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**“The Appropriation of Ibn Taymiyya in the Modern Wahhabi Polemics of Sufism:
The Analyses of Holy People in Sufi Thought: An Explanation and
Analysis in light of the Qur’an and Sunnah by Muhammad Lawh”**

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The contemporary era has seen the creation of various Muslim philosophies that attempt to reconnect with Islamic history and tradition in an effort to establish a sense of authenticity. Among these philosophies is modern Wahhabism which has played a major force in defining Islam in various Muslims communities throughout the world. Predicated in this way of thinking is the desire to create a unified understanding of Islam that emphasizes *tawbeed* and strongly shuns anything that maybe perceived to encroach on this understanding. Among the movement’s biggest criticisms are the *Sufis* who are seen to be elevating particular individuals to the level of the Prophet Muhammad and introducing religious innovations that deviate from the pure teachings of the Qur’an, the *Sunnah* and the pious predecessors. This criticism is primarily based on the works of Ibn Taymiya who in medieval times criticized Sufis for not adhering to the *Shar’iah*. This paper seeks to understand how contemporary Wahhabism appropriates Ibn Taymiya criticism of Sufis by examining *Holy People in Sufi Thought: An Explanation and Analysis in the light of the Qur’an and Sunnah* by Muhammad Lawh - a converted masters thesis from the University of Medina. The paper ultimately holds that modern Wahhabism, as demonstrated through this book, correctly applies Ibn Taymiya’s criticism of popular Sufi practices, but incorrectly appropriates Ibn Taymiyya’s ultimate views on Sufism. Ibn Taymiyya clearly differentiated between a Sufism that follows the *Shari’ah* and a Sufism which is full of religious innovations. Thus, many modern Wahhabis are misappropriating Ibn Taymiyya in order to promote a particular anti-Sufi rhetoric that has only appeared in contemporary times.