

تأصيل المنهج الدعوي

في ضوء الكتاب والسنة وفهم السلف الصالح

لمعالي الشيخ صالح بن عبد العزيز بن محمد آل الشيخ
وزير الشؤون الإسلامية والأوقاف والدعوة والإرشاد

Principles of the Salafi Manhaj (methodology) in Dawah

by Shaikh Saleh ibn Abdul-Aziz ibn Muhammad Aal-Shaikh
Minister of Islamic Affairs, Dawah and Guidance

Translated by Shawana A. Aziz



Published by Quran Sunnah Educational Programs
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Methodology of Translation

This book is not a literal translation. One of the reasons being; the content of **this booklet is a lecture,**

Establishing the Fundamentals of the Manhaj of Dawah in light of the Book, the Sunnah, and understanding of the Salaf.

delivered (on the 7th of Rabie al-Aakhir 1430H) - and unlike a written essay, many a times, the orator tends to repeat his words.

So, in order for the message to be clearly conveyed and easily understood, **I have simplified the language - but al-Hamdulillah, all the points cited by the Shaikh have been fully and completely conveyed.**

Also note that I have referred to two versions; one, a direct transcript of the lecture and the other, published in the form of a booklet – so, any point that was missing in one, was taken from the other.

May Allah make this humble effort to spread the knowledge and understanding of His Deen - in the words of major scholars - fruitful and rewarding – and may He grant me many more opportunities to do the same. And I ask Allah to forgive me for my shortcomings and errors – Ameen, Ya arHamar-Raahimeen.

Translator: Shawana A. Aziz

11th Nov 2011

All the titles with an asterisk (*) at the end are by the translator

Introduction*

This is a time, in which we hope that Mercies (of Allah) descend upon us, Angels honor us, and Allah mentions us in the presence of those who are with Him - because this effort of ours;

- to listen to the Speech of Allah and the sayings of His Messenger,
- to understand (to have the Fiqah¹ of) them,
- to know what as-Sabiqoon al-Awwaloon from the Muhajireen and the Ansaar (i.e., the Sahabah), and those who followed them in good were upon,

is in a time when the Fitan (trials, tribulations) are setting off, the day and night are unsettled, the (Straight) Path has become vague for many people, and many have been deviated from it.

It is therefore, necessary that there be constant reminders of the Order of Allah and His Manhaj, which He has assigned for His Messenger ﷺ, the Sahabah and those who followed them in their Manhaj.

1. Read about, What is Fiqah of Deen? Why do I need it? How do I achieve it? Where do I start? How do I proceed? Whom should I approach? What are the means to achieving it? And what are the pitfalls I must avoid? ... in our book, **"How can I achieve the Fiqah of the Deen", from the writings of Shaikh Saleh ibn Fawzan al-Fawzaan.**

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Why the need to learn the Fundamentals of the Manhaj of Dawah?

Dawah is, without doubt, a distinctive trait of this ummah – a distinctive characteristic of the followers of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

"Say (O Muhammad ﷺ), 'This is my Sabeel;
I invite unto Allah with sure knowledge,
I and whosoever follows me (must also invite others to Allah)
with sure knowledge. Glorified and Exalted be Allah.
And I am not of the Mushrikoon (polytheist)."
[Soorah Yusuf (12): 108]

- (So), Dawah is **the** Sabeel (way) – and it is the Nahaj (way), which is necessary for us.
- Dawah is a great (form of) worship.
- (It is a worship) through which one draws closer to Allah.
- It is a worship, the benefits of which are passed on, and not limited to the one who makes Dawah. Its benefits extend through the Da'ee to the people in his country, to the people outside his country, and even to those who will be influenced by his Dawah until the Hour is established.

Du'aat (callers to Allah) are of two kinds;

1. (Du'aat who make) Dawah according to the Sunnah - along with the recent Ijtihadaat (sing. Ijtihad – i.e., deduction of rulings based upon the Sharee'ah texts) of the century.

(They make Dawah according to) Ijtihadaat that do not go beyond the boundaries of adhering to the Sunnah, the Jamaa'ah and the ways of as-Salaf as-Saleh.

2. (Du'aat who make) Dawah which agrees with al-Hawaa (one's lowly desires), and Ijtihadaat which are not referred back to Ilm (knowledge) as a strong pillar.

So, because there are numerous desires, Dawah - instead of being one Manhaj – has resulted in various Manaahij (sing. Manhaj). And everyone claims that the correct (Manhaj) is that which he comes up with.

Verily, cautiousness/carefulness in establishing the Usool (fundamentals) safeguards the mind and heart from falling into mistakes – and therefore, our subject:

Establishing the Usool (Fundamentals)
of the Manhaj of Dawah
in light of the Book and the Sunnah,
and the understanding of the Salaf.

Manhaj is the Way, which Allah has mentioned in His Book, in the following verse,

"To each among you, We have prescribed a law and Manhaj (a clear way)." [Soorah al-Maidah (5): 48]

Al-Manhaj, al-Minhaj or an-Nahj – is the clear Path which holds no doubts/ambiguities.

It is said, 'He took a clear Manhaj' meaning, (he took) a way with confidence, a way which is definite and free from uncertainty.

Dawah, without doubt, is a course of action, which needs a way (i.e., manner, approach, method)...

It is possible that the Manhaj of Dawah (of some Du'aat) is not in accordance with the Quran, the Sunnah and the safe/reliable way of as-Salaf as-Saleh, from whom the people of knowledge have taken the Manhaj of Dawah.

The Manhaj of Dawah might be influenced by one's opinion about MaslaHa or by corruption - in accordance to the magnitude of one's inclination towards corruption – or it might be influenced by some specific occurrences, which are either territorial, political, etc.

Translator's Note:

Q: Why the need to learn the Fundamentals of the Manhaj of Dawah?

