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M. Haroon Khpal

The Kite Runner: A Source of Provocation and Mischievousness

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Last summer a family member offered me a book for reading which was originally recommended to her by a colleague at the work place. That book was “The Kite Runner” by Mr Khalid Hussaini, an Afghan novelist living in the USA. I accepted her kind offer with gratitude, and instantly began reading it.

Although it took me a few days to finish the novel, but the sad and regretful memories of reading the book never go away from the back my mind, because the novel is mainly based on the mischievous sentiments which hurt millions of innocent and peace-loving Pashtuns across Afghanistan and beyond. Exactly this aggressive and provocative nature of the novel compelled me to write a few words on a number of issues, ideas and characters maliciously portrayed in the book.

It’s noteworthy that events and characters in the novel have been shrewdly conceived and portrayed in such a manner that only a well-versed Afghan having full command of Afghan history, culture, ethnic and tribal structure can differentiate facts from fictions. In other words, Mr Hussaini’s political manipulation in depicting events in the novel, and his provocative characterization cannot be understood by majority of non Afghan readers.

The perverse characterization of his novel has immensely served the nefarious aims of certain anti-Pashtun circles inside and outside Afghanistan. Hence, it was not surprising that the writer was personally invited by the US war-monger president, G.W. Bush, at the White House and his novel was, therefore, given unusual publicity around the world. According to one estimate more than eight million copies of the book were published in several countries, and reprinted in some others.

Here are the specimens of such evil characterization and mischievously fabricated scenes in book that seriously undermine the social cohesion of already turbulent Afghan nation, and certainly fuel the flames of animosity and vengeance among certain Afghan tribes and communities. Of course, this succinct writing is not a proper book review that entails the analysis of every aspect of Mr Hussaini's novel including its story, the technical and creative features etc. Instead, it aims to shed light on some passages of the novel that are deeply misleading, mischievous and disturbing, and therefore reveal the essence of this wicked and politically manipulated book.

“Ali's face and his walk frightened some of younger children in the neighborhood. But the real trouble was with the older kids. They chased him on the street and mocked him when he hobbled by. Some had taken to call him Babalu, or Bogeyman. Hey, Babalu, who did you eat today? They barked to a chorus of laughter. “Who did you eat, you eat today?” p. 8.

“They called him “flat-nosed” because of Hassan's characteristic Hazara Mangoloid features. For year that was all knew about the Hazaras, that they were the Mogul decedents and they looked like little Chinese people. It was written by an Iranian named Khorami.” p. 8.

Referring to Khurami's comments on Hazāra people, the writer says: “I read that my people, the Pashtuns, had persecuted and oppressed the Hazaras. It says that the Hazaras had tried to rise against the Pashtuns in the nineteenth century, but the Pashtuns had quelled them with unspeakable violence. The book said that my people had killed the Hazaras, driven them from their land, burned their homes and sold their women. The book said part of the reason Pashtuns had oppressed the Hazaras was that Pashtuns were Sunni Muslims, while Hazaras were Shi'a.” p. 8.

Depicting a pious and saintly picture of the Hazāras, the writer says: “like Hassan, Ali was incapable of lying.” p. 39.

In another part of the novel, the writer once again insists on the spiritual purity and religious righteousness of the Hazāras. He writes:

“Hassan never missed any of the five daily prayers. Even when we were out playing, he'd excuse himself, draw water from the well in the yard, wash up and disappear in to the hut.” p. 60.

In the aforementioned quotes, the writer clearly tries to present two opposite pictures: one belonging to an oppressed, innocent and faithful people, in this case the Hazāras, and the other belonging to an oppressor, aggressive and fanatical people, in this case the Pashtuns.

Although things like spirituality, purity and morality are completely individual virtues i.e. Hazāras, Pashtuns, Tājiks, Uzbek, Afghan, non Afghan, Muslim, Christian, Jew, Hindu, Sikh, Black, White and others can all be of such commendable qualities. Nonetheless, there is no problem whatsoever in portraying our Hazāra brothers with saintly qualities in Mr Hussaini's novel or any other writing, but the ascription of all negative qualities and wicked characteristics to a particular race, tribe, group or person is simply a prejudiced mentality.

