

THE REAL REASONS BEHIND THE PHENOMENON OF RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN MUSLIM COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

This research deals with the phenomenon of religious extremism, which has become more widespread in our contemporary Muslim societies. It is one of the most important issues in the Islamic world that impede civil peace in the Muslim community. In such a painful reality, there is a need to analyze the phenomenon in depth to understand its real causes and effects. This study aims to: (1) identify the causes of religious extremism by considering its causes in our contemporary Muslim societies, whether it is related to the intellectual misunderstanding of religion or due to the hostility of facts (2) identify and analyze the implications of religious extremism on contemporary Muslim societies. This study adopted a descriptive analytical approach based on previous academic research on the topic and revealed several important findings. First, most of the violent and extremist ideas in the Muslim community emerged from the womb of suffering from injustice, oppression and tyranny, along with other unfair social and economic conditions. Second, by studying the causes that led to religious extremism in Muslim community, it is concluded that our societies are not immune. They do not have sufficient barriers to the threat of religious extremism. Third, among the effects of religious extremism is distracting the nation from fulfilling its civilizational goals. In addition, the research alludes to the difficulty of getting rid of this incurable disease, unless the collective awareness of Muslims changes.

KEYWORDS: Phenomenon, Religious Extremism, Muslim Community

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most serious threats to the security and stability of the world in general, and Muslim societies in particular, in this era are the extremist religious ideas, which are practically translated into individual, or group behaviors characterized by extremism and intolerance. What should be known is that the real danger is not in the presence of a religiously extremist group of Muslims, because this phenomenon exists in all societies. The real danger lies in the spread of this phenomenon, and the extremist groups' attempt to use various methods under religious justifications, and attempt to impose this phenomenon in the midst of Muslim societies, so that it then becomes a culture of society which is the nation's true wealth, and its future hope.

Religious extremism may occur between two religions, such as Judaism and Islām, or within one country and one religion, as is happening now in the Muslim community, and this is the motivation behind this study. Despite the efforts being made in Muslim societies to confront the phenomenon of religious extremism, its spread is increasing day by day, and perhaps the reason for the failure in that is due to the lack of knowledge of the real reasons behind this phenomenon, because diagnosing any phenomenon accurately and knowing its true causes and everything surrounding it is the first step to solving it.

Accordingly, this paper attempts to raise some questions about the spread of the phenomenon of religious extremism in the Muslim community, which has become a fact that cannot be denied today, by clarifying the real reasons behind this phenomenon, and examining its implications. That is because accurately diagnosing any phenomenon and knowing its true causes and all that surrounds it, is the first step to solving it. This leads us to search for the following: How did religious extremism arise? What are the most important reasons that led to the spread of the phenomenon of religious extremism in the Muslim community, and what are the effects of it?

This paper aims to provide a cognitive addition in moderate thought, and to spread awareness among Muslims, by exposing the phenomenon of religious extremism in the Muslim community, and clarifying the real reasons behind this phenomenon and its implications, as a first step to limit the spread of this phenomenon among Muslims. Those interested in fighting religious extremism may benefit from it.

The remaining parts of this paper represent previous studies that address a body of research on religious extremism. The third section also represents the methodology adopted in preparing the research. In the fourth section, the minutes and merits of the research will be discussed in detail, such as the definition of the most important search terms, the emergence of religious extremism

and Islām's position on it, a statement of the causes of religious extremism, and its implications. Then the research concludes with a set of results and recommendations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Among the important studies written on the topic of religious extremism, the study by Bazaz (2008) titled "*The Phenomenon of Exaggeration through the Qur'ān and the Sunnah*" (*Zahirat alghului min khilal al-Kitab wa al-Sunnah*). The study tackled the phenomenon of religious extremism using the term expressed in the legal texts which is 'exaggeration'. The aim of the study was to clarify the extent of the Muslims' suffering because of being described as terrorists, extremists, and fundamentalists. After that, the author tried to defend the religion of Islām with sound arguments, he evidenced Islām as a religion that is innocent of all accusations attached to it.

The author highlighted the true meanings of Islām, and corrected some misconceptions, which were the cause of the deviation, and the motive to this phenomenon. In his analysis of the phenomenon of exaggeration, the author relied on two main sources; the Qur'ān and the honorable Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ (peace be upon him). He also presented the causes and manifestations of the phenomenon by explaining, analyzing and linking this phenomenon, and judging it through the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

The study was characterized by a comprehensive view of the subject, as well as a set of Islamic experiences in ancient and modern times, including the Algerian experience, trying to evaluate it and draw lessons from it. The study concluded with a set of findings and recommendations by the researcher. In another study, Al-Jarad (2009) addressed the issue of religious extremism (*Zahirat al-tattaruf al-diyini*) in a systematic study in which he addressed some terms related to the concept of religious extremism such as 'exaggeration' and 'extremism' etc. He also analyzed the concept of terrorism with regard to its meaning and its connotations, excluding countries that defend their land and its honor against the colonizer. He also explained the relationship between extremism and terrorism.