A: It is required to learn the Fundamentals in order to avoid mistakes and errors, as the Shaikh writes, "Verily, cautiousness/ carefulness in establishing the Usool (fundamentals) safeguards the mind and heart from falling into mistakes."

Why is the reward of a Da'ee upon Allah Alone?*

(Most importantly) Dawah cannot be, 'Dawah upon the correct Manhaj' - unless it is raised from the materialism of the world, and is carried out sincerely for Allah.

It is for this reason that mankind does not impart the reward of the Da'ee. It is Allah, Who rewards the Da'ee.

"Say (O Muhammad ﷺ), 'No wage do I ask of you for this (the Quran)..." [Soorah Saad (38): 86-88]

So, the Da'ee does not take his wages from the creation. Why?
- Because, he is upon the Sabeel of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (who did not seek any reward from anyone except Allah).

If the Da'ee was to take a worldly wage from the creation, then perhaps, he will act according to their wishes and likings - And he will be lead by their desires, without paying attention to anything else - (and) this does happens (in the real world)!

So, if one takes compensation for his Dawah, then he might be lead astray such that he says what suits those who provide his wages, therefore, the rewards of the Da'ee are with Allah,

"No wage do I ask of you for this (the Quran)..."
[Soorah Saad (38): 86]

And in another verse,

"my reward is only from Allah."

[Soorah Yunus (10): 72]

The (formation of this verse) restricts (seeking rewards from Allah Alone), and demands Ikhlas (sincerity).

The more the heart of the Da'ee is attached to Allah, the more his fundamentals of Manhaj will be in accordance with the Way of our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Is there a greater compensation than what was offered to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ?

(In order to persuade Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to give up calling to the Tawheed of Allah, the Arab polytheist sent the uncle of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Abu Talib, saying), "If you want wealth, we will give you (as much) wealth, if you want a beautiful woman, we will marry her to you."

But the Prophet ﷺ replied (to his uncle), "Even if they place the sun in my right-hand, and the moon in my left-hand in return for giving up this matter (Dawah to Islam), I will never stop – until; - either Allah makes it (the religion of Allah) triumph or I die defending it."

[See, as-Seerah an-Nabaweyyah, Ibn Hisham (vol.1, p.265-266)]

It is thus, a priority to follow the example (of the Prophet ﷺ in seeking the reward from Allah Alone); (even) before learning about the Way.

The Da'ee should be free from the greed of the world. The more a Da'ee gets closer to the world, the more he will be away from the correct Dawah. If his aim behind Islamic Dawah and Dawah to Allah is materialism, honor, position, wealth, victory

for his Hizb (group), prevalence over another group or power over a political personality, or any other such aim – then the Dawah will suffer from deviation, and the truth will not reach the people.

Translator's Note:

Q: Why is the reward of a Da'ee upon Allah Alone?

A: It helps the Da'ee to preserve his sincerity, and in turn, saves the Dawah from corruption, as the Shaikh writes, "If the Da'ee was to take a worldly wage from the creation, then perhaps, he will act according to their wishes and likings - And he will be lead by their desires, without paying attention to anything else."

Why is Dawah one of the best forms of worship?*

Dawah to Allah is not an ordinary act, because it is one of the best forms of worship. Rather, a group of the people of knowledge has considered it to be the best (form of) worship due to its various merits, and because it is a form of striving in the Way of Allah. Allah says,

"So obey not the disbelievers, but **strive** against them (by preaching) with the utmost endeavor, with it (the Quran)."

[Soorah al-Furqan (25): 52]

i.e., strive against them with the Quran. And striving with the Quran means, Dawah to Allah by the Quran and the Sunnah, which is the explanation of the Quran.

Dawah to Allah is the best form of worship, (also) because its benefits are passed on, whereas (other) voluntary worships lack (such) benefit.

For example, if one prays during the night, or increases in his recitation of the Quran – the benefit of his act is for him alone.

But if he were to teach the Quran and explain the Sunnah, make Dawah to them, and make Allah beloved to them, and get them closer to Allah - then, in this way, the benefits are passed on.

Ibn Jawzi (rahimahullah) thus wrote in (his book) Sayd al-Khatir,
"I have found writing and compiling
more beneficial than teaching."

Ibn Jawzi said so because, a teacher is visited by 40, 50 or 100 students for instance – then if he dies, the number of the students comes to an end, then they teach and so on.

Whereas, the benefits (received through the writings of an) author and compiler of beneficial writings – writings from which the ummah benefits – is not restricted to one generation; multitudes of people benefit from it. Thus, with respect to benefits that are passed on – writing and compiling is the best as Ibn Jawzi (rahimahullah) mentioned.

... The reward of the Da'ee is multiplied in accordance with the number of those who are influenced by his correct Dawah.

So, he listens to a saying of Allah's Messenger, understands it, acts upon it and forwards it (to others). So, he has a reward equal to the (reward) granted to the one who follows him. Therefore, Allah's Messenger ﷺ said,

"If Allah gives guidance to somebody through you, it is better for you than possessing red camels."

[Saheeh al-Bukharee, b.52, no.253]

i.e., the high-priced red camels.

This is an enormous merit and a big reward. Also in the Saheeh,
"Whoever calls others to guidance will have a reward like that of those who follow it, without that detracting from their reward in the slightest." [Saheeh Muslim (2674)]

The scholars have, one-after-the-other, mentioned the merits of Dawah.

Why adhere to the understanding of as-Salaf as-Saleh in Dawah?*

'Dawah to Allah' - everyone claims it. There are various Manaahij, and those who affiliate themselves to the Dawah, their ways are different.

These ways and Manaahij could be very distant from the Quran, Sunnah, and the ways of the Salaf of the ummah - like the way of Dawah used by the extreme Soofis and Mureeds, and purely political parties that use the Deen as a means to call people to political understandings (ideologies).

