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RESEARCH DIVISION

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE
LATEST RAND STUDY ON
ISLAM AND EXTREMISM
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Indeed, all praise is due to, we praise Him, we seek His aid, and we ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh from the evil of our actions and from the evil consequences of our actions. Whomever Allāh guides, there is none to misguide and whoever Allāh misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allāh.

To proceed:

http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2007/RAND_MG574.pdf

Angel Rabasa, Cheryl Bernard, Lowell H. Schwartz and Peter Sickle, *Building Moderate Muslim Networks* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007)

The think-tank 'RAND' have come to assume a reputation for producing a range of plans to be implemented and promoted among Muslims, with little concern with the involvement of Muslims themselves. The first controversial RAND study which gained fame for its categorization of Muslims was conducted by Cheryl Bernard in 2003 attempted to find a form of Islām which caves in to the policies of the West along with pandering to and promoting such policies.¹ However,

¹ Cheryl Benard, *Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources and Strategies* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2003). She calls for 'moderates' to be utilized by non-Muslim governments and the 'traditionalists' and 'scripturalists' to only be used in so far as they oppose violent extremists. Within her report, Benard also claims that women who do not wear the *hijāb* or *niqāb* should be made into 'civil rights heroes' (!!?) and that their views, which are based largely on Western feminism, should also have an equal footing within the 'Islamic discourse' (pp.58-59 & p.61)!? Even though they have no evidences, reject clear verses of the Qur'ān, deny the *sunnah* of the Prophet (*sallAllāhu alayhi wassallam*), oppose the *manhaj* of the *salaf* and have concocted their own version of Islām which suits their desires! Benard also promoted Sufism within her report due to the emphasis on music, mysticism and 'spirituality' which she feels fits well into promoting peace and reducing terror. Benard displays a particular disdain for Saudi saying, as if talking directly to her non-Muslim colleagues "Clearly, our strategy toward Saudi is based on geopolitical, tactical and economic considerations and does not represent an endorsement of that regime or its lifestyle and ideology." (p. 27) She also makes a number of errors in her report and this can be seen on page 29 wherein she claims that the traditionalists do not really consist of young men. Benard's promotion of the modernist school of thought is very dangerous arguing, "Instead, we allow our vision of Judaism's or Christianity's true message to dominate over the literal text, which we regard as history and legend. That is exactly the

where the 2003 study was concerned with profiling Muslims and putting them into categories based on their beliefs and contrast with the West, the latest study identifies what they call “liberal Muslims” as being the ones to be buttressed by the West.

The latest attempt by RAND (and more specifically by Angel Rabasa, Cheryl Bernard, Lowell H. Schwartz and Peter Sickle) this time around has not changed in its scope and is still bent on finding an expression and form of Islām that forfeits Islamic principles thereby conceding to and yielding to every single policy of the West and uncritically follow American and European foreign policy in the Muslim world. This is to the extent that RAND will even quote from all manner of discredited “moderates” in order to justify their agenda, as we shall soon observe.

On page 66 they look at ‘*Characteristics of Moderate Muslims*’ which according to their reasoning only includes Muslims who have:

- ✓ a commitment to democracy;
- ✓ An acceptance of non-sectarian sources of Islamic law – this is problematic as firstly there are only the well-known sources of *Sharee’ah* and secondly the RAND researchers in their study refer to the likes of Abdul-Hadi Palazzi, who is not exactly the best example of that which is “non-sectarian”.
- ✓ respect for women's rights and minority rights – this is emphasized in the *Sharee’ah* in any case;
- ✓ opposition to terrorism and violence – this is also something which is intrinsic to the *Sharee’ah* and therefore most Muslims should oppose terrorism.

approach of the Islamic modernists...”(p.37) She does however note the limitations of the modernists, such as: **their distance from the average Muslim on the street; no connection to Muslim youth; no publications available; no monies; no media; no institutions; no educational centres; too isolated; too integrated with their non-Islamic surroundings to tap into the Muslim communities; too academic; not attractive to journalists etc; not found in Islamic schools etc** (pp. 39-40). Basically they’re totally out of touch with the Muslim youth! Benard contradicts herself in her report as she argues that the modernists, such as Khaled Abou el-Fadl (who is vocal in his hatred of what he simplistically calls “Wahhabis” as well as being completely out of touch with Muslim youth), Bassam Tibi et al, should be the Muslims who define Islam and not the others as they represent minority opinions. Yet these modernists themselves, she even states, represent an even smaller minority and are totally out of touch with Muslim youth so where is the democracy? Page 47 is the chapter on the ‘*Proposed Strategy*’ to be implemented and here she notes that modernists should be supported first amongst the Muslims, not the traditionalists, as those who present the face of contemporary Islam. What is questionable is her recommendation to financially help and support modernist Islamic thought through **encouraging new websites; modernist textbook authors for curriculum; usage of media wherein modernists can express their bātil views; affordable and cheap books that expose modernist Islamic thought to Muslim youth** (p.48) Page 50-53 sees a rather weak attempt to dissect *hadeeth* science and this in itself needs a separate refutation. On page 62, she asserts that the “**causal relationship between traditionalism and underdevelopment**” should be shown.

ARE THE SUFIS “NATURAL ALLIES OF THE WEST”?

On page 69 they have a list of criteria for a Muslim group to fall into, in order for it to be branded as being “democratic”. From page 70 is where they look at “potential partners” and includes secularists, liberal Muslims, Sufis and moderate traditionalists. They state on page 73:

Immediately relevant to this study is the fact that Salafis and Wahhabis are relentless enemies of traditionalists and Sufis. Whenever radical Islamist movements have gained power they have sought to suppress the practice of traditionalist and Sufi Islam, as in the well-known destruction of early Islamic monuments in Saudi Arabia. Because of their victimization by Salafis and Wahhabis, traditionalists and Sufis are natural allies of the West to the extent that common ground can be found with them.

This view is quite far from academic neutrality and intellectual objectivity. First of all they have somehow managed to exclude the *Salafis* from being “traditional” and this is odd considering that the *Salafis* are the most vocal and strict in adhering to the “traditional” classical source texts of Islām that have been inherited from the heritage of the earliest Muslims. One of the other ways in which RAND have now reached this position is no doubt due to their collaboration with the likes of the “traditional Islam” movement and thus reproduced its hatred of the *Salafi da’wah*. Moreover, there is a use of emotive and aggressive words when referring to *Salafis* and “Wahhabis” such as: “**relentless enemies**”, “**radical**”, “**suppress**”, “**destruction**” etc., yet while referring to *Sufis* and so called “Traditionalists” they are “natural allies of the West” and portrayed as the passive victims of *Salafi* “radicals” who “victimize” the *Sufis* and so-called “Traditionalists”. Objective reports are characterised by their use of neutral terms and the absence of emotive language, thus adopting a scientific register - something this report has failed to achieve. The RAND study is thus replete with propagandistic literary devices designed to advocate a particular viewpoint.

Secondly, it would have been not only appropriate but also fair and just for the RAND researchers to actually ask the *Salafis* or refer to them before speaking for the *Salafis* and oddly branding them as being part of a movement of “radical Islamists”. So what is noticeable here then, as per usual, is that the *Salafis* stand accused and yet they are denied a voice, the only ones deemed as being those who have correct views about them are not themselves but rather *Sufis*, liberals and non-Muslims.

As for the common and rather simplistic assertion that the *Salafis* were involved in “**the well-known destruction of early Islamic monuments**” then the RAND researchers (Angel Rabasa, Cheryl Bernard, Lowell H. Schwartz and Peter Sickle) have taken this straight from neo-con *Sufi* polemic. This issue was also reported by Irfan Ahmed al-Alawi writing *Islamica Magazine* and also in an article by Daniel Howden. In a front-page article in *The Independent* (of

London) dated 6 August 2005 and entitled *The destruction of Mecca: Saudi hardliners are wiping out their own heritage*, Howden claims:

Historic Mecca, the cradle of Islam, is being buried in an unprecedented onslaught by religious zealots. Almost all of the rich and multi-layered history of the holy city is gone. **The Washington-based Gulf Institute² estimates** that 95 per cent of millennium-old buildings have been demolished in the past two decades. Now the actual birthplace of the Prophet Mohamed is facing the bulldozers, with the connivance of Saudi religious authorities whose hardline interpretation of Islam is compelling them to wipe out their own heritage. It is the same oil-rich orthodoxy that pumped money into the Taliban as they prepared to detonate the Bamiyan buddhas in 2000. And the same doctrine - violently opposed to all forms of idolatry...

The driving force behind the demolition campaign that has transformed these cities is Wahhabism. This, the austere state faith of Saudi Arabia, was imported by the al-Saud tribal chieftains when they conquered the region in the 1920s. **The motive behind the destruction is the Wahhabists' fanatical fear that places of historical and religious interest could give rise to idolatry or polytheism,**³ **the worship of multiple and potentially equal gods. As John R. Bradley notes in his new book *Saudi Arabia Exposed*, the practice of idolatry in the kingdom remains, in principle at least, punishable by beheading.**⁴ And Bradley also points out this same literalism mandates that advertising posters can and need to be altered. The walls of Jeddah are adorned with ads featuring people missing an eye or with a foot painted over. These "deliberate imperfections" are the most glaring sign of an orthodoxy that tolerates nothing which fosters adulation of the graven image. Nothing can, or can be seen to, interfere with a person's devotion to Allah. "At the root of the problem is Wahhabism," says Dr Angawi. "They have a big complex about idolatry and anything that relates to the Prophet." He is not alone in his concerns. The Gulf Institute, an independent news-gathering group, has publicised what it says is a fatwa, issued by the senior Saudi council of religious scholars in 1994, stating that preserving historical sites "could lead to polytheism and idolatry". **Ali al-Ahmed, the head of the organisation, formerly known as the Saudi Institute**, said: "The destruction of Islamic landmarks in Hijaz is the largest in history, and worse than the desecration of the Koran."

In regards to the *Islamica Magazine* article entitled '*Destruction of Holy Sites in Mecca and Medina*' (February 2006) by Dr Irfan Ahmed al-Alawi (director of the so-called '*Islamic Heritage*

² An anti-Saudi Institute that has links to Nina Shea's neo-con *Freedom House*, as a result they were also involved in attacking Saudi curricula and claiming that it preaches intolerance. See Muhammad Salahuddin's article for the *Arab News* on 21 June 2006: <http://www.arabnews.com/?page=7§ion=0&article=84136&d=21&m=6&y=2006>

³ This alleged "fanatical fear" is based upon the Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (*sallAllāhu alayhi wassallam*)!

⁴ This is probably nothing but another scare-mongering work in the same vein as Mark Silverberg's *The Quartermasters of Terror: Saudi Arabia and the Global Islamic Jihad* (Wyndham Hill Press, 2005) and Dore Gold's *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism* (Washington D.C: Regnery, 2003).

and Research Foundation⁵ and who has recently written articles with the neo-con Jewish convert to Hishām al-Kabbanee's version of the *Naqshbandee* movement Stephen Schwartz. Schwartz is also the "executive director" of Irfan Ahmed's '*Centre for Islamic Pluralism*')⁶, then it was again

⁵ This 'foundation' does not exist in a complete manner, what *does* exist is Stephen Schwartz and Irfan Ahmed's '*Centre for Islamic Pluralism*' which is so accepting of other expressions of Islām and so "pluralistic" that it has a special "*Wahhabi Watch*" section and articles attacking Saudi Arabia! See the '*Islamic Pluralism.org*' and '*Islamic Pluralism.eu*' websites. There is thus no doubt that the likes of Irfan Ahmed have a political agenda that is working hand-in-hand with the neo-cons and the *Sufis* of the era are being utilized in this, hence articles in *Islamica Magazine* and the likes which are blindly followed by many Muslims. *Islamica Magazine* and other Sufi and "traditional Islam movement" media like them are therefore becoming neo-con mouthpieces, unbeknown to themselves!

⁶ They both authored an article on March 5 2007 entitled '*Valentine's Day in Saudi Arabia: Portents of Change from the Desert Kingdom*' in *The Weekly Standard* (of Washington D.C.), vol.12, issue 24. As for Schwartz then he is a neo-con Jewish convert to Hishām Kabbānee's *Naqshabandee Sufi* order!? He is a journalist yet is absolutely unqualified to discuss matters of the *deen*, on top of that he contributes to *Front Page Mag!*? Clifford Geertz writing in the *New York Review of Books*, described Stephen Schwartz as being a "**strange and outlandish figure**", indeed, as we shall observe.

