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THE FREEDOM OF INTELLECT MOVEMENT
(BUDDHIR MUKTI ANDOLAN)
IN BENGALI MUSLIM THOUGHT, 1926-38

by

Shahadat H. Khan

**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Centre for South Asian Studies
University of Toronto**

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DEDICATION

To the loving memory of my deceased parents,
Muzaffar Hussain Khan and Asiya Khan,
and of their gifted son, my brother,
Commonwealth Scholar Anwar Hussain Khan,
whose doctoral research on Buddhism
at the University of Toronto
was cut short by cancer in 1965.
Peace be upon them.

**THE FREEDOM OF INTELLECT MOVEMENT (*Buddhir Mukti Andolan*)
IN BENGALI MUSLIM THOUGHT, 1926-38**

Shahadat H. Khan

**Centre for South Asian Studies
University of Toronto, Ph.D. 1997**

Abstract

The subject of this dissertation is the origin and evolution of a rational humanist movement by a group of Bengali-speaking and Bengali-writing Muslim intelligentsia in the 1920s and 1930s. The motto of this movement was: *Jnan jekhane simabaddha, buddhi sekhane arashta, mukti sekhane asambhab* or "Where knowledge is restricted, there the intellect is inert, there freedom is impossible." This motto is examined in this dissertation primarily in the thought of two Bengali Muslim intellectuals in several ways: a) an examination of the rational humanist Muslims' ideals of unfettered freedom, intellect and creativity, that were inspired especially by two distinguished Bengali sources, Raja Rammohun Roy and Rabindranath Tagore; b) examination of the rational humanist Muslims' application of the ideal of unfettered freedom in the origin, structure, composition and deliberations of an organization, the Muslim Sahitya Samaj or Muslim Literary Society of Dhaka and the publication of their Bengali journal, *Shikha*; c) rational humanist Muslims' application of their ideals to understanding certain doctrines and practices of Islam in Bengali Muslim society; d) their application of these ideals to understanding British rule in India and Indian nationalism.

Chapter One examines English language scholarship on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Muslim modernism on north India and Pakistan, and Bengali- and English-language scholarship on the intellectual history of Bengali Muslims. Chapter

Two examines the prime movers of the freedom of intellect movement, with life sketches of its leader, Kazi Abdul Wadud, and his associate, Abul Hussain, and the intellectual orientation of and influences upon Kazi Abdul Wadud. Chapter Three describes the origin, composition, structure and objectives of Muslim Sahitya Samaj. Chapter Four describes the rational humanists' interpretation and evaluation of some Islamic doctrines, practices, trends, debates in the deliberations of Muslim Sahitya Samaj at Dhaka. Chapter Five describes, *srishti dharma* or 'religion of creativity' that Wadud proposed for accommodation of Muslims with Hindus in India. Chapter Six concludes the thesis and points to possible continuing influence of *buddhir mukti* ideals among Muslims in Bengal.

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In writing this thesis, I have incurred debts of gratitude to many persons and several institutions. My foremost debt is to my thesis supervisor, Joseph T. O'Connell. I wish to express my appreciation for his strict, but extremely helpful, guidance for organization and methodology of the thesis. Also I wish to express my respect for his knowledge of Bengali language and literature, thanks to which he could help me with many difficult passages. He was very generous with his time and attention despite his other demanding commitments. Likewise, Kathleen M. O'Connell shared her understanding of Rabindranath Tagore and Bengal Renaissance figures and offered valuable suggestions throughout the writing of the thesis.

I am also obliged to Milton Israel and Narendra K. Wagle, whose fine analytical and empirical teaching on Muslims of upper India prepared the theoretical background against which I could distinguish the view of nationalism put forward by the rational humanists among the Muslims of Bengal. I am especially grateful to Professor Israel for his successful efforts to secure fellowship and bursary support from the University of Toronto when my family and I were most severely in need of such support. I gratefully acknowledge that financial support from the School of Graduate Studies, University of Toronto.

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For very helpful discussion and advice on my thesis project, thanks are due to Rafiuddin Ahmed and Shelly Feldman of Cornell University, William van Schendel of

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During my year of overseas research, concentrated in London, Calcutta and Dhaka, many individuals and several research facilities provided assistance. I am especially thankful to the British Library and the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, the National Library in Calcutta, the Bangla Academy, Dhaka University Library and Chittagong University Library in Bangladesh. Special thanks are due to Enayet Akbar, Kazi Abdul Wadud's grandson, who gave me access to Kazi Abdul Wadud's private collection, and to Mrs. Umratul Fazal and her two sons, Abul Momen and Abul Mansur, who gave me access to Abul Fazal's collection. I am also obliged to many relatives of stalwarts of the *buddhir mukti* movement, who granted me extensive interviews. I should mention here, however, that I alone, not those whom I interviewed, am responsible for the interpretations of the ideas and actions of those stalwarts given in this thesis. My brothers, Musharaf Hussain Khan and Delwar Hussain Khan, and sisters-in-law, Joyce Williams and Sultana Khan, facilitated my stays in London and Dhaka, for which I am most grateful.

To my loving wife, Dilara, it would be impossible to give back the years of patience, hardship and solitude which allowed me to concentrate on my thesis research. But I can and do express my gratitude and affection. Likewise, I am also thankful to my little son, Safwan, who used to ask, "Which chapter are you writing now, Dad?", and to my daughter, Shaharin, who has waited so long for the completion of this thesis. Now it is finished and we can share the satisfaction.

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

This thesis uses a simplified scheme for transliteration from Bengali to English. No diacritical marks have been used. The equivalency chart (adapted from the ALA-LC Romanization Tables) given below has been followed generally, with the exceptions noted in the next paragraph. Though certain closely related Bengali characters may be represented by the same roman character--and in some cases the same Bengali character (reflecting different sounds) may be represented by more than one roman character--it is expected that readers knowing Bengali will have little difficulty in recognizing the original through the transliterated version.

The main exceptions to following the equivalency chart are as follow. Proper names may be rendered in the roman form commonly used by or for the person, institution or publication concerned when written in English language contexts. Words that have become virtually English language words (whether recognized as such yet by major dictionaries, and whether so treated only in India and Bangladesh or worldwide) may appear in a commonly found "English" spelling.

The semivowel transliterated as "b" when so pronounced in Bengali is transliterated as "v" (or "w") when, in conjunction with certain consonants, it loses its own sound in favor of lengthening the sound of the preceding consonant.

The short "a" (which ordinarily is assumed to follow a consonant in the absence of any other sign) is written as "a", regardless of variations in Bengali pronunciation, where it is actually sounded in spoken Bengali, but is omitted where it is not sounded.

For any ambiguities, inconsistencies or lapses in transliteration that may remain in the thesis, the author requests the indulgence of the reader. He is not a linguist but an

historian who has concentrated his efforts on presenting to readers of English as much as he could of important, but hitherto neglected, Bengali sources.

BENGALI-ROMAN EQUIVALENCY CHART

Vowels and Diphthongs

অ	a	ই	i
আ	a	ঈ	ee
এ	e	ঐ	ai
ঊ	u	ঔ	ou
ঋ	u		
ৠ	r		

Consonants

Gutterals

ক	ka
খ	kha
গ	ga
ঘ	gha
ঙ	na

Palatals

চ	ca
ছ	cha
জ	ja
ঝ	jha
ঞ	na

Cerebrals

ট	ta
ঠ	tha
ড	da
ড়	ra
ঢ	dha
ঢ়	rha
ণ	na

Dentals

ত	ta
থ	ta
দ	tha
ধ	da
ঢ	dha
ঢ়	na

Labials

প	pa
ফ	pha
ব	ba
ভ	bha
ম	ma

Semivowels

য	ja
র	ya
ল	ra
শ	la
ষ	ba

Sibilants

শ	sha
ষ	sha
স	sa

Aspirate

হ	ha
---	----

Anusvāra

ং m

Bisarga

ঃ h

Candrabindu (anunāsika)

ঁ m

Abagraha

’
(apostrophe)

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Chapter One

Introduction

I. "Classic" Academic Views of South Asian Muslim Modernists.

There have been organized movements of modern thought including a radical movement of rational humanism, among Bengali-speaking and Bengali-writing Muslim intellectuals (hereafter referred to as Bengali Muslims). Nevertheless, Bengali Muslim intellectuals are largely unknown and neglected in Western scholarship on Islamic or Muslim modernism in India or South Asia. This dissertation attempts to correct in part this lapse of scholarship on the Bengali Muslim intellectuals.

A good starting point to see this lapse, is provided by three pioneering works on Muslim modernism: H.A.R. Gibb's, *Modern Trends in Islam* (1945); W.C. Smith's, *Islam in Modern History* (1957); and Aziz Ahmad's, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan, 1857-1964* (1967). These scholars are highly respected for the excellence of their works. They spent years of painstaking research and used rich local sources for an understanding of Islam and the Muslims. Our concern, however, is to see how far these works are representative of Muslim modernism in India or South Asia as a whole including Bengal. Gibb's and Smith's works, mentioned above, are not written exclusively on Indian Islam, but do include Indian Islam. Aziz Ahmad's work, on the other hand, was exclusively written on Indian and Pakistani Muslim modernists.

What we see in the three works is similar, almost a continuity. The Muslim modernists of India whom they examined are all Urdu-speaking Muslim intellectuals. They were selected from north India and mainly from two provinces: Punjab and Uttar Pradesh (United Province). From Bengal, it was only Urdu-speaking Muslims, some of whom, like Sayyid Amir Ali wrote a lot in English, who were selected. This means that the high cultural tradition of a few selected Urdu-speaking intellectuals was again and again being focused upon. According to the 1941 Census of India, out of the total

population of Uttar Pradesh only 15.3 per cent were Muslims. Out of the total population of Punjab 57.1 were Muslims and out of the total population of Bengal 54.7 were Muslims.¹ An emergent group of educated and articulate Bengali-speaking and Bengali-writing Muslim intellectuals was visible in Bengal during the first half of the twentieth century and they published a great deal. Yet they remained virtually unknown to these distinguished authors. Gibb was, however, aware that there may be a danger of overgeneralization of modernism of Muslims:

At present, therefore, one cannot hope to avoid the dangers and errors implicit in the attempt to generalize on the basis of a limited experience. No single person can possibly compass in his own direct knowledge all the varieties of faith and practice in the length and breadth of the Muslim world or think to enter into the minds of Berbers, Arabs, Turks, Persians, Afghans, Punjabis, and Bengalis, not to speak of Malays, Javanese, and the Negro peoples of East and West Africa.²

Aziz Ahmad, possibly, knew of this danger in trying to understand the Muslim mind over such a vast geographical area. Ahmad, therefore, concentrated only on Indian Muslim modernism before 1947, and modernism of Pakistan until 1967. Ahmad also examined in his work additional or more recent Muslim modernists, that Gibb and Smith did not describe in depth. Yet that extension of treatment does not mean that Ahmad included Bengali Muslims. An obvious question, therefore, comes to mind immediately: Did not Bengali Muslims form a major part of the Indian Muslim intellectual population? Should we not have expected that Aziz Ahmad would have written in detail on Bengali Muslims? It is misleading to consider Ahmad's work as representative of Muslim modernism of India and Pakistan. Instead, one should categorize his work, as treating modernism of the Urdu-speaking elite of India and Pakistan. The "modernism" and "orthodoxy in Pakistan" that he wrote about in his 1967 book was not 'Pakistani,' but

¹ Amalendu De, *Dharmiya Maulabad o Dharma Nirapeksata* (Calcutta: Ratna prakasani 1992), pp. 68.

² H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam* (The University of Chicago Press, 1945), pp. x.

exclusively "West Pakistani."³ Aziz Ahmad did not, however, acknowledge this limitation of his work, although in the preface he reminded his reader: "An omission which may strike the reader in this book is Ahmadiyya movement (in Pakistan)."⁴ This dissertation, written exclusively on Bengali Muslim intellectuals, attempts to bring Bengal into the current historiography of Muslim modernism in pre-independence India.

Aziz Ahmad's conclusions regarding Urdu-speaking Muslim modernists are, however, important. He divided his Muslim figures into several categories: traditionalist, orthodox, fundamentalist, socialist, and modernist. Among these categories, Aziz Ahmad argued there were several ideological differences and differences of direction. But most importantly, Aziz Ahmad argued that despite these differences, all categories of Muslim were united on one purpose, i.e., 'defense' and 'rehabilitation' of Islam in modern times. For this, he quoted a key statement of W.C. Smith: "The fundamental *malaise* of modern Islam is a sense that something has gone wrong with Islamic history. The fundamental problem of modern Muslims is how to rehabilitate that history."⁵ The modernists rehabilitated Islam by constructing a mass of 'apologetic' and 'polemical' scholarship: Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's, "Theological speculation;" Sir Mohammad Iqbal's, "Speculative neo-modernism;" Abul Kalam Azad's "Exegetical eclecticism;" and Amir Ali's anti-western polemics. The Muslim apologetic, according to Aziz Ahmad, was "able to recreate elements of a renaissance, but not of a reformation."⁶ The Muslim modernists interpreted "heterogenetic change (usually experienced as achievement or advance) as

³ Perhaps at that time he was unaware of how much he was missing. Some years later, however, when beginning his unfinished study of Muslim society in South Asia, he did acknowledge to a colleague his lack of knowledge of Bengali sources and sought the latter's assistance on this. Private communication from J.T. O'Connell.

⁴ Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan, 1857-1964* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. xi.

⁵ Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan*, p. 260. The quotations is taken from Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (New York: Mentor Book, 1959), p. 47.

⁶ Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan*, p. 272.

orthogenetic."⁷ The use of reason by the modernist was "not so much with discerning unknown areas of facts as with uncovering the insights and directions implied in divine or prophetic pronouncements."⁸ Islam had been subjected to violent change, but the modernists "consistently refused to accept the ontological reality of change."⁹

This thesis of 'modern Muslim apologetic' was not introduced first by Aziz Ahmad. The term *apologia* had been used for a long time in the context of Christianity in the West. In the context of Islamic modernism, it was described by Gibb in the 'Haskell Lecture,' delivered at the University of Chicago in 1945. W.C. Smith developed this thesis in 1957; and Aziz Ahmad applied it extensively to Indian Muslims in 1967. In his lecture, Gibb defined an 'apologetic,' as a kind of literature that is primarily directed in order to maintain Muslims' inner loyalty to Islam. 'Apologetic' is, therefore, 'partisan by its very nature.' The limitations of most modernist apologetic are 'self-imposed.' Gibb critically described the limitations. For example, he wrote that the modernists are distinct from secularists. There is a complete dislocation or paradox between the modernists' 'outward argument' and 'inner reasoning.' "Whatever the outward profession of the apologist may be," Gibb argued, "he sets out to defend and to prove the truth of what he is already convinced is the truth."¹⁰

W.C. Smith, who had been a student of Gibb at Cambridge,¹¹ spent ten years or more of investigation to write, *Islam in Modern History*. A "great friend of Islam in the West," Smith studied problems of Indo-Pakistani Muslims within a wide context of modern Islamic developments. The geographical areas that he covered include northern India, Pakistan, Turkey, and selected areas of the Middle East in modern time. The

⁷ Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan*, p. 272.

⁸ Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan*, p. 269.

⁹ Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan*, p. 272.

¹⁰ H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, p. 68.

¹¹ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (New York: Mentor Book, 1959), p. ix.

Muslim figures of his study are mainly Urdu, Turkish, and Arabic speakers. Perhaps Smith did not take one non-Urdu figure from eastern India because he also was constrained by lack of knowledge of Bengali language. However, we inform Smith respectfully, that when he published and reprinted *Islam in Modern history* (1957, 1959, 1963), at least one Bengali Muslim's critique of Islam was available in English, a book by Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Creative Bengal* (1949).

In one of the chapters of *Islam in Modern history*, Smith put together several Muslim modernists of separate political nationalities into one category: 'Islamic liberalism.' The four Urdu-speaking liberals of India that he includes in the list are: Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898), Sayyid Amir Ali (1849-1928), Shibli Nomani (1857-1914), and Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958). Sir Mohammad Iqbal is not included in the list, as Smith writes: "...Iqbal is so contradictory and unsystematic that it is difficult to assess him."¹² Smith's form of 'Islamic liberalism' is broad; but liberalism is not without loyalties to Islam:

Liberalism--and we are using the term here in a deliberately broad sense--is inherently not an established system nor fixed content or even intention. Islamic liberalism has evinced many forms, taking on, as it should, the individual quality of various persons who have given expression to it, have accepted its loyalties.¹³

Smith characterizes some general weaknesses of Islamic liberalism, but he reduces these to one fundamental problem of the Muslim liberals:

In sum, then, we would attribute the decline of liberalism in recent Islam in significant part to the fact that such liberalism as has been achieved--whether primarily of external or internal source, whether primarily in ideas or in action--has not yet been formulated in such a way as to envisage its dynamic truth as within the central structure of the Islamic faith.¹⁴

¹² Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, p. 69.

¹³ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, pp. 64-65.

¹⁴ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, p. 72.

The fundamental problem was, therefore, a Muslims' preoccupation with defending Islam.

In the Indian scene, Smith characterizes the content of the liberal apologetic as that of defense of faith in relation to "science, civilization, progress, feminism, and the liberal values generally."¹⁵ Besides, the Islamic liberal apologetes had attempted to check 'disloyalty' to faith, specially of the educated youth. The output of the apologetes, Smith summarizes:

For the function of reason has then not been seen as that of ascertaining new truth and solving new problems--particularly, not religious truth or religious problems. They have turned to an interpretation of Islam, presumed or explicit, according to which the solving of problems, spiritual, social is the function of revelation of Islam. In classical Islam the intellect was considered an instrument to explicate what is revealed. In modern times, this rational system has seemed obsolete to some; and the intellectuals' only duty is seen as that of proving the faith (unexplicated, even undefined) to be valid.¹⁶

About an idea of nationalism of Muslims, Smith's central argument is that Muslim nationalist movements of whatever sort were understood in 'relation to the religion of Islam.' Smith detected four components of Muslims' view of nationalism. First: The Muslims are to eject an alien rule upon them.¹⁷ Second, the leadership of the nationalist movements of the Muslims, especially in the primary stage, was primarily 'religious figures.' Third, a sense of 'positive nationalism,' was absent in Muslims' mind. Smith defined a positive nationalism: "To respect all members of one's own nation, to envisage its welfare, to evolve an effective loyalty to that welfare, and to work constructively so as to bring it about..."¹⁸ Smith elaborated this meaning further: "Nowhere in the Muslim world (except perhaps in Indonesia?) do Muslims feel that a non-Muslim member of their

¹⁵ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, p. 91.

¹⁶ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, p. 93.

¹⁷ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, p. 80.

¹⁸ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, p. 82.

nation is 'one of us.' And nowhere do the minorities feel accepted."¹⁹ Fourth: nationalism of Muslims' was related to Pan-Islam. Pan-Islamism is also defined by Smith: "Pan-Islam is, and always has been, primarily a sentiment of cohesion. It is not cohesion itself; or any institutional or practical expression of it. The unity...is a unity of sentiment."²⁰ This was a 'negative aspect' of Muslim nationalism, as Smith pointed out: "the virtual absence among Muslims of any 'we-feeling' that includes men not of the faith."²¹

In the works that we have mentioned above of Gibb, W.C. Smith, and Aziz Ahmad. Indian Muslim modernists are all Urdu-speakers. These modernists, although they differed on matters of direction, all aimed for the defense and rehabilitation of the faith in modern time. Modernity of these Muslim intellectuals was only investigated in 'apologetic' literature. Therefore, their liberalism may be categorized as 'Islamic liberalism.'

This dissertation does not contest the validity of this thesis in the context of Urdu-speaking Muslim intellectuals of India. This dissertation would not deny either that significant groups of the Bengali Muslim intellectuals were committed to the defense of Islamic faith. In fact, the dissertation identifies three broad groups of modernizing Bengali Muslim intellectuals in the first half of the twentieth century: neo-orthodox, Islamic liberal, and rational humanist. The first two groups defended 'Islamic faith' in the general sense that W.C. Smith describes. But the 'form' and 'quality' of defense of Islamic faith, even the first two groups were different from those of the Urdu-speaking intellectuals. However, the third group, the rational humanist Muslims, were not preoccupied with defense of Islamic faith. They do not fall within the category of Smith's 'Islamic liberals;' nor are they similar to any group that Aziz Ahmad focused upon. This

¹⁹ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, p. 86.

²⁰ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, p. 88.

²¹ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, p.87.

dissertation describes the first two groups only briefly, but it examines the more rational humanist in detail, as these are the most distinctive among Bengali Muslim modernists.

II. English-language scholarship on radical humanism within modern Bengali Muslim thought.

We begin our study of modern Bengali Muslim thought with a sketch of relevant English language scholarship. An early reference to an organized movement of a radical thought of Bengali Muslim intellectuals was first pointed out by Dr. Mahmud Hussain, who was on the faculty of the Dacca (hereafter spelled as Dhaka) University, 1933-48. He was an eye witness of a rational humanist movement among Muslims in Dhaka, and describes it in two paragraphs in two of his published articles: "The Cultural life of old Dhaka"²² (1957) and "Dhaka University and the Pakistan movement"²³ (1970).

Kamruddin Ahmad, a sociologist of Dhaka University, published *The Social History of East Pakistan* (1967), with a paragraph on a rationalist trend of the Bengali Muslim intelligentsia:

Some leading litterateurs and teachers under the leadership of Mr. Abul Hussain and Prof. Kazi Abdul Wadud founded a literary forum in 1926. It was known as '*Dhaka Muslim Sahitya Samaj*.' The ideal was to create a movement for the 'Emancipation of intellect and conscience' and to promote the study of rational thinking among the Muslim intelligentsia. This was only an intellectual movement, but the leaders were not spared the persecutions in the hands of ignorant and superstitious public led by the Nowab (Nawbab) of Dhaka.²⁴

²² M. Hussain, "The Cultural Life of Old Dacca," *Pakistan Quarterly*, Vol. VII, No. I (1957), pp. 13-17.

²³ Mahmud Hussain, "Dacca University and the Pakistan Movement," published in C.H. Philips and Mary Doren Wainright (ed.), *The Partition of India: Politics and Perspectives, 1935-47* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1970), pp. 369-373.

²⁴ Kamruddin Ahmad, *The Social History of East Pakistan* (Dhaka: Crescent Book Centre, 1967), p. 28.

J.H. Broomfield's otherwise pioneering work, *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society: Twentieth Century Bengal*²⁵ (1968), articulated the socio-cultural and political thought of the Bengali *bhadralok* ("gentleman" class) including those in the *muffusil* beyond Calcutta. Nevertheless, the book did not cite any of the radical Bengali Muslim intellectuals. The only East Bengali-speaking Muslim that featured in his work, was A.K. Fazlul Huq, who was a *bhadralok*, but not an intellectual.

Abidullah Gazi, a Bangladeshi scholar, read an essay in 1972, "Muslim Bengal: A Crisis of Identity," in the Bengal Studies Conference, at the University of Toronto. Gazi correctly assessed Bengali Muslims' linguistic, social, and ideological distance from West Pakistani Muslims. Yet the article did not mention the rationalist Muslims. Gazi's doctoral dissertation at Harvard, "Raja Rammohun Roy (1772-1833): Encounter with Islam and Christianity, the articulation of Hindu self-consciousness (1975);"²⁶ does not mention Kazi Abdul Wadud, a Bengali Muslim intellectual, who pioneered the movement of radical rational humanism among Bengali Muslims, though he was an outspoken admirer of Rammohun a century later.

Mustafa Nurul Islam's *Bengali Muslim Public Opinion as Reflected in the Bengali Press, 1901-1930* (1973) has cited Kazi Wadud only two times.²⁷ The book has, however, cited dozens of other Bengali Muslim intellectuals and their journals.

Leonard A. Gordon's *Bengal: The Nationalist Movements, 1876-1940* (1974), has cited several Bengali Muslim intellectuals, notably, Maulana (or Mawlana) Akram Khan;²⁸ whom we situate within the neo-orthodox trend of the Bengali Muslim

²⁵ J.H. Broomfield, *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society: Twentieth Century Bengal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).

²⁶ Abid U. Ghazi, "Raja Rammohun Roy (1772-1833): Encounter with Islam and Christianity, the Articulation of Hindu Self-Consciousness" (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1975).

²⁷ Mustafa Nurul Islam, *Bengali Muslim Public Opinion as Reflected in the Bengali Press, 1901-1930* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1973).

²⁸ Leonard A. Gordon, *Bengal: The Nationalist Movements, 1876-1940* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), p. 192.

intelligentsia. Two years later, an Indian scholar, Shila Sen, published *Muslim Politics in Bengal 1937-1947*, (1976). The work articulates the political thought of many East Bengali Muslim intellectuals, including Akram Khan and his neo-orthodox cohorts; but not the radicals of Dhaka.²⁹

In 1976, Joseph T. O'Connell published, "Dilemmas of Secularism in Bangladesh."³⁰ The article is based on O'Connell's use of Bengali-language publications as well as on his eleven-months field work (September 1972-July 1973) in post-liberation Bangladesh. O'Connell's theoretical orientation is influenced by W.C. Smith's analysis of 'Islamic liberalism.' O'Connell investigated the thought and policy framework of those who were front rank leaders of the Bangladesh liberation war and who held political power until 1975, and of Muslim Bengali intellectuals who were shaping a Bangladeshi sense of nationalism not based on Islam. The secular thought of this group, according to O'Connell, faced certain "dilemmas." Secularism of this group is restricted to '*dharma-nirapekshata*' or "neutrality in religion or simply tolerance;"³¹ without any repugnance to Islamic faith.

O'Connell observed that the Awami League regime had declared a state policy of secularism and an elimination of communalism, though communalism and secularism/tolerance were left undefined in the constitution. The regime outlawed religion-based political parties, but did not outlaw communal lobbying groups. Separation of religion and politics was declared in the constitution, but there was confusion about how this could be accomplished. There is no commitment within the Constitution that forbade

²⁹ Shila Sen, *Muslim Politics in Bengal, 1937-1947* (New Delhi: Impex India, 1976).

³⁰ Joseph T. O'Connell, "Dilemmas of Secularism in Bangladesh," published in the *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. XI, No. 1 & 2 (January-April, 1976), pp. 64-82. The article was also published in Bardwell L. Smith (ed.), *Religion and Conflict in South Asia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976).

³¹ Joseph T. O'Connell, "Dilemmas of Secularism in Bangladesh," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, p. Vol. XI, Nos., 1 & 2 (1976), p. 65.

legislation contrary to the Quran and Sunnah, but the Prime Minister assured his people that the regime was not hostile to Islam.

The scholars who were trying to define Bengali national identity in relation to Bengali literature and culture also faced dilemmas. Much of the best and most popular of existing Bengali literature was either very Hindu or very Muslim in content. It did not reinforce the idea of secularism, even in its weaker "religious neutrality" form. The selections that were made often seemed narrow and arbitrary. O'Connell wrote: "There is relatively little appeal to universal standards to justify what is affirmed to be of great value in and of itself."³² Additionally, there were ambiguities for the regime and the scholars both over: "Who make up the Bengali nation?" and "Are the fifty million Bengali speakers in India part of the Bengali nation?" While the regime was defending its commitment to "secularism" (which sounded very Indian to most Bangladeshi ears), and while the intellectuals were trying to discover inspiring models of non-communal Bengali national culture in existing Bengali literature, the more orthodox and more fundamentalist Muslims were beginning to denounce the regime and the scholars for opposition to Islam. This posed a challenge to the Bangladesh leadership to "construe the principal of secularism/tolerance in ways that constructively guide this Muslim self-assertiveness and not in a way that alienates it and leads to an unintended communal backlash."³³

O'Connell fails to distinguish between what we call Islamic Liberals and rational humanist Muslims. He seems to imply that what Bangladesh needs is Islamic liberals who are committed to the universal humanism, but not the secular rhetoric, of the rational humanist Muslims.

Sibnarayan Ray, an enthusiastic follower of M.N. Ray's radical humanism, was the first to write in English language an exclusive essay on the rational humanist trend of

³² Joseph T. O'Connell, "Dilemmas of Secularism in Bangladesh," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, p. 66.

³³ Joseph T. O'Connell, "Dilemmas of Secularism in Bangladesh," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, p. 70.

the Bengali Muslim intelligentsia. The article, titled "The *Sikha* (1927-32) movement: A Note on the Bengali Muslim intelligentsia in search of modernity" (1977), was read at a conference of the Australian Association of Asian Studies. It was published in M.N. Ray's English journal, *The Radical Humanist* (977-78). Sibnarayan Ray, in the article, appealed to historians to look into a radical movement of the Bengali Muslims:

During its brief life, *Sikha* (The title of a journal of the radicals) became the center of a unique intellectual movement which both in the scope and vigor of its inquiry and in the intensity of opposition which it generated among powerful sections of the community in Bengal was reminiscent of another movement which had taken place in Calcutta, exactly hundred years earlier. But while much has been written about Derozio and his Hindu school pupils, who were known collectively as "Young Bengal," the *Sikha* movement still waits for its historians.³⁴

The article has several problems. The journal of the rational humanists, *Shikha*, died in 1931; not in 1932, and the organization of the rational humanists, the Muslim Sahitya Samaj, survived up to 1938. Second: Ray looked only into the essays that were published in *Shikha*; but not those articles of the same rational humanist that were published in other journals and in volumes edited by their own group. As a result, Ray could not see that their main intellectual inspiration had come from the Bengal Renaissance. Finally, Ray did not look into some of the unpublished works of the radicals. Despite these problems, Ray situated the radical movement within a correct theoretical frame. He distinguished the thought of the Bengali Muslim radicals from Urdu-speaking intellectuals of Bengal and north India on one main basis; defense of the Islamic faith. His conclusion on the latter group of intellectuals was: "...Intellectual energies were devoted largely to either a defense of religion, or to glorification of early

³⁴ Sibnarayan Ray, "The *Sikha* movement-I: A Note on the Bengali Muslim Intelligentsia in Search of Modernity." *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XLI, No. 9 (December, 1977), p. 11. Also Sibnarayan Ray, "The *Sikha* movement-II: A Note on the Bengali Muslim Intelligentsia in Search of Modernity." published in *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XLI, No. 10 (January, 1978), pp. 11-15.

Islamic history..."³⁵ On the contrary, Ray quoted Kazi Abdul Wadud to illustrate the viewpoint of the radical humanists among Muslims of Bengal: "...Muslim society had refused to give to members any scope of self-development. Whatever might have been the original purpose of Islam, in the actual working of Muslim society, freedom of spirit was restricted by a plethora of rules and prohibitions."³⁶

In 1977, David Kopf and Safiuddin Joarder jointly edited a volume, *Reflections on the Bengal Renaissance*.³⁷ Kopf was a visiting professor at the Institute of Bangladesh Studies, Rajshahi. The volume published ten articles. Three described the negative attitude of nineteenth-century Bengal Muslims to the Bengal Renaissance. A lone essay written by Mahmud Shah Qureshi, "Seizure of Consciousness and Position: Role of the Muslims in the Bengal Renaissance,"³⁸ pointed out the positive response of Kazi Wadud to the Bengal Renaissance. Qureshi wrote that Wadud "conscientiously carried out the spirit of Bengal Renaissance."³⁹ For the first time, Qureshi had identified the movement of the rationalists in the way they themselves called their movement: '*Buddhir Mukti Andolan*' or 'Freedom of Intellect Movement.' Qureshi divided the Bengali Muslim intellectuals into four groups:

1. Those who concentrated on Islamic themes--Sayyid Ismail Hussain Shiraji (1880-1931), Mawlana Akram Khan⁴⁰ (1868-1967), and Mawlana Muniruzzaman

³⁵ Sibnarayan Ray, "The Sikha movement-I," p. 13.

³⁶ Sibnarayan Ray, "The Sikha movement-I," p. 11.

³⁷ David Kopf and Safiuddin Joarder (eds.), *Reflections on the Bengal Renaissance* (Rajshahi: Institute of Bangladesh Studies, Rajshahi University, 1977). Kopf had been a visiting professor, at the Institute of Bangladesh Studies, Rajshahi, 1975-76.

³⁸ This article is basically translation of material in chapter: re V, "La litterature Musulmane et la renaissance des lettres Bengali," in Mahmud Shah Qureshi's *Etude sur l'evolution intellectuelle chez les Musulmans du Bengale, 1857-1947* (Paris: Mouton, 1971). This important book seems not to have been used by English-reading scholars.

³⁹ David Kopf and Safiuddin Joarder (ed.), *Reflections on the Bengal Renaissance*, p. 99.

⁴⁰ Mushirul Hasan, *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1979), has incorrectly stated that Akram Khan was a "Lawyer." Akram never studied law. He was a professional journalist and an editor of several Bengali journals. See Hasan, p. 223.

(Manirujjaman) Islamabadi⁴¹ (1878-1950) are the outstanding personalities in the category.

2. Those who drew their inspirations from Bengali traditions mainly; Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899-1976), Jasimuddin (1904-1976), Kazi Abdul Wadud (1894-1969) and the Kemalists (i.e. participants or followers of *buddhir mukti Andolan* or the *Shikha-Panthei*)...

3. Those who balanced or equivocated between the above two highs of tradition; there can be a long list, to name few: Lutfar Rahman (1880-1932), Kazi Imdadul Huq (1882-1926), Golam Mostafa (1895-1964), Shahadat Hussain (1893-1953), S. (Sheikh) Wajed Ali (1890-1951), Mohammad Wajed Ali (1888-1954), Abdul Karim Sahitya-Visharad (Bisharad) (1896-1953), and Mohammad Shahidullah (1885-1969).

4. Those who attempted to relate a more Universal Modern culture to the local traditions--Humayun Kabir (1906-1969), Abu Sayeed Ayyub, Syed Mujtaba Ali, Syed Waliullah (1922-1971).⁴²

Qureshi has appropriately categorized the first group of intellectuals as concentrating on "Islamic themes." But the phrase, "Islamic themes," is vague and too general. It was for their aggressive defense of faith, by modern intellectual organizations and techniques and by employing modern intellectuals, that we prefer to call this group neo-orthodox. We do not categorize the neo-orthodox as either fundamentalist or traditionalists for reasons to be discussed later in this introductory chapter.

Among the second group distinguished by Qureshi, we consider only Kazi Abdul Wadud and participants in *buddhir mukti andolan* as rational humanist using Bengali themes. We also treat in the dissertation, other associates of Wadud in this category. It is by the way, a misnomer to identify as "Kemalist" any section of *buddhir mukti*

⁴¹ The name has been Arabized, "Mawlana Munir al-Zaman Khan Islamabadi," in a recent doctoral dissertation of the University of Toronto, Rizwan Malik, "Mawlana Husayn Ahmad Madani and Jami'yat Ulama-i Hind 1920-1947: Status of Islam and Muslims in India" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis: Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Toronto, 1995), p. 371.

⁴² Mahmud Shah Qureshi, "Seizure of Consciousness and Position: Role of the Muslims in the Bengal Renaissance," published in David Kopf (ed.), *Reflections on the Bengal Renaissance*, pp. 98-99. Kazi Wadud did not die in 1969, but in 1970. The article is reprinted in Mahmud Shah Qureshi, *Culture and Development* (Dhaka: Obor Book, 1982). There is a printing mistake in this article. The footnote 19 is printed as 9 in page 12.

movement. "Kemalist" and "*Shikha Panthi*" (group associated with the journal *Shikha*), were pejorative terms of the Calcutta-based Muslim neo-orthodox intellectuals for the Dhaka-based rational humanists. Wadud had rejected these titles. Jasimuddin and Nazrul Islam, however, do not belong in the same category with Wadud. Jasimuddin was never a member of the *buddhir mukti* organization, Muslim Sahitya Samaj (MSS) of Dhaka, nor did he ever write for its journal, *Shikha*. Nazrul was invited occasionally, not to read a paper but to sing a song, in the sessions of the MSS. It is true that all three drew inspiration from Bengali tradition. But there was a difference. Wadud's *gurus* were Rammohun and Rabindranath. In other words, Wadud's Bengalism was continuous with the "unfettered rationalism" of Rammohun and the "universal humanism" of Rabindranath Tagore. But Wadud was not much interested in the cultural and social life of the ordinary Bengali peasants. Jasimuddin, on the other hand, who drew inspiration from the latter, wrote nothing about Rammohun and very little about Tagore. Nazrul Islam's thought was full of conflict and contradictions; it is difficult to put him into any category. Nazrul Islam was a Bengali, but he was also pan-Islamic. He defended Islamic faith; but also challenged Islamic tenets. He was a socialist, a close associate of the communist leader, Muzaffar Ahmad; but he was also a close associate of the relatively apolitical Rabindranath Tagore.⁴³

About Qureshi's categorization of the third group, those who "balance or equivocated," between Islam and Bengali culture, we do not disagree. But we characterize this group more sharply as within the 'Islamic liberal' model of W.C. Smith. In Bengali Muslim society, we define a liberal as one who accommodates as much of Bengali culture

⁴³ For an excellent intellectual biography of Nazrul Islam, see, Rafiqul Islam, *Nazrul Jibani* (Dhaka: Bengali Department, Dhaka University, 1972). For Nazrul Islam's poems in Bengali, see Abdul Kadir (ed.), *Nazrul Racanabali*, I, II & III (Dhaka: Kendriya Bangla Unnyan Board, 1966, 1967, & 1970). Abdul Kadir, *Nazrul pratibhar Svarup* (Dhaka: Nazrul Institute, 1989). Abu Rushd, *Selected poems of Kazi Nazrul Islam*, (Dhaka: Nazrul Institute, n.d.). Rafiqul Islam, *Nazrul Nirdeshika* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1969).

as Islamic principles allow. Hence the secularism of an "Islamic liberal" is constrained by his conception of Islamic faith.

As for Qureshi's fourth group, those who attempted to relate 'universal modern culture to local traditions,' we would consider them closer to our "rational humanist" category because of their commitments to the "universal human," "creativity," "freedom" etc. But, as they were not participants in the *buddhir mukti* movement and the Muslim Sahitya Samaj of Dhaka, we do not examine them in this thesis.⁴⁴

Two years later, David Kopf, published an article, "Pakistani identity and the historiography of Muslim Bengal" (1979), as part of his research on the "origins of a Bengali Muslim intelligentsia." Kopf correctly understood the identity problem of distinguishing between the "self-image of Bengali Muslims and Muslim Bengalis." But it seems that Kopf was not aware of the rational humanist trend of the Muslims of Bengal. His judgement on the Muslim intellectuals of Bengal seems to have been entirely based on the two types that we have categorized as neo-orthodox and Islamic liberals.

To Muslim Bengali historians, 1857 represents the ultimate catastrophe of Islam in India. Indian Muslims suddenly awoke from their futile struggle to dislodge the British to find themselves far behind the Hindus socially, economically, intellectually and politically. It is in this context, finally, that the Muslims refer to the Bengal renaissance. But as one might anticipate, the liberalism, reformism, creativity, and all other positive aspects of the renaissance are totally disregarded.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Writings of some of these intellectuals are reprinted in Bangladesh. See for example, Syed Akram Hossain (ed.), *Syed Waliullah Racanabali*, I (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1986). Syed Abul Maqsood (ed.), *Syed Waliullah Jiban o Sahitya*, II (Dhaka: Miraba books, 1983). Nurur Rahman Khan, *Syed Muztaba Ali* (Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1993). Mohammad Nurul Huda (ed.), *Humayun Kabir Racanabali* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1985). Humayun Kabir wrote a book review on Kazi Abdul Wadud's, *Banglar Jagaran*: "Kazi Abdul Wadud is widely known in Bangladesh as a thoughtful writer of *mukta buddhi* (freedom of thought). The present book will establish his eminence more widely." Humayun Kabir, "Samalocana," *Caturanga*, Vol. XIX, No.1 (1957), pp.91-94.

⁴⁵ David Kopf, "Pakistani Identity and the Historiography of Muslim Bengal," published in Richard L. Park (ed.), *Patterns of Change in Modern Bengal*, (East Lansing: Asian Studies Centre, Michigan State University, 1979), p. 117.

This statement is appropriate to the neo-orthodox and to some extent to Islamic liberals, but it does not at all reflect the more radical rational humanist view of Bengali Muslim intelligentsia.

Rafiuddin Ahmed's, *The Bengali Muslims 1870-1905: A Quest for identity* (1981), and his recent article, "Conflict and Contradictions in Bengali Islam: Problems of Change and Adjustment" (1988),⁴⁶ argue that Islam in Bengal had lost its orthodox beliefs amid the ethnic cultural influences on the Bengali Muslims, thus giving birth to a new image of Islam--the 'popular Islam' or 'folk Islam.' According to Ahmed, such an adjustment of classical Islam to the local environment involved not only Islam's cultural accommodation with Hindu religious idioms. An entire complex of local folk traditions had permeated the beliefs and practices of the ordinary Bengali Muslim population. Ahmed's is a pioneering work for our understanding of classical Islam's accommodation in the rural areas of Bengal.

This dissertation is similar as well as dissimilar to Ahmed's work. Ahmed's work primarily concentrates on a 'Hinduization of the Islamic faith' by the ordinary rural Bengali Muslims between 1870 and 1906. This dissertation, however, concentrates on a rational humanist critique of Islam by a group of urban Bengali Muslim intelligentsia between 1926 and 1938. Second: Ahmed's work focuses on a movement of Islamization of the ordinary Muslims carried out exclusively by Muslim 'reformists' in the rural areas. This dissertation, however, argues that a part of the funding of the later neo-orthodox's program of Islamization and orthodoxy came from urban Hindu business houses. Third: this dissertation aims to show, how far the 'Bengali puthi' (popular manuscript) literature, was inspiring the urban intelligentsia. Our conclusion is that 'Bengali puthi' literature was, by and large, neglected by the urban intelligentsia. However, the neo-orthodox and the

⁴⁶ Rafiuddin Ahmed, *The Bengali Muslims 1870-1905: A Quest for Identity* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981), and Rafiuddin Ahmed, "Conflict and Contradictions in Bengali Islam: Problems of Change and Adjustments," published in Catherine P. Ewing (ed.), *Shariat and Ambiguity in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 115-141.

Islamic liberals suppressed allegedly Hinduized 'Bengali puthi' literature but showed some interest in 'Mussalmani puthi' literature. The rationalists on the other hand ignored 'Mussalmani puthi;' but divided on the 'Bengali puthi' literature.

Asim Roy's book, *The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition* (1983) concentrates on medieval Bengali Muslim society, and he favors the term "syncretistic" instead of "popular" and "folk." the terms used by Rafiuddin, for traditions of Bengali Islam. This important study does not treat twentieth century Bengali Islam.

In 1982, Amalendu De published, *Islam in Modern India*.⁴⁷ Five of the thirteen articles in the book are on Bengali-speaking Muslims, of which one is on the rational humanists of East Bengal: "The Muslim Sahitya Samaj of Dhaka (1926-1936): Its Contribution to the Growth of Rationalism in Bengali Muslim Society." De argues in these articles that Muslims of India do not form a homogeneous community. One argument is that a key Bengali Muslim political figure did not want Pakistan: "Two Nation theory challenged by A.K. Fazlul Huq." Also at the political level, De discussed: "A plea for sovereign Bengal," a plan that was engineered jointly by Sarat Chandra Bose, Abul Hashem, and H.S. Suhrawardy in 1947.

At the socio-cultural and religious levels, De argues that the rationalism of East Bengali Muslims is distinctive of Bengali Islam. He characterizes the thought of the rationalists of the *Muslim Sahitya Samaj* as marked by "Rational-democratic-humanistic ideals:"⁴⁸ "...This *Sahitya Samaj* was opposed by a group of Bengali Muslims for propounding un-Islamic ideals. Thus the spirit of rationalism generated by the *Samaj* was

⁴⁷ De is currently a Guru Nanak Professor of history at Jadabpur University, Calcutta. The work is a collection of thirteen essays that De read earlier in various intellectual forums. These essays together do not reflect a uniform Islam. That is probably not intended by De.

⁴⁸ Amalendu De, "Muslim Sahitya Samaj of Dhaka (1926-1936): Its Contribution to the Growth of Rationalism in Bengali Muslim Society," published in Amalendu De (ed.), *Islam in Modern India* (Calcutta: Maya Prakashini, 1982), p. 70. See also Chandiprasad Sarkar, *The Bengali Muslims: A Study of Their Politicization, 1912-1929* (Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi, 1991), chapter 6 and 7.

confronted with Islamic fundamentalism."⁴⁹ The meaning of 'Islamic fundamentalism,' is, however, left undefined in the article. De identified as the founder of this movement Kazi Abdul Wadud (1894-1970) and as his co-worker, Abul Hussain (1897-1938). He also cited accurately the motto of the movement and noted its intellectual organization and the conflict between the rationalists and 'fundamentalists' in the Bengali Muslim society.

De distinguishes a group of Bengali Muslim intelligentsia that we would call 'Islamic liberals.' He argues that these intelligentsia had created "a stir in literary circles," that their "rational spirit" spread to the rationalists of Dhaka. The intellectuals that he cites in this role are Kazi Imdadul Huq, Begum Rokeya, Mohammad Lutfar Rahman, and Nazrul Islam. For example, De quotes Begum Rokeya as saying that: "religious books are nothing but man made code. Nobody can definitely say that they are sent by God."⁵⁰ Again Rokeya said: "Where there is much rigidity in religion, there is greater oppression on women."⁵¹ It is true that scattered and isolated comments critical of Islam were made by a few 'Islamic liberals' among the Bengali Muslim intelligentsia, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Rafiuddin Ahmed even noted that Mir Mosharraf Hussain (1847-1911) "advocated the voluntary abolition of cow-slaughter by the Muslims for the sake of amity with the Hindus."⁵² But such explicit criticism of and departures from Muslim norms were rare among the Islamic liberals in Bengal.

The more radical rationalism of Wadud, Abul Hussain cannot be equated with the 'dilemma' of the Islamic liberal intellectuals mentioned above. Wadud and Abul Hussain paid attention to these writers, but wrote very little about them. The difference of Wadud

⁴⁹ Amalendu De, "Muslim Sahitya Samaj of Dhaka (1926-1936): Its Contribution to the Growth of Rationalism in Bengali Muslim Society," p. 70.

⁵⁰ Amalendu De, "Muslim Sahitya Samaj of Dhaka (1926-1936): Its Contribution to the Growth of Rationalism in Bengali Muslim Society," p. 71.

⁵¹ Amalendu De, "Muslim Sahitya Samaj of Dhaka (1926-1936): Its Contribution to the Growth of Rationalism in Bengali Muslim Society," p. 71.

⁵² Rafiuddin Ahmed, *The Bengali Muslims 1870-1905: A Quest for Identity*, p. 175. The book of Mir Mosharraf is *Go-jiban* (1888), that Ahmed cites.

and Abul Hussain from these Islamic liberal intellectuals may be understood on these points. First: Wadud and Abul Hussain gave an organizational shape to the movement of rational humanism. Second: rationalism was advocated by Wadud and Abul Hussain under universal (not specifically Islamic) ideals of 'freedom of thought' and 'liberation of expression.' Third: rationalism was consistent and insistent in Wadud's and Abul Hussain's writings, not occasional. Fourth: rational humanism was inspired in Wadud's thought most directly not from any Muslim source but from Rammohun and Rabindranath. Fifth: Wadud kept his rational humanism organizationally and conceptually distinct from the neo-orthodox and the Islamic liberals, such as Mir Mosharraf, Begum Rokeya, Imdadul Huq, and Lutfar Rahman.⁵³

While in Calcutta in the 1970s and 1980s, Amalendu De was writing articles and books that gave a fresh insight into Bengali Muslims, in Bangladesh, Rafiuddin Ahmed was launching a similar intellectual effort. In 1983 and 1985, Ahmed organized two major seminars: one in Dhaka and the other in the port city of Chittagong. Ahmed's purpose is clear, a re-definition of Islam of the Bengali Muslims:

Islam in Bengal has often been presented in the context of the dominant cultural tradition of northern India. The historians of the subcontinent were so overwhelmed by the tradition of Imperial Delhi and Lucknow that their views of Muslim culture in India were influenced by the splendors of

⁵³ For study of Mir Mosharraf's writings, see Mohammad Abdul Awal, *Mir Mosharrafer Gadya Rachana* or "An analysis of prose works of Mir Mosharraf Hossain" (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1975); Mohammad Moniruzzaman, *Adhunik Bangla Kabey Hindu-Musalman Samparka: 1857-1920* or "Hindu-Muslim Relations as reflected in Modern Bengali Poetry" (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1970), pp. 359-364. Qazi Abdul Mannan, *Adhunik Bangla Sahitya-o-Muslim Samaj* or "Modern Bengali Literature and the Muslim Society of Bengal" (Dhaka: Bangladesh Book Corporation, 1990), pp. 120, 156, 183, 187, 323, 324, 325, 331, 333, 335, 336, 338, 340, 395, 424, 452, 478, 497. Anisuzzaman, *Muslim Manas o Bangla Sahitya*. (Calcutta: Muktaadhara, 1971), pp. 194-220. For Begum Rokeya, see, Dr. Shamsul Alam, *Rokeya Sakhwat Hossain: Jiban o Sahitya karma* or "Life and Literary works of Rokeya Sakhwat Hossain" (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1989). For Imdadul Huq, see Abdul Kadir (ed.), *Kazi Imdadul Huq Racanabali* or 'Works of Imdadul Huq' (Dhaka: Kendriya Bangla-Unyan Board, 1968). Essays of Mohammad Lutfar Rahman were published in Bengali Muslim journals. See Mohammad Lutfar Rahman, "*Mussalman*," *Moyajjin*, Vol. III, No. 1-2 (1931), pp. 8-9; Vol. III, (March, 1931), pp. 77-85; Vol. IV, No. 1 (1932), pp. 13-14; Vol. IV, No. 2 (1932), pp. 69-70; Vol. IV, No. 3 (1932), pp. 139-141; "*Echlamer Purna Pratishta*," Vol. VI, No. 3 (1933), pp. 69-72; "*Mussalman*," Vol. VI, No. 5 (1933), pp. 132-134; Vol. VI, No. 7 (1933), pp. 193-195; Vol. VII, No.1 (1934), pp. 12-14; Vol. VII, No. 2 (1934), pp. 56-59; Vol. VII, No. 3 (1934), pp. 98-100.

the classical civilization which flourished in the upper Gangetic valley and which all but obscured other forms of expression of the Islamic culture in different regions....The key to understanding the peculiarities of Bengali Islam lies in the infra-structure of the society, the local tradition, custom, and popular culture, rather than study of the dogma of the dominant tradition which flourished in northern India.⁵⁴

The contributors to the two seminars included front-rank intellectuals of Bangladesh and two scholars who came from the United States.⁵⁵ Despite the high profile of contributors, and the appeal of Ahmed to locate Bengali Islam within a new context, the contributors generally failed to address more radical, or rational humanist group of the Bengali Muslim intelligentsia. Except for one essay, the contributors attributed creativity of the Bengali Muslim intelligentsia only to an 'ambiguous' understanding of Islam. These papers, thus, stressed nothing beyond 'Islamic liberalism.'

A lone essay was read on the group of rational humanist Muslims by Dr. Wakil Ahmad, a 'neo-marxist'⁵⁶ scholar of Bengali literature of Dhaka University, "*Kazi Abdul Waduder Samaj o Rastra Cinta*" or 'Social and political thought of Kazi Wadud.' Instead of contrasting Wadud with the 'Islamic liberals' of Bengal and north India, the article criticized Wadud from a Marxist point of view. The essay satirized Wadud's radical thought in Marxist/nationalist terms: "The best years of Wadud's life were spent under the rule of British imperialism and colonialism." Wadud was inspired by "scientific

⁵⁴ Rafiuddin Ahmed (ed.), *Islam in Bangladesh: Society, Culture, and Politics* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Itihas Samiti, 1983), pp. I-II.

⁵⁵ Professor Richard Eaton of the University of Arizona and Professor Zillur Rahman Khan, University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh, contributed to the seminars. Eaton was a discussant and Khan read a paper, "Islam and Bengali Nationalism," published in Rafiuddin Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Society, Religion, and Politics* (Chittagong: South Asia Studies Group, 1985), pp.17-50.

⁵⁶ I have an experience with one leading Marxist scholar during my field trip to Dhaka in 1993. For collecting information on the *buddhir mukti* movement, I met the marxist scholar and told him about Wadud's thought of 'rational humanism.' He told me to get out of his house, because, he said that there is nothing in Wadud's thought that can be called 'radical' and 'creative.' David Kopf has noted a wonderful similarity between 'Marxist' and 'communalists' reaction to *bhadralok* movements: "They share a nearly-identical dismal view of the renaissance, but for different reasons." See David Kopf. "Pakistani Identity and the Historiography of Muslim Bengal," p. 115.

rationalism, liberal humanism, individualism, secularism, materialism, and this worldliness of a colonial bourgeois culture."⁵⁷ Despite acknowledging Wadud's freedom of thought and critique of Islam, the Marxist orientation of the author has downgraded Wadud:

...Wadud's idealistic society is where the individual would enjoy rights; where there would be a freedom of thought, emancipation of intellect; where, irrespective of color, race, and nationality, all people would be equal; where, instead of mental rigidity, artificiality, stupidity, there would be naturalness, creativity, and dynamism....No social scientist would suggest a social change on this basis. Without an economic revolution with a change of production process and relations, there is no possibility of a social change....⁵⁸

Wadud's so-called "bourgeois" intellectual inspiration does not fit with the author's 'economic revolution' or class struggle thesis. The author even condoned those orthodox Muslims who tried to intimidate Wadud and Abul Hussain: "In the people's court (*gana adalat*), they were declared *kafir*, and had to sign a note of apology."⁵⁹ The Muslim Marxist scholars of Bangladesh evidently are not interested in the kind of creative movement of the *bhadralok*, that was engineered by Kazi Wadud.

Anisuzzaman, a distinguished scholar on Bengali literature in Bangladesh, has discussed the 'creativity' of the Bengali Muslim liberals of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in his recent book: *Creativity, Reality, and Identity* (1993).⁶⁰ The book

⁵⁷ Wakil Ahmad, "Kazi Abdul Waduder Samaj o Rastra Cinta" in Rafiuddin Ahmed (ed.), *Bangladesh: Society, Religion and Politics*, p. 221.

⁵⁸ ...Kazi Abdul Waduder kalpita Samaje byaktir adhikar thakbe, jnan o cinta carcar svadhinata thakbe, jati-dharma-barna nirbisheshe sauharda saubhratritver samparka thakbe, kritrimata, nirbuddhita, jaratar sthale svabhabikata, buddhimata o gatishilata thakbe....Abashya kona samajbijjani samaj-paribartaner erup bidhan diben na. Utpadan paddhatir upay o samparker paribartan dvara arthanaitik biplab chara samajer paribartan o unnayan sambhab nay, e satya Gandhipanthe victorian liberal madhyabitta *bhadralok* upalabdhi karte paren na....Wakil Ahmad, "Kazi Abdul Waduder Samaj o Rastra Cinta," pp. 223-224.

⁵⁹ Wakil Ahmad, "Kazi Abdul Waduder Samaj o Rastra Cinta," p. 222.

⁶⁰ Anisuzzaman, *Creativity, Reality and Identity* (Dhaka: International Centre for Bengal Studies, Dhaka University, 1993). For other works of Anisuzzaman on Bengali Muslim intellectual history, see *Muslim Manas o Bangla Sahitya* (1757-1918); *Muslim Banglar Samayik Patra, 1831-1930*, or 'Journals of Muslim Bengal.' (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1969); *Svaruper Sandhane* (Dhaka: Jatiya Sahitya Prakashani, 1976).

is a collection of four articles, two of which are related to Bengali Muslim intellectuals, covering the years between 1870 and 1920 and between 1947 and 1971. Thus the radical *buddhir mukti* movement of 1926-1938, is omitted from this book. Nevertheless, the importance of the book is its definition of creativity, one that more or less justifies the 'Islamic liberalism' of the Bengali Muslim intelligentsia. Anisuzzaman gives a broad definition of creativity:

Creativity may be defined as the capability to cope with the changing or unforeseen situations, resulting in 'products' which are 'new' and 'original'....One of the major manifestations of intellectual creativity is in the expression of collective identity and consciousness in a given social formation. It provides the source of values, beliefs, and world-views which constitute the bed-rock of any culture. It is significant as a mechanism for either legitimizing or repudiating any socio-economic system.⁶¹

Anisuzzaman thus argues that Bengali Muslims' creativity is expressed in two ways: by "legitimizing" or "repudiating" a given socio-economic system. In the chapter entitled "The world of the Bengali Muslim writer in the nineteenth century (1870-1920)," Anisuzzaman describes the 'creativity' of a group of intellectuals whom we would prefer to divide into two categories--neo-orthodox and Islamic liberals. One source of creativity of this group, according to Anisuzzaman, is that they wrote in "chaste Bengali." Bengali Muslim intellectuals, for example, Manirujjaman Islamabadi, Akram Khan and Mohammad Shahidullah, were "influenced by the modernists" like Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Amir Ali. They sought to find the "causes of Hindu-Muslim conflict," and one of

Anisuzzaman's, *Muslim Banglar Samayik Patra* 1831-1930, published a long list of titles and editors of the Bengali Muslim journals. The list describes the year of publication of the journals, their editor, duration and most importantly key responses of the editors and writers to issues such as: politics, nationalism, religion, etc. A total of 117 Bengali Muslim journals were published by Bengali Muslim intellectuals from 1831 to 1930. Out of 117, a total of 77 journals were published from Calcutta, and 29 journals published from Dhaka and *mofassil* areas of East Bengal. Hundreds of Bengali Muslim writers published essays in these journals.

⁶¹ Anisuzzaman, *Creativity, Reality and Identity*, pp. 11-12.

them "called upon the Muslims to give up beef-eating and cow sacrifice to spare the feelings of the Hindus."⁶²

III. Bengali language scholarship on modern Bengali Muslim thought.

The first extensive work on the *buddhir mukti* movement was completed by a Bangladeshi scholar, Khondkar Sirajul Huq. The work is Huq's doctoral dissertation in Bengali language and literature, completed in 1982 at the University of Dhaka. Two years later, the Bangla Academy of Dhaka published the dissertation under the title: *Muslim Sahitya Samaj: Samaj Cinta o Sahitya Karma* (1984) or "Muslim Literature Society: Social thought and Literary works." A detailed critical review of this book is would be desirable but space does not permit us to do so.

It is a huge book of 622 pages describing the views of almost all the Bengali Muslim intellectuals who were associated with the Samaj, but without dividing them any into categories under an analytical framework.⁶³ The secondary sources that he cites in this book do not suggest that he is aware of the current scholarship on Muslim modernism in India. As a result, Huq could not differentiate the rational humanism of Wadud and Abul Hussain from 'Islamic liberalism,' of Mohammad Shahidullah, Abdur Rashid, and many other Bengali 'Muslim liberals' of the Samaj. The phrase, *buddhir mukti*, or 'Emancipation of Intellect' had a critical rationalist meaning to Wadud and an Islamic 'apologetic' meaning to the Islamic liberals, but Huq does not indicate this.

We also could see that Huq's work has not focused on the organizational structure of the Samaj, the circumstances of its origin in Dhaka, its constitution, social background

⁶² Anisuzzaman, *Creativity, Reality and Identity*, pp. 77-78.

⁶³ Of those who were associated with the Samaj, our understanding is that three distinct groups emerged: the "rationalists," who founded the Samaj, and the 'Islamic liberals' and 'independents,' who were invited by the former to participate. The independent group was further divided into two and one of which tended to support the rationalists. The other independent group tended support to the 'Islamic liberals.' We have already noted, the clear basis of this division,—whatever the 'form' and 'content' of an issue, the Islamic liberals defended Islam; as against the rationalists who were prepared to criticize Islamic beliefs and practices.

of its participants, and, most crucially, topics and arrangements of debate in the Samaj between the 'rational humanists' and 'Islamic liberals.' Perhaps one reason why Huq has not done this is that he could not get access to some important unpublished writings and documents of Wadud and the Samaj. These were available when Huq wrote his dissertation, but only in some private collections in Dhaka, which he did not use.

Huq identifies a group of seven Bengali Muslim intellectuals as the core of the *buddhir mukti* movement: Kazi Abdul Wadud (1894-1970); Abul Hussain (1897-1938); Anwarul Kadir (1887-1948); Kazi Mutahar Hussain (1897-1981), Motahar Hussain Choudhury (1903-1956), Abul Fazal (1903-1983), and Abdul Kadir (1906-1984). As long as the Samaj survived, they, along with some of their followers, formed a radical rational humanist group of Bengali Muslim intelligentsia. Ironically, Huq did not (or did not want to) focus on the radicalness of this group inside or outside the Samaj as opposed to 'Islamic liberals.' Much of the critique of Islam by these radicals is suppressed or minimized in Huq's work, possibly for a fear of reprisals by Islamic orthodox or fundamentalist groups in Bangladesh. Huq, however, wrote a large chapter exclusively on this 'group of seven;' but mostly it is a biographical and annotated bibliographical survey of these intellectuals. This chapter is valuable, however, for its impressive list of essays, books and journals of these intellectuals.⁶⁴

In addition to Huq's work, several secondary studies on the *buddhir mukti* movement have been published in recent years. These may be classified as follows. First, between 1968 and 1993, biographical and/or autobiographical volumes of each of the 'group of seven' have been published by individuals or by the Bangla Academy. Second, several *addas* (informal but relatively stable, discussion groups⁶⁵) of Bangladeshi

⁶⁴ This is a major contribution of Huq's book, although some mistakes of date and year must be corrected. For example, the Samaj was founded, not on January 19, 1925, but on January 17, 1926. The Samaj survived not until 1936, but up to 1938. See, Khondkar Sirajul Huq, *Muslim Sahitya Samaj: Samaj Cinta o Sahitya Karma* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1984).

⁶⁵ David Kopf calls *addas* "endless gossiping and intellectualizing." See, David Kopf, "The Image of Bengal in the emerging literature of Bangladesh: A fiction of Hasan Azizul Huq," published in Clinton B.

intellectuals have collected writings on Wadud and published them in edited volumes. An *adda* in Dhaka in the early 1970s, led to the formation of a committee on Raja Rammohun Roy and Wadud: *Raja Rammohun Roy o Kazi Abdul Wadud Smriti Udjapan Committee* or 'A committee of celebration for remembrance of Raja Rammohun Roy and Kazi Abdul Wadud.'⁶⁶ The committee organized a seminar on May 19, 1972, to mark the bicentennial of Rammohun's birth and Wadud's second death anniversary. Abdul Kadir, a living member of the 'group of seven,' wrote and read the first intellectual biography on Wadud: *Kazi Abdul Wadud* (1976). Other *addas* of Dhaka University had also published similar works. One *adda*, stating their purpose to be 'collecting literary criticism' (*sahitya samalocana samgraha*), published a volume: *Wadud Carca* (1982), or 'research on Wadud.' Similarly, an *adda* of Chittagong: Bangladesh Literary Society (*Bangladesh Sahitya Praishad*) published a volume, *Kazi Abdul Wadud Prasanga* (1987). Third, since the 1960s, many Bengali journals and newspapers of Bangladesh and West Bengal, have reviewed Kazi Wadud and the *buddhir mukti* movement.⁶⁷

Seely (ed.), *Women, Politics and Literature in Bengal* (East Lansing: Asian Studies Center, Michigan State University, 1981), p.157.

⁶⁶ The members of the committee were: Professor Kabir Choudhury (Dhaka University, hereafter D.U.); Prof. Begum Sufia Kamal (D.U.); Abul Fazal (living participant of *buddhir mukti* movement); Shamsul Huda (Son-in-law of Kazi Wadud and living participant of *buddhir mukti* movement); Abdul Kadir (living participant of *buddhir mukti* movement); Prof. Nilima Ibrahim (D.U.); Saokat Usman (writer); Syed Nuruddin (?); Sanaul Huq (writer); Prof. Salauddin Ahmad (D.U.); Prof. Zillur Rahaman Siddique (D.U.); Prof. Serajul Islam Choudhury (D.U.); Abu Jafar Shamsuddin (writer); Prof. Hasan Hafizur Rahman (D.U.); Prof. Anisuzzaman (D.U.); Shamsur Rahman (poet and novelist); Abdar Rashid; Abdul Gani Hazari (writer); Prof. Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir (D.U.); Prof. Hasan Azizul Huq (D.U.); Karunamoi Goswami; Prof. Akram Hussain (D.U.); Bashir Al Helal; Prof. Sardar Fazlul Karim (D.U.); Hemanta Kumar Ghosh (secretary, Bangladesh *Brahmo Samaj*); Sanjida Khatun (daughter of Kazi Mutahar Hussain); and Humayun Kabir. See, Bashir Al Helal (ed), "*Raja Rammohun Royer Dvi-shata Janmabarshiki o Kazi Abdul Waduder Dvitiya Mrituybarshiki*" or 'Raja Rammohun's bicentennial birth anniversary and Kazi Wadud's second death anniversary' (Dhaka, May 19, 1972).

⁶⁷ See for example, Muhammad Mahfujullah, "*Itihaser Aloke Kazi Abdul Wadud o Buddhir Mukti Andolan*," published in *Bangla Academy Patrika*, Vol. XV, No. 2 (July-October, 1970), pp. 34-72; "*Buddhir mukti andolan: Kayekjan Lekhak*," published in *Parikram*, Vol. II, No. 3 (1963) pp. 205-212; *Buddhir Mukti o Renaissan Andolan* (Dhaka: Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh). Anisuzzaman, "*Buddhir mukti andolan*," *Parikram* (November-December, 1962), pp. 335-338. Abdul Huq, "*Shikhar Sandhane*," *Samakal*, Vol. V, No. 3-5 & 6-8 (1961). Ahmed Sharif, "*Imrej Amale Muslim-manasher Paricay-sutra*," *Samakal*, Vol. III, No. 7 (1959), pp. 524-528. Ahmed Nurul Islam, "*Kazi Abdul Wadud o Muslim Sahitya Samaj*," *Nibandhamala*, Vol. IV (June 1988), pp. 54-66. Wakil Ahmad, "*Muslim Sahitya Samaj o Buddhir mukti Andolan*," *Bhasha Sahitya Patra*, Vol. IX, (1981), 85-110. Annadashankar Ray, "*Jiban Darshanik*

The intellectual output of these *addas* and literary journals has been publication of a substantial amount of descriptive articles on Wadud and the *buddhir mukti* movement. There is, however, no major criticism of the literature, thought, and impact of Wadud and the *buddhir mukti* movement, except by writers of 'neo-Marxist' and 'Islamic liberal' orientations. Ahmed Sharif belongs to the former category. Sharif is a professor of Bengali literature of Dhaka University and a specialist on Sufi tradition. Sharif began criticizing Wadud in 1959. In an article published in that year, Sharif frankly admitted that he had been inspired to write the article in retaliation for Wadud's alleged "sarcastic and ignorant comments on Muslims in *Banglar Jagaran* (1956) or 'Bengal Awakening.'"⁶⁸ The reason for Sharif's hostile comments is that Wadud had criticized the fundamentalism of the Wahabi movement. Sharif, on the contrary, in the article eulogized Wahabi fundamentalists and many other Muslim peasant rebels who had fought against British "exploitation and imperialism" in India. It should be noted that in *Banglar Jagaran* Wadud did not in fact make comments derogatory to the peasant movement.⁶⁹

Sharif's second article criticizing Wadud was published in 1982. Here Sharif, without citing any evidence from Wadud's writing, depicted him as a "*mumin mussalman*" or a 'faithful Muslim.'⁷⁰ The neo-Marxist scholar deconstructed Wadud's

Wadud," *Desh* (Calcutta), June-July, 1970, pp. 955-961. Muzaffar Ahmad, "Kazi Abdul Wadud," *Desh*, June-July, 1970, p. 962. Abdur Rauf, "Jar mantra Chila Buddhir Mukti," *Anandabazar Patrika*, August 23, Sunday, 1993. Saktisadhan Mukhopadhyay, "Prabal Jharer Mukheo Disha Haranni Tini," *Anandabazar Patrika*, August 23, Sunday, 1993. Shamsul Huda, "Manishi Abdul Waduder Karmamay Jiban;" Mahbubul-Alam, "Kazi Abdul Wadud;" Abul Fazal, "Mukta Buddhir Dishari Kazi Abdul Wadud;" Mofazzal Haider Choudhury, "Kazi Abdul Wadud, Ekti Prashasti;" *Ittefaq*, June 7, Sunday, 1970. Arabinda Poddar, "Kazi Abdul Wadud: Smaraniya Bangali, Mananshila Byaktiva," *Purbadesh*, June 21, 1970. Editorial, "Rammohunke Smaran Karche Bangladesh," *Sambad*, May 21, 1972. Syed Abdul Karim, "Abul Hussain," *Banglabazar Magazine*, August 5, 1993.

⁶⁸Janab Kazi Abdul Waduder *Banglar Jagaron granthe mussalman sambandhe je ajnanta kimba tacchilayr chap rayeche, tai e prabandha racanay praracana jugiyeche*. Ahmed Sharif, "Imrej Amale Muslim-manasher paricay-sutra," *Samakal*, Vol. III, No. 7 (1959), p. 528.

⁶⁹ Ahmed Sharif, "Imgrej Amale Muslim-manasher Paricay-sutra," p. 524. Sharif's article was published in Bengali journal, *Samakal*, but with a strong dissent by its editor: "The author's conclusion is sudden and short and it is not completely original. We will publish a different view shortly."

⁷⁰Ahmed Sharif, "Kazi Abdul Wadud," published in Syed-ur Rahman (ed.), *Wadud Carca* (Dhaka: Academic publishers, 1982), p. 125.

universal humanism, unfettered rationalism, and human identity. He also wrote that Wadud was inspired by Subas Chandra, Jamaluddin Afgani and Hazrat Mohammad. He also declared: "They (*buddhir mukti* intellectuals) lived in the Bengal in 1920s, but they could not get rid of an infatuation with Medina and Mecca."⁷¹ Finally, the neo-Marxist author suppressed Wadud's critiques of Islam. Our answer to his speculative scholarship is that the neo-Marxist author was motivated to Islamacize the *buddhir mukti* movement in order to downplay the creative role of Wadud. David Kopf has rightly said:

Marxists are not terribly impressed with the creative intellectual accomplishments of the renaissance giants..."⁷²

The second critic of Wadud and the *buddhir mukti* movement was an 'Islamic liberal,' Muhammad Mahfujullah. His critiques were published in some Bengali journals from 1969 through 1980 and collected and published as a book by the Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh.⁷³ Mahfujullah's attempt, like Ahmed Sharif, is to portray Wadud as a "self-conscious Muslim," of course, for a different purpose. Mahfujullah's purpose is to Islamicize Wadud and the *buddhir mukti* movement in order to give them a Pakistani identity. Mahfujullah ascribed Muslim self-conscious to Wadud on three flimsy grounds. i) Wadud was inspired not only by Rammohun; but also by the Mutazilites, Abu Hanifa, Abul Fazal, Akbar; ii) Wadud frequently used communal symbols, both 'Hindu' and 'Muslim.' iii) The *buddhir mukti* movement named its organization, Muslim Sahitya Samaj and "their knowledge, cultivation of thought, and attention was essentially centered around Muslim society." Like Ahmed Sharif, Mahfujullah also suppressed the radical critiques of Islam by Wadud, Abul Hussain, Abdul Kadir, and other rationalist participants in the Samaj. In a review article, Anisuzzaman notes inconsistency and lack

⁷¹ Ahmed Sharif, "Kazi Abdul Wadud," p. 128.

⁷² David Kopf, "Pakistani Identity and the Historiography of Muslim Bengal," p. 115.

⁷³ These articles were collected and published as a book by Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh. Mahfujullah paid hearty gratitude to the Islamic Foundation for this act: "I pay my hearty gratitude to Islamic cultural center. Without their effort, these articles would only have been imprisoned in the journals." See Muhammad Mahfujullah (ed.), *Buddhir Mukti o Renaissan Andolan* (Dhaka: Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh, 1988), p. 10.

of evidence by Mahfujullah: "Although the author has pointed out a Muslim self-consciousness of Wadud and Abdul Kadir, he also complained that these authors lacked a Muslim self-consciousness. The author should cite evidence from their writings to prove the latter."⁷⁴

This survey of the secondary literature leaves us with an impression that the thought of the Bengali Muslim intellectuals of the present century, and especially their more radical or rational humanist thought, needs to be addressed and reinterpreted in English language scholarship. The historians in the West do not know the Bengali Muslim intellectual world of the present century, not to speak of the rational humanist trend of the Bengali Muslim intelligentsia.⁷⁵

This thesis aims to remedy this situation by examining in some detail that--tendency of modern Bengali Muslim thought that is most distinctive of Bengal--and least developed elsewhere in the subcontinent. That type is the rational humanism advocated most explicitly and forcefully by Kazi Abdul Wadud and his associates in the *buddhir mukti* movement. But, in order to situate this distinctive tendency of Bengali Muslim intellectuals in the wider context of modern Bengali Muslim thought, we offer here brief sketches of the other two main types or tendencies of modern Bengali Muslim thought that was current when the *buddhir mukti* movement was at its height. Needless to say, each of these types merits extensive study in its own right. Here we briefly identify and introduce what we call "neo-orthodox" and "Islamic liberals" types of Bengali Muslim thought current in the first half of the present century. The former was a powerful anti-thesis of the rational humanism of the *buddhir mukti* movement. The latter was a weaker middle position between the other two.

⁷⁴ Anisuzzaman, "*Buddhir mukti Andolan*," *Parikram*, Vol. II, No. 3 (1963), pp. 205-212. The essay was reprinted in Muhammad Mahfujullah, *Buddhir Mukti o Renaissance Andolan*, pp. 189-193.

⁷⁵ David Kopf admitted this reality in one article: "Not much is yet known in the United States about contemporary Bangladeshi literature nor about the writers themselves." See David Kopf, "The Image of Bengal in the emerging literature of Bangladesh: A fiction of Hasan Azizul Huq," p. 157.

IV. Intellectual views of neo-orthodox spokesmen in Bengali Muslim society.

The urban-based intellectual history of modern Bengali-speaking and Bengali-writing Muslim intellectuals began in the late nineteenth century. One of the most vocal groups prominent in that modern Bengali-speaking and Bengali-writing Muslim intellectual history was a group we call the neo-orthodox group. The intellectuals of this group were fairly close to Islamic "reformists" who launched programs of Islamization in the rural areas of Bengali Muslim society throughout the nineteenth century.⁷⁶ Yet, unlike nineteenth century rural reformists, the neo-orthodox intellectuals expressed their orthodoxy by establishing modern intellectual organizations. Educationally, a few of them had acquired Madrasah education, but the majority had received some English education. We call this group "neo-orthodox" because orthodoxy of the group existed in a "type of symbiotic relationship" with modernity.⁷⁷

During first half of the twentieth century, Mawlana Mohammad Akram Khan (1868-1968) was the most forceful spokesmen of the neo-orthodox trend in Bengali Muslim society. Akram was not alone. He had several close associates, for example, Mawlana Manirujjaman Islamabadi (1874-1950), Syed Ismail Hussain Shiraji (1880-1931), Syed Emdad Ali (1880-1956), Mujibur Rahman (1869-1940).

The neo-orthodox were the first of Bengali-speaking and Bengali-writing Muslim intellectuals to found intellectual organizations and publish newspapers and journals for spreading a clear set of Muslim ideological views. Abul Fazal, a rational humanist Bengali Muslim intellectual, differed with Akram on ideological issues but acknowledged: "We are forever indebted to Akram for a permanent daily newspaper."⁷⁸

⁷⁶ I refer to the early nineteenth century Islamization movements by the Faraidi, Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah and Ahl-i-Hadith groups. For further reference see, Rafiuddin Ahmed, *Bengali Muslims: A Quest for Identity 1870-1905*, pp. 39-72.

⁷⁷ Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (eds.), *Fundamentalism Observed*, I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. vii.

⁷⁸ Abul Fazal, "Ekti Nam Ekti Itihas." published in Abu Jafar (ed.), *Maolana (Mawlana) Akram Khan* (Dhaka: Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, 1986), pp. 135.

At the turn of the present century, intellectual institutions of any kind owned by Bengali-speaking and Bengali-writing Muslims were virtually non-existent. The Urdu-speaking Muslim intellectuals of Bengal, for example, Sayyid Amir Ali (1894-1928) and Nawab Abdul Latif (1828-1893), had founded elite literary clubs, like the Muhommedan Literary Society (1863), in Calcutta. Yet the organization was an exclusive forum of Urdu-speaking *asraf* (elite) Muslims without any active participation by the Bengali-speaking and Bengali-writing *atraf* (common) intellectuals.⁷⁹

Mohammad Akram Khan filled this vacuum of the Bengali-speaking and Bengali writing Muslim intellectuals. Akram was a Madrasah-educated intellectual, but he began a career as a professional journalist. He wrote essays in the Bengali Muslim journal, *Ahl-i Hadith*, owned and edited by the Ahl-i Hadith organization, Anjuman-i-Ahl-i-Hadith of Bengal. He was also sub-editor of a Bengali Muslim journal, *Mohammadi Akhbar*. The journal published both Urdu and Bengali essays. Akram's job was to translate Urdu essays into Bengali and Bengali into Urdu. From 1903, Akram edited and published his own journal, *Masik Mohammadi* (monthly). The journal continued for a year. In 1908, he published the *Saptahik Mohammadi* (weekly). In 1927, he re-published *Masik Mohammadi* and the journal continued to be published until after the partition of India (1947). Akram also published three more journals, a monthly Bengali, *Al-Islam* (1913); an Urdu daily, *Jamana* (1920), and the weekly Bengali, *Sebak* (1921). In 1936, Akram published the Bengali newspaper, *Azad*, which was voice of the Bengal Muslim League and played a decisive role to bring Pakistan into reality in East Bengal.

Akram was associated with several religio-literary Calcutta-based intellectual organizations. He was once vice-president (1917-1918) of the Bangiya Mussalman Sahitya Samiti (Bengali Muslims Literary Association). This literary association published its journal, *Bangiya-Mussalman-Sahitya-Patrika* (Bengali Muslims Literary

⁷⁹ See for details, Enamul Haque (ed.), *Nawab Bahadur Abdul Latif: His writings & Related Documents* (Dhaka: Samudra Prakashani, 1968).

Journal). In 1913, Akram, Manirujjaman Islamabadi, Mohammad Shahidullah and host of others, including Abul Kalam Azad, founded the *Anjuman-i-Ulemae (Ulama) Bangla*. The organization was an association of the ulama in Bengal. Akram was also a member of the Bengal Provincial Tanjim Committee. He was also advisor to the Young Men's Muslim Association (1927) of Calcutta.⁸⁰ These organizations and journals were agencies of Akram and his associates that used to spread and implement neo-orthodox views in the Bengali Muslim society.

In his intellectual life, Akram was bold and earnest about his ideological standpoint. He told Bengali Muslims frankly, "...Except *allah* and *rasul*,... we accept none of the *pirs* and *ulema*, if their teachings are contradictory to the Quran and Hadith."⁸¹ Again he wrote, "Except the Quran and the true Hadith, whatever historical traditions and learning we gather from other sources, we have the right to examine and accept in the light of the Quran and the Hadith."⁸² In the first issue of *Masik Mohammadi*, Akram identified two ideological trends in Bengali Muslim society, the *puratan* (old) and the *adhunik* (modern) trends. What he meant by 'old trend' was the "popular" or "syncretistic" tendency of the village mollas, while the 'modern' was rational humanism of certain Bengali Muslim intelligentsia. Akram accepted neither of the two trends: "I must tell the first group (old trend), 'Open your doors'. Let the true light of Islam glorify you. I must tell the second group (modern), 'Open your eyes'. Look at the eternal beauties of Islam..."⁸³ Akram often told his associate Mujibur Rahman Khan, "I am a super non-believer (*gora nastik*); as well, I am an orthodox *Mussalman*." Mujib explained that Akram's super-non-belief was his undeclared *jihad* against *pirs* and their acts of *shirk*

⁸⁰ Mujibur Rahman (ed), *The Mussalman*, August.19, 1927 and September 2, 1927.

⁸¹ Mohammad Akram Khan, *Mostafa Carit* (Dhaka: Fourth Edition, Jhinuk Pushtika, 1975), p.21.

⁸² Mohammad Akram Khan, *Mostafa Carit*, pp.22.

⁸³ Mohammad Akram Khan. "*Atma-nibedan*," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol.1, No.1, 1927, pp.1-2.

("polytheistic associationism").⁸⁴ Akram's orthodoxy was his opposition to the rational humanist intellectuals of the *buddhir mukti* movement. To this group Akram firmly asserted, "No question would be allowed to be raised against the Quranic text, proofs and arguments."⁸⁵ Akram's orthodoxy can be seen in several of his positions.

Akram recognized Bengali language as the mother tongue and language of expression of Bengali Muslims. Nevertheless, Akram and other neo-orthodox spokesmen criticized Bengali words and literature which express Hindu ideas or secular humanism as injurious to Islamic identity of Muslims.⁸⁶ Akram wanted, therefore, to Islamicize the Hindu words/symbols of the Bengali language and literature that do not confirm the

⁸⁴ Mujibur Rahman Khan, "Ek Ananyasadharan Pratibha," Abu Jafar (ed.), *Maolana (Mawlana) Akram Khan* (Dhaka: Islamic Foundation, 1986), p. 124. For Akram's and Mohammad Manirujjaman Islamabadi's programs of Islamization of the ordinary Muslims, see Dr. Sunil Kanti De, *Anjumane Olamae [Ulama] Bangla, 1913-1919* (Calcutta: Mallick Brothers, 1992). Mohammad Manirujjaman Islamabadi, "Anjumane-Ulama," *Al-Islam*, Vol. IV, No. 5 (1918), pp. 273-276. Manirujjaman Islamabadi, "Anjumane-Ulama," *Al-Islam*, Vol. IV, No. 10 (1919), pp. 554-559. Manirujjaman Islamabadi, "Samaj Samskar," *Al-Islam*, Vol. IV, No. 10, (1919), pp. 541-552. Manirujjaman Islamabadi, "Anjumane-Ulama o Samaj Samskar," *Al-Islam*, Vol. V, No. 3 (1919), pp. 156-162. Mohammad Akram Khan and Manirujjaman Islamabadi, "Anurodh Patra," *Al-Islam*, Vol. V, No. 3 (1919), pp. 277-278. Manirujjaman Islamabadi, "Samaj Samskar," *Al-Islam*, Vol. V, No. 6 (1919), pp. 299-308. Manirujjaman Islamabadi, "Samaj Samskar," *Al-Islam*, Vol. V, No. 8 (1919), pp. 425-434.

⁸⁵ Abdul Huq, "Mawlana Akram Khar Dharma Cinta," published in Abdul Huq (ed.), *Sahitya o Svadhinata* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1974), p. 68.

⁸⁶ Akram argued that the Hindu symbols of Bengali language cannot protect distinctive of Muslim culture and tradition: "The distinctive Hindu culture and thought are safe in Sanskrit symbols of Bengali language. But Sanskrit symbols cannot safeguard Islamic traditions and thought." Further, he complained that Bengali literature written by many Hindus has no cultural value for the Muslims: "Muslims' religion, history, culture, and traditions, have been ignored, distorted and dishonored by the Hindus." Again he complained that the Hindu bhadralok's Bengali literature has infected doubt among Muslims about Islam. "Those Muslim intellectuals who grew up and were educated in the *parajati* (Hindu) literature and cultural, they are the one who disrespect and ridicule the truths and glory of Islam." See, Mohammad Akram Khan, "Maktab Madrachar Pathya," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. V, No. 8 (1933). Mohammad Akram Khan, "Anacar o Tahar pratikar," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. VI, No. 11 (1933). Sheikh Habibur Rahman, "Jatiya Sahitya Hindu-Mussalman," *Al-Islam*, Vol. II, No. 1 (1916). Sheikh Habibur Rahman, "Samaj-samskarer Kayekti Katha," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. VII, No. 5 (1934). Mohammad Ahab Choudhury, "Amader Jatiya Byadhi o Tahar Pratikar," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. II, No. 4 (1928). Mohammad Ahab Choudhury, "Uparyase Jatiya Adarsha," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. VI, No. 9 (1933). Syed Emdad Ali, *Mahashmashan Kabye Anislamic o Ashlil bhab, Bangiya-Mussalman-Sahitya-Patrika*, Vol. II, No.1-2 (1919). Goiam Mostafa, "Sahitye Asampradayikata," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. I, No. 9 (1928). Mohammad Abdul Hakim Bikrampur, "Bangabhasa o Mussalmani Shabda," *Saogat*, Vol. IV, No. 7 (1927). Molla Nasirul Huq, "Bangla Sahitye Mussalmani Prabhab," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. IX, No. 6 (1935).

Islamic identity of Bengali Muslims.⁸⁷ For example, in one article in *Mohammadi*, "Bangla Sahitya o Mussalman," or "Bengali literature and the Muslim," Akram wrote: "Even though Bengali is the mother tongue of the Hindus and Muslims, our national thought and culture are not the same as that of the Hindus."⁸⁸ Akram proposed several restrictions on the Bengali language for making it conform to the Muslim culture. One limitation Akram imposed was that "the Arabic symbols of the Quran and hadith will not be translated into Bengali."⁸⁹ For this he cited such Arabic symbols as carry crucial meaning of the Islamic faith, for example, *iman* (faith), *shirk* (polytheistic association), *salat* (prayer), *sawm* (fasting), and *bedat* (innovation in Islam). These and similar other Arabic religious words are Muslims' "national words (*jatiya shabda*)." A translation of these national words into Bengali, Akram feared, would deform the meaning of the faith. For example, an article of the Bengali Hindu journal, *Prabasi* (May-June, 1932), translated *bedat* and *shirk* in Bengali as "bad" (*manda*) and "good" (*bhalo*). Akram was furious of this mistranslation, "Till now no non-Muslim writer has ever dared to make such a cruel attack upon Muslims' national words."⁹⁰ The meaning of *bedat*, Akram asserted is "innovation in Islam;" it cannot be translated "bad." Because in Islam,

⁸⁷ See, Mohammad Akram Khan, "Maktab-Madrachar Pathya," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. V, No. 8 (1933), pp. 523-524. Mohammad Akram Khan, "Sabhapatir Abhibhasan," *Bangiya-Mussalman-Sahitya-Patrika*, Vol. I, No. 4 (1918), p. 310. Mohammad Akram Khan, "Atma-bicar," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. V, No. 12 (1932), pp. 817-824. Mohammad Akram Khan, "Alocana," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. VI, No. 12 (1933), pp. 866-867. Nazir Ahmad, "Islamabad Namer Upar Bangabhashar Prabhav," *Al-Islam*, Vol. IV, No. 4 (1918). Nazir Ahmad Choudhury, "Anulikhan Sambandhe Jat Kincit," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. I, No. 3 (1928), pp. 173-176. Abdul Gafur Siddique, "Mussalmani Bangla ki?" in *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. XV., No. 6 (1941), pp. 318-320. Khademul Insan, "Bangalir Matribhasha" in *Al-Islam*, Vol. I, No. 8 (1915), pp. 465-470. Abdur Razzak Khan, "Bangla Sahitya Arabi-Farsi Shabda," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. I, No. 4 (1928), pp. 214-215. Molla Nasirul Huq, "Banglabhashar Byakaran o Barnanubad Samasya," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. VI, No. 10 (1933), pp. 710-712.

⁸⁸ Mohammad Akram Khan, "Bangla Sahitya o Mussalman," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. IX, No. 5 (1935), p. 300.

⁸⁹ Mohammad Akram Khan, "Bangla Sahitya o Mussalman," p. 303. See also, Mohammad Akram Khan, "Banan-bibhrat," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. III, No. 10 (1930), pp. 798-800.

⁹⁰ Mohammad Akram Khan, "Maktab Madrachar Pathya," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. V, No. 8 (1933), p. 523.

"robbery means a bad work but all bad works are not *bedat*."⁹¹ Similarly, Akram argued that *salat* (prayer) cannot be translated into Bengali as *upashana* (prayer): "All *upashana* is not *salat*. Hindus, Christians, and the Jews pray, but to Muslims, *salat* means *ebadat* (Ar. worship) to Allah only."⁹² Akram also refused translation of *sawm* (fasting) into the Hindu Bengali *upabas* (fasting): "When a sick person does not eat dinner, it is also *upabas* (fasting); but this would not be *roza* (Persian, means fast) or *sama* (Ar. to observe fasting)."⁹³ Again, the Arabic word *rasul*, according to Akram, could not be translated into Bengali by *abatar* or *prerita mahapurush* (appointed great person) or *svargiya bhabadi* (heavenly mystic person)."⁹⁴

Akram suggested several guidelines for writing Arabic and Farsi words in the Bengali language. First, for transliteration of the Arabic and Farsi words, the shape of the Bengali alphabets should be changed. Second, there is no necessity to follow the Western method of the transliteration. Third, there should be an approximate pronunciation of the transliterated Arabic or Farsi words. Fourth, for transliteration of the Arabic and Farsi words, new 'Typesetting' should be set up.⁹⁵ Finally, Akram also appealed to Bengali

⁹¹ Mohammad Akram Khan, "Maktab Madrachar Pathya," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. V. No. 8 (1933), p. pp. 524.

⁹² Mohammad Akram Khan, "Abhibhashan," Akram's speech to *Tritiya Bangiya Mussalman Shahitya Sanmelaan*, *Bangiya-Mussalman-Sahitya-Patrika*, Vol. I, No. 4 (1918), pp. 310.

⁹³ Mohammad Akram Khan, "Abhibhashan," Akram's speech to *Tritiya Bangiya Mussalman Sahitya Sanmelaan*, published in *Bangiya-Mussalman-Sahitya-Patrika*, Vol. I, No. 4 (1918), p. 310.

⁹⁴ Mohammad Akram Khan, "Abhibhashan," *Bangiya-Mussalman-Sahitya-Patrika*, Vol. I, No. 4 (1918), p. 310. See also Mohammad Akram's Bengali translation of the Quran, *Quran Shariff*, I (Dhaka: Reprinted Jhinuk Pushtika, 1960).

⁹⁵ Mohammad Akram Khan, "Arabi Farsi Shabder Anulikhan," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. VI, No. 12 (1933), p. 867. Akram cited several examples of wrong spelling of Arabic, Urdu and Farsi words in Bengali transliteration that lead to their deformed meanings: "I saw Bengali Muslim writers write *Iqbal's pyame-masrek* as *pyame mushirk*. The former means, "message of the east," while the later means, "message of the worshipper of idols." The Arabic word, *fajel* (well versed in the Quran) has been misspelled in Bengali as *fajil*, which means wicked. He also claimed that even educated Muslims transliterate *baqara* (Ar. cow) by *baqre* (Beng. goat). As result, Hindus challenged validity of the Muslim ritual, slaughtering of the cow."

Muslims, "Reject those Bengali words that are symbols of idolatry and ideals that are against Islam."⁹⁶

Akram also cited Rabindranath Tagore in essays many times. But Akram could not imagine Rabindranath as more than a Hindu poet. For example, Akram cited Rabindranath's essay, *Guptadhan*. The only theme that attracted Akram in this essay of Rabindranath was Tagore's treatment of *puja* by a Tantric saint, Mitrunjai, to his *debata*. Akram also praised Rabindranath for any comments that supported Muslim causes. For example, in 1929 Akram wrote in the editorial of *Mohammadi* that Tagore supported the Muslim cause for slaughtering the cow.⁹⁷ Yet, Akram never recommended Tagore as a poet of the Bengali Muslims. On the contrary, he claimed that Tagore's standing as poet was not higher than second and third grade Muslim poets.⁹⁸

On the eve of the 1937 Bengal Legislative Assembly election, one hundred twenty Bengali intellectuals of Hindu origin, including Rabindranath Tagore, sent a memo to the Secretary of State for India, Lord Zetland, for the annulment of the "communal award." Tagore feared the "possible danger to Bengali literature if the political predominance of the Muslim was allowed to be established in the province".⁹⁹ In reply an editorial in *Mohammadi*, entitled "*Rabindranath o Sampradayikata*" or "Rabindranath and communalism," denounced Tagore as, "anti-Muslim" (*muslim-bidvesh*), "critic of others"

⁹⁶ Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Maktab Madrachar Pathya*," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. V, No. 8 (1933), pp. 526.

⁹⁷ Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Alocana*," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. I, No. 8 (1929), cited by Anisuzzaman, *Muslim Banglar Samayik Patra*, p. 515.

⁹⁸ Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Alocana*," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. I, No. 4 (1927), cited by Anisuzzaman, *Muslim Banglar Samayik Patra*, p. 508.

⁹⁹ *Modern Review*, Vol. LX, No. 2 (July 1936), p.107. *Indian Review*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 8 (August, 1936), p. 495, cited by Enayetur Rahim, "Bengal Election, 1937, Fazlul Huq and M.A. Jinnah: A Study in Leadership Stress in Bengal Politics," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, Vol. XXII., No. 2 (1977), p. 106.

(*paraninda*) and "envious" (*parashrikatarata*), and warned that, if for Rabindranath's anti-Muslim stand there was riot, Muslims could not be blamed.¹⁰⁰

Akram popularized Indo-Muslim and Pan-Islamic traditions in Bengal. What he popularized of the Indo-Muslim and Pan-Islamic traditions was not, however, Sufi and rationalistic developments in the Muslim world outside of Bengal. I am not aware that Akram wrote any essay on Sufi thought of Sheikh Saadi, rationalism of the Mutazilites and Ibn Rushd or the thought of Mostafa Kemal Ataturk of Turkey.¹⁰¹ On the contrary, Akram felt pride in the orthodox Wahabi movement of Arabia¹⁰² and justified the jihad campaign of Wahabis against the British rule in India.¹⁰³ Akram's Bengali journal, *Masik Mohammadi*, published articles on Indo-Muslim historical figures and their Islamic glory, grandeur, chivalry, and Islamic toleration. These were defended mainly from the critiques of Hindu intellectuals, notably from the novels of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.

Akram's perception of the West was centered not on apologetics of Islam as at par with reason and science in the West. Akram's stand was more aggressive, glorifying Islam as the greatest religion compared to Christianity and Judaism. Akram put forward this thesis by maliciously downgrading Christianity and Judaism as "pious frauds".¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Editorial, "Rabindranath o Sampradayikata," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. IX, No. 11 (1936), p. 781. Mohammad Akram Khan, "Rabindranather Bani," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. V, No. 9 (1932), pp. 660-661.

¹⁰¹ Akram denounced Mostafa Kemal's secularism (*dharma sambhandhe nirapeksha*) as: "New evil acts of Kemal Pasha" (*Kemal Pashar nutan ku-kirti*). See Mohammad Akram Khan, "Alocana," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. VI, No. 5 (1932), pp. 365-366.

¹⁰² See Mohammad Akram Khan, "Alocana," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. VI, No. 5 (1932), pp. 366-367.

¹⁰³ Akram justified Jihad in his Quranic commentaries. See, Mohammad Akram Khan, *Quran Shariff*, I, pp. 237, 243, 256, 292, 305, 336.

¹⁰⁴ As an orthodox Muslim, Akram's standpoint was not to challenge the clear Quranic messages to the revealed religion of Judaism. He, however, charged that the Jews from the time of Hazrat Mohammad were not believers of monotheism: "They worshipped cow, priests and scholars." Further he brought allegation of "culpable homicide" against the Jews for "conspiracy" to kill Hazrat Mohammad. He also brought allegation that the Jews wanted to kill Abraham and forced Moses to take shelter in the mountain. See Mohammad Akram Khan *Quran Shariff*, I, pp. 458-459, 109, 177, 109, 108, 135-136. Akram criticized Christianity on two grounds. First: "Jesus is begotten son of God." Second, he argued that "The Bible is a pious fraud." See Mohammad Akram Khan, *Quran Shariff*, pp. 370, 376, 373, 161, 472, 134, 419, 424, 423, 429, 463, 472. Also see Mohammad Akram Khan, *Mostafa Carit*, p.133.

These critiques of Akram were far more aggressive than the anti-Christian polemics written by rural Muslim "traditionalists" in nineteenth century Bengal. The "traditionalists," incited by Christian missionary propaganda in Bengal, did not write anti-Jewish polemics. Furthermore, Muslim traditionalists, being too little literate to understand the Arabic Quran, could not effectively use the Quran against Christian missionary propaganda, except citing passages from the *mussalmani* puthi literature.¹⁰⁵ On the contrary, Akram was fully conversant with the Quran, Hadith and critiques of Islam in Orientalist writings.¹⁰⁶ Akram tried to justify his criticism of Christian and Jewish religion with Quranic verses,¹⁰⁷ critics of Christianity in the West¹⁰⁸ and by

¹⁰⁵ Rafiuddin Ahmed, "Muslim-Christian Polemics and Religious Reform in Nineteenth-Century Bengal: Munshi Meheru'llah of Jessore," published in Kenneth W. Jones (ed.), *Religious Controversy in British India: Dialogues in South Asian Languages* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

¹⁰⁶ This is a list of authors, titles of books, essays and pamphlets that Akram cited as critiques of Islam in the West. Some authors' names and titles of writings are not complete and confusing. Nevertheless, we quote the way, Akram cited them in English. (1) Boyle's Critical Dictionary. (2) John Megee, *Remarkable Prophecy* (Edition, 8th). (3) 'The Account of Prophet' in *Lithgow's Travels* (Reprint, 1906). (4) *Sandy's Travels to Turkey* (Edition, 5th). (5) *Complete History of the Turks*, Vol. II, (1701). (6) *Islamic Library*. (7) Nandacus, *History of Magic* (1657). (8) *Weber's Metrical Romances*, Vol. II (1810). (9) T. Archer, *History of the Crusades*. (10) W. Bedwell, *Muhamedis Imposture* (London, 1615). (11) W. Bedwell, *Mahomet Unmasked* (London, 1642). (12) Joshep Pitts, *Religion and Manners of Mohametans* (1704). (13) Dean Prideaux, *The True Nature of the Imposture* (London, 1718). (14) Count Boulain-Villers, *Life of Mahomet* (1731). (15) Reverend Sale, *Translation of the Quran* (1731). (16) E. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London, 1776). (17) N. Alcock, *The Rise of Mahomet Accounted For* (London, 1796). (18) C. Mills, *History of Mahomedanism* (London: 1817). (19) Reverend R. C. Forster, *Mahomedism Unveiled* (London: 1829). (20) G. Higgins, *An Apology for the life of Mahomed* (London, 1829). (21) W. C. Taylor, *History of Mahomedanism* (London, 1834). (22) Thomas Carlyle, *Hero As Prophet* (London, 1840). (23) Reverend George Bush, *Life of Mohammed* (New York, 1844). (24) Washinton Irving, *Life of Mahomet* (London, 1850). (25) Abul Fada, *Life of Mohamad*, translated by Reverend W. Murry. (26) A. Sprenger, *Life of Mohamed* (Clacutta, 1851). (27) William Muir, *Life of Mahomet* (London, 1858). (28) Reverend G. Akehurst, *Imposture Instanced in the Life of Mahomet* (London, 1859). (29) John Davenport, *Apology for Mahomed and the Quran* (London: 1869). (30) R. Bosworth Smith, *Mahomed and Mahomedanism* (London, 1874). (31) Reverend T.P. Huges, *Notes on Mahomedanism* (London, 1877). (32) J. W. H. Stobart, *Islam and its Founders* (London, 1878). (33) Marcus Dods, *Mahomed, Buddha and Christ* (London, 1878). (34) D.S. Margoliouth, *Mahomed* (London, 1906). (35) Dr. Henry Stubbe, *Rise and Progress of Mahometanism* (London ?). (36) Dr. G. W. Leitner, *Mahomedanism* (London ?). See, Akram Khan, *Mostafa Carit*, pp. 130-133.

¹⁰⁷ Akram divided suras of the Quran into two categories, "clear revelations" (*Muhakamaatun suras*) and "allegorical revelations" (*Mutashaabihat suras*). As to the later category of suras of the Quran, Akram's standpoint was that an *Alim*, educated in Arabic language and who understands the meaning of the Quran, has a right to interpret these suras independently. Akram asserted, therefore, that he has a right of freedom granted by the Quran to be critical of Christianity and of the Jews. The specific verses of the Quran that he

distorting verses of the holy Jewish-Christian Bible.¹⁰⁹ The neo-orthodox, therefore, wrote far more forceful critiques of Christianity and Judaism than Muslim traditionalists in rural areas of Bengal.

Yet Akram was not completely a "fundamentalist," in the sense of fundamentalism of Jama'at-i-Islam, as analyzed by Rafiuddin Ahmed. Ahmed, in a recent article, "Redefining Muslim identity in South Asia: The Transformation of the Jama'at-i-Islam," has defined and limited the boundaries of fundamentalism.¹¹⁰ According to Ahmed, the Muslim fundamentalists, like the Marxists, are definite and categorical for changing the institutions and structures of Muslim society. This includes, among many other things, the "state sponsored programs of Islamization," for example, changing the existing structure of polity of the state to what the fundamentalists call "theo-democracy" or a "divine democratic government." At the ideological level, the fundamentalists straightforwardly regard themselves as the "sole champion of true Islam." In this regard they apparently stress the "irrefutability of divinely inspired sources" and apply to themselves "freedom to interpret the laws and principles of Islam without reference to the views of other scholars." To return to the puritan Islam, the fundamentalists follow an

cites for this purpose are: 2:93, 2:54, 2:65, 2:72, 2:87, 2:91, 3:21, 3:7, 2:87, 2:116, 3:45, 3:46, 3:49, 3:45, 3:46, 3:49, 6: 102-3, 7:54, 35:3, 39:62-64, 3:78, etc. See Mohammad Akram Khan, *Quran Shariff*, I.

¹⁰⁸ Akram cited several names of the critics of Christianity in the West. For example, Akram cited, T.H. Horne, *Introduction to the critical study and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, II (London, 1881); Henry and Scott, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible* (London, 1834) and Dr. Arthur Drews, *Christian Mythology Unveiled* (?). Akram also quoted Voltaire's critical comments of the Bible from Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan's "Sixth Essay" in *Tabyin al-kalam*. Sir Sayyid did not support critical comments of the Bible. He wrote: "That these books (Bible) are not prophetic is unsupported by any argument especially when we see prophetic authors have taken quotations from them in their writings." See Aziz Ahmad and G.E. Von Grunebaum (ed.), *Muslim Self-statement in India and Pakistan 1857-1968* (Weisabadan: O. Harrassowitz, 1970), p. 47. Akram's comment was: "Voltaire's comments are useful examples of pious fraud of the Bible." See Akram Khan, *Mostafa Carit*, pp. 133-137, 164 and *Quran Shariff*, I, pp. 430, 420.

¹⁰⁹ How Akram distorted the Bible can be demonstrated by several examples. We cite here one example. Akram quoted Luke 3:23 from Henry and Scott's critique of the Bible: "Jesus was the son of Joseph." What Akram suppressed here was that Luke 3:23 says: "Jesus...was the son, as people thought,...of Joseph..." See Mohammad Akram Khan, *Quran Shariff*, I, pp. 420.

¹¹⁰ Rafiuddin Ahmed, "Redefining Muslim Identity in South Asia: The Transformation of the Jama'at-i-Islam," published in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (eds), *Accounting for Fundamentalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 670-674.

"activist ideology of the Islamic movements" and become militant. The fundamentalists have defined rigidly an ideal Islamic order: "There could be no compromise on the fundamental principles that should guide the faithful. The choice is not simply between Islam and another system, but between Islam and *kufir* (infidelity). There is no alternative."¹¹¹ In politics, fundamentalists condemn the modernizing influence of the West and within the state apparatus their relation with 'secular elites' is one of profound hostility. Maududi, an ardent spokesman of Islamic fundamentalism in India (and later Pakistan), was against both the Indian nationalist Muslim leaders and the Muslim League.¹¹²

Akram's intellectual standpoint conformed to as well as differed from this definition of fundamentalism. Akram, like the fundamentalists, emphasized the irrefutability of the divinely inspired sources and was not willing to accept any source of knowledge if it does not conform with the Quran and hadith, as he understood them. Like fundamentalists, Akram strengthened the separation of Muslim from non-Muslim by a rigid construction of Islamic doctrines and practices. This strict construction also led him to be a severe critic of non-Muslims, notably the Jews and Christians. Akram and his associates also had programs of Islamization, for ordinary Muslims in the rural areas and for educated Muslims in the urban areas.

Yet Akram was not fully a fundamentalist. His Islamization program did not require fundamental change and was not militant. The programs of Islamization were targeted for giving a Muslim identity, but not by destroying existing institutions. For example, Akram's aim was not to abolish Bengali language in favor of Urdu and Arabic, but to import and safeguard the purity of Urdu and Arabic words in Bengali language. Nor did Akram form an organization which was rigorously structured, like Jama'at-i-

¹¹¹ Rafiuddin Ahmed, "Redefining Muslim Identity in South Asia: The Transformation of the Jama'at-i-Islam," p. 672.

¹¹² Rafiuddin Ahmed, "Redefining Muslim Identity in South Asia: The Transformation of the Jama'at-i-Islam," p. 675.

Islam. Akram was never a member of Jama'at-i-Islam, before and after 1947. He was a vocal member of the Muslim League and his ideal leader was Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Akram was one of the three Bengali-speaking leaders who were willing and enlisted as members of Jinnah's Central Parliamentary Board of the Muslim League in 1936.¹¹³ In contrast to the fundamentalists, Akram was not suspicious of, but collaborated with, Western educated Islamic liberals. These Islamic liberals, although ideologically similar to as well as, different from Akram, formed the backbone of Akram's intellectual journals, notably *Mohammadi*. The management-level positions of *Mohammadi* were filled by these young Islamic liberals. For example, Abul Kalam Shamsuddin (1897-1978), Mujibur Rahman Khan (1910-1984), Mohammad Wajed Ali (1896-1954) and Dr. Abul Kasem (1902-?) held key positions in *Mohammadi's* editorial board, commercial, news, proof reading, and other departments. Akram paid them well and they happily accommodated to Akram's orthodoxy. For example, Dr. Abul Kasem wrote, "With this salary we lived in good houses, ate well, wore good clothes, went to theater and sometime sent money to our village home."¹¹⁴ Two intellectuals of Hindu origin, Nripendra Krishna Chattopadhyay and Asit Kumar Mukhopadhyay, also held positions in the editorial board.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ According to *Star of India* (August 25, 1936), Jinnah nominated only four non-Bengali-speaking aristocratic leaders, Haji Adamjee Dawood, Mirza Ahmad Ispahani, Faizullah Ganjee and Abdul Aziz Ansari. However, M.A.H. Ispahani stated that Jinnah also nominated other leaders: M.A.H. Ispahani, K. Nooruddin, A.R. Siddique and S. Kander Dehlavi, Khawja Habibullah, Khawja Nazimuddin, Khawja Shabuddin (all three from the Dhaka Nawab family), H.S. Suhrawardy, Akram Khan, Abdullah-al-Baki, Sir A.F. Rahman, Tamizuddin Khan. The last six names that includes two Bengali-speaking Muslim leaders, Mohammad Akram Khan and Tamizuddin, who according to A.K. Fazlul Huq were not direct recruits of Jinnah, but were nominated by the United Muslim Party of Bengal (UMP). See Kamruddin Ahmad, *The Social History of East* (Dhaka, 1967), p. 34. See also Enayetur Rahim, "Bengal Election, 1937, Fazlul Huq and M.A. Jinnah: A Study in Leadership Stress in Bengal Politics," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, Vol. XXII, No. 2 (1977).

¹¹⁴ Abul Kasem, "Maolana Akram Khan," Abu Jafar (ed.), *Maolana (Mawlana) Akram Khan*, p. 244.

¹¹⁵ Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, "Sambadpatrasebi Maolana Mohammad Akram Khan," Abu Jafar (ed.), *Maolana (Mawlana) Akram Khan*, p. 73.

In his commentaries on the Quran, Akram was a harsh critic of *mushrik*, based on his orthodox understanding of the Quran. Yet, it was Hindu and Western business advertisement published in *Mohammadi* that supported the journal in which Akram popularized Muslim orthodoxy. The popularity of *Mohammadi* among Bengali Muslims lured hundreds of Hindu businesses to publish advertisement in the journal. The leading-Calcutta based Hindu commercial houses that bought space in *Mohammadi* included: Jaharlal and Pannalal Company (cloth merchant); Kamal brothers (shoe merchant); B. Sarkar and Sons (jewelry merchant); A.K. Majumdar and Company (homeopath medicine); Bengal Shati Food Company (baby food merchant); Megaphone Company (Bengali music records). The commercial houses in Calcutta that imported Western manufactured goods also advertised in *Mohammadi*. A notable example was Kellogg's Corn Flake company, which published advertisement in *Mohammadi* in attractive language: "Have you used Kellogg's most nutritious and tasty breakfast cereal? For the energy of your body, there is nothing like this delicious and refined food. If you use it once, you will use it forever."¹¹⁶ On an average, fifteen pages of each issue of *Mohammadi* were bought by Hindu and Western businesses for publishing their commercials. At times, the disparity between the phrases of Bengali nationalism used in the Hindu commercials and orthodoxy that Akram focused in the essays of *Mohammadi* seemed awkward. For example, in one issue of the journal, the Megaphone Record Company advertised merchandise with the words, "The heritage of the Bangalis....The Svadeshi Record," while on the next page *Mohammadi* published articles, "Islam and Napoleon."

We do not know for sure if Akram knew such techniques of Western "Big business" as "backward vertical integration" of production with raw materials and

¹¹⁶ *Masik Mohammadi*, January-Feb, 1927.

"forward horizontal integration and merger" with distribution.¹¹⁷ But there is evidence that Akram followed some techniques of modern business. For printing *Mohammadi*, Akram owned a printing press, "*Mohammadi Press*." During 1930s, Akram introduced technological innovations in his printing press. The Bengal Congress leader, Naliniranjan Sarkar, acted as go-between for Akram and *Amritabazar Patrika* (English daily owned by Hindu) for Akram's buying an automated rotary machine from the later at a cheaper price.¹¹⁸ Akram also owned a distribution agency for circulation of *Mohammadi*, *Mohammadi book Agency*," that directly sold or mailed *Mohammadi* to the subscribers. This system of distribution as well as technological innovation reduced the cost of *Mohammadi* to its subscriber.

In 1903, when the journal was first published, only 500 copies were printed. The retail price of this twelve page paper was 4 *anas* (16 *anas*=1 Indian rupee, in those days). In 1927, when the journal was re-published, the retail price was increased only to 4.5 *anas*, but the pages were increased to sixty-four. About 5,000 copies were printed of the first issue (November 6, 1927) of the first volume of the journal. This was the largest printing of a Bengali Muslim journal at the lowest retail price (lower than the rational humanist journal, *Shikha*, published in 1927).¹¹⁹ The circulation of *Mohammadi* increased faster during later years. Akram received letters frequently from the readers such as, "Please send your *Mohammadi* alias *Bangabasi* (weekly Bengali journal owned and edited by Hindus) by V.P.(verified parcel)."¹²⁰ Akram was, therefore, what we call in this

¹¹⁷ Alfred D. Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. Chapter IV.

¹¹⁸ Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, "*Sangbadpatrasebi Maolana Mohammad Akram Khan*," Abu Jafar (ed.), *Maolana (Mawlana) Akram Khan*, p. 83.

¹¹⁹ The first volume of *Shikha*, printed 1000 copies and its retail price was 8 *anas*. This was almost double than the price of a copy of *Masik Mohmmadi* in 1927.

¹²⁰ Mujibur Rahman Khan, "*Ek Ananyasadharan Pratibha*," Abu Jafar (ed.), *Maolana (Mawlana) Akram Khan*, p. 91.

dissertation a neo-orthodox. He wrote and preached thunderous orthodoxy in harsh language that downgraded the West and secular Bengali symbols. But Akram was able to present these views, assisted by funds from the West and Hindus and by using modern methods and by employing English educated Muslim and Hindu intellectuals.

V. Intellectual views of Islamic Liberals in Bengal.

Parallel to the growth and development of neo-orthodox intellectuals, there was an Islamic liberal group of Bengali Muslim intellectuals. In addition to the names that are cited above, namely: Abul Kalam Shamsuddin (1897-1978), Mujibur Rahman Khan (1910-1984), Mohammad Wajed Ali (1896-1954) and Dr. Abul Kasem (1902-?), there were other Islamic liberals in the Bengali Muslim intellectual world in the first half of the twentieth century. They were, Mohammad Shahidullah (1885-1969), Sheikh Wajed Ali (1896-1954), Yakub Ali Choudhury (1877-1938), Mohammad Lutfar Rahman (1891-1936), Mohammad Barkatullah (1898-1974) and Islamic liberals who are cited in Chapter Five of this dissertation.

The Islamic liberals suffered in Bengal from "dilemmas" or "conflicts and contradictions" with regard to secular Bengali culture, which separated them from, to some extent, the neo-orthodox Muslim intellectuals. For example, the neo-orthodox, like Akram, tried to construct a strictly Muslim Bengali language, but not a Bengali Muslim identity, which the Islamic liberals did attempt. But the Islamic liberals suffered a dilemma on this issue: were they strictly Muslim Bengalis or Bengali Muslims? For example, in contrast to the neo-orthodox, the Islamic liberals expressed interest in non-communal, or secular Bengali literature and in the culture of rural and urban Bengalis of both Hindu and Muslim origin. A few of the Islamic liberals also demanded a Bengali state, *Bangladesh*, in 1930. Some also expressed doubt about accepting Pakistan in 1947. Yet there were persisting dilemmas of the Islamic liberals toward accepting non-communal symbols of Bengali culture, at the cost of communal Muslim self-consciousness.

For example, Shahidullah maintained personal and intellectual communications with Rabindranath Tagore. In 1920 Shahidullah read an article, "*Bharater Sadharan Bhasha*" or "The ordinary language(s) of India" at Shantiniketan and Tagore presided over the seminar.¹²¹ The article explored the possibility of Bengali language to be made the "lingua franca" in India. Earlier, in 1911, Shahidullah had praised Tagore, "He (Rabindranath) is the first Bengali poet who introduced new rules of phonetics in Bengali language... Persuaded by Rabandranath's research, we have now been able to discover in Bengali language the law of harmonic sequence or vocalic harmony."¹²² In 1921, Shahidullah took a vacation in Shantiniketan and two years later he represented Dhaka University in a Vishva-Bharati convocation ceremony. Tagore invited Shahidullah in 1923 to be a member of the Managing Committee of Vishva-Bharati,¹²³ but Shahidullah replied politely that he was not "competent to take this responsibility." In reality, it would seem, Shahidullah was not incompetent, but he was reluctant to be a patron of Vishva-Bharati. Shahidullah's could not become a member of Vishva-Bharati because that would imply participation in bhadrakok culture of Bengali-Hindu origin and possibly that would create a social and cultural gap with his neo-orthodox Muslim cohorts. When Tagore's invitation came, Shahidullah was a member of the Executive Committee and Akram was the vice-president of Bangiya Mussalman Shahitya Samiti. In 1923, while Shahidullah was teaching Sanskrit and Bengali in Dhaka University, he spent three months of summer vacation preaching Islam among Malakan Rajputs.¹²⁴ Despite refusal to be member of

¹²¹ Bhuiya Iqbal, *Rabindranather Ekguccha Patra* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1985), p.15.

¹²² Mohammad Shahidullah, "*Bangla Bhasha Tatve Rabindranath*," published in Shamsuzzaman Khan, Azhar Islam and Selina Hussain (eds), *Mohammad Shahidullah Smarakgrantha* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1985), p.42.

¹²³ Tagores letter to Shahidullah, published in Bhuiya Iqbal, *Rabindranather Ekguccha Patra*, p. 15.

¹²⁴ Ali Anwar, "*Mohammad Shahidullah: Kale bidhrita manush*," *Shahidullah Smarakgrantha*, p. 151.

Vishva-Bharati, yet Shahidullah used Tagore as a reference for securing a teaching position in a university abroad.¹²⁵

Shahidullah wrote a few essays and made a few comments on Tagore. Occasionally in public speeches he recited Tagore's poem, "My! golden Bengal, I love you..." Yet in the same speeches, Shahidullah would cite many more sayings of Hazrat Mohammad and the Quran.¹²⁶ Statistically, one can give figures that Shahidullah's writings on the Quran, Hadith, Hazrat Mohammad and Iqbal were higher in number than the essays and books written on Tagore.¹²⁷ In one essay, "*Vishva-Kabi Rabindranath*," Shahidullah even awkwardly stated that Tagore's thought was identical with Iqbal's and inspired by Hazrat Mohammad; and that Tagore looked like a Mawlana! Therefore, his suggestion was that Bengali Muslim intellectuals should follow Tagore.¹²⁸

The Islamic liberals, like Shahidullah, did not contribute to the neo-orthodox anti-Christianity and anti-Judaism polemics. Akram frankly admitted that all he had learnt

¹²⁵ In 1945, Shahidullah applied for professorship of Veda and Avesta in the University of Kabul and in his Curriculum vitae, he associated himself with Tagore, "I am one of the foundation members of the Vishva-Bharati of Rabindranath Tagore." See Shahidullah's application for job in the University of Kabul, June 18, 1945, published in Anisuzzaman (ed.), *Shahidullah Racanabali*, I (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1994), p. 695.

¹²⁶ Mohammad Shahidullah, "*Abhibhashan*," Shahidullah's speech to Chittagong Mussalman Chatra Sanmelan, December 1918, published in Shamsuzzaman Khan, Azharul Islam and Selina Hussain (ed.), *Mohammad Shahidullah Smarakgranth* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1969), pp. 485-490. In this speech, Shahidullah quoted one or two sayings of Tagore and a few Sanskrit verses, but he took forty quotations from Hadith and the Quran, so that Muslim students would build their lives according to Islam.

¹²⁷ Shahidullah in his lifetime published 32 printed books (excluding the Madrasah text books that he wrote) and 263 journal articles (excluding the book reviews, pamphlets and introductory notes). Out of 32 books, 12 books were written during British India and 20 books between 1947 and 1963. Out of the 12 books, 4 books are directly relevant to the Quran, Hadith and Hazrat Mohammad; 2 books on Iqbal; 2 books on Muslim poet Hafeez and Umar Khaiyam; 1 book on Bengali language and phonetics; 1 on Bengali-Urdu-Arabic controversy; 1 on Bengali grammar and 1 book on ancient and medieval Bengali literature. Shahidullah's strong emphasis on Islam or Muslim continued during post-partition days. Out of the 20 books that he wrote, 11 are relevant to the Quran, Mohammed; 2 are related to Muslim traditions in medieval Bengal; 1 Arabic literature; 1 history of Bengali literature written in Urdu; 1 Bengali-Urdu-Farsi-Arabic language issue; 1 relevant to Hindu-Buddhist-mystic-Muslim/Islamic traditions in the medieval Bengal; 1 directly on Hindu writers in ancient India; 1 folk music, folk arts in East Pakistan; 1 directly on Buddhist mystic traditions. Shahidullah published no book on Rabindranath Tagore, Bankim Chatterji, Raja Rammohun Roy, but published two books on Iqbal. On Rabindranath Tagore, he wrote 4 journal articles but published also 4 journal articles on Iqbal, 2 on Hafeez and 2 on Umar Khaiyam.

¹²⁸ Mohammad Shahidullah, "*Vishva-kabi Rabindranath*," published in Mohammad Safiyullah (ed.), *Shahidullah Sangbardhana Grantha* (Dhaka: Renaissance Printers, 1967), pp. 449-458.

from the writings of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan were some techniques for translating the Quran, "a knowledge of Arabic literature, simple human intellect and avoiding blind adherence to existing *Tafsirs*. Except these, I have followed nothing of Sayyid Ahmad Khan."¹²⁹ Moreover, it was Islamic liberals who rehabilitated in the Bengali Muslim intellectual world, the Islamic writings of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Sir Mohammad Iqbal. The Bengali Muslim monthly journal *Mahe Nou* wrote in 1951, "...Twenty-five years ago, it was through the Bengali journal *Gulista* that Sheikh Wajed Ali first spread the message of Iqbal in Bangladesh."¹³⁰ Perhaps no other Bengali Muslim intellectual, in the first half of the twentieth century, was so eulogistic of Iqbal as Sheikh Wajed was. Sheikh Wajed clarified his stance toward Iqbal at the beginning of his book *Iqbal's Paigam* (1933) or 'Iqbal's Message:'

Iqbal was the greatest poet whose writings and songs have made glorious efforts to bring Renaissance in the twentieth century oriental world. In that Renaissance Iqbal found spirituality, the inner human power and inspirations. Iqbal, like a Prophet of ancient ages, declared the authenticity of that (spiritual) power in a thunderous voice that echoed throughout the world. It is essentially a necessity to be acquainted with the message of this age-making superman for our individual interest as well as for the welfare of our nation. What super poet Goethe did for the German nation, statesman Mazzini for the Italian nation in the nineteenth century, Iqbal, the glory of poethood, did the same for the oriental world...The way Hazrat Musa was spellbound at the sight of God's spiritual light and used that power for the glory of the Israeli people (*jati*)....Iqbal in the same way found in the pages of the Quran the burning light of spirituality...and glorifying the lives of Orientals.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Quran-anubad Alocana*," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. IX, No. 4 (1935), pp. 226.

