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Salafism, Do You *Really* Get It?

An Actual Methodology or Merely Empty Slogans?

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Foreword

Surely the praise is for Allah. We praise Him, we ask Him for aid and we ask Him for forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evils of our souls and the misdeeds of our deeds. Whomsoever Allah guides, then he has no misguider and whomsoever Allah leaves astray, then he has no guide.

I testify that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah. He is alone, He has no partner. And I testify that Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and His messenger.

(O those who believed, be godly to Allah with His godliness's right and do not die except as Muslims) (3:102).

(O people, be godly to your Lord who created you from a single soul, and created from it its mate, and from them both sent forth many men and women. And be godly to Allah who you ask of, and [to the relations of] the wombs. Surely Allah is a watcher over you) (4:1).

(O those who believed, be godly to Allah and say a straight word. ! He will rectify your deeds for you and forgive your sins for you. And whoever obeys Allah and His messenger has achieved a tremendous achievement) (33:70-71).

As for what follows, then the truest speech is the speech of Allah, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad ﷺ. The vilest of affairs are their innovations, and every innovation is a heresy, every heresy is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the Fire.



My wife and I had a discussion not too long ago about what Salafism is. That discussion is the basis of this article. Before I get into the whole topic of Salafism, however, I first wanted to address those who regularly visit my blog to read my posts. As they're well aware, I've gone on a bit of a hiatus and haven't posted anything of real substance in quite some time, save the odd quote to remember or whatnot. I'm only mentioning what follows, because firstly, I feel I owe my regular readers a bit of an explanation for the inactivity (some have asked me what's up) and secondly, because some of the reasons behind it are related to what I want to discuss in this article. So please note that this is *not* a rant or a complaint; I'm just explaining my situation.

To sum it up in a single word, I've become jaded.¹ Those of you who regularly read my writings may have gotten a tiny sense of this in my *What's the Deal with QSS?!* article and its subsequent comments,² while a few of you who have actual contact with me, whether through the internet or in person, have probably heard me express it or at least hint at it. For those thinking that I'm going through what's been termed "salafi burnout",³ I'm not. I'm just fed up. Fed up of all the turmoil, fed up of all the bickering between Salafis (between laymen and scholars alike), fed up of all the retards. As such, I made a conscious decision to step back and take a break from translating texts, from participating on internet discussion forums, and from Islamic propagation in general. I've been preoccupying myself largely with worldly matters and living life as any

¹ For those unfamiliar with the word and its meaning, it simply means tired and unenthusiastic, fatigued, worn out, or wearied (see *Collins Gem Canadian English Dictionary*, pg. 297; and *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*, vol. 2, pg. 1207), which almost perfectly describes my current frame of mind and attitude towards everything.

² See [What's the Deal with QSS?!](#) (accessed August 26, 2009).

³ "Salafi burnout" is a term that has gained increased usage on the internet in recent times. It refers to a phenomenon experienced by some where one's "initial enthusiasm [for Salafism] loses steam some seven to ten years [after first embracing it]" (*Islamic Spirituality: the forgotten revolution*, Abdal-Hakim Murad). The outcomes for each "burnout" will vary, but most end up renouncing Salafism to a large extent (if not completely), and in some severe cases, renouncing Islam altogether; and refuge is sought with Allah.

normal mundane person would. Being that I've been a bit of a loner my entire life, I've been restricting myself to only showing my face at Friday sermons, QSSC's occasional functions; not really much else.

With that said, let's get back to the topic. As I mentioned at the beginning, my wife and I recently had a discussion about what Salafism is. This discussion was prompted by certain things that came up in some of her recent talks and conversations with friends and acquaintances. I asked her, "What is Salafism?" She gave me a pretty textbook answer: "Following the Qur'an and Sunnah according to the understanding of the Righteous Predecessors." Ask any claimant to Salafism what it is and you're almost guaranteed to get this response. But what does it mean? Do they really understand its implications? Do they *really* get it? I then asked her, "Yes. But *what* is it?" She wasn't quite sure what I meant by the question, so I asked, "Is it a body of scholarly opinions (madh-hab)?" She replied, "No, it's a methodology (manhaj)." Another pretty textbook response that most claimants to Salafism would give. But again, what does it mean? Do they understand its implications? Do they *really* get it?

