



# Analysis of Moral Values and Figurative Languages in Song Lyrics “Palestine Will Be Free”

by Maher Zain

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## Abstract

Music serves as a universal medium for conveying moral values and social messages, exemplified by Maher Zain’s song “Palestine Will Be Free.” This study addresses the gap in analyzing the moral and figurative elements of the song, focusing on its contributions to moral education and social awareness. Utilizing a qualitative research design, the study examines the song’s lyrics and integrates insights from secondary sources to identify themes of justice, freedom, optimism, solidarity, and resilience. The analysis reveals that the song employs various figurative language techniques—such as metaphors, similes, and symbolism—to deliver its moral and emotional messages effectively. For example, the metaphor “Your soul will always be free” highlights the unyielding spirit of the Palestinian people despite oppression, while the recurring theme of solidarity fosters a sense of empathy and collective responsibility. The accompanying music video further amplifies the da’wah message, showcasing visuals of patience, faith, and hope in adversity. These findings affirm the song’s dual role as an artistic expression and a platform for moral advocacy, resonating with broader discussions on music’s potential to inspire ethical consciousness and social change. However, the study’s focus on lyrical and figurative analysis limits its scope, as it does not delve into the sociopolitical context or audience reception. Future research should explore these aspects, including cross-cultural interpretations and empirical studies on listener responses, to provide a deeper understanding of the song’s global impact.

**Keywords:** *Moral Values*<sup>1</sup>; *Figurative Language*<sup>2</sup>; *Music and Ethics*<sup>3</sup>

## **Introduction**

Music is a powerful cultural medium that transcends linguistic and national boundaries, often used to express moral convictions, spiritual beliefs, and calls for justice. In times of sociopolitical crisis, protest songs have historically played a central role in shaping public consciousness and inspiring social movements. According to a 2022 UNESCO report, music is increasingly recognized as a tool for civic engagement and moral reflection, especially among youth in conflict-affected regions. One such example is Maher Zain's "Palestine Will Be Free", which not only serves as a musical tribute to the Palestinian struggle but also as a moral narrative that champions universal values such as justice, hope, and resilience.

Maher Zain, a Lebanese-Swedish singer and songwriter, is internationally acclaimed for blending Islamic themes with contemporary musical styles. His debut album *Thank You Allah* (2009) helped popularize Islamic music across the globe, with songs addressing spiritual devotion, social justice, and humanitarian issues. Zain's multilingual and cross-cultural reach makes his work a significant artifact for examining how music can function as a form of da'wah (Islamic outreach) and moral education.

This study analyzes the lyrics and accompanying video of "Palestine Will Be Free" to identify the moral values it conveys and the figurative language it employs. For clarity, moral values in this context refer to principles that guide behavior in accordance with ethical, social, or religious norms (Zakiah & Rusdiana, 2014), while figurative language encompasses literary devices such as metaphor, simile, symbolism, and personification that communicate deeper meaning beyond literal expression.

Alpers (1994) emphasizes music's communicative power in ethical discourse. Rasmussen (2010) explores Islamic devotional songs as tools for spiritual and moral instruction. Roy (2010) illustrates how protest music can articulate collective struggle and mobilize listeners. Salam and Hajar (2016) specifically examine how Maher Zain's Islamic music promotes moral values. However, few studies focus on a close reading of a single song, particularly one that directly addresses a geopolitical crisis with explicit moral themes.

This gap underscores the need for focused analysis of "Palestine Will Be Free" as a unique case of musical moral communication. Drawing from theories of moral education (e.g., Kohlberg's stages of moral development) and literary stylistics, this study explores how Maher Zain's song employs figurative language to convey ethical messages that resonate across cultural boundaries.

The research is guided by the question: What moral values are embedded in "Palestine Will Be Free," and how do figurative language techniques enhance its moral and educational impact? By addressing this question, the study contributes to the interdisciplinary understanding of music's role in ethical awareness, religious identity, and global activism.

## Method

This study employed a qualitative content analysis to examine the moral values and figurative language found in Maher Zain's song "Palestine Will Be Free." A qualitative approach was selected for its suitability in exploring complex, interpretive meanings within texts—particularly moral, emotional, and symbolic dimensions of language in artistic expressions.