¹³⁰ "*Morhum Sheikh Wazed Ali*," published in *Mahe-Nou*, August 1951, cited by Syed Akram Hussain (ed), *S. Wajed Ali Racanabali*, II (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1985), p.522.

¹³¹ Sheikh Wajed Ali, "*Iqbal's Paigam*," *S.Wajed Ali Racanabali*, II, p. 186.

Like Sheikh Wajed, Shahidullah quoted profusely from Iqbal's poems, in public speeches and writings during the 1920s. From the 1940s, after promulgation of the Lahore Resolution, calling for a separate Pakistan, Shahidullah advised Muslim audiences to adopt the "Islamic dynamism" of Iqbal. Between 1940-1960, he made further efforts in this direction. Shahidullah translated Iqbal's poem "*Shikwa*" and "*Jawab-i-Shikwa*," wrote several articles on Iqbal and finally published a book, *Iqbal: Jibani o Bani* (1945) or 'Iqbal: Life and Words.'¹³² Similarly, Mohammad Wajed Ali wrote several articles praising Iqbal, and also lengthy articles on Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan.¹³³

Despite their rehabilitation of Iqbal's and Sir Sayyid's Muslim apologetics, and their imitating the two Muslim modernists, the Islamic liberals in Bengal did not on their own format construct fresh Muslim apologetics. The two Bengali Muslim liberals, Shahidullah and Sheikh Wajed Ali submitted uncritically to Iqbal's theological speculations, and at times went beyond Iqbal. Iqbal and Sir Sayyid speculated that Islam was at par with the West. But Shahidullah, and more so, Sheikh Wajed, extended that speculation more assertively: Islam is superior to Western modernity; or Western modernity was the creation of Islam. Iqbal and Sir Sayyid at least provided some grounds for their speculations, however unrealistic those arguments may seem historically. The Islamic liberals in Bengal did not provide such justifications. In fact the defense and glorification of Islam by Islamic liberals in Bengal at certain points left but a fine distinction with the Muslim triumphalism of their neo-orthodox associates.

It was in the context of debate with such Islamic liberal and neo-orthodox Muslim contemporaries that the rational humanist Muslims of eastern Bengal and their movement for intellectual freedom are examined in this dissertation.

VI. Plan of Dissertation.

¹³² Mohammad Shahidullah, *Iqbal* (Dhaka: Renaissance Publications, 1945). The book is reprinted in Anisuzzaman (ed.), *Shahidullah-Racanabali*, I (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1994), pp. 83-185.

¹³³ Mohammad Wajed Ali, "*Sir Sayyid*," Syed Abdul Mannan (ed.), *Mohammad Wajed Ali Racanabali*, I (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1990), pp. 135-172.

This thesis is organized in terms of six chapters of which this Introduction is Chapter One and a Concluding Review and Epilogue is Chapter Six. Chapter Two introduces the rational humanist trend within Bengali Muslim intelligentsia. Two intellectuals are focused upon here: Kazi Abdul Wadud and Abul Hussain, the founder and his co-worker in the *buddhir mukti* movement. The chapter examines the social background and professional life of these two key individuals and the range of intellectual influences and sources of inspiration that were important for the founder of the *buddhir mukti* movement, Kazi Abdul Wadud.

Chapter Three, examines the origin of the Muslim Sahitya Samaj in Dhaka. We situate the Samaj within the socio-cultural milieu of Dhaka city in general, and Dhaka University in particular. The chapter also describes structure and operations of the Samaj, its social composition, statistical evidence of its participants, its stated purpose, its leadership, and its periodical publication, the *Shikha*. The bottom line of the description is to show, that, although the term, 'Muslim,' was part of the title of the organization, yet it was not a communal organization. On the contrary, a critique of Islamic ideas and practices in its deliberations could be seen in the structure and even in the masthead of the *Shikha*.

Chapter Four examines the deliberations of the "rational humanists," "independents" and "Islamic liberals" in the Samaj. A key point of the rationalist deliberations in the Samaj is a critique and modification of Muslim ideas and practices. This chapter describes this critique in several areas, but emphasizes two important areas: fundamentals of Islamic faith and some social rules of Islam. These critiques can be seen at several levels, for example: rationalists' definition of the phrase, 'freedom;' debates between Islamic liberals and rationalists in the Samaj sessions; the topics and contents of papers that were read by the rationalists; the rationalists' proposals for solution of social problems. The chapter also indicates a decline of the Samaj, in part because the neo-

orthodox of Calcutta and orthodox interest in Dhaka brought intimidation upon the rational humanists. The chapter strictly confined to the years of the Samaj, 1926-1938.

Chapter Five. records the critiques of communal nationalism by Wadud and Abul Hussain. The chapter presents their critiques of both the 'Muslim communal nationalism,' one that led to Pakistan; and the 'composite nationalism,' that had been proposed for India. Freed from a communal Muslim self-consciousness, the rational humanists advocated a new kind of nationalism in India: a non-communal humanistic nationalism. Its emphasis was not on immediate political freedom of India, but freedom of Hindus and Muslims from communal consciousness. Again it was not primarily through traditional religion that the two rationalists wanted unity of Hindus and Muslims, but by '*srishti dharma*' (religion of creativity). British rule was not looked upon as the 'enemy;' but as a modernizing factor supportive of *srishti dharma* unity of Hindus and Muslims.

The Concluding Review and Epilogue sketches evidence that the ideas and values stressed so much by the *buddhir mukti* movement on the 1920s and 1930s have continued to play a significant part in Bengali Muslim intellectual and even social and political life in later years in East Pakistan and Bangladesh.

VII. Sources.

This dissertation is constructed extensively on Bengali-language primary sources. Excerpts from these Bengali sources are, usually for the first time, translated into English by the author for this dissertation. This is one of the major contributions of the dissertation. The published primary sources of the dissertation are classified as follows: i) biographies; ii) memoirs; iii) public speeches; iv) written correspondence; vi) diaries; vii) journals; viii) newspapers; ix) volumes that were edited by the participants themselves; and x) volumes that reprinted the works of the participants, edited by contemporary Bangladeshi scholars.

The dissertation has also used many unpublished Bengali sources; i) extensive audio-recorded interviews with families of *buddhir mukti* figures as well as with

contemporary Bangladeshi scholars; ii) an unpublished diary of a Bengali Muslim radical, dated 1934-47; iii) the unpublished proceedings of the Muslim Sahitya Samaj of Dhaka, dated 1926-38. Almost all the unpublished written primary sources in Bengali language have been collected from several private collections in Dhaka and Calcutta. The unpublished English language government records that have been used in the dissertation are: MSS. EUR. E. 221. Philip Joseph Hartog Papers: Dhaka University and Dhaka University Record: No. Abul IV-1965/B-91, 1921-27.

We should note that the primary sources I have collected on the rational humanists include a huge amount of writing of all members of the 'group of seven.' This dissertation, for practical reasons, is emphasizing only Kazi Wadud and Abul Hussain, especially their writings from 1926 to 1938. Any scholar interested to know, what happened to the 'group of seven,' for example, in the periods 1938-47 or 1947-1983, could contact me. It should be noted here, that my supervisor, Professor Joseph T. O'Connell has already translated into English, some writings of Abul Fazal; a member of the 'group of seven.'

The published Bengali-language primary sources have been collected from several places: The British Library of London; National Library of Calcutta; University of Chicago Library; Library of Congress; and Bangla Academy, Dhaka University, and Chittagong University libraries of Bangladesh. For this, I took a complete year, 1992-93. I spent three months in London, two months in Calcutta, and seven months in Bangladesh. The research trip was funded by a dissertation fellowship, awarded by the Social Science Research Council, New York, for which support I am most grateful. A draft proposal of this dissertation was also read in 'Bangladesh Workshop,' arranged by the SSRC at Colombo, during December 16-19, 1993. The conference was participated in by graduate students and faculty interested in Bangladesh, from United States, Netherlands, India, and Bangladesh.

Chapter Two

Prime Movers of the Freedom of Intellect Movement (*Buddhir Mukti Andolan*):
Life sketches of leader, Kazi Abdul Wadud, and his associate, Abul Hussain;
intellectual orientation of and influences on Kazi Abdul Wadud.

I. Introduction.

Among the three trends of Muslim modernism in Bengal, neo-orthodox, Islamic liberal and the rational humanists, it is the third trend that this dissertation will emphasize. We have indicated in the introduction that the rational humanist trend of Bengali Muslim intelligentsia is virtually unknown in the scholarship of Muslim historiography in the West. We have also indicated in the introduction that this *buddhir mukti* ("Emancipation of Intellect") movement was the most unique and striking expression of rational humanism among twentieth century Bengali Muslims before Indo-Pakistani independence. The dissertation will therefore concentrate on the *buddhir mukti* movement of the Bengali Muslim intelligentsia in four chapters.

The *buddhir mukti* movement began in Dhaka in 1926. Its intellectual motto was: *jnan jekhane simabaddha, buddhi sekhane arashtha, mukti sekhane asambhab* or "Where knowledge is restricted, there the intellect is inert, there freedom is impossible." The movement's main organization was Muslim Sahitya Samaj in Dhaka, and its views were published in its Bengali journal, *Shikha*. The motto of the movement, *buddhir mukti*, was conceived by Kazi Wadud and emphasized by his effective associate, Abul Hussain.

The first section of this chapter will provide life sketches of the two main leaders, Kazi Abdul Wadud and Abul Hussain. This will include the social upbringing, education and professional lives of Wadud and Abul Hussain. The second section will examine the basic intellectual orientation of Kazi Wadud, which includes Wadud's understanding of three aspects of *buddhir mukti*: freedom (*mukti*), intellect (*buddhi*) and creativity (*srishti*). The section will then examine those individuals, Muslim and non-Muslim, who most inspired Wadud. For this, the chapter will examine five prominent figures: Mostafa

Kemal Atatürk, Sir Mohammad Iqbal, Mahatma Gandhi, Raja Rammohun Roy and Rabindranath Tagore. The section will then give extended attention to Wadud's analysis of the thought of Rammohun and Rabindranath, the two Bengali mentors who shaped Wadud's thought throughout his adult intellectual life. The chapter does not analyze Abul Hussain's intellectual orientation and influences in detail, but offers an example how he extended the ideas of Wadud.

II. Life Sketches of Kazi Abdul Wadud and Abul Hussain.

A. Kazi Abdul Wadud (1894-1970).

Kazi Abdul Wadud was born on April 26, 1894 in a Muslim family of Eastern Bengal.¹ He was born in his paternal grandfather's home in Bagmara, a remote village in the district of Faridpur, approximately 65 miles south of Dhaka. Wadud's paternal grandfather, Kazi Yasin Ali, was an illiterate peasant, but Kazi Yasin's elder brother, Kazi Mohasin Ali, was a police constable. It was Kazi Mohasin who raised Wadud's father, Kazi Chagir Uddin. Kazi Chagir was educated up to the secondary level. When Kazi Yasin died, Wadud's father, Kazi Chagir, inherited a small plot of land of 2-3 acres, and two worn out village huts.² Kazi Chagir was married into a wealthy village family, who arranged a job for him in the Bengal railway. By merit of his hard labor and professional commitment, Kazi Chagir rose to a high rank in the Bengal railway. At the time of death in 1922, Kazi Chagir was a station master of the Howrah station at Calcutta.

¹ There are several biographical essays on Kazi Abdul Wadud including a short auto-biographical sketch that Wadud wrote in a letter addressed to a Hindu writer, Ufullah Roy, in 1951. The sketch is given a title by Wadud's biographer, Abdul Huq, "*Kazi Waduder Jibankatha*," published in Abdul Huq (ed.), *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, II (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1990), pp. 335-337. Some of the close associates of Wadud wrote biographical essays on Wadud. Among these essays, Abdul Kadir's, *Kazi Abdul Wadud* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1976), is most informative. More biographical essays and books are published recently in Bengali language on Wadud. See Khondkar Sirajul Huq, *Kazi Abdul Wadud* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1987). Rashid Al Faruqi (ed.), *Kazi Abdul Wadud-Prasanga* (Chittagong: Bangladesh Sahitya Parishad, 1987); Syed-ur Rahman (ed.), *Wadud Carca* (Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1982). Muzaffar Ahmad, "*Kazi Abdul Wadud*," *Desh*, June 26, 1970, p. 962.

² Abdul Kadir, *Kazi Wadud*, p. 1.

Wadud's maternal grandfather, Pacu Molla, was a rich *jotedar*, who educated his sons for professional careers. Two of Pacu Molla's sons, Ahasab Uddin and Nazir Uddin were police officers (*daroga*). Another son, Khabir Uddin, was an inspector of school. Wadud's mother was the youngest child of Pacu Molla.

Wadud did not boast of his family background, nor did he trace a genealogy of the history of his forefathers. On the contrary, he tended to be critical of the way they lived their lives. Wadud wrote in his autobiographical note:

My paternal and maternal families were both of 'middle class' origin. The maternal family was slightly well off. But none, however, were extraordinary in anything. My paternal grandfather was illiterate....He did not care for his 'intellect' (*cinta-bhabna*). Instead he borrowed money and enjoyed eating *ilish mach* (a type of popular fish in Bengal). Even with a heavy burden of loan, he could also enjoy a care-free sleep.... My father had a very whimsical mind (*buddhite atyanta kheali*); but was sympathetic to the sorrows of his relatives.... He admired my intellect, but he did not like very much my quiet character. He had an expectation that I should earn more money and help my relatives.... My mother was extremely intelligent, but an extremely commanding motherMy maternal uncle (Nazir Uddin) was religious, but luxurious. I respected him. But from the age of fifteen or sixteen, I decided that I should not live according to their ideas.³

Young Wadud was raised by his maternal uncle, Nazir Uddin, who was a police officer. As Nazir Uddin was posted in villages as well as in sub-divisional level police stations, Wadud's primary and secondary education was done in village and sub-divisional schools. Wadud, however, completed matriculation with a scholarship of Rs.10.00 from the Dhaka Collegiate School in 1913.⁴ Wadud wrote about his childhood

³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Kazi Waduder Jibankatha*," p. 335. Wadud was also unhappy about his mother's ill feeling toward him at his birth. Wadud stated in his incomplete and unpublished autobiography, *Smriti Katha*: "I looked very ugly at my birth. There were several marks of cut on my head. My mother said that she was not at all happy to look at me after my birth." It should be noted, however, that Wadud was born when his father was suffering from the disease of plague. See Abdul Kadir, *Kazi Wadud*, p. 2.

⁴ Abdul Kadir, *Kazi Wadud*, pp. 2-3.

experience: "I watched the *Svadeshi* movement when I was ten or eleven years old. I always had friendship with meritorious Hindu students and we discussed among us the movement of *Svadeshi* as well as the distance between European and Indian civilization."⁵ But he did not mention any significant inspiration from friends or from political developments during his primary and secondary education.

Wadud entered Presidency College of Calcutta in 1913. He passed the Intermediate examination in 1915, B.A. in 1917, and M.A. in political economy from Calcutta University in 1919. In Presidency College, Wadud had several friends: Subash Chandra Bose, an eminent Indian nationalist, Pramathanath Sarkar, Niren Roy, Khitish Cattopadhyay and Deben Banerjee.⁶ Wadud's biographers have also mentioned Wadud's acquaintance with Justice Ramaprasad Mukhopadhyay and Justice Amin Ahmad, with singer Dilip Kumar Roy, and publisher-editor, Afzalul Huq.⁷ They were Wadud's friends in the Presidency College; but not his intellectual mentors. Wadud wrote no specific articles or made any significant comments on any of his acquaintances in Presidency College.⁸ Wadud wrote a poem on Subash Chandra Bose only in 1949, on the occasion of Indian independence day. The poem paid respect to the patriotism of Bose; but it was critical of Bose's acts of terrorism for achieving freedom of India.⁹

⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Kazi Waduder Jibankatha*," p. 336. Kazi Abdul Wadud described his childhood life in his novel, *Azad* (Calcutta: Nur Library, 1948). The book is reprinted in Nurul Amin (ed.), *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, III (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1992).

⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Kazi Waduder Jibankatha*," p. 336.

⁷ Muzaffar Ahmad, "*Kazi Abdul Wadud*," *Desh*, June 26, 1970, p. 962. See, also Rafiqul Islam, *Nazrul Jibani* (Dhaka: Bengali Department, Dhaka University, 1972), p. 84.

⁸ In his auto-biographical note, *Jibankatha*, Wadud wrote only a short comment about his Presidency College friends: "I spent my college life at Presidency college. My class friends were Subas Chandra, Pramathanath Sarkar, Niren Roy, and Khittish Catyopadhyay. Except Subash Chandra, all are now famous college professors. See, Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Kazi Waduder Jibankatha*," p. 336.

⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Subash Chandra*," published in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Svadinata-Diner Upahar* (Calcutta: Khurshid Bakht, 1951), pp. 4-6.

Wadud's entry into Presidency College marked the beginning of an interest in Rabindranath Tagore. Until 1913, there was no reference to Tagore's writing. His maternal uncle, Nazir Uddin, had arranged for Wadud to stay for a few days with his Hindu colleague's father-in-law in Calcutta. Wadud recalled:

I went to Calcutta after I passed the matriculation examination. For the first several days, I stayed in a Hindu bhadralok's house. He was a teacher and was fond of Brahmo religion. Every evening there was Rabindra-song in his house from Tagore's newly published *Gitanjali*. I listened to these songs and I become entranced with Rabindranath. Before Rabindranath achieved the Nobel Prize, I bought *Gitanjali*, and after that I become a 'Rabindra-(a)nuragi' (Rabindra-enthusiast).¹⁰

Soon Wadud was eager to have Tagore's comment on one of his early novels, *Nadibakshe* (1919).¹¹ Tagore sent his comments from Shantiniketan on April 15 1919: "In your (*apnar*) novel, *Nadibakshe*, you have subtly sketched the family life of Muslim peasants. I feel delighted to enjoy its naturalness, simplicity and newness, for which I express appreciation to you."¹² It is noticeable in this letter that Tagore addressed Kazi Wadud, though much his junior in years, by the formal term, *apnar* ('your'). Eight years later, in 1927, Tagore addressed Kazi Wadud by the more intimate *tomar*¹³ ('your'). Wadud's intensive study and accurate understanding of Tagore's writing began in 1924

¹⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Kazi Waduder Jibankatha," p. 336.

¹¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nadibakshe* (Dhaka: Naroj Kitabstan, 1919). The novel is reprinted in Kazi Abdul Wadud *Racanabali*, Vol. III. For more novels and short stories of Wadud, see Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Mir-Paribar* (Bramanbaria: Begum Afiqa Khatun, 1918). Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Bhul*, *Bangiya-Mussalman-Sahitya-Patrika*, Vol. I, No. 1 (1919), pp. 49-57. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Ma," *Bangiya-Mussalman-Sahitya-Patrika*, Vol. II, No. 3 (1919), pp. 215-225. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Biraj-bou," *Bharatbarsha*, Vol. IV, No. 2 (1916), pp. 502-507. Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Tarun* (Dhaka: Orient Publishers, 1948).

¹² *Apnar likhita Nadibakshe upanyashkanite mussalman cashi grihasder je saral Jibaner chabikhani nipunbhabe pathakder kache khulia diyachen, tahar svabhabikatva, saralata o nutanatbe ami bishesh ananda labh kariyachi, ei karane amar kritaggata janiben.* Rabindranath Tagore to Kazi Abdul Wadud, April 15, 1919. Bhuiya Iqbal (ed.), *Rabindranather Ekguccha Patra* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1985), p.22.

¹³ Bhuiya Iqbal, *Rabindranather Ekguccha Patra*, p. 23.

and continued until Wadud died in 1970. Wadud's first book on Tagore, *Rabindra Kabya Path*, was published in 1927. Tagore read the book and wrote to Wadud:

I can not remember anyone from whom my writing has received such a tasteful discriminating reception. In it (*Rabindra Kabya Path*) there is a subtle sensibility and a command over language that is astonishing. It is a matter of good fortune for a poet to have a reader like you...¹⁴

Tagore backed Wadud's professional career in Bengali language and literature. A year after completing his M.A. in political economy, Wadud applied to teach Bengali literature in the Dhaka Intermediate College (established in 1841). Despite the fact that Wadud had no formal training in Bengali language and literature, he got the job. Wadud described one reason of his success:

I become a lecturer of Bengali by Dinesh babu's (Dinesh Chandra Sen's) recommendation. He read my novels (*Mir Paribar, Nadibaksho*) and an essay of mine ("*Sahityiker Sadhana*") and took assessment of my ability from Sarat Chandra Chatopadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore, Shashanka Mohan Sen, and Pramatha Choudhury. At that time I had not been formally introduced to Dinesh Chandra Sen.¹⁵

Communist leader Muzaffar Ahmad, who was associated with rebel Bengali poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, had known Kazi Wadud since 1913. Ahmad was suspicious of this appointment: "When Wadud applied for this job, there were other candidates who contested. I do not understand why the government send this file to Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sen."¹⁶

¹⁴ *Amar rachana eman saras bicarpurna samadar aro karo hate labh kareche bale mane pare na. Er madhye je suksna sahanubhuti o bhasha-naipurnya prakash peyeche ta bismaykar. Tomar mato pathak paoya Kabir pakshe saubhagyor bishay...* Rabindranath Tagore to Kazi Abdul Wadud. Bhuiya Iqbal, *Rabindranather Ekguccha Patra* (1985), p. 23.

¹⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Kazi Waduder Jibankatha*," p. 336.

¹⁶ Muzaffar Ahmad, "*Kazi Abdul Wadud*," p. 962.

Wadud stayed in the Dhaka Intermediate College from 1921 to 1938, and then applied for a job as a secretary of Bengal Textbook Committee¹⁷ located in Calcutta. One of the referees whom Wadud mentioned in the application was Rabindranath Tagore. Wadud wrote to Tagore¹⁸ about it only after he had mailed the job application. Most probably, Tagore recommended Wadud, because Wadud's application was successful.¹⁹ When Calcutta was bombed during World War II, Wadud's office was transferred to Rajshahi (East Bengal) in 1943. Wadud stayed in Rajshahi until 1945. After the war was over, he went back to Calcutta and never came to stay permanently in East Pakistan.

It was during Wadud's stay in the Dhaka Intermediate College that he and his associates founded the Muslim Sahitya Samaj in 1926. The Samaj lasted until 1938. Wadud's application for a new job in the Bengal Text Book Committee, his departure from Dhaka, and his decision to settle down permanently in Calcutta were related to the Muslim separatist movement in Dhaka. The Samaj was undermined by the Islamic liberals and Muslim fundamentalists in Dhaka. Wadud and his associate, Abul Hussain, faced a trial in the private court of Muslim orthodox of Dhaka. With their freedom of thought and expression so restricted, Wadud had little alternative but to leave Dhaka (1938). Annadashankar Ray, a close associate of Wadud and a retired district magistrate of Indian Civil Service, has given further reasons for Wadud's decision to opt for India after 1947:

¹⁷ The Committee was a branch organization of the Directorate of Public Instruction, Bengal Presidency, situated at Calcutta.

¹⁸ I did not know about this letter while I was in Calcutta in 1993. After I came back to Chittagong, I interviewed Dr. Bhuiya Iqbal and he told me that the letter is preserved in *Rabindra-bhaban* archives in Shantiniketan. Bhuiya Iqbal, "*Rabindranather Ekguccha Patra*," p.19.

¹⁹ There is, however, another story of Wadud's success. Tasadduk Ahmad, president of one session of the Dhaka Muslim Sahitya Samaj, was Wadud's close friend. In 1993, Tasadduk was promoted to Additional Director of Public Instruction. Tassaduq came to Dhaka before retirement and told his colleague, S.N.Q. Zulfiqar Ali (Professor, Dhaka Teachers training College), "Do not apply for the post of Secretary of Text Book Committee. This post has been created for Wadud." Golam Saklayan, *Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman Khan, 1890-1964* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1990), p. 32. S.N.Q. Zulfiqar Ali, "*Kazi Abdul Wadud*," published in Syed-ur Rahman (ed.), *Wadud Carca* (Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1982), p. 80.

If Kazi (Abdul Wadud) would have been a conformist Muslim, he could easily arrange a promotion in his professional career during provincial autonomy in undivided Bengal...Before the Cabinet Mission came...Kazi was strongly against Pakistan. He wrote a lengthy article²⁰ to that end....The newly promulgated two nation theory was against Kazi's conscience....If he had stayed in Pakistan, he would have faced no competition from Hindus in his professional career....He give up his landed property in Faridpur (East Pakistan)....He stayed in a secular state, India, for an exercise of the right of freedom of thought and expression...²¹

From 1947 to his death in 1970, Wadud lived comfortably in Calcutta, leaving his only daughter, Jebunesa, and her husband, Shamsul Huda in Dhaka. One of the favorite pursuits of Wadud in the retired life, beside intellectual activities, was his love of animals!²² Wadud retired from government service in 1951 and with pension money he bought a house in Calcutta. Wadud's correspondence with Jebunesa at this time shows that he had no particular preference for a house in the Muslim neighborhood of Calcutta.²³ Within four years after purchase of the house, Wadud's wife, Jamila Khatun, died (1955). Wadud was saddened and lonely after her death. Annadashankar Ray wrote: "Kazi promised not to sleep anywhere except in the bed in which his beloved wife had last slept."²⁴ Wadud did not marry a second time, although he lived fifteen years after his wife's death.

²⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Griha Judher Prakkale*" (May 4, 1946), published in Abdul Huq (ed.), *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1988), p. 491-497.

²¹ Annadashankar Ray, "*Jiban darshanik Wadud*," *Desh*, June 27, 1970, p. 957.

²² Wadud was a cat-lover. Mahbub-ul-Alam, father-in-law of Abul Fazal and a young associate of *buddhir mukti* intellectuals of Dhaka, visited Wadud's Calcutta home in 1951. Alam was amazed to see that Wadud has number of pet cats in his house and he fed them milk in his dinning table. Mahbub-ul Alam, "Kazi Abdul Wadud," *Ittefaq*, Dhaka, June 7, 1970, p.2.

²³ Kazi Abdul Wadud to Jebunesa, unpublished letters, July 18, 1945 and August 3, 1945. Wadud's house, 8/B Tarak Dutta lane, is located in a Hindu neighborhood of Calcutta. The house is a three-floor building of five-six bedrooms, a spacious balcony and a lawn.

²⁴ Annadashankar Ray. "*Jiban Darshanik Wadud*," *Desh* (Calcutta), June 27, 1970, p. 961.

From the time of retirement in 1951 until Wadud died in 1970, he had a diversified intellectual life in Calcutta. Wadud gave the second Vishva-Bharati lectures in 1956. In 1961, he gave a lecture in Gujarat University. He wrote at this time several books. We will describe these writings and lectures of Wadud in later sections. What was, however, distinctive in Wadud's life at this time, was his easy settling down in a multi-religious "civil society" in post-independent India. This can be seen in several activities of Wadud's private and public life during these years.

After his wife's death, Wadud rented out several rooms of his home. The tenants were students and professionals, male and female; and there were Hindu as well as Muslim tenants.²⁵ After Wadud was attacked by deadly Parkinson's disease, he called a Hindu neighbor, Srimati Sandha Roy, to take the dictation of his Bengali translation of the Quran.²⁶ During vicious Hindu-Muslim riot in Calcutta in 1950, triggered by an uprooting of the Hindu population in East Pakistan,²⁷ Wadud was cautioned by his neighbors in Calcutta: "You should close the doors and windows of your home." Wadud replied to his neighbors, "If I die by riot, I would prefer to die at the hands of a Hindu."²⁸ Another of Wadud's Hindu neighbors in Calcutta, Ratan Kumar Ghosh, described Wadud in Calcutta, "To some Wadud is a *Brahmo*, others think he is a Christian; still others think

²⁵ Two female tenants who lived in Wadud's House were: Kohinoor Begum (Muslim) and Srimati Maitri Debi (Hindu). They were CPI workers in Calcutta. They looked after Wadud until 1970. Interview with Mrs. Rakibuddin Ahmed, June 24, 1993. Mrs Ahmed has been tenant of Wadud since 1964. See also Kazi Abdul Wadud's correspondence with Mohammad Asad, unpublished document dated 12. 3. 70. Kohinoor Begum's correspondence with Jebunesa, unpublished, dated 2. 2. 1970.

²⁶ In 1993, I met Mrs. Sandha Roy in Calcutta. She is now a disabled person and lives next door to Wadud's house in Calcutta. Mrs Roy told me that Wadud gave her the dictation of Bengali translations of the Quran and she wrote down the translations. Interview with Mrs. Rakibuddin Ahmed and Sandha Roy, Calcutta, June 24, 1993.

²⁷ See *Anandabazar Patrika*, January-April, 1950. See also Saileshkumar Banerjee, *Dangar Itihas* (Calcutta: Mitra & Ghosh Publishers, 1992).

²⁸ Interview with Mrs. Rakibuddin Ahmed and Sandha Roy, Calcutta, June 24, 1993.

Wadud is a learned agnostic."²⁹ Mahbub-ul-Alam wrote that Wadud always greeted Hindus by saying *namaskar*.³⁰ Among the Hindus, one young follower of Wadud in Calcutta during the 1960s was Amalendu De. De told me in an interview (1993) that his marriage to a Muslim women, Nasima Banu (A.K. Fazlul Huq's niece), was largely inspired by Wadud.³¹

In the 1950s and 1960s, Wadud's closest intellectual associates in Calcutta were liberal humanists of Muslim and Hindu origin: Annadashankar Ray (retired Indian civil servant),³² Amalendu De (currently Guru Nanak Professor, Jadabpur University, Calcutta), Suniti Kumar Chatterjee (historian of Bengali literature), Narayan Choudhury (writer),³³ Rabiuddin Ahmad (social worker), Niranjan Haldar (*Anandabazar Patrika*). Amalendu De told me that Wadud's intellectual interactions with these humanists were usually held in *addas* (informal conversation circles), in Wadud's living room in Calcutta. The central focus of these *addas*, according to De, was to bind the Hindus and Muslims in a composite culture in Calcutta.

These *addas* in Wadud's house led to the publications of three Bengali journals and two intellectual associations in Calcutta. The three Bengali journals that were

²⁹ In the article, Ghosh also describes that Wadud's writings were popular among many students, teachers, professionals and public officials of Calcutta. Ratan Kumar Ghosh, "*Hindur Cokhe Kazi Abdul Wadud*," unpublished, n.d., pp. 7 & 9.

³⁰ Mahbub-ul-Alam, "*Kazi Abdul Wadud*," *Ittefaq*, June 7, 1970, Dhaka, p 2.

³¹ Interview with Professor Amalendu De, Calcutta, June 27 and July 2, 1993. De's family now lives in Calcutta and their children are growing up without any formal religion.

³² Professor J.T. O' onnell's interview with Annadashankar Ray, Calcutta, September 1, 1992. Ray's views of rational humanism can be gathered from his several books. See, for example: Annadashankar Ray, *Banglar Renesas* (Calcutta: Muktaadhara, 1991); *Cakrabal* (Calcutta: M.C. Sarkar and Sons, 1976); *Simhabalokan* (Calcutta: Sahityalok, 1984); *Juktabanger Smriti* (Calcutta: Mitra & Ghosh, 1990).

³³ Narayan Choudhury's recent work is, *Lekhak Pathak o Samaj* (Calcutta: Sahityalok, 1984). One of the essays of this book is written under the title, "*Manab Mukti o Lekhaker Bhumika*" or 'Human Freedom and the Role of Writers.'

published were: *Samkalpa* (1954),³⁴ *Barshashesh Samkalpa* (1965)³⁵ and *Tarun Patra* (1965). The first journal was edited by Wadud; the last two were edited jointly by Kazi Abdul Wadud, Narayan Choudhury and Rabiuddin Ahmad. In the three journals, articles were contributed by Hindu and Muslim male writers, and women writers of Hindu origin. It is noticeable that none of the Marxist views were published in these journals. It is also noticeable that in almost all the volumes of the first journal, Wadud published his own articles, as well he reprinted essays written by former *buddhir mukti* intellectuals of the 1920s in Dhaka. The title, *Tarun Patra*, was borrowed by Wadud from the title *Tarun Patra*, which was published by Abul Hussain in Dhaka in 1925. One purpose of Wadud was, therefore, to give the rational humanists of the two parts of Bengal an unity of focus.

Wadud wrote in the "Editors Note" of *Tarun Patra* (1965):

Long years ago, in the year 1925, the great person Abul Hussain had published a small Bengali journal *Tarun Patra*. The *Tarun Patra* and its ultimate form *Shikha* (journal of the *buddhir mukti* movement in Dhaka) had their intimacy with *Sabuj Patra* (a Bengali journal of rational humanism, edited by Pramatha Choudhury of Calcutta and inspired by Rabindranath Tagore). The purpose of *Sabuj Patra*, *Tarun Patra* and *Shikha* was liberal humanism and *mukta buddhi*. The recent *Tarun Patra* (1965) wants to fulfill the same purpose at this time.³⁶

Two pertinent intellectual associations were founded in Calcutta in 1960s by "Wadud's direct inspiration:" i) *Naba Jagaran Samiti* or 'New Awakening Society' and ii) Dara Shikoh-Rammohun Institute.³⁷ Amalendu De was secretary and Suniti Kumar

³⁴ See Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Samkalpa*, Vol. I, No.1-8 (1954) and Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Samkalpa*, Vol. I, No. 9-12 (1955), published from Calcutta.

³⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, Rabiuddin Ahmad and Narayan Choudhury (eds.), *Barshashesh Samkalpa*, December, 1965.

³⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, Rabiuddin Ahmad and Narayan Choudhury (eds.), *Tarun Patra*, April-May, 1965, p. 1. See, also Kazi Abdul Wadud, Rabiuddin Ahmad, Narayan Choudhury (eds.), *Tarun Patra*, Rabindra-Nazrul Samkhya, 1965.

³⁷ Amalendu De, "Preface," in M. Mahfuz-ul-Huq (ed.), *Majma'-Ul-Bahrin* (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1982).

Chatterjee was president of the second organization. Amalendu De told me that the two organizations were the "brain children"³⁸ of Wadud.

For all these intellectual activities in Calcutta, Wadud was awarded a literary prize, the 'Shishir Kumar Award, 1970.' The award came too late. On the day of the award, Wadud was unconscious due to Parkinson disease. Wadud's Calcutta associates were not happy that Wadud was not awarded, 'Rabindra Purasamskar,' or 'Rabindra Award.' Annadashankar Ray was angry: "It is not Wadud's misfortune, but the misfortune of this country that one of the foremost scholars and Rabindra specialists of Bengal was not awarded the better known *Rabindra Purasamskar*."³⁹

B. Abul Hussain (1897-1938).

Three years younger than Wadud, Abul Hussain was born on February 5, 1897, in his maternal grandfather's village, Pansira, in the district of Jessore, about 125 miles away from Dhaka city.⁴⁰ According to Abul Hussain, his paternal grandfather, Maulabi Mohammad Hasim, was a Sufi. Abul Hussain's father, Mohammad Musa, was a Haji. Abul Hussain's maternal grandfather, Mir Lutefa Ali, had no biological son, so Haji Musa moved to his father-in-law's home to become what in the Bengali social system is called, 'ghar jamaya' (son-in-law living in father-in-law's house). Haji Musa was a small landholder and a religious person. His book, *Namaj Shiksha*, or Teaching prayer, was "well received by his village Muslim community."⁴¹

³⁸ Interview with Amalendu De, Calcutta, July 2, 1993.

³⁹ Annadashankar Ray, "Jiban Darshanik Wadud," *Desh*, June 27, 1970, p. 968.

⁴⁰ Unlike Wadud, Abul Hussain did not write any short autobiographical note. Abul Hussain, however, wrote a short essay, "Sufi Hasim," who was Abul Hussain's paternal grandfather. The essay was first published in a Bengali journal, *Barshik Saogat*, Vol. I (1926) and later reprinted in Abdul Kadir (ed.), *Abul Hussainer Racanabali* (Dhaka: Barnamichil, 1976), pp. 278-285. For biographical information of Abul Hussain, this section is depended on several works: Abdul Majid, *Abul Hussain* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy 1988). Abdul Kadir (ed.), *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*. Mohammad Siddiqur Rahman, "Abul Hussain o Muslim Sahitya Samaj," *Bhasha Sahitya Patra*, Vol. XVIII (1991). Syed Mohammad Hussain (Abul Hussain's brother), "Abul Hussain Smriti," published in Syed Abul Maqsd (ed.), *Astitva* Vol. I (1993). It should be noted that Abul Hussain wrote his name in English, "Abul Hussain," and not "Abul Husain."

⁴¹ Abdul Majid, *Abul Hussain*, p. 11.

Abul Hussain reported that his paternal grandfather, Sufi Hasim, was born in 1821 in Jessore. He was well versed in Farsi (Persian) and was happy with a simple life of "plain clothes and ordinary rice." He spent time teaching religion to his community. Hasim was educated for four years in Calcutta in the Quran, Hadith and fiqh by a "famous ulema." After he returned from Calcutta to his village home, Hasim was employed as a clerk in the estate of a Hindu zamindar of Jessore, Indrabhushan Choudhury. At this time, Abul Hussain reported, Hasim became a Sufi. But Abul Hussain's description of Hasim's Sufi activities indicates that he was a pious Muslim.⁴² Another Islamic devotion by Hasim, according to Abul Hussain, was his humane attitude to the poor:

If Hasim's neighbors were hungry, Hasim shared his food with them. When families were suffering from a contagious disease, and there was none to take care for them, Hasim gave a hand to the family. Hasim was not tolerant to pirism. He gave public speeches against *shirk* and *bedat*. With this end in view, Hasim debated with pirs of the district of Khulna, Jessore and Nadia.⁴³

Abul Hussain, as a child, had his first lessons in Arabic, Farsi and Urdu from his father. When Abul Hussain reached the age of secondary education, Haji Musa moved out of his father-in-law's house. Abul Hussain was admitted into a village high school. For higher secondary education, Abul Hussain was admitted into a district level government high school: the Jessore Zilla school. It was in class Class VII (Grade VII)

⁴² Abul Hussain described Sufi Hasim's daily schedule: "Hasim got up from bed in the early morning. He then took bath and become clean. After that he entered into mosque and stayed there until 8 a.m. During his stay in the mosque, he performed morning prayer, devotedly read the Quran, Hadith etc....He took launch at 11.a.m and then went to work...For evening prayer he entered the mosque and prayed until 1-2 A.M. In the last year of life, he spent so much time in performing religious rites that he did not sleep more than 2-3 hours....For this devotion to Islam, people called him Sufi." See, Abul Hussain, "*Sufi Hasim*," *Abul Hussain Racanabali*, p. 282.

⁴³ It is not known from Abul Hussain's essay or from Abul Hussain's biography, if young Abul Hussain had personally experienced orthodoxy of his grandfather or the story had been told to him by his parents. It seems likely that Abul Hussain did not see his grandfather's orthodox activities. It is not known, when Hasim died. If he was alive, he was 76 (born in 1821) at the time Abul Hussain was born (1897).

that Abul Hussain first met his teacher, Anwarul Kadir.⁴⁴ Abul Hussain got special attention from Anwarul Kadir because Abul Hussain was brilliant but poor. Anwarul Kadir gave Abul Hussain private coaching, food, and tuition fees. Poor Abul Hussain, who found a paternal shelter at this young age, was easily carried away and took Anwarul Kadir as his *baba* (father).⁴⁵ This informal parent-son relationship between Anwarul Kadir and Abul Hussain, continued as long as they lived. It was Abul Hussain's son-like solicitation, and Wadud's personal friendship with Anwarul Kadir that persuaded the latter to participate in the Muslim Sahitya Samaj sessions and start the organized movement of *buddhir mukti*.⁴⁶

In 1914, Abul Hussain passed the matriculation examination with a stipend of Rs 10.00. He completed the Intermediate examination in 1916 and a B.A. in 1918 from Presidency College. Abul Hussain studied economics for the M.A. from Calcutta University in 1920, and began a professional life as a school teacher in Calcutta. In 1921, he was appointed as assistant lecturer in commerce and economics at Dhaka University at a monthly salary of Rs. 125.00.⁴⁷ Yet, within six years, Abul Hussain resigned from Dhaka University.

Trouble began after Abul Hussain wrote an article that vehemently criticized the special concession granted to Muslims in education, employment and politics. Abul

⁴⁴ This information is gathered from my extensive interview with Zaheda Rahman, Anwarul Kadir's daughter. The interview took place in Dhaka on May 5, 1993.

⁴⁵ Zaheda Rahman told me that she used to call her father as *baba*, which is a Turkish and Hindi word. It is common word of Hindus and Muslims of Bengal. Anwarul Kadir's biography was written by her daughter, Zaheda Rahman, *Babake Jeman Peyechi* (Dhaka: Glimpse Publication, November 1988).

⁴⁶ Interview with Zaheda Rahman, May 5, 1993.

⁴⁷ Abul Hussain's application for Job in Dhaka University was recommended by Principle J.R. Barrow of Presidency College; Professor Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, Dean of Arts, Dhaka University; and Professor Sardacharan Das, Head of Mathematics Department, Calcutta University. Abul Hussain's application impressed Vice-Chancellor Professor P.G. Hartog who raised Abul Hussain's starting salary from Rs. 100 to 125. See, Dhaka University Record, No. Abul IV-1965/B-91 (1921-27), unpublished document. See also Mohammad Siddiqur Rahman, "Abul Hussain o Muslim Sahitya Samaj," p. 94.

Hussain wrote that seeking concession was just like "an attitude of beggars, whining at the feet of the indifferent and disgusted giver...." Concessions had offered the Muslim youth an easy and uncompetitive way to find jobs through backdoor opportunities: "The charisma of 'forty-five percent' would collapse the ambition of our younger generation from lesser to the least; their dynamism would decay; their minds would be cramped; and ambition would be pruned."⁴⁸

The article was immediately criticized by the neo-orthodox journal, *Mohammadi*. The journal claimed Abul Hussain's employment in Dhaka University was by courtesy and favor. The allegation was probably true, as Abul Hussain did not hold high academic standing for a teaching position in Dhaka University. He did not hold a first class certificate in B.A. or M.A. Nonetheless, it is not known if a better qualified candidate with first class degrees had contested with Abul Hussain. In reply to *Mohammadi's* accusation, Abul Hussain frankly admitted that he had been favored by a concession:

If I had not been made professor (he means lecturer) by concession, then it would be better for me and for the Muslim society....It is my firm conviction that the more concession is given to us, the more we would diminish....My opponents have done good to me....⁴⁹

Within months of this accusation, Abul Hussain applied for a leave (without salary) from Dhaka University. The application was turned down and Abul Hussain resigned from the university on July 13, 1927.

Abul Hussain now began practicing law in the lower court of Dhaka, for which he took a degree of B.L., early in 1922. As a lawyer in a lower court of Dhaka, Abul Hussain's financial standing did not improve. His brother, Syed Mohammad Hussain, wrote that Abul Hussain had moved out of a "free apartment of the University," and now

⁴⁸ Abul Hussain, "*Shatkara Paytallish*" (1926), *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), pp. 23-24.

⁴⁹ Abul Hussain, "*Shatkara Paytallisher Jer*," *Abhijan*, September 1926, cited by Abdul Kadir, "*Abul Hussainer Cintadhara*," published in *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 395.

lived in a house where there was no electricity.⁵⁰ Abul Hussain was not frustrated. To prove that he was not fearful of competition, Abul Hussain formed a small circle to contest in the election of Dhaka University Court (highest elected executive body of the university). The circle won the election in 1927, by defeating such a towering Muslim political leader as Dr. Abdullah Al Mamun Suhrawardy.⁵¹ Privately he also took preparation for a degree of M.L. In 1931, he not only completed the M.L. degree, but was awarded two gold medals for securing outstanding grades. In 1932, Abul Hussain moved out of Dhaka and joined the Calcutta High Court bar. He was nominated for and submitted the "Tagore Law Lecture" in Calcutta University in 1935.⁵² In 1937, he was appointed government pleader of the Calcutta High Court. Abul Hussain could not take up this position, as his health had been deteriorating rapidly due to stomach cancer. In the following year, on October 15, 1938, Abul Hussain died at the age forty-one.

III. Intellectual Orientation of and Influences on Kazi Wadud.

Wadud coined the motto, *buddhir mukti*, and its English translation, "emancipation of intellect," privately in his diary, *Nana Katha*,⁵³ in 1924. Between 1924 and 1926, Wadud developed the implications of this motto. Along with elaborating the meaning, Wadud also cited intellectuals who, he thought, had inspired him to construct the motto. In addition, Wadud analyzed in his diary, as well as in published essays, the

⁵⁰ Syed Mohammad Hussain, "Abul Hussain Smriti," *Astitva* Vol. 1 (1993), p. 68.

⁵¹ The contest was centered on the issue as to who would control the Executive Body of Dhaka University, East or West Bengal. For details, see News Report, "Election of Members of Dhaka University Court," *The Mussalman*, August 19, 1927.

⁵² Abul Hussain, *The History of Development of Muslim Law in British India* (Calcutta: A. Hussain, 1935).

⁵³ During these years, Wadud did not write every day. Wadud recorded events and his thoughts of sixty-nine days: thirty-nine days in 1924; eight days in 1925; nine days in 1926; nine days in 1927 and four days in 1928. See, Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, published in *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, II (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1990), pp. 283-331. Wadud published a part of his diary in a Bengali journal. See Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Dairir Chera Pata," *Saogat*, February-March, 1930, pp. 479-482.

ideas of those he considered his mentors or ideals, as well as the thought of those whom he rejected.

A. Intellectual Orientation: Freedom (*mukti*), Intellect (*buddhi*), and Creativity (*srishti*), 1924-26.

Wadud's diary, it may be noted, contains a few personal remarks on his wife, whom he married following pre-marital love. It is not full of Wadud's day to day relations with his family. Until 1928, Wadud only once mentioned his parents, who lived in a village home. Wadud's opinion about his father was that he was someone whose thought was not creative: "My father has many faults..."⁵⁴ Among the faults, Wadud wrote, his father did not want to know about the outside world, with its past and future, beyond the complacency of his little village world. Wadud irregularly visited his parents at their village home. He felt contentment from the loving care of his relatives and fellow villagers. Yet, he wrote that his nature is not to feel satisfied with this kind of loving care of kinship:

My real nature does not want this contentment. What my nature wants is not very simple to explain in a few words. If I say excitement or emotion, then I tell part of the truth of my nature; but not the complete truth. Even if I say pleasure, yet I am not telling the complete truth of my nature. My nature wants freedom--full of fire, full of pleasure, full of excitement, and full of pains.⁵⁵

Wadud frequently cited in his diary the meaning of freedom and creativity through several basic Bengali terms. The most frequent citations are of: *mukti* (freedom) and *srishti* (creation/creativity). These two terms, and their equivalents, are very noticeable in Wadud's writings. For example, in the diary, Wadud used phrases such as: "It is not right to overwhelm people with talk of freedom, rather freedom has to be grown within

⁵⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 294.

⁵⁵ *Amar asal prakriti e triptike cay na. Ta cay--ki cay ek-kathay bala soja nay. jadi bali ullas ki abeg tahale anekhani satya katha bala hay, kintu puro satyati bala hay na. jadi bali ananda tateo thikti bala hay na. Amar e prakriti prakash cay--agun-bhara, ananda-bhara, ullas-bhara, ar bedana-bhara.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 318.

oneself."⁵⁶ Again he writes: "...No laws and rules could force the human to freedom; let the human move according to his nature. What the human feels essential for his life, let him choose it. Let the human have intimacy with the world, let him feel this intimacy by heart: he would probably free himself from bondage."⁵⁷ Wadud also expressed such ideals in the diary such as: "Endless potentiality of the human"...."Relation of intellect with mind"... "Path of freedom".... "Enormous power of intellect." But he lamented "it is rare to find in Muslim society a devotee of freedom from all bondages."⁵⁸

These phrases expressing the ideal of *mukti* (freedom) are recorded in Wadud's diary concurrently with phrases expressing *srishti* (creativity/creation) and its Bengali equivalents. Wadud was not, therefore simply satisfied with a freedom of thought and expression. He went further into the results and achievement of the freedom of thought. He sought to judge creations individually as well as to awaken the thought of human creativity. For example, Wadud cited phrases, such as: "I do not know which is true--do we know God first to understand His creations or do we know creation first to understand Him"⁵⁹ Again Wadud wrote: "Do not take me wrong, God, I just want to understand a little of your creation. What else can I ask from you?"⁶⁰

Wadud in his diary further made a comparison of the creative power of some noted individuals, such as: "Gandhi is a famous person, but the robust power of intellect

⁵⁶ *Ajadi barta diye manushke abhibhut kara nay, ei Ajadi niye manusher majhe phute otha.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 296.

⁵⁷ *...kona ain-kanun diye jor kare manushke mukta kara jay na. Manushke sbabhaber pathe calte dao, ja tar antata darkari ta se nik. Jagate dasheer sange jog rakhuk, sara manapran diye e jog upalabdhi karuk, hayata bandhan khule jabe.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 302.

⁵⁸ *Manusher ananta sambhabana....Buddhir sange praner jog....muktir path....pracanda buddhi-shakti.... sab bandhan theke muktikami mussalman samaje biral.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, pp. 287-288.

⁵⁹ *Kije satya jani na--take na bujhle tar srishti bujha jabe na athaba srishti na bhujle take bhujha jabe na.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 294.

⁶⁰ *Khoda tomar srishti shudhu ektu bujhe dekhte cay, ar ki cayte pari?* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 292.

of Tolstoy is absent in Gandhi's thought."⁶¹ Last but not least, Wadud's only expectation from God, he said was: "If a sense of reasoning is developed in me, it is a sign of the success that God has bestowed upon me. Otherwise I do not think, there is any 'ism' (English phrase is Wadud's)....Whenever I hear any ideal model spoken about, immediately it comes to my mind. 'Why put burdens on the human? [Why one] put thorns on his way.'"⁶²

Wadud did not fully develop these expressions of *mukti* and *srishti* in his diary. However, one can get an idea of Wadud's sense of freedom and creativity, to understand his sense of relation with the supreme being. Wadud addressed the supreme being by several names: *Khoda*, *Allah*, *Ishvar*, *Prabhu*, *Bidhata*, and *Bhagaban*. He divided God's creation into two aspects: work of God, i.e., 'His creation' (*tar srishti*) and 'His word' (*tar katha*), i.e., the Quran and the *rasul*. Wadud submitted 'almost uncritically' to the works, the creations of God. He summarized creations of God:

His (God) works are endless. In some people, He develops rational thought, that is His work. In some people, he does not develop rational thought, that is also his work. He (God) is present within mute nature; He (God) is also present within a so-called very learned person....Therefore everything is His wish, like waves of an ocean; science and learning; commerce and trade. Saints are born, poet have spoken that is also His wish. The message of freedom has been announced age after age, that is also His wish. As a result, some are freed, that is also his wish....In endless ways He (God) brings success. We, you, are all trivial. Who are we to command His creations?⁶³

⁶¹ *Gandhi khub bara byakti kintu tar bhetre Tolstoy er pracanda buddhi-shaktir sandhan pai na.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 289.

⁶² *amar bhetare jodi bichar phute othe sei amar bidhatar deya sarthakatar cihna taibalte habe. Naile bishesh kona bad ism ache bale mane hay na....jakhani kono adasher katha suni takhani mane jege othe accha kena manusher upar bojha capan. tar pathe kata deoya.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 294.

⁶³ *Ananta tar khela, karo bhetare bicar jagacchen seo tar lila, karo bhetare temani bhab jagacchen na seo tar lila. Muk prakritir bhetareo tar prakas, abar tathakathit ati jnani manusher bhetareo tar prakash....Ataeb sabay tari iccha, brahmo samudrer dheau, jnan-biggan, byabsayabanijay sab ek ek dheau-er beshi kichu nay. Rishi janmacchen, kabi balchen seo tar iccha. Mukair bani bighoshita hayeche*

At another time, Wadud expressed a sacrosanct belief in a supreme being: "I feel sometime, that there is a mighty God; that is the truth and human have found no other truth."⁶⁴ Wadud also wished the mercy and blessing of God, so that all his sorrows and pains would turn into a 'birth-pain of new [creativity]' (*nutaner janma byatha*): "Oh! God... let me be Your new and wonderful creation."⁶⁵

Wadud himself was indeed a "new and wonderful creation." His understanding of *mukti* and *srishti* was not a total submission to God's creation. In the Bengali society in which Wadud was living, there was poverty of all kinds--economic, social, intellectual. Wadud did not fail to see God's *srishti* within the context of Bengali poverty. He described one incident, when he could not enjoy the pleasure of God's creation without seeing dejection in His creations: "While I was coming from college, I saw a destitute mother with a baby in her lap--in what poverty the baby was growing up! I felt that the march of His power is reflected in so many problems, ugliness and rubbish."⁶⁶ At another time, Wadud was enjoying God's creation of nature in the scenic beauties of Bengal:

Khoda, open your veil a little further and stand before the world. I want to satisfy my eyes with your creations and to sing a song of 'Your' beauty. My happy eyes see a growing young plant as earth's romantic pleasure; and those big trees are only its development. All creation is dancing with great pleasure. Yet within this creation, why is that poverty-stricken woman shedding tears of misery?⁶⁷

juge juge seo tar iccha, tar phale katak mukti peyechhe seo tar iccha....Ananta upaye tini sarthakata phutiye tolen. Tomi ami samanya. Tar srishtike hukum karbar ke? Kazi Abdul Wadud, Nana Katha, pp. 292-293.

⁶⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 294.

⁶⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 295.

⁶⁶ *College theke asar pathe ek dukkhinir kole kaci shishu dekhlam--ki dukkhe manush hacche--mane halo kato golmal, abajjana, kajarjatar bhetare tar datta shaktir abhijan.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 284.

⁶⁷ *Khoda, ei je tomar abaran ar ektu phika kare diye darao tumi jagater samne, tomar sei rup chokh bhare dekhte cay ar gala chere tar jay gan karte cay. Cokhe lagce trinankur jena dharanir anander romanca ar baro gachgulo jena tar anander hat barano, mahanande sara srishti nacche--accha er bhetare ai anashanklisha nari soke dukkhe chokher jale buk bhasacche?* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 291.

Beyond this contradiction perceived amid the pleasures of God's creation, Wadud's major dissatisfaction was with the word of God. The stress on freedom and creativity in Wadud's thought is clear in his diary from 1924. He wrote in his diary on October 31, 1924: "I can not accept the heavy rules of Islam without question like the ordinary person. What I accept is not quite the same as what the ordinary person accepts nor according to the explanations of the ulema."⁶⁸ Wadud confessed in the diary that he performs Islamic ritual, *namaj*, at times; but many verses of the *namaj* or word of the Quran, cannot satisfy him always:

I felt this morning, why should I not start to pray--to call Him five times a day by heart? I recited sura *Fatiha* silently, but my mind is not satisfied with '*gayril-magzuubi alay-him*' ("not the path of those who earn Thine anger")...because, I do not know for which acts, 'You' (God) feel satisfied and for which act 'You' (God) feel unsatisfied. 'You' (God) are alive, and alive everywhere in the world and this 'You' (God) I want to feel in me....I have observed many times, that several words of the Quranic *suras* do not touch my mind. It seemed to me that just as the *Fatiha* is the root statement of the whole Quran,...so my mind is attracted to *bismillaahir-rahmaanir-rahim* ("In the name of God, the beneficent, the merciful"). Yet, except for some prohibitions, I do not get always a picture the *rasul*; these are only ordinary ceremonies and prohibitions.⁶⁹

In the diary, Wadud characterized, *rasul*, by at least two more Bengali phrases, *mahamanab* (great human) and *mahapurush* (great man): "When I think about *rasul*, I see

⁶⁸ *Ekdin amar mane samasya jegechila ami Islamer mota bidhibidhanguli bina bakyabyaye dasjaner mata mene nite parci na, ja manci tao thik sadharan dasjaner mata ki alimder byakhya mata mana nay--tahale amar 'position' (English word is Wadud's) ki? Arthat mussalman samaje ami achi kon dabite ba adhikare?* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 305.

⁶⁹ *Sakale mane hacchila namaj para arambha kari na kena--pac pac bar kare take ekanta mane daka. Mane mane sura fatiha parlam, kintu gyril magdube alayhim (gayril-magzuubi alay-him) kathatay man othe na...mane hay kise tomi khushi ar kise asantusta ta to amar mane nay. Tomi acha, jagat jure acha sei tomake anubhab karte cai. Bashtabik anekdin dekheci Quraner suragulir katha sab samay mane lage na....Amar mane hacchila sura fatiha jeman samasta Quraner mul katha temani bismillaahir rahmaanir-rahim...cittakarshak. Rasul nije ja tar purna rup sab samay amara suragulir bhetare dekhte pai na, sekhane nana sadharan bidhinished ache.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 290.

a picture of a *mahamanab*..."⁷⁰ The two Bengali phrases, *mahapurush* and *mahamanab*, are standard titles that Wadud conferred on many reformers of Hindu, Muslim and Christian origin. For example, in the diary, Wadud used the expression *mahamanab* for Gandhi and also for Hazrat Mohammad and drew a parallel:

Gandhi said, 'It is my strong nature that separated me from my wife, son, and my brother.' I can see this personal tragedy in the life of many *mahamanabs*. Although Hazrat Mohammad's wives, daughters, servants, were devoted to him, his other relatives were not satisfied with him. The pain that we find in the above words of Mahatma, we see in the lives of many searchers for truth.⁷¹

Referring to Hazrat Mohammad, Wadud also wrote that the life of a *mahapurush* is his the only truth. It is only his life that should be taken conscientiously. The only message that is to be taken from a *mahapurush* is that which adjusts his human life to the life of human. Wadud wrote:

The *mahapurush* are as the only light-houses in the ocean, not to show a ship where to anchor; but to help a ship to sail further. In other words, the Quran, Bible and Veda, all these are '*jnanir katha*' (words of a person of wisdom). One has to understand them by knowledge. If we fail, we have to find an alternative. I see no other alternatives, except '*jnan o prem*' (knowledge and love) or '*bhumar*⁷² *jnanajat prem*' (great person's love based on knowledge).⁷³

⁷⁰ *Kintu rasuler bishay jakhan bhabhi takhan ta dekhi mahamanber chabi*. Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 290.

⁷¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 305.

⁷² Wadud defined the word, *bhuma*, as: *mahan birat purush, sarbabyapi purush* wich is equivalent to *mahapurush* or great person. See, Kazi Abdul Wadud and Anil Chandra Sen, *Byabaharik Shabdakosh* or 'Bengali to Bengali dictionary' (Calcutta: Presidency Library, 1962), p. 797.

⁷³ ...*Mahapurusher jiban-satya, kintu kathay anek golmal. Mahapurusher sei jibankei jagratabhabe grahan karte habe. Katha tarai sange miliye ja paoya jay nite habe. Mahapurushera hacchen bhabsamudra jatrir arkathi ba aloksthambha, sekhane jahaj badhbar janya nai, aro samne paricalanar sahajya pabar janya. Arthat Veda, Quran, Bible, sabay jnanir katha, jnan diye ta samjhe nite habe, na bujhle anya path dekhte habe. Jnan ar prem, arthat bhumar jnanjat prem bhinna path dekci na.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 290.

Wadud stressed in the diary that biographies of the founders of religions should be written. It is the human lives of the founders of religion rather than their verbal 'instruction' (*upadesh*), that are important. The distinction is not so clear in Wadud's diary; yet the emphasis is in this direction is clear:

In ages past, biographies of religious founders were less important than their instructions (*upadesh*). No biography had been written on (Gautam) Buddha and (Hazrat) Mohammad by their contemporaries. In those days, people believed that instruction is the only truth and essential teaching. An image of an eternity of truth was restricted (*satyar anantamurti takhan alpa parisare chokhe na parbari katha*). Today, we want *mahamanab* for their 'example' (English phrase is Wadud's)... We do not want a single *mahamanab*, but the lively humanity of a group of *mahamanabs*. It is not the instruction [that we want], but the source [life of Mohammad] from which the instruction has emerged.⁷⁴

In the diary, Wadud had also given *dharma jiban*, or religious/righteous life, a new meaning.⁷⁵ A 'generalized' (English phrase is Wadud's) meaning of *dharma jiban*, according to Wadud, is the cultivation of knowledge and leading life in the direction of knowledge. A *dharma jiban*, as taught by ancient religious sages, was to "acquire first a knowledge of *brahmmacarja* (a holy and controlled celibate life-style⁷⁶); and only then to begin a domestic life."⁷⁷ A great defect of this system, according to Wadud, was that while the sages emphasized knowledge, they employed knowledge only for support of religion. The result was that *mukti* or freedom was lost in the system. Gautam Buddha saw the problem of life from a different direction. He ignored, for the most part, religious formalism. This revolution (*bidroha*), according to Wadud, had created a lasting way for

⁷⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 290.

⁷⁵ There may be no single English equivalent for *dharma*. It ranges over the meanings of religious, righteous, virtuous, law-abiding, etc.

⁷⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud and Anil Chandra Sen, *Byabaharik Shabdakosh*, p. 772.

⁷⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 288.

human freedom. Furthermore, Buddha taught: "It is not only following the predecessors; you are a light for yourselves (*apanarai apanader alok hao, shudhu purbabartir amusaran nay*)"⁷⁸

For *dharma jiban*, Wadud was convinced that 'truth and individuality' (*satya ar byaktitver*) were essential. The meaning of 'truth' (*satya*), according to Wadud, is to level to the ground human distinctions of *jati* and *gotra* (group), like a "river losing itself in the ocean." Wadud also defined individuality: "Individuality means the hint of the great within a small, or that the great separates into the small (*byaktitver artha khudrer bhitare birater je ingit athaba birat jena khudra haye dana bedhe otheche*)."⁷⁹ He gave yet more specific metaphors expressing the meaning of individuality. Individuality is like waves of an endless ocean. It is like a concentration of 'electrons' (English phrase is Wadud's) in various shapes at various places. Wadud also gave a typical Bengali metaphor: "Individuality is like a 'sweet-ball' (*rasagolla*) that floats within sweet syrup." In other words, individuality is the characteristic of a human in relation to what is greater. On the basis of this definition combining 'truth' and 'individuality,' Wadud drew out two implications of *dharma jiban* (religious or righteous life). First: "Obedience to rules and prohibitions is not religion. *Dharma bhab* (religious attitude) is one's love of humanity or one's cementing of relations with the world."⁸⁰ Second: "Religious rules should not dominate one's life, i.e., rules of religion should not overwhelm one's rational-intellect."⁸¹

B. Influences and critiques, 1924-1970.

1. General observations.

⁷⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 288.

⁷⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 289.

⁸⁰ *Bidhi-bidhan mana dharma nay--dharma bhaber jagarani prakrita dharma--arthat prem svarthahinata e sab--athaba nijeke jagater sange jukta jnan karai dharmer pratham sopan.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 299.

⁸¹ *Dharmer nirdeshguloke jibaner upar arthat tomar budhhi-bicarke abhibhut kare-probhutta karte dio na.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 299.

From 1924 until the 1970s, Wadud wrote about those he considered his mentors and sources of inspiration. Wadud's diary (1924-28) reveals that he was a patient reader of many intellectuals and religio-social reformers: Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Raja Rammohun Roy, Bankim Chandra, Vivekananda, Tolstoy, Romain Rolland, Goethe, Mohammad Ali, Sir Mohammed Iqbal, Mostafa Kamal Ataturk, Abul Kalam Azad, Gautam Buddha, Kabir, and Hazrat Mohammad. Nevertheless, shortly before founding of the Muslim Sahitya Samaj (January 17, 1926), Wadud had identified two prime mentors of his own choice-Rammohun and Rabindranath.

Wadud explained why he chose certain figures as inspirations. He wrote that 'benefactors of humanity' (*sadhak*⁸²) were of two types. One type "light the lamp of truth and knowledge" (*satya ar jnaner dvip jvalan*)--e.g., Buddha, Hazrat Mohammad, Rammohun, and Gandhi. Others were "emblem of truth," (*satyer padapith*), who offer their lives at the "feet of truth and knowledge." The architects of the Bengal Awakening, or Renaissance, were one example of this type. The reformers dedicated their lives to defining a unique religion for the age (*jug dharma*), one that gave birth to the idea of 'universal religion' (*vishva-dharma*). Wadud did not say anything about how Hazrat Mohammad and Gautam Buddha related to this universal religion. Rabindranath, Rammohun and Gandhi, he especially singled out for their power of 'creativity' (*srishti*):

When our nation will achieve independence...and before we start a 'new phase of life' (*naba parjayer jiban*), Rabindranath will be a hero of our nation. All his writings are new song (*nabagita*) of freedom (*mukti*). He has defined *buddhir mukti* by an astonishing, wonderful, simple, but powerful definition. This is his 'creation' (*srishti*); and for this Rabindranath will remain 'immortal' (*amar*) to us. We also see many other immortal heroes in India: Rammohun, Michael Madhusudan, Ramakrisna and Gandhi. Among

⁸² The Bengali word that Wadud wrote was, *sadhak*, which I translated, 'benefactors of humanity.' Wadud gave five Bengali meanings of the word *sadhak* as: *hitasadhak*, *anushilankari*, *pujak*, *aradhak* and *yogi*. From these words I took *hitasadhak* or 'benefactor of humanity,' because *hitasadhak* is closer to Bengali word *manabhita sadhak* or benefactors of humanity. This is a meaning that Wadud wrote to understand the meanings of all religions. See Kazi Abdul Wadud and Anil Chandra Sen, *Byabharik Shavdakosh* p. 1014.

these three are notable--Rammohun, Gandhi and Rabindranath.⁸³

After five years of the Muslim Sahitya Samaj, Wadud would reaffirm his respect for his two *gurus*, Rammohun and Rabindranath; but he wrote of other sources of his inspiration as well. Wadud wrote in 1931 that he drew inspiration from three sources.⁸⁴ The first was classical Islam, which had an insignificant impact in Bengal, though Islam was forced upon Bengali Muslim life. The second was Bengal as a land of 'religion rooted in soul/self' (*atmanishta dharma sadhana*) of the Sufis. 'Freedom of thought' (*cintar svadhinata*) of the Sufis is most noticeable in the *baul* songs of Muslim origin. The third was the birth pain of '*buddhir mukti*,' felt in the Muslim world in the thought of Abu Hanifa and Mutazilites to the west, and Akbar and Abul Fadl in India. In 1945, Wadud further extended his sources of inspiration to include Kemal Ataturk: "...In the Dhaka University campus, 1926-27, a small group of Muslim intelligentsia was born, whose slogan was *buddhir mukti*, and who called themselves Kemalist (i.e., advocates of Mostafa Kemal Ataturk)."⁸⁵ Kazi Wadud's six lectures in Vishva-Bharati (1956), on "*Banglar Jagaran*" or 'Bengal Awakening,' revisited two of his earlier sources of inspiration: Rammohun and Rabindranath; but he included new names. "The *mantra* (motto) of the *buddhir mukti* movement was inspired by many reformers and intellectuals: Kemal Ataturk of Turkey; Rammohun; Rabindranath;...Romain Rolland; Farsi poet Sheikh Saadi and Hazrat Mohammad."⁸⁶

These statements of Wadud, from different time periods of his life, show that he drew inspiration from several sources. It may be presumed that these figures worked in

⁸³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 311.

⁸⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Path o Patheya*" (1931), published in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Samaj o Sahitya* (Calcutta: Moslem Publishing House, 1934), pp. 39-40.

⁸⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Adhunik Bangla Sahitya*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 519.

⁸⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran* (Calcutta: Vishva-Bharati, 1956), pp. 194-195.

various ways on Wadud's inner mind. Yet, it could be stated reasonably that the unique meaning of *buddhir mukti* that Wadud defined could not fit wholly or comfortably within the thought of any of the above figures. Wadud wrestled throughout his long intellectual career to find an intellectual model that suited his distinctive radicalism. His nearest intellectual mentors in this regard were Rammohun and Rabindranath. This special relationship could be argued on three grounds: i) Wadud wrote the greatest number of articles on the thought of Rabindranath and Rammohun, compared to other reformers and intellectuals of Hindu, Muslim and European origin; ii) Wadud analyzed Rammohun and Rabindranath in such a way as to adjust their thought to his idea of *buddhir mukti*, and iii) he had far less to say of a critical sort about these two.

In the years of 1926-1938, Wadud wrote three articles exclusively on Rammohun,⁸⁷ an article on 'Bengal Awakening',⁸⁸ a book and five articles on Tagore.⁸⁹ During this period, when the current of the *buddhir mukti* movement was strong, it is interesting to note that Wadud wrote only one essay and delivered one public speech on Hazrat Mohammad.⁹⁰ In subsequent years, 1938-1970, Wadud published two long essays

⁸⁷ The three essays are: Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Neta Rammohun*" (1926) or 'Leader Rammohun' published in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Naba Parjay*, II (Dhaka: Syed Imamul Hussain, 1929), pp. 1-13; "*Rammohun Roy*" (1933), in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Samaj o Sahitya*, pp.1-31; "*Rammohuner Birodhi-paksher Baktabya*" (1934) or "Arguments of Rammohun's opponent," *Samaj o Sahitya*, pp. 73-80.

⁸⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Banglar Jagaran*," *Shikha*, Vol. II (1928).

⁸⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path* (Calcutta: Moslem Publishing House, 1927). The essays in this book were read by Wadud in Vishva-Bharati addas in Dhaka in 1924, under a title, "*Rabindranath*." The essays were published in a Bengali journal *Prabasi*, "By Tagore's wish." The four articles of Wadud on Rabindranath are: "*Rabindranather gan*" (1931) or 'Songs of Rabindranath,' published in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Samaj o Sahitya*, pp. 131-156; "*Gandhi o Rabindranath*" (1921) or 'Gandhi and Rabindranath,' published in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Shashvata Banga* (Calcutta: Kazi Khursidi Bakht, 1951), pp. 408-419; "*Rabindra Kabya Pather Bhumika*" or 'Introduction to Rabindranath's Literature,' (1926) *Jayati*, Vol. I, No.1, 1930, pp. 26-28; "*Shiksha Sambhadhe Rabindranath o Sarat Chandra*" (1927), *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, pp. 615-622; "*Kalidash o Rabindranath*," *Shashvata Banga*, pp. 1-8.

⁹⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud's four page essay on Hazrat Mohammad is, "*Fateha-i-Doajdaham*"(1925), published in Kazi Abdul (ed.), *Naba Parjay*, II, pp. 43-46. On June 2, 1929, Wadud delivered a short public speech on Hazrat Mohammad. See Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hazrat Mohammad*," published in *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, pp. 626-628.

and a book review on Raja Rammohun,⁹¹ and delivered six lectures on the 'Bengal Awakening' at Vishva-Bharati (1956).⁹² During these later years, Wadud published on Rabindranath four articles and 'two large volumes' (1962 & 1969), and lectured on Rabindranath Tagore in the Gujarat University (1961). He also published two volumes on Goethe's biography⁹³ in 1946. At this time, his works on Islam included a biography of Hazrat Mohammad (1966),⁹⁴ two short essays on the Quran, and two volumes of the Bengali translation of the Quran without citing the Arabic text (1966, 1967).⁹⁵ These works on Islam reflect a *buddhir mukti* understanding of Islam, as done by an intellectual who was a follower of Rammohun and Rabindranath throughout his life.

Wadud wrote no exclusive essay on the Mutazilites, but only reported what he learned of them from Rammohun. Similarly, he did not write any article on the Sufi and mystic thought of Bengal, other than to mention what he found in Tagore's writings. Wadud cited Romain Rolland once in his diary and a few times in his essays. He wrote no

⁹¹These essays of Kazi Wadud are as follows. 1) "*Shata Barsha Pare Rammohun*" (1949) or 'Rammohun after one hundred years.' The essay was read in 'Sadharan Brahmo Samaj' meeting in Calcutta, 1949. See *Kazi Wadud Racanabali*, I, pp. 467-470. ii) "*Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin*" (1954). The article was first published in Bengali journal, *Tattva Kaumudi*, August 16, 1954. The article is reprinted in Abdul Huq (ed.) *Kazi Wadud Racanabali*, II, (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1990), pp. 178-182. Kazi Wadud reviewed, Sophia Dobson's, *Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun* (1913), *Caturanga*, Vol. XXIV, No. 4 (1962). The review is reprinted in Khondkar Sirajul Huq (ed.), *Kazi Wadud Racanabali*, IV (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1993), pp. 397-399.

⁹² Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran* (Calcutta: Vishva-Bharati, 1956).

⁹³ Wadud wrote on "New humanism"(English phrase is Wadud's) of Goethe (1749-1832). Begining from 1929, Wadud wrote essays on the life and writings of Goethe. Kazi Abdul Wadud published, *Kabi Guru Goethe*, I & II (Calcutta: 1946). Wadud was inspired by Bankim and Rabindranath Tagore to write on the life and writings of Goethe. Wadud frankly admitted in *Goethe* Vol. I: "Long years ago Bankim Chandra wrote on the humanism of Goethe. Goethe was so similar to Rabindranath that one can call it an organic unity (*atmik jog*)." Wadud's two volumes on Goethe were published in Khondkar Sirajul Huq (ed.), *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, IV (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1993). Wadud's writing on Goethe earned him respect from the East Pakistan German Forum. Its honorary secretary was Dr. Detlef Moeller. The forum acknowledged the interest of Wadud in Goethe: "The Forum recalls with admiration the great contributions of Kazi Abdul Wadud towards the Bengali language and literature and especially his efforts for the introduction of the German literature to the Bengali reader..." Letter from East Pakistan German Forum to Shamsul Huda (Wadud's son-in-law), July 14, 1970, unpublished document.

⁹⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Hazrat Mohammad o Islam* (Calcutta: Kazi Khurshid Bakht, 1966).

⁹⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Pabitra Quran*, I & II (Calcutta: Kazi Abdul Wadud, 1966 & 1967).

essay on Romain Rolland, nor on the thought of Farsi (Persian) poet Sheikh Saadi. Wadud wrote articles on Mostafa Kemal, Iqbal and Gandhi, along with Rammohun and Rabindranath. The next section, considers what Wadud did write on these figures, and how far their thoughts were relevant to Wadud's understanding of *buddhir mukti*.

2. Mostafa Kemal Ataturk: "My few words on Mostafa Kemal."

The quoted phrase is Wadud's title of the short essay that he wrote on Mostafa Kemal. At the beginning of the article, Wadud addressed Kemal with an Urdu phrase: *Kemal tu ne kemal kiya bhai* or 'Oh! brother Kemal, your success is wonderful.' Wadud continued that Kemal is a leader of a 'new opinion:' "Like our own private life, religious life could also be subject of change."⁹⁶ Wadud apprehended that opponents would say: "Can religion that is revealed be changed?" To this Wadud said: "Yes, if necessary, we should think about it."⁹⁷ Wadud cited examples of societies which understood religion in relation to modern life: "Think of the European Renaissance, or our own Rammohun, Debendranath, Keshab Chandra, Ramakrishna, and Vivekananda; how they interpret modern human life in its relation to the ancient *shastras*."⁹⁸ Notice how Wadud was drawn to the Bengal Awakening, even though his article was focused on Mostafa Kemal of Turkey.

Wadud only returned to Kemal in the last three pages of the article. Wadud wrote: "We acclaim Kemal" because "Kemal has conceived and implemented, among the living-dead of the (Muslim) society, the wonderful materialism among his countrymen."⁹⁹ Kemal cast off strongly "this harmful Khilafat-mess" (*ei khilafat-janjali*) as

⁹⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Mostafa Kemal Sambandhe Kaekti katha," *Naba Parjay*, I (Calcutta: Moslem Publishing House, 1926), p. 3.

⁹⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Mostafa Kemal Sambandhe Kaekti katha," *Naba Parjay*, I, p. 4.

⁹⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Mostafa Kemal Sambandhe Kaekti katha," *Naba Parjay*, I, p. 4.

⁹⁹ *Mostafa Kamaler (Kemal) prashamsay aj amara je prabitta haeche, tar karan samagra mussalman jagater bahubistrira jibamritatar majhkhane tiniyi prajyapta parimane ei sundar jagatik Jibaner tattva*

unnecessary to Muslim society and politics. His vision is to implement in his society the "potentiality of Muslims in all levels for a strong charming material life and denial of an all-encompassing authority of ancient *shastras* on human life."¹⁰⁰ Wadud's only cited source of this information was newspaper reports. Wadud quoted one of the newspaper reports, according to which Kemal said: "Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turanianism are dead thoughts of Muslims' dream, that did not achieve anything except the ruin of the Muslims."¹⁰¹ Wadud concluded this essay by summarizing his inspiration from Mostafa Kemal: "Our foremost learning from Kemal is that new creation is not possible for blind following of the past. For those who want to accomplish a renaissance movement, there is no alternative to changing some traditions."¹⁰² For this, Wadud compared the Kemalism of Turkey with his inspiration from the Bengal Renaissance: "Evidently the movement of *buddhir mukti* had been inspired by the striving of Mostafa Kemal; yet its more substantial relation was with the Bengal Renaissance and in that respect to the liberal Renaissance of the humans in all ages."¹⁰³

Wadud's analysis of Mostafa Kemal shows that Wadud understood that there was a radical trend of Muslim modernism in Turkey; but he was not sure that Kemal would be his intellectual mentor. Two years after he published the article, Wadud wrote in his diary:

...Kemal, Amanullah and leaders in Egypt are solving their national problems by introducing European ways in the dress, running the government and education....I do not know what is their future. But I feel that Muslim-

nutan kare uplabdhi karechen. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Mostafa Kemal Sambandhe Kaekti katha," published in *Naba Parjay*, I, p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Mostafa Kemal Sambandhe Kaekti katha," *Naba Parjay*, I, p. 9.

¹⁰¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Mostafa Kemal Sambandhe Kaekti katha," *Naba Parjay*, I, p. 9.

¹⁰² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Mostafa Kemal Sambandhe Kaekti katha," *Naba Parjay*, I, p. 11.

¹⁰³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Nibedan," *Shashvata Banga*, p. i.

Renaissance of Turkey, Kabul, Arab, and Egypt, is one sided....They might or might not do better than Bengal Renaissance. In the Bengal Renaissance, there is Renaissance of the 'free mind' (*mukta citta*)....But we are not sure that in the Muslim-Renaissance the renaissance is a Renaissance of the mind; in other words, if there is a real birth of a new mind.¹⁰⁴

Interestingly, Wadud did not deliver this article on Kemal in the Muslim Sahitya Samaj, a forum of the *buddhir mukti* movement. Wadud delivered it in a forum of the 'neo-orthodox' and 'Islamic liberal' apologists: Bangiya Mussalman Sahitya Samiti, in 1926. Wadud's interest on Kemalism did not sustain itself after this article. Except for a few isolated comments, Wadud never called himself a *kemal panthi* or 'Kemal advocate.' Wadud's co-worker, Abul Hussain never, wrote an essay on Kemal.

3. Sir Mohammad Iqbal: "Iqbal as a thinker is less prized by us than Iqbal as a poet."

This was the view of Wadud, a humble intellectual of a Bengali origin, of the much publicized Cambridge-educated, Sir Mohammad Iqbal. Wadud's stated clearly his difference with Iqbal:

Our difference is fundamental. Iqbal holds the idea that revival of an old religion and culture is possible and desirable; while we hold that it is an impossibility....The past, in our view, can only provide some inspiration for us if our desire to act in the present is honest. So Iqbal the thinker is somewhat less prized by us than Iqbal the poet....¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 326.

¹⁰⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Iqbal" (1943) published in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Creative Bengal* (Calcutta: Thacker Spink & Co., 1949), p. 120. The article is one of the fifteen articles of Wadud that were translated in English in 1949 and published in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Creative Bengal*. The English translations were done by Kazi Wadud, Professors Taraknath Sen (Presidency College) and Lotika Ghosh (Fraternity of faiths, Calcutta). Wadud thanked Professor A.G. Stock, English Department of Dhaka University, who arranged to publish this book. Wadud wrote in the Preface of the book: "I had the privilege of being closely associated with a literary and cultural movement, inaugurated at Dacca, East Bengal, in 1926, which had for its watchword 'Emancipation of the Intellect'.... Emancipation of the Intellect and Humanism are perhaps the basic thoughts on which the essays of the collection try to take their stand...We are now deep in the age of Totalitarianism and Fanaticism: the voice of reason and humanism sounds today feeble indeed. But feeble it has perhaps always been and yet persistent. This feeble and persistent voice needs must win the ear of humanity....The story of Creative Bengal is the story of resurgent India and East. May the resurgent be a

Wadud designates 'Iqbal the poet:' "He (Iqbal) was an established and powerful poet of the Urdu-poet-society" (*tini urdu-kabi-samaje shaktiman kabi rupe adrita han*). Wadud wrote that he can enjoy the company of Iqbal's "ever active endlessly desirous self" (*sadasakriya ananta-lolup amitva*); because this aspiration of Iqbal encouraged Muslims to giving up an ideal of 'lethargy, or self-composure'¹⁰⁶ (*jarata*). But Wadud also detected a risk of 'misrepresentation' (*apabyakhya*) of Iqbal's thought as a 'doctrine of force' (*shaktibad*). Wadud cited the example of Nietzsche in Europe: "...We even apprehend that, like Nietzsche's thought, which has been instrumental in releasing the forces of destruction in Europe, Iqbal's thought is liable to such misinterpretation."¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, on both accounts, the discarding of lethargy and the doctrine of force: Wadud cited Tagore. Wadud wrote: "On the unwanted outcome of both the doctrine of force and the ideal of lethargy (or self-composure) Tagore's two comments are noteworthy."¹⁰⁸

Wadud also criticized Iqbal's "ever active self" for its social and political implications. First, Wadud noted that Iqbal's fervent prayer was for upliftment of Muslims: "O Lord, enkindle a living desire in the heart of the Mussalmans..." This according to Wadud, "He (Iqbal) could not desire without the well-being of all other peoples, the absence of which would render meaningless his love of God and truth."¹⁰⁹

thing of joy for mankind." For Bengali version of Wadud's essay on Iqbal. See Abdul Huq (ed.), *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, pp. 484-491.

¹⁰⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Iqbal," *Creative Bengal*, p. 120.

¹⁰⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Iqbal," *Creative Bengal*, p. 120.

¹⁰⁸ Wadud wrote that on the doctrine of force, Tagore said: "When the aggressive activity of will, which naturally accompanies physical vigor, fails to accept the responsibility of its ideal, it breeds unappeasable greed for material gain, leads to unmeaning slavery of things, till amidst a raging conflagration of clashing interests the tower of ambition topples down to the dust."

The ideal of self-composure of Tagore, according to Wadud is, "As activities of a vigorous vitality may become unmeaning and thereupon smother the soul with a mere multiplicity of material, so the peace of the extinguished desire may become the peace of death; and the inner world, in which we would dwell, become a world of incoherent dreams." See Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Iqbal," *Creative Bengal*, p. 121. For Bengali versions of the two passages, see Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Iqbal," *Kazi Abdul Racanabali*, I, p. 489.

¹⁰⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Iqbal," *Creative Bengal*, p. 122.

Second: The growth of the 'self' (*amitva*) that Iqbal desired cannot be imposed on human mind. For this Wadud quoted a verse of the "our foremost Baul:"

O thou cruelly impatient! Shouldst thou bake in fire the bud of man's mind? Shouldst thou fry it, in thy impatience, to make it fragrant? Look, how our Supreme Guru takes ages to ensure the blossoming of a lotus--He is in no hurry.¹¹⁰

Again Wadud criticized Iqbal:

By his (Iqbal's) turning away completely from modern European culture under the conviction that it is heading towards destruction--in one of his last poems he writes: the musk brought by this merchant (European thinker, meaning is Wadud's) is from the nave "*Mushk-e-saudagaraz nafe-sagast*"--and by lending his full weight on the side of oriental spirituality he does not show insight enough, inasmuch as, with all their glaring weaknesses and insufficiencies, the scientific outlook and the unflagging interest in human good of modern Europe are still great spiritual assets of mankind; and the spirituality of the East should supplement them instead of placing itself in opposition to them.¹¹¹

In another article, "*Path o Patheya*," Wadud also criticized Iqbal's "ever active ego." The problem is that Iqbal gave an old symbol for new meanings. Wadud noted that by Islam Iqbal understood, power, strength, and vitality; but many Muslim scholars understood Islam a "complete surrender." The two objectives, according to Wadud, may not be inconsistent. But Iqbal wanted a 'political power' for the Muslims; on the other hand, many Muslims did not share this view.

Iqbal believed that, at a critical period of Muslim history, it was Islam that rescued Muslims. Wadud cited a specific example of a critical period of Islamic history: the conflict between orthodoxy and reason, i.e., a conflict between, orthodox Imam Gazzali and Mutazilite leader, Ibn-Rushd (Averroes). Ibn Rushd was defeated by Gazzali. Wadud asked the question: "Did this defeat bring victory for Islam? The benefactors of those

¹¹⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Iqbal," *Creative Bengal*, p. 122.

¹¹¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Iqbal," *Creative Bengal*, p. 122.

influenced by the rationalism of Ibn Rushd were modern Europe; and those who followed victorious Gazzali, are the Muslim world."¹¹²

The strength that Iqbal offered for Muslims was 'faith' in Islam. Wadud stated that by Islam Iqbal understood Islam as a 'new picture of beauty' (*ek nutan saundarjya*); and for its defense he was 'an exceedingly faithful person' (*ekanta bishvasban byakti*). Wadud assessed its impact on society:

This fundamental faith is not a subject of disrespect; but it is to be respected. Inspired by this 'new faith,' people's hearts are stirred; and people share this pleasure with one another. Yet, influence of faith upon humans actually is somewhat different. By its influence, human life becomes a merciless torture....The nationalists of our time are cursed by this torture. Iqbal says, 'Islam is *abe hayat* for human' or *mritusanjibani* (giving life to the dead). Dr. Arabinda says, 'Hinduism is *amogh bidhan* (unfailing rule) for human.' I do not know if people would seriously think about these sayings. Yet their influence has made life unbearable for Indians.¹¹³

Indian Muslims would not be able to disregard Iqbal as their leader, unless an alternative more rational ideal is presented to them. At this point in criticism of Iqbal, Wadud declared a sort of manifesto of *buddhir mukti*.

It is true, we live in a house, but the house is built under an open sky. The various nationalities or communities are not untrue for humans.' Yet humans have formed a unity of a 'world family' (*vishva paribar*), where humans have an obligation and respect to one another. When a human forgets this larger life, it is then the problem starts. It can be said without doubt that compared to an emotion of 'Muslimism' (*muslimatva*) and a feeling of 'Hinduism' (*hindutva*), ideals of *buddhir mukti*, are suited for the well-being of Indians, irrespective of *jati* and *dharma* (religion).¹¹⁴

¹¹² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Path o Patheya" (1931), *Samaj o Sahitya*, p. 36.

¹¹³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Path o Patheya" (1931), *Samaj o Sahitya*, p. 37.

¹¹⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Path o Patheya" (1931), *Samaj o Sahitya*, p. 40.

Wadud concluded that two roads are now open to Muslims. One is Iqbal's "inferiority complex" of Muslims. The other is *buddhir mukti*, based in faith of an unlimited potentiality, respect and pleasures of human life. These ideals of *buddhir mukti*, according to Wadud, are not easy ideals to follow; but one should not be afraid: "Human efforts are becoming harder day by day, and in this are inherent the human pleasures of creativity. Today Muslims should decide which way they should go."¹¹⁵

4. Mahatma Gandhi: "Is *Caraka* a symbol of Indian freedom?"

Wadud's interest in Gandhi originated in the 1920s. Yet, unlike his interest in Rammohun and Rabindranath, it did not persist. Apart from a few comments in the diary, Wadud wrote only one article on Gandhi during the non-cooperation movement in 1922. Wadud wrote in the diary that *Caraka* (spinning wheel) symbolizes the dignity of human labor. He was impressed by Gandhi's emphasis on the dignity of physical labor. But, in comparing Gandhi and Rabindranath, Wadud preferred the latter: "Rabindranath emphasized knowledge. Gandhi said to work according to knowledge....But one should remember Rabindranath's warning that a coercion of the *Caraka* movement must not be imposed upon the human intellect."¹¹⁶ Wadud praised Gandhi's sense freedom, a symptom of the potentiality of India, yet he carefully considered Gandhi's freedom and the method to achieve it. Wadud wrote in his diary, "I see human slavery in many ways. If people simply give up job and title, that will not get rid of our slavery. British rule is only one example, the worst example, of our deep-rooted weakness."¹¹⁷ Wadud praised Gandhi's

¹¹⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Path o Patheya*" (1931), *Samaj o Sahitya*, p. 42.

¹¹⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 310.

¹¹⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 304.

saying: 'The best propaganda is not pamphleteering, but for each one of us to live a life we would have the world to live.'¹¹⁸

The article that Wadud wrote on Gandhi, "*Gandhi o Rabindranath*" (1922) or 'Gandhi and Rabindranath' began by a comparison of Gandhi with Rabindranath. Wadud gathered Gandhi's thought from Gandhi's *Indian Home Rule*. Wadud repeated that he was impressed by Gandhi's phrase, "*Carka* is a plea for the dignity of labor,"¹¹⁹ but he noted Tagore's reply to Gandhi's call for *Carka*: "It is not this dull sound of *Carka* that will bring a devotion to *svaraj*; for that we need an awakening of all our strength. The awakening of our strength, e.g., the expansion of our knowledge, will qualify us to achieve *svaraj*."¹²⁰ Wadud's response to Tagore's reply was positive:

This reply of Rabindranath is very precious. Many people do not have this knowledge that we will not get real *svaraj* merely by the transfer of power from British to Indian hands. If we drive out from our heart many rigidities, infatuations, etc., only then we will get the meaning of the real *svaraja*. This real *svaraj* does not consist in one's external mastery; but one's mastery over one's self.¹²¹

C. Wadud's first Bengali Mentor: Raja Rammohun Roy. "Raja Rammohun Roy deserves reminiscence in each morning."

¹¹⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 305.

¹¹⁹ Wadud cited a passage from *Indian Home Rule*, "...A plea for the spinning wheel is a plea for the dignity of labor. There are certain things which all must do in all climes. The spinning wheel is the thing which all must turn in the Indian clime for the transition stage at any rate and the vast majority for all time....God created man to work for his bread and said that those who are without work were thieves....Why should I, who have no need to work for food, spin ? Because I am living on the spoliation of my countryman. Trace the course of every pice that finds its way into your pocket and you will realise the truth of what I write." See Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Gandhi o Rabindranath*," *Shashvata Banga*, p. 410.

¹²⁰ *Gandhi sabaikē carka kate kapar bunte balechen. Tate Rabindranath balte can, shudhu ei carkar ekgheye gharghare svarajer arati habe na. Tar janya desher sab shaktir jagaran cai. Sei shaktir jagarane jnaner samprsarane svaraj-labher jogyta amader ghatbe.* See, Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Gandhi o Rabindranath*," *Shashvata Banga*, p. 410.

¹²¹ *Rabindranather ekatha ati mullyaban. Imrejer hat theke amader hate bharater shashanbhar elei je amader prakrita svaraj paba na se jnan amader aneker nei. Amader antahkaraner jaratva, moha, ityadi anek kichu dur kare dile tabe amara prakrita svarajar sandhan pabo je svarajya bairer prabhutve nay, atmakatritve.* See, Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Gandhi o Rabindranath*," *Shashvata Banga*, p. 410.

It is true that Wadud focused his *buddhir mukti* view in dialogue or debate with the views of those surveyed just now, as well as with views of other Hindu and Muslim leaders. Yet it was Rammohun and Rabindranath Tagore who throughout his adult life stood as his ideals or mentors. It is interesting to note that Wadud's intellectual life began with a massive interest in the two mentors. His last works, immediately before his death, were also devoted to the two mentors. How he admired them throughout his life could be gathered from several activities of his life. For example, while Wadud was suffering from deadly Parkinson's disease in 1969 (a year before his death), he refused to write his memoirs: "I am not getting an inspiration to write my memoir." Yet Wadud got an inspiration to act on behalf of his two mentors. He wrote to Abdul Huq, who was interested on Wadud's writings: "I am now busy working on 'Kabi Guru Rabindranath, Vol. II.'"¹²² It was during this illness that Wadud also floated a proposal in *addas* (in his living room) for founding an institute on Rammohun in Calcutta.

The regard which Wadud felt for Raja Rammohun Roy is highlighted in Kazi Wadud's speech delivered to a gathering of the "East Bengal Brahmo Samaj," Dhaka, 1926. The Bengali phrase that he used to glorify Rammohun is: *pratah-smaraniya Raja Rammohun Roy*. Wadud translated the phrase, *prata-smaraniya*: "Worth reminiscence each morning means so holy as to be pronounced at the beginning of each day."¹²³ The phrase was not the only homage Wadud paid to Rammohun in that speech. Wadud told the Brahmo Samaj, "I feel proud that I am able, from the bottom of my heart, to pay reverence to Rammohun and to his *Brahmo* movement."¹²⁴ "The Muslim community,"

¹²² Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Huq, March 3, 1969. See Abdul Huq, "Kazi Abdul Waduder Patrabali," *Bangla Academy Patrika*, Vol. July-October (1983), p. 6.

¹²³ *pratah-smaraniya, arthat jahar nam eta pabitra je taha uccaran kariya din arambha karite hay.* Kazi Abdul Wadud and Anil Chandra Sen, *Byabaharik Shabdakosh*, p. 649

¹²⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Neta Rammohun" (1926) or 'Leader Rammohun,' *Naba Parjay*, II, p. 1. *Naba Parjay*, I & II published sixteen articles and public speeches of Kazi Abdul Wadud between 1926-1929. Kazi Wadud wrote in the third page of *Naba Parjay*, I, that the title *Naba Parjay* or 'New Phase' is given by "my respected friend Abul Hussain." The *Naba Parjay*, II, was published by Abul Hussain's younger

Wadud proclaimed, "is one of the largest branches of Rammohun's family."¹²⁵ In the second annual conference of the Muslim Sahitya Samaj in 1927, Kazi Wadud titled Rammohun "the morning star (*prabhat-naksatra*) of the Bengal Awakening and rising sun (*prabhat-surjya*) for the future renaissance of India."¹²⁶ These terms were repeated in 'Rammohun's Centenary Celebrations' in Calcutta (1933) by distinguished Hindu bhadrakalok intellectuals, for example, Rabindranath Tagore, Brajendranath Seal and Ramananda Chatterjee.¹²⁷

Wadud was inspired by Rammohun's religious ideals. Wadud's summary of the religious ideals of Rammohun in 1926 included: "Worshipping of a formless inner God and adoption of the ancient *shastra* as modified by the good of humanity and reason...."¹²⁸ Wadud did not understand these ideals of Rammohun's religion as apologetic for ancient Hindu *shastras*. Wadud asked himself, "When the good of humanity and reason are placed above the *shastras*; why should one talk about the subject, *shastra*, at all?"¹²⁹ Wadud answered that the *shastras* are necessary in human society to endorse: "social harmony and peace (*lok-istiti*)" and "*shastras* originate from the minds of those"¹³⁰ who

brother Syed Imamul Hussain who owned 'Modern Library' in Dhaka. Note the title *Syed* which is usually a title of *ashraf* Muslim has been used by Abul Hussain's brother, but not by Abul Hussain.

¹²⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Neta Rammohun*" (1926) or 'Leader Rammohun,' *Naba Parjay*, II, p. 2.

¹²⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Banglar Jagaran*" (1926) or 'Bengal Renaissance,' *Naba Parjay*, II, p. 48.

¹²⁷ Rajat K. Ray, "Introduction," published in V.C. Joshi (ed.), *Rammohun Roy and the Process of Modernization in India* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976) pp. 1. For Rammohun's Centenary Celebrations in Calcutta, see, Sri Jitendramohan Choudhury, "*Bibidha Prasanga*," in *Prabasi*, January, 1934. pp. 578-581.

¹²⁸ *Ek nirakar prambrahmer upasana, lokshreyah o bicar-buddhir dvara parishodhita shastra, sei janya pare parer upshastrasamuha praytyakhyan kare pratyabarttan mul shastrasamuhe...* See, Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Banglar Jagaran*," *Naba Parjay*, II, p. 50.

¹²⁹ *Er sadharan uttar--lok-istiti janya pracin shastraer prayojan ache. Kintu e sambandhe amader ar ekti katha mane hay. Shastra jader ciitta theke utsarita hayechila, tarao gabhirbhabe satya o shreyah-arveshi chilin...* See, Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Neta Rammohun*," *Naba Parjay*, II, p. 5.

¹³⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Neta Rammohun*," *Naba Parjay*, II, p. 5.

were also seeker of 'truth' and the 'good of humanity'. Rammohun's far-sighted intellect did not ignore these ideals of *shastra* for humans. Thus Wadud noted: "Rammohun's respect for the ancient *shastras*; but above this Rammohun's emphasis on 'reason' and the 'good of humanity'...."¹³¹ The twin principles, the 'good of humanity' and 'reason,' were thus in Wadud's view keys to Rammohun's religious thought. Rammohun, accordingly, upheld both 'respecting' the *shastras* as well as 'violating' the *shastras*. Wadud was thus fascinated by Rammohun's placing of reason above religious rule for an understanding of God. Wadud quoted Rammohun as saying:

The inquiring into all kinds of truth and all honest human efforts is the celebration of *bhagaban* in our lives; the glorified intellect of Rammohun understood it word by word in his life. Therefore when people by creative efforts have brought *bhagaban* into their own lives--as has been done in basics of all religions or in modern science, Rammohun looked at them with respect. But where *bhagaban* was arranged by people more for a mean imitation and where humans act only as sycophants..., Rammohun took his eyes away from these people.¹³²

Wadud was not present at Rammohun's Centenary Celebrations in Calcutta 1933. But remaining in Dhaka, Wadud marked the occasion by publishing a lengthy article: "*Rammohun*."¹³³ The article begins with a brief sketch of Rammohun's rebellion against traditions in his childhood:

¹³¹ "*Rammohuner ei je adarsha--pracin shastre shraddha kintu taro upar lokashreyah o bicarbuddhir pradhanya-manusher samajke sabal o sundar rakhbar janya e kato amogh.*" Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Neta Rammohun*," *Naba Parjay*, II, p. 6.

¹³² "*Samasta rakamer satya-anusandhan, samasta shubh ceshta, je amader jibane bhagabaner utsab (rajnitio ye Ishvarer), samaprita-pran mahakarmmi Rammohun ta marmme marmme uplabdhi karechelen. Tai jekhane manush antahin prayase nijeder jibane bhagabaner utsab-ayojan kareche--jeman pratyok dharmer mul shastragulir bhitare, athaba adhunik bijne--sekhane tini sashraddha netrapat karechen. Kintu jekhane sei utsab racanar caite hino anukaraner ayaojan, unchabrittir ayojan, beshi hayeche, manusher ananta-shubha-cestar-niyamak cirajagrata bhagabaner sange jogjukta haoyar muktir je aparisim ananda ta ksunna hayeche.--jeman pare pare udbhabita upshastragulir bhitare.--sekhan theke tini dristi phiriye niyechen.*" Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Neta Rammohun*," *Naba Parjay*, II, p. 7.

¹³³ We are not sure if Rammohun Centenary Celebration was organized by Brahma Samaj of Dhaka. This article was first published in Kazi Abdul Wadud's, *Samaj o Sahitya* (Calcutta: Moslem Publishing House,

The two outstanding things about the boy Rammohun were his mental gifts and his devotion to the family idol. The first had as noble a fruition as well-wishers could desire; the fruition of the second was somewhat unusual, though not rare, as we have in Bengal the example of the turbulent and contentious youthful Nimai turning in later years into the rapturous Shri Chaitanya.¹³⁴

Wadud argued that the Quran influenced Rammohun in his "aversion to the Christian Trinity and the vicarious atonement but at the same time his profound regard for Jesus himself."¹³⁵ Wadud also argued that Rammohun "seems" to draw a "sense of majesty of the Almighty from the Quran."¹³⁶ Wadud translated the expression, *Tuhfat-Ul-*

1934), pp. 1-31. This article was translated into English and published in *Creative Bengal*, pp. 17-43. We follow the English version of the article.

¹³⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, p. 17.

¹³⁵ In support of his argument, Wadud cited three verses of the Quran about Jesus. These verse are 10:68, 2:87 and 5:18. Wadud translated the verse 10:68, "They say: Allah has taken a son (to Himself): Glory be to him; He is the Self-sufficient; His is what is in the heavens and what is in the earth; you have no authority for this; do you say against Allah what you do not not know? Wadud's translated the verse 2:87, "...and We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear arguments and strengthened him with the holy spirit." Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, pp. 18-19.

¹³⁶ In support of this argument, Wadud quoted "some lines" of Rammohun's writings along with "some verses" from the Quran.

For example, Wadud quoted Rammohun:
 "How can the eye see Him whom the mind cannot reach!
 He is even beyond our spiritual qualities,
 Can never be grasped by the senses,—
 How can He ever be associated with any form?
 He who brought about the world by will, maintains it at will,
 Destroys it at will, He alone is true--know this."

From the Quran, Wadud quoted the verse:
 "...Nothing is like a likeness of Him" (42:11).
 "Wonderful Originators of the heavens and the earth, and when He decrees an affair, He only says to it, Be, so there it is" (2:117).

Wadud quoted Rammohun:
 "Mediate on the One who resides at one and the same time in water, on land, in either;
 Who created this world without beginning and without end;
 Who knows everything, but Him no one knows."

Wadud quoted the Quranic verse 2:255:

"...He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases; His throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and the

Muwahhidin as a "gift to the monotheists," but raised some doubt whether Rammohun's rejection of Hindu image worship came only from the Quran. Wadud wrote:

The Hindu way of life and thought has been closely associated with image-worship from time immemorial. There have been thinkers among them who looked upon this particular method of approach to the Divinity as inferior worth (or inferior work); but none of them seem to have gone like Rammohun to the length of declaring it as positively harmful to the life of the spirit. The Shivanarayani fraternity of medieval Hindus (who just preceded Rammohun) were...uncompromising monotheists. But Hindus of such a disposition are too rare to count.... [However, the truth of] *ekamebadvitiyam*, 'the one having none to compete with' which he (Rammohun) extracted from the frightful depths of Hindu traditions and scriptures have (has) not been prized sufficiently by his people in general as they do not recognize them (as) so valuable.¹³⁷

The Islam that influenced Rammohun was not the "common variety of Islam." Wadud quotes here Rammohun's, "Second Appeal to the Christian Public," in which Rammohun felt "...dissatisfied at the cruelty allowed by Mussalmanism against the non-Mussalmans...."¹³⁸ The Islam that inspired Rammohun, according to Wadud, was the Mutazilite and Sufistic Islam. Wadud defined Sufis as those, "who attempted intuitional approach to the Quran," and Mutazilites as those, "who attempted some sort of rational approach to the Quran." The Persian Sufi literature of Saadi and Hafiz were quoted in Rammohun's *Tuhfat*. They speak of Rammohun's "deep joy in the leading Sufi's love of humans and creation...but the lines Rammohun quotes do not indicate at all their mystical probings."¹³⁹ Rammohun's "oneness of humanity" Wadud felt paralleled Saadi's

preservation of them both tires Him not (2:255)." Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, pp. 20-21.

¹³⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, p. 28.

¹³⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, p. 22. Wadud quoted this line from Panani Office (ed), *The English Works of Rammohun*, (Allahabad, 1906), p. 580.

¹³⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, p. 24. Wadud wrote that Rammohun quoted one couplet of Saadi and two couplets of Hafiz in *Tuhfat*, and in the memorandum to Directors of East India

couplet, "The children of Adam are so many limbs (of a body) in relation to one another, for they originated from the same source."¹⁴⁰ Wadud claimed that three arguments of the Mutazilite heresy were persuasive to Rammohun. These arguments of the Mutazilites were:

- (1) God is omnipotent, but He cannot not destroy Himself, nor can He create His equal. (2) Attributes of God are not independent of His essence. Admission of independence of attributes would violate unity of the God-head (It is principally by this argument that Rammohun tried to set aside the claim to divinity of different gods and goddesses).
- (3)....According to the Mutazilites the Quran was a created thing, so perishable in time, i.e., not eternal like God....¹⁴¹

The second argument of the Mutazilites inspired Rammohun to "set aside the claim of divinity of different gods and goddesses." The third argument inspired Rammohun to hold that the Vedas are not eternal but perishable. Wadud's conclusion on Rammohun's inspiration from Islam was that: "He (Rammohun) liked Islamic ideas and the Muslim way of life of his time, but not to the extent of being enamoured of them."¹⁴²

Company. Wadud cited the two couplets of Hafiz that Rammohun quoted in *Tufar*: i) "The wrangles of the seventy-two sects are all vain—They could not see truth and went the way of whims and foolishness;" ii) "Oppress nobody, and do whatever else you like; in our way there is no other sin except that." The couplet of Saadi that Rammohun quotes in the memorandum is: "Bind yourself with ties of love with your subjects and thus be assured of victory against your foes; For, to the just king, his subjects are his soldiers."

¹⁴⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, p. 24.

¹⁴¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, p. 24. Wadud did not mention the sources of Rammohun's contact with Mutazilites ideas nor did Wadud inform the sources of his information of the Mutazilites. In one session of the Muslim Sahitya Samaj, Professor Fida Ali Khan (Dhaka University) presented an article on the Mutazilites. Rajat K. Ray informs that Rammohun might have been informed of the Mutazilites from *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, that "contained a somewhat desultory discussion of the doctrines of the Mutazalites." David Shea and Antony Troyer had translated partial of this work, *The Dabistan or School of manners*. See for further details, V.C. Joshi (ed.), *Rammohun Roy and the Process of Modernization in India*, p. 10.

¹⁴² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, p. 26.

In *Tuhfat*, Rammohun certainly quoted a few lines of the Quran and sayings of the Prophet, "but his role in it is that of a deist and rationalist with no religious moorings."¹⁴³

Wadud wrote that the Vedantic monism of Sankara had influenced Rammohun. Wadud did not attempt to compare Rammohun's thought with Sankara's. Rather, Wadud felt satisfied with S. Radhakrishnan's modern interpretations of Sankara's monism of 'absolute reality,' in relation to the 'empirical world,'¹⁴⁴ and assumed that Rammohun shared a similar modern interpretations of Sankara.

For Rammohun's "strikingly new interpretations" of Hinduism, Wadud referred to a specific verse from the *Gita*. The verse of the *Gita* says:

The wise man must not upset the understanding of the ignorant given to rites and ceremonies (for gaining mundane and heavenly happiness). He the non-attached worker, should set them to various activities by his own example.¹⁴⁵

Wadud stated that the lines were widely held to mean that the religious rites and ceremonies of the "masses, such as image worship should not be criticized" by the "wise man." But Rammohun re-created those lines:

The wise man should set the ignorant to work by showing them his own example, so that, the non-attached way of work of the wise man may lead the ignorant to a similar

¹⁴³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, p. 18. Wadud developed the argument that Rammohun was "deist" in a separate article. See Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Tuhfat ul Murwahhidin*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, II, pp. 177-182.

¹⁴⁴ Wadud quoted two passages of "Professor Radhakrishnan's" (Wadud did not give his full name) interpretation of Sankara's philosophy. First: "Sankara does not assert an identity between God and the world but only denies the independence of the world. If we raise question as to how the finite rises out of the bosom of the infinite, Sankara says that it is an incomprehensible mystery, Maya. We know there is the absolute reality, we know that there is the empirical world, we know that the empirical world rests on the absolute; but the how of it is beyond our knowledge. The greatest thinkers are those who admit the mystery and comfort themselves by the idea that the human mind is not omniscient. Sankara in the East and Bradley in the West adopt this wise attitude of agnosticism (*Hindu View of Life*, pp. 66-68)." See, Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, p. 21.

¹⁴⁵ Wadud cites the verse in Sanskrit from *Gita*. He also wrote a Bengali and English translation of the verse. We follow Wadud's English translation of the verse. For Sanskrit and Bengali translations of the verse, see Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Rammohun Roy*," *Samaj o Sahitya*, p. 23. For English translation see, Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, p. 33.

course of activities. As the wise man is precluded from performing rites and ceremonies for the gain (of mundane and heavenly happiness) the ignorant also will, for their inner purification, be inclined to the non-attached way of action by seeing the wise man's doings. The *Gita* indicates clearly in many places as to how people should engage themselves in work: You are entitled to action only and not to the result; Work done for the gain (of mundane and heavenly happiness) and not for God leads to bondage. And to quote from another source (Bhagabat Purana): The wise man will not advise the ignorant to take rites and ceremonies (for gaining mundane and heavenly happiness), just as a good physician will not allow unsuitable diet to a patient even though he (the patient) may yearn for it.¹⁴⁶

According to Wadud, this "rationalism unfettered by scriptures/tradition (*shastra-nirapeksha svadhin juktibad*)" of Rammohun never changed into "rationalism dependent upon religion (*dharmashrita juktibad*)."¹⁴⁷ In other words, Rammohun's religious ideals were not apologetics of Hinduism. Wadud stated that Rammohun systematized the tenets of Hindu religion in the light of Vedanta, but Rammohun's letter to Lord Amherst "ridicules the teachings of the Vedanta, the *Mimansa* and the *Nyaya*."¹⁴⁸ Wadud conceded the counter argument that Rammohun may have ridiculed the popular ideas about Vedanta. "Even then," Wadud justified "it must be admitted that he (Rammohun) prefers modern European learning to the scholasticism of his fathers."¹⁴⁹

It is true that Rammohun valued the Bible, yet his rationalism is not controlled by Christian religious faith:

¹⁴⁶ Wadud quoted this passage in Bengali from Rajnarayan Basu (ed.), *Rammohun Granthabali* (Calcutta, 1880), p. 215. See Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, p. 34.

¹⁴⁷ Wadud wrote that this argument was first raised by Rajnarayan Bose. Wadud also cited Jogendra Chunder Ghose (ed.), *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy, I & II* (Calcutta, 1885 & 1887). See Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, II, p. 179. Also Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Deshar Jagaran," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 331. The later article was translated into English entitled, "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance," *Creative Bengal*, pp. 63-78.

¹⁴⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, p. 35.

¹⁴⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, pp. 35-36.

He (Rammohun) collected and published *Precepts of Jesus* from the Bible with the object in view that these simple ethical directives, shorn of mysteries, would help men in general to arrive at a better conception of the Author of the universe and would regulate better their relation with one another and their conduct in society....¹⁵⁰

From *Tuhfat Wadud* cited similar remarks of Rammohun in respect of the power of reason in the human mind:

As the foundation of faiths is based on the truth of the existence of the soul...and on the existence of the next world men are to be excused in admitting and teaching the doctrine of the existence of the soul and the next world for the sake of the welfare of the people, as they, simply for the fear of punishment in the next world and of the penalties inflicted by the earthly authorities, refrain from the commission of illegal deeds. But as an appendage to the belief in these two indispensable doctrines, hundreds of useless hardships and privations regarding eating and drinking, purity and impurity, auspiciousness and inauspiciousness etc., have been added and thus have become causes of injury and detrimental to social life and sources of trouble and bewilderment to the people, instead of tending to the amelioration of the condition of society.

Notwithstanding implicit faith in the orders of the...doctors of religion, there is always such an innate faculty existing in the nature of mankind that in case any person of sound mind....makes an impartial and just inquiry into the nature of the principles of religious doctrines...he will be able to distinguish the truth from untruth and true propositions from fallacious ones...and also he, becoming free from the useless restraints of religion, which sometimes become sources of prejudices of one against another and causes of physical and mental troubles...¹⁵¹

Wadud agreed that Rammohan was a "great friend of the Unitarians," but doubted Rammohun's return to the doctrine of Trinity while in England. "Miss Collett's biography

¹⁵⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, p. 36.

¹⁵¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, p. 36.

of Rammohun has not attached importance to this view...."¹⁵² This argument of Wadud is not very convincing, but it indicates how concerned Wadud was to prove Rammohun's "unfettered rationalism."

In the 1935 "Nizam Lecture" at Vishva-Bharati, Wadud brought fresh arguments for Rammohun's "unfettered" rationalism. Rammohun's attitude towards prophets and revelation underwent a change and that he had no longer rejected them as he had done in *Tuhfat*. Wadud rejected this contention saying, "The change is found, on closer examination, to be superficial, because he (Rammohun) never accepted them (prophets and revelation) as necessary intermediaries between God and man as is usually done by people of religious denominations."¹⁵³ Contradicting Brajendranath Seal's contention that *Tuhfat's* keen rationalism was intimately associated with awareness of and devotion to God, Wadud provided fresh argument: "Rammohun used the line of arguments of Spanish Muslim philosophers who were both acute rationalists and earnest deists."¹⁵⁴ Rammohun was well aware of the medieval Saints, but he was not one of them. The medieval Saints were God *bhaktas* (worshippers), Rammohun was a *bhakta* of a "formless God" (*nirakar Brahmo*) as well as lover of humanity desiring earnestly a better and fuller life for him. In 1949, Wadud repeated this as well as Rammohun's denunciation of religious rites and ceremonies, in a speech to the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj meeting in Calcutta.¹⁵⁵

In 1954, Wadud once again raised this issue, bringing the passages of Rammohun's earlier writing, *Tuhfat*, after closer examination, into agreement with

¹⁵² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Rammohun Roy," *Creative Bengal*, pp. 37-38.

¹⁵³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance," *Creative Bengal*, p. 64. For Bengali version of the article, see Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Deshar Jagaran," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, pp. 331-340.

¹⁵⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance," *Creative Bengal*, p. 64.

¹⁵⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Satabarsha Pare Rammohun," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, pp. 467-470.

Rammohun's later writing, "Trust-Deed" (of the Brahma Samaj building).¹⁵⁶ The passages Wadud quoted from both show the similarity in both statements of Rammohun's ideas about the "Immutable Being" for the "worship" of whom Rammohun suggested no formal religious intermediaries, but only the "innate faculty" of the human being.¹⁵⁷ Rammohun in his later years entered into scriptural debates with the Hindus and Christians by using proofs from the Veda, Upanishad and Bible. Wadud did not deny this, but he noted, "For Rammohun these were the only defense that was necessary during the blind scriptural religiosity of his time."¹⁵⁸ Wherever Rammohun brought up 'revelation,' 'scriptures,' and 'prophets;' his central focus was to stress 'rationalism,' 'universal humanity' and 'high ideals of God'.¹⁵⁹ After years of study of the Veda, Rammohun wrote a letter to Amherst

¹⁵⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, II, pp. 178-182.

¹⁵⁷ From *Tuhfat*, Wadud quoted this passage: "...notwithstanding these ardent enthusiasms on the part of the Mujtahids or the doctors of religion, there is always an innate faculty existing in the nature of mankind that in case any person of sound mind, before or after assuming the doctrines of any religion, makes an enquiry into the nature of the principles of religious doctrines, primary and secondary, laid down by different nations, without partially and with a sense of justice, there is strong hope that he will be able to distinguish the truth from the untruth and the true propositions from the fallacious ones...." Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, II, p. 180.

From the "Trust-Deed" Wadud quoted: "For the worship and adoration of the Eternal Unsearchable and Immutable Being Who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe but not under or by any other name, designation or title....and that no sermon preaching discourse prayer or hymn be delivered made or used in such worship but such as has a tendency to the promotion of the contemplation of the Author and Preserver of the Universe to the promotion of charity morality piety benevolence virtue and the strengthening the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds...." (The English passages within quotation marks, Wadud cites them in English). Kazi Wadud followed this document from Jogendra Chunder Ghose (ed.), *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, II, p. 516. See, Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Tuhfat ul Muwahhidin*," p. 180.

¹⁵⁸ Wadud cited from Rammohun's *The Second Appeal to the Christian Public*. See Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Tuhfat ul Muwahhidin*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, II, p. 181.

¹⁵⁹ Wadud cited a passage from Rammohun's, *Precepts of Jesus*: "I feel persuaded that by separating from the other matters contained in the New Testament, the moral precepts found in that book...these will be more likely to produce the desirable effect of improving the hearts and minds of men of different persuasions and degrees of understanding....These simple code of religion and morality is so admirably calculated to elevate men's ideas to high and liberal notions of God, who has equally subjected all living creatures, without distinction of caste, rank or wealth, to change, disappointment, pain and death, and has equally admitted all to be partakers of the bountiful mercies which He has lavished over nature and is also so well fitted to regulate the conduct of the human race in the discharge of their various duties to themselves, and to society, that cannot but hope the best effects from its promulgation in the present form." Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Tuhfat ul Muwahhidin*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, II, p. 181.

in 1823, in which he emphasized the "Universal God" of "humanity" for worship while rejecting the "necessity of any *shastra* and prophets."¹⁶⁰

One year after publication of this article, Vishva-Bharati invited Kazi Wadud to deliver six lectures on the 'Bengal Awakening.' The lectures were scheduled during July 1955, but later re-scheduled¹⁶¹ to July 1956. Wadud had earlier argued that Rammohun's rationalism as recorded in *Tuhfat* had "not come from the mind of a young Rammohun, but expressed a full-grown mind."¹⁶² So in the first Vishva-Bharati lectures, he stressed that *Tuhfat* was not written in 1803 (Rammohun born in 1772), but was written in Rangpur in 1814.¹⁶³ Wadud, therefore, argued: "*Tuhfat* was a creation of Rammohun's

¹⁶⁰ For supporting this statement, Wadud cited Rammohun's, *Final Appeal to the Christian Public in Defence of the Precepts of Jesus* (1823). He cited this document from Jogendra Chunder Ghose (ed.), *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, II, pp.484-485.

¹⁶¹ The Lectures were rescheduled because Professor Probodh Kumar Bagchi, Vice-chancellor of Vishva-Bharati, died in 1955. Wadud also required time for his preparation of the six lectures. The first lecture described Rammohun's life until his journey to England with an emphasis on Rammohun's debate with Hindu pundits. The second lecture described the origin of the 'Young Bengal' movement, Henry Vivian Derozio, comparison between 'Young Bengal' and Rammohun, foundation of Brahma religion and Debendranath Tagore, and social reforms of Vidyasagar. The third lecture described more elites of Bengal Renaissance: Keshab Chandra, Aksya Kumar, Michael Madhusudhan Dutta, Bankim Chandra, and division of Brahma Samaj. The fourth lecture described Muslim leadership in nineteenth century Bengal and the debate between *Darul Harb* and *Darul Islam*. In other words, Wadud described two uneven intellectual developments among Muslims and Hindus in Bengal. The fifth lecture blamed Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan for Hindu revivalism. The sixth lecture described influence of Bengal Renaissance in twentieth century India. Kazi Wadud picked up here Rabindranath Tagore and Mahtama Gandhi. See, Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran* (Calcutta: Vishva-Bharati, 1956).

¹⁶² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Tuhfat ul Muwahhidin*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, II, p.182.

¹⁶³ Wadud wrote that according to Rammohun's biographer, Miss S.D. Collet's, *Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy*, *Tuhfat* was written in 1803. Wadud rejected Collet's statement on two grounds. First: Dr. L. Carpenter, who was Rammohun's friend, stated that *Tuhfat* was published from Murshidabad after 1811. Wadud did not mention L. Carpenter's writings. David Kopf cited two works of Carpenter on Rammohun, *A Review of the labours, Opinions and Character of Raja Rammohun Roy* (Bristol: Brome and Reid, 1833) and *Funeral Sermon on the Death of Rajah Rammohun Roy* (Calcutta: Military Orphan Press, n.d.). See David Kopf, "Rammohun Roy and the Bengal Renaissance: An Historiographical Essay," published in V.C. Joshi (ed.), *Rammohun Roy and the Process of Modernization in India*, Second: Wadud argued that in *Tuhfat*, there is indication that Rammohun was influenced by the West. Wadud cited specifically that Voltaire is mentioned in *Tuhfat*. Wadud further indicates that a Persian phrase "*ard*" which means 'world' written frequently in *Tuhfat*. Rammohun could not read Voltaire in 1804, because he did not know English at that time. Abidullah Gazi's doctoral dissertation on Rammohun has indicated that *Tuhfat* was "originally" published in 1804 and "thereafter has gone through three more editions: 1859, 1918 and the present volume

well grounded thought and it was not at all an immature essay, as some people thought. Its writing style is mature and it was written specifically for highly intellectual people of that time."¹⁶⁴

By extensive citations of Rammohun's debate with a Brahmin pundit, Mrityunjay Vidyalankar (1817), Wadud indicated Rammohun's disgust with Brahmin pundits for "Whom *shastra* means following only some codified rules."¹⁶⁵ Wadud also cited Rammohun's debate with another Brahmin pundit, Subrahmanya Shastri of Madras. The central point that Wadud highlighted in this debate was that learning from *shastra* is not a condition of one's knowing of religion. Wadud clearly focused this standpoint by a careful citation of comments from this debate:

In addition to Mrityunjay Vidyalankar, there were others with whom Rammohun had a debate on *shastra*, among whom Subrahmanya Shastri was famous. In the debate, Subrahmanya Shastri's argument was: 'without acquiring *vedajnan* (knowledge of Veda) there cannot be any *brahmajnan* (knowledge of Brahman).' Rammohun proved that there are many names in the Veda of those who were *brahmajnani* (well versed in Brahman); but they were not Brahmins. Therefore, without reading Veda, they become Brahmins.¹⁶⁶

Rammohun's respect for Jesus was not for his divinity and supernatural power, but for his universality and his teachings: "behave with others, the same as you expect from others."¹⁶⁷ In his edition of "Kenopnishad" (1823) Rammohun stressed reason as well as

in 1950." See Abid U. Gazi, "Raja Rammohun Roy (1772-1833): Encounter with Islam and Christianity, the articulation of Hindu self-consciousness" (Harvard University, 1976).

