

The Myth of the Three Abrahamic Religions

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Lately, it has become fashionable to refer to the “**The Three Abrahamic Religions,**” referring to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The assumption is that all these theistic faiths, have one spiritual ancestor; and notwithstanding some differences in details, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, worship the same God.

As an example, I cite information from the website **Enotes**, about the **Abrahamic Religions**: “Christianity, Islam, and Judaism have many similarities and many differences. They are all Abrahamic religions and worship the same God. Each religion requires its followers to adhere to a certain moral code and show devotion to God through prayer. One area of difference is in their view of Jesus Christ. Christians believe Jesus to be the messiah and Son of God. Muslims consider him to be a prophet, though they do not believe in his resurrection. In Judaism, Jesus is not believed to be the messiah or the Son of God.”

<https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/compare-contrast-judaism-christianity-islam-475652>

The correctness of the term, “**the Three Abrahamic Religions**” is an undisputed fact, in certain academic circles. As an example, I refer to comments made by Dr. Peter Kreeft, professor of philosophy at Boston College. In his debate with the writer Robert Spencer, on the 4th of November 2010, at Thomas More College, he quoted approvingly from Article 841 of “The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)” : “**Muslims ... profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind’s judge on the last day.**” The catechism promulgated in 1992, was a fruit of the Second Vatican Council and its policy of **Aggiornamento** (renewal and modernization) To view the debate online and read a full account of it access the Thomas More website at:

<http://www.thomasmorecollege.edu/blog/2010/11/08/peter-kreeft-and-robert-spencer-engage-in-lively-debate-on-islam/>

Once Christians accept the thesis of the “**three Abrahamic faiths,**” they give credence to an unsubstantiated myth, namely that Abraham was the father of the Arabs.

In fact, there are no historical or archeological grounds for asserting, as Muslims do, that Abraham had gone to Mecca with Ishmael, or that the latter is the father of the Arabs. The Bible tells of the journeys of Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, in southern Mesopotamia, to the land of Haran (in present-day Syria); from there he continued his journey to the south, and lived as a nomad in Hebron. Due to famine in the land of Canaan, Abraham went down to Egypt, but eventually he returned to the land of Promise.

After Abraham sent Hagar away with her young son Ishmael, we learn from the Biblical account that “God was with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.” Genesis 21 (ESV)

The wilderness of Paran is in the Sinai Peninsula, Egypt; the area became the home for Ishmael’s descendants.

To the best of my knowledge, the phrase, “**The Three Abrahamic Religions**” is of recent origin, and is used mostly among English-speaking people. I have not noticed any equivalent phrase, on French-language websites that I access regularly. Before this term became popular, the more exact term was used, namely the “**Three Theistic Religions;**” which set Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, apart from the Asiatic faiths, which were either **polytheistic, or pantheistic**.

While Muslims used either the “**Three heavenly religions,**” or “**The Custodians of Revealed Books,**” yet they charged Jews and Christians with the corruption of their books, thus, they were no longer authentic revelations.

Nowadays, thanks to the momentous changes that have taken place in communications, brought by the Internet, it is possible to consult some Arab scholars about their views regarding the “**Three Abrahamic Religions.**” I’m indebted to the works of **Hamed Abdel-Samad**, a political scientistⁱ, and his colleague, **Professor Muhammad al-Musayeh**ⁱⁱ, a Moroccan expert on Islamic History, and the various manuscripts of the Qur’an.

According to their research, there is no mention of the existence of Mecca, prior to the Third Century A.D! Furthermore, there were in the Arabian Peninsula, several Kaaba’s, almost one for every tribe; there was even a Christian Kaaba at **Najran!** The Mecca that existed in Muhammad’s days, wasn’t there in Abraham’s time.ⁱⁱⁱ Both **Hamed Abdel-Samad** and **Muhammad al Musayeh**, have discussed this subject at length. Their opinion is that the Prophet Muhammad invented the account that Abraham, accompanied by Hagar and Ishmael, came to Mecca, and built the Kaaba.

Now, even if Mecca had existed 1800 years B. C., Abraham, a very old person, couldn’t have made the arduous journey of 1200 kilometers, from **Hebron to Mecca**, with Hagar and her young son. The Genesis narrative makes sense, since a move of 150 km., from Hebron to Paran, where Hagar and her son settled, was both possible and practical.

While the concept of the “**Three Abrahamic Religions**” has found currency in the West, both in Academia, and in an official document of the Roman Catholic Church, it remains a myth. Two Arab scholars, **Abdel-Samad and al-Musayeh**, have proven their case, and should not be ignored! No one would benefit from perpetuating a religious myth!

ⁱ **Hamed Abdel-Samad** is a German-Egyptian political scientist and author. He was born as the third of five children, the son of a Muslim Sunni Imam. He came to Germany in 1995 at the

age of 23. Abdel-Samad studied Japanese, English and French in Cairo as well as political science in Augsburg. He worked as a scholar in Erfurt and Braunschweig. He taught and conducted research until the end of 2009, at the Institute for Jewish History and Culture at the University of Munich; his dissertation topic was: **“Bild der Juden in ägyptischen Schulbüchern.” “Depiction of Jews in Egyptian textbooks.”** Subsequently he decided to become a full-time professional writer. His works have been printed in German, Arabic, English, and in French. His lectures are archived on YouTube.

ii I have translated the information regarding the biography of **Muhammad al-Musayeh**, a Moroccan scholar specializing in the Qur’anic manuscripts; he worked with the German expert on the Qur’an, Christof Luxemburg; he has delved into the various aspects of the Islamic heritage. In this dialogue with Abdel-Samad, we learn about the various manuscripts of the Qur’an.

<http://ar.le360.ma/culture/103741>

iii Hamed Abdel Samad & Professor Muhammad al-Musayeh on the History of Mecca, Sunduq al-Islam #101

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=hamed+abdel+samad+on+youtube+box+of+islam&&view=detail&mid=8FB66912D142F775B6728FB66912D142F775B672&rvsmid=447B3145C77647B0651C447B3145C77647B0651C&FORM=VDRVRV>