



A. A. Nasr

Topics

Business and Management, Culture and Society, Global Affairs, Humor, Inspirational Speakers

Travels From

Florida

Bio

A. A. Nasr is the abbreviated pen name of the writer and artist formerly known as Amir Ahmad Nasr, born on August 25th, 1986, at the convergence of the White and Blue Niles in Khartoum city. The formerly anonymous voice behind the three-time Weblog Award nominated blog *The Sudanese Thinker*, which he began in 2006, he is the author of the critically acclaimed memoir *My Isl@m: How Fundamentalism Stole My Mind – And Doubt Freed My Soul* (St. Martin's Press), recommended by *Foreign Policy* magazine among 25 books to read in 2013. Set in war-ravaged Sudan, oil-rich Qatar, multi-cultural Malaysia, the United States, Turkey, and the frontlines of the digital revolution, *My Isl@m* is a fascinating prelude to the Arab Spring and a disarming tale of doubt, soul-searching, and how the Internet opened the eyes and heart of a young Muslim man to “a world beyond the conspiracy theories and religious fundamentalism of his early youth.” Described by *The Economist* as “puckish,” aka playfully mischievous, over the years, Nasr's writings and public lectures have often covered a wide range of subjects – art, satire, storytelling, technology, surveillance, religion, free thought, human rights,

moral philosophy, soft power, American foreign policy – but generally centered on what it takes to advance liberty and prosperity, individually and societally. He has shared the stage with Nobel Peace Laureates and former presidents, and spoken to audiences of up to a thousand at events in North America, Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, and Southeast Asia. He has also appeared at YPO, Google, Cato Institute, Freedom House, the Oslo Freedom Forum, Columbia University, and the University of British Columbia, among many other venues, and has been noted by WIRED as a “formidable speaker.” After the release of his memoir in 2013 at the age of 26, A. A. Nasr's work quickly gained an influential readership that includes Hollywood personalities, former White House officials, Ivy League academics, tech entrepreneurs, and celebrated journalists. In 2014, following the ban of his book and blowback to the Arab Spring, he sought, and attained, political asylum in Canada, where he found renewed purpose and consciousness as an artist and creative entrepreneur. His story and advocacy have been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *The Guardian*, *El Pais*, *Rare*, *Al Jazeera English*, *Bloomberg*, WNYC, BBC, and dozens of media outlets in over 13 languages across the globe, as well as in the Emmy nominated documentary film *Live Your Quest*. A. A. Nasr is the founder and executive producer of A Tribe Called Story, and a sought-after business storytelling advisor to 7, 8 and 9-figure entrepreneurs. Vancouver, Canada is the city he calls home and his global HQ. Prior to writing *My Isl@m*, he was an early team member at Mindvalley, an award-winning EdTech company, as well as the formerly anonymous voice behind the sociopolitical blog *The Sudanese Thinker*, until the revelation of his identity at the height of the Arab Spring uprisings in 2011.

SPEECHES

Beyond War: Why the Consciousness That Birthed ISIS Is the Real Enemy – And How to Overcome It

In late June, 2015, news broke out that twelve Sudanese medical students including American, British, and Canadian citizens left Khartoum to Turkey to cross into Syria to join ISIS. To those in the know, the likely answers to why they did it are not so elusive.

In this engaging story-driven presentation, based on Amir's memoir and widely-read essay *ISIS Isn't the Real Enemy, The "Game of Thrones" Medieval Mindset That Birthed It Is*, Amir offers an eye-opening assessment of the ISIS phenomenon.

Using a holistic analysis that former Middle East editor of *The Guardian*, Brian Whitaker, noted "really grasps the scale of the problem," Amir deconstructs the interconnected factors driving ISIS, and explains why military force alone will solve nothing in the long-run.

Instead, Amir proposes a feasible concerted effort to overcome the destructive consciousness that birthed ISIS, and to unshackle the creative imagination of Muslim youth everywhere. To get there, he stresses, we must assertively stand for basic cross-cultural liberal values, and build on the promising entrepreneurial media and education efforts currently underway in the Arab world and beyond, facilitated by technology.

The Rewiring of Muslims and The Future of Liberty On today's world stage, few topics are more

pressing than the retreat of liberal democracy, the ramifications of the digital revolution, and Islam's violently contested role in public life.

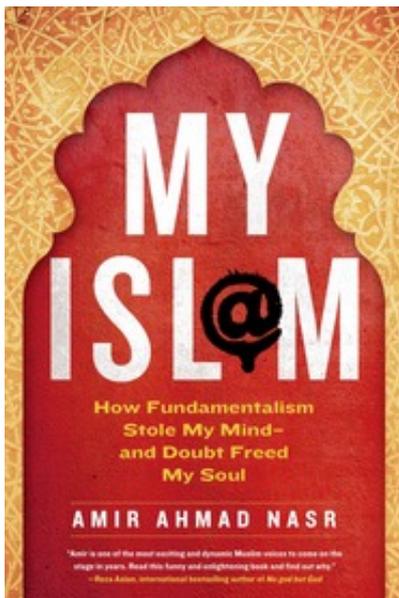
In this unique stats-meet-stories presentation, rather than explore these three global currents separately, Amir demonstrates how their dynamic interplay presents us with great challenges as well as great opportunities where they intersect.

