

Kafi: A Genre of Punjabi Poetry

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ABSTRACT

Kafi is a prominent genre of Punjabi literature and is very rich in form and content. This article deals with the etymology, connotation and definition of Kafi with its literary and cultural background and the atmosphere in which it flourished, so as to have a better concept of it. It also includes a commentary on the Punjabi writers of Kafi, classical as well as the poets coming after the creation of Pakistan. It is a tribute to the talent which has gone into creative efforts of the five hundred years of the tradition of Kafi, which is the pride of this region. The article also points to the avenues which Kafi has opened to the new poets.

What is the etymology of Kafi? What is its historical background? The researchers have divergent views on it. Let us first take the opinion of the scholars and intellectuals. Dr. Nazir Ahmed (1979) observes,

“Kafi is a Thath and a raga of music. Now since the Qawwals sing Kafis, therefore it is believed that it is called Kafi because it is in some way related to the Kafi raga. This may not be wrong but some objections have been raised against it. First, you may sing a Kafi in any raga (may be Bherwein). On the contrary, the same Kafi can be sung in every raga. In other words, there is no definite relationship between raga and Kafi. Thus, if no such relationship exists, then why are, these five lines poems called Kafi, not Asavrian and Holian?

“One argument that is forwarded in relating the poem Kafi with the raga Kafi is that Kafi Thath is the vastest of all ragas and any raga within it and its tunes have always being popular. Among the holy saints, which include Moen-ud-Din, Nizam-ud-Din, Amir Khusro and Bulhe Shah, these have been very popular. Common people are their audience and it is not strange that for the transmission of their poetry they used the most popular raga, Kafi. But there is one thing that goes against it. Many Kafis of Shah Hussain do not fall in the category of Kafi. Jai Jai Vanti, Vodhuns, Kahnra, Dhanasri, are very different from Kafi Thath” (Ahmed, 1979).

Syed Ali Abbass Jalalpuri (1993: 207) writes,

“Kafi is a well known genre of Punjabi poetry, which Shah Hussain has composed in ragas and which Bulhe Shah and Ghulam Farid carried to sublimity. There is a tradition that earlier its name was Kami (related to Kam or sensuality

and love). Which later changed into Kafi. Majority believe that Kafi meant Kamil or perfect. In Indian music Kafi is a raga as well as a Thath” (Puri, 1993: 207).

Muhammad Asif Khan (1989: 24) says,

“One thing is definite, that the F sound in Kafi is not from Sindhi or Punjabi speech. This has been introduced from Persian” (Khan, 1989: 24).

Makhdum Muhammad Zaman Talib-ul-Maula comments,

“The word is actually Qafi (rhyme scheme) related to Kafi, That is rhymed speech. It means the words or sentences which use rhyme” (In Khan, 1989: 24).

Abdul Ghafoor Qureshi (1989: 79) tells us,

“Kafi is in fact a distortion of the word Qavafi in Arabic dictionaries. It has been mentioned as concise poetic composition. But there is no reference to this genre in Arabic literature” (Qureshi, 1989: 79).

Syed Atta Hussain Musvi wrote,

“In Arabic language Kafh means duff (cymbals) to which small bells are attached” (In Khan, 1989: 24).

Sharif Kunjahi (1996: 17-18) notes,

“To read Kafi as rhyme scheme (Qafia) is not correct. In our opinion the real word was Kav. It is called Kafi because in Sindhi and classical Punjabi, the last letter is not a consonant and usually it would have been pronounced with a declining accent” (Kunjahi, 1996: 17-18).

The research scholars have much speculated about the word Kafi. The aforesaid arguments of Muhammad Asif Khan suggest that, this is an Arabic or Persian word. As opposed to this Sharif Kunjahi traces its origin to Kav which is a Sanskrit word. Even before the arrival of Muslims in the Sub-Continent this word was used for poetry. The passage from Kav to Kafi is not improbable. All these scholars are respectable but it is difficult to arrive at a definite conclusion from their writings.