Amir Butler has noted that Schwartz beginning

...as an anarchist-Trotskyist (calling himself "Comrade Sandalio"), Schwartz later became the obituary writer for the San Francisco Chronicle. From there, according to Geertz's article, he became a cheerleader for Reagan's war in Grenada, before finally moving to Sarejevo where he worked as a freelance journalist of some description. At other times, he has been described as a "New Age Rightist" and as an "internationally recognized surrealist poet" who had found the philosophers stone of class struggle. The only consistency in Schwartz's career has been the frequent ideological shifts that have characterised it. Since September 11, this "strange and outlandish figure" has risen from the relative obscurity of writing obituaries for the San Francisco Chronicle and as a freelance hack in Sarejevo to holding court in such publications as Frontpage Magazine, Weekly Standard and the National Review. Indeed, it only takes a cursory viewing of Stephen Schwartz's contribution to Frontpage Magazine to understand where Schwartz's obsession lies. With titles such as "Saudi Stench", "Saudi Spinning", "Saudi Mischief in Fallujah", "Wahabi Fireworks", "The Dysfunctional House of Saud", "Saudi Arabia in Crises", and "Saudi Extremism in High Places", it is obvious that Schwartz has cast himself as something of an expert on Saudi Arabia and its state ideology. By doing so, he seems to have found what years writing snappy obituaries for dead Californians never gave him: some sort of notoriety and standing as the go-to guy for comment on Saudi Arabia and Wahabiism.

Yet Schwartz has never ever been to Saudi Arabia and an example of his lack of knowledge of Islām can be directly witnessed in his book *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa'ud from Tradition to Terror*, which is a book wherein Schwartz does not even quote one verse of the Qur'ān to support his version of Islām, let alone any of the works of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhab!! Within the book there is scant reference to

the Qur'ān and *hadeeth*, if there is any reference to them at all! Yet he does see it fit to list 57 of his own writings and articles in his bibliography! Amir Butler notes:

Schwartz goes on to draw bizarre comparisons between Wahabiism and "Italian fascism", "Soviet Communism", and even "Japanese Militarism". Indeed, one is left with the impression that either Schwartz doesn't know what Wahabiism means or he doesn't know what communism, fascism or militarism means (other than being something "bad"). Even in his congressional testimony, Schwartz makes completely nonsensical claims about the nature of the Saudi state.

Another of Schwartz's glaring errors, again typifying the sheer lack of research undertaken and the utter deficiency of Islamic knowledge, is that he states in the book on page 71 that: **"Muhammad never once forecast that the Muslims would fall back into polytheism, as Wahhabis have strenuously accused them of doing since the 18th Century."** Hereby trying to assert that the Prophet Muhammad (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) never stated that the Muslims would fall back into *shirk*.

This is a common argument of some of the extremist *Sufis* which others uncritically follow with no further investigation. However, the reality is that the Prophet Muhammad (*sallAllāhu alayhi wassallam*) stated that *shirk* will return to the Muslim *ummah* at some stage! It is verified in the *Saheehayn* from the *hadeth* of Abee Hurayrah that the Prophet (*sallAllāhu alayhi wassallam*) said: *"The Hour will not be established until the buttocks of the women of Daws move around Dhu'l-Khalasah (an idol which was worshipped by the tribe of Daws during the period of Jāhiliyyah)."* Meaning: *shirk* will return to the Arabian Peninsula and to the *ummah* of Muhammad (*sallAllāhu alayhi wassallam*). This *hadeeth* is reported by Bukhāree in *Kitāb ul-Fitan, Taghyeer az-Zamān hatta Tu'bad al-Awthān*, vol.13, p.76, *hadeeth* no.7116; Saheeh Muslim, *Kitāb ul-Fitan, La Taqoom as-Sā'h hatta Ta'bud Daws Dha'l-Khalasah*, vol.4, p.2230, *hadeeth* no.2906. Both *hadeeth* are via Sa'eed Ibn Musayyib (*raheemahullāh*) from Abee Hurayrah (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*). 'Daws' are a tribe originally from Yemen and Dhu'l-Khalasah was a house full of idols and named 'Dhu'l-Khalasah' because it was believed that whoever circumbulated it would achieve 'khalasa' (purity). The *hadeeth* proves that Daws will apostate from Islām and return to *shirk* to the extent that their women will go around the idol with their rear-ends wiggling about around it.

Other *hadeeth* which state this are narrated by Muslim, on the authority of Thawbān (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) that the Messenger of Allāh (*sallAllāhu alayhi wassallam*) said: *"Verily, Allah folded the earth for me, so much so that I saw its East and its West: The kingdom of my Ummah will reach as far as the earth was folded for me. The two treasures, both the red and the white were given to me. I prayed to my Rabb that He may not destroy my Ummah by a widespread drought and not give sovereignty over them to an enemy who annihilates them in large numbers except from among themselves. And then verily, my Rabb said: "Oh, Muhammad! When I issue a decree, it is not withdrawn: I have promised your Ummah that I will not destroy it by a widespread drought and I shall not give sovereignty of them to an enemy who exterminates them in large numbers, even if they are stormed from all sides of the earth except from among themselves. Only a portion of them will destroy another portion and a portion will take another portion prisoner."* This was also narrated by Al-Barqāni, who added: *"I fear for my Ummah those leaders who will send them astray: When the sword is used among my people, it will not be withdrawn from them until the Day of Resurrection and the Hour will not come until a tribe from among my Ummah attach themselves to the polytheists and numbers of my people worship idols; and there will be among my Ummah thirty liars, all*

replete with anti-Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb polemic. This kind of “spirituality” seems more concerned with preserving tombs, shrines and monuments wherein worshipped is directed to other than Allāh in the name of “heritage” than with the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (*sallallāhu alayhi wassallam*). Ahmed says in the article that:

From 1848 to 1860, the buildings were renovated and the Ottomans built the domes and mosques in splendid aesthetic style...

of them claiming that he is a prophet, though I am the Seal of the Prophets - none will come after me. But some of my Ummah will continue to hold to the truth and they will be victorious and they will not be harmed by those who oppose them until Allāh's Command comes.” Also the Prophet (*sallAllāhu alayhi wassallam*) stated: “*The night and day will not depart until al-Lāt and al-'Uzza are worshipped.*” Relayed by Muslim in *Kitāb ul-Fitan wa Ashrāt is-Sa'ah*, vol.4, p.2230, *hadeeth* no.2907 via Abee Salamah from 'Ā'ishah (*radi Allāhu anhumā*). Also the Prophet (*sallAllāhu alayhi wassallam*) stated: “*O people fear the shirk which is more hidden than the crawling ant.*” Reported by Ahmad in *al-Musnad*, vol.4, p.403; Ibn Abee Shaybah in *al-Musannaf*, vol.6, pp.70-71, *hadeeth* no.29547 in the chapter of *Ta'oodh min ash-Shirk*; Bukhāree in *Tāreekh al-Kabeer*. All are narrated via a man from Bani Kāhil from Abee Moosā al-'Ash'aree, al-Haythamee said in *al-Majma'*, vol.10, p.223: “*Narrated by Ahmad and at-Tabarānee in al-Kabeer and al-Awsat and the narrators of Ahmad are sound except for Aboo 'Alee and Wathaq ibn Hibbān.*” Also reported by Aboo Ya'la in his *Musnad* (vol.1, p.60-2, *hadeeth* no.54, 55, 56) from the *hadeeth* of Hudhayfah from Abee Bakr in a *marfoo'* form and from the *hadeeth* of Mu'qal bin Yasār in a *marfoo'* form, mentioned by al-Hāfidh in *al-Matālib* (vol.3, p.183) and referred it to the *Musnad* of Ishāq ibn Rāhawayh and Aboo Bakr al-Marwazee narrated it in *Musnad* Abee bakr (p.55); Bukhāree in *Adab al-Mufrad* (p.105) from the narration of Mu'qal from Abee Bakr in a *marfoo'* form, related by at-Tirmidhee (p.397). al-Haythamee said in *al-Majma'* (vol.10, p.224): “*Related by Aboo Ya'la from his Shaykh 'Umar bin al-Husayn al-'Aqlee, who is matrook*). Imām al-Albānee said in *Saheeh al-Jāmi'* (vol.1, p.694, *hadeeth* no.3731) that it is *saheeh*. Aboo Nu'aym also relayed it in *al-Hilyah* (vol.7, p.112) from the *hadeeth* Qays bin Hāzim from Abee Bakr and Imām al-Albānee declared it *saheeh* in *Saheeh al-Jāmi'*, vol.1, p.693, *hadeeth* no.3730.

On pages 72-73 of *The Two Faces of Islam*, he says that Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb was “something equally fearsome” as the Dajjāl!! First of all, Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb (*rahimahullāh*) was originally from the Bani Tameem about whom Aboo Hurayrah (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) mentioned: “*I have continued to love the tribe of Tameem ever since I heard three statements from the Messenger of Allāh (sallAllāhu alayhi wassallam) about them. I heard him say “They are the strongest of my Nation against the Dajjāl.”*” Recorded in the *Saheehs* of Bukhāree and Muslim. As the research and Islamic source referencing in *The Two Faces of Islam* is scant to say the least, it is no wonder that we find Schwartz saying things such as “**Music is perhaps the greatest glory of Islamic civilization...**” (pp.72-73)!! Without any mention of Islamic monotheism!? He continues: “**...Islam without music would be like God without his creation.**” Is this found in the Qur'ān? Did the beloved Prophet (*sallAllāhu alayhi wassallam*) say anything of the sort? The answers to these questions are emphatically “no!” So where on earth is Schwartz acquiring such aberrant understandings of Islām from? None other than from his teacher, Hishām al-Kabbānee. In an interview with *National Review Online*, Schwartz also says that Saddam Hussein, *Hamas* and *Hezbollah* are all “Wahhabis”?!

Above the circles are invocations including “Ya Allah” and “Ya Muhammad.” The latter was removed and replaced it with “Ya Majid” by adding the dot under the ‘ha of Muhammad to make it jim and two dots under the second mim of Muhammad to make it ‘ya. There are qasidas written by rulers of the Muslim world, such as Sultan ‘Abd al-Hamid. Many verses of the famous Burda of al-Busayri had also been painted over.⁷

Herein, the *Sūfī* beliefs of some men again are put over the words of the Prophet Muhammad (*sallallāhu alayhi wassallam*) himself. The Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu alayhi wassallam*) stated in authentic *hadeeths* in Bukhāree and Muslim that Allāh cursed some people before because they took the graves of their Prophets as places of worship. In another *hadeeth* in *Saheeh Bukhāree* it is authentically reported on the authority of ‘Ā’ishah that Umm Salamah (*May Allāh be pleased with them both*) told the Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu alayhi wassallam*) about a church she had seen in Abyssinia in which there were pictures. The Prophet (*sallallāhu alayhi wassallam*) said: “Those people, when a righteous member of their group or a pious slave (of Allah) dies, they build a mosque over his grave and make images therein; by so doing, they combine two evils: (i) The evil of the graves and (ii) the evil of images.” Also on the authority of Thamamah bin Shafee who said: We were with Fadālat bin Ubaid in the land of the Romans in a place called Baroodus, and one of our companions died, so Fadālat bin ‘Ubayd ordered for him to be buried in a grave. The grave was leveled off, and then he said: “I heard the Messenger of Allāh order with the leveling off of graves.” Narrated by Muslim (vol.7 p.39), Abu Dawood (vol.3 p.208), an-Nisae (vol.4 p.72), Ahmad (vol.6 p.18) and in it is mentioned: “level off your graves with the ground.” The former *Muftee* of Saudi Arabia, ‘Abdul‘Azeez bin Bāz (*rahimahullāh*) was asked:

There is someone who says, "Verily the ruling of the prayer in the *masjid* which has a grave in it differs from the *masjid* which has two graves in it, or the *masjid* with three graves or more in it." We hope for clarification regarding this. And how is the ruling when the Prophet (*SallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "**May Allāh curse the Jews and the Christians, (because) they took the graves of their Prophets as masjids**"? This is while knowing that some of the people who come from Al-Madinatul-Munawwarah (the city of Madinah) argue that the *masjid* of the Prophet (*SallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) has his grave in it and the grave of his two companions (Abū Bakr and ‘Umar) (*RadhiyAllāhu 'anhumā*), so it is like the other *masjids* with prayer being permissible in it. I hope for some clarification.

