THE SALAFI METHODOLOGY
ITS DEFINITION, DISTINCT CHARACTERISTICS AND CALL TOWARDS RECTIFICATION

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Its Call Towards Rectification

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Indeed, the praise is for Allāh. We praise Him, we seek His aid and His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allāh from the evils of our own souls and from our evil deeds. Whomsoever Allāh guides, then none can misguide him and whosoever Allāh misguides, then none can guide him. And I testify that none has the right to be worshipped besides Allāh alone, without any partner, and I further testify that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger (ﷺ).

To proceed:

So this is a translation of my book, *The Salafi Methodology: Its Definition, Distinct Characteristics and its Call Towards Rectification*, into the English language. It was carried out by [...]1 Hasan Husayn as-Somali – may Allāh keep him safe. And since I am not proficient in the English language and I am not grounded in it, then the translation is his responsibility. Indeed, I have given him permission for this translation and the printing of this book.2 I ask Allāh to place his effort and his action in his scale of good deeds and to accept from us righteous deeds done for His noble Face. Indeed, He is the All-Hearing, the One who answers the supplication.

Written by:
Muḥammad Ibn ’Umar Sālim Bāzmūl
13 of Rajab, 1431H
Makkah al-Mukarramah, al-’Awālī

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1 **Publisher’s Note:** The honorific titles mentioned here were left out at the request of our brother, Hasan as-Somali.

2 **Publisher’s Note:** The translation of this book was a co-operative effort between brothers: Hasan as-Somali and Qaasim Mutiva.
Indeed, all praise is due to Allāh. We praise Him, seek His aid, assistance and His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh from the evil within ourselves and the evil of our actions. Whoever Allāh guides cannot be led astray and whoever Allāh misguides then no one can guide him. I bear witness that there is nothing worthy of worship except for Allāh without any partner. And I bear witness that Muḥammad (نبيّ) is His servant and Messenger.

"O you who believe, fear Allāh as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims."

[Sūrah Āl-İmran 3:102]
“O people, fear your Lord who created you from a single soul and created from this soul its mate and sent forth from the two of them many men and women. And fear your Lord through whom you demand your mutual rights, and [fear Allāh] concerning the ties of kinship. Indeed, Allāh is always observing you.”

[Sūrah al-Nisā’ 4:1]

"O you who believe, fear Allāh and speak directly and forthright. He will rectify your affairs and forgive you of your sins. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger has [truly] achieved a great achievement."

[Sūrah al-Āhzāb 33:70-71]

As to what follows:

The most truthful speech is the speech of Allāh, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad. The most evil of affairs are the newly invented matters and all newly invented matters are considered religious innovation (bid’ah) and every religious innovation (bid’ah) is misguidance and all misguidance is in the Hellfire.

To proceed: This is a book that was written concerning the Salafī methodology, its definition, distinct characteristics and its call towards rectification. I presented it to those of my brothers who were participating in the scholarly educational seminar in al-Zulfi in the year 1429 H/2008 CE during the Islāmic month of Rabī’ al-Thānī from the 26th to the 28th [May 2nd-4th].

I have compiled it to include three primary objectives and a conclusion.
The First Objective: The definition of the Salafī methodology, its principles, the ruling concerning adhering to it and the mention of its virtue.

The Second Objective: The distinguishing characteristics of the Salafī methodology.

The Third Objective: The call towards rectification that exists within the Salafī methodology.

The Conclusion: Words of some of the Imāms pertaining to adhering to the Sunnah and learning the Religion.

I ask that Allāh grants everyone success, steadfastness and guidance.

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The First Objective
The Definition of the Salafi Methodology, its Principles, the Ruling Concerning Adhering To it and the Mention of its Virtue

The word ‘methodology (manhaj)’ refers to a way and a clear path. In this context, it is considered a pathway and a clearly defined course that leads towards the knowledge of a particular affair. The term Salafi is an ascription to the Salaf. In the Arabic language everyone who preceded you from your forefathers and relatives are considered your Salaf [predecessors]. The plural of Salaf is sullaf or aslaf. The phrase al-Qawm al-Sullaf [in Arabic] means: The people who have preceded you.

An example of this is ‘Abd al-Rahmān Ibn ‘Abdullāh al-Salāfī (d.576H) the famous Scholar of hadith, and there are others from amongst the Scholars of the past who have formally used this ascription to the Salaf [the pious predecessors].

So the intended meaning here is what the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was upon, his Companions and those who followed them upon righteousness.

Therefore, the Salafi methodology is the path through which devout observance of the way of the Messenger (ﷺ) and his companions can be achieved. Or [it can also be said that] the Salafi Methodology is to traverse upon the path of the Companions and imitate them in the way that they used to follow the Messenger (ﷺ) and apply the narrations.

Linguistically, Salafi is an ascription to the Salaf. This term can often be found in the speech of the people of knowledge in many places. The term Salafiyyah [or salafism] is what the people of hadith are upon, those who are the people of the Sunnah and the Jamā‘ah. These are some of the names that are used to describe the people of the Sunnah and the Jamā‘ah:
• Ahl al-Ḥadīth (The people of ḥadīth)
• Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah
• Al-Salafiyūn
• Atbā' al-Salaf (The followers of the Salaf)

Allāh (ﷻ) said:

وَمَن يُشاقِقُ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهَدَىَ وَيَتَبَعَ غَيْرَ سَبِيلٍ

الْمُؤْمِنِينَ تُولِّئُونَهُ ما تَوَلَّى وَنُضَلِّهِ بِجِهَةٍ وَسَآءَتْ مَصِيرًا

“And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has been made clear to him, and follows other than the way of the Believers; We will direct him towards the path which he has chosen, and burn him in Hell - and what an evil destination..” [Sūrah al-Nisā’ 4:115]

The way of the believers is firstly and foremostly describing what the Companions were upon. So abandonment of their way is deemed as following other than the path of the Believers.

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, “Cling to my Sunnah and the way of the rightly guided Khulafā’ [Caliphs] who will come after me”

Abū Hātim Ibn Ḥibbān (d.354H) -  - stated, “In his statement (ﷺ), ‘Cling to my Sunnah,” which he (ﷺ) mentioned when speaking about the differing that will occur within his Ummah is a clear illustration that whoever continuously sticks to the Sunnah, speaks in accordance with it and does not turn away from it [to delve into] opinions will be from the

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1 This ḥadīth is Hasan (sound). It is narrated upon the authority of al-‘Ir ṣād Ibn Sāriyah (ﷺ). It was collected by Ahmad in the Musnad (4/126-127), al-Dārimī (no. 2676) in the introduction, al-Tirmidhī (no. 2676), Abū Dāwūd (no. 4607), and Ibn Mājah (no. 42 and 45). Al-Albānī has authenticated this narration in Irwā’ al-Ghālīl (8/107, no. 2455).
Saved Sect on the Day of Resurrection - may Allāh favour us to be amongst them.”

Then he [Abū Ḥātim Ibn Ḥibbān] entitled a chapter, ‘A mention of the narrations that explain what is obligatory upon the individual as it relates to adherence to the Sunan of Muḥammad (ﷺ), and safeguarding oneself from anyone who rejects [the Sunan] from the people of innovation (bid‘ah), even if they attempt to beautify this and make it seem pleasing to his eye.‘¹

Thawbān stated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, “There will always remain a group from my Ummah steadfast and manifest upon the truth. They are unharmed by those who desert them and they will remain like this until the order of Allāh is established.”²

Abū ʻĪsā al-Ţirmidhī (d.274H) said, “This hadīth is Hasan ʻAḥīh. I heard Muḥammad Ibn Ismā‘îl say: I heard ‘Alī Ibn al-Madīnī (d.234H) say...He mentioned this hadīth, ‘There will always remain a group from my nation steadfast and manifest upon the truth.’ ‘Alī said: ‘They are the people of ʻAḥādīth.’”³

Mu‘āwiyyah Ibn Abī Sufyān stood up amongst us and said, “Indeed the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) stood up before us and said, ‘Verily, those who preceded you from the People of the Book divided into seventy-two sects; and this nation will divide into seventy-three sects. Seventy-two of these sects will inhabit the Hellfire and one will be in Paradise. And this is the Jamā‘ah.”⁴

¹ ʻAḥīh Ibn Ḥibbān (1/180).
² This hadīth is mutawātīr, refer to Iqtiḍā’ al-Şirāţ al-Mustaqīm (p. 6) and Naẓm al-Mutanāthir min al-ʻAḥādīth al-Mutawātīr (p. 93).
³ Sunan al-Ţirmidhī (no. 2229).
⁴ ʻAḥīh li ghayrīhi (authentic due to supporting narrations) and some have pointed to the fact that it could be considered mutawātīr. It was collected by ʻAḥmad in his Musnad (4/102), Abū Dāwūd (no. 4597) and al-Ājurri in his book al-Shar‘īyyah (1/132, no. 31) of the checked edition. This narration has been authenticated by the person who checked the book Jāmi‘ al-Uṣūl (10/32) and by al-Albānī in Silsilah al-Aḥādīth al-ʻAḥīḥah (no. 204). Al-Albānī also mentioned a number of hadīth that strengthen this narration. Refer to Naẓm al-Mutanāthir min al-ʻAḥādīth al-Mutawātīr →
Al-Tirmidhî reported upon the authority of ‘Abdullâh Ibn ‘Umar that the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) said, “There will come a time for my nation which will resemble what befell the children of Isrâ‘îl step by step. Verily, the children of Isrâ‘îl divided into seventy-two sects; and this nation will divide into seventy-three sects. All of them will reside in the Hellfire except for one. They asked: ‘Who are they O Messenger of Allâh?’ He replied: ‘Those who are upon what I am upon and my Companions.’”}

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(p. 32-34). Refer to The Status of the People of Hadeeth - Their Feats and Praiseworthy Effects in the Religion by Rabî’ Ibn Hâdî, Salafi Publications.
The Fundamental Principles of *Salafiyyah*

The *Salafi* methodology stands upon three fundamental principles:

1. **The First**: Sincerely directing all worship to Allah (ﷻ) alone.
2. **The Second**: Holding fast to the *Jamā’ah*, and hearing and obeying [the Muslim rulers].
3. **The Third**: Being extremely cautious of innovation (*bid’ah*) and the people of religious innovation.

From the evidences that provide textual support for these fundamental principles is the following:

Al-‘Irādíd Ibn Sāriyah (ﷺ) said, “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) admonished us one day after the early morning prayer. The admonition was heartfelt and eloquent and caused the eyes to shed tears and the hearts to tremble. A man from amongst us said, ‘Certainly, it is as if this is a farewell admonition, so with what do you advise us, O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?’ He replied, ‘I advise you to fear Allah and to listen and obey those in authority over you even if it were an Abyssinian slave. Indeed, whoever from amongst you lives long will witness much differing. And beware of newly invented matters for surely they are misguidance. Whoever from amongst you lives to witness this, then cling to my Sunnah and the way of the rightly guided Khulafā’ [Caliphs] who will come after me and grab hold of it with your molar teeth.’”

Suhayl Ibn Abī Śāliḥ said upon the authority of his father who narrated from Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, “Indeed, Allah loves for you three things and despises for you three things. He loves for you that you worship Him alone and that you do not associate any partners with him; that you hold on to the rope of Allah altogether; and that you advise those who have been placed in authority over you.

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1 This *hadīth* is established and the sources have already been mentioned.
Allāh despises for you gossip, the wasting of wealth and incessant questioning.”

These three principles have been explicitly mentioned in the narration of Zayd Ibn Thābit (ﷺ) who said, “I heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) say, ‘Allāh will brighten the face of the one who hears from us a hadīth (narration), memorizes it and then conveys it to others. Perhaps, the one who conveys it does not comprehend it, and perhaps the one carrying fiqh conveys it to one who has more understanding than himself. There are three characteristics which when present the heart of a Muslim will never harbor any vindictive feelings: Sincerely performing an action for Allāh, advising those who have been placed in authority over you and holding fast to the Jamā‘ah. Indeed their call protects all those behind them.’”

These three characteristics encompass everything that the people’s Religion and their worldly affairs are built upon. Shaykhul-Islām Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb (d.1206H) said, “There is no deficiency in a person’s Religion or worldly affairs except due to a discrepancy in these three things or some of them.”

There is no doubt that following the legislation of Islām requires abandonment of innovation (bid‘ah) and its people. Here is an explanation of these principles:

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1 Related by Mālik in his Muwaffa (no. 1863), Āḥmad in his al-Musnad and collected by Muslim (no. 1715) without his saying, “And that you advise those who have been placed in authority over you.”

2 This hadīth has been transmitted with chains which are authentic, chains which are ḥasan (sound) and others which are ma‘lūlah (defective) upon a group of the Companions. This hadīth is mutawātir (frequently narrated). Refer to the treatise Dirāṣah Ḥadīth Naḍḍara Allāh ‘Imra‘an by Shaykh ‘Abdul-Muhsin al-‘Abbād.

3 Masā’il al-Jāhiliyyah, which is part of the collection entitled Majmū‘ al-Tawḥīd al-Najdiyyah; al-Maktabah al-Salafīyyah print, Egypt, (p. 236-237).
The First Principle
Establishing the Worship of Allāh (ﷻ) Through Adherence to the Book (the Qur’ān) and the Sunnah According to the Understanding of the Pious Predecessors (al-Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ)

Establishing this involves solely worshipping Allāh without directing worship to other than Him, and to only worship Him in the manner that He has legislated. This is the actualization of the phrase which indicates absolute sincerity, “I bear witness that there is nothing worthy of worship except for Allāh; and I bear witness that Muḥammad (ﷺ) is His servant and Messenger.” Thus, the Religion is established upon two foundations:

1. That we do not worship anything except Allāh.
2. That we do not worship Allāh except in the manner that He legislated.

This is the first fundamental principle that the Salafi methodology is built upon: The establishment of Allāh’s worship by following His legislation. Those who oppose this stray away from the Straight Path.

Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, “Indeed I have left behind me two things and you will never go astray after them: The Book of Allāh (the Qur‘ān) and my Sunnah. The two will never separate until they meet me at the ʿHawḍ (Pool).”¹

Ibn ʿAbbās (ﷺ) narrated that, “The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) delivered a khutbah (sermon) to the people during his farewell sermon wherein he said, ‘O people, I have left you with something that if you adhere to it,

¹ Collected by al-Dāraquṭnī in his Sunan (4/245), al-Mustadrak (1/284, no. 324) and al-Bayhaqī in al-Sunan al-Kubrā (10/114). It was also mentioned in Majmaʿ al-Zawā’id (9/163). This hadith is raised to the level of ʿHasan li ghayrihi (sound due to other supporting narrations).
you will never be misguided: The Book of Allāh (the Qur’ān) and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ).”

Kathīr Ibn ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr Ibn ‘Awf narrated from his father who narrated from his grandfather that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, “I have left you with two things you will never stray so long as you cling to them: The Book of Allāh (the Qur’ān) and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ).”

Whoever clings to the Book of Allāh (the Qur’ān) and the Sunnah will be guided. The Companions were the most knowledgeable people concerning them both. So whoever follows the Book of Allāh (the Qur’ān) and the Sunnah upon the understanding of the pious predecessors (al-Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ) will be safe.

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1 Related by al-Bayhaqī; see the previous footnote.
The Second Principle
Holding Fast to the Jamā‘ah, and Hearing
And Obeying [the Muslim Rulers]

The [People of Sunnah] hold fast to the Jamā‘ah and fulfil the rights of those who have been placed in authority, and the greatest of these rights and the most serious of them is obeying those in authority so long as they do not command with disobedience.¹

Allāh (ﷻ) said,

"O you who believe! Obey Allāh and obey the Messenger, and those in authority from among you. And if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, then refer it back to Allāh and His Messenger, if you believe in Allāh and in the Last Day. That is the best and most suitable determination.” [Sūrah al-Nisā’ 4:59]

¹ The meaning of the statement “There is no obedience to the ruler if he commands with something which is considered disobedience to Allāh,” is that there is no obedience in that particular affair which involves disobeying Allāh. So if he [the ruler] commands with something that is impermissible, then it is compulsory that he not be obeyed in that affair because obeying Allāh is the greater of rights. However, it should not be understood from this that if he commands with disobedience that there is no hearing and obeying him whatsoever. Rather, he is to be absolutely obeyed unless he commands with disobedience, and in that specific scenario he is not to be heared or obeyed. Refer to Mu‘āmalah al-Hukkām (p. 78).
In this āyah is proof that it is obligatory to hear and obey [those in authority] when they command with something so long as it does not oppose obedience to Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ).

‘Alī (ﷺ) narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) dispatched a military party and appointed a man from the Anṣār as its leader. He commanded them to obey the man who was appointed. Later the man who was appointed to lead them became angry and said, “Didn’t the Prophet (ﷺ) command you all to obey me?” They responded saying, “Of course.” He then said, “Then I have decided that after you have gathered firewood and started a fire, you should enter into it.” So they gathered the firewood and started the fire but when they were just about to enter the fire, they began to look at one another. Some of them said, “Certainly, we have followed the Prophet (ﷺ) in an effort to flee the fire so should we really enter it?” While they were in this state, the cinders of the fire died down and the anger of their appointed leader abated. This was mentioned to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he said, “If they had entered into that fire, they would never have left it. Obedience is only to be observed in the matters that are good.”

Ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Hearing and obeying is obligatory so long as [a person] is not commanded with disobedience. If someone is commanded with disobedience, then there is no hearing or obeying.”

The Messenger (ﷺ) placed a great deal of emphasis upon the importance of obeying the Muslim leader to the extent that he made holding fast to the jamā’ah of the Muslims and their leader a means of safeguarding oneself from the callers to the gates of the Hellfire.

Busr Ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh al-Ḥadramī said: Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī said that he heard Ḥudhayfah Ibn al-Yamān (ﷺ) saying, “The people used to ask the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) about the good but I used to ask him about the evil out of fear that it might reach me. So I asked him, ‘O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), certainly we lived in a period of ignorance and evil, but

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1 Related by al-Bukhārī (no. 2955) and Muslim (no. 1839).
Allāh provided us with this good. Will there come after this good any evil? He said: 'Yes.' I said: 'And after this evil will there be any good?' He said: 'Yes but it will be tainted.' I said: 'What will taint it?' He said: 'There will be a people who seek guidance in other than my guidance. You will recognize some of what you see from them and rebuke other things.' I said: 'Then after that good will there be evil?' He said: 'Yes, callers to the doors of the Hellfire, whoever answers their call will be thrown into it.' I said: 'O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), describe them for us.' He said: 'They are from our own people and they speak with our tongue.' I said: 'So with what do you command me if this were to reach me?' He said: 'Hold fast to the jama'ah of the Muslims and their Imām.' I said: 'What if there is no jama'ah or an Imām?' He said: 'Then abandon all of the factions even if this means that you have to bite onto the root of a tree until death overtakes you, and you are in this state.'

In another transmission of this narration we find the obligation of hearing and obeying the Muslim rulers even if they were to take your wealth and beat your backs.

Abū Sallām said: Ḥudhayfah Ibn al-Yamān (ﷺ) said, "I said, 'O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), indeed we were in [a period of] evil and Allāh gave us this good that we are currently in. Will any evil appear after this good?' He said: 'Yes.' So I said, 'Will there be any evil after this good?' He said: 'Yes.' So then I said, 'So then will there be any evil that will follow that good?' He said, 'Yes.' I said, 'How [will this occur]?' He said: 'There will appear after me Imāms who do not follow my guidance, nor will they follow my Sunnah. There will arise from amongst them men whose hearts are like the hearts of devils yet they are in the bodies of men.' I said, 'How shall I conduct myself, O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), if I were to reach such a time?' He said: 'Hear

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1 One should pause at the description of the callers to misguidance. The Messenger (ﷺ) instructed us to hold fast to the jama'ah when the callers to misguidance are numerous. This is the way to successfully safeguard oneself from the trial and tribulation of these individuals, and not by declaring the leaders of the Muslims to be disbelievers, revolting against them or by turning the hearts of the people against them.

2 Related by al-Bukhārī (no. 3606).
and obey the leader even if he were to beat your back and take your
wealth. Listen and obey!”¹

Further support for the narration of Abū Sallām came in the form of a
narration transmitted by Khālid Ibn Khālid al-Yashkurī who said, “I set
out at a time when Tustar (Shushtar)² had been conquered and
continued until I arrived in al-Kūfah. I entered the mosque [of al-Kūfah]
and found myself in a gathering of individuals and there was one man
that stood out. He had nice teeth and was clearly from the men of the
Hijāz. So I inquired: ‘Who is this man?’ The people replied: ‘Do you not
know him?’ So I said: ‘No.’ Then they said: ‘This is Hudhayfah Ibn al-
Yamān, the Companion of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).’ Then I sat down
while he spoke to the people, and he said: ‘Indeed the people used to
ask the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) about the good but I used to ask him
about the evil.’ Then the people began to reprimand him for this. He then
said to them: ‘I shall inform you concerning what you have found
strange. Islām came at the time that it did and appeared before us as an
affair that was distinctly different from the period of ignorance. I was
given understanding of the Qur’ān, so when men used to come and ask
about the good I used to ask [the Prophet (ﷺ)] about the evil. I said to
him: ‘O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), will there come after this good any evil
just as there was evil that existed before it?’ He said: ‘Yes.’ I then said:
‘Then what will protect us, O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)?’ He said: ‘You
will find protection in the sword.’ Then I asked: ‘Will any of this remain
after the use of the sword?’ He said: ‘Yes. There will be corrupt
leadership and there will be an unstable agreement.’ I said: ‘Then
what?’ He said: ‘Then callers to misguidance will come forth. If at that
time Allāh has decreed that there should be a Khalīfah (Caliph) who
beats your back and takes your property, then obey him. Otherwise,
you should die biting on to the root of a tree.’ I said: ‘Then what?’ He
said: ‘The Dajjāl (Anti-Christ) will appear with a river and a fire.
Whoever enters his fire will receive his reward and be relieved of his
burden; and whoever enters his river will be assured of his burden and

¹ Related by Muslim (no. 1847).
² Translator’s note: Tustar or Shustar as it is pronounced in Persian is the greatest
city of Khūzestān which is a province of modern day Iran situated near the Kūrūn
River in southwest Iran. See Mu’jam al-Buldān (2/29-31).
be deprived of his reward.’ I said: ‘Then what?’ To which he replied: ‘Then a mare will not deliver a foal that can grow old enough to be mounted except that the Hour will be established.’”\footnote{1} The term [الصُّدَّعُ من* [اَرْطُُّبَان]] mentioned in this narration refers to a specific description or type of man.

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) instructed us to obey the Muslim leader even if we see from him things that we dislike to the extent that we should not raise a single hand in disobedience of him.

‘Afw Ibn Mālik (ﷺ) narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, “The best of your Imāms [leaders] are those whom you love and those who love you; they are those whom you supplicate for and those who supplicate for you. The worst of your Imāms are those whom you dislike and those who dislike you; they are those whom you curse and those who curse you.” It was said, ‘O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), should we not overthrow them with our swords?’ Then he said: “No, so long as they establish the prayer amongst you. If you see something from your leaders that you dislike, then you should dislike his action without raising a hand in disobedience.”