Later, the discussion was directed to religious extremism in the three religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islām, where the researcher identified the historical roots of religious extremism in Islām, and also addressed the concept of moderation, as one of the general characteristics of Islām, being manifested in various acts of worship. explaining the reasons that led to religious extremism. He classified the causes as two-dimensional: direct causes such as the wrong understanding of Islām and fanaticism and indirect causes, such as economic and political reasons and so on. The most important cause that led to terrorism, according to his opinion is the extremists' deviance from the true understanding of the

religious texts. There is no doubt that the researcher was right when he said that extremism varies according to the conditions of societies, in reference to the role of governments in their politicization of religion and manipulating it to serve their interests.

He also talked about the psychological roots which the *takfiris* relied on in their terrorist practices, with an explanation of the subjective characteristics of the extremist. He touched upon the types of religious extremism and divided religious extremism into three sections, first: the extremism of belief, which he considered one of the most dangerous types of extremism, second: practical extremism, and the third type, which is extremism in judging people by defection and apostasy, and so on. Then, he explained the effects, manifestations and dangers of religious extremism. Accusations of defection (*takfir*) was considered one of the main causes of deviation.

He also shed light on Israel and other Western and secular countries and their role in exaggerating the phenomenon of religious extremism among Muslims. In the end, he presented ways to treat the phenomenon of religious extremism, indicating the most important reasons for avoiding this phenomenon. Abdullah (2012) dealt with the topic "*Al-Shabab Mujahideen Movement in Somalia. where to?*" (*Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahidin fi al-Suwwal.. 'Ila Ayn?*). The study discussed the emergence of the jihādist trend in Somalia and how it turned to taking up arms after the collapse of the government, then talked about the next stage, which is the renunciation of arms and the trend towards advocacy work, where the name of the movement was changed from the “Islamic union” to the “sit-in group” according to Qur’ān and the Sunnah.

However, this change was a formality as expressed by the researcher, and was not affected by the jihādist doctrine that was entrenched in the minds of the youth of the movement. Thus, groups were formed, the most prominent of what is currently known as the Mujahideen Youth Movement under the leadership of Mukhtar Abi Zubair. Then the researcher moved on to talk about the entry of the Ethiopian forces to Mogadishu which gave the Mujahideen Youth Movement a great opportunity to prove its existence and impose its jihādist agenda in the region, as it was able to establish the so-called “Islamic State” in most areas of central southern Somalia in a short time.

He also talked about the military coup, and the decline of the Mujahideen Youth movement, indicating the mistakes made by the latter, which negatively affected its course and made it withdraw from important cities and locations, the last of which is the port of Kismaywa. The researcher concluded the study by presenting the opinion of international observers on the future of the Mujahideen Youth Movement, and their statement that it is not unlikely that the Mujahideen Youth Movement will rise again and emerge from this crisis, stronger than it was. This is for many reasons, which includes: the movement has never relied on its own capabilities, as much as it was relying on the mistakes of its opponents. The researcher postulates that the Mujahideen Youth Movement will remain, as long as foreign interference in Somali lands exists.

In the same vein, Jirjis (2016) in his book *"Where is ISIS going? (Daesh 'Ilaa 'Ayn?)"*, focused on the emergence of ISIS, and the circumstances that helped its emergence, prominence and advancement. Among which is the social and sectarian crisis and the conflict of identities among Muslims, including the conflict of identities between Sunni and Shiite Muslims, presenting itself as the only protector of the oppressed Sunnis, and filling the vacuum in governance. The researcher also exposed the social and religious backgrounds of ISIS leaders, as well as the political, economic and social factors that prompted people to join ISIS, especially after the escalation of the sectarian wave in the region.

In addition, the researcher discussed the experience of this group in managing states, and the emergence of differences with other Salafi jihādist group, as well as the disparity that exists between ISIS and Al-Qaeda. This is done by providing wise leadership at the local, regional and international levels of which little is available today. In addition to working on developing a long-term political strategy that includes reconciliation and some concessions, with the aim of reaching a peaceful solution to civil conflicts, and settling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as the researcher considered the tragedy of Palestine as the constant source of mobilization and recruitment for all groups, including ISIS.

On the other hand, Adam (2017) stated in his book *"The Plague of the Age, Religious Extremism (Its Causes, Results, and Treatment)"* (*Taeun al-Asra.. al-tattaruf al-diyni, 'asbabuh wa natayijuh wa 'eilajuhu*), that the phenomenon of religious extremism emerged due to several factors, including subjective ones related to the extremist's personality, and objective ones related to the environment, where the spread of ignorance was considered the main reason of this phenomenon. According to the researcher's point of view, religious extremism generates mentalities that cannot be resolved. The author cited the position of Judaism, Christianity and Islām on religious extremism. He also touched on the manifestations of religious extremism and its effects, foremost of which is the moral and ethical decay, which often leads to wars that destroy all social and economic structures of states. In addition, it leads to the absence of coexistence between members of the same society.