What is the form of Kafi? Is it related to content or form? In this context Dr. Nazir Ahmed opines.

“Kafi is usually a rhymed composition of five or seven and sometimes more verses. At times it has a climatic line. But the content is usually mystical. The term Kafi is generally used with reference to the work of Muslim mystics. For Non-Muslims the word is the Shabd or Ashloka” (Ahmed, 1979).

Muhammad Safdar Mir (1990:175) writes,

“Like Bhajan, in Kafi also, the Rahao or the climatic lines is an essential constituent but while composing a book, for convenience, it is not necessarily repeated after every line or stanza. Even the reader does not care to repeat it and feels that the verses are independent and have no thematic connection” (Mir, 1990:175).

Muhammad Asif Khan (1989) writes,

“All the lines coming after every climatic line in a Kafi, all the lines that follow it have their own autonomous value. But each line gives its full meanings when read with the climatic lines” (p.37).

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Both Safdar Mir and Muhammad Asif Khan consider the climatic lines as the distinctive quality of the genre of Kafi. According to Dr Nazir Ahmed, some Kafis have climatic lines and some not, or some Kafis are not well knit and continuous. According to Safdar Mir, when Dr. Nazir raises such objections actually he exposes his ignorance of the technique of Kafi and Bhajan. Kafis have been extensively written in Punjabi. This has made it difficult to assign a subject to it. Neither is it distinguished by its subject. Kafi is a formal genre and its distinctive quality is the climatic lines. Neither the number of lines is fixed nor the subject. Some Kafis have only half a line for the climax. But then it is repeated to make it a complete line. In Shah Hussain's Kafis the climatic line has been repeated after every line. This is so with most of the Kafis of classical poets. In some of Bulhe Shah Kafis, the climatic line comes after three lines. Actually the meanings of the lines can be understood only with reference to the climatic line. In the light of these definitions of Kafi, many Shabd of Hindu Bhagats are found to be very close to the form of Kafi. Take this example of Bhagat Kabir:

My heart is in turmoil for the absence of my beloved.
Neither is there rest in the day nor sleep in the night.
I remain in torture till dawn.

My heart is in doldrums as if I have been born on a deserted bed.
The eyes are tired and no way is visible,
My cruel lord did not inquire after me.

O Sadho! Kabir says, my pain has greatly tortured me (Oudh, 1990: 293).

Beside Bhagat Kabir other Bhagats have also written Bhajans which come up to the form of Kafi. But the editors of Bhagat Banis have never used the word Kafi for these compositions. Dr. Jit Singh Sital, the editor of the *Kalam-e-Nanak*, has described the poetry of Nanak under the title of the genres or forms, but Kafi has nowhere been mentioned. However, there is the description of Maru Kafi in the ragas. Dr. Sital has edited this poetry very much according to Guru Granth.

“Here Guru Nanak's poetry (Bani) is discussed in some details so that the readers may be acquainted with the various aspects of this great creative work. In this elaboration, particular care has been taken that it must be arranged according to the tradition established by Sri Guru Arjan Dev Saheb. Other efforts beside this sometimes may create confusions. Therefore in the following details the order of Bani has followed the ragas, ragnis and the poetic genres as titled by Sri Guru Granth Saheb” (Sital, 1971: 21).

Guru Granth was compiled by Guru Arjan in 1604 (Sital, 1971:4). Guru Arjan (1563-1606) and Shah Hussain (1539-1599) were contemporaries. Even they did not name any poetic creation of Guru Nanak as Kafi. In fact the form of Kafi existed even before the Muslim poets. But the Naths and Bhagati poets called it Bhajan and Shabd, while the Ismaili pirs use the term Ginan for it. Shah Hussain is the first Punjabi poet who used the term Kafi for this Genre.

