

QUR'ÂN TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY IN BENGALI: A GENERAL SURVEY

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Of all the forces that revolutionise the inner world of Man, religion is undoubtedly the most powerful. History bears testimony to the fact that the religious bond is stronger even than that of blood. In the history of Islam we read of a battle in which Abû Bakr (r.‘a.) was on the side of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), whereas his son, ‘Abd al-Rahman was in the opposite camp. When the battle was fierce, ‘Abd al-Ra-mân got a chance to kill his unmindful father but filial affection prevented him from such an obnoxious deed. After embracing Islam, ‘Abd al-Ra-mân told this story in the presence of Abû Bakr, who said: “My dear son, if I were you on that occasion I would not have spared your life, because you were an infidel and I was a Muslim”.¹ This shows that religion can alter a man’s character. The Qur’anic story in which Noah’s son refused to believe in his father is another illustration of this.²

Muslims throughout the world believe that the Holy Qur’ân is not only a religious book in the narrow sense, but is also a complete code for their lives. Their legal system, the *Shar‘ah*, is derived from this Holy Scripture. It is no wonder therefore that they try to understand it thoroughly and why they translate it into their mother tongue. Even during the lifetime of the Prophet, Muslims, wherever they lived, tried to translate at least some parts of the Holy Qur’ân into their native language. For example, al-SarakhsTM in his *Kitâb al-Mabsûf* clearly mentions that “some Persians converted to Islam and wrote a letter to the Prophet requesting his permission to say their prayers temporarily in their mother tongue. The Persian, Salmân al-FârisTM, translated the first Chapter (*Sûrat al-Fâti-ah*) and sent it on to them.”³ Thus, Persian⁴ is said to be the first language into which the Qur’ân was translated, Hindi being perhaps the second.

Translations of holy books/scriptures into other languages have been highly problematic. For instance, when the Bible was translated into French at Rheims by a baker named Ishard, this work of impiety enraged the people so much that they burnt it. Similarly, Tyndale, who had translated the Bible into English, was strangled and his body burnt in 1536.⁵

The Holy Qur'ân, although initially thought untranslatable into other languages, was gradually translated into other languages by Muslim and non-Muslim scholars. For instance, Buzurg ibn Shahriyâr (d. 350 A.H./961 C.E.) had referred in his book *Kitâb 'Ajâ'ib al-Hind* to a translation and exegesis of the Qur'ân made in 270 A.H./883-4 C.E. for the benefit of the Kashmiri king, by an unknown scholar born in Iraq and brought up and educated in al-Mansurah, the then capital of the Arab Kingdom of Sind. This may have been the first Hindi translation. The above-mentioned king, Mahruq b. Ra'iq, had expressed to 'Abdullah b. 'Umar al-Habbâri, the ruler of Mansurah, his long-felt desire to translate the Qur'ân. Accordingly, 'Abdullah had sent him a translator, who stayed with the king for three years, translating the Qur'ân from the beginning up to *Sûrah Yâ-Sîn* (*al-Qur'ân al-Majîd*, Chapter 36). As he progressed, the translator used to read out what he had done. When he reached the translation of the verse 78 in Chapter 36 (*Yâ-Sîn*)⁶, Mahruq was so overwhelmed by its inner meaning that he instantly descended from his emerald throne, lay down on the floor and wholeheartedly felt the divine existence in himself and accordingly there and then embraced Islam.⁷ Thereafter, the monumental translation and the Arabic commentary (*Tafsîr*) of Mu-ammad ibn Jarîr al-ÊabarTM (d. 310 A.H./922-3 C.E.) was rendered first into Persian in 365 A.H./947 C.E. and then into the Turkish language. An old manuscript of the Persian translation is preserved in the Raja Library, Rampur, India. The Turkish one is held in the Aya Sofia Library.

The Indo-Pakistan-Bangladesh sub-continent has also produced notable scholars in the field of Qur'ânic translation and commentary. Among these has been Allamah Shamsuddin of Dawlatabad and then of Delhi, who lived during the reign of Ibrahim Sharqi of Jaunpur, and who translated the Qur'ân into Persian. Many others followed in several countries and there are at least 250 early Persian translations of, and commentaries on, the Qur'ân.⁸ The Persian venture was followed by the Turkish and from the 11th century C.E. more than seventy translations into Turkish⁹ were made.

The Bengali-speaking Muslims, who number 120 million, have, unlike other Muslims, been slow to speak other languages. Among many factors accounting for the late appearance of the Bengali translations of the Qur'ân, two should be mentioned:

Firstly, during Muslim rule in India, and as late as the 18th century C.E., the official language of the Bengali Muslims was Persian, and since a good number of Persian translations of the Holy Qur'ân were already in circulation, the necessity for a Bengali version was not felt. Secondly, the conservative Muslims considered the work of translating the Holy Qur'ân to be an act of impiety and blasphemy that would rob it of its flavour, style, cadence and sanctity.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (d. 1938) forced the Turkish people to offer prayers in their mother tongue, but soon after he died they reverted to the tradition of praying in Arabic. In the words of Marmaduke Pickthall, "the Qur'ân cannot be translated". No translation can ever "take the place of the

Qur'ân in Arabic nor is it meant to do so."¹⁰ Muhammad Asad¹¹ and Khalifah Ishaq al-Sharif¹² both discussed the problem of translation further.

Under the circumstances, no Bengali Muslim dared to translate the entire Qur'ân in the beginning. In 1981, a non-Muslim Bengali, Girish Chandra Sen (sometimes called Bhai Girish Chandra Sen), a Brahmin published his translation of the Qur'ân and was threatened with death by an orthodox Muslim for doing so. This hostility prevailed until the beginning of the 20th century. This fact is deduced from the writings of Mawlavi Taslimuddin (1852-1927) and Mawlavi Abul Fazal Abdul Karim (1875-1947) in the Prolegomena to their translations of the Holy Qur'ân.¹³

We have looked at the attitudes of ordinary Bengali Muslims regarding the rendering of the Qur'ân into Bengali. There were, however, a few scholars in the region who held different views, and who surreptitiously devoted themselves to the translation of the Qur'ân into their mother tongue. So far we have been able to identify at least five translators who preceded Girish Chandra Sen.

The first Muslim to translate the 30th part of the Qur'ân into *Dobhashi*¹⁴ Bengali was Amiruddin Basunia from the village of Mokhtarpur, Rangpur district in Bangladesh. His translation ran to 128 pages duodecimo and was published in 1800, that is, eighty-one years before that of Girish Sen. At present, however, the book cannot be traced, possibly because a few copies were published. We know from a reliable source that only two copies were extant at the end of the 19th century. One belonged to Munshi Abdul Karim (1819-53) of Chittagong and the other was held by the poet Fazlul Karim (1882-1936) of Kakina, Rangpur.¹⁵

The work of Amiruddin Basunia was followed by that of Ghulam Akbar Ali of Mirzapur, Patwar Begum of Calcutta¹⁶ and Khondkar Mir Wahid Ali of Chittagong. These scholars attempted to translate particular pieces into *Dobhashi* Bengali, including the 30th part, commonly called '*Amm pârah* (Juz' '*Amma*)¹⁷. Although the works appeared in 1868, they were quite different in nature. These can be found in Chittagong University Library, and the '*Amm pârah* of Khondkar Mir Wahid Ali is held in the office of the *Ahl-e-Hadis* journal, '*Arafat* in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Evidently only an incomplete copy of this translation has survived. It is written in verse form.