Before accepting Islam, I don't recall hearing the term methodology very much (if ever), let alone using it at all. It was a word and term I was introduced to after accepting Islam. Very early on in learning about Salafism I was like many others, simply parroting what I was told, giving the same textbook answers. I never really thought about what they mean or how they relate to Salafism, never really knew what implications they *really* held. That all changed with the turmoil surrounding a particular infamous (but ironically, largely unknown) Egyptian scholar residing in a small Yemeni town called Ma'rib: Shaikh Muṣṭafâ bin Ismâ'îl as-Sulaimânî, known by most only as Abul-Ḥasan al-Ma'ribî. It was this controversy surrounding this *one* seemingly insignificant scholar, a man who's earned my utmost respect and admiration, that opened my eyes to Salafism, what it means, what it's all about, what it *is*. It opened my eyes to the many misconceptions I had about Salafism, about what makes somebody salafî and what makes someone not salafî. More importantly, it opened my eyes to how retarded we were and how retarded many people unfortunately continue to be.⁴

In any case, our discussion turned towards the linguistic meaning of the word manhaj (both the meaning of the Arabic word and the meaning of its common English translation) and other similar terms we commonly use in our Islamic vocabulary, particularly the terms sunnah (), madh-hab (), and shari'ah (). We did this not only to gain a broader understanding of the words themselves, but also to see how they relate to each other and what they really refer to.

First, the word sunnah: the word sunnah is derived from the verb sanna () meaning to sharpen, whet, hone, or grind something. It can mean to mold, shape, form or to prescribe, introduce, enact or establish (as in a law or custom),⁵ which is how it is used in Islamic terminology. It is said that the word sunnah refers to a way, a path or a mode of conduct.⁶ Thus, it

⁴ See [After All That's Gone On ...](#) and [There is Sufficiency For You In Those Who Come](#) (both accessed August 26, 2009).

⁵ See *Hans Wehr: A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (4th ed.), pg. 505.

⁶ See Ibn al-Athîr's *an-Nihâyah fî Gharîb al-Ḥadîth* (Dâr Ibn al-Jawzî), pg. 449.

refers to a habitual practice, a customary procedure or action, something that is a norm or sanctioned by tradition.

Second, the word madh·hab: the word madh·hab is derived from the verb dhahaba () meaning “he went” or “to go”. Linguistically, a madh·hab is a way or path taken or a manner adopted by someone. It can also refer to an opinion, a view, or a doctrine that someone has taken or arrived at,⁷ which is how it is used in Islamic terminology. Thus, the word madh·hab commonly refers to what is known as a school of thought, or more accurately, a body of scholarly opinions, usually attributed to a particular scholar and his students or followers, derived using the principles formulated by said scholar, students or followers.

Third, the word shari’ah: the word shari’ah is derived from the verb shara'a (), which also means “he went” or “to go”, to enter something. It can also mean to introduce, enact, prescribe or legislate. Linguistically, the word shari’ah refers to a watering hole or a drinking place. It can also refer to an approach to a watering hole;⁸ the word shâr' () means street or thoroughfare.⁹ In Islamic terminology, the word refers to divine law revealed by Allah as found and derived from the sacred texts: the Qur'an and the Sunnah. While the word refers to the body of laws found in the source texts themselves, anyone who reflects on how Islamic law works will see that the word refers moreso to the sources of Islamic law and the framework it provides than the actual laws themselves; this makes perfect sense when you take the word’s linguistic meaning into consideration.

Lastly, the word manhaj: the word manhaj is derived from the verb nahaja () meaning to proceed, to act, to take a route or course, to follow or pursue a way or a road. The word nahj () means a well-trodden path or trail, a street. A manhaj (also pronounced minhaj) likewise is a well-trodden path or trail. It refers to a manner, procedure, method, or a program¹⁰ and is commonly translated as methodology. The *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary* defines methodology as “a body of methods, procedures, working concepts, rules and postulates employed by a science, art, or discipline.” It also defines it as “the processes, techniques, or approaches employed in the solution of a problem or in doing something; a particular procedure or set of procedures.”¹¹

Looking at the meanings of all of these words, it’s easy to see the similarities between them (particularly with all of them sharing in the meaning of a way, a path, or a road) and how they relate to each other. Despite the similarities, however, each word carries its own significance; a significance that many usually seem to overlook or ignore, and in some cases be completely oblivious of. With the word shari’ah, we have the source of our religion and the framework in which the laws, rulings, and opinions we formulate from those sources, fit—the watering hole from which we quench our thirst for religious knowledge; with the word madh·hab, we have the actual laws, rulings and opinions themselves—the destination we arrive at after our

⁷ See *Hans Wehr: A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (4th ed.), pg. 362.

