



MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN KERALA TO 1798

Dissertation Submitted for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy

KUNHALI V.

Under the Supervision of
PROF.(Dr.) M. ZAMEERUDDIN SIDDIQI

**CENTRE OF ADVANCED STUDY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY, ALIGARH**

1986

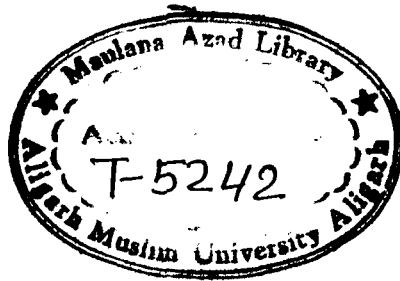
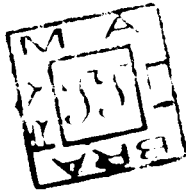
DONATED BY
PROF. Z. S. HADDIQUE
DEPT. OF HISTORY, A.M.U.

U. H. H. H.



T5242

Red in Computer



27 JUN 2000

CHECKED-22

S. K.

THESIS

PREFACE

This dissertation is an attempt to analyse in detail the history and culture of the various communities that formed the Muslim population of Kerala. Most of the published works on Muslims of Kerala regarded this group as monolithic, and failed to analyse the different cultural identities that existed among them. These communities played an important role in the cultural development of the region.

Published and unpublished works available in Arabic, Arabi-Malayalam and Malayalam formed the source material for this dissertation. The Maulid literature, an equivalent of 'Malfuzat', was for the first time utilised in this study for social analysis. The major portion of this dissertation is mostly based on extensive field work conducted in different parts of the state. The early coastal settlements, their riverine and interin extensions were visited for this study. Necessary information was also collected from different communities on the basis of a prepared questionnaire. Also several festivals and social gatherings were attended and rituals and ceremonies were analysed, for a descriptive account of the study.

For the first time Sufism in Kerala was studied tracing its origin, development, philosophy, rituals and practices and evaluating its role in the spread of the community. Fifteen sub-sections of the community as traced in this study, their relative significance, functional role and social status has been discussed in detail. A realistic appraisal of the condition of Muslim community upto 1798 is earnestly attempted.

In preparation of this dissertation I am greatly indebted to Dr. M. Zameeruddin Siddiqi, Professor, Department of History, Centre of Advanced Study of Aligarh Muslim University, under whose supervision this study was carried out. I am grateful to Prof. K.A. Nizami and Prof. Irfan Habib who initiated me into the study of social history. Prof. M.G.S. Narayanan, Head of the Department of History and Prof. K.K.N. Kurup, my Colleagues, helped with their valuable suggestions at various stages of this work. Prof. Ibrahim Kunju deserves my deepest gratitude for all the helps and encouragement he gave me in completing this dissertation. I am thankful to Prof. Hashim of MES Mampad College, for saving me from stylistic errors. I am also thankful to Mr. N. Ussain for secretarial assistance.

A.M.U. Aligarh, I
20--6--1986. I

KUNHALI. V.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B.S.O.A.S.	: Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.
E.I.	: Encyclopaedia of Islam.
I.A.	: Indian Antiquary
I.C.	: Islamic Culture
Proc. I.H.C.	: Proceedings of Indian History Congress.
J.A.S.	: Journal of Asian Studies.
J.I.H.	: Journal of Indian History.
J.K.S.	: Journal of Kerala Studies.
Adhkiya	: Shaykh Zayn ud-din Makhdum (Senior) Hidayat al-Adhkiya Ila Tariqat al-Awliya.
Manaqib waliyullahi	: Abdul Aziz Musaliyar, Manaqib Waliyullahi al-Rabbani wa al-ghawth al-Samadani al-Shaykh Abdul Qadir Sani.
Mappila Sahithyam	: C.N. Ahmad Moulavi and K.K. Muhammad Abdul Kareed (Ed.), Mahathaya Mappila Sahithya parambaryam.
Muhyiddin	: Shaykh Muhiyi al-Din Abdul Qadir Jilani.
Tuhfat	: Shaykh Zayn ud-din (Junior) Tuhfat al-Mujahidin fi Badi Ahwal al-Burthuqaliyyin (Tr.), S.M.H. Nainar.

C O N T E N T S

Pages

PREFACE

ABBREVIATIONS

INTRODUCTION

i-xxiv

Chapters

I	GENESIS AND GROWTH OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN KERALA TO THE CLOSE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.	1-45
II	SUFISM AND THE ROLE OF SUFIS IN THE GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITY	46-92
III	THE EUROPEAN DOMINATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY	93-148
IV	MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN KERALA	149-239
V	MUSLIM SOCIAL LIFE IN KERALA	240-292
VI	MUSLIM FOLK LIFE IN KERALA	293-330
APPENDIX	..	331
GLOSSARY	..	332-335
BIBLIOGRAPHY	..	336-345

INTRODUCTION

The Muslims of Kerala are generally known to the outside world as Mappilas. Seldom any one realise that Mappilas are but one among the many communities that formed the Muslim population of Kerala. The fame the community acquired may be due to the Mappila outbreaks of the 19th century and the Malabar Rebellion of 1921.

Even recent publications on the Muslims of Kerala do concentrate only on different aspects of the major community - the Mappilas. This work is an attempt to enlist various communities, their origin and growth, relative significance in the community, reactions to the major problems, response to important developments, life style, and inter-relation of these communities. The study aims at an evaluation of local influence and also to trace the impression of pre-conversion life. An attempt is made here to project the unparalleled role of Muslims of Kerala as the defenders of Islam against medieval West as the only one community on earth who fought people of the Dar ul-Harb while themselves in Dar ul-Harb. The evolution of the concept of martyrdom (Shahid), in fact the real resource of the

community to meet western fire power, is traced in this work. The significant contribution of religious leadership of the community of different ages in diverse forms has also been noticed.

Till recently, Muslim of Kerala have rarely been noticed in scholarly writings. This non-Urdu-speaking people were not included among 'The Indian Muslims' (M. Mujeeb, 1967). Only Dr. I. H. Qureshi had realised the need to begin the study of the history of Islam in India from Peninsular India, and included the Mappilas (for an outsider all the Muslims of Kerala are Mappilas) in his 'Muslim Community of Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent (1962).

The first realistic appraisal of the history and culture of Muslims of Kerala appeared in the monumental Malabar Manual (1881) of William Logan, first the Malabar Collector and then the Special Commissioner for Malabar, to investigate the causes of the Mappila Outbreaks of the nineteenth century. Innes and Evans utilised the materials available in 'Logan's Manual' to compile the Malabar District Gazetteer (1908) and the successive editions of Malabar District Gazetteers updated the informations. W.W. Hunter in his Indian Mussulmans (1876) showed unusual insight into the mind of the Muslim community and tried to high light some aspects of Mappila Outbreaks of the 19th century.

Even native writers seemed to neglect this community. When T.K.G. Panikkar edited his 'Malabar and Its Folk' in 1900, Muslims were not included in the study and it was only in the revised third edition (1929) that a chapter by Hamid Ali on Mappilas, who represented one third of the 'folk', was incorporated in it. There was a spurt of works on Mappilas following the Rebellion of 1921. Some of them were motivated by enthusiasm to describe it as a struggle for independence and others to glorify the community. Another source of information were secret administrative reports. Then there was a series of 'Khilafat reminiscences' by veteran fighters. The themes of all such works were the ideology and activities of Congress-Khilafat volunteers. A few works on the Rebellion of 1921 by the Marxist sympathisers characterised it a peasant rebellion (Soumyendranadh Tagore's banned pamphlet, 1937, and Sukhbir Chaudhuri's Moplah Uprisings, 1977).

Except for P.A. Seyd Muhammad's Kerala Muslim Charitram (1961), a Malayalam historical study on the Mappilas, there has been no major investigation of the community's history, theology or culture by a Mappila. Khan Bahadur K. Muhammad's Mappilamar Engott, ("Whither the Mappilas") published in 1956 is the first and still

the only major discussion of the community's future by one of its own members. There was an unprecedented increase of monographs and commemoration volumes on men in various fields. To cite a few, like Ali Musaliar, Variyamkunnath Kunhamad Haji, K.M. Moulavi, K.M. Seethi Sahib, Mohammed Abdurahiman Sahib, Bafaqi Tangal, Panakkad Pukkoya Tangal, C.H. Mohamed Koya and others. These works contain important information regarding many aspects of life of Muslims in Kerala, but which are written in such laudatory forms that they must be subjected to tests for historical accuracy.

The 'Mappila Muslims of Kerala' of A.E. Miller (1976) is worth mentioning. But it is a compendium of available materials, wherein widely accepted notions are explained and do not contain any original thinking and analysis. Dr. Stephen F. Dale's 'Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922' (1980), is the only one research monograph published on Muslims of Kerala. He has tried to explain the ideology underlying the outbreaks of 19th century in terms of a militant revivalist movement and exploded the idea held by several writers that ridiculed the outbreaks were a mere act of 'Hal Ilakkam' (frenzy).

A research work as attempted in this study,

to trace the origin and growth of various subsections of the community has not appeared so far, except for Diwan Bahadur C. Gopalan Nair's Malayalattile Mappilamar, (The Mappilas of Malayalam) (1917). Repeating the relevant portions of Keralolpatti, he prepared brief notes on Mamburam Tangal, Kozikkod Koya, Nahas and Mandayippuratt Muppans. Of these only 'Naha' is referred to in the present study as a community and Mamburam Tangal is included in the section on Sayyids.

The present study on the Muslim communities is subject to many limitations. Much of the information for the study of Muslim communities is derived from personal interviews with leaders of the communities. The informants flew into rage on being told of communities among Muslims and burst out that there is only one community and Islam does not recognise any differences among its followers. Theoretically they were right. No Census Report where the communities were mentioned separately was also available.

Many people answered the questions with reservations, and it seemed that they were conscious of the caste predilections and pre-conversion relics. Further every community claimed an Arab descent and

traced the origin of their names from Arabic even when they apparently contradicted historical facts and philological derivations. Tracing the Sufi influence in the community has caused great hardship. Wahhabi scholars, whom the present writer consulted, became indignant on the suggestion of Sufism and remarked that there is no Sufism in Islam and I was trying to create something new. At the same time in all the Darghas the custodians wanted to know the identity of the writer whether Sunni or Wahhabi and when the place (Edavanna, A Wahhabi centre) was mentioned, were reluctant to oblige. It is a pity that an invaluable collection of Arabic manuscripts are kept as Waqf in the Chaliyam Masjid by the Qazi family with Wasiyyat, 'not to show to Wahhabis'. Since Chaliyam had been an ancient settlement and the highest seat of Arabic learning before the rise of Ponnani, probably these collections may contain highly useful material on diverse questions. Again in the shrine of Kondotty a number of books are kept in a bundle and placed at one end of the cenotaph which are 'forbidden' to be opened. These books 'Kitabs' as they are called, may probably contain valuable information regarding the rise and growth Kondotty Tangals and the 'Kondotty-Ponnani Kai Tarkam' of the

19th century. Such materials were beyond the reach of present writer.

The methodology adopted in this study may be questioned. For the historical part of this study both published and unpublished sources had been consulted. An Epigraphist's help was availed to incorporate the contents of unpublished inscriptions found in mosques. Arabic chronograms in Jarams (Darghas) had to be deciphered with the help of 'Abjad' numerals. Innumerable hagiographic works in Arabi-Malayalam were collected from Darghas all over Kerala. A bulky collection was available from an old book-binder in Tellichery which considerably reduced the difficulty of collecting of them, some of which were printed more than hundred years ago. The geneological trees of Sufis, Sayyids and communities were collected with great difficulty. Arab manuscripts which were sacred possessions of families and Sufi orders, containing the rules and regulations, 'dhikrs' and 'awrads' and succession ceremonies were consulted. A number of works on the disputes of various Tariqahs were looked into. Social gatherings, community functions, marriage ceremonies and nerccas (Urs) were attended and family rites and ceremonies were studied.

Descriptive sources like Keralolpatti and Keralamahatmyam were available. Ibn Battuta's 'Rehla' contains information on the society of Kerala and especially of the coastal settlements which he visited. Shaykh Zayn uddin Makhdum's 'Tuhfat ul Mujahidin', written around 1583 A.D. was very useful for the study of political and social conditions of Kerala in the 16th century. The Book of Duarte Barbosa (1515) could provide the Portuguese version of 16th century history of Kerala. Fath al-Mubin, an Arabic Qasida (poem) on the battle of Chaliyam (1571) between the Portuguese and the Zamorin-Muslim alliance is not a mere eye witness report of the episode, but a first-hand report of the Portuguese atrocities on Muslims and its impact on the community. Travalogues of Abdurazzaq, Mahuan Pyrard de Laval and Thevenot contain sufficient information of the Muslim settlements, Muslim monopoly of trade, flourishing coastal cities and markets, and of the rulers who had special love and regard towards traders.

An analytical approach to Mappila social life is possible with the accounts of Hamilton, Buchanan and Wilks who noted the social heirarchy, caste system,

slavery and pollution. It also provide an insight into the cause of rapid growth of Muslims population in the interior districts. Islam stood in striking contrast to the caste-ridden Hindu society of Kerala. These writers provided information on the excommunication of Hindus who violated caste rules and selling of low-class women who committed fornication with a Nayar or Brahmin and the Moplas sending them beyond the sea, were simple and natural causes of the spread of Islam.

The works of W. Logan and Innes and Evans help us to interpret the phenomenal growth of the community further with the help of statical data provided by the administrative reports. When Logan arrived at the conclusion, comparing the Census Reports of 1871 and 1881, that within 10 years some 50,000 Cherumars (slave caste) have 'availed themselves of the opportunity' of converting to Islam, much of the earlier hypothesis become more plausible.

Apart from indigenous works, foreign notices, Portuguese sources and administrative manuals, the hagiographic literature, namely the Maulid literature which is equivalent to the 'Malfuzat' literature were

utilised in this study. It is certainly for the first time that hagiographic literature was utilised for understanding the Muslim social history. 'Maulids' known all over Kerala as Mauluds were songs composed in honour of the Shaykh of a Tariqah, an Awliya, Tangal or a Shahid, and sung in every household at appointed hours to avail their blessings to overcome difficulties in life, would end with a Tawassul. Such a branch of literature was unknown as the scholars denied the existence of Sufism in South India. I.H. Qureshi noted in his 'Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent', that 'the extensive Sufi missionary activities found elsewhere in Indian Islam is not evident in South India.' R.E. Miller could only quote the above words in his 'Mappila Muslims' (1976). Further there was an apathy towards Sufism as superstition and sorcery due to its too much involvement in Dhikr, retirement to solitude and use of Tawiz (talismans). Even singing the 'Maulids' among the educated was considered 'Shirk', and the literature was never subjected to any serious study. A few enthusiasts of folk songs had subjected the works for analysis since the 'Maulids' in Arabic-Malayalam retained many linguistic characteristics of 17th and 18th century

Malayalam, and therefore their interest was confined only to philological aspects. Tuhfat ul-Mujahidin was compiled with a view "to inspire in the faithful the desire of fighting the worshippers of cross; for a holy war with them is an obligatory duty". The community responded to the call made by 'ulame' and in the battle of Chaliyam (1571) which was the most desperately-fought battle between the Portuguese and Zamorin-Muslim allies on Malabar. According to Qazi Muhammad, author of Fath ul-Mubin, and one of the participants in the battle, "men came like ants from far off regions with what all weapons and provisions they could carry". How the masses reacted to the call for martyrdom could be read in Maulid literature. Kottuppally Mala, a contemporary poem, has its theme as the martyrdom of 'Kunhi Marakkar Shahid'. Kunhi Marakkar, the hero of the Mala was sitting on the carpet after his Nikah on the day of his marriage, and the feast was to begin. Then an old man ran into the pandal in panic and asked: "Is there anybody who want to attain 'firdause'? Last evening a Portuguese ship had anchored off the shore; a few of the sailors came ashore in a boat, captured a Muslim girl and took her to the ship. Whoever will rescue the girl fighting Portuguese will attain paradise". The

song is very long with all the characters of an epic poem. In short the hero went out of the pavilion and took an oath that he will meet his bride only after rescuing the girl. At night he got onboard the ship, rescued the girl and decided to fight the heavily drunken sailors. But he was killed, his body was cut into pieces and thrown into sea. His severed body drifted ashore with the waves, and the limbs were picked up by Muslims who buried them befitting a Shahid. Later on Mosques were erected near those Qabars each of which took the name of the limb buried there. The mosque where his cheeks (Kot) were buried came to be known as Kottuppally. The song was composed after this incident. Such mosques known after human limbs are found in many coastal settlements in South Malabar. This shows the tradition of martyrdom prevalent among Muslims. Such instances are not mentioned in either of the indigenous sources or the Portuguese sources. Much material of similar nature has been utilised in this study to form an understanding of the social and cultural life of Muslims of Kerala.

For procurement of materials on the social and cultural life and for studying the folk-life and rituals of various communities, an extensive field-work was

conducted in various centres from Kasarakod (including Ullal Dargha of Karnataka) to Trivandrum. Information on Mappilas is derived from observation in Mappila nad (Malappuram District). The Koyas were studied in Calicut and Keyis in Tellicherry. For analysing the custom and manners of Sayyids extensive interviews were conducted in Pantalayini Kollam ('Pandarina' of Arabs) and Calicut. Members of the rich Marakkar community settled in Chaliyam were interviewed. Some of the Pathans who were once settled east of Palayam Masjid of Trivandrum were interviewed to study their social customs and manners especially elaborate celebration of Muharram, marriage rites and ornaments. Pusalans' life was observed in Tanur 'Ossan beach'. The eldest living Naha was interviewed at Parappanangadi, their only settlement at present, though some of its members in isolated cases have moved to far interior places. Information on Labbais were derived from interviews with some of the members of Pathanamthitta, one of the important Labbai settlements and of the Labbai Colony of Cannanore. Service castes like Ossan were studied in a few adjacent villages of Malappuram District. The Kurikkal community was subjected to study at Manjeri, their important settlement where they are also the leaders of the community.

Malik Dinar Urs of Kasarakod, held once in three years was studied where a compulsory levy of contribution for the Urs was noted. The presentation of a replica of sailing vessels in fulfilment of a vow and the offering of cardamom was noticed in the Dargha of Hazrat Madani of Ullal (in Karnataka, but the devotees are mainly from Kerala).. Dozens of caparisoned elephants arrayed in majestic pomp was photographed in the Nercca of Hydross Kutty Muppan of Manattala (Chawghat), where the practice of taking out the replica of the tomb of the saint was noted. Folk arts as well as rituals like Kolkali, Aravana and Daff were studied during the many annual Nercas of Kondotty. Pure rituals like Ratib and Moulud were attended for study in the centre of performance, Birth and death ceremonies, and marriage rites, dress, ornaments, and social gatherings were studied. Reciting Quran on the Qabar uninterruptedly for 40 days was noted in the graveyard around the Main Masjid of Manjeri. The information collected during the field-work was compared with similar works on communities by E. Thurston (1909) L.A. Krishna Ayyar (1909) and lastly P.R.G. Mathur (Mappila Fisher-folk, 1978).

A regular pattern was followed in the interviews. To begin with, questions were put on birth rites, Haqiqah, Khatna, ear-boring and puberty rites, marriage talks,

marriage rites, dress of bride and bridegroom, social customs, feast and amusements in order. Then the ceremonies in the seventh month of pregnancy, succession rights, specialised vocations, death rites and Madhhabs (Sects), social status and vocational mobility were enquired into. Questions were then put on important events in the history of the community, interaction with other Muslim communities and non-Muslims, special social rights and privileges, and important historical figures. Then the conversation was allowed to drift into the informants favourite topics, wherein often an Arab geneology, purity of blood, wealth and prestige of bygone days, pomp and show of marriages or the deeds of a well known hero figured out. Often a published souvenir, or a pamphlet or a written manuscript or some other important relics kept in the family were produced in between the conversation. Ladies interviewed were helpful in giving information on social customs, dress and ornaments, food habits and in tracing some of the Hindu relics retained by the Muslims. Necessary information was collected from such leisurely talks.

Chapters for the study are arranged in the following pattern: Chapter one deals with the

introduction of Islam into Kerala by foreign traders, who were treated as honoured guests. The various factors that helped the spread of the creed like marriage alliances of Arabs with local women, conversion of the outcastes, purchase of low class women sentenced to death, Zamorin's order to bring up one male member of fishermen family as Muslim, are discussed. The caste to class movement of slave castes and their social status, royal patronage and privileges of Shah bandar and Kolikkod Koya are also discussed. A new and probable derivation of the origin of the name Mappila from 'Mavallad' is also suggested in this Chapter.

In the second chapter an attempt is made to study sufism as prevalent among Muslims of Kerala and the way how it became instrumental in the spread of the creed, especially in the post-1498 period, when the community was suffering from the Portuguese onslaughts all over the country. Their lucrative foreign trade was lost and they were compelled to move to the interior. In the interior where there was rigorous caste discrimination, Islam offered an avenue for freedom from slavery.

The study of sufism in Kerala itself was

undertaken against the generally accepted notion of the absence of sufism in South India. It was interesting to note that Kerala had more Sufi orders than Akbar's India as noted by Abdul Fazal. Various Sufi practices which are still emulated and social institutions which have undergone transformation and new ones adopted have been discussed. The sphere of activity of various sufi orders, their ideology and the lack of knowledge of common man of the complexities of sufi rituals and philosophy are discussed. The charisma resulting out of Karamah of sufis helping conversion is also discussed. The role of the sufi khanqahs in the trade centres as 'pious night-clubs' has also been noticed. Attempt is also made to evaluate how the charisma of sufis worked among Muslims in a way beneficial to the community to overcome its difficulties.

The third chapter attempts an evaluation of the significance of Portuguese domination over Muslim trade, aiming at the economic destruction of the community. Attempt is made to trace Portuguese history of one century prior to 1498 when the destruction of Muslims was the proclaimed national policy, and the various factors that they sought to utilise in this

attempt. They followed a policy of befriending the enemies of the Zamorins, who was known in the West as 'Moorish Prince'. They unleashed inhuman cruelties on Muslims which have been discussed in Tuhfat and Fath ul-Mubin. 'Kunjalis, Admirals of Calicut', who claimed to be saviours of Islam could operate with equal skill, ease and familiarity in Malabar, Travancore, Cochin, the Coromandal coast and even in Ceylon, since they had their kinsfolk settled all over India's coast. Attempt has been made to trace, the persistence of enmity between Muslims and 'Worshippers of the Cross' and to show how the tradition of 'Shahid' was carried into the 19th century outbreaks, finally culminating in the rebellion of 1921. The earnest attempts of Ulama to write to the rulers of the Muslim world against Portuguese is seen in Qazi Muhammad's Qasida 'Fath al-Mubin', which he stated "was addressed to the rulers of 'Sham and Iraq', that when they hear (the Zamorin and Muslims fighting against the Portuguese) they may consider joining him or atleast the need of helping him (the Zamorin), who fights the infidel Portuguese more zealously than a Muslim King". Unity of Muslim world was again the idea in inviting the help from Sultan of Turkey, Pasha of Egypt and Muslim rulers of the Deccan,

which were naturally envisaged by Muslims in Calicut. They could easily think in terms of world Muslim unity because they had seen on their streets Arabs, Egyptians, Yemanites, Abyssinians, Tunisians, Persians, Gujaratis, Ceylonese, Tamil and Chinese Muslims presenting a wide spectrum of the Muslim world. They never lagged behind any of these Muslims even in scholarship and learning. The emotional crisis and change in attitude of Muslims when Kunjali IV was handed over by Zamorin to the Portuguese and when Hyder and Tippoo invaded the land is highlighted. An important note is made in this Chapter that foreigners were welcome so long as they supplemented the economic interests of the rulers and they were never welcome in areas where their economic interests came into conflict.

In the fourth Chapter a detailed study is made of the different communities and subsections belonging to the Muslim population of Kerala. The major community, Mappilas are dealt in detail. Rites and ceremonies of the life cycle of individual and social and cultural life of the community are explained. Repetition of the same customs and ceremonies are avoided but their variants are noted. A comparative study of smaller

communities of Mappilas is attempted. Vocational groups like Pusalan and service castes like Ossans, maritime class of Nahas and Marakkars were subjected to observation. The only one Shiah community of Kerala, the Daudi Bohras has been included in the study. The Panjappura of Muharram celebration of Dakhnis and taking out the replica of the jaram of Hydross Kutty Muppan are variations of one custom. Similar influences and imitations have been largely noted in this study.

The fifth chapter is an attempt to give a descriptive account of the various cultural aspects of these communities. The distinct features of these communities like rituals, ceremonies, food habits, dress and ornaments are noted here. Communal gatherings and feasts, on all important occasions are special characteristics of Muslims alone. It is interesting to note that right from Haqiqah upto death ceremonies and even rituals like Ratib, Maulud, and Khatam otikkal have been made occasions of communal feast. Adoption of indigenous style in the construction of houses and mosques have been noticed here. Their close resemblance to temples has led many to believe that they were temples turned mosques. The fact was that buildings

were constructed according to the principles of Taccusastra (the science of architecture) by the local masons and carpenters, using local building materials like laterite stones, lime mortar and timber. Due to the heavy rainfall they had to use sloping roofs, roofed with tiles or thatches which made any architectural innovations in Islamic style impossible.

The origin of Muslim female dress is traced to the Jews as the elderly ladies called a blue-black mundu worn by them 'yudattuni' (Jewish cloth). Too many varieties of ornaments including a few garlands of Tawiz which later on took the name 'Elassu' (a hollow cylinder with both ends covered and Tawiz inserted in them) are noted. These were worn by both males and females. The custom of wearing the 'Malappuram dagger' on a wide belt, dreaded and confiscated by British after Collector Conolly's murder, is described. The social charm, friendliness and affection, exuberant in communal gatherings, a great trait of Muslims of Kerala is also discussed.

The folk-life of the above Muslim communities are dealt with in the sixth Chapter. The religious

awareness and sufi tradition gave rise to innumerable rites and ceremonies. The way of celebrating folk festivals like Nerocas and Maulids, are described. The local influence in such celebrations as the procession bearing 'centipede flags', fancy dress parades, use of drums and pipes are noticed. The use of fireworks, distribution of food and of various 'Tabarruk all Hindu influence on folk-life are described. The relics of pre-conversion days like propitiating Hindu deities and spirits in vocational rites as in the case of Pusalans are noted. The form of offerings like breaking coconut, lighting lamps and burning eggs are also described in this Chapter.

A class analysis of these communities is also attempted. Of these only Kurikkals were a pure landed-class followed by Keyis who later shifted from business to land-ownership. The Mappilas formed the agricultural labour class between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. The Bhatkalis and Bohras were purely business class. The Nahas and Marakkars formed a maritime class, while Pusalans formed a labour class. During the period under discussion Sayyids alone formed the religious class, but not the priesthood. Many of

the Sayyid families were wealthy merchants, who could with the help of their kinsfolk settle in different parts of the world and operate international trade with much ease and comfort. The Bafaqih and Jifri Sayyids had their warehouses and business in Malabar, Ceylon, Burma and Singapore even in recent times. The Pathans and Rawthars who were a service class in times of royalty have now been shifted to various vocations like shopkeeping, small-trade and governmental jobs. The Ossans alone are at the same time a service caste and class, among whom class mobility is little noticed. One of the reasons may be that the Ossan's profession is well-paid and the youngsters take to profession at a very early age. Their ladies in anyway have to perform the traditional services in village community, and this fact hampered any psychological impetus necessary for any change.

The Pusalans also remained a class with an aversion to change, the reason again being the early initiation to the traditional profession which never required any formal education.

An interesting finding observed in the course of the aversion to pomp and luxury exhibited in social

functions by the traditional business groups like Navayats (Bhatkalis) and Bohras. "Much celebrations, means much expense, which we cannot afford with hard-earned money", a Bhatkali confessed. At the same time new entrants make roaring business in textile and hotel business and amass fortunes, a mysterious irony of course.

In spite of the existence of all these communities none claimed superiority over the other or tried to formulate an order of caste heirarchy. They were all but vocational groups forming one important section of the 'multi-cultural amalgam' of Malayali society.

CHAPTER I

GENESIS AND GROWTH OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN KERALA TO THE CLOSE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

Kerala state occupies the South-Western tip of the Indian peninsula and lies between $8^{\circ} 13'$ and $12^{\circ} 43'$ North latitude and between $74^{\circ} 52'$, $77^{\circ} 24'$ east longitude. The land comprises the narrow coastal strip bounded by the Western Ghats on the East and the Arabian Sea on the west. This geographical position helped it to ensure to some extent the political and cultural isolation from the rest of the country, and facilitated its extensive contacts with countries of the outside world. Kerala seldom felt the impact of the many foreign invasions and of the political changes that took place in the other parts of India. Yet it was not totally immune from the political and cultural impacts of the neighbouring territories.

The Arabian Sea has been the permanent decisive factor in the history of Kerala. From time immemorial the long coastal line was studded with a number of sea-ports, the relative importance of which had fluctuated from age to age. In ancient Kerala commercial and cultural contacts were kept up with foreign countries through ports like Muziris, Tyndis, Barace and Nelcynda. Ports like Cochin,

Quilon and Calicut came into prominence in later periods of Kerala history. The Greek writers and Arab geographers have mentioned large number of ports. The contacts between Kerala and the outside world in ancient and medieval periods had been mainly commercial and cultural in character. Thus the isolation to which Kerala was subjected by the Western Ghats was more than compensated by the extensive foreign contacts facilitated by its long sea coast on the west.

The Arabs, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Phoenicians, the Isrealities, the Greeks, the Romans and the Chinese were among the foreign peoples who had contacts with the Kerala coast in the ancient and medieval periods. These foreign contacts mainly commercial in nature led to the introduction of such religions as Christianity, Judaism and Islam into the land at a very early period of history and helped to mould the composite cosmopolitan culture of Kerala. Not only the natives but also the traders were benefitted by these contacts. As observed by Logan, "It is certain that Indian ideas and practices contributed largely to the form which orthodox Christianity in the West adopted first. Monasteries, nunneries, tonsures, rosaries, confession and celibacy all seem to have found

their way to Europe from Indian sources. And in return the West seems to have given to the East, arts and sciences, architecture, the art of coining money and in particular the high ideal of religion contained in Christianity".¹ In this multi-cultural amalgam founded by the happy union of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, are a bewildering range of cultural patterns. It is to this co-existence and mutual reliance that a prominent historian used the term 'cultural symbiosis'.

Kerala presents a picture of rare tropical beauty and rich fertility.² The State lies in the path of both the South-West and North-East monsoons. The average annual rainfall of ninety-six inches, increasing to a much higher rate in the northern areas, placed the area in the 'rain forest' classification. Its forests abound in a variety of birds and animals. The flora and fauna reflect this climatic condition. The peacock and the monkey had the place of honour among the exports from

1. W. Logan, Manual of Malabar, Madras (1951), p. 254.

2. Francis Buchanan, one of the first Europeans to travel extensively through the interior of Kerala remarked, "The territory through which I passed is the most beautiful I have ever seen". A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar. London (1807), Vol. II, p. 347.

ancient Kerala to foreign countries. The forests of Kerala abound in some of the rarest species of timber which have been very much in demand in foreign markets. The teak-wood from Kerala found its way to foreign countries even centuries before the dawn of the Christian Era, as is evidenced by the discovery of teak in the ruins of Ur. The magnificent teak of Kerala forests appears to have been used for the building of ships that fought in the battle of Trafalgar and brought victory to Nelson.³ Abu Zayd the Arab traveller of Ninth century refers the carpenters from Umman building boats in the country of coconut trees.⁴ Unfortunately these valuable forests especially of the eastern mountain - region is gradually giving way to the encroachment of man in his desperate search for abode. The forty-one west-flowing rivers and the continuous chain of lagoons and back-water facilitate communication and transport.

It was the spices of the land that had attracted the Arabs, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Phoenicians the Israelites, the Greeks, the Romans and the Chinese

3. A. Sreedhara Menon, A Survey of Kerala History, Kottayam (1967), p. 9.

4. Langles and Reinaud (Ed.), Silsilat-ut-Tawarikh, p. 131; as quoted in Ibrahim Kunju, Journal of Kerala Studies, IX, (1977), p. 593 'Islam in Kerala'.

from early times. The Assyrians and the Babylonians of the second millennium B.C. carried an extensive trade in cardamom and cinnamon that came from Kerala. The ancient Egyptians prepared perfumes and holy oil for mummification from the spices. Cinnamon is referred to as one of the ingredients of the holy anointing oils and perfumes in the rituals of Tabernacle erected in Sinai by Moses in 1490 B.C. It is needless to refer to the "great train with camels that bore spices" to Solomon (1015-960 B.C.) from Sheba. Sandal wood, peacock and monkey purely of Indian origin had reached Solomon from Tarshis. As their names in Hebrew are of Dravidian origin, Tarshis could be somewhere in South India later fallen into obscurity.⁵

Among the Phoenicians and Arabs, the Arabs of Oman and of the Persian Gulf area, might have undertaken the first sea voyages to Kerala for cinnamon. A land route from Sind through the ancient province of Godrosia and Hormozia and through Persia and Bassora existed which brought spices from South to West Asian ports. Solomon's fleet had sailed to the east to bring gold, ivory, apes

5. Dr. Shamshulla Qadiri, Malaibar, p. 14.

and peacocks from Ophir. Ophir has been identified by some scholars with Puvar in Trivandrum District and by others with Beypur in Kozhikode District. Though there is also a view that the place was not located anywhere in Kerala.⁶

Dioscorides (40-90 A.D.), the Greek physician in his *materia medica* had mentioned the medical virtues of cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, turmeric and pepper. Discovery of 'Hippalus' brought India nearer. Roman ships sailed direct to Muziris (Cranganore), from Ocelis in 40 days, bringing gold and precious metals and returned with pepper and other spices. Warmington traces the route direct from Muziris to Italy⁷ when Alaric, the Goth besieged Rome he demanded 3000 pounds of pepper as indemnity.⁸ The vast hoards of Roman coins unearthed in different parts of South India are sufficient to prepare a chronology of Roman Emperors. Pliny estimated that Roman empire paid out

6. Ibid., p. 12. Dr. Shamshulla Qadiri holds the view that the port from where these goods were exported was surely in South India and later fallen into obscurity.

7. Leaving Muziris to Alexandria by way of Berenice and Coptos up the Nile took about 94 days. If ships were available they may go direct to Italy or take a coasting voyage.

8. Roman trade in pepper with Cranganore is discussed in detail by K.P. Padmanabha Menon, History of Kerala, (Reprint, 1982), Vol. I, pp. 297,305.

annually a hundred million sesterces (about 1,08,7500 d.) to India, China and Arabia for purchase of luxuries. Pepper was known as 'Yavana priya' (dear to Romans). The Greeks have mentioned the ports like Naura, Tyndis, Muziris, Carur, Bacare (Badagara), Nelcynda (Srekantapuram) and Cottiarra (Kuttanadu) as the major ports of the age.

A Chinese coin of 8th century B.C. discovered from Chandravalli, suggests the existance of Chinese trade with South India. Not long after the birth of Christ there had been colonies of Arab and Persian traders on the West-Coast of Sumatra, who frequented the South Indian Harbour of Madura.⁹ Marco Polo had noticed the trade in pepper, ginger and cinnamon in West Asia and China. In the city of Hanchow he was informed by the customs officer of Kublai Khan, the Chinese emperor, that the daily amount of pepper bought was 43 loads, each load being 243 pounds or a total of 10,449 pounds. Referring to the city of Zaitun, Marco Polo says that the quantity of pepper imported there was so considerable that what was carried to Alexandria to meet the demands of Western parts of the world was not more than even a hundredth part. The revenue from this pepper trade was enormous. In the

9. S.M.H. Nainar, Java as noticed by Arab Geographers, Madras (1953), p. 23.

ships the number of crew differed from 150 to 300 men and cargo capacity was from 5000 to 6000 baskets or mats of pepper.

There were other groups like Somalis who sometimes subjugated the south Arabian trading centres. With the rise of powerful empires and political powers on the route the importance of each group in trade varied.

The rulers of Kerala had extended warm welcome to the foreign traders. Facilities for trade were provided and they were given quarters to reside and to build their own houses. Symbols of honour were conferred on them. Concessions of taxes were a part of the deal. Such were the cases of Bhaskara Ravi's (962 A.D. to 1020) grants to Jewish chieftain Joseph Rabban (1000 A.D.) and the grant of Ayyan Atikal (849 A.D.) Governor of Venad to Mar Sapis Iso, the Christian merchant prince. Zamorin's gift to Muccunti mosque (13th century) may also be included in this series. Mar Sapis Iso was called the founder of the 'Nagaram' in the grant. We will see the Zamorins' welcome to the Arabs in the forthcoming pages. The reason for the tolerance and generosity was the fact that the early Jews and Christians came to this undeveloped semi-tribal Dravidian society, devoid of naval power and coinage with ship-loads of gold and prospects of trade. The interest

of trade might have induced harmony inspite of religious and racial differences. Therefore the Christian church established by Mar Sappir Iso in the 9th century came under the protection of the state and the king himself ordered Ilavar, Vellalar, Taccar, Vannar etc. to co-operate with the latter.¹⁰

Coming to the 5th century A.D. there was a change in the control of spice trade. This was caused by the fall of the Roman Empire and on account of the Indians' reluctance to leave the Indian soil. The vacuum was filled by the Arabs and Persians engaging in a steadily growing intercoastal trade. The history of the Arabs on Indian ocean is of an expanding commerce which reached its peak in the 9th century of Christian era.¹¹

The Arabs had settled in Sumatra and Ceylon by the first century A.D.¹² It is also believed that the Arabs and Persians had formed a small colony on the West-Coast of Sumatra.¹³ By 753 A.D. the colony of Arabs in Canton had become large enough to attack and pillage the

10. M.G.S. Narayanan, Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala, p. 5.

11. G.F. Hourani, Arab Sea faring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times, pp. 61-79.

12. Nafis, A., "Arabs' Knowledge of Ceylon", IC, XIX (1935), p. 224.

13. S.M.H. Nainar, Java as noticed by Arab Geographers, p. 23.

city. The rise and spread of Arab political power within a few years of the rise of Islam engulfing vast territories from Western Africa to the borders of China and from Caucasus to the Southern shores of Arabia was an important factor in contributing to the development of Indo-Arab trade. The greatest impetus to Indo-Arab trade was given when Baghdad was founded by Abbasid Caliph Abu Ja far al-Mansur, for now for the first time the capital of Arab empire was directly linked by water with Arabian Sea through the water system of Tigris and Euphrates which jointly flowed to the Persian Gulf.¹⁴ The interruption of non-Muslim trading activity by the Islamic expansion in West Asia helped the Arabs gradually to strengthen their trading might everywhere and to acquire a virtual monopoly of commerce in the Indian Ocean.

This trade which brought ship-loads of gold to their market place compelled native rulers to extend to the traders all facilities. This had become such a great tradition by the time of Sulayman (851 A.D.) that "the people believed that the longevity of their kings (Balhara) and prosperity of the kingdom was due to their love for the Arabs". Masudi (943-955) adds "Islam is therefore

14. S. Maqbul Ahmad, Indo-Arab Relations, p. 87.

flourishing in his country". Though Masudi makes this statement in connection with the Balhara other Arab geographers have mentioned the flourishing Muslim communities on the Malabar coast where "None but Muslims ruled over them".¹⁵ The grants to Mar Sapor Iso and Joseph Rabban to which reference has already been made were the expressions of the warm welcome extended by the rulers. The tomb stone at Pantalayani, Kollam¹⁶ dated 166 Hijra (784 A.D.) in the grave yard of a big Masjid is testimony of an earliest Muslim settlement on Malabar coast. C.N. Ahammad Moulavi has mentioned that he had seen at Irikkalur, an ancient Mappila village in Cannanore district a tomb-stone bearing the date 50 A.H. But 20 years after he could not trace it as the area had been subjected to floods. The discovery of four gold coins of the Umayyad period in Kothamangalam village is a clear indication of the Muslim interior trade prior to 750 A.D., which again proves the possibility of settled Muslim trading communities along the coast.¹⁷ These traders

15. Nainar, Arab Geographers Knowledge: p. 142. The year of the writers are (1) Masudi (934-955), p. 163. (2) Idrisi (1154). (3) Abul-Fida (1213-31), p. 48. (4) Dimishqi (1325), p. 100.

16. It was an important port on the Malabar coast between Muziris and Konkan coast prior to the rise of Calicut. It is the Pantalains of the Chinese, Pandaraina of Idrisi and Ibn Battuta, Pandarini of the Portuguese, and Bandinaina of Abdulrazzack and possibly Patate of Pliny-present-day Quilandi, 13 miles north of Calicut.

17. Kothamangalam lies in the interior Malabar at the foot a mountain pass.

themselves came with the message of Islam to the caste-ridden society, with ship-loads of gold and with the prestige of Islamic civilization and as the subjects of the most powerful ruler on earth.¹⁸

The local tradition regarding the introduction of Islam into Kerala is contained in the Keralolpatti (Origin of Kerala). It states that Ceraman Perumal, the last Perumal ruler of Kerala, who was a convert to Islam, partitioned his empire and went to Mecca. He died on his way back from Mecca after visiting Prophet Muhammad and was buried on the Arabian coast. According to another tradition it was in commemoration of the partitioning of the kingdom that the 'Kollam Era' was started in 824-85 A.D.¹⁹ The earliest recorded version of this tradition is found in the accounts of Duarte Barbosa and Barros. Barbosa (c.1515 A.D.) concludes his narrative thus: "He (Ceraman Perumal) went in their (the Moors) company to the house of Mecca and there he died, or as it seems probable on the way thither; for the Malabares never more heard any

18. Arabs counted the most powerful kings of the world in the following order: 1. Caliph, 2. Byzantine emperor, 3. Chinese emperor, and 4. Balhara.