Shaykh Bin Bāz (*rahimahullāh*) answered:

The Messenger (*SallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) cursed whoever took *masjids* over graves and he warned against that. This is just as is mentioned in the previous *hadeeth*, and he said, “**Indeed those who were before you all used to take the graves of their Prophets and their righteous people as masjids. So do not take the graves as masjids, for indeed I prohibit you all from that.**” Muslim reported it in the *Saheeh*, and the two Shaikhs (Al-Bukhāree and

⁷ Irfan Ahmed also has issue with real estate developments in Makkah as he mentioned in an article for *The Asian News* in December 2006, see: http://www.theasiannews.co.uk/heritage/s/221/221346_the_shadow_of_zamzam.html

Muslim) both reported from 'Ā'ishah (*RadhiyAllāhu 'anhā*) that Umm Habeebah and Umm Salamah (*RadhiyAllāhu 'anhumā*) mentioned to the Prophet (*SallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) a church that they saw in the land of al-Habashah (Ethiopia) and what it contained of pictures. So he said, **“Those people, when a righteous man died among them, they built over his grave a masjid and they made these pictures in it. Those people are the worst of the creation with Allāh.”** So the Prophet (*SallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) explained that those who build *masjids* over graves, they are the worst of creation with Allāh, and he warned against their deed. Hence, that proves that the *masjid* that is established over a grave, or more than one grave, prayer (*As-Salāh*) should not be performed in it. And there is no difference between one grave or more than that. **So if the *masjid* was built last (i.e. the grave was there first) over the graves, it is obligatory to tear it down, and the graves are to be left in the clear open with nothing built over them just as the graves were in the time of the Prophet (*SallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) in the cemetery known as Al-Baqee' and in other places. And the matter remains like this until today in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The graves in Saudi Arabia are out in the open without any structure built over them, and with no domes or *masjids* over them, and all praise and blessing is due to Allāh. However, if the *masjid* is old but a grave or more than one grave are put in it, then verily the grave is to be dug up and the person in it is to be moved to the general graveyards that do not have domes, *masjids* or any structure over them. And the *masjid* should remain empty of any graves so that prayer can be performed in it.** In reference to the argument of some ignorant people regarding the presence of the grave of the Prophet (*SallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*), and the grave of his two companions in his *masjid*, then there is no proof in that, because the Messenger (*SallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was buried in his house and not in the *masjid*, and his two companions, Abū Bakr and 'Umar (*RadhiyAllāhu 'anhumā*) were buried with him. However, when al-Waleed bin 'Abdil-Malik bin Marwān expanded the *masjid*, he put the house inside the *masjid* due to the expanding, and he was wrong in that. What was obligatory upon him was that he not put it (the house) in the *masjid* so that the ignorant people and their likes would not be able to use that as a proof (i.e. for allowing graves in *masjids*). Indeed the people of knowledge rebuked him for that, so it is not permissible that he be followed in this. And no one should think that this is from the matter of building structures over graves or taking them as *masjids*, because this house is independent (separate) that has been entered into the *masjid* for the need of expanding (the *masjid*). This is from the matter of the graveyard which is in front of the *masjid* but separate from the *masjid*, thus it does not harm it. Likewise, the grave of the Prophet (*SallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) is separated by a wall and rails. Thus, it is necessary for the Muslim to explain this to his brothers so that they do not make a mistake in this issue, and Allāh is the Giver of success.⁸

Yousef Muhammad writing in the *Arab News* in 21 December 2006 CE/30 Dhu'l-Qa'dah 1427AH in the article 'Demolition of Historic Madinah Mountain Halted' states:

⁸ 'Abdul'Azeez bin 'Abdullāh bin 'AbdurRahmān bin Bāz, from the Saudi Islamic Radio Programme series *Noorun 'ala'd-Darb*, tape no.62, originally translated into English by 'Aqeel Walker, see:

<http://ibad-ur-rahman.org/bin%20obāz%20answers%20questions%20concerning%20the%20Prophet%20Grave.html>

MADINAH, 21 December 2006 — **As part of efforts to preserve the Islamic heritage and antiquities in the holy city of Madinah, Crown Prince Sultan has instructed the authorities to stop demolition works on the historic Salae Mountain, located northwest of the Prophet’s Mosque.**⁹

“The crown prince has also ordered the formation of a committee to study the present condition of the mountain and expropriate real estate properties near the mountain to complete the ring road surrounding it,” said a statement carried by the Saudi Press Agency. Madinah Governor Prince Abdul Aziz ibn Majed thanked the crown prince for his action and praised his efforts in preserving Islamic landmarks. **Prince Sultan earlier instructed authorities to restore the centuries-old Osaifreen Mountain in Madinah. “Salae and Osaifreen mountains are great historic sites as they have witnessed a number of important Islamic events,” the governor said, adding that a number of tourism projects would be established at the historical sites in the near future.**¹⁰ The historic Khandaq Battle took place near Salae Mountain in the fifth year of Hijrah. The commander of the Muslim force took position on top of the mountain where the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and many of his companions had their camps. Prince Sultan stopped demolition of the historic site in response to the demand of people living in the area who wanted to preserve the location. The famous Seven Mosques were located west of Salae Mountain, which is situated close to the trench (khandaq) dug by the Prophet and his companions to protect them from invaders. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) used to stay at Banu Haram Mosque that was built on the western side of the mountain. Old Kufic writings on its northern side are still visible. A famous place called Dakkat Jalal is located to the east. Located about 700 meters away from the Prophet’s Mosque, Salae Mountain is composed of basalt rocks; it is nearly a kilometer in length, 80 meters high and 300 to 800 meters wide. The Madinah Municipality caused another controversy earlier this year when it pulled down the Aqeeq Valley Bridge, which was part of the historic Hejaz Railway, in August. **Prince Sultan ibn Salman, secretary-general of the Supreme Commission for Tourism (SCT), then said that the demolition of the bridge was an unacceptable mistake.**¹¹ **There are some 1,000 tourist sites in Madinah with Islamic monuments representing about 50 percent of the total. Efforts are being made to develop these sites as part of a major effort by the Supreme Commission for Tourism to promote domestic tourism and attract foreign tourists.**¹²

M. Ghazanfar Ali Khan in an article entitled *‘New Laws Planned to Preserve Historical Monuments’* dated: 13 May 2004 CE/23 Rabe’ al-Awwal 1425 AH in the *Arab News* highlights:

RIYADH, 13 May 2004 — **The government is formulating new laws to preserve historical monuments and other sites of archaeological importance as well as to encourage the spread of museums across the country. The move, promoted by the Supreme Commission for Tourism, is intended to end the destruction of scores of historical and**

⁹ Does this sound as if the Saudis are purposefully destroying Islamic heritage?

¹⁰ So obviously it would not be in the interest to “destroy Islamic heritage” as the likes of Irfan Ahmed assert.

¹¹ Therefore, this shows that in some cases historic Islamic sites may have been demolished without the knowledge of the people in authority.

¹² <http://www.arabnews.com/?page=1§ion=0&article=90238&d=21&m=12&y=2006>

Islamic sites which could be developed as tourist and cultural attractions. Prince Sultan ibn Salman, SCT's secretary-general, appointed an international agency last week to draw up a four-year strategy to develop museums and to package and promote the country's wealth of antiquities for the tourist market. **"Efforts have already been intensified to develop important historical sites and to merge the Deputy Ministry of Antiquities and Museum with the SCT from next fiscal year,"** said Professor Sād Abdul Aziz Al-Rashid, deputy minister for antiquities at the Ministry of Education. **Professor Al-Rashid expressed his concern over the destruction and decay of old architectural and Islamic monuments and sites.** However, the sheer size of the country was part of the problem, he said. "Geographically, the Kingdom is so big that it is not possible for us to look after a relatively low-value historical site. We can't put obstacles also in the development of the country." **The issue of destruction of historic sites was recently raised in a lecture organized by the UK-based Barakat Trust, a charity that promotes the study and awareness of Islamic art and architecture.** Asked about the situation in the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah, Professor Al-Rashid said **attempts to preserve the cultural heritage in the two cities are a particularly difficult task, because the priority "is to carry out expansion to accommodate an ever-growing number of pilgrims."** However, he added that future plans, including the preservation and development of historical sites and monuments, "will be governed by the new laws." **Professor Al-Rashid said eight excavation teams had been working in different parts of the Kingdom last year and some 20 archaeological projects were currently being undertaken. Dr. Khaleel Ibrahim Al-Muaikel, head of archaeology at King Saud University, said the university has also started an excavation at Al-Oula region, where pre-Islamic materials including pottery have been found. The findings there are expected to shed new light on the history and heritage of the Arabian Peninsula in general and Saudi Arabia in particular.**¹³

In an article entitled '*SCT to Focus on Preservation of Historic Sites*' by M. Ghazanfar Ali Khan again writing in the *Arab News* on 23 June 2004/5 Jumadā al-Ulā 1425 AH states:

RIYADH, 23 June 2004 — **The Supreme Commission for Tourism is to focus increasingly on the preservation of the Kingdom's threatened historical sites,** highlighting a recently restored palace in Taif as an example of the cultural attractions the Kingdom has to offer.

Shubra Palace, once the summer residence of King Abdul Aziz and the seat of the government, has been opened for public after the completion of massive renovation works. Crown Prince Abdullah recently led a group of officials on a visit of the palace, which consists of a five-story building and a sprawling estate. At an event mapping out strategies to promote the Kingdom's historical and cultural monuments, the commission said Shubra Palace embodied the Kingdom's history of unification and Islamic art. The SCT workshop, which drew more than 100 people from the public and private sector, discussed the imminent merger of the deputy ministry of antiquities and museums with the SCT, its Secretary-General Prince Sultan ibn Salman said. Once it is complete, the commission will be better able to focus on preserving and promoting heritage sites. **Several experts at the workshop expressed concern over the destruction of venerable architectural and Islamic**

¹³ <http://www.arabnews.com/?page=1§ion=0&article=44850&d=13&m=5&y=2004>

monuments. Professor Sād Al-Rashid, the deputy minister for antiquities and museums at the Ministry of Education, said the SCT has already started work on some projects to preserve historical sites and turn them into valuable tourist attractions in the process. Al-Rashid said the move would allow the SCT to curb the wanton destruction of scores of historical and Islamic sites, either by government agencies or by individuals. “We dispatched eight scientific excavation teams in different parts of the Kingdom last year alone and we are handling some 20 archaeological projects at the moment,” he said. A group of experts from King Saud University has also started excavation works in the Al-Oula region, where pre-Islamic findings will shed new light on the history of the Arabian Peninsula.¹⁴

Habib Shaikh in an article entitled ‘*Saudi Arabia Rich in Islamic Sites*’ on 28 December 2006 CE/7 Dhu’l-Hijjah 1427AH in the *Arab News* throws into question the claims of Irfan Ahmed and Daniel Howden in their somewhat alarmist articles with regards to the “destruction of historic Islamic sites” which were uncritically followed by many Muslims, particularly after Howden’s front-page spread.¹⁵ Habib Shaikh informs:

As the birthplace of Islam, Saudi Arabia abounds in historical sites. There is hardly an account of a visit to Makkah, Madinah or other parts of the country made by travelers of years past that does not mention one of them. Although the very existence of some is questionable, there are other sites of which the historical significance is beyond doubt.

There are supposed to be no less than 300 locations between Makkah and Madinah. Some were old mosques built on an older site related to the Prophet, (Peace Be Upon Him) or one of his companions. Very few of the holy sites are documented. Some people in Makkah and Madinah make individual efforts, but they are not scientific and don’t have proper documentation. Many of the sites outside of Makkah and Madinah are still there in some form. Unfortunately, many of the sites once in Makkah and Madinah and in between no longer exist. Some are left to oblivion for fear of ‘shirk’ and ‘bidat,’ especially when it comes to sites involved with the life and times of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh); others have been demolished in the interest of development. Rutter, who visited the Kingdom in 1925 and met Abdul Aziz ibn Saud, notes that “in different parts of the Manakha there are several little mosques. These are cool silent places in the heat of the day. All are swept and garnished, and have grass mats on the floor. Some of them have small gardens beside them, and green branches and trees may be seen through the iron-barred windows by the sitters within. Among these mosques are the Masjid Al-Ghamama, Masjid Ali, Masjid Abi Bakr, Masjid ibn Anas, and the Masjid Umar.” He also notes that “behind the hill Jabal Sil’a, to north-westward of the city, there are seven little mosques — Al-Masajid Al-Saba’a — scattered in the valley. One of these is known as the Mosque of the Two Qiblas.” “Underneath this mosque there is a well, which is reached by means of a flight of steps,” he adds, and continues: “On our way we passed by the Masjid Al-Ijaba, where the Prophet (pbuh) is said to have prayed to God...”

¹⁴ See for example: <http://www.arabnews.com/?page=21§ion=0&article=81033&d=20&m=4&y=2006>

¹⁵ Howden yet again wrote an article on 19 April 2006 entitled ‘*Shame on the House of Saud: Shadows Over Mecca*’ in *The Independent* (of London) wherein he repeated his early claims of August 2005 and worked in conjunction with Irfan Ahmed. See: http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/article358577.ece also see: <http://www.savethehijaz.org/> which also regurgitates this polemic.

