

## Understanding Religious Egocentrism

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### Abstract

*The exploration of religious egocentrism reveals its prevalence and significance within religious discourse, with implications for individual development and societal interactions. Rooted in early developmental stages and characterized by narcissism and self-centeredness, religious egocentrism influences perceptions of morality, relationships with others, and interpretations of divine concepts. Contrasting religious egocentrism with radicalism and extremism underscores nuanced distinctions in cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. While religious radicalism shares certain traits with egocentrism, such as literal interpretations of sacred texts and emphasis on religious symbols, extremism diverges by glorifying violence and imposing personal beliefs on others. This delineation underscores the spectrum of religious orientations, ranging from egocentrism's self-centeredness to extremism's militant ideology.*

**Keywords:** *Egocentrism. Societal Interactions*

### INTRODUCTION

Faith is a multifaceted and essential element for religiously devoted individuals. In severe cases, it can incite violence against perceived "enemies" or those seen as not sharing similar beliefs (Abbas & Siddique, 2012; Bhui et al., 2012; Rubin, Gunaratna, & Jerard, 2011; Kruglanski et al., 2009; Monahan, 2012; O'Duffy, 2008; Putra & Sukabdi, 2013; Shepherd, 2007; Tausch, Spears, & Christ, 2009; Dernevik et al., 2009; LaFree & Dugan, 2004; McGilloway, Ghosh, & Bhui, 2015; Rabasa et al., 2010).

Governments worldwide implement counter-radicalism/extremism initiatives, such as interfaith dialogues, policy formulation, and targeting specific religious practices, symbols, and appearances (e.g., religious names, schools) for mapping and screening purposes (e.g., at immigration checkpoints, national borders, employee selection, recruitment, and promotion) (Chaterine, 2019; Ghaliya, 2019; Hermawan, 2019; Mahfud et al., 2018; Puspita, 2019; Sean, 2019). However, some efforts may inadvertently target the general religiously conservative population, leading to harassment, fostering phobias, and potentially inciting violence against those who practice the relevant beliefs, symbols, or identifiers (Abadi, 2018; Abdel-Hady, 2004; Abdulhadi, 2018; Hafez & Bayrakli, 2019; Bleich, 2011; Cipriani, 2019; Dauda, 2020; Dreher, 2009; Graham-McLay, 2019; Itaoui & Elsheikh, 2017; Kaplan, 2006; Kumar, 2018; Lee et al., 2009; Robby & Amrad, 2021; Sayyid, 2014).

For instance, burning flags containing statements of Muslim faith (such as Ar-Rayah and Al-Liwa), often mistakenly associated with terrorism, or banning veils/hijabs for Muslim women (while history shows Jewish or Christian Orthodox females also wear veils), could fuel phobias against Islamic theological statements (shahadah) and appearances (e.g., attire, beard, hijab), leading to mistreatment of Muslims in general (Esposito, 2019; Istriyani, 2016; Runnymede, 1997). Similarly, law enforcement's public exposure of suspected schools linked to terrorism financing, without proper preparation for transferring their students to alternative schools, could result in stigmatization, abuse, and rejection of these children in public educational institutions (Persada, 2022). Such mistreatment disregards the significance of religious rituals, practices, and symbols to believers of a religion (not just terrorists). Thus, prohibiting religious traditions, practices, or symbols without careful study and resolution may undermine the well-intentioned efforts of counter-terrorism, community tolerance, and peaceful coexistence in society (Bazian, 2012; Breen-Smyth, 2014).

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Regarding the development of faith, students' or individuals' religious learning encompasses a stage where they think egocentrically that their religion is the best and holiest among all (Genia, 1990; Fowler, 1982), which may stimulate problems in the future when they live among a heterogeneous population. The good news is that this egocentric stage does not last forever (Genia, 1990; Fowler, 1982). There are higher stages in the individuals' journey of faith development, such as transitioning (Genia, 1990), personal rationality (Wilber, Engler, & Brown, 1986; Wilber, 2001; Wilber 2007), individuating-reflective (Fowler, 1982), reconstructing (Genia, 1990), and mysticism (Underhill, 1990), to finally achieve religious maturity and wisdom (Genia, 1990; Fowler, 1982; Wilber, Engler, & Brown, 1986; Wilber, 2001; Wilber 2007). Nonetheless, in the case where the faith development process stops at the egocentric stage due to internal (i.e., personality) or external causes (i.e., stigmatization and alienation, instead of proper religious education), the individuals will suffer from stagnancy or not transform to the following levels, as has happened to religiously motivated terrorist offenders. The condition is what the author calls 'religious egocentrism'.