On the other hand, the writer has either failed to comprehend or deliberately overlooked the fact that political and socio-economic problems never had racial, tribal or sectarian nature in Afghan society. The ruling class in Afghanistan never belonged to Pashtun tribe exclusively. The ruling class, comprised of elites from different communities of the country, was mostly pursuing their class interests rather than the interests of any particular group.

Despite their predominant role in Afghanistan's political and cultural lives, millions of the supposedly privileged Pashtuns have been suffering from various types of repressions, exploitations, corruptions and so many other unjust practices of the ruling authorities.

In the passage attributed to the so-called Iranian writer, Khurami, our novelist actually refers to Amir A. Ramān Khān's brutal repression of the Hazāra people in the nineteenth century which is an historical fact, but to infuriate our Hazāra brothers Mr Hussaini dishonestly blames the Pashtuns for it.

As Mr Hussaini always attempts to manipulate events like that in his novel, it seems necessary to elaborate this important issue in the light of historical facts.

According to many credible Afghan and foreign historians, Amir A. Rahmān Khān (1880 - 1901) had not only waged war against the Hazāras, but against the Pashtuns and some other ethnic groups of Afghanistan as well. Abdur Rahmān Khān's cruel suppression of Ghalji Pashtuns such as Hotak, Taraki and Andar is a well-documented fact cited by all historians including Amir A. Ramān Khān himself in his autobiography and memoir entitled "Tāj-ul-Tawārikh" (See: A. Ramān 271-72 ; Kātib Hazāra 265, 296).

A. Ramān Khān is scornfully referring to Mulā Mushk-i-Ālam Andar, a Pashtun hero of the second Anglo - Afghan war (1978 - 79) as Mush-i-Ālam, a mouse of the world (See: A. Rahmān 269).

A. Ramān Khān had also lodged war against the Nuristānis, whom he refers to as Kāfiris, nonbelievers, prior to their conversion to Islam (A. Ramān Khān 298 -299).

A. Ramān Khān had personally killed a group of well-known Pashtun ulema, Islamic scholars, from Kandahār province including A. Rahim Kākar, the son of a prominent Pashtun scholar, Maulawi Habibullā, also known as 'Muhāqiq-i-Kandahiāri', who issued the fatwā, ruling, of Jihad against him, because of his British backing (A. Ramān 239-40; Kātib Hazāra 7-8; Ghubār 664; Habibi 126).

Amir A. Ramān Khān's repression of the Pashtuns including his own cousin, Ghāzi Ayub Khān, the conqueror of the battle of Maiwand in July 1880 against the British Army, is also a well-documented fact in Afghan history (See: A. Ramān Khān 273 and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Maiwand).

Look at this quote where A. Rahmān Khān contemptuously attributes the following couplet in his autobiography and memoir, Tāj-ul-Tawārikh, about the Shinwāris, a famous Pashtun tribe: "Should one work hard for two hundred years, and bestow the outcome to snakes and Shinwāris, yet they will never be friend with you" (A. Rahmān 260).

A. Ramān Khān's merciless repression of many other Pashtun tribes, such as Shinwari, Sāpi, Mangal and Zurmat is widely reflected in all history books, including his own autobiography and memoir.

In addition to all repressions, A. Ramān Khān's concession to the sell out of Afghanistan's southern and eastern regions to British India against Rs. 1.8 million annual subsidy was his worst betrayal to the Pashtun people (A. Ramān 451 and 453; Habibi 130).

Having said these historical facts, Amir A. Rahmān's military expeditions were not motivated by racial, tribal or sectarian divisions. In fact, he fought any leader, any tribe and any religious sect that did not concede to his tyrannical reign.

Nonetheless, Abdur Rahmān Khān had performed an important role in securing national unity, consolidating territorial integrity of Afghanistan, the growth of cities, the induction of modern institutions, the establishment of printing houses and factories for minting money, manufacturing garments, military equipment and munitions etc. Healthcare units and postal services were also introduced during his reign. Likewise, he also gets some credit for constructing a number of Royal palaces in Kabul and provinces (Habibi 131- 32).

Abdur Rahmān Khān on the one hand was cruel and ruthless in suppressing his political opponents, but on the other an important figure in establishing a secure and united Afghanistan after long years of foreign occupation and bloody civil wars in the country. The authors of “A History of Afghanistan” appropriately refer to the contradictory nature of A. Ramān Khān’s personal and political activities (Gankovsky 179).

