



**Echoes from the Heart:
A Poetic Tribute to**

PALESTINE



A Compilation of Poems in Solidarity With Palestine



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**Echoes from the Heart:
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Palestine**

Academy of Language Studies,
Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah Branch

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From the Rector's Desk

Professor Dr Roshima Haji Said

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabaratuh,

As the esteemed Rector of Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah Branch, it is with great pride and admiration that I extend my heartfelt praises to the Academy of Language Studies for their noble initiative in publishing a poetry anthology in solidarity with Palestine. In times of adversity, academic institutions must stand in solidarity with communities facing hardship and injustice. The efforts of the Academy of Language Studies exemplify the ethos of compassion, empathy, and solidarity that we strive to instil in our students. Poetry, with its power to evoke emotions and inspire change, serves as a poignant medium to express solidarity and raise awareness. Through this anthology, our scholars and poets lend their voices to amplify the plight of the Palestinian people, shedding light on their struggles and advocating for justice and peace.

I commend the dedication and passion of everyone involved in this endeavour. Your unwavering commitment to social justice and human rights is truly commendable, and it serves as a shining example for our university community and beyond.

May this anthology serve as a beacon of hope and solidarity, fostering understanding, empathy, and meaningful change in our world.

With warm regards,

Professor Dr. Roshima Haji Said
Rector
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kedah Branch



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Foreword

Azlan Bin Abdul Rahman

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabaratuh,

It is with great pleasure and deep pride that I introduce "Echoes from the Heart: A Poetry Tribute to Palestine". This anthology stands as a testament to the power of language and the resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

I extend my sincerest appreciation to the diligent members of the working committee whose tireless efforts and unwavering commitment have made this publication a reality. Their dedication to the project, from its commencement to its accomplishment, has been nothing short of inspiring. "Echoes from the Heart" is not merely a collection of poems; it is a testimony to the collective empathy and solidarity of our community. Through their words, our poets have captured the essence of the Palestinian experience, giving voice to the hopes, dreams, and struggles of a people yearning for justice and freedom.

As Head of the Academy of Language Studies, I am immensely proud of the diverse voices represented within these pages. Each poem reflects the unique perspectives and experiences that enrich our academic community. I am confident that "Echoes from the Heart" will serve as a source of inspiration and reflection for readers around the world. May it ignite compassion, foster understanding, and sow the seeds of change in our collective consciousness. Congratulations to the editorial team and poem contributors from all over the world.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Azlan Bin Abdul Rahman
Head of Academy of Language Studies
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kedah Branch



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Preface

Puan Hajjah Sharina Saad

As the Chief Editor of "Echoes from the Heart: A Poetry Tribute to Palestine," I am honoured to share the journey of this remarkable project from its humble early conception to its realization. This anthology is a piece of evidence of the collective effort and unwavering dedication of numerous individuals who have come together to lend their voices in solidarity with the Palestinian people. The rallying cry "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" serves as a powerful inspiration to all individuals engaged in this admirable endeavour. Though we possess a strong desire to extend our support with all our might, however, our geographical remoteness from the land considered holy by some prevents us from providing direct support. Nevertheless, this poetry tribute serves as our jihad—a heartfelt effort to express our solidarity and empathy. It signifies our recognition of the Palestinian tears and pain, and our commitment to stand by their side. May our humble actions be regarded favourably by our Creator, serving as a source of strength and encouragement for our brothers and sisters in that region.

From the outset, our vision for this anthology was clear: to create a platform for poets from diverse backgrounds to express their solidarity with Palestine through the universal language of poetry. To achieve this goal, we recognized the importance of reaching out to international institutions of higher learning to encourage contributions from poets beyond our borders. To facilitate this process, liaison officers were appointed to establish connections with universities and academic institutions worldwide. Their efforts not only expanded our outreach but also fostered meaningful collaborations with poets from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Through their tireless dedication, we were able to gather a diverse collection of poems that reflect the global solidarity with Palestine. 163 beautifully worded verses were successfully produced in the anthology. Alhamdulillah.