The author concludes the study with a set of solutions that it deems appropriate to curb the phenomenon of religious extremism, foremost of which is spreading a culture of moderation and mediation, and giving complete independence to religious authorities, so that they are able to educate Muslims and respond on suspicions, and thus limit this phenomenon. The state should seek to create an appropriate environment suitable for dialogue and true coexistence. Siddiq (2017) mentioned in his book *"Religious extremism and fanaticism, its causes and the factors leading to it"* (*al-tattaruf wa al-ta'asub al-diyniu 'asbabuh wal 'awamil al-muadiyat 'ilayh*), the problem of religious extremism and fanaticism. The researcher discusses the concept of religious extremism,

its different types and forms, as well as the concept of intolerance, its types, and the originating causes of extremism and religious fanaticism. The absence of religious authority and the decline in its role in paying attention to the concerns of Muslims was considered the most important cause of religious extremism and fanaticism.

The author also discussed the repercussions of the spread of religious extremism, indicating the position of Islām on it. The researcher cited the roots of religious extremism and the emergence of such groups in the Arab and Islamic world in the modern era to the beginning of the nineteen seventies. He also stressed on how to treat extremism and religious fanaticism, by empowering religious authorities and allowing them to teach religion in the right way. He concluded that religious extremism cannot be cured definitively except through serious dialogue in the best way and being firm about it in societies. The researcher believed that the treatment of religious extremism and fanaticism cannot be eliminated, but rather we can limit its spread only, because Allah Almighty created us all different and this wisdom will continue until the day of Judgment.

Moreover, Ibn Marzouk (2018) tackled this phenomenon in his book titled "*The phenomenon of religious extremism in Arab societies*" (*Zahirat altattaruf aldiynii fi almujtama'at al-'arabiati*). First, he defined the concept of religious extremism, then moved on to discuss the causes of religious extremism in Arab societies. Ignorance of religion was considered the most important cause. The author also discussed the repercussions of the spread of religious extremism, where he focused a lot on the negative effects of this phenomenon in the Arab societies. He also provided some mechanisms of combating religious extremism in Arab societies.

On the other hand, Al-Muhamidi (N.d), took another approach by comparing today's extremists to the *Khārijites* of this century in his research entitled "*The full story of the Khārijites of modern times*" (*Al-Qissat al-Kamilat li Khawarij fi 'asrina*). In the first topic, the researcher addressed the emergence of the *Khārijites'* thought in the present era and summarized the stages of their development. The author discussed their characteristics and pointed out similarities between the *Khārijites* of the past and the present-day *Khārijites*. According to his estimation, there are sixty-eight aspects in which they differ. He also mentioned about the rulings of the Sunnis regarding the adjective '*khārijī*', as he showed that the *Khārijites* are not on the same level in exaggeration, and lastly, he concluded by presenting a set of hadīths and effects contained in the *Khārijites*. Bakkar. (N.d), presented some solutions that he saw as appropriate to dismantle the culture of extremism in his book "*Dismantling the Culture of Exaggeration*" (*Tafkik thaqafat al-Ghului*). In addition to immunizing Muslims from the danger of slipping into the abyss of accusing others of blasphemy and treason and judging people for apostasy and so on, the researcher tried to shed light through this book on the culture of extremism, showing the bad consequences of extremism. He

also dealt with the explanation and analysis of the roots and types of extremism, as well as its manifestations and causes. In addition, he presented a set of ideas and principles on how to deal with extremism indicating that the treatment can only be through intellectual awareness, and a statement of its danger and its departure from the method of moderation and mediation. The researcher also focused on the importance of dialogue and considered it the most important principle for treating religious extremism.

Through the foregoing studies that dealt with the issue of religious extremism, we find that the causes of religious extremism in the Muslim communities vary according to different conditions. They differ from one person to another, and from one group to another, and even from one society to another. According to the researcher's opinion, among the most important reasons that led to religious extremism in Muslim societies; is the absence of moderate thought of religion and the lack of its understanding, which is not addressed in previous studies. Accordingly, this study attempts to bridge the research gap by studying the issue of moderation and clarifying its importance and impact on various aspects in society.