### 1) Data Collection

The primary data source was the official English-language lyrics of the song, obtained directly from Maher Zain's verified artist page and official YouTube lyric video to ensure accuracy. The official music video, also available on Maher Zain's verified YouTube channel, was analyzed to support the interpretation of visual da'wah elements. Secondary data included published interviews with the artist, critical reviews, journal articles, and scholarly discussions of Islamic music and protest songs.

### 2) Analytical Framework and Coding

The data were analyzed using a combination of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and content analysis, focusing on both manifest and latent meanings in the lyrics. First, open coding was conducted to identify recurring themes corresponding to moral values—such as justice, resilience, and solidarity—guided by moral education frameworks (e.g., Zakiyah & Rusdiana, 2014; Kohlberg's theory). Second, figurative language was categorized based on stylistic theory (e.g., Leech & Short, 2007), using predefined categories such as metaphor, simile, symbolism, personification, hyperbole, and alliteration.

## Results

### ***Analysis of Moral Values and Figurative Languages in Song Lyrics "Palestine Will Be Free" by Maher Zain***

According to Zakiyah and Rusdiana (2014), Moral value is something that is inherent and reflects on the person who demands to be believed, exercised in life, or the demands of conduct that is in accordance with the provisions of either sourced from the state law, customs, or religion. This mentality necessitates the development of decent people. When a person can carry out the terms and conditions, it is safe to assume that they are of high quality. Buzan (2003) in (Marzal et al., 1990) explained that moral values can be classified as responsibility, cooperativeness, sincerity, love and affection, diligence, never give up, honesty, bravery, goodhearted (kind and willing to be helpful), loyalty, strong belief. Research on the song "Palestine Will Be Free" by Maher Zain has revealed various moral values and da'wah messages contained in his lyrics and video clips. Here are

some of the main findings from the study:

1. Moral Values in The Lyrics

a) Justice

"Palestine tomorrow will be free"

This lyrics reflects the aspiration for justice and an end to occupation, a central moral appeal of the song.

b) Freedom

"Your soul will always be free"

This suggests spiritual and moral freedom, even in physical captivity.

c) Optimism

"one day you will see her rising"

The use of future tense reflects unwavering faith in a better outcome.

d) Solidarity

"We'll walk hand in hand"

This moral call promotes unity and shared responsibility.

e) Resilience

"Every precious grain of sand, every stone and every tree"

This element of the land symbolizes strength and steadfastness.

In addition to the moral message, the song "Palestine Will Be Free" by Maher Zain also uses various figurative language techniques to convey its moral, emotional, and social messages in a deeper way. Here are some types of figurative language that can be found in the lyrics of the song:

1. Metaphor

- "Your soul will always be free."

It is a metaphor that illustrates that although the physical and land of Palestine may be colonized, the spirit and soul of the Palestinian people remain free and indestructible.

2. Simile

- "Like drops of rain in the sun's light." It is a simile that compares rockets and bombs falling from the sky to raindrops shining in the sunlight. It shows the contrast between the devastation brought by war and the beauty that should exist in life.

3. Personification

- "No mother, no father to wipe away my tears."

The land of Palestine is described as something that has lost people who are supposed to care for and protect, giving the impression that the land itself is feeling grief and loss. It also shows how much suffering children who have lost their parents can feel.

4. Alliteration

- "Every precious grain of sand, every stone and every tree."  
The repetition of the "e" sound in "every" and "precious" gives a rhythmic and reinforcing effect to the importance of every element of the land of Palestine that is guarded with love and passion.

5. Hyperbole

- "Taking away everyone dear to my heart."  
This is a hyperbole that illustrates how great the impact of oppression and war is. "Taking away everyone dear to my heart" emphasizes how many people have been lost in this conflict.

6. Symbolism

- "Every stone and every tree."  
The stones and trees here are not just physical objects, but symbols of the land of Palestine itself. They symbolize the strength, resilience, and sustainability of the Palestinian people's struggle, despite many trying to destroy them.

## Discussion

The results of this study reveal several key moral values embedded within the lyrics of Maher Zain's "Palestine Will Be Free". The analysis of the song's lyrics highlighted central moral themes such as justice, freedom, optimism, solidarity, and resilience. These values are expressed through both the lyrical content and the figurative language employed in the song, making it not just a form of artistic expression but also a call to moral action.