Furthermore, recognizing the importance of linguistic diversity, guest language editors were appointed from institutions outside UiTM and foreign countries such as Indonesia and India. Their expertise and linguistic proficiency ensured the faithful representation of poems written in languages including English, Bahasa Malaysia, and Arabic. Their invaluable contributions enriched the anthology, allowing it to resonate with a wider audience. It's noteworthy to mention that each contributor to this anthology is also a donor to Yayasan Nurjiwa, a foundation committed to funding Palestinians in Gaza and Rafah with food, clothing, medical, and educational aid. This dual contribution underscores our commitment not only to artistic expression but also to tangible support for those in need.

Proudly mentioned, the poems featured in this anthology are a testimony to the depth of feelings, spirits, and the tireless solidarity of the authors with the Palestinian people. Each poem written from the depth and breadth of the soul serves as a powerful reminder of the shared humanity that unites us all. I extend my deepest gratitude to all the contributors, liaison officers, and guest language editors who have made this anthology possible. May "Echoes from the Heart" serve as a beacon of hope and solidarity, amplifying the voices of those who strive for justice and peace in Palestine and beyond.

Puan Hajjah Sharina Saad
Chief Editor



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Acknowledgement

Puan Hajjah Sharina Saad

Bismillahirrohmanirrohim,

"Sometimes a homeland becomes a tale. We love the story because it is about our homeland and we love our homeland even more because of the story."

— Refaat Alareer, Gaza

Just as the quote suggests, the poems within this collection transform Palestine from mere geographical coordinates into a vibrant narrative, infused with the hopes, dreams, and struggles during the Nakba. In "Echoes from the Heart," the poems become a vehicle through which the stories of Palestine are told and cherished. Each verse carries with it the weight of history, the resonances of generations past, and the aspirations for a brighter future. As readers immerse themselves in the pages of this anthology, they not only come to appreciate the beauty and complexity of Palestinian culture but also develop a deeper sympathy and understanding of the Palestinian predicament.

In the endeavour to create "Echoes from the Heart: A Poetry Tribute to Palestine," numerous hands have contributed, and countless hearts have poured their empathy and solidarity into this endeavour. As the Chief Editor, I am profoundly grateful for the unwavering support and dedication of those who have made this anthology a reality. To all the brilliant poets whose words grace the pages of this anthology, I extend my deepest appreciation. Your genuine contributions have adorned this collection with depth, emotion, and resonance, embodying the spirit of solidarity with Palestine. I would also like to express gratitude to the liaison officers who tirelessly connected with international institutions of higher learning, enabling us to broaden our reach and gather diverse voices from around the world. Your efforts have been instrumental in fostering global collaboration and understanding. Special thanks are also due to the remarkable editorial team and guest language editors from institutions outside UiTM and foreign countries like Indonesia and India. Your linguistic expertise ensured the faithful representation of poems in various languages, enriching the cultural tapestry of this anthology.

Additionally, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the donors who have supported Yayasan Nurjiwa, thereby providing vital aid to the Palestinian communities in Gaza and Rafah. Your generosity and compassion are truly admirable. With heartfelt gratitude, I extend profound thanks to the esteemed Rector and Head of Department for their invaluable support and encouragement. Finally, I am grateful to every individual who has contributed, in big or small ways, to the realization of this project. Your collective efforts have transformed this vision into a tangible expression of solidarity and hope. May "Echoes from the Heart" continue to resonate far and wide, strengthening the voices of those who strive for justice and peace in Palestine.

"Poetry is the language of the soul, a sacred symphony that echoes the resilience and beauty of the human spirit, even amidst the harshest of trials." – Sharina Saad

With deepest gratitude,

Puan Hajjah Sharina Saad
Chief Editor

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Chapter 3

Echoes from the Heart:
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Of Feathers and Stale Bread

by Amir Lukman Abd Rahman

She sat there on the mat by the street,
With stale bread surrounding her being,
She must've been 60, probably 80,
All I know is that she's aged,
As I've only seen her through my tiny screen.

She was ripping the bread into tiny pieces,
It was stale so she gave them to the birds,
"How kind," I thought,
Despite being surrounded by fear and rubble,
Her kind heart extended to those not even her kin.

As I continued staring at my tiny screen,
Comments came in, praising her being,
"How kind" they mentioned,
But in Arabic she said,
"If the birds covered the sky like clouds,
maybe then it'll be difficult for the bombs to drop".



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