

THE MAIN IDEA OF THE NOVEL “A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS”

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Annotation: This article is about the main idea of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khalid Hosseini. There are many difficult issues presented in the text, such as war, rape, and domestic abuse, but these can be addressed in a meaningful manner as they appear in the text. The novel provides significant insight into the history and development of Afghanistan and provides a unique insight into the lives of women living in Afghanistan. This novel is highly recommended for individual or classroom reading.

Key words: Khalid Hosseini, novel, Afghanistan, political issues, soviet, women, taliban, religion, culture

Novel entitled *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is the second novel written by Khaled Hosseini. It was first published on May 22nd, 2007 by Riverhead Books. The title of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* comes from a poem by Saib-e-Tabrizi. Inspired by a 2003 trip to Kabul, Afghanistan, the author's place of birth, the story follows the lives of two Afghan women, their families, friendships, and hopes for the future, set against a backdrop of three decades of political strife. Published just four years after the wildly successful debut of his first novel, *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* received an equally enthusiastic reception from critics and readers alike.

Hosseini disclosed that in some ways, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* was more difficult to write than his first novel, *The Kite Runner*. He noted the anticipation for his second book when writing it, compared to *The Kite Runner* wherein “no one was waiting for it.” He also found his second novel to be more “ambitious” than the first due to its larger cast of characters; its dual focus on Mariam and Laila; and its covering a multi-generational period of nearly forty-five-years in total. However, he found the novel easier to write once he had begun, noting “as I began to write, as the story picked up the pace and I found myself immersed in the world of Mariam and Laila, these apprehensions vanished on their own. The developing story captured me and enabled me to tune out the background noise and get on with the business of inhabiting the world I was creating.” The characters “took on a life of their own” at this point and “became very real for him”. Similar to *The Kite Runner*, the manuscript had to be extensively revised; with Hosseini ultimately rewriting the book five times before it was complete. The novel's anticipated release was first announced in October 2006, when it

was described as a story about “family, friendship, faith and the salvation to be found in love”.

Hosseini determined the title of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* from the Persian poet that was translated by Dr. Josephine Davis from Farsi to English. It comes from a poem about Kabul by Saib-e-Tabrizi, ... Persian poet, ... I had found not only the right line for the scene, but also an evocative title in the phrase “a thousand splendid suns,” which appears in the next-to-last stanza. The poem was translated from Farsi by Dr. Josephine Davis. Although Hosseini’s novel includes the events of Afghanistan’s history over the past three decades from the Soviet invasion till the war against Taliban, but he never writes the story with specific agenda. He said that is a burden for him to feel responsibility to tell about the story of his own culture and to educate the reader. So, he put the story in Afghanistan, the turmoil in it is as a backdrop to make the sense of the two women’s story becomes stronger.

“For me as a writer, the story has always taken precedence over everything else. I have never sat down to write with broad, sweeping ideas in mind, and certainly never with a specific agenda. It is quite a burden for a writer to feel a responsibility to represent his or her own culture and to educate others about it. For me it always starts from a very personal, intimate place, about human connections, and then expands from there. ... But it was simply for the sake of storytelling, not out of a sense of social responsibility to inform readers about my native country”.¹

The core point of Hosseini’s representation of those two women is their inner life, their specific circumstances that bring them together to face their hard life, and their togetherness make something meaningful and powerful. Hosseini, as a writer of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel, hopes that the content of his novel can be understood as what he intends to yarn. The reader also expected to view the characters engaging in the novel, the character’s experiences, struggle to face multi ethnic, also the woman character in facing the diversity. Also, Hosseini expects the readers being familiar and have empathy to Afghan woman or others who wear burqa clad.

The significance of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* comes, in part, from its source, which is a 17th-century poem praising the beauty and wonder of Kabul. Throughout the story, Kabul suffers under different regimes and violence, yet there is beauty in the hearts of many of the characters who live there. Even after the wars are over, some of the characters return to help rebuild their home.

¹ (June 6, 2013) Khaled Hosaini: By the Book, nytimes.com

The primary theme in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is the rights of women, especially under the Taliban. Mariam and Laila grow up during regimes that are not oppressive. Although Mariam's father's family pushes her into marriage with Rasheed, it is ultimately her choice to agree to marry him.

