for us to say "Sunni" in relation to Ahl us-Sunnah, it is also correct for us to say "Salafi" in relation to the Salaf and not as a sect.²

After the development of different sects and division, the intended meaning of "Salaf" became applied to whoever preserved sound 'aqidah (creed) and manhaj (methodology) in agreement with the understanding of the Sahābah and the virtuous generations. The term "Salaf" became synonymous with other Divinely Legislated names for Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, and the da'wah to following the Salaf, or the Da'wah Salafīyah, is only the da'wah (call) to true Islām, to the

¹ *Mawqif Ahl us-Sunnah min Ahl il-Bida'*, p.63.

² *Ibid.*

purified Sunnah and to returning to Islām as it was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ and accepted from him by the noble Companions. There is no doubt that this da'wah is the truth and ascribing to it is also the truth. Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah ؒ stated:

“There is no shame in manifesting the Madhhab of the Salaf and ascribing oneself to it and referring to it. Rather, it is obligatory to accept that from him by unanimous agreement, because the Madhhab of the Salaf is nothing but the truth.”

The Imāms of Islām from Ahl us-Sunnah had a big impact in calling to the Sunnah and to returning to the way of the Salaf, their manhaj and guidance from them. The Imāms were the likes of: Mālik, ash-Shāfi'ī, Ahmad, Ibn Khuzaymah, Ibn Abī 'Āsim, al-Asbahānī, al-Ajurri and others; then Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah and his students such as: Ibn ul-Qayyim, Ibn 'AbdulHādī, Ibn Kathīr and adh-Dhahabī; then Shaykh ul-Islām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb and the Imāms of the da'wah after him and from what leads to manifesting the Salafī way throughout history is basing one's religion and creed on the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ and the way of the Salaf us-Sālih and resisting every manifestation of innovation which goes against this basis.

I have gone to some length in explaining all of this and clarifying it because we hear and read regularly of those who curse and abuse Salafīyyah and brand it as being partisanship and that there is no difference between it and contemporary partisan groups. Some people even say that the founder of Salafīyyah was Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb. The reality is: Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb ؒ was just one of the callers to Salafīyyah and one of its revivers, who revived learning it. He also established it purely in this (Arab) peninsula after it had been polluted by the transgression of innovation and superstition. Indeed, this blessed state, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, may Allāh protect it, is a Salafī state and the da'wah that it is based on is the Salafī da'wah as one of the founders of it, King 'Abdul'Azīz bin

'AbdurRahmān Āl Sa'ūd ﷺ indicated when he said in his speech given during Hajj in 1365 AH/ November 1946 CE:

Verily I am Salafī and my creed is that of Salafīyyah which is based on the Book and the Sunnah.

He also said in the same speech:

They say that we are “Wahhabis”, rather we are Salafīs and we preserve our religion and follow the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger and there is nothing between us and the Muslims except for the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger.¹

So the Kingdom established the true Islām which was based on the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger in agreement with the Salaf of the Ummah² and as a result its politics was based on wisdom and justice and tolerance of the well-known madhāhib in fiqh. Due to this, the students of the Islamic colleges in the Kingdom study the fiqh of the four Imāms: Abū Hanīfah, Mālik, ash-Shāfi'ī and Ahmad, especially in the Islamic University of Madīnah. This is because the differences between the madhāhib are not due to 'aqīdah, but in the subsidiary matters of fiqh. King 'Abdul'Azīz ﷺ said:

What we traverse is the way of the Salaf us-Sālih and we do not make takfīr of anyone except those who Allāh and His Messenger make takfīr of. There is not a Madhhab like the Madhhab of the Salaf us-Sālih and we do not support one particular Madhhab over another, for Abū Hanīfah, Mālik, ash-Shāfi'ī and Ibn Hanbal are all our Imāms.

These are precious words which exemplify the correct meaning of Salafīyyah which in itself exemplifies the correct Islām. In these days

¹ *Al-Mus-haf wa's-Sayf*, pp.135-36.

² And applied correct Islām far from neglect and excess.

Islām generally and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia¹ along with the da'wah Salafīyyah specifically², have bore the brunt³ of slander, oppression, confusion and things which are not the reality. This has been due to some politicians, western writers who hate Islām and those who promote the Zionists and their views and agree with their oppression and falsehood and have thus been influenced by them in certain countries. This is even though the Da'wah Salafīyyah is the furthest from takfīr (to brand a Muslim as a disbeliever), tabdī' (to brand a Muslim as an innovator) and tafsīq (to brand a Muslim as a sinner) without evidence, it is also the furthest from extremism and fanaticism. Yet this blessed da'wah has been associated with things which are not from it and it has been ascribed to things which are not from its manhaj which all distorts its beauty and reality.

One of the most glaring factors for this is: the existence of contemporary partisan Islamic groups affected by the Khawārij ideology and their well-known leaders agreed with a few things from the Salafi manhaj in some matters.⁴ Indeed, some of them even spoke in the name of Salafīyyah when the reality is that they were not from it and this confused many people and the reality was hidden from them as they (the opposition to Salafīyyah) thought that these groups were Salafi or "Wahhabi" as some of them named it. What is really strange is that some of these partisan Islamic groups named themselves "Salafi Jihadis", yet how can they be Salafi when they oppose its 'aqīdah and manhaj?! The reality however is in the application and meanings not in mere terms and names and as a result it is a must to bring attention to

¹ Due to it applying the *Shari'ah*.

² Due to it exemplifying the correct understanding of Islām.

³ The enmity of some of the *Yahūd* and *Nasāra* and *kuffār* towards Islām is not strange, for Allāh says,

"And never will the Jews or Christians be pleased with you until you follow their religion." {*Baqarah* (2): 120}

⁴ Even though they differed with most of the Salafi manhaj and 'aqīdah.

this confusion and misguidance which is present in the Islamic world today.

So it is a must to purify Islām from what has been ascribed to it and to cultivate the Muslim on true Islām which is based on the pure sources of the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ and in agreement with the understandings of the Salaf of this Ummah. Allāh blessed this Ummah with His Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to perfect their religion and complete His favour for the Ummah and chose Islām as the religion that He will accept,

﴿الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا﴾

“This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion.” {al-Mā'idah (5): 3}

And Allāh says,

﴿وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّيْنَاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾

“And, [moreover], this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way.” {al-An'ām (6): 153}

Ibn ul-Qayyim said:

This is because the path to reach Allāh is one and it is the way that His Messenger was sent with and the path that He revealed His books with, and none is able to reach Him except by this path. Even if a person tried to reach Him by all paths and try to open all doors, they will find that the

paths are blocked and the doors are closed except the one path which is connected to Allāh and reaches Him.¹

Allāh instructed us to return to Him and His Messenger at times of dispute and referring to Allāh is by referring back to His Book and referring back to the Messenger is by referring back to his life and Sunnah after his death. Allāh says,

﴿ فَإِن تَنزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ۝ ﴾

“And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allāh and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result.” {an-Nisā (4): 59}

The word, “anything (شيء)” here, is in the context of every difference in the principles and subsidiary matters.² Ibn ul-Qayyim also says:

“If the ruling of a matter, about which people are disputing over, is not explained in the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger and is not sufficient then Allāh would not have instructed to refer matters back to them (i.e. Allāh and the Messenger). It is unsuitable that Allāh would instruct to refer back to someone at a time of dispute who does not have the ability to explain the matter of dispute.”³

Allāh says,

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا لَّسَتْ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ ۚ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ
ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ۝ ﴾

¹ Tafsīr Ibn ul-Qayyim, pp.14-15.

² As stated by Shaykh Shinqīṭī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ in *Adwā' ul-Bayān*, vol.1, p.323.

³ *I'lām ul-Muwaqqi'in*, vol.1, p.49.

“Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects you, [O Muhammad], are not [associated] with them in anything.” {al-Anām (6): 159}

Allāh also says,

﴿ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ ۖ جَهَنَّمَ سَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴾

“And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of the believers We will give him what he has taken and drive him into Hell, and evil it is as a destination.” {an-Nisā (4): 115}

Allāh threatens whoever follows other than the way of the believers and indicates that following the way of the believers in understanding the Divine Legislation of Allāh is obligatory and opposing this is misguidance. Allāh praised the foremost from the Muhājirūn and Ansār and whoever follows them, He said:

﴿ وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴾

“The Foremost to embrace Islām from the Emigrants and the Helpers and also those who followed them in good conduct, Allāh is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide by forever...” {at-Tawbah (9): 100}

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ made clear that the best of people are his generation and then those who come after them; he said ﷺ:

*"The best of people are my generation, then those who come after them and then those come after them."*¹

The Prophet ﷺ instructed to follow his Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and he ﷺ warned against opposing them, he said:

*"Stick to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs after me. Hold firm to it and bite onto it with the molars, and beware of newly invented matters for every newly-invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is misguidance."*²

The Prophet ﷺ described the Firqat un-Nājiyyah as being *"What I and my companions are upon."*³ These texts and others indicate the obligation of following the Book and the Sunnah and of also following the way of the believers. The foremost believers whose path has to be followed are: the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, as Ibn ul-Qayyim stated:

"All of the Companions turned to Allāh in repentance, so it is obligatory to follow their way, statements and creed which are the most important of His path."⁴

Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ stated:

"To follow and not innovate is sufficient for you."

¹ Reported by al-Bukhārī in his Sahīh.

² Reported by Abū Dāwud, at-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah and it is Sahīh.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *I'lām ul-Muwaqqi'in*, vol.4, p.120.

And Imām Ahmad رحمته الله stated:

“The Foundations of the Sunnah with us is: Holding firm to what the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and following them and abandoning innovation.”¹

Therefore, it is a must for every Muslim to: follow the Book and the Sunnah with the understanding of the Salaf us-Sālih.

I participated in giving some lessons at the Sharī’ah College at the Islamic University of Madīnah and, all praise is due to Allāh, delivered a number of lessons related to the correct manhaj (methodology),² the manhaj of the Salaf us-Sālih. This is because Salafīyyah means: following the Islamic religion based on the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and those who followed them in their manhaj. Some brothers impressed upon me to publish these lessons so I revised it and appended to it with that which was relevant to the topic, I also saw that it be appropriate to name the book ‘Be a Serious Salafi’³ and I

¹ Al-Lālikā’ī, *Sharh Usūl I’tiqād Ahl us-Sunnah*, vol.1, p.156.

² The Shaykh, al-’Allāmah, Dr Sālih bin Fawzān al-Fawzān stated:

Manhaj is more general than ’aqīdah because manhaj can include: ’aqīdah, sulūk, manners, interactions, and all affairs of a Muslim’s life, all of what he goes through can be named ‘Manhaj’. As for ’aqīdah then its intended meaning is: the foundation of īmān, the meaning of the *Shahādātayn*, this is ’aqīdah.” [Al-Ajwiba al-Mufīdah, p.75]

³ This title is taken from what was mentioned by the noble Shaykh, Dr Bakr Abū Zayd in his superb book *Hilyah Tullāb ul-’Ilm*, p.8 wherein he said whilst speaking about the manners of the student of knowledge:

Be a serious Salafi, on the path of the Salaf us-Sālih from the companions رضي الله عنهم and those who came after them and followed their example in all affairs of the religion such as: tawhīd, acts of worship and the likes and were distinguished by sticking to the narrations of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. Occupy yourself with the Sunan and leave argumentation and disputation

ask Allāh to provide me with sincerity in speech and action and to bless us and the Muslims as a whole with beneficial knowledge and righteous actions and to bring benefit with what I have written.

And may prayers and peace be upon His servant and Messenger, our Prophet Muhammad and on his family and all of his companions.

The one in need of his Lord's pardon,
'AbdusSalām bin Sālīm as-Sihaymī
Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarrah
Safar 1423 AH [April 2002 CE]

and delving into 'Ilm ul-Kalām (rhetorical and speculative theology) which does not avert sins and merely blocks off the Divine Legislation."

THE INTENDED MEANING OF THE SUNNAH



It is well known that from the names of Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah is 'the Salafis.' The definition of the Sunnah will be better understood linguistically and technically, after which we will stop at the definition of the names of Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah along with mentioning the reasons for such titles.

Linguistically, the Sunnah means: a path and a way.¹ The linguists differ: is 'the Sunnah' in the language restricted to a good way or does it include the good and the bad. The correct meaning is: that in the language it means a way whether it is good or bad and what indicates this is the hadīth of the Prophet ﷺ:

“Whoever enacts a good Sunnah in Islām will be rewarded and the reward of whoever does it and whoever enacts an evil Sunnah carries the burden and the burden of whoever enacts the evil Sunnah.” - Narrated by Muslim.

Herein the Prophet ﷺ categorised the Sunnah into being either a good Sunnah or an evil Sunnah.

As for the technical definition of the Sunnah: then it has a technical definition according to the scholars of hadīth just as it has a technical definition with the scholars of usūl and also with the fuqahā.

According to the hadīth scholars the Sunnah is: what has been narrated from the Prophet ﷺ from sayings, actions, tacit approvals, or descriptions - in terms of characteristics and manners - or based on what is in the Sīrah (biography of the Prophet), whether it was before the commencement of Prophethood or after it.²

¹ Ibn ul-Athīr, *an-Nihāyah*, vol.2, p.409 and in *Lisān ul-'Arab*, vol.17, p.89.

² Al-Qāsimī, *Qawā'id ul-Tahdīth*, p.64.

According to the scholars of *usūl*, the Sunnah is connected to whatever has been transmitted from the Prophet ﷺ yet has not been reported in the Noble Book (i.e. the Qur'ān); matters which have been attributed to him ﷺ in order to explain what is or is not in the Book.¹

According to the scholars of *fiqh*, the Sunnah is: whatever is not obligatory, so it is said **“this thing is Sunnah”** meaning: it is neither compulsory nor obligatory and neither prohibited nor disliked.²

However the Sunnah according to many of the Salaf, had a much wider definition than that, wherein they specified a meaning much wider than the meaning given by the scholars of *hadīth*, the scholars of *usūl* and the scholars of *fiqh*. They thus specified for the Sunnah: agreement with the Book (i.e. the Qur'ān), the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and his companions whether in affairs of belief or in acts of worship; they considered all that opposed this to be *bida'* (innovation).

It is said: **“So-and-so is on the Sunnah”** if his actions agree with the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.

It is also said: **“So-and-so is upon *bida'*”** if his actions oppose the Book and the Sunnah, or one of the two. Shaykh *ul-Islām* Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله stated:

The word ‘Sunnah’ according to the speech of the Salaf includes the Sunnah in acts of worship and in beliefs, even if much of what was classified as being the Sunnah was intended to be speech concerning beliefs.³

¹ Al-Āmidī, *Usūl ul-Ahkām*, vol.1, p.169.

² *Sharh ul-Kawkab al-Munīr*, vol.2, p.160.

³ Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-'Amr bi'l-Ma'rūf wa'n-Nahy 'an al-Munkar* [Commanding the Good and Forbidding the Evil], p.77.

