

## Islamic Thought in Al Mahmud's Poetry

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### Abstract

*This paper explores the manifestation of Islamic thought in the poetry of Al Mahmud, one of the most significant voices in modern Bangla literature. His poems reflect a deep attachment to Islamic ideology, encompassing the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, the life and ideals of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and a profound sense of spirituality and faith. Al Mahmud does not confine himself to personal religiosity; rather, he presents Islam as a guiding force of justice, morality, social transformation, and collective liberation. The study reveals that his poetry integrates Islamic philosophy with national history, cultural heritage, and the struggles of the Muslim community. Through powerful imagery and symbolism, he celebrates Islamic civilization while simultaneously raising a voice against injustice, oppression, and moral decay. Thus, Islamic thought in his poetry emerges not only as a personal belief but also as a collective aspiration for truth, equality, and human dignity. Al Mahmud's poetry establishes a new dimension in Bangla literature by blending Islamic ideals with modern poetic expression, offering a unique synthesis of spirituality, history, and ethical consciousness.*

**Keywords:** Al Mahmud, Islamic Civilization, Islamic Thought, Poetry, Cultural Heritage, Bangla Literature.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Al Mahmud is a brilliant name in the modern context of Bengali poetry. His poetry is appreciated not only for its aesthetics or linguistic style, but also for its deep thought, sense of history and religious consciousness. Islamic ideology has served as a powerful inspiration in Al Mahmud's creativity. He not only reflected on spirituality and faith, but also made aspects

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of Islam's justice, equality, humanity, and social justice the subject of his poetry. His poetry reflects the teachings of the Quran and Hadith, the life of the Prophet (PBUH), and the glorious story of Islamic civilization. At the same time, his voice against injustice, exploitation, and moral degradation resonates with the eternal call of Islam. As a result, Al Mahmud's poetry is not just an expression of personal beliefs; it is also a reflection of a nation's history, culture, and desire for freedom. This article will analyze various aspects of Islamic thought in Al Mahmud's poetry and see how he integrated religious values, historical consciousness, and moral guidance into modern Bengali poetry. He presented Islam not just as a religious sentiment, but as a force for justice, truth, equality, and social change. As a result, Al Mahmud's poetry has given Bengali literature a unique blend of Islamic values and modern poetic thought.

### *1.1 Birth and childhood*

Poet Al Mahmud is one of the leading figures in the world of Islamic poetry in Bangladesh. His real name is Mir Abdus Shukur Al Mahmud,<sup>2</sup> born on July 11, 1936 AD. He was born in Mollabari, Morail village, Brahmanbaria district. He is better known as Al Mahmud. His father's name is Mir Abdur Rab, and his mother's name is Rawshan Ara Mir; his maternal grandfather's name is Abdur Razzak Mir. He was a famous businessman.<sup>3</sup> His grandfather's name is Abdul Wahab Mollah, a landowner in the Habiganj district. Al Mahmud married Syeda Nadira Begum in his personal life. Poet Al Mahmud has five sons are Mir Sharif Mahmud, Mir Anis, Mir Arif, Mir Tariq, Mir Monir and three daughters are Tania, Jinia and Atia.<sup>4</sup> He died on February 15, 2019, at the age of 82 at Ibn Sina Hospital in Dhanmondi, Dhaka, due to various physical complications caused by old age, including pneumonia.

### *1.2 Education*

He began his education in 1942 with his maternal grandmother, Begum Hasina Banu Mir (Bornapath), under the guidance of Bismillah Khani. At that time, he received religious education from the Imam of the village mosque<sup>5</sup>. Later, he was admitted to the M.E. School in Brahmanbaria from 1943 to 1947 and studied there from the 2nd to the 6th grade. In 1948, he was admitted to George Hexth High School (On March 3, 1910, George Minor School (George M. E. School) was established on an empty place on the east side of Brahmanbaria Sadar Police Station. It is worth mentioning here that during the British rule, high schools could not be established directly. First, it was a minor school and then it was

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<sup>2</sup> . "Almujahidi (ed.), New Single, Al Mahmud (supplement); Dhaka July - August 2019

<sup>3</sup>. Al Mahmud, Autobiographical Rachan Samagro (Dhaka, Srijani, February 2017 AD), page no.08

<sup>4</sup>. (Note: Zakir Abu Zafar, Al Mahmud as I saw him, Dhaka, Saral Rekha Publishing House, 2020.)

<sup>5</sup>. Al Mahmud, how I grew up, (Dhaka, Ananya Publishing House, 2022 AD, Third Edition), Page No. 12