19. Keralolpatti (Gundert's Edition), p. 67.
Velayudhan Panikkasseril, Randu Keralolpattikal (Mal.), pp. 17, 25, 28.

tidings of him. Before he started the king divided his kingdom among his kinsfolk into several portions as it yet is, for before that time all Malabar was one kingdom".²⁰ Barros gives a similar account. "Sarama Pereimal, which king was so powerful that in memory of his name they used to make a reckoning of the period of his reign..... making it the starting point of an Era..... In his time the Arabs now converted to the sect of Muhammad began to trade with India.... When they were settled in the country this king Sarama Pereimal became a Moore and showed them great favour.... Thus they persuaded him that for his salvation he ought to end his life at the house of Mecha. He agreed.... and determined to make a partition of his state among his nearest kindred". Shaykh Zayn ud-din²¹ also gives a similar account. He says that a party of Muslim faqirs with a Shaykh started on a pilgrimage to Adam's foot in Ceylon and landed in Kodungallur. From this party the ruling king heard of Prophet Muhammad, the tenets of the religion of Islam and the miracle of splitting the moon. "allah, glory be to Him, and exalted be He, had caused to enter

20. The Book of Duarte Barbosa, Vol. II, pp. 2-4.

21. Shaykh Zayn ud-din, the author of Tuhfat ul-Mujahidin, completed in 1573. This is the first written work on Kerala History, by a Keralite,

in his mind the truth of the mission of Prophet, and the king believed in him". The king then asked the party to return by his capital and on their arrival he made arrangements for ruling his kingdom in his absence by appointing governors for provinces and he left for Mecca in their company. On his way back he fell ill and died. He had entrusted letters addressed to his relatives in Malabar introducing the party who had accompanied him, asking the rulers to grant them facilities for the propagation of the faith and erection of mosques. The party led by Malik Ibn-Dinar came to Kodungallur and they erected ten mosques in different parts of Malabar.²²

The serious chronological discrepancies in the different versions of the tradition make it difficult for us to accept it as it is. At the same time such a persistent tradition as current in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries cannot be easily discarded, because "Christians claim him as one of their early converts, the Muhammadans as their very first convert on Indian soil. At the same time the Hindus look upon him as one of their saints".²³ The mere fact that this tradition was not known

22. 'Tuhfat', pp. 35-40.

23. K.V. Krishna Ayyar, Cheraman Perumal - a new study, I, 9. Bharatha Kannudi (Quoted in P.H.S. Raja, Medieval Kerala, p. 5).

to Ibn Battuta who had visited Malabar several times, is not a good and sufficient reason to reject it. In fact he had heard of the conversion of a former ruler²⁴ in Dahfattan. Often Sulayman's statement, "I know not there is anyone of either nation (Chinese and Indian) that has embraced Islam or speak Arabic" is quoted against this tradition to show that Islam did not enter India till 851 A.D. As Nainar has stated Sulaiman's date cannot be taken as 351 A.D. as it is the sum total of Arab knowledge of India prior to 851 and it cannot be ascertained precisely in which period Sulaiman makes this statement.²⁵ Therefore it will not be useful to establish any theory on the strength of Sulaiman's statement.

The different versions give three different periods for the introduction of Islam into Kerala and for the Perumal's conversion.

1. During the life-time of Prophet (between 622-633 A.D.)
2. During the Eighth century

24. Adjacent to a Jama at mosque in Dharmadam in Northern Kerala, he had seen a very big tank with comfortable bathroom and staircase leading to the mosque so that people could perform ablution and take their bath. "Husain the Jurist told me that he who had built the mosque as well as the bain was one of the ancestors of Kuwayl (the ruler) that had been a Muslim and that there was a remarkable story concerning his conversion". Mahdi Husain, Rehla of Ibn Battuta, p. 187.

25. S.M.H. Nainar, Arab Geographers' Knowledge of South India, p. 108.

3. During the Ninth century.

This tradition that Islam spread in Kerala during the lifetime of Prophet is probably true. As has been pointed out, Arab sailors and merchants who were trading with Kerala at that time must have been the first converts to Islam. Therefore, it stands to reason to believe that Islam spread in Kerala along with its introduction in Arabia, especially in the trade settlements. But to believe that a Perumal of Kerala believed in Islam and went to Arabia, met the Prophet and was converted at his hands is a different matter. As minute details of the Prophet's life and activities have been meticulously recorded, one can be fairly certain that if a well-known king of Malabar (Kerala) had visited the Prophet it would not have escaped mention in the vast Hadith literature.

The second tradition is that the introduction of Islam into Kerala and the conversion of the Perumal took place in the eighth century A.D. There is circumstantial evidence supporting this possibility. The earliest reference we get in the form of inscriptions to prove the presence of Muslims in Malabar is a tombstone in an ancient grave yard at Pantalayini Kollam dated 166 Hijrah (782 A.D.) It reads: "Ali Ibn-Udthorman was obliged to leave this world for ever to the one which

is ever-lasting, and which receives the spirits of all, in the year 166 Hijrah (782 A.D.), so called after Muhammad the Prophet left for Madina".²⁶ Though the dating of this inscription was questioned by Dr. Burgess who thought that it could not be earlier than the fourteenth century, as Logan concluded it is possible that the tombstone was erected at a later date to commemorate the traditional burial place of the Arabian pioneer. The existence of a group of similar tomb stones at Pantalayini Kollam testifies to the existence of a settled colony of Muslims in that place.²⁷

The conquest of Sind by Muhammad ibn Qasim soon after 710 A.D. gave the Arabs the valuable ports of Daybul and Mansurah which brought them a stage nearer to the far east. Before the end of Umayyad caliphate (749) some Shia Muslims fleeing from the persecution in Khurasan had settled on an Island in one of the large rivers of China, opposite a port. Al-Marwazi had recorded that the community was still in existence about 1120 A.D. and acted as middlemen in the trade between Chinese and foreigners.²⁸ In

26. William Logan, Malabar Manual, I, pp. 195-6.

27. C.N. Ahmad Moulavi and K.K.M.A. Karsen, Mahathaya Mappila Sahithya Parambaram (Mal.) (The Glorious Mappila Literary Heritage), pp. 170-71.

28. G.F. Hourani, Arab Sea faring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval times, p. 63.

758 A.D. the Caliph's subjects were powerful enough to sack and burn the city of Canton.²⁹

The cause of Hajjaj's attack of Sind as recorded by Baladhuri itself proves the existence of a Muslim settlement in Ceylon prior to 710 A.D. The immigration of Nawayats either "at the end of the seventh century or in the beginning of the eighth century A.D."³⁰ to the Canara coast further strengthens the possibility of the existence of Muslim colonies on the Malabar coast at an earlier date. The learned scholar C.M. Ahamad Moulavi has recorded that he had seen a tombstone dated 50 A.H. in a grave yard at Irikkur near the ancient Muslim settlement of Valappattanam in Cannanore District, but that after twenty-one years when R.E. Miller and himself

29. S. Maqbul Ahmad, Indo-Arab Relations, p. 11. It was reported that the widows and children of some Muslim merchants who had died in Ceylon were repatriated by the king of Ceylon to their native country. The ship carrying them was attacked by the pirates of Debal, off the coast of Sind. Hajjaj Ibn Yusuf's appeal to the ruler of Sind to chastise the pirates fell on deaf ears. Thereupon Hajjaj sent his commander, Muhammad Ibn Qasim, to conquer Sind (712 A.D.). (Baladhuri, Futuhul Buldan in Elliot and Dowson, History of India as told by its own Historians, Vol. I, p. 118).

30. Wilks as quoted in Victor S.D' Souza, The Nawayats of Kanara, p. 51.

tried to take a photograph, the tombstone could not be traced because the whole grave yard was affected by floods.³¹

The presence of a powerful Muslim group, whose importance was recognised by the government of the country is proved by the 'Tharisappalli Copper Plates' (849 A.D.) granted with the approval of Emperor Sthanu Ravi in his fifth regnal year to the Syrian Christian merchant-chieftain Mar Sappir Iso. The fact that the copper plates are attested by some Muslims, probably merchants, goes to prove their influence in the political set-up of the country, which further establishes their long contact and flourishing condition from an earlier date.³²

Shaykh Zayn ud-din writing towards the close of sixteenth century (1573) on the first appearance of Islam in Kerala supports the view of the introduction of Islam in Kerala in the ninth century. He says, "As

31. R.E. Miller, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, p. 42.
C.N. Ahmad Moulavi and K.K.M.A. Kareem, Mappila Sahithyam, pp. 170-71.

32. The attestation to the copper plates in the kufic script reads: "And witness to this Maimun son of Ibrahim and witness Mohammad son of Mani and witness Salih son of Ali and witness 'Uthman son of Al-Marziban and witness Muhammad Baker son of Isa and Ismail son of Yakub". Syed Mohideen Shah, Islam in Kerala, pp. 13-14.

for the exact date there is no certain information with us; most probably it might have been two hundred years after Hijrah (822 A.D.) of the Prophet".³³

The question then arises whether the advent of Islam in Kerala was related to the conversion and emigration of the Perumal. Ibn Battuta has recorded the tradition of one of the ancestors of the king of Kottayam called 'Kawayl' who was converted to Islam.³⁴ Though the statement is obscure, it is possible that perhaps the ancestor referred to here may have been a Perumal, ruler of Kerala. Hence it cannot be argued that the Perumal legend was totally unknown to the Moroccan traveller. As Dr. M.G.S. Narayanan points out "There is no reason to reject the tradition that the last Cera king embraced Islam and went to Mecca since it finds a place not only in Muslim chronicles, but also in Hindu Brahminical chronicles, like Keralolpatti, which need not be expected to concoct such a story which in no way serves to enhance the prestige or further the interests of the Brahmin or Hindu population".³⁵ But the

33. *Tuhfat*, p. 39.

34. Mahdi Husain, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

35. M.G.S. Narayanan, "Political and Social Condition in Kerala under the Kulasekhara Empire" (Unpublished Thesis submitted for Ph.D. in Kerala University, (1972), pp. 185-90.

tradition that he partitioned his empire in 824-25 A.D. (which is also the starting year of Kollam Era) cannot be accepted because a united kingdom flourished in Kerala from 800-1122 A.D. It has also to be noted that the provincial chieftains (Naduvalis) had been very powerful in the kingdom even when the centralised monarchy existed. We find the proof of their importance in their attestation of the grants by ruling kings to the merchants.³⁶ If we associate the tradition of the division of Kerala into several principalities with the conversion and emigration of the last Perumal, it might have happened only by the beginning of the twelfth century A.D. Three circumstances support this argument.

1. The tradition relating to the last Perumal's body-guards being designated as Onnu Kuru Ayiram (Thousand soldiers less one).

2. The inscription in the Madayi mosque dated 518 A.H. (1124 A.D.).

3. The Malayalam Proverb 'Torru Toppiyittu' (Defeated and converted).

36. Bhaskara Ravi's Copperplate grant (1000 A.D.) is attested by important provincial chieftains. M.G.S. Narayanan, Cultural Symbiosis, Trivandrum (1972), p. 30.

The last Perumal, Rama Kulasekhara, is believed to have disappeared under strange circumstances in 1121 A.D., which prevented the nomination of another leader. Hence his bodyguard came to be known as Onna Kure Ayiram (one thousand less one). The above-mentioned Matayi mosque is one of the ten mosques believed to have been erected by Malik Ibn Dinar and his party. This would mean that the mosque was erected two years after the departure of the Ceraman Perumal to Mecca. The two year gap between his departure (1121 A.D.) and the erection of the mosque (1124 A.D.) is sufficient period for the party who had accompanied him on his return journey to come to Malabar and establish the mosques. In the tradition as recorded by Zayn ud-din, Madayi mosque is the third mosque established by the missionary group in Malabar, the Kodungallur and Kulam (Southern Kollam) mosques being the first and second respectively. But another shortcoming in this argument is to be noted again, that Zayn-ud-din says that it was many years after Perumal's death that the Malik Dinar Missionary group sailed for Malabar.³⁷

37. "Then the King died.... many years after this Sharaf Ibn Malik, Malik Ibn Dinar, Malik Ibn Habib and his wife Qamariyya and others with their children and dependants set sail for Malibar in a ship and arrived off Kodungallur", Tuhfat, p. 38.

Historians have so far neglected one important factor in this tradition, namely the missionary group under Malik ibn Dinar. To sum up this tradition from various sources, the group landed at Kodungallur with Perumal's letter. The ruling chieftains accorded them a warm welcome and eventually this group founded ten mosques in different parts of Malabar.³⁸ After entrusting these mosques to reliable disciples, Malik Ibn Dinar left Quilon for Shahr Muqalla. From there he proceeded to Khurasan and died on his way³⁹ or in Khurasan itself.

To look at this tradition from a different angle brings more chronological confusion. We know only one Malik Ibn Dinar in history. He was Malik Ibn Dinar as Sami who was the son of a Persian slave from Sijistan, and who became a disciple of Hassan of Basrah. He is mentioned as a reliable traditionist transmitting from such early authorities as Anas Ibn Malik and Ibn Sirin. He was a noted calligrapher of the Quran. He died in

38. The ten places are; 1. Kodungallur, 2. Kulam, 3. Hayli Maravi (Madayi), 4. Pakhanur, 5. Manjarur, 6. Kanjar Kuth, 7. Jurfattan, 8. Dharm fattan, 9. Fandarina and 10. Shaliyat (Tuhfat, pp. 38-9).

39. Ibida., p. 39. Zayn-ud-din says that he died in Khurasan while Umar Suhrawardi, the author of Rihlat al-Muluk, holds the view that he died at Kasargod. T. Ubaid, Hazrat Malik Ibn Dinar (Mal.), p. 17; also P.A. Syed Mohammad, Kerala Muslim Charithram (Mal.), pp. 57-63.

748 A.D. (c.130 A.H.).⁴⁰ One thing is thus proved beyond doubt that Perumal did not meet the Prophet as Zayn ud-din stated. The second argument that Perumal went to Mecca in 8th century is probable, though we have established it to be in 1121 A.D. earlier in this chapter. The nature of the tradition suggests that the story is a later fabrication around the known personalities of history. Stories of kings who converted to Islam was current in the East in other countries as well. It becomes also clear as the names indicate that men of this missionary group were Persians, as they came from Basra. As S.D. Goitein observed, "the very expansion of Islam was largely the work of non-Arab peoples".⁴¹ Persian influence on Mappila Muslims is evident from the use of the words like Bank,⁴² Mulla,⁴³ Shirni,⁴⁴ Sabeena,⁴⁵ Nishan Kallu,⁴⁶ and others.

The fact that the missionary group was able to establish ten mosques along the Malabar coast in two and

40. Farid ud-din Attar, Tadhkirat al-Awliya (Tr.), A.J. Arberry, Muslim Saints and Mystics, p. 26.

41. S.D. Goitein, Studies in Islamic History and Institutions, p. 10.

42. Adhan, Call for prayer.

43. The man who teaches Quran.

44. Sweet dishes.

45. Pious songs sung in nights.

46. The stones placed at the head and foot of a Qabar.

half years proves beyond doubt that there had already been settled communities of Muslims in these places. The letter of the Perumal to the local rulers helped them to obtain a warm reception and also facilities to erect mosques. But this had been the case even prior to the conversion of the Perumal. The Arab geographers repeatedly speak of kings who had been very kind to the Muslims.⁴⁷ In the eighth and ninth centuries, as Buddhism and Jainism were on the retreat, and as Brahminism had not exerted its domination, there was sufficient laxity in the social life of Malabar for the introduction and assimilation of the new creed. The welcome given by the rulers to the traders is proved by the munificent grants to the merchant princes.⁴⁸ Describing the rapid growth of Islam in Kerala Zayn ud-din says: "Allah, glory be to Him, and exalted be He, made the faith of Islam spread in most of the inhabited regions

47. Refer to Arab geographer's statement on Balhara, 'The king of king's whose people believed that the longevity of their king was due to their favour shown to Muslims. S.M.H. Nainar, Arab Geographers' Knowledge of South India, pp. 153-67.

48. Copper Plate grants to Joseph Rabban, and Mar Sappir Iso (The Christian Merchant). For a detailed discussion on the significance of these grants, vide, M.G.S. Narayanan, Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala, pp. 23-37.

of the earth. Allah has been gracious to the people of Malaibar in Hind in making them accept the faith of Islam spontaneously and willingly, and not out of fear or compulsion. Thus Islam took roots and its adherents increased in number".⁴⁹ The Muslims steadily increased in number by immigration and proselytisation. Traders from different parts of the world began to flock to the coastal towns and new inland as well coastal centres developed. The rulers received them well because they found in these caliph's subjects a substitute for the Syrian Christians and Jews whose international influence was waning. Zayn ud-din says: "The rulers have respect and regard for the Muslims, because the increase in the number of cities was due to them. Hence the rulers enable the Muslims in the observation of their Friday prayers and celebration of Id. They fix allowances for Qazis and muadhins and entrust them with the duty of carrying out the laws of Shariat. No one is permitted to neglect the mass prayers on Fridays. In greater part of Malaibar, whoever neglects it, is punished or made to pay a fine. The rulers take from the Muslims only a tenth part of the income of their trade..... They do not levy

⁴⁹. Tuhfat, p. 12.

tax on those who possess lands or fruit gardens although they are of vast extent. As a result of such kindly treatment the Muslim merchants of olden days used to come in large numbers".⁵⁰

Ibn-Battuta who spent two years (1345-47 A.D.) in Malabar found several prosperous Muslim settlements in different parts of the Northern and Central Kerala, patronised by their rulers on account of their 'need for the merchants'. He found that "Muslims were most highly honoured amongst them (the Hindus) except that they do not eat with them or allow them into their houses".

The most important factor in the growth of Muslim influence in Kerala was the support given by the Zamorins of Calicut. Three factors of mutual interest had combined to form this attitude.

1. The great prosperity that the traders brought and the "increase in number of cities" in his country.
2. The financial support and manual assistance these traders gave him in fulfilling his political ambitions.
3. The trade interest of Calicut, for the Muslims made the Zamorin a vital link in the chain of Moorish

50. Tuhfat, pp. 51-2.

powers from Cordova in Western Europe to Malacca in the Far East.

According to tradition, it was the Calicut Koya who recommended to the Zamorin the conquest of Valluvanad in order to acquire the custodianship of the Mamankam festival of Tirunavay. The financial and military support provided by the Muslims helped the Zamorin to extend his sway over Valluvanad. The Zamorin had even issued an order that one or more male members of every fishermen family should be brought up as Muslims. This helped in the largescale conversion of fishermen community now known as 'pusalans', evidently a corruption of 'Pudu Islam' (New Islam) and enabled an adequate supply of manpower to man his navy and sea trade, because the Hindus were averse to sea and sea-trade, and left such 'vulgar' professions either to the lower castes or to the foreigners.⁵¹ It was his Muslim Admirals, the 'Kunnali Marakkars' who captained his navy in his prolonged wars with the Portuguese and the Muslim settlement of Ponnani for long served as his naval base and chief arsenal,⁵² while on the land Muslim recruits provided additional loyal

51. M.G.S. Marayanan, Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala, p. 33.

52. K.V. Abdulrahman, 'Ponnani - A brief historical account' (MES Ponnani College Souvenir), (1969), p. 17.

forces to supplement his traditionally militant but unstable Nayar fighters for his policy of aggrandisement.⁵³

The Zamorins amply reciprocated the services of the Muslims. As Zaynuddin had noted he offered fixed allowance of Qazis and Muadhins. A thirteenth century inscription in a mosque in Calicut has been recently discovered registering a land gift for the custodian of the Mosque for his maintainance.⁵⁴ The history of Ba Alavi Saints shows his patronage to them and to all other saints. "His love for the Muslims and respect for them especially for those who come from far-off lands" has been lauded by Shaikh Zayn ud-din.⁵⁵ The Muslims were given monopoly of import and export trade. The office of the 'Port Commissioner' was given to them with the title, 'Sabantra Koya'.⁵⁶ Kunnalis were his naval captains. After the coronation ceremony, the Zamorins used to receive Betel leaf from a Muslim dressed as a lady of a certain family.

53. R.E. Miller, op. cit., p. 17.

54. The Bilingual Inscription in the Muccunti mosque in Calicut registers one Nali (a measure) of rice for the maintainance of the mosque and land was set apart in Kunnemangalam and Pallikkal villages (areas some 10-15 miles from Calicut to north and east). M.G.S. Narayanan, op. cit., pp. 38-42.

55. Tuhfat, p. 41.

56. The original word was 'Shah bandar Khwaja'.

"The Muhammadan Qazi or Judge, Sabantra Koya or farmer of port dues, Tura Marakkayar or chief pilot and the 'Palli Musaliyar' or elder in charge of the mosque should be at the Jetty for Akampati (escort)⁵⁷ in the coronation procession", writes the historian of the Zamorins. But the greatest honour was the right of Kolikottu Koya (The Muslim chieftain of Calicut) to stand on the right side of Zamorin in the prestigious 'Mamankam' festival.⁵⁸ The Muslims not only made Calicut the greatest port of the West-Coast of India: they even helped to spread the name and fame of the Zamorin to Europe where he was known as a 'Moorish prince'. Calicut thus became the meeting place of nations. Such security and justice reigned in the city that Abd al-Razzaq (1142) noted that "large bundles of goods off loaded from the ships could be left on the streets for any length of time without guard and without threat of theft". These trade prospects attracted the Chinese traders also and by the time of Ibn Battuta Calicut, where he found large Chinese Junks, had become the last port on Malabar coast which the Chinese ships had visited.

57. K.V. Krishna Ayyar, The Zamorins of Calicut, pp. 94-6.

58. Ibid., p. 104. The great festival held at Tirunavay once in twelve years.

The establishment of Arakkal Swarupam of Cannanore was an event that greatly influenced the growth of the community in North Malabar. By twelfth century the influence of the Ali Rajas of Arakkal (often called Arakkal Svarupam) had increased so much that the Kolattiris (The Rajas who held sway in North Kerala) were induced to seek their help by bestowing Laccadive Islands on them. As Tom Pires remarked "Had the Portuguese not taken over the city (Cannanore) it would have fallen to Muhammad Ali and the Moors".⁵⁹

Farther north, in the kingdom of "Eli Mala" also Muslims were honourably treated. In the 'Musakavamsakavya', an eleventh century Sanskrit work, there are references to the foundation of two cities of Marahi (Madayi) and Vallabhapattanam (Valapattanam), "where merchants from distant islands were settled for trade".⁶⁰ These two cities and surrounding areas became important Muslim centres. Valapattanam, especially in the 16th and 17th centuries became an important centre of Islamic learning and numerous Tarigas and Shaykhs flourished there as will be discussed in the coming chapters. Atula, the court

59. Tom Pires as quoted in Ibrahim Kunju, "Islam in Kerala", Journal of Kerala Studies, IV, p. 600.

60. M.G.S. Narayanan, "Political and Social Conditions...." p. 258.

poet and chronicler of Musaka king, Srikantha (11th century), described the religious harmony of his capital as different deities co-existing "in peace like wild beasts forgetting their natural animosity in the vicinity of a holy hermitage".⁶¹

The support of the native rulers encouraged large-scale conversion to Islam. People of lower castes who were suffering from the cruel inhibitions of the Hindu caste system came forward in large numbers to embrace the new religion. The out-castes found, in the conversion to Islam a refuge. When shame and disgrace fell upon somebody, he converted himself.⁶² Thurston observes: "In the heat of a family quarrel, in moment of despair, a Hindu thought to revenge himself and upon his family by becoming a convert to Islam. But once in Islam, there was no question of going back to his religion and be a renegade to be killed by the Mappilas".⁶³ William Logan, the Malabar Collector observed in 1881: "The honour of Islam once conferred on a Cheruman (scheduled caste of Kerala) or any one of the lower caste he moves at one

61. Musakavansa Kavya as quoted in M.J.S. Narayanan, Cultural Symbiosis, Introduction, p. 11.

62. A Proverb in Malayalam runs 'Torru Toppiyittu', which means defeated and converted.

63. E. Thurston, Castes and Tribes of South India, Madras (1909), IV, pp. 458-60.

spring several places higher socially than that which he originally occupied and the figures corroborating what has been actually observed in the district show that nearly fifty thousand Cherumars and other Hindus have availed themselves of the opening.⁶⁴ The new converts were given clothes and robes by the Muslims. Zayn ud-din observed: "The unbelievers never punish such of their countrymen who embrace Islam but treat them with the same respect shown to the rest of Muslims though the convert belongs to the lowest of the grades of their society".⁶⁵ As Montgomery Watt observed "better economic prospect" also 'had profound influence on religious movements' since, as a trading community Mappilas could move freely with their merchandise and were less taxed. Moreover in Calicut as well as in other parts of Malabar, as noticed by Ibn Battuta, almost all men related to sea trade were Muslims.

In Quilon in South Kerala where Malik Ibn Dinar had erected one of his ten mosques, the Muslim trading community had acquired such prominence in the political set up of the country that they were cited as witnesses to the Tarisappalli Copper Plate Grant made by Ayyan Atikal

64. W. Logan, Malabar, I, p. 197.

65. Tuhfat, p. 52.

Tiruvatikal, Governor of Venad (849 A.D.).⁶⁶ The cavalry wing of the king was chiefly manned by them.

The community as has been described by Abul Fida (1273-1331), Marco Polo (c.1293), Abdul Razzaq (1442) and best of all by Ibn-Battuta (1304-1369) grew in number by 1583 to form ten percent of the population.⁶⁷ But the importance of these people in the political and economic affairs of the country was far more than what their smaller number would suggest. Ibn Battuta found Muslim merchants and Muslim houses in most of the districts of Northern and Central Kerala. At Mangalore, on the northern fringe of Mappila area, he noticed a settlement of 4000 people originated from Fars and Yamen. Travelling south, he noticed Muslim colonies with big Jamaath mosques at Hili (Madayi), Baliyappattam, and Pantalayini Kollam. His difficulty in obtaining food due to caste pollution was overcome by the large number of Muslim houses on the way: "Were it not for them no Muslims could travel". Nevertheless he experienced friendly welcome from the Hindus. "Muslims are most highly honoured amongst them.... except that they do not eat with them or allow them to

66. M.G.S. Narayanan, Cultural Symbiosis, pp. 31-37.

67. Barbosa (1500-1516) noticed only the coastal settlement of Muslims and was mistaken by the presence of large number of Muslims in the trading centres which he estimated as forming one fifth of the population of Malabar.

their houses". At Calicut, he was amazed by the splendour and pomp, while at Quilon he was struck by the greatness of the Jamaath mosque.

The peaceful assimilation and rapid growth of the community on Malabar coast are sufficient temptations for a student of history to analyse the various factors that contributed to these developments. The social status and royal patronage of the early traders were aspects of great significance. They lived in separate quarters with virtual autonomy, something which may be the earliest form of extra-territorial rights.⁶⁸ They lived with least interference in the society and their economic interests were never in conflict with the agrarian economy of the natives. Instead they provided ready market for the agricultural products and cash crops. Trade and industry flourished with them, and new cities sprang up all along the coast. The unprecedented development of cities may rightly be called an urban revolution, which is ascertained in Zayn ud-din's statement.⁶⁹ Though we have no statistical data of the income of these Rajas, the nature of conquest and consolidation of powerful Rajas

68. Judaism and Christianity too were introduced into Malabar by trading communities who were patronised by native rulers, for which reference has already been made.

69. "The rulers have respect and regard for the Muslims, because the increase in the number of cities was due to them". *Tuhfat*, p. 51.

would reveal their loose hold and consequent rights on land. Zamorin himself who by the time of the arrival of Portuguese had exercised overlordship all over northern Kerala including Cochin had innumerable conquered territories under him, but the rulers were allowed to continue, provided they agreed to pay some tribute or to forfeit certain rights. "Whenever the Samuri fights against any of the weak chieftains for some reason or other and subdues him, he would give him some property or a portion of the territory".⁷⁰ Zayn ud-din also adds that it was "because of the regard of the people of Malabar for old customs". When he was defeated the Raja of Cochin ceded to Zamorin Munchira Mukkatam and certain rights in the temples of Trivandrum and Chengannur.⁷¹ Again when the Kolattiri was defeated, he was compelled to cede to the Zamorin certain 'Melkoyma' rights over the Taliparamba temple. Such acts were just recognitions of sovereignty and they were virtual liabilities than assets. Except from the 'Cerikkals' (lands which were personal property of the kings) the income from land in the form of land revenue was

70. Ibid., p. 41.

71. K.V. Krishna Ayyar, A History of Kerala, p. 178. He also agreed to send a flag with an offering to Tirunavay for the 'Mamankam'.

insignificant.⁷² Thus all these Rajas to a great extent depended on duties on trade and transit. These two rights were considered exclusive rights of sovereigns.⁷³

As for the rate of customs duties Zayn ud-din says "The rulers take from the Muslims, only a tenth part of the income of their trade, and realise also the penalties, whenever they do anything calling for a penalty".⁷⁴

Ibn-Battuta noted a flourishing Muslim community numbering 4000 with settlers from Fars and Yemen under the royal patronage 'on account of the King's need of the merchants'.⁷⁵ This 'need of merchants' was the motive behind befriending Muslims who now substituted the Jews and Christians in international trade providing direct access to Baghdad and opening vast markets in the Islamic empire, as well the great boon to transit trade to Europe.

The Muslims in turn supplied men and money for various schemes of conquest of the Zamorin. His navy was entirely manned by them. In order to enable ample a

72. In connection with land under the possession of Muslims Zayn ud-din says "They do not levy any tax on those who possess lands or fruit gardens although they are of vast extent". *Tuhfat*, p. 52.

73. Even when Vasco da Gama wanted permission to leave the port in 1499 after his transactions, the Zamorin demanded customs duties and detained the factor. K.V. Krishna Ayyar, *The Zamorins of Calicut*, p. 148.

74. Zayn ud-din, *Tuhfat*, p. 52.

75. H.A.R. Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, pp. 231-32.

supply of men to man his navy and sea-trade, the Zamorin issued a royal decree, that one male member of every fishermen family should be brought up as Muslim.⁷⁶ Not only that, "the Zamorin induced them", writes the historian of the Zamorins of Calicut "by special concessions to visit his new town and settle there." They were not only given freedom to convert the people to their faith, they were also given the monopoly of import and export trade.⁷⁷ Muslim fighters supplemented the irregular Nayar forces of the Zamorin, and the conquest of Tirunavay, the site of the prestigious Mamankam, was planned and executed by Kolikkottu Koya.⁷⁸ The conquests thus carried on enabled him to claim such titles as 'Kunmalakkonattiri' (The Lord of hills and waves).

Social disabilities of lower castes and restrictions imposed on non-caste people were the most important

76. L.A. Krishna Ayyar, The Cochin Tribes and Castes, Vol. II, p. 462; T.W. Arnold, The Preaching of Islam, p. 266; K.B.A. Mohammad, Mappilamar Engottu (Mal.), p. 17. In the Middle and Central Kerala fishermen later became Roman Catholics, indicating the community's readiness for conversion. W. Logan, Malabar, Vol. I, p. 197. He adds that the practice of bringing up one male member of fishermen family as Musalman is continued in modern times.

77. K.V. Krishna Ayyar, The Zamorins of Calicut, p. 52.

78. As an expression of his gratitude the Zamorin gave the Koya the privilege to stand on the right side of Zamorin during the Mamankam festival. This was considered a very high honour, for a Muslim historian in sixteenth century (1573 A.D.) counted it first among the favours of the Zamorin. Qazi Mohammed, Fath ul Mahan, p. 242.

reasons for conversions. But Islam came into contact with these people in the interior in the later centuries when Portuguese depredations on the coastal settlements and loss of export trade compelled them to move in to the interior. During the period from sixteenth century the Sufi Missionary activities in the interior settlements became very active.⁷⁹ In these settlements, wherein the Mappilas, hitherto traders confined to coastal trade emporiums, came into contact with agricultural labourers and non-caste peoples. The Mappilas themselves had to be contented with the status of tenants and landless labourers because in the traditional agrarian system ownership of land was 'Jenmam' or birth-right of the privileged classes. Thus the 'Vasco da Gama epoch' was a period of retrogression and economic decline for the community but it opened up new horizons for the propagation of the faith.

There were many causes for the community's ranks to swell. The children of the union between Arab Muslims and local women were brought up as Muslims.⁸⁰

79. A detailed discussion of the topic is made in Chapter II.

80. M.L. Dames, (Ed.), The Book of Duarte Barbosa, Vol. II, p. 78.

The Arab short-time marriage called 'Muta marriages' are still in practice in some of the coastal cities of Kerala.⁸¹ Many of these also had accepted Islam. T.W. Arnold has discussed in detail the propagation of the Muslim faith in Malabar and the causes of conversion.⁸² The out-castes which were too many due to the rigorous restrictions of caste system found a ready refuge from its clutches by the acceptance in Islam. Francis Buchanan has given a description of out castes and convicts being sold to the Mappilas. "A Nair man who is found in fornication with a shanar is put to death and the woman is sold to the Moplays".⁸³ "A Namburi who condescended to commit fornication would formally have been deprived of his eyes, and the girl and all her relatives would either have been put to death or sold as slaves to the Moplays who send them beyond the sea, a banishment dreadful to every Hindu and still more to the native of Malabar who is more attached to his native spot than any other person I knew".⁸⁴ W. Logan records that Hindu youth would avenge himself and his family by converting to Islam.⁸⁵

81. A detailed discussion of Muta marriage is given by S.M. Mohamed Koya, Mappilas of Malabar, Calicut (1983), pp. 12-21.

82. T.W. Arnold, The Preaching of Islam, pp. 261-87.

83. F. Buchanan, A Journey from Madras through countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar, Madras (1800), p. 737.

84. Ibid., p. 739.

85. W. Logan, Malabar, Vol. I, pp. 197-99.

Better economic advantages and scope of employment and the consequent change in social status were other attractions to converts. The rise of innumerable urban centres opened new scope for employment. The brisk trade activities required the manual service in the form of accountants, helpers, watchmen, porters, and servants. There was an unlimited demand for servants in the royal service as well, for it is said that the Zamorin used to appoint one accountant and helper and other servants to every merchant when he landed in Calicut. The unbounded generosity and hospitality of this king again must have required a good number of royal 'slaves'. Abdurazzack tells us of the manner how a befitting residence was allotted to him and royal provisions were sent and servants assigned. These servants could not have been Nairs since they were bound to pollute their persons in so closely mingling with the flesh and fish-eating foreigners. The royal hospitality alone provided demand for manual labour as servants of different level and status.

The demand for seamen has been noted by travellers and to enable an adequate supply of man power for the Zamorin's navy, and sea-trade he had made a Royal decree to bring up one member every fishermen family as Muslim.⁸⁶

86. "The Brahmin-kshatriya prejudice against trade and navigation also induced them to leave such 'vulgar' affairs in the hands of foreigners", M.G.S. Narayanan, Cultural Synthesis in Kerala, Trivandrum (1972). p. 5.

A lot of labour was in demand as porters. Carts and carriages were not in use as late as 19th century. The reason was the absence of good roads. Carts could not be used due to innumerable rivers in fury half the year and with their steep banks in the summer. Ibn Battuta testifies how only men were used to carry goods and not even bullock carts. Buchanan also testifies to the fact.⁸⁷ As late as 1808 after annexation by English we see A British Official describing "the pitiabie condition of roads in Malabar". This would mean that not only in the ports but all along the coastal routes men could come into close contact with Muslim traders.

Many of these people had to move to the cities to find job opportunities in the various ways as already noted. But the Hindu Law-givers had an aversion to city life. According to Gotama there is a perpetual an-adyaya (non-recital of Vedas) in the city.⁸⁸ Apasthamba has a similar injunction. So also Vasistha and Manu. Apasthamba forbids a snataka (pious householder who has completed

87. 'In Malabar even cattle are little used for the transportation of goods, which are generally carried by porters'. F. Buchanan, Journey through Mysore, Canara and Madras, p. 741.

88. Gotama Dharma Sutra XVI, 43 Cf. A. Gosh, The City in Early Historical India, p. 52.

his studies as a brahmacari) to enter the city. Bandhayana makes it very clear by declaring that nobody living in the city, with his body covered with the dust of the city and his eyes and mouth filled with it can attain salvation even if he leads an austere life.⁸⁹ Anyhow 'apad-dharma' (emergency) relaxation were permitted, which could permit any means of livelihood. But many of them were looked down upon by the luckier ones.⁹⁰

The Brahmins in Kerala society were at the apex, followed by the Nayars, and they formed the gentry. In the agrarian structure Brahmins were landlords, the Nayars Kanakkar or tenants, and Ilavas formed agricultural labourers. There was no relevance for Brahmins and Nayars moving to the cities. In the case Parayasa and Pulayasa they were by birth bound to the land. They could be bought and sold with the land and were destined to work and die on the same soil whoever be their master. Moreover in the early stages of its growth confined to the port towns there was no possibility of the Muslim community coming into contact with these people who lived deep in the interiors away from the settlements of caste Hindus.

89. Ibid., p. 53. (Apasthamba, Dharma-Sutra 1, 11, 21, 32).

90. A. Gosh, The City in Early Historical India, p. 53.

The Chogans or Ilavas of Malabar were people who migrated from Ceylon (Ilam) as their name indicates. These people were traditional toddy tappers, and men who plucked coconuts. They had no role in the land-owning system except as agricultural labourers. They were naturally settled along the coastal regions with cocanut plantation and as such provided manual labour as porters and came into contact with Muslims. In the caste heirarchy they stood just below Nayars and could move more easily to the cities. Naturally in Malabar they came under the pale of Islam. It is a startling discovery during the course of the field work that even today in Calicut a non-Muslim is invariably referred to as 'Thiyyan'. That was why in North Malabar the Muslims were influenced by concepts like Illam, Kulam and Kiriya, common among the Ilavas. The field work conducted for this study in the case of Muslim and Ilava Ornaments revealed striking similarity which again shows large-scale conversions from Ilavas.⁹¹

As A.M. Klausen observed: "When a lower caste person wants to improve his economic position he very often does so by breaking off his connections with the native

91. The present writer is deeply indebted to K.A. Mohamed, Archaeologist, A.M.U. Aligarh for the help, given in the comparative study of ornaments.

home, village, and his caste kindred.⁹² Such people got jobs in the city milieu and very often got a new occupation not represented in the traditional caste system. Thus he entered a milieu where representatives of many castes lived side by side in a new employment situation and where caste attachment will not therefore impose subordination to any one.

This movement of people in search of job to the trade centres helped the "increase in number of cities" with the help of merchants whom the "kings were in need of", In every sense it was Asian mode of urbanization.⁹³ Thus Muslims at least in small degree caused occupational diversification and non-caste economy, and the multifarious economic changes helped the growth of individualism, the greatest trait of Malayali character.

92. A.M. Klausen, Kerala Fishermen and the Indo-Norwegian Project (Scandinavian University Publication, Oslo, 1969), p. 179.

93. "The rapid rate of urbanization visible in Asian countries does not bespeak of a corresponding growth of industry, but a shift of people from low productive agricultural employment to yet another section marked by low productivity employment, namely handicraft production, retail trading, domestic services in urban areas". N.V. Sevani, Urbanization and Urban India, Bombay (1966), p. 7.

CHAPTER II

SUFISM AND THE ROLE OF SUFIS IN THE GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITY

Muslim settlements coastal as well as the interior have 'Jarams'¹ of either a Sufi, Wali or Sayyid or at least a holyman. These jarams served as the focal point of common man's religion especially in the isolated interior settlements. One of the reasons for the universal popularity of these shrines in the interior was that they provided sufficient religious education to the rural folk. The absence of established Madrasahs was due to the absence of social organisations to initiate them. In such places a Mulla - himself with a meagre learning - would collect a group of students in some quarter of a house and would instruct them in reading and writing Quran and the requirements of prayer. Their remuneration was not paid in cash but in the form of a fixed measure of paddy after each harvest.² In those old coastal settlements even during the visit of Ibn-Battuta

1. Malayalam equivalent of 'Darghas'.

2. The Mulla's men would go to every house with his list and a gunny bag to collect his dues. Even those houses where no student may be studying under the particular Mulla considered it an obligation to give something to these men.

Madrasah system was well established.³ On the Western Coast there was an earlier centre of religious learning at Ponnani which is said to have been founded by an Arab divine in the 12th century.⁴ Later on Caliyam developed to be an important centre of higher learning in theology.

All over the Deccan the role of Sufis-individuals- in the growth of Islam was significant. Either on account of the unwillingness on the part of Sufis to accept state's allowances or by dis-inclination of the state on some pretext to support these teachers, they had to carry on their proselytisation programme single-handed in the region, what R.M. Eaton calls the volatile zone. As he has shown the magnitude of the problem of assimilation of the creed was great.⁵ In fact this region had more Sufi orders than Akbar's India.⁶

3. Ibn Battuta refers to the big Jamaath Mosque of Pantalayini where there were 300 students studying and fed from the common kitchen run by charity. (Mahdi Hussain, Rehla of Ibn Battuta, pp. 186-7).

4. K.V. Abdurahman, 'Ponnani, A Brief Historical Account', MES Ponnani College Souvenir (1969).

5. R.M. Eaton, Sufis of Bijapur, p. 125. The author has described how by degrees the pious Sufis tried to instil enthusiasm among the converts by including religious themes in folk life especially in songs of their routine.

6. Abul Razal had included only 11 orders in 'Ain, while Kerala had 11 active Tariqahs and three more with small followings. Vide, Blochmann (Trans.), Ain-i-Akhari, Vol. II, p. 203.

The rise and spread of sufism and its influence on the Muslim community in particular and society in general was quite similar to that of other parts of the country. It is testified by the fact that the rulers had recognised at least some of them as leaders of the community wielding authority over them.⁷

The time of arrival of the first Sufi saint in Malabar cannot be ascertained. According to tradition the introduction of Islam into Kerala and the conversion of the last Perumal, were the work of Malik ibn Dinar the first Sufi to arrive in this land. As he was not a 'companion' (Sahabi) of the Prophet, his meeting with the last Cera ruler who had gone to Mecca is improbable if the last Cera ruler Ceraman Rama Kulasekhara had ruled upto 1121 A.D. The writers who compiled the life's work on Sufis and sufism do not give any evidence to the arrival of Malik Dinar on Malabar. Farid ud-Din Attar in his 'Tadhikirat al-Awliya' has given the story of how the Sufi came to be called Malik Dinar and mentions a

-
7. The Zamorin used to send robes on their succession to the Makhdums in Ponnani, who were Chisti saints. The ancestors of Mamburam Tannals (Ba-Alavi saints) were given land to settle, an allowance for their maintainance and the headship of the Mappilas. Muhammad Shah, The Kondotty Tannal was made Inamdar of many villages by Tipu Sultan later.

sea voyage he had undertaken which he concludes thus: "Then he walked over the sea and disappeared". Other than this sentence nothing suggests that Malik Dinar ever made a journey in a ship. If one Malik ibn Dinar had ever visited Malabar it was some one else named after the great Malik Dinar, and that too in the beginning of 12th century. But it is possible that not much later after the rise and spread of Islam Sufis had reached this land. From a recent study by a well-known scholar it appears that "Mariners and traders encouraged adventurous preachers and mystics to accompany them for various reasons".⁸ Athar Abbas Rizvi says that the mariners used to take Sufis and pious men with them firstly to give them spiritual training engaging their leisure hours. Secondly they would provide the mariners spiritual solace and composure in the face of hair-raising calamities on the sea. Thirdly they believed that their presence would protect the ship and crew from dangers and fourthly these pious people acted as mediators between them and natives of the lands where-ever they may touch, in case of any dispute or bargain. Ibn Battuta has mentioned such practices among fishermen and sailors.

