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Figure 10:
Two examples of the replica of the Shrine of Imam Hussain lifted in a Muharram procession



Figure 11: Drums used in a Muharram procession to bring back the atmosphere of the Battle of Karbala







Figure 9: Another lecture during MO.









Figure 7: Front and back cover of Penguin's version of E.M. Forster's Ptl

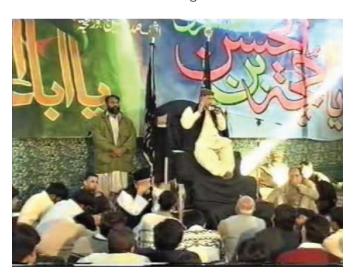


Figure 8:

A reciter in India speaks to his audience about the values Imam Hussain fought for during MO.







Figure 5:
A Muharram procession where chest-beating is performed



Figure 6: A portrait of E.M. Forster, by Dora Carrington, painted in 1924–1925







Figure 3: An educational lecture held in the Shrine of Imam Hussain during MO.



Figure 4: Heartfelt weeping after hearing an elegiac reciter speaking about the passions of Imam Hussain



APPENDIX OF FIGURES



Figure 1: A painting which represents the twelve Imams from the House of Ali

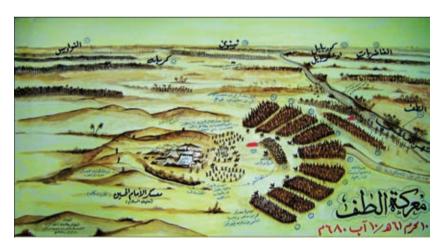


Figure 2:
A sketched map of the Battle of Karbala showing the camp of Imam Hussain surrounded by army of Yazid





Ja'far Sharīf, Islam in India; or The Qānūn-i-Islām: The Customs of the Musalmāns of India; Comprising a Full and Exact Account of Their Various Rites and Ceremonies from the Moment of Birth to the Hour of Death, translated by Gerhard Andreas Herklots, edited by William Crooke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921), 167.

Ganguly, 89.

Mohammedan (also spelled Muhammadan, Mahommedan, Mahomedan or Mahometan) is a term used by some western writers to refer to Muslims. The word was formerly common in usage, but the terms Muslim and Islamic are more common today. A vast majority of Muslims consider the term a misnomer. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia s. v. "Mohammedan," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohammedan (accessed September 15, 2015).

Sharīf, 167.

Ganguly, 88.

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Qanood.

Gassaner and Quinn, 648.

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Syed Akbar Hyder, Reliving Karbala: Martyrdom in South Asian Memory (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 85.

Ostrander, 53.





lbid.

Ibid., 46-7.

Ibid., 47.

Hughes, 407.

Adamec, 2.

Kathryn Spellman Poots, "Manifestations of Ashura among Young British Shi'is," in Ethnographies of Islam: Ritual Performances and Everyday Practices, edited by Baudouin Dupret, and et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 41.

Esposito, 212.

Hiro, 118-9.

Hassan Qanood, interviewed by writer, Ash-Shamiyah, Iraq, June 22, 2015.

Adwaita P. Ganguly, India, Mystic, Complex, and Real: A Detailed Study of E.M. Forster's 'A Passage to India' (Delhi: Motilal Banaridass, 1990), 24.

Ibid., 89.

Oliver Stallybrass, introduction to A Passage to India, by E.M. Forster (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1978), 7.

To know about the books he read, see Ibid. 9.

Ibid.

Norma Ostrander, Cliffs Notes on Forster's 'A Passage to India' (New York: Hungry Minds, 1967), 5.

Ibid., 53.

E.M. Forster, A Passage to India, edited by Oliver Stallybrass (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1978), 198. All further quotations are taken from this Penguin version of Forster's A Passage to India. Henceforth, these quotations are referred to parenthetically as A Passage followed by page number(s).

Ostrander, 53.

Muhammad Jane Alam, "Causes and Origin of Racial Tension in

A Passage to India," http://ijellh.com/racial-tension-passage-india/ (accessed August 18, 2015)





NOTES

The word "Muharram," meaning "forbidden" in Arabic, is spelt differently. The form "Muharram," used by some writers, will be used outside quotations. The other form, "Mohurram," is used by Forster.

