

The



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Saudis want to destroy Mecca to build Las Vegas style casinos

Ed Miliband

We need more moderate Muslims eating bacon sandwiches

David Cameron

Calm down dear and focus on growing radicalisation instead

Quilliam Foundation

Government must put more money into tackling extremism

Tony Blair

We need to start interfering in what goes on in Saudi schools



Are You a Victim of the Labels 'Wahhabi'/'Saudi-Salafi'?

● Challenging Loaded Concepts Found in These Newfangled, Sound-Bite Buzzwords

There are non-Muslims who have the common decency to recognise the deep-seated corruption within western policy and foreign affairs yet, in spite of that, they still cannot escape the persuasive clutches of the label 'Wahhabi'. That is not to say that non-Muslims should have the precise ability to purge the term 'Wahhabi' from its

and first three generations of Islam. Even Muslims who share a common knowledge of Islam with Salafis label Salafis as 'Wahhabis'. This just drives home the insurmountable odds we face in trying to rectify the Wahhabi stigma! Let us take this a step further: even if some non-Muslims could make a direct correlation between the

because the term 'Wahhabi' can be used by some western academics as a loaded synonym for the ambiguous term 'puritan'. And this is why you frequently hear in the discourse of speakers like Adam Curtis or Alastair Crooke red-flag terminology like 'Wahhabism' and 'puritanism'. This observation further branches out to another

people (Muslims and non-Muslims) for varying and contrasting reasons. Thus, Salafis are embroiled in a smear campaign on two fronts: with Muslims who use the term 'Wahhabism' as a pejorative term to symbolise religious deviation in Islam and with non-Muslims who are motivated politically, ideologically,

INCOMPETENT

ARE YOU A VICTIM OF THE LABELS ‘WAHHABI’/‘SAUDI-SALAFI’? CHALLENGING LOADED CONCEPTS FOUND IN THESE NEWFANGLED, SOUND-BITE BUZZWORDS¹

PART TWO

NOTORIOUS NEOLOGISM # 2: ‘SAUDI-SALAFI/WAHHABI’

“The problem with smear campaigns is that too often they work.”

THE MAGNITUDE OF THE TASK AT HAND

There are non-Muslims who have the common decency to recognise the deep-seated corruption within western policy and foreign affairs yet, in spite of that, they still cannot escape the persuasive clutches of the label ‘Wahhabi’.² That is not to say that non-Muslims should have the precise ability to purge the term ‘Wahhabi’ from its impure elements, which enables a match to be made between the Islam of the Salafis and first three generations of Islam. Even Muslims who share a common knowledge of Islam with Salafis label Salafis as ‘Wahhabis’. This just drives home the insurmountable odds we face in trying to rectify the Wahhabi stigma! Let us take this a step further: even if some non-Muslims could make a direct correlation between the Salafis and early Islam, that would not stop them from labelling Salafis as ‘Wahhabis’ because the term ‘Wahhabi’ can be used by some western academics as a loaded synonym for the ambiguous term ‘puritan’. And this is why you frequently hear in the discourse of speakers like Adam Curtis or Alastair Crooke³ red-

¹ Paper compiled by Abū Amīnah AbdurRahmān Bennett.

² A good example of this can be seen in Adam Curtis’ latest documentary *Bitter Lake*. Throughout the film, Curtis resorts to using the terms “Wahhabi” and “puritanism” when referencing any Muslim group who is at odds with western policy.

³ Not only does Crooke use the term “Wahhabism” quite frequently, he also claims that Dā’ish (ISIS) have ‘strict Salafist ideology’, which more than implies that ISIS and the Salafis share core ideology. And just like the rest of the academics and political commentators who lump the Salafis with ISIS, al-Muhajiroun et al, they fail to see that even if we did share core beliefs with other Muslims (hence why we are all Muslims), that does not require that we share the same application of core beliefs. For example, two parties may share a belief in the death penalty but how they apply

flag terminology like ‘Wahhabism’ and ‘puritanism’. This observation further branches out to another important point which illustrates that the term ‘Wahhabi’ can be used by two sets of people (Muslims and non-Muslims) for varying and contrasting reasons. Thus, Salafis are embroiled in a smear campaign on two fronts: with Muslims who use the term ‘Wahhabism’ as a pejorative term to symbolise religious deviation in Islam and with non-Muslims who are motivated politically, ideologically or even academically to use it as ad hominem broad term to conflate between different Muslim groups, with the term ‘puritan’ being the mechanism that enables conflation.