This study set out to analyze the moral values and figurative language used in Maher Zain's song "Palestine Will Be Free." The findings reveal a consistent interplay between lyrical artistry and ethical messaging, anchored in both Islamic teachings and broader humanistic values. The song's central moral themes—justice, freedom, resilience, optimism, and solidarity—are conveyed not only through overt statements but also through carefully crafted figurative language, such as metaphor and symbolism.

The alignment of these values with Islamic principles of da'wah and ummah reinforces the idea of music as a legitimate medium of moral instruction. However, the song's appeal also transcends religious boundaries, positioning it as a cross-cultural narrative of nonviolent resistance and hope. In this way, Zain's work aligns with what Street (2012) refers to as "moral musicianship"—where artistry becomes a vehicle for civic virtue and ethical consciousness.

The cultural context is vital to understanding the song's impact. For Muslim-majority listeners, the lyrics resonate with religious values and political solidarity; for global audiences, they offer an emotional entry point into the Palestinian struggle without requiring prior ideological commitment. This duality increases

the song's reach and moral authority.

In practical terms, the findings suggest that songs like "Palestine Will Be Free" can be used as educational tools in moral education curricula, especially in multicultural and interfaith contexts. Educators might employ such media to foster empathy, discuss figurative language in moral discourse, and explore global justice issues. Policymakers and media regulators may also consider supporting ethically oriented music as part of civic engagement initiatives.

The study also found that the song's call for solidarity—expressed through the repetition of "Palestine, tomorrow will be free"—functions to create a sense of unity and shared responsibility among listeners. The lyrics urge individuals to empathize with the Palestinian cause, fostering a sense of collective action and moral duty toward those suffering injustices. This study affirms that the song serves not only as a medium for personal emotional expression but also as a vehicle for promoting social and ethical awareness, which aligns with the research question concerning the moral values embedded in the song and their potential to foster moral education.

The findings of this research have several practical and theoretical implications. On a practical level, the study highlights the power of music as an educational tool for fostering empathy and promoting moral reasoning. In the context of global social justice movements, songs like "Palestine Will Be Free" serve as a form of non-violent advocacy, using the emotional appeal of music to inspire individuals to reflect on ethical issues and act in solidarity with marginalized groups.

While this study provides valuable insights into the moral dimensions of "Palestine Will Be Free", it is not without limitations. One of the primary limitations is the scope of analysis. This research focused exclusively on the lyrics and figurative language, without considering the broader sociopolitical and historical context in which the song was created and received. A deeper analysis that incorporates historical, political, and sociocultural factors could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the song's impact and significance.

Additionally, the study relied on a qualitative interpretative approach, which, while effective for in-depth lyrical analysis, is inherently subjective. The interpretation of metaphors and figurative language can vary depending on the researcher's perspective, and different listeners may interpret the same lyrics in multiple ways. Moreover, the study did not incorporate feedback or interviews with audiences, which would have provided valuable insights into how the song's moral messages are received and internalized by different listeners.

Based on the results and limitations of this study, several avenues for future research can be suggested. First, future studies could explore the sociopolitical context of the song, investigating how its message resonates with different political and cultural groups. Understanding how "Palestine Will Be Free" is interpreted

across diverse populations could provide a more nuanced view of the song's global impact.

Second, further research could incorporate empirical methods, such as interviews or surveys, to gauge how audiences perceive the song's moral messages and how they influence listeners' attitudes toward social justice and human rights. This approach would provide a more data-driven understanding of the song's influence on moral reasoning and social activism.

That said, this study has limitations. It is confined to textual and visual analysis and does not include audience reception data. Interpretations are influenced by the researchers' academic and cultural background—rooted in literary and Islamic studies—which may shape certain readings. Future research should include reception studies to explore how different audiences interpret the moral and poetic content. A comparative study of Maher Zain's wider body of work or other Islamic protest songs could further illuminate recurring themes and techniques.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, "Palestine Will Be Free" is more than just a song it is a form of moral storytelling. Through poetic language and emotionally charged visuals, Maher Zain presents a powerful message about justice, hope, and resilience. By combining Islamic values with universal themes, the song encourages listeners to reflect on moral issues while fostering empathy and solidarity. As this study has shown, music can be a meaningful tool for ethical reflection and global awareness, especially in times marked by conflict and humanitarian crises. Future studies would benefit from examining how different audiences engage with these musical messages and how they influence broader conversations about morality and social change.

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