



DISSERTATION

Titel der Dissertation

**Preaching Arab Satellite Television Channels:
The Power of *Salafi* Discourse in forming Public
Opinion.**

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ABSTRACT

The last decade witnessed launching tens of Islamic preaching satellite channels that can be received free of charge in the Middle East. And as Muslims are divided into two main branches (*Sunni* and *Shiite*), and each of them has different schools that compete with each other, preaching channels broadcast is representing this diversity.

Political and religious groups and parties fund some of these channels while others try to commercialize the preaching message in order to survive. Commercialization works mainly through discursive techniques that lead to religion commodification, consequently, products and services get an Islamic brand by advertising through preaching channels.

In addition to commodification, Islamization is another main technique to achieve popularity. Preaching channels and mainly *Salafi* ones, frame the political situation- such as the Syrian revolution- in an Islamic perspective. Binaries such as good and evil, right and wrong belief and disbelief are a main discursive technique for categorizing actions.

This study is specialized in the power elements of *Salafi* discourse via satellite channels in Middle East.

Keywords: preaching channels, commodification, Islamization, *Sunni*, *Shiite* and *Salafi*.

ABSTRAKT

Im letzten Jahrzehnt wurden Duzende „islamisch predigende Sender (Kanäle) eingeführt (installiert), die gebührenfrei im Mittleren Osten empfangen werden können. So wie die Moslems in zwei Hauptgruppen gespalten sind (Sunniten und Schiiten) und jede von ihnen unterschiedliche Schulen hat, die miteinander konkurrieren, repräsentieren die Sendungen der „Predigt-Kanäle“ diese Verschiedenheit (Ungleichheit, Vielfalt). Politische und religiöse Gruppen finanzieren einige dieser Kanäle, während andere versuchen, die (Predigt-) Botschaft zu kommerzialisieren, um zu überleben. Die Vermarktung funktioniert hauptsächlich durch abweichende Techniken, was religiöse Kommodifizierung zur Folge hat.

Konsequenterweise bekommen Produkte und (angebotene) Dienstleistungen ein religiöses Markenzeichen durch die Werbung in " Predigt-Kanälen". Zusätzlich zur Kommodifizierung ist Islamisierung eine andere „Haupttechnik“, um Popularität zu erreichen. Predigt-Kanäle, und vor allem salafistische, stellen die politische Situation, wie z. b. die syrische Revolution, aus der islamischen Perspektive dar. Schwarz-Weiss-Malereien, wie gut und böse, richtig und falsch, glauben und nicht-glauben, sind eine hauptsächlich abweichende (diskursive) Technik für „klassifizierende Aktionen“. Diese Studie befasst sich mit den „power elements der salafistischen Reden, die über Satelliten-Kanäle im Mittleren Osten übertragen werden.

Schlüsselwörter: Islamisch predigende Sender, Kommodifizierung, Islamisierung, Sunniten, Schiiten und Salafi.

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1. Introduction

The number of Free to Air (FTA) satellite channels targeting the Arab region is continuously growing. According to the Arab Advisors Group Research (2011), The FTA landscape has increased by about 438% in the last seven years (January 2004- April 2011). An increase by 10.5% had been recorded in the last year alone (April 2010-April 2011). By April 2011, the total number of the distinct FTA satellite channels reached 538 on *Arabsat*, *Nilesat* and *Noorsat* (the three main trademark carriers of satellite TV channels in the Arab region) (Taswir, 2012).

More than a half of these channels are news channels, which well exceeded 300 and counting. However, the religious and preaching channels also continue to grow rapidly: more than 40 “pure” Islamic preaching channels can be received free of charge- not to mention other tens of channels that provide sorcery, dreams-interpretations and other spiritual services.

We consider preaching Islamic satellite channels to be solely focused on providing Islamic recommendations for daily and public life issues depending on the interpretation of the holy *Quran* and the revelations (*Sunnah*) of Prophet Mohammad. Prior to the rapid rise of preaching satellite television channels starting in 2006, general-interest Arab satellite channels

used to offer a few hours of religious programs on a weekly basis. However, the success of *Iqraa*, a channel that monopolized the preaching satellite television market for over 8 years, encouraged investors to pump money in the new “promising” market.

Al-Resalah (the message), *Iqraa* (read/recite) and *Al-Nas* (the people) are the three most watched religious channels in the Arab region. Each one of the three channels is part of a larger media group that –ironically- has a large share of the Arab entertainment industry. *Iqraa* was the first channel to trademark itself as a preaching channel. The billionaire banker Saudi prince *Saleh Kamel* who owns MBC group launched it in 1998. The slogan of the channel is “the enjoyment of a media that has a purpose” reflects the nature of the media it produces- mainly preaching programs in a lively format. 39%, of the productions of the channel are talk shows. It also produces TV lectures, documentary films, and cultural shows dedicated for Islamic rituals, children and family issues (Miladi, 2006).

Al-Nas channel has a unique experience; it started in 2006 as dancing songs and video clips channel before shifting to the preaching field in 2007. *Al-Nas* is an extremist *Salafi* channel that preaches for asceticism and ultra-orthodox views of life. These messages are reflected in the slogan of the channel: "*Al-Nas*: screen that takes you to paradise".

Al-Resalah was also launched in 2006. It is part of "Rotana group", which is an entertainment TV network dedicated for music, infotainment and movie showing. Unlike those of *Al-Nas*, the preaching of *Al-Resalah* and *Iqraa* reflects a moderate view of Islam.

Nevertheless, all of the preaching channels are engaged in a tough competition - among each other, in one hand, and with other entertainment networks, in the other hand- for viewership and public-opinion formation. Depending on the features of the targeted audiences, the shows of the preaching channels vary in the seriousness of their topics (from politics to sex education) and in the format of the shows (from the exciting and lively talk shows to the traditional preaching/lecturing format).

Hence, new styles of media shows appeared on air which delivers religious messages in a sensational marketing format. As a result, religious preaching flourished as a highly profitable marketplace. Historically, preaching effectiveness and impact have been measured by the eloquence of the preacher's discourse and his charisma. However, the researcher will argue that the medium is getting more important than the preaching itself.

Understanding the effectiveness of the religious channels is possible in two contexts: First, considering them as complementary to the nation-state tools in controlling the people, by reshaping the religion in a form that

achieves the interest of the nation state. Second, looking at the religious channels as part of civil society, as a new challenge to the tools of the traditional state for example.

The study considers religious channels as a new adaptation of the urgent public sphere in the Middle East, whereas media is still under direct or indirect censorship. At the same time, Media is considered under the invasion of state borders by the flow of globalized ideas and goods, the religious reaction is to adopt the religious discourse to obtain the global techniques and tools in maintaining its audience.

1.1 Significance

The study is the first to look in depth on the changes on the Islamic preaching message. It is particularly significant because it will relate these changes to the political and economic dimensions of media industry. By tackling such a challenging subject, the thesis will primarily focus on the output discourse of the selected channels. Thus, the analysis will treat the preaching discourse, as media discourse without constraining the research with any supposed sacredness that constrained the development of the critical project of Arab media studies.

1.2 Objectives

The relevance of the study emanates from the quest for the diagnosis of the religious satellite channels advocacy through a comparative study with the historical models and their interfaces to identify differences in the ability to shape public opinion and direct it. Discourse diagnosis will be useful to understand the reality of contemporary religious discourses, and the factors that control the competitiveness of these channels in shaping their audience.

This study does not aim to follow up the way the preaching channels influence their audience, it is not a kind of audience research, and rather it focuses on the senders' or producers' influences in the preaching message itself. The important point to note is that the powerful preaching discourse does not consider real circumstances. The result of this discourse is a sequence narrative preaching stories, which depend on the metaphors more than on the real world.

1.3 Theoretical Background

Studying the phenomenon of the religious T.V raises questions about the quality of produced knowledge specially the way that “real” produced and delivered by, to the audience. Media discourse is not a production but a process and to analyze it we need to look at both the text itself and the interaction and the context in which the text is embedded (Talbot, 2007:10).

It investigates language as a social interaction, which means the language not only to contact, but also to shape the knowledge.

According to *Foucault* (1990), discourse works as a producer of the social environment during the interaction between concepts of power and knowledge. In the case of media discourse, our knowledge is shaped and created by the forms of media institutions, and its imagination to the “real”. Therefore, our vision is limited to the worldview of those isolated. Indeed, no discourse is closed in itself; a discourse only comes to existence in its relationship with other discourses. There is no ‘pure’ discourse (Santos, 2008: 2). That means the religious discourse during the uses of visual techniques were not and will not be neutral, and its inputs contain political, commercial, and institutional interests. Without the engagement of techniques especially visual ones, the shadow of discourse in the public sphere would not be as effective as they are and would have a smaller impact.

By employing visual techniques, new perceptions of religious T.V discourse rises to maintain the public’s faith or” Truth”, under the dialectical uses of sticks and carrots, especially in the sermons. Moreover, perceiving the concept of 'Truth”, means to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements it. 'Truth' is linked in a circular relation with the

system of power, which produces and sustains it, and to the effects of power which induces and extends it (Epstein, 2005).

The main aim of the discourse analyses is to discover how does speaking, the position and the viewpoint from which they speak, the institutions, which prompt to speak about it, and which story and distribute the things that are said (Foucault, 1990: 11). Discourse language is created by symbolism through signifying systems, in order to articulate itself in the dialectic between the semiotic and the symbolic. In addition, achieving the goals of discourse depends on the potential of the different types of signs (icons, index, and symbols). In addition to this, there are the metaphors and the ability to be used in representing the “real” to be closer to achieve the interest of discourse. Consequently, "the defined and delimited sets of statements that constitute a discourse are themselves expressive of and organized by a specific ideology." Language, "can never appear by itself-it always appears as the representative of a system of linguistic terms, which themselves realize discursive and ideological systems" (Dellinger, 1995).

Visual techniques as a discourse tool, offers a perspective that intervenes in the problematic dichotomy between production and reception. It continues to plague media and communication studies. Visual information is a form of knowledge that is gain through the act of looking. That which is seen is not “sent” in any conventional sense of that term, but is constructed

in the dynamic relationship between seeing and being seen (Becker, 2004: 7).

Within the hegemony of visual techniques, the concept of public sphere had emerged in the anthropology and media studies as an alternative concept to civil society. *Habermas's* concept of the public sphere thus described a space of institutions and practices between the private interests of everyday life in civil society and the realm of state power (Meyer and Moors, 2006: 7). In case of the religious discourse in Islamic countries, the public sphere is reflected by the networks of religious groups and commercial channels, as we see in Rotana network. It brings together the songs, movies, and religious channels. Because of the technological advancements in the field of media, the religious discourses were forced to produce new messages like advocacy programs in order to maintain the audience. This message is dependent on new media forms like visual show techniques, which however are at the expense of the quality of the content. Thus, the competition between the religious groups for getting new solidarities and audience on the television screen will be a competition for presenting new forms and show effects rather than contents, as a result, the religious discourse is about to become a new form of entertainment.

Again, the rising number of preaching stations with attempts to improve the whole discursive techniques in order to attract as possible audience as can, lead to high level of competition among them. In order to

survive, preaching channels that are not a part of commercial networks such as *Rotana* and *ART*, have to search for fund. Preaching channels and *Salafi* one in particular adopts new advertisements of goods and services by giving it Islamic brand to fit the Islamic audience. This is a kind of what is called “commodification of religion”.

The commodification of religion is a new style of buying and selling via advocacy satellite channels to target the religious audience. According to this, religion is used as input of promoting goods and services in giving it an Islamic brand that encourage the viewers of preaching screen to buy. The dilemma that might raise here is the contrast between the outputs of the preaching satellite channels message and the values of promoted goods and services.

The result of amalgamation between technology and religion is that the global flow of knowledge in the direction of the Islamic world has to be re-Islamized and therefore made as suitable for the Islamic audience. Nevertheless, the process of adaptation might be at the expense of knowledge quality. In other words, the quality of the hybrid knowledge would be smatter.

As an example to imagine the role of religious television in shaping the public sphere in Middle East, we could observe the conventional role of

cassette sermons in Egypt. It has been employed by the *Islamic Brotherhood* movement, which claims having the public sphere. As a conclusion, we cannot analyze the religious discourse, without analyzing the techniques of media itself.

1.4 Literature review

It is not easy to find a study that focuses on the competitions between preaching Islamic satellite for having the public opinion in particular, while most of the available researches in the field study the new forms of preaching and the changes in the style and topics of the new preachers. Hence, the following reviews of most helpful and close researches to the study topic, while other researches will be used in the content of the study as references.

The first review is the book of *Lotfe* (2009), "the phenomenon of new preachers". The author presented the phenomenon of new preachers from three perspectives: advocacy, wealth and fame. The book is divided into four chapters; it starts to discuss the emergence of new preachers in the Egyptian society. The book chronicled the phenomena from the moment when a new generation of preachers who don't have a religious studies background started to advocate the rich people in the mosques of rich districts in Egypt or what the author called "high class faith". This situation established the commercial side in preaching, paid preachers. The book considers the preachers of digital television as the developed model in the new preachers' phenomena.

Lotfe's study concludes that the topics of new preachers shifted from focus on the substances of religious to the formalities and manifestations because of the market logic. This leads to the result that the relationship between advocacy, wealth and fame is guiding the preaching message to the same direction of any advertising message, which is promising receivers, and dreams selling.

The study adopted historical and comparative methodology in studying the historical and sociological changes in the Islamic preaching discourse. It represents a number of new preachers as a case study to realize the phenomena, but it did not dedicate a sample of the content of the preachers programs and this is what this study will try to explore.

The second review is 'Words from the Heart': New Forms of Islamic Preaching in Egypt". The study is MA theses for *Lindsay Wise* from Oxford University. *Wise* studies the changes in the Islamic preaching discourse from the side of preachers' techniques. She tries to compare between the old style of preaching and the new ones. Her case study focuses on video and audio tapes of the preacher *Amro Khaled's* sermons, articles from the Egyptian and English press, and interviews with Egyptians who have been following the trend. She concludes that the new preachers' techniques established a new style of religiosity that depends on reconciliation with the language of the age, or we can describe it as the discourse of modernity. Islamizing the

technology and the human products is the secret of the new preachers' popularity compared to the old one.

The third review is *Patrick Hani's* book "marketing Islam" (Hani, 2006). The book rises the changing in the Islamic discourse produced because of adapting new forms of Islamic religiousness. New preachers appear in the public sphere started to call for personal faith, focusing on micro issues in Islam not macro, for instance: Self-fulfillment and economic success; how to start a new project and how to be a rich Muslim ...etc.

Hani observed that the new preachers in mass media in the satellite channels in particular –played a role in the emergence of what so-called" personal faith". New form of Islamic religiousness that emerged from the sphere of Islamic parties and movements that refused at the same time to get involved into the core of the political conflict whether it is a conflict between political Islam movements and ruling regimes or between the Islamic culture and Western culture. Therefore, the new forms of preaching in the Islam satellite connected in somehow to marketplace and the marketing values because of the fact that their educational background is marketing or management, not a religious one.

The methodology of *Hani's* book is not obvious, but it seems close to the investigative approach in which the researcher tries to follow the changes

in the Islamic preaching discourse by addressing the commercial perspective to the preaching discourse instead of the traditional political perspective. The researcher also gives examples of new preachers as a case study, for instance: the preacher *Amro Khaled* in Egypt, who is one of the most famous Muslim preachers who employed the management and commercial theories in preaching.

Hani's study is very helpful to my research, especially the topic of the changes in the preaching marketplace and how the Islamic call shifted to be close to the commercial and marketing field, not to the political one. This idea represents a window to work in depth in the applications of *Mary Einstein's* theory "the supply side of religion". This study helps in testing the effectiveness of supply and demand in the content of the preaching message, and whether the marketplace of preaching is guiding the religious discourse or vice versa (Einstein, 2008).

The fourth study that close to the theses topic is *Nabil Echchaibi's* study "From Audiotapes to Videoblogs: the Delocalization of Authority in Islam (Echchaibi, 2011). This study highlights the differences in the Islamic preaching consisted by the preaching mediums and its techniques. *Echchaibi* tries to explore how the mass media affects the preaching message itself. New Islamic preachers aim to Islamize modernity which means having a new copy of Islam "the modern Islam" by using the new media techniques.

Echchaibi finds that the changes in the Islamic preaching message "Da'wa" or what he called "gentrification of Da'wa" has its political and economical dimensions. He gives different examples of new preachers to improve how the use of new media techniques broke the traditional authorities of the traditional religious institutions in Islam such as "Mosques, mosques preachers, and the preacher of the formal state institutions" towards the new preachers on television, radio and websites. The preacher website for instance is the new marketplace of religious where they can do both preaching activities and promoting his/her books, CD and other preaching products.

Based on the previous literature reviews, firstly, this study will look in depth in the Islamic preaching message changes through the various mediums and the Satellite channels in particular; secondly, it will try to explore the political and economical dimensions of the outputs of those changes, in particular.

1.5 The problem of the study

The study examines the effect of adopting new medium on the discourse of Islamic preaching and mainly the *Salafi* one. The following questions are those that will be raised throughout the study:

- To what extent the competition among the channels, for gaining the audience, come on the account of the quality of preaching message?

- To what extent do *Salafi* preaching channels seek to achieve political and commercial interests?
- Do these channels reflect a real religious discourse that takes place within society, or is it a reflection of the wishes and interests of the existing institutions?

Then how we can understand the "bazaar" suit widespread among the messengers via satellite advocacy? Is it a natural case, or is it an expression of intellectual and doctrinal competition?

1.6 The hypothesis of the study

The rapid spread of preaching television channels is to consider it as similar as any marketplace where the producers are looking for new customers and that is exactly what *Mara* explored in the religious media discourses in US (Einstein, 2008). The preaching satellite television marketplace in Middle East is guided by the commercial formula: supply and demand. The competition between the preaching channels leads them to search for thrill and excitement which might come on the account of the content quality.

So, the analysis of the preaching satellite channels competitions in Middle East should be based on understanding the role of existing institutions and their political and economic interest. Therefore, these

channels directly or indirectly are an implicit expression of the political and religious *Bazaar*.

1.7 Methodology

First of all, this research adopts qualitative tools and techniques to explore the elements of the power in *Salafi* preaching discourse via satellite channels. Hence, it is not an audience research. The methodology of discourse analysis used to analyze the *Salafi* preaching discourse focuses on the techniques of the message - mainly language, images and frame, Highlighting events and ensconcing others and narrative techniques (intertextuality, metaphors...etc) of historical stories adopted to fit the current time.

Two *Salafi* channels are chosen to test the concepts of commodification and Islamization: *Al-Nas* channel (People) and *Al-Majd* (Glory) as considered extremist in their call of revival the Islamic model of Prophet Mohammed. The power of *Salafi* discourse is tested in two main topics:

1- Commodification of Islam in selling goods and services at *Al-Nas* channel.

2- Islamizing political action through the Syrian revolution at *Al-Majd* channel.

The study considers the channel as its unit of analysis. Information will mainly be collected by two different samples. For *Al- Majd* channels, the coverage of Syrian revolution is the case study that test the concept of Islamization and mainly through episodes of program "*We are with you*" which supports the Syrian revolution. In case of *Al-Nas* channel, the research analyses the commodification of religion on a sample of advertisements. Further details about the methodology will be reviewed within each sample.

1.8 Preview

The First chapter discusses the historical transition of preaching concept through Islamic eras and whether preachers are independent in choosing topics or they follow their institutional and school rhetoric, such as *AL-Azhar* institute in Egypt. Politics gravitations and attracting preachers is also one of the topics that the chapter discusses and analyses from two perspectives: the call for *Jihad* in Afghanistan in 1880s and the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1991.

The second chapter follows the shifts in the preaching mediums from mosques, Cassette and satellite channels as well as the rising of specialized preaching channels in the late 1990s. The shifts in the used mediums are tested in case of influential preaching topics and content. Moreover, the chapter discusses the public sphere of the rise of Arab satellite channels in 1990s that founded the emergence of the preaching channels phenomenon.

The third chapter concludes the two main branches of Islam: *Sunni* and *Shiite* as they also are divided into different streams and many of them have several preaching channels. The focus of this chapter is to come across the *Salafi* ideology and practice in politics and media, mainly through the Egyptian *Salafi* model. The *Salafi* position of elections and participating in political process was represented by consisting political parties that -for the first time- come on the contrary of the historical experience of *Salafi*, who had not participated in the political game and dealt merely with advocacy work.

The fourth chapter discusses the commodification of religion through advertisements of *Al-Nas* satellite channel. Commodification is a new form of promoting goods and services by giving it an Islamic brand. The fifth chapter focuses on the Islamization of politics through the Syrian revolution. *Al-Majd* channel covers the Syrian revolution from an Islamic perspective and within the binaries of good and evil, right and wrong belief and disbelief...etc.

Finally, results conclude the outcomes of preaching discourse transition via mass media and the changes in contents of the preaching messages themselves. In addition to the elements of power of the emerging *Salafi* discourse nowadays.

2 . Preaching Discourses: (contrast of visions – discourse diversity)

The temporal and *spatial* circumstances play a role in the transformation of visions and views towards things. The idea can be effective through its function in the space and the environment where it exists, not by rhetoric theorizations, which aim to uphold what is hypothetical on the expense of what is realistic. Hence, the assumption is that the contexts of Islamic preaching discourses through eras and locations, had actually affected the form and the content of the preaching thought and its trend. Now, we are going to look into the trends that the Islamic preaching adopted, especially the effectiveness of the preaching (Islamic preaching) mediator in the process of directing.

The study will discuss two theses in this chapter. The first thesis will look into the stage of the preaching thought in the Arabic culture from pre-Islam epoch to the appearance of *Mohammed's* message, which is represented in calling for monotheism and for the Islamic religion throughout the different Islamic eras. The focus here will be on the transformations of the preaching message from the early eras “*era of the caliphate Rashidiya*” to the following eras, in which the Islamic caliphate turned into hereditary regime. The second thesis will study the transformations of the Islamic preaching in the era that followed the collapse of the Islamic *Caliphate* and the formation of non-religious state in the Arab world, specifically the experience of religious preaching discourse in states

like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, since the beginning of the last century until the present time.

It is important to clarify that the rooting of the historical transformations of the preaching concept in the various Islamic eras is not the focus of this research; it rather helps in discussing the religious discourse in satellite channels and the modern techniques of mass communication, as shown in the next chapters.

2.1 The concept of preaching and its contexts in the Islamic experience

Definitions of preaching are various according to different sources and Islamic researchers. Some of them define it as “endearing faith to the hearts of people and persuade them to adhere properly to the worship of God” (Al-Buti, 1977: 37), (Seyyed, 2003). Another researcher defines it as “diverting attention and minds of people into a doctrine that benefits them or an interest that serves them. It also saves people from going astray, or from a disaster that may happen (Raquit, 1996: 35). Other researchers define it as another articulation for the word media. They divided the stages of Islamic preaching into the known communication phases: the oral stage, which was in the era of the prophet *Mohammed*, the writing stage, which lasted to the Abbasid era and the modern era, the press and print communication stage and finally, the broadcast and televised stage (Amam, 1985: 57-63).

In the general context, the preaching thought is inherent in every human, and this is something settled inside one's self as a group of biases. Merely one's existence in life leads him/her to take attitudes toward it. One can be influenced relatively according to those attitudes. Attitudes can be intensified according to the degree of the influence inside one's self, and then turn into belief and faith.

Those biases, which have been translated into beliefs, can move out of their reflections on those who believe in them, until they become a subject of missionary and preaching. In the course of transition, self-which is biased-and believes in that bias towards a certain attitude, cannot be realized until the thought creates its context by those who believe in it.

From this perspective, preachers and preaching biases can be rooted; as they are considered as a need for understanding life at first, and then, self-realization. This order can be rearranged; to become a need for self-realization to manage the game of variables in life. We can find beneficial roots for a bias, provided by psychology and linguistics, when reality turns to the highest levels of the duty for individual or community. At then, it becomes difficult to find out the core of objects, then, the attempts of perception and confirmation will turn into a principle, in which metaphors start taking shape in order to generate substitutive pivots. Therefore, the preaching thought is only a pure metaphor whose pillars are based on a group of systems that push inside the metaphors by activating the substitutive pivots on the level of the preaching individual, and on the level of the targeted individual or community. The goal of that is to intensify the metaphor in the ability of its substitutive pivots to reshape it.

Based on the above, the preaching discourse, in order to legitimize itself and practice its authority on the recipients, must be based on a religious text. The religious text here does not refer to the written text, it instead refers to evoking words, or quotations, which could be orally quoted, or even an experiment transferred from its spatial and temporal context into a contemporary context, sometimes, without taking into account the differences. In other words, before discussing the preachers and their techniques, it is important to highlight the source of authority upon which the Islamic preaching discourse is based; this authority is firstly and mainly derived from the religious text. Other authorities appear later, such as the authority of the preacher himself, and more recently, the authority of the technique and its presence in the preaching discourse, or perhaps the presence of the preaching discourse in the technique.

The text plays an important role in forming the ancient and modern societies, and represents in one way or another the symbolic and existential capital of the society, which embodies the common sense in these societies, their history, culture, identity and myths, where the reality succumbs to a sacred text reference, that gives the existential meaning to the society. Then, three sacred circles are interlocked: the circle of the past that embodies its heritage, the circle of the present that is dominated by the past and its sacred spirituals, and the circle of the future, whose view is determined by the effectiveness of the past as a sacred reference to the awareness of the future. Hence, the sacred texts cannot be placed outside the context of ideology where language becomes according to *Roland Barthes* as generalized guidance and subjection (Sabella and Abdel Salam, 2005: 104), (Barthes, 1997: 155).

Moreover, the kinship links create sacred quotes in the society, expressed in poetry or prose, and thus the sacred texts become the language and the means of communication imbued by the sanctification aura of quotes that became sacred.

Arabs were known by their lingual aesthetic heritage in poetry and prose; they did not even have a science of more productivity and impact on their lives than poetry. Poetry embodied all the exploits of the Arab tribes¹ and became the “pride of tribes” among them, as they were rising based on the abundance of their poets and their proficiency in writing poetry, which left nothing that sanctified by the life of pre-Islam epoch. Therefore, poetry became the language of the tribe existence, which established its symbolic capital and linked the people of the tribe with a strong bond to its history. Thus, the poetic quotes represented a moment of constant contact with the reality of life in the tribe, and its images appear clearly -through the reflection of the sacred texts of the tribe- on the behavior of its members.

¹ In the words of *Omar Ibn Al-Khattab*: "Poetry was of people who did not have more accurate than it" until after the Arabs were engaged with something other than it after the situation settled to Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, and the Arabs were engaged in invading Persia and Byzantium, the Arab narration of poetry muffled, and after the outright victory for the Arabs against the Persians and the Romans, the Arabs settled in the cities, and returned to their poetry, then they found what was preserved of it became less, therefore they increased of it in narrating. What emphasizes this point of view is what of Ibn Salam said in his “Generations of the Stallion Poets” when he cited with *Umar Ibn al-Khattab* quote, then his justification for the loss of large From pre-Islamic poetry after Islam, he also presents a quote by *Abu Amro Ibn al-Ala*: "What reached you of what the Arabs said is the least, had been plentiful, too much knowledge and poetry would have reached you." This indicates the importance abundance of pre-Islamic poetry in revealing the nature of pre-Islam life which was not written with something more obvious than the poetry portrayed it. See the comment *Nasir al-Din al-Assad* on the quote of *Ibn Salam* (Al-Assad, 1988: 194-196). In the opinion of the author of *As-Sinaatain* (Attitude towards Poetry and Poets) that the Pre-Islamic Poetry ... is ancient Poetry that is connected in circles portrays the life of the Arabs before Islam, it is record for emotions and feats, a record for fanaticism and wars, it has the days of Arabs and their proceedings, and a record for their origins and genealogy (Al-‘Askari, 2006: 138).

Hence, poetry became a preaching tool in building the moment of a structural hegemony on the tribe members².

Due to the dependence of poetry on the metaphor in portraying allegorical figure, it created the tribe in the form of allegorical figure that mixed between imagination and reality. Therefore, the reality of tribal members mixed with their imagination³, and the poet produced through his quotes -which form the tribe imagination- a dynamic, inspiring, impacting and dramatic imagination to form the first circles of the individual awareness of reality in the tribe. Hence, the imagination of the poet as an individual became the imagination of the society that missed the pretexts to persuasion.

By defining the general framework of tribal imagination in poetry as a preaching technique, the poet employed the poetic metaphor as a myth that possessed an ideological effectiveness in subordination of people to their tribe⁴. The poet's kind of employment aimed at turning the unnatural thing into natural, the non-realistic into realistic, and what is not existed as existing and active, an example is what *Duraïd Ibn As-Simma* said:

I am only from an invading tribe, if it invades, I will invade, too.

If it is discreet, I will also be so (Al-Isfahani).

² - *Hussein Barghouti* sees in his book "Asadn and camel: stories from the heathen time" that the Pennants are pre Islamic sacred texts, and were put with the Idols inside the *Kaaba* side by side as a sign of their sanctity, and the circumambulation around the *Kaaba* is just a circumambulation around the sacred texts of the pre-Islamic era (Barghouti, 2003).

³ -The collective imagination is much similar to the inter thoughts and mental images shared among a group of people living in specific temporal and spatial conditions(Lakoff, 2003)

⁴ -*Althusser* goes to say that the ideology is a misleading illusion, he proves that through the unmasking of the circumstances in which people feel happy to participate in this illusion, although this response helps enslaved people to create the tools of their slavery and oppression without being aware of the fact that they are enslaved (Nye, 2009: 103-111).

This indicates that the tribal poetry confirms the absence of mind and the rational argument in favor of the poetic articulations that raise the sanctity of the tribe. In the same context, *Amro Ibn Kulthum* went in his pennant poem to sanctify the tribe and determine the extent of its authority and power over its members and on the other tribes, it is read in his pennant poem in which he expresses too much pride of his tribe:

Oh! None can be ignorant to us

Otherwise we'll be ignorant in addition to the

Ignorance of those who are ignorant

If a baby of ours reached to the ablactation

The giants will bow to him kneeling (Al Ayoubi and El Hawary, 1995: 227-228).

Ibn Kulthum here hides the rational arguments by other ones that are not based on logic when he makes the authority of sacred ideology of the poetic texts as an argument power rather than mental. Hence, the poetic argumentation wills lonely form the reality inside the tribe.

That way, the poet provided through a metaphor his preaching language function of sacred imagination, which embodies the metaphysical meanings in the images, visions and behaviors. In this context, a smooth transition happens between the levels of awareness that couple with metaphysical faith in the tribe quotes, and the behavior that is governed by these perceptions. That happens within a tripartite process represented by production, nutrition and empowerment - the community, the text power, and so the power text. In fact, this blend plays a role in the production of self-perception of the tribe in ethical precious dimensions, and that

configures the social space in the tribe through its implementation, which marks the tribe from others as an identity and a discourse⁵. It is the responsibility of the tribe poet - as its first agitator-, to guide - and perhaps forge – the tribal awareness. Hence, he is the one who brings the culture of illusion to take over the reality of the tribal awareness and turn it into ambiguous, a state in which the aesthetic and imaginative are mixed with the reality, and attributes the individual creativeness and aesthetic in favor of the community and the collective imagination. That is resulted from the fact that he has the power to articulate the sacred speech in the tribe.

The Arab poet has a multiplied authority in the tribe, since he possesses the most effective means of preaching in influencing the social structure of the tribe. He is the compass of the tribe that always indicates the status of the tribe and its hegemony, history and aspirations; he is also its emotional, moral, existential message. Thus, the poet is the first tribe agitator whose speech power is undisputed by any *Sultan*, and no speech or spears can be louder than his words. He is a means of tribal contact that is the hottest and the most influential agitating to feelings, so, the poet is considered as the most involved of the tribe members in the context of creating ideological imaginary stock of the tribe. He contributes as an advocate in making and empowering the tribal discourse through the social structures; as an ideology that sets the foundations operation for the discourse, and re-produces the poetic texts to the poet in response to social ideological events (Barghouti, 2003: 34-38).

⁵ -Exception to this is the phenomenon of Tramps which went out of tribal laws and tried to establish its sanctification outside the scope of the tribal sanctification, and In this respect it is possible to return to the collections of the tramps poets, the most prominent of whom are *Urwah ibn al-Ward*, and *As-Shanfari*. See: (Ibn al-Ward, 1953), (Al-Shanfari, 1968).

A poet managed to play the central role in manufacturing the tribe ideology and producing the meanings, until the arrival of Islam as a different and competitive preaching discourse in manufacturing ideology and its sacred transcendence. Then, the Prophet began as a preacher for the new religion by producing its transcendent text and making it legendary as a dominant authority meant to recast the reality on new ideological bases that presents in the meaning and its contexts. This is what justifies the clash between the two contrasted levels in the discourse. The of the clash sides is represented through the techniques of the first discourse which are socially rooted through a symbolic capital, established by the poetry articulations as a dominant authority and ideology. The other side is the discourse that proceeds in making its transcendent text and transcendence, and spreads itself as exceeding to the metaphysics of "illusion and delusion," which were confirmed by the tribe articulations, particularly the poetry. In return, and as a kind of mechanisms of defense adopted by the first discourse, the poets tried to describe the new discourse "the Islamic discourse" sometimes as "poetry" other times by magic and even sometimes as madness⁶.

The new discourse succeeded in forming both the sacred existential and the sacred ground meaning for those who were oppressed, because this discourse represents the shortest route in forming communicative meaning with the vulnerable group, specifically in *Quraish*⁷. It provided them with imagination twice, in the image of reality; once by offering them the Paradise as fantasy, as if it is a reality waiting for them and encouraging

⁶ -The *Quran* singularized one of its 114 chapters (*Sura*) with the title "poets", also it denies that the Prophet is a poet or a magician.

⁷ - *Quraish* is the most famous Arab tribe before the pre Islam epoch from which the Prophet *Muhammad* appeared, the Holy Qur'an mentions it in more than one occasion.

them to step towards it speedily. Secondly, through a secular discourse that equals among people; when it equilibrated the masters of tribes to the crushed groups in them. The Islamic discourse explained to those groups – the crushed- that they were deluded by being convinced that they exist in a context of a reality that can only be persuasive and accepted, and that working to consolidate that reality was through stressing the social differences between them and the lords of the tribe.

