



## AFGHANISTAN AND AFGHANS FINDING PEACE OF LIVING, LEAVING HOMELAND–WITH REFERENCE TO KHALED HOSSEINI’S NOVELS

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### Abstract

Afghanistan, though an underdeveloped country, was a land of happiness and peace with happy people, educated working men-women and a rich cultural heritage. It has witnessed many foreign attacks because of its favorable geographical existence as an easy gateway to the Asia for the European countries. But the three major invasions changed the happy and confident, despite its internal discrimination among the ethnic groups, picture of Afghanistan. It was affected mostly by the Soviets, who chiefly came to intervene the civil war to save human rights in Afghanistan but their rockets and firing made huge destruction and the flying from own motherland started. Later when the Taliban took over and expanded their totalitarianism, the running increased and finally the largest refugee population of the world was created. This article will focus on the reason, results and some statistics of those ill-fated Afghan refugees and their peaceful life back in Afghanistan which is rather the real protagonist in Khaled Hossini’s novels.

Keywords: Soviet, Taliban, Refugee, Pakistan, Iran

### Introduction:

‘There’s nothing left for us here. Our sons are gone, but we still have Laila. We still have each other, Fariba. We can make a new life.’(A *Thousand Splendid Suns* 184) – if Laila’s Baba enunciated to his wife Fariba these words of grief of losing young sons at the war, of panic of losing the remaining only child, Laila and of hope of starting their war-devastated life anew somewhere else, somewhere far from their motherland which was no longer a bless but a boon, no longer a place of prosperity but a zone of terror in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Amir and his Baba ,too, left Kabul- their homeland, their big house , their memories wrapping only a handful of things in a suitcase in search of a safe place for their uncertain future in *The Kite Runner*. After the Soviet invaded Afghanistan in 1979 to bolster the civil war between the Communists and the Mujahideen, Afghanistan which was once a land of peace became the land of deads because of the constant and consistent firing bullets and rockets which ended in resulting huge casualties of human lives and Afghan architect

as well. Young boys and men had to join the war against the Soviet backed government and thus many family lost their male members, some became handicapped, crippled. When the conformist Islam followers, Taliban won over the Soviets and established their rule in Afghanistan, the Afghans celebrated their victory and then the hellish part of the history started. More than half of the population of Afghanistan fled their country and hoarded into the neighbourhood countries like Pakistan, Iran as refugees. Some managed to fly to USA to pursue education and a good life.

‘The overwhelming firepower of the Soviet forces, coupled with their total air superiority, introduced the destructiveness of modern combat of Afghanistan. Villages and civilian populations were targets from the beginning of the conflict; as in all guerrilla wars, the inability to distinguish the fighters from the usually supportive noncombatants fostered an indiscriminate attitude by the Soviets. In addition to the atrocities and horror this approach engendered, it created refugees.’ (Goodson 60) Khaled Hosseini himself has said in the afterword of his books that ‘For almost three decades now, the Afghan refugee crisis has been one of the most severe around the globe.’ (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 403) Incessant war, civil war, destruction of lives and economy, hunger, disease – all led the Afghan citizen like the protagonists of the plays leave Afghanistan. Living and surviving became worst when the Taliban came into power. In *The Kite Runner* the father figure of Amir, Rahim Khan described Amir how when after a continuous bombing and fighting stopped with the advent of Talibs, they literally danced in the roads to celebrate their victory and to pay them a warm welcome:

‘When the Taliban rolled in and kicked the Alliance out of Kabul, I actually danced in the street. And, believe me, I wasn’t alone. People were celebrating in Chaman, at Deh-Mazang, greeting the Taliban in the streets, climbing their tanks and posing for pictures with them.’ (*The Kite Runner* 74)

On the other hand Rasheed proclaimed the Talibs as ‘pure and incorruptible. At least they are decent Muslim boys. Wallah, when they come, they will clean up the place. They’ll bring peace and order. People won’t get shot anymore going out for milk. No more rockets!’ (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 267) and then after a few years they banned Afghan’s most memorable tradition of kite flying followed by an imposition of a set of rules and bans on women in the name of Allah-u-Akbar. The result of violating those would cause canning or shooting or stoning.