¹⁶⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran* (Calcutta: Vishva-Bharati, 1956), p. 6.

¹⁶⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 14. Wadud did not give any credit to Mrityunjay Vidyalankar for supporting the abolition of Sati. Wadud argued that like other Hindu Pundits he searched solutions within *shastra*. See Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 29.

¹⁶⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 15.

¹⁶⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 18. Wadud cited this comment from Rammohun's, *Precepts of Jesus--the Guide to Peace and Happiness* (1820). Also Wadud described Rammohun's debate with Srirampore Christian priests.

tradition.¹⁶⁸ but Wadud argued, "Rammohun said to procure guidance from *shastra* and reason. At times he also said to abandon *shastra* in favor of reason. But he never said to relinquish reason in favor of *shastra*."¹⁶⁹ In the "Trust-Deed" Rammohun dreamt of a home for the Brahma Samaj, composed of civilized people of all *shastras* gathered in the oneness of humanity under the canopy of one inner God, but what he achieved was a house for ancient Hindu *shastra* and a "divided house" of Brahmins and non-Brahmins. Wadud commented: "For this we should not be uncertain about Rammohun's reason. In the conservative society, where he aimed to give a practical shape to his epoch-making ideals, many in that society could not understand him. Yet, with their help, he begun his movement in the way it always happens (in our society)."¹⁷⁰

Our purpose here is not to judge Wadud as an expert scholar of Rammohun. What is pertinent, however, is to see how Wadud, though a Muslim, was also a devout disciple

¹⁶⁸ Wadud's Bengali translation of Rammohun's English passage is: *E sambandhe Kenopanishader Imreji tarjamar bhumikay tini (Rammohun) balechen: pracin jatigulor dharmamater dike jakhan takai takhan dekhi sei sab mater madhya paraspar-birodhita bartaman. Sei sab dharmamate sambandhe nirutsah haye jakhan juktir dike takay takhan dekhi jukti niye jay byapak samshaye--tate citter asantosh o sukher bilop ghate. Sejanya shrestha pantha mane hay ei dayer kono ektir pakshpati na-haoya baram dayeri jathajogya sahajya niye amader bauddhik o naitik utkarsha sadhan kara, ar sarbashaktimaner sadayatar upar nirbharshil haoya, kenana ta thekei amader samasta akanksha o shramer sarthakata.* See, Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 20.

It is interesting to note that Sumit Sarkar's essay, "Rammohun Roy and the Break with the Past" has cited the same passage from "*Kenopanishad*" in English. Sumit Sarkar wrote, "When we look to the traditions of ancient nations, we often find them at variance with each other; and when... (Sarkar omitted: disheartened by religion. Wadud inserted the Bengali translation of the words) we appeal to reason as a surer guide, we soon find how incompetent it is, alone, to conduct us to the object of our pursuit....(Sarkar omitted: that causes a dissatisfaction of mind and an end of happiness. Wadud inserted the Bengali translation of the phrase) The best method perhaps is, neither to give ourselves up exclusively to the guidance of the one or the other; but by a proper use of the lights furnished by both, endeavor to improve our intellectual and moral faculties, relying on the goodness of the Almighty power....(Sarkar omitted: Who alone is our source of inspiration and effort. Wadud inserted the phrases in Bengali translation)." For Sumit Sarkar's translation, see, Sumit Sarkar, "Rammohun Roy and the Break with the Past," published in V.C. Joshi (edit.), *Rammohun Roy and the Process of Modernization in India*, p. 54.

¹⁶⁹ *Jukti o shastra dayeri sahajya grahan karte Rammohun balechen, shastrake bad diye juktir upare nirbhar karte kakhano kakhano balechen, kintu juktike bad diye shastraer upar nirbhar karte tini (Rammohun) kakhano balen ni--Hindu shastraer alocana kaleo nay khristan shastraer alocana kaleo nay.* See, Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 21.

¹⁷⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 39.

of Rammohun in the sense that he remained faithful to what he understood to be Rammohun's rationalism free from the restrictions of traditional religion. The influence of Rammohun's thought on Wadud's understanding of Islam, will be discussed in a later section. It may be noted, however, before we end this section, that Kazi Wadud remained intolerant of criticism of Rammohun, even of Rammohun's private life.¹⁷¹

D.Wadud's Living Bengali Mentor: "*Vishva-Kabi* (universal poet) Rabindranath,"

Wadud appealed to the universal ideals of the noble laureate, Rabindranath Tagore, when he addressed a Muslim audience in 1920. This was part of a broader framework of Wadud's thinking on cultural universals based on humanism. For building a theoretical framework of "universal human" (*vishva-manab*) culture, Wadud wrote three essays between 1920 and 1939. The first (1920), given as a speech to a gathering of Muslim writers and intellectuals, emphasized no fixed territoriality of culture. As he wrote: "The English poet Keats did not know Greek, but by virtue of the worship of beauty, he was a successor of the classic Greek literateur. Though Wordsworth was born in England, was by nature competent to understand souls of the saints and Sufis of Asia."¹⁷² Wadud was aware of contrasting social environments, as well as geographical incongruity between the East and the West, which inspired the respective poetic

¹⁷¹ The Sanskrit-Bengali Association presented an essay, "*Rammohun Roy*" in Dhaka University in 1934. The essay blamed Rammohun for becoming rich by money-lending business. The article also criticized Rammohun's *shaiba* (worshipper of *Siba*) marriage. To the first criticism, Wadud's reply was: "There is nothing wrong in living a life on money lending." To the second criticism, Wadud replied: "Those who want to bring slur on Rammohun's private life for Rammohun's *shaiba* marriage, also agree that Rammohun was respectful to his *shaiba* wife and children. It is ludicrous to judge a human character so easily especially to determine a genius, like Rammohun." See Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Rammohuner Birodhi-Paksher Baktabya*" (1934) published in *Samaj o Sahitya*, p. 74. See also, Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, pp. 6-7 & 35.

¹⁷² *Tai Keats Greek na janiyao saundrjopasana-gune pracin Greekder sahityik bamshadhar, ar Wordworth England'e janmiyao prakrita prastabe Asiar Sufi ba rishi-atmar adhikari.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Sahityiker Sadhana*" (1920), *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 540. The essay was first published in Bengali journal, *Moslem Bharat*, March-April, 1920. Wadud also read this essay in Muslim Sahitya Samaj, Dhaka, 1929.

imaginations of each. Wadud wrote that one can see that the intellect of Kalidasa, shaped in India, riverine and densely forested, is different from that of "European son," Shakespeare, born in an environment of snowy mountains and seas. Nonetheless, both applauded the "splendor of human souls" (*manab-atmar saundarjya*), so that in the continuing existence of the two cultures there has always been both conflict and harmony¹⁷³ (*duier dvanda o milan*).

At another level, Wadud found such unity in cultural diversity within the same geographical regions in different periods of history, "The stories of *Laila-Majnu* and *Mahabharat* are composed in different environments in different ages, nevertheless both have so much human-centered human truths, dignity and beauty that they remain ever respected by the 'human race' (*manab-jati*)."¹⁷⁴ The development of science and learning in the Victorian age influenced Tennyson to understand the "ever new potentialities" (*nitya natun sambhabana*) of the "universal human" (*vishva-manab*). On the other hand, Browning did not give so much attention to science in his age, but, like Tennyson, appreciated "unlimited variety" (*ananta baicitra*) of human-life and human-character. Wadud followed these poets in the West and called attention to their examples in brief comments, but he did not develop their ideas, as he developed ideas of Tagore.

In the same article in which Wadud mentioned the poets in the West, he frequently articulated Tagore's sense of universality, "Tagore throughout his life sought the broad within the small; the entertaining within the trivial."¹⁷⁵ Wadud explains, the "broad" and "entertaining" of Tagore's thought as "splendor of the human-soul" (*manab-atmar saundarjya*) and expression of "the human's inner and outer freedom" (*manaber antarer o bahirer svadhinata*). To these ideals, Wadud adds Tagore's famous verse:

¹⁷³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sahityiker Sadhana," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 537.

¹⁷⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sahityiker Sadhana" (1920), pp. 537-538.

¹⁷⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sahityiker Sadhana" (1920), pp. 538-539.

"Ascetic-life is not my freedom; the taste of freedom lies in my manifold pledges" (*bairagya-sadhane mukti se amar nahe(;) asamkhya bandhan majhe labhiba muktir svad*).¹⁷⁶

The humanism of Tagore, which Wadud designates as *mukta buddhi* (free intellect), is the 'sign of timelessness' (*cirantaner imgit*); it should form the major ingredient of writers' creativity of thought. "The creative writer is the one having a potent mind, a mind that can envision 'universal subjects' (*vishva-bastu*), sustain them and able to nourish them with care."¹⁷⁷ The conceiving of a universal subject may not be a writer's own creation: "Tagore drew from European thought and from the Upanishads,"¹⁷⁸ and Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay imitated Tagore's, "ideal of the suffering of human-souls." This drawing from others' should be done not in writings only, but the imitator should feel the thoughts by his own senses as well. "One who does not sense in his heart the passions of pain and frustration of human lives, but merely copies them in writing from others, is like trying to relish the taste in other peoples' mouths."¹⁷⁹

Like Tagore, Wadud had reservations concerning unlimited freedom of universal humanism. Even though Wadud was respectful to the new wave of European humanism for abolition of the institution of marriage for the sake of "moral, material and spiritual freedom," as an "honest objective" in the West,¹⁸⁰ yet, he supported 'marriage' and 'home' as necessary for 'enjoyment' (*bhog*) as well as 'control' (*samjam*) of life. Wadud disliked Indian poet Bharat Chandra's epic, *Bidyasundar*, for rousing the animality of carnal

¹⁷⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sahityiker Sadhana" (1920), pp. 540-541.

¹⁷⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sahityiker Sadhana" (1920), p. 535.

¹⁷⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sahityiker Sadhana" (1920), p. 539.

¹⁷⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sahityiker Sadhana" (1920), p. 543.

¹⁸⁰ ...*Europar ati baro samasya stri-prusher jauno-sambandha o bibaha-bidhi...Ebam tahara bibaha-bidhike je akraman karitechen ihao tahader dharanay samajer mangaler janya: Tahara bishvas karen iha lop pailei jibaner pradhan uddeshya je parthib, naitik o adhyatmik svadhinata labh tahao samadhik sambhabpar haibe.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sahityiker Sadhana," p. 545.

relation between men and women, but he exalted the aesthetic beauty of Tagore's woman character, Urbashi:

Urbashi is not a mother, not a daughter, and not a wife (*nahe mata, nahe kanya, nahe badhu*; the verse is Tagore's). Nevertheless she is an emblem of loveliness whose flavor is refreshing to everybody; whose intoxicating youth is like the ripples of a stream and jingling of *nupur* (anklets) in the youth of human lives.¹⁸¹

This aesthetic humanism in Wadud's eyes is basic to Tagore's universality. "The poet (Tagore) shows this, as 'one trend of universal sport' (*vishvalilar sei ek mati*). Urbashi does not "excite us to sensuality, but awakens us to the beauty of its feeling."¹⁸²

Wadud's first book on Tagore, *Rabindra Kabya Path* (1927), gives a comprehensive description of Tagore's universal humanism. Wadud divided the book into two chapters, starting with a poem written by young Rabindranath. In the two chapters, Wadud analyzed some selected verses of poems by Tagore.¹⁸³ Wadud briefly described at the beginning of the book how the child Rabindranath grew up with sensitivity to the scenic beauty of Bengal. This inclination is a general tendency of Bengali poets; but what is distinctive of Tagore, Wadud noted, is: "Tagore's sharpened sensitivity and unrestrained creativity."¹⁸⁴

From *Kari o Komal*, Wadud selected verses¹⁸⁵ that explain Tagore's 'enjoyment' (*bhog*) of this world. Tagore is a 'worshiper of beauty' (*saundarjyor upasak*), as distinct

¹⁸¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Sahityiker Sadhana*" (1920), p. 546.

¹⁸² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Sahityiker Sadhana*" (1920), p. 547.

¹⁸³ These are entitled as: *Kari o Komal, Manasi, Sonar Tari, Citra, Kalpana, Katha, Ksanika, Naibedya, Shishu, Kheya, Gitanjali, Gitali, Balaka, and Palataka*. See Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path* (Calcutta: Moslem Publishing house, 1927), pp. 1-128.

¹⁸⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path* (1927), p. 5.

¹⁸⁵ Wadud cites verses of Tagore's, "*Balaka*," "*Kusumer Karagar*," etc. One of the verses that Wadud cites from "*Balaka*," says: "I do not want to die in this world of beauty, it is in the world of humans' that I want to live....(*marite cahina ami sundar bhubane, manaber majhe ami bacibare cai*....). Kazi Abdul Wadud. *Rabindra Kabya Path*, p. 9.

from one showing 'frenzy' (*mattata*) of satisfaction, as in the Persian poet, Hafiz, and the English poet, Burns.¹⁸⁶ Like Kalidasa, Wadud wrote, "Tagore is a worshipper of beauty, but he is unsympathetic to drowning up to his neck in the satisfactions of life. We also see pains amidst pleasure in his poems."¹⁸⁷

Wadud perceives Tagore's collection, *Manasi*, as reflecting 'poems of love' at the beginning and Tagore's heart shadowed by sorrow at the end. *Manasi* is the poet's allegorical sweetheart and in describing her, the elegance of Tagore's heart overflows, "At times, Tagore submits to her charm....at another time, his love shifts to doubts and frustrations."¹⁸⁸ These expositions are reflective of Tagore's "finer senses" (*suksh anubhuti*), and written in amazing styles. In the later part of "*Manasi*," Wadud writes, Tagore was saddened to see himself "in the prison of his petty life" (*ksudra jibaner karaghar*) of mere enjoyment and satisfaction of beauty. Tagore's larger mind is now craving involvement in the "field of action in the world," (*samsarer karma-ksetra*).¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Wadud did not mention the full name, but quoted the title of his poetry: "Highland Mary." The passage that Wadud quotes from the poem is:

"How sweetly bloom'd the gay green birk
How rich the Hawthorn's blossoms,
As underneath the fragrant shade
I clasp'd her to my bosom !
The golden hours on angel wings
Flow o'er me and my desire;
For dear to me as light and life
Was my sweet Highland Mary."

Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path*, p. 12.

¹⁸⁷ *Esaber sange miliye Rabindranather bhoger svarup jakhan uplabdbi karte jai takhan dekhi, Kalidaser matan saundarjyor upasak tini; majhe-majhe bujte para jay, e bhoge tini tripta; kintu moter upar ei bhoger bhitare akantha nimajjaner svasti jena tini pacchen na. Seijanya keman-ekta byatha tar...kabitay bartaman.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path*, pp. 12-13. Wadud quoted two poems of Tagore, "Bahu" and "Deher milan."

¹⁸⁸ Wadud quoted six verses of Tagore's, "*Manasi*," *Rabindra Kabya Path*, p.15.

¹⁸⁹ Wadud quoted verses Tagore's, "*Bhairabi Gan*," *Rabindra Kabya Path*, p. 18.

Wadud concludes from the last few poems of "*Manasi*" that Tagore's larger world is exploding out of a narrow mind-set that is exclusively Bengali.¹⁹⁰

In Tagore's *Sonar Tari*, Wadud finds more examples of the larger world of Tagore. "The poems in *Sonar Tari* are the beginning of Tagore's vigorous protest against our inert way of life that is full of asceticism (*bairagya-prapirita tamasik jiban-jatra*)."¹⁹¹ The poem, "*Vaishnav*," included in *Sonar Tari* concerns Tagore's questioning the infatuation with worshipping of the *debata* (deity) by devotional song, the presentation of flower, passion, attachment, etc. "Are these solely for *debata*?"¹⁹² Do not the nearest and dearest among humans deserve the same devotion? The answer is clear in Wadud's careful citation of Tagore's phrases: "My *debata* is my beloved; my beloved (*priyajan*) is my *debata*."¹⁹³ The poem, "*Basundhara*," is Tagore's explanation for "humans' intimacy with the 'world of nature' (*vishva-prakriti*)."¹⁹⁴ Wadud concludes his analysis of *Sonar Tari*, with a passage from Tagore's essay, "*Amar Dharma*," or "My Religion," "When my desire for my 'greater self' (*bara-ami*) was beginning to evolve in my poems....I saw its indication in 'universal dancing' (*vishva-nrityo*) in *Sonar Tari*."¹⁹⁴

Wadud followed carefully this 'greater self' from Tagore's poems that follow *Sonar Tari*. In an analysis of Tagore's, *Citra*, that followed *Sonar Tari*, Wadud defined the term *Vishva-Kabi* as it applied to Rabindranath: "*Vishva-Kabi* means the poet of the 'universal-feeling' (*vishva-bhab*)."¹⁹⁵ He cites verses of the poem, "*Sandhya*," where

¹⁹⁰ Wadud satired petty cultural ideals of *bhadralok* "*Bangalir botam-ata poshmana pran*." Wadud referred two poems of Tagore's "*Manasi*." They are Tagore's satirical poems, "*Bangabir*" and "*Dharma pracar*." Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path*, pp. 20 & 83. See also Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Lekha*," *Jayati*, Vol. I. No. 9-10 (1930), p. 213.

¹⁹¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path*, p. 25.

¹⁹² Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path*, p. 28.

¹⁹³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path*, p. 28.

¹⁹⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path*, p. 38.

¹⁹⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path*, p. 45.

Tagore has been using phrases such as 'universal-family' (*vishva-paribar*), 'sweetheart of the universe' (*vishver preyasi*).¹⁹⁶ But Tagore was also pained watching the universe of "so many wars and deaths." Wadud interpreted Tagore's, *Jiban-debata* as "Rabindranath's creative genius." that searched for the eternal truths of the "universal human" (*vishva manab*).

Wadud discussed meanings of Tagore's religious views using several of his poems. Wadud ventured into this difficult task in 1925, before Tagore had delivered the Hibbert Lectures on "The Religion of Man" at Oxford in 1930. Wadud cites four poems under the title, "*Kalpna*:" *Ebar phirao more*, *Barsha Shesh*, *Baishakh*, and *Ratri*. to show that the 'larger life' (*maha-jiban*) of the poet is becoming conscious, after remaining so long asleep in his heart. In the passage Wadud quotes from "*Barsha Shesh*," Tagore envisioned a God, who is "mighty" (*durdam*) and "cruel" (*nisthur*), who destroys the "ancient ones" (*puratan*) to which Tagore had given respect (*pranam*).¹⁹⁷ Wadud cites two verses from "*Ratri*" in which Tagore surrenders to God, without submitting to Hindu formalism: "Take me to his 'great chariot' (*maharath*) that has no wheels (*cakra-hin*) and 'makes no sound' (*nirab-ghargar*)." In the second verse, Tagore praises the pleasing *brahmo* worshipper, "Praying for freedom within the 'anguished world' (*pirita bhuban*)."¹⁹⁸

Wadud interprets Tagore's *Gitanjali*, so as to compare and contrast it with Vaishnava and Sufi ideals.¹⁹⁹ Tagore's sadness in *Gitanjali* has parallels in Sufi and Vaishnava writings. The real Vaishnav is a wonderful anguished lover. When Rabindranath feels pains in love, it is natural that he would reflect similar feelings. The

¹⁹⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path*, pp. 38-39.

¹⁹⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path*, p. 49.

¹⁹⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path*, p. 51.

¹⁹⁹ Wadud argued that tragedy is a central theme in almost all situations in *Gitanjali*. Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path*, pp. 89-93.

symbolism of Radha (beloved mistress of Krishna) is suggested in many places in *Gitanjali*. Yet, Wadud objects, "I must say that Rabindranath's love is not the same image of love found in Vaisnavism. Vaishnavas are idolatrous. Vaishnavas adopted the love symbol of Radha-Krishna, but Tagore is the worshipper of the unseen."²⁰⁰ The mystic worshipping of Tagore is not even similar to Sufism: "Sufis obey pirs, as well as accept truths of *shastras*, but in Tagore's worshipping there is something new."²⁰¹ Tagore's creativity is found in the "profoundness of his senses, burning of his seeking of truths and the breadth of his expositions."²⁰²

The ideals of Tagore's universality, as Wadud had been interpreting them since 1920, were criticized by educated Muslim opinion: "Rabindranath is a celebrated poet, great man, universal lover, but what he has done for his Muslim neighbors."²⁰³ Wadud answered these criticisms against Tagore, again and again in public speeches to Muslim audiences. At times he repeated a reply that came from another stalwart of *buddhir mukti*, Anwarul Kadir. "What has the sun in the sky done specially for Muslims (*akashar surja mussalmander janya bishesh ki kareche*)."²⁰⁴ However, Wadud's most substantive justification of Tagore to Muslims came in 1941.

If '*mussalmani*' means a heap of inflexible ideas and rules, then for that *mussalmani* Tagore has done nothing....[But] since Rabindranath is a poet and Muslims are human, Rabindranath is a close friend to them, whether Muslims

²⁰⁰ *Tabu ekatha baltei habe, moter upar Vaishnaver premer dhat Rabindranather nay. Vaishnav murttibadi, Radha-Krishna ek sundar rasaghana bigraha b'alei Vaishnav ta abalamvan kare ananda pan. Kintu Rabindranath rahasyamayer pujari. Se rahasyamay tar kache "jale sthale" "nana akare" dhara den.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path*, p. 93.

²⁰¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path*, p. 94.

²⁰² See Wadud's understanding of Tagore's poems, "*Gitimalla*," "*Gitali*" and "*Palataka*." Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path* (1927), p. 95-128.

²⁰³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Rabindranath o Mussalman-Samaj*," (1941), *Shashvata Banga*, p.59.

²⁰⁴ This was Anwarul Kadir's comment, see Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Rabindranath o Mussalman-Samaj*," *Shashvata Banga*, p. 59.

know this fact or; due to certain historical influences, they do not know it.²⁰⁵

Wadud reported that some of Rabindranath's "Muslim country-brothers" (*Muslim desh-bhrata*) say that Rabindranath composed works on classical Hindu culture, but he remained silent on Muslim culture and Islam. Wadud replied that Rabindranath was not absolutely silent on Muslims, and the little he wrote on Muslims is significant. For instance, Rabindranath's drama, *Sati*, is outstanding in that it explains that Indian Muslims are distinctive from the Muslims outside of India; and it projects the success of Muslim rulers of India, not only their failures.²⁰⁶

Wadud also admits that Rabindranath did not write in detail about "*mussalmaner dharma*" or about the founder of their religion. At the same time, Wadud also argues, "Rabindranath did not write in detail of any religion either." Rabindranath was born into the religion of a Brahma leader, and this inherited religion of Rabindranath, no doubt, was one of his inspirations; but it was not Rabindranath's spiritual destination.²⁰⁷ Wadud challenged the critics by claiming that there was no better Muslim born in this age than Rabindranath, if Islam means: "Devotion to truths; keen rationalism; love towards humans and universe; upholding the just and hindering the unjust."²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Rabindranath o Mussalman-Samaj*," p. 62

²⁰⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Rabindranath o Mussalman-Samaj*," p. 61.

²⁰⁷ Wadud described understanding of Tagore's religion in Tagore's words [in my translation]: "...we will how be looking at the subject of religion ? One should not consider religion, as water for quenching the thirst; it is only a bowl for drinking water. One who is truthfully thirsty he wanders for water and when finds the opportunity he drinks water from any bowl. But one who is not thirsty he values only the bowl. He does not care about water, but fights only for bowls. As a result, religion that came for loosening the knots of the 'intellect' (*buddhi*); spread newer tangles of groups, that are impossible to overcome." Wadud cited this comment from Tagore's, "*Caritra Puja*." Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Rabindranath o Mussalman-Samaj*," pp. 61-62.

²⁰⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Rabindranath o Mussalman-Samaj*," p. 62.

Tagore's death in 1941 saddened Wadud, who was in Rajshahi at the time. Wadud wrote in a memorial essay, "*Kabi-Guru Smarane*"²⁰⁹ that the "Only wonders comparable to Tagore found in the European past were--Leonardo Da Vinci and eighteenth century German poet, Goethe."²¹⁰ Tagore earned respect as 'friend of humans' (*manab bandhu*) in Bengal, India and throughout the world. Tagore said, repeatedly, "I am a poet." Wadud writes that one should understand the meaning of this thoughtful comment. The poet is not one who skillfully composes verses, but one who is "creative in intellect." Throughout life, Rabindranath used creativity for understanding the perplexities and dignity of human life for lighting up a "flame of awakening" (*jagaraner shikha*) of India. Rabindranath was a poet of beauty and his life was spent in dedication to the varieties of beauty for creation of a "heaven of peace" (*shanti-svarga*) in this world.

Wadud's concern with Tagore's thought carried on after 1946. In 1955, Wadud published the second book on Tagore, the thick volume, *Kabi-Guru Rabindranath*, Vol. I. The book reaffirmed Wadud's earlier interpretation of Tagore's universal humanism as well as Tagore's views on religion, but added new materials from Tagore's writings. In a short introduction to the book, Wadud indicates his pride about writing on Tagore since 1924. He notes that his earlier book, *Rabindra Kabya Path*, was "published in a Bengali journal (*Prabasi*) on the advice of Tagore."²¹¹

Wadud gives an elaborate description in the first chapter of *Kabi-Guru Rabindranath*, Vol. I, concerning Rabindranath's "deepening awareness of infinite" (*ananter gabhir bodh*), "his endless curiosity about the world and human life" (*jagat o jiban sambandhe aphuranta kautuhal*), and "his intimate concern for the welfare of all

²⁰⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Kabi-Guru Smarane*," *Shashvata Banga*, pp.55-59.

²¹⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Kabi-Guru Smarane*," p. 55.

²¹¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Kabi-Guru Rabindranath*, I (Calcutta: Jitendranath Mukhopadhyay, 1955), p. 2.

human being" (*sabar janya nibir shubhakanksha*).²¹² The first quality, Wadud writes, young Tagore inherited from his family and his childhood associates,²¹³ and the last two, the adolescent Tagore learnt from the "most valuable and meaningful riches of European thought" (*Europar sadhanar theke labdha param-arthapura baibhab*).²¹⁴ Regarding Tagore's inspiration from the two sources, Bengal and the West, Wadud concludes:

From the time of Raja Rammohun Roy, the greatest Bengalis were attracted to these riches of Europe. [Yet], whatever may be the source, the three precious ideals have an organic unity in poet Rabindranath's inner mind--that is especially to be noted.²¹⁵

Wadud entitles the second chapter with Tagore's saying: "I do not want to die in this beautiful world" (*marite cahi na ami sundar bhubane*). The chapter elaborates Tagore's poems which Wadud had included earlier in his *Rabindra Kabya Path*, but it also includes some new Tagore essays and dramas. Wadud includes in this chapter, "Argument between Bankim Chandra and Rabindranath," showing Tagore's dissatisfaction with the Hindu revivalism of Bankim Chandra. Wadud writes that Tagore continued the dispute for years in satirical essays and poems, from which Wadud cites two passages criticizing Bankim. Tagore wrote in one essay, "...Our *jati* (nation, race, i.e., India) is only now learning to walk anew. At this time it is in no way acceptable to

²¹² Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Kabi-Guru Rabindranath*, I, p. 26.

²¹³ Wadud stated inspiration on child Tagore from three sources: i) Maharishi Debendranath Tagore's teaching, "freedom," at home: ii) Influence of Dijendranath Tagore (1838-1925) and Jotyindranath Tagore (1849-1925), brothers of Rabindranath Tagore; iii) Akshya Choudhury (1850-1898) and poet Biharilal Chakrabarty (1834-1894) who were friends of Tagore family. Wadud gathered this information from autobiography of Rabindranath Tagore, *Jiban Smriti*.

²¹⁴ Wadud stated that adolescent Tagore's learning of the West began before he visited England in 1878. Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Kabi-Guru Rabindranath*, I, pp. 31-43. Also, Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Shiksha Sambandhe Rabindranath o Sarat Chandra," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, pp. 615-621.

²¹⁵ *Raja Rammohun Royer kal theke Europar ei shrestha baibhaber dike shrestha Bangalider dristi akrista hay. Ta jekhan thekei labh hok ei tin mahasampader ba prabhaber angangi jog ghatechila kabi Rabindranather antaloke--seitii bisheshbhabe lakshya karbar bishay.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Kabi-Guru Rabindranath*, I, p. 26.

show examples of an 'aging *jati*' (old India) and create distrust toward new thinking."²¹⁶

Wadud also cites four verses of Tagore's satirical poem to poet, Priyanath Sen:

These tiny Aryans are growing like weeds. [Their] sharpening upper tongues are thorns [that] wound the feet. They say, 'I am *kalki*,' (anticipated warlike *abatar*--divine descent--to end the decadent current age); may be it is opium's *kalki* (*kalki* is a small earthen pot which is used to burn raw tobacco and opium for inhaling the smoke)! All [our] lanes and bylanes are crowded with these *kalkis* and *abatars*.²¹⁷

Wadud concludes that Bankim Chandra put much emphasis on complicated details of Hindu tradition whereas Tagore emphasized tradition's "simplified vitality of moral consciousness' (*ajatil birjabyanta naitik cetana*). In Wadud's eyes, "Tagore's consciousness of tradition is focused on its moral contents; and it is mainly for this that Tagore's 'progressive' (*pragrasarata*) and 'creative religiosity' (*srishti-dharma*) has never been obstructed."²¹⁸

For Rabindranath's view of nationalism, Wadud cites "*Cithipatra*" or 'Letters,' first published in a Bengali journal, *Balak* (1885) and later published as a book in 1887. The fictional correspondence between the grandfather, Sasticharan, and grandson, Nabinkishor, shows young Rabindranath's perception of the larger goals of nationalism, "....If people of Bengal can be citizens of the world, then we will feel proud of it. We will be able to rub off all the dust of narrowness from our bodies."²¹⁹ Wadud

²¹⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Kabi-Guru Rabindranath*, I, p. 68.

²¹⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Kabi-Guru Rabindranath*, I, p. 77.

²¹⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Kabi-Guru Rabindranath*, I, p. 69. Wadud cited from Tagore's drama, *Prakritir Pratisodh* (Calcutta, 1884), that a Hindu *sannyasi* (saint) wanted a release from *maya* of this world, but he could not do it. A young 'untouchable' girl fell in love with him. The *sanyasi* refused her love initially, but later infatuated to her beauty. In the end Tagore wrote: "In composing my writings, there is only one theme, the 'unity of the small within the broad" (*Amar to mane hay, amar-kabya racanar ei ektimatra pala. Se palar nam deoya jaite pare simar madhya asimer sahiti milan sadhaner pala*). Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Kabi-Guru Rabindranath*, I, pp. 69-70.

²¹⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Kabi-Guru Rabindranath*, I, p. 80.

also discussed this larger objective of Rabindranath's nationalism in the sixth of his Vishva-Bharati lectures, 'Bengal Awakening' (*Banglar Jagaran*), in 1956.

This sixth lecture starts with an analysis of the term "Hindu-nationalism."²²⁰ Wadud said in the lecture that in Hindu nationalism, "The consciousness of Hindu traditions in reality was weak, although at the surface it seemed very strong."²²¹ Those who were supposedly Hindu nationalists, e.g., Bankim Chandra, Shashadhar Tarkacuramani, Swami Vivekananda, etc., were the "exponents (*dharak o bahak*) of divergent thoughts and paths."²²² They were influenced by the Hindu traditions as well as attracted to "liberal humanism," "democracy," and "science," not only from Bengal and India, but from the 'larger world' of the West.

Wadud agreed that from 1885 to the foundation of Vishva-Bharati in 1921, Tagore was wavering between 'ancient Hindu' symbols of the Indian nation²²³ and the ideas of 'new Hinduism' (*nabya Hindutva*). Wadud cites an evidence of wavering of Tagore between the two in Shantineketan, from letters that Tagore wrote to Manoranjan Babu, headmaster of Shantiniketan:

The doubt you have in your mind about *pranam* is not trivial. What is against Hindu-society-religion, that should not have any place in this school. According to the advice of Samhita, students would pay *pranam* by touching feet of the Brahmin professors and say *namaskar* to other professors. This is a rule that I think should be introduced in the school.²²⁴

²²⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, pp. 164-167.

²²¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 165.

²²² Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 164.

²²³ Wadud wrote that Rabindranath's essay, "*Rammohun Roy*" (1884), shows that at that time Tagore's support of Indian nationalism meant Hindu nationalism. Wadud also noted Tagore's distance from Adi Brahma-Samaj leaders, who were nationalists, but not Hindu nationalist. See Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, pp. 169-173.

²²⁴ *Pranam sambandhe apanar mane je dvidha upasthit haiyache, taha uriiye dibar nahe*. Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p.174.

Wadud wrote further that in matters of dining, separate arrangements for Brahmin and untouchables were followed in Shantiniketan.²²⁵ Yet Tagore also wrote to the Headmaster: "Is not there any arrangement [in Hindu tradition] to give *pranams* to non-Brahmins?"²²⁶

In the midst of the *Svadeshi* movement in Bengal in 1905, Tagore was facing a "great crisis" (*maha samkat*) concerning the Indian nation. He gave up his fondness for 'Hindutva' (Hinduness, Hinduism) for the larger goal which Wadud calls "*prakrita svadesh-hitaishana*" or 'genuine patriotism.' Wadud articulates the patriotic views of Tagore from several of Tagore's writings at this time.²²⁷ Rabindranath did not like the word 'boycott' for he understood it is easy to express sudden anger and take actions against the British, but this simple road could not bring the permanent well-being of the country.²²⁸ Yet Tagore, supported the *Svadeshi* movement at its beginning:

It is our duty to take responsibility for the education of the country....We have to find work for our youths....For if we do not create a large *Svadeshi* workplace, we will remain weak forever....²²⁹

Wadud understood this support for *Svadeshi* not to mean anti-British boycott sentiment, but his deepening patriotism to his country. The deeper meaning of Tagore's *Svadeshi*, according to Wadud, is to be found in his address to Bengali youths, where he urges them to have: "Discipline where there is disorder, vitality where there is despair,

²²⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p.174. See also Kathleen M. O'Connell, "Santiniketan, Tagore, and the Art of Education," in Joseph T.O'Connell, Rasesh Thakkar, Prasanta Kumar Basu and Niladri Chaki (eds.), *Presenting Tagore's Heritage in Canada* (Toronto: Rabindranath Tagore Lectureship Foundation, 1989). Kathleen confirms: "Tagore never insisted that Brahmins eat with non-Brahmins, and separate facilities were available for those who chose," p.96

²²⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 174.

²²⁷ The sources of Wadud are: i) Rabindranath Tagore, *Jibansmriti* (year of publication, not cited by Wadud); ii) Rabindranath's articles, "*Saphalatar Sadupai*," "*Path o Patheya*," and "*Samasya*." See, Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, pp. 178-189.

²²⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 178.

²²⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 178.

liberal humanism where there is narrow intolerance for divergences; life among the resigned; liberal humanity in amid narrowness."²³⁰ He proposed that the governmental favors (*rajprasad*) that "we have been enjoying so far be shared by the Muslims; and we should pray (*prathana*) for that from our complete happy mind."²³¹ Wadud explains that this harmony and oneness of humanity advocated by Tagore is especially significant once we read Tagore's earlier comment: "If we do not create a larger *Svadeshi* workplace, we will remain weak forever."

Wadud cites more examples of Tagore's harmony from Tagore's essays, "*Path o Patheya*" (1908) and "*Samasya* (1908)."²³² In the first essay, Wadud writes that Tagore sees no danger to India from "blacks and whites, Muslims and Christians, East and West....For centuries past in the *Tapoban*, the Upanishads spread 'thoughts of oneness' in an amazingly simple knowledge."²³³ Tagore at the same time drew examples from the West: "If Switzerland could unite various *jatis* into a country, then harmony has become the ruler crossing all the barriers of diversity."²³⁴ Inspired by the Indian traditions as well as examples of the West, Tagore envisioned *svaraj* as a greater Indian nation, a "*mahajati*" such that "high and low, Hindu-Muslim-Christian, all, by sharing of their views and enterprises enter into harmony."²³⁵ Wadud explains that a new meaning of *svaraj* was clearly envisioned in Tagore's thought. Tagore did not exclusively blame the British:

²³⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 179.

²³¹ *Je rajprasad etadin amara bhog kariya asiyachi aj pracur parimane taha mussalmander bhage paruk iha amara jen sampurna prasanna mane prathana kari.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 180. Wadud cites this passage from Tagore's, *Galpa Guccha* (year of publication is not cited by Wadud), pp. 527.

²³² These two articles, according to Wadud, were public speeches of Rabindrath Tagore delivered in 1908.

²³³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 182.

²³⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 184.

²³⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 184.

...Many think unfreedom in India is unlike a 'headache' originated from the inside; but like a burden that has been imposed on us, like the British-government, from the outside....The British government is not our unfreedom, but merely proof of our deepest unfreedom.²³⁶

Wadud did not describe in this lecture what 'unfreedom' of the Indian mind meant to Tagore. But he carefully observes Tagore's dislike of some aspects of the *Svadeshi* movement, due to which Tagore carefully withdrew from this movement. Tagore was opposed to the secret terrorist activities and cautioned: "The Bengalis must bear full responsibility for miseries incurred by the secret revolution (*gupta biplab*)."²³⁷ Tagore was uncomfortable seeing the boycott as "exploitation of many Muslims and scheduled caste Hindus."²³⁸ Replacing these mean actions of the *Svadeshi* movement, Wadud highlights the end of "*Path o Patheya*," where Tagore urged strongly:

Humans in this world are different in race, color, language and religion....We will unite these diversities into one temple...not by abolishing diversities but by tolerance and love to all humans....²³⁹

Wadud understood this universal goal of Tagore's nationalism. He concludes his lecture on Rabindranath's nationalism by distinguishing it from the main stream *Svadeshi* movement, "...the poet (Rabindranath) had the consciousness of love and human welfare and remained at the level of the universal humanism; his fellow countrymen [on the contrary] remained at another level of radical nationalism or [political] nationalism."²⁴⁰

²³⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 183.

²³⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 181. Wadud's strong disgust against terrorist movement is described in his correspondence with Abdul Kadir. See Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Biplab Prasange*," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, July 19, 1931, *Jayati*, Vol. I, No. 11-12 (1931), p. 109.

²³⁸ *Yara bilati panya boycott karte apatti karle sei sab mussalman o namah-shudrader upar kono kono jaygaya jabardastio hala*. Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 180.

²³⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 185.

²⁴⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Banglar Jagaran*, p. 186.

Five years later, in 1961, Wadud summarized Rabindranath's universal ideals in his 'Tagore Centenary Celebrations' lecture at the Gujarat University, "Tagore's Role in Reconstruction of Indian Thought."²⁴¹ This was not the end of Wadud's interest in Tagore. One year before his death in 1970, Wadud fulfilled his one last wish, his much beloved thick volume, *Kabi Guru Rabindranath Vol. II* (1969).²⁴²

E. Addendum: Abul Hussain's comparison of Rammohun and Sayyid Ahmad Khan.

One of the early followers of Wadud's three ideals, freedom (*mukti*), intellect (*buddhi*) and creativity (*srishti*), was Abul Hussain. Surendra Nath Maitra (S.N. Maitra), Wadud's colleague and one of the Hindu intellectuals who actively participated in Muslim Sahitya Samaj, categorized the respective roles of Kazi Wadud and Abul Hussain in the *buddhir mukti* movement: "Kazi Wadud was on the top and the 'brain' and Abul Hussain was the 'hand-leg-body'...."²⁴³ Kazi Wadud, thus, performed a major role as the movement's intellectual mentor, while Abul Hussain, as a "co-worker" of the movement, followed the ideals of his mentor, Wadud.

Abul Hussain's following of Wadud's three ideals become visible not earlier than 1925. Until 1925, Abul Hussain was an ambiguous socialist. He wrote articles that used socialistic metaphors and argued against economic exploitation of the peasants by the zamindars, but did not reject zamindars as care-givers of the peasants.²⁴⁴ Another level of

²⁴¹ Wadud delivered the lecture in English. The other Indian scholars who participated and read articles on Tagore in the symposium were: i) Kakasaheb Kalelkar, "The Bard of Indian Culture;" ii) Masti Venketesha Iyengar, "Tagore-An Artist and Humanist;" iii) Saumyendranath Tagore, "Rabindranath Tagore on Aesthetics;" iv) Humayun Kabir, "Tagore's philosophy of Education." These articles are published by Gujarat University, *Homage To Tagore*. Tagore Birth-Centenary Lectures (Ahmedabad: S.C. Parikh, Gujarat University, 1963).

²⁴² Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Kabi-Guru Rabindranath*, II (Calcutta: Vishva-Bharati Library, 1969).

²⁴³ Cited by Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Dhaka Vishvavidyalayer Smiriti o Anyanya prasanga*," published in Abul Ahasan Choudhury, *Kazi Motahar (Mutahar) Hossain Racanabali*, III (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1992), p. 31.

²⁴⁴ In 1921, Abul Hussain published three articles and entitled them with socialistic titles: "*Banglar Balshi*." There is no ordinary Bengali word 'balshi.' Abul Hussain coined this Bengali word from "Bolshevic." Yet he denied that the term 'balshi' would imply a socialistic revolution of the peasants of Bengal: "Banglar Balshi is published with a note of caution to an almost imminent peasant revolution in Bengal. The term balshi is used as a distorted form of Bolshevic." The article was first published in a Bengali journal,

his socialistic ambiguity was that he was a critic of the zamindars (Muslim and Hindu) on socialistic terms; but he was also a critic of the "syncretistic tradition" of the peasants that stood for cultural egalitarianism of the ordinary Bengalis in the rural areas.²⁴⁵ The socialistic views of Abul Hussain were replaced by a rational humanism that was first visible in Abul Hussain's journal: *Tarun Patra* (1925) and other writings.²⁴⁶ We will describe this journal in Chapter Three. One major source of Abul Hussain's transformation was Wadud's influence. Abul Hussain was one of the associates of Wadud in *addas*, since both had settled down in Dhaka in the early 1920s. We will describe Wadud's *addas* also in the next chapter. Here our concern is that Abul Hussain filled a gap that his mentor Wadud did not fill. Abul Hussain did not publish articles exclusively on Rammohun.²⁴⁷ But Abul Hussain wrote essays on Rammohun's ideological difference with Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, a topic on which Wadud did not write.

Bangiya-Mussalman-Sahitya-Patrika, Vol. IV, No. 2 (1921). Abul Hussain wrote two more articles in the direction of peasant revolution, "*Krishi Biplaber Sucana*" or 'The Beginning of Agricultural Revolution in Bengal.' Agricultural revolution suggests an economic development in the rural areas. Abul Hussain, however, meant that zamindars had failed to improve the lands, but had increased the rents. He appealed the zamindars for improving the condition of peasants. For complete detail of the article, see *Bangiya-Mussalman-Sahitya-Patrika*, Vol. IV, No. 3 (1921). The second article is "*Krishaker Artanad*" or 'Cries of the Peasants.' The article is a critique of *bhadralok* who had ignored peasants and settled down in towns and cities. However, the latter article noted that American professors ask students to go back to villages for their improvement. For details of this article, see *Bangiya-Mussalman-Sahitya-Patrika*, Vol. IV, No. 4 (1921). The three articles were published in Abul Hussain (ed.), *Banglar Balshi* (Dhaka: Fazlul Karim Mallick, 1925).

²⁴⁵ Abul Hussain, "The Growth of the Helots of Bengal," *Peace*, Vol. III, No. 2 (1925); "The Religion of the Helots of Bengal," *Peace*, Vol. III, No. 5 (1925).

²⁴⁶ In 1925, Abul Hussain wrote a book that appealed "a systematic and tenacious movement for the regeneration of the rivers in Bengal." See Abul Hussain, *The Problem of Rivers in Bengal* (Dhaka: The Islamia Library, 1925). He also wrote essays on Industrialization in Europe. See Abul Hussain, "*Frederick List o Tatkalin Germany*," *Bangiya-Mussalman-Sahitya-Patrika*, Vol. III, No. 4 (1921), pp. 271-274. Abul Hussain, "*Industrialism*," *Bangiya-Mussalman-Sahitya-Patrika*, Vol. IV, No. 1 (1921), pp. 27-36. He also wrote short stories but unlike Wadud, Abul Hussain did not write dramas and novels. See Abul Hussain, "*Chota Galper Dhara*," *Bangiya-Mussalman-Sahitya-Patrika*, Vol. II, No. 4 (1919), pp. 261-268. Abul Hussain, "*Rudha Byatha*," *Bangiya-Mussalman-Sahitya-Patrika*, Vol. II, No. 4 (1919), pp. 310-319.

²⁴⁷ I am not quite sure about this. Abdul Kadir, one of the associates of Wadud and Abul Hussain, wrote: "After Abul Hussain's death in 1938, some unpublished writings of Abul Hussain were given to Kazi Abdul Wadud. The relatives of Abul Hussain were afraid to publish these writings. They were afraid of Muslim orthodox reprisals in Dhaka. Wadud took these writings to Calcutta. In 1947, Kazi Wadud had finally arranged to publish these unpublished writings of Abul Hussain with Modern Library in Calcutta. The

Abul Hussain's article, "*Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*" (1929), constructed an ideological contradiction between Rammohun and Sayyid Ahmad Khan. At the beginning of the article, Abul Hussain drew a few similarities between Rammohun with Sayyid Ahmad. He wrote that the respective audiences of the both, Hindu and Muslims, had suffered from an identical problem: "They rejected European knowledge and civilization."²⁴⁸ Rammohun and Sayyid Ahmad had brought European knowledge and science to their own religious communities. Both studied classical religions; and both had used religious metaphors and symbols in their writings. The efforts of both attained the same results:

Sir Sayyid had strengthened his arguments by *shastra*. As a result people [Muslims] continued their infatuation with *shastra*. We have acquired English styles, dress, fashion, language...; yet by our praise of the *shastras* and by the name of Islam, we feel proud of being a *mussalman*. [As a result], a darkness that we had in our thought still remained dark.²⁴⁹

About Rammohun's influence, Abul Hussain came to an identical conclusion:

In order to get freedom to the people (Hindu) from an infatuation with *mantras* of the Brahmins, Rammohun contemplated that it is the Brahmins whose weapons he should use before them (Hindu). Therefore he (Rammohun) studied the Veda, Upanishad, etc., and dug out the argument that is favorable for his freedom....The result was dangerous from one direction. They (Hindus) could not get freedom from an infatuation with *shastras*. They thought,

library was, however, burnt to ashes by the Calcutta riot in 1947." See, Abdul Kadir, "*Bhumika*," published in Abdul Kadir (ed.), *Abul Hussainer Racanabali* (Dhaka: Barnamichhil, 1976), pp. 10-11.

²⁴⁸ *Ubhayer samasya praya ek rakami chila. Hindur chila samudra jattrar samasya—ar mussalmaner chila nasara-atanka. Ey dui samasyai chila jnaner pathe nidarun bighna. Ubhay sampradayi ei kusmaskare Europiyo jnan o sabhyata hate mukh phiriye dariye raila.* Abul Hussain, "*Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*" (1931), published in *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 264. The article was first published in *Shikha*, Vol. III (1929).

²⁴⁹ *Tinio* (Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan) *shastrabacan diye tar kathar jor bedhechilen: phale loke sei shastra-mohei 'sanmohita'* (this is a favorite phrase of Wadud that Abul Hussain has frequently used) *haye thakla. Imreji habbbhab, poshak-paricchad, fashion* (English phrase is Abul Hussain's) *sabi ayatta kare amara svecchacaritar curanta k'are charchi, tabu shastrer prashmsaya pancumukh haye Islamer dohai diye mussalman bale asphalan k'are beracchi. Maner ghare amader je andhakar sei andhakari raye geche.* Abul Hussain, "*Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*," published in *Abul Hussainer Rachanava li*, p. 266.

'well Raja has also recovered metaphors from *shastras* to support his argument. *Shastras* is therefore sacrosanct and an endless resource--there is nothing outside of the *shastra*.' They did not look at Rammohun's dream. What they (Hindus) understood of him (Rammohun) is 're-affirmation' (English word is Abul Hussain's) of faith in *shastra*.²⁵⁰

Notwithstanding these parallels, Abul Hussain analyzed specific contradictions between the two modernists. Abul Hussain wrote that Rammohun was not a Hindu. He had an immortal dream of a Hindu-Muslim synthesis, which he saw as the basis of Indian nationhood and its freedom.²⁵¹ Abul Hussain did not bring strong evidence to support this statement, however. But he clearly understood that Rammohun was not prejudiced against any religion or scripture: Veda, Upanishad; Quran, Mutazilites; and Christianity. A sense of unity of religions in Rammohun's thought, however, was absent in Sayyid Ahmad:

...I cannot feel but grieved to see that throughout his life Sir Sayyid did not make any effort at all to understand Hinduism. I am [also] astonished to note that Sayyid Ahmad, whom we respect as the prosperity-making *guru* of the Indian Muslims, had not felt curious to know anything about his Hindu neighbors. [I am] sorry and [I feel] ashamed. Yet, to solve a dispute of Islam with Christianity, he wrote a commentary on the Bible. ²⁵²

²⁵⁰ Rammohun mane karlen. lokgulike brahmaner mantra moha hate mukta karte hale tader samne brahmaner astra byabaha karte habe. Tai tini Veda, Upanishad sab ghetar tar svapner anukul bacan uddharar k'are tader samne dharlen....Tar phal anya dik hate maratmak haye darala. Seti ei je, t'ara shastrer moha hate mukta h'alo na. Tara mane karla, tai ta, Rajao ta, shastra hate bacan uddhar k'are tar katha samarthan karen--ta' hale shastra ta abhranta aphuranta bhander--tar baire ar ki thakte pare! Rammohuner se svapner dike tader dristi gela na--tara tar katha h'ate tader shastra-bhaktiri punhsamarthan ba re-ffirmation (English word is Abul Hussain's) labh k'are jeman temani raye gela. Abul Hussain, "Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan" (1931), published in *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 265.

²⁵¹ Abul Hussain, "Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 266.

²⁵² ...Sir Sayyider jibane hindushastra bujhbar janya kona prayas dekhte na peye bismita na haye pari na. Tar karan, jake amara British-Bharate (English phrase is Abul Hussain's) mussalmaner bhagya guru bale bhakti kari tar jibane parshi hindur sambandhe kichu janbar ceshta na dekhe shudhu bismita ken, dukkhita o lajjita hate hay. Athaca tini khristan dharmer sahiti Islamer birodh mitiye phelbar janya Koran o Bibleer tika likhechen. Abul Hussain, "Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan"(1931), published in *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, pp. 266-267.

Abul Hussain cited two reasons for Sayyid Ahmad's attitude to Hinduism. First: he never thought a future of India in terms of emancipation of all its people. Second: he believed that Islam is the only true religion of the modern world. Therefore, he left "idolatrous Hindus" outside of his thought. To this communal attitude, Abul Hussain recorded his reactions:

Islam becomes a truth to me only when and to the extent that I can accept it. Again, I only do not and I could not live on truth limited to Islam. In order to survive in today's world, I have to search and collect many truths to satisfy my intellect. Therefore, I have to listen to what the followers of other religions say. In Sir Sayyid this 'attitude' (English word is Abul Hussain's) was not clearly developed. But Rammohun, although born long before Sir Sayyid, understood this freedom of truth.²⁵³

Furthermore, Abul Hussain argued that excluding of Hindus in Sayyid Ahmad's thought had later infected the thought of Sayyid Ahmad's 'Aligarh products.' Like Sayyid Ahmad, they did not want to know about Hindus. Sayyid Ahmad's grieving, "Oh Muslims! Oh! Muslims!" no doubt led to his exceptional service to the cause of a Muslim 'qaum' (community). But by keeping Muslims apart a separate community, Sayyid Ahmad did not give an opportunity to Muslims to be introduced with 'Rammohun's mission.' Consequently, Abul Hussain wrote,

Sir Sayyid could be called in one sense, a phase of 'reaction' (English word is Abul Hussain's) against Rammohun's 'program' (English word is Abul Hussain's). By keeping Muslims away from Rammohun, Sir Sayyid wanted to unite them. As a result, Muslims were not able to encounter with Rammohun's dream or 'mission' (English

²⁵³ *Islam amar kache satya takhani hay ebam tatatukui hay jakhan ebam jatatuku ami grahan karte pari. Ar ami shudhu Islamer mapa satya niyei baci na ba bacte pari na. Ajker duniyaya bacte gele amake nana satyar upkaran samgraha k'are nijer atmaka paripustha karte hay, sejanya anya dharmabalambir kathao amake sunte habe. Sir Sayyid'er bhitar ei attitude (English word is Abul Hussain's) spastha haye otheni. Kintu tar bahu purbe janmagrahan k'areo Rammohun ei satyar svadhinata kathati bujhte perechilen. Abul Hussain, "Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan," Abul Hussainer Racanabali, p. 268.*

phrase is Abul Hussain's), not to speak of taking Rammohun's dream or mission as their own.²⁵⁴

Abul Hussain also analyzed and compared the distinct appeals and goals of European knowledge as understood by Sir Sayyid and Rammohun. "Sir Sayyid had appealed to Muslims to adopt European knowledge, but by conforming it to their 'old teachings' (*pracin shastra*)."²⁵⁵ This created a co-ordination of European knowledge and old teachings: "Islam is only clothed with European dress but nothing more." As a result, Muslims' dreams and aspiration got small. They learnt English language. They began to wear hats, coats, and attach themselves to *raj darbar* (British administration) as "*jo hajur*" or 'Yes Sir [men]'; but they did not increase their knowledge.²⁵⁶ They learnt English only to earn qualifications for getting jobs. The Muslims did not want "European learning-science-philosophy to judge religious teachings (*shastra bicar*), but bent their intellects to confirm the flawlessness of their religion."²⁵⁷

Conversely, Rammohun's thought was to "transform the Indian mind to a European intellect." For this, he even took the 'risk' of modification of old *shastras*.²⁵⁸ But Sayyid Ahmad did not take that risk. His aim was not to transform "Muslim *shastra* learning by European thought." Therefore, Muslims could not look courageously at their *shastra* with a European intellect. Abul Hussain concluded his essay by saying that Sir

²⁵⁴ *Sir Sayyidke ek prakar Rammohuner programer birudhe re-action-er rupantar bala jete pare. Mussalmanke Rammohuner dik theke sariye niye Sir Sayyid take samghabadha karte ceyechilen, tate mussalman Rammohuner svapna ba mission-er sange paricay labh karte pare ni, take apanar svapna ba mission bale grahan kara ta durer katha.* Abul Hussain, "*Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*," p. 270.

²⁵⁵ Abul Hussain, "*Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*," p. 271.

²⁵⁶ Abul Hussain, "*Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*," p. 272.

²⁵⁷ Abul Hussain, "*Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*," p. 272.

²⁵⁸ Abul Hussain, "*Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*," p. 272.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan was "essentially a man of faith and a man of action;"²⁵⁹ but he did not possess the thought of a rationalist philosopher.

IV. Conclusion.

The founding father of the *buaahir mukti* movement was Kazi Abdul Wadud. One of the foremost followers of Wadud was Abul Hussain, who, although initially influenced by socialist thought, came to share closely Wadud's ideals of *buddhir mukti*.

Wadud and Abul Hussain both were born to very ordinary Muslim families of Eastern Bengal. There is no evidence that the two ever visited the West or even planned to. For that matter, until 1938, there is no indication that they traveled beyond the province of Bengal. The two received an English-language education; and received their highest academic degrees from Presidency College and Calcutta University. It is perhaps futile to trace the origin of the idea of *buddhir mukti* in the kind of families into which they were born. Wadud, in fact, instead of being inspired to *buddhir mukti* from his family background, was a critic of his family for not conforming to *buddhir mukti*. Wadud's and Abul Hussain's higher education in political economy and commerce were not especially slanted in the direction of *buddhir mukti*. Neither Wadud nor Abul Hussain ever wrote a single sentence to the effect that they were inspired to *buddhir mukti* by their close associates at Presidency College or Calcutta University. Wadud did mention a few of his associates at Presidency College, but they were not his mentors or inspirers; but college buddies. Abul Hussain mentioned none of his associates of Presidency College or Calcutta University. The chapter, therefore, does not seek an answer or speculate on Wadud and Abul Hussain's inspiration from Presidency College.

The private thought of Wadud, as recorded in his diary (1924-26), suggests three broad ideals of *buddhir mukti*: freedom (*mukti*), intellect (*buddhi*) and creativity (*srishiti*).

²⁵⁹ Abul Hussain used this citation in English, but he did not tell its author. Abul Hussain, "Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan," p. 277.

The three value-loaded ideals were symbiotically related in Wadud's thought. Freedom of intellect is a precondition of creativity. After adopting the three ideals, Wadud used them repeatedly to understand Islam. In this context, Wadud understood freedom and creativity to imply that religious rules and prohibitions should not be allowed to constrain human 'judgement-intellect' (*bicar-buddhi*). Related to this was Wadud's second meaning of freedom and creativity, that human thought should go beyond the boundaries of particular religio-communal identity, so that one is able to establish an identity with all humans. Interestingly, Wadud wrote these meanings of freedom and creativity without offering apologetic on behalf of Islam.

Wadud, as a Muslim, did not inherit or derive his three ideals from any Muslim figure. Strong Muslim self-consciousness is missing in his understanding of the thought of Iqbal. On the contrary, he was a critic of Iqbal's ever active ego, Muslim dynamism, and Iqbal's turning away from modern European culture. Wadud's critique was based on arguments that Iqbal's thought is primarily grounded on the Islamic faith. We will describe Wadud's other criticism of Iqbal in the chapter on nationalism. Wadud liked Mostafa Kemal's thought. But Wadud was not sure if the modernism of Muslim countries stressed freedom of thought as strongly as had been accomplished by the Bengal Awakening. Wadud understood Gandhi's *Carika* as symbolizing the dignity of human labor. But, influenced by Rabindranath and contrary to Gandhi, Wadud understood the freedom of India in different terms.

The real two mentors of Wadud were two Bengalis: Rammohun and Rabindranath. Perhaps Wadud's Bengaliness was deeper than Rabindranath's. Except for two writings, Wadud did not write in English. He spoke in Bengali, he liked Bengali food and Bengali dress. His *addas* were with the Bengalis. But importantly, as we will see, Wadud was very selective in Bengali Muslim literature. He liked only those that supported a rational humanism. For fifty years, starting from 1920 to 1970, Wadud thought of himself as a disciple of Rammohun and Rabindranath. There is no example in

the current historiography of Muslim modernism in India of a Muslim who was so much a staunch advocate of non-Muslim figures. Wadud wrote more supportive essays on the two mentors than he wrote on the Quran, Hazrat Mohammad and other Muslim figures.

Wadud derived from Rammohun's writings an ideal of "unfettered rationalism" and from Rabindranath an ideal of "universal humanism." For this, Wadud looked only at some selected writings of Rammohun. Wadud defended the two ideals consistently throughout his adult intellectual life. The two ideals are not contradictory to Wadud's three ideals: freedom, intellect and creativity. Current literature on Rammohun may find fault with Wadud's understanding of the "unfettered rationalism" of Rammohun. For example, Sumit Sarkar argued that Rammohun's "break with the past...was of a limited and deeply contradictory to Kind."²⁶⁰ Abid U. Gazi argued that Rammohun articulated a "Hindu self-consciousness."²⁶¹ However, this chapter insists that Wadud's understanding of Rammohun should be looked at from the point of view of a new discourse. The discourse is: Wadud was a Muslim, and a Muslim fascinated by Rammohun's "unfettered rationalism." There is a break of Wadud with tradition. For example, David Kopf has analyzed a mood of Muslims to understand Rammohun: "Muslims believe that Rammohun's early ideas of monotheism were derived from Islam..."²⁶² In other words, Muslims picked up only the Islamic contents of Rammohun's writing. Gazi writes: "Muslim scholarship has not seriously concerned itself with the understanding of either Rammohun Roy or the Hindu tradition in general."²⁶³ Examining prior Muslim disinterest

²⁶⁰ Sumit Sarkar, "Rammohun Roy and the Break with the Past," in V.C. Joshi (edi.), *Rammohun Roy and the Process of Modernization in India*, p. 47.

²⁶¹ Abid U. Gazi, "Raja Rammohun Roy (1772-1833): Encounter with Islam and Christianity, the articulation of Hindu self-consciousness."

²⁶² David Kopf, "Rammohun Roy and the Bengal Renaissance: An Historiographical Essay," published in *Rammohun Roy and the Process of Modernization in India*, p. 22.

²⁶³ Abid U. Ghazi, "Raja Rammohun Roy (1772-1832): Encounter with Islam and Christianity, the articulation of Hindu self-consciousness," p. 83.

in Rammohun and perhaps in Rabindranath, it would be safe to conclude that Wadud began a new discourse in Bengali Muslim understanding of Rammohun, and of Tagore. The subsequent chapters will articulate how Wadud and Abul Hussain, inspired by these two mentors, were critics of Islam and Muslim society.

Chapter Three

The Muslim Sahitya Samaj of Dhaka: Origin, composition and structure

I. Introduction.

The *buddhir mukti* thought of Kazi Abdul Wadud and Abul Hussain was given an organizational shape with the foundation of Muslim Sahitya Samaj (hereafter designated as MSS) and its periodical publication, *Shikha*. The MSS was founded on January 17, 1926. One year later *Shikha* was published in 1927 from Dhaka. The formal existence of MSS lasted until January, 1938, though its decline had started by the end of 1936. The *Shikha* was more short-lived; it survived only until 1931. The survival of MSS for twelve years and *Shikha* for five years was due to concerted efforts of many Dhaka-based intellectuals, with Wadud and Abul Hussain as the pioneer organizers of these two forums of the *buddhir mukti* movement.

This chapter traces the origin of MSS in Dhaka, including developments leading up to its formation and details of its foundation, composition and structure. The MSS was not founded in Dhaka merely because Wadud and Abul Hussain happened to be employed in Dhaka city and founded an organization there. The second section of the chapter demonstrates that voluntary intellectual associations were operating in Dhaka when Wadud and Abul Hussain came to work in the city. These associations were the outcome of English education that British rule had extended to Dhaka city, a crucial example of which was the establishment of Dhaka University in 1921. The section presents the origin of MSS as a by-product of Dhaka University and an outgrowth of some early intellectual associations that grew up in Dhaka city. The section also describes an informal Bengali intellectual network of *addas* (conversational circles), through which Wadud and Abul Hussain had developed relations with Dhaka bhadralok before the MSS was founded.

The heart of the chapter is its second section. This section, like some sections of the next chapter, is written mainly on a basis of information provided by some unpublished records. These unpublished records have not been used by any historian who wrote on *buddhir mukti* movement in Dhaka, either in Bengali or English languages. The second section of this chapter provides: a definition of 'membership' of MSS; rules of procedure and administrative mechanism; social composition of members; intellectual activities; important resolutions and, finally the publication of *Shikha*, a journal of MSS.

II. Origin of MSS: Context and means of intellectual exchange in pre-independence Dhaka.

A. Context: urbanization of Dhaka and extension of English educational facilities.

Dhaka city's British-based civic and educational facilities began in the nineteenth century. By the time of the 'Sepoy Mutiny' (1857), the British had established the Dhaka Government College and Dhaka Collegiate School.¹ The Dhaka College was founded in 1841, but prior to the college there was an English high school, which was opened in 1835. Despite these early developments, the city's educational facilities required considerable attention by the beginning of the twentieth century. For example, "The Dacca (Dhaka) College has been starved, the professors have been few and underpaid, and progress has languished."² The partition of Bengal (1905), however, brought major development of the city's education facilities. Before opening of Dhaka University in 1921, the government had funded an engineering college, a medical school, a teachers training college and seven English high schools.³

¹W. W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, V (Delhi: D.K. Publishing House, 1973), p. 137.

² M.K.U. Molla, *The New Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam 1905-1911* (Rajshahi: The Institute of Bangladesh Studies, 1981), p. 160.

³ Mahmud Hussain, "The Cultural Life of Old Dacca," *Pakistan Quarterly*, Vol. VII, No. 1 (1957), pp. 13-15.

The development of Dhaka College during the partition years, 1905-1911, was an example of improved educational facilities in the city. The staff of the college was increased from twelve in 1906 to thirty in 1911. Among its thirty academic staff, twelve were qualified in Europe.⁴ The college building was extended with a group of "architecturally harmonious buildings, nobly planned and executed."⁵ The physical facilities of the college included laboratories, hostels for students, residential quarters for teaching staff, a library building and a hall. The latter was named Curzon Hall, after the Viceroy Lord Curzon. Honors and M.A. classes were opened in many subjects in Dhaka College. The library facilities were improved to support graduate courses. Clubs, including one for cricket, and a "literary and debating society" were started. H.R. James, Principal of Presidency College, remarked on the wonderful transformation of the Dhaka College: "The Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam are to be congratulated on the liberality with which they have carried out the design for a residential college (Dhaka College) on a great scale"⁶ The growth of the academic institutions of Dhaka was one reason that the Calcutta University Commission of 1917 recommended a university for Dhaka. The Commission noted that Dhaka College was the "best equipped among all *mofussil* (district town) colleges, with an admirable site in Ramna to form a nucleus of a new university."⁷

One of the finest achievements of Dhaka College was its teaching staff, who informally socialized with students. This led to an easing of the traditional hierarchy of

⁴ The principal of the college was Mr. Archbold. A. Macdonald, M.A., B.Sc., of Glasgo University taught physics. J.M. Bottomly, B.A. (Oxford) was a teacher of Mathematics. For detail See, M.K.U. Molla, *The New Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam*, p.168. Mahmud Hussain, "The Cultural Life of Old Dacca," *Pakistan Quarterly*, Vol. VII, No. 1, 1957.

⁵ M.K.U. Molla, *The New Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam 1905-1911*, p. 170.

⁶ M.K.U. Molla, *The New Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam 1905-1911*, p.172.

⁷ Rajat Sanyal, "Protiva (*Pratibha*) and Shikha: Two Faces of Literary Culture of Early 20th Century Dhaka," published in Sharifuddin Ahmad (ed.), *Dhaka Past Present and Future* (Dhaka: Asiatic Society, 1991), p. 263.

teacher-student relationship. Dr. Mahumud Hussain, who was then a student of Dhaka College, wrote:

I have found, in general, European teachers very magnanimous and humane. Once it so happened that Mr. Turner, who succeeded Mr. Archbold as Principal, was playing football with us. While playing, my class-mate Sailen Chatterjee received an injury. Before I could realise what had happened, I saw Mr. Turner running to Bungalow at top speed and in two minutes running back to the playground with a big basin of water...He then gave Sailen first aid and sent him to hospital...⁸

Mahmud cites many other examples where Dhaka College teachers broke down rigid hierarchical barriers with students. We shall see soon that Dhaka University's rules and regulations had also informalized relations of teachers with students. Wadud and Abul Hussain, who were teaching in Dhaka College and Dhaka University, would maintain these informal relations in their *addas*, in the publication of journals and in the rules of procedure of the MSS.

Under the British rule, the physical facilities of Dhaka city also had improved. During the late nineteenth century, the British constructed roads, railway and telegraph lines that connected the wards of the city⁹ speedily as well as the city with the outlying regions and with Calcutta.¹⁰ The Dhaka municipality was founded in 1864 and was continuously engaged: "developing areas...by filling the low-lying parts" of the city. In 1870 the British moved the administrative headquarters of Dhaka from an old fort to a new building constructed on the Johnson Road in the new urbanized neighborhood of Dhaka. Nazia Hussain, an urban historian of Dhaka, had stated that Dhaka was the only

⁸ Mahmud Hussain, "The Cultural Life of Old Dacca," *Pakistan Quarterly*, Vol. VII, No. 1, 1957, p. 15.

⁹ For early nineteenth century urban development of Dhaka city, See S.U. Ahmad, "Urban Problems and Government Policies: A Case Study of the City of Dacca, 1810-1830," published in Kenneth Ballhatchet and John Harrison (ed.), *The City in South Asia: Pre-modern and Modern* (London: Center of South Asian Studies, SOAS, 1980), pp. 129-160.

¹⁰ W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, V, p. 108. Nazia Hussain, "The City of Dacca, 1921-1947," published in Kenneth Ballhatchet and John Harrison (ed.), *The City in South Asia: Pre-modern and Modern*, p. 199. F. B. Bradley-Birt, *Dacca: The Romance of an Eastern Capital*, p. 191.

city in India where electricity and water were "gifts and not the result of municipal or government enterprise." These two civic facilities were gifts of the Dhaka Nawabs, cost-free initially to the citizens of Dhaka municipality.¹¹ At the close of the year 1935-36, Dhaka had 1,066 electric and 865 kerosene lights. All the public roads surrounding the government buildings and educational centers glittered with electric lights.¹² The city's law and order situation was tightened by employing one police officer for every 35 adult male citizens.¹³

The census reports recorded a steady growth of population of Dhaka city. In 1872 the population of the city was 69,000 and in 1921 it jumped to 119,000,¹⁴ an increase of slightly more than 82%. The highest growth rate was recorded between 1905 and 1911, when Dhaka was "reincarnated" as the administrative capital of East Bengal. The city's population increased 21%, from 90,000 in 1901 to 109,000 in 1911. The growth rate was not so rapid after Dhaka returned to being a divisional sub-capital of Bengal in 1911. However, population growth continued in the city. Dhaka city had been traditionally known as the "city of mosque." Yet in the years 1901-41, Hindus outnumbered the Muslim population.¹⁵

¹¹ Nazia Hussain, "The City of Dacca, 1921-1947," p. 213. Nazia mentions that generosity of the Nawabs for providing the capital costs of the two schemes was not without reason. It was a recognition of favors granted by and hoped for from the British government.

¹² Nazia Hussain, "The City of Dacca, 1921-1947," p. 213.

¹³ Nazia Hussain, "The City of Dacca, 1921-1947," p. 213.

¹⁴ Nazia Hussain, "The City of Dacca, 1921-1947," p. 198.

Census	Hindus	Muslims
1901	51, 000	41, 728
1911	59, 994	47, 295
1921	69, 145	49, 325
1931	79, 906	57, 764
1941	129, 223	82, 921

Religiously, all the city's wards were not completely segregated: "Three wards were predominantly Hindu; in ward 2 they formed 76.1 per cent, in ward 3, 75.9 percent, in ward 1, 68.8 per cent, of the inhabitants. Two wards were almost equally divided between the Hindus and Muslims. Hindus formed 52.4 per cent in ward 7, and 50.0 per cent in ward 5. Muslims predominated in wards 4 and 6 where only 31.4 percent and 36.8 per cent respectively were Hindus." Nazia Hussain, "The City of Dacca, 1921-1947," pp 200-203.

B. Context: emergence of bhadralok ("gentleman") and intellectual activities.

The physical, educational and administrative facilities led to the emergence of a visible group of Dhaka bhadralok. Rajat Sanyal, another urban historian of Dhaka city, gave statistical evidence of bhadralok of the Dhaka district (including Dhaka city): "In 1901, in the district of Dacca, 2778 persons were engaged in teaching profession, 285 in clerical services, 280 in legal professions, and 168 in medical professions."¹⁶ Nazia Hussain gave evidence of bhadralok population of Dhaka city: "Dhaka city had 128 *vakils* and pleaders of which 2 were Muslims in 1905.¹⁷ In 1911, this figure increased to 144 of which 3 were Muslims.¹⁸ The Calcutta University Commissions (1917) had given statistical evidence of the bhadralok of Dhaka division and Trippera. The two divisions, according to the Commission, "supplied 7,097 out of total 27,290 students of Calcutta University."¹⁹ The *Thacker's Indian Directory* listed 267 pleaders in Dhaka city in 1921²⁰ and 967 in 1931. In 1921, Dhaka district had 2,593 male and 93 female teachers, who were working in colleges and schools. The figure was steadily rising to 3,430 males and 352 females in 1921 and 4,354 males and 498 females in 1931.²¹ The religio-communal composition of Dhaka bhadralok was overwhelmingly Hindu.

The Dhaka bhadralok were expressive people. Since the late nineteenth century, they had established several intellectual associations and published Bengali journals and newspapers. In the years 1847-1905, the Dhaka bhadralok published 76 Bengali

¹⁶ Rajat Sanyal, "Protiva and Shikha: Two Faces of Literary Culture of Early 20th Century Dhaka," p. 263.

¹⁷ Nazia Hussain, "The City of Dacca, 1921-1947," p. 209.

¹⁸ Nazia Hussain, "The City of Dacca, 1921-1947," p. 209.

¹⁹ Calcutta University Commission, IV (1917), cited by Rajat Sanyal, "Protiva and Shikha: Two Faces of Literary Culture of Early 20th Century Dhaka," p. 263.

²⁰ Nazia Hussain, "The City of Dacca, 1921-1947," p. 209.

²¹ Nazia Hussain, "The City of Dacca, 1921-1947," p. 210.

newspaper or journals²² In the years 1831-1930, a total of 14 Bengali Muslim journals were published by Bengali Muslims from Dhaka city.²³

The Dhaka branch of the Brahmo Samaj was established in 1846. W.W. Hunter recorded activities of the *Samaj* in Dhaka:

The *Brahmo* (sic) *Samaj* was established in Dacca in 1846, and has steadily increased its members and influence. Up to 1857, its meetings were held in the houses rented for the purpose, and from that time to 1869, in the house of a native gentleman, a deputy magistrate of the District and a leading member of the *Samaj*.... There are about a hundred regular subscribers to the *Samaj*, who pay from six shillings to five pounds per annum, to meet current expenses, and a thousand ordinary members, or sympathizers, comprising nearly all the English-speaking Hindus of Dacca.²⁴

Brajasundar Mitra, a poor but educated bhadralok, was the founding secretary of the Brahmo Samaj in Dhaka. In one report sent to Calcutta, Mitra reported that Dhaka Brahmo Samaj was founded in a "hostile environment" and for "first three months it had to maintain secrecy about its meetings."²⁵

It was Keshab Candra Sen whose effort turned the Brahmo Samaj in Dhaka into a well-knit organization. Keshab visited Dhaka in November 1865 and made arrangements for "regular social prayer for the followers of Brahmoism."²⁶ In March 1869, Keshab

²² In the years, 1857-1900, the total number of Bengali newspaper-journals was 905. The total number of newspaper-journals published from East Bengal was 241. The first East Bengali newspaper-journal, *Rangpur-bartabaho*, was published from Rangpur in 1847. See Muntassir Mamoon (ed.), *Unish Shatake Bangladesher Sangbad-Samayikpatra*, Vol. II, No.1-2 (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1987), pp. 148-151.

²³ Anisuzzaman, *Muslim Banglar Samayikpatra 1831-1930* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1969).

²⁴ W.W. Hunter. *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, V, p. 58.

²⁵ Rajat Sanyal, *Voluntary Associations and Urban Public Life in Bengal, 1815-1876* (Calcutta, 1980), p. 211. Sanyal writes that a report was written by Brahmo Samaj secretary, Brajasundar Mitra, for Calcutta Brahmo Samaj to be published in *Tattwabohini Patrika*. The report is reprinted in Benoy Ghosh (ed.), *Samyak Patre Banglar Samaj Chitra*, II (Calcutta, 1962), pp. 504-507. For an early development of Brahmo Samaj movement in Dhaka, see also, Shibnath Shastri, *Ramtanu Lahiri o Tatkalin Banga Samaj* (Calcutta, 1957), pp. 231-234. Upadhyay Gourgobinda Ray, *Acarjya Keshab Chandra*, I (Calcutta, 1938), pp. 284-297.

²⁶ Amalendu De, *Roots of Separatism in Nineteenth Century Bengal* (Calcutta: Ratna Prakashan, 1974), p. 133.

again visited Dhaka and founded "Brahmo festivals." On March 18 1869, he delivered a lecture in which he said: "Brahmo Samaj is a power."²⁷ In December 1869, Keshab for the third time visited Dhaka and founded a Brahmo Mandir. The occasion was marked by a ceremony for two days. Amalendu De wrote:

The Nawab of Dhaka, several Englishmen and respectable Bengalis graced the occasion by their presence....As a result of his visit the sphere of influence of the Brahmo Samaj was extended. Being inspired by Keshab Sen, 36 men of Dhaka embraced Brahmonism on December 7. At that time one simple-hearted energetic young Muslims also embraced Brahmoism and he was cordially received by Brahmos.²⁸

The Dhaka Brahmo Samaj served as a model for the structure and arrangement of intellectual associations in Dhaka. For the first time, the Brahmo Samaj established an arrangement for the publication of an intellectual newsletter or journal by a voluntary association. In 1846-1847, two Bengali journals were published by Dhaka Brahmo Samaj: the *Dhaka Prakash* and *Dhaka Bijjapan*. After Keshab's visit in 1869, the Dhaka Naba Bidhan Sabha published a Bengali journal, *Bangabandhu* (1870) or 'Friend of Bengal.' The journal survived thirty-seven years. Its founding editor was Banga Candra Roy. Some of its editors toward the end of the journal were: Kaylash Candra Nandi, Barada Kanta Hawlader, Iswar Candra Sen, Durgadas Roy and Girish Candra Sen.²⁹ The majority of the editors were born in Dhaka and/or educated in Dhaka college.³⁰

The journal, *Bangabandhu*, had started a new format. It printed a saying of Keshab Candra as the motto of the Naba Bidhan Sabha in the front page: "1) one thought, one belief, one way of life, one mother and one father; 2) lacking faith in the people/person of [any] religious community is the same as lacking faith in religion [as

²⁷ Amalendu De, *Roots of Separatism in Nineteenth Century Bengal*, p. 133.

²⁸ Amalendu De, *Roots of Separatism in Nineteenth Century Bengal*, p. 134.

²⁹ Muntassir Mamoon (ed.), *Unish Shatake Bangladesher Sangbad-Samayikpatra* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1987) p. 369.

³⁰ For example, Banga Candra Roy was born in Dhaka, educated in Dhaka College and he was teacher in Dhaka Pogoj School. Kylash Nandi was born in Tripura, but educated in Dhaka College.

such]"³¹ The English supplement of the journal, *New Light*, wrote similarly its motto in the front page: "Heaven's light is our guide."³² The *Tarun Patra* (1925), the journal of Abul Hussain, and later *Shikha* (1927-31), the journal of the MSS, had followed a similar arrangement, although the messages were different.

The Naba Bidhan Sabha and its journal were two sources that spread radically new religious ideas in Dhaka. The journal addressed Muslims with a friendly term: *mussalman bhrata* or 'Muslim brother.'³³ Amidst an anti-British outcry of some leading journals³⁴ owned by Hindu bhadralok in late nineteenth century Dhaka, it was *Bangabandhu* which stood solidly behind the British rule.³⁵ A radical religious manifesto of the Naba Bidhan Sabha was regularly published in *Bangabandhu*. For example, on May 3, 1903, *Bangabandhu* published a religious sermon in the front page, entitled *Buddhir Ishvar*, or 'God of Intellect.' The sermon stated:

Oh! Great father! Oh! Lover of children! Love is Yours, salvation is Yours, many of us know about it. But we do not know that knowledge (*jnan*) is Yours, intellect (*buddhi*) is Yours....We believe that You have been infatuated with mercy. You are shining. Who does not believe this? But one thing strikes our mind...there are some faults in your knowledge (*jnan*) and intellect (*buddhi*). Nobody says it

³¹ 1--*Ek mat, ek bishvas, ek rakam pranalite cala, ek ma, ek bap. 2--dharma sampradayer lok'ke abishvas kara ar dharme ke abishvas kara ekay.* *Bangabandhu*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 3 (May, 1903), p.1.

³² Muntassir Mamoon (ed.), *Unish Shatake Bangladesher Sangbad-Samayikpatra*, p. 270.

³³ *Bangabandhu* (October 5, 1983), cited by Muntassir Mamoon (ed.), *Unish Shatake Bangladesher Sangbad-Samayikpatra*, p.185.

³⁴ See for example, *Hindu Hitaishini*, Vol. LXXV, No. 38 (August, 1875); Vol. LXXVI, No. 21 (May, 1875); Vol. LXXIX, No. 1 (December, 1878); Vol. LXXVI, No. 24 and 32 (June 1876); Vol. LXXVII, No. 9 (February 1877). *Dhaka Gazette*, Vol. LXXX, No. 42 (October, 1890). *Garib*, Vol. LXXX, No. 40 (September, 1888).

³⁵ On occasion of Jubilee Celebration of Queen Victoria's fifty-year reign in India, *Bangabandhu* published a special article. The title of the article was "*Jubilee uplakshe Naba Bidhan Mandire Bishesh Prathanna* or 'special prayer on occasion of Queen Victoria's jubilee.' The conclusion of the article writes: "Oh! mother (Queen Victoria) you have brought great welfare in India. During fifty-year British rule, the welfare that you have brought for Indians, we do not want to explain these from our sinful mouth....Mother, we are sick and stupid. Yet, remaining under your feet, the 'great queen' (*maharani*), we also bless a happiness of your children." *Bangabandhu*, March 1, 1887, in Muntassir Mamoon (ed.), *Unish Shatake Bangladesher Sangbad-Samayikpatra*, p.63.

frankly, but everybody believes it. If we would have a faith that You have such an intellect (*buddhi*) which could guide very well human's practical life, then we would have a firm faith on You....If humans apply intellect (*buddhi*) everyday in their practical life, they can run a practical life better than You...³⁶

The radicalism of Naba Bidhan Sabha spread among the English-educated bhadralok of Dhaka. We have noted above that some Hindu bhadralok of Dhaka were converted into Brahmoism. A few followers of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj were also converted into Naba Bidhan Samaj. Bijoy Krishna Gosami was an example of the latter type. In 1888 Gosami published a note in *Bangabandhu*:

Whatever is truth that is Brahmo religion....Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Naba Bidhan Samaj, Adi Samaj, Hindu Samaj, Christian Samaj, Mussalman Samaj, I am a servant of the servants of all samajes. I have no samaj of my own. All samajes are my samaj. Wherever there is any amount of truth, that is my Brahmo religion. ³⁷

Other bhadralok of Dhaka city observed, enjoyed, participated in and supported the Brahmo Samaj, but did not change their caste-based religion. Hunter noted: "Collector (of Dhaka) believes that many students who are...*Brahmos* when at college, become good Hindus when they returned to their country homes."³⁸ This observation is not incorrect. Many Hindu editors were supportive of the Brahmo movement. For example, *Garib* (poor), started as a journal of the Hindu Sabha. Later the journal turned out to be a defender of the Brahmo movement of Dhaka; but again it came back to a Hindu stand.³⁹

³⁶ *He prampita, he shantanbatsal, prem tomar, punya tomar iha amara aneke jani; kintu jnan tomar, buddhi tomar iha jani na....Amara mani tumi dayate matta hayecha, punya ujjal hayecha; e ke na mane? Kintu ekti katha mane lage...ekta katha mane na--jen tomar jnane, budhhite kichu truti ache; mukhe keha bale na bate, kintu mane e rakam samskar ache; jadi bishvas karitam, je tomar eman buddhi ache jahate amader samsar tumi khub bhala kare calate para, ta hale amara sarbbsva diye tomake bishvas karitam...Manush nitya jadi buddhi khatiye samsar calay, tomar ceye bhala calate pare.* See Durgadas, "Bishay Buddhir Ishvar" published in *Bangabandhu*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 3 (May 3, 1903), p. 1.

³⁷ *Jaha satya tahai Brahmo dharmam.... Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Naba Bidhan Samaj, Adi Samaj, Hindu Samaj, Khiristiya Samaj, Mussalman Samaj, ami sakal samjer dasanudas amar kona Sampraday nai athaca sakal Sampradaya amar. Jekhane jatatuku satya seitukui amar Brahmo dharmam... Bangabandhu*, June 1, 1888. Muntassir Mamoon (ed.), *Unish Shatake Bangladesher Sangbad-Samayikpatra*, pp. 97- 98.

³⁸ W. W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, V, p, 58.

³⁹ Muntassir Mamoon (ed.), *Unish Shatake Bangladesher Sangbad-Samayikpatra*, p. 374.

Kaliprasanna Ghosh was born into a conservative Hindu family and edited a Hindu journal, *Bandhab*. Later he was attracted to Brahma Samaj movement and edited one of its journals, *Shubhasadhini*, but again he came back to Hinduism.⁴⁰ The Naba Bidhan Sabha thus created a radical element in the Dhaka intellectual environment. It set a precedent of religious innovation on which other bhadralok could start a movement of radical religio-social thought. Wadud, Abul Hussain and many others frequently visited Naba Bidhan Sabha before they founded the MSS. We will see shortly that there were other sources of radical rationalism in Dhaka.

Muslim intellectuals of Dhaka did not organize any particular movement against the Brahma Samaj in Dhaka. Two Muslim intellectual associations were established in Dhaka in 1879 and 1883, the Samaj Sanmilani and Mussalman Suhrud Sanmilani or Dacca (Dhaka) Mohammedan Friends Association.⁴¹ The founder of the two associations was Mawlana Obedullah Al-Obedi (1834-86). Obedi was a principal of Dhaka Madrasah (now Islamic Intermediate College).⁴² He was also the first Muslim Bengali to translate Rammohun's *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin* into English. The Suhrud Sanmilani was founded on February 23, 1883 and continued until 1886-87. It had an executive committee, a president and a general secretary. In its last year, the association had 102 members.⁴³ The president, vice-president and secretary of the association were graduates of Dhaka College. In the first Annual Report (1883), the general secretary said the objectives of the Mussalman Suhrud Sanmilani:

⁴⁰ Muntassir Mamoon (ed.), *Unish Shatake Bangladesher Sangbad-Samayikpatra*, op. cit., p. 390.

⁴¹ See for detail, Syed Murtaza Ali, *Obaidullah Al-Obaidi Suhrawardy* (Dhaka, 1965). Mohammad Abdul Qayum, "Dacca Muslim Suhrud Sanmilani," in *Mahe Nao* (April 1967), pp. 27-32. Khondkar Sirajul Huq, "Bangali Mussalmaner Jagarane Muslim Sahitya Samajer Bhumika," in Mohammad Faruk (ed.), *Bhasha Sahitya Patra*, Vol. XI (1983), pp. 33-70. Mohammad Habibullah, "Sekaler Graduate," in *Masik Mohammadi* (January-February, 1941), pp. 283-284.

⁴² Obedullah Al-Obedi was grandfather of Husain Shahid Suhrawardy. Suhrawardy was one-time Prime Minister of Pakistan.

⁴³ Mohammad Abdul Qayum, "Dacca Muslim Suhrud Sanmilani," *Mahe Nao* (April 1967), p. 34.

The purpose of this *sabha* (meeting) was an all round improvement of the Muslims of Bengal. But due to a lack of support of the local people, this high ideal was dropped. Now the society has restricted its purpose to spreading ideas for Muslim female education in Bengal.⁴⁴

The association selected books for Muslim women so that they would read these books and appear in examination conducted by the association.⁴⁵ It is not known what books the association selected. However, the association privately arranged to write a book for education of Muslim females: *Tuhfat-ul-Moslemin* (n.d.) or a 'Gift to Muslims.' It was written by Mohammad Reazuddin Ahmad (1862-1933), a Calcutta-based neo-orthodox Muslim intellectual.⁴⁶ Mawlana Obedi's leadership in the association is dubious, as his name is not listed in the first executive committee of the association.⁴⁷ The sessions of the association were held only in the Dhaka Madrasah. In the declaration of the first

⁴⁴ Mohammad Abdul Qayum, "*Dacca Muslim Suhrid Sanmilani*," p. 33.

⁴⁵ This private arrangement of the examination was based on five rules: i) any Muslim female of Bengal can sit for the examination; ii) the medium of the test is either Bengali or Urdu; iii) the place of examination is at home (*antapur*), under the supervision of a guardian of the examinee; iv) the examiners of the oral test shall be selected with a consent of guardian of the examinee; v) for the test, no help is allowed to be taken from any book or from the guardian. See Mohammad Abdul Qayum, "*Dacca Muslim Suhrid Sanmilani*," p. 31.

⁴⁶ In *Hazrat Mohammad Mostafar Jiban Cairit* (Calcutta, 1927), Reazuddin wrote: "It is because of the Hinduized Bengali language that our life is turning into opposite direction. Instead of the word '*Allah*,' we are using the word '*Ishvar*' and '*paramishvar*' or '*bhagaban*'...Our new Muslim writers should know that Muslim *jatir* (community or race) language is Arabic. Without Arabic Muslims would not be able to build their national life...It is a matter to ponder: what a disaster Muslims as a community in India would have fallen without Urdu language. It is because of the Bengali language as mother tongue that a disaster had happened for Muslims of Bengal..." In the book Reazuddin also said that Bengali language is a language of the *kafir*. To accept it by Bengali Muslims, Reazuddin demanded its Islamization. In the book Reazuddin also rejected a de-spiritualization of Hazrat Mohammad's life. In separate essays, Reazuddin denounced in harsh language Muslim women's engaging in pre-marital love and moving outside home without a veil. He was one of the harshest critics of a pre-marital love story of a Muslim man and Muslim women. In addition, Reazuddin called it a disaster in Muslim social life of Bengal that *bauls* had originated among Muslims of Bengal. He also criticized Muslims for taking Hindu names and titles and participating in Hindu religious festivals, etc. See Anisuzzaman, *Muslim Banglar Samayikpatra 1831-1930*, pp. 280-286.

⁴⁷ The members of the Executive Committee, as listed in the First Annual Report of the Dacca Mohammedan Friends Association (1883), were: Maulabi Hikmat Ali--President; Maulabi Abdul Majid--General secretary; Maulabi Hemayet Uddin--Assistant secretary; Maulabi Johadar Rahman--Assistant secretary; Maulabi Makbul Ahmad--Treasurer; Maulabi Azad Ali--district representative; Maulabi Madacheb Ali--district representative; Maulabi Syed Hazrat Ali--district representative; Maulabi Fazel--district representative; Noazesh Ali--district representative; Maulabi Mohammad Chadek--district representative. The list is cited by Mohammad Abdul Qayum, "*Dacca Muslim Suhrid Sanmilani*," p.29.

year, the association clearly stipulated that its purpose was nothing without or beyond Islam:

Oh brothers! religion is the only essential of human life. It is only for this holy matter that the human is called the human. Like a diamond, which is nothing without its bright light, similarly nothing exists in human life and human body if separated from religion. Muslims are always ready to sacrifice their lives for religion....There is nothing dear to a Muslim, except religion....We humbly appeal to Muslim brothers of all positions and groups to help this organization and its activities, which the holy rules of Mohammadi approves...⁴⁸

The association could not last long. One major cause of its decline was a shortage of funds.

Up to the foundation of MSS (1926), five Muslim journals had been published from Dhaka.⁴⁹ These journals were short-lived and none proposed any program against the movement of Brahma Samaj. The Muslim journal *Paril Baratabaha*, (edited by Anisuddin Ahmad) was published from a village in Dhaka. *Islam Suhrid* (edited by Sheikh Abdus Sobahan) was published in 1906 and lasted until 1907. The *Bhaskar* (edited by Nurul Islam Kasimpuri), the third journal, published in 1920 was again a "short lived" journal. The "Zahed Islam Mission" journal, *Ainul Islam* (edited by Ainul Islam) declared as its purpose:

We want an education from a truthful puritan Islam. We want a unity of simple faithful persons. Therefore seeking truth is our highest aim. Human society is our field of cultivation. Hazrat Mohammad is our ideal cultivator. And faith is our capital...⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Abdul Qayum, "Dacca Muslim Suhrid Snmilani," pp. 31-32.

⁴⁹ These journals are: i) *Paril Bartabaha* (1874), ii) *Islam Suhrid* (1906), iii) *Bhaskar* (1920), iv) *Ainul Islam* (1923), v) *Samsari* (1924). See Anisuzzaman, *Muslim Banglar Samayikpatra 1831-1930*, pp. 4, 123, 291, 392, 394.

⁵⁰ Anisuzzaman, *Muslim Banglar Samayikpatra 1831-1930*, p. 393.

The fifth journal, *Samsari* (edited by Syed Abdul Karim) was aimed toward improvement of "health and home economics"⁵¹ of Muslims.

The Hindu Sabha of Dhaka had also failed to suppress the Brahmo movement. Kashi Kanta Chattyopadhyay, a conservative Hindu and a lawyer of Dhaka, established the Hindu Dharma Rakshini Sabha or Association for Protection of Hindu Religion. In the same year, Kasi Kanta published the Sabha's, intellectual journal, *Hindu Hitaishini*, edited by Harishcandra Mitra.⁵² The journal continued its publication up to 1887. Kashi Kanta was hostile to the Brahmo movement from his anti-British intellectual stand.⁵³ He was also hostile to the Brahmo Samaj because his son, Syama Kanta, had become a Brahmo.⁵⁴ Despite an anti-Brahmo slogan, the journal could not wage major intellectual battle against the Brahmo Samaj. Its emphasis on Hinduism was on a return of the *kulin* ideal in the Hindu society.⁵⁵

Late-nineteenth-century Dhaka also witnessed other intellectual associations that promoted a more liberal view.⁵⁶ These multi-functional associations were established for the avowed purpose of social reforms. Four associations of Dhaka declared as their objective "improvement of knowledge in the field of literature." Three others advocated: "cultivation of knowledge and reformation of character."⁵⁷ Apart from an Indo-European learned society, the Dhaka (Dacca) Institute, these small voluntary associations were controlled by Hindu bhadralok.

⁵¹ Anisuzzaman, *Muslim Banglar Samayikpatra 1831-1930*, p. 394.

⁵² Muntassir Mamoon (ed.), *Unish Shatake Bangladesher Sangbad-Samayikpatra*, p. 367.

⁵³ Muntassir Mamoon (ed.), *Unish Shatake Bangladesher Sangbad-Samayikpatra*, pp. 73-77.

⁵⁴ Muntassir Mamoon (ed.), *Unish Shatake Bangladesher Sangbad-Samayikpatra*, p. 367.

⁵⁵ Muntassir Mamoon (ed.), *Unish Shatake Bangladesher Sangbad-Samayikpatra*, p. 95.

⁵⁶ Some of these voluntary associations are recorded in W. W. Hunter's, *Statistical Account*, V, p. 117. Others are recorded in *Bengal administrative Report, 1876-77*, cited by Rajat Sanyal, *Voluntary Associations and Urban Public Life in Bengal*, pp. 211-212.

⁵⁷ Rajat Sanyal, *Voluntary Associations and Urban Public Life in Bengal*, p. 264.

In 1910 the Hindu bhadralok of Dhaka city founded the Dhaka Sahitya Parishad,⁵⁸ or Dhaka Literary Society. A year later, the Parishad published a journal, *Protiva* [*Pratibha*, 1911] or Genius. The Parishad and *Protiva* [*Pratibha*] were founded by some teachers of Dhaka College and Jagannath College with a clear objective:

The object of this association (Dhaka Sahitya Parishad) is to take care, through various means, of the cultivation and improvement of Bengali and literature. The Parishad will not be involved, in any way, in politics, social reforms or religious reforms.⁵⁹

The Parishad did not in fact involve itself in issues of religious reform. It published a substantial number of essays on Bengali language and literature, Sanskrit literature and English literature. Several Sanskrit works were translated into Bengali, including Kalhana's classic *Rajatarangini* and Bhasa's dramas. While there was some attention given to historical subjects of India, the regional cultures outside of Bengal were ignored.⁶⁰ The Parishad gave systematic attention to "antiquities, Bengali language, sociology of Eastern Bengal and collection of manuscripts and oral literature."⁶¹ The Parishad and *Protiva* were not forums for ordinary Bengalis. *Protiva* was published essentially for intellectual bhadralok:

No short stories, or so-called poems, entertaining the ordinary people are to be published in the *Protiva*. On the other hand, it makes an effort to awaken the intellectual faculty of the readers, so that they can realize where [their] place on earth is. Their attention is drawn to the question, what we were and we are going to be[.] It will continue to make such endeavor to [the] utmost.⁶²

⁵⁸ Rajat Sanyal, "Protiva and Shikha: Two Faces of Literary Culture of Early 20th Century Dhaka." Sanyal is probably the first historian who has done research on *Protiva* and *Dhaka Sahitya Parishad*. His information is based on the proceedings of the *Dhaka Sahitya Parishad* as well as on the writings published in the volumes of *Protiva*.

⁵⁹ Rajat Sanyal, "Protiva and Shikha," p. 265.

⁶⁰ Rajat Sanyal, "Protiva and Shikha," p. 266.

⁶¹ Rajat Sanyal, "Protiva and Shikha," p. 266.

⁶² Rajat Sanyal, "Protiva and Shikha," p. 266.

The Parishad was mainly an organization of teachers, lawyers, government officials and few landlords. There were no visible student members of the Parishad. Nor was there any female member who read a paper in any session of the Parishad or participated in the discussion.⁶³ Muslims were not represented in the Parishad.⁶⁴ The association, therefore, was an organization of Hindu bhadralok of elite professions. The Parishad built a typical modern organizational structure. It had a constitution, president and an executive committee. There is no indication that members were elected to hold positions in the Parishad. The members of the Parishad met monthly, annually, and at times in special meetings.

The religio-communal composition and arrangement of the associations and journals of Dhaka were evident. The Naba Bidhan Sabha was essentially a religious organization. Despite its radical religious doctrines, the Naba Bidhan Sabha did not write self-critique of Brahmoism. The Sabha's journal, *Bangabandhu*, published only essays supportive of the Brahmo faith. A survey of the essays published by the journal during one year shows that the majority of essays were apologetics on behalf of Brahmo religion. These essays featured, for example, the doctrines of Brahmo religion, prayers of Keshab Candra, critique of Bijoy Krishna Gosami, festivals of Brahmo religion, etc. One essay of the journal asked: "Why Naba Bidhan Sabha should not maintain any relation with the opponents (*Naba Bidhan birodhider sange jog raksha kara ucit nay ken*)?"⁶⁵ The communal orientation of associations of the Muslims was also evident. Hindus were not active and visible members of any Muslim association in Dhaka. Apart from a lone Hindu intellectual, who gave a lecture in one session, the Dhaka Mohammedan Friends

⁶³ Rajat Sanyal writes, "One important matter to be added is that women did not feature prominently in the *Protiva* except for a few women poets, one of them being Kusum Kumari Debi. Her poems appeared in the *Protiva* when she was twelve years old." Rajat Sanyal, "Protiva and Shikha," p. 268.

⁶⁴ Abdul Karim Sahitya Bisharad's some collections of puthi literature were published in *Protiva*, Vol. VIII, No. 8.

⁶⁵ *Bangabandhu*, Vol. XVII., No.23 (1887), in Muntassir Mamoon (ed.), *Unish Shatake Bangladesher Sangbad-Samayikpatra*, pp. 360-362.

Association was exclusively composed of Muslims. The MSS and *Shikha* would be a breakthrough in this regard.

C. Context: Establishment of Dhaka University.

The Dhaka University was established in 1921 in part to compensate the Muslims of Eastern Bengal for the loss that they incurred as a result of the annulment of the partition of Bengal in 1911. The Chancellor of Dhaka University, Lord Lytton, said in the first degree convocation (1923) that the Dhaka University was "designed as a splendid imperial compensation."⁶⁶ J.P. Hartog, the first vice-chancellor of the university, made similar observations: "Dacca (Dhaka) University scheme is intended to provide extended opportunities of education to the Muslim community in Bengal."⁶⁷ This rhetoric, that the university had been founded for a specific group, the Muslim community, was intended to satisfy the Muslim political leaders in Bengal. The political leaders, specifically A.K. Fazlul Huq, ceaselessly demanded in Bengal Legislative Council extension of educational facilities for Muslims.⁶⁸ The Dhaka University in fact was not created to cater to the needs of Muslim community or well-to-do-classes.⁶⁹ The former stipulation was changed to "Bengali student"⁷⁰ by Calcutta University Commission (1917), which drafted

⁶⁶ M.A. Rahim, "Dacca University and Muslim Awakening in East Bengal," published in S. A. Akanda (ed.), *Studies in Modern Bengal* (Rajshahi: The Institute of Bangladesh Studies, 1981), pp. 191-192.

⁶⁷ M.A. Rahim, "Dacca University and Muslim Awakening in East Bengal," p.192.

⁶⁸ See, A.K. Fazlul Huq's speech on the Budget for 1913-1914. See also Sirajul Islam, "Fazlul Huq Speaks in Council," *Bangladesh Historical Studies*, Vol. I (1976), pp. 131-205.

⁶⁹ H.E. Stapleton, Special Officer, Dhaka University, told at the Social Service Exhibition, Dhaka, on March 11, 1920: "The Committee's (Sir Robert Nathan Committee) scheme for a 'Well-to-do-Classes' College was cut down to the provision of simply a Hostel..." See, Sir Robert Nathan Committee Proposal on Dhaka University cited by H.E. Stapleton, "A University in the Making," published in *The Dacca Review*, Vol. April-May, 1921, p. ii. For social background of Muslim students of Dhaka University from 1920s to 1940s, see, Sardar Fazlul Karim (ed.), *Dhaka Vishvavidyalay o Purbbabangiya Samaj* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1993), pp. 39, 42, 49, 51.

⁷⁰ H.E. Stapleton. "A University in the Making," p. vi.

the early ordinances of Dhaka university. The latter was rejected by the Government of India.⁷¹

1. Impact of Dhaka University: Collegial teacher-student relationship.

Dhaka University opened on July 1, 1921 and began a new phase of teacher-student relationship. The university constructed three residential hostels, or halls, for students: Dhaka Hall, Jagannath Hall and Muslim Hall. Following the system of Oxford and Cambridge, academic and administrative headship of a hall were combined in a position called provost. During the early years of Dhaka University, the provost was always a senior professor of the university. The early ordinances of the University of Dhaka defined the purpose and functions of a hall:

Hall as well as class-room would be the center of intellectual life. The students and teachers form part of one community, working to one purpose and helping each other to a common end....A true education can only be obtained-- [by]the training of mind, body and character; the result, not a book, but a humankind.⁷²

The passage thus indicates a "corporate life" of students and teachers in Dhaka University. Early ordinances of the university also authorized provosts to establish collegial relations with students and organize *Chatra Samsad*, or Student Union.⁷³ In 1923, Professors Ramesh Candra Majumdar (History) and Naresh Candra Sen Gupta (Law) guided students to form the *Dhaka Vishvabidyalay Kendriya Chatra Samsad* or Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU). It was an elected body, whose

⁷¹H.E. Stapleton, "A University in the Making," p. ii.

⁷² Report of the Calcutta University Commission 1919 IV, cited by Rangalal Sen, "*Jagannath Haller Itihas o Prayata Pradhyaksha Prasanga*," published in Narendra Nath Bishvas, Rangalal Sen, Ajay Kumar Ray, Shantinakaran Ghosh and others (ed.) *Basantika* (Dhaka: Jagannath Hall Diamond Jubilee publication, 1981), p. 5.

⁷³ Rangalal Sen, "*Jagannath Haller Itihas...*" p. 5.

concern was to look after the welfare of students.⁷⁴ Early ordinances of the university stipulated that the DUCSU's three key positions (president, vice-president, general secretary) be held by the provosts of the three halls. During the 1925-26 academic year R. C. Majumder, who was provost of Jagannath Hall, became president of DUCSU. Mamtazuddin Ahmad (provost of Muslim Hall) and A.K. Mukherjee (provost of Dhaka Hall) were vice-president and general secretary of the DUCSU.⁷⁵ Collegial relations between teacher and student were thus mandated and fostered by the ordinances of Dhaka University.

Students were also given freedom to organize their own *samiti*, or association. The teaching staff of the university in its early days played a key role in guiding students to form associations and journals. Professor Naresh Sen Gupta sponsored *Praci* or Orient (1923), a monthly literary journal published by some students of Jagannath Hall. The journal was edited by a Hindu student. Yet there is a column entitled: "Muslim world." Abul Fazal, a future activist of the *buddhir mukti* movement, published his first journalistic article in *Praci*.⁷⁶ Sen Gupta had personal contact with Tagore and requested Tagore to write a poem for the first issue of *Praci*. Tagore wrote a poem for *Praci*: "Risen up oh! ancient Orient."⁷⁷ Sen Gupta also sponsored another private student association, Chatra Seba Samgha (1923-40) or 'Voluntary Organization of Students.' The organization was dedicated to impart education among lower caste Hindus in Dhaka city. R. C. Majumder, who was provost of Jagannath Hall, invited Tagore in 1924 to see this project. In 1925, Tagore sent a representative of Shantiniketan, Kali Mohan Ghosh, to observe

⁷⁴ Altaf Hussain, an early leader of the DUCSU, was a leader of Pakistan movement in Dhaka University in the 1930's. See Mahmud Hussain, "Dacca University and the Pakistan Movement," in C.H. Philips and Mary Doreen Wainwright (ed.). *The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1970) p. 371. DUCSU played, however, a leading role in an anti-Pakistan movement, 1969-71.

⁷⁵ Rangalal Sen, "*Jagannath Haller Itihas...*" p. 19.

⁷⁶ Abul Fazal, *Rekha Chitra* (Chittagong: Boi Ghar, 1968), p. 113.

⁷⁷ Rangalal Sen, "*Jagannath Haller Itihas...*" p. 15.

this project.⁷⁸ During the terrorist movement in 1930, police officers sought permission from Professor Majumdar to raid Jagannath Hall. Majumdar, who respected terrorist leaders (he once said, "You are makers of history, I am a mere writer")⁷⁹ on one occasion refused permission to police. At another time, when a student of his hall was arrested and police ordered him to walk to police headquarters, Majumdar intervened. He told the police officer: "Let him hire a transport to go to the *thana* (police office); I shall pay the fare."⁸⁰

This pattern of collegial relationship with students was a precedent that Abul Hussain further developed before the foundation of MSS. Abdur Razzak, then a student of Dhaka university and currently a National Professor of Bangladesh, said in an interview recently:

In those days, the majority of students came into close and frequent contact with teachers such as Abul Hussain and Kazi Mutahar Hussain. These teachers provided the morale to the whole show. It was not important what they said in the class. It was important that they led a life devoted to the students. Their life-styles were important in building a respect for learning among students.⁸¹

Abul Hussain's major activity during the years just before MSS was to involve students in journalistic and associational works. His earliest effort was to publish a Bengali journal, *Tarun Patra* (1925), or Letter of the Young [heart]. The design as well as the motto of *Tarun Patra* set the pattern for *Shikha*. Below the title of *Tarun Patra* it was written: "If truth has a power, then advance with fearless mind."⁸² Pramatha Choudhury, editor of a radical humanist journal, *Sabuj Patra* (published from Calcutta), commented on *Tarun Patra*:

⁷⁸ Rangalal Sen, "*Jagannath haller Itihas...*" pp. 16-17.

⁷⁹ Rangalal Sen, "*Jagannath Haller Itihas...*" p. 23.

⁸⁰ Rangalal Sen, "*Jagannath Haller Itihas...*" p. 23.

⁸¹ Sardar Fazlul Karim (ed.), *Dhaka Vishvavidyalay o Purbbabangiya Samaj*, p. 112.

⁸² The Bengali version was, *jadi Satyer thake bal tabe nirbhay cite calo*. See Abdul Kadir (ed.), "*Tarun Patra*," published in *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 419.

Respected Suniti Kumar Catyopadhyay has recently introduced me to a monthly journal. The journal's name is *Tarun Patra*, and its origin is Dacca. The objective of the journal is to enlarge new thought beyond our everyday thought of food. In other words, its purpose is to inspire among youth an appetite for cultivation of new thought and knowledge....After I read this, I was not only happy but I was astonished that this is a journal of some young Bengali Muslims!⁸³

The first editorial of the journal argued: "To obey some rules, prohibitions, customs, and precedents without knowledge is not only a blunder, but a serious fault."⁸⁴

The journal was exclusively owned and financed by Abul Hussain and most of its radical articles were written by him in a column, "*Patheya*." The journal's editor was Mohammad Fazlul Karim Mallik. Mallik was an exceptional symbol of religious pluralism. Mallik attracted the attention of Muslim Hall students. The office of *Tarun Patra* was within the campus and near Muslim Hall. The two undergraduate students of Muslim hall who regularly visited *Tarun Patra* office were Abul Fazal and Abdul Kadir. Kadir was a "beloved student of Wadud and Parimal Kumar Ghosh"⁸⁵ of Dhaka College. The mentorship of Wadud and Parimal had inspired Abdul Kadir to search for a new meaning of knowledge. He involved himself whole-heartedly in the literary activities of Dhaka College. One of his self-composed poems that he published in the college magazine was titled "*Mukti*" or "Freedom." Young Abdul Kadir was impressed by Mallik's religious pluralism. Abdul Kadir wrote: "By birth Mallik was a Hindu, Hariprasad Mallik. First he was converted to Christianity, and then he was converted to Islam (Shahidullah converted him⁸⁶); and again to Christianity and finally he went back to

⁸³ Pramatha Choudhury, "*Tarun Patra*," *Sabuj Patra*, Vol. LX, No. 4 (1925), p. 267.

⁸⁴ *Bidhi-nished, anushashan, pratha, ihar ektikeo cintabihin haiya maniya laoya shudhu anyay nahe, ap-anyayo bate*," cited by Abdul Kadir, "*Tarun Patra*," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 420.

⁸⁵ Rafiqul Islam, *Abdul Kadir* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1987), p. 11.

⁸⁶ Rafiqul Islam, *Abdul Kadir*, p. 126.

Hinduism."⁸⁷ Abul Fazal wrote in his memoirs, why Muslim Hall students were attracted to the *Tarun Patra* office:

In those days all of us who were new writers knew Fazlul Karim Mallik. We called him *Mallik dada* (elder brother Mallik). He loved literature like a maniac. Simultaneously, he could write poems and literary essays....In personal life he got a taste of three religions. Yet we never heard a religious belief from him. We never saw him practicing any religious ritual. Literature was his only addiction. From this addiction, he cared very little for his children and wife. He could not give them good food and at times he could not even pay his house rent. Yet, Mallik spent hour after hour with us. When he discussed literature, we totally forgot our time, place and our energy. He was addicted to literature and those of us who gathered around him also fell into this addiction to literature.⁸⁸

Abul Fazal published his first literary essay, "*Matribhasha o Bangali Mussalman*" or 'Mother tongue and Bengali Muslim,' in *Tarun Patra* (Vol. IV). In the same volume, Abul Fazal reviewed Abul Hussain's, *Banglar Balshi* (1921) or 'Peasants of Bengal.' These works elevated Abul Fazal's position in *Tarun Patra*. Abul Hussain appointed him as assistant editor of *Tarun Patra*. Probably no salary was given to Abul Fazal, yet the employment of an undergraduate student as assistant editor gave him valuable experience of editing journals. Abul Hussain also enhanced young Abul Fazal's literary reputation. Abul Hussain wrote and published articles in *Tarun Patra* under Abul Fazal's name.⁸⁹

As an assistant house tutor of Muslim Hall, Abul Hussain had established informal relations with students. Muslim Hall itself published only a formal journal of the Student Union. Abul Hussain privately organized some "progressive students" and

⁸⁷ Abdul Kadir (ed.), *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 420.

⁸⁸ Abul Fazal, *Rekha Chitra*, p. 126.

⁸⁹ One example was Abul Hussain's article, "*Itihaser Bhaugalik Bhitti*" or 'Influence of geography on History.' The article was published under Abul Fazal's name in *Tarun Patra*. See Abdul Kadir (ed.) *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 426.

brought out a hand-written wall journal, *Pataka*,⁹⁰ or 'Flag' in 1926. The journal was edited by Abul Hussain, but his name was not published. The journal was published under a student's name, A.M. Taheruddin. Taheruddin was a favorite student of Caru Candra Bandyopadhyay, a radical teacher of the Bengali Department of Dhaka University. Caru babu's frequent remarks included: "I am not really a Hindu. I have no place in Hindu society. Because I worship facing to the west (i.e., as Muslims pray facing the west), the Hindus of my village have isolated me."⁹¹ The motto of *Pataka* was a little poem, printed at the top of the journal: "What is fear, what is dread? We will conquer all the barriers."⁹² The first editorial of the *Pataka* explained its objective:

We have grown new passion among ourselves. We want to be dynamic. We want to re-examine our lives and we want to ask questions and we demand an answer from ourselves: Where are we? In which direction will we go? If Muslim Hall supports us, our 'flag' will cross the boundary of the Muslim Hall and everybody will one day honor us.⁹³

By an invitation of Dhaka University (1924), Rabindranath Tagore visited Dhaka on February 7, 1926. Tagore's visit further intensified Abul Hussain's relationship with students. Earlier in 1922, the university had also invited a French humanist, Sylvain Levi, a Professor at the College de France at Paris. On February 22, 1922, Levi had given a guest lecture on "Eastern Humanism."⁹⁴ Tagore gave three speeches in Dhaka University

⁹⁰ The copy of this hand written journal was published by Syed Abul Maqsd of Bangladesh News agency. See Abul Hussain, "*Pataka*," in Syed Abul Maqsd (ed), *Astitva*, Vol. I (1986), pp. 61-66 and *Astitva*, Vol. II (1990), pp. 6-8.

⁹¹ Abul Hussain, "*Pratham Barsha Dvitiya Adhibeshan*," April, 4, 1926, unpublished. See *Sabhar Samkshipta Karjya Bibarani* or 'Muslim Sahitya Samaj Proceedings' or MSSP p. 14.

⁹² "*Sakal badha karba jay, kisher dar, kisher bhay?*" Abul Hussain, "*Pataka*"(1926), in *Astitva*, Vol. I (1986), p. 62.

⁹³ Abul Hussain, "*Pataka*," *Astitva*, Vol. II (1990), p. 6.

⁹⁴ Sylvain Levi, "Eastern Humanism," published in *Dacca University Bulletin*, Vol. IV (Oxford University Press, Calcutta, 1925), pp. 1-9.

of which two were organized by DUCSU and the third was organized by Abul Hussain in Muslim Hall.⁹⁵

For a grand reception to Tagore, Abul Hussain involved all Executive Committee members of the Muslim Hall Student Union. He formed a seven-member student committee for decoration of the hall. The two undergraduate students of the committee were Mohammad Eusuf and Bilayet Ali Khan.⁹⁶ Later these two students would become active members of the MSS. The Muslim Hall students were excited that Tagore would visit their hall. At first they decided that Tagore would be given a reception only by an 'address of welcome' Shortly before the visit, enthusiasm for Tagore had reached such an extent that students wanted to drink tea with Tagore. Abul Hussain endorsed this love of students for Tagore. He arranged money so that students could have tea with Tagore.⁹⁷ Under Abul Hussain's leadership, Muslim Hall students gave a grand reception to Tagore.

Abul Fazal describes this event in his memoir:

The reception was arranged in the large dining room of the Muslim Hall. From the main entrance of the university to the Muslim Hall, the road was covered with flowers of all types. The room was turned into several flower gardens with little birds in the cage. The students were excited and forget that Rabindranath would not like these little birds in a cage. When Tagore entered into the Hall, students showered upon him a rain of flowers....Tagore entered into the Hall with his son Rathindranath and his wife Pratima Devi. The huge audience gave a standing ovation....The poet's chair was decorated with so many flowers that one could hardly see the chair. A second round of flower

⁹⁵ Abul Fazal, *Rekha Chitra*, pp. 140-145.

⁹⁶ Abul Hussain, "*Pataka*," *Astiva*, Vol. II (1990), p. 7.

⁹⁷ Abul Hussain wrote: "On the occasion of Rabindranath's visit, great excitement had began among students in Muslim Hall. The Hall Union members decided at first to give an address of welcome. Subsequently their respect for Tagore was more excited. The students decided to arrange a tea-party for Tagore. But there was very little money in the Union Fund. So we decided to raise funds from donation of students. The entire expense of tea-party was raised in one day." See, Abul Hussain, "*Pataka*," reprinted in Syed Abul Maqsood (ed), *Astiva*, II (1990), p. 7.

showering upon Tagore began when poet took his seat.... I have never seen such a magnificent reception in my life.⁹⁸

Abul Hussain read an address of welcome. For the first time, he capitalized on a crowded gathering to launch a manifesto of the *buddhir mukti* movement. The crowd was composed of elite intellectuals as well as hundreds of students. In the reception address, Abul Hussain first paid rich tribute to Tagore. He identified Tagore with the motto of *buddhir mukti* ("Emancipation of Intellect"). His purpose was to appeal for the support of "*Rabindra(a)nuragis*" or 'lovers of Rabindranath' to support the MSS that had been born only a week before Tagore came to Dhaka. We cite a paragraph of his "Address of Welcome to Tagore:"

Oh! Conservatory of World learning! '*Jnan jekhane simabaddha, buddhi sekhane arastha, mukti sekhane asambhab*' ("Where knowledge is restricted, there the intellect is inert and there freedom is impossible"); you, having understood and felt this motto in your heart, have arranged a dynamic program for acquisition of world knowledge in Shantiniketan. Let us be inspired by your ideals of the conservation of world knowledge, so that we can go beyond the narrow boundary of *shastra*, time, nation and country to the acceptance of all humanity's contribution as our own. Your immortal advice, 'non-co-operation in the world of knowledge is death,' we will never forget so long as we live ⁹⁹

In 1927, Abul Hussain founded a radical organization in Muslim Hall, the Al-Mamun Club. Its secretary was Naziruddin Ahmad, a brilliant student of history in Dhaka University. On the opening day of the club, Abul Hussain read an article, "*Al-Mamun*," that highlighted the rational thought of Mutazilites during the reign of Abbasid Caliph,

⁹⁸ Abul Fazal, *Rekha Chitra*, pp. 144-145.

⁹⁹ Abul Hussain, "*Kabi Samrat Acarja Rabindranath Takhurer Dhakay Agaman Uplakshe Muslim Hall Chatrabrinder Abhinandan*," Abdul Kadir (ed.), *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 288. For Rabindranath's speech in Muslim Hall, see Abul Hussain, "*Muslim Halle, Rabindranather Abhibhashan*," *Abhijan*, Vol. I, No.1 (1926), pp. 16-18. For Wadud's comment on Tagore's speech, see Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Mlan Samasya*," *Saogat*, Vol. VI, No. 12 (1929), pp. 850-851.

Al-Mamun.¹⁰⁰ The club was open to all students. The Purdah-birodhi Samgha,¹⁰¹ or Anti-Purdah Association, of Dhaka University used Al-Mamun Club as a forum. In 1927, the Purdah-birodhi Samgha gave a formal reception to a Muslim female student, Miss Fajilatun Nesa. Fajilatun was the only Muslim female graduate student of Dhaka University in 1927. She broke *purdah* in the university by refusing to wear a *borka* or a black ankle length veil.¹⁰² As a result, Fajilatun was taken by the Samgha as a symbol of Muslim *nari pragati*, or "Woman's progress"¹⁰³ In a reply to the reception, Fajilatun read a lengthy written paper on the "Urgency of education for Muslim female."¹⁰⁴

2. Impact of Dhaka University: Freedom of expression.

Freedom was one of the precious objectives for which Dhaka University was founded in 1921. The Calcutta University Commission (1917) granted the University the right to have an "autonomy" while drawing its financial support from the government.

The Commission wrote:

By autonomy...we certainly mean neither irresponsibility nor freedom from all constitutional restraints. But without a certain degree of freedom we do not think the University of Dacca can ever become a living and healthy organism.¹⁰⁵

A limited autonomy from governmental control was implemented in Dhaka University. The highest executive body of the University, the Dhaka University Court, was a body elected by the registered graduates of the university. The provosts were elected by members of the Court. The vice-chancellor had his own vote as well as a casting vote to

¹⁰⁰ The article was first published in Bengali journal *Jayati*, Vol. I, No.1 (1930). The article is reprinted in Abdul Kadir (ed.), *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, pp. 252-262.

¹⁰¹ Abul Fazal, *Rekha Chitra*, p. 162.

¹⁰² Abul Fazal, *Rekha Chitra*, p. 163.

¹⁰³ Abul Fazal, *Rekha Chitra*, p. 163.

¹⁰⁴ Abul Fazal, *Rekha Chitra*, p. 163.

¹⁰⁵ Cited by H.E. Stapleton, "A University in the Making," pp. iv.

elect a provost.¹⁰⁶ The office of dean was not an elected position in those days, but only senior professors with high academic standings were appointed. P.J. Hartog, the first vice-chancellor of the university, stood against any discrimination of students, teachers, and office holders for any kind of beliefs and practices:

It shall not be lawful for the University or for any of its authorities as hereinafter provided to adopt or impose on any person any test whatever of race, of religious belief or of profession, in order to entail him to be admitted as professor, teacher or student of the university, or to hold any office therein or to graduate thereat or to enjoy or exercise any privilege thereof, except where such test is specifically provided under this act or the statutes of the university made thereunder, or as may be defined in Trust Deeds.¹⁰⁷

The act was fully implemented during the early decades of the university. The teachers of the university were appointed on a basis of merit rather than on race and religion. The university began with a 60 member, highly qualified teaching staff, of which 45 were Hindus, 11 Muslims, and 4 Europeans.¹⁰⁸ H.E. Stapleton, Special Officer of Dhaka University during 1920s, described a motto of freedom and humanity which the university expected from its students:

...The visions will be vouchsafed to the student of his inherent oneness with humanity--a oneness which Wilberforce has pointed out, transcends and overflows the isolation of personality....He will be face to face with the conception that...we have only to unite ourselves by loving service with our fellow men...to attain *bodhi* (enlightenment), to obtain *mukti* (salvation).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ In 1932, Shahidullah was a contestant for the position of provost in Muslim Hall. Shaihidullah got seven votes while his opponent got eight votes. Vice-chancellor, Professor G.H. Langley, elected Shahidullah by his own vote as well as the casting vote as the president of the meeting. See News Report, "Dr. Shahidullah Appointed Provost of Dacca Muslim Hall," *The Mussalman*, February 20, 1932.