The religious discourse succeeded in the marginalized classes because the message it carries has enlightened them with the sense of injustice inflicted upon them by the nature of the tribal regime. The sense of injustice was the moment when the marginalized people began to be aware of the desire and pursuit to change their reality. Therefore, the prophet Muhammad’s message played a role in awakening the feeling of injustice among this class, to present itself as the context of the liberal meaning in this world and salvation in the Hereafter, the preaching message here showed to the marginalized class the falsehood of the tribe ideology, and then provided them with a way to salvation.

The preaching message of *Muhammad* overlapped in the techniques of its discourse by separating between transcendence of its holy text and the contexts of preaching discourses. It sometimes relied on the text as an out flowing energy of the charming music, and sometimes on the aspects of rhetoric and its ability to suggest and mislead between the cognitive and ideological reality. Some other times it used the techniques of communicative tribal preaching which is represented in poetry as a carrier to the meaning and as the preaching at the same time. Here, it was carved in the

form of preaching to the tribe, but with tribal tools to deny the tribal preaching.

This was what made the Islam's first preacher, the Prophet *Muhammad*, appoint famous poets in the pre Islam times, after their submission to Islam, including: *Ka'b ibn Malik*, *Abdullah bin Rawaha* and *Hassan ibn Thabit* to respond to the poets of *Quraish* by poetry. The Prophet *Muhammad* also built a platform to *Hassan ibn Thabit* in the mosque – and that had a great significance in mixing between the sacred transcendent and the ground profane. It points to mixing between the techniques of the poetic message, which played a major role in the establishment of the social tribal meaning, and the religious message of the preachers who are assigned to combine those two preaching techniques, which are not correspondent in the message, the sender and the mediator to some extent. More precisely, the Prophet built the platform in the mosque for *Hassan* to satirize *Quraish*.

Satire is a deficiency in the eyes of religion, and it is ground profane that stood side by side with the sacred in the Mosque as a place that began to embody two ideologies that are incompatible in content and correspondent in being techniques of the preaching discourse. The contradiction was also assembled in the preacher who represented the sender in the fact that his speech ranged between two discourses. The first discourse claims heavenly divine reflected on the part of the content of the poem as extensive meanings of heavenly religious senses. The second was the tribal discourse that uses the tribal language that is rich with satire, menacing, threatening, slander and vilification of others stature.

Hassan Ibn Thabit was not diligent in this area, but the first preacher “prophet” appointed him, when he said to *Hassan*: "satirize them, i.e. *Quraish* and the Holy Spirit with you, and go to *Abu Bakr* who is the most knowledgeable of *Quraish* members in genealogy - to teach you the flaws of *Quraish*. According to *Sahih Bukhari*, the prophet said to *Hassan Ibn Thabit*, "Go to *Abu Bakr* to tell you the talk of folk: their days and their genealogy, then satire them and Gabriel with you". In another saying of the Prophet: “I ordered *Abdullah bin Rawaha* to satire *Quraish*, he said and excelled, and I ordered *Ka'b Ibn Maalik*, he said and excelled, and I ordered *Hassan Ibn Thabit*, and he healed and was remedied” (*Hadith encyclopedia*, 7).

The advocacy to the tribe continued even in the era of the organization of Islam in the institution of the state, as it was in the *Abbasid* and *Umayyad* period. It is clear through the naming – Umayyad & Abbasid- that the Islamic state then affiliated to the tribe and community more than its affiliation to the first idea of the preaching, i.e. the essence of preaching to God.

Preaching in the *Umayyad* period particularized with the large mixing between faithful and historical, to the extent that the preaching discourse was based on the rivalry between the *Umayyad* and the *Abbasid* in preaching to the community, that is, the *Umayyad* and *Abbasid* groups. According to *Al-A'lawi* (2002), one of the factors of the *Umayyad's* success is their coup against *Abbasids* was the *Umayyad* indulgence with the *Abbasids* preachers who were deployed in the *Umayyad* state to call for the partisanship of the *Abbasid* and support them.

The *Abbasid* Advocacy succeeded in evoking unrest inside the *Umayyad* state. Therefore, the political assassinations of the governors and princes escalated; the tribes and groups were divided into pro-princes and rulers at the expense of the other. In fact, this was evidence, which shows the historical deviation of the preachers compass away from the idea of preaching to God, to the employment of preaching for political advantage to Islamic groups at the expense of other groups⁸.

Shifts in preaching discourse in the Arab and Arab-Islamic experience from calling for the tribe and preaching to God are clear through what was mentioned above, and then the start of rebounding back again toward the tribe, as what happened after the death of the Prophet *Muhammad*; tribal factionalism that prevailed Muslims across the different Islamic eras.

Our main concern regarding the previous mentions is how the Islamic preaching discourse have been reflected across the different eras on the reality of the contemporary Islamic preaching discourse, specifically after the recruitment of the various mass communication means in the preaching discourse.

The study will focus through the following pages on the transformation that hit the Islamic preaching discourse and the preachers

8 - According to some literature to the *Abbasid* Revolution on the *Umayyad* rule and the calling of the tribes was based on providing promises of righteousness to all classes of Muslims in their various genealogies, whether Arabs or non-Arabs, but after enabling themselves in power they rumored that they were the holders of the turban and that they inherited it from their first grandfather -*Abbas Ibn Abdul Muttalib*, and they transmitted and decided and applied that the *Caliphate* was pure heritage to them and inherited to them. For more details on the political conflicts, political assassinations and the stature of the clergymen and their integration in these conflicts at the expense of the preaching to God, see chapters VI and VII of (Al-A'lawi, 2002).

themselves, in light of Arab political regimes shifts after the salvation of colonialism since the mid-twentieth century, and how they organized the relationship of religion with the state conversely with the relationship of religion with the tribe as previously prevailed. That is based on the assumption that the emergence of the Arabic political regimes after the salvation of colonialism, created a new kind of preachers and clergymen, as the partisanship moved from the experience of the tribe to experience of the state in its modern concept.

2.2. Preachers between the preaching institution and the political one

Political regimes in the Arabic region play a role in directing the religious institution towards the social, political, and economical urgent issues in the region, whether nationally or at the international level of the competence among the states. The political regimes influence the religious institution effectively through governmental funding and assignment of its preachers and clergymen, though some religious positions were occupied by hereditary succession (Al-Bayyumi, (n.d.)).

This topic discusses the relation of *Al-Azhar*⁹ religious Institution and its preachers with the political regime in Egypt in addition to the competition between political Arabic regimes for preachers, especially after the mid-

⁹ - *Al-Azhar* Foundation, an Egyptian religious governmental foundation responsible for legislation and advisory and advocacy and has one of the largest religious university in the Islamic world.

twentieth century in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The role of preachers and clergymen and their attitudes of some political issues such as the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1991 will also be discussed side by side with the preachers' techniques and the effectiveness of the available means for practicing preaching whether through mosques, books, or even radio and preaching cassettes.

2.2.1 *Al-Azhar* preachers and the political dimensions

The main way for understanding the relation of Islamic preaching discourse in the modern age is the Egyptian model of strengthening the relation between political and religious institutions since the sixties of the past century until now. *Al-Azhar* Institution and *Al-Azhar* University have been considered the base from which clergymen and preachers obtain their legitimacy for being considerably known in teaching religion. The power and legitimacy of *Al-Azhar*, as the largest Islamic religious institution, has made it the place where students from all Arabic and Islamic countries meet to study Islamic religion (Al-Bayyumi, (n.d.)).

Affiliation and membership to this religious institution is considered a cover that offers legitimacy and confidence to preachers whether they are individuals or groups. However, this has not prevented the presence of preachers from outside the *Al-Azhar* Institution, whose emergence outside the formal religious institution and their rise since the beginnings of the past century has challenged not only the legitimacy and authority of *Al-Azhar*,

but also the political, social, and economical environment, which controls the *Al-Azhar* Institution.

The rising tone of the preaching speech in Egypt has been in harmony with the government's benefit seeking the protection of the religious discourse, in order to face the rising religious movements, especially those in Egypt such as the *Muslim Brotherhood* movement¹⁰. Therefore, the decline of Egyptian public enthusiasm of socialist thoughts after the defeat of the 1967 war created a need for the regime to run away from the situation that existed after the defeat and employ religion in supporting the public psychologically.

This is obviously manifested in the interest why the Egyptian president *Al-Sadat* used to use religious expressions in his speeches, calling his opponents polytheists; and seeking to participate in all religious occasions. Businesspersons and artists followed his example as well, through being interested in building governmental mosques for the sake of their election campaigns and publicity. Moreover, the Radio and TV Institution increased the number of hours of religious broadcast to three hours a day (Hassan, 2000: 153). The percentage of religious programs broadcasted by the Egyptian TV reached 2.3% of the total number of broadcasting hours in 1963, it was increased to 8% - 9% during the eighties; however, in the nineties it was decreased down to 7%¹¹.

¹⁰ - In the following pages, the expanding in religion relation, particularly *Al-Azhar* Foundation, to the Egyptian political regime and how the regime depends on the employment of religious discourse for the opposing Islamic movements in the logic of fighting with the same tools which are the subjects of religious speech, will follow.

¹¹ - The Egyptian regime sought in 1966 to issue a ministerial decision to organize television broadcast and to follow-up the preparation and presenting the programs which ensure the religious awareness of citizens,

This political- religious harmony designates the idea demonstrated in the first part of this chapter; the way of employing the techniques of preaching discourses and poetry and reciting poetry before the public as a means of public communication, to produce a new political and social context; the preaching power¹².

In modern age, the same thing may be represented in party spirit, a form of tribalism, which emerged particularly in Egypt as a guarantee for the permanence of the governing authority. Though the principles of the national movement in Egypt do not care about religion, the movement found that it was worthier to seek the protection of religion to in order keep controlling the public on one hand and to face the rising of Islamic movements, like the *Muslim Brotherhood* movement, on the other hand.

Consequently, it was not a surprise that the former Egyptian president *Anwar Al-Sadat* himself, the holder of the national thought, acted as a preacher of Islamic religion, committed himself to Islam principles such as selflessness and brotherhood, and kept on reciting *Qur'an* and staying at mosques in *Ramadan*. Likewise, the Egyptian mass media at that time played a role in boosting the Islamic character of *Al-Sadat* through covering his practices of Islamic activities and rituals in addition to inviting *Al-Azhar* preachers, who served directly or indirectly the political interests of the

and the regime based on the revolution of July 1953 sought to pay attention to programs of religious order not to be said that the revolution has neglected religion, despite the fact that the new regime is based on the socialist thought that contradicts in some of its theses with Islamists ones as the religion is their main source of legislation in the State. See: (Al-Fawwal, 1994).

¹² - In this area, consideration could be on the role played by the political exploitation of Islam in its beginning in the production of a new form of symbolic authority that supports the political power.

regime through employing the preaching of religion in favor of the regime (Al-Fawwal, 1994: 153).

To emphasize the importance of political dimension in employing the symbolic authorities of religion, the preaching character in religion of some preaching groups was limited to “infidelization” (*takfir*) (accusing Muslims of apostasy); for example, some fundamentalist movements worked towards accusing the Egyptian regime of apostasy trying to spread that through individual and mass communication at universities and mosques. To face these groups, the Egyptian regime sought to drive *Al-Azhar* institution to accuse their opponents with apostasy as an adverse reaction. Hence, that continues the chain of changes of a preaching speech from preaching to the word of God to preaching for the tribe, then to preaching for the benefit of political and religious movements, that is, preaching for the party or organization¹³.

The accelerated spread of religious discourse since the sixties of the past century has many factors. The decline of the socialist discourse upon the defeat of the Arab armies in their war against Israel in 1967 is one factor. The second is the victory of Islamic revolution in Iran in the year 1979, and finally the rise of the *Muslim Brotherhood* movement during the seventies and eighties in the previous century.

13 - One of the groups who accuse Muslims of apostasy in Egypt, was the group of *As-Shawqiin* which was spread in upper Egypt in the eighties and nineties, as well as the Islamic Group, and *Al-Jihad* group. For more on the groups who accuse Muslims of apostasy in Egypt, see: (Al-Arabiya, 2009). In the same context, on the base of employing the religious symbols in the service of political attitudes of the regime, the Iraqi President *Saddam Hussein* sought to emphasizing the religiosity of the regime by putting the words of God is the Greatest on the Iraqi flag, with the knowledge that the Iraqi regime is a national one, not religious.

It is natural for *Al-Azhar* institution to represent the formal attitude of the government for several considerations some of which are the government funds it gets and its loyalty to the administrative authorities of the government; furthermore, the president of Egypt is the one who is responsible for appointing the cleric of *Al-Azhar* (Hassan, 2000: 143-144). Thus, the *Al-Azhar* Institution could be considered as dependant, and the *Al-Azhar* preachers are obligated to avoid opposing the Egyptian government and its attitudes, if not spreading them, in their talks and speeches.

Not far from containing the *Al-Azhar* discourse, the Egyptian regime managed to contain the opponent religious discourse, the speech of the *Muslim Brotherhood* movement, in certain occasions. Before talking about this relation, it is necessary to review the changes of the preaching discourse of the *Muslim Brotherhood* themselves.

The *Muslim Brotherhood* movement emerged in 1928, by *Shaikh Hasan Al-Banna*, as a social, religious movement aiming at practicing social and religious reforms. The movement went into, according to *Al-Banna's* approach, organizing preaching institutions and setting plans and strategies, to produce changes to the Egyptian society. *Al-Banna* considered that calling for change undergoes three stages: the first stage, spreading the idea and informing the public of it, especially through mosques and mass media; the second stage, the formation stage through which occurs the recruitment of members in order to make the change; and the final stage, work and production (Hassan, 2000: 187-190).

The conflict between the Egyptian national *Nasiri* regime and the *Muslim Brotherhood* refers to several reasons, some of which are the attempts of the *Nasiri* national thought to integrate Islam and the Islamic discourse into the Arabic nationality and its progressive vision. On the other side, the *Muslim Brotherhood* sought to present themselves and their approach as an integrated society project. Consequently, the *Muslim Brotherhood* got into conflict with the Egyptian regime under the pretext of seeking to establish the rule of God on earth, considering the state as apostate and the society as ignorant. Infidelization and ignorance techniques were the most effective tools in the *Muslim Brotherhood* discourse advantage to the society as well as promising the people with what they claim as missing in their religion and *Sharia* (applying the Islamic rules) (Al-A'sha, 2009: 179)¹⁴.

During the spread of the *Brothers'* thought, some other religious Infidelizing groups in addition to some preachers and clergymen arose. In this context, *Sayyid Qutb* was considered as one of the inspirers of the Infidelizing military thought in Egypt; he was viewed in his books as one who infidelizes the societies. His book *Milestones on the Road* is special example, in which he says that nations are ignorant and ruled by ignorant regimes, which go past the authority of God on earth. From the same book emerged the Infidelizing movements in Egypt, which divides societies and regimes into types like the house of war and the house of peace/Islam; accordingly, fighting the house of war is a must to enforce Islam.

¹⁴ - In the context of talking about the conflict between the Egyptian regime and the Muslim Brotherhood, such as the book milestones on the road to the stage of *Sayyid Qutb* articulated the nature of this relationship when he proposed the idea of governance, which necessarily means a law of God on earth to save the society from its *Jahiliyya*. See (Qutb, 1973).

In the editorial of the first issue of the *Brothers'* preaching journal, *Qutb* also wrote his description of those societies, "*Twentieth Century Ignorance*", calling along with the journal, for putting Islam into effect and resorting to *Quran* and *Sharia*. Moreover, what was surprising about the journal is the presence of advertisements on some pages for some imported goods like refrigerators, cars, television sets, kitchens, and clothes. All of these goods are foreign and could not be obtained easily by most of the people. So such goods, would support the castes' differentiations between those who could afford to pay and those who could not. Such promotion, which pushes the sale of foreign goods on the pages of a preaching journal, would disagree at first with the preaching logic as this would threaten the national goods, and increase the demand on imported; consequently, this would make unemployment worse and weaken the economy. For example, in July 1981, a colored advertisement appeared on the cover of the journal encouraging people to invest in the Egypt Bank, "open a branch on the Islamic way" (Mahfouz, 1988: 151).

The journal "*Add'awa*" exceeded the limits in its advertisements, which do not harmonize with the philosophy of the preaching journal, which is based on asceticism. An example here is advertising for apartments in a residential compound that includes a mosque, as the prices of each apartment worth tens of thousands of Egyptian pounds ignoring the fact that the salary of a *Brothers'* graduate does not exceed 23 pounds. "*Add'awa*" also published another advertisement for a company selling Japanese cars each of which worth tens of thousands of pounds and was owned by one of the *Brothers'* leaders. In this context, *Mohammad Mahfouz* commented on

publishing the previously mentioned advertisements, wondering who would have tens of thousands to buy apartments or cars while the *Brothers'* emblem on the preaching journal is comprised of two swords, the holy *Quran*, and "Get prepared,". This expression is quoted from the beginning of the holy *Quran* verse "Against them, make ready your strength to the utmost, including steeds of war." So is "*Mazda*" or "*Honda*" cars part of "steeds of war" even though they are with 1000 horsepower (Mahfouz, 1988: 152)?

The controversy that arose after Sadat signed peace accord with Israel is important to be mentioned, as it emphasizes the influence of the political by the preaching discourse, even for the opponents of the regime. Because of this accord, certain clerics of *Al-Azhar* and some leaders of the opposition banned reconciliation with Israel. Then, *Muslim Brotherhood's* magazine editorial appeared to say that Israel is the house of war, and Muslims must declare war (*Jihad*) against it, and anyone who doesn't commit to that is a sinner. However, *Sadat's* pressures and his need to an Islamic cover, and through his threats to cancel the facilities he granted to the Islamic opposition after the absence of the former Egyptian president *Jamal Abed El-Naser*, all these reasons urged the preaching magazine, through the writer of its first editorial the cleric *Omar Altelmesani*, to change his position towards the accord. *Altelmesani* considered that Islam is great deal of significance, and that everyone is dreaming in peace and working for it, so the defect is not in peace, but in Israel who is the one who did not want it-meaning peace.

Sadat had allied earlier with the cleric *Altelmesani*, a *Muslim Brotherhood* leader, But that coalition did not last because of the pressure of

some of the *Muslim Brotherhood* leaders. In response, the Egyptian government practiced more pressure on some of the Islamic groups, and this prompted those groups to return to the people, in particular people in poor neighborhoods and mosques, to preach them. The government confiscated numbers of the preaching magazine after “exceeding the red lines” (Mahfouz, 1988: 182-186).

The subjects of the Islamic preaching and the preaching discourse vary according to government's relationship with the preaching movements. At the time when the government's relationship with the Islamic opposition was solid, the preaching of the "preaching" magazine was based on the promotion of luxury cars and apartments owned by some wealthy preachers themselves. At that time, the regime could silence the *Muslim Brotherhood* opposition by meeting some of their demands, such as allocating special buses to females, as well as separation of female from male students in lectures at universities. After the regime had delegitimized the *Muslim Brotherhood* movement, the preaching turned to call for toppling the regime, and infidelizing it.

Conflict and tension between the discourse of the regime and the discourse of opposition has continued since the signing of the *Camp David Accords* between Egypt and Israel in 1979, which ended the conflict that started between them, since Israel occupied Palestine and territories of some neighboring Arab countries. As a response to the *Brotherhood's* provocative preaching discourse against the Egyptian regime, the latter started to issue a number of newspapers of a religious nature such as the *Banner of Islam* and *My Faith*, in order to provide its vision and interpretation of Islam. In

addition, the minister of information, *Safwat al-Sharif*, instructed the female broadcasters of the State television to reduce cosmetics and vivid colors of the dress as a need, adding that the rhythm of the television should commensurate with the rhythm of the Egyptian public (Al-Awadi, 2009: 176-178).

The President *Hosni Mubarak*, in the eighties of the last century, like former President *Sadat*, sought to employ *Al-Azhar* and its preachers to confront the fundamentalist and infidelizing movements. This example emphasizes the thorny relationship between the symbolic and financial capital, and its political connections. Aside with the same example, the Egyptian regime supported the *Muslim Brotherhood*, the main rival of the current regime, at the expense of infidelizing movements at the time. The President was also periodically meeting *Al-Azhar* cleric "*Gad al-Haq*", and the *Mufti* of the Ministry of *Awqaf* (religious Affairs), to reaffirm the importance of *Al-Azhar* in playing a role in confronting extremist ideas through intensifying the preaching work for social peace (*Al-Ahram* Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 1996: 29).

Later, the Egyptian media employed the preaching discourse again to serve the political regime in the face of threats of extremist religious preachers, particularly through intensifying the appearance of *Al-Azhar* preachers in media, in order to advise people to stay away from excessiveness of religion and extremism. In addition, *Al-Azhar* scholars organized field visits in various Egyptian cities and villages to speak to Muslim youth and to advise them. In other words, agendas and topics of the religious preaching discourse were identified mainly by the political

priorities. The aims of the preaching work were being strengthened at that time, through activating the religious discourse in media, in response to emergency conditions, which serve the current situation.

The greatest challenge to *Mubarak's* regime appeared in the eighties by the *Muslim Brotherhood* movement. The regime granted it facilities to carry out its preaching mission to confront the fundamentalist movements, but within a short time, because of the success of its preaching discourse, and by getting closer to the concerns of the lower classes in society, it was able to play the role of the rival to the ruling regime. In addition, it turned from being a tool given the facilities to meet the competitors, to a stronger competitor than the fundamentalist preaching discourse.

The effectiveness of the preaching discourse of the movement has been intensified by its economic activities, such as the spread of Islamic banks and Islamic investment, which means that any other opposite emulator is necessarily not Islamic. The effectiveness of the *Muslim Brotherhood's* discourse has accelerated due to recruiting the authority of religion, or the symbolic capital according to the language of *Bourdieu*, for intensifying and strengthening the financial capital of the companies and investments held by the *Muslim Brotherhood* (Al-Awadi, 2009: 105-120). It seems that both financial and symbolic capital played a role in the rise of the *Muslim Brotherhood* as competitor for the regime; through the effective employment of their mass media, and their preachers in mosques.

The transition from the culture of the tribe to the institution in the era of political systematization - the states - generated a new environment for

the preaching discourse. In the case of the *Muslim Brotherhood* in Egypt, it is clear that the language of interests was reflected on the priorities of the preaching discourse. While the regime granted the *Muslim Brotherhood* movement facilities for the union work, especially within universities, the discourse of the movement has taken the conciliatory form with the regime, ignoring the fact that it does not apply the Islamic rules. While the regime was reducing the facilities granted to the opposition, the preaching discourse was re-ordering its priorities to criticize the regime, and considering the illegality of the regime as an outcome of the lack of commitment to the Islamic discourse¹⁵.

It is noted that the preaching discourse, through its various stages, especially in the modern era, was able to find supporters from the public, due to its closeness to the reality of the people and their suffering, in particular poor students coming from remote villages. Such people found in the preaching discourse what justifies their social deprivation and incite them against the existing social and political reality.

Since the preaching discourse needs additional constituents in addition to the youth, the *Muslims Brotherhood* sought to work in money laundering by establishing banking and financial institutions, including *Al-Taqwa Bank* in the *Bahamas*. The most importantly in the context of these financial investments was the bankruptcy of the two institutions *Al-Rayyan* and *Al-Sabeel*, in which the supporters of the *Muslim Brotherhood*, the poor and

¹⁵ - *Muslim Brotherhood* discourse's dodge, between supporting and opposing the regime, is contrary to the theses of Sayyid Qutb, who is considered one of the *Muslim Brotherhood's* theorists who believed that the current Muslim communities and the existing regimes do not rule according to what *God* had commanded, thus, it is a duty to fight them to apply the law of *God*. See: (Qutb, 1973).

needy, contributed. Those supporters had put all their money in the investments of the *Muslim Brotherhood* (Al-Hur, 2004: 96 +97).

It seems that the politicization of religion and religionization of politics, and the competition existing between the forces of power and the opposition, had been resolved to the favor of the opposition, which seemed more intelligent than the regime; through its discourse that is close to the daily reality of people suffering as well as its closeness to religious heritage. It is clear that the *Muslim Brotherhood* was intelligent in reconciling with the regime that enabled the movement to penetrate more inside the public by exploiting the facilities -granted to its preachers- in mosques and universities. This urged the regime, specifically in the period after the bombings in 1992, to tighten its grip on universities and mosques, in particular persons and entities that are entitled to practice the preaching or not.

At the same time, the state was indulgent toward the *Muslim Brotherhood* in particular, with the aim of encouraging moderate groups over infidelizing and fundamental groups that emerged in Egypt in the seventies of the last century and infidelized the regime at that time. The regime succeeded at first in transforming the conflict into a conflict between the Islamic groups themselves, through advisory opinions, preaching and infidelizing groups to each other. Nevertheless, the great penetration of the *Muslim Brotherhood* inside the Egyptian public since the nineties of the last century, and their participation in parliament and unions, made it difficult to fight it within the religious discourse. Thus, the Egyptian regime intentionally imposed further restrictions and constraints on the *Muslim*

Brotherhood, especially restricting their powers and activities in universities, religious and political seminars inside mosques, banning the movement, and prosecuting anyone declares affiliation to it.

In addition, the attention of the regime for religion and politics has declined without any regard to attempts of dyeing the practices of the regime by a religious nature. However, that does not mean giving up the symbolic power in favor of *Al-Azhar* (2004), which was demanded by the regime to take a religious position towards any important decisions and attitudes. The last of those positions was an advisory opinion by *Al-Azhar* in late 2009, permitting construction of the barrier, which Egypt was building on its border with the *Gaza Strip*, in return for an advisory opinion of denying its construction by the *Muslim Brotherhood*

2.2.2 Gravitation of politics and attracting preachers

The relationship between the political establishment and the religious institution in the Arab region did not stop at the borders of interaction within the one political system. It rather exceeded it until it reached a competition between the political regimes in the Arab region, and then it turned to be a historic rivalry between Egypt and Saudi Arabia for the leadership of the Arab region. It is no secret to say that religious discourse and preachers have played a historic role in this conflict.

In the fifties and sixties of the last century, the Egyptian President *Jamal Abdel-Nasser* sought to direct *Al-Azhar* institution to challenge and confront the regime of King *Faisal* in Saudi Arabia, in order to achieve the dream of *Abdel Nasser*; establishing the Arab nationalism in the various Arab countries. We have already noted that the nationalist ideology does not meet with religious thought, except for employing the Islamic religion to serve the thought of nationalism. For this reason, *Abdel-Nasser* saw that the Saudi *Sunni* religious rule was threatening him, at the same time; Saudis had also seen *Abdel-Nasser* as a competitor trying to grab their legitimacy in the Arab region. Thus, each party resorted to direct all of its clerics and preachers to counter the propaganda of the other party¹⁶ (Georges, 2009). The competition between the two countries reached to the extent of severing the diplomatic relations. Egypt withdrawn its educational delegation (of *Al-Azhar*) from Saudi Arabia, but *Sadat*, after reaching the power, asked the delegation to return back to Saudi Arabia, where this can be considered within the context of political guidance for preachers (Said, 1995: 119 +130).

The Egyptian regime sought to employ *Al-Azhar* institution to issue advisory opinions on various topics, including: covering the peace agreement signed by the President *Sadat* with Israel by issuing an advisory opinion that permits achieving peace based on a *Quranic* text, "if the enemy

¹⁶. Within the efforts of Egyptian President *Abdel-Nasser* to contain clerics, particularly those who are influential, the cleric *Shaarawi* said that *Abdel Nasser*, before his death, issued a decree appointing him as "the secretariat of thought" in the Socialist Union, although the cleric *Shaarawi* is not a socialist, and did not belong to the project of *Nasiriya*. In addition, *Shaarawi* himself thanked God and prayed after the defeat of Egypt in 1967, considering the defeat as a correction by God and a defeat for the Marxists, he means the defeat of the project of *Nasiriya* near the socialist Russia at that time. See: (Abu-Alaynayn, 1995).

incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in God". The president *Mubarak*, too, depended on an advisory opinion by *Al-Azhar* to permit his interference in the 1991 Gulf War, besides international powers to stop the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait (Al-Hur, 2004: 14).

To indicate once again that the political guides the religious, especially in internal affairs, it must be noted that the former Egyptian President *Jamal Abdel- Nasser* had asked cleric *Al-Azhar* and the Research Academy at *Al-Azhar* to issue an advisory opinion that limits birth. Cleric *Shaarawi*, director of *Al Azhar* cleric office at that time, and the minister of *Al-Awqaf* (religious affairs) later, narrated how *Al-Azhar* Cleric sought to be absent from the meeting that was scheduled for that matter, by claiming sickness, as well as the absence of some members of the Research Academy. Nevertheless, they later acknowledged the need for birth control, but not birth limitation in response to the demands of the political establishment¹⁷. It is important to note the role of the political environment in Egypt in influencing the religious establishment, and its historical transition from the service of God and religion as an idea, into serving the political establishment and its agendas. It is also noted that the political rivalry between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, has also led to an institutional and religious competition after the competition between *Al-Azhar*, individualist preachers and clerics. Here, It could be said that preachers non-belonging to

17- *Shaarawi* mentions that Egypt witnessed unrest in 1977 led by some leftists, communists who called it revolution of bread and freedom, but *Shaarawi* says that he called it the "uprising of thieves". It is mentioned that the police brought him to the radio and television to say a statement to the people around the chaos and unrest, criticizing the protesters and their subversive acts against private and public property. President *Sadat* was ruling Egypt at that time, after *Nasser's* death, and an Islamist group assassinated him after signing a peace agreement with Israel. But *Shaarawi*, at that time, considered him a martyr. *Shaarawi* blessed peace agreement and reconciliation with Israel, which signed by *Sadat*. (Abu-Alaynayn, 1995: 165-168), (Fawzi, 1994: 146).

the thought of *Al-Azhar* institution, whether in Egypt or Saudi Arabia, particularly the *Salafists*, have started shifting away from the illegality of the institution to the institution of *Salafist* legitimacy, which was supported by the Saudi regime. Thus, the Saudi- Egyptian competition did not only become a political rivalry, but also a rivalry for authorities and religious symbols through the conflict between *Salafi Jihadist* discourse and the equinoctial conciliatory one¹⁸.

Saudi Arabia, the state of *Sunni* Islam, desired to forbid the spread of nationalism and communism in the Arab region in the sixties of last century. Therefore, it resorted to attract scholars and preachers from various Arab countries. Those elites, especially the Egyptians who oppose the regime, have played a role in developing a religious vision that is different from the traditional *Salafist* approaches, which prevailed in Saudi Arabia before 1969. In the context of the so-called liberal plan, which was launched by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and ranges in the period between the years 1969-1980, the kingdom tried to reform the religious establishment, and unify the religious discourse. It particularly sought to get rid of individual advisory opinions in favor of the constant committee for giving advisory opinions, in addition to forbidding random speeches (Al-Khodor, 2010: 57).

In the same period, the censorship role on the Saudi media and publications were reduced. The media openness has granted young people the opportunity to revolt against the prevailing customs and traditions and

18 - to emphasize the Saudi-Egyptian conflict, *Abdel- Nasser* sought to support Kuwait in the face of the Iraqi threats which is about annexation of Kuwait to Iraq, *Abdel- Nasser* granted Kuwait an active role in the Arab diplomacy, for the purpose of creating an oil competitor to Saudi Arabia. See: (Rais, 1987: 26).

decline of the impact of scholars and their speeches. In return, this openness has led the preachers themselves to be stricter and to seek for working in secret to occupy the previous status. A detailed discussion will be engaged in this subject later.

It is noted from the discussion above that the decline of Egyptian national threat to Saudi Arabia after the 1967 defeat, urged for further governmental openness and marginalizing the religious establishment, preachers and clerics, and reducing the religious censorship on the media. However, the religious discourse soon returned to the interface very effectively after the emergence of the 1979 Iranian revolution, where the State needed to immunize itself from the Iranian threat and, of course, clerics and preachers are the first line of defense for protecting the society and guiding it.

The rise of the Iranian threat in addition to the issue of the Soviet occupation to Afghanistan, were an important issue for the religious establishment in Saudi Arabia. It helped Saudi Arabia activate its symbolic power and hegemony on the Saudi society after a period of marginalization - or what they call as the moral degeneration- and declining religious observance during the years 1969-1980. At the same time, the rise of the Iranian threat after the *Khomeini* revolution in addition to the escalation of the Soviet war in Afghanistan opened the door for the government, along with alliance with the medial preachers, to get rid of the extremists by encouraging them and granting them facilities to go out for *Jihad* in Afghanistan. An example about this matter, a saying emerged "liberation of

Palestine passes through Afghanistan". This is the saying that preachers, clerics and Arab media promoted at that time (Alrashed, 2004).

In addition to the Saudi fear from the Iranian Revolution, the Egyptian fear of the regional shifts and their reflections on the opposition, which adopts preaching trends, also emerged. Thus, the Egyptian regime initiated to be protected by religion to the extent that helps in immunizing itself. It operated the *holy Quran Radio*, and supervisory Cleric became present in any of the committees owned by the Egyptian Radio and Television institution, to criticize and correct any proposals for the implementation in the Egyptian media that may be inconsistent with the doctrine of *Al-Azhar* (Qimni, 2004: 97).

2.2.3: Preachers and the call for *Jihad* in Afghanistan.

