

# This Day in History

(May 7)

Today is Monday; 17<sup>th</sup> of the Iranian month of Ordibehesht 1397 solar hijri; corresponding to 20<sup>th</sup> of the Islamic month of Sha’ban 1439 lunar hijri; and May 7, 2018, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

**2417 solar years ago**, on this day in 399 BC, Greek philosopher Socrates was killed during imprisonment by being forced to drink poison because of rejecting the Athenian democratic regime’s tyranny and rejection of its demand to acknowledge its pantheon of gods. His preaching of moral virtue brought accusations of corrupting the youth.

**1333 solar years ago**, on this day in 685 AD, Marwan ibn al-Hakam, the fourth self-styled caliph of the usurper Omayyad regime died in Damascus at the age of 62, after nine months in power, which was limited mostly to Syria. He was killed by his most recent wife, a widow of the tyrant Yazid ibn Mu’awiyah, who put a pillow on his face and sat over it till his breath was snuffed out. One of the most criminal characters in Islamic history, Marwan was the son of the hypocrite Hakam bin Aas, who because of ridiculing Islam was expelled from Medina by Prophet Mohammad (blessings of God upon him and his progeny). He was the first cousin of Osman bin Affan, who on becoming caliph recalled him to Medina in violation of the Prophet’s Sunnah, gave his daughter in marriage to him, and entrusted him all affairs of the state. The resulting mismanagement and plunder of the public treasury ended some twelve years later in the killing of Osman by Muslim revolutionaries from Egypt. In the “Battle of Jamal” or Camel that the pledge-breakers led by Ayesha – a wife of the Prophet – imposed on the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (AS), near Basra in Iraq, Marwan treacherously killed his own leader, Talhah ibn Obaidollah, with an arrow shot at the unprotected thigh. When the Omayyads seized the caliphate he served as governor of Medina for intermittent periods, and stayed there after retirement until Abdullah ibn Zubayr rebelled against Yazid and made the mistake of allowing him and his son Abdul-Malik to leave for Damascus. In Syria, following Yazid’s death and abdication by his son Mu’awiyah II, in protest to his father’s crimes against Islam and humanity, including the tragic martyrdom of Imam Husain (AS) in Karbala, Marwan found himself propelled to the caliphate. His ascension pointed to a shift in the lineage of the Omayyad dynasty from descendants of Abu Sufyan to those of Hakam, both of whom were grandsons of Omayya. Some 67 years later, the Marwanids were thrown into the dustbin of history with the rise of the new dynasty of usurper caliphs, the Abbasids.

**1185 solar years ago**, on this day in 833 AD, the historian Abdul-Malik bin Hisham ibn Ayyub al-Himyari, died in Fustat (Cairo). Ibn Hisham compiled the **“Sirah”** or biography of Prophet Mohammad (blessings of God upon him and his progeny). It is actually an edited version of the earlier **“Sirah”** compiled by Mohammad ibn Ishaq – grandson of Christian convert from Kufa. Ibn Hisham abbreviated, annotated, and altered the original text by adding what appealed to his inclination and removing several passages, however authentic. For instance, he deleted the hadith confirming Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS) as **“wasi”** (or testamentary legatee), including the famous event in Mecca on revelation of ayah 214 of Surah Shu’ara when Prophet Mohammad (blessings of God upon him and his progeny) soon after his formal entrustment with prophethood, invited his kinsmen for meals and announced to them the message of Islam, declaring at the end of the function his young, pre-teen cousin, Imam Ali (AS) as brother, legatee and caliph. The historian Tabari has preserved such hadith, citing Ibn Ishaq’s work as his source.

**1054 lunar years ago**, on this day in 385 AH, famous Islamic historian and bibliographer, Mohammad Ibn Is’haq Ibn an-Nadeem, passed away. He was a follower of the Prophet’s Ahl al-Bayt and the author of the famous encyclopedic work **“al-Fehrist”**. Ibn an-Nadeem’s choice of the rather rare Persian word **“pehrest”** (Arabized as **fehrist/fehri**) for the title of his masterpiece on Arabic literature is noteworthy. This work is ample testimony to his knowledge of pre-Islamic, Syriac, Greek, Sanskrit, Latin and Persian books. He gives the titles only of those books which he had seen himself or whose existence was confirmed by a trustworthy person.

