

Book Review: *Abrahamism: Between the Rightful Adherents and the False Claimants*

(Kuwait: Rawasekh, 2023). 134 pages. ISBN: 9789921797138

Reviewed by: Dr. Sékou Marafa Touré

I. Foreword:

This review aims to shed light on one of the most important recent intellectual contributions that critically engages with contemporary religious, ideological, and soft diplomatic (soft power) transformations: *Abrahamism: Between the Rightful Adherents and the False Claimants*, published by Rawasekh Center for Research and Studies in its first edition in 2023.

Rawasekh is recognized as a think tank specializing in contemporary Islamic thought and the challenges facing Muslim identity today. It is known for producing balanced scholarly analyses of theological, cultural, and political trends. This book is part of the Center's efforts to respond to the expanding and ambiguous discourse of "Abrahamism", a term increasingly invoked in ways that may contradict the very teachings of the faiths it seeks to unify. The book critically addresses this usage and calls for clarity in differentiating genuine interfaith dialogue from attempts to blur doctrinal distinctions.

The review adopts both descriptive and analytical approaches. It offers an overview of the book's main themes and structure, followed by a critical evaluation that situates the book within the broader intellectual and religious context of our time.

II. Overview of the Book and Its Content

This book tackles a prominent and complex issue that has gained traction in recent decades, "Abrahamism" as a socio-religious and political concept. It is associated with recent initiatives like the Abraham Accords and projects such as the Abrahamic Family House, which might aim to create a unified religious discourse. However, these efforts, the author argues, risk undermining theological specificity and genuine faith traditions.

In the introduction, the author warns against what he describes as the “false appropriation” of Abraham’s legacy by certain modern entities. These actors, he suggests, use the Abrahamic label as a façade for political agendas, attempting to erode doctrinal boundaries and exploit the intellectual and political vulnerability of the Muslim world. Instead, the author advocates for a return to the authentic path of Abraham as described in the Qur’an; a model of resistance and theological integrity.

Notably, the themes explored in this book align with the objectives of Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID), particularly in its upcoming activities in 2024 and 2025, which focus on faith and conflict resolution. DICID promotes the view that while religions differ in doctrine and practice, they share common ethical and moral values. However, it firmly rejects the notion of merging these faiths into one. The upcoming 20th issue of “Religions” journal is dedicated to examining how faith traditions can contribute to peacebuilding, making this book particularly timely and relevant for scholars, readers, and dialogue practitioners.

III. Objective of the Book

The book seeks to unmask the misleading narratives behind the contemporary discourse on "Abrahamism," particularly when used as a tool within uncertain ideological and political frameworks. The author aims to:

- Affirm the true and legitimate adherence to the faith of Abraham (peace be upon him) as described in the Qur’an.
- Resist efforts to dissolve religious identities under the banners of “unity of religions” or “Abrahamic commonalities.”
- Empower Islamic discourse to move from defensive apologetics to proactive intellectual engagement.
- Raise awareness within the Muslim community about the ideological and political risks posed by these projects.

IV. Significance of the Book

This book is significant for several reasons:

- It distinguishes between the legitimate use of the term “Abrahamic religions” and the newer, problematic interpretation that suggests a fusion of religions.

- It contributes to strengthening the intellectual and theological awareness of Muslims against ideologies that distort Islamic beliefs.
- It draws vital links between theological analysis and political awareness, underlining that faith cannot be separated from the destiny of the Muslim ummah.
- It presents a coherent and rigorous critique of the "political Abrahamism" and "intellectual Abrahamism" discourses.
- It refutes relativistic and pluralistic claims promoted by some modern and postmodern philosophies.
- It reaffirms the Islamic claim to Abraham's legacy and emphasizes the responsibility to preserve it from distortion.

V. Book Structure and Content

The book is divided into two main sections, each addressing a different dimension of the "Abrahamism" project:

1. Political Abrahamism

This section explores:

- How "Abrahamism" is used to justify the "normalization" and other political agendas.
- A critique of religious figures who support this direction.
- Deconstruction of religious discourse that legitimizes normalization under the guise of peace.