Earlier during the wars between the Soviets and the Mujahideen many male members of the Afghan families either died or went through an amputation. Later when the Taliban came they imposed ban on women’s working outside their homes, even on their going outside without a *mahram*, a male relative along with them. Laila in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* was compelled to drop her daughter Aziza in an orphanage because she did not want her daughter to die of starvation in front of her eyes. Her husband became jobless when his shoe shop got burnt and they started selling off their goods, staffs, furniture, clothes, and toys of the children. Laila could have earned a living easily going out the house but the Talibs did not allow. The result

was ‘stunning to Mariam how quickly alleviating hunger became the crux of their existence. Rice, boiled plain and white, with no meat or sauce, was a rare treat now. ...Death from starvation suddenly became a distinct possibility.’(A *Thousand Splendid Suns* 298)

A great fear with the Afghans at the Soviet invasion was the rockets which were like uncertain, unpredictable destiny for every Afghan. With the launch of every rocket every Afghan knew that somewhere in some place some Afghan got shattered by it. In *The Kite Runner* Amir shared his first experience of hearing a rocket thus:

Something roared like thunder. The earth shook a little...A white light flashed, lit the sky in silver. It flashed again and was followed by a rapid staccato of gunfire. ... We stayed huddled that way until the early hours of the morning. The shootings and explosions had lasted less than an hour, they had frightened us badly ... They were foreign sounds to us then. The generation of Afghan children whose ears would know nothing but the sounds of bombs and gunfire was not yet born.’ (*The Kite Runner* 31-32)

A few years later of that night Amir found himself sitting at the back of a truck with his Baba on their way to leave their motherland, on their way to Pakistan. Reaching Jalalabad with a dozen of other passengers towards the same destination, they found themselves among thirty more - huddled, standing shoulder to shoulder in the basement of a house. Later the journey to Peshwar ended in the death of two passengers. Similarly in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* Tariq, the love of Laila, informed her one day that he with his parents were leaving Afghanistan to ‘Pakistan first. Peshwar. Then I don’t know. Maybe Hindustan. Iran.’(177) as his father’s ‘heart can’t take it anymore, all this fighting and killing.’(177). She realized how everyone around her was leaving Kabul, Afghanistan and “only four months after fighting has broken out between the Mujahidden fractions, Laila hardly recognized anybody on the street anymore.’(A *Thousand Splendid Suns* 177) Later she herself along with her parents decided to leave Kabul though her mother, a loony, was not ready to leave the place as her two sons had become *saheed* to fight the *Shorawi* and she wanted to make her dead sons see the defeat of the Russians through her eyes. Anyhow finally they, too, decided to run to ‘Pakistan first to apply for visas... Then, who knew? Who knew? Europe! America?’(A *Thousand Splendid Suns* 183) Just then a rocket struck and only a chunk of bloody mass was left of her Babi and her mother was killed inside the house. In this context Caillouet in her article has referred to another Afghan writer Farah Ahmedi’s book *The Story of My Life: An Afghan Girl on the Other Side of the Sky* which is more like a recorded document of the first hand experience of a war-devastated Afghan:

The horror continues for Ahamedi as her home is struck and destroyed by a rocket, killing her father and sisters. She and her mother come home with her brothers to find the bodies lying in the rubble that was their home. The horrors of war are dreadfully real to Ahamedi at a young age, and even though she and her mother eventually escape to Pakistan and later America, she is haunted by the memories of the mine and the rockets.”(30)

Thus becoming a prey to a rocket had become a shared destiny to the Afghans. The rockets not only turned the built houses into rubble but turned the psychological soundness of the countrymen into debris too – full of dried traumatic memories and no emotion.

After years Laila with Mariam, her companion and the mother figure, and daughter Aziza attempted an escape from Rasheed, the brutal husband of both Laila and Mariam, and the country as well, but failed. Tariq, her love and also the father of Aziza, who succeeded in his escape with his parents, had had a firsthand experience of the refugee camps. He told Laila sulkily how they suffered reaching Pakistan as ‘There were sixty thousand Afghans living there already when he and his parents arrived.’ (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 326) and how his parents, both, died in the camps in Pakistan. Then after the wars when Soviet left, the worldwide interest on Afghanistan also faded and the funding “dried up” (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 326). Then Nasir Bagh became their tents and there they ‘handed...a stick and a sheet of canvas’ (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 326) and told them to build tents for themselves. He further described how ‘All around the refugee town...a lot of kids died. Dysentery, TB, hunger’ (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 326). His father couldn’t survive the first winter and mother caught pneumonia in the very winter due to exposure. He attempted an illegal job to rent his mother an apartment but got arrested and imprisoned for seven years during which his mother, too, died of exposure. Goodson in his book *Endless War in Afghanistan* has penned a reason the Afghans choosing Pakistan in spite of such over burdened situations:

Only Pakistan and Iran were alternatives as countries of first asylum, ...they come to house the world’s largest refugee concentrations...however, Iran was not the destination for most of the refugees...’ because ‘Iran is a predominantly a Shia Muslim country of Persians; Tajik and Uzbek Afghans tended to move south into Sunni Pakistan. For...strong ethnic relationships with Pakistani Pushtuns.’ (156)

With the advent of the Talibs the production of refugees increased because of their ruthless, inhuman rules and tortures. Their reckless destruction all over the country destroying its heritage, its nature, had caused a deadly draught and made Afghanistan almost a barren land. Amir, who left Afghanistan 20 years ago, when returned Kabul to pay back his sins, just crossing the border of Afghanistan he found ‘sign of poverty were everywhere...chains of little villages...broken mud houses and huts consisting of little more than wooden poles and a tattered cloth as a roof...children dressed in rags...cluster of men sitting on their haunches, like row of rows,’ (*The Kite Runner* 203). He found only debris and rubble everywhere around and ‘A haze of dust hovered over the city...’ (*The Kite Runner* 205) The reason of this changed climate of Afghanistan was the destruction of the trees as ‘People cut them down for firewood in the winter. The *Shorawi* cut a lot of them down too.’ as ‘snipers used to hide in them’ (*The Kite Runner* 215). And the Afghan farmers with no water, no greenery, and no fertile land found no better job than begging. The result of Taliban’s destroying educational institutions, closing women’s schools, colleges was heart breaking. The

highly educated persons like the university professors, the school-college teachers and other officials found themselves in the streets wearing rags and asking for alms from passersby:

The new voice belonged to an old beggar sitting barefoot on the steps of a bullet-scarred building. He wore a threadbare *chapan* worn to frayed shreds and a dirt-crusting turban. ...the old man replied, '...I used to teach it at the university...from 1958 to 1996. I taught Nafez, Khyyam, Rumi, Beydal, Jami, Saadi. Once I was ever a guest lecturer in Tehran, 1971 that was. (*The Kite Runner* 208)

Thus Afghanistan is credited with producing the largest population of refugees and homeless citizen since 1981 and the exact number of their existence is always debatable. According to Goodson :

'At the height of the refugee crisis, in 1990, Pakistan had 3.3 million registered Afghan refugees; there were so many unregistered refugees that this number was probably 10 to 20 percent too low. Thus, most of the past two decades Pakistan had 3.3-4.0 million refugees, the largest refugee burden of any country in the world...In 1990 there were also 2.94 million Afghan refugees in Iran, the second largest refugee population in the world.'(148)

While escaping with Mariam to Pakistan, Laila went through the truth of the not so easy situation of escaping even, especially for women:

Since the Mujahideen takeover in April 1992, Afghanistan's name had been changed to the Islamic State of Afghanistan. The supreme court under Rubbani was filled now with hardliner mullahs who did away with the communist-era

decrees that empowered women and instead passed rulings based on Shia's strict Islamic laws that ordered women to cover, forbade their travel without a male relative...'(*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 253).

Travelling without a male member not only caused Laila-Mariam a return to their evil husband but made them experienced an inhuman violence of brutal beating as well from their husband, Rasheed. The other obstacle that bothered Laila before being discovered by the officers as travelling without a *mahram* was the worry that Pakistan 'already burdened with two millions Afghan refugees' and the country had 'closed its borders to Afghans in January of that year...only those with visas would be admitted.'(*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 254) But still people were entering Pakistan by giving bribes or on humanitarian ground. And for those who were not allowed to leave or had not the enough money to buy tickets, were leaving behind their barren, parched lands, selling off their goods, and were roaming from village to village in search of shelter in the places left behind by other countrymen and became, thus, the refugees in their own country. Some roamed finding security, a respite from their own countrymen and some in search of water as the draught was on its extremity only accelerating the pangs already given by the Taliban.

