

# **The History of Arabs**

## **Bridging Cultures with Knowledge of the Past**

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Today's Arab Spring and the behavior toward Arabs by easterners and westerners have made it crucial to address and understand Arab history and contributions including pre-Islamic.

The new generation has little or no knowledge of history, even when the past is part of a person's or society's worth. What we did and how we did it determine our value today, like a bank account of accumulated deeds. The nature and diversity of one's contributions can influence how people look at and treat him/her.

One of the main reasons why Arabs have been mistreated and misunderstood is the lack of knowledge about their history, contributions and perceptions.

I mean the very Arab identity today and as a result of wars and destruction as well as globalization has been seriously challenged to the extent that some Arabs fear that they may go extinct within 50 to 100 years just like Australians and Americans. [when I say Americans and Australians, I mean the natives, not the new European comers who took their land and even nationality]

The reference to Arabs by the industrial west (and later all around the world by those who imitate the west) has been everything else, but it; for nearly two centuries, Arabs have been referred to as Moors, Middle Easterners, Near Easterners, North Africans, and other names just to avoid saying the term 'Arab'. In the recent war on Iraq, which was followed by occupation till this very day (November 8, 2012) despite the claim that the USA army has completely withdrawn, we no longer hear of Arabs! The industrial west (and the world that imitates westerners) refers to Iraqis as Sunni, Shiite, Kurd and Christian! And the more than 75% Arabs have suddenly been omitted from any reference except occasionally mentioned in negative anecdotes and news or curses!

How many of you have lately seen a restaurant, an advertisement or an article with the term, "Arabic cuisine," in it? No more, it is middle eastern cuisine. Of course the Turks and Persians have their cuisine named after their ethnicity/language, but not Arabs. I have even seen few "Middle Eastern & Turkish or Middle Eastern & Persian restaurants," which is redundant, as if Iran and Turkey are not part of the Middle East. Middle and East of what and why? This is aside from the fact that Arabic recipes from the at least the ninth century have been adopted by non-Arab Moslems and Europeans, but their contributions continue to be discredited.

In making peace with easterners (in this case the Arabs), it is crucial for Europeans to learn the history of Arabs and how their discoveries and inventions contributed to the advancement of Europeans. There is a serious mistrust and mistreatment of Arabs in Europe, which need to be addressed and treated. This awareness and knowledge is equally essential for the new generations of Arabs who lack understanding of their history and contributions due to globalization, which has impacted their perception and caused this imbalance. The following Hungarian example is best to illustrate my point:

I asked a Hungarian hotel receptionist if he knew of any concerts or restaurants playing Hungarian folkloric music, he replied, "Do you mean gypsy music?" This hotel's restaurant played nothing but English music mostly from the USA day and night, yet its workers have no grasp of English language or traditional Hungarian music, which has been evaluated by him and many in his generation as a lesser music, as a gypsy music. Hungarian TV reflects exactly that, most of the TV programs, series, game shows and films are non-Hungarian with vast majority from the USA dubbed with Hungarian language. This is not true only in Hungary, but all over Europe and the world.

Arab history, which goes beyond Islam and Christianity, has been recorded in Ancient Mesopotamian manuscripts and the Torah, yet today Christian and Jewish so-called historians, relate Arab history only to Islam!

I will speak in the style of Judeo-Christian western leaders, the mainstream writers and "historians," the arrogant and condescending style so to act as a mirror and to perhaps make you feel what we have been feeling for decades listening to those Judeo-Christian westerners speak about Arabs or on their behalf.

In the industrial west, you think and behave as if you are superior to easterners especially Arabs. You consider them backwards and terrorists, and you are the

sophisticated, the peaceful, the more civilized and high-class people. Well, let us examine all of this:

- The earliest mention of the term 'Arab' was recorded during the reign of the Assyrian King, Salmanassar III (858-824 BCE) when Assyrians were at war near Al-Asi River, north of Hama in Syria. The war was between the Assyrian army on one side and the Arameans, Phoenicians and Arabs on another; all backing the king of Damascus.

- In his book, "The Music of Ancient Mesopotamia," Henry George Farmer states and I quote, ". . . It has been said that 'the old danced whilst the young made music. One imagines that there were toil songs among the ancient Semites, as we know in the 'well song' of Numbers xxi.17. Singers and drummers, in a picture of Assyrians felling palm-trees, certainly appear to be facilitating labour. Indeed an Assyrian annalist gives a picture of the Arabs who, as prisoners of war, were working as slaves at Nineveh, where they sang their native songs to relieve their sorrows. Their exotic music fascinated the idle Assyrians who begged for more." It was Henry George Farmer and other music specialists who provided historic information about Arabs' music theory predating and influencing Greek music theory. Do you think this will ever be mentioned in history books and in school curriculum?

-Arabs were also mentioned during King Sargon II (721-705 BCE). He was quoted as saying, "The distant Arabs who live in *Badiya* [or Peninsula] don't have a king or ruler and they never paid taxes to any king before me." How lucky these Badiya Arabs were; no ruler and no taxes, as natural as lenient a living should be.

