

Religious Ideology and Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis of *Marsiya-e-Hussain*

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ABSTRACT

This paper employs Fairclough's framework of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001; 2003) as a research tool to demonstrate how mourning discourse of marsiya manages to win favourite responses from Pakistani audiences by foregrounding certain linguistic conventions. The data comprising popular marsiyas are based on responses obtained through a small-scale survey and are analyzed from the perspective of ideology and emotive appeal embedded in discourse. The analysis illustrates that discourse conventions of marsiya—in addition to traditional commemoration of martyrdom of Imam Hussain—serve to elaborate, explain and disseminate religious doctrines in Pakistani Shi'ah masses.

Keywords: *Marsiya*, Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideology, Shiism

1. Introduction

This paper provides a close study to examine the distinguishing features of *marisiya-e-Hussain* and the way discursive choices of certain transitivity features, figurative language and lyrical conventions serve to make it a distinct poetic genre of its own. Though *marisiya* recitation is taken to be a means of commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussain; nevertheless, it means much more to Shi'ia community. Along with other mourning rituals, *marisiya* is considered to be a means of seeking *waseela* (mediation) from the saints, teaching and learning religious ideologies, seeking God's pleasure and so on ('Azadari; mourning for Imam Hussain', 2009). All these objectives are achieved by following certain discourse conventions which in turn construct certain discursive reality and weigh heavily on the formation of distinctive opinion and religious ideology in Shi'ah masses. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to examine the ideological contents and Shiite cult preaching as embedded in Pakistani *marisyas*, which when deconstructed reveal considerable information about the formation of Shi'ism as a distinct Muslim sect, its fundamental principles and the rationale behind the rituals and mourning ceremonies for the martyrs of Karbala. The way *marisiya* seems to fall in a distinct poetic genre and deals with such a wide range of issues prompted the following research questions:

- What key themes and Shiite cults recur in *marisiya* discourse?
- What linguistic choices are preferred by *marisiya* writers to support certain cults, and religious themes and ideologies?

The investigation of these questions can yield considerable insight about the rationale of Shiite mourning ceremonies and Shi'ah religious beliefs. The ultimate question is whether the discursive practices of this type 'contributed considerably to the construction of mental models' (Polovina-vokovic, 2004:156) for members of Shi'ah community and further influence the way in which Shi'ahs call for, accept and reinforce typical linguistic conventions of *marisyas*.

2. Historical Background of the Shiah Community in Pakistan

According to British Encyclopedia for the year 1997 about 20% of population of Pakistani Muslims comprises of Shi'ahs which are predominantly twelvers or *ithna ashariyats* ('How many Shias are there in the world', 1999). Twelvers or *ithna ashariyah* Shi'ahs believe in twelve *imams* or absolute leaders of the nation who according to them deserve allegiance from the Muslims of the entire world (Hitti, 2002; Mahmud, 2004). Shi'ism reached in Indo-Pak sub-continent through Iranian merchants and immigrants in 900-1000 AD who promoted it among Muslim notables in southern India (Rizvi, 2008; Cole, 1989). In addition 'urban trades people and some peasants also created their own form of twelver Shi'ism, based especially on mourning rites for the Prophet's martyred grandson, Husayn' (Cole, 1989: 16). *Marsiya* along with *Majlis-e-Hussain* is one of the traditions of mourning rites of Hussain. According to Armstrong (2000), mourning rites of Hussain—which include weeping, beating the bodies and recitation of *majalis* (gatherings) and singing dirges—started right after Karbala tragedy. In that particular era, mourning rituals stood for declaration of 'undying opposition to the corruption of Muslim political life' (Armstrong, 2000: 46). Thus started, the same tradition still persists among Shi'ahs all over the world; and Pakistan is no exception.

3. *Marsiya* as a distinct poetic genre and *marsiya* discourse conventions

Marsiya could be defined as 'a poem written to commemorate the exploits of great men of Islam; usually to describe the battle fought on the plains of Karbala in Iraq by Hazarat Imam Husain and his supporters against the army of Yazid. It is usually a poem of mourning' ('Terminology of Urdu Poetry' 2010). This definition clearly links *marsiya*s with multiple poetic traditions such as epic which could be defined as a long narrative poem telling of a hero's deeds (Cuddon, 1991); elegy which 'is a mournful poem and a lament for a deed' (WordNet Search, 2010: 02); and dirge which is taken to be 'a song of mourning, shorter and less formal than an elegy and intended for singing' (Gray, 1999: 90). This study—despite conforming to the above given definition of *marsiya*—still takes *marsiya* as a distinct poetic genre which is a broad and encompassing literary tradition and absorbs the mourning characteristic of elegy, heroic deeds narration of epic, and rhythm and musicality of dirge. The attachment with all these myriad attributes makes *marsiya* poetry quite unique marked by certain norms and conventions. *Marsiya* writers take special care to make it affect the listeners both aesthetically and structurally. Hence it has to be both rhythmic and rhymed adorned with element of musicality. The poetic elements like rhythm, rhymes and figures of speech add *expressive*, *relational* and *experiential values* (Fairclough, 2001) in *marsiya* discourse. These values are revealed if discourse is deconstructed using Fairclough's (2001, 2003) method of critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA).

The objective of CDA is to perceive the language as a social practice and its proponents like Fairclough (1995, 2001, and 2003) and van Dijk (1993) do not propose a homogenous model. Hence, according to van Dijk (1993), 'Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is obviously not a homogenous model, nor a social school or paradigm, but at most a shared perspective on doing linguistics, semiotics or discourse analysis' (cited in Horvath, 2010). Drawing upon these perspectives of CDA, this paper analyzes the religious discourse of Urdu *marsiya*s which both influences and is influenced by Pakistani social and cultural practices. Furthermore, Muharram's mourning rites serve as a multipurpose instrument for historically excluded Pakistani Shi'ah community by teaching and preaching them Shiite identity and ideologies.

4. Overview of Method

In Pakistan many *marsiya* reciters recite *marsiya*s in their respective localities and it is not very easy to pick one as representative of them all. This research intended to pick *marsiya*s of one popular *marsiya* reciter as the representative sample. As there is no authentic source available to agree upon Pakistan's most popular *marsiya* reciter, the researcher had to conduct a small scale survey. For this purpose, a form (Figure 1) was distributed among 100 participants at an *imam barigah* called Masjid Alhussain situated in the locality of New Multan.