upgraded to a high school. After the British government made English the state language in India instead of Persian, Indian Muslims boycotted English. As a result, Indian Muslims soon fell into ruin due to lack of education. The Muslims of Brahmanbaria also fell into ruin due to lack of education. Following the path of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, some Muslim intellectuals and social workers of Brahmanbaria city came forward to establish an English school in the city. As the number of students in the school increased considerably within a short time, the school was shifted to the Morail area (to its present location). It was upgraded to George High English School in 1914 and received permanent recognition from the University of Calcutta in 1919, for 7th grade. Then he studied at Sitakunda High School and Brahmanbaria High School. In the early hours of 1860, the then Police Sub-Inspector, late Babu Kashinath Roy, a resident of Shyamgram, took the initiative to educate some boys and girls of the area in a broken thatched hut on the east side of Brahmanbaria police station. This is the historical school of this area. A close relative of Babu Kashinath Roy, late Babu Ambika Charan Bhattacharya, became the headmaster of this school. The institution was named "Brahmanbaria High School". Due to the increase in students over time, due to lack of space, the institution was shifted to the east side of the local Muslim boarding school (Munsefpara). The entire cost of which was borne by the late Babu Gurudas Chowdhury of Adair village in Sarail upazila. Later, the institution was upgraded to a full-fledged secondary high school in 1959 through the efforts of the head of the institution, the late Babu Pulin Bihari Burman) While studying in the tenth grade, he got involved in the language movement in 1952. At that time, a pamphlet was published by the Brahmanbaria Language Movement Committee. When a four-line poem by Tarun Al Mahmud was printed, the poet went into hiding under the wrath of the police. In this situation, he even went to West Bengal for a while to take refuge. After a two-year absence, the poet returned to Dhaka city in 1954 and made it his permanent residence. Before coming to Dhaka, he became interested in writing poetry during his school life. To learn the art and technique of writing poetry, he traveled a long way to the presence of another famous poet from Brahmanbaria, Mohammad Mahfuz Ullah. Mohammad Mahfuz Ullah (1936 - 2013) is a Bangladeshi writer, poet, and journalist, who was an activist of the Bengali language movement. In 2007, he was awarded the Ekushey Padak, the second-highest civilian honor of the state, for his special contribution to language and literature.) He received training from him on the rhythm of Bengali poetry. He studied at Sadhana High School, located near Daudkandi Police Station in Comilla District, and later attended Chittagong. He studied at Sitakunda Government Adarsh High School in Dhaka. His writing career began at this time. Al Mahmud grew up in Brahmanbaria. After arriving in Dhaka, he began studying medieval romances, the Vaishnava Padabali, Rabindranath Tagore, and Nazrul, and started writing poetry. He gained recognition and readership in the sixties.

### *1.3 Career/Working Life*

From childhood, the poet Al Mahmud had a literary career. Writing was the primary focus of his career. His creative writing, love, nature, and expression of life flowed in the same stream as his career. After coming to Dhaka, Al Mahmud began his career as a proofreader at the newspaper 'Dainik Millat' in 1954. After leaving Millat in 1955, he joined 'Kafela' as an associate editor. From 1957 to 1962, he worked as a gauge reader in the dredger division and as a salesman for Lifebuoy soap. In 1963, he joined the 'Dainik Ittefaq' as a proofreader. Later, he served as the district editor there. When 'Ittefaq' was temporarily closed in 1968, he joined the 'Boi Ghar' in Chittagong as the publishing officer. It was during this time, that is, between September and December 1968, that his famous sonnets of 'Sonali Kabine' were written. When Dainik Ittefaq was re-launched on March 3, 1969, he joined it as an associate editor. On the night of March 25, 1971, the Pakistani army demolished the Ittefaq office, and he participated in the Great Liberation War. During the Liberation War, he went to India and served as a staff officer<sup>6</sup> of the Defense Department at 8 Theatre Road of the then Mujibnagar government until December 16. After the country gained independence in 1972, a group that believed in scientific socialism published 'Dainik Ganakanth' from the Ranking Street office in Dhaka, and Al Mahmud was appointed its editor. Ganakanth fell under the wrath of the government as an anti-government radical newspaper, and Al Mahmud was imprisoned in March 1974. Three days later, Ganakanth was also closed. After serving approximately one year in prison, he was released in 1975. After his release from prison, the then Prime Minister, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, took the initiative and appointed him as the Assistant Director of the Shilpkala Academy in 1975. After serving for 18 years, he retired as the director of the Research and Publication Department of the Shilpkala Academy on July 10, 1993. After that, he worked as the assistant editor of 'Dainik Sangram' for several years, from 1993. In 1978, the poet Al Mahmud represented Bangladesh at the Third World Book Fair. In the eighties, he represented Bangladesh at the Asian Poetry Conference in Bhopal, India. He participated as Bangladesh's representative at the International Book Fairs in Delhi and Kolkata, India, on several occasions. Later, he worked as a writer and columnist for various newspapers. He is regarded as one of the most influential poets in contemporary Bengali literature. However, although he is best known as a poet, he has also made significant contributions to short stories, novels, and essays. Al Mahmud has established himself as an indispensable figure in modern Bengali literature.

### *1.4 Literary Life*

The poet Al Mahmud, who created a stir in the fifties. He has been writing nonstop for almost 6 decades. His free and fluent movement in books, magazines, meetings, seminars, events,

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<sup>6</sup>. Al Mahmud, How I grew up, (Dhaka, Ananya Prakashni, 2022 AD), page-52

