

Preface

Transliteration and Translation of Al Quran in English

All praise is due only to Almighty Allāh, the Lord of the worlds who said in His Glorious Book—“We have made this Qur’ān easy for remembrance, is there any who is to remember?” And peace and blessing of Allāh be upon the noblest of the Prophets and Messengers—the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) who said, “The best of you is he who learns the Holy Qur’ān and teaches it.” Blessing be upon his covenants and companions and whoever follows his guidance till the Day of Resurrection.

The Holy Qur’ān is the last Divine Scripture revealed by Allāh for all humankind forever. It is absolutely transcendent Kalām (Speech) of Allāh, the Almighty. All other written holy scriptures from the Almighty Allāh were--Zabūr to Dawūd(PBUH), Tawrāt to Mūsā(PBUH) and Injīl(Bible) to ‘Īsā(PBUH) and all other small books have been sent down to other Prophets. Being “KALĀMULLĀH” the Holy Qur’ān is a unique revealed Holy Book whose words and sentences are from Allāh (SWT). Though it is in Arabic, it maintains such a genre of language and literature as is beyond any creation’s capability to create any sūrah like this. The Holy Qur’ān itself challenges:

“And if you are in doubt, concerning that which we have sent down (the Holy Qur’ān) to Our Worshipper (Muḥammad (ṣ) then bring a Sūrah (Chapter) of the like thereof and call your supporters besides Allāh, if you should be truthful in your claiming. But if you do not do it, and you can never do it fear the Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers”(al-Qur’ān, 2:23,24). This is the challenge still remaining active. None has faced this challenge till to date, and no body will be able in the days to come.

When such is the status of the Holy Qur’ān, none has ever been able to approach this impossible task. Some disbelievers tried their best, but failure was their fate undoubtedly. But over the ages it has been established that the translation of the Holy Qur’ān helps us only to reach the nearest possible to its actual meanings. As the Holy Qur’ān has been revealed mainly to let us know its directions and to execute them in our lives, so it has been translated into Persian by Shāh Walīullāh, the renowned Muḥaddith of his time, who was convicted as kāfir (disbeliever), though some contemporary ‘Alims of the Sub-continent gave their verdict in favor of his translating the Holy Qur’ān in to the Persian language.

Now a days, no Islamic scholar is found against the translation of the Holy Qur’ān in to any language of the world with a view to better understanding its language and meanings. In the present age of Digitization, it is widely believed that its transliteration is very helpful for the non-Arabic speaking people over the world to have access to the Qur’ānic text. Even we also support the truth that the Holy Qur’ān must be recited knowing and practising the original language and its recitation method. The transliteration is never worthy of perfect recitation, since the Holy Qur’ān has come to us through verbal media

and memorizing it in heart to heart, that is why it is protected from any distortion in any stage and by any means, unlike other revealed Scriptures.

After this short note, we would like to accord the background of the digitization program. Bangladesh is a country of 160 million people of whom about 90% are Muslims. Their daily life is widely controlled by the belief of Islam. Thus the Holy Qur'ān is the main inspiration and impetus of their culture, tradition, heritage and civilization. This holy Book is the most recited book of the world, and it is widely recited here in Bangladesh also. Muslims are to recite this book in their five time ṣalāt (obligatory Prayer). As the Words of Allāh, whoever recite this book he gets virtues (ṭhawāb), even if he or she does not understand its meanings. So recitation of the Holy Qur'ān is indispensable to every Muslim. So an eagerness is automatically generating and developing in the minds of the Muslims to know the meanings of the Scriptures. When the beginners want to learn how to recite this Holy Book, the reciters want to know the meanings therein. And Allāh says, "We have certainly made the Qur'ān easy for remembrance, so is there any who will remember?" (Al-Qur'ān, 54:17).