There can be no final word about how long the form of Bhajan or Kafi has been in use. But it is most probable that if the Bhajans had been based on Mantras

in Vedas, then they would not have been so deeply rooted in the people. Actually it was nourished in the climate of Punjabi, Sindhi and Hindi cultures. Some critics arrive at this conclusion from the similarities of the techniques of Kafi with woman's expression of love. They take it as a derivative of Hindi literature. While Hindi literature was limited to Rasso, even then great classical poets like Baba Farid were creating universal literature in Punjabi. If one has to fall back on conjecture, it may also be claimed that this genres spread to other areas through Naths and Ismaili Pirs of the Punjab. We believe that Kafi and Bhajan are based on the folksongs which have been popular in the Punjab for centuries. Classical poets also based their poetry on folksongs. There is a reflection of folksongs in many Kafis of Shah Hussain. 'oh mamma, of Khaeras don't speak to me' (Ghaffar, 2005: 551).

If such climatic lines are read separately from Kafis, these sound like bridal songs, as if a bride is departing from her father's home. Such examples abound in other classical poets too. It may be that these poetic lines carry in them the melody and the rhythm of folksongs.

In the Punjabi poetry of Guru Nanak (1449-1539) as it exists now, some Shabds are found which are according to the form of Kafi. After Guru Nanak, a significant name is that of Shah Hussain, who wrote in the form of Kafi and extended its dimensions technically as well as intellectually.

After him many poets took it seriously. Among the classical poets Shah Sharaf, Ghulam Hasan Gaman, Khair Shah, Aqil Jogi and Muhammad Bakhsh Nauroz are the most renowned. But there were Shah Hussain, Bulhe Shah, Sachal Sarmast and Khawaja Ghulam Farid who took Kafis to sublimity.

Shah Hussain (1539-1599) is the first recognized writer of Kafi. Folksongs are reflected in his Kafis. On the surface, it looks quite common-place poetry but he has studied the philosophy of life in depth. His other great contribution to Punjabi literature is the use of symbols. His symbols grow from Punjabi culture and these are multidimensional in meanings. This is an intellectual and technical innovation which has exerted great influence on the classical and modern Punjabi poetry. The

following Kafi is an illustration of his style.

O Mamma! Who can I tell, this state of separation pain
Fires of faqeers smoulder, wherever I rummage ruby-red gain

O Mamma! Who can I tell, this state of separation pain
Thorns pierce; make me mad, separation my mind's refrain

O Mamma! Who can I tell, this state of separation pain
Bread of pain, curry of thorns, from burning bones for obtain

O Mamma! Who can I tell, this state of separation pain
Jungles, moors she roams in search, yet not found the swain

O Mamma! Who can I tell, this state of separation pain
Says Husayn the destitute devote, if he's found, joy I'd attain

O Mamma! Who can I tell this state of separation pain (Ghaffar, 2005: 783).

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Bulhe Shah (1692-1758) comes next. Bulhe Shah has dealt with many subjects but the most prominent in his universal approach is his love for men. He very courageously condemns hypocrisy, mischievousness, greed, jealousy, prejudice and class divisions among men. He carries a message of love for the whole humanity.

Sachal Sarmast (1740-1826) talks of the unity of God, of union and separation and of true love for the real lord and negating one self for God. Khawaja Farid comes last in this tradition of poetry. His poetry has many dimensions and approaches. But in it the philosophy of Wahdat-ul-Wajod, love, separation from divine beloved and descriptions of Rohi frequently appear. In the poetry of Khawaja Farid divine and profane loves go side by side. In his descriptions of nature, he blends the objective and the subjective. When the clouds thunder on the burning Rohi, its noise is very welcome. He related it to the aspiration of the heart. The Pelo pickers are ultimately dyed in the colours of Farid. He has used the symbol of Sassi for separation in love. Very few poets have touched the heights of art as he has.

