



Ocean of Melancholy

The Tragedy that was Karbala

Mir Mosharraf Hossain

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- A tragic historical novel, with mythical dimension and epic narrative, based on the battle of Karbala that took place on 10th October AD 680
- The day of the battle of Karbala is now observed as Muharram, in the memory of the martyrdom of Prophet Muhammad's grandsons Hassan and Hussein
- The text, being dramatic, is performed regularly during the month of Muharram every year in many parts of Bangladesh, accompanied by music and dance

One of the best known works of Mir Mosharraf Hossain, *Bishad Sindhu (Ocean of Melancholy)* is an epic historical novel centered around events that led to the battle of Karbala and its aftermath. The book revolves around the tragic story of Hassan and Hussein, grandsons of the great Prophet Muhammad, who were exterminated by their bitter enemy Yazid, the son of the king of Damascus, for his desire for Zainab – Hassan's beautiful wife – and his greed for the throne of Medina. The plot is dramatic, has a mythical undertone to it, and deeds of heroism and supernatural occurrences render an epic flavor to its narrative. The storyline explores the sufferings and agonies of human life and the covetousness and hatred of men, and, at the same time, imparts a historical background to the bloodbath and killings that took place in Karbala, Iraq on the 10th of October, AD 680. Contents: A Short Biography of Mir Mosharraf Hossain; Translator's Introduction; The Language of Bishad Sindhu; The Indian Connection; Prologue; Muharram Parva: The Story of Muharram; Chapter I to Chapter XXVI; Uddhar Parva: Operation Rescue; Chapter I to Chapter III; Chapter IV to Chapter XXX (Summary); Yazid Badh Parva: The Slaying of Yazid; Chapter I to Chapter V (Summary); Epilogue; Translator's Acknowledgements.

Mir Mosharraf Hossain was born in 1847 to the zamindar of Padamdi, Mir Muazzam-Hossain. A bright boy from his early childhood, Mir started his education at home under a good maulvi. He was good at languages since his schooldays. He was deeply interested in Arabic, Persian, and Bengali literature and spent hours reading books in these scripts. Mir contributed his writings to various journals, mainly in Sangbad Hitokar and Gram Barta Prakashika, and edited the magazines Azizannehar (1874) and Hitokori (1890). Mir has authored thirty-five books of which *Bishad Sindhu* (1885-1891) is applauded as his best. **Alo Shome** is a freelance writer and poet. Her selected and translated collection of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's essays *Many Threads of Hinduism* and her translation of Bankim's study of Sri Krishna's personality *Krishna Charitra* have been published by HarperCollins (2015) and Pustak Mahal (2008) respectively. Her poems (published in Poetry Chain) were also critically appreciated in *The Hindu* in 2002.

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