⁸ *ibid.*, pg. 544.

⁹ *ibid.*, pg. 505.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, pg. 1175.

¹¹ methodology. Merriam-Webster Editorial Staff. *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*. G. & C. Merriam Co., 1971. vol. 2, pg. 1423.

journey and quest; and with the word *manhaj*, we have the methods and procedures used to deduce and arrive at our conclusions—the road or path we took to get there. They are all synonyms of one another and all refer to pretty much the same thing: *Islam*.

This leads me back to the question asked earlier: What *is* Salafism? It's a methodology, a body of rules, principles, methods, procedures used to make sense of the source texts and derive opinions and positions from them; a framework. As Shaikh 'Alî bin Ḥasan al-Ḥalabî mentions,

[it] includes creed, includes [acts of] worship, includes how you comprehend [things], and includes how you face the people of heresies. [It] is comprehensive: the People of the Sunnah's methodology in creed, their methodology in [acts of] worship, their methodology in their acquisition [of knowledge], their methodology in this, and their methodology in that ...¹²

It's a way, a path, a road one takes to gain understanding of Allah's book, of the Prophet's traditions. It's a mindset and an outlook towards the religion, its texts, towards your relationships with Allah, with your family, with your brothers and sisters in faith. As Shaikh Muḥammad bin Ḥusain Ya'qūb says,

We are in need, O my brothers, of utilizing this methodology in our lives—our *entire* lives. Seeking knowledge should be from the Book and the Sunnah through the Predecessors' understanding; worship should be by the Book and the Sunnah through the Predecessors' understanding; [Islamic] propagation should be for the Book and the Sunnah through the Predecessors' understanding; [our] entire lives should be by the Book and the Sunnah through the Predecessors' understanding.¹³

During the past decade, some negative trends among claimants to Salafism have become more and more prominent, particularly among those with a narrow mindset and understanding of what Salafism is all about. They have taken Salafism from being a body of methods, procedures, rules and postulates (a *manhaj*) to being a body of opinions, positions and stances (a *madh-hab*). Several years ago, Shaikh Muḥammad bin Ṣâliḥ bin 'Uthaimîn ? alluded to this fact when asked about Salafism saying that

some of those who have taken the path of Salafism in this time of ours have begun to declare all of those who differ with them to be astray, even if the truth were with them.¹⁴ They have taken it as a partisan methodology, like the methodology of the other parties that are ascribed to Islam. This is what is rebuked, and its affirmation is not possible.

¹² al-Ḥalabî, 'Alî bin Ḥasan bin 'Abdil-Ḥamid. *Manhaj as-Salaf as-Ṣâliḥ fi Tarjîḥ al-Maṣâliḥ wa Taṭwîḥ al-Mafâsid*. Amman, Jordan: ad-Dâr al-Athariyyah, 2009. pg. 138.

¹³ Ya'qūb, Muḥammad bin Ḥusain. [Haqîqah al-Manhaj](#) (Word format), pg. 8. yaqob.com (accessed August 26, 2009).

¹⁴ I.e., those they accuse of being astray.

It is said, look to the opinion of the Righteous Predecessors, what they used to do in their way and in the vastness of their chests in differing in [areas] where independent deduction was allowed; they even used to differ in large issues, in credal issues, in academic issues. You will find some of them, for example, rejecting that the Messenger ﷺ saw his Lord, while some of them say that [he did]. Some of them say, surely, that which will be weighed on the Day of Standing will be the deeds, while some of them view that the scrolls of the deed are that which will be weighed. You will see them also differing in jurisprudential issues: in marriage, in religious duties, in the waiting periods [that are part of the divorce process], in sales, and in other [issues]. Despite that, they did not declare each other to be astray.

