20172 - He is asking: are all the pious shaykhs Salafis?

the question

I am confused about the Islamic groups that exist. I believe that the Salafees and the Ahlul Hadeeth are the closest to the Sunnah.
Are all the Pious Scholars Salafees? .

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Yes, the closest of the groups that exist nowadays to the Sunnah are the Salafis, because their principles are based on the idea of referring all matters of religion, theoretical and practical, to the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and the consensus of the earliest generations (salaf) of this ummah, the first three generations: the generation of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), then those who followed them, then those who followed them; as well as venerating the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and the way of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs; loving those who follow the Sunnah, avoiding bid'ah and innovations in the religion of Allaah, both theoretical and practical, and condemning those who follow them; striving to cleanse people's thoughts and actions of these innovations and to bring them back to the way of life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and his companions, following his guidance and the true religion.

But… this does not mean that all the pious shaykhs are Salafis or that all the Salafis are pious and that others are not pious. No, this is not the case.

Piety (taqwa) means doing that which Allaah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) have enjoined and forsaking that which Allaah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) have forbidden. Everyone who obeys Allaah and avoids disobeying Him is following light from Allaah and is pious. Everyone who disobeys Allaah is falling short in piety to

the extent of his disobedience or sin.

If this is what piety means, then it cannot be attained simply by calling oneself a Salafi or anything else, or joining any of the groups. Rather the more one attains of the causes of piety – such as learning about Allaah and His laws and acting upon them – the greater share one will have of piety and the higher his status will be in Islam.

Because of that, we have to differentiate between the Salafi manhaj (way or methodology) which is protected from error as it is based on the sources of sharee'ah, namely the Qur'aan, Sunnah and scholarly consensus, and the individuals who claim to belong to this path. These individuals are not free of error with regard to their knowledge or actions, whether that error is a sin or even a bid'ah (innovation). Rather the person who does it is to blame for it; it is not permissible to blame the manhaj for this mistake. That leads to vilification of the Salafi manhaj on the grounds that So and so (a Salafi) made a mistake and did such and such.

There follow some examples which will explain that:

Islam is undoubtedly the religion of Allaah, and He will not accept any other. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers"

[Aal 'Imraan 3:85]

"Truly, the religion with Allaah is Islam"

[Aal 'Imraan 3:19].

This does not mean that the Muslims are infallible or that everything the Muslims do is correct. Indeed many Muslims – unfortunately – have gone against Islam and disobeyed the Sovereign, the All Knowing. Just as it is essential to differentiate between Islam and what the Muslims do, it is also essential to differentiate between the Salafi manhaj (way) and the Salafis.

And Allaah knows best.