radio, and television - everywhere still inspires us. Poet-storyteller and outspoken commentator in Bengali, Al Mahmud, became involved in journalism immediately after the 1971 war. At that time, he was editing the newspaper "Dainik Ganakantha". Apart from writing poetry, Al Mahmud regularly writes novels, stories, essays, columns, and children's books. One of his stories was published in the Kolkata-based magazine "Satyayug" in 1954. The renowned editor then encouraged him to write prose. A poem by Mahmud was also published in Satyayug at that time. Later in 1955, Buddhadeb Bose Buddhadeb Bose is a writer, critic, editor. He was born on 30 November 1908 in Comilla. His family's original residence was in Malkhanagar, Bikrampur. Shortly after his birth, his mother died in Dhanushankare and his father, Bhudev Chandra Bose, a lawyer of the Dhaka Bar, went missing after taking a leave of absence. In this situation, Buddhadeb was raised and brought up in his maternal home. He spent his childhood, adolescence and early youth in Comilla, Noakhali and Dhaka. Publishing and editing the magazines Pragati (1927-1929) from Dhaka and Kavita (1935-1960) from Kolkata are notable works of his life. (1908-1974) published three of Al Mahmud's poems - 'Prabhod', 'Ek din Bangke' and 'Symphony' - in his 'Kabita Patrika'. Since then, the master of words Al Mahmud has been writing continuously for almost 60 years. Al Mahmud arrived in Dhaka in 1954 with the intention of writing for newspapers. He started writing for the weekly Kafela, edited by poet Abdur Rashid Wasekpuri and published by Nazmul Haque, among the contemporary Bengali weekly newspapers. He also started his career in journalism as a proofreader at the Daily Millat newspaper. In 1955, when poet Abdur Rashid Wasekpuri left his job at Kafela, he joined it as an editor. Active in the second half of the twentieth century, he enriched modern Bengali poetry with a new style, spirit, and attitude<sup>7</sup>. Al Mahmud is one of the few writers who wrote about the Bengali language movement, nationalism, politics, economic oppression, and the anti-West Pakistani government movement in the 1950s. Poet Al Mahmud also gained fame for his unique stories and novels. The poetry collection Lok Lokantar (1963) first established him among the ranks of renowned poets. In 1971, he went to India and actively participated in the Liberation War. After the war, he joined Dainik Ganakantha as its founder-editor. While he was the editor, he had to serve a year in prison for writing against the government. Amidst the urban-oriented trend of modern Bengali poetry, he adopted the public life of Lower Bengal, the rural atmosphere, river-based towns, the flow of life in the char areas, and the eternal themes of love and separation in his poetry. The subject of women and love is widely covered in his poetry. ||. As a creator of excitement, he has shown women's sexuality, desire, and lust for pleasure as part of his art.<sup>8</sup> The use of regional words with natural spontaneity within the conventional structure of the modern Bengali language is his unique achievement. In 1968, he

<sup>7</sup>. Dr. Fazlul Haque Tuhin, Al Mahmud's Poems, Dhaka, Maulana Brothers, February, 2014 AD.

<sup>8</sup>Al Mahmud: The Poet's Face; Dhaka, Adarsh Publishing, 1 November 2018, 3rd edition, page: 282

received the Bangla Academy Award for two poetry books named 'Lok Lokantar' and 'Kaler Kalas'. His most acclaimed literary work is 'Sonali Kabin'. The source of Islamic thought in Al-Mahmoud's poetry can be found in several aspects. This trend has developed from a combination of his personal life, social environment, historical context, and religious consciousness. In short, it is:

a. Family and Personal Life:

Al Mahmud was born into a Muslim family and was exposed to Quranic teachings and an Islamic environment from an early age. The religious teachings and values of his family instilled the seeds of Islamic ideology in his mind.

b. Influence of Quran and Hadith:

Al Mahmud's poetry is influenced by the Islamic perspective, belief in the afterlife, moral teachings and humanity from the Quran and Hadith. Direct Quranic references, metaphors or allusions can be found in many of his poems. Faith, Holy Quran Context:

-I am your black shadow companion, O Giffari. That black sheath, in which you, the sharp sword of faith, were encased.

You were the storm of the Holy Quran against those who built mountains of gold and silver.<sup>9</sup>

c. Islamic History and Tradition:

The life of the Prophet (PBUH), the sacrifices of his companions, the history of the conquests of Islam, and the tradition of Muslim civilization served as inspiration for his poetry. From these sources, he expressed struggle, sacrifice, and faith in poetry. Muhammad, the mercy of Allah, the words of the Prophet, the Prophet's context: Madman, have you not heard the words of Muhammad, upon whom be the continuous mercy of Allah, about the limit of life? The pain of death is painful, woman. Yet listen to my ineffable destiny, beloved. A group of friends We, once sat around the Prophet in a valley.<sup>10</sup>

d. Social and Political Reality:

The social crisis, moral decline and devaluation of Islamic consciousness in Bangladesh after independence deeply moved Al Mahmud. Therefore, he expressed Islamic thoughts in poetry with the aim of reviving Islamic values.

e. Bengali Muslim Literary Movement:

The literary movement of the Muslim poets of the past, including poets Kaikobad and Kazi Nazrul Islam, influenced Al Mahmud. In particular, Nazrul's Islamic spirit and rebellious voice gave a kind of strength to his poetry.

f. Personal Beliefs and Experiences:

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<sup>9</sup> Al Mahmud, The End of Gifari's Days, Bakhtiar's Horse, Bangla Sahitya Parishad, Dhaka, 2008 AD, page-24.

<sup>10</sup> Previous

Al Mahmud's own faith, love for Islam, and spiritual experiences are among the main sources of his poetry. He saw Islam not only as a religion, but also as a way of life and a part of his nationhood.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find the source of Islamic ideology in Al Mahmud's poetry.
- To analyze the influence of the Quran, Hadith and the life consciousness of the Prophet (PBUH).
- To understand the expression of Islamic spirituality and moral values. To explore how faith in Allah, firmness of faith, moral guidance, and spiritual emotions are expressed in his poetry.
- To assess the influence of Islam on social and political consciousness, and to analyze how Al Mahmud used Islamic thought as a force for struggle against injustice, exploitation, and injustice.
- To determine how the history, civilization, and cultural glory of Muslim society are presented in the light of Islam in his poetry.
- To evaluate the importance of Al Mahmud's poetry as a new journey of Islamic thought in modern Bengali poetry.
- To identify his contribution in creating a new dimension of Islamic thought in Bengali poetry.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### *3.1 Type of Research*

This research is a literature-based, qualitative study, which is primarily descriptive and analytical. No statistical (quasi-quantitative) data have been used here; instead, the presence of Islamic ideology has been understood and analyzed by examining the language, symbols, imagery, and ideas of the poem.

### *3.2 Source of Data Collection*

#### A. Primary source (quasi-quantitative):

Poems have been selected from Al Mahmud's original poetry collections, such as Sonali Kabin and Bakhtiarer Ghora.

#### B. Secondary source (quasi-quantitative):

Articles, research papers, biographies, and critical books written on Al Mahmud's poetry have been reviewed. The idea of the poem has been analyzed in the light of religious sources, including the Quran and Hadith.

