

# **Sacred Symbols in the Shi'a Tradition: Observance of Ta'ziya, Khak-e-Shifa, Jhoola and Zul Jinnah in Chakwal**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Shi'ism/Shia Islam is one of the prominent sects in Pakistan. The main objective of the present study is to highlight the elements of tolerance and harmony in Pakistani Society reference to difference of opinion regarding religious rituals. This paper deals with the sacred symbols of Ta'ziya (the replica of tomb of Imam), Khak-e-Shifa (the clay discs are made of the sacred soil of Karbala), Jhoola (cradle) and ZulJinnah (the name is given to the horse which was used by Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.A.) during the battle in Karbala) which play an important role by importing a distinct identification to Shi'a sect (AthnaAshari). This exploratory study was conducted in district Chakwal, Pakistan. This paper also traces the sacred symbolic meanings and historical perspective of sacred objects and ritual performances in Shi'as daily lives. The present research has found that the most of the Shi'a symbols emerge from the incident of Karbala, and it discusses how physical objects of*

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*Shi'a traditions like Ta'ziya, Khak-e-Shifa, Jhoola and Zul Jinnahare practiced in Chakwal.*

### **Introduction**

Religious symbols are found and practiced as rituals in almost every religion. Groups of people perform rituals year after year traditionally and they utilize the concerned symbols in religious rituals. Durkheim considers symbols as collective consciousness. Individuals of the society communicate by way of secret languages which convey their emotions and sentiments. It explains that folks are in harmony and make them conscious of their moral unison. It is a matter of collective representation. Individuals assume action and reaction with each other through material intermediaries. Human minds come in contact through activities. The homogeneity of these activities gives a collective consciousness. When people develop harmony through collective consciousness, stereotyped movements are formed and symbolized.<sup>1</sup>

Sacred rituals are generally performed in order to celebrate and memorize religious events in daily life. Wilkinson describes; there are various religious rituals in any organized religion and cult. The most common subject matter: practices of rituals in all the world religions are part of regular system of human life, which give their believers chance to get attached with the absolute power at particular points of progress, period of the year, or usual worship.<sup>2</sup>

Rituals have been defined generally as "repetitious and stylized symbolic bodily actions that are centered on cosmic structures and/or sacred presence".<sup>3</sup> Religious ritual is a source of emotions and activity. It is a desire to act expressed through the effective symbol and the performance of the ritual. Similarly, human struggle for his

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1 Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans., Swain (Glencoe, 3: The Free Press, 1947), 157-58.

2 Philip Wilkinson, *Religions* (London: Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2008), 30.

3 Arnold van Gennep, discussed in Evan M. Zuesse, 'Ritual' in Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopaedia of Religions*, Vol.12 (New York: Macmillan, 1987).

own identity and society or group life, which offers a system of rites and rituals, to satisfy his requirement like Christians (who worship Merry), Jews (worship Moses) and Shi'a collectively take part in rituals to express their love for Imam Hussain (R.A.).

These rituals play an important role in reinforcing Shi'as distinct identity and collective memory. They allow the mourner not only to weep over the suffering of Imam Hussain, his companions, and his family but also to join the past with the present by linking Hussain's incident to that of the supporter's in his lifetime. Through these rituals, the believer can also protest emotionally against contemporary injustice and oppression as he experiences it around himself.<sup>4</sup>

Woodward<sup>5</sup> and Duncan explain objects as representation of social sentiments, also focuses on semiotic analysis of objects as:

In religious ritual, social sentiments are truly represented in the shape of religious symbols. Religious symbols are not ordinary objects but also give strong feelings and society becomes conscious of itself which is called identification. Identification leads to continuation of human realization. Collective sentiments always remain among the members alive of the society and they need a formula or any kind of figurative representations. This is how they express and spread to others when they all collectively participate in a common social life.<sup>6</sup>

This research applies the model derived from Turner's symbols, as symbolism theory, to compare and show the importance of Shi'as' symbols, in group cohesion and solidarity, by explaining how *Ashura* rituals and symbols are constructed, embraced, and evolved as well as how these are practiced by Shi'as, as a way to reunite and to reconfirm common values shared among members of Shi'a societies. Turner defines symbols as:

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4 Muhammad Mahdi Shams al-Din, *The Rising of Al-Husayn: Its Impact on the Consciousness of Muslim Society* (Great Britain: St. Edmunds Bury Press, 1985), 213.