In a similar narration, “The best of your Imāms are those whom you love and those who love you; they are those whom you supplicate for and those who supplicate for you. The worst of your Imāms are those whom you dislike and those who dislike you; they are those whom you curse and those who curse you.” They said, “We said: ‘O Messenger of

\footnote{1} Related by Ahmad in the Musnad (5/386) and Ibn Ḥibbān (al-İhsān, 13/298). This hadīth has been authenticated by Ibn Ḥibbān and also the person that checked al-Ihsān. In the completion of this narration comes the wording of his statement: “Then what will protect us, O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)? He said: You will find protection in the sword.” Qatādah (d.104H) considered this a reference to the apostasy that occurred during the time of Abū Bakr. And concerning his statement, “There will be corrupt leadership and there will be an unstable agreement.” This is a reference to a truce. His statement, “unstable or tainted,” refers to the existence of resentment and malice. The benefit of this narration is that it provides support for the narration of Abū Sallām who narrated upon Ḥudhayfah. So the [problem of] the breakage in the chain is resolved - and Allāh knows best.
Allāh (ﷺ), should we not overthrow them with our swords if that happens?” He said, “No, so long as they establish the Prayer amongst you. No, so long as they establish the Prayer amongst you. Whoever has someone placed in authority over him and then witnesses them committing an act of disobedience to Allāh, then they should detest the disobedience of Allāh that he committed but he must not raise a single hand in disobedience.”

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) placed great emphasis upon the importance of hearing and obeying the Muslim rulers to the extent that he made this issue a means for entering Paradise.

Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, “All of my nation will enter Paradise except for those who refuse.” They said, ‘And who would refuse?’ He said, “Whoever obeys me enters Paradise and whoever disobeys me has certainly refused.”

Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, “Whoever obeys me has obeyed Allāh and whoever disobeys me has disobeyed Allāh. Whoever obeys my amīr (appointed leader) has obeyed me and whoever disobeys my amīr has disobeyed me.”

So examine - may Allāh have mercy upon you - how the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) established a connection between obeying him and obeying the Muslim leader, and disobeying him and disobeying the Muslim leader. Similarly, examine the way that he established a connection between his obedience and entering Paradise, and likewise his disobedience and refusing to enter Paradise.

The end result is: Whoever obeys the Muslim leader has obeyed the Messenger (ﷺ), and whoever obeys the Messenger (ﷺ) enters Paradise. Whoever disobeys the Muslim leader has clearly disobeyed the

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1 Related by Muslim (no. 1855).
2 Related by al-Bukhārī (no. 7280) and Muslim (no. 1835).
3 Related by al-Bukhārī (no. 7137) and Muslim (no. 1835).
Messenger (ﷺ), and whoever disobeys the Messenger (ﷺ) has clearly refused to enter Paradise.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) considered the abandonment of the solemn pledge of support (bay'ah) and disobeying the Muslim leader abandonment of the jamā'ah [community] of the Muslims; and this is a door that leads to leaving the Religion.

‘Abdullāh narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, “The blood of a Muslim who bears witness that there is nothing worthy of worship except for Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is forbidden except in three circumstances: The married adulterer, a life for a life, and the one who has abandoned his Religion and has forsaken the jamā'ah.”

Look at the way that the Messenger (ﷺ) linked abandonment of the religion to forsaking the jamā'ah.

Ibn ‘Abbās (ﷺ) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Whoever witnesses something from his leader that he dislikes let him remain patient since the one who forsakes the jamā'ah the distance of a hand span and dies in that state does not die except in a state of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic ignorance).”

Nāfi' (d.117H) said, “‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar came to ‘Abdullāh Ibn Muṭṭī during the events of al-Ḥarrah at the time of Yazīd Ibn Mu‘āwiyyah and he said: ‘Lay down a cushion for Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.’ So he said: ‘I have not come to you to sit. I came to you to inform you of a narration that I heard from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: ‘Whoever removes a single hand from obedience [to the Muslim leader] will meet Allah on the day of Resurrection with no argument in his defense. Whoever dies without having offered the

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1 Related by al-Bukhārī (no. 6878) and Muslim (no. 1676) and the wording is that of Muslim.
2 Related by al-Bukhārī (no. 7054) and by Muslim (no. 1848).
solemn pledge of support (bay‘ah) has died the death of jāhiliyyah (pre-Islamic ignorance).”

Look closely - may Allāh grant you success in attaining the truth - at how the Messenger (ﷺ) placed such great emphasis on the issue of obeying the Muslim leader in permissible affairs and how he warned against disobeying him.

Another example of this is the ḥadīth narrated by ‘Irbaḍ Ibn Sāriyah (ﷺ) who said, “The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) addressed us after the early morning Prayer with an eloquent admonition that caused the eyes to shed tears and the hearts to tremble. Then a man said: ‘It is as if this is a farewell admonition so what do you advise us with?’ He said: ‘I advise you all to fear Allāh and listen and obey [the Muslim leader] even if he were an Abyssinian slave. For indeed, whoever lives long from amongst you will witness much differing. And beware of newly invented matters [in the Religion] since they are clearly misguidance. Whoever from amongst you reaches that time, must adhere to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly guided Khulafa’ (Caliphs) who will come after me. Bite onto this with your molar teeth.’”

This was his farewell advice in which he sufficed by focusing upon the following matters:

- The command to fear Allāh which will rectify that which is between the servant and his Lord.
- The command to hear and obey the leader of the Muslims even if he were an Abyssinian slave. This affair will rectify the matters of a Muslim’s worldly life as well as his community.
- He further advised the people concerning what they should do when they are faced with a situation which is contrary to what was established during his lifetime (ﷺ) from the fear of Allāh and hearing and obeying the leader of the Muslims. [He advised

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1 Related by Muslim (no. 1851).
2 This ḥadīth is established and the sources have already been mentioned.
them if they were to witness this] to return to the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ) and the Sunnah of the rightly guided Khulafā’ (Caliphs). When this approach is adopted, then rectification can continue and the corruption that manifests can be eliminated along with any change in the community as it relates to the two previously mentioned issues, fearing Allāh and hearing and obeying the Muslim leader.

In this narration is a proof that this is an important [matter] and that it is an obligation. Look at how these issues were expressed with nominal sentences as opposed to verbal sentences. He did not say for example, “I advise you to fear Allāh and to hear and obey [in this present time] even if an Abyssinian slave was given authority over you.” Rather, the narration was transmitted in the context of a nominal sentence so the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “I advise you all to fear Allāh and to hear and obey [at all times]...” It was expressed - and Allāh knows best - with the usage of nominal sentences because this indicates that [this advice and direction] is continuous, established and unchangeable as opposed to verbal sentences which can indicate the occurrence of an action and its repetition without indicating continuity. Therefore, this highlights that the Muslim is required to consistently fit this description [i.e. he should always fear Allāh, and hear and obey those in authority] until it becomes something that is continuous, firmly established and decisive. All of this reinforces the importance of fearing Allāh, holding fast to the Jamā‘ah, and hearing and obeying the Muslim leaders without rebelling against them.

If the situation is one where holding fast to the Jamā‘ah is promoted and dissention and differing is considered blameworthy, then this means that there must be a united Jamā‘ah. It has been transmitted from Tamīm al-Dārī (ﷺ) that he said, “The people competed with one another during the time of Umar in the construction of tall buildings. So Umar said: ‘O Arabs; this land, this land! Verily, there is no Islām without a Jamā‘ah; there is no Jamā‘ah without leadership; and there is no leadership without obedience. Whoever is promoted by his own people based upon knowledge and understanding, then this is life for both him and them. But whoever is promoted by his people based upon
other than knowledge and understanding, then this is destruction for both him and them.”¹

[It is well known in the Religion of İslâm by necessity that there can be no Religion except with a Ḥamā’ah; there can be no Ḥamā’ah except with leadership; and there can be no leadership without listening and obeying. [It is also known that] rebellion against the Muslim leader and any attempts to overthrow him are from the greatest of ways to cause corruption in the land and amongst the people; and it ultimately leads people away from the path of guidance and uprightness.²

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d.110H) said, “By Allāh, the Religion cannot prevail except by way of the Muslim leaders, even if they are tyrannical and oppressive. By Allāh, Allāh will rectify by way of them far more than they will corrupt.”³

Ibn Rajab (d.795H) said, “Hearing and obeying the Muslim leaders results in success in the life of this world and through this the people are able to carry out their daily routines as normal and in an orderly fashion. This is something that assists the servants to outwardly practice their religion and obey their Lord.”⁴

Abandoning the obedience of the Muslim leader and any attempts to undermine his authority through revolt or the like of this is ‘sinful and in direct opposition to Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ). This is also considered to be in direct opposition to the methodology of the people of the Sunnah and the Ḥamā’ah, the Pious Predecessors from amongst them.”⁵⁶

¹ Related by al-Dārimī in al-Muqadimah (no 257). This narration is Ḥasan li ghayrihi (sound due to the presence of supporting narrations) - if Allāh wills - especially since there are many authentic ḥadīth that convey a similar meaning.

² Refer to Naṣīḥah Muhimmah (p. 23).

³ Refer to Jāmi’ al-‘Ulam wa al-Ḥikam (2/117).

⁴ Refer to Jāmi’ al-‘Ulam wa al-Ḥikam (2/117).

⁵ Refer to Naṣīḥah Muhimmah page 29.

⁶ What is found between the brackets is from the treatise as-Sunnah fīmā Yata’laqu bī Walī al-Ummah (p. 24-25) of Aḥmad Bāzmūl.
It is obligatory to be patient with their oppression:

Ibn Taymiyyah (d.728H) said, “Being patient with the oppression of the Imāms [Muslim leaders] is a fundamental from the fundamentals of the people of the Sunnah and the Jamāʿah.”

This is true because commanding the masses to observe patience with the oppression and transgression of the tyrannical Imāms (leaders) brings about benefits and averts harms, which is in the best interests of the land and its people.

[Advising the Muslim leader is from the most important matters of the Religion as mentioned in the narration of Tamīm Ibn Aws al-Dārī (ﷺ) who said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “The Religion is sincere advice. We inquired: To whom? The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: To Allāh, His Book, His Messenger, the leaders of the Muslims and the common people.”]

There comes in the hadīth, “There are three characteristics which when present the heart of a Muslim will never harbor any vindictive feelings: Sincerely performing an action for Allāh, advising those who have been placed in authority over you and holding fast to the Jamāʿah. For indeed their call protects all those behind them.”

The meaning of this narration is that whoever does these three things possesses a heart that is free of enmity, treachery and resentment.

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1 Refer to al-Majmūʿ (28/179), cited by way of the treatise as-Sunnah fīmā Yata’laq bī Wali al-Ummah (p. 49) of Aḥmad Bāzmūl.
2 Related by Muslim (no. 55).
3 This hadīth has been transmitted with chains which are authentic, chains which are ḥasan (sound) and others which are ma’lūlah (defective) upon a group of the Companions. This hadīth is mutawātir. Refer to the treatise Dirāsah Ḥadīth Naḍḍara Allāh ‘Imra’an by Shaykh ‘Abdul-Muḥsin al-‘Abbād.
Abū Nu‘aym al-Ásbaháni (d.430H) said, “Whoever advises the Muslim leaders and rulers, then he is upon guidance, and whoever deceives them has transgressed and gone astray.”

The foundation of the Jamá‘ah [community] and what firmly unites the hearts together in the face of the terror of civil strife and dissention is Tawhíd.

Based upon this principle, they [the people of Sunnah] do not permit the establishment of Jihád except with the Imám [leader] or with his expressed permission. This principle is found in the narration of Abú Hurayrah (ﷺ) who said that the Messenger of Alláh (ﷺ) said, “Whoever has obeyed me has certainly obeyed Alláh, and whoever disobeys me has certainly disobeyed Alláh. Whoever obeys the leader has certainly obeyed me, and whoever disobeys the leader has certainly disobeyed me. Indeed, the Imám is a shield behind whom the people fight and through whom they protect themselves. If he commands the people to fear Alláh and acts justly, then for this he will be rewarded; and if he does other than this then he will be held accountable.”

They fulfil his covenants and they do not transgress against the non-Muslims who were granted safety and security while living under the protection of the Muslim leader. In this they implement what is found in the narration of ʿAbdulláh Ibn ʿAmr (﷽) who narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Whoever kills a non-Muslim who has an agreement with the Muslim state (mu‘áḥad), will not smell the scent of Paradise even though its scent can be detected from a distance of forty years.”

Upon the authority of Ṣafwán Ibn Sulaym who narrated from a large number of children of the Companions of the Messenger of Alláh (ﷺ) who narrated from their respective fathers that the Messenger of Alláh (ﷺ) said, “Let it be known that whoever wrongs a non-Muslim who has

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1 Fadilatul-ʿĀdilin (p. 140).
2 What is found between the brackets is from the treatise, al-Sunnah fímá Yata'laq bi Wali al-Ummah (p. 63) by Āḥmad Bäzmül.
3 Related by al-Bukhári (no. 2958) and Muslim (no. 1835).
4 Related by al-Bukhári (no. 3166).
an agreement with the Muslim state (mu‘āhad), denies some of his rights, imposes a burden upon him that is more than he can bear or takes something from him without his permission, then I will contend with him on the Day of Resurrection.”¹

They do not revolt against the Imāms (leaders) on the basis of them falling into disobedience nor do they dispute their decisions. They do not declare the Imāms to be disbelievers unless they witness clear disbelief for which they have a clear proof from Allāh.

[Even if they witnessed open disbelief for which they had clear evidence they would still not rebel against the Imāms] except that they were absolutely certain that their rebellion would not bring a greater harm, and that their actions would not bring evil into the land and endanger the people, and that they truly possessed the ability to successfully change the regime. If the [above prerequisites were not met] then they would demonstrate restraint and withhold themselves from such actions. They do not treat the Muslim nation as an experiment for trial and error nor as an object about which they can afford to differ.

They are individuals who act upon the narrations of the Prophet (ﷺ).

In fact, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) accepted the pledges of allegiance (bay’ah) on the premise of hearing and obeying [the rulers], and avoiding opposition of those in command.

Junādah Ibn Abū Umayyah narrated that, “We entered upon ‘Ubādah Ibn al-Ṣāmit while he was sick. We said to him: ‘May Allāh rectify your affair, tell us of a narration that Allāh will allow you to benefit from and that you have heard from the Prophet (ﷺ).’ He said: ‘The Prophet (ﷺ) summoned us and we gave him the pledge of allegiance, and among the conditions on which he took the pledge from us was that we were to listen and obey both at times when we were active and at times when

¹ Related by Abū Dāwūd (no. 3052). This hadīth is considered Ḥasan (sound).
we were tired, and at our times of difficulty and at our times of ease; and not to oppose those in authority unless you see them committing open disbelief for which you have a proof from Allah.”¹²

Shaykhul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (d.728) said, “It is for this reason that from the fundamental principles of the People of the Sunnah and the Jama‘ah is holding fast to the Jama‘ah, the abandonment of fighting the Imāms [leaders] and the abandonment of fighting during times of social unrest and turmoil. As for the people of desires like the Mu‘tazilah, then they view fighting against the Imāms as one of the fundamental principles of their Religion.”³

They also never engage in any activities that could lead to disunity [within the ranks of the Muslims] and fill the people’s hearts with enmity towards the Muslim rulers. They never openly criticize them from the podium or the pulpit, in lectures, in sittings or gatherings of the people.⁴ This is exactly what the previously mentioned texts have

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¹ This hadīth lays the prerequisites that have to be met before a Muslim leader can be declared a disbeliever. [i]: In his saying “Unless if you see,” he is referring to a matter that is perceivable and observed which is visible to the eyes [i.e. apparent]. [ii] Then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) mentioned the act of seeing with the wāw that signifies a plural (jama‘ah) which would require that this is something not only noticed by a single individual but there must be a group from amongst the Muslims that witness this clear disbelief. [iii]: And “disbelief,” means that he does not disbelieve if he commits a sin even if it is a major sin. [iv]: And “clear,” means that it must be apparent. [v]: “For which you have a proof concerning from Allah,” means that it cannot just be any proof. Rather, the proof must come from Allah, which means that the evidence should be a clear cut textual proof that must be related, authentic and explicit.

² Related by al-Bukhārī (no. 7056) and by Muslim (no. 1709).

³ Refer to al-Iṣtiqāmah (2/215).

⁴ The esteemed Scholar, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Ibn Bāz (d.1420H) was asked in al-Ma‘lūm min Wājib al-‘Alāmah bayna al-Ḥākim wa al-Maḥkūm (question no. 10), “Is it from the methodology of the Salaf to criticize the Muslim leaders from the pulpit? What was the methodology of the Salaf in respect to advising the Muslim leaders? The Shaykh responded by saying, “It is not from the methodology of the Salaf to publicly announce the mistakes and shortcomings of the Muslim leaders and to mention these things from the pulpits because these things lead to confusion, disorder and the absence of hearing and obeying the Muslim ruler in what is →

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good. It also results in debates and disputes which cause harm and brings no benefit. However, the Salaf used to offer sincere advice (nasīḥah) in a way where it was between them and the Muslim leader and by writing to him or by reaching him through the scholars who keep in touch with him (to advise him) until the ruler is directed towards the good. Repelling the evil occurs without mentioning the doer of the evil. So fornication, drinking of intoxicants and the taking of usury are forbidden and curbed without mentioning the one who does such things. Warding off the evil and warning the people against it is sufficient without it being mentioned that such and such a person does it, whether he is a ruler or other than the ruler.

When the turmoil erupted during the time of 'Uthmān (رضي الله عنه), some of the people said to Usāmah Ibn Zayd (رضي الله عنه): ‘Will you not speak to ‘Uthmān?’ He then replied: ‘Why is it that you think that I have not spoken to him unless you are able to hear what I say? Indeed, I will certainly talk to him regarding that which concerns me and him without initiating a matter which I do not love to be the first to initiate.’

When they (i.e. the instigators) opened up the evil in the time of ‘Uthmān and rejected ‘Uthmān openly, the fitnah, the killing and the mischief, which has not ceased to affect the people to this day, was brought about. This caused the fitnah to occur between ‘Ali and Mu‘āwiya. These were the reasons why ‘Uthmān was killed.

Furthermore a large number of Companions and others beside them were killed due to openly criticising the ruler and the open proclamation of his faults, until the people began to hate the one charged with authority over them and killed him. We ask Allāh for success.”

During a discourse with the esteemed Scholar Dr. Šāliḥ Ibn Fawzān al-Fawzān - may Allāh preserve him - he was asked in Ḥīwār ma‘ ‘Ālim (p. 16-18, question no. 5), “Some of the youth of today understand the statement of Allāh,

وَلَا تَحْفَرُونَ لَوَّةً لَآ أَعْمَرُ

“And they do not fear the blame of the blamers.”

[Sūrah al-Mā’idah 5:54]

They understand it as referring to those individuals who mention the mistakes of the leaders and rulers from the pulpit, in front of the masses and in recorded lectures. They restrict enjoining the good and forbidding the evil to this as well. We hope that you might direct these young people - may Allāh guide them - towards the correct path and clarify the proper meaning of this verse of the Qur’ān and the ruling concerning those who publicly speak out against the Muslim ruler?” Shaykh Šāliḥ Ibn Fawzān al-Fawzān replied, “Allāh said,
“O you who believe, whoever from amongst you should commit apostasy and forsake his Religion, then Allāh will bring forth [to replace them] a people whom He will love and who will love Him. They are humble toward the believers, stern against the disbelievers; they strive for the sake of Allāh and they do not fear the blame of the blamers.” [Sūrah al-Mā‘idah 5:54]

This āyāh refers to those who speak a word of truth, strive for the sake of Allāh, enjoin the good and forbid the evil obediently for Allāh’s sake, and they do not abandon sincere advice (naṣīḥah), enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, and jihād for the sake of Allāh because of the people or out of fear of the people. However, the issue of sincere advice (naṣīḥah) and calling the people to Allāh is as Allāh (ﷻ) said,

أَذَاعُ إِلَى سَبِيل رَبِّك بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمُوَعَّدَةِ اِلْحَسَنَةِ وَجَنِّبْلَهُمْ بَيْنَاهَا هَيْنَ ُيَسْتَحْسَنُ

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and appropriate admonition and argue with them in a manner which is better.” [Sūrah al-Nahl 16:125]

And Allāh (ﷻ) said to Mūsā and Hārūn when He sent them to Pharaoh,

فَقُولُوا لَهُ قُولًا أَيْنَ أَلَّذَيْنَ لَعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَحْسَنُ

“And speak to him with gentle speech such that perhaps he may be reminded or fear Allāh.” [Sūrah Ta Ḥā 20:44]

And Allāh (ﷻ) said concerning our Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ),

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“So by the mercy of Allāh [O Muḥammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been stern and harsh of heart, they would have disbanded from around you.” [Sūrah Āl-Imrān 3:159]

So sincerely advising (naṣīḥah) the Muslim leaders should be done in an appropriate way that would successfully reach them without being made public or agitating the simpleminded or the masses. Sincere advice (naṣīḥah) should be given in secrecy between the advisor and the Muslim leader. It can be given orally, in writing or over the phone. The advisor should clarify these affairs to him with gentleness and the proper manners. As for speaking against the Muslim rulers from the pulpits and in public lectures, then this is not sincere advice (naṣīḥah) this is disparagement. This sows the seeds of social unrest and enmity between the Muslim leaders and their nations. This creates a great amount of harm which may result in the leaders scrutinizing the people of knowledge and the callers to Islām due to this behavior. So these actions generate evil and problems which are far greater than the good that it is thought they will bring about. If you noticed that a regular person made a mistake or fell into some type of opposition, and then you went directly to the masses and announced, ‘So and so did such and such.’ Then this action would be identified as criticism and not advice (naṣīḥah). The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘Whoever conceals the faults of a Muslim, then Allāh will conceal their faults in the worldly life and the hereafter.’ If the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to address the actions of a specific individual, he never identified people by their names. Rather he would say: ‘What is the condition of a people that does such and such?’ This is because the explicit mention of names creates more corruption than rectification, and perhaps it does not bring about any rectification at all. In fact it tends to create more harm for both the individual as well as the community. The correct manner of offering sincere advice (naṣīḥah) is well-known. The people of sincere advice (naṣīḥah) who take up this responsibility must possess a certain level of knowledge, understanding, comprehension and the ability to weigh the potential harms against the benefits of different situations. They should possess foresight into what may happen. As forbidding the evil may be a form of evil in itself as Shaykh al-Islām (巯) said. This occurs when an evil is forbidden in a way that is not legislated. So forbidding the evil itself becomes evil because of the corruption it causes. The same applies to [what some may claim to be] advice (naṣīḥah), we may call it criticism, instigation, or provocation of social unrest and turmoil if it is given in an unlegislated fashion.”
indicated and it has also been established from the practice of the Salaf. For example Usâmah ibn Zayd (￼), when it was said to him, “Will you not enter upon ʿUthmān and speak with him?” He replied by saying, “Do you believe that I have not spoken to him unless I allow you to hear what was said? By Allāh, I have already spoken with him and our speech will remain between me and him without opening an affair that I do not love to be the first one to open.”1

Likewise, ʿAbdullāh ibn Abū Awfā, Imām Ahmad reported a narration concerning him in his Musnad.2 He said: Abū al-Naḍr told us that al-Ḥashraj ibn Nubātah al-ʿAbsī told us that Saīd ibn Jumhān told us that he said: “I came to ʿAbdullah ibn Abū Awfā when he was blind and offered him the Islāmic greetings. He said to me, ‘Who are you?’ I replied saying, ‘I am Saīd ibn Jumhān.’ He then asked, ‘How is your father?’ I then said, ‘The Azāriqah killed him.’ He then said, ‘May Allāh’s curse be upon the Azāriqah. May Allāh’s curse be upon the Azāriqah. The Messenger of Allāh (￼) told us that the Azāriqah are the dogs of the Hellfire.’ I responded, ‘This only referring to the Azāriqah or all of the sects of the Kharijites (Khawārij)?’ He said, ‘Rather, all of the Kharijites (Khawārij).’ I said, ‘Indeed, the Muslim leader oppresses the people and mistreats them.’ Then he took my hand and squeezed it very firmly and said, ‘Woe unto you O Ibn Jumhān! Stick to the main body of Muslims; stick to the main body of Muslims! If the Muslim leader will listen to you, then you should approach him at his home and inform him of what you know. If he accepts this from you, then [this is one thing] but if not then leave him alone. You are not more knowledgeable than him.’”3


1 Related by al-Buhārī (no. 3267) and Muslim (no. 2989), and the wording is that of Muslim.
2 Refer to al-Musnad (4/382).
3 Related by al-Ḥākim (3/660), aṭ-Ṭayālisī (no. 822), Ibn Abū Āṣim in al-Sunnah (no. 905), and Ibn ʿAdī in al-Kāmil (2/441) from the narration of al-Ḥashraj.