This article sought to understand religious egocentrism and its indicators. It also compares religious egocentrism with other themes such as religious radicalism and extremism. The final section will present cases of terrorist offenders.

## **RELIGIOUS EGOCENTRISM**

The roots of the term 'egocentrism' can be traced back to Freud's idea in Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development. Drawing on psychoanalytic concepts, Piaget introduced the concept of egocentrism in 1922 (Kesselring & Muller, 2011). Piaget's works, such as "Language and Thought of the Child" in 1923, "Judgment and Reasoning of the Child" in 1924, "The Child's Conception of the World" in 1926, and "The Child's Conception of Physical Causality" in 1927, elaborate on egocentric thinking. Initially, Piaget placed the egocentric stage between the autistic stage and the stage of logical thought (between 2-3 to 7-8 years) (Piaget, 1930; Piaget, 1995). However, by the mid-1930s, Piaget revised his concept, recognizing that egocentrism occurs at different stages of development in humans.

According to Piaget, egocentrism manifests in ontological and rational forms. Ontological egocentrism arises from unclear ego-boundaries and the need to distinguish the subjective from the objective (Piaget, Tomlinson, & Tomlinson, 1929). Failure to distinguish between the subjective and objective leads to treating mental or abstract phenomena as physical objects (realism) and attributing mental attributes (animism, artificialism) (Piaget, 1929; Piaget, 1930). Piaget suggests that realism, animism, and artificialism gradually diminish as the child engages in social interaction or becomes aware of their subjectivity (Piaget, 1923; Piaget, 1929; Piaget, 1930).

Logical egocentrism is evident in various phenomena (Piaget, 1972): 1) egocentric speech, such as echolalia, monologues, and collective monologues (where children talk simultaneously without listening to each other) (Piaget, 1926), 2) difficulty in understanding relational concepts and spatial relational terms (e.g., left and right), 3) inability to provide evidence for statements and lack of awareness of contradictions, 4) egocentric thinking characterized by juxtaposition (associating thoughts without the ability to prioritize one over another), syncretism (generalizing or thinking in wholes without considering parts), and transductive reasoning (non-logical thinking, e.g., "I haven't had my nap yet, so it isn't afternoon") (Piaget, 1962). Piaget explains that logical egocentrism arises because the child perceives everything solely from their perspective and assumes that everyone/the world thinks like them. The child has not yet grasped the diversity of possible viewpoints (Piaget, 1929). Therefore, egocentrism stems from a lack of discernment ability (Piaget, 1929).

After Piaget, Kesselring and Müller (2011) redefine the concept of egocentrism as a substage in the process of decentration, allocating attention to other people's perspectives to achieve 'personal equilibration' or the balance between accommodation and assimilation. They reformulated egocentrism in three phases: 1) strict egocentrism, where the child does not take different perspectives or relations into account; 2) egocentrism in the broader sense, where the child understands both differences between perspectives and shows attention to relations but without coordination; and 3) complete decentration, in which the child understands the coordination of perspectives and people's points of view.

In terms of religiosity, Genia (1990) identifies developmental faith stages within a religious individual equivalent to the metamorphic theory of human development, including ego, psychosocial, moral, and cognitive approaches (Genia, 1990). Genia's Theory of the Development of Faith acknowledges the egocentric stage at the beginning of the faith-adopting process. Genia's theory expands existing models of faith development by combining and organizing ideas from object relations and psychodynamic psychology. Her purpose in this reconceptualization is to help psychotherapists understand religiously-committed patients by suggesting a theoretical framework that describes the inner-psychical and psycho-social developmental disturbances hidden under unhealthy adult religious functioning. She argues that her list of criteria for religious maturity helps clinicians distinguish healthy from unhealthy religious tendencies. Hence, more precise therapeutic implementations were hoped for from the expansion and refinement of her model (Genia, 1990).