He also said ﷺ in *'Aqīdah al-Hamawiyyah*:

The Sunnah is: what the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ followed in creed, speech and action.¹

Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalī رحمه الله stated:

Many of the later scholars link the Sunnah to what is connected to belief because it is the foundation of the religion and whoever opposes it is in severe danger.²

I say: Therefore, the Sunnah is connected to beliefs and the intent of the word 'Sunnah' is: the complete religion. Not the technical definitions of the scholars of hadīth, usūl and fiqh. Ibn Rajab also said:

The Sunnah is the path which is trodden and it includes: holding firm to what the Prophet ﷺ traversed and his rightly guided companions in beliefs, actions and statements...³

¹ *'Aqīdah al-Hamawiyyah*, p.2.

² *Jāmi' ul-'Ulūm wa'l-Hikam*, p.249. For this reason there were many publications which carried the title '*As-Sunnah*', such as: *As-Sunnah* by Imām Ahmad; *As-Sunnah* of Abū Dāwood as-Sijistānī; *As-Sunnah* of Ibn Abī'l-'Āsim; *As-Sunnah* of 'Abdullāh bin Imām Ahmad; *As-Sunnah* of Ibn Abī Hātim ar-Rāzī and others.

³ *Jāmi' ul-'Ulūm wa'l-Hikam*, p.262.

LEGISLATED NAMES FOR AHL US-SUNNAH WA'L-JAMĀ'AH



The people of a thing (Ahl ush-Shay') are the people particular to that thing, so for example is it said within the Arabic language; "Ahl ul-Bayt" which refers to the people of a household, and "Ahl ul-Islām" meaning: the people who adhere to the religion of Islām.

So the meaning of "Ahl us-Sunnah" is: the people most particular to it and those who hold firm to it the most and follow it in speech, action and belief. This wording became a technical term connected to and referring to one of the following meanings;

The first meaning: A general meaning – wherein all who ascribe themselves to Islām are included except the Rāfidah.

The second meaning: A specific meaning and much narrower than the general meaning, which intends – Ahl us-Sunnah unadulterated and free from innovation and the people of desires and innovation like the Khawārij, Jahmiyyah, Murji'ah, Shī'ah and others from the Ahl ul-Bida' are expelled from it.

Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah says:

The word 'Ahl us-Sunnah' (in general) means: all groups who affirm the (first) three Caliphs excluding the Rāfidah. So the intent of 'Ahl us-Sunnah' (specifically) is: Ahl ul-Hadīth (the people of hadīth) and the people of the unadulterated Sunnah. One is not to be included within it except those who affirm the Attributes of Allāh, The Exalted and says: "The Qur'ān is not created" and says that Allāh will be seen in the Hereafter, affirms the Divine Pre-Decree

and other well-known matters according to the people of hadīth and Sunnah.¹

Therefore 'Ahl us-Sunnah': are the companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ as they relayed from him directly the foundation of belief just as they relayed from him matters of worship, so they are the most knowledgeable of the creation of the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ and follow it more closely than those who came after them. Ahl us-Sunnah are also the Tābi'ūn (successors) who followed the companions in goodness, their influence is to be seen in every times and place and at the head of them are: Ahl ul-Hadīth wa'l-Athar. When this ascription "Ahl us-Sunnah" was ascribed to the companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and those who followed them in guidance, groups began to dispute over the name (and who are its rightful people), however the proof is in the realities not in mere claims.

When innovation spread within Islām and the sects of misguidance became numerous and all were calling to their innovation and to their desires, while still outwardly adhering to Islām, it was a must for the people of truth to be known by names which distinguished them from the people of innovation and deviation in 'aqīdah. At that time, their Divinely Legislated titles derived from Islām became manifest; from their names are: "Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah", "al-Firqat un-Nājiyyah", "at-Tā'ifah al-Mansūrah", "Ahl ul-Hadīth wa'l-Athar" and "as-Salafiyūn."

When contemplating on their names it will be apparent that they are names which Islām indicates and some of these names are verified in the texts, and some of these names were ascribed due to their correct realisation of Islām, all of which oppose the names and titles of the people of innovation. The names and titles of the people of innovation only refer back to personalities such as the Jahmiyyah, which is related to Jahm ibn Safwān; the Zaydiyyah, which is related to Zayd bin 'Alī

¹ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Minhāj us-Sunnah*, vol.2, p.163.

bin al-Husayn; Kulābiyyah, which is related to 'Abdullāh bin Kullāb; al-Karāmiyyah, which is related to Muhammad bin Karām; al-'Ashar'irah, which is related to Abi'l-Hasan al-'Asha'rī.

As for nicknames then they are derived from the origin of their innovation, like the 'Rāfidah', due to their *rafd* (rejection) of Zayd ibn Ali and their *rafd* (rejection) of the leadership of the two Imāms; and like the 'Nawāsib' due to their *nasb* (setting up) enmity to the Ahl ul-Bayt (family of the Prophet ﷺ); and like the 'Qadariyyah' due to their statements regarding Qadr (the Divine Pre-Decree); and like the 'Sūfiyyah' due to the wearing of *sūf* (wool); and like the 'Bāṭiniyyah' due to their claim that the texts have an apparent and hidden (*bāṭin*) meaning; and like the 'Murji'ah' due to their *irjā'* of actions from imān.

Or it could be the case that the nicknames refer back to the reason for their expulsion from the 'aqīdah of the Muslims and their jamā'ah. Such as the 'khawārij' who were named as such due to their *khurūj* (revolt) against the leader of the believers 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib ؑ and the 'Mu'tazilah' due to the *'itizāl* (leaving) of their leader Wāsil ibn 'Atā from the gathering of al-Hasan al-Basrī.¹

Shaykh Bakr Abū Zayd stated in his book *Hukm al-Intimā' ilā al-Farq wa'l-Ahzāb wa'l-Jamā'at al-Islāmiyyah* (p.21):

When those sects began to ascribe themselves to Islām derived from the backbone of the Muslims, the Divinely Legislated names for the Jamā'ah of the Muslims emerged to distinguish them from the sects and their desires. Whether these names were verified with an origin in the Divine Legislation such as: "al-Jamā'ah", "al-Firqat un-Nājiyyah", "at-Tā'ifah al-Mansūrah", or (the names were) due to the adherence to the Sunnah in opposition to the people of

¹ See the book by the noble brother Dr Ibrāhīm ar-Ruhaylī, *Mawqif Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah min Ahl il-Ahwā wa'l-Bida'* [The Position of the People of Sunnah and Jamā'ah Towards the People of Desires and Innovation], vol.1, pp.45-6, it is an excellent book which is important in this field.

innovation. For this reason there developed a connection to the first ones and it was said to them “as-Salaf”, “Ahl ul-Hadīth”, “Ahl ul-Athar” and “Ahl us-Sunnah wa’l-Jamā’ah.” These honoured names oppose any other names that any sect may have, from a variety of aspects:

The first: These are ascriptions are not separate from, by even a small fraction, the Islamic Ummah since its foundation is upon the Prophetic Manhaj; such names include all the Muslims that are upon the way of the first Muslims and whoever takes them as an example in knowledge, as the path of his understanding and as the natural daw’ah he calls to. So the necessity is to restrict the Firqat un-Nājiyyah to “Ahl us-Sunnah” who are the people of this Manhaj, which will remain to the Day of Judgement and is taken from his saying ﷺ *“There will not cease to be a group from my Ummah victorious upon the truth.”*

The second: These names and ascriptions which include all of Islām, the Book and Sunnah, and are not specific to a particular image which opposes the Book and the Sunnah.

The third: They are names which are verified in the authentic Sunnah and some of the names only emerged in confronting the people of desires and sects of misguidance when refuting their innovations in order to distinguish themselves from the people of innovation and not mix with them. So when innovation manifested, they distinguished themselves with “the Sunnah” and when people began judging according to opinion, they distinguished themselves with “al-Hadīth” and “al-Athar” and when innovation and desire manifested in the later generations, they distinguished themselves with “the guidance of the Salaf” and its like.

The fourth: the connection of allegiance and disavowal, allegiance and enmity to them is based on Islām and not on

a particular name or mere formation. Rather, it is only based on the Book and the Sunnah.¹

The fifth: These names were not something which they called to out of partisanship to a person other than the Messenger ﷺ.

The sixth: These names do not call to innovation, sin or to partisanship to a specific person, or to a specific group. - End of Shaykh Bakr Abū Zayd's words.

¹ In agreement with the understanding of the Salaf.

DEFINING THE NAMES OF AHL US-SUNNAH WA'L-JAMĀ'AH, IN SUMMARY



Firstly: “Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah” (the People of Sunnah and Jamā'ah)

This is one of the famous names which the people of Sunnah are known by and it is connected to the Sunnah, so it is said “Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah” and it has also been relayed singularly “Ahl us-Sunnah” and it can be said “Ahl ul-Jamā'ah” yet this is not common and it is mostly ascribed to the Sunnah. Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله stated:

The Sunnah is connected to the Jamā'ah just as innovation is linked to division, so it is said “Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah” just as it is said “Ahl ul-Bida' wa'l-Firqah” (the people of innovation and division).¹

From the reasons that they were named with this name “Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah” is that they distinguished themselves with two great aspects:

1. Their adherence to the Sunnah of the Messenger ﷺ to the extent that they became its people, as opposed to the other sects which adhere to their opinions, desires and statements which are not ascribed to the Sunnah and are only ascribed to their innovations and to their Imāms, or to their actions, as has preceded.

¹ *Al-Istiqāmah*, vol.1, p.42.

2. They are the people of the Jamā'ah due to their gathering upon truth and their lack of division as opposed to the other sects who do not unite upon the truth as they follow their desires.

Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah stated with regards to the definition of the people of Sunnah:

They adhere to the Book of Allāh, the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ what the first and foremost from the Muhājirūn and Ansār were upon and those who followed them in goodness.¹

Secondly: “Ahl ul-Hadīth” [the People of Hadīth]

Of the names that Ahl us-Sunnah are named with is: “Ahl ul-Hadīth” and this name is mentioned often in the statements of the Imāms, such as Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah and others from the people of knowledge before and after him who also mention “Ahl ul-Hadīth” and “Ahl us-Sunnah” in order to clarify their ‘aqīdah and not separate between the two terms. Imām as-Sābūnī رحمته الله stated:

Verily, the Ahl ul-Hadīth hold firm to the Book and the Sunnah, may Allāh preserve their lives and have mercy on their dead. They bear witness to Allāh’s Oneness and to the Messenger’s Message and Prophethood. - To where he said: Allāh protected the Ahl us-Sunnah from tahrīf (distortion), takyīf (asking “how” Allāh is), tashbīh (making Allāh similar to the creation), and blessed them with knowledge and understanding.²

¹ *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, vol.2, p.375.

² *Aqeedat us-Salaf wa’l-Ashāb ul-Hadīth*, p.423.

Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله said:

The Madhhab of the Salaf is that of the People of Hadīth and Sunnah and Jamā'ah.¹

The intended meaning of “Ahl ul-Hadīth” in the books of the creed of the Salaf is: Ahl us-Sunnah. Ibn Taymiyyah stated:

By “Ahl ul-Hadīth” we do not mean that we restrict this to those who listen to Hadīth, write them down and narrate them. Rather, we mean by “Ahl ul-Hadīth” all who most deserve the name in terms of preserving it, knowledge of it and understanding it outwardly and inwardly, and following it outwardly and inwardly, and likewise the Ahl ul-Qur’ān.²

Thirdly: “al-Athariyyah” or “Ahl ul-Athar” [the People of Narrations]

This is a name that many of the people of knowledge have attached to, and then intend by this term Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Hadīth [the People of Sunnah and Hadīth]:

Ibn Abī Hātim ar-Rāzī رحمته الله stated:

Our madhhab and our choice is: following the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, his companions and the successors, and adhering to the madhhab of Ahl ul-Athar like: Abū 'Abdillāh Ahmad bin Hanbal.³

¹ *Dar' Ta'arud al-'Aql wa'n-Naql*, vol.1, p.203.

² *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.4, p.95.

³ *Sharh Usūl 'Tiqād Ahl us-Sunnah*, vol.1, p.179.

He said in regards to another issue:

The sign of Ahl ul-Bida' (the people of innovation): abusing the Ahl ul-Athar; the sign of the people of heresy: calling Ahl us-Sunnah, 'Hashwiyyah' (worthless); the sign of the Qadariyyah¹: calling Ahl ul-Athar, 'Mujbirah'²; the sign of the Murji'ah³, calling Ahl us-Sunnah, 'Mukhālifah' and 'Nuqsāniyyah'; the sign of the Rāfidah⁴: calling Ahl us-Sunnah, 'Nāsibah'^{5, 6}.

And this is mentioned in much of the statements of the Imāms such as: Abū Nasr as-Sijzī, Ibn Taymiyyah, as-Saffārīnī, and others from the people of knowledge. Due to that they were ascribed with the term 'Athar' and technically: al-Athar is synonymous in meaning to Hadith. The meaning of "Ahl ul-Athar" is as as-Saffārīnī stated:

Those who take their 'aqīdah from what is reported from Allāh, The Glorious, in His Book and within the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ, or from what has been verified and

¹ Those who deny the Divine Pre-Decree.

² Those who deny free will and claim that people are not responsible for their own actions, rather they are forced.

³ They uphold the belief of *irjā'* (to hold that sins, major or minor, do not effect faith and that *īmān* neither increases nor decreases). The first to call to this belief was Ghilān Ibn Abī Ghilān al-Qadārī. He was executed in 105 AH. They claim that actions are not part of faith and that people do not vary in faith and that faith does not increase or decrease.

⁴ They are extreme *Shi'a* who call themselves *Ithnā Ash'ariyyah* (the Twelvers) or *Ja'afariyyah*. This sect was formed by 'Abdullāh Ibn Saba, a Yemenite Jew who appeared during the caliphate of 'Uthmān; he claimed to have love for 'Alī and the family of the Prophet ﷺ. They curse the Companions and declare them to be disbelievers, especially Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and the wives of the Prophet. They also believe that the Qur'ān is incomplete.

⁵ Those who have hatred towards 'Alī and the family of the Prophet ﷺ.

⁶ *Ibid.*

authenticated from the Salaf us-Sālih from the noble companions and those splendid ones who succeeded them...¹

This is the meaning of “Ahl us-Sunnah” according to the agreement of the Salaf.²

Fourthly: “al-Firqat un-Nājiyyah” [the Saved Sect]

Meaning: saved from the Hellfire, as the Prophet ﷺ exempted it when he mentioned the sects and said “...all of them will be in the Hellfire except for one.” Meaning: it (the saved sect) is not in the Hellfire.³

Shaykh al-Hāfidh al-Hakamī said in *Ma’ārij ul-Qubūl*:

The truthful one informed us that the saved sect are those who traversed what he and his companions followed.⁴

Fifthly: “at-Tā’ifah al-Mansūrah” [the Aided Group]

This name is taken from his saying ﷺ in the Hadīth of al-Mughīrah bin Shu’bah ؓ:

“There will not cease to be a group from my ummah manifest (upon the truth) until the command of Allāh comes, and they are manifest.”⁵

¹ *Lawāmi’ al-Anwār*, vol.1, p.64.

