


12. علماني / Elmani (Secular)

Other spellings and related references: مرتد / *murtad* (English translation: *apostate*); كافر / *kafir* (English translation: *infidel*); ليبرالي / *librali* (English translation: *liberal*); منحرف / *monharef* (English translation: *deviant / person with bad habits*); سافره / *safere* (English meaning: *a woman with bad habits who is non-religious / a woman who does not wear a hijab / a loose woman*); عاهرة / *eahira* (English translation: *prostitute*)

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Abdullah Ghaly
BA, Ghaly

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علماني وسخ وسفيه مالك ومال السلفية وولاية الامر خليك في سكرك وضلاتك

English translation: “Secular and dirty. The money of the Salafists and your masters keep you in your drunkenness and misguidance”



Hassan Abdhany
Hassan, Jedd

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يا شمام يا امهزب زعما اتشم في بنة فمك المعفن يا علماني يا ديوث

English translation: “Oh cantaloupe you are a liar you smell in the corner of your moldy mouth you elmani you cuckold”

Definition: The literal definition of “elmani” is “secular” and in Libya, it is used in a religious context to describe someone who does not “adhere to the teachings of [Islam]” or, in the political context, someone who is overly liberal to a level that’s inappropriate. The use of the term in political conversations also associates the target with negative foreign, and especially Western, characteristics such as inappropriate mixing of genders in public spaces and workplaces. As illustrated by the related references above, when used to refer to women, the term is also associated with promiscuity and culturally shameful behavior. The word itself is old but, according to the focus group participants, it generally began to be used as hateful speech after the 2011 revolution. The word began to spread particularly during the debate over whether to implement Sharia law or not between the MB and Mahmud Jebri, the head of the NFA party. The term began to be used to attack liberal opponents of the MB who were advocating for democracy, free civil society, and a constitution.

Why it’s offensive and inflammatory: This term is offensive within the Libyan context because it accuses the target of not following Islamic values properly or of adopting Western political beliefs or lifestyle that are perceived negatively. Respondents in Kufra stated that it is