#### 4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

##### *Islamic Ideology in Al Mahmud's Literary Works*

In his early life, Al Mahmud was a skeptic, a leftist, and a holder of Marxist thought and consciousness. Gradually, his circle of beliefs changed—a freedom fighter poet who sought refuge in India during the Liberation War. After the country gained independence, he returned to Bangladesh and was imprisoned due to his opposition to the then-government. It was during this imprisonment that the most significant change in his life occurred. In his words: "I see in nature a hidden conspiracy of love that makes me think about the cause of the world-mystery. In this way, I have arrived at religion and the final and complete seed mantra of religion, the Holy Quran.<sup>11</sup>" Then the poet expresses his faith and conviction in more clear language: "I have accepted Islam as my religion, this world as my religion, this world and the hereafter as peace. I think that if a nuclear holocaust occurs, and by chance even some remnants of humanity remain, then Islam will be their only religion of conduct. I have dedicated my poetic nature to the establishment of this religion. The epitaph of Al Mahmud's grave contains a poem filled with the fragrance of faith. Every line of the poem seems to ooze with devotion. The same exhilaration of joy that Ashiq felt after meeting his beloved is engraved on his epitaph in the poem. The poem now sways us. It moves us with a sense of faith.

'Some morning, at the end of the night, on a good Friday,

If the angel of death comes and urges us to go;

In the darkness of this unprepared, haphazard house,

I will accept whatever good happens; this is my Eid.<sup>12</sup> Everyone talks about conquering death. They regret the haphazard toys left in the playground of life. Al Mahmud did not regret, but instead spoke of accepting death with the joy of Eid. The poet says: "By chance, in prison, I got the opportunity to think about the meaning of my poetic life and got the opportunity to do a comparative study and research on Semitic ( Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are primarily known as Semitic religions. Semitic religions are religions that originated primarily in Semitic, or Among the Hebrew, Arab, Assyrian, and Phoenician peoples, according to the Bible and the Quran, one of Noah's (pbuh) sons was named 'Sham'. The descendants of Sham are (known as 'Semites') religious texts. Therefore, I had already mastered the Buddhist and Hindu scriptures, so the Holy Quran began to be easily understood by me, and my idea of beauty changed. At that time, I started studying ancient poetry extensively. At the same time, the Semitic, Persian, Hindu, and Latin worlds began to open up to me. The study divided the Islamic ideology in the poetry of the poet Al Mahmud into three parts.

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<sup>11</sup> Al Mahmud, Kabir Atœ Biswas, (Dhaka, Bangla Sahitya Parishad, 2013 AD), pp. 32-33.

<sup>12</sup> Al Mahmud, Bichurn Ayanay Kabir Muk, (Ekushey Bangla Prakashan, 2015, February), pp. 69

**Part One:**

Poet Al Mahmud began incorporating Islamic traditions into his poetry in his first poetry book, *Loklokantar*.

**Part Two:**

The poet has taken Islamic tradition forward in his poetry by expressing his faith, pure feelings, in his poetry books such as 'Mayabi Purda Dule Otho', 'Adarishyabadider Rannabbana', etc.

**Part Three:**

Poet Al Mahmud expresses his Islamic attitude in his poetry, as well as his anxiety to surrender himself to the court of God and his longing to find the Creator, in works such as 'Second Breaking', 'Arabia Rajnir Rajhas', and 'Mithabadi Rakhal'.

**First phase:**

The practice of Islamic tradition begins in Al Mahmud's first stage of poetry. Which reaches its full development in the second stage of poetry. The three poems, "A Day in Darkness", "Noah's Prayer", and "Shilper Falak", from his first poetry book, "Lok Lokantare", embody Islamic tradition. According to the divine scriptures, the poet recounts the story of Adam and Eve, the first man and woman on earth, who lived in Paradise and were tempted by Satan.

Before coming to earth, they lived in Paradise, eating and drinking as they wished, but Allah forbade them from going to a single tree and eating its fruit. One day, Satan (the serpent in the Bible) tempted Eve alone with immortality and knowledge, and ate the forbidden fruit himself and fed it to Adam. As a result, both of them were thrown into the miserable wilderness of the earth as punishment for violating the Lord's command. Gradually, the human race spread across the face of the earth from its descendants. This original story is found in all the religious scriptures of Jews, Christians, and Muslims<sup>13</sup>. These words of the poet Al Mahmud are the essence of verses 35-36 of Surah Al-Baqarah of the Quran. Allah Almighty says:

*That is -And We said, O Adam! Dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat freely from wherever you wish, but do not approach this tree; otherwise, you will be among the wrongdoers.*

However, Satan caused them to slip therefrom and expelled them from where they were. We said, Go down as enemies to one another, and on earth is your dwelling and livelihood for a while.

**Second Phase:**

In the poem of the second part, he completely returns to the Islamic tradition. In this part, he has moved forward from the Islamic tradition towards the unsparing description of his faith and pure feelings. In the poem 'Mayabi Purdah Dule Otho', the poet calls for adopting the ideals of the Quran. I cannot abandon the command of Allah on the abandoned stones of a

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<sup>13</sup> Al Quran, Surah Al Baqarah:Verse No- 35-36

deserted city without people. I descended from the ruins to that great book. When I was about to raise my hands and lift them to my chest, I noticed a verse on the open page:

*"Thus have I destroyed many cities because they were wrongdoers, and they are now ruins, and abandoned wells, and palaces on high peaks."*<sup>14</sup>

Hazrat Musa (a.s.) went to Mount Sinai to bring the Torah. In the meantime, his people indulged in calf worship. He describes this in the poem 'Dhaatur Ulan ': " The man goes again to the golden cow; Behind him, on the mountaintop, the holy letters fall with a beautiful sound like a long breath, Come back, come back! Moreover, that call, listen to it, breaks the conscience<sup>15</sup>. In the above discussion, the poet alludes to the calf worship of the people of Hazrat Musa (a.s.), specifically the Israelites.

