

## GLANCING TO THE HISTORY OF CENTRAL ASIA THROUGH LITERATURE REFERRING TO THE NOVEL “DAYS GONE BY” BY ABDULLA QADIRI

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### Annotation

Literature of each era serves as an embodiment of the past events of the history as such, novels, satires, proses are the bright tunnels between the past and the present. Days Gone By, a masterpiece created by Abdulla Qadiri, one of the most influential Uzbek writers of the last century is an evocative storyline which won the hearts of many readers. This classic origin story of the Uzbek people was written at a time of various difficulties and triumph which probably were experienced by many nations when the cultural landscape of Central Asia grappled with the countervailing forces of reform and modernity.

**Keywords:** days gone by, khanates, morality, jadids, modernists, reformers, nationalistic, antagonistic, faith in God.

### Introduction

Og`rinqning tuzalasi kelsa, emchi o`z oyog`i bilan kelur. (Chagatai)  
Og`riqning tuzalgisi kelsa, emchi o`z oyog`i bilan keladi. (Modern Uzbek)  
If pain desires succor, the healer will arrive soon to render aid.  
-O`tkan Kunlar

Abdulla Qadiri (1894-1938) was one of the Uzbek writers of Turkestan who dedicated his life and art to his motherland and died in the service of his nation. He was one of the razor sharp-minded people of his time who could see the future and always advocated to reform the society. In his short-lived life he was able to create several works which ultimately served the nation.

He wrote the priceless novel “Days Gone By” in order to provoke people’s awareness of the truth, injustice and their value in society.

*“Glancing to the past when starting something new ensures the deed is noble, with this wise saying in mind I decided to dedicate my story to days gone by, namely to the recent past. To the most bloody, dirty and dark days of our history, the time of the last khans”* A.Qadiri 1926.

The novel explores the universal truths which exist in 21<sup>st</sup> century as they were in 1800s: good and evil, jealousy and love, the base and the noble, famine and the wellness. On the one side, the novel seems to be romance by its heroes who were the victims of jealousy. On the other side, it is a pure criticism of authorities of the last Khanates.

### Research Methodology

This research mainly focuses on the novel “Days Gone By” written by Abdulla Qadiri from different aspects. The novel which we have chosen to implement the methods will be analyzed further in the article. The data was collected in agreement with the research planning, namely, the questions

according to which the answers were taken from different resources. The data was analyzed in association with two versions of the novel, the original "O'tkan kunlar" written by Abdulla Qadiri and "Days Gone By" translated by Mark Edward Reese. The messages delivered by the author through the novel will be interpreted.

### **Analyses and Results**

Throughout reading the novel, one might be filled with resentment and ire due to the cruel events of the story, such as lousy deeds because of jealousy or the Khans torturing the residents with unbearable taxes however, peculiar beauty of the Central Asian tradition is also well portrayed.

In terms of flexibility of cultures, it's often said that tradition is like a flux and it may be reformed overtime to some extent. If we compare the Uzbek tradition in 1800s with the contemporary one, it can be noticed that some beliefs and folks remain the same. For instance: Children do not dare to disobey parents' words while choosing a life partner or the song "Yar-yar" sung in those days is still main part of the weddings in Uzbekistan.

*"Others are cradling wailing babies, still others are singing the wedding song, raucously calling "yar-yar" while some, unable to restrain themselves, are laughing at the top of their voices; in short, the glamour rises almost to the heavens."* [Days Gone By, Mark Reese] page 54.

Analysing the story reveals that the writer not only looked back into the recent past but also into the recent future. He tried to warn his people of the danger threatened by being ununited and the lack of harmony.

*"O'zbekoyim wore black and mourned"* [Days Gone By, Mark Reese] page 498.

It is interesting to take the name O'zbekoyim into consideration, if we think that there is a relation between this name and the Uzbek nation, mourning can be considered as a prediction of bad days awaiting if the Uzbek nation does not unite. Another name selection for one of the main heroes of the novel Kumush (Silver). The writer describes her in the following citation.....

*"Jet black eyes.....brows arched like a bow..."* [Days Gone By, Mark Reese] page 26.

*"Face round and luminescent as the moon, playfully smiling eyes, shyly she flees...O-o-o!"* page 27.

So, Kumush is assimilated to the moon, this can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, as the moon is in the sky and enlightens the earth in darkness, there might be a relation between the moon and the Uzbek nation. Kumush was killed by her rival Zaynab as a result of jealousy, Zaynab's unthoughtful deed destroyed the whole family. This incident makes the readers think that if there is a jealousy in the nation, the whole country may collapse and this will eventually look like an earth in the darkness without the moon.

Secondly, the moon is maybe perfect in terms of beauty and brightness but in terms of its position in the darkness, it can not be admired. Although her beauty was perfectly described, her life was not smooth due to the turmoil caused by her and Atabek's (her husband) enemies. These enemies could not see their happiness and togetherness, therefore they dig holes in Atabek and Kumush's way.

### **Advantages of the past mistakes for the future**

As we mentioned above, history is seen through literature, we judge the Kings, Khans, Emperors as good or bad according to their positive or negative actions, we read about wars between lands in books, this might result in hatred in us towards the so called enemies in the past. However, This judgement comes from different points of views depending on the nations and countries. If we see one

leader as bad one, other nations may see him as good one. Therefore different interpretations may cause to false assumptions. Actually, past events are written and past to the younger generation for not to be judged but to be learned from and not to repeat the same mistakes of ancestors in the future. *"Without knowing the past, you can never create a bright future"* I.A.Karimov (first president of Uzbekistan)

Therefore Abdulla Qadiri never wanted to approach people to hate the Khans or Emperors, he wanted his fellows to learn the past mistakes and not to repeat them. He wanted to deliver the message that there will be disastrous and bloody future if we do not prevent now and if we do not unite to save our motherland.

Actually both, positive and negative incidents of the history can be efficient in terms of morality. If we can imitate some virtues of decent ancestors, we can also draw conclusions based on the bad performances of dishonest ones.

Ethics, perceived throughout the story attracts the attention of the readers at one glance. For example: main hero Atabek respects his slave like his own father.

"Atabek seated his guests at the sandal and, after a short prayer, turned to Khasanali:

- How are you feeling father?
- Allah be praised, replied Khasanali (slave) it has eased somewhat. I must have inhaled fumes from the coals.
- Would you do something for me?
- State your wish my son.
- I would be most grateful if you could boil us some tea.
- It shall be done, my bek [page 12]

Kumush's kindness and fairness to her rival Zaynab.

Atabek:

- My love, let's go to the countryside for a picnic, everywhere is green and beautiful, enlightens the soul.

Kumush:

- Is Zaynab also going with us?

A: No, just two of us.

K: Without her I'm not going anywhere!

A: As you wish, get ready then! [Page 380]

### **Religion and faith**

If we observe the novel from the religious aspect, Islam and faith in God, it's obvious from the actions of the characters that there is a continuous disagreement between those who are true to their faith and who are practically not faithful. In the story, there are genuinely religious ones like Atabek, Yusufbek haji, Khasanali as well as dishonest ones like Homid (Atabek's opponent) and Azizbek (one of the leaders of Tashkent).

The opening stage of the novel begins with Azan (shom, when the day pulls back and darkness takes the power).

" *It was the seventeenth day of the month of dalv, hijri year 264, A wintry day. Calls to evening prayer rang from all around as the sun sets*" [page 11]

Hijri- Prophet Muhammad's flee from Mecca to Madina (16 July 622 AD) This event marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. The date referred here corresponds to 7 Feb 1848.

The italicized words say that all the Muslims are urged to the prayers but there is no mention that they are accomplishing them. There is a hint of the gloomy period of the last Khanates where people are striving just to survive physically and not having time or willing for the spiritual and religious enhancement. But we see Atabek and his father Yusufbek haji (who accomplished the pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca) praying five times a day, the people who are inside and outside true religious and real Muslims. On the other side, there are also unbelievers like Homid, Azizbek who sold their souls to the demons just for their own satisfactions and benefits.

The novel was written at the early development stage of Uzbek literature. That period witnessed great promise through the rise of ideologies that were poised to disrupt the socio-cultural makeup of societies on a global scale. By the time of the publication of *Days Gone By* in 1926, Central Asians saw revolution, famine, civil war and ethnic violence not just as distant global events but as a part of their daily lives.

In Qadiri's period literature served as a tool to unite the nation. Advances in technology gave impetus to forms of expression that helped solidify national identities, meanwhile, there appeared modernist reformers within the Russian Empire. They were intellectuals and fought for the acquisition of a new knowledge, European modeled cultural reform. Those modernists were called as "Jadids". They were identified by their widespread use of print media in promoting their messages and advocacy of the *usul-ul-jadid* or "new method" of teaching in the schools of the Russian Empire. Patriotic writers used literature as a tool and tried to awaken the awareness of the people. Abdulla Qadiri as a *jadid* wrote about the injustice of the recent past in order to prevent the disasters threatened people's life in his time.

The novel was first partly published on a newspaper *Mushtum*, later it was published as a whole book. Unfortunately, after a short period of time of the publication, his novel was banned and the author was arrested due to the nationalistic and antagonistic spirit of the story. So, Qadiri for many years in USSR did not receive the award he deserved. His work was spoken but in hushed tones. But later, when Uzbekistan became an independent country, Qadiri's work was rehabilitated and publicly recognised.

## **Conclusion**

Glancing to the history through literature indeed gives a vivid imagination of the past events because literature forms the foundation of people through its timeless draw upon universal consciousness. It gives purpose and enlightens the soul. There is much to learn, positive or negative, all can be food for thought.

Qadiri mentions his story taken from the recent past but it's now long stretch for us and his book ties these two periods smoothly. Although his work was not recognised in his time, this phenomenal masterpiece is now adored and could make him well-known.

**Literature.**

1. "Days gone by" Mark Edward Reese 2019
2. "O`tkan kunlar" Abdulla Qodiri 1961