The proper Arabic name Hussain is spelt differently. The form "Hussain" will be used outside quotations. Different forms used by authors will be left as they are inside quotations.

To mention but a few of those western writers: Thomas Patrick Hughes, Dictionary of Islam (New Delhi: AES Publications, 1996), 407; Ludwig W. Adamec, Historical Dictionary of Islam, (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 222; Ronlad A. Pachence, "Muharram," in An Introductory Dictionary of Theology and Religious Studies, edited by Orlando O. Espín and James B. Nickoloff (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2007), 918.

Dilip Hiro, A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Middle East (Massachusetts: Olive Branch Press, 2013), 118-9.

John Gassaner and Edward Quinn, eds., The Reader's Encyclopedia of World Drama (Ontario: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1969), 647.

Muhammad Shirazi, What is Islam? Beliefs, Principles and a Way of Life, translated by Abdelmalik Badruddin Eagle (London: Fountain Books, 2003), 18-9. The Twelver Shiite-Muslims believe that Imam al-Hujja al-Mahdi, the Saviour, is still alive, by God's omnipotence and all-power, and he will appear to the public again at the end of time, accompanied by Jesus Christ, to save the world from oppression, establishing peace everywhere as well as bringing prosperity, knowledge, health and virtuous living which will turn this world into a small paradise.

Gassaner and Quinn, 647-8.

John L. Esposito, The Oxford Dictionary of Islam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 49.

Gassaner and Quinn, 648.

Ibid.

lbid.

lbid.

Muhammad Shirazi, Husayn: The Sacrifice for Mankind, Translated by Z. Olyabek (London: Fountain Books, 2002), 46.





partially authentic and almost-thoroughly non-authentic. On one hand, it is true that there are some Shiite-Muslim Indians who, out of their radical religious enthusiasm and ignorance of the core of Imam Hussain's case, may cut a Hindu sacred tree-branch or a telephone-wire which might hinder them while performing a Muharram parading and, therefore, spark riots. But, on the other hand, the majority of Shiite-Muslim Indians have a high standards of awareness of the goals that Imam Hussain fought for and would never tolerate clashing with non-Muslims during Muharram sublime days or dressing a youth like a tiger to make spectators on sides of streets comprehend the character of Imam Abbas. Those who would like to commemorate Imam Hussain's martyrdom should practice what Imam Hussain sacrificed himself for and this is mainly the point that Forster lapses to show.





Hassan Qanood, a Ph.D. scholar who spent two years in Hyderabad, says that some Shiite-Muslim Indians tend, sometimes, to represent Imam Abbas, Imam Hussain's brother, during a passion play, as a tiger. This is because the bravery and prowess Imam Abbas possesses. Forster, partially, refers to this. After having a quarrel with the members of the English Club upon Dr. Aziz's innocence from the charge that Adela accused him of, Mr. Fielding goes out. The narrator continues,

At the entrance of the bazaars, a tiger made his horse shy – a youth dressed up as a tiger, the body striped brown and yellow, a mask over the face. Mohurram was working up. The city beat a good many drums, but seemed good-tempered. He was invited to inspect a small tazia Excited children were pasting colored paper over its ribs (A Passage, 198).

Back to the troubles during MO, it turns out that they are not only a nightmare for British officials. They even represent a moment of terror and panic for British civilians who reside in India. After arresting Dr. Aziz, Mrs Moore refused to leave her house "on the awful last night of Mohurram, when an attack was expected on the bungalow" (A Passage, 204). As the quotation vividly manifests, Mrs. Moore fears she might be the target of an attack on the eve of Ashura, which adds more distortion to the awful delineation of MO. Syed Akbar Hyder is completely right when he states that "E. M. Forster's A Passage to India speaks of Muharram as a moment of mayhem in India." At any rate, after speaking on "the awful last night of Mohurram," the narrator concludes the story of MO in Ptl by indicating that "tiny tazias after Mohurram" are thrown "into the storm" (A Passage, 209). "At the completion of the ten days of mourning," says Norma Ostrander, "the tazia is buried in sand near a riverbank."