Undoing the knots that exist in the term ‘Wahhabism’ is anything but a simple task due to the rapid mutations that are taking place within the term because of today’s sociopolitical climate. Arguing that Salafis are nothing more than modern-day representatives⁴ of the early practitioners of Islam is an effective and sturdy argument against Muslims who use the term ‘Wahhabism’ against their co-religionists to usher in ideas of religious deviation and innovation.⁵ However, let us not confuse this internal war being waged on one front with the other war being waged on another. As we noted, some non-Muslims⁶ (for obvious reasons) are not using the term

their shared belief may place light years between both parties. One party could argue that it is the ruling duty of the government and the other party could argue it is everyone’s civic right and consequently argue for vigilantism. Thus, association through shared beliefs does not necessitate association in implementation and application of said shared beliefs.

⁴ The term “Salafi” is to be understood in terms of adhering to Islam correctly and not in terms of the quality of the Islam that was unique to the first three generations of Islam (as-Salaf as-Sālih).

⁵ For a more detailed read on the myths surrounding ‘Wahhabism’ then the book, which is aptly named, [The Wahhabi Myth](#) is highly recommended read.

⁶ Here is a typical journalistic example of conflating between Jihadis/Khawārij and Salafis and merging both under the term ‘Wahhabi’. A journalist named Siamak Nooraei, who writes for a public service on the web called ‘openDemocracy’, published an article called ‘**Saudis and Wahhabis: a marriage between politics and piety**’. In the midst of his fictional article he states,

Although not always politically radical, their [Wahhabis] views have been interpreted to justify violence against non-Wahhabi Muslims and non-Muslims. Their worldview has played a key role in the radicalization of men and women the world over. A notable example is the late, infamous Osama Bin Laden. The Islamic State, as well, owes its ideological basis to Wahhabism. It is thus important to understand the group’s history, role in Saudi society and politics, and the existential threat it poses to the region and the world.

Then he even goes on to carry the baton of myth that has been carried now for centuries and accuses ‘Mohammad [ibn] Abd al-Wahhab’ of reintroducing *takfir*:

Named after founder Mohammad Abd Al-Wahhab, it advocated establishing a society modeled after the “earliest teachings” of Islam. Al-Wahhab opposed many practices and advocated a literalist

‘Wahhabism’ to attack the Salafis from a religious point of view; rather, they are deploying the term ‘Wahhabism’ as part of their smear campaign against Salafis. Those of a more prejudiced disposition, have a political agenda to interlink all violent extremists and ‘non-violent extremists’ through the term ‘Wahhabism’ and then subsequently argue that the pure form of Islam is itself extreme and inherently violent.⁷ This is an over-elaborate case of killing two birds with one stone:

reading of Islam. He also reintroduced the idea of takfir—labeling other Muslims as non-believers—which would thereafter be used periodically by rulers, Jihadists, and clerics to justify their own political positions.

Then he goes on to conjure up some reasons why the Wahhabis are problematic, which results in him publicly exposing himself:

Second, even though the Saudi regime has officially condemned Jihadist groups, organizations like Islamic State and al-Qaeda enjoy support amongst many Saudis. As stated before, historically, many groups—like Ikhwan—have used Wahhabism in order to achieve their political objectives. Osama bin Laden, in a sense, “was precisely the representative of a late flowering of this Ikhwani approach.” Today, groups such as the Islamic State and al-Nusra Front espouse the same puritanical beliefs held by the early Wahhabi Bedouins centuries before.

So in the first sentence, he openly admits that the Saudi regime (state) has **“officially condemned Jihadist groups, organizations like Islamic State and al-Qaeda”**, but despite this open confession we can see throughout his article desperate attempts to forge a link between militant groups, like ISIS, and the Saudi state by smearing all parties involved with the label ‘Wahhabis’. Unsuccessful in his attempts to show any real correlation, he then resigns himself to making a contingent argument through his unfounded assertion that ‘many’ Saudi citizens support **“organizations like Islamic State and al-Qaeda”**.

⁷ Nothing demonstrates this observation greater than the evangelical atheist Sam Harris, who is attempting to expand the well that he is poisoning to include most Muslims (apart from his friends at Quilliam Foundation) and ultimately, with planning permission, to include Islam itself. He states:

It is time we recognized—and obliged the Muslim world to recognize—that “Muslim extremism” is not extreme among Muslims. Mainstream Islam itself represents an extremist rejection of intellectual honesty, gender equality, secular politics and genuine pluralism. The truth about Islam is as politically incorrect as it is terrifying: Islam is all fringe and no center. In Islam, we confront a civilization with an arrested history. It is as though a portal in time has opened, and the Christians of the 14th century are pouring into our world.