**587 lunar years ago**, on this day in 852 AH, Ottoman Sultan Murad II decisively defeated a united European Christian Crusader army of 100,000 soldiers in the Second Battle of Kosovo, led by the king of Hungary, after three days of fierce fighting. The Crusaders arrived at the Kosovo Field, the same place the famous First Battle of Kosovo had occurred 60 years earlier between the Serbs and Ottomans, and resulted in Turkish domination of the Balkans. In this Second Battle of Kosovo, the 60,000-strong Muslim army completely destroyed the numerically superior Christian army, and five years later ended the existence of the tottering Byzantine or Eastern Roman Empire by taking its capital Constantinople and renaming it Islambol (present day Istanbul).

**531 solar years ago**, on this day in 1487 AD, siege of the Spanish Muslim city of Malaga was started by a huge Christian army of 20,000 cavalry, 50,000 infantry, and 8,000 support troops including thousands of mercenaries from other parts of Europe, as part of the attempts of Ferdinand of Aragon and his wife Isabel of Castile to occupy the prosperous Nasrid Kingdom of Granada. The siege lasted about four months. Malaga was the second important city after Granada, a major trading port on the Mediterranean. After the city surrendered, Ferdinand broke all terms and ordered that the survivors, numbering around 15,000 should be killed or enslaved. It is also worth noting that the Mamluks of Egypt, who had assembled a special force for assisting the Spanish Muslims, could not march to their aid, because of the divisive diplomacy of Christian powers, who fearful of the Ottoman advance into Italy and subsequently Spain, tempted the Turkish Sultan of Istanbul to get embroiled in an unwanted fratricidal war in Syria.

**206 solar years ago**, on this day in 1812 AD, English poet, Robert Browning, was born in London. His works include **“The Piper of Hamelin”** and **“The Ring and the Book.”**

**157 solar years ago**, on this day in 1861 AD, India’s Bengali language poet and thinker, Rabindranath Tagore, was born. He travelled widely and wrote several books. He visited Iran and paid tributes to the famous Persian poet, Hafez Shirazi. Tagore travelled to Shiraz, Isfahan, Tehran and Kermanshah in Iran, from where he went by road to Baghdad in Iraq. Tagore’s personal diary and public interviews capture fascinating details of his political and social observations. At the mausoleum of Hafez, he wrote in his travelogue, **“Sitting near the tomb, a signal flashed through my mind, a signal from the bright and smiling eyes of the poet on a long past spring day – akin to the springtime sunshine of today.”** He celebrated his 71<sup>st</sup> birthday in Tehran and wrote a beautiful poem titled: **“IRAN”**, on the occasion.

**152 lunar years ago**, on this day in 1287 AH, the great scholar, Ayatollah Mohammad Reza Najafi Isfahani, known as Masjid-Shahi, was born in the holy city of Najaf in Iraq. Among Ayatollah Masjid-Shahi’s books is **“Wiqayat al-Adhan”**, **“Naqd-e Falsafa-e Darwin”** and **“Amjadiyyah”**. He was also an expert in Arabic literature, and a poet himself. He was laid to rest in the Takht-e Fulad Cemetery of Isfahan.

**130 solar years ago**, on this day in 1888 AD, on the pretext of trade, the crafty British established their foothold in what is now Zimbabwe, through the designs of the imperialist agent, Cecil Rhodes, who soon deceived the local African chiefs to declare the land as Britain’s colony. The British troops massacred thousands of black people and in 1898 named the land Southern Rhodesia – the land of Zambesi across the river of the same name was called Northern Rhodesia.

**106 lunar years ago**, on this day in 1333 AH, Ayatollah Mullah Mohammad Akhund Kashi, passed away at the age of 84 in Isfahan. A student of famous scholars such as Aqa Mohammad Reza Qomshe’i, Mullah Hassan Nouri, and Mullah Abdul-Jawad Khorasani, he became a prominent teacher and promoter of the philosophy of Mullah Sadra Shirazi. In addition to philosophy, he mastered mathematics, astronomy, jurisprudence, and Gnosis, and is reported to have displayed **“karamaat”** or supernatural abilities. He groomed several students he became outstanding ulema, such Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Abu’l-Hassan Isfahani, Ayatollah Seyyed Hassan Modarres, and Haj Aqa Rahim Arbab.

