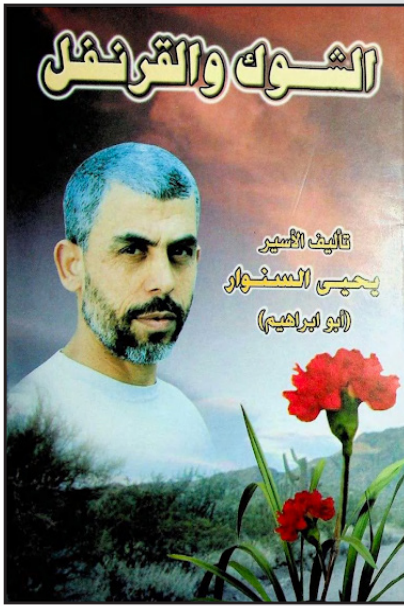


Tale of Palestine in Yahya Sinwar's Novel (Part IV)

TEHRAN -- The author's intent to illustrate the economic disparity between Gaza and other Palestinian territories is clear, particularly in the comparison with the city of Al-Khalil about 40 miles away. Al-Khalil experienced an economic revival after the occupation, largely due to Jewish religious tourism to the Ibrahimi Mosque. This economic focus influenced Palestinians at the time, diverting attention to production and improving living standards, which in turn hampered Fatah's efforts to organize resistance in the city. It was not surprising that Palestinians were divided over the viability of resistance, especially after the Arab armies' swift defeat by Israel. "How could a group of fedayeen [resistance fighters] with their simple weapons and limited capabilities stand against it?" This was a common topic of conversation in the city's cafes during a period when Palestinian hopes were at their lowest, long before Al-Khalil transformed into a hotbed of resistance led by the generation of children of the 1967 war who, from the 1980s onward, would take up arms against the occupation.



In the early 1970s, Palestinians were able to cross into Israel to work. At the time, there was freedom of movement — no checkpoints, walls or other barriers. Israeli businesses hired Palestinians from the occupied territories — Gaza, the West Bank and East Al-Quds — because they were cheaper and easy to exploit with long hours and no benefits. This practice also aimed to suppress resistance, a strategy that sparked significant controversy among Palestinians. The novel captures the tension of this situation, documenting the complex realities and difficult choices faced by an occupied society. What began as a principled moral and political refusal to work in the territories occupied in 1948 gradually eroded under the crushing weight of the poverty that afflicted most of the strip's residents.

In a scene that encapsulates this complex situation, Ahmed recounts an incident when resistance fighters attempted to confiscate a work permit from a laborer. The man pleads with them, explaining that his eight children have nothing to eat, and what little the relief agency provides is insufficient, leaving them hungry. The resistance fighters, torn between their national principles and the harsh realities of survival, reject his justification and tear up the permit, their eyes brimming with tears — a poignant reflection of the internal conflict between the desperate need to survive and the imperative to uphold national principles.

Sinwar describes the modest yet transformative economic improvements seen by those who benefited. A neighbor builds a wall around his once-open house, another installs a sturdy door and yet another paves the floor of his home. As for Ahmed's family, despite their refusal to work in Israel, they manage to afford the cost of placing a large piece of nylon over the tiled roof of their house to prevent rainwater from leaking in during winter. This "amazing" development means that, for the first time in many years, they can sleep without the sound of water splashing.

This same overwhelming joy is mirrored in Ahmed's excitement when the relief agency issues him a card allowing him to eat once a day at its nutrition center after a doctor confirms he is suffering from malnutrition. The intimate details of the entrenched deprivation described in the novel could have only been experienced firsthand by Sinwar himself. Ahmed's elation is such that he feels as if his head is "touching the ceiling," and he quickly begins planning to smuggle a piece of kofta to his cousin Ibrahim, who is closest to his heart, so they can share this rare privilege together.

None of the family's young people, except the eldest brother, are able to attend college after the clash between the Egyptian president, Anwar Sadat, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in the 1970s, which for a period led to the cessation of admission of students from Gaza to Egyptian universities. As a result, it was decided to establish a university within the Gaza Strip for the first time. This initiative turned into a fierce battle for the right to education, a right Israel entirely rejected. With no other options, the students joined this fledgling university project, attending evening classes at the Al-Azhar Religious Institute, without a budget or academic staff. As the number of students grew, and with no alternatives available, university classes were held in tents, since the Israeli authorities prevented the entry of construction materials into the strip and imposed strict restrictions on what could be brought into Gaza — decades before the blockade was established in 2007.

An independent university building was not constructed until many years later. The simple act of attending a university, an epic struggle, transformed it into a symbol of peaceful resistance, a national act that defied the occupation, which, as the narrator says, "fights us in everything, even education."

The story of the university in Sinwar's book resonates with events today. On Dec. 8 last year, the Israeli military demolished the entire Islamic University building after bombing it and filming the destruction, leaving not a single stone of the educational institution where Sinwar spent many years as an active student. Most of Hamas' leaders, including Ismail Haniyeh and Muhammad Deif, graduated from this university. Israel also destroyed most of Gaza's other universities, including Al-Azhar University.

Iranian Delegation Discusses Qur'anic Research in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) -- An Iranian delegation led by the head of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO)'s International Qur'an and Propagation Center Mostafa Husseini Neyshabouri is on a visit to Malaysia to identify areas of cooperation in Qur'anic and religious fields.

In a meeting with the president of the International Islamic University of Malaysia, Husseini Neyshabouri said cooperation should expand between the two countries in organizing Qur'anic research and identifying and removing problems and obstacles.

He also stressed Iran's readiness to activate Qur'anic diplomacy between the two Muslim countries that are influential powers in the Islamic world.