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The Third Principle
Being Extremely Wary of Religious Innovation
(Bid‘ah) and Religious Innovators (Mubtadi‘ūn)

The adherents to Salafiyah [or Salafism] are cautious and wary of religious innovation (bid‘ah) and innovators (mubtadi‘ūn) because the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) warned against these things as we find in his statement, “Beware of newly invented matters [in the Religion] for indeed they are clearly misguidance. So whoever witnesses this from amongst you, then cling to my way (Sunnah) and the way (Sunnah) of my rightly guided successors [Caliphs]. And bite onto it with your molar teeth.”

They consider the task of refuting innovation (bid‘ah) and destroying the misleading façade of the innovators (mubtadi‘ūn), which is from those righteous actions that benefit others, better than occupying oneself with supererogatory acts of worship that only benefit the individual who performs them.

It was said to Imām Aḥmad (d.241H), “Is the man who fasts, prays and performs i‘tikāf [i.e. supererogatory acts] more beloved to you or the one who speaks out concerning the people of innovation (bid‘ah)?” He said, “If this person fasts, prays, and performs I‘tikāf, then this only benefits him. However, if he speaks out concerning the people of innovation (bid‘ah), then this benefits the Muslims, and this is better.”

Abū al-Mu‘ẓaffar al-Sam‘ānī (d.489H) said, “We have been commanded to follow and we have been encouraged with this. We have been forbidden from innovating (bid‘ah) and severely warned against such behavior. The hallmark of the people of the Sunnah is their adherence to the pious predecessors (al-salaf al-sāliḥ) and their abandonment of

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1 This ḥadīth is established and the sources have already been mentioned.
2 Refer to Majmū’ Fatāwā (27/231) of Refer to Ibn Taymiyyah.
everything that constitutes an innovation (mubtada‘) or a matter from the Religion that appears without precedent (muḥdath).”

The protector of the Sunnah, [Abū al-Qāsim Ismā‘īl Ibn Muḥammad] al-ʿAṣbahānī (d.430H) said, “It is befitting that a man is cautious of newly invented matters as every newly invented matter [of the Religion] is a religious innovation (bid‘ah). The Sunnah involves believing in the narrations of the Messenger of Allāh (ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) and the abandonment of opposing them with contentious arguments like how and why. Rhetoric and argumentation in affairs of the Religion, and pointless debate is considered a newly invented affair, and it can sow the seeds of doubt in the hearts and prevent them from recognizing that which is true and correct. And true knowledge is not demonstrated by the amount of narrations that are transmitted rather true knowledge involves following and practical application. A person should follow the Companions and their students even if they possess a limited amount of knowledge, and whoever opposes the Companions and their students is misguided even if they possess a vast amount of knowledge.”

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2 Refer to al-Ḥujjah fī Bayān al-Maḥājja (2/437-438).
The Salafis Stay Away from the Gatherings
Of the People of Innovation (Bid'ah)

It has been narrated that al-Ḥasan said, “Do not sit with a person of innovation (bid'ah), for indeed he will make your heart sick.”  

Sufyān al-Thawrī (d.167H) said, “Whoever sits with a person of innovation (bid’ah) cannot escape one of three things: He is a trial and tribulation for others, something may fall into his heart that remains with him and causes him to enter the Hellfire or he will say, ‘By Allāh, I do not care about what they say and I have full confidence in myself.’ Whoever feels that they are not in need of Allāh to safeguard his religion even for the blinking of an eye, then He will take it from him.”

It has been narrated that Ḩabīb (ṣ) said, “Do not sit with the people of desires, for indeed sitting with them will cause a disease to spread in the hearts.”

For this reason you will find them wary of innovation (bid’ah), especially since it is a road to disbelief.

Ibn al-Qayyim (d.751H) said, “Our Shaykh said, ‘The reality of disbelief has been married to immoral innovation (bid’ah) and they have given birth to a state of loss in the life of this world and the hereafter.’ If he overcomes this imposing obstacle and escapes it with the light of the Sunnah, and he seeks to stay clear of it by truly adhering to the Sunnah and by emulating those who have passed from the illustrious Salaf from the Companions and their students who followed them in goodness, and it is rare for these later generations to produce one of these types of people. However, if a person like this is produced, then the people of

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1 Refer to al-Bida' wa al-Nahyu 'anhā of Ibn Waddāh (p. 104) with the checking of Badr al-Badr and something similar is mentioned on (p. 110).
2 Refer to al-Bida' wa al-Nahyu 'anhā (p. 104) of Ibn Waddāh with the checking of Badr al-Badr.
3 Refer to al-Sharī'ah (p. 60) by al-Ājurrrī.
innovation (bid‘ah) would set their traps and wreak havoc; and they would declare him a misguided innovator.

If Allāh grants him success in passing this obstacle, then he [the Shayṭān] attempts to catch him with the third obstacle, which is the obstacle of major sins. If the Shayṭān is successful in overcoming the person in this way, then he will make these sins appear attractive, beautify them in his eyes and convince people to procrastinate over them. He also opens the door to [the innovated] belief that actions are not a part of faith (irjā‘). So the [Shayṭān] says to him: ‘Faith is merely to believe and it cannot be harmed by actions.’ It is possible that he [the Shayṭān] causes him to utter a statement that often results in the people’s destruction. This is the statement, ‘Sins do not harm an individual so long as a person is upon monotheism (Tawḥīd) just as good deeds do not benefit the person who is upon polytheism (Shirk).’ He [the Shayṭān] is most pleased if he successfully overcomes the servant with the obstacle of innovation (bid‘ah) because of the way that it opposes the Religion and since it involves rejection of what Allāh has sent His Messenger (ﷺ) with. Also the one who commits innovation (bid‘ah) does not repent from it nor does he abandon it and instead he invites the creation to it. [He prefers this] because it necessitates making statements about Allāh without knowledge, it causes hostility towards the clear Sunnah and enmity towards the people of the Sunnah, and it strives to extinguish the light of the Sunnah. It gives leadership to those whom Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ) have relegated and it discredits those whom Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ) have given authority. It accepts what is rejected by Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ) and it rejects what He accepted. It shows allegiance towards the enemies of Allāh and it makes enemies of His allies. It affirms what He negated and negates what He affirmed. It declares the truthful to be liars and the liars to be truthful. It opposes the truth with falsehood and perverts reality so that the truth becomes falsehood and falsehood becomes truth. It incites heresy (ilḥād) in the Religion and conceals the truth from the people’s hearts. It seeks some deviation in the straight path and opens the door to the changing of the Religion as a whole.”

1 Refer to Madārij al-Sālikīn (1/223) by Ibn al-Qayyim.
In light of this fundamental principle, they warn against the books of the people of innovation and misguidance, and they warn against taking from individuals known for innovation (bid'ah).

Abū Naṣr ʿUbaydillāḥ Ibn Saīd Ibn Ḥātim al-Wāyilī al-Bakrī as-Sijzī (d.444H) dedicated the eleventh section of his treatise to the people of Zubayd, which was a refutation of those who reject the letter and the voice, to the subject of how we should not loosely give our trust to everyone and take from every book. This is because deception has become prevalent and it has become common for people to ascribe lies to the various schools of thought (madhāhib).

He said in this treatise, “Know, may Allāh (ﷻ) have mercy upon us and you, that this section is from the most important sections of this book without question because of the calamities and confusion that has appeared and because of what has been introduced to the people due to their negligence in this matter. This is because the affairs of the people of this time have changed and those who can be truly depended upon are scarce. This is because many people sell their Religion for a lowly price and try to endear themselves to those who are perceived to be large in number! Lies are commonly attributed to the various schools of thought (madhāhib). Therefore, it becomes obligatory upon every Muslim who wishes to escape from this to not rely upon everyone and to not depend upon every book. He should not surrender his reins to everyone who outwardly claims to be in agreement with him... Whoever desires safety and security from the likes of these people and to be free of any innovations must make the Book (the Qurʾān) and the narration his scale which he uses to measure everything that he sees and hears. If he is knowledgeable concerning these things, he will constantly refer back to them and do so while following the example of the Salaf. He should not accept any statement from anyone except that he asks them to provide validation for their claim in the form of a clear verse (of the Qurʾān), an established Sunnah or a statement of a Companion from a chain of narrators that is authentic. In addition, he should beware of the works of those whose conditions have changed
for indeed in these works there are scorpions and perhaps for their venom there is no antidote.”¹

¹ Look at some of the Salafi principles and points of benefit in the treatise Risālah al-Imām al-Sijzī ilā Ahl Zubayd fi al-Radd 'Alā man Ankara al-Ḥarf wa al-Ṣawt (benefit no. 16), (p. 231-234).
The Ruling Concerning Following
The Salafī Methodology

You have learned from what has already been mentioned that following the Salafī methodology is actually following the Religion which we are obliged to follow due to the command of Allāh and the command of His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Muhammad Ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Ājurrī (d.360H) said, “The intelligent Believer exerts himself to be from the saved sect by following the Book of Allāh (the Qur‘ān), the Sunnah of His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and the ways of his Companions and their students who followed them in goodness, may the mercy of Allāh be upon them. He follows the statements of the Imāms of the Muslims from those of whom no one is shy to mention, like: Sufyān al-Thawrī (d.167H), al-Awzā‘ī (d.157H), Mālik Ibn Anas (d.179H), al-Shāfi‘ī (d.204H), Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d.241H) and Abū ʿUbayd Qāsim Ibn Salām (d.224H) and those who were upon their way from the Scholars of this nation. So whatever they rejected, we reject, and whatever they accepted and stated, we accept and we state. We forsake anything other than that.”¹

Ibn Taymiyyah (d.721H) said, “The knowledge that is legislated and the acts of worship that are legislated [in this Religion] are taken from the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم). As for what has come from those who appeared after them, then it is inappropriate that they are used as a fundamental point of reference even though this person is excused, rather rewarded for their efforts to extract the correct ruling (ijtihād) or their efforts to follow another in his ruling (taqlīd). Whoever bases his speech in the various Islāmic sciences - whether they are fundamental issues or subsidiary issues - upon the Book (the Qur‘ān), the Sunnah and the narrations that have reached us from the earliest generations, then this individual has traversed upon the path of the Prophet. Similarly, the one who bases his intention, his worship, his deeds and his hearing [of knowledge] as it relates to the fundamental of

¹ Refer to Kitāb al-Arba‘īn Ḥadīthān lil-Ājurrī with the checking of our distinguished brother Badr al-Badr, published by Aḍwā‘ al-Salaf (1420H).
actions and their subsidiary branches from the affairs of the heart and
the actions of the body; whoever bases these things upon true faith, the
Sunnah, and the guidance of Muḥammad (ﷺ) and his Companions, then
he has traversed upon the path of the Prophet. And this is the way of
the Imāms of guidance.”

1 Refer to Majmū’ Fatāwā (10/362-364) of Ibn Taymiyyah.
The Benefit of Following the *Salafi* Methodology

Whoever follows this methodology acquires many distinct benefits. Some of these are:

1. It is a means of safeguarding oneself from differing.
2. It is a means of eliminating sectarianism.
3. It is a means of guidance which prevents misguidance.
4. Ascribing to it carries the nobility of ascribing oneself to the Prophet (ﷺ).
5. By following this methodology we avoid the various paths of the Shaytân.
6. By following this methodology the Muslims remove themselves from lowliness and disgrace.
7. Applying it helps us to understand the sickness and its cure.
8. Through its application all of the legislation of Allāh can be applied.
9. With it an individual can achieve righteousness and good character.
10. With it the Muslims can save themselves from the severe torment of the Fire.
11. Through its implementation the Muslims can enter Paradise.
12. Applying it involves reviving the Sunnah.

Any one of these benefits is sufficient by itself to establish the obligation of following this methodology by virtue of the principle that states whatever is required to establish an obligation is an obligation in itself, not to mention the issues of its significance and importance.

At this time, it would be relevant to point out that not everyone who calls himself a *Salafi*, ascribes to the methodology of the people of Sunnah and the *Jamā`ah*, or declares himself from the People of Hadīth should be considered as such until his path and adherence [to the truth] is examined. His affair, condition and speech should be measured in accordance to the Book (the Qur`ān), the Sunnah and that which was practiced by the Companions and their students who followed them in righteousness. If he conforms to this, then he is from them but if he
opposes this then he is not from them. His closeness or remoteness from the straight path depends upon the extent of his opposition [to the truth] and how much he actually conforms to it.

Abū al-Muẓaffar al-Samānī (ﷺ) said, “We have been commanded to follow and we have been encouraged with this. We have been forbidden from innovating (bid’ah) and severely warned against such behavior. The hallmark of the People of the Sunnah is their adherence to the pious predecessors (al-salaf al-sālih) and their abandonment of everything that constitutes an innovation (mubaṭada’) or a matter from the Religion that appears without precedent (muḥdath).”

If this is the case, then what are the characteristics of the Salafi methodology? This will be clarified in the following chapter.

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The Second Objective
The Distinct Characteristics of the Salafi Methodology

There are distinct characteristics and qualities that the true Salafi is known by as opposed to those who falsely claim to adhere to the Salafi methodology. From these characteristics is the following:

The First Characteristic: Their allegiance and disassociation (al-walā’ wa al-barā’) revolves around following the way of the Messenger (ﷺ).

The Second Characteristic: Their hallmark is that they follow [the Sunnah].

The Third Characteristic: They are upon moderation in all of their affairs.

The Fourth Characteristic: They are a people who are united and in agreement, and they are firm and resolute upon the truth.

The Fifth Characteristic: They work towards the establishment of the Religion through the seeking of correct Islamic knowledge and its application.

Here is a detailed explanation of these characteristics:
The First Characteristic
Their Allegiance and Disassociation (al-Walā’ wa al-Barā’) Revolves Around Following the Way Of the Messenger (ﷺ)

According to the Salafīs, there is no place for partisanship (hizbiyyah) that elects an individual, a principle or a book, other than the noble Qur’ān and the Prophetic Sunnah, as grounds for allegiance and disassociation (al-walā’ wa al-barā’). Whoever judges the personality that they follow, other than the Messenger (ﷺ), an issue for which there must be allegiance and disassociation (al-walā’ wa al-barā’) is in reality a person of differing and splitting.

Ibn Taymiyyah (d.728H) said when commenting upon the famous narration concerning the splitting of this nation (al-iftirāq), “As for specifying the exact identity of these sects, then indeed several books have been written concerning them and their mention can be found in the books which compile historical accounts of the beliefs and positions [of the various sects]. However, to explicitly state that a particular sect being discussed is one of the seventy two sects requires evidence. This is because Allāh has generally forbidden people from making statements without knowledge, and He has specifically forbidden people from making statements about Him without knowledge. Allāh, the (ﷺ) said,

قُلُ إنِّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّي فَأَلْفُوا حِشْنَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالَّذِي
وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ بِإِلَهِكُمْ حَقًّا وَأَن تَشْرَكُوا بِإِلَهِ مَآ لَمْ تُرِيذِلْهُ بِهِ شَرِّيًّا وَأَن
تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (ﷺ)
“Say: My Lord has forbidden immorality -what is apparent from it and what remains concealed- and sin and transgression without right and to associate with Allāh that for which He has not sent down any authority and to say concerning Allāh that which you do not know.” [Sūrah al-A’rāf 7:33]

And Allāh (ﷺ) said,

وَأَلْفِحَا إِنْ تُقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

“O people, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] permitted to you and do not follow the footsteps of Shayṭān (Satan). Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. He only orders you with evil and immorality and to say concerning Allāh what you do not know.”

[Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:168-169]

And He said,

وَلَا تَفْقِحُوا مَا لَيْسَ لَكُم بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّهُ

“And do not pursue things concerning which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart; all of these things are subject to questioning.” [Sūrah al-İşrā’ 17:36]

Likewise, many people speak concerning these sects based solely upon speculation and desires. They proclaim their own group and those who
ascribe to the individuals that they follow and show allegiance to it as the people of the Sunnah and the Jamā’ah, and they declare whoever opposes them to be from the people of innovation (bid’ah). This is clear misguidance.

The people who cling to the truth and the Sunnah restrict themselves to following the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) who,

> ❮وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنْ أَهْوَأِهِ إِنَّ هُوَ إِلاَّ وَحْيٌ يُرَحَى ❯

“He does not speak from his own desires. Rather, it is revelation which is revealed to him.”

[Sūrah al-Najm 53:3-4]

He is the only one who must be believed concerning everything that he informs, and he is the only one who must be obeyed in everything that he commands. This station belongs solely to him and should not be given to any of the Imāms. Rather, everyone’s statements can be accepted or rejected except for the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).

Whoever holds that an individual other than the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) can be the criterion by which the people are judged such that those who love this individual and agree with him must be from the people of the Sunnah and those who oppose him must be from the people of innovation (bid’ah), as is found amongst the various sects that follow the leaders of rhetoric and philosophy (‘ilm al-Kalām) and other than that. Then these individuals are people of innovation (bid’ah), misguidance, and division.¹

¹ This would include them [amongst the sects mentioned] in the narration of splitting (al-ijtirāq). Consequently, they are from the doomed sects that will be destroyed as opposed to the saved sect. It should be noted that this text is from the texts that contain mention of a punishment. This means that the sects that have been threatened with the Hellfire in his statement (ﷺ), “All of them are in the Hellfire except one,” then this is their punishment. If Allāh wills He will punish them, and if Allāh wills He may choose to forgive them. As He (ﷺ) said,
With this it becomes clear that the people who most deserve to be regarded as “the saved sect” are the People of Ḥadīth, the People of the Sunnah who do not have a leader to whom they blindly stick except for the Messenger of Allāh (ṣ.). They are the people who are most knowledgeable concerning his statements and actions. They are the people who are most renowned for differentiating between the

"Certainly Allāh does not forgive that partners are associated with Him, but He forgives whatever is less than that for whomever He wills." [Sūrah al-Nisā' 4:46]

Ibn Taymiyyah (d.728H) said in Majmū' Fatāwā (7/217-218), “In the Book (the Qurān) and in the Sunnah, people who profess Islām are of two types, either believers or hypocrites. The hypocrite will inhabit the lowest station in the Hellfire. As for the believer, then it is possible that he possesses faith that is deficient so he does not qualify for it to be said that he perfected faith; and it is possible for him to possess perfect faith.”

Then he went on to say, “What is intended here is that no one should be declared a disbeliever just because he commits a sin or introduces an innovation (bid‘ah), even if he calls the people to it, unless he is a hypocrite. So if he believed in his heart in the Messenger and what he brought, but he erred in some of his innovated practices due to misconceptions, then this person, in principle, is not a disbeliever. The Kharijites (Khawārij) are one of the clearest examples from the people for innovation (bid‘ah), killing and declaring Muslims to be disbelievers. In spite of this, none of the Companions declared them to be disbelievers, not ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (ṣ.) or other than him. They judged and treated them the same way as they would treat oppressive and aggressive Muslims...The same applies to the remainder of the seventy-two sects. Whoever from amongst them is a hypocrite is secretly a disbeliever. Whoever is not a hypocrite but is a believer in Allāh and His Messenger (ṣ.) is not considered a disbeliever, even if he errs in understanding something no matter what that mistake. Some of them may possess a branch of hypocrisy which does not condemn a person to the lowest station in the Hellfire. And whoever says that every single one of the seventy-two sects disbelieved with the disbelief that expels an individual from the religion has certainly opposed the Book (the Qurān) and the Sunnah, and the consensus of the Companions (ṣ.). He has also opposed the consensus of the four Imāms and other than them. For none of them declared all of the seventy-two sects to be disbelievers. Contrary to that, they used to declare some of them to be disbelievers due to specific statements, and this issue has been explained in greater detail elsewhere.”

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authentic and unauthentic narrations. Their imāms understand the Sunnah correctly, they are well aware of its meanings and adhere to it, believing in it, acting upon it and loving it. They show allegiance to those who embrace it and show animosity to those who reject it. They return ambiguous statements and positions back to what has been revealed concerning it in the Book (the Qur‘ān) and the Sunnah. They do not invent sayings and set it as a fundamental aspect of their religion or a matter to be frequently discussed if it has not been authentically established from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). Contrary to that, they establish whatever the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was sent with from the Book (the Qur‘ān) and the Sunnah as the foundation that they believe in and rely upon.”

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1 Refer to Majmū‘ Fatāwā (3/346-347) of Ibn Taymiyyah.
The Second Characteristic
Their Hallmark is That They Follow [the Sunnah]

Abū Muḥammad Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī (d.386H) said while discussing the affairs of the Religion that the Muslim nation has unanimously agreed upon and the aspects of the Sunnah that if opposed is considered innovation (bid‘ah) and misguidance, “[This requires] total submittance to the Sunnah. It is not to be opposed by opinion or averted by way of analogy. The way the texts were interpreted by the righteous Salaf, then we interpret them in the same fashion; and whatever way they applied them, then we apply them in the same way and whatever they abandoned then we abandon. We refrain from what they refrained from and we follow them in what they have explained. We imitate them and follow their extrapolations and their opinions concerning the contemporary affairs. We do not leave their Jamā‘ah [i.e. the opinions of Salaf] even in the areas which they differed or explained differently. All of what we have mentioned is the position of the people of Sunnah and the Imāms of the people in fiqh and hadīth, as we have clarified. This is also the statement of Imām Mālik.”¹

Abū ‘Abdullāh Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abdullāh Ibn Abī Zamānayn (d.399H) - said, “Know, may Allāh have mercy upon you, that the Sunnah is the proof that explains the Qur‘ān, and it is not understood through the use of analogy, nor is it grasped by the intellects. It is only through following the Imāms and the way of the main body of the Muslim nation. Allāh (ﷻ) has mentioned a people and praised them when He said,

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\text{فَبِشْرَ ِعِبَادِ أَلَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقُوْلَ فَيَبْعَونَ أَحْسَنَهُمْ}
\]

\[
\text{أَوْلِيَآيَكَ أَلَّذِينَ هَدَّنَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولِيَآيَكَ هُمُ أَوْلُوا الْأَلْبَنَّ}
\]

¹ Refer to al-Jāmi‘ (p. 117) of Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī.
"So give glad tidings to My servants; [those] who listen to speech and follow the best of it. They are the ones Allah has guided, and they are people of understanding." [Sūrah az-Zumar 39:17-18]

And He commanded His servants in His statement,

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ يُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا آثَارَ السَّبِيلِ فَتَفَرَّقُوا

“And certainly, this is My Straight Path, so follow it; and do not follow the [other] paths, for they will divert you from His Way. This is what He has instructed you so that you may become righteous.”