Genia explains religious development as a continuum rather than as disconnected stages. Her Faith Development Theory constructs its concepts based on psychodynamic (i.e., Piaget's) and object relations theories, where the explanation of the highest (the fifth) stage of religious development characterizes religious maturity (Meadow & Kahoe, 1984). Her steps of faith are as follows:

### **Stage I: Egocentric Faith**

The hallmark of this initial stage is egocentricity, wherein the adult who 'religiously functions' at this stage is likely to demonstrate narcissism and self-centeredness. Hence, their religious expressions and descriptions indicate an overall immature personality development (Fowler, 1982; Kao, 2014; Meadow & Kahoe, 1984). Regarding moral development, the person at this stage is likely to demonstrate Kohlberg's heteronomous morality (Kohlberg, 1967; Kohlberg, 1970; Fowler, 1982). They define the rightness or wrongness of actions because of anticipated reward or punishment. Their behavior is based on its direct consequences with little consideration of the needs of others.

Psychosocially, an individual at this stage has not learned the basic sense of trust, which is essential for establishing healthy relationships with others and a positive self-concept (Erikson, 1963). They cannot differentiate the characteristics of others and form stable descriptions of them (Blanck & Blanck, 1994). Perceptions about others are narrowed to their current availability as need-satisfying objects. They cannot differentiate past-experience memories and information from a holistic and accurate concept of the other. Instead, they "split" others/define them into a dichotomy: "all-good" or "all-bad," depending on how well the other satisfies their psychological/emotional needs. There is little acknowledgment of others' needs, wishes, and feelings.

In terms of religious development, this stage can be discerned in the individual's descriptions of God, quality of prayer, and relationship to God (Spero, 1987; Rizzuto, 1979). The individual's perceptions of God are based on needs for gratification and affection, which fluctuate depending on their circumstances. For example, misfortunes provoke anger or perceptions of God as an unforgiving figure who punishes them. This anger may cause fear of God's neglect and various efforts to restore the ideal "all-good" divine figure depending on the remedies suggested by their received doctrines.

Regarding the quality of prayer, the individual is primarily desirous, reflecting their egocentricity and magical thinking that represents weak ego integration (Blanck & Blanck, 1994). Their praying is motivated by fear of punishment for perceived wrongdoings/sins rather than actual guilt or atonement. In terms of the relationship to God, the individual at this stage may demonstrate dichotomous thinking; the splitting of the 'good' things into God/God's side/angels and the 'bad' objects into Satan/devils (Lovinger, 1985; Rizzuto, 1979; Spero, 1987). Furthermore, as they view God as an extension of themselves, God's divine images are described as humanlike. Anthropomorphism at this stage displays the lack of solid ego boundaries and the inability to differentiate between self and others, which portray early failures in ego development. Treatment for the individual at this stage needs intense and long-term therapeutic work to strengthen their ego and establish a firm perception/recognition of self and others (Genia, 1990).

### **Stage II: Dogmatic Faith**

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This stage consists of egocentricity, anthropomorphism, and magical thinking, with significant qualitative differences in ego functioning distinguishing individuals at this stage from the previous one. The devotion to religious doctrine or dogma is not linked to pathological signs, as a standard religious value/belief system serves as the foundation for religious individuals (Genia, 1990). According to Genia, devotion to doctrine is not considered unhealthy solely because it is defensively utilized for psychological support (Genia, 1990).

Individuals at this stage demonstrate a law-and-order morality (Kohlberg, 1967; Kohlberg, 1970) where moral judgment is based on fixed rules/guidelines of fairness. The rules also clearly delineate duties/obligations within a reference social group. Although morality at this stage is still egocentric, individuals recognize the needs and rights of others, demonstrating a sense of responsibility and reciprocity, which distinguishes them from purely egocentric individuals. A morality of exchange/reciprocity and duty indicates an essential trust in others. Furthermore, their religious doctrines provide guidelines for reciprocal exchange between them and God; therefore, 'right and wrong' is based on compliance with the rules without considering situational contexts. As they require clear rules, they tend to interpret sacred texts (e.g., Holy Book) literally and view their contents as absolute.