It can be concluded, now, that Forster, in his Ptl, continues the western tradition towards MO where he only concentrates on the undesirable partitions of their subsidiary part, giving the impression that blood-shedding has dominance during the festival. He never says anything about the noble moral values of the case of Imam Hussain that MO should mainly celebrate and most of Shiite-Muslim Indians commemorate annually. Yet, it may sound fair to say that what he presents is both





cause these troubles. After all, he is an occupier and it is for his benefit if Indians divided and fought each other. However, one should exclude the latter option because the way the British officials deal with Hindu-Muslim clashes during MO speaks more in support of "balance and rule" than "divide and conquer."

On the other hand, Forster says nothing about the identity of the Holy Man Mr. McBryde disguised as. This thorny issue needs some clarification. During parading, the procession of MO is almost always accompanied by some passion play performers, actors and actresses, who tend to incarnate some real personages from the Battle of Karbala, such as Imam Hussain, His son Imam Al-Sajad, his brother Imam Abbas, or his sister Lady Zainab. These characters are by no question Holy Figures for Shiite-Muslims. Now the guestion is whether Forster refers to one of the Holy Figures mentioned above when he says "a Holy Man" or he just says it for an intention he never discloses. Ptl remains a fictional work and Forster has the freedom to say whatever he likes. What the western reader does not know that the persons who play the roles of the key Holy Figures of the Battle of Karbala are attentively chosen by those in charge of MO. Indian Shiite Muslims would never choose a British officer to act as Imam Hussain, Imam Al-Sajad, or Imam Abbas. Mr. McBryde disguises himself as a Holy Man to fulfill a secret errand related to the British presence as peace-keeper and that is all. Forster sustains this argument when Ronny visits Adela in the hospital while the latter recovering from the assumed assault upon her. Ronny tells her about Muharram troubles where the high floats cut a telephone wire. Here, he refers to Mr. McByrde's errand. The narrator reflects,

She learned for the first time of the Mohurram troubles. There had nearly been a riot. The last day of the festival, the great procession left its official route and tried to enter the Civil Station and a telephone had been cut because it interrupted the advance of one of the larger paper towers. McBryde and his police had pulled the thing straight – a fine piece of work (A Passage, 201).

Away from Mr. McByrde's job, it seems, unfortunately, that a web of legends and myths is woven around some details of the Battle of Karbala.





as he says earlier, is kindness among Indians.

Now, as the preparations of MO are being proceeded in the streets of Chandrapore, the sound of drums reaches the English Club (Figure 11). An English woman with her baby, Mrs. Blakiston, inquires about some noise while attending the English Club. Some men tell her, "Don't worry, Mrs. Blakiston, those drums are only Mohurram." She moans, "Then they've started." She adds, "No, of course not and anyhow, they're not coming to the club." Mrs. Turton answers, "And they're not coming to the Bara Sahib's bungalow either, my dear and that's where you and your baby'll sleep to-night" (A Passage, 188).

The noise the drums of MO make continues to be the topic of a strange conversation between Mr. Turton and his wife, who also attend the Club at that moment,

"Harry is there any news from the city?" asked his wife, standing at some distance from him and also assuming her public safety voice. . . .

"Everything absolutely normal."

"I had gathered as much. Those drums are merely Mohurram, of course."

"Merely the preparation for it the Procession is not till next week."

"Quite so, not till Monday."

"Mr. McBryde's down there disguised as a Holy Man," said Mrs. Callendar (A Passage, 189).

One can notice, on one hand, that, as far as the last sentence of the above conversation is concerned, Forster does not elaborate why Mr. McBryde contributes, disguised, in MO. This British official is the British superintendent of police in Chandrapore who, in Rama Kundu's words, "epitomizes another typical face of Anglo-India." All readers know is that Mr. Turton rebukes his wife for disclosing such an apparently highly classified piece of information: "That's exactly the sort of thing that must not be said," he remarked, pointing at her. "Mrs. Callendar, be more careful than that, please, in these times" (A Passage, 189). Definitely, "these times" are meant to be the days of MO. Now, one can wonder whether Mr. McBryde "disguised as a Holy Man" in MO to maintain peace in case some troubles happen so that a pretext is given for his occupation or to





necessary to India; there would certainly have been bloodshed without them. His voice grew complacent again; he was here not to be pleasant but to keep the peace and now that Adela had promised to be his wife. she was sure to understand (A Passage, 110).

