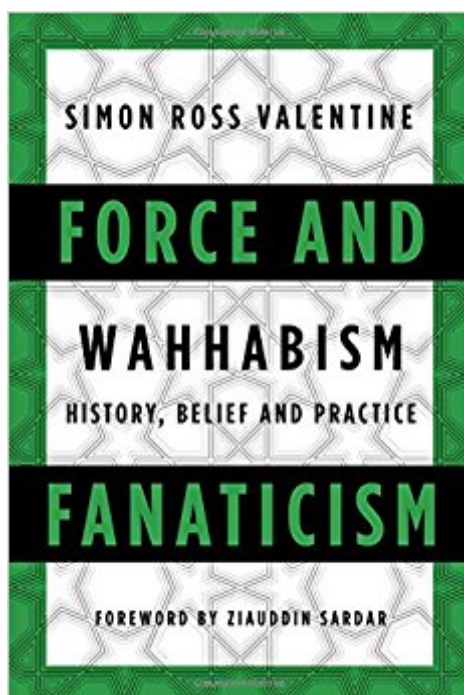


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Force And Fanaticism: Wahhabism In Saudi Arabia And Beyond



Synopsis

Wahhabism is an Islamic reform movement found mainly in Saudi Arabia. Closely linked to the Saudi monarchy, it enforces a strict code of morality and conduct monitored by mutawa (religious police), and governs every facet of Saudi life according to its own strict interpretation of Shariah, including gender segregation. Wahhabism also prohibits the practice of any other faith (even other forms of Islam) in Saudi Arabia, which is also the only country that forbids women from driving. But what exactly is Wahhabism? This question had long occupied Valentine, so he lived in the Kingdom for three years, familiarizing himself with its distinct interpretation of Islam. His book defines Wahhabism and Wahhabi beliefs and considers the life and teaching of Muham-mad ibn Abd'al Wahhab and the later expansion of his sect. Also discussed are the rejection of later developments in Islam such as bid'ah; harmful innovations, among them celebrating the prophet's birthday and visiting the tombs of saints; the destruction of holy sites due to the fear of idolatry; Wahhabi law, which imposes the death sentence for crimes as archaic as witch- craft and sorcery, and the connection of Wahhabism with militant Islam globally. Drawing on interviews with Saudis from all walks of life, including members of the feared mutawa, this book appraises one of the most significant movements in contemporary Islam.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'Dr Valentine has written an arresting study that combines the curiosity of the travel writer, the tenacity of a good journalist, and the rigour of the academic ... provides not only an exhaustive account of Wahhabism's founder, history and spread, doctrines, and practices, but also

communicates something of the texture of its lived reality.' -- Church Times 'Valentine, a British Methodist pastor and teacher who taught in Saudi Arabia, has written a useful book about the desert kingdom ... The author explores important topics, including the mutawwa, or religious police, and provides useful historical context, discussing the origins of "Wahhabism," its alliance with the House of Saud, and the oil discoveries that changed everything.' -- The Jewish Voice 'A thoughtful and comprehensive overview of Wahhabi Islam and its influence on public life in Saudi Arabia. The author's mix of analyses and anecdotes makes for an interesting and easy read ... Partly a travelogue, Force and Fanaticism also gives powerful impressions of life in the Kingdom, especially among ordinary people.' -- Middle East Journal Admirable and comprehensive. Simon Valentine lived and worked in Saudi Arabia for three years and devoted much time and energy to mastering Wahhabi literature. He provides an invaluable guide to this history, beliefs and practices of Wahhabism. Erudite and well researched, this book -- both informative and controversial -- offers much food for thought, and self-critical reflection for Muslims and non-Muslims alike.' -- Ziauddin Sardar, author of Mecca: The Sacred City 'A very useful primer on the religious and philosophical thought behind the Saudi regime which achieves a skilful blend of scholarly writing and colourful travelogue. Fascinating.' -- Christopher Davidson, author of After the Sheikhs: The Coming Collapse of the Gulf Monarchies

Simon Ross Valentine is a freelance British lecturer and researcher into Islam and comparative religions who has taught part-time at Leeds University and Bradford University. His first book was Islam and the Ahmadiyya Jama'at: History, Belief, Practice .

Book explains how Wahhabi Islam which is very violent is concentrated in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Taliban in Afghanistan and where ever Saudi oil money builds mosques so is spreading outside those areas. Essence of Wahabbism is that only God can be asked to help you. Saints, visiting tombs of holy people or any others can not help you, only God. It is similar to the Protestants who do not approve of saints praying for you, holy water, sacraments, or any other item that is not God gaining you the help of God. Islamic nations consider Wahabbism to not being Islamic and try to keep it out of their nations.

Interesting read, many issues with Wahhabism provided. Great insight into Saudi daily life.

Plain description of the driver in the war between Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

Good overview of wahabism. May offend some.

"Force and Fanaticism: Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia and Beyond" by Simon Ross Valentine (2015). Following are partial comments by Raymond Ibrahim in the Fall 2016 "Middle East Quarterly": Valentine, a British Methodist pastor and teacher who taught in Saudi Arabia, has written a useful book about the desert kingdom. Most interesting is its exploration of how the monarchy is the single greatest force in spreading Islamic fundamentalism; "Unfortunately, a large chunk of the book is devoted to separating Islam from Wahhabism, meaning the author never gets to root matters. Anything positive is attributed to Islam and anything negative—misogyny, draconian punishments, execution of apostates, persecution of non-Muslims—to Wahhabism." This position stems from the author's own cultural presuppositions. He "felt confused and puzzled" by Wahhabi intolerance and the "attempt to propagate their beliefs by force." In all his conversations with "ulema, imams, Mutawa and Saudis generally, there was never a mention of 'love.'" In fact, Islam's prophet, Muhammad, followed by countless caliphs, did sanction the use of force; and while Islam attributes ninety-nine characteristics to God, love is not one of them. Valentine's readers would benefit much more had he simply laid out his useful information concerning the inner workings of the Saudi regime and its unholy alliance with the West, without trying to tackle the deep question of what Islam really is."

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