The Power of the Truth



By Amer Zahr



I always tell people, "I'm Palestinian like Jesus." He is very famous, by the way. We should use him a lot more. And he said a lot of pretty profound things. One of my favorites is, "You will know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free."

This is a war of information. And for one simple reason, we Palestinians are winning. It's because we share that thing with our cousin Jesus: The Truth.

Sure, it might sound clichéd. It might sound romantic. But the Truth gives us our power. Although we Palestinians suffer, although we are often devastated, sad, and in deep pain, we sleep well at night. And it's because we know the Truth resides with us. It allows us to wake up every day, to smile, to continue life. It is why the martyr's mother smiles. It is why the people of Gaza are not going anywhere.

And the Truth is why Palestinians everywhere in the world were prepared for this moment. We listened to our elders, the generations before us, the ancestors who relayed to us the stories of 1948. Those accounts of despair and dispossession live in us to this day. And they live in us because they are the Truth.

Palestinians and Arabs globally have been at the forefront of social media messaging since the beginning of the Gaza Genocide. And we have been wildly successful with audiences in Europe and the United States, especially among the younger generations. And this success has translated into millions pouring into the streets to cry out for Palestinian rights. In London, Washington, Berlin, Madrid, and beyond, citizens of the world are chanting "From the River to the Sea, Palestine Will Be Free!"

How did we achieve this global phenomenon? Well, it's simple. Young people heard influencers say, "Everything you have ever heard about Israel, about its democracy, about its freedom, about its morality…it's all a lie." And their audiences said, "How can that be?" They heard us say that history didn't start on October 7. That what happened that day didn't fit the packaged and false media narrative. That it wasn't "unprovoked." That maybe Palestinians on that day were like Nat Turner, the African American slave who led a rebellion against his oppressors in the 1830s.

So these young people sought out the Truth, the Truth we were telling them. And they found it. And when you find the Truth, you find freedom. But one more thing happens. When you find the Truth, you realize that you've been the victim of deception. And when you realize you've been lied to, you get angry. And when you get angry, you hit the streets. And we have seen the results.

And yes, it's all about the Truth. That's what we Palestinians possess. And since we are generous, we share



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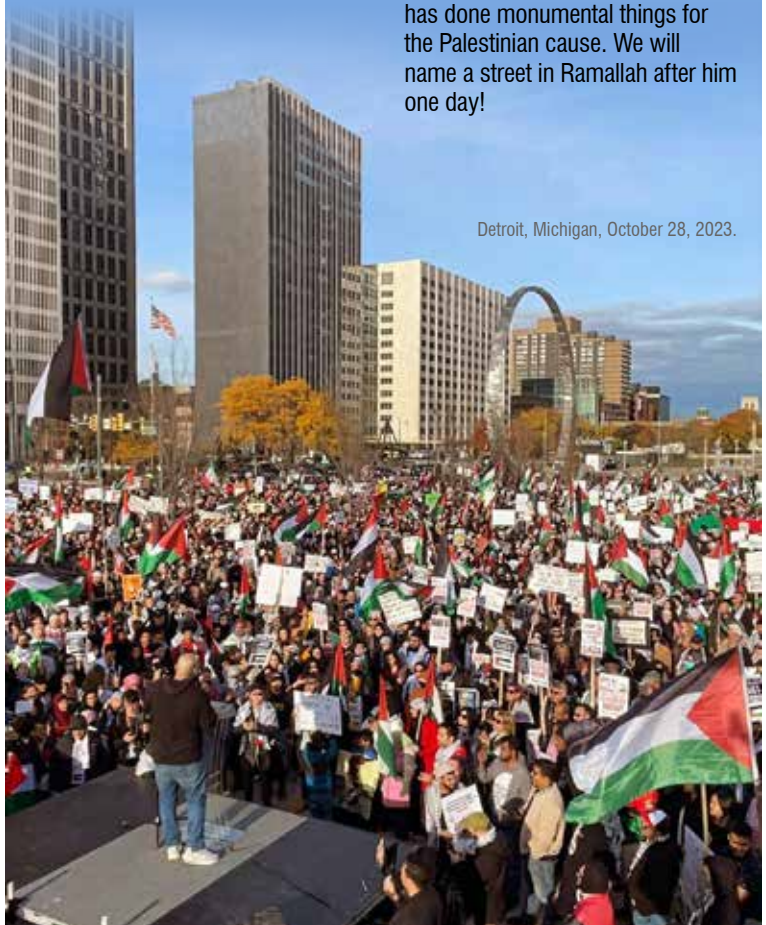
it with the world. The power that resides in that simple concept is deeper than anything. Predictably, Israel tries to suppress it. One can understand why. When you've spent the last 75-plus years lying, the Truth can be a very scary thing.

Palestinians talking about the *Nakba* all over social media is a reminder to Israel of what it did to us, what it knows it did to us.

Six years ago, we didn't have a strong Palestinian voice in the US Congress. Then we elected one Palestinian woman, Rashida Tlaib. A total of 535 Americans serve in Congress. And this one woman made Israel and AIPAC lose their minds. One woman out of 535.

They started holding meetings about how to get rid of Rashida. They raised tens of millions of dollars to get her out of Congress. Now, if you are strong and secure, you don't care about one woman out of 535. You only care about one out of 535 if you are weak, insecure, and fragile, because you know that even one person speaking the Truth can bring everything crashing down.

Our Truth also means that we don't try to silence them. They try to shut us up. We don't try to shut them up. We actually like it when they talk. Like Yaakov. Remember him? "If I don't steal your home, someone else will." Keep talking, Yaakov. Please don't shut up. He has done monumental things for the Palestinian cause. We will name a street in Ramallah after him one day!



Detroit, Michigan, October 28, 2023.



Dearborn, Michigan, October 18, 2023.

I know the Truth from my grandmother Salma, born in Yafa around 1915. She lived in our house, outside Philadelphia (Pennsylvania). Every night, my brother and I would visit her room after dinner because she would give us chocolate cupcakes that our mom never bought for us. But before we got the cupcakes, we had to pay a price. And the price was listening to her stories from Yafa, Palestine in 1948. The same story every night. She would hold up two fingers and say, "They told us we could come back after two weeks." Every night. The same two fingers.

She was the Truth. I lived with the Truth. She wasn't lying. None of our grandmothers were lying. They prepared us for this moment. We Palestinians are smart, hardworking, and overachieving, but we're not gifted enough to all separately tell the same lie for 75 years. We are telling the Truth.

So the message is clear. Keep going. Keep spreading the simple Truth. It is finally setting us free.

Amer Zahr is a Palestinian American comedian, author, lawyer, and professor. He performs and speaks globally. He is also the founder and producer of the "1001 Laughs Palestine Comedy Festival."

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