Bangladeshi people who laid their lives for their mother-tongue, must know about their religion Islām in Bengali. Muslims of other language also might have this feeling. So the English translation and transliteration of the Holy Qur'ān would be helpful for them. As an international language, it will give an opportunity for English knowing people to understand the Holy Qur'ān irrespective of their religion, creed and cult. The Honorable Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina realized this realistic requirement of the people of the land and the greater communities of the world. She took a historic decision to come forward with a digital Bangladesh complying with the demand of the contemporary world. Digitization will accelerate our national development and would give us easy connectivity with the rest of the world through media, internet and website. This august intuition has come to her mind to reach the provision of digitization even to the recitation and understanding of the Holy Qur'ān. This decision has received a wide reputation from every corner and every walk of the society. When people of the world are clamoring for the most wanted peace and harmony, the Holy Qur'ān will definitely guide them to the right path of peace here and hereafter, and by the digitization people would be benefited generally. Unveiling the curtain of the language people will understand the actual call of Islam and it will contribute to eliminate the prevailing mis-understandings.

So in an auspicious moment, our Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who usually recites the Holy Qur'ān every morning in her personal program, took her pen to pass an order through writing some very special sentences, where she recorded her conception, guidelines, directions how to implement digitization of the Holy Qur'ān with translation and transliteration in both—English and Bengali. Her hand writing about this program was so outright, self-explanatory and comprehensive that remains as a pragmatic document of this program.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh soon after receiving this order, started to comply with it and to make this dream come true. The Ministry has formed two editing committees-- one for English version and the other for Bengali version for digitization of the Holy Qur'ān's translation and transliteration. The English version committee consists of renowned scholars of the country who have strong background in Arabic, English and Bengali education, and theological knowledge to a remarkable extent. The English version committee is as follows:

1. Professor Dr. Md. Abu Baker Siddique, Department of Arabic, University of Dhaka
Convener/President
2. Professor Dr. A H M Mujtaba Hossain, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Dhaka
Member
3. Dr. Abdullah al-Ma'rūf, Director, Islamic Foundation(MORA)
Member
4. Mr. Helal Uddin, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Govt. of Bangladesh
Member
5. Mr. Muhammad Shah Jahan, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Religious Affairs
Member
6. Dr. Muhammad Mīzānūr Rahmān, Deputy Director, Bangla Academy
Member
7. Eng. Qays bin Habīb, System Analyst
Member
8. Dr. M.Nasīr Uddin, Lecturer, Department of Arabic, University of Dhaka
Secretary

Shouldering this important responsibility the committee have discussed the goals to achieve the methods to follow. Main objects were found as follows:

1. To find an authentic English translation of the Holy Qur'ān with special care to ease it to the readers retaining the Qur'ānic flavor in it.
2. To make a transliteration in English what would be the closest possible to the original accent of recitation, using the diacritical marks as easy and acceptable signs for correct reading and recitation.
3. To select two voices of recitation, which would be widely acceptable in its tune, correct pronunciation, heartfelt rhythm and spiritual fascination.
4. To select a voice which will read English translation that must be correct and clear pronunciation with a rhythmic output befitting with original Arabic voice putting the two voices at one proper track.
5. To collect the authentic resource books and other necessary equipments.
6. To find out a very calm and quiet and convenient place, where the committee will work heart and soul to implement this difficult task up to the mark.
7. Finally, we have overcome all those hurdles by our untiring endeavors using every possible means and ways.

What we did in translating the Holy Qur`ān in to English:

We have collected most of the translation works made so far in different parts of the world over the last two centuries. Unfortunately we observed lack of Arabic flavor in the proper nouns, i.e. names of Prophets and historic places. So we, as for example, have written Nūḥ, Yaḥyā instead of Noah, Jonah respectively etc. To preserve dialectic accent we translated the Qur`ānic names as they are. Our endeavor was centralized on making translation as representing the original, so that the literary flavor will not cause to dilute the essence of Allah's word. As such, original Arabic with its Tafsīr, Rhetoric and diversity of meanings will be dominating over translations, not vice versa. Eventually, this attitude has paved the way for our readers to find an original test of this divine revelation. Finally, it has been easy to understand its authentic meanings.