² *Wasitiyyah Ahl us-Sunnah Bayna al-Furuq*, p.119.

³ Taken from his saying ﷺ in the *Hadīth* of division: “...and verily my nation will split into 73 sects, all will be in the Hellfire except for one and that one is the jama’ah.” And in another narration: “...what I and my companions are upon.”

⁴ *Ma’ārij ul-Qubūl*, vol.1, p.19.

⁵ It is an error to make a separation between the *Tā’ifah al-Mansūrah* (the aided group) and the *Firqat un-Nājiyyah* (the saved sect), as they are both the same thing.

Sixthly: “as-Salafīyyah” and “as-Salafīyūn” [the Salafis]

An ascription to the Salaf (the pious predecessors), linguistically ‘Salaf’ is: all that preceded (Sālif) and the Sālif is: what went before. The Salaf are: the group of predecessors, Allāh said,

﴿ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ سَلَفًا وَمَثَلًا لِّلآخِرِينَ ﴾

“And We made them a precedent and example for the later peoples.” {az-Zukhruf (43): 56}

Al-Baghawī said in his tafsīr:

The Salaf are: whoever preceded from forefathers we take as predecessors and as an example for later peoples.

Ibn ul-Athīr said:

It is said that the Salaf amongst people are those who died previously, such as one’s forefathers and relatives. This is why the first generation, such as the Tābi’ūn, were called the Salaf as-Sālih (pious predecessors).¹

Technically: What then is the intended meaning of as-Salaf us-Sālih (the Pious Predecessors)? And what is their manhaj (methodology) in ‘aqīdah? What are their well known characteristics of their manhaj? All of this we will discover in the following lesson inshā’Allāh.

¹ Translator’s Note: *an-Nihāyah fī Gharib-il-Hadīth*, vol.2, p.390.

THE INTENDED MEANING OF 'THE SALAF'



The linguistic definition of 'the Salaf' has been discussed prior, as for the technical definition of the intent of 'the Salaf' then there are a number of different statements about it which are:

1. The Salaf are only the Sahābah.
2. The Salaf means the Sahābah and the Tābi'ūn (Successors).
3. The Salaf means the Sahābah, Tābi'ūn and the Tābi'u-Tābi'in.
4. The Salaf means: whoever lived five hundred years after the Prophet ﷺ. Those who hold this view claim that the Madhhab of the Salaf is a specific and restricted period which does not transcend this time, then Islamic thought evolved after this time via the hands of men.

Is the restricted time period sufficient in restricting the understandings of the Salaf? If we say that 'the Salaf' corresponds to a timeframe, then they are the people who lived in the first three virtuous generations which are highlighted in the transmitted ahādīth and specify these virtuous generations. So do we consider everyone that lived during these generations to be from the Salaf who are examples of guidance? There is no doubt that this is incorrect and that the answer to the question is in the negative, because many sects and groups emerged during this period. So the periodic definition is not sufficient in specifying the Salaf, rather there has to be the addition of agreement with the views of the Book and Sunnah, whoever differs with the Book and the Sunnah is not Salafī even if he lived among the Companions and the Successors (Tābi'ūn).¹ Therefore, the existence of a person

¹ See Dr. Muhammad Bā Karīm, *Wasitiyyah Ahl us-Sunnah Bayna'l-Firaq*, pp.96-101 – it is a very useful book.

during this timeframe is not sufficient in judging him to be upon the Madhhab of the Salaf as long as he does not agree with the Book and the Sunnah in his speech and actions, following and not innovating. For this reason, many of the scholars restrict this technical term by saying: as-Salaf us-Sālih [The Righteous Predecessors]. Imām as-Saffārīnī stated:

The intent of the Madhhab of the Salaf is: whatever the virtuous Companions ﷺ, those who succeeded them in goodness and those who followed the successors and the Imāms of the religion whose leadership in knowledge and whose great role in the religion has been testified to. These are Imāms whose words were received by the later generations from the early generations as opposed to those who have been accused of innovation or famed with blameworthy titles such as: Khawārij, Rawāfid, Qadariyyah, Murji'ah, Jabariyyah, Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah, Karrāmiyyah and their likes.¹

This Imām restricted the Salaf who should be the example to be followed as those whose leadership has been testified to and were not accused of innovating anything. Therefore, not every Salaf is an example of guidance to follow, the example and model to follow is only those blessed Salaf from the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and the Imāms of the Tābi'ūn and the followers of the Tābi'ūn whose goodness was also witnessed. These were all known to adhere to the Sunnah and be Imāms of the Sunnah who stayed away from innovation and warned against it. Allāh commanded us to follow the path of the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and traverse their methodology, He said:

¹ *Lawāmi' ul-Anwār*, vol.1, p.20.

﴿وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ﴾

“Follow the path of he who turns to Me in repentance...”

{Luqmān (31): 15}

Imām Ibn ul-Qayyim stated:

All of the Companions turned to Allāh in repentance; it is obligatory to follow their way, statements and creed...¹

Allāh was pleased with them and with those who followed them in righteousness, Allāh said:

﴿وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأُولُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ
فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ﴾

“The Foremost to embrace Islām from the Emigrants and the Helpers and also those who followed them in good conduct, Allāh is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide by forever. That is the great success.” {at-Tawbah (9): 100}

Therefore, it is not an innovation at all to be called ‘Salafiyyūn’, rather the term ‘Salaf’ is exactly the same as the term of ‘Ahl us-Sunnah wa’l-Jamā’ah’. This is understood by contemplating all of the terminologies in the right of the Sahābah, that they are the Salaf and they are Ahl us-Sunnah.² So just as it is correct for us to say “Sunni” as an ascription to Ahl us-Sunnah, it is also correct for us to say “Salafi” as an ascription to the Salaf and there is no difference. After the existence of division then

¹ *T'lām ul-Muwaqqi'īn*, vol.4, p.120.

² *Mawqif Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah min Ahl ul-Ahwā wa'l-Bida'*, vol.1, p.63.

the symbol of 'the Salaf' was applied to whoever preserved sound 'aqidah and manhaj with the understanding of the blessed generations. Therefore, the term "Salaf" is synonymous with other Divinely Legislated terms for the Ahl us-Sunnah.

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE MADHHAB OF THE SALAF AND AN EXPLANATION OF THEIR POSITION AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF INNOVATION



The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

“Stick to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly guided Caliphs after me. Hold firm to it and bite onto it with the molars, and beware of newly invented matters for every newly-invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is misguidance.”¹

He ﷺ also described the Firqat un-Nājiyyah, when he was asked “Who are they O Messenger of Allāh?” as being:

“What I and my companions are upon.”

Imām Ahmad said:

The Foundations of the Sunnah with us is: Holding firm to what the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ held on to, and following them and abandoning innovation.²

The Imāms of the Sunnah generation after generation and its scholars remained calling to following the Salaf us-Sālih, adhering to their guidance and traversing their way. Ahl us-Sunnah, in their religion and their creed, utilised what is present in the Book of Allāh and what has been authenticated from the Messenger ﷺ. If it is not based on these

¹ Narrated by Imām Ahmad, Abū Qatādah, Ibn Mājah, ad-Dārimī, Ibn Hibbān and others and it is a *Sabīh Hadīth*.

² Al-Lālikāī, *Sharh Usūl Y'tiqād Ahl us-Sunnah*, vol.1, p.156.

two sources then it is on what has been verified from the Salaf us-Sālih from the Companions and Tābi'ūn and their well-known followers who had leadership in the Sunnah. Ibn Kathīr stated in his tafsīr of Allāh's saying:

﴿ تَمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ﴾

“...and then established Himself over the Throne...” {al-'A'rāf (7): 54}

“The people had several conflicting opinions over its meaning. However, we follow the way that our righteous predecessors took in this regard, such as Mālik, al-Awza'i, ath-Thawrī, al-Layth bin Sa'd, ash-Shafi'i, Ahmad, Ishāq bin Rahwayh and the rest of the scholars of Islam, in past and present times.”¹

Imām Ibn Abi'l-'Izz al-Hanafī, the explainer of *'Aqīdah at-Tahawiyyah*, said:

I always loved to explain it as: traversing the way of the Salaf in their terms of expressions; following their tracks; joining their way and becoming part of their numbers...²

Imām adh-Dhahabī said, in the introduction to his book *al-'Uluww li'l-'Aliyy al-Ghaffār*:

O slave of Allah! If you love justice, then stop at the texts of the Qur'ān and Sunan and then look at what the Companions and the Tābi'ūn stated along with the commentaries of the Imāms of tafsīr with regards to the verses and with whatever has been related from the Madhhab of the Salaf. So either you speak with knowledge or you remain silent with gentleness.³

¹ *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, vol.2, p.422.

² *Sharh al-'Aqīdah at-Tahawiyyah*, p.74.

³ P. 16 and also see what has been mentioned by the noble Dr. Muhammad Bā Karīm Muhammad Bā 'Abdullāh, *Wasitiyyah Ahl us-Sunnah Bayna'l-Firaq*, pp.102-05.

Ahl us-Sunnah made manifest the Madhhab of the Salaf us-Sālih about whom no one doubts as being from the well known people of Sunnah. They also manifested this when the people of innovation, and the Khalaf, arose who viewed themselves as being upon the truth and as being the Firqat un-Nājiyyah. These deviated groups and sects used as proofs for their sayings and school of thought the texts of the Book and the Sunnah and refer them back to their own (interpretations) and divert the texts from their apparent meanings. They claim that they follow the Book and the Sunnah and maybe the people can be deceived by this. So from here the people need to manifest the Madhhab of the Salaf and explain it. For this reason, the Imāms from the people of knowledge safeguarded clarifying issues of creed and that it comprises what was stated by the Imāms of the Salaf (from the Companions, Tābi'ūn and their followers) in order to know that whatever opposed that is not from the sayings or guidance of the Salaf, but is rather from the sayings of the people of innovation and opposition.¹

¹ *Wasitiyyah Ahl us-Sunnah Bayna'l-Firaq*, pp.105-06.

THE PERMISSIBILITY OF ASCRIBING TO THE SALAF AND USING THE NAME 'SALAFI'



It is well-known that the da'wah to following the Salaf or the da'wah of Salafīyyah is nothing but the da'wah to real Islām and to the purified Sunnah and da'wah to returning to Islām as it was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ and received by his noble companions ﷺ and there is no doubt that it is the true da'wah and ascribing to it is the truth. The Imāms of Islām from the people of Sunnah had a huge influence in calling to the Sunnah and returning to the way of the Salaf and their way. These Imāms were the likes of:

- The Imām of Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal
- Imām Abū Bakr Muhammad bin Ishāq bin Khuzaymah
- Imām Abū Bakr Muhammad bin al-Husayn al-Ājurri
- Imām Abū 'Abdullāh bin Battah al-'Ukbari
- Imām Abu'l-Qāsim Ismā'eel bin Muhammad al-Asbahāni

Then: Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah and his student Imām Ibn ul-Qayyim and then Shaykh ul-Islām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb and the Imāms of da'wah after him. The matters which make apparent ascribing to being Salafī throughout history is basing one's religion and 'aqidah on the Book of Allāh and Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ, and the way of the Salaf us-Sālih from the Companions, the Tābi'ūn and the Atbā'u-Tābi'in from the virtuous three generations whose goodness has been testified to. All of this is alongside sidelining any innovations which are external to this basis. If this is known: then we return to the title of this chapter "the permissibility of ascribing to the Salaf and using the name 'Salaf'." Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah stated:

There is no shame on the one who ascribes to the Madhhab of the Salaf, assigns to it and refers to it. Rather, it is obligatory to accept that from him by unanimous agreement, because the Madhhab of the Salaf is nothing but the truth. In *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.4, p.149.

As-Sam'ānī stated in his book *al-Ansāb*, vol.3, p.273:

As-Salafī – With a fatha on the sīn, then a lām and then a fā at the end. This is an ascription to the Salaf and following their ways based on what has been relayed from them.

Ibn ul-Athīr appended to the statement of as-Sam'ānī which is:

“They are known as being the Jamā'ah.”

In some of his works Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah describes those who adhere to the sayings of the Salaf with regards to *fawqiyah* (Allāh being above His Throne) as being “Salafī”.¹ Adh-Dhahabī ؒ stated in *Siyar*, vol.12, p.380:

What a Hāfidh needs to be is: consciousness of Allāh, intelligent... and Salafī.

He further stated in *Siyar*, vol.16, p.457 about ad-Darāqutnī ؒ:

He never ever got involved in 'Ilm ul-Kalām or argumentation and did not delve into these matters, rather he was Salafī.

I say: in our present era this ascription was given to the scholars who were well-known for adhering to the Sunnah such as Shaykh 'AbdurRahmān al-Mu'allimī (d.1386 AH) ؒ, in his book *al-Qā'id ilā Tas-hih ila'l-'Aqā'id* and Shaykh and Imām 'Abdul'Azīz bin 'Abdullāh

¹ Just as many other Imāms did, see *Bayān Talbis al-Jahmiyyah*, vol.1, p.122 and *Dar' Ta'arud al-'Aql wa'n-Naql*, vol.7, 134, 207.

bin Bāz رحمته الله in his treatise *Tanbihāt al-Hāmah 'alā mā Katabahu Muhammad 'Ali as-Sābūnī fī Sifāt il-Allāh*. Shaykh 'Abdul'Azīz رحمته الله was asked "What do you say about one who calls themselves 'Salafi' and 'Athari' is it a form of tazkiyah (commendation)?" Shaykh Bin Bāz answered:

If he is truthful in saying that he is Atharī or Salafī then there is no problem in that like what the Salaf used to say "Such-and-such is Salafi" and "So-and-so is Athari" as a tazkiyah which was necessary and obligatory.¹

Also, the رحمته الله in his book *Mukhtasar al-'Uluww*, his introduction of *Sharh ul-'Aqīdah at-Tahawiyyah* and his book *Tawassul* mentions Salafīyyah and so does Shaykh, al-'Allāmah Sālih bin Fawzān al-Fawzān in *al-Ajwibah al-Mufīdah*, p.103. He was asked: "What is Salafīyyah? Is it obligatory to traverse their way and hold firm to it?" Shaykh Sālih al-Fawzān replied:

Salafīyyah is following the methodology of the Salaf from the Companions, Tābi'ūn and the praiseworthy generations in 'aqīdah, understanding and manners. It is obligatory on Muslims to follow this manhaj.

Also from these scholars (who mentioned the Salafī Manhaj) are the noble Shaykh 'Ali bin Nāsir Faqīhī in his book *al-Fath al-Mubīn bi'r-Radd 'alā Naqd 'Abdullāh al-Ghumārī li-Kitāb il-Arba'in*.

