

The Definition of the word ‘Salaf’

Imam as-Sam‘ānī رحمه الله said: “As-Salaf: This term refers to the first generation among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, then the Tabi‘een (their students), then the followers of the Tabi‘een. These are called the Salaf; anything after them is not called Salaf.” [al-Ansāb, 3/273]. And Imam al-Lalika‘ī رحمه الله clarified that: “What is meant by ‘the Salaf’ is the people of the first generations, upon whom Allah’s pleasure descended, those whom Allah described in His Book and praised in many places, and whom His Messenger ﷺ described with nobility, goodness, and virtue.” [Sharh Usul I‘tiqad Ahl al-Sunnah, no. 2]

And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “The best people are my generation, then those who come after them, then those who come after them...” [Bukhari 2652, Muslim 2533]

Allah presents those early generations as the example to be followed: “And the first forerunners among the Muhājirīn and the Ansār and those who followed them with good conduct—Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him...” [9:100]

Imam Ibn al-Mubarak رحمه الله said: “As for the foundation upon which the religion is built—it is following those who came before (the Salaf).” [Sharh Usul I‘tiqad Ahl al-Sunnah]

And Imam Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله explained: that “Salaf refers to the earliest generations of this Ummah, and whoever follows their path in belief, worship, and character is upon their way. There is no blame upon one who identifies as Salafi, for the way of the Salaf is nothing but truth.” [Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā, 4/149]