Psycho-dynamically, individuals at this stage suffer from oedipal struggle and lack self-esteem (Genia, 1990). Their self-worth depends on others' approval and the fear of rejection. Psychosocially, their intense guilt prevents them from taking initiative and being spontaneous. Their defense mechanism against insecurity is repression rather than splitting between 'good' and 'bad' (Blanck & Blanck, 1994). Developmentally, their superego is oppressive (unlike egocentric individuals who lack sufficient ego controls). For these individuals, repression is supported by an authoritarian belief system. Dogmatic devotion to doctrines and perfectionist acts of ritual are employed to maintain internal controls and protect against extreme guilt and fear of rejection. Their prayers often involve bargaining with God by making promises to become more obedient in exchange for God's favor or assurance of love. Prayers are driven by the fear of losing God's love, and guilt over wrongdoings and self-criticism reflect the fear of God's punishment. 'Reconciliation with God' through prayers helps to restore their self-esteem.

Unlike egocentric individuals, those at this stage have firm ego boundaries that differentiate self from others. Hence, anthropomorphism at this stage reflects their intense need for external support. Unlike egocentric individuals, their religion is rooted in a socio-cultural context. Their devotion and identification provide security within a religious group, leading to conformity (even fanaticism) and a lack of questioning authority. They may affirm their beliefs, defend against doubt, and strengthen self-esteem by aggressively asserting that their social group is the holiest or superior. Their fanaticism provides an acceptable outlet for hostile urges. They may exhibit intolerance, condemn, or judge those with different ideologies and beliefs. Exposure to differences can stimulate feelings of doubt that threaten their integrity as devout believers. Treatment for individuals at this stage should focus on assisting them in gaining better acceptance of self and others and shifting the locus of control/authority from external to internal (Genia, 1990).

### **Stage III: Transitional Faith**

Religious thinking alteration usually occurs during adolescence and parallels other developmental changes in this period (Allport, 1950; Clark, 1959; Elkind, 1971; Kao, 2014; Starbuck, 1899). However, this stage may occur much later for some individuals, paralleling changes in their personality. There is a significant change at this stage: the shift from a morality of reciprocity to mutual interpersonal relations (Fowler, 1982).

At this stage, individuals can rise above their worldviews and objectively apprehending others' perspectives and opinions. Moreover, Kao (2014) characterizes this critical phase as a stage of faith doubt and uncertainty which may bring positive effects (healthy doubt) that stimulate the individual to explore and study more about their belief system and values (Allport, 1950; Baird, 1980; Batson & Ventis, 1982; Fowler, 1982; Hood, 1985). According to Genia, religious searching facilitates an individual's transition to having a healthier intrinsic religious commitment from an immature extrinsic religiousness (Genia, 1990).

Psychosocially, this stage is equivalent to the identity crisis (Kao, 2014) resulting in confusion, emotional turbulence, and rebellious behaviors (Genia, 1990). This stage may involve experimenting with and trying different ideologies (i.e., switching affiliations and exploring sects or cults) before finally reaching a higher level of autonomy and mature spiritual identity. Treatment for individuals at this stage should focus on their need for solid emotional support as they critically examine their religious beliefs, values, and commitment to a self-chosen faith (Genia, 1990).

#### **Stage IV: Reconstructed Internalized Faith**

At this stage, the individual culminates in a commitment to her chosen faith that surpasses egocentric and utilitarian concerns. This stage is achieved after critical reflection, exploration, and introspection during the transitional stage. The individual at this phase has a sense of purpose and meaning in life given by her religious ideology. Although adherence to doctrine and sacred scripture is still vital to her, such doctrine does not serve her self-justifying/defensive functions which characterize the previous stage of faith. For her, religious doctrine is a complex matter not narrowed by concreteness, literalness, and conceptual simplicity.

