



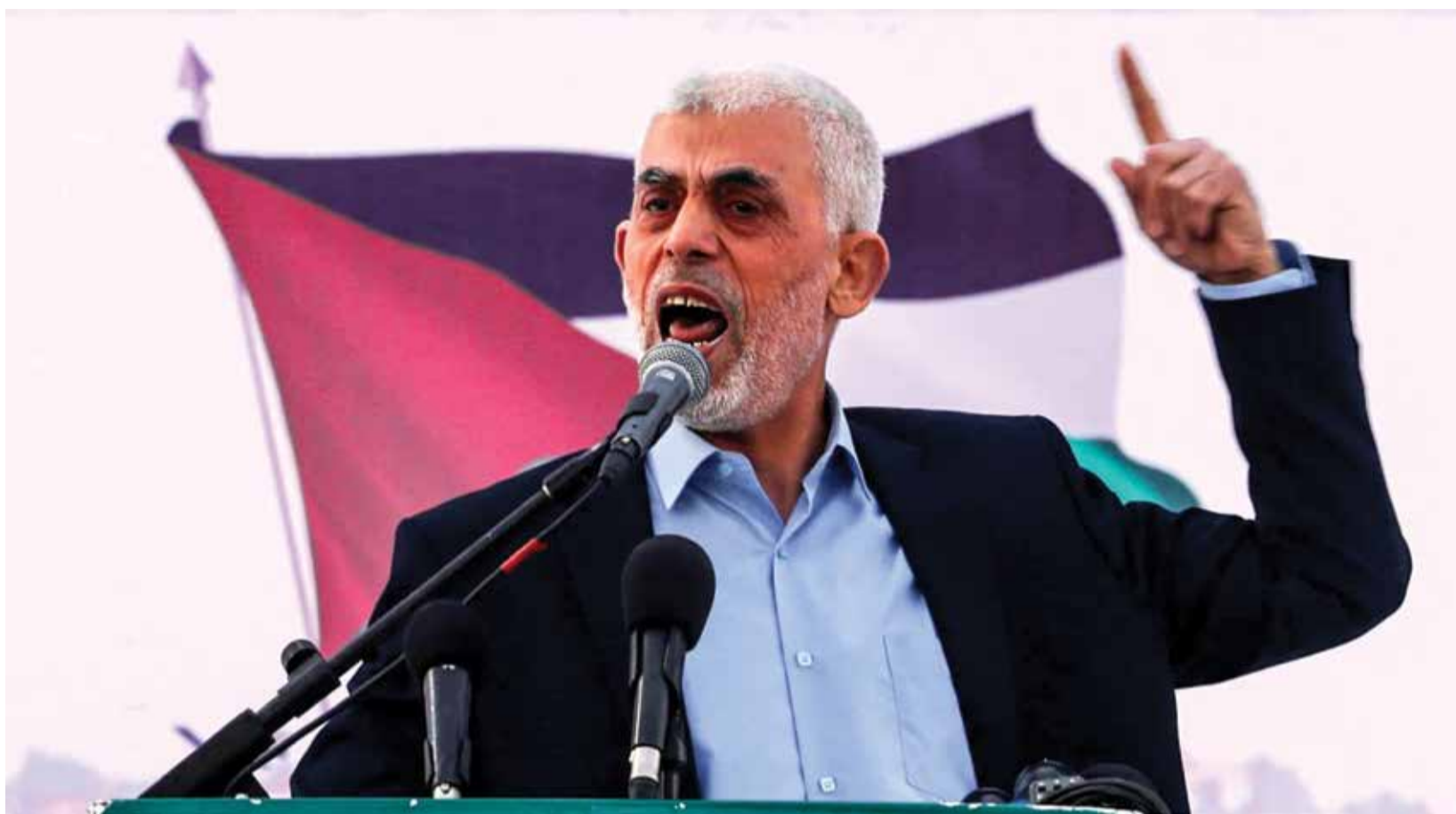
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ANALYSIS

The following was originally published in Arabic in Babelwad, titled "The Philosophy of Hamas: Politics and Existence According to Yahya Sinwar," by Haneen Odetallah. The author uses Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar's novel, "Thorns and Carnations," as a lens through which the mindset of the contemporary resistance can be analyzed, delving into themes of self-reliance, sacrifice, and security awareness. Odetallah explores how these concepts are ingrained in individuals to foster political ascendancy and collective liberation, illustrating the strategic and existential dimensions of resistance and providing a unique perspective on the ideological framework of the resistance.



The politically self-made individual finds, in the intertwining of political practice and faith, in transferring the reference of the Palestinian's existence and purpose to Allah, a principle that the enemy cannot disintegrate. The self-made individual finds in historical Islamic sites, stable political edifices against occupation's attempts to erode awareness and distort direction. Perhaps this is why the battle addressing the freedom of the Palestinian prisoners is named "Al-Aqsa Flood," in an attempt to magnify the cause of the prisoners.