Thus, Salafism with the meaning that it is a special party having distinguishing features, and its individuals declare others astray, then these [people] are not from Salafism in the least.¹⁵

You often hear calls from some of these people (scholars and laymen alike) to take “the correct salafī stance” with respect to certain individuals and groups they deem to be astray imposing their views upon others.¹⁶ When you think about what Salafism *is*, however, is there really only *one* correct salafī stance? Is there really only *one* possible result or outcome that a person can arrive at using the body of procedures, rules, and principles that Salafism is? If the proponents of this mentality don’t explicitly say yes, they definitely imply it. Reality, however, tells us no. The evidence is found throughout history. Just take a look at the various differences of opinions held by scholars from the People of the Sunnah in various issues, be they credal, jurisprudential, methodological, political ... you name it, and you will see just how ridiculous this notion is.

Sadly, however, the basis of people’s salafism for many of its claimants today has become all about the positions and opinions they hold, rather than the methods by which they arrive at them. Even worse, for some, one’s salafism has become merely based on who they associate with or who they benefit from with respect to Islamic knowledge. Forget about the fact that their creed (what will gain them entry into Paradise) is sound or that their methodology for the most part is in conformity to the methodology of the Righteous Predecessors. If a person is known, or in some cases, merely suspected to associate with a supposed heretic or partisan, or if a

¹⁵ *Silsilah Liqa' al-Bâb al-Maftūh*, tape 57, [side A](#) starting at the 26:50 minute mark, continuing until the 38 second mark of [side B](#). Recorded Thursday, Dhul-Qa'dah 24, 1414H.

¹⁶ In recent times, well respected scholars like Shaikhs 'Abdul-Muhsin al-'Abbâd and 'Abdullah bin Şâlih al-'Ubailân have made statements regarding the heresy of testing individuals on the basis of the positions and opinions they have and warned people from the dangers and impermissibility of imposing one’s position or opinion upon others. See [Gentleness, O People of the Sunnah, with the People of the Sunnah](#) and [Shaikh al-'Ubailân On Testing People & Imposing Opinions On Them](#) (both accessed August 26, 2009).

person takes knowledge and benefit from a supposed heretic or partisan scholar, this person's salafism is automatically in doubt, or even worse, completely nullified.¹⁷

This restricted and restrictive approach of theirs is usually justified by the pretext that these supposed heretics or partisans have “serious mistakes”, whether they be credal or methodological, and you will often hear them citing the well known statement from Muḥammad bin Sîrîn ?, “Surely, this knowledge is a religion. So look to whom you take your religion from.”¹⁸ It's reached the point where you find these people producing lists¹⁹ of scholars, speakers, groups, and even websites where benefit can be taken from and even *longer* lists of scholars, speakers, groups, and websites to avoid. Contrast this restricted mindset to statements from our scholars, such as Imam Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, who when asked about certain individuals would say things like, “He used to hold the [heretic] view of [Qadarism], but was reliable in Ḥadīth.”²⁰ In Shaikh 'Abdul-Muḥsin al-'Abbād's advice, *Rifqan Ahl as-Sunnah bi Ahl as-Sunnah*, he mentions that

Shaikh Muḥammad bin Sulaimân al-Ashqar had erred slanderously in the derogation of the companion Abî Bakrah ؓ and his narrations, and [in] his²¹ concern with the issue of the woman's guardianship and in her sharing in the appointment [as guardian] of others. I refuted him in a treatise titled, *ad-Difâ' 'an aṣ-Ṣaḥâbî Abî Bakrah wa Marwiyâtih wal-Istidlâl li Man' Wilâyah an-Nisâ' 'alâr-Rijâl*,²² and when I cautioned against his repugnant slip I did not caution against his beneficial writings; among the men of the two *Ṣaḥîhs*, as well as other [books], are narrators described with heresy whose narrations were accepted²³ despite the People of Knowledge's notification of those heresies in order to caution against them.²⁴

These narrowminded notions propagated by these people belie the well known principle of the People of the Sunnah and Congregation's of taking the truth from wherever it comes. As Shaikh of Islam Ibn Taimiyyah ? said,

¹⁷ Just glancing through some of their internet discussion forums to see the types of questions forum members ask about certain individuals and the replies these questions garner is more than enough to demonstrate this.

