Chapter 5
CONCLUSION

In his novel, *A Passage to India*, Forster tries to find out a golden mean so that he could bridge the gap between the East and the West. In writing this great masterpiece, he drew upon his intimate friendship with Masood to create the character of Aziz.

All the qualities of Masood are reflected in the character of Aziz, who is shown a well-bred Indian, well-read, fond of Urdu, Persian and Arabic poetry, lamenting the decay of Islam and the brevity of love. Sometimes he indulges in the fantasy of the Mughal past, refers to Moghul kings, identifying himself with Babur, sometimes with pious Aurangzeb but never with Akbar, who according to Aziz betrayed the Indian spirit. This fierce Muslim pride is not only a mark of identity in Aziz's character, but also its shaping force. The glorification of past, a tendency towards pathos, are the characteristic qualities of a certain period of Urdu literature, whose poetry expresses pathos or venom. Like Masood, he is also shown as a 'Islamic modernist', proud of his religion and his ancestors and is aware of himself as one of the Islamic race. He is proud also of being an Indian, opposed to the British rule.
A young Muslim doctor, simple-minded, childish who became a victim of the hallucination of an English lady Miss. Adela Quested who had come to visit India. That is why he hated the British from the core of his heart. He is confident that India shall be an independent nation with no foreigners and Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs all shall be one. He embodies the national aspiration of India during the British rule and was hopeful that Muslims and Hindus would one day unite and drive away the Britishers and thus Iqbal’s statement that nations are born in the hearts of poets is truly demonstrated in the portrayal of Aziz.

We find in the delineation of Aziz, all the Oriental qualities that Forster noticed among his Muslim friends using Urdu, Arabic and Persian expressions as well as the Oriental ways of habit as chewing the pan, putting on topi (cap) and offering prayer at mosque. Forster’s choice of a Muslim as the central character in the novel has generated some controversy. The sharpest criticism comes from Indian writer Nirad C. Chaudhuri, who argues that the Forster is wrong in choosing Aziz as his Indian protagonist as Muslims were a side shadow in the freedom struggle of India. He says that Aziz and other Indian characters
belong to the service section and are inverted toadies. He maintains that India is not only diverse but Hindu. He criticizes Aziz as servile, simple and hot-headed. He cannot forgive Forster for not having a Hindu protagonist, not providing any solution of Indo-British relations and not depicting nationalistic struggle against the British. With such a material, history of the Muslim destiny in India could have been written but not a novel on Indo-British relations for which a Hindu protagonist should be there, he argues.

Forster was equally justified in choosing Aziz as the central character of the novel. The obvious reason was that his friendship with Syed Ross Masood and other Muslim friends familiarized him with the Oriental life, custom, tradition and religion. Through them he came to know Muslims better than Hindus and his unsympathetic portrayal of the later shows that he never had the chance of getting into close contact with them in real life.

We also see that the novel was written at a time when there was political unrest all over India as India was under the domination of the British. The British supremacy had vitiated race relations among white and non-white. Forster recounts these ground realities in his novel.
Forster's *A Passage to India*, has generated controversy in terms of being a socio-historical study i.e. the dissolution of the British dominion of India. No doubt it is true to some extent that the novel has a deep social and historical sense; the clash of cultures is firmly presented and in the historical sense the British Raj ruling Indian subject and both cultural and political matters are fully explored. The object of the writer behind it was to discover how people behave in relation to one another under conditions which prevailed in India at that time. Therefore *A Passage to India*, stands out a faithful attempt to understand human conditions in India. It is a commendable study of racial antagonism. Forster succeeds in evoking Indian atmosphere and represents, both Hindus and Muslims in *A Passage to India*. It is a fusion of real and unreal, the gulf that divide Indians from Britishers, as well as social, political and spiritual division which keeps India and Anglo-India apart. The two nations—Indian and English are different culturally, socially and racially and when they come in contact, there is a reaction which is depicted in the novel.

But the distinction of *A Passage to India* lies in fact that this is much more than simply a study of British Raj and Indian reaction to British imperialistic rule.
Forster is justified in portraying Aziz as central character because he knew Muslims better than Hindus and that he never had the chance of getting in close contact with any Hindu in real life. It is also his expression of social, political and moral views in the form of truth and reality. The aim of novelist is to show a reaction, a desire in hearts of people against a foreign domination. This novel is helpful in unfolding the mind of Indians, especially Muslims. It delineates the problems of human relations and society and calls people all over the world to attain emotional integration and save themselves from being subdued by foreign domination. It is an interpretation of India, a land of mysteries and muddles as well as interpretation of those who live in it and the foreigners who came to it.

It is not merely a sociological venture but also a study of human attitudes as the novel ends on the symbolic note that races standing apart owing to clash in thoughts and feelings even if they desire to become friends they cannot do so; as there is no permanent union of hearts or joining of hands.

But we see that such criticism is baseless as most of Forster's friends were Muslims and he was attracted
towards Islamic culture. His friendship with Ross Masood acquainted him to the Oriental life, customs, traditions and religion. It was not that he was partial to Muslims that made him choose Aziz as his central character; rather he picked up a Muslim because he believed that if a Muslim could thrive under the influence of Hindu politics, India's nationhood could never be challenged. Forster had in mind the period when Hindus were co-operating with Muslims in the Khilafat agitation and in Aziz he represented the educated nationalist Indian youth, conscious of his country's destiny in the modern world. Muslims in his novel are derived from his prolonged contact with dynamic Indian Muslims as Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali, Dr. M.A. Ansari, and Ross Masood. Even his minor Oriental characters of Hamidullah, Mohamamd Latif, Mahmoud Ali, Nawab Bahadur, Nureddin, Rafi are described with accuracy and are crowned with triumph of insight and imaginative sympathy. Their role in the novel is important in creating Oriental atmosphere. This shows that Forster is equally good in his portrayal of different characters in the novel.

Forster introduced few Hindu characters to act as a foil to his Muslim characters, though he presented them as
comical and bewildering such as Prof. Godbole, Dr. Panna Lal, Amrit Rao, Ram Chand and Mr. Das. All of them are queer and incomprehensible.

They are not Western stereotypes but are purely Indian, proud of their nation, blood and race with their liberal culture and human traits such as tolerance and intelligence. His characterization is marked by variety. He observes human beings under certain conditions. We find his characters both round and flat. Forster says, “A proper mixture of character is the most important ingredient of the novel and serves as a vehicle for conveying ideas”. He individualizes his characters even when painting them as representative of a class. Forster grows psycho-analytical, discerning human nature while portraying his characters. We find in his novels the much portrayed, intelligent, well-bred, sophisticated middle class with a fine blend of classicism and Orientalism illumined by psycho-analytical flashes. In it he touches upon social and cultural problems, personal relations and expression of the liberal tradition with finesse. It is the paradox explored by areas of relationship and dissonance between the ancient and enduring patterns of Indian civilization.
Forster was more inclined towards Islam as it provides peace, simplicity, a sense of social order and stability. That is why we may trace the Oriental aspect in his novels. He uses Oriental expressions owing to his first-hand knowledge as well as his minute observation of the Oriental life and also his thorough study of works on the Orient.

Forster writes with ease and lucidity. The evasive charm of the Indian life is suggested with its regard for formulas, symbols and spiritual significance. His knowledge of Islamic thought and literature particularly of Persian classics and Urdu was profound under the influence of philosophy and literary works of poets as Mohammad Iqbal, Ghalib as well as his greatest Indian friend Syed Ross Masood.

In keeping with the Oriental colour of the novel, we find a number of Oriental words as Bulbul, Badmash, Bazaar, Begum, Caaba, Chuprassi, Chukker, Dilkusha, Ghalib, Gully, Hafiz, Hali, Hakim, Hammam, Hookah, Huzoor, Iqbal, Islam, Izzat, Kerbala, Koran, Moghul, Mohammedan, Mohurrum, Moslem, Mecca, Mem Sahib, Nawab, Nullah, Pan, Pathan, Punkah, Purdah, Sahib, Salaam, Sais, Shikar, Tazia, Tonga and Topi.
In his novel, we find mixed diction of Persian, Urdu and Hindi words to express his thoughts and views and comment on the Oriental aspect as well as its modern, social, political and economic life. This diction lends Oriental colouring to the novel.

To conclude, Forster's *A Passage to India* is an amazing novel, in which he addresses the question of human relations and society by presenting man against man and race against race. It is a plea for people all over the world to save themselves from being subdued by emotional disintegration. Forster has succeeded to a great extent in unfolding the mind of the Indian people, while dealing with many aspects of Indian life. It reflects a picture of Englishman in India. The portrait of Indian mind especially of Muslims and the problems arising out of the contact of India with West, which had no solution. It is a realistic study of Anglo-Indian relations. It explores the possibilities of friendship between two races particularly if one of them belongs to a ruling race and other being the subject race, the gulf that divides Indians from the British. *A Passage to India* is a document of Forster's personal experience in India.
We find that some of the essays of Forster reveal his views on Oriental aspects of life. As for example in Abinger Harvest, he praises Islam in comparison to other religions as he was highly moved by the simplicity inherent in it. The whole description of mosque architecture is given as he himself had been to one of the mosques for prayers along with his Muslim friends. The peace and serenity of mosque appealed
to him and we also find a similar description of a mosque in his novel A Passage to India. Forster witnessed the rituals, ceremonies and festivals in India and we find one such description of a wedding ceremony in a Muslim family with details of Nikah being performed with great pomp and show.

Forster was equally influenced by some of the great Muslim personalities of India. Iqbal's poetry and philosophy had a deep impact on his mind. Iqbal was a great genius and important literary figure of India. Also his closest Indian friend Syed Ross Masood provided him with much information about India and the Orient. Without him, India would not have been so appealing to Forster. An account of these Muslim personalities is found in his another essay Two Cheers for a Democracy.
On the whole, Forster's experiences and observations of the Orient are reflected in his writings. He tried to present every aspect of Oriental life, its culture, religions, customs, rituals, and ceremonies. Forster according to the knowledge gained through a study of Oriental literature, used the Oriental diction. Muslims make a substantial contribution to the social setting of the novel. His writings create a profound illusion of life's reality. It is a document embodying Forster's thoughts and emotions especially in the wake of his visits to India.