



# Who are the Salaf? Understanding the Origins and Use of the Term ﴿سالاف﴾

## Description

Bismillahi Wal Hamdullillah Was Salaatu Was Salaamu â████ Alaa Rasoolillahi  
Ammaa Baâ████ d:

## **The term $\hat{\alpha}\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}$ Salafâ $\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}$ and its usage**

For the one who is familiar with the classical works of the Imaams of this Ummah the term **âl Salafâ** may not be a new entity. It is, unfortunately, new to those who do not have that familiarity, so we mention here a small portion of the usage of the term in the Book, the Sunnah and within the various sources of the deen, that it may become clear that it is nothing new, and that the only new affair, is ignorance of it.

# âم Salafâم in the Qurâم aan

## **The term being used in reference to a past affair**

Allah the most high states:

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â• Do not marry the women your fathers have married except that which has â•  
Salafâ• (past)  
(Suratul Nisaa Vs 22)

â•“ Whoever come to them an admonition from their lord (concerning Interest) and desists) then to him is what has â•“ Salafâ•“ (past) and his affair is with Allah (Suratul Baqarah Vs 275)

## **The term being used in relation to a group of people**

â€œ So we made them a â€œ Salafâ€œ (precedent) and an example to later generationsâ€œ

(Suratuz Zukhruf Vs 56)

# Salaf in the Sunnah

No doubt from the clearest of the texts of the sunnah mentioning the term salaf is an authentic hadeeth wherein the prophet ﷺ Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam ﷺ referred to himself as a blessed salaf for his daughter and ﷺ it follows ﷺ the rest of the Ummah in general

The messenger ﷺ Sallallahu alaihi was Sallam while he was ill prior to him passing away, Fatimah His daughter ﷺ Radhiyallahu anhahaa ﷺ came to his bedside and the messenger of Allah whispered to her twice. When he did so in the first instance she began to weep, then when he whispered on the second occasion she began to laugh. Aisha ﷺ Radhiyallahu anhahaa asked her about that and Fatima refused to divulge the secret that messenger gave to her that brought about this weeping and laughter. After the death of the messenger ﷺ Sallallahu alaihi Was Salam she informed her that now I will inform you so she said:

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The messenger ﷺ Sallallahu alaihi wa Salam ﷺ said: Indeed Jibreel used to listen to my recitation of the Qurâaan once a year, and he has now (i.e. this year) done so twice, and i do not see except that my appointed time is close, so fear Allah and be patient for indeed I am a blessed ﷺ salafâ (Predecessor) for you ﷺ

(Collected by Bukhaari (5928) and Muslim (2450))

She explained to her that this was what caused her to weep in the first instance and that the Messenger ﷺ Sallallahu Alaihi was Salam then informed her that she would be the leader of the female believers or the leader of women of this Ummah, and so she laughed.

Thus here we see the Messenger referring to himself as a ﴿ سالفٌ ﴾ thus just as one refers to himself as ﴿ سُنِّي ﴾ (follower of the Sunnah) the muslim likewise refers to himself as ﴿ سَالِفٌ ﴾ (follower of the Salaf) and what a blessed ascription!

## Examples of early scholars referring to other scholars as being âم Salafiâم

Indeed those familiar with the statements and writings of the people of knowledge past and present will know that they find no problem using this term in praise of scholars who proceeded them. The following are some examples of this:

## 1. Muhammad Ibn Khalaf Ibn Hayyaan (died 306H)

He mentions in his book *Akhbaarul Qudhaahâ* P.342:

â€œ And they say that Ismaâ€â€œ eel Ibn Hamaad Ibn Abi Haneefah was a true Salafîâ€ |â€œ

the statement "And they say" indicates that it was being used by scholars before his time.