There is no submission to Allah in these (Manaahij), and there is no clarifying the true Deen for the sake of Allah, and other similar (necessary aspects). So, there are many (Manaahij), and the followers of these Manaahij are distant or close (to the Manhaj of the Salaf in accordance to the magnitude of their deviation from the Manhaj of the Salaf).

Therefore, it is one of the important tasks that the Muslim Da'ee ensures that his Dawah is in accordance with the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger and understanding of the Salaf.

Why the understanding of as-Salaf as-Saleh?

Because Allah said,

"The first to embrace Islam of the Muhaajiroon (those who migrated from Makkah to al-Madinah) and the Ansaar (the citizens of al-Madinah who helped and gave aid to the

Muhajiroon) and also those who followed them exactly in Faith - **Allah is well-pleased with them** as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever."

[Soorah at-Tawbah (9): 100]

Allah has made those, who follow the Sahabah in faith, deserving of the same merit (as that of the Sahabah) because He said,

"The first to embrace Islam of the Muhajiroon and the Ansaar and **also those who followed them exactly in Faith.**"

Included in this (merit of, 'Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him') are;

- those Sahabah, who followed as-Sabiqoon (i.e., the Sahabah who were the first to accept Islam), and
- those who follow the Sahabah in faith until the Day of Resurrection.

It is for this reason, the people of knowledge said, "as-Salaf as-Saleh" – the pious predecessors.

Who are as-Salaf as-Saleh?

As-Salaf means those who have preceded us.

As-Saleh are those, for whom Allah's Messenger ﷺ has testified as-Salah (i.e., piousness, righteousness). And they are the best three generations, concerning whom he ﷺ said,

"the best of you is my generation, then those who follow them and then those who follow them." [Saheeh al-Bukharee]

He mentioned two generations or three generations.

This (Hadeeth) implies strict adherence to that which they (i.e., as-Salaf as-Saleh) were upon.

Means of Dawah to Allah*

Dawah to Allah is a general word and includes all means through which the true Deen can be conveyed to the people; – teaching, writing books or giving lectures, visiting villages and towns or participating in mass media, etc. Every means, through which the true Deen can be conveyed to the people, is Dawah to Allah.

Translator's Note:

Q: Why is Dawah the best form of worship?

A: "Dawah to Allah is the best form of worship because its benefits are passed on to others, whereas (other) voluntary worships lack (such) benefit."

Translator's Note:

Q: Why adhere to the understanding of as-Salaf as-Saleh in Dawah?

A: Allah has made those, who follow as-Salaf as-Saleh, deserving of the same merit as them, for, He said, "The first to embrace Islam of the Muhajiroon and the Ansaar and **also those who followed them exactly in Faith.** Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him..."



If we take a look at what as-Salaf as-Saleh were upon, we find that the Manhaj of Dawah of as-Salaf as-Salih and those who followed this path -- from the Imams of the people of knowledge, Imams of the people of Ijtihad like the heads of the Taba'een and Taba Taba'een, the four Imams of the people of Islam, scholars of Islam until our times -- **although they slightly differed in few issues, they shared (distinctive) characteristics, and attributes of these (distinctive) characteristics.**

These characteristics are the (distinctive) traits of the Manhaj of Dawah based upon the Quran, Sunnah and the understanding of the Salaf.

Dawah is for Allah Alone*

First characteristic is to know that Dawah is indeed for Allah and not for anyone else; neither a Shaikh nor one's own self, one's tribe, country, madhhab or group.

Dawah is bringing the slaves (of Allah) closer to Allah, and making them love Allah, and worship Him Alone without any partner – upon the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ - therefore, Allah said,

"Say (O Muhammad), 'This is my way; I invite unto Allah.'" [Soorah Yusuf (12): 108]

Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhab (rahimahullah) said concerning the above verse,

"In it, is exhortation/encouragement towards Ikhlas, because there are those who make Dawah - but their Dawah is to his own-self, his Shaikh, his way, his Hizb (group) or his party."

This does happen - If we take a look around today, and seek Ikhlas; we find that there are only few, who are sincere. Therefore, it is obligatory upon the Da'ee to be alert, and hold one's self accountable - every now and then.

Shaytaan might come to him, and (frivolities) of the world will be flaunted before him every now and then - but the Mu'min (always) returns to the truth, and he does not fail to return to Allah – every now and then.

He asks Allah for rectification, and seeks forgiveness for the wrong, lack of Ikhlas (sincerity) or weakness of Ikhlas in Dawah to Allah – because How will the people benefit from your Dawah unless you make yourself sincere to Allah?! because, it is due to Ikhlas that the deeds are accepted.

Yes, there is much talk which one can say, and it is also pleasing to the ears - but it does not move the heart to bond with Allah or glorify Him, nor does it move the heart to honor His Messenger, bond with knowledge or its people. It does not cause them to return to the truth, make Tawbah (repentance) or Inabah (return to Allah). It does not exhort them towards Ittiba (following the Prophet).

Such talk is only beautified for the minds and ears. It does not have any true influence on the heart – because the talk which emanates from the tongue does not go beyond the ears – but the speech which comes from the heart, then verily, the hearts adhere to it.

So, the first and the greatest concern is that the Da'ee should be Mukhlis (sincere) in his endeavor. He should be cautious of taking wages for his Dawah, speaking for a price or participating for a fee. If any of these overwhelm him, or (he has to take wages) due to neediness, then he should keep a check on himself that he says that which is correct.

Dawah is different from the Quran, and the ruling of Dawah is different from the ruling of teaching Quran. Therefore, the scholars have allowed that the Da'ee takes his livelihood, but not wages. He takes compensation from Baytul-Maal (treasury) which is assigned by the one in authority. A compensation which is not conditional to his performing this Wajib Kifaya (an obligation which is required to be carried out by some individuals of the ummah such that the need is fulfilled), because Allah says,

"Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining al-Ma'roof (monotheism and everything Islam preaches) and forbidding al-Munkar (polytheism and disbelief)." [Soorah aal-Imran (3): 104]

Allah has ordered that there be from amongst us an adequate group calling to the good.

