

an introduction to the salafi da'wah

Introduction

The Salafi Da'wah is that of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. It is the Religion of Islam - pure and free from any additions, deletions or alterations. It is to adhere to the Path of the Messenger (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) and of the True Believers (as-Salaf us-Salih). As-Salaf is a collective term referring to the Pious Pioneers in Islam and all those who follow in their footsteps in belief, actions and morals. Allah said, "Whoever contends with and contradicts the Messenger after guidance has been clearly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that of the Faithful Believers, We shall leave him in the Path he has chosen and land him in Hell, what an evil destination! [An Nisa 4:115].

Shaiikh ul-Islam ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullah) commented on this ayah: "All who contradict and oppose the Messenger (S), after the right path has been clearly shown to them, have followed other than the Path of the Believers. And all who follow other than the Path of the Believers have contradicted and opposed the Messenger (S). If one thinks that he is mistaken in following the Path of the Faithful Believers, he is in the same position as one who thinks that he is mistaken in following the Messenger (S)."

Who are the "Salaf?"

As-Salaf us-Salih (or briefly: the Salaf) refers to the first and best three generations of Muslims. They are the Companions (Sahabah) of the Prophet (S), their immediate followers (Tabiun), and the followers of the Tabi'in. These were praised by the Prophet (S): *The best of people is my generation, then those who come after them, then those who come after them* [Bukhari and Muslim]. The term Salaf applies also to the Scholars of Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah after the first three blessed generations who followed their way in belief and practices.

Allah said, **The first to embrace Islam of the Muhajirin (those who migrated from Makkah to al-Madinah in obedience to Allah) and the Ansar (the citizens of al-Madinah who gave aid to the Muhajirin), and also those who follow them in the best way; Allah is well pleased with them, and they are with Him [At-Tawbah 9:100].**

Among these scholars are (the number following the name is the Hijri year of death): *Abu Hanifah (150), al-Awzai (157), ath-Thaumi (161), al-Laith bin Sad (175), Malik bin Anas (179), Abdullah bin al-Mubarak (181), Sufyan bin Uyaynah (198), ash-Shafi'i (204), Is'haq (238), Ahmad bin Hanbal (241), al-Bukhari (256), Muslim (261), Abu Dawud (275), Ibn Taymiyyah (728), adth-Dihababi (748), Ibn ul-Qayyim (751), Ibn Kathir (774), Muhammad bin 'Abdil Wabbah (1206) and his many students, and, in our time: 'Abd ul-'Aziz bin Baz, Muhammad Nasir ud-Din al-Albani and others.*

Who are the "Salafis?"

The description "Salafi" applies to one who truly attaches himself to the Salaf. This attachment is not to an arbitrary single person or group of people. It is an attachment to that which will never err - to the guidance of Muhammad (S), his Sahabai, and their true followers. Likewise, the Salafi Da'wah is not blind following of any particular Shaikh or Imam. It is adherence to the Qur'an and Sunnah as understood and practiced collectively by as-Salaf as-Salih. A true Salafi values Tawhid, singling out Allah in all acts of worship: in supplication, in seeking aid, in seeking refuge in times of ease and hardship, in sacrifice, in making vows, in fearing and hoping and total reliance, and so on. A true Salafi actively seeks to remove shirk (polytheism) with all his capacity. He knows that victory is not possible without true Tawhid, and that shirk cannot be fought with the likes of it (i.e., with another form of shirk). A true Salafi adheres to the Sunnah of the Prophet (S) and of his companions after him.

The Prophet (S) said, *Adhere very closely to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly guided successors after me; bite on it with your molar teeth, and beware of the newly invented matters.* [Authentic; recorded by Abu Dawud and at-Tirmidhi]. Whenever there is a difference of opinion, a true Salafi refers matters to Allah and His Prophet (S), acting in accordance with the ayah: **If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger if you do believe in Allah and the Last Day, that is better and more suitable for final determination [An-Nisa 4:59].** He gives precedence to the Word of Allah and of His Prophet (S) over the opinion of anyone else, in according with the ayah: **Believers! Do not put your opinions forward ahead of Allah and His Messenger, and fear Allah. Verily Allah is All-Hearing and All-Knowing. [Al-Hujurat 49:1].**

A true Salafi revives the Sunnah of the Prophet (S) in his worship and behavior. This makes him a stranger among people, as the Prophet (S) has described: *Islam began as a stranger, and it will revert to being a stranger just as it began. So give glad tidings to the strangers.* [Recorded by Muslim]. *And he (S) said in another narration: So give glad tidings to the few, those who purify and correct what the people have corrupted of my Sunnah.* [Authentic; al-Albani's as-Silsilat us-Sahihah number 1273].