Third Phase:

In the poem of the third part, the poet finds the fullness of his Islamic attitude. The longing to meet the Creator, the anxiety to surrender himself to the Creator's court, drives the poet. In the poem 'Bharhin' of the second volume of poetry, he says,

I have found you, just like a silence, just saying.  
 In your name, the waves of the river of love leap,  
 the murmur of salt rises in the Atlantic,  
 What a turbulent water, the clouds in the majesty of the name.  
 The name of the bird rises in the nests.  
 Your ghazals in the ten directions.  
 I have crossed the last and stood.  
 There is no more weight, now hold me  
 Wrap me in the sheet of light.

In the poem 'Prayer Language' of the second volume of poetry, he says-

'Give me the language of prayer, Lord,  
 The ease of unconscious surrender.

Am I not crossing a life that is more difficult than the shark-filled sea?

That day and night?  
 Sunrise and sunset.  
 Darkness and light.

Lord, I want to reach your presence  
 As a fluffy butterfly under your throne.

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<sup>14</sup>. Al Quran, Surah Kahaf:Verse No- 59

<sup>15</sup> Al Mahmud, Mayabi Pardah Dulo Utho, Chittagong, Bangladesh Cooperative Book Society Ltd., 2013, page-57

Whose wings are the eternal mysteries of the past.<sup>16</sup>

A poet can never ignore his heritage. Through a close study of the heritage, he discovers the power and potential of the present—the dreams and enthusiasm of the future.

The history of Al Mahmud's ancestors is deeply rooted in Islamic heritage. That is why he spoke about his heritage. He demonstrated his courage in the story of his race. Riding on the wings of flying poetry, he composed history by swinging the magical curtain. Al Mahmud found the Creator in the beauty, life, and nature of the world. According to those who imagine the Creator as a beautiful and graceful lover, the Creator created the world as a crown in his glory. The poet sees his form in the crown of this creation. In the poem "Dak" from "The Swan of the Arabian Nights"<sup>17</sup>, he connects himself with creation and the Creator. I call you, and the world moves; the mountains also send the river Selami, and it steps into the sea. Birds fly in flocks, singing the hymn of the hungry in their beaks, and the boundless blue sea is silent in the language of the wind. I know the one who sits in the invisible of fate, who keeps the nuts of the soul in order, whether I know it or not; countless salutations to him. The poet is overwhelmed by the signs of the Creator in nature and the animal world. As a result of realizing the love of creation for the Creator, the poet becomes more passionate towards the Creator. Therefore, the poet sends sincere salutations to the incredible power that controls his destiny, existence, and soul. On the other hand, in the poem "Light Formless" from "Mithyabadi Rakhal", the poet believes that creation is a reflection of the Creator, who is the formless, luminous power, and He is the eternal time. He is the master of creation and destruction, the source of all light, and His nature is like formless light. The poet is a devotee of this great power. The poet is always enthusiastic and sings praises to be enlightened by the light of the Creator and to be near Him in love. In the judgment of time, you are great time, in eternity, I am just a poet, I sing praises, what am I afraid of<sup>18</sup>? In the poem "The Floating of the Addressless Boat" from the book "One-Eyed Deer", the symbol of the boat reveals the convergence, the greatness of the Pir, and the love and devotion of Allah. The floating addressless boat stopped in the unknown pasture; the devil let go of the helm and drowned in his heart. The wind came and spread the Badr Pir's breath; the remembrance of Allah arose.<sup>19</sup> In the poem "O Amar Arambh O Shesh" from the collection "Doel O Dayita", the poet prays for devotion and ultimate refuge in the Creator. The Creator is the controller of limitless time and the owner of the rise-fall-change-birth-death of creation. The poet, therefore, dedicates his life to the Creator who determines the beginning and end of life -

OH, my beginning and end.  
Take me now, my edge of infinity.

<sup>16</sup> Al Mahmud, Second Break, Dhaka, Sarol Rekha Prakashan, 2017 AD, page-92

<sup>17</sup> Al Mahmud, Arabian Nights Rajhan, Dhaka, Adarsh Sambhar Prakashan, 2018 AD. Page 49

<sup>18</sup> Al Mahmud, Lying Shepherd, Dhaka, Ananya Prakashan, 1997 AD, page 54

<sup>19</sup> Al Mahmud, One-Eyed Deer, Chittagong, Nandan Publication, February, 2015 AD. Page -34

I am an unprepared soul.

However, I know that without you, the boat of my swaying body will not be able to sail to another shore.

There is no anchor for the past. However, I had hope in you.

I am a sinner. However, I know that far away, there is an arch of forgiveness.

I am mistaken. However, I know that there is a kind smile in infinity, in the infinite.

OH, my beginning and end.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Islamic Ideology in Al Mahmud's Poetry*

In the poem "Hazrat Muhammad" from the fatalist cookbook, the poet expresses the contribution of Hazrat Muhammad's (PBUH) philosophy in shaping life and the world. On the other hand, the poet sings the praises of his greatness, luminous personality, epic scope, achievements, and diffused light in integrated poetic language.

The great stones that were in Lat-Manat's chest were pierced

The stones that were painted in the glory of Ganjna collapsed and the deceit of the fake hero

The voice of faith floated through the stones.

He was like a golden eagle in the sky of humiliation

The sound of his wings shook the prison doors;

The little chains of ignorance are shattered

The tide of light breaks through the horizon.