So, if he takes livelihood, which helps him in carrying out this obligation, and he does not take wages conditional to hours, days or anything else, nor is it something which he specifically demands, then there is nothing wrong in it.

Priorities of the Manhaj of Dawah must be clear to the Da'ee

The Priorities of the Manhaj of Dawah are manifest in the Book and the Sunnah; what comes first, and what comes next is clearly explained - as in the Hadeeth of Mu'adh. When Allah's Messenger ﷺ sent him to Yemen, he said,

"O Mu'adh, You are going to a nation from the People of the Book, so let the first thing to which you will invite them, be the Tawheed of Allah."

[Saheeh al-Bukharee (book.93, no.469)]

And in the two Saheehs, the Prophet ﷺ said,

"O Mu'adh, you are going to the People of the Book.

- First of all invite them to worship Allah (alone),
- When they come to know Allah, inform them that Allah has enjoined on them, five prayers in every day and night,
- If they start offering these prayers, inform them that Allah has enjoined on them, the Zakaat, and it is to be taken from the rich amongst them and given to the poor amongst them and if they obey you in that, take Zakaat from them and avoid taking the best property of the people as Zakaat."

[Saheeh al-Bukharee (book.24, no.537)]

This Hadeeth is an evident proof that Dawah should be to the Tawheed of Allah first, and Tawheed should be the foremost - on the whole and in the specifics.

This includes, as we mentioned earlier, teaching the correct Aqeedah, publishing/circulating writings and recordings on the topic, and explaining it to the people through the modern media - internet, satellite and other forms of communication media.

Adhering to Ittiba (obedience) and refraining from Ibtida (innovation)

Time (and circumstances) might lead one to innovate a Bidah in Dawah - Why?

- Because an eager Da'ee wants to be successful in his Dawah, and wants to convey the Message to the people, so his keenness for this good might cause him to innovate such issues in Dawah, that are not permitted by Allah or attested by the proofs.

Many people are confused concerning MaslaHa (advantages) and the obligation of Ittiba. It is thought that every MaslaHa that arises, it is allowed to accept it – but this is not correct.

MaslaHa meant in the Shar'eeah are only those, which;

- are confirmed by the proofs or are deduced by Ijtihad, and
- have no opposition to the religion, and
- do not include anything that is not praised in the religion.

If the Masaaleh (pl. of MaslaHa):

- includes innovation or
- involves forsaking Ikhlas or
- constitutes not adhering to the priorities of the religion

then this MaslaHa is batil (false), like the sayings,

"We want political affairs through Dawah,
as for the other issues, let them be after it."

"The most important in Dawah is Sulook (mannerism).
We will train the people upon Zuhd (ascetics) and Fadhaail
(virtues), etc.

- even if they do not have any understanding of the Deen,
- even if they are weak in their Tawheed or ignorant and
- even if they are acting upon some innovations."

This (Manhaj of Dawah) constitutes departing from the principle
of Dawah, which were followed by as-Salaf as-Saleh.

One should adhere to Ittiba and be cautious of Ibtida (innovation).
The Prophet ﷺ said in an agreed upon Hadeeth from Aisha
(radhi allahu anha),

"Whoever innovates something in this matter of ours
(Islam) which is not part of it, will have it Radd."
[Agreed upon]

'Radd' means, Mardood (rejected and turned back) to its owner.

Dawah is included in the Prophet's ﷺ saying, "In our matter..."
because Dawah is a command of Allah's Messenger, and a
command of the Deen.

So, whosoever innovates in Dawah that which is not from
Islam, and is not from the guidance of the Prophet, and is not
confirmed by the people of knowledge - then it is Radd –
Mardood to its owner.

Tarbiyah with Ilm

Giving attention to Tarbiyah (educating, nurturing) (the people) with Ilm (knowledge) is from the distinctive traits of Dawah based upon the Quran, the Sunnah (and the understanding of the Salaf).

There are those who focus upon

- Tarbiyah with Sulook or
- people's understanding of the local and global issues, or
- educating the people about the merits of Islam or
- talks concerning the position of the rulers, states or developments.

and years pass by without any change or upgrade/improvement in the Manhaj of Dawah.

In this (Manhaj), is obvious loss/disadvantage of the Mad'oo (the recipient of Dawah), because you are calling this man towards (the Pleasure of) His Lord (in the Hereafter) – and (so, you should know that) the one, who will succeed in the Hereafter is he, who will come to Allah with a saleem (sound, upright) heart.

Successful is not the one, who will come with an enlightened mind or a mind which understands the developments, current situations or political issues.

Some Daee's or some who are concerned about Dawah, refer to the political news more than they refer to the sayings of the people of Ilm, Quran, Tafseer and Saheeh al-Bukharee, Saheeh Muslim, and (other) books of Sunnah, and the sayings of the Mujtahideen from the people of knowledge! And in this is great harm for the Da'ee himself, and the Mad'ooeen (recipients of Dawah).

It is therefore, important that there be focus upon Tarbiyah with beneficial Ilm in Dawah. Rather, the first phase of Tarbiyah is the Mad'oo's learning the Quran, and memorizing what is easy from it, knowing the Sunnah, adhering to it, knowing the difference between Sunnah and Bidah, and being warned against Bidah, and paying attention to the fundamental Ilm - Ilm of the Quran and the Sunnah.

Giving importance to the Arabic Language*

The Quran was revealed in clear Arabic language, So, how can we

- understand the Quran,
- comprehend what the Quran informs us?
- know the commands and prohibitions, Hudood, promises and warnings of the Quran?
- understand the stories which Allah has related to us in the Quran?

And how will the hearts be moved?

- Verily, (by reading the Quran in the) the Arabic language.

Therefore, as-Salaf as-Saleh if they made Dawah to Allah in a country which they conquered by Ilm and Quran before sword and arrow, they would first teach the Arabic language.

