

## INTRODUCTION

The present work entitled *Contribution of Maulana Abdul Hoque in the field of Tafsir Literature with special reference to Tafsirul Qur'an* has been undertaken to carry out a comprehensive study on the contribution of Maulana Abdul Hoque in the field of literature especially in Tafsir al-Qur'an. Here mention may be made that this study will bring the Arabic and Assamese language in close contact with their wide thoughts and glorious cultures. Starting a new era, co-operation, tolerance and prosperity can be made more effective.

The word tafsir is derived from the Arabic ف-س-ر (f-s-r) which means to explain, to expound, to disclose, to lift the curtain, to make clear, to show the objective, and hence by analogy tafsir is the body of knowledge, which aims to make clear the true meaning of the Qur'an, its injunctions and the occasions of its revelation.

The Qur'an consists of 114 chapters of varying lengths, each known as a *sura*. Suras are classified as Meccan (مكي) or Medinan (مدني), depending on whether the verses were revealed

before or after the migration of Muhammad to the city of Medina. However, a sura classified as Medinan may contain Meccan verses in it and vice versa. Sura titles are derived from a name or quality discussed in the text, or from the first letters or words of the surah. Suras are arranged roughly in order of decreasing size. The sura arrangement is thus not connected to the sequence of revelation. Each sura except the ninth starts with the *Bismillah* (بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم) an Arabic phrase meaning 'In the name of Allah.' There are, however, still 114 occurrences of the *Bismillah* in the Qur'an, due to its presence in Qur'an as the opening of Solomon's letter to the Queen of Sheba.

Each sura consists of several verses, known as *ayat*, which originally means a 'sign' or 'evidence' sent by Allah. The number of verses differs from surah to surah. An individual verse may be just a few letters or several lines. The total number of verses in the Qur'an is 6236; however, the number varies if the *bismillahs* are counted separately.

In addition to an independent of the division into surahs, there are various ways of dividing the Qur'an into parts of approximately equal length for convenience in reading. The 30

*juz'* (plural *ajzā'*) can be used to read through the entire Qur'an in a month. Some of these parts are known by names—which are the first few words by which the *juz'* starts. A *juz'* is sometimes further divided into two *hizb* (plural *ahzāb*), and each *hizb* subdivided into four *rub' al-ahzab*. The Qur'an is also divided into seven approximately equal parts, *manzil* (plural *manāzil*), for it to be recited in a week.

*Muqatta'at*, or the Qur'anic initials are 14 different letter combinations of 14 Arabic letters that appear in the beginning of 29 surahs of the Qur'an. The meanings of these initials remain unclear.

According to one estimate the Qur'an consists of 77,430 words, 18,994 unique words, 12,183 stems, 3,382 lemmas and 1,685 roots.

The Qur'an has sparked a huge body of commentary and explication (*tafsīr*), aimed at explaining the "meanings of the Qur'anic verses, clarifying their import and finding out their significance."

The Hadith comprehended the Tafsir. It is a component part of the former. The Holy Qur'an contained a fairly large number of words and expressions which many Arabs were unable to understand. It had others of a technical nature, such as the salat (صلوة), the zakat (زكاة), the Hajj (حج) and the jizya (جزيه). This called for explanation. Further there were confusing or apparently contradictory verses in the Qur'an which required interpretation.

To explain the Holy Qur'an is not an easy task like the narration of the Hadith relating to the History or commands of the Prophet. It required literacy and some measure of acquaintance with the Arabic language and above all a study of the Qur'an under the tutelage of the Prophet. The number of companions with these qualifications was limited and explanation activity at the capital cities was therefore, restricted, being carried on mainly by those companions who were literate and whose connection with the Prophet had been long and intimate.

It is one of the main streams of literature and a kind of narrative prose fiction. It is basically a literary prose genre developed first in the Western Countries in the first part of eighteenth century. Tafsir is considered as an important genre of the prose literature in the modern period. Though initially it was

not regarded as a remarkable art, but with the course of time it took the turn of its being a highly acceptable art. It is imperative to know that the art of Tafsir writing was introduced in Arabic, Urdu, and English as well as in Bengali in 19<sup>th</sup> century and developed rapidly in 20<sup>th</sup> century. Undoubtedly, Tafsir reflects the human life and the Mufasssir finds freedom to express the subject matter in the contents of various kinds of Tafsir. As such, Tafsir has been a highly respectable art of literature and accepted by the readers to the great extent. In fact, the Tafsir readers find a lot of enjoyments in the broad areas of different characters designed by the Mufasssirs. It needs mention that Maulana Abdul Hoque Sahab is famous in the field of multifarious literary works as well as his scholarship was highly praiseworthy in the realm of composition.

It reveals that such studies are essential and need of the present time. Partially so many works has been done on the Tafsir in Arabic, Urdu, English and Bengali, but no attempt has been made yet to translate and Exegesis the Holy Qur'an in the North-Eastern Languages like Assamese for his specific Tafsir as the study undertaken here. As such, it is attempted to find out the objectives of this study with a view to highlight the literary activities and services of the personality. This study also attempts

to show the socio-religious, socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions of the people of Assam in north-east India with illustrations.

To accomplish the work five chapters have been undertaken in this dissertation and they are brought to discussion accordingly.

The first chapter highlights the Life and works of Maulana Abdul Hoque.

The second chapter deals with the Tafsir al- Qur'an of Maulana Abdul Hoque: A Background

The third chapter deals with the characteristic of Tafsir al- Qur'an of Maulana Abdul Hoque.

The fourth chapter is dealt with the Impact of Tafsir al- Qur'an of Maulana Abdul Hoque on the Muslim society of north-east India.

The fifth chapter deals with the writing style of Tafsir al- Qur'an.