Sam Harris is not your everyday secularist who is content with attacking the Muslims. Harris is a harbinger of atheism and his atheistic god requires a greater sacrifice than mere mortal souls; it requires a sacrifice of religion. He wants to see Islam fall like the Berlin wall, just as Christianity did. And he makes no qualms in making this known:

It now appears to be a truism in foreign policy circles that real reform in the Muslim world cannot be imposed from the outside. But it is important to recognize why this is so—it is so because the Muslim world is utterly deranged by its religious tribalism. In confronting the religious literalism and ignorance of the Muslim world, we must appreciate how terrifyingly isolated Muslims have become in intellectual terms.

not only do you get to vilify and character assassinate everyone who is forced to wear the label of ‘non-violent extremist’ you also get to implicate Islam by constant reference to the term ‘puritanical’. However, in order for this strategy to work, there needs to be a process of artificial assimilation between the terms ‘non-violent extremists’ and ‘violent extremists’ by demonstrating a direct correlation between the two. This shows how essential the term ‘non-violent extremism’ really is the grand scheme of things and how damaging it is for Salafis in particular.

“IF YOU WANT TO UNDERSTAND TODAY, YOU HAVE TO SEARCH YESTERDAY”

Before we briefly speak on the man himself, Muhammad ibn AbdulWahhāb, we are required to speak on the status quo he was born into so that we harvest for ourselves a measure of understanding of what motivated him to become the man that he became. The American historian Lothrop Stoddard⁸ in his book titled *The New World of Islam* gives us an unbiased account of the religio-political environment that Muhammad ibn AbdulWahhāb was born into during the early part of the 18th century:

As for religion [during the era of Muhammad ibn AbdulWahhāb], it was as decadent as everything else. The austere monotheism [tawheed] of [prophet] Mohammed had become overlaid with a rank growth of superstition and puerile mysticism. The

Then Harris makes a statement which seems contradictory on its apparent but can easily be reconciled when you understand Harris’ motives and grand designs:

All civilized nations must unite in condemnation of a theology that now threatens to destabilize much of the Earth. Muslim moderates, wherever they are, must be given every tool necessary to win a war of ideas with their coreligionists.

How can Harris use the term ‘moderate Muslim’ when he believes that Islam by nature cannot be moderate? To reconcile this apparent contradiction it requires us to believe that he wants Islam itself to undergo some wholesale changes. To reconcile this apparent contradiction it requires us to believe that he wants Islam itself to be disembowelled of many of its core contents until it is nothing more than a shell with a religious name. Harris already has test Muslim subjects at the Quilliam Foundation to show that these clinical trials of disembowelment actually work!

⁸ Lothrop Stoddard (June 29, 1883– May 1, 1950) was an American historian who wrote extensively on Islam. The main inspiration behind quoting this non-Muslim historian is to anticipate accusations of a self-serving version of historical events if they were presented by Muslims or Muslim historians. There is no greater demonstration for presenting objective and unbiased evidence than quoting from external sources that have no bias/religious agenda.

mosques stood unfrequented and ruinous, deserted by the ignorant multitude, which, decked out in amulets, charms, and rosaries, listened to squalid fakirs or ecstatic dervishes, and went on pilgrimages to the tombs of "holy men," worshipped as saints and "intercessors" with that Allah who had become too remote a being for the direct devotion of these benighted souls. As for the moral precepts of the Koran, they were ignored or defied. Wine-drinking and opium-eating were well-nigh universal, prostitution was rampant, and the most degrading vices flaunted naked and unashamed. Even the holy cities, Mecca and Medina, were sink-holes of iniquity, while the "Hajj," or pilgrimage ordained by the Prophet, had become a scandal through its abuses. In fine: the life had apparently gone out of Islam, leaving naught but a dry husk of soulless ritual and degrading superstition behind. Could Mohammed have returned to earth, he would unquestionably have anathematized [condemned] his followers as apostates and idolaters.

Yet, in this darkest hour, a voice came crying out of the vast Arabian desert, the cradle of Islam, calling the faithful back to the true path. This puritan reformer,⁹ the famous Abd-el-Wahab, kindled a fire which presently spread to the remotest corners of the Moslem world, purging Islam of its sloth and reviving the fervour of olden days. The great Mohammedan Revival had begun.¹⁰

A mental note at this point should be made regarding the keyword in this passage "puritan" because it is used by three different sets of people:

1. Puritan is a keyword for a host of academics and journalists with an anti-Islamic agenda, like Sam Harris, who carefully use this term as a common denominator to bond between violent and 'non-violent extremists' groups, with the term 'Wahhabi' being the adhesive glue. This eventually allows them to argue a case for Islam being extreme at its very core, which is their overall objective.
2. There is a small group of modern day academics and journalists who try to maintain a measure of objectivity when critiquing Islam and the Muslims. However, in spite of their

⁹ If we were to contrast the way the term puritan is used today with the way it was used by Stoddard you would think they were different terms.