- In documenting the war against Babylonians, Assyrian King, Sennacherib (705-681 BCE) stated that, "he took soldiers of an Arabian army, led by Basqanu, as prisoners". Basqanu was the brother of Arabian queen Yatie. In 691 BCE, Sennacherib also mentioned that he went to war against another Arabian queen, Talkhono, and later against the Arab King, Khazayli.

- Arabs spoke their native language, Arabic, and the languages of the region, Aramaic and Hebrew; all Semitic languages. There is absolutely no evidence as to which of the Semitic languages appeared or was spoken first. The Hebrews and Arameans claim that their languages predated Arabic or were spoken before, but this is far from the truth. One thing is certain: Only Arabic (of all Semitic languages) is

still used today in its original form (more than one and half thousand years) in books, newspapers, TV/radio, films, the UN body and mosques with the largest number of speakers (among other speakers of Semitic languages). From Arabic language, the terms are currently used in western languages are many such as algebra, alchemy, alfalfa, coffee, cotton, elixir and many others.

- Ancient Arabs followed paganism and practiced Judaism, Christianity and later Islam. At the present time, Christian Arabs live in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and Egypt. Their history is parallel to that of Christianity in the Arab east. Arab Jews existed in the east in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. In the 20th Century, with the European colonization and Euro-American monopoly and globalization, the terms 'Arab Jew' or 'Jewish Arab' became a matter of debate to the extent of rejecting these terms by Ashkenazi Jews, Zionists and pro-Zionists in the industrial west.

Here is some of what the Arabs have contributed to civilization and directly to Europeans for free without patenting:

1. Until the beginning of the 20th century many Europeans didn't wash their hair and body because they considered it a devilish act, they adopted the idea of washing, body cleaning and oiling, the use of aromatic soaps and other nourishing ingredients from the Arabs in Andalusian Spain and Moslems. All these products were introduced to westerners by Arabs and Moslems.

2. The Arab Moslem era was driven by invention, its architects constructed buildings that defied gravity. Its mathematicians created algebra and algorithms (both Arabic terms) that enabled the building of computers and the creation of encryption. Arab and Moslem doctors examined the human body and found cures for many diseases. For instance, the blood cycle was discovered and documented in details by the Arab doctor Ibn-nafees. Arabs didn't patent the cures and deprived people from getting them the way the industrial west has been doing with cures for today's diseases like cancer, Aids and others. Pharma has gotten so cruel and even violent when some doctors found a cure and implement it to cure patients or when doctors present their research outcome on medicine or genetically modified food, and when such outcome challenges the mainstream. They would lose their jobs and/or be forced to leave their countries as in the case of some European and

Euro-American doctors and scientists such as Andrew Wakefield of Britain, Arpad Pusztai of Hungary and many others. These scientists and doctors have also been killed as what the USA and Israel did to hundreds of Iraqi hard-core scientists with published inventions and discoveries. In this recent war and occupation of Iraq, the USA has directly and indirectly killed more than 550 scientists and university professors. The Arabs didn't behave in this corrupt manner, they offered their medical treatment free or at very low cost to people coming from around the world for treatment in Damascus or Baghdad during their peak glories. By the way, the medical treatment and pharmaceutical products in Iraq remained competitive, of high standards and free to all until the 1990s when westerners collectively imposed the most fatal international sanctions ever on any society on earth.

3. In addition to the previously mentioned aspect of Arab sciences, it was an Arab mathematician from the court of Baghdad who invented what you have been using in your daily life, the 1, 2, 3, .... numerals. That mathematician was Al-Khawarizmi. These numerals were based on the number of angles. The number one (1) has one angle, number two has two angles, all through number 9 with nine angles, and zero has none. Where would you be today without these numbers! As the former CEO of Hewlett-Packard stated in a speech on September 26, 2001, "The technology industry would not exist without the contributions of Arab mathematicians."

4. Arab astronomers named the stars, studied and documented their characteristics and paved the way for space exploration and voyages.

This study is part of a series on Arab history covering various aspects of arts, sciences and politics, parts of which I've published previously in writing or produced on radio. The study also tackles the religious diversity among Arabs be that Moslems, Christians or Jews. It is a growing body of research that I hope to incorporate in a book and/or a documentary film.

I want to conclude by asking why after all this greatness, westerners and perhaps worldwide citizens have discredited, mistreated and discriminated against Arabs?

My observation since before the 2001 September attacks, with a considerable increase after these events, continues to be that the Arabs and Moslems have been apologetic and on the defensive while the Judeo-Christian west has never been apologetic and always on the offensive even when they drop bombs and kill millions

of people! They always justify these corrupt and criminal actions.

By presenting aspects of Arab history, their contributions and struggle, I am bridging them as equal; people with intelligence, tolerance, generosity and oceanic contributions. However simultaneously I acknowledge that bridging easterners (especially Arabs) and westerners is a strenuous task. I am a civil engineer by training and know that bridges cannot be built one side made of concrete and the other made of wood. Bridges cannot be built when one side is dominant, arrogant, non-apologetic and on the offensive and the other is passive, apologetic, discredited and on the defensive.

Sources:

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