3. METHODOLOGY

Two research methods were employed for the sake of meeting the objectives of this research. The inductive approach was employed in this research at the aim of investigating and tracing the causes and factors that led to the emergence of the phenomenon of religious extremism in Muslim societies. This approach helps the researcher in diagnosing the phenomenon and knowing its true causes and effects. In addition, the descriptive analytical method was employed to describe the phenomenon of religious extremism that threatens the security and stability of Muslim societies, and to identify the extent of the impact of extremist thoughts on Muslim societies, in order to develop an integrated perception on the phenomenon of religious extremism.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Defining the phenomenon of religious extremism

It is referred to as all strictness in understanding and practicing the principles, rituals, and laws of the Islamic religion, with an attempt to obligate others to it. Religious extremism is linked to fanaticism and ideological inertia, and it indicates a departure from the values and behaviors recognized in society. The phenomenon of religious extremism is the appearance of a Muslim's behavior that contradicts other Muslims at the level of the principles of the Islamic religion, its rituals, and its laws, while trying to obligate others to it. Religious extremism may be between two religions, such as Judaism and Islām, or within one religion, such as Shiite extremism against Sunnis, or it may be the extremism of one group against another group, and it may also include

individuals or the state. Religious extremism that takes place within one country and one religion, as is happening now in our contemporary Muslim societies, is more dangerous than religious extremism that exists between two different religions, and it enters the cycle of exaggeration and overstepping the limit. There is another form of extremism, the opposite of the first, which is the extremism of idleness and negligence that causes its owner to disintegrate, and what concerns us in this paper is the extremism of exaggeration and overstepping the limit.

4.2 Types of exaggeration and overreaching

There are two types of religious extremism cited in texts and pervious literature. The first of which is the Legislative Doctrinal Extremism. It is referred to as strictness in the doctrinal and legislative field, such as strictness in the issue of loyalty and disavowal for instance, as well as obligating all people to perform *ijtihad* (Al-Luhaiq, 1992). The second type of religious extremism found in texts is the Practical and Behavioral Extremism. A good example of it, is the strictness in the practice of worship, such as the prolonged recitation of some imams in prayer, to the extent that some worshipers have almost abandoned prayer in their mosques, even though the Sunnah commands easing (Al-Bukhāri, N.d), and other practices that are considered to be disobedient in religion, that The basic principle in every extremism is the lack of understanding of the rule of the Lawgiver, or the lack of knowledge of its purposes, or the failure to consider these purposes, or ignorance of reality and so on.

4.4 The emergence of religious extremism

Many scholars agree that the talk about the emergence of religious extremism and its emergence in Islām was after the death of the Prophet ﷺ and specifically when the Muslims were divided and the Khārijites sect emerged, then religious extremism became a phenomenon that could not be hidden. (Jabri,1996). The Khārijites are one of dozens of sects and groups that have deviated from the straight path. Of course, the matter did not stop with the Khārijites group, because the door to extremism has not yet been closed. Every day there are more groups that carry extremist religious ideas in various parts of the Islamic world, even if the means and goals differ.

In our time, there are those who believe that religious extremism is due to the religious discourse behind which great figures stand, and heritage references bearing many statements of accusations of kufr and murder, such as Ibn Taymiyyah and his most famous books: (Fatwas), (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2004) and his book (alsiyasat alshareiat fi 'iislah alraaei walraeiat)and (alfaridat alghayibati), whose author likened the rulers of Muslims today to the Tatars, as it was forbidden to deal with them and help them, and that the state is an infidel and there is no way to get rid of it except through jihād, as it is considered the first ideological foundation for armed jihādist organizations, and the reference Contemporary jihādist Salafī movements, which is the theoretical

basis for the jihād group in Egypt, (Faraj, N.d). Even the killing and criminality carried out by ISIS (aldawaeish), (Al-Yaqubi, 2016). There are those who attribute it to Ibn Taymiyyah, (Al-Mulla, 2020). There are also those who attribute extremism in the current era to Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of the Wahhabi movement that was later adopted by the House of Saud, which carries with it a lot of extremism, (Ibn Bishr, 1982). As well as what Sayyid Qutb called for through his book *On Interpretation (In the Shadows of the Qur'ān)* and *(Milestones on the Road)*, the most famous and most controversial book, which is considered the main reference for the Hijrah and Takfir group in Egypt, (Sayyid Qutb, 1972). There are those who attribute religious extremism in the current era to extremist fundamentalist (al'usuliat- a return to the first roots of Islam from the book, the Sunnah, and consensus) movements, (al-Qaradawi, 1997). that are characterized by violence, extremism, and takfir, such as the Muslim community... and others. They are movements opposed to the renewed modernist Islām(Hammadi, 2015). There are those who attribute it to the religious reform movement with Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abdo, as stated by (Mansour Khaled, a liberal Sudanese diplomat and writer who held several positions, including the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sudan), which was the cause of reactions opposed to reform, and the problem of the first nucleus of the extremist groups that produced the Muslim Brotherhood, (Zanbir, 2018). There is no doubt that these serious accusations against scientists need evidence, and an objective discussion in independent research.