In 1872 Nasiruddin Ahmad of Taghoria, about whom nothing is known, published in Calcutta a treatise entitled *Ni'ma-i-Khudâ* which contained the virtues, characteristics and efficacies of selected Qur'ânic verses.¹⁸ Nasiruddin was followed by Rajendra Nath Mitra, who confined himself to the translation of the *Sûrat al-Baqarah*, the second and largest chapter of the Qur'ân. This work was published by him from Calcutta in 1879 and printed by Mihir Chandra Roy.¹⁹ Of this particular translation, the Bengal Library Cataloguer remarks, "This is an attempt at translating the Muhammadan [sacred book] ... and is not a faithful one. ... He has confused the nominative in place of the real one, with the verb. For instance, on page 15 [the episode of] the creation of Adam and an account of his acquisition of previous knowledge in heaven before he descended to earth are quite wrong. Also, at the end of page 13, [the translator's

narrations] do not correspond at all with the words or account given in the Qur'ân.”²⁰

Although Girish Sen (1835-1910) is widely credited with being the first translator of the Holy Qur'ân into Bengali, our researches have proved otherwise. However, his father, Madhab Roy, and grandfather Ram-Mohan Roy (not to be confused with Raja Ram Mohan Roy) were well versed in Persian, which was introduced into the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent as the Mughal court language which continued to enjoy a favoured position as a language of culture among the élite. Madhab Roy copied the *Pand Nâmeḥ* of the renowned poet Shaikh Sa'dTM (1175-1295) and personally taught his son the book. Girish did badly at school and played truant for fear of being beaten by the headmaster. Before completing his studies he left Dhaka with his brother, Kara Chandra Roy for Momenshahi (Mymansingh district). Here he worked for a while as a copyist for Mawlavi Qadi Abdul Karim who, later on, taught him *Ruq'at-i-'AlamgTMrTM*. In 1876, at the age of 42, he left for Lucknow to study Arabic, where he met the eminent scholar, Ihsan Elahi, who taught him the Arabic language, together with grammar and theology for about a year. On returning home he began to read the Holy Qur'ân, its commentaries, and Arabic literature and history, with Mawlavi 'Alimuddin,²¹ of Nalgola, Dhaka. It is obvious that towards the end of his life, Girish Sen undertook this trouble only to prepare himself to translate the Holy Qur'ân into Bengali. It is a pity, therefore, that despite his dedication he remained less adept in Arabic than he was in Persian, Urdu, Sanskrit and Bengali. So, on the advice of his spiritual guide, Keshab Chandra Sen²², he began to render the Holy Qur'ân into Bengali—the Persian *TafsTMr-i—usainTM* of Mollah Wa'iz Kashifi (d. 1289 A.H./1872 C.E.) and the Urdu translation of Shah Abdul Qadir (1753-1827) being his main sources, which he himself admitted in the preface of his translation. Girish Sen published his first *pârah* (*Juz*) of the Qur'ân at the Charu Chandra Press, Sherpur town, Momenshahi in 1882. However, he was unsatisfied with this press and he left for Calcutta with a view to publishing the rest of the translation at the celebrated Ramshar Bhasa Bidhan Yantra. However, the task took longer than expected, occupying five years from 1881 to 1886. Eventually, it appeared anonymously in three volumes bound in one²³ and created a thrill throughout the country. People, regardless of creed and class praised it and it was sold out in no time.

The second and third editions were published in 1892 and 1908 from Devyantra and Mangalganj Mission Press respectively. The fourth edition appeared in 1936 from Naba-bidhan Publication Committee, Art Press, Calcutta with a foreword by the rationalist Islamic scholar-journalist, Mawlana Mohammad Akram Khan. The fifth edition came out in 1977. It was then reprinted and published in 1979 by a prolific litterateur, Abdul Aziz al-Aman, from 2-126 College Street Market, Calcutta. For this Indian edition, a brief biography of Girish Sen was added, together with a bibliography of the different translations of the Qur'ân. It is followed by another section comprising 25 pages. In this edition Abdul Aziz al-Aman has rendered a great service to the cause of Qur'ânic studies.

These various editions demonstrate how popular this translation was among Bengali-speaking readers. Many Muslim scholars from Bengal also praised this translation. Among these, mention may be made of Mawlana Mohammad Akram Khan (1867-1968),²⁴ Aftabuddin, Abu'l-Muzaffar 'Abdullah, Ahmadullah, 'Abdul Aziz and Mawlana Alimuddin, all of whose letters of congratulation to the translator have been inserted into the different editions of the book.²⁵ Later on, the writers of these letters conferred upon Girish Sen the enviable epithet of 'Mawlana' as is used for Islamic scholars of high standing. The English letter published in the book is as follows:

To the author of the Bengali translation of the Qur'ân,
Calcutta.

Dear Sir,

We the undersigned have most carefully and attentively read and compared with the original of the first two parts of your valuable production, viz. the Bengali translation of the Qur'ân, and our curiosity is no less excited to find it to be such a faithful and literary translation from a classical language as Arabic, which varies so widely in its construction from all other languages of the world. As we are Mohammadans by faith and birth, our best thanks are due to the author for his disinterested and patriotic effort and the great troubles he has taken to diffuse the deep meaning of our holy and sacred religious book - the Qur'ân, to the people.

The version of the Qur'ân above quoted has been such a wonderful success that we should wish the author would publish his name to the public,²⁶ to whom he has done such a valuable service and thus gain a personal regard from the public.

Lastly, in our humble and poor opinion we think that the book may be useful, particularly to the Mohammadans, if the style could be rendered a little easier so as to be understood by the less erudite.

We have the honour to be

Rev. Sir,

Your most obedient servants,

Ahmadullah,

Late Arabic Senior Scholar of Calcutta Madrasah,

Calcutta,

Abdul Ala,

Abd al-Aziz²⁷

2 March 1882.

Regarding these letters and the translation, the Bengali Library Cataloguer remarks, "The translator has published in this a number of letters from several Moulvis certifying to the correctness of this version and describing it as more faithful than any other translation of the Qur'ân existing in any language."²⁸ Nevertheless, one group of critics discovered a number of mistakes in the Girish Sen's translation. They even went so far as to claim that it misguided the Muslims, especially in explaining technical words such as *îamad*, *tawbah*, *tahlTM*, *tasbTM*, *ruk#*, *malâ'ikah*, *îalawât*, *îawm*, *Shayfân* and *Ru- al-Quds*,²⁹ etc. They therefore warned their fellow Muslims to be on their guard when using the translation. Naturally, Girish Sen confessed unhesitatingly to some of these errors and shortcomings.³⁰

Girish Sen confessed to receiving from the Muslim community more than he had spent on printing and publishing his translation.³¹ According to the Bengal Library Cataloguer, these donations went towards the propagation of the Brahma (Hindu) religion, with the result that many in Kuch Bihar and Bengal were converted to *Brahma Samaj* (Society of the Brahmans). Amongst these were Jalaluddin of Dhaka, Das Ghaffar and some pleaders (*wakTM* or lawyers) of Bengdon.³² It was Jalaluddin who assisted Girish Sen in purchasing the Holy Qur'ân from a Muslim bookseller ignorant of Jalaluddin's conversion to *Brahma Samaj*. Otherwise the Muslim bookseller would never have sold it to a non-Muslim because the holy book can only be read by a person in a condition of purity and ablution (*wud#*).

Among its shortcomings, the translation contains no original Arabic text, nor is there an Index to the sign of pauses in Qur'ânic verses. Moreover, Girish Sen does mention the *Shân-i-Nuz#l* (*Asbâbun Nuz#l*) which refers to causes and the background of revelations according to Shah Abdul Qadir and *TafsTM-i-usainTM* but not in great detail. Without it, the deeper meaning of the Qur'ân cannot be understood. Many readers therefore may easily be misguided by the outward meaning of the verses.

The language of Girish Sen is, on the whole, eloquent, though rather pedantic, Sanskritised and hence, to some extent, incomprehensible. Two scholars in a letter of acclamation to Sen, were mildly critical: "We think that the book (Bengali translation) may be useful, particularly to the Mohammadans, if the style could be rendered a little easier so as to be understood by the less erudite."³³

In the introductory note, Sen explains the method of translation he adopted and the sources he used. As the Qur'ân has been divided into seven *manzils* (literally 'mansions' or 'stations') these *manzils* are indexed. This index provides us with the name of every *s#rah* (chapter), its corresponding Bengali meaning, and page number. The names of the *pârah* are mentioned separately. The remainder of the introductory note deals with how the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) received the revelation of the Qur'ân through the archangel Gabriel, with what honour and respect the Muslim community sees and touches the Holy Qur'ân, what sort of spiritual reward could be gained by reciting the Holy Qur'ân and hearing it read, and how many formalities (for instance, ablution and physical

cleansing) are to be observed. Also noted are those chapters at the start of which *Basmalah* (i.e. *Bismillāh al-Ra-mān al-Ra-ṭm* in the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful) has to be uttered. In his autobiography, Girish Sen narrated how and when he uttered *Bismillāh* (literally 'In the name of Allah') while beginning to recite from the Holy Qur'ān in his boyhood. In his 'Introduction' he also briefly mentions the history of the Qur'ān and admits the difficulties he faced while trying to preserve the spirit of the original Arabic text as Bengali differs markedly from Arabic in style, imagery and cadence.