Figure 1: Pakistan's Most Popular *Marsiya* Reciter

Who is Pakistan's most popular <i>marsiya</i> reciter?
Background Information: Name: (Optional)----- Nationality: -----
<i>Marsiya</i> Reciter's Name: -----

According to this survey, Pakistan's most popular *Marsiya* reciters include (see Table 1):

Table 1: Pakistan's Most Popular *Marsiya* Reciters

	<i>Marsiya</i> Reciters	Frequency (Percent)
1.	Nadeem Sarwar	42
2	Ali Waris	03
3	Farhan	16
4	Ali Haider	09
5	Qurban Jarari	08
6	Syed Ali Deep Rizvi	13
7	Meer Hassan Mir	09
		100

After having determined Nadeem Sarwar (Sarwar henceforth) the most post popular *marsiya* reciter of Pakistan, the list of *marsiya*s from his most recent albums (from 2006 to 2011) was obtained. Initially it was planned that text of top 15 *marsiya*s of Sarwar would be analyzed. But data revealed that even a single *marsiya* provides quite extensive text; and its length may be over twelve minutes or so when recited. Dealing with so many *marsiya*s is out of the scope of one research paper. Hence, the study was delimited to top 5 *marsiya*s of Sarwar. As no other source to gauge the popularity of *marsiya*s is available, their ranking in popularity was determined from a *marsiya* downloading website (i.e. <http://nauhey.hussainiat.com/audio/nauhey/Default.aspx?AID=69>); accessed on December 23, 2010. The frequency of downloading from this website was considered the parameter of a *marsiya*'s popularity and a list of most popular *marsiya*s was compiled. The table 2 shows the selected data of *marsiya*s based on frequency of their downloading until December 23, 2010.

Table 2: *Nadeem Sarwar's Most popular *Marsiya*s

	<i>Marsiya</i> 's Title	Downloads (Frequency)
1	Buss Ya Hussain	170,072
2	Ya Ali, Ya Hussain	157,245
3	Kya Mohammad ka Pyara	119,277
4	Jahan Hussain wahan La ilaha illallah	119,005
5	Behan main sath sath hun	102,100

*The credentials of Sarwar's album indicate, the *marsiya* lyrics writing for his albums is not done by Sarwar alone all the time. It is a collaborative effort of Sarwar and other lyricists. But in this article only Sarwar's name would be mentioned to avoid confusion and ambiguity.

For the purpose of analysis, the complete text of above mentioned *marsiya*s—comprising 478 clauses—was transliterated (Appendix 1) and interpreted for ideological and linguistic aspects.

5. Data Analysis

5.1 *Marsiya* as a means of disseminating Shiite religious practices and beliefs

In order to understand thematic and discursal features of *marsiya*s, it is first necessary to present their purpose and design. The recitation of *marsiya*s for slain imam and his companions—as it has already been discussed—is meant to commemorate his martyrdom in the battle of Karbala. Above it was noted that *marsiya* generally adopts particular linguistic conventions which mark its distinction from other poetic genres. Sarwar's *marsiya*s are no exception to this rule and follow multiple rhetorical and discursal conventions. Though *marsiya*s—predominantly—have to deal with depiction of Karbala tragedy; they are also a means of disseminating Shiite

religious practices. Interestingly all these religious beliefs and practices are delineated as being practised by *imams* themselves; so that masses should realize their significance and perform them with devotion.

One of such religious practice is offering prayers, which is one of the most important religious obligations for Muslims regardless of sect. The following lines (see Figure 1) reveal the rhetorical strategies adopted by Sarwar to inculcate the importance of offering prayers in common Shi'ahs:

Figure 1: Importance of *namaz* (prayer)

Original Text	English Translation
1. <i>Namaz nafs ki izzat hai oliya ki qasam</i>	1. Prayer is an honor for your soul, I swear by saints
2. <i>Namaz deen ki hurmat hai osiya ki qasam</i>	2. Prayer is a sacred part of faith, I swear by holy administrators
3. <i>Namaz husan-e-sharafat hai ambiya ki qasam,</i>	3. Prayer is the beauty of the chaste, I swear by prophets
4. <i>Namaz qissa-e-wahdat hai kibriya ki qasam</i>	4. Prayer is a tale of oneness of God, I swear by greats
5. <i>Namaz khair-e-amal ki taraf bulati hai,</i>	5. Prayer calls towards good deeds
6. <i>Namaz ishq-e-khuda ka hunar sikhati hai</i>	6. Prayer teaches the art of loving God
7. <i>Namaz abd ko mabood say milati hai,</i>	7. Prayer connects the worshippers to God
8. <i>Namaz guftgoo ALLAH aay krati hai</i>	8. Prayer makes one talk to Allah
9. <i>Yehi namaz gunahoon say bhi bachati hai</i>	9. Payers saves one from committing sins
10. <i>Namaz qabar talak sath sath jati hai</i>	10. Prayer would stay (with you) until (you) reach (your) grave

Here, the use of parallelism (the repeated syntactic units in first five and then again in last five lines), rewording and over wording of certain words (swear, prayer), use of material clauses and personification of prayer seem to serve two purposes. First, it exhorts 'offering prayer' as the most important religious obligation for Muslims; and secondly use of parallelism and rhyming words in last five lines (*bulati hai, sikhati hai, milati hai, karati hai, bachati hai, jati hai*) brings about rhythm and rhyme in the verses as *marsiya*s are usually meant to be sung in mourning ceremonies along with beating the chest. Additionally, recontextualization (Fairclough, 2003:32) of prayer in these lines serves as preamble of detailed depiction of Imam's martyrdom in the following stanzas of the same *marsiya* who is reported to be offering Asar prayer in the battlefield before passing away (Abu-un-Nasr, 1960). Furthermore, *marsiya* reciter's emphasis on offering prayer seems to be an answer to non-Shi'ah Muslims who generally believe that participation in mourning rites takes precedence over offering prayers to Shi'ahs and 'extreme Shiites have little in common with common Muslims' (Mahmud, 2004:49). But, it should not lead one to infer that Sarwar does not give reverence to performance of mourning rites. Figures 2a and 2b below sufficiently explain the importance of mourning rituals for Shi'ahs:

Figure 2a: Importance of *azadari*

Original Text	English Translation
1. <i>Hussain walon ki pehchan hai azadari</i>	1. Mourning rituals are identity of Hussain lovers
2. <i>Hussain walon ki to jaan hai azadari</i>	2. Mourning rituals are soul of Hussain lovers
3. <i>Hussain walon ka imaan hai azadari</i>	3. Mourning rituals are faith of Hussain lovers
4. <i>Hussain walon ka elaan hai azadari</i>	4. Mourning rituals are slogan of Hussain lovers

