

THE SORROWINGS OF PEOPLE AND DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN MEN AND
WOMEN IN AFGANISTAN IN KHALED HUSSEYNI'S BOOK 'A THOUSAND
SPLENDID SUNS'

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Annotation: *The article reviews a discussion about discrimination between man and woman in Afganistan that started a long time ago and still exists. It debates about the relationship among people during wars and how they could handle their problems despite numerous obstacles. Furthermore, the study shows how woman were treated by the government in the work of Khaled Husseyeni.*

Key words: *Discrimination, civil war, marriage, domestic violence, friendship, bastard, dedication, affection.*

1970s, Herat, Afghanistan. The girl Mariam, the illegitimate daughter of the wealthy merchant Jalil, lives alone on the edge of the city with her mother Nana. Once upon a time, her father seduced his maid, but with 3 wives and several children, he drove her and her daughter out to the suburbs. He will support and visit them. The kind but weak-willed Jalil is ashamed of Nana and his daughter and sympathizes with them. The girl adores her father and feels sorry for her mother, who is suffering from illness. She also has an attachment to Mullah Fathullah, who supports them. When the heroine was 14 years old, a military coup took place in Afghanistan, the Shah was overthrown, and the country became a democratic republic. At the age of 15, Mariam went out to the city for the first time and, contrary to Nana's wishes, decided to visit her father. He is driven by prejudice and does not allow his daughter to enter the house. Only now the girl understands why her mother hates Jalil so much. Returning home, she could not find her mother alive, could not stand the betrayal of her daughter and hung herself. For the rest of her life, the girl remembered the words of her mother that together with men, women are always guilty for everything.

After the situation that happened with Nana, Jalil takes his daughter to his house. Without living with them even a month, Jalil's wife finds a husband for Mariam: a big, cruel man who is 45, whose wife and son died a few years ago. "Now he is a little older than you," Afsoon chimed in. "But he can't be more than... forty. Forty five at the most. Wouldn't you say, Nargis?" [1. 32].

After the marriage, Rashid takes Mariam to Kabul, to their house. In the beginning, Rashid is a kind man that loves his wife, shows her the city, buys lots of gifts and tries to make her smile. At the same time, Mariam wants to be a good wife for him. Soon when she was on the for family, she loses her baby and this situation repeats every time when she gets pregnant. That's why, Rashid starts to treat her as his slave. Gradually, Mariam becomes acquainted with neighbours, especially, with Fariba: wife of the teacher Khakim.

In 1978, the April Revolution occurs, the communists come to power, brutally dealing with the former dictator. Repression of the aristocrats and persecution of the dissatisfied begin. Rashid criticizes the new government. A girl, Leila, is born into the happy family of teacher Hakim and Fariba.

When Leila studies at school, the civil war starts. The girl's father, Khakim, was fired from school for criticizing the communists, but in the evening he tutored his capable daughter. Leila's best friend is her neighbor Tarik, a one-legged boy who suffered from mines. He is desperately brave and always protects his girlfriend. The girl often visits the house of friends, and everyone loves her. Leila is a Tajik, Tarik is a Pashtun, but the children do not pay attention to their nationality. Leila's brothers die, and an atmosphere of severe hopelessness is established in the family. The mother is overcome by apathy, the father is getting old. Khakim wants to leave their country but Fariba was against. In 1992 Kabul becomes Islamic government. When Fariba was talking with her daughter, she mentions the relationship between Leila and Tarik. Young people knew that they were in love with each other.

After some time, war starts again which was the reason of death of Mariam's friend. People decide to emigrate and Tarik's family made a decision to leave a city as well. Within a few weeks Fariba agrees to emigrate, however Leila's parents die because of a bomb. She could not handle the situation and soon Rashid finds her on the street and takes her home. In order to marry her he was kind and he creates a fake story about Tarik's death, after what Leila agrees to marry him. "At first, was the bad news. But I promised him. And, like I said, I'd become rather fond of him. So I came by here a few days ago. I asked around for you, talked to some neighbors. They pointed to this house. They also told me what had happened to your parents. When I heard about that, well, I turned around and left. I wasn't going to tell you. I decided it would be too much for you. For anybody." Abdul Sharif reached across the table and put a hand on her kneecap. "But I came back because, in the end, I think he would have wanted you to know. I believe that. I'm so sorry. I wish." Laila wasn't listening anymore." [1. 129].

Moreover, she finds out that she is pregnant and has to prevent her child being 'bastard'. But Mariam is jealous and considers Leila as her enemy.