Writing about Jeddah in his “Travels,” Ibn Jubayr says that “in it is a place having an ancient and lofty dome, which is said to have been the lodging place of Eve, the mother of mankind, — God’s blessing upon her — when on her way to Makkah. This edifice was erected to illustrate its blessedness and excellence. God best knows concerning it.” Ibn Al-Mujawir also describes the tomb as a place having a lofty dome. Al-Hamdani mentions the site in his “Sifat Jazirat Al-Arab” (Description of the Island of the Arabs). Mention of Eve also is made by Idrisi in his “Nuzhat Al-Mushtaq fi Ikhtiraq Al-Afaq” (The Delight of Those Who Seek to Wander Through the Regions of the World); in the words “it is there that her mortal remains are buried.” In “Travels to the Coast of Arabia,” published in 1788, the Western adventurer H. Rooke, wrote: “About a quarter of a mile north of the town is a white building called Eve’s sepulcher, and they tell you that she was certainly buried there, and her grave is 20 feet in length, which they determine to have been the standard height of mankind at that early period of the world; the two Arabic words Oumana Houa, signifying Eve, the mother of all, are inscribed on the building.” Ibn Jubayr goes on to mention that the city has “a blessed mosque attributed to ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab — May God hold him in His favor — and another with two pillars of ebony wood, also attributed to him — May God hold him in His favor — though some attribute it to Harun Al-Rashid — May God have mercy on him.” It is said that in Makkah there are two houses related directly to the Prophet — the birthplace of the Prophet now is where the library is, and the house in which he lived with Lady Khadeeja. That is the house that is sometimes called the Lady Khadeeja House, sometimes called the birthplace of Fatima because she was born in that house, and all his children were born in that house. He lived for 18 years in that house and received the wahi (revelation) in that house on many occasions. In his book, “Mekka: In the Latter Part of the 19th Century,” author C. Snouk Hurgronje mentions the house of Abu Bakr, the house where Ali was born. He also mentions the “many yards long” grave of the Mother of Mankind. Hurgronje tells about the tomb of Maimunah, a wife of the Prophet, as being “on the road to Medina, half a day’s journey northwestward from Mekka.” There are many houses in which the Prophet and others used to gather, such as Dar Ul Arkam, which “one could say it to be the first school in Islam.” There are also many mosques related to the Prophet. **And there are natural locations, such as Mount Hira, Mount of Noor (Jabal Al-Noor) and the Mount of Mercy (Jabal Rahma). It was at a cave in Jabal Hira that the first wahi (revelation) came to the Prophet. “History of Makkah” and “History of Madinah,” two books prepared by a group of scholars under the supervision of Shaikh Saifur-Rahman Mubarakpuri, throw light on many such sites.** It was at Jabal Thawr, that the Prophet and Abu Bakr hid in a cave on their migration (Hijra) from Makkah to Madinah. The mosque in Mina, Masjid-Al-Khaif, is a place where Prophet Mohammed prayed during the Haj, and according to the marfu’ hadith (traceable) of Ibn Abbas 70 prophets prayed there. The Masjid At-Tani’m, also known as the Mosque of A’ishah — Ummul Mu’minin (mother of the believers) — is situated 7.5 kms from the Makkah Haram on the road from Makkah to Madinah. It is the place where she went to enter ihram for Umrah when the Prophet told her to do so during the Farewell Pilgrimage. Masjid Al-Ji’ranah is situated between Taif and Makkah, closer to Makkah. The Prophet stopped at that location on his way back from the campaign of Hunaian and entered Ihram from there. Masjid Al-Jinn (Mosque of the Jinn) is the place where Allah had commanded the Prophet to recite the Quran to the Jinn. It is on the edge of Al-Hajun. One finds mentioned in books, the houses of Abu Sufyan, Abdullah bin Abdul-Mutallib, and Ali bin Abi Talib in

Makkah. The Quba Mosque in Madinah, the first mosque in the Holy City built by the Prophet after his migration there, had a well related to the Prophet. The other historical mosques in Madinah include Al-Ijabah Mosque, Al-Jumu'ah Mosque, Al-Qiblatain Mosque (Mosque of the Two Qiblahs), Masjid Al-Mustarah (Mosque of Banu Harithah), Al-Fath Mosque, Al-Miqat Mosque, Al-Musalla Mosque and Al-Fash Mosque. Al-Ijabah Mosque is also known as the Mosque of Banu Mu'awiyah because of its location in the district of Banu Mu'awiyah from the Ansar. It is named Al-Ijabah because the Prophet supplicated Allah for three things, and had two prayers granted. The third was declined. The prayers granted were that the Ummah would not be destroyed by famine and by drowning. The third was about fighting among the people of the Ummah. The Al-Jumu'ah mosque is so called because the Prophet prayed at the location on the first Friday after he arrived in the village of Quba on his way to Madinah. It is also known by other names, such as Masjid Bani Salim, Masjid Al-Wadi (the Valley Mosque, because it is in the middle of the Valley of Ranuna), Masjid Al-Ghubaib and Masjid 'Atikah. Al-Qiblatain Mosque is so named because one prayer was offered therein facing two Qiblahs — Baitul-Maqdis (Jerusalem) and Bait Al-Haram (the Sacred House in Makkah. The Prophet was offering Zuhr (afternoon) prayers with his companions when he was commanded to face towards the Ka'aba. It is also known as Masjid Bani Salamah, because of its location in the village of Banu Salamah. The Mosque of Banu Harithah was built during the time of the Prophet, and the people of the Banu Harithah tribe used to pray there. It is reported that the Prophet also prayed there. Al-Fath Mosque is so called because Allah revealed to His Prophet the glad tidings of victory during the Battle of the Trench. It is located in the north of Madinah on a mountain called Sal'a. It is also known as the Mosque of the Confederates because the Prophet (pbuh) supplicated against the Confederates (of Quraish), saying: "O Allah! Vanquish the Confederates!" Jabir bin Abdullah narrated that the Prophet supplicated in Al-Fath Mosque three times — on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and he was answered on the Wednesday between the two prayers with the good news. Al-Miqat Mosque is so called because it is the miqat for the people of Madinah and is also known as the Mosque of Al-Ihram. The Prophet prayed therein and entered into a state of ihram from there. The mosque is also known as the Ash-Shajarah (the tree) Mosque, because it was built near a tree under which the Prophet used to rest. As is it located in Dhul-Hulaifah area, it is also called by that name. Al-Musalla Mosque is located southwest of the Prophet's Mosque. It is in a place that he used for Eid prayer, and was also called Maidan Al-Musalla. It has been confirmed that he performed the rain prayer in Maidan Al-Musalla. It is also known as Al-Ghamama Mosque because it is said that a cloud shaded him from the sun when he was performing the rain prayer. Al-Fash Mosque is a small mosque under the cave at Mount Uhud. It is reported that the Prophet performed Zuhr prayer sitting at its location after the fighting on the day of Uhud, because of the injuries sustained during the battle and the Muslims prayed sitting behind him. It was perhaps built by Umar bin Abdul Aziz during his governorship of Madinah. The structure is Ottoman. The Al Katibiyya mosque in Madinah is at least 300 something years old. Next to it is the grave of one of the sahaba who fought at Badr. There are many such places in the Kingdom, but they are concentrated around Makkah or Madinah or in-between. For those looking for a new perspective — or a reminder of the old one — a little historical tourism might be in order over the next vacation time.¹⁶

¹⁶ See <http://www.arabnews.com/?page=21§ion=0&article=90452&d=28&m=12&y=2006>

In fact if Daniel Howden and Irfan Ahmed were really aware, and genuine enough to have adequately checked, they would have known what M. Ghazanfar Ali Khan reported in January 2005 for the *Arab News* in a very interesting article entitled *'Tighter Rules to Protect Heritage Sites'*, way before their articles, that:

RIYADH, 2 January 2005 – **The government will impose tighter rules and restrictions in order to protect and restore rare architectural and heritage sites. The government, which is awaiting the final draft from the Shoura Council of the rules governing the tourism and heritage sector, is also discussing the option of penalizing people for the wanton destruction of rare historical sites or buildings in the country. This was revealed by Prince Sultan ibn Salman, secretary-general of the Supreme Commission for Tourism (SCT), at a press conference here yesterday. The conference was convened to announce the institution of an award for architectural heritage under the aegis of Al-Turath Foundation, a nonprofit organization established by Prince Sultan himself with a mandate to preserve antiquities.**¹⁷ The briefing was also attended by Riyadh Mayor Prince Abdul Aziz ibn Muhammad ibn Ayyaf Al-Muqrin and Professor Sād Abdul Aziz Al-Rashid, deputy minister for antiquities. **Speaking about the destruction of some historical and Islamic sites in Saudi Arabia as reported in the past, Prince Sultan said: “We have gone through enough destruction in the past. We will not allow it any longer. In fact, the government is now committed to protecting the rare sites and buildings of archaeological and historical importance. The government has already allocated SR300 million for the restoration or, I may say, revival of the famous old Dirriyah historical village near the capital city.”** At the moment, there are some 1,679 archaeological sites, 143 historical sites and 184 sites related to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The sites have been documented by the SCT. Spelling out the details of the new prize, Prince Sultan said: “This award will help promote awareness about the architectural heritage and the importance of preserving it.” The award – called “Prince Sultan ibn Salman Award for Architectural Heritage” – will be presented in three fields – research related to architectural heritage, use of architectural heritage in new designs and heritage restoration and rehabilitation. The prince said the award is the first initiative to generate greater awareness about the preservation of architectural sites and buildings. It will be given away every two years. Candidates interested in obtaining information on applying for the award should contact Al-Turath Foundation. **The prince said: “The government is exerting more efforts to restore historical sites and recently we sent some 25 municipal officials to the Italian city of Tuscany on a week-long familiarization trip during which the officials learnt about how the Italians restored the old historical sites and even the whole ancient cities.”** On the role of municipalities in ensuring protection for rare architectural sites, Prince Al-Ayyaf reaffirmed his commitment to work closely with Prince Sultan, saying that “new regulations to be announced soon will help to streamline this sector.” He said Al-Turath has been organizing cultural and educational activities that stress the importance of national heritage.¹⁸

¹⁷ Not to be confused with the Kuwaiti *Thyā Turāth*!!!

¹⁸ <http://www.arabnews.com/?page=1§ion=0&article=56929&d=2&m=1&y=2005>

So in all of this it would have been adequate for Angel Rabasa, Cheryl Bernard, Lowell H. Schwartz and Peter Sickle to quote all sides of the story instead of just running with the partisan assertions of the extremist *Sufis*.

It is all the more strange that the *Sufis* of the era want to make themselves out to be those ones who the West should liaise with, even though the *Sufis* throughout the nineteenth century were the ones also revolting against British, French and Russian (i.e. Western) colonialism in Algeria, India, Senegal, Russia, Somalia, Syria, Sudan and other places!!¹⁹ Indeed, even some of the

¹⁹ For example,

- AbdulQādir ibn Muhiydeen ibn Mustaphā al-Hasanee al-Jazā'iree, born in Qaytana, Algeria in 1222 AH/1807 CE. In 1246 AH/1830 CE when the French colonialists entered Algeria, he led a resistance against the French until 1263 AH/1847 CE when the 'sultān of the West' 'AbdurRahmān ibn Hishām made a peace deal with the French and then 'AbdulQādir was taken to Toulon. In 1281 AH/1864 CE, he was allowed to move to Damascus where he died in 1300 AH/1883 CE.
- In Senegal, those who opposed French colonialism included Ahmadu Bamba, Imām Samore Toure and Mahmadu al-Ameen. Mahmadu al-Ameen, a *Tijānee soofee*, waged his war at a time when French colonial conquest was at its most vigorous phase during 1885 to 1887. Mahmadu al-Ameen began to be feared by the French as by 1885 he had an army numbering 5000 armed men with ammunition, thus the French, with support from Britain and other tribes and clans opposed to Mahmadu Ameen were cornered at Niani.
- Imām Shamil Muhammad ad-Daghestanee fought against Tsarist Russia for 35 years, his teacher was Mullah Muhammad al-Ghazzee al-Kamrawee, whose own military career began when Russia declared protection for Christians in Khurjistan and then formal annexation of the region from Safawid Persia in 1215 AH/1800 CE. Al-Ghazzee recruited thousands of soldiers and fought until his death in 1248 AH/1832 CE, when his successor al-Ameer al-Khanzajee took over but was killed the same year, after which the war's leadership went to Imām Shamil. He fought many pitched battles with the Russians in the 27 years of resistance that followed. In 1260 AH/1844 CE his forces captured 35 Russian canons, which provoked Russia to send an even larger army to finish off the *mujāhideen*, who still fought on 15 years more until 1279 AH/1859 CE when Shamil Muhammad was captured. Shamil Muhammad was then banished to Turkey and then travelled to Madeenah and died there. We will speak about him further later.
- Muhammad ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Hasan as-Somālee, born in 1864 CE near Bohotle in north-central Somalia. He was an important intellectual and scholar well versed in the Qur'ān, *hadeeth* and Islamic jurisprudence. He had resistance to the British and Italians in his country for more decades, 1899-1920 and highlighted that non-Muslims from remote lands entered Somalia enforcing Christianity, supported by their governments and their military superiority. Bradford Martin in his book *Muslim Brotherhoods in 19th Century Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp.179-200, states that Muhammad ibn 'Abdullāh as-Somālee mounted a military movement that was perhaps sustained longer and was more successful than any movement led by an African Muslim leader of the 19th century. For 20 years the hands of the Italians and the British were tied, forcing the imperial forces to spend huge sums of money, raising taxes in their home countries in

contemporary *Sufis* of the West have admitted this, or rather they admitted this when it was politically correct for them to highlight this with no fear. So for example, Abdal Hakim Murad (aka TJ Winter) himself stated in an article entitled *The Poverty of Fanaticism: Islamic Spirituality, the Forgotten Revolution* in a rather odd attempt to present the *Sufis* as being ‘militant’ stated, prior to the events of 9/11 when many were not ashamed to mention the word *jihād*:

Likewise, the Islamic obligation of jihād has been borne with especial zeal by the Sufi orders. All the great nineteenth century jihadists: Uthman dan Fodio (Hausaland)²⁰, al-Sanousi (Libya), Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza’iri (Algeria), Imam

order to fund these wars, and costing more lives purely on military operations. Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullāh as-Somālee died in 1920 at 56 years of age.