[Sūrah al-An‘ām 6:153].”

Abū al-Mu‘azzar al-Sam‘ānī ( defStyle) said, “We have been commanded to follow and we have been encouraged with this. We have been forbidden from innovating (bid‘ah) and severely warned against such behaviour. The hallmark of the People of the Sunnah is their adherence to the pious predecessors (al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ) and their abandonment of everything that constitutes an innovation (muḥtada‘) or a matter from the Religion that appears without precedent (muḥdath).”

The guardian of the Sunnah [Abū al-Qāsim Ismā‘īl Ibn Mu‘ammad] al-Aṣbahānī (d. 535h) - defStyle - said, “it is befitting that a man is cautious of newly invented matters, as every newly invented matter [of the Religion] is an innovation (bid‘ah). The Sunnah involves believing in the narrations of the Messenger of Allah ( defStyle) and the abandonment of opposing them with contentious arguments like how and why. Rhetoric

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1 Refer to Uṣūl al-Sunnah (p. 35) of Ibn Abī Zamanayn which has been checked and given the title Riyād al-Jannah.
and argumentation in affairs of the Religion, and pointless debate is considered a newly invented affair, and it can sow the seeds of doubt in the hearts and prevent them from recognizing that which is true and correct. And true knowledge is not demonstrated by the amount of narrations that are transmitted rather true knowledge involves following and practical application. A person should follow the Companions and their students even though they possess a limited amount of knowledge. Whoever opposes the Companions and their students is misguided even if they possess a vast amount of knowledge.”¹

He went on to say, “This is because the affair of the Religion has been clarified for the people so it is upon us to follow since the Religion has come solely from Allah and is not to be subjected to the intellects of men and their opinions. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has clarified the Sunnah to his nation and explained it to his Companions. So whoever opposes the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in any affair from the Religion has certainly gone astray.”²

They [the Salafis] do not have any secret organization, a president or leader, or an individual that is absolutely followed other than the Messenger (ﷺ). They refer to the Scholars who adhere to the Book (the Qur’ān) and the Sunnah upon the understanding of the pious predecessors (al-Salaf al-Ṣālih).

They have no secret society.

They have no pledge of allegiance

They have no hidden meetings.

They have no undercover hierarchy or anything similar.

¹ Refer to al-Ḥujjah fī Bayān al-Maḥajjah (2/437-438).
² Refer to al-Ḥujjah fī Bayān al-Maḥajjah (2/440).
They do not hide anything from the Muslim leaders or from the general Muslim community.

They do not have any secret chains of command, cells or wings.

Rather, they align themselves with the Muslim leaders and the general community of Muslims as has been prescribed in the legislation of Allāh, offering sincere advice inwardly and outwardly.

With this type of behavior they emulate the example of the Companions (ﷺ).

Ibn Taymiyyah (ﷺ) said, “The Imāms of the Muslims like Mālik (d.179H), Ḥammād Ibn Zayd (d.179H), al-Thawrī (d.167H) and others would only speak in unison with the legislation of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), which consists of guidance and healing. Whoever does not possess knowledge of the path of the previous Muslims would substitute that which they were upon with something else, and this is the reason for the appearance of innovation (bid‘ah) in every nation and the inevitable consequence of this is the disappearance of the Sunan [practices] of the Messengers amongst them; and this will result in destruction. That is why they used to say, “Holding fast to the Sunnah brings about salvation.”

Mālik (ﷺ) said, “The Sunnah is like the Ark of Noah (Nūḥ), whoever boards it is saved and whoever abandons it is destroyed.” This is the truth. For indeed the Ark of Noah (Nūḥ) was only boarded by those who believed in the Messengers and subsequently followed them, and whoever did not board it disbelieved in the Messengers.

As following the Sunnah is following the Message that has come from Allāh, so the one who follows this is like the one who boarded the Ark along with Noah (Nūḥ), both inwardly and outwardly.

The one who decides not to follow the Message is like the one who decided not to join the followers of Noah (Nūḥ) and refused to board the Ark. This is also the case if the Muslim was to ponder over the
positions held by the philosophers and the other nations who were upon misguidance and disbelief, they would find that the Qur'ān and the Sunnah expose their true conditions, clarify their true reality and differentiate between the truth and falsehood of their state.

The Companions were the most knowledgeable of the creation concerning [the Book and the Sunnah] just as they were the ones who struggled most against the disbelievers and the hypocrites as ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd said, ‘Whoever from amongst you seeks to take an example, then let him take the example of those who have died. Indeed those who are living are not immune from fitnah [trial and temptation]. Those were the Companions of Muḥammad; they were those from this nation that possessed the purest hearts, the greatest level of knowledge and they were the least excessive. They are people whom Allāh specifically chose to be Companions of His Prophet and those who would establish His Religion. So recognize their rights and cling to their guidance for indeed they were upon the guidance of the Straight Path.’”

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1 Refer to Majmū’ Ḥatāwā (4/137) of Ibn Taymiyyah.
The Third Characteristic
They are Upon Moderation in All of Their Affairs

From the distinct characteristics of 伊斯兰 is moderation and balance.1

1 Refer to al-伊斯兰 Maqāṣīdahu wa Khaṣṣā‘īṣuḥu (p. 50) by Dr. Muhammad al-‘Aqlah. Shaykhul-伊斯兰 Ibn Taymiyyah (ṣ) says in al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ (1/6-8), “Indeed, Allah (ﷻ) honoured Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) with specific characteristics that distinguish him from all of the Prophets and Messengers, and He endowed him with both a law and a methodology. It is the most superior law and most complete and clearest methodology. Likewise, He made the nation of Muhammad the best nation that has arisen from mankind. They surpass seventy nations and they are the best of them and most noble to Allah. Allah guided them with His Book (the Qur'an) and His Messenger (ﷺ) to the truth of the affairs in which the people which preceded them differed. He made them a nation of moderation, fairness and excellence. They are moderate concerning the Tawḥīd of Allah and His Names and Attributes. They are moderate in their beliefs concerning His Messengers, His Books, and the laws of His Religion, that which is commanded and forbidden and that which is lawful and unlawful. So He commanded them with good and forbade them from evil and made lawful for them the good and beneficial things and forbade them from the lowly and harmful things. He did not forbid them from anything that is good and beneficial like that which was forbidden from the Jews. He did not make lawful anything from the lowly and harmful things like that which was made permissible by the Christians. He did not place as many restrictions upon them in issues relating to purification and impurities as He did with the Jews. Nor did He completely eliminate the issue of purification and impurities as the Christians did such that they do not require that an individual purifies himself from sexual impurity, perform ablution for the Prayer or avoid impurities when praying. In fact, many of their worshippers view the use of impurities as a means of devoutness and obedience. To the extent that it is said concerning the praiseworthy characteristics of an ascetic monk that, ‘He has not touched [i.e. bathed] water in 40 years.’ This is the very reason they have abandoned circumcision even though it was from the legislation of Abraham al-Khaled (ﷺ) and his followers. And with the Jews, if a woman menstruates, then they do not eat or drink with her nor do they remain with her in the same house. As for the Christians, then they do not prohibit sexual intercourse with a woman who is menstruating. The Jews do not believe that it is compulsory to remove impurities. If some impurity were to touch the garment of one of them they would cut it out with scissors. According to the Christians nothing is considered unlawful to eat or impermissible to wear while in a state of prayer. The Muslims are also moderate in matters of legislation. They do not reject a ruling established by an →
abrogating text due to the presence of a ruling established by an abrogated text as the Jews did. They do not change any of the clear legislation nor innovate a new legislation that Allāh has not permitted as the Christians did. They do not exaggerate the station of the Prophets and the righteous as do the Christians nor do they deprive them of their appropriate status like the Jews. They do not describe the Creator with the deficiencies and imperfections of the creation like poverty, miserliness or inability as did the Jews. They do not describe the creation with the characteristics of the Creator, as did the Christians, since there is nothing like unto Him. They are not too proud to worship Him as are the Jews and they do not commit Shirk when they worship Him as do the Christians. Certainly, the people of the Sunnah in Islām are like the people of Islām when compared with the people of other religions. They are moderate concerning the attributes of Allāh (ﷻ) as they take the middle path that falls between the people who reject or deny them and the people who resemble His Attributes to that of the creation or make comparisons for them. They only describe Allāh in the manner in which He has described Himself and in the way that His Messengers described Him without negation or making examples. In such a way that His attributes of perfection are affirmed and to declare Him free of equals or partners. They affirm [His Attributes] without likening them to the creation and they negate [imperfections] without denying [His Attributes]. As He (ﷻ) said, “And there is nothing like unto Him...” which is a refutation of those who compare Him to His creation. And His statement, “And He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing...” is a refutation of those who deny His Attributes. He says, “Say: He is Allāh; the One. Allāh the Eternal Provider; He does not beget nor was He begotten, and there is not for Him any equal.” So al-Šamad here or the Eternal Provider is the absolute independent sovereign who possesses the Attributes of perfection. And al-Aḥad or the One is the One who possesses no equal and has no example. They [the People of Sunnah] are also moderate concerning the issue of Allāh’s actions. They take the middle path which falls between the Mu’tazilah who deny al-Qadr and the Jabariyyah who negate the wisdom of Allāh, His mercy, His justice, and ultimately use Qadr (the Divine Decree) as an excuse to rebel against Allāh’s commands and threats, and His rewards and punishments. In the issue of the [texts that contain] promises [of Paradise] and threats [of the Hellfire], [the people of Sunnah take the middle path which falls] between the Wa’diyah who say that the sinful Muslims will remain in the Hellfire forever and the Murji’ah who reject some of the textual threats and the superiority that Allāh has given to the righteous servants over the wicked sinners. They are also moderate concerning the issue of the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷻ). [They take the middle path] between those who exaggerate concerning some of them, claiming for them divinity, prophethood or infallibility, and those who are negligent concerning them like those who declare some of them to be disbelievers or sinners. The companions are without doubt the best of this nation.”
Moderation is from the most distinguishing characteristics of the Religion [Islam]. Allāh (ﷻ) said,

"Guide us to the straight path. The path of those upon whom You have shown Your favor. Not those with whom You are angered or those who are astray.”

[Sūrah al-Fātihah 1: 6-7]

This is cited as an evidence here because He (ﷻ) described the Straight Path as other than the path of those whom He is angry with, which is a reference to the Jews who were excessive in their religion, and not the path of the Christians who were excessive in their worship and asceticism to the point that they exceeded the limits of their legislation. Their excessiveness was not restricted to their worship but they even exceeded the limits in matters of belief as Allāh (ﷻ) said,
“O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess in your religion or say about Allāh except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was but a Messenger of Allāh and His word which He directed to Mary and a soul (created at a command) from Him. So believe in Allāh and His Messengers. And do not say, "Three"; desist - it is better for you. Indeed, Allāh is but one God. Exalted is He above having a son. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And sufficient is Allāh as Disposer of affairs.” [Sūrah al-Nisā’ 4:171]

If the Straight Path is a path other than that of the Jews and the Christians and the path of the Jews and the Christians was a path of excessiveness [as explained above], then this indicates that the straight path is a path that allows no excessiveness. Therefore, it falls between the two extremes of excessiveness and negligence. This is the meaning of moderation that is the methodology of the Religion of Islām.

It has been transmitted upon the authority of ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd that he said, “The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) drew a straight line. Then he said, ‘This is the path of Allāh.’ Then he drew other lines on the right and left of it. Then he said, ‘These are different paths. On each one of these paths is a Shaytān [devil] calling to it.’ Then he recited,

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صَبْرًا مُّسْتَقِيمًا فَأَتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْسَّبِيلَ فَتَفْرَقُوا

And certainly, this is My Straight Path, so follow it; and do not follow the [other] paths, for they will divert you from His way.” [Sūrah al-An‘ām 6:153].”

1 Related by Ahmad in the Musnad (1/435,465), al-Dārimī in the introduction his Sunan, Ibn Abū ‘Āsim in al-Sunnah (1/13), Ibn Ḥibbān (al-Ihsān, 1/180-181, no. 6-7) and al-Ḥākim in his Mustadrak (2/318). It was also related upon the authority of →
The Straight Path necessitates that this is a path of moderation and excellence, which exists between the two extremes of excessiveness and negligence.

It has been transmitted upon the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās that he said, “It was said to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), “Which of the previous legislations is most beloved to Allāh?” To this he replied, “The easy and tolerant Religion of Islāmic monotheism (al-Ḥanīfīyyah al-Samḥah).”1

This narration provides textual evidence that Islām is an easy and tolerant Religion [al-Ḥanīfīyyah al-Samḥah]. The attribute of [al-Samḥah] easiness and tolerance totally negates excessiveness and harshness.

Ibn Taymiyyah (ө) said concerning the People of Sunnah and the Jamāʿah, “Likewise concerning the remaining issues of the Sunnah, they are moderate because they adhere to the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) and what was agreed upon by the first generation from the Muhājirūn (those who migrated from Makkah to Madīnah) and the Anṣār (the inhabitants of Madīnah who welcomed the Prophet and his Companions) and those who followed them upon goodness.”2

Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh (ө) by Ibn Mājah (no. 11) and in Ibn Abū ʿĀsim in Kitāb al-Sunnah (1/13). This ḥadīth was authenticated by Ibn Ḥībbān and al-Ḥākim. The person that checked the book, al-Iḥsān, declared it to be sound, and Shaykh al-Albānī declared it to be Ṣaḥīḥ li ghayrihi (Ṣaḥīḥ due other narrations) in Zilāl al-Jannah (1/13).

1 Related by Ahmad in the Musnad (al-Risālah, 4/17, no. 2107), al-Bukhārī in al-Adab al-Mufrad (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Adab al-Mufrad, p. 122, no. 220/287) and ʿAbd ibn Ḥumayd in his Musnad (al-Muntakhab, 1/497, no. 567). It was also mentioned by al-Bukhārī in ta’līeq form in Kitāb al-Īmān in the chapter concerning the easiness of the Religion and the statement, “The most beloved Religion to Allāh is al-Ḥanīfīyyah al-Samḥah.” Ibn Ḥajar declared the chain of narration for this ḥadīth to be Ḥasan in Fath al-Bārī (1/94). Shaykh al-Albānī declared this narration to be Ḥasan li ghayrihi (Ḥasan due other narrations) in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Adab al-Mufrad and also in Silsilah al-ʿAḥdāth al-Ṣaḥīḥah (no. 881) and the checker of al-Muntakhab also declared this narration Ḥasan li ghayrihi (Ḥasan due other narrations); and the checkers of the Musnad declared this narration to be Ṣaḥīḥ li ghayrihi (Ṣaḥīḥ due other narrations).

2 Refer to Majmūʿ Fatāwā (3/375) of Ibn Taymiyyah.
[The Salafīs] are not extreme or harsh.

They do not permit roughness or dissonance.

They do not bring forth reasons and excuses to justify a lack of submittance and surrender.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d.751H) – اَء – said, “The difference between being moderate (iqtisād) and being negligent (taqsīr) is that moderation (iqtisād) is positioned between the two extremes of excessiveness and negligence. Moderation is opposed by two conflicting extremes: Negligence (taqsīr) and going beyond bounds (mujāwazah). So the one who is considered moderate (al-muqtasid) takes the balanced and middle course, and abandons the conflicting extremes.

Allāh (ﷻ) said,

وَلَاتَجَعَلِ نَفْطًا إِلَى عُنْفِهَا وَلَا تَبْسُطُهَا كَلِ الْبَسْطِ

قُوَّامًا

“And those who when they give of their wealth; they neither spend extravagantly nor miserly, but they maintain a consistent manner between those extremes.” [Sūrah al-Furqān 25:67]

And Allāh (ﷻ) said,

وَلَا تُجَعِّلِ نَفْطًا إِلَى عُنْفِهَا وَلَا تَبْسُطُهَا كَلِ الْبَسْطِ

“And do not allow your hand to be bound to your neck [like a miser] or completely extend it [like a spendthrift].” [Sūrah al-‘Isrā’ 17:29]

And Allāh (ﷻ) says,
And eat and drink but be not excessive."

[Sūrah al-Aʿrāf 7:31]

All aspects of the Religion exist between these two extremes. Actually, Islam is the moderate Religion when compared to other religions, and the Sunnah is an example of moderation in the midst of innovation (bidʿah). The Religion of Allāh exists between the extremes of those who are excessive and the negligence of those who are negligent.

This is also the case with interpretive jurisprudence ( ijtiḥād) which involves the exertion of great efforts in order to arrive at the truth. And excessiveness involves transgressing this point and overstepping its limits.

Allāh has not commanded a matter except that the Shayṭān attempts to misguide the people with his whispering in two ways, either through excessiveness and transgression, or through heedlessness and negligence. These are two sources of evil that cannot be completely prevented from corrupting the beliefs, intentions and actions except for the one who walks in the footsteps of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and abandons the statements of the people and their opinions in favour of what he came with; and not the one who abandons what he came with in favour of the statements of the people and their opinions.

These two dangerous diseases have overpowered most of the children of Ādam. This is why the Salaf used to warn in the most severe manner from these two diseases, and they would frighten those who succumb to either of these maladies with destruction. Indeed, these two characteristics sometimes combine in a single person as is the case in most of the creation so an individual could be negligent with some aspects of his Religion and excessive and extreme in others. The one who is guided is the one whom Allāh guides."¹

¹ Refer to al-Rūḥ (p. 347) of Ibn al-Qayyim.
In keeping with this characteristic, those who ascribe to Salafiyyah reject harshness, extremism and excessiveness.

Al-Ghulūw [extremism] is to go to extremes in a particular issue and be harsh by transgressing the set boundaries. This incorporates the meaning of exaggeration.¹ It is said: (ghalā fi al-shay') He was excessive or extreme in something [in the past tense], (yaghū) he is excessive or extreme [in the present tense], and (ghulūwan) which means extremism. It is said that the price ghalā which basically means that the normal asking price has been exceeded. It is said the shares yaghū ghalwan with ghalwan taking a fathah then a sukūn, when it reaches the highest possible price hoped for.

In the narration of Ibn 'Abbās (ﷺ) he says, “The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said to me on the morning of 'Aqabah while he was on his mount, ‘Could you gather for me some small pebbles?’ So I gathered for him some pebbles that would be like the stones that are flicked with the finger, and I placed them in his hand. He said, ‘[Throw] the ones like these. And beware of going to extremes in matters of the Religion, for indeed those who came before you were destroyed because they went to extremes in matters of the Religion.’”²

It has been transmitted upon the authority of Anas ibn Mālik (ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Make things easy for the people and do not make things difficult, and give glad tidings and do not chase them away. For indeed you were only sent to make things easy and you were not sent to make things difficult.”³

¹ The Arabic word ta'ammuq means to exhibit harshness in a matter to a level where the justified limits are exceeded. Refer to Fath al-Bārī (13/278).
² Related by Ahmad in the Musnad (al-Risālah, 3/351, no. 1851), al-Nisāṭ (no. 3057), Ibn Mājah (no. 3029), Ibn Khuzaymah (4/274, no. 2867), Ibn Ḥibbān (al-ʿıṣān, 9/183, no. 3871) and al-Ḥākim (1/466). The hadith was authenticated by Ibn Khuzaymah, Ibn Ḥibbān, and al-Ḥākim and its chain of narration was declared Sahīh by those who checked the Musnad of Imam Ahmad and by the one who checked al-ʿıṣān.
³ Related by al-Bukhārī (no. 69) and Muslim (no. 1734).
It has also been transmitted upon the authority of ʿAbdullāh Ibn Masʿūd (ﷺ) that he (ﷺ) said, “The mutanaṭṭiʿūn [those who go to extremes] are ruined. The mutanaṭṭiʿūn are ruined. The mutanaṭṭiʿūn are ruined.”¹

The mutanaṭṭiʿūn mentioned in this hadīth, as the explainers of this narration have mentioned, are those who delve too deeply, go to extremes and transgress the set limits in their statements and actions.

This narration apparently describes the condition of the mutanaṭṭiʿūn while it also signifies the prohibition of excessiveness.

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¹ Related by Muslim (no. 2670).
The Fourth Characteristic
They are a People who are United and in Agreement, and They are Firm and Resolute upon the Truth

The Salafis seek to preserve and strengthen the Jamā‘ah [community of Muslims] and banish dissention, but the type of Jamā‘ah that they want to unite upon is what the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was upon and his Companions.

Abū al-Mu‘āzaffar al-Sam‘ānī (رضي الله عنه) said, “From what shows that the people of hadith are upon the truth is that if you were to examine all of their written works from the first of them to the last of them, from the oldest of them to the newest of them, despite them living in different lands and during different times, and the great distances that separate them and the fact that each one of them inhabited a different region, you will find them when expounding upon their beliefs upon a single way, upon a single method and they traverse upon a single path without deviating from it or turning away from it. They are united in their speech concerning it, and their actions are one. You will not witness any differing and separation amongst them about anything, even if it is insignificant. Rather, if you were to collect everything that has been stated upon their tongues and what they conveyed from their predecessors, you will find that it is as if it has come from a single heart and come from a single tongue. And is there any evidence for truth that is clearer than this?

Allah (ﷻ) says,

آَفَلاَ يَتَبَيَّنُ عَلَى الْقُرْآنِ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِبَادِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوْ جَدُوا فِيهِ

“Do they not reflect upon the Qur'ān? Had it been from other than Allah, then they would have found therein much contradiction.” [Sūrah al-Nisā’ 4:82]
And Allāh (ﷻ) says,

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَيْئَتِيْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُواَ وَأَذَّنُوا بَعْمَةَ اللَّهِ
عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كَانُتمُ أَعْدَاءَ فَلَنَفَّسَ بَيْنَ فَلْوِيَّكُمْ فَأَصْبَحَ خَمْصُ بِيَوْمِ يَكُونُ إِخْوَانَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا عَلَى شَفَةِ حُجُرٍ مِنْ آنَّا فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَٰلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَتَهُمَا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَبَيَّنَونَ

“And hold firmly to the rope of Allāh all together and do not be divided. And remember the favour of Allāh upon you - when you were enemies He brought your hearts together and you became, by His mercy, brothers. And you were on the edge of a pit of the fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allāh make clear to you His āyāt that you may be guided.”

[Ṣūrah Āl-‘Imrān 3:103]

But if you were to look at the people of desires and innovation (bid’ah) you would see that they are divided and differ with one another; they are factions and sects. It would be unlikely to find two groups from among them that are upon the same path in terms of their beliefs. Some of them declare others amongst them to be innovators (mubtadi‘ūn), and some of them go further and make takfīr [declare a Muslim to be a disbeliever]. The son declares his father to be a disbeliever, a man declares his brother to be a disbeliever, and the neighbor declares his neighbor to be a disbeliever. You will always find them disputing, hating and differing with one another. Their entire lives have passed them by and their words are still not in agreement. You may believe that they are together but their hearts are divided. This is because they are a people who do not understand.