Ronny later confirms the British peace-making errand while trying to convince Adela that Dr. Aziz is guilty of assaulting her when he takes her and his mother, Mrs. Moore, in a picnic to the Marabar Caves. He fabricates the story that Dr. Aziz, after being arrested, has escaped from prison and contributed in Muharram troubles and then imprisoned again. He says, "He was let out until the Mohurram riot, when he had to be put in again" (A Passage, 208). This suggests that British occupiers imprison whoever participates in the so-called "Mohurram riot" to keep Chandrapore peaceful.

For his part, Dr. Aziz, commenting on the first indication of the Hindu-Muslim conflict during MO in the novel, registers his abhorrence towards such sectarian clashes during a talk with Mr. Fielding, the English principal of the government school, when the latter visits Dr. Aziz before the incident of the Marabar Caves. He also says that Indians should build their country upon kindness and not clashes:

"Mr. Fielding, no one can ever realize how much kindness we Indians need, we do not even realize it ourselves. But we know when it has been given. We do not forget, though we may seem to. Kindness, more kindness and even after that more kindness. I assure you it is the only hope." His voice seemed to arise from a dream. Altering it, yet still deep below his normal surface, he said, "We can't build up India except on what we feel" (A Passage, 128).

Then, Dr. Aziz shows his resentment to solutions of sectarian violence that depend upon political procedures: "What is the use of all these reforms and Conciliation Committees for Mohurram . . . and Councils of Notables and official parties where the English sneer at our skins?" (A Passage, 128). He also blames his Muslim kinsmen for being stubborn during MO: "shall we cut the tazia short or shall we carry it another route?" He believes that all these procedures will not unite Indians, the only hope,





lunisolar calendar, chances to coincide with Hindu festivals, such as the Ramanavami or Ramnaumi, the birth of Rama, the Charakhpuja, or swing festival, or the Dasahra, serious riots have occurred as the processions meet in front of a mosque or Hindu temple."

Amid this chaotic situation, Forster gives the idea that British officials are after maintaining peace in India so that they can rule it easily. Therefore, any disorder in this area would give them sharp headache. Ronny Heaslop, being the City Magistrate of Chandrapore, sheds more light on this idea while talking to his fiancée Adela about their relationship. He states, "I'm so dead with all this extra work Mohurram's bringing" (A Passage, 99). The narrator, then, clarifies what Ronny means by "extra work Mohurram's bringing" when he speaks of the preparations of MO and how they spark a clash between Shiite-Muslims, whom he calls Mohammedans, and Hindus:

Mohurram was approaching and as usual the Chandrapore Mohammedans were building paper towers of a size too large to pass under the branches of a certain pepul tree. One knew what happened next; the tower stuck, a Mohammedan climbed up the pepul and cut the branch off, the Hindus protested, there was a religious riot and Heaven knew what, with perhaps the troops sent for. There had been deputations and conciliation committees under the auspices of Turton and all the normal work of Chandrapore had been hung up. Should the procession take another route, or should the towers be shorter? The Mohammedans offered the former, the Hindus insisted on the latter. The Collector had favored the Hindus, until he suspected that they had artificially bent the tree nearer the ground. They said it sagged naturally. Measurements, plans, an official visit to the spot (A Passage, 110).

Sharīf clarifies that riots between Shiite-Muslims and Hindus may happen during MO "when an attempt is made to cut the branches of some sacred fig-tree which impedes the passage of the cenotaphs." "Ronny," says Ganguly, "justifies the necessity of British rule for settling disputes among Hindus and Muslims during Mohurram." The narrator sighs for Ronny,

But Ronny had not disliked his day, for it proved that the British were





1921, after seven-year absence, Forster was back to India to be installed as a secretary to the Maharajah of Dewas State Senior upon the latter's request. In 1923, he finished writing Ptl, after years of drafting, and the novel was published in 1924 to achieve an immediate success.

One can say that the story of MO in Forster's Ptl runs smoothly behind the main narrative of the novel. Forster foregrounds the conflict of his Muslim Indian protagonist Dr. Aziz with British occupiers of India and brings to the background the story of MO accompanied with the sectarian conflict among Indians which he vividly pictures.