2. Intellectual Abrahamism

This section includes:

- A philosophical analysis of Abrahamism within modern and postmodern thought.
- An examination of how Abrahamism is used to dismantle identity and challenge doctrinal certainties.
- A Qur'anic perspective on Abraham's faith and the People of the Book.
- A rebuttal to globalist claims about the universality of all messages and an affirmation of Islam's finality.

- A defense against efforts to detach Islam from its prophetic and historical roots.

The book concludes by calling not only for a defensive posture but for the development of an original and unapologetic Islamic discourse, grounded in revelation and responsive to modern realities.

VI. Author's Methodology and Distinctive Features

The author blends theological and political analysis, using the Qur'an and Sunnah as primary sources, while engaging with the cultural and intellectual landscape. Key features of his approach include:

- A multi-dimensional analysis that combines religious, political, and ideological perspectives.
- A conscious effort to reach a broad audience -especially youth and Islamic intellectuals- with a message that is both devotional and cautionary.
- A passionate, rhetorical style that reflects the author's deep concern for Islamic doctrine.
- A tone of urgency that encourages awareness and intellectual resistance, not just rebuttal.

VII. General Evaluation

A. Strengths and Merits

- **Language and Style:** The writing is clear, impactful, and persuasive, leaning more toward public discourse than purely academic prose.
- **Structure:** The book is well-organized, with coherent arguments and effective analytical depth.
- **Scholarly Contribution:** It offers a principled Islamic critique of the Abrahamic discourse in a methodical and scripturally grounded manner.
- **Target Audience:** The book is especially relevant for Muslim thinkers, preachers, students, and those engaged in Islamic studies.

B. Areas for Improvement

1. Rhetorical Tone Over Academic Rigor:

The book leans heavily on rhetorical and sermon-like language, often at the expense of academic structure, citations, and conceptual precision. A stronger scholarly foundation would enhance its credibility.

2. Underdeveloped Introduction:

The introduction bypasses the conventional flow from general to specific, instead beginning with direct assertions. This approach may give the impression of bias, rather than objective analysis.

3. Lack of Methodological Clarity:

The methodology -whether descriptive, analytical, or critical- is not clearly stated, leaving the reader uncertain about the scholarly framework.

4. Limited Conceptual Definition:

The book provides at the beginning of the concept of "Abrahamism" a basic linguistic definition of "Abraham" without fully exploring the modern ideological dimensions of "Abrahamism."

5. Unexplained Categorization:

The distinction between "Political" and "Intellectual" Abrahamism lacks a clear theoretical basis, making the division seem arbitrary.

6. Historical Context Missing:

The book does not trace the historical evolution of the term "Abrahamism" in Islamic or modern literature, a gap that weakens its depth.

7. Citation Issues:

Some claims are not supported with adequate references or footnotes, which may undermine the scholarly reliability of the arguments.

8. Inclusion of Irrelevant Figures:

The critique of Muhammad Shahrour appears out of place, as his work does not directly engage with the Abrahamic discourse, suggesting a forced inclusion.

9. Structural Inconsistencies:

Some rich discussions, particularly on Abraham's faith in the Qur'an, would benefit from being placed in a separate, dedicated chapter.

10. Content Cohesion:

Certain sections -especially toward the latter parts of the first section- seem indirect to the central thesis, indicating a need for better integration with the book's main theme.

Conclusion

Abrahamism: Between the Rightful Adherents and the False Claimants is a timely and thought-provoking contribution that exposes the ideological and political dimensions behind a seemingly religious initiative. The book underscores the importance of preserving Islamic theological identity and calls for a clear, confident, and authentic Islamic discourse in an era of religious dilution and cultural normalization. It is not just a rebuttal to misconceptions, but a call for proactive intellectual renewal grounded in divine guidance.

And God knows best.