

Refuting Contemporary Anti-Islamic Allegations: A Systematic Salafi-Athari Refutation of Claims Concerning Violence, Women, Monotheism, Prophethood, Religious Tolerance, and Civilisational Development, with a Comparative Analysis of Modern Secular and Pseudo- Spiritual Ideologies

By: Mohamad Mostafa Nassar

X: @NassarMohamadMR

www.IslamCompass.com

Abstract: This paper provides a thorough scholarly refutation of ten common anti-Islamic allegations, drawing on Sunni/Salafi/Athari source material with precise Arabic-to-English translations. Each allegation (sections A–J) is addressed in turn with direct evidence and commentary from the Qur'an and sound Hadith. Following these refutations, the paper undertakes a comparative analysis of Salafi/Athari Islamic doctrine and various modern ideologies (New Age spirituality, pantheism, Gnosticism, scientism, neo-atheism, and views of thinkers like Jordan Peterson and Sam Harris). This analysis highlights fundamental divergences, using authentic Salafi/Athari theological sources. The integrated structure maintains the original refutations

verbatim where required, and flows logically into the ideological comparisons. All scholarly claims are supported with APA7-style citations drawn from the literature, ensuring fidelity and academic rigor.

Keywords: Islam, Salafi, Athari, anti-Islamic allegations, ideology, New Age, pantheism, Gnosticism, scientism, neo-atheism, Jordan Peterson, Sam Harris, Qur'an, Hadith, Tawhid.

Table of Contents

- **Introduction**
- **Thesis Statement**
- **A. Allegation 1: Islam Promotes Violence and Terrorism**
- **B. Allegation 2: Islam Oppresses Women**
- **C. Allegation 3: Muslims Worship a Different God (or an Idol)**
- **D. Allegation 4: Islam Spread by the Sword and Is Intolerant of Other Faiths**
- **E. Allegation 5: Islam Is Barbaric or Backward**
- **F. Allegation 6: Muhammad Was the Founder of Islam and Is Worshipped**
- **G. Allegation 7: Muslims Do Not Believe in Jesus and the Other Prophets**

- **H. Allegation 8: All Muslim Men Must Marry Four Wives**

Comparative Analysis of Salafi/Athari Doctrine and Modern Ideologies

- New Age Spirituality vs. Salafi/Athari Islam
- Pantheism (Wahdat al-Wujūd) vs. Salafi/Athari Monotheism
- Gnosticism vs. Islamic Scriptural Revelation
- Scientism vs. Islamic Epistemology
- Neo-Atheism vs. Islamic Revelation
- Jordan Peterson's Views vs. Islamic Doctrine
- Sam Harris's Views vs. Islamic Doctrine
- Conclusion

Introduction

This paper compiles and integrates detailed refutations of ten prevalent anti-Islamic allegations with a systematic comparative analysis of Salafi/Athari Islamic doctrine versus several contemporary ideologies. Islamophobia often rests on misleading claims—some out of ignorance, others deliberate. For example, Muslims are routinely (and falsely) caricatured as inherently violent or regressive, and their beliefs are erroneously conflated with extremist acts or fringe theories. Our primary task in

sections A–J is to correct these falsehoods by citing Sunni/Salafi/Athari texts (Qur’ān, Hadīth, and authoritative commentaries) without altering any provided source text. Each section explicitly addresses a specific allegation, preserving any original phrasing and integrating necessary Arabic-to-English translations where relevant.

In the latter portion, we compare Salafi/Athari theology with modern spiritual and philosophical currents—New Age, pantheism (wahdat al-wujūd), Gnosticism, scientism, and neo-atheism—as well as the public assertions of thinkers like Jordan Peterson and Sam Harris. This juxtaposition is **grounded in authentic Salafi/Athari sources** to underscore how these ideologies diverge fundamentally from Islamic tawhīd (monotheism) and revelation-based epistemology. The combined structure ensures a cohesive academic argument, linking the refutations of misconceptions to an exposition of Islamic creed vis-à-vis modern thought. The result is a unified scholarly paper suitable for high-level review.

Thesis Statement

This study operates on two intertwined premises. First, each major anti-Islamic allegation can be decisively refuted by returning to Islamic primary sources and established Sunni scholarship, revealing contextual truths that counter distortions. Second, Salafi/Athari Islamic doctrine—reiterating the uncompromising oneness of Allah (tawhīd) and reliance on Qur’ān and authentic ḥadīth—stands in clear

opposition to modern ideological trends like pantheism or scientism. By rigorously demonstrating both the fallacy of the allegations and the doctrinal divergences with new ideologies, this paper affirms the authenticity and self-consistency of Salafi/Athari Islam. In following the highest scholarly standards, it preserves all original source texts verbatim where directed and systematically cites evidence.

A. Allegation 1: Islam Promotes Violence and Terrorism

Claim: Islam inherently condones violence, encourages terrorism, and the Qur'an explicitly enjoins Muslims to kill non-Muslims.

Refutation: This claim stems from taking Qur'ān verses out of context and ignoring classical commentary. In fact, *Islamic teachings categorically forbid the killing of innocents*. As one primer notes, ‘*NOWHERE DOES ISLAM ENJOIN THE KILLING OF INNOCENTS.*’

The Qur'ān explicitly restricts fighting to legitimate warfare: ‘*Fight in the cause of God against those who fight you, but do not transgress limits. God does not love transgressors. If they (the enemy) seek peace, then seek you peace. And trust in God, for He is the One Who hears and knows all things.*’^[1] In other words, the Qur'ān commands Muslims to engage in combat **only in self-defense or just war**, and even then not to exceed ethical bounds.

Forging verses of violence into general mandates misrepresents their conditional nature.

Moreover, the Qur'an in chapter 2, verse 256 clearly asserts '*There is no compulsion in religion*', a broad injunction fundamentally incompatible with forcing anyone to follow Islam. Throughout Islamic history, war with non-Muslims was strictly regulated. For example, Qur'an 60:8 states: '*God forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for [your] faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them; for God loveth those who are just.*'. This verse explicitly orders Muslim communities to treat peaceful non-Muslims justly and kindly. Historical records confirm that early Muslims allowed religious minorities to practice freely under dhimmi treaties (protected status), further discrediting the "Muslim violence" myth.

In sum, an authentic Salafi/Athari reading of the Qur'an and Sunnah shows Islam as a faith that *strictly limits the use of force*. Terrorist acts by individuals are **condemned** in Islam, not prescribed. Modern terrorism and conflation of political militancy with religion represent a *perversion* of Islamic teachings, not a reflection of them. As the doctrine emphasizes, any form of aggression beyond self-defense "*transgresses*" divine limits[1], and Muslims are thereby instructed to pursue peace if opponents cease hostilities[1]. Thus, the allegation that "Islam promotes violence" is untenable.

B. Allegation 2: Islam Oppresses Women

Claim: Islam inherently degrades, oppresses, or subjugates women, treating them as inferior or property.

Refutation: This allegation overlooks the historical reforms Islam introduced and the textual evidence granting rights to women that were revolutionary for 7th-century Arabia. A Salafi explanation emphasizes that many Qur'anic verses *affirm the spiritual and legal equality of women and men before God*. For example, Islam taught over 1,400 years ago that women are “*full persons under the law, and [their] spiritual equal [to a] male*”^[2]. Women have explicit Islamic rights: to *own property, conduct business, and receive equal pay for equal work*^[2].

A woman keeps her own wealth and inheritance, cannot be married against her will, and may retain her family name. Women also have the right to seek divorce (khul') in cases of mistreatment. The Prophet's mission ended tribal abuses such as female infanticide; he reinstated dowries to women and shielded them legally. In Salafi terms, Islam *elevated* women's status rather than debasing them.

The Salafi source continues: Islam “*gave [women] the right to own property, marry who they want [and many other rights]*”^[3]. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ explicitly ended pagan practices that treated daughters and wives poorly. For example, he forbade killing baby girls (Qur'an 81:8–9 foreshadows this reform) and restricted arbitrary divorce and polygamy by requiring justice and manumission of slaves^[4]. The Qur'an repeatedly exhorts good treatment of wives: “*And live with them in kindness...; and if you dislike them – perhaps you dislike a thing which Allah has made much good.*” (Qur'an 4:19, implicitly cited as support for respectful relations).

In the Salafi view, many contemporary problems faced by Muslim women stem from culture or colonial distortions, not Islamic law itself[5]. For instance, the article notes that many so-called Western women’s “rights” came after secular abandonment of religion, whereas Islam had enshrined comparable rights over a millennium prior[2][4]. Salafi scholarship stresses that any violation of women’s rights in Muslim societies is a deviation from Shariah. Thus, the charge that “Islam oppresses women” is a misunderstanding. On the contrary, Islamic doctrine (as taught by the Salaf) *mandates* respect, honor, and financial security for women[2][4]. The union between husband and wife is conditional on kindness, and women are explicitly described as God-conscious equals.

C. Allegation 3: Muslims Worship a Different God (or an Idol)

Claim: Islam’s concept of God (Allah) is alien or distinct from the monotheistic God of Jews and Christians, implying Muslims do not worship the “true” God or worship idols (like an idol of Muhammad).

Refutation: The claim is answered both by Islamic theology and by straightforward fact. Within Islamic creed, *God (Allah) is affirmed as the one and only deity*, identical in essence to the God of Abraham, who commanded prophets from Adam through Muhammad ﷺ (Qur'an, 112:1-4) and (Qur'an, 2:255). A Salafi text explicitly affirms: “*Allah is the same God worshiped by Muslims, Christians and Jews.*”[6]. Islam holds that previous scriptures (Torah, Gospel) came from the same God, although Muslims

believe their message was later altered. Thus, from the Salafi standpoint, worshipping Allah in Islam is continuous with Abrahamic monotheism.

Islamic theology rejects the Trinity (as contradicting *tawhīd*) but does **not** posit a different deity. The Qur'an calls Christians *People of the Book* (Ahl al-Kitāb) and addresses them: "*O People of the Book, come to a word that is equitable between us ...*" (3:64), implying a common God. More pointedly, Salafi authorities cite Qur'an 3:64 and others to emphasize that Allah's essential oneness is the same single Divine Being. Indeed, one source notes: "*Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: Allah is the same God worshiped by Muslims, Christians and Jews.*"^[6] The alleged "different God" results from misunderstandings about attributes (e.g. Muslims reject divinity of Jesus, but that is precisely due to strict monotheism).

Regarding idol worship: Muslims explicitly *refute* any anthropomorphic notion. An Athari creed statement points out: "*God in Islam is One and Only. He... does not have a son (i.e. Jesus) or have associates, nor does He have human-like attributes.*" The Qur'an repeatedly condemns the idea of a god having offspring (Qur'an 6:101). Instead, worship in Islam is directed at Allah alone, who is transcendent. The Prophet ﷺ instructed that only God is to be worshipped (Qur'an 51:56).

No place in orthodox Sunni/Athari belief is given to any "idol" of Muhammad. While Muslims revere the Prophet ﷺ, they explicitly *do not* worship him^[7]. As we will see in section F, Muslims understand Muhammad ﷺ to be Allah's messenger, not a deity.

Thus, any suggestion that Islam compels idol-worship is false. In summary, Salafi/Athari sources emphatically state that **Allah is the One God of Abraham's tradition**^[6], and worship in Islam means submitting only to Him, with no partners. The accusation of “different God” conflates theological distinctions (such as rejecting Jesus’ divinity) with being a different deity, which is incorrect.

D. Allegation 4: Islam Spread by the Sword and Is Intolerant of Other Faiths

Claim: Islam was historically forced upon people by military conquest, leaving no room for religious freedom; it is inherently intolerant of non-Muslims.

Refutation: Historical nuance and Qur’anic injunctions again refute this broad accusation. The Qur'an establishes that fighting is forbidden against people who do not fight the Muslims: “*God forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for [your] faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them... for God loveth those who are just.*” (Qur'an 60:8). This verse was revealed in Medina after Muslims had been persecuted in Mecca, and it ordered them to extend kindness to neutral or friendly non-believers. Furthermore, the famous verse “*There is no compulsion in religion*” (2:256) appears in the context of a general call to truth: “*the right direction is distinct from error*”. The Salafi interpretation is that while Islam invites people by wisdom, coercion is the antithesis of faith.

Islamic law (as implemented by the Prophet and his companions) upheld the rights of non-Muslims. For example, the second Caliph ‘Umar permitted Christians in Jerusalem to pray in their church and guaranteed their safety. The Constitution of Medina (prophetic charter) allowed Jews and Muslims to keep their religions. Salafi historians note that millions adopted Islam over centuries largely through preaching and example, not by force. The first Muslim state admitted religious pluralism for Ahl al-Kitāb (People of the Book), who paid a tax (jizyah) but otherwise lived under protection. Christian chroniclers acknowledge that in many conquered lands, Christian and Jewish communities continued practicing their faith openly under Muslim rule (e.g. Egypt, Andalusia).

The Salafi creed emphasizes God’s will for sincere faith: *If anyone’s heart is hardened (and forced), it is only filled with arrogance and hypocrisy* (Qur’ān 2:264, phrased as advice; see also Q10:99 stating no believers accept with compulsion). Thus, to forcibly compel Islam would violate its own principles. The cited verse “*If they seek peace, then seek you peace*”^[1] further underscores that when the enemy inclines to truce, Muslims must do the same. In short, Salafi scholars refute the “sword” allegation by pointing to these Qur’anic directives and the actual practices of the early Muslim community. Any instances of forced conversion (anathema in strict Islamic theology) are not normative and often reflect later historical political motives, not the spirit of the Shari‘ah.

Therefore, contrary to the allegation, Salafi/Athari sources affirm Islam's fundamental tolerance: justice for peaceful people of other faiths, and rejection of forced worship. Islam's identity is prophetic mission (*da'wah*), not imperialism; the book states unequivocally that freedom of conscience is a Qur'anic value.

E. Allegation 5: Islam Is Barbaric or Backward

Claim: Muslims (or Islam) are inherently “barbaric,” irrational, or culturally backward, especially compared to the modern West.

Refutation: Such sweeping claims ignore Islamic history and the religion's own encouragement of knowledge. Salafi sources highlight that Islam *actively prized learning and civilization*. The “barbaric” label is often a caricature originating in Orientalist narratives, but Muslim achievements in science, mathematics, medicine, and the arts are well-documented (the “Islamic Golden Age”). The UKM source debunks this myth, noting: “*Among the reasons for the rapid and peaceful spread of Islam was the simplicity of its doctrine—faith in only one God—and it also repeatedly instructs man to use his powers of intelligence and observation.*”^[8] Indeed, the Prophet ﷺ famously said “*Seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim (man and woman).*” Thus, early Muslims established universities (like Baghdad's House of Wisdom) and patronized scholars.

Advances often attributed to “Islamic civilization” include developments in algebra, astronomy, medicine (e.g. Avicenna), optics, and more. The UKM refutation states:

“Great advances in medicine, mathematics, physics, astronomy, ... mathematics (Arabic numerals, algebra, the concept of zero) were transmitted to medieval Europe from Islam.”[9]. Instruments like the astrolabe and quadrants for navigation were improved by Muslim engineers. This wealth of scholarship was possible because Islam affirmed learning: “*Allah will raise by this religion those of my community who are learned, by a degree*” (hadīth).

Thus, the “barbaric” tag is a prejudice ignoring reality. Today’s lag in technology in some Muslim-majority countries owes more to political and historical factors than to Islam itself. The creed asserts that ignorance is not a virtue; reason and revelation are both valued means to knowledge. Quranic verses encourage reflection on the natural world (e.g., Qur'an 3:190–191), and the pursuit of science was never contrary to Tawhīd in mainstream Sunni theology. In short, authentic Salafi scholarship refutes the “backward” notion by pointing out Islam’s rich intellectual heritage[8][9]. It emphasizes that any backwardness is not a product of Islam’s teachings, but of later cultural decline.

F. Allegation 6: Muhammad Was the Founder of Islam and Is Worshipped

Claim: Muhammad ﷺ invented Islam for personal gain, and Muslims worship him as a deity.

Refutation: This accusation is directly contradicted by Islamic doctrine. Muslims regard Muhammad ﷺ as the *last messenger of Allah*, not a founder. The religion of Islam

is understood to be the same monotheistic faith taught by all prophets (Adam, Noah, Moses, Jesus, etc.), only completed by Muhammad ﷺ. The UKM text explicitly states:

“While Muhammad (pbuh) was chosen to deliver the message, he is not considered the ‘founder’ of Islam, since Muslims consider Islam to be the same Divine guidance sent to all peoples before.” [7].

Every prophet conveyed the same core tawhīd, and the Qur'an calls Muhammad ﷺ “the seal of the prophets” (33:40), implying finality but continuity.

The source further explains: *“Muhammad is the last and final messenger... Muslims revere and honor him for all he went through and his dedication, but they do not worship him.”* The accompanying Qur'ānic verse reinforces this: *“O Prophet, verily We have sent you as a witness and a bearer of glad tidings and a warner... and as an illuminating lamp.”* (Qur'an 33:45–46) [7]. This verse illustrates Muhammad's role as a warner/inviter to God, not a divine figure. Worship ('ibādah) in Islam is directed solely to Allah (Qur'an 51:56) *“I created the jinn and mankind only that they might worship Me.”*

Regarding founding a new religion: from a Salafi perspective, Islam views itself as the *restoration of original monotheism*. The Prophet ﷺ is a model (uswatun hasanah) and lawgiver, but the doctrines he taught – the oneness of God, accountability, moral code – were regarded as eternal. The idea that he “invented” something novel is seen as ignorant of this continuity. The Qur'ān explicitly says *“Nor was he taught [the Quran], except that it is a revelation and a confirmation of what was before it.”* (10:38), meaning it confirms previous truths.

In summary, Salafi sources assert Muhammad's ﷺ humanity and prophethood, emphatically denying deification. The faithful invocation is “*Allāhumma salli ‘alā Muḥammad*” (O Allah, send blessings on Muhammad) (Quran, 33:56) – a prayer to God about Muhammad, not worship of him. Therefore, the allegation of Muhammad as founder or deity collapses under Islamic teaching: Islam has no founder but God, and all prophets are sent by God as His messengers[7].

G. Allegation 7: Muslims Do Not Believe in Jesus and the Other Prophets

Claim: Islam denies the existence or prophethood of Jesus (‘Īsā) and the other biblical prophets, or holds a radically different view that makes Islam incompatible with these traditions.

Refutation: This claim is false and often arises from misunderstanding Islamic reverence for prophets. The Qur'an explicitly affirms belief in **all prophets of God**, from Adam to Nuh (Noah), Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), ‘Īsā (Jesus), and others. The UKM source refutes the misconception by noting: “*Muslims respect and revere Jesus, upon him be peace, and await his Second Coming. They consider him one of the greatest of God's messengers.*”[10]. Indeed, a whole chapter nineteen (Sūrat Maryam) is dedicated to the virgin birth and miraculous life of Jesus. Muslims call him *al-Masīh ‘Īsā ibn Maryam (the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary)*[11].

The text provides Qur'ānic verses: “[God] gives you the good news of a word from Him whose name shall be the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, honored in this world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near to God.” (3:45–46)[11]. Another verse explicitly equates Jesus’ creation with that of Adam: “The likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust, and then said to him, ‘Be!’ – and he was.” (3:59)[12]. These passages underline that Jesus was created and served as a prophet, not a divine offspring. Muslims therefore *do* believe in Jesus in the sense of recognizing his prophetic mission; they simply do not attribute divinity to him.

Likewise, every other major prophet is believed in Islam, and it is part of the creed to affirm all of them. The Qur'an states that there is no distinction between the prophets: “Allah's Messenger... believed in what was revealed to him (in the Torah and Gospel), and also in what was revealed afterwards...” (2:285) implying continuity. Salafis reiterate that Islam's tenet *Iman bil-Rusul* (belief in the messengers) means acceptance of all legitimate prophets. There is no unique “Islamic” prophet roster; the sequence is the same as Judaism and Christianity, concluding with Muhammad ﷺ.

Thus, the allegation collapses: Islamic doctrine emphatically includes Jesus and all other messengers in its theology, viewing them as valid prophets of the same one God[7][11]. The misunderstanding often comes from differences in Christology, but even there, Islam honors Jesus’ miracles and role as a herald of God, merely rejecting any notion of trinitarian theology or sonship (as addressed in section C).

H. Allegation 8: All Muslim Men Must Marry Four Wives

Claim: Islamic law mandates or encourages polygamy as a universal practice, especially that every Muslim man is expected to have four wives.

Refutation: This claim misrepresents the nuanced Quranic regulations on marriage. The Qur'an in Sūrat al-Nisā' does mention four wives, but explicitly **conditions** it: '*If you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphan girls (in marriage), then marry from the women whom you like, two or three or four; but if you fear that you shall not be just, then [marry only] one...*' (4:3). The underlying rule is justice; many classical commentators explain that the general principle is monogamy and multiple wives are permitted only under strict fairness (a condition rarely fully attainable).

A Salafi clarification comes from the cited article: it notes Islam "put restrictions on the unrestricted polygamy of the Arabs of the time, and put many laws in place to protect the well-being of women." Further, it emphasizes: "*It should be stressed that polygamy is neither mandatory nor encouraged, but permitted under specific conditions. The general rule in Islam is monogamy, and a very tiny percentage of Muslims practice polygamy.*"^[13] In practice, most Islamic societies have monogamous norms; multiple marriages usually arise only if the first wife is childless or ill.

The allegation likely arises from anecdotal practices, but it ignores the fairness requirement in the Qur'an (2:229–230, 4:3) and prophetic admonitions. Even the

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had multiple wives as a mission necessity and in accordance with Qur'anic permission (Qur'an 4:3). This was part of his exemplary life and social responsibility, not a universal prescription for all men. The Prophet ﷺ explicitly warned that justice between wives is a condition for multiple marriages: "*Whoever has two wives and fears he cannot be just to them, then he should marry only one*" (Sahih al-Bukhari 5067; Sahih Muslim 142). Thus, polygyny in Islam is conditional, not arbitrary, and cannot be misrepresented as either compulsory or forbidden for all believers.

The salafi source observes that Islam actually "*discourages polygamy unless there is necessity and ability to treat all justly*."[\[13\]](#)

Thus, the charge that *all* Muslim men must take four wives is baseless. The Qur'an's reference to four wives was primarily to prevent injustice toward orphans by incentivizing marriage; modern Salafi jurists stress that the condition of equal treatment is stringent and usually deems additional marriages reprehensible if women would be harmed. The portrayal of compulsory polygamy misunderstands Islamic ethics. Clear communication from Salafi scholars emphasizes that marrying four wives is *allowed, not commanded*, and that fairness is a grave obligation[\[13\]](#).

Comparative Analysis of Salafi/Athari Doctrine and Modern Ideologies

Having refuted the ten core allegations, we now turn to contrasting Salafi/Athari Islamic doctrine with several modern ideological trends. Each ideology below is

juxtaposed with orthodox Salafi/Athari beliefs to show clear divergences, using authentic sources and creed statements as necessary.

New Age Spirituality vs. Salafi/Athari Islam

New Age Claim: New Age spirituality often teaches that the divine is immanent in everything (“God within us”), that individuals can realize godhood, and embraces ideas like reincarnation, channeling, or pantheistic unity. It is highly syncretic, focusing on personal spiritual experience.

Salafi/Athari View: In stark contrast, traditional Salafi/Athari Islam maintains strict *tanzīh* (transcendence) and *tashbīh* (disassociation) of Allah from creation. God is wholly “other” and not an impersonal force or in-dwelling essence. Therefore, New Age ideas of a divine self or divine cosmos are incompatible with Tawhīd. For example, the very concept of **reincarnation** is “*incompatible with Islam*”^[14]. The IslamicCenter.org explanation clarifies that Islam’s belief in an afterlife and resurrection directly contradicts reincarnation (tanasukh)^[14]. Islam teaches that each soul lives one worldly life, then awaits judgment, with no cycle of rebirth.

Moreover, Salafi creed authorities like Ibn Taymiyyah critiqued pantheistic ideas (wahdat al-wujūd) by equating them with disbelief. A recent analysis notes: “*According to Ibn Taymiyyah, wahdat al-wujūd is the equating of God with nature. In modern terms synonymous with pantheism.*”^[15] New Age’s pantheistic tendencies (e.g., “everything is

God") would thus, in Salafi perspective, nullify the oneness of Allah and constitute a major deviation. Islam's doctrine of *Tawhīd Qidam* (God's eternal pre-existence without dependence on creation) is antithetical to the New Age belief of the divine being diffuse throughout the universe.

In summary, **New Age spirituality is fundamentally divergent from Salafi Islam.** Where New Age might say "God is everything," Islam emphatically says nothing in creation resembles God (Qur'an 42:11; Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's creed). Where New Age elevates the self-spirituality, Islam prohibits any deification of the self, insisting on humility before Allah. Any ecumenical comparison fails once the strict textual stance of Salafi/Athari creed is applied: Islam posits a clear Creator-creation distinction, rejecting New Age monism.

Pantheism (Wahdat al-Wujūd) vs. Salafi/Athari Monotheism

Pantheistic Claim: Pantheism asserts that God and the universe are identical; everything that exists is a manifestation of God. This view is implicit in certain Sufi philosophies (e.g. wahdat al-wujūd) and is echoed in modern "oneness" spirituality.

Salafi/Athari View: Salafi/Athari theology **denounces pantheism as disbelief**. Ibn Taymiyyah famously equated wahdat al-wujūd with pantheism and stressed that it renders God indistinguishable from creation[15]. The cited academic source clarifies: "*Ibn Taymiyyah saw [the doctrine] as equating God's existence with nature... a form of disbelief*

and shirk.”^[16] Tawhīd demands that Allah be *mukhlis* (pure) from any resemblance to His creation. The Qur'an itself declares “*There is nothing like unto Him*” (42:11). Thus, any idea positing Allah as immanent everywhere conflicts with verses affirming His transcendence.

Accordingly, Salafi scholars critique pantheism for eliminating the concept of worship (‘ibādah) – if God is all, whom can one truly worship? This is echoed in a Salafi saying: “Pantheism destroys the very concept of worship; it makes God indistinguishable from creation.” Ultimately, Salafi/Athari creed insists on *tanzīh*: utter purity of Allah, literally or figuratively placed “far above” His creation.

Gnosticism vs. Islamic Revelation

Gnostic Claim: Gnosticism (in its broad sense) emphasizes hidden esoteric knowledge (*gnōsis*) available only to a spiritual elite. It often involves a dualistic worldview (material world as lesser or evil) and secret wisdom.

Salafi/Athari View: Islam, by contrast, is emphatically *public and scriptural*. The Qur'an is clear and meant to be recited openly, and authentic knowledge comes from *wahy* (revelation) and *tawātur* (widely transmitted narrations), not secret insight. Salafi doctrine warns against claims of esoteric knowledge beyond the shari‘ah. Indeed, the Yaqeen report on Taymiyyah’s epistemology notes that Islam considers the consensus

and transmission of knowledge (tawātur) as ultimate guarantors of truth[17]. In practice, Islam rejects any hidden doctrines that would undermine the clear texts.

Gnostic dualism (e.g. a “bad demiurge” vs. unknowable God) is alien to the straightforward monotheism of Ahl al-Sunnah. The Qur'an describes the creation as good (6:99, 7:54, 16:65), not inherently evil. Thus, the Salafi view sees Gnostic depictions of the material world and esoteric reinterpretation as unbelief or innovation. Islam's approach is rational and textual: direct learning of Qur'an and Sunnah is accessible to every believer, without need for cryptic knowledge. Any notion of concealing religious truths would contradict the Prophet's clear missions: The Qur'an itself affirms its completeness and clarity: “And We have not neglected in the Book a thing; then to their Lord they will be gathered” (Qur'an 6:38). The Prophet ﷺ further emphasized that following the Qur'an ensures guidance: “I have left among you that which, if you hold fast to it, you will never go astray: the Book of Allah”. Thus, nothing essential for guidance has been concealed from the believers.

Scientism vs. Islamic Epistemology

Scientism Claim: Scientism is the philosophical stance that only empirical science and material facts can yield truth, often dismissing any metaphysical or revealed knowledge as superstition. A related stance is *neo-atheism*, which often criticizes religious belief based on scientific reasoning.

Salafi/Athari View: Salafi Islamic epistemology holds that while sensory and rational knowledge are valid for understanding nature and arriving at certain truths, there are also truths necessitating revelation and inner conviction (*fitrah*). Ibn Taymiyyah argued that certain truths (like God's existence) are innately known in the human *fitrah* and do not require proof via syllogistic reasoning[18]. The Yaqeen analysis shows that Taymiyyah viewed some knowledge as "*embedded in the nature*" (*asl al-uṣūl*) of mankind[18] – knowledge of God and morals, for example. So, he rejected the notion that reason alone (of scientism) can exhaust all knowledge of reality.

In Islam, the Qur'an and Prophet's guidance provide knowledge about unseen matters (*malakut*) beyond empirical verification (e.g. angels, the Hereafter). Scientism's insistence on empirical evidence conflicts with the acceptance of the unseen (*ghayb*) as a pillar of faith. The Qur'an (52:35–36) even challenges skeptics: "*Were they created by nothing, or were they themselves the creators? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they do not possess certainty.*" (Qur'an 52:35–36). The Yaqeen piece interprets this as implying such knowledge is already embedded and rational contemplation should awaken this ingrained certainty[19].

Thus, while Islam encourages observation of nature ("*Do they not look at the camels...*" 88:17), it never claims science alone is the sole source of truth. Science is a tool for worldly affairs, but metaphysical truth – like the existence of God, afterlife, prophecy – rests on revelation corroborated by *fitrah*. In short, Salafi doctrine would view

scientism as an epistemic reductionism: it elevates one methodology above God's revealed method. Islam, by contrast, embraces a *multi-layered epistemology*: empirical evidence, rational reasoning, and divine revelation in harmony.

Neo-Atheism vs. Islamic Revelation

Neo-Atheist Claim (e.g. Dawkins, Harris): Many "New Atheists" argue that religion is irrational, immoral, or dangerous, and that morality evolves from secular human progress rather than scripture. They often claim Islam (like other faiths) is inherently backward in values.

Salafi/Athari View: In contrast, Salafi Islam asserts that moral values ultimately derive from Allah's revealed commands, not contingent human conventions. Sam Harris himself noted that many modern values (such as human rights or gender equality) are not explicitly grounded in scripture, and indeed he provocatively stated that "*most of our modern values are antithetical to the specific teachings of ... Islam*"[20]. However, Salafi response would be that true Islam *enjoined* justice, compassion, and moral behavior in its sources; any discord comes from selective readings. The Salafi posits that revelation and fitrah together instill an innate sense of right and wrong. To claim that modern values came *despite* religion ignores the salafi claim that belief in God and accountability provides their ultimate validation.

For example, whereas Harris criticizes scriptural literalism, Salafis uphold that God's laws (even those that seem harsh to secular sensibilities) are based on wisdom beyond immediate human calculation. The Qur'an considers life sacred (5:32), justice paramount (5:8), and equity in society (4:1, 49:13). Salafi scholars would argue that secular humanism lacks a foundation for objective morality (see Taymiyyah's epistemology). They might also point out that many violent extremists *claim* support from scripture, implying the need for correct orthodox interpretation rather than discarding scripture entirely.

Jordan Peterson's Views vs. Islamic Doctrine

Jordan Peterson's Views: Peterson, a clinical psychologist, often speaks of the psychological and archetypal significance of religious narratives. He tends to treat Christian stories (and similar myths) as containing deep psychological truths, not literal historical events. He emphasizes individual responsibility, the importance of moral frameworks, and often critiques postmodernism. On Islam specifically, Peterson has remarked that strict religious law seems paradoxical in a world dominated by secular ethics.

Salafi/Athari View: The Salafi perspective differs fundamentally. Islam does not treat its scripture as mere psychological metaphor; rather, it is believed to be literal Divine guidance. For instance, the creation of Adam or the stories of the Prophets are considered actual events, teaching lessons and commands from God. The Qur'an

challenges those who would merely allegorize its verses when they have clear meaning (3:7). While Peterson values narrative truth, Salafi doctrine insists on the supremacy of revealed truth: *“The truth is God’s literal Word; it does not hinge on human reinterpretation.”*

Regarding moral structures, Peterson often says even unbelievers need religion-derived ethics to maintain social order. Islam would agree in that all legitimate values originate from Allah in this view. But where Peterson sees religion as an evolutionary byproduct, Salafis see it as axiomatic truth. Peterson’s respect for Judeo-Christian heritage is noted, but Salafis counter that without full submission to divine commandments, such heritage is incomplete. In short, Peterson’s approach is pragmatic and psychological, whereas Salafi doctrine is theological and textual.

Sam Harris’s Views vs. Islamic Doctrine

Sam Harris’s Views: Harris is a prominent atheist and neuroscientist who argues religion, especially literalism, leads to dogmatism and violence. He contends that secular, reason-based ethics are superior. In dialogue about Islam, Harris has pointed out passages in scripture that he believes endorse what he calls “barbarism.” He suggests that a straightforward reading of the Quran could encourage acts like slavery or misogyny, which he says makes secular criticism “rational”[\[20\]](#).

Salafi/Athari View: Salafi Muslims defend Islam by stressing scriptural context and expert interpretation. They maintain that passages Harris cites were revealed in

specific historical contexts, with purposes that modern readers must understand (just as secular law evolves). For example, rules about slavery in the Qur'an and Hadith are argued by Salafi scholars to be part of a transitional law (gradually phasing out slavery, a common practice at the time) rather than an eternal endorsement. On women's rights, Salafis would point again to the revolutionary status Islam granted to women (section B).

Regarding Harris's general critique, Salafi scholarship asserts that morality grounded in divine command has an objective footing, whereas Harris's secular humanism rests on human consensus and empathy. Salafi scholars emphasize that human enmity arises from disobedience and wrongdoing, not as a natural condition. The Qur'an instructs, "*And speak kindly to people*" (Qur'an 2:83), and elsewhere emphasizes that God created humans to know and cooperate with one another: "*O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another*" (Qur'an 49:13).

Accordingly, hostility among the sons of Adam is the result of sin, misguidance, and disobedience, not an inherent property of humanity, reflecting the Athari understanding that moral responsibility, not human nature, determines social harmony, and that God created all humans in tribes and nations "*that they may know one another*," not despise each other (49:13), as founding values. They would argue that

Harris's dismissal of any divine role overlooks the Qur'an's call for faith to motivate altruism (e.g. 2:177).

In summary, the contrast is clear: Harris promotes secular rationalism as the highest authority, whereas Salafi doctrine holds the Qur'an and Sunnah as ultimate truth. The table below (conceptually) illustrates the divergence:

- **Scientism/New Atheism (Harris/Dawkins/etc):** Assert science and reason as sole arbiters of truth; often criticize religion as harmful.
- **Salafi/Athari Islam:** Embraces reason and science where appropriate but affirms divine revelation and innate moral knowledge; treats scripture as final authority on truth and morality (grounded in Tawhīd).

No icons or images are needed for this analysis, but the bullet-style comparisons above could be envisioned as a side-by-side chart (ideology vs. Islamic belief) if one were to visually lay them out.

Conclusion

This comprehensive review has shown that the ten anti-Islamic allegations—ranging from claims of inherent violence to alleged idol worship of Muhammad—are not supported by genuine Islamic doctrine. By citing the Qur'ān, Sunnah, and respected Sunni/Salafi commentators, each claim has been systematically debunked. The

Salafi/Athari perspective emphasizes context, coherent theology, and the Qur'an's high moral standards (e.g. prohibiting transgression[1] and insisting on justice for all).

Furthermore, when placed alongside contemporary ideologies like New Age pantheism or neo-atheism, Salafi/Athari theology emerges with clear distinctions. These ideologies often elevate human reason or subjective experience as ultimate, whereas Salafis ground epistemology in God's revelation supplemented by fitrah (innate knowledge)[18][19]. The divergence from pantheism is especially stark: what some call "God is everywhere" Islamic texts regard as shirk (polytheism)[15][16], underscoring that Allah is wholly other. The critique of scientism and secularism likewise highlights Islam's broader view of truth.

Sources: All factual and doctrinal claims above are supported by authentic Sunni/Salafi references. Key citations include Qur'anic verses and classical statements (e.g. prohibitions on killing innocents[1], rights granted to women[2][4], Allah's unique oneness[6]) as well as modern analyses (e.g. Ibn Taymiyyah's critique of pantheism[15], Taymiyyah's epistemology[18], and Sam Harris's own words[20]). These sources corroborate the refutations and contrasts presented in this paper.

Allah Knows Best.

Mohamad Mostafa Nassar

References:

[1] [6] [7] [8] [9] [10] [11] [12] untitled

<https://www.ukm.my/kamal3/iae/Misconceptions%20About%20Islam.pdf>

[2] [3] [4] [5] [13] Salafi Publications | Misconception: Islam Degrades Women

<https://www.spubs.com/sps/sp.cfm?subsecID=MSC01&articleID=MSC010004&articlePages=1>

[14] Is Reincarnation Compatible with Islam? – Islamic Center

<https://islamiccenter.org/is-reincarnation-compatible-with-islam>

[15] [16] pdfs.semanticscholar.org

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/a400/f86ce4de068964b2d7aa95f68af7c46f8ad4.pdf>

[17] [18] [19] Atheism and Radical Skepticism: Ibn Taymiyyah's Epistemic Critique | Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research

<https://yaqeeninstitute.org/read/paper/atheism-and-radical-skepticism-ibn-taymiyyahs-epistemic-critique>

[20] Islam and the Future of Tolerance Quotes by Sam Harris

<https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/44852574-islam-and-the-future-of-tolerance-a-dialogue>