A Thousand Splendid Suns is a novel by Khaled Hosseini that is mainly constructed on mother and daughter problems within a religiously controlled society. The story's main characters are Laila and Mariam who have a very different childhood. "A harami was an unwanted thing; that she, Mariam, was an illegitimate person who would never have legitimate claim to the things other people had, things such as love, family, home, acceptance" (*A Thousand Splendid Suns*, 4). Mariam was born as an illegal Child whose mother will, later on, commit suicide and is forced to marry Rasheed, who is very abusive and strict. On the other hand, Leila is born within an educated family and is grown up with all the things from which Leila was restricted or stripped. Nonetheless, they are both raised with a strictly religious family which means that the rules of religious doctrines would still apply to them no matter what their stance is. Leila, having grown up very prosperously in contrast to Mariam, ends up having the same fate as Mariam as she loses her parents in a rocket explosion of her house. She later becomes pregnant and unwillingly becomes Rasheed's second wife with Mariam being the first one. Having common interest and common problems, they then become very close friends and share their problems and interests.

The role of women in Afghanistan is an unjust and unreasonable position in which they are continuously denied many freedoms and rights. The women in the story engage reader's interest and feelings; their personalities are almost real and existent. It is amazing that Hosseini, a man, could have so much insight into the feelings of women at particular situations. Hosseini positively depicts the personal of Afghan women and their ability to endure gender inequality, denied education and Taliban rule. Khalid Hosseini's "*A Thousand Splendid Suns*", is an epic tale of two young Afghan women; Laila and Mariam. Although they differ greatly in age and routine, they share the same heartache, pain and sorrow of living in a country ruined by political oppression and war.

The Thousand Splendid Suns, the titular phrase has been taken from the Persian Poet Saeb-e-Tabrizi's poem signifying the beauty of Afghanistan. Predominantly, the novel traces the lives of three women Nana, Mariam and Laila along with two men Rasheed and Tariq who desperately try to define their lives. But women try to champion their struggles with their domestic and political issues. The novel shows the evolution of the Afghan women by recreation as the

political scenario changes and the reaffirmation of their identity. Though the hopes of these Afghan women are crushed by political turmoil and patriarchy, the bonding between them promises that humanism could never diminish till the women inhabit the earth. The thousand splendid suns behind the veils are Afghan's metaphor who continue to preserve the quality of humanity amidst the oppressive situations. The paper analyses how politics, religion and culture has deprived even the basic rights for women and highlights how these ordinary women with the contesting forces of men emerge as radical forces surging ahead to meet the shocking realities of their home and nation.

The novel offers several sites of contestation to debate about Politics, religion, culture and patriarchy. The personal struggle is entwined with the national struggle and the study reveals how men and women become the victims of this historical upheaval and assert the supremacy of humanism.

Totalitarianism or dictatorial states are the ones whose leader or ruler has absolute power and control over the state and he can alter as he wishes or diminish anything that objects. Such political ideas and influences are only there to serve one primary and most important purpose and that is to tell people what to think and make sure that they obey it with minimal deflections or objections from them. Not only political ideas but also religious ideas more or less serve the same goal and it has if not more but equal power and influence on the mind of the people so that they can be grouped under one umbrella. Controlling an organized group of sheep is easier than controlling a herd spread out entirely. These ideas more or less work the same way as they try to make sure that the people will have one shared ideology by which they can set their standards and also a will to fight for. In this way, they can be controlled more easily. *Animal Farm* and *A thousand Splendid Suns* are both great literary forms that have deep meanings regarding such a concept. Both texts illustrate the effect of immense political and religious doctrines on people's lives from complete deception to control based on groundless logic.

A Thousand Splendid Suns is a breathtaking story set against the volatile events of Afghanistan's last thirty years—from the Soviet invasion to the reign of the Taliban to post-Taliban rebuilding—that puts the violence, fear, hope, and faith of this country in intimate, human terms. The story of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* revolves around the lives of two Afghan women, Mariam and Laila. Though they are born 20 years apart, their lives are intertwined through the stormy events of the book. Together they fight against all odds, after having faced them courageously. The theme in the novel "A Thousand Splendid Suns" by Khaled Hosseini is the inner strength of a women even in the darkest of times, which he

has shown through symbolism, metaphors / similes, and irony. Both Mariam and Laila endure so much heartache in their lives because they are women, yet they continue the strength to pull together and persevere. Mariam was born in a world which turns their back on women. She has a father who refuses to acknowledge her existence, a husband who abuses her for twenty-seven years, and the need to murder her husband when he attempted to kill Laila. Even though every situation, she remains to accept what fate hands her. Laila faces the loss of the boy she loves, the deaths of her parents and the marriage to Rasheed who abuses her for first producing a girl instead of a boy and then finding out it's not his child. In the end, Laila faces the challenge of being a woman who returns to her home country with the intention of helping rebuild the country and honoring the memory of Mariam.

Foydalanilgan adabiyotlar:

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