In the British period Punjabi language had been thrown out of curriculum. As a result the new educated generation has been alienated from its heritage. After the creation of Pakistan some middle class intellectuals started thinking afresh about their language and literature. They arrived at the conclusion that true creative activity is possible only in the mother tongue. They were also fully aware of the fact that in order to put an end to the alienation created by the colonial period, they shall have to come back to their literary heritage. Many poets wrote Kafis in the classical tradition. But they could not rise above it. Kafis have also been written after independence. But the Kafis of Mushtaq Soofi, Ghulam Hussain Sajid, Shahzad Qaiser, Khaqan Haider Ghazi, Rifaat Abbass and professor Sharib have carried this genre forward thematically.

Mushtaq Soofi, in his Kafis in “Haith Vagay Daria” has followed Shah Hussain by repeating every line. He did not bring any change in the form of Kafi but he has based most of his Kafis on the songs of Sandal Bar. Even some of the climatic lines are actually the songs of the Bar. For his metaphor, landscape and romance, he chose the diction of the Bar. He regrets that there is no dearth of resources, but there is barrenness in them use of which there seems to be no end. He dreams of an ideal society in his poetry. The beauty of the Bar, the landscape and the romance have been so blended that his work has attained sublimity.

The first poetic collection of Ghulam Hussain Sajid “Dunia Phiray Ghamazi” includes some Kafis beside other poems. But his “Pani Ramz Bharay” is a book of Kafis which he has named Waee. Waee is the name of a collective prayer which is offered to break the stifling force of cruelty and exploitation, when it reaches its extreme. Sajid is the Child of the river Ravi. The beauty of the Ravi and the rich culture of the Bar are ingrained in his unconscious. He wishes that the oppression around him ultimately come to an end and a new world blossom. His approach is subjective in this era of ideological poetry. There is a bitter sweet melancholy that

runs deep through his poetry and casts a spell over the reader. He draws the landscape of the Ravi in his chaste language. His passion does not burst out in a conflagration rather he keeps this heat under his mature response. It is not a deliberate effort but a spontaneous out-burst which comes out with ease.

Shahzad Qaiser has published four collections of his Kafis. The form and mood of these Kafis is classical. His diction is also very close to that of the Kafi. His Kafi deals with the problems of human existence, the inner barrenness, the relationship between the body and the soul, mortality of man and the blessing of the Murshid. His Kafis fall in the category of subjective poetry.

The two poetic collections of Khaqan Haider Ghazi “Band Gali Vich Sham” and “Dam Dam Nal Dhamal” also include some Kafis. He has described the agony of his own time through an address to Baba Farid, Sultan Bahoo, Lal Qalandur and Bulhe Shah. The great exponent of this style in Punjabi poetry is Shah Hussain who has described the torture of separation through an address to his mother. In modern poetry Amrita Pritam is a big voice that has narrated the massacre of the Partition and the great moral degradation through an address to Waris Shah. This kind of style basically flourishes in a period of intellectual barrenness only when people become callous to the cries of pain. In such a situation the poet address one who has been through such a torture. In the other Kafis of Khaqan which have been addressed to Bulhe Shah, the pain of this age has been concentrated in twenty eight stanzas. He has made his utmost effort to break through this web of torture but to no avail. The agony of time, oppression and cruelty has been so blended in the classical tradition that this Kafi has become the representative genre of this generation.

Rifaat Abbass has published two collections of Kafis “Sangat Veda” and “Ishk Allah Saien Jagia”. Their form is classical. Sangat Veda deals with man from the age of Vedas to the present age. The poet has made the people of this culture aware of the oppression of history. He has also suggested the creation of a new structure on these ideas. In “Ishq Allah Saien Jagia” there are two basic metaphors, Ishq and Allah. Apparently these two are the subjects of classical Kafi. But the poet has so beautifully adjusted these topics to the folk dialect that puts a stamp on his poetic talent. To mould every day attitudes into beautiful verses is his distinction.