Even in the case of any racial, tribal or religious discrimination by Amir A. Ramān Khān’s regime there is no justification whatsoever to ascribe the crimes and wrong doings of a puppet and brutal dictator or his political regime to Pashtun people who had equally been suffering from his vicious repression all along.

Unlike Abdur Rahmān Khān’s despotic regime, we see that during the reign of Amir Amānullā Khān (1919-1929) Hazāras were enjoying equal rights and privileges as other Afghan tribes and communities. Hazāras were among those Afghan ethnic groups who strongly opposed the authority of Habibullā Kalakāni, known as Bacha-i-Saqāu (Jan 1929 - Nov 1929) and supported King Amānullā Khān’s reinstatement to the Afghan throne.

From ethnic point of view, Mr Khālid Hussaini belongs to Qizal Bāsh, the red head or the red hat Turkish Shia community who are considered as the remnants of Safavid Emperor - Nadir Shā Afshār’s Army in Afghanistan (1736 - 47).

Mr Hussaini’s Qizal Bāsh minority has always been enjoying a honoured position in Afghan bureaucracy. Being a son of former Afghan diplomat, a privileged status in public services, it’s really unfair for Mr Hussaini to spitefully blame the Pashtun tribe for any mishap and injustice in Afghan society.

Given his personal background, I cannot see any reason behind Mr Hussaini’s unfair accusation of the Pashtun people, but a politically driven provocation and mischievousness.

It looks as if Mr Hussaini acts as the mouthpiece of some foreign - backed minority groups in the previous Northern Alliance who mistakenly argue that Pashtuns have ruled this country for more than 250 year, so it’s time now, in their opinion, to offset the account in their favour thanks to the presence of US and other foreign troops.

Nobody can deny the fact that Pashtuns have ruled modern Afghanistan for more than 250 years since its foundation by Ahamd Shā Durāni (1747-1773), but it does not mean that all Pashtuns were enjoying royal privileges under Pashtun rulers.

The ruling class in this country had always been obsessed with their class interests rather than safeguarding the rights and privileges of those whom they were supposed to be representing in the political system.

In fact, until 1978 Afghan people had no problems such as racism, tribalism and divisions along the sectarian, lingual and regional lines. We, Afghan nation, have always lived in peace and harmony all over the history, and peacefully shared the good and bad days of our united country, Afghanistan.

Every awoken Afghan knows very well that dividing our people on ethnic, tribal, sectarian, lingual and regional lines is actually the conspiracy of world’s imperialist powers, and some regional and neighbouring countries. There is no doubt that certain elements in Karzai’s puppet government are also being used to serve this anti-Afghan conspiracy.

Thus, labelling any Afghan tribe or ethnic group with prejudice, hatred and humiliating attitude is totally unfair and unacceptable. Individual and isolated Incidents of this type have nothing to do with any tribal, religious or lingual group.

The US-backed puppet government of Hāmid Karzai in today’s Afghanistan is a clear example of this solid fact. As everyone knows American stooge, Hāmid Karzai, is ethnically a Pashtun

from the southern province of Kandahār, but all Afghans are witnessing that Pashtuns from Kunduz to Khost and Kunaṛ to Herāt are living under constant bombardment of US drone and coalition jet fighters; innocent Pashtun civilians including children, women and elderly are brutally slaughtered in their homes and villages without any justification; Pashtun youths are illegally thrown behind the bars in Bagrām, Guantanamo and other prisons under the pretext of association or co-operation with Taliban and Al-Qāida; their homes, mosques, shops, orchards and other properties are wantonly bulldozed without any reason; educational, healthcare and other development projects in Pashtun provinces are absolutely incomparable to those existing in other parts of the country; Pashtuns' share in public administration, especially in the army, police, intelligence and diplomatic agencies is not even equal to the share of a minority group in the country.

Many Pashtuns in the north of the country are still living in the atmosphere of fear, intimidation and harassment created by the warlords supported by Karzai's government and his foreign patrons.

Except the ruling mafia controlling political and economic machine in the country, the rest of Afghan nation above all the Pashtuns on both sides of the so-called Durand line are suffering the worst atrocities of both foreign troops and their puppet and corrupt rulers every day.

Unlike the universally accepted legal rule "everyone is innocent until proven guilty", the oppressed Pashtuns on both side of the Durand line are considered guilty until proven innocent. Pashto language and Pashtun culture are also getting rough ride in all anti-Pashtun quarters throughout Afghanistan thanks to US-led occupation and Iranian intervention.