¹⁰⁷ Dhaka University, Philip Joshep Hartog Papers, Vol. I, Hartog's Memorandum No. 59, unpublished, see British Library, MSS, EUR, 221.

¹⁰⁸ M.A. Rahim, "Dacca University and Muslim Awakening in East Bengal," p. 194.

¹⁰⁹ H.E. Stapleton, "A University in Making," p. viii.

Several examples show that teaching staff and students enjoyed and exercised freedom in Dhaka University. Muslim hall students had refused to give entry into the hall to Sir Abdur Rahim, a communal political leader of the Bengal Legislative Council.¹¹⁰ Similarly A.F. Rahman, provost of Muslim hall, recognized "academic freedom" of students to practice and express any belief they choose. In 1925, Muslim Hall students arranged a debate on a radical topic. The event has been described by a Muslim student leader who arranged this debate:

For the first time in the Muslim Hall, I arranged a debate on a topic: 'Bolshevism is the only hope of mankind.' The opponent group, led by Professor Ayer of the Economics Department, took an opposite stand. The vice-chancellor, P.J. Hartog, gave a lengthy speech against Bolshevism. The opponents could not refute our argument. The overwhelming majority of the panel gave decision in favor of us. As a result of this decision, the University administration was scared of 'sedition' movement in the campus. Sir A. F. Rahman was undaunted by this fear and told us: 'the Hall Union is students' union and they must have academic freedom.'¹¹¹

Sir A. F. Rahman took a leave from the university in 1927. He took a new job as secretary of the 'reform committee' of Aligarh University. At this time, Wadud and Abul Hussain knew Rahman. Abul Hussain worked as a house tutor of Muslim Hall, while Rahman was provost of the Hall. Additionally, Rahman was a secretary of the reception committee of the MSS in 1926. As vice-chancellor of Dhaka University in 1935, Rahman served as president of a General Session of MSS. Rahman said his opinion about the MSS in 1926: "Muslim Sahitya Samaj is a movement of new dynamism. It is simply a symptom of a new renaissance in our society."¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Sardar Fazlul Karim (ed.), *Dhaka Vishvavidyalay o Purbbabangiya Samaj*, p. 39.

¹¹¹ Zaker Hussain, "A. F. Rahman Zindabad," *Jagaran*, Vol.IV, No. 9 (1945), p. 313.

¹¹² A.F. Rahman, "Abhyarthana Samitir Sabhapatir Abhibhashan," *Shikha*, Vol. I (1926), p. 2.

Intellectual freedom had existed in Muslim hall before it became a stronghold of MSS. Professor A.F. Rahman (History),¹¹³ was a symbol of secularism of the hall. He was popular among Hindu and Muslim students. When a Hindu provost of Jagannath Hall took leave, Hindu students of Jagannath Hall insisted that Sir P.J. Hartog appoint Rahman as their provost.¹¹⁴ Rahman usually opposed any Islamic orthodoxy in the hall.

One of Rahman's student wrote:

While he (Rahman) was provost, the number of the *be-namaji* (non-praying) students of the Hall increased faster than the *namaji* (praying) students. As a religious person, Shahidullah (one of the house tutors of the Hall) was so excited that he strictly imposed five-time prayer as compulsory for every student. As a result, students broke into two groups: *namaji* and *be-namaji*. After a lengthy debate between the two groups, the matter was referred to the provost. Sir A.F. Rahman solved the matter very diplomatically: 'After the whole day you go to sleep. What is a guarantee that this sleep is not your eternal sleep? Can you take care of yourself when you are asleep? Should you not then commit yourself to the care and will of your Lord before you retire to bed.'¹¹⁵

Rahman's mild but diplomatic reply did not help the praying group, who wanted a program of Islamization of Muslim Hall. The non-praying group was united strongly. They demanded that during the month of Ramadan meals should be served as usual in the dining room.¹¹⁶ They entered into a heated debate with Shahidullah that religion is

¹¹³ Born in 1889 in West Bengal, Rahman was educated at Oxford and London University. For a few years in 1910s, Rahman taught history at Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College. In 1921, Rahman joined Dhaka University as Reader in History Department. In 1924, he was elected as representative of Dhaka University to Bengal Legislative Council. In 1934, he was appointed as vice-chancellor of Dhaka University. In 1937, he was appointed as member of Indian Civil Service Commission. In 1942, Rahman was knighted. Rahman died on March 24, 1945. For biographical information of Sir A.F. Rahman, see Mizanur Rahman, "A.F. Rahman," *Jagaran*, Vol. IV No. 9 (1945), pp. 294-295. B.C. Ghosh, "Jibani," *Jagaran*, Vol. IV No. 9 (1945), p. 297. Abul Khayer Ahmad Khan, "Smriti-Kanika," *Jagaran*, Vol. IV No. 9 (1945), pp. 299-301. Mohammad Shahidullah, "Sir A.F. Rahman," *Jagaran*, Vol. IV No. 9 (1945), pp. 304-305.

¹¹⁴ Mizanur Rahman, "A.F. Rahman," *Jagaran*, Vol. IV, No. 9 (1945), p. 295.

¹¹⁵ Abul Kahir Ahmad Khan. "Smriti-Konika," *Jagaran*, Vol. IV, No. 9 (1945), p. 301.

¹¹⁶ M. Ahmad Ali, "Alocana, Muslim Hall," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 5 (1928), p. 206.

purely a private and personal matter. Shahidullah compromised to the extent that they should declare themselves sick and then they would be allowed to eat privately. The non-praying group was not satisfied. They sent a petition to the chancellor of the university for dining hall to be kept open during the month of Ramadan. Under chancellor's instruction, Sir A.F. Rahman temporarily calmed down the rebellious student group. The new provost, Mahmud Hussain made Ramadan compulsory upon Muslim students of the Hall. The non-praying group challenged this arbitrary decision of the provost and filed a case in the civil court against Dhaka University for violating freedom of religious beliefs of students.¹¹⁷ The decision of the court is not known to us. Nevertheless, the formation of a non-praying group, a willingness to eat during Islamic holy month of Ramadan, and finally filing a case in the civil court for safeguarding freedom against Islamic injunction, was a classic example of Muslim bhadralok's radicalism in Dhaka University, before the MSS was founded. A rebellious student of the Muslim Hall, Khan Mohammad Aatur Rahman, for example, even wrote an essay in which he drew picture-sketches of *maulabis* who were intolerant and bringing torture to freedom of expression (see, Appendix I).

The radicalism of the non-praying group can be accounted for by several reasons. One can see that the group had fully utilized the religious freedom that P.G. Hartog had stipulated for Dhaka University. Second, though we have no evidence to prove Abul Hussain's specific influence on the group, yet, when the group emerged, Abul Hussain was one of the house tutors and published in *Tarun Patra* several radical essays that were critical of Islam. For example, Abul Hussain wrote in one of the articles of *Tarun Patra*:

You recite the Quran and Hadith wonderfully, yet your mind will remain dry. The recitation will satisfy your tongue and ear but your mind will remain hungry....Performance of religious formalism will not give you truth. If there is no life in religious formalism then it will wear down your body and you will not go to the path of truth....Have you not seen people snooze in prayer in

¹¹⁷ M. Ahmad Ali, "Alocana, Muslim Hall," *Jagaran*, Vol. I. No. 5 (1928), pp. 203-214.

mosque and preaching in *milad*? Can we really achieve truth through these?¹¹⁸

The group's rebellion could also be explained as due to the popularity of Brahma Samaj among students of Dhaka University. Communist leader, Girish Candra Nag, said in a speech in Jagannath Hall in 1930: "Students in general had a leaning towards Brahmoism which was making headway in East Bengal."¹¹⁹ Abul Fazal, an undergraduate student of the Muslim Hall was a regular visitor of the Brahma *mandir* in Dhaka. The location of the *mandir* was in Bidhan village, which was in the neighborhood of Muslim Hall. Abul Fazal wrote: "Every Saturday, there were speeches and songs in the *mandir*. I used to go there frequently because there was no restriction upon the non-Brahmos to enter into the *mandir*. Therefore many non-Brahmos, like me, enjoyed those functions."¹²⁰

C. Means of informal intellectual exchanges : *addas*.

Wadud and Abul Hussain were like immigrants in Dhaka city in the 1920s. Wadud came to Dhaka in 1920 and Abul Hussain in 1921. They had no roots in the city. They owned no property and had no near relatives in Dhaka. Yet, within six years of their arrival in Dhaka, they founded a large, important and unique intellectual association. For formation of the MSS. Wadud recalled the years, 1920-26, as the years of "preparation."

Wadud wrote to Abdul Huq, a writer who edited Wadud's writings in the 1970's:

Your evaluation of the *Shikha* is good, but you have written nothing about Abul Hussain and my preparation during the years before the publication of *Shikha*--that made your essay somehow incomplete. To know Abul Hussain's preparation, look at *Tarun Patra* (1925). To understand my preparation is less difficult, I myself can answer your questions.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Abul Hussain, "Satya" or "Truth," Abul Hussain (ed.) *Tarun Patra*, Vol. I (May-June, 1925). See also Abul Hussain, "Ahamika," *Tarun Patra* Vol. I (April-May, 1925); "Agganubartita," *Tarun Patra*, Vol. I (June-July, 1925). The three articles are reprinted in Abdul Kadir (ed.), *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, pp. 3-12.

¹¹⁹ Rangalal Sen, "Jagannath Haller Itihas..." p. 23.

¹²⁰ Abul Fazal, *Rekha Chitra*, p. 168.

¹²¹ Abul Huq, "Kazi Abdul Waduder Patrabali," May 8, 1969 published in *Bangla Academy Patrika*, (August-September, 1983), p. 9.

Wadud's preparation was to build many informal intellectual circles or *addas* in Dhaka city.

1. Characteristics of an intellectual *adda*.

The general meaning of *adda* in a Bengali context is an informal means of thinking and communicating through group conversation. *Adda* is one of typical socio-cultural experiences in the intellectual life of a Bengali. The primary cohesion among participants of an *adda* is not ordinarily based on kinship relation. The intellectual *adda*, or *budhijibider adda*, in Bengali society is formed when formal relationships, for example, a conventional relationship among professional colleagues, or formal relationship of teacher-student or peer relationship among students is further extended into an informal relationship, e.g., as among companions or friends. The informal relationship grows further by frequent casual meetings or *addas*. Unlike formal voluntary associations, an *adda* has no fixed agenda. An *adda* has no fixed time, place, membership, subscription, constitution and agenda. Nevertheless, many *addas* in Bengal had developed into formal voluntary intellectual associations or have published some of the finest Bengali journals.

2. Examples of *adda* in Dhaka city.

Many intellectual *addas* existed in Dhaka city during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. One good example was the '*Pragati adda*' or '*Progressive adda*.' One participant of this *adda* was Buddhadeb Basu, a scholar graduated from Dhaka University. The *Pragati adda* originated in Dhaka University cafeteria in the 1920s, as Basu relates:

Compared to our education in the university (Dhaka University), the facility of our cafeteria was very poor. Situated in one corner of the University, the cafeteria was a shanty place filled with worn out furniture. It was here we ate our lunch and drink tea. It is here we met our friends--- Tonu (later, Professor Ajit Kumar Dutt of Dhaka University), Amal (later, Professor Amalendu Dutta of Calcutta and Aligarh Universities), Parimal (later, Professor

Parimal Roy of Dhaka and Delhi Universities). Hour after hour we spent here in *addas* and drank tea and talked about literature, Bengali society, and politics.¹²²

The *adda* gave itself a name in 1926-27, *Pragati adda*, or Progressive Group. They also published a literary journal, *Pragati*, edited by Buddhadeb Basu and Ajit Kumar Dutta. Centered on this journal, *Pragati*, the *Pragati adda* in 1940 crystallized into a formal voluntary association, Pragati Lekhak Samgha or Progressive Writers Association.¹²³ Detailed evidence is not available, yet there is a reference that the *Pragati adda* knew Abul Hussain and Wadud. Basu had been a student of Wadud in Dhaka Intermediate College. In 1926, 'rebel poet' Nazrul Islam came to the opening session of MSS. Basu literally snatched Nazrul away from Abul Hussain's house and brought him to *Pragati adda*.¹²⁴

Another *adda* was regularly held in the house of Mohitlal Majumdar, a teacher of the Bengali Department of Dhaka University. Shukumar Ray was a student of Mohitlal, yet Ray regularly attended the *adda* held in the house of his teacher. Roy described this *adda*:

I have studied Bengali literature and I have attended many *addas* of Bengali literature (in Dhaka city). But no *adda* had overwhelmed my thought so much as the *adda* held in the house of Professor Mohitlal Majumdar. Usually the *adda* was held in the evening and participated in by students, teachers, professional writers, and scholars of literature. In the *addas*, night after night, Mohitlal discussed writings of Rabindranath, Bankim, Madhusudan, and Debendranath Thakur on the one hand, and recited poems of English poets of the romantic age on the other.¹²⁵

¹²² Buddhadeb Basu, "Dhaka Visvavidyalay: 1927-1931," *Basantika*, p. 89.

¹²³ Kiran Sankar Sen Gupta and Sardar Fazlul Karim, *Calliser Dashaker Dhaka* (Dhaka: Sahitya Prakash, 1994), pp. 50-54.

¹²⁴ Mohammad Siddiqur Rahman, "Abul Hussain o Muslim Sahitya Samaj," *Bhasha-Sahitya Patra*, Vol. XVIII (Dhaka: Bengali Department, Jahangirnagar University, 1991), p. 78.

¹²⁵ Sukumar Ray, "Ekak Dristite Vishvavidyalay, Sahitya o Dhakar Sangit," *Basantika*, p. 95.

We do not know if *addas* in Mohitlal's house were ever transformed into a voluntary association. But Mohitlal in the 1930s played an active role in the MSS.

3. The *addas* of Kazi Wadud in Dhaka.

Wadud organized an *adda* with Kazi Mutahar Hussain in Dhaka city in 1920. Mutahar Hussain was a 'demonstrator' for the Physics Department of Dhaka University and Wadud was a teacher of Bengali literature of Dhaka Intermediate College. Wadud was also a childhood friend of Mutahar. Mutahar wrote:

In childhood I met Wadud every year when he came to the village during summer vacations. At that time I was a rustic village boy and he was a well dressed and an intelligent city *babu*....The village boys flew small kites, he flew a big kite....Yet he loved me...because he believed some intelligence was still left in my brain...¹²⁶

In 1920, Kazi Wadud renewed this informal relation of childhood friendship with Kazi Mutahar in Dhaka. The two Kazis rented a house in Dhaka and lived together with their families for four years (to 1924). Mutahar was not only a physicist, but also a good singer and a renowned chess player. Wadud developed both these hobbies of Mutahar in *addas*.¹²⁷

This friendship with Mutahar brought Wadud into informal contacts with many other intellectuals of Dhaka University. For example, Professor R.C. Majumdar and Mohammad Shahidullah knew Mutahar. Mutahar was a "favorite student of Satyen Bose," who was again a good friend of Professor Majumdar. Mutahar described one incident in which Professor Majumdar expressed intimacy with Mutahar:

Ramesh *babu* once organized a cultural function of Jagannath Hall. For some reasons, I was late in that function. Ramesh *babu* immediately sent a student to my home. When I reached the function, there was no vacant seat in the male spectators area. Ramesh *babu* directed one

¹²⁶ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Kazi Abdul Wadud o Tar Abadan*," or 'Kazi Abdul Wadud and his contribution' published in Abdul Huq (ed.), *Kazi Mutahar Hossain Racanabali*, I (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1984), pp. 358-59.

¹²⁷ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Kazi Abdul Wadud o Tar Abadan*," p. 362.

student, 'seat Kazi *saheb* in a vacant seat in the area of female spectators, because he (Kazi) is the ladyest of the ladies'.¹²⁸

Mutahar's familiarity with Shahidullah, however, was based on kinship. Mutahar wrote: "By matrimony: Shahidullah was my maternal father-in-law (*baibahik samparke Shahidullah amar khalu svashur haten*)."¹²⁹

Wadud cemented the informal contacts with Professor Majumdar and Shahidullah that he initially established through Mutahar. At the same time, Wadud organized literary *addas* in his home, *Johara Manjil*, where many professors including Professor Majumdar frequently participated. S.N.Q. Zulfiqar Ali, a Bengali civil servant, was one participant of *addas* in Wadud's home. Ali wrote:

Frequent literary *addas* were held in Wadud's home, *Johara Manjil*, Dhaka. The participants usually read essays and self-composed poems. I have been introduced to many intellectuals in these *addas*: S.N. Maitra (principal, Dhaka Intermediate College); Dr. Kalika Ranjan Kanungo (Professor of Bengali, Dhaka University); Caru Candra Bandyopadhyay (Assistant Professor of Bengali, Dhaka University); Kazi Mutahar Hussain; Mohitlal Majumdar; Stayen Bose; A.F. Rahman; R.C. Majumdar and Haridas Bhattycarjya (Professors of Dhaka University). I have noticed and respected one characteristic of Wadud in these *addas*. He never thought himself inferior to these high profile Dhaka University professors. He never thought that he is only a government college teacher and they were high profile intellectuals of Dhaka University. In the *addas*, Wadud spread his ideas to these intellectuals through conversations and debates.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Dhaka Visvabidyalayer Smriti o Anyana Prasanga*," published in Abdul Ahasan Choudhury (ed.), *Kazi Mutahar Hossain Racanabali*, III (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1992), p. 28.

¹²⁹ Kazi Mutahar Hussain. "*Dhaka Visvabidyalayer Smriti o Anyana Prasanga*," p. 29.

¹³⁰ S.N.Q. Zulfiqar Ali, "*Kazi Abdul Wadud*," *Wadud Carca* (Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1982), pp. 78-79.

Wadud's home was not the only place of *adda* in Dhaka. Wadud took Mutahar to Anwarul Kadir's home, where he met Abul Hussain.¹³¹ Anwarul Kadir (Professor of Logic) was a professional colleague of Wadud in Dhaka Intermediate College.¹³² This formal professional relationship of Wadud and Anwarul Kadir was soon developed into what Wadud called: *bandhubar Anwarul Kadir*¹³³ or great friend Anwarul Kadir. What had transformed this formal relationship into an informal friendship is difficult to establish. Perhaps it is an inherent social trait of Bengalis to mix freely and frankly with strangers, if they sense some similarity of feelings.

Anwarul Kadir's daughter, Zaheda Rahman (now residing in Dhaka), and son Hamidul Kadir (now residing in Calcutta), confirmed for me (1993) that Wadud frequently visited their home in Dhaka. In 1928, Kadir was transferred from Dhaka to Noakhali. Wadud was saddened by the departure of his friend. He wrote in his diary:

Today my *bandhubar* is leaving. I feel that I have not had so much of friendship with anybody as with him. Pramatha (Pramatha Sarkar, Professor of Economics of a college in Calcutta), Niren (Nirendranath Roy, Professor of English of a college in Calcutta), Afzal (Afzalul Huq, editor and publisher in Calcutta) were my good friends. But with Kadir I have a relation of heart, more organic, the kind of relationship, I have with my children and a few relatives.¹³⁴

Wadud met Abul Hussain at Anwarul Kadir's home, because Abul Hussain was a frequent visitor at Anwarul Kadir's home. We have noted that Anwarul Kadir was a school teacher of Abul Hussain. It was Anwarul Kadir's financial subsidy and paternal care that supported young Abul Hussain's secondary education. At that time, young Abul Hussain used to address Kadir, *baba*, or father. After many years, they met again in

¹³¹ Interview with Zaheda Rahman, Anwarul Kadir's daughter, Dhaka, May 5 1993, unpublished. Zaheda wrote biography of his father. See, Zaheda Rahman, *Babake Jeman Peyechi* (Dhaka: Glimpse Publication, 1988).

¹³² Sirajul Islam (ed.), *Anwar Pasha Racanabali*, I (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1981), p. 252.

¹³³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 323.

¹³⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 324.

Dhaka. Abul Hussain continued to call Anwarul Kadir *baba*, although Abul Hussain held a higher professional rank in Dhaka University. Anwarul Kadir, like a father, advises his son, asked Abul Hussain to complete a degree of law. After Abul Hussain completed the degree of M.L.A. and obtained a distinction, he "touched the feet" of his *baba*, Anwarul Kadir.¹³⁵ At a family level, Abul Hussain's children were like brothers and sisters of Kadir's daughter and son. Hamidul Kadir frankly admitted that his father, Anwarul Kadir, did not develop a habit of writing because Anwarul Kadir's view was: "Socrates did not write!" It was Abul Hussain who inspired Kadir to write and read articles in MSS sessions.¹³⁶ Abul Hussain inspired Anwarul Kadir to edit these articles and publish a book. The book was published in 1934 under the title, *Amader Duhkha* (1934) or 'Our Sorrows.'

Wadud's informal acquaintance with Abul Hussain at Kadir's home was gradually cemented. Several times during 1924-25, Wadud, Abul Hussain, Kadir, and Kazi Mutahar Hussain had "closed door meetings" in Kadir's home.¹³⁷ We do not know what they discussed in these *addas*. Zaheda told me that she was young and was not allowed to enter into that room. Wadud's *adda* with Abul Hussain was also extended outside of Kadir's home. Together, they spent hours watching 'folk dramas and songs' (*jatra gan*) in Dhaka. Importantly, together they visited, and enjoyed songs of, the Brahma Samaj of Dhaka.¹³⁸ This informal companionship was further strengthened by Wadud's respect for Abul Hussain's ideological stance. Wadud wrote in his diary:

He (Abul Hussain) is committed to the well-being of [Muslim] society. But how stupid Muslims are that they could not follow Abul Hussain....Abul Hussain wants to present himself in Muslim society as an exemplary instance of devotion, dedication, and bravery. But Muslim society

¹³⁵ Interview with Zaheda Rahman, Dhaka, May 5 1993, unpublished.

¹³⁶ Interview with Hamidul Kadir, Anwarul Kadir's son, Calcutta, June 23, 1993, unpublished.

¹³⁷ Interview with Zaheda Rahman, Dhaka, May 5 1993, unpublished.

¹³⁸ Kazi Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 307.

does not understand a single word of Abul Hussain. Not only that, they think him as an enemy of Islam and Muslim society. Of course, ordinary people are like this in every society, but none is so 'perverse' as of the Muslims. I do not blame them too much if they do not understand me. But Abul Hussain's thought is so clear that, except blind people, everybody should understand each of his words. This blind and stupid (*ahammak*) Muslim society is probably fit to be destroyed.¹³⁹

Wadud's support of Abul Hussain's radical stance continued as long as Wadud lived. Specifically in MSS sessions, Abul Hussain was allowed to read most of his idiosyncratic radical essays and Wadud was one of their vocal supporters. In 1926, shortly after MSS was founded, Wadud published his book, *Naba Parjay* or 'New Step.' Wadud respectfully acknowledged in the book: "This book's title, '*Naba Parjay*,' is given to me by my respected friend, Professor Abul Hussain."¹⁴⁰

A strong Rabindra-admiring *adda* had existed in Dhaka city at this time in the 1920s. Wadud entered into this *adda*, called Vishva-Bharati Sanmelani (1924), or Vishva-Bharati *adda*. The *adda* was first began by Manoranjan Dhar. Manoranjan was a cultured Hindu bhadralok as well as a business person. Inspired by Tagore, he opened a book store in Dhaka city. The store was not far away from Dhaka University and Kazi Wadud's house. For attracting customers to his shop, Manoranjan organized an *adda* of the intellectuals in his shop. Abul Fazal has described the *Vishva-Bharati adda* in Dhaka:

The *Vishva-Bharati Sanmelani* offered a wonderful opportunity to those of us who moved purposefully in Dhaka city to include ourselves in some *addas* for literary activities. The book store of Manoranjan Dhar was named *Bani Mandir* (word-temple). And underneath the name of the

¹³⁹ *Tini samajer kalyan can--sei tar aradhya. Kintu mussalman ki ahammak--ei loktir katha ektuo bujhte pare na....Samajer samne emani ekti tyager emani eka sahaser dristantao tini pesh karte can. Kintu mussalman tar e kajer etatuku artha bujhla na--shudhu tai nay, takei tara bhabe dharma o samajer satru bale. Abashya sadharan manusher sab deshei ei cehara, kintu hayta eta 'perverse' (English phrase is Wadud's) keau nay. Amake jadi na bojhen tabe besi dosh dite pari na, kintu Abul Hussainer samajpriti eta suspastha je andha bhinna ar sabari najare para ucit. Sei andha, ahammak, mussalman samaj hayta dhvamsa haye jaoyar jogya.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, p. 327.

¹⁴⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Naba Parjay*, I, p. 3.

store was written: 'here are available books of Rabindranath, Sarat Candra, Nazrul Islam, and books of many more modern writers.' We began to visit this shop every evening. After I got a taste of the literary activity of the shop, I became a member of *Vishva-Bharati Sanmelani*.¹⁴¹

The Bani Mandir was also one of the distributors of Wadud's book, *Naba Parjay*, I & II (1926, 1929). Wadud participated in this *adda* because it largely centered on the life and thought of Rabindranath Tagore. The regular self-styled 'secretary' of the *adda* was Parimal Kumar Ghosh. Parimal was a colleague of Wadud and Professor of English in Dhaka Intermediate College. In many meetings of this *adda*, Wadud also met Caru Candra Bandyopadhyay. Caru was a specialist on Rabindranath in Dhaka University. In 1924, Wadud had given three talks on Rabindranath¹⁴² in three consecutive *Vishva-Bharati addas* in Dhaka. The *adda* had also arranged a staging of Tagore's drama, *Falguni*. Wadud also took a role in the drama along with many other intellectuals of Dhaka city, including Dhaka Intermediate College professors.¹⁴³

He have noted above Rabindranath Tagore's visit in Dhaka in 1926. On the night of February 14 1926, the *Vishva-Bharati adda* arranged a small meeting in honor of Tagore in the house Apurba Kumar Canda. Canda was Wadud's colleague in Dhaka Intermediate College. Wadud, Professor R.C. Majumdar, and a few other elite intellectuals of Dhaka were invited.¹⁴⁴ Abul Fazal was also invited because of his close association with *Vishva-Bharati adda*. The reception arrangement of the meeting followed the typical Hinduized way. The two Muslim participants accepted this arrangement without questions. Abul Fazal noted this reception arrangement in his memoir:

¹⁴¹ Abul Fazal, *Rekha Chitra*, pp. 137-139.

¹⁴² These three articles were revised and published in Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Rabindra Kabya Path*.

¹⁴³ Abul Fazal, *Rekha Chitra*, p. 139.

¹⁴⁴ Abul Fazal, *Rekha Chitra*, p.147.

I looked behind and saw Kazi Wadud was entering into the *adda*. A Hindu woman outside the door received Kazi Wadud by pasting a mark of 'scented wood' (*candan*) in his forehead. The woman was doing the same to everybody who was entering. I took a relaxed breath. After all I am not the only one. Kazi *saheb* was a lecturer and I was a mere student....¹⁴⁵

Abul Hussain knew R.C. Majumdar. Professor Majumdar was the Dean of the Faculty of Arts who recommended Abul Hussain for appointment in Dhaka University. Abul Hussain also knew Professor A.F. Rahman, because Abul Hussain was one of his assistant house tutors in Muslim Hall. No evidence is available, however, to determine if Abul Hussain had converted these professional relationships into an informal relationship in *adda*. However, there is evidence of Abul Hussain's informal relationship with Khan Bahadur Abur Rahman Khan. Khan was Secretary of the Dhaka Board of Education. Abul Hussain's influence on Khan was responsible for the latter's participation in the MSS. Rahman Khan's biographer noted: "Abul Hussain respected Rahman Khan as a *murabbi* (respected senior), because he was a friend of Anwarul Kadir."¹⁴⁶ Rahman Khan wrote in his autobiography, *Amar Jiban* (1964), that his informal relationship with Abul Hussain had brought him to participation in MSS:

In 1928, he (Abul Hussain) told me that 'you have to be president of this session of the Dhaka Muslim Sahitya Samaj....I refused by giving him several reasons. But he (Abul Hussain) did not listen. I therefore agreed and become a president.'¹⁴⁷

By involving Dhaka bhadralok in informal intellectual networks, Wadud and Abul Hussain were ready to form a formal voluntary intellectual organization. We do not know exactly when and in which *adda*, if any, that they took the decision to form the Muslim Sahitya Samaj (MSS). Nonetheless, after the MSS was formally founded, the

¹⁴⁵ Abul Fazal, *Rekha Chitra*, p. 148.

¹⁴⁶ Golam Saklayan, *Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman Khan* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1990), p. 47.

¹⁴⁷ Abdur Rahman Khan, *Amar Jiban* (Dhaka: Mahabubur Rahman, 1964), p. 144.

students and intellectuals of Wadud's and Abul Hussain's informal networks were the first batch of people who were its members.

III. Foundation and structure of MSS and publication of its journal *Shikha*.

A. Foundation of MSS.

The MSS founded formally in the afternoon (4 p.m.) of January 17, 1926. The foundation was preceded by a formal meeting held in Muslim Hall. The meeting was presided over by Mohammad Shahidullah and was participated in by four key individuals: Wadud, Abul Hussain and two students Abdul Kadir and A. M. Taheruddin. The foundation meeting lasted only short time, which gives the impression that the real decision to found the MSS had already been taken in *addas* of Wadud. The MSS was not founded on a clear ideological consensus. This is clear from a disagreement in the foundation meeting. Shahidullah argued that the purpose of MSS is to create: "Muslim literature for safeguarding Muslim culture."¹⁴⁸ Wadud disagreed: "This organization (MSS) would make no distinction between East and West Bengali literature."¹⁴⁹ The divergence of ideals was thus clearly visible at the very foundation of MSS.

B. Meaning of being a member (*sadasya*) of MSS.

Membership in MSS was not rigidly defined. Abul Hussain made this policy of the MSS clear at its beginning, "...this *Samaj* is not the prisoner of a particular perimeter."¹⁵⁰ Any individual, irrespective of gender, religion, race, and political opinion, who participated in the activities of MSS would automatically become a member. This unrestricted meaning of membership was continued until 1930. In that year, article III of

¹⁴⁸ Abul Hussain and Caru Candra Bandopadhyay, "*Sucana*," January, 31, 1926, MSSP, p. 3.

¹⁴⁹ Abul Hussain and Caru Candra Bandopadhyay, "*Sucana*," January, 31, 1926, MSSP, pp. 3-4.

¹⁵⁰ Abul Hussain, "*Barshik Bibarani*," *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 27.

the constitution of MSS restricted its membership: "(a) Any individual can be a member of MSS with the consent of Executive Committee; (b) Each should be able to pay an annual membership fee of at least Rs.1.00"¹⁵¹ No clause was provided in the constitution for canceling a membership. The two conditions were not implemented. Month after month, members did not pay the annual fees and there is no record that participants ever applied for membership to the executive committee.

Additionally, no individual was ever barred from participating in the sessions of MSS. In the absence of a rigid set of rules, participants of MSS were usually called members. The members participated in MSS through several ways: essay reader in sessions of MSS; discussant of essay or essays; president or member of an Executive Committee (EC); president or member of a Reception Committee (RC); president or secretary of a General Session (GS); president or secretary of an Annual Session (AS).

C. Administrative structure of the MSS.

The statistics used in this section and elsewhere in this chapter are not the figures that have been found in secondary or primary sources. It took months to read and compile statistical information on the MSS from some descriptive documents. Two primary documents are mainly used for this purpose: i) the unpublished proceedings of MSS, 1926-1938; ii) the five published volumes of *Shikha* (1927-31), a Bengali journal of MSS. The title of the unpublished proceeding is: *Sabhar Samkshipta Karya Bibarani* (1926-38) or "Concise Account of the Proceedings of the Society."¹⁵² Hereafter we will refer to it as Muslim Sahitya Samaj Proceedings (MSSP). The two sources provide

¹⁵¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud and Abul Fazal, "*Muslim Sahitya Samajer Niyamabali*" (Constitution), MSSP, p. 83.

¹⁵² This document is collected from Kazi Abdul Wadud's private collection in Dhaka. This is a hand written document of 154 large size pages. The document is written in Bengali language. The document covered activities of the MSS from January 17, 1926 to December 20, 1938. The private collection of Wadud is now preserved by Wadud's grandson, Enayet Akbar, House No. 5, Road No. 2-A, Dhanmodi Residential Area, Dhaka. Kazi Abdul Wadud Collection is also kept in Kazi Wadud's house, 8/B Tarak Datta lane, Calcutta.

extremely fine details of MSS. From these narratives, we have constructed several appendices and the quantitative information that is reported. The appendices are included in the dissertation.

The only administrative structure of the MSS was its Executive Committee (EC). The function and mechanism of the ECs was not complex. Fifty-two different members held in 11 ECs that were formed during 12 years of the MSS (see, Appendix B). The highest executive position of an EC was the post of president, followed by a secretary, assistant secretary or secretaries, joint secretary or secretaries, treasurer and members. Not all executive positions were filled in all 11 ECs. For example, the first EC (1926-27) was formed without a joint secretary. Out of the 11 ECs, the post of a president was included in only 5 ECs. The post of a treasurer was included only in sixth (1931-32) and seventh EC (1932-1933). The post of secretary, however, was included in all 11 ECs.

It is also recorded explicitly in the MSSP that the first EC (1926-1927) and second EC (1927-28) of the MSS were elected bodies. The secretary's report of the foundation of MSS concluded: "The session was closed after electing a president and four assistant secretaries of the EC."¹⁵³ The second EC was also a body elected by a large audience of the AS. The secretary's report stated: "After the secretary's previous year annual report was read at 3 p.m. on Sunday, March 27, 1927, the second EC was elected. Professor Kazi Abdul Wadud was the presiding officer."¹⁵⁴ For formation of the third to twelfth ECs, the secretary's report simply recorded that they were formed (*karmi samsad gathan kara hay*) in the first GS of every year. No EC was formed on the eleventh year (1937) of the MSS. Most probably this was due to the general political turmoil during 1937 election.

The main function of ECs was to organize intellectual seminars in GSs and ASs of MSS. The president of EC, with consent of its members, had authority to form a large

¹⁵³ Abul Hussain and Caru Candra Bandopadhyay, "Sucana," January, 31, 1926, MSSP, p. 4.

¹⁵⁴ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Barshik Adhibeshan," March 27, 1927, MSSP, p. 32.

committee known as the "Reception Committee" (RC) of the AS. The latter committee was a large body that included its own president, secretary, and several members. This was a temporary structure created by EC for smooth working of the Annual Session (AS)-that usually lasted longer hours than a General Session (GS). What is more, RCs were created to raise funds for MSS. It was a precedent established by MSS that those individuals who would be selected for RC would donate funds for MSS. With a mandate from members of GS, an EC president had also power to select a president of the GS. For this purpose, the EC president normally made a formal approach by writing to the person, if he was not a personal acquaintance. Occasionally, when a president was not available, an EC president could also serve as president of the GS. However, when the ECs had no position of a president, it was the secretary who performed functions of a president. But no secretary of an EC was simultaneously a president of GS.

A secretary of EC, however, holds another portfolio, i.e., a secretary of GS. In that capacity, the secretary recorded the proceedings of each of the GSs. The proceedings included notes on all intellectual or procedural activities that occurred in a GS. Foremost among the secretary's task was to write a summary of each essay that was presented in a GS and to record any debates generated by those essays. For formal approval, the secretary then presented the proceedings of the session in the next GS. The secretary also prepared and presented a "Yearly Report" of GSs in the AS. In that capacity, a secretary had an opportunity, like president and secretary of a RC, to address a larger gathering of the AS. As the first EC secretary, and as first secretary of the GSs of the first year of the MSS (January 19, 1926-March 27, 1927); Abul Hussain used this formal opportunity to declare meaning and motto of *buddhir mukti* movement in MSS. Wadud did not get this formal opportunity, because he never was a secretary of any GS or any RC of MSS.

Wadud was president of 4 ECs out of the 5 ECs that had a president. Wadud was also a treasurer of 2 ECs (1930-31 and 1931-32) and he was a member of 1 EC (1929-30). He held the latter position under secretaries who were students. Mutahar held the

position of secretary of 2 ECs. Wadud and Mutahar were members of 1 EC (1929-30) of which the secretary was a student, Abul Fazal. This EC was important because it drafted a constitution of the MSS. Abdul Kadir was an assistant secretary and member of 4 ECs. Among Wadud's *adda* comrades, Anwarul Kadir did not hold any official position, because he found little time to spend for administrative positions in MSS. None of the positions of EC was held by a Hindu intellectual or Hindu student. But Muslim intellectuals and students from outside the *adda* network also shared positions in the ECs. Khan Bahadur Tasadduk Ahmad, who was teacher of Dhaka Collegiate school, was a president of the first EC. His colleague in Dhaka Collegiate school, Mohammad Abdur Rashid, was secretary of 1 EC and an assistant secretary of 2 ECs. Mohammad Eusuf, a graduate student of Muslim Hall, was secretary of 1 EC. Ajharul Islam, Shahidullah's "favorite student," was secretary of 1 EC. Other graduate and undergraduate students of the Muslim Hall who held the position of a secretary of ECs were Aminuddin Ahmad and Tofajjal Hussain. Many college students of the Dhaka Intermediate College and Islamic Intermediate College were co-workers with their teachers in EC's. Many individuals began their involvement in MSS as students, but retained membership after they become professionals. An example was Shamsul Huda, who was an Islamic Intermediate College student of Dhaka. Huda was a classic example how a student of an Islamic college was gradually turned into a radical critic of Islam under an influence of the MSS. We will describe Huda's radicalism in next chapter.

D. Statistics regarding social composition of office bearers and members of MSS.

The statistical or quantitative information available shows that MSS was indeed a Muslim organization, but it was not exclusively composed of Muslims; nor were the Muslims exclusively male; nor were all the participants professional elite *bhadralok* e.g., university teachers, lawyers, Khan Bahadurs etc. Such information enables us to see the academic and administrative roles of Wadud in MSS and the activities of member of

Wadud's *adda* network in MSS. The evidence from the proceedings also show that MSS was purely an intellectual organization. The topics of essays and debates, and their frequency have been recorded. Likewise, number of essays read by males, females and by Muslims, Hindus are also recorded. From the information in the sources that this section uses, one could elicit many more facts about MSS.¹⁵⁵

A long list of 56 presidents of 56 sessions of MSS shows that 13 sessions were presided over by Hindus and 43 were presided over by Muslims (see, Appendix D). Among intellectuals of Hindu origin, Wadud's *adda* associates, Professor Caru Candra Bandyopadhyay (Dhaka University) was president of 3 sessions and Professor R.C. Majumdar of 1 session. Wadud's colleague, S.N. Maitra, presided over 3 sessions. Other intellectuals of Hindu origin who presided were: Professor Parimal Roy (Dhaka University) 2; Professor Susil Kumar De (Dhaka University)1; Professor Umesh Kanti Bhattashali (Dhaka University) 1; Professor Nalini Kanta Bhattashali (Dhaka University) 1; and 1 session was presided over by Bengali novelist, Sarat Candra Cattyopadhyay.

Wadud did not act as alone in selecting these intellectuals of Hindu origin. For example, Wadud invited Sarat Candra to be a president of the Tenth AS with the "written authorization" from a GS (July 2, 1936).¹⁵⁶ This authority of a GS was stipulated in article V of the MSS constitution: "Special membership could be created by a proposal of EC and by approval of GS" (see Appendix E). Many of these intellectuals of Hindu origin were moral supporters of Wadud's and Abul Hussain's viewpoints in sessions of MSS. What is more interesting, as we shall see in the next chapter is that these intellectuals as presidents participated in debates even on topics of Islam.

Among 43 Muslim presidents, 5 presided over 29 sessions. Among these 5 Muslim presidents, Kazi Wadud presided over 9 sessions, Kazi Mutahar presided over 4,

¹⁵⁵ For example, it is possible to determine how many times the sessions of MSS started with verses of the Quran or with verses of Bengali song. The section has not given much attention to it for a risk that the chapter will be lengthy.

¹⁵⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Karjya Samsad Adhibeshan*," July 2, 1936, MSSP, p. 148.

Khan Bahadur Tasadduk Ahmad over 3, Mohammad Shahidullah over 2, while Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman Khan, presided over 11 sessions. The remaining 14 Muslims who presided over one session each were: Khan Bahadur Kamruddin Ahmad, Khan Bahadur Nasiruddin, Mohammad Wajed Ali, Mohammad Barkatullah, Mahabub-ul-Alam, Moajjem Hussain, Abdus Salam Khan, Muzaffar Ahmad, Hekim Habibur Rahman, A. F. Rahman, Abdus Sobahan, Mohammad Eusuf, Abdus Samad and Fida Ali Khan.

The MSSP recorded a total 54 secretaries for 56 sessions. Among the secretaries, four Muslims were secretaries of 29 sessions. Wadud and Anwarul Kadir were not secretaries of any session. The four were: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, who was secretary of 17 sessions; Abul Hussain, 7 sessions; Abul Fazal, 6 sessions; and Abdul Kadir, 2 sessions. The secretaries of the remaining 25 sessions were 10 Muslims, of whom: Mohammad Eusuf was secretary of 5 sessions; Aminuddin Ahmad 5; Mohammad Abdur Rashid 5; Shamsul Huda 2; Kamaluddin Ahmad 2; M. Tofajjal Hussain 2; Ajharul Islam 1; Tofail Hussain 1; Abdus Sobahan 1; and Mohammad Abdul Wadud 1.

For 56 sessions, there was no president of a European origin and among 54 secretaries there was no secretary of Hindu origin. There was neither a female secretary nor a female president. A total of 27 persons (8 Hindu and 19 Muslim) presided over 56 sessions. And 14 Muslims were secretaries of 54 sessions. Except for 2 presidents, academic qualifications of 25 presidents were recorded in MSSP and/or in the Bengali journal, *Shikha*. Among them, 3 had only a degree of B.A.; 1 had a B.C.L (Bachelor of Criminal Law); 15 had an M. A degree; 2 had an M.Ed.; and 4 had a Ph.D. Many presidents who were working in a higher secondary education board had a second degree of B. T (Bachelor of Teaching). A few presidents had a second degree of B. L (Bachelor of Law). Abul Hussain had a second and a third degree beside an M.A. Except for 2 secretaries, academic qualifications of the 12 secretaries were recorded. Two secretaries

had an 'Intermediate degree' (Grade XIV), 5 had a degree of B. A, 1 had a degree of B.Sc.; 3 had a M. A; and 1 had a M. Sc.

Among 27 presidents, professional backgrounds of 20 presidents were recorded; 12 were engaged into a teaching profession. The other 8 presidents were: 1 Bengali novelist; 1 secretary, Board of Education; 1 Principal, of a college; 2 Head master of a school; 1 journal editor; 1 District and Session judge; and 1 Deputy Magistrate & Collector. Qualifications of the 11 out of 14 secretaries were recorded. The graduate and undergraduate students of Muslim Hall were a majority of 7; and 4 were engaged into a teaching profession. Out of the 4 teachers, 2 were from Dhaka University; 2 from the colleges. Among 27 presidents, 6 presidents were invited from outside Dhaka city, of whom 4 came from Calcutta, 1 from Chittagong, and 1 from Rangpur (north Bengal).

Participants of the MSS sessions were not all residents of the city of Dhaka. Students, teachers and persons of other professions usually attended sessions from outside Dhaka city. The organizers of the ASs, i.e., ECs always invited these outside participants by a formal letter. For example, "delegates" from two student organizations, North Bengal Student Organization and Sirajganj Muslim Youth Association, participated in the first AS of the MSS.¹⁵⁷ In the second AS (1928), two more student organizations outside of Dhaka city participated: the Uttar Banga Chatra Samiti (North Bengal Student Association) and Munshiganj Chatra Samiti (Munshiganj Student Association). Each student delegate paid a fee of Rs. 2.00 for participation. The student delegates who came from outside Dhaka were not simply spectators in MSS sessions. For example, Habibullah Mukhtar, a student from Munshiganj (a subdivision of Dhaka Division) read a self-composed poem, "*Abhahan*," in the first AS. One verse of the poem said:

*Dhakhar bakser duti tara
Tasadduk, Rahman (A.F. Rahman) diyeche sara,
uthate jatire kule;*

¹⁵⁷ Abul Huusin, "*Parishishta*." *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 129.

*Wadud, Hussain (Abul Hussain), Kadir (Abdul Kadir),
Anwarul Kadir sane eder
namiche sagar jale.*¹⁵⁸

The verse reflects that the author perceives the new movement to have began in Dhaka. The last three lines have emphasized Wadud and co-workers as a group. By categorizing them into a group, the author probably had understood an ideological unity of the four. Participants also came from West Bengal. One example was Akbaruddin, a high school teacher of Krishnagar, who read an essay in one AS. Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, a liberal associate of Akram Khan, also came from Calcutta. Similarly, a vocal participant of Akram's neo-orthodox group, Syed Emdad Ali, came as spectator of the MSS from Calcutta. He was a member of RC of the first AS and paid Rs. 5.00 for his participation.

Many other participants of the GSs also came from outside Dhaka. Motahar Hussain Choudhury, a school teacher of the district of Comilla (one hundred miles south of Dhaka), took part in the MSS sessions. Motahar (not Kazi Mutahar Hussain) read one essay in the fifth GS (January 18, 1930), and read two essays in two ASs (1931 and 1932). The three essays established a visible relation of Motahar with Wadud in MSS, but the essays also established Motahar's ideological polarity with Wadud's rational humanism. Anisuzzaman wrote:

With Muslim Sahitya Samaj, his (Motahar's) ideological identity was more penetrating than an optic relationship....It was for this reason that he (Motahar) had a deep feedback in the heart of intellectuals like Kazi Abdul Wadud, Abul Fazal and Abdul Kadir.¹⁵⁹

It was due to the ideological unity of Motahar with Kazi Abdul Wadud, Abul Hussain, Kazi Mutahar Hussain, Anwarul Kadir, Abul Fazal and Abdul Kadir that one can call them as a 'Group of Seven.' at the core of MSS. We will present their radical ideological

¹⁵⁸ Habibullah Mokhtar, "*Ahaban*," *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 18.

¹⁵⁹ Anisuzzaman, *Motahar Hossain Choudhury* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1988), p. 17.

unity in the next chapter. However, it should be pointed out that this group was a visible minority compared to other members of MSS.

In 1926-27, the MSSP recorded a total of 66 members. This figure had risen to 96 in 1928-29, but then the figure gradually dropped. The total members in 1930-31 were 55. In 1932-33, this figure further dropped to 45. In 1934-35, it was 36 and 16 in 1936-37. In the last year of 1938, its members were only 11. For social composition of members (see Appendix F), we cite here only years 1926-27 and 1928-29. Out of 65 members in 1926-27, academic qualifications of 55 are available. Out of those 55, 4 were only Matriculates (or intermediate students of a college), 18 were intermediates (or undergraduate students of university), 11 B.A.s (including 2 graduate students), 19 M.A.s; 1 M.Ed; 1 Ph.D (London); and 1 D.Litt (Oxford). Out of 55 members, professional positions of 47 members are available: 24 were students of college or university (graduate 2, undergraduate 18, and intermediate 4); 18 were teachers of college or university; 1 a headmaster; 1 the secretary of a school education board; 1 a college inspector; 1 a zamindar and 1 a retired police inspector.

Among a total of 96 members of MSS in 1928-29, academic qualifications of 90 are recorded. A total of 42 members had a degree of M.A, M.Sc, and MBBS (a degree of Medical science); 28 had B.A.'s and B.C.L (including 6 graduate students); 16 had an intermediate degree (undergraduate student of the Dhaka university); 2 had a degree of D. Litt; 1 D.Sc; and 1 Ph.D. Professional positions of 64 are available: 30 were teachers and 22 were graduate and undergraduate students of Dhaka University. The other 12 were engaged in 12 different professions: politician; secretary, school education board member; medical doctor; lawyer; zamindar; deputy magistrate and collector; retired deputy magistrate and collector; district and session judge; college principal; head master of school; inspector of school (*maktab*); and book publisher.

A religion and gender breakdown of the 96 members indicates that 15 intellectuals were of Hindu origin, of whom 3 were female. Among the majority 81 Muslim

intellectuals and students, 3 were Muslim females: Miss. Fajilatun Nesa, Khurshid Jaha Begum and Mrs. Fatema Khatun. Fajilatun read essays in MSS sessions. She was selected also as a member of RC of the second AS (February, 1928) along with twenty-five male members. Fajilatun read a paper in the same session, "*Nari Jibane Adhunik Siksar Asvad*,"¹⁶⁰ or 'Delight of modern education in Women's life.' The article stated that women would no longer be covered with ignorance of 'black veils,' "We will smash exploitive male domination."¹⁶¹ The women are the 'complement' (the English word is Fajilatun's) of males in the work place said Fajilatun, who concluded that women should not be restricted to limited activities. The MSS gave a standing ovation to the boldness of Fajilatun. On her leaving for England for higher studies, MSS called a Special Session (August 26, 1928) to give a farewell to Fajilatun.¹⁶² One month later, MSS called a comparable Special Session of reception for one of its male members, Dr. Mohammad Shahidullah, on his return from France in 1928.

A distinguished group of 6 Khan Bahadurs were members of MSS. Of these 5 were Bengali-speaking Muslims and 1 a Bengali-speaking Hindu. The Hindu Khan Bahadur, Kali Prasanna Sen, was a medium-sized landholder. The Muslim Khan

¹⁶⁰ Fajilatun Nesa, "*Nari Jibane Adhunik Shikshar Asvad*," in Kazi Mutahar Hussain (ed.), *Shikha*, Vol. II (1928) pp. 125-128. Fajilatun was born in 1905 in Mymensing. She passed Matriculation and Intermediate examination from Dhaka Eden School and then completed B.A. with distinction from Bethun College, Calcutta. She completed M.A. in Mixed Mathematics from Dhaka University and stood First class first. Fajilatun went to England in 1928 with a scholarship from England to study one year on "Education policy." She wrote several articles on freedom of Muslim Women. For example, one of her essays was entitled, "*Muslim Narir Mukti*" or 'Freedom of Muslim Women.' The article was published in Bengali journal, *Saogat*, Vol. VII, No.1 (1929), pp. 31-35. Another article, "*Muslim Nari-shikshar Prayojanita*" or 'Necessity of Education for Muslim woman,' was published in *Saogat*, Vol. V. No. 6. (1927), pp. 525-527. The latter essay was read in Abul Hussain's Al-Mamun Club. For biographical information of Fajilatun Nesa, see Kazi Mutahar Hussain's article, "*Morhuma Fajilatun-nesar Sange amar Paricay*," published in Abul Ahasan Choudhury (ed.), *Kazi Mutahar Hussain Racanabali*, III (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1992), pp. 46-50. See also, Rafiqul Islam, *Nazrul Jibani* (Dhaka: Department of Bengali Dhaka University, 1972), pp 476-480.

¹⁶¹ Fajilatun Nesa, "*Nari Jibane Adhunik Shikshar Asvad*," *Shikha*, Vol.II (1928), pp.125-128.

¹⁶² The Secretary's Report stated that the session was overcrowded. Protiva Ghosh and Shila Nandi, two women's activists of Dhaka, were present in the occasion. From outside the Dhaka city, 'addresses of welcome' were sent by many girl's schools. See, Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Parishishta*," MSSP, p. 65.

Bahadurs who were members of MSS did not form an economic or social class. They achieved the title, Khan Bahadur, because they had demonstrated "outstanding performance" in the field of their professions. For example, Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman Khan was a secretary of the Dhaka Board of Education for seven years (1926-33). His biographer noted: "For recognition of his service in the field of education, the British honored him with the title Khan Saheb in 1926 and then Khan Bahadur in 1932."¹⁶³

Rahman Khan's academic career was brilliant. He got a distinction in Matriculation from Calcutta University in 1903. In 1912 he completed BA.(honors) in Mathematics from Dhaka College. In 1914, he stood first in first class in M.A. from Calcutta University. Following a convention of his family,¹⁶⁴ Rahman Khan was a father dedicated to promoting education of his children. One of Rahman Khan's sons, Dr. Fazlur Rahman Khan was the reputed architect who designed the Sears Tower of Chicago. Another son, Zillur Rahman Khan is now Professor of Political Science in the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh.

Another Muslim Khan Bahadur member of MSS was Tasadduk Ahmad. Tasadduk was a classic example of timidity and docility, which may have been one reason why several Muslim intellectuals of this sort were invited into the MSS. Abul Hussain described Tasadduk's docile temperament and that of Khan Bahadur Kamruddin Khan:

The Samaj (MSS) has invited workers like Khan Bahadur
Tasadduk Ahmad and Khan Bahadur Kamruddin Ahmad as

¹⁶³ Golam Saklayan, *Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman Khan*, p. 78.

¹⁶⁴ Rahman Khan came from a large family. His father, Asalat Khan, was an ordinary person of moderate education. Asalat educated his ten sons and daughters. Rahman Khan was the eldest. Rahman Khan's fourth brother, Arshaduzzaman Khan, was M.A. in Mathematics and was a sub-Deputy Collector in 1924. His fifth brother, Anisuzzaman Khan, was a doctor and studied in Hekim Azmal Khan's College in Delhi. The sixth brother, Abdul Aziz Khan, was a business person. The eighth brother, Abdul Hakim Khan was a district court judge in 1937, and become a judge in High Court. The ninth brother, Abdur Razzak Khan, was educated in England and became a civil servant in British Education Service in India. See, Golam Saklayan, *Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman Khan*, pp 10-11.

presidents of sessions. They are wonderful and thoughtful people and they wanted to work. But they were shy to express their opinion vocally. By the impulse of Samaj they have opened their mouths and thought aloud. At the same time they have begun writing.¹⁶⁵

Tasadduk was selected as president for the third GS (Sunday, April 4, 1926) of the first year of MSS. When an offer in this regard was presented to him by a formal letter, Tasadduk felt obliged and responded to Abul Hussain: "I got your letter of request. The time of the session is not good for me [2:30 p.m. in the holy month of *Ramadan*]. Yet I have to come....If I can spend few hours of my time with all of you; why should I not come?"¹⁶⁶ Tasadduk was invited again to preside over the first AS. This time his reply to Abul Hussain was more self-effacing:

I have no competence of the honor that you have given to me. You have given me this honor because you are all my friends....I shall participate and I will enjoy the ceremony....But I am not competent enough to be a president. I have never dared to enter into the world of literature not to speak of its temple. I wish a success of your ceremony, but please do not select me as your president. This is not my profession and I have no addiction.¹⁶⁷

Abul Hussain exploited this docile intellectual temperament of the Khan Bahadurs in MSS sessions. None of them was intellectually or ideologically polarized. As a result, many of them were not critical of Abul Hussain's and Wadud's radical stance.

E. Statistics regarding intellectual activities.

The heart of MSS was its seminars, which utilized a format that still is followed in Bangladesh. For the general arrangement of academic seminars in our colleges and universities, the MSS may have established the prototype. The essay or essays to be read

¹⁶⁵ Abul Hussain, "*Sahitya Samaje Cinta-Carca*," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 325.

¹⁶⁶ Tasadduk Ahmad to Abul Hussain, April 1, 1926, MSSP, p. 17.

¹⁶⁷ Tasadduk Ahmad to Abul Hussain, February, 2, 1927. See Abul Hussain, "*Sampadaker Nikat Likhita*," *Shikha*, Vol. 1 (1927), p.130.

in GS and AS were decided beforehand. A president of the session was also selected beforehand. The president and audience of the session were invited by a formal invitation letter or by some informal verbal communication. A typical GS conducted seminars after its president introduced the essay-reader to the audience. This was followed by a song or music. The essay-reader would then read his or her essay. No fixed time was given to an essay-reader. An average essay of the MSS was short and was read by its author quickly. The president of the session then invited comments from the audience. Absolute freedom of speech was allowed to the commentators, even though many commentators were students and paper readers were university or college teachers. Many of the harsh critics, as well as the supporters, of Abul Hussain's essays were students of Muslim Hall. After a debate subsided, at times by an order of the president, the essay-reader was given time to reply and to defend his arguments. The president would then wrap up the session by a speech. This was followed by music or a song and the event was concluded by a note of thanks by president of the session.

One can see that Kazi Wadud, Abul Hussain and some intellectuals who had previously participated in their *addas* read the highest number of essays. The total number of essays presented in the GSs and ASs between 1926 and 1938 was 176, read by 80 authors. Of the 176 essays, 14 were read by 11 authors of Hindu origin (male 9 and female 2). The other 162 essays were read by 66 authors of Muslim origin (Muslim male 61, Muslim female 4, one of whom read two essays). Mutahar and Wadud presented the highest number, 15 and 14 essays respectively. This was followed by 9 essays by Abul Hussain (1926-31), 4 essays by Abdul Kadir, 3 by Anwarul Kadir (1926-28), and 2 by Abul Fazal. Thus a total of 47 essays was read by six stalwarts of the Wadud and Abul Hussain *adda* network. The other 115 essays by Muslim authors were read by 60 Muslim intellectuals. Shahidullah, it may be noted, did not read any essay in MSS.

Statistical evidence (see, Appendix A) indicates also that the majority of essays (123 out 176) were read in "crowded Annual Sessions;" and only 53 essays were read in

the small gatherings of GSs. No essay was read in 1935 and 1937, and only one essay was read in 1936 and 3 essays were read in 1938. Excluding these last few years of the MSS, the average number of essays read in each of 9 years (1926-1934) of the MSS was about 19 essays.

Out of 176 essays presented, 48 essays were commented upon by 64 discussants. A total of 178 comments by 64 discussants on 48 essays are reported in MSSP (see, Appendix G). Wadud was a discussant of the highest number of essays, 23; Caru Candra Bandyopadhyay responded to 15 essays; R.C. Majumdar to 12; Mutahar 8; Abul Hussain 3; Abdul Kadir 2; Mohitlal Majumdar 2; Abul Fazal 1. Naziruddin Ahmad, secretary of Abul Hussain's Al-Mamun Club, was discussant of 4 essays and Fajilatun (Muslim female) commented on 1 essay. Bilayet Ali Khan, member of the Tagore reception committee in Muslim Hall, commented on 2 essays. S.N. Maitra, Wadud's colleague of Dhaka Intermediate College, was a discussant of 2 essays. These intellectuals and students were affiliated with Wadud and Abul Hussain before the foundation of MSS. On an average each of these participants who had been acted in Wadud's or Abul Hussain's earlier *addas* commented on about 6 essays each. Excluding these 12 from total number of 64 discussants, the other 52 participants commented on about 2 essays each. Shahidullah was the only commentator on 1 (radical) essay of Wadud; and along with others he commented on 1 (radical) essay of Shamsul Huda.

Abul Hussain's essays attracted a highest number of commentators. The average number of commentators on 4 essays of Abul Hussain presented in GSs was 7.5. Abul Hussain's, "*Adesher Nigraha*" (Sunday, July 24, 1927) or the 'Coerciveness of Commands' was the most debated essay in the MSS. The essay was debated by 12 discussants for several hours. Abul Hussain was defended by 8 debators, headed by Wadud and Caru Bandyopadhyay. Abul Hussain was criticized by 4 participants, lead by Mohammad Abdur Rashid, a higher secondary school teacher of Dhaka (Dhaka Collegiate School). Four months later, Rashid defended his own standpoint against Abul

Hussain in an essay, *Muktir Agraha banam Adesher Nigraha*" (Sunday, November 13, 1927) or 'The Love of Freedom versus the Coerciveness of Commands.' Wadud, Abdul Kadir and 3 other debators were critics of the liberal views of Rashid. The theoretical division of the ideals of the MSS between the rational humanists and the Islamic liberals was most clearly reflected in the debates between these two articles. We will elaborate this issue in the next chapter.

The GSs and ASs were held in various spaces of Dhaka University campus-- Muslim Hall; Central University Building; Jagannath Hall; Lyton Hall and Curzon Hall. Wadud, Mutahar and Mohitlal Majumdar arranged some of GSs in their homes. On October 7 1931, Mahmud Hussain, provost Muslim hall, refused MSS permission to hold its session in the hall. Mahmud Hussain did not specify any reason, but he wrote to the secretary of MSS: "I am unable to recommend your application to the vice-chancellor for a loan of the Assembly Hall for a session of the Muslim Sahitya Samaj, for reason which I will describe to you at a great length, personally."¹⁶⁸ Mahmud did not explain the reason, but Mahmud, an 'Islamic liberal.' member. was deeply affected by the MSS radical stance. Many years later, in 1970, on the eve of Bangladesh liberation war, Mahmud confessed his antipathy to radicalism of MSS in 1920's:

It was in Dacca (Dhaka) University that *Muslim Sahitya Samaj* was formed with university teachers such as Abul Hussain and Qazi (Kazi) Motahar (Mutahar) Hussain as leading genius. This movement could not last long but it shocked the Muslim community by its radical ideas and modernizing zeal. It was almost an anti-religious movement.¹⁶⁹

Mahmud Hussain's decision not to allow MSS to hold its session at Muslim Hall was an individual provost's exercise of authority. This was not a decision of Dhaka University. M. Eusuf, secretary of MSS, in the following year, wrote a letter to the

¹⁶⁸ Mahmud Hussain's letter to Mohammad Eusuf, October 7, 1931, MSSP, p. 106. See also M. Ahmad Ali, "Alochana," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 5 (1928), p. 10.

¹⁶⁹ Mahmud Hussain, "Dacca University and the Pakistan movement," p. 370.

registrar of Dhaka University for a space. The registrar agreed and MSS held its GS (March 19, 1932) in Dhaka University's Central Building. In 1934 A.F. Rahman, who was honored by a title 'Sir,' was vice-chancellor of Dhaka University. In that official capacity, Rahman presided over a GS (Friday, December 9, 1934) held in the Curzon Hall of Dhaka University

A typical GS or AS was held on a Sunday afternoon. An average GS lasted for about two hours. For example, the first GS of MSS started at 3: 45 p.m. and ended at 6 p.m. without any break for *magreb* prayer at 5:30 p.m. Some GSs went up to 6: 30 p.m., but only once (third year II GS, Sunday, July 22, 1928) the MSS recorded a prayer break for fifteen minutes: "After deliberations of Kazi Wadud, it was time for an 'evening prayer' (*megriber namaj*). The session was closed for fifteen minutes. After a break, the session re-started with a song of Abdus Salam Khan."¹⁷⁰ Out of 56 GSs and ASs that MSSP recorded, 24 sessions began and ended with songs and music (see Appendix C. We have not included the two exclusively Cultural Sessions of the MSS in the 24 sessions.) A total of 30 singers and musicians performed in sessions of MSS from 1926 to 1938. Out of the 30 singers and musicians, 17 were Muslims and 13 were Hindus. Among Hindu singers, 6 were unmarried females and 7 were males. Among Muslim singers, 15 were males and 2 unmarried females. Among the 'Group of Seven,' *buddhir mukti* stalwarts, Mutahar and Anwarul Kadir took a major part in songs and music of MSS. Among singers who came from outside Dhaka, the main contribution was from rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam. Some members of MSS objected to the emphasis on songs and music in MSS sessions. For example, Professor Abdul Hakim (Dhaka Teachers Training) was adamant that the first AS should be opened with a recitation from the Quran. The rational humanist members respected this view, but they did not give up. The schedule of the session shows that a Hindu would sing after a recitation of the Quran: "The songs of

¹⁷⁰ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Tritiya Barsha, Dvitiya Adhibeshan*" MSSP, p. 60.

Birendranath Ganguli (Professor of Economics of Dhaka University) followed a recitation of the Quran."¹⁷¹ The first GS (July 24, 1927) of second year of MSS, omitted a recitation from the Quran. Instead, the session started with a song from Tagore: "*kon alote pran pradip jalea tomi dharai esa....*" or "which light is burning in your heart when you come to this universe...."

For shielding their radical stance from the denunciation of the orthodoxy, Wadud needed a group of allies in the MSS sessions. He had no control upon the general audience, who would walk into the GSs and ASs. And neither had he any control over an audience if they wished to denounce him or Abul Hussain. Wadud was, therefore, careful whom he selected as presidents and secretaries of GSs and ASs. The president had authority to give an opening speech and to introduce an essay-writer. And at the end of a session he had an exclusive privilege to wrap up the session and to give an opinion on the subject of discussion. His comment as a president was, therefore, crucial in General and Annual Sessions; especially at times when ideologies were in conflict over radical essays. In that situation, a traditional orthodox person, or a neo-orthodox figure, if acting as a president, could crush a radical proposal at its very birth. Wadud was, therefore, cautious whom MSS would choose presidents for its sessions.

F. Resolutions of MSS.

MSS passed several resolutions that condemned political terrorism and religious fanaticism. When an European police inspector general was killed by a terrorist in 1930, the MSS passed a resolution that: "This session (August 31, 1930) condemn and express a deep sorrow for killing Inspector General of Police, Mr. Lomen."¹⁷² The MSS also passed condolence resolutions for natural deaths of many individuals--Imdadul Huq

¹⁷¹ Abul Hussain, "*Barshik Sanmilaner Bibaran*," *Shikha*, Vol. I, (1927), p. 125

¹⁷² Abul Fazal, "*Pancam Batsar Prathan Adhibeshan*," November, 16, 1930, MSSP, p. 79

(Bengali Muslim novelist); Ismail Hussain Siraji (Bengali Muslim writer); Amir Ali; and Altaf Hussain Hali.¹⁷³ But scheduled sessions of MSS were not canceled to mark these occasions. A scheduled session (Sunday, December 26, 1926) was, however, canceled in response to the killing of Swami Shraddhanand. Swami Shraddhanand was an Arya Samaj leader in northern India who was killed by a fanatic Muslim. On the following day, Abul Hussain instructed Abdul Kadir to post a notice outside the Union room of Muslim Hall, where MSS had scheduled a session. The notice read:

At the heart-breaking news of barbarous killing of Swami Shraddhanand, today's session of the Samaj is canceled. Swami Shradhanand was a nationalist (*svadesh premik*), a well-wisher of his people (*svajati batsal*); and a friend of humans (*manabhitaishi*).¹⁷⁴

Abul Hussain was himself a target of a Muslim intimidation in 1929. We should mention here that this threat to kill Abul Hussain forced him to resign (September 9, 1929) as founding secretary of MSS. We shall bring up this issue in the next chapter.

G. *Shikha*: Bengali journal of the MSS.

A yearly Bengali journal of MSS was *Shikha*. The journal published activities of MSS in ASs that included: essays, yearly report of the secretary of GS, speeches of the presidents of GS, speeches of the president and secretary of RC and a yearly financial statement of the MSS. The first volume of the journal was published in April 1927, i.e., shortly after the first AS (March, 1927). The fifth, or last volume, of the journal was published in 1931. Among the five editors of *Shikha*, three were rational humanists who belonged to the 'Group of Seven' stalwarts of the *buddhir mukti* movement: Abul Hussain, Kazi Mutahar Hussain, and Abul Fazal. Mutahar edited 2 volumes. Abul

¹⁷³ See, MSSP pp. 19, 96, 63, 91, and 150.

¹⁷⁴ MSSP, p. 31. He was killed in December 1926, following his attempt to reconvert to Hinduism some Rajputs, who were earlier converted into Islam. For further information on Swami Shradhanand, see Kenneth W. Jones, *The New Cambridge History of India: Socio-Religious Reform Movement in British India*, III-1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, in association with Orient Longman, 1989), pp. 101, 194 and 196. Jones did not mention any Muslim's condemnation of the death of Swami Shradhanand.

Hussain and Abul Fazal edited 1 volume each. The fifth editor was an Islamic liberal, Mohammad Abdur Rashid.¹⁷⁵

The *Shikha* was an under-subscribed journal. It may have been the only Bengali Muslim journal that did not print any commercial advertising. The reason may have been probably its radical stance, for which no business may have cared to publish its commercials in the *Shikha*. Volume I of the journal was printed with a total 1,000 copies. A retail price was fixed at "eight *annas*" (Sixteen *annas*= Rs. 1) per copy. Only 315 copies were sold. A total 500 copies of volume II were printed, of which 276 copies were sold.¹⁷⁶ For push sale of the back issues of *Shikha* (Vol. I & II) and to publish volume III, Abul Hussain, Wadud and Kazi Mutahar Hussain raised new proposals and took actions. The three virtually forced commitments from members of the MSS to purchase "one hundred and thirty-five copies of the undersold volume II of the *Shikha*." For raising funds, they also formed a committee. Members were sent on a door to door campaign in Dhaka city. At one stage of the campaign, they approached Dhaka Taxi drivers.¹⁷⁷ Yet the funds were not raised. The secretary's report informed a GS in April 1928: "We are sorry to inform you that until now we have collected only Rs. 5.00"¹⁷⁸

Despite this financial handicap, volume III was published and so were IV and V. A crucial source of financial support was explained by Abul Fazal, who edited volume V of *Shikha* (1931):

Among members of the Samaj, his (Abul Hussain's) role was undoubtedly most important. He was the real editor of *Shikha*; even though his name was not printed [as editor of volumes, II, III, IV and V]. We merely remained as editors

¹⁷⁵ The four volumes of *Shikha* are available in British Library, IOL 4113, BEN. ST. 49.

¹⁷⁶ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Parishishta*," *Shikha*, Vol. III (1929), p. 144.

¹⁷⁷ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Tritiya Barsha*," April, 8, 1928, MSSP, p. 53. Also Professor J.T. O'Connell's interview with Syed Ali Ahasan at Dhaka, August 29, 1992.

¹⁷⁸ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Tritiya Barsha*," April, 8, 1928, MSSP, p. 54.

on paper. He supported the lion's share of the expenses of *Shikha* and *Samaj*.¹⁷⁹

Abul Hussain was not a secretary of MSS in 1930. But volume IV and V of the *Shikha* were published on credit from Abul Hussain's publishing house, Modern Library, in Dhaka.¹⁸⁰

Kazi Wadud translated the Bengali title. *Shikha*, 'the flame of a fire' (*aguner shish, anal-shikha*¹⁸¹). This title was inscribed on the front page as well as on the second and third pages of the journal. On the third page, the title, *Shikha*, was placed in the middle of a picture (see Appendix H). In the left side of the title picture, there is a sketch of two palm trees in a desert and some huge flames of fire with smoke. The flames of fire and smoke are shown to be tending toward a building, perhaps a mosque. The "mosque" was standing alone in the midst of some undesirable weeds. In the middle of "mosque" was a closed book, presumably the Quran. Below the picture of "mosque" and the book were written: *Jnan jekhane simabaddha, budhhi sekhana arastha, mukti sekhane asambhab* or "Where knowledge is restricted, there the intellect is inert and there freedom is impossible."

The picture was fiercely objected to by some Muslim opinions. They charged that the picture depicted "Burning the Quran and mosque."¹⁸² This masthead of *Shikha* gave rise to new names for the MSS: *Shikha-Sampraday* or 'Fire-Group,' and *Dhakar nastiker*

¹⁷⁹ Abul Fazal, "Manishi Abul Hussain Smarane," in Abul Fazal (ed.) *Shubhabuddhi* (Dhaka: Muktaadhara, 1974), pp. 94-95.

¹⁸⁰ Syed Imamul Hussain, brother of Abul Hussain and "manager" of the "Modern Library," called back a credit of Rs. 600 from Kazi Abdul Wadud. Wadud wrote to his daughter, Jebunesa, to pay this money and an additional Rs 225 to Abdul Kadir who was editing at this time, *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*. Kazi Wadud to Jebunesa, dated, 9. 9. 1969, unpublished.

¹⁸¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud and Anil Chandra Ghosh, *Byabaharik Shabdakosh*, p. 950.

¹⁸² Kazi Mutahar Hussain said, "Objection of Muslim opinion in Dhaka," but he did not specify their names. See, Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Tritiya Barsher Karjya Bibarani," *Shikha*, Vol. II (1928), p. 24.

*dal*¹⁸³ or 'Agnostic/atheist group of Dhaka.' Mutahar tried to give a justification of the picture:

The date tree in a desert depicts the birthplace of Muslim learning and culture. The flame depicts Muslim civilization at the height of glory and then it died down to smoke. On the right hand side in the picture, the mosque in the weeds and closed Quran in the mosque means: there is none to clean the weeds and open the Quran. The *Shikha* will open the real truth of the Quran.¹⁸⁴

It may be credible that the flames of fire was not aimed at burning a mosque and the Quran. But it does seem that the picture shows the Quran and mosque in their present condition to be of no use for Muslims. Why did Abul Hussain "who drew this picture,"¹⁸⁵ and who was editor and publisher of *Shikha* (volume I), remain silent about this picture? Volume III (1929) reprinted the controversial picture, but this time a new picture was presented on the front page--a picture of Tajmahal. The *buddhir mukti* motto was written atop the Tajmahal and below the fire, smoke, mosque and the closed Quran. Volumes IV and V (1930 and 1931) abolished all pictorial mastheads of *Shikha*, but reprinted motto of *buddhir mukti* on top of the third page. *Shikha* published only essays that were read in

¹⁸³ Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "Sampadaker Katha," *Shikha*, Vol. IV (1930), p. 22.

¹⁸⁴ We cite the complete statement of Kazi Mutahar Hussain's on this picture: *Gato batsar "Shikhay"* (Emphasis inserted by Mutahar) *je ekkhana chabi deoya haiyachila, tahate keha keha apatti kariyachilen. Tahader dharana je, masjid o Quran sariffke agun diya poraiya dite haibe, ukta chibite tahai ingit kara haiyache. Jaha hauk, amara bag bitanda na kariya, chabikhani je arthe "Shikhay"* (Emphasis inserted by Mutahar) *sannibistha kara haiyachila tahai sadharanya gocar karitechi. Chabir bam dike marubhumir upar kayekti khejur gach ache. Tahai Muslim jnan o sabhyatar jnma-bhumi. Jnan o sabhyatar agun prathame kichu ksinabhabe thakiya, Muslim gauraber dine ati ujjal o byapak bhabe jaliya uthiyachila. Abasese taha nibbapita haiya anekdin jabat andhakar dhummatre parjabasita chila. Ati adhunik kale sey kundalikrita dhum-rasir agrabhage abar ek agnisikha dekha jaiteche--iha dara Islamer naba Jagaran sucita haiteche. Chabir dan dike dekhun, ye masjid purbbe jnaner kendrastral chila, taha bartamane andhakar purna, ebm sei andhakarer bhitar ekkhana bandha kara Quran Sariff rahiyache, taha khuliber lokti pajanta nai. Ar ai masjid caturdike janjal[,] abarjana[,] pargacha prabhiti spardbar sahit matha ucu kariya daraiya ache. Islamer naba prajjalita "Shikhay"* [This time emphasis is not inserted by Mutahar] *'abar andhakar sthan alokita haibe'* [there is no sign of it in the picture] *'ebm abarjana puriya giya'* [There is no sign in the picture that weeds are going to die in the future.] *Quran o masjid satayrup ujjal bhabe prakash paibe* [if this is the meaning, why there is no sign in the picture?]. Mutahar Hussain, "Tritiya Barsher Karjya Bibarani," *Shikha*, Vol. II (1928), p. 24.

¹⁸⁵ Mohammad Siddiqur Rahman, "Abul Hussain o Muslim Sahitya Samaj," p. 91.

"overcrowded" ASs. It should be noted, however, that most radical essays of MSS were not read in ASs and therefore they were not published in the *Shikha*. These essays were read to relatively small gatherings in GS. The footnotes of the next chapter named the books and journals where these radical essays were published.

No explanation was given in MSSP for why *Shikha* had a premature death after 1931. *Shikha's* last editor, Abul Fazal, did not mention that volume V would be the last volume. It seems to us that *Shikha* had a sudden death after 1931 because of Abul Hussain's departure from Dhaka. Abul Hussain, who was financing this scholarly but unprofitable journal, had not decided until 1931 whether he would join the Calcutta Bar. After he got a distinction in M.L.(Master of Law) in 1932, he suddenly left Dhaka for Calcutta. With Abul Hussain's departure from Dhaka in 1932, *Shikha* lacked both funds and its main promoter. Like many journals of Dhaka, it died mainly because of insufficient financial support.

IV.Conclusion.

The foundation of the MSS and publication of *Shikha* originated in Dhaka not simply due to the fact that Wadud and Abul Hussain were working in Dhaka in the 1920s. A strong intellectual climate and context of voluntary intellectual associations had existed in Dhaka city since late in the nineteenth century. These were direct and indirect results of British policies for development of Dhaka city and Bengali patterns of communication. Two fundamental policies that British rule pursued in Dhaka were its urbanization and extension of English educational facilities. As a result, a newly educated bhadralok community grew up who were founders and participants of modern intellectual associations in Dhaka.

The establishment of a university in Dhaka by the British rule directly contributed to the formation of MSS and the encouragement of similar intellectual initiatives. Among notable influences of Dhaka University upon the formation of MSS, this chapter has

emphasized two factors: i) Dhaka University tended to break down the hierarchy of formal relation between teacher and student; ii) Dhaka University recognized and supported freedom of thought and expression. The former, the encouragement of more intimate informal relations between teachers and students, was further developed by rational humanist teacher, Abul Hussain, who with his students welcomed Tagore to Dhaka University. This informal mode of relationship induced many students to join with their teachers in MSS. The MSS maintained that informal collegial relationship in its organizational structure, debates, editorship of *Shikha* and other social activities.

The freedom of thought that was advocated by Dhaka University had its own predecessors, like the freedom to criticize and innovate in religion and society exhibited by Naba Bidhan Sabha in its standpoint of radicalism in late nineteenth century Dhaka city. Freedom of thought was also implicit in the religious pluralism of many Dhaka bhadralok editors and students of Dhaka city. Conservative and traditional interests in Dhaka before the 1930s could not initiate and sustain any effective movements against liberal and rational humanists view points. The racial and religious freedom of Dhaka university, rightly or wrongly interpreted by some teachers and students, provided the supportive milieu on the university campus for intellectual initiatives culminating in MSS and *Shikha*. Early ordinances of freedom of thought of Dhaka University had enabled a radical 'non-praying group' to exist even in Muslim Hall. Furthermore, Abul Hussain was able, based on the freedom of thought of Dhaka University, to publish a radical journal *Tarun Patra*, a radical Al-Mamun Club, and finally MSS in the campus.

The structural pattern of many journals and associations of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Dhaka had also influenced the shape of MSS and *Shikha*. The example of masthead used by *Bangabandhu* (journal of Naba Bidhan Sabha) was also visible in *Tarun Patra* and later in *Shikha*. Likewise, the Dhaka Sahitya Parishad had a president, general secretary, executive committee, and annual meetings, i.e., a structure very similar to what would be utilized by MSS.

Wadud, for his part, built on the intellectual ethos and pattern of *addas* that existed in Dhaka. The *adda* network helped Wadud to have an informal intellectual exchanges with bhadralok of Dhaka city. These bhadralok and students of Wadud's and Abul Hussain's *adda* circles were the first cadres of people who joined the MSS. For example, six intellectuals out of the seven stalwarts of the *buddhir mukti* movement and the MSS, had been associated previously with Wadud's and Abul Hussain's *addas*.

The MSS and *Shikha* were forums founded by Muslims. Yet, unlike many Hindu, Muslim and Brahma associations and journals in Dhaka, a parochial and a religious exclusiveness was foreign to the MSS and *Shikha*. This is evident in MSS's definition of membership, its composition, resolutions, rules of procedure, intellectual activities and contents of its journal, *Shikha*. In none of the areas, was discrimination imposed by reason of religion, gender or professional status. The next chapter on the deliberation of MSS will show that radical Muslims of MSS were critical of Islam and Muslim society in several respects. This gave birth to an intellectual polarization between 'Islamic liberals' and 'radicals' in MSS, and this--along with communal political pressures beyond the Samaj--led to the demise in the mid-1930s.

The essential contribution of the MSS was not its advocacy of any particular viewpoint. Its unique contribution was to provide a framework within which a range of divergent views could not only be expressed, but mutually assessed in orderly discussion and debate. As the next chapter shows, the topics of essays ranged over Bengali Muslim literature, society and religio-cultural life. But the ways of thinking about these Muslim topics were deliberately structured, to be diverse and critical. One of the significance of calling the association a Muslim Samaj was that this would demonstrate that one could be Muslim and still engage in free and open debate on topics of concern to Bengali Muslim society.

Chapter Four

Deliberations of the Muslim Sahitya Samaj of Dhaka.

I. Introduction.

The deliberations of the Muslim Sahitya Samaj (MSS) of Dhaka began exactly a week after its formal foundation on January 17, 1926. These deliberations mainly took three directions: essays, debates on some of these essays, and speeches of the presidents and secretaries of the General Sessions (GS) and Annual Sessions (AS). The essays were presented on several topics.¹ For an analytical purpose, these topics can be organized into several groups. Group A essays elaborate the meaning of *buddhir mukti*. Group B essays are on diverse Islamic topics: Islamic practices and prohibitions, trends of Muslim thought, Hazrat Mohammad, Muslim education and Muslim women. Group C essays are on language, literature and issues of cultural significance. Group D essays seek causes and solutions of economic poverty of Bengali Muslims. Group E essays are written on Muslim Law. Group F essays appeal for new leadership and dynamism among Bengali Muslim youths. Group G includes essays that can be categorized only as on 'miscellaneous topics.'

This chapter sketches in brief the range of opinions on some of these topics expressed by three groups of Bengali-speaking Muslim intellectuals: 'rational humanist,' 'Islamic liberal,' 'independent Muslim.' The more radical, or rational humanist, group in

¹Among 176 essays that were delivered in the GSs and ASs (1926-1938), 63 essays were read on Islamic practices and prohibitions; and views of Islamic orthodox, Muslim apologists, radical critics, and agnostics; Hazrat Mohammad; Muslim education; position of Muslim women; and pirism. This is followed by 65 essays that focused authors' views toward language, literature and issues of socio-cultural significance. Among these, 19 essays were read on literature and language; 25 essays were read on literary figures, poets, and philosophers of Muslim, Hindu, and European origins; 11 essays deliberated on Muslim-Hindu unity; and 10 articles were read on history and tradition. A total of 13 essays were written on the causes and solutions of economic poverty of Bengali Muslims. On the meaning of *buddhir mukti*, 4 essays were read. A total of 4 essays were read for growth of a new leadership and dynamism among Bengali Muslim youth. A defense and a deconstruction of traditional sources of Muslim law were elaborated in 2 essays; and 2 were essays read on the relation between the 'Orient and West.' Finally, 23 articles could be placed under a heading of 'miscellaneous topics' that included various topics on Hitler, physical science, science and religion, Bahai religion, travelers' accounts. See, Appendix A.

MSS was represented by Wadud, Abul Hussain and their associates, the core members of the *buddhir mukti* movement. The 'Islamic liberal' group was represented primarily by previously discussed Mohammad Shahidullah and Mohammad Abdur Rashid. The intellectuals classified here as 'independent Muslim' constituted the vast majority of MSS participants. This chapter does not characterize 'independents' under any strict ideological category. One reason is that, except for their deliberations in the MSS, some of these intellectuals did not write any serious intellectual work during their lifetimes. Also, some of them, especially college students, read their first essay in MSS. There is no specific evidence that these college students wrote serious journal articles or published books before they came to MSS. Their statements, furthermore, tended to reflect a considerable range of viewpoints presented in this chapter. The evidence presented in this chapter, however, indicates that the crucial interventions of many independent Muslims and Hindu intellectuals tended to strengthen the position of rational humanist Muslims in MSS.

The central focus of this chapter is to examine in more detail a few representative debates between rational humanist Muslims and Islamic liberals. This enables us to see more closely the precise points of difference and the reasons being offered for the respective positions. In other words, this chapter argues that in the Bengali Muslim intellectual world, the Islamic liberals and rational humanist Muslims were not identical groups. Instead, in the deliberations of MSS, one can see a clear and substantive ideological differentiation between the two groups.

II. The meaning of *buddhir mukti*.

We have noticed earlier that the phrase *buddhir mukti* and the motto: *Jnan jekhane simabaddha, buddhi sekhane arastha, mukti sekhane asambhab*, was first publicly articulated by Abul Hussain as a motto for the MSS when Tagore visited Dhaka in 1926. The phrase *buddhir mukti* created considerable difference of opinion in the MSS. The rationalists took this motto as their theoretical orientation for an understanding Islam

and problems of Muslim society. The Islamic liberals also took this motto as their orientation. Yet the two groups differed as to an understanding of the phrase *buddhir mukti* or "emancipation of intellect." The section examines how rational humanist Muslims, Islamic liberals and independent Muslims and Hindus understood *buddhir mukti* or "freedom of intellect". We shall see in later sections, how they treated salient issues according to this orientation.

A. *Buddhir mukti* of rational humanist Muslims: unfettered freedom of intellect.

Abul Hussain clarified meaning of the phrase and motto in the first 'Annual Report of the Secretary,' delivered in the first AS (March 27, 1927). Abul Hussain told the audience that Bengali Muslims' intellectual inertia is at the root of their poverty. To overcome intellectual destitution, Abul Hussain suggested:

...We want first to make our life easy-going, brilliant and full of variations. By liberating our age-old inept intellect, we have to create among ourselves unrestricted hunger for new learning....For what we haven't got we must create an appetite....For this we have to unite all thoughtful and tolerant people and strike hard upon the inert life of our society....The famous American philosophy professor, James, said, "The renovation of nations begins always at the top among the reflective members of the state and spreads outward and downward"....Now, you probably understand what this Samaj (MSS) wants and which direction it wants to take us. We must one day turn from our conventional paths. But we must take care that we do not delay because of the severe shame and frustration.²

² ...*sarbagay cai amader jibanke saras, sundar o baicitrabipul kare tola; amader jugjuganter arastha buddhike mukta kare jnaner adyama pipasha jagiye deoya....je jinish thake na tar janya kshudha srishiti karte hay....Er janya jadi sahisnu cintashil gutikatak lok sva sva cintadhara ek mukhi kare samajer nihspanda jibaner upar aghat karen ebam sange sange sva sva jiban sampadpurna o anande bharpur kare tulte paren tabe samjer pran jege uthte pare....Americar bikhyata darshanik adhyapak James balen 'The renovation of nations begins always at the top among the reflective members of the state and spreads outward and downward' (English quotation is cited Abul Hussain's).... Apanara ekhan bujhte parlen ei samaj ki cay ebam kon path dharte cacche. Gatanugatik path hate amadigake phirtei habe ekdin; kintu se nidarun lajja o byarthatar janya apeksha na kare aj amader sabdhan hate habe. Abul Hussain, "Barshik Bibarani" or 'Annual Report,' Abul Hussain (ed.), *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), pp. 21-27.*

The masthead of *Shikha* was one indication that the rationalist Bengali Muslims did not restrict the meaning of *buddhir mukti* to an apology for Islam. To give a more radical meaning of *buddhir mukti*, Abul Hussain also inscribed in *Shikha* (Vol. I) two passages. One of the passages is Tagore's and the other is Abul Hussain's. Tagore's passage is a verse of one of the poems of Tagore, which says: "Everybody will stop you, when they see the first light. They will rise up from a deep sleep when you strike them hard. There will be war between truth and untruth, but the defiant young will not be afraid."³ The words that Abul Hussain picked from his own writings are:

The *jug-dharma* (*dharma* of the age) is 'mother' (*janani*) of all 'law books of *dharma*' (*dharma shastra*) and 'teacher of *dharma*' (*dharma guru*). *Jug-dharma* manifests in many aspects of human life. The law book of *dharma* that denies aspirations of the present *jug-dharma* is of no use for human lives; but it turns into a moth-eaten book.⁴

Wadud was never secretary of the MSS, so it was not his formal responsibility to clarify the meaning of *buddhir mukti*. However, as a president of a few ECs, Wadud said frequently that Muslim Sahitya Samaj of Dhaka is distinct from many literary societies. The essays of Wadud presented in the MSS directly and indirectly defined *buddhir mukti* as unfettered freedom to be enjoyed by the Muslims. For example, Wadud in the first AS (March 27, 1927) of MSS, said:

How is Islam to be for the welfare of humans, this is the subject we have to think anew from top to bottom. The kind of Islam that has been given to us by our predecessors is

³ *Tore hethay karbe sabai mana
hathat alo dekhbe jakhan
bhabe eki bisham kandakhana
Samghate tor uthbe ora rege
shayan chere asbe chute bege
sei sujoge ghumer theke jege
lagbe larai mithya ebam sacay
aya pracanda ayare amar kaca.*

Abul Hussain, 'Quotation of Rabindranath' in *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 6.

⁴ *Jug-dharma dharma guru o dharma shastrer janani. Jibaner bahu bhangimati se jug-dharmer prakash. Je dharma shastra ei prakashlaliyat jug dharmake asvikar kare se dharma shastra manusher kaje na lege kiter khadaya parinita hay.*" Abul Hussain, 'Quotation,' *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 20.

sufficiently clear...In clear terms, Islam has been presented to us that has supported the seclusion of women, cursed the taking of interest, objected to the cultivation of fine arts, and in the realm of thought we have been told boldly 'all your thought always must be restricted by the thought of the Quran and Hadith.' All these words, we have to think anew. [We have to] question whether imposing these new forms of barriers upon the efforts and freedom of thought of the humans in Muslim society could achieve real welfare?....It is essential for us to consider anew that to bring holiness and human control...by shackling human *buddhi*, would only mean asking for something impossible. In other words, does it not mean an imposition of torture upon human nature?...⁵

Kazi Mutahar Hussain denied that the masthead of *Shikha* implied "burning of the Quran and mosque." Yet, when he gave a formal meaning for *buddhir mukti*, he gave a rationalist explanation:

We do not want to listen to others with our eyes closing nor, after listening to others, do we want to follow them blindly. We want to see the truth ourselves by opening our eyes. We do not want the real truth to be covered by emotion or infatuation. By 'flames of learning' (*jnan-shikha*), we want to burn to ashes all deadened thought and free all eternal Truth from all that obscures it. We do not want to have a struggle against Islam. We want that Muslim society would get rid of many debilitating superstitions and rubbish that have accumulated for many years. We do not want to live in a sleeping dream. We want that by our hard work the glory of Islam would rise in future....By keeping our relations with all the races of the world, we want to be powerful, learned and resourceful....In one word, by keeping our intellect free, we want to perceive, as well as to

⁵ *Islam ki bhabe manusher janya kalyanprasu habe sei kathatai hayto amader nutan kare bhabe habe. Amader purbabatira Islamer je rup prayas peyechen ta jatheshtha paricchanna...Spastha bhabei amader samne grahaniyarupe-bidhrta Islam narir abarodh samarthan kareche, sudher upar abhismpat janiyeche, lalita kalar carcay apatti tuleche, ar cintar ksetre amader drira kanthe bale diyechhe, tomader samasta cinta sab samaye jena simabadha thake Quran o Hadiser cinta dvara. Ei samasta kathai amader nutan kare bhebe dekhthe habe, bhebe dekhthe habe, mussalman samajer manushder karma o cintar svadhinatay eibhabe je anekkhani nutan rakamer pratibandhakata upasthit kara hayeche eate kare ki satyakar kalyan labh hayeche....Amader nutan kare bhebe dekhbar prayojan ei janya je, samjam o pabitrake...manusher buddhi srinkhalita karar dvara, sambhabpar kare tulte prayas pele asambhab kichur prati hat barana hay ki na. Anyakathay tate kare manab-prakritir upar atyacar kara hay ki na... Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bangali Mussalmaner Sahitya Samasya" (AS, 1927), *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 30.*

help others to perceive, the material world and world of thought.⁶

B. *Buddhir mukti* as understood by a few independents: Unfettered freedom

The unfettered interpretation of *buddhir mukti*, including a criticism of religion, also appealed many student participants of the MSS. In the third AS, Nazirul Islam (independent), a graduate student of Muslim Hall, read an essay, "*Manab Pragati o Mukta Buddhi*" (1929)⁷ or 'Human Progress and the Liberated Intellect.' The essay cited examples of *mukta buddhi* in the thought of Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, Socrates, and Ibn Rushd (Spanish Muslim philosopher). About Socrates, Nazirul wrote that he paid the highest respect to humankind urging them to develop self-confidence in their thought: "Human thought is not less valuable than words or rules of *shastra*."⁸ For this unfettered freedom of thought, Socrates was condemned to death for being, "a rebel against authority" (*shastra drohi*). Socrates died, but he did not compromise on freedom of thought. Nazirul quoted a passage of Socrates' statement before he died: "If you propose to acquit me on condition that I abandon my search of truth, I will say, I thank you....So long as I have breath and strength, I will never cease from my occupation with philosophy."⁹ Nazirul interpreted Ibn Rushd as a non-conformist philosopher who

⁶ *Amara cakshu bujiya parer katha sunite cai na, ba suniyai maniya laite cai na;—amara cai, cokh meliya dekhite, satyake jibane prakita bhabe anubhab karite. Amara kalpana o bhaktir moha-abarane satyake dhakiya rakhite cai na. Amara cai jnan-shikha dvara ashar samskar bhasmibhut karite ebam sanatan satyake kuhelika-mukta kariya bhaskar o diptiman karite. Amara Islamer birudhe samgram karite cai na—amara cai bartaman mussalman samajer badha-kusamashkar ebam bahukal sancita abajjana dur karite. Amara atiter mohe dubiya thakiya sukher svapna dekhite cai na—amara cai karma-shroate jhap diya Islamer bhabishyatke mahima mandita karite....Amara cai jagater samuday jatir sahit samparka rakhiya jnanaban, balaban o esvaryaban haiya jibaner paridhi bardhita karite ebam tahake purnabhabe asvad o bhog karite....Ek kathay amara buddhike mukta rakhiya prashanta jnan drishti dvara bastu—jagat ebam bhab-jagater byapardi prataksha karite o karite cai. Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Tritiya Barsher Karjya Bibarani," *Shikha*, Vol. II (1928), pp. 22-23.*

⁷ Mohammad Nazirul Islam, "*Manab Pragati o Mukta Buddhi*," published in Kazi Mutahar Hussain (ed.), *Shikha*, Vol. III (1929), pp. 85-92. The article is reprinted in the Bengali journal, *Chayabithi*, December-January (1935), pp. 217-225.

⁸ Mohammad Nazirul Islam, "*Manab Pragati o Mukta Buddhi*," *Shikha*, III (1929), p. 86.

⁹ Mohammad Nazirul Islam, "*Manab Pragati o Mukta Buddhi*," p. 86.

rejected categorically belief in the "next world" (*parakat*). The rejection, according to Nazirul, came at a time when the medieval European Church had a firm conviction of the next world, and at a time when Europe was killing many rebels for their rejection of religion.

Nazirul then applied the notion of *buddhir mukti* to socio-economic norms of the Muslim tradition. He attacked Islamic law for suppressing *buddhir mukti* in economic development. He wrote that "*mussalman shastra*," or Islamic law, had taught social and economic egalitarianism by the abolition of interest, the introduction of *zakat* (tax for benefit of the poor) and by the law of inheritance. These laws suited the needs of the people in the days when they were introduced, but had become unhelpful and oppressive later on. By contrast, the law of inheritance of Christianity denied property to any except the eldest son. This law made the other sons more energetic to stand on their own feet. As the industrial revolution occurred, European social structure adjusted to the needs of an economic revolution. For massive investment in new industries, Europe introduced a system of compound interest. People deposited money in the bank and in turn it was invested in building new industries. The Muslim, according to Nazirul, could not accept this 'creativity of the humans':

He opened the decaying pages of his *shastra*. He saw in there that it is an act of transgression (*haram*) to take interest and to introduce an unequal distribution of family property.... What happened, as a result, is that egalitarianism within the Muslim society continued according to the rules of *shastra*. But differences [in material welfare] become as sky and earth between the Western Christians and the Muslims.¹⁰

By citing all these examples, Nazirul concluded that *shastra* could not be valid for all ages of humankind. For betterment of society and human lives, human thought should be given freedom to question *shastra*:

¹⁰ Mohammad Nazirul Islam, "*Manab Pragati o Mukta Buddhi*," p. 90.

The basic source of orthodox attitude is the 'faith in *shastra*' (*shastrate bishvas*). *shastra* wants to shackle all of human life perpetually. By the same hard rules of the past, it wants to shackle human lives in the present and in the future. Humans live in all their actions, in work, learning, and thought, and want diversity. When *shastra*, by disobeying these inherent human rules, imposed some eternal truths, human lives become stereotyped and dull. To get rid of this machine-life, humankind applies *mukta buddhi*. The *mukta buddhi* would not only bring variation but equip humankind to adjust and to achieve victory in the changing circumstances of the world.¹¹

Shamsul Huda (independent), another undergraduate student of the Muslim Hall, further elaborated the radical meaning of *buddhir mukti*. Huda was an assistant secretary in the seventh year of the MSS. In that year, Huda read his article, "*Muslim Sahitya Samaj*" (July 31, 1932) in the first GS of that year of MSS.¹² Huda elaborated the meaning of *mukta buddhi* as: "independence of thought" (*cinter svadhinata*); "cultivation of knowledge" (*jnan-carca*); "universal welfare" (*vishva-kalyan*); "struggling for freedom" (*mukti prayashi*); "deepest respect for the endless potentiality of the power inherent in humankind" (*manusher antarnihata shaktir ananta sambhabanar prati param shraddha*). Huda's definition of *mukta buddhi* threatened the basics of religion, its divine and inspired foundation. Huda wrote:

Let me ask to those of you who argue that religious declarations should be accepted uncontested. Is religion a collection of messages that came through God's (*bidhata*) own mouth written in so many languages, Arabic, Hebrew and Sanskrit? Did God himself come down and tell to originators of religious law (*dharma shastra*) His self-righteousness? Was not religion the product of an influential person's experience and thought? Should not the change of our life-styles change the truth and untruth of

¹¹Mohammad Nazirul Islam. "*Manab Pragati o Mukta Buddhi*," p. 88.

¹² This article is not published in any Bengali journal. A copy of the article is found in the diary of Shamsul Huda, "*Bibidha ba Elomelo*." This unpublished diary is collected from Kazi Wadud's private collection, Dhaka. For Secretary's report on the article, see, Moslemuddin Khan, "*Saptam Barsha Pratham Adhibeshan*," July, 31, 1932, MSSP pp. 115-117.

religion? Today, in the twentieth century, why should I accept that the enormous potentiality of my diversified life would not be greater than that of a seller of dates, thirteen hundred years ago? Why should I concede today that the hopes, aspirations, dreams, and endeavors of a Bengali life are equal to and continuous with those of Bedouins?....There is no need for a religion in any age of the past, present, and future if it represses human intellect to a blind adherence and shuts the door of ever inquisitive human thought. There is no need for a religion that not only endorses its believers' failures in life but also creates obstacles for other people. No religion should ever function permanently in human lives. The truth of one age must turn into untruth and wrong in another age. Humans, therefore, have felt it necessary to revise religions at the end of an era. Examples include the renaissance movement in medieval Europe and neo-reform movement of Mostafa Kemal in modern Turkey. For this effort of a neo-reform movement, what is essential is freedom of intellect and freedom of thought....It is also true that for this blindness and sickness of thought, it was prophets and reformers who were mostly responsible. Because it was the prophets who set the rule that their particular thought, their works in their age are the only final answers for ever new questions in ever new lives of humankind. They, whose works were wrong to deny that human lives are ever changing....served to establish a cruel judgeship over human knowledge and intellect...The prophets have done wrong by introducing religion (*dharma*), because what we ordinarily understand by religion, by the correct practice of which heaven is gained, has no purpose for any human in any age....¹³

¹³ *Shastrar banike nirbbicare mene na nile calbe na, tader prati amader du ekti jiggasa ache. Dharma ki Aarbi[,] samskrita, Hebrew bhashay likhita svyam bidhatar mukhnihsrita banir samashti? Bidhata ki svyam ease dharma shrasthader kane kane atmaprashamsar mantra phukechen? Eki kona bishistha Pratibhashali manusher abhiggata o cinta prasuta nay? Jibaner paribartane ki er satyata asatyatar rup badlay na? Paribardhanshil jibaner prayojane ki dharmake amar maner mata kare amar byabaharupjogi kare tulte parba na? Kena aj ami ekatha svikar karba je sare-terashatabatsar purbber sadharan ekjan khajur bikreta Arabir jibaner caite biggan-adhusita amar ei bimsha shatabdir bahumukhi bahu sambhabanapurna jiban ektilo srestha nay? Kena ekatha ami manba je ajker dineyo ekjan marubeduin ar ekjan Bangalir jibaner asha, bharsa[,] svapna[,] sadhana ek o abhinna....Je dharmer athaba dharma sadhanar kona darkari kona juge hayni, hacchena ebam haoya ucit nay, je-dharma manusher buddhike arastha kare, svata-kautuhali maner sbabhabik abhibyaktike dar rudhra kare ar take baniye rakhe ashakta o andha jar dvara sadhita hay shudhu nijer jibaner byarthata nay anyader agragatir patheo pracur badhar srishti. Ciradin kona ekti dharma manusher jibane samagra bhabe karjya kari hay na. Haoyata bancniyao nay. Ekdiner satya, satya-bilasir shata praceshta satveo anyadin mithaya parinita haye jete badhya, sejanyai take juge juge shudhre nebar prayojano haye eseche--er praman svarup dhara jay*

Shamsul Huda was an example of how an initially independent individual was converted to a radical rational humanist standpoint in the MSS. What was responsible for Huda's quick conversion seems to have been close personal contact with Wadud. Huda's social background and secondary education are not known. It is recorded, however, that he studied two years in Dhaka Islamic Intermediate College. We also do not know when Wadud first met Huda. In the early 1930s, Huda was appointed as a private tutor for Wadud's daughter, Jebunesa. In course of time, Huda fell in love with Jebunesa¹⁴ and they were married in 1949. What is striking in Huda's essay is his using of favorite Bengali synonyms of *buddhir mukti* of Wadud and imitation of Wadud's difficult Bengali writing style. It is also striking that Wadud's earlier essay, "Sanmohita Mussalman" (1926) or 'Infatuated Muslim' was imitated by Huda's. "Hazrat Mohammader Pratibha"¹⁵ (AS, 1927) or 'Genius of Hazrat Mohammad.' One could also see a continuity of radical thought between Huda's, "Muslim Sahitya Samaj" (1932) and Wadud's "Sanmohita Mussalman" (1926). Huda's conversion to radical rationalism by Wadud was most probably happened during early 1930s.

C. Debate on the meaning of *buddhir mukti*: Islamic liberals and rational humanists.

The debate on Huda's essay demonstrates a major ideological polarization between Islamic liberals and rational humanists in MSS. Shahidullah (Islamic liberal) was

modhyajuger renaissance, (English phrase is Shamsul Huda's), *ebam bartaman Turuske Mostafa Kamaler naba-samskar praceshta. E naba samskar praceshtai prayojan mukta buddhi ebam svadhin cintar....Abashya eo thik je e andhatar o rugnacittar janya nabi o samskarakgani atimatrai dayi. Karan tader kona-ek juger kona ekti bishesh srishtikei manusher naba naba jibaner naba naba jiggasar ekmatra caram uttar bale tara bidhan diyechen barambar. Tara bhul karechen e asvikar kare je manusher jiban kramabardhanshil. Jader kaj pratyaksha bhabe manusher jnan o buddhir upar nisthur bhabe jaiyati kara....Nabira anyay karechen dharmer srishti kare, karan pracalita kathay amara jake dharm bale jani ja hubahu palan karle amader habe svarga labh, tar kona prayojani kona kale manusher hayni.* For complete text of the article, see, Shamsul Huda, "Bibidha ba Elomelo," unpublished diary.

¹⁴ Shamsul Huda, "Bibidha ba Elomelo," unpublished diary.

¹⁵ Shamsul Huda, "Hazrat Mohammader Pratibha," published in Abul Hussain (ed.), *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), pp. 70-72. Huda read two more articles in MSS. See, Shamsul Huda, "Kusamskarer Ekti Dik" (AS, 1929), published in Kazi Mutahar Hussain (ed.), *Shikha*, Vol. III (1919), pp. 92-96.

president of the GS in which Huda read "*Muslim Sahitya Samaj*." As spokesman of the Islamic liberals of MSS, Shahidullah could not tolerate Huda's unfettered freedom of thought and expression. Neither would he give a counter-argument to Huda's anti-apologetic thesis. The secretary's report of the session states:

Shahidullah became angry and objected bitterly to Huda's comments of "There is no need of religion" and "The prophets had made mistakes by introducing religion." He then objected to the 'Muslim' title of the Samaj and said 'If the Samaj wants to spread the idea of rejecting fundamentals of Islam, then the *Samaj* should withdraw 'Muslim' from the title of its organization.'¹⁶

Shahidullah left the session by giving as his reason that he had to attend *milad*, or a Muslim religious gathering. Afterward, he told his favorite students of Dhaka University. "Listen, religion is a subject one should understand thoroughly. The way the Samaj is interpreting religion is like one blind person showing a street to another blind person."¹⁷

On the other hand, the rationalist Mutahar agreed with Huda that fundamental human freedom should not be rejected. Mutahar, however, objected to Huda's comment that "there is no need of religion."¹⁸ Mutahar argued that religion is a last resort of ordinary people for solving day to day moral problems. But he rejected Shahidullah's objection to using the title 'Muslim' for the 'Muslim Sahitya Samaj' (MSS). Mutahar boldly asserted that MSS should use the title as long as "our problems are not solved and there is no harm to understanding Islam with a free intellect."¹⁹ Wadud disagreed to an extent with Mutahar. "It is human life that is the standard of truth. If any religion or religious code cannot make human life flourishing, then that religion would bring only

¹⁶ Moslemuddin Khan, "*Saptam Barsha Pratham Adhibeshan*," July, 31, 1932, MSSP, p. 116.

¹⁷ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Mohammad Shahidullahke Jeman Dekhechi*," in Muhammad Safiyullah (ed.), *Shahidullah Sangbardhana Granth* (Dhaka: Renaissance Printers, 1967), p. 191.

¹⁸ Moslemuddin Khan, "*Saptam Barsha Pratham Adhibeshan*," July, 31, 1932, MSSP, p. 116.

¹⁹ *Amader samasya jatadike dekha diyeche tatadike Sahitya Samaj bishay bastu hisabe taha grahan karbe. Mukta buddhi diye dharma bicare akalyan ney.* Moslemuddin Khan, "*Saptam Barsha Pratham Adhibeshan*," July, 31, 1932, MSSP, p. 116.

disgrace. but not welfare, into human life."²⁰ Wadud disagreed with Mutahar and questioned, "Why is mankind so weak? Perhaps, if mankind had not been made so weak, it would not be so weak. For this religion is responsible in many ways."²¹ He offered an example of Islamic practice which made Muslims weak enough to a practice "barbarity." Citing the origin of the practice of cow slaughtering, Wadud said: "Slaughtering a son by Ibrahim is a practice of a 'barbarous' (English word is Wadud's) age. This is not for our age."²² Wadud concluded: "Time has passed for being proud of religion....What I understand by religion is that I love this universe to the extent I can; that is my religion "²³

Mohammad Abdur Rashid, another Islamic liberal, was more rational than angry and emotional, as Shahidullah had been. Rashid differed with Huda, yet he tolerated Huda's freedom of thought: "Raising questions against religion and differences of opinion are a 'natural process' (English phrase is Rashid's). Huda has the freedom to become a *nastik* (agnostic, atheist, non-religious); let him be a *nastik*. Sometime *nastiks* are more religious than a religious person."²⁴ This argument of Mohammad Abdur Rashid, that civility should be maintained in academic debate, did not end the matter. Some orthodox Urdu-speaking Muslim 'leaders' (*sardars*) of Dhaka summoned a religious court to try and punish Huda. The court chose the Islamic liberal, Shahidullah as the judge. We shall

²⁰ ...*Jibanta ati matraya satya[.] Kona dharma ba dharma bidhan jadi jibanke jay jukta kare tulte na pare tahale tate jibaner apamani sadhita hay, kalyan kichui hay na.* Moslemuddin Khan, "Saptam Barsha Pratham Adhibeshan," July, 31, 1932, MSSP, p. 117.

²¹ *Manush durbal hala kena? Jadi take durbal kare deyoya na hata tahale se eta durbal haita hata na. Dharmai er janya anekhani dayi.* Moslemuddin Khan, "Saptam Barsha Pratham Adhibeshan," July, 31, 1932, MSSP, p. 117.

²² ...*Ibrahimer putra korbani barbarous juger niti. Uha amader janya nay.* Moslemuddin Khan, "Saptam Barsha Pratham Adhibeshan," July, 31, 1932, MSSP, p. 117.

²³ ...*Dharma niye garba karar din cale geche. Dharma balte nije arsva-dimba kichu bujhi na. Jadi bujhi ta ei je jagatke jatakani bhalabasi tai amar dharma.* Moslemuddin Khan, "Saptam Barsha Pratham Adhibeshan," July, 31, 1932, MSSP, p. 117.

²⁴ *Jadi prabandha lekhaker mat prakasher mata nastikata ese thake tabe take ta asvikar kara jabe na. Anek samay nastikrai dharmiker caiteo beshi dharmik.* Moslemuddin Khan, "Saptam Barsha Pratham Adhibeshan," July, 31, 1932, MSSP, p. 117.

return to this topic in a later section along with Muslims intimidation of Wadud and Abul Hussain.

D. *Buddhir mukti* as understood by Islamic liberals: Fettered freedom.

Mohammad Abdur Rashid (Islamic liberal) refused to accept Huda's, Wadud's, and Abul Hussain's understandings of *buddhir mukti*. Rashid constructed a counter-meaning of *buddhir mukti* in the article that he entitled: "*Buddhir Mukti o Cintar Muktir Katha*" (1927) or 'Meaning of Freedom of Intellect and Thought.' Rashid's difficulty in understanding *buddhir mukti* as unfettered freedom is clearly visible in the article: "Shall we accept *buddhir mukti* without giving any importance to the Quran and Hadith? Shall we not accept the authority of Sharia in our life? It is true that we want *buddhir mukti*. It is also a true that we want to remain as Muslim....The two can be made possible in Muslim life."²⁵ Rashid's understanding of *buddhir mukti*, therefore, took position of a religious apologist.

Intellectually, Rashid supported the Muslim apologetics of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. According to the Secretary's Report of MSS, Rashid said: "Many people are suspicious of the term *buddhir mukti*, but we think that there is nothing dangerous to be afraid of in this term. For *mukta buddhi* (freedom of intellect), Sir Sayyid Ahmad confronted insult from his people."²⁶ Rashid did not, however, as Sayyid Ahmad did, harmonize many philosophical ideas of the West with the Quran and Hadith. For example, Rashid did not write, as did Sayyid Ahmad, Muslim apologetics harmonizing the Quran rules with the natural law. Yet his tendency of thought was that of a Muslim apologist. This is clear in one of Rashid's arguments: "We will keep our freedom of intellect open....Keeping intact the Quran's rules, we will re-state its rules according to

²⁵ Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "*Buddhir o Cintar Muktir Katha*," *Naoroj*, Vol. I., No. 1 (1927), p.35.

²⁶ Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "*Sampadaker Katha*," in Mohammad Abdur Rashid (ed.), *Shikha*, Vol. IV (1930), p. 23.

modern demands."²⁷ Contrary to the rational humanists' understanding of unfettered freedom and intellect, Rashid argued: "Our Islam is a religion which has suited all periods and all societies. In other words, Islam is a religion of *mukta buddhi*."²⁸

D. *Buddhir mukti* as understood by a Hindu intellectual.

Mohitlal Majumdar expressed considerable interest in the meaning of *buddhir mukti* and MSS. In the third AS (1929), Mohitlal read an essay, "*Muslim Sahitya Samaj*," in which he stated that the purpose of *buddhir mukti* was to bring Muslim-Hindu unity in Bengal. His standpoint on Muslim-Hindu unity was that of 'composite nationalism:' "The Hindus, by remaining Hindu, and Muslims, by remaining Muslim, would be inspired to form a Bengali nation."²⁹ For this reason, Majumdar was comfortable with the title, 'Muslim,' for the MSS. The Bengali Muslims would derive a new ideal of a Bengali nation from the Muslim tradition in Bengal:

From the thirteenth through fifteenth century, Bengali society experienced a 'new life' (*naba jiban*). The Muslim intellectuals would see how this new life was influenced by Muslim religion and civilization. What did the Muslim contribute to the dynamism of Bengali culture? How far did

²⁷ Mohammad Abdur Rashid. "*Buddhir o Cintar Muktir Katha*," *Naoroj*, Vol. I., No. 1 (1927), p.36.

²⁸ Mohammad Abdur Rashid. "*Buddhir o Cintar Muktir Katha*," *Naoroj*, Vol. I. No. 1 (1927), p. 35. Identical meaning of *buddhir mukti* was articulated by many Islamic liberals and independents in MSS. See, Mohammad Wajed Ali (Islamic liberal), "*Abhibhashan*," (AS, 1935), *Chayabithi*, Vol. II. No. 7 (1935), 509-515. Moslemuddin Khan (independent), "*Muslim Sahitya Samaj*" (GS, 1932), unpublished, see MSSP. p. 116. Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman Khan (independent), "*Abhibhashan*," (AS, 1928), *Shikha*, Vol. II (1928), pp. 5-18. Abul Muzaffar Ahmad (independent), "*Abhibhashan*," (AS, 1929) *Shikha*, Vol. III (1929), pp. 5-13. Khan Bahadur Nasiruddin Ahmad (independent), "*Abhibhashan*" (AS, 1930), *Shikha*, Vol. IV (1930), pp. 4-21. Mohammad Barkatullah (Islamic liberal), "*Islam o Mukta Buddhi*," *Bulbul* Vol. II. No.1 (1934), pp. 76-81. Akbaruddin (independent), "*Muktir Path*," *Naoroj*, Vol. I. No. 1 (1927) The last essay was not delivered in the MSS. A group of Islamic liberals, who organized intellectual associations for movement of Pakistan in Dhaka university in 1943, used *buddhir mukti* slogan to serve a communal purpose. A notable figure was Calcutta based, Abul Kalam Shamsuddin. Shamsuddin attended one session of the MSS and read an essay, "*Sahitya o Culture*" (AS, 1930). He was a strong critic of radical group of MSS: "So many derogatory comments were written against Islam and Muslim life-style in the writings of Muslim Sahitya Samaj leaders, that ordinary Muslims of Dhaka stood against this association." In 1943, Shamsuddin understood and used the phrase, *buddhir mukti*, as East Bengali Muslims' cultural, political and economic freedom from the Hindus of West Bengal. See, Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, "*Alocana*" (1943) and "*Abhyarthana Samitir Sabhapatir Abhibhashan* (1944), in Sardar Fazlul Karim, (ed.), *Pakistan Andolan o Muslim Sahitya* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1968), pp. 127-128 and 129-136.

²⁹ Mohitlal Majumdar, "*Muslim Sahitya Samaj*," *Shikha*, Vol. III (1929), p. 24.

his religious life, social ideals, and literature contribute to one Bengali mentality? What did this new religion, Islam, and its Muslim culture add to the strength of the Bengali culture and life both before and after the Muslim rule?³⁰

In other words. Majumdar suggested that developing Bengali culture is the purpose of the *buddhir mukti* movement. The Bengali Muslim intellectuals should trace an origin of *buddhir mukti* from their own Muslim tradition in Bengal. Majumdar therefore, stood apart from Wadud and Abul Hussain, who did not seek precedents for *buddhir mukti* from the tradition of Bengali Muslims. Ideologically, as well as in personal manners. Wadud and Abul Hussain were more open than Mohitlal. After an Annual Session of the MSS was held 1931, Wadud invited Mohitlal for dinner along with others at his home. Abul Fazal, who was present at the dinner, wrote: "Mohitlal did not touch the food served in the dinner. I do not know if it was for his religious orthodoxy or for any other reason."³¹

The meaning of *buddhir mukti* was thus interpreted differently according to two ideological frameworks. The rational humanists, supported by some independent Muslims, defined *buddhir mukti* as an unfettered freedom that allows critique of Islam. Extreme examples are Huda's and Nazirul's essays. The Islamic liberals, on the contrary, preferred a restricted, or fettered, meaning, i.e., freedom of intellect is to be used to re-state Islam in the modern situation. Based on these two conceptual frameworks, the two groups responded differently to principles and practices of Islam in Bengali Muslim society. The sections below will show the divergence of the two groups on these issues.

III. Islamic rules and prohibitions in Bengali Muslim society.

The two groups' responses to rules and practices of Islam were at the heart of deliberations of the MSS. Out of the 12 essays read in the first AS (March 27 through March 28, 1927), 10 essays addressed socio-economic and cultural issues and 2 essays

³⁰ Mohitlal Majumdar, "*Muslim Sahitya Samaj*," *Shikha*, Vol. III (1929), p. 27.

³¹ Abul Fazal, "*Buddhadeb Basu o Mohit Prasange*," in Abul Fazal (ed.), *Shubhabuddhi* (Dhaka: Muktadhara, 1974), p. 121.

were direct comments on Islamic practices in Bengali Muslim society. These two essays were Anwarul Kadir's (rationalist) essay, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Samajik Galad* (1927)," or 'Social Wrongs of Bengali Muslims' and Mohammad Abdur Rashid's (Islamic liberal) essay, "*Amader Naba Jagaran o Shariat*," or 'Our New Awakening and Sharia.' The two essays began an intellectual battle on the applicability of many Islamic rules and prohibitions in Bengali Muslim society.

A. Rationalists' critique: Polygamy and the Islamic rule of divorce.

Anwarul Kadir's, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Samajik Galad*" was the first essay that he read in MSS. In his introduction, Anwarul Kadir was proud of Islam: "Practically, Islam is such a wonderful religion, its practice is so simple that one day everybody will be obliged to accept Islam..."³² Despite this praise, Anwarul Kadir chastised Bengali Muslim society. It was born a long time ago, "But why, during these long years, was there not born in this society a Herbert Spencer, a Rousseau, a Rammohun, Bankim Chandra, Piari Charan, Ramtanu Lahari, Rajnarayan Basu, or an Asutosh."³³ For overcoming intellectual poverty, he advocated modern education for Bengali Muslims; but, importantly he also criticized some basic principles of classical Islam.

Anwarul Kadir writes in the article that Muslims should not simply obey Hazrat Mohammad and the Quran because of the praise by which Hazrat Mohammad's life is glorified and the claim that everything is in the Quran.³⁴ The essay made the criticism that Islamic social institution of polygamy is like a "primitive society, where a woman was

³² Anwarul Kadir, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Samajik Galad*," *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 57.

³³ Anwarul Kadir, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Samajik Galad*," *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 60.

³⁴ *Samajer netader ucit samajbhukta janaganke pabitra paygamvarer samyak paricayer subidha kare deoya. Ta na kare shudhu haoyai prashamsa kare ar ketabe ache, Qurane ache pare dekha ei soja path dekhiye dile tara ta manbe kena. Shudhu hukum palane svad paoya jay na—bishesh kare jadi hakimke puropuri na jana jay ar tar gune puropuri mugdha na haoya jay.* Anwarul Kadir, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Samajik Galad*," *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 60.

treated foremost as a property." About the impact of polygamy, Anwarul Kadir further reports a sexual corruption that it introduced into Muslim society: "Very respected religious Muslims divorce one *bibi* (wife) out of four *bibis* in order to marry a young pretty virgin girl without any obstacle from Islam."³⁵ What made it so simple in Islam, according to Anwarul Kadir, is that "you say *kalma* and agree to pay *mohar* (dowry) and nobody would see your misdeeds."³⁶ Similarly, Anwarul Kadir criticized divorce rules of Islam related to re-marrying a wife by an earlier husband: "We know that according to *sharia*, if a Muslim wants to remarry his divorced wife, then the divorced wife must be married to another Muslim and stay [with him] for some time before she will be allowed to remarry her former husband."³⁷ Anwarul Kadir objected to this rule of Islam on the ground that the second husband may not divorce his wife to allow her to remarry the first husband. He cited the example of a *pir*, who, after marrying a divorced wife, had refused to divorce her in order for her to re-marry her former husband. Anwarul Kadir paid no respect to Muslims' objection against "music before a mosque." He stated: let Muslims commit a sin by permitting Hindus to play music before a mosque. Anwarul Kadir did not see any reason that Muslims should give up life to protect a mosque from this sin of Hindus: "Do Muslims have to destroy life for this? Is it really worth giving up life for this issue? What would happen to the children and families of Muslims who died in riots to prevent music before mosque?"³⁸

B. Reply of an Islamic liberal: Sharia is to be re-stated in modern time.

³⁵ Anwarul Kadir, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Samajik Galad*," *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 61.

³⁶ Anwarul Kadir, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Samajik Galad*," *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 61.

³⁷ Anwarul Kadir, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Samajik Galad*," *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 62.

³⁸ Anwarul Kadir, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Samajik Galad*," *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 65.

