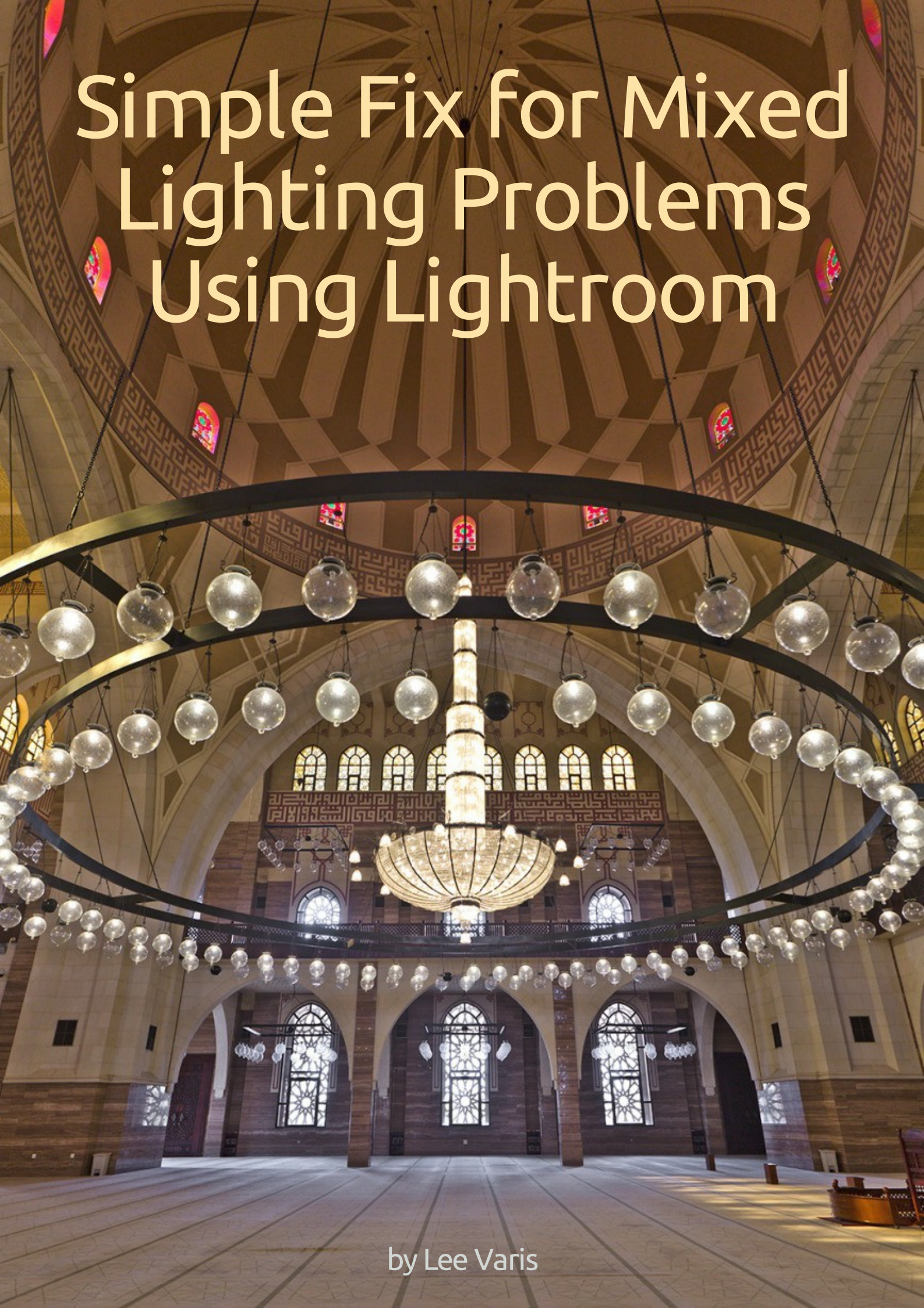


Simple Fix for Mixed Lighting Problems Using Lightroom



by Lee Varis

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Lightroom Removes the Curse of Mixed Color Lighting from Your Photos

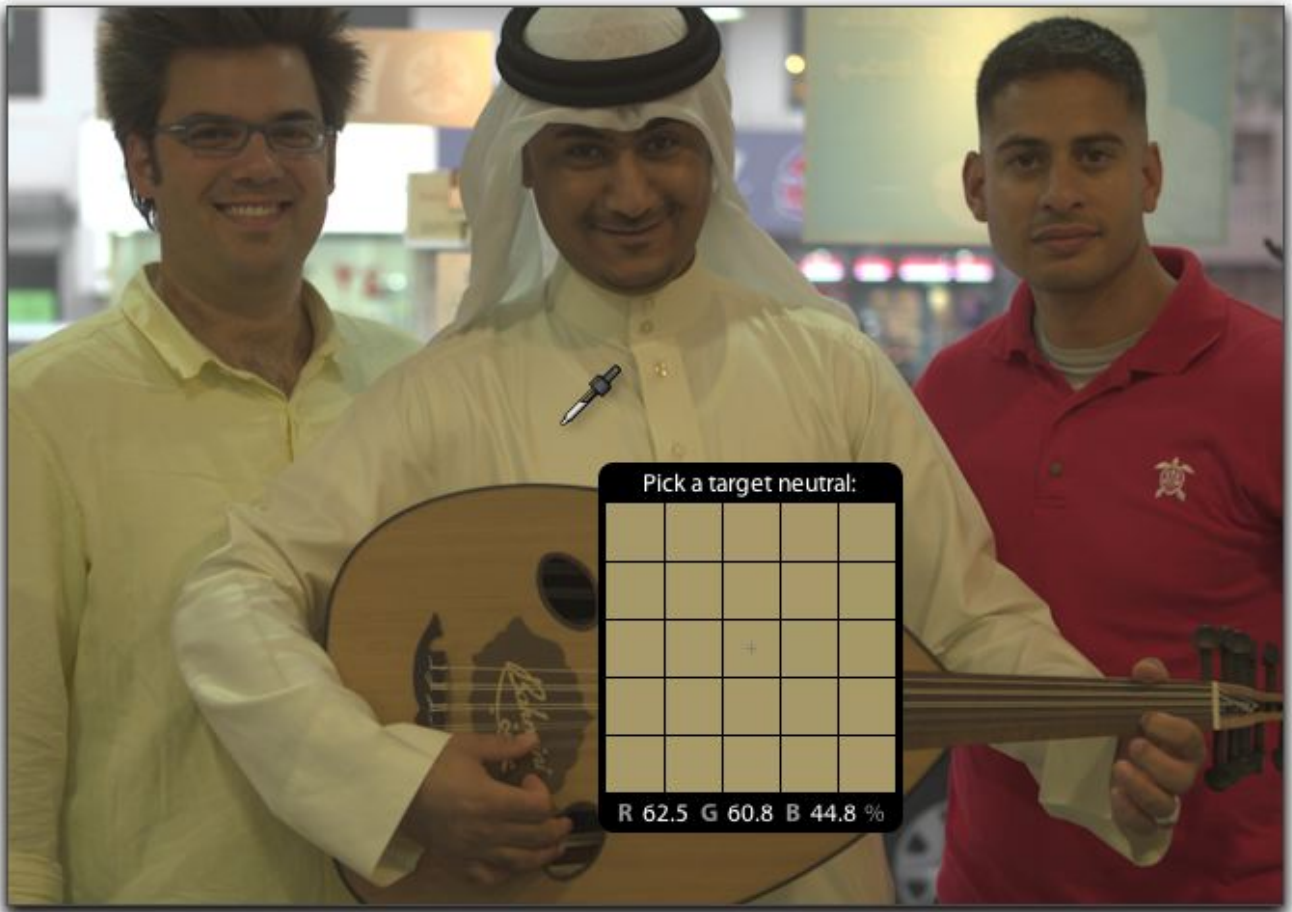
I've just now returned from the California Photo Festival, but I'd like to share something from my stay in Bahrain—a great technique for dealing with color casts associated with mixed lighting scenarios. The following image was captured as a quick snapshot of my traveling companions at a music store in Manama, the capitol city of Bahrain.



The RAW unaltered capture of the oud salesman

This image was shot very quickly and it clearly needs to be brightened up and the yellow color cast removed from the white clothing of our arab oud salesman (the oud is the ubiquitous middle eastern lute). The first step is to remove the yellow color cast caused by the tungsten lighting in the store – a quick click with the White Balance eyedropper does the trick...

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Select the White Balance Tool (the eyedropper) and click on something that needs to be neutral to set the correct color temperature.

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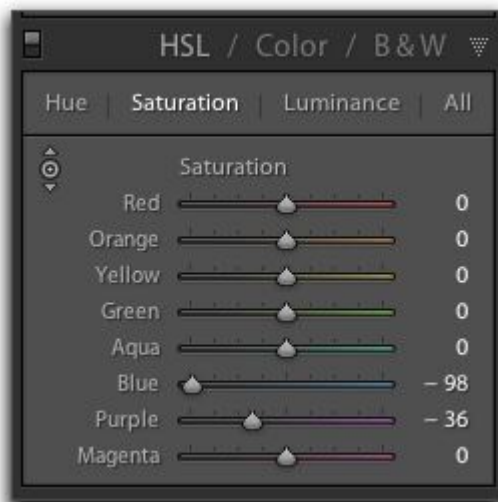


Oud Seller Brightened and White Balanced—better, but look at the background.

Now, after some simple brightness and contrast adjustments, we have good color on our subjects but we have an unusual blue/purple color cast in the background. The effect is jarring and quite distracting. This is actually a very common problem with interior shots that look out through a window into a sunlit scene. In this situation, the room lighting is a much warmer color temperature. When we balance the color for the warm tungsten lights by cooling down the color overall, we also cool down the background and this exaggerated blue cast is the result.

Fortunately there is an easy fix available to us in Lightroom. Go to the HSL panel choose Saturation and select the Color Target Tool in the upper left corner of the panel. You can now simply click and drag down on a color in the image to de-saturate...

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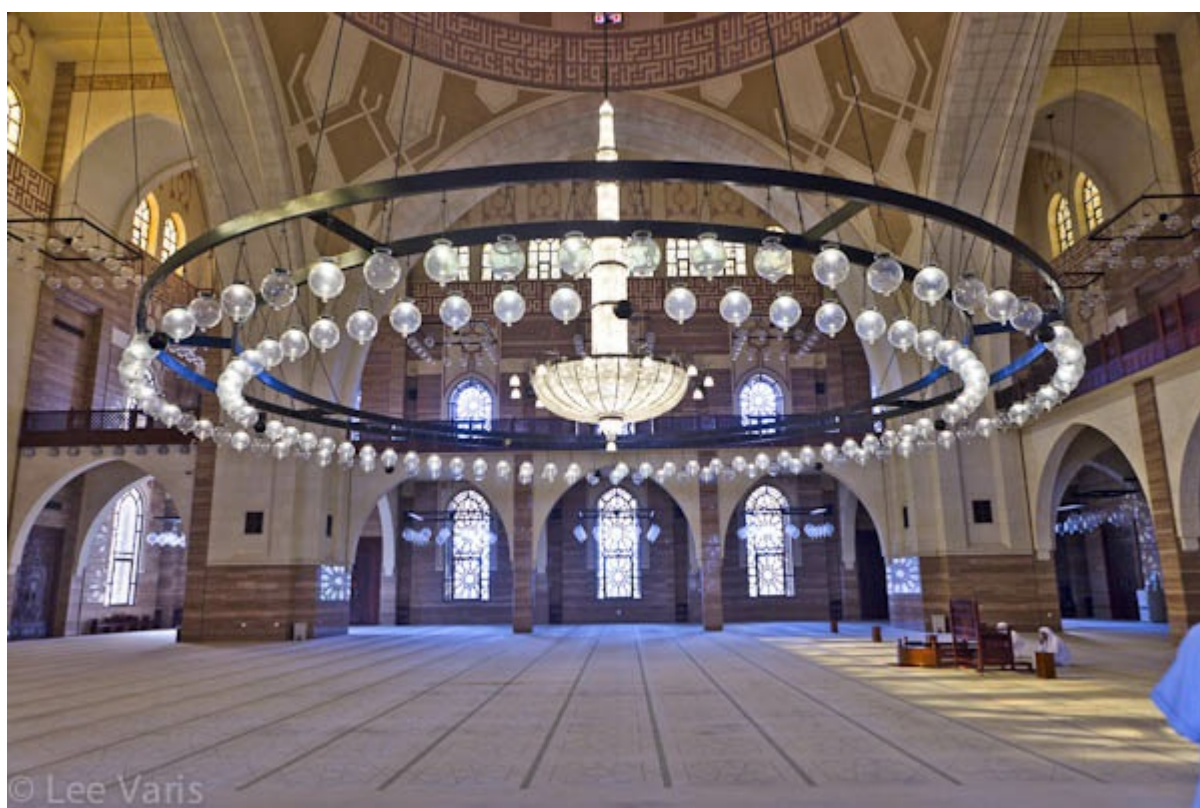
The HSL Panel with corrections applied. The Color Target Tool is the little circle with up and down arrows in the upper left.



The final corrected image after de-saturating the background blue color.

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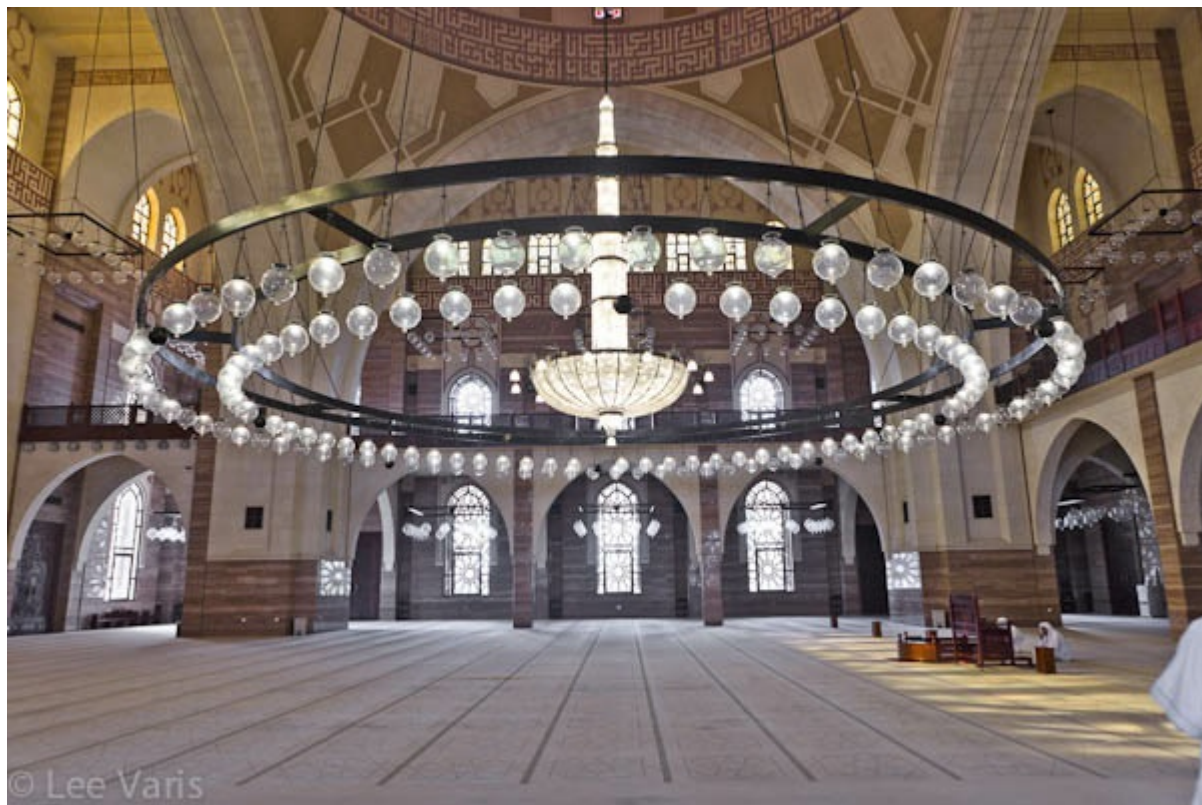
The result, after de-saturating the blue, is much less distracting, leaving the emphasis properly on the subject. This trick is quite effective in a number of different situations. The following image was shot inside the Grand Mosque. The original shows the blue cast of the light coming through the windows – a mis-match with the warm interior lighting.



The Grand Mosque Chandelier – notice the blue light just below the windows at the rear.

Applying the blue de-saturating trick in Lightroom results in the following...

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The Scene looks more natural without the odd blue light.

Beware of any warmly lit subjects that might have blue color in them (blue clothing, etc..) because as soon as you shift out the blue in the background the other blue in the image will also shift. In these cases you may have to process out two versions and blend them together with layer masks in Photoshop. I have found that, most of the time, this technique works quite well without too much effort in Photoshop