According to the research opinion, there are a set of approaches that lead to the causes of the emergence of religious extremism, on top of which is the approach of ignorance of religion, which is the main reason for its emergence. That is because God, who knows best about His creation, made religion able to revive the believers with it despite the natural differences that exist between them. And there is the political approach, which carries with it a lot of injustice, the robbery of rights... and other repressive practices. Likewise, the materialistic approach, as religious extremism often arises in a society whose people suffer from poverty.

4.5 Islām's position on religious extremism

There is no doubt that Islām, which calls for moderation, rejects extremism altogether and in detail, and a warning has been received about the dangers of this phenomenon, as it is far from the nature and limited human capacity for the Almighty's saying: (*Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): "O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians)! Exceed not the limits in your religion (by believing in something) other than the truth, and do not follow the vain desires of people who went astray before and who misled many, and strayed (themselves) from the Right Path."*) Al-Maedah:77.

The warning and prohibition of it was also mentioned in the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, as it came in the hadīth: On the authority of Sahel bin Abi Umamah bin Sahl bin Hanif, on the authority of his

father, on the authority of his grandfather, on the authority of the Prophet ﷺ who said: *“Do not be hard on yourselves, for they were destroyed before you by their hardening on themselves.”* (Al-Bukhāri,1999) . Then we come to the conclusion that the phenomenon of religious extremism in the Islamic community has nothing to do with the teachings of Islām, but rather was fed with the intention of distorting the image of Islām.

4.6 References or origins from which the extremist derives his ideas

Extremists derive their ideas and references from misunderstanding and misreading of the texts and books that are reliable in religion. Misunderstanding may occur even among those who differ in thought and understanding, for example what happened between hardline fundamentalists and modernists (*Al-hadathīn- the thinkers who worked to spread new thought in the Arab and Islamic world, and these people depend on reason alone, and make it the ruler of religious issues*), (Al-Ruwaili & Al-Bazghi, 2002). Each group claims to have correct understanding of religion. However, both of which fell into the epicenter of extremism.

4.7 The causes that led to religious extremism in Muslim community

Among the most important reasons that led to religious extremism in our contemporary Muslim societies the following:

4.7.1 Reasons related to religion

4.7.1.1 Ignorance of the principles and rulings of religion

Most religious extremism is due to ignorance of religion and not to religion itself. Examples of ignorance of religion include speaking about it without knowledge, and arbitrating an opinion, which is forbidden by Sharī’ah, because of the Almighty’s saying: (7:33) *Say, “My Lord has only forbidden immoralities – what is apparent of them and what is concealed – and sin, and oppression without right, and that you associate with Allah that for which He has not sent down authority, and that you say about Allah that which you do not know.”* Al-Araaf:33

4.7.1.2 Absence of moderate religious thought

One of the most important causes of religious extremism is the absence of moderate thought on religion, that is, the absence of a moderate, balanced understanding that governs the Sharī’ah, due to the lack of definition of it. There is no doubt that the absence of moderate thought in dealing with changes in our contemporary Muslim societies has produced for us a new generation that lives between excess and negligence, and to get out of the problem of religious extremism, we must return to moderation, through which we can preserve the constants and deal with variables, without exaggeration or negligence.

Religious and doctrinal intolerance: an extremist is an example of both, so you find him fighting the thought of the other with all his strength. This is the result of ignorance of the legitimate differences and acceptance of the other opinion. Scholars have warned of this danger, “considering that getting used to inference for one sect may cause the student to alienate and deny a *math’hab* other than his *math’hab*, without knowing its source, and this leads to a rift in belief in the imams, whom people unanimously agree on their merit and progress in the religion, and their carrying out the purposes of the legislator and understanding its purposes.” (Al-Shatibi,1997).

In addition, the door of *ijtihād* was closed, which led to the freezing of Islamic thought, and this undoubtedly affected the Muslim’s thinking negatively. There was religious extremism. As provoking sectarian and sectarian strife poses a threat to the cohesion of the fabric of any human society, and the current conflict and fighting between Sunnis and Shiites in Syria, Iraq and Yemen is undoubtedly religious extremism that came as a result of sectarian animosity and intolerance of religious ideas. This charge was used for the purpose of achieving political goals and finding a religious justification for these wars (Jbeil,2020).

Instead of religion being a means of coexistence, closeness and tolerance, religion has become a factor of demolition, division and sectarian wars. There is no way to extinguish the fire of sedition, dry up hotbeds of sectarian extremism and eliminate sectarian and sectarian tensions; Only by accepting the option of coexistence based on dialogue, tolerance, mutual respect and trust among the components of one society.