All these tragedies are happening under the name of democracy, human rights, justice, equality and national unity!

As historical record verifies, Afghanistan's security and stability has always been linked with the stability of Pashtun tribe. Should the Pashtuns were calm and peaceful, the entire Afghanistan, even the entire region was quiet and peaceful. On the contrary, if the Pashtuns were in turmoil, other nations surrounding Afghanistan were in mayhem and turmoil too. Pashtuns have always been a major factor in maintaining peace and security in the region, and will definitely remain so in the future. Anyone who stupidly refutes or underestimates this historical fact will regret sooner rather than later.

In the following excerpt, the writer diplomatically praises the advancement and prestige of Iran, the alleged sanctuary of all Shia Muslims in the world, but for sending this message across, he chooses Bābā, a typical Pashtun character in the novel; He writes:

"For a lot of Hazaras, Iran represented a sanctuary of sorts - I guess like Hazaras most Iranians were Shi'a Muslims. But I remembered something my teacher had said last summer about Iranians that were grining smooth talkers who patted you on the back with one hand and picked you pocket with other. I told Baba about that, and he said my teacher was one of those jealous Afghans, jealous Iran was a rising power in Asia and most people around the world couldn't even find Afghanistan on a world map. It must hurt to say that, he said, shrugging. But better to get hurt by the truth than comforted with a lie." p. 50.

To stir up resentment and hatred between Hazāras and Pashtuns along the ethnic and sectarian lines, the writer expresses Amir's stupidity and bigotry towards Hassan as follows:

"History isn't easy to overcome. Neither is religion in the end. I was a Pashtun and he was a Hazara. I was a Sunni and he was a Shi'a, and nothing was ever going to change that. Nothing." p. 22.

Here is another clear example of sowing the seeds of hatred and hostility in the minds of Hazāras against their Pashtun brothers. In this extract Amir, the main Pashtun character, referring to his friend, Hassan, the main Hazāra character, says:

“I read him stories he couldn’t read for himself. That Hassan would grow up illiterate like Ali and most Hazaras had been decided the minute he had been born, perhaps even the moment he had been conceived in Sanaubar’s unwelcoming womb - after all what use did a servant have for a written word?” p. 24.

Look at these passages where the writer gives birth to a crazy and wicked character in the novel, Āssif, born of an Afghan father and a German mother who greatly favours Hitler’s fascist mentality. Owing to the biased stance of our novelist it’s not surprising that this evil character also gets tied up with the Pashtun tribe. In a passage he quotes Āssif as saying:

“Afghanistan is the land of Pshtuns. It always been, always will be. We are the true Afghans. The pure Afghans not this flat-nose here [referring to Hassan]. His people pollute our watan [homeland].” p. 35.

Hinting to Āssif parents’ family relations with Muhammad Doud, the president of Afghanistan (1973-1978), the writer attributes the following dialogue to Āssif: “I ‘ll ask the president what the king [Muhammad Zāher, 1933-1973] didn’t have the quwat [guts, courage] to do. To rid Afghanistan of all the dirty, kassef [dirty, filthy] Hazāras.” p. 36.

In the above-stated quote, the novelist also tacitly blames President Muhammad Doud for his alleged inclination to Hitler’s doctrine.

To dilute the stain of Āssif’s fascist attitude, the writer attributes the following comment to Bābā: “Hitler was crazy that he ordered a lot of innocent people killed.” p. 35.

In another excerpt, Āssif asks Amir regarding Hassan: “How can you talk to him, play with him, let him touch you?” “How can call him your friend?” p. 36.

As mentioned before, Āssif is not only of fascist outlook, but is a morally corrupt and perverse person too. He is the one who in collaboration with another accomplice, Wali, rapes Hassan a few streets away from Amir’s house in Wazir Akbar Khān Mena, Kabul. Amir sees Āssif’s savage act of raping his best friend, Hassan, in a deadlock street of Wazir Akar Khān, but does not dare to confront Āssif, because he is a dastard and coward person.

In the above-mentioned case the writer actually portrays a mischievous scene where the rapist, Āssif, and the victim’s best friend, Amir, who cowardly turns his back to rescue his friend, and punish the culprit, are both Pashtuns.