Have not you heard about the Mu‘tazilah, even though they share this ascription and nickname the Mu‘tazilah from Baghdād declare the Mu‘tazilah from al-Baṣrāh to be disbelievers. The companions of Abū ‘Alī
al-Jubātī declare his son Abū Hāshim to be a disbeliever and the supporters of Abū Hāshim declare his father, Abū ‘Alī to be a disbeliever.

The same applies to the rest of their figureheads and those who have formulated certain position from amongst them. If you were to reflect upon their statements, you would see that they are divided, they declare one another to be disbelievers and they renounce one another.

This is also the case with the Kharijites (Khawārij) and the Rawāfid and how they interact with one another. The rest of the people of innovation (mubtadi‘ūn) resemble them in this. Is there any evidence for falsehood clearer than this?!

And Allāh (ﷻ) says,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا لَّسْتَ مَنْ مَعِيْهِمْ فِي شَيْٰئٍ إِنَّمَا
أَمَرُوهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ

"Indeed, those who have divided their religion and split off into sects; you should not concern yourself with them in the least [O Muḥammad]. Their affair is exclusively for Allāh.” [Sūrah al-An‘ām 6:159]

The reason behind the unity of the people of hadīth is that they take their Religion from the Book (the Qur’ān) and the Sunnah, and they rely upon that which is transmitted. This has left them in agreement and harmony. Whereas the people of innovation (mubtadi‘ūn) have taken their Religion from logic and theoretical opinion so this has left them to inherit division and differing. As for the narrations and transmissions conveyed by trustworthy and reliable individuals then they rarely differ and even if they differ about a word or phrase then this type of differing does not harm the Religion or spoil it.
However, as for the arguments that are derived from the intellect then they rarely agree. In fact, the intellect of each individual interprets things differently than the next person and this is very clear, and all praise is due to Allāh. With this the difference should be understood between differing amongst the schools of thought (madhāhib) in the branch issues of the Religion as opposed to differing in the fundamental issues of belief.

We found that the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) used to differ, [after the death of the Prophet], in issues of jurisprudence but this did not prompt splitting or sectarianism. This was because they never departed from the [teachings] of the Religion and they only differed in areas where disagreement was allowed [through interpretive jurisprudence (ijtihād) in order to arrive at an informed opinion and in order to extract rulings from the Book (the Qurʾān) and the Sunnah regarding the issues that were not explicitly addressed with a text]. They held different statements and opinions in many issues...Which would require a great length to enumerate upon from the matters of commerce, marriage and divorce; and also in a multitude of other issues related to purification, the way Prayer should be performed and the other acts of worship. With this type of differing in these affairs they were still worthy of praise; and this form of differing is a mercy from Allāh upon this nation since He aided them with certainty. Then the Scholars thoroughly researched those issues where they did not find its legal ruling in the Qurʾān and the Sunnah. So even though they differed in these things they were a people who loved one another and offered sincere advice. The brotherhood of Islām remained and they did not cease to be in a state of harmony.

When these ignoble desires appeared which direct its proponent towards the Hellfire enmity appeared and the people split and became sects. The brotherhood of the Religion became severed and the harmony ceased. This proves that this type of splitting and division occurred as a result of innovations introduced by Shayṭān, which he placed in the mouths of his allies to cause them to differ and provoke them to declare one another to be disbelievers.
Every issue that arose in Islam and the people disputed regarding it and differed but these differences did not incite enmity, animosity or division between them and there was a continuance in the harmony, sincere advice, love, mercy and compassion, then these are from the issues of Islam in which research and scrutiny is permitted. Adopting any of these positions does not justify takfīr (the person being declared a disbeliever) or tabdīl (being declared an innovator) since this type of differing existed between the Companions and their students, and the harmony and love was maintained.

Conversely, every issue that appears and which the people differ about and this differing leads to taking sides, shunning, boycotting, severing relationships and possibly even escalates to takfīr, then you know that this is in no way related to the religion. It is obligatory upon every individual of sound mind to distance himself from this and avoid indulging into disputes of this nature because Allah has stipulated that as a result of our implementation of Islam that we become brothers.”

And Allah (ﷻ) said,

وَآذَّنُوا بِنَعْمَتِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَّ كُنْتُمْ أُمَّةً مَّأْمُولًا فَأَضْحَكُوا بَيْنَ سَبْعِينَ سَبْعَةً فِي رَمَضَانَ

“And remember the favour of Allah upon you - when you were enemies He brought your hearts together and you became, by His mercy, brothers.”

[Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān 3:103]

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1 Refer to al-İntişär li Ahl al-Ḥadīth by way of the book Sawn al-Manṭaq wal-Kalām (p. 165-169). Compare this to what is written in al-İtisam (2/231-233) where much of this section has been summarized but he did not attribute it to Abū al-Muẓaffar al-Samʿānī. Instead, he said, “Some scholars have said,” and then he summarized this, quoting the main objectives.
Ibn Taymiyyah (メディ) said, “You will definitely find that those who change their positions the most are the people of rhetoric (ahl al-kalām), and they are those most famous for asserting a position in one place and then resolutely promoting its opposite in another place and declaring the one who holds the first position to be a disbeliever. This is a proof of their lack of certainty. For indeed faith is as Heraclius said when he asked Abū Sufyān about those who embraced Islām and joined the Prophet (ﷺ), ‘Do any of them abandon their Religion because they are discontented with it after having entered into it?’ He replied, ‘No.’ Then he [Heraclius] said, ‘This is the nature of faith. When its joy enters into the heart no one becomes displeased with it.’

Based on this, some of the Salaf like 'Umar Ibn 'Abdul-'Azīz or other than him stated, “Whoever allows his Religion to become a matter of debate will frequently change.”

As for the people of the Sunnah and hadīth, then it is not known that a single one of their Scholars or even one of their righteous laypeople ever withdrew their position and retracted their beliefs. They are the most patient of the people upon their beliefs even if they are made to endure all kinds of trials and tribulations. This is the condition of the Prophets and their followers from those who have preceded us like the people of the trench and the like of them. This was the case with the Salaf of this nation from the Companions and their students and other than them from the Imāms. To the extent that Imām Mālik used to say, “Do not envy anyone who has not been subjected to severe affliction in this affair.” He would say, “Indeed, Allāh must test the Believer with trials and affliction. Then, if he is patient, his level increases.”

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1 Related by al-Bukhārī (no, 7) upon the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās (メディ) and a shorter version (no. 51) with the wording: Upon the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās who said: Abū Sufyān Ibn Ḥarb informed me that Heraclius said to him: I asked you are they (the followers of Muḥammad) increasing or decreasing in number. And you replied that they are increasing. This is the way of true faith until it is complete. I asked you whether any of them became displeased and forsook their Religion. Then you replied: No. This is the nature of faith. When its joy enters into the heart and mixes with it, no one becomes displeased with it.
As Allāh (ﷻ) said,

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ﺃَلْهَ ﻣَאَلِكَةٍ ﺃَلْهِ ﺳَوْيَةٍ ﺳَدِيدٍ}

And Allāh (ﷻ) said,

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمَّ أُمَيَّةً يَهْدِي رُءٍّيْتَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُواَ وَكَانُواَ

And Allāh (ﷻ) said,

وَالْعَصَرِ ﻛُنَّ إِنَّ أَلْذَٰلِمِينَ لَيْفَخُسْرٍ إِلَّا أَلْذَٰلِمِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُواَ

And We established from amongst them, leaders who would guide in accordance with Our command when they were patient and used to be certain of Our signs.” [Sūrah al-Sajdah 32:24]
“By the time, truly, mankind is in loss, except those who believe and do righteous deeds, and advise one another with truth, and advise one another with patience.” [Sūrah al-‘Asr 103: 1-3]

Those who remain steadfast upon their positions from the people of desires, then this is due to the elements of truth that they adhere to as there must be with every innovation (bid‘ah) that is practised by a large group of people some element of truth which they hold onto that the Messenger (ﷺ) came with and with which the people of the Sunnah and hadith agree, which causes it to be accepted. This is because pure falsehood will not be accepted under any circumstances.

In summary, firmness and steadfastness among the people of hadith and the Sunnah is far more common and prevalent than what you find among the people of rhetoric (ahl al-kalām) and philosophy. In fact, the philosophers are more indecisive and uncertain than the people of rhetoric (ahl al-kalām). This is because the people of rhetoric (ahl al-kalām) possess an amount of truth which they have acquired from the Prophets that is not present among the philosophers. For this reason you’ll find that Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī and the like of him displayed more conviction than Ibn Sīnā and the like of him.

You will also find that the people of philosophy and rhetoric (ahl al-kalām) are the people that divide and differ the most and each one of them claim that their statement is the definitive truth which is supported by evidence. The people of the Sunnah and hadith are the people with the greatest unity and harmony. The closer the sect is to them, then the closer they will be to unity and harmony. For example, the Mu’tazilah experience more harmony and agreement than the philosophers since the philosophers have so many contradictory positions that only Allāh can keep count of them. They have different positions concerning affairs of divinity, the resurrection, prophethood, and even in the natural sciences, mathematics and astrology.

Those who have compiled books documenting the positions and statements of the earlier generations [of philosophers] like Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash’arī (d.324H) in his book, al-Maqūlāt, and al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr in the
book, *al-Daqāʾiq min Maqālātihim*, have cited exponentially more than what has just been mentioned by al-Farābī, Ibn Sīnā and those who are similar to them...”¹

Thus, the Salafīs do not fall into blameworthy differing that is a characteristic of weakness.

A person cannot protect himself from falling into this except by obeying Allāh and obeying the Messenger (ﷺ).

Allāh (ﷻ) said,

وَأطيعوا الله ورسوله ولا تنزعلوا وتدفعوا وتذهب رتبتكم
وأصبروا فإن الله مع الصبرين

“And obey Allāh and His Messenger and do not dispute, lest you lose courage and your strength may depart; and be patient. Indeed, Allāh is with the patient.”

[Ṣūrah al-Anfāl 8:46]

When the Sunnah is followed, implemented and understood in the same manner as the pious predecessors (*al-Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*), then this is obedience to Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ). This is the path to safely escape blameworthy differing.

Al-Tirmidhī collected the following narration in his Sunan in the book of knowledge (*Kitāb al-ʿIlm*) within the chapter, ‘What has been narrated concerning adherence to the Sunnah and avoiding religious innovation (*bid’ah*),’ and Abū Dāwūd related the same narration in the book of the Sunnah (*Kitāb al-Sunnah*) from his Sunan within the chapter concerning, ‘Adherence to the Sunnah.’ Upon the authority of al-ʿIrbād Ibn Sāriyah (ﷺ) who said, “The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) admonished us one day after the early morning Prayer. The admonition was heartfelt and

¹ Refer to *Naqḍ al-Manṭaq* (p. 42-44) of Ibn Taymiyyah.
eloquent and caused the eyes to shed tears and the hearts to tremble. A man from amongst us said, ‘Certainly, it is as if this is a farewell admonition, so with what do you advise us O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?’ He replied, ‘I advise you to fear Allah and to hear and obey those in authority over you even if it were an Abyssinnian slave. Indeed, whoever from amongst you lives long will witness much division. And beware of newly invented matters for surely they are misguidance. Whoever from amongst you lives to witness this, then cling to my Sunnah and the way of the Rightly Guided Caliphs who will come after me and grab onto it with your molar teeth.’”

According to the wording of Ibn Mājah, [al-‘Irbaḍ Ibn Sāriyah] said, “Then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, ‘I have left you upon clear guidance, its night is like its day. No one strays from it except that they are destroyed. Whoever from amongst you lives long after me will witness great differing. So adhere to what you know of my Sunnah and the Sunnah of my Rightly-Guided Caliphs, and hold onto it with your molar teeth. And obey the leader even if he is an Abyssinnian slave. For the believer is like a camel with a ring in its nose wherever you direct it it will follow.’”¹

This admonition given by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is amongst those narrations which comprise of few words but has an immense meaning, and it is comprehensive and precise.

It represents a tremendous foundation from the foundations of this Religion. This is from the angle that people’s lives consist of various relationships. It is either his relationship with his Lord, his relationship with his community or his relationship with himself.

This narration clarifies the servant’s relationship with Allah as found in his statement, “I advise you to fear Allah.”

The relationship between the individual and his community is mentioned in his statement, “Hear and obey those in authority even if

¹ This hadith is established and its sources have been cited.
it were an Abyssinnian slave. Indeed, whoever from amongst you lives long will witness much differing. Beware of newly invented matters for surely they are misguidance. Whoever from amongst you lives to witness this, then cling to my Sunnah and the way of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs who will come after me and grab onto it with your molar teeth.”

The relationship that a person has with himself is clarified in the admonition with the mention of taqwā (fearing Allāh) and adherence to the Sunnah.

This advice also indicates the excellence of following the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).

This narration also contains information of what will transpire in the future. What exactly is this event that will occur?

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) informed us that a great amount of differing would occur amongst the Muslims as opposed to his era, “Whoever from amongst you lives long after me will witness great differing.”

So what is the path to safety? What is the way to deliverance from this? How can we escape this?

He (ﷺ) said, “Cling to my Sunnah and the way of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs who will come after me and grab onto it with your molar teeth.”

By adhering to what the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was upon and his Companions will allow you to protect yourself from this blameworthy type of differing. You will also be able to protect yourself from entering into issues of differing and splitting which have been condemned by Islām.
The Fifth Characteristic
They Work Towards the Establishment of the
Religion through the Seeking of Correct
Islāmic Knowledge and its Application

According to them [i.e. the Salafīs] knowledge is following the
narrations. They collect the āyāt [of the Qur’ān], ḥadīth [of the
Messenger of Allāh (安宁)] and the narrations of the Companions, and
they seek to understand them. They follow the speech of the Salaf and
do not introduce any new understanding of the texts that departs from
the speech of the Companions (安宁).

Ibn Taymiyyah (安宁) said, “The knowledge that is legislated and the
rites of worship that are legislated [in this Religion] are taken from the
Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (安宁). As for what has come from
those who succeeded them, then it is inappropriate that this be used as
a foundation even though this person maybe excused, rather rewarded
for their efforts to extract the correct ruling (ijtihād) or their efforts to
follow another in a ruling (taqlīd). Whoever bases his speech in the
various Islāmic sciences - whether they are fundamental issues or
secondary issues- upon the Book (the Qur’ān), the Sunnah and the
narrations that have reached us from the earliest generations, then this
individual has traversed upon the path of the Prophet. Similarly, the
one who bases his intention, his worship, his deeds and his hearing [of
knowledge] as it relates to the fundamentals of actions and their
subsidiary branches from the affairs of the heart and the actions of the
body; whoever bases these things upon true faith, the Sunnah, and the
guidance of Muḥammad (安宁) and his Companions, then he has
traversed upon the path of the Prophet. This is the way of the Imāms of
guidance.

You find that Imām Aḥmad (d.241H) said after mentioning the
foundations of the Sunnah (Uṣūl al-Sunnah), “It is to adhere to what the
Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (安宁) were upon.” He wrote books
of tafsīr (Qur’ānic exegesis) which comprised of narrations of the
Prophet (安宁), his Companions and their students. He wrote books of
\(\textit{hadīth}\) and narrations which comprised of narrations of the Prophet (ﷺ), his Companions and their students. This is what he used to rely upon in both the fundamental issues of knowledge as well as the subsidiary issues; and this is emphasized by a letter that he wrote to the Caliph of his time al-Mutawakkil where he said: ‘I do not like speech in any of these matters except that it is found in the Book of Allāh (the Qur’ān), the \(\textit{hadīth}\) of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), or the speech of the Companions or their students. As for the speech that is based upon other than that, then this [type of] speech is censured.’

This was also his position concerning asceticism (zuhd), matters that soften heart (raqā‘iq), and the conditions of the heart (ahwāl). In his book entitled \(\textit{al-Zuhd}\) (asceticism), he relied upon what has been transmitted from the Prophets - may the peace and blessings of Allāh be upon them - from Ādam to Muḥammad, then he mentioned the narrations of the Companions and their students, without mentioning the statements of those who came after them.

This was also the case when he described how a person should seek knowledge as he advised that [the student] should record, ‘What has come from the Prophet (ﷺ), then what has reached us from the Companions and then from their students.’ In another narration ‘Then you have a choice concerning [the statements of] the students of the Companions.’

There can be no doubt that knowledge of the statements of the Salaf, the Companions and their students, and knowledge of their actions, their consensus and even the matters in which they differed is more valuable than knowing the statements and actions of those who came after them.

If you were to contemplate, you would find that every faction and sect of this great nation of Muḥammad will claim that they adhere to the Book of Allāh (the Qur’ān) and the Sunnah. However, the criterion which

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1 Refer to Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā (10/362-364) of Ibn Taymiyyah.
2 This has been stated by Ibn Taymiyyah in Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā (13/23-27).
differentiates between these various factions and sects is to carefully examine which of them are upon what the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and his Companions were upon and to then adhere to this. Since this is the saved sect and the group which will be aided, and this is the jamā‘ah and the way of the Believers.

Allāh (ﷻ) said,

وَمَن يُشَافِقِ آلِ رَسُولِنَّ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ آلِ الْهَدَىَّ وَيَتَمَعَّ غَيْرَ سَبِيلٍ

الْمُؤْمِنِينَ تَوَلَّوْهُ مَا نَوَلَّ وَنُضَلُّهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ مَصيرًا

“And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has been made clear to him, and follows other than the way of the Believers; We will direct him towards the path which he has chosen, and burn him in Hellfire; and what an evil destination.” [Sūrah al-Nisā‘ 4:115]

Al-Shāfi‘ī (ﻉ) mentioned in the book, ar-Risālah al-Qadīmah, after mentioning the Companions and praising them with words of praise that they deserve, “They are far greater than us in every discipline of knowledge and interpretive jurisprudence (ijtihād). They are better than us in piety and intellect and any affair of knowledge which requires understanding and extrapolation. Their opinions are more praiseworthy and more deserving of our attention than our own opinions which we formulate ourselves, and Allāh knows best.

Whomever we have encountered from those whom we are pleased with and those whom we have been informed about in our lands relied upon the position of the Companions if they formed a consensus and the position of some of them if they differed, if there was no explicit narration known from the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). This is what we state: if they reach a consensus, then we act upon their consensus and promote it. And if one of them held a position that was not opposed by his peers from amongst the companions, then we embrace his position. But if they differed, then we accept the position
of some of them without departing from the positions that were held by the Companions.”

This methodology is the path that was taken by the Imāms of this Religion and the legislation that was walked upon by those who were guided and traversed upon the Straight Path. This is the knowledge that is both precise and authentic.

All praise belongs to Allāh for the person saying,

قَالَ الصَّحَابَةُ لَيْسَ خَلَفْ فِيهِ
بَيْنَ الرَّسُولِ وَبَيْنَ رَأْيِ سَفِيٍّ
بَيْنَ الرَّسُولِ وَبَيْنَ رَأْيِ فَقِيٍّ
حَذُّرُا مِنَ التَّحْسِيمِ وَالْقَصُوْصِ

"Knowledge is, 'Allāh said, His Messenger said, the Companions said;' there is no discrepancy therein.

It is not knowledge that you foolishly designate a disagreement, between the textual evidence and the opinion of a fool.

Nor is it that you ignorantly designate a disagreement, between the Messenger and the opinion of a jurist.

Nor is it that you deliberately reject the texts, Out of fear of considering Allāh a body (tajṣīm) and resembling Allāh to His creation (tashbīh).”

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1 Refer to al-Madkhal ilā al-Sunan al-Kubrā (p. 110).
Al-Awzā‘ī (ﷺ) said, “Knowledge is what reaches you from the companions of Muḥammad (ﷺ), and anything else is not considered knowledge.”¹

Al-Zuhrī (ﷺ) used to write down the speech of the students of the Companions while his colleague Ṣāliḥ Ibn al-Kaysān used to oppose him in this practice, and the latter later lived to regret the decision not to record their statements.²

Abū Ḥanīfah al-Nuʿmān (ﷺ) proceeded upon this path.

Ibn al-Mubārak (ﷺ) said, “I heard Abū Ḥanīfah (ﷺ) say, ‘If something reaches us from the Prophet (ﷺ) then it is more than deserving to be accepted and honoured. If something reaches us from the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), then we select one of their positions. If something comes from the students of the Companions, then we may participate with them [to arrive at what is correct].’”³

Mālik Ibn Anas al-ʿAshbāḥī the Imām of Dārul-Hijrah (ﷺ) also proceeded upon this path. When his book, al-Muwwaṭa’, was mentioned to him, Mālik said, “It contains hadīth of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), and the statements of the Companions and their students along with their opinions. I mentioned some of my own opinions which I reached through interpretive jurisprudence (ijtihād) and what I have acquired from the people of knowledge in our land. I have not departed whatsoever from their stances.”⁴

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¹ Related by Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr in Jāmi’ Bayān al-ʿIlm wa Faḍluhu (2/29).
² Related by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī in Taqyīd al-ʿIlm (p. 106-107) and Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr in Jāmi’ Bayān al-ʿIlm wa Faḍluhu (1/76-77), and this has been taken from the comment made by the brother Muḥammad Nāṣir al-ʿAjmī upon Bayān Faḍl ʿIlm al-Salaf (p. 69).
³ Refer to Akhbār Abū Ḥanīfah (p. 10) of as-Ṣaŷmirī, transmitted by Abū Yūsuf from Abū Ḥanīfah Ḥāḍir Himam Umay’ al-Abṣār (p. 70).
⁴ Refer to Tartīb al-Madārak (1/193).
This was also the path that was traversed by al-Shāfi‘ī (ال patched). Al-Shāfi‘ī (ال patched) said, “Knowledge consists of levels:

- **The First Level:** The Book of Allāh (the Qur‘ān) and the Sunnah if it has been authentically established in the Sunnah.
- **The Second Level:** The scholarly consensus (ijmā‘), when no proof is found in the Qur‘ān and the Sunnah.
- **The Third Level:** When some of the Companions state something and we do not know of any Companion who opposed them.
- **The Fourth Level:** Differing opinions amongst the Companions (ṣaḥabah) of the Prophet (ﷺ).
- **The Fifth Level:** [The correct use of] juristic analogy or inference (qiyās) in relation to some of these levels.

Nothing should be sought from other than the Qur‘ān and the Sunnah when the appropriate texts are found. For indeed knowledge is sought from the top.”

This is also the methodology of Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ḥanbal (ال patched). Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ḥanbal said, “If there is a hadīth concerning a specific issue that was reported from the Prophet (ﷺ), then we do not accept a statement from any of the Companions or those who came after them in opposition to it.

If the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) held different positions about an issue then we choose from their positions. We do not depart from their positions and [accept the stance] of others.

If there is no statement from the Prophet (ﷺ) or his Companions in an issue, then we choose from the positions of the students of the Companions...”