¹⁰ <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/24107/24107-h/24107-h.htm>. It is also interesting to note that Stoddard named this revival 'The great Mohammedan Revival'.

concerted attempts to remain objective in view of term 'puritan', they still muddy distinctions where distinction are required to be made.

3. This is the term that some 18th-19th century academics, like Stoddard, choose to use to summarise a host of beliefs, traits and practices that were the antithesis of Islam and not to symbolise the scourge of humanity (e.g. ISIS and al-Qaeda):
- austere monotheism (tawheed)
 - rank growth of superstition and puerile mysticism
 - the mosques stood unfrequented and ruinous, decked out in amulets, charms, and rosaries, listened to squalid fakirs or ecstatic dervishes
 - went on pilgrimages to the tombs of "holy men," worshipped as saints and "intercessors" with that Allah who had become too remote a being for the direct devotion of these benighted souls
 - wine-drinking and opium-eating were well-nigh universal
 - prostitution was rampant, and the most degrading vices flaunted naked and unashamed
 - the holy cities, Mecca and Medina, were sink-holes of iniquity
 - the "Hajj," or pilgrimage ordained by the Prophet, had become a scandal through its abuses

Then Stoddard goes on to state,

Mahommed ibn Abd-el-Wahab was born about the year a.d. 1700 in the heart of the Arabian desert, the region known as the Nejd.¹¹ The Nejd was the one clean spot in the decadent Moslem world. We have already seen how, with the transformation of the [Ottoman] caliphate from a theocratic democracy to an Oriental despotism, the free-spirited Arabs had returned scornfully to their deserts. Here they had maintained their wild freedom. Neither caliph nor sultan dared venture far into those vast solitudes of burning sand and choking thirst, where the rash invader was lured to sudden death in a whirl of stabbing spears... The nomad Bedouin lived under the sway of patriarchal "sheiks"; the settled dwellers in the oases usually acknowledged the authority of some leading family. But these rulers possessed the slenderest

¹¹ [Here](#) is a refutation against those who feebly attempt to argue that the Najd found in Saudi is the Najd mentioned in a series of hadith that speak on affliction that arise from the east.

authority, narrowly circumscribed by well-established custom and a jealous public opinion which they transgressed at their peril. The Turks, to be sure, had managed to acquire a precarious authority over the holy cities and the Red Sea littoral,¹² but the Nejd, the vast interior, was free. And, in religion, as in politics, the desert Arabs kept the faith of their fathers.

Into this atmosphere of an older and better age, Abd-el-Wahab was born. Displaying from the first a studious and religious bent, he soon acquired a reputation for learning and sanctity. Making the Meccan pilgrimage while still a young man, he studied at Medina and travelled as far as Persia, returning ultimately to the Nejd. He returned burning with holy wrath at what he had seen, and determined to preach a puritan reformation. For years he wandered up and down Arabia, and at last he converted Mahommed, head of the great clan of Saud, the most powerful chieftain in all the Nejd.¹³ This gave Abd-el-Wahab both moral prestige and material strength, and he made the most of his opportunities. Gradually, the desert Arabs were welded into a politico-religious unity like that effected by the Prophet. Abd-el-Wahab was, in truth, a faithful counterpart of the first caliphs, Abu Bekr and Omar.

When he died in 1787 his disciple, Saud, proved a worthy successor. The new Wahabi¹⁴ state was a close counterpart of the Meccan caliphate. Though possessing great military power, Saud always considered himself responsible to public opinion and never encroached upon the legitimate freedom of his subjects. Government, though stern, was able and just. The Wahabi judges were competent and honest.

¹² Relating to the shore of a lake, sea, or ocean.

¹³ Muhammad ibn Saud (died 1765), also known as Ibn Saud, was the leader of Ad-Diriyah (north-western outskirts of the Saudi capital, Riyadh).

¹⁴ The usage of the word 'Wahhabi' here is not politically loaded as it is today because Muhammad ibn AbdulWahhāb's puritan, reformist activities were "pre-Colonial, and pre-Industrial (i.e. prior to the main thrust of the western Industrial revolution and Colonial activities, pre-1800), and thus, his da'wah was non-reactionary, and was an internal da'wah that was reformatory in the proper sense of the word. It more served as a relative adjective to define Muhammad ibn AbdulWahhāb's notable achievements in returning certain regions back to the classical understanding of Islam." ([Historical Development of the Methodologies of al-Ikhwaan al-Muslimeen And Their Effect and Influence Upon Contemporary Salafee Dawah: Part 1](#))

Robbery, became almost unknown, so well was the public peace maintained. Education was sedulously [diligently] fostered.¹⁵

