

Manifestation of Love in the Novels of Khaled Hosseini

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Khaled Hosseini the Afghan born American writer and physician beautifully reflect the human relationships through his powerful novels. This Humanitarian author of best selling stories authentically display things both lovable and problematic of Afghanistan. His works visualize the readers to know about his homeland to the extent of his beliefs. They act as a window to view Afghanistan. Hosseini is sober about his home land and wants a stable country though it has to face enormous changes. Well known sensible writer Khaled Hosseini vividly portrays the capital city Kabul where he was born and spent his early days as a young boy. He tries his best to show the world about the city Kabul in its colour, tone, mood and texture. It once had the pride of historical monuments, art, architecture and gardens. Three decades of war and instability in the country caused devastating effects on the natives. War disrupts the lives of many people and their relationships.

In his novels Hosseini has expressed his deep concern over the pitiable condition of the people particularly women. The state of women in the past was free and equal with men, but with Afghanistan slowly falling in to the tyrant hands, women were treated worse than in any other time or by any other society. As a representative of his homeland to the best of his abilities, he truthfully displays Afghanistan. Hosseini wants his novels to be treated as love stories. It is not conventional love stories but the characters are saved by love and affection. Hosseini in

one of his interviews with Lois Alter Mark says about his books

“My books are love stories at core, really. But I am interested in manifestations of love beyond the traditional romantic notion. In fact, I seem not particularly inclined to write romantic love as a narrative motive or as an easy source of happiness for my characters. I am more interested in love that blooms in the most unexpected places, between people who don't really see it coming -the co-wives in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, for instance, or between Nabi, the chauffeur in *And the Mountains Echoed*, and his employer. My characters search love and human connection, and in that process face the limitations of their own hearts and see their own vulnerabilities exposed. It is the overcoming of these obstacles, in the name of love, that leads to those acts of self-sacrifice and altruism that speak so deeply to me and represent what is best in man.”

Love helps his characters to draw out of isolation. It gives them strength and hopes to endure their hardships and grow confidently. In the novels of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens, family is the centre of all activities and the protagonist becomes part of that scenario. Likewise in Hosseini's novels, bond and role of the family is stronger. His characters are linked with one another and through bonding in the family

good human relationships. Love, affection, greatest treasures of living. Love, affection, care, compassion and empathy become the essential ingredients to maintain valuable relationships. In his novels, Hosseini has revealed his great concern about the wretched conditions of people especially women at the mercy of others. Against the backdrop of such pathetic situation, the strong factor that gives solace to the bleeding souls is love. Love gives them the strength to transcend their own limitations, to expose their vulnerabilities, and to perform devastating acts of self-sacrifice. Love helps his characters to move out of isolation in all his three novels, *The Kite Runner* (KR), *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (TSS) and *And the Mountains Echoed* (AME).

The Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini's first novel mesmerised the world. As Isabel Allende, author of *The House of the Spirits* states about this novel on the cover page that "This is one those unforgettable stories that stay with you for years. All the great themes of literature and of our life are the fabric of this extraordinary novel: love, honour, guilt, fear, redemption...It is so powerful that for a long time after, everything I read seemed bland". The novel vividly summed up the history of Afghanistan from 1960's to the 21'st century. Against this backdrop the story of love between two friends Amir and Hassan are depicted which is intense and haunting. They are also master and servant. Amir belongs to the ruling majority Sunni Pashtun ethnic where as Hassan belongs to Shia Hazara the minority in Afghanistan. Amir recalls that "But we were kids who learned to crawl together, and no history, ethnicity, society, or religion was going to change that either. I spent most of the first twelve years of life playing with Hassan"

courageous, honest and athletic. Amir loves his father Baba a lot but he is jealous of his father's regard and affection for Hassan. Hosseini provides information about the Afghan tradition of kite flying and kite running. Hassan is a champion kite runner. Amir says about Hassan "He held the kite over his head, like an Olympic athlete showing his gold medal" (KR 9).

At the kite competition as Amir's kite soars in the sky Hassan runs to catch the last snapped kite for his master. Amir and his friends confront him and rape Hassan. Amir witnessed it without rescuing his loyal friend from the brutality. This kite contest brings out the loyalty and betrayal of the true friends. Amir recalls, "Hassan looked tired too –he'd lost weight and green circles had formed under his puffed –up eyes" (KR 81). Adding more fuel to the fire Amir blames Hassan of a theft and Baba sends him away with a grief stricken heart. Hassan silently bears every humiliation from his friend and proved himself as the epitome of love. Like a flower exhales fragrance, he exhales love and love only. Eventually because of the changing political climate Amir and his father are forced to flee Afghanistan. Amir views his refugee in the United States as an opportunity to leave his past behind. Although Amir with his father Baba toiled hard to create a new life for them in the United States, the past is unable to stay buried. After his father's death Amir receives a phone call from Rahimkhan in Afghanistan and offers him the "Chance to be good again". There he rescues Hassan's son Sohrab from Taliban's with much difficulties. He learned that Hassan was his half brother and adopts Sohrab with true redemption.