(Hazrat Muhammad, The Fatalists' Cooking)

The poet's mystical attitude emerges in the second part of the poem. He speaks of the Creator. He offers his heart's request. The lying shepherd says in the formless poem of the light of the poetry book:

The threads of the law are held by your own finger, you are not there,

The stars spin, the blue sky is like the beginning of our own existence, the intoxication of extinction

Why do you seek the limits of the invisible? In the judgment of time, you are the great time, I am only a poet in eternal time, singing the praises, what am I afraid of?

In the poem 'O Amar Arambho O Shesh' from the poetry collection Doel and Dayita, he says—

O my beginning and end. Take me now, the edge of my heart.

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<sup>20</sup> Al Mahmud, 'Doel and Dayita' Chittagong, Aksharbrut, 2016 AD. Page -43

I am an unprepared soul. But I know that without you, the boat of my swaying body would not have sailed to another pier.  
 There is no anchorage for the dead. But I trusted you. I am a sinner.  
 But I know that far away there is a gateway to forgiveness.  
 I am mistaken.  
 But I know that there is a kind smile shining in the infinite.  
 O my beginning and end!

The poet's mystical attitude is fulfilled in his third part of the poem. The longing to meet the Creator. The anxiety to surrender himself to the Creator's court drives the poet. In the weightless poem of the second part of the poem, he says—  
 Like a silence, I just said, I found you.

At your name, the waves of the river of love leap,  
 the murmur of salt rises in the Atlantic,  
 How the clouds sing the glory of the name of the restless water.  
 The birds sing the name of the Kulay.  
 Your ghazals are in all directions. I have crossed the last hurdle and have come to a standstill.  
 There is no more weight, now hold me and spread out the sheet of light.

In the poem on the language of prayer in the second volume of the poetry collection, he says—

Give me the language of prayer, Lord, the ease of unconscious surrender.  
 Am I not passing through a life that is more difficult than the sea full of sharks?  
 That day and night? Sunrise and sunset, darkness and light.  
 I want to reach your presence, Lord, under your throne  
 As a fluffy butterfly. On whose wings is painted the eternal mystery of eternity.  
 A poet can never ignore his heritage.

Through a close study of tradition, he discovered the power and potential of the present. Dreams and enthusiasm for the future. The history of Al Mahmud's ancestors is steeped in Islamic tradition. That is why he spoke of his tradition. He showed his own race in stories of courage. Riding on the wings of flying poetry, he composed history while swaying the magical curtain. Al Mahmud, the proverbial father of Bengali poetry, has flown like a fluttering butterfly in the presence of the Lord. The eternal mystery of time is painted on his wings. Our entire life will pass while we try to unravel this mystery. He wrote his poems in the spirit of Islam until the end of his life, making a place in the hearts of readers. Al

Mahmud's poetry is deeply influenced by religious ideology. The unique example that Al Mahmud has created by combining modernity with Islamic ideology is rare in Bengali literature. He has demonstrated that poetry can be modern, language can be diverse, but consciousness and morality can remain Islamic. This combination has established him as one of the pioneers of modern Bengali Islamic poetry. He has presented the land and people of Bengal in a way that combines Islamic culture, faith, and spirituality. In his poems,

Love for the Prophet (swt.) and Islamic ideals:

The poem expresses immense respect and love for the Holy Prophet (Swt)-

    In the poem "Nabiq," he writes:

        "Have you seen Muhammad?

    When you see him, is the brightness of the sun in the eyes of his Ummah?"

    His faith is evident in these verses.

    Love for the Prophet and Spiritual Consciousness

In Al Mahmud's poems, a deep love and respect for Muhammad (swt.) are revealed. In many poems, the humility, struggle, and creativity of the Prophet are expressed in the Muslim tradition, and it has been presented as a guide for the poet. In some parts of the poet's 'Sailor' poem or 'Sonali Kabin', the love for the Prophet is heart warmly expressed:

    "The language in his blood, I was not born in that language

    That is why that language is my prayer and the melody of the Quran."

Spirituality and Faith:

Al Mahmud's poetry is not only an expression of Islamic culture, but also an expression of the inner faith. His poetry expresses self-questioning, repentance, spirituality, and love for Allah. He believes that poetry can purify the human soul.

Islamic History and Tradition

Al Mahmud was an influential Bengali poet who presented rural Bengal, nature, love, and religion in his poetry. The influence of Sufism and Islam is also evident in his poetry. Several of Al Mahmud's poems mention mosques. "Imam of the Blue Mosque" is one of his famous poems, which depicts the life of the mosque and the Imam.

    Cover your face. Because

    The city's prophets are now blowing the trumpet of the arrival of the Dajjal.

    Cover your face. Because

    In the battle between truth and falsehood, we are

        written in the list of rights.

    Let us wait for that Imam

    Who will descend from the minaret of the Blue Mosque among us

        from his white clothes

The fragrance of musk will spread  
In the miserable slums of the world.<sup>21</sup>

#### Rural Muslim Society and Folk Islam:

In Al Mahmud's poetry, the daily life of rural Muslims, including rituals, fasting, prayers, and Eid, is perfectly presented. This is not only a religious feeling, but also a reflection of folk Islam and culture.

#### Faith, Holy Quran Context:

I am your black shadow companion, O Gifari. That black sheath, in which you, the sharp sword of faith, were inserted. You were the storm of the Holy Quran against those who built mountains of gold and silver.<sup>22</sup>

#### Muhammad, the Mercy of Allah:

The words of the Prophet, the Prophet's context:

Crazy, haven't you heard the words of Muhammad, the Prophet, on whom Allah's continuous mercy is - about the limit of life? The agony of death is painful, woman. However, listen to my ineffable destiny, beloved. A group of friends and I sat around the Prophet once in a valley.<sup>23</sup>

#### Jihad Context:

Look, all of them died in the cities, in the crowded valleys, in jihad.<sup>24</sup> The call to prayer of the minaret, weapons, and the deprived scholar context:

Do you count the call to prayer in another minaret?