5 Ian Woodward, *Understanding Material Culture* (London: Sage, 2007), 158.

6 Hugh Duncan, *Symbols and Social Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 158.

Symbols, which may be described as the molecules of ritual, have great semantic richness and depth and possess a specific structure.<sup>7</sup>

### **Exegetic Explanation of Shia Symbols, Rituals and Symbolism**

Shi'as have different symbols like *Zul Jinnah*, *Jhoola* and *Ta'ziya* carrying significant historic relevance with *Karbala* and martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain so are made part of religious rituals of Shi'a faith. Symbols have three major dimensions of significance (a) the exegetic, (b) the operational, and (c) the positional.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Shi'a symbols have also three dimensions. The exegetic dimension consists of the whole corpus of explanations for a particular symbol's meaning, offered by indigenous informants. The informants must of course be classified according to their social characteristics (age, sex, status, religious role, degree of esoteric knowledge, etc.).<sup>9</sup>

For example, in Shi'a symbols, *Khak-e-Shifa* is a significant source of treatment of many diseases. One of the key informants told the researcher that Shi'as have valued highly *Khak-e-Shifa* on the basis of its religious role, as this *Khak* is taken from the *Karbala's* ground where Imam Hussain (R.A.) fought for the great moral cause. This relationship between the *Khak-e-Shifa* and Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.A.) imparts it distinct attributes. This *Khak* possesses spiritual as well as medicinal qualities.

A symbol's meaning is equated with its use and interpretation. We observed what the ritual participants do with it and not just what they say about it. Here, too, we consider not only the symbol but also the structure and composition of the group which avails itself of it, or performs mimetic acts, with direct reference to it. We further noted the effective qualities of these acts, whether they are

7 Victor Turner, *The Syntax of Symbolism in an African Religion: A Discussion on Ritualization of Behaviour in Animals and Man* (London: The Royal Society, 1966), 295.

8 Turner, *The Syntax of Symbolism in an African Religion*, 295.

9 Turner, *The Syntax of Symbolism in an African Religion*, 295.

aggressive, sad, joyful, penitent or derisive, in terms of the cultural interpretations of these expressive acts or not? We also inquired; why certain persons and groups are absent on given ritual occasions, and whether this absence represented their deliberate exclusion.<sup>10</sup>

In Shi'aism, the operational dimension of *Zul Jinnah* symbol implies its ritual performance. *Zul Jinnah* is a famed symbol of protection. People bring their children to *Zul Jinnah*, to gain security and protection. They also give edibles to the horse as an expression of love.

In the positional dimension we see the meaning of a symbol as derived from its relationship to other symbols in a specific cluster or gestalt of symbols whose elements acquire much of their significance from their position in its structure.<sup>11</sup> In Shi'a ideology, *Khak-e-Shifa* is a symbol and the positional dimension of the symbol has been acquired from its relationship to sacred clay from Karbala which has healing power from all the syndromes.

The nominal basis consists of the name assigned to the symbol in ritual/non-ritual contexts or in both sets of contexts.<sup>12</sup> For example, in Shi'a context, passing a child from the legs of *Zul Jinnah* is a ritual which supposedly protects from evil although some Shi'as consider it a non-religious ritual. The substance of objects used as symbols is inherent in their culturally selected natural and material properties.<sup>13</sup> For example, *Jhoola Jhulana* is a ritual of Shi'as, which consists of culturally selected natural and material properties too.