## 2. Umar Ibn Abdil Azeez ibn Abi Jaraadah (died 660H)

He mentions in his book âمâa Bughyatut Talab fee taareekhi Halabâمâa (10/4565) narrating from his shaikh Ibnil Hanbali concerning the biography of Abil Fath Ar Roohaawi:

âمâa *He was a good shaikh, a man of religion and worship, one upon the way of Imaam Ash Shaafie and a âمâa Salafiâمâa !âمâa*

3.Imaamudh Dhahabee (Died 748H) mentions this in praise of a number of scholars in a number of his books, from that:

His book âمâa Tadhkiratul Hufaadhâمâa 4/149:

### **Under the biography of Imaam Ibn Salaah (4/149):**

âمâa *He was a âمâa Salafiâمâa having good sound belief..âمâa*

In his book Siyar Aâمâa Iaamin Nubalaah:

### **He mentions under the biography of Imaamul Fasawi (13/183):**

âمâa *I do not know that Yaâمâa qoob al Fasawi was anything but âمâa Salafiâمâa , he authored a small book concerning the Sunnah (meaning here belief)âمâa*

### **Under the biography of Uthmaan Ibn Khurrazaadh (13/380):**

âمâa *that which a haafidh needs to be God fearing, Intelligent, a grammarian, a linguist, one who purifies his own soul, one who is modest, (and) a âمâa Salafiâمâa âمâa !!*

### **Under the biography of Al Imaamud Daaraqtini (16/457)**

He mentions concerning him: âمâa ..*The man never entered into theoretical speech nor argumentation neither did he delve into that, rather he was a âمâa Salafiâمâa*

### **He mentions concerning Ibnil Majd (23/118):**

âمâa *He wrote much, he collected and authored, he excelled in (the knowledge of) Hadeeth, He was Thiqqah (trustworthy) strong, Intelligent, A âمâa Salafiâمâa , Pious..âمâa*

### **Al Haafidh Ibn Hajar (852H) mentions in Lisaanul Meezaan (5/348) concerning Imaam Muhammad ibnil Qaasim Ibn Sufyaan:**

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â€œ ..He has (authored) an Ahkaamil Qurâ€œ aan, (a book concerning the virtues of Imaam Maalik, and he also narrates from him and (A book concerning) the rites (of Hajj), (a book concerning weak positions in jurisprudence and other than that and he was â€œ salafiâ€œ in Madhhab..â€œ

**Imaamus Suyooti (911H) mentions under the biography of Imaam In Salaah in â€œ Tabaqaatul Hufaadh P503:**

â€œ he was from the great scholars of the deen one of the noble ones in his era, in Tafseer, and hadeeth , Fiqh and he contributed to many sciences, he was very well versed in the fundamentals of the religion and its subsidiary affairs, he is used as a (noble) example, he was â€œ Salafiâ€œ , Abstained from the dunya, of sound aqeedah and possessed many excellent traitsâ€œ |â€œ

**The usage of the term â€œ Salafiyahâ€œ as a path, methodology, and body of principles in the writings of the earlier scholars**

Imaam As Safdi (764H) mention in the biography of Imaam Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad An Naysaboori the statement of Imaam Haakim (the author of the â€œ Mustadrakâ€œ ):

â€œ He was from the righteous, those firmly established upon the path of â€œ Salafiyahâ€œ

(Al Waafi Wal Wafayaat (2/55 Ar Risaalah print)

**Al Imaam Ibn Katheer (774H) mentions in â€œ Al Bidaayah wan Nihaayahâ€œ when speaking about Imaam Fathud deen Ibn Sayyidin Naas:**

â€œ He has â€œ Al Aqeedatus Salafeeyahâ€œ authored from ayaat (of the Qurâ€œ aan), citations, narrations and prophetic traditionsâ€œ

**Imaam Muhammad ibn Ismaâ€œ eel As Sanâ€œ aani (852H) mentions in Subulus Salaam (4/145):**

â€œ ..but this has been supported by narrations of â€œ salafeyahâ€œ from the companionsâ€œ

The statements regarding this from Shaikhul Islaam and his student Ibnil Qayyim are too numerous to mention

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As far as this coming from our contemporary scholars then I will mention one example from Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Saalih Al Uthaimeen who mentions in âمâ Ad Diyaaul Laamiâمâ Minal Khutabil Jawaamiâمâ (P170 risaalah print)

âمâ ..and this position was chosen by, from the later day scholars, our Shaikh, The Salafi, The Athari, Abu Abdillah Abdul âمâ Azeez Ibn Baazâمâ

*Thus we see the ascription to salafiyyah is not a new affair, rather that which is new is ignorance of it. Wallahul Mustâمâ aan*

*Was Sallallahu âمâ Alaa Nabiyinaa Muhammad*

*Abu Hakeem*

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