A true Salafi enjoins the good and forbids the evil. He warns people, out of deep concern, about shirk, innovations, misguided ways, and of deviant, destructive groups: Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong [Aal Imran 3: 104]. A true Salafi constantly seeks Allah's forgiveness, makes true repentance, remembers Allah abundantly, and rushes to perform the righteous deeds in order to purify his soul. Thus he attempts to follow the ayah: Truly he succeeds who purifies it (i.e., the soul) [Ash-Shams 91:8].

A true Salafi worships Allah out of a combination of Fear, Hope and Love. Allah says: Call upon Him, with Fear and Hope. [Al-Araf 7:56]. And He says (what means): There are people who take [for worship] alleged rivals to Allah, loving them as only Allah should be loved. But the Believers love Allah more than all else. [Al-Baqarah 2:165]. A true Salafi is not of the Khawarij who consider most Muslims to be kafirs (disbelievers) because of committing sins. He is not of the Shiah who revile the Sahabah, who claim that the Qur'an has been altered, who reject the authentic Sunnah, and who worship the Prophet's Family. He is not of the Qadariyyah who deny qadar (the Divine Decree). He is not of the murjah who claim that iman is only words without deeds. He is not of the Mu'attilah who deny Allah's Attributes. He is not of the Sufis who worship graves and claim Divine incarnation. He is not of the Muqallidun who insist that every Muslim should adhere to the Madhab of a particular imam or shaikh, even when that madh'hab conflicts with the clear texts of the Qur'an or authentic Sunnah.

Thus the true Salafs are Ahl us-Sunnati wal-Jamaah. They are the Aided, Victorious Group and al-Firqat un-Najiyah (the Saved Party) which have been described in several hadiths. The Messenger (S) said: *A group from my Ummah (nation or community) will always be aided with victory as they continue to persevere upon the Truth; they will not be harmed by those who abandon them or those who oppose them.* [Recorded by Muslim]. And he (S) said: *This Ummah will split into seventy three parties, all of which will go to Hell - except for one party: the one which will follow the same path as what I and my companions are following today.* [Authentic; recorded by Abu Dawud, at-Tirmidhi, and others]. In one report he (S) described this Saved Party as: ... except for one party, which is the Jama'ah. Upon comprehending this, a Muslim has no option but to be salafi. In doing so he attaches himself to that group which has been guaranteed success, victory, salvation and safety from the Fire.

The Fundamental Principles of the Salafi Da'wah **The Salafi Da'wah stands upon the principles of Tawhid and Tazkiyah.** **Tawhid**

Tawhid means to accept and believe in the oneness of Allah and in the uniqueness of His Message. It means to worship Allah alone, and to worship Him in accordance with His legislation. Tawhid encompasses the following principles:

1. To believe in Allah's existence and ownership of the creation, which is sometimes referred to as the Tawhid of Rububiyyah (Allah's being the only True Lord or Rabb). Allah says (what means): Praise be to Allah (T) the Lord of the Worlds. [Al-Fatihah 1:2]. And He says (what means): Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is in charge of all things. [Ash-Shura 42:11].
2. To believe that Allah possesses the attributes of perfection and the Most Excellent Names, as mentioned in the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah, and in accordance to their literal Arabic meanings without denial of these attributes or likening them to the attributes of His creation. This is sometimes referred to as the Tawhid of Asma' and Sifaat (Names and Attributes). Allah says (what means): Say: He is Allah the One, Allah the Self Sufficient Master (whom all creatures need). He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is nothing comparable to Him. [Al-Ikhlās 112:1-4]. And Allah also says (what means): There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer. [Ash-Shura 42:1 1].
3. To believe that Allah is the only one worthy of worship and full obedience, which is sometimes referred to as the Tawhid of 'Ubudiyyah or 'Ibadah (worship), or of Ilahiyyah or Uluhiyyah (state of being the only True God or Ilah). Allah says (what means): And the Mosques are for Allah (alone) so do not invoke anyone along with Allah. [Al-Jinn 72:18]. and He says: Whoever looks forward to meeting his Lord, let him do righteous deeds, and let him not ascribe unto anyone a share in the worship due to his Lord [alone]. [Al-Kahf 18:110].
4. To believe in the uniqueness of Prophet Muhammad's (S) Message and in the obligation to follow him exclusively. This is sometimes referred to as the Tawhid of Ittiba' (adherence). Allah said (what means): Say: If you really do love Allah then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. [Al-Imran 3:31].

The Salafi Manhaj (methodology) maintains that these forms of Tawhid are inseparable from one another. They are the essence of the meaning of the testimony: *"La ilaaha illa 'Llah, Muhammadun Rasulu 'Llah"* (There is none worthy of being worshipped except Allah, and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger). The Salafi methodology places special emphasis on the Tawhid of Ittiba' because of the general tendency among many Muslims

to neglect it. Thus it emphasizes the following items.