This is the reason why the Arabic language has become so widely known and understood – to the extent that people from other countries have established the rules of Arabic language for us! This is due to the (great) concern and keen attention given to the Arabic language by as-Salaf as-Saleh.

Therefore, today you find that the righteous people of knowledge - in the east and the west - are so eager to teach the Arabic language - Why?

Not because it is the language of the Arab race or the Arab people. Rather, because it is the language of Islam and the language of the Quran, and the language of Fiqah (understanding) about Allah and about His Messenger ﷺ.

Thus, concern for teaching this Arabic language is from the characteristics of as-Salaf as-Saleh in their Manhaj of Dawah.

The Salaf did not make Dawah to the people in their language, and then leave them with no (way of increasing their) Fiqah (understanding) (of Islam). (Rather) they taught them Islamic issues, encouraged them to make Dawah in their own language - and they also taught them the Arabic language - as much as possible.

It is not possible that a Da'ee becomes Baseer (enlightened, wise) in his Dawah while he is ignorant of the Arabic language.

This further stresses the importance of the Duaat's studying the Arabic language in Islamic organizations, institutes and committees. For, there is no strength for Islam except by the strength of the people of knowledge and the people of Dawah, and there is no strength for the people of knowledge or for the people of Dawah except through their strength in the Arabic language.

If we were to lack in our understandings and derivations or pronunciation and speech of the Arabic language, then we will lack in our understanding of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger.

Academic Discipline*

Amongst the Distinctive Traits of as-Salaf as-Saleh is that they were academically disciplined in the issues they studied / discussed / tackled.

Knowledge is vast, and its books are many, and to study them (all) is not easy, therefore, they have to be academically distinguished (according to priorities).

Academic Discipline includes (three) issues:

1. The Da'ee must be confident that he is academically well-acquainted with what he is calling to.

We do not make complete knowledge a condition for Dawah. Whosoever has learnt something with proofs, and has understood it, then he has the right to call to it.

(So,) if you know an issue of Tawheed, and you have understood it, then you call to it. If you know issues of the religion with their proofs and clarity, then you call to it.

Do not make anything Halaal or Haraam without a Daleel (proof).

From the (various) verses, which speak about this issue is the Saying of Allah,

"Say not concerning that which your tongues put forth falsely, 'This is lawful and this is forbidden,' so as to invent lies against Allah. Verily, those who invent lies against Allah will never prosper." [Soorah an-Nahl (16): 116]

This makes clear to you the severity/magnitude of the danger of saying, 'this is Halaal' and, 'that is Haraam' (without Daleel) - like what some authors have titled their writings, 'Halaal and Haraam'.

This is from the most excessive/inappropriate sayings, because no one should decide the Hukm (Order/Command) of Allah in issues of Ikhtilaaf (disagreement) or issues of Ijtihad.

Manhaj of the Salaf in such issues was that of fearing Allah and being cautious in the Deen. So, they did not say, 'this is Haraam/Halaal,' unless the Shar'eeah Daleel clearly mentioned it.

Many of them used phrases such as, 'I hate it', 'I do not like it', or 'this is not permissible'. This was due to their refraining from using the words Halaal and Haraam. And therefore, the Fuqaha (rahimahumullah) said in their explanation of the sayings of the Imams, like Imam Shafa'ee and Imam Ahmad and others,

"Their intent (by saying, 'I hate this') was hatred for the Haraam (prohibited) issues. Because it (i.e., the issue about which they say, 'I hate it') is not Makrooh (disliked) – (such that) one who leaves it is rewarded, while he who commits it is not punished. Rather it is from the principles of religion that he who commits that particular action be punished. But they did not term it Haraam out of cautiousness and fear of Allah.

This is from the lofty manners, and out of fear of lying upon Allah, and (the desire of) abiding by that which has come down in the revelation,

"Say, 'In the Bounty of Allah, and in His Mercy - therein let them rejoice.' That is better than what they amass. Say (O Muhammad), 'Tell me, what provision Allah has sent down to you! And you have made of it lawful and unlawful.' Say, 'Has Allah permitted you (to do so), or do you invent a lie against Allah?' And what think those who invent lies against Allah, on the Day of Resurrection?" [Soorah Yunus (10): 58-60]

The scholars said in the Tafseer of this verse,

- This verse is enough stern warning against exceeding the limits when asked about Ahkaam (rulings), and
- This verse is enough reason for (establishing) the obligation of being cautious concerning Ahkaam (rulings), and not saying anything concerning anything that - this is permissible, and that is not permissible - unless after (he has understood the issue with) accuracy and surety.

He, who is not accurate, should fear Allah and keep silent, otherwise, he is a liar upon Allah, and this (verse) is a stern warning,

"Has Allah permitted you (to do so),
or do you invent a lie against Allah?"

[Soorah Yunus (10): 58-60]

This necessitates fear from indulging in giving Fatwa concerning everything one is asked about. And there are many other verses (in this regard).

As for the Ahadeeth (in this regard), there are sayings of Allah's Messenger ﷺ that are reported by Imam al-Bukharee and Imam Muslim and others.

The narration of Abdullah ibn Umaro ibn al-Aas ؓ,

"Allah does not take away the knowledge, by taking it away from (the hearts of) the people, but takes it away by the death of the religious learned men till when none of them remains, people will (then) take as their leaders; ignorant persons, who when consulted will give their verdict without knowledge. So they will go astray and will lead the people astray."

[Saheeh al-Bukharee (book.3, no. 100)]

And the saying of Allah's Messenger,

"Whoever gives a fatwa without knowledge, the sin will be on the one who gives the Fatwa." [Abu Dawood]

2. The Da'ee must know the Akhlaaq (praiseworthy manners) of a Da'ee.

One should discipline himself with the desired manners, i.e., the manners of Allah's Messenger ﷺ in Dawah, and the manners of the Sahabah.