Another shift may be taken as an evidence for the relationship of the political with the religious in the Arab region, is the implicitly convergence of the interests of both Saudi Arabia and Egypt in the need to get rid of the extremist clerics and preachers in both countries. They encouraged them to go for *Jihad* in Afghanistan against the Russian occupation in the Eighties of the last century. This was coincided with encouraging youth to volunteer, by Preachers of mosques and clerics. The preaching work, at that time, represented a response to the political situation. Without the political situation, which was in line with the *Salafist* thought, *Jihad* idea in

Afghanistan would not have gotten the importance and legitimacy it obtained through the support of the political establishment and media propaganda. In the period of encouraging *Jihad* in Afghanistan (lacey, 2009: 62-68) along with the traditional preachers, a new generation of preachers and young clerics emerged and led the change later in the Saudi community, in a partnership with the State for the first time. Encouraging the preaching cassette of the new preachers who started to reconcile with the technique and employing it at the expense of the traditional preachers, is a prominent case of change back then. Anyway, some traditional preachers issued an advisory opinion that forbids the image itself, considering it as breaching God's right in portraying what he had created. Others issued an advisory opinion that forbids owning and watching TV, as "it encourages debauchery and disobedience of the true religious and community values". However, cassette has formed a unique media power, since the mid-eighties of the last century (Al-Khodor, 2010: 61+91).

In the eighties and early nineties, a number of cassette preachers emerged in Saudi Arabia, Cleric "*Safar Al-Hawaii* and Cleric *Salman El-Odeh*" were some of them. What draws attention is that the two prominent Clerics are *Salafism* propagandists, which is considered one of the fundamentalist movements in Islam (Ashour, 2003: 172 +173). However, the strike is that the preaching cassette, especially the *Salafi*, has become popular and competitive to the lyrical cassette, to the degree that the preaching cassette managed to be sold on the sidewalks of the streets and in public places. So how could the preaching cassette, which contrasts with the goals and objectives of the lyrical cassette, win the popularity in the eighties and nineties and very quickly?

The initial answer to the question assumes that the cassette, as a new preaching technique - at that time, allowed the preaching discourse to reach to the masses. This is an indication to the employment of the religious discourse to technique, "Islamization of Technique", and the sense of religious satisfaction it raises within the believers, that religion is valid for all times and places, this is on the one hand. On the other hand, there are considerations that are not technical; or let us say substantive considerations, that is, many of the themes of religious discourse and sermons of preachers in mosques, cassettes and radio programs were mostly a response to the political conditions and attitudes of the official government. Both political regimes in Egypt and Saudi Arabia sought to direct the religious institution away from domestic issues, by diverting its attention to the issues of the ascending *Shiite* and *Jihad* in Afghanistan. At that time, Saudi Arabia sought to make advantage of the clerics and preachers belonging to the *Muslim Brotherhood*, especially those coming from Egypt as representatives of moderate Islam. It sought to recruit them domestically in the face of the hard-line discourse, and in order to open the mind of future generations on the issues of modern features of Islamic culture, through religious education and the preparation of preachers and clerics. Nevertheless, the regime did not allow those preachers to address internal, social or political affairs, in order to avoid provoking the attention of the hard-line trend, and to ensure that it is busy with the *Jihad* in Afghanistan (Al-Khodor, 2010: 57).

The general scene of the preaching discourse in Egypt, in the eighties and nineties, was similar to what it was in Saudi Arabia. The similarity is represented in the rise of religious preaching discourse and its effectiveness in daily life through its impact on the content of the media, and specifically

preventing some of the movies to be presented on TV, decreasing songs on TV, and preventing emergence of female singers. Increasing prevalence of memorizing *Quran* circles, and increasing the government and media attention for covering religious activities are also other sides of that similarity.

2.2.4 Occupation of Kuwait and Confusion of Cassette Preachers.

According to the previous, political developments in the Arab and Islamic region pushed towards the development of the culture of preaching cassette, and considering it as one of the most important tools and means of shaping public opinion. As for the eighties, it is clear that the preaching cassette was not widespread as much as after the crisis of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1991. It is also noted that the preaching cassette was widespread in Egypt and Kuwait more than its spread in Saudi Arabia; this is due to the nature of the political regime and its relationship with the mainstream Islamic doctrines. The early cassette was focusing on reading the *Quran* themes, while the Clerics' rivalry, at that time, depended on techniques such as: aesthetic sound and rhythm and recording mosque speeches of some sermons and preachers, an example of this is the well-known recordings of Cleric *Koshk* in Egypt.

Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1991; and the subsequent events represented a new phase of the preaching discourse, particularly through the

cassette; some preachers and clerics exploited the event of the humanitarian situation of the Kuwaiti people fleeing across the desert to Saudi Arabia. They considered this as an opportunity to attack the *Ba'athists* and the Iraqi regime for not complying with the *Muslim Sharia*. Earlier, this was not allowed - since the eighties of the last century and until the occupation of Kuwait- due to the wide public sympathy in the Arab world with *Saddam* in his war against Iran in the eighties all over the Arab countries.

In addition to the first type of preachers, *Salafist* cassette preachers emerged. They called for prohibiting dealing with foreigners during the war on Iraq in 1991, and they even explicitly and implicitly forbade residence of the U.S. forces in the Arab Peninsula. Two of them were the clerics "*Ibn Baz*" and "*Ibn Uthaymayn*", who opposed the official Saudi tendency and their rhetoric and preached people to return to God and to ask for his help. At that time, a saying: "flee to God" became well- known¹⁹.

Cleric *Shaarawi*, who enjoyed broad popularity in mosque speeches and on the Egyptian official TV, had position that ranged between the two former trends of preachers. He had a position against *Saddam's* war on Kuwait, along with the official position of Egypt and Saudi Arabia for supporting Kuwait. He also issued an advisory opinion to legalize getting help of the foreigners, saying they are not occupation forces, and that they came according to the desire of the ruler, while *Saddam's* occupation to

¹⁹- In response to *Saddam Hussein's* occupation of Kuwait, the cleric *Ibn Baz* called *Saddam Hussein* and his *Baathist* regime infidels, considering that the regime is atheist, that the ideas of the *Baath* are not based on faith in God and Islam. Even after the death of *Ibn Baz*, the official website of *Ibn Baz* celebrates the broad public opinion he enjoyed in Kuwait and people's sadness for his death. See the official website of the cleric (Ibn Baz, 2010).

Kuwait was against the desire of the countries' rulers. *Shaarawi* supported his position by a series of verses and sayings of the prophet *Mohammed*, that forbid attacking a Muslim to his brother Muslim or occupying a Muslim country to another Muslim country. Cleric *Shaarawi* distrusted Saddam *Hussein's* protection in Islam, and his quest to gain the support of public opinion after the occupation of Kuwait, considering his occupation to Kuwait as a work that contradicts with Islam. In return, *Saddam* sought to engage with clerics who supported his war on Kuwait, and facilitated their appearance on the *Iraqi* media, especially public radio. The controversy among the clerics was reflected on the Arab public opinion. Demonstrations took to the streets in various Arab capitals and cities, some of them supported the cooperation with the foreign forces in the liberation of Kuwait, and others opposed it²⁰.

The Iraqi occupation of Kuwait represented a new transformation in the preaching discourse and its tracks, especially the rise of a new type of the cassette preachers, or the so-called political preaching cassette. Those cassette preachers of the new orientation were calling people to boycott the mass media, in order to avoid confusion and ensure their success at the time. This strengthened and intensified the political and religious fanaticism (Al-khodor, 2010: 65 +66). The political *Jihadi Salafist* cassette managed to influence a number of the Saudi youth who rejected the U.S. presence. Relatively this same public supported the thought of *Al-Qaeda* and its theorist *Osama bin Laden* later.

20- See: the cleric *Saharawi's* views about the Gulf War .1991. (Collection of statements and positions of *Shaarawi*, (n.d.): 133-142).

In the case of *Sunni-Shiite* conflict and its political title, for both the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iran, it is clear that the nature of the conflict is political with tribal roots, in particular when talking about the Persian roots of the conflict in the face of *Sunni* Arabs. It was easy to promote the preaching cassette in the case of exaggerating the threat of *Shiite* Iran against the *Wahhabi Sunni* Saudi Arabia, especially to the students of universities. In addition, there were cassettes and books of the preacher *Ehsan Dahir* (2008).

To confirm the relationship of the political exploitative with the religious of preachers and clerics, we can be aware of the following paradox: the United States sought to support both Iran during the *Shah's* rule in the seventies of the last century, and the *Sunni* Saudi Arabia. At the same time, the United States sought to blow up the conflictive situation between these two countries, and to strengthen their rule in the region, which makes the strings of the game under its control. Thus, the so-called *Shiite* awakening versus *Sunni* awakening emerged at that time. Saudi Arabia politically and religiously supported *Saddam's* war against Iran in the eighties of the last century, and many of the preachers and clerics supported *Sadam's* war on the *Shiite* Iran through their cassettes and sermons in mosques. Therefore, Saudi Arabia re-published some books that warn against the *Shiites*, and distributed them free of charge in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states²¹; this In fact, was a strong public support to *Saddam*. However, when the war ended, and *Saddam* occupied Kuwait, most preachers and clerics lined up against *Saddam's* regime, and some of them called it infidel. It is clear here,

21- One of the most famous books that was warning against *Shiite* and inciting against them is the book: "dispelling the darkness and alerting the sleepers to the risk of *Shiites* on Muslims and Islam, Ibrahim Suleiman (Suleiman, 1988), also (Dahir, 1984).

that the political overlaps with the religious; when the Saudi regime supported *Saddam's* war against Iran, clerics and preachers did the same, the majority of Saudi clerics adopted the same position by criticism and rejection (Farhat, 2006). The authorities sought to confiscate cassettes of some clerics who opposed the official position of Saudi Arabia, which permits calling for help of the foreigners for the Liberation of Kuwait. Saudi Arabia also prevented a number of preachers and clerics from delivering speeches in mosques; one the most prominent among them was the famous Egyptian cleric *Abdel Hamid Kishk* (Fouad, 2002).

In order to understand the effectiveness of the preaching cassette and its strong rise in the period of occupation of Kuwait, the psychological dimension of the occupation influence emerges. The occupation caused a shock to the Muslim community, particularly in Saudi Arabia, due to the surprising event and the difficulty that the public faced in understanding and analyzing what is going on, especially at the moment of the arrival of thousands of Kuwaitis who fled from the Iraqi forces to Saudi Arabia. Since the logic of the utilitarian use of religion is activated more in times of difficulty and crisis, the religious answer became very necessary to satisfy the people's psychological vacuum or the so-called psychological trauma, so, the presence of preachers and clerics was very important to guide people to understand what is going on. In the beginning, preachers dealt with the event through a preaching logic, by urging people to return to God, before the preaching work changed into a political doctrinal work as previously mentioned.

The successful international military action, which liberated Kuwait, influenced the psyche of the majority of the Kuwaiti people, who are sympathetic with the United States for mainly its contribution in forcing *Saddam* to leave Kuwait. The degree of sympathy reached hating those who criticize U.S., like the Kuwaiti Islamic trend. The effectiveness of the *Salafist* discourse in Kuwait began to decline, even temporarily, under the influence of fascination anesthetization of the process of the liberating Kuwait. In addition, some journalists and liberals, who promised with a new American era, emerged in Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, some preachers and clerics were soon able to exploit the issue of Israeli occupation of Palestine and the escalation of the events of the first Intifada, as well as raising the issue of *Jihad* in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in order to defend Muslims against genocide crimes that were committed against them. That was in order for those preachers to achieve new benefits through earning public opinion in Saudi Arabia.

It is clear that the religious discourse -in its various means such as books, sermons in mosques and cassettes had been politically recruited, whether in the Iranian-Iraqi war or the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. The religious institution and the most prominent clerics and preachers could not sit aside. Those who supported the political position were given the way to fame and the chance to talk on television, cassettes and speeches in mosque, while those who opposed the official position of Saudi Arabia, faced the fate of banning and isolation. Consequently, the preaching discourse techniques such as television, radio, book and mosque played a major role in the process of shaping public opinion. In addition, according to the German thinker *Jürgen Habermas* (1970), anyone owns techniques can control. The

religious discourse techniques actually provided the political discourse broad effectiveness in guiding the religious discourse itself, and the effectiveness in guiding public opinion.

3. New Preachers vs. Institution

This chapter is based on the assumption that the effectiveness of preaching and its legitimacy in the modern era has moved from the framework of religious institutions and their interaction with the political arena in particular, to the idea of preaching out of the religious institution, within the framework of Media Institution. That is, the preaching competition, especially in the era of satellite TV, has moved from competition in the institutional context to the individual one, from the Competition on the institution to Stardom, "a culture of paradigm."

Historically, the link between the religious establishment and the existing political system was the source of legitimacy for the preachers and clergy. The legitimacy of the institution and preachers has been derived from its ability to comply with the political, so a religious figure, such as the Egyptian preacher *Yousef al-Qaradawi*, has gained his legitimacy from his compatibility with the ruling regime in Qatar, and his ability to reconcile between the political and the religious concerning the Qatari prince's practices. Mass media that belong to the political regime played an influential role in boosting the media popularity and prominence of the preacher and cleric as long as the religious and political discourses are in the same line, and this applies to the case of *Sheikh al-Qaradawi* (Helfont, 2009).

However, preachers of satellite television channels in particular have gained their legitimacy from the elements of their presence on T.V. screen,

and their ability to achieve the popularity is greater than their institutional relations and legitimacy are, as it was prevalent before the age of satellite television. That is, media presence, specifically the televised, provided a short entrance to all forms of the other political, sectarian, and economic presence, as it will be tested later.

3.1 Marketing preachers between the mosque and the cassette

Historically, calling to God is not associated with a particular place; Islamic preaching was firstly a voluntary act to call non-Muslims to enter Islam, but the other context of preaching changed to focus on calling the Muslims themselves to adhere to the teachings of religion. Such callings were through the institution of the mosque, where Muslims used to meet and discuss their own affairs as well as prayer and calling to God. Preacher's position emerged institutionally through the combination with the mosque institution, where public lectures were run to educate, to advise and to guide people to the teachings of religion such as ethics and morals.

According to *Sadeq Al-Nayhoum*, (1996: 35) the concept of the mosque as an Islamic public sphere declined since the *Umayyad* era and particularly since the *Muawiya*²² era. *Muawiya* intended to shift some of the mosque authorities to the governance authority, particularly the political one. The mosque before *Muawiya* was as a University for discussing various Muslims affairs.

²² - *Muawiya* was the first *Umayyad* Caliph.

Since the position of mosque preacher has become dependent on recruitment by political power rather than voluntary, preachers must take into account the interests of the ruling authority, just like the way it was since the *Umayyad* period, when the Islamic Caliph *Muawiya* adopted rhetoric against *Shiite* rival and *Kharijites*, as already mentioned in the first chapter. *Richard Anton* emphasizes the view of *Nayhoum*, that the mosque was a place for prayer and discussing the public matters, in addition to being a school. However, what distinguishes the mosque, historically, is the *Friday sermon*, in which the preachers used to discuss public contemporary issues that concern all people. it was like the news bulletin in the media today, as the preacher was announcing the news that matter the people's daily affairs and guides them on issues such as: war, peace and public events (Lindsay, 2003: 19).

The authority of the mosque preacher comes from being God spokesperson on earth, aware of his teachings, and a person who delivers his recommendations. One of the elements of its power (mosque preacher) comes from his sitting on the podium in a high place that gives him the power of speech and forces the others to obey the authority of the speaker. He is the only speaker, who may not be interrupted during the speech. Moreover, in order to achieve the required listening of the people, that is, affecting them psychologically, the mosque preacher has to have a good sound, fluent language, and can shape the audience psychologically by the layers of sound in accordance to the requirements of speech and by using carrot and stick method. The technique of sound layers as well as movements of the hands and body language in general is one of the most

important characteristics of the preacher's power on the public, as these combined techniques control the psychological state of the recipients, especially the creation of a state of emotion on the expense of thinking and mental arguing. The effectiveness of the mosque preacher can be considered as a pattern of hot communication leads to the creation of emotion and sentimental transmigration, just as the ancient pre-Islamic poet who was also a pattern of hot communication that lead people through his poems to war and peace²³.

What characterized the mosque as one of the most important means of mass communication at that time was the fact of being an arena where Muslims would receive the teachings of religion and general guidance on various matters of life, as Islam requires Muslims to go for *Friday prayers* in the mosque every week. Therefore, the Rhetorician's or preacher's power in the mosque was an authority that did not have a real competitor, especially before employing the other means of mass communications such as radio and television, which in turn competed with the authority of the traditional mosque preacher. Those new means of mass communications have provided other options for the public, especially the option of selecting the topics to which they would listen, and sometimes, choosing the timing of listening, as in the preaching cassette.

The crucial difference between the preacher at the mosque and the preacher on television, radio or cassette, is that people go to the preacher of the mosque willingly, while the television preacher goes to them without

²³ - McLuhan categorize the mediums of mass media to cool and hot, any hot mediums always of less participation than a cool one. See: (McLuhan, 1964: 22-31).

their permission by a device that is not equipped for preachers. This device can be turned off, its channels can be changed from one to another, looking for another program, and that is what really happens once the preaching program starts. This is a clear testimony to that television cannot be customized to perform a function other than that it was created for in its native capitalist" (Al-Nayhoum, 1996: 72).

Previous discourse points at the starting phase of decline in the authority of the mosque preacher in light of the multiplicity of preaching options and multiple messages of preachers. Hence, according to the theory of "the Supply Side of religion" for "*Mara Einstein*" (2008), the diversity and multiplicity of forms of display will determine the demand of the public on religion. The multiplicity of religious discourse offered by various means of mass communications will make the religious discourse similar to any other entertainment discourse looking for thrill and excitement, to draw the attention of public under the multiplicity of suppliers. This multiplicity in religious discourse to which the media profoundly contributed, might be the entrance to vanquish the traditional authority of the preacher in Islam.

The effectiveness of the preaching cassette surpasses that of the mosque for several considerations, including: the rapid and direct spread of preaching discourse and circulating it to the most possible of the public, in addition to that, the censorship on the preaching cassette was much lower than that on the preachers of mosques. It is noteworthy here, that the preaching cassette fame and the rapid dissemination of it in both: Egypt and Saudi Arabia in particular, came in reaction to the lyrical cassette album. Lyrical cassette shops that spread in Saudi Arabia faced -in return- the

Islamic cassette shops as well as companies of Islamic tape recordings, whose profits exceeded those of the singing cassette shops and companies (Ashor, 2011: 172).

The main entrance to understanding the effectiveness of the preaching cassette in contrast with satellite preaching is the pursuit of these cassettes to intimidate the torment of hell, and to frighten people to return to God and leave sins and guilt, as these cassettes characterize. It was also clear that the most important techniques to maximize the sales of Islamic cassettes are fighting singing cassette, and describing them as evils and immorality. The success of the preaching cassette in Saudi Arabia resulted from their ability to create favorable public opinion to their rhetoric, which has forced Saudi Arabia to put pressure on the national television to ease down the programs and songs that provoke new preachers (Al-Khodor, 2010: 86).

The preaching cassette represented a greater technique in serving the religious stream to penetrate in the Arab societies and the Saudi society in particular, especially the significant role played by the cassette in the project of Islamization of society that launched by Saudi clerics in the eighties of the last century. The phenomenon of the preaching cassette also contributed to the emergence of new rituals within the Muslim communities and even within small families. The reason for that is that these cassettes spread to invade homes, and people still listen to it in the majority of time, especially homemakers while doing daily housework, while men used to listen to the preaching cassettes in their private cars and public transportations.

Topics of preaching cassette varied from discussing women's issues and the inhibition of finery, as well as inhibiting youth westernization, and some behaviors, which are considered as imitation for the West. In general, it focuses on the taboos and prohibitions. That might be contrary to the message of satellite-based on carrots, as it will be discussed later.

It is said that the proliferation of digital television influenced in general on radio publicity and enforced it to invent new programs and techniques in order to compete the T.V. techniques of sound and picture. The same can be measured on the mosque as a preaching technique; it has become necessary for the mosque preachers to develop themselves to compete with cassette preachers. In this context, the mosque sermons developed from improvisation and randomness to written interactive sermons and lessons based on dialogue. These new adaptations in mosques' sermons provide immediate feedback, which is not available in the preaching cassette. The direct feedback is essential in any communication process especially in diverting the contact to an intimate one that depends on participation and harmony in ventilating and sentimental metempsychosis. One of the most updated mosque sermons are those of the preachers *Salman Alawda* and *Mohammed Almonjed*, *Alawda* was also able to adapt with the preaching cassette technique in his preaching work.

The success of the cassette can be seen as complementary to the preachers' sermons in mosques. To explain that, we recall here the way political preaching cassette emerged during the Kuwaiti crisis, along with the division of the cassette preachers to a "close" and "opponent" to the Saudi regime and its decision to participate in the military operation to

liberate Kuwait. The same has previously happened in the mosque sermons, especially in calling for *Jihad* in Afghanistan against the communist in the seventies, where mosques were hired to mobilize people and incite them to *Jihad* and specifically by the extremist Islamic groups that have received a governmental support. Thus, this group of clerics and preachers has entered - without awareness- in the game of international relations and undeclared interests between the Arab countries and the United States. Through that, the US used young Arabs and Muslims to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan, while the benefit of Arab States was getting rid of radical sounds and to encourage traveling to Afghanistan, as well as the benefit of militant groups that consider themselves in the process of achieving a main goal in Islam, a *Jihad* for God's sake.

When preaching cassette joined the mosque in encouraging young Muslims to *Jihad* in Afghanistan in the eighties, cassette preachers resorted to methods of reinforcement, publicity and interesting narration in telling the stories of the struggling Muslim youth in Afghanistan, comparing them with the youth seeking for pleasures and taboo, and reminding with the inevitable fate of each of them. Therefore, the important role of the preaching cassette has in fact played a role of "narcotic needle" (Butler, 2007: 421-422) for young people, in preaching for *Jihad* in Afghanistan. The cassette preachers' inducement for travel was usually under the influence the experience of *Jihad* excitement and obedience of God, Compared to the intimidation of sin and punishment. Here exactly, is where the danger of the preaching cassette lies; where it was natural to push the young Saudi dumped in the pleasures and taboo, to have a self-meditation as the preacher reminds him with what he had of atrocity and danger of misguidance. To change his situation, he

had soon to join the fighters in Afghanistan after hearing the preaching, under the influence of the discourse of purification of the soul and cleaning it, which was the famous propaganda for mosque and cassette preachers in that period (Al-Khodor, 2010: 90).

Interests' intersection between some Islamic groups and preachers with the US was also direct and through CIA support of movements such as the "intellectual and armed *Salafist Jihadism*"²⁴, which required silence of these religious movements over the US support to Israeli occupation and offenses on the Occupied Palestinian territories and the Palestinian People. *Salafi's* silence might be an unconscious response to the objectives of the U.S. ally, which seeks to distract them away from issues of the Arab region. However, when the two parties' interests conversed into contradicted after the fall of the Soviet Union, it was natural for the U.S. to look for a new enemy, which was the same one who had recently been a friend. Therefore, the U.S. entered a media war before the military one with the armed Islamic groups, whom the U.S. called as terrorists, despite that America supported them with money and weapons, particularly in Afghanistan.

In the context of assessing the cassette experience on both the audience and the religious message itself, we should pay attention to the following observations. Preaching cassette was able to occupy the minds of people and directed them towards traditional mental simplistic through

24 - United States supported the conferences of what called "the Islamic awakening" group. This support aimed to push the preachers and clerics to give more attention to the past and encourage the Muslims on the policy of retreat, and thus highlights the contradiction between the heritage preachers and the modernization one. As a result, the conflict between these two trends emerged the slogan "Islam is the solution". This slogan became a trend seeks to Islamization of society and technology. See: (Alqimni, 2004: 89) (Almorsi, 2001: 235).

spreading a superficial, technical and utilitarian interpretation of the religion, including the subjection of religious discourse to the circumstances of the political interests of both religious groups and the Arab regimes. Preaching cassettes also played a role in impeding the effectiveness of the media and its informative and educational role in the Arab region. They called the public to boycott the government-controlled media, especially in Saudi Arabia, specifically some opinions based on the prohibition of images and watching TV on the base of blocking the pretexts and fighting evil, which automatically means the clergy monopoly of the mentality and direction of public opinion²⁵. Some of what called "Islamic awakening" or Islamization of society men have sought to launch private preaching magazines such as *Al-Bayan* Journal and the Saudi *Al-Da'wa* Journal and the Kuwaiti *Al-Mujtama'* Journal.

The relationship between the religious preaching discourse and the market demands comes out as an important issue when considering the content of preaching messages, especially the question of who direct them, as well as the factors that govern the relation between audience desire and the preachers' topics. The issue of supply and demand for the religious discourse as "*Mara Einstein*" (2008) posed is suitable for assessing the shifts in preaching discourses through the media and its impact on people. In the era of preaching cassette fame, and in light of the limited diversity of this discourse, some preachers could direct the public, particularly through intimidation techniques. In the era of satellite TV and after breaking the

²⁵ - *Alnayhom* Confirms that the prohibition of images, drawings and sculpture, came from preachers views and not from the Islamic religion at all. He emphasizes that there in no any religious text prevents the drawing and photography, and such this is opinions enhance the preacher power at the expense of the religion itself (*Alnayhom*, 1995: 144+145).

monopoly of some preachers and clergy to preaching cassette in the eighties, the diversity in supply -or the excess supply- became governed by market choices "demand". Thus, the effectiveness of religious discourse is no longer to the extent of its ability to terrorize people and intimidate them from the afterlife, as it is in the effectiveness of the speech to motivate people and encourage them in the preaching discourse.

Preaching cassette monopoly to a limited class of preachers compared to satellite TV preachers and mosques, might lead us to say that the preaching cassette became the industry itself, and the distribution of some cassettes arrived to millions of copies, which has spread in the majority of Arab and Islamic countries. The most famous institutions of cassette recordings were *Dar At-Taqwa* in the Saudi capital of Riyadh (Al-Khodor, 2010: 94). We can imagine the profitable dimension of the religious cassette, which competed at the beginning of the nineties in producing the cassette and the excited elements in introducing the topics. Such elements were –for example- the preachers weeping techniques while they talk about the resurrection torment, powered by sound effects that can create a psychological state for the listening audience in a very short time. Hence, the relationship of the symbolic capital of preacher who owns the cassette, with the financial capital of commercial institutions, which records and sells the cassettes can be discussed.

To conclude, the Islamic preaching discourse is not stable. Its varieties depend on the urgent political, social and economical conditions in the Arab and Islamic societies, and it is therefore a response to these varieties. The following pages will show the relationship of religious discourse in satellite

T.V., and the way it responds and deals with the media sphere in the Arab region.

3.2 Declining of the cassette effectiveness and the rise of satellite TV

Just as the historical rise of radio at the expense of print media, the spread of television in the Arab region, particularly the satellite television came at the expense of radio and cassette. Television, through the technology-image and sound techniques, can compete the radio, which only relies on listening senses, thus watching television can create the largest public and make the needed excitement and attraction to the public according to various technologies, taking into consideration that every new technique has special joy and audience.

This section will discuss the decline of the effectiveness of the preaching cassette for technical and political reasons in return for the rise of the phenomenon of Arab satellite channels. A new perspective of how preachers attempt to adapt with new technology in their speeches, and find space to be on the screen. Just as the era when the preaching discourse was stationed in the mosques, books, and later in radio and cassette, the preaching discourse has found space in the new technology. Anyway, the question that rises constantly in each cycle of technological shift within preaching discourse is the fate of religious content and its transformation by technology, in other words, the adaption of preaching discourse with the

technology and the role of technology in creating pluralism in the preaching discourses, might affect the content of the preaching discourse itself.

3.2.1 Satellite Channels as a Competitor to Cassette

The main advantage offered by preaching satellite television, and is not available in the preaching cassette, is the techniques of television audiovisual appearance, which enables the preacher to get a wide popularity with the possibility of having audience all around the world at the same time. These advantages allow the television preacher to have a greater and better impact than presenting in the cassette (Al-Khodor, 2010: 102). The rise of Arab satellite channels, particularly in Saudi Arabia, during the Gulf War in 1991 represented a new threat to the effectiveness of the preaching cassette specifically the political. The decline of the effectiveness of the preaching political cassette, in addition to the main reason mentioned above, which is the impact of satellite channels and the logic of modernity in form and substance, is the retreatment of the Iraqi occupation to Kuwait after forcing Saddam to withdraw his military forces, and the imposition of international sanctions on Iraq. Since each preaching method created its preachers, like the religious cassette that created another generation of preachers other than the mosques', the Arab satellite channels, even before the emergence of specialized religious channels, also created another generation of preachers. Once again, the different means of preaching along with the emergence of new preachers raise the question about the nature of

preaching issues that will be formed according to the new means of preaching. Due to the need of adaptation of the new mediator, the satellite TV preachers needed time to move from religious preaching that is dedicated to daily transactions to the political action, just as the cassette preachers needed new conditions like the occupation of Afghanistan and Kuwait to go to the political preaching cassette.

Among other reasons that weakened the effectiveness of some cassette and traditional preachers, specifically in Saudi Arabia, is that some preachers were contained and directed by the Arab regimes. Thereby their effectiveness declined, especially in issuing opinions and decisions opposing to the popular attitudes, like those issued by *Sheikh "Ibn Baz"* when he called to the legitimacy of the establishment of peace with Israel under critical political and humanitarian conditions, such as the continuation of the Palestinian intifada and the Israeli aggressions against the Palestinians.²⁶

Upon considering the success of the preaching satellite phenomenon, we notice that it was due to their focus on the daily and educational issues and family problems that concern people. Most importantly is also warning and intimidating people against the dangers of some satellite channels and foreign programs and their role in the destruction of public taste, although some satellite channels, which broadcast these preachers' sayings, are involved in programs and contents about which preachers warn. However, the preacher cannot or will not have any interest in the allocation of the

26- *Ibn Baz* was based on the whole Quran in legitimizing the peace with Israel to the same Quranic verse on which the Egyptian previous president *Sadat* to sign a peace agreement with Israel, the verse "if they incline to peace, you also incline to it" (The holy Quran, Al- Anfal verse 17).

channel that speaks to people²⁷, on the contrary, the preacher sometimes needs to remain closer to the channel to ensure his survival and his work in it, rather than being replaced by another preacher. Even in the worst circumstances, in case he faces a related question about his view on some of the programs broadcasted by the same channel, his answers are just prayers to God to correct the mistake, and bring what can serve Muslims and religion. A vivid example of the above is the message of *Al-Resalah* preaching channel which is based on calling women for modesty in dress, in return to the fact that the channel is a part of the Saudi "*Rotana* network". The majority of this network is singing and entertainment channels that do not take into account the principles of *Al-Resalah* preachers. *Al-Resalah* Channel as part of the *Rotana* network is an example of the applicability of *Mara Einstein* aforesaid theory "the supply side of religion", that the preaching discourse is not out of the criteria of the market and media competition in accordance with the bilateral of supply and demand.

Moreover, one of the causes of the shifting in the content of the spatial preaching discourse, and its difference from the cassette preachers, is the characteristics of satellite channels itself and its ability to host preachers and religious leaders from beyond the geographic space, which decides the spread of the cassette. In addition, the preacher of the satellite channels may address very wide audience at the same time. The Egyptian preacher "*Mohammed Hadia*" who presents a number of preaching programs on the Egyptian television believes that the television preacher contributes to fill the vacuum left by the death of senior clerics and preachers in Muslim

²⁷ - we can see in some preaching channels and programs that preachers asking the audience for not waste their money in not essential issues at the same time you can say advertisements for not essential issues in the channel. "*Al-Nas*" preaching satellite channel is a famous example for this.

countries, including *Sheikh Shaarawi* and *Sheikh Abdul Hamid Kishk*. The preaching sphere after them became empty, and none appeared to fill the vacuum. He says: "In that period, we were resorted- means the new preachers - to appear on television screens" (Ashor, 2011: 176). Here he cites with the preacher *Amro Khaled*, who could make success in the preaching field where the specialists could not, and he was able to bring people from cafes and clubs to the mosques and television screens and this is a great success - as he described.

Interestingly, the preacher "*Mohammed Hadia*" recognizes that the success of the new preachers or some of them is not from their specialization, but it is from the speaking method in preaching and from the new preaching mediums. This perception is exactly what sparked the ire of specialist preachers, who adapted at the same time with the preaching on television. *Khaled Aljundi*, an Egyptian preacher, called the new preachers as "*Sheikhs* of satellite channels". He considers himself as an intermediate stage between the preacher *Amro Khaled*, and the preacher "*Al-Mufti*". *Aljundi* is a cleric who works in the Egyptian governmental foundation of *Al-Azhar*, and he has a religious education, which distinguishes him from the majority the Satellite T.V. preachers who are often non-specialized in their University study in preaching. In the previous words of *Sheikh Al-Jundi*, there is a confirmation that he is of the satellite specialized and experienced *Sheikhs*, but not of the satellite talented preachers who are not professionals. It seems clear from specialists' talk in the field of new preachers, that their reputation is not due to their knowledge and culture as much as it is due to the preaching tool, which is the television, and its ability to access to the public, as described by the former Egyptian Minister of *Al-Awqaf* (religious

affairs) "*Mahmoud Zaqzouq*". He says "People in our country are eager to the preachers who appear in the media, and they always love to see and hear them even if they are not qualified enough in science and efficiency" (Khalil, 2003).

It is obvious from the previous words of the minister that the traditional clergymen and preachers fear from the fame of new preachers or the satellite TV preachers, and how the media became a weapon in hands of the non-specialist in preaching. Competition between preachers no longer depends on the experience and efficiency, but rather on the possession of methods of intimidating and exciting the spectators. Therefore, the traditional religious institutions, such as *Al-Azhar* in Egypt realized late the importance of recruitment of the media, specifically the T.V. to access to the public. As a result, *Al-Azhar* cooperated with the Egyptian national TV for the allocation of a number of religious programs that are proprietary to the *Al-Azhar* preachers as an attempt to compete with the new preachers on the other satellite channels (Ashor, 2011: 178-179).

Due to the preaching competition taking place on the satellite channels, a new slogan has emerged in the area of preaching work in Egypt, it is "preaching means the art of marketing", and so, special institutes were established to train preachers in the art of marketing their messages in a clear response for the technique condition. *Fadel Soleimani*, an owner of one of the institutes mentions that "the preachers may have judiciary science, but they do not know the other important arts, such as: rhetoric, performance style and tone of voice, in addition to the methods of persuasion, and the rules of body language, including the movements of hands, face and eyes "

(Ashor, 2011: 180). "*Patrick Hani*" Swiss of French origin, mentioned that there is a close relationship between the discourse of new preachers and the new liberal discourse; televised preaching technologies have provided new options to the public through the diversity of religious discourse on the screen. *Hani* pointed out that this has reinforced the principle of freedom of choice, a fundamental principle of liberal thought and values of market liberalism.