A literal rendering of the original text would have been impossible. In the Arabic language several words can be derived from the same root and sometimes the meaning of a word can only be conveyed by using a number of foreign words, thus making a Bengali translation of the Qur'ān extremely difficult. Yet, despite all its shortcomings, Sen's translation remains indisputably the work of a true pioneer. Although some Muslim translators had started the task before him, it was left to him to complete the job. The Muslim community and the world of Bengali literature owe him a considerable debt of praise. As the father of Bengali Muslim journalism, the late Mawlana Mohammad Akram Khan has remarked: "The unprecedented perseverance and tenacity of Girish Babu in the domain of Bengali Islamic literature may rightly be called 'the eighth wonder of the world'."³⁴ Girish Sen made more than thirty contributions towards Bengali literature, and these will both enlighten and thrill Bengali readers for years to come. They are works that will last.

Girish Sen appeared at a time when Hindus felt very indifferently towards Islam, while Muslims remained educationally backward, down-trodden and in despair. At this critical juncture, Girish Chandra Sen played an adventurous role by stepping through an impassable, thorny way. But more impressive still is the fact that in addition to this Qur'ān translation, Girish has to his credit another publication concerning the Holy Qur'ān—*Essays on the Qur'ān*. Truly, his inquisitiveness was praiseworthy as far as the heritage of Islam is concerned.³⁵

In the journal, *Banga Mihir*, the Bengali translation by Tara-Charan began to appear from 1873 onwards.³⁶ It was published in book form in 1882. Tara-Charan supplied the original Arabic text along with his Bengali translation, against which he also gave serial numbers of each verse (Ar. *āyah*, plural *āyāt*).

Contemporary Christian priests both local and foreign, began to propagate their beliefs with great zeal, condemning at the same time what they thought to be the falsehood of the Qur'ān. This was done not only verbally but also through numerous tracts. The leader of these preachers was H. G. Rouse, whose booklet *Furqān* was distributed free of charge in 1883.

The Bengali version of the Holy Qur'ān by Mawlana Naimuddin of Surujgram, in the district of Tangail began to be published in parts by Mir Athar Ali in 1887.³⁷ In this work he was generously supported by Harith Mahmud Khan Panni, a Zamindar (literally 'big landlord') of Karatia; but the scholar's premature death before the task was complete brought forward

his gifted sons, Qasim uddin and Fakhr uddin, who completed the remaining 23 *pârahs* before they themselves died.³⁸ Mawlana Naimuddin began his translation with an account of the *Shân-i-Nuzûl*. It then included the full Arabic text of it. The Bengali translation then follows in bold type. The commentaries and footnotes that follow the translation are printed in a smaller type. Father and sons use, on the whole, a lucid style.³⁹ Thus, the great tradition of *Tafsîr al-Jalâlayn* (the commentary by two *Jalâls*) established by the celebrated teacher al-Mahalli (791-864 A.H./1389-1459 C.E.), and faithfully continued by his devoted student *Jalâl al-Dîn al-Suyûtî* (849-911 A.H./1445-1505 C.E.), was carried on in Bengal by a family of a father and his two sons.

Of the thirty books known to have been published by Mawlana Naimuddin, his translation of the Holy Qur'ân is generally considered to be his masterpiece. The other publications are rather polemical, and tend to be critical of rival scholars. As a result of his unacceptable views he was imprisoned in Patna for eighteen months.⁴⁰

We next come to the Bengali work on the Qur'ân by Mawlavi Akbaruddin Dinajpuri and Al-Hajj Sufi Mianjan Kamali of Tangail district. Their works were published and printed by Munshi Samiruddin and Mir Athar Ali in 1887 and 1893 respectively.⁴¹

In Bengal there were four veteran '*ulamâ*' (Islamic scholars) and litterateurs who belonged to the *Sudhakar* group.⁴² These were Mawlavi Iad uddin Ahmad (1862-1933), Munshi Shaikh Abdul Rahim (1859-1931), Mawlavi Mu'izzuddin Ahmad (1863-1920), generally known as Madhu Miah and Mawlavi 'Ala'uddin Ahmad (1851-1915). All valiantly attempted to render into Bengali *Tafsîr-i-aqqân*, an Urdu exegesis of the Holy Qur'ân compiled by Mawlana Abd al-Haqq Haqqani (1850-1915); but these four learned translators could only succeed in completing the introductory volume and failed to finish the whole work because of the voluminous nature of the Urdu text.⁴³

The last-named scholar, 'Ala'uddin Ahmad, compiled another exegesis also under the title *Rû- al-Bayân*. This was the detailed commentary and translation of the *Sûrah al-Qadar* which was published in 1911 from Lower Circular Road, Calcutta by Hafiz Mahmud Shah.⁴⁴ A little earlier a native Christian named Philip Biswas was working on the studies of the Qur'ân in Bengali and in 1892 published *Koran*, a selection of essential passages, divided into ten chapters. This was nothing but an endeavour to establish Christianity as the true religion, and it goes without saying that it has never been popular among Muslim readers.

Mawlana Mohammad Khan's commentary on the *Sûrah al-Fâtî-ah* (literally 'the Opening') was originally published as a booklet on 17 August 1905 from Hook Lane, Calcutta.⁴⁵ Thenceforth, he continued to write and became celebrated in the history of the Freedom Movement and for the defence of Bengali as the state language. On being released from Alipur (also spelled Alipore) Central jail in 1921, he brought with him a complete manuscript of *Tafsîr 'Amm pârah (Juz' 'Amma)* which was afterwards published by his son, Khairul Anam Khan (1904-1963), from Calcutta under the title of *Kara-gharer Sawgat* (or a presentation/gift from the prison).⁴⁶

This work recalls the renowned commentaries of Imam Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328),⁴⁷ Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966),⁴⁸ Sheth Yaqub Hasan Madrasī⁴⁹ and Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958)⁵⁰, all of which were written in prison.

Mawlana Akram Khan continued to work on the Qur'ān, though on a greater scale, and the results were published in three volumes, with a detailed commentary, footnotes and annotations.⁵¹ He published another series in a more concise form,⁵² the final volume of the five being brought out by Sayyid Ja'far Ali at the Azad Press, Dhaka in 1959.⁵³ In this version the Arabic text and the Bengali translation appear in parallel columns with a brief commentary and notes at the foot of each page.

Mawlana Akram Khan embellished his translation with illuminating commentaries that make an appreciation of the Qur'ān easier, even for non-Muslims. The freshness of its approach and the purity, simplicity and the rhythmic force of the language⁵⁴ are among the qualities that have won praise from the reading public. However, there are occasional lapses, which will be discussed in detail elsewhere.⁵⁵

Wider circulation of religious literature was greatly facilitated on the introduction by Sir Charles Wilkins⁵⁶ in 1777 of printing with Bengali and Perso-Arabic type. The earliest edition of Mirza Kazim Ali Jawan's Urdu translation of the Qur'ān was printed by John Gilchrist in 1802 and 1803.

In response to the aggressive evangelisation attempts of the Christian missionaries, a few printing presses were established by Bengali Muslims. Among these, Munshi Hedayatullah was a pioneer. He was followed by Munshi 'Abdullah of Hooghly, who in 1822 founded a Press in Calcutta which printed the earliest Bengali translation of the Qur'ān. An earlier pioneer was Hajji Shariatullah (1764-1840), whose *Farā'id*TM Movement preferred to strengthen Muslims in their own beliefs rather than confront the missionaries. Yet, neither Shariatullah nor his son, Dudhu Miah, attempted a Bengali translation of the Holy Qur'ān.⁵⁷ It was left to others, to whom I now turn.