The artifactual aspect is exposed by the symbolic object, after it has been worked upon, fashioned or treated by purposive human activity; in short, when it becomes a cultural artifact.<sup>14</sup> In Shi'ism, the symbol of *Ta'ziya* is built to

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10 Turner, *The Syntax of Symbolism in an African Religion*, 295.

11 Turner, *The Syntax of Symbolism in an African Religion*, 295.

12 Turner, *The Syntax of Symbolism in an African Religion*, 295.

13 Turner, *The Syntax of Symbolism in an African Religion*, 295.

14 Turner, *The Syntax of Symbolism in an African Religion*, 295.

express an association with Imam's tomb as the original tomb which is its replica and Shi'as consider it as sacred as the original tomb. It becomes a cultural artifact. In this reference a very important question is that why Shi'as make use of these symbols?

The term Shi'a conveys the meaning of followers, party, group, associates, partisans and supporters. The term Shi'a suggests "the meaning of followers, party, group, partisans, or in a rather loose sense, supporters. The literal meaning of the Shi'a is follower and supporter".<sup>15</sup>

Bell<sup>16</sup> quotes Durkheim, religious rituals are used by people to ensure the unconscious priority of communal identification bonds of the community.<sup>17</sup> Durkheim asserts that rituals transform knowledge into belief and membership into belonging. As periodic opportunities for the social group to assemble itself and project sacred images that actually represent the community occur, rituals are designed to arouse a passionate intensity and feelings of 'effervescence,' in which individuals experience something larger than themselves.<sup>18</sup>

It also discloses three major stages of Ashura rituals that have passed through. The first stage began shortly after the Battle of Karbala (year 680 AD) and it continued until the fall of Baghdad at the hands of Hulagu. The second stage began at the time of the fall of Baghdad and continued through the Muslim dark ages until the modern period. The third and final stage was from the beginning of the modern period until the present.<sup>19</sup>

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15 Aghaie, "The Origins of the Sunnite – Shi'ite Divide and the Emergence of the Ta'ziyeh Tradition," *The Drama Review* (2005): 4.

16 Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspective and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 24-26.

17 Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, 21.

18 Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, 24-26.

19 Shams al-Din, *The Rising of Al-Husayn*, 161.

### **Ta'ziyaas Sacred Symbol**

*Ta'ziya* is a traditional term of Shi'a. Its literal meaning is mourning and the expression of condolence. It has deep rooted significance for the Shi'as as lamentation for martyred Imams, who are true leaders of their faith.<sup>20</sup> Variants of *Ta'ziya* rituals are performed in popular processions in the month of Ashura.<sup>21</sup>

Nakash describes the five major Shi'a rituals in the month of Muharram ensued include the commemorative services (*majales al Ta'ziya*), the visitation of Imam Hussain's (R.A.) tomb in Karbala particularly on the event of the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Muharram (*Ashura*) and the 40<sup>th</sup> day after the war (*ziyaratashura and ziyaratarba'in*), the public remembrance processions (*al mawakibal hussainiya*), the demonstration of the battle of Karbala in the form of a play (*tashabih*), and the self-flagellation (*zanjirand tatbir*) since the battle of Karbala. Within these major rituals, there are other rituals like chest beating (*matam*), recitation of Karbala narratives (*qira'ah*), and recitation of rhythmic lamentation poetry (*niyahah*).<sup>22</sup> During the time of Aurangzaib, in 1687 Shi'ism was promoted and linked to the hope of gaining support from Iran against the invasions of the predominantly Sunni Mughals. The great Mughal king Akbar (1556-1605) declared an official religion *deen-e-elahi*, which was not supported by even Raja Maan Singh and the public.<sup>23</sup> However, Hindu devotees participate in the Muharram processions, with indigenous Shi'a religious traditions and practices of Deccan. The most significant single historical development in this context was the introduction of the

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20 Syed Ali Naqvi, telephonic interview by author, September 2, 2016.

21 Peter Chelkowski, "Time Out of Memory: Ta'ziyah," *TDR* 49, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 118.

22 Yitzhak Nakash, "An Attempt to Trace the Origin of the Rituals of Ashura," *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, Vol. 33, Issue 2 (Nov., 1993), 161-181.