In contrast to the simple but clear examples of the rational humanist critique of Anwarul Kadir, Rashid's essay was quite different. In the introduction of the essay, "*Amader Naba Jagaran o Shariat*," Rashid stated clearly that there is no need to eliminate sharia, but to re-state its meaning in modern situations:

Amidst the new necessities that we come across with the change of time and age, we need to keep a continuity of the inner meanings of sharia. But we have to adjust them to modern life-styles. This adjustment would not mean change of the inner thought and meaning of Sharia; but only a rational change of their exterior form. I firmly believe that in this change, there would not be any disrespect to Islam and to the orders of Allah....For Muslims, it is possible to make a synthesis between science and sharia.³⁹

To bring a "rational change of the external form of Sharia," and for a "synthesis between science and sharia." Rashid cited several rules of sharia. For example, Rashid took up the issue of interest. Rashid recalled that the holy "Quran has forbidden interest." Yet, for the economic competition of Muslims with other "races," interest is desirable. Rashid could not cite a rationale from the Quran; but he found one in Hazrat Mohammad's conversation with one of his disciple. Rashid wrote:

In this context (rationale of taking or giving of interest by Muslims), I am telling you of an event in Hazrat Mohammad's life. One day, Hazrat *rasul* asked Moad (governor of Yemen), "by which law will you govern Yemen?" Moad replied, "the law of the Quran." The Prophet then replied, "if there is a situation for which you find no law in the Quran?" Moad replied, "I will govern by the practices of *rasul*." Again Hazrat asked, "if you do not get any law there?" Moad replied, "I would apply my own judgment."⁴⁰

Rashid did not specify a source of this dialogue. It seems, however, that he drew it from *ijtehad* ("consensus" or "judgment"). Rashid applied this freedom within Islam to judge the restrictions of *purdah* imposed by Islamic prohibitions. He, however, only

³⁹ Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "*Amader Naba Jagaran o Shariat*," *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 93.

⁴⁰ Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "*Amader Naba Jagaran o Shariat*," *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 96.

criticized *abarodh* or 'physical seclusion' of women,⁴¹ established in Bengali Muslim society by Muslim traditionalists.⁴² Like the liberal Rashid, the neo-orthodox Muslim Bengali intellectuals also demanded an abolition of *abarodh* of Muslim females. Nevertheless, the neo-orthodox replaced *abarodh* by introducing rules of *echlami purdah* (Islamic *purdah*). The rules of Islamic *purdah* were re-stated by the neo-orthodox from the Hadith and Quranic rules on women that allowed public appearances and participation of Muslim female, but imposed restrictions on the freedom of Muslim females' sexuality.⁴³ Rashid also favored Islamic *purdah*. For example, he justified freedom of

⁴¹ A Bengali Muslim physician, Dr. Abdul Malek, wrote in 1928 that *Abarodh* is equivalent to "untouchable" (*asuya-spasya*) so much so that "Muslim women can not see any male not even the sunlight" (*Munush to durer katha, surjyar aloka jena tahara* [Muslim women] *dekhite na pay*). Although the physician exaggerated the situation a bit extreme, nevertheless, he stated an impact of *abarodh* or physical imprisonment of Muslim women at home. The physician wrote that 2,216 people had died from tuberculosis in the city of Calcutta in 1922. It was Muslim women among 20-30 years' age group who accounted 7.1 percent as against 1.8 percent of Muslim males of the same age group. See, Dr. Abdul Malek, "*Abarodh Prathar Apakarita*," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. II, No. 5 (1928), 269-271. During the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, several Bengali novels were published on the physical imprisonment or *abarodh* of Bengali Muslim women. See Nauser Ali Khan Yusufzai, *Bangiya Mussalman* (Calcutta, 1890). Rokeya Sakhwat Hussain, *Motichur*, I & II (Calcutta, 1905); *Sultana's Dream* (Calcutta, 1908); *Abarodhbasini* (Calcutta, 1928). Qazi Imdadul Huq, "*Abdullah*," reprinted in Abdul Kadir (ed.), *Kazi Imdadul Huq Racanabali*, I (Dhaka, 1968). Abul Fattah Qureshi, *Saleha* (Calcutta, 1924). Ali Akbar Khan, *Muslim Mahila Carita* (Calcutta, 1920). Masih Al-Rahman Qureshi, *Narir Pabitrata ba Parda Raksha* (Calcutta, 1922-23). Mohammad Ajjar Ali, *Ukil Meye o Vedata Kechcha* (Serajganj, 1920). Mohammad Ibrahim, *Jobeda* (Calcutta, 1922-23). Mohammad Mansur Ali, *Sati Rahima* (Calcutta, 1919). Mohammad Qurban Ali, *Manoyara* (Calcutta, 1927). Sayyid Mukaram Ali, *Narir Dharma* (Calcutta, 1924).

⁴² Anisuzzaman found an "unrestricted hate and suspicion towards women" in medieval (1760-1860) Bengali Muslim *puthi* literature. In *puthi*, "*Kecha Alif Laila*," author Mafizuddin Ahmad was so angry to unrestricted female sex that he suggested, "whipping is the best medicine to keep a wife obedient." See Anisuzzaman, *Muslim Manas o Bangla Sahitya*, pp. 138-141. The *Ahl-i-Hadith* understood the Quran and Hadith supportive to the social rules of *abarodh*. They argued: "Social rules of *abarodh* are recommended principles of the Quran and Hadith and these rules were not manufactured by molla's and maulabis. *Abarodh* and *purdah* are *iman* of Muslim woman." See Abdul Hakim and Babar Ali, "*Abarodh-Pratha*," *Ahl-i-Hadith*, Vol. III, No. 3 (1917), pp. 97-111; Vol. III, No. 4 (1917), pp. 145-158; Vol. III, No. 5 (1917), pp. 202-211.

⁴³ Fatima Mernissi, a woman feminist of Morocco, argued for restrictions on women's sexuality by the Quran, Hadith, Muslim theorists and Islamic rules of Muslim states. See Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987). For neo-orthodox view of Islamic *purdah*, see Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Abarodh o Ucchrinkhala*," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. VI, No. 1 (1932), pp. 9-14. The article criticized physical seclusion of Muslim women but also criticized free mixing of women of the West. In the article, Akram wrote: "In the name of freedom of women, nations of the West had infested their social lives with great curses." He cited critiques of co-education of women with males in the West from writing of an American judge, Ben Lindsay's, *The Revolt of Modern Youth*: "The first item in the testimony of the high school students is that of all the youth who go to parties, attend parties, attend dances, and go together in automobiles, more than 80 percent indulge in

education and public movements of Muslim females, but justified *burka* ("a billowing garment that covers the whole body. The wearer can see only through a mesh of veil"): "By wearing colorful *burkas* they can move around freely. They can go to schools, colleges, parks and participate in associations."⁴⁴ Nevertheless, Muslim females are not equal to Muslim males. Rashid's reasons were:

It would be unjustifiable to allow Muslim females to move freely like Muslim males. Europe has recognized a dark side of this practice, but they could not find any language to oppose it. Women's intellect may not be less than men's...and men and women are children of humans; yet we could bring many objections to this rationale....The functioning power of Women is restricted by nature....As long as satisfaction of sensuality by sex would be a factor...it is essential that women should keep away from the eyes of men.⁴⁵

C. Rational humanists' critiques of: *Purdah*, ambivalence between Islamic faith and Islamic reforms, Islamic charity and fundamental practices.

Abul Hussain instantly objected to Rashid's imposing of *purdah* upon Muslim females. As editor of *Shikha* (Vol. I), in which Rashid's article was printed, Abul Hussain commented: "What happens to control of male sexuality?"⁴⁶ Four months later, Abul Hussain read his own essay. Abul Hussain's essay, "*Adesher Nigraha*" or "Coerciveness of Commands," is a devastating critique of some of the rules and prohibitions of Islam. He

hugging and kissing..." Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Echlame Narir Marjada o Adhikar*," published in *Masik Mohammadi*. Vol. 1, No. 2 (1927), pp. 65-72, No. 3 (1927), pp. 137-145, Vol. 4, pp. 201-204. Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Mostafa Cariter Baishishta*," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. III, No. 5 (1929), pp. 322-323. Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Id Sanmelane Narir Upasthiti*," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. VIII, No. 4 (1934), pp. 323-328. Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Purdah, Hijab o Abarodh*," *Al-Islam*, Vol. III, No. 4 (1917), pp. 195-205. Mohammad Akram Khan, *Quran Shariff*, I or 'The Quran: Bengali translation and commentaries' (Dhaka: Reprinted by Jhinuk Pustika, 1960). See Akram's commentary on Sura "Nisaa" or 'Women' pp. 563-658. Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Alocana*," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. V, No. 12. (1932), pp. 873-875; Vol. VI, No. 8 (1933), pp. 582-583; Vol. VIII, No. 7 (1935), 250-251; Vol. VII, No. 9 (1935), pp. 667-668.

⁴⁴ Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "*Amader Naba Jagaran o Shariat*," *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 97.

⁴⁵ Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "*Amader Naba Jagaran o Shariat*," *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 97.

⁴⁶ Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "*Amader Naba Jagaran o Shariat*," *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 98.

read this essay in the first GS (July 24, 1927) of MSS. In other words, Abul Hussain presented the essay in a GS that immediately followed the AS where Rashid read "*Amader Naba Jagaran o Shariat* (March 27-28, 1927)." Like Rashid's, Abul Hussain's essay is well organized but it has a radical theoretical base:

"Islam is an eternal religion, equally applicable in all ages and in all countries." This claim can only be sustained by brute force; not by reason or by the norms of the flow human history or of nature. The reason Muslims today can not completely accept the injunctions of Islam may be inquired into and made clear. And this must be considered: to what extent can seventh century Islam, which originated in the Arabian-desert, be applicable in the twentieth century in bountiful Bengal, green with harvest? If I consider Islam to be unchanging, a monolithic reality, an eternal religion (*dharma*) and attempt to apply that to life, the attempt will turn into useless torment; and he upon whom such attempt is made will rebel and, looking upon his life, say, "I do not obey Islam, because I cannot obey or I do not want to obey it"....Islam is for humankind, humankind is not for Islam.⁴⁷

Abul Hussain had asked a fundamental question, i.e., does the claim of an unchangeable Islam bring torment to human life? Abul Hussain analyzed several social practices of Islam from this perspective. For example, he criticized imposition of *purdah* upon Muslim women and the ambiguity between Islamic principles and Islamic reforms. Abul Hussain wrote a psychological analysis of *purdah*'s influence upon Muslim social life. He claimed that *purdah* today was becoming a deadly weapon for rousing sensuality of Muslim men and women that *purdah* is a symbol of Muslim society's 'weakness'

⁴⁷ "Islam ekti sanatan dharma, sarba kale o sarbadeshe samanbhabe prajojya. Kintu ei dabi gayer jorei kara calte pare, jukti ba manab-itihaser dhara ba prakritir niyamanusare se dabi tikte pare na. Aj mussalman kena Islamer adesh purapuri palan karte parche na, tar karan khuje ber karte habe; ar eo dekhte habe, saptam shatabdir Arab marur Islam bimsha shatabdir shasya-shyamal urbbar deshe katakhani karjakari hate pare. jadi Islam aparibarttaniya, akhanda satya sanatan dharma bale take hubahu jibane grahan karbar janya ceshita kara hay, se ceshita nichak atyacarei parinita habe, ebam jar upar se ceshita habe se bidrohi haye tar jiban diye dekhabe je, 'ami Islam mani na; karan mante pari na ba mante iccha hay na'....Islam je manusher janya, manush je Islamer janya nay. Abul Hussain, "*Adesher Nigraha*," in Abdul Kadir (ed.), *Abul Hussain Racanabali*, pp. 63-64. The article is also published in a Hindu journal, *Shanti*, Vol. IV, No. 8 (1929). The article should be read along with Abul Hussain's identical article, "*Nishedher Biramvana*," or 'Dilemmas of Prohibitions,' *Abhijan*, Vol. I. No. 1 (1926), pp. 20-27.

(*durbalata*), 'shamelessness' (*nirlajjata*), 'narrow mindness' (*sankrinacittata*), 'heartlessness' (*hidayhinata*), 'perversion of taste' (*ruci-bikriti*), 'ill health' (*svasthahinata*), 'laziness' (*alasya*), 'loss of work ethic' (*karme bigataspriha*), and is indifference to the intellectual development (*mastishka-carcar prati udasinya*) of Muslim females. Finally, Abul Hussain's stated that *purdah* is corrupting Muslim females:

In Muslim society, *purdah* is becoming a wonderful system for violating the chastity of Muslim women. Behind the *purdah*, weakness of Muslim women has been nourished in such a manner that her individuality could not grow at all. At a slightest temptation she swims in sensuality--because since her childhood *purdah*, while habituating her to think exclusively of chastity, only encourages her sensuality.⁴⁸

Abul Hussain paid respect to widow remarriage in Islam, but he was unreserved in his criticism of the ambivalence between Islamic principles and Islamic reforms in the case of widow remarriage:

The high class Muslim single men have hatefully refused to marry widows. Even those who have married two or three times have a craving for a virgin girl. Many Muslims do not hesitate to have sexual relations with a widow; but they refuse to accept a widow as their wife...Yet they are ideal Muslims, because they pray five times. In other words, if one prays five times, but commits the worst vices, all the vices are gone. What a wonderful religion!....Prayer and vices are mixed together in Islam.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ *Bartaman mussalman samaje purdah ei statitv nasta karber camatkar ekti upaye parinita hayeche. Purdahar antarale mussalman narir durbalata erupe lalita hate thake je, tar byaktitva ekebare pusthilabh karte pare na, phale samanya ingite ba pralobhane se pashabik lalashar shrote ga bhashiye dite badhya hay--karan purdah take ati shaishab hatei ai ekti matra basttu arthat satitver katha bhabte abhyasta karte giyei ai lalasa kei pustha k'are tule. Abul Hussain, "Adesher Nigraha," reprinted in Abul Hussainer Racanabali, p. 72.*

⁴⁹ *Ektu uccastarer bipatnik mussalman bidhabake strirupe grahan karar prastabe nak-mukh kuciye ghrinabhare ta pratyakhyan karen. Eman ki, dui ba tatodhik stri-biyog-katar bhadra mussalmano kumarir (virgin) janya lalayita haye uthen. Kintu lajja o paritaper bishay, mussalmaner aneke bidhabar sange pashabik sambandha pratista karte dvidha bodh karen na....Ai Samanta abaidha acarparasta bhadra mussalmankei adarsha mussalman bale dharen, karan tara namaj paren. Namaj pareli sat khun maph. Kukarmer curanta kara kintu masjid e ease matha thuke jao, tomar samasta pap dhuye jabe. Ki camatkar dharma!....Namaj ar kukarma jena mitali k'are baseche. Abul Hussain, "Adesher Nigraha," in Abul Hussainer Racanabali, p. 71.*

Abul Hussain charged that Islamic polygamy and divorce have destroyed wonderful human relations in the institution of marriage. He wrote that it is rare for Muslims to pay respect to the sanctity and obligation of marriage: "Today, marriage has been taken by Muslim men for satisfaction of lust upon Muslim females. Similarly, Muslim men take Islamic laws of divorce and polygamy as ways of imposing coercion upon Muslim females."⁵⁰

Abul Hussain also criticized Islamic rules of charity, e.g., *zakat*, *fitra* and *sadka*, as destroying the self-confidence of Muslims: "With ever increasing sources of Islamic charity, *zakat*, *fitra* and *sadka*, there is a proportionate increase of Muslim beggars. There is no doubt that this obnoxious profession of begging was mostly responsible for senseless charity originated by the orders of Islam."⁵¹

The most serious criticism that he brought against Islam in this article was targeted against several fundamental practices of Islamic religion: *namaj* (prayer), *roja* (fasting), *aju* (ablution), *telawat* (recitation of the Quran), *azan* (call for Muslims' prayer), and *kalema* (basic Muslim affirmation that *Allah* is one and Mohammad is His *rasul*). He challenged the narrow and dirty mind of those Muslims who obey these 'commands to the letter' (*akshare akshare palan*) or to the last bit (*karay gandya hisab kare palan*).⁵² Abul Hussain did not reinterpret the meanings of these practices. But he wanted to change them by appeal to some universal human standards. He appealed to the Mawlanas:

How long will you propagare *aju*, *roja*, *namaj*, etc., among Muslims? It is not crucial if humans are performing or not performing *aju*. Tell them, if they do not know it, how to keep oneself clean instead of doing an *aju*. Tell them that a human cannot clean his body only by touching fingers and legs into (*aju*) water. Your duty is also to tell them about mental and bodily cleansing for better health, of which *aju* is only one of the acts....What are Muslims going to

⁵⁰ Abul Hussain. "Adesher Nigraha," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 73.

⁵¹ Abul Hussain. "Adesher Nigraha," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 73.

⁵² Abul Hussain. "Adesher Nigraha," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 67.

achieve, when you say that "if they perform *namaj* and *roja* they will receive seventy thousand 'rewards' (*sowab*) of God?" Instead, tell them how the *namaj* and *roja* could contribute to humanity in this world. If, by rejecting these acts, we could achieve humanity by other simpler means: tell them not to rigorously insist upon these obligatory of rituals.⁵³

These Islamic practices, according to Abul Hussain, are based on a notion of *bishvas*. In Bengali vocabulary, *bishvas* or believing, is a generic term. The Bengali word *bishvas* does not always carry the translated meaning of faith or *iman*.⁵⁴ Abul Hussain traced an origin of *dharma-bishvas* (religious faith) to fear, weakness, and ignorance of humans: "Those people whose thought is like barbaric people or full of ignorance, fear, feebleness, are the people who have *bishvas*. In other words, they obey each and every word of *shastra* for fear of punishment in the next world."⁵⁵ In one specific case, *dojakh* and *beheshta* (the last day of judgment), which are not minor beliefs but fundamental Islamic doctrines. Abul Hussain questioned and rejected their validity in modern time:

...No Muslim would be able to comprehend by the intellect (*buddhi*) the real character of *dojakh* and *beheshta*. To understand these, Muslims' last resort is *bishvas*.

⁵³ Abul Hussain, "*Adesher Nigraha*," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 68.

⁵⁴ W.C. Smith distinguished "belief" from the "faith" in major religions: Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. About the "Islamic instance," Smith argued that faith is "theocentric." The Quran does not ask Muslims simply "believing," but "to have faith." The English word "believing" is a "serious mistranslation" of the Quranic word *amana* "with *iman*, faith, as its verbal noun." Smith understands that the term "believing" has prevailed among religious people by an innocent and straightforward meaning. "In ordinary parlance.... believing is the concept by which we convey the fact that a view is held, ideationally, without a final decision as to its validity-explicitly without that decision." In contrast, Smith defined, "Faith is something that people do more than it is something that people 'have;' although one may also say that it pertains to something that people are, or become. The Quran presents...a dramatic challenge wherein God's terror and mercy, simultaneously, are proclaimed to mankind....The man of faith (*mu'min*) is he who accepts, who says 'yes'....So the *mu'min*, the man of faith, the yes-sayer.... By it, he identifies himself with the communal, and cosmic activity. *Iman*, the act of faith, means the positive response to the divine and dramatic challenge....The Muslim does not say, I believe that Muhammad is the apostle of God. Rather, he asserts: 'I bear witness to' these facts. His regarding them as facts, not theories, as realities in the universe not beliefs in mankind....The witness formula affirms that he is relating himself in a certain way--of recognition, obedience, service--to a situation that already, and independently, and objectively, exists. He is corroborating it, not postulating it....Notions are not believed, they are presupposed." See, W. C. Smith, "The Islamic Instance: Faith as Theocentric," in W.C. Smith, *Faith and Belief* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 33-52.

⁵⁵ Abul Hussain, "*Adesher Nigraha*," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 60.

Realistically, *bishvas* is a notion that can not be grasped by the intellect, so it can not be abided by humans. A notion for which intellect is unnecessary or unworthy must lose its hold... Ordinary Muslims do not care about *dojakh* and *beheshta*. A *bishvas* that tells Muslims about distribution of *dojakh* and *beheshta*, in some unknown future, cannot salvage the practical life of Muslims, the daily necessities in this world....Therefore, the *dharma-guru* who gave the command to renounce pleasures of the present time by pointing to some far distant longing has denied the nature of humanity.⁵⁶

D. Debate on rationalists' critiques: Islamic liberals, independents and other rationalists.

The debate (GS. September 23, 1927) on Abul Hussain's essay was divided. Out of 12 participants who commented on this essay, 7 Muslim discussants censured Abul Hussain. The 5 defenders of Abul Hussain in MSS were Kazi Wadud and the Hindu participants. The criticism of the essay was based on several grounds Abdul Aziz (independent) criticized that: "Abul Hussain wants to destroy Islam. He has not given any solution for the reconstruction of Islam."⁵⁷ Kazi Nurul Huq (independent) accused Abul Hussain of propagating criticism of Islam and advised Abul Hussain. "If you had learned to understand the true meaning of the Quran and Hadith, your thought would not have criticized Islam."⁵⁸ Naziruddin Ahmad (independent) objected because Abul Hussain had spoken only about the dark side of Muslim society. He also mentioned: "It is a mistaken belief that Muslims, by rejecting religion, would think only about practical life of this

⁵⁶ ...*Dojakh beheshter barnana hate kono mussalmani tar prakrita svarup buddhir dara dharana karte pare na. Keval bishvasi tar ekmatra samval. Prakitapakshe, buddhi je bastuke dharte pare na, bishvas dvara take beshiksan dhare rakha jay na. Buddhir prayog jekhane anabashyak ba anarthak sekhane bishvas sithil hate badhya...Sadharan mussalman dojakh beheshter bishesh paroya kare na. Kon ajneya kale mrituyr pare sei dojakh beheshter batoyara habe ei bishvas manushke tar nitya-prayojaner pirapiri hate uddhar karte pare na....Sutaram sudur-bhabishyater sukher lobh dekhiye je dharmaguru bartamaner sukh tyag karte hukum karen tini manusher prakritike asvikar karen.* Abul Hussain. "Adesher Nigraha." *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, pp. 65-66.

⁵⁷ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Dvitiya Barsha Pratham Adhibeshan" August, 27, 1927, MSSP, p. 35.

⁵⁸ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Dvitiya Barsha Pratham Adhibeshan" August, 27, 1927, MSSP, p. 36.

world."⁵⁹ Another discussant, Golam Maola (independent) was mixed in his response. Golam stated that religious morality is acting as a force for law and order in Muslim society. Yet Maola argued: "If religion fatally suppresses our human instincts, why should we obey religion?"⁶⁰

Rashid's criticism was well organized within the framework of Islamic liberalism. He agreed with Abul Hussain that there is no doubt that *khotba* (Islamic sermons, usually delivered by the *imam* after Friday prayer) and *aju* have become lifeless; "but that does not mean we have to trample all orders of Islam"⁶¹ (*Tay baliya Islamer sab adesh je pada-dalita karite haibe, tahao nay*). "In reality," Rashid continued, "Islam is a universal religion suitable for all ages and for all races."

Kazi Wadud's strong supportive comment came in the middle of the discussion. Wadud's comment was similar to Abul Hussain's indictment of fundamental Islamic practices and doctrines. Wadud said:

We want to perceive and understand religion and Muslim society by our open eyes. Whether Islam is a universal religion is an issue on which there must be a discussion. Professor Abul Hussain has given us a new ideology. This new ideology is full of agnosticism, no doubt. Yet in all ages this ideology has inspired humans to many new efforts and creativity. Today, Muslim society is inept. There are no "doers" in it. There is no service of the society, no love at all. There is only dried up ritual everywhere.⁶²

The comments of Hindu intellectuals supported Wadud and Abdul Hussain's rational humanistic critique. Nalini Kanta Bhattasali (independent Hindu) took a stand supportive of Abul Hussain. Nevertheless, he expressed his comments in cautious

⁵⁹ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Dvitiya Barsha, Pratham Adhibeshan" August, 27, 1927, MSSP, p. 36.

⁶⁰ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Dvitiya Barsha, Pratham Adhibeshan" August, 27, 1927, MSSP, p. 37.

⁶¹ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Dvitiya Barsha, Pratham Adhibeshan" August, 27, 1927, MSSP, p. 35.

⁶² *Amara dharma o samajke khola cokh diya dekhite cai, bujhite cai. Islam sarbbabhumik kina, taharo alocana kara darkar....Adhyapak Abul Hussain saheb ekta nutan matabad diyachen. Matabadti nastikya mulak. Kintu sarba juge eirup nastikya mulak matabadi karmmer janmadata hayeche. Mussalman samaj arastha, tahate karmmi nai--samaj seba, prem kichuy nai; ache shudhu shuska anusthan sarbbata.* Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Dvitiya Barsha Pratham Adhibeshan," August, 27, 1927, MSSP, pp. 36-37.

language. He tried to convince independent and liberal critics that they had misunderstood Abul Hussain's language. In reality, he claimed, Abul Hussain loves his society. One who loves his society has a right to hurt his people.⁶³ Chau Candra Bandyopadhyay took a straddling position. He praised Abul Hussain's "bravery and blunt statements." and appealed to the audience that Abul Hussain had not rejected God, but had rejected religious formalism as a way for attainment of God. Caru, however, disagreed with Abul Hussain that there is nothing universal in religion: "Every religion has certain elements of universality. Otherwise, religions would not have survived so long. Religious formalisms are not entirely meaningless. But one should restate these rituals and make them adjustable to one's life."⁶⁴ Caru argued that he, for example, has not abandoned a Hindu ritual, *sandhya bandana* (twilight prayer), but he has restated it in his own way.⁶⁵ Outside the MSS, Abul Hussain's article in particular and rational humanists of MSS in general were bitterly criticized by neo-orthodox Muslim intellectuals of Calcutta.⁶⁶

After the debate was over, the president of the session, Tassaduq Ahmad (independent), invited Abul Hussain to defend his position. Abul Hussain did not reply point by point to his critics. But he did not shift an inch from his radical position. He replied to his critics:

⁶³ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Dvitiya Barsha Pratham Adhibeshan," August, 27, 1927, MSSP, p. 37.

⁶⁴ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Dvitiya Barsha Pratham Adhibeshan," August, 27, 1927, MSSP, p. 38.

⁶⁵ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Dvitiya Barsha Pratham Adhibeshan," August, 27, 1927, MSSP, p. 38.

⁶⁶ For example, Mohammad Akram Khan denounced the rational humanists as *dharmadrohi* (rebels against religion), *abishvasi* (unbeliever) and *Islamer gupta shatru* (secret enemy of Islam). Among several bitter comments on Abul Hussain's essay, "Adesher Nigraha," Akram also wrote: "In the essay, the writer (Abul Hussain) has attacked the religion of Islam so much so that even the Arya Samaj and Christian missionary (critics of Islam) would accept a defeat. It is astonishing that this kind of people (rationalists) were selected as teachers for our future generation." See for details, Mohammad Akram Khan, "Echlamer Jayjatra," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. I, No. 8 (1928), pp. 518-519; "Dhakar Bani" or 'Messages from Dhaka,' *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. III, No. 2 (November, 1929), pp. 159-160. Akram's critiques were replied to by rationalists other than Wadud and Abul Hussain. Abdul Kadir countered Akram in "Shastra-Bahaker Humki" (December, 1929) or 'The threat of the bearer of religion,' *Shanti*, Vol. IV, No. 12 (1929), pp. 485-489.

Muslims are increasing in the number of beggars and debauches in a society infatuated with the formalism of Islam. Today throughout the world the Muslims present one miserable picture. Should we not be awakened by seeing this dirty life of Muslims in the world?...The great men (*mahapurush*) are like a series of light-towers. When one light goes dim another must be lit on that tower.⁶⁷

The session was formally ended with a song of Kazi Mutahar Hussain and a note of thanks by the president. Yet debate and criticism of the essay did not die. Outside the MSS, the essay was immediately reacted to. Some members of Dhaka Nawab family immediately summoned Abul Hussain and threatened him. We return this issue below in section on the decline of MSS. Meanwhile, Rashid prepared to refute Abul Hussain's criticism of Islamic injunctions and prohibitions.

E. Defense of Islamic faith: Islamic liberals.

1. Mohammad Abdur Rashid's apologetic essay.

In less than two months, Mohammad Abdur Rashid read a counter-essay: "*Muktir Agraha banam Adesher Nigraha*" (November 23, 1927) or 'The Zeal for Freedom Versus Coercion of Commands [of Islam].' Rashid began the article by giving one general meaning of the phrase, 'zeal for freedom.' The zeal for freedom of humans, according to Rashid, had existed side by side with compliance with commands. Rashid argued that in primitive human society men who loved freedom had also tolerated 'coercion of commands' (*adesher nigraha*) by their leader. When the institution of marriage was ordered first in human society, many opposed it as a repression of male freedom. "But we now know that this repressive order has brought welfare to humans."⁶⁸ Rashid's argument

⁶⁷ *Mussalman eta anusthan parayan haiyao kebal bhikshuk ebam byabharir dal pustha kariteche. Aj samagra jagate mussalman maner ekay kadarja chabi. Iha dekhiyao ki amader caitanya haibe na?...Mahapurushganke shrenibadha alok-stambhar sahit tulana kara jay. Ekti alo mlan haia ashile sei shikhate anya alo jvalan ucit.* Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Dvitiya Barsha Pratham Adhibeshan*" August, 27, 1927, MSSP, p. 38.

⁶⁸ Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "*Muktir Agraha banam Adesher Nigraha*," *Saogat*, Vol. V, No. 10 (1927), p.788.

was, therefore: "Zeal for freedom and coercion of commands are both combined in the evolution of human society."⁶⁹

For constructing a relation between religion and zeal for freedom, Rashid argued that prophets were also lovers of freedom. They freed humans from a dark anarchic age of moral and social degradation. Besides prophets (he did not mention any specific prophet), Rashid cited philosophers who were ardent followers of *mukta buddhi* but were not atheists or agnostics (*nastiks*).⁷⁰ For example, Rashid cited Hafiz and argued that he was a fervent Sufi and a humanist; yet "Hafiz never denied *Allah* and his *rasul*."⁷¹ Similarly, Rashid stated that Spinoza was like pantheistic Muslim Sufis; but he had a firm faith in God.

In specific Islamic context, Rashid's standpoint was that Islamic "orders and prohibitions may be a coercion (*nigraha*), but they are also beneficial for Muslim lives." No Muslim, according to Rashid, would ever deny *iman*: "Oh *Allah*! Let me die with my *iman*." At the same time, no Muslim would ever dispute that in "modern times, property, money, and resources are slipping out of the Muslim hands."⁷² Rashid agreed that prohibition on interest is acting against economic competition of Muslims: "But *Allah* does not like this kind of taking interest which is associated with human exploitation and torture."⁷³ Furthermore, Rashid justified music in Islam when music awakens a spiritual

⁶⁹ Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "*Muktir Agraha banam Adesher Nigraha*," *Saogat*, Vol. V, No. 10 (1927), p. 788.

⁷⁰ The philosophers that Rashid cited are Muslim philosophers, Ibn Rushd and Hafiz; Christian scientist-philosopher, Galilio; and Dutch Jewish philosopher, Bruce Spinoza. Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "*Muktir Agraha banam Adesher Nigraha*," *Saogat*, Vol. V, No. 10 (1927), p. 789.

⁷¹ Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "*Muktir Agraha banam Adesher Nigraha*," *Saogat*, Vol. V, No. 10 (1927), p. 790.

⁷² Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "*Muktir Agraha banam Adesher Nigraha*," *Saogat*, Vol. V, No. 10 (1927), p. 791.

⁷³ *Ei prakar sudh grahaner sange julum ba atyacar misrita ache jaha khodatale kakhono pachanda karen na*. Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "*Muktir Agraha banam Adesher Nigraha*," *Saogat*, Vol. V, No. 10 (1927), p. 791. On this issue, the neo-orthodox intellectuals argued that interest is prohibited, but payment of Zakat

feeling of Muslims. Yet, where Muslims pray and surrender to *Allah*, none should have the right and audacity to play music. Similarly, the drawing of pictures or paintings of human figures is not prohibited in Islam, if the painters and drawers of pictures do not compare the creativity of themselves with His creativity.⁷⁴

For safeguarding our unique prayer system from an attachment with idolatry, we must prohibit pictures of any type from our mosques. Islam came to this world as a protest against idolatry. From a faith (*bishvas*) in Islamic ideals we must carry out prohibition for keeping pictures out of our mosques.⁷⁵

In conclusion. Rashid cautioned the rationalists that they should give up a romantic passion of freedom. They must not forget that there is a necessity to remain as Muslim:

If there is a hope that by rejecting Islam we would have a better prospect to get greater welfare, then refusal of Islam could have been normal. Islam is the greatest religion of world. some might not agree to this.... But... for solution of the worldly problems, the rationales that have been given by the religion of Islam, are no weaker than the rationales given by other religions. Specifically, Islam did not impose as much coercion of commands (*adesher nigraha*) upon human zeal of freedom of thought and intellect as did other religions....Commands of religion do not act as an obstacle on our road to cultivation of knowledge; they rather inspire us. The earliest evidence is Hazrat Mohammad [who said], "For accumulation of knowledge, you can go even to China." One name of *Allah* is *Huq* or truth.... Whatever truth

is obligatory for rich Muslims so that poor Muslims would not have to go to moneylenders. See Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Samasya Samadhan*," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. I., No. 10 (1928), pp.593-597.

⁷⁴ *Jiber citra ankita kariya jadi srishtikattar saman asan labher dambhikata kaharo ashe*Jiber citra ankita kara jadi srishtikattar sahit pratijagita karar saman hay, tabe briksha-lata o patra-pusper citra ankita karao seirup ekta kichu karar saman na haibe kena? Ei bimsa shatabdite emon...sahasi milibe na je ekti manusher citra ankita kariya ba murti prastut kariya apanake Ishvarer saman kshamatashali baliya kalpana karite sahas karibe. Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "*Muktir Agraha banam Adesher Nigraha*," *Saogat*, Vol. V, No. 10 (1927), p. 792.

⁷⁵ Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "*Muktir Agraha banam Adesher Nigraha*," *Saogat*, Vol. V, No. 10 (1927), p. 792. The Muslim Bengali neo-orthodox intellectuals defended similar viewpoints. Mohammad Akram Khan wrote: "The pictures and icons that are painted and built for the purpose of idolatry or the pictures and icons that would help to fostering a feeling of idolatry, are completely banned and always to be avoided." Akram's statement is based on re-statement of the Quran and Hadith. See Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Citrakala o Echlam*," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. III, No. 8 (1930), pp. 561-565; No. 9 (1940), pp. 686-691; No. 10 (1930), pp. 722-727; No. 11 (1930), pp. 818-821; No. 12 (1930), pp. 883-886; No. 12 (1930), pp. 883-886.

modern science and philosophy have achieved has its root set in the highest truth, *Huq*.⁷⁶

2. Debate on Islamic liberals' defense of Islamic faith.

Rashid presented his essay in a GS in which Wadud was the president. Among the audience, 7 members participated in the discussion. Rashid was supported by 3, opposed by 3, and 1 discussant kept straddling. The support for Rashid's Muslim apologetic was short and full of emotion. Moslemuddin Khan (independent) took a mixed position: "What are we going to change in Islam? What is truth will remain truth forever. For the cause of freedom of thought, one could not support recklessness. It is equally unjust to adhere to the old as it is to destroy the old. It is better that we should take a middle position."⁷⁷ Moslemuddin was clearly straddling between rationalist and Islamic liberal positions. Shaifiquir Rahman (independent), another supporter of Rashid's essay, questioned: "Is it really true that something is wrong in Islam? Why should one support pictures in mosques because Hindus worship a picture?"⁷⁸

The criticism of the essay was began by Mamtazuddin Ahmad (independent), a teacher of Dhaka University. Mamtaz said that many people firmly believe today that

⁷⁶ *Mussalman thakar ceyeo jadi ekta brihattar kalyan amader paoyar bharsa thakita, tabe amader mussalman dharma tyag kara ekta svabhabik byapar haiya daraita. Jagate "mussulman dharma sarbbashrestha." ei katha svikar karite hayta aneker apatti ache. Kintu...pramathik mangaler samasya mussalman dharma je-sakal jukti dvara mimamsa kariyache, se sakal jukti anya dharma-pradatta jukti apeksha durbbal nahe. Bisheshata: manaber buddhir o cintar muktir agraher upar anyanya dharma jato 'adesher nigraha' dayi kariyache, Islam dharma baram tatata kare nai....jnaner carca karite dharmer adesh amader pathe darai na baram utshahai dey, tahar pratham dalil amader Hazrater hadis--"jnan aharane chin desheo jaibe." Allahtalar ek nam 'Huq'....Bijjane paoya satyar o darshaner paoya satyar mul prashraban sei param satya "Haq."* Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "Muktir Agraha banam Adesher Nigraha," *Saogat*, Vol. V, No. 10 (1927), pp. 792- 793.

⁷⁷ *Dharmer abar ki rad badal habe? ja satya ta ciradini satya. Cintar svadhinater name ucchrinkhalatar prashray deoya jay na... puratanke akre thakao jeman anyay padaghat karac tai. Modhyabartti pantha abalamvan shreyaskar. Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Dvitiya Barsha Tritiya Adhibeshan,"* December 12, 1927, MSSP p. 45.

⁷⁸ He also argued that in the twentieth century the Hindus worship picture of Cittaranjan Das. "In that case," he asked: "why should I not be convinced that the painting (*citra-bidya*) and idolatry shall not be the same." Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Dvitiya Barsha Tritiya Adhibeshan," December 12, 1927, MSSP, p. 46.

"religion is nothing but an accident of birth"⁷⁹ (English phrase is Mamtaz's). Muslims' attitude must change. For example, Mamtaz stated:

Many of us go to Mecca for Hajj; but we never rectify our thought. Hajj is like taking a sacred bath in waters of Ganga. Whatever mischief Muslims would do, once Muslims visit Mecca, everything is forgiven. It is for this narrowness that the West says 'we do not hate Islam, but we hate Muslims.' Religion, society, state, family, and conscience are essential for fuller development of human life; but not for its repression.⁸⁰

Anwarul Kadir (rationalist) stated that there is no necessity for ordering human life according to religion: "Idealists of freedom would find solutions to our problems."⁸¹

Abdul Kadir (rationalist) complained that classical Islamic rules and prohibitions had never entered into the thought of ordinary Bengali Muslims: "Islam that has come to Bangladesh is an admixture of Sufism, Vaishnavism, and Sahajiya thought."⁸² The unity of these three viewpoints had simplified religion in Bengali peasants' life. For example, Kadir stated that ballads of '*Mymensingh gitika*,' composed by ordinary Muslims, had found "unity between Krishna and Mohammad."⁸³ Kadir added further that emotional Bengalis perform *bhakti* (devotion) and *pujas* (acts of worship); "but these are not *pujas* of *bhagaban* (God)."⁸⁴ Wadud's comment was short but direct: "Freedom is for the sake of enjoyment of freedom. We do not care if someone is objecting to us (*muktir anander janyai mukti, amara dekhte jaba na, keu mana karche ki na*)."⁸⁵

⁷⁹ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Dvitiya Barsha Tritiya Adhibeshan*," December 12, 1927, MSSP, p. 45.

⁸⁰ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Dvitiya Barsha Tritiya Adhibeshan*," December 12, 1927, MSSP, p. 45.

⁸¹ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Dvitiya Barsha Tritiya Adhibeshan*," December 12, 1927, MSSP, p. 47.

⁸² Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Dvitiya Barsha Tritiya Adhibeshan*," December 12, 1927, MSSP, p. 46.

⁸³ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Dvitiya Barsha Tritiya Adhibeshan*," December 12, 1927, MSSP, p. 47.

⁸⁴ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Dvitiya Barsha Tritiya Adhibeshan*," December 12, 1927, MSSP, p. 47.

⁸⁵ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Dvitiya Barsha Tritiya Adhibeshan*," December 12, 1927, MSSP, pp. 47.

F. Proposals for freedom of Muslim Women.

Following Abul Hussain's devastating comments on *pardah*, several essays on Muslim women were presented in MSS.⁸⁶ These essays were read not only by Muslim men but also by Muslim women. By permitting Muslim females to read essays on their own downgrading conditions in the MSS, the *buddhir mukti* movement gave Muslim woman scope to speak and judge about the state of their own freedom. This daring recognition came in the fourth GS (October 10, 1928), after two Muslim male independents had read essays on *Purdah* and Muslim women.⁸⁷ Abul Hussain stated boldly in the debate that followed: "If we restrict the boundary of the freedom of women, it is not freedom. Let us not restrict the freedom of Muslim women by law. Let the Muslim women decide their own freedom."⁸⁸ Wadud supported this standpoint: "Women will be able to solve their problems once they are educated."⁸⁹ Abul Hussain's proposition included many new rights of Muslim women. The voting right of women was one such

⁸⁶ In the years, 1928-1934, a total of 10 essays was read on Muslim women in the MSS. The 10 essays were read by independents, of whom 3 were Muslim female and 7 Muslim males. The 3 essays read by Muslim females were: i) Fazilatun Nesa, "*Nari Jibane Adhunik Shikshar Asvad*" (AS, 1928), *Shikha*, Vol. II (1928), pp. 125-128; ii) Khurshid Jha Begum, "*Narir Katha*," (AS, 1928), *Jagaran* Vol. I, No. 4 (1928), pp. 146-147; iii) Mrs. Fatema Khatun, "*Taruner Dayitva*" (AS, 1930), *Shikha*, Vol. IV (1930), pp. 38-47. Of the 7 Muslim male independents who read essays on Muslim women, 2 supported *pardah* and 5 were against *pardah*. The 2 *pardah* supportive essays were: (i) Abdul Gani, "*Purdah Pratha*" (GS, 1928), unpublished, see, MSSP, p. 68. (ii) Shamsuddin Ahmad, "*Muslim Narir Katha*" (AS, 1931), published in Abul Fazal (ed.), *Shikha*, Vol. V (1931), pp. 84-87. The 5 critics of *pardah* were: (i) Mohammad Nazirul Islam, "*Nari Samasya*" (GS, 1928), unpublished, MSSP, p. 68; (ii) Abul Fazal, "*Tarun Andolaner Gati*" (AS, 1929), published in *Shikha*, Vol. III (1929), pp. 134-142; (iii) Kamaluddin Ahmad Khan, "*Bibaha*" (GS, 1934), unpublished, MSSP, pp. 127-128; (iv) Kamaluddin Ahmad Khan, "*Nari Pragatir Katha*" (AS, 1932), unpublished, MSSP, p. 110; (v) Bilayet Ali Khan, "*Islame Badi Pratha*" (AS, 1930), unpublished, MSSP, p.78.

⁸⁷ The two essays were: i) Abdul Gani, "*Purdah Pratha*," (GS, 1928), unpublished, "MSSP," p. 68; ii) Mohammad Nazirul Islam, "*Nari Samasya*," (GS, 1928), unpublished, MSSP, p.68.

⁸⁸ *Abul Hussain Saheb pardah pratha sambandhe balen, svadhinatar simana nirdesh kariya dile taha ar svadhinata thake na. Ain kanun na kariya narir svabhaber upar chariya deoyai sangata.* Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Tritiya Barsha Caturtha Adhibeshan*" December 2, 1928, MSSP, p. 70.

⁸⁹ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Tritiya Barsha Caturtha Adhibeshan*" December 2, 1928, MSSP, p. 69.

right.⁹⁰ Abul Hussain also recognized: "Women are now ready to begin to be administrators and political leaders of Muslim males."⁹¹ Instead of the system of marriage, Abul Hussain did not agree, however, with sexual relations of Muslim females outside of marriage. This disagreement of Abul Hussain was not based on the grounds of protecting the moral standards of Islam: "The meaning of moral ideals is now gradually changing. Many people no longer consider that the marriage-bond relationship is necessary or beneficial. But this is an unnatural way to reduce population and carry new diseases."⁹²

In 1934, Kamaluddin Ahmad Khan (independent), a student of Muslim Hall, read a daring essay, "*Bibaha*," (GS) or 'Marriage.' The article advocated several rights of Muslim women. For example, Kamaluddin stated: "(i) Muslim women should know their husband or live together before marriage; (ii) second marriage must require a doctor's certificate and wife's consent; and (iii) marriage is necessary for controlling sexual violence and fulfillment of love."⁹³ The English phrase "courtship" was frequently cited in the discussion and it was criticized by Islamic liberals. In reply, Kamaluddin did not give up. but he restricted the freedom of "courtship" of Muslim men and women before the marriage.⁹⁴ Wadud made no comment on 'courtship,' but he rejected polygamy: "When a first wife is alive, it is utterly contrary to human manners, love and mental happiness to

⁹⁰ A few Bengali Muslim feminist writers demanded right to vote in 1930s. Shamsun Nahar, a woman feminist of Calcutta, was one such example. Nahar's view was that modern Muslim women demand a right to vote on their own right, not because she is a wife of a husband. See Shamsun Nahar, "*Narir Bhotadhikar*," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. IX, No. 3 (1935), pp. 155-159.

⁹¹ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Tritiya Barsha Caturtha Adhibeshan*," December 2, 1928, MSSP, p. 70.

⁹² *Naitik adarshao kramashah paribartita haiteche. Bibaha bandhanke keha keha abashyak ba hitakari mane kariteche na. Ei rup asvabhabik upaye lokasamkhye hras karite giya kataguli roger srishiti haiteche.* Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Tritiya Barsha Caturtha Adhibeshan*" December 2, 1928, MSSP, p. 70.

⁹³ (i) *parasparer nikat paricay haoya ba thaka; (ii) Cikitshaker anumodan o patnir anumatite dvitiya bibaha kara; (iii) Jauna himsar samadhan o prem bishesh karane bibahe anibarja kariya tule.* Aminuddin Ahmed, "*Ashtam Barsha Caturtha Adhibeshan*," January, 14, 1934, MSSP, p. 127.

⁹⁴ *Lekhak balen courtship baliya bishishtha o simabadha sutra-bishishtha kono jinish nai. Sutaram naranarir paraspar paricay haoyar janya courtshiper katha ullekh na kariya jatadur paricay haile ubhay paksher man jatheshtha bhabe santushta o raji haite pare taha abastha, patra, sthan o kal bhede bibecana kara jaibe.* Aminuddin Ahmed, "*Ashtam Barsha Caturtha Adhibeshan*," January, 14, 1934, MSSP, p. 127.

marry a second woman. To marry second time, the first wife must be divorced."⁹⁵ Wadud also added, "If [Islam] could allow Muslim men to have the right of polygamy, why could not [Islam] agree to the equal right of polyandry for Muslim women?"⁹⁶ Naziruddin Ahmad (independent), commented radically, like Abul Hussain, "There is no way Muslim men can restrict right of Muslim women. Why should Muslim men be so anxious about moral standards of Muslim women? Let Muslim women decide their own moral standard."⁹⁷

G. Criticism of fatalistic beliefs in Islam.

The radical humanists' review of Islamic prohibitions continued unabated in the MSS. Two months after Rashid's essay (1927), Abul Hussain read another critique: "*Bangali Mussalmaner Bhabishyat*"⁹⁸ (January 15, 1928) or 'Future of the Bengali Muslim.' Abul Hussain's primary focus in this essay is on economic and educational backwardness of Bengali Muslims. Abul Hussain described the extent of backwardness in harsh language. It should be noted that he and rational humanists were not the only ones who described Bengali Muslims backwardness. The neo-orthodox and Islamic liberals wrote huge articles on the issue of Muslim backwardness. What is exceptional is that Abul Hussain in his essay did not blame British rule and Hindus for the backwardness of Muslims. On the contrary, he blamed Muslims for their own backwardness: Abul Hussain wrote:

⁹⁵ *Ek stri bartamane dvitiya stri grahan kara ruci o prem ba manasik shantir dik diya juktisangata nahe, baram prathama strike ei samay parityag bancaniya.* Aminuddin Ahmed, "*Ashtam Barsha Caturtha Adhibeshan.*" January, 14, 1934, MSSP, p.127.

⁹⁶ *Etadvayatit tini bahubibaher nyay bahusvami grahan samarthan kariya balen, "Iha jadi samarthan kara jay tabe uhao karite apatti ki.* Aminuddin Ahmed, "*Ashtam Barsha Caturtha Adhibeshan,*" January, 14, 1934, MSSP, pp. 127-28.

⁹⁷ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Tritiya Barsha Caturtha Adhibeshan,*" December 2, 1928, MSSP, p. 71.

⁹⁸ Abul Hussain. "*Bangali Mussalmaner Bhabishyat,*" *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No.1 (1928), pp. 4-9; Vol. II, No. 2 (1929), pp. 43-47; Vol. I, No. 3 (1929), pp. 89-91.

Whatever position they (Bengali Muslims) have in these areas [of education, government service, economic activities], they acquired it by concessions or by begging. Yet they hide their poverty by boasting about their religion. For poverty, they do not blame some foolishness of their own past, but blame the Hindus. And they hold tight to the British hands out of fear that Hindus would send them back to the land of dates and desert.⁹⁹

The article suggested a solution through modern education. Nevertheless, Abul Hussain persisted in questioning why there was so much poverty in Bengali Muslim society. One answer that he gave was that poverty is fostered in Bengali Muslim society by some fatalistic beliefs of Islam: "Hundreds of Muslim beggars beg in the city streets and lanes by singing a song of '*Lilaha illAllah, Mohammadur Rasulluha*' (There is no God but *Allah* and Mohammad is the *Rasul* of *Allah*)"¹⁰⁰ The rural *mollas* recite the Quran and hadith and preach detachment of Muslims from material life. Abul Hussain quoted a Hadith that was popular in the preaching of the *mollas*.

Today we are poor. Hazrat [Mohammad] said, "all my *ummat* (Muslims) will be poor in this material world." They will enjoy eternal happiness in the next world (*behashta*)...Hazrat in the last day of judgment will ask for *safayat* (mercy) of his *ummat*. Once you say the *kalema* (There is no God but *Allah* and Mohammad is the *Rasul* of *Allah*) all your sins will be forgiven.¹⁰¹

The passage does not claim a distortion of Hadith by a *molla*, nor was it Abul Hussain's purpose was to criticize the *molla*. His purpose was to focus on the fatalistic beliefs of Islam as expressed in *mollas'* preaching. Abul Hussain sarcastically commented on the preaching of the hadith: "What a wonderful hope for Muslims! What a wonderful simple religion! One time *kalema* and another time *Taoba* (confession of a sin)." By

⁹⁹Abul Hussain, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Bhabishyat*," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No.1 (1928), p. 4.

¹⁰⁰Abul Hussain, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Bhabishyat*," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No.1 (1928), p. 6.

¹⁰¹ Abul Hussain, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Bhabishyat*," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No.1 (1928), p. 7.

insinuating endless "fear of sins at every step" (*pade pade gunaher bhay*), the *mollas* had accumulated a huge amount of fear in Muslims' mind:

Muslims have become so much overwhelmed by fear that their hearts tremble when they see a sign of any new experience. They are willing, in no circumstances, to take a risk of danger that is associated with innovations. Yet, without taking a risk of danger of innovation, there is no likelihood that creativity will emerge in Muslim society. The more Muslims will avoid dangers of innovations, the more these dangers will grow from large to larger. One day, Muslims will see that there is no way they can escape from of these dangers.¹⁰²

Abul Hussain complained that educated Muslims' reverence to pirism had generated new wave of pessimistic feeling: "The educated *murids*, infatuated by pirs, think they get jobs in modern professions because of a pir's blessings." Instead of working hard for success in examination in the university, Muslim students spend valuable time reading *ajifa*¹⁰³ and beg mercy for success. Abul Hussain gave an example:

I am astonished to meet one of my Sufi student relatives. Last year he failed in B.A. examination. Now he is keeping a long beard and a round white cap on his head. He did not talk to me, because he thought my intentions are bad. Subsequently I heard that he is under a strict discipline of a pir (Abul Hussain used a satirical word, *hajur kebla* for pir) and, by the pir's instruction, he is devoted to *ajifa* to pass the B.A. examination.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² *Krame samaj* (Muslim) *aj emani ekta bhae bihabbal haye pareche je kona kichu nutaner ingite tar* (Muslim) *hritpinda thar thar karte thake. Naba abhiggatar bipad se baran karte kichutei raji hate cacche na. Athaca se bipadke baran na karle kona srishtii sambhabpar habe na--ar take jatai erana habe tatai abayab brihat hate brihattar hate thakbe ebam ekdin sei eriye jaoyar lalane lalita bipader sanmukhin hatei habe--takhan ar ta atikram karbar shakti amader thakbe na--karan bhayer durbbalata sei abhiggata arjjaner sahas o shaktir sthan kramei adhikar karte thakbe.* Abul Hussain, "Bangali Mussalmaner Bhabishyat," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 1 (1928), p. 9.

¹⁰³ Kazi Wadud defined *ajifa* as: *Nitya dharma shastra path*, or reading a holy book everyday. See Kazi Wadud and Anil Chandra Ghosh, *Byabharik Shabdakosh*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁴ Abul Hussain, "Bangali Mussalmaner Bhabishyat," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1929), p. 44.

At the end of the article, Abul Hussain appealed to young Muslims: "Unless you are committed to oppose this process of exploitation of Muslims in the name of *mussalmani*, no shining future will exist for you."¹⁰⁵

This section thus shows that a first round of debate between Abul Hussain and Rashid centered on certain Islamic practices and certain specific Islamic doctrines. Abul Hussain's and Rashid's essays had a degree of similarity. The essays were expressions of their theoretical positions on Islam. They sharpened their standpoints, whether critique or defense of Islam, not by massive citation of verses from the Quran, practices of Hazrat Mohammad, or from any past Muslim traditions. They defended their positions primarily by appeal to the practical consequences of Islam in Bengali Muslim society. Abul Hussain's critique of Islam, however, deconstructed some fundamental Islamic doctrines and Islamic social and ritual practices. But what Bengali Muslim rational humanists replaced this by deconstruction was not a new interpretation of Islam, but rather a rational humanist standard of universal practices and thought. Examples of this are Abul Hussain's proposed reform of Muslim education and elevation of the position of Muslim women.

IV. Reduced Islam in Muslim Education.

A. Abul Hussain's proposal.

Abul Hussain's critique of Madrasah education¹⁰⁶ and his charges about the evil effects of Islamic education are examined in this section. He analyzed the harmful effects

¹⁰⁵ *Aj he tarun! Tumi ei mussalmani namer daulate mussalmaner shoshan kriyake bandha karte jodi badhparikar na hao tabe bhabishyat ar bacbe na.* Abul Hussain, "Bangali Mussalmaner Bhabishyat," *Jagaran*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1929), p. 93.

¹⁰⁶ For a reference of Madrasah education in Bengal, see Mujibur Rahman, *History of Madrasah Education* (Calcutta, 1977). Abd'ul Karim, "The Sadat, Ulama and Mashaikh," in Rafiuddin Ahmed (ed.), *Islam in Bangladesh: Society, Culture and Politics*. W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans* (Delhi: Reprinted, Indological Book House, 1969). Anathanath Basu (ed.), *William Adam, Reports on the State of Education in Bengal* (Calcutta, 1941). Minute of Warren Hastings, dated April 17, 1781, cited by Sekandar Ali Ibrahimy, *Reports on Islamic Education and Madrasah education in Bengal*, V (Dhaka: Islamic Foundation, 1990). Nawab Abdul Latif, "A Paper on Mahomedan Education in Bengal" (Calcutta, 1868),

of Islamic education and drafted a new educational curriculum for Madrasah students. He read three essays in this vein in MSS. These essays were: "*Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya, I*" (AS, March 27, 1927); "*Bangali Mussalmaner Bhabishyat*," (GS, January 15, 1928); and "*Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya, II*" (GS, July 22, 1928). The critiques of Islamic education and demand for reducing Islam in Muslim education were another example of rational humanism in MSS. This section will also record how independents in MSS, and various agencies outside, responded to rationalist demands for reducing emphasis on religion in education.

These three essays of Abul Hussain argued that the purpose of modern education is "liberality toward knowledge," and a "curiosity toward new truth." In harsh language, Abul Hussain censured Islamic education for its failure to accomplish these objectives of modern education:

Madrasah education...does not increase liking, but disliking, for [modern] education. It (Madrasah education) is not increasing the liberality and power of [modern] knowledge, but increasing blind religiosity and self-deception. It (Madrasah education) is not increasing curiosity about truth but increasing narrow communalism, a passionate urge to prove others' religion as the worst, blind veneration of one's own religion, one's self-satisfaction with ignorance covered with mist,...hiding one's mental destituteness by outward clothing. These [Madrasahs] are increasing moral depravity, heartless attitudes to one's nation and people, extreme ignorance about acquiring

reprinted in Enamul Haque (ed.), *Nawab Bahadur Abdul Latif: His Writings & Related Documents* (Dhaka: Samudra Prakashani, 1968). Amalendu De, *Roots of Separatism in Nineteenth Century Bengal* (Calcutta: Rama Prakashan, 1974). Kuldip Kaur, *Madrasa Education in India: A Study of its Past and Present* (Chandigarh: Center for Research in rural and Industrial Development, 1990). Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka, *Revised Regulations, Chapter XIV* (Calcutta, 1939). For Abul Kalam Azad's supportive standpoint on Islamic education for Muslims, see Abduhu G. Rasool, *The Educational Ideas of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad* (Delhi: Sterling Publisher, 1973). Mawlana Azad supported a project to establish an Arabic University in Chittagong. The project was started by neo-orthodox Muslim Bengali intellectuals in 1920. See Manirujjaman Islamabadi, "*Arabi Vishva bidyalay*," *Al-Islam*, Vol. VI, No. 3 (1920), pp. 135-141. Syed Mostafa Jamal, *Islami Arabi Vishva bidyalay, Maulana Islamabadi* (Chittagong, 1980). Imran Hussain & Sunil Kanti De, "*Manirujjaman Islamabadi Shiksha Niti: Arabi Vishvavidyalay Parikalpana*," *Chittagong University Studies*, Vol. V (1989), pp. 201-205.

knowledge and loss of individuality....Think for a moment about what kind of creature the Muslim is becoming by learning everyday a *mussalmani* way of smiling, coughing, dressing, etiquette and even *mussalmani* way of swearing!....The Islamia College on Wellesley street [Calcutta] stands as a pillar of the worst communalism, calling to people, 'Come on, brother, be a Muslim; I am a factory producing Muslim people.'¹⁰⁷

Abul Hussain also charged that harsh and compulsive learning of the Quran has produced baneful effects for Muslim children. The memorization of the Quranic verses in an unknown language and harsh compulsion of *maktab* (lower religious school) had reduced Muslim children's intellectual caliber and potency: "What a Hindu child learns at the age of 8, a Muslim child learns exactly the same at the age of 11."¹⁰⁸ Abul Hussain also noted that an aversion toward education also grew as a result of forcing Quran study in early childhood education. He argued also that many Muslims who were corrupt and delinquent at adult age were those who had been forcibly taught Islam by "whipping" (*betraghat*) during childhood.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, he accused Madrasah education of equipping *maulabis* to treat their profession as "trade in religion" (*dharma-byabsa*) to sell Islam. Besides these harmful influences, Abul Hussain also identified some other serious outcomes of Islamic education. For example, Abul Hussain argued: "Muslims know that

¹⁰⁷ *Madrasah shiksha[y]....priti na bere barche sikshar prati bitrishna, tate jnaner udarata o shakti na bere barche dharma-andhata o atma-prabancana, tate satya anusandhita na jege jagche sankirna sampradayikata, para dharmer nikristha pramaner janya akul agraha, svadharmer prati andha anurag, aggatar kuyasay acchanya atmaparitripti,...bahiyik paricchad diye antarer dainya lukiye lalan karbar prabritti ebam tate barche naitik bhiruta (moral depravity, translation is Abul Hussain's), svadesh o svajatir prati hidayhinata, jnanarjane paramukhata o byaktitvahinata....Niyata mussalmani hasi, mussalmani kashi, mussalmani poshak, mussalmani bhasha, mussalmani cinta, mussalmani adab kayada, mussalmani gali ayatta karte karte mussalman je ki jibe parinata habe ta apanara ekbar bhabar ceshta karben....Islamia College Wellesly streete matha ucu kare sampradayikatar ek nidarun smritisthambharupe dariye je jay take ishara kare jena balche, "esa bhai, esa--mussalman haye jao. Ami mussalmani manush tairir factory."* Abul Hussain, "Bangali Mussalmaner Bhabishyat," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1929), pp 44-45, 47, and *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 3 (1929), p. 90.

¹⁰⁸ Abul Hussain, *Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya*, I & II (Dhaka: Modern library, 1928), p. 10.

¹⁰⁹ Abul Hussain, *Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya*, I & II, p. 11.

Madrasah education has no practical value in the modern age; but, though knowing it to be wrong, they will not admit it is wrong."¹¹⁰

For originating this blind and pessimistic Islamic faith for Muslims, Abul Hussain blamed the Quran and cited passages from Orientalist writings. For example, he quoted a passage from *Progress and Civilization*, written by Dr. Crozier:

...The Koran professed to be not only a spiritual revelation but a scientific treatise; to close not only the book of inspiration but the book of knowledge. It accordingly discouraged all attempts of man to discover the order of the world and thereby to improve his condition; while its central doctrine led him to repose indolently on the decrees of inexorable fate. The consequence was that under this belief the human mind stagnated; as we see at this hour in those nations that are deeply imbued with its spirit, progress, civilization and morality lie rotting together (Abul Hussain cited this passage in English).¹¹¹

Abul Hussain translated this passage into Bengali. What is, however, important in his Bengali translation is that he added new sentences that further affirmed that it is the Quran that is responsible for hindering new knowledge of Muslims. For example, Abul Hussain translated Crozier's statement, "The Koran professed to be not only a spiritual revelation but a scientific treatise..." as "Not only does the Quran claim to be a religious book, but it is known as the depository of all knowledge's" (*Quran je kebal dharmagrantha bale dabi kare taha nahe iha sarbbajnaner bhandar bale paricita*). Crozier wrote: "...To close not only the book of inspiration but the book of knowledge." Abul Hussain translated: "With the coming of the Quran not only is God's message closed, but simultaneously knowledge is closed" (*Quraner abbirbhabe shudhu je khodar*

¹¹⁰ Abul Hussain, *Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya*, I & II, p. 25.

¹¹¹ Abul Hussain, *Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya*, I & II, p. 4. Abul Hussain did not give a full detail of the author and title of the book that he quoted, but he writes, "Dr. Crozier in his book *Progress and Civilization*."

bani ruddha hayeche taha nahe, sange sange jnana rudha hayeche).¹¹² Crozier wrote: "It (Quran) accordingly discouraged all attempts of man to discover the order of the world and thereby to improve his conditions;..." Abul Hussain translated this passage: "It is Muslim religious doctrine that there is and never will be any other book equivalent to the Quran. Based on this faith Muslims, therefore, have rejected all efforts to discover the secrets of this world and at the same time have given up effort for improving individual prosperity and resources" (*Eman kona pustak nai ba habe na ja kakhano Quraner samaksha hate pare. Ei halo mussalmaner dharmamat. Kajei, ei bishvaser basabarti-mussalman jagater rahasya udghataner sarbaceshta tyag kareche ebam sange sange tar svakiya jibaner shri o sampad bridhir ceshtao tyag kareche*).¹¹³

In part II of his article on Muslim education, Abul Hussain submitted a policy proposal for reforming Madrasah education. The proposal did not reject freedom of Muslims to study Islam in Madrasah, but it introduced only a skeleton of Islamic study in the curriculum of Muslim education, because, as Abul Hussain suggested daringly, "Madrasah education must be open equally to Hindus."¹¹⁴ The reform proposal removed teaching of Islam at an entry level of Muslim education; but children would learn, "Unity of God; Fraternity of men; and [the] Universe (English words are Abul Hussain's, except 'and')."¹¹⁵ For the secondary level of education, Abul Hussain's proposal introduced "Elements of Islam and Hinduism." However, at 'Standard IV,' Abul Hussain forbade study of the classical Arabic text of the Quran; "Muslim students would read selective

¹¹²Abul Hussain, *Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya*, I & II, p. 4. Abul Hussain quoted also a passage of the writings of another Orientalist, "Renan," whom he designated as the "Great scholar." The passage Abul Hussain quoted, says: "Islamism will perish without striking a blow by the sheer influence of European science and history will point to our century as the one in which the just causes of that immense event began to appear on the horizon...." Abul Hussain did not cite full name and title of Renan's book, but he referred the year, 1848. See, Abul Hussain, "*Muslim Culture o Uhar Darshanik Bhitti*," published in *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 104.

¹¹³Abul Hussain, *Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya*, I & II, p. 5.

¹¹⁴Abul Hussain, *Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya*, I & II, p.36.

¹¹⁵Abul Hussain, *Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya*, I & II, p. 39.

readings of the Quran, translated into Bengali; Hindu students would read selective readings of the Gita or Mahabharat."¹¹⁶ For 'Standard IX-X' (ages' 14-16), Abul Hussain recommended eight compulsory courses that include four language courses but no course on any religion. The optional "Theology group" includes five courses, of which one was, "History of Muslim people," but it was not a compulsory subject even of the theology group.¹¹⁷

For Madrasah students who have "ambition" for undergraduate and graduate degrees, Abul Hussain's proposal recommended no Islamic College. For higher education, Madrasah students would learn English education in the college and university. They would complete B.A. and M.A. rather than *fazil* and *kamil* degrees of Madrasah. For a two-year undergraduate program, Abul Hussain designed identical courses for Madrasah students and English-educated students. Four subjects were proposed as compulsory: "Vernacular literature and language, English literature and language, modern world, and sports."¹¹⁸ For Madrasah and English-educated students willing to study 'humanities and social science' ("Arts Group"), Abul Hussain proposed seven history courses: "History of the British Empire, History of America, History of the Muslim Peoples, History of the Far East, History of Europe, History of the Modern World since 1914, and History of India."¹¹⁹ Students would choose any three from these subjects. For Madrasah students who were willing to study Islam, there was no alternative but to study other areas of history apart from course on "History of the Muslim peoples." For two other compulsory history courses, they had to choose histories of non-Muslim peoples. Similarly, Abul Hussain designed four literature courses. Madrasah students could select "Arabic and

¹¹⁶Abul Hussain. *Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya*, I &II, p. 44.

¹¹⁷Abul Hussain. *Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya*, I &II, p. 52.

¹¹⁸Abul Hussain. *Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya*, I &II, p. 59.

¹¹⁹Abul Hussain, *Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya*, I &II, p. 59.

Persian," but they had to take one course on non-Muslim literature.¹²⁰ The "Theology Group" in Abul Hussain's proposal for an undergraduate program did not accommodate a major Islamic curriculum for Madrasah students. The door of "Theology Group" was also kept open for students who were not willing to study any Islamic subjects. Hindu students, who were not likely to study Islamic courses but still might be inclined to be theology students, could choose courses from the theology group: "French or German literature and Language, Comparative Religion--Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and comparative Philology."¹²¹

When Abul Hussain read this essay in MSS, he had an official connection to primary and secondary education. He was one of a twenty-four member committee of the Dhaka Education Board.¹²² The board's chairman was Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman Khan. In addition to Rahman Khan and Abul Hussain, at least five members of the committee were also regular members¹²³ of the MSS.

B. Debate on radical critique of Islamic education.

Rahman Khan (independent) was president of the GS in which Abul Hussain read his essay on Madrasah education. Bipin Chandra Pal (independent), a nationalist politician from Calcutta, was present in this session. Pal was allowed to comment first on the essay. He told that Abul Hussain is a "genuine leader of intellectual freedom." The secretary's report of the session states, "Pal was amazed and proud to see that such a big

¹²⁰ Abul Hussain, *Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya*, I &II, p. 59.

¹²¹ Abul Hussain, *Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya*, I &II, p. 61.

¹²² News Report. "Dhaka Education Board," *The Mussalman*, August 16, 1929.

¹²³ They were: Dr. S.K. De (Prof. Dhaka University); Fida Ali Khan (Prof. Dhaka University), S.N. Bose (Prof. Dhaka University); S.N. Mitra (Principal, Dhaka College); and Abdul Khaleq (Headmaster, Dhaka Government Muslim High School).

association (MSS) had developed among Muslims of East Bengal."¹²⁴ Pal did not share, however, many of the radical views of Abul Hussain; but pointed out: "If Islam had not come into the Indian sub-continent, Nanak, Kabir, Tulsidas and Chaitanya would not have emerged in India."¹²⁵ After this comment, Pal left the session and Rashid took the floor.

Rashid approved of Abul Hussain's reformed Madrasah education as a means for solving Muslim-Hindu problems. But Rashid imposed a condition that the cultural identity of Bengali Muslims must be safeguarded from Hindus in Madrasah education. Rashid cited examples of the West: "In England and the United States, people work together, but they keep intact the 'sectarian distinctiveness' (*sampradayik baishista*)."¹²⁶ Rashid also did not agree with Abul Hussain that Islamic subjects taught in Madrasah are worthless: "These subjects on Islam are highly important for Muslims. But due to Madrasah teachers' lack of understanding of 'independent thought' (*svadhin cinta*), these subjects did not produce a mighty and hopeful outcome."¹²⁷

After Rashid, Wadud took the floor. He pointed out that there must be an inherent malaise in Muslim society, "There is no worry in this society. Muslims are sleeping with daydreams. 'we have to be Muslims, we have to be human.' But without generating a fervent urge for freedom, what is the use of describing Muslim problems?"¹²⁸ Wadud thanked Abul Hussain for his new proposal. But he also cautioned that reform proposals for Muslim education are not the only solution. The Muslim mind must be freed first:

¹²⁴ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Tritiya Barsher Dvitiya Adhibeshan*," August 12, 1928, MSSP, p. 58.

¹²⁵ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Tritiya Barsher Dvitiya Adhibeshan*," August 12, 1928, MSSP, p. 58.

¹²⁶ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Tritiya Barsher Dvitiya Adhibeshan*," August 12, 1928, MSSP, p. 60.

¹²⁷ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Tritiya Barsher Dvitiya Adhibeshan*," August 12, 1928, MSSP, p. 60.

¹²⁸ *Amader samaj ekhan sukh-nidrai bibhor. E Samajer kache ekhan kono samasya nai—man na jagile samasyar alocanai ki kaj haibe?* Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Tritiya Barsher Dvitiya Adhibeshan*," August 12, 1928, MSSP p. 60.

"We must have a sense of universality. It is only then that Muslims would be able to learn that Hindus-Muslims-Brahmos-Christians are one humanity. Only then will we be able to build real Muslim workers and fulfill our cherished desire of freedom."¹²⁹ Anwar Hussain, a member of the MSS, invited government attention to Abul Hussain's proposal. In an English weekly, Anwar wrote:

It is really gratifying to note that Mr. Abul Hussain...has recently published a booklet criticizing the present system of Madrasah education and giving a detailed scheme of primary, secondary, and university education. He has proposed many new things, which, if duly introduced will do immense good to both Hindus and Muslims....We only hope that Hon'ble Minister will not lose this opportune moment.¹³⁰

C. Independents' views on Madrasah education.

The speeches and essays on education that preceded and followed Abul Hussain's essay were not staunch endorsements of Islam in Muslim education. Out of 13 essays and speeches of independents on education, 8 described 'Muslims and education' (but not Islamic education for Muslims).¹³¹ One essay was read on the relation between religion

¹²⁹ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Tritiya Barsher Dvitiya Adhibeshan," August 12, 1928, MSSP, p. 60.

¹³⁰ *The Mussalman*, September 3, 1928. In another note, Anwar wrote: "The educational problem of Bengali Muslims has been growing more and more complex day by day with changing times....A nation whose brain power has not developed up to the required standard is dead intellectually and intellectual death is to be deprecated most....We have sought to lay special stress on religious education to the secular education which is so very important in this progressive science and art....One gross defect of the Madrasah education is that Hindus are mercilessly excluded from the scheme....Bengal is a land of both Hindus and Muslims. Nothing can be more dangerous and suicidal than a policy of exclusiveness and denominationalism in the field of education." See, Anwar Hussain, "The Education Problem," *The Mussalman*, May 21, 1929.

¹³¹ See Khan Bahadur Nasiruddin Ahmad (independent), "Abhibhashan" (AS, 1930), *Shikha*, Vol. IV (1930), pp. 4-21. Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman Khan (independent), "Abhibhashan" (AS, 1928), *Shikha*, Vol. II (1928), pp. 5-18. Abul Muzaffar Ahmad (independent), "Abhibhashan" (AS, 1929), *Shikha* Vol. III (1929), pp. 5-17. Aatur Rahman Khan (independent), "Muslim Bharate Shiksha Carca" (AS, 1928), *Shikha*, Vol. II (1928), pp. 105-109. Mamtazuddin Ahmad (independent), "Shiksha Samasya" (AS 1927), *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), pp. 86-92. Fatema Khatun (independent, Muslim female), "Prathamik Sikshay Mussalman" (AS, 1928), *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No.1 (1928). Abdul Kadir (Radical), "Bangalir Imreji Shiksha" (AS, 1933), unpublished, see, MSSP, p.118. Fazilatun Nesa (Independent, Muslim female), "Nari Jibane Adhunik Shikshar Asvad," *Shikha*, Vol. II (1928), pp. 125-128 and *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No.1 (1928), pp.48-52.

and education at a theoretical level,¹³² and one on religion-free education in Europe.¹³³ Finally, three essays were without any reference to religion.¹³⁴

Mamtazuddin Ahmad's (independent) essay, "*Shiksha Samasya*" (AS, 1927), began by arguing two influences of modern education, the 'cultural' and then 'practical.' By 'cultural' influences of education, Mamta understood development of 'intellect' (*buddhi*) and 'rationality' (*bibek*). Mamta understood that, according to the "theory of Evolution" (English phrase is Mamta's), the human was a development from animals: "yet with intellect and rationality we have turned into a new race (*jati*)."¹³⁵ For development of human intellect and rationality, he further cited John Stuart Mill's saying: "It is better to be a Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied."¹³⁶

About "practical meaning" of education, he cited a Latin phrase (via Thomas Carlyle, 1795-1881): "*Mens sana in corpore sano*" or "A sound mind in a sound body." Inspired by these secular objectives of education, Mamta demanded closing down all Madrasahs new and old in favor of modern schools and colleges,¹³⁷ but not reducing Islam in Muslims' education. Mamta's objection against Madrasah was not for its Islamic education, but because Islamic subjects were not properly taught in Madrasahs. Mamta wrote:

The Madrasah text books are two hundred years old....In this, the mixing of English and Bengali causes confusion.

¹³² Kazi Mutaahar Hussain (Radical), "*Dharma o Shiksha*"(AS, 1930), *Shikha*, Vol. IV (1930), pp.47-53.

¹³³ Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman Khan, "*Europe Shikshar Adarasher Kramabikash*" (AS, 1929), *Shikha*, Vol. III (1929), pp. 40-51.

¹³⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Shiksha-Sankat*" (AS, 1932), in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Samaj O Sahitya*, pp. 65-70. Wadud also wrote an essay that distinguished Rabindranath's universal ideals of modern education from conservative ideals of Sarat Chandra. Wadud did not read this article in MSS. See for reference, Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Shiksha Sambanandhee Rabindranath o Sarat Chandra* (1921), in Abdul Huq (ed.), *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, pp. 615-622. Samsun Nahar (independent, Muslim female), "*Shishur Shiksha*" (AS, 1934), unpublished, see, MSSP, p. 134. Sujata Roy (independent, Hindu female), "The Education of the pre-school Child" (GS, 1931), unpublished, see, "MSSP," pp. 101-102.

¹³⁵ Mamta's Ahmad, "*Shiksha Samasya*" (AS, 1927), *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 85.

¹³⁶ Mamta's Ahmad, "*Shiksha Samasya*" (AS, 1927), *Shikha*, Vol. I, p. 86.

¹³⁷ *Nutan puratan sakal madrasah bandha kariya school colleger Shiksha pranali abalamvan kara ucit.* Mamta's Ahmad. "*Shiksha Samasya*"(AS, 1927), *Shikha*, Vol. I, p.85.

Students do not have knowledge of *shastra* as previously. They become 'jack of all trades, master of none' (English words are Mamtazuddin's)....Also Islamic history, philosophy, *shastra* and literature are not [properly] taught in Madrasah-education.¹³⁸

Therefore, Mamatazuddin did not like Abul Hussain, propose reduced Islam in Muslim education.¹³⁹ nor did he criticize secular education in the West. Mamtaz took a position somewhere between a secular meaning of education in the West and a neo-orthodox view that Islam should be taught to Muslim students.

Unlike Mamtaz, Rahman Khan in his presidential speech (second AS, February, 1928) did not suggest abolition of Madrasahs. He argued: "Muslims would have remained completely illiterate without an arrangement of Madrasah education."¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, his specific criticism was that the Madrasah curriculum is overburdening the students. High Madrasah students are taught "high English school subjects, such as English and Bengali, along with Islamic subjects: Hadith, Tafsir, Quran, Kalam, Fiqh, Usul, Mantaq, etc...."¹⁴¹ As a result of overburdening, Muslim students had turned into "machines," without proper development of their intellect. Like Abul Hussain, Rahman Khan also criticized Islamic subjects of Madrasah. Yet it is be noted that Rahman Khan's speech was not an outspoken indictment of Islamic education.

Rahman Khan visited Europe in 1928. In the third AS (1929), he read an appreciative essay on education in Europe: "*Europe Shikshar Adarsher Kramabikash*" or

¹³⁸ *Madrasah Shikshar bishay pathya pustakadi dui sata Batsarer purber....Ihate imreji bangla jog karay bram ager mata shastrajnantao tahader hay na--tahara jack of all trades master of none....Tadupari madrasah-Shikshai Islamic itihās, darshan, shastra, sahityao shiksha hay na.* Mamtazuddin Ahmad, "*Shiksha Samasya*" (AS, 1927), pp. *Shikha*, Vol. I, 90-91.

¹³⁹ Instead of Madrasah, Mamtazuddin suggested that universities and colleges shall teach "Islamic studies." The purpose of Islamic studies, according to Mamtatazuddin: "Muslims will glorify Islam not only to themselves, but to people of this world....Muslims must understood Islamic books with relation to modern science and philosophy. Otherwise Islam will be impractical and impossible and in many areas it will be laughable." Mamtazuddin Ahmad, "*Shiksha Samasya*" (AS, 1927), *Shikha*, Vol. I, p. 90.

¹⁴⁰ Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman Khan, "*Abhibhashan*," *Shikha*, Vol. II (1928), p. 13.

¹⁴¹ Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman Khan, "*Abhibhashan*," *Shikha*, Vol. II (1928), p. 13.

'Evolution of the Ideals of Education in Europe.' The article appreciated socio-intellectual movements of Europe, 'Renaissance' and 'Protestant Reformation.' for developing the ideals of secular education.¹⁴² But Rahman Khan (independent) did not suggest any reform of Muslim education on the secular model of Europe.

D. Responses outside MSS to rationalists' criticism of Madrasah education.

Outside the MSS, the response to Abul Hussain's essays on education was mixed. The "Hon'ble Minister" of Bengal did not pay attention to Abul Hussain. A.K. Fazlul Huq, the Chief Minister of Bengal (1937-38), went so far as to assert that he would not only promote Madrasah education, but he would approve an Arabic university in Bengal.¹⁴³ The Momin Committee Report (1931) for reform of Madrasah education recommended to government a "new department of Islamic literature, History, *Mantiq* and *Hikmat* in Calcutta Madrasah without further delay."¹⁴⁴ The Muslim neo-orthodox intellectuals of Calcutta rejected outright Abul Hussain's radical reforms of Muslim education. Additionally, the neo-orthodox intellectuals demanded Islamization of text books written by Hindu authors that Muslim students read on Muslim history, culture and religion in Madrasah, school, colleges and even in university.¹⁴⁵

Yet the Hartog Committee (1928) paid attention to Abul Hussain. The committee was formed for reforming primary and secondary education in India. The committee was

¹⁴² Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman Khan, "Europe Shikshar Adarsher Kramabikash," *Shikha*, Vol. III (1929), pp. 41-51.

¹⁴³ Kuldip Kaur, *Madrasa Education in India: A Study of its Past and Present*, p. 199.

¹⁴⁴ Kuldip Kaur, *Madrasa Education in India: A Study of its Past and Present*, p. 197-98.

¹⁴⁵ See Mohammad Akram Khan, "School-Pathshalar Pathyapustak," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. VII, No. 5 (1933), pp. 362-367. No. 6 (1933), pp. 393-398, No. 7 (1934), pp. 502-507. Mohammad Akram Khan, "Vishvabidyalay o Mussalman," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. IX, No. 1 (1935), pp. 2-7. Mohammad Akram Khan, "Vishvabidyalayer Dilemma," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. IX, No. 8 (1936), pp. 515-520. Mohammad Khaled, "Prabeshika Bangla Pathy ki Pathya Haibar jogya," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. IX, No. 8 (1936), pp. 521-524. Moslem Khan, "Intarmidiyet Bengali Selekshan," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. IX, No. 8 (1936), pp. 526-532. Al Faruq, "Sampradayik Samasya o Calcutta Vishvabidyalay," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. IX, No. 8 (1936), 535-537. Abdul Mabud, "Jaghanya Akraman," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. IX, No. 8 (1936), 539-540. Ali Haidar, "Prashnapatre Hinduyani," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. IX, No. 8 (1936), 541-552. Aminuddin Ahmad, "Kalikata Vishvabidyalay o Ihar Uddeshya," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. IX, No. 8 (1936), pp.557-562.

headed by retired vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, Sir J.P. Hartog. The Hartog Committee which submitted its report to the Simon Commission, however, interviewed Abul Hussain in 1929.¹⁴⁶ Its four hundred pages report is not available to us. But an English newspaper reported that Sir J.P. Hartog, Sir John Anderson, and Raja Narendra Nath agreed that religious education "may be undesirable in public education."¹⁴⁷

Abul Hussain's proposed reform of Muslim education is not a re-statement of Islam. He did not propose that Islam be completely removed from Madrasah education. Yet it was only a skeleton of Islam that would be taught in Madrasah. This is again overshadowed by Abul Hussain's repeated insistence to teach communities other than the Muslims in the Madrasah education system. Abul Hussain was probably the first Muslim educationist of India who opened the door of Madrasah education for Hindus. He was also probably the first to include the history of the United States in Madrasah education.¹⁴⁸ This inclusion of global society and culture in Muslim education by Abul Hussain, Wadud, and few independent Muslims was as radical as their advocating that there be no law restricting "freedom of Muslim women." The independent and Islamic liberal Muslims who disagreed with the rationalists deconstruction of Islam and the Muslim tradition provided no strong argument infavor of Islamic education. Rashid was orthodox in his defense of Islamic subjects in Madrasah, yet he was willing to give women the right to vote in 1929. Similarly, Mamtaz and Rahman Khan both defended Islamic subjects for one reason or the other, but both were agreeable to the religion-free education in the

¹⁴⁶ News Report, "Hartog Committee," *The Mussalman*, December 7, 1928.

¹⁴⁷ News Report, "The Hartog Report," *The Mussalman*, April 19, 1929.

¹⁴⁸ This hypothesis is based on my study of several Bengali journals since 1905. Abul Hussain was aware of the founding fathers of the American revolution. He mentioned Benjamin Franklin's "cultivation of knowledge," and George Washington's "power" to fight in the American revolution. See Abul Hussain, "Caritra," read in 'Al-Mamun Club' 1927, published in *Naoroj*, Vol. I, No. 3 (1927). The history of United States in the curriculum of undergraduate program of the universities of Bangladesh has been introduced since late 1950's. See Kamal Uddin Ahmad, "American Studies Activities in Dhaka University," in Syed Anwar Hussain (ed.), *Bangladesh Journal of American Studies*, Vol. I (Dhaka: Dhaka University, Summer, 1987), pp. 55-65.

West. This straddling between Islam and Western rationalism was characteristic of several independent and liberal Muslim intellectuals of the MSS.

V. Rationalists viewed theoretically, the standpoints of orthodoxy, apologetics, and non-belief.

The rational humanists' deliberations in MSS also pointed out frequently their theoretical attitude toward orthodoxy, apologetics, agnosticism (*nastik*) and faith. This section concentrates on representative views of the rationalists in the essays of Motahar Hussain Choudhury and Kazi Mutahar Hussain.

A. Rationalists' critique of religious orthodoxy and apologetics.

Motahar Hussain Choudhury read three essays in MSS. The first essay, "*Amader Dainya*" (GS, 1931) or 'Our destitution,' is a critique of economic, educational and intellectual poverty of the Muslims of Bengal.¹⁴⁹ The second essay is written on Rabindranath's universal humanism, "*Rabindranath o Bairagyabilash*" (AS 1931). The third essay, "*Adeshpanthi o Anupreranapanthi*" (AS 1932), also describes intellectual destitution of Bengali Muslims.¹⁵⁰ Motahar reviewed the views on religion of three groups of Bengali Muslim intellectuals. He identified the three groups: (1) Orthodox (*adeshpanthi*), those who follow the commands of religion; (2) *juktibadi shastrapanthi* or religious apologist; (3) inquisitive (*anupreranapanthi* or "Know thyself," this English rendering is Motahar's), i.e., individualist or rational humanist. Motahar defined clearly the intellectual standpoints of the three groups and recorded his support and criticism.

Motahar characterized the orthodox (*adeshpanthi*) is those whose purpose is to carry out orders (*adesh*) of *shastra*, and who find it dangerous to follow any direction

¹⁴⁹ Motahar Hussain Choudhury, "*Amader Dainya*," in Motahar Hussain Choudhury (ed.), *Samskriti-Katha*, (Dhaka: Samakal Prakashani, 1958), pp. 113-126.

¹⁵⁰ For full text of the article, see, Motahar Hussain Choudhury, "*Adeshpanthi o Anupreranapanthi*," in Motahar Hussain Choudhury (ed.), *Samskriti-Katha* (Dhaka: Samakal Prakashani, 1958), pp. 269-277.

other than *shastra*.¹⁵¹ "Holding a stick of commands of religion," Motahar characterized. "the orthodox search for a road like a blind person" (*adeshpanthi kintu cale andher mata hatre hatre[.] adesh jasthi hate kare*).¹⁵² The orthodox do not know that the meaning of human life is not merely to breathe, but that "human life is full of unlimited potentiality to understand and experience its selfhood" (*jiban mane ananta sambhabana-purna atmar astitver upalabdhi*. This phrase is borrowed from Wadud's writing).¹⁵³ It is an exercise of independent human selfhood that creates literature, fine arts, and philosophy. The orthodox are not creative people but followers of *sharia*. "There is no creativity (*srishti*) where one obeys the prohibitions and commands of *sharia*. Creativity (*srishti*) is there when one crosses the barrier of *sharia* and gives importance to the impetus of one's mind."¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, Motahar states that the orthodox not only cannot create, but they are suspicious of the creativity of others.¹⁵⁵ "It is only the inquisitive (i.e., the rational humanists), and not the orthodox, who are creative" (*anupreranapanthi srijandharmi, adeshpanthi nay*). Motahar distinguished the two groups by dividing Bengal into intellectual periods: "One can see Bengal as a *shastra*-based society before Mahatma Rammohun Roy and in many ways a *shastra*-free Bengal in modern time."¹⁵⁶ He criticized, without citing a name, the beliefs of Muslim orthodox in Bengali Muslim society:

The poverty of Bengali Muslims provides glaring examples
of how *adeshpanthis* could bring a society to a utter ruin. I

¹⁵¹ *Adeshpanthi bhabe manush raktamamser jib, apaurusher shastranidistha path chara anya pathe cala tar pakse maratnak*. Motahar Hussain Choudhury, "Adeshpanthi o Anupreranapanthi," p. 269.

¹⁵² Motahar Hussain Choudhury, "Adeshpanthi o Anupreranapanthi," p. 269.

¹⁵³ Motahar Hussain Choudhury, "Adeshpanthi o Anupreranapanthi," p. 269.

¹⁵⁴ *Jekhane shariater adesh nishedh tini mene calechen sekhane tar srishtir paricay ney, ache sekhanei jekhane shastrake dingiye antarer ingitkei tini baro kare dekhechen*. Motahar Hussain Choudhury, "Adeshpanthi o Anupreranapanthi," p. 270.

¹⁵⁵ Motahar Hussain Choudhury, "Adeshpanthi o Anupreranapanthi," p. 270.

¹⁵⁶ *Mahatma Rammohun Royer purbber shastrasarbhasva Bangla ar bartman juger anekta shastra shasanmukta Banglar tulanamulak samalocana karley kathatir satyata sahabodhy habe*. Motahar Hussain Choudhury, "Adeshpanthi o Anupreranapanthi," p. 270.

believe that the areas in which our society is poor and has failed to create anything new are due to the dominance of the *adeshpanthis*.¹⁵⁷ Ninety-nine per cent of *adeshpanthis* not only disobey the instinct of their selfhood; but even refuse to acknowledge that there is something called human selfhood.... This is rather a slavish mentality.... *Adeshpanthis* obey only dry beliefs of *shastra* on the ground that these will guide humans in honest directions. *Shastra*, which has been imposed and has not come from within, is unable to keep humans in an honest direction.... Swallowing an outside order called *shastra* is like swallowing some bitter tasting medicine....¹⁵⁷

Motahar also defined and criticized *juktibadi shastrapanthis*, or religious apologists. He described the standpoint of religious apologists: "First they accept a particular religious idea based on *shastra* and then they try to support that idea by rationalizing it."¹⁵⁸ (*juktibadi shastrapanthis, era shastrer ekti bishesh matke mene niya sei matke jukti tarker dvara pratishhita karbar cesta kare*). Their attitude is not to accept reason independently, but to accept *shastra* first then rationalize. Motahar writes:

The religious apologists want to defend their own thought. But the problem is that they resort to fake reasoning instead of [an independent] reason. The ideals that are now existing in *shastra*, even if there have been contrasting ideals within these *shastra*, the religious apologists would not hesitate to apply reason and use arguments to justify. Their tendency is not to reason first and then accept [*shastra*], but to accept [*shastra*] first and then reason.¹⁵⁹

Motahar criticized religious apologists on several grounds. The first is that their failure to endorse reason before doctrines is a barrier to distinguishing truth from untruth in religion. The religious apologists also, Motahar claims, do not want freedom but only a loosening a bit of religious bonds (*juktibadi shastrapanthis mukti cay na, cay bandhan-*

¹⁵⁷ Motahar Hussain Choudhury, "*Adeshpanthis o Anupreranapanthis*," p. 271.

¹⁵⁸ Motahar Hussain Choudhury, "*Adeshpanthis o Anupreranapanthis*," p. 274.

¹⁵⁹ *Juktibadi shastrapanthis tar svamater pakse anek kichu balte ceshta kare. Kintu muskil ei je, juktir caite goja mili deya tara beshi. Sastrer madhyo battamane je sab mat dekhte paoya jay, jadi tader thik ulta mato thakto ta'haleo seguli sambandheo jukti tarka'er abatarana karte tara kunthita hata na. Age jukti pare mene neoya nay, age mene neoya pare jukti karai tader svabhab.* Motahar Hussain Choudhury, "*Adeshpanthis o Anupreranapanthis*," p. 274.

pash ektu shlath karte). Likewise, they also do not emphasize human life, but *shastra's* authoritative teaching. Motahar at this point quoted Wadud and Rabindranath. He quoted from Wadud's article, *Sanmohita Mussalman* or 'Infatuated Muslim': "The mysterious consciousness of life within us is most forcefully needed and then come, Quran, Rasul, and Sufi devotion."¹⁶⁰ From Rabindranath, Motahar quoted: "What we get as religion from outside, *shastra*, never can be my religion....The eternal effort of a human is to feel religion within oneself."¹⁶¹

B. Rationalists' view of faith/belief (*bishvas*) non-belief (*nastikya*).

Kazi Mutahar Hussain read, "*Dharma o Samaj*," or 'Religion and Society' (AS 1929), on the difficult topic of religion. The article traced the origin of religious faith (*bishvas*) and its meaning in modern time. Mutahar traced origin of religious faith or belief from human helplessness with events or facts that he could not control or answer.

Mutahar wrote that faith in God and the last day of judgement originated in human mind:

When the human felt that he is so little in comparison with various events and powers of this world....When the unfulfilled desires of human mind are destroyed in one minute...When someone dear and beloved dies or when someone suffers from oppressive exploitation for which humans can find no solution....¹⁶²

Mutahar agreed that there is a need of faith in human life. For example, he wrote that even the sharpest human intellect, consciously or unconsciously, in the end took shelter under faith: "Faith starts where intellect ends" (*buddhir shesh sima haite bishvaser arambha*). But Mutahar did not admit that religious doctrines, or the content or form of

¹⁶⁰ ...*Jiban-rahasyor bodhi amader bhitar prabal bhabe cai, tari anusangik bhabe asbe quran, rasul, sufisadhana*. Motahar Hussain Choudhury, "*Adeshpanthi o Anupreranapanthi*," p. 275.

¹⁶¹ *Amara bairer shastra theke je dharma pai se kakhonoi amar dharma ha'ye uthe na...Dharmake nijer madhyo udhbhuta ka're tolai manusher cirajibaner sadhana*. Motahar Hussain Choudhury, "*Adeshpanthi o Anupreranapanthi*," p. 275.

¹⁶² Kazi Mutahar Hussain. "*Dharma o Samaj*," *Shikha*, Vol. III (1929), p. 113.

faith, are self-evident or above human knowledge. What is more important, Mutahar writes that the content of faith is subject to change: "With the development of human *buddhi* and knowledge, faith is gradually changing"¹⁶³ (*manusher buddhi o jnaner prasarer sange sange bishvaso kramasha paribartita haiteche*). Not only does Mutahar see changes in religious faith, but he further insists that "reforms of faith are necessary and inevitable" (*bishvas'er samskar abashyak ebam abasyambhabi, tahate kona sandeha nai*). Mutahar's reasons are not complicated. He claims that period after period in human history "blind religious faith" (*andha dharma bishvas*) has conflicted with "reason and science" (*shudhu bijnan nay...dharmer sathe juktiro birodh ghate*). One result of this conflict, according to Mutahar, is that the "unchangeable religious' faith had also been changed" (*aparibartaniya dharma-bishvas'o paribartita hiyache*). As a physicist Mutahar cites example: "Columbus, Bruno, Galileo, Magelan, Copernicus had changed the medieval religious faith that the earth is flat and the sun orbits around the earth...." In the same spirit, Mutahar argued that unless religious faith conforms to human *buddhi*, faith is only superstitious beliefs. This rationalist thought of Mutahar is not directed toward a re-statement of faith, as Muslim apologetics of northern India were. Mutahar's standpoint is to disbelieve some religious doctrines:

In modern time even ordinary people are more developed in thought than many prophets, *abatars* and saints....All prophets who came to this world fought against superstitions and came out with new truths in their days. Nevertheless, that any individual or prophet had a direct contact with God and is bringing a message from God for the benefit of all humans probably in the present age would not be believed. The people of the modern age do not believe that God will interfere human actions that are also made by God....Hazrat Mohammad...said that no prophet will come after him. He also said that many people will come to this world to perform works done by the prophets.

¹⁶³ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Dharma o Samaj*," *Shikha*, Vol. III (1929), p. 113.

The modern people will call them, not prophets, but *Mozaddad* or reformers.¹⁶⁴

Two years later, Mutahar read, "*Nastiker Dharma*" (AS 1931) or 'Religion of Agnostics.' Without a reference to Islam, the essay constructed a theoretical balance between believers (*astik*) and non believers (*nastik*) of religion. The characteristic of *nastiks*' non-belief, according to Mutahar, is that they do not have faith in the existence of a "mighty and merciful God" (*Debata, Ishvarer astitve abishvas*).¹⁶⁵ Other non-believers say, "*Ishvar* is the creation of human mind, an effort of his emotion" (*ishvar manusher maner srishti, kalpanar karsaji*). Furthermore, Mutahar writes that *nastiks* are also materialists (*nastik ba prakritibadi*) who believe that creation of the world is not done by God, but by "perpetually inanimate-nature, because of its strength and some eternal goodness."¹⁶⁶ In other words, the universe is not created by God, but is the result of the highest development of the inanimate-nature (*jara prakriti*).

In the essay, Mutahar also drew similarity of thought between *nastiks* and believers of religion. His reason is to give a social legitimacy to non-believers that usually was not given in a religious society. Mutahar writes in the essay: "Between believers of

¹⁶⁴ *Barttaman juger sadharan lokeo jnaner ksetre anek bishaye purbbakaler muni-risi paygamvar abatar prabhritir ceye adhik unnata. sutaram purbbakaler paygamvar diger dvara je kaj haito, barttaman juge taha haibar asha nai....Prithibite jato paygamvar asiyachen, tahara pratyakei apan apan samajer kusamskarer biruddhe shakti niyojita kariyachen...Kintu kono byakti-bishes saksat bhabe Allahar nikat haito sakaler upakarer janya adesh bahan kariya anitechen, ekatha bodh hay e juger loke ar bishvas karibe na. Khoda saksat bhabe jagadyapare hastaksep kariya tahar sva-racita niyamer birudhata kariben, e bishvas kramanvaye lop paiteche....Hazrat Mohammad...baliya giyachen je tahar par ar kona nabi asiben na. Sange sange tini ihao baliya giyachen je nabir kaj kariber janye juge juge bahu loker abirbhav haibe. Loke tahadigake nabi na baliya mojjaddad ba samskarak balibe. Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Dharma o Samaj," *Shikha*, Vol. III (1929), p. 115.*

¹⁶⁵ Mutahar wrote that *nastiks* "Observing the sorrow and poverty, unfulfillment, disease and sadness of this world, hesitate to accepting God as merciful. Some of them, out of sorrow, cursed god and some... for fighting with God threw arrows in the air....Even some called them as Khoda" (*Jibaner dukkha-dainya, asanpurnata, rog, sok dekhe tara debatake bhagaban ba karuna-nidhan purnabrahmo bale svikar karte itastata karte laglo. Kau shoke debatake abhisap dite arambha karlo, kau ba...debatar sange judha karbar jayne akashe tir churte arambha karlo....Kau ba nijeke khoda bale pracar karte laglo. Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Nastiker Dharma," Shikha, Vol. V (1931), p. 27.*

¹⁶⁶ *anadi ananta abinasvar jaraprakriti antanihita gun bale nirdrista niyame apnake apani bikashita karte karte ei bicitra Vishva srishti koreche. Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Nastiker Dharma," Shikha, Vol. V (1931), p. 27.*

religion and materialist, in the true sense. there is no difference of instinctive-efforts or instinctive-religion.... Although, both belong to two different levels of creation."¹⁶⁷

On two levels, Mutahar saw a congruity. First, non-believers found a *cinmayarva* (consciousness) in the inanimate-nature. The believers see God in the nature and depend on Him for fulfillment of their highest hopes, aspirations, and pleasures. The materialists also see a *cinmayatva* in the nature, but only believes: "...*Ishvar* or nature operates by impartial rules; it is not its religion to do good or bad to anyone."¹⁶⁸

In another respects, Mutahar argued that believers perform virtuous work (*satkarja*) for reward of heaven or for fear of God. A *nastik* normally does not believe in the next world of religion. But an agnostic, as materialist (*prakritibadi*) and evolutionist (*bibartanbadi*), also performs virtuous work for fear:

The materialists are also evolutionists. It is their faith (*bishvas*) that their religion is to act according to nature. Otherwise, they believe, there will be suffering and punishment. For example, obedience to rules of health is a natural rule. If one disobeys, there will be severe punishment. This punishment is hell. [They believe] that by honest works humans have reached to a highest stage of progress of evolution which is the 'seventh heaven' for the materialists.¹⁶⁹

Mutahar's defense of *nastiks* came from another direction also. *Nastiks* do not perform religious ceremonials. Mutahar defended this position of the *nastiks*. Ceremonials of religion, according to Mutahar, are a natural manifestation of the 'spirit'

¹⁶⁷ *Astik o prakritibadi ubhayer madhya karma-prenar ba dharmabhabhe kona satyakar parthakya nai....Tabe ubhaye srishtistarer bibhinya sopaner lok.* Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Nastiker Dharma," *Shikha*, Vol. V (1931), p. 31.

¹⁶⁸ *Prakritibadi balen, Ishvar ba prakriti nirapeksa niyam anusare kaj kare jacche karo hita ba ahiter dike laksya kara tar dharm nai.* Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Nastiker Dharma," *Shikha*, Vol. V (1931), p. 28.

¹⁶⁹ *Prakritibadi abar sange sange bibartan-badi. Tar bishvas, prakritir niyam anusare calai dharm, tar birudhe calte gelei lanchanar abadhi thake na. Jeman svasthayer niyam palan kara prakriti-siddha. Aniyam karlei tar janya kathor shastir baybastha ache. Ei shasti narak. Satprabittir abhyas karte karte manush kramash bibartaner uccatar sopane arohan karche. Prakritibadir kache ei sab sopani sapta svarga.* Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Nastiker Dharma," *Shikha*, Vol. V (1931), p. 30.

(English phrase is Mutahar's) of religion. But Mutahar observed that without knowing the true spirit of religion, performing religious ceremonials turns humans into beings who delight in being servants or slaves (*das-tripti*). Mutahar also claimed that the importance and usefulness of religious ceremonials are now decaying:

Despite continuing necessity and usefulness in all societies and periods, the normal direction of [religious] ceremonies is toward some dry performances. Therefore, one can see that many people oppose [religious] ceremonies.... Sometimes a new spirit of awakening changes their structure.... Codified [religious] ceremonies are only an insignificant part of human life.... Beyond these, there is perpetual busy practical life (*karma kolahal*). It is this practical life that manifests the true spirit of religion (*dharmabhab*).¹⁷⁰

Mutahar criticized religious ceremonials for one more reason. Humans perform religious ceremonials as good ideals (*bhala adarsha*) of 'great men' (*mahapurush* and *birat manush*); but Mutahar examines an ill effect of following ideals of others:

The danger of following ideals of others is that what is not normal (*svabhabik*) in one's life is believed to be normal and is to be propagated (*pracar*). As a result, humans become resigned and ignore their own standard or individuality of life and become suspicious of one's own strength (*atma-shakti*) and one's own character (*atma-caritra*).¹⁷¹

VI. Understanding of Hazrat Mohammad.

A. Rational humanists' critical evaluation of Hazrat Mohammad and his influence.

Out of the 176 essays read in MSS during twelve years, only 4 essays examined Hazrat Mohammad. None of four essays is biographical; three did not claim divine revelation, or *wahy*, of God to Prophet Mohammad. The four essays, however asked a

¹⁷⁰ *Anusthaner ashesh upajogita ebam aparihajata sattveo sarbadese sarbakalei kramik shuskatar dikei er svabhabik gati. Tai bahu lokke er birodhi dekhte paoya jay....Anek samay naba-jagaraner gatibege er angik paribartano je na hay, ta nay....Er baire je asim karma-kolahal, tar madhyai dharmabhaber prakristatar bikash.* Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Nastiker Dharma," *Shikha*, Vol. V (1931), p. 29.

¹⁷¹ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Nastiker Dharma," *Shikha*, Vol. V (1931), p. 26.

crucial questions: "How should modern Muslims understand Hazrat Mohammad? What did he stand for; and how much can we take from him today?"¹⁷² Wadud was the first intellectual who addressed these questions in MSS.

A. Hazrat Mohammad is a 'great man', but not the 'greatest.'

In the fifth GS (July 8, 1926) in the first year of MSS, Kazi Wadud read his essay, "*Sanmohita Mussalman*" (GS, July 8) or 'Infatuated Muslims.' This was Wadud's first out of 14 radical essays read in MSS. The essay is divided into parts. In one part, Wadud was a harsh critic of Bengali Muslims' inhibited intellect. In the second part, Wadud blamed this inhibited intellect on Bengali Muslims' infatuation with Hazrat Mohammad. Nowhere in this 12 pages article did Wadud address Mohammad as *paygamvar* (Persian equivalent or Arabic *rasul*, or Prophet) or affix the usual Muslim phrases: "Let the blessing and peace of God be upon him." Instead of such titles as *paygamvar*, *rasul*, *nabi*, he wrote before Mohammad's name a title "*Mahapurush Mohammad*." (Great man Mohammad), or simply Hazrat Mohammad. *Mahapurush* is a title that Wadud also frequently used for many eminent figures, such as Rammohun, Rabindranath, Goethe, Sheikh Saadi, et al. We concentrate in this section on one essay of Wadud on Mohammad read in MSS, though he wrote other essays and gave speeches on Hazrat Mohammad outside the MSS.

Wadud essay, "*Sanmohita Mussalman*," paid attention to Hazrat Mohammad as a reformer of his lifetime. For example, Wadud writes phrases such as: Hazrat Mohammad's "thunderous discovery of monotheism" (*abiskrita bajrasar tauhid*); "blazing egalitarianism" (*agneya samyabad*); and Mohammad's "astonishingly simple and practical life (*ashcarjya anarambar samsarik jiban*)."¹⁷³ Wadud also depicted Mohammad's life, like the lives of other great man as: "that life was diverse and great in discipline, in love, in action" (*se jiban tapasyay, preme, karmme, bicitra o birat*).¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Shamsul Huda, "*Hazrat Mohammader Pratibha*," *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927).

¹⁷³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Sanmohita Mussalman*," in Kazi Wadud, *Naba Parjay*, I, p. 71.

¹⁷⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Sanmohita Mussalman*," p. 73.

Wadud also remarked that Rammohun, inspired by Mohammad, broke orthodoxy of his society: "The freedom of intellect and reason that he [Rammohun] instilled into the *chandimandap* (Hindu temple of the goddess, i.e., orthodoxy) he drew to its last minute impulse from Hazrat Mohammad's *samya* and *tauhid*"¹⁷⁵ Equally, Wadud argued that the Spanish Muslim philosopher, Ibn Rushd (Averroes), whose writings "led Europeans to question veneration of sacred teachings (*shastras*)" was a strong believer of Hazrat Mohammad's *tauhid*.¹⁷⁶ He wrote: "Nanak and Kabir, before the glowing flame of Islam's *tauhid* and *samyabad*, had again lightened a lamp of spirituality in India."¹⁷⁷

Despite this pleasing rhetoric, Wadud did not categorize Mohammad as more than a *mahapurush* or 'great man.' This is noticeable in Wadud's critique of Bengali Muslims' infatuation with Mohammad. Wadud writes in the essay: "Muslims, especially modern Muslims, are 'infatuated' (*sanmohita*). They are not only idol-worshippers but they have reached an extreme state of idolatry. All their rational intellect (*bicarbuddhi*) and riches of thought are strangely dumb."¹⁷⁸ The reason for this infatuation was not unknown to Wadud. In the essay, Wadud pointed out that Islamic faith in divine revelations is one reason for this "infatuation" of Muslims with Mohammad. For this, Wadud blamed "inspiration" i.e., 'divine revelation to Mohammad.'

...Built on the faith of divine revelations, the life that
Muslims are living by kneeling down to a giant idol

¹⁷⁵ *Banglar chandimandaper abarudhata o nirudveger bhitare tini [Rammohun] je prabahita karte perechilen sabal kandajnan, cinta o karmmer Vishvadhara, se samasther jogya prerana cittabikeshher mahamuhurte tar labh hayechila Hazrat Mohammader sadhana theke,—tar pracarita tauhid, samya...* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sanmohita Mussalman," p. 81.

¹⁷⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sanmohita Mussalman," p. 80.

¹⁷⁷ ...Nanak, Kabir prabhriti bhakta satyakar adhyatmikatar dip bharate punh prjjalita karechilen, tader samneo shikharupe jvalechila Islamer touhi o samyabad. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sanmohita Mussalman," p. 80.

¹⁷⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sanmohita Mussalman," p. 72.

(Mohammad), from an standpoint of spirituality, morality, and practicality. is a miserable poverty and confusion.¹⁷⁹

Wadud continued to argue that by the influence of this "unhelpful unseen power" (*asvastikar adrisha shaktir prabhabe*) the Muslims are persuaded to see the modern world with suspicion, as if they do not know, or had not been born into, it. Wadud criticized Muslim caliphs and philosophers for surrendering individuality and the search for truth for the sake of the "dazzling personality of Hazrat Mohammad"¹⁸⁰ For example, he criticized Hazrat Umar for surrendering his strong individuality in order to follow Hazrat Mohammad, "as if he believed that truth and Hazrat Mohammad's devotion are one and inseparable"¹⁸¹ (*satya ar Hazrat Mohammader sadhana ek o abhinna ei-i jeno tar manobhab*).

Without affirming that prophethood had been bestowed upon Mohammad and divine revelations transmitted through him, Wadud boldly assented: "Hazrat Mohammad, like countless millions of people in this world, was a human being. Mohammad was eminent for the greatness of his strength at one special phase of human history..."¹⁸² Wadud in the next sentence clarified Mohammad's "strength:" "For the smooth working of material life of this world, it was normal for the eternal ruler that He would combine

¹⁷⁹ ...*preritatvarup ek prakanda pratimar samne natadrishthi haye tara je jiban pat karchen, adhyatnikata, naitikata, samsarikata sab dik thekei ta shocaniyarupe duhsha o bibhranta.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sanmohita Mussalman," p. 71.

¹⁸⁰ ...*Hazrat Mohammader byakitver ei prakharjyor...* Wadud explained this character of Mohammad as a result of his "love (*prem*) of humans" and "works"(*karma*), but also due to "meditation" (*tapasya*) which Wadud defines a course of actions of Mohammad before he recieved divine revelation. Wadud supports dazzling individuality of Mohammad, because of his "love" of human, but criticized because of influence of divine revelation: "It is a fortune and misfortune of people to know details of him (Hazrat Mohammad)" *Tar upar tar punkhanupunkh bibaran janbar saubhagya ba durbhagya manusher hayeche.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sanmohita Mussalman," p. 73.

¹⁸¹ *Hazrat Umarer bhitare dekha jay, tini tar prakanda paurushke jena ar sab dike lauha-abesthane badha kare shudhu Hazrat Mohammader anubattitar pane un mukh rekhechilen; satya ar Hazrat Mohammader sadhana ek o abhinna ei-i jeno tar manobhab.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sanmohita Mussalman," p. 74.

¹⁸² *Jagater anantakoti manusher mato Hazrat Mohammado ekjan manush;—manusher itihaser ek bishesh stare shaktimahtmaya tini su prakat...* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sanmohita Mussalman," p. 70.

the efforts of two classes of people, the powerful and ordinary."¹⁸³ Wadud's understanding of Hazrat Mohammad was that he was a reformer, a great man (*mahapurush*); but not necessary a Prophet. Even Wadud's using the title, great man (*mahapurush*), for Mohammad was very careful and restricted. Wadud wrote:

Actually, great men are not omniscient. They are not the absolute masters of humans. A great man is only a great friend of humans, like a lighthouse is a friend showing the route for travelers on the ocean. It is a serious insult to human efforts of great men to believe that the words and thought of great men have fixed a definite path forever for humans, because, as a result of this belief, an awareness of God, which is the root of all effort, will be closed to human vision.¹⁸⁴

Wadud restricted the proper influence of great men upon human even further. "Prostrating at the feet of a great man and sacrificing one's intellect, judgment etc., is not showing genuine respect. Showing genuine respect is to undertake efforts with all one's life-force and brain for the sake of this great world; and on that basis, if necessary to oppose him."¹⁸⁵

A.. Debate on Hazrat Mohammad: Islamic liberal, neo-orthodox, and rational humanist.

Wadud's article did not produce substantial criticism in MSS. The only commentator was Shahidullah. Confessing frankly that the essay was of high standard,

¹⁸³ *Jagat samsarer jini cirajagrata niyamak ananta kal dhare tini emhnbhabe shaktiman ar sadharan ei dui shrenir cakrer samabay samsar-rathke ciracalanta rekhechen.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sanmohita Mussalman," p. 70.

¹⁸⁴ *Bastabik, mahapurush je sabbrjna nan, manusher sabbamay prabhu nan, manusher jibansamgrame tini ekjan bara bandhu matra--abashya jeman bandhu samudracari poter janya alokstambha; tar katha o cintar dhara cirakaler janya manusher pathke niyantrita kare diyechhe ekatha bishvas karle manushrupe tar sadhanake je caram apamane apamanita kara hay, kenana samasta sadhanar ja laksya sei allahar upalabधि manusher dristipath theke rudha haye jay.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sanmohita Mussalman," p. 70.

¹⁸⁵ *Buddhi, bicar prabhiti manuser srestha samval bisarjjan diye natajanu hoye mahapuruser paye gar hoye ye taro proti satyakar sraddha nibedan noy, tar proti satyakar sraddha nibedan hochey, prakanda ei jagoter upar dariye tar sadhanake samasta pran o mastiska diye grahan karaya, eham sei adhikare, proyajan hale, take atikram karay...* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Sanmohita Mussalman," p. 77.

Shahidullah criticized only a few secondary aspects of the essay. As an Islamic liberal, Shahidullah was not intellectually equipped to give a strong rebuttal of Wadud's unfettered rationalism. Shahidullah made only some scattered comments. For instance he observed that Wadud did not make substantial comments on the Sufi view of God and the Quran. Shahidullah, however, asserted that Sufis say that the human can experience God in many ways, but that among these many ways, the basic way is Islam.¹⁸⁶ Further, Shahidullah questioned why Wadud did not refer to many philosophers who were inspired by Hazrat Mohammad and Islam. Lastly, Shahidullah stated: "Islam is a natural religion for humans. Blind subservience is altogether wrong. But for one class of human it has necessity."¹⁸⁷

While Islamic liberals failed to criticize the essay, the neo-orthodox Muslim intellectuals outside the MSS did not spare Wadud's critical comments on Hazrat Mohammad. After the article was published in Wadud's book, *Naba Parjay* (1926), or New Phase, the neo-orthodox intellectuals wrote devastating critiques. Mawlana Mohammad Akram Khan attacked Wadud from Calcutta, while his associate in MSS, Daliluddin Ahmad, attacked Wadud in Dhaka. The debate did not take place in *bahas*¹⁸⁸ or in open public gatherings, but in published statements. Akram wrote the critiques in a series of essays under a satiric title: "*Naba Parjay na Naba [Bi]parjay!*"¹⁸⁹ (1927-28) or

¹⁸⁶ *Sufira bale thaken khoda bahu dik diye paoya jete pare, Take uplabdhi karbar bahu patho rayeche. Sei bahu pather sadharan path, sadharan rup hayeche Islam.* Abdul Kadir, "Pratham Barsha Pancam Adhibeshan," September, 5, 1926 MSSP p. 26.

¹⁸⁷ *Eslam manuser svabhabik dharma. Andha anubattita nitanta anyay. Kintu ek shrenir manusher janye ero prayojanita rayeche.* Abdul Kadir, "Pratham Barsha Pancam Adhibeshan," September, 5, 1926, MSSP, p. 27.

¹⁸⁸ Rafiuddin Ahmed reports that *bahas* which became a "common occurrence in rural Bengal during the closing years of the nineteenth century, were usually open public meetings held to debate controversial theological questions." See Rafiuddin Ahmed, *The Bengali Muslims*, pp. 43, 74-76, 79-82, 103, 184, 212 and 214.

¹⁸⁹ Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Naba-Parjay na Naba-[Bi]Parjya!*" published in Mohammad Akram Khan (ed.), *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. I., No. 5 (1927), 272-276, No.6 (1928), pp. 346-352, No. 7 (1928), pp. 393-400, No.8 (1928), pp. 497-503.

'New Phase or New Disaster.' Akram's position is that Hazrat Mohammad is human, but the greatest human in the world. Wadud defended his own position strongly. But it is interesting to note that Wadud was also defended aggressively by his radical associates, notably Abul Hussain and Abdul Kadir. In course of defending Wadud, Abul Hussain also disclosed his standpoint on Hazrat Mohammad and he too entered into a debate with Daliluddin Ahmad.

Abul Hussain's views were published in two essays, entitled "*Sab-janta*" or "Knower of all"¹⁹⁰ (1928). The title itself is satirical of Muslim beliefs that Hazrat Mohammad is a knower of all. As he is "the *Rasuliyyah*," he was the only perfect human born in this world. Abul Hussain's critique was well organized. He cites first the arguments of Akram and then he wrote his rebuttal. Three arguments of Akram's defense of Hazrat Mohammad were cited by Abul Hussain. First: "He (Akram Khan) said 'Muslims' faith (*bishvas*) is that all efforts, thoughts, knowledge and devotion of Hazrat Mohammad's life are full of eternal truth. Not even an insignificant untruth had ever touched Mohammad's life or in any aspect.'¹⁹¹ Abul Hussain interpreted this statement of Akram: "In other words he (Hazrat Mohammad) is faultless" (*arthat tini masum*). Second: "Unlike millions of people in world, he (Hazrat Mohammad) possessed unique, illustrious and extraordinary greatness."¹⁹² Third: "Muslim faith (*bishvas*) is that the Quran is not Words of Hazrat Mohammad. It (Quran) is not his discovery. And no

¹⁹⁰ Abul Hussain, "*Sab-janta*" (1928), published in *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No.1 (1928), pp.37-40; Vol. I., No.2 (1928), pp. 80-85.

¹⁹¹ *Tini* (Mohammad Akram Khan) *balechen*, "*mussalmanera bishvas kare je, Hazrat Mohammad Mostafar jibaner samasta kaj, samasta bhab, samasta Shiksha o samasta sadhana anabil satya paripurna. Tahar kona starer kona amshe asatyar samanya ektu samsparsha matrao nai.* Abul Hussain, "*Sab-janta*" (1928), *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No.1 (1928), p. 37. For this comment on Mohammad by Akram, see Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Naba-Parjay na Naba-[Bi]Parjya!*"(1927), published in *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. I, No.6 (1927), p. 350.

¹⁹² *Tini* (Hazrat Mohammad) *duniyar ananta koti manush apeksa svatantra bishista o asadharan mahimer adhikari.* Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Naba-Parjay na Naba-[Bi]Parjya!*" (1927), *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol.I, No.6 (1928) p. 347. Abul Hussain interpreted this statement of Akram: Hazrat Mohammad was *manusher atit manush* or "human beyond human." Abul Hussain, "*Sab-janta*" (1928), published in *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No.1 (1928), p. 38.

thought, planning and devotion of him (Mohammad) had any influence in the Quran. Its (Quran's) every letter, word and verse is directly the Word of Allah..."¹⁹³

Abul Hussain rejected these neo-orthodox standpoints of Akram. About the first two views, Abul Hussain alleged that these are "unnatural" (*aprakrit*) demands. He traced the origin of the views to the "auspicious utterances of the religious priests (*dharma purohitder mangara bykshaya*)."¹⁹⁴ For example, Abul Hussain recited the Quranic verse that Akram cited: *ana basrum meslokum* (I am human like you). But Akram had interpreted the verse to understand that Hazrat Mohammed was "human, but beyond human" (*manusher atit manush*),¹⁹⁵ because he received the *wahy*. Akram had somewhat de-spiritualized Hazrat Mohammad's life from the supernatural image of Mohammad given by the traditionalists, pirs and *mollas*. But Akram also re-spiritualized Hazrat Mohammad's life by his own interpretation of the Quran and Hadith.¹⁹⁶ Indeed, Kenneth

¹⁹³ For Abul Hussain's citation of this statement of Mohammad Akram, see Abul Hussain, "Sab-janta" (1928), *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No.2 (1928), p. 80. The Bengali version of Mohammad Akram's statement is: *Mussalmanera mane prane bishvas kare je, ei Koran Hazrater katha nahe. Tahar abiskar nahe, tahar cinta kalpana o sadhanar kona sampsarsa kona prabhab tahate nai. Tahar pratyak ayat o pratyak shabda ebam pratyak akshar saksyatbabe Allahar kalam...* See, Mohammad Akram Khan, "Naba-Parjay na Naba-[Bi]Parjya!" published in *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol.I, No.6 (1928) p. 350. Mohammad Akram Khan defended the Quran as the Word of God from writings and preaching of three groups: (i) Orientalist writings; (ii) Christian missionary polemics and (iii) critics of radical Bengali Muslims, notably Abul Hussain. Akram's defense rested primarily on two arguments. First, Akram cited the Quranic suras. Second, Akram argued that Mohammad was an illiterate Prophet. Therefore, it was impossible for him to write the Quran. The problem of Akram was that he could not sustain the argument that Mohammad was illiterate. Because, Mohammad's illiteracy would also raise doubt about Akram's claim that Mohammad was faultless. For further reference as why Muslim neo-orthodox had to defend the Quran the Word of God, see Mohammad Akram Khan, *Mostafa Carit* (1938), or *Biography of Hazrat Mohammad* (Dhaka: Reprinted by Jhinuk Pustika, 1975) and the *Quran Shariff*, I or 'The Quran: Bengali translation and commentaries,' (Dhaka: Reprinted by Jhinuk Pustika, 1960).

¹⁹⁴ Abul Hussain, "Sab-janta" (1928), *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No.1 (1928), p. 37. For Akram's interpretation of the Quran to understand Mohammad, see Mohammad Akram Khan, "Naba-Parjay na Naba-[Bi]Parjya!" *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. I, No.6 (1928), p. 347.

¹⁹⁵ ...*Maulana Saheb take "manusher atit manush" mane karte balen. Tai ki Koraner 'meslokum' er kona artha hay na.* See, Abul Hussain, "Sab-janta"(1928), *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 1 (1928), p. 39.