After Stoddard gives us a brief insight into the religious and geographical feud between the “Wahhabis” and the Ottoman state, he then goes on to give **“special reference to its religious and cultural phases”**:

The Wahabi movement was a strictly puritan reformation. Its aim was the reform of abuses, the abolition of superstitious practices, and a return to primitive Islam.¹⁶ All later accretions—the writings and interpretations of the mediæval theologians, ceremonial or mystical innovations, saint worship, in fact every sort of change, were

¹⁵ Despite Stoddard’s best efforts in remaining disciplined in his understanding of ‘Wahhabism’, it eventually gave way to conflation with Ikhwanism due to an influx of Ikhwani ideologues into Saudi Arabia:

Perhaps it is symptomatic of a more bellicose temper in Islam that the last few years have witnessed the rapid spread of two new puritan, fanatic movements—the Ikhwan and the Salafiya. The Ikhwan movement began obscurely about ten years ago in inner Arabia—the Nejd. It is a direct outgrowth of Wahabism, from which it differs in no essential respect... As for the Salafi movement, it started in India [Deobandis] even more obscurely than Ikhwanism did in Arabia, but during the past few years it has spread widely through Islam.

¹⁶ It is statements like these that we see many western academics attributing to ISIS and al-Qaeda. One such academic is named Graeme Wood, who (to his credit) has made great efforts in keeping things academic at least, so much so he even make rare journalistic statements like this:

The term *Salafi* has been villainized, in part because authentic villains have ridden into battle waving the Salafi banner. But most Salafis are not jihadists, and most adhere to sects that reject the Islamic State.

Even though he not completely accurate in his observations, it is the best we are going to see from most western journalists. However, in spite of all of his academic endeavours, Wood still makes statements like this:

The reality is that the Islamic State is Islamic. *Very* Islamic. Yes, it has attracted psychopaths and adventure seekers, drawn largely from the disaffected populations of the Middle East and Europe. But the religion preached by its most ardent followers derives from coherent and even learned interpretations of Islam.

It just goes to show that bush-whacking along the treacherous trails that lead into the jungles of Islamic sectarianism have become too dense even for savvy academics like Wood. You need more than academia and a precursory knowledge of what defines Salafiyyah to truly understand why ISIS can never be Islamic. This just proves that Wood has his own understanding of the term ‘Islamic’ that heavily contravenes the Prophet’s practice of Islam. The problem is he is not looking at the word ‘Islamic’ from a theological or methodological perspective which requires more than a rudimentary understanding of sectarianism in Islam.

condemned. The austere monotheism of Mohammed was preached in all its uncompromising simplicity, and the Koran, literally interpreted, was taken as the sole guide for human action. This doctrinal simplification was accompanied by a most rigid code of morals. The prayers, fastings, and other practices enjoined by Mohammed were scrupulously observed.

Then Stoddard goes on to make a very interesting observation:

Many critics of Islam point to the Wahabi movement as a proof that Islam is essentially retrograde and innately incapable of evolutionary development. These criticisms, however, appear to be unwarranted. The initial stage of every religious reformation is an uncritical return to the primitive cult. To the religious reformer the only way of salvation is a denial of all subsequent innovations, regardless of their character. Our own Protestant Reformation began in just this way, and Humanists like Erasmus, repelled and disgusted by Protestantism's puritanical narrowness, could see no good in the movement, declaring that it menaced all true culture and merely replaced an infallible Pope by an infallible Bible...

Before discussing the ideas and efforts of the modern Moslem reformers, it might be well to examine the assertions made by numerous Western critics, that Islam is by its very nature incapable of reform and progressive adaptation to the expansion of human knowledge. Such is the contention not only of Christian polemicists, but also of rationalists like Renan and European administrators of Moslem populations like Lord Cromer.¹⁷ Lord Cromer, in fact, pithily summarizes this critical attitude in his statement: "Islam cannot be reformed; that is to say, reformed Islam is Islam no longer; it is something else."¹⁸

¹⁷ Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, Vol. II., p. 229 (London, 1908). For Renan's attitude, see his *L'Islamisme et la Science* (Paris, 1883).

¹⁸ This is not only a very pithy statement with regard to the uncompromising nature of Islam, it also aptly reminds us of the abuse of the term 'reformation' (which is just a flashy word for man's tinkering with faulty religion) that is romanticised under concepts of 'progression' and 'enlightenment'.