These noble scholars and many others did not view any problem with using the title "Salafī", "Salafīyyah" or Salafīyūn" and that the intent of that is: to traverse the methodology and way of the Salaf. Some contemporary writers of Islamic schools of thought have stated: "The Salafis follow the Imāms before them" and make it a distinct group which is known by this name. The writers who have held this opinion are the likes of: Muhammad Abū Zahrah, Mustafā ash-

¹ From the lecture entitled *Haq ul-Muslim* which was given in Tā'if.

Shak'ah, Muhammad bin Sa'id al-Būtī and others. They point to historical developments for the development of this group and that it is an extension of the school of Ahmad ibn Hanbal that was revived during the time of Ibn Taymiyyah and Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb, they also claim that the Salafis ascribed the term to themselves. The writers who hold the Salafī Madhhab to be a stage in history and not an Islamic school of thought are the likes of Dr Muhammad Sa'id Ramadān al-Būtī.

Whether it is true or not that the advocates of a return to the Madhhab of the Salaf are the ones who applied the ascription to themselves, or that others applied it to them and then they were known by it, it is not known from the Imāms from Ahl us-Sunnah of the past, or those who followed their method after them up to today, that anyone rejected or objected to them applying that ascription. The least that can be said regarding the permissibility of the title and the ascription to it, is that it is a terminology and 'there is nothing wrong in extracting new appropriate terminologies' [*la Mushāhata fi'l-Istilāh*].¹

The example is with realities and meanings and not via names, the intent of the names has been mentioned previously which is to: indicate whoever follows the manhaj of the Salaf us-Sālih and follow their way. So there is not the least bit of difference between calling oneself "Salafī" or "Ahl us-Sunnah".

¹ *Wasitiyyat Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah Bayna'l-Firaq*, p.111 (summarised).

SOME EVIDENCES WHICH INDICATE THE OBLIGATION TO FOLLOW THE SALAF US-SĀLIH AND ADHERE TO THEIR MADHHAB



Allāh says,

﴿وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ﴾

“Follow the path of he who turns to Me in repentance...”
{Luqmān (31): 15}

Allāh instructed us to follow the path of the companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and traversing their methodology. Imām Ibn ul-Qayyim stated after mentioning this verse: All of the Companions turned to Allāh in repentance, so it is obligatory to follow their way, statements and creed, which are the most important of His path.¹

Allāh warned us from opposing their path. Allāh warned those who oppose their path with the Fire, Saying,

﴿وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
نُؤَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ ۗ جَهَنَّمَ ۗ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا﴾

“And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of the believers We will give him what he has taken and drive him into Hell, and evil it is as a destination.” {an-Nisā (4): 115}

Allāh also informed us about His Pleasure with those who followed the Companions in goodness and will be greatly rewarded, Allāh says,

¹ *I'lām ul-Muwaqqi'in*, vol.4, p.120.

﴿ وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴾

“And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhājirūn and the Ansār and those who followed them with good conduct, Allāh is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.” {at-Tawbah (9): 100}

Just as Allāh promised those who followed other than their path with the punishment of the Hellfire, He promised those who follow the path of the Companions with Paradise and Pleasure. The Prophet ﷺ instructed his Ummah to follow his Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly-guided Khulafā’ after him. He said ﷺ:

“Whoever of you lives will see many differences, so stick to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly-guided Khulafā’ after me. Hold firm to it and bite onto it with the molars. And beware of the newly invented matters! For every newly invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is misguidance.” Reported by Ahmad and Abū Dawūd.

He also said ﷺ:

“The best of people are my generation, then those after them and then those after them.”

He ﷺ described the Firqat un-Nājiyyah in the Hadīth of divisions, he said:

“What I and my Companions are upon.”

So whoever is upon the likes of what they were upon is from the Firqat un-Nājiyyah and whoever opposes them and stays away from them is from those people who have the promise (of punishment over them). 'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd ؓ stated:

“To follow and not innovate is sufficient for you!”¹

He also said:

“We take [them] as an example [to follow] and we do not begin (anything new), we follow and do not innovate and we do not deviate from narrations that we adhere to.”

'Ubayy ibn Ka'b ؓ:

“Stick to the path and the Sunnah, for there is no servant who follows the path of Allāh and the Sunnah remembering Allāh, his eyes overflowing with tears out of fear of Allāh, except that the Fire will never touch him. A minimal course in the path of Allāh and the Sunnah is better than striving hard in a path contrary to the path of Allāh and the Sunnah and consenting to innovation. See that your actions - whether they are striving or minimal - are on the path of the Prophets and their Sunnah.”

Abū 'Āliyah stated:

“Stick to the first affair which they were upon before they became divided.”²

Al-Awzā'ī stated:

“Be patient on the Sunnah and stop where the people stopped and speak with what they spoke with, avoid what

¹ Ad-Dārimī.

² Abū Nu'aym, *al-Hilyah*, vol.2, p.218.

they avoided with and traverse the way of the Salaf us-Sālih, what is good for you is that which was good for them.”¹

Al-Awzā’ī also said:

“Stick to the narrations of those who went before (Salaf) even if the people reject you! And beware of the opinions of men even if their speech is adorned for you.”

Imām Ahmad stated:

“The Usūl of the Sunnah with us is: to hold firm to what the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ were guided with, and leave innovation.”

The scholars from the Imāms of the Sunnah continued saying this, generation after generation, calling to follow the Salaf us-Sālih and taking their example for guidance along with traversing and following their ways.

¹ *Ash-Shari’ah*, p.58.

THE MANHAJ OF THE SALAF IN 'AQĪDAH



Their Manhaj [Methodology] can be summarised in the following:

1. Their safeguarding the source of Creed, being the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ, and understanding the texts in light of the Salaf us-Sālih.
2. Their use of the authentic Sunnah in 'aqīdah whether it was relayed mutawātir or via the āhād narrations.
3. Submitting to all what has been revealed and not rejecting it with the intellect. An avoidance of delving into the Unseen matters which have no room for the intellect.
4. Avoiding delving into 'Ilm ul-Kalām (Speculative Theological Rhetoric) and Philosophy.
5. Rejecting void and false interpretations
6. Combining between the texts in any given issue.¹

This is the manhaj in 'aqīdah [Creed] from the original source: the Book of Allāh, the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ devoid of desires and doubts and holding firm to these sources in respect of them, because all of it is true and correct. Imām al-Barbahārī رحمه الله stated:

You should know, may Allāh have mercy on you, that the religion is only that which has come from Allāh, and the religion is not that which is based on the intellects of men and their opinions; (rather) its knowledge is from Allāh and His Messenger. Do not follow anything with your desires that will cause you to deviate from the religion and leave Islām, for it has no use to you. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ explained the Sunnah

¹ This is summarised from the noble Shaykh 'Abdullāh al-'Ubaylān, *Durūs fi'l-Manhaj*. This methodology is well-known and established in the *manhaj* of the *Salaf* in 'aqīdah.

to his Ummah and clarified it to his Companions, they are the Jamā'ah and the Main Body, for the Main Body are: the truth and its people.¹

He also said before this in his book *Sharh us-Sunnah* (p.65):

The basis of the Jamā'ah, who are the Companions of Muhammad ﷺ and are Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, is that whoever does not take from them has deviated and innovated, and all innovation is misguidance.

Then Imām al-Barbahārī says,

'Umar ibn al-Khattāb ؓ said that there is neither an excuse for anyone to go astray and think that he is upon guidance, nor for anyone to abandon guidance thinking that it is misguidance. This is because the issues have been clarified, the proofs have been established and the excuse severed. Because Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah have consolidated and safeguarded all of the religion and it has been made clear to the people, so it is for the people to comply and follow.²

I say: from the distinguished characteristics of the Salafī manhaj are:

1. Its people's verification of the truth and avoidance of being overcome by the people of desires. Hudhayfah said to Abū Mas'ūd: "Misguidance is: to approve of what you used to disapprove of and disapprove of what you used to approve of, and beware of changing colour in the religion [i.e. constantly changing from one position to the other] as Allāh's religion is one."
2. The agreement on 'aqīdah and their avoidance of differing throughout different times and places.

¹ *Sharh us-Sunnah*, p.66

² *Ibid.*

3. They are the most knowledgeable people of the conditions of the Prophet ﷺ and his actions and sayings. They are the greatest in distinguishing between the authentic and weak (accounts of events) and as a result they have the most love for the Sunnah and safeguard following it the most and having allegiance to the people of the Sunnah. Shaykhul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله stated:

As the Messenger of Allāh was the most perfect of creation and the most knowledgeable of them of the realities and the most steadfast of them in speech and condition, it is a necessity that he is the most knowledgeable of people and also the most knowledgeable of creation, and he has the greatest position and the most guided... the best of creation.

4. Their creed is that the way of the Salaf us-Sālih is the safest way, the more knowledgeable way and the wisest. It is not as the people of Kalām claim that “the way of the Salaf is safer but the way of the Khalaf is more knowledgeable and wiser.” Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah refuted this claim saying

They have lied about the way of the Salaf and have been misguided about the accuracy of the way of the Khalaf. For they have combined between the ignorance of the way of the Salaf, by lying about them, and ignorance, and misguidance, about the accuracy of the way of the Khalaf.¹

5. They safeguarded spreading the correct ‘aqīdah and straight religion, and teaching it to people and advising them along with refuting the opposers and innovators.

¹ *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, vol.5, p.9.

6. They are the balanced middle way among the different sects, Ibn Taymiyyah stated: Ahl us-Sunnah are, within Islām, like the people of Islām among the different religions.” He also stated:

They are the middle way in the issue of the Names of Allāh, between the ta'til of the Jahmiyyah and the tamthil of the Mushabbihah. They are the middle way in the issue of the Actions of Allāh, between the Qadariyyah and the Jabariyyah. In the issue of wa'id (promises and punishments of Allāh) they are the middle way between that of the Murji'ah al-Wa'idiyyah and the Qadariyyah. In the issue of the names of Imān and religion they are the middle way between the Harūriyyah and Mu'tazilah and the Murji'ah and Jahmiyyah. In the issue of the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ they are the middle way between the Rawāfid and the Khawārij.¹

¹ Ibid., vol.3, p.141 and also see: *Wasitiyyah Ahl us-Sunnah Bayna'l-Firaq*, p.235 and the pages after it. Also see Shaykh 'Abdullāh al-'Ubaylān, *Durūs fi'l-Manhaj*, pp.70-3.

THE MANHAJ OF THE PEOPLE OF INNOVATION AND DESIRES



It has been mentioned previously regarding the Manhaj of the Salaf in 'aqidah that its most important distinguishing feature, and the most important characteristic, is: safeguarding and complying with what is in the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ based on the understanding of the Salaf us-Sālih.

On the contrary to this is the manhaj of the Ahl ul-Hawā' wa'l-Bida' (People of Desires and Innovation), for the main source of acceptance for them is not the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah, rather it is what their leaders and Shuyūkh innovate and then they interpret the Book and the Sunnah in accordance with what agrees with their desires. They also rely on their intellect, weak hadīth, weak proofs and lies upon the Prophet ﷺ and their followers rely on the unclear verses and then distort the proofs and give false and corrupt interpretations. Ibn ul-Qayyim رحمه الله states: "To sum up: The splitting of the People of the Book and of this Ummah into 73 sects is only understood via their interpretations."¹ Ibn Abi'l-'Izz al-Hanafī states:

Did the Khawārij revolt, or the Mu'tazilah depart or the Rawāfid reject and the Ummah split into 73 sects due to anything except corrupt and false interpretations?²

This Manhaj which the People of Desires and Innovation traverse opposes the Manhaj of Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah in their views and their use of proofs and it is from the greatest factors for division of the Ummah.

¹ *I'lām ul-Muwaqqi'in*, vol.4, p.317.

² *Sharh ul-'Aqidah at-Tahāwiyyah*, p.189.

THE PATH TO SUCCESS IS IN FOLLOWING AND NOT INNOVATING



Shaykh ul-Islām states in his book *al-'Ubūdiyyah*:

The religion has two foundations: that we only worship Allāh and that we only worship Him with what He has legislated.¹

Therefore, we do not worship Allāh with innovation as Allāh stated:

﴿فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا﴾

“Whoever hopes for the meeting of Allāh should do righteous actions and not associated in the worship of his Lord anyone.” {al-Kahf (18): 110}

Allāh instructs in this verse that actions should be righteous, meaning: in agreement with the Sunnah, and then He ordered the one who does righteous actions to be sincere to Allāh. Al-Hāfidh Ibn Kathīr in his tafsīr states: “These are the two pillars for acceptance (by Allāh), one must be sincere to Allāh and correctly on the Divine Legislation of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.”² The like of this has been related from al-Qādī 'Ayyād رحمه الله and others. What has preceded is that, for the correctness of any action which we want to gain nearness to Allāh with, it has to be in line with two conditions and foundations:

1. Sincere worship for Allāh alone.
2. Sincere following of His Messenger ﷺ.

¹ *Al-'Ubūdiyyah*, p.31.

² *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, vol.3, p.106.

Allāh says,

﴿ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ ﴾

“Worship Allāh being sincere to Him in religion” {az-Zumar (39): 2}

And He says,

﴿ وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ ۗ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَأَحْسِنَ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ ۗ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفَسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴾

“But seek, through that which Allāh has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allāh has done good to you.” {al-Qasas (28): 77}

The Prophet ﷺ stated in a hadīth Qudsī, that Allāh said:

“I am so Self-Sufficient that I am in no need of having partners. Thus, whoever does an action for someone else’s sake as well as Mine, will have that action rejected by Me to him whom he associated with Me.”¹

Sincerity is not achieved with shirk or showing off or pleasing people with worldly actions, the person who does the action has to intend the Face of Allāh alone.² This is in relation to the first condition, as for the second condition: then it means that actions with which we gain nearness to Allāh are in agreement with what Allāh has legislated in His Book or in the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ. Allāh says,

¹ Reported by Muslim in *Kitāb uz-Zuhd*.

² Dr Sālih bin Sa’d as-Suhaymī, *Mudhakkirat fi'l-'Aqīdah*, p.10.

﴿ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا
فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرِ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾

“This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion.” {al-Mā'idah (5): 3}

Allāh has completed the religion for us before the Messenger was sent to the Highest Abode, so He is no need for anyone to add or detract from it. There are many texts which instruct to following and warn us against innovating in the religion, Allāh says,

﴿ لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ
وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ﴾

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allāh an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allāh often.” {al-Ahzāb (33): 21}

Allāh also says,

﴿ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا^ط وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ^ط إِنَّ اللَّهَ
شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴾

“And whatever the Messenger has given you take; and what he has forbidden you, refrain from.” {al-Hashr (59): 7}

He also says,

﴿ قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ^ط وَاللَّهُ
غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾

“Say, [O Muhammad], “If you should love Allāh, then follow me, [so] Allāh will love you...” {Āl ’Imrān (3): 31}

From the Sunnah: there are many hadīth, such as the saying of the Prophet ﷺ:

“Stick to my Sunnah an the Sunnah of the Rightly guided Khulafā’ after me, bite onto it with the molars and beware of the newly invented matters, for every newly invented is an innovation and every innovation is misguidance and all misguidance is in the Fire.”¹

He also said ﷺ:

“I have left you with that which if you hold firm to will not misguide you after me: the Book of Allāh and my Sunnah.”²

He also said ﷺ:

“Whoever does an action which is not from our affair will have it rejected.”³

Allāh instructed the Ummah to unite the word based upon: holding fast to the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ. He forbade splitting and clarified its dangers for the Ummah and in order for this matter to be achieved He instructed us to refer judgement back to the Book of Allāh in the principles and the branches and He forbade us from everything which leads to division.⁴ Allāh said,

﴿وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا﴾

“And hold firmly to the rope of Allāh all together and do not become divided.” {Āl’Imrān (3): 103}

¹ The verification of this *hadīth* has preceded.