- The *Sufis* of Sudan joined the revolt of Muhammad Ahmad (the false claimant of being the Mahdi) against the Franco-British backed regime of the Turko-Egyptians during 1880-1898 CE!
- Even al-Kabbānee admitted this himself, despite his current frolics with the secularist rulers of Uzbekistān! Kabbānee had the nerve to say in his book, in the chapter entitled ‘*Jihad and Sufi Mujahidin*’, that the *Sufis* “...far from encouraging escapism and quietism that impedes social progress, upheld the highest values of social consciousness as well as religious inquiry and science. In fact, they provide adequate testimony to an unremitting jihad and struggle against social injustice and social inaction that took place over the centuries.” See Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, GF Haddad (ed.), *Islamic Beliefs & Doctrine According to Ahl al-Sunna: A Repudiation of “Salafi” Innovations, vol.1* (Mountain View, CA: ASFA, 1996), p.230. What warped understanding of “social justice” leads al-Kabbānee to impugn 80% of the *masājid* in America to be run by “Wahhabi terrorists”?! What bizarre notion of “upholding high values of social consciousness” leads al-Kabbānee to wine and dine with the enemies of Islām?!

²⁰ He wasn’t a clear *sufi*. He is Aboo Muhammad ‘Uthmān ibn Muhammad ibn Foodee, born in Marratta in northern Nigeria in 1168 AH/ 1754 CE. The name ‘Dan Fodio’ is the Hausa rendition of Ibn Foodee. He was from a family of scholars that migrated to Hausaland from Futa Toro before the 15th century CE, bringing with it the Islamic tradition of Timbuktu. He waged a *jihād* in 1217 AH/1802 CE against clans that had violently opposed Islām and strongly repressed the Muslims. He established the Sokoto Islamic state which ruled by *Sharee’ah* in West Africa. He is known for his *tajdeed* efforts and his stance against innovations. A number of folkloric legends and myths surrounded the personality of Dan Fodio as some people claimed that he could “walk on water” or appear in dreams. Some people even claimed that he was *the Mahdi*! All of these ideas were refuted by Dan Fodio himself during his time. In a book entitled *Tanbeeh al-Faheem*, Dan Fodio refuted the claims of a man named Hammā who lived in Maganga, Nigeria and was claiming to be the *Mahdi*. The man was later executed for his heresy (MA al-Hajj, *The Mahdist Tradition in Northern Nigeria*, A.B.U. 1973). Dan Fodio however did make some comments in some of his works that were in line with the *Asharees*, but at times he clearly said things in line with the *Salaf* (pious predecessors) as have been mentioned. He therefore was akin to Imām an-Nawawee and Ibn Hajar, who also had teachers that were of the *Ash’aree ‘aqeedah* but were not pure *Asha’arees*. Dan Fodio’s chain of scholars however reveals

interesting facts. One of teachers was Jibreel ibn 'Umar of the Tuareg tribe who had made Hajj and thus lived in Makkah for a while. In Madeenah, Jibreel Ibn 'Umar studied with Muhammad Murtada az-Zabeedee (1145-1205 AH/ 1732-1791 CE) who was originally from India but had travelled to az-Zabeedee in Yemen where he lived for a while and studied before going on to teach in Madeenah himself. One of az-Zabeedee's teachers was Shāh Waliullāh ad-Dehlawee (1702 – 1762 CE) of Delhi in India. Dan Fodio's uncle who taught him *hadeeth* was Muhammad bin Rāj who had studied under Abu'l-Hasan as-Sindee also from India and a teacher of *hadeeth* in Madeenah. Abu'l-Hasan as-Sindee was a student of Muhammad Hayāt as-Sindee another great *hadeeth* scholar of India who was also teaching in Madeenah. One of Muhammad Hayāt as-Sindee's students was Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhāb (*rahimahumullāh*). Also see a recent study conducted in Nigeria and written in Arabic entitled *Asāneed al-Faqeer ad-Da'eef al-Mutashāfee bi'l-Mushaffa' Ahmad as-Shareef* (Ms. University of Ibadan Library 82/137: Ibadan, Centre of Islamic Documentation (CAD)). This *sanad* was also mentioned by an American Muslim researcher who had graduated from *Madeenah University*. Also see the research of a non-Muslim researcher Stefan Reichmuth in his "*Murtada al-Zabidi (d. 1791) in Biographical and Autobiographical Accounts – Glimpses of Islamic Scholarship in the 18th Century CE*" in the Islamic studies journal *Die Welt Des Islams – International Journal for the Study of Modern Islam* (Leiden, Boston and Koln: Brill, Vol. 39, No. 1, March 1999) p.70.

With regards to fanatical blind following of Imām Mālik, it is known that **"...the greatest contribution of Dan Fodio's reforming ideas, apart from his views on Sunnah and Bid'a, was in the field of madhāhib (schools of law)."** See F.H. al-Misri (ed.), *Bayān Wujoob ul-Hijrah 'ala'l-'Ibād* (Khartoum University Press and OUP, 1978).

'Uthmān ibn Foodee said in his book *Hidāyatut-Tullāb* (Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation, 1961), p.2:

"Neither Allāh in His book, nor the Prophet in his Sunnah made it obligatory that one particular madhhab should be followed, nor did we hear any of the early scholars enjoining a person to follow one way. If they had done that, they would have committed a sin by not allowing people to act in accordance with ahadeeth which that particular way did not give weight to."

Other statements from 'Uthmān ibn Foodee can be found in his book *Hisn ul-Afhām min Juyoosh il-Awhām* [The Fortification of Understanding Against the Armies of Delusion], this book was translated into English as *Islam Against Illusions* (Quality Press, 1989) by Fazlur Rahman Siddiqi. In the book 'Uthmān ibn Foodee says of many 'scholars,'

"If such a person is not aware of the Sunnah it is not permissible to follow him...He is simply a lunatic lost in his special state." (ibid. p.105 (Arabic text), p. 157 (Eng. Text))

'Uthmān ibn Foodee also says in the same book,

"Some people are ignorant of the Sunnah, but they are anxious to emulate the practices of their Shaykh. If you speak to them about the Sunnah they will reply, "My Shaykh was doing this, my Shaykh was doing that," thus contradicting the clear and open Sunnah."
ibid. p. 90 (Arabic text), p. 99 (Eng. Text)

Under delusion number 35 Imām 'Uthmān states:

"There are people in this country who venerate stones and trees...they sacrifice animals for them symbolizing that the stones and trees are great, and they even pour flour-paste on them."

Shamil (Daghestan)²¹ and the leaders of the Padre Rebellion (Sumatra) were active practitioners of Sufism, writing extensively on it while on their

He further stated:

“The one who indulges in such activities is considered a kāfir according to consensus.”

Dr Siddiqi stated (ibid. pp.34-36)::

“Since innovations and superstitions prevailed in all parts of the country, the common people as well as the Muslim scholars of that time were involved in un-Islamic practices and the whole society changed into a corrupt and demoralized society.”

Hence, there was a situation which was exactly what was prevalent during the epoch of Imām Muhammad ibn ‘AbdulWahhāb, Dr Siddiqi continues

“At that time, Muslims were called Muslims only because they were born in the so-called ‘Muslim families’ while their characters and practices were against Islam and its education. Their belief was that some trees and stones deserved respect and worship and that these could provide them with the means of subsistence or bless them with a child...Muslims of that time had totally lost their Islamic identifications because of their pagan practices. Even for a Muslim, it was difficult to recognize his Muslim brother. Even the Ulama accused the Shaykh, but they were not sincere in their remarks against him. Their attitude to the Shaykh was not based on their sincerity, but it was the result of a conspiracy against the Shaykh by the Sultān.”

Dr Siddiqi also states on page 175 of *Islam Against Illusions*:

“According to Muhammad Bello...the main purpose of his (Imām ‘Uthmān’s) sermons was to teach the people the fundamentals of Islam; preferably, the principles of tawheed, the other articles of faith and the essential duties of a Muslim towards Islam.”

Muhammad Bello (*raheemahullāh*) was the son of Imām ‘Uthmān. Therefore, here alone we can see a radical departure in the emphasis of Imām ‘Uthmān and the *Sufis* of the era, who refrain from calling to *tawheed* based on their claim that it causes division! Not to mention the fact that they are largely ignorant of it. ‘Uthmān ibn Foodee also made similar statements in his books *Irshād al-Ummah ilā Tayseer il-Milla* and *Tawqeeful-Muslimeen*. See Ahmad Mohammad Khani, *The Intellectual Origin of the Sokoto Jihad* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Iman Publications, Muharram 1405 AH/1985 CE), pp.85-90.

²¹ He was born in the small village of Gimry which is in present-day Daghestan in 1797 CE. He studied Arabic, logic and other subjects. He was born at a time when the Russian Empire was expanding into the territories of the Ottoman and Persian empires. After the Russian invasion, the Caucasian tribes united against the oppressive Tsarist rule in what came to be known as the Caucasian War. Imam Shamil became the leader of the Caucasian resistance in 1834 CE and in June-August 1839 went to the mountains with some 4000 followers including women and children. They found themselves under siege in their mountain stronghold in Akhoulgo in a siege which lasted for eighty days and resulted in huge losses for Shamil and most of his followers were killed yet the Russians also had 3000 casualties. Amazingly, Imam Shamil and some of his closest followers were able to escape down the cliffs and cross Russian siege lines, then he re-grouped and resumed guerrilla tactics against the oppressive Tsarist Russian incursion. In 1859 however, Imam Shamil and his family surrendered and were imprisoned and then exiled to Kaluga, a small town near Moscow and then in 1869 was given permission to leave for Makkah via Istanbul. He died in Madeenah in

campaigns. Nothing is further from reality, in fact, than the claim that Sufism represents a quietist and non-militant form of Islam.²²

There are some issues to append to this statement from Murad and those who follow him from the *Sufis* and others, with regards to his referral to 'Uthmān Dan Fodio and Imām Shamil. As we have already discussed Dan Fodio, we will look at Imām Shamil.

Similar in many ways to Imām 'Uthmān Dan Fodio (*rahimahullāh*), Imām Shamil (*rahimahullāh*) also was a far cry from the 'Sufism' that is being adhered to by the contemporary claimants such as Murad (Winter), Kabbani et al. What has to be understood is that after the dissemination of Sufism, it remained amongst most Muslims until some scholars became aware of the excessive and uncorroborated practices, but it is not correct for the contemporary claimants of a 'Sufi tradition' to jump on them as their role models, as the likes of Murad (TJ Winter) do when it suits and we shall mention herein some reasons as to why this is the case. Imām Shamil was a *Sufi* of sorts, but his "Sufism" was in many ways of the antithesis of the "Sufism" of those who hypocritically claim him as their own – especially the neocon *Sufis*. Shamil's *Sufi* movement, known as Muridism, was essentially a 19th century *Naqshabandi Shafī'i* version of today's *Deobandi Hanafī Tālibān* or the Saudi *Hanbali mutawa*. That is, Shamil was concerned primarily with the implementation of the *sharē'ah* and by that we mean the external application of the *Sharē'ah* including the blessed *Sunnah* (*hijāb*, *hadd* punishments, beard, congregational prayer etc.) that classical and modern *Sufis* reject and mock. In fact, Shamil categorically stated that the only reason he waged *jihad* against the disbelieving Russians is because they prevented the Muslims from implementing the *Sharē'ah* and that had they left the Muslims to live by the laws of Islām, he would not have declared war upon them.

