

“SHAYTANAT”: CRITICISM, ANALYSIS, VIEWPOINT

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Abstract. *The article reviews some aspects of the novel “Shaytanat” by Takhir Malik and provides the author’s view point towards some of the controversial thoughts about this work.*

Keywords: *“Shaytanat”, popular literature, criticism, literature devices.*

There are such literature works in the Uzbek literature that provoke a huge resonance among the readers as soon as they have been published. There are several cases when the works that was graded to be unworthy by the editors and critics gained a vast popularity with the general public and vice versa the works that had been predicted to become bestsellers by the critics would actually never grow on the readers. Some of the literature critics have been calling the works of literature that have been met with a great success by the general public with the name of public literature. According to these literature critics, the works that contain specific ideas and thoughts that are different for understanding, and digesting by the general public have been written for specific type of chosen readers. Meanwhile Zeus works of the literature, which do not contain any difficult ideas. Critical thoughts are directed for the general public. These kinds of assessment criteria’s have been said mainly after 1990s. Being respectful to these kind of points of use we would like to present our own opinions on this matter. First of all, none of writers starting from Master Navai and continuing to Abdullah Qadiri wrote their masterpieces keeping in mind particular people in the society. Secondly, the contemporary people of Alisher Navai were able to understand the ideas in his works. The intellectual capabilities of people of his era starting with a field worker to the teacher were on the very high level. Starting from 70s and 80s of the previous century, the level of reading books decreased significantly. Due to some financial problems at the beginning of the independence, some of the people left their reading habits at all. The novel “Shaytanat” by Tahir Malik started being published since 1992 in the magazine “Sharq Yulduzi”. This work was one of the reasons that made a lot of people restart the reading habits, and this work was called as popular literature by some of the critics.

The work was different from novels created at the same time. For example, in novels such as “Adolat manzili” (“The destination of just”) (O.Yoqubov), “Tushda kechgan umrlar” (“The lives spent in dream”) (O.Xoshimov), “Otamdan qolgan dalalar” (“The fields that are left from my father”) (Toghay Murod) were mainly covering the issues of repression, cotton case, and Uzbek case, whereas in “Shaytanat” the conflict between man and the devil, which is the main cause of these evils, found its artistic reflection.

The book has been widely read by our people for 30 years. Just like any masterpiece that has ever been created has its critics, “Shaytanat” has enough critics as well. However, most of these criticisms do not have satisfactory proof. In this article, respecting our mentor critics we shall respectfully express our attitude to the critical views on “Shaytanat”.

I. Many believe “Shaytanat” to be a detective story. First of all, we should understand the difference between detective works and other types of proze. In a detective literature, the plot begins with the murder of someone or the theft of something, and the identification of the criminal at the end forms the resolution of the detective story or novel. The work we are discussing also

contains incidents related to criminals and police officers, thus making it connected to detective elements. However, this does not mean that “Shaytanat” is a complete detective work. If you pay attention, the main goal of this work is not to tell the life of the police, but the tragic end of the people who are under the control of Devil. Not a single crime is committed in secret until the 4th book of the novel. In the 4th book, the criminal case related to Oysanam will be solved by prosecutor Zahid Sharipov. This situation serves to express the disgusting image of a character called Haidar – “Mudstone wrestler” more precisely. In addition, the author directly intervenes in the lives of some characters. In some places, he communicates with the reader. The above examples clearly show that the work is not just an adventure novel. According to some critics, “Shaytanat” inspired the appearance of the “Yellow Pages” novels written later on. However, even in the period when “Shaytanat” was written, there were books of the same level as we mentioned above. They do not have such a large theme and idea as “Shaytanat”, and from an artistic point of view, it is a great illogicality to put them on the same level as “Shaytanat”.

II. The second point of view is that the use of verses of the Qur'an, examples from hadiths and the wisdom of representatives of our classical literature in this novel is a reason for some people's objections. One of the mistakes made by the press of the former USSR was when the works of great artists such as Hazrat Mir Alisher Navai and Zahir-ad-din Muhammad Babur were studied in a way that was different from Islam. Since our literary roots go back even further than them, how can this aspect of “Shaytanat” be criticized?! The denotative meaning of the word literature is “Collection of manners”. Being commonly used to express the name of the discipline and all the sources of the various subjects in our routine, this word has lost its power. According to its denotative meaning, we are far from the opinion that literature only teaches us certain manners. It also serves to invite a person to observation, to be able to evaluate the past, present and future. If you think about it, most of the characters in the work face a spiritual crisis because of their wrong beliefs. This is covered in detail in the article “The question of faith and morality in the work of “Shaytanat” by Tahir Shermurodov, candidate of philological sciences (Literature and Art of Uzbekistan, October 30, 1998). The main character Asadbek is a vivid example of this. From his childhood to his death, he faces various complicated situations. His views on life are also different from others. In the end, the people under Asadbek's command also bring various problems to the society. The fire of revenge in Asadbek's heart prompted him to enter the demonic streets of Satan. He was also one of the victims of an unjust society.

III. There are some who are of the belief that Tahir Malik had wrongly chosen the name “Shaytanat” for his work. They consider that the author made a mistake from the point of view of the Uzbek literary language, therefore, it would be appropriate if they first knew in which sources this word could be found. The word “Shaytanat” exists in Alisher Navoi's ghazals: “Riyoiy shaykhdirkim shaytanatdin tavqi la'natdek solur bo'ynig'a tasbehni ul mal'un”. In Abdulla Qadiri's novel “Gone Days” we also come across the word shaytanat. In addition, we can see that the author was influenced by our great writer Abdulla Qadiri when writing his work. Asadbek's daughter Zainab asked her mother: “Why did you name me Zainab? Would it not be better for me if I died like Kumush?”. Elchin ruined Zainab's life. As soon as Zaynab sees Elchin in their first night, she asks him the same question of “Is this really you?” just as Kumush does in “Gone Days” by Abdulla Qadiri. When you read these lines, you will involuntarily remember the novel “Gone Days” by Abdulla Qadiri. We took examples mainly from the first book. In the remaining 4 books of the novel, you will witness a bright reflection of the writer's talent.

For several years now, the novel “Shaytanat” has been published in hundreds of thousands of copies. There are some positive feedbacks about this novel in “Heart of the Universe” by Ozod Sharafiddinov and “Literature is never-fading new” Abdughofur Rasulov. In 2017, the author re-edited “Shaytanat” and named each book. Thus, now Book 1 is called “Revenge”, Book 2 is “He who provides bread is no stranger”, Book 3 is “The Fat Ant”, Book 4 is “Swan Song”, and final Book 5 is “The shop of Azazel”. The book was published by “Hilal Nashr” in 2017, and by Uzbekistan national encyclopedia state publishers in 2018. The novel was also included in the list of selected works of the writer. It seems that the work is being read with great interest and love by its readers.

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