Through *The Kite Runner* Hosseini explores human relationship beautifully with intense and haunting love with loyalty of Hassan and Amir. In spite of the turmoil and hardships, the protagonist Amir is left in an individual path to reunite with Soraya to whom he is indebted. Love towards their dear ones shapes and moulds them and perform devastating acts of self-sacrifice. The noble act of selflessness paves way for peaceful life.

A Thousand splendid Love is the second novel of Hosseini which depicts the selfless and splendid love between two women supporting each other in their marriage to the same man. It makes the readers eyes flood with tears in several places. Mariam and Laila are the co-wives of Rasheed. The two women are raised in a completely different atmosphere and nineteen years gap between them. The novel is set in the midst of war and famine over three decades and the abject misery of the Afghan women is portrayed. Mariam is the illegitimate child of Jalil Khan, the rich businessman who had three legitimate wives and nine children. Mother Nana cautions her daughter Mariam that "Learn this now and learn it well, my daughter: Like a compass needle that points north a man's accusing finger always find a woman. Always. You remember that Mariam" (TSS 7).

After Nana's death she is forced marry Rasheed a widower from Kabul. She has suffered six miscarriages and unable to give her husband a son. Frustrated Rasheed brutally forced her eat pebbles "His powerful hands clasped her jaw. He shoved two fingers in to her mouth and pried it open, then forced the cold, hard pebbles in to it. Mariam struggled against him mumbling, but kept pushing pebbles in, his upper lip

curled in a sneer" (TSS 102). Rasheed rescues Laila from bomb blast, Mariam nursed her. Mariam is still more humiliated when Rasheed took Laila as his second wife. Initially she is angry at the sight of Laila. After few months Laila gives birth to a baby girl Aziza that brings sunshine in childless Mariam life. When Laila is suffering in labour pain it is Mariam who takes care of her like a mother "My daughter's water broke and the baby won't come," Mariam called" (TSS 280). Maternal bonding is so strong, that Mariam goes to the level to kill Rasheed to protect Laila. She sacrificed her life to save Laila and prove her selflessness.

Mariam, the illegitimate child, dies a saint's death and emerge as a symbol of selfless love "Mariam thought, that she should die this way. Not so bad. This was a legitimate end to a life of illegitimate beginnings" (TSS 361). Here the focus is on the special strong bond between two women who endure their hardships patiently and silently. Mariam retaliate back against the cruelty of her husband to save her sweet heart.

Hosseini in his third novel *And the Mountains Echoed* ventures in to portray the dynamic relationship which is sibling ship. This tale with web of relationship and pool of narrators' perceptions travelling over six decade's across war- torn Afghanistan, the United States, France and Greece with myriad of characters and intertwining plots. Several sibling ships are revealed here. Inseparable siblings Abdullah and Pari live in poverty with their father Saboor, step-mother Parwana and a new born brother. Saboor give away Pari to a childless wealthy couple. It is easy for Pari to forget past and family but it is very painful for Abdullah till his old age. Abdullah recalls

“But there was no forgetting. Pari hovered, unbidden, at the edge of Abdullah’s vision everywhere he went. She was like the dust that clung to his shirt. She was in the silences that had become so frequent at the house, silences that welled up between their words, sometimes cold and hollow, sometimes pregnant with things that went unsaid, like a cloud filled with rain that never fell. Some nights he dreamed that he was in the desert again, alone, surrounded by the mountains, and in the distance a single tiny glint of light flickering on, off, on, off like a message.” (AME 55)

Pari moves to Paris, marries her lover and has children. In her fifties she hears the truth of her biological parents. Then she sets off to Afghanistan to find her brother at last she finds him in the United States as a sick man. The other sibling ship is about the twin sisters Parwana and Massoma. Massoma is very beautiful and good looking in the village where as Parwana was stout and unattractive. Both are fond of Saboor. Parwana is jealous of Massoma, pushed her sister from the branches of a huge tree which brings Massoma to be bedridden and incapable forever. Then after Parwana devotes herself in taking care of her sister. Though in her pitiable situation Massoma liberates her sister to marry Saboor “Now, “Masooma says, the orange glow of the flames shimmering on her cheeks, in her eyes, “if you ever loved me, Parwana, if you were my true sister, then leave. No kisses. No good-byes. Don’t beg” (AME 79). Another brother – sister pair is Markos and Thalia. They are not related biologically but fond of each other.

Hosseini explores the relationship between siblingship is compelling and interesting. It is one of the dynamic relationships it has the ability to give all the pleasures and comfort. Compromises are made for the upliftment of the family among siblingship is portrayed.

In Hosseini’s novels *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand splendid sons* and *And the Mountains Echoed* insatiable hunger for love and strong desires to rebuild their Motherland is predominant. Imagining his novels without family ties and roots is very difficult. Relationship has love but there also ability to wound, betray and hurt. Life makes sense only with the strong relationship around. ■

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