This is also what Einstein (2008) indicated indirectly, in her "supply side theory of religion". What is new in this subject is that the liberal circle through which the preaching discourse started to move due to televised preaching and the preachers' need to market their speeches, has created a new trend among some preachers to mix and integrate between the Islamic preaching and the art of marketing and management. *Tariq Sweden*, a Kuwaiti preacher, the director of *Al-Resalah* preaching channel is pioneer in the specialization of marketing the art of preaching through various media.

Patrick Hani points to the model of the young Egyptian preacher *Amro Khaled* as an example of a successful preacher who was able to focus on liberal values and concepts and integrate them into the preaching discourse such as management, success and marketing. *Hani* discussed *Amro Khaled's* famous programs "*Sunna Alhayat*"- "*Life Makers*"- as an example of programs of self-realization. The programs is based on promoting individual values and the concept of ego, for a goal that may look secular; which is exceeding the negativity, and the rise of Muslims to free them from unemployment and to free them from the absence of goals in life. What can be said here is that the multiplicity of preaching discourse that has emerged

due to the adaptation of the new religious discourse with the media has created what *Patrick Hani* called as "new contractor of Islam". *Hani* says that this contractor -preacher- sometimes appears as a consultant for human resources and sometimes as a preacher, and as a vector between the economical and political satellites along with cultural mediator between Western categories and the Islamic system (Hani, 2011: 25-27).

New preachers, led by *Tariq Sweden* who holds a doctorate in management science from a U.S. university, discovered the extent of compatibility between preaching discourse and management science with the religious field, especially by his closeness to the field of management, and some of them even worked as religious advisers in some Gulf companies. It is also noteworthy here that the new preachers are affected by the writings of "*Stephen Covey*" whose writings as a whole are based on the idea that success stems from the individual, and that the individual is linked to his values and principles. According to the Islamic perspective, the last topic is translated as "if you want to win, you should have strong values and principles (Hani, 2011: 25-27).

The American magazine "*Forbes*" devoted its volume in March 2008 to discuss the yearly profit of new Islamic preachers. The preacher *Aljundi* said to the magazine that there is no contradiction between the work of preaching and the accumulation of wealth; the preaching grants the preacher the wage and the afterlife "the paradise", and the money he collects also makes him enjoy the life, and thus preacher may gain the world and the hereafter (*Forbes*, 2008). It is obvious from the views of *Patrick Hani* and *Mara Einstein* that they agree on the role of preaching channels in religion

secularization and how the liberal values and the competitive market created a religious discourse that seriously differs from its antecedent. One of the most important of these differences is the decline of both the role of the political factors and the dominance of the ruling authority on the preaching satellite television discourse, in exchange for a greater role to economical factors and the values of market "supply and demand". On the other side, the previously mentioned does not mean that the preaching discourse has become completely out of the dominance of the political interest. The attempt to understand that more deeply as a matter of structural issue by which the technical correlates with the political and the Economic with the social will lead us to talk again about the reality of Arab media and its transformations. That would be particularly in the era of satellite broadcasting before returning to understand the satellite preaching discourse and its transformations in the era of preaching deletions.

Before discussing the preaching discourse on television specifically, it is necessary to stop at the circumstances of the rise of Arab satellite channels since the nineties of the last century. That is, the nature of the relationship that ruled the media, politics and religion in the Arab media sphere, leading to what is recently called the phenomenon of preaching Islamic satellite channels. Those channels, which are in dozens, are varied into multipurpose preaching channels for reading *Quran* and the interpretation of *Hadith* (what is said by the prophet Muhammad) to youth program focusing on manners, in addition to magic and sorcery channels and recently channels for treatment by prayers and religious texts ... etc.

3.2.2 The rise of Arab satellite channels

Understanding the context of the emergence and development of preaching satellite channels is not possible without understanding transformations in Arab media, especially at the beginning of digital television era in the Middle East in the nineties of the last century, and earlier shifts in the conditions of the written press, radio and local TV channels. The emergence of Arab satellite channels refers to three reasons: first, the relative liberal political and economic shift, second: policies of privatization, and third: technical modernization in the Arab region, including the broadcast equipments, communications and television production (Zayani, 2005: 11-14). According to *Zayani*, the Arab media is classified under four types: tactical, authoritative, pro and diverse media.

The tactical media phenomenon in the Arab world is correlated to the Egyptian President *Jamal Abdel- Nasser* regime and to his radio "the Voice of the Arabs" in particular, after the success of the July Revolution in 1953. "*The Voice of the Arabs*" radio and the printed press in Egypt in general promoted for the nationalist ideas, which necessitated the fear of some Arab regimes that are historically conservative such as Saudi Arabia, a nation of Sunni Islam. The nationalist ideas of the Egyptian regime and his mass media were considered as a threat to the authorities and the stability of the Saudi Arabia regime, in the case national media manages to access the public in Saudi Arabia. The ideological competitions necessitated Saudi Arabia to improve a media religious discourse to attack and expiate the nationalist ideology as already explained in the first chapter (Fandy, 2007: 40-47).

In the case of authoritarian media, it could be said that the majority of the Arab media until the raise of satellite TV since the nineties of the last century, were classified within the authoritarian media. It had a governmental nature in terms of funding, the discourse and the media policy that was entirely consistent with the interests of the regime, such as the Jordanian and the Syrian media. Until the beginning of the nineties of the last century, Arab media did not come out of the shadow of the political regime discourse; therefore, the Arab media did not allow the political oppositions to talk through it. The reason behind that is that it was one of the media work taboos to publish any information, which opposes the interests of the existing political regime (Zayani, 2005: 10).

At the level of diagnosis of religious discourse in the tactical and the authoritarian media, it was noted that tactical media, as in Egypt, the regime has sought to marginalize the religious discourse at times - especially the period of the national trend popular rising in the era of *Jamal Abdel -Nasser*. In return, the recruitment of religion to serve the political regime, as in the experience of the Egyptian President *Anwar Sadat*, especially when he started to strengthen the religious trend in the seventies in Egypt it as detailed in the first chapter. In the case of the authoritarian media, it was obvious that the presence of the cleric and preacher in the authoritarian media like radio and television was to talk to people in a sense of caution. That was because the preacher in the authoritarian regimes media was demanded to avoid conflict with the regime or the ruling party, and in certain occasions, he was demanded to support the regime and cover it religiously.

Since the measure of fame of preachers and their popularity was essentially determined by the extent of their appearance in the media, it was natural that choosing TV preacher went through a process of security checks. The preacher was often supposed to be a member in the ruling party or one of its institutions as *Al-Azhar Sheikhs* in Egypt, or a member in the Ministry of *Al-Awqaf* in any Arab political regime.

Returning to talk about the Arab media transformations, the most prominent change was the rise of satellite TV that was dated by the emergence of MBC channel in 1991, a satellite channel belonging to a Saudi businessperson named *Al-Walid Ibrahim*, a member of the ruling family. MBC satellite channel represented the beginning of the emergence of divers and pro-regime satellite media in the same time. MBC network, which includes a number of various channels was not tactical or authoritarian, it rather relied on entertainment and avoidance of discussing political topics and issues as its focus on entertainment, amusement and drama productions In general.

The view of *Fandy* (2007) is contrary to that, as he diagnoses in his book " *Un Civil War of Wards*" the reality of the Arab media as it is a political par excellence. He adds that the privatization of the Arab media does not mean the change of political nature; real change must affect the structure of Arab culture as a whole. *Fandy* provides examples to prove that from the Egyptian and the Lebanese media. In Egypt, the national media is still close to the ruling party and exercises its hegemony and authority of the so-called private media in Egypt, including satellite television channels such as *Al- Mhwar* and Dream channels. Egyptian businesspersons own these

satellite channels and they are independent in terms of funding and policy from the ruling party administratively and legally, but they cannot actually oppose the interests of existing authorities and in some cases promote for the regime. This has already happened with some of the Egyptian satellite television channels in the election campaign to renew the term of former Egyptian President *Hosni Mubarak* (Fandy, 2007: 19-35).

Talking about the characterization of the Arab media as a political is echoed clearly in the most significant transformations in the process of contemporary Arab media, which is represented in the rise of *Aljazeera* channel in 1996 and its slogan "the opinion and other opinion". *Aljazeera* actually provided a wide window of telephone calls for the audience to express their attitudes and views concerning domestic and foreign issues. In addition, *Aljazeera* has angered a number of Arab regimes and some of them closed the offices of the station in their countries. That caused tensions in political relations between some Arab countries like Jordan, Kuwait, Egypt with Qatar, the owner of the channel.

In contrast, allowing the audience to talk in what was previously considered as taboos in the Arab media, does not actually implement the motto of opinion and other opinion. What *Aljazeera* did -according to media scholars such as "*Fandy*" and "*Mohamed Zayani*"- is that it did not follow the policy of direct promotion of a political regime or party, or a particular group as it's the case of authoritarian Arab media before *Aljazeera*, it rather seeks to focus on the criticism of some Arab political regimes. That raised questions like: Why does *Aljazeera* focus on issues concerning countries like

Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt, while it pays no attention to those concerning Qatar or its friendly countries like Syria.

Answering the previous question, requires highlighting the main stations in the march of Pan-Arab media, particularly after the rise of *Aljazeera*, and these stations were in the first Gulf War in 1991, 11 September attacks and the war on Afghanistan and subsequent occupation of Iraq in 2003. In the case of the Gulf War in 1991, the Arab media was not developed at that time, and the Arab satellite media in its beginnings depended on the international news agencies in the majority of news, *CNN* also has been the source of main information in the coverage of the events of the Gulf War. *CNN* has created a new phenomenon in the International media, a phenomenon of the military correspondent who accompanies the military forces, this reporter who lives the details of the war from one side.

Indeed, within this dominant international media scene, Arab media did not gain its own identity and its vision in the coverage of events. In addition, the general characteristic of the Arab media was authoritative. The governmental censorship in the Arab media, made the Arab masses follow up international radio channels such as "*Monte Carlo*" and the *BBC* to get information that are not provided by the official Arab media. *Aljazeera* emergence in 1996, represented –as mentioned before- the most prominent change in the march of the Arab media, the channel have covered the Operation of "*Desert Fox*", U.S military operation in Iraq in 1998. It was the first time that the Arab media improved their crews as the main source of information rather than being mainly dependent on the news agencies.

Aljazeera Succeeded and became popular due to breaking the domination of the Arab media and traditional way of making news and giving the public the opportunity to call and criticize the current situation in their countries. In addition to the allocation of a number of programs that discuss internal issues and previous taboos in the Arab media before *Aljazeera*. The most interesting in the experience of *Aljazeera* and its reflections on the masses, was that people started to feel the democracy and freedom on the screen before experiencing them on the ground. We can say that the screen had become an outlet and a compensatory attempt for the circumstances of the Arab reality and the political authoritarianism regimes, which began to fall because of the protesting movements against the domestic circumstances in different Arab countries since the beginning of 2011.

If the coverage of *Aljazeera* to the "*Desert Fox*" operation was, the first station for the fame of the channel in the Arab world, its coverage to the events of September 11 and subsequent war on Afghanistan in 2001 led it to knock the door of the globalism. *Aljazeera* became the first famous Arab media that provided news to the international media, especially when it had monopolized publishing videos of *al Qaeda* leader *Osama bin Laden*, who was killed by U.S. forces in Pakistan in May 2010. The coverage of *Aljazeera* for the war on Afghanistan raised many problems that were reflected on two contradictory positions of the channel: the first considered the channel as supporter to the so-called international terrorism through the dissemination of *Osama bin Laden's* tapes, focusing on images of Afghani civilian victims of military operations of coalition forces in Afghanistan. The second, considered the coverage of the channel as a state of media

objectivity, and broke the dominance of Western media on both the news sources and distribution (el- nawawy and Iskandar, 2003) (Zayani and others, 2005).

On the other side, Saudi Arabia had criticized *Aljazeera* for giving *Bin Laden's voice* a space in the channel, especially as he is originally a Saudi citizen. Bin Laden criticized Saudi ruling family in speeches. *Aljazeera* sought to publish *bin Laden's* criticism against Saudi Arabia taking advantage of his popularity among the Arabs who are angry for the US policy in Middle East. On the other side, *Aljazeera* did not air the parts of bin Laden's tapes that included criticism to the State of Qatar regarding its relations with America and its hosting for the largest U.S. military base outside the U.S. borders "Aloded " base, from which the earlier U.S. war on Iraq in 2003 launched. *Jamal Ismail*, a former reporter of *Aljazeera* in Pakistan, who conducted interview with *bin Laden*, pointed out that *Aljazeera* used the meetings conducted with *bin Laden*, a Saudi national, and the second man *Ayman al-Zawahri*, an Egyptian, to embarrass their countries officially and publicly (Ismail, 2001).

In response to the allocation of *Aljazeera* Channel a number of programs to criticize Saudi Arabia, in addition to *bin Laden* tapes and airing a number of interviews with opponents of the Saudi regime, Saudi Arabia' considered launching a satellite channel to compete with *Aljazeera*, or what *Fandy* calls "war of words". *Al-Arabiya* Channel appeared in 2003 after the U.S. war and military occupation in Iraq. In terms of ownership: Unlike *Al-Jazeera*, *Al-Arabiya* is not owned by the Saudi regime directly. The Emirate of Qatar owns *Al-Jazeera* channel and offers open budget from the treasury

of the emirate whilst, the Saudi businessman *Walid Ibrahim*, a relative to the ruling family in Saudi Arabia owns *Al-Arabiya* who is the same owner of the MBC Group. MBC Group has established *Al-Arabiya* in 2003 with a capital of \$ 300 million, it is not a substitute for *Aljazeera* as much as a weapon directed against *Aljazeera* news channel (Fandy, 2007).

The first competition between *Aljazeera* and *Al-Arabiya* was in airing the news of Iraq after the invasion in 2003, the contrast in coverage has begun to be clear, especially after the fall of the Iraqi regime of *Saddam Hussein*, and the formation of an interim Iraqi government. *Aljazeera* was accused of being biased to the armed groups and the Iraqi resistance, whereas *Al-Arabiya* was accused of supporting the Iraqi government, which resulted in the bombing of the *Al-Arabiya* office in Baghdad in 2004. Iraqi governments kicked *Aljazeera* offices in Iraq and prevented its crews from working under the pretext of incitement against the government. As a result, *Aljazeera* lost its competitiveness with other Arab satellite channels in covering Iraq news on the ground. To compensate that, *Aljazeera* leaned on international news agencies and the telephone communications. *Aljazeera* had angered the U.S. administration more than once; US speakers accused *Aljazeera* of using civilian victims' images to incite against U.S. and international forces in Iraq.

After the absence of *Aljazeera* from the competition, *Al-Arabiya* exclusive coverage of the Iraqi events beside attempts from Lebanese television stations to find a position such as *Al-Manar* satellite channel, close to *Hezbollah* -the Lebanese Shiite group-and *LBC* channel, close to *Maronite* group. *Al-Arabiya* news agenda is close to *Sunnis* in Iraq, while

Al-Manar Lebanese Shiite is close to Shiite groups in Iraq, this may show how the ideological agenda can shape the news production (Al Qadri, 2008: 81-86).

The Palestinian cause and the Israeli occupation of Palestine is one of the important issues that Arab satellite channels compete for coverage. Because the Arabs and Muslims are involved in the Palestinian cause in particular, any Arab satellite channel seeks to compete for popularity must make the Palestinian cause a priority in its daily news coverage. The change in the Arab media scene before and after the satellite channels can be measured by having a look at the way the Arab public interacted with the daily events of the Palestinian *Intifada* in 1987-1991. That was the period in which the digital Arab media was in its beginnings and inactive, compared to the second *Intifada* from 2000 to 2007. Within this context, several academic views appeared. The optimistic view; which considers that Arab satellite channels has increased the Arab solidarity with the Palestinian cause and broke the barrier of censorship that some Arab regimes imposed on their media. Actually, that censorship was in order to maintain general quietness and avoid public protests that might threaten the survival of political regimes, which are mostly illegitimacy and did not come through democracy measures. The negative diagnosis comes from the danger of the new role, which is represented by the Arab digital satellite and *Aljazeera* in particular, in terms of the normalization and direct contact with Israeli officials by hosting them on Arab satellite channels and giving them space to promote their "propaganda" to the Arab public. That was not allowed before *Aljazeera*, which allowed the Israelis to talk for the first time. In addition, the Arab satellite channels, specifically *Al-Arabiya* and *Aljazeera*

contributed, in the context of competition for public opinion, in promoting the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict by highlighting it more than focusing on the essence of the conflict in the region; the Palestine Israeli conflict²⁸ (Al Qadri, 2008: 88-89).

In the light of the Arab satellite channels competition in covering the Palestinian news, it might be important not to ignore the political dimensions and the interests of these channels and those who made it. In many live programs hosted by some Arab satellite channels, political analysts have criticized, directly or indirectly, the policies of some Arab regimes and accused them of weakness and not supporting the Palestinian people. The response most often, comes from similar guests in other satellite channels alongside with the live phone calls by the viewers of those channels, which participated in increasing severity of the "*War of Words*" between the Arab countries and the political parties. For example, *Aljazeera* hosts in its dialogue programs intended and recurrent guests to criticize the positions of each of Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt for their policies towards the Palestinian cause, the same thing happened in *Al Arabiya*, the Egyptian and Jordanian satellite channels; by hosting political analysts and experts who expressed other point of views than *Aljazeera*. With repetition and the passage of time, a new media division appeared to classify the Arab

²⁸ - In the context of talking about the role of Arab satellite channels in the service of the Palestinian uprising, it must be referred to an interview with Dr. *Mohammed Ziani* , a professor in the media and a visitor to a number of universities in the world. He authored two books and a number of joint researches on *Aljazeera* from several views. *Ziani* indicated that Arab satellite channels as a whole played a role in the awakening the Arabs towards the Palestinian struggle against occupation, particularly *Aljazeera* and its support of the Palestinian uprising through its live broadcast and ongoing news of the Palestinian daily developments of the second intifada, and the news follow-up to the reactions of the Arab masses through the marches of solidarity and other activities, but it appears at the same time that *Aljazeera* in its coverage to the Palestinian event and focusing on it provides services to the Qatari diplomacy, either directly or indirectly. See: (Zayani, and others. 2005, 171-182).

countries between resistant regimes and moderate ones. The resistant countries include those, which oppose the American and Israeli policies in the region, such as Qatar, Syria and armed movements such as *Hezbollah* in Lebanon and *Hamas* in Palestine. On the other side, moderate states include Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority.

By the repetition of these descriptions by some Arab satellite channels, they have become popular, although these descriptions are confusing to anyone who searches deeply in this issue. Saudi Arabia, for example, does not have diplomatic relations or peace agreements with Israel, but it is classified as mild state, while Qatar, which has a strong diplomatic relations with Israel is classified as a resistant country! This directly means that Qatar is supposed to be against the policies of Israel and US, but perhaps without the mass of *Aljazeera* channel, Qatar would not have had the power to be categorized as a resistant state. These hypotheses can be confirmed by returning to some of the literature about the history of Qatar before launching *Aljazeera* and realizing how it was originally a small country that did not have any regional roles or international powers before the year 1996²⁹. Previous words might confirm what *Fandy* said about the political considerations as they greatly control the Arab media.

The amount of the economical dimensions in case of the Arab satellite coverage to events like the war on Iraq and the daily Palestinian news is unclear, as the great satellites in this study are extremely political and funded by states, parties or groups, which have political interests.

²⁹ - The researcher MA theses was about the role of *Aljazeera* channel in shaping Qatar international relation, I have checked a lot of references about Qatar before *Aljazeera* era and after even the case study that the study adopted shared that *Aljazeera* played a role of PR agency (Abu Alrob, 2010).

The media map in the Arab world indicates again the fact that the political media has considerable influence on the public, and in general, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have the control over the majority of this media –the political-. The sectarian and entertainment media is obvious in the Lebanese media experience. However, the Egyptian media is standstill between the entertainment and authoritarian media. Other than that, the media scene in the rest of the Arab states is relatively unobtrusive and did not develop in a form that could be classified as state of transformation. Transformations in Jordanian media, for example, are a case of transferring it from the direct authoritarian to diverse recreational authoritarian (Zayani and others, 2005: 171-182).

The researcher agrees with the view of *Fandy*; that the transformation in the Arab media scene after the emergence of satellite TV, did not take this media away from the dominance of the state, even when considering the experience of each of *Aljazeera* and *Al-Arabiya*. They both are not considered as more than one visible copy of the Egyptian tactical radio "*Voice of Arab*". *Fandy* says that *Al-Arabiya* and *Aljazeera* channels cannot be understood away from the political conflict between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, just as we cannot understand the Lebanese satellite channels like: *Future*, *Al-Manar*, *OTV* and *LBC* away from the ethnic and religious conflict in Lebanon (*Fandy*, 2007: 39-66). Previous words raise the question again about the status of the economic dimension in the Arab media scene and the possibility of playing a role in creating a diversity of media, and whether the state- any Arab state- is the dominant player in media, and not the market forces. This saying is echoed in saying that the majority of Arab countries

that consider *Aljazeera* as a dependent department of the Qatari state, and that any criticism by *Aljazeera* to any Arab country is answered at the state level, not only by actions against the channel itself. For instance, Saudi Arabia when recalled its ambassador in Qatar in 2002, in response to the criticism of *Aljazeera* to Saudi Arabia in some programs, the same thing was repeated by Jordan, Egypt and other Arab countries (Fandy, 2007: 8-15).

Some Arab media claims that the funding and the political dimensions do not play a role in influencing the agenda and policies of these media, although the experience of *Aljazeera* and *Al-Arabiya* as a model for political and diversified media did not reflect the authoritarian and the dominance of direct political on the media. Still, the presence of politics is clear, at least when *Aljazeera* and *Al-Arabiya* avoid criticizing the current situation in their countries: Qatar, Saudi Arabia. In addition to the direct political influence on the media outlet, emir of Qatar himself appoints the board of directors of *Aljazeera* (Abu Alrob, 2010).

In addition to the impact of the political dimension in the march of Arab satellite media, the international dimension of the globalization of media and import of media technologies also appears. It became noticeable that there is acceleration in the rise of Arab satellite channels, which amounted in 2004 up to 150 channels, while the number has increased rapidly at the end of 2010 to reach more than 400 satellite channels that can be received by mere possession of a receiver without the need to pay any fees or subscriptions. This media scene raised concern for not only the nature of competition that governs the media space, but also for the possibility of seizing and controlling this space. In addition, the digital

media scene did not reach the degree of self-sufficiency in media production; it is still depending on the international media to a wide extent. A study of "UNESCO" pointed that the Arab televisions import around 40-60 Percent of their programs from foreign countries (Al Qadri, 2008: 18-19).

Arab satellite channels' viewers note that the majority of the successful non-political programs in these channels are Arabized copies of international programs such as **Super Star, Star Academy, the Moment of the Truth**...etc. and even political programs like "The Opposite Direction" on Aljazeera is a copy of "*Crossfire*" on CNN. The success and popularity of Arabized foreign programs on the Arab satellite stations, raised questions about the status of national identity and nationalism in the light of viewers' preoccupation with non-Arab television programs and contents. The most prominent question that arises in this context is about the relatively open sphere provided by the digital television in the Arab region and its western contents in exchange with Arab conservative culture. So that Arabized television programs created a kind of dual personality in the Arab viewer as he lives in a conservative environment with its Islamic and Arabic cultural specificity versus the addiction of watching programs promoted to western cultures. This brings the Arab viewer in front of several options: either to return to his culture and isolate himself from the content of foreign programs or to get deeply into the content of these programs and lifestyle, thus he loses the sense of cultural identity. The third type of audience is the elites and specialists. This kind of viewers has critical sense that is able to create an interaction between the local culture and values and televised contents (Alrazen, 2007).

The experience of Arab satellite channels and its rapid flow since the beginning of the nineties of the last century has angered the Arab specialists and the foreigners to the extent that *Marc Lynch* (2006) described the Arab reality as an "Urgent public sphere"³⁰ due to the satellite. *Lynch* considered that the accelerated shift in the environment of Arab media was not a product of fundamental social, cultural, political and economical transformations, as much being a response to the technical and the modernizing factors imposed by technology and imported to the Arab region. From that point, the question about the identity of the Arab media starts. Politicians tried to adapt powers with the satellite television, the economists also tried to drag the TV into their powers of Commerce, and later the preachers and clerics entered the equation of the competition on the "Arab media sphere". Interestingly, all of these changes and shifts that have taken place in the march of the Arab media were not accompanied by a parallel development in the legislation, media laws, or even in a civil democratic change makes the diversity of digital television sphere as a healthy phenomenon. That is also an important question to be referred to, but without having to look into it in a specialized manner away from the specificity of the study.

In the end, *Nhund Al-Kadiri* (2008: 60-63) summarizes the experience of Arab satellite channels, saying that a number of observers were impressed at first by the Arab satellite channels phenomenon, and they went far in expectations. They thought –according to *Al-Kadiri*- That Arab satellite

³⁰- The concept of "Urgent Arab Public sphere" came for the first time by Marc Lynch, who uses it to describe the changes in the Arab media scene after the Iraq invasion and how Aljazeera coverage changed the formula of media coverage in Middle East (Lynch, 2006).

channels will contribute to the promotion of “understanding between the Arab societies and respecting the privacy of each other, overcoming the differences of the regimes, and even limiting the control of political regimes and the monopoly of the authorities to information access. Nevertheless, the experience has proved the invalidity of this argument and the reality of the case refers to the opposite, for important reasons like the lack of vision and strategic planning at the national level.

4. *Salafi* ideology, politics and media

The Islamic world is divided into two main streams: *Sunni* and *Shiite*. The *Shiite* axis is represented by Iran and some groups in Iraq, Lebanon, and Bahrain while the *Sunni* axis is represented by Saudi Arabia and almost all of the Arab and Islamic Countries. The majority of Muslim population in the world follows the Sunni branch of Islam, and approximately 10-15% of all Muslims follow the *Shiite* (Blanchard, 2009: 2). The main differences between the *Sunni* and *Shiite* Islamic divisions refer to the beginning of the Islamic era after the death of the prophet *Mohammad* in 632 AD, when the companions of Prophet *Mohammed* conflicted for the succession (*Khalefa*); who will lead Muslims after the prophet's death.

The historical debate centered on whether to have Muslim governor from the same family of Prophet *Mohammed* and make it exclusive and monopolized to his family- as it used to be in the Arabian tribal system- or to obey and give loyalty to the prophet's companion *Abu Baker*. The majority of Muslim followed *Abu Baker*, and a few of them rejected to recognize him. "Those who supported Ali's ascendancy became later known as "*Shiite*", a word stemming from the term "*shi'at Ali*", meaning "supporters" or "helpers of *Ali*." Others respected and accepted the legitimacy of his *Caliphate* but opposed political succession based on bloodline to the Prophet". (Blanchard, 2009: 2).

Many historical actions took place between *Sunni* and *Shiite*, but since Muslims are following two different ideology schools, the majority of

Muslims, became known by time as "*Sunni*" meaning "followers of the Prophet's customs" "*Sunna*".

4.1 *Salafi* approach

Salafist is an alternative reform trend emerges from the same 20th century context of reform and revival. It is related to the Saudi thinker and renewal *Mohammed Abdelwahab*. Traditionally, the term refers to those who want contemporary society to be re-ordered based on the model set by the Prophet and his companions (Field and Ahmad, 2009). The *Salafi* term does not refer to one group that follows the same beliefs, as they seemed recently to have different perspectives in politics and tools of revival of the prophet *Mohammed* state model. Three *Salafi* camps can be observed. "The first camp rejects both democracy and secularism as Western concepts that are not even worth refuting. The second camp claims that returning to the "true tenets" of Islam will create the best kind of democracy; the second camp also recalls the antecedent Muslim practices, to prove that Islamic political ideology meets the basic requirements of democracy. The third camp advocates *Ijtihad*, or reinterpreting Islam to make it compatible with the universal concept of democracy" (Roy, 2012).

Salafi and *Ikhwan "Islamic Brotherhood"* are the two biggest Islamic trends in the Middle East, both of them believe in the revival of the Islamic experience, but *Salafi* is not as pragmatic as *Ikhwan*, since it believes in the revival of Prophet *Mohammed* state model in every detail without taking into consideration the differences in time and place. Therefore, any form of

guidance outside of the previous sources is considered dangerous human innovation "*Bid'a*" and any *Bid'a* is *Haram* (taboo) (Lacroix, 2012).

The pragmatic approach in the *Islamic Brotherhood* parties in the Middle East helped them to come to power, they won the presidential election in Egypt and Tunisia during what is called "*Arab Spring*". *Salafi* trend in Egypt has recently witnessed a new turn in its Philosophy; they used to consider democracy as contradictory to Islam, thus it is *Haram*. But the popular revaluation against *Mubarak* regime in 2011 pushed them to establish three political parties, the biggest one so-called "*Al-Noor*" got 20 percent of seats in Egyptian parliament, while the other two parties together roughly held 5 percent of seats (Zelin, 2012). Although new political concerns rise for *Salafi* preachers on Satellite channels, they still focus on issues such as Islamic dress, veil, beard and the provisions of ablution.

Actually, the absence of the pragmatic culture in *Salafi* refers to the idea that many of *Salafist* preachers received their religious training in Saudi Arabia (which is considered a conservative state and culture) instead of *al-Azhar of Cairo*, and millions of Egyptians became more conservative while working in the Gulf. (Field and Ahmad, 2009: 9) The essence of the *Salafi* ideology is in returning to the heritage of the prophet *Mohammed's* Companions and follows their footsteps. *Salafi* believes that seeing the future in the eyes of the past is what materializes Muslims' glory.

4.1.1 *Salafi* and politics

Salafi scholars and preachers did not tend to talk in politics, they believe in changing the societies from the bottom of the pyramid, they also believe in “not to erupt against governor” -or what they called ‘guardian’- even if they live under authoritarian regime. According to *McCants* (2012), to understand the political behavior of *Salafi* today, keep four things in mind: their religious beliefs do not predict their political behavior; they are a minority in almost every Middle Eastern country; whilst, the countries where they form majorities are wealthy countries; and their appeal and power arise from their commitment

Saudi Arabia is the Islamic model for *Salafi* where Islamic system and Islamic laws applied. The wide *Salafi* proliferation in Arab countries during the *Arab Spring* and consisting political parties with huge media propaganda raise the question of who support them. To answer the previous question, there is a need to understand the political map in the Arabian world during the *Arab Spring* and the alliances arise within. While Qatar helps *Muslim Brotherhood* in various Arab spring countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon and other countries, Saudi Arabia funds various *Salafi* groups and political parties. Iran also has its alliances in the region; it funds the *Shiite* groups and parties in many Arabian countries such as *Hizballah* in Lebanon, and the *Shiite* revolution in Bahrain³¹ (Lynch, 2012).

³¹ - The Bahrain uprising has started in February 2011 through Shiite demonstrations against the Sunni regime. It has started and continued as peaceful protests asking for political reform and additional rights for the Shiite majority. The Bahraini regime has accused Iran of planning a political coup and supporting the Shiite opposition leaders. In response to the Iranian policy, Arab Gulf countries have supported the Bahraini regime (Kinninmont, 2012).

Other observers consider the growing role of Egyptian *Salafi* streams started before the fall of the *Mubarak* regime, *Mubark* turned his eyes away from *Salafi* social movements to weaken the *Muslim Brotherhood* while ‘*Wahabi* money find free channels to fund *Salafi* and other radical Islamists groups in Egypt. This pushed preacher *Mazhar Shaheen* (the Tahrir Square preacher) to consider the Saudi funding of the Egyptian Islamists as directed to counter the aims of Egyptian civil revolution and the aspiration to create a civil democratic state. (Al-Ahram, 10 October 2011) specialist in *Salafi* movements such as *McCants* believes that the new "turn" in *Salafi* ideology and practice represented by participating in parliament election is an opportunity to press new Arab regimes to make a state that accords to the *Salafis*’ own image (McCants, 2012).

Arab spring pushes the *Salafi* into the spotlight with adopting a new *Salafi* philosophy considering that state power should be adapted with the *Shari’a* and that the state cannot make permissible what the *Shari’a* prohibits (Rutherford, 2006). The absence of political experience of the arising *Salafi* parties led to unclear opinion and sometimes contradictory in both of politics and economics. For instance, Egyptian *Salafi* parties discourse seems as not including anti- American rhetoric, instead, *Yassir Al-Burhami* the head of Egypt’s largest *Salafist* political party affirmed his support for the *Camp David Accords* between Egypt and Israeli, while *Muslim brotherhood* still not giving direct recognition. *Al-Burhami* approved an interest-bearing loan to Egypt from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), while, *Salafist* from either the same party or others have harshly criticized his decision as un-Islamic because usury is forbidden in Islam (McCants, 2012).

Another example from *Saudi Salafi*, *Sheikh Salman al-Awdah* took his Twitter feed and Facebook page to proclaim: "Democracy might not be an ideal system, but it is the least harmful, and it can be developed and adapted to respond to local needs and circumstances." *Awdah* notably made his announcement using his own English, but in Arabic, he wrote; democracy is the worst form of government (Zelin, 2012). The lack of experience in Politics and economical issues can be seen also in the speech of Preacher *Mohammed Yaqob* for instance; he suggests that economical crises in Egypt can be solved by invasion "*Jihad*"; Egyptians have to invade non-Islamic countries to gain money, slavery and women! He also called the process of voting to change the constitution: "foray of battles" (Yaqob, 2011).