The cleric noted that the emergence of the Islamic civilization was possible thanks to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and one can find no aspect of this civilization in which the Holy Book has not played a decisive role.

The Malaysian official, for his part, welcomed the Iranian delegation and underlined promotion of Qur'anic cooperation between Tehran



and Kuala Lumpur.

He said categorizing Qur'anic studies is necessary in order to boosting cooperation in this field.

The two sides also discussed new methods and

approaches to research in Islamic and Qur'anic fields.

The International Islamic University of Malaysia currently has more than 25,000 students from 100 countries.

Saint Petersburg Hosts Russia-Iran Painting Exhibition

MOSCOW (Dispatches) -- Saint Petersburg is currently featuring the Russian-Iranian painting exhibition "Patterns of Friendship".

The event showcases 200 works by young artists from Russia and Iran. The paintings are dedicated to the imagery, people, culture, cities, and history of the two countries.

The opening ceremony at Tsarskoe Selo was attended by Masoud Ahmadvand, head of the Cultural Representation of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Russian Federation, and Olga Taratynova, director of the Tsarskoe Selo State Museum.



In an exclusive comment to TV BRICS, the Iranian representative stated that "Patterns

of Friendship" plays an important role not only from an artistic point of view but also in

strengthening intergovernmental relations.

"This festival is held not only to discover talents and promote culture but also to bring Russia and Iran closer together. We aim to continue in this direction and involve other areas of art in future festivals"

The paintings arrived in the Northern Capital after the exhibition in Moscow. Residents and guests of Saint Petersburg will be able to enjoy the artworks until November 7, after which they will be sent to Sochi. The next stage of the festival will include exhibitions in Tehran, Isfahan and Shiraz.

Fajr Festival to Premiere Pilot Version of 'Prophet Moses'

TEHRAN -- The pilot version of the highly anticipated TV series 'Prophet Moses', directed by renowned filmmaker Ebrahim Hata-mikia, will be unveiled at the upcoming edition of the Fajr International Film Festival (FIFF) in Iran.

The series, produced by Seyed Mahmoud Razavi, is being filmed in five seasons, employing advanced virtual production technology.

The initial footage released is from virtual production technology tests.

The project's pre-production began several years ago, involving extensive preparation and planning across various phases.

The series will explore the life of the Prophet Moses [PBUH] in 52 episodes, beginning prior to his birth and covering events to his death.

Originally, the project was to be directed by Farajollah Salahshour, the director of 'Prophet Joseph', but his passing led to Jamal Shourjeh being appointed. Shourjeh's subsequent health issues delayed production, resulting in Hatamikia taking over the direction.

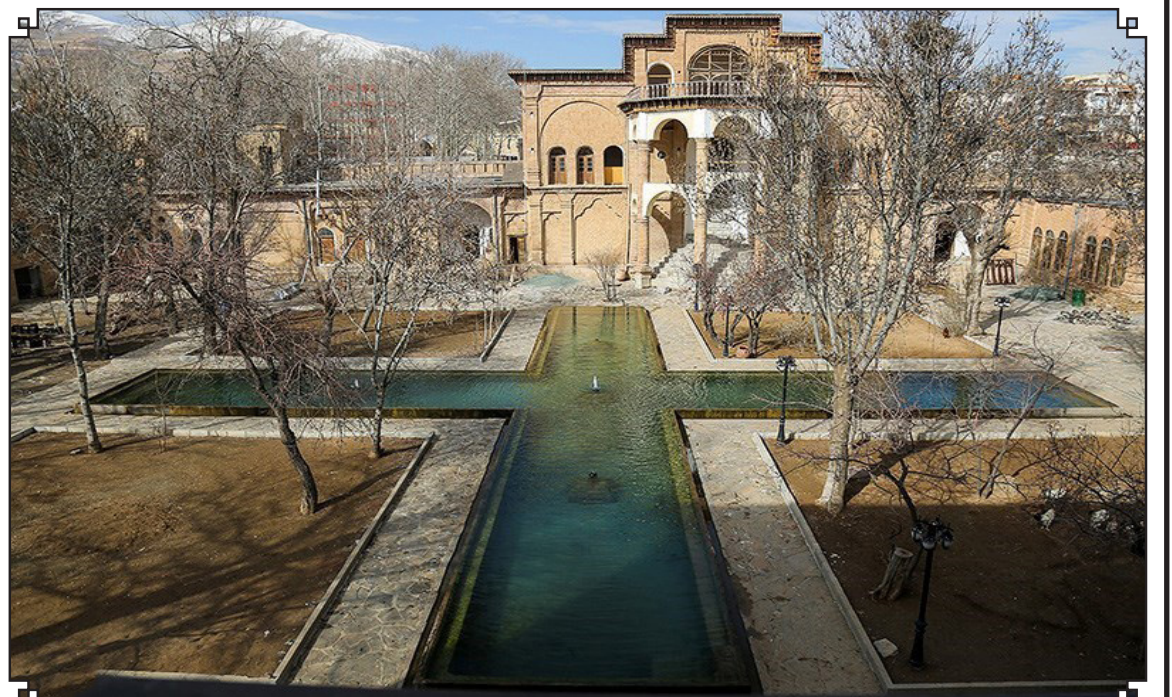
Razavi stated that the series is being produced according to international standards, with the pilot

screening at the festival marking a key step before broader marketing efforts.

The producer expressed optimism about potential global reception of the series, noting the success of previous religious productions like 'Prophet Joseph'.



Picture of the Day



Khosro Abad Mansion is the most outstanding monument in Sanandaj. Its construction dates back to the beginning of the Qajar era in Iran in 1808.

Photo by Tasnim