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1 Refer to al-Madkhal ilā al-Sunan al-Kubrā (p. 110).
2 Refer to al-Musawwadah (p. 276).
Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan said, “Whoever is a Scholar concerning the Book of Allāh (the Qurʿān), the Sunnah, the statements of the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and what is considered sound by the Muslim jurists, then [this individual has] extensive insight that allows him to conduct interpretive jurisprudence (ijtihād) that will shape his opinion in matters which are pertinent to him. This individual can judge in accordance with this and implement his judgment in his Prayer, fasting, Ḥajj and everything that he has been commanded with and forbidden from. So if he performs interpretive jurisprudence (ijtihād), examines the situation and compares it (qiyyās) to a similar situation, then he did not fall short with this effort even if he did not reach the correct position.”

Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan also said, “Knowledge is of four types:

- What can be clearly found in the Book of Allāh (the Qurʿān), and whatever is similar to this. And what is found in the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), and whatever is similar to this.
- Whatever the Companions unanimously agreed upon, and whatever is similar to this.
- Likewise those issues which the Companions differed concerning. No one should depart from the positions of the Companions. If a person chooses from the opinions of the Companions, then this is knowledge which can be used for juristic analogy, and whatever may resemble this.
- Whatever is deemed to be correct by the majority of Muslim jurists, and whatever is similar to this.

Knowledge does not consist of any classification other than these four.”

I say: Their words are the same, may Allāh have mercy upon them, and they all have agreed upon this methodology. So whoever departs from

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1 Related by Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr in Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm wa Faḍluluhu (2/61).
2 Related by Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr in Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm wa Faḍluluhu (2/26).
it has departed from the path of the Believers. And Allāh is the One who grants success.

Ibn Taymiyyah (ـ) said, “Whoever explains the Qurʿān or ḥadīth and interprets it in a way other than that which was known to the Companions and their students is a fabricator of a lie against Allāh, a distorer of the āyāt of Allāh and one who misinterprets words from their true context. This action opens the door to infidelity (zandaqah) and heresy (iḥdād). The falsehood of such a practice is well known by necessity in the Religion of Islām.”

It is impermissible for anyone to interpret a verse of the Qurʿān or ḥadīth with a meaning that directly contradicts and opposes the meaning [found in the] explanation given by the Companions of the Messenger (~).

Ibn Rajab (~) said, “In our time [And I say (Shaykh Bazmool) that in our time it is even more applicable] it is necessary to record the speech of the Imāms of the Salaf whose example should be followed all the way up until the time of al-Shāfi‘ī, Ḥamd, Ishāq (d.238H), and Abū ‘Ubayd (d.224H). This is so that an individual can be cautious regarding what occurred after them. For indeed, many things happened after them. People began to ascribe themselves to the Sunnah and ḥadīth from the literalists (Zāhiriyah) and those who resemble them, yet they are of the worst in terms of their opposition to it because of their deviation from the Imāms, them establishing their own understanding and them taking something that none of the Imāms before them took.”

Due to this principle, and this is referring to understanding the Glorious Qurʿān and the Prophetic Sunnah in light of the understanding of the Companions (~), you see that the people of the Sunnah and the Jāmā‘ah, the people of ḥadīth do not delve into issues like explaining the Glorious Qurʿān and clarifying the meanings of ḥadīth by solely relying upon the Arabic language, opinion, and intellect. Contrary to that, they

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1 Refer to Majmū’ Fatāwā (13/ 243) of Ibn Taymiyyah.
2 Refer to Bayān Faḍl ‘Ilm as-Salaf (p. 69).
look at and study the narrations and they gather whatever is found in the works of the Salaf. They base their jurisprudence (fiqh) and their interpretive jurisprudence (ijtihād) upon this as opposed to the people of desires and innovation (bid'ah).

Ibn Taymiyyah (ansa) said, “The Murji’ah deviated in this principle [referring to the issue of faith (imān)] from the clarity of the Book (the Qur’ān), the Sunnah and the statements of the Companions and their students who followed them in goodness. They chose to rely upon their own opinion and what they interpreted through their own understanding of the Arabic language. This is the way of the people of innovation (bid’ah). That is why Imām Ahmad used to say, “The main reason that people make mistakes is misinterpretation and analogy (qiyyās).”

This is why we find the Mu’tazilah, the Murji’ah, the Rāfiḍah and the rest of the people of innovation (bid’ah) explaining the Qur’ān according to their own opinion, intellects and whatever they can derive from the Arabic language. You will find that they do not rely upon the hadīth of the Prophet (n) or the narrations of the Companions and their students or the Imāms of the Muslims. They do not rely upon the Sunnah or the consensus of the Salaf and their narrations but they restrict themselves solely to the intellect and the Arabic language.

We find that they do not rely upon the books of tafsīr (Qur’ānic exegesis) that comprise of narrations, the books of hadīth and the books that contain the narrations of the Salaf. Instead, they only rely upon books of Arabic literature and books of rhetoric and theory that were compiled by their figureheads. This is also the way of the heretics (malāhidah). They too restrict themselves to the books of philosophy, literature and Arabic language but as for the books that focus on the Qur’ān, hadīth and narrations then they do not even look in their direction.

These groups turn their backs on the texts of the Prophets since according to them these texts do not convey certain knowledge [i.e. this knowledge is speculative]. So they interpret the Qur’ān according to
their opinions and their own understanding with no narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ) or his Companions. We have already mentioned the speech of Imām Ahmad and other than him in refutation of this practice and his declaration that this is from the ways of the people of innovation (bid'ah).”

I say: Imām Ahmad (ﷺ) said, “Beware of speaking in an issue that you have not been preceded in by an Imām.”

The abandonment of the hadīth and Salafī narrations and totally depending upon the books of language and rhetoric to understand the Qur‘ān and hadīth is a path taken in this era by the orientalists. If their research requires them to search for some narrations, they cite al-Jāḥīz, the book, al-Aghānī, or al-‘Aqd al-Farīd. If they feel uncomfortable to cite textual evidence, then they say, ‘This is what is necessitated by the intellect.’

So the Muslim who follows the way of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions restricts his learning and understanding of the Glorious Qur‘ān and Prophetic Sunnah to the understanding of the Companions (ﷺ) and he does not look to other than them. However, if a particular issue seems to require interpretive jurisprudence (ijtihād) or further examination, he first looks to determine whether or not he has any predecessor [in the conclusion he has reached]. If not then he abandons this position since all good comes from following the Salaf and all evil comes from following the latter generations [who deviated from the path of the Salaf].

It is incumbent that you cling to that which is ancient [i.e. the way of Salaf].

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1 Refer to Īmān (p. 114).
2 Cited in Majma‘ al-Fatāwā (21/291); and it has been presented along with its chain by Ibn al-Jawzi in the book Manāqīb al-Imām Ahmad Ibn Ḥanbal (p. 178).
Ibn Ḥajr (raudah) said, ‘Al-Awzā'ī said, ‘Knowledge is what has come to us from the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (saw), and whatever did not come from them is not considered knowledge.’

And Abū ‘Ubayd and Ya‘qūb Ibn Shaybah collected by way of Ibn Mas‘ūd that he said, ‘The people will continue to remain in a state of good, as long as they take their knowledge from the Companions of Muḥammad (saw) and their elders. If they take their knowledge from the lesser ones amongst them and split because of their desires they will be destroyed.’ Abū ‘Ubaydah said, ‘This means that everything that has come from the Companions and their senior students who followed them in goodness is the knowledge which has been inherited. Whatever has been introduced [into the religion] after them is blameworthy. The Salaf used to differentiate between knowledge and opinion. They stated that the Sunnah is knowledge and whatever opposes it is opinion.’

It has been narrated from Ḥātim that knowledge is to be taken from the Prophet (saw), then from the Companions and if there is nothing from them then you have a choice concerning [the statements of] the students of the Companions.’

It has also been narrated that [he said], ‘Whatever is reported from the Rightly Guided Caliphs is from the Sunnah, and if someone was to say that whatever is reported from any of the Companions is a Sunnah then I would not reject it.’

It has been reported that Ibn al-Mubārak (saw) said, ‘The narration is that which should be relied upon, and only use opinion in situations where it will aid in explaining the narration.’

In summary, if the opinion is based upon the textual evidence of the Qur’ān and the Sunnah it is praiseworthy. However, if it is used independently without knowledge [of the Qur’ān and the Sunnah] then it is blameworthy.”¹

¹ Refer to Fath al-Bārī (13/291). Many of the narrations cited in this passage have already been referenced – and all praise and favour is due to Allāh.
This characteristic necessitates the following:

1. That the Salafis do not speak about matters of the Religion with their opinions or intellects. ʿAlī (ﷺ) said, “If the Religion was according to opinion, then the bottom of the *khuf* (leather socks) would be more deserving to be wiped as opposed to the top. But indeed, I saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wipe the top of his *khufs.*” In another wording of this narration he said, “I believed that the bottom of the leather socks was the most deserving part to be washed, until I saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wipe over the top of his *khufs.*” In another wording he said, “If the Religion was based upon the intellect then the bottom of the feet would be more deserving to be wiped than the top. Verily, I saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wipe over the top of his *khufs.*” Collected by Abū Dāwūd.¹

Abū ‘Abdullāh Muḥammad Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Būshanjī (ﷺ) said, “It is obligatory upon all of the people of knowledge and the people of Īslām to be intent upon following [i.e. the Book and the Sunnah]. They should make the principles that were revealed in the Qur’ān and found in the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ) the focus of their intellects. They should not make their intellects the focus and basis from which they derive principles.”²

Abū al-Muẓaffar al-Samānī (ﷺ) said, “As for the people of the truth, then they have placed the Book (the Qur’ān) and the Sunnah in front of them and sought the Religion from them. They examined whatever thoughts and intellectual arguments they developed in light of the Book (the Qur’ān) and the Sunnah. If they find that it is consistent with what has been revealed, then they thank Allāh (ﷻ) since He directed them to

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¹ This hadīth is authentic. Related by Abū Dāwūd (no. 162). Shaykh al-Albānī has authenticated this narration in Sahīh Sunan Abī Dāwud (1/33).
² Refer to Dhamm al-Kalām by al-Haravī, by way of the book Sawān al-Manṭaq wa al-Kalām (p. 69).
it and granted them success. On the other hand, if they find that it opposes the [Book and Sunnah], then they abandon this and turn sincerely to the Book (the Qur’an) and the Sunnah and they assign any blame or doubt to themselves. Indeed, the Book (the Qur’an) and the Sunnah can only guide people to the truth but the people’s opinions can sometimes conform to the truth and sometimes be absolutely wrong.”

He (ﷺ) also said, “As for the people of the Sunnah, may Allah preserve them, then they cling to whatever is found in the Book (the Qur’an) and the Sunnah, and they establish this with clear evidences and authentic proof according to the Islamic legislation and according to what has been revealed. They do not speak concerning Allah’s (ﷻ) Attributes or any other affair of the Religion based upon their opinions. This was the way that they found their predecessors (Salaf) and their Imāms upon.

Allāh (ﷻ) said,

َّيَأْتِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَهِيدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَدَاعِيًا إِلَىَّ

َّلَهُ بِلَدَنِيَّ وَسَرِجًا مُّبِينًا

“O Prophet! Indeed, We have sent you as a witness, a bearer of glad tidings, a warner, and one who invites to Allāh by His permission, and as an illuminating lamp.”

[Sūrah al-ʿAḍzāb 33:45-46]

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And He also said,

وَإِذَا آتَيْتَ الرُّسُولَ بِلَغَةٍ مَا أَنزَلْنَإِلَّإِكُوَّإِنْ لَمْ تَفَعَّلْ

فَمَا بَلَغَتْ رِسَالَتُهُ ۚ

"O Messenger, convey what has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not transmitted His message." [Sūrah al-Mā'idah 5:67]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said in his farewell sermon [khutbah], and in many other situations in the presence of his Companions (ﷺ), "Have I not conveyed [the message]?

イスラーム monotheism (Tawhīd) is amongst those affairs which were revealed to him and which he was commanded to convey and explain. The Prophet (ﷺ) did not neglect any matter of the Religion, its fundamentals, principles, legislation and tenets, except that he clarified and conveyed it perfectly and completely. He did not delay clarifying these things until after the need had passed. This is because had he done this, he would have burdened his Companions with something beyond their capacity.”

He (ﷺ) also said, “We have been commanded to follow and adhere to the narrations of the Prophet (ﷺ), and to cling to what he has legislated for us in the Religion and the Sunnah. It is not possible for us to achieve this except through the text

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1 This statement has been authentically transmitted from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) on various occasions as the Imām indicated. This statement is found in the story of Ibn al-Lutbiyyah from the narration of Abū Humayd as-Sā'īdī (ﷺ) which is in al-Bukhārī (no. 7197), the khutbah of Kusūf from the narrations of Ḥā'ishah (ﷺ) in Muslim (no. 901), and the khutbah from the day of sacrifice from the narration of Abū Bakrah in al-Bukhārī (no. 1741) and in Muslim (no. 1679).

and ḥadīth, following the narrations that the trustworthy and reliable people of this nation have conveyed from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), his Companions and those who came after them. So now we will explain the statement of the people of the Sunnah: Verily, the path of the Religion involves submitting to the texts [of the Book and Sunnah] and the narrations. As for the [approach of just relying upon] the intellect, referring to it and basing what has been narrated upon it, then this is blameworthy in the Religion and prohibited. We will discuss the place of the intellect in the Religion and the extent that the Religion has commanded us to utilize it and the limits it has set which are impermissible to exceed...”¹

His student, the guardian of the Sunnah [Abūl-Qāsim Ismā‘īl ibn Muḥammad] al-ʿAṣbahānī (ﷺ) said, “This is because the affairs of the religion have been clarified for the people so all we have to do is follow since the Religion has come solely from Allāh and is not to be subjected to the intellects of men and their opinions. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) has clarified the Sunnah to his nation and explained it to his Companions. So whoever opposes the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) in any affair from the Religion has certainly gone astray.”²

He said, “We do not oppose the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) with our logic. This is because the Religion itself [is comprehended by using] the intellect [to understand the texts] because the intellect leads to the acceptance of the Sunnah, and as for what leads a person to abandonment of the Sunnah then this is ignorance and not intelligence.”³

² Refer to al-Ḥujjah fī Bayān al-Maḥāfijah (2/440).
³ Refer to al-Ḥujjah fī Bayān al-Maḥāfijah (2/509).
2. They honour the people of knowledge, respect them and fulfil their rights without neglecting any of them. Abū al-Dardā’ (ﷺ) said, “I heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) saying, ‘Whoever travels a path seeking knowledge, Allāh will place him on a path leading to Paradise. The angels lower their wings for the student of knowledge, pleased with what he is doing. The inhabitants of the heavens and earth seek forgiveness for the student of knowledge, even the fish in the water. The superiority of the Scholar over the devout worshipper is like the superiority of the full moon over the rest of the stars. The Scholars are the heirs of the Prophets. The Prophets leave no money [dinār or dirham] as an inheritance, rather they leave knowledge. Whoever seizes it takes an abundant portion.’”¹

Abū Ḥātim Ibn Ḥibbān (ﷺ) said, “In this narration is a clear indication that the Scholars who possess the virtue that we have mentioned teach the people the knowledge of the Prophet (ﷺ) as opposed to other types of knowledge. Do you not notice that he said that the Scholars are the heirs of the Prophets? And the Prophets do not leave behind anything but knowledge. The knowledge of our Prophet (ﷺ) is his Sunnah. Whoever lacks this knowledge of the Sunnah cannot be from the inheritors of the Prophets.”²

Allāh (ﷻ) said,

وَإِذَا جَآهُمُ أَمْرُ مِنْ آنِمٍ أَوْ أَخَوِّ فَأُدْعِوْا بِهِ وَلَوْ زَدْوَهُ إِلَى

أَرْسُولٍ وَإِلَىٰ أَوَلِ الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُ لَعِلْمَهُ أَلْبِنَ يُسْتَبَطَؤُهُ مِنْهُ وَلَوْلَا

فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَرَحَمَهُمْ لَا كَأَنَّهُمْ أَلْبِنُ الْبَيْطُنِ إِلَّا فَاِيْلًا

¹ This ḥadīth is Hasan (sound). The sources for this narration has been cited earlier.
² Refer to al-Iḥsān bi Taqrīb Sahīh Ibn Ḥibbān (1/295, no. 88).
“When there comes to them some matter concerning [public] safety or fear, [which] they spread; if only they had referred it back to the Messenger or to those in authority among them, then the ones who can derive the proper conclusions would have known about it. And if it were not for the favor of Allāh upon you and His mercy, you would have all certainly followed Shayṭān except for very few.” [Sūrah al-Nisā’ 4:83]

In this verse is an instruction to refer back to the people of knowledge in the occurrence of a severe calamity or affliction, and that rulings related to this event should be sought from them; and judgements should not be sought from others beside them nor should anyone precede them in addressing these issues. Also this verse shows that referring to the people of opinion involves rejection of the command of Allāh (ﷻ) to return these affairs to the Scholars who are able to derive the proper rulings. This is because the people of opinion are not people who can derive the proper verdicts. So no one should precede them in producing public statements or public declarations relating to current events. Rather, they should be referred to as this is their right.

‘Abd al-Rahmān Ibn Nāṣir as-Saʿdī (ﰛ) said in his explanation of this noble āyah, “This is a piece of disciplinary admonition from Allāh to His servants concerning their inappropriate behavior. It is proper when news reaches them of important issues or things that are of a general benefit [to the Muslims]- such as the issues connected to public welfare and the safety of the Believers or fear of a calamity befalling them- that they should first verify such news and not be hasty to spread it. Instead, they should refer these issues back to the Messenger (ﷺ) and those in authority from amongst them, those who are people of sound opinion, knowledge, sincere advice, intellect and composure, those who understand the affairs and are able to recognize the associated benefits and harms.
If they believe that it is beneficial to broadcast these affairs and that it will increase the spirit of the Believers, bring them tranquility and protect them from their enemies then they [spread this news].

On the other hand, if they believe that there is no benefit in this or that there is some benefit but the harms outweigh them, then they do not broadcast this news.

This is why Allāh said, “The ones who can derive the proper conclusions would have known about it.”

This means that they would extract the ruling through the use of their abilities, sound opinions and correct knowledge. In this is an evidence for the ethical principle which states that if the need arises to research a particular situation, then it is essential that it be left to those best qualified for it, and nobody should precede them in this.

This is the most correct and safest approach which minimizes the potential for error.

In this [āyah] there is also the prohibition of being hasty and rushing to spread news upon hearing it, and a command to reflect before speaking and to examine the issue as to whether there is any benefit in [speaking] which would cause a person to continue to utter it or harm which would cause him to refrain.

Then Allāh says, “And if it were not for the favor of Allāh upon you and His mercy.”

This is referring to the success that He has granted you, the education that He has provided you with and how He taught you things that you did not know.

“You would have all certainly followed Shayṭān except for very few.”
This is because mankind according to his very nature is oppressive and ignorant and his soul only incites him towards evil. But if he returns to his Lord, holds firmly to him and struggles in doing this, then Allāh will make things easy for him and guide him towards everything good and protect him from the accursed Shayṭān.”

The abandonment of returning to the scholars involves blatant disregard of their rights, and many evils result from this:

From them is that this will result in disgrace and humiliation afflicting this nation. This is highlighted in the narration of Ibn ʿUmar (ﷺ) who said, ‘I heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) say, ‘When you begin to deal with usury, take hold of the tails of cows, become pleased with agriculture and abandon Jihād, then Allāh will place upon you a humiliation and He will not lift it until you return to your Religion.’”

There is no way for the people to return back to the Religion except by way of the Scholars. If the people were to neglect the rights of the Scholars, and started not to return to them and in fact neglected them, and took ignorant figureheads and ideologues, how could they possibly return to the Religion?

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1 Refer to Taysīr al-Karīm al-Raḥmān, from edition that is printed in the margin of the Glorious Qur’ān (p. 190). Also compare this with what was written in Maḥāsin al-Taʿwīl by al-Qāsimī (5/324-326).

2 Related by Aḥmad in al-Musnad (al-Risālah, 8/440, no. 4725, 9/51, no. 5007, 9/395, 5562); and by Abū Dāwūd (no. 3462), Abū Yaʿlā in his Musnad (10/29, no. 5659) and al-Bayhaqī in al-Sunan al-Kubrā (5/316). Those who checked the Musnad declared this narration to be weak however the checker of the Musnad of Abū Yaʿlā indicated that it is sound (ḥasan). Shaykh al-Āl-bānī has authenticated this narration due to its multiple chains of narration and has included it in his Silsila al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīhah (no. 11). This hadīth has a supporting narration that has been narrated upon Ibn Maṣʿūd, which is marfuʿ (hadīth of the Prophet), “Do not take to the estate, so much so that you begin to desire the life of this world.” This hadīth has been collected by Aḥmad in al-Musnad (al-Risālah, 6/54, no. 3579), al-Tirmidhī and al-Ḥākim. It was included by Shaykh al-Āl-bānī in his Silsila al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīhah (no. 13).
The Religion is as it was described in the narration of Jibrīl wherein İslām, īmān, iḥṣān and the signs of the Day of Judgment were mentioned. It is mentioned at the end of this narration [that ʿUmar said], “Then he left (meaning the questioner who came forth with a strange appearance). I remained for some time. Then he (ﷺ) said to me, “O ʿUmar, do you know who the questioner was?” I replied, Allāh and His Messenger know best. He said, “That was Jibrīl who came to you to teach you your Religion.”

If the Scholars are eliminated and the people take for themselves ignorant figureheads and ideologues, then who will guide the people back to their Religion? How could they ever hope to remove the condition of disgrace and humiliation without the Scholars?

From them is that this is a departure from the path of the Believers which is a conduct that carries the threat of the Hellfire for those who adopt it.

And Allāh (ﷻ) said,

> وَمَّن يَشَافِقُ الْرَّسُولِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا نُبِيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَايَةَ وَيَمْشِي عَفْرَ سَبِيلِ
> الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُولِيَهُ مَا نَوْلِيَ وَنُضِلِهُ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا (٦)

“And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has been made clear to him, and follows other than the way of the Believers; We will direct him towards the path which he has chosen, and burn him in Hell - and what an evil destination.” [Sūrah al-Nisāʾ:115]

Amongst the harms that result from neglecting the rights of the Scholars is contradicting the command of the Messenger of

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1 Related by Muslim in (no. 8), upon the authority of ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (ﷺ).
Allāh (ﷻ) to respect the Scholars, preserve their rights and avoid harming them.

And Allāh (ﷻ) said,

قُلْ يَحْدُثُ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ عَنِ الْأَذَّانِ أَنْ يُصَبِّبُونَ فَتْنَةً أَوْ يُصِيبُهُمْ عَذَابَ الْأَلِيمِينَ

“So let those who oppose his order [beware] lest an affliction befall them or a severe punishment.”