8. Athar Abbas Rizvi, Sufism in India, Appendix on Sufis of Deccan and South India. Taking pious holy men on board was believed to bring good luck, P.R.G. Mathur has noted that Mappila fishermen of Tanur sometimes took a Moulavi or Musaliar with them on fishing expeditions.

From the fifteenth century onwards we find the systematic working of Tariqahs in Kerala. The mould literature is sufficient to construct a continuous history of the main Sufi orders. Ibn-Battuta's testimony of Khazeruni Shrines is a clear indication of the existance of earlier Sufi orders too. But these Khanqahs were situated along the coast in the trade centres which served as a kind of resort for the Muslim merchants for their religious pursuits in leisure times. In those days it was of the nature of an aristocratic⁹ movement and was thus devoid of any chances of contact especially with non-Muslims. When the Portuguese after capturing the trade, decided upon systematic destruction of Muslim settlements along the coast many of these people had to move to the interior. The foreign Muslims, very few of them could hold up against such adversities, yet a good number of them had to leave Malabar and other trade centres.¹⁰ A comparative study of the Muslim settlements

9. Spencer Trimingham, Sufi Orders in Islam, pp. 9-12.

10. Even evacuation of the Malabar coast was not possible for the Arab Muslims, "Disinterested on trade losses and on threat of life the Arab traders had gathered seventeen vessels at Pantalayini Kollam. They were 2000 in all onboard. The fleet was captured and Arabs all of them were killed by Lopo Soares. Danvers. F.C., The Portuguese in India, I, p. 116.

described by Ibn-Battuta¹¹ and of Zayn ud-din's Tuhfat shows the rapid growth of Muslim settlements in the interior. Tuhfat's list include 30 places connected with some incident or other in Portuguese-Muslim rivalry.¹² These settlements were in the beginning concentrated on the river banks on the confluence of which the Arab-Muslim trade had concentrated. In other words when the Muslims lost the monopoly of foreign trade they were concentrating on the riverine trade, thus trying to continue the old profession though in much smaller scale. This would explain why all along the course of the rivers north of Ponnani there are Muslim settlements dating back to 16th or 17th centuries. The outstanding character of these settlements are their predominant Muslim population whereas their surrounding areas continued to be domiciled by Hindu majority. It was from these riverine trade centres that Muslims gradually spread into the interior where atleast some of them could afford to buy land and become agriculturists.

A new foreign element was being introduced into the caste-ridden village communities dominated by the Brahmin and Nayar landlords. The low-caste and

11. Ibn-Battuta describes only the coastal settlements. But it has to be kept in mind that he was making a hasty trip to catch up with the Chinese ship at Kavalam on which his family and belongings were boarded at Calicut.

12. Tuhfat, Appendix A, pp. 95-98.

non-caste people bound to land by birth had to work for their masters for nothing but their bread, which they were made to believe was expected of them by religion. The entry of Muslims into this society with the message of universal brotherhood naturally gave an opportunity for a rethinking to the lower classes. Consequently the newcomers offered too many attractions to the lower-classes. These settlements were the fertile lands for Sufism to grow. The Sufi centres were established in many of these settlements as proved by the presence of 'Jarams' or by the local traditions of saints.

The main Sufi orders that existed in Kerala were,

1. Qadiri
2. Rifai
3. Chishti
4. Suhrawardi
5. Naqshabandi
6. Kazeruni
7. Shadili
8. Ba-Alavi
9. Ba-faqih
10. Hydrus
11. Nurisha
12. Qadiri al-Aydarusiyyah wa al-Alaviyyah.

All Tariqahs recognised Muhiyuddin 'Abdul Qadir Jilani as the greatest Shaykh and his Tariqah the noblest of all. Even the Ba-Alavi and Ayderus Tariqahs of purely Arab origin claim in title, 'Tariqah Qadiri al-Aydarusiyya wa'l 'Alawiyyah'. The Suhrawardi Shaykh of Forathel called himself 'Abdul Qadir as-Sani out of respect for the first 'Abdul Qadir. Muhiyuddin Shaykh was commonly invoked by all Muslims as the protector of all. But no shaykh claimed that he was shaykh of Qadiri Tariqah. So was the case with Rifai silsilah Muslims had profound respect for Rifai Shaykh, his ratib was performed, Rifai Maulud was recited to guard against snake-bite and chanted to give relief from burnings,¹³ Yet the present writer could not get any example of a Shaykh claiming to head the Rifai Tariqah. Thus the two most important Qadiri and Rifai Tariqahs are merged in other Tariqahs. Their ideology and practices being imitated and emulated by the rest, they did not have independent existence. The Qadiri practice of 'Qunut' in Subhi prayer and rosary of 99 beads were universally accepted.¹⁴

13. Special powers against fire - like fire walking - and against snakes are universally recognised as special Rifai power.

14. The non-Sunni (Wahhabis) Muslims do not recite Qunut and use the rosary of 99 beads.

The most important Tariqah among Mappilas was, as it still is, the Tariqah Qadiri al-Aydarusiyya Wal Alawiyyah. An attempt is made in this study to draw the geneological tree of this Tariqah because Ba-Alavi and Aydarus Tariqahs originated among Sayyids of Tarim. It could be noted that the Bafaqih and Jifri line of Sufis too have merged in this Tariqah. Information available in the Encyclopaedia of Islam on Ba-Alavis Bafakihs, and on Aydarus¹⁵ have been helpful in tracing the line of succession of the Tariqahs. R.B. Sergeant's 'The Sayyids of Hadramawt'¹⁶ and his article on 'Materials for South Arabian History'¹⁷ were put together with the two monographs in Malayalam, on Mamburam Sayyid Alavi Tangal¹⁸ and on Sayyid Abdurahiman Bafaqi¹⁹ Tangal. The articles of Shihabuddin Imbichikoya Tangal, Senior Qadi of Calicut in the 'Panakkadu Tangal Smaraka Grandham' and of M. Ali Kunhi in 'Bafaki Tangal Smaraka Grandham' containing

-
15. E.I. (N.Ed.) Lofgren's articles on Ba-Alavis, Faqih Ba, and Aydarus.
 16. I am grateful to Dr. Stephen F. Dale of Ohio University for sending me xerox copy of this book from England, which facilitated not only this study but to develop my idea of the origin of 'Mappila'.
 17. R.B. Serjeant, 'Materials for South Arabian History', BSOAS, XIII (1), (1949), pp. 281-307.
 18. K.A.M.A. Kareem, Mamburam Sayyid Alavi Tangal, Tirurangadi (1970).
 19. Attakkoya Pallikkendi, Bafaqi Tangal, Calicut, (1973).

the geneological table and family history, with the manuscript of Sayyid Muhlar kept at Panakkadu were put together to compile this list. As only fragmentary information is available on the individual saints such a table would help in understanding the interconnections of the Tariqahs which finally took the name of Tariqat Qadiri al-Aydarusiyyah wa'l-Alawiyyah.

According to Lofgren²⁰ the nisba 'Ba' in South Yemen stands for Banu and is used to denote the sons or descendants like Al-Ba-Alavi or Awlad Ba-Kushayr. Ba-Faqih therefore means Banu Faqih which in Malabar came to be called only by single term Bafaqi. The Ba-Alavis thus means descendants of 'Alavi. The Hadrami Sayyids are descendants of their legendary ancestor Ahmad al-Muhajir who migrated from Basra to Western Yemen with his son Ubaidulla and two companions in 317 A.H./929 A.D. In the year 340 A.H./951 A.D. he left with his son Ubaydullah for Hadramawt and lived at first near Tarim in Al-Haajran, then in Karat Bani Jushayr and finally in Hussayyisa where he bought the territory of Sawf above the town of Bowr, where he died in 345 A.H./956 A.D. His grand sons Basri Jadid and Alavi settled near Sumal, near

20. Lofgren's article on Ba. in Encyclopaedia of Islam (New Edn.), Vol. I, p. 828.

Tangals. It is in Abdul Rahman al-Saqqaf and Sayyid Mouladdavila that the Mamburam Tangal line and Shihabuddin 'Ali Shihabuddin descended the 'Aydarus line of Sufis. These family connections helped the development of one single Tariqah, namely, Tariqat Qadiri al-Aydarusiyah wal-Alawiyyah descended from Shaykh 'Ali Shihabuddin.²⁴

'Ali, the seventh ancestor of the present Tangal was the first of the line to come to Malabar. He lies buried at Baliapattam. His son Husain had married from the Arakkal Royal House and lies buried at the 'Ilayanre Palli' of Calicut. His son Sayyid Muhlar Kunhi Sithi Koya settled in Malappuram and died there. He popularised this Tariqah among Mappilas of Malabar and laid down the rules of conduct, special Dhikrs and various Duas in a book.²⁵ Sayyid Hussain Arrakoya Tangal was banished by the British Government in 1882 for his alleged involvement in the Mappila outbreaks of the nineteenth century and died in Vellore in 1885. He lies buried in the courtyard of the Mosque

24. Shihabuddin Imbichikoya Tangal, Panakkad Tangal Smaraka Grandham (Mal.), p. 176.

25. The manuscript is in the possession of the present Shaykh, Muhammad Ali Shihab. Shaykhs on succession adds their name in Silsilah. The Silsila of the saints is taken from the book.

attached to the Baqiyat al-Salihah Arabic College.²⁶ Sayyid Muhammad Koya Kunhikoya was the man who built the Kodappanakkal house which is now the residence of the Shaykh of the Tariqah. This centre became the hub and axis of Mappila community during the life-time of the late Pukkoya Tangal. His house was not merely a place where Murids were initiated or Dhikrs were taught. Men and women of all ages irrespective of community or caste thronged to his house to kiss his hand or to get a Dua or Tawiz or prescription and for mediation in all affairs from matrimonial matters to politics of the State. He was made Qazi of eighty mosques, and parents of minor children with fortunes made him the custodian of properties. His devotees brought him presents of various kinds but they were distributed to the needy. It was because of that charisma and the Mappila's trust in his family that his son, Muhammadali Shihab, was elected president of Kerala State Muslim League.

Suhrawardi Tariqah was next in importance in Malabar. It was concentrated mostly in North Malabar. The Tariqah once had a large following and one of its important Shaykhs, Sayyid Moula Bukhari, had spread his

26. Shihabuddin Imbichikoya Tangal, loc. cit.

activities from Travancore to Mangalore. Here also the difficulty is that though a continuous chain of the Silsilah is available, very little is known of the life and history of the Sufis of this order. Like all other orders here also an important saint may become more venerable after death and a Jaram (dargha) would spring up in his honour and memory. Characteristic of the Taifa stage the descendants or custodian of 'Jaram' became the next Wali whose importance is greater by virtue of his blood-relationship to the deceased saint and not by his piety, wisdom or scholarship. Unless a descendant or successor could far excel the deceased saint in 'Karamah', which commanded popular respect for him, he continued to be mere custodian of the Jaram, who would be then buried around the prominent Qabar and would attract little attention.

There was just a reverse process too. An unimportant Tariqah would take pride in an earlier well-known saint of the order. Malas would be composed, Mouluds would be held and Merccas would be offered. Such was the case of the Naqshabandis. One is surprised to see that the Saifuddin Mala composed in 1327 A.H. is the Mala on Shaykh Abdulrahman al-Moulaviyya,²⁷ one of the

27. It was composed by Muhammed Kunhi Marakkar Moulavi and printed in 1327 A.H./1909 A.D. at the Matbaath al-Islamiya, Tirur.

Sufis of Naqshabandi order. He died in 1320 A.H. at Tanur and was buried at Mahe Kunhippalli. The Mala though named after Saifuddin, has little on 'Nurul Huda Nur Wali Saifuddin' who was the 26th Shaykh of the Tariqah but it actually is a Tadhkira of Abdurahmanul Moulavi who was the 36th Shaykh of the Tariqah, according to the Mala.

The greatest of the Sahrawardi Shaykhs was Abdul Qadir as-Sani, known as Porattel Shaykh. His Manaqib²³ does not give his date of birth, but says only 'Qarnul Ashir' (10th century A.H.). His date of death is given as 16th Dhul-Qaad, 983 A.H./1574 A.D. It is said that his father was one of the Sultans of Hamadan who had given up his kingdom and come to Baliapattam. Before his birth his father left and nobody knew where he had gone.

According to his Manaqib when he was 16, one day, a group of four strangers went to his house and asked his mother for food. She said, she had nothing except a cow belonging to Abdul Qadir. They killed the cow, cooked it and gave a little to her saying "Give it to your

23. Abdul Azees Musaliar, Manaqib Waliyyullahi al-Rabbani Wal-Ghawth al-Samadani Al Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Sani (Arabic), (1972). It is not known whether there was an old Manaqib which is quite possible as the Shaykh was widely respected.

son when he returns".²⁹ On his return his mother told him of the strangers and he took up their trail hoping to meet them. He met them in Bhatkal.³⁰ One of them asked "Have you got any food"? He said: "Yes". Then they all ate it. Afterwards one of them called Ahmad al-Khabushani gave him Ijazah and 'Khirqa'.³¹ He then returned home and later the king who was pleased with him by his sincere service conferred him the village of Porattel where he built a house and mosque and settled.

He had wide following and people from far off places came to visit him and became his murids. Various miracles were attributed to him. It is reported by some of his murids that one day the Shaykh was travelling with them in a boat. When the boat was reaching Cannanore, the Shaykh disappeared for a long time and then returned, He said, "My Shaykh Kamaluddin Muhammad al-Khabushani died and I prayed for him".³² He recommended special award to his disciples which were regularly recited after prayers. His sphere of activities were mainly the Muslim centres of North Malabar. But he is said to have visited Ponnani many times, and one of the Makhdums of

29. Abdul Azeez Musaliar, op. cit., p. 7.

30. Bhatkal is a township in Karnataka. For the origin of the term, vide, Victor S.D. Souza, The Mavayats of Canara, p. 53. It was one of the oldest Muslim settlements and home of the Bhatkali Muslims.

31. Abdul Azeez Musaliar, op. cit., p.6.

32. Ibid., p. 8.

Ponnani was his murid. He was acknowledged as Qutb uz-Zaman.

The next Shaykh of the Suhrawardi Silsila was Al-Shaykh Wajihuddin Abdurahman ul-Ummami, one of the Makhdums of Ponnani. He was the chief murid of Abdul Qadir as-Sani and was asked by the Shaykh on his death bed, to be his Khalifah until his son Kamaluddin came of age (16 years). The murid obeyed. Kamaluddin later became well-known as the Kallayi Shaykh. It is said that the makhdum used to awaken the boy Kamaluddin for calling out Adhan. One day, as usual the Makhdum called him but the boy did not reply. Twice he called but the boy replied only the third time. On being asked the reason for not replying twice, the boy said, "when you called me twice the cock on the 'Arsh' of Rahman'³³ had not woken up". The Makhdum then asked him to be Imam'.³⁴ In the end of the Namaz he said the first Salam and remained in that posture long, but the Mamums said the second Salam also and began their Dhikr. On being asked the reason, he said, "when I said my first salam I saw Prophet and companions in prayer and I could not take my

33. The reference is to the popular belief that it dawns only when the cock on the throne of Allah cries.

34. Only the leader of prayer in this context.

eyes from them. Makhdum then understood that the boy had come of age and conferred on him the Khirqa and Ijaza as his Shaykh, Abdul Qadir as-Sani had wished.³⁵ No Manaqib of Kamaluddin could be traced though he was the founder of the family of Kallayi Shaykhs.

Shaykh Nuruddin, the next saint was the son of Kamaluddin. He was born in Vengad but migrated from there to Kallayi and later settled in Caliyam where his Jaram stands now as a centre of 'Ziyarah'. The reasons for his migration is said to be that he killed, a Hindu boy because he foresaw that on growing up he would bring 'Fitna' to Muslims. He had been attacked by Hindus for this and had to migrate. Various Karamath are attributed to him and his Mala says that he had Islam Jinns, Wallis, birds and animals in his service.³⁶ According to the chronogram he died in 1048 A.H./1639 A.D. The Nuruddin Mala (composed in 1976) gives the names of all the Shaykhs of the Tariqah. Nuruddin Shaykh was the 37th and Shaykh Muhammad Kamaluddin Hamadani was the 49th in the Silsilah. The twelve Shaykhs who succeeded Nuruddin were the following:

1. Shaykh Kamaluddin Hamadani

35. Manaqib Waliyullahi Abdul Qadir as-Sani, p. 28.

36. P.T. Muhammad, Nuruddin Mala, p. 4. Muslims believed that there are Islam Jinn and Kafir Jinn and Islam Jinn do good to Muslims.

2. Shaykh Muhammad Hamadani.
3. Shaykh Kamaluddin as-Sani al-Hamadani
4. Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Kamaluddin Hamadani.
5. Shaykh Abdul Qadir Hamadani
6. Shaykh Muruddin Hamadani
7. Shaykh Muhammad Al-Hamadani
8. Shaykh Kamaluddin Hamadani
9. Shaykh Abdul Qadir Ibn Muhammad ul-Hamadani
10. Shaykh Abdul Qadir Ibn Abdul Qadir Hamadani
11. Shaykh Kamaluddin Ibn Abdul Qadir Hamadani³⁷
12. Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Kamaluddin al-Hamadani.

The later Shaykhs were mere custodians of the Jarams, the inheritors of the Barakah of the deceased saint by virtue of their blood-relationship and not by scholarship, wisdom or piety. They were recipients of the offerings and in some cases of the income of endowments. They simply succeeded on the death of a custodian. In the case of Suhrawardis the succession was limited to the family descendants. But the successor had to come of age, usually 16 in the Suhrawrdi Silsilah.

The Makhdums of Ponnani were the Chishti Sufis

37. Al-Shaykh Abdul Qadir as-Sani conferred the Khirqa to his chief murid Al-Shaykh Wajihuddin Abdur Rahman 'Ummami with the instruction that the Khirqa should be conferred on his son Kamaluddin on Maturity: (16 years). Manaqib Waliyullahi..as-Sani, pp. 26-27.

in Kerala. Ponnani is said to have been founded by an Arab divine in the 12th century for the religious instruction of the Muslims. Ponnani still is the 'Mecca of Malabar', and it is where the converts are initiated and trained.

Makhdums were more popular as theologians, scholars and mentors and were recognised as the highest ecclesiastical authority by the Mappilas of Malabar until the arrival of Muhammad Shah of Kondotty in 1130 A.H./ 1718 A.D. They produced many works on theology, Sufism and Shariah. No other line of Tangals had so many works in Arabic to their credit as the Makhdums. These works were regarded as text books in many Muslim countries.³⁸ This study could not yield Malas or Manaqibs of them, and not much Karamah were attributed to them. No geneo-logical tree of these saints could be collected.

The authors of 'Arabi-Malayala Sahithyam' are of opinion that the Makhdums were a tribe of Mabbar in South Arabia. The very name Mabbar for Coromandal coast is derived from them, as they settled in that region. Ponnani was a Muslim centre as far back as the 12th century. Tottungal Palli was the Jamaath Masjid before

38. Reference to Fathul Muin, and Adhkiya and similar works discussed in detail elsewhere.

the construction of the big Jamaat Masjid by the Makhdums which became their centre of activity later on. According to tradition Tottungal Palli (Mosque near the canal) was constructed eight centuries ago at the behest of Shaykh Fariduddin Ibn Abdul Qadir Jilani on the bank of Appittodu.³⁹ Zayn ul-din Ibrahim Ibn Ahmad Mabari was brought from Cochin to Ponnani as Qazi. His nephew, Zayn ud-din Ibn Ali Ibn Ahmad Al-Mabari, was born in Cochin in 871 A.H./ 1467 A.D. He was the first Makhdum of Ponnani, known as the Makhdum Senior. His biography is given by his son in his book, Maalak al-Adhkiya.⁴⁰ According to this author, his father, Al-Shaykh Zaynuddin Ibn Ali was wavering on the path he should choose. Then one day on 24th Shaaban 914.A.H./1504 A.D. he had a dream in which he saw somebody advising him that the path of Tasawwuf was to be preferred, because Tasawwuf brings man nearer to his target (God).⁴¹ After completing his studies under eminent scholars, he joined the Dars of Qazi Abdul Rahman Adami-al Misri and got permission (Ijazah) for reporting Hadith. Then he became a student of Al-Shaykh al-Jalil

39. K.V. Abdu Rahman, Ponnani, A Brief Historical Account, M.E.S. Ponnani College Souvenir (1969), pp. 15-19.

40. This book was written as a commentary to 'Adhkiya'...

41. K.M. Muhammad, Kerala's Contribution to Arabic Learning and Literature (An unpublished thesis submitted for Ph.D. in A.M.U. Aligarh, 1972), p. 101.

Khwaaja Qutbuddin and Khwaaja Izzud-din Chishti and specialised in Chishtiyya and Qadiriyya⁴² Tariqahs.

He was the author of many works. Some of them are:-

1. Murshid ut-Tullab
2. Siraj ul-Qulub
3. Shams ul-Huda
4. Tuhfat al-Ahibba
5. Kitab as-Safa minal-Shifa⁴³
6. Tashil al-Kafiyah⁴⁴
7. Shub al-Iman⁴⁵
8. Hidayatul-Adhkiya Ila Tariqat al-Awliya.

The Makhdum established the big Juma Masjid of Ponnani and made it his head-quarters where he instructed students. Ponnani gained the name of 'Mecca of Malabar' and the 'Fatwas' from the Makhdums were sought after not only by Muslims of Kerala but from the Muslim communities of East Indies Archipelago, who regarded Muslim scholars of Malabar as their spiritual mentors. Zaynuddin Makhdum died at Ponnani in 928 A.H./1521 A.D. The Second Makhdum was Shaykh Abdul Aziz. True to the tradition of the

42. Arabi-Malayala Sahityam, pp.140-41.

43. An abridgment of Qazi Iyad's Kitab al-Shifa.

44. Sharah of Ibn Hajib's 'Kafiyah'.

45. Arab translation of Allama Sayyid Nuruddin's Persian work Shab al-Iman.

Makhdums, leading the society in dire needs, 'Abdul Aziz wrote letters to various Muslim rulers of the world to help the Mappilas and the Zamorin in their fight against the Portuguese. He personally led the Muslim army in the historic battle of Caliyam in 1571 A.D.⁴⁶ He died in 994.A.H./1587 A.D.⁴⁷

Al-Shaykh al-Ghazzali was the third son of the first Makhdum. He was the Qazi ul-Qusat of many masjids of Malabar. Some of the manuscripts of his Fatwas are found in the library of Arakkal Palace of Cannanore. He died in Mahe and was buried in Chombal grave yard.

The next Makhdum, Shaykh Zaynuddin ibn al-Gazzali al-Mabari was known as the Makhdum Junior. After his preliminary studies, he went to Mecca where he became a student of the great scholar Imam Ibn Hajar al-Haytami. It is said when he became the Makhdum, Ibn Hajar al-Haytami had come to Ponnani and stayed there. Though there is no evidence to support this tradition, copy of a Fatwa written in Ibn Hajar's own hand-writing kept in the library of Shihabuddin Ahamad Koya of Caliyam suggests that it might

46. Qazi Muhammad, Fathul Muhib in Jawahir ul-Ashar, pp. 246-47.

47. Arabi Malayala Sahityam, p. 144.

have been written during his stay at Ponnani. Zayn ud-din Ibn Ali's renowned Tuhfat.... was submitted to 'Ali 'Adil Shah of Bijapur (1557-1580 A.D.).

His main works were:

1. Qurrat al-Ayn
2. Ajwibat al-Ajibah
3. Minhaj al-Wadih
4. Irshad
5. Tuhfat al-Mujahidin...
6. Fathul-Muin.

The importance of Tuhfat has been discussed elsewhere. Al-Irshad had been published from Malabar and Egypt many times. Fath al-Muin became famous throughout Malabar and Mabar and was accepted as a text book in Shafi schools even in the East Indies. Succession in the Makhdum family came to be recognised on matrilineal line according to the local custom of Muslims. The first Makhdum to succeed on matrilineal line was 'Abdurrahman Ibn 'Uthman, son of a daughter of the first Makhdum.

Like the rest of the Sufi orders in Kerala, a continuous history of the Makhdums could not be written: Prof. K.V. Abdul Rahman, himself a native of Ponnani, working on the history of Ponnani had to confess: "It is not possible to trace in proper sequence of Makhdums who

succeeded Abdu Rahman Ibn Uthman. However, in a statement made in 1812 by the Makhdum of that time, Pazhayakath Zaynuddin, and included in the Mackenzie Collection of manuscripts, he stated that he was the 29th Makhdum".⁴⁸ In the year 1969 A.D. the then Makhdum was sixteenth from the Makhdum who lived in 1812, which shows that he was the 45th in the line of succession. Succession in other Tariqahs also shows approximately an equal number.

Over and above being great scholars and leaders of the community in war and peace, many of these Makhdums were well-versed in athletic feats.⁴⁹

Ponnani became the centre of religious learning which attracted people from all over Malabar. The big Jamaath masjid thus took up the place of a Khanqah of the order. The new entrants were trained by the senior ones and they in turn were taught by the elders and the senior-most and the deserving few were called to "sit at the lamp" by the Makhdum to be personally instructed by him and after solemn oaths, were conferred

48. K.V. Abdulrahman, 'Ponnani, A Brief Historical Account', M.E.S. Ponnani College Souvenir, (1969), p. 16.

49. K.V. Abdulrahman has given an incident in which when a powerful Chieftain, Vettam Pokker, made an attempt to forcibly enter the mosque, supported by his followers, Ali Hasan Musaliyar of Valiyaputiyakam who later became Makhdum foiled his attempts, as he was well-versed in athletic feats.

the coat and cap with the title of Musaliar. It is reported that in 1906 there were 300 such students in Ponnani.⁵⁰ As this study could not yield the details of the ceremony of conferring the coat and cap, it could not be ascertained whether these Musaliars were also required to vow allegiance (Bayath) to the Chishti Tariqah.

Available materials clearly speak of the widespread acceptance of Naqshabandi Tariqah in bygone days. Unfortunately even the present Shaykh could not provide me sufficient information to compose a continuous history except the Silsilah of the order.⁵¹ Arabi-Malayalam literature has innumerable fatwas issued by Qazizs and Muftis of Kerala on various issues of religious and social significance. The authors of Arabi-Malayalam-Sahithyam has recorded that Baithan Ahmad Musaliar of Rayyanadu⁵² who died in 1315 A.H./1398 A.D. was a strong critic of Naqshabandi Tariqah. He had written replies to the arguments of the Naqshabandi Alims, Padur Koya Kutty Tangal, and 'Ali Hassan Moulavi. This shows that

50. E. Thuston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 469.

51. See Appendix on the Silsilah provided by the present Shaykh to me at his residence.

52. A Muslim settlement from the sixteenth century, 4 miles east of Manjeri.

towards the end of the last century Naqshabandi Tariqah had a wider following, powerful enough to argue their cause. Now the followers of the Tariqah are confined to Maguvittil Talam⁵³ (Wynadu) Kantapuram, Kilisseri⁵⁴ Kondotty, and Chelembra.⁵⁵ But the Tariqah had a wider following in Tanur earlier, as is shown in the Saifuddin Mala.

The Mala was composed by Kunhi Ahamad Kutty of Tanur in 1327 A.H. Shaykh Abdurahaman Moulavi on whom the Mala was composed, died at Tanur and was buried at Ayur. The Karamah of his Jaram as described in the Mala shows the respect he commanded in the locality. Their publications like Hidayat al-Islam Tarjuma and From Holy Quran and innumerable booklets give only their ideology stressing on the inner meaning of the Quran and the need of an Imam. The present Shaykh Sayyiduna Ahmad Kutty Tangal took the Tariqah from Shaykh Qadir Moulavi who took the Tariqah from Shaykh Kunhi Ahmad Kutty (Ahmad al-Sufi). Ahmad al Sufi was, perhaps, the first Shaykh of the Tariqah in Malabar. Abdurahman Moulavi who died in

53. 20 miles north of Calicut, also the headquarters of the Shaykh of Naqshabandi Tariqah.

54. 2 miles north, on the Kondotty-Areacode road.

55. A village near the Calicut University Campus.

1320/1902 according to the author of Saifuddin Mala was second in succession in the silsilah. Hence it is reasonable to assume that Wali Ahmad al Sufi succeeded not earlier than the second half of the 19th century.

The official version of the history of the Tariqah as given by the present Shaykh, Shaykh Ahmad Kutty Tangal does not include Abdurahman Moulavi, which shows that a definite line of succession was not recognised in 1902. The present line starts from Puttan Vittil Shaykh who is regarded as the founder of Tariqah. He was succeeded by Karuvampoyil Shaykh and, after him, the Silsilah became inactive. The next Shaykh was Puttan Vittil Ahmad Kutty. He began the systematic enrolment of murids who were required to sign in a Register, kept at his residence. The practice was started in 1928 as the signature of the Shaykh shows. Until 4th December, 1977, when the last signature was made, 1659 murids had signed the register.⁵⁶

In 1921, Naqshabandis were excommunicated by the Sunni 'Ulama and forbidden from entering the mosques. It cannot be ascertained whether it was this act which

56. The present Shaykh, Shaykh Ahmad Kutty Tangal told me that the practice is not continued now.

compelled the Naqshabandis not to attach much significance to the mosques. This neglect of the mosque combined with their stress on the inner meaning of the Quran made it easy for their rivals to allege that their Qibla and Masjid and even Kalima were different. So, no social mingling and inter-marriages with them take place. On 18th February of 1979, two Naqshabandi followers were killed in a clash with Sunnis. The Shaykh told the present writer that they would not remain any more passive sufferers and that they would launch resistance but would not offend however. They stress that the hidden knowledge could be acquired only through an Imam and for all ages there are Imams. To find him and accept his guidance is the duty of every individual and those who die without knowing him will be at loss.⁵⁷

The available literature on Sufism mainly in the form of unpublished treatises produced on Malabar coast itself, current traditions regarding saints and studies undertaken on the special characters of certain 'Nerccas' lead to the conclusion that in Kerala too Sufism had passed through its main stages of development, which according to Spencer Trimmingham had passed three stages

57. For details of their philosophy, Hidayat al-Islam Tarjuma, (Arabi-Malayalam).

in its development.⁵⁸ The first stage was Khanqah stage. This was the golden age of mysticism where a master and his circle of pupils, frequently itinerants, having minimum regulations for living a common life, which led in the tenth century to the formation of undifferentiated, unspecialised lodges and convents. Guidance under the master had become the accepted principle. This was intellectually and emotionally an aristocratic movement.⁵⁹ Individualistic and communal methods of contemplation and exercises for the inducement of ecstasy was accepted. The second was Tariqah stage. The period between 1100-1400 A.D. was the formative period of this stage. Here doctrines were transmitted, rules and methods were adopted, continued teaching developed schools of mysticism and the Tariqahs developed from illuminates. The mystical spirit was accommodated to the standards of tradition and legalism, and new types of collectivistic methods for inducing ecstasy developed. Third was the Taifa stage. The formative period of this stage was fourteenth century, period of the founding of the Ottoman Empire, the time

58. J. Spencer Trimingham, Sufi Orders in Islam, p. 68.

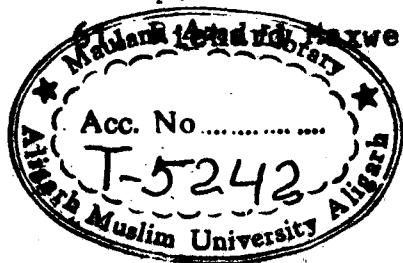
59. This was the stage when the Khazaruni Khanqahs functioned vigorously, Khazaruni Shaykh was considered patron saint of voyages to India and China. His Khanqahs provided a meeting place and resort for the individualistic religious pursuits of Muslims of different nationalities, once they were given the Khazaruni Khirqah.

of transmission of an allegiance alongside doctrine and rule. Sufism became a popular movement, new foundations were formed in Tariqah lines which branched into numerous corporations of orders, fully incorporated with the saint cult. In the third stage to be a Sufi meant belonging to a cult association called Taifa than submitting to a method of discipline. The mystical element characterised in Khanqah and Tariqah stages now played a minor role. Sufi's direct communion with God was replaced by a veneration of Pir who occupied the position of intermediary between the disciple and God. Pirs just became saints (Wali-literally friend of God) and Sufi orders which in the second stage had been schools of spiritual discipline now became saint-cults, centred on the spiritual power, or Barakah of a single individual. The headship of most Tariqas became mainly hereditary as blood replaced merit as the chief criterion of succession. This in turn gave rise to the practice that descent from a saint could claim special spiritual status, for it was now believed that the spiritual power possessed by a saint passed to his own familial descendants, in India called Pirzadas (born of a Pir). Barakah of a saint was transmitted not only to his descendants but also to his shrine. These shrines, the Darghas, replaced khanqahs as the physical

structure upon which Sufi movements were based. Now Sufism became more a devotional than a mystical movement. Although there was an inner circle of Murids who studied with the Pirs or Pirzadas, a much larger circle of devotees was now brought into informal association with the order as devotees in the saint-cult.⁶⁰ Whereas in its earlier case of evolution, Sufism had been confined to small spiritual elite, it had now broadened to become a popular movement in which the unlettered masses could freely participate. Devotion to some saint exercised through the veneration of his descendants and his tomb exerted a powerful appeal among common folk, whose goal was not the mystic's goal of spiritual affinity with God, but the simpler one of achieving relief from worldly anxieties or attaining possession of worldly desires. It was mainly through the intercession of the saint that god's help could be secured in attaining these goals. This was perhaps the reason that this phase witnessed the introduction of astrology, magic, belief in talismans and charms and other superstitions as a means of prescribing the flow of Barakah from the saint who occupied the central position in the cult to the devotees.⁶¹ As

60. J. Spencer Trimmingsham, Sufi Orders in Islam, p. 81.

61. Ronald M. W. Eaton, Sufis of Bijapur, pp. 30-31.



Trimmingham observed if Sufis in the Khanqah phase surrendered to God and in the Tariqah phase to a method of discipline, in the Taifa stage they surrendered to a person, the Barakah possessing saint of whose cult they were members.⁶²

Sufism in Kerala as revealed in this study had passed through the above three stages, though there is considerable variation in the periods of the various phases.⁶³ Shaykh Ali al-Kufi of Peringattur lived in the middle of the 15th century. He retired into solitude in a cave and had no murids but a lot of devotees. Shaykh Abdul Qadir as-Sani of Porattel (15th century) had his murids, and nominated his successors. It was the period when Sufism had reached in Taifa stage of developments. The real representation of Taifa stage is evident in the Kondotty Tangals of Kondotty with the 18th century shrine as its centre. So also in Mamburam, the shrine serves as the centre of the Tariqah with the characteristic veneration of the Tangal's tomb. In Ibn Battuta's time

62. J. Spencer Trimmingham, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

63. When the characteristic development of Khanqah stage in Sufism took place in 10th century elsewhere in the Islamic world, Sufis who could be placed in that phase of development were active in Kerala as late as 17th century.

there had been Qazeruni Khanqahs in Calicut. The Makhdums of Ponnani, the Ghishti Sufis from 12th century down to the present, maintained their organisation in characters of Khanqah phase. But except in a few instance Sufism in Kerala had maintained the 'Taifa' features. The tombs of the deceased saints, the physical inheritors of their Barakahs, became the central point of Sufism with the blood relations succeeding the deceased and by virtue of their blood relation claimed to be the inheritors of the Barakah of deceased saints. It was mainly through the intercession of these saints that God's help could be secured in achieving relief from worldly anxieties or attaining possession of worldly desires. This was perhaps the reason that this phase witnessed the introduction of astrology, magic, belief in talismans and charms and other superstitions as a means of prescribing the flow of Barakah from the saint who occupied the central position in the cult to the devotee. This belief with the tradition of succession in blood relation gave rise to many base and unlawful practices in later stages. In such maligned form as sufism stood in the 19th and 20th centuries, the movement was looked down upon and ridiculed.

Side by side with Sufism with its nature of

'saint-cult' in the 'Taifa stage' there developed another institution unknown in other parts of India namely the cult of martyr-saints.⁶⁴ The benefits and bliss of martyrdom as propagated by the theologians were higher than those of any mystic's or saint's and they were the people to whom paradise was promised, as the theologians preached. Their Barkahs were attributed to their tombs, which became objects of popular devotion. 'The Shuhadakkal' or Saidakkanmar were invoked in times of distress. In the place of blood relations and the Darghas for the saints, the custodians of the tombs and the tomb itself became the manifestation of their Barakah.⁶⁵ Their importance increased in a process what Trimmingham called the 'dualism of Islam'. He says: "Most women found their religious focus in the local wali, the saint (his power) localised in his tomb and visitations on Fridays and festival days were the highlights of their religious life. The dualism between male and female religion was brought out on Friday when men went off to

64. The call for martyrdom in the 'Jihad' against the "worshippers of cross" as propounded in the Tuhfat and later propagated by the Ulama gave birth to innumerable Shahids.

65. The popular belief was that the Jarams or tombs of the holy men automatically sprouted from under the earth if one was not erected and properly maintained by posterity. Some times the saints appeared in dreams to the local chieftains and asked them to build a tomb as in the case of Al-Shaykh Abdul Wafa Muhammad al-Kalikutti of Calicut.

the Juma to display their communal solidarity by participation in congregational prayer, whilst, the women were at the saints' tomb or grave-yard making their offerings, petitionings or communing with the spirit of the tomb".⁶⁶ Visitations to the Darghas are still very popular all over South India and one of the reason is "The belief that visits to Darghas would enhance a woman's fertility".⁶⁷ Especially in Kerala the female folk believed that the Barakah of saints would enhance their fertility. Almost all the Malas would 'bring comfort' at labour pains,' as the composers or murids of saints often claimed, or if a certain Mala was repeated after particular Dua and Dhikr a fixed number of times a sterile woman would conceive.⁶⁸ The adoration of Martyrs was a universal phenomenon in the Islamic world. It is reported that when Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya's mother fell ill, She sent the boy Nizamuddin to pray in the martyrs' grave yard outside the city.⁶⁹ For the Mappilas shahids were not mere historical figures.

66. J. Spencer Trimmingham, op. cit., p. 232.

67. R.M. Eaton, op. cit., p. 270.

68. "If the women read it at labour pains, the child will be born soon sayeth he". Muhammad Wali Mala of Mamutty composed in 1330 A.H./1912 A.D. on saint Muhammad Mawla of Palghat (d.998 A.H./1590 A.D.) (Arabi-Malayalam), p. 6.

69. A.A. Nizami, Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century, Delhi, (1978), p. 301.

From the year 1498 to the present there has arisen innumerable shahids amongst themselves. When the Portuguese destroyed their trade and attempted to systematically destroy the Muslims, a consciousness of the need for Jihad grew up among Mappilas. Theolgians exhorted the merits of Jihad and martyr's rewards. Zaynaddin wrote: "I therefore, compiled this narrative with a view to inspire in the faithful the desire of fighting the worshippers of cross; for a holy war with them is an obligatory duty".⁷⁰ "The war against such unbelievers is an obligatory duty imposed upon every Muslim, who is strong to undertake it whether he be a slave or female, of the city, or a dependant, without the permission of the chief, the husband or creditor".⁷¹ In the first chapter itself he described the merits of Jihad. The Portuguese were bent on the total destruction of Muslim colonies all over the trade settlements and similar depredations were carried out in the South-East Asia too, which had reached such intolerable degrees that similar works as that of Tuhfat were produced there also. This

70. Tuhfat, p. 13.

71. Ibid., p. 20.

gave rise to the militant character of Mappilas, who "perceived the social violence as religious conflict which was sanctioned by tenets of Islamic law."⁷² The Mappilas "carried Jihad and those who participated intentionally martyred themselves at the conclusion of each assault".⁷³ The influence of the concept of 'Shahid' was so strong that a mother would not look at the face of her son not killed in an encounter, even if he was bleeding to death.⁷⁴ In a society where Shahids had such profound respect as people for whom 'firdous' was promised martyr saints were bound to command widespread respect. Sufism in the Taifa stage provided ample scope for the veneration of tombs of such Martyr saints as the external manifestation of Barakah, and the custodians of such tombs were regarded equal to the descendants of popular Sufi saints who by virtue of their blood relationship to the deceased saint succeeded him and claimed to have possessed the Barakah. For common man custodian of a Shahid's tomb was equally venerable as one of the tomb of a popular saint. These two institutions therefore developed as twins in Sufism at the later (Taifa) stage among the Muslims especially among Mappilas.

72. Dale, The Mappilas of Malabar, 1498-1922, pp. 31-33.

73. Ibid., p. 2.

74. W. Fawcett, 'War songs among the Mappilas'. Indian Antiquary, Vol. XXX (1901), pp. 499-508. Fawcett has given a vivid description of many of such incidents when a mother was told her son was bleeding to death, she exclaimed; "He is gone, he is nothing to us".

Sufism was an important aspect of Mappila life. For him Sufism was not a logical culmination, or philosophical development to nourish the intellectual needs of a community. Such intellectual exercises were to be the routine of a superfluous aristocracy. In Kerala Muslims never had a ruler or political power,⁷⁵ except the small princely state of Ali Rajas of Cannanore. Another significant aspect of Sufism in Kerala was also helpful in making it very much meaningful to common folk namely its subordination to Shariat. Zaynuddin Makhdum in his *Hidayat al-Adhkiya Ila Tariqat al-Awliya*, which can be regarded as the guideline of Sufism of Kerala, says:⁷⁶

وَكُنْ الْكَوْبُفَةُ وَالْحَقِيقَةُ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ خَيْرٌ مِنْ شَرْعِيَّةٍ لِي تَخْطَلَا

(The Tariqah (of Awliya) and (attainment of) Haqiqah (God) are like that Oh! my brother; they cannot be attained except with deeds according to Shariat).

The non-Shariat practices like asceticism which had elsewhere been one of the marked features of Sufism did not influence the movement. Perhaps it was the absence of asceticism that tempted the writers to deny

75. It is true that they wielded considerable political power in Calicut but it did not cause the development of a Muslim aristocracy.