4.7.1.3 Productions of the Islamic awakening

The Islamic awakening has produced fanatical religious movements. These movements are called fundamentalist movements, as most of these movements are characterized by fanaticism for their principles (Jabri, 1996), but it must be recognized that these movements did not come from a vacuum. Rather, they are a natural result of the spread of injustice and the absence of freedom of expression, and tyranny on the part of the ruling authorities, with the absence of real democracy, as well as the absence of dialogue. In addition, there are some dictatorial regimes in Islamic countries that prevent religious people from practicing their devotional laws, and they practice a policy of repression. They are undoubtedly sufficient factors for the emergence of extremist movements in Muslim community. As a response to feelings of marginalization, exclusion, and persecution. The Islamic Awakening has also produced extremist currents that care about and promote the *hadīths* of sedition, and perhaps the best example of this is the *hadīth* (The Surviving Sect), (Ibn al-Bay, 1990), It is a major reason for *takfīr* and sowing discord among Islamic sects. Undoubtedly, their misunderstanding of the *hadīth* led them to atone for each other, as each sect claims to be the surviving sect. In contrast to these extremist fundamentalist movements, secular movements

emerged, which came as a result of the fascination with Western civilization, and its adoption of its ideas, which stand at the opposite end of the fundamentalist movements, (Jabri, 1996).

4.7.1.4 Absence of the jurisprudence of difference and the spirit of tolerance and dialogue

Islām today has become completely different from the Islām of mercy and tolerance legislated by Allāh Almighty, and it is really unfortunate that dialogue and understanding with the other is absent and the spirit of tolerance has disappeared, so the difference in viewpoints turns from integration to outright rivalry.

4.7.1.5 Absence of the role of pulpit preachers in educating people

This is due to the modest cultural level of many of these preachers, who were satisfied with what they received from the institutes for training imams, as they often lack the rhetorical faculty and the ability to persuade. You find their speech hardly benefits the listener in anything. There is no doubt that this spiritual and mental void has opened the way for intruders who carry extremist religious ideology to incite people to religious extremism, directly or indirectly. Likewise, the failure to invest the religious text in a way that suits the transformations that society is witnessing, and the failure to address their various issues, led young people to dangerous slips of thought that scholars did not notice (Zanbir, 2018). The cause of religious extremism may also be the love of fame by following perverts from issues without realizing the consequences of matters. (Al-Kulaiti, N.d). Hence, it can be said that some of the extremism is due to ignorance of religion, due to the absence of the role of scholars, which made it easier for young people to adopt extremist ideas.

4.7.2 Political and Civil Reasons

4.7.2.1 The struggle for power

At first, political extremism was founded by scholars with the abolition of the Rightly Guided Caliphate, as they spilled the blood of the opposition (in the language of the age). The struggle for power continues to this day; Where are the Islamic parties prevented from exercising their right to political action, and the exchange of power with the presence of repression of opposition groups and not allowing them to reach power, which turned the scales, and made them adopt the approach of religious extremism that often leads to violence. Moreover, not giving young people an opportunity to integrate into the political sphere makes extremism a haven for them, as it is the only way, according to their belief, to escape from injustice and political tyranny. Also, one of the political reasons that led to religious extremism is the large number of political and military defeats that have befallen many Islamic countries (Al-Luwaiq, 1992).

4.7.2.2 Imbalance of the balance of justice and equality

Despite the fact that the laws of Islām, despite their diversity, revolve around one axis, which is the establishment of justice on earth, according to the Almighty's saying:

"Indeed, Allāh orders justice and good conduct" Al-Nahel:90.

And Him saying also: *"O ye who believe! stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety" Al-Maedah:8.*

However, its absence with the existence of extremist regimes that practice oppression, tyranny and aggression day and night against their people, and make them feel humiliated and ashamed, is considered one of the most important reasons at all that lead not only to religious extremism. Rather, it is an explicit call to violence because repelling injustice from oneself is a human instinct.

Accordingly, most of the violent and extremist ideas in Muslim community have emerged from the womb of suffering from injustice and oppression, even if they came to treatment, they used more injustice and oppression without looking at the reasons, which made the phenomenon of religious extremism instead of shrinking its circle expanding day by day.

4.7.3 Economic and cultural reasons

4.7.3.1 Absence of social solidarity in its Islamic concept

There is a decline in the role of non-governmental institutions, which used to help the state in solidarity and compassion, through which the state was able to absorb the affection of young people, direct its energies to what benefits society, and was able to fill the void that harms the individual and society .(Abd al-Qaher, 2012). This decline in social solidarity has contributed to the high rate of poverty in Muslim community, the feeling of isolation, marginalization, and the widening circle of social disintegration. Which led to a loss of balance among the members of society, and this is what pushed the youth to religious extremism... and other deviations.

4.7.3.2 Lack of security within society

There is no doubt that security is necessary for the stability of the individual and society, and its absence in most Islamic countries is due to some external causes such as colonialism, most of which are internal reasons that came because of the injustice and tyranny of the rulers. This is because the security practices are exaggerated in some Islamic countries, in the form of random and repeated arrests in resisting some suspects, or those who are affiliated with some extremist Islamic movements and others. It led to the spread of evil and sin, and the violation of sanctities, as well as the spread of fear and panic in society (Abd al-Qaher, 2012). This prompted some young

people to migrate to the countries of disbelief and prompted others who claim to represent the Islamic project to adopt extremist religious ideas.