According to Ptl, MO in British-occupied India are merely processions of public mourning whereupon a replica of Imam Hussein's shrine, or "tazia" as Forster calls it, is erected of bamboo and decorated with paper (Figure 10). "Tazia," says Forster, is "a flimsy and frivolous erection, more like a crinoline than the tomb of the grandson of the Prophet, done to death at Kerbela" (A Passage, 198). Carrying this cenotaph, Indian Shiite-Muslims, as Ptl supposes, roam streets while doing related activities and causing sectarian violence. Muhammad Jane Alam points out that Forster plants in the minds of his readers that "the Muslims festival of Muharram regularly produces riots."

Forster commences his portrayal of MO by suggesting that some Indians have some secret meetings with British officials regarding MO. This presupposition is approved in the first mention of MO in Ptl when Mr. Turton, the Collector and the head of British officialdom and social leader of Chandrapore, glances an Indian attending a party in the English Club. He remarks to his English kinsmen, "H'm! H'm! Much as one expected. We know why he's here, . . . he wants to get the right side of me for Mohurram" (A Passage, 61).

Presumably, this not-much-liked Indian is either a Hindu or Shiite-Muslim who seeks the British support in case some troubles happen during MO. The reason for this presumption is that Forster depicts the days of MO as an opportunity of Hindu-Muslim battling. Ja'far Sharīf makes this area of annual conflict between Hindus and Shiite-Muslims perfectly clear: "whenever the Muharram, according to the





side of MO, that is the educational aspect. At any rate, judgments should not be thrown out in vacuum without evidence. A few examples of what some western writers say will support this idea. In his Dictionary of Islam, Thomas Patrick Hughes describes MO only as "days of lamentation." As for Ludwig W. Adamec, he says that "the day, called 'Ashura, is the climax of 10 days of mourning for the Twelver Shi'ites, in which they conduct processions of communal lamentation with self-flagellations and passion plays." Kathryn Spellman Poots expands,

Ashura is often associated with public processions and the performances of . . . a ritualised self-flagellations of one's body in grief. Stereotypically, shirtless men and boys dressed in black trousers parade through the streets, chanting and beating their chests with a whip of chains and blades . . . while women line the streets and observe the men flagellate or cut their foreheads until blood streams from their bodies.

As for his part, John L. Esposito describes MO as "a ritual mourning" usually observed by "lamentation assembles" and "public processions." These activities, says Dilip Hiro, are "accompanied by frenzied grief and tears, wailing, and self-flagellation."

E.M. Forster (1879–1970) (Figure 6), in his A Passage to India (henceforth Ptl) (Figure7), exhales no breath about the major side of MO. What makes this strangely enough is that the educational major side of MO is there in India (Figures 8-9) and Shiite-Muslim Indians conduct it annually. Besides, Indian culture, mainly MO, is an open book for Forster because of the panoramic knowledge he has of India. Adwaita P. Ganguly points out that "Forster himself observed Muharram in Jubbulpore Central Province." Forster's affinity with India started seventeen years before he wrote his novel when, in 1906, he tutored in London a young Muslim named Syed Ross Masood. This young Masood and Forster grew an intimate relationship where the former introduced his tutor to many London-inhabitant Muslim Indian friends.

Forster read much about India and decided to set out to India for the first time. Accordingly, he embarked at Bombay in 1913. He, then, visited Bankipore, the model for Chandrapore, the setting of Ptl, and the Barabar Caves which suggested the Marabar Caves in the novel. In





as we know it today. For such reasons, the holy month of Muharram . . . [is] known as the month[...]— of sorrows [and] the time to mourn the tragic loss of such an impeccable personality, as well as the time to reflect on the teachings and movement of Imam Husayn alayhis-salam who became known as ... "Master of the Martyrs", and ... "Father of the Free."

Thus, MO, from a Shiite-Muslim scholarly point of view, are of two sides; the major is educational (Figure 3) while the minor is elegiac (Figure 4). "Every year," says Shirazi, "during the first ten days of the month of Muharram, special programs are held to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Husayn." He adds, "these Imam Husayn-special commemoration programs . . . serve as a school of learning for everyone, and at all levels." As for the two sides of MO, Shirazi throws a heavy emphasis upon the major educational side. He affirms that MO

mainly [Emphasis added] consist of a series of lectures and speeches exploring the personality of Imam Husayn alayhis-salam and those of his devout companions, covering the bravery, mission, and achievements of Imam Husayn alayhis-salam. These programs revive the fervour of the battlefield of Karbala and the sacrifice offered by Imam Husayn. alayhis-salam. . . .