I would call this craftily designed scene as a double assassination of the Pashtun characters in the novel, one for the wickedness and the other for his timidity and cowardice.

It’s not accidental that Mr Hussaini maliciously tries to taint Pashtuns with such evil and degraded qualities, as he knows well that rapist and coward are both seriously hated by the general public of each society.

At the time of Hassan’s rape by Āssif, he describes Amir as saying:

“I ran because I was a coward. I was afraid of Assef and what would he do to me. I was afraid of getting hurt.” p. 68.

In his birthday party, Amir, the coward Pashtun character in the novel, says:

“In one of those brief bursts of light, I saw I will never forget: Hassan serving drinks to Assef and Wali from a silver platter.” p. 87.

“I tore the wrapping paper from Assef’s present and tilted the book cover in the moon light. It was a biography of Hitler. I throw it amid a tangle of weeds.” p. 85.

Look at this statement by Amir about himself, and then judge for yourself that how the writer strives to despise a Pashtun character in the novel:

“I was the snake in the grass, the monster in the lake. I wasn’t worthy of this sacrifice, I was a liar, a cheat and thief.” p. 92.

In the following passage, the writer clearly tries to show that Pashtuns are culturally backward and deeply conservative people:

“When Khala [aunt/auntie] Jamila, the wife of general Tahiry, says: when am I going to sing alahoo [lullaby] for my little nawasa [grandchild]?” The general ever the Pashtun, never made any queries – do so meant alluding to a sexual act between his daughter and a man, even if the man in question had been married to her for over four years.” p. 161.

Here are some examples of other politically motivated scenes. Due to his biased attitude, the writer is not showing the whole picture of Kabul’s chaotic situation during pre-Taliban era. Telling half of the truth is a treachery with readers resulting from his bigoted stance and political manipulation all over the novel. See in this passage where Hassan writes about Taliban to Amir:

“The savages, who rule our watan [country] don’t care about human decency. The other day, I accompanied Farzana Jan [Hassan’s wife] to the bazaar to buy some potatoes and naan. She asked the vendor, how much the potatoes cost, but he didn’t hear her. I think he had deaf ear. So she asked louder and suddenly a young Talib ran over and hit her on the thighs with his wooden stick. He stuck her so hard. She fell down. He was screaming at her and cursing and saying the Ministry of Vice and Virtue does not allow women to speak loudly.” P. 190.

The story of Hassan’s and Farzāna’s murder narrated by Rahim Khān to Amir in Peshawar:

“... They [Taliban] accused him of lying when Hassan told them he was living with me [Rahim Khān] even though many of the neighbors, including the one who called me, supported Hassan’s story. The Taliban said he was a liar and a thief like all Hazaras, and ordered him to get his family out of the house by sundown. Hassan protested... But my neighbor said the Taliban were looking at the big house like how did he say it? Yes like wolves looking at a flock of sheep.” p. 192.

In another part of the novel, Rahim Khān recounts to Amir that his father, Bābā, was in fact Hassan’s father as well, which implied that Bābā had committed the crime of adultery with his servant’s wife, Sanaubar. p. 195.

Amir asks himself: “How did Bābā brought himself to look Ali in the eyes? How had Ali lived in that house, day in, day out, knowing he has been dishonoured by his master in the single worse way an Afghan man can be dishonoured?” p. 192.

On the occasion of so-called Hazāras’ massacre in Mazār Sharif, the novelist writes with flagrant provocation and stinking favouritism, but says nothing, whatsoever, about Pashtuns’ brutal carnage in both Kabul and Mazār Sharif at the hand of Hazāras. Of course, two wrong does not make a right at any circumstance. The loss of innocent life by anyone is a tragedy and a crime. So, the culprit, regardless of his/her identity, should be brought to justice. However, historical issues are not supposed to be taken out context. Read the following quote politically manipulated by the writer:

“I had read about the massacre of the Hazara in Mazar-i-Sharif in the papers. It had happened just after the Taliban took over Mazar, one of the last cities to fall. I remember Soraya handing me the article over the breakfast with her face bloodless. Door to door, we only rested for food and prayer, the Talib said. He said it fondly like man telling of great party he’d attended.

We left the bodies in the streets, and if their families tried to sneak out to drag them back into their homes, we'd shoot them too. We left them in the streets for days. We left them for the days. Dogs meat for dogs.” p. 243.