From the heart calls, not sleep, not sleep, love

The poet sits in the sea, having performed ablution, in a sad silence.

Everyone's desires are over. This deprived scholar is left.<sup>25</sup>

#### Allah's word, God's prayer, prayer, greetings:

After your prayer, turn to whichever direction you wish

To the left or the right, I am thirsty for the smile of that face;

The word of Allah is still on your lips

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<sup>21</sup> Al Mahmud, Imam of the Blue Mosque, Bakhtiar's Horse, Bangla Sahitya Parishad, Dhaka, 2008 AD, Page-13

<sup>22</sup> . Al Mahmud, The End of Gifari's Day, Bakhtiar's Horse, Bangla Sahitya Parishad, Dhaka, 2008 AD, Page-24

<sup>23</sup> . Previous

<sup>24</sup> . Previous

<sup>25</sup> Al Mahmud, Black Eyed Qasida, Bakhtiar's Horse, Bangla Sahitya Parishad, Dhaka, 2008 AD, page-09

For God's sake, say it with your lips, 'I love you.<sup>26</sup>

Allah's mercy, oath, throne:

In my tears, the forgiveness of all is born  
 The mercy of Allah spreads in the form of light on the throne,  
 Rain falls on the earth, flowers bloom, do you know what the Almighty  
 My poetry is only the oath of these two eyes.<sup>27</sup>

Imam, minaret of the mosque:

Let us wait for that Imam  
 Who will descend from the minaret of the blue mosque  
 The fragrance of musk will spread  
 In the slums of the world.<sup>28</sup>

Prostration, Dervish, Candle of Dawn Topic:

Seeing your prostration, the pigeons of this house rise from the dome  
 As if the chest of a dervish sleeping inside the dome can breathe,  
 What a cool breath it takes. In the quiet candlelight,  
 As if the candle of dawn has gone out with the breeze.<sup>29</sup>

Pir's Shrine, Zikir, Ghazal Topic:

One night, a group of Bauls sat at the Pir's shrine  
 As if suddenly, the zikir of love with a hu hu sound  
 My poem is the night ghazal of those drunkards  
 Let your ears hear the words torn from the heart.<sup>30</sup>

Night Prayer, Apostate, Jinn Topic:

In the sacred fabric of the cold night prayer  
 A shrike walks. Whose soul, whose life is this?  
 Or does an apostate jinn seek out the food of humiliation  
 Moreover, sees the flames of fire on dry cloth, equal to himself.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Previous

<sup>27</sup> Al Mahmud, Waved Temptation, Sonali Kabin, Mahakal Prakashan, Dhaka, 2020 AD, page-37

<sup>28</sup> Al Mahmud, Black Eyed Qasida, Bakhtiar's Horse, Bangla Sahitya Parishad, Dhaka, 2020 AD, page-37

<sup>29</sup> Al Mahmud, 'Imam of the Blue Mosque', Bakhtiar's Horse, Bangla Sahitya Parishad, Dhaka, 2008, page-14

<sup>30</sup> Al Mahmud, 'Imam of the Blue Mosque', Bakhtiar's Horse, Bangla Sahitya Parishad, Dhaka, 2008, page-14

<sup>31</sup> Al Mahmud, Black Eyed Qasida, Bakhtiar's Horse, Bangla Sahitya Parishad, Dhaka, 2008 AD, page-09

The Blow of Satan, the Trumpet of the Jackal, the Horn of the Arrival of the Dajjal:

May your door not be opened  
by the blow of Satan  
Your door.

Cover your face. Because  
The trumpet of the jackal is now the trumpet of the arrival of the Dajjal.  
Blowing.<sup>32</sup>

Iblis, Regarding Prostration:

Fix your abrae. This is the time to cover the umbrella.

Where have you lost the  
safety pin  
of your chest?

Today, do not let Iblis sniff your honor.  
The mountain's prayer girl. By the chin of the mountain.

Look how humble this straight one is. As if  
the horns will fall in prostration right now.<sup>33</sup>

Natural Topic:

Who knows whose natural power  
He lights the lamp in the wind.<sup>34</sup>

Sword of Allah Topic:

In the name of Tuhan in the wind  
You are steady, you are eager, stay left  
Sword of Allah.<sup>35</sup>

Turban, Amirul Momineen, Hajid's Call, Caravan Topic:

A blue flock has flown from the petals of the Ara flower.  
The longing call of the Hajj has blown away the dust and merged into the horizon.  
The caravan of Amirul Momineen is surely  
Now at the threshold of the holy city.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Al Mahmud, 'Imam of the Blue Mosque', Bakhtiar's Horse, Bangla Sahitya Parishad, Dhaka, 2008, page-14

<sup>33</sup> Previous

<sup>34</sup> Al Mahmud, Your Fire, Bakhtiar's Horse, Bangla Sahitya Parishad, Dhaka, 2008, page-18

<sup>35</sup> Al Mahmud, Women, Bakhtiar's Horse, Bangla Sahitya Parishad, Dhaka, 2008, page-16

<sup>36</sup> Al Mahmud, The Last Day of Giffari, Bakhtiar's Horse, Bangla Sahitya Parishad, Dhaka, 2008, page-23

Grave, shroud, Rasul, Abu Zar Topic:

I am a helpless woman, the grave of a great man  
How shall I dig in this rocky ground  
O companion of Rasul, Abu Zar,  
were you against even a piece of shroudSaving?<sup>37</sup>