¹⁹⁶ See Mohammad Akram Khan's several essays on Hazrat Mohammad. These were published mainly in two Muslim Bengali journals: *Masik Mohammadi* and *Al Islam*. For a comprehensive neo-orthodox view of Akram on Hazrat Mohammad, see Mohammad Akram Khan, *Mostafa Carit* (1938) or 'Biography of Hazrat Mohammad,' (Dhaka: reprinted by Jhinuk Pustika, 1975); *Quran Shariff*, I or 'The Quran: Bengali translation and commentaries,' (Dhaka: Reprinted by Jhinuk Pustika, 1960); "*Mostafa Cariter Baishishta*,"

Cragg, a Cambridge historian, has given examples to show that it is not difficult to give an image of Mohammed as "a vicarious proximity to God" with the help of "ambiguity" in some "pivotal verses of the Quran."¹⁹⁷

Abul Hussain's rejection of the faultlessness of Hazrat Mohammad was based on his commitment to *buddhir mukti*. He writes that this kind of thought, that Hazrat Mohammad was "faultless" (*masum*) and that "God had special favor on him" (*tar upar khodar bishesh anugraha chila*) blocks *buddhir mukti*.¹⁹⁸ (*ei rup dharanay buddhir mukti ruddha haye geche*). He asked one difficult but crucial question of Akram. At what stage of Mohammad's life can one call him faultless? If it is answered that he was born faultless, then the Quranic verse, *...ana basrum moslekum...*(I am human like you) has no validity.¹⁹⁹ If it is answered that Mohammad was not faultless in the early stage of his life, but become faultless in a latter stage; then Mohammad cannot be said to be "completely faultless" (*tahale take ekebare nirdosh bala jay na*). Abul Hussain clearly states that Muslims cannot follow Mohammad as an example if he is without human "failings [and]

in Mohammad Akram Khan (ed.), *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. II, No. 12 (1929), pp. 711-722; Vol. III, No.1 (1929), pp. 1-4, No. 4 (1930), pp. 281-284, No. 5 (1930), pp. 321-328, No. 7 (1930), pp. 481-485.

¹⁹⁷ Cragg has cited several verses and words of the Quran. For example, he cited that Sura 2:255 asked: "Who is there that will intercede with Him save by his leave?" The "leave" can be argued that it was given to Mohammed. Sura 33:56 reads: "God and his angels celebrate the Prophet. O, ye who believe, celebrate him and greet him with peace." The word "celebrate" means here "to pray." Cragg writes, "God cannot, of course be said to pray." Additionally Cragg cited several ambiguous words that can be interpreted to give divine character of Mohammad. For example, he cited the Quranic phrase, *Tasliyah*, technical noun that is closely related to *Taslim* or invocation of peace: "Greet him with peace" and, according to Cragg "this lends support to the idea that the whole phrase may have to do with an inviolability of the Prophet, a sort of Hosanna: God saves Muhammed." Furthermore, Cragg writes, "Mohammad was the *Ahmad* (a variant of Mohammad) without the 'm'—meaning he was *Ahad* or the One, a title of Allah. Or he was the Arab without 'A' that is *Rabb* or Lord." In addition, in the ritual prayer or *salat*, all Muslims are bound to incorporate Mohammad into acts of devotion. "Petition, eulogy, celebration all came to be offered in his name....The *Rasuliyah* that had been the high way of the word from God to men became the highway of many words from men to God." See, Kenneth Cragg, *The House of Islam* (Belmont, California: Dickenson Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 29-30.

¹⁹⁸ Abul Hussain, "Sab-janta," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 1 (1928), p. 37.

¹⁹⁹ Abul Hussain, "Sab-janta," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 1 (1928), p. 39.

infirmities"²⁰⁰ (English words are Abul Hussain's). In other words, Abul Hussain looked at Mohammad as a down-to-earth human person. Abul Hussain writes:

It is saddening that Mawlana (Akram Khan) *saheb*, without understanding at all this fact [Mohammad's failings and infirmities would made him a suitable model for human], has unnecessarily loaded his *mantiqi* [Arabic word means logic] debate with worthless remarks....His (Hazrat Mohammad's) power cannot be matched with the power of ordinary people. We are 'imperfect' (English word is Abul Hussain's), but he (Mohammad) was 'perfect' (English word is Abul Hussain's). But unless one agrees that he (Mohammad) was imperfect, but later, through effort (*sadhana*) become perfect, or tried to become [perfect], the example of his struggle would be no use in our struggle to be perfect. Because for one who is perfect, what need is there for him to have a struggle?²⁰¹

Furthermore, Abul Hussain questions a fundamental belief (*bishvas*) of Muslims that "Hazrat [Mohammad] is the greatest Prophet and greatest man (*mussalmangan Hazratke sarbashrestha paygamvar o sarbashrestha manush bale bishvas kare*). Does this mean that no greater man was ever born after he was born? And that no man as great as he will be born in the future?"²⁰² If the answer is positive, Abul Hussain states, then it would render meaningless the Quranic understanding of the "evolution of humanity" (*manusher kramabikash*) and also a saying of Hazrat: "*Takhallaku bi Akhlakillah*" or "Be embellished with the virtues of Allah." If Hazrat Mohammad had believed himself to be the greatest. Abul Hussain writes, he would probably have had said: "*Takhallaku bi Akhlakillah Mohammad*" or 'It is Mohammad only who is embellished with the virtues of

²⁰⁰ ...*Jadi manushyacita bhul-bhranti o dubbalata tar jibane amara dekhte na cay ta'hale anukaran karbar mata kichui amara tar jibane khuje paba na*. Abul Hussain, "Sab-janta"(1928), *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 1 (1928), p. 38.

²⁰¹ *Duhkher bishay Maulana saheb ei kathati adau bujhte na pere nana kathar abajjanya tar "mantiqi" takkake anabashyak bhabe bhakaranta karechen...Tar shaktir sahit sadharan manusher shaktir tulana hate pare na. Amara imperfect* (English word is Abul Hussain's) *ar tini perfect* (English word is Abul Hussain's). *Kintu tinio imperfect chilen pare sadhanar dvara perfect hayechen ba hate ceshta karechen--ekatha na manhle amara perfect haoyar ceshta karte gele tar struggle* (English word is Abul Hussain's) *adarsha ta amader kona kajei lage na--karan perfect jini tar abar struggle er darkar ki?* Abul Hussain, "Sab-janta"(1928), in *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 1 (1928), p.39.

²⁰² Abul Hussain, "Sab-janta"(1928), *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 1 (1928), p. 40.

Allah.' Finally, Abul Hussain objected that Muslims' conviction that Mohammad was the 'greatest Prophet and greatest man' was held them back from confidence in "eternal human potentiality" (*manusher ananta sambhabana*). As a result, Muslims sacrificed their ambition to develop and found no alternative but to live with 'stunted intellect' (*kharbba buddhi*. English "stunted" is Abul Hussain's) and 'stunted power' (*kharbba shakti*).²⁰³

Akram's third point was that the Quran is the Word of Allah. This statement of Akram is a fundamental principle of faith on which Islam as a religion has been founded. There is no instance in the historiography of Muslim modernism in India that I know of where any Muslim modernist expressed publicly the slightest doubt about this fundamental expression of Islamic faith. W.C. Smith, H.A.R. Gibb, Aziz Ahmad and many others have not given reference to any Muslim modernists of India, who were 'no sayers' (*nastiks*) to this fundamental doctrine. For example, W.C. Smith wrote:

In the Muslim world, you will not find, or would not have found for centuries gone by, a lecture announced for theologians carrying as its title the question with which we have begun this essay ["Is the Qur'an the Word of God?"]. Nor do I know of any book in the Muslim world with this title. Muslims do not publicly ask, 'Is the Qur'an the word of God?....There are not books, and have not been lectures, in which the question was asked, precisely because the answer was given, was known and accepted.'²⁰⁴

Abul Hussain, however, challenged the authenticity of the Quran as the Word of God. His challenge lacked substantial philosophical justifications or speculations and strong back-up arguments. Yet it is a fact that Abul Hussain challenged publicly the idea that the Quran is authored by God rather than by Mohammad. This is classic radical

²⁰³ *Erup dharanar bashabatti hale manusher ananta sambhabanay ashahin haye parte hay ebam cirakali Hazrater adarsher samne natajanu haye, bara haoyar akankshay jalanjali diye khabba buddhi o khabba shakti (stunted) manush hayai thaka chara ar gatyantar ki?* Abul Hussain, "Sab-janta" (1928), *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 1 (1928), p. 40.

²⁰⁴ W.C. Smith, "Is the Qur'an the Word of God?" published in Willard G. Oxtoby (ed.), *Religious Diversity* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982), p.29.

example of what freedom means to rational humanist Muslim intellectuals in Bengal. Abul Hussain wrote these views in the second essay of his debate with Akram. We will first quote a lengthy passage of Abul Hussain to show how he challenged the Quran. Second, we will note why Abul Hussain challenged the exclusively divine authorship of the Quran. Abul Hussain challenged authenticity of the Quran in assertive words:

According to Mawlanas, one has to have faith that the words of *Khoda* (God) are the Quran, expressed through the mouth of Hazrat Mohammad. Mohammad is but a machine through which the Quran is revealed. Mohammad's mind and thought had no touch in the Quran. Mohammad is only a 'megaphone' (English word is Abul Hussain's) a lifeless 'automaton.' If this is a belief, we are bound to say that there can be no more impossible and unrealistic demand than this. 'Quran is the message of Allah.' If this means that Hazrat's devotion, thought and emotions had in no way touched upon it, then the question will arise: Why it was so essential for Mohammad, having so many difficult problems, to wait until forty years of age to receive the divine revelations of the Quran?....If *Khoda* had felt it essential that this 'final code' (English word is Abul Hussain's) be delivered through the mouth of Mohammad, then would it not have been more 'miraculous' (English word is Abul Hussain's) if it came out of Mohammad at childhood?....What need is there for revelations of the Quran phase by phase?....*Khoda* can say everything in one phase because He knows everything, the present and the future...²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ *Mawlana saheber byakhya anusare--amader mante habe, Khoda kisti ba kisti Hazrater mukh diye Qurane byakta karchen. Hahrat matra ekti jantra-puttali bai ar kichui nay. Tar man o mastisker kona sparshi Quraneer kona shabde lage ni. Tini ekti megaphone (English word is Abul Hussain's) ekti nirjib niret automaton (English word is Abul Hussain's), ei jadi hay tahale amara balte badhya haba er ceye asambhab, asangata dabi ar kichui hate pare na. "Quran Allahar bani" ei kathar byakhaya jadi ei hay je Hazrater cinta, kalpana o sadhanar kono samsparsha kona prabhab tahate (Quran) nai--tahale svahi ei prashna uthbe "Hazratke nana samasyar sanmukhin haye callis (40) Batsar kathor sadhana kare Quraneer bani grahan karar ki darkar chila?....Khodatala jadi emani ekti final code (English words are Abul Hussain's) tar mukh diye byakta karbar prayojan anubhab kare thakten tahale tini jakhan ati shishu chilen takhan tar mukh diye bahir karle ta aro bismaykar (miraculous, English word is Abul Hussain's) byapar hato?....Ar tahale kisti ba kisti bibhinna samasyar sanmukhin kare Quraneer ukti tar marphate pracar karar ki prayojan chila?....Khoda ta bartaman bhabisayat sabi janten...* For complete text of the article see Abul Hussain, "Sab-janta," *Jaganan*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1929), pp. 80-85.

Abul Hussain describes several negative influences that may arise from the conviction that the Quran is the Word of God. The foremost impact is that this conviction will constrain humans' *buddhir mukti*. Humans will not look beyond the Quran to solve problems, because "...no words are essential except the words of the Quran" (*Qurāner katha chara ar kona katha manusher janya abashyak haoya ucit nay*). Again this conviction means: "There will be no necessity for new rules and laws. Any need for humans arising from a power of intellect (*buddhi*) will then be recognized as illegal."²⁰⁶ Furthermore, Abul Hussain writes that the solution of problems, according to Mawlanas, is: "Turn pages of the Quran and tell the rules and laws" (*Qurāner pata ultao ar ain kanun bitiyē jao*). Abul Hussain also states: "Recognizing that, the messages of Quran are the Words of *Allah* that have fixed permanently human directions would mean that apart from the Quran humans have no need to frame laws for driving out their sorrows and miserable situations"²⁰⁷ There would be no scope of employing intellect to introduce new rules and solve new problems that arise everyday in this world:

All is in the Quran; look at these and fondle your beard-- that is it, everything will be fine! [There is no concern] that groups of destitute, convicted criminals, camouflaged fraudulent 'humanitarians,' and fraudulent religious traders are increasing day by day...It is futile to convince 'Islamic activists' (*Islampanthi*) that there is an urgent need of new rules and systems that are not in the Quran and Hadith because today's problems of society are completely different from the problems of those days. Today's human society is affected by new problems, which people in those days could not even imagine.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ *Nutan Nutan niyam kanuner ta darkar tahale hate pare na. Manusher buddhi bale kona jinisher abashyakatar svikar kara tahale anyay.* Abul Hussain, "Sab-janta," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1928), pp. 80-81.

²⁰⁷ *Qurāner-bani Allahar bani, manusher gatipath cirakal niyantrita kareche ekatha svikar karle svikar karte habe manusher dukkha dainya dur karbar janya kona ceshta caritra kare Qurāner bahibhuta kona nutan fiqir karar kona prayojan nai.* Abul Hussain, "Sab-janta," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1928), p. 81.

²⁰⁸ *Sab Qurane ache uhate bosa dao ar darite hat bulao--byas! Bhiksuker dal, kara-nigrihiter dal, sebakchadvabeshi prataraker dal, hujuk kare artha aijan-kari o dharmabyabasayi bhander dal din din bere caluk...Kintu etuku tader kichutei bujhan jay na--je, deshkal patra bisheshe jagater bicitra samasyo Islampanhider samadhan karte habe ebam tar janya nutan eman byabasharo darkar--ja haito Qurān*

Abul Hussain's message in this passage, therefore, is that for Muslims' worldly welfare, the Quran is to be superseded by new rules and social system, even if that amounts to contradiction of the Quran. He saw the Quran as reflecting Mohammad's effort to understand problems of his time. He urged his readers to do the same thing in their time of history. He did not give much argument to support his understanding of how God guided Mohammad in comparing the Quran. But his general objective was to show that the Quran is the words of Mohammad, whose mind was stimulated or inspired by blessings of God:

We know that for solving problems, specially of the Arabs and Medina, Hazrat Mohammad was engaged several times in deep thought. It was during this time of deep thought that Mohammad, was inspired by God, understood the solution of problems, and reported these. The flames of his devotion and higher quality of his thought had achieved God's blessings--the result in his mind is the Quran....It has been said that many times Hazrat became restless like an orphan in lonely places without receiving God's blessings. Why? Was this not a reaction of a temporary troubled mind that reacted to surrounding situations of obstacles and counter-obstacles?²⁰⁹

The comments of Abul Hussain were not countered directly by Akram. It was his intellectual follower, Daliluddin Ahmad Khan, who reacted. Daliluddin was a retired deputy magistrate who lived in Dhaka. He was member of MSS and was selected two times as member of a Reception Committee. As a member of MSS, Daliluddin also

hadise nai--Karan takhankar diner samasya ar ajkar samasyar madhye dher parthakya; ebam ekhan eman nutan nutan samasya manab samajke byathita kareche o korche jar dharanao tatkalin samajer pakse asambhab chila. Abul Hussain, "Sab-janta," Jagaran, Vol. I, No. 2 (1928), p. 81.

²⁰⁹ *Amara jani Hazrat Arab o Medinar samasya samadhan karbar janya bishesh kare bibhinna samay bibhinna cintaya nimagna haten ebam sei tanmayatar muhutteitini khodar madad labh karten ebam samasyar samadhan tar mane upalabdhi hato. Tai tini byakta karten. Tar sadhanar bahnite prajjalita o utkarsha-mandita citta khodar rahamat labh karte samatha hayechila--sei chitter phasali hacche Quran...Amara aro jani, Hazrat katadin khodar rahamater baridharay bancita haye anath balaker mato nijjane base chatphat karechen. Kena? Eki tar paripasvik abashar ghat-pratighater phale tar citter ksanik anurbbratar praman nay?... Abul Hussain, "Sab-janta," published in Jagaran, Vol. I, No. 2 (1928), pp. 81-82.*

donated funds. Although he was irregular in attendance, Daliluddin was present in two Annual Sessions of MSS.

Daliluddin wrote against the radical rational humanists, only after Abul Hussain had began the first round of rebuttal against Akram. Daliluddin's entitled his critique with an Urdu phrase: "*Kuch Nei Janta*" or 'You do not know anything.' The critics were written for one core reason. Daliluddin states that a 'believer of religion' (*astik*) will not pay attention to *nastik*, or non-believer, who denies God. But Wadud and Abul Hussain were not non-believers (*nastik*) and they did not give up Islam. They have confidence in Islam; or at least people say that they are Muslims. Yet, remaining as Muslims, Daliluddin wondered, they are refusing (*naraj*) something of Islam.²¹⁰ Daliluddin could not spell out in one sentence what it is that both have refused. He, however, justified Akram's orthodox stand: "Professor *saheb* (Wadud) has clearly expressed no confidence in Hazrat's receiving of divine revelations (*Hazrater rechalat*). In this situation, Mawlana Akram is right to protest."²¹¹

Daliluddin understood that Abul Hussain is a "well educated" but an "obscure person" (*ek ajjayatnama byakti*). Muslims are bound (*badhya*) to obey the Quran and Hadith and, therefore, "If Abul Hussain (*sab janta saheb*) claims himself Muslim, he is bound to obey the Quran and Hadith."²¹² In other words, Daliluddin's standpoint was that Abul Hussain, being a Muslim, has no right to criticize Islam. Daliluddin could not, however, raise any substantive arguments against Abul Hussain's objections. He did recite the Quranic verse already cited by Abul Hussain, "*Kol innama ana basrum*

²¹⁰ *Adhyapak Kazi saheb* (Kazi Abdul Wadud) o *Sabjanta* (Abul Hussain) *sahebke Islame ashaban baliyai bodh hay, athaca tahara jeno ki ekti jinis grahan karite naraj athaba sadharan manabatit buddhir bale ki ekta jinise dharana karite tahara saksam baliya tahader bishvas*. Daliluddin Ahmad, "*Kuchnei Janta*," published in *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1928), p. 86. See also Daliluddin Ahmad, "*Kuchnei Janta*," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No.3 (1928), pp. 132-136.

²¹¹ Daliluddin Ahmad, "*Kuchnei Janta*," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1928), p. 86.

²¹² Daliluddin Ahmad, "*Kuchnei Janta*," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1928), p. 86.

moslekum." Abul Hussain stated that Hazrat Mohammad meant, "I am human like you."

Daliluddin reviewed the background of the verse and re-stated its meaning:

When the Christians and the Jews claimed Hazrat Icha (Jesus) and Hazrat Zayer as sons of God, the Quran ordered Mohammad, 'you say that I am human like you, but *wahy* has been revealed to me.'²¹³

Daliluddin, therefore, argued that Hazrat was human, no doubt, but he was receiver of *wahy* and Hazrat position's is above the ordinary human. Abul Hussain's question in this regard was: "Does this mean that no great men, like him (Mohammad) was ever born after he (Mohammad) was born and no great men like him will be born in future?"

Daliluddin replied:

Hazrat [Mohammad] was born as a religious preacher in this world. His religious book, the Quran, contains advice about all essential matters of this world. He is the last Prophet, according to the Quran, and no religious preacher has ever achieved so much celebrity, after him. Therefore, how can I believe that as great a religious preacher will be born after him.²¹⁴

Daliluddin re-stated Hazrat Mohammad's saying: "*Takhallaku bi Akhlakillah*" as "Follow the principles of Allah."²¹⁵ Abul Hussain had understood it as: "Be embellished with the virtues of Allah." In addition, Daliluddin pointed out that many verses of the Quran refer to Mohammad with superlative phrases. For example, Daliluddin cited Quranic verse, *ajimen*, and stated: "Many commentators understood by this phrase 'greatest' (*shreshtha*). Other understand the phrase as "behaving like God" (*parameshvar*

²¹³ *Khrishthangan Hazrat Ichake ar Ihudigan o Jayerke paramesvarer putra balai khodatata Hazrat Mohammadke adesh karilen "tumi bala je ami tomaderi matai ekjan manush kintu amar nikat wahy najel haiya thake.* Daliluddin Ahmad, "Kuchnei Janta," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1928), pp. 86-87.

²¹⁴ *Hazrat dharmapracarakrupe prithibite janmagrahan kariyachilen; tahar dharmagrantha Qurane prithibir jabatiya abashyak bishayer upadesh bidyaman ebam tadullikhita "khatemennubiyani" shesh nabi athaba sampurna nabi baliyai prakash kariyache; tahar hadich "lanbiyabadi" haite o dekhi je tahar pare ar kona nabi janmagrahan kariben na; tahar pare e prajanta ar kona dharmapracarak serup sresthatva labh karite paren nai,--taha dekhi. Tabe kirupe bishvas kariba je bhabishyate serup **shrestha dharmapracaraker** (Emphasis is Daliluddin's) *janma haibe?* Daliluddin Ahmad, "Kuchnei Janta," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1928), p. 87.*

²¹⁵ Daliluddin Ahmad, "Kuchnei Janta," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1928), p. 86.

byabaharer nayay).²¹⁶ Abul Hussain argued that the 'greatest Prophet and greatest man' concept will discourage "endless human potentiality" (*manusher ananta sambhabana*).

Daliluddin replied:

Hazrat Mohammad's life is full of human potentiality...If we follow Hazrat Mohammad, it is inevitable that we will be directed to endless human potentiality. I do not understand how can one express doubt about the human potentiality of Hazrat Mohammad. If he (Abul Hussain) thinks that it is possible to go beyond the ideals of Hazrat Mohammad and that he can create some superior ideals, we think it is a wrong and impossible ambition.²¹⁷

Daliluddin did not give a direct reply to Abul Hussain's questioning that the Quran is the Words of God. Neither did his intellectual associate, Akram, enter into debate on this specific issue. The unwillingness of neo-orthodox and Islamic liberals to debate on the issue 'Is the Quran the Word of God' was most probably due to their not wanting to publicize this issue in Bengali Muslim society. The question itself, not to speak of its negative reply, is a threat to the foundation of Islamic theology and ideology. Daliluddin's counter-essay had, however, cited Abul Hussain's disrespectful languages regarding the Quran and Hazrat Mohammad. The article also presented the orthodox stereotypes that, compared to all other religions, Islam is the holiest and greatest.²¹⁸ Wadud's and Abul Hussain's debate with the neo-orthodox on Hazrat Mohammad had influenced the rationalist Muslims. For example, Huda's radical comments on Hazrat Mohammad in 1932, that we cited above, came after this debate. The following section describes, how Kazi Mutahar Hussain, another rationalist associate of Wadud and Abul Hussain, viewed Hazrat Mohammad.

C. Hazrat Mohammad: A "bhadralok" (gentleman) with good and bad human qualities.

²¹⁶Daliluddin Ahmad, "*Kuchnei Janta*," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1928), p. 87.

²¹⁷ Daliluddin Ahmad, "*Kuchnei Janta*," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1928), p. 87.

²¹⁸ Daliluddin Ahmad, "*Kuchnei Janta*," *Jagaran*, Vol. I, No. 3 (1928), pp. 134-135.

In 1930 two essays were read on Hazrat Mohammad in MSS. The two essays are Kazi Mutahar's essay, "*Manush Mohammad*" (GS, 1930) or 'Human Mohammad' and Mokhtar Ahmad Siddique's (independent) essay, "*Paygamvar Mohammad*" or 'Prophet Mohammad' (GS, 1930). The second essay is not published, but a summary version is recorded in the Secretary's Report of the session.

Mutahar described Mohammad a "bhadralok" (gentleman), with wonderful human qualities, but also with some human errors. Mohammad was a happy, luxurious, courteous, humorous, kind, hospitable and peaceful Muslim "bhadralok." He used the term 'bhadralok' in the third paragraph of the essay: "In this essay, I shall describe how Hazrat Mohammad was a bhadralok."²¹⁹ Mutahar provided some unusual descriptions of Mohammad's bodily features and attire. In the 1960s, Philip K. Hitti's, *History of the Arabs* was banned in Pakistan because it published a sketch-picture of Hazrat Mohammad. Mutahar, however, described Prophet Mohammad's physical features in 1930s:

Mohammad was a handsome man. His long hair fell down to his shoulders and he managed his hair by careful parting in the middle of his head. He used color for his eyeliner. He had a long well trimmed beard. He used to wear a big white turban and clean clothes. He used perfumes and color for his nails....He took hours for dressing, before he visited his friends. One day his wife asked him, 'Hazrat you are a revealed person of *Allah* and greatest among humans; yet why do you spend so much time for dressing? Mohammad replied 'Allah wishes people to meet their friends well dressed.'²²⁰

Except for the "white turban," Mutahar's vision of Mohammad's physical features and manners resembles the social dress of Muslim Bengali bhadralok of that era. Mutahar states that Mohammad was courteous. Whenever he met people, he gave *salam*. He loved

²¹⁹ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Manush Mohammad*," in Abdul Huq (ed.) *Kazi Mutahar Hossain Rachanbali*, I (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1984), p. 150.

²²⁰ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Manush Mohammad*," p. 150.

to play with children and told them jokes. He loved his wives and used to play with them. Hazrat Mohammad was also humorous with women: "One day he told an old women that she will never be in heaven. The women cried and Mohammad replied laughing 'you will never be *an old women* in heaven. You will be a *young girl* in heaven..."²²¹ Mohammad was kind, sympathetic and merciful to others: "Mohammad forgave the Jewish woman, Zainab, who wanted to poison him." After wars, the poor and miserable prisoners were released without ransom. Mohammad released Abul al-Has, who was Mohammad's son-in-law. Mohammad did not abolish slavery; but he was kind to slave men and women: "Many times a slave rode a camel and Mohammad walked. Belal, who was a slave, was appointed to give prayer call (*azan*). Mohammad arranged the marriage of his cousin-sister with a slave."²²² At times when Mohammad had problems, Mutahar describes, Mohammad acted upon his own common sense or by copying others. For example, Mutahar writes, there was no *wahy* that told about digging a trench during war. Yet Mohammad ordered it by copying an example in Persia.²²³

Despite these positive human attributes, Mutahar criticized Hazrat Mohammad for his errors. Mutahar censured Mohammad for having eleven wives before his death. Instead of becoming an apologist of Mohammad's polygamy, Mutahar was a critic:

In the reckless society of Arabia, Hazrat Mohammad did a very major reform by limiting marriage to satisfaction with only four women. But he (Hazrat Mohammad) himself married twelve women, of whom two were slave-wives[?] Hazrat got his first marriage with forty years old *bibi* Khadija....But not even a year passed after Khadija's death, when Hazrat Mohammad married a young girl, Ayesha, and also an old women, Saoda. In the next six/seven years, he married women one after another--Hafsa, Zainab, Salma, Rayhana, Habiba, Maria, Safia, and Maimona. At the time of his death, Hazrat had eleven wives. It is hard to believe

²²¹ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Manush Mohammad*," p. 151.

²²² Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Manush Mohammad*," p. 156.

²²³ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Manush Mohammad*," p. 157.

that Hazrat Mohammad, after keeping restraint [sexual control of having no more than one wife] until fifty years of age, all of a sudden broke that restraint....Some say that he married many wives for political reasons or to express equality of all classes of women.... One could not say what was the situation in those days; but in modern days these reasons are not taken as justifications for marrying so many women.²²⁴

Mutahar also states signs of other fondness for women by Mohammad. For example, Mutahar writes that even in the battlefield: "Mohammad frequently used to take one of his wives. To select one of the wives to go to the battlefield, Mohammad played 'lotto' (English phrase is Mutahar's) game."²²⁵ In another description, Mutahar writes that Hazrat Mohammad had used abusive language against the Jews, for example: "Oh! brothers of *markat* (a mythological aquatic animal) and *baraha* (the boar, the hog)."²²⁶ In still another example, Mutahar brought an accusation that Mohammad was involved in an assassination plot:

Like the Quresh, who sent assassins to kill Hazrat Mohammad, similarly Hazrat Mohammad also sent two assassins to kill Abu Sufiyan. For political reason in those days, Mohammad could be defended. But as a human, for this assassination attempt by Hazrat Mohammad, he could not, by any circumstances be called not guilty.²²⁷

²²⁴ *Araber ucchinkhal samaje bibaher samkhya simabdha kare prayojan mato matra cariti narite santustha thakar byabastha diye Hazrat Mohammad khub baro ekti samaskar sadhan karechilen. Hazrater Pratham bibaha hay callish Batsar bayaska bibi Khadijar sange....Kintu Khadijar mrituyar par ek Batsar ghurte na ghurtei tini (Hazrat Mohammad) balika Ayesha ebam bridha Saoda'r sange bibaha bandhane abadha han. Parabatti chay sat Batsarer madhyai kramanaye Hafsa, Zainab, Salma, Rayhana, Habiba, Maria, Safia o Maimona'keo patnirupe grahan karen. Hazrater mrituyar samay ei egaro jan jibita chilen. Ja hok pancas Batsar pajanta samjam raksa kare sahasa eruphabe Hazrrater samjamer badh bhenge jabe, ekatha bastabiki bishvas kara jay na....Keu keu balen, tini rajnytik karane, ba samyabhab pradasaner janya anekguli bibaha karechilen....Se samayer abastha keman chila, thik bala jay na, kintu battaman juge eguli atirikta bibaha karbar sangata karanrupe ganya hay na. Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Manush Mohammad," pp. 152-153.*

²²⁵ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Manush Mohammad," p. 151.

²²⁶ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Manush Mohammad," p. 151.

²²⁷ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Manush Mohammad," p. 156.

Contradictory to Mutahar's thesis was Mokhtar's (independent) essay on Mohammad. The summary of the essay indicates that Mokhtar's emphasis on Hazrat Mohammad was: "Out of all the Prophets, Hazrat Mohammad was the greatest."²²⁸ The secretary's report states in the summary of the essay that Mukhtar did not despiritualize prophet Mohammad's supernatural actions; but he confirmed these by several arguments.

D. Debate on rational humanists' view on Hazrat Mohammad.

The Islamic liberal leaders, for example, Shahidullah and Rashid, were absent in the session in which Mutahar read his essay on Mohammad. As a result, Mutahar's bhadralok portrayal of Hazrat Mohammad carried the day. Wadud began the discussion.

He pointed out a crucial question and a new promise:

Whether Hazrat Mohammad was the last prophet and whether the Quran was revealed by divine power, are not big issues for us today. Our problem is that living in this age, climate, and environment, how much can we take from Hazrat Mohammad's life and from teachings of the Quran? Let us not be dazzled by the monumental personality of Hazrat Mohammad. If we get nothing for our life from any aspect of Hazrat Mohammad's life, let us not hesitate to reject it.²²⁹

Abul Hussain repeated what Wadud had said:

There is no use for Muslims justifying every aspect of Hazrat Mohammad's life. He (Hazrat Mohammad) has to be judged as a historical person who was born in an age of the past and in a different environment. From the life-style that he led and the knowledge that he gave, we will take only what gives us light to lead our life in this country and in this age. Without doing this, if we justify him at every step, then he will not be understood and our life will be

²²⁸ Abul Fazal, "*Pancam Batsar Pratham Adhibeshan*," November, 16, 1930, MSSP, p. 80.

²²⁹ *Hazrat Mohammad shesh paygamvar kina, Quran pherestar marfat wahyrupe najel hayechila kina ajkar dine e sab amader baro samasya nay--Amader samasya hache ei juge ei abhaoya o paripasvikatar madhya dariye Hazrat Mohammader jiban o Quran theke amara amader jibane katakhani patheo samgraha karte pari? Hazrat Mohammader birat byaktitva jeno amader cokh jhalse na dey. Hazrat Mohammader jibaner kona Prathama jadi amara amader jibane na nite pari--taha parihar karte jeno amader etatuku divdha na hay.* Abul Fazal, "*Pancam Batsar Pratham Adhibeshan*," November, 16, 1930, MSSP, p. 81.

bewildered....Let there be no unchanging ideal to obstruct our road. We have to move from ideal to idealism.²³⁰

Surendra Nath Maitra, the Hindu who presided over the session, participated in the discussion of this purely Muslim issue. Maitra Babu made some diplomatic comments: "Today in Bangladesh we are discussing the child (Mohammad), who was born in the family of undistinguished parents (*akhyata pita-matar ghare*) in the far off past. This itself [suggest] the supernaturalism of his life. There cannot be any greater prize for him than this."²³¹ Maitra Babu also commented: "It is also a pleasure to me to say that a leader of my community (probably he referring to Rammohun) was inspired by this 'great man' (*mahapurush*)."²³²

The rationalists' essays on Hazrat Mohammad and the radical comments that followed from the discussion of these essays did not pay any attention to prophethood of Mohammad. Nor did rationalists consider Hazrat Mohammad the "greatest human" ever born. Kazi Mutahar analyzed Mohammad simply as a model *bhadralok* with human limitations. These analyses of the rationalist contrasted sharply with neo-orthodox and Islamic liberals' understanding of Hazrat Mohammad.

VII. Physical and intellectual intimidation against Abul Hussain, Wadud, and Shamsul Huda.

The radical critiques of Islam and deconstruction of Muslim identity by Wadud and Abul Hussain did not go unchallenged by Muslims--neo-orthodox, Islamic liberal and

²³⁰ *Hazrater jibaner pratyak byaparke justify* (English Phrase is Abul Hussain's) *kare mussalmaner ar kona labh nei. Take bicar karte habe ekjan aitihask byaktvi hisabe--itihaser ek atit juge bhinna abesthane tini jnmechilen. Sekhane base tini je jiban karechen je Shiksha diyechen, tar theke ei juge ei deshe base amara kataraku alo pai amader jiban calar pathe amara tai shudhu neba. Ta na kare jadi amara pade pade take justify karte jai ta hale takeo bujha habe na, amara nijerao shudhu biramvita haba....Kono adarsher pashan ese jeno amader path agle na darai--amader calte habe adarsha hate adarsatre. Abul Fazal, "Pancam Batsar Pratham Adhibeshan," November, 16, 1930, MSSP, p. 81.*

²³¹ Abul Fazal, "Pancam Batsar Pratham Adhibeshan," November, 16, 1930, MSSP p. 82.

²³² Abul Fazal, "Pancam Batsar Pratham Adhibeshan," November, 16, 1930, MSSP p. 82.

others--outside the MSS. The fierce opposition outside the MSS was concentrated at two geographical locations, Dhaka and Calcutta. In Dhaka it was essentially a few loyalist [to British rule] Muslim zamindars who intimidated physically and violated the freedom of thought of Abul Hussain and Wadud. At Calcutta it was mainly the neo-orthodox, Akram Khan and Daliluddin Ahmad, and Islamic liberals, e.g., Sheikh Wajed Ali and Mohammad Wajed Ali, who challenged Wadud's and Abul Hussain's critiques of Islam. It is interesting to note that none of the Dhaka-based Islamic liberals, for example, Shahidullah and Mohammad Abdur Rashid, went into debate with the rationalists except within the MSS. This section concentrates only on Dhaka Muslims' intimidation of Abul Hussain, Shamsul Huda and Wadud, and assesses its impact leading to the demise of the MSS. But to show how Muslims' of Dhaka were incited by the Calcutta neo-orthodox leader, Mohammad Akram Khan, we write a brief background.

The Dhaka Muslims' direct attack was against two essays of Abul Hussain, "*Nisheder Biramvana*" (published in 1926, but not read in the MSS) or "Dilemmas of Prohibitions" and "*Adesher Nigraha*" (read in the MSS, July 1927)--one essay of Wadud-- "*Sanmohita Mussalman*" (read in the MSS July 1926) or "Infatuated Muslims;" and one essay of Huda, "*Muslim Sahitya Samaj*" (1932).²³³ The four essays, as we have already mentioned above, were critiques of Islam. After publication of Abul Hussain's "*Nisheder Biramvana*" (1926) and Wadud's, "*Sanmohita Mussalman* (1926)," it was Akram Khan whom first declared that the "articles aim at attacking Hazrat Mohammad and his religion, Islam."²³⁴ Akram also brought charges against Wadud for an "extreme insult to Prophet Mohammad."²³⁵ The daily Bengali Muslim journal, *Sultan*, published from

²³³ Abul Hussain's, "*Adesher Nigraha*" was published in *Shanti*, Vol. IV, No. 8, 1929 and "*Nisheder Biramvana*" in *Abhijan*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1926. The two articles are reprinted in Abdul Kadir (ed.), *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*. Wadud's, "*Sanmohita Mussalman*," was published first in Kazi Abdul Wadud, edited, *Naba Parjay*, I, and later reprinted in *Abhijan*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1926.

²³⁴ Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Naba-Parjay na Naba-[Bi]Parjya!*" *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. I, No.5 (1927), p. 274.

²³⁵ Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Naba-Parjay na Naba-[Bi]Parjya!*" *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. I, No. 6 (1928), p. 351.

Calcutta, followed Akram. The *Sultan*, in an editorial, "*Dhakay Tarun Dal*," condemned Abul Hussain and Wadud as "*kafir*" or 'unbeliever.'²³⁶ Wadud and Abul Hussain, joined by Abdul Kadir, fought back against this extreme charge and their articles were published by some Bengali journals of East Bengal in 1928. The most notable example was the East Bengali radical Muslim journal, *Jagaran*, or 'Awakening.' The Calcutta neo-orthodox Muslim intellectuals thus began the attack and were soon followed by a loyalist Muslim zamindar of Dhaka, Khan Bhadur Kazemuddin Ahmad Siddique.²³⁷

By devising an ingenious method, zamindar Kazemuddin trapped and compelled Wadud and Abul Hussain to sign notes of apology for their criticism of Islam. Kazemuddin invited the two rationalists for conversation in his home. Abul Hussain's biographer reports that on August 20, 1928, the two came to Kazemuddin's house, but met with several of his Muslim orthodox associates.²³⁸ After several hours of heated debate, the two radicals were required to sign notes of apology (See, Appendix J). The two lengthy notes of apology were published only by Akram's weekly, *Mohammadi*. We only quote a few sentences from each of the notes. Abul Hussain had to declare:

I am extremely sorry if the language I have used could not express my thought and hurt my Muslim brothers (*Amar byabaharita bhashar janya amar maner katha jadi sampurnarupe prakash paiya na thake. ta[r]janya ami antarik dukkhita*). For this I apologize to *Allah* and hope that Muslim society

²³⁶ See, *Sultan*, November, 16, 1927. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Bad-Pratibad*," published in *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 39.

²³⁷ Kazemuddin was a petty zamindar of a suburban region of Dhaka known as *Baliadi*. Kazemuddin had no basic ideological difference with Mohammad Akram Khan on Islamic orthodoxy, but he differed with Akram on the question of British rule in India. Akram was anti-British but Kazemuddin was a loyalist. In correspondence with Akram, Kazemuddin wrote: "It is illegal and dangerous for India if it is independent and even if Muslims would have been the majority in India. Because Muslims were divided into sects of *Shia* and *sunni*." See, Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Alocana*" published in *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. IV, No. 2 (1930), p.158.

²³⁸ Abul Hussain's biographer has not mentioned the name of these orthodox Muslims of Dhaka. See Abdul Majid, *Abul Hussain* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1988), p. 85. The incident is also mentioned by Mohammad Siddiqur Rahman, "*Abul Hussain o Muslim Sahitya Samaj*," published in *Bhasha Sahitya Patra*, p. 84. Khondkar Sirajul Huq, "*Muslim Sahitya Samaj: Samaj Cinta o Sahitya Karma*, (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1984).

would forgive my mistakes (*Se janya ami khodar nikat maph cai, ebam samajer nikato asha kari amar aparadh marjita haibe*). My only objective is to express the beauty of Islam and Hazrat Mohammad's (sm) life in my life and in society of modern Muslims (*Hazrat Mohammad (dh) o Islamer raonak nijer jibane o adhunik Muslim samaje phutaiya tolai, amar ekmatra uddeshya*).²³⁹

Wadud had to declare:

According to my knowledge and faith, I have said nothing about Islam or Hazrat Mohammad that is impossible or lacking in respect/faith (*Amar jnan bishvas anusare Islam o Hazrat Mohammad (dh) sambhandhe eman kona katha ami byabahar kari nai jate asambhab ba ashradha prakash pete pare*). On the contrary, I believe that I in this my little life have been inspired and [still getting] inspiration from the Quran and Hazrat Mohammad (sm) (*Baram ami bishvas kari je Quran o Hazrat Mohammad (dh) theke ami amar ei samanya jibane prerana labh karechi o kari...*)²⁴⁰

The two rational humanists continued, however, to write radical essays and made radical comments in the MSS. For example, Abul Hussain published "*Adesher Nigraha*" in a Hindu-edited Bengali journal, *Shanti*, in 1929. Wadud continued to write radical critiques of Islam in many essays that he read in the MSS. Privately in his diary, Wadud noted his antipathy against reprisals by the Muslim against the freedom of thought and expression. Sometime between June 20, 1928 and October 22, 1928, Wadud wrote his diary: "Muslim society is a half-civilized society....Here fool is above the scholar. The scholar is afraid of the fool. But we must stand against this fear. That is religion."²⁴¹ Wadud continued in his diary to trace the root of this problem in the "half-civilized Muslim society:"

²³⁹ Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Dhakar Duikhana Ghoshana Patra*," *Saptahik Mohammadi*, August 31, 1928, p. 7. The notes are also reprinted in Khondkar Sirajul Huq, *Muslim Sahitya Samaj: Samaj Cinta Sahitya Karma*, pp. 123-124. Abdul Majid, *Abul Hussain*, p. 85.

²⁴⁰ Mohammad Akram Khan, "*Dhakar Duikhana Ghosana Patra*," *Saptahik Mohammadi* August 31, 1928, p. 7.

²⁴¹ *Mussalman samaj ardhasabhyar samaj...Ekhane murkha punditer upar, murkhaer bhaye pundit bhita. Kintu ei bhitir birudhe darate habe. Sei dharma*. Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, in *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, II, p. 328.

For this it seems Hazrat Mohammad is responsible. It is true that he had said very high words and formed a society; but in making a society he took enough care to see that a society was formed--but inside they were not fully developed mind-using humans. All are dolls--press the belly and sounds come out! That's all!....Those who say Hazrat Mohammed was successful are wrong. He created a huge Muslim society but did not build a huge human society....Perhaps a revolution is a last resort for Muslims...²⁴²

This radical rationalism again made the two intellectuals target of Muslims' communal attack. Akram continued to blast Wadud in *Mohammadi* from Calcutta. In Dhaka, this time Abul Hussain was handled more roughly by Muslim opponents. After the "*Adesher Nigraha*" essay was published, a few leading Urdu-speaking Muslims of Dhaka city became agitated. An Urdu-speaking Muslim, Khan Bahadur Syed Abdul Hafiz, vowed to kill Abul Hussain. Aaur Rahman Khan, an 'independent' member of the MSS, described the incident:

Khan Bahadur Syed Abdul Hafiz went to Abul Hussain's home at *Dewan Bazar* [neighborhood in Dhaka] with a gun in his hand. He first insulted Abul Hussain in filthy language. Afterward, he pointed the pistol at Abul Hussain and threatened to kill him, if he did not promise to stop criticizing Islam. At this time, Abul Hussain's wife and minor children came and stood behind Abul Hussain. Abul Hussain looked at them and replied, 'No, I will not write any more.'²⁴³

This was not the end, however, and Abul Hussain was not spared further harassment. Urdu-speaking leaders brought the matter to the Dhaka Nawab family.²⁴⁴

²⁴² *Er janya Hazrat Mohammad jeno dayi. Tini khub baro katha balechen satya, kintu dal garar dike eta cokh diyechilen je dali gara hayeche--kintu bhitare man-oyala taja manush nai. Sab putul pet tiple aoyaj beroy--byas!....Hazrat Mohammadke jara saphalkam balen tara bhul balen--tini ek brihat dal garay saphalya arjan karechen--kintu manush garai teman nay....Haito biplabi mussalman samajer pariniti... Kazi Abdul Wadud, Nana Katha published in Kazi Abdul Racanabali, II, p. 328.*

²⁴³ Abul Hussain's biographer, Abdul Majid, who is currently holding a high position in Bangladesh Civil Service, gathered this information from Abul Hussain's student, Aaur Rahman Khan. Aaur Rahman Khan was once Chief Minister of East Pakistan. See Abdul Majid, *Abul Hussain*, pp. 84-88 and pp. 96.

²⁴⁴ Dhaka Nawab family then consisted of the branches of Nawab Sir Salimullah's family. We do not know for sure who was the head of the Nawab family in 1929.

Abul Hussain was summoned to the 'Anjuman office' of the 'Ahasan Manjil' (name of the Nawab's house in Dhaka). On the night of December 8 1929, he had to sign again a *ksama patra* or 'Note of Apology.' On his way home around midnight, Abul Hussain was again harassed: "Some people of the locality threw human soil in Abul Hussain's face."²⁴⁵ Insulted and intimidated, Abul Hussain, on the following morning, December 9, 1929, resigned from the post as secretary of the MSS. Nevertheless, he had the frankness to defend his resignation:

I have been given responsibility to be secretary of the fourth year of the Samaj....But I was not been able to call a session and I cannot do that in future. For this inability of mine, I specially state to members of the Muslim Sahitya Samaj that from today I resign as secretary of the Samaj....For this, I think I should tell the real reason for my resignation. The motto of the *Samaj* is the 'Emancipation of Intellect,' but I think it is impossible in the Muslim society to live up to that motto....From the recent agitation that followed from my "*Adesher Nigraha*," I understand that none in this society will listen to a philosopher who wants the welfare of this [Muslim] society...My position [English phrase is Abul Hussain's] is not truly like a philosopher. My position is like a small worker [who is] thirsty for welfare....Last night there was a meeting held in the 'Ahasan Manjil.' Many representatives [Urdu-speaking] of Dhaka's Muslim society were present there. My essay "*Adesher Nigraha*" was translated for them into Urdu. They gave unanimous judgement--'I am an enemy of Islam. I have ridiculed Islam. I do not want the well-being of Muslims...' It is useless to resist this judgement. Only time will give a complete judgement.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ Interview with Syed Abul Maqsood, Dhaka, May 25, 1993. Abul Maqsood is a journalist of Dhaka and editor of a Bengali journal, *Astitva*. Abul Maqsood gathered this information from Abul Hussain's younger brother, Syed Mohammad Hussain.

²⁴⁶ "*Muslim Sahitya-Samajer*" *caturtha barsher janya sampadaker kartabya amar upar nayasta haechila....Amar dvara anaya Adhibeshaner jogar kara sambhabpar hai nai ebam bhabishyate haoyar asha nai. Ei aksamatar janya bishesh kare ami aj "Muslim Sahitya-Samajer" sabhyabrinder nikat nibedan kari je, ami adya hate ukta samajer sampadak pad tayag karlam....Ei padatayag karar asal uddeshyati ei prasange bale deoya darkar mane kari. "Sahitya-Samajer" mukhya uddeshya chila cinta carca kara. Kintu bartaman mussalman samaje cinta-carca kara asambhab bale mane kari....Samprati amar "Adesher nigraha" niye je-andalon hayeche, tate ami etuku bujhte perechi je, samajer prakrita kalyanakanksi darshaniker kathay keu karnapat karbe na....Amar position (English word is Abul Hussain's) thik*

Three years later, in 1932, Huda's idiosyncratic criticism of Islam again stirred Muslim communal stalwarts in Dhaka, who condemned Huda as a *kafir*.²⁴⁷ They forced Huda to appear before a local *Shalish* (informal court, organized privately to deal with social offenses) and selected Mawlana Shahidullah as their judge. In the trial, Huda was accused of being deserving of death, but Shahidullah, in his verdict, acquitted Huda with a strong warning: "The writer is warned that in future these subjects (Mohammad, Quran, and Allah) must be written with sufficient respect (*tazim*)."²⁴⁸

Ajharul Islam, one of Shahidullah's favorite students of Dhaka University, explained Shahidullah's anger against radical rationalists. Shahidullah was a Muslim heart and soul and was intolerant of any organization or individual Muslim who considered Islam "old and displeasing." Shahidullah was not willing to create confusion or dissension in the Islamic resurgence movement being initiated at this time by neo-orthodox leaders, Mawlana Akram Khan and Manirujjaman Islamabadi, by continuing his association with the *Samaj*.²⁴⁹

This harsh incident deeply upset Wadud. On December 12, 1930, the MSS took a resolution that expressed sorrow for Abul Hussain's resignation. We have noted earlier that Abul Hussain's resignation and subsequent leave from Dhaka in 1932 had stopped

darshaniker nay, amar position katakta kalyanpipasu samanya karmir...Gatakal sandhyar par 'Ahasan-Manjile' ekti chotakhata majlis hayechila. Dhakar mussalman samajer representative (English word is Abul Hussain's) lok aneke sekhane chilen. Tader nikat Urdute "Adesher nigraha" prabandhatir artha kara hayeche. Tate samabeta byaktibarga ekbakya je ray dilen, seta ei--"Ami Islamer (?) satru. Islamke niye uphas karechi. Mussalmaner kalyan ami cai na..." Ei rayer birudhe pratibad kara nirathak. Kalai er punabicar karbe. Abul Hussain, "Ekkhani Patra," Abul Hussainer Racanabali, pp. 75-76. The document was first published in Bengali journal, Masik Sancay, Vol. II., No. 4 (1929). Abul Hussain's biographer has confirmed this meeting held in the "Ahasan Manjil" on the night of December 8, 1929.

²⁴⁷ Prof. J.T. O'Connell's interview with Syed Ali Ahasan, who was a witness of Huda's trial by Muslim orthodox of Dhaka in 1931. The interview was recorded in Dhaka on August 29, 1992.

²⁴⁸ Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "Mohammad Shahidullahke Jeman Dekhechi," *Shahidullah Sangbardhana Grantha* (Dhaka: Renaissance Printers, 1967), pp. 202-203. My interview with Syed Ali Ahasan on May 29, 1993. Syed Ali Ahasan was a Class VIII student at the time of Huda's trial.

²⁴⁹ Ajharul Islam, "Mohammad Shahidullah: Ekti Smaraniya nam," *Shahidullah Sangbardhana Grantha*, pp. 218-219.

publication of the *Shikha*. But Muslim opponents in Dhaka did not at first threaten the very existence of MSS, the organizational base of the Muslim rational humanists for spread of criticism of the failings of Bengali Muslim life. For seven years after the first act of intimidation, the sessions of the MSS were uninterrupted. A total of 32 sessions were held between the incident on December 8, 1929, and the last session of the MSS on January, 1938. A total of 108 essays were read between 1930 and 1938. However, the membership of the MSS dropped from 96 in 1928-29 to 55 during 1930-31.

Decline of membership was more shaky leading up to the 1937 provincial legislative elections. No session of the of the MSS was held in 1937. Membership dropped to 16 in 1935-36, and to 11 in January 1938. The total essays read and sessions held were also low. Between 1935 and January 1938, a total of 5 GSs and 1 AS were held, but only 4 essays were read. We have not enough evidence to show how this decline was affected by the Muslim League's communal slogans on the eve of or after the 1937 election. However, Ajharul Islam, who was last secretary of the MSS, gave us some interesting indications of Shahidullah's religio-political role in Dhaka and the adverse impact of his actions on the MSS. As a provost during 1932 to 1936, Shahidullah began a movement of Islamization of the Muslim Hall students. It was Muslim Hall that had supplied the bulk of the student members of the MSS. The Islamization movement included many programs. One of the programs of Shahidullah was to invite and arrange speeches of the newly converted European Muslims, Khaled Sheldreck and Khaled Simson.²⁵⁰ It also included Shahidullah's own long speeches to students after the Friday prayer.²⁵¹ Ajharul Islam also wrote that Shahidullah's purpose was to infuse religiosity

²⁵⁰ Ajharul Islam, "*Mohammad Shahidullah: Ekti Smaraniya nam,*" *Shahidullah Sangbardhana Grantha*, p. 213.

²⁵¹ Ajharul Islam, "*Mohammad Shahidullah: Ekti Smaraniya nam,*" *Shahidullah Sangbardhana Grantha*, p. 216.

among students of the Hall by conversation and debate with them.²⁵² After Shahidullah was appointed provost of the Muslim Hall in 1932,²⁵³ Dhaka University banned sessions of MSS in Muslim Hall.²⁵⁴

On the eve of the 1937 election, Shahidullah, along with some student leaders of the Muslim Hall, Dhaka Hall, and Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University, founded the Purba Bangla Sahitya Samaj or 'East Bengal Literary Society.' The foundation of Shahidullah's Samaj led to the diversion of members from MSS. The most notable example was Ajharul Islam. Ajhar was nominated secretary of the MSS in 1938; but from 1936 he had been an active organizer of the Purba Bangla Sahitya Samaj.²⁵⁵ The motto of the Purba Bangla Sahitya Samaj was not known, but Ajharul Islam wrote, "So long as there is no attack on our *Iman, Bishvas, Akida* (faith, belief, and rituals) everybody is welcome in this Society."²⁵⁶ With the organization at his back, Shahidullah now desired to contest in the 1937 election under a manifesto, "Muslim Bangla is to be converted truly into Islamistan, for which workers are required"²⁵⁷ (*...Muslim-Banglake satyikar Islamisthane parinata karte habe ebam tar janya karmir prayojan*). Wadud could not do anything against this rising Muslim communal enthusiasm, except to leave East Bengal. There is no evidence that MSS was formerly closed by Wadud in 1938, well before he left Dhaka in 1940. However, our assumption of its closing in January 1938 is based on our finding

²⁵² Ajharul Islam, "*Mohammad Shahidullah: Ekti Smaraniya nam*," *Shahidullah Sangbardhana Grantha*, p. 216.

²⁵³ Shahidullah was appointed provost of Muslim Hall in February, 1932. *The Mussalman*, Saturday, February 20, 1932.

²⁵⁴ Abul Hussain, "*Sahitya Samaje Cinta-Carca*," speech delivered in the 'Sixth Annual Conference' of the MSS (March, 25-26 1932), published in *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 325. We are not sure if the 'Ordinance' was a government ordinance. It may be that the Dhaka University Ordinance had prohibited *Samaj* from holding session only in the Muslim Hall. Wadud also confirmed this ban on the MSS, see Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Pariciti*," in Shamsul Huda (ed.), *Kaekti Kabita*, (Calcutta: Nur Library, 1946), p. 3.

²⁵⁵ Ajharul Islam, "*Mohammad Shahidullah: Ekti Smaraniya nam*," p. 219.

²⁵⁶ Ajharul Islam, "*Mohammad Shahidullah: Ekti Smaraniya nam*," p. 222.

²⁵⁷ Ajharul Islam, "*Mohammad Shahidullah: Ekti Smaraniya nam*," p. 226.

no record of any session of the MSS in the Muslim Sahitya Samaj proceedings after January 1938.

VIII. Conclusion.

The deliberations of the MSS give us crucial evidence to reach several conclusions. The foremost evidence is that there was a radical group of rational humanist Muslims in the history of Muslim modernism in India. This group was centered in East Bengal, especially at Dhaka. The thrust of Muslim rationalism in the MSS was not to construct Muslim apologetics, i.e., to clothe Islam in terms acceptable to liberals in the West: but to deconstruct Islam in vital areas. The rational humanists understood *buddhir mukti*, or freedom of intellect, to mean unfettered freedom. This meant that freedom of thought and expression should not be constrained by Islamic faith, doctrine or practice. In the second phase of their deliberations, they used their unfettered freedom to analyze and criticize the theological and social rules of Islam in Bengali Muslim society.

The rationalist critique addressed several areas of Islamic ideas and practices of Muslims in Bengal. These included, for example: polygamy, rules of divorce, *purdah*, Islamic charity, fundamental tenets of Islamic faith, contradictions between traditional Islamic tenets and Islamic reforms. Also the rationalists denounced at a theoretical level the intellectual trends of Muslim orthodoxy and apologetics, and justified the position of non-believers/agnostics/atheists (*nastiks*). Furthermore, they critically evaluated the life of Hazrat Mohammad. The fundamental point in this critical evaluation was not to give an emphasis on 'Prophet Mohammad,' or 'Mohammad, the greatest human,' but simply treat him as a 'great man' with human virtues but also with human faults. This was followed by Abul Hussain's questioning publicly the Quran when understood literally as the Words of God. Wadud criticized the divine authenticity of the Quran in more sophisticated Bengali phrases in many debates with Islamic liberals outside the MSS. The thrust of these critiques of Islam, therefore, was not only objecting to specific

applications, prohibitions and practices of Bengali Islam; but also challenging the theoretical foundation of Islamic faith as understood by traditionalists as well as modernists of neo-orthodox and Islamic liberal Muslim types.

Yet even the most radical of the rational humanists in the MSS understood themselves as Muslim. A non-communalistic, or tolerant secular, understanding of "Muslimness" by Wadud and Abul Hussain can be found in many of their explanations of being Muslim. We cite only a few examples in this section. Wadud did not refuse to be a Muslim. But he rejected a communal boundary of society as established by religion: "It is ridiculous that I have to get out of Muslim society, because I do not agree with what other Muslims think. A society is not a prison. Society is a ground on which we stand up and exercise our free thought. Getting out of Muslim society, where would I go? The Christian and the Hindu are not societies of my choice."²⁵⁸ Similarly, Abul Hussain wrote in *Shikha*:

One day, one of my friends said, 'Looking at the apathetic situation of the present Muslim society. I feel it is my misfortune that I belong to the Muhammadan community.' In reply I said, 'It is for this reason that I do not feel ashamed to call myself a 'Muslim.' I do not feel proud of the history of the Muslims. I feel proud of the apathetic situation that Muslims have fallen into the present time. The reason for my proudness is that I was born and brought up in this destitute society. Therefore, I would get many chances to serve humans of this society.'²⁵⁹

Furthermore, one can see that the deliberations of the above two radicals in MSS and outside, had one grand objective: the improvement of Muslims in modern times. This bottom line of the two radicals was not different from any group of Muslim modernists of

²⁵⁸ Wadud also wrote in his diary on May 1, 1926: "Do I love Muslims only, Otherwise, why I am so sad when I hear the Hindus' glory and Muslims' miserable positions. No, it is not the truth that I love Muslims only. Above all, I want human welfare. Hindus are progressing in that road but Muslims are not. Therefore, I am so sad for Muslims. Also, I was born into the Muslim society and I could not deny this fact. I have an organic relation with this society, but deepness of my love and sorrows for Muslim society is clear. Today Muslims are extremely destitute." See, Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, pp. 306 and 313.

²⁵⁹ *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 99.

India. Yet the crux of the question is how the rational humanist Muslims found solutions to improve the backward situation of Muslims. The neo-orthodox and the Islamic liberals did not criticize fundamental doctrines and practices associated with Islamic faith; but the radical rational humanist Muslims did. This is where the radical Muslim intelligentsia of Eastern Bengal contrasted with neo-orthodox and Islamic liberals in Bengal and elsewhere in India. The neo-orthodox and Islamic liberals were defensive of Islam for improvement of Muslim conditions. On the contrary, rational humanist Muslims were not defensive, but rather critical, of Islam for the improvement of Muslim conditions along with humans of any community.

Chapter Five

Kazi Abdul Wadud's and Abul Hussain's Views of the "Religion of Creativity" (*Srishti Dharma*): the basis for non-communal Indian nationalism.

I. Introduction.

Kazi Abdul Wadud was not an activist in the nationalist politics of India. He had no formal or informal, social or political, linkage with political clubs or organizations of the Muslim League, Congress or Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind etc. Wadud's diary, *Nana Katha*, and his written correspondence indicate that Wadud had no social or intellectual communications with nationalist Muslim or communal Muslim political figures. Yet Wadud was not an unconcerned intellectual who kept to himself his views, about political developments in India. Wadud wrote a large article on the Khilafat movement. He reacted in print to the Civil Disobedience movement. He commented on the British rule in India. He responded to the political question of 'mixed electorate.' And in 1935, Wadud developed a clear, detailed thesis on the causes and solutions of Muslim-Hindu division in India. What emerged out of Wadud's response was in fact a new thesis--a secular humanistic nationalism for India. Wadud called this thesis *srishti dharma* or 'religion of creativity.' Its objective was not to hurry a nationalist movement for ending political unfreedom of Indians, but to start a movement of social freedom of Indians, first from infatuation or obsession with religion so that "Hindus and Muslims can lead an integrated life" (*Hindu-mussalmaner sanmilita jiban*).¹ He also told educated Bengali Muslims that their life-style ought to be changed to a "life of knowledge and love" (*jnan o premer jiban*). On another occasion, Wadud lectured the Muslim audience on "humans' loving union with their surroundings" (*paripasvikatar sange manusher prembandhan*).²

¹ "Hindu-Mussalmaner sanmilita jiban bhinna ar kichu jadi edeshe sambhabpar na hay tabe hindu-samskriti, mussalman-samskriti, arya-samskriti, semiya-smskriti esab katha haye pare dayitvahin, eham esaber pracalan amader bhashay o sahitya jata kam hayi tatay mangal...." Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Samskritir Katha," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 511.

² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Abhibhashan," *Bulbul*, Vol. IV, No. 7 (1937), p. 578.

This chapter elaborates three components of Wadud's *srishti dharma*. First, the chapter indicates the extent to which Wadud's own thought was liberated from a communal self-consciousness of being a Muslim, which was necessary to enable him to develop so novel a conception as *srishti dharma*, the religion of creativity. Second, it examines Wadud's secular or humanistic standpoint in relation to British rule in particular and the West in general. In fact, Wadud expected that British rule would play a positive role for freeing Indians from infatuation with religious communalism. Third, the chapter explores the most important component of *srishti dharma*, namely accommodation of Muslims with the Hindus, not on the basis of their respective religious apologetics, but through accommodation of Muslims with Hindus via rational humanism and human creative endeavors. Wadud did not subscribe to the thesis of composite nationalism, i.e., that enhanced Hindu communal self-consciousness and enhanced Muslim communal self-consciousness could lead to co-operation for a stronger Indian national identity. Indeed, Wadud's response to composite nationalism was critical and he pointed out its weaknesses. Furthermore, Wadud's standpoint was that Muslims' accommodation with Hindus should be unconditional and unrestricted.

This chapter is divided into three main sections, the first of which is further divided into chronological sub-sections. The first section starts with Wadud's own lukewarm Muslim response to the Khilafat movement, 1921, and ends with Wadud's secular humanistic response to the Civil Disobedience movement and his accommodation with Hindu revivalism in the aftermath of the movement. The second main section treats Abul Hussain's version of Wadud's *srishti dharma*. Most interestingly, Abul Hussain strengthened *srishti dharma* with new arguments for accommodating with Hindus and British rule in India. The third section examines in detail Wadud's three lectures, "*Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh*," delivered at Vishva-Bharati, March 26-28, 1935. The three lectures of Wadud are crucial to understand how a rational humanist Muslim saw the causes of and gave a solution for Hindu-Muslim division in India. It was in the Vishva-

Bharati lectures that Wadud fully elaborated the thesis of *srishti dharma*, the "religion of creativity." that he proposed for legitimating a secular humanist Indian "nationalism."

II. *Srishti dharma* in Wadud's thought (1921-1934): British rule, West, lessened emphasis on Muslim communal self-consciousness and accommodation with Hindus.

This lengthy section is divided into four parts: A) Wadud's response to the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation movement (1921); B) Wadud's lessened emphasis on Muslim communal self-consciousness (1924-29); C) Wadud's standpoint on the Civil Disobedience movement (1930-31); D) Wadud's sympathetic treatment of Hindu revivalism (1932-34) to encouraging Muslims' accommodating with Hindus.

A. Wadud's response to the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation movement in 1921.

Wadud wrote on the Khilafat movement and Non-Cooperation in 1921, a lengthy article. "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*." The essay was written before Wadud conceived the *buddhir mukti* motto. Yet Wadud's essay does not conform to the views of nationalist Muslims to Non-Cooperation movement. For example, Urdu-speaking nationalist Muslim leaders, such as Abul Kalam Azad, Hussain Ahmad Madani, Mahmud Hasan, etc.. "gave the Non-Cooperation movement a religious sanction."³ In other words the "nationalist" Ulema claimed the Quranic sanction for Non-Cooperation against the British rule.⁴

Wadud stressed several issues of the Non-Cooperation movement. He wrote that "we believe we have to understand Non-Cooperation by our intellect, which is the greatest resort of humans."⁵ Wadud restricted his definition of Non-Cooperation to its political meaning, "...Non-Cooperation is only a political issue. In larger human life there

³ Rizwan Malik, "Mawlana Hussain Ahmad Madani And Jami' yat Ulama-I Hind 1920-57: Status of Islam and Muslims in India"(Unpublished dissertation, University of Toronto, 1995), p.76.

⁴ Rizwan Malik, "Mawlana Hussain Ahmad Madani And Jami' yat Ulama-I Hind 1920-57: Status of Islam and Muslims in India," pp. 77-78.

⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud. "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*." published in *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 556. The article was also published in Bengali journal, *Moslem Bharat*, January-February, 1921.

cannot exist anything called, non-cooperation."⁶ And a political non-cooperation against British rule in India, according to Wadud, should not set a precedent for non-cooperation with a democratic political system of India.

Wadud expressed his objection against British rule by using several strong Bengali phrases: *danab shakti* or monstrous power, *dharmahin*, or irreligious; and said the British attitude to India was filled with *atnambharita* or arrogance. These objections were largely repetition of Gandhi's and nationalist Muslims' accusations against the British rule. For example, following Gandhi, Wadud wrote that the British were determined to rule India by the sword:

The gruesome murder in Punjab is one indication. In this age of science, learning, freedom, equality and fraternity the British rule marked a distinction of value between Indians and English. They think that one English person is equal to one thousand Indians...⁷

Yet, unlike Gandhi and nationalist Muslims, Wadud saw this "monstrous rule" as an outgrowth of the highest development of European democracy and material civilization. It is interesting to note that Wadud showed a deep respect for the development of democracy and material culture in Europe. He wonderfully described three ideals of European democracy: "Equality, Fraternity, Liberty" (*Samya, Maitri, Svadhinata*)⁸ The European *raj shakti*, or 'highest executive power' of European states, according to Wadud, is not concerned for the well-being and happiness of vested interest groups, but for all citizens who live within a *raj shakti*. The rise of the democratic type of *raj shakti*, according to Wadud, began a new phase in human history.

Its direction is not so much concerned with development of a spiritual life of humans. The commitment of modern *raj shakti* is now directed toward material development of humans in this world. For example, *raj shakti* has

⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita," published in *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 568.

⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita," p. 568.

⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita," p. 561.

introduced policies and programs so that humans would lead a happy and prosperous life, protected from poverty and disease. The modern *raj shakti* of Europe while creating a new order of state and society, has also created avenues for an unrestricted development and fulfillment of ambition, hope and aspiration of humans.⁹

Wadud also expressed respect for other influences of democratic (*ganatantra*) development in Europe. For example, he cited the rising 'power of masses' (*ganashakti*) and also observed that humans were given incredible opportunities for coming out of 'all kinds of superstitions' (*sarba prakar samskar bimukti*). This freedom of thought of the masses in Europe, according to Wadud, "is always essential for humankind's highest achievement of civilization"¹⁰ (*vishva-manaber sabhyater caram utkarsha labher janya sarbada apariharja*). Furthermore, according to Wadud, the form of government in Europe, i.e., "*raj shakti*, the way it functions through a parliament or gathering of people etc.." (*raj shakti, parliament ba janasabha itayadir madhya diya je pranalite karya nirbbha kare*) should be taken by human as a universal standard of state mechanism, because it is a highest form of government that can guarantee 'well regulated freedom' (*suniantrita svadhinata*).¹¹

Wadud contrasted this European development of democracy and materialism with Asian civilizations. Wadud argued that Asian civilizations had also stressed materialism, but only at the cost of yet more emphasis on spirituality. On the contrary, "*raj shakti* in Europe found out the secret truth of human life--a new truth, the splendors of the desire for enjoyment"¹² (*bhogakankshar saundarya*). Wadud described the amazing splendors and elegance of material civilization achieved by Europe:

In this perceptible world (*drisyaman jagat*, as opposed to *parakal*, or next world), variety of earthly pleasures (*bhog*)

⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," p. 559.

¹⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," p. 560.

¹¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," p. 560.

¹² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," p. 559.

has made human life charming. The earthly pleasures have given human life a new vigor (*nabasphurti*) and new strength (*nabashakti*). Now, modern people no longer have to wait like dull-witted persons for pleasures in the next world (*paraka*). The ancient sages of Asia had stated that for heavenly pleasure people should promote spiritual life in their society. But modern people have brought pleasures into this earthly world by the power of intellect (*buddhi*).... We should not hesitate to eulogize the beauty of human intellect that has been inspired in the heart of the Europeans.¹³

Yet, Wadud was disappointed by British rule in India. He argued that 'Equality, Fraternity, Liberty' were also ambitions of the Indian nation (*bharatiya jati*),¹⁴ yet the British would not grant these to India. The British rule was inflated by an arrogance (*atnambharita*) arising from their highest achievements in material and democratic development: "British rulers want in India the highest fulfillment of their selfish purpose, no matter what honest or dishonest means they achieve them."¹⁵ Wadud, however, did not claim that the British rulers in India were the only examples of this arrogance. Neither did he exclusively blame India for being the first victim of European arrogance. Wadud argued that the highest form of European arrogance was expressed in "Nietzsche's ideal of the superman."¹⁶ Germany had begun World War I due to the superman ideal of Nietzsche. After Germany's defeat, the victors of Europe themselves took this ideal and made ineffectual the "American scholar president," Woodrow Wilson's, ideals of "League of Nations" and "self-determination of nations."¹⁷

Notwithstanding these criticisms, Wadud thought that non-cooperation against British "political rule" should be non-violent and peaceful: "It is only non-violent non-

¹³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," p. 560.

¹⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," p. 561.

¹⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," p. 571.

¹⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," p. 571.

¹⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," p. 571.

cooperation which is our goal."¹⁸ For self-restraint in the face of British rule, Wadud offered several suggestions. He forbade any kind of physical violence. For example, Wadud appealed for guarantee of personal safety of British officials and their staffs. More importantly, Wadud understood non-violent non-cooperation only as: *srishti dharmi asahajogita*, or 'non-cooperation is to be founded on the "religion" of creativity.' Its one positive aspect is that non-cooperation versus the British is also the "cementing bond amongst ourselves (Indians)." Wadud reminded: "Our miserable unfreedom is not only effected by our rulers; but it is also our creation."¹⁹

Wadud also proposed reforms for problems for which he blamed Indians. The reform proposals of Wadud were so extensive that at times he forgot that his target was British rule in India. For example, when the Central Khilafat Committee asked students to leave all British educational institutions, Wadud did not accept this proposal outright. His answer was ambivalent: "Unless students are properly indoctrinated in the broader purpose of non-violent non-cooperation, they should stay in schools and colleges."²⁰ That indoctrination, according to Wadud, was to educate students that "Non-Cooperation is with well-established but irreligious rulers in India. In other words, in a broader sense, it is only with modern European thought that is against the equality and freedom of universal humanity."²¹ For teaching "universal humanity" (*vishva-manab*) in education, Wadud proposed a reform of 'national education' (*jatiya shiksha*). The proposal suggested new curricula in school and college education, one central purpose of which was to resolve Hindu-Muslim division. The secondary purpose was to popularize vocational and

¹⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," p. 583.

¹⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," p. 577.

²⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," p. 579.

²¹ *Asahajogita haiteche bharate supratisthita athaca dharmahin shasanshaktir sahit, athaba aro byapakbhabe balite gele vishva-manaber samaya-svadhinatar birodhi adhunik Europiya citter sahit.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," p. 578.

adult education. These proposals tended to deflect attention from any direct or indirect indoctrination of students against the British colonial power in India.²²

In a separate section of the article, "Non-Cooperation and Muslims," Wadud also articulated some of the views of nationalist Muslims:

The Christian world is frightened and jealous due to Muslim power and might. The destruction of Khilafat means to Muslims the loss of their worldly power. Political freedom of Muslims is indispensable for Islam and for Muslims. Pan-Islamism is a form unity of universal humanity.²³

Yet, unlike nationalist Muslims, Wadud did not elaborate where and how British rule had destroyed Muslim traditions and Islam in India. Similarly Wadud did not share the view of nationalist Muslims that it is simply un-Islamic for Muslims to live under a Christian ruler. Wadud, however, did suggest that Muslims should not forego a religious identity of Islam. Yet it is important to note that it was only during the Khilafat/Non-Cooperation movement that Wadud spoken favorably about Muslim and Hindu communal identities. Wadud explained why he did seek support of religion for Hindu-Muslim unity during the Khilafat/Non-Cooperation movement:

I think it is not time yet for breaking the boundaries of religion. Without breaking a boundary, they (Muslims and Hindus) should be kept within religious boundaries, so that they may get more strength and firmness from religion. But one should bear in mind that while keeping separate religious identities, they should keep alive true religious feeling (*prakrita dharma bhab*). True religious feeling is involvement of Indians in wider social and material life and removal of the repression (*atyacar*) of meaningless ceremonials of religion. In other words, the highest order of all religions is that humans have entered into an inseparable organic unity, because humans are united under *Allah* or *Bhagaban*.²⁴

²² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," pp. 599-606.

²³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," pp. 606-614.

²⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," p. 610.

During the Khilafat movement, Wadud also resolved, in his own thinking anyway, one of deep-rooted tensions of composite nationalism: "Are we Muslim or Indian first?" To this question, a typical nationalist Muslim's response was: "India is the physical and Islam the spiritual force for the Indian Muslims."²⁵ Conversely, Wadud argued: "If the Khilafat, for the restoration of which we are fighting today, were to attack India tomorrow, then it would be our obligation to fight back....Because nobody has the right, not even our Khalifa, to impose bondage on countless Muslim-Hindu-Christian-Buddhists in India."²⁶ In other words, Wadud's own resolve, in the ongoing tension between religion and nationalism, was to embrace an "un-conflicting patriotism," of the *bharatbasi*, or Indian. Wadud wrote: "The national patriots sometimes would help Muslims against non-Muslims: but also [sometime] help non-Muslims against Muslims."²⁷

B. Wadud's lessened Muslim communal self-consciousness (1924-1929).

Whatever Muslim communal self-consciousness Wadud had expressed during the Khilafat movement began to change steadily in the aftermath of the Khilafat campaign. From 1924, the ideals of freedom (*mukti*), intellect (*buddhi*) and creativity (*srishiti*) had been evolving in Wadud's thought. We have also noted that Wadud appreciated the thought of Tagore and Rammohun in terms of those ideals. A rational humanistic tendency in Wadud's understanding of Islam was also evident in the essays and comments that he presented in MSS, as we have seen. This sub-section provides additional evidence of Wadud's reduced emphasis, even prior to the launching of the MSS, on Muslim self-consciousness. In particular, it shows the difference of emphasis in Wadud's view of

²⁵ Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan, 1857-1967*, p. 192.

²⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," p. 613.

²⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Non-Cooperation ba Asahajogita*," p. 614.

Hazrat Mohammad as compared with the view of composite nationalist Muslims, who took "Prophet Mohammad" as an Islamic justification for Muslims' cooperation with Hindus in India.²⁸

1. Wadud's critique of Khilafat.

Despite Wadud's initial support for the Khilafat and a non-violent Non-Cooperation movements, his diary in 1924 was privately cheerful over the destruction of Khilafat: "The destruction of Khilafat was most necessary"²⁹ (*khilafat dhvamsa hala ei sab caite darkari*). Since 1924, he had denied that Indian Muslims had political and financial responsibility for preservation of Khilafat. "We will protect all Muslim countries--this is largely not true....Why should we protect them? Who are you to protect them? Above all, how long should the Khilafat arrangement continue, like a plant protected in a pot?"³⁰ Wadud thought that Muslim countries until now had survived on physical force and not on the strength of modern science and knowledge. Under the name of "so-called Khilafat," Muslims ruled their countries with imposition of religious dogmas. The destruction of Kihilafat would give them relief: "They would not allow religious rules to dominate the human intellect."³¹ As for those who argued that destruction of Khilafat hurt the image of Muslims, Wadud commented, "I agree with them, but I am not sorry for it. It is now very essential that a part of '*mussalman* feeling'

²⁸ Rizwan Malik, "Mawlana Hussain Ahmad Madani And Jami' yat Ulama-I Hind 1920-57: Status of Islam and Muslims in India," pp. 85-86. Mushir U. Haq, *Muslim Politics in Modern India* (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1970), p. 118. Yohanan Friedmann, "The attitude of the Jam'iyat-i-Ulama-i-Hind," *Asian and African Studies*, Vol.VII., (1971), p. 164.

²⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha, Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, II, p. 298.

³⁰ *Sab mussalman desh amara raksha karba er bhetare anekkhani asatya ache...Ken raksha karbo? Tumi raksha karbar ke? Tar upar shudhu emani karei tabe jiye rakhbar mata raksha kare ar katadin calbe?* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, dated March 7, 1924, pp. 298-299.

³¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, dated March 7, 1924, p. 299.

(*mussalman bhab*) should be destroyed. Up to now, religion had brought torture. Now it would be cut back and would be situated in its proper place in [human] life."³²

Privately, Wadud also criticized two nationalist Muslims, Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad and Mawlana Mohammad Ali. Wadud criticized Azad for aiming to found "an international Muslim association" (*vishvabyapi mussalman-samgha*) for protecting the interest of Muslims in the world:

The fault of this organization [*vishvabyapi mussalman-samgha*] is not because it is a huge organization. The problem of this organization is that its basis for unity is religion and religion of the tradition. They [promoters of *vishvabyapi mussalman-samgha*] do not recognize seriously the 'universal humanity' (*vishva-manabata*). If we compare it with (Romain) Rolland's 'International League of intellectuals,' then we easily see its problem. In today's world, one society is coming into acquaintance with other societies. Such an introduction and familiarity should lead to a mighty civilization. Pan-Islamism is opposed to universal humanity. As a result, the Muslim world is not able to adjust its own time.³³

The starting point of Wadud's criticism of Mohammad Ali was latter's proposal for demanding an exclusive territory for Muslims. Wadud pointed out this demand in a speech that Mohammad Ali delivered in the aftermath of the Khilafat movement. Wadud quipped about this proposal:

He [Mohammad Ali] claims that for Islam it is essential to have such territories. '*Jejirat-ul-Arab*,' over which there would be no control by unbelievers. [I say], 'Well! It has a cultural value...But what is its relation with a true religious life? Leading the life-style in a specific way does not mean religious life. For this [religious life], means that everybody should do self-effort, i.e., person has to grow within himself a religious feeling: love of God and love of humanity....It is not impossible, but it is difficult to get a true sign of

³² *Ami tader katha mani. Kintu tate ami dukkhita nai. Mussalman bhaber ei amshik dvamsai ekhan atyanta prayojaniya. Eta din dharma kareche atyacar. Eiber kete chete take jibaner jathajogya sthane basbar jogya kare neoya habe.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, dated March 7, 1924, p.299.

³³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Nana Katha*, March 21, 1924, p. 302.

religion in life-style closed in by rules of *shariat*....Mohammad Ali said, 'Islam is an original religion of humanism, an eternal religion for all people. Other religions are only manifestations of Islam.' [I said], 'It is difficult to call it Islam. It is better to call it a religion of humanity--that is manifested in many forms: Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism.'³⁴

2. Lessened emphasis on Hazrat Mohammad.

Not only privately, but publicly, Wadud urged Bengali Muslims to think about *manab dharma* or 'religion of humanity.' Wadud repeated his appeal for a change of attitude toward Hazrat Mohammad in 1926 on the occasion of Mohammad's birth and death anniversary when he paid a tribute to Mohammad's humanity. Wadud's three-page article, "*Fateha-i-Doyajdaham*," did not give glorious citations concerning Mohammad's socio-political reforms, but gave only polite reference to Mohammad's glorious humanity.

Wadud spoke of prophet Mohammad as *mahaguru* (great *guru*).

If we look into our *mahaguru's* life, we become silent because of our praise and respect. He [Hazrat Mohammad] entered deeply into the hopes and desires, capacities and incapacity's of human. Like a healthy and normal human person, he (Hazrat Mohammad) was active as well as inactive in daily work. He became restless at the sight of human sorrow and poverty. He became impatient at the sight of human exploitation.³⁵

Wadud also reviewed several biographies of Hazrat Mohammad. In 1926, he reviewed a biography of Hazrat Mohammad: *Manab Mukut* (1922) or 'The Crown of Humanity,' by

³⁴ *Tini can Islamer janya eman ekti jayga thakar darkar, "jezirat-ul-Arab," ja kono bideshi ba bidharmir adhine thakbe na. Beshkatha, kintu tar sange prakrita dharmajibaner ki samvandha? Er khub baro cultural value (English words are Wadud's) rayeche. Bishesh kona dharane Jibanjapan karlei dharmajiban japan hay na. Tar janya prtyaker atmaceshta cai, dharmabhabke arthat ishvarprem o manabpremke antare janmadan karte hay....Niyam-kanun-shara-shariat badha jibaner pakshe dharmer prakrita ingit paoya asmbhab na haleo kastasadhya...Mohammad Ali balechen--Islam adi manaber dharma, sab manusher cirantan dharma. Bibhinna dharma eri bibhinna (kal ar desh curanta) dharaner prakash, kintu setike Islam balle mushkil ache. Tar caite take manabdharma bala--ar Islam, Khristadharma, Budhatva, Hindutva itayadi tar bahubhangima prakash. Kazi Abdul Wadud, Nana Katha, March 21, 1924, p. 301.*

³⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Fateha-i-Doyajdaham*," Kazi Abdul, *Naba Parjay*, II, p. 43.

an Islamic liberal. Yakub Ali Choudhury (1888-1940).³⁶ Wadud praised Choudhury because the biography was not an orthodox re-statement that: "Mohammad was the last and greatest Prophet and his coming had been mentioned in holy books of Jews and Christians." Wadud also approved the author's quoting of Hazrat Mohammad's statement, "I am human like you." Nevertheless, Wadud criticized the author for his statement: "Hazrat Mohammad's ideal of humanity is the greatest of this world."³⁷ Wadud called this attitude of Muslims "partisanship" (*pakshapatitta*).

Wadud criticized this partisan attitude from several directions. First: he said "Muslims are so much infatuated by the dazzling glory of Mohammad's power that they have no time to look anywhere, except at Mohammad."³⁸ Second: Wadud cautioned the author that while his love of fellow Muslims (*sajan-prem*) and love of Islam (*sadharmaprem*) may be wonderful, yet a person who believes in the religion of creativity (*srishti dharma*) would look at these differently. Wadud quoted American humanist philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882): "No facts are to me sacred, none are profane: I simply experiment, an endless seeker with no past at my back" (English quotations are from Wadud).³⁹

In the following year, Wadud's article, "*Sahitya Samasya*" (1927), stated a fundamental standpoint of modern intellectual criticism: "A genius (*pratibhaban*) is not 'infallible' (the English word is Wadud's)."⁴⁰ Wadud also pointed out: "It is not true that

³⁶ For a biographical reference of Yakub Ali Choudhury, see Abdul Kadir (ed.), *Yakub Ali Choudhury's Aprakashita Racanabali* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1963). The biography of Hazrat Mohammad is written in three essays of Choudhury's that he published in a Bengali journal. See, Yakub Ali Choudhury, "*Manabatai Hazrat Mohammad*" or 'Hazrat Mohammad's contribution to humanity'; "*Hazrat Mohammader Shaktilabh Manaber Adhikar*" or 'Hazrat Mohammad's achievement of power and rights of mankind'; and "*Hazrat Mohammad'er Jibane Praner Pratidhani*," or 'Rhythm of vitality (mankind) in Hazrat Mohammad's life;' published in *Bangiya-Mussalman-Sahitya-Patrika*, January-February, 1919; July-August, 1922 and October-November, 1922.

³⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Manab Mukut*," in Kazi Abdul, *Naba Parjay*, I, p. 33.

³⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Manab Mukut*," p. 33.

³⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Manab Mukut*," p. 34.

⁴⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Sahitya Samasya*," in Kazi Abdud Wadud, *Naba Parjay*, I, p. 19

monotheism was completely unknown in the brutal and idolatrous society of Arabia."⁴¹ He tactfully pointed out that Mohammad also faced severe opposition: "Throughout his life, Mohammad had physically suffered torture and torments by some ordinary Arabs. After his death, even the majority people of his own tribe, Quresh, did not understand his basic teaching."⁴²

3. Wadud's defense of his position of lessened Muslim self-consciousness.

When the neo-orthodox weekly Bengali journal, *Sultan* (November 16, 1927),⁴³ edited by Manirujjaman Islamabadi, condemned Dhaka radicals for "*kaferi fatwa*," Wadud fought back. Wadud defined his own and the rational humanist group's position against the neo-orthodox and Islamic liberals of Calcutta: "Young Group and *Shikha* sect of Dhaka" (*Dhakar Tarun Dal Shikha Sampradaya*) versus "You, the argumentative Sharia advocates" (*Apnara. Arthat Juktibadi Shariat-panthi*). Two weeks after the Calcutta neo-orthodox had attacked the rational humanists of Dhaka, Wadud wrote a lengthy reply (November 30, 1927) to the editor of *Sultan*, with a request that his reply should be published in the journal. The journal did not publish Wadud's reply.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, Wadud repeated in the letter his earlier point that Hazrat Mohammad is a human and as a human has limitations:

Your [editor of *Sultan*] rationale is so inadequate and meaningless; its model is Mawlana Mohammad Akram

⁴¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Sahitya Samasya*," p.16.

⁴² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Sahitya Samasya*," pp.16-17.

⁴³ The journal was first published by Kunjalal Das, a Hindu publisher from Kushtia (East Bengal), in 1901. Naziruddin Ahmad, one of the journal's editor, also published it from Pabna (East Bengal). In 1902, the journal was financed by some zamindars of Rangpur (East Bengal). They published the journal also from Calcutta. The editors of the journal published from Calcutta were: Munshi Meherullah (of Jessore), Munshi Zamiruddin and Mawlana Mohammad Manirujjaman Islamabadi. From 1904, Islamabadi held the editorship of the journal. See Anisuzzaman (ed.), *Muslim Banglar Samayik Patra*, pp. 65-66 and 394.

⁴⁴ Wadud's letters to the editor of *Sultan* were published in a Hindu journal, *Pradip*, August-September, 1934. These letters were reprinted in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Shashvata Banga* and Abdul Huq (ed.), *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I. A recent journal in Bangladesh reprinted these letters. See, Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Ekta Cithi*," reprinted in Zahangir Kabir (ed.), *Bishay Manush*, March, 1995.

Khan's huge *Mostafa Carit* [a biography of Hazrat Mohammad]. The book tried in many ways to detect 'true hadith' (*sahi hadis*), but more than that, the book was all about criticizing the Christians. But nowhere did the book portray the human character of Mohammad, for example, how Mohammad's human thought grew day by day, how he loved his family life, and for that matter how from time to time also committed mistakes.... But excuse me, your line of reasoning is this: 'The person who would be a last messenger of truth must be truthful and possess all the virtues. Hazrat Mohammad is the last messenger of truth and therefore he must be truthful and virtuous.'⁴⁵

Wadud posed two fundamental questions. First: "What does it mean to say that the Quran is the message of Allah (*Quran Allahar bani kon arthe*)?"⁴⁶ Second: "The way Muslim society was asked to obey the phrase 'last messenger of truth,' does it not distort humans relation with God and commit idolatry?"⁴⁷ Wadud reminded: "It is up to you, how you are going to answer the two questions. But do not repeat answers that have already been given. We are not satisfied with those answers. Because those answers do not recognize complete and unfettered freedom of human thought."⁴⁸

The two questions were not answered by the editor of *Sultan*. On the contrary, the journal asked Wadud: "If he (Wadud) respects the Quran in any sense as the Words of Allah" (*Tini kona arthe Quranke Allahar bani bale manen kina*). Second: "If he (Wadud) respects Hazrat Mohammad as a prophet and last messenger of Allah"⁴⁹ (*Tini Hazrat*

⁴⁵ *Apanader juktibad je kata asampurna or nirarthrak tar ek bara praman Maolana Mohammad Akram kha[n] saheber biratkar Mostafa-carit. Sekhane sahi hadis nirnayer ceshta besh ache, padrider dhoka-bhanjaner ceshta tar caiteo beshi ache, kintu nei manush-Mohammader caritra; keman kare tar citta-korak dine dine bikashita hayeche, keman kare tini pariyanke bhalabesechen manushke bhalabesechen jibanke bhalabesechen, keman kare samay samay bhulo karechen....Kintu maph karben, apanader juktibader dhara hacche--Khatemunnabiyin jini haben tar sarbagunalankrita o nirdosh haoya cai. Hazrat Mohammad Khatemunnabiyin, atayab Hazrat Mohammader sarbagunalankrita o nirdosh haoya cai. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bad Pratibad," in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Shashvata Banga*, p. 404.*

⁴⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bad Pratibad," p.404.

⁴⁷ *Khatemunnabiyin (shesh bani-bahak, meaning is Wadud's) kathatake mussalman samaje je bhabe mante bala hay tate Allahar sange manusher samvandhake bikrita kare dekha hay kina, o pauttalika kara hay ki na. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bad pratibad," p.404.*

⁴⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bad pratibad," p. 405.

⁴⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bad pratibad," p. 405.

Mohammadke nabi o Khatemunnabiyin bale manen kina). Wadud cautiously avoided any direct answer. However, his reply (December 3 or 4, 1927) to the neo-orthodox intellectuals was bold:

These questions are not only irrelevant but wrong to raise in our debate. You are supposed to know already what is the framework of our debate and how you should debate with 'Free-thinkers' (English phrase is Wadud's) of Dhaka.... We believe that you have not enough strength to answer our questions. For no reason, you are talking big. If you had the strength to answer these modern questions, then, by this time, Muslim society would have changed completely.⁵⁰

At this point in debate, editor of the *Sultan* withdrew and did not bring further accusation against the "free thinkers" of Dhaka. But Akram and his journal, *Mohammadi*, did not spare them. Wadud boldly defended his radical theological views in replies to Akram. For example, when Akram Khan condemned Wadud as a non-Muslim (*amussalman*) Wadud replied:

You declare that I am not Muslim (*amussalman*). What I am is only known to Him, who is my creator. Certainly, I am not so anxious to prove myself a Muslim, because Muslim and Hindu are only group identities of humans. Since I live in a *samaj* or community, I would get the title (*padabi*) of that community. But for proving it, I am not very anxious.⁵¹

⁵⁰ *Prashnakarta Quranke Allahar bani bale manen kina, Hazrat Mohammad nabi o Khatemunnabiyin bale manen kini, ityadi jignasa kara shudhu aprasangkik nay anyay. Dhakar dalke apanara ek srenir Free-thinker (English words are Wadud's) thaurechen; sei Free-thinker-der sange je bhabe mokabela karte hay sei dhara abalamvan karben e' ta age thakte jana katha.... Amader sadharan dharana ei je, e-sab prashner santoshjanak uttar debar ksamata apanader nei, shudhui akarane bara katha balechen; kenana, adhunik juger e samasta prashner uttar debar shakti jadi apanader thakta ta hale apanader hate mussalman samajer cehara etadine phire yeta. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bad protibad," p. 405. See also Kazi Abdul Wadud's letter to the editor of *Masik Mohammadi*. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Amader Katha," *Jayati*, Vol. I, No. 5 (1930), pp. 158-160.*

⁵¹ "Abashya ami mussalman ki na ekatha praman karbar janya khub byasta ami nai, kenana Mussalman Hindu esab hacche manusher samajik ba shrenigata paricay, ar ami jakhan ekti samje bas kari takhan sei samajer padabiti amar prapya ekatha praman karbar janya byagrata anabashyak." Wadud's letter to the editor of *Mohammadi*, December 13, 1928. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bad Pratibad," in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Shashvata Banga*, p. 407.

Wadud, interestingly, elsewhere gave a sociological meaning to being Muslim: "Muslim is one who is born in or who takes shelter in Muslim society."⁵²

In public speeches and writings, Wadud sought to liberate Muslims of Bengal from a Muslim communal self-consciousness. In 1926, Wadud was invited to give a lecture in Hindu ashram in Rajshahi. Wadud declared: "It is not right to categorize humans into two groups, Hindu and Muslim."⁵³ Hindu and Muslim, these two religious categories, "may be true according to *Shastras*, but not in the life that the Creator (*bidhata*) has given to them."⁵⁴ Wadud also stated that if a religious distinction is made to supersede everyday way of life of Hindus and Muslims, and if their relationship is not categorized as "close relative" (*nikatar atmiya*), based on "normal human self-identity (*manusher svabhabik atmapratistar ceshta*);" then "all our efforts [toward Muslim-Hindu unity] would be in vain due to the fault of basing [them] on this untruth [separation of Hindus and Muslims]."⁵⁵ In 1927, Wadud told a young Muslim audiences in Faridpur:

...Strengthened by an inspiration of love, stand up strongly in the bosom of the modern age, and say--"My inheritance lies in the deeds of humans. If I deprive myself of this claim of inheritance, I shall not only be a destitute, but the flow of human history will be thwarted in me"....You also say oh! young Bengali Muslims, "I am a human first, simply by my human birthright. I am a relative of the humans, regardless of their birth in any specific country, age, *jati* and religion." After that...."I am a child of Bengal, *Bangalee* (Bengali), [and I have] lifted my head under an open sky." And say lastly, "I am a Muslim." ⁵⁶

⁵² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bangali Mussalmaner Sahitya Samasya" (AS, 1927), *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 32.

⁵³ *Hindu o mussalman manushke ei dui dale bhag k'are dekha asatya...* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Milaner Katha," in Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Naba Parjay*, II, p. 12.

⁵⁴ *...Hindu o Mussalman manusher ei dui svatantra samgna hayta tader racita shastra prajanta satya, kintu bidhatar racita tader je jiban sekhane ta satya nay.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Milaner Katha," p. 11.

⁵⁵ *...Ei asatyake abalamvan karar aparadhe amader samasta ceshta byartha h'ae jabar sambhabanai beshi.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Milaner Katha," pp. 11-12.

⁵⁶ " *...preme baliyan h'ae samasamayik kaler buke drirha-pratistha h'ae apanara daran, dariya balun--manusher sakal sadhanay amar uttaradhikar,--se uttaradhikar theke nijeke bancita k'arle ami shudhu*

Wadud's essay "*Bangali Mussalmaner Sahitya Samasya*" (1927), also claimed that

Muslims are human first:

Men and women who live in Muslim society are Muslims, but they are humans. They are family member of all races, countries, and religions. Flowing out of a vast universal human society are hopes, aspirations, endeavors. In these, there are the message that humans are courageous, their longings are endless, and they do not agree to any limitation on their thought. Should not Muslim society make arrangements to do something about these messages of human society?⁵⁷

Wadud's view of universal human identity thus takes as the main standard of value of anything its ability to enhance the potential of human life. Implied by this grand view was Wadud's judgment that Islam and the much vaunted Muslim cultural ethos were of secondary importance, and often served to positively block the greater good, the universal potential of human life.

C. Wadud's stand during the Civil Disobedience movement, 1930-1931: Criticism of Gandhi, defense of British rule, and Muslim accommodation with Hindus in joint electorate.

During the early 1930s, Gandhi was pursuing a new way to bring Hindu-Muslim unity, the political slogans of *satyagraha* and *svaraj* proposed new kinds of actions for challenging the legitimacy of British rule. These, it seemed to Gandhi, would bring Hindu-Muslim unity through shared political consciousness of Indian nationalism. The Salt *satyagraha* defied British rule by producing salt illegally by boiling sea water. The

daridrai haba na, manusher itihaser dhara amar bhitare biparjasta habe....Aro balun he Banglar tarun Muslim, je, manabjanmer sahaj adhikare sarbbaprathame ami manush--desh, kal, jati, dharma nirbbisheshe manusher atmiya; tarpar, ami matir santan...ami akasher nice matha tule--ami Banglar santan Bangali; ar sheshe balun, ami Muslim...." Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Abhibhashan" published in Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Naba Parjay*, II, p. 35.

⁵⁷*Mussalman samaje je samasta naranari bas kare tara shudhu mussalman nay, tara manush--desh bidesher nana dharmer nana dharmer nana barner manausher atmiya. Sey vishva-brihat manab samajer nana asha akanksha ceshta-biphalatar madhya diye utsarita hacche ei bani je, manush duhsahasi, tar ananta ksudha; jara-jagater bandhanai se mante raji nay, cintar jagater ta kathai nai. Manusher ei banir sarthakatar kono avojan ki mussalman samaje karte habe na?* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Sahitya Samasya*" (AS, 1927), *Shikha*, Vol. I (1927), p. 33. See also *Naba Parjay*, II, pp.14-31.

campaign included also other types of *satyagraha*, "...boycott of foreign cloth.... non-payment of certain taxes, contravention of forest laws, and disobedience to the Ordinances with which government attempted to control the movement."⁵⁸ But these tactics failed to bring Hindu-Muslim unity. The majority of Muslims kept apart from the *satyagraha* and by the end of 1930, "Out of a total of 29,000 in prison, only 1,500 were Muslims."⁵⁹

Wadud was a critic of Gandhi's political nationalism by the 1930s. This shift of Wadud from support of Gandhi's non-violence in 1920, to critique of civil disobedience in 1930 was due to several reasons. Tagore's influence on Wadud was one factor. Tagore had not supported Gandhi's Non-Cooperation movement in 1920. After Turkey was declared a republic in 1923, Tagore valued Gandhi's 'communal entente' as a "fragile solution" (*theko-deoa byabastha*).⁶⁰ In a private correspondence, Tagore wrote that, apart from curing the disease of religious orthodoxy, he saw no alternative for solving Hindu-Muslim problem.⁶¹ Wadud endorsed this attitude of Tagore: "Rabindranath has said, 'our biggest problem is to go beyond the mentality from which Muslim-Hindu conflict originated.' Mahatma says the solution is by 'ending the *satanic* government' (English phrase is cited by Wadud)."⁶² Wadud, like Tagore, was not willing to accept Gandhi's solution.

⁵⁸ Judith M. Brown, *Modern India: The Origins of an Asian Democracy* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 267.

⁵⁹ Judith M. Brown, *Modern India: The Origins of an Asian Democracy*, p. 270.

⁶⁰ Rabindranath Tagore, "Samasya," *Prabasi*, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, Part 2 (1923), p. 150. See also Rabindranath Tagore, "Satyor Ahaban," *Prabasi*, Vol. XXI, No.7, Part I (1921), p.11.

⁶¹ *Hindu mussalman samasyar kul paoya jay na. Lathalathir dvara kona jiniser samadhan hay na. Je ritimata jnan shiksha dvara dharmandhatar araggya ghate ta chara upay nei.* Rabindranath Tagore-Pramatha Choudhury Correspondence, April 6, 1926. Rabindranath Tagore (ed.), *Chitipatra*, V (Calcutta: Vishva-Bharati, 1945). Also see Khondkar Sirajul Huq, *Muslim Sahitya Samaj: Samaj Cinta o Sahitya Karma*, p. 234.

⁶² *Rabindranath balechen--amader sab caite baro samasya Hindu-Mussalman-birodh balte je manobhab bojhay ta-i dingiye jabar samasya. Mahatma balechen--ending or ending this satanic government.* Kazi

Wadud's discomfort with civil disobedience and communal participation in it was further evident in Wadud's correspondence with Abdul Kadir during the Civil Disobedience movement. When Gandhi launched the Civil Disobedience movement in 1930, Kadir unearthed an apparently parallel anti-British appeals by the Wahabi and *Svadeshi* movements.⁶³ Wadud immediately cautioned Kadir. The *Svadeshi* leaders, he said at least thought about the economic emancipation of Indians generally. On the contrary, Wahabi movement was a purely Muslim religious movement, or at best: "An attempt of the defeated [Muslims] to stir themselves up."⁶⁴ Kadir wrote in one editorial of the Bengali journal, *Jayati*: "Without doubt we (Muslims) should stand side by side with Hindus. If we ignore this movement, there will be no welfare for Muslims [in the present] and there will be endless problems in the future."⁶⁵ In reply, Wadud cautioned Kadir: "We have said 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' too many times. Let us forget those symbols. Why should we say 'Muslim'? Say, a human should come to aid or follow another human....Freed from a symbol of 'Muslim,' we are born under an open sky....It is better that we should delete terms like 'Islam' and 'Muslim' from our dictionary."⁶⁶

Wadud opposed Gandhi's program at several levels. Wadud complained that Gandhi's towering leadership had not produced any 'creativity' (*srishti*) in India. Gandhi's

Abdul Wadud, "Ekkhani Patra," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, published in *Jayati*, Vol. I, No. 4 (1930), p. 141, reprinted in *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, II, pp. 149-153.

⁶³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Ekkhani Patra," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, *Jayati*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1930), p.77, reprinted in *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, II, pp. 146-148.

⁶⁴ *Kintu Wahabi andolan mulata: religious* (English word is Wadud's) *andolan, athaba bara jor bijitader ekbar ga jhara deoyar ceshta*. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Ekkhani Patra," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, *Jayati*, Vol.I, No. 2 (1930), p. 77.

⁶⁵ *Amader ucit kona dvidha na kariya Hindur parshvasthan adhikar kara. Ihake (bartaman andolanke) upeksha karile, amader kalyan nai, bhabishyat durgatir anta nai*. Cited by Kazi Abdul Wadud, see Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Ekkhani Patra," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, *Jayati*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1930), p. 77.

⁶⁶ 'Mussalman,' 'Hindu' eder katha bahu bala h'aeche. O pala ekhan cukiya dao....'Mussalman'ke dakhe kena, bala manush ke acha manusher kalyaner kaje eso....Mussalman'tver kukshi theke amara matir upare udar akasher nice janma niyechi....Islam Mussalman kathagulo ekhan amader abhidhan theke muche phela bhaio." Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Ekkhani Patra," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, *Jayati*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1930), p. 77.

leadership did not even sustain whatever 'creative power' (*srishti kshamata*) had already existed in India before him. Except for jealousy and bitterness, Gandhi's non-violence is now meaningless for his disciples. Gandhi's movement for freedom and rights of the untouchables has been interpreted by many Hindus and Muslims as manipulation by the Hindu establishment. Gandhi by and large had failed to understand and correct the underlying problem of communalism:

Can we call someone a doctor who cannot give medicine for the worsening cause of the disease while the patient suffers from the disease. For Hindu-Muslim conflict, Mahatma's last word is, 'The Mohammadan is a bully and the Hindu is a coward' (English sentence is cited by Wadud). Mahatma's leadership has raised very much the country's 'political consciousness,' (English words are Wadud's) but not its 'conscience' (English word is Wadud's). In human society, a person is dangerous whose 'consciousness' has risen, but not his 'conscience.'⁶⁷

Wadud's conscience in nationalism was not founded on anti-British political or social outcries: "I respect Europe more than I respect ancient India and ancient Islam."⁶⁸ Wadud, however, cautioned that this respect does not mean that: "We have to surrender our *srishti shakti* (creativity, English translation is Wadud's)...We will adopt European things and ways, not because they are European, but because these are necessary for us."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Ekkhani Patra," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, published in *Jayati*, Vol. I, No. 4 (1930), p. 141.

⁶⁸ *Pracin bharat ba pracin Islalamer caite ami bartaman iyoropke beshi shradha kari*. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Jnan o Prem" (1930), in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Samaj o Sahitya*, (Calcutta: Moslem Publishing House, 1934), p. 85. See also Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Banglar Tarun Citta," *Bulbul*, Vol. II., No. 2 (1934), p. 97.

⁶⁹ *Iyoroper kona acar-padhati grahan korba iyoroper jinish bale nay amader janya prayojaniya bale*. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Jnan o Prem" (1930), p.85. Wadud's understanding of German poet Goethe can be noted in this context. Wadud's first essay on Goethe was presented in the MSS in 1930. Wadud quoted in the essay some praising comments of European authors on Goethe. Wadud cited Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), *Heroes, Hero-worship, and The Heroic in History* (1841) and wrote: "Goethe has, as is to be expected, a large number of distinguished admirers. But Carlyle seems to excel them all in full-throated profusion. In his *Heroes and Hero-worship*, he opens his discourse on Hero as a man of letters with Goethe, and after giving in a few charged sentences how Goethe is a new wonder before the world, how he towers even above Mohammad, the hero of the desert—whom he admires deeply—he changes his topics saying that people are not fit enough to receive Goethe at this stage...But we would be making a more dependable approach to Goethe by trying to understand Croce's (one of the biographers of Goethe) appraisal of him, namely that Goethe represents in large measure, the "modern spirit" (emphasis inserted). Wadud highlighted

Wadud also described another purpose of *srishti shakti*: "To make the power of the state more effective"⁷⁰ (*raj shaktike bishesh karjyakari kara*). At the same time, Wadud also wrote. "We have to try to free ourselves from all intellectual destituteness (*amader jata rakamer manasik dainya, sab dur karte ceshta karte habe*)."⁷¹ The two meanings of

srishti shakti are not antagonistic, but complementary. For example, Wadud wrote:

What we understand by initiative (English word is Wadud's) will be taken by *raj shakti* (state power). Yet it is also true that peoples' minds should be built first and then the *raj shakti* would take initiative. In other words, for any new endeavors, it is individuals who would first take initiative and then the *raj shakti* would function in relation to individual initiatives.⁷²

For this, Wadud, by the 1930s supported continuing British rule in India because he expected that British rule would help minimize the religious barriers and end communal identity: "If the Hindu caste system has been breaking down in India, it is not being done by the Mahatma, but by the British rule."⁷³

several ideals of Goethe's modern spirit. First, Goethe represents a major development of the spirit of Renaissance. Second, Goethe was the "loftiest and grandest" of the German awakening movement. Third, in Goethe's writings, one can see "entwined quest for knowledge and susceptibilities to love." Fourth, Goethe was no believer in religion in the ordinary sense. Fifth, Goethe was markedly deficient in patriotic zeal. Sixth, Goethe believed in Internationalism. Wadud's conclusion on Goethe was: "Goethe was an epitome indeed. The spontaneity and urge of nature and the seeking and shifting of human nature met in his life and genius splendidly. The breath of the ocean that is Goethe will prove invaluable for the human psyche in all ages possibly." See Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Goethe" (1929) published in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Creative Bengal*, pp. 143-151; "Goethe" published in *Jayati*, Vol. I, No.2 (1930), pp. 69-70; No.3 (1930), pp.115-118; No.11-12 (1931), pp.251-254; *Jayati*, Vol. II., No. 4-6 (1931), pp. 69-74. Also see, Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Goethe" in *Chayabithi*, January-February 1933, pp. 261-264; February-March 1933, pp. 324-330; March-April 1935, pp. 422-424. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Goether Praticya-Pracya Diwan." *Saogat*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2 (1945), pp. 66-68. Wadud did not suggest a blind following of Western literary thought, but he appealed to search for a "creative universality in the thought of European poets." Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bangla Sahityar Carca" (AS, 1929), *Shikha*, Vol. III (1929), pp. 117-124. See also Anwarul Kadir, "Imreji Sahitya Romantic Jug" (1928) or 'Age of Romanticism in English literature,' *Shikha* Vol. II (1928), pp.90-98. This article is useful to show an identical understanding of the "Romantic Age" by H.A.R. Gibb and Anwarul Kadir. For Gibb's definition of Romantic age, see H.A.R. Gibb, *Islam in the World*, p.110 and for Anwarul Kadir's understanding, see "Imraji Sahitya Romantic Jug"(1928), p. 90.

⁷⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Jnan o Prem" (1930), in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Samaj o Sahitya*, p. 83.

⁷¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Jnan o Prem" (1930), p. 85.

⁷² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Jnan o Prem" (1930), p. 82.

⁷³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Ekkhani Patra," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, *Jayati*, Vol. I, No. 4 (1930), p. 143.

Furthermore, Wadud objected to Gandhi's Civil Disobedient movement on another account: "It is a dangerously extreme measure (English phrase is Wadud's) because it has shaken respect for law, which is a very basic norm of a civilized society."⁷⁴ Wadud rebutted those who say, "extreme measures should be taken in an extreme situation." His reply was that extreme measures may or may not lead to a positive impact: "After flood water subsides, the ground could be either fertile or there could remain a big concentration of contaminated water in the soil."⁷⁵ This supportive attitude toward British rule does not indicate, however, that Wadud was opposed to the eventual political freedom of India: "We do not oppose a separate nation state for India. The real question is which course we should follow."⁷⁶

During the Civil Disobedience movement, Wadud gave his decision in favor of 'mixed electorate.' Among Muslim politicians, mixed electorate was supported only by a few nationalist Muslim leaders. Wadud did not call them "nationalists" but "friends of the mixed electorate." He summarized two reasons for their support of a mixed electorate: "First, they say that they are children of this country (*desh*). Therefore, they want to fight for the welfare of this country. Second, Islam is a universal brotherhood. So Islam's interest would be narrowed and falsified, if its followers would not look out for other people's interest."⁷⁷ Wadud praised their support for mixed electorate. Yet he differed with their motivation--theirs being a religious motivation for support of a mixed electorate. Wadud wrote: "I am a realist (English word is Wadud's)...Whatever is the reason, Hindus and Muslims are divided in this country. They are not completely enemies to each other. Neither they are friends. For this, I do not want to say anything.

⁷⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Ekkhani Patra*," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, *Jayati*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1930), p. 78.

⁷⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Ekkhani Patra*," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, *Jayati*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1930), p. 78.

⁷⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Nirbacan Prasanga*," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, published in *Jayati*, Vol. I, No. 11-12 (1931), p. 281, reprinted in *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, II, pp. 153-158.

good or bad, about their past because to say something forcefully good or bad about the past is [another] sign of force."⁷⁸ When he did blame anyone for communal tensions, he tended to blame his fellow Muslims, at any rate their leaders.

If anyone is to answer, who is to blame for a discord between Hindus Muslims, a straight answer is the Muslims. I do not say that Hindus are better.... Yet, Hindus have taken a step toward a new human life; but Muslims? Their respected and dear political leaders are bowed down to the feet of powerful in the hope of minor gain (*samanya labher ashay kshamatar pade cira-abanataashir*) or are arrogant. Even today, Muslim religious leaders are a group of destitute (*bubhukshur dal*), who are habitually illogical, immoral, even ignorant of religion. And their world of literature is still being dominated by a group of 'tasteless half-educated people' (*rucihin ardashikshiter dal*).⁷⁹

Wadud constructed a new role for Muslim representatives in an elected "national parliament." For this new role, Wadud suggested Muslims adopt creative power (*srishti kshamata*). This Wadud did by pointing Muslims to the creative power of the Jews in multinational societies of Europe. Wadud wrote:

The Jewish community is a minority group in Europe. For this they had suffered violence and insult for long years in Europe. Yet the Jews have reached a highest position in European material and intellectual life. For one special reason, the Jews have achieved this highest position: for self-protection a minority's sense of creative power must be higher."⁸⁰

Wadud wanted to rouse the creative power (*srishti kshamata*) of minority Muslims of India in order to follow this intellectual and material development of the

⁷⁸ ...Ami realist...*Je karanei hok Hindu o Mussalman dui svatantra dal deshe ache, ar tara parasparer puropuri shatru na haleo bandhu nay. Eder kar atit keman chila se samvandhe kono kathai ami balte cai na. kenana atit samvandhe bhalo manda kono kichui jor kare balte jaoya haito joreri paricayak...* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Nirbacan Prasanga," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, *Jayati*. Vol. I, No. 11-12 (1931), pp. 281-282.

⁷⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Nirbacan Prasanga," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, *Jayati*. Vol. I, No. 11-12 (1931), p. 284.

⁸⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Nirbacan Prasanga," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, *Jayati*. Vol. I, No. 11-12 (1931), p. 282.

Jewish population in Europe. Wadud suggested several ways to do it. First, Muslim leaders must fully realize that demographically they are a 'minority community' (*chota dal*) in India. Therefore, Muslim leaders must stay away from the communal path, for which it was inevitable for 'Muslim masses' (*mussalman ganashakti*) to fight with other communities of India. For example, Muslim leadership should not battle with a majority community (*bara dal*) on issues of "music before mosque" (*masjider samne bajna*), "cow slaughtering" (*go-korbani*) and "separate electorate" (*svatantra nirbagan*).⁸¹ This surely would mean concessions by Muslims to Hindus. Yet such concession, according to Wadud, would be valuable for Muslims: "I am telling Muslim to 'accept this defeat' (*har svikar*), because it is only by accepting this defeat the mental depression (*manasik asvad*) and discomfort (*asvasti*) of the Muslim in the present time would go. His whole intellect would be creative (*srishti praban*) and simultaneously he would help India in many ways to be creative (*srishti praban*)."⁸² Second, Indian Muslims must "get rid of infatuation (*moha*)": "Muslims are the majority in some provinces and at time of danger they would be rescued by some 'invincible religious brothers from outside India' (*Bharater baire tader durdharsha dharma bhrata*)."⁸³ Finally, Wadud wanted Muslims to be strong and powerful only by creative ability (*srishti kshamata*) in unison with Hindus:

In politics of a country's elected parliament, it is impossible that a majority community (*bara dal* or Hindu majority) would give up an established principle to rule a minority community (*chota dal* or Muslim minority). Let the majority community keep up domination. But the domination should aim for the welfare of all classes of people. The effort for welfare by the majority community would not achieve success unless the minority community would give up separatist talk (*chota dal jadi daladalir*

⁸¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Nirbagan Prasanga," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, *Jayati*. Vol. I, No. 11-12 (1931), pp. 283-284.

⁸² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Nirbagan Prasanga," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, *Jayati*. Vol. I, No. 11-12 (1931), p. 283.

⁸³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Nirbagan Prasanga," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, *Jayati*. Vol. I, No. 11-12 (1931), p. 282.

katha man theke dur kare diya...). By giving up a separatist talk, the minority party would devote itself only to various actions of creativity (*bibhinna srishtite atmaniyog kare*) so that the majority community can direct various projects of human welfare. It may sound ludicrous that a minority would influence a majority, but this is a law of the world. Ibsen said, 'The strongest man is one who stands in the minority of one' (Wadud quoted in English).⁸⁴

D. Muslims' Accommodation with Hindus (1930-1934): Wadud's defense of Bankim, but minimal attention to Abul Kalam Azad and Mohammad Ali.

During the Civil Disobedience movement, Wadud also searched an understanding of nationalism in the Bengali literature: "*Bangla Sahitya Jatiyatar Adarsha*" (1931) or 'Ideals of nationalism in Bengali literature.' The article analyzed nationalist thought of some eminent scholars of Bengali literature: Bhudev Mukhopadhyay, Vivekananda, Keshab Chandra Sen, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, and Bankim Chandra. Wadud was a harsh critic of Bhudev's rationalist Hindu identity. Wadud acknowledged some concern for *jatiya jiban*, or a 'national life;' beginning in Bhudev's essays, *Samajik Prabandha* (Social Essays) and *Paribarik Prabandha* (Domestic Essays), that sought a solution of Hindu-Muslim tension. Yet Bhudev, feeling threatened by the Young Bengal attack upon Hinduism, wanted to prove that "Hinduism is the greatest religion in all ages of history."⁸⁵ Wadud did not object to a 'self-esteem' (*atma-prashamsa*) on the past of Bhudev, but he objected to the purpose for which this self-esteem was being used:

This self-esteem is not derived from a habitual self-esteem coming from one's ability to move freely and to gain strength in this world....But this self-esteem is generated for the purpose of a debate--an ongoing effort to defeat a powerful opponent and safeguard a religion....Therefore, for an energized national life (*ojasval jatiya jiban*) of India and Bengal, perhaps nobody should probably be indebted to Bhudev.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Nirbaban Prasanga*," Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir, *Jayati*. Vol. I, No. 11-12 (1931), p. 283.

⁸⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Bangla Sahitye Jatiyatar Adarsha*" (1931), in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Samaj o Sahitya*, p.51.

⁸⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Bangla Sahitye Jatiyatar Adarsha*" (1931), p. 53.

Wadud criticized Vivekananda on two accounts. First, Wadud objected that Vivekananda's 'benevolent hermitage' (*seba asram*), although originated from patriotism (*svadesh batsalya*), were mythical and would downgrade human dignity:

We must have to consider that to solve Indian's sorrows by a hermit and self-sacrificing life (*sannyas jiban*) and by begging (*bhiksha*), is nothing more than repairing a torn cloth. By charity or by begging, economic inequality might be slightly removed. But a highest essential of human dignity would not come by begging or by charity.⁸⁷

Second, for solving Hindu-Muslim tension, Vivekanda's famous dictum was: "The character of Indian nationalism would be, 'Islam is the body and Veda is the brain.' Wadud objected to several weaknesses of this synthesis. For example, Wadud argued that it is probable: "Islam is in the Vedanta and Vedanta is in Islam."⁸⁸ Yet that synthesis is only: "an accommodation of several old and conflicting religious ideals." and it is not a "clearly defined resolution of human 'welfare and misfortune' (*kalyan-akalyan*) in today's practical world."⁸⁹

Wadud stated that Bankim Chandra Chattarjee's ideal of Hindu revivalism is a 'narrow and harsh view of nationalism' (*sankirna o ugra jatiyata*). Bankim was unable to form a single ideal of nationalism suitable for all Indians because Bankim's talent (*pratibha*) was not a talent 'rooted in the religion of creativity' (*srishti dharmi*).⁹⁰

These objections do not imply that Wadud wanted a communal separation of Muslims from authors of Hindu nationalism. Wadud criticized Hindu revivalist nationalism because such nationalism did not fit with Wadud's conception of secular humanistic nationalism. For this reason, Wadud never told Muslims to stay away from reading writings of Bankim. On the contrary, for accommodating Bankim with Bengali Muslims and to stop the later from branding Bankim as a communal Hindu, Wadud wrote

⁸⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Bangla Sahitye Jatiyatar Adarsha*" (1931), p. 57.

⁸⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Bangla Sahitye Jatiyatar Adarsha*" (1931), p. 58.

⁸⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Bangla Sahitye Jatiyatar Adarsha*" (1931), p.58.

⁹⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Bangla Sahitye Jatiyatar Adarsha*" (1931), p. 54.

apologetics of Bankim's writings designed to counter Muslims' demand of separatism from Hindus because of Bankim's alleged anti-Muslim stand.⁹¹ Wadud interpreted Bankim's humanism from 1919 to 1931 in several essays which were not exclusively written on Bankim.⁹² However, it was the "high noon" of Muslim separatism from Hindus in Bengal, after the civil disobedience movement, that inspired Wadud to write his major interpretations of Bankim's writing. Wadud wrote five essays in this vein from 1931 until 1939.⁹³

⁹¹ For anti-Bankim writings by Islamic liberals, see Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, "Sahitya Gurur Bangali priti," *Al-Islam*, Vol. III, No. 2 (1917), pp. 113-120. S.M. Akbaruddin, "Bartaman Bangla Sahitye Mussalmaner Sthan," *Al-Islam*, Vol. II, No. 8-10 (1916). M. Aftabuddin, "Anandamath o Jatiyatar Adarsha," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. VI, No. 12 (1933), pp. 841-843. Bankim's *Anandamath* was ceremoniously burnt in 1934 by Calcutta Muslim League. Many Islamic liberals and neo-orthodox Muslim intellectuals had participated in the burning ceremony. The incident was described by Fazlur Rahman, a rational humanist intellectual of Calcutta: "On that day (Bankim Chandra's one hundred birth anniversary in 1934), the Muslim League held a public meeting in Calcutta. The educated Muslim Leaguers of all professions were present--poets, writers, intellectuals, members of the Legislative Assembly. They dumped many copies of the *Anandamath* at one corner and amidst loudest cheers and slogans they set fire and burned *Anandamath*. They enjoyed the fire with great contentment and declared that a new age had dawned in Bengal, that there is no reason for Muslims to worry about. The civilized world was stunned to see that in one of the big cities in modern India and with the consent and presence of so many educated and intellectual people a barbarism was committed at such a level for which there were no instances even in the fanatical medieval period." See Rezaul Karim, "Anandamather Bahni Utsab" or "The Burning Ceremony of Anandamath," reprinted in Abul Qasem Fazlul Huq (ed.), *Lokayat*, Vol. X, No. 3 (1992), pp. 35-36.

⁹² For example, Wadud's article, "Mussalman Sahityik" (1919), denied orthodox Bengali Muslims' assertion that Bankim deliberately constructed inferior characteristics of the Muslim historical figures, such as: "Muslim women, Ayesha, had fallen in love with Hindu Jagath Singh (war hero)." Wadud's reply was that no rational Muslim could deny Bankim's humanism: "This natural admiration of women toward a helpless war hero, this union of love between two religions which crossed the barriers of family, society, and *jati*, no Muslim reviewer of Bankim can ignore." Wadud's article, "Banglar Jagaran" (1927), argued that Bankim's "immortal" *Anandamath* probably did not fulfill feelings of "pleasure and sorrows" of its hero and heroine characters. Yet *Anandamath* is an imperishable document. Bankim, by wonders of his creativity, has portrayed, "The bleeding heart of his distressed people." Wadud also argued that Bankim becomes a Hindu revivalist only at the end of his life. The Hindu revivalism of Bankim, according to Wadud, was due to the death of Bankim's close relatives. In the Hindu revivalism, Wadud explained, Bankim was playing the role of a nationalist patriot. By nation, Bankim understood a nation of the Hindus, "but not all Hindus, only those Hindus who were suffering at the hands of the British." See, Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Mussalman Sahityik," *Prabasi*, May-June, 1919. The article is reprinted in *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, pp. 527-534.