76. Zaynudin, *Adhkiya*....., p. 3, line 7.

the existence of Sufism in South India. According to Dr. I.H. Qureishi, "The extensive Sufi missionary activity known elsewhere in Indian Islam is not evident in South India."⁷⁷ Recently, a Canadian scholar even after his fourteen years of experience among the Mappilas could only subscribe to Qureshi's view.⁷⁸ With the appearance of R.M. Eaton's Sufis of Bijapur, the Sufi realm of the Deccan and its vigorous functioning especially proselytising activities has been brought to light.

Though there was a complete absence of asceticism in this part of the land, the movement was not completely devoid of similar practice. Certain Sufis had practiced 'Jinnu Seva' (Propitiating the Jinn) as people believed it. It could be performed only at a highly advanced stage in Sufism. Those who completed the 'Jinnu Seva' possessed karamah and could perform miracles. People believed that miracles were performed with the help of Jinn who were propitiated and made obedient to

77. I.H. Qureshi, Muslim Community of Indo-Pakistan Sub continent, pp. 15 ff.

78. R.E. Miller, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, p. 53. The author however admits, "Reading back from the Mappila respect for outside teachers... and the veneration of saints that continues to the present, it may be surmised that Sufi activity was atleast a minor element in the process of the community's growth".

the man's command. In fact the practice was the Arbainiyya,⁷⁹ (Quadragesima) the forty days retreat which could be performed only by a perfect Sufi, during which even a visualisation⁸⁰ of God was possible'. The study yielded sufficient materials to establish the prevalence of various forms of retreat like khalwa, itikaf and 'Uzla performed by Sufis at various maqams (stages). Shaykh Ali al-Kufi (16th century) spent most of his times in the cave in Kanakamala of Peringattur. Shaikh Muhammed Shah, the first Kondotty Tangal was found in meditating posture by a group of hunters in the thick forests of Chekkunnam-mala. In spite of all these facts the study has not yielded any material to establish the prevalence^{of} chilla or chilla-i-Makuz. One of the reasons for the absence of asceticism and chilla or such philosophical advancement was the lack of political power and a superfluous society. The characteristic features of

79. Trimmingham, *op. cit.*, pp. 30, 187, 190. Sufi is required to make periodic retreats (khalwa, itikaf, Uzla, itizal or arbainiyya) individually in his cell or, if highly advanced, in the society of the convent, p. 30.

80. A Qadiri manual describing the condition of Arbainiya: "And if, during the course of his retreat, a form reveals itself to him and say, 'I am God,' he should reply, 'Praise is due to God (alone)! nay rather thou art by God'; and if it be for testing it will vanish; but if it remains it will be a genuine theophany (at-tajalli al-ilahi) in an outward form which does not contradict 'tanzih bi laisa", that is the doctrine of exemption, the wholly other, that God 'is not' in any way like his creatures.

Islamic communities which grew up as urban civilizations was the dominant feature of the Muslims of Kerala too. In the trade centres they grew up as merchant communities. This compelled the community to concentrate fully in trade and related activities. The subjugation of Sufism to Sheriah was more a convenient modification of the movement by theologian Sufis to suit the life of Muslims here. The development of the riverine settlements have already been discussed. These riverine settlements formed the centres for radiation of Islam. Many of the Mappilas began purchase of lands and engage in agriculture. It was at this stage that Islam came into contact with the low-caste and non-caste people. In the traditional system of land ownership in Kerala the Landlord was often a Brahmin, A Raja, or some temple who would lease the land to a Nayar who in turn would sublet it to some subordinate. In this system Muslims could not be adjusted. The same condition was there when the Christians tried to acquire land in the interior and the tussle with the landed aristocracy inspite of the support of British administration in the last century was a very serious problem. A good many number of novels and plays in Malayalam would depict, the hesitation of Jenmis to lease or sell land to Christians. Even if they could acquire some piece of land out of the mercy of certain Jenmi, the whole village community

opposed them until they could win some low-castes to their faith, with whose help they could repulse the machinations of local gentry. When the Mappilas moved to the interior they had lost their erstwhile monopoly of export-trade and some engaged in riverine trade and others became petty shop-keepers. But the larger section of them turned to be agricultural labourers and worked shoulder to shoulder with non-caste slave labourers as Pulayas or Parayas. Very soon the labourer class came to be influenced by Mappila customs.⁸¹ In Malabar as had been elsewhere in rural India, women were part of rural economy and had enjoyed more freedom compared to those of the cities.⁸² Muslim women who formed part of the agricultural labourers, could influence their fellow workers in belief of Karamah, Barakah, Charms and Talismans for it is true that belief in Karamah would cut across communal denominations. Many of the shrines had some speciality with fertility and they were more popular with female folk. Female devotees are more in number even today among the visitors to shrines and low-caste Hindu women are considerable in number if not

81. In the rural Malabar ploughing the field on Friday was forbidden as a matter of custom. So also fishing by hook at the time of Friday congregational prayer was believed to be a sin.

82. The masses consisting mostly of peasant women moved about freely and they did not believe in seclusion. S.M. Jaffar, Some Cultural Aspects of Muslim Rule in India, Delhi (1972), p. 202.

majority. Islam offered them an avenue of freedom from slavery, salvation from bondage and an elevation in social status. The degradation of non-caste and low castes fishermen, tanners, cobblers and innumerable out-castes condemned due to violation of castes rules of morality and caste pollution has been described by all foreign travellers and native writers and were rigorously observed in Brahmin-dominated temple-oriented society.⁸³

With the gradual spread of Islam in the interior the Sufis, Sayyids or Tangals also migrated. In every village with a considerable Muslim population there is a Tangel family which is testified by their Jaram or other traditions. Atleast when a new mosque was built the ecclesiastical functionary was a Musliar or a Tangel. Moulud, Ratib and Ziyarah were conducted in such Jarams according to the rank 'Maqamah' of the deceased holyman. As L.B. Sergeant has suggested there was a wave of migration of Sayyids from Hadramawt during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Though he has not explained the cause of such a migration it may most

83. Surendra Nath Sen (Ed.), Indian Travels of Thevenot and Caveri, National Archives of India, Delhi (1949), pp. 122-23. Hamilton, Voyage to the East Indies, p. 375; L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer, The Cochin Tribes and Castes, I, pp. 275-77. Thurston, Castes and Tribes of South India, II, p. 45; C.A. Innes, Malabar and Anjengo District Gazetteer, I, pp. 133-34.

probably be attributed to the political condition of the neighbouring countries, as Persia where a Shia state had been vigorously functioning had its repercussion in Hadramawt. Again many of the Sufi orders had their origins and important centres in Persia which might have suffered under the Shia dynasty who themselves traced their origin from the Safavid saints of Ardabeel. Another reason may be the loss of profits from eastern trade which was now captured by the Portuguese, which might have adversely affected the Sayyid families,⁸⁴ either in business or in charity.⁸⁵ Many of the Sayyid houses and Shaykhs arrived on Malabar from the beginning of 15th century onwards. This coincided with the movement of Mappila Muslims to the riverine settlements and interior centres and the ground was prepared for the peaceful settlement of these Saykhs and Sayyids. The example of Mamburam Tangals - The Ba-Alavi Sufis - shows that they

84. Hadramawt was one of the regions to bear the brunt of the Wahhabi attacks. They considered Sufism as idolatory and by the beginning of 19th century Wahhabis raided the main Wadi 'to save Hadramawt from idolatory'. R.B. Serjean, 'Ba-Alavi Sayyids', BSQAS, XIII, Pt.(1), (1949), p. 231.

85. The prospects of proselytism during the Bahmanid (1347-1490) and Bijapur (1489-1686) regimes renowned for their patronage gave fresh impetus to Arab immigration and with the traders and soldiers of fortune came the missionaries seeking to make spiritual conquests in the cause of Islam. Arnold, T.W., The Preaching of Islam, p. 261.

used to send their agents (Khalifas) to different settlements as had been the practice elsewhere in the Sufi silsilah.⁸⁶

The contribution of Sufis in the spread of Islam was very significant both in the early stages and the post-Portuguese period in Kerala. The magnitude of proselytisation activities and conversion cannot be assessed as no census is available. But Logan made a comparison of the census of 1871 and 1881 and concluded that more than fifty thousand of the Cherumars alone had been converted. In 1871 the Cherumar caste numbered 99,009 and by 1881 the number had fallen to 64,725. This decrease was unquestionably due to conversion to Islam. This was the period of British rule when law and order was firmly maintained and use of force or coercive methods for conversion was impossible as had been attributed to the Mysorean period. The available evidence helps us to believe that the process had continued in varying rate

86. The Ba-Alavi saint, Mamburam Tangal, is said to have travelled far and wide in the interior Malabar and founded mosques in many places. Sometimes he fixed sites for the mosques, repaired the existing ones or he often sent the 'Mulakkallu' (Corner stone) as a symbol of his blessings. Some of them 1) The Northern Masjid of Tanur, 2) The Jumaath Masjid of Kodinji, 3) The Masjids of Chappanangadi, 4) Of Kananchery, 5) of Munniyur, 6) Velimukku, 7) Muttiyarakkal, 8) Ponnundam, 9) Edavanna, and 10) Pantayil and Lamanchira Masjid of Karippur. K.K. Muhammad Abdul Kareem, Hazrat Mamburam Sayyid Alavi Tangal, Tirurangadi (1970), p. 35.

CHAPTER III

THE EUROPEAN DOMINATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

The kingdom of Calicut, its benevolent ruler, honest people and the biggest mart, so vividly described by Marcopolo, Ibn Battuta, Mahuan, Abdurazzack and Pyrard de Laval was soon to become the arena of a long drawn out blood bath with the landing of Vasco da Gama, on 17th May 1498. "The discovery of the Cape of Good hope... was an evil day for the Mappilas... In the keen struggle for supremacy on the Eastern seas Mappilas came out vanquished... and never have they regained their wealth and their glory".¹

Recent studies have brought to light the brunt of Western onslaughts especially of the Portuguese, this "Oldest community of South Asian sub-continent was destined to bear".² The Portuguese entry into the Indian waters was not motivated by the idea of trade profit alone. They in fact carried on the vengeance of the cross on the crescent. A detailed survey of the formative factors of

-
1. Hamid Ali, "The Moplahs", in T.k. Gopala Panikkar (Ed.), Malabar and Its Folk, Madras (1929), p. 269.
 2. Stephen Frederick Dale, The Mappilas of Malabar, Oxford (1980), pp. 1-12.

Portuguese policy reveals the magnitude of the problem.

Four main motives inspired the Portuguese leaders in chronological order but in varying degrees.³

1. The crusading zeal against the Muslims.
2. The desire for Guinea gold.
3. The Quest for Prester John.
4. The search for oriental spices.

During the fifteenth century Portugal was a united kingdom virtually free from civil strife when countries of Western Europe were either convulsed by foreign or civil wars - The Hundred Years' War, the War of the Roses, etc. - or else they were pre-occupied by the menace of the Turkish advance in the Balkans and in the Levant. Spaniards were experiencing a period of ruinous anarchy before the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella and they could not affectively compete with the Portuguese. Portuguese capture of Ceuta in August 1415 was inspired mainly from crusading ardour. Since Ceuta was one of the terminals of Trans-Sahara gold trade its capture provided the Portuguese, information of the source of the

3. C.R. Boxer, The Portuguese Seaborne Empire (1415-1825), London (1969), pp. 17 ff. "The main impulses behind the 'Age of Discovery' evidently came from a mixture of religious, economic, strategic and political factors!"

gold dust, the Upper Niger and Senegal rivers. Attempts were made to establish contact by sea and divert gold trade from the camel caravans of Western Sudan and the Muslim middlemen of Barbary. There was great demand for gold in Western Europe during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and especially in Portugal because while other states had gold coins Portugal did not have any since 1383,⁴ which was resumed in 1457 after gold dust arrived from West Africa.

Mysterious legend of the Christian king, Prester John, in the Indies with 30000 men on his table of emerald with the grandeur of 12 Arch Bishops seated on the right and 20 on the left had been current in Portugal. It was believed in Portugal as elsewhere in Christendom that "this mysterious Priest-king, when once definitely located would prove an invaluable ally against the Muslim powers, whether Turks, Egyptians, Arabs or Moors".⁵ The Portuguese hoped to find him in an African region where he would be able to help them against the Moors.

From 1452 to 1456 the Portuguese crown got a series of papal Bulls promulgated on request, which gave

4. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

it the monopoly of conquest, conversion, and commerce.

1. Dum Diversas, 18 June 1452.
2. Romanus Pontifex, 8 January 1455.
3. Inter Caetera, 13 March 1456.

In the first, Pope authorised the King of Portugal to attack, conquer, and subdue the Saracens, Pagans and other unbelievers who were inimical to Christ; to capture their goods and their territories, to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery and to transfer their lands and properties to the King of Portugal and his successors.

The second Bull Romanus Pontifex was even more specific and it has been rightly termed the charter of Portuguese imperialism. The bull starts with meritorious accomplishments of Prince Henry since 1419, praises his apostolic zeal as a true soldier of Christ and defender of the faith in eloquent terms especially for compelling the Saracens and other unbelievers to enter the fold of the Church. It specifically credits him with the intention of circumnavigating Africa and thus making contacts by sea with the inhabitants of the Indies 'who it is said honour the name of Christ' and in alliance with them, prosecuting the struggle against the Saracens and other enemies of the faith. The Prince is authorised to subdue

and to convert Pagans (even if Untainted by Muslim influence) who may be encountered in the region lying between Morocco and the Indies. The crown of Portugal is thus given the monopoly of Navigation, trade and fishing in the extensive maritime dominions. Pope Nicholas V decreed that "since this work is one which forwards the interest of God and Christendom, this monopoly does infact apply not only to Ceuta and all the present Portuguese conquests, but likewise to any that may be made in future. The legitimacy of any measures taken by the crown of Portugal to safeguard this monopoly is explicitly recognised by the Pope. Portuguese were further given permission to trade with Saracens but not arms to 'those enemies of the faith'. Prince Henry and his successors were authorised to build churches, monasteries and to send priests to administer sacraments in those regions. Finally, "All other nations were strictly prohibited from infringing or interfering in anyway with the Portuguese monopoly of discovery, conquest and commerce".⁶ The importance of the last clause was underlined by the Solemn proclamation of this bull in Lisbon Cathedral on 5th October 1455, in the

6. *Ibid.*, p. 22 ff.

original Latin, and in Portuguese translation and before a congregation which included representatives of foreign communities in the Portuguese capital-French, English, Castilians, Galicians and Basques - who had been specially summoned for the occasion.

It seems that Prince Henry's household was in financial crisis. Barros informs us, during the siege of Ceuta one of Henry's captains, Diogo Gomes told Martin Behaim of Nuremberg, that Prince Henry gained information of gold-producing land from Moorish prisoners which led him to try to reach these lands south of Sahara by sea in order to trade with them and to sustain the nobles of his household.⁷ Gold dust was first obtained by barter from the natives (Tourages, in this instance) in 1442.

Development of slave trade helped to finance Portuguese voyages down the West Coast of Africa. The slaves were originally obtained by raiding the un-armed people of Touareg encampments and Negro villages. These raids on unarmed people were characterised as if they were knightly deeds by the court chronicler, Gomes Eanes de Zurara, and was in fact so regarded by the majority of his contemporaries. Later the slaves were obtained

7. Ibid., p. 24.

by barter from chiefs of Senegambia and Upper Guinea, either criminals, prisoners of war or victims of witch craft.

The lure of the yellow metal certainly played a prominent part in the development of the Portuguese voyages of discovery down the West African coast after 1442. They never succeeded in finding the elusive source of West African and Sudanese gold, which was mostly mined in the region of Bambuk on the upper Senegal river, at Mali on Upper Niger and at Lobi on the upper reaches of the Volta. This gold mostly in the form of gold-dust was originally taken by bearers through the kingdom of Mali and Ghana as far as Timbuktu. It was there traded to Arab and Moorish merchants who carried it by camel caravans across the Sahara to the Islamic states of North Africa whose ports were frequented by Jewish, Genoese and Venetian traders amongst others. In the second half of fifteenth century by means of their fortified factories at Arguin and by other unfortified factories in the coastal regions of Senegambia, the Portuguese were able to divert a considerable proportion of this Trans-Sahara trade to their own ships and establishments on the coast. Fort 'Saint George of Mine' erected in 1482 on the orders of Dom Joao II was able to

tap not only the gold trade of Western Sudan but that derived from the river-washings on the Gold Coast itself. For about 100 years (c.1450-1550), the Portuguese caravels thus dominated Moorish camel caravans in the gold trade. The great quantity of this guinea gold brought to Lisbon was converted into 'cruzados' and was re-exported to pay for the goods which Portugal needed and helped to put Portugal on the currency map of Europe.

During 1496-1521 an annual average of 170000 'dobras' worth of gold was imported from St. George of Mine alone and sometimes more.⁸ Something like 150,000 Negro slaves were secured by the Portuguese between 1450-1500.

The resources derived from the flourishing gold and slave trades enabled king Dom Joao to prosecute the search for Prester John, which had evidently become something of an obsession with him. Though their notions were vague about the situation of the Kingdom, the Portuguese knew that it was somewhere beyond the river Nile, which was then regarded by learned Europeans as forming the boundary between Africa proper and "Middle India". They hoped first to get access to Prester John by way of

8. Ibid., p. 29.

the Senegal, the Gambia, the Niger and finally the Zaire (Congo) rivers, each of which they successively mistook for a tributary of or branch of the Nile, when first encountering their outlets into the sea. As they worked further down the coast of West Africa the prospect that this continent might be circumnavigated and way opened by the sea to the kingdom of Prester John and the Indies became more plausible. It was also in the reign of Dom Joao II that the quest for Prester John became coupled with the quest for Asian (as distinct from African) spices.

In the mid-1480s reconaissance expeditions were carefully organised to seek for Prester John and spices by sea. The chief maritime discovery was made by Bartholomew Diaz who leaving Lisbon in 1487 rounded the Cape of Good Hope in early 1488 and voyaging some distance up the coast brought the news that the sea route to the Indies was open. Most of the agents who were sent overland seems to have failed. But one of them, an Arabic-speaking squire named Pedro Covilho, who left Lisbon in the same year as Bartholomew Dias, reached the West Coast of India in 1488. Then he visited the Persian Gulf and the Swahili coast of East Africa as far South as Safala. This adventurous journey which lasted for over two years gave him a very good idea of the trade of the Indian Ocean in

general and of the spice trade in particular. On his way back to Portugal at the end of 1490 in Cairo he received the message from the king to proceed to the Kingdom of Prester John which was supposed to have been located in the highlands of Abyssinia. Having sent a detailed report he went to 'Prester John' where Emperor Negus of Abyssinia honourably received him and was detained with honours till his death 30 years later.

There are conflicting views whether Covilho's report reached the king or not. If it did, that was why Vasco da Gama was ordered to go to Calicut, the most important Indian port of spice trade. Probably it did not, as Da Gama and his men were surprised at the high degree of civilization attained by the Swahili cities of Mosambique, Mombasa and Malindi. At Calicut Gama also was unable to distinguish between Hindu temple and Christian church which Covilho must have surely reported. Finally Vasco da Gama was provided with trumpery presents for the ruler of Calicut and the most unsuitable goods-Cloth, brass utensils, beads and the like to barter for the pepper and other spices which he sought. Covilho would certainly have reported that these could only be purchased with gold and silver.⁹

9. Ibid., p. 34.

It shows that it was only after 1480s that the Portuguese king became seriously interested in tapping the Asian spice trade at its source. Till then their relatively modest demand for Asian spice had been satisfied by what they got like the rest of Europe from the Venetians who purchased them from the Muslim merchants of Mameluke Empire in Egypt, and Syria. It is possible that once he was convinced that the sea route to India could be found, the king would have considered the possibility that Asian spice trade could be diverted from its overland route to the Atlantic Ocean in much the same way as the gold trade of Guinea had been largely diverted from trans-Saharan camel caravans to the caravels of Fort St. George of Mine.

In a jubilant letter to Ferdinand and Isabella written a couple of days after the return of the first of Da Gama's ship to the Tagus in July 1499, King Manuel announced his decision to 'wrest the control of the spice trade in the Indian Ocean from the Muslims by force with the aid of the newly discovered Indian Christians. In his letter to Rome dated 28 August 1499, King Manuel described himself Lord of Guinea and of the conquest of navigation and commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia and India'.¹⁰

10. Castanheda, The History of the Discovery and Conquest of India (Kerr, Collection of Voyages, Vol. II, p. 396), (Edinburgh, 1811).

These developments in Portugal show that Vasco da Gama's landing at Calicut was the culmination of a long-planned national policy aimed at the destruction of the Saracens, Moors and any other community of Muslims 'as may be encountered'.¹¹ When a white-skinned man of Gama's crew was passing through the streets of Calicut, a Spanish-speaking Tunisian Bontaybo asked him "What the devil has brought you here?", The reply was, "We have come to seek Christians and spices". This again shows that their primary concern was Christians, which would again mean their bitter hatred of Muslims, reminiscent of the Crusades.

Vasco da Gama on his second meeting with the Zamorin insisted that all the Muslims be banished from the city, which the king refused to do. Thereupon 2nd november 1498 his fleet commenced a furious bombardment of the city which was stopped only when it was pointed out to the captain that the ships themselves were being damaged. The retaliation of the Zamorin's guns were ineffective and Barros commented: "Their shots came like

11. The discovery of the cape of Good Hope was an evil day for the Moplahs. In the keen struggle for supremacy on the Eastern seas the Moplahs came out vanquished and never since they regained their wealth and their glory. Hamid Ali "The Moplahs", in T.A. Gopal Panikkar (Ed.), Malabar and Its Folk, Madras (1929), p. 269.

bowls". While Vasco da Gama remained off Calicut there appeared a flotilla of twenty-four Calicut boats, all laden with rice. He seized the boats and their crew numbering 800. "He ordered his men to cut off their hands, ears and noses. This done, their feet were tied together, and in order to prevent them from untying the cords with their teeth, he ordered his men to strike them on their mouths with their staves and knock their teeth down their throats. They were then put on board, heaped one Upon the top of the other, and covered with mats and dry leaves; the sails were then set for the shore and the vessels set on fire".¹² This was just an example of Portuguese cruelty to Muslims. The succeeding Portuguese captains tried to rival one another in cruelty to Muslims. Even some of the authentic historians of Kerala seems to have ignored the Portuguese national policy as stated in Papal Bulls and King's letters to neighbouring rulers and try to lighten the weight of Portuguese brutality. A.M. Pannikar observes, "The Portuguese king could not have selected a worse officer if he wanted to establish peaceful relations with the Indian rulers and carry on trade. Cabral had neither tact nor foresight. He had an overweening pride which suspected an insult in every innocent

12. Danvers. F.C., The Portuguese in India, London (1894), Vol. I, p. 85.

movement, and was short-tempered".¹³ But a careful student of history would be convinced that these personalities were mere embodiments of their national aspirations in vengeance against Muslims. If the aim of Portuguese entry into India was, as H.A. Miller has stated, "the drive for economic power, the control of the spice trade and the amassing of the wealth associated with the Orient",¹⁴ how the burning of Hajj pilgrims¹⁵ even after extorting all their gold and valuables and the massacre of 2000 Arabs at Pantalayini Kollam¹⁶ who were leaving the country could be justified. The Zamorins of Calicut with their Muslim allies waged a desperate war against the Portuguese. The atrocities committed by the Portuguese has been well described by Zaynuddin who regards the arrival of Portuguese as a punishment of Allah: "They oppressed the Muslims, corrupted them and committed all kinds of ugly and infamous deeds, too bad to be described, The Portuguese scoffed at the Muslims and held them upto scorn. They

13. A.M. Panikkar, A History of Kerala 1498-1801, Annamalai Nagar (1960), p. 40.

14. Roland E. Miller, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Madras (1976), p. 61.

15. Vasco da Gama plundered a ship carrying Hajj pilgrims which belonged to Shabantra Koyas' brother and set it on fire with the crew. He saw the women bringing up their gold and jewels and holding up their babies to beg for mercy. Jane K.G., Vasco da Gama and his Successors, London (1910), p. 66.

16. Danvers, F.C., The Portuguese in India, I, p. 116.

ordered them about insolently, employed them to draw water, bespattered them and spat upon their face and body. They prevented the Muslims from their journeys, especially their pilgrimage to Makkah. They plundered their properties, burnt their cities and mosques, seized their ships and trod down the Quran and other books under their feet and burnt them away. They violated the mosques, instigated the Muslims by bribery to accept Christianity and prostrate before the cross. They adorned their own women with ornaments and fine clothes in order to allure the Muslim women. They put to death hajis and other Muslims with all kinds of cruelties and reviled publicly the Apostle of Allah. They held the Muslims captives, binding them with heavy fetters and rushed them into the market to sell them as slaves, tormenting them, at that time, with all kinds of punishment in order to get more profits. The Portuguese kept Muslims in dark, dirty and stinking houses. They beat Muslims with shoes when they purified themselves with water after excretion. They tortured the Muslims with fire, sold some, and kept some as slaves and employed some of them for all kinds of hard labour without any compassion.¹⁷ He continued:

17. Shaykh Zayn uddin, Tuhfat al-Mujahidin fi Baazi Akhbaril-Burthugaliyyin (Trans.), S.M.H. Nainar, pp. 60-61.

"The Portuguese after great preparations sailed to the ports of Jazrat, Konkan, Malibar, and the coast of Arabia, lay in wait for the ships of the Muslims and seized them. Thereby they amassed abundant wealth and acquired a large number of Muslim prisoners". He laments, "How many a Muslim woman of noble birth they took as captives, and violated their honour to bring into the world Christian children who would be enemies of the faith of Allah and agents to cause affliction to the Muslims! How many Sayyids, learned men and nobles they captured and tortured and put to death! How many Muslim men and women they converted to Christianity! How many such shameful and abominable deeds they committed! The tongues get weary of describing them, and hate to put them into words. May Allah chastise them very severely!"

We hear the same pathetic laments in Fath al-Mubin by Qazi Muhammad, one of the leaders of the Mappilas in the 'holy war'.¹³ Qazi Muhammad had been very actively involved in the Chaliyam battle of 1571 with the other Qazis, Sayyids and Yogis. He describes how people came from far off lands to take part in the battle, He described

13. Fath al-Mubin, Qazi Muhammad, Ibn Muhammad in Abdul Qadir al-Fadfarī (Ed.), Jawahir al-Ashar, pp. 240-62.

that due to the Portuguese destruction of coastal settlements and the constant bombardments of Mappila centres, "then people began to walk along the mountains. But they walk in perpetual fear (of the Portuguese)."19

The Mappilas were so hardpressed that the leaders called for a Jihad-holy war. Zayn uddin says of his temptation to write the Tuhfat: "I, therefore, compiled this narrative with a view to inspire in the faithful the desire of fighting the worshippers of the cross; for a holy war with them is an obligatory duty, because they invaded the territories inhabited by the Muslims, and also captured from among them a multitude whose number cannot be counted....."20

The war was fought with the Zamorin and his Muslim allies on the one hand and the Portuguese and the allies they could get in Malabar--princes who were disgrunted at the increasing power of the Zamorin Rajas. While his Nayar forces were unbeatable on land, the navy chiefly manned by Muslims and led by Kunjalis was invinsible. The Portuguese dominating the sea and checking the navigation of the Muslims, the resources of the Mappilas declined. Yet the ideas of 'Jihad' and 'Shahid' rendered them bold and courageous.

19. Ibid., p. 248.

20. Tuhfat, p. 13.

The Kottupalli Mala, a very popular song of the Mappilas re-printed several times by many, gives an instance of martyrdom of a man. The hero is Kunhi Marakkar, the martyr, of Manath House of Veliyankod. The central theme of the song is that the hero was sitting among his friends on a carpet just after his 'Nikah' for the feast and nuptial union. Just then an old man came running and asked, "Is there anybody amongst you who wants to enter heaven and permanently reside there?" He then described that at dusk on the previous day a Christian ship was seen in the sea. Two of the sailors came ashore in a canoe caught hold of a Muslim Maiden and took her to the ship. Anybody who save and bring her back will get heaven. There upon the bridegroom walked out of the pandal as if going to toilet. He went to his house to see his surprised mother, from whom he asked permission to court martyrdom, but was refused. He walked past the mother who fell unconscious, and arranged a boatman to take him to the ship at night and wait for his signal not far. Thus he got on board the ship. A guard tried to stop him, but was killed. He saw the vile unbelievers heavily drunk and tried to find out the girl. After long search he found her, lead her to the waiting boat and asked the boatman to take her

ashore. Then he killed all the heavily drunken sailors. The captain meanwhile woke up and fought with him. Kunhimarakkal thus died the death of a Shahid. The boatman and the girl witnessed his body being cut to seven pieces and being thrown in to sea. His mutilated body was washed ashore one piece each appearing in Tahir beach, Kalatt, Beypore, Calicut, Muttungal, and Badagara. The place where his head reached was Kottuppally.²¹ Then there is the description of how the chieftain of the Muslims of the place one day dreamt that the severed head was in the river and it should be properly buried. Then the author goes on to narrate the typical 'Karamah' of a shahid. The tradition was so live among the Mappilas that in many places 'Jarams' (Shrines) were erected as a holyman or the leader of the community dreamt that some part of the Martyr's severed body had appeared in the locality. This incident shows the response of the community for the call of martyrdom made by Zaynuddin and others and how it actually worked. This was one aspect of the total response of the community.

The Mappilas also tried to seek help outside.

21. The Mala took its name from this Kuttuppally, also known as Albhutha Ratnamala (Garland of wonderful diamonds).

They had the advantage of various foreign Muslim communities settled as traders in Calicut. They were 'Indian Muslim traders and seafarers from Gujarat, Malabar, Coromandel and Bengal' and 'Many of the originally Hindu coast-dwelling peoples of India from Gujarat through Malabar and Coromandel to Bengal had been converted to Islam by the fourteenth century'.²² Naturally these non-Malabar communities were also eager to bring about the destruction of Portuguese on the sea. Fathul Mubin of Qazi Muhammad itself was meant for circulation among Muslim rulers. "When they hear this (news of Zamorin's war with Portuguese) they would consider joining him in war..... especially in 'Sham' (Syria) and 'Iraq'.²³ Among the Muslim rulers the sultans of Bijapur and the Pasha of Egypt took active interest in joining hands with the Zamorins. That was why Zaynuddin's Tuhfat... was dedicated "as a gift-book to the most illustrious of sultans, the most noble of monarchs, one who has made the holy war his chief consolation, and holds the elevation of the word of Allah by military expeditions as a precious ornament, The mighty, victorious and compassionate Sultan Ali Adilshah

22. C.R. Boxer, op. cit., p. 45.

23. Fath al-Mubin, pp. 1-2.

(of Bijapur)".²⁴ It was from him that Albuquerque in 1510 seized Goa. The ruler of Gujarat had his own reasons to fight the Portuguese. The trade of Gujaratis all over Asia was adversely affected by the Portuguese 'Cartas' and later from the time of emperor Akbar onwards the Portuguese had friendly relations with Mughals which increased the hatred of Bijapur, because of the enmity between Mughals and Bijapur. The diversion of spice trade caused loss of trade of his subjects and the Arab traders and a huge revenue.

In 1509 the Zamorin's naval alliance with Qansau al-Ghauri, Sultan of Egypt, and Sultan Mahmud Begarha of Gujarat ended in failure. After an initial victory the combined Egyptian and Indian fleet under the command of Amir Hussain, the Kurdish governor of Jiddah was totally defeated in Gujarat harbour.²⁵ Albuquerque's occupation of Goa in 1510 cut off the last hope of help from the Deccan. In the same year he sacked Calicut and the Zamorin was poisoned at his instance by the heir apparent. In 1513 Portuguese built a fort in Calicut. This was abandoned in 1526 and Zamorin

24. Tuhfat, p. 14.

25. Majumdar. R.C., Ray Chaudhuri H.C., and Datta K, Advanced History of India, London (1948), p. 332. Tuhfat attributed the defeat to the decree and will of Allah, 'which is indisputable and against which nothing can avail'.

was compelled to allow the construction of the Chaliyam fort in 1529 using the materials and Tombstones taken from the ancient Jamaat mosque.²⁶ The Mappilas fought bravely as Alburquerque himself noted, "better than any other people he had ever seen". But in the face of the formidable enemy more was needed than courage. The Mappilas shared no military tradition. They were good sailors but lacked experience and preparation for sustained naval fights. They lacked a strong leadership until the appearance of the Kunjalis. They had no territory of their own except that of the Ali Raja of Cannanore, whose opposition was made ineffective by his position within range of Portuguese cannon. Finally the Mappilas were subject to the whims of the Zamorin, who dispensed the funds and equipments and controlled the aid of the Nayars.

The Portuguese on the other-hand possessed superior firearms, skill in naval action, leadership and unity. They could have the co-operation of the rival rajas who resented Zamorin's pretensions. They had also the advantage of a network of forts at Cannanore, Cochin and Quilon which provided a safe haven for their ships and cut off Mappila financial resources necessary for a

26. When the Chaliyam fort was finally captured in 1571 by the Zamorin and his Mappila allies, the war that formed the central theme of 'Fath al-Mubin' (complete victory), the building materials of the fort were returned to the Mappilas for rebuilding the Jamaath mosque, "which the Portuguese had destroyed in building their fort". W. Logan, Malabar Manual, Madras (1951), I, p. 333.

prolonged war. The establishment of the Goa consolidated Portuguese arms in an almost unshakable position.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century the Muslim resistance took a unified form under the command of Kunjali Marakkars. They were originally a community of Cochin Mappilas who were compelled to move to Ponnani following Portuguese oppression of Muslims in Cochin, and the Cochin Raja's friendship with the Portuguese. When the Cochin fort was erected the Zamorin launched an attack and Muslims of Cochin naturally helped him. The Zamorin had persuaded 'Ismail Marakkar, the head of the Mohammedan Community' to issue orders to his men not to import rice from the Carnatic coast.²⁷ This shows that Marakkars were the leaders of the community of Muslims at Cochin as 'Koya of Calicut' or 'Shahbantra Koya' under the Zamorins. Later the Marakkars took service under the Zamorins. It seems that it was after the attack of Henry de Menezes in 1525 on Pantalayani Kollam, which was a stronghold of Kunjalis, and on Ponnani where he destroyed several Moorish ships, that the Marakkars appeared as the spear-head of Mappila resistance.²⁸ The origin of the

27. K.M. Panikkar, A History of Kerala 1493-1801, Annamalai Nagar (1960), p. 57.

28. W. Logan, Malabar Manual, p. 325.

name 'Marakkar' is explained in many ways. But it never seems sensible that 'Marakkar' originated from the Arabic Markab (canoe) or Tunisian word 'Martaba' (Sailor).²⁹ Anyone related with sea or ship was called Marakkan. Marakkar may be a honorific plural as is the case in innumerable words in Malayalam.³⁰ The pet name 'Kunja' (younger, beloved) is added with 'Ali'. The word Kunjali would therefore mean 'Dear Ali the Navigator' or 'Sir Ali the Navigator'.³¹ If Kunjalis are described only as the naval chieftains of the Zamorins, their role as the 'Defenders of Islam', against Portuguese atrocities become narrowed down. Since many of them had names of Illams attached with families it is assumed that they were descendants of rich merchants who contracted marriage alliance with important families in Malabar.³² This would explain the source of their influence from Gujarat to Ceylon towards the end of sixteenth century.³³ Instead

29. P.k. Muhammad Kunhi, Muslimkalum Kerala Samakharavum (Mal.), Trichur (1982), p. 92.

30. 'Maram' or 'Kattamaram' is the oldest form of Canoe, Some three or four floating wood planks tied together with ropes as still used in fishing. They won't sink or overturn.

31. Miller, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, p. 68.

32. P.k. Mohammed Kunhi, op. cit., p. 93.

33. From the description of their operation in Ceylon places like Puttalam, Kotta and Vidala were as familiar to them as Calicut or Ponnani. Ibid., p.94. O.k. Nambiar, The Kunjalis, Admirals of Calicut, Bombay (1963), pp. 81-96.

of the direct fight in the tradition of 'Caverpada', the Kunjalis used the tactics of hit and run. They used the 'Ghurabs' that could sail in deep and shallow waters alike, and smaller boats for operation.

It is said it was after the death of Kutti Ahmad Marakkar that Kunjali II assumed the office. So it can be assumed that Kutti Ahmad was the first 'Kunjali' and it was a title. Kunjali I might have lived upto 1538. In fact there were three more who were conferred the title of 'Kunjali' in succession. There is evidence to believe that the third among them, Pattu Marakkar assumed the office after the destruction of the Chaliyam fort in 1571 and the fourth Kunjali succeeded him in 1595. This helps us to believe that it was after the death of Kutti Ahmad Marakkar that the Zamorin conferred on his naval captains the title of 'Kunjali'.

It was under the first Kunjali that the dreaded Kutti Ali terrorised Portuguese shipping. Their tactics was unique. They would wait close to the shore silently for the arrival of enemy ships. The men stationed on the top of hills would give signs and they would dash with their small boats like bloodhounds, get on board the ship and kill as many as possible. If they can't hold

the enemy then they would retreat to shallow waters. The huge Portuguese ships could not follow them in shallow waters. They could also give protection to ships in the high seas under the cover of the 'battle'. In 1523 Kutti Ali thus helped 200 ships to come safely to Calicut. 8 ships laden with pepper were sent to the Red Sea escorted by 40 other ships. Marakkars' protection enabled Calicut, to carry on her trade with West Asia though often it was interrupted.

The Muslim business men in Ceylon also suffered at the hands of Portuguese much the same way as the Muslims of Kerala. The Zamorins under the leadership of the Kunjalis tried to destroy Portuguese influence in Ceylon and interfered in Ceylonese politics on behalf of the brother of the king, Mayadunn who was an avowed enemy of Portuguese. In 1539 the Kunjalis fought Martin Alphonso de Souza at Vidalai. When the battle came to an end, "800 dead Muslims covered the battle field and the whole camp with its rich booty fell into Portuguese hands, including 400 cannon, 2000 muskets and many other weapons and 22 war-paroes".³⁴ The victory of Vidalai was so important for Portugal that

³⁴. Ferrolli, The Jesuits in Malabar, Bangalore (1939), Vol. I, pp. 119-20.

"it was extolled all over Europe".³⁵ It was during the operation at Puttalam that Ali Ibrahim and Kunjali I were killed. Kunjali's death is shrouded in mystery.³⁶ For nearly four decades he had fought the Portuguese on sea and land and in 1540 he died broken-hearted.

The Zamorin then tried to get the help of the Ottoman emperor Sulaiman. A navy under Sidi Ali Reis entered Indian waters, But the attempt turned futile. Earlier Gujarat had obtained Egyptian assistance under Sulaiman Pasha,³⁷ which also was ineffective due to various reasons, and this incident is, referred to by O.K. Nambiar as the 'Indo-Egyptian Axis'. Tired of the naval setbacks, the Zamorin sent Chinnakutty Ali to Goa for reconciliations and a treaty was signed at Ponnani in which the Zamorin agreed to accept Portuguese 'Cartas' for Moorish ships. Even after the purchase of such cartas the Portuguese extorted huge sums on point of the sword. Kunjali II opposed the 'Cartas' system and gave protection to Malabar ships. He also began attacking Portuguese ships they could set sail only with a huge navy for protection.

35. O.K. Nambiar, Kunjalis, op. cit., p. 93.

36. "Some say that they were done to death by secret orders of Mayadunne, and others that they were killed by the villagers in consequence of their over-bearing conduct towards them". Ibid., p. 96.

37. Qazi Muhammad, Fath al-Mubin, p. 247.

The Portuguese became a byword for cruelty. They had all the unknown savage ways for killing and torturing the victims, as had been described in 'Tuhfah' and 'Fath al-Mubin' especially in places where they had fortresses. In Cannanore a lady paraded in the street carrying the dead body of her husband. She was related to the Arakkal royal family. This roused the mob and the natives attacked the fort furiously and a reinforcement to the fort from Goa was repelled by Kunjali.

The simultaneous attack on Goa by the Sultan of Bijapur, on Chaul by the Sultan of Ahmadnagar and on Chaliyam by the Zamorin shocked the Portuguese. The Zamorin's naval captain, Kuttipokker secretly descended on chaul, and later attacked the fort at Mangalore.³⁸ The Chaliyam battle was a total war for the community and the Zamorin. A call for 'Jihad' was made by the religious leaders, and 'Tuhfah' itself was meant for this purpose. "Men came like ants from far off places" says the author of Fath al-Mubin, 'the carpenters, blacksmiths, weavers and labourers with what all arms and provisions they could carry'. Trenches were dug and barricades were raised.

38. O.k. Nambiar, op. cit., p. 111.

The fort was blockaded and the occupants were reduced to starvation till 'they took to eating dogs and carcasses'. The yogis, pandits, Sayyids Qazis and Mashaikh recited sacred books. Offering were made to sacred shrines of India, Arabia and the Zamorin daily visited the besieging forces and inspected trenches. The Portuguese surrendered and the fort was razed and not one stone was left. The materials were returned to the Mappilas for rebuilding the ancient Jamaath Mosque which the Portuguese had destroyed.³⁹ The Zamorin permitted Pattu Marakkar, who led the attack on Caliyam, to erect a fort at Putuppanam, granted all honours of a Nayar chieftain and the title of Kunjali (the third).

The Portuguese retaliated for the Chaliyam defeat with fire and sword all along the Malabar coast; Ships were destroyed, the crew, killed, settlements were bombarded and cities were reduced to ashes. It was then that the ruler of Calicut was compelled to seek an alliance with Adil Shah of Bijapur in 1578. The Portuguese were convinced of the need to estrange Mappilas and please the Zamorin for their existence. Albuquerque even tried to poison one of the Zamorins whom he could

39. Fath al-Mubin, pp. 247-50; W. Logan, Malabar Manual, Vol. I, p. 333.

not win over to his side. In 1578 the Zamorin granted them permission to erect a fort at Ponnani, but the Kunjalis continued their resistance capturing all the Portuguese ships on the sea, and one of them Kutti Musa even established a naval base in Mannar in Ceylon with the help of the ruler of Jafna. The third Egyptian armada sent in sixty years to Indian waters was again futile. One of the reasons for the defeat of such grand enterprises was the distunity among the naval powers and suspicion of each others' intentions. The Zamorin lost all hopes and thought of befriending the Portuguese, Since the Cochin Raja was estranged from them, the Portuguese entered into a treaty with the Zamorin at Ponnani. This treaty destroyed the Zamorin-Marakkar axis and was reflected in the communal harmony that existed between the Hindus and the Muslims for centuries. Kunjalis strengthened the fort at Putuppanam, with additional defence facilities from land and sea. Pyrard de Laval says that it had fine wall paintings depicting the adventures of Kunjalis and of all the ships captured and sunk by them.⁴⁰ The friendship between the Zamorin and the Portuguese was resented by Kunjali and the Mappilas. In the changed circumstances

40. K.V. Krishna Ayyar, The Zamorins of Calicut, (1938), p. 211.

he often acted by himself and probably became an overgrown subject. Thereupon the Zamorin took the help of the Portuguese for his destruction. In 1599 a joint Portuguese-Calicut attack on Kottakpal from land and sea was defeated. This victory made Kunjali Ijustifiably proud'. He caught the imagination of the people, princes and lords. He had helped Rani Tirumala Devi of Ullal to fight Banga Raja of Mangalore and she had sent him 3000 bags of rice to the fort and promised further help. And the Nayak of Madura was prepared to permit him to build a fort at Rameswaram.⁴¹ The Portuguese were still besieging the fort. On 16 December 1599 a combined force of the Zamorin and Portuguese Captain Furtado finalised the plan to reduce the Putuppanam fort. The agreement arrived at between the two has been described by Faria and De Couto. It is said Kunjali had only 800 Muslims where as on the other side there were 1200 Portuguese assisted by 12000 Nayars of Calicut and a reinforcement from Cochin was further expected. The battle that followed was bitter and forms glorious chapters in the history of Mappilas, but too risky for Kunjali since he was surrounded by enemies on land and

41. O.k. Nambiar, op. cit., pp. 126-7.

sea. Kunjali opened negotiations and came out of the fort to surrender to the Zamorin. The moment he left the fort the treacherous Portuguese under Belchior rushed to the fort and set fire to the stockades, houses and the ships that were in or about it. The Calicut Nayers were enraged by this act of perfidy. Thereupon Kunjali retired to the fort. On further negotiations, Kunjali got assurance from Zamorin to spare his life and of the 250 men with him. 'The admiral of Calicut' decided to surrender on 16 March 1600. On that day the gate of the citadel opened and Kunjali came out with the gallant remnants of the garrison with his sword in hand, points lowered and delivered it to Zamorin in token of submission. The Portuguese captain advanced and seized him. "This treachery was revolting to the code of honour of the Nayar soldiers, who would not have the Portuguese lay hands on their brave countryman, in violation of the well-known terms of surrender. A tumult arose among the Calicut Nayers who fell upon the Portuguese in an attempt to rescue the captive".⁴² The Portuguese hurried him away under a strong escort to their lines leaving the Zamorin to suppress the tumult, which he did

42. O.K. Nambiar, op. cit., p. 133.

with utmost difficulty. The allies made a ceremonious entry into the fort, Furtado and the Zamorin hand in hand. The Zamorin gave up the town to be sacked by his soldiers and so diverted their mind from dwelling on the sordid incident. The Zamorin gave Furtado a gold leaf on which the terms of a treaty of friendship was inscribed. "That was the end of Kotta and the eclipse of an intrepid naval tradition as surely as that was the end of the prestige and glory of Calicut".⁴³ The whole citizens of Goa poured in unending streams to the square where a special scaffold was erected for hanging Kunjali and his brave companions. Kunjali conducted himself "with great dignity and courage which won the respect of his pitiless foes". The execution went for several days and all the forty prisoners whom the Zamorin had handed over were put to death. Kunjali's body was quartered and exhibited on the beach at Bardes and Panjim. "His head was salted and conveyed to Cannanore to be stuck on a standard for a terror to the Moors".⁴⁴

The emotional shock of defeat and the serious

⁴³. Ibid., p. 134

⁴⁴. Ibid., p. 140.

economic deterioration were accompanied by problems arising from the aggressive religious policy of the Portuguese. In his letters to captain, Cabral, the King of Portugal had instructed him that all the Moors who do not accept the law of faith and forbid commerce and exchange, should be killed with fire and sword and fierce war against them should be carried on.⁴⁵ To effect this policy large numbers of priests and other religious workers accompanied the Portuguese military and administrators. Infact their large number often created serious difficulties of finance and morale. Danvers notes that in 1635, two-thirds of the Portuguese in Goa were church-related. In 1632, 1000 out of 1500 Portuguese soldiers became monks after arrival at Goa because of better prospects.⁴⁶ Right of private trade and the great privileges of the church were the two distinguishing characteristics of the Portuguese system.⁴⁷ At times notably during the period of Arch Bishop de Menezes, who became Arch Bishop of Goa in 1595 and served as Governor, 1607-1609, the ecclesiastical establishment was also in effective control of the political policy

45. Gaspar Correa, The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama, London (1849), p. 187.

46. F.C. Danvers, The Portuguese in India, London (1894), Vol. II, pp. 253-5.

47. K.M. Panikkar, Malabar and the Portuguese, Bombay (1929), p. 176.

and activity.⁴⁸ At the same time the Portuguese attitude to Hindus differed due to economic considerations. The Hindu rulers were their source of supply of pepper. Zayn uddin complains that the Franks entertained antipathy and hatred only towards the Muslims and to their creed alone, evincing no dislike towards the Nayers and other pagans of similar description. At the same time the church did not look upon Hindus as different from Muslims and it realised that it was to the Hindu community that it must look for its growth. The work of proselytization was therefore carried forward energetically, especially in Goa, where thousands were baptized. Finally a royal decree forbade the practice of Hinduism in the Portuguese domain and commanded the destruction of idols. The policy became so rigorous that by 1561 Goa and its surrounding islands were almost converted,⁴⁹ during the viceroyalty of Dom Constantine de Braganza (1558-61). The exodus of the Hindus from Goa to the

48. H.S. Miller, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Madras, (1976), p. 72.

49. H.S. Whiteway, The Rise of Portuguese Power in India, London (1899), pp. 60-66; Summarizes the religious policy in Goa, C.A. Boxer, The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, pp. 70-72; refers to the complaint of the Bishops of Ceuta, Lisbon, Tangier, Angra, Portalegre, Lamego and the Algrave to the Crown in February 1563 of the abuses in the mission field.

mainland reached such alarming proportions that his immediate successors had to give specific assurances to the Hindus of Goa.

Economic retrogression, estrangement from Hindus, bitterness against Christians and a new militancy was the result of continued Portuguese hostility to Muslims. Each of these was passed forward in some measure into modern times, shaping both Muslim history and present attitudes. The economic retrogression had a severe effect upon the community and produced radical changes in their situation. "The Portuguese domination compelled them to turn inward from the profitable seaward commerce in search for new avenues of economic well-being. But there they found the land all but totally occupied by the Hindu landlords and their lessees. The Mappilas did not have adequate resources or initiative to work their way out of the predicament. It is here that we must find the starting point for the community's later poverty, ignorance and inwardness".⁵⁰

With the coming of Dutch in 1603 due to many reasons the Portuguese power was on the wane. Once the Europeans became conscious of the wealth of India, the

50. R.E. Miller, op. cit., p. 75.

English East India Company in 1600, the United East India Company of Netherlands in 1602, and the Danes Company in 1616 and the last the French East India Company in 1664 were founded. In Kerala a triangular competition developed between the Portuguese, the Dutch and English. The new Europeans were primarily interested in trade, not territory. They assumed authority over selected areas required for trading activities which they defended with whatever stratagems required. These people were primarily businessmen; but neither the advance agents of the state or religion were apostles of non-violence. Yet the decline of the Portuguese did not mean salvation for the Mappila Muslims, because they yielded their power not to the old coalition of Hindus and Muslims, but to another group of foreigners with similar aspirations and strength as their predecessors.

The Dutch led the new wave with policies that represented a modification from the Portuguese approach. While they were not averse to territorial acquisition and maintained a religious concern, these interests were largely qualified by a utilitarian concentration on business. Everywhere in the East, the Dutch became the commercial monopolists of the seventeenth century. Pressed by Marthandavarma in the South and by the Zamorin

and the English in the North, with revenues growing less and less, their position steadily deteriorated until the final withdrawal from Cannanore in 1790 and Cochin in 1795.

The Dutch left no visible long-term impact on Malabar coast and especially on the life of the Mappila Muslims.⁵¹ In the first instance they had gained the support of the community in overcoming the Portuguese. They revived and broadened the range of commercial activities, and to a 'minor' extent Mappilas shared in its benefits. At Cannanore they maintained friendly relations with their immediate neighbour, the Ali Raja, and later they concluded alliances with Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. But for the Mappilas they were the new Portuguese who varied, but continued the trend of their predecessors. "The Dutch religious policy was directed chiefly against the Roman Catholic Portuguese, who represented the nation and faith that had stood against Holland's religious freedom. Their sense of divinely appointed mission was as vital as those whom they opposed."⁵²

51. Mainly because Malabar was only one of the 32 settlements of the Dutch where there were chief factories of the Company in the year 1650. "Malabar formed but a small part of the possessions of the Dutch East India Company". A Galletti, The Dutch in Malabar, Madras (1911), pp. 3-4.

52. R.E. Miller, op. cit., p. 80.

By the time when the English gained ascendancy they had taken lessons from the experience of other European traders, especially the interference in politics of the land and of the aggressive religious policy. Hence they followed a milder approach in religious affairs and in accordance with the view of Sir Thomas Roe, preferred to live as private merchants under the titular authority of local rajas and utilizing conciliatory methods. This brought them closer to the people and provided experience that stood them in good stead in later years. They did make huge profits even upto the tune of 65 per cent. While the English traders were successful in achieving alliances with the Hindus in order to further their trading activities, their relations with Mappilas were less favourable. The commitment of the English to the pepper rajas, their suspicions of the neighbouring Ali Raja, their dislike of the Mappila sailors who threatened shipping, and their competition with the Zamorin produced a generally negative situation for the Mappilas. Thus the over-all impact of the post-Portuguese period was less brutal on the community but the net effect was the same. The Zamorin was powerful but Mappilas were no longer a major political asset and they were relegated to the background of events. The destruction of their economic prosperity was now sealed

and stamped. The frustrated Muslims were in the process of becoming a community of petty traders, landless labourers, and poor fishermen.

When the Mappilas turned to the interior they found ready converts from low castes,⁵³ and interior settlement centres developed. With their entanglement in rural economy, mainly the land tenure system, causing much stress and strain. Though they did not put their hope in an Islamic state, they had enjoyed the obvious advantages of a favourable alliance with the ruling power. Now for the centuries, they had been experiencing a new situation where power was in the hands of a coalition of Christian foreigners and Hindu rajas. The situation could no longer be viewed as a temporary problem. It had taken on the appearance of permanency. There seemed to be no one who could help the Mappilas out of the dilemma. 'The voice of Zain al-Din was stilled and there was none to replace it; for not the least of the effects of the European blockade of Kerala shores was that, it cut off from the Mappilas the source of their preachers and holymen, who had come from Arabia to guide and encourage them in the faith. "All considered Islam in

53. The development of the community in the interior settlements has been discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

Kerala had never been in greater distress since its advent".⁵⁴

The second half of eighteenth century was a turning point in the history of Muslims of Kerala. This period witnessed three important developments in the history of South India. Firstly the French and the English plunged into the Deccan politics as was evident in the second Carnatic War of 1749-1754. Secondly the rise of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan during 1757-1799 and finally the emergence of British as the dominant power in South India and their assumption of sovereignty.

Hyder Ali the ruler of Mysore who has been described as "one of the ablest personalities in the history of India"⁵⁵ had three reasons to invade Malabar. The

54. R.E. Miller, op. cit., p. 84. P.A. Syed Mohamed, Kerala Muslim Caritram, p. 146, takes another view. He claims that it was at this time that Muslim religious leaders began to labour for change and to revitalise religious education. It seems that Miller makes a too hasty assessment. In fact with Portuguese pressure on the South Arabian coast large number of Sayyids migrated to Asian coastal settlements as is revealed from the field survey to be discussed in the next chapter. Even on the Malabar coast there was no dearth of preachers. Zaynuddin had come not from Arabia but from Malabar-Coromandal coast.

55. R.C. Majumdar, Advanced History of India, p. 685. Michaud describes that Hyder as a young boy had witnessed the victorious marches of Nadirshah which thrilled his imagination and often he appeared armed with a sword. His steady growth to become the ruler of Mysore was also a thrilling episode. Michaud, History of Mysore, Madras (1926), pp. 16-19.

political weakness of the land, The wealth of Malabar, traditional and acquired over centuries of trade, and port-facilities and prospectus of trade for the land-locked Mysore. It is said that he was invited by Ali Raja for help against Nayars and some are of opinion that he was trying to establish a safe route to the friendly French port of Mahe.⁵⁶ "It was from Mahe that he received his main supply of arms His Army trained on Western lines would be useless without Western arms".⁵⁷ The Mappilas about 8000 in number, joined his army as irregulars. He conquered North Malabar and Calicut and the Zamorin committed suicide. The pent-up resentment of the Mappilas took violent form against the ruling Nayars and Brahmins. Haidar fixed the tribute of the Rajas who were asked to settle the alleged claim of the Mappilas. As his ally the Ali Raja became his lieutenant in North Kerala. He assumed monopoly of the exports from Malabar setting up his chief factory at Badagara. The Nayars rebelled later in 1766 and Hyder Ali invaded

56. P.A. Syed Mohamed, Kerala Muslim Caritram, p. 26.

57. The relative importance of Malabar and Mahe to Hyder's possessions on the West-Coast is discussed in detail by B. Sheik Ali, "Malabar as a Potent factor in the Second Mysore War", in Eighteenth Century India (Essays in Honour of Prof. A.P. Ibrahim Kunju), Trivandrum, (1981), pp. 46-54.

Malabar again defeating the Nayars at Putyanzadi. But the unrest continued and he came again in 1768. He was failed in his attempt to capture Travancore and was forced to withdraw, but took Trichur and Cochin in 1776. In 1779 English captured Mahe cutting the hope of French support and in 1780 defeated Haidar's forces at Tellicherry and took Calicut. Battles raged involving the Muslims, the Nairs, the British and the French till Hyder Ali died in 1782.

In Malabar Nayars stood as his most consistent opponents and Mappilas stood as his supporters, welcoming the change that he brought to their situation. While he punished all the rebels; the Nairs were the object of his special resentment'. "They were hunted remorselessly down, and hanged without mercy as soon as captured. Their wives and children were sold into slavery, and Hyder even published an edict degrading the caste below the rank of Pariahs".⁵⁸

Malabar came under Tipu Sultan, Haidar's son and successor in 1782. But discontentment grew up against his administration. One factor in the disaffection was the exorbitant exactions of Tipu's revenue

58. C.A. Innes, Malabar Gazetteer, Madras (1951), p. 63.

collectors. Another alienating factor was the ruthless destruction resulting from the scorched earth policy of the conqueror - mainly the destruction of peppervines. Naranna Prabhu, an envoy from the Malabar Council to Calicut in 1784 saw on his way sandal trees and peppervines being cut. "People told him that the Nawab had given strict orders for their destruction as it was because of these commodities that the Europeans sought to make war on him".⁵⁹ By such policy of the administration pepper, produced at the rate of 15000 candies per annum, prior to Haidar's invasion of 1764 declined to 800 candies by 1800. 'Not one in fifty peppervines was left standing'. The Mappilas under Kurikkal of Manjeri rebelled in 1786 and again in 1788. They joined Ravi Varma and the Coorgese in an insurrection and the Sultan had to march in person to suppress rebellions. As a punitive and precautionary measure the Sultan wanted to transfer the capital of Malabar from Calicut to Feroke on the southern bank of Beypore river. He was bent upon destroying the rebel forces now and made a proclamation:-

"From the period of the conquest until this day, during twenty four years, you have been a turbulent and refractory people, and in the wars/waged during your

59. Ashin Das Gupta, Malabar in Asian Trade, 1740-1800, Cambridge University Press (1967), p. 113.

rainy season you have caused numbers of our Warriors to taste the draught of martyrdom..... Hereafter you must proceed in an opposite manner, dwell quietly and pay your dues like good subjects; and since it is the practice with you for one woman to associate with ten men, and you leave your mothers and sisters unconstrained in their obscene practices, and are thence all born in adultery, and are more shameless in your connections than the beasts of the field: I hereby require you to forsake these sinful practices and to be like the rest of mankind, and if you are disobedient to these commands I have made repeated vows to honour the whole of you with Islam and march all the chief persons to the seat of Government".⁶⁰

It is said some thirty thousand Brahmans fled to Travancore. The Malabar Rajas headed by Ravi Varma of the Zamorin's house invested Calicut and early in 1789 Tipu himself descended the Tamarasseri ghat and made his triumphant march. Many Rajas and rich landlords fled to Travancore. By a marriage alliance of the Bibi's daughter

60. M. Wilks, Historical Sketches of the South of India, Madras (1869), Vol. II, p. 120.
 C.A. Innes, Malabar Gazetteer, p. 68.
 C.K. Kareem claims this edict, not corroborated in other writings, "was born out of the evil genius of the greatest critic of Tipu, Colonel Wilks".
 C.K. Kareem, "History of Tipu Sultan" in Malabar Lahala (Charithram Special Edition), Trivandrum (1971), p. 187.

with one of his sons, he tried to win over her, and the Mappilas of Malabar to his side. Tipu attacked Travancore with a strong army in 1789, but was compelled to return to Mysore in 1790 with the coming of monsoon and as a coalition of his enemies threatened his Kingdom from the North. The combined army of the Raja and the English then reduced Tipu's strongholds one after the other. By the treaties signed at Seringapatam on 22 February and 18 March 1792 Coorg, Cochin State and Malabar district came under British supremacy. This treaty marked the end of an important phase of the history of Muslims of Kerala but the scars it left on their life was an endless emotional crisis.

Mysorean rule, 'for the first time in history of the land gave the Mappilas much-needed psychological boost. The fact that they were for the first time living under Muslim rulers made it appear that matters had finally come in their way'.

This period also marked an unprecedented numerical growth of the community. To a minor degree it was result of conversion of the caste Hindus during Mysorean reign "More significant was the number of low-caste and out-caste Hindus who joined Islam, which asserted their

equillity, gave them freedom from their traditional masters, and provided new possibilities for economic improvement".⁶¹ W. Logan, the Malabar Collector noted that between 1871 and 1881 some 50000 Cherumans have availed themselves of the opportunity.⁶² By all means conversion to the creed of a reigning power was attractive in many ways, just as it happened in the case of conversion to Christianity in the case of low-caste people during the days of British hegemony. The Muslims were naturally favoured by rulers for positions. They not only obtained service in large numbers in the military forces, but were also employed in the administrative system as noted by Buchanan.⁶³ The most important aspect was that, Mappilas were able to purchase at low cost or seize land rights held by fleeing landlords, this being the first large-scale opportunity for them to gain possession of land. This was important in the traditional caste-ridden land revenue system of Malabar. Now, the attitude of Muslims to land rights changed. Mysorean era resulted in a temporary release from the shackles of that feudalistic system for the Muslims. Many of the converts

61. R.E. Miller, op. cit., p. 94.

62. W. Logan, Malabar, Vol. I, p. 81.

63. Francis Buchanan, A Journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar, London (1807), Vol. III, p. 550.

from landless classes, who were placed only in the ranks of the lowest tenants and labourers, to bear the full weight of injustice was now given the vision of land-ownership and new economic hopes.

But when the British occupied Malabar a large number of Hindu landlords who had fled during the Mysorean invasion either disposing their estates on nominal prices or leaving them behind, returned and laid claim to their former estates. The newly established British courts supported the Jemmes. The British policy in general was "to preserve the rights of the superior class of subjects".⁶⁴ Even their genuine complaints were turned down as "private matters beyond the reach of the government". As the Joint Commission noted, "From the beginning of 1791 instead of seeking to conciliate the Mappilas the members of Zamorin's family thought only of attacking and subduing them. The Kottayam Raja not only allowed, but seemed to encourage the Nairs to oppress and maltreat the Mappilas and to injure their temples in revenge for former molestation of a similar nature by the Mappilas". With the psychological boost and the growth of militancy the Muslims had

64. General Abercromby's instruction to the newly appointed Supervisor of Malabar. Logan, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 486.

now the will to fight the oppression which hitherto they had passively accepted.

During the hundred years from 1821 to 1921 a total of fifty-one outbreaks took place.⁶⁵ A recent study by Stephen F. Dale has revealed many vital facts of these outbreaks.⁶⁶ William Logan, the Malabar Collector and Special Commissioner for the District (1881-82) reported that while 98% of the Jenmis were Namboothiri Brahmins or Nayars, 27 per cent of the agriculturists were Mappilas and 34 per cent of the eviction decrees had been passed against them. The Mappilas incessantly fought the British with their 'War knives', stones and sticks and neither side won. The murder of Collector Conolly in his Bungalow in 1854 in retaliation of his capturing 7561 war knives was the peak of the revolt. The British retaliated causing much destruction to life and property in Muslim majority areas. A huge fine of 38337 rupees was levied of which 30936 rupees were realised

65. They had been termed as Mappila outrages, Mappila outbreaks, Mappila rebellion and Mappila riots, so called because the outbreaks took place only in the regions inhabited by the Mappila majority. A. Sreedhara Menon, A Survey of Kerala History, pp. 346-67.

66. Stephen F. Dale, 'The Mappila Outbreaks, Ideology and Social Conflict in Nineteenth century Kerala', Journal of Asian Studies, XXXV, (1975), pp. 86-97.

and given to Conolly's wife.⁶⁷ They branded the rebellions as 'Hal Ilakkam' (Acts of ecstasy) and passed the notorious 'Mappila Outrages Act of 1862', which prevented 'unlawful gathering' and put Malabar under Martial Law. Even the workers on the fields were terrorised and fields were left uncultivated. Properties were confiscated, mass fines were levied, arms were captured. All the arrested were banished or tortured to death and the construction of mosques was prohibited.

It has been proved that Sayyid Fazl, the Ba-Alavi Saint of Mamburam known as Mamburam Tangal among his devotees, had an important role in some of these outbreaks.⁶⁸ When the Mappilas planned an attack either on a British official or an oppressive Jenmi, they would spend much time in prayer, and fast and would go to Mamburam to seek the blessings of Sayyid Fazl. Returning they would put on white robes, divorce their wives, and

67. P.A. Syed Mohammed, Kerala Muslim Charitram, pp. 202-5.

68. It seems that even in the beginning of 20th century a Tangal had to bless a Mappila to die as Martyr. Thurston quotes the President of Maunath ul-Islam Sabha (founded in 1900) as saying in 1908, "It is he (Jarathingal Tangal) that sanctifies Musaliyar and where there is no Musaliyar to bless them there is no Mappila to die as martyr". E. Thurston, op. cit., IV, p. 481.

spend much time in mosques. Then often a 'moulud' was performed and when the act was committed they would wait for the arrival of the police or army to fight and die. The strong influence of the concept of Shahid was evident from the fact that only 28 out of 350 Mappilas who directly participated in the attacks survived while 322 fought to death.⁶⁹ When a survivor was interrogated he regretted that he could not become a 'Shahid' and enter paradise, and hence preferred to go to Mecca. Sayyid Fazl's teachings show that he was very much aware of the community's problems, namely, the economic exploitation⁷⁰ and the consequent inferior social status. Doctrinal purity was an important aspect of his teachings. Mappilas were always in contact with Islamic world outside and in the middle of the 19th century reformist

69. Parents and brethren would feel proud of Shahids. If anyone survived bullets or bayonet attacks they would remark "Why did this would be Shahid not die" or "He is gone; he is nothing to us". In 1894 when only two out of the thirty-two of the rebels survived. "The mother of one of the survivors was heard to say indignantly "If I were a man I would not come back wounded". Fawcett, 'war songs of the Mappilas of Malabar', The Indian Antiquary, XXX (1901), p. 501.

70. Fawcett observed regarding the Mappilas in agrarian system of Malabar; "The customary land tenures are, as it were, arranged specially for the purpose of making people discontented". (Ibid, p. 502) Sayyid Fazl is said to have remarked "It is not a crime but a merit to kill a Jenmi who evicts".

preachers of Arab origin were touring the Mappila land.⁷¹ The anti-British nature of the movement is evident from the fact that when Kondotty Tangal and his followers helped the British officials in Conolly's murder case, they were branded as 'Kafirs' and it was proclaimed that those who will kill them will obtain 'fi sabil' (Paradise).⁷² The Mappila out-breaks had many things in common with the Faridi movement of Bengal. It was a regional variant of the Islamic revivalist movement, a response to the new economic and political context created by the British occupation of Malabar.

Many Muslim families had migrated to the princely states of Travancore and Cochin in protest against the British oppression. The Mappila awareness of the need for self reliance and reform resulted in the formation of Majlis ul-Islam Sabha at Malappuram, in the year 1900.⁷³ Various voluntary organisation for the

71. Sayyid Mahmood Sella who was interviewed in Calicut in 1940 by Collector Conolly stated that he had left his home in Baghdad 16 years ago and travelling in Arabia came to India, and employed himself in religious instruction. Sayyid Abdul Hydrose arrested in Calicut in 1855 admitted that he left his home in Hijaz four years ago and earned his living by travelling about in the country and preaching. Stephen F. Dale, 'Mappila outbreaks, Journal of Asian Studies, XXXV (1), (1975), p. 91. Both admitted their connections with Sayyid Fazl.

72. Ibid., p. 93.

73. On 9th September 1900, eight hundred Mappila leaders assembled at Malappuram to form the organisation which started functioning in Ponnani, the traditional centre of spiritual leadership of the community. P.A. Syed Mohammed, op. cit., pp. 211-12.

social and educational uplift of the community were formed following the example in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Moulana Shoukath Ali was accorded a grand reception at Tellicherry on 16th June 1911 when he was touring Malabar on behalf of the committee for a Muslim University. The pioneers of these movements were a few Thangals, Moulavis and some British sympathisers. The 'Khilafat movement' sparked the last Mappila outbreak in 1921. Thousands of Muslims assembled in Calicut on 14th June 1920 to hear Mahatma Gandhi and Moulana Shoukath Ali on Khilafat movement. Khilafat volunteers toured the villages wearing fez caps with crescent, in their Kaki uniforms with white flags. It was true that when the Mappilas fought with their simple war knives against the mighty British army, thousands lost their lives. Even the Muslim officials in the government services were not spared. The Kondotty Tangal, the Muslim divine of Kondotty was attacked as he supported the enemies. A letter which the present writer found written by the then Tangal (1921) to the Captain of the British garrison stationed at Feroke, requesting his protection against Variyankunnath Kunhahamed Haji, the Khilafat leader and his followers, testifies that the Khilafat movement was not only against the British but against all those who

sided with them.⁷⁴ This was another expression of Mappila religious sentiments and his love of freedom. The sufferings of the community aroused national leaders and in Kakinada session of the Indian National Congress in 1922 a "Mappila relief committee" was formed under the Presidentship of Moulana Shoukath Ali. Relief centres were opened in the 'war torn' Mappilanad. The administration launched the 'Andaman scheme' which they said was intended to help the Muslims but actually to deport hundreds of their leaders to the Andamans. Mappilas still cherish the memory of thousands who were rounded up, deported or sent to the jails of Cannanore, Madras, Selam, Coimbatore, Trichinopoly, Bellary, and Alipore and of the leaders who proudly received bullets shouting 'takbir'.⁷⁵ The community contributed more than its share to the freedom struggle.

The lot of the community changed for the worse during the 150 years of British rule. The neglect of

74. The letter in Malayalam was displayed in the history section of the exhibition organised in connection with the Farook College Silver Jubilee Celebrations (1973). The letter is now with Abdurahman Tangal of the family.

75. P.A. Syed Mohammed, *op. cit.*, pp. 209 ff.
K.K. Mohammed Abdul Kareem, Khilafat Lahala (Mal.), pp. 131 ff.

vernacular education on the one hand and bitterness against "English" on the other made them 'illiterate' and ignorant. The mass fines and tax burden for the maintenance of government machineries like Malabar Special Police made them poor. Being a far off district of the Madras state after independence, their demands, were not heard. Only after the formation of the state of Kerala in 1956 did developmental activities, with the slowest pace, creep into the area.

The foundation of Farook College at Feroke in 1948 was the most important event in the history of the community after independence. One of the biggest colleges in Kerala, often called the 'Aligarh of South India', the service of this institution to the community has been great. The formation of the Muslim Educational Society in 1964 was yet another giant stride in the path of progress which eventually became instrumental in the formation of All-India Muslim Educational Society in 1970. The astounding progress which the society could make under the leadership of Dr. P.K. Abdul Gafoor manifested the community's awareness of the need for self-reliance and reform. Doctors, Engineers, Professors and Lawyers, the Planters of Wynad, Businessmen of Calicut, Exporters of Cochin, Landlords of Eranad, Timber merchants of Nilambur and Business tycoons of Kasaragode all joined the enthusiastic

Muslims, who only contributed just five rupees a month. The Society boosted the creative energy of men of all vocations.

The history of the community will be incomplete without a reference to the Muslim League. True to the Mappila traditions the leadership of the organisation had always been with the Sayyids. In the post-independence turmoil men like Hassan Kutty Kurikkal and Perool Ahamad Sahib kept the organisation alive and after the formation of the state of Kerala the League became a decisive factor in politics. The state had the first Muslim Chief Minister when C.H. Mohammed Koya was sworn in as the Chief Minister following the fall of the ministry under P.K. Vasudevan Nair. Perhaps no other leader had been so popular with Mappilas in recent times as 'C.H.'. His pen and tongue had been equally effective in snubbing the critics, and at the same time extolling the honour of the community. The unending struggle of the Muslim League legislators under his able leadership won many favours for this 'Backward class' of the 'Backward Area'. The unity and solidarity of the community was once again manifested in the overwhelming response shown by the Mappilas in and outside the country, to the Malappuram Relief Fund instituted by its respected President Sayyid Mohammed Ali Shihab.⁷⁶

76. The Collection of fund was launched to help the victims of the Police firing of 29 July 1980, outside the Malappuram District Collectorate.

CHAPTER IV

MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN KERALA

Mappila:-

Mappilas form the largest community among the Muslims of Kerala. Sometimes the whole Muslim community on Malabar coast is known by the name 'Mappila'. In the Census Report of 1871 the Mappilas, or Moplahs, are defined as the 'hybrid Mahomedan race of the Western Coast, whose numbers are constantly being added to by conversion of the slave castes of Malabar'. In 1881 the Census Superintendent wrote that "among some of them there may be a strain of Arab blood from some early generation, but the mothers throughout have been Dravidian, and the class has been maintained in number by wholesale adult conversion".¹

The origin of the name is a matter of dispute. The name 'Mappila' was also used for Jews and Christians but they were differentiated as 'Jonaka' and 'Nasrani' Mappilas respectively. One interpretation of the word is that it is a combination of two Malayalam words:

1. E. Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Madras (1909), p. 456.

Maha (great) and Pilla (child) meaning great ones and noble ones, received and held in high respect. Logan and Innes take this view.² Shamsullah Qadiri who has devoted a full chapter of his monograph 'Malaibar' to the discussion is of opinion that the word is connected with Christian migrants from Iraq, Arabia and Syria. Another derivation suggested is 'Ma' (mother), Pilla (child) denoting the children of mothers, so called as they were the children of mothers who were married to foreigners, Arab as well as non-Arab.³ It is also held that the word means 'son-in-Law' or 'bridge-groom' or the foreigners married to local women. The word is still in use to mean bridegroom.

Even if any of these arguments is accepted some other related questions remain unanswered. It was the Portuguese writer Barbosa (1515) who used the term 'Moors Mopulars' for the first time for the Muslims of Kerala. Why was it that none of the Arab travellers, Ibn Battuta (1349) Abdur Razzaq (1444) Ma Huan (1451) or Zaynuddin had used the term? Ferishta can be left out as his information was from the 'Tuhfat'. This proves beyond doubt that the word originated at a later date.

2. W. Logan, Malabar, Vol. I, p. 191; C.A. Innes, Malabar Gazetteer, Madras (1951), p. 185.

3. Shamsullah Qadiri, Malaibar, (Tr.) V. Abdul Qayyum, p. 45.

After going through all these arguments the present writer is of opinion that the original word was Muwalladun (**مَوْلَدٌ**) or Mawalladun (**مَوَّلَدٌ**) which means Sayyid half-breeds, sons of Sayyid fathers and indigenous mothers. R.B. Serjeant used the term for Sayyid half-breeds in common.⁴ Arnold in his 'Preaching of Islam' has testified to the existence of the word in centres of Sayyid migration.⁵ The last dal (د) when dropped in pronunciation becomes Mawalla(h). In the Mappila Malayalam especially 'wa' (**و**) is often replaced by 'Ba' (**ب**). Thus the word becomes Maballa(h) with the last dal (د) hidden. The various spellings used in different periods like 'Mapular' and 'Moplah' suggests that one sound after la (ل) existed, but since dropped. If this is accepted it will also answer the question why it was not used by writers before Barbosa. The Sayyids or the Tangals as they are called in Kerala, are those people who had migrated from Hadramawt. It was in the 14th and 15th centuries that Sayyids migrated in large

4. R.B. Serjeant, The Sayyids of Hadramawt, pp. 25-26.

5. T.W. Arnold refers to Spain: "So that their descendants the so-called 'Muwallads' - a term denoting those not of Arab blood--soon formed a large and important party in the state", The Preachings of Islam, Lahore (1961), p. 139.

numbers to India. 'Calicut' and 'Malibar' are specially mentioned as the place of emigration. This means that within two hundred years, by the time Barbosa wrote, the Sayyid half-breeds had so increased in number that the term Maballa(h) could be used to indicate a Muslim. The fact that Calicut and, further north, Pantalayini Kollam (Pandarina of the Arabs) are Sayyid centres on South-western coast, while in Southern Kerala Muslims are called by family names,⁶ also strengthens this argument. It is possible that the name was later on applied to all foreigners and traders but nowadays it is being more and more exclusively used for Malabar Muslims. According to the Government notifications, the Mappila is a backward Muslim, belonging to the category of OBC (Other Backward Community).

Mappilas formed a patrilineal exogamous group. The Sayyids took Mappila brides but a reverse was not possible.

On the birth of a child 'Bank' (Adhan) was called into its ears. A black thread was tied to its hands possibly to ward off evil eyes.

6. In Southern Kerala Muslims are not called Mappilas, with their proper names they are called with clan names like Rawther, Methar, Labbai and Pillai while in northern Kerala no such clan names are suffixed.

The Mutikalaccil (Haqiqah) was generally held at the 7th, 14th, 21st or 28th day of delivery. The Ossattis (Barber ladies) acted as midwives on delivery.

The Sunnath Kalyanam (Khatna) was celebrated at the age from 8-12 generally. The Ammon (=Amavan= maternal uncle) used to initiate the preparation for khatna and also the talks for arranging marriages. This upper hand of maternal uncle in such matters may be a remnant of matriliney, as many of the Mappilas were local converts. After the ceremonious bath when the boy was taken in joyous procession to the Jamaath Palli on Friday. The well-to-do families used to send their children in a procession seated on elephant's back. Among the poor they used to spread an umbrella⁷ over his head. The occasion was considered very important.⁸ The barbers used to perform Khatna. It is said that the uncle used

7. K.K. Mohammed of Koduvally in Calicut District informed during the field work that when the umbrella was held over the head of the boy one would callout "Neither for yesterday nor for tomorrow, only for today" in their region. Because holding umbrella was a honour or right which was rarely granted to common man by the Rajas or chieftains.

8. Because the ceremony which is the outward sign of the boy's admission into the fold of Islam is made the occasion for much feasting and rejoicing, and large sums of money are often distributed to the poor". L.A. Krishna Iyer, Cochin Tribes and Castes, Vol. II, p. 468.

to stand with a drawnup sword and if by mistake the boy was hurt, he would strike the barber with the sword. It was the barber himself who used to dress the wound during the days of confinement. The Musaliar and Mulla of the Madrasah were given presents on the occasion.

In the case of girls, ear-boring ceremony was also celebrated. In the typical Mappila style there used to be 8-12 holes on the ear where to begin with small rings were hung. On the occasion of marriage Cirru (ornamental ear rings) were worn in these holes and Kummattu (a gold ornament similar to a bird's cage) were worn in the lower ear lobe. The ear-boring usually took place at the age from 8-12 in olden days. It seems that this was a counter-part of Hindu 'Tirandu Kalyanam' (puberty rite) which was celebrated with great pomp.

Marriage proposal was initiated from the boy's side in South Malabar and in north from the girl's side. Often a Dallal (Broker) acted as Middle-man. Dowry was not in practice. But the Mahr and ornaments had to be previously agreed upon. The Nikah used to take place at the bride's house on arrival of the bride-groom's party. Not very often, only the Nikah used to take place but marriage was not consummated. On such occasions the girl's father and elders would go to the bridegroom's

house or Nikah would take place in either mosque of the respective Jamaaths. The usual practice was that the Qali would make a short speech or read in Arabic verses on the importance of marriage, and conditions a true Muslim should observe in an alliance, which would end with a prayer. Then the father⁹ would take the bridegroom's hand in his own and, the Qazi would say, which the father would repeat, "I have married my daughter to you for the Mahr of....." The bridegroom would reply "I have accepted from you marrying your daughter for the mahr of....." This was repeated first in Arabic and then in Malayalam by both. The Mahr as fixed was then itself handed over to the girl's father. Mahr was often fixed in terms of 'Panam' (a quarter of a rupee of old) or in terms of 'Pavan' (sovereign) in the case of well-to-do families. Then after a communal dinner the 'Putukkam' (Rukhsati), the most colourful item of the marriage was held. The bride was clothed in costly bridal dress by husband's sisters and others, and the party would include her own friends, dear and near ones. There used to be particular clothes with gold brocade

9. Uncle or brother in the case of an orphan. The Qazi or anybody else as may be authorised by the competent authority.

or silken cloths for the bride's dress. A lot of festivities used to be attached with marriage. Exchange of presents were also a costly affair.

Pregnancy was celebrated. A pregnant woman was considered to be an easy pray for evil eye and evil spirits. Hence 'Nulu' (charms) and 'Aikkallu' (Talismans) were used and nerccas (vows) were also made. A pregnant woman was visited by friends and relatives with 'Shirni' (sheerin-sweets). The girl was taken to her parental house for the first delivery. Generally she was brought at the 7th month of pregnancy. The second delivery used to take place either at the husband's house or her own house as would be mutually agreed for convenience. The period of confinement used to be forty days. The Ossatti who would also act as midwife used to take care of her and the baby during these days. On the fortieth day after the final purificatory bath the midwife and 'Mannatti' (washer-women) were adequately recompensed, with clothes, a measure of rice, coconuts, batel-leaf and money. Often another handmaid was also employed to attend the girl during the days of confinement. The reason was that the mother of the house would be busy managing the kitchen for the girl, the visitors and guests. The handmaid used to take the baby to those

visitors, or distant relatives who may find it inconvenient to see the mother in confinement. On such occasions presents were given to the maid often in cash. The well-do-do families used to keep the handmaid until the baby becomes ten or twelve years' old and she becomes a kind of foster mother. But there was no practice of entrusting the baby for suckling unless the mother was ailing or physically unfit. Rich families used to have such permanent handmaids as if a member of that family who might have nursed two or three generations in a household. Such maids would also accompany the bride to the bridegroom's house once or twice in the beginning until the girl become familiarised with the new household, and in some cases used to permanently reside with the bride.

Death was attended with great agony and grief. Often food was not cooked in the house on the day. The neighbours would feed them and all the assembled as required. There was no such tradition but as a matter of inconvenience in the house and unconcern of the household for hunger this was done. On the third day after death the 'yasin' and 'Fatiha' were read in the household. In the case of well-to-do families on the third day 'Mushaf Pettā Edukkal' (Taking the Box containing the Quran sherif) was held. A procession of Qaziz, Musaliars, Mukris and

the elders proceed from the house to the Qabar of the deceased where a kulikkappura (hut on the Qabar) used to be erected with seating arrangements for a few. Round the clock Quran was then read over the grave, often the family members or relatives used to join the readers for some time. This used to be continued for forty days. During these days Shirni (sweets) Appam (rice cake) and Kulavi (sweet drinks) were sent either from the house or from the house of the relatives. In the evenings there would often be a big gathering near such graves. The relatives used to compulsorily send big pitchers and baskets of sweets to the house to be sent to the grave for being distributed to such gatherings. Some of the orthodox theologians like Zaynuddin Makhdum of 16th century in his "Fath al-Muin" have declared it un-Islamic, found only in Malabar coast. The universal prevalence of Darghas, the veneration and rites and ceremonies rampant among Mappilas, had gone unnoticed till recently.¹⁰ It tends to believe that the veneration of 'Qabar' is a prototype of veneration 'Jarams' (Darghas). On the fortieth day a big communal dinner

10. In 1981 a dissertation was submitted in the Department of History of AMU Aligarh on 'Sufism in Kerala' for the award of M.Phil. Degree, being the first ever known study on Sufism in this part of the country.

used to take place marking the closing of the recitation. All the reciters would be adequately recompensed according to their order and ranks.

These days every Jamaat mosque has got a grave yard except those being built in crowded cities or in busy highways where sufficient space may not be available. But 100 years ago until William Logan was appointed Special Commissioner to enquire into the land tenure system and Mappila grievances. One of the 'long-standing' grievances of the Mappilas was 'the difficulty of getting from their Hindu landlords sites for mosques and burial-grounds'.¹¹ The existence of large grave yards in ancient settlements may therefore help us to believe that these lands were assigned to the community during its golden days - days of trade and navigation - and for the later Jamaath mosques grave yards were not permitted.

During the field-work information was received that when a dead body had to be taken many miles away for internment, a party used go in advance with rice and vegetables so that they may prepare food for the party coming with the 'Janazah', during a short rest as previously

11. C.A. Innes, Malabar Gazetteer, p. 81.

arranged sometimes in Anjachevidi (90 KMs east of Calicut) Jamaat masjid dead bodies were seen. These were brought from distant places and by the time the bearers get exhausted and they left the dead body to be interred by the local people. This was due to the absence of grave-yards in the nearby places. As it was a long-standing grievance of the Mappilas in 1887, when the Special Commission was appointed it can be safely assumed that the problem was a very serious one for a long time.

Religious instruction was given in the local Madrasahs in places where Madrasahs were not available an elderly man or even woman collected some children and taught them to read and write Arabic and recite the Quran. Such 'Mullakkas' (Mulla+Kaka) were found in every village.

The Mappilas were traditionally traders, who were all part of the brisk foreign trade, which they lost to Europeans. Then they were compelled to move to the interior and manage riverine trade. Many acquired land and became land-owners and agricultural labourers. They supplied naval personnel to the ruling Rajas and were also employed in their army, and later in the army of Mysorean rulers and still later though on a minor scale in the forces under the British. Even at a later stage

they controlled the local trade since they were the bullock cart drivers, the chief means of transport before the development of the motor transport.¹² They also controlled riverine trade and transport. The importance of riverine transport may be understood from the fact that in all the riverine interior settlements a main road used to lead from the central market to the main ferry. The old Jamaat mosques, all of them are situated on the road from the central market or old bazar to the main ferry. It seems that this was meant both for the use of the local people and for the use of the passengers on the river.

When the British supremacy on Malabar coast was established, many were recruited for employment in plantations in Burma, Assam and for manual labour in South-East Asian concerns of the British Government.

The mother-tongue of the Mappilas is Malayalam. Mappilas are a community which has no tradition of Urdu. That is why they are isolated from the rest of the Indian Muslims. There is an overbearing tinge of Arabic and just as Arabic-Tamil, Arabi-Malayalam is in use for

12. Variyankunnatt Kunhahamad Haji, the man who established 'Khilafat' in Eranad in 1921 was himself leader of the bullock-cart drivers.

instructions in Madrasahs. But it did not develop into a separate language, though even dictionary of Arabi-Malayalam had been prepared long before.¹³ They knew to read and write Arabic and in the coastal settlements there had been many, who could converse in colloquial Arabic. There were well-known scholars in Kerala as the Makhdums of Pennani, who were looked upon as spiritual leaders by Muslims of South-east Asian countries like Java and Malaya. There had been large number of 'hafizs' also.

The Mappila dress in ordinary cases consisted of one mundu (Dhoti) either, white, red, black or lined with another small mundu which he used to tie round his loing during work, used as a bath towel, and turban and as fan in summer. This was often mud-stained. Shirt was not usually worn. Still among Mappilas could be seen people without shirt, but with his 'Mappila belt' and Malappuram kathi' (Malappuram Dagger). The female dress is a black or white mundu often with edges of silk embroidery and a loose shirt. The head dress is Tattam (another form of mundu) or a Makkana¹⁴ (veil).

13. C.N. Ahamad Moulavi and KKMA Kareem (Ed.), Mahattaya Mappila Sahitya Paramparayam, Calicut (1978), pp. 35-38, 52-54.

14. A detailed discussion on dress and ornaments follows in Chapter V.

Pusalans:-

Pusalan, or Puislan (Pudu Islam) means new converts who according to the 1891 censuses "are mostly converts from the Mukkuvan or fishermen caste" which process Thurston reported "was still going on"¹⁵ in 1909. K.V. Krishna Ayyar has observed that "in order to man his navy and merchant shipping, the Zamorin is believed to have ordered that one male member of every fishermen family should be brought up as Muslims. This resulted in the growth of the community of Pudu Islam (new converts).¹⁶ In the case of fishermen of Kerala coast often mass conversion of a village or a clan took place because kinship bonds were so powerful.

The fishermen community in Northern Kerala are mainly Muslims (Pusalans), while in Central and Southern Kerala they are small Hindu, Muslim and Christian groups.

15. E. Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Madras (1909), Vol. IV, p. 459.

16. "Their (the Pusalans) conversion took place relatively late and, because of this and their low occupation of fishing, they are allotted a low status in Moplah society". Victor S.D'Souza 'Status groups among the Moplahs on the South-West Coast of India', in Intiaz Ahmad (Ed.), Caste and Social Stratification among Muslims in India, Delhi (1978), p. 46.

Kinship and communal bonds were very strong among them and a whole beach, always obeyed one single 'Karanavan' (head fisherman of the Beach). It was only with his blessing and consent that any important event in the villages would take place. He had to be pleased with requests and presents, which was his right as the headman.

Recent studies have established that Pusalans had better knowledge of the species of fish, their habits and breeding season, the sea-currents (Niru), and various winds (karnu), and changing conditions of the sea, than marine biologists.¹⁷ They made their living either by contributing labour to the fishing unit or from the shares received for the equipments owned by its members. Besides the fishing tools and implements what a fisherman generally owned was only a thatched hut and household utensils.

Pusalans, as other Mukkuvas, believed in keeping nothing for the next day. Kadalamma (the sea-goddess) is bounteous. 'She would provide for the next day' was their belief. Hence by hard work Pusalans used to earn handsome wages which was spent on food, clothes and amusements saving nothing. During the rainy season when fishing was impossible in the raging sea, they would

17. P.R.G. Mathur, Mappila Fisher-folk of Kerala, Trivandrum (1977), pp. 23-63.

inevitably starve. It seemed that the Pusalans' beliefs and rituals were static and traditions were stagnant.¹⁸

The Pusalans had their own way of attracting their children to sea. As soon as a boat^a landed after each catch, children at the beach soon surrounded it. They used to grab 5 to 8 pieces of small fish. The childish pranks are not resented or objected to by the members of the crew. In this manner a boy grab^bed 7-10 fish, the cost of which comes Rs.2-3. Children were thus allowed to play truant by parents, who refuse to send them to any other vocation. Gradually these youngsters acquire sufficient knowledge of their future career. The large number of children thus did not become a cause of poverty among them. On an auspicious occasion the young people would be initiated into the profession.

They maintained an economic reciprocity among themselves. The norms being that all the participants in a productive enterprise should receive their due share.

18. Thakasis 'Chemmin' (Prawn). The novel and later film which won so many awards was written when his fellow writers were blowing the trumpets of new social change of casteless society, end of land-lordism, etc. But his novel alone described some of the traditional beliefs and practices of the Mukkuvas.

but social considerations enjoined the fishermen that they should take into consideration the age, skill and share in fishing unit. Thus the maxim each according to his labour became the governing principle in the distribution of every catch, in the case of a joint expedition.

Like the majority of the Muslims of Kerala the Pusalans were also followers of Shafi school of Sunni sect. The other Mappilas used call them 'Kadappurattukar' (dwellers of the beach), while themselves were known as 'Angadikkar' (towns-people). The term 'Puslan' was considered among non-fishermen communities to be a term of reproach. The 'Kadappurattukar' were divided into two endogamous groups on the basis of their traditional occupation, 'Valakkar' (fishermen who use the net) and 'Bepukar' (the hook-and-line fishermen). On the same beach they used to reside in separate quarters. They were patrilineal and polygamous, used to keep three or four wives simultaneously. The Bepukar were considered superior to Valakkar, and traced their origin to high caste Hindus.

In addition to the above endogamous groups there were other sections like 'Kabarukilakkunnavar' (grave-diggers) 'Alakkukar' (washermen) and 'Ossans'

(Barbers) in the Pusalan settlements. They were engaged in preparing graves from time immemorial and were paid in cash whenever their services were required. Both Valakkar and Bepukar accept food from Kabarukilakkunnavar but do not intermarry. Similarly the Valakkar and Bepukar would not take food from the Alakkukar and Ossans while the latter two groups accepted food from the former. Among these three service castes the Ossan occupied the lowest position in the hierarchy.

The Pusalans were very strict in observing the compulsory religious injunctions. The five times prayer did not fit quite well into the daily round of Pusalans' fishing expedition. This was overcome by making the prayers 'Jam' (performing two consecutive prayers at one time in times of necessity). They observed prayer mostly in the Masjids. Usually fishing operations on Fridays were not conducted. They used Friday morning for repair of their nets and boats and when there was great demand for fish they went out to sea on Friday afternoon.

On the death of a member of the community they would send for the Qazi and the news would be spread, the neighbours suspend their expeditions until the burial take place.

Pasalans performed a number of rituals and observed numerous magico-religious practices in the course of fishing. They believed that sorcerers can cause illness and death by black magic and engaged a host of mercenaries such as fortune-tellers, magicians, exorcists and medicine-men in order to ward off the effects of sorcery, witchcraft and magic. Their rituals have been classified into eight main groups in a recent study.¹⁹

1. Maulud = Recitation of the history, sayings and glory of Prophet Muhammad, his predecessors and descendants.

2. Pattu = Recitation of songs in Arabi-Malayalam in praise of the Prophet and his disciples.

3. Khattam Otikkal = Reading of the full text of the Holy Quran.

4. Bayt = Singing of the elegy (in Arabic) in honour of the Prophet, his descendants or contemporaries.

5. Ratib = Observance of those special rituals in honour of Shaykh Rifai and Shaykh Muhiyuddin.

19. P.R.G. Mathur, The Mappila Fisher-folk of Kerala, Trivandrum (1978), pp. 304-5. A detailed discussion of the rituals follows in Chapter VI on folk-life and rituals, etc.

6. Performance of those rituals connected with the birth of the Prophet, ending of fast and the day of sacrifice, etc.

7. Adherence to those intermittent rituals held at irregular intervals (Daily, weekly, monthly or annually) depending upon unusual occurrences like bumper catches, illness, ownership of fishing units, etc.

8. Performance of rituals connected with life-cycle-birth, circumcision, marriage and death.

Some ten evil spirits, male and female, both Hindu and Muslim, and symptoms the possessed patient exhibited, and the various curing technique including Homam, Takideluttu, Ulinju Vangal, amulet and strings, sacrifice of cock, have also been listed by recent researchers. Rites are also performed to propitiate popular spirits like 'Ifrit' who the fisher-folk believed was the spirit of the waves. If he is enraged he would come to land and cause miseries.

Khattam Otikkal (Reading full text of the Quran) was conducted in honour of Ilyas nabi, the guardian of the sea, in the month of July when there would not be any fishing. This was done for getting protection from the violent waves and hazardous sea. Milk was considered compulsory for the feast in honour of Ilyas Nabi. The

reason for conducting the same ceremony in honour of Yunus Nabi was the expiation of all sins committed by Pusalans during the course of a year. It was conducted from first to tenth day of the lunar month of Safar. They believed that it was either on the second or the tenth day of Safar that Yunus Nabi was punished by God for impudence in asking him to bring Ti-Mala (Rain of fire and thunder storms) and killing those who refused to recognize him as the Prophet. Yunus Nabi was condemned to live in the stomach of a fish. The myth concerning Yunus Nabi had a strong impact on fisher-folk, and they observed the first ten days of the month of Safar as a period for repentance of their sins and misdeeds, keeping off from any work connected with their vocation.²⁰

As for the Hindu beliefs, the Pusalans had the same idea about the cause of small-pox and cholera, and they did not lag behind the Hindus in sending votive offerings like coconut and coins to the local Goddess Bhagavaty. Pusalans also believed that convulsions, fits and epilepsy were caused by 18 kinds of spirits, and had almost similar treatment for curing these illness.

20. P.R.G. Mathur, op. cit., pp. 309-13.

Pusalans like the Hindu fishermen attributed the failure of a catch to the wrath of the Gulikan (Hindu diety) and consulted or employed the local Nambutiri priest for conducting special 'pujas' for appeasing the Gulikan. On the whole it seemed that Islam had been super-imposed upon a primitive culture; it has not helped the Pusalans to give up their own peculiar shades of mystical magical feelings. We find among Pusalans the co-existence and integration of the beliefs and practices of Hinduism and Islam.

Sayyids:-

Sayyids as elsewhere in the Islamic world occupies the highest strata in social order among Muslims of Kerala also. "A peculiar sanctity is always attached to a Sayyid in Muslim society probably because of his alleged descent from the Prophet".²¹ There had been large-scale migration of Sayyids from Central Asia in the wake of Mongol invasion during the period of the Delhi Sultanat. K.M. Ashraf observed that the Indians were used to the privileges of Brahmin hierarchy and because of that respect as a counter-part Sayyids commanded an exaggerated

21. K.M. Ashraf, Life and conditions of the People of Hindustan, New Delhi (1970), pp. 100-101.

and indiscriminate respect. "Every Sayyid was supposed to be brave, truthful, pious and possessed of every other noble quality".

Scores of Sayyid families had been constantly migrating to the Western-Coast of India. During the reign the of Sultans of Gujarat (1400-1570) and their successors many families migrated both via land and sea. The government of Saudi Arabia was always unfavourably inclined to the Sayyids as they commanded respect in society, and often posed a threat to administration. Still later in the year 1224/1809 the Wahhabis under the leadership of Najd b. Kamla al-Najdi al-Wahhabi raided the main wadi, 'To save Hadramawt as they asserted from idolatory'.²² The Mirat-i-Ahmadi, the eighteenth century chronicle of Gujarat listed the following important Sayyid families:

1. The Shirazis
2. The Bukharis
3. The Rifais
4. The Qadiriyyas
5. The Mashhadis

22. R.B. Serjeant, 'Ba Alavi Sayyids', BSOAS, Vol. XIII, Pt. (1) (1949), pp. 281-307.

6. The Idrusis
7. The Tirmizis
8. The Bhaktaris
9. The Arizis
10. The Zaidis
11. The Madhavis.

Some of these Sayyid families were present in Malabar too. There was a constant stream of Sayyid migration to Malabar from the very early days of the introduction of Islam on the coast. The Sayyids came as missionaries too in trading vessels. From 17th century onwards certain political developments in South Arabian coast had compelled Sayyids to leave the land. It seems that as in Malabar, Portuguese depredations were unbearable in Hadramawt, since it was another vital link of the chain of trade settlements which Portuguese wanted to capture, and dominate. R.E. Miller observed that "European blockade of Kerala shores cut off from the Muslims the source of their preachers and holymen, who had come from Arabia to guide and encourage them in the faith". Miller was correct about the flow of Sayyids from Arabia to Malabar, but the flow of holymen had never been interrupted. Dr. Stephen F. Dale has shown that as late as 19th century during the Mappila outbreaks Sayyid

preachers of foreign origin were active in Malabar. R.B. Serjeant has noted that Malabar and Calicut were two important centres of Sayyid migration. Field work for this study was undertaken in Pantalayini Kollam (Fandarina) north of Calicut which is probably the largest Sayyid centre on the West-Coast.

The octagenarian Sayyid Abdulla Ba-faqi was interviewed with a number of his fellow Sayyids. He belonged in the geneological table to the 29th generation from the Prophet. According to the information gathered, there were the 'Hasani' Sayyids largely settled in Africa. In India and the East they were mainly 'Husaini' Sayyids. Sayyid Hamid, the fifth grand-father of Sayyid Hamid Bafaqi, came and settled in Quilandy. He had two sons, Hashim and Abdulla. As Hashim had only two daughters his family line ended with them since female descendant is not counted among Sayyids. Abdulla, the second son had seven sons and one daughter. The Bafaqis of Quilandy and Calicut were all the descendants of Abdulla by his seven sons, now numbering more than 1000. The Bafaqis were invariably known as Bafaqi(h) Bin faqi(h) and faqi(h). There were other four Arab families in Quilandy.

1. Ba-Raqiba
2. Batha
3. Basilmi
4. Barami

These four were only Arabs but not Sayyids.

Dr. S.C. Misra has listed Rifais and Qadiris, Bukharis and Mahdavis among the Sayyid families. These were only Sufi orders, the disciples being called with the suffix of Tariqa line which probably misled him to believe that these were community names. The Qadiris, Rifais, and Bukharis, called in Malabar as Hamdanis, are present in Kerala but they cannot be included in Sayyid or even Arab families. But Aidarus was a Sayyid and since among the Sayyids only the descendants are admitted to the Pir-Murid System, Aidarus can be called Sayyid. According to the information collected there were more Sayyid families.²³

1. The Jifris
2. The Ba Alavis
3. The Ibn Shihabs.

The date of arrival of the first Bafaqa Sayyid, Sayyid Ahmad cannot be ascertained as no proof is available. But his second son Sayyid Abdulla who was popularly known as Valiya Seethi Thangal (The elder, or

23. A detailed discussion on the Sufi orders and their role in the spread of Islam has been given in Chapter II. The genealogical table appended would reveal the family connections of various smaller communities known after important ancestors.

eldest Seethi Tangel) lies buried in a magnificent 'Jaram' in the centre of the Sayyid settlements not far from the Sayyids' family Masjid, which is an important pilgrim centre of his devotees. An important nereca (Urus) is annually celebrated here on the 26th of Rajab, and Ratib is held. On the cenotaph of his Jaram is written the date of his death as A.H. 1160, on a wooden engraving. If the average life of a Sayyid (who has an unusually long life) is taken to be sixty-five, Sayyid Hamid might have come before 1100 A.H., or roughly some 300 years ago. The Sayyid's role in the Muslim community was well recognized by the rulers, and it is said when the 'Mamburam Tangel', the Ba-Alavi Sayyid had settled in Mamburam in Tirurangadi, the Zamorin recognized him as the leader of the Mappilas of Eranad and Valluvanad. Later during the Mappila outbreaks when the British administration was sure of the involvement of Sayyid Fazl in inciting the 'Cherur riot', he had to be 'respectfully' permitted to go on Hajj pilgrimage in 1852, instead of arresting and banishing him. Mappilas killed Collector H.V. Conolly in retaliation for the expatriation of Sayyid Fazl, their venerable leader.²⁴

24. W. Logan, Malabar Manual, Vol. I, p. 576.
C.A. Innes, Malabar Gazetteer, Vol. I, p. 80.

The Sayyids, proud of their Arab blood do maintain many of their original family traits. They were an endogamous society but if only Sayyids were not available they would seek partners among the Arabs. But a Malabari was rarely selected. Sayyid Ahmad was of opinion that their 'Sheriat' was against it when a marriage took place outside the community, it was only hypergamous and never vice-versa.

The birth rites were common. The Mutikalachil (Haqiqah) was held any day from 7th day onwards. But it was often delayed, sometimes upto 30 days since 'Sunnath' (khatnah) was also conducted together, because it was only then the mother was able to nurse the baby. The ear-boring ceremony was celebrated.

The Mahr was usually fixed at 7 'Mithqal', which had to be given or in some cases the lady had to consent as having received the Mahr. Dowry was unknown and even presents in the form of household utensils were not given.

The Sayyids had a separate grave-yard in Quilandy in the enclosure around the Jaram of Valiya Seethi Tangal, the first to be buried in Malabar in the Bafaqi line. It was only one 'Malabari' woman who was buried in the grave-yard other than pure Sayyids. A story

was current on this particular woman that one night a native woman came to the House of the elder Bafaqi and asked a place to sleep. The woman lied down to sleep and soon after she died. The Tangal then said that the woman actually asked a place to be buried and since he had promised her she must be buried in the Bafaqi graveyard. The story was related by Sayyid Ahamd Bafaqi. Their mother tongue was Arabic and the dress invariably was the long-flowing white typical Arab dress with a white skull cap and headgear. The younger generation has taken to the ordinary Malayali dress, but white colour is always preferred. Now the only one member of the family yet in the Arab dress is Sayyid Ummar Bafaqi, the Muslim League leader. Their women observed strict purdah system and were never subjected to public gaze.

Sherief Muhammad ibn Hamid Abdulla had reached 'Qutbiyat' (The concept of Qatbul-Zaman in Sufism). On his deathbed he said to the assembled: "Soon after my death two persons would come. Give this staff and my turban to them", so saying he died. Just when he died two strangers came and received the staff and turban. One of them went and settled in Putiyangadi, near Calicut. Sayyid Shaykh Jifri of Calicut became his murid. The first Mamburam Tangal was the nephew of Sayyid Shaykh Jifri.

In the absence of a Muslim administration the Sayyids never became holders of administrative positions, state-grants and Inams as in the Sultanate or the Mughal Empire, which tempted Prof. Irfan Habib to call them 'exploiters', but in Kerala they lived, worked and fought with the people. When being interrogated in 1785 for joining the rebellious Mappilas, Sayyid Husayn Kunhikoya Tangal stated:²⁵

My reason for joining these people arise from the dictates of religion; for when a members of Musulmans are in trouble and in danger, it is for us Sayyids to join and die with them. Seeing their grievous state, I thinking of the face of God, joined them.

Valiyakatte Palli (the mosque of the big house) was constructed some 300 years before, and it was used ever since as a Sayyid Masjid. Teak is abundantly used for the construction with massive beams. It has got an elevated foundation about 5 feet in height and situated very close to the waves, cooled by the humming sea-breeze. No other special architectural features could be seen there. The masjid could be used by others as well for prayer. But the Qazi and Imam were always Sayyids.

25. Correspondance on Mappila Outrages in Malabar 1849-1853, Madras (1863), Vol. I, p. 32.

Very near to the masjid there is one Jaram of Hyderus which seemed to be older in architectural features but could not be examined because the custodian was a very old man who could not conversed with.

On the ancestry of Sayyids Ahmad Bafaqi said: After victory over Persia during the Caliphate of 'Umar many slave girls were brought to Madinah as captives. Among them there were two serene and humble yet dignified girls. On asking about them Ali was told that they were daughters of Kaiser, the Persian Emperor. Ali then bought them and presented them to his two sons, Hasan and Husain. One of the girls Shaharban, became the mother of Zayn ul-Abidin, the son of Husain, the only one who survived 'Karbala'. Thus the Sayyids of Kerala claim the royal ancestry in their Sayyid lineage.

Naha:-

Nahas are a small matrilineal community concentrated mainly in Parappanangadi on Malabar coast. Parappanangadi represents the ancient Tyndis of the Romans, which according to Periplus was one of the important ports of 'Cerobotro' (ancient Greek name for Kerala Ceraputra), second only to Muziris in pepper trade.²⁶ Around Tyndis

26. Warmington, Commerce between the Roman Empire and India, Delhi (1974). For importance of Tyndis, pp. 57, 58, 113, 181, 251.

stood the ancient Caliyam, Beypore and other ports. The Nahas might have preferred the location of Tyndis to settle down.

The origin of the name Naha is supposed to be a transformation of 'Nakhuda' which means captain of a ship. 'Nakhuda' itself of interesting origin. According to Sulaiman Nadvi it is a combination of two words. The Nao (boat) in Hindi, and Khuda (lord) in Persian. Thus Nao-Khuda would mean the Lord of the ship. We have many references to Nakhudas in travel accounts. Ibn Battuta says that it was in a ship of Ibrahim Nakhuda, that he sailed from Gujarat to Malabar. Dr. S.C. Misra has traced a Muslim community of boatmen 'found around the major rivers in Central and South Gujarat and on the sea coast'. They claim that they originally came from Arabia and their original name was Nakhuda, which means a ship owner or a captain. Many of them still retain the surname Nakhuda. The term Nakhuda has been used for a Muslim shipowner in an inscription of 12th century.²⁷ Ibn Battuta refers to Nakhuda Mithqal as a very rich merchant who sent out ships, between Arabia and China.²⁸ One such Nakhuda

27. S.C. Misra, Muslim Communities in Gujarat, Bombay (1964), pp. 95-97.

28. Ibn Majid had been familiar with Nakhudas whom he calls "An-Nawakhid" and 'An-Nawakhidah' to mean owner or captain of a ship. G.R. Tibbets, Arab Navigation in the Indian Ocean before the coming of the Portuguese, London (1971), p. 543.

Mithqal was the founder of the stupendous Mithqal Palli (Misqal's Masjid) of Calicut, which points to the influence they once wielded and wealth they commanded.²⁹

The Nahas in Kerala were also proverbial in affluence but as elsewhere they did not claim Arab descent. As the followers of matriliney, even family surnames are descended through female line. Malayalam is their mother tongue. Dress, food and manners were also not different from Mappila Muslims. Formerly they were endogamous. These days hypergamous marriages take place. A Naha lady is never given in marriage except to a Naha.

No particular vocation could now be ascribed to them. Like others in the fishing harbour they owned fishing boats and engaged in coasting trade of fish and coir. The community might have gone unnoticed but for its involvement in Kerala politics through Avukkaderkutty Naha the present Deputy Chief Minister and long-time minister of various departments in Kerala Government.

29. C. Gopalan Nair has recorded another tradition on the origin of the Nahas; One Princess of Vettathu Swarupam purchased a Pattu (Muslin) from a Muslim merchant without the permission of her father, the King. Since she accepted Pattu from a Muslim, she was excommunicated and married to the merchant. A palacial mansion and sufficient properties were assigned to her. The king also honoured her husband with the title 'Naha'. C. Gopalan Nair, Malayalathile Mappilamar (Mal.), Mangalore, (1917), p. 35.

Marakkars-

Marakkars were the Muslim navigators who had invariably settled in different coastal towns of Kerala, Tamilnad and Ceylon. They were mainly concentrated in the Tamil country and were a powerful maritime trading community and who had their settlements in Ceylon and the Strait. Settlements known as Marakkayars these people were described in the Madras Census Report of 1901 as 'a Tamil-speaking Musalman Tribe of mixed Hindu and Musalman origin, the people of which are usually traders'.³¹ In the Gazetter of South Arcot District, the Marakkayars (Marakkars) are described as 'largely big traders with other countries such as Ceylon and Strait Settlements and owning most of the native coasting crafts'.

The word Marakkayar is said to have originated from Arabic 'Markab', a boat. The story goes that when the first immigrants of this class (who like the Labbais, were driven from their own country by persecution) landed on the Indian shore, they were naturally asked who they were and whence they came. In answer they pointed to their boats, and pronounced the word Markab, and they

30. E. Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol. V, p. 1.

became in consequence known to the Hindus as Marakkayar or the people of Markab.

This explanation is part of an attempt to find an Arabic root for the caste name. A more reasonable suggestion is here to make. The word seems to have originated from Tamil Cattamaran, the traditional type of fishing-craft used along the Eastern coast from Orissa to Cape Comorin with an extension northward upto Central Kerala. This keelless craft is formed by joining a few logs of light wood (Albizia species of wood). Four to five logs of light wood are tied together with coir ropes. Two wooden supporters called Kadamarams are used for lashing them together.³¹ Only a single sail is used and on return from fishing they are separated and dried. This type of Kadamarams are still in operation and seems to be the primitive types of fishing-crafts. The people who work or own these Katamarams might have been called Marakkar, owner of a Maram. Not only that Marakkan is name by which fishermen folk are, some times called, but in Thakazhi's, 'Chemmeen' even the fisherwoman calls her husband 'Marakkah'. Thus it would mean that the respectful 'r' is added to Marakkan which makes the word Marakkar.

31. P.R.G. Mathur, Mappila Fisherfolk of Kerala, Trivandrum (1977), pp. 130-31.

There is another objection in accepting the origin of the word from Markab. That would mean, until 8th century A.D. the people in South India had not known Arabs which is highly improbable and even ridiculous. Further these people have never claimed an Arab origin. The most famous of the Marakkar were 'Kunjali Marakkars', or the naval captains of the Zamorins.

The Marakkars were seen in almost all the coastal towns and they were always on the move in search of trade prospectus. We find in 1503 when the Zamorin was invading Cochin and besieging the fort 'Ismail Marakkar' the head of the Muhammadan community' had on Zamorin's inducement issued orders prohibiting the trade in rice with Cochin.³² When the Cochin Raja entered into treaties of friendship and when 'Cochin, became another Portuguese town like Lisboa' Ismail Marakkar and his people moved to the Mappila centre of Ponnani in search of a free port. Ponnani soon became a Portuguese target since it was Zamorin's arsenal and naval-head quarters. Due to constant bombardment of Ponnani, the Marakkars again moved to north and finally took up the Naval captainship of the Zamorin. Yet in all important trade

32. K.M. Panikkar, A History of Kerala, 1498-1801, Annamalai Nagar (1960), p. 57.

settlement there were rich and powerful Marakkar settlements and in some places their own fortifications, as Kotta in Ceylon, and that was why Marakkars became such a dreaded menace from the Straits to Gujarat. Their successful operations could not have been carried out without sufficient local support.

Again according to the 1901 Census of the 13712 inhabitants of Porto Novo 3805 were Muhammadans. The vernacular name of the town was Parangi Pettai or European town, but the Muslims called it Muhammad Bandar, and a large proportion of them earned their living either as owner or sailors in the boats, which plied between the place and Ceylon and other ports. All these point to the Muslim maritime community who were indigenously called Marakkars.

There were innumerable Musalman saints who were buried in Porto Novo but the most important of them was on Malumiyar³³ who was apparently in his lifetime a notable sea-captain. The fact that a sea-captain was enshrined as the patron saint itself reveals the character of the community.

33. Muallim or a ship master often called Malumi-yar (the respectable plural)

The Muslims of pure descent held themselves superior to Marakkars and Marakkars considered themselves superior to Labbais. But from 16th century onwards the Marakkars had become economically prosperous and socially of equal status with other Muslims. Hence there was no ban on inter-marriages.

The Marakkars usually dressed in white Moulana lungis and white shirts with long sleeves. They wore a white embroidered plaited skull cap in Kerala. Their women observed purdah. Chaliyam, the ancient 'Shaliyat' is one of their settlements. There they are the landlords and exporters of coconut, fibre and coir products, copra and dryfish. Their houses are built close to the river and the main traffic till recently was by river. For their own purpose they kept comfortable decorated canoes of elegant style.

They were Sunnis and followers of Shafi sect and did not have any patron saint of their own, different from the common saints of every beach or settlement.

Marakkar is also used as a propername in any community and hence often a man to whose name marakkar is suffixed or a name with simple Marakkar, need not necessarily be a member of the Marakkar community. In

recent times Marakkars or Marikkars (as sometimes pronounced) have taken to other vocations too. The best example is the Marikkar Mortors, a chain of Automobile dealers in Kerala, Mahe and Pondichery.

Keyis:-

The Keyis were a small but prosperous community of merchants, mainly settled in Tellicherry and Parappanangadi. They rose into prominence on account of their close co-operation with the English merchants of Tellicherry. It is related that one Aluppy Kakka, a petty trader of Chovva moved to the English settlement at Tellicherry probably in the first half of the 18th century. His family came to be known as the Keyis. The term Keyi is believed to be derived from a Persian word, denoting the owner of a sailingship.³⁴ The migration of Aluppy Keyi might probably have been due to the disturbances in Northern Malabar at this time. Further the English used to encourage local traders to reside with their settlement.

Aluppy Keyi was popularly known as 'Chovvakkaran', meaning a resident of Chovva. His successors were also known by this name in memory of the founder of the house.

34. C. Vasudevan, Keyis of Malabar, pp. 1-3.

He was the chief merchant under the English East India Company, supplying pepper, cardamom and other spices.³⁵ Every year he entered into contracts with the Company to supply a stipulated quantity of spices, for which he received an advance from the Company. It was through this trade with the English that Aluppy Keyi's fortune was built up.

Aluppy Keyi was succeeded by his nephew, Musa who improved the family's fortune by his commercial dealings by appointing sub-dealers in different parts of the country. The declaration of monopoly of spice-trade by the Mysore Sultans at this time hit the English Company hard, and it was through the efforts of Musa that they got trickles of these rare commodities during this period. Musa did not join the Mysore Sultans though they were his co-religionists but remained loyal to the English.

By the time the English gained control over Malabar, Chovakkaran Musa was a force to reckon with, in the commercial field, who had dealings with Surat, Bombay and Calcutta. He sent his sailing vessels as far

35. He entered into contact with the English factors at Tellicherry for the first time in 1779. Das Gupta has noted the development of the Keyi house. A. Das Gupta, Malabar in Asian Trade 1740-1800, Cambridge, (1967), pp. 128-30.

as Red Sea and Mocha. His intimate relations with the English East India Company made it possible for him to send drafts to his clients in the different parts of the Middle East and South Asia, payable at the English factories. Musa was so affluent that it was to him that not only local chieftains but even the Company turned in times of financial stringency. In 1784 the Ali Raja Bibi mortgaged several Laccadive Islands for two lakhs of rupees to him. The Islands were to remain in pledge till the principal and interest of his debt were liquidated.³⁶ The authenticity of the entire transaction was suspected by the Joint Commissioners. Ultimately the Governor-General rejected the claim of Musa in favour of the produce of the Laccadive Islands.

In 1788 when the Company was in distress, Musa granted them a loan of Rs.10,000 for payment of salary to the English garrison.³⁷ All these transactions indicated the wealth of Musa, and his political influence in the affairs of the local chieftains and the Company.

36. Joint Commissioner's Report, para. 236.

37. Letter from Tellicherry to Bombay, 11th May 1788, MS. Vol. No. 1593, ff. 237-87.

By the end of the 18th century the mercantile house of Chovvakkaran Musa enjoyed a unique position in Malabar. Buchanan wrote during 1800-01. "The Company had always made its purchases by a contract entered into with a few native merchants or in fact for many years almost with one only, that is with Choucara Mousa of Tellicherry; several others have also dealings with the Company but one of them is Mousa's brother and others are in a great measure his dependents".³⁸

After Musa's death, the family's commercial activities declined. The family was divided into four branches, namely Orkkatteri, Kelott, Putiya Purayil and Valiya Purayil. Instead of trying to revive their business, the Keyis invested their fortunes in land and became one of the leading land-owning families of North Malabar.

Keyis do not intermarry. They seek mates from Taravads of equal status like Acharatt, Kodankandi, Pommanicci and Mukkuttumpuram. All these Taravads together with the Keyis form one endogamous group. But within this group itself marriage is hypergamous. Nowadays marriages take place even outside the above Taravads but strictly hypergamous. They followed

38. Buchanan Francis, A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar, Vol. II, p. 178.

Matrilineal succession and this made them lethargic, inert and lazy. Karanavar did not care for the education and upbringing of the members of the joint family. Yet there had been many members of the community who distinguished themselves in various fields of activities.

Mayan Kutty Elaya who translated the Holy Quran into Malayalam for the first time belonged to the community.³⁹

Many distinguished personalities such as C.O.T. Kunhippakki who retired as member of Kerala Public Service Commission and Savan Kutty who retired as Chairman of Kerala Public Service Commission belonged to this family. The leading member of the community at present is C.P. Cheriya Mammu Keyi, the Vice-President of Kerala State Muslim League. The members of the Keyi community were actively involved in many of the revivalist and reform movements of the Muslims of Kerala in this century and the last.

Dakhnis or Pathans:

The Dakhnis, or Pathans as they are called by local people, were these who came as cavalry men under various Rajas, especially in the Travancore region. Some

39. Male members who married into the Arakkal family were known by the title of "Elaya".

of them came South along with the invasion of the Coramandal coast by Malik Kafur and settled there. These people in Trivandrum region were called 'Tulukkan' or 'Turuppan' on account of 'Turuppu' (special type of turban) worn by them when in uniform, riding their horses. They were mainly used to add pomp and show to the Royal processions. But these Muslim cavalrymen in the employ of Raja of Travancore supported him in many a crisis. When 'Mukilan', 'a petty Sirdar under the Mughal Emperor', invaded the southern parts of Travancore, it was a party of cavalrymen in the employ of the Royal family, who interceded on behalf of the Rani (Umayamma Rani, 1678-84) and prevented the spoliation of the Sri Padmanabha Swami Temple, the temple of the tutelary deity of the Royal family.⁴⁰ This incident is often cited as an example of the close relation between the Muslims and Travancore Royal family, just as it had been in the case the Zamorin Rajas and Mappilas of Calicut.

Many of them had also come as traders and businessmen and some of them arrived from the Tamil country as businessmen to the coastal towns such as Quilon and other important trade centres.

40. P. Shangoonny Menon, A History of Travancore, p. 102.

It is said that in Tiruvattar, near Nagarcoil there was a Pathan settlement formed after the invasion of Malik Kafur. In Trivandrum the regions around the present Palayam Muhiyuddin Mosque up to Nantankod were the Pathan settlement. The word Palayam itself means military camp and probably of cavalry men. It was for the use of the Muslims in the camp that Palayam Masjid was built. In Trivandrum, the region was known among the locals, as Pattani Palayam. The original mosque was thus at least four hundred years old.

There had been a few Sayyids among them whose Qabars were venerated, even by the local people whom they called Pattani Tannals. Of these Sayyids some of them served as scholars of Arabic, heading the religious affairs of the realm and also as Government functionaries in regard to the Persian language, in which correspondence with outside countries was carried on, till recently.

Among the Dakhnis Adhan was pronounced into the ear of the New born baby and 'Haqiqa' was celebrated on the fortieth day of birth. The ear-boring ceremony of the first daughter was celebrated with much pomp and pleasure. Typical of their Dakhni culture, women assembled on such occasions as ear-boring and wedding and sung their favourite songs beating 'Dholak'.

The Dakhnis, whose mother-tongue is Dakhni maintained the distinct type of dress also. The children wore the typical salwar-qamis and Paijama and shirt. Elderly women used to wear the non-Keralite (North Indian) skirt with many stripes, choli, Kurtta and half saree. This dress was compulsory for elderly women and elderly ladies in this dress are still seen.

The marriages talks had to be initiated from the male side. Mahr had to be settled. For the Valayidal (presenting any ornament preferably bangle, ring, wrist watch or even gold chains), the Dakhnis used only cheap glass bangles, however rich they were. The informant was of opinion that this was done in the tradition of nominal ornaments worn by Prophet's daughter Fatima. During the wedding they still insisted that there should be glass bangles in between the golden ones, and the 'Padasaram' (anklet) should only be of silver. They had typical nose rings on both sides of nose and another ring in the middle portion of the nose - without any parallel among other communities - which they called Bullaq. For the Talikettu, 'Karishamani' (The minute black glass beads which is an ornament of poor people) was compulsory. The golden tali had to be strung in the middle of this Karishamani. Dakhni ladies

never united Talis once tied. The marriage ceremonies lasted for seven weeks. The pomp and show decreased day by day and finally concluded on the seventh Friday, when both the male and female and their relatives would become familiar and well-acquainted.

Marriage was generally held at night. When the bridegroom reached the bride's house after 'Nikah', the brother-in-law would tie a 'Kankan', (bangle) as Rakhsa. The significance seems to be accepting him as brother and member of the family as in 'Rakshabandan'. The male's sisters would tie the bride another Kankan probably with the same significance. The ceremony of untying the kankan, known as 'Juluwa' is an occasion of much teasing and merry-making. Among the Dakhnis the Tali was always tied personally by the husband in the bridal chamber amidst the women-folk with merry-making, for which he was helped by his sister. On the occasion 'Badam' (Almond) and Kalkandam (sugar cubes) were showered on the couple. After tying the Tali the bridegroom had to perform 'Kalima parannutal' - breathing the Shahadat Kalima - on the fore-head of the bride. This appears to be an equivalent of the Shiah custom of 'Kalmey-ki-Unglee', when the bridegroom writes Sara-i-Ikhlās on the fore-head of his wife with the right hand pointing finger.

The 'Juluwa' -untying the Kankan- took place on the third day of the marriage. Until then the pair won't see each other. This was generally an occasion of womenfolk. The pair would be seated side by side, but the bride's face would be covered. A mirror was then held in front of the bridegroom⁴¹ who was to name her ornaments and answer other questions of the assembled amidst laughter and teasings. Finally the screen in between them was removed and the pair would comfortably see each other for the first time. Even when tying the Tali both of them will have the veil of flower (sehra). On the third day the bride was taken to the husband's house, but was soon brought back. Until Friday of the week the lady's house had to send food to the male's house. This had to be of choicest dishes including fruits and flowers, carried in bullock carts or Tonkas. This was an occasion to display the dignity and wealth of the family and was naturally an expensive affair.

The first delivery always took place at the girl's parental house. On the seventh month the girl

41. This custom is a variation of 'Arsi Mushaf' observed in Shiah marriages. Mushaf (Holy Quran) is held on Arsi, a mirror for seeking divine blessings on the pair. The bridegroom sees the face of the bride in privacy through the mirror in candle light under a shawl spread over the head of both. Sheikh Abrar Husain, Marriage customs among Muslims in India, New Delhi (1976), p. 111.

was taken to her house. This was another occasion when the womenfolk assembled to sing beating Dholak. Child marriage was common though it was not the rule.

Death was attended with the usual exhibition of grief and reverence. The dead body was interred with usual ceremonies. Then followed some strange practices typical to this community alone. Every day morning fruits were taken to the qabar. Yasin and Fatiha was recited at the grave and the fruits were distributed. In the evening "Sham roti" (Evening food, supper) was taken to the grave, Yasin and Fatiha recited and the Rice flour and Shakkar which was the stuff of sham roti, was distributed. This was continued for forty days. During the forty days reciters were employed to read the Quran. Special prayers were held at the Qabar on 10th, 20th, 30th and 40th day of death. On the fortieth day was held another pompous ceremony. Pandals (Roof) were raised and relatives and neighbours were invited for the occasion. The favourite dishes of the deceased person were prepared and served. The Dakhnis believed that when the 'Ruhani' (soul of the deceased) goied out of the house it would cause the curtains or other clothes of the Pandal to move. The house would from that moment onward be

safe from the soul of the deceased. Until this ceremony on the 40th day nobody dared to enter the room where the deceased breathed his last.⁴²

Dakhnis celebrate Muharram for ten days with many Shiah customs. They raise Panjappuras (five shuts) with replicas of five palms, four in silver and one in gold, in such Panjappuras. The palms represent martyrs of Karbala and the golden one represents a bridegroom who went to the battle field of Karbala just after marriage and courted martyrdom. People considered it auspicious to visit such Panjappuras and get blessings. The devotees were waved with peacock feathers or flags kept in the Panjappuras by the functionaries who received coins in return of such blessings. These 'Panjas' were taken in procession around the city on the seventh day which was called 'Savari'. On the ninth day 'Tikuliccattam', (jumping into fire pit) was performed, a form of self-torture sympathising with the martyrs of Karbala. People made vows, (Nerccas) to supply firewood for preparing Tikkuli or firepit. The tenth day was the

42. This belief in appeasing the soul of the deceased seems to be purely Hindu in which the souls are fed and anniversaries of death are celebrated with rituals and ceremonies, lest the soul may wonder and cause mishaps to the family.

climax of the celebration. Dakhnis observed fast for ten days and avoided meat and fish on these days. The 'Kud' (Tazia) were taken in procession to water, in Trivandrum the procession went up to Karamana river. The idea was that the martyrs were being taken to bath. This procession was made colourful by such folk-plays as 'Pulikali', fancy dress, or 'Kaluttil Kuttikkali' (torturing the body). Devotees watched these processions in reverence and onlookers with amusement. At the river the Kud was covered with white clothes and procession returned along the same route. The returning procession witnessed the original Shiah practice of wailing, beating the chest in memory of the martyrs and people behaved as if they were accompanying the deceased martyrs. This was the culmination of the Muharram celebrations.

Dakhnis had introduced a few more items in the celebration preparing special dishes and drinks. On the ninth day they prepared 'Kichada' and 'Panakkam'. Kichada was prepared with rice wheat and pulses, in fact with many things, in memory of the food with stone and mud given to the hungry in Karbala by Yazid's men. Panakkam was prepared with Shakkar water and lime juice kept in a new earthen pot to which Agarbathi smoke added a special odour. This drink would be prepared and kept

closed with the Agarbathi smoke. The shakkar water with lime juice would undergo fermentation and produced a special taste. Those who used to drink the Panakkam was of opinion that its taste and spirit in which it was consumed would cause a little giddiness. This was prepared and consumed in memory of the poisonous drinks given to the Shahids of Karbala by their enemies.

No other communities except the Bohras who are a small minority of business men in towns do celebrate Muharram with such elaborate ceremonies in Kerala. In Quilon the Karbala maidan was the centre of the celebrations. This shows that the celebration of Muharram by the non-Shiah communities was not uncommon in Kerala. There a few isolated Dakhnis in different parts of Kerala but they do not celebrate Muharram in such style. Many celebrities sprang up from Dakhnis since they took to modern education earlier. Because of his mother tongue (-Urdu-), a Dakhni is more at home in any other Muslim community outside the State.

Ossans:-

Ossans, as the Muslim barbers were called, formed the lowest rank of Muslims of Kerala. The washer-men and Ossans dispute themselves of their superiority to

each other where-ever they are present, but since in larger part of the land there was no separate Muslim washermen, they invariably held the lowest rank.

Ossan families were present in every village. The birth and death ceremonies were common. Being a service caste the Ossan was expected to perform certain services to the village community in return of which he was paid; he also had certain exclusive rights.

On the haqiqa of a child, the Ossan received a measure rice, betel leaf, cocanut, a certain amount and a white cloth. If an animal was sacrificed, he was entitled to the head of it. These rights were given when haqiqa was performed in grand-scale, especially of the first child which took place at the house of the mother. The Ossan who performed haqiqa was brought by the male's party to the house. At the same time the Ossatti of the girl's village was entitled to get the right hind leg of the sacrificed animal.

The Sunnat kalyanam (khatna) was performed by Ossans and they nursed the boy and dressed the wound during bed-rest. This was the occasion when the boy was to be fed with rich nutritious food and the Ossan had to be served with same food.

On the marriage the Ossan shaved the bridegroom the previous day of the wedding for which he received a handsome reward from the bridegroom. When a new bridegroom arrived for salkaram in any family of the village, Ossan had the right to 'Kannadi Kanikkal' (showing the mirror) for which also he received a handsome reward according to the status of the bridegroom. The affluent families included a piece of cloth for Ossatti in the Ammayippudava (Dresses brought by the bridegroom's party along with the bridal dress on the day of marriage). In certain cases the elderly Ossans performed bathing and 'Kafan ceyyal' (covering the dead body in white cloth) and other rites.

The Ossan had the right to be invited to marriages. On marriage feasts, he dined in the group of the commoners. Even in the functions such as haqiqa and aristocrat would feel it a humiliation to sit on a supra where Ossan is seated.

The Ossatti acted as mid-wife on delivery. She was called for this purpose and had to oblige. She bathed the child and nursed the mother for forty days. The baby thereafter was bathed by the washer-woman (Mannatti) of the village. The ossathi received adequate remuneration in the form of cash, rice betal leaf, clothes and

oil in addition to the hind leg of the sacrificed animal during Haqiqah. Since these people were welcome in every household and a potent propaganda group they had to be kept satisfied.

They invited others to their weddings, whereupon the village community turned up and made them presents of cash and kind but would not dine at their houses. As a token of taking part only drinks were received.

They were an endogamous group, and could never marry outside the caste. They accepted an elderly man of a group of adjacent villages as their chief who would mediate and fix marriages and other affairs.

In some places it was the duty of the ossans to carry the news of death. Since they were familiar with every household, they also acted as 'Dallala' in marriages. Some of them were specialised in local medicines and served as 'nattumullas' in very few cases.

The death and burial ceremonies were common and they were buried in the common graveyard. Their children underwent education in the same Madrasas and they attended the same Jamaat Masjids. Since there is great demand for barbers for shaving head in the ceremonies of Hajj, many ossans are taken for Hajj by rich people which otherwise could be performed only by well-to-do people.

The younger ones were initiated into the profession on auspicious occasions and they persisted in the vocation since they received attractive remuneration. They were expected at every house-hold of fixed intervals, ossans for shaving heads and ossattis for cutting nails. Ossattis received a measure of rice for such services and in addition the ossans were entitled to a fixed measure of paddy after every harvest. The ossans were thus an indispensable part of the village community of Muslims of Kerala.

Labbais:-

In the Madras Census Report of 1901 the Labbais are described as "a Musalman caste of partly Tamil origin, the members of which are traders and betel vine growers. They seemed to be distinct from the Marakkayars, as they do not inter marry with them, and their Tamil contains a much smaller admixture of Arabic than that used by the Marakkayars. In Tanjore district, the Labbais are largely betel vine cultivators and are called Kodikkalkaran (betel vine people)".⁴³

This community of Tamil origin are found in Kerala in groups in districts adjacent to Tamil Nadu.

43. E. Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol. IV, p. 198.

It seems that they migrated through Shencotta to Kerala . They are sparingly distributed in different towns and had a small settlement in Cannanore. They were distinct from Malayalees by their physical features, mode of dress, life style and mother-tongue. Labbais in earlier days engaged in various vocations as a community but later shifted to various fields. In Cannanore they made very convenient skull caps.

They are said to be the Mappilas of the Coromandel coast, converted Dravidians or Hindus with a slight admixture of Arab blood. Regarding their origin, Colonel Wilks, writes as follows: "About the end of the first century of Hijirah or the early part of eighth century A.D., Hajjaj Bin Yusuf by his persecution drove some persons of the house of Hashim to exile. They fled in large numbers and some of them landed on the Western-Coast of India called the Concan coast and some others landed on the eastern coast called Maabar. The descendants of the former were the Nawayats and of the latter were the Labbais".

There are many opinions regarding the origin of the word Labbai. Some say that they got the name from the Arabic particle 'Labbaik' corresponding with the

English 'here I am', indicating attention of being called, (the response of the servant to the call of his master).

A further explanation of the name is that the Labbais were originally few in number, and were often oppressed by other Muslims and Hindus, to whom they cried labbaik, or we are your servants. It is also said that they are the descendants of the Arabs, who, came to India for trade. When these Arabs were persecuted by the Portuguese, they returned to their country, leaving behind their children born of India women. The word Labbai seems to be of recent origin, for, in the Tamil lexicon, this caste is usually known as Sonagan, a native of Sonagam (Arabia), and this name is common at the present day. In religious matters they are orthodox Muslims, following Hanafi sect. Their marriage ceremony, however, closely resembles that of the lower Hindu castes, the only difference being that the former cite passages from the Quran, and their females do not appear in public even during marriages. Girls are not married before puberty. They are also called Marakkayan (Marakalar= boatmen), and Ravuttan (a horse soldier). Their first colony on the Eastern-Coast seems to have been Kayalpattanam and Kilekarai.

Thurston noted that while Dr. N. Annandale was surveying Madura District, he had noticed the use of

blow-gun probably made in North Borneo as he understood from its ornamentation, bought by the Labbai traders in Singapore. The Labbais had a great naval tradition as he noticed and "large proportion" of them had visited Penang and Singapore and carried on coasting trade with ports of Burma and Strait Settlements.

A high hat of plaited coloured grass and tartan (Kambayam) waist-cloth, are marks, which easily distinguish them. Their women dress almost exactly as Hindu women. Instead of the cap with plaited grass the Labbais in Kerala wore the black skull cap or white plaited cap. In the Cannanore settlement of Northern Kerala they produced skull caps of various colours but usually of black and white colours. These skull caps were in great demand in the gulf area, because of the insistence on covering of heads during prayer. As the Arabs had typical headdress the foreigners found it convenient to keep a thin skull cap in his pocket and take it out for prayer. But the trade had considerably dwindled these days. Probably the Labbais might have had a roaring business in these caps in the South-East Asian countries where the followers of Shafi sect insisted on covering the head in prayer and even outside. Their women had earned a name or being "clever weavers".

The Labbais are a people with great adaptability. The Mysore that they were an enterprising class of traders, settled in nearly all the large towns. They are vendors of hardware and general merchants, collectors of hides, and large traders in coffee produce, and generally take up any kind of lucrative business. It is noteworthy, as denoting the perseverance and pushing character of the race, that in the large village of Gargesvari in Tirumakudlu, Narsipur taluk, the Labbais have acquired by purchase or otherwise large extents of river-irrigated lands, and have secured to themselves the leadership among the villagers within a comparatively recent period.

It were the Labbais who invented Arabic-Tamil, written in Arabic script. It was following the Arabic-Tamil that Arabi-Malayalam was developed for the same purpose. Many of the guttural sounds in Tamil had to be softened down to Arabic. Since the religious education was probably carried out in Kerala also in this Arabic Tamil-before the development of Malayalam into a separate language distinct from Tamil language - many original Tamil words might have persisted. That was why lot of Tamil words unfamiliar in Malayalam have been preserved in Malas, Pattus, Bayths and such hagiographic literature produced in Kerala but written in Arabi-Malayalam on the trial of Arabic-Tamil.

Koyas:-

The Koyas are Muslims of Calicut, settled only in that city and not in any other coastal or interior settlements. It is said that the name is a corruption of 'Kwajah', which means greater and respected.

It is not known who was the first to be called Koya or when was the name first applied to Muslims. None of Ibn Battuta Abdu al-Razzack or Zayn uddin called Muslims Koyas and Barbosa called them only as Moors Mopulars. But the word Khwaja as a term of respect was familiar to Muslims. They appealed to God as 'Khwaja Rajawaya Tampuran' (The respectful king, the Lord) Prophet Muhammad was referred as Kwaja Muhammad. Mahiyuddin Mala composed in the year 782 of Kollam Era (1607 A.D.) by Qazi Muhammed in praise of Muhiyuddin Abdul Qadir Jilani, which was regarded next only the to Quran by the Muslims of Kerala, abounds in the word 'Khwaja'. The Shahbandar of Calicut held the title "Shah bandar Khwaja" and was called 'Sabantra Koya'.

A story is preserved in Keralolpatti which says that a young sailor from Muscat wanted to settle and carry on business in the land of some honest King. He visited various countries testing the honesty of each King. The

trick was that he presented to every ruler of the countries he visited pickle jars, containing full of gold. He represented them that the boxes contained only pickles and when the rulers found that they contained gold they concealed the fact and appropriated the gold. At last he came to Calicut and tried his trick. The Zamorin on finding what it contained at once called him up and said "you mistook one thing for another. This is not pickles but gold". "The traveller thereupon concluded that here atleast was a trustworthy King, and so he settled down at Calicut. He became the Koya of Calicut."⁴⁴ This tradition alludes to the honesty of the King and security of property that prevailed in Calicut. Further this may also suggest that the first Muslim to settle in Calicut was either called by the King or known among natives as Koya. No date is suggested to this incident, but it may be anywhere near the emergence of the house of the Zamorin itself. Since 'Khwaja' is a Persian epithet (used in Gujarathi also) it can be safely assumed that the first Muslim to arrive and settle down in Calicut was a Persian.⁴⁵

44. Gundert, Keralolpatti.

45. Persian influence on Muslims of Kerala has been discussed in detail elsewhere in this work.

The Koyas however do not bear any significant Persian influence other than what is common to the rest of the community.

Koyas are a matrilineal community and matrilocal. They formed an endogamous group and tends to remain so by virtue of their visiting marriages. The system in Calicut was that bride-grooms were selected for hypergamous marriages. They would visit their wives during night and will have supper and breakfast at the wife's house. Then he would go to his own house for lunch. A Koya in Calicut will have no place in his own house at night because he shall have to vacate the place for his brother-in-law. Their system of 'Ara' solves the problem to a great extent. Aras were newly built for every marriage if the house was not big enough. It is more an apartment and exclusive property of the bridegroom and his wife and later on of their children, which not even the householders would use, without his permission. The wife visited the husband's house on important occasions. Husbands made their contributions to the joint-family for the maintainance of his wife and children. Often a matrilocal house had a large number of inmates of various economic status but the system of fixed contributions minimised the variation in standard of life. This system provided no scope for frictions

and tensions of femalefolk. It seems that the development of the system was a favourable outcome of the mercantile tradition of the Koyas.

It is true that matrilliny was an alien custom introduced in Kerala around 14th century, and it is often argued that it was probably taken from mariners. Robertson Smith argues that matriling was in practice among the early maritime communities of South Arabia. If we accept that matriling was introduced by early maritime people of Arabia, the Calicut system of matrilocal family can be taken as a Islamic modification of matriling, where the ladies lived in their own house and received their husbands at night.

The mode of dress, life stule, food and manners of the Koyas are not different from other Muslims. Their speech had a strong tinge of Arabic, a trait of their Arab contact for centuries. They have a lot of sweet dishes, and variety of spicy curries necessary to keep the visiting 'Putiyappila's'⁴⁶ in good humour.

46. In Calicut a son-in-law is invariably referred to as 'Putiyappila' - New bridegroom - who in other parts are referred to as only 'Mappila', meaning only Husband; however aged he be.

Many Arabs who had settled in Calicut had contracted marriage alliance with aristocratic families, and their sons and descendants infused many noble Arab traits among the Koyas. Calicut used to be a centre of 'Muta' marriages. There are separate localities still in Calicut where Muta marriages with Arabs take place. Calicut was also one of the important centres of Sayyid migrations. All these facts show the diverse avenues of Arab influence and its impact on Koyas. Many of the Koya settlements have Arab names. Mithqal Palli, Muqdar, Jiffiris, Bafaqis, Baramis and a lot of other remnants indicate the Arab impact on Calicut. Once in Calicut flourished a Kazaruni Khangah where Ibn Battuta had enjoyed the hospitality of his Sufi brethren.⁴⁷ All these point to the Arab influence on Koyas.

Marriage was an elaborate affair for Koyas, lasting for many days. The usual rites and ceremonies were followed. The Verrilakett-preparing betel bundles with pieces of arecanut and tobacco - was an important occasion when only the near relatives, immediate neighbours and close friends alone assembled the previous night, made preparations for the next day, decorating

47. Spencer Trimmingham, Sufi Orders in Islam, p. 21.

pandals, preparing various dishes and the elders recounting their old memories. Then took place the most joyous 'Mulanci Kalyanam' at the house of the bride when she was made to apply henna on fore arms and on foot by her own friends and elderly ladies with much amusements, singing of oppanna and dance. The 'Ara' was decorated to the fullest satisfaction of the girl's family which was an occasion for expressing their dignity, taste and wealth. The exchange of presents between the two houses was a real burden and the bridegrooms were expected to contribute their share for all important occasions in the wife's family like marriages, 'Idul-Fitr and Bakrid. The bridegrooms had to be consulted and their permission obtained for all important events to take place in the family. Sometimes one member moved to a separate house on his own will and not by any traditional compulsion.

Koyas were mostly traders and businessmen. Their vocation varied from small shop-keeping to hoteleering, textile business, copra, coir, timber, wholesale trade, import-export trade and boat-building. They had to follow certain international standards in business since there had been competition from Gujarati Muslims, Saits, and Cettis who had streets of their own, and who still handle a considerable portion of business.

In the European Companies' period, various entered the field and controlled trading activities. One important aspect of business of the Koyas is, its continuing contact with trade centres of the Gulf region. By this contact large number of Koyas had recently gone to Gulf countries for employment. But the system of matrilocal endogamous marriages made Koya settlements outside Calicut rather difficult.

Koyas are ardent Sunnis and followers of the Shafi sect. It appears that there had been large number of Sufi Tariqahs with considerable following in Calicut. The presence of Muhiyuddin Palli, Rifai Palli and Shadili Palli indicate the prevalence of those Tariqahs in bygone days. It also seems that there had existed some sort of rivalry among these Tariqahs, when Qazi Muhammed composed his 'Muhiyuddin Mala' in 1580, for he asks:

"Leaving a Shaykh with so much elation and exaltedness, Where do you go oh, people!"

The poet in the succeeding lines repeats his warning to the people to follow Muhiyuddin's Tariqah.

The unbounded generosity and heartening hospitality are Arab heritage of the Koyas. A Koya is typical with his small potbelly, simple and humorous, and with least pretensions.

They invariably preferred white dothi and shirt and elders with turban and cape, while female dress consisted mainly of the white mundu with wide coloured edges (Vellakacci) a tight shirt and a loose one over the other, and the Pattam (small mundu). These days male and female have shifted to other dressing styles as in the case of any other community.

Vattakkolis (Bhatkalis):-

In the Madras Census Report of 1901, the Navayats are described as "a Musalman tribe, which appears to have originally settled at Bhatkal in north Canara, and is known on the West-Coast as Bhatkali".⁴⁸ They are known all over Kerala as Vattakkolis, a corruption or Malayalam rendering of Bhatkali, while they call themselves 'Navayats'.

Bhatkalis are seen as businessmen in all important towns of Kerala like Ernakulam, Trichur, Calicut, Cannanore, and Palghat. They had a special liking to establish their business in Muslim-dominated areas.⁴⁹ So

48. E. Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol. V, p. 272.

49. Zain al-Abidin, a textile shop owner of Manjeri was of opinion that he set up business there because of his love for the greenish vegetation, straight forward people and the peaceful way of life. He had formerly run business in Colombo for nearly 35 years.

that they were present even in smaller towns of Malabar like Manjeri, Malappuram, Tirur, Badagara and Tellicherry. Bhatkalis had the monopoly of textile trade in these towns and they owned a good number of hotels. Textile and Hotel business are the two fields of business of Bhatkalis. Recently they have taken to iron and steel dealership due to the great demand for such commodities in largescale constructions going around. In the cities of Ceylon, Burma and many of the South Asian countries, Vattakkolis are found running their business with moderate profits. They speak their mother tongue 'Nawayati' which is similar to Urdu in script and speech, but an amalgam of Sanskrit, Konkani, Arabic, Persian and Urdu. They run a fortnightly 'Naqsh-i-Nawayati' (Nawayati Views) from Bombay under the editorship Abdurahim Irshad in which they get information about Bhatkalis all over the world.

There are various opinions⁵⁰ regarding the origin and meaning of the term Nawayat and these could be broadly divided into two categories; those which hold that the term is of Arabic origin and the others which ascribe to it an Indian origin.

50. Various opinions regarding the origin of the name Nawayat are summarised in Victor S.D'Souza, The Navayats of Kanara, Dharwar (1955), pp. 12-15.

Many writers, especially Arab and Persian, have traced the origin of the community and its name to Arabia. In his work *Tauzak-i-Malajahi*, Burhan ibn Hasan says that the community of Navayats is of Arab stock. In the Arabic language *Wayat* means backbone which signifies unity. So according to one opinion the community originally derived its name from the remarkable unity among its members under the leadership of one man. Consequently the community is called *Wayat*.

Allama Jalaluddin Sayuti, the author of '*Kashful-Ansab*' says that the Navayats are the progeny of an Arab called Abdullah *Wayat*. First they were called *Banu-Wayat*, the children of *Wayat*, and this expression gradually changed into *Nawayat*. He adds that after leaving Medina the community settled down in a place called *Wayat* which is situated at a distance of three days' journey from Baghdad. However, he is not sure whether the place derived its name from its new inhabitants or the inhabitants themselves derived their name from the place.

The author of *Hafta-ul-Ambariya*, Maulana Muhammad Baqar Aga states that the ancestor of this community was called *Wayat*, who was the son of *Nazar-ibn-Kinana*, the ancestor of the Prophet.

Jaffar Sharif calls the community Nuwa-ay-tay, and states that it originated in Arabia from the expression Nuwa-ay-t'hay (or new comers).

According to Qamus, the Arabic dictionary, the Navayats, are a tribe of sailors, the term being derived from Nawwati the plural of Nuti which means sailor. This view is further supported by the Muslim historian Syed Sulaiman Nadvi who states that the Arab sailors of the Mediterranean Sea were known as Nuti and Nawwat. He is of the opinion that the Navayats living in Southern India are descendants of Arab sailors called Nawwat.

Next, we will examine the views ascribing the term Navayat to Indian origin.

Gilks says that Navayat is generally supposed to be a corruption of the Hindustani and Marathi terms for new-comer. In the Sanskrit language the word Navayata can be split up into nava (new) and ayata (come) meaning newcomer. On the face of it this meaning of the term is quite apposite, for it is generally believed that the forefathers of the Navayats were newcomers to their present localities. Viewed this way the community derived its name from the people of India.

Another opinion gives the term the meaning of those who came by boat, nave or nao meaning boat in Sanskrit and some other Indian languages.

The Navayats are Sunnis, followers of Shafi sect who do not as a rule follow any Sufi Tariqahs or venerate Auliyas and tombs, and are very punctual in observing compulsory religious practices. They often leave their wives and children behind in Bhatkal and sometimes take them to their places of business if they are sure of a comfortable life. The children of the school-going age are taken to such centres where they would complete their education and as well get sufficient acquaintance of business helping their parents.

Adhan and Qamat are pronounced into the ear of a new-born baby. The Navayaths differentiate between 'Haqiga' and 'Aqiga' whereas it is one ceremony for the rest of the Muslims of Kerala. Haqiga for them is only shaving the head which need not necessarily be celebrated. But Aqiga is the sacrifice of an animal for the welfare of a child which would either be held with 'Haqiga' at or any time once in life regardless of the age of the person concerned. On the fortieth day of delivery when the mother had purificatory bath, a feast was given to neighbours and relatives.

The Sunnat or Khatna took place at the age of 5-10. They did not celebrate ear-boring ceremony except for the first child. Vattakkolis say that too much ceremonies and celebrations means, more and more expense. They could not afford to spend their hard-earned money in this way and those who earn without hard labour would not care to squander it away. This attitude towards wealth has enabled them to stick to necessities and to avoid luxuries. Child marriage was not in practice and marriageable age for boys was 20 and for girls 15. Marriage talks had to be initiated from boys' side and after preliminary talks, both parties meet. Mahr had to be fixed. About 25 years ago the Mahr was usually fixed at 19½ varahan (seventy-eighty rupees) and now the husband offers any amount according to his status. Dowry is still not in practice among Navayats. Jewels, ornaments and other presents are made to the newly-married by the girl's parents but is not obligatory.

They are an endogamous group. Marriages take place only in Bhatkal and cousin marriages are preferred. Bhatkals have thus retained the purity of their blood, and are easily distinguishable everywhere by their fair complexion.

Victor G.D'Alouza has given a detailed description of the marriage ceremonies of the Navayats. According to

him the marriage functions commence about ten days in advance of the actual wedding ceremony called nikah, and they last for about thirty days after nikah, thus occupying a period of about forty days. The bride's house is the venue of most of these functions. Generally all the important functions take place at night. The only other Muslim community on the west coast of India in which also marriages used to be celebrated for forty days is the Mappila community⁵¹ of Malabar. But whereas among the Navayats the marriages functions commence about ten days before the nikah ceremony among the Mappilas they start after nikah. Among them also most of the marriage functions take place at the bride's house and they usually take place at night.

The first function is called 'raththa' or 'thaharath' fixing night. At this night the engagement is confirmed and the day and time of the nikah are formally fixed. The kazi mukhtasars, friends and relatives are invited. Sweets like tatapolo and sacar-brinji are distributed. An important function of the night is the grinding of black-gram (*phaseolus roxburghii*)

51. Only a few sections of Muslims of Kerala used to celebrate marriage for forty days. Victor S. D'Souza perhaps refers to the Koyas of Calicut whom he calls Mappilas.

and it is called 'uddamusa'. In the bridegroom's house the same day prior to this ceremony beads are strung to prepare the lucky thread which would subsequently be tied to the bride. From now onwards all the relatives and friends and whoever is invited to the wedding usually do not cook in their house but go for their meals to the marriage pandal. Although the ceremony of raththa is performed in the houses of the bridegroom as well as the bride, there is one important detail which is observed only in the house of the bride. Here the palang or the cot,⁵² which is subsequently decorated for the use of the bridal couple is ceremoniously kept in the proper place--that is, in the second room of the house.⁵³ Among the Moplahs of South Kanara also great importance is attached to the installation of the bridal cot in the house of the bride, and the bridegroom's sister's husband or the maternal uncle places on it a gold ornament which goes to the bride.

Soon after raththa, arrangements are made to

52. It is usually a double cot.

53. In the house of the bridegroom there is no use for such a cot, for the bride and the bridegroom do not spend their night together at the latter's house for the first few years of their marriage or at least until all the marriage functions are over.

decorate the bridal chamber in which the bridal cot is placed. The cot and the room are profusely decorated and the work lasts until the eve of the nikah and involves much labour and material.⁵⁴ In some houses, especially of rich people, two cots are decorated on either side of the room. If there is just one bride, only one cot is used and the other is kept for the sake of symmetry. If, on the other hand, there are more than two brides in the same house the other cots are kept in different rooms either on the ground floor or the first floor. In all the four corners of the cot four lamps are hung and these are lighted day and night for four days following the nikah. A peculiarity of the bridal cot is that it is covered with seven mattresses placed one above the other. The bride and the bridegroom will have to get into the bed by the aid of stools. This custom of covering the bridal cot with several mattresses was also followed among some sections of the Moplahs of Malabar. Much change had taken place in marriage ceremonies in recent time. The nikah takes place at the bridegroom's house where the father of the bride went with elders for the purpose. After nikah the bridegroom

54. This is also the case with many of the Muslim communities in the coastal area such as the Koyas and the Konkani Muslims.

is taken to the bride's house and they garland each other. He then returns. The next day the bridegroom is taken to the wife's house in procession where a feast is given and he returns. The bride is then brought to his house by palanquin and after some light refreshments she is taken back to her house. The same night a party would take the bridegroom to the girl's house and the marriage is consummated. He returns after breakfast the next day. Then he continues visiting his wife at night. The girl resides with her parents until the time when the male has means and convenience to take her to his house or to a separate house. Bhatkalis claimed that divorce and polygamy were very rare among them. Formerly they used 'Bali' for marriage but the practice is not followed now and is condemned as un-Islamic.

Since they were concentrated in one place they have every facility for religious education of their children. It is one laudable character of the Navayats that even the small boys are regularly seen for the five times prayer in nearby masjids. The informant proudly claimed that there are a number of 'Hafizs' among Bhatkali boys and girls, a merit which no other community in Kerala would claim. Recently they have started many educational institutions including an Engineering College in Bhatkal.

They do not celebrate Muharram except for the fast of 9th and 10th days. The male dress of Bhatkalis were white lungis and shirts with full sleeves. The ladies usually dressed in saree and blouse with full sleeves. They observed pardah whenever they went out.

Kurikkals:-

Kurikkals were a community of Muslims settled in Manjeri, the capital of Mappila nad and in Payyanad, three miles to the east of Manjeri. The community was first settled in Mavvanceri in North Malabar and moved to Manjeri in the beginning of the 16th century. They were held in high esteem all over Malabar. The rise and spread of Muslim League in Mappila nad was due to the toils and sacrifice of the members of this community. When Ahamed Kurikkal (Bappukurikkal) was sworn in as Minister, in the first coalition ministry of the state, the prestige of the community reached its zenith.

A note in Arabic, prepared by a great scholar Unnippokker Musaliar born in A.H. 1259, who was the Qazi of the Kurikkal Masjid of Payyanad, and the field survey are the sources of the study regarding the community. The scholar himself admitted that his information was derived from elderly people and family traditions. He

was one of the descendants of Qazi Simamu of Payyanad Masjid, whom the Karanavar of the Kurikkal community had appointed as the first Qazi.

According to the note, one of the Zamorins honoured the leader of the community with the title 'Kurukkal' or Kurikkal, appointing him as his own teacher, due to his special skills with fire-arms. Before that the community was known as Sheikhs in Mavvanceri, the place of their earliest settlement. The tradition ascribes their origin from Abu Ubayd ibn Jarrah, one of the close companions of Prophet and one 'who was given the glad tidings with the promise of paradise'. He was a great hero unrivalled in martial arts who had held the command of many expeditions under the Prophet and the first Caliph Abubakr. Kurikkals claim that this martial tradition later on helped them to master fire-arms when they came to be used in Malabar. Many of the members of the family had served as instructors in the use of fire-arms in the employ of various Rajas of Malabar, and it was their fame that caught the attention of the Zamorin.

The first two members of the community to settle in Manjeri were Attan Kurikkal and his nephew Moideen

Kurikkal.⁵⁵ In fact the history of this community provides an insight into the history of the Muslim community in Manjeri. Until their arrival in Manjeri there was no mosque for congregational prayer. Even in 1881 it was a serious problem for the community that the Hindu landlords seldom gave sites to construct mosques and burial-grounds. Even the British administrators were conscious of this fact as one of the causes of Mappila outbreaks which they sought to remedy in 1881.⁵⁶ Atan Kurikkal and his nephew requested the Raja of Manjeri to allot them a site for construction of a mosque, which was granted in Payyanad, two miles east of Manjeri. The Zamorin cancelled the permission given by the Raja on the insistence of the enemies of Muslims. The Kurikkals appealed to the Zamorin and gained possession of the land but on condition of payment of a huge sum within a prescribed time. Meantime Naiden Kurikkal had gone to Chaliyam as instructor in fire-arms, where he married a widow, mother of a young boy. He brought to Manjeri his

41

55. There is a tradition that they were sent by the Zamorin to the Raja of Manjeri, one of his vassals, to train his soldiers in the use of fire arms.

56. "On February 5th, 1881, the former (A. Logan) was appointed special commissioner, to enquire into land tenures and tenant right in Malabar, and to consider the best means of removing another Mappila grievance of long standing, the difficulty of getting from their Hindu landlords sites for mosques and burial grounds". C.M. Innes and A.S. Evans (Eds.), Malabar District Gazetteer (Reprint, 1951), p. 71.

wife and her son and all the property, which the boy had received as patrimony. When it was time to give the amount to the Zamorin the property of the boy was utilised for this purpose. Moideen Kutty Kurikkal wanted that the amount taken from the boy's property should somehow be a source of income for him. Since there were no mosques in the nearby surroundings, he foresaw that the Qaziship of the mosque may yield a good income to the boy and his descendant. For this purpose the boy, Simamu, was tutored under great ulama, sent to various 'Dars' and finally to Ponnani. The descendants of Simamu thus held the Qaziship of the Payyanad Mosque. Unnippoker Musaliar who wrote the said note was one of Simamu's descendants. With the construction of the mosques, Moideen Kurikkal moved to Payyanad and settled in a place called Melettodika. Later on the family branched to various Taravams like Kokkooth, Kochirittodika, and Pattayapurakkal.

The Kurikkals acquired the leadership of the community of Eranad with the construction of the mosque and by virtue of its custodianship (Mutawalli). It is impossible to trace the history of the community in succession. But all the elder members of the community were 'Nattu Muppans', and heroes of their age. It is

said that they had trained and organised their own members and fellow Muslims establishing a militia of their own. Their status and chivalry were used only for the good and the welfare of the people. Attan Kurikkal who was at first friendly with Tipu Sultan, who had stationed his main garrison at Manjeri, later on rebelled and fought with the Mysorean forces, due to the misgovernment of Tipu's agents in 1781.⁵⁷ Again in 1800 it seems that some serious developments had taken place when Attan Kurikkal was harshly treated with his friends Chempan Pokker and Unni Mutta Muppan. We see the administration reprimanding two British Officers for their excessive zeal in dealing with the Mappila leaders. Due to his ability to wield authority among Mappilas, Attan Kurikkal was appointed as the Zamorin's revenue agent for the Manjeri area in 1796.⁵⁸ When the British adopted the policy of appointing the influential Mattu Muppans as their agents for the collection of revenue

57. C.A. Innes and P.D. Evans (Ed.), Malabar District Gazetteer. (1951), p. 63.

A.S. Miller, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Madras (1976), p. 95. There was an exchange of fire between the forces of Tipu Sultan stationed on the present college hills, and of Attan Kurikkal stationed around the Payyanad Masjid. Large number of cannon balls found in the bushes around the masjid, are obviously fired by Tipu's forces on this occasion.

58. A.S. Miller, op. cit., p. 110.

and maintainance of law and order, Attan Kurikkal was placed at the head of a 100-member auxiliary police force. Some of his rivals envied his power and influence with British Government. An incident which took place probably in 1800 was narrated by an elderly member of the community where a misunderstanding was created between the then Malabar Collector and Attan Kurikkal, which culminated in the death of the latter and confiscation of all the properties of the community. Later on the misunderstanding was removed and properties returned. In 1939 Moideen Kurikkal the elder member of the community was awarded the title of 'Khan Sahib' and the title of 'Khan Sahabur' in 1946.

It is very difficult to compose a chronological sequence of events connected with the community, because very often names like Attan, Ahmad and Moideen repeatedly occur. It is not uncommon to find so many members of the same name still in different families. This tradition of naming after great ancestors seems to be one of the Arab traits of the community.

Kurikkals had a great role in the rise and spread of Muslim League in Oranad. During the Hyderabad operation when all the Muslim League supporters evaded

arrest joining other political parties, it was only Hassan Kutty Kurikkal who boldly proclaimed his allegiance and courted arrest. After release he won a seat to the Madras Assembly as the Muslim League candidate. When Muslim League came to power in the coalition government in Kerala Mahamed Kurikkal was sworn in as minister for Panchayath and local bodies. It was his historic speech in the State Muslim League Conference held at Mananchira in Calicut in 1967 that resulted in the formation of Malappuram District in 1969. Since then atleast one member of Kurikkal community was always elected to the State Assembly. The trust of the Muslims in Kurikkal community was further evinced in the election of Hassan Mahmood Kurikkal as Chairman of the Manjeri Municipality.

Kurikkals were mainly instrumental in the construction of the Jamaat Masjid of Manjeri. Since then the Karanavars of the community invariably succeeded as Mutawallis. By virtue of this office they also acted as arbitrators and judges of social and communal affairs. They are Sunnis and followers of Shafi sect with a comparatively high veneration of Sayyids and pirs. A set of three books of large size (3' x 1 1/2') of Quran in beautiful calligraphy has been preserved in the house of the late Moiden Kutty Kurikkal, prepared by a certain Baithan Musliar about 150 years ago.

Kurikkals conducted hypergamous marriages with aristocratic families. But there was a tradition of excluding some Tarawads from marriage alliance, as informed by an elderly woman of the community, probably of being new-rich.

Nainars:-

The Nainars were converts to Islam of the same, who came from Tamilnad. They were settled only in Cochin. It is believed that the Nainars first settled in Kerala about 500 years, entering into contract for certain works with Rajas of Cochin. They had certain rights and privileges during the Raja's Elunnellatt. The name was used formerly to mean Savarikkaran: (rider). Some writers are of opinion that they migrated to Kerala following persecution in Pandyan country.⁵⁹

It seems that Nainars had been converted sufficiently earlier to Islam since they have a greater affinity towards Arabic language.

Nayuthars:-

They were Hindu tribe of Tamil origin converted to Islam, who retained their caste name even after conversion.

59. Velayudhan P.S. (Ed.), Kerala Carithram (Mal.), Cochin (1973), Vol. I, pp. 1139-41.

It is believed that the word means 'cavalry man'. The Madura District Gazatteer mentions that cavalrymen under the Rajas were called 'Ravuther', and they were a martial class. It appears that several Ravuthars migrated to Kerala on account of persecution of the foreigners in the Pandya country. They are found widely distributed in the eastern parts of the Palghat region.

Bohras:-

Bohras were the only Shiah community settled in a few major towns of Kerala like Calicut, Cannanore, Cochin and Alleppy. They migrated from Gujarat some four generations ago.

They were a sub-division of Ismaili Shiahs which bifurcated into two branches, the Eastern Ismailis or the Nizaris represented in Gujarat by the Khojas, and the Western or Mustaalis to which the Bohra community with a highly developed theosophical frame-work which underlined its administrative system with symbolic and mystic system of notions, grades and cycles belonged.

The Ismaili Shiahs to which Bohra community belonged was persecuted during the Mughal rule.⁶⁰ This

60. "No other Muslim community in India suffered more at the hand of the iconoclastic Sunni rulers. And finally none other have developed a business outlook which is distinct in Muslim communities. Misra, S.C., Muslim Communities in India, Varanasi, 1964, p. 15.

at any age. Ear-boring ceremony was nominally celebrated. The marriage talks had to be initiated from the male side. The Nikah was solemnized anywhere according to convenience. After Nikah the bridegroom proceeded to wife's house with a Sehra (flower Veil) on his face. This was removed by the bride at her house. The bride was then taken in procession to the bridegroom's house. Shaykh Abrar Husain has listed a number of ceremonies⁶¹ observed by the Shiah community which anyhow was not followed by the Daudi Bohras of Kerala. Many of these ceremonies were relics of local and Rajput customs as developed in Gujarat.

Bohras reiterated that there was no system of dowry among them. Mahr was fixed as rupees 101,152 or 252 and never more. The parents used to keep their status in marriage giving gold ornaments to their daughters. According to his position the husband offered an equal amount of gold, often double the amount and some-times less, without any religious, traditional or customary compulsion. All that was given to her was her own property in which husband had no right. Even the expenditure of the feast on the day of marriage was born by the male. Thus among the Daudis marriage of

61. Shaykh Abrar Husain, Marriage Customs Among Muslim in India, New Delhi (1976), pp. 108-118.

a daughter was never considered to be a burden on parent of the girl as is the case with the rest of the communities. The first delivery took place at the girl's house, where she was brought on the seventh month. At the time when the girl was taken to her house the relatives of the husband made her presents of ornaments and new clothes.

Bohras had a mosque of their own where the chief functionary was an 'Amil' equivalent of 'Qazi'. A 'Khadim' looked after the maintainance of the mosque. Mulla Sahib (Mullakka) among Mappilas, was next to the Amil who could also perform the duties of Amil in his absence and also headed the local Madrasah. These functionaries were appointed by the Dai from Bombay and were subject to transfer to Daudi mosques all over the world.

On Fridays the Daudis assembled in the mosque and conducted the congregational prayer. Khutba was not held before prayer, but only an ordinary sermon after it. Daudi Bohras said that Khutba was the right of the Imam and since the Imam (21st Imam, Tayyib) had disappeared it is not held. When he reappears (as Mahdi) Khutba will be held. They do not tie their hands on chest, which would be done only after appearance of the Imam. They

keep hands hung down close to their body in prayer. Daudi Bohras celebrated Muharram with enthusiasm. They often fasted either for ten days or on 9th and 10th days. No procession was held. They assembled in mosque, listened to sermons, wept and cried and beat their chest but all inside the masjid. "No dramas and demonstrations outside", said a Bohra youth. They used to wear Paijama and Jubba or lungi and Jubba to Masjid with the Bohri cap, white skull cap with golden tissues. On ceremonial occasions they wore churidar, Sherwani and fetah (The Bohri cap with golden brocades). Outside they wore the ordinary dress. Their ladies used to wear Ghagra (a skirt) Blouse and Duppetta, the bride too wore this dress on the day of wedding. Girls usually wore Paijama, Kurta or Shelwar Qamis.

They held compulsory Iftar (ending a day's fast) at the masjid. All the members of the community including children and ladies took part in it and contributed their share. Thus the 'Jamaat' or communal organisation is very strong among the Daudi Bohras as elsewhere in the world.

CHAPTER V

MUSLIM SOCIAL LIFE IN KERALA

An outstanding feature of the social life of Kerala was its uniformity in habitat, dress, food and manners. However, before 1792, i.e., roughly two hundred years ago communities were more segmented and dissimilarities were more apparent especially in matters of dress and manners.

A house of an average Muslim like his Hindu brethren was built of wood and laterite stone. Poor people built their houses with mud walls, bamboo and thatched roof. The well-do-do people built their houses in the fashion of the same 'Nalukettu' of the Hindu aristocracy. Houses were built in strict conformity to the principles of 'Taccusastra' (science of architecture). According to the 'Manushyalaya Chandrika' a standard work devoted exclusively to domestic architecture, "before commencing the building of a house the site has first to be chosen, for which rules are laid out as in the case of construction of temples". The selection of the site mainly depended on slope of the land and the flow of water. These rules were strictly followed in the

case of construction of permanent dwellings. Since it was always a carpenter who decided the site, size and plan of the house the Muslims also followed these principles. Anything which went against these principles was believed would bring early death to the residents and calamity and quarrels in the family. Such faulty construction were either demolished fully or partly or new constructions were made to cover the defective aspects. The 'Malukettus' were built for accommodating the joint families, which was accepted as the pattern for wealthy Muslim houses also. Especially in the case of those following matriliney such big houses were necessary. Even the verandahs, front door openings and cattle-sheds in proper places were accepted by Muslims as the set pattern. They were generally roofed with thatches of palm leaves. Gold or silver pieces were placed when the 'Mulakkallu' (generally the first stone at the north western corner) was laid. If any calamity or immature death occurred in the family the mantravadis, Tangals or Sorcerers were first asked to see if there was anything against the Tacusastra in the construction of the house.¹ Toilets were never attached with Muslim houses, though bathrooms

1. This is an important source of income for such people and they often exploited the superstitions of the people.

near the wells were constructed. The 'Thandas' (Toilets) were built at sufficient distance from the house.

The houses of the well-to-do had separate structures as prayer halls. Often these structures constructed on waysides were used as the local Niskarappalli by neighbours. The Padippura (gate complex), in the Muslim houses sometimes served as Niskarappally, where sometimes a Mulla (keeper of the local Masjid) used to teach Quran to the children. Such Mullas sometimes resided in such Padippuras, therefore also served as gate-keepers in the night.²

At dusk bronze lamps were lit. Lighting of lamps was considered an auspicious ceremony among the Hindus. But old houses, electrified, had been seen in the course of the field work with the auspicious brass lamps still hanging from the roof on a long iron chain. Squatting around the bronze lamps lit with oil and wick, the children of the wealthy Muslim houses read Quran or sung some 'Bayt' while in the poor mud huts, children did the same squatting around kerosene lamps.

2. The Mullas and Mukris were to have their meals from the Karanavar of the Masjid and as such they often accompanied the house-owner from the Masjid to his house with the lighted areca lamps (Rantals) and slept in their houses. Feeding such people were considered a good deed, privilege and mark of respect.

Rich houses had costly furniture made of Rosewood. Their drawing rooms were decorated with Elephants' tusks with golden edges or the horns of Bison and deer. On the walls of the old Muslim houses Bison skulls and Deer horns were hung, mounted on wooden boards as a symbol of aristocracy. Tiger or leopard skins were also spread on wood chairs, since hunting was a passtime of aristocracy.

In the trading centres Muslims used to live in the town itself. In such cases the front portion of the house was constructed as shops and in the back rooms the trader lived with his family, which was more convenient to his business and community life. In that case, he was contented with a very minute backgarden if he had one at all. These back yards were surrounded by a high wall to protect his women from public gaze.