Some of the greatest manners (of Allah's Messenger and the Sahabah) are; Ikhlas, Sabr (patience), knowing the truth, good etiquettes, politeness in speaking with the people, flexible/complaisant behavior, humbleness and (being a) good example.

So, the manners, which numerous people of knowledge have cited, are from amongst the priorities of the Dae'e's discipline, because he who does not possess (good) manners, then his knowledge will not be correct knowledge! - He who does not have patience, endurance, compliance, deliberation or prudence – how can he be a Da'ee?

3. The Da'ee must have Prudence in handling the affairs of the people.

Affairs of the people differ, and their behaviors and lifestyles are diverse - but a Da'ee's academic discipline causes him to not neglect the skill of appropriately interacting with the people.

Ilm alone cannot be the cure to disagreements and issues which arise during Dawah, etc. There are many who are known for their beneficial Ilm, but they do not have the manners/morals of a Da'ee, or the proficiency of a Da'ee which causes them to be discipline his Dawah and Ilm based upon Usool.

Dawah with Ilm and Akhlaq, without proficiency to interact with the people instigates various undesired issues in Dawah. Therefore, the Da'ee who is upon the Manhaj of as-Salaf as-Saleh should have Ilm, Akhlaaq and Baseerah (insight) of **how to convey his Dawah**.

Verily, the correctness of the Salafi Dawah and the perfection of the Manhaj of its bearers has been damaged in many places due to lack of Akhlaaq of its bearers – It is wiped out due to this!

Therefore, if we want to establish our Dawah and the Dawah of Islam upon the Manhaj of as-Salaf as-Saleh, then consideration must be given to academic discipline based upon these three:

- Ample Knowledge about the fundamentals and principles. this is important and it is the Asl (foundation).
- Akhlaaq (manners, morals of an ideal Da'ee).
- Proficiency of a Da'ee - i.e., know-how to deal and interact with the people.

Callers to Jamaa'ah (unity) and to abandonment of disunity

From the distinguishing traits of as-Salaf as-Saleh in Dawah is that they were callers to Jama'ah (unity) and to elimination of sectarianism.

So, they would implement every means of uniting the people, and they would keep away from every cause of disunity - And therefore, their Dawah was to Sunnah and to Tawheed, adherence to Ilm and actions – this was their call to unity – because the (true) unity is the unity of the Deen.

There are two (kinds of) Jama'ahs (unity):

- Religious Unity:
- Material Unity, i.e., unity for worldly interest.

Unity of the people in their Deen is a means to their unity in the world, and therefore, it was a distinguishing trait of the Manhaj of as-Salaf as-Saleh in Dawah that they were callers to unity (in Deen), and to abandonment of disunity (in the Deen).

(Establishing) Jamaa'ah and eradicating sectarianism has to be in two ranks:

1. First of all, (there should be unity) in the greatest issue – i.e., in the Deen. There should be no differences/divisions in it.

"He (Allah) has ordained for you the same religion (Islam) which He ordained for Nooh, and that which We have inspired in you (O Muhammad), and that which We ordained for Ibraheem, Moosa and Eesa saying **you should establish religion** (i.e. to do what it orders you to do practically), **and make no divisions in it** (religion) (i.e. various sects in religion)." [Soorah ash-Shura (42): 13]

So, establishing the Deen and absence of divisions in the Deen – this is the call to Jamaa'ah (unity) and the call to abandonment of sectarianism.

2. Secondly, (there should be) unity upon the one who is obeyed and has the authority – i.e., the ruler, who is given the oath of allegiance.

Unity upon the ruler is obligatory, and from the distinguishing traits of the Manhaj of as-Salaf as-Saleh, which is why they criticized al-Khawaarij and sects of Mu'tazilah, al-Karamiah, Shiah, others like them because they call for Khurooj (revolting) against the rightful rulers and those who are given the Sharee'ah Oath of Allegiance.

It is not from the Deen, the Quran and the Sunnah and not from the way of as-Salaf as-Saleh, that there be two Bay'ah (oaths of allegiance) in a land of Islam: i.e., one oath for obedience to the state, and another oath for Jamaa'ah or oath for Dawah, or oath for Sulook, or oath for Tareekah.

There is only one Bay'ah - and every Bay'ah which is against the known Bay'ah – i.e., the Bay'ah of obedience to the leader of the Muslims and the one in authority of their affairs – is incorrect.

So, for a group to call for Bay'ah to its leader, or its Imaam, or one of their Shaikhs, or to a Shaikh of Tareeqah, etc., is incorrect because there is no Daleel for it. Having more than one Bay'ah is opposing that which the Daleel has established, and the Manhaj of as-Salaf as-Saleh – which dictate that the Bay'ah is to be one, and not many. There weren't many Bay'ahs in the Manhaj of as-Salaf as-Saleh.

Moreover, anything of this sort will lead to sectarianism and differences, and forsaking the way of as-Salaf as-Saleh.

Moderation

(al-wasatiyyah and al-a'tidal)*

Al-Wasatiyyah and al-l'tidaal mean to uphold the issues between two extremes.

As-Salaf as-Saleh were

- not with the people of Ghulu (extremism) in their Ghulu, and
- not with the people of Jafaa (negligence, turning away) in their Jafaa.

- they were not with the people of Ghulu in Dawah, actions or Ilm, and
- they were not with the people of Jafaa in Dawah, action or Ilm.

Verily, they are between the two – just like they are moderate in Tawheed of Allah and in His Sifaat and in Sunnah, and in Sulook.

Similarly, they are moderate in the Manhaj of Dawah, and **this is what makes their Dawah capable of spreading and surviving.**

We have known, through experience that every Dawah which transgressed the Manhaj of as-Salaf as-Saleh due to any form of extremism, then Allah has not inscribed survival for it. Verily, Allah has ordained survival for the Dawah which is upon the Manhaj of as-Salaf as-Saleh.