To understand these changes in the Islamic parties and in *Salafi*' in particular, Roy (2012) considered that Islamists have been changed because society has changed. The rises of Islamists have reflected the social and cultural revolutions within Muslim societies as much as a political revolution". Considering the *Salafi* rhetoric changes, competition between *Salafi* parties and *Muslim Brotherhood* party is rising as well; *Muslim Brotherhood* used to monopolize the political Islamist rhetoric in the Arab region before the new" turn" in *Salafi* discourse. *Salafi* participation in the political action in Arab region specially the Arab spring countries did not change the compass of the *Salafist* from criticizing *Shiite* ideology and practices. *Salafists* are a major factor in the growing global polarization between *Shiites* and *Sunnis* in the Islamic community (Carly, 2012).

4.1.2. *Salafi* and the Egyptian Spring

Much of *Salafi* debate rose during the Egyptian revolution against *Mubarak* regime in 2011. *Salafi* leaders were divided into four streams: the first is revolution supporters' stream, where some *Salafi* preachers involved in the civil protest at the *Tahrir Square*. This stream included Preacher *Nash'at Ahmad*, Preacher *Fawzi Als'ed* and the most prominent, preacher *Mohammed Hassan*. The traditional *Salafi* group, which is called "*Ansar Alsona Almohamdeah*", represents the opponent's stream. This stream refused the demonstrations considering that it might destroy the country and achieve the aims of Egyptian's enemies. Preacher *Mostafa Aladawi* came out on the governmental satellite channel asking protesters to return homes. The same happened with the popular preacher *Mahmoud Almasre* who appeared on Al-Nile channel asking protesters to listen to the reforms that *Mubarak* stated in his television speech. The Third *Salafi* group was represented by "*Alexandria Salafi*" school who takes an ambiguous position towards the civil revolution (the center of religion and politics studies, 2012).

According to the statements of this group that was headed by preacher *Yasser Bourhami*, protesters have to stop their actions, and instead, they have to fight the thugs who take advantage of the absence of police to steal and attack people. This came in the first statement while the last statement after the fall of *Mubarak's* regime called for an Islamic state that applies Islamic laws. Finally, the silent stream represented by the famous preacher *Abu Ishaq Alhweni* who said nothing (Aljazeera center for studies, 2012).

After the success of the Egyptian revolution, some *Salafi* preachers established what they called: "*Scientist Shura council*"³² with the membership of the most popular preachers. The first statement of this council urged people to participate in the public referendum to change the Egyptian constitution considering participation in parliament elections as not *Harm*, on the contradictory of what they used to say. They also asked their followers to vote for Muslim candidates. As *Alexandria* group was not represented in this *Salafi* council, they immediately announced their participation in the parliament elections independently and established a new political party called: "*Al-Noor*". Another *Salafi* group established a new party too, named "*Al-Fadela*" (Virtue party) and headed by the preacher *Adel Abdelmaksod Afefi*.

Al-Asalah "Originality" and "Reform and Renaissance" are also *Salafi* parties that have recently risen to reflect changes in the *Salafi* School. Their emergence showed a political division in the Egyptian *Salafi* School, even before *Salafi's* participation in the political elections. As a result, rational *Salafi* preachers and followers asked other *Salafi* to put hands together in preaching "*Da'wa*" rather than competing each other (Dabish, 2012).

³² - In case of religious discourse, scientist means just professional preachers and not reflect scientist in either neutral sciences or human sciences.

4.2 Definition of Islamic preaching satellite channels

Islamic preaching satellite channels now typify a phenomenon, which exceeds the national borders, considering its “satellite” broadcasting characteristic. Some of these preaching channels, are general and devoted to present diverse contents, focusing on daily and spiritual issues from Islamic perspective, whilst the other some are specialized channels; they broadcast in Islamic brand and in specific topics such as *Quranic* reading, religious songs, praying and *Quranic* provisions (Lacroix, 2012). The most famous specialized preaching channels are *Al-Majd* network; *Al-Majd for Islamic songs*, *Al-Majd for kids* and *Al-Majd for holy Quran...etc.*

The observer of the Arab satellite channels’ scene could notice the emergence of a new phenomenon; channels that try to get Islamic brand such as channels of dreams interpretation, treatment by holy *Quranic* verses and the prophet *Mohammed’s Sunnah*. Preacher *Adnan Ibrahim* rejects giving these channels an Islamic brand considering them as “exploiting Islam and the religious sense of public” (Ibrahim, 2012). The commercial revenue from phone calls, SMS, and even commercial ads would be the main incentive of these channels.

The number of preaching channels increased rapidly during the previous 5 years, it reached about 80 preaching channels excluding the Islamic treatment channels or Islamic interpretations of dreams. However, the whole number of Arab Satellite channels reached more than 740 channels in 2011 (Al-Omari, 2011).

4.2.1 The intellectual reference of preaching channels:

As Muslims are divided into two main streams *Sunni* and *Shiite*, each of these streams is also divided into many schools, and preaching channels map reflects this diversity. This study categorizes the preaching Islamic channels in three types: moderate channels, *Salafi* channels and *Shiite* channels, and this categorization is guided by the quality of advocacy discourse produced by these channels. Moderate channels are those channels that seek to spread the moderate thought of Islam against the extremist or radical thought and do not encourage the division between *Sunni* and *Shiite*; moreover, some of these channels try to introduce Islamic principles and rules in modern topics and models. Meanwhile, *Shiite* and *Salafi* channels mostly produce doctrinal discourse highlighting differences between the two approaches while claiming that they provide the correct version of Islam.

4.2.2 Moderate Channels:



Monitoring preaching channels for several years indicates that it is hard to find one preaching channel that does not highlight specific Islamic school beliefs against other channels, but *Al- Resalah* (The message) and *Iqraa* (Read) channels are exceptions. Specific Islamic schools or parties do not fund these two channels, instead, the two channels belong to entertainment channels network, likewise, they simply aim to attract various audiences regardless their religious commitment degree.

4.2.2.1 *Iqraa* channel (Read):

Religious broadcast in the Arab world started with *Iqraa* channel in 1998; it is the first Islamic channel specialized in preaching. It aims to build the Islamic personality of the contemporary Muslim community by offering interactive television programs that seek to present a totalitarian ideology; moderate, objective, entertaining, diverse and interesting (Iqraa, 2012). It also allows elite women to present special programs for women on the contrary of *Salafi* channels -for instance- that do not allow women to appear on screen. The Arab media company that belongs to the Saudi prince *Saleh Kamel*, owns the *Iqraa* channel. It adopts the slogan "fun purposeful media". It relies heavily on broadcasting preaching programs, Islamic rituals, children programs and *Quran* recitation. Around 39% of channel programs are Talk Shows while the descriptive talk programs such as stories of Prophet *Mohammed* (*Al Serra*)', are listed in the second level by 16%. Recently the English version of the channel has been launched targeting all English speaker Muslims around the world (Al-Zobae, 2007. 206-219).

Iqraa is one of *ART* network channels, it covers 80% of Muslim audience around the world. It has a wide audience in EU countries depending on monitoring channels programs and the geographical distribution of phone calls that mostly come from EU and USA. This might refer to living in non-Islamic communities, which arises the need to know more about Islamic rules in daily life (Al-Omari, 2011). The popularity of *Iqraa* channel might refer to two reasons: First, the success in attracting famous preachers who have changed the traditional image of preachers (being restricted and serious with audience) such as preacher *Mohammed Al-Arefi*, preacher dr. *Sa'd Albrak*, preacher *Wajdi Quniem* and the young preacher *Amro Khaled* who have all adopted interactive preaching programs and interesting topics. The second factor is the success in using influential video and audio techniques in addition to various aesthetic aspects of the television picture. Such techniques bring out the thrill and excitement that attract the receivers' attention. In fact, this style enabled this channel to be in the track of competition with entertaining networks, offering the audience alternative - appealing choices. Another reason for the success of *Iqraa* might refer to the diversity of preachers' background, taking into consideration that all of them follow the *Sunni* approach but from different schools, *Muslim Brotherhood*, moderate *Salafi*, non-partisan...etc.

4.2.2.2- *Al-Resalah* channel (the Message):

Al-Resalah started broadcasting in 2006 as a preaching channel within an entertaining network called *Rotana* owned by the Saudi prince *Al-Waled Bin-Talal* whereas, the channel is managed by the famous preacher *Tareq*

Swedan. It broadcasts various Islamic programs 24 hours a day in addition to commercial advertisements. According to *Al-Resalah* website, the channel seeks to offer Islamic thought in intellectual ideas and topics that obey the queries raised in Muslims' minds. It adopts a moderate message against the extremist ideas and behaviors; it also says that developing the Islamic communities by improving scientific and educational methodologies is one of its priorities, which indeed might be the main reason of *Salafist* preachers' criticism for the channel referring to the lack of seriousness (Al-Resalah, 2012)

Al-Resalah channel "The message" offers a variety of programs which include Talk shows, women affairs, documentary programs, economic programs and *Ifta* programs (asking and answering questions from religious perspective) as well as broadcasting praying times and other religious programming. This programs diversity seeks to achieve channel goals such as enhancing the Islamic conventions by logical argument and evidence, in addition to developing the skills of the individual Muslim in time management and developing personal and social skills. According to *Al-Resalah* web site, only 10 percent of the channel programs target the religiously puritanical while 40% of the channel programs directed to Muslim youth (Al- Resalah, 2012).

Offering balance and moderate discourse is actually, what distinguishes *Al-Resalah* channel from other advocacy channels as it comes with the slogan "Creativity and originality". That can be easily seen in the quality of the channel programs such as " *Wind of Change*", "*Life taught me*" presented by preacher *Tariq Swedan* and another program for the preacher

Mas'od Alqamde called "*Youth and Challenges*"; as these programs produce the Islamic culture in creative and interesting models. *Swedan*, the director of the channel, refuses the classification of *AL Resalah* as a religious channel; he pointed out that 40% of the channel preachers are retired artists and want to share their life change experience with Muslim audience (Abdel-Rahman, 2006). He also refuses to identify the features of the Islamic media compared to other media types, he says, "when we identified what is the right Islamic discourse and what is not, we have miserably failed; we have to offer different models of Islamic life styles, because people are not merely following one life style". He also gives an example that prophet *Mohammed* companions represent various Muslim models; some of them were moderate, others permissive and some were even extremist. "Life beauty is in diversity and difference", he says (Abdel-Rahman, 2006).

Al-Resalah benefits from the experience of "*Iqraa*" channel in developing dramatic discourse in the majority of programs such as *Talk Shows* or even in establishing interactive studios and designing *Real Television* advocacy programs such as the famous program of *Swedan* "*Leadership Academy*" which looks like "*Star Academy*". *Al-Resalah* website offers different interactive corners such as suggesting or requesting programs, requesting the repetition of certain programs' episodes side by side with other services like social media icons and platforms such as Facebook and twitter. The channel encourages the spirit of interactivity with the religious audience through designing interesting advocacy meals that meet the characteristics and requirements of the time ; for instance: watching a previous singer turning into a preaching program presenter, or even hosting a singer for spiritual songs in advocacy programs.

In an effort to win the largest number of religious audiences with different trends, especially the supporters of *Salafist* movements, -which began to expand and spread over satellite-, Al-Resalah sought to host *Salafi* advocates though it is a moderate channel. It hosts the preacher *Mahmoud Masri*, who is primarily contracting with *Al-Nas "people"* channel. *Masri's* increased popularity enabled him to compete with other famous preachers such as *Amro Khaled*. Egyptian researcher "*Mustafa Ashour*" says that the popularity of religious channels became more conservative after the spread and expansion of *Salafi* channels considering that they -*Salafi* channels- are imposing their conservative trend on satellite TV (Ashor, 2011: 182).

4.2.3. *Salafi* Channels:



Salafi channels are those channels that seek to disseminate the *Salafi* approach for Muslims around the world. The main feature of these channels is to revive prophet *Mohammed's Sona* and follow his companions' recommendations regarding behaviors like eating and dressing habits...etc. The most famous *Salafi* channels will be reviewed in brief within the next

pages, such as *Al-Nas* and *Al-Majd*, which represent the case study here, and more details will be showcased to explore other *Salafi* channels such as *Al-Rahmah* and *Azhari*.

4.2.3.1 *Al-Nas* channel:

The main Feature in the experience of *Al-Nas* preaching channel "*people*" compared to others is that it did not start as an advocacy channel, instead, it began as video clips channel; displaying wedding parties, advertisements, entertainment programs, medical consultations and dreams interpretation from religious perspective. After a year of broadcasting entertainment rhetoric, in 2006, *Al-Nas* shifted to become an advocacy channel to join the already existing preaching channels such as *Iqraa* and *Al-Resalah* (Horub, 2012).

4.2.3.2 *Al-Majd* channel:

Al-Majd has started broadcasting since November 2002, it includes a network of 12 channels with a capital of 130 million *Riyals* and 900 employees, some of these channels are free of charge, while others are locked, and so require an annual subscription. The most important channels among *Al-Majd* network are the "*holy Quran* ", "*Al-Majd documentary*" and "*Al-Majd Children*". *Al-Majd* network has suffered from a financial crisis in 2008 due to delays in paying salaries to employees, which came as a result

for the unstable subscriptions' revenue. The SMS is one of the most important sources for *Al-Majd* revenue, a report from *Al-Watan* newspaper mentioned that one of the network channels called "*Shaza*" for songs brings a monthly income of 2 \$ millions riyal only from SMS (Marebpress, 2008a).

4.2.3.3 *Al-Rahma* channel:

Al-Rahma started broadcasting in 2007. Preacher Muhammad Hassan supervises it. It focuses on the *Sunni* and its sciences, and Hadith interpretation "*Prophet Mohammed sayings*". The channel interest has turned after the Egyptian revolution -as other *Salafi* channels- to focus on political developments, the issues it had avoided for so long. Preacher *Hassan* is one of the powerful *Salafi* preachers. He has good relations with Saudi *Salafist* and officials, and those relations improved strongly when Saudi Arabia closed its embassy in Cairo after attacking it in 2012 by Egyptian protestors. As a result, normalization between Saudi Arabia and Egypt has returned after a visit of *Salafi* delegation headed by preacher *Mohammed Hassan*. The channel launches a specialized program discussing the *Shiites* called "*The real of Shiites*". The program discusses the doctrine of *Shiites*, their beliefs and their disagreement with the *Sunnis* throughout the ages (Al-Rahma, 2012).

To improve the commitment of the *Salafi* ideology, all preachers at *Al-Rahma* channel are bearded elderly ,characterized by traditional Islamic dress, in an effort to highlight aspects of sobriety and seriousness on the

contrary of moderate channels that give youth male and female the chance to provide interactive programs to attract youth concerns.

4.2.3.4 Azhari Channel:

The rapid proliferation of various preaching channels pushed *Al-Azhar* religious institution in Egypt to launch a preaching channel. The lack of tendency of traditional religious institution versus the preaching channels' dominant tendency is obvious, considering that *Al-Azhar* Foundation is the most prestigious religious Islamic institution that graduated tens of thousands of preachers and clerics across the world (as it has been discussed in details in the first chapter). *Al- Azhar* preachers represented by *Sheikh Khalid Al-Jundi* sought to launch a new channel named *Azhari*. *Al-Jundi* said in a press statement that the philosophy of the channel is summed up in activating the role of *Al-Azhar* and its scientists at the forefront of the call to God, in addition to highlight and offer competencies of the *Al- Azhar* advocators as a scientific reference and intermediate legitimacy of the nation against the extremism. He confirmed that the channel would lead to the publication of the tolerance of Islam in addition to address the destructive ideas, especially some advocacy channels that encourage strife of *Sunnis* and *Shiites* and other various Islamic sects (Azhari, 2012).

4.2.4 *Shiite* preaching channels:



Dozens of different religious *Shiite* satellites channels "free to air" can be received in the Arab and European countries. One of the most extremist channels that encourage the sedition of *Sunnis* and *Shiites*- I- is the channel that has been launched recently from London: "*Fadak*" - sacrifice of *Imam Ali*, the *Shiites'* *Imam*. This channel attacks the Muslim *Caliphs* – except *Ali*- with the ugliest descriptions. *Shiite* religious satellite channels predominantly focus on the deployment of *Shiite* ideology and rituals that differ from some *Sunni* Muslims rituals. The Iranian funding for some of these channels is seen from the perspective of *Sunni* advocates as a deliberate campaign, which aims to spread *Shiism* in Arab region in recent years. In addition to Iranian fund, there are channels, funded and managed by *Shiite* groups within the Arab world, such as *Hezbollah* channel *Al-*

Manar in Lebanon and other Shiite channels that broadcast from Iraq and Bahrain (Zaafan, 2010).

4.2.4.1 Al- Kawthar channel:

Al –Kawthar is one of the most directed *Shiite* channels funded by Iran, it started broadcasting in 1980. *Haytham Zaafan* (2010) considers it as missionary of promoting Iran Shiite because it curses most of Prophet *Mohammed's* companions and attacks Saudi Arabia and its preachers. Most seriously, it says that *Ottomanic Quran* that was collected in the era of *Othman* is incomplete and that it contains errors, as opposed to the claim that they have the correct *Quran*. *Zaafan* noted that Egyptian satellite "*Nilesat*" broadcasts 34 missionary *Shiite* channels, 33 of them broadcast in Arabic-language, in addition to "*Press TV*" English Channel. On the other hand, the "*Arabsat*" satellite broadcasts about 13 channels and most of the *Shiite* exist on *Nilesat* (Zaafan, 2010). *Al- Kawthar* Programs focus on explaining *Shiite* thought, in addition to identifying the coming *Shiite Imam* called *Mahdi*, one of the 12 *Shiites' Imams* who will come and change the world -as *Shiite* believe. Furthermore, it highlights the position of the Prophet's daughter *Fatima* and her positive role in Islam, while attacking the prophet's wife *Aisha* in more than one program.

4.2.4.2 *Ahl Al-Bayt* channel:

Ahl Al-Bayt preaching channel is an Iraqi *Shiite* channel, but it broadcasts from holy *Karpala*’ funded by *Ayato Allah Hadi Almadrasi*, a well-known cleric for all *Shiite* around the world. The channel offers programs in three languages: Arabic, English, and Urdu. It adopts religious slogan: "*Ahl Al-Bayt* shine in every home." It is a metaphor of the prophet *Mohammed* and his family behaviors and ethics (Ahl Al-Bayt, 2012).

The intensive coverage of the *Baqi'a* incident in the 2009 *Hajj* season was crucial for the fame of the channel. The incident of *Baqi'a* clashes occurred between *Shiite* pilgrims and Saudi security men especially the Committee of the *Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice* who claimed that Iranian pilgrims were trying to practice some rituals beyond the common *Hajj* rituals, causing confusion for millions of pilgrims. The channel focuses mainly in most of its programs on sectarian comparisons, highlighting areas of the *Sunni-Shiite* sectarian division in general, and particularly attacking *the Wahhabi (religious School of Saudi Arabia)*, including the issues of faith, and the position of the prophet’s companions. One of the most important programs in this channel is "*Ways of Islam*."

4.2.4.3 *Al-Anwar* “Lights”

There are two different channels, which are named *Al-Anwar*; the first specializes in dialogues, religious studies and the *Shiite* doctrinal issues, especially issues of imamate, state and *Mahdism* (followers of the upcoming

twelve Imams). The second specializes in spreading *Shiite* rituals such as *Aellatmyat* (following *Shiite* preachers in their all behaviors), supplications and *Bakaúaat* (crying as *Shiite* rituals). The channels were launched in 2004 mainly from London and Kuwait offices, both are owned by the *Shiite* cleric *Sadiq al-Husseini al-Shirazi* (Al-anwar, 2012). In the midst of the evolution of *Shiite* protests in Bahrain, *Al-Anwar* produced blaring song for the poet "*Hussein Abu Hamid Alabdle* entitled: "*Rebels against Tyrants* ": "*On the path of Hussein are moving, no no tyrants ... We will stay the protectors of Hussein era, despite all the hate... On the path of Hussein are moving...etc.* The song serves to charge the emotional and ideological supporters of the protesters in Bahrain, as it shows scenes from Bahrain demonstrations against the regime (Rebels against Tyrants, 2012).

4.2.4.4 Al- Zahra' Channel

Al- Zahra " Channel also belongs to the *Shiite* school but considered less popular than other preaching channels especially that it broadcasts from London, and can be received only on *Hotbird* satellite. The website of the channel is shared with the "*Al-Mahdi*" channel and offers nine international languages including Arabic, Persian and English. The name of *Al-Zahra* refers to one of the Prophet *Mohammed's* daughters (*Fatimah*), mother of *Hasssan* and *Hussein*, and the wife of the *Shiite* Imam *Ali*. (Almahdi, 2012). *Al- Zahra* channel promoted for a story, in which they claimed it happened under the admiration of the *Hotbird* satellite itself; when they tried to put the

channel "*Al-Zahra*" on fourteen different packages and failed to do that but, finally they were able to install it at the package fifteen. They were surprised - According to *Al- Zahra* channel- that the reason for this was that mostly *Hotbird* bouquets (the fourteen packages on which they failed) have sex channels while *Al- Zahra*- the prophet's daughter is a pure woman, and cannot meet with improper and inadequate things. The *Hotbird* administrator congratulated them for this charity work. They were surprised that in spite of the large number of Christian channels on *Hotbird*, no one has ever thought of opening a channel and calling it "*Mary*" (the miracle of Fatima Zahra, 2012). Several *Shiite* sites and forums published this story under the title of "*Miracle of Fatima Zahra*".

Al- Zahra discourse is distinguished by focusing on a comprehensive review of the Bahrain *Husseiniyahs* (religious places for praying), and called mourning processions with scenes that spotlight *Ltmyat* (famous rituals express self-punishment for not supporting *Imam Hussien* before his killing 14 centuries ago). Such scenes also display marching swords and knives with sound of drums comprehending a majestic scene that encourages the *Shiite* solidarity, and highlights the power of *Shiite* for the non-*Shiite* such as *Sunni*. Regarding the channel coverage for Bahraini *Shiite* situation, it tries to show *Shiites* as oppressed, and it tries to accentuate the sincerity of their claims and demands, especially that this channel excludes mental debates while focusing on passion activation to create emotional empathy to the viewer.

Hence, the previous pages represent a general view of *Shiite* channels, but the important issue here is the role of these channels, which have rapidly

risen. *Thaer al-Musawi*, *Shiite* worker in "*Al-Masar*" channel said: issues covered by media have a more profound impact when directly broadcasted to the world, and so *Shiite* events that take place during (visits of millions) have an important impact on the audiences' hearts and minds. Therefore, *Shiite* satellite channels are essential for revealing the *Shiite* rituals and beliefs to both *Shiites* and non-*Shiites*. *Al-Musawi* continuous: "the ambition is to have the whole world under the banner of Islam and meet under the tent of *Imam Hussein*, "may peace be upon him" (Ali, 2012).

From another perspective, *Shiite* channels are devoted to export the Iranian revolution by highlighting the intellectual background of "Exporting revolution" or "Ongoing revolution" concepts. Such concepts, which came originally from the socialist thinkers *Trotsky*, are linked to the *Khomeini* -the style of governors of *Khomeini* Revolution in Iran- idea regarding "*Wali al-Faqih*" (the high credibility *Shiite* preachers) (Allush, 2010).

Alloush (2010) believes that "export of revolution "or "spread *Shiitism*" took place by allocating nearly 40 *Shiite* satellite channels - according to the latest statistics – to broadcast programs that explain separating *Shiite* beliefs against *Sunnis*'. Such emergence took a good advantage of the simultaneous absence of *Sunni* representatives for clarification and defense; which afforded a better chance for spreading the principle of uncertainty among the *Sunni* followers.

Shiite satellite channels are predominantly characterized by several attributes that control both the degree and the effectiveness of receiver response. That includes firstly, broadcasting emotional discourse followed

by mostly crying scenes- *Babakaúaat*-. Secondly, focusing on *Shiites* clerics with maximizing their intellectual achievements and practical role in the advancement and prosperity of Islam, while highlighting the so-called "atrocities" committed by *Sunni* rulers against *Shiites*. Thirdly, technically, the usage of graphics and sound effects supports the ideas of these channels and contributes to maximize the emotional state of the recipient, ensuring greater responsiveness.

4.2.5 Islamic preaching Channels in English

Islamic preaching channels appeared recently to introduce the Islamic principles and rituals for both non-Arab Muslim speakers and foreigners. Monitoring these channels does not show political interest, they rather seem more opened than the Arabic preaching channels, as they target audiences that differ in culture and mentality. Example, *Iqraa* English Channel displays pictures of unveiled women and stands out in dramatically rational discussions. For instance, this channel brings girls to discuss the headscarf issue in a rational way. Another channel called *Islam* provides commercial ads that use unveiled women as an advertising tool. Since its launch in 2004, *Islam Channel* has provided alternative news, current affairs and entertainment programming from an Islamic perspective.

The commercial and marketing perspective is prominently represented in the vision of the channel; it says "*Islam Channel*, an avenue for connecting businesses with potential customers. "With the powerful

combination of our media and technology coupled together with global reach helps us to unite our advertisers to our large global audience”. *Islam Channel* has a proven track record of aiding businesses to promote latest technologies and products as well as maintaining a high degree of viewer satisfaction" (Islam channel, 2011).

Al-Huda channel, which started in 2006, is also an Islamic preaching channel. It is funded by Muslim businesspersons to improve the image of Islam in Western societies, especially after the event of September 11 in 2001, and the rise of radical Islamist movements such as *Al Qaeda*. According to some Islamic references, these channels also aim to provide a true picture of Islam especially rising awareness towards the Islamic universal principles, disseminate Islamic jurisprudence and heritage in addition to the *Lord's* miracles, and finally linking Islamic religion with the issues of the day. (Al-Ramahi, 2002:129) (Kanakr, 2004: 378)

4.2.6 The popularity of preaching channels

The variety of the preaching channels led to raise a question on whether those channel should follow the rule of “seeking popularity” or the rule of “arranging priorities of the essential issues”. Researcher *Hani Yassen*, has introduced this as a main topic in his book "preaching channels between reality and expectations". *Yassen* says that preaching channels that delve into the details of ablution and how to pray and that delve in some other formalities do not exist today; such as *Speight* – owning women after war,

application of prying in travel by camel in the desert, and historical stories ...etc. Even though, more than 90% of women in *Algeria* watch preaching channels and 48% of them believe that those channels strongly form their beliefs. Moreover, 51% of them believe that these channels enhance creativity and the Islamic personality (Abbas, 2010:37).

In United Arab Emirates, 81% of women do watch preaching channels (Abdul Ali). Another study examines the development of preaching methods in the preaching channels and applied with a case study of media and theology lecturers in Egypt, shows that 67% of them are satisfied with the content of these channels, despite their observations regarding the lack of attention to the essence of religion and focusing on formalities. The popularity of preaching channels in Egypt is also high; a study shows that 85% of Egyptian women wear Hijab- head craft- and 60% of men carry holly *Quran* in their bags. According to this study, the preaching channels have strengthened the behavior of the Egyptian youth (Yousri, 2005).

Islamic satellite channels come in the forefront of young people's commitment to religious reasons, where it plays an influential role affecting young people's emotions, particularly in the age of 16 to 25 years, when human beings experience mental composition, and where their minds are open and emotionally affected (Al- Bakri, 2003). Another study about the influence of preaching channels on the Egyptian university students indicates that 77% of the case study watches the preaching channels (Gharib, 2003), while another study shows that 61% of the Egyptians watch the preaching channels and benefit in better-known Islam (Ismail. 2004). Regarding Saudi Arabia, a study indicates that 67% of respondents are

satisfied with the content of the preaching programs broadcasted by religious channels (Al-Hazani, 2009).

4.3 Preaching channels and women:

The Sudanese preacher *Mohamed Sayed Haj*, rejects the appearance of women in the satellite channels, even the veiled. This opinion embodies *Salafi* preachers' position, such as preacher *Ahmed Abdul Hamid*, who believes that women shall not work, even in preaching channels where meeting photographers and Staff streaks taboos emergence. Instead-according to Abdul Hamid- women have to be only responsible for household and raising children, and that this duty should take precedence over any other work regardless its importance (Al-Ansari, 2002). Moreover, *Sheikh Abdul Rahman al-Barrak* considers women voice and image as taboos, and that they are prohibited to appear on satellite channels due to possibilities of tempting men. Preacher *Abu Ishaq Alhweni* says that the emergence of women who wear veils on television is a pure ugliness. Moreover, he says that science is only for men and that women are not qualified to know it, and therefore, they are supposed to commit to house holding and stay at home. *Alhweni* commends the success of satellite TV and considers that countries worldwide started to follow Islam because of theses channel, but without any details about those countries (Alhweni, 2012).

Furthermore, preacher *Mohammed Hassan* has a lenient attitude towards a woman's voice, but not towards television appearance; he also

recommends women who call preaching channels, to be serious and avoid romantic tones of speech, he also points out that the “saying” which indicates the woman's voice as a loin is unproved. (Hassan, 2010). Another opinion regarding the issue, preacher *Mohammed Almonjed* at *Al-Majd* channel says woman’s appearance on television is worse than walking in the street; he describes how cameras offer to present different shots from different sides and angles, furthermore he criticizes preaching channels that allow women’s appearance (Almonjed, 2010).

Moderate preaching channels such as *Iqraa* and *Al- Resalah* took a step further in presenting women in advocacy work, *Nabel Hamad*, the previous head of *Iqraa*’ considers supporting women in taking a role in advocacy helps correcting the erroneous image of women as a source of instincts and desires. In case of *Al- Resalah*, Preacher *Swedan* points that it is illogical to exclude women in advocacy work as it means-dispensing half of society. However, “Islam is a moderate religion and do not encourage the extremist ideas” is a quote from *Swedan* responses to opponents.

5. *Al- Nas* preaching Channel and the religious commodification of goods

The commodification is a new style of buying and selling via advocacy satellite channels to target the religious audience. According to this, religion is used as input for promoting goods and services while giving it an Islamic brand, in order to encourage the viewers of preaching screen to buy. The dilemma that might raise here is the contrast between the outputs of the message of preaching satellite channels and the values of promoted goods and services.

The main Feature in the experience of *Al- Nas* "people" preaching channel, compared to other channels, is that it did not start as an advocacy channel; it began as a video clips channel, it displayed marriages and wedding ads, entertainment programs, medical consultations and dreams interpretation, financed by public calls to a special number. Dreams Interpretation programs are popular and have their traditional roots in most Arab societies, especially when linked to religious texts and the interpretations of the recommendations of Prophet *Mohammad*.

The choice that (*Al-Nas*) -"people"- preaching channel took regarding commodification of religion is due to firstly, being one of the most popular religious channels according to the latest statistics that will be shared later. Secondly, being one of the widest advertising business channels, and this result relates –of course- to researcher's monitoring for various religious channels over three years. The third reason is related to the experience of the

channel, which stood as different from the rest of the religious channels, as the coming pages will clarify. *Al-Nas* started in 2006 as an entertainment digital television. A year later, it shifted to be an advocacy television to be added to other preaching channels which started earlier , such as *Iqraa*" read" and *Al-Resalah*" the message"(Saleh, 2012).

The first slogan for the channel was "*Al- Nas* channel for all the people", it later turned into "*Al- Nas* channel ... the screen that will take you to paradise". Ideological connotations are clear in the new logo; the channel promises its audience to take them to the paradise, an aspiration and dream of every Muslim, regardless the degree of religious commitment.

The director of *Al-Nas* refused to declare the reasons why he turned the channel from singing and video clips into religious discourse, saying that there is no coup in the channel policy. At the beginning, *Al-Nas* adopted its approach as a channel for all people, saying that people have chosen its approach and directed it! (Jabir, 2008). Lack of financial sources and the intensive competition with well-financed video clip digital channels such as *Rotana* and *Melody*, pushed *Al-Nas* to change its discourse from entertainment to advocacy. This channel adopted *Salafi* discourse and attracted the famous *Salafi* preachers, who did not have previous appearances on other preaching channels at that time. In addition, the *Salafi* trend focuses on advocacy and it is not that close to political discourse such as the *Muslim brotherhood*. So attracting the *Salafi* preacher might not cause any problem with the Egyptian regime where the program airs.

Indeed, *Al-Nas* managed embracing the most important *Salafi* preachers in Egypt such as, *Sheikh Mohamed Hussein Yacoub*, *Abu Ishaq Alhiwiene*, and *Sheikh Mohammed Hassan*, who served as religious consultant for the channel. *Sheikh Mahmoud Masri*, *Sheikh Salem Aboul Fotouh*, and others involved in the emerging programs, some of which have recently become famous and succeeded in attracting the masses (such as minimum and religion), (*Fadfada*) and (*the way to Paradise*). In fact, the channel began broadcasting from modest studios and without decorations. *Al-Nas* turned in a short period into purely *Salafi* in its form and substance. The preacher *Abu Ishaq Alhewini* put conditions to expel all women in order to continue his work at the channel; arguing that a woman's voice is loin, and consequently the woman's image is even more unsanctioned. As a result, the channel dismissed all the working girls in the channel, even those who are veiled in Islamic dress. Moreover, according to the researcher's continuous monitoring for more than 3 years, no woman appeared on the channel, neither veiled nor unveiled. (Field and Ahmad. 2009).

Alhewini also prevented the preacher *Amro Kaled* from appearing on *Al-Nas* screen accusing him of encouraging mixing between men and women either "immodest" or veiled in his lectures and seminars, which raises the wrath of *Salafi* preachers (*Salafi war*, 2012).³³ *Al-Nas* is infected by the ambiguous relations among the preachers themselves, because of the different curricula and intellectual orientations. Some *Salafi* channel advocates criticize the channel managers for allowing the appearance of

³³ Preacher *Abu Ishaq* attacked *Amro Khaled*, describing him as "artists Mufti and that he had not read any Serious Islamic book in his life". Preacher *Muhammad Hassan* also attacked *Khaled*" Called him fruitless and has religious excesses; in addition, his knowledge is poor and didn't reach to the level of preacher". These are just simple evidence about the preachers' conflict.

some preachers from outside the *Salafi* movement, specially the *Sufi* preacher *Ahmad Abdo Awad*.