23 Nagendra Kr. Singh, Abdul Mabud Khan, ed., *Encyclopaedia of the World Muslims: Tribes, Castes and Communities*, Vol. 3 (New Delhi: Global Vision, 2001)

handy replica (*taboot and Ta'ziya*) of Imam Hussain's (R.A.) tomb displayed by Amir Timur on his return to India from pilgrimage to Karbala in 1398.<sup>24</sup>

It has been observed during data collection that physical stuff of objects and practice of rituals established a grassroots dialogue between traditions like *Ta'ziya*. *Ta'ziya* is deeply rooted into the Shi'a's faith and displayed in rituals like processions and *majales* on *Ashura*. *Ta'ziya* is product of artistic creativity and skills which is supposed to be a replica of Imam Hussain's (R.A.) *roza* (tomb).

Shi'a's largely use this symbol in rituals, which is generally made up of wood, copper, brass and steel. They decorate it with golden or silver paint, precious stones, shiny papers, wood or metal depending upon available resources. They spend a reasonably handsome amount on *Ta'ziya* rituals like *mannat*, *neyaz* and *sabel*. Shi'a's consider that the compassionate eye of Imam Ali, Imam Hussain, and Imam Hassan focuses upon them for memorizing them. Shi'a's observe *mannat* and it is also believed that all *mannat* would be fulfilled sooner or later.<sup>25</sup>

Pinault describes the Shi'a rituals in processions as, one of the most visible rituals. The mourning processions are displayed in main streets of the towns and cities letting everyone to actively participate and are arranged on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram. The size of the procession can differ, participants gather from different areas and reach the main already defined area, where gather thousands of men and boys holding '*Alam* and carrying models of the tomb of martyrdom of Imam Hussain and his followers.<sup>26</sup>

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24 Jafar Sharif, *Islam in India or the Qanun i Islam: The Customs of the Musalmans of India* trans. Gerhard Andreas Herklot; revised and rearranged with additions by William Crooke (Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation 1972), 164.

25 Saima Ali Naqvi, interview by author, November 12, 2016.

26 David Pinault, *Horse of Karbala: Muslim Devotional Life in India* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 149.

### History of *Ta'ziya*

Cole informs that Muharram rituals were introduced in Pakistan by Mahmood bin Amir Wali, who was a tourist from Bukhara. He shared mourn rituals of Muharram in Lahore around 1635.<sup>27</sup> In the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, processions of *Ta'ziya* and '*Alam* became impressive events in Awadh and spread from Lucknow into countryside areas. The Iranian performance of chest beating was introduced into India by Syed Dildar Ali Nasirabadi (1762-1819) and the concept of *Zul Jinnah* processions also came from Iran, which was introduced in Lahore by Nawab Ali Raza Khan Qizilbash in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>28</sup>

### *Ta'ziya* Rituals and its Symbolism

We have observed during the fieldwork that Shi'as make a new *Ta'ziya* when they observe a *mannat*. Purity and cleanliness is the most important part of the ritual of making of *Ta'ziya*. More often they decorate *Ta'ziya* in showcase with lights and colourful ribbons.<sup>29</sup>

In Chakwal, Shi'as do not take *Ta'ziya* out of the *Imam Bargah* in routine life as it is considered highly sacred and divine. However, in the month of Muharram and Safar, *Imam Bargah*'s administration allows Shi'as to take *Ta'ziya* out for the religious processions. Shi'as present money as *amannat* to *Ta'ziya*, that money is collected to cook *neyaz* which is called "thanksgiving payment". This *mannat* could be attributed to their general prosperity, security, matrimony, birth of a male child and the well-being of any person. Shi'a individuals also voluntarily contribute to construct and maintenance of the symbol as an expression of respect and faith for *Ta'ziya*.

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27 Rizvi, *Shah Wali Allah and his Times* (Canberra: Ma'rifat Publishing House, 1980), 191.