Amir tells Sohrāb about his relation with his father, Hassan:

“Let’s just say they [Bābā and Rahim Khān] did not tell us because your father and I ... We weren’t supposed to be brothers.” He asks: “Because he was Hazara?”

Amir lies to Andrew, the visa officer at the US embassy in Islamabad to get visa for Soharāb. He says to him: “He [Sohrab] was sexually abused.” I said, thinking of the bell around Sohrab’s ankles, the massacre on his eyes.” p. 288.

Look at the writer’s “mercy!” for Pashtuns people in the following passage. Āssif, the wicked man, who used to vehemently favour Hitler’s fascist thoughts during the presidency of Doud Khān, his parents’ supposed supporter and benefactor, has now been turned into a blind and hardcore Talib guarding an orphanage in Kabul. He asks Amir: “I wonder why you’ve come all the way, Amir, come all this way for this Hazara?” p. 249.

In the subsequent passage, the writer tries to depict a liberal picture for Bābā, who pays no attention to religious rituals. Under Afghan conservative culture it can be considered as a revolt against religious teachings of Islam, but regarded as something praiseworthy within western liberal way of life. On the occasion of Qurbani [immolation] he quotes Bābā as saying:

“He sounds annoyed with endless praying, the ritual of making the meat halal. But Baba mocks the story behind the Eid, like he mocks everything religious. But he respects the tradition of Eid-e-Qurban. The custom is to divide in thirds, one for the family, one for the friend and one for the poor. Every year Baba gives it all to the poor. The rich are fat enough already, he says.” p. 67.

Here is another passage where the writer aims to show Bābā, a typical Pashtun character, as someone who publicly stands up against Islamic teachings and clerics. Again such picture is sending a mixed message about the Pashtuns. Under Afghan traditions in general and Pashtuns’ code of conduct in particular, anyone holding such disobedient attitude towards religion and religious authorities is usually considered as nonbeliever or heretic, whilst in western liberal society such person may be seen as a freethinker or intellectual. Given the dominant culture of Afghan society, a Pashtun reader will not be pleased with such character and disposition attributed to Bābā in the novel.

“I remembered something Bābā had said to me a long time ago. Piss on the beards of all those self-righteous monkeys. They do nothing, but thumb their rosaries and recite a book written in a tongue they don’t even understand. God help us all if Afghanistan ever falls in their hands.” P. 235.

The writer once more mischievously attempts to prove Bābā as an atheist or disbeliever: “I see now that Bābā was wrong, there is a God, there always had been.” p. 301.

Readers can easily see the political motivation behind Mr Hussaini’s characterization of Pashtun people. Fascism, oppression, rape, adultery, hypocrisy, religious extremism or its opposite extreme, the infidelity, cultural backwardness, and other evil characteristics are all Pashtuns’ part and parcel.

To give his concealed agenda more plausible appearance in the eyes of foreign readers, the writer sometimes favours a Pashtun character as well, however, there is a huge difference between his denouncing and praising of a Pashtun character. In denunciation of a Pashtun character, Mr Hussaini slyly attacks the Pashtuns as a whole, while praising a Pashtun character he makes an effort to be more specific. In other words, he is very generous in condemnation, but very mean in praising of Pashtun characters. Apart from Bābā’s mixed personality, his perverse and controversial characters in the novel are all Pashtuns.

Look at this quote regarding the unruly nature and mythical strength of Bābā which indicates his personal nature:

“It was Rahim Khān referred to him as what eventually became Bābā’s famous nickname, Tophan Agha or Mr. Hurricane. It was an apt enough nicked name. No father was a force of nature a towering Pashtun specimen with a thick beard, a wayward of crop curly brown hair as unruly as the man himself. Hands those look capable of uprooting a willow tree and black glare that drop the devil to his knees begging for mercy.” p. 11.

Here is another passage of flattering a Pashtun character in the novel:

“My mother, Sofia Akrami, a highly educated women universally regarded as one of Kabul’s most respected, beautiful, and virtuous ladies, and not only she teach classic Farsi literature at the university, she is a descendent of the royal family, a fact that my father playfully rubbed in the sceptics’ faces by referring to her as my princess.” p. 14.

Some other passages indicating writer’s favour towards the Pashtun characters:

“Bābā builds orphanage for orphan kids.” p. 16.