² Reported by Mālik in *al-Muwatta*; Abū Dawūd and Ibn Mājah and it is a *Sahīh hadīth*

³ Agreed upon.

⁴ *Usūl ul-Īmān fī Dau’ Kitāb wa’s-Sunnah*, p.293.

The rope of Allāh is: the promise of Allāh, which is the Qur'ān as the commentators of the Qur'ān have mentioned; Allāh instructs for there to be a Jamā'ah and forbids separation and disagreement, as Allāh says,

﴿ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴾

﴿ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴾

“And whatever the Messenger has given you take; and what he has forbidden you, refrain from.” {al-Hashr (59): 7}

This is the apparent and inward aspects of the Usūl of the religion and its branches; whatever the Messenger of Allāh came with is for the worshippers to take and follow and it is not permissible to contradict it. The texts of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ have the same ruling on a thing as the texts from Allāh and there is no permission for anyone to abandon it or put forward the statement of anyone over that of Allāh's.¹ Allāh says,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَسْمَعُونَ ﴾

“O you who have believed, obey Allāh and His Messenger and do not turn from him while you hear [his order].” {al-Anfāl (8): 20}

Allāh instructed us to return to His Book at times of disagreement, and to also return to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. Allāh says,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولَى الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۚ

تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۚ

ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴾

¹ Usūl ul-Īmān, p.294-295.

“O you who have believed, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allāh and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result.” {an-Nisā’ (4): 59}

Ibn Kathīr stated about (Allah’s statement), “obey Allāh...”: “it means: to follow His book and His saying, ‘and obey the Messenger...’ means: take his Sunnah and follow his Sunnah, Allāh’s saying, “and those in authority among you,” means: in what they instruct you to do out of obedience to Allāh and not out of disobedience to Allāh, for there is no obedience to the creation in disobedience to the Creator.” As for Allāh’s saying,

﴿ فَإِن تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ ﴾

“And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger ...”

Means: refer it to the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger, this is an instruction from Allāh that every matter of dispute among people regarding the Usūl of the religion and its branches should be referred back to the Book and Sunnah.¹ Just as Allāh says,

﴿ وَمَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَحُكْمُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبِّي عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ ﴾

“And in anything over which you disagree its ruling is [to be referred] to Allāh.” {ash-Shūrā (42): 10}

Whatever is judged upon based on the Book and the Sunnah and testifies to it, is true; and what is after truth except for misguidance?! For this reason Allāh says,

¹ *Usūl ul-Īmān*, p.294.

﴿ إِن كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ﴾

“...if you should believe in Allāh and the Last Day.”

Meaning: refer arguments and ignorant contentions to the Book and the Sunnah and whoever does not refer back to this does not believe in Allāh and the Last Day. Then Allāh censures division and forbids all of the avenues to it and He explained that it is of the greatest reasons for setbacks in the Dunya and for punishment in the Hereafter. Allāh said,

﴿ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝ يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ ﴾

“And do not be like the ones who became divided and differed after the clear proofs had come to them. And those will have a great punishment. On the Day [some] faces will turn white and [some] faces will turn black.” {Āli 'Imrān (3): 105-06}

Ibn 'Abbās stated: “The faces of the People of Sunnah will become light and the faces of the people of innovation and division will be darkened.”¹ Allāh says,

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ ۚ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴾

“Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects you, [O Muhammad], are not [associated] with them in anything. Their affair is only [left] to Allāh; then He will inform them about what they used to do.” {al-Anām (6): 159}

¹ Al-Lālikā'i, *Sharh Usūl Sunnah*, vol.1, p.72.

The Prophet ﷺ stated:
“Those who were before you from the People of the Book split into 72 sects and this Ummah will split into 73 sects, 72 of which will be in the HellFire and one will be in Paradise, and that is the Jamā'ah.”¹

The Prophet ﷺ informed of the Ummah becoming divided into 73 groups, 72 of which will be in the Hellfire and one will be in Paradise, this group is the one about whom the Prophet ﷺ said:
“What I and my Companions are upon.”

The reason for the previous nations being destroyed was due to division and much disagreement, especially over the Book which had been revealed to them. The Messenger of Allāh informed us of that by saying
“The only reason those before you were destroyed was due to their constant asking of questions and differing with their Prophets; so whatever I have forbidden to you, stay away from, and whatever I instruct you to do perform what you are able.”²

The way to be free from division and splitting is: to follow the way of the Firqat un-Nājiyyah al-Mansūrah and it is the Jamā'ah, they are the ones who traverse what is in agreement with the Manhaj of the Prophet ﷺ and his companions, they do not digress from it or abandon it. The path of salvation is in following the Salaf us-Sālih in speech, action and creed and to avoid opposing them or doubting them.³ Allāh says,

﴿ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
نُؤَلِّهِمْ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِمْ ۗ جَهَنَّمَ ۗ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ۝ ﴾

¹ Reported by Ahmad, Abū Dawūd and others.

² Agreed upon.

³ *Usūl ul-Īmān fī Dau' Kitāb wa's-Sunnah*, p.301 and the pages after it.

“And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of the believers We will give him what he has taken and drive him into Hell, and evil it is as a destination.” {an-Nisā’ (4): 115}

Therefore, following the way of the believers, who are the Companions and whoever followed them in righteousness from the Imāms of guidance, is the path of success.¹ So following (the believers) is only correct with three matters:

1. Holding firm to the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ.
2. Staying away from division and splitting over the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah.
3. That following the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah be restricted to how the Salaf us-Sālih understood them and not the understandings of others.

Also from the necessities of following (the Book of Allāh and Sunnah): is to leave innovation in the religion and the Divinely Legislated texts about following and warning against innovating, have been mentioned prior. The Prophet ﷺ gave glad tidings to those who hold firm to his Sunnah, and the greatest aim for every believer who has even the slightest bit of Imān is to be granted Paradise and be saved from the Fire. The Prophet ﷺ said “*Every Ummah will enter Paradise except for those who refuse.*” The Companions said “*Who will refuse O Messenger of Allāh?*” He ﷺ said:

“*Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise and whoever disobeys me has refused.*”²

¹ *Usūl ul-Īmān*, p.293.

² Reported by Bukhārī in his *Sahīh*.

What rejection of the Sunnah is greater than opposing the instruction of the Prophet ﷺ, and by introducing new matters into the religion and innovating in it?!¹

Ubayy ibn Ka'b ؓ stated:

“You must follow the path of Allāh and the Sunnah. There is no slave who is on the path of Allāh and the Sunnah, remembering Allāh, his eyes overflowing out of fear of his Lord, but that Allāh will never punish him. A minimal course in the path of Allāh and the Sunnah is better than striving hard in a path contrary to the path of Allāh and the Sunnah and consenting to innovation.”

So whoever contemplates on the texts of the Book of Allāh and Sunnah will find that innovation in the religion is prohibited and rejected for the one who does it. For this reason there is to be found the forbiddance of innovation from the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ, such as:

“Beware of the newly invented matters, for every newly invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is misguidance.”

Also the hadīth:

“Whoever does an action which is not from our affair will have it rejected.”

The hadīth indicates that every newly invented matter in the religion is an innovation and every innovation is a rejected misguidance. This means: Every innovation in acts of worship is not allowed but this depends on the type of innovation as some acts of innovation are clear kufr, some are a means to shirk while others are sin and disobedience.²

¹ *Usūl ul-Īmān fī Dau' Kitāb wa's-Sunnah*, p.296.

² *Ibid.*, p.298.

If one contemplates the way of the people of deviation and misguidance you will find that their way differs from the way of the people of guidance. Allāh says,

﴿ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَبَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ ۗ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۗ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ ءَأَمَّنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا ۗ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴾

“It is He who has sent down to you, [O Muhammad], the Book; in it are verses [that are] precise they are the foundation of the Book and others unspecific. As for those in whose hearts is deviation [from truth], they will follow that of it which is unspecific, seeking discord and seeking an interpretation [suitable to them].” {Āli ‘Imrān (3): 7}

In the Sahīh: “If you see those who follow the unspecific verses of the Book, then they are the ones who Allāh named so beware of them.”¹ Allāh stated:

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا لَّسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ ۚ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴾

“Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects, you [O Muhammad], are not [associated] with them in anything.” {al-An‘ām (6):159}

﴿ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِ ۗ ﴾

“...and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way.” {al-An‘ām (6):153}

¹ Reported by Bukhārī and Muslim in their Sahīhs.

The most important signs of the people of deviation are¹:

1. Division, as Allāh said,
﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴾

“Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects, you [O Muhammad], are not [associated] with them in anything.” {al-Anām (6):159}

2. Following things which are unspecific, Allāh says:

﴿ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَبَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ ﴾

“As for those in whose hearts is deviation [from truth], they will follow that of it which is unspecific...” {Āli ’Imrān (3): 7}

3. Following desires,

﴿ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ ﴾

“As for those in whose hearts is deviation [from truth]...”
{Āli ’Imrān (3): 7}

﴿ أَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ أَفَأَنْتَ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلًا ﴾

¹ See al-Barbahārī, *Sharh us-Sunnah*, p.22; as-Sābūnī, *Aqīdat us-Salaf As-hāb ul-Hadīth*, p.132; al-Lālikā’ī, *Sharh Usūl us-Sunnah*, vol.1, p.179; Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, vol.4, p.155; Ibn Taymiyyah, *Minhāj us-Sunnah*, vol.5, pp.239-40; *Majmū’ ar-Rasā’il wa’l-Masā’il an-Najdiyyah*, vol.3, p.120; *Mawqif Ahl us-Sunnah wa’l-Jamā’ah min Ahl ul-Hawā’ wa’l-Bida’*, vol.1, pp.127-34.

“Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?” {al-Furqān (25): 43}

4. Turning away from the Sunnah via the Qur’ān.
5. Hating Ahl ul-Athar [The People of the Narrations].
6. Calling Ahl us-Sunnah evil nicknames.
7. Pretending to be upon the Madhhab of the Salaf.¹
8. Making takfīr of those who disagree with them without any dalīl (proof).
9. Summarising topics which need explanation and clarification, and making analogy for matters which do not need analogy is incorrect.

Imām Ahmad رحمته الله stated:

It is obligatory for the one who speaks to stay away from two foundations: the general and analogy.” He also said: “Most of the things which cause mistakes are ta’wīl (false interpretations) and qiyās (analogy).²

¹ Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah stated in *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, vol.3, p.156:

As for pretending to be upon the Madhhab of the Salaf for the then this is bātil, as this is not possible except that ignorance will increase and knowledge will decrease.

I say: During our time there have been those who have claimed to be upon the madhhab of the Salaf when the reality is that they are not. Indeed, there are those who are part of modern partisan groups, some who have the ideology of the Khawārij in the name of Salafiyyah and the likes. All of this is the result of the increase of ignorance and the decrease of knowledge just as Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah stated, or there has been a watering down of the Salafi Manhaj in order to include deviated groups in the guise of Ahl us-Sunnah wa’l-Jamā’ah.

² Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Qawā’id an-Nūrāniyyah*, vol.2, p.437.

I say: What Imām Ahmad رحمته الله mentioned from warning against these two foundations of fiqh is a proof that in the topic of 'aqīdah, these foundations should especially be avoided first and foremost.

SOME PRINCIPLES OF THE SALAFĪ MANHAJ



Firstly: Commanding the Good and Forbidding the Evil [al-Amr bi'l-Ma'rūf wa'n-Nahy 'an al-Munkar]

The Meaning of 'good' (Ma'rūf) is: All actions of obedience, the most important of which is: to worship Allāh alone and not associate anything in worship with Him, being sincere in worship to Him and abandoning worship other than Him; after this are all other acts of disobedience from the obligatory and recommended actions.¹

The meaning of 'evil (Munkar)': Is all what Allāh and His Messenger have forbidden and all acts of disobedience and innovations; the major act of Munkar is: Shirk with Allāh.²

Commanding the good and forbidding the evil is a collective obligation for the Ummah and not an individual obligation. If it is established by those who can carry it out, then there is no sin for the others and if no-one establishes it then all of them are sinful. Allāh says,

﴿وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْعُرْفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾

“And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful.” {Āli Imrān (3): 104}

Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah stated:

¹ Shaykh 'Allāmah Sālih al-Fawzān, *al-Amr bi'l-Ma'rūf wa'n-Nahy 'an al-Munkar*, p.6.

² *Ibid.*, pp.6-7.

Whoever commands to the good and forbids the evil has to have knowledge of what he is commanding and of what he is forbidding. He also has to be gentle in what he is commanding and gentle in what he is trying to forbid; he also has to be mild in what he is commanding to and mild in what he is trying to forbid. So knowledge comes before commanding to anything and there has to be gentleness and mildness in commanding. If he does not have knowledge then he has to stop, but if he has knowledge and no gentleness then he is like a Doctor who has no gentleness and thus makes the sick patient worse, and he will not accept (the instruction) from him. Allāh said to Mūsā and Hārūn,

﴿فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى﴾

“And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allāh].” {Tā Hā (20): 44}

Also, whoever commands and forbids will surely be harmed repeatedly so he has to be patient and forbearing just as Allāh said,

﴿وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ ۗ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ

الْأُمُورِ﴾

“...enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] determination.” {Luqmān (31): 17}

Ibn Taymiyyah also said:

It is compulsory for the one who commands to good and forbids the evil to make sure that his commanding and forbidding is sincerely for Allāh and out of obedience to Allāh. And his intent is to rectify and establish the proofs and the intent should not be for leadership for himself and his group or for anything else. The origin of the religion is: love of Allāh and hate for Allāh,

allegiance to Allāh and enmity for Allāh's sake, worship for Allāh, seeking help from Allāh, fear of Allāh, hope in Allāh, giving for Allāh and preventing for Allāh. All of this can only be done by following the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ as his command is the command of Allāh and his forbiddance is the forbiddance of Allāh, his enmity is the enmity of Allāh, his obedience is the obedience of Allāh, disobeying him is disobeying Allāh.