Psycho-dynamically, the person at this stage has rebuilt her belief system and internalized the standards of her faith. The religious doctrine operates as her internalized foundation for choices in life, guided by the ego ideal element of the non-oppressive/non-punitive superego. Moreover, her religious standards are comprehensive and consistently implemented in various social contexts and for other people's lives rather than centered on hers (Allport, 1950; Clark, 1959). For her, moral decisions are completed by following socio-cultural norms and civil law as long as they do not directly violate her religious code. Nonetheless, her thinking style tends to be dichotomous in terms of cognitive capabilities as she lacks tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty. Although she respects others' freedom in choosing their faith, she makes little effort to expand her belief system by uniting/integrating and combining ideas from other religious traditions. She may initiate social activities due to the ideals of her theology. Furthermore, although she is enthusiastic in converting others, her missionary passion is rooted in insecurity and care for others (by sharing the joys of her faith). Persuading/converting others stops her fanaticism as she assists others regardless of their theological and ideological differences. Her prayers include praise, thanksgiving, and devotion in terms of the quality of worship. Her prayer stems from constructive sorrow, not self-blame or excessive guilt. She believes in God's forgiveness and commits to taking corrective action. Overall, she is more emotionally and psychologically healthy than those in previous stages of religious development (Batson & Ventis, 1982; Donahue, 1985; Genia, 1991; Meadow & Kahoe, 1984; Spilka, et al., 2003). Treatment for the individual at this stage needs to focus on strategies to enrich the individual's spiritual viewpoint. In achieving this purpose, a psycho-spiritual growth group (Genia, 1990) may also help (Fowler, 1982).

#### **Stage V: Transcendent Faith**

The individual at this stage demonstrates religious maturity (Allport, 1950; Anderson, 1970; Batson & Ventis, 1982; Clark, 1959; Feinsilver, 1960; Fowler, 1982; Jung, 1938; Kao, 2014; Meadow & Kahoe, 1984; Strunk). This stage is signified by transcendent faith, which consists of more permeable psycho-spiritual borders. This transcendent faith is flexibly guided by a universal-principled morality. Criteria of religious maturity (Genia, 1990) are:

Transcendent relationship to something greater than oneself, where the individual shows an awareness of a force in creation greater than themselves.

Lifestyle, including moral behavior, is consistent with religious values.

Commitment without absolute certainty, in which the individual's religious commitment is held without losing its power for emotional experience and moral actions.

Openness to religiously diverse viewpoints.

The rejection of magical thinking, egocentricity, and anthropomorphic God concepts, where the individual does not demonstrate any immature, self-serving, and utilitarian religiousness.

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A healthy religious view includes both rational and emotional components that are intellectually convincing and emotionally satisfying.

Social interest and humanitarian concern, where the individual shows a religiously mature goal toward humankind by generating love, reason, and cooperative unity.

Life-enhancing and growth-producing, in which the individual shows responsibility, a generally optimistic view of the world and of human nature, positive self-esteem, and forgiveness even though they are aware of the reality of tragedy and suffering.

Meaning and purpose in life, where the individual integrates the personality into the larger world.

Independence from a particular dogma, set of practices, or formal religious structure, where the individual subscribes to beliefs, yet with tentativeness and openness to diverse viewpoints that allow them to reach beyond their faith structure for ideas that may expand their spiritual understanding (Fowler, 1982).

Genia (1990) acknowledges any additional developmental indicators by other clinicians or practitioners that overlay with or lie between her proposed stages. She suggests that the description of her designed stages may also be improved by integrating ideas from other fields of psychology (i.e., Forensic Psychology, in which the author specialized) through future research such as case studies, analysis of autobiographies, and reviews of psycho-historical materials. Additionally, she recommends more advanced psychometric evaluations of religious maturity when applying her theory.

Genia (1990)'s theory and description of religious maturity show that religious egocentrism (the first step of religiosity) is a common state that occurs in religious individuals irrespective of their demographic profiles, age, or religion (Genia, 1990). It can be summarized that religious egocentrism is demonstrated in the following critical indicators:

The adult exhibits religious narcissism and self-centeredness, understanding the correctness or wrongness of actions based on anticipated reward or punishment, with little consideration of the needs of others. Her understanding of others' needs adjusts based on need-satisfying matters. Because she struggles to distinguish between past experiences and a comprehensive understanding of others, she categorizes individuals into a binary: either entirely good or entirely bad, depending on how well they meet her psychological requirements. Similarly, her perceptions of God are influenced by desires for pleasure and gratification—for instance, interpreting misfortunes as divine retribution. Consequently, her prayers are motivated by a fear of punishment.