⁹³ The following are the five essays of Wadud on Bankim. i) Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bankim Chandra" (1932), published in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Samaj o Sahitya*, pp. 62-64. ii) Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bankim Chandra" (1933), was read in the MSS, but unpublished. iii) Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bankim Chandra," read in Dhaka on occasion of Bankim's one hundred birth anniversary and published in *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, II, pp. 183-186. iv) Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bankim Pratibha," published in Kazi Abdul (ed.), *Samaj o Sahitya*, pp. 163-166. Wadud wrote that he read this article in MSS. But the titles of the two

The five articles defended Bankim's Hindu revivalism in several ways. First, Wadud reminded those 'rootless Muslims' (*pratisthahin Muslim*) of Bengal who feel pain today by Bankim's remarks that once upon a time Hindus also felt helplessness and dishonor by Muslim conquerors.⁹⁴ Wadud gave an example: "By Sultan Mahmud's onslaughts, India's wealth was looted....The Hindus, like dust, were blown away....This uprooting of Hindus is the cause of anti-Muslim antipathy."⁹⁵ Today, if the defeated *bharatbashi* (Indian) has begun a reaction under Bankim's leadership, it is not abnormal.

Second, Wadud agreed, however, that it is an offense for a 'genius' like Bankim, to have inordinate concern for brotherhood exclusively for Hindus, which he did not feel for Muslims. Wadud also agreed that there is no doubt that "some sort of Hindu revivalism" had been written in the *Anandamath*. Nevertheless, Wadud questioned, does this really indicate that Bankim was not a humanist? Wadud's answer was: "Bankim tried hard to glorify Hinduism, but the significant glorification that he actually achieved was glorification of truth and humanity alone; hence his claim to be reckoned as a man of genius...."⁹⁶ Wadud argued that even Bankim's love of Hindus is another example of strong attachment with humans kith and kin. Wadud also asserted that, for focusing the 'universals, a writer can be concerned with the "particular" or concrete:

The relation between the universal and the particular in the words of Tagore, is a ceaseless interchange between Spirit and Form....The view that no creativity is worth the name, if it fails to be a record of the particular in space and time, is not truer than the other view that such a creation equally

articles are not similar. v) Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Bankim Chandra*" (1938), published in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Ajkar Katha* (Calcutta: General Printers and Publishers, 1941), pp. 60-69. This article was translated into English and published in Kazi Wadud (ed.), *Creative Bengal*, pp. 90-97. A year before the Lahore Resolution, Wadud reviewed Bankim's book, *Dharmatatva* (?). The review article, "*Bankim Chandrer Dharmatatva*" (1939), was published in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Ajkar Katha*, pp. 88-94.

⁹⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Bankim Chandra*," *Ajkar Katha*, p.63.

⁹⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Bankim Chandra*," *Ajkar Katha*, p. 63. In a separate article, Kazi Wadud wrote details of Sultan Mahmud's attack on Hinduism in India. See Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Ekti Aitihāsik Caritra*," in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Ajkar Katha*, pp 116-119.

⁹⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud. "Bankim Chandra," in Kazi Abdul (ed.), *Creative Bengal*, p. 92.

fails if that particular is not lighted up by the steady glow of the love of truth and humanity.⁹⁷

In other words, Wadud recognized that an emphasis on 'particular' (religion, language, time, and space could also be a kind of creativity) if it focuses the universality of "love, truth and humanity." Wadud re-interpreted Bankim's controversial novel, *Anandamath*. Wadud argued that a strong feeling of Hindu revivalism was *not* prominent in the novel. A Hindu resurgence was portrayed to the extent that Hindu rebels wanted to wreck a Muslim state. But, Wadud added: "The Muslim state was already suffering in a decrepit condition" before the Hindu rebels wanted to wreck it. Wadud also pointed out that, despite the Hindu rebellion against Muslim rule, Bankim did not in the novel re-establish a 'Hindu Kingdom' in India. For that, Wadud wrote, Bankim pointed his finger to the distant future: "The great possibility of the reinstallation of the Hindu power with the help of the English, who are skilled teachers in secular things."⁹⁸

Wadud also asked the question: "What exactly is the 'Hindu' or 'Hindu way' that Bankim Chandra describes in the *Anandamath*?" Wadud directly quoted from *Anandamath* that Bankim's meaning of 'Hinduism' was not an orthodox interpretation: "*Sanatan dharma* (eternal [Hindu] religion) does not consist in the worship of thirty-three *crores* (330,000,000) of deities; that is an ignorant popular cult. Hindu religion is based on knowledge."⁹⁹ By this notion ("Hindu religion is based on knowledge and not on formalism"), Bankim places himself in opposition to many an authority on Hinduism. For example, Wadud pointed out that Bankim's remark, "ignorant cult," had been rejected by Ramakrisna Paramahansa as "a betrayal of ignorance of matters of religion."¹⁰⁰ Wadud

⁹⁷ *Kabir* (Rabindranth) *kathay e byaparke bala jay 'bhab theke abiram jaoya asa'....Desh-kaler bishesh rup jate na phuteche ta sahitya hay ni e katha jatakhani satya, sei desh-kaler rupe satyashrayitar o manabatar cirantan dityi jadi na phute thake tabe tao sahitya hai ni, eo tatakhani satya.*" Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bankim Chandra," *Ajkar Katha*, p. 62. For English translation of this passage, see Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bankim Chandra," published in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Creative Bengal*, p. 92.

⁹⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bankim Chandra," *Creative Bengal*, p. 92.

⁹⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bankim Chandra," *Creative Bengal*, p. 92.

¹⁰⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bankim Chandra," *Creative Bengal*, p. 93.

also had doubts about Bankim's eagerness for understanding "religion [as] the submission of all human faculties toward the *Isvar*."¹⁰¹ Wadud's answer was: "Do we really perceive within novelist Bankim Chandra--or within Bankim Chandra, author of *Krishna-Caritra* and *Samya*--this peace of looking toward the lord in all activities. Do we not rather see in Bankim's novels a sense of sorrow, disappointment and discord? Sorrow at the harshness of nature, disappointment at human weakness, discord within his own nature?"¹⁰²

Wadud refuted the charge that Bankim distorted Muslim historical figures as "mean characters." Wadud defined a mean character in literature as one "who is wanting in vigor, misshapen and--when the character is not nourished by the emotion of its creator--fails to excite emotion of the reader." In this sense, Bankim did not distort the Muslim character, Zebunnissa. Wadud wrote: "In the eyes of connoisseurs, Zebunnissa towers head and shoulders above the big personalities and the battles and intrigues of *Rajsingha*. The author first presents her to his readers as a monstrosity (*danabiya*) who toys with love, but he goes on revealing with delicate care and curiosity the loving woman hidden in that monstrosity."¹⁰³ If communal Muslim intelligentsia disregard this human image, Bankim should not be blamed. Bankim presented the Hindu woman character, Shaibalini in *Chandrashekhar* as a "sinful woman" and Hindu male character, Bhabananda in *Anandamath* as "a vicious scoundrel." From the perspective of literary execution, these three "sinners" far out balance in magnificence the "goodies," Bankim draws in his novels. Wadud, therefore, concludes that Bankim was a humanist, despite his concern for establishment of the Hindus and the Hindu way.

¹⁰¹ *Tini* (Bankim) *balechen, samudai brittir ishvar mukhi haoyar nam dharma*. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bankim Pratibha," published in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Samaj o Sahitya*, p. 163-164.

¹⁰² *Kintu upanyasik Bankin Chandrer bhitare--athaba Krisnacaritra o samaya-praneta Bankim Chandrer bhitareo--ei samuday brittir ishvar mukhi haoyar shanti bastabiki ki amara anubhab kari? Tar caite dukhabodh, nairashya o ashanti--prakritir nirmamatar janya dukkha, manusher akshamatar janya nairashya o tar nijer prakritir bhitarkar ki-ek ashantibodh--ei sabhay ki tar upanyasgulite amara beshi kare anubhab kari na?* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bankim Pratibha," *Samaj o Sahitya*, p. 164.

¹⁰³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bankim Chandra," *Creative Bengal*, p. 94.

He (Bankim) is steeped in the philosophical and scientific ideas of the civilized world of his time, and with those ideas and ideals he tries to dispel the foggy outlook of men and women...and lead them to secular welfare--as has been done by thinkers and philosophers....Bankim Chandra was a child of the nineteenth century Bengal which witnessed a curious tug of war between illusions on the one hand and attempts at emancipation from them on the other.¹⁰⁴

Wadud also looked into Muslim writings, but Wadud's effort to search out humanism in writings of the nationalist Muslims was remarkably insufficient. Wadud did not write any essay on Madani's ideas, including his Islamic view of composite nationalism. Wadud identified Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad merely as a leader of the group of "thoughtful Ulema:"

...A leader of a class of thoughtful Ulema in Bengali Muslim society is Urdu-speaking Muslim Bengali *alim*, Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad. In the introduction of a recently published book, *The Tarjuman-i-Quran* [*Tarjuman-Al-Quran*] Azad has given a liberal and inspiring commentary on Islam. As a result, he has earned respect from the *alokpanthis* [enlightened]. I hope his commentary would help Muslims to get rid of Wahabi influence of hatred and disliking to rationality.¹⁰⁵

Wadud recognized Mawlana Mohammad Ali as a Pan-Islamist:

¹⁰⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bankim Chandra," *Creative Bengal*, p.95. Wadud's article, "Bankim Chandrer Dharmatatva" (1939) reviewed Bankim's book, *Dharmatatva*. In this book, Bankim re-stated Hinduism. Wadud stated that Bankim was influenced mostly by Bhudev and partially by Rammohun. Wadud's review, however, did not emphasize on the "new Hinduism" of Bankim, but interpreted it as the "new-Humanism." Wadud pointed out that Bankim's Hindu faith was not strong enough than Keshab Chandra Sen. In *Jiban Veda*. Wadud argued, that Keshab acted as a religious *guru*. In *Dharmatatva*, Bankim also acted like a *guru*. Nonetheless, "Keshab was ecstatic by his faith in *Ishvar*, conversely Bankim's faith was devoted to every day human life." Wadud also focused Bankim's cliché in *Dharmatatva*: "Nationalism is above religion." Furthermore, Bankim had an instinctive respect for modern science and that Bankim's ideals of "humanity" and "mental freedom" had never faded. This "new humanism of Bankim," according to Wadud, was expressed in Bankim's celebrated saying: "I concede to Hinduism but I do not agree to the foolishness of Hindu religion." For complete text of the article, see Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bankim Chandrer Dharmatatva," published in Kazi Abdul (ed.), *Ajkar Katha*, pp. 89-93.

¹⁰⁵ ...Cintasil alimder mukut-moni hacchen Urdu-bhasi Bangali Alim Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad. *Tar samprati-prokasita "The Tarjuman-i-Quran" er bhumikay tini Islamer ye udar o sanjibani bakhya dite perechen tate desher alokpanthider sraddhabhajan tini hoyechen. Tar bakhya mussalman samaj Wahabiprobhaber kandajnanbimukhata o aprem theke mukti pabe asa kara yay.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Bangla Sahityor Muslim Dhara" (1932), published in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Samaj o Sahitya*, p. 105. For Wadud's comment on Azad's commentary of the Quran, see Kazi Abdul Wadud's two pages article, "Quraner Nutan Byakha," *Sabuj Bangla*, Vol. I, No. 4 (1935), p.182.

Mohammad Ali was a nationalist, no doubt; but more than a nationalist, he was a Pan-Islamist....I do not know for what curse such geniuses as Jamal Uddin Afgani, Sir Sayyid, Amir Ali, and Mohammad Ali shed tears [crying], 'Oh Islam!' (*hay Islam*) 'Oh! Muslim!' (*hay Muslim*)....Many mammoth animals of the past no longer exist on the surface of the earth in the present. Similarly, imperialism of the past and its companion religious communalism (Pan-Islam is one case) are perhaps no longer required for this present world. [We should agree] with a scholar, who said recently, 'Let us live rationally and nationally' (English words are Wadud's).¹⁰⁶

III. Abul Hussain's accommodation with Hindus and British rule in India: New Creativity or *Naba Srishti*.

When Wadud developed his new thesis of non-communal nationalism, Abul Hussain, Wadud's "co-worker" and primary follower, stood solidly behind Wadud. Abul Hussain coined an expression, akin to Wadud's *srishti dharma*, namely '*naba srishti*' or 'new creativity.' This section is divided into three subsections: (A) Abul Hussain's understanding of *naba srishti*; (B) his view of social and political accommodations of Muslims with Hindus and; (C) his preference for upholding British rule in order to facilitate Muslims' accommodation with Hindus.

A. Abul Hussain's understanding of *naba srishti*.

¹⁰⁶ *Mohammad Ali jatiyatabadi chilen sandeha nai. Kintu tar ceyeo haito beshi chilen (athaba take hate hayechila) Pan-Islam badi....Jani na kon abhisampater janya Jamaluddin. Sir Sayyid Ahmad, Amir Ali, Mohammad Alir mato Pratibhaban byaktider svabhabik saundarja "hay Muslim! hay Islam! er ashrupte jagater samne shrestha prakasher sarthakata hate bancita hayeche....Atiter anek atikay jib dharapristhe ar barttaman nai. Temani atiter samrajyabad ebam samrajyabaderi dosar prakanda prakanda dharmasangha-bad (Pan-Islamism, tari ekti) e-saber haito jagate ar prayojan nai. Ekaler ekjan manishi balechen: "Let us live rationally and nationally." Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Mohammad Ali" (1931), published in Kazi Abdul (ed.), *Samaj o Sahitya*, pp. 70-72. As a source for Bengali Muslims' accommodation with Hindus, Wadud did not emphasize, either, on the humanistic tendencies of the *puthi* literature, written by some ordinary Bengali Muslims. See Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Bangla Sahityor Muslim Dhara*" (1932), published in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Samaj o Sahitya*, 94-109. Abdul Kadir, a rational humanist associate of Wadud, differed on this issue. Kadir presented three essays in the MSS on the "syncretistic tradition" of the ordinary Bengal Muslim literature. See Abdul Kadir, "*Banglar Lok Sangit*" (1927); "*Banglar Palli Sangite Lilabad*" (1927); "*Banglar Palli-Gane Buddha-Sadhana o Islam*" (1928). For complete text of the three articles, see Abdul Kadir (ed.), *Banglar Lokayata Sahitya*. (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1985). For Wadud's difference of opinion with Kadir on this issue, see "MSSP," p. 49*

Abul Hussain defined *srishti* or 'creativity' as the highest and sharpest of all intellectual resources of humans. It is *srishti*, according to Abul Hussain, that makes humans immortal through the ages. It is *srishti* that gives birth everyday to new histories. Civilization is the collection of *srishti* that has been achieved by individual efforts at the personal level. When creative individuals are 'infatuated' (*moha*) with *srishti*, an entire society is filled by *srishti* of the individuals. A *naba srishti*, or 'new creativity,' according to Abul Hussain, cannot be achieved by 'infatuation with the past' (*atiter moha*).¹⁰⁷ Abul Hussain argued that infatuation with the past would depress dynamism of creativity in the present. A person infatuated with the past would not feel a new need for the necessities in the present, but would only seek to enjoy glories of the past. By dreaming of "the stories of [a past] age of truth" and the "so-called amazing enlightenment of the past," one would lose self-confidence and would lose *srishti-kshamata*, or creative power. The nations, Abul Hussain argued, who were able to come quickly out of an infatuation with the past were the ones who contributed the most to human civilization. His obvious reference was the West:

The Western nations are no longer happy with the past. For solving the present problems and sorrows, they resort to everyday 'new and newer creativity' (*naba naba srishti*). They no longer believe in the golden age of truth in the past; but in a golden age in the future. The new creativity of the West at present is an easy road to reach to that future.¹⁰⁸

Based on this justification of new creativity in the present, Abul Hussain pointed to Muslims' and Hindus' infatuation with past as the root of social division. "Hindus are

¹⁰⁷Abul Hussain, "Atiter Moha," published in Abdul Kadir (ed.), *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, pp. 39-47. The essay was also published in *Sahityik*, Vol. I, No. 8 (1927).

¹⁰⁸ *Pashcattya jatir bartaman itihis parle mane hay je, ta'ra atiter mohe ar mugdha nay. Ta'ra bartamaner duhkha-samasyar samadhan-kalpe nitya naba naba srishtir udbhaban karche. Tara ar mane kare na, 'satya jug ba subarna-sabhyata atite chila;'*—*ekhan tara mane kare, 'se jug bhabishatye eham taderi naba naba srishti se juge pauchar path sahaj ka're tulbe.* Abul Hussain, "Atiter Moha," published in Abdul Kadir (ed.), *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 40.

dreaming of restoring an Aryan power and say: 'India belongs to Hindus, and Muslims are foreigners.' Muslims say, 'We are Muslim and we will remain Muslim in India.'¹⁰⁹

B. Social and political accommodations of Muslims with Hindus.

Abul Hussain, though he wanted to end Muslims' infatuation with the past, did not reject all Muslim traditions. He modified the term 'tradition' to "selective tradition," with an emphasis that selective traditions of Muslim history¹¹⁰ could be inspirational for Muslims. Nevertheless, he also cautioned Muslims:

We must not indulge our pride and romance about ancient history, but only take examples from ancient history as inspiration for our present creativity. These examples must not infatuate us and make us arrogant. We must believe

¹⁰⁹ Abul Hussain, "Atiter Moha," published in Abdul Kadir (ed.), *Abul Hussain Racanabali*, p. 41.

¹¹⁰ Abul Hussain justified Muslims unity with Hindus on essence of some verses of the Quran. For example, he cited *sura* II:213, "Mankind were one community..." The rest of the verse, that Abul Hussain ignored, is: "And only those unto whom (the scripture) was given differed concerning it, after clear proofs had come unto them, through hatred one of another. And *Allah* by His will guided those who believe unto the truth of that concerning which they differed. *Allah* guideth whom He will unto a straight path." Again, Abul Hussain cited a verse of *sura* II:30. Abul Hussain interpreted the verse to mean that Hindus and Muslims are children of *Adam*, who was sent by one *Allah* to bring a kingdom of heaven in this world. Hindus believe in one supreme *Brahma*, master of the universe. As well, they had opened up avenues for human welfare. A complete verse of the *sura* is: "And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth, they said: Wilt Thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood, while we, we hymn Thy praise and santify Thee? He said: Surely I know that which ye know not." This effort of Abul Hussain, to be an apologetic of Islam for Muslims unity with Hindus, was essentially a short lived attempt. He stressed this only one time in his writings. See Abul Hussain, "Amader Rajniti," *Jayati*, Vol. I, No. 11-12 (1931), published in *Abul Hussain Racanabali*, pp. 179-91. It is likely that Abul Hussain was attracted by English Muslim, Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall. In 1927, Pickthall delivered seven lectures on "Muslim Culture" in Madras. Abul Hussain translated Pickthall's lectures into and published these in a Bengali journal. See Abul Hussain, "Muslim Culture," *Saogat*, Vol. V, No. 2 (1927), pp. 107-110; No. 3 (1927), pp. 197-202; No. 4 (1927), pp. 299-306; No. 5 (1927), pp. 379-383; No. 6 (1927), pp. 474-480; No. 7 (1928), pp. 547-552; No. 8 (1928), pp. 660-662. The lectures did not directly address the issue of Muslims' unity Hindus, but provided comparable examples. Pickthall wrote that for generations Muslims had been living peacefully with non-Muslims. *Kafir* in the Quran is not an idol worshipper: "The correct meaning of *kafir* in the Quran refers only to agnostics. *Kafirs* are those who do not trust any religion, follow any holy book, have no faith in prophets as messenger of truth, and do not rely on God's mercy." Pickthall also argued that Islam does not recognize separate laws, one for Muslims and one for non-Muslim. For "selective Muslim traditions" that Abul Hussain agreed with, see Abul Hussain's articles: "Saracenic Commerce and Industry," published in *The Calcutta Review*, August, 1926, pp. 211-226 and September 1926, pp. 441-454; "Itihaser Bhaugalik Bhatti (1925)," *Abul Hussain Racanabali*, pp. 79-85; "Fiqa-phobia (1928)," a debate with Islamic liberal Mohammad Wajed Ali, published in *Abul Hussain Racanabali*, pp. 112-119; "Muslim Culture o Uhar Darshanik Bhatti," *Bulbul*, April, 1933, pp. 43-49 and "Al-Mamun" (1931), published in *Abul Hussain Racanabali*, pp. 251-262.

that we have achieved a higher power of creativity than the creativity's of our traditions. We are not for history, history is for us....We will treat equally the creativity's of ancient Hindus and ancient Muslims as human creativity and feel proud about these. We will not have a slightest hesitation in our thought that these are Muslim and those are Hindu. We will take both as created by humans.¹¹¹

The passage thus affirms a human commonness based on the creativity's of Hindus and Muslims. Abul Hussain gave little or no emphasis on the communal labels, such as 'Hindu' and 'Muslim.' He wrote clearly that a creative human does not have a label Hindu, Muslim or Christian: "To name the creative human (*kriti manush*) with labels of Hindu, Muslim, Christian shows only the difference of colors of humans as flowers...The real identity of humans--who bear diverse religions as if garments--is within them, where there is no difference."¹¹²

Abul Hussain rejected the emphasis of Hindu leaders on territorial freedom of India. Oppositely, Abul Hussain was emphatic: "We want first the freedom of human beings, then liberation of the soil (*amara cay manusher mukti--tarpar matir mukti*)"¹¹³ A true national freedom, according to Abul Hussain, is the social freedom of people born on Indian soil. Abul Hussain appealed to Hindu leaders who have real feelings of freedom of India to first uplift the Muslims:

Despite hundreds of problem of Muslims, a Hindu leader has to recognize Muslims as inhabitant of this soil (India)... He should have a sympathetic attitude toward Muslims. He

¹¹¹ *Prachin itihās amader garba o asphalaner prashray na diye se itihāser drīstanta amader bartaman srishtir janya anuprerana sanchar karuk, kintu jeno stambhita biramvita na kare. Se srishtir ceye aro brihattara srishtir ksamata amader hayeche, e bishvas jena amader karme utsaha uttarottar bridhi kare. Itihās amader janya--amara itihāser janya na....Amara jena pracin Hindur srishti o pracin mussalmaner srishti saman-bhabe manusher srishti mane kari o antarer sahii tate gaurab anubhab karte pari. E jena amader mane til-bindu sthan na pay je, aha, oti Hindur--ar eti mussalmaner. Amara jena mane kari--o sab manusher.* Abul Hussain, "Atiter Moha," pp. 42-43.

¹¹² *Kriti manush prasphutita pusper mata adaraniya hok--hindu, mussalman, khristian nam dile bara jor se manush-pusper ramer parthakya dekhan hay matra....Sutaram bibhinna dharmā-paricchad-parihita manusher asal satta tar antare--jekhane prithak karbar kichui nay.* Abul Hussain, "Atiter Moha," p. 43.

¹¹³ Abul Hussain, "Tarun Muslim," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 59. The article was also published in *Barshik Saogat*, Vol. II (1927).

should say, 'Oh! such a big Muslim community was born and has been raised in the Indian environment. Why are they habituated to bad practices and being misled in a wrong direction?....The concern of a Hindu leader should not be hate, satire and mockery of Muslims....The cause of his (Hindu leader) sorrow should be that they (Muslims), by adopting some bad practices, are stigmatizing this country. To get rid of these conditions of Muslims is a matter of concern to every freedom lover of India.... Education, wealth and uprightness...if Muslims mistakenly do not participate in these activities of human welfare, then real lovers of the country should persuade Muslims to do so.¹¹⁴

Abul Hussain also required Muslims to accommodate with Hindus. For this Abul Hussain criticized Muslims, "My blasting objection to the Muslim society is that they are not doing anything special to get respect from their Hindu brothers."¹¹⁵ For this, Abul Hussain drew attention of Muslims to Rammohun.¹¹⁶ On the eve of the Civil Disobedience movement, Abul Hussain also appealed to the Muslim young generation for self-criticism (*atma-samalocana*) and only then to be critical of Hindus. He cautioned

¹¹⁴ *Aj hindukeo mussalmaner shata truti thaka sarveo take desher manush bale svikar karte habe....Tini (Hindu)...karunar attitude (English word is Abul Hussain's) dekhoben, ar ei ba'le tini dukkha karben, 'aha! eta bara ekti sampradaya ei desher jal-bayute manush haye ken eman bipathgami ku-acar-parasta ha'ye pareche?'....Tar (Hindus) se dukkher madhya ghrina-bidrup ba shlesher ban lukkayita thakbe na....Tar dukkher karan habe ei je, ta'ra ku-acar-parasta ha'ye desher kalanka baracche. Se kalanka apanodan karar bhar shudhu sei sampradayer upar nayasta karle calbe na--tar bhar pratayak svadesh-premike svecchay grahan karte habe....Shiksha, dhan, niti....mussalman jadi bhul kare ei samasta mangler kaje jog ni dey, tabe prakrita desh-premike take jor ka're se mangaler kaje prabitta karate habe. Abul Hussain, "Atiter Moha," pp. 44-45. In a separate article, Abul Hussain appealed to Hindu leaders for an "elder brotherly" (*agraj*) attitude to Muslims. He stated that Hindu-Muslim relationship is like "flowers of the same tree" (*Hindu-Mussalman ekay briksyer dutyi puspa*). Abul Hussain traced an uneven social development of Muslims and Hindus in India. He wrote that "elder brothers" (Hindus) were born in a rational environment. On the other hand, Abul Hussain asked, "What is the environment into which Muslims were born?" Abul Hussain appealed to compassion of the Hindu leaders to Muslims: "What your children will be learning in eight years by growing up in a liberal environment of your predecessors, a Muslim youth would be learning the same in fourteen years....As elder brothers you are to lift the Muslims out of a pitiable situation." Abul Hussain, "Tarun Muslim," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, pp. 49-50.*

¹¹⁵ Abul Hussain, "Atiter Moha," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 46.

¹¹⁶ Abul Hussain, "Taruner Sadhana," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 154. Abul Hussain wrote in this essay: "I know many people will be angry at me. But I must confess that among founders of modern India Raja Rammohun was the greatest. For India, Rammohun was a 'man of the era' (*jug manab*). Rammohun emphasized knowledge above freedom and told us: during the British rule, accept European science, knowledge and philosophy and cease worshipping the *Sashtra*. This epoch-making ideal began a memorable movement in Bengal and India." The article was published in *Saogat*, Vol. VI, No. 12 (1929).

Muslims that it is a habitual rule the strong will assert power upon the weak. "If you want to escape from this, get rid of the degrading conditions of your own society." After British come to rule India "our Hindu brothers" took all advantages of Western learning, but "our forefathers by being infatuated with religious-romanticism, were engrossed in old manuscripts."¹¹⁷ The result was that Muslims had been turned into a "community of beggars, begging to British to give me this and give me that."¹¹⁸ If this "begging community" is criticized by non-Muslims, "could you blame non-Muslims?"¹¹⁹

For Muslims' accommodation with Hindus, Abul Hussain rejected any more truces or any conditional alliances with Hindus. He wanted genuine mutual respect based upon a sense of common humanity and shared Indian history and culture. Muslim-Hindu accommodation is not possible between a 'prejudiced Muslim' (*samskarasakta mussalman*) and a 'prejudiced Hindu' (*samskarasakta Hindu*).¹²⁰ Abul Hussain rejected Muslim blaming of Hindus for music before the mosque: "If Hindus are to respect the mosque, they should have respect for life-style of its *imam*. If the life-style of an *imam* is ugly, his taste is perverted, his manners are not honorable and his profession is mean, then how should others respect the Muslim mosque?"¹²¹ Instead of labeling Hindus as *kafir*, said Abul Hussain, Muslims should respect Hindu culture and history:

Esteem Hindu culture and history, because Hindu history,
learning, and efforts are created by humans of India. For

¹¹⁷ *Amader aparadher anta nei. Amader purbapurush dharma-joshe matta haye gunke grahan na ka're atiter puthitey mashgul thaklen...* Abul Hussain. "Tarun Muslim." *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p.49.

¹¹⁸ Abul Hussain, "Tarun Muslim," p. 50.

¹¹⁹ Abul Hussain, "Tarun Muslim," p.50.

¹²⁰ Abul Hussain also wrote that the problems for which religions had originated in the past have no longer existed in the present. Today, new problems have begun in Hindu and Muslim society. Therefore, there is a need of 'new religion' (*Naba dharma*) to which both can submit equally. See Abul Hussain, "Sahitya Hindu-Mussalman." *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, pp. 315-316. This essay was a speech of Abul Hussain first delivered in a literary gathering, Bazitpur Sahitya-Sanmelan. The gathering was organized by Pabitra Sen, a noted Hindu intellectual. The speech was also edited by a Hindu author, Sureshcandra Das, and first published in a Hindu Bengali journal, *Dipika*, Vol. III., No. 5 (1927). See also Abul Hussain's article, "Sahitye Svatantra," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, pp. 318-322.

¹²¹ Abul Hussain, "Tarun Muslim," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 50.

that history, Hindus are proud and so are you....Every human is my brother. So, I am an equal inheritor with Hindus of India's *srishiti*....I repeat, Hindus hate (*ghrina*) you because you have done nothing exceptional for which you deserve respect....You do not improve your religious rules, you do not cultivate new knowledge, and your tolerance is not satisfactory. Why then should Hindus and British rulers respect you?¹²²

Abul Hussain opposed separate electorates for Muslims because he wished to bring an end to using Islam in politics. He wrote an exclusive article on this issue in 1931. After the Gandhi-Irwin 'truce' (English word is Abul Hussain's) was signed, Abul Hussain wrote an article on the mixed electorate in which he supported the Gandhi-Irwin truce and urged its support by Hindus and Muslims: "That truce requires sincere and unconditional embrace in the heart of the Muslims. The Hindus must forget that they are Hindus and Muslims must forget they are Muslims."¹²³ For bringing Muslims into the Indian National Congress, Abul Hussain appealed Congress leaders to win over Muslims; "if not by peaceful persuasion, then by invisible coercion or conversion, in spite of Muslims' medieval foolishness and adamant obstinacy."¹²⁴

¹²² Abul Hussain, "*Tarun Muslim*," p.58. He also accused Muslims that it is for their religion that violence and intolerance are habitual in their life-style and in their history. Abul Hussain further stated that Muslims' violence and intolerance are directed not only against 'non-Muslims' (*pardharmi*), but Muslims shed blood of other Muslims. Abul Hussain cited the bloodshed as a result of the conflict between Hanafi and Mohammadi sects of the ordinary Muslim population in Bengal. Abul Hussain also cited historical evidence of Muslims' intolerance and violence: "Ibn Rushd, Ibn Sina, Ibn Khaldun, Abu Hanifa, Khalifa Al Hakam, poet Abul Atahiya, all were terrorized." For Abul Hussain's more provocative criticism of Muslims' intolerance, see Abul Hussain, "*Nishedher Biramvana*," *Abhijan*, Vol. I, No. 1, (1926), pp. 20-27.

¹²³ Abul Hussain, "The Gandhi-Irwin Truce and the Muslims" (Calcutta: reprinted, 1933), from the *East Bengal Times*, Dhaka, April 18 & 25, 1931.

¹²⁴ Abul Hussain, "The Gandhi-Irwin Truce and the Muslims" (Calcutta: Reprinted, 1933), p. 2. Nationalist Muslim leaders advocated conditional participation of Muslims in the Indian National Congress. Rizwan Malik wrote: "The Deoband fatwa, however, did not advocate unconditional Muslim co-operation with the Congress. The ulema stipulated that co-operation with the Congress should be conditional, as long as it did not defy any ordinances of Shari'yah. Madani inherited this Deoband tradition and felt closer to the Congress than to the All India Muslim League." See, Rizwan Malik, "Mawlana Hussain Ahmad Madani And Jam'iyat Ulama-I Hind 1920-57: Status of Islam and Muslims in India," p. 88. For Abul Kalam's theological justification for "political alliance" of Muslims with Hindus, see, Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan, 1857-1967*, p.188.

Abul Hussain used all kinds of pejorative words to stigmatize communal electorate. He accused Muslim political leaders who were elected by a communal electorate as: "educated sneaks, treacherous hirelings, mean hypocrites, self-conceited cowards, fanatical *jo-hukums* ('Yes sir')...worthless drones, and brazen faced [sic] mediocrity's."¹²⁵ About the impact of communal electorate for raising a communal consciousness of ordinary Muslims, Abul Hussain was also frustrated: "It [communal electorate] has arrested natural and healthy growth of public spirit among the Muslims....It has kept the Muslim mass locked in the backwaters of ignorance, credulity, idolatry, and primitive barbarity, of which the communalists have made great capital by invoking their medieval tradition."¹²⁶ Muslim candidates approach their constituencies without any program of work, except with their label of religion, including "certificates of their spiritual guides, the *pirs*."¹²⁷ Abul Hussain described one incident of corruption of communal appeal:

The disgrace of religious appeal was once experienced by some of my co-religionists who were approached by two Muslim candidates, one being certificated by a Nawab and the other by a Pir. The man of the Nawab had no beard and the man of the Pir had beard and moustache well trimmed according to *Shariat*. Both appealed to Muslim voters as *Khadem-ul-Islam* (servant of Islam, meaning emphasized by Abul Hussain) not as *Khadem-ul-Constituency* (servant of the constituency). The Nawab could not override the Pir. The beardless candidate was denounced by the disciples of the Pir as *Khilafi-Shariat* (transgressor). A compromise was inevitable. The appeal to purse was resorted to. The Pir supported the Nawab and the beardless candidate was returned.¹²⁸

Rejecting separate electorate for its communal appeal and outcome, Abul Hussain advocated mixed electorate, for its non-communal impact. His theoretical agreement with

¹²⁵ Abul Hussain, "The Gandhi-Irwin Truce and the Muslims," p. 3.

¹²⁶ Abul Hussain, "The Gandhi-Irwin Truce and the Muslims," p. 3.

¹²⁷ Abul Hussain, "The Gandhi-Irwin Truce and the Muslims," p. 6.

¹²⁸ Abul Hussain, "The Gandhi-Irwin Truce and the Muslims," p. 6.

mixed electorate was that a state cannot be divided into small compartments. The state exists because the people want to survive. The measures of state are required to make life of the people happy, good and healthy. As Muslims and Hindus both require these basics, it is not possible to distinguish between the Muslim interests and the Hindu interests in a nation: "Sunshine or the rains cannot be divided into two different doses for each community in a country."¹²⁹ Abul Hussain rejected the Muslim communalists' argument that Hindus, having financial muscle, would never allow Muslim candidates to succeed at the polls, as Hindu candidates would buy the Muslim votes in a mixed electorate. Abul Hussain replied:

In the transition period probably the Muslims as they have become weakened and demoralized under the present system will succumb to the purse and influence, but the time will soon come when youth of Islam will not sell themselves so easily. They fear that consequence because they think the demoralizing propensities that the system of communal representation has developed, will also remain in operation in a common electorate....The next advantage of a common electorate is that the better type of Muslims will come to compete with the Hindu candidates and necessarily they will have to resort to attractive program of work in the councils. The voters will then be compelled to decide on the most advantageous program for their ultimate choice. Assuming that the Hindus will buy off the Muslims, the Hindu candidates will yet have to go to the polls. In this way the parties will develop on different interests, not on the label of religion.¹³⁰

By the advocacy of common interests, Muslim candidates may secure a majority in Hindu majority provinces and Hindu candidates may do so in Muslim majority provinces. The advocacy of common interest, Abul Hussain further stated, "will develop common outlook and add strength to the union of all the forces of all the communities

¹²⁹ Abul Hussain, "The Gandhi-Irwin Truce and the Muslims," p. 4.

¹³⁰ Abul Hussain, "The Gandhi-Irwin Truce and the Muslims," p. 9.

inhabiting our motherland."¹³¹ He concluded the essay with a "warning" to Gandhi for "misleading" Muslims regarding their religious symbols:

Mahatma Gandhi has once done a great injury to India, and Islam as well, by backing the shadow of Khilafat, after which the Muslims were led, rather misled. He ought to have denounced the shadow and ought not to have lent support to that at all....It is therefore necessary to warn him this time so that he may not, in his anxiety to placate the Muslims, give too much premium to their 'medieval mentality' and instinct of fear. ¹³²

C. Upholding British rule for Muslims' accommodation with Hindus.

Like Wadud, Abul Hussain was also a loyal 'citizen' (*nagarik*) under the British political rule in India. The political loyalism of Abul Hussain was expressed on several occasions. For example, he did not participate in anti-British Khilafat movement in 1920 or anti-British Civil Disobedience movement that threatened the legitimacy of British rule in India. And he criticized those agitators who blamed the British for all their problems during the Non-Cooperation movement: "Accusing the British is declared by the political nationalist as a sign of a moral strength. This kind of thought only inspires us to magnify wrongs of a foreign power and suppress our own faults. There could be no worse miseducation than this propaganda."¹³³ There is hardly any scope to misinterpret this loyalism of Wadud and Abul Hussain as due to professional or economic interests. Neither of them coveted any lucrative positions in Indian Civil Service. Neither they held any political position nor formal nor informal membership in any political organization. Nor did they own any commercial 'agency houses' that made fortunes out of British economic rule of India.

¹³¹ Abul Hussain, "The Gandhi-Irwin Truce and the Muslims," p. 10.

¹³² Abul Hussain, "The Gandhi-Irwin Truce and the Muslims," p. 11.

¹³³ Abul Hussain, "*Tarun Muslim*," *Abul Hussain's Racanabali*, p. 49.

Two factors were responsible for their loyalty to the British rule. One was that throughout their *buddhir mukti* movement, Wadud and Abul Hussain were never disturbed or interfered with by British rule in India.¹³⁴ The other was that they saw British rule as a positive source of secular and humanistic thought. Accordingly, Abul Hussain and Wadud believed that social freedom, including freedom from communalism of Indians, should be achieved before political freedom. As Abul Hussain said in 1927: "We must liberate people before we liberate the soil (*matike svadhin karar age manushke svadhin karte habe*)."¹³⁵ Again he wrote in 1929:

Nowadays, various movements have started in India-- 'political emancipation' (English words are Abul Hussain's), 'civic and economic emancipation' (English words are Abul Hussain's). No movement of emancipations could succeed unless there is first a movement for 'intellectual emancipation' (English words are Abul Hussain's) or a freedom of the restricted mind of the people.¹³⁶

Abul Hussain argued emphatically that in ancient, medieval and even recent India, no political movement or rulers had ever thought in this direction: "The Congress movement of today is not an effort for liberation of servile (sudra-like) mentality (*shudratva manabhab*). At best, Congress only makes educated Indian aware of this servile mind. Without a liberation of people from this servile mind, no political movement could be successful in India."¹³⁷ But his view of the British was somewhat mixed. Abul Hussain wrote at one time: "The British rule kept intact the *Brahmin-*

¹³⁴ Abul Fazal compared intellectual freedom under the British rule with the freedom under Pakistani rule: "The unfreedom under the British rule was outward or territorial unfreedom, but that did not exert pressure upon our intellectual freedom. Beyond politics, unfreedom was relaxed, and it was during the British rule that many distinguished intellectuals had emerged in Bengali society.... We have achieved political freedom under Pakistani regime, but intellectually we were enslaved." See, Abul Fazal, "*Lekhaker Svadhinata*," published in Abul Fazal (ed.), *Shubhabuddhi* (Dhaka: Muktaadhara, 1974), p. 21.

¹³⁵ Abul Hussain, "*Tarun Muslim*," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 56.

¹³⁶ *Rastriya mukti* (Political Emancipation), *jagatik Jibaner prayojan anusare arthik o samajik mukti* (Civic & Economic Emancipation) *samparke nana prakar andolan hacche. E-samaster mule rayeche maner mukti* (Intellectual Emancipation). *Se mukti jekhane nai, sekhane anya kona muktir andolan jnmalabh karte pare na*. Abul Hussain, "*Muktir Katha*," published in *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 173. The essay was first published in *Saogat*, Vol. VII, No. 4 (1929), pp. 218-224.

¹³⁷ Abul Hussain, "*Muktir Katha*," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 174.

controlled power apparatus in India, although the British had given the opportunity to the *shudra* to become a *Brahmin*..."¹³⁸ At another time he also wrote: "I believe India is favored by British rule, because it is a British power, radiant with European learning and science and freed from an infatuation with the past, that has come to rule India."¹³⁹

For the secular and humanistic influence of British policy in India Abul Hussain offered further evidence. For example, he argued that British rule "developed" Muslim law. The 'Tagore Law Lecture,' delivered by Abul Hussain at Calcutta University in 1935, strongly supported British policy for developing 'Muslim law' into 'Anglo-Muslim law.' The lecture was extensive, full of legal terminologies, as it highlighted a transition of Muslim law from the Mughal period to the British rule. Abul Hussain concluded that "development" of Muslim law by British rule created scope for non-communal accommodation of Muslims with India.

Different minds (British policies) have tested its (Muslim law) validity from different standpoints and have formulated the propositions in the language of the law that tends to suit all nationalities that are destined to be consolidated into a mighty nation, which will coincide with humanity itself....The Anglo-Muslim law in its career in the hands of the judges in British India will be enriched with new conceptions, new outlooks; and with the growth of social complexities will gather round it various tinctures and tastes peculiar to the enlightened social environment created by the British administration.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ *British moter upar Brahmin paricalita rastrakei bajay rekhe calchilen--pathakya ei je, tara shudrake Brahmanava labhe kichu sahayya karechen...* Abul Hussain, "Amader Rajniti," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 181.

¹³⁹ *Ami mane kari, bharater saubhagya je iuropiya jnan-bijjan-dipta, atiter mohe-samskar hate mukta imraj edeshe probhutva karte esechhe.* Abul Hussain, "Taruner Sadhana," *Abul Hussainer Racanabali*, p. 154.

¹⁴⁰ Abul Hussain, *The History of Development of Muslim Law in British India* (Calcutta: Publisher Abul Hussain, 141-2, New Theatre Road, 1935), p. 77. The lecture was delivered in English. There are some excellent studies of British law relevant to Hindu law in India. See J. Duncan M. Derrett, "The administration of Hindu law by the British," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.IV (1961), pp. 10-52. Derrett was Tagore Professor of Law in Calcutta University. D.A. Washbrook, "Law, State and Agrarian Society in Colonial India," in *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.XV., No. 3 (1981), pp. 649-721.

This subsection will not go further into the details of Abul Hussain's 'Tagore Law Lecture' for risk of over-extending this chapter. However, 1) it may be pointed out in conclusion that Abul Hussain wanted that Muslim law should be separated from Muslim religion; 2) Abul Hussain appreciated the non-communal emphasis of British policy that "developed" the Muslim law into Anglo-Muslim law.

1. Muslim Law should be separated from religion

Abul Hussain stated: "theology and law co-exist in Islam."¹⁴¹ He viewed this as opposed to "historical method"¹⁴² and a "comparative method."¹⁴³ in studying a legal system. Acting on the basis of historical method, Abul Hussain argued that English judges of British India were often shocked at some provisions of Muslim law. for example: "allowing *talak* (divorce) under compulsion or the condition validating re-

¹⁴¹ Abul Hussain defined Muslim law: "Muslim law in the most extensive sense of the term *shara'* or *deen Islam* comprehends the ordinances of religion and the duties of man towards his Creator as well his rights and obligations toward his fellow creatures. It comprises five principal heads: (a) *I' liqad* (articles of faith); (b) *Ibadat* (acts of worship and piety); (c) *Mua 'milat* (affairs of life or civil transactions); (d) *Muzajir* (punishments for the prevention of crimes); and (e) *adab* (morals and manners)." This principal heads, according to Abul Hussain, "Aim at protecting five things: *deen* (*din* or religion), *naf* (self), *aql* (mind), *mal* (property), and *nasl* (progeny)." Abul Hussain, *The History of Development of Muslim Law in British India*, p. 5.

¹⁴² Abul Hussain defined the 'Historical method:' "It lifts up the thick veil which once concealed the origin of law and society; and explain away the absurdity and barbarity in which a legal institution of the past appears to the modern mind." Abul Hussain quoted an English 'positivist,' Frederick Harrison (1831-1921): "The Historical method is a key to unlock ancient riddles, a solvent of apparent contradictions, a touchstone of sophistries and a potent spell to exorcise those phantoms of superstitions, sheeted now in the garb of religion, now of humanity, now of the free spirit of science itself that do yet squeak and gibber in our streets." Abul Hussain, *The History of Development of Muslim Law in British India*, p. 8. Harrison was educated at Wadham College, Oxford. He began to practice as a barrister-at-law in 1858. The meaning of 'positivism' has been defined as: "In its origin and narrower sense, the system of the French thinker Auguste Comte, which confined intellectual inquiry to observable ('positive') facts and their relations, and eschewed all consideration of ultimate issues, including those of philosophy and theology....Similar doctrines were taught by H. Spencer and other defenders of agnosticism." See, F.L. Cross (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 610 & 1094.

¹⁴³ Abul Hussain defined Comparative method: "Comparative method is practically an extension of the historical method. Comparative method will enable us to collect, examine, and collate the notions, doctrines, rules and institutions of Muslim law...with other developed legal systems. In British India, the social environment is a complex product of various types of culture...application of the comparative method will prove extremely profitable." Abul Hussain, *The History of Development of Muslim Law in British India*, p. 8.

marriage with a divorcee."¹⁴⁴ On the basis of comparative method, Abul Hussain gave another reason, for which Muslim law was to be divorced from religion: "Political necessities of the people of India will ere long lead to a movement for a code of common law applicable to the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, and other natives alike."¹⁴⁵

For separation of Muslim law from religion, Abul Hussain looked back into Muslim law that had been administered under Muslim rulers of India. He cited a few attempts of Alauddin Khalji, Firoz Shah Tughlaq and Akbar to separate Muslim law from religion.¹⁴⁶ Yet, he argued, there were not such attempts by all or most Muslim rulers of India.¹⁴⁷ Second, Muslim law in India can hardly be said to have passed to the stage of legislation. The Muslim law was administered by the *Qazis* with the assistance of *Muftis*, who were neither "equity judges of England nor jurisconsults...of Rome. So we can not expect to find the body of case law in Muslim India."¹⁴⁸ Most importantly, Abul Hussain objected that Muslim rulers did not bring about the fusion of Hindu law and Muslim law

¹⁴⁴ Abul Hussain, *The History of Development of Muslim Law in British India*, p. 7.

¹⁴⁵ Abul Hussain, *The History of Development of Muslim Law in British India*, p. 8. He gave another example: "The Christian world after a protracted travail of intellectual struggle, shook off the yoke of religious thralldom in the 18th century and since then it has been under the regime of pure law completely divorced from religion." Abul Hussain, *The History of Development of Muslim Law in British India*, p. 6.

¹⁴⁶ For example, Abul Hussain cited Firoz Shah Tughlaq who prohibited punishment by mutilation, though at variance with the *shariat*. Akbar's policy of legal reforms included policy such as: (i) marriage between first cousins, permitted in the Quran was prohibited; (ii) wine drinking was permitted under medical advice and government regulation; (iii) polygamy was not allowed except in case of the first wife's barrenness; (iv) every man was allowed the liberty to change his religion if he so thought fit; (v) dispute between the Hindus were to be decided by learned Brahmins and not by Muslim Quazis. These references of Abul Hussain were based on writings of the European historians. For example, Abul Hussain's reference of Akbar was based on: R.K. Wilson, *An Introduction to the Study of Anglo-Muhammadan Law* (1894) and Elphinstone's, *History of India* (9th edition). See Abul Hussain, *The History of Development of Muslim Law in British India*, p. 22.

¹⁴⁷ Abul Hussain cited re-introduction of Islamic rules by Shahjehan and Aurangzeb: "Complete reaction for the revival of Muslim law appeared in the reign of Aurangzeb. Great efforts had been made to revive the study of *shariat* and India beheld for the first time a really serious attempt at codification of Muslim law by a Muslim sovereign. The attempt succeeded in the production of *Fatawai Alamgiri*. It corresponds to the Digest of Justinian, but differs in the very important point that it does not profess to derive any of its binding force from the Emperor or to supersede the sources from which its matters were extracted." Abul Hussain, *The History of Development of Muslim Law in British India*, p. 22.

¹⁴⁸ Abul Hussain, *The History of Development of Muslim Law in British India*, p. 17.

in India: "Only criminal and revenue law was introduced to supersede those branches of Hindu law....Cases to which both the parties were Hindus were decided by Hindu judges and the cases to which one of the parties was Hindu were referred to the state tribunals administering justice in accordance with *urf* and discretion of kings..."¹⁴⁹ In other words, in the cases of dispute, where both parties were Hindus or both were Muslims, the Muslim rulers could not devise a 'common law,' based on legislation, except for some specific customs and usages.

2. Abul Hussain's conception of a non-communal Anglo-Muslim law.

Abul Hussain understood Anglo-Muslim law in a non-communal sense. He re-emphasized in his 'Tagore Law Lecture' that Muslim law "must be studied" to "construct a system which will be natural, philosophical, and truly serviceable to suit all types of culture and social conditions."¹⁵⁰ Abul Hussain analyzed this notion of non-communalism of law in several developments of the Muslim law under the British in India.

First, a uniform common law, applicable to both Hindus and Muslims, had been introduced in the domain of criminal law and law of procedure and evidence, contracts and torts. Muslim criminal law was first modified and then altogether superseded by those changes.

Second, Abul Hussain pointed out that some traditional Muslim personal laws were retained, those conformed to English law of "equity, justice, and conscience;" some were anglicized, and some were replaced by a new set of English laws. These include laws relating to disposition of property, law of inheritance, family law, and religious usages and customs. Furthermore, Abul Hussain argued that Muslim family law, as developed by British rule, not only helped to lessen conflict within Muslim society, but

¹⁴⁹ Abul Hussain, *The History of Development of Muslim Law in British India*, p. 18.

¹⁵⁰ Abul Hussain, *The History of Development of Muslim Law in British India*, p. 6.

helped Muslim adjustment with other communities of India.¹⁵¹ He acknowledged that Muslims had suffered economically as a result of this policy. For example, hereditary proprietors of religious estates could be hurt when Anglo-Muslim law gave a legal definition of the 'Waqf' as the "appropriation of a pious and charitable trust," instead of hereditary possession.¹⁵² But Abul Hussain pointed out that Muslims also had suffered economically under traditional Muslim law.¹⁵³

Third, British policy opened up an avenue for the development of a common law of 'justice, equity, and good conscience' in India, agreeable to all Indians. For example, 'Regulation VII of 1832 (Section 9)' suspended the application of Hindu or Muslim law to any civil suit to which parties are of different religious persuasions. In all such suits, the decision of the judges in the British courts was governed by the principles of 'justice, equity, and good conscience.' Act XXI of 1850 had extended this principle throughout

¹⁵¹ Abul Hussain argued this point in three areas of the development of Muslim personal law: i) development of Muslim law relating to marriage; ii) development of Muslim law relating to dissolution of marriage and judicial separation; and iii) growth of the law relating to parental relationship. About an impact of British acts on the development of law relating to Muslim marriage, Abul Hussain stated, "Muslim marriage treated as a civil contract in British India." Inequality of Muslim female to Muslim male recognized in the traditional Muslim law of marriage was abolished. For example, Abul Hussain drew from the Indian 'Contract Act of 1872' (Sec. 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21-22) that defined: consent and free consent; consents, express or implied; and factors vitiating consent, such as, compulsion, coercion, fraud, misrepresentation, mistake; and consent of adults distinguished from that of minors. Similarly, Abul Hussain cited acts and case laws that abolished impediments of inter-marriage among and between Hindus, Muslims, Christian, Brahmo, Sikhs, and Buddhist. He cited three acts and several case laws in this context: Widow Remarriage Act of 1856; Act XXI of 1850 (Freedom of Religion Act, or its official name Caste Disabilities Removal Act of 1850); Christian Marriage Act of 1872; and such case laws that derived from inter-racial marriages. One noted case law, that Abul Hussain cited, was marriage between Humayun Kabir (Muslim) and Santi Das (Hindu). The British courts approved "inter racial marriage" by a "minimized difference of religion owing to more liberal interpretation of the Quranic injunctions, Buddhist, Brahmos, Hindus and Sikhs." The 'Widow Remarriage Act of 1856,' furthermore recognized a "right to a Hindu woman retaining her religion, marries a Muslim husband and vice versa." For details, see, Abul Hussain's synopsis of "Lecture VI, VII of 'Tagore Law Lecture' in *The History of Development of Muslim Law in British India*, p. XXXVIII-LXI.

¹⁵² Abul Hussain. *The History of Development of Muslim Law in British India*, pp. 62-63. See also Abul Hussain, "*British-Bharate Mussalman Ain*," *Shikha*, Vol. IV (1930), pp.78-79.

¹⁵³ Abul Hussain wrote: "One of my senior lawyer colleague had told me once: 'Thanks to the great Prophet of the desert, because, but for his Law of inheritance 60% litigation of our courts would have been diminished and half of the judges would have been discharged. Abul Hussain, "*British-Bharate Mussalman Ain*," *Shikha*, Vol. IV., (1930), p. 78.

territories under the control of British East India Company. "These two enactments," Abul Hussain declared, "opened the door for free and progressive intrusion of English legal principles, analogy and decisions into the systems of Muslim and Hindu law."¹⁵⁴

Fourth, the British abolished Persian as the court language. This change of the court language was "productive," according to Abul Hussain, because "the demand for more close and faithful application of (traditional) Muslim law to changed conditions became less keen."¹⁵⁵ Abul Hussain closed the Tagore Law Lecture with a strong appeal for the divisibility of law from its original sources so as to suit persons of nationalities who live in a given territory. Abul Hussain had been selected by Calcutta University to deliver the Tagore Law Lecture in 1935, the same year that Kazi Abdul Wadud was invited by Rabindranth Tagore to deliver three lectures at Vishva-Bharati. The two leaders of *buddhir mukti* movement were thus given ample opportunity to express their views. We have no evidence to say that Rabindranath Tagore was present on occasion of Abul Hussain's delivery of Tagore Law Lecture at Calcutta University. But he definitely attended the three lectures that Wadud delivered in Vishva-Bharati.¹⁵⁶

IV. Wadud's three lectures at Vishva-Bharati: "*Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh*" or Hindu-Muslim Conflict.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ For introducing this foreign law into India, Abul Hussain, however, rejected the notion that the British rule was a rather communal force that destroyed an entire legal system of Hindus and Muslims. With substantive legal evidence, Abul Hussain refuted this notion: "In fact the law of 'justice, equity, and good conscience' meant in practice the judges' conceptions of English law in so far as they regard it suitable to the circumstances of India. Of course, 'Section 9 of Regulation VII of 1832' did not make it incumbent to apply the English sense of 'justice, equity, and good conscience.' It was added to the section that 'it being clearly understood, however, that this provision shall not be considered as justifying the introduction of the English or any foreign law or the application to such cases of any rules not sanctioned by those principles'....The proviso was wide enough to admit of those principles of 'justice, equity, and good conscience' that was consistent with and not repugnant to the principles of Hindu, Muslim, or English law." Abul Hussain, *The History of Development of Muslim Law in British India*, p. 56.

¹⁵⁵ Abul Hussain, *The History of Development of Muslim Law in British India*, p. 53.

¹⁵⁶ Bhuiya Iqbal, *Rabindranather Ekguccha Patra*, p.24.

¹⁵⁷ Kazi Wadud read in one session of the MSS (1936), the three lectures that he delivered at Vishva-Bharati. In sessions of MSS, 11 essays were read on Hindu-Muslim division before Wadud delivered the three lectures at Vishva-Bharati, March 26-28, 1935. Out of the 11 essays, 8 essays argued Muslims unity with Hindus and 3 essays rejected such unity. Naziruddin Ahmad's (independent) essay, "*Svadhin Bharater*

Kazi Wadud's humanistic non-communal conception of nationalism had attracted the attention of Rabindranath Tagore. He assigned Wadud the honor as well as responsibility for getting to the roots of Hindu-Muslim division, as well as drafting a new solution for solving this problem. For giving this rare honor to a Muslim intellectual.

Tagore admitted frankly:

When my mind is anxious over the barbarities of Hindu-Muslim hostility in this country, I see no end of this cruelty. Then soon from time to time, I see in the distance with two arms, like a bridge, bringing the two opposite streams together. When it become known to me that Kazi Wadud *saheb's* intellectual liberality is one of the large roads to this oneness of Hindus and Muslims, then with open heart I salute him. I saw in him a mental creativity, indiscriminating subtle judgment and a distinctive power of expression in Bengali language. Thus, one day with full respect, I invited him in Shantiniketan *ashram*, requested him to give a lecture in Vishva-Bharati. My expectation is fulfilled and for this pleasure, I am writing these few sentences.¹⁵⁸

Das" (AS, 1931), argued that Muslims would be "slave" of Hindus in education, economy and politics, if Muslims live with Hindus in the united independent India. Yet Naziruddin blamed Islam for Muslims backwardness: "It is either because of social reasons or religious obstacles that Muslims lost all strength for living equally with other races." See Naziruddin Ahmad, "*Svadhin Bharater Das*," *Shikha*, Vol. V (1931), p. 109. Moslemuddin Khan's (independent) essay, "*Milan-Saudh*" (AS, 1931) argued, "My proposal is not an abstract solution of Muslim-Hindu division. We have to develop among ourselves a new dynamism of work (*karma-ksamata*) and strength to move ahead (*agae calar shakti*) of time, so that we will have no reason to ask ourselves which *jati* we belonged to." See Moslemuddin Khan, "*Milan-Saudh*," published in *Shikha*, Vol. V (1931), p. 115. Ali Nur's (independent) essay, "*Bharater Adarsha*" (AS, 1931), argued: "Today it is for the British rule that a Hindu is not as a Hindu, and Muslim is not as a Muslim, were able to stand up as *bharatbasi*." See Ali Nur, "*Bharater Adarsha*," *Shikha*, Vol.V (1931), p. 38. Mohammad Abdur Rashid, was closer to Abul Kalam Azad's theological justification of Islam for Muslims co-operation with Hindus. See Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "*Hindu Mussalmaner Katha*," *Shikha*, Vol. V (1931), pp. 87-90. Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "*Bharatbarshe Ki Paygamvar Prerita Hon Ni*," published in *Moajjin*, Vol.II, No. 3-4 (1929).

¹⁵⁸ *Edeshe Hindu-mussalman-birodher bibhishikay man jakhan hatasvas haye pare, ei barbatar anta kothay bhese pay na, takhan majhe majhe dure dure sahasa dekhte pai du biparit kulke dui bahu diye apan ka're ache eman ek-ekti setu. Abdul Wadud saheber cittabritir audarya sei milaner ekti prashatha path rupe jakhan amar kache pratibhata hayeche, takhani ashanvita mane ami take namaskar karechi. Sei sange dekhechi tar mananshilata, tar pakshapathin suksna bicarshakti, banglabhashay tar prakash shaktir bishistata. Tai ekdin samadarpurbak take shantiniketan ashrame ahaban karechi, anurodh karechi Vishva-Bharatiya bidyabhabane bakrita karbar janya. Amar sagraha pratyasha kshunna hayni ei anandatuku janabar abhipraye amar ei kayti chatra lekha.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hindu Mussalmaner Birodh*," reprinted in *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I (1988), p. 315. The three lectures were also published in Kazi Abdul Wadud, (ed.), *Shashvata Banga* (1951). The three lectures were published by Vishva-Bharati as a book in 1935, *Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh* (Calcutta: Vishva-Bharati, 1935).

Wadud was a personal guest of Tagore at Shantiniketan. Wadud took a year to prepare for the three well-written lectures. For assisting him at Shantiniketan, Wadud took two of his associates: Abdul Kadir and Motahar Hussain Choudhury. Abdul Kadir, reminiscing his first meeting with Tagore in 1935, described the warmth of Tagore's hospitality at Shantiniketan: "We stayed in Shantiniketan for one week. Everyday during lunch-hour, *Kabi guru* (Poet Guru) was personally present and spoke with us on several issues....Tagore blessed me on this occasion of Kazi Wadud's lecture."¹⁵⁹ Wadud presented three lectures, entitled: "*Mussalmaner Paricay*" or ('Introducing the Muslims'); "*Deshar Jagaran*" or ('Country's Awakening'); and "*Byarthatar Pratikar*" or (Remedy for the Failures). Wadud focused upon two fundamental, but problematic issues. First, he asked who is to blame for Hindu-Muslim division and why? Second, he defined *srishti dharma*, or 'religion of creativity,' and proposed it for solving the Muslim-Hindu problem. The two issues were analyzed at the all-India level and, where appropriate, Wadud made specific references to Bengal.

A. Causes of Hindu-Muslim division.

For Hindu-Muslim division, Wadud looked into the view of 'Divide and Rule.' But, unlike the nationalist Muslims, Wadud blamed the Indians for their own division. This sub-section first describes Wadud's rejection of the accusation that British rule divided Hindus and Muslims. Then follows Wadud's own explanation for the causes of Hindu-Muslim division

1. Rejection of the accusation of 'Divide and Rule'

Wadud began his lecture by quoting a nationalist leader, Sir Surendranath Banerjee, "The Hindu-Muslim division began with the *svadeshi* movement. Before this

¹⁵⁹ Shamsuzzaman Khan, "*Kabi Abdul Kadir*," Shamsuzzaman Khan's interview with Abdul Kadir, published in *Caritra*, Vol. 1, May (1970), p. 51.

movement. Hindu-Muslim relationship was cordial."¹⁶⁰ Wadud rejected this Hindu nationalist claim that it was the British partition of Bengal (1905) into west (Hindu) and east (Muslim) which originated Hindu-Muslim antagonism. By citing several historical references to Hindu-Muslim riots¹⁶¹ during the Mughal period, Wadud refuted nationalist blame of the British rule. Wadud referred to two Hindu-Muslim riots, one in Gujarat and another in Kashmir, that occurred toward the end of the Mughal period. The communal characteristics of these riots, according to Wadud, were surprisingly similar to riots that occurred under the British rule.¹⁶² Wadud also rejected a nationalist accusation that the British pursued a so-called 'divide and rule' policy. The British support to backward Muslims was a natural process of administration and not a divide and rule policy. Wadud also argued that long before the British came, communalism had originated in ancient India, and at no time in its history was India a country of non-violence and tolerance to other religions. The conflict between Buddhists and Hindus in ancient India was one in which the former were persecuted. Second, Wadud argued that if *Arthashastra* (written by Kautilya) and *Buddhajataka* were accepted as accurate reflections of ancient Indian political life, then "bloodshed is not only a characteristic of India of the Mughals and Pathans but also a characteristic of India as a whole."¹⁶³ Instead to accusing the British for

¹⁶⁰ Wadud quoted from Surendranath Banerjee's, *A Nation in Making*. See Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 317.

¹⁶¹ Wadud cited reference from Golam Hussain Khan Tabtabae's, *Siere Mutakhhherin* (1575). The book has given an account of the political and social history of Mughal rule in India. See Dr. M. Abdul Kader (ed.), *Siere Mutakhhherin* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1978). Wadud translated into Bengali a part of the *Siere Mutakhhherin* (1575). See Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Deshar Duhkha," *Bulbul*, Vol. III, No.5 (1936), pp. 331-335. No. 7 (1936), pp. 486-489.

¹⁶² *Anandabazar Patrika* countered this statement of Wadud: "Riots in those days originated from acts of individual hypocrisy" (*sekaler danga byaktigata hatakaritar phal*). Wadud's reply was: "It is true that the riot in Kashmir was directly the result of an individual vendetta. But the riot continued for a long time and many people were behind the riot. This proves a communal division" (*Kashmirer ghatanati ekti byaktir akrasher phal mukhyata. Kintu se byaktir pichane eta lok je jute gela, etadin dhare danga callo, e theke bojha jay dui sampradayer bhitarkar bibhed*). Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh," *Kazi Abdul Wadud to Abdul Kadir*, July 7, 1936, *Moajjin* Vol. IX (August-September, 1936), pp. 185-186.

¹⁶³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 319.

originating Hindu-Muslim division, Wadud, however, blamed them for failing to interfere:

The British are not be blamed for a policy of divide and rule. Yet they are to be blamed on one account, i.e., the fear and blindness of the British to interfere in the religious and social issues of this country. This fear and blindness in British policy may have been due to the fanatic mind of the Indians in the Sepoy mutiny. But one blindness cannot be resolved by another blindness. If this country is grounded on an obsession with ritual (*achar pradhan*), i.e., if rationality is not preferred by people; then it is not enough that British rule would merely try to stop escalation of conflict of religions. This kind of policy is intelligent, but not a sign of power and farsightedness because the policy did not remove the root of conflict of Hindus and Muslims by substituting 'religion of creativity' (*srishti dharma*).¹⁶⁴

Unlike nationalist Muslims, Wadud also did not accuse the British of destroying Muslim traditions and history in India. He quoted W.W. Hunter: "The permanent settlement most seriously damaged the position of the Mahommedan house...." but disagreed with him: "I do not think that these measures were aimed to make Muslims weak in India. The purpose of the British revenue policies is to get larger and more stable revenue from India."¹⁶⁵ The theory of economic nationalism of India is based on the accusation that the British revenue policies had 'drained India's economic wealth.' Wadud to some extent agreed and hence partially objected to British revenue policy. But his objection is based primarily on the argument that British revenue policy helped to encourage religious fanaticism of Wahabi movement arising from the economic decline of rural Muslim society. Wadud made a specific reference to the "Faradi movement, a Wahabi sect of Mohammadan fanatics of Bengal."¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p.342.

¹⁶⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 328.

¹⁶⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh*," p. 328. There is a confusion in Wadud's analysis to distinguish Faraizi from Wahabi movement in rural Bengal. Rafiuddin Ahmed wrote: "It seems unlikely that the Faraizis at any stage got merged with the wider *Wahabi* movement, as suggested by Hunter, although it was perfectly possible that in the period of confusion, resulting from confused religious and political propaganda by the preachers of both the doctrines, the distinction was hardly obvious to an outside

Rejecting the nationalist accusations, Wadud saw Hindu-Muslim conflict as caused by the 'distorted intellect' (*bikrita buddhi*) of Hindus and Muslims.

I have no power to change the minds of those who accuse 'Divide and Rule' policy as the source of all diseases of India. But it is undeniable that there are strong arguments against their accusation. Whatever the immediate causes of Hindu-Muslim conflict, it is strongly relevant to assert that the 'distorted intellect' (*bikrita buddhi*) of Hindus and Muslims of many ages was at the root of all causes. Not only history, but simple human reason, will justify this charge. When a house is on fire, an immediate cause may be carelessness of its resident. But those who would protect this house should see that the house is not built of easily inflammable materials.¹⁶⁷

Wadud blamed Muslims for communalism not only in early Islamic history but in recent Muslim political developments in India. And he blamed Indian nationalist leaders for their failure to accentuate the non-communal (humane or humanistic) thought of the 'Bengal renaissance' in politics. Finally, Wadud objected that Hindu nationalists should not use the term "Hindu nationalism" for what in fact is and should be a human or humanistic nationalism.

2. Muslim responsibility for communalism.

In the first lecture, "Introducing the Muslims," Wadud sketched communalism of Muslim thought in early Islamic history. Wadud distinguished Hazrat Mohammad's preaching life at Mecca from his political life at Medina. "At Mecca, Mohammad was like all other religious preachers, a searcher of truth and a lover of humanity. At Medina, he was a victorious hero, a political leader and builder of a Muslim state."¹⁶⁸ Muslims are

observer." See Rafiuddin Ahmed, *The Bengali Muslims, 1871-1906: A Quest for Identity*, p. 40. For Wadud's analysis of Wahabi movement in Bengali Muslim situation, see also Wadud's article, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Katha*" (1937) or 'Origin of Bengali Muslims,' published in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Ajkar Katha*, p.1-32. For an English version of the article, see Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Mussalmans of Bengal," published in Kazi Abdul Wadud, (ed.), *Creative Bengal*, pp. 39-62.

¹⁶⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 347.

¹⁶⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 320.

more inclined toward following Mohammad's political life at Medina. Their mistaken belief is that all the works and ideas of a person they think of as their *dharma guru* are above everything.¹⁶⁹ This blind following of Mohammad's building of a Muslim nation state at Medina had led to Muslims' intolerance of other religions. For example, Wadud claimed that for building a Muslim nation state at Medina, "Mohammad's political role in Medina generated an extreme antipathy to Jews and idolatrous Arabs."¹⁷⁰ Because of this indivisibility of Islam from politics, it became essential for early Muslims to stand united under Mohammad and become suspicious of the religions of their opponents. As a result, when a verse of the Quran (60:13), revealed in Medina, says: "Oh! ye who believe! Be not friendly with a folk with whom Allah is wrath, who have despaired of the Hereafter....."¹⁷¹ the Muslim commentators in early days, and even today, took it (60:13) to mean that: "It is not the Quran's intention that Muslims be friendly with non-Muslims" (*jara mussalman- sampraday bhukta nay tader sathe bandhutva Quraner anabhipreta*). Wadud did not dispute strongly this hostile meaning of the Sura (60:13) toward non-Muslims. However, he argued that merging of Islam with politics was a basic cause of communalism in Muslim thought:

When ideals of religion take a societal and political shape, then its separation [from politics] is virtually impossible. An example is Muslims' hostile relations with non-Muslims. Many verses of the Quran, Mohammad's practices and sometimes Muslim history wanted a friendly attitude with opponents of the Quran. Yet once Muslims' political relationship with non-Muslims has been fixed by the sword, it is now virtually impossible for Muslims to put that sword away.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ *Mussalman daler bhul--yake tara dharmaguru jnan karechen tar kaji tara mane karen bicarer atit.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 320.

¹⁷⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p.320.

¹⁷¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh," p. 320. Wadud's Bengali translation of the Sura (60:13) is translated into English from Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* (Toronto: Mentor Book: n.d.), p. 397.

¹⁷² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 321.

Wadud reconstructed a different type of communalism in early Muslim thought. This was intolerance of one group of Muslims for another Muslim group. The emergence of a Muslim 'rationalist's group'¹⁷³ (*bicar panthi*) in early Islam was well known. During Abbasid rule, the leader of the rationalist group was Imam Abu Hanifa. Under Imam Hanifa, Wadud stated, rationalism had continued for some time in the Muslim world, "Until the 'extreme scriptualists' (*ekanta shastranugata*) under Imam Gazzali persecuted the rationalist group."¹⁷⁴ The rationalist group could not tolerate the differing opinions of the extreme scriptualists. This culminated in the "inhuman torture and killing by the rationalists of the scriptualist leader, Imam Hambal."¹⁷⁵ After Imam Hambal died, the 'extreme scriptualists' in the thirteenth century were organized under Imam Ibn Taymiya, who had started a movement of 'return to puritan Islam.' Wadud wrote that the intolerance of Taymiya had gone to the extreme: "Except the Quran and reliable Hadith, all other sources of knowledge--Khalifa, Sufis, philosophies--are declared unreliable."¹⁷⁶ But Sufis, who were dominant in Muslim society at that time, "tortured Taymiya."

In the eighteenth century, a disciple of Ibn Taymiya, Mohammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, had successfully re-established puritan Islam in Arabia. In the nineteenth century, Wahabism became a powerful trend among Indian Muslims.¹⁷⁷ Wadud accounted for the communalism of the Wahabi movement in two ways: return to primitive Islam (*adim Islame pratyabartan*) and use of Islam as a political force." On

¹⁷³ Wadud argued that early Muslim rationalists were also scriptualist, i.e., they did not question the Quran; but they re-stated the Quran. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p.322.

¹⁷⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p.323.

¹⁷⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 322.

¹⁷⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh*," p. 322. Some scholars reject this understanding on Taymiya. Fazlur Rahman wrote, "Ibn Taymiya has an important and interesting passage which clearly shows that contrary to the opinions generally held, he was not only not inimical to Sufism as such, but considered it as necessary, a part of religion as law." See, Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago, Second edition, 1979), p. 112.

¹⁷⁷ Wadud's primary sources on Wahabi movement were, W.W. Hunter, *Indian Mussalmans* (1871) and *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. VII, (n.d.).

both accounts, Wadud argued, the Wahabis aggravated Muslims' intolerance toward non-Muslims. By a *fatwa* (ruling) that India was a '*Darul Harb*,' the Wahabis justified a political use of Islam, i.e., to declare a *jihad* against the British rule. And by a movement of Islamization for return to puritan Islam, Wahabis had destroyed Hindu-Muslim unity in rural Bengal. Wadud wrote: "Before the Wahabi influence come to Bengal, rural Muslims were not intolerant of worship of idols. Some respected Muslim families in those days used to worship Hindu deities, for example, *Kali* and *Durga*."¹⁷⁸ After the Wahabis came, the relationship was destroyed. "The honest minded Hindus," according to Wadud, "were now sad. They complained that while Muslim peasants used to take part in our *pujas*, and did not even mind to eat with us...now they are not willing to know their Hindu neighbors."¹⁷⁹

Wadud objected that Wahabis think it is a perpetual religious duty to return to primitive Islam. Wadud reacted to this rigid ideal: "It is needless to say that this kind of thought is always inimical to expansion of human thought and is suspicious of all new experiments of humans....The Indian Muslims could not get free of this, because of their consciousness of Muslim weaknesses in India."¹⁸⁰ It was because of their weakness and 'inferiority complex' (English phrase is Wadud's), according to Wadud, that "two objects

¹⁷⁸ *Banglar kono kono sambhranta mussalmano Durga, Kali prabhriti debir puja karten ekatha suprasiddha. Er bara karan bodh hay ei je Wahabi prabhber purbe mussalmander manasik abastha pratik carcar ekanta Birodhi chila na.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 325.

¹⁷⁹ *Banglar sadhu-samkalpa Hindu jakhan dukkhita haye balen—mussalman cashira to age amader puja-arcaḡ besh jog dita, amader barite kheteo tader apatti chila na, kintu din din sab keman haye jacche—tadhan tar pratibeshider gharer khabar sambhandhe sampurna ajjatar paricay tini den.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hindu-Mussalman Birodh*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 323. For comprehensive study of Wahabi movement and its impact in rural Bengal, see Rafiuddin Ahmed, "Fundamentalist Reform and the Rural Response" in Ahmed's, *The Bengali Muslims, 1871-1906: A Quest For Identity*, pp. 39-71. Wadud also criticized impact of Wahabi movement in the thought and literature of Bengali Muslims. See Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Sahitya-shakhar Sabhapatir Abhibhashan*," Kazi Wadud's speech to Bangiya Mussalman Sahitya Sanmelan, *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. IV, No. 4 (1932), pp. 249-254. The speech was criticized by neo-orthodox Muslim intellectuals of Calcutta. See Mohammad Abdullah-hel Kafi, "*Bangla Sahitya Mussalmaner Ruci-biparjay*," *Masik Mohammadi*, Vol. VI, No. 5 (1933), pp. 299-304; No. 6 (1933), pp. 380-384; No. 7 (1933), pp. 487-491; No. 8 (1933), pp. 566-568; No. 9 (1933), pp. 634-637.

¹⁸⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 329.

become a special subject of respect of Muslims of India--the Quran and the messages of Mohammad or to put it bluntly subservience to both."¹⁸¹

Wadud analyzed an aspect of communalism, obsession with Islam, in the thought of nineteenth and twentieth century Muslim modernist intellectuals: Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Sayyid Amir Ali and Sir Mohammad Iqbal. Sayyid Ahmad had an innate liberality that was free from a Wahabi intolerance, but his emphasis on Islam was fairly explicit and intense: "Islam is an 'unrivaled eternal light' (Wadud quoted Sayyid Ahmad's Urdu phrase, *ek lajaob nur*), i.e., Islam is universally bright and universally perfect."¹⁸² Wadud also argued: "Sir Sayyid's thought of Muslims' separatism in education and politics was not merely on account of the *Mussalmans'* backwardness."¹⁸³ It was Sayyid Ahmad's ingrained impulse that Islam is the best civilizing force of the world. He said frequently, "Were not the Muslim civilization and culture unforgettable things in the annals of human history? Why then should not *Mussalmans* of India, the lawful inheritors of those proud traditions, exert themselves to have at least as honored and useful an existence as any other nation or community?"¹⁸⁴

Wadud constructed Amir Ali's obsession with Islam in another direction. Amir Ali was not totally in the dark about the Bengal Renaissance that went on among his "non-Muslim fellow citizens" in Bengal, where he was born. But his acquaintance was "outrageously imperfect and meager."¹⁸⁵ The Central Mohammadan Association that he established undertook even more "absurd" politics than the association established by Sir

¹⁸¹ *Mussalmaner janya ekal parjanta bishesh shraddhar samagri haye ache dute bishay--Quran o Hazrat Mohammader bani, athaba sojasuji-bhabe ei duiyer anubartita.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 322.

¹⁸² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance," *Creative Bengal*, p. 75. The article is English translation of Kazi Abdul Wadud's Vishva-Bharati lecture, "*Deshar Jagaron*." We follow here the English translation of the lecture.

¹⁸³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance," *Creative Bengal*, p. 75.

¹⁸⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance," *Creative Bengal*, p. 75.

¹⁸⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance," *Creative Bengal*, p. 75.

Surendranath Banerjee. The Mohammadan Association had succeeded to establishing *anjumans* ("associations") in different areas of Bengal "but the long and short of all their orations and thundering seems to have been that Mussalmans are different from the Hindus...Sir Sayyid, although a separatist, was creative, but Amir Ali had almost nothing except separatism."¹⁸⁶

Wadud acknowledged that Iqbal wrote genuine patriotic poems. Iqbal had even expressed in an All India Muslim League conference (1930) that he would accept Indian nationhood had it been established on the lead of Akbar and Kabir. But Wadud criticized this rhetorical nationalism. Why, in the absence of Akbar and Kabir, could he not think of any other solutions except "strengthening each religious community of India in its particular ideology and way of life?" As a result, Wadud wrote, "The old inarticulate suspicion of Indian *Mussalmans* of their uncharitable environs has under its [Iqbal's literature's] influence, flared up to undisguised belligerency."¹⁸⁷

The aspect of non-communalism (humane, humanistic) that Wadud was expecting from Muslim intellectuals was "unfettered reason." As Rammohun's "unfettered reason" had broken out of particular religious bonds, Wadud expected the same from so-called creative Muslim modernists. They should be free from obsessions and infatuations. Wadud wrote: "Rammohun has been esteemed by the Hindus as ancestor of the saints of *Brahmoism*; similarly Rammohun is an authoritative disciple of Hazrat Mohammad's *tauhid* and egalitarianism in modern time."¹⁸⁸ The model of adjustment to modern non-communal life for Wadud was Rammohun, and the necessary condition for getting agreement with other religions is one's getting rid of obsession or infatuations with one's own religion. But this model of "unfettered reason," Wadud could not find in many intellectuals, except among the intelligentsia of the Bengal Renaissance

¹⁸⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance," *Creative Bengal*, p. 77.

¹⁸⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance," *Creative Bengal*, p. 78.

¹⁸⁸ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Neta Rammohun*," *Naba Parjay*, Vol. II, p. 4.

and some of its twentieth century followers, especially his young rational humanists among the Muslims of Dhaka.

3. Critique of 'self-interest' of Hindu political leadership.

Wadud was enthusiastic that the ideals of the Bengal Renaissance should spread to the general body of the educated Hindus and Muslims. But the relationship between the 'creative intellectuals' of the Bengal Renaissance and educated Hindu-Muslim body, according to Wadud, has not been that of a "rightful intellectual and spiritual succession of pioneers by admiring followers; rather, it has been of the nature of an inheritance of estate and status of a self-made father by his surviving children."¹⁸⁹ The impact of these creative intellectuals upon the educated body of Muslims and Hindus that Wadud was seeking was "Revitalization of the national life"¹⁹⁰ through self-criticism of one's religion and society, but he was disappointed in what he found. Likewise, Wadud had expected a positive response from Indian political leadership to the humanistic trends of the Bengal Renaissance. This too did not really happen. Angrily Wadud blasted nationalist political leaders: "The effort of the reform movement or revitalization of the national life, received a yet harder blow from the political movements of the country."¹⁹¹ "The politics of the late nineteenth century Bengal or India," Wadud complained, "was, with all its pretensions, mere agitation by our English-educated people for the furtherance of their 'rank and status' (*pada marjada*)....Self-criticism lost all relish for our people and yielded place to the zeal for fault-finding."¹⁹² Wadud criticized politics of Sir Surendranath Banerjee, an admirer of Mazzini (nationalist leader of late nineteenth century Italy), a man of 'religious faith' (*dharmapran*) and clearly a politician. Wadud argued that Surendranath's political objective was to gain privileges and honor for educated Indians.

¹⁸⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance," *Creative Bengal*, p. 69.

¹⁹⁰ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance," *Creative Bengal*, p.69.

¹⁹¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh*," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 334.

¹⁹² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance," *Creative Bengal*, p. 70.

The Indian National Congress initially wanted to separate politics from religion, yet these were endeavors of only a few politicians, like Ananda Mohan Sen. Some may point out, Wadud continued, that this trend was replaced in due time by a sterner variety of political activists, of which the *svadeshi* (1906) advocates and the anti-partition 'revolutionaries' were the shining examples. Wadud criticized their self-satisfying rhetoric: "In reply we would say in all humility that a path of life's fulfillment is as it were a razor's edge over which may not be vouchsafed an easy passage for all that look mighty and fascinating, and that sacrifices, though ever worthy of our best regards, do at times lead to new forms of fanaticism."¹⁹³

4. Opposition to calling a movement 'Hindu' a movement of humanism.

Wadud was aware of humanistic movements that took place in nineteenth century Maharashtra. After Bengal, Wadud declared, "Maharashtra is the second largest center of awakening." This high intellectual image of Maharashtra, according to Wadud, broke the myth that "depicts Marathas as largely relentless free-booters."¹⁹⁴ Wadud particularly cited a "genius," and a "patriot" of Maratha intellectual history, Mahadeb Gobinda Ranade. Wadud argued that Ranade in his book, *A Theist's Confession of Faith*, was "unreserved in his criticism of the Hindu observances and ideas he considered unprogressive."¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, Ranade appeared to have been in his time the ablest

¹⁹³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance," *Creative Bengal*, p. 70.

¹⁹⁴ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance," *Creative Bengal*, p.72.

¹⁹⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance," *Creative Bengal*, p. 72. This indicates that Wadud was conscious of "*The Prarthana Samaj*," a society organized by English educated Chitpavan and Sarasvat Brahmans in Maharashtra. Like *Muslim Sahitya Samaj*, the organization had published a journal, *Shubodh Patrika*. Kenneth W. Jones argued that "*The Prarthana Samaj*," started a humanistic movement in the late nineteenth century. For example, Jones quoted Ranade: "Our friends of the Prarthana Samaj seem to be perfectly satisfied with a creed which consists of only one positive belief in the unity of God, accompanied by a special protest against the existing corruption of Hindu religion, viz., the article which denounces the prevalent idolatry to be sin and an abomination." Jones, however, argued that radical criticism of Hinduism by the *Samaj* was not continuous: "They softened their attack considerably by a rejection of religious inflexibility." See Kenneth W. Jones, *The New Cambridge History of India*, III-1., pp.141-144. Matthew Lederle, *Philosophical Trends in Modern Maharashtra* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1976), Chapter VII, "Origin and Growth of Liberalism in Maharashtra."

successor of Rammohun. Wadud also paid respect to Ranade for the achievements of his disciple. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, in the field of "creative politics" (*srishti dharmi rajniti*).¹⁹⁶ By contrast, Wadud was a critic of Bal Gangadhar Tilak: "India has hailed him as a defiant leader. But his powers...flash fearfully in stormy nights without caring to enlighten the path of perplexed travelers."¹⁹⁷ Wadud cited Ranade's movement of humanism as an example of how educated Indians were unable to comprehend a humanistic movement in its own terms, without giving it a communal label, 'Hindu'. He argued that 'idealist Bengalis' and 'practical Marathas,' misunderstood Ranade and many creative intellectuals only as "an exclusively Hindu-awakening" (*Hindu jagran*).¹⁹⁸

B) Wadud's solution for Hindu-Muslim Conflict: '*Srishti Dharma*' or 'Religion of Creativity.'

Wadud narrowed down solutions of Hindu-Muslim conflict in modern times to the viewpoints of two Bengali spokesman: Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Rabindranath Tagore. Regarding Ramakrishna's dictum, "As many views, so many paths" (*jata mat tata path*), Wadud analyzed that "the phrase has a tendency toward new creativity, but there is

¹⁹⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud. "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance." *Creative Bengal*, p. 72.

¹⁹⁷ Kazi Abdul Wadud. "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance." *Creative Bengal*, p. 72.

¹⁹⁸ Wadud roughly summarized their views: "First, it means Hindus, now considered fallen, to be elevated to a strong and agreeable stage of humanity. This school of thought looks upon various 'nations' (*jati*) or 'community' (*samprdayer*) as unique entities as final and worthy of perpetuation in their separateness with of course mutual understanding and co-operation. Second, it means the revitalization of the wonderful powers inherent in the Hindu civilization which has outlived all its compeers possibly for no other reason except that its foundations have been very strong, perhaps the strongest ever conceived. So the Hindu awakening means the coming to life of the greatest civilizing force in the world. Third, India had achieved, prior to the advent of the Muslims, 'a particular thought of nationhood' (*ekti bishesh manabhaber jati srishti hayechila*) composed of the non-Aryans, Dravidians, Scythians, Huns, and the like. A name of this 'mixed community' (*misrita jati*) was Hindu. The Muslims did not, it is true, merge themselves in this Hindu nationhood, but they too could not withstand its powers of assimilation. Muslims' manners and customs, arts and sculpture, and even their spiritual outlook were influenced by the 'Hindu' or 'Indian' influence....The 'Hindu-awakening,' therefore, is an 'awakening of Indianess.' This should now receive the fostering care of all Indians irrespective of 'community or religion' (*jati-dharma-nirbisheshe*). The composite character of the of the Indian nationhood need not to be disturbed, but all component parts must combine effectively to create the grand India harmony." Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Our Nineteenth Century Renaissance," *Creative Bengal*, pp. 73-74. For Bengali version, see, Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh*," Kazi Abdul Wadud *Racanabali*, I, p.336.

more in it of worship of ancient *shastras* and society."¹⁹⁹ Rabindranath's unifying viewpoint has two aspects. On the one hand, it can be categorized as, "As many views, so many paths," which respects the characteristic of human diversity. On the other, "he also believed in *srishti dharma* that sees humans not as divided into by country or class, but members of an inter-related society in which the humans' only truth is the highest development in social-life."²⁰⁰ Wadud frankly admitted that his ideal, *srishti dharma*, or 'religion of creativity,' was inspired by Tagore's 'Hibbert Lectures,' *The Religion of Man*, at Manchester College in Oxford (May, 1930). In those lectures, Tagore did not use the Bengali phrase, *srishti dharma* or its English equivalent 'religion of creativity.' The nearest expression to *srishti dharma* that Tagore used in the Hibbert Lectures was "The Creative Spirit." One difference in approach was that Tagore defined creative spirit in the Hibbert Lectures in metaphors but did not directly criticize Hinduism or Islam.²⁰¹ On the contrary, Wadud though he drew inspiration from Tagore's creative spirit, and seems to have coined the term, *srishti dharma*, in response to that idea. He then used *srishti dharma* as an ideal by which he criticized historical religious systems, especially his own Islamic system.

Wadud took *srishti dharma* as the only real solution of Hindu-Muslim conflict. He declared it in clear terms: "Unless a movement of *srishti dharma* begins in our

¹⁹⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, p. 345.

²⁰⁰ Rabindranather samanvay-bader duiti dhara. Ekdike takeo bala jay "jato mat tata path" badi-Bibhinna shrenigata o deshgate baishisatya dika tar dristi shraddhapurna: ar ekdike tini bisheshbhabe srishtidharmi--manushke deshe kale bibhakta na dekhe ek akhanda bikashman samajer sabhyarupe dekhechen, samaj-jibane utkarshalabh jar janya param satya. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalman Birodh," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 345.

²⁰¹ See Rabindranath Tagore, *The Religion of Man* (New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India Pvt. Ltd., Reprint, 1993). Rabindranath Tagore, *Manusher Dharma* (Calcutta: Vishvabharati, Reprint, 1972). Swami Prajjanananda, *Rabindrasahitya Dharmacetana* (Calcutta: Shri Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Second Edition, 1987).

thought, the sorrows of Muslim-Hindu conflict, as we understand them, will not be driven from our country. This is our solution."²⁰² Wadud defined *srishti dharma*:

Srishti dharma is the boundless curiosity of humans toward knowledge and enterprise....Age after age, it was by *srishti dharma's* inspiration that humans had dreamt of new possibilities of human life and sacrificed their lives for celebrating all new efforts. This does not indicate that *srishti dharma* changed humans suddenly and completely into something marvelous. Humans would only change slowly in their new profundity of understanding....*Srishti dharma*, also, does not reject humans' relation with surrounding living beings with whom they have entered into intimacy. Rather, by fully recognizing this intimacy, *srishti dharma* creates new potentiality of human life and this process has been continuing steadily. This ability of the humans to bloom into new the life along with their surroundings is not only a wonder, but it is inevitable--as oxygen is fundamental for the burning and reconstitution of the cells of a human body.²⁰³

For building up a new life of creativity, Wadud suggested several measures to Hindus and Muslims. First, Wadud's *srishti dharma* rejects outright Muslims' and Hindus' 'infatuation with religion' (*dharma moha*). This rejection by Wadud was expressed in clear and explicit terms: "An infatuation with religion...is an age-old thoughtless attachment to ritual."²⁰⁴ There is a well-known hypothesis of composite nationalism, according to which: "If the Hindu is devoted to Hinduism and the Muslim is devoted to

²⁰² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalman Birodh," Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali, I, p. 345.

²⁰³ *Ei bikash-dharma athaba srishti dharma ki? Khub ghoralo na kare sahabhabe bala jay--jnana o karmar ksetre manusher je antahin kautuhal seiti tar srishti dharma....Juge juge manush je jibaner sarbaksetre nutan sambhabanar svapna dekheche, nutan nutan karmar udjapane pranpat kareche, se-sab tar srishtidharmeri preranay. Er artha abashya e nay je srishtidharmer prabhabe manush ratarati agagora badle giye adbhut kichu haye othe. Hayta antarer nutan upalabdhir garhatar dik diye se badle jay....Charpasher jibaner sange manush je nibir joge jukta srishti-dharma take kakhono asvikar kare na, baram purnabhabe svikar ka're tate phuteye tole nutan sambhabana--ar kramagata cale er kaj. Ei je manusher ksamata--paribesthanke niyae nutan haye phute otha--e shudhu paramashcarja nay atyabashyak, jeman atyabashyak deher koshanusamuher oxygen samsparshe pratimuhurte dagdha o purnagathita haoya. See, Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh," Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali, I, p. 345.*

²⁰⁴ *Dharma moha...hoeche dirgha kaler bicarhin acarpriyata.* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh," Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali, I, p. 346.

Islam, their unity is possible, because, in each religion, essential truths of human welfare are inherent."²⁰⁵ Wadud found flaws in this thesis of composite nationalism on two grounds: i) the conflict and contradiction in the thought of the leaders who proposed this thesis: ii) its basis being purely in religious faith, but not a "piece by piece analysis of Hinduism and Islam." As to the first flaw, Wadud referred to Gandhi's contradiction:

By religion. Gandhi accepted ritual (or formalism) (*acar*) as well as the intellectual discernment (*bicar buddhi*) of religion. Nevertheless, Gandhi could not attract people to only the intellectual discernment; but he told people to be devoted to the totality of their own religions. As a result, Gandhi gave an opportunity to popularizing infatuation with religion instead of the rationalism and humanism of religion. Thus it can be said that Gandhi is partly responsible for Hindu-Muslim conflict in our age.²⁰⁶

Wadud's second objection was that a Hindu-Muslim unity is proclaimed on religious humanism/ rationalism. 'only on the basis of faith on religion' (*shudhu bishvaske patheyarupe abalamvan kara hayeche*):

[The leaders who] depend the well-known conviction that if Hindus are devoted to Hinduism and Muslims devoted to Islam their unity will be possible were inspired by an honest objective but gave steps to a wrong direction. Before they propounded this thesis, they should have realized of what do they understand by Hinduism and Islam? But to analyze that way, their understanding should not be Hinduism and Islam, but their understanding should be *srishti dharma* inherent in the both. Saying this in another way means, that it is meaningless of the real form of Hinduism and Islam that took shape in the past and taking shape in the present. Instead, how these religions should be sources of knowledge and working-power, these should be subject of study of people of Hinduism, Islam and all communities. This is reflected in this saying of Rabindranath--'what is a *shastra* is not believable, but what is believable is a *shastra*.'²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 347.

²⁰⁶ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 347.

²⁰⁷ ...*Ei je suparicita siddhanta je hindu hindutve nisthaban hale ebam mussalman mussalmantve nisthaban ha'le tader milan sambhabpar habe er upare jader nirbhar tara sadhu-uddeshyo-pronadita hayeo*

On the contrary, Wadud's *srishti dharma*, was intended to dissolve blind faith in religious, including Islamic, rules. "It is possible to escape from this difficulty if we do not think of religion as a matter of rules but as a matter of discovery. Then religious books and great men--like the thinkers of the word and works--would be the objects of trust/respect (*shraddha*) by mankind; but not the objects of worship and ritual."²⁰⁸ *Srishti dharma*, therefore, is not antagonistic to Hindu-Muslim unity on the basis of religion: but it must be religion as new creation (*srishti*); not as re-stating (*punar-gathita*) religious rules. Religions could be used for a unity, but only by an application of 'unforced knowledge and intellect' (*nirankush jnanbad ba juktibad*) to religious rules. Wadud applied this understanding of religion to Islam in a debate on "Hindu-Muslim conflict" with a Bengali Islamic liberal apologist. Wadud wrote:

[To Muslims], the Quran is the message of Allah, Hazrat Mohammad is merely the carrier of that message. The Muslim is expected to follow that Quran whole heartedly. This thought may have two implications. One implication is essentiality that of 'Quran *puja*,' or blind following of the literal Quran, which is bound to be excessive, like blind *puja* to the pirs. The other implication could be according to uncoerced knowledge or reasoning. For example, Quran as the message of Allah, means knowledge. Knowledge indicates the varieties of knowledge. Therefore it is desirable for humans to search for knowledge of various sorts, from the Quran or, if necessary 'to reject the Quran' (*Quran tayag kareo*).²⁰⁹

andhakare pa baran. E-sidhante upanita habar purbe tader jacai kara ucit--Hindutve o mussalmanve balte tara ki bojhen. Kintu teman bhabe jacai karte gele tader abalamvan Hindutva o mussalmanve habe na, habe ei duyeri antanihita srishti dharma. Anyabhabe kathata balle daray, Hindutva o mussalmanve atite o bartamane je-rup parigraha karechila o kareche taii se-sabher prakrita rup ekatha arthahin, tar paribarte eisab dharma bhabishyate ki bhabe manusher jnan o karma-shaktir sutikagar habe eii haoya cai Hindu Mussalman sab sampradayer lokderi bishesh sadhanar bishay. Ei kathai rayeche Rabindranather ei banite--ja Shastra tai bishvasya nay, ya bishvasya tay Shashtra. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh." Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali, I, p. 347-48.

²⁰⁸ *E-anarther hat theke udhar paoya sambhabpar hai jadi dharmake cirashita bidhanrupe ganya na kare abiskarer bishay bale bhaba jay, tahale dharmagranth o mahapurush haben jagater cintashil o tader banir mata manusher shraddhar bastu--tara puja-aratir bastu nay. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh." Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali, I, p.347.*

²⁰⁹ *Quran Allahar (Allah) bani, Hazrat Mohammad sei banir bahak matra, mussalmanke ekantabhabe anusaran karte habe sey Koran--ei ye mat, ear duti parinati hote pare. Ekti ekantabhabe Koran-puja*

Wadud's *srishti dharma* also called for redefining 'Indian culture' (*bharatiya samskriti*). Wadud criticized, that Indian culture is a fragile and emotional thinking of those cultural nationalists who recognize only the 'Indianness'²¹⁰ of their culture. The cultural nationalists give no respect to the innate creativity of humans as humans. They also cannot not clearly answer: "What is really meant by Indian culture?--Buddhist, Vedic, Puranic, Mughal, or British? If it means a synthesis of all these, in which ways and what areas would there be a synthesis? And why should there be a synthesis?"²¹¹ Therefore in Wadud's redefined sense of culture it is neither essential nor possible that *bharatiya samskriti* or Indian culture (what to speak of Hindu or Muslim culture) would

athaba Koraner aksharik anubartan--andha pirpujar matani utkat hote badhya. Er dvtiya parinati hote pare nirankus jnanbade ba juktibade. Jatha-Koran allahar bani arthat jnan. Jnan artha jnaner bicitra ingit. kajey Koran theke. athaba proyojan hale Koran tayag koreo. sey bicitra jnananvesan manuser kamya.... Kazi Abdul Wadud. "Hindu-Muslim." Kazi Abdul Wadud to Mohammad Wajed Ali. *Bulbul*, Vol. IV, No. 1 (February 7, 1937), p. 59. The correspondence is reprinted in *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, II, pp. 160-164. For details of Kazi Abdul Wadud's debate with Mohammad Wajed Ali, see Kazi Abdul Wadud. "Dharma Samparke Du-ekti Katha," Kazi Wadud to Mohammad Wajed Ali, published in *Bulbul*, Vol. IV, No. 5 (March 5, 1937), pp. 351-354. Mohammad Wajed Ali, "Dharma Samparke Dui-ekti Katha." Mohammad Wajed Ali to Kazi Abdul Wadud, n.d., published in *Bulbul*, Vol. IV, No. 6 (1937), pp. 410-417. Kazi Abdul Wadud. "Hindu-Muslim." Kazi Abdul Wadud to Mohammad Wajed Ali. *Bulbul*, Vol. III, No. 9 (1936), pp. 703-704. Kazi Abdul Wadud. "Hindu-Muslim." Kazi Abdul Wadud to Mohammad Wajed Ali. *Bulbul*, Vol. III, No. 13 (December 7, and December 27, 1936), pp. 934-935. Mohammad Wajed Ali. "Hindu-Muslim," *Bulbul*, Vol. III, No. 6 (1936), pp. 427-433. Mohammad Wajed Ali, "Hindu-Muslim," Mohammad Wajed Ali to Lilamay Ray, *Bulbul*, Vol III, No. 9 (November 30, 1936), pp. 703-706. Mohammad Wajed Ali. "Hindu-Muslim," Mohammad Wajed Ali to Lilamay Ray, *Bulbul*, Vol. III, No. 9 (December 5, 1936), 706-708. Mohammad Wajed Ali, "Hindu-Muslim," Mohammad Wajed Ali to Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Bulbul*, Vol. IV, No. 1 (February 25, 1937), pp. 60-66. Mohammad Wajed Ali, "Hindu-Muslim," Mohammad Wajed Ali to Lilamay Ray, . 1937. *Bulbul*, Vol. III, No. 13 (February 26, 1937), pp. 935-939. Lilamay Ray (Annadashankar Ray). "Hindu, Mussalman," *Bulbul*, Vol. II, No. 2 (1934), pp. 110-114. Lilamay Ray (Annadashankar Ray), "Hindu-Muslim," Lilamay Ray to Mohammad Wajed Ali, *Bulbul*, Vol. III, No. 8 (1936), pp. 611-614. Lilamay Ray (Annadasankar Ray), "Hindu-Muslim," Lilamay Ray to Mohammad Wajed Ali, October 25, 1936 and November 13, 1936. *Bulbul*, Vol. III, No. 9 (1936), pp. 702-703. These letters are also reprinted in *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, II, pp. 158-172. For Mohammad Wajed Ali's Islamic liberal views, see Abdul Mannan Syed, *Mohammad Wajed Ali Racanabali*, I (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1990). Abdul Mannan Syed, *Mohammad Wajed Ali Racanabali*, II (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1992).

²¹⁰ Wadud explained their view: ...*Bharater je bishesh prakarsha-dhara jjasare hok ba ajjasare hok tari haoya ucit bhartbasir jibaner niyamak...Ei cintadhara jader tara khub bara ei kathati balen je desher je bahukaler bhaugolik parishiti o jiban-dhara ta sei desher lokder svabhaber angibhuta haye jay, sei svabhaber dike dristi rekhe na calle svabhab samaye bhayankar pratishodh ney. Era ahar-bihar poshak-paricched theke arambha kare bishesh bishesh adarsher anusaran parjanta jibaner sarba byapare desher lokder je desher prakritir dike lakshya rekhe calte balen...* Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 348.

²¹¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud. "Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 349.

be the only meaning of *samaskriti*, or culture, in India. Conversely, Wadud stated, "It is inevitable and essential today not only to be acquainted with the world but also be one who is blended into this world."²¹² This meaning of 'universality' (*vishva-janinata*) of culture, Wadud expressed in various Bengali phrases, for example: *vishva-manab* (universal human), *vishva-kristi* (universal culture), *antarjatikbad* (internationalism) or *paribestaner sange nibir jog* (one's intimacy with surrounding). Wadud, therefore concluded:

If we look at culture from this standpoint, then such categories as Hindu culture, Muslim culture, Semitic culture, and Aryan culture, these are not functional. If Hindus and Muslims are to be united into one nationhood, then their cultural life cannot be different. If this difference persists, then prime objective of that culture, i.e., achievement of societal or national progress of India, would be hindered."²¹³

Finally, for implementing the ideals of *srishti dharma*, Wadud was looking for a new political and intellectual leadership in India. Wadud wrote that the qualities of new leadership would be to "respect traditions," but not as their worshipper (*pujari*). Their expectations would not be unity of "ancient Hindus and Muslims," because that would be an untruth and an impossibility. Instead, the expectation should be to build a "new nation" of humans in India. The new leadership should never recognize a nation divided by religion, because that would result an anathema, the "division by *jati*." It is not division by *jati*, or communal and cultural divisions, that should be the goal of new leadership.²¹⁴ Instead, the new leadership should work tirelessly for infusing *srishti*

²¹² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh," *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 349.

²¹³ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Samskritir Katha (1941)," published in *Kazi Abdul Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 507. See also Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Ekaler Jiban o Ekaler Sahitya," essay read in *Bangiya Sahitya Sanmelan*, April, 1939, published in Kazi Abdul Wadud (ed.), *Ajkar Katha*, pp. 69-88. The article is reprinted in Bashir Al Helal (ed.), "Raja Rammohun Royer Dvi-shata Janmabarshiki o Kazi Abdul Waduder Dvitiya Mrityuyabarshiki" (Dhaka: Raja Rammohun Roy and Kazi Abdul Wadud Smriti Udjapan Kamiti, May 19, 1972).

²¹⁴ See Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Shrotabarta." Kazi Abdul Wadud to Mahbub-ul-Alam, August 26, 1938. *Purabi*, August-September, 1938, p.336.

dharma into political and intellectual life. Wadud concluded his three lectures at Vishva-Bharati by rejecting Swami Vivekananda's notion of a composite character of the future Indian nation:

Swami Vivekananda said, 'the character of the Indian nation would be a body of Islam and a brain of the Veda.' To this it is better to say, the character of the Indian nation would be a completely human body and a completely human mind where manifestations of *srishti-shakti* (creative power) would be without limits. Islam and the Veda are only manifestations of the *srishti-shakti* of humans. *Srishti-shakti* is endless, inexhaustible and unailing, and this is the humans' birthright. Let this birthright be true in our lives.²¹⁵

IV. Conclusion.

Kazi Wadud's *srishti dharma* is a new thesis by Bengali Muslims of secular humanist approach to British rule and accommodation of Muslims with Hindus and eventual independence of India. *Srishti dharma* was a new thesis because it contradicts both separatist Muslim nationalists' and Indian nationalist Muslims' views of British rule and Muslims' relation with Hindus. We have noted in the introduction of the dissertation W.C. Smith's portrayal of Muslims' view toward nationalism. We return here to Smith's conception of the "religio-nationalist relation" of Muslim nationalists to show how it differs from Kazi Wadud's *srishti dharma*. Smith noted four components of religio-nationalist relationship of Muslim nationalist movements (Indian and Pakistani nationalists both). First, the fundamental objective of the Muslim nationalists movement was to eject British rule from India, because British rule was considered basically not compatible with Islam. The pro-British attitude of such rational humanist Muslims as Wadud is quite different. Wadud and Abul Hussain wanted the British to stay in India because they did not think that British rule was responsible for Hindu-Muslim conflict.

²¹⁵ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Hindu-Mussalmaner Birodh*," p. 351. In the years 1935-1947, Wadud continued to emphasize Muslims accommodation with Hindus in many essays and books. Wadud wrote a drama in 1939 in which he repeated *srishti dharma*. See Kazi Abdul Wadud, *Path o Bipath* (Calcutta: Vishva-Bharati, 1939).

Moreover, Wadud and Abul Hussain understood nationalism not primarily in terms of gaining immediate political freedom, but in terms of social freedom or freedom of thought of people from the shackles of religio-communal bigotry. They saw continuing British rule and Western influence as supporting such social freedom and "freedom of intellect."

Second: Smith pointed out the leadership of such ulema figures as Deobandis and Abul Kalam Azad in the Muslim Indian nationalist movement. This may be true of leadership of Indian nationalist Muslims in north India. But the leadership and sympathizers of the rational humanist Muslims, or *buddhir mukti* group, in East Bengal was not at all drawn from the ulema, whether Deobandis or others.

Third, Smith has also written: "Whatever nationalism has been adopted in the Muslim world, and in whatever Muslim form, the 'nation' concerned has been a Muslim group. No Muslim people has evolved a national feeling that has meant a loyalty to or even concern for a community transcending the bounds of Islam."²¹⁶ Smith also states, "No where in the Muslim world (except perhaps Indonesia) do Muslims feel that non-Muslim member of their nation is one of us." Again this thesis of Smith contradicts sharply the *srishti dharma* of such rational humanist Muslims as Wadud and *buddhir mukti* group. Unlike composite nationalists, Kazi Wadud and Abul Hussain did not argue for a fragile "co-operation" with Hindus. *Srishti dharma* demanded a more fundamental and permanent relationship of Muslim 'accommodation with Hindus.' This would be accomplished, according to *srishti dharma*, not through an apologetic featuring what in current circumstances would be good for Islamic religion. Instead, *srishti dharma* urged Muslim accommodation and solidarity with Hindus which would come about through lessened emphasis on religious rules, rejection of Muslims "obsession" or "infatuation" with Islam, recognition of the positive values of the Indian national revival and finally

²¹⁶ W.C. Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, p.83

fidelity to the rational humanist ideals of the Bengal Renaissance, even though most of its leaders had been non-Muslims.

Fourth, Smith stressed the Pan-Islamic component of Muslim nationalism. Smith said, "The Muslim's feeling for his total community is well known. We have previously noted the deep religious base on which this rests..." Smith characterized the Pan-Islamic feeling: "Pan-Islam is, and always has been, primarily a sentiment of cohesion. It is not cohesion itself; or any institutional or practical expression of it. The unity of the Muslim world is a unity of sentiment."²¹⁷ Wadud himself wrote only one essay on the Non-Cooperation movement which manifested this sort of Muslim self-conscious sentiment of solidarity. This was before he became convinced of the priority of *buddhir mukti*. After the Khilafat movement was over, Wadud rejected Pan-Islamism in clear terms. However, it can be argued that Muslims writing essays on the topic of Pan-Islam do not necessarily do so for the sake of "unity of Muslim sentiment." At least in Eastern Bengal, many essays were presented on Pan-Islamic topics in MSS that overtly address Pan-Islamic concern but inwardly contain critiques of or disclaimers to Pan-Islamic Muslim unity.²¹⁸

A year before the independence of India in August 1947, Wadud was frustrated as he watched communal agitation gathering momentum for the division of India and Pakistan. Publicly he did not make a last bid to reassert his outspoken advocacy of *srishti dharma* for Muslims' accommodation with Hindus. His co-worker Abul Hussain had died, and privately, Wadud felt in that charged environment of communalism that it was fruitless to appeal to Muslims for oneness with Hindus, "By heart and soul Muslim

²¹⁷ W.C. Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, p. 88.

²¹⁸ For example, many essays of Pan-Islamism also glorified Mutazilites tradition and atheistic thought of Ibn Rushd (Averroes, 1126-98), a disciple of Aristotle. Similarly, essays of Pan-Islamism also called Ezid, a killer of Hazrat Mohammad's grandsons, "Poet Ezid." See Fida Ali Khan, "*Abhibhashan*," (1933), MSSP, p.119; "*Mutazilabader Kramabikash*," *Saogat*, Vol. XXII, No. 2-4 (1939). Kazi Akram Hussain, "*Abbasiya Jug*," *Shikha*, Vol.III (1929). Mohammad Kasem, "*Arabi Kabya*," *Shikha*, Vol. III (1929), pp. 104-110; "*Svabhab Kabi Imrul Kayes*," unpublished, "MSSP" p. 75. Khondakar Mohammad Abdus Salam, "*Kabi Ezid*," unpublished, "MSSP," p. 118. Mamtazuddin Ahmad, "*Darshanik Ibn Rushd*" (AS, 1929), *Shikha*, Vol. III (1929), pp. 75-81.

separatists are now coming to a climax. They have never united with Hindus and they will not be united in the future."²¹⁹ Wadud condemned the separatist Muslim leaders, who were proposing an "Islamic foundation" of the new Muslim state. He condemned some of the Muslim separatist leaders as "Nazis and Bolsheviks"²²⁰ However, Wadud demanded of the Muslim leadership who insisted on a communal state of Pakistan: "They must go to the Northwest of India and form an independent religious Kingdom,"²²¹ one to which Bengal would not be a party. Wadud flatly declared, "Bengali Muslims' geographical and cultural union with Punjabi Muslims' is impossible."²²²

²¹⁹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Griha Juddher Prakkale" (May 4, 1946), *Kazi Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 493.

²²⁰ *Natsi-bad o bolshebik-bader samagrikata ekale byapakbhabe manusher citta akrista kareche. Amader desher nabanetarao je esabher dvara prabhabita hayechen ta bhoja kathin nay. Islamer naba rastrik ruper katha jara bhabchen tader keu keu je bishesh prerana peyechen natsi-bad theke, F.R. Khan krita nabaprakasita*, A Plan of Muslim Educational Reform (English title is cited by Wadud), *granthe tar ek suspasta paricay...Ekaler bidvan o budhhiman mussalmano je pracin Islamer jay ghoshana karte giye prakrita prastabe jayghoshana karben samasamayik prabal natsi-bader athaba bolshevik-bader tao katakta aparihajra*. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Griha Juddher Prakkale," *Kazi Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 496-497.

²²¹ Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Griha Juddher Prakkale," *Kazi Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 494.

²²² Kazi Abdul Wadud, "Griha yuddher prakkale," *Kazi Wadud Racanabali*, I, p. 496.

Chapter Six

Concluding Review and Epilogue

I. Review.

The five chapters of this dissertation thus far indicate that the *buddhir mukti* movement was essentially a rational humanistic trend of Muslim modernism emerging toward the end of British rule in India. This trend, begun by some rational humanist Bengali-speaking and Bengali-writing Muslim intellectuals of East Bengal, up to now has been virtually unstudied in English language historiography of Muslim modernism in South Asia. This dissertation, therefore, as its basic contribution, introduces into the historiography of Muslim modernism in India, the rational humanist, *buddhir mukti* ("emancipation of intellect"), dimension of Bengali Muslim thought and values. The rational humanistic trend was significantly different from the neo-orthodox communal and liberal apologetic types of Muslim modernism that current historiography of Muslim modernism has examined so far. The latter two types either aggressively or apologetically aimed to "rehabilitate" the image of Islam in modern times. But the rational humanist Muslims of East Bengal markedly differed from such communal and apologetic restatements of Islam. Although still considering themselves Muslims, they sought radical reform of the cultural and social life of Bengali Muslims. In doing this, they were prepared to challenge any traditional authority or allegedly revealed doctrines and practices, if these violated basic universal human values, especially human creativity and freedom.

The Bengali-speaking and Bengali-writing rational humanists did not emerge in the intellectual milieu of Bengal from elite Bengali-speaking Muslim or Urdu-speaking Muslim families. Almost all the rational humanists active in the Muslim Sahitya Samaj of Dhaka, including their leader, Kazi Abdul Wadud, came from very ordinary Bengali Muslim families. Their fathers' and grandfathers' social ranking were almost equivalent to

that of ordinary ("subaltern") Muslims in Bengal. Yet these relatively subaltern fathers had managed to give their sons English education. These English-educated, but non-elite, sons could not visit the West, as Sir Mohammad Iqbal or Sir Sayyid Ahmad did. Neither did they ever have an opportunity for significant dialogue with European intellectuals or with high ranking Europeans in Bengal. Yet some of the finest strands of modern rational humanism of the West were discussed in the writings of these rational humanists. They learned about the West in their own ways. This came initially perhaps, from their English education, but, more importantly, from their creative individual efforts to study the literary works of the West and of the other Bengali humanist intellectuals, mostly Hindus, already in dialogue with West. If historians argue that Rammohun and Rabindranath, two stalwarts of the Bengal Renaissance, were inspired by "British Orientalism," then rational humanists like Wadud may be considered as first generation of Muslims inspired by British Orientalism through Tagore and Rammohun.

The rational humanists' critique of Islam within and outside Muslim Sahitya Samaj at Dhaka (MSS) was no mere hesitant and inconsistent critique of certain practices and doctrines of Islam. There was force and consistency, for example, in the writings of Wadud, and Abul Hussain in the way they understood and used key value-laden terms: *buddhi* (intellect), *mukti* (freedom) and *srishti* (creativity), as the basis for unfettered critique of the most fundamental practices and doctrines of Islam. This unfettered freedom is also visible in the membership, structure, and masthead of the MSS, the contents of its journal, *Shikha*. The MSS was free of almost all kinds of discrimination: gender, racial, ideological and hierarchical. Any person of any category--Hindu-Muslim-Christian, male-female, orthodox-liberal-radical, Bengalist-Pan-Islamist-Western--was allowed into the MSS. The Anglo-Indians, Europeans and Hindu students did not present essays or take major part in the debates on Muslim issues, but this was by their own choice. The constitution and the rules of procedure of MSS did not impose any kind of restrictions on any category of people.

Wadud's understanding the ideals, *mukti* (freedom), *buddhi* (intellect) and *srishti* (creativity), was also consistent with his analysis of the thought of his two distinguished Bengali mentors, Rammohun and Rabindranath, and also with this critiques of Iqbal, Amir Ali, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Mawlana Mohammad Ali, Abul Kalam Azad and M.K. Gandhi. One should also note that what Wadud learnt from the two Bengali mentors, by way of unfettered freedom of thought and universal humanism, was less radical than what Wadud appealed for and demanded from Muslims. The rational critiques of Islam and Muslim society by Wadud and his associates in MSS were more severe than the critiques of Hinduism by Rammohun and Rabindranath. For example, to encourage Muslims' accommodation with Hindus, Wadud wrote apologetic interpretations of Hindu revivalism. But no such apologetics of Muslim revivalism were ever offered by Rabindranath and Rammohun to foster Hindu accommodation with Muslims. There was hardly any direct critique of their own Brahma religion in the writings of Rammohun and Rabindranath, yet rational humanist Muslims did not hesitate to criticize Islam; but interestingly they did not propose any new religious organization for that purpose. To rational humanist Muslims, the meaning of *mukti*, *buddhi* and *srishti* was universally human and thus above the practices and doctrines of any particular religious tradition, organization or community, even the Muslim.

Finally, as typical of the rational humanist Muslims of the 1920s and 1930s, Wadud's view of nationalism was consistent with a universal and unrestricted sense of *buddhi*, *mukti*, and *srishti*. Wadud did not see political nationalism as main goal or political un-freedom as the fundamental problem or cause of weakness of the Indians. The nationalism Wadud sought was primarily freedom of Indians from all sorts of diverse communal religious self-consciousness. For an ideal pattern of human values to support this kind of nationalism, Wadud coined the phrase, *srishti dharma*, or 'religion of creativity.' One basic emphasis of this *srishti dharma* was Muslims' accommodation (not simply co-operation) with Hindus. From the ideal standpoint of *srishti dharma*, Wadud

found the intolerance and blatant communalism in Islam and Muslim tradition, as he saw it, to be in need of criticism and correction. But Wadud did not criticize Hinduism to the same degree. Wadud's final proposal for Muslims was creativity, the most crucial condition for which was to get out of a communal obsession (or infatuation, *moha*) with self-consciousness of being a Muslim, at the cost of losing one's self-consciousness of being universally human.

The unfettered meanings of *mukti* (freedom), *buddhi* (intellect) and *srishti* (creativity) that were originated, emphasized and given organized shape by rational humanist Muslims in Dhaka during the 1920s and 1930s was only the most sharply focused "tip of the iceberg" of rational humanist, even secular, Bengali Muslim self-consciousness. Much of that submerged mass of non-communal Bengali Muslim sentiment rose to the surface soon after Pakistan's independence among Muslim intellectuals in East Pakistan and more recently in Bangladesh. This dissertation does not attempt to document in any systematic and complete fashion the history of the rational humanist tendency of Bengali Muslim thought beyond the *buddhir mukti* movement and its Muslim Sahitya Samaj at Dhaka in the 1920s and 1930s. However, to suggest that the *buddhir mukti* movement was not an aberration or momentary accident, a brief sketch of subsequent expressions of rational humanist vitality among Muslims in East Bengal (for a while East Pakistan and now Bangladesh) is provided in this epilogue.

II. Epilogue.

A. Independence of Pakistan and Official Islamization and Urduization of East Pakistan.

The communal division of India in 1947 brought forth a communal division of Bengal. The basic reason for separating the eastern half of Bengal from its western half was that Muslims formed a majority in the eastern half of Bengal, but were in the minority in western Bengal. In 1947, the eastern half of Bengal was given a new name, East Pakistan, although geographically, historically, linguistically, economically, socially and even in understanding of Islam, ordinary Bengali-speaking Muslims were different

from Urdu-speaking and Punjabi-speaking Muslims of West Pakistan.¹ From 1947 until 1971, Pakistan was therefore a "double country," characterized by "internal colonialism" from the time of Jinnah, as most East Pakistanis came to view their newly independent country.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, in 1947 was not instinctively a communal Muslim political leader. Yet Islam needed to be politicized for its ideological use ever since Pakistan was born as a double country. A revisionist historian, Ayesha Jalal, has recently given reasons for establishing "Islam as ideology and culture" in politics and society in Pakistan.² Jalal's key arguments are four. First, that the state of Pakistan in 1947 did not "organically emerge" with socio-economic structures that existed below, but began with constructing a central government at the top, which then would impose authority upon the provinces. Second, a large number of orthodox religious groups, the Jamat-i-Islam, the Ahrars and the Khaksars, had adversely reacted against the formation of Pakistan. Yet members of these groups who settled down in Pakistan were the "loudest proponents of an Islamic State." Third, the state of Pakistan had to justify its own distinctiveness from the state of India. Fourth, Islam was necessary to integrate closely West Pakistan with the far flung "linguistically distinct" East Pakistan.³

¹ Several major studies have been published in the English language on the socio-cultural, religious, economic and political disparities between East and West Pakistan. See Richard Weekes, *Pakistan: Birth and Growth of a Muslim Nation* (Princeton: Van Nostrand Company, 1964). Rounaq Jahan, *Pakistan: Failure in National Integration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972). Charles Burton Marshall, "Reflections on Revolution in Pakistan," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. XXXVII (1959). R.K. Dasgupta, *Revolt in East Bengal* (New Delhi: A. Dasgupta, 1971). Anisur Rahman, *East and West Pakistan: A Problem in the Political Economy of Regional Planning* (Cambridge: Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1968). Ramendu Majumder (ed.), *Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: Bangladesh my Bangladesh* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1972). Philip Oldenburg, Ralph Nicholas and Marata Nicholas, *Bangladesh: The Birth of a Nation* (Madras: M. Seshachalam and Co., 1972). Gauri Pada Bhattacharjee, *Renaissance and Freedom Movement in Bangladesh* (Calcutta: The Minerva Associates, 1973). Ministry of External Affairs, India, *Bangladesh Documents, I & II* (New Delhi: 1971). Pakistan Ministry of Economic Affairs, *Twenty Years of Pakistan in Statistics* (Karachi: The Manager of Publication. Government of Pakistan Press, 1968).

² Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

³ Ayesha Jalal did not enlarge this point further. Jalal merely stated in two sentences: "...That Urdu would be the official language of the state. For the Bengali majority this was not merely an insult to their language and culture, but an outright denial of their status as equal citizens Pakistan." The statement needs to be rewritten. First, it is not merely the imposition of Urdu language, but Islamization of the Bengali language

The Islamization of Bengali culture was therefore a priority and the campaign to do this in East Pakistan was a state-sponsored movement. Jinnah began this state sponsored campaign in 1948. In that year on March 19, Jinnah bluntly told the Dhaka University students:

Let me tell you in the clearest language that there is no truth that your normal life is going to be touched or disturbed so far as your Bengali language is concerned....But let me make it very clear to you that the state language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other language.⁴

Jinnah's recognition of Urdu as the state language meant an Urdu cultural hegemony that he wanted to establish over the Bengalis of East Pakistan, even though according to the Census Report of Pakistan of 1951, 54.6 per cent of Pakistan's population spoke Bengali, 28.4 Punjabi, 7.2 Urdu, 5.8 Sindhi, 7.1 Pushto and 1.8 English.⁵

On February 23 1948, the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan rejected a proposal that Bengali be used in the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly along with Urdu and English. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan, said: "Pakistan is a Muslim state and it must have its *lingua franca* the language of the Muslim nation."⁶ Not only was Urdu to be recognized as the state language of Pakistan, but Fazlur Rahman, Education Minister of Pakistan in 1947-1949, himself a Bengali, reported a project to write Bengali letters in Arabic script.⁷ Rahman instructed his assistant, Dr. Mahmud

and literature of its secular and contents of its Hindu origin. This was not merely "insult" but flagrant violation of Bengali culture of the Bengali Muslims. Third, the rational humanist Bengali Muslims resisted Islamization of Bengali language and literature not to become "equal citizens of Pakistan" but to become culturally 'autonomous,' that finally led to the full-fledged struggle for freedom from Pakistan in 1971.

⁴ *Quaid-Azam Speaks* (Karachi), p. 136, cited by Gauri Pada Bhattacharjee, *Renaissance and Freedom Movement in Bangladesh*, p. 61.

⁵ Cited by Gauri Pada Bhattacharjee, *Renaissance and Freedom Movement in Bangladesh*, p. 58. See also, R.K. Dasgupta, *Revolt in East Bengal* (Delhi A. Dasgupta, 1971), p. 21.

⁶ *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. Debates*, Vol. II, February 1948, pp. 15 & 17, cited by Gauri Pada Bhattacharjee, *Renaissance and Freedom Movement in Bangladesh*, p. 59. See, also Badruddin Umar, *Purba Banglar Bhasha Andolan o Tatkalin Rajniti*, I (Dhaka: Maola Brothers, 1970), pp. 50-51.

⁷ See Fazlur Rahman's speech to Pakistan Teachers Conference, Karachi, December 27, 1948 and speech to Educational Advisory Board, Peshawar on February 7, 1949. The two speeches were published in Akram Khan (ed.), Bengali newspaper, *Azad*, December 28, 1948 & March 3, 1949. The two speeches were cited by Badruddin Umar, *Purba Banglar Bhasha Andolan o Tatkalin Rajniti*, I, pp. 256-257.

Hussain (former Muslim Sahitya Samaj member) and Fazle Ahmed Karim, East Pakistan Education Secretary to implementing this project.⁸ The East Pakistan Education secretary motivated an orthodox *Maulabi* Zulfiqar Ali to publish a journal, entitled: "*Arabi Akshare Banga Bhashar Saptahik Dharma Barta*" or 'Weekly Message of Religion Written in Bengali, using the Arabic Script.' The journal was published from Chittagong (see Appendix K). This was not the end of it.

In 1949, Pakistan government formed the East Pakistan Language Committee.⁹ The official purpose of the Committee was to reform Bengali language. The Committee's report was submitted to government in 1950. Munier Choudhury, an eminent scholar of Bengali language and literature of Dhaka University, objected that the Language Committee's report waged a "battle for the welfare of religion."¹⁰ but not the welfare of Bengali language. Choudhury mentioned that the Committee did not change the syntax or grammatical arrangement of Bengali words, but abolished Sanskrit and Hindu words in favor of unpopular Urdu, Farsi and Arabic words.¹¹ In 1950, the Constituent Assembly

⁸ The project began since April 18, 1950. In several districts of East Pakistan, twenty centers were opened in which Arabic was written in Bengali and taught to the illiterate adults. For the success of the project, central government spent Rs. 67, 764. Badruddin Umar, *Purba Banglar Bhasha Andolan o Tatkalin Rajniti*, I, p. 268. Mohammad Abul Kasem, "*Bangali Musalmander Rajnaitik Svatantracetana: Bangla Bhasha o Sahitya Carçay Tar Pratiphalan*" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis: Rajshahi University, 1988). The thesis includes detailed discussion of efforts to Islamize and Urduize Bengali language and literature prior to and during the Pakistani period.

⁹ The members of East Bengal Language Committee were: Mohammad Akram Khan, President; Habibullah Bahar Choudhury, provincial minister; Dr. Abdul Motalib, provincial minister; Dr. Moazzem Hussain, vice-chancellor, Dhaka University; Mawlana Abdullah Al-Baki, lawyer; Dr. Mohammad Shahidullah, Professor Dhaka University; Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, editor, *Azad*. See Badruddin Umar, *Purba Banglar Bhasha Andolan o Tatkalin Rajniti*, I, p. 275.

¹⁰ Munier Choudhury, "*Purbabanga Sarkari Bhasha Committeer Supareshe Prasange*," published in Anisuzzaman (ed.), *Munier Choudhury Racanabali*, III (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1984), p. 650. Munier Choudhury was one among the scores of Bengali intellectuals murdered on the eve of Bangladesh independence on December 16, 1971.

¹¹ He cited several examples from the Committee's report. For example, the Committee changed the Bengali sentence, "*Ami tomai janma janmantare bhuliba na*" to "*Ami tomai kiyamater din parjanta bhuliba na*." The dispute here is between two sets of words, *janma janmantare*, which is a Hindu phrase meaning 'rebirth,' to be replaced by *kiyamater din*, which is a phrase of Islam, meaning the last day of judgement. Munier Choudhury, "*Purbabanga Sarkari Bhasha Committeer Supareshe Prasange*," p. 655-56.

of Pakistan formed the Basic Principle Committee. Its report "stated categorically that Urdu would be the national language of Pakistan."¹² This was reiterated in 1952 by Khawja Nazimuddin, the Urdu-speaking premier of Pakistan, who came from the Dhaka Nawab family. On 26 January, 1952 he announced formally in Dhaka that Urdu would be the only national language of Pakistan.

B. Bengali Resistance to Islamization and Urduization.

These state-sponsored programs for promoting Urdu language and Muslim culture and religion at the expense of Bengali culture/language and literature were increasingly resisted in East Pakistan. A huge number of books, journals, seminars, student organizations and street demonstrations affirming Bengali culture gained popularity in Dhaka University. In the wake of communal riots of 1950, student leaders of Dhaka University celebrated the birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. But the East Pakistan Government issued warrants of arrest against students, including their leader Oli Ahad.¹³ The movement of Bengali cultural autonomy took a militant turn in 1952. All student organizations (except the Muslim League) of Dhaka University in that year formed a State Language Committee. The Committee declared February 21, 1952 as the State Language Day. Professor Rafiqul Islam of Bengali Department, Dhaka University, has described the tragedy and symbols of martyrdom that followed after the government took action against the students:

The government promulgated prohibitory orders banning all sorts of meetings, processions and demonstrations. Dhaka University students defied government ban, held protest meetings, and brought out massive demonstrations. This brought them into direct clash with the government. The police and para-military forces resorted to widespread tear gas, shelling, clubbing and finally, shooting. As a result, several students were killed, hundreds were injured

¹² Gauri Pada Bhattacharjee, *Renaissance and Freedom Movement in Bangladesh*, p. 65.

¹³ M.R. Akhtar, "Michhiler Nam Shapath," *Desh*, June 12, 1971. See also, Gauri Pada Bhattacharjee, *Renaissance and Freedom Movement in Bangladesh*, p. 76. Yatindra Bhatnagar, *Bangla Desh--Birth of a Nation* (New Delhi: Indian School Supply Depot, 1971), p. 54.

[the injured students who died later in the hospital were: Abdul Jabbar, Abul Barqat and Rafiquddin], and thousands were arrested. A reign of terror was let loose by the government but the language movement did not stop....A martyr's column was immediately raised on the spot where the first student was slain. 'Ekushe February' or '21st February'....From 1952 onwards the Bengalis of Pakistan drew inspiration from the sacrifices made on 21 February in all subsequent struggles.¹⁴

In 1956, Field Marshall Mohammad Ayub Khan rose to the head of a military junta and took up political power in Pakistan. Ayub's memoir, *Friends not Masters*, clearly reflects the sense of racial and cultural superiority which Urdu-speaking and Punjabi-speaking Muslim leaders felt over Bengali-speaking Muslims of East Pakistan.

Bengalis...belong to the very original Indian races....Up to the creation of Pakistan they had not known any real freedom or sovereignty. They have in turn been ruled either by caste Hindus, Moguls, Pathans or the British. In addition they have been and still are considerably under cultural...and linguistic influence. As such they have all the inhibitions of down trodden races and have not yet found it possible to adjust psychologically to the requirements of their new born freedom (Emphasis inserted).¹⁵

This internal cultural colonialism, as perceived by Bengalis, of Ayub continued uninterrupted throughout the 1960s. Following resistance of the Bengali Muslims, both Urdu and Bengali were recognized as national languages in the 1956 and 1962 constitutions. Despite this belated recognition, "Bengali was not given the same position in West Pakistan as Urdu was given in East Pakistan."¹⁶ The government-controlled radio in East Pakistan preferred Bengali words with Arabic and Persian origin.¹⁷ In 1962, at a meeting with newspaper editors at Dhaka, Ayub even proposed the "introduction of

¹⁴ Rafiqul Islam, "The Language Movement," in S.R. Chakravarty and Virendra Narian (eds.), *Bangladesh*, I (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1986), p. 154.

¹⁵ Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 187.

¹⁶ Gauri Pada Bhattacharjee, *Renaissance and Freedom Movement in Bangladesh*, p. 69.

¹⁷ For example, the Bengali word *atithi* means guest was opposed by the Radio. See, *Ittefaq*, June 5, 1970.

common script for both Bengali and Urdu."¹⁸ He apparently was haunted by the fear of the traditional common script used by Bengali Muslims of East Pakistani Muslims and Hindus in both East Pakistan and West Bengal.

The 1960s also witnessed a state-sponsored campaign against Rabindranath Tagore in East Pakistan. A member of the National Assembly of Pakistan in 1967 demanded a ban on Dhaka Radio against broadcasting the songs of Rabindranath and the celebration of the first day of the Bengali month and new year, *Baishakh*.¹⁹ In reply, Central Information Minister, Khawja Shahabuddin, reported that Dhaka Radio could broadcast Rabindra music only two days a week. The Ayub government was not satisfied and in June 1967 a total ban was imposed upon Rabindra music from Dhaka Radio. A general strike followed immediately in East Pakistan and the government withdrew the ban. The Jamat-i-Islam leader in East Pakistan, Mawlana Abdur Rahim, argued that Rabindra music was full of Hindu ideas including idol worship.²⁰

At the intellectual level, in East Pakistan during 1960s and 1970s, three groups of Bengali Muslim intelligentsia became united in the movement for cultural freedom from Urdu. These were Islamic liberals, who experienced some tension between the secular humanist aspects of Bengali culture and their Muslim self-consciousness. In other words, they suffered from a crisis of identity between being "Muslim Bengali" (*Mussalman Bangali*) and "Bengali Muslim" (*Bangali Mussalman*). Examples were Mohammad Shahidullah, Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, Mohammad Mahfujullah, Syed Ali Ahasan, et al. The second group was neo-Marxist, represented for example, by Ahmed Sarif, Badruddin

¹⁸ Gauri Pada Bhattacharjee, *Renaissance and Freedom Movement in Bangladesh*, p. 70.

¹⁹ His argument was: "In the name of observance of *Pahela Baishakh* and *Rabindra Jayanti*, attempt had been directed to hit hard at the very base of Pakistan founded on Islamic ideologies by making infiltration of foreign culture. After the general election in India such activities had increased in an alarming proportion and unless proper attention be given to it the very existence of Pakistan might be jeopardized." *National Assembly of Pakistan Debates, Official Reports*, July 4, 1967, p. 2663, cited by Fazlur Rahman, *Cultural Conflicts in East Pakistan* (Dhaka: Sejuty Prakashani, 1990), p.152.

²⁰ *Ittefaq*, March 4, 1970.

Umar. Akhlakur Rahman et al. The third was the rational humanist group, represented by three living members of Muslim Sahitya Samaj: Abul Fazal, Kazi Mutahar Hussain, Motahar Hussain Choudhury; and also by a younger generation of rational humanists, for example, Shamsur Rahman, Hasan Hafizur Rahman, Mofazzal Haider Choudhury, Sikandar Abu Jafar, Kabir Choudhury, Serajul Islam Choudhury et al. The numbers of rational humanist Muslims are increasing in current Bangladesh, of whom several examples may be noted: Humayun Azad, Hayat Mahmud, Abul Momen, Abul Qasem Fazlul Huq, Mafidul Huq, etc. Included in the list are two noted women feminists in recent Bangladesh, Taslima Nasrin and Sultana Kamal.

Despite internal differences of the three groups, they arrived at a consensus, i.e., they rejected what they considered internal colonialism of Pakistan and thereby opposed communal Muslim nationalism of Pakistan in 1970. The Bengali nationalism, articulated by rational humanist Bengali Muslim intellectuals since 1952, was not based on Islam. None was concerned with apologetics for the Quran and Hazrat Mohammed. Continuity of Wadud's ideals of rational humanism, if not direct influence, may be traced in the thought of those later humanist intellectuals--along with a strong commitment to specially Bengali nationalism. First, Wadud's understanding of nationalism, i.e., *srishti dharma* or religion of human creativity, regardless of religio-communal origin, can be found in the expressions of Bengali nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s. These later Bengali intellectuals, though for the most part Muslim were, like Wadud, also oriented toward Rabindranath and used non-communal Bengali cultural symbols. One difference is that Wadud had not wanted to eject the colonial British power from India. But the new generation of Muslim rational humanists wanted a total rejection of colonialism, in this case the "internal" religious, political and economic colonialism of Pakistan. This difference is due to the fact that Wadud and the Muslim Sahitya Samaj did not have same negative experience from the British rule as the East Pakistanis experienced from Pakistani rule.

Islam's eclipse in the thought of Bengali nationalists even though most were/are Muslims was clearly visible in the preference for secular or non-communal symbols of Bengali culture.²¹ One such symbolic preference was frequent emphasis on Rabindranath. In 1950s and 1960s, when Pakistani rulers tried to discredit Rabindranath, Bengali intellectuals defiantly re-emphasized Rabindranath's universal humanism. One notable initiative taken in this regard was by a Bengali journal, *Samakal*. The journal's first editor was Sikandar Abu Jafar. Sikander was born in an ordinary Muslim family and completed education up to B.A. at Ripon College, Calcutta. Yet *Samakal* was one of the leading rational humanist journals published from Dhaka in the late 1950s. Sikander's intellectual view was articulated by a close friend after Sikander died in 1975:

His [Sikandar Abu Jafar's] professional life had started before the partition of India (1947). I saw no lack of his care-free life before or after the partition. The *buddhir mukti* movement was originated by the late Kazi Abdul Wadud and Abul Hussain. Sikandar Abu Jafar was their real successor.²²

Sikandar was on the one hand strongly against Muslim communalism of Pakistani rule, on the other, he was a critic of Islam. In one of his poems, "*Beheshti Meoya*," Sikander stated how poor Muslims, by obeying the *iman*, become hungry and destitute Muslims.²³ In the *Samakal*, Sikander published or republished essays, book reviews and

²¹ Even the political party that articulated the Bengali struggle for autonomy and eventually independence began as the Muslim Awami League, but soon changed its name to Awami League and accordingly sought Hindu support in election.

²² Abu Jafar Shamsuddin, "*Jibanke Jini Jestrupre Graham Karechilen*," *Samakal*, Vol. XVIII (1975), p. 11. For biographical essays on Sikander Abu Jafar, see Mustafa Nurul Islam, "*Jafar Bhai*," *Samakal*, Vol. XVIII (1975), p. 15. Abdul Hafij, "*Sikandar Abu Jafarer Kabita Bhuban*," *Samakal*, Vol. XVIII (1975), pp. 56-74.

²³ The Bengali verse of the poem says: *Jibane chilam ati naganya nihsva*
hajar payer lanchana saye
adhar dekhechi vishva
Tabu pratibad karini,
Imaner jore nachib kabul kareche.
Ksudhar jvalay gharani hayeche panya
mareche putrakanya,
tabuo dhairja menechi
nachiber lekha phalbei jene

debates of the rational humanists of the 1920s and 1930s. Likewise, Sikander also published essays of the new generation of rational humanists, like Kabir Choudhury. Kabir in one essay, "*Purba Pakistaner Samakalin Sahitye Aitihyer Bhumika*," identified an intellectual group in East Pakistan which he called *udar manabatabadi*²⁴ or 'liberal humanists.' Kabir read this essay in the association called Congress for Cultural Freedom, which was organized in Rajshahi University in 1959. Kabir was opposed to the revival of Muslim self-consciousness in Bengali Muslim literature, but wanted a closer relation of Bengali Muslim literature with 'universal literature' (*vishva-sahitya*) and 'universal outlook' (*vishva-dristi*).²⁵

In 1961, *Samakal* celebrated Rabindranath's birth anniversary and nine essays written on Rabindranath were published in one issue of the journal. Mofazzal Haider Choudhury's article, "*Rabindranath o Hindu-Muslim Samparka*," cited dozens of Rabindranath's writings that called for Hindu and Muslim unity in Bengal. The article also cited several comments showing Rabindranath's respect for Muslim tradition and religion. However, for Muslim unity with Hindus, Mofazzal also cited Wadud's *srishiti dharma*.²⁶ Professor Moniruzzaman's essay analyzed Rabindranath's volume of short

imaner jore nachib kabul koreche

Cited by Abdul Hafij, "*Sikandar Abu Jafarer Kabita Bhuban*," *Samakal*, Vol. XVIII (1975), p. 63.

²⁴ Kabir Choudhury, "*Purba Pakistaner Samakalin Sahitye Aitihyer Bhumika*," *Samakal* Vol. VIII (1960), p. 565.

²⁵ Kabir wrote: "Within a few years after independence (1947), a group of intellectuals made conscious attempts to fill our literature with Muslim tradition. At first they were subjective. They introduced in Bengali Muslim literature, Prophet, pir, saints, ancient superstitions and romantic stories of Muslim life. They imported communal and orthodox subjects in our literature....They forgot this truth that tradition is a process for survival of human but that process must include change.... For creation (*srishiti*) of literature of any country, we must remember T.S. Eliot's comment of a need of tradition, but we also remember Eliot's comment 'we are always in danger in clinging to an old tradition or attempting to re-establish one, of confusing the vital and the unessential, the real and the sentimental' (English comment of T.S. Eliot is cited by Kabir in English). Kabir Choudhury, "*Purba Pakistaner Samakalin Sahitye Aitihyer Bhumika*," published in *Samakal* Vol. VIII (1960), p. 564.

²⁶ The Bengali passage that Mofazzal cited from Wadud's essay, "*Hindu Mussalmaner Birodh*," was: ...*Ei je suparicita siddhanta je hindu hindutve nisthaban hale ebam mussalman mussalmantve nisthaban ha'le tader milan sambhabpar habe er upare jader nirbhar tara sadhu-uddeshyo-pranodita hayeo andhakare pa baran. E-sidhante upanita habar purbe tader jacai kara ucit--Hindutve o mussalmantve balte tara ki*

stories, *Galpaguccha* (1933), and stated that Rabindranath did not characterize Muslim characters as mean.²⁷ Mohammad Delawar Hussain Khan's essay traced "universal humanism" (*vishva-mamabata*) and "universal nature" (*vishva-prakriti*) and "creativity" (*srishti*) from Rabindranath's writing.²⁸ Hasan Hafizur Rahman's essay highlighted "human consciousness" (*manab cetana*) and "consciousness of beauty" (*saundaya cetana*) in Rabindranath's writings.²⁹ In 1967, Anisuzzaman edited thirty essays written on Rabindranath by Bengali Muslim intellectuals. The rational humanist Muslim intellectuals, thus, continue to return to and re-emphasize Tagore's universal humanism.³⁰

The song of Rabindranath, *Amar Sonar Bangla Ami Tomai Bhalobashi...* or 'My Golden Bengal, I love You,' now is the national anthem of Bangladesh. But long before the song was formally recognized as national anthem, *Amar Sonar Bangla* was a popular symbol of Bengali nationalism and resistance to the forced cultural integration of Pakistan. During the 1969 mass movements against Pakistani rule, the song was played on street corners, in the tea stalls, in the shopping centers and even sung by peasants and factory workers. Rabindranath wrote this song when Bengal was partitioned in 1905. In this thirty-nine line Bengali poem, *Sonar Bangla*, Rabindranath used six times the Bengali phrase *ma* or 'mother.' In first eight-lines, Rabindranath used 'mother' twice:

I love you, my golden Bengal,
Ever your sky and your breeze
play flute in my soul

bojhen. Kintu teman bhabe jacai karte gele tader abalamvan Hindutva o mussalmantve habe na, habe ei duxeri antanihita srishti dharma. Anyabhabe kathata balle daray, Hindutva o mussalmantve atite o bartamane je-rup parigraha karechila o kareche tair se-sabher prakrita rup ekatha arthahin, tar paribarte eisab dharma bhabishyate ki bhabe manusher jnan o karma-shaktir sutikagar habe eii haoya cai Hindu Mussalman sab sampradayer lokderi bishesh sadhanar bishay. Ei kathai rayeche Rabindranather ei banite--ja Shastra tai bishvasya nay, ya bishvasya tay Shashtra. See Mofazzal Haidar Choudhury, "Rabindranath o Hindu-Muslim Samparka" published in Samakal, Vol. IV (1961), p. 651.

²⁷ Mohammad Moniruzzaman, "Galpaguccher Muslim Caritra," *Samakal*, Vol. IV (1961), p. 691.

²⁸ Mohammad Delawar Hussain Khan, "Rabindra Kabyar Shesh-adhyae Manabata Bodh," *Samakal* Vol. IV (1961), p. 699.

²⁹ Hasan Hafizur Rahman, "Bangla Kabya Mulyabodher Bibartan: Rabindranath," *Samakal* Vol. IV, No. 9 (1961), p. 667.

³⁰ Anisuzzaman (ed.), *Rabindranath* (Dhaka: Studentways, 1968).

O mother. in spring the forests of mangos,
 fragrance intoxicates
 alas. alas--
 O mother. in summer in your full fields,
 what sweet smiles I have seen.³¹

The "mother" symbol that Rabindranath and many earlier Bengali poets had used frequently in poems and essays was also used by many other humanist Bengali Muslims. Poets Shamsur Rahman, Hasan Hafizur Rahman, Al Mahmud, Abu Jafar Obiadullah, during the days of freedom movement against Pakistan, regularly used the 'mother' symbol in their poems.³² One poem of Shamsur Rahman, *Amar Make* or "To my Mother," may be cited here. In the first three lines of the poem. Rahman sees his mother as a religious lady:

Every day I find my Mother going on her meditative rounds.
 covered in shadows, in her own household.³³

The phrases "meditative rounds." "covered in shadows" and "her own household" refers to a Muslim mother, covered with *purdah*, who recites the Quran while confined in the household. Soon Rahman personified as mother the eternal Bengal. full of paddy fields, rivers, orchards, hills.³⁴ The next few lines depicted mother, "...devoted lifelong to the verses of the Quran."³⁵ Nevertheless, in the concluding verse, Rahman laments that he does not share his mother's hopeful religious faith:

It's my misfortune that, in that land of faith
 I find rooted no heavenly tree, that may
 lead me to a life to sacrifice myself
 in quest of heavenly happiness.³⁶

Mohammad Nurul Huda, a rational humanist Muslim intellectual of Bangladesh, interprets these lines: "To the poet, surrendering to religion for unworldly pleasure means

³¹ Marian Maddern, *Bengali Poetry into English* (Calcutta, 1974), p. 79.

³² For details, see Mohammad Nurul Huda, *Flaming Flowers: Poets' Response to the Emergence of Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1986), pp. 71-101.

³³ Mohammad Nurul Huda, *Flaming Flowers: Poets' Response to the Emergence of Bangladesh*, p. 73.

³⁴ Mohammad Nurul Huda, *Flaming Flowers: Poets' Response to the Emergence of Bangladesh*, p. 72.

³⁵ Mohammad Nurul Huda, *Flaming Flowers: Poets' Response to the Emergence of Bangladesh*, p. 74.

³⁶ Mohammad Nurul Huda, *Flaming Flowers: Poets' Response to the Emergence of Bangladesh*, p. 74.

the meaningless negation of individual liberty."³⁷ In the last line of the poem, Rahman expressed a crisis of his Muslim self-consciousness. Rahman does not know if he really know his devout mother: "Do I correctly know her...do I ?"³⁸

The three other popular secular Bengali symbols that were most frequently used by the rational humanist intellectuals during the freedom movement were: "*Ekushe*" ("21st." i.e., the language crisis of February 21, 1952); "*Shahid Minar*" or the "Martyr's Monument;" and "*Jay Bangla*" or "Victory to Bengal." These symbols of Bangladeshi nationalism, likewise were very much an antithesis of the communal Muslim ideals that led to the creation of Pakistan. Similarly, Bangladeshi nationalism was different from the Indian composite nationalism of the 1940s, as there was no appeal to Islamic values to free East Bengal from Pakistani "internal colonial" domination. The inspiration of Bangladeshi independence and nationalism had more in common with Wadud's *srishti dharma*, which is also found rooted in the non-communal humanism of much of modern Bengali literature and culture.

Wadud's and Abul Hussain's understanding of *mukti* (freedom) and *buddhi* (intellect) as unfettered freedom of intellect had also a continuity in East Pakistan and later Bangladesh. One of the earliest organizations in East Pakistan in 1950s, in this regard, was the East Pakistan Humanist Association (EPHA). The Association was founded in 1957 by a professor of Dhaka University, Jotirmoya Guha Thakurta (murdered by Pakistan army in the night of March 25, 1971). Shamuël Huda, a former member of Muslim Sahitya Samaj (MSS) was also associated with the EPHA.³⁹ The objectives of EPHA were:

- (1) Free exploration for knowledge concerning moral and social problems;
- (2) critical appraisal of ideas, practices and prejudices based on dogmas and traditions;
- (3) feasible

³⁷ Mohammad Nurul Huda, *Flaming Flowers: Poets' Response to the Emergence of Bangladesh*, p. 74.

³⁸ Mohammad Nurul Huda, *Flaming Flowers: Poets' Response to the Emergence of Bangladesh*, p. 74.

³⁹ I have collected handouts and constitution of the Association from Shamsul Huda's house in Dhaka.

redress and relief in human ills by social services; (4) promotion of peace, social justice and happiness among mankind, irrespective of caste, creed or community; (5) to preach and affirm autonomous nature of ethics as well its priority over "spiritual values;" (6) rejection of ideas of supernatural guidance and other worldly aims.⁴⁰

Like MSS, the EPHA had a written constitution, president, secretary, treasurer, EC (Executive Committee), annual fee and importantly, EPHA was open to all: "Any person interested in the Aims and Objectives of the Association and acceptable to the Executive Council may be admitted to the membership of the Association."⁴¹ The first publication of EPHA was a book entitled: *Manab Maner Azadi* (1964) or "Freedom of Human Mind"⁴² One notable difference between the MSS and the EPHA was that the latter established its affiliation with one humanist organization in the West, namely, the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU), based at Utrecht in the Netherlands. Another difference was the presence of non-Muslims among the office-holders and leaders of the Association. For instance, Guha Thakurta was deputed by EPHA to attend the Board meeting of IHEU at Utrecht, held between July 10 to July 12, 1964.⁴³

C. *Buddhir Mukti* tendencies in Independent Bangladesh.

For achievement of the demands of freedom and secular Bengali cultural nationalism, Bengali Muslims fought long nine months of freedom struggle in 1971. But the price they paid for achieving the victory of freedom was huge. Pakistan Army and armed Jamat-i-Islam cadres murdered dozens of eminent Bengali nationalist intellectuals, including several professors of Dhaka University, in the last three days of Pakistani rule,

⁴⁰ Handout of the East Pakistan Humanist Association, "Memorandum of Association of The East Pakistan Humanist Association" (Dacca, n.d.), p. 1. The address of the Association as written in the Memorandum was: 31, Topkhana Road, Dhaka-2.

⁴¹ "Memorandum of Association of The East Pakistan Humanist Association" (Dhaka, n.d.), p. 2.

⁴² Handout of the East Pakistan Humanist Association, "East Pakistan Humanist Association EPHA" (Dhaka, 1964), p.2.

⁴³ Handout of the East Pakistan Humanist Association, "East Pakistan Humanist Association EPHA" (Dhaka, 1964), p.2.

from December 13 to December 16, 1971. This was one last blow of the "cultural genocide" in East Pakistan. The bulk of genocide was executed by the Pakistan army, which during nine months (March 25 through December 16, 1971) may have killed as many as 3 million Bengalis, destroyed nearly 6 million homes, raped 200,000 Bengali women and forced 10 million people to take refuge in India.⁴⁴

In independent Bangladesh since the devastation of 1971, unfettered political and intellectual freedom has not yet been achieved. Up to now political power and its mechanism have not been entrusted to rational humanist intellectuals, nor have their views been reflected the working of the state. Yet within this society, cultivation of non-communal Bengali culture and unfettered freedom of thought have survived and still flourish, even though challenged.⁴⁵ An important institution for research and cultivation of Bengali language and literature in Bangladesh has been the Bangla Academy. From 1972 to 1993, this research Academy had published five research journals in Bengali and one in English. But more importantly, the Academy had published a huge number of biographies, memoirs and essays of Bengali-speaking and Bengali-writing Muslim intellectuals of nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Up to 1993, according to official statistics, the Academy had reprinted in edited volumes the collected writings (*racanabali*) of 45 Bengali Muslim intellectuals, published 101 biographies/memoirs and 28 books on "language-martyrs." In four volumes, Bangla Academy has already published the writings of Kazi Wadud and, in another four volumes, the writings of Kazi Mutahar Hussain. The reprinting of Kazi Wadud's works includes Wadud's critiques of Islam, and most interestingly, these were (unknowingly?) funded by government of Hussain Mohammad Ershad.

⁴⁴ Talukdar Maniruzzaman, "Radical Politics and the Emergence of Bangladesh," published in Marcus Franda and Paul Brass (eds.), *Radical Politics in South Asia* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), p. 223. For an overview of genocide in Bangladesh, see also Robert Payne, *Massacre* (New York: MacMillan, 1973), pp. 76-78; Kalyan Choudhury, *Genocide in Bangladesh* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1972).

⁴⁵ Among the former *buddhir mukti* advocates, Abul Fazal, has served as cultural adviser to one political regime in Bangladesh.

The first two reprinted volumes of Wadud's works were edited by Abdul Huq, an Islamic liberal who suffered from the "dilemmas of secularism,"⁴⁶ but who agreed to be an editor of Wadud's works. For months, he worked hard and collected Wadud's 87 essays, Wadud's diary, his books and several book reviews from old journals and private collections. These were reprinted with an introduction by the editor in which Huq did not criticize Wadud. The third and fourth volumes of Wadud's works similarly were edited by intellectuals who were not strong admirer of Wadud.

The publication of the works of other *buddhir mukti* intellectuals of the 1920s and 1930s was privately financed in recent Bangladesh. Abul Hussain's works were collected by one of the surviving members of MSS, Abdul Kadir. The reprinting of works of Abul Hussain were funded by Wadud and by relatives of Abul Hussain. Aged Abdul Kadir, before his death in 1987, told Mohammad Abul Majid, Abul Hussain's one biographer and also a high ranking civil servant of Bangladesh: "I am pleased that you are keeping the flames of *buddhir mukti* alive in Bangladesh."⁴⁷ Like Kadir, Abul Fazal, another *buddhir mukti* stalwart, took a successful initiative in 1968 to have Wadud's writing included as text books for undergraduate students of the Bengali Department of Chittagong University, Bangladesh.⁴⁸ In 1983, BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), a non- governmental organization in Bangladesh funded by G-7 countries and United Nations, when approached by Dhaka University, reprinted several hundred copies of Kazi Wadud's *Shashvata Banga* or "Eternal Bengal."

Abul Qasem Fazlul Huq, a professor of Bengali of Dhaka University, is currently teaching Wadud to undergraduate students of the Bengali Department. In 1993, Huq urged vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, Prof. Emajuddin Ahmed, to formally honor

⁴⁶ See Abdul Huq, *Sahitya, Aitihya o Mulyabodh* (Dhaka, 1966) and *Sahitya o Svadhinata* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1974).

⁴⁷ Interview with Abdul Majid, Dhaka May 23, 1993.

⁴⁸ Abul Fazl's letter to Shamsul Huda, Kazi Wadud's son-in-law in Dhaka, May 6, 1968.

Wadud's one-hundredth birth anniversary in Dhaka University on April 24, 1994.⁴⁹ We do not know if Dhaka University actually celebrated the occasion, but Vice-chancellor Emajuddin Ahmed stated in a speech in Dhaka University's Convocation ceremony for Professor Abdus Salam (Nobel laureate scientist) in 1993: "*Buddhir mukti* movement, which originated in Dhaka University's environment during a decade of 1920-30, was a most glorious event in the history of the evolution of our knowledge, thought and intellect."⁵⁰ Qasem Fazlul Huq personally informed me in an interview that his own intellectual orientation is inspired by Wadud's *Banglar Jagaran*. The book had been recommended to him by Professor Munier Choudhury when Qasem Fazlul Huq was an undergraduate student in Dhaka University in 1962.⁵¹ Wadud's unfettered freedom had attracted Huq. This is reflected in Huq's book, *Manus o Tar Paribesh* (1988),⁵² or "The Human and His Environment," and in Huq's selection of topics from and references to Wadud's writing in his teaching.⁵³

Shamsuzzaman Khan and several other officers of Bangla Academy drafted a proposal in 1977 for revival of *buddhir mukti* movement of 1920s and 1930s. The proposal was that the day of *Ekushe* (celebrating the language crisis of February 21, 1952) in 1977, should be observed in the Academy with a discussion on the Muslim Sahitya Samaj and the ideals of *buddhir mukti* movement. The proposal, as usual, was released to newspapers. An official of the newspaper *Ittefaq*, Khondakar Abdul Hamid (subsequently a Minister in the Government of President Ziaur Rahman), was reported to have been

⁴⁹ Abul Qasem Fazlul Huq to Emajuddin Ahmed, vice-chancellor Dhaka University, September 8, 1993, unpublished document.

⁵⁰ Emajuddin Ahmed, "*Bhashan*," *Smaranika* (Dhaka: Dhaka University, May, 23, 1993), p. 8.

⁵¹ Interview with Abul Qasem Fazlul Huq, Dhaka May, 28, 1993.

⁵² Abul Qasem Fazlul Huq, *Manush o Tar Paribesh* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1988), pp. 1-13 and chapter on "*Sahityar Srishtipraksiya*" or 'Evolution of creativity in Literature,' pp. 144-165.

⁵³ The two key topics that Qasem had chosen for his students were Kazi Abdul Wadud's *srishti dharma* and Wadud's understanding of Hazrat Mohammad. For this he referred to students Wadud's, "*Sanmohita Mussalman*," and "*Hindu Mussalmaner Birodh*." This information is gathered from an undergraduate term paper that was submitted to Professor Qasem. See Mihir Mushaki, "*Kazi Abdul Waduder Dharma o Samaj-Smaskar Cinta*," unpublished.

enraged at this decision of the Bangla Academy. On January 3, 1977, *Ittefaq* contained an editorial:

We have been observing that there are many activities going on recently in the name of '*mukta buddhi*' and *Shikha* movement. Originated half a century ago, the *Shikha* movement was dangerously controversial and in those days people criticized the movement.⁵⁴

Following this editorial, the plain clothes officers of the National Security Intelligence (NSI) of Bangladesh picked up Shamsuzzaman Khan from his office and detained him for several hours for interrogation. Khan was asked why he was interested in the *buddhir mukti* movement and why he wanted to spread the ideas.⁵⁵

Araj Ali Matubbar, a self-educated Bengali Muslim villager of Barisal, had also suffered resistance to his *mukta man* or "free mind" and for reprinting some key writings of Wadud, Abul Hussain, Abul Fazal, Motahar Hussain Choudhury, Sibnarayan Ray and others. Araj was born in a remote village, Lamchari, which is 7 or 8 miles away from Barisal town.⁵⁶ He did not have formal education, except a few months of study in a village *maktab*. Nevertheless, the adult Araj became a "self-taught" intellectual in the subjects of philosophy, religion and Bengali literature. Toward the end of his life, Araj sold his little landed property and spent his little savings for building a fine library in the village of Lamchari.

Araj's first publication was *Satyor Sandhane* (1973) or "In Search of Truth." The book made a distinction between formal Islam and folk Islam in Bengal and also argued that incomprehensible rules of Islam are not acceptable to the modern mind.⁵⁷ Before Araj died, he edited another book, *Mukta Man* (1988) or "Free Mind." The book reprinted

⁵⁴ *Ittefaq*, January 2, 1977, p.2.

⁵⁵ Interview with Shamsuzzaman Khan, Dhaka, July 29, 1993.

⁵⁶ For biographical information on Araj Ali Matubbar, see Ayub Hussain, *Araj Ali Matubbar* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1993).

⁵⁷ See Araj Ali Matubbar, *Satyor Sandhane* (Dhaka: Third edition, Bangladesh Lekhak Shibir, 1992), pp. 12, 58-95. The publication of the second and third edition of the book was financed by London branch of Bangladesh Lekhak Sibir.

selections from, among others, the writings of *buddhir mukti intellectuals of the 1920s and 1930s*. These articles were: Motahar Hussain Choudhury. "*Adeshpanthi o Anupreranapanthi*" (1932); Abul Hussain, "*Adesher Nigraha*" (1927), "*Nishedher Brimvana*" (1926); Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Sanmohita Mussalman*" (1926) or 'Infatuated Muslim.' These articles were significant pieces of writing by these intellectuals on rational humanism and unfettered freedom and containing critiques of Islam.⁵⁸ The publisher of the book claims that Araj's thought has been reviewed in the *New York* (September, 1982), under the title "Araj Ali, the Insurrectionist."⁵⁹

Following the demolition of the Ayodhya mosque in India (December 6, 1992), communal riots flared up throughout Bangladesh. Many Bengali intellectuals of Hindu and Muslim origin in Dhaka and Calcutta criticized the demolition. Some of these critiques were recently published in Bangladesh in a book, *Dhvamsastupe Alo* (1993) or *Light in the Ruins*. The book was edited by a Muslim and a Hindu. The objective of thirty-one Bangladeshi Muslim intellectuals in the book was not simply to protest the demolition, but to criticize Indian politicians for using religion in politics. Nevertheless, the thirty-one Bangladeshi Muslim intellectuals in the book also stood solidly against retaliation against Hindus in Bangladesh.

However, there were differences over how these Muslim intellectuals of Bangladesh wanted to stop communalism and protect the minority Hindus. Some cited from the Quran that Islam does not permit demolition of temples. Still others cited historical evidence of cordiality between ordinary Hindus and Muslims in Bengal. They were, however, not critical of religion as such. Rational humanist statements and arguments in the book are somewhat different. Shamsur Rahman made the basic point:

⁵⁸ See Araj Ali Matubbar, *Mukta Man* (Barisal: Musharaff Hussain Matubbar, 1988), pp. 11-40, 129-144, 221-231.

⁵⁹Araj Ali Matubbar, *Mukta Man*, p. 3.

"Rabindranath has spoken about humanism, but we have not understood his words."⁶⁰ Harun Habib's essay is entitled: "Let there be a rising of humanism; only then freedom would be achieved"⁶¹ (*Jege Uthuk Manabata. Tabei mukti*). Hayat Mahmud's essay was entitled: "The human soul is crying out from the lashes of religion" (*Manabatma Kade Dharmar Prahare*).⁶² Other rational humanists rejected using Islam in politics; in particular, they demanded that there should be an end of Jamat-i-Islam's using of Islam in the politics of Bangladesh.

It was in the aftermath of the Ayodhya incident that Taslima Nasrin, a women feminist in Bangladesh, wrote the controversial novel, *Lajja* (1993) or 'Shame.' The book depicts the fate of a Hindu family who immigrates to Bangladesh, but feels harshness and betrayal at the hands of the forces of communalism. In the end the family emigrates back to India. In India, the book provided powerful impetus to the Hindu communalist Bharatiya Janata Party, who then demanded forcible eviction of "illegal" Bangladeshis from India. In July 1993, the book was banned in Bangladesh and the author was denounced by Mrs. Khaleda Zia's government for "blasphemy" and "insulting Islam."

We do not know if Taslima had read writings of Abul Hussain and Wadud. Yet, like the two giants' of the *buddhir mukti* movement, Taslima's central concern is freedom to express her critical views, unfettered by religion or ideological inhibitions. An Indian newspaper reported Taslima as saying: "The Quran should be revised thoroughly."⁶³ Taslima denied this version of her remark, but said: "I hold the Quran, the Veda, the Bible, and all such religious texts determining the lives of their followers, as out of place

⁶⁰ Shamsur Rahman, "Ghor Amabasya Duti Alor Samket," in Mafidul Huq and Arun Sen (eds.), *Dhvamsastupe Alo* (Dhaka: Sahitya Prakash, 1993), p. 260.

⁶¹ Harun Habib, "Jege Uthuk Manabata, Tabei Mukti," in Mafidul Huq and Arun Sen (ed.), *Dhvamsastupe Alo*, pp. 268-271.

⁶² Hayat Mahmud, "Manabatma Kade Dharmar Prahare," in Mafidul Huq and Arun Sen (ed.), *Dhvamsastupe Alo*, pp. 221-225.

⁶³ News Report, "Writer Ordered Arrested," *Globe and Mail*, Toronto, June 6, 1994.

and out of time... We have to move beyond these ancient texts if we want to progress."⁶⁴ Sentiments and phrases like these were expressed by many *buddhir mukti* intellectuals back in the 1920s and 1930s. In a telephone interview with a Toronto-based organization, Women and Revolution, Taslima said further, "I have seen that women are oppressed by religion, by state and by tradition, so I have written about all types of oppression."⁶⁵ Taslima's novel, *Jabo na Kena? Jabo* (1992), cited how Islam of the Bengali *mollas* and also classical Islam have downgraded Muslim women in Bangladesh. For indicting the former, Taslima cited a most popular book of ordinary Muslim households, *Mokchudul Mominin*.⁶⁶ which some critics characterize as "Islamic pornography." For indicting the latter (classical Islam), Taslima cited several Hadiths, but more importantly identified verses of the Quran, for example: 2:187, 222, 223, 230: 3:14.⁶⁷ The *mollas* of Dhaka called for her execution.⁶⁸ This call was repeated by Sheikh Ahmed Deedet, a prominent Muslim scholar of South Africa. The Sheikh gave a verdict that Taslima Nasrin "should be stoned to death" and this verdict was announced at a press conference, in one of the "civilized" cities of the world, Toronto.⁶⁹

Sultana Kamal is another Bengali Muslim feminist of contemporary Bangladesh. Sultana is the daughter of Kamaluddin Ahmad, a long-time vocal member of Muslim Sahitya Samaj of Dhaka. We have noted in chapter four, that Kamaluddin was one of the younger associates of Wadud and Abul Hussain. Kamaluddin demanded freedom of Muslim women, who have been restricted by Islam and Muslim tradition. Kamaluddin's

⁶⁴ News Report, 'Taslima Nasrin,' *Independent*, London, May 25, 1994.

⁶⁵ Amy Rath, "Interview with Taslima Nasrin," *Women and Revolution*, No. 44 (Toronto: Winter 1994-Spring 1995), p. 15.

⁶⁶ Taslima Nasrin, *Jabo na Kena? Jabo* (Dhaka: Mujibur Rahman Khoka, 1992), pp. 35-38.

⁶⁷ Taslima Nasrin, *Jabo na Kena? Jabo* (Dhaka: Mujibur Rahman Khoka, 1992), p. 46.

⁶⁸ News Report, 'Taslima Nasrin,' *Guardian*, London, December 10, 1993. See, also *Globe and Mail*, June 6, 1994. The critics of Taslima Nasrin are published in a book by Mohammad Mokaddes Hossain, *Ucit Jabab* or "The Justified Direction," (Dhaka: Ucit Prakashan, 1993).

⁶⁹ News Report, "Stone Her to Death," *The Toronto Sun*, Thursday, July 7, 1994, p. 36.

wife, Mrs Sufia Kamal, mother of Sultana Kernal, is also a noted activist for women's right in Bangladesh. The International Centre for Human Rights (based in Montreal, Canada), which awarded Sultana the John Humphrey Freedom Award for 1996,⁷⁰ explained the reason for giving this prestigious award to Sultana:

She (Sultana Kamal) has been a legal consultant for the UN High Commissioner of Refugees and Coordinator of the Women's Program for International Voluntary Service (IVS) in Sylhet, Bangladesh. She is a member of Unity for Social Action (USHA) and Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), a legal aid and human rights center. Her work is done at great personal risk. Last year, her home was bombed by the Sahaba Soldiers as the police stood by at a distance of 50 yards without intervening. The attack was led by the same group that passed fatwa (Islamic decrees) against Taslima. Recent years have seen the rise of right-wing forces that, under the guise of religion, have led a frontal attack against women's rights, secularism and civil rights.⁷¹

In conversation with me at Toronto, Sultana told me that her husband is a Hindu and is not converted to Islam. Sultana also told me that she is inspired by her father, Kamaluddin Ahmad, and mother Sufia Kamal, although she did not know that Kamaluddin had been a member of Muslim Sahitya Samaj of Dhaka.

During my field trip to Dhaka and Calcutta in 1993, I took interviews of many relatives of rational humanist Muslims who had been active in the earlier *buddhir mukti* movement. The critiques of Islam of these family members are recorded, but for their safety and security in Bangladesh, I do not want to identify them or discuss their religious practices and ideas in detail. Like Wadud and Abul Hussain, many told me they are

⁷⁰ Handout of the International Centre for Human Rights, "The 1996 John Humphrey Freedom Award" (Montreal: International Centre for Human rights, 1996).

⁷¹ Handout of the International Centre for Human Rights, "The 1996 John Humphrey Freedom Award," p. 3. Identically, *The Toronto Star*, wrote: "Sultana Kamal, a 45-year old Bengali feminist lawyer who puts her life...to challenge Islamic decrees against women..." The Canada-Asia working group who organized a discussion meeting with Sultana on October 30, 1996, wrote in their handout: "...Sultana is a human rights lawyer who has been particularly active in opposing Shar'ia (Islamic Law) which detrimentally affect women." See, News Report, "The Bengali Feminist Honored," *The Toronto Star*, October 26, 1996. Handout of the Canada-Asia working group, "A Rare Opportunity to Dialogue with a Woman Activist from Bangladesh," October 29, 1996.

Muslims, because they live in the Muslim community in Bangladesh. But in the households of many such families, Islamic rituals of *namaj*, fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, *milad*, recitation from the holy Quran and slaughtering cow for celebrating *Id* are gradually getting less effective than vigorous celebrations of *Ekushe* and *Nababarsha*. Some Hindus were being married without being converted to Islam. Some observed that slaughtering cows is a "criminal offense," and that observing Ramadan fast is scientifically wrong in Bangladesh. At home, the children are not given training in reading the Quran and how to pray. Some members complained that these are burdens upon children in addition to burdens of school and homework. A daughter-in-law of a rational humanist told me that she painted a picture of three poor working village women smoking cigarettes in front of a mosque. Her idea, she told me, is that Islam could not change the life-style of these village women, who traditionally smoke and do not care about the mosque. Some family members institutionalized their commitment to rational humanism by founding a primary school, where formal religion is not taught. Teachers of this school are recruited, not on the basis of training in Islamic education, but for depth of reading and knowledge of Tagore. Special teacher training classes were organized privately to give training in Bengali culture and humanism, for example, discussion on Rabindranath Tagore.

III. Conclusion.

This brief sketch thus indicates continuity of rational humanistic tendencies from the *buddhir mukti* movement through the thought of successive generations of humanist Muslim (and Hindu) intellectuals in East Pakistan and then in Bangladesh. There is no doubt that tendencies of Islamic liberalism, Islamic orthodoxy and neo-orthodoxy, fundamentalism and neo-Marxism have also existed in parallel with rational humanism in East Bengali Muslim thought. One problem of the later generations of rational humanists, unlike the *buddhir mukti* intellectuals of 1920s and 1930s, has been that they have not

been united and organized under such leadership as Wadud and Abul Hussain could provide. Like Wadud and Abul Hussain, most prominent Bengali Muslim humanists are not directly affiliated with any political party nor have they organized a new political platform. Taslima Nasrin said: "I was not involved in any politics or any social organization. I was alone, and I am alone now today, because I have seen that what I believe in my heart very few persons can share with me."⁷²

Nevertheless, the fact remains that there is a persisting wider spectrum of Muslim thought and values in Bengal, one that makes room for more critical, independent non-communal thinking. The rational humanistic trend emerged clearly in East Bengal during British rule by forming an explicit *buddhir mukti* movement with its association and journal in 1920s and 1930s. In 1940s the trend was opposed to communal Muslim nationalism and division of India and specifically opposed to inclusion of East Bengal with Pakistan. From 1950s to independence of Bangladesh in 1971, this trend along with others helped frustrate official Pakistani attempts to impose communal nationalism and Islamic ideology in East Pakistan.

Within Bengal, the rational humanist intellectuals of the *buddhir mukti* movement at the 1920s and 1930s kept themselves ideologically distinct from Bengali-speaking and Bengali-writing Muslim neo-orthodox and Islamic liberal trends of Muslim modernism. They also consciously claimed that their rational humanist thought was distinct from Urdu-speaking Muslim modernist intellectuals and politicians--in Bengal and elsewhere in India. Wadud did not enter into direct debates with Sir Mohammed Iqbal and Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad. He criticized their thought in print, however, but neither ever replied to Wadud. It is also apparent from Wadud's critiques of Iqbal, Azad and other Urdu-speaking Muslim modernists that he understood these intellectuals' attitudes toward Islam. Knowing their intellectual standpoints well, Wadud criticized their views

⁷² Amy Rath, "Interview with Taslima Nasrin" p. 15.

confidently. For example, Wadud and his rational humanist associates in 1920s and 1930s criticized Muslim apologetics almost in the way recent historians in the West have criticized Muslim modernism as apologetic.

Wadud allowed all kinds of Muslim views to be spoken freely and frankly in the Muslim Sahitya Samaj. Wadud also visited literary societies and organizations of the neo-orthodox and Islamic liberals. Wadud consciously entered into several fairly long-lasting, ideological debates. We have cited only a couple of these debates. There were more, however, and these show clearly the basic ideological differences between neo-orthodox and Islamic liberal and *buddhir mukti* trends in Bengali-speaking and Bengali-writing Muslim intellectuals in Bengal.

The rational humanistic trend of *buddhir mukti* that began in East Bengal in the 1920s was a new trend in the colonial and post-colonial history of Muslim modernism in pre-independence India. The ideological distinctiveness of this movement from neo-orthodox and Islamic liberals in Bengal, and from the better known Urdu-speaking modernists of north India, lay in several crucial areas. But the key ideological difference was that these rational humanists exercised, and appealed to others to do so too, unfettered freedom to examine and criticize fundamental doctrines and practices of Islam in a way that no known neo-orthodox Muslim or Islamic liberal in Bengali, or Urdu-speaking Islamic apologists outside Bengal, did. This distinctive trend of Muslim modernism in Bengal is at last being brought to the attention of English-language scholarship by means of this dissertation. Historians, on the basis of evidence presented here from Bengali language sources, will now be in a position to reject certain sweeping generalizations that, unfortunately, have become common in our standard history books--but which apply only to Urdu-using, or north Indian (or West Pakistani) Muslims.

Objective historians should now feel uncomfortable and suspicious over any generalizations about Muslim modernism in the Indian subcontinent that fail to reflect the plentiful Bengali sources and that ignore the distinctiveness of modern Muslim thought

and values in Bengal, especially in East Bengal, current Bangladesh. The persistence of a collectively self-critical rational humanist tendency in debate with other, more familiar, types of Muslim thought and values is the most distinctive characteristic of modern intellectual history of Muslims in East Bengal, now Bangladesh.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

I. Papers Read in General and Annual Sessions of the MSS, 1926-1938¹

AS=Annual Session

GS= General Session

1. Abdul Gani, "*Purdah Pratha*" (GS,1928).
2. Abdul Hakim, "*Europe Ekhane Okhane*" (AS,1931).
3. Abdul Kadir, "*Banglar Lok Sangit*" (AS, 1927).
4. ____, "*Banglar Palli Sangite Lilabad*" (GS,1927).
5. ____, "*Banglar Palli-Gane Buddha-Sadhana o Islam*" (GS,1928).
6. ____, "*Bangalir Imreji Shiksha*" (AS,1933).
7. Abdul Muid Choudhury, "*Shapatya-carcai Mussalman*" (1928), AS.
8. Abdul Wahab, "*Pater Katha*" (AS, 1931).
9. ____, "*Tarun Muslim*" (AS, 1934).
10. ____, "*Akbar*" (AS,1932).
11. Abdus Sadek, "*Cirastayi Bandobyasta*" (AS,1930).
12. Abdus Salam Khan, "*1950 Sale Bharatbarsha*" (AS,1931).
13. ____, "*Mughal Juge Citra Carca*" (AS,1928).
14. ____, "*Sebhim Byank o Sudh*" (GS,1930).
15. ____, "*Bharatiya Mussalman o Rashtraniti*" (AS,1930).
16. ____, "*Parashya Sahitya*" (AS, 1930).
17. Abul Fazal, "*Bahai Dharma*" (GS,1926).
18. ____, "*Tarun Andolaner Gati*" (AS,1929).
19. Abul Hussain, "*Satkara Paytallish*" (GS,1926).
20. ____, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya, I*" (AS,1927).

¹ Sources: MSSP (unpublished); and *Shikha*, Vol.I-V (1927-31).

21. ____, "*Adesher Nigraha*" (GS,1927).
22. ____, "*Bangali Mussalman'er Bhabishyat*" (GS,1928).
23. ____, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Shiksha Samasya, II*" (GS,1928).
24. ____, "*Justice Amir Ali Morhum*" (GS,1928).
25. ____, "*Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*" (AS,1929).
26. ____, "*British-Bharate Mussalman Ain*" (AS,1930).
27. ____, "*Amader Rajniti*" (AS,1931).
28. Abul Muzaffar Ahmad, "*Keats Kabye Parthiba Prem*" (GS,1938).
29. Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, "*Sahitya o Kalcar*" (AS,1930).
30. Afsaruddin, "*Dharmer Abashyakata*" (AS,1934).
31. A.K. Ahmad, "*Baideshik Banijya o Banglar Mussalman*" (AS,1928).
32. ____, "*Banglar Ryot*" (AS, 1930).
33. Abdur Rahman Khan, "*Europe Shikshar Adarasher Kramabikash*" (AS, 1929).
34. Ali Nur, "*Bharater Adarsha*" (AS,1931).
35. Alimdad Khan, "*Bernard Shaw*" (AS,1934).
36. Aminuddin Ahmad, "*Arsver Dimba*" (GS,1933).
37. ____, "*Sufi-mat*" (AS,1931).
38. ____, "*Adhunik Arabi Sahitya*" (AS,1933).
39. ____, "*Adhunik Arabi Sahitya*" (GS,1934).
40. Anwar Hussain, "*Mussalmaner Arthik Samasya*" (AS,1927).
41. ____, "*Banglar Krishi Samasya*" (AS,1928).
42. ____, "*Dhakar Bahire Kaekdin*" (GS,1930).
43. Anwarul Kadir, "*Hindu Mussalman Samasyar Ekta Dik*" (GS,1926).
44. ____, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Samajik Galad*" (AS,1927).
45. ____, "*Imreji Sahitya Romantic Yug*" (AS,1928).

46. Asutosh Bhattacharya, "*Bangla Sahitya Mussalman Yug*" (AS,1932).
47. Khan Mohammad Ataur Rahman Khan, "*Muslim Bharate Shiksha Carca*" (AS,1928).
48. Ajharul Islam, "*Jati Gathne Islam*"(AS,1933).
49. ____, "*Amir Khasru*" (GS,1934).
50. Bilayet Ali Khan, "*Islame Badi Pratha*" (AS,1930).
51. ____, "*Islam o Sharir Carca*" (AS,1929).
52. Fatema Khatun, "*Prathamik Shikshay Mussalman*" (AS,1928).
53. ____, "*Taruner Dayitva*" (AS,1930).
54. Fajilatun Nesa, "*Nari Jibane Adhunik Shikshar Asvad*" (AS,1928).
55. Fida Ali Khan, "*Mutazila Sampradaya*" (AS,1933).
56. Hafizullah Khan, "*Itihaser Dhara*" (AS,1934).
57. Hemanta Kumar Sarkar, "*Sahitya Srusti*" (GS, 1926).
58. Jamaluddin, "*Arthanaitik Kalaha*" (GS,1930).
59. Kalika Ranjan Kanungo, "*Hindi Sahitya Mussalman*" (GS,1928).
60. ____, "*Darar Dharmamat*" (AS,1929).
61. Kamaluddin Ahmad, "*Bharater Uttaradhikar*" (AS,1931).
62. ____, "*Nari Pragatir Katha*" (AS,1932).
63. ____, "*Bijjanbad*" (AS,1933).
64. ____, "*Bibaha*" (GS,1934).
65. ____, "*Janma Niyantran o Amara*" (GS,1934).
66. ____, "*Cithi*" (GS,1934).
67. ____, "*Alkimiya*" (GS,1934).
68. ____, "*Gita*" (GS,1934).
69. Kamaluddin Ahmad & Abul Mansur Ahmad, "*Pracya o Praticya*" (AS,1930).

70. Kamruddin Ahmad, "*Qurane Manaber Sihan*" (AS,1929).
71. ____, "*Samabay Andholane Mussalmaner Kartabya*" (AS,1928).
72. Karuna Gupta, "*Amader Mahila Upanyasik*" (AS,1930).
73. Kazi Abdul Wadud, "*Sanmohita Mussalman*" (GS,1926).
74. ____, "*Bangali Mussalmaner Sahitya Samasya*" (AS,1927).
75. ____, "*Banglar Jagaran*" (AS,1928).
76. ____, "*Bangla Sahityar Carca*" (AS,1929).
77. ____, "*Sahityiker Sadhana*" (GS,1929).
78. ____, "*Goethe*" (AS,1930).
79. ____, "*Bangla Sahitya Jitiyatar Adarsha*" (GS,1931).
80. ____, "*Shiksha-Samkar*" (AS,1932).
81. ____, "*Bankim Chandra*" (AS,1933).
82. ____, "*Rammohuner Bilat Gaman*" (GS,1933).
83. ____, "*Rammohun o Muslim Sadhana*" (GS,1933).
84. ____, "*Banglar Tarun Citta*" (AS,1934).
85. ____, "*Hindu Mussalmaner Birodh*" (GS,1936).
86. ____, "*Imdadul Huq*" (GS,1926).
87. Kazi Akram Hussain, "*Abbasiya Jug*" (AS,1929).
88. Kazi Mutahar Hussain, "*Sangit Carcay Mussalman*" (AS,1927).
89. ____, "*Ananda o Mussalman Samaj*" (GS,1927).
90. ____, "*Manab Maner Kramabikash*" (AS,1928).
91. ____, "*Dharma o Samaj*" (AS,1929).
92. ____, "*Dharma o Shiksha*" (AS,1930).
93. ____, "*Manush Mohammad*" (GS,1930).
94. ____, "*Nastiker Dharma*" (AS,1931).

95. ____, "Bangalir Samajik Jibar" (GS.1932).
96. ____, "Bangla Samgiti" (AS,1932).
97. ____, "Qurāner Kafer" (GS,1933).
98. ____, "Qurāner Kafer. Mumin o Allah" (GS.1933).
99. ____, "Utsab o Ananda" (GS,1934).
100. ____, "Sahityik" (AS,1934).
101. ____, "Shikshita Mussalmaner Karyya" (GS,1934).
102. ____, "Sahitya o Byakirtva" (GS.1938).
103. Kedarnath Badyopadhyay. "Jarer Svarup" (AS.1934).
104. Khondakar Mohammad Abdus Salam. "Kavi E-ida" (AS.1933).
105. Khurshid Jha Begum, "Narir Katha" (AS.1928).
106. Luf-i-Ahmad Siddique, "Arthanaitik Samkar" (AS.1932), AS.
107. Mahfujur Rahman Bhuyia, "Wordsworth o Rabindranath" (AS.1932).
108. Mahbub-ul-Alam. "Korbani" (GS,1938).
109. Mamtazuddin Ahmad. "Shiksha Samasya" (AS.1927).
110. ____, "Darshanik Ibn Rushd" (AS.1929).
111. S. N. Maitra. "Sahitye Sucita" (AS.1930).
112. ____, "Browninger Tarjama" (GS.1931).
113. Mohammad Abdur Rashid, "Amader Naba Jagaran o Shariat" (AS.1927).
114. ____, "Muktir Agraha banam Adesher Nigraha" (GS,1927).
115. ____, "Moor Nirbbasan" (AS,1928).
116. ____, "Europea Sabhatay Muslim Smriti" (AS,1929).
117. ____, "Semitic Culture" (AS,1930).
118. ____, "Hindu Mussalmaner Katha" (AS,1931).
119. ____, "Hindu-Mussalmaneer Milaner Samasya" (AS,1932).

120. ____, "*Parakaler Katha*" (AS,1933).
121. ____, "*Semitic Civilization*" (AS,1934).
122. Mohammad Abdul Wadud, "*Al-Beruni*" (AS,1931).
123. Mohammad Akbaruddin, "*Calar Katha*" (AS,1929).
124. Mohammad Ajraf Choudhury, "*Dharma o Naitikata*" (AS,1932).
125. Mohammad Eusuf, "*Samatate Kharga Shashan*" (AS,1933).
126. ____, "*Itihaser Gorar Katha*" (AS,1934).
127. Mohammad Foshe, "*Arabi Bhasha o Kabya*" (AS,1929).
128. Mohammad Kasem, "*Tatva o Sahitya*" (AS,1927).
129. ____, "*Arabi Kabya*" (AS,1929).
130. ____, "*Svabhab Kabi Imrul Kayesh*" (GS,1929).
131. Mohammad Mansuruddin, "*Marfati Sahitya*" (AS,1933).
132. ____, "*Banglar Lok shilpa*" (AS,1934).
133. Mohammad Nazirul Islam, "*Nari Samasya*" (GS,1928).
134. ____, "*Manab Pragati o Mukta Buddhi*" (AS,1929).
135. Mohammad Syed, "*Satya Mithya*" (AS,1931).
136. Mohitlal Majumdar, "*Muslim Sahitya Samaj*"(AS,1929).
137. ____, "*Sahitya Rash o Samasya*" (AS,1932).
138. Mokhtar Ahmad Siddique, "*Allahr Bani*" (AS,1932).
139. ____, "*Mufti Abdus-krita Quraner Tafsir*" (AS,1933).
140. ____, "*Mufti Abduh*" (AS,1934).
141. ____, "*Fiqer Udbhab o Pariniti*" (AS,1929).
142. ____, "*Paygamvar Mohammad*" (GS, 1930).
143. Moslemuddin Khan, "*Milan-Saudh*" (AS,1931).
144. ____, "*Muslim Sahitya Samaj*" (GS,1932).

145. ___. "*Banglar Pir Puja*" (AS,1928).
146. ___. "*Ekey Bale Islam*" (GS,1930).
147. ___. "*Mymensingher Git*" (AS,1929).
148. Motahar Hussain Choudhury, "*Adeshpanthi o Anuprenapanthi*" (AS,1932).
149. ___. "*Amader Dainya*" (GS, 1931).
150. ___. "*Rabindranath o Bairagya Bilash*" (AS,1931).
151. Naziruddin Ahmad. "*Svadhin Bharater Das*" (AS,1931).
152. ___. "*Muslim Jagaran*" (AS,1930).
153. A.Z. Nur Ahmad. "*Mussalman Jagate Library*" (GS,1930).
154. ___. "*Abu Hanifa*" (AS,1933).
155. ___. "*Mohaddesh Prasange*" (AS, 1931).
156. Nuruzzaman Khan, "*Arabi Bhasha*" (AS,1934).
157. A.Y. M. Obiadul Huq, "*Kichu Nay*" (AS,1934).
158. Parimal Kumar Ghosh. "*Ati Adhunik Sahitya*" (AS,1930).
159. Rakibuddin Ahmad "*Bangali Mussalmaner Arthik Samasya*" (AS,1927).
160. ___. "*Banglar Lupta Shilpa*" (AS,1928).
161. Samsun Nahar. "*Shishur Shiksha*" (AS,1934).
162. Sujata Roy. "The Education of the pre-school Child" (GS,1931).
163. Shamsuddin Ahmad. "*Muslim Narir Katha*" (AS,1931).
164. Shamsul Huda, "*Hazrat Mohammader Pratibha*" (AS,1927).
165. ___. "*Kusamaskarer Ekti Dik*" (AS,1929).
166. ___. "*Deshar Katha*" (AS,1931).
167. ___. "*Muslim Sahitya Samaj*" (GS,1932).
168. Satish Ranjan Khastagir, "*Dharma-Bisvas o Bijjan*" (AS,1933).
169. Sirajul Islam, "*Manab o Islam*" (AS,1928).

170. Syed Abdul Wahed, "*Banglar Pir Puja*" (AS,1928).
 171. Syed Zahurul Huq, "*Hitler o Tahar Niti*" (AS,1934).
 172. S.N.Q. Zulfiqar Ali, "*Rabindranather Ekti Kabita*" (AS,1933).
 173. A.M. Taheruddin, "*Rabindra Kabyar Svarup*" (GS.1926).
 174. _____. "*Imdadul Huq,*" (GS.1926).
 175. Tofajjal Hussain. "*Rin Bhar-prapirita Banglar Krishak*"(AS,1933).
 176. Umesh Chandra Bhattacharya, "*Bharatiya o Europea Darshane Jagat o Jiban*" (AS,1930).

II. Distribution of Essays Read in GSs and ASs

Essays read in 1926: 8 (GS:08, AS:00)
 Essays read in 1927:15 (GS:04, AS:11)
 Essays read in 1928:24 (GS:07, AS:17)
 Essays read in 1929:21 (GS:02, AS:19)
 Essays read in 1930:24 (GS:07, AS:17)
 Essays read in 1931:21 (GS:04, AS:17)
 Essays read in 1932:15 (GS:03, AS:12)
 Essays read in 1933:20 (GS:05, AS:15)
 Essays read in 1934:24 (GS:09, AS:15)
 Essays read in 1935:00 (GS:00, AS:00)
 Essays read in 1936:01 (GS:01, AS:00)
 Essays read in 1937:00 (GS:00, AS:00)
 Essays read in 1938:03 (GS:03, AS:00)

Total: 176 (GS:53, AS:123)

III. Total Muslim, Hindu, Male and Female Paper-readers in GSs & ASs of MSS

Total articles read by Hindu & Muslim intellectuals: 176
 Total Muslim & Hindu authors who read those articles: 80.

Total Hindu intellectual-written articles: 14
 Total Hindu authors who read those articles: HM 9 + HF 2 = 11

Total Muslim intellectual-written articles:162
 Total Muslim authors who read these articles: MM 61 + MF 4 [one wrote 2 articles] = 66

Appendix B

I. President, Secretary and Members of Executive Committees of MSS, 1926-1938²

Foundation Meeting (January 17, 1926), First EC (1926-1927), elected:

Abul Hussain: Secretary
 Abdul Huq: Assistant secretary
 A.Z. Nur Ahmad: Assistant secretary
 Abdul Kadir: Assistant secretary
 Anwar Hussain: Assistant secretary

First Annual Session (March 27 through 28, 1927), Second EC (1927-28), elected:

Tasadduk Ahmad: President
 Kazi Mutahar Hussain: Secretary
 Mohammad Abdur Rashid : Assistant Secretary
 Abdus Salam Khan: Member
 Golam Ahmad: Member
 Abdul Kadir: Member
 A. M. Taheruddin: Member
 Bilayet Ali Khan: Member
 Khan Mohammad Aatur Rahman Khan: Member

Second Annual Session (February, 1928), Third EC (1928-1929), selected:

Kazi Mutahar Hussain: Secretary
 Mohammad Abdur Rashid: Assistant secretary
 Abdul Kadir: Member
 Abdus Salam Khan: Member
 A. M. Taheruddin: Member
 Bilayet Ali Khan: Member
 Kham Mohammad Aatur Rahman Khan: Member
 Golam Ahmad: Member
 A.Z. Nur Ahmad: Member
 Ali Nur: Member
 Shamsul Huda: Member
 S.M. Abdur Rouf: Member
 Sufi Motahar Hussain: Member

Fourth Year, First General Session (August 1929), Fourth EC (August 1929-December 1929), selected:

² Sources: MSSP (unpublished). Abul Fazal, *Rekha Chitra* (Chittagong: Boi Ghor, 1965).

Abul Hussain: Secretary
Members name are not available

Fifth Year, First General Session (August 31, 1930), Fifth EC (1930-31), drafted
Constitution of the MSS:

Abul Fazal: Secretary
Shamsul Huda: Assistant Secretary
Kamaluddin Ahmad: Assistant Secretary
Kazi Abdul Wadud: Member
Kazi Mutahar Hussain: Member
Naziruddin Ahmad : Member
Ali Nur: Member
Ahmad Sobahan: Member
Aminuddin Ahmad: Member

Sixth Year, First General Session (Sunday, August 2, 1931), Sixth EC (1931-32),
selected:

Mohammad Eusuf: Secretary
Mohammad Abdul Wadud: Assistant Secretary
A.K.S. Fazlul Huq: Assistant Secretary
Kazi Abdul Wadud: Treasurer
Kazi Mutahar Hussain: Member
Shamsul Huda: Member
Mahafuzur Rahman Bhuyian: Member
A.T.M. Ayub: Member
Abdu Taher: Member

Seventh Year, First General Session (July 31, 1932), Seventh EC (1932-1933), selected:

Moslemuddin Khan: Secretary
M. Tofajjal Hussain: Assistant Secretary
Shamsul Huda: Assistant Secretary
Kazi Abdul Wadud: Treasurer
Kazi Mutahar Hussain: Member
Mohammad Abdul Wadud: Member
Ansaruddin: Member
Araraf Hussain: Member
Aminuddin Ahmad: Member

Eighth Year, First General Session (September 3, 1933), Eighth EC (1933-34), selected:

Kazi Abdul Wadud: President
Aminuddin Ahmad: Secretary

Ajharul Islam: Assistant Secretary
 Kazi Mohammad Hussain: Assistant Secretary
 Wasiul Huq: Member
 A. N. Bazlur Rashid: Member
 Abul Masud Mohammad Khan: Member

Ninth Year. First General Session (August 10, 1934), Ninth EC (1934-1935), selected:

Kazi Abdul Wadud: President
 M. Tofajjal Hussain: Secretary
 A.K.M. Abdul Awal: Assistant Secretary
 Amejuddin howlader: Assistant Secretary
 Kazi Mutahar Hussain: Member
 Kamaluddin Ahmad: Member
 Bazlur Rahman: Member
 A. N. Bazlur Rashid: Member
 Aminul Islam: Member

Tenth Year. First General Session (February 2, 1936), Tenth EC 1935-36. selected (except the position of President):

Kazi Abdul Wadud: President elected
 Mohammad Abdur Rashid: Secretary nominated
 Mujibur Rahman: Assistant Secretary
 Moazzem Hussain: Reception Committee
 Kazi Mutahar Hussain: Member
 Mohammad Abdul Bari: Member
 Ajharul Islam: Member
 Musharaff Hussain: Member
 Abul Masud Mohammad Khan: Member

Eleventh Year
 No EC

Twelfth Year. First General Session (January, 1938), Twelfth EC (1937-38), selected:

Kazi Abdul Wadud: President
 Ajharul Islam: Secretary
 Mujibur Rahman: Assistant Secretary
 Abdul Kadir: Assistant Secretary
 Kazi Mutahar Hussain: Member
 Abul Muzaffar Ahmad: Member
 Abdul Khaleq: Member
 Mohammad Idris: Member
 Mozammel Huq: Member

II. Participation in Executive Committees

Total EC : 11

Total Members of EC: 89

This came by a participation: 52

Average size of an EC: 8.09 members

Kazi Abdul Wadud

Involvement: 7 EC

As a President: 4 EC

As a Treasurer: 2 EC

As a Member: 1 EC

Abul Hussain

Involvement: 2 EC

As a Secretary: 2 EC (Resigned on September 9, 1929)

Kazi Mutahar Hussain

Involvement: 8

As a President: 0

As a Secretary: 2

As a Member: 6

Abdul Kadir

Involvement: 4 EC

As a president: None

As a Secretary: None

As an Assistant Secretary: 1 EC

As a Member: 3 EC

Abul Fazal

Involvement: 1 EC

As a president: 0

As a Secretary: 1 EC

As an Assistant secretary: 0

As a Member: 0

Total Position of President in 11 ECs: 5

Total Position of Secretary in 11 ECs: 11

Appendix C

Gender and Religious Composition of the Singers and Musicians of MSS.³

Muslim Male= MM.

Hindu Male= HM

Muslim Female= MF

Hindu Female= HF

First Year, First General session (Sunday, Jan. 31,1926). Muslim Hall.

Singer: Golam Ahmad, MM.

First Year, Second General session (Sunday February 21. 1926), Muslim Hall.

Singer: Ardhendu Bhusan Mukhopadhy, HM.

First Year, Fourth General Session (Sunday, June 27, 1926), Muslim Hall.

Singer: Kazi Nazrul Islam, MM.

First Annual Session (Sunday March 27 through Monday 28, 1927). Muslim Hall.

Singers: Anwarul Kadir, MM; Akkas Ali, MM; Birendranath Ganguli, HM; Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM; Kazi Nazrul Islam, MM.

Second Year, First General Session (Sunday July 24, 1927), Muslim Hall.

Singers: Abdus Salam Khan, MM; Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.

Second Year, Second General Session(Friday September, 23 1927), Muslim Hall.

Singer: Korshed Uddin Ahmad, MM.

Second Year, Third General Session (Sunday, November 13, 1927), Muslim Hall.

Singer: Abdus Salam Khan, MM.

Second Year, Fourth General Session (December 4, 1927), place ?

Singer: Abdus Salam Khan, MM.

Second Annual Session (February, 1928). place ?

Singer: Kazi Nazrul Islam, MM.

Third Year, First General Session (Sunday, April 8, 1928), place ?

Singer: Mohammad Hussain, MM.

Third Year, Second General Session (Sunday, July 22, 1928), place ?

Singer: Abdus Salam Khan, MM.

³ Sources: MSSP (unpublished); and *Shikha*, Vol. I-V (1927-31).

Special Session of Farewell to Fajilatun Nesa (August 26, 1928), Lyton Hall.

Singer: Miss Pratibha Ghosh, HF.

Fourth Year, First General Session (August ? 1929), place ?

Singer: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.

Fourth Annual Session (April 18-19, 1930), place ?

Singer and Musicians: Kulchandra Sen, HM; Kazi Anwarul Huq, MM; S.N. Maitra, HM.

Fifth Year, Second General Session (November 16, 1930), Dhaka University Building.

Singer: Rezaul Karim, MM.

Fifth Year, Third General Session (December 14, 1930), Dhaka University Building

Singer: Kulchandra Sen, HM.

Fifth Year, Fourth General Session (December 18, 1930), Jagannath Hall.

Cultural Functions: Songs and poetries by HM, HF, MM, MF.

Fifth Annual Session: (April 12-13, 1931), Muslim Hall.

Singers and Musicians: Kul Chandra Sen, HM; Mohammad Hussain, MM; Kazi Anwarul Huq, MM; S. N. Maitra, HM; Birendranath Ganguli, HM; Joadul Karim, MM.

Sixth Year, First General Session (Sunday, August 2 1931), Central Building.

Sixth Year, Second General Session (September 21, 1931), Jaganath Hall

Singers: Kul Chandra Sen HM; B.D. Habibullah, MM; Abul Mansoor, MM. Birendranath Ganguli, HM.

Sixth Year, Third General Session (October 5, 1931), Dhaka Intermediate College.

Cultural Function. "*Musaera Majlish*." Singers: Mohammad Hussain, MM; Miss Sarma Basu, HF; Birendranath Ganguli, HF; Miss Usha Tara Bhattacharya, HF; Narendra Candra Ghosh, HM; Habibur Rahman, MM; Abdur Rashid, MM; Miss Juthika Roy, HF; Asutosh Chatterjee, HM.

Sixth Annual Session (March 25-26, 1932), Curzon Hall.

Singers and Musicians: Mohammad Hussain, MM; Miss. Jiaunahar, MF; Nagendra Ghosh, HF.

Seventh Year, First Session (July 31, 1932), place ?

Singers: Miss Jiaunahar, MF; Kulchandra Sen, HM;

Eighth Year, Third General Session (Sunday 19, 1933), Lyton Hall.

Singer: Miss. Jobeda, MF.

Nineth Year. First General Session (August 10, 1934), Dhaka Intermediate College.
Singer: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.

Nineth Year. Second General Session (September 16, 1934), University Central Building.
The session begun and ended with songs. Singer's name are not mentioned in
MSSP.

Nineth Year. Fourth General Session (December 9, 1934), Curzon Hall.
Singers: Chorus song: "participated by two female Hindu students. Miss Citra
Chatterjee and Miss Roma Nag of Dhaka University and four male, Hindu and
Muslim students of Dhaka University and Dhaka Intermediate College.

Appendix D

I. Gender and Religious Composition of the Presidents and Secretaries of GSs and ASs of MSS, 1926-1938⁴

DU= Dhaka University. HM= Hindu Male. MM= Muslim Male.

First Year, First General Session (January 31, 1926), Muslim Hall, DU.

President: Caru Candra Bandyopadhyay, HM.

Secretary: Abul Hussain, MM.

First Year, Second General Session (February 21, 1926), Muslim Hall, DU.

President: Abdur Rahman Khan, MM.

Secretary: Abul Hussain, MM.

First Year, Third General Session (April 4, 1926), Muslim Hall, DU.

President: Tasadduk Ahmad, MM.

Secretary: Abul Hussain, MM.

First Year, Fourth General Session (June 27, 1926), Muslim Hall, DU.

President: Kazi Abdul Wadud, MM.

Secretary: Abul Hussain, MM.

First Year, Fifth General Session (July 8, 1926), Muslim Hall, DU.

President: Mohammad Shahidullah, MM.

Secretary: Abul Hussain, MM.

First Year, Sixth General Session (September 5, 1926), Muslim Hall, DU.

President: Abdur Rahman Khan, MM

Secretary: Abdul Kadir (Acting), MM.

First Year, Seventh General Session (December 26, 1926), Muslim Hall, DU.

President: Caru Candra Bandyopadhyay, HM.

Secretary: Abdul Kadir (Acting), MM.

First Annual Session (March 27 through 28, 1927), Muslim Hall, DU.

President: Tasadduk Ahmad, MM.

Secretary: Abul Hussain, MM.

Second Year First General Session (July 24, 1927), Muslim Hall, DU.

President: Tasadduk Ahmad, MM.

Secretary: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.

⁴ Sources: MSSP (unpublished); and *Shikha*, Vol.I-V, 1927-31.

Second Year, Second General Session (September, 23 1927), Muslim Hall, DU.

President: Abdur Rahman Khan, MM.

Secretary: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.

Second Year, Third General Session (November 13, 1927), Muslim Hall, DU.

President: Kazi Abdul Wadud, MM.

Secretary: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.

Second Year, Fourth General Session (December 4, 1927), place ?

President: R. C. Majumder, HM.

Secretary: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.

Second Year, Fifth General Session (January 15, 1928), place ?

President: Kazi Abdul Wadud, MM

Secretary: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.

Second Year, Sixth General Session (March 18, 1928), place ?

President: Abdur Rahman Khan, MM.

Secretary: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.

Second Annual Session (February, 1928), place ?

President: Abdur Rahman Khan, MM.

Secretary: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.

Third Year, First General Session (April 8, 1928), place ?

President: Abdus Salam Khan, MM.

Secretary: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.

Third Year, Second General Session (July 22, 1928), place ?

President: Abdur Rahman Khan, MM.

Secretary: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.

Third Year, Third General Session (August 12, 1928), place ?

President: Abdur Rahman Khan, MM.

Secretary: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.

Special Session, farewell to Fajilatun Nesa (August 26, 1928), Lyton Hall, DU

President: Abdur Rahman Khan, MM.

Secretary: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.

Special Session, Reception to Shahidullah (September, 10 1928), Muslim Hall, DU.

President: Abdur Rahman Khan, MM.

Secretary: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.

Third Year, Fourth General Session (October 10, 1928), place ?

President: Abdur Rahman Khan, MM.
Secretary: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.

Third Year, Fifth General Session (December 2, 1928), place ?
President: Nalini Kanti Bhattachali, HM.
Secretary: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.

Third Annual Session (held sometime between January-August 1929), place ?
President: Abul Muzaffar Ahmad, M.M
Secretary: Abdus Sobahan, MM.

Fourth Year, First General Session (August 1929), place ?
President: S. N. Maitra, HM.
Secretary: Abul Hussain, MM.

Fourth Year, Second General Session (January 12, 1930), Lyton Hall, DU.
President: Umesh Chandra Bhattachali, HM.
Secretary: Mohammad Abdur Rashid, MM.

Fourth Annual Session (April 18-19, 1930), place. ?
President: Nasiruddin, MM.
Secretary: Mohammad Abdur Rashid, MM.

Fifth Year, First General Session (August 31, 1930), place ?
President: S.N. Maitra, HM.
Secretary: Abul Fazal, MM.

Fifth Year, Second General Session (November 16, 1930), University Central Building, DU.
President: Kazi Abdul Wadud, MM.
Secretary: Abul Fazal, MM.

Fifth Year, Third General Session (December 14, 1930), University Central Building, DU.
President: Abdur Rahman Khan, MM.
Secretary: Abul Fazal, MM.

Fifth Year, Fourth General Session (December 18, 1930), Jagannath Hall, DU.
President: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.
Secretary: Abul Fazal, MM.

Fifth Year, Fifth General Session (January 18, 1931), place ?
President: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.
Secretary: Abul Fazal, MM.

Fifth Annual Session: (April 12-13, 1931), Muslim Hall, DU.

President: Hekim Habibur Rahman, MM.

Secretary: Abul Fazal, MM.

Sixth Year, First General Session (August 2 1931), University Central Building, DU.

President: Caru Candra Bandopadhyay, HM.

Secretary: Shamsul Huda, MM.

Sixth Year, Second General Session (September 21, 1931), Jagannath Hall, DU.

President: Abdus Samad

Secretary: Mohammad Eusuf

Sixth Year, Third General Session (October 5, 1931), Dhaka Intermediate College.

President: S.N. Maitra, HM.

Secretary: Mohammad Eusuf, MM.

Sixth Year, Fourth General Session (March 19, 1932), University Central Building, DU.

President: Kazi Abdul Wadud, MM.

Secretary: Mohammad Abdul Wadud (not Kazi Abdul Wadud), MM.

Sixth Annual Session (March 25-26, 1932), Curzon Hall, DU.

President: Kamruddin Ahmad

Secretary: Mohammad Eusuf

Seventh Year, First Session (July 31, 1932), place ?

President: Mohammad Shahidullah, MM.

Secretary: Mohammad Eusuf, MM.

Seventh Annual Session (April 3, 1933), Dhaka Intermediate College.

President: Fida Ali Khan, MM.

Secretary: Mohammad Eusuf, MM.

Eighth Year, First General Session (September 3, 1933), Kazi Wadud's home, 109 Dewan Bazar, Dhaka.

President: Kazi Abdul Wadud, MM.

Secretary: Aminuddin Ahmad, MM.

Eighth Year, Second General Session (September 10, 1933), 109 Dewan Bazar, Dhaka.

President: Kazi Abdul Wadud, MM.

Secretary: Aminuddin Ahmad, MM

Eighth Year, Third General Session (November 19, 1933), Lyton Hall, DU.

President: Mohammad Eusuf, MM.

Secretary: Aminuddin Ahmad, MM.

Eighth Year, Fourth General Session (January 8, 1934), Kazi Mutahar Hussain's home.

President: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.
Secretary: Aminuddin Ahmad, MM.

Eighth Year, Fifth General Session (January 14, 1934), 109 Dewan Bazar, Dhaka.
President: Abdus Sobahan, MM.
Secretary: Aminuddin Ahmad, MM.

Eighth Year, Sixth Session (March 11, 1934), Mohitlal Majumdar's home.
President: Susil Kumar De, MM.
Secretary: Kamaluddin Ahmad, MM.

Eighth Annual Session (March 30, 1934), Dhaka Intermediate College.
President: Mohammad Barkatullah, MM.
Secretary: ?

Ninth Year, First General Session (August 10, 1934), Dhaka Intermediate College.
President: Kazi Mutahar Hussain, MM.
Secretary: Tofajjal Hussain, MM.

Ninth Year, Second General Session (September 16, 1934), University Central Building, DU.
President: Kazi Abdul Wadud, MM.
Secretary: Shamsul Huda, MM.

Ninth Year, Third General Session (December 9, 1934), place ?
President: Parimal Roy, HM.
Secretary: Kamaluddin Ahmad, MM.

Ninth Year, Fourth General Session (Friday, December 9, 1934), Curzon Hall, DU.
President: Sir A. F. Rahman, MM.
Secretary: M. Tofajjal Hussain, MM.

Ninth Year, Fifth General Session (February 3, 1935), University Central Building, DU.
President: Parimal Roy, HM.
Secretary: Tofail Hussain, MM.

Ninth Annual Session (1935), Jagannath Hall
President: Mohammad Wajed Ali, MM.
Secretary: ?

Tenth Year, First Session (February 2, 1936), Kazi Abdul Wadud's home, 26 Purana Paltan, Dhaka.
President: Moazzem Hussain, MM.
Secretary: Mohammad Abdur Rashid, MM.

Tenth Year, Second Session (July 2, 1936), 26 Purana Paltan, Dhaka.

President: Kazi Abdul Wadud, MM.
Secretary: Mohammad Abdur Rashid, MM.

Tenth Annual Session (August 2, 1936), Jagannath Hall.

President: Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyya, HM.
Secretary: Mohammad Abdur Rashid, MM.

Eleventh Year (August 3, 1936-December 1937), place ?

No session.

Twelfth Year. First General Session (January, 1938). 26 Purana Paltan. Dhaka.

President: Mahabub- ul-Alam, MM.
Secretary: Ajharul Islam, MM.

Appendix E

Muslim Sahitya Samajer Niyamabali (Constitution)⁵

Gata satai september (1930) karma samsader pratham adhibeshan bashe. Sei sabhay ninmalikhita niyam kanunguli sadharan sabhay pesh karar janya grihita hay.

1. *Nam: Ei pratisthaner nam Muslim Sahitya Samaj*

2. *Uddeshya: Satya priti o sahitya carca*

3. *Sabhay: (ka) Karma samsader anumodankrame je kona byakti ihar sabhya haite pariben. (kha) Prati sabhyer barshik cada kam pakshe ek taka haibe. Baisakh haite Samajer barsha arambha haibe.*

4. *Bisistha sabhya: Karma Samsader prastabe o Sadharan Sabhar anumodone bishistha sabhya manonita haite pariben.*

5. *Sadharan Sabha nay jan sabhayr karma samsad gathan kariben: sampadak o duijan sahakari sampadak o chayjan nirbacita sabhya.*

6. *Prati batsar nutan karma samsad gathita haibe.*

7. *Batsare antata chaybar Sadharan Sabhar adhibeshan haibe.*

8. *Barshik sabha sadharanta easter'er chutite (Easter vacation) haibe.*

9. *Karma Samsad haite Sadharan sabha ekjan kosadhakya nirbacita kariben.*

10. *Sampadak nije, athaba sat jan sadharan sabhyar cahiday, sadharan sabha ahaban kariben.*

⁵ Source: MSSP (unpublished).

11. *Batsare duibar hishab parikshar janye Sadharan Sabha duijan hishab-pariksak nijukta kariben.*
12. *Sampadak nije, athaba Karma Samsader duijan sabhyar cahiday, Karma Samsad ahaban kariben.*
13. *Karma Samsader 'koram' cari jan sabhye gathita haibe.*
14. *Barshik cada pujar bandher purbe dite haibe.*

(Signed & approved by Fifth Year, Second General Session, MSS, November 16. 1930)

Kazi Abdul Wadud
Sabhapati
16.11. 30

Abul Fazal
Sadharan Sampadak
16.11. 1930

Appendix F

Educational and Professional Background of the Members of MSS⁶

Members were: those who read papers; discussants of papers; members of the Executive Committees; Reception Committees; president of the GSs and ASs; and editors of the *Shikha*. Following abbreviations are used to identify each member's academic and professional standing for first three years (1926-29) of the MSS.

B.C.L.=Bachelor of Criminal Law. B.A.=Bachelor of Arts. CAL=Calcutta. CI=College Inspector. CS=Collegiate School (Dhaka). D.Lit.=Doctor of Literature. D.Sc=Doctor of Science. DMC=Deputy Magistrate & Collector. DSG=District & Session Judge. DU=Dhaka University. Edit (Editor of journal). GS=Graduate Student. HF=Hindu Female. HM=Head Master of School. IC=Intermediate College. IIC=Islamic Intermediate College (Dhaka). IS=Intermediate Student. JIC=Jagannath Intermediate College (Dhaka). KRSNGR= Krisnanagar (district of West Bengal). M.A.=Master of Arts. M.Ed.=Master of Education. MI=Maktab Inspector. MD=Medical Doctor. MF=Muslim Female. MH=Muslim Hall. MUNSHI=Munishiganj (sub-divisional town of Dhaka). MYM=Mymensing (district of East Bengal). PB=Publication Business. PC=Principal of College. Ph.D.=Doctor of Philosophy. PNA=Profession not available. POL=Politician. RANG= Rangpur (district of East Bengal). RDM=Retired Deputy Magistrate & Collector. RNA =Record not available. RPI=Retired Police Inspector. SEB=Secretary. Education Board. TEACH=Teaching. TTC=Teachers Training College. US=Undergraduate Student. ZAMNDR=Zamindar.

1926-27

1. Abdul Hakim (M.A., teach., IIC)
2. A. M. Taheruddin (US., MH)
3. A.Z. Nur Ahmad (US., MH)
4. A.K. Ahmad (M.A., teach., IIC)
5. Abdul Aziz (B.A., CI)
6. Abdul Aziz Talukdar (M.A., PNA)
7. Abdul Hakim Bikrampur (IS., MUNSHI)
8. Abdul Huq (US., MH.)
9. Abdul Kadir (US., MH)
10. Abdul Wadud (US., MH)
11. Abdur Rab Choudhury (M.A. teach., IIC)
12. Abdus Salam Khan (GS, MH)
13. Abdus Sobhan (M.A., PNA)
14. Abu Yusuf Serajuddin (US., MH.)
15. Abul Fazal (US, MH)

⁶ Sources: MSSP (unpublished). *Shikha*, Vol. I-V (1927-1931). Abul Fazal, *Rekha Chitra* (Chittagong: Boi Ghor, 1965).

16. Abul Hussain (M.A., teach., DU)
17. Abul Kasem (M.A.,teach.. IIC)
18. Ali Ahmad (US., MH)
19. Ali Akbar Khan (RNA)
20. Ali Anwar (US. MH.)
21. Ali Nur (M.A., PNA)
22. Aminur Rasul (RNA)
23. Anwar Hussain (US., M.H.)
24. Anwarul Kadir (M.A.. teach.. IC)
25. Arshaduddin Ahmad (RNA)
26. Khan Mohammad Aatur Rahman Khan (IS., IIC)
27. Bilayet Ali Khan (US., MH)
28. Caru Candra Bandyopadhyay (M.A., teach., DU.)
29. Faiz Ahmad (US., M.H.)
30. Golam Ahmad (US., MH)
31. Golam Maola (RNA)
32. Hemanta Kumar Sarkar (M.A. tech., IC)
33. Kazi Abdul Wadud (M.A., teach., IC)
34. Kazi Abdur Rashid (B.A., PNA)
35. Kazi Mahabbat Ali (RNA)
36. Kazi Mohammad Nurul Huq (RNA)
37. Abdur Rahman Khan (M.A., SEB.)
38. Kamruddin Ahmad (B.A., PNA)
39. Tasadduk Ahmad (M.Ed, teach., CS)
40. Khondakar Faizuddin (US., MH)
41. Khorseduddin Ahmad (B.A., PNA)
42. Majumdar Mohammad Idris (RNA)
43. Mamtazuddin Ahmad (M.A., teach., DU.)
44. Mohammad Abdul Khalek (B.A., HM)
45. Mohammad Abdur Rashid (B.A.. teach..CS.)
46. Mohammad Eusuf (US., M.H.)
47. Mohammad Habibullah Mokhtar (IS., MUNSHI)
48. Mohammad Mohasin Ali (RNA)
49. Mohammad Moklesur Rahman (M.A., teach., TTC)
50. Mohammad Shahidulah (M.A., teach., DU);
51. Miss. Fajilatun Nesa (GS., MF., D. U.)
52. Miss. Prabhabati De (HF., RNA)
53. Moslemuddin Khan (US, M.H.)
54. Muhammad Ismail (B.A., PNA)
55. Nalini Kanta Bhattashali (M.A., teach.)
56. Naziruddin Ahmad (US., MH)
57. Parimal Kumar Ghosh (M.A., teach.)
58. Dr. R.C. Majumdar (Ph.D. teach., DU)
59. Rakibuddin Ahmad (M.A., PNA)
60. Rejay Karim (US., MH)

61. Safiqur Rahman (RNA)
62. Shamsul Huda (IS., IIC)
63. Dr. Susil Kumar De (D.Lit. teach., DU)
64. Syed Emdad Ali (B.A., RPI)
65. Syed Hasan Ali Choudhury (B.A., ZAMNDR..MYM)

1928-29

1. Abdul Hakim (M.A., teach. TTC)
2. A. M.Taheruddin (PNA)
3. A.Z. Nur Ahmad (US., MH)
4. A.F. Mohammad (US., MH)
5. A.K. Ahmad (M.A., teach., IIC)
6. Khondakar Abkari Sabyan (RNA)
7. A.S.M. Tyfur (US., MH)
8. Abdul Aziz Talukdar (M.A., PNA)
9. Abdul Gani (B.A., PNA)
10. Abdul Hakim Bikrampur (US., MH)
11. Abdul Kadir (US., MH)
12. Akbaruddin (M.A., teach. school, KRSNGR)
13. Mohammad Abdul Khalek (M.A. HM.)
14. Abdul Latif (M.A., PNA)
15. Abdul Muid Choudhury (B.A., PNA)
16. Abdur Rab Choudhury (M.A., teach.. IIC)
17. Abdus Salam Khan (M.A., PNA)
18. Abul Fazal (US., MH)
19. Abul Fazal Muhammad (B.A. PB)
20. Abul Hussain, (M.A., teach., DU.)
21. Ali Ahmad (US., MH)
22. Ali Nur (M.A., PNA)
23. Altafur Rahman (M.A., PNA)
24. Anwar Hussain. (US., MH)
25. Anwarul Kadir (M.A., teach., DI)
26. Arifuddin Ahmad (B.A., PNA)
27. Khan Mohammad Aatur Rahman Khan (US., MH)
28. Bilayet Ali Khan (US., MH)
29. Bipin Chandra Pal (B.A., POL., CAL)
30. Daliluddin Ahmad (B.A., RDM)
31. Dr. Susil Kumar De (D. Lit., teach., DU)
32. Dr.Gyan Chandra Ghosh (D.Sc.teach. DU.)
33. Dr. R.C. Majumdar (Ph.D. teach., DU)
34. F. Ahmad, (M.A., PNA)
35. Fakaruddin (US., MH)
36. Fida Ali Khan, (M.A, teach, DU)
37. Golam Ahmad (US., MH)
38. Golam Rahman (M.A., PNA)

39. Jalauddin Ahmad (M.A., PNA)
40. Kalika Ranjan Kanungo (M.A., teach., IC)
41. Kazi Abdul Wadud (M.A., teach., IC)
42. Kazi Akram Hussain (M.A. teach,)
43. Kazi Mutahar Hussain (M.A. teach., DU.)
44. Kali Prasanna Sen (B.A., ZAMNDR)
45. Abdur Rahman Khan (M.A.. SEB)
46. Mohammad Musa (B.A., PNA)
47. Naziruddin Ahmad (B.A.. PNA)
48. Khan Mohammad Abul Hasnat (B.A.. PNA)
49. Kamaruddin Ahmad (B.A., PNA)
50. M. I. Borah. (M.A., teach.. DU)
51. Mahatab Uddin Ahmad (B.A., PNA)
52. Mahmood Hasan, (M.A., teach., DU)
53. Mamtazuddin Ahmad (M.A. teach, DU)
54. Mohammad Abdullah (US., MH)
55. Mohammad Abdur Rashid (B.A., teach., CS)
56. Mohammad Abdus Salam (GS., MH)
57. Mohammad Abdus Sobahan (M.A., teach.)
58. Mohammad Bilayet Ali Khan (GS.. MH)
59. Mohammad Foshe (B.A.. PNA)
60. Mohammad Kasem (M.A., teach. Edit.)
61. Mohammad Nazirul Islam (GS., MH)
62. Mohammad Serajul Huq (B.A., PNA)
63. Mokhtar Ahmad Siddique (B.A.. MI)
64. Mohammad Yahiya (M.A.. PNA)
65. Mohammad Shahidullah. (D.Lit., teach.. DU)
66. Mirza Abu Jafar (M.A., PNA)
67. Miss Pronir Nath (HF., RNA)
68. Miss Pratibha Ghosh (HF., RNA)
69. Miss Shila Nandi (HF., RNA)
70. Miss. Fazilitun Nesa (M.A., PNA)
71. Miss.Khurshid Jha Begum, (MF., RNA)
72. Mrs. Fatema Khatun, (MF., RNA)
73. Mohitlal Majumdar (M.A., teach, DU)
74. Moklesur Rahman (B.A., teach., TTC)
75. Moslemuddin Khan (GS., MH)
76. Muizuddin Khan (MBBS, MD)
77. Abul Muzaffar Ahmad, (B.C.L. DSJ., RANG)
78. Nalini Kanta Bhattashali (M.A. teach.)
79. Naziruddin Ahmad (GS. MH)
80. Nazmul Hasan (M.A., PNA)
81. Nazmul Hussain (M.A., teach., IIC)
82. Parimal Kumar Ghosh (M.A., teach.IC)
83. Rakibuddin Ahmad (M.A., teach.)

84. S. N. Maitra (M.A., PC., IC)
85. Abdur Rouf (GS., MH)
86. S.N. Basu (M.Sc., teach., DU)
87. Saleh Ahmad (B.A., PNA)
88. Shamsul Huda (US., MH)
89. Satish Chandra Nath (M.A., teach., DU.)
90. Sirajul Islam (US., MH)
91. Sufi Motahar Hussain (US., MH)
92. Sultanuddin Ahmad (M.A., Lawyer).
93. Syed Abdul Wahed (B.A., PNA)
94. Syed Nurul Huq (B.A., teach., JIC)
95. W.H. A. Sadani (M.A., PNA)
96. W. H. Wazir Ali (B.A., DMC)

1930-1931

1. A. B. Aminuddin
2. A. K. Ahmad.
3. A.T. M. Ayub
4. A.Z. Nur Ahmad
5. Abu Taher
6. Abdul Hakim
7. Abdul Kader Khan
8. Abdul Wahab
9. Abdur Rab Choudhury
10. Abdus Sadek
11. Abdus Salam Khan
12. Abdus Samad Khan.
13. Abul Fazal
14. Abul Hussain.
15. Abul Kalam Shamsuddin
16. Abul Mansur Ahmad
17. Ahmad Sobahan
18. Ajit Kumar Dutta
19. Ali Nur
20. Anwar Hussain
21. Bazlur Rahman
22. Bilayet Ali Khan
23. Caru Candra Bandopadhyay.
24. Hekim Habibur Rahman
25. Jamaluddin
26. Kamaluddin Ahmad
27. Kazi Abdul Wadud
28. Kazi Anwarul Huq
29. Kazi Mutahar Hussain
30. Nasiruddin.

31. Abdur Rahman Khan
32. Mahafuzur Rahman Bhuyian,
33. Mohammad Abdul Wadud
34. Mohammad Abdur Rashid
35. Mohammad Eusuf
36. Nuruzzaman Khan
37. Mohammad Shahidullah
38. Mohammad Syed
39. Miss. Karuna Gupta
40. Mohitlal Majumdar
41. Moslemuddin Khan
42. Motahar Hussain Choudhury
43. Mrs. Fatema Khatun
44. Sujata Roy
45. Mokhtar Ahmad Siddique
46. Naziruddin Ahmad
47. Parimal Kumar Ghosh
48. Reazul Karim
49. S. N. Maitra
50. Shamsuddin Ahmad
51. Shamsul Huda
52. Susubhan Sarkar
53. Syed Moazzim Hussain
54. Umesh Chandra Bhattashali.

1932-1933

1. A.B. Aminuddin.
2. A.N. Bazlur Rashid
3. A.Z. Nur Ahmad
4. Abdul Kadir
5. Mohammad Abdur Rashid
6. Abul Hussain.
7. Abul Masud Mohammad Khan
8. Aftabuddin Ahmad.
9. Araraf Hussain
10. Asutosh Bhattacharya
11. Ajharul Islam
12. Fida Ali Khan
13. Jainal Abedin
14. Kamaluddin Ahmad
15. Kazi Abdul Wadud
16. Kazi Mohammad Hussain
17. Kazi Mutahar Hussain
18. Kamruddin Ahmad

19. Khondakar Mohammad Abdus Salam
20. Tofajjal Hussain.
21. Mahfujur Rahman Bhuyia.
22. Mohammad Abdul Wadud
23. Mohammad Abdul Wahab
24. Mohammad Abdur Rashid
25. Mohanmmad Ansaruddin
26. Mohammad Ajraf Choudhury
27. Mohammad Barkatullah
28. Mohammad Eusuf
29. Mohammad Mansuruddin
30. Mohammad Serajul Huq
31. Mohammad Shahidullah
32. Mohammad Wajed Ali
33. Lutf-i-Ahmad Siddique
34. Mokhtar Ahmad Siddique.
35. Moslemuddin Khan
36. Mohammad Abdus Salam
37. Motahar Hussain Choudhury
38. Mohitlal Majumder.
39. S.N. Maitra
40. Shamsul Huda
41. Satish Ranjan Khastagir
42. Sirajul Islam
43. Syed Nurul Huq
44. S.N. Q. Zulfikar Ali
45. Wasiul Huq

1934-1935

1. A.N. Bazlur Rashid
2. A.Y.M. Obiadul Huq
3. A.K.M. Abdul Awal
4. Abdul Wahab
5. Abdus Sobahan
6. Afsaruddin
7. Alimdad Khan
8. Amejuddin Howlader
9. Aminuddin Ahmad
10. Aminul Islam
11. Bazlur Rahman
12. Shamsun Nahar

13. Kedarnath Badyopadhyay
14. A. F. Rahman
15. Dr. Susil Kumar De
16. Fida Ali Khan
17. Hafizullah Khan
18. Kalika Ranjan Kanungo
19. Kamaluddin Ahmad
20. Kazi Abdul Wadud
21. Kazi Mutahar Hussain
22. Mohammad Wajed Ali
23. Mohammad Mansuruddin
24. Mohammad Abdur Rashid
25. Mohammad Barkatullah
26. Mohammad Eusuf
27. Mohitlal Majumdar
28. Mokhtar Ahmad Siddique
29. Moslemuddin Khan
30. Nuruzzaman Khan
31. Osman Gani
32. Parimal Roy
33. Shamsul Huda
34. Syed Zahurul Huq
35. Tofail Hussain
36. Tofajjal Hussain

1935-36

1. Dr.A.F. Rahman.
2. Ajharul Islam
3. Kamaluddin Ahmad
4. Kazi Abdul Wadud
5. Kazi Mutahar Hussain,
6. Wajed Ali
7. Mohammad Abdul Bari
8. Mohammad Abdur Rashid
9. Mohammad Masud
10. Moazzem Hussain
11. Mujibur Rahman
12. Musharaff Hussain
13. Parimal Roy
14. Shamsul Huda
15. Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyaya
16. Tofail Hussain

1938

1. Abul Muzaffar Ahmad.
2. Abdul Kadir
3. Abdul Khaleq
4. Asutosh Chattopadhyaya
5. Ajharul Islam
6. Kazi Abdul Wadud
7. Kazi Mutahar Hussain
8. Mahbub-ul-Alam
9. Majumdar Mohammad Idris
10. Mozammel Huq
11. Mujibur Rahman

Appendix G

Discussants of Essays Read in MSS. 1926-1938⁷

The figures on the right hand side indicate number of essays each one commented on.

1. A. Z. Nur Ahmad: 5
2. A.K. Ahmad: 2
3. Abdul Aziz: 1
4. Abdul Huq: 1
5. Abdul Kadir: 2
6. Abdur Rab Choudhury: 1
7. Abdus Salam Khan: 1
8. Abdus Sobahan: 1
9. Abu Yosuf Serajuddin: 1
10. Abul Fazal: 1
11. Abul Hussain: 3
12. Aftabuddin Ahmad: 1
13. Ali Ahmad: 1
14. Ali Anwar: 1
15. Ali Nur: 3
16. Aminuddin Ahmad: 2
17. Aminur Rasul: 1
18. Anwar Hussain: 1
19. Arshaduddin Ahmad: 1
20. Bazlur Rahman: 1
21. Bilyet Ali Khan: 2
22. Bipin Chandra Pal: 1
23. Caru Candra Chattopadhyaya: 15
24. Faiz Ahmad: 1
25. Fida Ali Khan: 3
26. Golam Maola: 1
27. Jainal Abedin: 1
28. Kalika Ranjan Kanungo: 3
29. Kamaluddin Ahmad: 3
30. Kazi Abdul Wadud: 26
31. Kazi Mahabbat Ali: 1
32. Kazi Mohammad Nurul Huq: 1
33. Kazi Mutahar Hussain: 8
34. Abdur Rahman Khan: 1
35. Khorseduddin Ahmad: 1
36. Mamtazuddin Ahmad: 12

⁷ Sources: MSSP (unpublished), and *Shikha*, Vol. I-V (1927-1931).

37. Mohammad Abdul Kader: 1
38. Mohammad Abdullah: 1
39. Mohammad Abdur Rashid: 7
40. Mohammad Barkatullah: 1
41. Mohammad Mohasin Ali: 1
42. Nuruzzaman Khan: 1
43. Mohammad Serajul Huq: 1
44. Mohammad Shahidullah: 2
45. Mohammad Wajed Ali: 1
46. MohammadAbdul Wadud: 2
47. Miss. Fajilatun Nesa:1
48. Miss. Prabhabati De:1
49. Mohitlal Majumdar: 2
50. Moslemuddin Khan: 5
51. Fakaruddin: 1
52. Muhammad Ismail:1
53. Nalini Kanta Bhattashali: 3
54. Naziruddin Ahmad: 4
55. Parimal Roy: 1
56. Dr. R.C. Majumdar:12
57. Rejay Karim: 1
58. S. N. Maitra: 2
59. Safiqur Rahman: 1
60. Shamsul Huda: 1
61. Sirajul Islam: 1
62. Dr. Susil Kumar De: 11
63. Syed Emdad Ali: 1

Appendix H

An enlarged version of the masthead of the *Shikha*. Vol.I-III (1927-1929)



“জ্ঞান যেখানে গীর্নাবক, বুদ্ধি সেখানে আড়ম্ব, মুক্তি সেখানে অসম্ভব”—

Appendix I

Khan Mohammad Aatur Rahman Khan, "Shastre o Jibane," published in Jagaran, Vol. I, No. 7 (1928), pp.271-272.

শাস্ত্র ও জীবনে

—খান মুহাম্মদ আতাউর রহমান

বিহাট জনতা—

নৌলতী সা'ব ওয়া'ল ওক করেছেন—গারে তাঁর বেহওয়ানী — নাপার আনানা — হাতে মা'লা ও করণে লেতাৰ।



বিশ্বভাষে 'আদিন' 'পারিন' উচ্চাৎপেত
সাথে আন্তে বয়েত আ'ড়িয়ে বে-হিসাব উর্দি
লক্ষ্য ইতিহাস করে. ইসলামে 'পরমত
সহিষ্ণুতা'র বিষয় আর তাঁর 'নেকী' বহান
করেন।

আল্লাহ তারানা এ বিষয়ে কি করতঃছেন,
কোরানের আয়েতের তর্জমা করে শুনায়েন।
কাকতপেত জুলুমে হকততের সহিষ্ণুতা—
মালান পরীক পরীতের পর কথা।

হকতত আলীর গারে খুব কোরার কথা
নতীর বেখায়েন।

পরবর্তী আস'তা'র ও সাদাবীতের জীবনে
ধৈর্য্য সহিষ্ণুতার দৃষ্টান্ত বেখায়েন ওপেত
জীবনের কোন কোন বাছ ঘটনার উল্লেখ
করে।

—হাদিস তরসীর কোন কিছু থাকে উইল না।

কথার কথার সবাই 'ইসলাম কী তর' আর 'হারদায়া' হবে নৌলতী সাবের কোন বাড়তে লাগণে
পুরাযবে।

অন্ত কর ও ধর্ম্ম শাস্ত্রের সিন্দাহার তবে তিনি তাঁর কথা সন্দর্ভ করলেন।

ইহনী ও নাপারদের কথা বললেন — তাঁদের ভৌরিত ইতিহাস এ বিষয়ে উল্লেখ থাকলেও এর নেতী



মৌলভী সাহেব হাডালেন— হাডালেনা নালাউন
 লেকে লুক লেখটা ললতে না লেবে হাডেব
 লার্টী হুঁড়ে লালেন, 'ক মবদত' লংলাভেবের
 লালেন লপর।

চোখের ইশারা, "ইরাজানী" হলের লালেন
 লখে লোকটার উপর লুতা লতয়ের লিলালুত
 ললেনো— লেবেন লুকলেভের এক লীবলপলকী!

পালো লেবের পর, মৌলভী সাহেব লুখং লেছে
 ললেন ললেলু ললেনে— বাটার লুটলার লিবল
 লুংলিত লালেনোচনা লরতে লরতে— লার
 লব লোক ললেনো লিছে লিছে— ইসলান
 লী লর' লর 'লারলার' লবে লাকলি লাতল
 লালেনো লর— "ইসলানে লরলত
 ললুকুতা'র লুতা' লললিত ল'বে—



লতে লিবে লললোত লে লেবলেন একা
 ইসলান ললল ললতে লিবে 'লিহিলা' লবে লেটা
 লর লেটা লল ললললী'র লল ললিত ললল

জাগরণ

১ম বর্ষ ৭ম সংখ্যা

নেই—আর এদের জীবনে এ ত্রিনিবটা নেই।
 পৌরাণিক নজীর দেখিয়ে মগলেন, হিন্দুদের শাস্ত্রে
 ত সঙ্কীর্ণতা বলে কোন ত্রিনিবই নেই। বাস্তব
 এর উল্লেখ নেই তাদের জীবনে তার প্রকাশ
 পায়ে না। তাদের পৌত্তলিকতা চিত্তপৌর্কগোর
 ত—তার বিবেকভাবাপন্ন নীচমনা। তাদের অল্প
 আখাত নিয়ে নিম্নের ধর্ম বজায় রাখনার চেটা
 জীবনে তারা অসংস্কৃত্যর একপেধ বেখাচ্ছে—
 পাতা ও চাকার দাসী হাঙ্গানা এর প্রমাণ।
 'মানুষের উচিত শাস্ত্রের আদেশ মানা-আর
 লুকিয়ে রাখা অসুখ্যায়ী সঙ্কীর্ণ হওয়া'—তা

আধাশের পারিপার্শ্বিক অধমতা বস্তই প্রতিফল আর
 সঙ্গীন গোক না কেন। চারনিকের জুন্স সহীতে
 হবে'—এই বলে সঙ্গে সঙ্গে বেহেশতের গোল্ড দেখিয়ে
 তিনি তার লগা বক্তৃতা থতর করলেন।
 অনেকের চক্ষু থেকে অঙ্গ বয়ে গেলে, বুকের
 উপস্থিত।

একজন তিস্থ উঠে দাঁড়ালো—তাদের শাস্ত্রে ও
 ধর্মবত প্রসঙ্গে অনেক কিছু অজ্ঞার বলা হয়েছে—
 তারই আপত্তি উঠাবার জন্ত।

বেখালো বেদ পুরাণের শত শত শ্লোক অংগড়িয়ে
 এ বিষয়ে শাস্ত্রের যত কি ও তদনান মহ কি বলেছেন।

সামান্য এলো—নগাভারত, পীতা এলো। ধর্ম
 ও শাস্ত্রের পৌনর্য আয় ও অনেক কিছু।

মুসলমানের শাস্ত্রে আবেশ থাকলেও বর্তমান
 মুসলমানের জীবনে এর খোরতর অস্তাব খটার
 তাদের জীবন নেগাত পদ, হের ও অশত
 হয়েছে। শেষটার পৌরাণিকৃতি, পৌরাণ-বেখো
 মুসলমানের তপে বগে নিশে থাকার কথাটাও
 না বলে থাকতে পারল না।



চারিত্রিক নীচত নিতক—আপন্ন মডের আশে
 প্রকৃতির নিতকতার মধ্যে মৌলভী শাস্ত্র
 গটে নাই গাল—গোপ ভাটো, যেন আশ্রনের
 দুই কুক্তি। সত্যত অন্যত বস্ত পড়লে
 লোকসিত লসন।

Appendix J

Full Bengali text of the "Note of Apology" (*Ghoshana Patra*) that Abul Hussain had to sign on August 20, 1928:

Amar byabaharita bhasar janya amar maner katha jadi sampurnarupe prakash paiya na thake, ta[r]janya ami antarik dukkhita. Se janya ami khodar nikat maph cai, ebam samajer nikato asha kari amar aparadh marjita haibe; Hazrat Mohammad (dh) o Islamer raonak nijer jibane o adhunik Muslim samaje phutaiya tolai, amar ekmatra uddeshya. Ajkar din, ami ei majlise, khodar nikat prathana kari, he khoda! Tumi Amake sei raonak phutaiya tulibar janya shaktidan karo ebam prakrita satyapathe (Siratul mustakime) calita karo.⁸

Full Bengali text of the "Note of Apology" (*Ghoshana Patra*) that Kazi Abdul Wadud had to sign on August 20, 1928:

Amar jnan bisvas anusare Islam o Hazrat Mohammad (dh) sambhandhe eman kona katha ami byabahar kari nai jate asambhab ba ashreddha prakash pete pare. Baram ami bisvas kari je, Quran o Hazrat Mohammad (dh) theke ami amar ei samanya jibane prerana labh karechi o kari, abasya Quran o Hazrater jiban ati bara byapar, hayto bhabishayat jibane ei duiyer mahatma aro upalabdhi karte parba eman asa rakhi, kintu e-samparke ashradha amar dharanar atit, manushe manusher bibhed achei kajei amar anyanya mussalman bhayer sange kona kona byapare amar matabhed khub sabhabik byapar! Kintu Hazrat Mohammader (dh) jiban theke jibaner patheya samgraha karar byapare ami amar anyanya mussalman bhaidar caite kam manajogi, e amar dharana nay. Mussalman Samajer unnati ami kamana kari ar se sambhandhe jatotuku amar dharana ase, bhashay ta prakash karte cesta kari. Duhkher bishay amar bhasha bartamane anekeri kache adbhut thekche, ebam aneker nikat eman artha jaypan karche ja likhbar samay amar svapner agocar chila. Erjonaya bishesh byasta haoyar karan chila na. Kintu ghatanakrame amar lekha mussalman samaje ek bisham asantos o manohksobher sristi kareche. Er janya ki katha bale je ami

⁸ Source: Mohammad Akram Khan, "Dhakar Dukhana Ghosana Patra" published in *Saptahik Mohammedi*, August 31, 1928, p.7.

nijer dukkha. lajja o byatha prakash karba ta bhebe pai na, khodar dargay prathana kari. jadi ajjatasareo amader dharma sambhandhe eman kona katha amar kalam theke bar haye thake ja satya o mussalman samajer kalyaner paripanthi tabe khodaond karim amar gonah maph kare amake "Siratul Mustakime" pauche din. Islam o mussalman samajer kichumatra ksati amar dara na hok ei tar dargay barbar monajat kari.⁹

⁹ Source: Mohammad Akram Khan, "Dhakar Dukhana Ghosana Patra" published in *Saptahik Mohammedi*, August 31, 1928, p.7.

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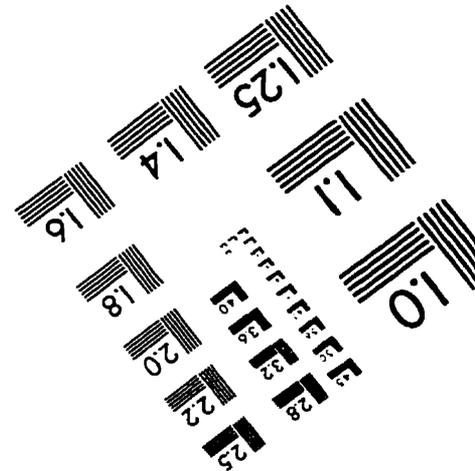
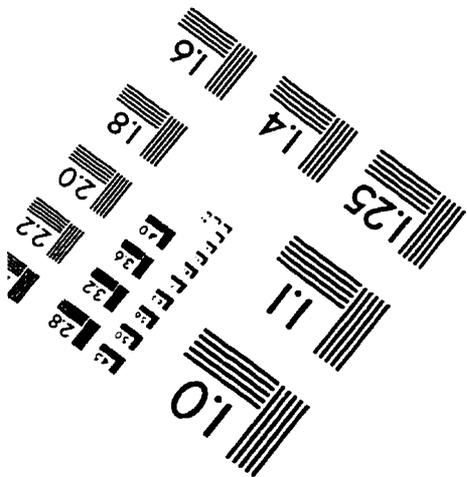
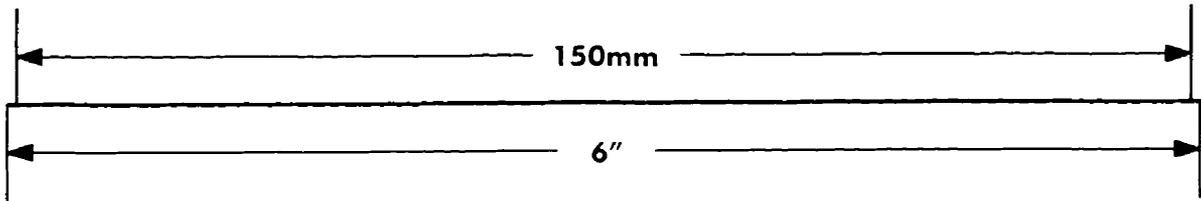
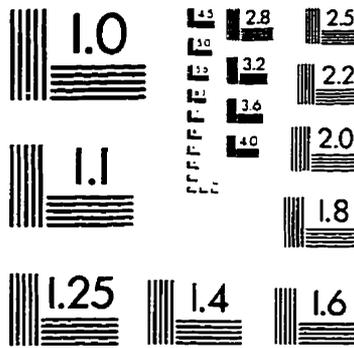
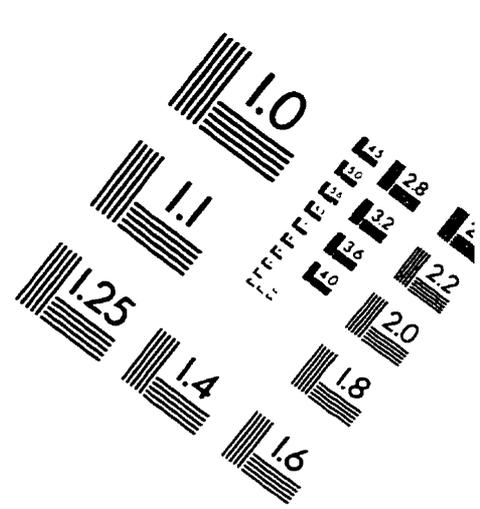
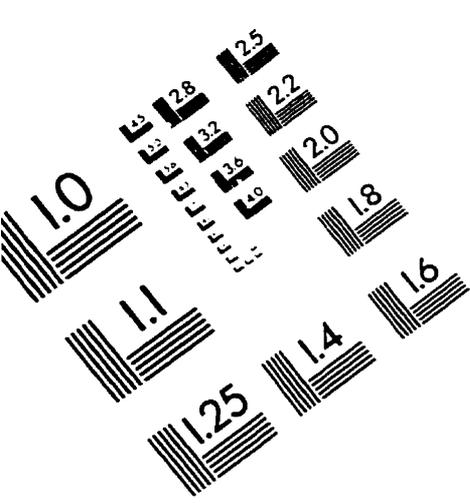
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