28 Cole, *Roots of Northern Indian Shi'ism in Iran and Iraq: Religion and State in Awadh, 1722-1859* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 108.

29 Observed by author during data collection in district Chakwal, September 2, 2016.

### Historical Background of *Ta'ziya*

The description of *Ta'ziya* is generally useful for an understanding of the whole rituals complex as well. The ritual grave visitation developed more fully in the Abbasid period. It later became a highly ritualized aspect of the Muharram commemoration ceremonies.<sup>30</sup> According to some Shi'as, *Ta'ziya* was introduced by the medieval times conqueror Amir Timur, who invaded India in 1398 A.D, on the return from a pilgrimage to Karbala. He ordered to make a miniature tomb of Imam Hussain, which he added to the mourning rites of Muharram. Thereafter, Sufi saints made their own contributions by mixing Islam and Hindu rituals.<sup>31</sup>

One of the respondents Asad Ali says that Nawab Sarajuddaula who was the famous ruler of subcontinent, was a Shi'a and often went to perform *ziyarat*. Unfortunately, for many years he could not go there so he ordered to build a *Ta'ziya* of Imam Ali. So the concept of *Ta'ziya* came from Lucknow (India). *Mujtahid* Deen of Lucknow took *ijhtihad* up on this matter and told that the future reward depends upon the intentions. They relate *Ta'ziya* with the faith. He elaborated with the example that when a person buys a sheep for sacrificing on *Eid-ul-azha*, it is sure that this sheep is not that one which was sacrificed by Hazrat Ibrahim (A.S.). Similarly, Shi'as consider *Ta'ziya* as a symbol for the remembrance of the sacred place where progeny of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) buried.<sup>32</sup>

### The Sacred Clay (Khak-e-Karbala or Khak-e-Shifa)

The sacred clay in a round shape is one of the most important and unique symbols which is used by the Shi'as. It is also called a prayer stone (sacred clay or dust). It is known as the 'Clay Disc of Karbala' or *Khak-e-Karbala*. In

30 Hussain, "The Mourning of History and the History of Mourning: The Evolution of Ritual Commemoration of the Battle of Karbala," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 25, no. 1 (2005):218.

31 Syeda Bushra Bibi, Sughra Bibi, Hassan, Ahsan, Khudijah, Rubab, interview by author, December 12, 2017.

32 Asad Ali, interview by author, February 24, 2017.

Chakwal, during prayers, each Shi'a places the prayer stone/sacred clay in front of him/her, as he bows to pray because it is the most sacred of all the things that can be used for prostration, during the worship of Allah. Shi'as used to place clay at their home for their prosperity and wellbeing.<sup>33</sup> We have found that Shi'as munch *Khak-e-Shifa* for observing *mannatas* it is considered a miracle. This sacred clay came from Karbala which has healing power for all the diseases and ailments except death.

A key informant Syed Yusaf Shah explains that Imam Jaffar Sadiq (R.A.) said, if an ill person holds *Khak-e-Shifa* in his hand and prays to Allah in this way: I begin in the name of Allah, O Allah, the Lord of this sacred, supportive *Khak*, the God of the light which is in it, the God of body which is resting in it, the Lord of the guardian angels, I request Allah, please let this *Khak* cure my disease. After that he munches *Khak-e-Shifa* for cure and definitely he will be cured soon.<sup>34</sup>

It has been observed by the researcher that it is a Shi'a tradition that they mention the names of the disease, then kiss the *Khak* and eat it with some water and keep praying. It also saves from fears. Shi'a traditions confirm that this reality has been successively reported.<sup>35</sup>

### **Jhoolaas Shi'as Symbol**

*Panghuraor Jhoola* or *gehwarā* [Persian: Cot] generally is a symbol of peace for a child. Generally, cradle is made up of wood, copper, brass, and steel which is inlaid with precious and colourful stones, beads and paper. It is one of the eminent religious ideas in Shi'ism, which is very popular among the issueless people, especially among the females, even Sunni and non-Muslims also have faith/belief in this *mannat*.<sup>36</sup> It is the symbol of Hazrat Ali Asghar (R.S.), son of Imam Hussain (R.S.) and Um e Rubab (R.S.). Ali Asghar