Secondly: The Principle in Acts of Worship

Acts of worship are based upon *tawqif* (nothing can be legislated in this regard except what Allāh has legislated), for Allāh instructed to follow the Messenger ﷺ. Allāh said:

﴿ قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾

﴿ غُفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾

“Say, [O Muhammad], ‘If you should love Allāh, then follow me, [so] Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful.’” {Āli ‘Imrān (3): 31}

Allāh also said,

﴿ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴾

“...and whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger will be admitted by Him to gardens [in Paradise] under which rivers flow, abiding eternally therein; and that is the great attainment.” {an-Nisā’ (4): 13}

In the Sahīhayn from 'Umar bin al-Khattāb ؓ, that he kissed the Black Stone and said:

“I know that you are a stone that cannot harm or benefit and if I didn't see the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ kissing you I would not kiss you.”

The saying of some of the Salaf has preceded:

“Follow and do not innovate, it will suffice you.”

Just as the condition of acceptance of actions has preceded: following the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. There are many texts in the Qur'ān and Sunnah which instruct obeying Allāh and His Messenger and which forbid disobeying Allāh and His Messenger. So it is not permissible for anyone to leave off what is found in the Sunnah; this is highlighted by the Qur'ān and Sunnah and was what the Salaf of the Ummah followed.

Thirdly: The Principle of Basing the Religion upon Beneficial Knowledge and Righteous Actions

The religion of Islām is based on beneficial knowledge and righteous actions. Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah stated:

Rectification is limited to two things: beneficial knowledge and righteous actions, Allāh sent Muhammad ﷺ with the best of these two things, which is guidance and the true religion in order to manifest it over all other ways of life. So guidance is: beneficial knowledge and the true religion is: righteous actions.

Ibn Taymiyyah also said:

Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah who follow the Salaf us-Sālih do not speak about anything in the religion except in following what the Messenger of Allāh came with and follow the Book and Sunnah.

As for Ahl ul-Bida' (the People of Innovation) then they do not rely on the Book and the Sunnah and the narrations of the Salaf us-Sālih, rather they depend upon on the intellect, language and philosophy.

Fourthly: The Principle that Preventing the Harms Takes Precedence Over Achieving the Benefits

The evidences of this principle is:

1. The saying of Allāh:

﴿وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ﴾

“And do not insult those they invoke other than Allāh, lest they insult Allāh in enmity without knowledge.” {al-Anām (6): 108}

Allāh has prohibited insulting the gods of the Mushrikūn due to insults being levelled at Allāh and on the pretext that humiliating their deities leads to insulting Allāh. So the benefit of averting the insulting of Allāh is better than the benefit of us insulting their deities.

2. It is mentioned in the Hadīth of Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها that the Prophet ﷺ said: “O Ā'ishah! If your people had not been recent converts to Islām, I would have spent the treasure of the Ka'bah in the way of Allāh and would have constructed its door just on the level of the ground and would have encompassed in it the space of Hijr.”
(Agreed Upon)

In the hadīth is a clear evidence for this principle, as the Prophet withheld from the benefit of rebuilding the Ancient House [i.e. the Ka'bah] on the original foundation upon which Ibrahim built it in

order to avert the harm, and out of fear, that doing so would appear as if he was destroying it and rebuilding on it, and people would have fled from Islam or apostated due to this action. So the Prophet ﷺ gave precedence to preventing this evil than achieving the benefits.

3. The Prophet ﷺ sufficed from fighting the hypocrites due to the benefit in that for safeguarding the people from their harm, such as it being said that Muhammad ﷺ kills his companions.

4. The Prophet ﷺ forbade killing the leaders (of the Muslims) and revolting against their Imāms (i.e. leaders) even if they oppress, as long as they establish the prayer, in order to prevent the means to fitna and the wisdom in this was to prevent further corruption and harm; this is because what results in killing and revolting against leaders is double the evil than what the leader was doing in the first instance, and the Ummah is still reaping the effects of this to this day. The Prophet ﷺ said: *“If two Caliphs are pledged allegiance to then kill the last of them (who called for allegiance to be pledged to him)”*, in order to prevent the means to fitna (tribulation). Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah, after mentioning the different branches under the principle of preventing harm takes precedence over achieving benefits, mentioned that if the benefits and harms conflict then the most correct one in the situation will take precedence, he said ﷺ:

From the Usūl of Ahl us-Sunnah is to stick to the Jamā’ah, leave off fighting against the leader, meaning: the oppressive leader, and abandoning fighting during times of fitna and all of these are included with the general principle that if the benefits and harms, and the evil and good conflict, then the most correct option has to be selected. This is because enjoining and forbidding though they entail the attainment of some benefit, and the prevention of some harm, its opposite must also be considered. If, in carrying out this enjoining or forbidding, there is benefit lost greater than the benefit gained, or harm is brought

about greater than the harm which was avoided, then this is not part of that which Allah has ordered us to do, rather it is harām, because of the fact that its net harm is greater than its net benefit.

The only criterion for measuring the above-mentioned harm and benefit is with the scales of the Sharī'ah. Whenever one is capable of following a text directly, it is not permitted for him to turn elsewhere. If he cannot find a text for the exact problem confronting him, he can exert his reason to understand the ruling by way of analogy. The legal texts are seldom without someone capable of knowing their implications, and how they point the way to the rulings of the Sharī'ah. Thus, if an individual or group constantly joins something right with something else that is wrong, and will not do one without the other, and will either do both of them together, or neither of them, it is not then allowed to enjoin on them the right nor to forbid them the wrong. First, the issue must be analyzed: If the good involved is greater, then they must be enjoined to do it, even if that necessitates the evil which is of lesser degree, and they are not to be forbidden the evil involved which would mean the loss of the good which is greater than it. In fact such a forbiddance in such a situation would be part of blocking the path of Allāh and would be striving for the eradication of obedience to Allah and to His Prophet ﷺ and toward the elimination of the doing of good. On the other hand, if the evil involved is greater, it must be forbidden, even though that means the loss of some good which is of a lesser degree. In such a case, the enjoining of this good which brings with it an evil of greater degree is in fact enjoining evil, and striving in the path of disobedience to Allah and His Prophet ﷺ. If the good and the evil which cannot be separated are of equal degree, both of them should neither be enjoined nor forbidden. Thus, in the case of some good and some evil which cannot be separated, sometimes

what is demanded is enjoining the good, and sometimes forbidding the wrong, and sometimes neither this nor that.

This is not a general rule, and applies only to specific situations of the type mentioned. As for the general case, right must be enjoined absolutely and evil forbidden absolutely. For the specific individual or group, its good must be enjoined, and its evil forbidden, its praiseworthy aspects praised, and its blameworthy aspects criticized in such a way that the enjoining of right does not include the loss of a good greater than itself nor the bringing about of an evil of greater degree, and the forbidding of evil does not involve the bringing about of a greater evil or the loss of a good of greater degree.

An example of this is: the Prophet ﷺ leaving 'Abdullāh ibn 'Ubayy ibn Salūl and others like him among the leaders of hypocrisy and corruption because of their many helpers and people loyal to them. The removing of their evil through punishment would have brought on the removal of other good of greater degree because of the anger of his tribe and the arousal of their hostility (against the Prophet and the Muslims). Also, this would have resulted in the repulsion of the people when they heard that the Prophet of Allah kills his companions.¹

5. Principle: Fundamental Regulations and Subsidiary Issues Are Completed With Two Matters: Conditions and the Removal of the Preventative Factors.²

I say: this is an extraordinary principle in all of the Divinely Legislated regulations whether fundamentals or subsidiary, there has to be the existence of the principles and the removal of the preventative factors. So if a condition is present but there is also a preventative

¹ *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.28, pp.128-31; also see Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Amr bi'l-Ma'rūf wa'n-Nahy 'an al-Munkar*, p.21.

² *Sharh al-Qawā'id as-Sa'diyyah*, p.89.

factor, it is not correct to make a ruling. For example: the verses which mention the threats regarding the one who falls into any of the prohibited actions, will be of those who come under the category of the threat or promise. However, there can be something which prevents one from being punished such as tawbah, seeking Allāh's forgiveness or anything else which expiates sins. So for example: in Salāh, there has to be the conditions of tahārah and whoever wants to pray without tahārah cannot correctly pray due to the absence of the fulfilment of the conditions.

From these foundations: is takfīr, tabdī' and tafsīq "and it is an issue which intensifies fitna and inquisition, causes division and leads to the spread of desires and opinions."¹

The position of Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah who follow the Manhaj of the Salaf us-Sālih regarding Takfīr of the People of Innovation and those who have corrupted beliefs

There is quite some explanation² in regards to this topic which is that the people of innovation are not all on the same level.

¹ *Mawqif Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah min Ahl il-Hawā wa'l-Bida'*, vol.1, p.237.

² Within this topic is the opinion which completely negates *takfīr* to be made on anyone from the Ahl ul-Qibla and that no one from the people of Qibla should be made takfīr of. Then there is an opinion which views that there is absolute takfīr of the people of innovation and that all of them are kuffār outside the fold of Islām. Both of these opinions are incorrect and contradict the evidences from the Sharī'ah. Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله mentioned the error of attributing any of these two views to an Imām from the Salaf. Rather the correct view is that the matter needs some detailed investigation and this is the true view of the Imāms of the Salaf. See *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.7, pp.337-40.

- Some are eligible for takfir like the one who makes a statement of kufr or does an action and after the conditions have been correctly applied to him and the preventative factors removed.
- Then there are some who are not made takfir of because of the correctly applied removal of kufr from them.¹

The issue of takfir of the people of innovation and general takfir is based on two important foundations:

Firstly: Evidence from the Book and Sunnah which proves that a saying or action which has come from the one being ruled about necessitates takfir.

Secondly: Applying the ruling on a specific person who made a statement or done an action, after the conditions of takfir have been correctly applied to the person and the preventative factors removed.

These two foundations are also applied to a person when he is ruled as having innovation or sin, either of the two is applied and Allāh knows best.²

¹ *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.3, pp.352-53, vol.12, pp.497-98; *Sharh ul-'Aqīdah at-Tahāwiyyah*, pp.338-40 and also see the statements in regards to this issue in the book *Mawqif Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah min Ahl il-Ahwā wa'l-Bida* by the noble brother, Shaykh Dr. Ibrāhīm bin 'Āmir ar-Ruhaylī, vol.1, pp.163-235.

² *Ibid.*

THE POSITION OF THE SALAF TOWARDS THE INNOVATORS



Warning against the people of desires and innovation who oppose the Sunnah

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

“Whoever introduces anything into this affair of ours which is not from it, will have it rejected.”

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ also said:

“Whoever does an action which is not from our affair will have it rejected.” He ﷺ also said *“Whoever loves for Allāh, hates for Allāh and gives and withholds for Allāh has perfected Imān.”* - Narrated by Abū Dawūd.

He ﷺ also said:

“There was not a Prophet sent by Allāh to an Ummah before me except that he had helpers and companions who took hold of his Sunnah and followed his orders. Then after that came those who said that which they (Prophets) did not do and did what they were not ordered to do.” - Narrated by Muslim.

From Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ who said: The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

“There will emerge at the end of time people of young age who are foolish minded yet they will speak the best speech of the people. They will pass through Islām just as an arrow passes through its target, whoever meets them should kill them because with killing them is a

reward from Allāh on the Day of Judgment for whoever kills them.”¹

The meaning of this Hadīth is: Those (who will pass through Islām just as an arrow passes through its target) are the Khawārij whom the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ fought against with 'Ali Ibn Abī Tālib ؑ at the head at the Battle of Nahrawān.

These texts carry the meaning that the Imāms of the Salaf warned against innovation and the innovator; and these Imāms filled their books with warnings against innovation and its people, for example:

1. Muslim reported in his Sahīh from Yahyā bin Ya'mar and Humayd bin 'AbdurRahmān. Yahyā said to 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar ؓ: “There emerged before us a people who read the Qur'ān and associate themselves with knowledge,” and he mentioned their condition and that they claimed that there was no Qadr! Ibn 'Umar said “So if you meet them inform them that I am free from them and they are free from me. And that what 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar swears by is that even if one of them had the likes of Mount Uhud in gold and gave it away in charity, Allāh would not accept it until they believed in al-Qadr.”
2. From 'Umar bin al-Khattāb ؓ that he said: “Beware of the people of opinion for they are the enemies of the Sunnah and they do not preserve the Hadīth and speak from their own opinion, they are misguided and they misguide others.” Reported by Ibn Abī Shaybah.
3. Relayed by ad-Dārimī, al-Lālikā'ī and others from Abū Qilābah ؓ who said “A people do not innovate an innovation except that they make permissible the use of the sword (i.e. violence and killing directed towards the Muslims).”

¹ Reported by Muslim in *Kitāb uz-Zakāh*.

4. Ayyūb as-Sakhtiyānī said: "The people of desires (Ahl ul-Ahwā) are all Khawārij." He also said "The Khawārij differ in their names but are all united on the use of the sword (fighting and violence)."
5. From Sufyān ath-Thawrī ؓ said: "Innovation is more beloved to Iblīs than sin, because disobedience is repented from but innovation is not repented from."¹ Relayed by al-Lālikā'i.
6. He also relayed from Qatādah that he said: "O Ahwal! If a man begins an innovation then it has to be mentioned before it is warned against."
7. From al-Hasan who said: "Ahl ul-Ahwā (the people of desires) are on the same level as the Yahūd and Nasāra."²
8. 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azīz ؓ stated: "If you see a people having secret meetings about their religion without involving the general people then know that they are based on misguidance."
9. 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar ؓ said: "My heart has not been as pleased with anything from Islām as it has by being empty of desires."
10. 'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd ؓ stated "A people will come and leave the Sunnah like this (meaning by as much as an index finger) and if you were to leave them upon what they are upon they would come with major calamities."

The Imāms of the Salaf did not only refute the people of innovation and misguidance, they also warned people from sitting with them and listening to their words. Ad-Dārimī and Ibn Battah transmitted from al-Hasan ؓ that he used to say: "Do not sit with the people of desires!

¹ This is what Sufyān ؓ mentioned about *tawbah* not being accepted from the innovator because he (the innovator) does whatever he wants and views it as being the religion by which to get closer to Allāh. What also proves this is the saying of the Prophet ﷺ: "Allāh covers the *tawbah* from every person of innovation until he leaves his innovation."

² Meaning: from the angle that they vainly hold onto what they are upon and leave the Sunnah, not that they are kuffār.

Neither argue with them nor listen to them.” al-Ajurri and al-Lālikā’i transmitted from al-Hasan that he also said when a man asked him: “O Abā Sa’īd! I want to debate with you!” Al-Hasan said: “Woe be to you from me! As for me I know my religion yet the one who debates you has doubt in his religion.” Ismā’il bin Khārijah said: Two men from the people of desires visited Muhammad bin Sīrīn saying “O Abū Bakr! Shall we relate a Hadīth to you?” He replied “No!” They said: “Shall we recite an āyah from the Book of Allāh to you?” He replied “No! Either you both get up and leave or I’m going to leave!” So the two men got up and left, and some of the people asked, “What harm would it be if they recited an āyah?” He responded, “I hate that an āyah be recited which they have distorted and then it enters my heart.” ’Abdullāh ibn Imām Ahmad reported from Abū Qilābah ؓ that he said: “Neither sit with them nor mix with them! It is not safe as they will plunge you into their misguidance and confuse you with many things.”