¹⁸ See *Silsilah al-Āthâr aṣ-Ṣaḥîḥah* by Abū 'Abdillāh ad-Dānî bin Munîr Âl Zahawî, pg. 312 for a referencing of this narration.

¹⁹ Not too unlike the lawful-unlawful foods and ingredients lists produced by some of today's Muslim groups.

²⁰ See *Masâ'il al-Imâm Aḥmad: Kitâb al-'Ilal wa Ma'rifah ar-Rijâl* (ed. Dr. Waṣî Allah bin Muḥammad 'Abbâs, Dâr al-Qabas, 2006), vol. 2, pg. 74-75, no. 1594

²¹ I.e., Shaikh Muḥammad bin Sulaimân al-Ashqar's.

²² I.e., *Defending the Companion Abî Bakrah and His Narrations, and Evidence for the Prevention of the Women's Guardianship Over Men*.

²³ See *Tadrîb ar-Râwî* by Imam as-Suyūfî (vol. 1, pgs. 229-328) for a list of literally dozens of narrators Imams al-Bukhârî and Muslim reported from who were accused of various heresies.

²⁴ al-Badr, 'Abdul-Muḥsin bin Ḥamad al-'Abbād. *Rifqan Ahl as-Sunnah bi Ahl as-Sunnah* (2nd ed., 1425H), pg. 9 (pg. 5 of the [PDF](#), pgs. 6-7 of [my translation](#) – both accessed August 26, 2009).

We do not [agree] with all of what is said by those we mention something from in this matter—and other than it—from the theological rhetoricians²⁵ or others, but the truth is accepted from everyone who speaks it.²⁶

Regardless of where or who the truth comes from, the People of the Sunnah accept it, such that even if it came from a devil, it would be accepted.²⁷ On the tape titled *al-Firqah an-Nâjiyah: Uṣūluhâ wa Wasâ'iluhâ*, rebuking those who reject the truth, Shaikh Rabî' bin Hâdî asks,

If the Messenger had accepted the truth from a Jew, why do we not accept it from a Muslim?! I mean, according to you, the Muslim became lesser than the Jew or the Christian?! Be godly to Allah, O brothers! (O those who believed, be custodians for Allah as witnesses in fairness) (5:8).²⁸

The question then arises: if someone, for the most part, uses the correct procedures and methods to look at the texts, is it possible to arrive at a view or an opinion or have errors in his approach regarding certain matters that falls *outside* of the boundaries of what is acceptable according to the People of the Sunnah? If the two famous imams, Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalânî and Muḥy ad-Dîn an-Nawawî, are any indication, then yes, it is very possible. In these two examples you have two scholars widely regarded as imams from the People of the Sunnah who followed the methodology of the Predecessors, but who had errors with respects to understanding Allah's names and characteristics. Answering a question about these two imams, Shaikh Ibn 'Uthaimîn ? mentioned,

Surely, the [two] shaikhs [and] ḥâfīḍḥs, an-Nawawî and Ibn Ḥajar, both had a good effect and large benefit in the Islamic nation. Even if a mistake in the interpretation of some of the texts of [Allah's] characteristics occurred from them, it would surely be drowned in what they had of virtues and abundant benefits.

We only think that what occurred from them originated from an independent judgement,²⁹ or a permitted interpretation—even if only in their view. And I hope in Allah, exalted is He, that it is from the forgiven mistake; that what they produced of

²⁵ Ar. mutakallimūn (pl. – sing. mutakallim) – speaker, spokesperson; Muslim theologian, scholastic.

²⁶ *Manhaj as-Salaf aṣ-Ṣâliḥ fî Tarjīḥ al-Maṣâliḥ wa Taṭwīḥ al-Mafâsid*, pg. 9; quoted by Shaikh 'Alî Ḥasan from Ibn Taimiyyah's *Majmū' al-Fatâwâ*, vol. 5, pg. 101.

²⁷ See the famous story narrated by Abū Hurairah ؓ in which a devil taught him to recite verse 2:255 as a form of protection against devils (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhârî*, vol. 6, no. 5010).