When the issue of Afghan refugees and their tolerance against the political intolerance is popped up, the expected picture is always man - building tents, jobless, foodless are staying huddled among strangers, suffering from diseases and dying. But the struggle of the women inside those tents is always a non-celebrated issue. When it comes to unveil the misery of the women of Afghanistan, the context is always Afghanistan and Taliban rule. But their lives in those tents were real hell, more miserable than those of the men's even, because:

Afghan men were to return, after receiving training in Pakistan, and fight Russian forces while women had to remain confined within the camps...they enabled Afghan men to be away from the camps for months at a time to fight the Soviet forces in Afghanistan while having psychological security that Afghan women did not have any opportunity to interact with the outside world, especially other men.  
(Saba Gul Khattak)

Patriarchy was like a never ending and ever expanding disease, even in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to Afghan women. Back in their homes in Afghanistan patriarchy was an inseparable part of their lives. In the refugee camps, too, there was no respite for them. It may seem that in those refugee camps far away from their daily life, which were their "new homes" (Khattak), they could at least find the circle of men rulers be broken around them. But in those camps, too, the male-crafted rules and regulations, the "*Nangs.Namoos*" (The Kite Runner) continued. They appointed male leaders to supervise the distribution of the aids to the refugees:

Although a majority of the camp population consisted of women and children, the manner of running the camps with men in charge of every aspect prevented the creation of an enabling environment for women.(Khattak)

The pitiful condition of the women in Kabul, broadly in Afghanistan, has got a wretched elaboration in Hosseini's novels especially in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. But their destiny, followed by their leaving Afghanistan is somehow unmentioned in the books. In homes their daily needs were under the whims of the male members of the families, in their "new homes" too 'Different *maliks* (male leaders) were put in charge of food and material aid distribution, camp security; overseeing schooling; health and water supplies; and resolving disputes, including issues related to women's lives, such as marriage, mobility and appearance.'(Khattak)

With no male member from the family present in the camps – some died, some left for Afghanistan to fight the Russian force – the women were the easy targets for the male inhabitants and the *maliks* as well. And this slowly probed them to enter the sex work. Rasheed in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* once hinted at this side of the helplessness of the women. While convincing Mariam, his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife, that he indeed was doing a noble task by marrying Laila as his 3<sup>rd</sup> wife because, according to him, if she steps out into the world outside it is very much probable that she is raped and killed or is driven forcefully into prostitution:

She can leave. I won't stand in her way. But I suspect she won't get far...How many days do you suppose she will last before she's abducted, raped...but let's say that by some miracle she gets to Peshawar. What then?...People living under scraps of cardboard...Then its frostbite season. Pneumonia...of course...she could keep warm in one of Peshawar brothels. Business is booming there. (209)

Even women's profession of selling their own body for earning livings, was not an acceptable and agreeable decision to the patriarchs as a rumour had been spread by some about women being 'planted by Russians to spread HIV/AIDS. Violence against women thus became sanctioned...' (Khattak) What was more tragic and unfortunate on the part of those victimised women that no person, no aid, no help was offered to lessen and abate the trauma of their torture-ridden minds. With the advent of Soviet and Taliban the torture of the male rulers was, merely, like an added degree to the already exiting tyranny, the excruciating piteous circs of the women. Saba Khattak has thus rightly mocked the hypocritical endeavour of the then social workers towards the women refugees:

The heavy personal losses, especially the loss of family members and having to provide psychological support and strength to handicapped children and husband, have left women emotionally drained; a state of being that has gone unnoticed and unrecognised. For example, numerous women refugees suffered depression and trauma, yet the mother and child health clinics(now closed after aid cuts) did not provide any counseling services simply because women's primary role was conceived in terms of reproduction; they were not thought of as human beings in need of psychological support. (Khattak)

The psychological trauma, fear and the status of being considered by the rest of the country as the machines to produce children, were never the products of wars in Afghanistan. Rather, were the preexisting social customs. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns* Jalil, Mariam's father, had eleven children of which she was the illegitimate one, the "harami" (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 3) to the world. When Mariam herself conceived, Rasheed treated her like the most precious object in his life. But when a number of miscarriages left her barren, especially sonless, the game of finding faults began, the beating followed by. Mariam, with no companion by her side started living the life of extreme trauma – trauma of being faulty in her every work, trauma of being beaten brutally by him for no reason:

Now Mariam dreaded the sound of him coming home...from her bed she listened to the click-clack of his heels...with her ears, she took inventory of his doings...and as her heart pounded, her mind wondered what excuse he would use that night to pounce on her...no matter how thoroughly she submitted to his wants and demands, it wasn't enough...she could not give him his son back...and now she was nothing but a burden to him. (98)

Mariam and Laila's relationship, thus, in such a context emerged as a preparation to fight back the oppressors. They, in spite of coming from different family environment and in spite of knowing about their uncertain future, united and revolted many a time

the dominance of their brutal husband. The result of whose oppression brought him the destiny to be killed by his own wife.