And therefore, if you look into the books of the sects – and how numerous they are! You will find that many sects originated and vanished, but Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah survived, and it has (always) prevailed over the sects, and it will remain until the Hour is established, as Allah's Messenger ﷺ said in the Saheeh Hadeeth,

"The Jews split into seventy one sects, and the Christians split into seventy two sects. This ummah (nation) will split into seventy three sects, all of whom will be in the Fire apart from one."

[See, Musnad Ahmed,
Sunan Abu Dawood and at-Tirmidhee]

9th Distinctive Trait of the Salafi Manhaj in Dawah

Salafi Manhaj is founded upon the fundamentals derived from the Sharee'ah texts*

Salafi Manhaj in Dawah is a Manhaj which is based upon the Sharee'ah texts, and the fundamentals derived from the texts and from the sayings of the people of knowledge.

The Salafi Manhaj has fundamentals which govern the features/characteristics of its Dawah.

The proofs are given priority, and the general fundamentals are given priority because there has to be control in Dawah, otherwise, endeavors will be divided. (Only) if there is returning back to the Daleel and to the fundamentals, then the Dawah will be a mutual (effort).

Explaining the fundamental,

'Considering the wider MaslaHa (interest of the ummah),
and giving it priority **over the restricted MaslaHa.'**
(i.e., restricted, limited, particular interest).'

Wider general Masaaleh (sing. MaslaHa) are important. So, if a Manhaj arises which seeks to give priority to restricted MaslaHa over general MaslaHa of the ummah, then this will cause split in the Manhaj - making a sect in the ummah.

Therefore, as-Salaf as-Saleh gave preference to the vital MaslaHa of the ummah, and left the trivial Khaas MaslaHa - even if it were Masaaleh (sing. MaslaHa) related to the Dae'e's person or some other issues. They would leave MaslaHa of the Dunya to achieve the general MaslaHa (of the ummah). And this is something which the people of knowledge are capable of.

Explaining the Fundamental,

'Blocking the Means (that lead to evil)'

Times vary and the people vary, therefore, Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz (rahimahullah) said,

"Rulings are derived for people
in accordance with the sins they originate."

Meaning the scholar derives a new ruling based upon his Ijtihad because the people originate a sin in their lives – for, example, (the scholars) have derived the fundamental of,

'(سَدُّ الذَّرَائِعِ) Blocking the Means (that lead to evil)'

(الذَّرَائِعِ) is the plural of (ذَرِيعَةٌ). In the Sharee'ah, it refers to every means and way that leads to something else, but in the fundamentals, 'Dharaa'eh' (الذَّرَائِعِ) is a title given to those **means which are prohibited in the religion.**

There are two fundamentals which are put into practice:

1. First Qaaidah (قاعدة) (fundamental):

- If a prescribed act cannot be carried out except through the means, then this means is a prescribed means.
- If the act is Wajib (obligatory), and it cannot be carried out except through this means, then the means is Wajib (obligatory).
- If a Mustahab (recommended) act cannot be carried out except through this means, then the means is Mustahabb.

Because the ruling concerning the means is in accordance with the ruling of the goal (i.e., the act which is to be accomplished through the means).

2. Second Fundamental: (سُدُّ الذَّرَائِعِ) Blocking the means.

It is known that the means, according to the people of Usool and Qawaaid, are of three kinds:

First Kind: Means concerning which the scholars are unanimous that they **should not be blocked**, like growing grapes, selling knives and selling devices of radiation.

Do we say, we forbid grapes so that people do not consume wine?

- The scholars are unanimous that it is not allowed to block this means, because it is not confirmed (that the buyer will use the grapes for this particular purpose) and it is not a common (practice).

Do we say we forbid selling knives so that the people do not kill with knives?

- The scholars are unanimous that this means is not to be blocked.

Similarly, we do not say that we do not dig the earth so that no one can come and commit suicide.

- The scholars are unanimous that this should not be blocked/prohibited.

- And there are many examples of this.

Putting this Qaaidah of 'Blocking the means' into practice in Dawah should be as much as is required. We do not say we forbid these means, because sometimes, some means are not forbidden due to the general need for it.

Second Kind: Means, concerning which the scholars are unanimous that they **should be blocked**. Example of this kind are; being alone with a non-mahram woman, a woman's displaying her beauty and adornment before a non-mahram man, and there are many examples of this kind.

Third Kind: Means, concerning which the scholars have **differed whether they should be blocked or not?**

Such issues of disagreement come up frequently in the field of Dawah, like some issues which are talked about, or brought up by some Duaat (sing. Da'ee), like some acts of Dawah like - camping.

Some people say. "This (camping) is a means to the ways of Soofis, or something similar to it." While others say, "No, this is a beneficial means."

So, if there is a difference of opinion whether these means should be blocked or not in Dawah, then these issues should be referred to the people of knowledge in order to achieve a Ijtihad based upon the Quran and the Sunnah and the sayings of as-Salaf as-Saleh. And then if the established people of knowledge differ, then there is room (for differing) in the issue.

10th Distinctive Trait of the Salafi Manhaj in Dawah

A Da'ee should spread Optimism*

People need understanding and Targheeb (encouragement to do good), more than Taqneet (giving up hope/despair) and Tarheeb (being terrified) – meaning, Dawah should be dependant upon propagating good portents and encouragement – so that hearts are at ease. Therefore, Aisha (radhi allahu anha) said to Ubayd ibn Umayr,

"O Ubayd, if you address the people, be brief (in your talk), because, too much talk causes one to forget some of it.

And beware of causing boredom to the people,
and inflicting despair."

So, extremism in Tarheeb - such that will cause the people to be psychologically (despaired and) think that they are destroyed and that there is no escape – is not the way of as-Salaf as-Saleh.

Extremism in pessimism and mentioning negative incidents – this is not what the wisdom of the scholars demand. The Prophet ﷺ used to love the good Fa'l and he hated Tiyyarah (belief in evil omens).

