

RAWAN OSMAN

SYRIAN-BORN GERMAN ACTIVIST, WRITER, PUBLIC SPEAKER, VOICE AGAINST ANTISEMITISM IN THE ARAB WORLD

Rawan Osman is a Syrian-born German political activist, writer, and public speaker who confronts antisemitism in the Arab world, a cause she has pursued since publicly reckoning with the antisemitic views she once held herself. Her work on Arab-Israeli normalization now reaches over 450,000 followers across social media platforms.

She received the 2026 Moral Courage Award at the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, along with the White Rose Society Award (US) and the Oppenheimer Süsskind Medal (Germany). She studied Islamic and Jewish Studies at Heidelberg University and is featured in the documentary *Tragic Awakening*, which explores the roots of antisemitism in the Arab world.

Her writing has appeared in JNS, *The Jerusalem Post*, *The Times of Israel*, and *Fathom Journal*.

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Back to God

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Growing up in the Middle East, I never believed in an all-powerful, benevolent God. The injustice and misery around us ruled Him out. The god I knew was indifferent and frightening. He demanded obedience even when his rules made no sense and the world he governed was broken. The closest thing to him was Syria's Hafez al-Assad, who terrified people even in Lebanon. As a teenager, I understood that man had created this petty god in his own image. I declared him imaginary and was labeled an atheist.

Still, in desperate times, I gave God a chance. During wars, I asked Him to end the shelling. When my parents fought, I asked Him to make them stop. I looked at our society and asked Him to end my life. He didn't. When I found my father dead, I begged Him to bring him back. He didn't. Eventually, I stopped talking to Him.

My father once told me that if God existed, He would have no interest in those who behave out of fear of hell or desire for heaven. If there is a God, he said, I would find Him. He was right. My father's death brought fear and pain so intense that I finally became present in my own life. Healing slowly freed me from fear and taught me to live with pain. And then I found God. Not the god society created, but the God who created us.

This God is the origin of our existence, a thread woven into each of us. He doesn't do things for us; He equips us with instincts, a mind, senses, and a world to explore. We are born with the ability to discern good from evil, right from wrong, and tame ourselves. How we live is our choice, and we will be judged accordingly, because our decisions set off chains of actions. Together, they shape the world. *Genesis* tells this human story: Adam and Eve, curious and tempted, left a serene existence for the Tree of Knowledge. We asked for this, and an adventure is what we got.

Tyrants like Hitler and Assad dismiss God as fiction, believing that freeing the mind from Him brings strength. Then they take His place, break His rules, and become false gods, feared and idolized. Yet every one of them vanished, because the world is designed in favor of the good. How do we know? The same way Abraham knew to trust God and answer His calling. Every one of us, in every era, carries that knowledge.

In this age of technology, God seems laughable to many. We think we have it all figured out: science and human rights can replace religion. But even in prosperous societies, where God is dismissed or distorted, right and wrong become relative, and people grow disoriented and lonely. We desperately need moral clarity and a connective tissue to heal our broken world. We need to bring back God. Not the *"Big Brother"* god, but the One who created us.