The translation by Mawlana 'Abbas Ali (1859-1932), a son of Munshi Tamyizuddin of Chandipur, Bashirhat (Twenty-four Parganas) will now be discussed. 'Abbas Ali published the *'Amm pārah* (30th part of the Qur'ān) in October 1907 at Bene Pukur, Calcutta, with a second edition appearing the following December. 'Abbas Ali then translated and published at his own expense the entire Qur'ān, which appeared in 1909 (976 pages octavo). This bilingual translation featured the Arabic text followed by the Urdu version of Shah Rafiuddin (1749-1833) and his own Bengali translation. The inner and outer margins contain short commentaries in Bengali and Urdu. Mohammad Naqibuddin Khan of Sarisa, Twenty-four Parganas, publisher of the fifth edition expressed a keen desire to bring out a sixth edition but apparently that plan did not materialise. Later on, Naqibuddin Khan himself, with the assistance of others, translated the entire Qur'ān, which was printed in Calcutta by various presses between 1938 and 1946.

Khan Bahadur Taslimuddin Ahmad (1852-1927) of Chaudanbari, Bodah, in the district of Jalpaiguri was a lawyer by profession. His *'Amm*

pârah was published by M. Riazuddin Ahmad at the Riadul Islam Press, 159 Karheya Road, Calcutta in 1908.⁵⁸ In the Preface of this book, the translator noted that his translation of the entire Qur'ân had already been completed and would appear in due course. Eventually, his version, without the original Arabic text came out in three volumes from the Oriental Printers and Publishers' Limited, Calcutta in 1922, 1923 and 1925.⁵⁹

The translations of the Reverend William Goldsack (1862-1950) began to be published in instalments in 1908 by the Calcutta Baptist Mission Press, 41 Lower Circular Road, the 30th part (*Juz' 'Ammah*) appearing in 1920. Although the last 19 *pârahs* were translated by R. W. Pettigrew, Goldsack is generally acknowledged as the translator.⁶⁰ Throughout the entire work an attempt is made to prove that the Qur'ân is a bundle of lies, distortions and concoctions. Inspired generally by prejudice and hostility, Goldsack and his missionary successors regarded the Qur'ân as the product of Muhammad's own imagination.⁶¹

Through his other treatises, including *The Qur'ân in Islam* (published in 1912 by the Madras Christian Society) and *The Traditions in Islam* (Jessore, East Bangla in 1919), Goldsack vehemently attacked the Qur'ân and —ad™th. A versified translation into Bengali of the last *pârah* was published by another non-Muslim, Kiran Gopal Singha (1885-1942) from Calcutta, in 1908, a second edition dedicated to M. Musa, appearing in 1924. In his Preface, Kiran Gopal Singha mentioned that he had already completed the verse translation of the entire Qur'ân,⁶² an assertion which the publisher confirmed in an advertisement. However, perhaps due to the want of encouragement, the work never appeared.

After this, the translation of the 30th part by Khondakar Abul Fazal 'Abdul Karim (1875-1947) along with the original Arabic text, was published for the first time from Tangail⁶³ in 1914. In the third and enlarged edition, many important footnotes and annotations were added, along with the panegyric Urdu letters of Qâri' Muhammad Tayyib⁶⁴ (b. 1898) and Sahban al-Hind Mawlana Ahmad Saeed.⁶⁵ 'Abd al-Karim was by profession a teacher of Arabic and Persian at the B. B. Secondary School at Tangail. His translation of the Qur'ân appeared in Bengali prose as well as poetry. The latter version proved so popular that a 4th edition was published in Calcutta in 1936.⁶⁶ In it, the original Arabic text was preserved alongside the Bengali translation and there were footnotes, annotations, glossaries and explanatory notes. In some of the footnotes he refers to Ibn Sabit (Thabit), which was his pseudonym (*nom de plume*).⁶⁷ The then British government recommended it as a prize book and required reading for children of all ages. It was also included in the school syllabus and this good news was published in the Calcutta Gazette.⁶⁸

Abdul Karim's translation of the Qur'ân into prose began to appear in different shapes and forms from 1914,⁶⁹ and included in it was the Urdu translation by Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanavi (1863-1943). At the beginning of every *Sûrah* (Qur'ânic chapter) a photograph of the Holy Ka'bah, the Masjid al-Nabaw™ and Masjid al-Aqṣâ were inserted onto a finely embroidered page. The translation starts with a biography of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and ends with an index of the signs of *rum=z*, *mawâqif*,⁷⁰ full

stops and other symbols indicating pauses in reading the text of the Qur'ân. In addition, an epilogue is used as the traditional prayer at the end of the text of the Qur'ân and there is also *Adhân* (or calling people to prayer), *darûd*, *thanâ'*, *al-ta-yyah* and an index of equivalence in which the translator gives the Bengali version (transliteration) of the Arabic Alphabet and accents. In some places, the footnotes emphasise the practice ('*am*) and special divine favour connected with a particular *Sûrah* (chapter).⁷¹ In another edition of the translation we find the original text in Arabic as well as the Bengali transliteration of it. All these extra features have made these particular exegeses attractive and valuable.⁷² Karim's namesake, Karim Bakhsh, wrote *Qawâ'id al-Qur'ân* (literally the methodology of the Qur'ân) or the grammar and the technique of recitation from the Holy Qur'ân, which was published from Noakhali (a district in East Bengal) in December 1915.⁷³ There was another Munshi Karim Bakhsh of Kariya, Calcutta, who partly translated the Qur'ân into Bengali, including with it the original text in both Arabic and Bengali characters. This work came out in 1916, from Jana-Nagar Road, Calcutta.

The Bengali translation and commentary of Mawlana Mohammad Ruhul Amin (1882-1945)⁷⁴ was published in instalments from February 1918 to 1930 by the Hanafi Press, Calcutta. However, Karim was an orthodox Muslim and his polemical views crept into his writings.

Fazlur Rahim Chowdhury (1896-1929) of Ullania police station Mahdiganj, in the district of Barisal became famous for his Bengali translation of the Mishkat Sharif or *Mishkat al-Ma'âb*TM— which was compiled by Shaykh Wali uddin al-Khatib al-Tabrizi. Fazlur Rahim was a son-in-law of the celebrated Eastern Bengal politician, Abul Qasim Mohammad Fazlul Haq, better known by his populist title 'Sher-e-Bangla' (literally the Tiger of Bengal), who wrote a valuable Foreword to Chowdhury's translation of the Qur'ân. In the second edition of this *Mishkat* translation, published in 1929, Fazlur Rahim announced the forthcoming publication of his Qur'ân translation, which appeared in two volumes, the first containing *Juz'* 1 to 15, and the second 16 to 20 in 1931 and 1932. Unlike the earlier translations, this version does not give the original Arabic text.⁷⁵ The Qur'ân translation of Abdul Wasiq Siddiqi (1851-1946) of Bhansulia, Bashirhat, 24 Parganas (in West Bengal), consisted of the last part ('*Amm pârah*) in one volume with original Arabic text, footnotes, glossaries and commentary.

The most celebrated national poet of Bangladesh, Qazi Nazrul Islam (1899-1976) also translated a section of the Qur'ân, that is the 30th part. This successful verse translation was brought out by Zahra Khanam at the Karim Bakhsh Brothers Press, Calcutta on 27 November 1933. Nazrul also intended to translate the other Qur'ânic parts but this never materialised. Nazrul's book contains no Arabic text but has footnotes, a historical background and glossary.

The Qur'ânic works of Mawlana Anisur Rahman Murshidabadi (1902-1978) were published in two volumes by Maqsd Ali of 5 Bagh, Usthi, Momenshahi (Mymensingh) from the Momenshahi Azad Press on 25

June 1934. Both volumes lack the original Qur'ânic text but contain much valuable Qur'ânic information.

Only the first volume of the Bengali translation by Mawlana Zulfiqar Ali (1903-1980) of Sonagachi, Feni, Noakhali, was published by Rahman and Hosain from the Chittagong Alavi Press in 1935. Probably due to the fact that the fonts used were Arabic ones, the venture was a failure.

Latterly, the Urdu Tafsîr, *Bayân al-Qur'ân* by Ashraf Ali Thanavi ((1863-1943), *Tafhîm al-Qur'ân* by Abu'l A'la Mawdudi (1903-79) and *Umm al-Qur'ân* by Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958) have been entirely translated into Bengali by Nurur Rahman, Mohammad Abdur Rahim and Akhtar Farook respectively.