[See, Saheeh al-Bukharee (5776) and Saheeh Muslim (2224)]

What is Fa'l?

It is a good word that is heard.

Therefore, the Da'ee in his talks, and the Khateeb in his sermons should stick to spreading Fa'l amongst the people, and reduce grief, and he should decrease (addressing them with) Tarheeb which causes panic – Tarheeb should be only as much as is required.

In the Quran, therefore, you find that Paradise is described more than Hell-Fire, and Targheeb is more than Tarheeb.

This brings us to the means or one of the ways, which is implemented by some of the modern Duaat (sing. Da'ee) – and this is a Munkar (forbidden) way - It is to spread hopelessness about the state of Islam and the condition of its people.

So, there comes up a khateeb or an Imaam, a Da'ee, a preacher or a teacher and talks about the situation of the Deen of the Muslims, political situation, and situation of the Muslims in such a way that he disheartens the people, and spreads despair and hopelessness amongst them. And he does not guide them to any escape or way (of returning) to Allah, and re-establishing the honor of the Deen, whereas the Prophet ﷺ said,

"Islam began as something strange and will revert to being strange as it began, so give glad tidings to the Ghuraba (strangers)." [Saheeh Muslim]

The Ghuraba are those who make Islaah (rectification).

The scholars said in the explanation of this Hadeeth that this is like how Islam was strange (for the people) in the beginning of the Message, and then it gained strength and spread – similarly, it will become strange (for the people), then it will gain strength and spread – **this gives you hope, and good opinion about Allah** and this is a confirmation of the Saying of Allah,

"He, it is Who, has sent His Messenger (Muhammad) with guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it (Islam) superior over all religions. And All-Sufficient is Allah as a Witness." [Soorah al-Fath (48): 28]

Who is giving the witness? – Allah, the Glorified.

So, if the people are corrupted, or are faced with grievous instances – in their Deen, in their desires, in their situations, in their lands and country, etc. **It is not permissible to tread the way of despair and hopelessness in Dawah. And this includes, mentioning the plots of the enemies of Islam and their conspiracies - and exaggeration in them.**

This is against the Legislative Commands of Allah, and it is also against the Universal Command of Allah, because the affairs are neither by the ability of man, nor due to weaponry or state of affairs – affairs can change in a day or a night – by His Saying, 'Be, and it is.'

You know, the world is crouching on the gruesome economic power, especially the West which owns so much that if calculated, the number would not be known by most.

But only in about three days, the whole world began to suffer from a great economic setback, stagnation, recession and losses. And bulk of the wealth was gone, companies went broke, rather countries were bankrupt... etc.

So, looking solely at the affairs of the mankind with admiration is exaggeration, and (even) looking at it with despair is exaggeration - as is done by some Du'aat (sing. Da'ee) and Khutaba (sing. Khateeb). This is not according to the Manhaj of as-Salaf as-Saleh.

Moderation is obligatory in these issues, exaggeration towards any side is blameworthy, and the most beloved acts to Allah are those that are moderate.

Refuting the doubts (that are raised) in the Deen*

From the distinguishing characteristic of as-Salaf as-Saleh is that they ensured refuting the doubts (raised) in Deen.

It is not from the Manhaj of as-Salaf as-Saleh to keep silent about (the mistakes, deviations of) someone who affiliates with them - because defending the religion, the faith, the religious community, the truth, and the Book and the Sunnah, is more important than patronage towards a particular person.

So, there is no partiality/favoritism, going along with or flattery/adulation for someone who has deviated from the Manhaj. And therefore, it was from the traits of as-Salaf as-Saleh that they carried out knowledge-based refutation of the opponents in Aqeedah, those who oppose adherence to the Jamaa'ah - to the extent that Imam Ahmad said to a man, 'Go away. You are a deviated person', due to his opposition to the Jamaa'ah.

But this does not mean creating groups or exaggeration in it - such that the Muslims are disunited.

Guarding the Tongue from slandering the scholars

The final distinguishing trait which is required from those following the Dawah Manhaj of as-Salaf as-Saleh, and which is proven from the Daleel from the Quran and the Sunnah is that they possess the distinctive trait of guarding their tongues and their hearts from slandering the people of knowledge and the people of Deen, and similarly, they protect their hearts from any dislike for them or their standing.

And this is from a Daee's priorities for success in his Dawah. He who possesses a slandering tongue, then Allah causes him to be defamed/insulted by the people.

He who holds rage for the believers, or for some believers, then his Dawah neither generates a good impact nor does it produce response. Therefore, as-Salaf as-Saleh did not consider themselves superior to the people when they made Dawah.

Al-Hasan al-Basree (rahimahullah) said, 'I have not met anyone except that I considered him to be better than me.'
... therefore, it is from the characteristics a Da'ee – and such were the Salaf – that they accepted the truth from whomsoever it came, and they were lenient towards their brothers, and they did not busy themselves in their gatherings with slandering so-and-so.

These things (i.e., explaining the faults of someone) are to be done when necessary – **but for this attitude to be a Manhaj and a habit – and indulging in exposing the people and saying, 'so-and-so is criticized for such-and-such, or praised for such-and-such' – this is against the way of as-Salaf as-Saleh** – therefore, guarding the tongue and guarding the heart is from the characteristics of the Da'ee upon the Manhaj (of the Salaf).

O Allah, we ask You that You decree good for us,
You guide us to that which pleases You,
You show us the path to Jannah,
You protect us and shield us from the ways to Fire –
Verily, You have Power over everything.

O Allah guide those who are in authority over us,
to that which You love and is Pleased with.
And make us and them help one another to al-Birr and Taqwa.

We seek refuge in You,
from deviation after guidance,
from deficiency after perfection.

O Allah, save us –
Verily, You have Power over everything.
All praise is for Allah,
and may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet.