THE PHENOMENON OF RELIGIOUS MANIA IN EGYPT

An analytical article

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April 2023

Translated in September 2023

Introduction:

 In this article, the term Mania will be used in the idiomatic meaning of the term, not its medical concept.

 The phenomenon of religious mania spreads in different countries at varying degrees. It is more prevalent among Muslims, taking more crude forms in countries like Afghanistan and Egypt.

 The phenomenon exists also in Israel among some Jewish sectors of the society obsessed with religious superstitions such as the promise of their Lord of the land in exchange for the covenant of circumcision. Those sectors were abused by the Zionist movement. There is also the ultra-Orthodox community called Haredi, which is more obsessed with religion. Religious mania as a phenomenon is also widespread in the rest of the Arab countries to one degree or another. There are even similar fanatical groups in many other countries, but they are fewer in number, such as the Aum Shinrikyo sect in Japan, which is based on the foundations of Buddhism and Hinduism and considers itself

the surviving sect from hell. Moreover, it killed citizens with poisonous gas to "purify the cursed souls."

There was also an ideological fanaticism, in the form of fascism and Arab nationalism, which were transformed by its adherents to earthly religions, and they formed intolerant and aggressive groups.

This article will focus more on religious mania among Muslims in Egypt, as the phenomenon is very widely spread, profound and impacts the pathway of life in this country.

This phenomenon of religious mania is called by the Islamists "the Islamic Awakening", or "Revival" which began in the late 1960s.

What is religious mania?

* Religious Mania is an individualistic or group behavior that can be defined as a psychological state that leads one to fanaticism, extremist and exaggeration in showing religiosity.

Accordingly, she/he strips religion of being a relationship between the individual and their Lord. So, the continuous declaration of religiosity becomes one of its most obvious manifestations, with a desire of self-purification and enjoying a feeling of excellence over others.

They also tend to escape from a reality that forces one to behave in a way that is contrary to the customary virtuous values. It is a condition that may lead one to unrealistic perceptions, such as being persecuted by persons having other beliefs. If the matter reaches an extreme degree, it may explain the immersion in conspiracy theories and the interpretation of social phenomena on that basis. Moreover, it can clarify the emergence of religious terrorism (=aggression or intimidation of peaceful civilians on the

pretext of their apostasy from or hostility to the religion, for the purpose of serving religious objectives whether political, social, or ideological).

*Religious mania may take the form of obsessive-compulsive disorder in certain aspects, such as exaggeration or repetition of religious worships or prolonging their time or spending more time and effort than is necessary for body purification, ablution, re-ablution or excessive praying. This is to ensure that religious duties are fully performed.

*The phenomenon of sexual obsession is widespread here among both sexes, whose announcing is considered a violation of religion. The behavior of persons having religious mania is also not included in the explicit teachings of the religion in most cases. It is believed that they intersect, especially since that religious mania considers a woman's body one of its most important issues, as it will be shown/discussed. This may be explained by the deepening and rootedness of sexual repression in this society, besides lacking enough fields of discharging energy of the persons, such as sporting, practicing art, scientific research and social relations based on love and respect.

Sexual obsession finds a basis in Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) in general. The female body also occupies an important place in the ancient and contemporary Islamic discourses, especially in the Arab countries, including Egypt. The fatwa (= decree or advisory opinion) index for 2019 determined that women's fatwas represent 25% of worldwide fatwas in Arab countries 40%, while in Egypt they represent 45% of fatwas and in non-Arab countries 15%. With the spread of religious mania, there has been an obsession among both sexes with covering women. Fanatics are interested in a remarkable way in Hijab or Khimar (a cover of the body) and Veil or Niqab (a cover of the face).

Rather, political Islamic groups deal with the Hijab as a symbolic sign of their power and influence.

It's striking to see many slogans dealing with the hijab and covering of women in general and criticizing what they call "Tabarruj" (displaying of women=taking off the veil). In addition to seeming (besides the beard for men) like the swastika of the Nazis; a symbol of distinction, it is treated as a talisman that brings good and guarantees victory. Most importantly, it is a mechanism to mask the sexual obsession of men and women and deny its presence.

Sexual obsession finds a good place for the terrorists or the "jihadists" (jihad= fighting against the enemies of Islam) who die – allegedly - for the sake of God. They do this hoping to enter paradise with its pleasures, the most important of which is plenty of gorgeous virgins (Al Hour). This hope for al-Hour is declared and explicit among the "jihadists", and it is used to lure suicidal youth. Rather, women captivity was practiced by "jihadists" such as ISIS, and poor young men and women of the members of various Islamic groups were married off to satisfy their sexual fantasies and hunger.

There are also many writings and talkings regarding what is forbidden for Muslim woman. It is pressed that she (a woman) is not allowed to marry a non-Muslim, lacks of entitlement to lead prayers and impermissible to assume the public jurisdiction (= general mandate), etc. Moreover, the interest of despising art and artists also stems from deeming the woman as Awrah (=nakedness or shame), starting from her voice and ending with her feet. Then prohibiting her from free intermingling with men, plus prohibiting dancing and singing. In the meantime, ethics like righteousness, respect of the other, and honesty take minimal interest.

*Religious mania has different degrees; it may disappear sometimes and come back again, or it may disappear completely… All this depends on the circumstances surrounding the individual and their life path.

*One of the characteristics of collective religious mania is the tendency of the public and its members to impose the same norms on others, using various moral or material pressures, or both, to the extent that it may reach the point of terrorizing or assaulting them. Expanding the extent of the phenomenon of religious mania proves to its victims that they are right, makes their voice louder and provides them with a kind of legitimacy and societal authority.

*There is also a trend to "Salafism". That means relying on what is called the creed of the righteous predecessors instead of relying on explicit holy texts. Such as relying on the "Sunnah" (ways) of those who are called "Rashidun" (= the first four "righteous" caliphs after Muhammad) and some famous companions of him. Consequently, the sources of religion have diversified into dozens, satisfying extremism and obsession with religion. So, religious mania is the problem not the holy texts.

Following the creed of the righteous "salaf" (predecessors) is a mechanism to escape from reality and transcend it. It is a historical and cultural regression to a culture that no longer identifies with contemporary reality. This regressive state is an alternative to confronting the present and struggling against the obstacles to individual realization and liberation. It is a situation similar to what sometimes happens to people having neurosis; a reaction of the alienated human in the contemporary world. Regression is defined in psychology as the reversion to an earlier stage of development through the behaviors that characterizes that stage, in order to achieve the same results that the individual was achieving during that stage, such as

achieving a degree of security and compatibility when she/he encounters a problem or frustrating situation. This phenomenon is closely related to the need for security and the desire to achieve success. Psychological studies have shown that regression is a common response to frustration, failure and helplessness.

Manifestations of religious mania

*The ordinary public behaves according to feelings rather than reason, in Egypt and most Arab countries the elites are also subjected to feelings and even superstitions.

In Egypt and most Islamic countries, Religion has triumphed over science, philosophy and rational thought. The occultism (= the Unseen) and religious interpretation of reality and history have gotten the upper hand, even among university professors and scholars. It has become customary to read about a history that includes the role of Prophet Moses, Prophet Joseph, or Noah's flood. Of course, the theory of evolution has only limited supporters, even among professors of the physical sciences.

Moreover, sermons are often read or heard by sheikhs (clergymen) belittling science and accusing it of inability and failure. This includes giving examples of the spontaneous healing of some patients after the failure of doctors, in order to demonstrate the power of God. There is also a common story of questioning or denying the landing humans on the moon, or the landing of spaceships on Mars and other planets, because it is -allegedly- impossible. There is also a phenomenon that preceded the era of Modernity, but has re-spread widely again, which is the metaphysical explanations of the events of nature as a punishment from God to humans or as a reward from him to the righteous. Besides,

many persons believe in the "Istisqaa" prayer (prayer for rain)... etc.

Sheikhs have become the most famous stars on satellite channels, being consulted for almost everything, including the interpretation of dreams and various social and political issues. They have become more famous and important than scientists and intellectuals.

Recently, some doctors behave like clergymen who interpret medicine within the framework of religious texts. Sometimes a fanatical psychiatrist becomes aggressive with a mentally ill patient, accusing her/him of distancing themselves from God as a reason for their illness! One of the strange things is that the "Legitimate Ruqyah" (= incantations which are used to ward off evil or harm) has become a weapon adopted by large masses. Rather, some satellite channels are advertising it. It was present before, but has become remarkably widespread among urban. In addition, belief in demonic touch and possession (=contact and invasion of the body by an evil spirit or devil) has spread at the expense of psychology and psychiatry. There is also a growing number of watchers of programs that interpret dreams in the ways of the righteous predecessors, as an alternative to psychology. The phenomenon of "prophetic medicine" has also become widespread, and many sheikhs have become specialized in it. It is an old phenomenon, but weakened after the era of modernism and then it re-spread again.

Islamic leaders and even non-politicized clerics have often been seen promoting female genital mutilation (circumcision), and calling for women's basic work to be household work. Some are prohibiting organ donation and transplantation. One of them (Sheikh Al-Shaarawi) even called for not treating kidney failure. Of course, the theory of evolution receives the greatest amount of hostility and

attack. This is seen and read all the time, especially from the common Muslim people and their elite.

Religious mania promotes the spread of superstitions. The exaggeration of superficial religiosity extends to exaggerate the immersion in the world of the occultism (= the Unseen) that is originally present in religion. One of the phenomena that are encountered every day is the explanation presented by many people of the occurrence of incidents that often happen by chance as being from the Unseen measures. For example, when someone offers a help to a person or even a hungry or sick animal, and they gain big benefits on the same day, this is interpreted as if it was a godsend for the good she/he did. Such anecdotes are widespread on social media and YouTube channels.

In the last decades, a common popular belief appeared regarding pouring hot water in the bathroom that excites the "jinn" (demons), and that falling into the bathroom is one of the reasons of demonic touch and possession of humans. Many sheikhs promote such myths. The fear of evil eye has also become very widespread, especially among the nouveau riche. There is also a famous myth claiming the appearance of angels who fought with this or that army. Such as the claim of some Muslims that angels fought alongside them in the October 1973 war and in Afghanistan. It is interesting that Israeli and American soldiers adopted the same belief! Moreover, many fictitious incidents are circulating, including: the story of the Omani girl who turned into a deformed goat because she mocked reciting the Qur'an - hearing of the call to prayer by Neil Armstrong on the surface of the moon (the man denied this lie in a press conference) - the discovery of traces of splitting of the moon mentioned by the Qur'an, on its surface, that was an image made with the Photoshop program! - the swindlers who printed the image of trees in the form of "La ilaha illallah"

(=there is no god but God) and claimed that it is a forest in Germany, distributed hundreds of thousands of copies and gained abundant money, while it is a painting drawn by an Egyptian artist whose signature was removed from it! - rumors about the conversion of some famous people to Islam, such as Michael Jackson and the daughter of former President Trump.. All these fictitious stories have found tremendous popularity among the public having religious mania. The inferiority complexes of this obsessed public towards the modern world make it a fertile breeding ground for liars, swindlers and rumor mongers.

Propaganda for the so-called miraculousness of the Qur'an (=scientific miracles in Qur'an) has also become widespread and attracted a large audience. For example, the use of holy texts in advertising for some products became common, such as dates, honey, black seeds, milk and "prophetic talbeenah" (a soup prepared by cooking ground roasted barley with milk and then sweeting it with honey). Camel urine and cupping take also an interest. The obsession with this alleged miraculousness reached the point of falsely claiming the existence of scientific studies confirming its presence in the Qur'an and hadiths (=the collected traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, based on his sayings and actions), such as claiming the benefits of camel urine and the presence of antibiotics in flies, thus confirming the miraculousness of the famous saying of the fly ("*if a fly falls in the vessel of anyone of you, he should dip all of it (in the vessel), for one of its wings has a disease and the other has the cure for the disease*")… etc.

In fact, the triumph of science and rationality over superstition requires the ability and aspiration of the self to control material or social reality. In the absence of this ability or aspiration, individuals and groups resort - involuntarily of course - to primitive defensive mechanisms

and to illusions to explain and try to change the reality or to express themselves in general. That's the situation here.

*The evolution of sectarianism and hostility to the other without any realistic justification: sectarianism is the result of taking protest and obsession a religious form. Discrimination has prompted Christians in Egypt to withdraw and rally around the Orthodox Church. Muslim parents are inciting their children against them, with the pretext of being infidels, and forbidding them even very often to play with their children. Supplication against non-Muslims also increased in mosques, being announced with a microphone on many occasions, which prompted one senior Sheikh; Al-Qaradawi, - the author of the jurisprudence of priorities - to call for stopping these practices. Rather, security forces have repeatedly stood in solidarity with Muslim fanatics in sectarian events and massacres, for example the Kosheh massacre in 1999-2000, and during the attack on the cathedral in Cairo in April 2013.

Many common Muslims hold fictitious ideas about Egyptian Christians. Such as: the priest has the "right of the first night" to verify the virginity of the bride - their women are allowed to wear sexy clothes - adultery is ordinary and acceptable for them. There is also a perception among many ordinary Muslims that Christians kiss inside the church on Christmas Eve, just as monks practice homosexuality in monasteries, and nuns and priests practice sex in churches. Many also imagine that there are weapons inside the churches and that Egyptian Christian plots aimed at dividing the country and fighting Islam... etc. Among the myths is that Christians do not wash themselves after defecating, and they have a bad smell... etc. All this belittling of the others aims to exalt the status of Islam and Muslims. There is also a widely repeated strange phrase: "Praise be to Allah that made us Muslims", while talking about immoral phenomena

in the West, as if Islam is an entity that protects its followers! Such myths are propagated by Salafist sheikhs, and Al-Shaarawi used to do so e.g., in his interpretation of the Qur'anic verse: *"Truly the Pagans are unclean."*

After the Islamic Awakening, an idea became widespread saying that Muslims should not befriend non-Muslims, based on the idea of "loyalty and disavowal" in Salafi Ideologies. Before, people did not have reservations about establishing friendships with non-Muslims, except for a few.

On the other hand, an Islam phobia has emerged among many Christians. Examples of this include portraying the events of the disappearance of Christian girls or women as kidnapping and forcible Islamization by Islamic groups, while the motive behind their escape is either falling in love with Muslims, the desire to convert to Islam, or exposure to kidnapping like any other kidnapping of a female. This allegation has never been proven and was not revealed by any female after her return or bringing back. There may be cases of Islamization of minors or under the pressure of love, but as an organized and planned process or carried out by force, there is no evidence.

There is a tendency to "takfīr" (accusing others of being infidels, or a Muslim to be an apostate) such as Shiites, Sufis, Christians, and secularists, even those who are faithful. This practice by a large sheikh like Al-Qaradawi has reached the degree of "takfīr" and calling for the punishment of secularists in his book: Islam and Secularism Face to Face:

"The secularist, who principally rejects the principle of applying Islamic law, has nothing from Islam other than its name, and he is certainly an apostate from Islam, must be asked for repentance to establish the argument against him. Otherwise, he shall be sentenced for apostasy; therefore, he shall be deprived of his

belonging to Islam, separated from his wife and sons, and sentenced to the penalties of the rogue apostates, both in life and after death."

*The religiously obsessed crowd is a suitable medium for the domination of opportunists who present themselves as religious preachers, and who know how to benefit from this milieu. These persons play the role of saints who are passionately in love with God and immersed in a state of piety. Actually, they attain wide popularity that brings them prestige and wealth. In this case, the public is considered the obsessed with religion, not the imposters.

*Some people strive to search and investigate discoveries of seemingly wondrous phenomena that show the greatness of the Creator and the validity of Islam. Examples include discovering the word of "God" on a tomato or the word "Muhammad" carved on a rock. Most of these are imaginary scenes and some of them are fabricated images or mere coincidences. The behavior of the animal is sometimes interpreted as a form of its worship of God, as if the animal kneels and prostrates, or the birds circle the Kaaba as a religious ritual! There are many fabricated pictures and videos of these scenes (this idea is rooted in the sacred texts).

*Religious mania sometimes takes the form of mass or collective hysteria, which is transmitted by inspiration, influence, imitation, and mutual empathy. This happened on the occasion of the caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad, and in the case of the killing of an Egyptian citizen in Germany, where demonstrations took place denouncing Germans in general and describing them as enemies of God, although the incident was individual, and the German authorities took legal measures against the perpetrator. However, religious madness prevailed, and the event was displayed as a religious and racist issue, especially that the dead woman was wearing hijab, and the killer described her

as a terrorist because of her clothing. The Egyptian government added fuel to the fire, and the Iranian president accused the German judge, members of the jury, and the German government of being responsible the crime, despite the measures they had taken against the killer. Recalling the scenes of Muslim demonstrations in London when Salman Rushdie issued his novel "The Satanic Verses", and the hysterical demonstration in which a million citizens participated in Mali in November 2022, what will be seen is people having a disorder similar to what is called in psychiatry Tantrum attacks.

Moreover, there are also bouts of religious mania associated with mass hysteria in some Shiite celebrations such as commemoration of Al-Hussein's death, where the crowd performs violent acts and the individuals hurt themselves in a cruel way. In addition, there are bouts of collective hysteria in some episodes of Sufism called "Sufi Dzikr Circles", and their celebration of the birthdays of some of the "Awliya of Allah" (allies of God, or saints), as some individuals may get loss of consciousness. This audience and that may behave normally before and after the end of these bouts. Certainly, some persons exaggerate their feelings intentionally, but this itself reflects their desire to announce their strong faith and piety and remains one of the manifestations of religious mania.

*Individual and personal events with different motives, such as economic or social, are frequently portrayed as sectarian conflicts. This is found in newspaper headlines such as: A Christian family does this and that against a Muslim family - a Christian young man assaults a Muslim girl, or vice versa. Therefore, causing mass hysteria to ignite, Christian homes or churches to be burned, and entire families unrelated to the event itself to be humiliated or killed.

*Exaggeration in listening to religious lessons, the Qur'an, and its Tajwid (correct pronunciation of the Qur'anic letters and words), even at the expense of working time and social duties, which is an expression of obsession with religious symptoms. This is usually motivated by a desire to collect a great deal of "good deeds" to achieve something of a guarantee to enter the paradise. Mostly, the hidden motive is to wash the sins.

*Reading Qur'an in transport means with a loud voice, imposing listening to it on the rest of the passengers, although it can be read silently. In fact, this is even hated in the sacred texts (according to this prophetic Saying: *"The one who recites the Qur'an loudly is like the one who gives charity openly, and the one who recites quietly is like one gives charity discreetly."*

*People's names: Most Egyptian males have the names of the Prophet: 24 million bear one of the three names: Muhammad – Ahmad – Mahmoud, in 2020. Others Prophet's names include: Taha, Mustafa, Sadeq, and other names like the names of holy religious personalities such as Ali – Hassan – Hussein, then Abd.. so and so.. Regarding females, names that are directly related to the Qur'an began to spread, such as: Basmala - Israa - Alaa - Taqwa - Sojoud.. Religious names have always been present, but they became more widespread and more derived from Qur'an after the Islamic awakening.

*Religious words are used out of place. There is as well an exaggeration in using the phrase: "inshallah" (if God wills) even regarding something that has already happened and will not happen again, like answering such a question: What is the name of your son, inshallah so or so. Another phrase, "Pray on the Prophet", has been very widely used inappropriately.

* Frequent use of supplications mentioned in sayings of the Prophet and the righteous predecessors, which are mostly fabricated. It is a widespread phenomenon now to resort to supplications than to perfect the work, and to look for the intervention of God more than to seek to change reality. This was less prevalent among the intelligentsia before the "Awakening." It is interesting that one of the most famous instigators against the regime (Moataz Matar) considers the supplication as the most important weapon of political struggle. Therefore, the idea of God's intervention in people's daily lives has been rooted, encouraging the people to wait for miracles rather than human effort. This idea is ongoing despite the continuation of suffering and failure, expressing feelings of helplessness and powerlessness.

*Court rulings: Due to prevalence of religious mania, courts have delivered judicial decisions that are carried out according to the jurisprudence of the judge and are in line with the prevalence of that state. For example, the rejection of Christian woman's custody of her children from a Muslim husband. Recently, the public opinion was surprised by a court ruling of Lack of Jurisdiction in a case of adopting a child by a Christian family, either according to the judge's religious conviction or out of fear of the public's reactions when issuing the ruling of acceptance or rejection. Both examples controverted Islamic jurisprudence, i.e., "Sharia."

*Giving handouts explicitly, whether for friends and relatives or something like the "tables of Rahman" (=tables of charity, that offer free "Iftar"; breakfast in Ramadan), or even advertising this in the media. This is hated in the religious text as aforementioned, while it was enough to grant aid discreetly for the purpose of getting the pleasure of the Lord. In a country like Egypt, the government itself resorts to this disgraceful behavior; the explicitly.

*Giving Islamic names to economic projects and enterprises, such as "Islamic hotel", "Islamic restaurant", perhaps because they do not serve alcohol. As if a Christian or Buddhist restaurant could not refuse to serve it! This is just a cheap way of advertising used to attract religious people.

*Before the Islamic Awakening, many shops used to sell beer, and the rest of the alcoholic beverages were easily served in many cafeterias and restaurants. But after that, the number of shops selling them decreased and they became sold in limited places, either for fear of the wrath of fanatics after they smashed some of them, or as a result of the spread of religious mania among shop owners. Some even refuse to sell cigarettes, believing that smoking is "haram" (forbidden in religion).

*Writing deceptive religious phrases on the means of transport and shops, such as "your hijab is your chastity", "the high prices continue if women do not wear hijab." Advertising posters are also posted on buildings or cars, including: "there is no god but God, Muhammad is the Messenger of God" – "Have you prayed on the Prophet.". It is just propaganda for religiosity, which reflects the public's seeking blessings with these slogans.

*Some people pray in the middle of the street or in front of a track of vehicles such as a tram (the latter happened recently in a European country), to declare their religiosity and announce it to the people, even if it creates problems for them. They also regard others as infidels who do not deserve any consideration. This is, fortunately, a very limited phenomenon.

*Refusing cassette or radio songs or social and political programs in public transport, and even arguing with the driver to forcibly prevent him from playing them back, even

if the other passengers wish to listen to them. Islamic groups -sometimes- prevent or sabotaging artistic activities in the universities.

*Installing records and playing back supplications or religious verses in elevators, which are not a religious obligation, rather it is unpleasant to many persons.

*Searching for religious roots that justify some habits, such as raising cats, as there are sayings of the Prophet and his companions regarding this matter.

*Some traditions and customs were transferred from Saudi Arabia after going millions of people to work there. This is not due to their conviction of Wahhabism. Rather, the Egyptians chose some issues, believing that because they are practiced in Saudi Arabia, should be closer to Islam. The newborn week celebration, became in Egypt called the "Aqiqah" like in Saudi Arabia (sacrifice of a livestock and sharing the meat with friends and relatives, as well as the community members in need) instead of its Egyptian name: "El-sebou' ", based on sayings of the Prophet, while it has been an Egyptian habit for thousands of years. Condolence phrases of Saudi people replaced what the Egyptian used for centuries. Other new imported customs involve wearing "Jilbab" (long and loose-fit robe or outer garment) by the urban peoples but with an Egyptian design.

*Instead of wearing a gold ring during the engagement period and after marriage, Egyptian males began to wear a silver ring since the eighties, based on a prophetic saying that forbids gold and silk for men. This is what Muslims in general do, and even the secularists, and most atheists among them. It has become rare to see a Muslim wearing a gold ring. Note that the gold ring is just a symbol and not for decoration.

*Even the greeting phrases have been changed: "Peace be upon you" even on the phone among large sectors has replaced other greetings such as "good morning" and "good evening", although being not forbidden in the sacred texts, as stated in the Qura 'n: *"When a (courteous) greeting is offered you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) of equal courtesy."* All of this has nothing to do with Wahhabism, but with religious mania. Moreover, Egyptians created a completely new and strange greeting phrase: *"There is no god but God"* and the response is: *"Muhammad is the Messenger of God."* It appeared after the Islamic awakening, and nobody heard about it before.

*Prohibiting art: prohibition of listening to songs or music; a limited phenomenon, but new in the Egyptian society. The official spokesman of the Dawa Salafiya (Salafi Call), Abd al-Moneim al-Shahhat, has publicly declared that singing is permissible while music is prohibited. While the former Mufti of Egypt (= a title for a Muslim scholar authorized to issue an advisory opinion on matters of religion), Nasr Farid Wasel, stipulated that *"singing should be with good words, have lofty meanings, noble goals, be performed in a manner which is consistent with good morals, not distracting the person from what God mandated him to do, and if it intends to self-recreation, there is nothing wrong with it. But if it is other than that, then listening to it is forbidden."* Another mufti of the republic also prohibited drawing the nude model. Furthermore, despite the teaching of nude model drawing was essential in art colleges, most students have been refusing to draw it since the rise of the Islamic Awakening.

The phenomenon of bullying and humiliating artists; women in particular, is widespread, including accusing them of immorality, committing debauchery, obscenity and having sex in artworks. Some influential people also sought to veil female artists (such as the efforts of Al-Shaarawi and Saudi Wahhabis). Rather, some of the "repentant" female artists

turned to calling others to retire from art and wear hijab. It is likely that these practices are being carried out intentionally with the aim of making the people absent-minded and deepening the state of religious mania.

In the eighties, video stores were being destroyed by the most fanatic Islamic groups under the pretext of being forbidden in Islam.

What is permissible and forbidden in Islam is not the issue of discussion here. Rather, the change that occurred in the society is monitored, imposing the view of religious people or their bullying and assault of others instead of leaving the people libre, and the strength and depth of the spread of this tendency as an indicator of the prevalence of religious mania.

*Praying in workplaces, mostly for a long time. The most significant thing here is that this is done openly and disrupts the work, even though the margin of prayer time is wide, and it can be postponed until one returns home. However, prayer is given priority over the interests of the citizens (the writer himself saw in Saudi Arabia only Egyptian doctors leaving intensive care or a patient who needed cardiopulmonary resuscitation in order to pray on hearing the Azan, i.e. the call to prayer).

*In the matches, a player may bow or prostrate when they play a good game, while it was enough for them to thank the Lord in their heart without practicing this overt behavior. Is it intended to give thanks to the Lord or announce it to the public?!

*The increasing demand for Hajj (pilgrimage) and "Umrah" (= a non-mandatory lesser pilgrimage made by Muslims to Mecca, which may be performed at any time of the year) trips despite the high cost and often at the expense of basic needs. Rather, the pilgrim or the "Mutamer" (who performs

Umrah) may spend all the money she/he has collected to carry out this ritual at the expense of their children and even at the expense of their treatment. It is the intense desire to purify and wash away sins. In many cases the pilgrimage is undertaken by thieves and swindlers who spend money to obtain the title of "pilgrim" and to purify themselves in front of the people. In fact, all this was happening all the time, but it became a very widespread phenomenon after the Islamic Awakening. Recently, the phenomenon of the "Kaaba selfie" is expanding, which is summarized in the publication by pilgrims and Umrah performers of their photos while they are in the Kaaba as the background of the image. Thus, pilgrimage and Umrah become explicitly public, and the declaration of a relationship that is supposed to be between the individual and their Lord turns into a cheap declaration of the person's religiosity.

*Increasing the sacred religious persons to include the Companions plus all the prophets, while prohibiting depicting any of them in artistic works such as drawing and acting. Some senior clerics are added to these religious icons, their criticism is prohibited, and those who do are attacked. They are also being venerated. All this has no support in the holy text.

*Manifestations of this mania are found evidently in the comments of YouTube viewers. Religious supplications, the call to pray on the Prophet Muhammad, and writing of Qur'anic verses are being repeated in a very striking manner, with nothing to do with the topic at hand and of course without any real religious value.

*Many people are also found filling their pages on the social media with Qur'anic verses, sayings of Muhammad and supplications, for no occasion. Those want to proclaim themselves very Muslims! otherwise what is the necessity of that?! Is this behavior a religious duty, or a Sunnah of the

righteous predecessors? Neither this nor that is so. It's actually a manifestation of religious mania.

*It happens frequently that a person receives a supplication on their mobile and begged by the sender to send it back to others, so that she/he will not be cursed and punished by God. There is also a widespread new phenomenon of sending pictures with the words "blessed Friday." In addition, messages are sent calling for a "campaign for prayer on the Prophet", without any occasion. Others send this strange question: "have you prayed on the Prophet today?"

Deep searching and invoking fanatic advisory opinions usually in alleged Profit sayings, using them to promote superficial religiosity, the hyperbole of the implementation of Sharia, and to justify aggression. Examples are: the verse of stoning, the prophetic saying of adult breastfeeding, the saying of the fly and that of narrowing the way for "infidels" ("do not initiate greetings with the Jews and Christians. When you meet any of them in the road, then make him take its narrowest path."*). The examples are countless.

*Too many prohibitions are added, without support from the sacred texts, such as the prohibition of shaking hand of men and women.

*What is also found is a large number of religious obligations that are not related to the essence of religion and based on allegorical or ambiguous verses, which accept several interpretations. This involves the imposition of the head covering for women, the veil, the widespread wearing of the black Abaya (a loose-fitting full-length robe), which are Bedouin clothing, or the shortening of the jilbab for men, following the way of Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab.

Exaggerated interest in women's headscarves is one of the most prominent symptoms of religious mania. Among

the slogans used about this are: "your hijab is your chastity", "the high prices continue if women do not wear hijab", your hijab is your adornment and your way to the heaven", a woman without hijab is a city without walls"and many others. It is remarkable that the Muslim Brotherhood, the sheikhs of Al-Azhar and other clerics did not impose the hijab on their women and daughters before the "Islamic Awakening." Rather, some of them allowed belly (oriental) dancing at their daughters and sons weddings, while it became prohibited after the awakening. It is also striking that creation of something really wonderful; the legal (= legitimate= Islamic) swimsuit for women, which covers the entire body. Even, some of them go to the sea in full clothes. Another striking phenomenon is that there are a high proportion of nurses who wear hijab, some of whom have become veiled and wearing gloves while working even in children's departments!

*The tendency to segregate women from men on the ground that mixing is forbidden in Islam. This began early, in the seventies of the last century. For example, university lecture halls were divided for years by order of the authorities, then some metro cars became reserved to women, then some beaches became also allocated to women only, even in a rich and famous tourist village. Many people prefer that women and men do not sit next to each other. In any government department or doctor's office, for example, some ladies are seen looking for a seat next to a lady and some men looking for a seat next to a man, and one has to stand up if she/he doesn't find an available seat!

*Little people prefer reading Qur'an in their weddings instead of singing and dancing; a new phenomenon but not widespread.

*Using microphones in the mosques to call for prayer. Sometimes also the prayer, the "khotba" (= sermon), the

following supplications, praises and "Tasbih" (the glorification of God by saying words like: "Glory be to God."), not regarding the sleeping, the sick, the students and the children in the neighboring houses. Rather, some mosques compete in exaggerating the sound of the loudspeakers and prolonging the prayer time, especially the Friday prayer, if the mosque is located near homes inhabited by Christians.

*Fighting ideas of women's liberation, by calling for preventing their appointment to high-ranking positions such as the judiciary, supporting the idea of women staying at home, basing on fake religious justification …

*Calling to restrict personal freedoms, including the freedom of the individual in their body and mind, i.e. freedom of belief and expression. In addition, to place restrictions on clothing, literature, art, music and other forms of self-expression and enjoyment, under the slogan of Islamizing the literature, art, culture, sociology, economics and psychology..

*Increasingly practicing rituals which are not religious obligations. Examples of this include the spread of many types of prayers - increase in the number of days and occasions of fasting that not heard about before, which are not imposed in the holy texts (voluntary fasting, such as fasting three days of every month, fasting nine days from the beginning of the twelfth month in Arabic calendar, fasting on the day of Arafat; 12/9 of that calendar and fasting every Monday and Thursday...) The more important is proclaiming this.

*Many schools force female students to wear the hijab, even very young girls, often by teachers. Moreover, preventing them from playing sports in the gym class, so the boys do not follow the movement of their bodies!

*The terror of religious fanatics results in forcing secular or moderate Muslims to behave like them regarding clothing, especially of women, and even men (such as wearing a silver ring instead of gold). In addition, using the sea beaches, foods, or practicing worships that they do not yearn for, or even may not believe in. Breaking the fast during the day in Ramadan has also been considered a social crime, and those who do it are subjected to bullying and sometimes arrested by the security forces against the law. Rather, opening restaurants and cafés during the day in Ramadan has become a risk that may expose the owner to harm. This and that was usual before the Islamic awakening.

*The expansion in the construction of mosques and corners (= small places for prayer), despite their abundance, even when there is no need for them, and even if the people are most in need of schools, hospitals and other life necessities.

The relation between religious mania and political Islam

*One of the manifestations of religious mania is the tendency of many persons to form and/or join various religious groups, including political Islam groups, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, Salafi groups and jihadist organizations (that violently fight in the cause of God). Political Islam is clearly <u>the pinnacle of religious mania.</u>

In addition to exaggerating worships and the extremism in highlighting the religious appearance, religious mania reaches the point of declaring hostility to the modern culture, and fanatics seek to fight and eliminate it, even by using the modern technology. This prompts them to pose the question of power and state intervention... Thus, political Islam emerges. They are seen demanding for the state intervention in the affairs of individuals to the point of

imposing religious canons. For example, by banning alcohol, imposing hijab, segregating the sexes, punishing breaking the fast in Ramadan, punishing secularists, atheists, those who abandon prayer, banning art...etc. All of this requires, of course, a new role for the police and the courts. Rather, it needs inquisitions and imposing penalties that existed in the Islamic jurisprudential heritage, including flogging, stoning and asking for repentance that may be accompanied by torture. Ultimately, the goal of political Islam is making the governance for God, as they call it, i.e. implementing the Islamic law by force. As if the Sharia is a set of clear and specific laws that ensures happiness and justice for all. Members of political Islamic groups may know that Islamic law in all its details is disputable and having great flexibility, but what is important for them is to accept the principle and then decide how it can be applied. The more fanatical of them believe that the stricter and harsher "Fatwas" (advisory opinions) one accepts, the closer she/he is to God. Political Islam reaches its peak of extremism among the "jihadists" who work to seize power by force, and until they are able to do so, they work to implement Sharia law themselves and assassinate the advocates of secularism.

*Political Islam presents multiple political projects, each organization according to its vision. But the commonalities are clear. The caliphate project, i.e. the establishment of a global Islamic state, is the central goal of all, and this is the greatest imaginary target. Until this goal is achieved – supposedly- the Islamists can strive to seize power in one country or more and make it a base for the global Islamic revolution. Therefore, this state will be Islamic, that is, it renounces the principle of citizenship, deals with others as Ahl al-Dhimma (= People of the Pact) or a sects living under the protection of Muslims. Because the Sharia will be

applied to everyone, the state will formulate the course of the individual's life from cradle to grave, to ensure the Islamization of everything, creating a totalitarian system. Because it is a base for the world revolution, it must prepare itself to invade other countries or to stir up Islamic unrests in them. Thus an outdated project is presented that the contemporary world has surpassed. So who now accepts the project of the global caliphate state? Rather, who now may accept the punishments by cutting–off hands, flogging, stoning, killing those who prohibit prayer and asking for repentance of apostates from Islam under torture or even without torture?

The Islamic leaders who are more pragmatic make concessions after concessions to make their project more reasonable and acceptable to the masses. This flexibility is called the jurisprudence of priorities. Rather, they often raise secularism slogans while in the commentaries say the opposite, such as the slogan of human rights. However, while they practice this flexibility, their fanatical junior members and audiences move to suppress the society under the banner of promotion of virtue and fighting vice and immorality...etc. This model was clear during the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 2011-2012. Rather, their party's program is, while offering verbal concessions filled with its opposite; sectarianism, suppression of freedoms and a totalitarian state. These are paragraphs of that program: *"Therefore, the first aspect of our party's program depends on purification of souls and hearts, making feelings delicate, by calling for commitment to worship, honorable morals, good companionship and dealing and reminding of God and the Judgment Day until consciences awaken, self-observation is formed and the values of goodness settle in souls and turn away from Evil and its drives. In addition, creating a good atmosphere that encourages integrity and righteousness, so, presents a good role model. We will let the school, home, mosque, church and the media play a role in that.. the dissemination and deepening of ethics, values*

and true concepts of the principles of Islamic sharia as an approach of dealing in the life of the individual and society, which were also decided by other Heavenly religions." **This program includes many of these pre-modern religious and identitarian ideas:** *the basic values of the society and the rules of public order - self-preservation and civilizational identity - according to our Islamic civilizational identity - to achieve Egyptian, Arab and Islamic security - the Palestine question... for being an Arab and Islamic problem - distinguished and competitive education that deepens Arab and Islamic identity –Reviewing and upgrading the curricula and plans of Al-Azhar education and improve its quality and linking it to the needs of the State and the Arab and Islamic worlds in terms of preachers, scholars and teaching staff - the party derives its economic vision from the reference of the Islamic economic system, whose purpose is worshipping the Creator, the blessed and exalted; a worship in the broad sense, which involves all actions of the individual, foremost of which is the reconstruction of the earth in order to achieve the goodness of life and to provide full sufficiency for every individual living in society, whether Muslim or non-Muslim - restricted economic freedom, which governs the production of "good things... "etc.*

There have seen vivid examples of the Islamic State in Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Afghanistan and Iran, with all its ugliness and imaginary slogans, with the varying role of political Islam in it. The sheikhs, the military and Al-Malali (Shia clerics) have been able to exploit slogans and the state of religious mania among the public to rob the people and accumulate wealth, while poverty, ignorance and marginalization are going on.

If the Islamists actually conceded all their amazing theses, they will be turned into a secular party and their political Islam ends, similar to Turkey's AKP.

*Social sections having religious mania constitute a suitable medium for the spread of political Islam, which is one of the manifestations of this situation at the same time. So, mania is the origin and political Islam is one of its

manifestations. Political Islam groups also encourage religious mania through their media and various other channels, and terrorize the opponents. It expands the medium suitable for its spread, attracting supporters and advocates, gets funds to expand its activities. However, religious mania spreads among large masses of the lower and middle classes, while elements from the middle classes are attracted to political Islam more than others.

*Religious mania is an incubator for religious terrorism. A highly religious fanatic is a potential terrorist, and their religious mania is only a prelude to their potential transformation into murderers in the name of religion. Their religious mania leads them to feel self-confident and superior to those around them. So, they begin to despise the society and deal with it as an object that must be changed by all possible means. Since they feel absolutely right, all means of change become legitimate in their mind, including crime. Islamists and the religiously fanatical public use their readings and interpretations of the holy texts which justify brutality and aggression against the peaceful to justify their barbaric attacks. In Egypt, there were dozens of barbaric attacks by Muslim crowds in villages and popular neighborhoods against churches, Christians, and even the cathedral, in the name of Islam. Likewise, very heinous behavior by jihadi organizations in the Levant, Iraq, Afghanistan and Algeria, were also watched.

*Political Islam presents three types of discourses:

The first is a hate speech that presents hatred directly, presenting formulations and concepts that lead to the demonization and condemnation of the other, justifying the violent fighting against him.

The second is the discourse of victimhood, which presents hatred through indirect, mediating mechanisms.

The political Islamic groups present themselves in the form of the savior of humanity and as an ideal of purity and immaculate, explaining their repeated defeats by the conspiracy and aggression of others. In fact, the social sections that were defeated and oppressed by modernity are actually the victims of modernization. Nevertheless, the militant religious groups cannot be described as such. The fighter hits and be hit, as is the case in war, where everything is fair. As for portraying themselves as a victim of the aggression of the other villain, is an attempt to push the world to condemn that other, justify and encourage aggression against it and to show schadenfreude when it is exposed to this aggression. Thus, victimhood justifies hate speech even though it appears to be its opposite. Actually, there are two mechanisms which form two sides of the same coin.

The discourse of victimhood suits the social sections that have been subjected to historical injustice and some of which adopt political Islam. <u>It fits them as social sections, but not their political organizations</u>. In fact, they cause problems for the society without providing any solution, but rather just screaming, wailing and terror practiced by political currents and religious sects. It seeks its rights, but in the form of aggression against society as a whole, and then complains about the reaction of this society and the state.

The two mechanisms unite in the third discourse: conspiracy theories that consolidate the relationship between Islam and the west, meaning the modernism, in the collusion of the evil world against the poor, peaceful world of good that is subject to persecution even in its own home. (the west in the Islamic concept= the whole modernized world in America, Europe, Japan, China and other developed countries and its supporters and allies at home). Reading

illusions about a global Masonic conspiracy and a black history of Freemasonry are still being written. Rather, Freemasonry is depicted as a secret Zionist Jewish organization, while it is completely far from that. On the contrary, it was for a long time refusing Jews to join it, it is not principally a secret society and is not a global organization. It's amazing that many still imagine that the Rothschild family, which has disintegrated and lost most of its wealth, still exists with its full strength, is ruling the world and its wealth is estimated to be twice the existing global wealth!

The naivety of Islamists and even many ordinary Muslims leads them to imagine the presence of an Egyptian Christian conspiracy and that Christians are preparing for a war and extermination of Muslims. Moreover, they think that Muslims are persecuted as being Muslims in their country and that Christians are the strongest and most privileged and distinguished by the authorities. Sometimes they were even portrayed as the rulers and power, especially after the army coup in 2013. Moreover, they imagine that the whole world, east and west, is dedicated himself to strive for eliminating Islam since its emergence. These people forget about the financial and logistical support from the "infidel" West and that they have always been used by governments to fight other governments. They are really in a delirious state.

*The largest mass of political Islam is a fascist current. This sector (especially the Muslim Brotherhood) resembles the Nazi and fascist movement in the West in its basic features. They do not actually believe in human rights that the world has adopted at the United Nations. Instead, they have an identitarian ideology, chauvinistic feelings of extreme hostility to others, especially the West and a project of an exclusionary totalitarian system, in addition to their propensity for committing violence. It is also mainly the

ideology of the middle classes. Another similarity to European fascism is that it seeks to reach power through ballot boxes in order to establish a totalitarian rule that does not allow more voting!

*Political Islam actually does not directly express class interests. Rather, it is a state of religious mania which infected social sectors that the Partial modernization has violated their values without fulfilling their aspirations, and that hoped to seize opportunities from modernization, but only afflicted with oppression and injustice. This situation is psychologically very similar to the case of the middle class in Nazi Germany, which Erich Fromm analyzed. It is composed of oppressed personalities, characterized by harshness and cruelty, which hate the surrounding world and seek for a compensatory mechanism to feel as if they are dominating others or belong to a group that gives them the illusion of having power. Thus they find their purpose in a sacred ideology. This does not negate the joining of other individuals and groups in the fascist march to seize interests and achieve influence at the expense of the public having religious mania. The latter are being driven by them, along with the rest of the masters and leaders, to die or suicide for the sake of illusions and then trade their blood for selfish interests. Those include the mullahs and some intellectuals. In addition to individuals or small groups who followed the line of the socialist revolution under the banner of Marxism or Nasserism, but gained the frustration of failure, could not achieve their hopes of seizing power and rising to positions of leadership and influence. So they turned their backs to this thought and went to ride the wave of Islamic awakening, hoping to reach some of their goals on the backs of the alienated masses. As well, there are rulers who decided to use political Islam to preserve their throne (such as Al Saud, Sadat and Al-Numairi. There are

also groups of Muslim immigrants to the Western countries who were not assimilated in those societies, remained on the margins and found a support in the ideology and organizations of political Islam. At last, add the interests of the opportunists who benefit from the awakening.

Thus the base of the phenomenon of Islamic fascism is its social pillars.

More clearly, political Islam in general expresses the agony of the classes and groups that have suffered from the repercussions of imperfect modernization, not representing their interests. Rather, it is merely a sigh of pain and a cry of frustrated and defeated social sectors that form its main pillars, expressing a state of religious mania with regard to the broad base of Islamists. At the same time, various forces used it to achieve their interests by riding the waves of the popular protest. In fact, it does not present a clear, practical political project. Of course, the situation is different for senior leaders, theorists and governments that support this trend, and who benefit from this fictional project. There is no Islamic section of capitalism, as many Marxists claim, who are looking for capitalism behind every stone. However, governments, the ruling class and the Western governments are fanning religious mania here and its top; political Islam, within the limits of making it usable to deceive the public and fuel its neurosis, while striking and curtailing it if it exceeds the permissible limit. This does not mean that political Islam is just a governmental-Western creature, but it is being used for their interest along with the global capitalist powers as well in their struggles with hostile and non-submissive countries. Regimes certainly played a role in encouraging political Islam to the extent that they could control and use it. However, there are societal factors behind its emergence and dissemination, which are the same factors, related to religious mania as a whole which

when carried forward, political Islam is reached. It is true, for example, that the authorities encouraged Hasan al-Banna (the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt), but before <u>he becomes a politician</u>. But then violently struck his organization several times (during the era of king Frouq, then by Nasser's regime twice, then during the era of Sadat when she/he declared that there is no religion in politics, ending the friendly relationship after they allied to liquidate the left. Then Mubarak clashed severely with the "jihadists" and encouraged and beat the Brotherhood at the same time. But Al-Sisi is fighting all Islamic groups except Salafi. Surely, it is not possible in general to create these huge organizations by governments artificially. Rather, there is already a large audience ready to integrate into the Islamic movement, and there are those who seek to be heroes and leaders and carry huge feelings of anger towards both the authorities and modernism.

The feelings of the Islamic groups and their broad masses are transformed from being crushed and in despair -through the sacred ideology- to the feeling of a community of believers; the surviving sect; the Professor of the world and the standard-bearer of the sanctuary; at last, the party of God. So that it becomes - in its own eyes - from nothing to an absolute power, confident of triumph. The literature of political Islam is full of expressions of this state. Of that: the professorship of the world - the best of peoples evolved for mankind (a Qur'anic verse used in another context) - our dead are in heaven and their dead are in hell. Hence, Islam becomes the absolute standard for the good and the evil. This is how the state of paranoia is formed among Islamic groups, where the state of feeling greatness intertwines with the feeling of persecution and exposure to global conspiracy at all times. A feeling similar exactly to the Jewish persecution complex linked to the genius, greatness and

superiority of the alleged Jewish race, a state which Zionism has inflated so vigorously.

Yet this feeling of power is false. Whenever they are faced with any criticism of something of their sanctities; a text, people, or history, they get a panic, frightened of the threat against Islam according to their fantasies and terrified by the idea that Islam may collapse under any knock from here or there. It could be just the publication of cartoons or a literary novel, albeit flimsy, that touches their references, albeit with insinuation. Sometimes just mentioning parts of their heritage as it is, provokes them to panic, showing their fangs and practicing terrorism. The scene of the pillars of political Islam; the angry masses, in hysterical demonstrations in Tehran, London and elsewhere after the publication of the novel "The Satanic Verses", and the scenes of their brutal assault on Christians in Egypt when they pray without official permission, revealing bouts of absolute madness, which never indicates a sense of power, but rather the opposite. They always call the state to protect Islam, implicitly admitting the vulnerability of their arguments and the incoherence of their discourse. It was very strange that they demanded the Danish and the French governments to prevent displaying the offensive Prophet Muhammad caricatures. So, they want to transform liberal regimes (definitely not absolute) into authoritarian ones, for the sake of Islam!

This feeling of internal vulnerability, emptiness, alienation and oppression explains the amount of malice and hatred that the advocates of political Islam and their popular pillars carry towards their opponents and explains the terrifying cruelty in their dealings with the other. Let us only recall the massacres and terror of the Taliban, ISIS and the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria. Add what was committed by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt: their arrogance - their

appealing to the army to suppress the rebels - the brutality of their militias when they crushed the rebels in front of the parliament building, as well as the protesters in front of the Republican Palace - their cheap defamation of January rebels and accusing them of bullying, being agents for foreign entities, drug use, having sex in "Tahrir" square sit-ins and hiring thugs - and by showing schadenfreude when they were subjected to massacres by the police and the army, before the magic has turned on the magician and their allies betrayed them and killed hundreds of their supporters.

This feeling of vulnerability also explains why the fanatics appeal to violence and to the government to punish apostates and those who break the fast during Ramadan, to prohibit pornographic sites and to issue repressive laws against violators, such as the blasphemy law.

However, Islamists reveal from time to time a deep inner feeling of inferiority, resulting from an inferiority complex. This is consolidated in a process of self-flagellation, which some of them resort to from time to time, accusing the "Nation of Islam" in general of turning themselves away from the religion, by betraying it and betraying the heavenly message. The process of self-flagellation is characterized by a shift from accusing others of being responsible for its failure, to accusing oneself of negligence and self-defeating. This is not explained as a result of mistakes that can be treated with care and comprehension, which is the normal self-criticism that every reasonable person can do, but by self-betrayal, failure of the self to achieve her goals and even its incompetence, utter corruption and degradation. Failure is explained by the self's conspiracy against herself in favor of the others; so, she is the reason for their superiority and sovereignty. Therefore, she deserves everything that happens, and instead of self-criticism, she insults and reprimands itself, without any plan to address the

shortcomings and imbalances in a practical and effective manner. It is something that some Islamists do, especially in the times of desperation.

*The emergence and dissemination of political Islam was one of the most prominent repercussions of incomplete modernization and one of the most prominent obstacles to complete these projects. Even the dominant reading of Islam as a religion plays the same role. It absorbs the energy of huge masses and dissipates it in futile battles, deflecting them from the class struggle. Thus, it provides a great service to the current system, despite their frequent clashes. It is a clear expression of the phenomenon of combined development in that modernization has produced ideological currents that are pre-modern and hostile to it. At last, the ideologies that expressed it and its forces have failed.

Those people are not advocates of freedom, equality, or progress. Their democracy is limited to the ballot boxes, only when they guarantee the majority. However, if the situation turns upside down, they declare without shame that democracy is "infidelity" because Sharia is prescribed from heaven and humans do not have the right to legislate and choose the system of government. Hence, they turn to violence. Indeed, when they seized the power of the state, they announced that it was the last election (Algeria) or that they would remain in power for 500 years (Egypt).

They also hide behind the slogan of the "civil state" to deceive others, meaning by this term a state that is governed by Sharia but led by individuals who are not clerics. But this is an obvious fallacy. A state based on the holy text or a specific view of it, must firstly need persons specialized in its explanation and interpretation as references to the texts. Therefore, it is -in practice- semi-theological, contrary to what Islamic discourse generally claims. That is why criticizing them is usually harshly

confronted. <u>Secondly</u>, the government leaders are not important as much as the basis of the ruling being the holy text or a certain interpretation of it. It is a religious state without doubt.

Moreover, they are issuing fatwas (advisory opinions) that preoccupy the public mind. Such as what is related to the women; their veil and being Awrah (nakedness or shame), about adult breastfeeding, segregation between the sexes, abandoning birthdays and New Year's celebrations, the Prophet's saying of the fly and about congratulating non-Muslims on their festivals... etc. All this distracts people from their real concerns and keeps them away from the struggle against corrupt regimes in favor of trivial issues and fictitious problems.

The Islamists track the failure of semi-modernist systems; nationalism and socialism of Arab and others, offering a solution to the repercussions of incomplete modernization. This solution is a regression to the past; Caliphate and the implementation of Sharia. As they interpret this failure by turning away from religion and resorting to modernity. Rather, they present projects that combine modern scientific progress with the religious values, thus putting science and industry under the service of their pre-modern or Salafist ideas.

*Using demagogic slogans with buzzwords and empty of content is what most characterizes the political religious currents. Such as: Islam is the solution - the Qur'an is our constitution - governance belongs to God - they have what we have and they have to do what we have to do – we carry the goodness for all people - we carry the goodness for Egypt. Then giving false promises to the public, such as: the renaissance project that was put forward during Mohamed Morsi's election campaign.

The summit of deception by groups of political Islam materializes in imparting holiness to their political projects, by presenting them as Islamic projects with reference from the Qur'an and Sunnah and considering the Prophet and the Companions as their ideals. Actually, it is a regressive project to pre-modernism.

Islamists vary in the degree of their religious mania. Some are moderate, or at least seeming so, following what they call the "jurisprudence of priorities," gradually spreading their ideas and goals. Others compete in showing their fanaticism and extremism in hostility towards others, accusing them of plotting against Islam, as well as in the means of political advocacy action, in terms of the time, degree and forms of violence used.

*Islamists and even the public Muslim live in a closed cave of illusional perceptions about the Islamic state in the past, where justice prevailed; freedom and wealth were available for all people who were equal before the law... That is, an imaginary utopia which the narratives of the Islamic heritage itself deny its existence at all. Instead of these illusions, the heritage portrayed the Islamic state as characterized with brutality, injustice, exploitation of the peasants and the people of its colonies, the captivity of their women and the practice of generalized servitude.. All this is versus the luxury, corruption and cruelty of the rulers. Rather, there are among the Egyptians who defend the occupation and the Ottoman ruling of Egypt, despite its heinousness and its role in obstructing the country's development for centuries. All this because – according to them - the Ottomans ruled in the name of Islam, preserved it and occupied many infidel countries. Religious mania in this case has brought the people to the point of loving their executioners, exploiters and murderers of their ancestors for one reason: they are Muslims.

*Undoubtedly, the Islamists and others as well have been exposed to forms of "injustice" by the current authorities both legal and humanitarian, like torture, arbitrary arrests, fabrication of charges and ill-treatment in prisons. However, the Islamist hate speech, discourse of victimhood and the conspiracy theories restrict injustice solely to Islam and its followers, but welcome implicitly or publicly the same injustice to secularists.

Factors of prevalence of religious mania:

They include psychological factors of individuals and general social factors.

At the individual level:

1- Failure and the inability to reach aspirations in a society that blocks the opportunities for the individuals. This creates a situation in which all the results of frustration and the tendency to rebellion are intertwined. Fiery passions mixed with superstition, material and sexual aspirations and sacred rituals. If the individuals find themselves in a suitable incubating environment that provides them with legitimacy, protection and security, guarantees them an otherworldly promising fate and facilitates things such as marriage without cost and wearing the simplest clothes... etc., especially if their cultural background is pre-modern, the result will be the satisfaction of their desire for salvation from the daily torments of life that they cannot overcome.

2- Feelings of inferiority towards modernity and modernism (what is meant by the modern era, materially and intellectually), with the absence of a rational culture that provides the individuals with a reasonable explanation of the reality and a way to overcome these feelings, pushes them

to exaggerate adherence to their old identity. This offers the individual a compensation; a false feeling that she/he is the best. As they come to believe that they are closer to God, wondering: Is there anything better than being close to God?

<u>On a general level:</u>

Saudi Wahhabism is often accused of pioneering of spreading religious mania in Egypt. This talk is never supported by reality. The Egyptians in, general, do not believe in monotheism according to the Wahhabi model (there are about 15 millions of Sufis in this country in 2017). They still love the shrines and the "Awliya" of Allah (=saints). They are also touching religious symbols such as Al-Hussein, Al-Sayyid Al-Badawi and Imam Al-Shafi'i. In fact, the essence of Wahhabism is related to monotheism, vows, graves, shrines... Moreover, Wahhabism was not an ideological source for Egyptian political Islam. Rather, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood did not deny Sufism; the first enemy of Wahhabism, but he accepted it. He put the following definition of the Brotherhood as: "*a Salafi call.. a Sunni method.. a Sufi truth.. a political body.. a sports group, a scientific-cultural association.. an economic company.. and a social idea.*" Some of its leaders regularly attended Moulids, or saints' festivals (including Isam Al-Erian and Jamal Heshmat). The Wahhabi organization in Egypt; Jamaat Ansar al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyyah did not prevail over the rest of the Islamic organizations. In Egypt, nothing was established like "Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice" as in Saudi Arabia. Rather, the general public plays this role without official authority and in a soft manner. The Egyptians in general did not stop celebrating the birth of the Prophet and the Moulids of the "Awliya of Allah" (birthday of saints) and they did not refrain from dancing at weddings and listening to songs - even

many of the religious persons - contrary to what Wahhabism demands. Actually, not every religious mania is Wahhabi. This does not negate that Saudi Arabia tried and spent billions to disseminate Wahhabism in the world, including Egypt, with partial success. Due to the fact that it did not prevail in the Egyptian Islamic movement, it is found that mutual criticism and attack between it and the Muslim Brotherhood, which ended with its classification by Saudi government as a terrorist group in 2014. Likewise, there was not an alliance between Saudi Arabia and the jihadist groups except during the war of the "Mujahideen" in Afghanistan against the Soviets, when it participated in financing and allowed the travel of jihadi elements for fighting.

Methodologically, the internal factors always have the highest hand in social internal transformations, both material and cultural:

1- Failure of modernization:

What is usually meant by <u>modernization</u> is the transition from pre-capitalist social organization to the organization established by capitalism in Western Europe and then extended to other regions. This involves industrialization and mechanization, building economic, social and political institutions, a legal system that is based on the interests of the social system and not on holy texts or the instructions of the predecessors. Therefore, the legislation is done by the people themselves according to the way they agree. But to put a clear and simplified definition of <u>modernism</u>, it can be said in one word: <u>rationalization</u>. Meaning that reason is the standard of judging human actions, and anything and everything is subject to research, criticism and rational analysis. This involves secularization, in the sense of making religion just a personal matter belonging to the individual. Thus, research in all aspects of life is based on scientific methods (experimental, mathematical, induction

and deduction...). This is unlike pre-modernism: acknowledging the disability of the reason and its need for guidance from outside, and then its submission to dogmatic beliefs.

*How did modernization fail?

In the modern era, some Islamic countries have undergone significant changes, in the direction of partially adopting modernity and secularism. However, secular currents have not succeeded in achieving a complete and rewarding modernization for all classes, for reasons not related to their secularism at all. Rather, its half - secular stance may have contributed to their failure. The wealthy classes benefited, and even the most parasitic and agents of European colonization. Modernization was also linked to the colonization of those countries and the subjugation of their people by the West. In the end, military colonization came out, but forms of exploitation and oppression continued to exist between the two parties. The cultural gap between the West and the Arab-Islamic East has also become increasingly wide. The topic of the reasons of failure of modernization is large and beyond the scope of this article.

In general, the rate of demolishing the pre-modern systems was much faster than the rate of building the modern ones. This resulted in the phenomenon of marginalization, the phenomenon of combined development and the permanent economic crisis.

This is the essential content of imperfect modernization, which has produced the so-called "development of underdevelopment" (a concept created by André Gunder Frank; a German-American sociologist and economic historian). One of its most important features is the dependence of the underdeveloped countries, especially the Arab and African countries, on the imperialist ones. These

are mere appendages of the global market, which contribute very little in the modern human civilization, being principally consumers of its products. It is a pattern of uneven and combined development; an unbalanced growth of the various components of the society; its components belong to more than one historical era, which puts it in a permanent crisis. There is a highly developed economic sector beside primitive sectors; modern education and illiteracy are associated. Besides the modern rational culture, there is a primitive culture that depends on transmission, indoctrination and even superstitions are widespread on a large scale. That is besides applications of the latest digital technology, some of which are used to spread spells, supplications and the illusions of political Islam and the occultism of all theological religions. One of the most important components of the uneven and combined development is entering the age of modern industry without enough qualified workers to deal with it. Nowadays, electronic services are spreading without a sufficient human element capable of supervising or using them, which results in the phenomenon of the system falling, for example, or its lack of response, and many other problems. There is the phenomenon of constructing a huge infrastructure that does not serve productive sectors, or vice versa; implementing projects without proper infrastructure. These disparities result in higher costs of production and services and their poor quality. Child mortality rates also decreased without the birth rate declining, under the influence of a religious culture which justifies "Tawakkul" (=perfect trust in God and reliance on Him alone). The result is the population explosion without a corresponding rate of industrialization and growth, which led to widespread unemployment. Advanced industries are also established without giving attention to scientific research and technological development. This leads to the ruin of these industries after

a short period, after cessation of the production of suitable spare parts for them in the West, and after they become unable to compete with their newer counterparts in the global market.

Among the most prominent manifestations of incomplete modernization is the persistence of customary law, the Islamic law, alongside the positive law.

The social structure still includes tribes, clans, religious sects...etc.

The popular classes that suffered most from the failure of modernization include sectors of the middle and lower classes of rural origin, small merchants, employees, workers, workshop owners and peasants. The same phenomenon among the nouveau riche of poor rural origins is also found. These sectors are more affected by the religious heritage for various factors and have not been able to assimilate modernism. Therefore, they remain the suitable candidate medium for the spread of religious mania as a reaction to the shock of modernization, which did not satisfy their inspirations. Rather, stripped them of the old values and deprived them from the safer lifestyle. They suffer, not only because they lost, but also because they look with envy and malice at the Western civilization and what they consider being its extension inside; luxurious classes. This civilization and these classes remind them of their impotence and weakness. As for the rich Muslim Brotherhood and the "satellite sheikhs", most of them are opportunistic personalities who know how to use the "awakening" to accumulate wealth; something recalls war profiteers. These do not constitute a special bloc of the ruling class, but rather deals with it in the market quite normally. Nevertheless a few of them are actually infected with religious mania and could not overcome the pre-modern culture.

The repercussions of this incomplete modernization in a country such as Egypt can be tracked as follows:

*Generalized forced labor became uglier with the introduction of cotton cultivation in the nineteenth century; the crop with which the country entered the world market. It was accompanied by beatings and humiliation, thus the suffering of the peasants greatly exacerbated.

*Population explosion, as aforementioned, led to the exacerbation of unemployment, the emergence of migrant workers in large numbers and then the marked growth of the phenomenon of slums. The phenomenon of marginalization has also expanded. The number of the marginalized, according to Nabil al-Qet, a leader in the Egyptian Social Democratic Party, reached about 32 million before 2011.

*Suppressing the rebellions of the peasants who were crushed by forced labor, conscription and poverty with excessive cruelty, especially during the first waves of industrialization, in the era of Muhammad Ali and Khedive Ismail, to the extent of shelling villages with cannons. In this way, all peasant uprisings were defeated, and they did not get any gains. On the contrary, they continued to pay the cost of modernization, and continued to pay much of the cost of economic growth during and after Nasser era.

*The growth of commodity production and land titling gave foreign merchants and usurers the opportunity to sweep the market, squeeze peasants and buying their lands at the lowest prices through mortgages with unfair contract terms.

*The industrial working class suffered greatly and its conditions improved only after a long period of time. Then, temporary labor appeared and grew sharply.

*One character of the new social formation is the growth of the intelligentsia, which was partially and temporarily

absorbed during the Nasserite period, and then returned again to suffer poverty and even marginalization.

*Migrations from the countryside under the weight of poverty, created a culture shock for the rural without creating jobs for most of them, who lacked also a decent life. The process of the ruralization of the towns has expanded and slums emerged in their surroundings. The rate of expulsion of rural populations remained much higher than cities' capacity to absorb migrants.

*A general and profound moral breakdown: This happened as a result of several factors. The most important of which is the widespread monetization and market economy. Then the state's complete control of civil society, especially after the 1952 coup, associated with the sovereignty of the bureaucracy. This led to the spread of corruption and the collapse of the traditional social values in favor of the values of the "Fahlawa" (hocus pocus) and the hypocrisy that increased its intensity as a result of the control of the trustworthy people. The most important result is that the composition of the rich class has changed, so that it engaged in the activities that were made available to it, trading, illegal and parasitic sectors, in collaboration with corrupted officers. The composition of the class of industrial workers in the public sector and state employees as a whole has also changed, so that a big portion of them became disguised unemployment.

The growth of social inequality and marginalization led to the spread of crimes of every kind.

Absence -to a large extent- of the rule of law and lack of confidence in the justice system as a result of the state's domination over the civil society and the absence of popular participation, created a tendency towards bullying.

Marginalization and poverty led to the widespread of the beggary phenomenon.

Imagine the psyche of people who put out their hands to ask for charity; inventing various ways to beg (including <u>selling phrases</u> such as "good morning", "praise be to God for safety", etc.). Let's imagine the psyche of people who sell their blood as a source of income, or whose job is: a patient, at the service of medical students!

The absence of social and health insurance, living in slums and open or disguised unemployment for large sectors of the population lead them to lack any feeling of security. You can imagine the feelings of these people and what they can do to compensate for this fear of the unknown and how excessive selfishness grows within them. In addition, the terrible social inequality that exacerbated class hatred, especially with the feeling of injustice, especially when people see huge wealth are being created without effort and in unprecedented ways, such as drug trafficking, abusing public posts and robbing state funds and foreign loan funds, etc.

With adoption of the policy of economic openness in 1970s, the parasitic class grew up without limit or control, and the state opened the gates to profit from any way without any deterrence. Values such as hypocrisy, opportunism, patronage, influence peddling, bribery… etc, have become partially accepted by the state, but more importantly, they have become socially acceptable. Thousands of professional criminals became millionaires quickly, through parasitic and criminal ways, in partnership with corrupt officers. This category of people of nouveau riche is lacking any noble values, which was reflected on the society as a whole and on the state.

With opening the way of working in the rich Arab countries, which is a very promising path for social ascension, immigration has become more important than the homeland, family and social ties. Millions of families have been disintegrated and marital and parent-child relationships have been broken. There is no exaggeration if it is said that infidelity has increased, and thus the bonds of love within many families have faded.

In the absence or weakness of legal and ethical mechanisms to achieve social status and create wealth, the individuals have been forced to commit all evils and crimes for the sake of this, especially with the weakness of the justice apparatus. Greed, avarice and hunger for collecting money in any way have spread. Since the main available path is corruption, it has become accepted by the general community.

Religious mania was in one of its fundamental aspects a compensatory reaction to this moral decadence. This mania expresses one's inability to live without faith and at the same time their inability to have true faith. Hence, Moral "disbelief" intertwines with superficial religiosity. The person is forced to practice moral "disbelief" in order to continue their life in the surrounding circumstances. But at the same time, they strive to obtain the Lord's approval, so they only find the ritual religiosity without abandoning moral "disbelief", and they remain in this whirlpool. Both moral "disbelief" and superficial religiosity increase, leading to a state of religious mania. It is the "unhappy consciousness" as prescribed by Hegel. This may explain the phenomenon of a highly religious person usually being less ethical, more selfish and aggressive than a non-religious person. A superficially religious person is often seen cursing the religion itself, and many of them practice all forms and colors of corruption. Religious mania here is linked to a

general moral decline. There have been here no general socially agreed-upon values. Rather, the individual sometimes rejects a certain behavior and accepts it at other times, according to their personal interest or desire. Everything has become permitted. Values such as respect of science and work, honesty, righteousness, sincerity and family affiliation and the nation have collapsed.

Moral "disbelief" creates a feeling of guilt, which is offset by religious mania. In a sense, it is a mechanism for purification. On the other hand, it is a mechanism to cover up the dark side of the human psyche. It is a compensatory mechanism and a mask that confers a false good appearance on personalities which have lost their relation to human values. Therefore, religious mania is usually associated with turning away from the ethics, including those of religion, which is stripped of its moral values in human relations and seen as mere symbols and emblems separated from morality. For the sake of these symbols and emblems, the fanatics disperse, but rather, they fight and fight over them among themselves and with others as well. Everything has become permissible, despite that those persons belief in God's existence, in contrast to Dostoevsky's famous phrase: *"If there is no God, anything is permitted."*

Example of this include the collective madness that follows individual actions with little effect, such as publishing offensive cartoons, or writing insulting words to the Prophet, someone burning the Qur'an, or a criticism of Islam or Muslims. The call and even attempts to kill opponents, just as a fatwa ordering Rushdie's execution, the late Sayyid al-Qimni, many others were threatened and some were even killed, such as Farag Fouda, a French teacher and others. It does not look a mere coincidence that individuals having religious mania use aggressive rhetoric and insult

their opponents with all kinds of words. They do not hesitate to insult mothers and fathers, nor describe their interlocutors as sexual deviants. Women who are not wearing hijab are almost always described as "muttabarijat" (displaying their beauty in a way deemed inappropriate by Islamic standards), immoral and other characteristics, or by phrases such as: a woman with hijab does not betray her husband. Their sheikhs do not hesitate to insult non-Muslims on the pulpits, describing them with the worst characteristics, such as the "descendants of apes and pigs" and questioning the ethics of their women. At the same time, these fanatics are not open to criticism from others to themselves, their ideas, or their religion. Therefore, in intellectual interaction, the synergy between moral "disbelief" and religious mania consolidates. It is clear that offending, defaming and insulting non-religious and secular people are not consistent with the well-known noble principles and high moral values.