Alluding to Bābā’s spirit of self-defence and self-reliance, the writer points out:

“A boy who won’t stand up for himself becomes a man who can’t stand up to anything.” p. 20.

Referring to the equity and fairness of Bābā, he narrates:

“Bābā would buy us each three identical kites and spools of glass string. If I changed my mind and asked for a bigger and fancier kite, Baba would buy it for me, but then he ‘d buy it for Hassan too...” p. 45.

Referring to Bābā’s tacit abhorrence of Amir’s coward and timid nature, the writer cites him saying to Rahim Khān, his friend and business partner, as follows:

“If I hadn’t seen the doctor pull him out of my wife with my eyes, I’d never believe he’s my son.” p. 20.

Bābā while dropping the stack of food stamps on the desk says, in his broken English, to Mrs Dobbins, the welfare officer: “Thank you, but I don’t want. In Afghanistan I work, In America I work. Thank you very much, Mrs. Dobbins, but I don’t like it free money.” p. 114.

In the last chapter of the novel, the writer disgracefully distorts the facts about Taliban’s heroic resistance against US ferocious aerial bombardment in October, 2001. He writes:

“Soon after the attack, America bombed Afghanistan; Northern Alliance moved in and the Taliban scurried like rats into the caves.” p. 316.

To claim that Taliban scurried like rats into the caves soon after US bombardment is a very absurd and pathetic way of explaining the facts. It actually took several weeks, if not months, whereas the world’s most advanced and powerful military machine with full help from their foot troops, the Northern Alliance of Afghanistan, ultimately managed to get rid of Taliban’s full control in Afghanistan.

I still remember those horrible days when the war-stricken Afghans were screaming because of US barbaric bombardment of the so-called Taliban’s positions up and down the country especially in the north, but the Northern Alliance’s puppet commanders and political spokespersons were begging Americans for even harsher bombing of Afghan cities. We also witnessed that Northern Alliance’s mindless thugs and militia were joying and dancing with every American bomb dropping over Afghan soil.

Except nuclear weapons, all modern weaponry, such as cruise missiles, B-52 bombers, stealth bombers, daisy cutter bombs etc. were widely used by the US Army, however, it was not simple to crash Taliban’s stern resistance. Pentagon’s top strategists including the war-monger defence secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, publicly admitted that Taliban are not easy nuts to crack.

So, It’s is really shocking and bizarre that American top brass generals and field commanders were all overwhelmed by the fierce resistance Taliban put in repulsing their air and ground

attacks, but Mr Hussaini as a devoted sympathizer of the notorious Northern Alliance and their US masters simply buries his head in the sand.

I have no affiliation and sympathy for Taliban's high-handed rule in the country, but nobody, including the corporate media, can deny these clear and concrete facts.

Furthermore, it's nearly ten years since the commencement of US invasion of Afghanistan, but the so-called mightiest army of more than one hundred and fifty thousand US- led ISAF forces plus tens of thousands of the purported security personnel are facing even tougher Taliban's resistance day by day. An annual report by the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the Afghanistan Human Rights Commission stated that 2,777 civilians were killed in conflict-related incidents **ONLY in 2010**. That is a 15 percent increase over the previous year. More than 2,400 coalition fatalities so far and the \$1 million cost per one US soldier a year in Afghanistan is also not a joke.

Read more on Afghan civilian deaths: http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2011/03/10/UN-finds-rise-in-Afghan-civilian-deaths/UPI-93041299783050/#ixzz1GIqocnjb

Full story: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/breaking-news/afghan-war-civilian-deaths-at-record-high/story-fn3dxity-1226018570605>

More details:

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2011/03/10/UN-finds-rise-in-Afghan-civilian-deaths/UPI-93041299783050/

Read more on the war casualties: <http://icasualties.org/oef/> ;

Read more on the US costs of war in Afghanistan:

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/282238#ixzz1IwbVHIYf>

Afghan people are not only suffering from aerial bombardment and ground attacks of US-led ISAF forces and insurgents' suicide bombing, but a widespread corruption as well.

Transparency International's latest annual report has ranked 180 countries based on perceived levels of corruption in the public sector, and found that war-torn nations were the most corrupt. Afghanistan, Iraq, Burma were among the lowest-ranked, with conflict-ridden Somalia at the bottom for the second year running.

Read more: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/8365094.stm>

According to UN sources, opium production in Afghanistan had soared to a record level in the world in 2007.

