



Why the Arab Spring May Turn into the Usual Arab Winter

Wafa Sultan is an Arab-American woman who was born in Syria, raised in the Islamic faith of her ancestors, rebelled against it, and emigrated to the U.S. She could not abide a faith that denigrates women and treats them worse than slaves. She's written an extraordinary book, *A God Who Hates*, which for the non-Islamic reader explains why the so-called Arab Spring may well turn into another Arab Winter.



For me, the most compelling statement in her book sums up why the Western world has had such a difficult time understanding the Muslim mind. It sums up why it is virtually impossible to be optimistic about the future of the Arab world:

"When we were young, our elders drummed a saying into us: 'We love death as much as our enemy loves life.' A man imbued with a culture of death cannot be a human being, because a person's humanity is not complete unless he respects human life and takes action to protect it."

When you understand that this death-loving philosophy dominates a Muslim's religious faith, then you can understand why it is futile to attempt to turn Afghanistan into a modern, tolerant, democratic society. The Taliban treat women worse than slaves, and even today many Afghan women will still wear these degrading, full-body burkas because of their Muslim husbands and their internalized belief that they are dirt and deserve to be treated like slaves.

And that is why Iraq, which was "liberated" from Saddam Hussein's sadistic dictatorship by America, is still plagued by radical Islamists who continue to bomb innocent civilians. They are determined to impose the most hateful aspects of Islam on the people of Iraq. As for the present "democratic" government, Iraq is still technically at war with Israel and has made no effort to end it with a peace treaty. Why not? Why is "democratic" Iraq still at war with Israel, and permitting its Islamic hotheads to persecute Iraq's Christians?

Concerning the Muslim world's treatment of Jews, Sultan writes that Jews have been the Muslim scapegoat from "Islam's earliest beginnings."

"Jew," she writes, "must be one of the words Muslim children hear most frequently before the age of ten. It is also one of the hardest words they hear, as in their imagination it conjures up visions of killing, depravity, lies, and corruption.... When someone wants to describe someone as ugly, he says he looks like a Jew. We hold the Jews 'responsible' for our military failures, our economic backwardness, and our technological dependency. We believe that Jews control the world and that, in consequence, the whole world, dancing to their tune, wants to get rid of us."

And that is why the Muslim world wants to get rid of Israel, because it represents everything the Muslim considers to be evil. And that is why Anwar Sadat's signing of a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel was considered by radical Islamists to be treason, and that is why they killed him. With the Muslim Brotherhood ready to assume greater power and influence in post-Mubarak Egypt, there is no telling what the Egyptian people will be led to do in their uncertain future.



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The story of how Safa Sultan liberated herself from a stifling religion of hate is one of courage and determination. She writes: "Most Muslims, if not all of them, will condemn me to death when they read this book. They may not even read it.... The wisdom of the age we live in cautioned me against writing this book and warned me that I might have to pay with my life for doing so, but I am undaunted. My belief that good will ultimately triumph over evil has encouraged me to speak out."

In other words, Safa Sultan has given us a rare gift: an insight into the Muslim mind by someone who lived in the middle of it and was able to analyze it like a scientist. When people ask her, "Why do Muslims hate their women," she answers: "Because their God does."

It was the suffering of her maternal grandmother at the hands of a brutal husband that forced her to look at her own religion and its hateful contempt for women. Since she loved to read, she found her way out of the Muslim world by books from the West. She read everything she could lay her hands on. And because she was an outstanding student in high school, she was able to enroll in medical school. She was also fortunate in finding a husband who shared her views of Islam and was attracted to her because of them.

But what makes this book especially informative to a Western reader is her analysis of the Islamic concept of God. She writes:

When you teach a child the attributes of God and tell him that he is an avenger, a compeller, imperious, one who subdues, as well as one who nourishes, what have you done to him? You have helped create a vengeful, tyrannical, and overbearing person who also nourishes, but at what cost? For people see their God as their ideal, and strive both consciously and unconsciously to internalize him and merge with him. . . .