Another matter of divergence with today's *Sufis* is that Shamil saw his struggle as part of the wider anti-imperialist *jihad* of the Orthodox *Sunni ummah*. This is evidenced by his sending delegations to *Sunni* Muslims leaders, including the Ottoman Sultan, seeking military assistance and manpower. He would even encourage his followers with promises of Muslim armies coming to their support from as far as Yemen. All this is in stark contrast to the secretive, exclusive *Sufi* cults who see the wider *Sunni ummah* as *jāhil* heretics. The main reason that historians give for the ultimate defeat of Shamil's east North Caucasus resistance is because they failed to win the support of the Kabardians (i.e. the Upper Circassians) of the central North Caucasus. Had the Kabardians joined in the fight against the Tsar, the Muslims would have presented a united and, most probably, unassailable front from the Caspian to the Black Sea - the Lower Circassians in the Western Caucasus were also at war with the Russians. And the reason Muridism failed to spread

1871 CE and was buried at the Baqi'. Two of his sons served in the Russian army (Camaluddeen and Muhammad Sefi) while two other sons served in the Turkish army (Muhammad Ghazi and Muhammad Kamil).

²² *The Poverty of Fanaticism: Islamic Spirituality, the Forgotten Revolution*, 2000, available Online

amongst the Kabardians and Circassians in general was because they thought it way too austere and excessive (incl. *fard dhikr* sessions) compared to their own liberal application of Islām. Again, the *Sufi* opportunist admirers of Shamil today themselves claim to champion liberalism against “Wahhabi” austerity.

In addition to the above, Shamil was famously opposed to those aspects of local cultural practice and tradition (known as the “*adāt*”) which opposed the *Sharee’ah*. In other words, as far as Shamil was concerned, he was fighting *bida’* (innovation). This is stark contrast to those *Sufis* who claim their pluralistic interpretation of Islām defends traditional cultural Muslim practices. Finally, everyone in Russia today – Muslim and non-Muslim alike - see the “Wahhabis” as the inheritors of Shamil’s legacy and “Wahhabism” as the natural successor or progression from Muridism. That is because the only popular leaders consistently calling for the freedom to implement *Sharee’ah* in Dagestan/Aluania in our time have been former “Wahhabi” graduates from the Islamic universities of Madeenah and Riyadh or those influenced by their *dawah*. That’s not to say that Sufism has died out in Dagestan, on the contrary, it has flourished amongst the deviated ‘clerics’ who are patronized by the corrupted ones and whose Muridism is now confined to *dhikr* sessions and nothing else. In all likelihood, had Shamil lived today, he’d have declared the contemporary *Sufis* as being hypocritical or disbelieving apostates! See: <http://www.unc.edu/~aneurysm/pre.html>

We also have another example which totally rubbishes the RAND study for setting up “liberal Muslim networks” and including the *Sufis* in that. This is in the similitude of Shaykh Ahmad as-Sirhindi and his stern opposition to the “liberal Islamic ideals” of the Mughal king Akbar. Shaykh Shamsuddeen as-Salafee al-Afghānee states in his book *Juhood al-’Ulama al-Hanafiiyyah fee Ibtāl ’Aqā’id al-Qubooriyyah* [The Efforts of the Hanafee Scholars in Nullifying the Beliefs of the Grave-Worshippers] states:

Ahmad as-Sirhindee who is regarded by some of them as being the *Mujaddid* of the second (Islamic) millennium (he was born in 971 AH/1563 CE) and founder of the *Naqshabandiiyyah Mujaddiiyyah* (d.1034AH). An-Nadwee glorified him greatly, even though Sirhindee was one of the major senior people of *Wahdat ush-Shuhood* which is the same as *Wahdat ul-Wujood* (pantheism aka ‘unity of all existence’) but in a refined form. See for example Sirhindee’s *ad-Durar al-Makoonāt: Tarjama Maktoobāt* by al-Munzawee, vol.2, pp.5-7; *al-Muntakhabāt min al-Muktawiyāt*, p.10; also see Sirhindee’s biography in *Nuzhat ul-Khawātir*, vol.5, p.54. ’Allāmah al-Khajnadee al-Ma’soomee has some important statements in his book *Miftāh ul-Jannah* (pp.80-1) in regards to some of the superstitious beliefs and *shirk* of Sirhindee. Even though I know that Imām as-Sirhindee did some good things to help Islām and waged *jihād* (a struggle) against the great *tāghoot* Akbar bin Hamāyoon at-Taymooree, one of the great kings of India (d.1014 AH/1605CE). See for example *Nuzhat ul-Khawātir*, vol.5, pp.75-81 to read about what Akbar done and some of his false actions that distorted Islām and strengthened the idol worshippers and grave worshippers.²³

²³ Dr Shamsuddeen as-Salafee al-Afghānee, *Juhood ul-’Ulama al-Hanafiiyyah fee Ibtāl ’Aqā’id al-Qubooriyyah* (Riyadh: Dār us-Samee’ee, 1416AH/1996CE), vol.1, pp.72-4.

Akbar made up a heretical liberal creed named “*Deen-e-Ilahee*” which Ahmad Sirhindee, a *Naqshabandee Soofee* of his time, totally opposed and even branded as heretical. So it looks as if history shows that the *Sufis* have not been so inclined to “liberal Islam”. Indeed, Akbar emphasized the kind of liberal creed which RAND are now vainly attempting to get Western governments to implement on Muslims, a creed which called for absolute unity of beliefs, pantheism, a disregard of the Islamic *Sharee’ah*, to reconcile the beliefs of many of the world’s religions along with atheism. Akbar was so tolerant in his liberal enlightenment that he threw Sirhindi, who was a *Sufi*, into prison.

On page 75 they assess whether 'Islamists' should be engaged with, this is very interesting but as *Salafees* they have not stated as to whether they include as within that as well, but they do mention the usual suspects here such as *MCB* and other similar orgs. in France, Spain etc.

On page 79, they discuss 'potential target groups to engage with', again quite interesting.

On page 81 is an area that brothers need to critique, they state:

Democratic Education. The narrowly sectarian and regressive instruction on religion and politics dispensed at radical and conservative madrasas needs to be countered by a curriculum that promotes democratic and pluralistic values.

Madrasahs aim to teach Islamic science and they should be taught according to the way the companions were taught by the Prophet Muhammad but contextualized to the time that people are living in. alongside this, there has to be the correct understanding and done step-by-step. If one finds within the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad (*sallAllāhu alayhi wassallam*), or the teachings of the companions or within the understanding of the rightly guided successors, or those scholars who are well-known and firmly grounded in classical, authentic, traditional scriptural knowledge, the ideas purported now regarding democracy and pluralism, then Muslims should have no problems in accepting it. If it is not found from these classical scholars then Muslims should be careful in taking such ideas on board.

If such pluralistic and ‘democratic’ ideas are found in the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad then Muslims should have no problems. Again, why is it only Islamic education that is deemed as being undemocratic and not conducive to a pluralistic society? Should not also Roman Catholic, Jewish and Christian schools also therefore have to include these aspects? Or are the RAND researchers taking it as a given that these schools already have such ideals, while the Muslims do not? Furthermore, RAND have cleverly tried to link “regressive education” with strict adherence to the Islamic texts and this is false. As many religious schools are totally up to date with contemporary technological developments along with the latest educational teaching methods, therefore such “conservative” or “strict” Islamic education does not equal “regression.” On page 98 is their discussion of ‘*Moderate European Muslim Organisations*’ and they state, in a clear proof of their ignorance:

Although most European organizations purporting to represent Muslims are Salafi in orientation or are associated with or tolerant of extremist groups, there are some that are unquestionably moderate.

99% of these organizations are not “**Salafi in orientation**” at all! In fact, they themselves say that they are not *Salafee*! So how on earth do RAND (Angel Rabasa, Cheryl Bernard, Lowell H. Schwartz and Peter Sickle in particular) manage to equate “**most European organizations purporting to represent Muslims**” to the *Salafis*??! We hope that they would be *Salafi* but the reality is that they detest *Salafiyah*, so what *Salafiyah* are RAND talking about?

THE PROBLEM OF PALAZZI

Another problematic move is that Angel Rabasa, Cheryl Bernard, Lowell H. Schwartz and Peter Sickle quote Abdul-Hadi Pallazi, a discredited claimant to Islamic scholarship that is based in Italy, there was a website dedicated to refuting him but it seems to be non-existent at present. RAND state:

In Italy there are a number of moderate Muslim institutions and personalities. The Confederation of Moroccan Associations in Italy is headed by Souad Sbai, a Italian-Moroccan feminist who has been active in the fight against spouse abuse in Italy’s Moroccan community. The al-Azhar-educated Sufi sheikh Abdul Hadi Palazzi, another leading moderate, directs the Cultural Institute of the Italian Islamic Community, which promotes the development of Islamic education in Italy, combats fundamentalism and fanaticism, and is involved in interreligious dialogue, especially with Jews and Christians... Consequently, Muslims must abstain from actions allowed in the Quran when those actions are illegal in a society in which a Muslim lives. In 1996, Palazzi and Israeli scholar Dr. Asher Eder cofounded the Islam-Israel Fellowship to promote cooperation between Israel and Muslim nations, and between Jews and Muslims.

It would suffice the RAND contributors (i.e. Angel Rabasa, Cheryl Bernard, Lowell H. Schwartz and Peter Sickle) to conduct an in-depth investigation into the background of Abdul-Hadi Palazzi in order to corroborate just how “moderate” he is and his “scholarship”. This is not really suitable for an objective piece of work, as RAND are merely piecing together fringe elements they stumble across without assessing the Islamic credentials of the individuals. As a result, former cult followers, those with freemasonic tendencies, Islamic scholarship frauds and other shady characters become “**leading moderates**”. Palazzi, despite his rants against Saudi Arabia and “Wahhabis” claimed a few years ago that he has a special Islamic qualification direct from the former *Muftee* of Saudi Arabia Shaykh Bin Bāz (*raheemahullāh*)?!

In September 3 2001 Palazzi described Kofi Annan, the then UN Secretary-General, as being a “neo-Nazi” just because he condemned Israeli policies.²⁴ Indeed, Palazzi in order to further his own notoriety has thus positioned himself to buttress the state of Israel to the extent that he says that “there is no such thing as a Palestinian”?! He has also stated that “Israel belongs to the Jews because Allāh gave it to them” and other totally obscure statements which exhibit a distinct digression from classical and traditional Islamic beliefs. He is part of the obscure *‘Islam-Israel Fellowship’* of the *Root and Branch Association* wherein Palazzi meets with prominent Jewish leaders in order to condemn Palestinians and vociferously support Israel.

John Esposito, a Professor of Islamic Studies at *Georgetown University* in Washington and author of *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* stated that Palazzi’s interpretations “are not credible” and also said “I’m not too sure who, other than Palazzi, supports his position that the Koran endorses Jerusalem as an Israeli-held capital”, said Mr. Esposito, who is also editor of the *Oxford History of Islam*. **“I understand why Jewish groups like him – he’s got a good product to sell - but when you talk about top scholars on Islam, I’ve never heard his name mentioned.”** Palazzi has thus received much attention in the neo-con Jewish press but received scant, if any, recognition from the media of Muslim communities in the West! He has been praised by the *Jerusalem Post*, aswell as by:

- ✓ *Arutz Sheva (Israel National News);*
- ✓ *American Students for Israel;*
- ✓ *Eretz Yisroel;*
- ✓ *The Jewish Mag;*
- ✓ *Jewish World Review;*
- ✓ *The Jewish Journal;*
- ✓ *Am Yisrael Chai and many others!!?*²⁵

²⁴ *Cultural Institute of the Italian Islamic Community*, Monday Sep 3, 2001 3:35 pm . Subject: A Message for the Neo-Nazi Kofi Annan.