Female Bengali scholars have also contributed to this literature. Among these one may mention Rani Gulbadan Begum,⁷⁶ Sultan Jahan Begum,⁷⁷ Wahidah Khanam,⁷⁸ Khadijatun Nisa,⁷⁹ and Mahmudun Nisa Begum.⁸⁰ One lady in particular, Begum Noor Mahal (1915-73), a Bengali woman from Hatim Khan, Rajshahi, Bangladesh, made a verse translation of the *'Amm pârah* which was published under the title *Qur'ân Mukub*⁸¹ from the Koh-i-Noor Electric Press, Andarqillah, Chittagong in 1940. It was dedicated to her father, Khan Bahadur Emaduddin (1875-1935), and proved so popular that several editions were published in rapid succession to meet the heavy demand.

Another verse translation by Mizanur Rahman (1897-1981) of Maricha-kandi, Banchharampur, Comilla, Bangladesh, was published by Jagadish Chandra Das from the New Crown Press, Calcutta in March 1944. The name Mawlana Mohammad Wafi of the Hajiganj, Comilla, is also worth mentioning. His one-volume work containing only the Arabic text was published by A. M. Sharfuddin Ahmad from the Islamiah Printing Press, Dhaka, in 1945. This production, which consisted of glossaries and Arabic text side by side went into four editions, was included in the school syllabus, and was approved by the D. P. I. (Director of Public Instruction) for prizes and for libraries.

The Qur'ânic works of Muhammad Shahidullah (1885-1969) were published for the first time by the Bogra (Bogura) Press in 1946. Afterwards two more editions appeared with Arabic texts. The remaining sections of the translation have remained unpublished.

Mawlana Abul Fazal Muhammad Maniruddin Anwary (1888-1942), former editor of the weekly Islamic Journal, *Saptahik Ahl-e-Hadis* (published from 1, Marquis Lane, Calcutta) hailed from the village, Ranirbandar in Dinajpur district, East Bengal (now Bangladesh). He published both a biography of Imam Ibn Taymiyah, entitled *Mujaddid-e-A'lam Imâm Ibn Taymiyah* (in 1933) and a translation and commentary on four important chapters of the Qur'ân, namely *Sûrah Âl 'Imrân* (Chapter 3: The House of 'Imran)⁸², *Sûrah al-Nisâ* (Chapter 4: Women)⁸³, *Sûrah al-Mâ'idah* (Chapter 5: The Table)⁸⁴ and the *Sûrah al-An'âm* (Chapter 6: The Cattle).⁸⁵ These writings were never published in book form, but between 1930 and 1937 were serialised in the weekly *Ahl-e-Hadis*. The same journal also published Anwary's earlier Islamic writings. (See the monthly *Ahl-e-Hadis* edited by Mawlana Mohammad Babar Ali who wrote a

commentary on *Ṣrah al-Baqarah* which appeared in the first year of the weekly *Ahl-e-Hadis*). Between 1929 and 1937, Mawlana Anwary shouldered the responsibility of editing the weekly *Ahl-e-Hadis*. As a fire-brand orator, Mawlana Anwary left a strong impression on his contemporaries, including Mawlana Akram Khan who, as a member of the governing body of the *Anjuman Ahl-e-Hadis*, Bengal and Assam, remembered him vividly. A tribute to Mawlana Anwary's work (in Bengali: *Anwarer Islami Sahitya*⁸⁶) was included in a collection of essays written by a young relative of Anwary. One of his younger contemporaries, Mawlavi Shah Muhammad (b. 1909) of Alok Dighi village, (near Hashimpur), Dinajpur, wrote a verse translation of the '*Amm p̣arah*,⁸⁷ excerpts from which were published in *Dainik Azad* (The Daily Independent) newspaper (Sunday Literary Forum) in Dhaka on 3 July 1967 (6 Sraban 1374 BE). Shah Muhammad's translation in Bengali verse of the 30th part of the Holy Qur'ān is one of the more acceptable poetic versions.

Almost all the works discussed here were undertaken and completed before India gained her independence. Since that time there has been much literary activity, a number of publication programmes, and the establishment of several new printing firms. Bengal was divided into an Eastern part (the then East Pakistan) and West Bengal (one of the states of the federation of India) in 1947. Since 1947, there have been a substantial number of Bengali translations of the Holy Qur'ān. Dissatisfaction with the literary qualities of these translations led to a growing demand for a standard Bengali version that would satisfy the highest demands of Qur'ānic scholarship and of literary excellence. A Bengali spokesman appealed to the Bangla Academy (Dhaka) in 1962 to undertake this task. The then Islamic Academy (now renamed Bangladesh Islamic Foundation) accepted the challenge and brought together a group of eminent scholars to work together on this project.⁸⁸ The result was the Qur'ān translation published in three volumes in 1967, 1971 and 1979. Yet, according to Mufakhkhar Khan, this new translation was a disappointment, falling short of the high expectations many had entertained. It was felt that the translation "lacked the clarity of some of the earlier renderings that were the work of individual scholars, and it introduced many Arabic words for which fully acceptable and adequate equivalents in Bengali already existed. In short, it failed to do justice to the richness and fullness of the Arabic text. Because of this reaction, it is reasonable to assume that individual efforts to render the meaning of the Holy Qur'ān in Bengali will continue to be made, in ever-new attempts to be faithful to its timeless message."⁸⁹

References

1. Ibn al-AthTMr, *Usd al-Ghābah*, Vol. III, Cairo 1280/1863, p. 305. Mawlana Said Akbarabadi, *Siddiq-i-Akbar*, Jama Masjid, Delhi, 1901, p. 321. Habibur Rahman Khan Sherwani, *STMrat-i-IddTMqTM*, Delhi (?) 1334/1916, p. 20.
2. *Al-Qur'ān al-KarTMm*, *Ṣrah Ḥad* (Chapter 11: Verse 47).

3. Muhammad Hamidullah (ed.), *Îlâh Hammâm ibn Munabbih*, Hyderabad, Deccan, India, 1961, (Introduction), pp. 19-20. See also Mawlavi Abdul Haq's article in *Khâtun-i-Pâkistân* (monthly), Karachi, 1955, p. 285.
4. Reference to an unpublished paper read by N. A. Baloch at the Second International Congress on the Qur'ân held in New Delhi, December 1962.
5. J. D. Pearson, *Al-Kuran*. (Translation of the Qur'ân), Section v, pp. 429-32.
6. Chapter 36, Verse 78: "He makes something up to be compared with us and forgets how he was created". (cf T. B. Irving's *Translation of the Noble Qur'ân*, Amana Books, 1992, p. 445).
7. *Ta'rîkh al-Sindh*, Vol. I, Azamgarh, India, pp. 115-7. Mufakhkhar Hussain Khan, "A History of Bengali Translations of the Holy Qur'ân," *The Muslim World*, Vol. LXXII, No. 2, April 1982, pp. 129-36.
8. Zubaid Ahmad, *Indo-Pak Contribution to Arabic Literature*, Lahore, 1938, p. 39.
9. Zeki Velidi Togan (d. 1970), "The Earliest Translation of the Qur'ân into Turkish," *Islam Tor Kikici Enst. Dergisi*, Vol. IV, 1964, pp. 1-19; (Zeki Velidi Togan: Obituary. See *Asian Affairs: Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, Vol. 58, part 1, February 1971, p. 56); J. K. Berge, "Turkish Translation of the Koran," *The Muslim World*, Vol. XVIII, 1938, pp. 394-9.
10. Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Quran. An Explanatory Translation*, Accurate Printers, Lahore, n.d., (see 'Translator's Foreword'), p. vii.
11. Muhammad Asad, "Why Translation of the Qur'ân Fails to Convey the Beauty of the Original: Peculiarities of Arabic—its Own Prerequisites of a Qualified Translator", *The Islamic Review*, Woking, London, June 1966, pp. 5-8.
12. Khalifah Ishaq al-Sharif, "Can the Qur'ân be translated?" in *The Muslim World League Journal* (Journal of the Rabi'at al-'Âlam al-IslâmTM), Makkah, Saudi Arabia, Vol. vii, No. 5, March 1980.
13. Muhammad Mujibur Rahman, "Taslimuddin in the field of Bengali Islamic Literature" (in Bengali: *Islami Sahitya Charchay Taslimuddin*), Dhaka, Bangladesh, May 1982, pp. 14-20. See also the "Preaching of the Qur'ân Monthly" (in Bengali: *Masik Quran Pracha*), Calcutta, India, Baisakh 1379 Bengali Era (henceforth shortened as B.E.)/1972 C.E., Volume xxiv, No. 7, p. 162.
14. This means a mixed diction in Bengali which sprang from a mixture of two cultures—Muslim and Hindu. For an explanation of the term, see Kazi Abdul Mannan, "Preface", *The Emergence and Development of Dobhashi Literature*, Dhaka, 1966, p. iii.
15. Nurul Islam Khan (ed.), *Bangladesh District Gazetteers*, Rangpur (Printed by the Government Press, Dhaka 1977), p. 143; Matiur Rahman Basunia, "Introduction to Rangpur" (in Bengali: *Rangpur Parichiti*), Rangpur, 1970, pp. 27-29 and his essay "A Muslim Writer from Rangpur" (in Bengali: *Rangpur Muslim Sahityik*), *Monthly Sawgat*, Vol. 48, part 11, Falgun 1371 B.E.); "Journal of the Rangpur Literary Society" (in Bengali: *Rangpur Sahitya Parishad Patrika*, Vol. 1 (first year), 1908, p. 158.
16. Kavi (poet) Gholam Akbar Ali, "Translation of the Juz' 'Ammâ" (in Bengali: *Tarjama Amm Sipara*) (30th part of the Qur'ân), (Parts 1 and 2 with Introduction).
17. The Qur'ân is divided into 30 parts, known as *pârah* in Urdu and *juz'* in Arabic.
18. Blumhardt, J. F., *Catalogue of the Library of the India Office*, London, 1891, Vol. 1, part II, page iii.
19. *Bengal Library Catalogue of Books*, Calcutta, 1879, Second Quarter.
20. *N.B.* The addition of the brackets was done by the contributor.
21. See M. Mujibur Rahman, *Bangla Akademi Patrika* (Journal of the Bangla Academy), Dhaka, Third Quarter, July-September 1971, pp. 66-7; Abdul Qadir, in *Islamic Academy Journal*, Dhaka, April-June pp. 116-7; M. Mujibur Rahman,

