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### Who is the Salaf el Saleh?

The word Salaf is a shortened version of the word Salafus-Saalih, which means the Righteous Predecessors. It refers specifically to the first three generations of Islam. The first, the Prophet ﷺ and his Sahaabah (companions) the second, the Taabi'een (the followers of the companions). Each and every Sahabi of the Nabi was in a sense a walking encyclopedia of the Prophetic Sunnah of their Prophet. The variant differences in their experience and understanding of the Nabi's Sunnah or theirs amongst themselves were both trivial and negligible. This was generally a period of intellectual, spiritual and juridical stability because of the cohesive nature of the Companions' views and their ability to live with one another, and respect for each other's views.

The third, the Tabaa'at-Taabi'een (the followers of the followers of the companions) generally, this term refers to all those pious predecessors who followed the way of the Salaf and who have preceded us in time. In Islamic terminology it is generally used to refer to the first 3 generations of Muslims (300AH.)

Note: it is indeed unfortunate that there are Muslims today who misconstrue and - misrepresent these honourable group/s of our pious forebears only to support their own personal, political and nationalistic ideologies in the modern world today. We as students of Islam must at all times be wary of these developments or groups with ulterior motives.

## Who are the Khalaf?

Khalaf were 300-500 AH. (The latter generation)

*They were the:*

- Students of the Taboon
- Some 13 Generations after
- Salaf el Saleh

We also generally term the latter groups of pious followers... as followers of the followers of the Nabi... .. and those who will follow them through our time in good deeds and piety. "*Tabieen.. wa tabiet-Tabieen..wa tabi'e him bi ihsaanin ilaa youmid-Deen)*

Due to the expansion of Islam, Tafwid was no longer viable for the new Ummah. The scholars now approached the "*problematic expressions*" (Mutashabehaat) with new conditions. Tafwid is the safest position. Khalaf are scholars of Salaf and are doing it out of necessity.

## What was the mathhab of the Salaf?

The mathhab of the Salaf was Tafwid.

Theory of Tafwid:

- Meaning in its recitation – when one recites the Qur'an the meaning is established in the heart of the reciter
- Confirm terminology – Allah used this terminology in the Qur'an
- Meaning not literal

## What was the mathhab of the Khalaf?

The mathhab of the Khalaf was Ta'weel. (With strict conditions)

Can only be performed on Mutashabeaat (problematic expressions)

Theory of Ta'weel: (resort out of necessity)

- Confirm terminology
- Meaning is not literal
- Metaphorically – possible but not absolute certainty (only used for problematic expressions)

## What circumstances led to the development of factions?

Islam spread to other lands and non-Arab speaking Muslims were entering into Islam. Hypocrites entered into Islam to destroy Islam from within and cause confusion. There were other people entering into Islam, leaving their old beliefs and "gods and idols" behind.

There was the introduction of Greek methodology with a multitude of gods, causing confusion with their philosophies influencing their understanding of Islam.

Debates began and people started interpreting Mutashabeaat ayahs. Our Aqidah was being challenged. Muslims were now in a state of confusion, as Tafwid was no longer viable. There was a split.

To protect our Aqidah the scholars of this generation now taught their own brand. This is the beginning of the 73 factions that the Prophet ﷺ spoke about. The scholars of Khalaf debated with the 73 factions.

Explain why the Khalaf were forced to depart from the Mazhab of the Salaf el Saleh although they were their teachers and shaykhs?

They ﷺ saw that Tafweed was no longer viable for them ﷺ. It could no longer be applied with the new Ummah that was now developing.

Methoporical understanding of Ta'weel:

- Can only be performed on Mutashabeaat
- Only qualified scholars can provide us with methoporical interpretation
- It must be bound to the linguistic use of the Arabic language
- It must be based on the use of the expressions of the Arabs at the time of revelation. (It would be interpreted as at the time of the language which was in use)
  - How did the Arabs understand the expressions and understand the interpretations
- Interpretations must be within the boundaries of Aqidah
- All this said: that it is not absolute - but possible.

Were they justified in doing so? Explain and support your view.

At the same time, when the need arose, some of the early Muslim (Salaf) scholars and many of the later Muslim (Khalaf) scholars used figurative interpretation to give a meaning to such "apparently problematic" primary texts, using the sound principles of linguistic usage and textual interpretation.

They had their clear precedent in the interpretations of many of the

Companions ﷺ of the Prophet ﷺ, most notably Ibn Abbas ﷺ, who ﷺ also engaged in such interpretations when the need arose.

This is clearly found in many of the very earliest reliable Tafsirs of the Qur'an, such as Tafsir al-Tabari, and also in Imam Maturidi's own Tafsir, Ta'wilat Ahl al-Sunnah.

The later scholars engaged in figurative interpretation more than the earlier scholars because of the greater prevalence of literalist excesses and the harms these were causing to many of the believers.

Figurative interpretation doesn't entail negation of what Allah ﷻ affirmed in any way whatsoever, because this way--like the way of 'consigning the meaning to Allah ﷻ' (Tafwid)--also entails:

[1] Affirming what Allah ﷻ has affirmed, such as Istiwa' or His ﷻ Hand or Eyes.

[2] Negating what Allah ﷻ has decisively negated, which is any similitude whatsoever between the Creator ﷻ and creation--a negation that the sound intellect readily discerns, and which was affirmed by Allah's ﷻ words, "There is absolutely nothing like unto Him ﷻ." [Qur'an]

*But it differs , in that it :*

[3] affirms a meaning to these texts, using the principles of established linguistic usage and sound textual interpretation (such as "Hand" signifying power or favour, as understood from the context.)

It is very important to note that this figurative interpretation entails affirming a meaning in the sense of affirming what the text signifies.

This is not an exclusive affirmation of meaning (such that A=B, meaning that text A means B, and nothing else) the way of figurative interpretation (Ta'wil), as exercised by the mainstream Sunni scholars of the Ash`ari and Maturidi schools is an affirmation of what is understood from such expressions, and not an exclusive specification of meaning.

Thus, the way of figurative interpretation (Ta'wil), which the scholars only resorted to with the utmost of caution when there was genuine need, also entails a consignment of the ultimate meaning to Allah Most High ﷻ (Tafwid).

This is a subtle but an important matter.