There are no available clear statistics for the popularity of *Al-Nas* channel all around the Arab and Muslim audience, but according to journalistic estimations, *Al-Nas* and within a short period has gained a wide audience, particularly in Egypt, as more than 70% of the Egyptian people watch the channel (Abdelall, 2012). *Al-Nas* has been able to leave impact on the habits and behaviors of its audience; it illustrates phone calls of young men and women on the channel programs thanking preachers because they helped them to find the right way, like wearing the headscarf.

The study addresses a gap that exists between the philosophy of the channel along with the content of religion, and the contents of commercial advertisements displayed. *Al-Nas* broadcasts religious programs, and reintroduces some historical stories about the Prophet *Muhammad* and his companions, calling people to follow their path, such as generosity, patience and asceticism. Within that, the Channel stops for commercial breaks promoting commercial goods such as mobile phones and home furniture, which are mostly accessories, the logic of promotion might contradict with the preacher calls for asceticism.

It is previously mentioned that *Al-Nas* channel focuses on advocacy and try to stay as far as possible from politics. According to the director of the channel, it" offers preaching and increases the awareness of the Muslims, do not play to calculate any specific ideology or approach (Islam online, 2006). *Abdul Rashid* declared it is" Undeniable that *Al-Nas* channel does not

delve into thought creation, and that it is not required to do so; it is merely a medium to address areas of heart and feelings rather than areas of thought”, at the same time, he denies limiting the right of speech on the *Salafi* ideology. *Abdul Rashid* did not hide that forbidding women from working in the channel is an audience desire, but he did not clarify who is the public who have chosen that, and how that was done.

5.1 Commodification of religion or Islamization of goods

The concept of commodification from the cultural perspective has recently become popular in critical studies and the first worthy work was launched in the 1970s, when *Jean Baudrillard* first published "The Consumer Society" (2004). This was explained based on the rising phase of studies about globalization role in guiding societies and making global - cultural changes. Commodification concept originally refers to *Marx* interpretation of what he called the religion exploitation in societies, therefore if religion is enmeshed in the production of commodities, the matrix for generating virtual reality is almost established (Ward, 2003: 54). Since then, much has been written about the particular challenge that the consumer culture poses to religious beliefs and values. Vincent J. Miller for instance looks at the commodification in Christianity; he diagnoses the process of commodification, which is mainly based on ‘consumer formation’. He believes that framing imagination pushes us to consume things with scant regard for their origins and their possible meaning in their

original context. Commodification somehow has led to everyday consumer items being produced and made available to us, such as food, electronics and even entertainment (Miller, 2005).

In order to counter the religions commodification, *Miller* recommends restoring the connection between belief and practice. He says it is indicator to the Islamic case, having preachers who mediate the relation between belief and the practice, guides the public to a case of commodification, as this chapter attempts to explore. *Michel York* (2001, 361) also sees in the contemporary religious consumer market the commodification of spirituality and its appropriation—especially from other traditions not one's own—foment an increasingly contentious issue that the sacred becomes commoditized. *York* diagnoses the reality of commodification as the following: "In today's world, however, through globalization, capitalism, and large-scale immigration, along with the decline of traditional religious institutions, the Western individual is confronted with an awareness of religious options on an unprecedented scale" (York, 2001: 361). *York* believes that religion commodification is one of global changes in a case of globalized consumerism that constitutes the dominant socio-economics of today.

The powerful of commodification consists of employing two main elements with its whole techniques of persuasion: first the philosophy of marketing and the philosophy of Islamization. From marketing perspective, *Ward* (2003. 56) sees that the production of a commodity must initially be understood in relation to desire. Second human desire changes with time, place and the technologies of production, therefore, pinpointing the religious

sentiments in product guides the human desire to buy specific products that touch both martial and spiritual imagined benefits and this is the core of commodification processes. It is clear that the television- sermons, with its big dollar budgets and high-stake investment, are deeply enmeshed in processes of commodification of buying and selling that are not at odds with their ethnical impulse (Moll, 2010: 5).

Islamization of goods is the address given for the commodity to be sold in a "pot" called –apparently - Islamic, for instance, Saudi Arabia prevents "*Barbie girl*" toys, and instead, it replaced them with "*Barbie*" with veil called "*Folla*". So, a new industry has been launched in Dubai and Syria for this toy (Hafez, 2009). The same thing with *Barbie* and *Folla* applies to industries that have recently begun to flourish, such as prayer rugs and compasses, as well as the praying calls and the *Quran ring tones Psalmist*.

This chapter focuses on the analysis of the content of commercial ads at *Al-Nas* channel, which promotes different products and services that employs religious commodification, in order to persuade the viewer to take a purchase decision. It is also an attempt to reveal the convergent of interests between the religious channels and commercials. In a time when religious discourse is not separated from the content of what is offered on the religious channels, indirect relationship rises between both religious and commercial contents. In other words, a lot of goods and consumables promoted on the religious channels usually become popular for the majority of the preaching channels' audience, and as a result, the goods get an Islamic brand.

To conclude, commodification is a new style of buying and selling via advocacy satellite channels to target the religious audience. According to this, religion is used as input of promoting goods and services by giving them an Islamic brand that encourage the viewers of preaching screens to buy. The dilemma that might raise here is the contrast between the outputs of the preaching satellite channels' message and the values of promoted goods and services.

5.2Preachers' "Business" and “Islamic Protestant”

An investigative report written by *Mohammed Maree* (2009: 26) on the number of preaching stars show explicit references and evidence for the economic dimension of the advocacy work. Statistics show high wages for their participation in workshops and preaching programs, in addition to intellectual property rights obtained from publishing audio and video recordings along with the financial return from the sale of books and publications. The name of the preacher *Amro Khaled* highlights the top of preachers' list of the highest yearly income, with approximately \$ 2.5 million. *Khaled* has signed a contract for 50 thousand pounds with a cassette company specialized in religious cassette production. Moreover, after the success and popularity *Khaled* achieved through his cassette, his contract value rose to 250 thousand pounds. Financial return for the preacher and production companies pushed *Khaled* to create a private production company owned with a group of friends (Maree, 2009).

Large Fame of *Khaled* made him earn 3 thousand dollars per episode of his "call for coexistence" program, his wages as a guest in talk shows raised from 4 thousand to 5 thousand dollars. Elegance and beautiful appearance and a voice that is close to hearts, is a set of specifications that *Khaled* has, and considered as influential techniques in attracting the young generations and gaining popularity, especially the wealthy classes in the community (Lotfi, 2009: 54-58). Some of princes and Arab presidents welcomed *Khaled* in their places; he did not hesitate to talk about those visits and thanking the officials for good hospitality in more than a television program.

Preacher *Tariq Swedan* also occupies a prominent role in the classification of the preachers in term of economic return; he earned \$360 thousand from courses in management and human development in addition to 200 training courses (Maree, 2009, 27). Preacher *Al Qarni*, 52 years old has 80 books and 1000 audio recording. His book "*Do not be sad*" is one of the most important books, which has been distributed in more than 2 million copies. *Qarni* defends wealth and financial benefits of advocacy work by saying that many of the companions of the Prophet Mohammed were rich (Maree, 2009, 29). Preacher *Omar Abdel Kafi* came in the fourth place at the top list of preaching stars with annual income reached to 373 thousand dollars. *Abdel Kafi* offers three advocacy programs: "*Missionaries*" on *Al Sharjah* channel, "*Rights and the Koran*" and "*Almnjiat*" on Dubai channel (Lotfi, 2009: 44-47).

As it has been more than four years since the previous investigation was published, it is more likely that the list differed now, especially the

position of *Salafi* preacher *Muhammad Hassan*. According to *Forbes Magazine*, *Hassan* gets 100 thousand pounds per month for presenting a program on *Al-Nas* channel, in addition to other amounts obtained from different satellite channels. *Hassan* has a brother who owns an Islamic cassette company, and helps him in publishing and distributing his preaching tapes. Preacher *Hassan* launched a digital satellite channel called "*Mercy*", but was closed by the Egyptian authorities in the Mubarak era. Later, he launched a new preaching satellite channel called "*breezes of Mercy*", a missionary *Salafi* channel whose approach is similar to *Al-Nas* channel.

Consequently, the relationship formed by the trinity of media money and advocacy is clear; the visual preaching discourse established for a new type of preaching discourse that blesses wealth and considers it as evidence of *Allah's* privilege. This type of refit -as some preachers explain- is considered as a kind of adulation to God, especially that Prophet Mohammad says, "God loves to see the impact of his blessings on the human kind". The linkage between the television preachers is boiled down to the notion "tasty religion"; a religion which combines: fame, wealth, influence and commercial projects (Aiz-Alarab. 2011). Some researchers such as *Mohamed Maree* go as far as describing the new preachers; he says, "They are dealers in the movement of religious business "; make a fortune by being TV stars competing football, singing and dancing stars. *Maree* summarizes their role in tickling people's emotions and provoking their religious, sexual, or heroic instincts as well as manipulating the feelings of youth and women, is actually an oratorical style, which is outwardly religious, but inwardly political. (Maree, 2009: 29). *Maree* believes that *Amro Khalid's* programs, for example, disrupt the viewer's cogitation and

sense of criticism. Fiction narration that *Amro* employs in the majority of his programs plunges the audience into cases of delirium based on duality of sticks and carrots, that is, intimidation through creating a feel of guilt and persecution for the viewer. The cleansing process in its extreme case appears at the end of *Amro*'s programs; the narration style that interpenetrates the old religious era into the current, side by side with emotional irritations, are a perfect state of mind, in which rationality and reality get replaced with the rising tones of weeping and wailing (Maree, 2009).

The carrot is present through the tensions made by preacher's body language and voice tones. Preachers sometimes overcome the logic of intimidation in certain situations to convince the viewer with the possibility of change and earning God's satisfaction and getting closer to him through good deeds, and that there is no contradiction between the manifestations of life and the religiosity. Moreover, the new televised preaching style, unlike the traditional old ones, targets the rich as well as the poor, and a wide audience of rich people was attracted, for them to sustain religiosity side by side with wealth and fame joy. This situation refers to the concept of "Protestant Islamic". It is a description of the state of transitions caused by new preachers as a new stream of similar transformations that were carried out by the Protestant approach to Catholic Christianity, in the European Renaissance, as discussed earlier.

5.3 Religious commodification at *Al-Nas* channel

The slogan *Al-Nas* channel: "a screen that takes you to paradise" is the first sign of religious commodification. This screen promises its audience to pick them up to paradise if they watch it and follow its commands. The slogan is presented in many styles and spots, one of which draws a scene of residential and commercial towers surrounded by green gardens with beautiful trees and white focus lighting. This slogan and its visual representation can be understood from *Jonathan Bignell's* perspective (2002) as "embedded content", which is the hidden meaning shaped by video shots, effects, lights, colors and framing. The synchronization between the slogan and the representative scene might be a representation of the promised paradise, or might be synchronization based on thriller, suspense and selling dreams. It also might be dreams selling for poor in Egypt who live in slums and miss such circumstances and it could be a metaphor representing the status of rich people.

Before displaying the sample of religious commodification at *Al-Nas* advocacy channel here, it is important to address the way in which the metaphors work according to the receiver's mentality and this would help explain how faith imaginations work. In this context, *McLuhan* invites us to pay attention to the ways in which "media determine our situation" that is, the ways in which media technologies shape, inflect and constitute modes of perception as well as the objects of perception (Moll, 2010: 20) (Mitchell and Mark, 2010). The influence of the image - any image- is in its ability to shape the mentality of the receiver and enhance the effect of the sender's

message. Media employs a number of techniques; the most important one is blocking certain images in return of pinpointing others, and repeating blocking and pinpointing leads to flattening issues at the expense of deepening others. This explains why people's attention to specific issues, come at the expense of other issues that might be more important and one of their life's priorities (Bourdieu, 2006). *Abdullah Alghamy*, a Moroccan thinker, says: "the accumulation of images contributes to the abolition of mental context of the event through a strategy of instantaneous velocity, techniques of coloring and activating of stardom, all of that might cause quick portability to forget and cancel the memory (Alghamy, 2004: 19). Accumulation of photos view and collecting it in the imagination of the masses is a huge "photography arsenal" works as a "symbolic" barrier separates the physical reality from the virtual one. This brings us to the argument of "*Jean Baudrillard* (1991) "actually superior", where imagined images are more realistic than reality itself; what happens on the screen is the real and the opposite is not true.

In the case of image usage in the ads, there is no doubt that the effectiveness of the flow of advertised messages depends primarily on the characteristics of the advertised message itself. This comes on ground that the flow of ads' message is directed primarily to the sense of sight, which employs behind all the senses, and whenever the advertised message achieves more dazzling accesses to address the ethics, customs and religion become easier. This case in its entirety pushes human societies to live in a new consumer and entertainment space, which is the same case as preaching digital channels (Abu Al-Rub, 2011). Based on the above, samples of *Al-Nas* channel's advertisements will be analyzed. Those include ads for mobile

phone, television, fan and other consumer goods that might be commoditized. In addition, there will be samples of ads that include a request to contact specific phone numbers for consultations on marriage and sexual relationships, or even mobile tones such as voices of famous prayers or *Sheikh*. Purposive samples were chosen to represent the most prominent ads that imply the commodification during the first three months of 2011, side by side with random samples from 2010 and 2012.

Using Islamic words, religious metaphors, paradoxes between the ad message and preaching message, creating the need for product and other techniques for products' spotlighting will be the variables of the analysis.

5.3.1 Ad for Cell phone A33

A promotional ad for a mobile phone starts with a sequence of a sad and confused businessperson, who seems to lose management over his several cell phones, as the ad shows; some cell phones are at home, in the car and at the office. Creating a confusing case in the mind of audience is the first technique to push receivers' feelings into tension and a sense of deficit right before that suddenly fades away by the magical effect of the displayed product (Bignell, 2002). The ad continues with a sudden appearance of a new cell phone on the table in conjunction with influential sound effects that continue to the end of the ad to draw audience's attention. The ad performer pretends that he is surprised by the presence of the phone, shouting, "It is a Mobile with three SIM cards' entrances", repeating it for three times continuously and then adds after the repetition: "It is the appropriate".

Repetition comes here to emphasize the importance of the device announced (Babin, 1991).

The ad continues displaying the mobile phone features; mainly that it is a “three in one”. In addition to other features like radio, a front bulb that could be beneficial in dark areas and a very strong camera that enables consumers to record the “best videos” and watch it. Iteration techniques and the high audio levels used aim at maximizing the product value in order to reach a high level of persuasion to buy. The device specifications are controversial; some Salafi preachers deprive the cell phone with camera considering that it encourages sedition and committing sins specially when used in a wrong way, so the prohibition comes from the door of being cautious not to commit taboos (Shammari, 2004).

The cell phone ad depends on the description of the attached features of the camera; the ad ensures the quality of the photos captured by the camera. It was not a coincidence that the first photo captured by the mobile camera, contained the slogan: " There Is No God but Allah". It is an implied message, aims to Islamize the product depending on building a case of intertextuality with the religion (Bignell, 2002). It also means this camera does not capture but permissible and acceptable things, hence, this ad does not include women or exposed body promotions; instead, it included images of waterfalls and natural views or religious contents.

Besides, if we know that the target audience of the ad is mainly Egyptians, the attempt to view scenery of waterfalls and stunning natural scenery is essentially the process of representing pictorial situations that do

not exist in the Egyptian reality. There are no waterfalls or landscapes like the depicted ones in the previous announcement; therefore, this ad is based on an implicit promise to the viewer to have beautiful life better than reality (Baudrillard, 1991). The screen performer of the mobile phone ad commends the manufacturer of the device, describing them as the best company and the first to produce a European "Stainless Steel". "That factory holds high attributes and international quality certifications". With repeating the ad more than once, the ad performer catapults the viewers to a state of fascination. Hence convincing viewers to buy the device is accomplished, especially when the screen performer himself decides the final buying decision alternatively by asking a question and answering it at the same time: "is there a mobile phone that could be better than this"? "I do not think so". This applies to the argument that promotional process pushes the product from being a job referral to a value referral, which is a life style and approach to see the world (Pennekrad, 2006: 58).

One of the other specifications shared about the mobile is a reminder for appointments on the daily, weekly or monthly agenda, like "birthdays or marriage celebrations." This might be an example of the contradiction between what is being offered on the *Salafi* religious television and the ideas of *Salafi* itself, as it does not believe in birthdays or celebrity marriages, besides, the majority of *Salafi* preachers believe that Muslims have only two "*Eid*" festival: *Eid Al-Fitr* and *Eid al-Adha* (Bin Baz, 2010).

Hence, the ad sought to direct the concerns of the viewer to new needs that might not actually be essential for all, such as some mobile phone specifications. In addition, the announcement includes promising viewers to

get presents if they call specific phone number that costs more than regular calls, and by repeating the call attempts; the callers will get more gifts. This logic of promotion is as the same as other commercial ads but it looks against the logic of preaching television that promises its viewers to guide them to paradise, while the advertisers guide the viewers to another paradise. Not only this, the logic of surprises and promises affects the audience decision and their choices are not spontaneous, the viewer here fell in the lure of dreams' selling, and this is what is supposed to be incompatible with alphabets' work of preaching screen.

In terms of the ad length and the impact of the iterative technique, the ad has continued for fifteen minutes. The question that rises here is, in such a religious preaching channel devoted to call audience to exploit every minute of their day in worshipping God, is it logical to consume their time several times a day with a fifteen minutes ad?

"Mobile solves all of your problems". The phrase is repeated many times during the 15 minutes; as a way to emphasize the idea that buying this cell phone will solve their problems. The process of repeating the narration about the phone value and its benefits is a practical application for the philosophy of the advertisement in directing the viewer from the sense of inferiority if he/she does not own the advertised item, then, at the next step, the product comes as a solution to a longstanding node (Pennekrad, 2006: 65).

5.3.2 Ad of “21 inch-Television”

The ad starts with depicting a cheetah attacking and breaking glass with adding sound effects. This symbolic presentation employs Egyptian dialect "*Hayksr Aldnya*" which means promising viewers with a magical offer. The ad performer sets in a room with high-class furniture, and an expensive table with a TV and a "receiver", mediates the room. This show comes with a narrator's voice that calls for the replacement of the old TV with the strong offer, "2 TV devices, buy the first and get the second free". The slogan "magic offer" here guides the audience towards thrill and excitement to be convinced to buy the product even before knowing the price. The commodification exists also in this ad; the show presents a representative scene for the sun set with a slogan "All extolment be to Allah-*Sobhan Allah*". It's an embedded message works as a rhetorical technique supported by the techniques of color, light and the whole scene. Therefore, the question that rises here: what is the relation between encouraging viewers to buy two televisions in a magic offer, with the slogan "All extolment be to Allah - *Sobhan Allah*"?

The hidden employment of a religious metaphor represented by phrase "All extolment be to Allah " directs the viewers attention to the need for the acquisition of the advertised item; Muslims use phrase "All extolment be to Allah " to thank God for the blessing, hence, the advertised product falls within the God's blessing only because of the text on the screen. The Islamic thinker *Sadeq Nayhoum* says in answering callers for Islamizing the television: "television is an entertainment device and no matter how loaded with different discourses, it will not achieve any goal but

the one it was originally designed for, which is joy and entertainment" (Al-Nayhoum, 1987: 87+88). *Nayhoum's* diagnosis is clear in the televised advertisements that promote the idea of "Farewell to marital disagreements" because if you owned the first TV device you will get a small one as a gift in addition to a "receiver", so you can watch what you want and your wife watches what she wants too. The ad performer gives an example that the husband can watch football game or movie without marital problems! From here, the discourse is reinforcing the positive role of the advertised television in solving marital problems. This show simplifies marital problems and their solutions, in process based primarily on the temptation to buy in exchange with flattening the awareness of the viewer - the expected customer- and this is what we can consider at first glance as contradictory with the message of religious television and its advocates, which is not built on promises - or so is assumed.

As a lot of *Quranic* verses and prophetic sayings urge for compassion and graininess, the previous advertisement promises the viewer to get another device that help in getting rid of marital problems. It shows that the device can stand as an alternative to getting rid of the wife, so that you can watch what you want and the wife can watch what she wants. In fact, this show is incompatible with the values of Islam, as it promotes the concept of individuality and personhood -as previously discussed- while Islam encourages the community values. At the end, one should ask the question: how could a religious channel that adopts the slogan "screen takes you to the paradise" promotes TV" Stereo "and another TV gift that will solve the marital problems? Does the way to Paradise come through 21 inch-TV stereo?

5.3.3 The Fan Advertisement

The ad begins with the phrase "a sale which is not even in your dreams"; buy two fans at 200 pounds and get the third by only 20 pounds. In order to encourage viewers to call and request the fans, the ad performer says: "this summer will be very hot and everyone should prepare for its heat, maybe one house will need more than one fan for different locations because of the extreme heat"! The other logic used for this promotion is represented by the show presenter's suggestion; that viewer may tell his\her close friend\relative about the offer if he/she cannot afford to buy more than one, so that they both can buy the two fans and earn the third. This is absolutely the logic of commercial promotions.

The religious commodification in the fans' show is clear. The show presenter encouraged viewers to buy fans on sale and put them in mosques to earn God's reward when making it easier for Muslims praying in mosques with a cool air. From the perspective of *Bignell* (2002), owning the offered product means having a stock in fantasy. It is obvious that Islamizing goods by introducing them in spiritual and theistic dimensions maximizes the results of promotion process. Using this in advertisements falls under the concept of superstitious meanings, which means being shaped by including it via ideological ways used for the presentation and perception of reality (Bignell, 2002: pp. 200-208).

5.3.4 Ad of "*magic Palette*"³⁴

One ad from the archive of April 2010 includes a show of "*magic palette*", which is a multi used textile; for group prayers, food meals, children carpet... etc. The ad describes that the palette is large and can be used inside and outside the houses. It serves as a magic solution to the mess children cause during their food meals in a tour, where parents cannot manage the situation as photographed in the advertisement. *The magic palette* is also a "magic solution" for praying especially when you have guests so you do not need to be confused in preparing individual palettes whose number may not be sufficient for your guests. Therefore, the ad recommends the *magic palette* that can accommodate four worshipers at once, and that is brought to screen with a scene of the four worshipers in a state of solemnity. By using the term "*magic palette*", presupposition runs in the imagination of the audience framing that they are in real trouble or confusing case until the ad brings up the magical solution. Here, the ad of the *magic Palette* is employing embedded and influential metaphor that pushes the audience's purchasing decision (Pennekrad, 2006).

In other words, one of the successful advertising techniques is to push viewers' desire to feel the need for a commodity, and in case of shortage feeling or inferiority due to the need of obtaining it, *Palette* advertisement fixes the confusion. The ad presenter says, "This item had arrived late for Egypt and the entire people in the Gulf States use it". Consequently, the promotion of multi uses of carpet piece and linking it to the ritual of

³⁴ - Ad of *magic Palette* seen at *Al-Nas* screen in April 2010 and continued for several months.

Muslims in praying, clearly represent a case of religion commodification (Moll, 2010: 5).

5.3.5 The strange and magical foot patches

The advertisement begins "world tech in your hands" (magic foot patches, 2011), it characterizes the reality of daily life and magnitude of the street pollution, work, food, and the way it precipitates toxins in the human body. In this miserable situation, the magic patch comes to get rid of all the toxins, bacteria, and viruses. It is made of natural materials that pull toxins when you put it at the bottom of the foot, it helps "with God willing" in the treatment of severe headaches, strokes, blood pressure, tension, angina pectoris, obesity, cancer diseases, sore throat, circulatory disorder, kidney disease and arthritis.

By using the term of "God's willing", the advertisement presenters promise viewers that the product will help solve many diseases, even the fatal as well as repeating that two or more times in every time the ad shows. In addition, reading *Quranic* verses and religious blesses arise strong belief within those patients who believe in God's credibility firstly, and channel credibility secondly to buy the product, thus, audience falls in the trap of commodification. It is common to see most of *Al-Nas* advertisements signed with magic product, magic treatment, magic solution...etc. It is not a spontaneous description, but almost a reflection of the *Al-Nas* discourse and culture, especially if it's linked to *Al-Nas* famous program "People and

magic" and the marketing of audio and video bless to treat the magic & sorcery curses upon call phone request.

Framing the product uses and success in Islamic context serves the idea of the projection of realism to a product that claims magical effectiveness, and in this case, religion was subjected to commodification (Bignell, 2002:151-164) (York, 2001). The magic foot patch pushed amateur to make a phone call with the company representative to inquire details, the caller recorded the phone call and upload it on *YouTube* under the title: "detect fraud on the name of foot patch" (2011).

The caller wondered why he searched for the name of the *Tormalen* plant, from which foot patch mainly made – according to the advertisement – and found nothing. The company representative had no answer and promised him to call back within 15 minutes to answer his question. An hour later, the amateur called the company again with embarrassing questions such as: the skin of the sole is thick so body toxins will not easily get out, so body toxins might get out easily from the nick for instance, the company representative seemed angry by saying: “put it anywhere you want and it works *Inshallah*-with God blesses”. The caller also asked whether patients have to stop the doctor's medicine in case of using foot patch, or not, and the company representative answered that the foot patch helps in treatment but it is not a cure itself.

Islamizing goods is not the only way of goods commodification as national commodification seeks to mobilize viewers too. It is a call honored by buying national goods. “*Sinai Cola*” is an Egyptian drinks company. Its

advertising depicts the local dress of *Sinai* people and the area of the factory to share the idea that this product is a national product versus the foreign product. The product slogan: " Proudly made by hands of Egyptian" and between the advertising and the other, channel slogan appears" *channel that takes you to paradise*".

5.3.6 "Expel the devil"

Blessings "*Doaa*" and religious songs is one of the sources of *Al-Nas* funding, *Al-Nas* produces multi- religious *Doaa* such as how to expel the devil, worry and grief, God Monologues in addition to other audio and video materials, promoted daily at *Al-Nas* screen. In order to have one of these blesses or monologues, viewers are invited to make an expensive phone call to a special number that consists of only four digits and more than half of the phone calls revenue goes to the channel account. Audio and video blessing became a market district; many Islamic preachers compete in this field such as *Salah Abu Islam*, *Taher Wajde* and *Yaser Abu Ammar*. Some of these blessings are produced for only *Al-Nas* channel and others are sold in different directions. Within the previous 5 years, preacher's competition in blessings extended to include numerous occasions such as *Ramadan blesses* collection, Islamic holydays bless, having a new birth bless, bless of a livelihood in addition to treatment of envy and magic & sorcery curses...etc.

The power of discourse in theses blesses creates a state of reverence to God, spiritual music background and preacher crying in a state of God Monologues, these elements create a phase of dominant condition of

reverence that pushes the viewers to a case of emotional empathy. The most famous bless at *Al-Nas* channel is the treatment of magic curses such as "the curses of marriage that aim to separate couples", so if any couple has marital problems, they might bewitched and they have to follow the preacher's blesses to solve the magic.

A special program airs at *Al-Nas* channel for magic curses and their treatment spells called *People and magic*. This program is popular, the episode of "*magical curses of separation and disruption for the married*" (2010) has more than 150 thousand viewers at *YouTube*. The program producer welcomes audience and guests before he reads Quranic verses, which legitimize discussing the topic of magic and sorceries especially curses of separation and disruption for the married.

The following verses of the holy *Quran* used in treatment spells. In Chapter two verses 101-102, the *Quran* says:

"And when there came to them a Messenger from Allah confirming what was with them, a party of those who were given the scripture threw away the book of Allah behind their backs as if they did not know. And they followed what the devils gave out falsely of magic of the reign of Solomon; for Solomon did not disbelieve but the devils disbelieved, teaching men magic and such things that came down at Babylon to the two angels Harut and Marut, but neither of these two (angles) taught anyone (such things) until they had said: we are only for trial, so don't disbelieve. And from them (magicians) people learn that through which they would cause separation between a person and his spouse, but they could not thus harm anyone except by Allah's leave; and they learn that which harms them rather than profits them indeed, they knew that its practitioner would have no share in the Hereafter. And how bad indeed was that for which they sold their own selves if they but knew" (2:101-2).

The program producer did not explain the relation between these verses and the treatment of magic and sorcery curses. Instead, he started to

warn viewers of denying the magic, and they would be the big losers in case they do not follow God's words and his prophet's sayings. The evidence of that again is a *Quranic* verse that means God never creates a disease without offering cure. For that reason, preachers' legitimacy come from monopolizing the treatment of magic as it is mainly from *Quranic* verses. *Al- Nas* Preacher warns his viewers: If they watch it and do not follow his recommendation, they will fall in sin and displease god. Accepting the idea of magic spells of separation and disruption of marriage, for instance, guide the target audience to the preacher treatment, which is in reading the Cow verses in the holy *Quran* in addition to eat seven beads pass every morning. This comes at the expense of the objective and substantive reasons of marital issues, such as financial problems or absence of consensus or even problems of miscommunication.

The commodification of religion attracts those who follow the preacher recommendation in magic issues whilst, pinpointing topics such as magic and envy treatment at preaching screen intersect with making business by asking viewers to request special audio and video bless in addition to increase the number of advertisers.

5.3.7 Classifieds



A new style of commodification is seen at *Al-Nas* screen. Classified advisements run in small screens appear behind the preachers within preaching programs. This section focuses on classified advertisements within the advocacy program of the famous preacher *Khalid Abdullah " the New Egypt"* at *Al-Nas* screen. Advertising screen appears in the background of preacher displays the ad of "*Sina -Cola*", "*Star JT Appliances*", "*Four Brothers Company for cars*" and others"(Abdullah, 2012). It is clear that presenting many elements in the screen contributes to distract the viewer; the promotion of product or company on the screen behind the preacher changes from one to another periodically, and whenever the display is switched from an ad to another, viewers lose the logical sequence of preacher talk."*The New Egypt*" program includes a promoting ad for "*Four Brothers Cars Company*" whose slogan says: "achieve your dream, ride the car of the year" and watch more and send more messages to enter a lot and win the Car of the Year".

The slogan of the previous ad shows that the promise deceives the viewer; that the frequent call and sending SMS to the number displayed on the screen will achieve his dream of riding the car of the year. This kind of promotion might be unacceptable in Islam, since it practices deception at the expense of viewers who pay money for nothing. Therefore, if the offer is for one car and thousands of callers or SMS senders paid money (by calling) for that, at the end just one will win. The logic in this ad is actually against the logic of faith considering it as based on luck and even delusion (Islam Web, 2012).

Commercial logic is also dragged on a moving banner at bottom of the screen. The channel adopted advertisements' bar for tourism companies, electronics, motor shows, and pharmacies ... This seems to be a successful business, thinking that it encourages owners of trades and professions to share their ads on the moving tape in order to reach the largest possible audience. Factually, advertising on preaching television channel represents a state of reassurance and positive feeling towards the advertised goods. The viewers' trust in what the channel offers is reflected on the commercial advertising content in the channel, so, Islamization comes in implicit way, and this is the power of commercial discourse when ideologized.

To conclude, religious commodification comes in different frames: first by Islamizing the goods via using Islamic descriptions and phrases. Second: by linking advertised items to Islamic uses or rituals. Third: by employing the authority of preachers' fans in ads such as shows of preacher *Mahmoud Almasry* reviewing his books on Islamic stories for children and adults during various episodes of his programs in addition to asking viewers

to call specific phone numbers to get the preacher's advice regarding personal matters and issues.

As a result of the analysis of the commercial advertising at *Al-Nas* preaching channel, a state of confusion appears within the relation between commercial advertising -which is based on the thrill, excitement and promise- and the promise upon the religious slogan: "screen will take you to paradise". The (Television machine ad) promises viewers to solve their marital problems by offering another Television as a gift, in this way husband gets rid of the trouble with his wife and their debates on what each of them wants to watch. At the same time, it's an Islamic TV because it mentions and displays God's verses, the same case happens in the ad of mobile phone which promises to resolve user's problems and organize his daily agenda, along with its camera that does not capture taboos or forbidden images, and that way users can earn God's reward. That way, consumer benefits worldly and afterlife and this is the significance of the logic of the so-called "Islamization of goods, "or" commodification of religion."

Again, advertising on preaching television channels employs two symbolical authorities: authority of excitement and thrill resulting from "not having the advertised item", and the power of religious discourse when linked to Islamizing the advertised item, as it is clear in the analysis of the case study. The impact of this type of advertising will be doubled on audience, especially religious audience conversely with the audience of entertainment and singing satellite televisions which mostly imply another type of commodification; commodification of the body.

6. “*Al-Majd* Channel” and the “Islamization” of the “Revolution” in Syria: -

The coverage of “*Al-Majd* channel” to the events of the Syrian revolution is a precedent in the history of religious channels; in terms of linking political with the religious concepts, or what is now called "rlegizing the political / politicizing the religious". That is obvious as the channel allocates open broadcasting waves for live and constant communication with clerics and politicians, to discuss and analyze the daily developments of the Syrian protests. This chapter presents an important question about the connotations of the religious media transmission from the preaching logic to the mobilizing sectarian, political and rhetorical techniques employed in achieving the greatest popularity.

Al-Majd started its broadcasting in November 2002. *Al-Majd* network includes 12 channels with a capital of 130 million riyals, and they have 900 employees. Some of these channels are open and free, others are within the locked up subscription system. The most important of its channels is "*Al-Majd* for the *holy Quran*", "*Al-Majd* Documentary ", "*Al-Majd* for Children" ... etc. *Al-Majd* network has suffered from a financial crisis in 2008 due to delays in paying employees' salaries resulted from the irregular channel revenues from subscriptions. The SMS are considered as an important source of revenue. It would be enough to imagine what has been reported by a source affiliated with the former Chairman of the Board of Directors” in the network; *Fahd Shamemri*, in an interview with *Al-Watan* newspaper,

that “one of the group channels - chanting "Shaza" – achieved a monthly income of 2 million riyals only by SMS” (marebpress, 2008).

Al-Majd channel for the holy *Quran* is one of the most important channels of *Al-Majd* network. It broadcasts the holy *Quran* all day long with the voices of over a hundred reciters of the *Quran* from all over the world. One of *Al-Majd* channels provides scientific information in non-traditional ways, it is the “*Scientific Al-Majd Channel*” which broadcasts Islamic Open Academic Program, and through the website, students enter to the lecture halls and listen to two lectures a day, each of them is nearly two hours long.