**64 solar years ago**, on this day in 1954 AD, the Battle of Dien Bien Phu ended in a French defeat and a Vietnamese victory after almost two months of fighting. The Viet Minh forces besieged Dien Bien Phu Castle, forcing Colonel Christian de Castries to surrender, thus ending French colonial rule over Vietnam. The meddlesome Americans, however, started interfering in Vietnam and on the pretext of spread of communism, landed troops, divided the country into two parts and imposed an unwanted war that dragged on till 1975, resulting in the death of tens of thousands of Vietnamese, but ultimately ending in a humiliating defeat for the US.

**27 solar years ago**, on this day in 1991 AD, Iranian poet, author, and researcher, Mehrdad Avesta, passed away at the age of 62. He was an authority on the classical Persian poet Shaiikh Sadi’s famous works **“Bostan”** and **“Golestan”**, in addition to Arabic grammar.

(Courtesy: IRIB English Radio – <http://parstoday.com/en>)

# Iran to Feature Sohrab Sepehri Biopic



Late Iranian poet and painter Sohrab Sepehri.

TEHRAN (IFILM) - **Iran director Ali Qavitan is set to helm biopic on notable Iranian poet and painter Sohrab Sepehri.** that will dramatize life story of the leading Persian modern poet and painter. “Dream of Sohrab” is the name of the biographical film

## Governments’ Role in Culture Development Undeniable

TEHRAN (IBNA) - **Turkish Ambassador to Iran Riza Hakan Tekin said at Tehran International Book Fair that although books play a vital role in cultural development, the governments should also support the process.** According to IBNA correspondent, in a way books can promote the cultural relations between Turkey and Iran, Hakan Tekin stated: “The role of books for achieving this goal is very obvious and influential; however, we officials should also take measures to strengthen such influence.” “Unfortunately, we as governments at times lag behind our nations, however, we are ready to boost our relations with the



Turkish Ambassador to Iran Riza Hakan Tekin.

Iranian nation,” he noted. Elsewhere in his remarks, the Turkish ambassador to Iran said: “Although I have recently visited the book fair, it’s obvious that so many people are attending this event.” The diplomat said that a num-

The director said to local media, “I have been considering the film script for quite a while to adopt a viewpoint in correct relation to the legendary Persian literary figure.” He added, “Since I am a Sohrab lookalike, I have been frequently asked by people why I don’t make a film about him.” He also noted filming the cinematic project will kick off in early July 2018. Sepehri who is a famous Iranian poet in modern poetry departed this life in 1980. His works have been translated into many languages, including English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Swedish, Arabic, Turkish and Russian.

## Fasting Gives Boost to Stem Cells

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - **Age-related declines in stem cell function can be reversed by a 24-hour fast, according to a new study.** According to a new study by researchers from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) biologists, it was found that fasting dramatically improves stem cells’ ability to regenerate, in both aged and

young mice. In fasting mice, cells begin breaking down fatty acids instead of glucose, a change that stimulates the stem cells to become more regenerative. The researchers found that they could also boost regeneration with a molecule that activates the same metabolic switch. Such an intervention could po-

tentially help older people recovering from GI infections or cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, the researchers say. “Fasting has many effects in the intestine, which include boosting regeneration as well as potential uses in any type of ailment that impinges on the intestine, such as infections or cancers,” says Omer Yilmaz,

an MIT assistant professor of biology, a member of the Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research, and one of the senior authors of the study. “Understanding how fasting improves overall health, including the role of adult stem cells in intestinal regeneration, in repair, and in aging, is a fundamental interest of my laboratory.”

## ‘Madam G’ Wins Award at Mexico’s FiNi Film Festival

TEHRAN (MNA) – **Iranian documentary ‘Madam G’ by Sadegh Souri has won the second prize at the student category of the 8th FiNi International Film Festival in Mexico.** “Madam G” is a documentary on the life of Mrs. Rigi, who is appointed the first female governor in Iran in Sistan and Baluchistan Province. The patriarchal society cannot accept a woman to be the leader of their town, and the rigid atmosphere causes many challenges for her. FiNi Film Festival was established in 2011 in the Mexican city of Pachacu and is held biennially in professional and student categories. The 8th edition of the event was held on 26 April to 4 May, 2018, in Pachuca, Central Mexico.

# Picture of the Day



The 15th edition of Theater Forum Celebration was held at the Artists Forum in Tehran on Saturday night. The event included tributes to A-list actors such as Nosratollah Vahdat, Behzad Farahani, and Fahimeh Rahimnia. Courtesy: Honaronline