1. Belief that the revelation to the Prophet (S) is the final revelation, and that it is composed of two complementary and inseparable parts: the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The Prophet (S) said: *I have indeed been given the Quran and, along with it, something similar to it. [Authentic; recorded by Abu Dawud and ad-Darimi]. And he (S) said: As long as you hold fast to two things which I have left among you, you will never go astray: Allah's Book and my Sunnah. [Authentic; recorded by al-Hakim].*

2. Belief that obedience to the Messenger must be absolute, and that his position is unapproachable by anyone else among humanity. The Prophet (S) is alone to be obeyed and followed. All beliefs, statements, deeds and morals which conflict with his teachings are to be rejected and avoided. Believers! Obey Allah and His Messenger and do not turn away from him when you hear (his Message). **[Al-Anfal 8:20].**

3. Directing perfect love to Prophet Muhammad (S), which should be exhibited in adherence to his commands, swiftness in obeying him, putting his statements above and ahead of all others, studying his Sirah, and studying and implementing his Sunnah in everyday life. The Prophet (S) has said: *None of you believes until I become more beloved to him than his father, child and all mankind. [Recorded by Muslim].*

It is unfortunate that true adherence to the Way of the Prophet (S) has weakened in the Ummah and true love for him has all but disappeared because of:

- Abandoning his Sunnah and removing it from our daily lives, belittling it, and developing an attitude of pride and arrogance toward it.
- The spread of numerous unsubstantiated and fabricated hadiths among Muslims.
- The spread of many bid'ahs (innovations) among Muslims.
- Blind following of a specific madhab (Taqlid).
- Delivering Islamic verdicts without knowledge or evidence.
- Ceasing to implement the Shari'ah (Islamic laws) throughout the lands of Islam and replacing it by the ways and laws of the Kuffar (disbelievers).

Tazkiyah

Tazkiyah, on the other hand, means to be purified or to purify oneself by adhering to Allah's commands. In its best form, it would be to worship Him with complete surrender, submission, and devotion. This is a great favor that Allah bestowed on this Ummah. Allah did confer a great favor upon the believers when He sent a Messenger (i.e., Muhammad (S)) from amongst themselves reciting unto them His signs (i.e., the Quran) and purifying them (from sins and ignorance by adopting his way) and instructing them in the Quran and the Sunnah while before they had been in manifest error. **[Al 'Imran 3:164].** The following points should help clarify the true meaning of Tazkiyah.

1. The Qur'an and Sunnah are the only sources for Tazkiyah.

2. The Prophet (S) is the purest of mankind in his soul. His character reflected the teachings of the Qur'an. Therefore, he is our model for Tazkiyah. Allah says (what means): Indeed in the Messenger of Allah is a beautiful pattern of conduct to follow for anyone whose hopes lie in Allah and the Last Day and who remembers Allah abundantly. **[Al-Ahzab 33:21].**

3. The Prophet's Companions and the rest of the Salaf are, as a group, a fine model to be followed in Tazkiyah.

4. There is no way of drawing closer to Allah except by adhering to what Prophet Muhammad (S) came with. The Prophet (S) has said: *If anyone introduces into this affair of ours (i.e., the religion of Islam) anything which does not belong to it, it will be rejected from him. [Recorded by Muslim].*

5. There is no way to attain Tazkiyah but through the teachings of Islam. Allah says (what means): O you who believe! Enter into Islam wholeheartedly (i.e., obey all the regulations of Allah and His Messenger) and follow not the footsteps of Shaytan. Verily! He is to you an open enemy. **[Al-Baqarah 2:208].** Thus there can be no Tazkiyah through deviant approaches of various groups, such as the Sufis who have corrupted the beliefs and practices of the Muslims.

6. The Salafi Manhaj represents the true exemplification of piety. It is Iman without hypocrisy, purity without corruption.

The Aims and Objectives of the Salafi Da'wah

The Salafi Da'wah is not a political party or a new madh'hab. Rather, the Salafi da'wah is that of Islam in its totality, addressing all humanity irrespective of culture, race, or color. It is the complete and perfect methodology of understanding Islam and acting according to its teachings. Consequently, the aims of the Salafi Da'wah are no different than those of the Da'wah of Islam. Therefore the Salafis remain distinct from the various sects and groups in the way and methodology of their Da'wah. They call to Islam as a whole - to its correct understanding and implementation. Misguided groups and deviant sects emphasize and call to particular aspects of Islam, thereby neglecting its other aspects to suit their own needs, as well as losing sight of the purpose and perspective for which they have been created; which is, as Allah has stated (meaning): I have not created Jinn and people except (for this purpose): that they may worship Me. **[Adth-Dharyyat 51:56].** And He has said (what means): And they were not commanded except with this: that they should worship Allah (alone), being

sincere in His Din and being Hanif (upright, true and conscientiously turning away from Shirk). [Al-Bayyinah 98:5]. This, in essence, is the call of all the Prophets: calling to the Tawhid of Allah, to the annihilation of shirk, to sincerity in His worship, to obedience to His Messengers, and to adherence to their way. This is also the essence of the Salafi Da'wah. This can further be itemized into the following practical objectives:

1. Return to the sublime Qur'an and to the Prophet's authentic Sunnah, and comprehend them both in accordance with the understanding and practice of as-Salaf: This conforms with what Allah said, If anyone contends with the Messenger even after the Guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that of the believers, We shall leave him in the path he has chosen, and land him in Hell: What an evil abode! [An-Nisa 4:115]. And: So if they believe as you believe (the companions of the Messenger (S)), they are indeed on the right path. [Al-Baqarah 2:137].

2. Caution Muslims and exhort them to cleanse their lives of all forms of: shirk (polytheism), bid'ahs, and philosophy or other thoughts alien to the pure, essential tenets of Islam. This is a duty that Allah enjoined upon us: Help you one another in righteousness and piety, but do not help one another in sinning and transgression. [Al-Maidah 5:2].

3. Cleanse the Sunnah of the weak and fabricated narrations. The problems referred to in this and the previous point have marred the clarity of Islam and have prevented the progress of Muslims. This puts on us the responsibility referred to by the Messenger (S): *A trustworthy group from every generation will carry this knowledge, expelling from it the alterations made by those going beyond bounds, and the false claims of the liars, and the misinterpretations of the ignorant.* [Authentic recorded by Ibn Adiy and others].

4. Educate Muslims and urge them to comply with the true Din, to act according to its teachings, and to adorn themselves with its virtues and ethics. This will ensure Allah's acceptance and will realize for them happiness and honor, as indicated in the following: By the passing time, man is indeed in [a state of] loss, except those who attain to faith and do good deeds, and those who enjoin upon one another the keeping to truth, and enjoin upon one another patience in adversity. [Al 'Asr 103:1-3].

5. Strive to revive Islamic thought within the boundaries of Islamic principles, and oppose stubborn adherence to madh'hab and prejudiced loyalty to parties. These problems have diverted Muslims from the pure original sources of Islam, and have deviated them from the honest Islamic brotherhood called to by Allah: And hold fast all together, by the rope of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves. [Al 'Imran 3:103]. And by His Messenger (S): *Be, worshippers of Allah, one brethren.* [Al Bukhari and Muslim].

6. Present realistic Islamic solutions to contemporary problems, and strive to resume a true Islamic way of life and to establish a true Islamic society governed by Allah's law. Allah said: Hence, judge between them in accordance with what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their errant views. [Al-Maidah 5:49].

Misconceptions about the Salafi Da'wah

1. Calling as-Salafiyah a "movement" or "movements." It should be clear to all that the Salafi Da'wah is Islam, no more and no less. It is the True Islam with all its teachings and implications. Anyone who talks about it as an outsider might as well talk about Islam as an outsider! It is the teachings of the Qur'an and the authentic Sunnah in the light of practices and understanding of as-Salaf: A "movement" is meant to indicate something temporal or reactionary, whereas the Salafi Da'wah is the only true and constant and blessed Da'wah of the prophets.

2. Thinking or claiming that the Salafs are followers of a fifth madhab which is attributed to Ibn Taymiyyah or Ibn Baz or al-Albani. This is a grave misconception. As stated above, the Salaf sources are the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the methodology of as-Salaf: If these scholars rely in their ijihad on these sources then we take what they say, not because they said it, rather because Allah or His Messenger said it or called to it directly or indirectly through the known channels of ijihad. The same applies to all scholars throughout the ages. We take from them all what conforms with the Qur'an and the Sunnah and we reject what does not.

3. The Salaf Da'wah is against all forms of 'asabiyyah and hizbiyyah (baseless allegiance for parties, factions, races, nations, etc). The only allowed allegiance is to Allah and His Messenger and to what stems from it. The leader of all Salafis is Muhammad (S). Anyone else will be respected and obeyed in as much as he obeys Allah and His Messenger. Claiming that the Salafi Da'wah calls its followers to be disorganized and chaotic in their behavior is another misconception. Work has to be organized and orderly, as was taught by the Messenger (S) on many occasions, but it should avoid the hizbiyyah disease described above.

4. The Salafi Da'wah puts a strong emphasis on tarbiyah (education and cultivation). This is not a mere academic educational process; rather, it is a complete process which is meant to raise committed Muslims who understand their Din and who practice it in the best possible way.

We ask Allah to guide us to the truth, to steady our feet, and to forgive our shortcomings.

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