



Palestinian Folklore

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The progress of nations does not come from totally abandoning the old but by researching and uncovering the old and taking what is best and building upon it. When nationalist ideas surfaced, the movement towards the revival of folklore started. Furthermore, as the spirit of nationalism increased, each nation increased its ties with its folklore because it is part of the nation's identity.(Alqam, 1974)

According to Webster's dictionary (1983), folklore is the "traditional customs, tales, sayings, or art forms preserved among a people." In addition, "folklore of any society anywhere is the humanity of people; it unifies them and directs their wisdom towards the benefits of the human kind." (Abu Hadba, 1994)

Folklore progresses as the society progresses, and it moves from one generation to another. Therefore, studying the folklore of a society helps in understanding the development of this society over the years.

Because of the importance of folklore in the life of a nation, we as Palestinians carry a national duty to revive and study our folklore. There are many concerned Palestinians who set forth the efforts to work in this field. The Palestinian universities are helping in these efforts along with other specialized organizations; for example, The Palestinian Folklore Center in al-Bireh and The Center for the Revival of Arabic Heritage in al-Taybah. Many individuals are involved in folklore studies and published a number of books and articles about different areas of the Palestinian Folklore. From those individuals, Dr. Abdellatif Barghouthi, Abdul Aziz Abu Hadba, Dr. Nimir Sarhan, and Dr. Sharif Kana'na. On July 1, 1983, the International Day of Palestinian Folklore was announced inviting everybody in the world to celebrate the Palestinian Folklore. This day is still observed every year among Palestinians, especially those interested in folklore.

The Palestinian Folklore covers many aspects including the popular literature, customs, clothes and embroidery, pottery, and others. In this humble effort, I will introduce the Palestinian popular literature by covering certain areas in this field. The popular literature has been circulating among the Palestinian generations vocally until books were published and people were introduced to the written form of this literature.

References:

1. Alqam, N.: "A Study in Heritage and Palestinian Folklore", *Society & Heritage*, 1: 119, al-Bireh, Palestine (April 1974).
2. Abu Hadba, A.: Interview with Ali Al-Khalili, *Society & Heritage*, 24: 194, al-Bireh, Palestine (July 1994).
3. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, p. 479, Merriam-Webster Inc., Springfield, MA, (1983).