Al Mahmud said, Sufism has had a remarkable influence on my poetry! Moreover, the Holy Quran is the primary path for me to write poetry! When the poet fell asleep with the world's last religious book on his chest, the magical curtain of his consciousness swung. Through the gap through which mysterious dreams are being caught. The poet left at the moment when Namus Jibrael ordered the last Prophet of the world to read. The poet, softened by the light of that reading, shared his rich experience. Bakhtiar's Ghora poetry book's poem "Sabwuj Iman" reflects Islamic ideology, the poet says: -

Who is it in sleep, man or jinn  
When I read my poem, I say, Amen, Amen!<sup>38</sup>

Below are the opinions of various critics and literary analysts about the reflection of Islamic thought in Al Mahmud's poetry:

1. Dr. A. N. M. Ehsanul Maliki's review on the entry of Islamic thought Dr. A. N. M. Ehsanul Maliki, in his article, mentions that "a wonderful artistic combination of Islamic history-tradition and spirituality" exists in Al Mahmud's poetry. Especially from the late 1970s, Islamic elements began to appear strongly in his poetry.<sup>39</sup>
2. Contrast: Shift from Left to Islamic Thought : Although Al Mahmud wrote poetry from a leftist perspective before the Liberation War, Islamic ideology has also been noticeably present in his poetry after 1974. The reasons for this change in poetry and life-beliefs are also highlighted in his controversial words, where he himself says: "I was never a Marxist, the real attraction to religion came from the family."<sup>40</sup>
3. Such a tendency and its criticism: The study reveals that the poet had a tendency towards Islamic religious understanding in the 1990s. The reflection of Islamic consciousness can be seen in the poem; although Al Mahmud himself has denied this at various times.<sup>41</sup>
4. Recognition as a "Poet of Faith": Ridwan Hasan called Al Mahmud a "Poet of Faith," especially to religious readers. This recognition was deeply relevant. On the other hand, leftists and non-believers called him a 'believing' or 'right-wing' poet.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Previous

<sup>38</sup> Al Mahmud, Bakhtiar's Horse, Bangla Sahitya Parishad, Dhaka, 2008 AD, page-40

<sup>39</sup> <https://magazine.anupranon.com>

<sup>40</sup> muna bulletine

<sup>41</sup> Teachers.gov.bd

5. The Breakdown of Modernism and Islamic Security in a Rural Character Abdul Hai Sikder, editor of the Daily Jugantor and poet, said that Al Mahmud "has powerfully broken the conventional concept of modernity." And in his poem, "Rural Bengal, settled within the city people, is revealed in unique consonants." Although he does not directly mention "Islamic thought," rural values and traditions are seen as a part of the Islamic perspective.<sup>43</sup>

## 5. FINDINGS

Al Mahmud is one of the most powerful voices in modern Bengali poetry. In his poetry, Islamic ideology has not only expressed spirituality and religious passion, but also presented Islamic ideals in a new way within the social and political consciousness. He not only discussed people's steadfast faith in Allah, the inspiration of the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him), or the guidance of the Quran, but also managed to reconcile Islamic civilization, culture, and morality with national life and history. Al Mahmud's poetry shows —

- A deep understanding of the role of Islam in shaping people and society.
- Presentation of religious values as a motivation for suffering, struggle, and finding a path to liberation.
- Glorious portrayal of Muslim history and tradition.
- The voice of Islamic justice against injustice, exploitation and oppression.
- Religious passion and firmness of faith are expressed in a new way through poetic imagery, metaphors and symbols.
- The combination of Islamic history, religious consciousness and folk culture has enriched his poetry and made it popular with readers.
- Al Mahmud's poetry is deeply rooted in Islamic ideology. His poetry presents not only religious feelings, but also a thoughtful and introspective Islamic perspective. As a result, it can be said that Al Mahmud's poetry is not just a work of art, but also an ideological and philosophical direction. His poetry has brought the eternal values of Islam to a bright horizon in modern Bengali poetry.

In short, the main result of Al Mahmud's poetry is the establishment of a new dimension of Islamic thought in Bengali poetry, where religion, history, morality, and national consciousness merge to give birth to a unique poetic world.

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<sup>42</sup>OurIslam24

<sup>43</sup> Daily Janakantha

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the relevance and depth of Islamic thought in the poetry of Al Mahmud, with the aim of understanding how religious consciousness shapes his poetic vision within the broader framework of modern Bangla literature. Using qualitative textual analysis and close reading of selected poems, the research explored thematic patterns, symbolism, and ideological shifts in his works, particularly focusing on the integration of Qur'anic values, Islamic history, and spiritual philosophy. The findings demonstrate that Islamic thought in Al Mahmud's poetry is neither superficial nor confined to personal devotion; rather, it functions as a comprehensive worldview that addresses justice, morality, social responsibility, and collective emancipation. His poetry reflects a significant ideological transformation—from early Marxist and skeptical leanings to a mature synthesis of faith, culture, and national identity—thereby establishing Islam as a central force in his literary expression. The study highlights the broader implications of Al Mahmud's work for Bangla literature, as it challenges dominant secular-progressive narratives and introduces a powerful model of poetic modernity grounded in Islamic ideals. His poetry not only enriches literary discourse but also contributes to cultural and ethical reflection by reaffirming faith as a source of resistance against oppression and moral decline. However, the study is limited by its reliance on selected texts and thematic interpretation, which may not fully capture the complete evolution of his poetic corpus or its reception across different ideological groups. Future research may expand this inquiry by incorporating comparative studies with other modern poets, exploring reader reception, or applying interdisciplinary approaches that combine literary analysis with sociopolitical and historical perspectives. Such research would further illuminate Al Mahmud's enduring significance and the multifaceted role of Islamic thought in modern Bangla poetry.

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