**Talal Abu-Ghazaleh & the Blessing of Suffering**

Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, the founder of a group of Arab companies providing professional services (Al-Jazeera Net)

**Interviewed by Mohamed Tarek - Doha**

Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization "TAG-Org" is the largest Arab group of professional service firms in the Arab world, and it was established to serve both Arab and foreign companies in the region.

TAG-Org was established in Kuwait in 1972 by Talal Abu-Ghazaleh under his name, and has been one of the first accounting firms in the Arab world.

TAG-Org supported Intellectual Property in the Arab world during 1970s under the name of Abu-Ghazaleh Intellectual Property, and then expanded its work to include management consulting; technology transfer; training; intellectual property; legal services; information technology; capacity-building; recruitment; credit information, translation; publication and distribution.

In an interview with Aljazeera Net, Talal Abu-Ghazaleh talked about the story of his success, and what he had not been able to achieve as well as some charitable and social activities undertaken by the Organization.

**What is the reason behind the success of Talal Abu-Ghazaleh?**

You assume that I am successful and I do not agree with you. I have been honored in Dubai, which was an appreciation award to successful people. On that occasion, I said that I have not come to accept the honor, but to say that success is measured after death. Success is realized upon the completion of a certain mission. For me, I still have a mission and have not achieved any success yet.

**Who should have the credit for building Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization?**

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| “I always tell my colleagues, rather than to think how to win money, think how to create the machine that makes the money. When you build a sincere organization capable and effective, this is the same income or yields, which will bring you the profit.” |

This is another subject. I say that God has blessed me with three things. Firstly, God blessed me with a teamwork that is better and keener than me on the interest of work.

I spend most of my time in international assignments and positions in service of the Arab cause and in representing the Arab image as much as I can. This Organization works as if I am always there, and I thank God that I have such a wonderful group.

Secondly, I have been able to build an organization and I listen to any suggestions on projects’ implementation. I mean that I am all ears to know how to build an entity that produces and manages projects, i.e. building organizations.

At TAG-Org, we have built organizations with systems and tools for implementation.

I always tell my colleagues that instead of thinking how to make money; think how to create the machine that makes money. When you build an effective and sustainable organization, it would be the same income or revenue which will bring you the profit.

Thirdly, the faith I have in my Arab nation is unlimited. When I started work, everyone used to say that what I was doing is useless. They also used to tell me not to try as this nation does not have place but for foreign companies.

I have started in the Gulf region, specifically Kuwait. My organization started with a private small car. Then I found who helped and supported me.

I found that my belief is true. When I decided to set up this organization, the support I received from work colleagues, clients and friends was indescribable.

I did nothing as this success was mainly based on the confidence of the Arab community, including government people and organizations.

I swear that I did not encounter any unsolved problem from any Arab government as long as the solution was proper and legal. I did not find any opposition or obstacles in any Arab country. As long as you are working as per the principles of decency, honesty and integrity, you will definitely receive support.

In short, the reason for TAG-Org success is efficiency in infrastructure, procedures and systems, and the principle that the Arab nation is a great one that will support you if you are worthy to be supported.

I always say that one gets what he deserves in life. If he deserves happiness, he will live so, but if he deserves misery, he will live so.

At the outset, Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization was exposed to a fierce war from international competitors. The war was against Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization in order not to have a national organization in the accounting field that replaces the international ones.

However, we have become one of the major organizations in the world in the field of accounting, and the largest in the world in the area of Intellectual Property; we have 71 branches around the world. We have been able to achieve this fame and outreach through the confidence of the Arab community, which without its support we would have not succeeded.

**What are the characteristics of a successful man in the field of business?**

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| “I’m notifying the students to if there was anything personal that helped me to build a global organization that would, what I call it the blessing of suffering.” |

I want to guide my students, rather than businessmen as they do not need my advice. I say to students that if there was anything personal that helped me to build an international organization, it would be the blessing of suffering.

I was a Palestinian refugee thrown by cargo ship on the Lebanese borders in a village called Ghaziah near Sidon. The village was two hours away from Sidon on foot and the nearest school was located in Sidon. I had to go to Sidon every day back and forth in the hot weather and under the rain. I was under what I call a blessing and what you call a suffering.

When I wanted to enroll in the American University, there was one scholarship granted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) for the first-ranking student in Lebanon, thus I was obliged to suffer to be the first.

To force yourself to be the first-ranking student in high school exams, this is a blessing not a curse. I chose to be the first in order to get the scholarship and this is a blessing. I was studying at the American University on the light of the street because there is no electricity in our house and I did not say that this is suffering. The suffering is the way that leads you to your targets.

**What have you not achieved yet?**

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| “I wish to be in the free state of Palestine. I was born in Jaffa. It has been my dream to be in Palestine and to vote in the Palestinian democratic system to achieve justice and freedom for all Palestinian people, which I am proud to belong to him” |

As an Arab; I wished to be in the free state of Palestine. I was born in Jaffa. It has been my dream to be in Palestine and to vote in a Palestinian democratic system that achieves justice and freedom for all Palestinian people, to which I am proud to belong.

I want Palestine as a homeland for every Palestinian. For your information, this will be achieved- may not be in recent days. Give me one case in history where resistance against occupation did not finally win.

It may take one year, ten years or one or two hundred years. There is no one case in history where resistance did not eventually prevail because the fighter for freedom knows that he has a right in his country and he is willing to die for it.

On the other hand, the occupier knows that he has no right and does not want to die for it. It is a conflict between those who want to die and those who do not want to die, and those who want to die eventually defeat those who do not want to die. This is the logic of history and not the logic of imagination. As they applied the right of return to Israel, I want my right to return to Palestine, where I was born because this is my right.

**Are there any charitable or social projects conducted by TAG-Org?**

We invest in one direction, i.e. capacity-building of which education also constitutes a part. When Jenin was struck in the West Bank, I sent a letter to the late Palestinian President Yasser Arafat telling him that I want to grant scholarships to educate one thousand certified accountants and TAG-Org will bear all relevant expenses. Abu Ammar circulated the letter. While Israel was bombing Jenin which called by Abu Ammar as Jenin Grad, I received 600 applications, of which 300 were from Jenin under bombardment.

I say that I am proud of these people who, while they were searching for food and medicine during the attack, applied to become certified accountants. These people are invincible.

When Gaza has been hit recently, I offered the same scholarship to educate another thousand Palestinians, and I received applications.

I am saying this to show off, but to emphasize that people who seek education while being under bombardment in Gaza and Jenin cannot perish but can only win. I mention these facts to pay tribute to my people and not to brag of what I provided.