4.7.3.3 The poverty crisis

There is no doubt that the failure of development projects, along with the economic constraints that resulted in massive unemployment in the depths of society, led to a feeling of frustration among the unemployed youth. This frustration prompted some of them to sell their values and principles to get out of the poverty crisis, as they took advantage of spreading religious extremism in exchange for a job position, a sum of money, or other incentives to get them out of their miserable situation, (Al-Jrad, 2009). Poverty, then, can weaken faith, and then slipping into the abyss of religious and other extremism becomes easy, especially since we did nothing to mitigate it. In addition, there are cultural reasons, the most important of which are:

4.7.3.4 Cultural invasion

The cultural invasion, with its technology, has marginalized and distorted the culture of Muslim youth, and changed it with a culture alien to our Islamic environment. Rather, it was able to replace our original values with other Western values that do not express the authenticity and identity of our Muslim society. Social alienation, and it has come to view society with an aggressive look and stands in defence of its identity in the face of intellectual alienation, by adopting religious extremism that often leads to violence (Al-Jrad, 2009).

4.7.3.5 Social networking sites

One of the most important reasons for the spread of religious extremism in the current era is a misunderstanding of religion, resulting from false information that has spread among Muslims. There is no doubt that social networking sites contribute greatly to the dissemination of religious extremism especially among young people (Jabri, 1996). In our time, it has become the main driver of youth, with its information and ideas that are difficult for a sane person to sort out, where the truth is mixed with falsehood and the ignorance of the world. Young people are the group that most uses social networking sites, discussing sensitive problems and issues, especially religious ones that trouble young people who are often on social networking sites. This has helped sites that spread religious extremism to attract young people towards extremist religious ideas, as these sites are considered among the most prominent incubators of extremism and terrorism at the present time, as stated by the Secretary-General of the King Faisal International Prize (Abdul Aziz Al-Sabeel: "Twitter, for example, includes more than 12,000 accounts affiliated with the Daesh regime, and the latter are all working in the field of extremism and terrorism." (Zanbir, 2018). Undoubtedly, these reasons in their entirety have contributed greatly to the spread of religious extremism in Muslim community.

4.7.4 External reasons

There are those who believe that religious extremism is a Western industry by reviving the old deviant sects in a contemporary form and bringing them into the Arab and Islamic countries for the purpose of internal rivalry (Adel Amer, 2020). In the sense that there is an external hand that feeds religious extremism in Arab Muslim countries, and this is a fact that must be pointed out. By looking at a summary of a study conducted by the Israeli Van Leer Institute, which specializes in strategic studies in Jerusalem in 1988, under the title: '*Israel on the threshold of the 21st century*', (Abu Saada, 2019), it was found that among the Israeli goals to be achieved are:

“Planting and spreading the factors of division, dispersion and ideological partisanship in the Arab countries, with the aim of increasing religious, sectarian and ethnic extremism, and nurturing it and eliminating the ideas of Arab nationalism and Islamic solidarity, and replacing them with the idea of Middle Eastern regional cooperation, as well as employing Islamic fundamentalism and minority ideologies in the region in favor of Israel, in close cooperation with the forces of crusader extremism in the world.” (Abu Saada, 2019).

It also stirs up ethnic, and sectarian differences that often end in civil wars (Abu Saada, 2019). The strange thing is that the first to use the term 'religious extremism' were the Jews, who described the Palestinian resistance with it. After that, this description was transmitted to all those who oppose the authorities in the name of Islām in the Arab countries. Rather, it became closely related to Muslims in any event that occurred in the world, until Islām and religious extremism became one thing in the world. Many people look at this, and this is a distortion of an image Islām (Al-Sawy, N.d).

Religious extremism, then, is like the mite that is eating away at the body of contemporary Muslim societies, and the cause of civil wars, sectarian strife, and others and what is happening in Lebanon from civil wars, and in southern Iraq from the revolution of the Kurds, and in Egypt from sectarian strife. It will inevitably move to the rest of the Arab countries, if you do not pay attention and take heed, and all this and more are a prelude to achieving the Zionist goals and its major goals, which is the establishment of the State of Israel and world domination.

What should be noted is that if the problem of religious extremism among Muslims is on the increase, and a certain percentage of it is a Western industry, then it is incumbent upon us as Muslims to acknowledge that this industry has found us capable. Simply because we have become fertile ground for religious extremism and other deviations. In addition, religious extremism is a natural reaction to the reality of contemporary Muslim societies that suffer at all levels, as we have explained before. Which made the door to religious extremism open wide? By searching for the causes that led to religious extremism in Muslim community, we reach the conclusion that our

contemporary Muslim societies are not immune; It does not have sufficient immunity to protect it from the danger of religious extremism and other deviations.