In 1993, the heroine gives birth to her daughter Aziza, to her husband's displeasure, which affects his attitude towards her for the worse. The father does not pay attention to his daughter. Leila adores Tarik's daughter, seeing in her a piece of their love. An angry Rashid becomes even more cruel to his first wife, but Leila always protects her. Having spoken openly for the first time, the women become close and become friends. Mariam becomes attached to the girl, and she adores her and calls her aunt. The heroine finally has a family. In a moment of frankness, Leila reveals to her friend the name of her daughter's father and suggests running away from Rashid.

In 1994, a brutal battle between Mujahidin, friends secretly try to leave for Pakistan, but 2 women are captured by police and returned to their husbands. Rashid brutally beat his wife, leaving them alive and threatening to kill them the next time.

In 1996, the Taliban came to power and defeated Mujahidin. Rashid welcomes the new government just like the previous one. Exhausted townspeople are waiting for order

and peace to be restored in the country. All democratic and European values are banned, and for violations there are severe punishments, including the death penalty. Women are deprived of all rights.

In 1997, Leila gives birth to a boy in a women's hospital in an unsanitary condition. Rashid adores his son, spoils him, spends his last money, and Zalmay grows capricious, like his father. The father does not love his daughter Aziza and suspects that she is not from him. There is drought and poverty in the country, there is not enough water, and the Taliban are terrorizing their people and arranging public executions, as the Mujahidin once did. Rashid loses his job, his family gets hungry and his children get sick. He can't find a new job, so he tortures and beats his family. Mariam withstands modesty, and Leila resists beatings.

Once Mariam tries to find her father, but unfortunately he was dead and she regrets that she did not read a letter the her father sent her a few years ago.

In 2001, Aziz had to be sent to an orphanage because it was difficult to feed 2 children. The director of the orphanage slowly teaches children that they are banned by the Taliban. Rashid gets a new job. When the women return from the shelter they visited Aziza, Tariq, who came from Pakistan for Leila, is waiting for them. He was alive, and the story of his death was invented by Rashid.

Laila and Tarik talk for a long time about how they lived without each other. The hero finds out that he has a daughter. Zalmay is capricious and jealous of his mother. When the father returned from work, the son says that his mother was talking to a strange man. Leila confirms that Tarik has arrived and accuses him of lying to her. Furious Rashid begins to beat his wife, and Mariam kills him, saving Leila's life and avenging all the humiliation. The heroine forces Leila, her children and Tarik to leave for Pakistan.

Mariam was put on trial and sentenced to death. Before her death, she remembers her life and understands that she was still happy and needed by someone. They publicly execute her. "Mariam's final thoughts were a few words from the Koran, which she muttered under her breath." [1. 224].

Laila and Tarik get married as soon as they arrive in Pakistan. They work in a private hotel with a kind owner who helps them. Aziza has an attachment to her father, and Zalmay still remembers Rashid and does not accept Tarik. Leila is afraid to believe in happiness to come. Once Leila goes to motherland of Mariam and find mulla Fathulla's house, but unfortunately he was dead and his son gives Leila a box that Mariam's father asked mulla Fathulla to give it to Mariam. In the box, she finds money and a letter that Jalil wrote for Mariam:

"... I have dreams of you too, Mariam jo. I miss you. I miss the sound of your voice, your laughter. I miss reading to you, and all those times we fished together. Do you remember all those times we fished together? You were a good daughter, Mariam jo, and I cannot ever think of you without feeling shame and regret. Regret... When it comes to you, Mariam jo, I have oceans of it. I regret that I did not see you the day you came to Herat. I regret that I did not open the door and take you in. I regret that I did not make you a daughter to me, that I let you live in that place for all those years. And for what? Fear of losing face? Of staining my so-called good name? How little those things matter to me now after all the loss, all the

terrible things I have seen in this cursed war. But now, of course, it is too late. Perhaps that is just punishment for those who have been heartless, to understand only when nothing can be undone. Now all I can do is say that you were a good daughter, Mariam jo, and that I never deserved you. Now all I can do is ask for your forgiveness. So forgive me, Mariam jo. Forgive me, forgive me. Forgive me..." [2. 245]

And these are the words that make a reader cry, because we can see the regret of a father that could not see his daughter last time and the daughter that will never know about this letter. If Mariam could give her father a chance when he came to talk to her, maybe their life could be different. What if Jalil was against to his daughter's marriage, could she end up happy? What if Mariam could give a birth to her baby, may Rashid be kind to her or love her truly? But they had already made a decision and chose their way of life. And this book teaches us to many things, for instance, being patient like Mariam did for many years, always being hopeful and believing that good days will come like Laila and, of course, avoiding silly decisions when it is related to your family like Jalil did. Because, everything that is going on in our life is our own choice.

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