The sum total of these rich-in-detail quotes from Stoddard provide us a comprehensive definition of the terms ‘Wahhabism’ and ‘Puritanism’ as understood in the 20th century. This will allow us now to contrast these impartial,¹⁹ historical definitions with their current definitions that are aimed to conflate between extremism/terrorism and Salafiyyah.²⁰

THE HISTORICAL ‘WAHHABI’ VS. THE NEWFANGLED ‘WAHHABI’

Historians like Lothrop Stoddard stated that the ‘Wahhabis’ who existed a few centuries ago were strongly echoing the da’wah of the early pious generations of Muslims. However, due to a host of determining factors (some self-inflicted and some imposed), the echolocation that this label signals back to us today no longer acutely locates the call of the early pious generations of Muslims. Nowadays, the echolocation of ‘Wahhabism’ emits the call of the Khawārij in all of its putrid and destructive forms. When a non-Muslim (and many non-Muslims) hear the word ‘Wahhabi’, disturbing imagery of Usama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, ISIS, Boko Haram and the Taliban quickly formulates in his media-conditioned mind. Since 9/11, the term ‘Wahhabi’ has become so common amongst the non-Muslims that it has become anglicised and thus no longer requires italicisation!

How times have rapidly changed since the era of Lothrop Stoddard who, as a historian and an academic, had the luxury of observing the label ‘Wahhabi’ before 9/11, which set off a disastrous global chain of events that have changed things forever. This one phenomena alone provides us

¹⁹ We say impartial here because these quotes were not lifted from a Muslim historian but rather from a non-Muslim who had nothing to gain by speaking favourably about Islam.

²⁰ Another example of this can be found on the website “the Jamestown Foundation” which conflates between groups such as al-Qaeda and Salafism. However, this conflation makes perfect sense when you read a subsequent paragraph defining ‘Salafism’:

Salafism originated in the mid to late 19th Century, as an intellectual movement at al-Azhar University, led by Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897) and Rashid Rida (1865-1935). The movement was built on a broad foundation. Al-Afghani was a political activist, whereas Abduh, an educator, sought gradual social reform (as a part of da’wa), particularly through education. Debate over the place of these respective methods of political change continues to this day in Salafi groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood.

Deviant Muslim personalities such as Muhammad Abduh, Jamal al-Dīn al-Afghani, ar-Rāfidi al-Māsūni and Rashid Ridā were light years away from Salafism. Both Abduh and Jamal ad-Dīn were chiefs of a masonic lodge in Egypt. That fact alone is enough to place a wide partition between ‘Salafism’ and the antics of these modernists in a bygone time who have bewilderingly been labelled as Salafis.

an insight into why Stoddard could look at the term 'Wahhabi' free of all the dogmatic and political baggage that shadows the term in today's global climate. Stoddard was not forced-fed with the spoon of the corporate media to gorge on the genetically modified terms 'Wahhabi' or 'non-violent extremist'. Stoddard, with his academic prowess and his organic outlook, had a measure of objectivity that most non-Muslim academics and journalists can only dream of today in the tightly scrutinised world of corporate media and politicised academia. What is the point in writing the truth if you hardly have an audience that wants the truth or can accept the truth? Who is going to employ you and offer you a career in fact-finding when fact-finding is no longer an integral part of journalism or academia? You can conform to manufactured world views and be a pen for hire for the cause or you can be a part of the dissenting voice and be banished into exile with the rest of the disaffected heretics.

As we have stated previously, it is the generic application of the word 'Wahhabi' (Salafis, ISIS et al) that serves as the lasso to rope all parties involved under the terms 'non-violent extremist' and 'violent extremist'. Then they apply the term 'puritan' as the causative factor that ideologically motivates all who fall under its labels. However, the problem with this is that it gives rise to two falsehoods which are correlated and causal:

1. All 'Wahhabis' are monolithic and are essentially one and anything they do differ on is merely religious semantics.
2. Since all 'Wahhabis' (Salafis, ISIS et al) are essentially one and all 'Wahhabis' are puritans then this means the sum total of their ideology and methodology is essentially Islam.

Point two of falsehood is predicated on the first point of falsehood and thus if the first premise goes, so does the second. The evidence presented in this paper has already done away with the first false premise by presenting undeniable facts that require Salafis by very nature and nurture be separated from ISIS, al-Qaeda and even the armchair warriors al-Muhajiroun. However, the second premise can also be refuted independently of the first premise.