These are some of the noble Prophetic ahādīth and statements of the Imāms of religion and righteousness from the Salaf and from the people of zuhd (asceticism) and wara’ (abstinence), in addition to what was mentioned before about the command to follow with the forbiddance to innovate. The license for cursing the people of innovation has also been indicated along with clarifying their condition to the people, rather this is obligatory and the religion cannot be established except with this. This is one of the avenues of jihād in the path of Allāh; Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah ؓ said:

So for example, the Imāms of innovation from the people who have statements which oppose the Book and the Sunnah or actions of worship which oppose the Book and the Sunnah, then their condition has to be clarified and it is obligatory to warn the Ummah against them by agreement of the Muslims. To the extent that it was said to Ahmad bin Hanbal: “If a man fasts, prays and secludes himself in the worship of Allāh, is this more beloved to you or talking about the people of innovation?” Imām Ahmad replied: “When a person prays, fasts and secludes himself

in worship then this is only for himself, yet if he speaks about the people of innovation this is for the Muslims and thus is more virtuous." He made clear that the benefit for this is for the general Muslims in their religion and is a type of jihād in the path of Allāh wherein the path of Allāh is purified along with His religion, His Methods and His Divine Legislation (from the heresies of the innovators) and it prevents their transgression and enmity. For this reason, it is obligatory according to the consensus of the Muslims, and if this was not established for Allāh to prevent the harms of those innovators then the religion would become corrupted and this harm would be much worse than the enemy during warfare gaining power. This is because when these enemies take control they do not corrupt the hearts or the religion that is within the hearts, but as for those (innovators) then they corrupt the hearts from the outset.¹

He also said ﷺ in another instance:

If an innovator is calling to his corrupted beliefs which oppose the Book and the Sunnah, and it is feared that he will misguide the people then his situation has to be explained to the people so that they are conscious of his misguidance and know about him. All of this is obligatory as a form of advice and seeking the Countenance of Allāh and not for personal desire with the people.²

The Salaf us-Sālih from the companions and the Tābi'ūn and those who followed them upon their manhaj reached consensus on censuring innovation and its people and warning against them and their people³

¹ *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.28, pp.231-32.

² *Ibid.*, vol.28, p.221.

³ *Ash-Shātibī, al-'Tisām*, vol.1, pp.141-42; also refer to the speech of Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah that has preceded wherein he mentioned warding off the transgression

in line with the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah, so it is obligatory to follow them in this.

of the innovator and that enmity towards him is obligatory, by the agreement of the scholars.

THE MANHAJ OF THE SALAF IN REFUTING THE OPPOSER



It was well-grounded with the Imāms of the Salaf ﷺ to refute the opposer, whether this opposer was from Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah¹ (like in fiqh issues or issues of 'aqīdah) or from Ahl ul-Bida'. This refutation of the opposer does not necessitate that the good points of the one being refuted be mentioned or counter-balancing between the good and bad points. Allāh praised the believers without mentioning their bad points and Allāh censured the disbelievers along with the hypocrites and the sinners without mentioning their good points. The Prophet ﷺ warned his Ummah from the people of desires without having to refer to their good points. The Prophet ﷺ even mentioned the bad points of two specific people and did not mention their good points out of advice.

From 'Āishah رضي الله عنها, who said: The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ recited the verse,

﴿ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخْرُ
مُتَشَبِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَبَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ

¹ This is a well-grounded principle with *Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah* and it is from the gateway of advice. The Book, the Sunnah and consensus indicate this basis of refuting the opposer. For further explanation of this topic of refuting the opposer refer to an excellent book *Manhaj Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah fi Naqd ir-Rijāl wa'l-Kutub wa't-Tawā'if* by Shaykh, al-'Allāmah, Dr Rabī' bin Hādī al-Madkhalī (hafidhahullāh) and another excellent book entitled *ar-Rad 'ala'l-Mukhālif min Usūl il-Islām*, by Dr Bakr Abū Zayd.

وَأَبْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ ۗ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۗ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ ءَأَمِنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا ۗ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٧﴾

“It is He who has sent down to you, [O Muhammad], the Book; in it are verses [that are] precise they are the foundation of the Book and others unspecific. As for those in whose hearts is deviation [from truth], they will follow that of it which is unspecific, seeking discord and seeking an interpretation [suitable to them]. And no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allāh. But those firm in knowledge say, ‘We believe in it. All [of it] is from our Lord.’ And no one will be reminded except those of understanding.” {Āli ‘Imrān (3): 7}

’Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها then stated: The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

“If you see people following that which is unspecific from it (i.e. the Book of Allāh) then they are the ones who Allāh named so be warned of them!” - This was reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim in their Sahīhs.

From Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه who said:

“At the end of time there will be people who will speak to you about matters which neither you nor your fathers have heard. So beware of them!” - This has been mentioned in the introduction of Imām Muslim.

It is well-known that the people of innovation are short of good points and as a result the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ neither referred to any nor mentioned any. He did not say “Benefit from the good they have”.¹

Al-Baghawī stated in his explanation of these two Hadīth:

¹ Shaykh, al-’Allāmah, Dr Rabi’ bin Hādī al-Madkhalī, *Manhaj Ahl us-Sunnah wa’l-Jama’ah fi Naqd ir-Rijāl wa’l-Kutub wa’t-Tawā’if*, p.18.

The Prophet ﷺ informed that there will be division of this Ummah and that the people of innovation and desires will emerge in the Muslim Ummah. He ruled that success will be in following his Sunnah and the Sunnah of his companions. Therefore it is for a Muslim person - if he sees a man doing anything from desires and innovation in beliefs, or making light of anything from the Sunnah - to abandon him and free himself from him and leave him as he will not be safe if he meets him. Therefore, he should not answer back to him if he begins talking until he stops his innovation and returns to the truth. The forbiddance of abandoning for more than three days when two men have a disagreement is with regards to the rights of companionship and family relations and not about the rights of the religion wherein abandoning the people of desires and innovation is permanent until they repent (from desires and innovations).¹

This is in regards to warning against the people of desires and innovation, as for the Prophet ﷺ mentioning the shortcomings of specific people without mentioning their good points, then:

1. 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها reported that a man sought permission to be allowed in to visit the Prophet ﷺ, and when he saw the man (from a distance), the Prophet ﷺ said: *"Let him in, what a bad brother of his tribe he is and what a bad son of his tribe he is."*² Al-Qurtubī said: "This Hadīth shows the permissibility of backbiting the accursed one who is an open sinner or immoral or the likes such as the callers to innovation."³ Imām an-Nawawī said: "This Hadīth shows the permissibility of

¹ Ibid., and *Sharh us-Sunnah*, vol.1, p.288.

² *Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Fitan*, vol.10, p.471.

³ *Fath ul-Bārī*, vol.10, p.452.

- mudārah (amicability) and backbiting the sinner due to his sin, and warning the people from him.”¹
2. When Fātimah bint Qays mentioned to the Prophet ﷺ that Mu’awiyah bin Abī Sufyān and Abū Jahm had proposed to her, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “As for Abū Jahm his stick never leaves his side (i.e. he was quick to discipline his family) and as for Mu’awiyah then he has no money, so marry Usāmah bin Zayd.” There is no doubt that these two men were virtuous and good, but when advising and consulting no more than the issues (being dealt with) needs to be mentioned (such as any good).
 3. From ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, that Hind bint ‘Utbah said “O Messenger of Allāh! Verily Abū Sufyān is a stingy man and does not give me or my son enough except if I take from him without him knowing.” The Prophet ﷺ replied: “Then take what is enough for you and your son in goodness.” Ibn Hajar said about this Hadīth: “It can be taken from this that it is permissible to mention a person’s shortcomings if it is out of seeking a ruling or due to complaining and the likes. This is one of the instances where it is permissible to backbite.”² The Prophet ﷺ did not object to her mentioning the bad points and he did not make her mention the good points of Abū Sufyān, even though he did have some.³

Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله stated:

Criticising the narrator of Hadīth with truth and the innovator is obligatory in the Divine Legislation, such as the Imāms of

¹ *Sharh un-Nawawī ‘alā Sahīh Muslim*, vol.16, p.144.

² *Fath ul-Bārī*, vol.9, p.509.

³ *Manhaj Ahl us-Sunnah wa’l-Jama’ah fī Naqd ir-Rijāl wa’l-Kutub wa’t-Tawā’if*, pp.20-21.

innovation from the people of heretical writings which oppose the Book and the Sunnah, they have to be exposed and the Ummah have to be warned against them by the agreement of the Muslims. It was said to Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal: "Is a man who fasts, prays and secludes himself in worship more beloved to you or speaking about the people of innovation?" Imām Ahmad replied: "When a person prays, fasts and secludes himself in worship then this is only for himself, yet if he speaks about the people of innovation this is for the Muslims and thus is more virtuous." He made clear that the benefit for this is for the general Muslims in their religion and is a type of jihād in the path of Allāh wherein the path of Allāh is purified along with His religion, His Methods and His Divine Legislation and it prevents their transgression and enmity. For this reason, it is obligatory according to the consensus of the Muslims and if this was not established for Allāh to prevent the harms of those innovators, then the religion would become corrupted and this harm would be much worse than the enemy during warfare gaining power. This is because when these enemies take control they do not corrupt the hearts or the religion that are within the hearts, but as for those (innovators) then they corrupt the hearts from the outset.¹

¹ *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.28, pp.231-32.

PRINCIPLES WHICH HAVE TO BE MAINTAINED FOR INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS



These principles¹ are in regards to restricting those people who have to be respected and restricting those who can be spoken about and criticised which is necessary at times and beneficial without having to mention their good points.

1. Who must be respected

Firstly: The Messengers and Prophets, may the peace and blessings of Allāh be upon them all.

Secondly: The noble Companions ﷺ. The Ummah only has love and adoration for them and Allāh greatly praised them in His Book which mentions their status, efforts, striving and giving in the path of Allāh. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ also praised them greatly as individuals and as a group, and the Imāms of Islām highlighted their virtues and characteristics and wrote many books about their virtues and status. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ forbade cursing them saying:

“Do not curse my Companions, for I swear by the One in whose hand is my soul, if any of you were to spend the weight of Uhud in gold, it still would not reach the measure of one of them or even one-half of it.” - It is agreed upon.

¹ These principles were mentioned Shaykh Rabi' al-Madkhalī in his book *Manhaj Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah fi Naqd ir-Rijāl wa'l-Kutub wa't-Tawā'if*, p.20 and the following pages.

Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah know the status of the companions and preserve this status, they also forbade delving into disputes which took place among the companions such as between Ali and Mu'āwiyah and whoever was with them. They affirmed that they have the reward of two Mujtahidīn and that speaking about them is deviation, misguidance and heresy.

Thirdly: Those who followed them in goodness from the Tābi'ūn who met the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and were guided by them such as the seven Fuqahā of Madīnah and those who followed their way in the different lands. Then after them were the Imāms of Hadīth, Fiqh and Tafsīr who followed the way of the Companions and the noble Tābi'ūn. And then those who followed their manhaj in beliefs and held firm to the Book and the Sunnah, stayed away from innovation, desires and its people, and defended the truth and its people up till today and until the order of Allāh comes. These are the ones who the Messenger of Allāh spoke about when he stated:

“There will not cease to be a group from my Ummah manifest upon the truth who will not be harmed by those who abandon them and differ with them until the command of Allāh comes.”

2. Who are permissible to criticise and warn the people against?

It is permissible, rather necessary, to speak about the people of innovation and to warn against them and their innovations individually and collectively, past and present such as: the Khawārij, Rawāfid, Jahmiyyah, Murji'ah, Karrāmiyyah and Ahl ul-Kalām [the people of speculative theology and rhetoric] who have corrupted beliefs like: ta'tīl [denial] of Allāh's Attributes or of some of them. The likes of these have to be warned against, their books have to be warned against and also the contemporary groups which follow these deviated ways. Connected to

this are those who support and defend them and mention their good and praise their personalities and leaders,¹ preferring their manhaj over the manhaj of the people of Tawhīd, Sunnah and Jamā'ah. Secondly: Narrators and witnesses - if they have been criticised then it is permissible to criticise them according to the consensus of the Muslims, rather this is obligatory. An-Nawawī and Ibn Taymiyyah رحمهما الله also related this.² If one follows what the Imāms of Islām established in their support of the religion such as refuting the innovators, one will find that the Imāms of Islām spoke about the people of innovations and about narrating and they did not make Muwāzanah (counter balancing between the good and bad points). These Imāms also wrote books in regards to Jarh wa't-Ta'dīl, aiding the Sunnah, refuting the people of innovation and their divisions. They also wrote books about fabricated narrations and they did not make Muwāzanah (counter-balancing) at all, rather they wrote books specifically on criticising and dispraising especially those who had been criticised. These books mentioned the criticism and did not make the condition of mentioning the good points of those who had been criticised.³

When one reads the books of the Imāms of the Salaf they will find warnings against innovation and those people who implement innovation. What is not found within these books is any mention of the person's good points along with his bad points and innovation, rather they mentioned the faults of writers, groups or individuals and did not refer to what good points they may or may not have had. Look what was written by Imām Ahmad and his son 'Abdullāh and what was written by al-Bukhārī in his book *Khalq A'fāl ul-'Ibād* and what was written by al-Khallāl, Ibn Khuzaymah in the books of Sunnah and Tawhīd. Also see what was written by Ibn Battah in *ash-Sharh* and *al-*

¹ This is if they know their condition and their opposition to the Sunnah.

² *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.28, p.324.

³ *Manhaj Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah fi Naqd ir-Rijāl wa'l-Kutub wa't-Tawā'if*, p.32 and also pp.33-34.

Ibānah and *Sharh 'Itiqād Usūl Ahl us-Sunnah* by al-Lālikā'ī and the *Muqaddimah* of *Sharh us-Sunnah* by al-Baghawī and the *Muqaddimah* of Ibn Mājah and *as-Sunnah* of Abū Dawūd in his book *Sunan* and *al-Hujjah fī Bayān il-Mahajjah* by Abī'l-Qāsim at-Taymī al-Asbahānī. Also see the works of Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn ul-Qayyim and Muhammad bin 'AbdulWahhāb and their positions and interactions with the people of innovation.¹

I say also: that the scholars of the Salaf refuted the groups of innovation, they refuted the Rawāfid, the Qadariyyah, Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah, Khawārij, Murji'ah, Ashā'irah, Māturīdiyyah and Sūfiyyah. In the same way the scholars of the Salaf refuted the heads of innovation such as Jahm bin Safwān, Bishr al-Marīsī, Ibn ul-Muttahir al-Hilli, ar-Rāzī and Ibn 'Arabī. The scholars of the Salaf also refuted al-Āmidī, al-Ghazālī, al-Bakrī, al-Ikhnā'ī, as-Subkī and others.

The Salafī 'Ulama of today follow the example of their Salaf us-Sālih in refuting the groups of innovation and the heads of innovation and misguidance. So they refute the groups of the Sūfiyyah and the contemporary groups of partisanship² who contradict the guidance of

¹ *Ibid.* p.70.