These lines are from the same *marsiya* quoted in Figure 1. It is called *Jahan Hussain Wahan Lailaha illAllah* [Where there is Hussain, there is *Lailaha illAllah*, (i.e. Islam)]. Here, parallelism has been employed once again to make the discourse effective and rhythmic. The repetition of nominal group 'Hussain lovers' as carrier and its attribute *azadari* (i.e. commemoration of Karbala tragedy) in the relational clauses seems to perform the function of exclusion. It does the exclusion or 'othering' of non-Shi'ah Muslims who do not participate in mourning rites of martyrs of Karbala. Similarly, in the concluding lines of another *marsiya* entitled *Bus ya Hussain*, Sarwar once again responds directly to the issue of *azadari* (Figure 2b):

Figure 2b: Importance of *azadari*

Original Text	English Translation
1. <i>Jis k dil mein hussain rehta hai</i>	1. Whoever remembers (or loves) Hussain
2. <i>farsh majlis ka jo bichata hai</i>	2. Whoever commemorates martyrs of Karbala in <i>majlis</i> (gatherings)
3. <i>Jo bi noha kahin sonata hai</i>	3. Whoever sings <i>marsiya</i> s
4. <i>le ke naam e hussain rota hai</i>	4. Whoever weeps in the name of Hussain
5. <i>Usko zehra salam karti hai</i>	5. Zahra (Fatima, Prophet's daughter and Hussain's mother) sends them her blessings

In Figure 2b the relative pronoun 'whoever' (*jise*) is both inclusive and exclusive. It is inclusive in the sense that the admirers of Hussain—no matter which religion or sect they come from—deserve blessings from Zahra. Contrarily, 'whoever' is also exclusive here because overall discourse declares the blessings of Fatima exclusively for the admirers and mourners of Hussain. Additionally, the use of rhymes in material clauses (*rehta hai, bichata hai, sunata hai, rota hai*) and parallelism is meant not only to add the musicality in the verses but also enlisting some of the mourning rites which are agreed upon by the *ithna ashariyah* Shiites. .

5.1.1 The preaching of *ithna ashariyah* Shi'ism

Shi'ia sect as it has already been discussed is further sub-divided into different factions, of which *Ismailites* and *Zaidis* are the most prominent ones (Hitti, 2002; Mahmud, 2004; Armstrong, 2001). But it is *ithna ashariyah* (twelvers) sub-sect which is considered the 'the main body of Shi'ah' Muslim community (Hitti, 2002: 441); likewise, *ithna ashariyah* is dominant sect in Pakistan (How many shiias are there in the world', 1999). It is because of this reason that the *marsiya*'s discourse under study overtly preaches *ithna ashariyah* beliefs and practices (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: *Ithna ashariyah* Shi'ism

Original Text	English Translation
1. <i>Namaz wo hao jo fakoon main Mustafa nay parhi</i>	1. The prayer is such an obligation which Mustafa (Prophet) offered even when he was starving
2. <i>Jaga k apnay qatil ko Murtaza nay parhi</i>	2. which <u>Murtaza</u> (Ali) offered after waking up his enemy in the battlefield
3. <i>Jo chakkiyon ki mushaqqat main Fatima nay parhi</i>	3. which Fatima offered while grinding the millstone
4. <i>Galay laga k Zahar ko jo Muftaba nay parhi</i>	4. which <u>Muftaba</u> (Hassan) offered while embracing his mother (Fatima)
5. <i>Jo chahta hai k azmat namaz ki dekhay</i>	5. If someone wants to observe magnificence of prayer
6. <i>Mray Hussain ka wo sajdaa aakhri dekhay</i>	6. they should bear witness to last prostration of my Hussain
7. <i>Parhi namaz jo aabid nay pusht-e-naaka pr</i>	7. <u>Abid</u> (Zain-ul-Abidin) offered prayer on camel's back
8. <i>Ada kya jisay Bqir nay sakhtiyan seh kr</i>	8. <u>Baqir</u> offered it despite facing all hardships
9. <i>Bayan kiya jisay Jaffar nay barsar-e-mimbar</i>	9. It (prayer) was narrated by <u>Jaffar</u> on the pulpit
10. <i>Ruko main barson rahay jis k Kazim-e-muztar</i>	10. <u>Kazim</u> , the afflicted one , remained bowed in prayers for years
11. <i>Raza nay lab pe sariyar rida saja k parhi</i>	11. <u>Raza</u> offered it while covering his lips with a shawl
12. <i>Taqi nay taqwa Abu Talibi bata k parhi</i>	12. <u>Taqi</u> offered it while showing fear of God like Abu-Talib
13. <i>Naqi nay nakhwat-e-batil mita mita k parhi</i>	13. <u>Naqi</u> offered it while erasing the haughtiness of evil
14. <i>Aur Askari nay khabar aakhri suna k parhi</i>	14. And <u>Askari</u> offered it while he was giving the last news
15. <i>Pas-e-namaz musallay pe ro raha hai koi</i>	15. Somebody (Imam Mahdi) is weeping while offering prayer
16. <i>Imam-e-asar hai or Hujjat-e-Khuda hai wohi</i>	16. He is <u>master of the time</u> and testifier on God's behalf (of presence of Imammat)

The underlined chunks in Figure 3 enlist all twelve imams of *ithna ashariyah* Shiite sub-sect. These imams are held as infallible spiritual leaders with secret knowledge of divine truth. In addition to this, nominal and prepositional groups (in bold, Figure 3) establish the difference between Shi'ah and Sunni versions of history. As

rightly put forward by Armstrong (2000), ‘there was no doctrinal quarrel between Shiis and Sunnis’ in the early days of Islam; ‘the difference was chiefly one of feeling. Sunnis were optimistic about Muslim history whereas Shiis version was more tragic: the fate of the descendants of Prophet Muhammad had become a symbol of cosmic struggle between good and evil, just and tyranny, in which the wicked always seem to get the upper hand’ (Armstrong, 2000:41). Hence the use of this sort of lexicon—which portrays *purified fourteen* (twelve imams, Prophet Muhammad and his daughter Fatima make up the *purified fourteens*) undergoing sufferings and being afflicted by the forces of evil—enhances the tragic effect of overall discourse. That is why incorporation of this sort of lexical items is quite favourable to *marsiya*s. Likewise the previous heading, the importance of prayer as the most important religious obligation for Muslims is reiterated here.

5.1.2 Glorification and veneration of Ali as rightful heir to Prophet Muhammad

The concept of *imamat* (leadership) is the base on which the edifice of Shiite faith rests (Hitti, 2002). According to Shi’ahs, Ali (Prophet’s cousin and son-in-law) is the only rightful successor of Prophet Muhammad as ‘Prophet would have wished to be succeeded by closest male relative’ (Armstrong, 2000:46) (see Figure 4):

Figure 4: Ali’s veneration

Original Text	English Translation
1. <i>rasool ki dono hain zaib o tain , pehlu mein ya Ali hain to godi mein ya Hussain</i>	1. Both of them are loved and adored by Prophet Muhammad. <u>He (Prophet) has Ali by his side</u> and Hussain (Ali’s son and Prophet’s grandson) in his lap.
2. <i>Loh-o-qalam k ilm ka talib hai ya Ali,</i>	2. <u>Ali has the knowledge of divine decrees...</u>
3. <i>muslim bine aqeel safeer-e-hussain hain, hubbe Ali hai dil mein mushir-e-hussain hain</i>	3. Muslim Bin Aqeel is Hussain’s ambassador. <u>He is a true lover of Ali</u> and advisor to Hussain.
4. <i>Ye Mustapha ki jaan wo Allah ka wali,</i>	4. He (Hussain) is adored by Mustafa (Prophet Mohammad); and the other one (Ali) <u>has secret knowledge</u> bequeathed to him by Allah.

These are only a few of the clauses where Ali is glorified and venerated. All the underlined clauses in Figure 4 are relational; which declare matchless attributes of Ali (Prophet’s company, secret knowledge and semi-divine qualities) and exhort that his ability for *imamt* of Muslim nation is beyond questions. The most celebrated attribute of Ali and his descendents is possession of divine knowledge (lines 2 and 4) and the most appreciated attribute of any individual which exalts his status is love with Ali (line 3). The companionship of Ali was highly appreciated by Prophet himself (line 1) as Ali always remained by Prophet’s side.

5.1.3 Infallibility and impeccability of imams and ahl-e-Bait

The *marsiya* discourse mourns the martyrdom of Imam Hussain passionately as Imam’s killing happened by the forces of evil despite the fact that he—being Prophet Muhammad’s descendent was ‘divinely protected against errors and sins’ (Hitti, 2002: 440). Hence *marsiya* discourse is replete with the attributive nouns like *begunnah* (innocent) , *khuda ka naz* (God’s pride), *naz-e-khuda* (God’s pride), *din* (religious code) and *diniyat* (religious doctrine) for Hussain and rhetorical questions like *kya hai khata?* (What is Hussain’s crime?) which establish Hussain’s infallibility and divine gift of impeccability. This sort of portrayal of Hussain is evident in Figure 5:

Figure 5: Hussain’s infallibility and impeccability

Original Text	English Translation
1. <i>Adam ki poori nasal pe ehshaan kon tha?, Jis per khuda ko naz wo insaan kon tha?</i>	1. Who was a special gift (of God) for entire humankind? Who was the man, God Himself felt proud of?
2. <i>Hussain deen bhi hai or deeniyat bhi hai,</i>	2. Hussain himself is religious doctrine and complete religious code.
3. <i>Syed gira, imam gira, naik khoon gira</i>	3. (Our) Lord fell, (our) imam fell, the righteous blood fell
4. <i>Chillayin Fatima mera bacha hai begunnah. Aye arz-e-Nainwa mera bacha hai begunnah. Aye nehre Alqama mera bacha hai begunnah.</i>	4. Fatima cried, ‘my child is innocent. O, land of Nainwa my child is innocent. O Euphrates River my child is innocent.’

The rhetorical questions in the first instance above carry an implied message. Here, the use of inclusive phrase 'entire humankind', declares that entire human race is beneficiary of Hussain's legacy. Because entire humankind could exalt itself by emulating Hussain's act of dying for principles and raising voice against corruption and forces of evil. Similarly in second and third instance the metaphorical attributes of *din* (religion Islam) and *diniyat* (teaching of religion Islam), and personification of Hussain's blood through attributive phrase *naik khoon* (righteous blood) further declares Hussain incapable of committing sin. The last instance is linguistically very rich as it carries multiple poetic devices like apostrophe (as Fatima addresses land of *Nainwa*, i.e. Karbala and River *Alqama*, i.e. Euphrates), parallelism and rhyming words (*mera*, *Arz-e-Nainwa*, *Nehr-e-Alqama*) which all help infusing the pathos and grief in the discourse. The use of apostrophe seems to exhort that there was no one else to help household of Hussain out; and the spirit of his mother Fatima had to make plea to nature and its objects for help. Further, the substitution of more ideologically invested lexical item in place of less ideologically invested lexical item— i.e. Fatima is portrayed as addressing his son as 'my child' instead of 'my son' in 4.—makes the discourse even moving and mournful.

5.1.4 Semi-divine attributes of imams and punjtans

As it has already been discussed in the previous heading, Shiites believe that an imam is a 'reliable and perfectly trustworthy means of divine guidance, he cannot commit any sins, neither major, nor minor, nor venial, neither intentionally nor inadvertently' (Gojri, 2010: 28). This argument leads Shiis to believe that imams as being directly appointed by God Himself have been bestowed with some of the divine attributes (Hitti, 2002; Armstrong, 2000). Because of this popular belief Marsiya discourse depicts Imam Hussain as being all powerful and capable of answering to the prayers and granting the wishes of the believers (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Semi-divine attributes of Hussain

Original Text	English Translation
1. <i>Ye thi hussain ki ata ye tha hussina ka jigar, Jo keh diya wo motabar jo de diya to sara ghar Karam hussain ka karam kisi per ho gaya agar Mile kisi ko balo par kisi ko mil gaye pisar</i>	1. Such was Hussain's endowment, such was Hussain's valor. Whatever he said carried weight; whatever he possessed , he gave away to the needy. If one manages to get Hussain's blessings, s/he will get all his/her wishes granted and prayers (to have a son) answered.
2. <i>Hussain ramz-e-khuda bi, khuda sifaat bhi hai</i>	2. Hussain is God's secret and has God's attributes
3. <i>Ye ikhtiyar itna wasi o buland hai, Sara jahan hussain ki muthi mein band hai</i>	3. Hussain's powers are so great that the whole universe is under his thumb.
4. <i>Main jo chahoon baras jaein badal, khon main, dooba nazar aaye maqatl</i>	4. If I (Hussain) decree, rains would fall. If I (Hussain) decree, battlefield would drown in blood.

The discourse in the first instance oscillates from present to past and past to future tenses and serves to highlight the timeless and ever present semi divine powers of Hussain. He was powerful enough to answer the prayers and granting the wishes of his followers when alive and he can do the same even now remaining behind the celestial veil of Heaven. Same is the case in second and third instances. Here Hussain's powers seem to assume even more authority as the use of attributive clauses in second instances and hyperbolic expression *muthi mein band* (under his thumb) in third instance makes the faith in his semi-divine powers even more firm. Finally, patterns of noun phrase and pronominal usage emerge in fourth instance; and direct reference in the form of proper noun (Hussain) shifts towards pronominalized first person singular 'I'. Here, the first person singular pronoun is used to strengthen the belief in Hussain's semi-divine powers because Hussain is portrayed as claiming to possess the divine powers himself.

5.2 Promulgation of Shiite version of Islamic history

The history of Islam is presented differently by Sunni and Shiite followers of Islam because of their fundamental difference over the issue of Prophet's rightful successor. These differences emerged immediately after the death of Prophet Muhammad in 632 AD (Aghaie, 2005; Amin, 2007). Sunnis kept tracing 'their historical roots in the majority group who followed Abu Bakr, an effective leader, as Muhammad's successor, instead of his cousin and son-in-law Ali. The Sunnis are so named because they believe themselves to follow the *sunnah* or "custom" of the

Prophet. Shi'ites are those Muslims who followed Ali, the closest relative of Muhammad, as Muhammad's successor' ("Comparison of Shi'ia and Sunni Islam, 2007: 2). It is because of this reason that the companion of Prophet Muhammad who stood for Ali's right to succeed Prophet are held in high esteem in Shi'iah historical accounts. The same tradition is followed in *marsiyas* where, in addition to narrating *ahl-e-bait's* historical accounts, the historical accounts of Ali's companions are also alluded to (Figure 7):

Figure 7: Shi'iah's version of Islamic history

Original Text	English Translation
1. <i>Ye sultant-e-ishq hai khuddar milen ge, Salman o abu zar se wafa dar milen ge</i>	1. This is land of adoration and (we/you) will find nobles here. (we/you) will find loyal friends like Salman and Abuzar.
2. <i>Kabhi meaasam, kabhi misbah, kabhi abuzar mein mila, Kabhi salman k dil mein kabhi qambar mein mila</i>	2. (Adoration) was practiced by Meesam, Misbah and Abuzar . It was also observed in Salman and Qambar's heart as well.

If analyzed linguistically the first instance carry many ideologically contested words like imaginary 'land of adoration' where only 'nobles' who are Ali's lovers, followers and 'loyal friends' are allowed. Hence it is an excluding phrase which, implicitly, dismisses the presence of Ali's adversaries within the premises of 'land of adoration'. In the next instance some of the residents of land of adoration (in bold italics) are introduced, i.e Meesam, one of the distinct and favorite companions of Ali (Martyrdom of Hazrat Meesam Tammar, 2009); Misbah, one of Ali's admirer; Abuzar, one of early Shi'iah and Ali's closest companion (Amersy, 2010); Salman, one of highly admired companions of Ali (Rehmat, 2005); and Qambar, Ali's servant (Shariati, 1971). The recontextualization of these historical figures declares them as role models worth emulating even at present. It invariably leads one to infer that import of renowned religious figures from historical text is symbolic and stands for exemplary characters. Obviously, here an exemplary character excludes Ali's adversaries and includes Ali's followers. These names not only serve to highlight the individuality of these historical personalities but also exhort other Muslims to be like them to earn respect and honour.

5.3 Mythologization of Karbala tragedy and Prophet's descendents

The mourning rituals of Karbala including *marsiya* 'has transformed the historical tragedy into a myth' (Armstrong, 2001: 47). Even though Prophet Muhammad, Ali and Fatima were not present at the battle of Karbala themselves, they are 'brought into the narrative symbolically or metaphorically' (Aghaei, 2005:10). The importance of mythologization in Shi'iah faith is demonstrated by large number of *marsiyas* and Moharram rituals:

Figure 8: Mythologization of Prophet's descendents

Original Text	English Translation
1. <i>Aye Hur kise mili ye shadat ki zaib o tain, Bali pe teri aayi hain khud mad re huassain</i>	1. O Hur, there is no one else but you who enjoyed this great honour at the hour of martyrdom, Hussain's mother (Fatima) herself came to bless you
2. <i>Jab rang mein zulfiqar -e- ali nagihann cahli, Bich bich gayin safon pe safein wo jahan chali, Chamki to is tarah udhar ayi wahan chali, Dene ko jaan arsh pe piyase ki maan chali</i>	2. When <u>Zulfiqar-e-Ali</u> (Ali's sword) started its business in its true colours, the ranks of enemy were routed in a wink. It (sword) shone and moved swiftly here and there. On the other hand, the thirsty one's (Hussain's) mother started moving in heaven to lay down her life.
3. <i>Dekhi jo zuljinnah mein surrat hussain ki. Qudrat baghor takti thi surat hussain ki</i>	3. The nature observed Hussain like swiftness in <u>Zuljinnah</u> (Hussain's horse). It stared at Hussain's face solemnly.

In first two instances (see Figure 8), Fatima (Hussain's mother and Prophet's daughter) is mythologized and symbolized. As it is obvious from the discourse that Fatima is portrayed as witnessing the Karbala tragedy from the gates of heaven and resultantly becoming very restless and moved (2). Her 'role as mother and educator of Hosayn, as well as her role as one of the *purified fourteen* who suffered for the cause of Islam, cannot be

separated from the Karbala event' (Aghaei, 2005:10). The importance of Fatima is demonstrated by a large number of *marsiyas* and historical accounts devoted to her memory. Here, she is introduced into the narrative metaphorically as she stands for great honour and prestige which a follower and lover of *ahl-e-bait* (Prophet Muhammad's household) enjoys. Hur—mentioned in first instance—is another important historical figure. He is held in high esteem by Shi'ahs because he joined Hussain's army right before the war despite knowing the fact he is sure to die in that unequal balance of power. Hur's reference here and in many other *marsiyas* is symbolic and inspirational. He represents all the devotees and true admirers of Hussain.

In addition to personalities, Ali's sword *Zulfiqar*—which was given to him by Prophet during battle of Badar and was carried by Hussain in battle of Karbala ("Zulfiqar", 2010: 2)—and Hussain's horse *Zuljinnah* are also mythologized. Keeping in with the tradition of mythologization, *Zulfiqar* is personified in the second instance (Figure 8) and *Zuljinnah* is mythologized in the third. In the third instance *Zuljinnah* is portrayed as a majestic warrior who seems to share some of Hussain's attributes like swiftness and skill etc. Further, nature is also personified and depicted as being awed by the valour of Hussain in the same instance. Nature thus personified observes the divine attributes of Hussain with amazement. It invariably leads one to infer that extensive use of figures of speech serves to mythologize the descendents of Prophet, their belongings and even phenomenon of nature. It is right in tune with the aesthetic sense of recipients of such discourses.

5.3.1 Aesthetization of violence and foregrounding of atrocities committed against ahl-e-bait

Hunt and Vipond (1985) and Van Peer (1986) have rightly pointed out that text recipients are impressed by foregrounded imagery and linguistic devices which evokes certain emotions in them. The more defamiliarize a text becomes; the more prone it is to hasten the emergence of feeling. The *marsiyas* discourse is generally filled with atrociously violent imagery which is achieved through incorporation of certain lexical items in the text. The *marsiya* discourse, hence, ensures the aestheticized depiction of violence which is highly appreciated by their presupposed audience.

Figure 9: Foregrounding the violence

Original Text	English Translation
1. <i>Bataon kesay k Dasween ko maine kya dekha, Sahar hui to shahaadat ka silsila dekha, Kisi ka seena to zakhmi koi gala dekha, Lab-e-furaat alam khoon main bhara dekha, Hussain lashon pe lashain yunhi uthatay rhay, Aur apni raah-e-shahadat ki simt jatay rhay</i>	1. How could I narrate what I witnessed on 10 th (of Moharram)? When it dawned (I) witnessed (Hussain's companion) martyred in quick succession. I witnessed somebody's chest injured and somebody's throat bleeding . I witnessed (Hussain's) black banner lying at Euphrates's bank, drenched in blood . Hussain kept collecting dead bodies and moving towards his own martyrdom.
2. <i>Wo sainkron payam-e-ajal laye, Ik Hussain, Doobay huay thay khoon main gaisoo Hussain k Teeron nay chaan dalay thay pehlloo Hussain k</i>	2. Hundreds of them (Hussain's adversaries) brought message of death to isolated Hussain. Hussain's hair was drenched in blood. The arrows had sifted the sides of Hussain.
3. <i>Wo jurm ho raha tha k duniya ulatti thi, Jab zer-e-taigh garden-e-shabbir katati thi</i>	3. Such crime was being committed which turned the universe upside down. When Shabbir (Hussain) was being beheaded by enemy's sword...

The bold linguistic chunks in Figure 9 aptly achieve the aesthetization of violence. Here the violence is foregrounded by portrayal of death, destruction, blood and brutality. Shi'ahs believe that mourning the tragedy of Karbala and other *ahl-e-bait* by weeping and beating the bodies is one of their most sacred religious rituals (Armstrong, 2001). So, this sort of elegiac and mournful language which makes them tearful and sorrowful is received quite favourably by the mourners. Furthermore, use of passive constructions, material clauses and lack of agency are other hallmarks of such discourses. The material clauses—despite the absence of agency—depict the brutality inflicted upon Hussain's family quite explicitly and 'synthetic sisterhood' (Talbot *et. al*, 2003) between the mourners makes them identify the agents, i.e. Yazid's army.

5.4 Recontextualizing the Muslim worship discourse

According to Fairclough (2003) recontextualization refers to ‘the appropriation of elements of one social practice within another’ (Fairclough, 2003: 32). Recontextualization could be related to ‘intertextuality or text-external referencing’ (Boyd, 2009: 80). In recontextualized discourse acts, language of a quotation could be repeated and resemanticized and ‘social events are selectively filtered’ (Fairclough, 2003: 139) by adopting certain linguistic strategies like ‘exclusion, inclusion and selective prominence’ (Boyd, 2009: 81). In *marsiya* discourse, the Arabic verses from Quran and *salat* (prayer) are recontextualized, supposedly, for two reasons. Firstly, for the sake of eulogizing Hussain’s infallibility and innocence; and secondly, condemning his adversaries, i.e. the rulers of the Islamic world at that time.

Figure 10: Recontextualized worship discourse

Original Text	English Translation
1. <i>wa to izzo man tasha wa tu zillo man tasha</i>	1. Allah honors those He is pleased with and disgraces those He is not happy with
2. <i>Ashado Alla ilaha ilallah</i>	2. I testify that there is no deity except for God
3. <i>JazakAllah</i>	3. May Allāh reward you [in] goodness
4. <i>La ilaha illallah</i>	4. There is no deity except for God
5. <i>Allah hu akbar</i>	5. God is greater than any description
6. <i>Subhana rabbi al ala</i>	6. Glory be to my Lord, the most High

Though these Arabic statements (Figure 10) occur in different *marsiyas* at different occasions, yet they serve to depict Hussain as incarnation of religion Islam. The righteous and pious Hussain kept testifying his firm faith in Allah (statements 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6) and did not forget to offer *Asar* prayer despite being fatally wounded (Abu-un-Nasr, 1960). Similarly, the first statement implicates that Hussain’s enemies are condemned to be disgraced and held in contempt eternally.

6. Overall Discussion

As above given analysis indicates, *marsiya* discourse addresses multiple issues which range from the rationale of *ithna ashariyah* Shiite ideological beliefs to detailed depiction of Karbala incidents and violence committed against *ahl-e-bait* and Hussain’s companions. *Marsiya* discourse employs a wide range of linguistic strategies to make the mourners moved and awed by the valour and semi-divine attributes of *purified fourteen*. This study demonstrates that along with recontextualization and figures of speech, relational and material clauses play an important role in making *marsiya* discourse aestheticized according to the expectation of the listeners. Figures 11 and 12 show the distribution of figures of speech and frequency of processes respectively:

Figure 11: Distribution of figures of speech

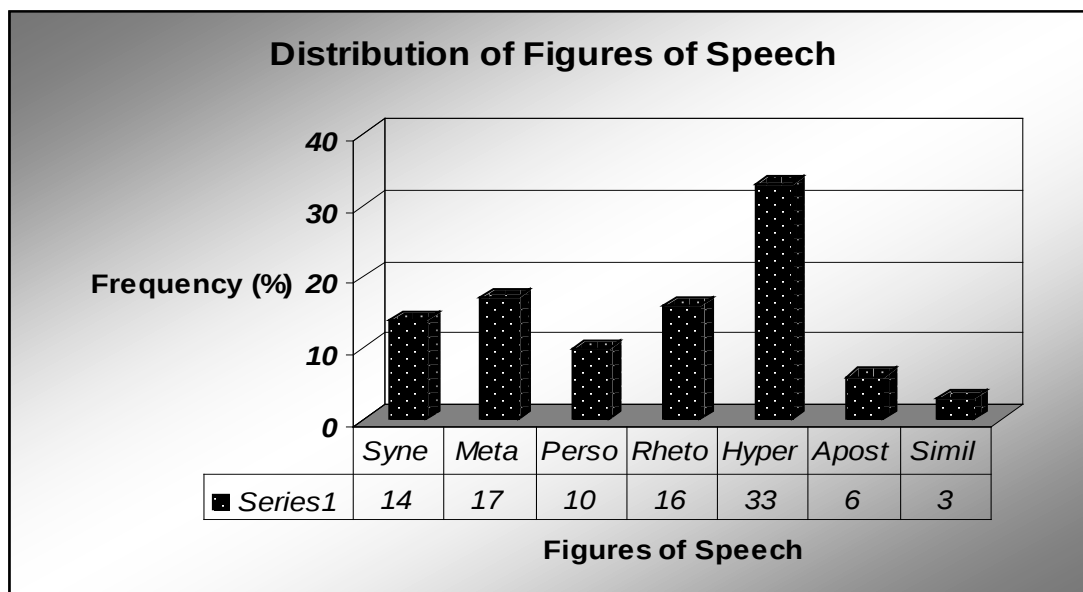


Figure 11 shows that hyperbolic expressions are most frequently used in marsiya discourse (making up 33% of total figures of speech). Other figures of speech like synecdoche (14%), metaphors (17%), personifications (10%), rhetorical questions (16%), apostrophe (6%) and similes (3%) are also employed in substantial numbers. Hyperbolic expression's preference marks the Shiites' faith in larger than life attributes of *purified fourteen*. Furthermore, the use of rhetorical questions serves to establish the innocence and sinlessness of impeccable Imam and his martyred companions. Similarly—as it has already been discussed—metaphors like lion, cheetah and deer for Ali's swiftness, *takht-e-zuljinnah* for Hussain's horse and *sham* (evening) for hopelessness and somberness after battle of Karbala; personifications of *kalma*, *namaz* (prayer), nature and even *Zulfiqar* (sword) serve to defamiliarize and exalt the text devoted to eulogize and mourn the tragedy of semi-divine personalities. Sample examples for each figure of speech are reproduced in Figures 12:

Figure 12: Examples of figures of speech

Figures of Speech	*Examples
Synecdoche	<u>Awaz-e-Muhammad ka safar khatam na hoga</u> The journey of <u>Muhammad's voice</u> will never come to an end.
Metaphor	<u>Cheete ki chashm, sher ki chitwan, hiran ki aankh</u> (Ali had) <u>Cheetah's sight, lion's eyebrows and deer's eyes</u>
Personification	<u>Thak jaye ga suraj ye safar khatam na hoga</u> <u>Sun would get tired</u> but this journey (of Hussain's tradition) would never come to an end.
Rhetorical Questions	<u>Jis per khuda ko naz wo insaan kon tha?</u> <u>Kunbe ke sath din per qurban kon tha?</u> <u>Who was the one God felt proud of?</u> <u>Who sacrificed his life in the name of Islam along with family?</u>
Hyperbole	<u>Rakoo mein jis k rahe barson kazim-e-Muztar</u> Kazim, the afflicted one, remained bowed in prayer <u>for years and years.</u>
Apostrophe	<u>Aye arze nainwa mera bach hai begunnah,</u> <u>Aye nehr-e-alqama mera bacha hai begunnah</u> <u>O' land of Nainwa, my son is innocent!</u> <u>O' Euphrates River, my son is innocent!</u>
Simile	<u>Jaisi wo Zulfiqar thi waisa tha Zuljinnah</u> <u>Zulfiqar, the sword was just like Zuljinnah, the horse.</u>

* The figures of speech are underlined.

Another striking linguistic feature of marsiya discourse is use of epithets or titles for *fourteen infallibles*, *Zulfiqar* and *Zuljinnah*. In the selected data there are fifty nine (59) titles incorporated to describe *punjtan*s, *imams*, their belongings, Karbala and Euphrates River (see Figure 13). The ‘synthetic sisterhood’ (Talbot *et al.* 2003) between the mourners makes them semanticize the titles and identify the referents appropriately.

