



The Center for the Study of
Contemporary European Jewry
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"[It] is one of the most important centers in Israeli academia."

President Isaac Herzog, Jerusalem, 27.1.22

Antisemitism Worldwide Report 2021



The Arab World: Antisemitic Attacks on Normalization

The announcement of the Abraham Accords in August 2020 awakened dormant conspiracy theories in the Arab world. The most popular, which combined several blatantly antisemitic arguments, suggested a Jewish-Zionist-American plot to create a new religion called “al-Ibrahimiyya,” which would harm Islam, was behind the Accords.

This conspiracy theory surfaced in manifestos, *fatwas*, articles, books, and conferences and was voiced by clerics, academics, and commentators from Cairo to London. Certain variations were based on fake pamphlets and selective interpretations of the Quran, according to which the Jews are satanic demons, the earthly representatives of evil.

The conspiracy theory regarding the new “Ibrahmic religion” developed as a response to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) decision to establish the “Abrahamic Family House” in Abu Dhabi, announced during the events of the 2019 “Year of Tolerance.” The complex is designed to house a mosque, a church, and a synagogue.

The Abraham Accords reflected the new Emirati “discourse on tolerance” and were presented, from the very beginning, as the foundation for interfaith and intercultural relations. They involved an unprecedented recognition of Judaism as both a religion and a nation, and Jews as a native people of the Middle East.¹

The Israeli-Emirati accord states that both countries recognize “that the Arab and Jewish peoples are descendants of a common ancestor, Abraham.” According to the accord, Abraham serves as the inspiration for fostering coexistence in the Middle East between Muslims, Christians, and Jews.

Emirati clerics, led by Sheikh ‘Abdullah bin Bayyah, a Mauritanian who serves as the director of the UAE Fatwa Council, justified peace with Israel as a manifestation of commonly held human values advanced by Moses, Jesus, and Muhammed.²

The opponents of the Abraham Accords decried the narrative calling for fraternal bonds between Jews and Muslims. Exiled Emirati opposition activists identified with the al-Islah Association, the Muslim Brothers’ branch in the UAE (banned in 2014), claimed that trust should not be

¹ Ofer Zalzberg, “The Abraham Accords: In Praise of Tradition,” *Kelman Institute*, August 30, 2021; available at <https://www.kelmaninstitute.org/2021/08/29/the-abraham-accords-in-praise-of-tradition/>, last accessed on March 20, 2022.

² “Ibn Bayyah Yushariku fi Multaqa al-Mubadara al-Ibrahimiyya [Ibn Bayyah Participated in the Abrahamic Initiative Forum],” *al-Ittihad*, December 3, 2020 [in Arabic]; available at <https://bit.ly/3eXAgS4>, last accessed on March 20, 2022.

placed in the Jews, “the murderers of the prophets, nor should peace be made with people whose history is founded on aggression against all of the world’s nations.”³

Activists in the Emirati opposition were among the first to mention the danger of an “Ibrahimi religion.” Ahmad al-Shayba al-Nu‘aymi, the chairman of the Emirati Resistance Union against Normalization, who resides in London, accused “Zionism, its sponsors, and its collaborators” of trying to “create a new religion called Ibrahimiyya.”

In an article entitled “Distorting the religion in order to achieve normalization with the Zionists,” al-Nu‘aymi warned of the plot to weaken Islam, the religion of the Arab-Muslim nation, a religion that stands as a “fortified wall against plots to normalize, commit treachery, and do away with the Palestinian problem.”⁴

A manifesto authored by thirty-two Islamic organizations and published in February 2021 regarding the so-called “Ibrahimi religion” stated that following the ways of the Ibrahimi faith amounts to a repudiation of Islam.

The manifesto claimed that the Quran teaches that the Jews’ contempt for Muslims began at the time of Muhammad, that it still exists, and that it will continue.

According to the manifesto, one contemporary manifestation of that contempt is the attempt made by modern-day Jews to take over the Arab world by launching a tourism initiative that would ostensibly include Abraham’s life journey. This is in addition to a Jewish plot to return to their native Arab homelands, where they would be a fifth column.

Similarly, a statement issued that month by the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS), established by Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a 96-year-old Egyptian-born and Qatar-based Islamist leader, called upon Muslim scholars to make Muslims aware of the risk posed by the Ibrahimi religion.⁵

Fear of the so-called “Ibrahimi religion” created a rare moment of agreement between Islamist organizations associated with the Muslim Brothers and al-Azhar, the most important Islamic university in the world, whose leadership supports the Egyptian regime.

In a 2021 speech, Ahmad al-Tayyib, Sheikh al-Azhar, warned against “the call for the Ibrahimi faith.” However, al-Tayyib did not explicitly link it with the Abraham Accords, presumably to avoid harming his close ties with the Emirati regime.