[Sūrah al-Nūr 24:63]

Amongst the harms of neglecting the rights of the Scholars is agreeing with the people of innovation (bid’ah) and desires, and resembling them. This is because it is from the way of the people of innovation (bid’ah) and desires to belittle the Scholars. Examine, if you will, the various sects and groups that have opposed the guidance of the Messenger (ﷺ) and that which the companions were upon, and you will most certainly find this trait. As for the Shī‘ah then their affair is well-known.¹ The Kharijites (Khawārij), then their true state has been documented and mentioned². The Mu‘tazilah, then their situation is notorious.³ The Sūfis and their attacks upon the

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¹ They have rejected the Companions and condemned them all except for the people of the Prophetic household and whoever else they claim supported them.
² They did not restrict themselves to attacking and belittling the Companions; they actually fought against them.
³ They label the people of the Sunnah as: al-Hashwiyyah and say that they are the carriers of books and that they do not possess any knowledge. In the book, al-Ṣu‘afā’ (3/285), of al-‘Uqaylī, there occurs: Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Ulayyah reported from al-Yas ‘Abū Sa‘dah that he said, “Wāṣil was speaking one day and ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd said: Listen! The speech of al-Ḥasan, Ibn Sirīn, al-Nakha‘ī, and al-Sha‘bī is nothing more than a discarded menstrual rag.” Wāṣil ibn ‘Aṭā‘ and ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd are the heads of the Mu‘tazilah.
Scholars of the Book (the Qur'ān) and the Sunnah have also been noticed.\(^1\)

You will not find a sect, group or faction that deviates from the straight path and exits from the way of the Believers except that they speak ill of the scholars, ridicule and attack them, neglect their rights and take the ignorant ones as figureheads and idealogues.

Al-Shāṭibī (۱۹۶) said, “It was narrated that one of the leaders of the people of innovation (bid'ah) wanted to give precedence to al-Kalām [or what is generally considered rhetoric and philosophical conjecture] over fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence). So this individual used to say, ‘The knowledge of al-Shāfi‘ī and Abū Ḥanīfah does not extend beyond the pants of the women (referring to the rulings of menstruation and postnatal bleeding).’ This is the speech of these deviants, may Allāh fight them.”\(^2\)

Also from the harms of neglecting the rights of the Scholars is that this results in the people falling into misguidance and them departing from the path of guidance and correctness. This is because the people will take the ignorant as leaders instead of the Scholars. They will consult them and they will give religious rulings which are not based upon knowledge so they will go astray. Thus, from the harms of this is that people will fall into misguidance.

This has been mentioned in the narration which was transmitted upon the authority of 'Amr Ibn al-'Āṣ (۱۹۷) who said, ‘I heard the Messenger of Allāh (۱۹۸) say ‘Allāh does not seize the knowledge by snatching it from the people. But rather He seizes the knowledge by the deaths of the Scholars. So if He

\(^1\) They sarcastically say about the people of the Sunnah: Your knowledge comes from the dead who have narrated from the dead while our knowledge comes from the All Living who will never die. My heart tells me about my Lord.

\(^2\) Refer to al-İ'tişām (2/239) of al-Shāṭibī.
does not leave a single Scholar the people will take the ignorant as their leaders. These individuals will be questioned and they will issue rulings without knowledge and as a result they go astray and lead others astray.”

The part of this hadith that is relative here is, “These individuals will be questioned and they will issue rulings without knowledge and as a result they go astray and lead others astray.” Look how he judged that they are misguided and that they will lead others astray.

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1 Related by al-Bukhārī (no. 100) and Muslim (no. 2673).
The Third Objective
The Way to Achieve Rectification According
To the People of the Sunnah and the Jamāʿah

Change is something that Allāh has decreed for His creation. It has come in the ḥadīth which was narrated by al-ʿIrbaḍ Ibn Sāriyah (ﷺ) who said, “The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) admonished us one day after the early morning Prayer. The admonition was heartfelt and eloquent and caused the eyes to shed tears and the hearts to tremble. A man from amongst us said, ‘Certainly, it is as if this is a farewell admonition, so with what do you advise us, O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)?’ He replied, ‘I advise you to fear Allāh and to hear and obey those in authority over you even if it were an Abyssinnian slave. Indeed, whoever from amongst you lives long will witness much division. And beware of newly invented matters for surely they are misguidance. Whoever from amongst you lives to witness this, then cling to my Sunnah and the way of the Rightly Guided Khulafāʾ [caliphs] who will come after me and grab onto it with your molar teeth.’”

According to the wording of Ibn Mājah, [al-ʿIrbaḍ Ibn Sāriyah] said, ‘Then the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, ‘I have left you upon clear guidance, its night is like its day. No one strays from it except that they are destroyed. Whoever from amongst you lives long after me will witness great differing. So adhere to what you know of my Sunnah and the Sunnah of my Rightly Guided Successors (caliphs), and hold onto it with your molar teeth. And obey the leader even if he is an Abyssinnian slave. Verily the Believer is like a camel with a ring in its nose wherever you direct it, it will follow.’”¹

The part of this narration which is relative here is his statement, “Whoever from amongst you lives long after me will witness great differing.” This means that change will occur after the death of the Messenger (ﷺ).

¹ This hadīth is established and the sources have been cited.
Another proof which substantiates what I have stated is what has been reported by Sālim who said, "I heard Umm al-Dardā' say, 'Abū ad-Dardā' came to me and he was angry.' So I said to him, 'What has upset you?' He said, 'By Allāh, I do not recognize anything from the nation of Muḥammad (ﷺ) except that they pray in congregation together.'"\(^1\)

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Hajr (d.852H) said, "His statement, 'That they pray in congregation' means that they would do this together. The object (maḍīl) was omitted here and it is understood to be (taqādir) 'Prayer or Prayers'. [Therefore, the meaning would be: That they pray the Prayers in congregation]. The intent of Abū al-Dardā' was that there was a deficiency and change that crept into the actions of those individuals that he was referring to except for their gathering to perform the Prayer in congregation. This matter is relative [to his time]. This is because the condition of the people during the time of prophethood was far more complete than the state of the people after this period. Then the condition of the people during the time of the two Shaykhs [Abū Bakr and 'Umar (ﷺ)] was far more complete than the state of the people after this period. It is as if Abū al-Dardā' made this statement towards the latter portion of his life, and this was towards the end of the Caliphate of 'Uthmān (ﷺ). If this praiseworthy generation was described by Abū al-Dardā' in this fashion, then what could be said about the generations that followed all the way up until our time?"\(^2\)

Thus, change has already occurred in this nation. That is why the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) informed us concerning the revival of the Religion. Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, "Indeed, Allāh sends to this nation at the head of every one hundred years those who will revive its Religion."\(^3\)

The meaning of revival, as explained in 'Awn al-Ma'būd, is to revive acting upon those things found in the Book (the Qur'ān) and the Sunnah that had been effaced, to command in accordance to them and to curb

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\(^1\) Related by al-Bukhārī (no. 650).
\(^2\) Refer to Fath al-Bārī (2/138) of Ibn Hajr and Ighāthah al-Lahafān (1/207) of Ibn al-Qayyim.
\(^3\) Related by Abū Dāwūd (no. 4291).
and subdue innovations (bid’ah) and newly invented matters in the Religion.

So there has been change and differences have occurred in comparison to the original state of affairs [of this nation]. The cure for this is to return to the Religion. This is the meaning of rectification.

The correct way to achieve rectification according to those who follow the pious predecessors (al-Salaf al-Şāliḥ), the People of the Sunnah and the Jamāʿah is contained within five key guidelines, and they are:

• • •
The First Measure
The Beginning and Foundation of this Rectification
is the Worship of Allāh and Singling Him Out with
Islāmic Monotheism (Tawḥīd)

This was the call of all of the Prophets, since every Prophet was sent by
Allāh to his people with this message.

And Allāh (ﷻ) said,

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثُنا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولاً أَنِّي أُعِبَّدُوا الله وَأَجْنَبُوا
الطَّنْغَوْتُ فِيمَّ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ
الضَّلِيلُةُ فَسَيَزِنُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَظْنَوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَنْقِبٌ

المُكْدِيرِ ( تعالى)

“And certainly We have sent to every nation a Messenger [commanding them to] worship Allāh alone and avoid the ṭāghūt. From among them were those whom Allāh guided, and among them were those for whom misguidance was [deservedly] decreed. So travel throughout the earth and consider the plight of those who denied [the truth].” [Sūrah al-Nahl 16:36]

And concerning Noah [Nūḥ] ( عليه السلام), Allāh (ﷻ) said,

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَى قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَنقُوْرُ أَعْبَدُوا الله ما لَكُم
مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِهِ فَإِنَّ أَحْقَفُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابٌ نَّفِيرٌ عَظِيمٌ

( تعالى)
“Indeed, We have sent Noah (Nūḥ) to his people, and he said: O my people, worship Allāh; you have no deity other than Him. Certainly, I fear for you the punishment of an overwhelming Day.”

[Sūrah al-A’rāf 7:59]

And concerning Hūd (Hūd), Allāh (ﷻ) said,

And to [the people of] ‘Ād, [we have sent] their brother Hūd. He said: O my people, worship Allāh; you have no deity other than Him. Will you not then fear Him?” [Sūrah al-A’rāf 7:65]

And concerning Šāliḥ (Ṣāliḥ), Allāh (ﷻ) said,

“And to [the people of] Thamūd, [we have sent] their brother Šāliḥ. He said: O my people, worship Allāh; you have no deity other than Him. Surely, clear evidence has come to you from your Lord. This is the she-camel of Allāh which is a sign for you. So allow it to eat from Allāh’s land and do not harm it lest a painful torment should overcome you.” [Sūrah al-A’rāf 7:73]
And Allāh ( سبحانه وتعالى) said,

"And to [the people of] Madyan, [we have sent] their brother Shu‘ayb. He said: O my people, worship Allāh; you have no deity other than Him. Surely, clear evidence has come to you from your Lord. So honour the scale and weigh goods appropriately; and do not deprive people of what they are due. And do not bring corruption to the earth after it has experienced rectification. That is better for you, if you should be Believers.” [Sūrah al-‘Ā’rāf 7:85]

And concerning Abraham [Ibrāhīm] ( عليه السلام), Allāh ( سبحانه وتعالى) said,

"And [remember] Abraham (Ibrāhīm), when he said to his people: Worship Allāh and fear Him. That is best for you, if you should know.” [Sūrah al-‘Ankabūt 29:16]

This is exactly what the Messenger of Allāh ( صلى الله عليه وسلم) did when he sent Mu‘ādh Ibn Jabal ( رضي الله عنه) to the people of Yemen, he said to him, “You are going to a nation from the People of the Book. So let the first thing that you call them to be the Tawḥīd of Allāh [to worship Allāh alone without
any partners). If they accept that, then inform them that Allāh has obligated upon them five prayers to be performed during their day and night. If they establish the Prayer, then inform them that Allāh has made obligatory upon them zakāh which must be taken from their wealth. It is to be taken from their rich and re-distributed amongst the poor from amongst them. And if they obey you in this, then take from them zakāh but beware of the most valuable of their wealth.”

This is the very reason why Allāh (ﷻ) created al-Jinn and mankind. He (ﷻ) said,

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجَنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيُعْبُدُونَ

“And I [Allāh] did not create the jinn nor mankind except that they should worship Me.”
[Sūrah al-Dhāriyāt 51:56]

Those people who call to rectification but base their call to rectification upon a political agenda, economics and financial issues or the redistribution of wealth or the like of this, then these people have engaged in actions that oppose the way of the Messenger (ﷺ) and are thus rejected.

Whoever desires rectification but does not make the establishment of Tawhīd the basis of his call and his goal has certainly opposed the methodology of the Prophets and has abandoned the legislated means of rectification as understood by the people of the Sunnah and the Jamā‘ah.

Look at those who presently claim that they are working towards rectification and even take upon this name. You will find that they severely oppose this principle. The redistribution of wealth is all they discuss day and night, and opposing those in positions of authority is the focal point of their conversations. They have no concern with this

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1 Related by al-Bukhārī (no. 7372) and Muslim (no. 19).
measure to begin with except to “throw dust into the eyes” as the saying goes. As for the Salafis, the people of the Sunnah and the Jamā‘ah then they firmly believe that the promise of Allāh is true if they implement Islāmic monotheism (Tawḥīd) and worship Allāh alone.

[They believe that:]

- Allāh will grant them authority in the earth just as He granted it to those who preceded them.
- Allāh will establish them upon the Religion that He is pleased with.
- Allāh will replace their fear with peace and safety.

Allāh (ﷻ) said,

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْأَرْضَ لِأَيْمَانِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَعَمَّلُوا الصَّلِبِ الحَتِّي لِهِمْ لَيُشْتَخِلَّفَنَّهُمْ ِ
في أَلْطِرْسِ َهَّمَا أَشْتَخِلَّفَ الْأَيْمَانِ ِمِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيْسَ كَنْنَ هُمْ دِينْهُمْ ِ
دِينِ الْذَّكَارِ لَأَعْبُدُونِي نَأَيْدِي مِنْ بَعْدِ حُقُفَهِمْ أَمَنَََ
يُشَكُّونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونِي بِشَيْءٍ وَمِنْ كَفَّارَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُلْتِيَكَ
هُمْ ِ الفَقِيْهُونَ ِ

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“Allāh has promised those who believe among you, and do righteous good deeds, that He will certainly grant them authority in the earth, just as He granted it to those before them, and He will establish them upon their Religion, which He has chosen for them [i.e. Islām]. And He will surely replace their fear with safety [provided] they worship Me while not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after this then they are the rebelliously disobedient.”

[Sūrah an-Nūr 24:55]¹

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¹ Translator’s Note: Imām al-Sa’dī (d.1376H) said in Taysīr al-Karīm al-Rahmān (p. 521) in explanation of this āyah, “This is one of His true promises whose meaning and accomplishment has been witnessed. He promised those who came with īmān (true faith) and righteous and correct actions from this Ummah that He would cause them to be successors upon the earth, so that they are the ones in authority and in charge of the affairs. Further that He would establish their Religion, that which He was pleased with for them, which is the Religion of Islām which gained ascendency over all of the religions. He was pleased with it for this Ummah, due to its excellency, nobility and His favours upon it, and He enabled them to establish it and to establish its laws and prescriptions, relating both to manifest and non-manifest matters, upon themselves and others, due to the people of the other religions and the rest of the disbelievers being conquered and humbled. He would change their condition of fear to one of security, since it was previously the case that one of them would not be able to manifest his Religion, and they suffered harm and injury from the disbelievers. The united body of the Muslims was very small in number in comparison to the rest and the people of the earth combined to attack them and to hope for their downfall. So Allāh promised them these things when the verse was sent down at a time when they did not witness ascendency and establishment upon the earth, nor the ability to fully establish the Religion of Islām and full security such as would enable them to worship Allāh, not associating anything with Him, in a state of not having fear of anyone except Allāh. The first and foremost part of this Ummah combined īmān and righteous action to a degree surpassing everyone else, so He established them in the land and gave them authority over the people, and granted them the conquest of the East and the West. They attained full security and complete authority and establishment, so this is one of the astounding signs of Allāh. This applies until the Hour is established. Whenever this nation combines īmān and righteous action, then that which Allāh promised will certainly occur.
The Second Measure
Rectification Starts with the Individual and it does not Start with the Community, nor the Leader or Other than Him - in Reality each Person Should Start with their Own Self then those who are Closest to Them and then Those who are Closest to Them

Allāh (ﷻ) said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بُقِّيَّ مَتَىْ نَغْيَبُوهُ مَا بِنفْسِهِمْ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ

اللَّهُ بُقِّوَّمُ سُوءَهَا فَلَا مَرَّةٌ لَّهُ وَمَا لُهُمْ مِنْ دُوَيْنِهِ مِنْ وَالِيٍّ

"Indeed, Allāh will not change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves. And when Allāh wants to punish a people, there is nothing that can repel it and they will find besides Him no protector." [Sūrah al-Ra’d 13:11]

So the starting point is with one’s self then those who are closest and then those who are closest.

Allāh (ﷻ) said,

وَأَنذِرُ عِشْرِتَكَ أَلَا فَرَبْيِكَ

"And warn your tribe of near kindred."
[Sūrah al-Shu’arā’ 26:214]

Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, "Give charity." Then the man responded, "O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), I possess a dīnār." Then he [the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)] said, "Give it as charity to yourself." Then he said, "I have another." Then he [the Messenger of
Allāh (ﷺ) said, “Give it as charity to your wife.” Then he said, “I have another.” Then he [the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)] said, “Give it as charity to your child.” Then he said, “I have another.” Then he [the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)] said, “Give it as charity to your servant.” Then he said, “I have another.” Then he [the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ)] said, “You know best what to do with it.”

If this is the case in matters of charity, then what do you think is the case when it pertains to rectification!

The path of rectification starts with the individual.

The rectification of the individual leads to the rectification of the family.

The rectification of the family leads to the rectification of the neighborhood.

The rectification of the neighborhood leads to the rectification of the region. The rectification of the region leads to the rectification of the country. The rectification of the country leads to the rectification of this nation. The rectification of this nation leads to the rectification of the entire world. So beginning with oneself is the foundation.

إِبَأْتُ يَنفَسْ وَهُمْ يَنفَسُونَ وَهُمْ عَنْ غَيْبَهُمْ

If it ceases from that, then you are truly wise.

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1 Related by al-Nisā'ī (no. 2535) and Abū Dāwūd (no. 1691). This hadīth is sound.
The Third Measure
Knowledge Precedes Speech and Actions

Al-Bukhārī (d.256H) entitled a chapter in his Šāhīh in Kitāb al-Šīm, (Chapter: Knowledge precedes speech and action due to the saying of Allāh,

"Fee ’ulmīn ‘ān, la ilah ‘ilā Allāh."

"Know that none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh." [Sūrah Muḥammad 47:19]

So He [Allāh] began with knowledge. The Scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets. The Prophets left behind knowledge and whoever takes from it has taken a handsome share. Whoever sets out upon a path in search of knowledge Allāh will make easy for him a path towards Paradise.

And Allāh (ﷻ) said,

"Inna taḥṭasṣa’i Allāh min ‘ibādī al-’ulamā’īn."

"It is only those who have knowledge among His servants that fear Allāh.” [Sūrah Fāṭir 35:28]

And He said,

"Wāma yuqāfūla’ihā ‘ilā al-’ulamā’īn.”

“And none will understand them except the people of knowledge.” [Sūrah al-’Ankabūt 29:43]
And He says,

وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسَمَعَ أوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ الْسَّعِيرِ

"And they will say: If only we had listened or contemplated, we would not be from among the people of the blazing Fire." [Sūrah al-Mulk 67:10]

And He said,

هُلْ يُسَتَّوِى الْذِّينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالْذِّينَ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ

"Are those who know equal to those who do not?" [Sūrah az-Zumar 39:9]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Whomever Allāh wants good for, He grants him understanding of the Religion.” And he (ﷺ) said, “Knowledge is acquired through learning.”

Abū Dharr (ﷺ) said, “If you were to place a sword upon this –and he pointed towards the back of his neck- and then I thought that I could utter a word that I heard from the Prophet (ﷺ) before you were able to strike me, then I would say it.”

Ibn ‘Abbās said, “[The statement of Allāh] ‘Be rabbāniyyūn,’ means to be religious Scholars who are patient and wise. The term rabbānī is applied to one who cultivates the people and teaches them the smaller issues of knowledge before the larger ones.”

The Religion is built upon two foundations:

1. That we do not worship anything except Allāh.

1 Related by al-Bukhārī, The Book Of Knowledge, Chapter: Knowledge Precedes Speech and Actions.
2. That we do not worship Allāh except in the manner that He has legislated.

The meaning of this measure is that it is upon the one who is calling to rectification to analyse closely that which he says and does to the extent that he is certain of his [speech and actions]. So that whatever transpires from him is based upon certainty of conviction that is based on textual evidence.

No one should set out upon a path that he claims is the path of rectification unless he knows that it is something that has been legislated by Allāh (ﷻ). He should never oppose the Sunnah in this.

He does not stand up upon a pulpit and criticize the Muslim leaders, claiming that this brings about rectification because this opposes what the Messenger (ﷺ) has commanded us with.

ʿIyāḍ Ibn Ghunm (ﷺ) narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, “Whoever wishes to sincerely advise a person in authority should not expose this publicly. Rather, he should take him by the hand and go into seclusion with him. If he accepts this from him then this is one thing, and if not then he has fulfilled the duty that was upon him.”

Similarly, no one should use demonstrations as a way to bring about rectification because this action was not from the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ) nor was it from the Sunnah of the pious predecessors (al-Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ).

Thus, a person should not speak or act except with knowledge as knowledge precedes statements and actions.

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1 Related by Aḥmad (3/ 403) and Ibn Abī Ṭāsim in the book al-Sunnah (2/737, no. 1130). The individual that checked Ibn Abī Ṭāsim, Assistant Professor Bāsim al-Jawābirah, said, “Its chain is authentic.”
The Fourth Measure
His Knowledge Should be in Accordance to
The Understanding of the Pious Predecessors
(al-Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ)

Muʿāwiyah Ibn Abī Sufyān (ﷺ) stood up amongst us and said, “Indeed, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) stood up before us and said, ‘Verily, those who preceded you from the people of the book divided into seventy-two sects; and this nation will divide into seventy-three sects. Seventy-two of these sects will inhabit the Hellfire while one will be in Paradise. That one sect is the Jamāʿah.’”¹

There is no safety in following any methodology unless it is the methodology of the Jamāʿah.

This is the way of the Believers as Allāh (ﷻ) said,

وَمَن يُضَاغِقِ الرَّسُولِ مِنْ بَعْضِ مَا تَبَيِّنَ لِهِ الْهُدَىُّ وَيَتُّبِعْ عَرْبَ سَبِيلٍ

الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُولِئَهُمْ مَا تَوَلَّىَ وَنَضَلُّهُ عِنْدَ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتَ مَصِيرًا

“And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has been made clear to him, and follows other than the way of the believers; We will direct him towards the path which he has chosen, and burn him in Hell - and what an evil destination.” [Sūrah an-Nisāʾ4:115]

¹ Related by Ahmad in his Musnad (4/102), Abū Dāwūd (no. 4597), al-Ājurrī in his book al-Shar‘iyyah (checked edition, 1/132). This narration is authenticated due to supporting narrations (ṣaḥīḥ li ghayrī), and some alluded to the possibility of it being mutawātir. This narration has also been authenticated by the one who performed the checking of the book Jāmi‘ al-Uṣūl (10/32) and by al-Albānī in his Silsilaḥ al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah (no. 204). Al-Albānī also mentioned a number of narrations that provide further textual support for this narration. Refer to Naẓm al-Mutanāthir min al-Ḥadīth al-Mutawātir (p. 32-34).
Whoever desires to attain knowledge should adhere to the way of the believers and he should not follow in the footsteps of the people of differing and sectarianism from those sects that oppose that which the Messenger (ﷺ) and his Companions (ﷺ) were upon.

These are the guidelines for rectification, which if anyone was to oppose from those who claim to be proponents of rectification then they are considered to be amongst those who spread corruption.

Allâh (ﷻ) said,

وإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تَفْسِيدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُضْلِّحُونَ

أَلَّا يَنْهَؤُنَّهُمُ الْمُفَسَّدُونَ وَلَيْكَن لَا يَشُعُّرُونَ

“And when it is said to them, ‘Do not cause corruption in the earth,’ they say, ‘We are only people of rectification.’ Indeed, they are the ones who spread corruption, but they do not realize it.”