Reflecting on the impact of mobile digital connectivity on Islam, and cultural liberalization as a force for good, Amir paints a vivid picture that illuminates our present and envisions a better future for Islamdom, liberty, and our common humanity.

Who Are You Not to Do Something: Redefining Leadership for the Digital Age In this presentation, drawing from wide-ranging current literature, as well as personal and entrepreneurial experience on the front lines of the digital revolution, Amir makes a compelling case for why, despite all the news of ongoing havocs and catastrophes, there's never been a better time in human history to exercise one's own individual agency and leadership in the pursuit of self-mastery and a better society.

Through compelling and gripping stories, Amir calls upon us to celebrate the "descent of power" and to embrace the promise of exponential technology, with the ultimate aim of reshaping our lives and our world for the better.

BOOKS



Hardcover

[My Isl@m](#) How Fundamentalism Stole My Mind -
And Doubt Freed My Soul

St. Martin's Press

Part memoir, part passionate call for liberty, reason and doing work that matters, *My Isl@m* tells the tale of how the internet opened the eyes and heart of a once fearful young Muslim to a world beyond the dogmatism of his upbringing, and recounts his transformation into a defiant digital activist.

REVIEWS: Praise for Amir and *My Isl@m* “Since we began Incitement, we’ve had many amazing individuals grace our stage, including respected Apple and Google executives, Grammy Award and celebrity artists, successful CEOs, social entrepreneurs, and more. Of them all, Amir has always delivered and is consistently ranked as our #1 speaker. He’s bold and has proven capable of commanding the attention of a large room of up to 800 audience members as he’s done for us. More importantly, he sure knows how to blow away the crowd and leave a lasting memorable impression with his real and raw story-driven style, transformative content, and energizing intensity. This is why we often use him to help us ensure the success of our important events. Invest in having him speak to your audience, and he’ll surely leave them feeling inspired, educated, and empowered.”

– Zikry Kholil and Daniel de Gruiter, co-founders of Incitement

“From Iran’s Green Revolution to the Arab Spring, the world has watched the Internet spark and fuel uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa in recent years. Raised in Sudan and Qatar as a devout Muslim, Amir Ahmad Nasr was among those young Muslims who took to the web, first blogging anonymously in 2006 before revealing his identity in 2011, amid the year’s wave of Arab uprisings. Now, the cheeky voice behind “Sudanese Thinker” describes in his first book a personal journey that reflects a widespread trend with important political and cultural implications — how the Internet “opened [his] eyes and heart to a world beyond the conspiracy theories and religious fundamentalism of his early youth.”

– *Foreign Policy*, What to Read in 2013

“One of the most enlightened books about religion that I think I’ve ever read.”

– Brian Lehrer, host of *The Brian Lehrer Show* on WNYC Radio

“*My Isl@m* displays the charm of a good blog: irreverent, nonchalant, open to fresh ideas, generous to other writers, ostentatiously unpretentious and secretly grandiose. Mr. Nasr appears to be convinced that his own intellectual trajectory from medieval-style Quran-memorizing to thoughtful dude, digitally loquacious, reflects a deep trend in world history, with the Internet as prime mover. He never openly

states this conviction. And yet it animates the book, and the possibility that he may be right imparts to his pages an electric glow, as if from an LCD screen.”

– *The Wall Street Journal*

“This is the passionate, skeptical, tech-savvy voice of a new age of Islam. Through the lens of his own life, Nasr sheds light on a generation of revolutionary life-hackers poised to change the global conversation about religion and politics.”

– G. Willow Wilson, author of *Alif the Unseen* and Marvel Comics’ new *Ms. Marvel* series

“My Isl@m is a beautiful story about love, heartbreak, and redemption. Read it, and be inspired.”

– Salman Ahmad, lead-singer of Junoon and author of *Rock & Roll Jihad*

“My Isl@m is a love letter to freedom of speech. As Nasr wrestles with oppression, mental and physical, personal and political, his story consistently turns on his ability to find new information, often from surprising sources, and eventually from his own ability to speak as well as listen.”

– Clay Shirky, NYU Professor and author of *The Cognitive Surplus*

“Nasr seamlessly blends memoir with political thought and activism. The book smoothly follows his journey out of a simplistic understanding of Islam, through rationalism and semi-atheism, towards a conversion to Sufism. Personal history—particularly his expatriate childhood—is the book’s strongest aspect, delivered in Nasr’s casual, conversational tone. Nasr’s insight into the world of young Arab bloggers, including many of the activists behind the Arab Spring, makes this a valuable and enjoyable read.”

– *Publishers Weekly*, starred review