A collection of the Kafis of Professor Sharib “Koi Androu Dur Kharkavay” has already been published. The great distinction of his Kafi is that he describes the internal problem of human existence in folk tradition. Separation from the beloved, the pain of deprivation despite labour and the wailings of separation from the beloved are so beautifully blended with the memory of the landscape of the old Punjab that his Kafi becomes a beautiful epitome of form and content. The poet is looking for a person through whom he may explore the internal possibilities of existence. Despite its ugliness, he does not allow the beauty of life to be absent from his mind. His poetry expresses the feeling of unequal distribution of wealth, deprivation and despair. But the spell of the desire for the beloved turns this ugliness into an aesthetic experience.

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The highly conscious poets of the Punjab are trying hard to identify themselves with their literary heritage in order to erase the alienation created by the colonial period. This poetry is much richer than other poetic genre in that it has behind it a classical tradition which is five hundred years old. Its acceptance is a part of Punjab's collective unconscious. The best writers of the present age have chosen it for their creative venture. The contemporary Kafi poets, keeping with the contemporary needs are trying to give a new form to the Punjabi genre in order to secure for it a status in the age of computer. It is a very welcome effort for Punjabi literature.

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Book Review

The Kite Runner

Khaled Hosseini

Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 36 Soho Square, London, 2003. 240pp. ISBN 9780 7475 9489 5

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The novel, “*Kite Runner*” under review is written by a Tajik novelist and a physician originally an Afghani, residing in North California. It is the first novel, written in English by an Afghan. It has been narrated in 25 chapters. It was first published in 2003. It has also been adapted into a film by the same name, released in December 2007. Hosseini’s personal memories of peaceful pre-Soviet era, Afghanistan as well as his personal experiences with the people of Hazara, led to the writing of this novel. The novel loosely fills in most of the relevant facts about Afghanistan’s chaotic recent history---the civil war of 1978, Soviet invasion, rise of Taliban opposition, the tensions between the Pashtuns and the Shiite Hazara minority. It covers the period from Soviet invasion of 1979 until its reconstruction, following the fall of Taliban. The novel is set in the backdrop of the troubled land of Afghanistan, starting in the 1960's when the situation was more or less unruffled, before the soviets entered the scene in 1979. It revolves around a rich boy and his servant - companion.

It is a story of a young boy Amir, a boy from Wazir Akbar Khan District of Kabul whose mother died at the time of his birth. He is an out sider and ill-at-ease with himself. He is awfully hungry for the love of his father. He is haunted by the guilt of betraying his childhood friend Hassan, the son of his father’s servant from Hazara. Hassan is a child of preternatural goodness and self-confidence, though he is illiterate and often picked up by roving Pashtun boys. His description of Amir’s relationship with Hassan is beautifully nuanced and the moment of Amir’s ultimate betrayal is genuinely shocking

In the beginning of the novel, Amir, the narrator of the novel recalls a day in the winter of 1975 that changed everything in his life. He recalls certain things of which the important one is that he receives a phone call from his friend Rahim

Khan from Pakistan who requests him to visit Pakistan. Then he remembers Francisco and recalls Rahim Khan's words, **"There is a way to be good again."**

He mentions about Hassan who is another childhood friend. Ali, Hassan's father works for Amir's father, despite having a contrasting difference of Pashtuns and Hazara, Shia and Sunni. The most shameful thing here, he tells about Hassan's mother who ran off with a clan of travelling dancers and singers and that is considered *infra dig* for Afghans. Here the narrator tells about his findings of an old history book, titled *Khorami*. This book is about the fact that the Pashtuns have oppressed and persecuted Hazaras for the reason that the Pashtuns were Sunni Muslims while Hazaras were Shia.

The narrator tells about Amir's father, Baba who always kept himself apart from himself because his wife died when she gave birth to Amir. Baba is of the view that stealing is the greatest sin of all sins while all other sins are at variance with. Baba does not like Amir's habits but still he is happy that Rahim Khan understands him. Here starts a kind of jealousy between Amir and Hassan and he snaps at Hassan out of jealousy.