- Bangla Bhashay Qur'ân Charcha* (in Bengali) (The Studies of the Qur'ân in Bengali Language), Islamic Foundation Press, Dhaka, 1968; Mufakhkhar Hussain Khan, "A History of Translations of the Qur'ân", *The Muslim World*, Hartford, Connecticut, USA, 1982, Vol. 62, part 22, pp. 129-36.
22. Keshab Chandra Sen was the leader of the Naba-bidhan faction of the Brahmins, which was founded by Ram Mohan Ray (1772-1833). See P. C. Majumdar, *The Life and Teaching of Keshab Chandra Sen*, Calcutta, 1801, pp. 30, 33.
 23. *Bengal Library Catalogue*, 1882, Serial Numbers 759-60, pp. 2-3.
 24. Mohammad Akram Khan who was recognised as a Mawlana (Islamic scholar) was a prolific writer. He was acknowledged as the father of Muslim journalism in Bengal. Of his contemporaries, Aftabuddin was an inhabitant of Qadirpur, Jessore; Ahmadullah was the Arabic Senior Scholar in Arabic at the Calcutta 'Aliyah Madrasah (Higher College) and Alimuddin, an inhabitant of Nalgola, Dhaka, and the revered Arabic and Persian teacher of Girish Sen.
 25. These were inserted in the concluding section of the book. The letters in Bengali were published in full. The English letter was published along with its Bengali translation. But as there was no Persian type in the press, the Persian letter was first rendered into Bengali and then inserted in the book. These letters were also published in the contemporary Bengali journals.
 26. It was perhaps a custom at that time not to publish the name of the author or the contributor, as we can see in the other books of the latter period.
 27. Bhai Girish Sen, *Koran Sharif*, Haraf Prakashani, Calcutta, 1979, 6th Edition, p. 684.
 28. *Bengal Library Catalogue*, Calcutta, 1882, Second quarter, S. No. 813, pp. 4-5.
 29. In his footnotes and annotations, he expressed many wrong ideas according to his Brahmo beliefs (for instance, footnote of the 7th *ayah* (verse) of the *Sûrah Humaza*). In the weekly newsletter, *Ahl-e-Hadis* there was published an article under the caption "The Errors of Girish Babu's Qur'ân Translation" written by Mawlana Mohammad Israel, a veteran teacher from Hooghly Baramba Madrasah (See *Ahl-e-Hadis*, Calcutta, October 1929, (second year), pp. 9-10). In it the contributor made an assessment and critical survey of Girish Sen's translation.
 30. Girish Sen, *Koran Sharif*, Vol. iii, (concluding portion), p. 1198.
 31. *ibid.*
 32. Idris Ali, "Islam Tatta" (Islamology), *Mah-e-Nao* (monthly literary Journal in Bengali), Dhaka, 1954 (June), p. 46. Qazi Abdul Mannan, *Muslim Contribution to Modern Bengali Literature*, (in Bengali: *Adhunik Bangla Sahitye Muslim Sadhana*), Dhaka, 1969 (second edition), p. 24.
 33. See last stanza of the letter published at the end of Girish Sen's translation (sixth edition), Haraf Prakashani, Calcutta, 1979, p. 684.
 34. See Introduction to the *Bengali translation* (Vol. i, 4th edition) by Mawlana Akram Khan.
 35. Ata Karim Barq in *Indo-Iranica* (Silver Jubilee Number), Calcutta, March-June 1970, Vol. 23, pp. 1-5. See also Raul Peter Das, review of Mujibur Rahman's "Bangla Bhasay Qur'ân Charcha", *Der Islam*, Berlin, Vol. 59, No. 1, 1982, pp. 122-24.
 36. See *Banga Mihir* (Asharh 1280 B.E./1873 C.E.), p. 99. See also the *Bengal Museum Catalogue*, (December 1883), with reference to a manuscript compiled by Ali Ahmad of Madhubagh, Dhaka.
 37. Mannan, Q. A., *loc.cit.*, p. 216. See also Khondakar Abdur Rahim, *A History of Tangail* (in Bengali: *Tangailer Itihas*), first edition, Tangail, 1977, p. 388. M. A. Razzaq, "A Catalogue of Islamic Books in Bengali" (in Bengali: *Bangla Bhasay Islamic Pustaker Talika*), Dhaka, 1977, 1st edition, p. 100. Ali Ahmad, *Arafat* (weekly), (special Qur'ân supplement), Dhaka, East Pakistan, February, 1968,