Full details: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/6965115.stm>

Reporting from Kandahar, Afghanistan, Los Angeles Time correspondent, Laura King, reports: "Opium production in Afghanistan last year, 2010 plunged by nearly half from 2009 levels, the United Nations said in a report. But the steep drop was attributed to a fungus that wreaked havoc on the poppy crop, not to Western anti-narcotics efforts."

Read full report: <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/oct/01/world/la-fg-1001-afghan-opium-20101001>

All these and other tragedies are happening under the watchful eyes of US-led coalition forces who pretend to be the liberator of Afghanistan from Al-Qaida and Taliban. Everyone witnesses that Afghanistan is not a safer place after nearly ten years of foreign occupation. It's a grim reality that Afghan conflict is characterized by civilian killings, increasing violence, corruption, impunity, poverty, unemployment, lack of essential services and so on.

Nearly ten years from US invasion of Afghanistan, the drama of peace, security, democracy, human rights, rule of law and providing basic needs is still a myth and fantasy. Mr Hussaini and his US patrons should know by now that democracy, human rights, and other civilized

achievements cannot be exported with drones, B-52 bombers, F-18 fighters, tanks and other lethal weapons.

As long as Afghan innocent lives are being lost; the pride and dignity of Afghan people are being insulted by foreign troops during their military operations, night raids and other offensive manoeuvres, and a bunch of warlords, drug lords, foreign spies, corrupt and incompetent officials still put in charge of the country, there is no real hope for peace, security, democratic and humanitarian values in our war-torn Afghanistan.

Mr Hussaini and his US benefactors should know by now that what is going on in Afghanistan is not a war on terror waged for self-defence, but a war of terror lodged for the sake of nefarious strategic interests, subjugating our freedom-loving people, above all the proud and courageous Pashtuns, and supporting a puppet and corrupt government in Afghanistan.

White House's policy of invasion and occupation of free nations is not only against the fundamental principles of international law, but also a major contributor in escalating terrorism and violence around the world.

In this passage, the writer once again passes his twisted and distorted version of political events to the readers. He claims:

[“That December Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras gathered in Bonn under the watchful eyes of the UN began the process that might someday end over twenty years of unhappiness in their watan \[homeland\].” p. 316.](#)

It's disgusting to claim that in December, 2001 Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras gathered in Bonn under the watchful eyes of the UN. The fact of the matter is that in December, 2001 a bunch of notorious warlords, drug lords, foreign spies and corrupt politicians gathered in Bonn under the dictating instructions of CIA and other intelligence networks.

The participating delegations in Bonn conference neither represented Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazāras, Uzbiks and other Afghan tribes and communities, nor served their interests at all. It's a rock-hard fact that In Bonn conference Afghan people were once again denied the right to decide their future. Bonn conference was in fact the beginning of another bloody period in Afghanistan's over thirty years long calamity.

It was naive, right from the beginning, to attach any hope to war criminals, militia groups and puppet politicians to do something good for their oppressed and war-stricken people in Bonn. By giving credit to the appalling Bonn conference, Mr Hussaini clearly attempts to cover up the hideous and ugly faces of participating delegates, and therefore justify the American aggression of Afghanistan.

Following the collapse of Dr Najibullā's government in 1992, thousands of innocent Afghan civilians from all walks of life were savagely slain by the so-called Jihādi Parties and various militia groups along the ethnic, tribal, sectarian and lingual lines; Kabul city was razed to ground and millions of Afghan civilians were forced to leave their homes and possessions...

Thanks to US generous financial and military support most of yesterday's notorious warlords and human rights violators are sitting in the driving seats of today's Afghanistan. However, there is no sign of peace and harmony among the coalition partners of Karzai's corrupt and incompetent government.

Under such deplorable circumstances should Mr Khalid Hussaini and other writers of his type try, with their poisonous ethnic, tribal and sectarian insinuations, to exacerbate the anger and resentment of different armed groups, we will certainly witness another tragedy of Afghan people, perhaps in a much greater magnitude than 1992 at some point in the future.

Finally, as the Persian Sufi poet of all times, Hāfīz Sherāzi (1325/26 – 1389/90) preaches in his sublime poetry, lets replace the tree of animosity, causing so many troubles, with the tree of friendship which fulfils the aspiration of hearts.

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