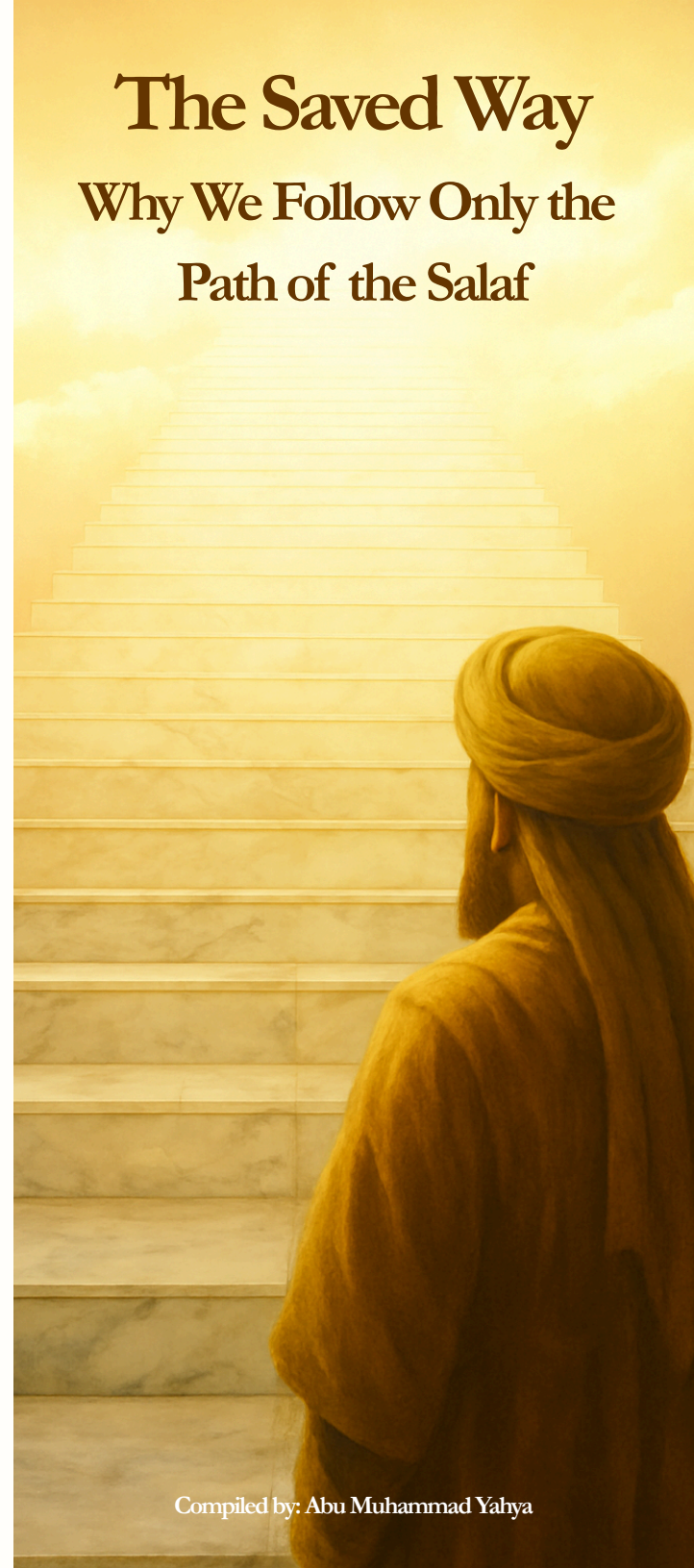
Signs of Being Upon the Saved Sect

- 1. Pure Tawhid (Islamic Monotheism):** They single out Allah alone in worship, without any partners—rejecting all forms of shirk (association). “So worship Allah, making the religion purely for Him.” [40:14]
- 2. Strictly Following the Qur’an and Sunnah:** Not just in belief, but in worship, character, and daily life—without additions or omissions.
- 3. Returning Every Issue to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ:** “If you disagree over anything, refer it back to Allah and the Messenger.” [4:59]
- 4. Following the Sahabah and the Righteous Imams:** Such as the Tabi‘een and those upon their way—not later sects groups or individuals.
- 5. Opposing Innovation, desires and Rejecting New Ways:** They warn against and stay far away from all bid‘ah, desires and sectarianism or Partisanship (hizbiyyah). The Prophet ﷺ said: “Every bid‘ah is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the Fire.”
- 6. Unity Upon the Truth, Not Numbers or Names:** Imam al-Fudayl ibn ‘Iyad رحمه الله said: “Stick to the path of guidance, and do not be harmed by how few walk it.”
- 7. Taking Knowledge Only from Reliable Scholars:** Avoiding the innovators and people of desires.
- 8. Emphasizing Brotherhood, Manners and Sincerity:** They are known for honesty, humility, and genuine concern for the Ummah.



The Saved Way

Why We Follow Only the Path of the Salaf



Proof That the Truth Is With the Salaf

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

Imam al-Awzaa'i رحمه الله said: “You must follow the footsteps of the Salaf, even if people reject you. Beware of the opinions of men, even if they beautify them with their speech..”

The Hadith of the Saved Sect

The Prophet ﷺ said: “My Ummah will split into seventy-three sects, all of them will be in the Fire except one.” They asked, “Who are they, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied: “They are those who are upon what I and my Companions are upon today.” [Tirmidhi 2641]

The Prophet ﷺ warned that every group except one will be misguided. That safe group follows the exact teachings and example of the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions. It is the only salvation.

Imam al-Barbahari رحمه الله said: “Know that Islam is the Sunnah, and the Sunnah is Islam, and one of them cannot be established without the other.” [Sharh us-Sunnah, no. 1]

Why Are All Other Groups Threatened With the Fire? Every sect that leaves this path—by inventing bid‘ah, following personal desires, or introducing new interpretations—has departed from the Sunnah and the saved way of the Salaf. True unity and salvation are not found in numbers but in returning back to the Salaf.

Learning Islam from the Salaf

Ibn ‘Abbas رضي الله عنهما said: “Indeed, the people will continue to remain upon goodness as long as they take their knowledge from their elders, their trustworthy ones, and their scholars. But when they take it from their young ones and evil ones, they will be destroyed.” [Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, al-Kifayah fi ‘Ilm ar-Riwayah, also Ibn Abd al-Barr in Jāmi‘ Bayān al-‘Ilm, 2/110]

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal رحمه الله said: “The fundamentals of the Sunnah with us are holding fast to what the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ were upon, and to emulate them.” [Usūl as-Sunnah]

Ibn Sīrīn رحمه الله said: “This knowledge is religion, so look to whom you take your religion from” [Muslim; Introduction, Sunan ad-Darimi, Sharh Usul I’tiqad Ahl al-Sunnah by al-Lalika’i]

Returning the Ummah Back to the Salaf

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever lives among you will see much differing. So stick to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly guided Caliphs after me.” [Abu Dawud 4607]

And he ﷺ said: “Whoever turns away from my Sunnah is not from me.” [Bukhari 5063, Muslim 1401]

True success, unity, and Allah’s pleasure are found only by returning to the original Islam—the pure way of the Prophet ﷺ, his Companions, and the righteous generations who followed them. Any other path leads only to confusion and division. The way of the Salaf is the only path to salvation and pleasure of Allah.

Clarifying What Salafiyyah Is Not

Salafiyyah is not a new sect, extremism, or “Wahhabism.” It means following Islam exactly as revealed to the Prophet ﷺ—nothing more, nothing less—by holding to the Qur’an and Sunnah as understood by the earliest generations.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “A group from my Ummah will remain manifestly upon the truth, unharmed by those who oppose them, until the command of Allah comes.” [Bukhari 3641, Muslim 1920] This means the original path will always remain; it is not a new group or movement and that those who adhere to it will not be harmed by those who oppose them.

The Role of Brotherhood, Manners & Ikhlas

The Prophet ﷺ said: “None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” [Bukhari 13; Muslim 45]. He ﷺ also said: “Nothing will weigh heavier on the Scale than good character.” [Abu Dawud 4799]

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله said: “Deeds without sincerity and correct following are like a traveler carrying sand—it does not benefit him.” [Madarij as-Salikin]

The Salafi path is balanced—neither extreme nor negligent. It combines purification of the heart, sincere worship, excellent manners, and true brotherhood, while also being unwavering and firm against bid‘ah and false desires. This balance safeguards the purity and sincerity of Islam and protects the unity of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah.