

Simorgh - The fire bird

Hava Natan-Zutrin

(Poet and Literature critic)

The firebird resurrected

"Simorghh - The Firebird" –

A novel by Ben-Zion Yehoshua,

Jerusalem 2018, 432 p.

A unique book with a rich plot, just as the writer Ben-Zion Yehoshua knows how to write. With talent, wisdom, emotion and knowledge, he is able to convey a fascinating story. The reader feels the heartbeats of his heroes, their experiences and the dying of their souls in the vicissitudes of their lives.

When reading the book - The words, phrases, vivid scenes and color images are assimilated into the point of view of the reader who absorbs what is told in the plot, marvels at the linguistic formulation and when he goes deeper into the story, he is exposed to a small and ancient Jewish community in Herat, Afghanistan, which jealously preserves its customs and faith.

The community maneuvers a life of survival in difficult conditions of scarcity, harassing nature and a hostile Muslim environment, in which some of them are revealed as martyrs to Islam, who secretly preserve some of the customs of Judaism with the knowledge passed down from generation to generation that in their ancient origins they are the descendants of the ten lost tribes, who were exiled from their country and assimilated into the Muslim world.

The life story of Elisha-Hai, the main hero of the book, is described in the vicissitudes of his life, his escape from a forced premature marriage. His incarnations, with in the background his difficult journeys in body and soul in the deserts of the Silk Road, when in his chest he carries the bones of his father whom he never met.

The itinerant peddler father was murdered by highwaymen while his mother carried him in her womb. After meeting his father face to face, Elisha Hai's wish is to bring his father's bones to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem for burial. His personality and maturity were forged in the school of life. Elisha-Hai experienced personality changes, falsification of identity and borrowed names used for his mask. Upon his arrival in the mandatory Haifa, his life undergoes an upheaval. His conscience is clear because he stopped using it. He put a candle at his feet for falsehood and deceit, greed and passions. At the height of his status and wealth, he also denies his family's request to immigrate to his country.

He is torn between socialism and capitalism. He admires the British rule in Palestine and makes the most of it. On the other hand, he extends aid to the underground of *Etzel* and *Lehi*, when in the middle he is blackmailed by the *Haganah* people in the country on the way. The departure of the British from the country spells disaster for him and he is deteriorating from the

heights of Mount Carmel to the depths of the abyss. The end has come to the forgery, the pretense, the borrowed identities Elisha-Hai, who descends from his possessions, returns to his original name and the source of his true identity when the wheel of his life turns.

The reader feels the excitement of the characters in the human side of the book, some ascend and others deteriorate in its slopes. The book contains extraordinary life tracts praying on the wings of the simorgh, the phoenix, her Eight beams of light: love, devotion, giving, vibration, creation, protection, earthiness and journey. The firebird, resurrected from the ashes, is a metaphorical symbol that inspires hope for life, in which all the components of human phenomena, from their extinction and resurrection, are a unique process in our Jewish world on His vicissitudes and his survival.

The language of the writer Ben-Zion Yehoshua is eloquent and rooted, rich in myths, proverbs, parables, songs, tastes, foods, colors, smells and customs. His descriptions are vivid pictures, which express the meaning, and determine the meaning.

I entered the plot of the book with a beating heart as if I were part of the scenes. There are few books in Hebrew fiction that are as rich in plot as 'Simorgh – The firebird'. Few like them have been written in recent decades. It is not possible to write a Tractate of Life with such a complete vision, but with the inspiration of the incarnations of the wisdom of generations received in personal traditions and added to the collective memory. Most likely, they were transferred and revealed to individuals between the suns.

The translation of the book into English and other languages is requested. At the end of the day, the mirror image in the book is universal and will speak to the heart of every reader.

'Daat - Jewish studies and spirit, education and teaching,' issue 15 5799 (2018).

Hagai Kamrat (writer and poet)

Realism within a legendary dream,

A literary-conceptual analysis

Simorgh - The Firebird, Jerusalem 2018, 432 pages.

The book of the writer Ben-Zion Yehoshua is a book that has everything in it. Mainly it is a fascinating travel book that is characterized by the many ups and downs spiritual journey that parallels the physical journey. It is amazing how much the changes in the physical landscape parallel the changes in outlook and worldview of the main protagonist, and sometimes also of the supporting protagonists. A wonderful overlap that, on the one hand, raises the dramatic tension almost covertly or transparently to the reader, and only by distinguishing between

the lines in the second layer, can this be noticed. For example, the hero's behavior in a foreign country out of the garb of poverty, on rural land, with the ambitions and boldness that corresponds to the time of his life and the physical geographical place where he lives, compared to his behavior in the Land of Israel in the modern urban city; the war of existence and its achievements and above all the spiritual and mental development of the hero who learns the secrets and secrets of the good life. The bottom line is that the narrative literary devices to create dramatic tension exist and affect the reader, but to reduce them you have to think literary thinking. This is the writer's narrative art beyond the fascinating plot itself. The book is fascinating from start to finish. It starts with a mild atmosphere and slowly it qualifies to the peak of the mountain. The dramatic climax takes place on the highest place created by man. Also the dramatic tension in the air of the man who lost his assets but does not lose his pride and self-respect.

A wonderful climax to a wonderful book.

The saying that was said in childhood: "I will show you who Elisha-Hai is" (p. 67), remained strong as a cornerstone in his heart even during the greatest depression of his life. There, standing on the tall iron structure with a fallen face and an aching heart. In order not to spoil the pleasure of reading, I will refer

Mainly for the literary aspect and the uniqueness of the book not only from a historical documentary and plot point of view but also as an asset to Hebrew literature as a whole.

Ben-Zion Yehoshua knows and loves Jewish tradition and culture. According to this, it is reasonable to assume that the verse from the Psalms, which according to tradition is the equivalent of the Persian simorgh, stood before his eyes.

Commentators have compared the Persian 'simorgh' with the 'ziziz' from the verse: "I knew how a fowl of the mountains and a fowl moved that my witnesses" (Psalms 11). According to the tradition, a fowl The ziz will be served together with the animals and the whale in the Last Days Supper. In Greek and Egyptian mythology it is about the phoenix which