Though the Taliban banned any kind of western connection and tried establishing a detachment from the western culture, the allied hypocrisy in their conduct was not unknown to the Afghans. They imposed rules and bans on women to save their honour and dignity, but women being raped by the Talibs or being forced to marry the Talibs had become an open secret to all. The Taliban winning over Afghanistan and spreading their rules over its countrymen was said to have a different motif and aspect. In his thesis Sahidul has brought this side into focus thus:

With the ascent of the Taliban in power, there came a radical change in the law and order in Afghanistan...Islamic Shari'ah law replaces the secular law of Afghanistan. The government does so purposefully to maintain Islamic environment as well as to stop the access of the popular culture in Afghan society. In other words Taliban's effort was to keep the people of the country far from the Enlightenment the West claims to stand for. (195)

Very astonishingly to the rest of the world Pakistan was not only welcoming the refugees from Afghanistan and trying hard to meet their basic needs by providing them 'some materials for construction of mud dwellings, some clothing, cash maintenance allowances...cooking utensils, kerosene oil...daily food basket containing 500grams of wheat, 30 grams of edible oil, 20 grams of sugar, 1.5 grams of tea, plus 25 liters of clean water per person.'(Goodson 150), but also was encouraging the refugees 'to register with the Pakistani government.' (Goodson 150) Though, Pakistan took the huge responsibility of giving space and care to the refugees, its 'efforts were bolstered by substantial outside aid...Pakistan provided 45 percent...UNHCR provided 25 percent and voluntary agencies and direct bilateral assistance the rest.'(Goodson 151). But speaking about these assistance and aids, Goodson said, 'Pakistan offered not only generous humanitarian assistance to the Afghan refugees but also military aid and training to the Mujahideen- allowing its territory to be used as an arms pipeline – and diplomatic support for the resistance, in order to support the Soviet expansionist threat.'(147) and that was the reason why 'it was made inviting by Pakistan's Zia-ul-Haq, who hoped to use the refugee-Mujahideen population to pursue several interlocking foreign policy goals.'(157). The characters of the two novels, like employed representatives of the common Afghans who had no knowledge of these diplomatic political strategies, too, doubted the generosity of Pakistan. Rasheed in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* virtually fortified this duplicity, diplomatic strategy behind their generous endeavour:

“Meet our real masters”, Rasheed said in a low pitched voice. “Pakistani and Arab Islamists. The Taliban are puppets. These are the big players and Afghanistan is their playground.” (300). He added more that, ‘he’d heard rumours that the Taliban were allowing these people to set up secret camps all over the country, where young men were being trained to become suicide bombers and jihadi fighters.’(*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 300)

In *The Kite Runner*, too, through the lips of Farid, the taxi driver cum guide to Amir in his own homeland Kabul, the author has hinted again at the point of the existence of the masterminds behind the Talibs:

The people behind the Taliban the real brains of this government, if you can call it that: Arabs, Chechens, Pakistanis”, Farid said. He pointed northwest. “Street 15, that way, is called Sarak-e-Mehmana”. Street of the Guests. “That’s what they call them here, guests. I think someday these guests are going to pee all over the carpet.”(227)

Hence, people knowingly or unknowingly, being aware or unaware, hived away to Pakistan for its eye washing welcomes and generous gestures.

For those, who did manage to fly to USA, got comparatively a better life. But flying America even was not easy at all with all its issues of getting visas and also the fear of learning English for absolutely illiterate people. When Amir in *The Kite Runner* asked Hassan to come to California with him, the latter enquired tensed ‘Is English hard to learn?’(297). Otherwise, Americans, too, welcomed the refugees, and not only a welcome but, as Laila’s father told her once, ‘They would help them with money and food for a while, until they could get on their feet.’(*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 148) too. But getting on own feet was not easy either. Amir and his Baba had to go through a period of hardship in America. His Baba, a rich businessman of Kabul, an eminent persona, worked in a gas station to earn living. In Fremont they sold used goods in the flea market on Sundays. Not only they but they found gradually many ‘Afghan families were working an entire section of the San Jose flea market.’(*The Kite Runner* 120)

If Hosseini’s novels are recorded documents of historical and political kernel of Afghanistan, they are the mirror of the cultural nitty-gitties of its good time too. Caillouet conferring Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner* esteemed reputations wrote:

*The Kite Runner* is filled with the details of the culture and society of Afghani people....attention to sports and the details about food as well as the explanation of Amir’s school year. Winter vacation instead of summer is certainly a new twist... The preparation and techniques of kite fights, enhanced by Hosseini’s description of the competitions, bring the kite festival to live for readers.”(31)