Arguing with Muslims becomes more complicated when they try to persuade you that their God is also merciful, patient, and forbearing. I asked a Muslim doctor who specializes in psychiatry: "How can you persuade your son that God is simultaneously merciful and vengeful? Doesn't teaching this type of religious lesson contain a contradiction which splits the child's personality and makes him feel more lost and confused?"

He replied: "No. I teach him that God is merciful with believers and vengeful toward unbelievers. I don't see any contradiction in this."

That statement clearly explains how the U.S. born Muslim psychiatrist, Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan, could murder 12 of his fellow soldiers and wound 31 at Fort Hood in obedience to his God. They were unbelievers, and therefore subject to Allah's vengeance. In other words, even though Muslims may be born in the West, that doesn't mean that they are free of the dictates of a hateful, vengeful God, for in a Muslim's mind an unbeliever is the enemy and must be treated as such.

The author provides us with an interesting anecdote that proves the veracity of that statement. Shortly after she had arrived in California, an Arab neighbor took her to a Vons supermarket. Once they were there she began to open every packet she could and make holes in the lids of cartons of milk, Jello-O, cream, bags of potato chips, and so on. When Sultan asked her why she was doing that, her neighbor replied: "May God curse them. They stole our land! ... I'm trying to hurt them! You're still new here. Don't you know the owner's Jewish?"

Apparently, when Muslims migrate to America they don't necessarily give up their hatreds and prejudices. That is why the terrorists who spent months in the U.S. planning their attacks on 9/11 were in no way influenced by our American love of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Their aim was to



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impose Allah's hate on the unbeliever and kill as many Americans as they could. Sultan writes:

"I have no hopes for Muslims, men and women, who live in the West. They are, quite simply, hypocrites. They are trying to have the best of both worlds. They live and enjoy the carefree Western lifestyle to the full while at the same time pretending to their relatives back home that they devoutly observe the teachings of Islam and try to spread and apply them in the West."

After several years in the U.S., Sultan began writing articles for the local Arabic press. Since she used America's freedom to express her critical views of Islam, she began to get threatening mail. Muslim advertisers withdrew their ads. One day she received a call from Mr. Hussam Ayloush of CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations). He expressed his displeasure at what she had written and said that she had come close to "overstepping the line." To Sultan it was a veiled threat "whose dangers can be understood only by those with an excellent command of Arabic and a profound understanding of Islam."

When she appeared on Al Jazeera, an Arabic kind of CNN, in a debate with an Islamic cleric, she virtually caused a revolution. At the end of the show, when Sultan was summing up her views, the cleric kept interrupting her. She finally shouted at him, "Be quiet! It's my turn." She writes:

"I uttered this sentence without realizing that it would open a new chapter in Arab and Muslim history. Never in the history of Islam has a woman clearly and forcefully asked a Muslim man to be quiet because it was her turn to speak.... My mailbox was flooded with letters.... Viewers who supported my position praised what I had said.... But Muslim men who saw it as a threat to their ability to raid and shout cursed me.... What is important to me is that I broke a taboo.... I challenged the insolence of a Muslim Sheikh and exposed his shallowness and hypocrisy for the first time in fourteen centuries."

Sultan calls the Islamic God of Hate an ogre that Muslims fear and internalize. They live in an Islamic prison which permits no outside influences. Yet, the recent revolution in Egypt was started by young users of the Internet and Facebook. Is that an opening that can change how Muslims think about their religion? In Syria, Sultan's homeland, people have risen up against their ruler who is determined to crush them. Yet, the rebels have used YouTube to get their message out to the world.

As of August 2011, the Arab Spring has not changed much of anything. Mubarak is out, but not the religion that has held the Muslim world in ideological bondage for centuries. So it is wise to heed Sultan's warning that Islam is not a religion of peace. She reminds us that the cruel God of Hate still rules the Muslim world and seeks vengeance against the unbeliever.



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