²⁵ See:

<http://www.jewishmag.com/75mag/palazzi/palazzi.htm>

<http://www.jewishjournal.com/home/preview.php?id=6528>

http://www.asiucsb.org/asiissues/blogfiles/mar_6_2004.htm

<http://www.geocities.com/rachav/amyisroelchai.html>

<http://www.jewishworldreview.com/jeff/jacoby051902.asp>

http://www.pmwatch.org/pmw/db/columns/display_message.asp?mid=410

In the above article *‘A Message of Hatred’* by Bruce Brill (one of Palazzi’s colleagues from the Islam-Israeli Fellowship of the Root-Branch Assoc.) in the *Washington Times* (July 2 2001 CE) says in regards to Palazzi **“a good Muslim must be a Zionist”!!?**

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/5010>

Palazzi is also totally discredited by the Muslim community of his homeland Italy and is not taken seriously at all by the Muslim community there. Another damning indictment if there ever was one! One of the main Islamic organizations in Italy is *AMI (the Italian Muslim Association)*²⁶ which Palazzi was made to leave which lead to Palazzi to set up his own organization entitled AMI also.²⁷ On February 25 2004 the Director of the bona-fide AMI Omar Danilo Speranza stated in an open letter:

Further, I hereby declare that **I have no relationship or connection to Mr. Massimo Palazzi (Abdul Hadi Palazzi) or to the directives or policies which he had imposed on the Italian Muslim Association in the past.**

In an article entitled *Antizionism and Antisemitism in the Contemporary Islamic Milieu*²⁸ Palazzi provides a rather simplistic assessment of Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb and mentions that some scholars branded him and his students as being apostates. Not a very moderate or tolerant form of Islām to promote by a think-tank! Palazzo also proceeds in this article to quote Qur'anic verses out of context and without referral to the explanations of the classical explainers and interpreters of the Qur'ān and this is unacceptable. As Palazzi has therefore given his own tafseer when he does not have the necessary Islamic knowledge or qualification to do that. Palazzi also stated in an interview with *Front Page Magazine* on September 12 2005 that:

To win the War on Terror, it is necessary to understand that *al-Qa'ida* is a Saudi organization, created by the House of Sa'ud, funded with petro-dollar profits by the House of Sa'ud and used by the House of Sa'ud for acts of mass terror primarily against the West, and the rest of the world, as well. **Consequently, to really win the War on Terror it is necessary for the U.S. to invade Saudi Arabia, capture King Abdallah and the other 1,500 princes who constitute the House of Sa'ud, to freeze their assets, to remove them from power, and to send them to Guantanamo for life imprisonment.** Then it is necessary to replace the Saudi-*Wahhabi* terror-funding regime with a moderate, non-*Wahhabi* and pro-West regime, such as a Hashemite *Sunni* Muslim constitutional monarchy. Unless all this is done, the War on Terror will never be won.²⁹

This is something which even the likes of Irfan Ahmed al-Alawi, Stephen Schwartz, Hishām Kabbānee and Abdal-Hakim Murad (TJ Winter) have not even yet called for!! That Saudi Arabia be attacked by non-Muslim governments in order to win the “war on terror”! Hereby calling for a few to be punished for the alleged “crimes” of a few. This is from a man who the RAND researchers (Angel Rabasa, Cheryl Bernard, Lowell H. Schwartz and Peter Sickle) have referred to as being “**a moderate**”.

²⁶ <http://www.amimuslims.org/>

²⁷ <http://www.amislam.com/> - This is Palazzi's official site which is not only designed in a rather simple manner but also totally polemical! It is strange how RAND, which boasts of being a professional academic think-tank has used something like this as a source.

²⁸ It can be read here: <http://village.flashnet.it/users/fn034463/racism.html>

²⁹ <http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/ReadArticle.asp?ID=19444>

On page 124-5 they laud praises on Hirsi Ali³⁰ and Wafa Sultan, when neither are Muslims in any case, let alone viable reference points for Muslims!?! So again how can RAND seek to try and

³⁰ ‘Ayān Hirsi Ali’ is a Somali apostate pseudo-feminist, former right-wing Dutch MP for the Dutch VVD party and self-confessed immigration cheat. Yet despite all this she was still chosen by *Time* magazine as being “**one of the most influential people of 2005**”. Influential for whom and for what we ask especially with a record as controversial as hers? After many Muslims were initially concerned about some of her wild claims and her false propaganda, the country to where she ‘fled’ has now exposed her deception and has stripped her of her beloved Dutch passport and citizenship. This was a documentary on a program entitled *Zembla* that is aired in Holland. ‘Hirsi ‘Ali’ rose to notoriety in the West after her extremist claims about Islām and by calling upon non-Muslim governments to do more to stand up for western values in order to fight against Islām. Her extremist opinions, which were not justified with any evidence, and her open *kufir* regarding Islām was given much media focus.

A few years ago, on TV, ‘Ayān Hirsi ‘Ali’ exclaimed that she had “**not been Muslim for five years**”, she reiterates this in her interviews. Yet in her recent book *The Caged Virgin: An Emancipation Proclamation for Women and Islam*, she regularly and dishonestly says “**we Muslims**”. On BBC2’s *Newsnight* (aired in the UK) in June 2006 she also made herself look utterly pathetic by claiming that she is arguing as a Muslim, but then the interviewer asked her how on earth she could have a Muslim audience when she was an atheist!?! In *The Caged Virgin* she demonstrates not only utter ignorance of Islām and poor research, but also presents a meagre understanding of history. She states for example: “**Every Muslim, from the beginnings of Islam to the present day, is raised in the belief that all knowledge can be found in the Koran.**” “**For Muslim children the study of biology and history can be very confusing.**” So here she is either absolutely ignorant of Islām or being deceptive, as the Muslim scholars note that knowledge of the mundane affairs can be sought, the only distinction that they make is that it is not as praiseworthy, but it can still be sought based on the hadeeth of the Prophet (*sallAllāhu alayhi wassallam*), found in the ‘*Book of Knowledge*’ in *Saheeh al-Bukhāree*, where he said to the people who were artificially inseminating the date-palms “*you know better about your dunya affairs.*” Furthermore, many of the bona-fide Islamic scholars have noted that worldly knowledge and sciences for human endeavour is a collective responsibility to acquire For more on this see Imām ‘Uthaymeen’s (*rahimahullāh*) words about knowledge: <http://www.salafimanhaj.com/pdf/Knowledge.pdf> So her claim that history and biology can be “confusing for Muslim children” (!!?) is again totally false, as the Muslims have studied these subjects for centuries with no difficulties whatsoever, in fact in Muslim Spain for example it was part of the curriculum to study these subjects, and if it was so “confusing for Muslim children” why are the subjects studied today in Muslim countries and within Islamic schools in Europe and the US?

She also argues that Islām has obstructed individual freedoms and that the individual is not valued in Islām. Another indication of further deceptive methods is in discussing the issue of female genital mutilation, she states that the practice was “spread by Islam” when rather it originates from the Pharaonic period and even according to the *United Nations Population Fund*, FGM is practiced in sub-Saharan Africa by Animists, Christians (Coptic and other), Muslims and Ethiopian Jews. However, only Islām is impugned within the simplistic, biased and poorly researched writing of ‘Ayān Hirsi Ali’, yet what can be expected from a self-confessed immigration cheat? She also states in *The Caged Virgin* that Muslim women are in some way incapable of speaking up for themselves and need Western women to do that for them, or

Westernised/Naturalised Euro or US women at least to speak up for them. This in itself indicates the extent to which 'Ayān Hirsi Ali' has internalized Orientalist thinking, she states, in an example wherein she puts herself forward as some sort of reference point for Muslim women, **"The [reason] I am determined to make my voice heard is that Muslim women are scarcely listened to, and they need a woman to speak out on their behalf."** Women during the epoch of the *salaf* were referred to by men for Islamic knowledge and asked to settle disputes over issues related to *'ilm*, this was during the epoch of early Islām, which 'Hirsi Ali' is obviously ignorant about. The book, *Caged Virgin*, is rather an insult to Muslim women, if indeed it is even directed to them, how such a poorly researched and factually inaccurate piece of work can somehow be taken as rallying cry for Muslim women in the West is beyond many Muslim women.

'Ayān Hirsi Ali' was the one who caused a *fitnah* in Holland/the Netherlands and increased the oppression of the Muslims there as she initiated a 'play' in Holland wherein verses of the Qur'ān were used in a despicable manner and Muslim women were in fact mocked. So 'Ayān Hirsi 'Ali' claims to represent Islām, yet the majority of Muslim women were utterly appalled by her disgusting play! This resulted in the assassination of the director of the play, Theo Van Gogh in 2004 the grandson of the world famous artist and ironically was vocally opposed to feminism! After this, the Muslims in that country were subject to a variety of draconian legislations all in order to suppress and restrict the development of Islām and the Muslims there. In any case, the Dutch have a history of turning the tables on its 'minority communities' and during World War 2, 80% of Dutch Jews were deported to concentration camps and subsequently gassed or massacred by the Nazis. The Dutch Jews were often escorted to the Nazis by the Dutch themselves as the Dutch wanted to free themselves from the Jews and avoid being conquered by the Nazis.

Subsequently, 'Hirsi Ali' fled to America for three months and then was under 24 hour guard and police protection in *The Hague*. Her similitude therefore, was of one who held the West to be intrinsically liberated and as a result the West was obviously her desire and ambition whilst she was in East Africa. Initially 'Hirsi 'Ali' had claimed that she came to Europe as a refugee in 1992, fleeing from a forced marriage in war-torn Somalia, however a recent exposé of 'Hirsi 'Ali' uncovered that she was actually living in a middle-class area in Nairobi, Kenya with her rich family, and the so-called 'forced marriage' was actually an *arranged* marriage with a Somālee man from Canada and they divorced normally, as her own brother and other (female) family members informed! Indeed, Professor Jytte Klausen, a just female Danish researcher of comparative politics at *Brandeis University* and author of *The Islamic Challenge: Politics and Religion in Western Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) noted recently that: **"She wasn't forced into a marriage. She had an amicable relationship with her husband, as well as with the rest of her family. It was not true that she had to hide from her family for years."** She did not arrive from war-torn Somalia, but had rather spent substantial periods of time in Kenya (where she spent most of her life), Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia and Germany! Furthermore, her name 'Ayān Hirsi 'Ali' is false and is not her real name, rather her real name was something else. She therefore fabricated her refugee story in order to seek asylum and residence in Europe, and then later get a passport, which she did get in 1997. This is the kind of lying individual that some people in the West were propping up as an 'Islamic specialist' and some *kuffār* in England were even claiming that she should be supported as an 'Islamic moderate'! *Time Magazine* even listed her as one of the most influential thinkers of 2005 CE! 'Ayān Hirsi 'Ali' attended the *American Jewish Committee* centennial meeting in Washington. ("A woman of valour" in *The Jewish Chronicle*, May 12 2006) After the cartoons controversy, the fraud 'Hirsi 'Ali' supported the printing of the

dictate to Muslims who to follow as they are even actually trying to use non-Muslim immigration cheats and poodles to the West as examples for Muslims!?

cartoons. Crying on Dutch TV in disgrace, she admitted that she lied (Dutch: “Ik heb gelogen”), and that her birth date and name on her Dutch passport were all false, going against Holland’s immigration laws! At the same time, ‘Hirsi ‘Ali’ supported Holland’s anti-refugee policies!! She has said that she will join the *American Enterprise Institute*, one of the hardcore right-wing neo-con think-tanks and spin-labs in the USA.³⁰ So it looks as if she will get another nationality soon, as long as she panders enough to her paymasters and fabricates more *bātil* against Islām. In any case the US right wingers are against homosexuality, abortion and euthanasia, all the things that ‘Hirsi Ali’ calls to, so it looks as if she may not be there long. Her political party began to view her as more and more of a liability and one of her former colleagues from her political party declared that ‘Ayān Hirsi ‘Ali’ **“is not a Dutch national”**. So much for pledging allegiance to the enemies of Islām and blindly following them in everything for name and fame, and so much for European right-wing politicians finding token black mascots to attack Muslims. Condemned by even some *kuffār* journalists who branded her extreme, she is in tears, in disgrace, humiliated with no home (except in Kenya, but she despised Africa in any case and would not return there), her political reputation in tatters, her credibility called into question by her own people, stripped of her beloved nationality, ‘Ayān Hirsi ‘Ali’ has been exposed by her own hands, indeed as the Qur’ān says,

كَذَلِكَ الْعَذَابُ وَالْعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

“Such is the punishment (of this world). And the punishment of the Hereafter is greater, if only they knew.”

{*al-Qalam* (68): 33}

Others who are also known for their use of the technique of claiming a past background of Islām are the likes of Walid Shoebat, Wafa Sultan, Ibn Warraq et al. all of whom claim a connection to Islām yet as their backgrounds are unknown their claims to Islām cannot be totally verified at all, they have only gained infamy in the West. And as we have seen with the case of ‘Ayān Hirsi Ali’ honesty, integrity and reliability are not hallmarks of the so-called “former Muslims”. Furthermore, they are all distinctly characterized by crediting the West solely for “emancipating their minds”, along with providing them with citizenship out of their “third world” countries of origin. As a result, they are the most vehement in their opposition to Islām along with their blind praise of all things European or American. Indeed, they are also known for sharing podiums with known Zionists and being propped up by their media, a damning indication of their aims if there ever was one. So for example, ‘Ayān Hirsi Ali’ and Irshad Manji have exonerated any blame from Israel, yet have strongly criticized the Palestinians. Hirsi Ali retained her Dutch citizenship however after being supported by the neo-cons, Zionists and right-wing Dutch governmental sympathizers who all launched a worldwide campaign to defend her.