What we did in English transliteration:

As we know that the transliteration of Arabic language is difficult, it is more difficult in Qur`ānic verses. After a wide review we followed phonetic dialect of recitation. So, we actually transliterate the voice not the letters written in calligraphic styles. For example, we have transliterated the Arabic word الشمس as ash-shams (not as al-Shams), as western orientalist did, and the word القمر al-Qamar, following original Arabic voice and method. Another example of this might be (إ) همزة وصل واستغفر (واستغفر) we made transliteration of wastaghfir (not wa-astaghfir). To ease the recitation we used the stoppage- signs as little as we can. Usually, we found so many signs of correct recitation which looks very clumsy rather than help a reader. But we never left back any necessary sign. Here are some examples:

Madd (مدّ), long vowels, as for ā (أ) , two stress and āā (سواء) three to four stresses. For (ي) ī and īī, and for (و) ū and ūū. The vowel of a syllable that terminates in a vowel may be called it short or long, as (قال) qāla. The vowel of a syllable that terminates in a consonant is almost always short, as (قل) qul, not (قُول). Before a double consonant ā is however not infrequent. Such a long ā preceding a consonant with jazm some times receives a madd, as (ضَالُونَ). When alif with hamza and a simple vowel or tanwīn is preceded by an alif of prolongation , then a mere hamza is written instead of the former, and the sign of prolongation madd is placed over the latter, e.g. (سماء) samā'un.

We shall find some Qur`ānic style of recitation, like:

(غنة) **Ghunnah**: Pronunciation of the letter Nūn (ن) with nasal affect of voice. It may be when the letter Nūn (ن) is doubled, like (إننا), Innā. Here Ghunnah is obligatory. In other place Ghunnah will be when (و) comes after Nūn Sākin (ن) , it happens to be in إقلاب like (من بعد) (مِمَّ بعد) and also in إخفاء like (من دون الله) (Min dūnillāh). The nūn (ن) of the words (من، عن، أن) is often not written when they are combined with (لا، مَنَّ، مَنَّ، مَنَّ); e.g. (مَنَّ) not (مَنَّ) or (من

(مَنْ), (عَمَّا) not (عَنْ مَا) لا. أَلَا is equally common with أَلَا , but مَمَّنْ، عَمَّنْ، مَمَّمَا، عَمَّمَا are hardly ever written separately.

We can express it in other word that whatever be the picture in written forms we just followed the finishing voice in correct recitation, aiming at proper recitation, which is our goal for the transliteration.

Here is the Table of Transliteration signs used in this version taken as diacritical marks used in giving voice:

Alphabets (الحروف الهجائية)=Vowels(حروف علة) +Consonant(حروف صحيحة)

Short Vowels	Long Vowels	Consonants	
أ = a	(أ)=ā	(إ) = a	(ض) =ḍ
ي = i	(ي) =ī	(ب) = b	(ط) = ṭ
و = u	(و) =ū	(ت) =t	(ظ) = ṣ
		(ث) = <u>th</u>	(ع) = ‘
		(ج) =j	(غ) = <u>gh</u>
		(ح) =ḥ	(ف) =f
		(خ) = <u>kh</u>	(ق) =q
		(د) =d	(ك) =k
		(ذ) = <u>dh</u>	(ل) =l
		(ر) =r	(م) =m
		(ز) =z	(ن) =n
		(س) =s	(و) =w,v
		(ش) = <u>sh</u>	(هـ) = h
		(ص) =ṣ	(ء) = ‘

What we followed in our transliteration voice:

Yes, we also followed Imām Ḥafs's style in recitation. He is one of the seven recognized reciters of the Holy Qur'ān. It is the main stream of recitation over the world. This is the style which has been followed in two holy Mosques of Makkah and Madīnah. More delightful is that we selected two voices for recitation --melodious voice of Sheikh Sudaisī, Imām of Masjidul Ḥarām, at Makkah, and Sheikh ‘Abdur Raḥmān Ḥudhaifī, Imām of Masjidun Nabawī of Madīnah al-Munawwarah, K S A. Other voices are also subject to addition. The calligraphic fonts of Arabic text also was under conscious consideration. We were looking for the easiest fonts to the readers. We found Kolkata style is the most favorite to the beginners. So, we selected it for our beloved readers.

Otherwise, Text of the Holy Qur'ān is unchangeable. Not a single letter has been changed from the moment it was revealed to our Prophet Muḥammad(ṣ) till to date. Since, it is Allāh who took the responsibility of preservation and protection of this Holy Book. He said:

“ Indeed it is We who sent down the message (the Holy Qur'ān) and indeed We will be its Protector”(al-Qur'ān, 15:09). May a sort of protection be digitization as a demand of present time.

How to use it over website?

Visit the website www.quran.gov.bd

Instruction itself will lead you to your desired application.

It gives you the following provisions:

1. To listen the finest recitation of the Holy Qur'ān.
2. To compare it with the written form of verses. You would be familiar with the recitation together with the original text which would lead you learning how to recite the Holy Qur'ān seeking no assistance of a teacher. Although we strongly recommend to learn the Holy Qur'ān verbally from a teacher.
3. You can visit directly a verse for its translation and transliteration.
4. You will be knowing the correct pronunciation of a word.
5. There is a good provision of recording these valuable events.
6. Even you can carry it by a pen drive.
7. You can use where and whenever you like.
8. It will be helpful to disseminate the Qur'ānic teachings to a great extent.
9. Multiple use of your multipurpose in a package using modern technology of internet even in your mobile set, laptop etc.
10. It will make the Holy Qur'ān available for every human being as it has declared: *“Hudal-linnās”- a true direction for the whole of humankind.* May Allāh accept our sincere efforts.

Evaluation of the Work:

1. It is first in Bangladesh of its kind and unique in its pattern in the whole of the world.
2. Bangladeshi talent has been reflected in it.
3. The Government's positive attitude towards Faith of majority citizens is established.
4. This is a unique service rendered to the people of Bangladesh as well as to the greater Muslim Ummah.
5. It is an initiative which will run long for the cause of peace and religious harmony for humankind.
6. It is fulfillment of the commitment of Honorable Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina to Digital Bangladesh. So, it is a golden step of success of this Government undoubtedly.
7. It is a start of our journey. We would be working persistently to develop our this endeavor over the days to come. May Allāh accept this deed and give His favor to

the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who has dreamed this and come her dream true.

8. Finally we are expressing our deepest gratitude to the Almighty Allāh Who bestowed us with this opportunity to render this humble service to the people who are trying to touch the truth, happiness and success here and hereafter.

After many careful revisions and cross examinations the work has undergone, even we pray to Almighty Allāh to forgive us our unwitting short comings. We, therefore, promise to our readers and listeners to rectify any error, if they intimate us about that, we will investigate and take proper initiative to address their comments.

May Allāh, the Almighty pay HisSalāt and Salām upon His beloved Apostle, the seal of the prophethood, Muḥammad Rasuḷullāh(ṣ), on his covenants and companions. May Allāh also bless Mr. Shamim Muhammad Afzal, D G, Islamic Foundation who provided us with every assistance we needed, and also thanks to renowned news reader of B T V Mr. Mahmudur Rahmān who gave his fine sense and voice to recite the English translation for their co-operation and assistance.

Thanks to His Excellency Mr. Shah Jahan Mia, MP, the Honorable State Minister for the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and His Excellency the Secretary of the Ministry Mr. Kazi Habibul Awwal, and thanks also to Mr. Helal Uddin, the Joint Secretary of the Ministry and Program Director.

As the Chairman of the Editorial Committee I must put my thanks and gratitude to all members of the committee and everyone who supported us in various manners. I must give thanks to the implementing committee, the technical committee and the recitation monitoring committee. May Allāh, the Almighty bestow us with His kind favor and with success here and hereafter accepting this humble endeavor as a fountain of inspiration for the seekers of truth, and forgiving us our shortcomings. 'Āmīn.