²⁸ as-Sulaimânî, Abul-Ḥasan Muṣṭafâ bin Ismâ'îl. “al-Qawl al-Mufḥim li Man Ankar Maqâlah: Nuṣaḥḥih wa Lâ Nahdim.” *ad-Difâ' 'an Ahl al-Ittibâ': ar-Radd al-'Ilmî 'alash-Shaikh Rabî' bin Hâdî al-Madkhalî* (2nd ed.). Menoufia, Egypt: Dâr al-Anṣâr, 2006. vol. 1, pg. 328; quoted by Shaikh Abul-Ḥasan from Shaikh Rabî' bin Hâdî's *al-Firqah an-Nâjiyah: Uṣūluhâ wa Wasâ'iluhâ*, tape 2, side A.

²⁹ Ar. ijtihād – effort, exertion, endeavour, pains; application; independent judgement in a legal or theological question using established jurisprudential principles to derive rulings from the available texts.

good and benefit is from the thanked effort; and that Allah’s statement, exalted is He, (Surely, the good deeds truly cause the misdeeds to go away) (11:114) holds true of them.

That which is our view is that they are both from the People of the Sunnah and Congregation.³⁰

Some may ask “But what about having mistakes in one’s methodology despite coming to correct conclusions (whether they be in credal or jurisprudential matters)?” as it is a situation that differs quite a bit from having correct methodology but coming to incorrect conclusions. As Shaikh 'Alî Ḥasan al-Ḥalabî points out,

Some of the people of desires differentiate between creed and methodology for partisan and political ends. They resort to tricks against many of the Salafis saying, “You remain on your creed. We need to cooperate with one another, however, in methodology, so there is [nothing] preventing us [from] saying, “I am salafî in creed, ikhwânî³¹ in methodology.”³²

Because of this, you find some people making the claim that one cannot have a non-salafî methodology and still be salafî despite having a salafî creed. One statement that immediately comes to mind here is Shaikh Muḥammad Nâsir ad-Dîn al-Albânî’s ? famous criticism of Shaikh 'Abdur-Raḥman bin 'Abdil-Khâliq of Kuwait. He ? said,

I will now give you an example from *our Salafî brothers*. I, like you now, assert that he is not ikhwânî. His methodology, however, is ikhwânî and *he is salafî*. I do not believe except that you know him well—he is 'Abdur-Raḥman 'Abdul-Khâliq. This pupil of mine in the university used to be ikhwânî, and if the expression is correct, he was “salafized” in the university; he was from the best of the youth [whose interests were] devoted to the lessons and to the curricula.³³

Here we have Shaikh al-Albânî ? *affirming* Shaikh 'Abdur-Raḥman bin 'Abdil-Khâliq’s salafism while acknowledging his “ikhwânî” methodology. What does this mean though, and how are we

³⁰ Âl Salmân, Mash-hûr bin Ḥasan (transcribed by Abû Râfit al-Atharî). *ad-Dalâ'il al-Wafiyah fî Tahqîq 'Aqîdah al-Imâm an-Nawawî: a-Salafîyyah am Khalafîyyah?*. Amman, Jordan: ad-Dâr al-Athariyyah, 2008. pg. 13; quoted by Shaikh Mash-hûr from *Kitâb al-'Ilm*, pg. 198 and what follows it.

³¹ Referring to the partisan group al-Ikhwân al-Muslimîn, i.e., the Muslim Brothers (or the Muslim Brotherhood).

³² [a.h.] Some of them have changed deceitfully and fraudulently saying, “Salafism in creed, contemporary in position.” [r.g.] *Manhaj as-Salaf as-Ṣâliḥ fî Tarjih al-Maṣâliḥ wa Taṭwîḥ al-Mafâsid*, pg. 138.