The fanatical public's contradiction with itself reaches its peak, even its internal disintegration, in its belief in the prohibition of art and the necessity of criminalizing it, while at the same time allowing itself to enjoy and practice it sometimes, such as dancing and taking off the veil at parties... It is the contradiction between belief and human needs.

*The incomplete modernization reached the peak of its failure under the slogans of nationalism and socialism in the defeat of 1967, which disclosed all the vulnerabilities of the Nasserite regime and Arab nationalism as a whole. The Nasserite regime raised slogans that exceeded its capabilities, put before the public hopes and dreams that it was unable to achieve and gave promises that exceeded its ability to fulfill. The defeat was followed by accepting the Nasserite regime the United Nations resolutions that

included the recognition of Israel and deeming the Palestinian cause just as a refugee problem. Consequently, there has been abandoning of the empty patriotic slogans, just as harmony arose between Nasserite and the Gulf countries, then the disintegration of the Arab nationalist and socialist regimes went on.

Therefore, the masses began to leave the fold of the regime. This phenomenon was also evident prior to the 1952 coup. The government that emerged could temporarily absorb the social conflict and freeze political Islam and communism. However, this process stopped later due to the incompetence of the regime and its defeat in the end. So, the majority of the masses walked away from it without finding an alternative, but to return to their heritage after modernization reached its climax and failure. The matter looks like the migration of the rural to the city and when they are subjected to a cultural shock without reaping any gain, they return back to the village. Liberalism proved its failure to achieve the aspirations of the poor classes before 1952 coup, and the Nasserite regime dragged its reputation through the mud, but it failed to implement socialism and was unable to achieve its national project.

The destruction of the pre-modern system in Egypt without the complete construction of a new modern system has led to a multi-faceted and multi-level crisis for the society. It can described as a historical crisis; a case of a <u>detained transition</u>, in the words of Samir Amin; the Egyptian–French Economist. This state had thrown the general consciousness of the public into a profound crisis; a historical shock that made it lose self-consciousness and made it a prey to obsessions, confusion and immersion in a world of myths and illusions.

This Egyptian scenario has been repeated in different forms and degrees in many Islamic countries (with the

exception of the Gulf countries, which are covered by huge oil revenues), especially Iran. This prompted the peoples of those countries to throwback to their ancient culture, and extract from their heritage what they imagined would overcome their growing crises. That modernization has led to profound value changes, without accompanying or resulting in significant gains for the popular classes, whose members were marginalized in large numbers, losing their values and security and did not gain anything. While colonization oppressed these peoples and controlled their capabilities. The gains of independence also have fallen into the mouth of small military and bureaucratic elites, to the extent that the masses compared the rule of the colonialists to the rule of the patriots in favor of the first party.

It was clear that the manifestations of the "Islamic Awakening" had begun to grow rapidly after the defeat of National Socialism in 1967, even in Palestine. It also escalated after the mullahs' triumph in Iran. Then a higher wave emerged after the defeat of the Baath Party project in Syria and Iraq. It is likely that after the decline in oil revenues, a new wave will explode in the Gulf countries, where the limits of modernization will be exposed, which remained largely superficial and relied on the cover of a policy of providing large subsidies to the peoples.

2- Civilizational general decline

*The so-called Islamic Awakening was represented in the spread of religious mania and political Islam at its peak. It was preceded by the start of a civilizational general decline in Egypt and the Arab countries, including art and culture... The efficiency of the workers deteriorated, education and scientific research collapsed, the tributary nature of the regime prevailed, which impeded the market economy and the culture of the Egyptians became less suitable for modernization.

The phenomenon of religious mania is one of the manifestations of the decline of modernity in those countries after the defeat of the modernization project itself. Egypt is the most glaring model of the decline of modernity and the spread of religious mania. The Egyptian people are described as the most religious people in the world, which is a historical heritage that appeared with the emergence of the old state, but it has become a state which can be called collective mania in the current era.

Among the manifestations of civilizational decline: the ruler's relationship with the people in general - the state's methods of collecting money from the people through robbing and blackmailing - the personalization of governance, the policy of revenge - terrorizing the public instead of applying the law as the modern state's behave – Judicial discriminatory against non-Muslims in matters such as child custody and adultery law - adoption Customary law and reconciliation sessions are an alternative to modern judicial system - the state frequently resorts to collective punishment of the people - sometimes forcible displacement of Christians - detention without charge and personal revenge against opponents such as demolishing their homes or expelling their sons & daughters from their jobs - extrajudicial killings – confiscation of individuals' properties under Illegal arguments..

The phenomenon of religious mania is sitting on the top of the civilizational decline.

3- The unlived life: the human who is non-human

What are meant is not material poverty, but moral poverty and psychological suffering. Modernization in this country has destroyed the old societal values, and made many individuals live a life that is not their own without gaining anything from the new situation. Millions have migrated from

safe villages and towns to the urban periphery and outskirts and resided in slums that lack less than what is required for human life.. Rather, hundreds of thousands lived in the cemeteries, in communal apartments, or in the streets. Consequently, they lost privacy, security and the warmth of life among their beloved. Millions have learned in modern schools, but they do not work according to what they have learned, rather, according to what the labor market or the state wants them to do. There are many scientists, doctors and engineers who do not practice their work according to professional principles and even cannot work according to what their professional and human conscience dictates to them, under the pressure of the existing work discipline. In addition, there are many university graduates who work in jobs that do not need their qualifications, such as a Tuk Tuk driver, delivery person, sidewalk vendor or street salesman...etc. Millions of rural' children have become qualified without practicing their new work according to professional principles, in addition to having to practice corruption in their work when it is the only available means to meet the requirements of life, such as taking bribes, forging official papers, cheating buildings and defrauding patients. Moreover, with the collapse of the level of education and training, they have become much less professional. The judges who issues judgments without taking into account the spirit of truth, but submits to orders of the executive authority or according to fabricated official papers and evidence and unreal security investigations, while they know this, cannot feel that they are true judges and they do not sleep with a clear conscience. Thus, all of these people lost the old life of stability without realizing themselves in the modern social system. Therefore, there is no any coincidence in the penetration of religious mania, in the form of political Islam, among students of medical and engineering colleges in particular and among doctors,

engineers and professionals in general. As for those who travel to work in the oil countries for high wages, they find themselves dislocated from among their loved ones, and lose -in most cases- their dignity and serve people who do not respect and often dehumanize them. Then at a moment they give the money they have earned in years of hard work to contractors or landlords; thieves and exploiters, just to own an apartment or shop.

Which life is this?

All this pushes the one to regress to the past unconsciously; to search for the lost self; to the authenticity instead of modernity, to God instead of the devil of modernity, when she/he does not find a clear alternative and a feasible path.

The lack of a feeling of security was one of the most important psychological motives to look for in the exaggeration of superficial religiosity. The human is in constant need of this feeling, and if the society fails to make him feel secure, this pushes him to search for that outside of the society, in the unseen world. If one of the factors of the emergence of religions is the search for existential security, then religious mania is a mechanism for searching for personal and social security.

Some of those who had the opportunity to assimilate modern culture and possess a rational approach to analyzing the miserable reality may escape from this path and become more self-conscious. As well as those who can find a way to integrate in the dominant class.

4- <u>Role of the collective unconscious:</u> The presence of active religious background facilitates the religious people towards adopting extremist religious ideas and slogans, or constitutes a contributing factor to the spread of religious mania. Moreover, the human mind is already full of illusions

and delusions, and the religion is full of stories of miracles and the occultism, which makes the acceptance of myths easier for religious people. This is most easy among the less educated segments of the population, especially those having a rural background.

When a person loses the ability of balanced thinking as a result of the severe suffering, it becomes easy to indoctrinate her/him, especially since their mentality originally depends on religious indoctrination; a pre-prepared mentality.

5- <u>Role of the dominant religious discourse in stimulating the state of mania</u>: portraying God as a savage and predatory being - intimidation of torment of the grave - prohibition of many things that people usually practice and not forbidden in holy texts such as listening to music and songs - promoting hideous sectarian Prophet Sayings - "takfīr" (accusing others of being infidels) violators for the most trivial reasons - "takfīr" and demonizing Artists. This type of religious discourse is led by the Salafis, the Brotherhood and religiously manic sheikhs. The state also encourages this type of discourse, as it owns Al-Azhar University and thousands of Al-Azhar schools that adopt this discourse. Satellite channels are also accessible for sheikhs who promote this kind of ideas, allow advertisements for "Legitimate Ruqyah" (=incantations used to ward off evil or harm) and present programs on prophetic and complementary medicine. Above all, there is no law that punishes those who disseminate superstition.

The ambiguity and difficulty of understanding reality, together with unwarranted suffering, make one loses the capacity for rational judgment. Therefore, she/he becomes a prey to agitation and propaganda, especially if the ideas presented to them give hope to overcome the suffering and incomprehensible situations.

6- Some governments encourage religious mania to divert the interest of the masses from their realistic issues and to consolidate the existing power. They encourage the expansion of establishing of mosques, and the Qur'anic memorization schools in a time one no longer needs to memorize with the advancement of technology, plus it is a purely a personal matter. The Saudi government has played this role for decades. In Egypt, the Nasserite government encouraged this phenomenon, which was then established by Anwar Sadat through resorting to a religious discourse that Sisi expanded up to the fullest extent. The authorities insist on broadcasting in T.V. the call for prayer five times a day, and on some channels this call is followed by religious supplications, despite the large number of mosques with their loudspeakers. It also encouraged the sheikhs preaching Islam in a country whose people are overwhelmingly Muslims, and who have become stars.

During Mubarak's era, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry encouraged and raised the issue of the caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad (known as "Danish cartoons") and revived the issue months after they were published. Then, the Minister of Culture, at the time, waged international campaigns to curtail expression under the pretext of protecting sanctities.

Moreover, there is a role played and still being played by some governments to create, promote and support political Islam, as aforementioned.

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In the end, if the masses could verify the failure of political Islam and religious mania as a whole, their unrealistic nature

and the problems they create in the society, they will have to find another unpredictable way.