² Which have taken methodologies which contradict the Salaf us-Sālih, from what these well-known groups are based on is the principle of "Let's cooperate on what we agree on and excuse each other on the things that we disagree on". Based on this principle is a dangerous all-inclusive methodology which includes anyone who agrees with them on this principle. A result of this principle is incorporating many deviant sects and for there being no difference between a *Sūfi*, a *Rāfidī*, a *Mua'ttāl* (one who denies the Attributes), a *Mushabbihah* (one who compares Allāh to the creation) and a *Qubūrī* (grave-worshipper). Indeed, they even include the Christians and have tolerance of the Jews regardless of creed. To the extent that one of the heads of this manhaj stated: "Our enmity to the Jews is not based on religion" and this da'wah gives rise to the da'wah of unity between Sunni and Rawāfid, and then following up with *da'wah* to unity of religions and the likes which destroy the Islamic foundation of *al-Wala wa'l-Bara'*. From this group branched off extremist groups who follow the *manhaj* of the Khawārij and also groups who were too lenient and agreed with the Murji'ah in their beliefs.

the Prophet ﷺ and the guidance of his companions. They refute all who oppose the Sunnah and the guidance of the Salaf us-Sālih in small things and major things. These contemporary Salafī scholars have refuted the heads of innovation in this time and followed the correct manhaj without making Muwāzanah between the good and bad points. From the best which has been written on this issue is *Manhaj Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah fī Naqd ir-Rijāl wa'l-Kutub wa't-Tawā'if* by the Shaykh, al-'Allāmah, Dr. Rabī' bin Hādī 'Umayr al-Madkhalī. The well-known 'Ulama of this era have supported the method of criticism that was mentioned by Shaykh Rabī, such as: the Shaykh, al-'Allāmah, Imām 'Abdul'Azīz Bin Bāz ر.ه.ه، Shaykh al-'Allāmah Muhammad Nāsiruddīn al-Albānī ر.ه.ه and the Shaykh, al-'Allāmah Sālih al-Fawzān and others. The Shaykh, al-'Allāmah, Imām 'Abdul'Azīz Bin Bāz was asked the following question:

In regards to the manhaj of Ahl is-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah in criticising the people of innovation and their books, is it obligatory to mention their good points and bad points, or just their bad points?

Answer:

It is well-known from the speech of the people of knowledge to criticise the bad points and warn against them, and to clarify the mistakes in which they erred in, in order to warn against those errors. As for the good points, then it is well known that the good is accepted however the intent in warning against their mistakes like that of: the Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah, Rawāfid and their likes. So if it is necessary to explain anything true that they have then this should be explained, such as if one asks "What true things do they have? In what matters do they agree with Ahl us-Sunnah?" and if the one who asks knows this, this should be made clear. However, the most important issue is to explain their falsehood that they have in order to warn the questioner about them and so that he does not incline towards them.

Another person asked:

There are some people who make counter-balancing (between good and bad points) an obligatory method, so that when you criticise an innovator to warn people against him you also have to mention his good points so as to treat him justly.

Imām Bin Bāz رحمته الله responded:

No, it is not necessary! It is not necessary! For this reason, when you read the books of Ahl us-Sunnah you will find that the main intent was to caution. Read the books of al-Bukhārī like *Khalq Afāl ul-'Ibād* in *Kitāb ul-Adab fi's-Sahīh*, read the book *as-Sunnah* by 'Abdullāh ibn Ahmad, read *at-Tawhīd* by Ibn Khuzaymah and read the refutation of 'Uthmān ibn Sa'id ad-Dārimī on the people of innovation and other works. They all mention the intent of warning against their (the innovators) falsehood and not to mention their good points. The main intent is to warn from their falsehood and their good points have no value whatsoever for the one who disbelieves, if his innovation makes him a disbeliever then his good deeds are worthless. Yet if the innovation does not make him a disbeliever then he is in a dangerous situation. The intent is to clarify the mistakes which have been warned against.¹

¹ *Muqaddimah an-Nasr al-'Azīz*, p.8 transmitted from a recorded lesson from the Shaykh which was given in 1413 AH/1992 CE in Tā'if. The Shaykh رحمته الله wrote many refutations against innovations and various Islamic parties such as the book *at-Tahdhīr min al-Bida'* and *Naqd Qamiyyah al-'Arabiyyah* and many refutations of those who call to Mawlid and ignorant celebrations and of various sects. You will not find any *Muwāzanāt* (counter balancing between good and bad points) within these works, this is the way of Shaykh Bin Bāz رحمته الله and the way of the Shaykh, al-'Allāmah Sālih al-Fawzān in his refutations and debates and also of others from the scholars of this country in following of the scholars of the *Salaf* رحمته الله.

Al-'Allāmah Shaykh Sālih al-Fawzān (hafidhahullāh) was asked, after being asked about groups:

O Shaykh! Shall we warn against them without mentioning their good points for example? Or do we mention both their good and bad points?

Answer:

If you mention their good points it is as if you are calling to them, so no! Do not mention their good points just mention their mistakes because you have not been entrusted to study their circumstances and support their personalities. You have been entrusted to clarify their errors in order for them to repent and in order to warn against them. As for mentioning their good points then the people will then say "This is what we want to take." - Extracted from *Muqaddimah an-Nasr il-'Azīz*, p.8 transmitted from the cassette of the third lesson of *Kitāb ut-Tawhīd* which was given by the noble Shaykh in the Summer of 1413 AH/1992 CE in Tā'if.

The noble Shaykh 'Abdul'Azīz al-Muhammad as-Salmān ربه was asked:

Is there a condition of making Muwāzanah between the good and bad points when speaking about the innovators in the manhaj of the Salaf?

Answer:

You should know, may Allāh grant you, me and all the Muslims success, that this (Muwāzanah) is not known from the Salaf us-Sālih, neither from the Companions, the Tābi'ūn or those who followed them in goodness, that they praised any of the people of innovation or had allegiance to them. This is because the people of innovation sicken the hearts and it is feared that one may mix with them or be connected to them, which may lead to them also becoming

sickened. So all of the people of innovation have to be warned against and some of them have to be abandoned such as: the Jahmiyyah, Rāfidah, Mu'tazilah, Māturīdiyyah, Khawārij, Sūfiyyah, Ashā'irah and those who are upon their ways which have deviated from the way of the Salaf. So it is incumbent on a Muslim to warn them and to be warned from them.

So from what has been mentioned from the 'Ulama of the Salaf past and present is that it is clear that Muwāzanah is not from the manhaj of the Salaf when criticising the people of falsehood, and that Muwāzanah leads to dangerous and serious corruptions such as:

1. Ignorance of the way of the Salaf.
2. Accusing the Salaf of oppression and injustice.
3. Praising innovation and its people and hatred of the Imāms of the Salaf and the true Sunnah that they were upon.¹

¹ Shaykh Rabī' al-Madkhālī, *al-Mahajjah al-Baydā' fī Himāyat is-Sunnah al-Ghurā'*, p.127.

THE TIMES WHEN BACKBITING AND CRITICISING IS PERMISSIBLE ACCORDING TO THE 'ULAMA OF ISLĀM



Imām an-Nawawī stated:

You should know that *ghībah* (backbiting) is allowed for genuine Divinely Legislated reasons and it is not possible to do it except with these reasons, they are six which are:

1. Complaining when wronged.
2. When seeking help in order to change an evil and to make a sinful person return to the truth.
3. When seeking a fatwa.
4. When warning Muslims from evil and giving them advice.
5. That the person being spoken about is doing the sin or innovation openly.
6. When defining a person if the person is well-known by a particular attribute such as: al-'A'ma (the blind one), al-'A'raj (the one with the limp), al-Asamm (the deaf one), this is permissible in order to define them.

Then Imām Nawawī said:

These six reasons have been mentioned by the 'Ulama and most of them are agreed upon and their evidences are from the authentic and well-known Hadīth. ¹

I say: Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned that it is permissible to backbite the innovator with two conditions:

¹ *Riyād us-Sālihīn*, p.519.

1. Knowledge.
2. Good intention.

He said:

The one who speaks in this matter should have knowledge and good intention, for if a person speaks the truth but merely intends status in the earth and corruption then he has the same position as the one who fights for showing off; yet if he speaks for Allāh's sake being sincere to Him in religion, then he is one of the Mujāhidūn in the path of Allāh and of the inheritors of the Prophets and of the Khulafā' of the Messenger. This issue differs from the saying of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ when he said: "Backbiting is saying something about your brother that he hates", because the brother is a believer, and the brother of a believer, if he is truthful in his īmān, he will not hate the truth that Allāh and His Messenger loves. He has to be just and stand up as a witness for Allāh even if it is against his own self, parents or relatives. When one hates the truth about himself then he is deficient in his Imān and also in his brotherhood... if he hates what Allāh and His Messenger love then the love of Allāh and His Messenger come first, as Allāh says,

﴿ وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُرْضَوْهُ ﴾

"But Allāh and His Messenger are more worthy for them to satisfy..." {at-Tawbah (9): 62}¹

We end this lesson with mentioning what Shaykh Bakr Abū Zayd (hafidhahullāh) highlighted in the ninth study in his book *Hajr ul-Mubtadi*, p.48 on the punishment for associating with an innovator:

...just as the one who speaks with falsehood is a Shaytān speaking, the one who is quiet about the truth is likewise a

¹ *Majmū' al-Masā'il wa'r-Rasā'il*, vol.5, p.281.

silent Shaytān, as Abū 'Alī ad-Diqāq (d.406 AH) stated! From the verified Sunnah is the statement of the Prophet ﷺ: "A person is with whom he loves" and Anas ؓ stated: "The Muslims were not pleased with anything after Islām except this Hadīth." The Imāms were stern on whoever contradicted the basis of belief and did not abandon the innovators. Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah refuted the Ittihādiyyah saying:

All who are attached to them must be punished along with those who praise them and their books and along with those who help and assist them, or those who hate speaking about them, or those who make excuses for them by saying "This speech is unknown" and "it is not known who made these disparaging statements" and the likes of such excuses which are not uttered except by a jāhil or hypocrite! Rather, all who know their condition (of the innovators of the Ittihādiyyah) and do not help to oppose them have to be punished. This is because opposing them is from the greatest obligations because they (the Ittihādiyyah) corrupt the minds and religion of many scholars, kings, rulers and they thus strive throughout the earth causing corruption and they block people from the path to Allāh.¹

Shaykh Bakr then said:

May Allāh have mercy on Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah and bless him to drink from the Salsabīl of Paradise, Āmīn. These words are of the utmost precision and importance... so all who manifestly praise an innovator, or praise his books and distributes them among the Muslims and spread their

¹ Ibid., vol.2, p.132.

innovation and misguidance and does not expose the deviations in belief that they have – then whoever does this is negligent and has to be abandoned so that he does not affect the Muslims. We have been tested in this era with people who praise the innovators and distribute their statements and writings and neither warn against them nor from their misguidance... we seek refuge in Allāh from misery and its people.¹

¹ *Hajr ul-Mubtadi*, pp.48-9.

NOTES

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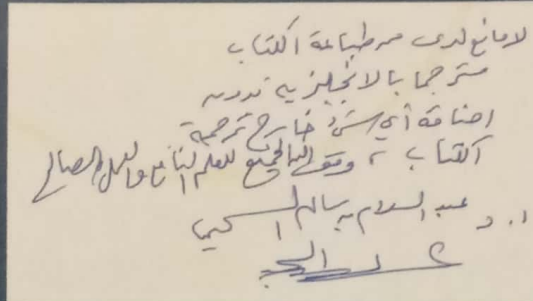
A series of horizontal lines for writing notes. The lines are black and set against a white background. The top line is curved, while the subsequent lines are straight. There are 20 lines in total, providing a space for handwritten notes.

1. *Before Nicea*, by AbdurRahman Bowes and AbdulHaq al-Ashanti (2005).
2. *The Impact of Man-Made Laws in the Ruling of an Abode as Being One of Kufr or Islam*, by Shaykh Khālid al-'Anbarī (2006).
3. *Who's in for Iraq?* by Shaykh Abdul'Azīz bin Rayyis ar-Rayyis (2007).
4. *A Warning Against Extremism*, by Shaykh Sālih Āli Shaykh (2008).
5. *A Critical Study of the Multiple Identities and Disguises of 'al-Muhajiroun'*, by Abu Ameenah AbdurRahman as-Salafi and AbdulHaq al-Ashanti (2009).
6. *The Noble Women Scholars of Hadīth*, by Shaykh Mashhūr Hasan Āl Salmān. (2010).
7. *The 'Aqīdah of Imām an-Nawawī*, by Shaykh Mashhūr Hasan Āl Salmān (2010).
8. *The Beautiful Advice to the Noble Salafis of the West*, by Shaykh 'Abdul-Azīz ar-Rayyis (2010).
9. *Shirk According to the 4 Madhhabs*, by Shaykh, Dr Muhammad al-Khumayyis. (2011).

10. *What the Notables Have Narrated About not Going to the Rulers*, by Imām Jalāluddīn as-Suyūṭī (2011).
11. *'Abdullah el-Faisal al-Jamayki' - A Critical Study of his Statements, Errors and Extremism in Takfīr*, by Abu Ameenah AbdurRahman as-Salafī and AbdulHaq al-Ashanti (2011).
12. *The Fiqh Madhhab of Ahl ul-Hadīth*, by Shaykh Mashhūr Hasan Āl Salmān (2011).
13. *7 Reasons Why Al-Muhajiroun Are Deviants*, by Abu Ameenah AbdurRahman Sloan and AbdulHaq al-Ashanti (2011).
14. *A Critique of the Methodology of Anwar al-'Awlaki and his Errors in the Fiqh of Jihad*, by Abu Ameenah AbdurRahman Sloan and AbdulHaq al-Ashanti (2011).
15. *Be A Serious Salafī*, by Shaykh 'AbdusSalām bin Sālīm bin Rajā' as-Sihaymī (2011).
16. *The Ash'arīs in the Scales of Ahl us-Sunnah*, by Shaykh Faisal bin Qazār al-Jāsīm (Forthcoming).

BE A SERIOUS SALAFĪ

[Authorised Translation]



(Authorisation from the Author)

“It is a must for every Muslim to: follow the Book and the Sunnah with the understanding of the Salaf us-Sālih. I participated in giving some lessons at the Sharī'ah College at the Islamic University of Madīnah and, all praise is due to Allāh, delivered a number of lessons related to the correct manhaj (methodology), the manhaj of the Salaf us-Sālih. This is because Salafiyyah means: following the Islamic religion based on the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and those who followed them in their manhaj. Some brothers impressed upon me to publish these lessons so I revised it and appended to it with that which was relevant to the topic, I also saw that it be appropriate to name the book 'Be a Serious Salafi' and I ask Allāh to provide me with sincerity in speech and action and to bless us and the Muslims as a whole with beneficial knowledge and righteous actions and to bring benefit with what I have written.”

Excerpt from the Author's Introduction

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