### **Religious Egocentrism and Radicalism**

Religious radicalism denotes a cognitive orientation within religious discourse characterized by a profound critique of prevailing socio-political norms and a concerted effort to reform or supplant established political frameworks (Sukabdi, 2022). Embedded within religious radical narratives are utopian ideological constructs, which envision alternative societal paradigms. Unlike religious extremism, religious radicalism does not espouse violence as a means to its ends. Practitioners of religious radicalism remain amenable to rational discourse and are even open to negotiation or concession in pursuit of their objectives (Sukabdi, 2022). Thus, religious radicalism occupies a spectrum wherein the demarcation between 'moderate' and 'radical' orientations is often nebulous (Fealy, 2004).

Individuals exhibiting religious radicalism manifest seven distinctive psychological traits (Sukabdi, 2022). Firstly, they espouse a totalitarian mindset, advocating for the imposition of religious laws and rituals at the state level, positing God as the sole arbiter of laws and societal norms, thereby disregarding human agency in daily affairs. Consequently, any legislation or constitutional framework devised by humans is deemed spurious and unworthy of adherence. Secondly, they exhibit a literal interpretation of religious scriptures, characterized by unwavering devotion and outright rejection of contextual scrutiny or rational analysis of sacred texts, as well as resistance to any modification of religious practices.

The third distinguishing characteristic pertains to their symbolic religious convictions, emphasizing adherence

to religious rituals and outward displays rather than delving into the deeper spiritual or philosophical aspects of their faith. The fourth characteristic involves their propensity for dichotomous thinking, wherein they categorize the world into binary opposites such as 'right versus wrong,' 'holy versus sinful,' and 'angelic versus evil,' without acknowledging nuances or gray areas. This dichotomous perspective aids in reducing decision-making complexities and streamlining choices.

The fifth aspect pertains to their pursuit of purification, leading them to adopt exclusive practices and eschew any association with 'the outgroup' to prevent contamination. The sixth aspect involves their tendency towards unilateralism, resulting in the rejection of ideas originating from the outgroup or external sources. The seventh aspect encompasses their endeavor for revolutionary change, particularly when they possess numerical strength, aimed at challenging established norms and institutions.

The parallels between religious radicalism and egocentrism manifest in several key aspects: 1) a prioritization of religious symbols over the deeper philosophical tenets of their faith, 2) adherence to a literal interpretation of sacred texts, 3) engagement in a dichotomous mode of thinking, characterized by black-and-white perspectives, 4) tendency to exhibit a unilateral stance, dismissing alternative viewpoints, and 5) assertion of moral superiority without overt advocacy for violence.

Distinctive features of religious egocentrism include anthropomorphizing the divine, attributing personal misfortunes to divine punishment, perceiving personal gratifications as divine rewards, and engaging in prayer with unrealistic expectations rooted in fantastical or magical ideation. Conversely, religious radicalism is typified by totalitarian tendencies, rejection of secular laws, pursuit of puritanical ideals, and adoption of revolutionary tactics aimed at effecting significant societal transformations.

### **Religious Egocentrism and Extremism**

Religious extremism manifests across three psychological dimensions: cognitive (belief), affective (emotion), and behavioral (psychomotor) (Sukabdi, 2022). It shares characteristics with religious radicalism but encompasses the glorification of violence as well (Sukabdi, 2022). Religious radicalization marks the initial phase of religious extremism, culminating in extremism as its ultimate expression (Adnan & Amaliyah, 2021). While religious extremism subsumes radicalism, the latter does not invariably entail extremism.

