

I Shall Not Hate:

Moving Forward from Forgiveness to Compassion

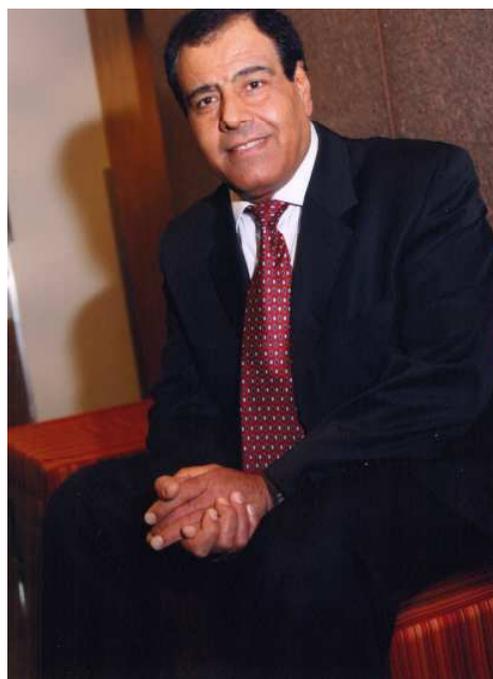
Hear Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish speaking on Thursday, April 26th

At Mark Isfeld Gym, 7:30 – 9:30 PM – Tickets \$15 each

International award winning humanitarian and author, Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, will bring his message of compassion in the face of unimaginable pain and personal suffering. Dr. Abuelaish is a Palestinian physician, raised in the Jabalia refugee camp in Gaza, who overcame the odds and became the first Arabic medical doctor holding a staff position in an Israeli hospital, serving both Arab and Israeli patients.

In October, 2008 his wife of 21 years, Nadia, died suddenly of leukemia. Then, on January 18, 2009, while at home in his Gaza apartment, a missile burst into his apartment, killing three of his daughters and a niece instantly. His story is the subject of his book "I Shall Not Hate".

Heather Reisman, of Chapters Books, reviewed it saying: "Every once in a long while you come across a book that touches your heart so deeply you will always remember where you were when you read it. And well after you turn the last page, the story will remain with you[...]Few people in the world today have a better, more richly etched perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian situation than Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish. Few could have as much reason to be angry, disillusioned or combative. But such is not his story. I Shall Not Hate is his story."



Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish

Advancing the roles of women

Within 15 months, he established a foundation "Daughters for Life" to create a credible voice throughout the Middle East on societal issues that affect the lives of girls and women. Abuelaish believes that when female values are better represented through leadership at all levels of society, overall values will change and life will improve in the Gaza Strip, in Palestine as a whole, in Israel, and throughout the Middle East. The Foundation funds scholarships for women and girls to pursue studies in the fields of interest of his daughters and niece: medicine (medical doctor and/or nursing), law, business administration and journalism. It also has plans to undertake curriculum development and programme assessment of programmes that advance the skills and abilities of Israeli and Palestinian girls and women to impact the peace process and the societies in which they live.

His single-minded focus on saving lives and his understanding of the way that the practice of medicine is a metaphor for everything he does have combined into the meaning, passion and purpose of his life.

No matter who he meets and talks with, he is always, and in every place saying the same thing: I refuse to hate, and I do not believe in revenge; hatred is an illness, and the enemy of peace. His stance has won him humanitarian awards around the world, and a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize.

But as with other world-leading humanitarians, the cackles of the scoffers are always there in the background. Some have claimed that he is cashing in on his loss, a point of view to which he responds: "weren't there people who said the same about Otto Frank?"

No Apology, but Forgiveness and Compassion Flows from Faith

So far, the Israeli government has neither compensated Abuelaish, nor apologised to him. "Actually, for me, it's not a question of compensation," he says. "But an apology? Yes. That would be good. The truth is the shortest way in life. It's not shameful to apologise. If I did something wrong to you, and I said sorry, I would be highly valued by you, and in the eyes of others. I wish they would have the moral courage."

God is a decisive factor for Abuelaish. His Muslim faith is the source of his passion for saving lives, but his appreciation and respect for Judaism and Christianity is also remarkable. While discussing the role faith plays in his work he remarked, "Saving one life, you save the world. Killing one, you kill the world." This is a paraphrase of a statement, not from the Quran as you might expect, but from the Talmud!

Palestine's Martin Luther King, Jr.

In an Interview with the Huffington Post, who dubbed Abuelaish as the Palestinian Martin Luther King, he said "Like Martin Luther King Jr., I too have a dream. My dream is that my children - all Palestinians and their children and our cousins, the Israelis and their children - will be safe, secure, and well fed; they will have their own citizenship and identity." This doctor wants to cure more than individual patients. He wants to cure the hatred between Palestinians and Israelis. More than this, he wants to cure poverty and injustice that is the source of that hatred.

In spite of the incredible pain and injustice that has been his experience for more than 50 years, he refused to give in to hate. He says, "Our enemy is our ignorance." Education is his solution. In the end, he says, we will be judged by three things:

Your money: from where did you get it and what did you do with it?

Your education: what did you do with it? Did you keep it in your heart and mind or did you spread it to others?

And your time: did you help others with it? Did you invest time or spend it in fun here and there?

Tickets for this event are \$15 each, with all proceeds going to the Daughters for Life Foundation. Tickets available after April 4th through Sid Williams Theatre Ticket Centre (cash, credit card, or on-line) and at Comox Videos 'n More, Laughing Oyster Books in Courtenay, or at Seeds Food Market in Cumberland.

This event is sponsored by the Community Justice Centre and the Comox Valley Immigrant Support Society and is funded by the Department of Justice as part of Victims of Crime Awareness Week. Our partners in this project are

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