... The lectures also cover the movement of Imam Husayn alayhissalam, the values he stood for, and the aim for which he paid everything he had – his own life as well as those of his sons, brothers, nephews, and companions. Various aspects of the teachings of Imam Husayn alayhissalam are normally addressed in these public lectures and speeches.

As "part" of MO, adds Shirazi, commenting on the minor elegiac part of MO, "there are also programs of public show of grief." He gives them the Arabic name "Ta'ziah" and propounds that they "take various forms such as: reciting lamentation poetry and chest beating" as well as "public processions of self-flagellation."

Back to western writers, one can say that most of them tend to put forth a problematic delineation of MO because they concentrate only upon one minor side of MO, that is the public mourning in its different patterns, and, intentionally or unintentionally, pay no attention to the other major





Muslims before Imam Ali assumed the caliphate after them. On the other hand, the Sunnite-Muslims esteem the first three caliphs and Imam Ali as the four Rashidi Caliphs and the rightful successors to the Prophet.

After Imam Ali assumed the caliphate, Muawiyah, the governor of Syria, soon defied him. Gassaner and Quinn point out that Muawiyah managed to establish a pro-Arab and anti-Shiite dynasty...

. . . Thus, the first three caliphs, as well as the House of Muawiyah, became the targets of mounting Shiite resentment and hatred. But none was so fiercely detested as Muawiyah's son, Yazid, who was responsible for Husain's martyrdom.

This is because the notorious Yazid committed an atrocious and brutal crime against Imam Hussain, whose chivalric, moral stand, suffering, and death form the central themes of MO.

The annual performances of MO aim to revive the historical Battle of Karbala when Imam Hussain set out with his family and a few followers toward Kufa, a city in southern Iraq, in order to fight the tyrannical rule of Yazid and bring back the true identity of Islam that the House of Muawiyah distorted. Intercepted and overwhelmed by Yazid's army (Figure 2), Imam Hussain and almost all of his group of supporters were monstrously slain on the plain of Karbala after they presented typical models of bravery, fortitude, faith, honesty, and sincerity.

In his Husayn: The Sacrifice for Mankind, Muhammad Shirazi, a prominent Shiite-Muslim Scholar, states that

Imam Husayn alayhis-salam [meaning 'peace be upon him'] along with his brothers and nephews and some seventy of his loyal companions, were killed by the army of the brutal tyrant Yazid on the tenth day of Muharram –Ashura– in the field of the land of Karbala by the River Euphrates, while overwhelmed by severe thirst. Imam Husayn alayhis-salam stood up to defend the noble teachings of Islam, which his grandfather had brought, against the relentless efforts of the Umayyad dynasty to uproot those teachings and replace them with every evil and decadence they could master. Imam Husayn alayhis-salam rose to revive Islam anew, for if it was not for the effort and monumental sacrifice that he and his followers and family members offered, there would most probably be no sign of Islam





his A Passage to India.

Keywords: Muharram, Hussain, India, Shiite, western, Forster, Karbala, Ashura, Muslim

Muharram is the first month of the Islamic lunar calendar. As far as western writers are concerned, many of them point out that Shiite-Muslims dedicate the first ten days of this month to commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, Prophet Muhammad's second grandson, who was murdered in the plain of Karbala, southwest of Iraq, in 680 A.D. The different activities of this Hussain-special commemoration are generally known, among other names, as Muharram observances (henceforth MO). MO, however, culminate in the anniversary of the murder, the tenth of Muharram, generally called Ashura.

To grasp the themes of MO, one should bear in mind that after the death of Prophet Muhammad in 632. A.D., a controversy arose among Muslims regarding his succession. The Shiite-Muslims believe in Imamate, which means that Prophet Muhammad, fulfilling God's command, installed successors to take his place after his death in order to guide the people and show them the right path. They are twelve in number (Figure 1), in succession starting from Imam Ali, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, and ending with Imam al-Hujja al-Mahdi, the Saviour. John Gassaner and Edward Quinn put forth a comprehensive definition of Imamate:

The Shiites maintain that the spiritual leadership that resided in the House of Ali passed on from him to his eldest son, Hasan, and then to Husain, Hasan's younger brother. The [Twelver] Shiites believe in a line of twelve spiritual leaders (imams) of the House of Ali, who are considered by definition sinless, infallible, and in possession of the true knowledge of the religion and the holy scripture.