On another side of *Al-Majd* network interests, we find recreational channels "conforming" such as *Al-Majd* Channel “Think and Play”. The channel presents services advertisements that encourage audience to obtain specific mobile video games, through calling phone numbers at the cost of a local call within the *Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, so that this channel can contribute through recreational services in increased revenues for the network (Jakob, 2011).

Al-Majd channels network is classified as one of the major religious *salafi* media organizations operating in the Middle East, and the real *Salafi* media follows the approach of *Al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah*. *Sheikh Rashid Al-Zahrani* sees that *Salafi* media specifications do apply, for example, to the *Saudi Arabia* Official Satellite Channel (Al-Zahrani, 2010). The key sentence to describe *Salafi* media is that each Islamic media classifies itself as following the approach of *Al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah*. Its purpose is to

preach only for the sake of God with no worldly benefit, as much as it seeks divine merit and reward.

Although *Al-Majd* is a religious *Salafi* channel, the former chairperson of the network board of directors *Fahd As-Shamemri*, stated that a part of the channel work philosophy is the profitable commercial logic in addition to the preaching logic. He also stated that a number of the channel preachers and *Sheikhs* have stakes in its shares, including *Sheikh Hamad Al-Ghammas* and the preacher *Salman Al-u'uda*.

The channel went through several managerial problems; it also faced conflicts between its preachers and its financial stockholders. *Al-Shamemri* pointed to the fact that the contested ownership of the channel caused *Al-Ghammas* to buy his share in the channel; indicating that this was for the interest of the channel. Consequently, many of the workers in the channel resigned, such as *A'adil Al-Majed*, *Ayman Lashin*, *Khalid Hussain* and others. *Al-Shamemri* described that sales process as similar to what happens in any trading company (Anbacom, 2010).

As-Shamemri's insistence on linking the channel to the commercial logic, leads us to review the channel programs and advertising content to figure the relation between this new type of the preaching discourse and the profit. That leads to say - from a scope of diligence - that the Islamic preaching discourse was different before the preaching satellite channels, and even before the pursuit of profitable logic by the cassette preachers and traders.

The general aspect of the channel is that it does not produce dramas like *Al-Resalah* channel for example, but it buys them from producers. The *Salafist* satellite channels including *Al-Majd*, also prevent the women emergence on their screens, and even if a woman appears in certain cases - as what happened in the *Salafist Al-Hafiz* channel – she appears veiled. However there still preachers within the *Salafist* trend who reject the emergence of women either veiled or not, such as the preacher *Ahmed Abdel-Hamid*, who considers women as sedition and that they shall not be shown to men under any circumstances (Al-Omari,109).

It is important to recall here that *Salafis* exploited developments in satellite and electronic media, through which they tried to influence the emotions of viewers of the various age groups, particularly urging to veil and religiosity, and from this point, it goes to the policy. That employment appeared clearly through what is known as Arab Spring, so that those means can be gates to attract citizens in election campaigns, Just like *Al-Nas* channel that played a role in directing the Egyptian voter to vote for the *Salafi Al-Nor* Party. Consequently, this party received more than 20% of the votes, although it is a new party.

6.1 *Al-Majd* and Political Links

Talking about "*Al-Majd*" Channel links to *Saudi Arabia* politically and intellectually. *Al-Shamemri* says, "*Al-Majd* satellite channel has been proud over the past decade of pertinence to *Saudi Arabia* government and

people, this government and this people deserve more than that. We do not forget that the capital is Saudi, the owners are Saudis, the Supreme Administration as a whole is Saudi, the legitimate Committee members of senior scholars are from *Saudi Arabia*, and most of our programs are from this good blessed earth. Before launching *Al-Majd* channel officially, it identified its audience clearly; 50 -60% of its programs are directed to the Saudis, and whoever looks at the Arab space channels finds that most channels are directed to Saudi Arabia. *Al-Majd* channel is proud and happy that it is a Saudi channel, Still, we have not forgotten the Arab audience, and we have offered them many programs” (marebpress, 2008b).

In addition to *Al-Shamemri's* words, the policy of *Al-Majd* Channel and its trend can be emphasized after the channel crisis with *Sheikh Saa'd Shashari* in his program "*The Satisfying Answer*", when he criticized -in his answer to a question of a caller- mixing the students at King *Saud* University and he demanded to separate between the two genders. Consequently, journalists in the newspapers "*Al-Watan* and *Al-Hayah*" criticized him; those journalists also criticized the channel in October 2009. That led to dismissing him from his position as a member of the permanent Council of Senior Scholars in Saudi Arabia, while *Al-Majd* Channel responded by saying that the words of *Al-Sheikh* do not represent the channel point of view and its position (Alarabiya, 2009a).

By handling the bloody bombings adopted by *al-Qaeda* in 2003 and afterwards, the channel and its preachers were seen as adopters of the official position of *Saudi Arabia* and *Saudi* religious institution. In addition, the channel's intensive coverage to King *Fahd's* death and highlighting his

merits and his role in serving Islam and Muslims was a clear sign of the channel's affiliation and approach.

Accordingly, the channel identity is clearly more obvious, especially the intellectual affiliation to the *Salafi* trend that is predominant on Saudi Arabia in terms of regime, thought and society. However, what concerns us in this research paper is to try to monitor and analyze the relationship between preaching *Salafi* discourse and political discourse regarding the protests in Syria, and the way of employing the televised rhetorical techniques in forming the intended message.

Saudi Arabia is the home of the *Salafist* trend, which returns in its roots to the *Saudi* "renovator" and scholar *Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab*, but regarding the *Salafi* media, it became noticeable that the majority of the *Salafi* channels' preachers are Egyptians with some Saudis, though those channels are Saudi-funded. The relevance of the political moment and political competition in Egypt and the areas of the Arab revolutions might be an indicator to the *Salafi* interests in the region. Particularly, some of the challenges posed by the *Shiite* channels that are increasing very rapidly, beside the challenges that were historically represented by the national trend to the *Salafi* thought in *Saudi Arabia*, specifically in President *Abed An-Nasser*'s time.

Political dimensions in the Arab satellite channels in general do play a role in the field of channels' competition to attract audience, and the experience of *Al-Majd* satellite channel is the best example of political and

sectarian involvement of religious discourse, especially its intensive coverage of what is happening in *Syria*.

The preaching discourse involvement in politics is not an optional act in the case of adopting popularity as the standard of success. The political satellite channels like *Al-Jazeera* and *Al-Arabiya* highlight the Syrian event as a priority by focusing on killing and blood scenes. The daily and all day long repetition of this coverage prioritizes the Syrian news for the Arabic viewer, even on the expense of his daily life's priorities and concerns. Here, the actual question arises, can the religious channels ignore the Syrian news and remain in religion's mantle and the superficiality of preaching discourse regarding veil and dress, or do they have to follow the daily developments of the so-called Arab Spring?

The frozen preaching discourse behind superficial issues and the ignorance of the political and field developments in the majority of Arab countries compared to the current challenges, almost led the preaching channels to lose their popularity and get isolated from their audiences. This is what actually happened with *Al-Nas* channel at the beginning of the Egyptian revolution, as it continued its usual programs and interests for more than a month, but those, who are in charge of it, noticed lately that their ignorance almost made them lose their popularity. Therefore, they had to allocate a number of programs to follow the daily developments in the Egyptian situation, and so, there were the program "*New Egypt*" on *Al-Nas* channel and another program called "*We are with you*" on *Al-Majd* channel, this program supports the Syrian opposition in facing what *Al-Majd* channel calls "infidel and magian regime."

This study starts from the assumption that the coverage of *Al-Majd* channel to the Syrian protests was accompanied with the Islamization processes and sectarian classification that led the Islamic discourse in general and the preaching one in particular to further mobilization and recruitment on the base of faith. By the initial observation of *Al-Majd* channel programs related to the Syrian issue like the channel trend, the logic of its operation and its belief that the Iranian support for the Syrian regime is a sectarian and ideological plot on the Sunnis, all are becoming more obvious.

The political role of the religious satellite channels, based on the ideological trend and the funding agendas in particular, will consequently determine the outputs of the preaching discourse. Anyway, the preaching discourse itself is in an internal doctrinal clash situation that is ultimately blowing the religious preaching content itself, and at the same time, it is responsible for the case of sectarian mobilization in the Arab region now. It can also be assumed that the priorities of the viewer of the preaching satellite channels are based on two dualities: first, the ideological partisanship and mobilization, Second, the superficialities of transactions system and the qualities of the Islamic personality in terms of dress and appearance.

The danger of sectarian mobilization is the prioritization of the Islamic public issues so that people talk and concerns' core becomes the fear of *Shiites* or *Sunni*, at the expense of life's priorities and even at the expense of larger challenges such as the challenge of the *Zionist* danger in Palestine and its Arab surroundings.

6.2 Al-Majd Channel and the Syrian Revolution – the Campaign of "We are with you"



The Syrian revolution has emerged in June 2011, were hundreds of protesters came out to protest against arresting 15 children in *Deraa*. The Syrian security forces arrested those children for writing freedom slogans on their school wall, in an attempt to imitate the Arab students in the countries of revolutions that took place before the Syrian, such as Tunisia and Egypt (Aljazeera, 2011).

After a year of peaceful protests and violent reactions from the Syrian regime, the Syrian revolution has moved day after day to military actions and recently a civil war. According to the UN estimations in February 2013, the ongoing revolution led to 70,000 dead and about four million people who are in need for assistance, including two million internally displaced, and more than 850,000 who are now living as refugees in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and North Africa (Aljazeera, 2013).

Al-Majd channel launched the campaign "*We are with you*", which is a series of episodes about the Syrian revolution. In some cases, it broadcasted for almost five continuous hours about the latest developments in Syria, giving religious nature through hosting clerics and preachers whose majority of interventions focused on the criminalization of the Syrian regime and judging it as unbeliever and motivate people to fight it.

The next pages analyze a random sample of the program "*We are with you*" episodes related to the Syrian revolution in 2012. It is a sample based on the available episodes on the channel's website and *YouTube* website due to the difficulty of receiving the broadcasting signals of the channel in *Vienna*. The sample analysis is based on monitoring and analyzing a number of variables such as: Islamization of some occurrences and events, employing the historical fiction narration, the religious symbol, creating intertextuality situations with the holy *Quran* and the Prophet *Muhammad's Sunnah* and promoting the idea of Divine Trial in describing what happens of killing and destruction.

All the mentioned above comes in the context of rhetorical techniques, such as dramatization the included emotional magnification, enlargement, contradiction, simplification, and changing shape (Babin, 1995). In addition to those techniques, there are the techniques of discourse analysis approach, such as highlighting events and facts on the expense of withholding others, creating conflicts, and division between the dualities of right and wrong, good and evil, faith and infidelity (Foucault, 1971). There are also the techniques of landscape framing and employing the various sound effects to form the intended messages, specifically the political dimensions of the channel's coverage of the Syrian crisis.

The primer notice regarding the various episodes of the program "*We are with you*" is linking the political with the religious and portraying what is happening in Syria as if it is a war on Islam and Muslims. The program also implicated judging the Syrian regime and its army as unbeliever, describing it as a criminal and a rapist of Muslim women and a killer of children, while portraying the *National free army* as combatants and its victims as martyrs. Further elements of *Salafi* discourse on *Al-Majd* channel will also be clarified.

One of the major assumptions in the channel's coverage of what is happening in Syria is mainly based on the **idea of divine trial**, which means that what happens of killing and destruction in Syria is a test from God to test his believing servants. Based on that, metaphysical interpretations are strongly shown by more than one preacher through the program "*We are with you*". The majority of this program's presenters start their talk with a

high level of faith emotions, in addition to the fact that most of them appear wearing a scarf of “Free Syria” flag on their necks.

The emblem song of the program "*We are with you*" is a sad song that reviews hard scenes and pictures of the dead Syrians of children and women, while the song words promote the faith logic to the viewer, it says "between mosques and homes ... Oh! God may save their people and protect their exits and entrances... and save the country of Muslims from right and left sides ... they are vulnerable, Oh Lord! Who supports them other than you! Holding with their religion and their blood is perfume ... “

Reviewing the victims’ pictures was coincided with preaching chanting that results in a high meaning to the viewer, employing two levels of impact: the emotional and humanitarian levels by the images of the dead children and women, and the faith level by portraying the victims as vulnerable who hold their religion. This produced supreme meaning surely leaves a strong impact on the viewer to make a reaction that is embodied with attraction and then promoting and taking a stand and a judgment. This extraordinary effect is also closer to the theory of media bullet for the message strength upon the recipient. The synchronization between both emotional and faith is primarily based on the technique of "**emotional magnification**" which comes strongly in the dramatization processes taking place in the program, and of that dramatizing the starting of the program by the impact of music and audio visual effects (Babin, 1995: 54).

6.3 Studio and landscape Techniques

The studio of the program "*We are with you*" is designed in a way that incites the viewer and performs the mobilization function. In the background of the presenter and the guest, a big poster of a scene of destruction, bombing, and children crying, and on the right of the screen, there is a rifle carried by a fighter without showing his details. That surely holds within, an indirect orientation to the viewer that the children of Syria calling and appealing you, and you, as a Muslim, have to respond to the call. While the studio background contains the signal of victory sign, in an implicit suggestion that a Muslim support to his Muslim brother leads to victory over infidelity and its folks. This is what was circulated by more than one preacher within the program episodes, as it will be detailed later.

The techniques of photography inside the studio are not as the same planning and power as that we observe in *Al-Nas* Channel for example. They are almost limited to the techniques of camera movements between the guest preacher and the anchor to transfer their emotions. That shows obviously when presenting tragic and bloody scenes inside Syria; in an attempt to maximize the reaction considering that the preacher's solidarity and his emotions and words while watching should affect the viewer according to the idea of collective solidarity, which is supposed to characterize the believer.

In the episode "*We are with you*" with *Sheikh Salman Al-U'uda* on 02.19.2012 the program presenter *Fahd Sunaidi* began his episode as usual by introducing a report on the demonstrations in Syria and photographing

areas of bombing with humanitarian painful scenes, including: a child crying for his father over his dead body while calling against the President *Al-Assad*. When presenting this scene, the channel / director used the techniques of dual screen as the screen was split into two halves, a half showing the crying child, and the other side showing *Sheikh Salman Al-U'uda* while he is very excited and calling against *Bashar al-Assad*. Simultaneously, with the screen split into two halves, the technique of "Zoom" shooting was used, as the studio camera gradually moves closer to the face of the preacher *Salman Al-U'uda*; to show his face features, his anger, his emotions and his sympathy with the child who cries his father over the body.

The significance of employing this kind of footage is to create more tension and sympathy to drive to a state of emotional reincarnation. Starting the episode with an effective humanitarian report leads the conversation context and motivates the guest for a more stiffed position and calls, and eventually a better performance for the general mobilization function against the *Al-Assad's* regime, army and "thugs". This is also represented in the preacher *Al-U'uda's* talk about messages sent by some Muslim scholars to the leaders and soldiers of the Syrian army to split and rebel against the regime and not to kill civilians (Al-Majd, 19/02/2012).

The program also employed panoramic shots in some episodes³⁵. In fact, that contributed to visually merge the viewer with the studio, and notify him as if he was into the photo frame. Apparently, that was enhanced when

³⁵ - Panoramic snapshot: it is the camera rotation on its axis, either horizontally or vertically without changing the site.

the crane was used in filming inside the studio to move from corner to another within the program, and when diversifying the shots between wide shots, medium and close-ups. Those techniques- all together- led to drive the viewer's emotions to merge with the guest's emotions, especially the close-up shots when narrating painful human stories of victims or what happened in Syria side by side with wide shots in case of using the dual-screen technique. Besides, the guest of the program tells humanitarian stories about Syrian people's suffering, patience and their faith in God, and in the same time, scenes of the injured and wounded are displayed on the screen, including very painful and impressive scenes (Bjnal, 2007: 321- 342).

In addition to the previous displaying techniques, sound effects technique were also allocated to serve the message, including mixing the singer's moan at the background of music. The singer's moaning was vacillating between several voice levels -high and low- which -as a whole- sentimentally affect the viewer; since all these techniques control the receiver's emotions and stimulate him for solidarity, and more often motivate him to the emotional reincarnation, thus the program message is well delivered.

6.4 Hypothesis of Trial

Faith logic that dominates all the episodes is mainly based on the concept of trial, such when *Sheikh Al-Munjid* in one of the previous program episodes -mentioned above- says: "God tested the people of The Levant and the Muslims in general," and he recites *Quranic* verses and Hadiths about

testing people in both their religion and world. Al-Sheikh *Al-Munjid* also rejects identifying the situation in Syria as a political conflict and he describes whoever believes in that as "inattentive". *Al-Munjid* demonstrates that in two levels: the first level is the duality of faith and infidelity and that the situation is a trial from God to test the belief of his servants and to examine them by inflicting the oppressors and unbelievers upon them – *Al-Assad's* regime - and in that, there are faith and emotional promotion and mobilization. The second level is the **logic of emotional magnification and fictional dramatization** in the language of exaggerations (Babin.1995); that is, it refuses to identify the conflict in Syria as a political conflict and cites that by saying that "the slaughtering by (knives and eyes gouge) and hatred of religion and the *Sunnis*". Indeed, the viewer unconsciously imagines the slaughtering by knives and eyes gouge when he listens to *Al-Sheikh Al-Munjid*.

Worse still, the pictorial rhetoric exaggerations such when *Al-Sheikh Al-Munjid* portrays the Syrian regime's "thugs" by saying that the first thing they do when they break into Syrian houses is to find the copies of the *Quran* and desecrate them! Thus, it seems to the viewer as if the main objective of "*Al-Assad's* forces" is to desecrate the *Quran*, considering that the desecrating the *Quran* is of a major abhorrent for Muslims. Factually when a Sheikh who has such popularity and such a position like Al-Sheikh Al-Munjid utters such a talk, it is certain that the viewer would not think away from the framework drawn by *Al-Sheikh* himself, which is, the

framework of infidels who are only interested in desecrating the *Quran* and insulting Muslims and their holy book³⁶.

Employing the religious symbol (Boundilion, 1984: 40-54) such as the holy *Quran* reoccurred in more than one episode. An example is when episode of the program "*We are with you*" which was posted on YouTube on 18-2-2012, began with a sentence of an eyewitness saying: they stepped on the *Quran*, I saw them myself, sons of a bitches!" and he then asks: "Where are the Muslims!" A scene of an armed group inside a mosque directly followed that, and a voice of someone says, "God damn them" that was immediately followed by sad moaning music and *Takbeers*, "God is the greatest" (*Allahu Akbar*) with shooting scenes. (We are with you, with Preacher Swaid, 2012)

Within the employment of divine trial technique, the program "*We are with you*" episode on 13.02.2012 hosted the preacher Dr. *Saud bin Abdullah Al-phenasan*, a professor at Imam University in Saudi Arabia. This preacher tried to clench the controversial issue regarding the possibility of riot (trial), in which case the Muslim must stay away and avoid fighting. However, after the preachers' usual introduction of thanking God and praising his messenger, he explains that the trial and its positions do not imply on Syrian situation. *Al-phenasan* projects in the episode his interpretations of *Quranic* verses that he is reviewing, saying: lifting the injustice and pushing the aggressor away is not a trial in anyway, but it is a *Jihad* and an obligation, whose reward is very great. Then, *Al-phenasan* cites with the saying of *Ibn*

³⁶- The frame means the limits of the picture which determines the size of the elements shown in the picture, and the limits of the picture will be the limits of consciousness for the recipient taking into account that the television viewer judges on what he/ she sees, not what is actually happening.

Taymiyya, Imam of *Salafists*: “The oppressor tyrannizes people and so people are tested by his oppression, the trial harms the one who receives injustice but does not face the oppressor, that is, the trial lies on anyone who does not stand against the oppressor”.

In other words, this preacher blames those who do not face *Al-Assad's* regime and support the militants for the “trial” in Syria. From this point, people are obliged to lift trials lying on them by praying, worshipping and *Jihad* with money and souls, if possible.

In order for the desired message intended by of the former preacher’s speech to be achieved, the Channel stops to present sad singing pauses. Those pauses include pictures of victims and torture, so that these scenes intersect with the preachers’ stimulation for people to get out for *Jihad* without the permission of the guardian, and in the midst of these images, there is a focus on the demolition of mosques in Syria (Al-Majd. 13, 02, 2012).

Hypothesis of Divine Trial comes in a number of ways depending on the guest preacher. An example, is what *Al-Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munjid* went to in the episode under the title “*Syria, where to*” on 08/29/2012. He stated that the wisdom of God is behind the fact that this nation to be punished in this world, not in the afterlife, that is, there are nations to be punished by God in the afterlife, but according to his point of view, God decided to punish this nation in this life to win the eternity. Actually, this was a strong entrance to stimulate people for patience and endurance as long the afterlife’s reward is waiting for them. He explains by

saying that human wishes conflict with divine laws, and proves that by a *Quranic* verse in which God says to his believing servants "And We will surely test you until We make evident of those who strive among you [for the cause of Allah] and the patient.". Projecting this *Quranic* meaning here, stimulates the opponents of *Al-Assad's* regime and all Muslims to say that they are in a case of divine trial and test, so they have to be patient and go to the *Jihad* against *Al-Assad's* regime in order to succeed in divine test and to prove that they are qualified to earn God's support. The viewer and the listener to the former preacher's words, finds himself retraced with word's context and unconsciously obligated to sense the religious text, and so reacts by forming a position towards the situation, and often all the metaphysical enhancements used by the preacher for the formation of the public imagination will lead to support (Bignell, 2000: 212).

To strengthen the hypothesis of divine trial and to tighten the structure of the narrative, *Al-Sheikh Al-Munjid* says that the length of the plague lies under the same divine wisdom. For the purpose of more persuasion, the preacher also creates a number of historical intertextuality cases, like the examples of comparing the current situation with the past, like when he says that the Crusader occupation of the Levant lasted for 90 years, as well as the Tatars occupation of the Levant and the magnitude of the their crimes. He proceeds with saying that all that was a historical indicator to enabling people.

The technique of creating the intertextuality is one of the rhetorical techniques used in preaching discourse to create the greatest possible

influence and direct the public³⁷. Strengthening the hypothesis of divine trial again needs a huge **depicting imaginary arsenal** through which the preachers stimulate their audience towards the intended meanings. The strongest rhetoric comparisons are the comparison of the armed battles taking place between the forces of *Al-Assad* and the opposition in Syria with the battles of the Prophet *Muhammad* against the infidels and enemies of Islam. *Al-Sheikh Al-Munjid* recounts a historical comparison and an intertextuality between what is happening in Syria with *Al-Ahzab* battle at the time of the Prophet; explaining how the polytheists gathered to attack Muslims and sought to destroy Islam. He says that the same scene is repeated in Syria, where the infidels are gathering from Iran, Lebanon, Russia and Venezuela. This depicting arsenal makes the critical sense of the public absent, and the simplest thing is that Iran and Lebanon are Muslim countries, but merely the support of Iran and *Hezbollah* in Lebanon for the *Al-Assad's* regime makes the preacher easily put them in the rank of countries he describes as polytheist.

Talking about the divine trial to describe the killing and destruction in Syria is not limited to *Al-Majd* Channel. The famous Saudi preacher *Salman Al-U'uda* in the episode of 29.02.2012 said that the delay of victory in Syria relates to a divine wisdom, in which case a Muslim does not have the right to complain about the delay of victory. In this case, some preachers justify that with an opposite meaning or narrations in many forms like “can you stand in the face of divine wisdom?” or, are you more knowledgeable than God in the matters of injustice and murder against children and women in

³⁷ - Intertextuality is in fact underpinned by conceptual blending and show how religion, whether conscious knowledge or unconscious knowledge, may influence the ways in which we construct meaning (Heerden, 2009: 9).

Syria, do you have more clemency than God, while he is the Merciful?”. Therefore, those who are skeptical about the preachers’ words have to commit to silence and respect the divine wisdom whose purposes are not known to them as they are to God. The above talk intersects with a rhetorical logic that is common among preachers, that is in the event of a disaster or catastrophe, the depicting rhetorical arsenal is ready to convince the Muslim with the trial hypothesis, including telling a famous phrase that says "And whatever strikes you of disaster is a drive to what is bigger".³⁸

The duality of divine trial and Believers’ persistence is one of the central ideas promoted by the program "*We are with you*", to mobilize people against *Al-Assad’s* regime. *Al-Sheikh Al-Munjid* asks in a program on 29.8.2012 about the reason that drives people in Syria to this amount of persistence on their faith and patience in facing the injustice of *Al-Assad’s* regime and their insistence to fight it, in order to stir up the attention of the viewer. *Al-Sheikh* answers himself based on employing the *Quranic* verses "They will not cease to fight against you until they force you to renounce your faith".

In his attempt to adapt the *Quranic* verse with the Syrian situation, *Al-Munjid* says that this verse was revealed against the Jews and Christians at that time, and it is against "*Al-Batiniya*"³⁹ too. Here, there is an employment

³⁸ - the previous sentence is the logo of preacher *Ayed Al-Qarni* program called: " *they ask you*" at "*Iqraa*" Channel- Read.

³⁹ - *Al-Batiniya* is an Islamic trend calls on his supporters to overcome the apparent meaning of the verses and prophetic sayings and access inside things on the grounds that the apparent meaning is only superficial, and the true understanding of religious texts is by entering to their depths and searching for underlying meanings inside them. When the mystical description is used against a person or a group, the implicit meaning here is expiation and apostasy according to *As-Sharh As-Sahih* (correct explanation). Many

for the **substitutive axis technique**⁴⁰; that is, he replaced the purposes of the verse and the reason of its revealing to emulate its reality at a different time, place and circumstances. The purpose of that is to create a high meaningful and faith judgment -for the current situation-, which are already presented unconsciously in the mind of the viewer by relating the two cases. Then, describing the Syrian regime and its supporters as being related to *Al-Batiniya* trend is a value judgment for the regime, and this judgment is not supported by scientific evidence or proofs. How did *Al-Sheikh* discover that *Al-Assad's* regime and its supporters are from *Al-Batiniya*? It is clear that the employment of **simplification and magnification** techniques⁴¹ is also present here in the preaching discourse. The purpose of emphasizing this employment, is to complete a series of convincing processes, aim to tell the viewer that the situation in Syria is a struggle between faith and infidelity, and the viewer is in a constant test case for his faith throughout the episode, whether he is with faith or infidelity.

Al-Sheikh "Al-Munjid" does not stop at promoting the idea that what is happening in Syria is a divine trial, but goes beyond that by talking about the benefits of trial!! He says that despite all the killings and violation of God sanctities, the good is still present in this "trial". He directly recites the following *Quranic* verse: "Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while such [trial] has not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before

Muslim jurists warned of this trend to the extent that Al-Baghdadi said that the danger of *Al-Batiniya* trend outweighs the danger of the Jews and the Magi. The same provision is the view of the *Al-Ghazali* (1964).

⁴⁰ - Substitutive Axis is to make a citation of an incident or an event and comparing it to a contemporary event in an attempt to bring a case in place of another one and a judgment logic in place of another one without taking into account the different in circumstances, times, environments and the substitutive axis is also rhetorical technique through which the speaker / writer seeks to produce meaning and a judgment in the recipient depending on a prejudgment of his toward an accident or incident

⁴¹ - The two techniques of simplification and magnification are techniques employed by the media discourse to form the intended meanings on the recipient. See: (Babin, 1991: 51 – 60).

you? They were touched by poverty and hardship and were shaken until [even their] messenger and those who believed with him said: "When is the help of Allah?" Unquestionably, the help of God is near", (holly *Quran, Surat Al-Baqarah*: Verse 214). The preacher here links between the trial hypothesis and the tax of the believer's entry to paradise, to reemphasize that the calamities are atonement for sins. As follows, the preacher highlights again the mobilizing and promotional logic for people to encourage them faithfully to resist *Al-Assad's* regime, and in that, there is a substitutive axis to indicate that fighting an "infidel" regime like *Al-Assad's* is rewarded by a promise of Paradise, and that itself is the tax of the believer's entry to paradise!

The preacher *Al-Munjid* goes on to build the divine trial system in describing what is happening in Syria, and he is trying to ask and answer by himself any question that may cross the viewer's mind, such as saying: "People ask why did not we achieve victory yet?" He directly answers by employing the verse: "For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease" (*holly Quran, Surat Al-Sharh*. Verse 6), and he cites with the tyranny of Pharaoh, and how was the end of each infidel and tyrant in an attempt to stimulate the viewers again to compare the tyranny of Pharaoh with the tyranny of *Al-Assad's* regime. However, the answer of *Al-Sheikh Al-Munjid* has a kind ignorance for the critical and mental sense of the viewer; as the answer of "why did not the "believers" win their battle with injustice in Syria," is assumed to be based on objective reasons, such as the disparity in military power and the human technical & financial possibilities and others. *Al-*

Sheikh Al-Munjid here made a full **withholding** process ⁴² for these objective reasons in parallel with **highlighting the** faith as the only cause in the believer's battle with the infidel, which would eventually lead to an important victory of the believer regardless the growing oppression, strength and tyranny of the infidel.

Dualities Logic in the discourse of *Al-Majd* Channel and its preachers is present in the diagnosis of the Syrian crisis. *Al-Sheikh Al-Munjid* says that what is happening in Syria is a radical conflict: the conflict of polytheism with monotheism, *Al-Sunna* with Heresy and the Right with Wrong. Therefore, the viewer has only two choices: Either to be with Unitarians to God or with the infidels, either on the side of the right and the people of right or on the people of evil's side. Considering that the audience of a religious channel must be believers and monotheism, here the effect is multiplied as the preacher leaves the audience no way to think, either good or evil. That has **symbolic violence**⁴³ practiced by the channel and its preachers on its audience unconsciously or consciously enveloped with the faith logic and polytheism caveats.

In the program "*A Dialogue Hour*" entitled with: "*A year on the Syrian revolution*", which hosted *Al-Sheikh Saleh bin Abdullah Doris*, the judge of the appeals court in *Mecca*, the **division between good and evil, faith and disbelief technique** is repeated. *Al-Sheikh Saleh* used terms such as: "the regime's deep hatred, infidelity in all its images and forms, the

⁴²- Highlighting and withholding are rhetorical techniques employed by any discourse in order to form the desired effect, and they are also analytical techniques of media discourse which were explained. See: (Bourdieu, 1998).

⁴³- Symbolic violence, it is the non-physical violence, it is intellectual violence that is mostly exercised on the receiving guests and audience, it is a hidden implicit violence. For more details, see: (Bourdieu, 1998).

Syrian regime and disbelief in all heavenly principles, the folly of the regime, a huge massacre, the thugs army... etc (A year for the Syrian revolution, 2012).

Exaggerations Logic is present in more than one location within the episodes of "*We are with you*". *Al-Sheikh "Al-Munjid"* never hesitates to remind the viewer of the killing performed by the Syrian regime, and connects sometimes killing with debasement and raping women. Mentioning debasement and women raping there is an extreme emotional state and religious prepossession for the viewer; as talking about raping in the Arab and Islamic culture produces **high meaning** (Baudrillard, 2004) for the viewer that controls his emotions. Such a state directs audience towards more mobilization against the regime, considering that the rape of women is linked to the mentality and ideology of honor in the pre-Islamic Arab culture. *Al-Sheikh "Al-Munjid"* returns to emphasize on the murder and the rape of Muslim chaste women in terms of the justifications of the trial logic by saying "that murder is destined for this religion and its followers."

In the episode "*We are with you*" with *Al-Sheikh "Salman Al-U'uda"* on 19.02.2012, "*Al-U'uda*" repeated what preceded by *Al-Sheikh "Al-Munjid"* of comparing "*Al-Assad*" with "*Haman*" and "*Pharaoh*". That means employing **the repetition technique**, which aims to strengthen the judgment and the impression that was mentioned above, especially prejudgment of the people on "*Haman*" and "*Pharaoh*" so that the substitutive axis can be present again in the form of repetition.

Exaggeration logic is evidently present among some preachers at *Al-Majd* channel, especially when it is linked with the narration technique. *Al-Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munjid* in the same program, on 08.29.2012, recounted a series of success stories of the Syrian revolution, giving example, a video on YouTube, shows a gun machine on a car that shot down a Russian-made -MIG plane, and for the narration purposes, *Al-Sheikh* shows signs of exclamation; How did that happen? He himself answers with “this will not happen without *Al-Mujahideen’s Takbeers* (cheering that God is greater) and their strong determination along with faith, and so God enabled the shots to hunt to the plane.

Al-Seikh goes further by telling a stranger story which he described as a divine miracle. He tells about a young man escaped from the *Al-Assad’s* forces but did not find a place to hide except in a mantle of an old woman who was sitting in front of her house. He says that *Al-Assad* forces could not notice him, and when they asked the old woman for the young man, she said, “I did not see anyone, and you can enter home and search!” The preacher continues his narrative with *Takbeer* with the support of the presenter to impart a state of shock for the viewer, but the audience is in negligence case. In the interpretation of the previous case, *Said Pennekrad* (2005) says in his analysis of the effectiveness of the narrative fiction used by preachers that the listener or viewer when listening, all the emotional energy that the preacher employs dispossess the mechanisms of defense and protection for the viewer. The logical question is how could a young man hide inside an old woman’s mantle and *Al-Assad’s* forces, who stopped to talk with the old woman, did not notice him, then the *Salafist* trend prohibit the women to shake hands with strange men, how to enter into her mantle!

Among the rhetorical exaggerations in narrative fiction is what was used in the episode of "*We are with you*" under the title "*Tremseh Massacre*" on 13/07/2012. *Al-Sheikh Khaira llah Talib*, chairperson of the *Islamic Sham Body* talked in the show about his visit to some areas that were bombed recounting some heroism models of women and children. He narrated a story of a two years old child whose father was killed, this child asked his uncle for a pistol, when they asked the child why, according to the words of *Al-Sheikh*, the child answered that he wanted to kill *Bashar*, and when they asked him about his father, he said that he was in paradise. At the same time, the *Takbeers* of the broadcaster and *Al-Sheikh* himself resounded to give a spiritual aura that stimulates the recipient for solidarity and support. This narrative fiction, which stimulates to encourage people to engage with the Syrian revolution and to achieve this final purpose, the narrative fiction seeks to keep the viewer through the verbal and visual signs, which undertakes the enjoyment and media (Bignell, 2002).