³ Sa‘id al-Tunayji, “Rasa’il fi al-Wa‘i: Al-Bina’ al-‘Uqadi fi Muwajahat al-Tatbi’ [Messages of Awareness: The Doctrinal Construction Against the Normalization],” Emirati Association against Normalization, October 7, 2020 [in Arabic]; available at <https://uae4palestine.com/posts/29>, last accessed on March 20, 2022.

⁴ Ahmad al-Shayba al-Nu‘aymi, “Tahrif al-Din lil-Tatbi’ ma‘a al-Sahayna [Distortion of religion for the sake of normalization with the Zionists],” *AlKhaleej Online*, October 10, 2020 [in Arabic]; available at <http://khaleejonline/KMK19R>, accessed on March 20, 2022.

⁵ “Al-Bayan al-Khitami li-Mu’tamar Mawqif al-Umma al-Islamiyya min al-Diyana al-Ibrahimiyya [Concluding Remarks of the Conference about the Position of the Islamic Nation on the Ibrahimi Religion],” *IUMS*, February 22, 2021 [in Arabic]; available at <https://iumsonline.org/ar/ContentDetails.aspx?ID=16112>, accessed on March 20, 2022.

According to al-Tayyib, preaching a united Ibrahimi religion may lead to the creation of a “colorless, flavorless and odorless new religion” and may harm religious pluralism. Observers in Egypt interpreted his words as voicing reservations about normalization with Israel.⁶

Other Egyptians also played a pivotal role in disseminating the claim that the Ibrahimi idea is a Jewish-Zionist plot. Under the guise of academic prestige, their lectures, writings, and interviews were infused with explicit antisemitic motifs.

The most outspoken Egyptian mouthpiece of the so-called resistance of the Jewish conspiracy has been Dr. Hiba Jamal al-Din, a social sciences lecturer at the Institute of National Planning and a member of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA). In the wake of the Abraham Accords, she published two books purporting to expose “the greatest imperialist plot of the 21st century.”

Jamal al-Din’s books are dedicated to substantiating the claim that the efforts invested by American scholars to highlight the commonalities in the monotheistic faiths are a form of “spiritual diplomacy.” This “spiritual diplomacy” is bent on marginalizing the Palestinian problem, eliminating the demand to exercise Palestinian rights, and whitewashing the Zionist occupation.

Jamal al-Din made numerous other claims to prove what she views as an imperialist plot to create a new Ibrahimi Middle East,⁷ establish a new regional entity called “the United Ibrahimi States,”⁸ and transform Arab-Islamic identity into a so-called “Ibrahimi” identity.⁹

Several of her claims contained antisemitic undertones. For example, in an interview she gave to Egyptian media after the Abraham Accords were announced, Jamal al-Din likened Israel to

⁶ “Al-Azhar wal-Ibrahimiyya: Ma Huwa ‘al-Din al-Jadid’ Alladhi Rafadahu al-Imam Ahmad al-Tayyib? Wa-Ma ‘Alaqtuhu bi-Isra’ il wal-Imarat? [Al-Azhar and the Ibrahimiyya: What is the ‘New Religion’ That was Rejected by Imam Ahmad al-Tayyib? And What Its Connection to Israel and the UAE?],” *BBC News in Arabic*, November 10, 2021 [in Arabic]; available at <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/trending-59235483>, accessed on March 20, 2022. Ahmad ‘Alaa’, “Azhari ‘an al-Diyana al-Ibrahimiyya: Lam Na‘ lam Inna Tramb Rasul min ‘inda Allah [Al-Azhar Cleric on the Ibrahimi Religion: We did not know that Trump is God’s Messenger],” *al-Shuruq*, November 11, 2021 [in Arabic]; available at <https://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=11112021&id=6ce45056-38df-4574-a66c-968ef9686aa1>, accessed on March 20, 2022.

⁷ Ahmad Abu Ful and Hiba Jamal al-Din, “Ittifaqat Abraham: Taqdim al-Diblumasiyya al-Rawhiyya, al-Isti‘mar al-Jadid wa-‘Asr al-Qanun al-Dawli al-Turati al-Jadid [The Abraham Accords: Introducing the Spiritual Diplomacy, the New Colonialism and the Era of the New International Law of the Torah],” *Vist*, January 9, 2021 [in Arabic]; available at <https://vistinternational.org/ar/law-ar/اتفاقات-أبراهام-الدبلوماسية-الروحية/>, accessed on March 20, 2022.

⁸ Muhammad Taha, “Bahitha: ‘Al-Salam al-Ibrahimi’ Khutta Isra’iliyya li-Tasyis al-Din fi Khidmat al-Siyasa [Researcher: The Ibrahimi Peace is an Israeli Plot to Politicize Religion],” *al-Masri al-Yawm*, September 3, 2021 [in Arabic]; available at <https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/2410007>, accessed on March 20, 2022.

⁹ “Anwar al-Musawi Yuhawiru D. Hiba Jamal al-Din ‘an al-Masar al-Ibrahimi wa-Mashru‘ al-Tatbi‘ [Anwar al-Musawi Interviews Dr. Hiba Jamal al-Din on the Ibrahimi Route and the Normalization Project],” *al-Muththaqaf*, September 19, 2021 [in Arabic]; available at <https://www.almothaqaf.com/c/d2/958213%202410007>, accessed on March 20, 2022.