The author tells that Baba never considered Ali as his friend and same was true of Amir's relation with Hassan. He tells about his routine of school life when Hassan used to do all his work, including making breakfasts, ironing clothes and polishing shoes. A time came when Amir started making fun of Hassan for which he used to repent and felt guilty after that. Here Amir tells about his first short story which he wrote but his Baba did not show any interest. It was Rahim Khan who writes a note to Amir after reading the story and encourages him to write more for his God gifted talent. Amir wishes that Rahim Khan would his father. When Amir shares his story with Hassan, he points out a problem with the plot of the story Amir gets jealous of him but suddenly Afghanistan changes forever.

Here starts, 'beginning of an end'. The night of 17th July, 1973, the destruction of Afghanistan started with the Russian invasion. It dawned the next day that Daoud Khan, the cousin of King Zahir Shah had ended the 40 years of King's reign with a bloodless coup. Here Amir and Hassan meet a boy, Assef who dislikes Hassan because he is from Hazara. For Hassan's 12th birthday, Baba arranges his cleft lip repaired by a plastic surgeon. Life of both Hassan and Amir changes drastically when Assef makes him realize that Hassan is merely a servant and not a friend, rapes him. Although Amir knows all yet he pretends that as if nothing has happened. Hassan starts avoiding Amir but still he wants to be friend again but does not get any positive response from Amir. The relationship between them starts getting deteriorated. As Amir's 13th Birthday approaches, he blames Hassan for stealing his birthday watch and money. Hassan very surprisingly admits but Amir's Father forgives him. Still Ali insists on leaving. In March, 1981 Amir and Baba leave for Pakistan very secretly as spies of Soviet soldiers were omnipresent. After facing a little problem, they are allowed to cross the borders. Along with other refugees, they are transported in a fuel truck to Pakistan. Amir along with his father settles in Fremont, California. In 1983, Amir did his

graduation from high school. Then a girl, named Soraya enters his life. She is the daughter of his father's friend. Her father does not like Amir. Baba gets inoperable Lung cancer but he refuses the treatment. He engages Amir with Soraya. Amir and Soraya get married and after One month, Baba dies. In 1988, Amir completes his first novel and in the following year, the book is also released. At this moment, he remembers his old friend Hassan who had great belief in his writing abilities.

Here the story comes to a new turn again, one day when Amir tells Soraya about his plan to go to Pakistan where he wants to meet Rahim Khan. Amir believes that there is an unspoken truth between him and Rahim Khan. It all foreshadows the fact that Rahim Khan knows each and every thing about Hassan and all what has happened between them. When Amir returns to Pakistan, he finds Rahim Khan sick. Rahim Khan tells him about the unbearable life of Afghans under Taliban rule. No doubt, he, like all others was in the beginning very happy when Taliban defeated the Russian soldiers because he thought that life in Kabul would improve. Rahim tells him that he has met Hassan in the year of 1986. By then, Ali, Hassan's father had been killed by a land mine. His wife gave birth to a son named, Sohrab. Hassan wanted his son to be a Kite runner, as Talibans had banned Kite fighting shortly after taking over.

Amir becomes anxious to meet Hassan but Rahim Khan gives him a letter. The letter shows the clear wishes of Hassan to see his Friend Amir. No sooner did Rahim Khan come to Pakistan than Taliban Officers came to take his house but Hassan refused to leave. Resultantly, he and his wife were shot dead. Rahim Khan requests Amir to bring Hassan's 10 year old son from Kabul. The most awful thing for Amir, is the bitter fact that Hassan was Amir's real brother. Amir gets very much annoyed and betrayed for what his father had done to him. He thinks that Hassan could have spent a better life in America. Then Amir at once decides to go to Kabul. He enters Afghanistan with the help of a person, named Farid. Who has childhood contempt with him because he was born with a privilege. But the moment, Farid learns why he is going to Kabul; he starts thinking better of Amir. The entry into Kabul was shocking for Amir because he saw a huge destruction and begging children. Both Farid and Amir try hard to find Sohrab. Then in an orphanage, they are told that a Taliban official has bought Sohrab. It makes Farid very much furious. But the Director of the orphanage tells them that he had no choice except selling children, otherwise Taliban would take as many children as they wanted. The director tells them to go to Ghazi Stadium and look for the official who bought Sohrab. Next day, they find the man and make an appointment with him. Amir goes to meet him alone. The Taliban official, wearing Glasses brings a great shock to Amir when he removes his glasses because he is Assef. He tells him that he can have Sohrab but first, he has to win an unsettled business with him. He tells his guards that only one of them will come out of the room and if it is Amir, then they must let go Amir and Sohrab. The fight ends when Sohrab takes out Assef's eye with a slingshot. It is the moment which fulfills the taunt of Hassan, calling him, "One Eyed Assef". Then they drive away.

Amir gets into conscious after two days. Rahim Khan has already left the town, leaving some money and a letter for Amir, requesting him to forgive himself and his Baba. Amir goes to Islamabad along with Sohrab. He calls his wife and tells her all what has happened in Kabul and about Sohrab. But the American Embassy tells him that before adopting Sohrab, he would have to provide the death certificate of his parents (Hassan and Farzana). It was the time when most of the people in Afghanistan had hardly the birth certificates. More over, he had to prove Sohrab to be his real nephew. Soraya arranges for a humanitarian visa to get Sohrab into the US. Until that time Sohrab was supposed to stay in an orphanage. Sohrab becomes very much perturbed and tries to commit suicide. Fortunately, he survives and both of them go to America but Sohrab remains silent for one year. The novel ends with a party thrown by an American-Afghan Community; Amir buys a kite for Sohrab. They both fly kite and win, just as he and Hassan did years earlier. Amir is Sohrab's kite runner and for the first time, Sohrab smiles for Amir. The novel ends with a hopeful note of optimism that the whole world would prefer to see it unspoiled. It combines the tones of memory and nostalgia with a desire to recreate a lost world. It touches upon all the aspects of childhood emotions like jealousy, love, possessiveness, etc.

The novel reminds us that we all human are alike, fighting similar daily and lifelong battles, just in different circumstances. Its many themes include ethnic tensions between Hazara and Pakhtoons in Afghanistan and the immigration experiences of Amir and his father in the US. It is told with simplicity. It is a novel of great hidden intricacy and wisdom like a timeless Eastern tale. There are many beautiful sayings in the novel like, "Afghans cherish customs but abhor rules". "Better to get hurt by the truth than comforted with a lie." The major themes explored in the novel are war, loyalty, forgiveness, friendship, redemption, sacrifice, race, class, fear and the relationships between father and son. It is a novel to be read, discussed and enjoyed by any one who wants a chance to make things right again. It also provides a sense of traditional Afghan life styles and culture. However, the four main themes shown by the author are Strength of Character, Sin and Redemption, Relationship between Parent and Child, as well as Loyalty and Friendship between two people. It speaks the most distressing truth about the power of evil, both personal and political. It intoxicates like a high-flying kite with the power of hope. It is shimmer of life. It is a Shakespearean beginning to an epic tale that spans lives lived across two continents amid political upheavals, where dreams will die before they bud and where a search for a child finally makes a coward into a man, rich and soul searching. His world is patchwork of the beautiful and the horrific. The novel is a sharp and unforgettable taste of the trauma and tumult experienced by Afghans as their country buckled.

Khaled Hosseini gives us a vivid and engaging story that reminds us how long his people have been struggling to triumph over the forces of violence, the forces that continue to threaten them even today. The novel has also been translated in

Urdu language with the title of *Patang Baaz Sajna* and has been published in Sunday magazines of Daily *Jang*.