33 A Scholar Syed Imtiyaz, interview by author, January 15, 2017.

34 A Shi'a expert Syed Yusaf Shah, telephonic interview by author, October 14, 2016.

35 Syed Ali Naqvi, telephonic interview by author, September 2, 2016.

36 Authors observed during field work in Chakwal.

(R.S.) is the innocent martyr of Karbala. *Jhoola* is a spiritual protection symbol of Ali Asghar(R.S.).<sup>37</sup>

### ***Jhoola* – Rituals and its Symbolism**

We have observed, Shi'as decorate *Jhoola* with colorful ribbon and dresses of babies for the observance of their *mannat*, especially in the month of Muharram. In Chakwal, most of the Shi'a mothers, pay respect to the Imams, they would seek their kind protection for the survival of their children. They observe this *mannat* to have male children and upon getting a male infant, they buy twelve or fourteen new dresses for the newly born babies of the other people as *amannat* in the name of twelve Imams and fourteen *masomeen*, as this is the rule of *mannat*. They also present baby dresses in *Jhoola* (sacred symbol) in *Imam Bargah*. It is generally believed that any deprived Shi'a, who has the same desire, can observe the same *mannat* and it works like a chain so that more and more people would utilize the symbol and receive its outcomes.<sup>38</sup> Usually, Shi'a women believe in the *mannat* of *Jhoola Jhulana* and present new toys as thanksgiving. Many people even the Sunni women also believe in the significance of the *jhoola* and they like to see and kiss it as a custom.<sup>39</sup>

### ***Zul Jinnah* as Shi'a Symbol**

It was found during the research that there were different sacred religious events when all Shi'as gather and express their sorrow through performing different religious rituals, annually in Chakwal. One of the most famous and important ritual is associated with sacred *Zul Jinnah*. In Chakwal, Shi'as arrange '*Alam, Zul Jinnah* and *Ta'ziyah* holder *jalus*.<sup>40</sup>

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37 Syed Ali Naqvi, a Shi'a scholar, telephonic interview by author, September 13, 2016.

38 Shi'a scholar Asad Ali, interview by author November 15, 2016.

39 A female Shi'a scholar Saima Ali Naqvi, interview by author, November 12, 2016.

40 Participant observation technique was used in compiling field data by author, March 3, 2017.

It is observed that in Chakwal, sacred decorated *Zul Jinnah* is used as a significant symbol by the Shi'as, because historically it has a deep rooted essence. It is said that Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) had a horse and after the sad demise of the Prophet, it came in the custody of Hazrat Imam Ali (R.S.) and then Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.S.) and there was no doubt of the loyalty of the horse *Zul Jinnah* for this Holy family.<sup>41</sup>

### **ZulJinnahRituals and its Symbolism**

In Chakwal, the Shi'as organize processions and decorate the horse with ornaments as a replica to *ZulJinnah*, this horse leads the processions in the memory of Imam Hussain's (R.S.) horse especially in the month of Muharram. They cover *Zul Jinnah* with a beautiful, colourful and decorated sheet made up of a clean cloth which is covered with an umbrella. Shi'as offer him clean food and water for the whole of its life and this replica reminds them of the real one and people often feed the replica with their own hands. Shi'as do not wipe *Zul Jinnah* and nor they use it to ride like an ordinary horse as they consider it sacred.<sup>42</sup>

It has been observed that Shi'as present *Zul Jinnah* clean place for living and exercise the symbol whole heartedly during the month of Muharram. They like to see and kiss it and have an extreme respectful behaviour for it. It is believed that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used it for ride.