Figure 13: List of epithets

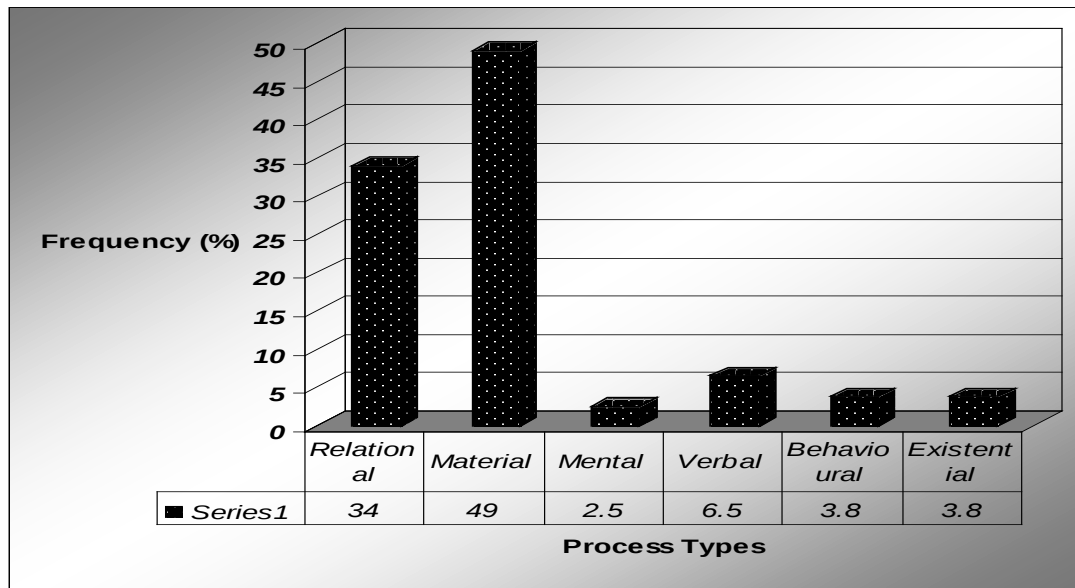
	Titles/ Epithets	Meanings and Referents		Titles/ Epithets	Meanings and Referents
1	Khak-e-shifa	Healing clay, i.e. Karbala	31	Mustafa ka jigar	Prophet’s dearest one, i.e. Hussain
2	Arsh-e-Muallah	The divine throne, i.e. Karbala	32	Naik Khoon	The pious blood, i.e. Hussain
3	Zulfiqar-e-Ali	Bifurcated, i.e. Hussain’s sword	33	Syed	Lord, i.e. Hussain
4	Piyasa	The thirsty one, i.e. Hussain	34	Namazi	Worshipper, i.e. Hussain
5	Jangi-e-tauqeer	Battle for honour, i.e. the battle of Karbala	34	Gharib noha gar	The grieved marsiya reciter, i.e. Zainab
6	Shah-e-Karbala	Karbala’s king, i.e. Hussain	36	Shaheed	Martyr, i.e. Hussain
7	Shah	King, i.e. Hussain	37	Akhi	Brother, i.e. Hussain
8	Zahra	The shining one, i.e. Fatima	38	Gharib-e-Karbala	The poor soul of Karbala, i.e. Zainab and Martyrs and Karbala
9	Punjtan	The purified five, i.e. Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, Hassan, Hussain	39	Bawafa	The faithful, Zainab
10	Nana ka saya	The grandfather’s shadow, i.e. Hussain	40	Ghamon ki arqama	The narrator of tragedy, i.e. Zainab
11	Kamli wale	The man with a black blanket, i.e. Prophet Muhammad	41	Musafira	The traveler, i.e. Zainab
12	Ibn-e-Haider	Haider’s son, i.e. Hassan and Hussain	42	Sharik-e-Karbala	The one who shares Karbala tragedy, i.e. Zainab
13	Khateeb-e-noke-e-sina	The one who preaches at the point of spear, i.e. Hussain	43	Sultant-e-ishq	The land of devotion, Hussain’s followers’ imaginary land
14	Ramz-e-Khuda	God’s secret, i.e. Hussain	44	Mushir-e-Hussain	Hussain’s advisor, i.e. Muslim Bin Aqeel
15	Khuda Sifaat	One who carries God’s attributes, i.e. Hussain	45	Badshah	King, i.e. Hussain
16	Mustafa	The chosen one, i.e. Prophet Muhammad	46	Wazir-e-Hussain	Hussain’s minister, i.e. Muslim Bin Aqeel
17	Murtaza	The chosen one, i.e. Ali	47	Faqeer-e-Hussain	The beggar at Hussain’s

					doorstep, i.e. Muslim Bin Aqeel
18	Mujtaba	The chosen one, i.e. Hassan	48	Dast-e-Hussain	Hussain's hand, i.e. Sword
19	Hujjat-e-Khuda	The Testifier on God's behalf, i.e. The 12 th Imam Mahdi	49	Punja	Claw, i.e. sword
20	Imam-e-Asar	The master of the time, i.e. Hussain	50	Mushkil Kusha	One who removes difficulty, i.e. Ali
21	Batool	Separated from uncleanness, i.e. Fatima	51	Allah ka wali	Allah's saint, i.e. Ali
22	Lashkar-e-Jafa	The army of unfaithful, i.e. Yazid's army	52	Mustafa ki jaan	Prophet's beloved, i.e. Hussain
23	Ahl-e-Jurm	The dwellers of land of crime, i.e. Yazid's army	53	Maula	Lord, i.e. Ali
25	Aalam-e-bala	The world hereafter	54	Shah-e-Zaman	The king of time, i.e. Hussain
25	Shah-e-wala	The emperor, i.e. Hussain	55	Ser-shikan	The head breaker, i.e. Ali
27	Imam-e-waqt	The master of the time, i.e. Hussain	56	Shamshir-zan	The swordsman, i.e. Ali
28	Fatima ke laal	Fatima's son, i.e. Hussain	57	Yadullah	God's hand, i.e. Gabriel
29	Rashk-e-Khuda	God's pride, i.e. Hussain	58	Neher-e-Alqama	A title of Euphrates river
30	Mah-e-laqa	With the face as lovely as the moon, i.e. Hussain	59	Arz-e-Nainwa	A title of land of Karbala

(Source: Qureshi, 1989)

As for as transitivity analysis is concerned, it is quite natural for this sort of discourses to have material and relational clauses in abundance; because narration of different events and action could be done only by material clauses, and eulogization of different attributes is achieved only through relational clauses: (see Table 14):

Figure 14: Distribution of transitivity processes



Material clauses—which are most frequently occurring (49% of 478 clauses) of all—serve to narrate events from the battle of Karbala and biographies of *fourteen infallibles*. Relational clauses (34%) on the other hand serve to delineate multiple attributes of Hussain, his household and followers. In addition to this *marsiya*s also make use of verbal clauses in abundance (6.5%) where discourse participants (Karbala martyrs and women from *ahl-e-bait*) are portrayed as conversing with Allah, nature, Ali, Fatima and Prophet Muhammad. The existential (3.8 %), behavioural (3.8 %) and mental clauses (2.5%) have also been used but they are not in substantial numbers. Hence they do not contribute much to disseminate and popularize the ideologically invested messages of the discourse. Sample examples for each transitivity process are reproduced in Figures 15:

Figure 5: Examples of transitivity processes

Processes	*Examples
Material	<i>Kya main us ghar mein khela nahin hoon?</i> Hav'n't I been <u>playing</u> in that house (of Prophet Muhammad)?
Relational	<i>Namaz nafs ki izzat hai...</i> The prayer <u>is</u> an honour of spirit...
Verbal	<i>Kaha Hussain ne ...</i> Hussain <u>said</u> ...
Mental	<i>Subah hui to shahadat ka silsila dekha</i> When it dawned, I <u>saw</u> martyrdoms in quick succession.
Existential	<i>Tera jalwa har soo</i> <u>There are</u> your sign everywhere.
Behavioral	<i>Zara mera rang dekh</i> <u>Look</u> at my way (of fighting the war).

*The transitivity processes are underlined.

7. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that *marsiya* lyrics and imagery play an important role in interpretation of religious doctrines by Shi'ahs; and lead them to arrive at collective *ithna ashariyah* Shiite ideology. This paper makes an attempt to put forward a wider understanding of *marsiya* discourse than merely associating it with Muharram's mourning rituals. Thus, it is argued that *marsiya* discourse could be seen as both defamiliarized and recognized;

and the text discussed here offers ample evidence to support such a broad view. Future research should aim at uncovering further linguistic devices of such religious discourses in similar and different contexts.

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