Philosophy of Hamas in writings of Yahya Sinwar

Sinwar spent 23 years of his life in prison, including four years in solitary confinement, but he did not waste any of those years. He learned Hebrew and everything he could about his enemy, even formulating and executing a long-term intelligence plan from behind bars, which at the time was far-reaching. In 2004, after a complex and pro-

tracted operation that required great effort and the recruitment of many prisoners, Yahya Sinwar, then a prisoner, published his novel, "Thorns and Carnations," or "Thorns of Carnations," as the writer intended. The novel deals with a thread from the story of the Palestinian struggle in the historical era between 1967 and the Al-Aqsa Intifada of the ear-

ly 2000s, and the emergence of the Islamic movement in the Palestinian resistance — specifically the Islamic Resistance Movement, or Hamas — against its social, political, and cultural background.

The novel tells a story that begins in a house in a refugee camp in Gaza that will shape the values and choices of these children, who will grow up to

become active and key figures in the Islamic Resistance Movement. The story then expands to include relatives, neighbors, the people of the camp, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the rest of the occupied lands, where each character forms a stone that builds the experience of the Islamic Resistance Movement in those years.

Historical novel as vessel for philosophy

This novel features fictional characters, but all its events are real; the fictional aspect arises from transforming these events into a work that meets the conditions of a novel, as the writer notes in the introduction. The choice of the writer, primarily a political and military figure, to document this pivotal stage in the history of armed resistance and transmit it in this creative, novelistic form indicates that it is an attempt that goes beyond merely recounting history and its events. The historical novel is not just a reflection of the events of the past; it is a deep exploration of the philosophical and moral forces that shape historical movements. The characters in historical novels embody and engage in philosophical struggles within the context of their time. In other words, it serves as a means to understand the complex relationship between personal beliefs and the broader expanse of history. As for the writer, he is one of the pioneering figures in Hamas who witnessed its inception and contributed to its formation and development from youth to the present day. His departure from the

confines of traditional historiography to address innovative dramatic struggles in history allows him to explore its philosophical dimensions; specifically, the impact of beliefs on history. In the context of the history of Hamas, this enables him to formulate a philosophy for the Islamic Resistance Movement. The story is told through the perspective of Ahmad, the son of the refugee camp who first opens his eyes to the world's harshness: the camp, the war, and the disappearance of his father, a resistance fighter, without a trace. Ahmad observes the camp environment and living conditions, witnessing the poverty, the cold, and the rain that seeps through the ceiling as they sleep and follows them to their classroom in the UNRWA school. He observes the camp's community and its culture, seeing his mother's concern for other people's honor and reputation — especially when it involves their daughters — and her strictness in this matter. Conversely, he experiences joy in accompanying his grandfather to prayer and social gatherings in the camp mosque. Ahmad observes the political transformations in the camp, in the Gaza Strip,

in the West Bank, and throughout the occupied lands; he witnesses curfews, sieges, the relentless hunt for resistance fighters, and collective punishment. He witnesses the normalization of occupation, material stability, work permits, and recreational trips into the occupied lands, through which more individuals are compelled and coerced into collaboration with the enemy. Ahmad observes the "Israeli" prisons from which he, his brothers, relatives, and acquaintances emerged, witnessing the power of determination and organization in changing reality. Most importantly, Ahmad watches how the weapons and the struggle for freedom evolve in response to these conditions, seeing men who were shaped by the resistance and who, in turn, shaped it. Ahmad traces the emergence of Hamas by following the characters who formed, developed, and embodied it, summarized in his cousin Ibrahim, the martyr's son who grew up with him in the same house with the same mother, and who grew to become a model of true leadership and political destiny-making. The narrator plays the role of an involved observer; he doesn't just watch, but he accompanies Ibrahim in his

work, his education, and his journey of struggle. Despite joining Ibrahim in demonstrations, organizing religious and educational sit-ins in Al-Aqsa Mosque, and security work in chasing collaborators, the narrator denies joining the Movement officially until the end: "Although I did not consider myself an 'Islamic Bloc' member or a supporter, I had no choice but to elect my cousin and his list, as our shared life and my personal admiration for him did not allow me to do otherwise." This gap between Ibrahim and the movement he represents makes Ibrahim a figure whose greatness surpasses that of the movement. Although Ibrahim does not directly clash with occupation forces and only becomes a martyr at the end of the book, he knows his fate from the beginning and pursues it, undeterred even by his attachment to his wife and children. Perhaps Ibrahim symbolizes a state of being that the narrator aspires for this political Movement to cultivate in society, or the model of the Palestinian individual that the writer hopes Hamas will create — achieving its goals of shaping self-determination and establishing a political entity for the Palestinians.