The same logic of the narrative magnification is repeated with preacher *Anas Swead* in a special episode of the program from Syria. *Swead* tells a story to demonstrate the solidarity with the people in the neighborhood where he lived, where the bread supply was cut off for several days and people were in severe distress with nothing to eat at homes. Then, one day after *Al-Sheikh* came out of the mosque when the blockade was completely enforced in the neighborhood, he found a car filled with bread, someone brought it from another neighborhood. He says, "Despite the fact that people's homes had run out of food for several days, people did not crowd for bread. No one came close and no clashes happened," he says that he himself had to ask people to approach and get bread". During that, the

channel displays a video clip shows people as they were jostling to get bread, even one of them climbed the car to get his share before it runs out. In all cases, the displayed scene denies the preacher's talk and this was probably what prompted the channel to stop the video clip. However, in order for the narrative constancy to be continued without conflict between the video and the narrative fiction, the channel displayed a scene of a man killed by a sniper bullet and the photographer screamed, "The martyr of bread". This scene was followed by a famous Islamic song about the martyr in conjunction with images of martyrs and promises to achieve hopes, either victory or martyrdom. (Interview of *Al-Sheikh Anas Swead at Al-Majd, 2012*)

The previous dramatic plot with its various elements seeks to give a high meaning to the objective reality. Choosing story as a way of preaching and counseling refers to choosing narrative fiction as a manner (and a tool) for persuasion. That, in a way or another, means being bias to the probability system and all of its mechanisms, at the expense of the "objective" description to the world. In this context, telling the bread story will serve as scale of the "actual" reality of people's solidarity and unity against oppression and violence, and will dominate other aspects of daily reality (Pennekrad, 2005).

6.5 The Semiotics of the Metaphorical Stories

Many of the programs and TV episodes allocated by *Al-Majd* channel to follow up the Syrian revolution were dominated by citations of stories from the Islamic history, specifically the situations in which the prophet stood against the infidels, and the prophet's patience while dealing with intolerable injustice. This has been adopted by preachers in an attempt to push people towards a religious mobilization against *Al-Assad's* regime. This is what we notice in the words of the preacher *Al-Qarni* and others, such as the citation and metaphors from the stories of the prophet –PBUH– as well as comparing these stories with the current Syrian reality. In addition to what the prophet was facing from the infidels' oppression versus the suppression and aggression of the Syrian regime against Muslims in Syria.

The episode named as "*The Friday of Popular Resistance*" of "*We are with you*" program, hosted the preacher *A'yed Al-Qarni* who compared the patience, resistance, and the destiny of the Syrian people with the patience of Muslims in *Al-Qadisiya* battle. He said, "*Homs* (one of the Syrian cities) is the second *Al-Qadisiya*". In another episode of the program, on 13-12-2012, *Su'oud Bin Abdallah Al-Fnsian* – A preacher and a lecturer at Al-Dammam University- said that, the signs of victory are obvious now. *Al-Fnsian* said that manifestation of preciousness within the Syrian community is the evidence for those victory signs, comparing what is happening in Syria with the story of *Al-Ifk* that happened in the prophet's era, which was followed with sedition between Muslims. This incident, which included accusing one of the prophet's wives of committing adultery, was compared with what is happening now in Syria. He repeated the words of the prophet *Muhammad*

who described *Al- Ifk* as a bad phenomenon that might hold the good within. This means that, whatever happens in Syria meaning the killing and destruction is bad from the outside, but it could hold –for Muslims- the good inside. The relationship the preacher tries to found between *Al-Ifk* story and what is happening in Syria appears to be an arbitrary relationship, but the narration could be beneficial in extracting the meaning away from the logical relationship. As in the previous example, the historical event –the adultery- was not given for anything but as a pretext to narrate another story, which is a mixture of old incidents and temporary psychological cases with their current repercussions (Pennekrad, 2006).

The episode of "*The Friday of Baba A'mro*" (2012) in the program "*We are with you*", which was published on the YouTube, hosted the Syrian journalist *Mohammad Milhem* and the preacher *Abdel Aziz Bin Marzouq At-Tarifi*. The guest preacher used the semiotics of metaphorical stories when he compared between the Syrian rebels and their rights with a story of a man who came to complain to the prophet about someone who stole his money, then, the prophet has legitimized the fighting for him. Therefore, the preacher was comparing between the story of the man with the case of the Syrian people, which he also used to conclude to "legitimizing the fighting of Syrian people against *Al-Assad's* regime.

Within the episode of "*Syria and the Tools of Conflict*" on 12-02-2012, the background of the program in the studio was pictures from the Syrian revolution, in addition to the signs of "*We are with you*" and "*For all Syrians*". The episode hosted two people from the opponents of the Syrian regime who were, Dr. *Hussain Al-Harbi* – Syrian academician- and Dr.

Khalid Al-Bakir— Saudi academician and thinker. The semiotics of metaphorical stories (Babin, 1991) was obvious in the episode, and among this was the discussion about wrenching "A tunnel around the city of *Homs*" to protect its people from the violence of the regime forces. This was subtracted in an attempt to create a substitutive axis with *Al-Khandaq Battle* in which Muslims spaded a trench around *Al-Madina Al-Munawara* in 5 AH to impede the advancement of *Quraish* infidels and to prevent them from arriving to *Al-Madina Al-Munawara*.

The episode of "*On the Way to Victory*" on 22-02-2012, hosted preacher *Walid Al-Rashudi* and Dr. *Hassasn Al-Jaja* the director of Media Office of Al-Sham Islamic Body. Dr. Hassan conducted a number of comparisons between the Syrian revolution and the stories of prophets and the Prophet *Mohammad's* companions. Among which was the siege of the prophet in a place in Saudi Arabia that is called "*al-Shi'b*" until the prophet and his companions ate the leaves of the trees. Then, he narrated the story of *Noah*, peace be upon him, and his 950 years sojourn while calling his people to believe in God until God gave him the privilege to defeat them, in addition to the story of the prophet Lot. All of these stories were employed to create a substitutive axis between the suppression of old nations of Muslims and the suppression of Muslims by *Al-Assad* in Syria. Then, the preacher *Hassan* cited the massacre of *Hamah* 1982, in which the forces of *Al-Assad* were cutting the hands of women in order to steal their jewelry, as he said. He followed his words by a *Quranic* citation of "Indeed, Allah defends those who have believed". This type of implications within the narration, according to *Rollan Barthes* (1977: 22) aims at "affecting by a deception" where changes are being made to the images for producing a

particular superstitious. That particularly implies in the cases of mixing two images together as what happened in the comparison of the prophets and their suffering with their people and the suffering of Syrians with *Al-Assad* regime.

The strangest episode in the program "*We are with you*" was titled with "*The Syrian Holocaust*", and it hosted Dr. *Abdel Karim As-Samak* who is a specialized researcher in the modern and contemporary Arab history". It was obvious from the title of the episode that it sought to create a substitutive axis through talking about the *Holocaust*, which faced the Jews in Germany in the period of the *Nazis* versus the events in Syria. The historical imagination which is present in the audience's minds regarding the *Holocaust* and the way through which Jews were tortured by locking them up inside ovens and burning them, has meant to produce a high meaning through which viewers will get an impression that what is happening in Syria should be considered as a holocaust. Therefore, this episode like the previous ones, sought to make the Syrian reality as a legend.

The historical intertextuality appears strongly in different episodes of the program of "*We are with you*". In the episode of the aforementioned "*Syria, Scenes from Inside*", preacher *Anas* linked between the armed gangs affiliated to the Syrian regime and a group that appeared in the Islamic history which was called as "*Al-Qaramita*" who made a revolution against the *Abbasid Caliphate*. Preacher *Anas* says that the gangs of the Syrian regime are from the old *Al-Qaramita*. He also describes the actions of *Al-Qaramita* when they attacked *Al-Ka'ba* and killed people there; how they were entering houses binding parents while killing children then raping

mothers in front of their husbands, and eventually killing the husbands. Sad music and moaning voices as sound effects that accompanied the words of the preacher pushed towards emotional empathy from the viewers' side, especially when the preacher continued the narrative scenario talking about evidences of knife-slaughtering cases in Syria while comparing the two cases. This comes in synchronization with presenting scenes of dead people on the ground and in synchronization with religious chanting and hymns. In an attempt to complete the conformity of the historical comparison, the preacher follows the previous incidents briefly with a video of an eyewitness who describes their suffering during their sit-in in *al-Masjid Al-Omari* (Al-Omari Mosque) and how *Al-Assad* forces attacked them and shot the *holy Quran* as well. According to the previous talk, the size of employing and highlighting religious symbols within new contexts from the narrations, which are in total considered as tools for passing on new facts, is obvious. The historical evidences are only a pretext for narrating other stories which are a mixture of old incidents and temporary psychological cases in our time along with their reactions (Pennekrad, 2005).

Then, in the episode of "*Divine Law within the Syrian Context*" which hosted the preacher *Mohammad Al-A'rifi* on 16-02-2012, what has been mentioned earlier is repeated. *Al-A'rifi* continues his attack on Iran saying that it has sent 15 thousand soldiers to fight Muslims in Syria. The episode in general is designed intensively to mention *Quran* verses and prophetic traditions that assert the faith dimension in attacking and fighting the Syrian regime. The presenter of the program mentioned a group of *Quran* verses such as, (And there will not be for the wrongdoers any helper.) and (But Allah will never fail His promise). Then he asks the viewers in a form of

question "Do you think Allah will fail his promise?" Then, *Al-A'rifi* attacks the *Mufti* of Syria "*Ahmad Hassoun*" when he told *Al-Assad* that: the more you kill from those people, the closer you get to Allah". *Al-A'rifi* attacks *Al-Assad* and his regime by saying that they depend on a book other than God's Book that we do recognize.

As in the political aspect of *Al-A'rifi's* discussion, he discussed the issue of soldiers in *Dir' Al-Jazeera*, which has been sent by the Gulf countries to Bahrain. He said that, it contributes to the process of keeping security and does not kill anybody, on the contrary of what Iran has done when it has sent 15 thousand armed men. Then he was wondering, what was the business of Iran in calling for the withdrawal of *Dir' Al-Jazeera* from Bahrain? Repeatedly, he links what is happening in Syria with the faith implications especially the *Levant* area in which the *Christ* will descend and kill the *Al-Dajjal*, then Muslims will defeat the crusaders in the *Levant*. From this perspective, *Al-A'rifi* calls for standing up with people of the *Levant*, and all of Muslim and neighboring countries shall move their aircrafts. Aircrafts shall not stay in their bases while Muslims and Syrians are being killed, he added. *Al-A'rifi* does not hesitate to describe *Al-Assad* as vulgar, killer, and criminal. In addition to linking between what is happening in Syria now and what *Al-Assad* "the father" did in the 1980s of the past century.

Al-A'rifi cites with an Islamic battle during the days of Prophet *Mohammad*, which was called as "*Hunayn*" in which 12 thousand fighters participated with the prophet. This battle was one of the biggest battles for Muslims in terms of its fighters' numbers and equipment until that time. He

narrates how Muslims in the battle of "*Hunayn*" depended on themselves and no one else. They entered a valley in which there was a trap for them and the earth was confining for them with its vastness, and so the *Quranic* verse "and [even] on the day of Hunayn, when your great number pleased you, but it did not avail you at all"(*holly Quran, Surat At-Tawba*. Verse 9).

Al-A'rifi cites with "*Hunayn*" incident; comparing it with the situation of the fighters in Syria, and how the "*Jihad*" stirred them up, and enabled them to take soldiers from the regime as prisoners. He adds that if they have a victory (military support) from outside, then they would sit idle doing nothing and say there comes who will fight for us. What is strange in the words of *Al-A'rifi* is the presence of contradiction in his speech. In the previous paragraph of his discussion, he was calling for standing by Syria and moving the aircrafts while he calls in another location for the fighters of Syria to depend on themselves and to be steadfast while not depending on the external support, so, how is that? The second guest in the episode of the "*Divine Laws in the Syrian Context*" is *Faisal Al-Shammari* who is a specialized expert in the field of information technology. He was talking over the phone about the electronic *Jihad* as it should be dutiful for Muslims to publish verses and videos, news about Syria on both *Twitter* and *Facebook* and in different languages.

The term Islamic *Jihad* evolved along with *Al-Qai'da* or what is so-called the third generation of *Al-Qai'da*. Despite the fact that jurists, preachers, and religious men differed in supporting and opposing the electronic *Jihad* against the enemy, particularly America and Israel, we find

that the presence of the Islamic *Jihad* today is now devoted for Syria and as a tool to attack the governmental website of *Al-Assad's* regime.

Among the preachers who supported the Islamic *Jihad* was *Tariq Sweidan* who –on his *Twitter* account- described this as a duty on all Muslims who are able to fight against Israel. The judiciary researcher *Abdallah Al-A'lweet* asserted the invitations of *Sweidan*; saying that the “electronic *Jihad* means damaging electronic devices of the enemy or taking important information sneakily”. At the same time he confirmed that, “as any other type of *Jihad*, it might be suitable according to specific calculations, and it could be harmful if it is not used in the suitable time and condition” (Almasry Alyawm, 2012).

6.6 Political Dimensions in the coverage of the Syrian Crisis

Despite the fact that the predominant feature of *Al-Majd* channel coverage for the Syrian crisis has taken the aspect of religious processing and the mobilization of people against *Al-Assad's* regime from the perspective of divine test, there are some of the episodes with directions and implications for Saudi Arabia and Qatar particularly. Within the program of "*Syria, Victory*" and in the episode that was broadcasted on 26-03-2012, and hosted *Al-Sheikh Kamal* –the member of the Syrian national council- certain political contradictions appeared in his speech such as "The Syrian revolution is 100% Syrian made, and it has not received any political or material assistance". However, and a few minutes after his previous talk, he

applauds the Saudi and Qatari support along with their credibility dealing with the Syrian crisis. In the previous discussion, the technique of contradiction appears. *Al-Sheikh Kamal* totally denies his first speech regarding stating that Syrian revolution has not received any political, military, or moral support, at the same time; he applauds the stand of Saudi Arabia and Qatar in the same episode. Besides, the method of simplification, or what is so-called -according to the methodology of discourse analysis- Surfacing, appears significantly in the words of *Al-Sheikh Kamal* in his absolute denial of receiving any kind of external support.

Anyway, there are repeated statements of the Qatari foreign minister, *Al-Sheikh Hamad Bin Jasim* regarding the support of Syria and what has been stated by the president of the Syrian National Council Dr. *Burhan Ghalion* about the council's readiness to pay the salaries of the rebels (*Al-Kabar* newspaper, 2012). So, what is the resource of this money to be paid? How the Syrian revolution is 100% - Syrian made, while the presenter himself asks on air for the support of the Syrian revolution. It should be enough that the title of the program "*Syria, Victory*" as a clear and direct indicator about the trend and the orientation of the channel, its policies, and agendas. *Al-Sheikh Khalid Kamal* personalizes the character of *Al-Assad* in the episode describing him as one who has a mental problem. He says, "We could describe him as an idiot". Then, he narrates with a type of emotional exaggeration, the story of torturing a 4-months-old girl! In order for the viewers not to think about the rationality of torturing the girl and other examples, *Al-Sheikh Kamal* goes on with verses and other prophetic traditions such as "If *Allah* should aid you, no one can overcome you). This means that, the purpose of enhancing the faith dimension is to create a faith

mobilization that pushes the viewers to think only within the faith framework that has been drawn by the preachers for the viewers.

Back to the political mobilization, we stop by again at the episode of "Dialogue Hour" named "A year from the Syrian Revolution" that hosted *Al-Sheikh Salih Bin Abdallah Darwish*, the judge of *Mecca* Court of Appeal. *Al-Sheikh Saleh* sought to link the relationship of Syria with Iran and the *Shiite* regime as an aggressive regime towards people of *Al-Sunna*. This includes a focus on the presence of sectarian dimensions within the struggle inside Syria. Then, the *Al-Sheikh* goes back to applaud the stand of Saudi Arabia and its support for the Syrian revolution and that the Saudi stand comes in conformity with the Islamic *Shari'a*. He goes further than this to criticize the Arab regimes, which have taken a stand that is less clear than the Saudi stand.

The episode of "*Syria, a History of Dignity*" (2012) hosted three poets to satire the Syrian President *Bashar Al-Assad*. The presenter of the episode "*Nasir Si Abdallah*" started the episode by attacking *Al-Assad* describing him as a dog, cheater, drug-addict, and arrogant. One of the poets was "*Abdel Rahman Al-A'shmawi*" who firstly supplicated *Allah* to guide them- the show anchors and guests- to say things that might be considered as *Jihad* "*The Jihad of Word*" and this was later repeated by the other two guests. Apart from getting into the details of the episode which had been repeated previously, it shall be enough to recall the affiliation of the channel and its political trends, especially the applaud of the poet *Al-A'shmawi* for the Saudi stand to the degree that he said, the Saudi people were the only ones who stood by the Syrian people.

Within the episode of "*We Are with you*" broadcasted on 13-02-2012, *Al-Sheikh Su'ud Bin Abdallah Al-Fnisan* –lecturer at University of al-Dammam- applauds the stand of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and thanks specifically the prince, describing his position as clear and supportive for the people of Syria. The presenter, at that time, interrupted reminding *Al-Fnisan* with Saudi foreign minister's invitation to support the Syrian rebels with all weapons. This in turn shall encourage *Al-Sheikh* to applaud repeatedly. It did not end there, the presenter comes back to create a historical intertextuality when he compares between the steadfastness of the companions of the prophet with that of the Syrians. While *Al-Fnisan* adds to the words of the presenter and increases description as if there was an agreed change of roles even implicitly. The presenter comes again citing the narration of the prophet, which says, "*Support your brother if right or wrong*". The interpretation of this saying is that Muslims shall support those whom are wronged among them while prevent those who wrong others by advice. The presenter wonders, how could the support be? In the end, he reaches a comparative case between what has been said by the prophet and what is happening now while focusing on the Gulf Countries in particular and their role in supporting the Syrian Revolution. Therefore, the presenter brought the Islamic heritage and dropped it on the current situations to gain much more support.

In the episode of "*Friday of Popular Resistance*" from the program "*We are with you*" which is published on YouTube on 17-2-2012, the preachers *A'yed Al-Qarni* and the Islamic thinker *Abdel Karim Bakkar* were hosted, many of the political indicators appeared. Among those indicators was *Bakkar's* indication of the Saudi stand towards Syria saying: "The

custodian of the two holy shrines says little, do a lot and the kingdom has made up its mind". *Al-Qarni* seeks to present a political and religious analysis regarding the hypothesis of the fall of *Bashar Al-Assad*, which shall lead to the collapse of the Iranian regime and cut its influence in the area as *Al-Qarni* described. He says that, it is impossible for the Syrian regime to remain the same as this, as it is from the Laws of *Allah*, thus those who believe in that realized that the Syrian regime should fall. There is a kind of contradiction between the speeches of the preachers; some explain the existence of the Syrian regime and the continuity of its suppression as a test from *Allah* and their talk goes even further on the benefits of trial. On the other side, other preachers commit to creating a contradictory in the hearts of the viewers; that believing in *Allah* will lead the believer to be convinced that this regime is going to fall. Therefore, the distance should be short between the notion of trials (affliction) and the notion of victory and in both cases, explanations are present, and the only victorious is the preaching discourse and its institutions.

Sunni and *Shiite* sectarian mobilization was also strongly present in the episode of "*We are with you*" with *Al-Sheikh Salman Al-U'uda* on 19-02-2012, in which *Al-Sheikh "Al-U'uda"* stopped by the notion of the *Shiite* sect in a way that accuses the Syrian regime of being *Shiite*. In addition, he criticizes the one family system in Syria as well as his focusing on the dangers of the presence of Iran's allies in the area like *Hezbollah*.

What is strange in *Al-Larne's* speech is his justification for the international community's hesitation in taking a decision regarding Syria, and according to his political analysis, this refers to the fear of the Israeli

Veto! Nevertheless, the simple question that is posed here, does Israel have the right of Veto so that it can use it in the Security Council? The logical and political explanation is supposed to be based on a truth that the support of Russia and China for Syria in the United Nations prevents the efficiency of the United Nations as well as the pressure of the Arab group.

In the episode of the "*Divine Laws and the Syrian Context*", the program hosted the preacher *Mohammad Al-A'rifi* who assailed the Syrian regime when he used terms such as: the filthy system, filthy behaviors, the filth *Al-Assad*, and the vulgar regime". The preacher *Al-A'rifi* did not forget to criticize Iran and its supporting position for the regime of *Al-Assad*. He further accused it of sending 15 thousand soldiers to Syria in an attempt to help Syria suppress the rebels. This also contains a mobilization process for the viewers against the regimes of *Al-Assad* and Iran. *Al-A'rifi* did a comparison between the preachers and the prophet, as the prophet was not able to help poor people who were living in *Mecca* just like the preachers themselves and their inability of fighting with the Syrians. This helps to create a substitutive axis. He is putting the preachers and their inability of tangible participation in the Syrian revolution, in the same position as the prophet's stand and inability –at that time- to help poor people in *Mecca* at the beginning of Islam.

In turn, *Al-Sheikh Salman Al-U'uda*, and while being hosted in an episode within the program of "*We are with you*" named as "*The Role of Muslim Scholars to Appeal for the Syrian Revolution*"; he attacked Iran and accused it of lacking credibility. An imaginary picture of the Syrian regime collapse has been drawn and how this collapse will change the area,

represented by the fall of Iran's allies specifically *Hezbollah*. He also called for the increase of the international and Arab pressure on *Al-Assad's* regime as well as boycotting it, asking the ambassadors of Syria to split over against the regime. If the international and Arab pressures on this regime get together, it would not remain any longer", he added.

In the episode of "*Friday of Baba A'mro*" in the program of "We are with you" on 24-05-2012 which hosted the Syrian journalist *Mohammad Milhem* and *Al-Sheikh Abdel Aziz Bin Marzouq At-Tarifi*, the guests and the viewers who phoned have focused on the fact that the situation in Syria is an ideological and racial cleansing war. Then, in the episode of "*On the way to Victory*" on 22-02-2012 which hosted *Al-Sheikh Walid Al-Rashudi* and Dr. *Hassasn Al-Jaja* – the director of the media office of the Islamic Levant-, the presenter started with an inquiry regarding "the Iranian role in the area and what is happening in Syria, Iraq, and the states of the area". The guest attacked the *Safawi* role in Syria stating that the dangerous interference of Iran in Syria surpasses what is happening in Iraq and other Arab countries. *Al-Rashudi* was wondering about the two Iranian battleships, which reached the port of Tartous; what did they carry? Were these battleships carrying fruits, Iranian apples? The presenter was being sarcastic by saying "they carry peace"!

"*The Syrian Holocaust*" episode of the program "*We are with you*" which hosted Dr. *Abdel Karim Al-Samak* –specialized researcher in the modern and contemporary Arab history", remains as the most prominent in our context. Though we have discussed this episode in the previous pages under the title of semiotics of narrative stories, we are repeating it here for

discussing the political dimensions it included. Here, the presenter of the program started the episode by posing certain inquiries such as: “should the situation in Syria be considered as an exception or there should not be a surprise in that? Does Islam fight for the sake of Islam?” The guest of the episode Dr. *Al-Samak* began the episode by attacking Iran, considering that the revolution of *Al-Khomeini* was the reason of dividing Islam into *Sunni* and *Shiite*. The political exaggeration in the speech of the guest reached to the level of saying, "We could liberate Palestine, but hostility against religion has no limits". He finds it easy to liberate Palestine from the Israeli occupation compared to the danger of *Shiite* plans against the Sunnis, which he considers as hostility against religion"!

The speech of the guest about the sectarianism of the regime was strongly apparent in the episode. He repeats in more than one occasion that killing in Syria asserts and confirms the sectarianism of the regime, its hostility, and aggression against the *Sunnis*. In another occasion, he describes the Syrian regime and its sectarianism as being closer to the Jews than to us- meaning the *Sunnis*.

6.7 Conclusions

As per the analysis for the sample of episodes from the program "*We are with you*" on *Al-Majd* channel, and the citation of a sample of other programs allocated to discuss the Syrian crisis, it was apparent that the channel sought clearly for the popular mobilization against *Al-Assad's* regime, in return of standing beside the rebels or the fighters. *Al-Majd* channel's speeches are based on the process of employing both religion and human relationship, as key factors in directing the interests of people and their stands regarding the situation in Syria.

Employing religious texts is evident in the speech of the channel, among which was the invitation to the Syrian people to be patient and steadfast following the traditions of the prophets and ancestors, parallel with motivating them to fight *Al-Assad* and reminding the viewers that the fate of *Al-Assad* resembles *Pharaoh* and *Haman* and all tyrants of the history. Moreover, the channel's speech included invitation for boys, girls, and women to go for fighting even if there is no permission from their guardian.

It was predominant in the episodes of "*We are with you*" presenting bloody scenes for children and women who were wounded or killed by the forces of the regime in Syria. Through focusing on the humanitarian aspect of the continuous incidents as well as repeating painful scenes, the channel aimed at creating a case of emotional sympathy and public mobilization to motivate the public opinion towards popular movement in Syria.

As per the political side of the coverage, the political indications were apparent on various programs on *Al-Majd* channel, specifically the program of "*We are with you*"- that supports the stands of the Gulf Countries in general and Saudi Arabia in particular regarding what is happening in Syria. In return, the program scathes Iran and conducts popular mobilization against it for the degree that preachers described the threats of Iran as extremely bigger and more dangerous than the *Zionist* project in the area. The previous results, which have been discussed in this study, reflect the indications of the preaching discourse's strength represented in the Islamization of the Syrian crisis as well as employing different techniques for the media discourse. Among those techniques were the techniques of narration, shooting, and audiovisual effects that aimed in total to change the screen of the channel into a live uprising that looks like a virtual battle.

The process of Islamizing the Syrian revolution through *Al-Majd* preaching channel has been done through employing certain religious symbols such as desecration of the *Quran*, demolishing the mosques, and conducting assaults in case of describing the Syrian army. In turn, there are processes of narrating stories of heroes and historical Islamic characters, specifically the Prophet *Mohammad* and his companions in related situations; showing how they were able to pass the tests of *Allah* due to their strong faith.

The techniques of withholding, highlighting, and deepening the events in the media discourse have been applied successfully in *Al-Majd* channel. It has been applied from the point of good and evil, faith and disbelief, *Halal* and *Haram* (Allowed and Prohibited). The semiotics of narrative stories of

incidents and historical events has been employed as metaphors for measurement and comparison with contemporary events in the Syrian Revolution. The study reached to the conclusion that these historical comparisons withheld the personification of reality through the information, statistics, and other scientific indicators.

Finally, the process of Islamizing the Syrian Revolution by *Al-Majd* channel has been achieved through invoking religious repository such as, rules, stories, historical models, and contemporary symbols, which have been employed for the sake of giving an Islamic flavor to the popular protests in Syria. The strongest of which was presenting painful humanitarian scenes such as killing, and other injuries that were mixed by shouting and *Takbeer* "saying *Allah* is great" as well as the supplication of the preachers from inside the studio to bring the victory sooner and to revenge from the enemies of *Allah* and religion. All of which have been followed by sound effects and tears of some of the preachers as an indicator of the size of the calamity. In addition, there was intensive show of the religious slogans such as "There is no God but *Allah* and *Mohammad* is his messenger", all praise is to *Allah*, and the *Jihad* for the sake of *Allah*. These slogans were sometimes mixed with enthusiastic songs that increase the conviction and faith of the audience and their trust that the events in Syria are a test from *Allah* and they have to be patient and extend their thanks to *Allah*.

7. Results

Al-Azhar preacher *Mohammed Tantawi* believes that modernization is not only involved in the act of technical modernization, but it is also followed by changes in ethics system. Modernization has been playing an essential role in breaking the traditional perception among people, especially towards asceticism and accepting what is available. As long as modernization is applied within the limits of being opened up for the other, more than being self-opened for what is already available, a gap between what is available and what is offered will then be created, and within this gap, morality is missed. Accordingly, globalization from this perspective is a novelty that contradicts with familiarity, as the seduction of luxuries is threatening the traditional base of asceticism and necessities' sufficiency (Al-Morsi, 1999: 196).

The effectiveness of modernization led to impose the culture of spirituality supermarket, which is based on individual multiple choices, but certainly it is not free of religion. Previous diagnosis intersects with the interpretations of *Mara Einstein's* theory of "supply side of religion", which explains the status of preaching discourse as it is a market that does not differ from any other market.

Hence, forms of religiosity displayed by preaching channels, have govern the demand for religion, and so multiple supply of preaching discourses come at the expense of the content. In this context, two

perspectives can be seen; firstly, modernization offered new techniques of preaching. Those techniques merge both modernized culture and religion discourse, and that threatens the sanctity of religions and promotes secularism. Second, preaching channels try to adopt the modernization and its techniques to the absolute religion by using descriptions and arguments such as: The virtue of God, blessing from God, All of that God willing, this is Allah's... and sometimes, preachers scream at the face of the viewer like saying you want to be against the will of God. The previous quest imposes symbolic violence on audience/ followers, through which the preacher reaches their minds to convince them in a way that serves his own interest.

This thesis discusses the historical development of the preaching Islamic forms since the beginning of Islam up to the present time from the perspectives of poetry, rhetoric and mosque preaching sessions up to the preaching cassette and preaching satellite channels. The ties between preaching tools, politics and sometimes economy are clear; the mosque as a preaching tool is used by Islamic groups against other groups to gain legitimacy and uncover others as illustrated in the *Umayyad* and *Abbasid* eras, more than thousand years ago. Preaching cassette also played the same role in case of Iraq and Iran war in the eighties of the last century when the *Salafi* preachers used cassette to support Iraqi regime against Iran, whilst, they used it again but against Iraqi regime in period of invading Kuwait - years later- for political interest as clarified earlier. In addition to the political interest, economical revenue of the preaching cassette established for the emergence of Islamic investment in the cassette industry that competed the lyric cassette.

In case of digital broadcast, the ability to reach wide audience with huge revenue encourages new investors to enter the advocacy market and launch preaching channels, which became a kind of prestige for many preachers. This explains the reason why the number of preaching channels reached eighty channels, excluding channels of dreams interpretations or *Quranic* treatment... etc.

This study focused on analyzing the concepts of commodification and Islamization in two extremist *Salafi* preaching channels: *Al-Majd* and *Al-Nas*. The essential difference between the two concepts is that commodification is linked to giving an Islamic brand for goods and services whilst, Islamization implies linking things in dualities such as *Halal* and *Haram*, good and evil, faith and disbelief...etc.

Commodification of religion at *Al-Nas* channel appears in giving Islamic brand for goods and services in order to attract as much audience/customers as possible, considering that the primer meaning of commodification comes from promoting goods and services on Islamic screens. Consequently, the public confidence in preachers will be reflected on the advertised products. This is what *Al-Nas* channel does; linking the earned benefit of buying an entertainment television for example, with gaining religious benefit at the same time; and that is by merging the television ad scenes with some religious verses such as (All Extolment be to Allah), which in turn, qualifies them religiously to earn God's reward for

screening religious quotations. In a same case, a price offer advertisement for a (fan) also gives the costumers a chance to buy two fans with a discount for the second one, so the advertisement encourages audience to use the first fan at home and put the second fan in a mosque to earn God's reward. This is just one type of commodification that the chapter VI discussed.

In case of *Al-Majd* channel, Islamization of politics means giving Islamic overtones for political actions in addition to linking the domestic situation with historical metaphors, which direct the audience's attention by morality's connotations. An example for that is linking the suffering of people in Syria bombing, killing and destruction with what the *Prophet Muhammad* faced at the beginning of the call to Islam; how his patience and confidence in God led him to success, so Syrians have to emulate him. Islamization of politics in Syria is also represented by atoning the *Al-Assad* regime and attacking his alliance with Iran as a *Shiite* ideology, whilst the channel praises the efforts of Saudi Arabia and Golf countries in supporting the Syrian revolution as "gatekeepers" of Islam and Muslims.

The rising appearance of *Salafi* parties during the Arab spring especially with winning 25% of the Egyptian parliament seats in the largest Arab country in terms of population is an indicator of the power of *Salafi* discourse, particularly in media. Furthermore, the *Salafi* discourse exploited the desire of people to change, to call for applying Islamic rules in return to the liberal and national parties that call for democratic state.

In case of *Al—Majd* channel coverage for Syrian reevaluation, It applied discursive techniques such as highlighting events and ensconcing others, techniques of narratives, Emotional amplification and consisting historical metaphors that reached to naming the battles in Syria with the names of historical Islamic battles in the era of Prophet Mohammed and the following Islamic eras. Furthermore, the channel sought to enhance the logic of faith in advocacy sessions like the employment of the *Quranic* verses and projecting them on the Syrian reality, especially verses that urge people to be patient, bear the injustice, and consider it as a test from God, so believers have to do so to achieve victory and win God's consent.

Al- Majd channel is still presenting a special coverage for the Syrian revolution until the date of writing these letters. This coverage includes designing interactive studios that support the Syrian revolution side by side with the sympathy of programs' presenters and guests with it. That in fact, has played influential and emotional roles, improved by presenting scenes of killing civilians accompanied with sad music that drive audience to a greater solidarity. *Al-Majd* also broadcasted revolutionary songs to stimulate the spirit of participating in the revolution against the Syrian regime. On the other hand, broadcasting scenes of preachers who weep on the air and scream from time to time, along with ideological slogans such as "God is enough" God is great, is also another way to gain a greater emotional empathy.

Finally, I have to say that the emotional religious discourse of *Salafi* channels does not stand in behalf- or represent all the preaching Islamic channels. There are some programs on moderate channels- such as *Iqraa* and *Al- Resalah*, seek to produce rational discourse and enhance the spirit of thinking and innovation, behind of the binaries of *Halal* and *Haram*, faith and disbelief...etc. I hope to find an opportunity to highlight these channels.

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