The differentiation between religious radicalism and extremism is multifaceted, characterized by several key distinctions: 1) Religious radicalism typically abstains from resorting to violence as a primary tactic, unlike religious extremism, which frequently employs violent means. 2) Religious extremism stands in opposition to the fundamental tenets of universal wisdom and human rights 3) While religious extremism targets individuals who do not adhere to their dogmatic beliefs, religious radicalism primarily challenges the existing societal norms or status quo. 4) Religious radicals tend to withdraw from mainstream society, especially when their influence is limited, whereas religious extremists persist in using violence to confront established authorities. 5) Religious extremism often aligns with authoritarian ideologies, whereas religious radicalism tends to exhibit more egalitarian tendencies. 6) Religious radicalism is associated with rational discourse and critical thinking, whereas religious extremism is characterized by irrational and fanatical convictions, often claiming sole possession of truth (Botticher, 2017).

Conversely, those exhibiting religious egocentrism tend to strongly anthropomorphize the divine, assessing divine punishment or reward based on personal desires or gratifications. In comparing religious egocentrism and extremism, individuals embodying either manifestation exhibit several distinctive traits. These include: 1) a literal interpretation of sacred texts devoid of historical, scientific, or contextual considerations, 2) a pronounced emphasis on religious symbols, 3) adoption of a dichotomous worldview, often framed as a conflict between good and evil, 4) narrow-mindedness and a reluctance to entertain alternative perspectives, 5) assertions of moral righteousness, 6) engagement in unrealistic or overly ambitious prayers, 7) unrealistic prayers, and 8) imposing his personal will to others. Further, delineating these characteristics, individuals characterized by religious extremism demonstrate a propensity for: 1) insistence on the institutionalization of religious rituals at the state level, often disregarding secular laws, 2) pursuit of puritanical ideals, and 3) advocacy for revolutionary actions which glorifies violence as a means of effecting change (See Table 1).

**Table 1 Religious egocentrism, radicalism, and extremism**

No.	Religious Aspects	Egocentrism	Radicalism	Extremism
1	Anthropomorphism of God	V	-	-
2	Assessing God's punishment/reward based on the completion of personal pleasures	V	-	-
3	View self as the most righteous	V	V	V
4	Unrealistic prayers which full of fantasies or magical thinking	V	-	V
5	Imposing his personal beliefs/will to others	V	-	V
6	One-sidedness (rejecting external intervention/ideas)	V	V	V
7	Literal approach on sacred texts by refusing contextual points of view in understanding holy books	V	V	V
8	Emphasis on religious symbols rather than universal wisdom	V	V	V
9	Black-and-white way of religious thinking	V	V	V
10	Totalitarian in character, which is not agreeing/ following with men-made laws	-	V	V
11	Performing revolutionary behaviors to achieve drastic changes	-	V	V
12	Glorification of violence	-	-	V
13	Attempt for purification (presenting self as exclusive)	-	V	V

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the examination of religious egocentrism sheds light on its psychological underpinnings and implications within religious contexts. Rooted in narcissism and self-centeredness, religious egocentrism is characterized by a narrow worldview that prioritizes personal gratification and anthropomorphizes the divine. Individuals at this stage exhibit dichotomous thinking, emphasizing their own righteousness while engaging in unrealistic prayers rooted in fantastical ideation. The recognition of religious egocentrism's manifestations, from anthropomorphizing God to engaging in unrealistic prayers, underscores the complexity of religious identity formation and its implications for individual and collective behavior. Addressing egocentric tendencies through comprehensive therapeutic interventions and educational initiatives is vital for promoting religious maturity and fostering inclusive, tolerant societies.

Comparatively, religious radicalism and extremism represent more extreme manifestations of religious fervor, each marked by distinct behavioral and ideological traits. While religious radicalism challenges societal norms and may exhibit dogmatic adherence to religious doctrine, it typically refrains from resorting to violence as a primary tactic. In contrast, religious extremism glorifies violence as a means of effecting radical change and often disregards secular laws in pursuit of religious agendas.

Despite these differences, all three manifestations share commonalities, including a literal interpretation of sacred texts, emphasis on religious symbols over deeper philosophical tenets, and a propensity for one-sided thinking. Understanding these nuances is essential for devising effective interventions to address religious extremism and promote tolerance and understanding within diverse religious communities.

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