³³ *ash-Shaikh al-Albânî: Salmân, Manhajuh Ikhwâniyyan* (a partial transcript of a recorded conversation between Shaikhs al-Albânî and Nâsir al-'Umar posted to alsaha.com, emphasis added). alsaha.com (accessed July 25, 2009). There is also a translation of this statement found on the Salafî Publications [website](http://www.salafipublications.com) (accessed July 25, 2009).

to understand Shaikh al-Albânî's words regarding Shaikh 'Abdur-Raḥman's creed and methodology? Looking at the context of Shaikh Albânî's statement about Shaikh 'Abdur-Raḥman (which isn't apparent from the short bit I've quoted here) it's quite obvious that he is referring to Shaikh 'Abdur-Raḥman's methodology in political issues and with respect to cooperating with partisan groups, not his methodology in other aspects of the religion, be they credal or jurisprudential.

The question then arises as to where to draw the line where a person's salafism is compromised to the point where he is no longer Salafî. In answering a question regarding the difference between creed and methodology, Shaikh Muḥammad bin 'Alî Farkûs explains that

creed could be sound in some of its aspects, corrupt in some of its other [aspects]. So its correct aspect is deduced by the correctness of methodology in [that aspect], and the corrupt [aspect] by the corruption of methodology in [that aspect]; similar to when one believes in the creed of the Predecessors regarding [Allah's] names and characteristics, while believing in the issues of rebellion, partisanship, and other issues. So the correctness of his creed in the Names and the Characteristics is deduced by the correctness of methodology in it, which is compliant in deduction by the Book and the Sunnah, [seeking] direction through the the Righteous Predecessors's understanding, just as the corruption of his creed in the other aspect is deduced by his leaving the Salafî methodology in it.³⁴

Much like the case with faith and disbelief where it's possible to have both exist within the same person,³⁵ with someone's methodology, or rather methodologies, a person can have both some aspects that are correct and some that are corrupt. As such, a person's salafism is based on how much of his methodology is in conformity or contradictory to the Predecessors' methodology. As Shaikh Abul-Ḥasan al-Ma'ribî mentions in his commentary on a statement issued by Shaikhs Muḥammad bin Mūsâ Naşr, Salîm bin 'Îd al-Hilâlî, 'Alî bin Ḥasan al-Ḥalabî, and Rabî' bin Hâdî al-Madkhalî,³⁶

... the Salafî methodology is a vast methodology. It contains actualization of the servitude for Allah U, it contains purification of the souls, it contains the seeking of

³⁴ Farkûs, Abû 'Abdil-Mu'iz Muḥammad 'Alî. *Majâlis Tadhkîriyyah 'alâ Masâ'il Manhajiyyah*. Cairo, Egypt: Dâr al-Imâm Aḥmad, 2005. pg. 66.

³⁵ Shaikh of Islam Ibn Taimiyyah said,

The intent here is that whoever the Messenger negated the appellation of faith or Islam from, there is no escaping that he has left some of the oligatatory [deeds] in it, even if some of them remain. Due to this, the Companions and the Predecessors used to say, "Surely, [both] faith and hypocrisy exist in the slave [at the same time]."

See Ibn Taimiyyah's discussion of this matter in his *Kitâb al-Îmân* (al-Maktab al-Islâmî, with referencing of the ḥadîths by Muḥammad Naşir ad-Dîn al-Albânî), pgs. 238-241.

³⁶ A translation of this statement can be found on SalafiTalk.net (accessed Sept. 2, 2009).

knowledge, it contains the ordering of the recognized [good] and the prohibiting of the reprehensible [things], etc. A man could be at variance with us in his judgement on a heretic person, but this man advocates the Salafî methodology from the rest of the other aspects. His expulsion from Salafism because of that is then not permissible, because the Salafî methodology is vaster than this particular aspect. ... the Salafî methodology is a methodology [that] illustrates how the People of the Sunnah deal with themselves and with their opposers from the heretics and the disbelievers; *all of that with justice and guidance, not with ignorance, oppression, and desire.*³⁷

... and on this note, I'll end here (for now).

³⁷ as-Sulaimânî, Abul-Ḥasan Muṣṭafâ bin Ismâ'îl. "at-Tibyân li Ḥaḳîqah Mâ Jâ' fil-Bayân." *ad-Difâ' 'an Ahl al-Ittibâ': ar-Radd al-'Ilmî 'alash-Shaikh Rabî' bin Hâdî al-Madkhalî* (2nd ed.). Menoufia, Egypt: Dâr al-Anṣâr, 2006. vol. 1, pg. 582 (emphasis added).