The simple and convenient anecdote here is that since all who are labelled as 'Wahhabis' are 'puritans' this means that all are rigidly working for the form of Islam that was practiced by the Prophet and his companions and thus all are 'puritans'. The first word in this simplistic anecdote

which crumbles under scrutiny is the term ‘puritan’. Why? Because (a) being a puritan and (b) what you are a puritan for is a clear distinction of sorts. It is possible that someone can be a puritan for a strict set of religious beliefs or practises that might not represent the true precepts and teachings of the religion he practices. Actually, if we stand back a bit further, we might see that the term ‘puritan’ is more inclusive than first thought because most who ascribe themselves to Islam can be labelled as ‘puritans’ because everyone in Islam thinks that he is practising the true form of Islam – such thinking just comes with the territory of religion. If this much is true, this requires that the term ‘puritan’ take a particular meaning when applied to the ‘Wahhabis’; otherwise, what allows you to single out the ‘Wahhabis’ for the term ‘puritan’? The concept of excessiveness is where Wahhabis are apportioned an exclusive meaning of ‘puritan’ and not the part of its definition that states **“a person who adheres to strict moral or religious principles”**.

Some take a bolder and braver approach and argue that indeed most Muslims are puritans because Islam by its aggressive nature requires this from its practioners. They argue that most Muslims are just symptomatic of the disease of extremism because the disease itself is Islam. Thus, the only way to remove the symptoms is by applying large doses of radiation to the malignant disease! Militant atheists, like Sam Harris,²¹ and chat show hosts, like Bill Maher,²² argue this highly aggressive line of thinking. However, what we like (yes like!) about this line of thinking it that it cuts out all the straw men arguments of the non-Muslim liberals and the ‘moderate’ Muslims who have shares in the property of intellectual denial. Sam Harris presents statements such as **“Mainstream Islam itself represents an extremist rejection of intellectual honesty, gender equality, secular politics and genuine pluralism”** which prompts the liberal in the Muslim to quickly rush to prove Harris wrong by watering down the contents of Islam. They deny Harris’ allegations even though Harris quotes unequivocal text from the Qur’an and hadith to substantiate his assertions. This puts the liberal Muslim, who is desperate to fit in due to the siege mentality²³

²¹ We have already quoted from Harris extensively to prove that his endgame is to either eradicate Islam or to disembowel it until it becomes just a ‘spiritual’ section of secularism, much like Christianity is today.

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²³ The siege mentality in the West that requires Muslims to conform to Western standards is a key factor in causing Muslims to compromise their Islamic beliefs and standards. As definitions of a moderate Muslim and an extreme Muslim become more politically and culturally delineated, the more Muslims feel the applied pressure to conform and squeeze themselves into the tightfitting definitions of ‘moderate Muslim’. This siege mentality especially affects those Muslims who are in the media spotlight. From the prominent Muslims who are affected the most are those who have compromised their own religion long before they were required to bend over backwards to prove their ‘Britishness’. In the world of Western media, there are three roles that the centre stage Muslim can play: (1) he can be the poster Muslim boy who typifies a self-serving, government-branded definition of a ‘moderate Muslim’ (2) he can be the radical, provocative Muslim who stands in defiance whenever he is given media attention (3) the Muslim who attempts

he suffers from, in a false dilemma: he can agree with Harris and then watch the walls of his fortress come falling down or he can induce himself into a state of intellectual denial.

The ditch that the liberal Muslim dug deeply for himself is partly due to his refusal to challenge Harris' accusations of flouting "**gender equality, secular politics and genuine pluralism,**" which are just a few of the many charges he reads out to the jury. Because the liberal Muslim is, himself, highly compromised, given that he has already invested heavily into western values, this makes it very difficult to challenge the core components of these concepts or world views which Harris accuses the Muslims and Islam of flagrantly contravening because it would also require on behalf of the liberal Muslim a self-assessment of epic proportions. Thus, denial of the undeniable becomes the next best thing. This is not only religiously detrimental for the liberal Muslim, it also aids Harris to demonstrate to the jury of onlookers the doublethink that plagues many Muslims.

The first question that has to be asked of Harris, who is an avowed atheist, is what supreme authority provides him the dogmatic objectivity to assert absolute beliefs of right and wrong in the absence of the only thing (Allah) that can objectively provide definitions of right and wrong that transcend time and place? The reason why we ask this question is because he throws around social constructs, like gender equality, as if they are not up for grabs in today's world of moral relativism. All Harris has, at best, are relative values that he believes in, which is fine. However, things quickly spin out of control when he plays god by demanding that a significant amount of the earth's population be subjected to his take on values and ethics. The arrogance of the man is staggering and his dogmatism is deafening. Ironically, for someone who dogmatically disavows the very existence of God he sure talks and walks like a recipient of revelation!