During data collection, we examined a Shi'a religious procession in (Malpur) Islamabad, where a small group consisted of the young Shi'as was beating the drum. There was a *Zul Jinnah* in the procession and Shi'as were observing the rituals associated with the day of *chelum*. It was a unique experience for the researcher to observe drum beating on the *chelum* event. This ritual has never been performed in district Chakwal. As Shi'as associated it with mourning and grief and they never beat drums during the

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41 Syed Ali Haider, telephone interview by author, September, 13, 2016.

42 Syed NasirKazmi, interview by author, February 22, 2017.

month of Muharram in Chakwal in other way, but it is carried out in Islamabad.<sup>43</sup>

### **Ethno-History of *ZulJinnah***

It is said by most of the Shi'as in Chakwal that Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) purchased *Zul Jinnah* from an Arabian named Haris. The researcher was informed that during the battle when Yazid's army attacked Imam Hussain (R.S.) and he got injured, his horse *Zul Jinnah* protected Imam's body from all the sides. In this attempt, the *Zul Jinnah* got wounded by arrows but he did not leave Imam Hussain (R.S.) alone. The embedded arrows formed two wings on both sides of its body to save Imam Hussain's (R.S.) life. *Zul Jinnah* did not care for itself and died for the sacred cause, that's why it has a mystical significance in Shi'a rituals.<sup>44</sup>

A knowledgeable respondent FarwaHaider explained that in the event of Karbala, the *ZulJinnah* also did not drink even a single drop of water. Some Shi'as say that in the war of Karbala, *ZulJinnah* came back to the tent with Imam Hussain (R.S.) on it and was wounded badly, when it realized that Imam Hussain (R.S.) had been martyred, *Zul Jinnah* wept on the tragic death of Imam Hussain (R.S.) and also died with the sorrow of his owner's tragedy. In this context, *Zul Jinnah* is a symbol of bravery, sacrifice and steadfastness. In Shi'a belief system, attributes of this horse are a great source of inspiration for human beings. Moreover, they can learn a lot from this embodiment of unique qualities.<sup>45</sup>

### **Conclusion**

These sacred objects understood as divine embodiments are primarily being associated with Shi'a Muslims, as for them they are symbols of honour as a religious decree. It is evident from the findings of this study that Shi'a symbols are a source to purify their bodies and souls. Shi'a symbols as rituals are carried out as their sacred *mannat*, religious

43 Observed during the fieldwork in district Chakwal, February 13, 2017.

44 Syed Ali Naqvi, a Shi'a scholar - interview by author, September 13, 2016.

45 FarwaHaider, a Shi'a scholar, interview by author, March 3, 2017.

people observe their *mannat* and make new symbols and particularly Shi'as participate in rituals to fulfill their worldly desires. Furthermore, lived experiences of materiality of Shi'as are foundation of their success of particular relationships and relief in the world.

### Images



**Photograph 1.** Image of a beautiful *Ta'ziya*(tomb's replica of Imam Hussain) placed in NoorMehelof centrallmam Bargah.



**Photograph 2.** A decorated *Ta'ziya* of tomb of Imam Hussain placed in *Imam Bargah* and men in black dress praying in front of *Ta'ziya* in Bhoun, District Chakwal.



**Photograph 3.** A beautiful *Jhoola*, and six *Ta'ziyas*, *Nyshan* and *Panjah* small in size placed on table in *Imam Bargah* Bhoun, District Chakwal.



**Photograph 4.** Image of *Ta'ziya* of shrine of *Ghazi Abbas*, where women are standing nearby the showcase, to offer money, as *mannat* in Belbikhari, District Chakwal.



**Photograph 5.** *Khak e Karbala* which is in round shape and have image of tomb of Imam Hussain(R.S.).



**Photograph 6.** Image of two fully decorated cradles which is a symbol of Ali Asghar(R.S.), who was son of Imam Hussain(R.S.), are placed in Noormehel.



**Photograph 7.** Image of a decorated Zul Jinnah covered with red velvet, symbolize the blood of Imam Hussain(R.S.), bowing his head, which is an expression of grief, led through road in Muharram procession in Bhoun, District Chakwal.