[Sûrah al-Baqarah 2:11-12]
The Fifth Measure
To Adorn Oneself when Calling [to Allāh] with the Attributes that have been Described in the Qur'ān, the Prophetic Ḥadīth and in the Narrations of the Salaf

The following are some of those evidences:

Allāh (ﷻ) said,

قُلْ هَذِهِ صِرَائِمِنِإِذْ أَعُوْرُ اِلَّلَّهُ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنْ أَتَبَعَنِي

وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنْ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“Say: This is my way; I invite unto Allāh with insight; myself and those who follow me. And glorified is Allāh; and I am not from those who direct worship to other than Him.” [Sūrah Yūsuf 12:108]

Allāh (ﷻ) said,

آْذَعُ إِلَيْ سَبِيلِ رَبِّي بِالْحَكَمَةِ وَالْمُعْتَصِمَةِ اَلْخَسَسُةِ وَجَدِيْلُهُمْ

بِلَاتَى هَا أَحْسَسْنِ إِنَّ رَبِّي هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا ضَلَّ عَن سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ

أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good admonition; and argue with them in a manner which is better. Certainly, your Lord is the most knowledgeable concerning who has strayed from His path and He is the most knowledgeable concerning whom is guided.”

[Sūrah al-Nāhľ 16:125]
Allāh (ﷻ) said,

"O my son! Establish the prayer, enjoin the good, and forbid the evil, and endure with patience whatever afflicts you. Certainly, These are from the most important of matters." [Sūrah Luqmān 31:17]

‘Ā’ishah, the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ), narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, “O ‘Ā’ishah, certainly Allāh is gentle and He loves gentleness and He gives as a result of gentleness what He does not give because of harshness or anything other than it.” [Agreed upon]

Sa‘īd Ibn Abī Burdah said upon the authority of his father who narrated from his father [the grandfather of Sa‘īd Ibn Abī Burdah] that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to Mu‘ādhd and Abū Mūsā as he sent them to Yemen, “Make things easy for the people and do not make things difficult, and give glad tidings and do not chase them away. Be cooperative and do not differ.” [Agreed upon]

It becomes clear from these textual evidences that the essential attributes that every caller (dā‘iyah) must exhibit is:

1. **The First Attribute**: Knowledge and understanding of what he is calling to, what he is commanding and what he is prohibiting.

2. **The Second Attribute**: That gentleness is observed when inviting the people, when commanding them with good and when forbidding them from evil. Allāh (ﷻ) said about His Messenger (ﷺ),
"By the mercy of Allāh [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been stern and harsh of heart, they would have disbanded from around you. So excuse them and seek forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. Then once you have made a decision, then rely upon Allāh. Indeed, Allāh loves those who rely upon Him.” [Sūrah Āl-ʾImrān 3:159]

3. The Third Attribute: Forebearance after having called the people. He should not be hasty or become angry, and he should suppress his anger.

4. The Fourth Attribute: Being patient after calling the people. Surely those who call the people to the way of Allāh are often subjected to harm as a result of their call so it upon them to be patient.

Ibn Taymiyyah (d.728H) said, “Promoting the Sunnah and forbidding innovation (bidʿah) is considered to be commanding the good and forbidding evil and it is amongst the best of the righteous deeds. It is obligatory that this is done seeking the pleasure of Allāh and in accordance to what has been commanded. In the narration it is found that whoever enjoins the good and forbids the evil must be:

- Knowledgeable concerning what he is commanding and forbidding.
- Gentle in his attempt to enjoin the good and forbid the evil.
- Forebearing when enjoining [the good] and forbidding [the evil].
Knowledge precedes the command, gentleness accompanies it and forebearance follows it. If this individual was not knowledgeable, then it would be inappropriate for him to take a stance upon an issue of which he has no knowledge.

If he was knowledgeable but not gentle then he would be like the doctor who lacks gentleness and is harsh with the sick, and this would not be tolerated from him. It is also similar to the educator who is rough and as such children do not benefit from him.

Allāh (ﷻ) said to Mūsā and Hārūn,

فَفُؤِدُوْنَ لَهُ قُوَّلَا لَيْتَنَا أَلْعَلَّهُ يُنْتَذَّكَ أَوْ تَحْشِئَ

“And speak to him gently so that perhaps he may accept the admonition or fear [Allāh].”

[Sūrah Ṭā Ha 20:44]

Whenever someone enjoins the good and forbids the evil, they are likely to be harmed so they should be patient and forebearing.

As Allāh (ﷻ) said,

يَبْنِىَ أَقْرَىٰ الْصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَآتِهِ عَنْ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَّی

مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنْ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأَمْوَرِ

“O my son! Establish the prayer, enjoin the good, and forbid the evil, and endure with patience whatever afflicts you. Certainly, These are from the most important of matters.” [Sūrah Luqāmān 31:17]
Allāh has commanded His Prophet with patience upon the harm of the idolators in various places [throughout the Qur'ān] and he is without doubt the Imām [leader and example] of those who enjoin the good and forbid the evil.”

Ibn Taymiyyah (d.728H) also said, “Gentleness is the path to enjoin the good and forbid the evil, and that is why it is said, ‘Let your enjoinment of good be good and let your forbiddance of evil not be evil.’”

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1 Refer to Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (5/254-255) of Ibn Taymiyyah.
2 Refer to al-Istiqāmah (2/210-211). Also compare this passage to what is found in Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā (28/136).
Conclusion

I will close with some words which are an encouragement to adhere to the Sunnah and learn the Religion, and these words are from the speech of the Imāms.

It is narrated upon Abū al-ʿĀliyah (d.90H) that he said, “Learn Islām, and if you learn it do not turn away from it. Stick to the Straight Path for verily it is Islām. And do not deviate from this path, to the right or to the left. It is likewise incumbent upon you to adhere to the Sunnah of your Prophet (ﷺ) and that which his Companions were upon.”

And in a version of this narration collected by al-Ājurri, “The Sunnah of his Companions before a group that appeared in their midst killed [this] Companion and before they did what they did. We read the Qurʿān fifteen years before they killed this Companion and before they did what they did. Beware of these desires which inspire enmity and hatred between the people.”

Al-Shāfiʿī (ﷺ) said, “Whoever studies the Qurʿān becomes of great worth. Whoever speaks regarding jurisprudence (fiqh) his stature will be raised. Whoever writes down hadīth his arguments become strong. Whoever studies arithmetic will acquire firm judgement and intelligence. Whoever does not protect himself will not benefit from his knowledge.”

Ibn Ḥibbān (ﷺ) said, “In adhering to his Sunnah (ﷺ) lies complete security and an assortment of virtue and nobility. Its light will never be extinguished and its evidence will never be disproven. Whoever adheres to it is safe and whoever opposes it is blamed. This is because it

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1 This narration is authentic. It was collected by Ibn Wāḍārah in al-Bida’ wa al-Nahī ‘anḥā (p. 39) and declared authentic by the individual who provided the checking for Miftāḥ al-Jannah - may Allāh grant him success - (p. 138); and by al-Ājurri in al-Sharīʿah (1/124, no. 19) and it was also declared authentic by the individual who checked this book; and by Ibn Baṭṭah in his book, al-Ibānāh (1/ 299 & 338, no. 136, 202) with a shorter wording that is similar.

2 Refer to Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’ (10/24) of al-Dhahabī.
is a fortified stronghold and a pillar of support whose virtues are evident and whose rope is firm.

Whoever adheres to it will prevail, and whoever desires other than it will perish. Those who cling to it are from the people of happiness and bliss in the hereafter and people who are envied in this life.”

This completes this conclusion and it brings the book to a close. All praise is due to Allāh, who by His blessings and favour, righteous actions are accomplished. Glory is to You, O Allah, and praise is to You. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship but You. I seek Your forgiveness and repent to You. Send praise, O Allāh, upon Muḥammad and upon the family of Muḥammad just as you bestowed your praise upon Abraham [Ibrāhīm] and upon the family of Abraham [Ibrāhīm]. Indeed, You are Praiseworthy, Most Glorious. O Allāh, bless Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad as you have blessed Abraham [Ibrāhīm] and the family of Abraham [Ibrāhīm]. Indeed, You are Praiseworthy, Most Glorious.

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1 Refer to Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān (al-İḥsān, 1/86).
**Glossary**

**A**

Āyah: (pl. āyāt) "sign," a verse of the Qur'ān.
Āhād: a narration which has not reached the level of mutawātir.
Āhādīth: see hadīth.
'Alayhis-salām: "may Allāh (ﷻ) protect and preserve him." It is said after the name of a Prophet of Allāh or after the name of an Angel.
Ansār: "helpers;" the Muslims of al-Madīnah who supported the Muslims who migrated from Makkah.
'Arsh: Throne of Allāh (ﷻ).
'Asr: the afternoon Prayer.
Awliyā': see Wālī.

**B**

Bid'ah: Heresy (any innovatory practice).
Burāq: An animal bigger than a donkey and smaller than a horse on which the Prophet (ﷺ) went for the Mi'raj.

**D**

Dā'ī: one engaged in da'wah, caller.
Da'āef: "weak," unauthentic narration.
Da'wah: invitation, call to Allāh (ﷻ).
Dīn: a completed way of life prescribed by Allāh (ﷻ).
Dhikr: (pl. adhkār) remembrance of Allāh (ﷻ) with the heart, sayings of the tongue and actions of our limbs.
E

Īmān: faith, to affirm all that was revealed to the Prophet.

F

Fāhish: one who talks evil.
Fard Kifāyah: collective obligation - if fulfilled by a part of the community then the rest are not obligated.
Fatwā: (pl. fatāwā) religious verdicts.
Faqīh: A Scholar who can give religious verdicts.
Fiqh: Islāmic jurisprudence, understanding.
Fitnah: (pl. fitan) Trials, persecution, conflicts and strifes.
Fitrah: the natural disposition that one is born upon.

G

Ghulū: going to an extreme.
Ghusl: A ceremonial bath necessary for the one who is in a state of Janābah.

H

Hadīth: (pl. ahādhīh) the saying, actions and approvals narrated from the Prophet (سَلَّمَ عَلَيْهِ وَرَحَّمَهُ). Halāl: lawful.
Hanīf: pure Islāmic Monotheism (worshipping Allāh alone and nothing else).
Harām: unlawful and forbidden.
Hasan: fine, good; a term used for an authentic hadīth, which does not reach the level of Sahīh.
Harj: killing.
Al-Harūriyyah: an especially un-orthodox religious sect that branched off from the Khawārij.
Hijrah: migration from the land of Shirk to the land of Islām.
Hukm: a judgment of legal decision (especially of Allah).

I

'Ibadah: worship, worship of Allah.
Ihsan: worshipping Allah as though you see Him. However, since you cannot see Him, then know that He sees you.
Ijmâ': consensus, a unified opinion of Scholars regarding a certain issue.
Itithâd: exertion of effort; the process of arriving at a reasoned decision by a Scholar on an issue.
Imâm: leaders; leaders in Prayer, knowledge in fiqh, leader of a state.
Isnâd: the chain of narrators linking the collector of the saying to the person quoted.
Istikhârah: a Prayer consisting of two units (rak'ah) asking Allah for guidance.
Istiwa: ascending; the ascending of Allah above the Throne (in the manner that befits His Majesty).

J

Janâbah: state of a person after having sexual intercourse or sexual discharge.
Janâzah: (pl. janâ'iz): Funeral.
Jihâd: striving, struggling, fighting to make the Word of Allah supreme.
Jumu'ah: Friday.
Jinn: invisible creation, created by Allah from smokeless fire.
Junub: a person who is in the state of janâbah.

K

Ka'bah: a square stone building in al-Masjidul-Haram (the great mosque in Makkah which Muslims go to for pilgrimage and which all Muslims direct their face in Prayer).
Al-Kabâ'ir: the major sins.
Khârijî: (pl. Khawârij): those who declared that a Muslim becomes a disbeliever due to committing a major sin alone.
Khalīfah: (pl. khulafā'): the head of the Islāmic government to whom the oath of allegiance is given.
Khilāfah: an Islāmic state.
Khutbah: (person khatib), religious talk (sermon).
Kufr: (person kāfir) act of disbelief in the Religion of Islām.

M

Madhhab: position or opinion of a scholar; school of Islāmic Jurisprudence.
Makrūh: not approved of, undesirable from the point of view of Religion, although not punishable.
Manhaj: way; method; methodology.
Marfū': raised; a narration attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ).
Māṣjid: mosque.
Mawbiqāt: great destructive sins.
Mudallīs: one who practises tādīlīs.
Muhājir: (pl. muhājurūn, muhājirīn) one who migrated from the land of the disbelievers to the land of the Muslims for the sake of Allāh.
Muhaddith: scholar of the science of hadīth.
Muftī: one who gives fatāwā.
Mujāhid: (pl. mujāhidūn): a Muslim warrior in jīhād.
Mujtahid: one who is qualified to pass judgment using ijtihād.
Munkar: "rejected;" a narration which is un-authentic itself and contradicts and authentic narrations.
Muqallid: one who practices taqlīd.
Mushrik: (pl. mushrikūn) polytheists, pagans and disbelievers in the oneness of Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ).
Mustahabb: recommended; an action if left it is not punishable and if done it is rewardable.
Muttaqūn: those who are pious.
Mutawātīr: a hadīth which is narrated by a very large number of reporters, such that it cannot be supported that they all agreed upon a lie.
Muwahhid: (pl. muwahhidūn) one who unifies all of his worship and directs it to Allāh alone.
Mawdū': fabricated; spurious; invented (narration).
Mawqūf: stopped; a narration from a Companion (not going back to the Prophet (ﷺ)).
Mawsūl: “connected;” a continuous isnād (can be narrated back to the Prophet (ﷺ)).

N

Nāfilah: (pl. nawafl) Optional practice of worship.
Niyyah: intention from the heart.
Nusuk: a sacrifice.

Q

Qadar: Divine pre-ordainment; that which Allāh has ordained for his creation.
Qiblah: the direction the Muslims face during Prayer.
Qiyās: analogical deduction of Islāmic laws. New laws are deduced from old laws based upon similarity between their causes.
Qunūt: “devotion;” a special supplication while standing in the Prayer.
Quraysh: one of the greatest tribes in Arabia in the pre-Islāmic period of Ignorance. The Prophet (ﷺ) belonged to this tribe.

R

Rāfidi: the correct title for the extreme Shi'ah. Those who bear malice and grudges against the noble Companions to the extent that they declare them to be apostates. They also hold that the Qur'ān which the Muslims have is neither complete nor preserved from corruption.
Ramadān: the ninth month of Islāmic calendar, in which Muslims observe fasting.
S

Sahābah: Muslims who met the Prophet (ﷺ) believing in him and died believing in him.

Sahīh: authentic, the highest rank of classification of authentic ahādīth.

Salaf/Salafus-Sālihīn: pious predecessors; the Muslims of the first three generations: the companions, the successors and their successors.

Salafi: one who ascribes oneself to the salaf and follows their way.

Sīrah: the life story of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Shari'ah: the divine code of law of Islām.

Shawwāl: the month after Ramadān.

Shaytān: Satan

Shī'ah: (see Rāfīḍī) a collective name for various sects claiming love for Ahlul-Bayt.

Shirk: associating partners with Allāh directly or indirectly; compromising any aspects of Tawhīd.

Sūrah: a chapter of the Qur'an

Sunnah: “example, practice;” the way of life of the Prophet (ﷺ), consisting of his words, actions and silent approvals. The Sunnah is contained in various ahādīth.

T

Ṭabi‘ī: (pl. tābi‘īn) the generation after the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Tafsīr: explanation of the Qur’an.

Tāghūt: anything worshiped other than the real God (Allāh) (i.e. false deities).

Tahajjud: voluntary, recommended Prayer between the compulsory prayers of 'Ishā' and Fajr.

Takhrīj: to reference a hadīth to its sources and analyze its isnāds.

Taqlīd: blind following; to follow someone’s opinion (madhhab) without evidence.

Taqwā: acting in obedience to Allāh, hoping for His mercy upon light from Him and taqwā is leaving acts of disobedience, out of fear of Him, upon light from Him.
Tarjamah: notes about a reporter of hadīth.
Tawwāf: the circumambulation of the ka'bah.
Tawhīd: Islāmic Monotheism. The Oneness of Allāh. Believing and acting upon His Lordship, His rights of Worship and Names and Attributes.

U

Uhud: A well known mountain in al-Madīnah. One of the greatest battles in Islāmic history came at its foot. This is called Ghazwah Uhud.
'Ulamāː: (singular: 'ālim) scholars.
Umm: mother of, used as an identification.
Ummah: “nation”, the Muslims as a whole.
'Umrah: a visit to Makkah during which one performs the tawwāf around the Ka'bah and the Saīr between as-Safā and al-Marwah. It is called the lesser Hajj.
Usūl: the fundamentals.

W

Wahyī: the revelation or inspiration of Allāh to His Prophets.
Wahdatul-Wujūd: the belief that everything in existence is in fact Allāh. This deviant belief is held by many Sūfīs.
Wakīl: disposer of affairs.
Witr: “odd;” the last Prayer at the night, which consists of odd number of raka’āt (units).
Walīmah: the wedding feast.
Wasīlah: the means of approach or achieving His closeness to Allāh by getting His favours.
Wudū': an ablution (ritual washing) that is performed before Prayer and other kinds of worship.
Y

Yaqīn: perfect absolute faith.
Yathrib: one of the names of al-Madīnah.

Z

Zakāt: charity that is obligatory on everyone who has wealth over and above a certain limit over which a year has passed (2.5% of saved wealth).
Zakātul-Fitr: an obligatory charity by the Muslims to be given to the poor before the Prayer of 'Īdul-Fitr.
Zamzam: the sacred water inside the haram (the grand mosque) at Makkah.
Zanādiqah: atheists, heretics.
OUR CALL TO THE UMMAH

[1]: We believe in Allâh and His Names and Attributes, as they were mentioned in the Book of Allâh and in the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ), without tahrîf (distortion), nor ta'wil (figurative interpretation), nor tamthîl (making a likeness), nor tashbîh (resemblance), nor ta'tîl (denial).

[2]: We love the Companions (ﷺ) of the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ), and we hate those who speak against them. We believe that to speak ill of them is to speak ill of the Religion, because they are the ones who conveyed it to us. And we love the Family of the Prophet (ﷺ) with love that is permitted by the Sharîah. ‘Imrân Ibn Husayn (ﷺ) said, “O people! Learn the knowledge of the Religion from us, if you do not do so, then you will certainly be misguided.”

[3]: We love the People of Hadîth and all of the Salaf of the Ummah from Ahlus-Sunnah. Imâm Shâṭîbî (d.790H) - ﷺ - said, “The Salafus-Sâlih, the Companions, the tâbi’in and their successors knew the Qur’ân, its sciences and its meanings the best.”

[4]: We despise ‘ilmul-kalâm (knowledge of theological rhetoric), and we view it to be from amongst the greatest reasons for the division in the Ummah.

[5]: We do not accept anything from the Books of fiqh (jurisprudence), nor from the Books of tafsîr (explanation of the Qur’ân), nor from the ancient stories, nor from the Sîrah (biography) of the Prophet (ﷺ), except that which has been confirmed from Allâh or from His Messenger (ﷺ). We do not mean that we have rejected them, nor do we claim that we are not in need of them. Rather, we benefit from the

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1 This explanation of our call has bin summarized from Tarjumah Abî ‘Abdur-Rahmân Muqbil Ibn Hâdî al-Wâdî’î (p. 135-142) of Muqbil Ibn Hâdî with minor additions from other sources.

2 Refer to al-Kifâyah (p. 15) of al-Khatîb al-Baghdâdi.

3 Refer to al-Muwâfiqât (2/79) of ash-Shâtibi.
discoveries of our Scholars and the jurists and other than them. However, we do not accept a ruling, except with an authentic proof.

[6]: We do not write in our Books, nor do we cover in our lessons, nor do we give sermons with anything except the Qur'ān, or the authentic and authoritative hadīth. And we detest what emanates from many Books and admonishers in terms of false stories and weak and fabricated ahādīth. 'Abdullāh Ibnul-Mubārk (d.181H) - 𐰋𐰋 - said, “The authentic ahādīth are sufficient and the weak ahādīth are not needed.”¹

[7]: We do not perform takfīr upon any Muslim due to any sin, except Shirk with Allāh, or the abandonment of Prayer, or apostasy. We seek refuge in Allāh from that.

[8]: We believe that the Qur'ān is the Speech of Allāh, it is not created.

[9]: We hold that our ‘obligation is to co-operate with the group that traverses the methodology of the Book and the Sunnah, and what the Salaf of the Ummah were upon; in terms of calling to Allāh the Glorified, and being sincere in worship of Him, and warning from Shirk, innovations, and disobedience, and to advise all of the groups that oppose this.’² “So co-operating upon righteousness and piety (taqwā) and mutual advising necessitates warning against evil and not co-operating with the wicked.”³

[10]: We do not deem it correct to revolt against the Muslim rulers as long as they are Muslims, nor do we feel that revolutions bring about reconciliation. Rather, they corrupt the community.

[11]: We hold that this multiplicity of present day parties is a reason for the division of the Muslims and their weakness. So therefore we set

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¹ Refer to al-Jāmi' li-Akh läqir-Rāwī (2/159) of as-Suyūtī.
³ From the words of Shaykh Ibn Bāz in al-Furqān magazine (issue no. 14, p. 15).
about ‘freeing the minds from the fetters of blind-following and the darkness of sectarianism and party spirit.’

[12]: We restrict our understanding of the Book of Allāh and of the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) to the understanding of the Salaf of the Ummah from the Scholars of hadīth, not the blind-followers of their individuals. Rather, we take the truth from wherever it comes. And we know that there are those who claim Salafiyyah, yet Salafiyyah is free from them, since they bring to the society what Allāh has prohibited. We believe in ‘cultivating the young generation upon this Islām, purified from all that we have mentioned, giving to them a correct Islamic education from the start - without any influence from the disbelieving western education.’

[13]: We believe that politics is a part of the Religion, and those who try to separate the Religion from politics are only attempting to destroy the Religion and to spread chaos.

[14]: We believe there will be no honour or victory for the Muslims until they return to the Book of Allāh and to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).

[15]: We oppose those who divide the Religion into trivialities and important issues. And we know that this is a destructive da’wah.

[16]: We oppose those who put down the knowledge of the Sunnah, and say that this is not the time for it. Likewise, we oppose those who put down acting upon the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).

[17]: Our da’wah and our ’aqīdah is more beloved to us than our own selves, our wealth and our offspring. So we are not prepared to part with it for gold, nor silver. We say this so that no one may have hope in buying out our da’wah, nor should he think that it is possible for him to purchase it from us for dīnār or dirham.

1 From Fiqhul-Wāqi’ (p. 49) of al-Albānī.
2 From Fiqhul-Wāqi’ (p. 51) of al-Albānī.
[18]: We love the present day Scholars of the Sunnah and hope to benefit from them and regret the passing away of many of them. Imam Mālik said (d.179H) - ﷺ, “The knowledge of hadīth is your flesh and blood and you will be asked concerning it on the Day of Judgement, so look who you are taking it from.”¹

[19]: We do not accept a fatwā except from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

These are glimpses into our 'aqīdah and our da'wah. So if one has any objection to this, then we are prepared to accept advice if it is truthful, and to refute it if it is erroneous, and to avoid it if it is stubborn rejection. And Allah knows best.

¹ Refer to al-Muhaddithul-Fāsil (p. 416) and al-Kifāyah (p. 21) of al-Khatīb.