

CultureTalk Bangladesh Video Transcripts: <http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>
A Long Career as a Driver

English translation:

Man (M): *As salam-alaikum*.¹

Interviewer (I): *Wa-alaikum-as-salam*². What is your name?

M: My name is Mohammad Siddique Sarkar.

I: What is your age?

M: Seventy-five.

I: What is your profession?

M: I drive cars.³ I drive.

I: How long have you been driving for [as a profession]?

M: I've been driving since 1962.

I: At present, where are you working?

M: I work in Crescent Road. At Iqbal *Shaheb*'s⁴ house.

I: What does Iqbal *Shaheb* do?

M: Iqbal *Shaheb*? He is a B.Sc. Engineer. He makes buildings.⁵

I: How many children do you have?

M: I have three sons and three daughters.

I: Do they have children? Are they married?

M: Two of my daughters are married, and my eldest son is also married.

¹ *As-salam-alaikum* is an Arabic spoken greeting used by Muslims all over the world as well as non-Muslim Arabic speakers, Christians and Jews. The term *Salam* in Arabic means "Peace". *As-salam-alaikum* means "Peace be upon you".

² The traditional response to *As-salam-alaikum* is *wa-alaikum-as-salam*, meaning "and upon you be peace".

³ He means to say that he is a private chauffeur.

⁴ *Shaheb* is a term of respect, meaning sir or master.

⁵ The speaker means to say that the person he is referring to is an engineer who designs and constructs buildings, bridges, dams, etc.

I: Do they have children?

M: They do. I have a grandson from my eldest son... a boy. And my eldest daughter has one son and one daughter.

I: Whom did you work for at first?

M: Prime Minister Aatur Rahman Khan.

I: Which country's Prime Minister was he?

M: East Pakistan.¹

I: Where else did you work?

M: I worked at Kazi Zafar *shaheb*'s house.

I: What was the name of your instructor who taught you to drive?

M: Moti Lal. Hindu...he was a Hindu.

I: How many meals do you have a day?

M: Me? I eat once in the morning, once in the afternoon and once in the evening. I eat three meals a day.

I: What do you eat?

M: What? Fish, vegetables, fish... meat... I eat everything.

I: What is your favorite food?

M: Chicken, beef and fish. I eat the fish that do not have too many bones.

I: How many teeth do you have?

M: 32 (laughs).

I: Show them.

M: I don't have them anymore. [laughing.] I only have two teeth now. All the others fell off. I don't have them anymore.

I: Wait, wait!

¹ He is referring to the former name of Bangladesh, when it was a province of Pakistan.

M: I studied until ninth grade. Then I left home. I took my exam and passed, and then I started working as a motor mechanic. From there, I learned driving. After I learned driving, I drove a bus. I drove a bus for one year, and then I drove a truck for six months. From there I went to Kazi Zafar's house, then I went to Aatur Rahman *shaheb*'s place, then... then... yes... then I went to *Khan Bahadur*¹ Mujibur Rahman's house and I've been here since then. I am a religious person. If Allah wills, then maybe I will go...

I: Where will you go?

M: Makkah Sharif.²

I: To do what?

M: To perform *Hajj*.³

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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¹ The title *Khan Bahadur* was bestowed in feudal India by the Great Mughal (whose protocol was largely Persian-inspired) upon Muslims and Parsis, and later by the British Raj as an honor akin to the ranks of nobility, often for loyalty to the crown. The Hindu equivalent title was *Rai Bahadur*.

² Muslims usually refer to the city Makkah/Mecca as Makkah Sharif as a sign of reverence.

³ Largest annual pilgrimage made by Muslims. *Hajj* is considered to be one of the five pillars of Islam, and every Muslim should perform *Hajj* at least once in a lifetime if he can afford to do so.