“a viper that changes its shape and color and wishes to devour the region as a whole, using diverse means, some of which we know of, and most of which we can’t even imagine.”¹⁰

Egyptian scholar Mursi al-Adham published a poisonous antisemitic conspiracy book entitled “The Ibrahimi-Jewish plots: Destroying the monotheistic religions and subjugating humanity.”

In the book, Jews are portrayed as devils. According to the author, the Jewish religion commands its adherents to destroy humanity, enslave and bestialize gentile nations, debase Arabian kings to the level of shoe shiners for the Jews, steal Arab lands from the Nile to the Euphrates, murder children and the elderly, rip out live fetuses, and rape women.

According to al-Adham, these practices had been noted throughout Jewish history, in ancient times and modern times. Al-Adham based his claim, among other things, on the “Franklin Document,” an antisemitic Nazi forgery from 1935 that permeated Arab discourse, in which the American statesman had supposedly warned of the risk inherent in the Jews and called for expelling them from their host countries.¹¹

In his book, al-Adham attacked the plan to establish an “Abrahamic Family House” and the “Document on Human Fraternity,” signed in 2019 during a visit by the Pope and Sheikh al-Azhar in the UAE. It sought to promote dialogue and friendly ties between the faithful.

Despite al-Adham’s implied criticism of Sheikh al-Azhar for promoting the UAE policy, his book was received positively by the Egyptian media, including the widely read daily *al-Masri al-Yawm*. A book launch was even arranged for him in 2021 at the Cairo International Book Fair. Dar al-Ma’arif, a prestigious publishing house, distributed the book and hosted a discussion on the book at its booth at the fair.

There were also Arab intellectuals and officials who spoke against the conspiracy theory. For instance, Muhammad ‘Abd al-Salam, the secretary-general of the UAE-based Higher Committee of Human Fraternity, stated that there was no conspiracy to create a global religion behind the push to establish the “Abrahamic Family House” in Abu Dhabi. On the contrary: its purpose was to highlight what makes each religion unique.¹²

‘Abd al-Qadir al-Zawi, a former Moroccan ambassador to the UAE, accused the International Union of Muslim Scholars of disseminating fake news, with the aim of taking a swipe at the states that normalized their ties with Israel. He decried the conflation of Judaism, a monotheistic

¹⁰ Hiba Jamal al-Din, “al-Ittifaq al-Ibrahimi wa-Mahiyyat al-Ibrahimiyya wal-Siyasat al-Wiqa‘iyya al-Lazima [The Abraham Accords, the Essence of Ibrahimiyya and the Required Defense Policies,” *al-Taqarub*, August 18, 2020 [in Arabic]; available at <https://www.altaqarub.com/d-hbtt-jmal-alden-kttb-alatfaq-alabraheme-wmahett-alabrahemett-walseasat-alwqaaeett-allazmtt/>, accessed on March 20, 2022.

¹¹ Mursi al-Adham, *Mu‘amarat al-Ibrahimiyya al-Yahudiyya* [The Conspiracies of the Jewish Ibrahimiyya], (Cairo: Dar al-Ma’arif, 2021), pp. 32-33 [in Arabic].

¹² Mohamed Abdelsalam, “The Abrahamic Family House is Not About Merging Faiths,” *The National*, January 22, 2022 [in Arabic]; available at <https://www.thenationalnews.com/opinion/comment/2022/01/22/the-abrahamic-family-house-is-not-about-merging-faiths/>, accessed on March 20, 2022.

religion, with the State of Israel, an UN-recognized political entity (in his words) with which the Abraham Accords were signed.¹³

Egyptian commentator Jamal Abu al-Hasan lambasted Sheikh al-Azhar's comments on the alleged Ibrahimi faith. That faith, he argued, is “a fib that no one is talking about or preaching, and as far as we know, no entity or institution has espoused it.”¹⁴

Critical discussion of peace accords is legitimate political discourse. However, conspiracy theories with antisemitic undertones are a dangerous poison. The champions of peace and truth must combat this poison, both in Israel and the Arab world.

– Dr. Ofir Winter and Ella Aphek

¹³ ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Zawi, “‘al-Diyana al-Ibrahimiyya’: Tahamul wa-Iftira’ fi Bayan ‘Ulama’ [“Ibrahimiic Religion”: Prejudice and Slander in a Statement by Ulama’], *al-Majalla*, December 17, 2021 [in Arabic]; available at <https://arb.majalla.com/node/185161/>, accessed on March 20, 2022.

¹⁴ Jamal Abu al-Hasan, “Fi Sha’n ‘al-Diyana al-Ibrahimiyya’ [On the Issue of the “Ibrahimiic Religion”],” *al-Masri al-Yawm*, November 22, 2021 [in Arabic], <https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/2467523>, accessed on March 20, 2022.

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