On the other hand, the Sunnite-Muslims believe in Caliphate, which means "succession," whereupon a successor of the Prophet is chosen according to a process of community consultation away from Prophet Muhammad's precepts.

The Shiite-Muslims believe that Prophet Muhammad's sole legitimately rightful successor was Imam Ali, and that the three caliphs, who took the authority after the Prophet, usurped the leadership of





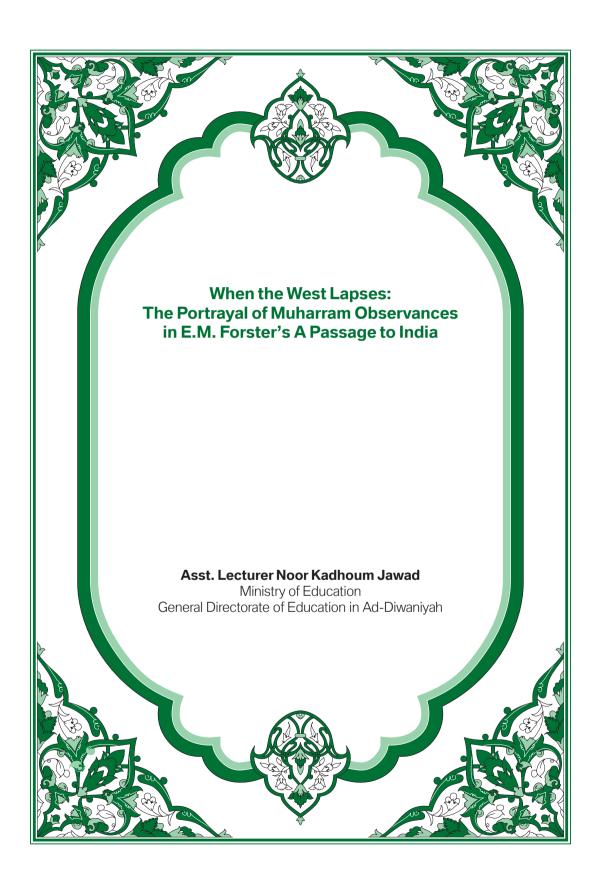
Abstract:

The case of Imam Hussain has reached all corners of the world because Imam Hussain sacrificed himself and his followers, family and companions, in the Battle of Karbala to stand for all what is noble, sublime, and exalted in the history of humanity, and not only to defend Islamic values. For this reason in particular, it is generally agreed that the aims of his revolution against tyranny, corruption, ignorance, and injustice are not confined to Muslims but they are universal. That is why many worldwide non-Muslim leaders took Imam Hussain as a model in their struggle and achieved glorious victories against their oppressors. Good example is the Indian political and spiritual leader Mahatma Gandhi.

The commemoration of the valiant sacrifice of Imam Hussain takes different forms and patterns. It depends on the levels of comprehension and understanding of the case of Imam Hussain that the people who perform Muharram observances possess. Some Shiite-Muslim communities are fully aware of the essence of Imam Hussain's noble case while the knowledge of others do not even penetrate its shell. It is noticed that western writers concentrate on the latter slice of Shiite-Muslims with little exaggeration and much confusion which gives the western reader a hazy and distorted image of the case of Imam Hussain.

It is the general aim of this paper to do an attempt to substitute the misshapen image of Muharram observances in the imagination of its western intended readers by their true image. This aim is particularly achieved through showing the picture that E.M. Forster delineates in his masterpiece A Passage to India of Muharram observances.

The paper attempts first to give an accurate definition to Muharram observances which can never be understood unless ideological and historical accounts of the story of Islam are put forth, starting with the death of Prophet Muhammad and ending in Imam Hussain's murder. The paper, then, attempts to juxtapose the Muslim-Shiite scholars' understanding of Muharram observances with that of western writers, giving the western reader a precious opportunity to take knowledge from its original source. Finally, the paper gives a detailed and transparent analysis of the way in which Forster portrays Muharram observances in



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