- p. 57. Mujibur Rahman, *Bangla Bhasay Qur'ân Charcha* (*loc. cit.*), Dhaka, 1986, pp. 59-68.
38. *Bengal Library Catalogue*, Second quarter 1909; Abdul Ghafat Siqqidi, in *Masik Muhammadi* (Sraban 1362 B.E./1955 C.E.), p. 614.
 39. A review of Mir Athar Ali's translation and commentary was published in the monthly *Islam Prachar* ("The Preaching of Islam"), (Kartik 1298 B.E./1881 C.E.), p. 100. See also the inner title page of the 13th *pârah* of the Qur'ân, where a detailed discussion regarding this commentary can be seen. All the volumes of Naimuddin's Bengali commentary are available in the Qur'ân Class Library, Chapai Nawabganj, Rajshahi. I had the opportunity of going through them, thanks to the kind co-operation of Ghulam Murshid Mukhtar.
 40. Munshi Shaikh Jamiruddin and M. Naimuddin, *Islam Pracharak* (monthly), Calcutta, 1901, September and October issues. See also Anisuddin, "Muslim Genius and the Bengali Literature" (in Bengali: *Muslim Manash O Bangla Sahitya*), Bangladesh Publishers, Dhaka, 1964, p. 230; Abdul Qadir, *Akhbar-i-Islami O Bangla Unnayan Board Patrika* (Islamic News and Bengali Development Board Journal), Dhaka, 1357 B.E./1950 C.E., pp. 157-58; Abdus Samad Sarim Ambari, *Ta'rîkh al-Qur'ân*, Nuqush Press, Lahore, 1963, p. 144. Principal Ibraim Khan, "Mawlawi Naimuddin", *Mah-e-Nao*, Dhaka, Chaitra Issue, (1365 B.E./1958 C.E.). See also, Muhammad Mansuruddin's article "Mohammad Naimuddin", *Dilruba* (monthly), (Jaishtha, 1360 B.E./1953 C.E.). Q. A. Mannan, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-6. Mymensingh District Board, "The Muslim Contribution to the Literature and Culture of Mymensingh" (in Bengali: *Maymansinger Sahitya Sanskriti: Muslim Sadhana*), Mymensingh, 1918, p. 421.
 41. *Bengal Library Catalogue of Books*, (1889), third quarter. See also *Maymensinger Sahitya O Sanskriti*, p. 423.
 42. M. Idris Ali, "The Significance of Islam" (in Bengali: "Islam Tatta"), in *Mah-e-Nao*, June 1954, p. 45; Khondkar Sirajul Haq, on Shaikh Abdur Rahim, in *Sahityiki* (A literary Journal), Rajshahi University, 1972, pp. 9-10; Brajendra Nath Bandopadhyay, "Occasional Papers in Bengali" (in Bengali: *Bangla Samoyik Patra*), Calcutta, 1952, Vol. II, p. 57.
 43. M. Idris Ali, On 'Mohammad Riazuddin Ahmad', Dhaka, 1956, pp. 34-5; Q. A. Mannan, *loc. cit.*, p. 234.
 44. *Bengal Library Catalogue*, Calcutta, 1913, second Quarter.
 45. *ibid.*
 46. Mohd. Abdur Raman, *The Genius of Mawlana Akram Khan* (in Bengali: 'Manishi Mawlana Akram Khan'), Calcutta, August 1980, 1st edition, pp. 35-6.
 47. The title of this Tafsîr is *al-Ba-r al-Mu-îf*, which was written in Damascus prison in forty volumes (See Ibn Battutah, *Ri-lah*, Vol. i, 1216 A.H./1801 C.E.; (for an English translation see H. A. R. Gibb, *Travels in Asia and Africa*, p. 67); for a study of Ibn Taymiyah's life and work, see Sirajul Haque, *Imam Ibn Taymiyah and his Projects of Reform*, Dhaka, 1982, pp. 16-9. This work was also translated into Bengali by M. Mujibur Rahman and published by the Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
 48. See his monumental commentary, *Fîrîl al-Qur'ân*, which was begun in 1954 before the author's imprisonment and was finished in prison (See Yusuf al-A'zam, *Al-Shahîd Sayyid Qutb*, pp. 27-30, 35).
 49. In prison, Yaqub Madrasi collected several Qur'ânic verses and published them with an Urdu translation entitled, *Kitâbul Hudâ* in 1928 at the Khilafat Press, Bombay. Its Introduction entitled *Kashf al-Hudâ* (literally, 'uncovering of guidance') was published in Madras. See *Sayyara Digest* (Urdu), Special Supplement on al-Qur'ân, 1970, p. 933. There were other works like this. We have cited a few examples here.

50. The title of Mawlana Azad's TafsTMr is *Tarjamân al-Qur'ân*, which is to be completed by Ghulam Rasul Mihr of Lahore. Its introductory volume, *Ummul Qur'ân*, was rendered into English by S. A. Latif and published by Asia Publishing House, Bombay. A Bengali version by Akhtar Farook was published by the Bangla Academy, Dhaka, in June 1966.
51. See Bengal Library Catalogue (*loc. cit.*), *Masik Muhammadi*, Vol. 6, No 3, 1955 (Paush 1339 B.E.) and Vol. 12 No. 4, (Magh 1345 B.E.).
52. Muhammad Mudabbir, *Sangbadiker Roznamcha* ('Daily diary of a journalist') Dhaka, September 1977, p. 244.
53. Shamsuddin, A. K., *Atit Diner Smriti* (Memoirs of Olden Days), Dhaka, Nawruz Kitabistan, 1968, p. 354. See also Shamsul Haq, *Bangla Sahitya Grantha-Panji* (Bengali Literature Catalogue), 1947-59, Pakistan National Book Centre, Dhaka, p. 195.
54. Mansuruddin Ahmad (*Bangla Sahitye Muslim Sadhana* (Muslim Contribution to Bengali Literature), Vol. II, 1964, pp. 61-2.
55. Moulana A. Sattar, "Distortion of Truth in the Name of Commentary" (in Bengali: *Tafsirer Name Satyer Apalap*), first edition, pp. 6, 9, 12, 14. Moulana Azizul Haq, "Wrong Explanation of the Holy Qur'ân" (in Bengali: *Pabitra Quraner Apa-Bakhkha*), first edition, pp. 7, 10, 13, 19.
56. M. Enamul Haq, "Islam in East Pakistan" (Bengali title: *Purba Pakistane Islam*), Dhaka, 1948, pp. 144-50. Mufakhkhar Hussain Khan, "History of Printing in Bengali Characters up to 1866" (Ph.D. Dissertation at University of London), 1976. See also M. Mujibur Rahman, *Bangla Bhasay Qur'ân Charcha* ("Qur'anic Studies in Bengali Language"), Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, 1986, pp. 84-91.
57. M. Mujibur Rahman, "SarjamTMn-i BanglâdTMsh mein Islâm kâ chand jhalkiyân", *JarTMda-i-Tarjamân* (Fortnightly Bulletin), Jame Masjid Delhi, India, 16 August 1989, pp. 7-8.
58. *Bengal Library Catalogue* (Second Quarter), 1908.
59. Jangindra Nath Samaddar and Rakhal Raj Ray (ed.), *Sahitya Panjika*, Calcutta, 1915, p. 104; Ashraf Siddiqi, Taslimuddin (in *Masik Muhammadi*, Dhaka, 1955, p. 133; Motahar Husain Sufi, *Taslimuddin Ahmad*, (publisher: Bengali Development Board Journal (*Patrika*), Vol. 2, No. 1, Falgun-Chaitra 1377 B.E., p. 138; Mansuruddin Ahmad, *op. cit.*, Vol. ii, Dhaka, 1964, p. 107; M. Mujibur Rahman, *Islami Sahitya Charchay Taslimuddin*, ("Taslimuddin's contribution to Bengali Literature"), Bangladesh Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, 1982, pp. 12-3, 16.
60. Muhammad Abdullah Minhas, *Qur'ân MajTMd kTM tarâjem* ("Translations of the Holy Qur'ân") *Urdu Sayyara Digest*, Vol. 2, Lahore, 1969, p. 637.
61. Maulana Yad Ali, *Masik Shariat-i-Islam*, Vol. i, No. 1, 1332 B.E./1925 C.E., ii. *Bengal Library Catalogue of Books*, 1907 (first quarter), and 1914 (4th quarter). (For a facsimile page of this translation, see S. Zwemer, "Translations of the Qur'ân", in *The Muslim World*, Vol. 5, 1915, pp. 254-5.
62. *Masik Madinah* (Madinah monthly), The Qur'ân Supplement, Dhaka, February-March, 1968, p. 292.
63. M. M. Rahman, A. F. Abdul Karim, (essay), *Masik Qur'ân Prachar*, (monthly) Vol. 24, No. 7, Calcutta, Baisakh, 1379 Indian Calendar Year/1972 C.E., pp. 162-4. See also *Arafat*, Dhaka, East Pakistan, 3 Baisakh 1370 B.E./1963 C.E.
64. Qari Mohammad Ayyub was the Director (Superintendent) of Dâr al-'Ulûm Madrasah, Deoband, India.
65. Ahmad Saeed's Urdu translation and commentary on the Qur'ân which had an unusually long title, *"Kashf al-Ra-mân wa taysTMr al-Qur'ân wa tashTMl al-bayân"* was published from the DTMnTM (Religious) Book Depot, Urdu Bazar, Delhi, in 1952. His other notable work (may be even a masterpiece) called *Fâti-at al-Kitâb* (Opening Chapter of the Book), in which he interpreted only