4.8 Effects of Religious Extremism

4.8.1 Distortion of the image of Islām

The reason for this is due to the bad practices of the religion, and the result was that they created a barrier between the non-Muslim and the correct understanding of the teachings of Islām. Also, these extremists were the reason why some Muslims moved away from their faith and the method of moderation and moderation, by pushing them to the temptations of materialistic theory and other corrupt beliefs.

4.8.2 Distracting the nation from carrying out its civilized role in reform

When religious extremism prevails in the Muslim community, this causes the nation to be preoccupied with hypothetical issues in which there is a dispute instead of being preoccupied with essential issues, and there is no doubt that this obstructs and drains the nation's energies (al-Qaradawi, 1402). For example: Some of them were preoccupied with the hadīth of (The Surviving Sect) (ibn albay, 1990).

4.8.3 Chaos and disruption of the social fabric

If a Muslim is a prisoner of extremist ideas, his harm to society becomes greater than his benefit, so he directs his energies to destroy society. Also caused by some of the misconceptions produced by religious extremism, such as takfir, and defaming the scholars... and others, and the consequences that result from them in terms of retiring from society, and their permissibility of money, honors and souls. This leads to the emergence of contradictions in society, and the result will be chaos and rupture in the social fabric (al-Qaradawi, 1402).

4.8.4 Confiscation of the freedom to call

There is no doubt that it has a negative impact on the call, as the extremist works to restrict the call and its people (Sabri, 2011). This is undoubtedly a realization of the plans of the enemies of religion to launch a campaign against Islām at the hands of its sons. This distorted image of Islām will remain in effect for generations, and it will never be easy to get rid of it. Unless the collective consciousness of Muslims changes. And they returned to moderation and mediation, through which we can preserve the constants. And dealing with variables, without exaggeration or negligence.

5. FINDINGS

By delving into the issue of the phenomenon of religious extremism in Muslim societies and identifying the real reasons behind it. This study provides some results at the hope of curbing this phenomenon in Muslim societies. First, the emergence of religious extremism as a phenomenon in Islām was with the emergence of the Khārijites sect. At the present time, it is due to many reasons, the most important of which is the absence of moderate thought of religion, due to the lack of definition of it. With hidden hands working to feed it and spread it to achieve its interests. This confirms the existence of an ideology that incubates extremism in our contemporary Muslim societies. Second, after studying the causes that led to religious extremism in Muslim community, it is concluded that our societies are not immune. There are not enough barriers to protect Muslim societies from the danger of religious extremism and other deviations. Third, extremism is a rejected phenomenon, and those who try to attach it to Islām and its followers; are the enemies of Islām. Their hidden goal is distorting the image of Islām at home and abroad. Fourth, religious extremism leaves deep traces. Among them is distracting the nation from carrying out its civilized role in reform, and it is not easy to get rid of it, Unless the collective consciousness of Muslims changes.

6. CONCLUSION

One of the main reasons behind studying the phenomenon of religious extremism in contemporary Muslim society, is the great challenges facing it today, such as the increasing pace of fanaticism, the series of bombings and assassinations, and the emergence of groups based on killing, which made the Muslim community groan from the effects of religious extremism. Through the review of previous studies, it is evident that there is a lack of discussion on religious moderate thought in dealing with different aspects of life. This study attempts to fill this gap and highlight the importance of this issue to the advancement of Muslim societies. This study revealed a number of results, the most important of which are: the emergence of religious extremism as a phenomenon today is due to many reasons such as the absence of moderate thought of religion and the lack of its definition and application. In addition to the existence of hidden plans aimed at spreading the phenomenon to achieve corrupt interests. By studying the causes of religious extremism in Muslim societies, we conclude that our societies are not immune from drifting towards this disgraceful behavior, as they do not have sufficient barriers to protect them from the danger of religious extremism and other deviations.

This research attempts to provide a cognitive addition in the moderate religious thought, by considering the results obtained. The results of the study would contribute to the development of our societies by protecting them from the danger of religious extremism. It must also be clarified

that the phenomenon of religious extremism is not related to Islām, and the main goal of all those who link Islām with extremism is to distort the image of Islām.

In light of the broad discussion on the phenomenon of religious extremism, this study suggests some recommendations which might contribute to reducing this phenomenon in Muslim societies. First, it is necessary to combat religious extremism, by supporting and organizing conferences and seminars to clarify the truth of Islām, and to respond to suspicions. Also, spreading the message by word of mouth through creating websites and channels in different social networking platforms to reach the masses. Second, focusing on the doctrinal aspect of the school curricula, to immunize the new generation from religious extremism. Third, directing the attention of students and researchers to the importance of moderate thought, and working to spread it in society. Lastly, tightening the penalty for anyone who uses hate speech and extremism, or incites religious extremism.

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