to bridge the gap between the two extremes by toeing the line wherever he feels it is possible. However, this method has its own perils because (a) in many cases the spotlight Muslim has a dubious past (b) he is asked questions that rigorously test his definitions of a 'moderate Muslim' and 'extremist Muslim'. Loaded questions such as, "what is your view on stoning to death?" Or, "What is your view of homosexuality?" Another popular question is "Do you believe in Jihad?" This leaves the spotlight Muslim in a difficult conundrum: he can try and argue a legitimate case by arguing definitions of morality and ethics and justice. However this approach is nigh-on impossible because such shows that these spotlight Muslims find themselves on are only structured for sound bite debate and quick-fire, ad hominem accusations. He can attempt to deflect such questions but this approach just makes him look like a slimy politician who has something to hide. The worst case scenario is when a spotlight Muslim is feeling the pressure so much so that he starts going into a state of wilful denial and says things or implies things that are a flagrant breach of his Islam just to save face but ends up creating a second face that warrants the charge of duplicity. A disturbing example of this can be seen [here](#) in an interview that took place between Asim Qureshi (CAGE) and This Week presenter Andrew Neil.

Secondly, the term 'equality' has become a complete synonym for 'justice' or 'equity' in the West where equality not so long ago hardly existed²⁴ (over compensating much?), but Islam, which ushered in equality over 1400 years ago, teaches equality where equality is required and justice where equality cannot be applied. If two things can be proven fundamentally different, why would you expect equality or give equality to the two? And this is not a line of logic that is lost on the West because even in worthless events like professional Tennis we see a necessary lack of equality when it comes to how many sets each sex plays. The males play the best of five and the female plays the best of three. Why the distinction? Because a discrepancy between the sexes requires a distinction to maintain justice. Today's obsession with equality is myopic because it fails to look at things proportionately. Some one could argue, "Well this is just tennis but when it comes to the important things of life, the West is attempting to incorporate equality in full effect." We would retort by stating that the example here was brought just to prove that equality does not always equate to justice and not that tennis is in desperate need of equality. The second thing we would say is that your fervent pursuit for equality is so ridiculous that even non-Muslims are questioning the lengths that this pursuit of equality is prepared to go.²⁵ A good example of this is the current debate regarding women being allowed to serve in British infantry units. Until this day, women are not allowed to be involved in close combat, but like everything else in pursuit of equality this is now up for PC review. In order for this restriction to be removed, conventional wisdom has to be removed as well. For example, in order to join an infantry unit at recruit level, men have to complete a run of 1.5 miles in 12 minutes 45 seconds. They also have to pass a battle fitness test which requires infantry to be able to pick up another man with his rifle and equipment and then carry him in a fireman's lift for 200 metres. Experts state that upper body strength in 99.9% of women would make it virtually impossible to pass the tests. This is how far these people are prepared to go in their drive for equality even if it tramples all over conventional wisdom and justice.

CONCLUSION

The Prophet (sallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) said,

يَأْتِي عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ الصَّابِرُ فِيهِمْ عَلَى دِينِهِ كَالْقَابِضِ عَلَى الْجَمْرِ

*There shall come upon the people a time in which the one who is patient upon his religion will be like the one holding onto a burning ember.*²⁶

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²⁵ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-27331365>

²⁶ at-Tirmidhi 2260

Shaykh 'Uthaymeen was asked about if this time mentioned in the hadith had arrived during our times. He responded by saying,

هذا الأمر يختلف باختلاف الناس والأماكن ففي بعض الأماكن يكون الإنسان مضطهداً في دينه مضيقاً عليه حتى يكون كالقابض على الجمر وفي هذه الحال يجب عليه أن يهاجر إلى بلد آخر يأتي فيه بدينه على حرية وطمأنينة لأن أهل العلم يقولون إذا لم يتمكن الإنسان من إظهار دينه في بلاد الكفر فإنه يجب عليه أن يهاجر ليقوم دينه وفي بعض البلاد في عهدنا هذا يجد الإنسان حرية كاملة في القيام بشعائر دينه وإظهارها وإعلانها وحينئذ لا يمكن أن نقول إن هذا العهد الذي أشار إليه النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم موجود الآن لأننا نجد والله الحمد في بعض البلاد الإسلامية ما يتمكن الإنسان معه من إقامة دينه على الوجه الذي يرضي الله ورسوله نعم.

This phenomenon will vary subject to people and places. Therefore, in certain places a person could face acute religious persecution so much so that holding on to his religion is akin to holding unto hot embers. In such an event, he is required to migrate to another country which affords him the freedom and the security to practice his religion because the people of knowledge state that when a person is unable to openly practice his religion in the lands of disbelief then he is required to migrate so that he can uphold his religion. However, in some countries, during these times, a person can find complete freedom to openly practice and declare his religion; therefore, we cannot say that this particular time which the Prophet alluded to is present right now and for Allah belongs all praise. In some Muslim countries it is not possible for a person to uphold his religion in manner that is desirable to Allah and His Messenger.²⁷

²⁷ http://www.ibnothaymeen.com/all/noor/article_6688.shtml