- those words or verses of the Qur'ân which occurred in *Ṣ̣rat al-Fâtî-ah* (See *Urdu Sayyara Digest*), Special Qur'ân Supplement (*op. cit.*), p. 910.
66. A. F. Abdul Karim, *Yusuf-jeer Sangkhipta Jibonee* (A Short Biography of Yusuf, 1864-1924), Calcutta, 1937, Introduction, p. 7. See also A. F. A. Karim's *Padyanubad Amm parah Abtaranika*, ("Verse Translation of the 30th part of the Qur'ân: an Introduction"), Calcutta, 1936.
 67. An oral information from A. F. A. Karim's son, K. N. Islam, Green Road, Dhaka, East Bengal. M. M. Rahman's article in *Masik Qur'ân Prachar*, and A. F. A. Karim's article in the same journal, Vol. 24, No. 7, 1379 B.E./1972 C.E.
 68. *Education Gazette*, Calcutta, 1324 B.E./1917 C.E. See also Sri Jagindra Nath Samaddar *et al.*, *Sahitya Panjika*, Calcutta, 1322 B.E./1915 C.E., p. 96.
 69. *Bengal Library Catalogue*, (second and third quarters), 1929-30.
 70. Abul Fazl Abdul Karim, *loc. cit.*, (*Padyanubad Amm Parah*). See introductory sentences and the inner title page at the end.
 71. *ibid.*, p. 42.
 72. *Bengal Library Catalogue*, second and third quarter, 1938-9.
 73. *Masik Muhammadi* (Book review), Vol. 11, No. 11, Bhadra 1345 B.E./1938 C.E., p. 793.
 74. Moezzuddin Hamidi, *Karmabir Mowlana Ruhul Amin* (biography), p. 103; A. G. M. Shahidul Islam, Mowlana Ruhul Amin (essay), *Calcutta Madrasah Magazine*, Calcutta, 1975, pp. 4-7.
 75. Maulavi Muzaffar Ahmad, *Ullaniya Khayry*, pp. 31-37; *Masik* (monthly) *al-Islam*, No. 8, 1915; *Masik Sawgat* (monthly), 1326 B.E./1919 C.E., pp. 180-5.
 76. Gulbadan's *Tafsir-i-Yusuf* was first published continuously in the *Oriental Gazette Magazine*, the Punjab University, Lahore, 1933, pp. 95-9. Then it was published in a book form; now it is held in the private library of Mr. Shirwani. See *Urdu Sayyara Digest*, Special Qur'ân Supplement, Vol. 11, 1969, p. 937. See also the late Dr. Abdul Haq's *Qâmus al-Kutub* (Urdu), Karachi, Pakistan, Vol. 1, p. 49.
 77. She was the Queen of the Bhopal State. Her *Madârij al-Qur'ân* was published from Bhopal in 1935. (See Mowlana Abdul Haq, *Qâmus al-Kutub* (Urdu), Vol. 1, p. 115.
 78. Wahidah hailed from Bombay and has published much Qur'ânic literature in Urdu. Her books include *Masâ'il al-Qur'ân*, *Maṭâlib al-Qur'ân*, *Fawâ'id al-Qur'ân*, *TarsTM al-Qur'ân* and *Asas al-Qur'ân*. All these were published from Bangalore City, Bombay Bazar. See A. Haq, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
 79. She hailed from Singapore and contributed a number of valuable articles on different aspects of the Holy Qur'ân to learned journals of the Indian subcontinent. See *Khât-n-i-Pākistân*, (Pakistani Women), Vol. 1, Special Qur'ân Issue, Karachi, 1965, p. 193.
 80. She rendered the holy Qur'ân into Urdu and published from Lahore. See *Sayyara Digest*, (Urdu), the Qur'ân issue, p. 950.
 81. See M. Mujibur Rahman, *Masik Nida-i-Islam*, Calcutta, 1973, p. 72. Begam Noor Mahal, *Qur'ân Mukul*, 'Introduction'. Her husband, Akbar Ali is also a Qur'ânic scholar who published a book entitled 'The Science of the Qur'ân', from Zico Press, Lakhshi Bazar, Dhaka, 1972. See M. M. Rahman, *Bangla Bhasay Qur'ân Charcha*, pp. 440-4.
 82. Mawlana Mohammad Muniruddin Anwary (ed.), *Ahl-e-Hadis*, Vol. 3, No. 11, 13 Ramadan 1348/ March-April 1930, *Ṣ̣rah Al 'Imrân*, Verse 72; *Ahl-e-Hadis*, Vol. 4, Nos. 11, 12 March 1931, pp. 5-6. *Ahl-e-Hadis*, Vol. 5, Nos. 3, 5, Ramadan: 1350 A.H./14 January 1934 C.E., p. 6. Also *Ahl-e-Hadis*, Calcutta, Vol. 2, No. 43, 24 October 1929, p. 6.
 83. Mawlana Anwary (ed.), *Ahl-e-Hadis* (weekly), Calcutta, Vol. V, No. 31, 15 September 1932, (*Ṣ̣rah al-Nisâ'*, Verse 6); *Ahl-e-Hadis*, Vol. VI: No. 2, 16 February 1933); *Ahl-e-Hadis*, Vol. VI, No. 31, 15 September 1932; *Ahl-e-Hadis*,

- Vol. vi, No. 3, 23 February 1933, (*Ṣrah al-Nisāʾ*: Verse 34), p. 9. (*ibid.*, Vol. VI, No. 5, (9 March 1933); *Ahl-e-Hadis*, Vol. VI, No. 34, 19 October 1933, p. 6.
84. *Ahl-e-Hadis*, Calcutta, Vol. VII, No. 39, (*al-Qurʾān: Ṣrah Māʾidah* Verse 1, 11 Paush 1341 B.E./19 Ramadan 1353 A.H./27 December 1934 C.E., p. 6; *Ahl-e-Hadis*, No. 47, (8 Dhuʾl—ijjah 1353 A.H./14 March 1935 C.E.), p. 6. *ibid.*, Vol. VII, No. 48, 22 Dhuʾl—ijjah 1353 A.H./28 March 1935 C.E., p. 6; *ibid.*, Vol. vii, No. 44 (16 Dhuʾl-Qaʾdah 1353 A.H./21 February 1935 C.E., p. 6; *Ahl-e-Hadis*, Vol. vii, No. 46, 7 March 1935, p. 6.
85. Mawlana Muniruddin Anwary (ed.), *Ahl-e-Hadis*, Calcutta, Vol. IX, No. 35, (13 May 1937), (*Ṣrah al-Anʾām*: Verse 7), p. 6. *Ahl-e-Hadis*, Vol. IX, No. 36, 20 May 1937, p. 6.
86. See an unpublished biography of Mawlana Anwary in Bengali, *Muniruddin Anwary: Ekti Bismrita Jiban* ("Muniruddin Anwary: A Forgotten Life") written in the 1960s by M. A. Jabbar Beg. A brief account of Mawlana Anwary's life was published in Muhammad Abdul Jabbar Beg's anthology of Essays in Bengali: "Anwarir Islami Sahitya" in the book *Jiban, Samaj, Islam* ("Human Life, Society and Islam", Islamiyah Library, Dhaka, November 1967), pp. 68-80.
87. Abdul Jabbar Beg, "Mawlavi Shah Muhammader Rachanabali" (Writings of Mawlavi Shah Muhammad), *Sunday Supplement (Rabibarar Majlis)* in the *Daily Azad*, Dhaka, East Pakistan, 5 Sraban 1374 B.E./3 July 1967 C.E., p. 13.
88. Abdul Qadir (poet), "Qurʾān Majider Bangla Anubad" ("Bengali Translation of the Holy Qurʾān"), in *Islamik Akademi Patrika* (Journal of the Islamic Academy), Dhaka, East Pakistan, 1962, pp. 131-2.
89. Cf. Mofakkhkar Hussain Khan, "A History of Bengali Translations of the Holy Qurʾān", *The Muslim World*, Vol. LXXII, No. 2, April 1982, Hartford Seminary, Hartford, Connecticut, USA, p. 136. See also Mofakkhkar Hussain Khan, *Pobitra Quran Pracharer Itihas, Banganubader Shatobarsho*, Bangla Academy, Dhaka, Falgun 1403 B.E./February 1997 C.E., 340 pp. This is a critical study of the translation of the Qurʾān in the Bengali language. There are several critical references in this book to the research of Muhammad Mujibur Rahman; see pp. 25-26, 28-29, 31, 41, 60, 62-64, 71, 73, 82-83, 96, 103, 141, 283.