RAND BRAND AL-QARADĀWEE AS “A SALAFI”?!

RAND also claim in a footnote on page 124 that Yoosuf al-Qaradāwee is *Salafi*!!!! Qaradāwee is known for a large body of false rulings that Muslim scholars have refuted, his book *al-Halāl wa'l-Harām fi'l-Islām*, has been rejected by many Muslim scholars as Qaradāwee attempts to sanction within it many things that authentic *hadeeth* do not condone. As a result, Qaradāwee allows the unity of religious beliefs, music, dancing, suicide bombings and a whole number of evil actions that he foolishly attempts to justify under the false banner of “leniency” one of the best examples of a “liberal Muslim” if there ever was one. Indeed, in a work entitled by a contemporary Salafi scholar Nāsir ibn Hamad al-Fahd entitled *al-Qaradāwee fi'l-Meezān*, 2nd Edn, (Egypt: Maktabah Asad us-Sunnah, 1420AH/1999CE)³¹ further interesting aspects about the liberal nature of al-Qaradāwee’s methodology are noted, such as

- ✓ al-Qaradāwee’s call for unity between Muslims and Christians;
- ✓ his disregard of *al-Walā wa'l-Barā'*
- ✓ differences between Muslims and Christians are minor issues
- ✓ his reliance and referral to the “rational intellect” (*'aql*)
- ✓ A very liberal stance towards women to the extent that he has said that men and women should intermingle and intermix during Islamic lectures; allowing women to take of their *hijābs* in Western countries etc.
- ✓ Liberal stances (inherited from *Ikhwān ul-Muslimeen*) with regards to music and entertainment to the extent that he has stated that music and film is permitted in Islām; he has condemned actors who left the industry encouraging them to remain within the industry; Qaradāwee has mentioned that he is a fan of the Egyptian female singers Faiza Ahmed, Shadiya, Umm Kulthum, Fayruz and others.

After being kicked out of Egypt he was given safe haven in Qatar wherein he has become the religious head of the country. The late scholar of Yemen, Shaykh Muqbil Ibn Hādee al-Wādi'ee (*rahimahullāh*) systematically refuted Qaradāwee on a number of occasions, saying once about al-Qaradāwee: **“From the callers to misguidance in our time is Yoosuf ibn Abdillāh al-Qaradāwee, the Muftee of Qatar...”** Furthermore, a book by Shaykh Ahmad bin Muhammad al-'Adeenee was authored entitled *Raf'ul-Lithām 'am Mukhālafāt il-Qaradāwee li Sharee'at il-Islām (Unveiling Qaradāwee's Opposition to the Divine Legislation of Islām)*. Shaykh Muhammad ibn Abdillāh al-Imām (*hafidhahullāh*) said,

I have reviewed the book of the noble brother Ahmad Mansoor al-'Adeenee, entitled *Raf'ul-Lithām*, and I found that the brother unveils and exposes the reality. The brother has mentioned some examples of the deviations of Al-Qaradāwee. And they are sufficient for the one who is searching for the truth

³¹ Translated by Isma'eel Alarcon here: http://www.al-ibānah.com/cms/pdf_files/79.pdf

and who desires to hold onto it, and whose goal it is to attain it. Since the scholars have launched their attack against Muhammad Al-Ghazālee when he made his tremendous devious claims, then (I say) Al-Qaradāwee is his successor (*khaleefah*). And he is the second Ghazālee of our time.

Therefore, Qaradāwee is used by liberal individuals who attempt to justify under an Islamic garb any desire that they have. So how on earth did RAND manage to brand al-Qaradāwee as being “**Salafi**”? There is no doubt that they reached this conclusion based on Qaradāwee’s political views about the state called Israel and his support for suicide bombings, which RAND must have thought is a ‘sanctioned *Salafi* view’. This is the only logical reason why RAND would have believed Qaradāwee was *Salafi*, they have made the judgement based upon politics, and even this they have got wrong as *Salafis* neither support suicide bombings nor constantly indulge themselves in political discussion.

MAKING TAKFEER OF BIN LĀDIN: A SIGN OF “LIBERAL MODERATION AND TOLERANCE”?³²

The deviation of Usāmah Bin Lādin has been totally refuted, condemned and warned against by the *Salafi* scholars.³³ They have warned against him vocally but they have not gone to the extreme of making *takfeer* of him as this is something which Bin Lādin actually utilizes himself to justify some of his excessive views! Therefore, making rash *takfeer* is one of the hallmarks of extremism and deviation, hence we find it promoted and supported from one angle by the RAND researchers when it suits them! They have thus used ignorant rhetoric by Muslims against terrorism, which is not based on any established Islamic principles or evidence, so for example in London after the 7/7 bombings it was common to view ignorant Muslims on TV saying things like “**those suicide bombers are not Muslim**” (!?) and this is nothing but ignorance and extremism!

The problem with the RAND document (by Angel Rabasa, Cheryl Bernard, Lowell H. Schwartz and Peter Sickle) therefore is that in opposing one form of extremism, namely violent extremism, they go to another extreme that of non-Islamic secular-atheism cum liberalism to try to find a solution. Indeed, the RAND document even supports an obscure “fatwa” from Spain from the obscure *La Comisión Islámica de España (the Islamic Commission of Spain)* dated: 11 March 2005 and signed by the Secretary-General of the organization of the time Mansur Escudero Bedate (as if he is qualified to issue a “fatwa”) and found on the ‘Web Islam’ website. The “fatwa” brands Bin Lādin as being an apostate for committing *istihlāl*!! It was thus thoroughly reported in the worldwide press, but it was also a reaction to the Madrid Bombings, indeed they did not issue

³² *Takfeer* is not something that can be done easily, see for example: http://www.salafimanhaj.com/pdf/SalafiManhaj_Extremism.pdf and http://www.salafimanhaj.com/pdf/SalafiManhaj_TakfeerAndBombing.pdf

³³ For more on this see pp.69-97 of: http://www.salafimanhaj.com/pdf/SalafiManhaj_Saudi.pdf

any such “fatwa” after 9/11. On page 162, the RAND study blindly reproduces the so-called ‘fatwa’ by unknown individuals and it states:

As long as Osama ben Laden and his organization defend the legality of terrorism and try to base it on the Sacred Koran and the Sunna, they are committing the crime of *istihlal* and they have become ipso facto apostates (*kafir murtadd*), who should not be considered Muslim nor be treated as such.³⁴

For more on the principles that Muslim scholars have laid down before *takfeer* can be made see the ebook by Shaykh ‘Abdul’Azeez bin Rayyis ar-Rayyis (*hafidhahullāh*), *The Clear Proofs for Refuting the Doubts of the People of Takfeer and Bombing*, pp.69-74 translated here: http://www.salafimanhaj.com/pdf/SalafiManhaj_TakfeerAndBombing.pdf

Shaykh ‘Abdul’Azeez ar-Rayyis states:

The saying that defending the *harām* is *kufir* needs evidence, not from you but from the classifications of the scholars, so where is the evidence that this is *kufir*?! Rather, the evidence indicates that falling into the prohibited actions is not *kufir* except if it was out of one of the types of *kufir* such as rejection, arrogance, turning away and denial. These Divine Legislated terms have been clarified by the Divine Legislation and the scholars have also elucidated on them and they did not allow any room for the hyped up enthusiasts to enter. The one who makes *takfeer* due to *kufir* of arrogance or *kufir* of turning away is sinful unless he knows of the lexical meanings of these Divine Legislated terms in accordance with the way of the meticulous scholars. If not, such a person who makes *takfeer* will become a person who merely speaks about Islamic knowledge with ignorance and the one who speaks about Islamic knowledge with ignorance harms only himself. Most of those who become engrossed in these issues do so with ignorance, and an example of this is their playing about with the lexical term ‘necessity’ as has been mentioned before. If you were to ask one of them about a man who drinks alcohol much and commits illegal illicit sexual intercourse they would safeguard him if men came to him. So is a man like this made *takfeer* of due to his defence of the *harām*? What do they say? Do they not read in the books of ‘*aqedah* of the Imāms of the *Salaf* that the people of *sunnah* do not make *takfeer* of anyone from the people of the *Qiblah* on account of sins as long as the person does not make it *halāl* wherein they refute the *Khawārij* and those affected by them? They (those *takfeerees*) should fear Allāh from their machinations and ‘*aqedah* and they should

³⁴ Ironically, Bin Lādin here is getting a taste of his medicine of rash *takfeer*!

know that a mistake which is pardoned is better than a mistake which is punishable.

The *'Islamic Commission of Spain'* continue, which is reproduced on page 163 of the RAND 'study':

Based on this fatwa, we have requested the national government and Spanish mass media to stop using the words *Islam* or *Islamic* to describe these malefactors, given they are not Muslim nor have any relationship with our Umma or Islamic Community; instead needing to call them Al Qaida terrorists, but without using Islamic as an adjective, since as it has been declared above, they are not legally so.

The very same thing that the RAND researchers accuse people of, RAND itself has reproduced the same of, branding a Muslim as an apostate henceforth justifying that he can be executed! RAND seem to be totally clutching at straws in this report, to the extent that they have actually supported that which they claim to be opposing, extremist "fatwas" branding Muslims as being not even "heretics", "deviants" or "misguided" (which the likes of Bin Lādin and his group clearly are), but as actually being "**kuffār apostates**" on account of their sins! In fact, Angel Rabasa, one of the researchers of this latest RAND report, in a paper entitled *Moderate and Radical Islam* (Santa Monica, C.: RAND Corporation, 2005)³⁵ states on page 3 that why the 'Islamic Commission of Spain' "fatwa" is useful is because it mentions Bin Lādin and *al-Qa'ida* by name whereas other Muslims in the West did not do that. Yet the *Salafis* are vocal in their condemnation and naming of well known extremists by their well known names and teachings! Therefore, Rabasa is either unaware of this or being misleading.

On page 151 the RAND quote an article from Abdur-Rahman Wahid a former president of Indonesia and senior advisor to the *Libforall Foundation*. This piece appeared in *The Wall Street Journal* on December 30 2005, Wahid states therein:

An extreme and perverse ideology in the minds of fanatics is what directly threatens us (specifically, Wahhabi/Salafi ideology—a minority fundamentalist religious cult fueled by petrodollars).

In a clear contradiction, the RAND report, before reproducing the full text from Spain which makes *takfeer* of Bin Lādin and accuses him of making *istihlāl*, includes Wahid's piece which we have just quoted above. Wahid further states in the article, on page 153 of the RAND document:

Extremists are quick to drape themselves in the mantle of Islam and declare their opponents *kafir*, or infidels, and thus smooth the way for slaughtering nonfundamentalist Muslims.

³⁵ This was a testimony presented before the House Armed Services Committee Defense Review Terrorism and Radical Islam Gap Panel on November 3 2005, see:

http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/2005/RAND_CT251.pdf

RAND had the audacity to include this before they went on to quote an obscure “fatwa” which actually makes *takfeer* of Bin Lādin and accuses him of making *istihlāl*! Wahid also makes the error on page 155 of trying to insinuate that all of the Muslims in the world are *Sufis*.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, we could summarise the criticisms of this RAND report as being the following:

- ✓ *Making claims about Salafis being “radical” and intolerant about certain issues, yet denying them a voice or arena wherein they can actually present what they actually believe on such matters;*
- ✓ *Incorrectly holding Sufis to be “natural allies to the West” when history shows otherwise! Indeed, some Sufis were at the forefront of opposing liberal kings and liberal ideas;*
- ✓ *Uncritical praise of individuals who they deem as being “moderate” when they know little or nothing about such characters;*
- ✓ *Praising as “moderates” those who support and policies of Israel;*
- ✓ *Expecting the Muslim world to accept fringe beliefs;*
- ✓ *Condemning an extreme with another extreme, namely that of non-Islamic secular-atheism- liberalism;*
- ✓ *Holding Yoosuf al-Qaradāwee to be “Salafi”*
- ✓ *Supporting the takfeer of Muslims due to their sins, evils, misguidance and extremism;*
- ✓ *The RAND researchers are totally out of touch with trends among Muslim youth and thus need to understand the youth better at the grassroots levels if they are serious, as opposed to merely delivering reports from the ivory towers.*