The world awed at Hosseini’s insight in portraying the plights of a country ‘he hadn’t seen since he was a kid’ (Grossman) and of countrymen ‘whose sufferings under Taliban he completely escaped’ (Grossman). Besides what is more lively about the novels is that though ‘There are, of course, clear echoes of Khaled’s life in Amir’s story Khaled recognises, but tends to minimise, these.’(*Doctors of Another Calling* chapter 35) Undoubtedly his focus was on the ‘complex of human relationship, those within families – between family members’ (*Doctors of Another Calling* chapter 35) focusing on a father-son relationship, a journey from Kabul to New York to Kabul again on a Afghan historical context. Contrarily his portrayal of the Laila-Mariam story is like penning the story of ‘enduring the unendurable’ (Grossman) proving it to

be more of Afghanistan's. But both the novels end in hope – Amir delighting at Hassan's hardly visible smile and Laila elating at the lines of Hafez - 'despite its horrors'(Doctors of Another Calling chapter 35). Along with foregrounding the ruthless dictatorship of the Taliban, Hosseini has thrown a little light on the sad fact of some of the Afghans' deliberate conversion into Talib to sue their envy and hatred to some marginal race of the country too. The short interview between Amir and Assef, the 'handsome' Talib and Amir's childhood terror, reveals the Pastun-Hazara, Sunni-Shi'a discrimination in Afghanistan. He said 'Afghanistan is like a beautiful mansion littered with garbage and someone has to take out the garbage.'(*The Kite Runner* 249) referring the Hazaras as the 'garbage' and 'Massacring' them 'in the name of Islam' as garbage cleaning.(248) This ethnic diversity and this lack of communication among the different parts of Afghanistan are still the concern and one of the biggest obstacle in the process of rebuilding Afghanistan. Hosseini, returning physically to Kabul after 27 years and getting a firsthand experience of the sensitive milieu, told in an interview to *Newsline* that 'The two major issues in Afghanistan are a lack of security outside Kabul (particularly in the south and east) and the powerful warlords ruling over the provinces with little or no allegiance to the central government.'(*Newsline*)

If Amir's return to Kabul was criticise and mocked by Farid and Assef in *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini himself went through the storm of criticism at his return to the long left homeland: 'He had faced serious criticism from some Afghans for giving the country a 'black eye' and from readers who thought he had continued the tradition of Orientalism,' (*Doctors of Another Calling* chapter 35). Hosseini has many a time been heard saying that his novels have changed the views of people, both the outsiders and insiders of Afghanistan, on the country and its political condition and people from all over the world probed to help the victims, the refugees. He, along with the whole world, witnessed an instance of the universal appeal of literature. The reason behind this strong appeal has thus been calculated by Joseph Lella in his book where referring Osler he said:

Khaled noted that apathy – indifference bred of carelessness, from absorption in other pursuits, from a contempt bred from self-satisfaction - is our common foe. He said that the pain of the needy must become ours. This entails not just knowledge, or learning, but more importantly imagination...Education of the imagination requires the arts, the humanities. Art is a window into the minds of other people.'(*Doctors of Another Calling* chapter 35)

Conclusion:

Thus in Afghanistan, irrespective of villages, towns, educated or illiterate, men and women, children even nature –everybody and everything suffered the foreign invasions, the civil wars, the Islamic rules and draught. Most of them fled and produced the largest refugee group ever existed in the world. But those who suffered the most were the women and the children. With Mujahideen's killing the men of Afghanistan 'father became a rare commodity in Afghanistan.'(*The Kite Runner* 215) On the other hand with the hypocritical rules and restrictions imposed upon the

women on their going out, on their working for living, their lives, too, became living hell. And thus with no father, no earning, no education, no food, no health there were ‘a lot of children in Afghanistan but little childhood.’(*The Kite Runner* 277) Hosseini himself has said in the afterword of his books that ‘women and children, two groups that have suffered more than any other in that beleaguered country and are the backbone of Afghanistan’s future.’(*The Kite Runner* 324) Lastly, Goodson’s survey can be taken as a perfect summary of the pity, agony and hoarded condition of Afghan civilians especially of the children:

The Afghan population in the refugee camps comprised 24 percent men, 28 percent women, and 48 percent children. Many of these children grew up with no knowledge of Afghanistan beyond the stories of their Afghan relatives, limited education or none at all, and no expectations for the future except more fighting.’(150)

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