Dress of the Muslims varied considerably from their Hindu brethren. Mappilas in the coastal towns 'dressed elegantly after the Persian style, as Abdur Razzak says: "Elegantly as we do". This had been the case of all these foreign Muslims who had been to Calicut. The native style of dress of the Nayers and even that of the Zamorins had been well described by Barbosa and others, wherein the males went out naked above the waist

with a drawn up sword and even the women as described by Barbosa in a royal procession went about naked above waist while they were richly dressed from the waist down.³ In the country-side the poor Muslims also were dressed in one dhoti, the end of which they tied to left while the Hindus tied the end to right and they never wore a shirt. Another 'Mundu' was used as a turban. It was a typical form of dressing, while in the field or in the hours of work a Mappila Muslim would dress in his mundu reaching just upto his knees and make with his dhoti a turban to protect him from the hot sun. In the market place he used to wear the dhoti and would make mundu a turban and used the same Mundu to cover his head and shoulders during the hours of prayer. He wore a wide belt round the waist and on it was thrust a dagger within the scabbard—the famous war-knife of Malappuram—which was captured and banned by the British administration following the Mappila outbreaks of the 19th century, especially after Collector Conolly's murder. The Sayyids wore the long-flowing white dress with cap and turban or

3. ".... Beautifully dressed with jewelled necklaces, golden beads, anklets and bracelets.....
'From the waist down they wear garments of rich silk, above the waist they are naked as they ever are.....'. Duarte Barbosa, The Book of Duarte Barbosa, (Tr.) M.L. Dames, London (1921), Vol. II, pp. 18-19.

a headgear. The Labbais and Rawthars of Tamil origin used to wear lungis and Kuppayam, waist coat (Kambayam). Mappilas of Malabar shaved their heads clean. Beards were worn especially by the old Musaliars and Tangals. Hajis and other holymen often dyed the beard red with henna.

Muslim women in those days as even now in the interior parts used to wear the black lungi, a loose white blouse and a Tattam (a long Mundu specially made for this purpose) some of them used to wear the Makkana (veil) and the rich, especially Sayyid women, observed purdah, and went out only accompanied by maid servants. It seems that the black lungi of Muslim women called it 'Yudattuni' (Jewish cloth); Not only that the dress of black Jews as described by L.A. Krishna Ayyar (the photograph of which is given in 'Cochin Tribes and Castes') BUT would seem exactly the same as the Mappila Muslim dress of the elder ladies. The younger ones preferred lungies of white, blue or green colour. Children below 3 or 4 years generally wore nothing and even for girls no skirt was in use, but for boys and girls dhotis of different sizes were available. The Madrasah-going boys either used a mundu to cover head or a 'rumal' (handkerchief). Especially when Quran was read the head had to be covered. Elegant silk dress were preferred for wedding.

A bridegroom usually dressed in white dhoti, shirts with long sleeves and a cap or a turban with mundu with borders of golden tissues which was called 'Kasavu'. A bride's dress was beyond description, that has roused the imagination of hundreds of Mappila songs. Elegant and colourful silks with golden brocades were worn. A Mappila bride wore Mattappu, over which the gold or silver belt (Aranjan) was worn on the waist. The blouse equally elegant, and the headgear was a makkana (veil) of black silk in front of which gold laces were strewn and over that another silk tattam was worn. Wrists were covered with bangles of gold in the case of the rich, and fingers had gold rings over all of them. Ear rings with holes were hung with golden cuffs and on the ear lobe wore studs of varying styles. Some Muslim brides among the communities of Tamil origin also wore 'Mukkutti' a stud on one side of the nose. A bride's neck was loaded with gold ornaments of various names and sizes. The most popular necklaces were, 'Koralaram', Pavan Mala, Mullaappu Mala, Manga Mala, 'Nakshatramala' and others. Anklets of gold or silver were also worn. The 'cakkaramala' was the queen of ornaments. It was a series of chains hung in order from both ends. The chains varied from 4 to 14 and the weight

of the garland was 32 'Pavans' (256 gms.). 'Makkatte mala' was one speciality. Hajis used to bring stones of various colour and size and these were given gold coverings to join them together and that was the 'Makkatte mala'. There was also the practice of wearing so many rings on 'Konttala',⁴ (The end of the dhoti hung in the waist to one side).

But the poor Muslim bride had to be satisfied with just one or two gold ornaments, the 'Pavan Mala' or Paranna Ellassu, and a silver 'Aranjan'. There had been marriages taking place with no gold ornaments at all. The condition of the marriage was only the 'Mahr'.

The foreign traders who brought gold with them could easily win over the ladies who were keen to contract 'Muta'⁵ marriages with local women. The parents often took the golden opportunity to enrich themselves by contracting such marriages especially as they were by nature matrilocal. When these foreigners, Arabs mainly, returned after pronouncing 'talaq' they were always kind

4. Hameed Chenna Mangalore has given the description of one hundred Muslim ornaments in a special issue of 'Grahalakshmi', A Malayalam women's monthly, on ornaments. "Ornaments of Northern Muslims" 'Grahalakshmi', February, 1983.

5. S.M. Mohamed Koya, Mappilas of Malabar, Calicut (1983), pp. 12-22.

enough to grant their ladies sufficient security for their future, in the form of money, building or business. In many cases children of such unions especially males were lucky to be taken by their fathers to their native country, to be given decent employments or share in property. This was another avenue of growth of the community and its economic improvement and social change.⁶

Dress and ornaments could always lure away women. One of the practices of the Portuguese in Malabar as described in a contemporary poem was to "adorn their women with dress and ornaments to lure away Muslim women".⁷

Marriage talks in the northern parts of Kerala was initiated by girl's party, in the central Kerala namely the 'Mappilanadu' it was the groom's party to take initiative and again to south in the Travancore-Cochin region the girl's party used to take the lead. Once both parties agreed on the give-and-take the elders met for 'Urappikkal' (agreement) which often took place in the girl's house. The next step was 'Nischayam' (betrothal). For this purpose the parents, Qazi, elders

6. Such examples are extant even in recent times. An Arab would up his business in Calicut, where he had contracted Muta marriages. Later he took his son to his mother country.

7. Qazi Muhammad, Fath al-Mubin, pp. 241-61.

and relatives assembled in the boy's house or sometimes in girl's house according to convenience. The day of marriage, mehr, and other conditions were to be either, publically discussed or mutually agreed through Dallals (brokers) and declared if necessary.

On the day of marriage, which usually used to take place in the night, a party of young boys and elders preferably the brother of the girl and her uncle would first go to bridegroom's house. This was the 'Tettam' (going in search of). After feasting and other things the bridegroom used to start to the bride's house. This was called the 'Putiyappila Irakkan' (Bridegroom's departure). On the arrival of the bridegroom the younger brother of the bride washed the feet of the bridegroom.⁸ Some coins or some times a sovereign was put by the bridegroom in the waterpoint. It was to be equally reciprocated when the bride reached the bridegroom's house, by his sister. 'Sharbats' and betel were then provided and meticulous care was taken that nobody missed the 'betel bundle' or pan supari. A man used to hold a basket or a tray full of pan supari and

8. Washing the feet when one enters a house was a Hindu practice. But this has been followed by Muslims too. If not washed at least water was sprayed. A. Sreedhara Menon, Kerala District Gazetteers, Quilon, Trivandrum (1964), p. 205.

called out 'If there was anybody to receive pan supari', and if any missed, it was considered a disgrace for the family. This shows the importance of 'pan supari' in social etiquette. Then the 'Nikah'⁹ is performed. There was the practice of Mahr being handed over to the father of the bride and paying a salam standing up in the Pandal so that all the assembled may witness. Among certain communities especially in the central and southern Kerala, there was the practice of tying 'Tali', which was again a pure Hindu practice followed by Muslims. In such cases the bridegroom entered the women's chamber where the bride was seated and he would, among much merry making of the assembled, tie the tali for which he was helped by his sister to fasten it. A sumptuous feast then followed and the assembled dispersed. The bridegroom in some cases would stay back with a few friends to take the bride and her attendants to his house. Among the Pulavar community of Tamil origin there was the practice of avoiding journeys between 4 to 6 in the evening to avoid "Rahukalam", so that the bridegroom would reach his house with the ladies before 4 or after 6 O'clock^{He} used to leave for the bride's house again to

9. A description of Nikah is given in Chapter IV 'Communities', on Mappilas.

spend 3 or 7 days there in the 'Maniyara' (nuptial chamber), where he was most affectionately treated by the girl's parents. After 7 days a party would come from his own house to accost them, and then would follow the invitation of relatives and friends. This was the case in southern parts of Kerala also.

Among the Mappilas who were more modest and conservative, the bridegroom departed with his friends after Nikah. Then followed the 'Putukkam' (bridal procession), the most colourful ceremony of Muslim marriage where the friends and relatives of the bride, majority of them of same age, clad in equally attractive dresses and covered with gold ornaments accompanied the bride. Among the Koyas of Calicut there was the practice of 'Ipapputiyotti' (close friend of the bride) who was an unmarried girl of the same age well-dressed, and adorned with the same ornaments. This helped to ward off the embarrassment of the bride in the whole of the formalities, with the teasings and amusements of her friends. The 'Putukkam' (bridal procession) had great social significance. Though there were elder ladies always present it was mainly an event of young maidens, and the prospective mother-in-law or father-in-law would search for a daughter-in-law in such gatherings, and

sometimes make preliminary enquiries if they were satisfied with a girl. Parents of unmarried girls therefore took utmost care to clad their daughters in fine attire and load them with ornaments even on loan.

Often the brides were chosen by parents, in many cases the boy never saw the girl before marriage. There were no facilities in the small houses for the pair meeting on the same night as there would be a host of friends and relatives. The next day morning itself the bride was taken for 'Salkaram' (hosting) by the sister-in-law to her husband's house, which was considered to be a privilege and a must by Mappilas. Many days were thus spent the bride changing hosts from sisters, to aunts and uncles. Finally it may take weeks before the girl met her husband. These practices have now been adjusted for convenience.

After the marriage followed a series of salkarams (Banquets). Always the bride's people were hosts. First it was the turn of brothers-in-law of the bridegroom, then his friends, parents, uncles, elders and so on. In Northern Kerala especially in regions like Tellicherry and Cannanore where Muslims were fairly rich, a marriage had to be celebrated for 40 days. It is not an exaggeration to say that many of the old aristocratic Taravads were ruined conducting marriages.

The system of 'ara', a separate room for the pair in the matrilocal families itself was a costly affair. It was in the layout, decoration and furnishing of the 'ara' that the whole prestige of the family was to be exhibited. The friends and relatives of the bridegroom would visit the ara to pass their comments and if they were pleased would give presentation to the man in-charge of preparation of the ara. Once the bridegroom entered the ara, even in his absence, not even a member of the family other than his wife would enter the ara. Presents had to be exchanged on important occasions, sweetmeat, dress and costly fishes were important items of such presentations.

The dress for the bride was always brought by the bridegroom's party, by a group of ladies following them. 'Ammayippuda' (Dress for the mother-in-law) had also to be brought. If the grand-mother (Mother's mother) was alive she was also entitled for this set of dress, but not father or grand-father. Among certain communities there was the custom of a group of girls going to the male house and inviting all the ladies to the bride's house for wedding. These girls also brought 'Maylanchi' (henna) and plastered the bridegroom's hand. In return he used to give some money to the girls. At the same

time (the previous night of wedding) in the house of the well-to-do people 'Maylanchi Kalyanam' (anointing the henna) took place. The bride was pasted with henna amidst a lot of singing and dancing. The 'Maylanchippattu' (song of the henna) is a very popular Mappila song where prophet's marriage with Asiya Beevi (Pharaoh's wife) and Mariyam Beevi (Mother of Jesus) are described in imaginative style. This marriage was supposed to be one of the important events in 'Svargam' (heaven). There, angels led by Jibril would bring henna for Muhammad. 'Paighambar Muhammed', 'Sultan al-Ambiya' would come on a white elephant, and the Shahids by virtue of their martyrdom will have the honour of being seated on the elephant's tusk. These songs were sung in solemn respect and rejoice, and then the singers would narrate the events of the next day, the charm and smartness of the bridegroom, and then the nuptial union and so on, which was again an event of much teasing and merry-making.

Professional singers attended the marriages, often without being invited. When all the members of such a party would assemble they may sit in one round and would catch up some pot or drum or used two brass pieces to strike in rhythm. There also the theme was

something on Prophet Muhammad or other Prophets of Islam. Hired singers both male and female were also present. Until gramophone music became popular about 50 years ago, these hired singers were the sources of attraction. Oppana, the great Muslim tradition of Kerala, was invariably held on the wedding and the previous night, during Mayilanchi Kalyanam as well.¹⁰

Marriage among the Muslims was a most expensive affair especially when families and Taravads competed to rival each other in pomp and show. The series of communal feasts and formalities, ornaments and presentation ruined many families.

'Kufuv',¹¹ (matching) of the families was the foremost condition for alliance. Among the Sayyids Kufuv was decided by thoroughly examining geneology and economic status. Among the well-to-do the lineage, and family prestige were also considered. New rich who tried to contract marriage alliance with old Taravads to enhance their social status was repulsed, at the same time the aristocrats never married their daughters to men of

10. 'Oppana' a peculiar dance of Muslims, male and female, is described in Chapter VI, on Folk life.

11. S.C. Misra calls it "Kifaat". S.C. Misra, Muslim Communities in Gujarat, p. 120.

inferior status however poor the family was. Wealth in the Southern Kerala and Coastal towns as well were counted in terms of business, boats and, groves, and among the Mappilas in terms of the extent of wet-land and the amount of paddy received in the form of Pattam, (land rent). In the Cannanore-Tellicherry region wealth was counted in terms of the yield of coconuts per month. Number of elephants in possession of a family was also a status criteria. An interesting incident was reported during the field work. An aristocratic family of Malappuram wanted to contract a marriage alliance with a family in Tellicherry. During the talks it was asked "how many thousand coconuts do you get monthly"? The Malappuram man had to say 'nil'. But he was educated and as a friend of Britishers had been the first to plant rubber in Malabar, owned much land, buildings, and was immensely rich. But all these did not convince the Tellicherry people and his proposal was turned down. He was belittled, and immediately on his return he planted coconut trees in hundreds of acres in his possession saying: "None of my sons or grand-sons in future should be denied a lady (marriage) for lack of coconuts".¹²

12. This plantation to the east of Malappuram extending over hundreds of acres could still be seen on either side of road to Perinthalmanna.

Among the lower section even turban and chappal was considered to be a status symbol. Turban was privilege in Malayali Society and had to be removed in the presence of the upper classes. So also chappal had to be removed while passing the boundary of a Naduvasi's or Adhikari's household. 'Talakkettucariyal' (lean the turban to one side) was a term used for the falling disgrace on one's family.

An elder woman accompanied a rich wife to her husband's house and stayed for sometime until she got acquainted with the family. Sometimes they permanently stayed and served as nurses for their children, and thus became 'Ayas' for one or two generations.

Pregnancy was celebrated and the first delivery always took place at the girl's house. On the 7th or 8th month the girl amidst much rejoicing of the elders was accosted to her house. A party of women would come from her house with new clothes and she may take leave of the husband's house-holders. This ceremony was called 'Ney Kudi' (consuming ghee).¹³

13. Non-Muslims also held such ceremony which they called 'Pulikudi' (consuming Tamarind) The practice among Gujarati Muslims was called 'Satvansah', Brahmins observed such a ceremony which they called 'Punsavanam' also intended to secure male offspring. C.A. Innes, Malabar Gazetteer, Madras (1951), p. 164.

Great care was taken to protect a carrying woman from evil spirits. The "Pulappedi and Mannappedi" common in the Malayali society had influenced Muslims also. It was believed that the Vannan Caste could perform 'odi' or 'odi mariyal' which would cause death of the enemy.¹³ The Parayas or Vannans performed odi with potion prepared from the womb taken alive from a carrying mother for this purpose. It was believed, they would go ground the house, then the carrying lady would open the door. They would capture her and open her abdomen, taking out the baby fill her belly with straw and dry leaves. The lady would return to her bed unaware of the whole incident. She would soon develop illness and die. The belief in odi was so strong that cane rings were worn around the upper arm to beat the odi and walking sticks with anti-odi potions and capacities were specially prepared by the Mantravadis. Chanted threads were ties round the neck or on the wrist, Takidu, and Talismans called 'Elassu' (hollow cylinders) were worn on the waist and around neck. In fact a garland of many such Talismans wrapped in waxed cloth or inserted in gold or silver Elassu was seen in abundance among the illiterate interior Muslim communities and among the fisher-folk.

Yasin (Surah Yasin) was recited by women around

a lady in pains, 'Burdah',¹⁴ was sung and a lot of other 'Bayts',¹⁵ 'Bassi',¹⁶ was also given to drink. The Ossatti, Muslim barber ladies helped as midwives. The Vannatti, woman of the Vannan caste, who were washer-women of the villages rendered special service during confinement. Bank (Adhan) was called into the baby's ears on birth by a male member of the family. During Haqiqa the well-to-do people performed 'Wuduhiyyat' (Sacrifice) of bullocks generally and two-thirds of the meat was distributed among the neighbours and relatives. One third was reserved for the consumption of the assembled. The knife was applied on the animal simultaneously when the Ossan, barber brought by the male party would apply his razor to shave the head of the child. One measure of rice, betel leaves and a white cloth was placed in front of the Ossan, of which the cloth and betel leaves were taken by him and the rice would be taken by

14. Qasidat al Burdah of Busiri, wherein the poet composed the poem in praise of Prophet Mohammed, in return of which he was cured of his illness. It was believed the singing of the poem would bring easy delivery.

15. Bayt, songs in praise of Sufi saints.

16. The local sorcerer of Muslims would be approached with a Bassi (a porcelain plate) on which Arabic letters in mysterious order was written as a chart which was believed to have hidden meanings and capacity to cure ailments or bring relief. This plate was then taken to the patient, washed and given to her as a medicine. People used to consume such Bassi or Vassi sometimes during the 40 day's period of confinement.

Ossatti. The ossan (brought by the male members) had the right for the head of the animal, which he carried home with him and the ossatti had the right to get the right hind leg in full. The hair was cleaned and weighed against gold or the amount calculated and the same was distributed among poor or given to religious institutions. On 'Khatna', religious teachers of the boy received presents.

A man could keep four wives at the same time. Marriage alliance with a fifth was considered illegal until the man had separated himself from one of his wives and the period of 'Iddah' had expired. A woman who had been divorced three times was prohibited to the same husband until she had been married to some one else, lived with him and had been divorced.

A woman in 'Iddah' following the death of husband or divorce could not be married. In the case of those who could afford the ladies observed iddah for 90 days. During this period they could not see a male other than blood relatives or even hear a male's sound. The orthodox women believed that even hearing a cock's crowing was not permitted.

The Keyis and Nahas followed matriline, but

were duolocal. 'Islam unequivocally emphasized the superiority of the husband. In surah Al-Nisa, Quran has made the superiority of men explicitly clear: "Men are guardians over women because Allah has made some of them excel others, and because they (men) spend of their wealth. So virtuous women are those who are obedient, and guard the secrets of their husbands with Allah's protection. And as for those on whose part you fear disobedience, admonish them and leave them alone in their beds, and chastise them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Surely, Allah is High, Great".¹⁷ Matriliney was not in conformity with the above-said injunction of the Quran. As human acts are classified as obligatory, recommended, permissible, disapproved and absolutely forbidden, somewhere among these categories social customs could be accommodated. Further the provision of Ijtihad,¹⁸ Ijma,¹⁹ and Qiyas²⁰ could also justify long-standing social institutions as social institutions as social necessities, so long it was not diametrically opposed to the canons of the Quran.²¹

17. Holy Quran: Surah IV, 35.

18. Opinion of religious scholars.

19. Public opinion.

20. Precedents of similar incidents.

21. A detailed discussion of the adjustability of Matriliney for social and vocational needs, Leela Dube, Matriliney and Islam, Delhi (1969), pp. 77-99.

The Koyas of Calicut followed matriliney and were matrilocal in nature. But the kinship terminology of the Muslims were dissimilar from those of the non-Muslims, though the mother tongue was Malayalam, everywhere. Father was addressed as Bappa.²² with its various forms like Uppa, Bava, and Baichi. Mother was addressed as Umma²³ with its local variations as Imma, and Immacci. Father's younger brother was called 'Elappa' and elder brother was called 'Muttappa'. The elder brother was called 'Kakka',²⁴ and elder sister 'Tatta'. Mother's brother was called 'Ammon'.²⁵ The similarity of kinship terminology tempts us to believe an overwhelming Gujarati influence on Mappila community. The Persian influence on the Muslims of Kerala in the form of distinct terminologies even for religious rites like Bank for Adhan, etc. has been discussed elsewhere in this work. Though this influence may not help us to formulate any hypothesis yet a second-thought on the notion of all prevailing Arab influence may be appreciated.

22. Bappa seems to be of Persian origin, also in Gujarati 'Bapu'.

23. Umma is Arabic word for mother.

24. Kakka or Chacha was the word for father's brother in Gujarathi.

25. The word for Mother's brother in Gujarathi was 'Mamun'.

The pattern of food habits of Muslim throughout the state was more or less same. Boiled rice was the staple food which was consumed with vegetables, fish or meat. Beef was a favourite item of food. Tea and coffee were not popular and the working people always relished 'conjee' (Rice porridge) with condiments. Two regular meals were taken one at mid-day (lunch) and other at night (supper). Dishes made of rice were preferred. Wheat was looked down upon as poor man's food who could not afford to have rice. Tapioca and fish formed the substitute of rice for poor men. Coconut oil and condiments were used in all culinary preparations. Coconut was an indispensable ingredient in almost all curries.

Muslims served expensive wheat preparations on special occasions. It was not pounded but boiled with tender chicken, until the whole meat perfectly mixed with boiled wheat which was then fried in ghee and consumed with sprinkling of sugar. This formed an important item of the 'Nombu Turakkal' (Iftar). The 'Tarikanji' (Rava boiled with cashewnuts and dry grapes and fried in ghee), was first served to all the assembled on Iftar. 'Tengaccor', a special dry preparation of rice with coconut and onion was a special Muslim preparation, which

was not prepared by non-Muslim. Ghee rice and Biriyani were favourite food items of Muslims. Meat and fish were consumed. On special occasions people considered it to be a symbol of aristocracy to have meat of bison or deer. These were caught by hunting or employing hunters. Fishing with nets, and hook and line, were favourite pastimes. Special break cakes 'Kalathappam' was prepared on occasions like, 'Laylat ul-Qadr', 'Badringale Andu' and the like. 'Cakkargcoru' (rice pudding with unbleached rice) was also prepared to celebrate solemn occasions, like Moulud, Ratib and Nerccas. Fatiha Otal (reciting Fatiha) was an important rite held on many occasions and since the Mulla or Musaliar would be present, some special dish was prepared. Muslims conducted Fatiha Otal to propitiate or ward off many evil spirits, and special dishes for such occasions were traditionally decided. For conducting the Moulud of Sheykh Rifai 'Avil',²⁶ was necessary. This was conducted among the Mappilas during the time of harvest so that fresh paddy was made available for the purpose. Devotees believed that if any of these special dishes of the occasion were relished before conducting Fatiha, it would bring the wrath of the spirit to be propitiated.

26. Paddy is dipped in water, fried and pounded to flatten it which required much experience, to prepare 'Avil', consumed with tea or coffee.

The Muslim style of eating was different from the rest of the community both Hindus and Christians, though the dishes were the same. "The traditional Malayali sits cross-legged on the floor and eats his food from the plate with his right-hand. On ceremonial occasions like feasts, the plantain leaf is used instead of the plate".²⁷ Zamorin's custom of eating has been described by Barbosa. "Another custom is that of eating. No man must be present while the Zamorin is eating, except four or five servants who wait on him. Before eating he bathes in a clean tank inside the palace. Then he dresses in fine garments and proceeds to a house which is arranged for his meal. There he sits on a round board placed on the ground. Then the servants bring him the silver dish and a pot of boiled rice. After the rice they bring in many other pots and dishes, each one into its own proper saucer. Then the Zamorin begins to eat with his right hand..... and if there is any Brahmins present when he is eating, he asks them to eat on the ground little away from him....."²⁸

This description shows the Hindu notion of

27. A.Sreedhara Menon, Quilon District Gazetteer, Trivandrum (1961), p. 218.

28. Duarte Barbosa, The Book of Duarte Barbosa, Vol. II, pp. 24-26.

pollution and is sharply contrasted with the Muslim way of eating. Among the Muslims in a household individuals took food separately and if all of them happened to be present simultaneously a 'Supra',²⁹ was spread on mats and food was served in big round plates. The curry was placed round the plate, and each one served sufficient rice and curries in the plate in which he ate. This was the system in communal gatherings, where ten or fifteen of the assembled would sit around the supra and Banana leaves were spread and rice was heaped up from baskets. Then the curry, pappad and fried meat were also heaped on top of the rice bowls. All of them ate from the same rice bowl, which would be filled simultaneously by the servers. When the people of one round finished eating they saw to it that nothing was left over the banana leaf to be wasted. The leaves were then thrown away. Fresh rounds were formed and thus again served. In matrilineal, and matrilocal families with a large number of inmates 'Supra' had to be prepared. This style of eating was a pure Arab custom. Even now the Arabs eat from such big plates, and when a group is finished the plates are not removed but more food is

29. Supra is the Malayalam form of the Arabic word 'Sufra'. In Calicut the same was known as 'Masara'.

served in the same plates and a fresh group sits to eat. Rice being the staple food and the extra-ordinarily large quantity that Malayalis consumes, the system still continues without modification. These days rice is served in the plate with a lot of condiments and each one has a separate plate to which he serves as much as he wants and eats from the plate.

The 'Supra' is exclusively a Muslim custom, and though the Hindus interdine with Muslims, they hesitate to sit on a Supra and if compelled by situation, serves for him in his plate and turns round to eat.

Muslims of Kerala are generally followers of Shafi School of Sunni Sect, except a few communities of Tamil origin like Labbais and the Dakhnais. From the 18th century there occurred a division among the Mappilas, a group preferring allegiance to Valiya Jarattinkal Thangal of Ponnani and another group to Muhammad Shah, the Kondotty Thangal. Muhammed Shah, a native of Kardan, who claimed descent from Imam Husayn and Abdul Qadir Jilani, settled in Kondotty in the year 1130 A.H. His fame as a Sufi and possessor of Karsmah spread far and wide, and won him many murids which was not liked by the Makhdums of Ponnani, who held the Qaziship of Kondotty

with the superior authority over Malabar Muslims in all matters of religion. The Ponnani faction did not like some of their Sufi practices³⁰ and branded them as Shias. This gave rise to the 'Kondotty-Ponnani Kai Tarkam'. The differences between the two parties sometime became acute and lead to disturbance. At Mulliakurichi in Valluvanad Taluk the two factions fought with each other in the month of September of 1901, marking the hight of the dispute.³¹ Ponnani was the highest seat of learning all over Kerala and even of some South-eastern countries. Ponnani Jamaat mosque was said to have been founded in the 12th or 13th century by an Arab divine for the purpose of imparting religious education to Muslims. It was there as even now that the new converts were given religious instruction. After much learning and training the Makhdam, chief of Ponnani College, conferred the title of Musaliyar on the selected few who were thus permitted to teach, preach and interpret the Quran. Ponnani become the religious centre of Muslims of Malabar, South Canara, and native states of Cochin and Travancore.

The office of Qazis was almost entirely held

30. It was said that Muhammad Shah instructed that his murids should prostrate before him, But prostration (Sujud) according to the Quran is due to God alone.

31. E. Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Madras (1909), Vol. IV, p. 462.

by Tangals, yet with exceptions. A realistic mind would certainly raise the question 'Where from such number of Thangals came?' But we have to keep in mind the fact before 1881 when Logan was appointed Special Commissioner to look into the Mappila grievances, their main problems were non-availability of land for mosques and grave yards. This would mean that there were very few mosques and sufficient number of Sayyids or Tangals were available to hold Qaziship. There was the institution of 'Melkazi',³² or chief Qazi, which was just an honour, who had rarely to attend any duty connected with it. Shihabuddin Imbichikoya Tangal, The Valiya Qazi of Calicut was Melkazi of the areas of the whole of Kozhikode Taluk except the Desoms of Olavanna and Beypore. It was the Zamorin who appointed the Melkazi and was ratified and notified in gazette in 1947. So also Qazi Nalakath Mohammed Koya had his jurisdiction over the whole area as that of the Shihabuddin Imbichi Koya Tangal. The reason for two Qazis' holding authority over the same area was a dispute about the question of succession, in the Qazi line 200 years before. Hence another line also came into existence with authority over the same area

32. An institution similar to Qazi al-Quzat of the Sultanat and Mughal Empire where the area of authority was defined. For Melkazi area was assigned, and some times the number of mosques was mentioned.

but this never caused hatred or conflict as it happened in the case of Kondetty-Ponnani Kaitarkam in Mulliakurichi. Qazi Nalakath Mohamed informed that he was 18th Qazi of Calicut and eleventh in succession from Qazi Mohammed, the author of Muhiyuddin Mala.

The Valappattanam Qazis, known as Tangals of Bukhara were descendants of Sayyid Jalaluddin Bukhari who had settled in Valappattanam in the year 800 A.H. Valappattanam had been mentioned as an important Muslim centre by Ibn Battuta. These Sayyid Qazis have a very extensive area under their authority like the neighbouring regions of Valappattanam, Mankavu, Cheriyaakara, Kattambally, Kannadipparambu, Kabani, Pannayankandi Palatinkavu, Nuncheri, Mundari, Manchur, Mullakkodi, Kairalam, Kandakkai, Kavvayi, Madayi Ramantali, Ettilam, which are now different Mahals, yet it shows that all these regions in olden days were under one Mahal, one Qazi and the Qazi was a Sayyid.

The Musliyers also held the office of Qazi but as Innes noted 'Musaliyers were not necessarily attached to any mosque but travelled about preaching and teaching.'³³

33. C.A. Innes, Malabar Gazetteer, Vol. I, p. 109.

Musaliyars also had the task of blessing the Mappilas to die as Shahid.³⁴

Two hundred years ago Madrasah system was in vogue in Malabar. Organised Madrasah system had not come into existence. Yet the community's enthusiasm and ardour enabled it to develop into a unique institution namely the 'Palli Dars'. In this system a number of students were attracted to a renowned scholar who would be a Qazi in a masjid. This scholar himself might often be a man trained in a renowned institution, might have travelled in other Islamic countries, and a disciple of some Sufi saint or a student of renowned scholar or of many scholars, themselves masters of their own branches of learning. When such number of students were enrolled the village community found means to support it. One or more such students were assigned to families according to their resources, in fact they volunteered, to feed them and the Qazi himself was often fed from such a house or from many houses at different times. This arrangement is unique and no parallel can be cited elsewhere in the Islamic world. Perhaps only in Ethiopia a similar system

34. For details of functioning of Makhdum College of Pennani, Vide, E. Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol. IV, pp. 489-81.

worked. These an institution of religions learning would camp (they were essentially wandering or travelling institutions) for six months in a village when the local community fed them. They they would move to another village for the next six months.³⁵ Thus even the Ethiopian parallel comes nowhere near the Kerala system in effect, because it was peciprocal in nature. The students thus fed by families taught the primary lessons of religion, reading of the Quran and writing of Arabic to small children of the house. So the community never felt lack of religious teachers. In far off poor villages where such a Palli dars could not function a mulla or any old man would collect some children around him either in the local Niskarappalli or in some room of his house and teach the Quran and Arabic, often a parrot-like recitation as he himself knew it. He also served as the Nattu mulla, conducting 'Moulud', 'Fatiha' and also as the local sorcerer. These mullas received fixed measures of paddy during the seasonal harvests and supplemented their income with occasional presents from the parents of students and with remunerations received for initiating other religious rites. Thus however poor a child

35. C.N. Ahamed Moulavi (Ed.), Mahathaya Mappila Sahitya Parambaryam, Calicut (1948), p. 26.

was never left without instructions at least in basic practices of Islam. From such mulla-run 'ottupalli',³⁶ as they were called, students went to the above-mentioned Palli Dars, and there joined the group of students according to their gradations. As the teachers (only one) of such Palli Dars were masters different branches of Islamic learning, students went on changing masters and finally reached the institutions of Ponnani or of later, Dar ul-Ulum of Deoband and 'Baqiyat ul-Salihah' of Vellore.

During the period under discussion, theological developments remained static. But one should not forget the contribution of Makhdums and the relevance of 'Fath al Muin' and similar works. These works were more explanations and not innovations of scholarly analysis. Sayyids had been migrating to Kerala mainly from South Arabia. But while themselves were conservatives, inimical to puritan reforms of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1787) and therefore Wahhabism was not introduced to Kerala soon after its rise. Lack of Urdu tradition prevented any infiltration of the ideas of the rest of India. Yet by the first quarter of 19th century ideas

36. Ottupally was the name for the institutions where Brahmin boys were instructed in the Vedas.

of social reforms and a will to fight social and economic injustice to the community had been developed as revealed from the teachings of Sayyid Fazl and Arab preachers who were interrogated by British officers in Malabar. But none of them made any significant contributions in the field of theology. It was only in the second half of 19th century that revivalist and reformist movements began to gather momentum among Muslims of Kerala.

Books were produced for instruction in Madrasahs in Arabic and Arabi-Malayalam (Malayalam written in Arabic script).³⁷ In this field Arabi-Malayalam went a step further, by formulating equivalents to all Malayalam sounds which could not be produced with existing Arabic alphabet. Books so written or printed were called Kitab, rather than its Tamil or Malayalam equivalent 'pustakan', and were considered sacred. They commanded almost the same respect as the Quran itself, and had been commanded not to touch with unclean hands. Books of religious nature written or printed in Tamil or

37. Arab-Tamil had been invented by Tamil Muslims for the same purpose--Tamil written in Arabic script and the guttural sounds of certain words had to be softened down into Arabic sounds.

Malayalam characters may be left on the ground, but a Kitab of even secular character would always be placed on a special seat, and if it fell to the ground it was kissed and raised to the forehead.

Muslims of Kerala, bred and brought up in such reverence to religious edicts strictly followed the Islamic injunctions. The principles of 'Islam' and 'Iman' were followed. They were very punctilious in saying the five times prayer, and attending the Friday sermon for which they walked many miles on Fridays. It is said that often in many places in those days people had to start walking to the mosque in the morning to reach for 'Jumah' at noon, because the Hindu landlords in the countryside did not give land for the construction of mosques and if a new Jamaat was to be founded there must be 'forty male adults' present for the congregation. The fast of Ramzan was strictly observed. In fact the month of Ramzan was the period of highest religious fervour. Many of the Mappila outbreaks of 19th century took place in the months of Ramzan or it was so regarded that they could be conducted only in a state of fasting. Since the British administrators called it Hal Ilakkam the month of Ramzan came to be called month of Hal Ilakkam.

Even now a popular joke in countryside runs thus:

"Ramzan is the month! Mappila is the man! take to your heels, Nayar! !", The Muslims celebrated 'Laylatt ul-Qadr'. The night in which Quran was first revealed to the Prophet through Jibril. According to popular belief it fell on one of the even nights of the last ten of Ramzan, "the night honoured than one thousand months,"³⁸ (in respect of reward for good deeds). Popular belief is that it was the 27th night, and Muslim often spent the whole night in reciting the Quran, prayer and Dhikr, because "therein descend the Angels and the Spirit by the command of their Lord with every matter" and which is "all peace till the rising of the dawn". So Muslims used to give alms (Zakath) to the poor amounting to 2½ per cent of his money, cattle and merchandise. Muslims in general observed only the ninth and tenth days of Muharram, keeping fast and there used to be no taziya and beating of breast except in the case of the Pathans. But the Bohras, Shia community concentrated mainly in Calicut and Alleppy and Cannanore observed Muharram like the rest of the Shia world.³⁹ Among the Pathans there

38. Holy Quran, Ch. 97, Verses, 2, 4, 5.

39. The Pathan and Bohr ways of celebrating Muharram is given in Chapter IV 'Communities'- Pathans and Bohras.

was the practice of Pulikali, when men would disguise as tigers painting their faces and making stripes like that of tigers during Muharram.

The Shabi Barat, "night of record" on the fourteenth of Shaban was celebrated by observing fast, preparing sweet dishes and conducting a 'Fatiha'. It is supposed to be the night of Prophet Mohamed's ascension to heavens.

Kerala Muslims celebrated Idul Fitr, and Idul Azha (Bakrid) enthusiastically like the rest of the Muslim world. Idul Fitr marked the end of the month of fast and rigorous self-control. The first item of the celebration was distribution of food materials to the poor and deserving, intended to remove the possibility of any case of starvation in the community on that auspicious day. In the morning men, and children attired in their best dress proceeded to the mosque or Idgah, a place set apart for public prayers. The gathering then offered congregational prayers, led by Imam. After prayer the Imam delivered the 'Khutba'. At the end of the congregation members then embraced and saluted each other. On that day they visited neighbours, friends and relatives. It was an occasion of cheerful meeting of friends. Social calls were made, and presents were

distributed to dependants. Children used to be the most happy ones on the day and they made it an occasion to visit distant relatives. All the members of the family, assembled and newly-married couples were specially invited to the bride's houses where another round of 'Salkaram' took place. Girls assembled to sing and dance, and boys in groups organised folk games. 'Karakali',⁴⁰ 'Talappandu',⁴¹ and 'Attakkalam',⁴² were some of the popular games of the boys.

Idul-Azha (Bakrid) was the biggest festival of Muslims in Kerala too. The festival falls on the 10th of Dhul-Hajj, the last month of the lunar year. It is celebrated in commemoration of Abraham's willingness to offer his only son as sacrifice in obedience to God's command. The sacrifice of animals which is an important item of the celebrations is a declaration 'that nothing will ever be withheld in the course of surrendering to the will of God'. Muslim houses woke up with the spirit of sacrifice and festivity and the day dawned

40. Beating a rubber ball with a stem of a bamboo taken with its roots, hence bent at the bottom, resembling modern hockey stick.

41. Still the popular folk game which is held on festivals like Onam in the countryside. One team throwing ball in various positions and the other trying to catch it.

42. A rural folk version of 'Kabadi'.

with resounding of Takbir (Allahu Akbar). Children were the happiest group in these festivals. Girls and small boys would be seen collecting the henna leaves three or four days before each festival. They applied henna, drawing various diagrams with Jackfruit's gum so that when henna was removed these diagrams would be clearly seen. Women of all ages especially youngsters did apply henna. Often children of the neighbouring houses assembled in one house and the whole night was spent in amusements and plays while the elders would be busy in preparation for the next day's feast. Men and children dressed in their best attire and reciting Takbir proceeded to the Idgah. After the congregational prayer and Khutba people greeted each other and returning houses enjoyed hearty feasts. Even the pardah-clad women enjoyed the occasion by going out to meet neighbours, friends and relatives.

Women did not attend Idgahs and Friday congregational prayers since it was only recently that they began attending congregational prayers that too in Wahhabi-dominated Mahals. The Orthodox Sunnis never allowed their women to attend the mosque. However in recent days women have begun going to mosques only to hear the sermons delivered on Fridays during the month of Ramzan. Since Wahhabism gained widespread support

only recently, it is reasonable to think that women did not attend congregational prayer or Idgah. Even in other parts of the world Muslim women's absence from mosques had been noted and Spencer Trimmingsham called this aspect as the 'dualism'⁴³ of Islam. When the Men went to Friday congregational prayer their women folk found solace and contentment in visiting the tombs of the local Wali.

Milad-i-Sharif, Prophet Muhammad's birthday, 12th Rabiul Awwal was celebrated throughout Kerala. This was celebrated by conducting Moulud, on the day, or any other convenient day of the month, or at least by reciting yasin. Procession of students of Madrasahs with banners and slogans as is held these days was of recent origin. When Moulud or Yasin was conducted a special drink was prepared called 'Kulavi'. Any guest or participant was first served this drink of wheat, flour, cocoanut, spices and sugar and later on the usual food or feasts. Religious sermons were conducted during the month. People considered it a sacred month and abstained from conducting any family functions like marriage, upto 12th of the month.

43. J. Spencer Trimmingsham, Sufi Orders in Islam.

Muharram was another important celebration for Muslims of Kerala. But it differed from Shia celebrations. Muslims observed fast during the 9th and 10th days of Muharram, and it was considered a very sacred and pious act. They desisted from launching upon any important acts like, marriage or business and even talks of marriage were never held in the first ten days of Muharram. It was not because of the martyrdom of Hassan and Hussain that Muharram was considered sacred, but because of the fasts of 'Tasurah' and 'Ashurah', the ninth and tenth days respectively.

Muslims all over Kerala celebrated 'Badringle Andu',⁴⁴ probably the most popular pious act as they considered it and not propounded in Sunnah or Shariat. Mouluds were conducted and Malas were sung. The night of the celebration was the communal feast for which rice and beef were prepared. Men, women and children went to the nearby mosque where the Andu Nercca was held. A short discourse by the Qazi followed on the sacrifice of the martyrs of Badr. Then the communal dinner was held. Each one of the assembled had a separate pot

44. The anniversary of Badringle, the day of the Battle of Badr, the first battle of Islam where He gave victory to Muslims. Badringle were the first of the martyrs. In a people whose concept of martyrdom was an active force, the Martyrs of Badr became very popular.

which they took home and ate it as a sacred deed. Elders compelled all the members of the family to eat as it was believed, it would cure diseases and the effect would last for one year. It was on the model of the Andu Nercca of Badr that various other Nerccas of saints and martyrs came to be celebrated. Men came from distant places to take part in the Andu and family members assembled in their houses where the Nercca was celebrated. The community generously contributed for the celebration of Andu and 'Badringle' (Oh! people of Badr) was the first word that Muslims uttered in difficulties.

The Muslims of Kerala celebrated many other local and communal festivals, also a number of which are described in the Chapter on folk life.

Before the close of the Eighteenth century there were very few pilgrim centres in Kerala and if at all there had been a few, they have fallen into oblivion, except a few Jarans of Sayyids and in Malabar of few martyrs. The Bimappalli, situated three miles to the South-west of Trivandrum railway station was founded roughly 200 years ago. According to the informations available Beema Beevi and her son Mahin Abubacker Auliya came and settled in Punttura some 200 years ago, which

means the mosque raised near their burial place is a later structure and its gates and tower are still later structure renovated and enlarged by the local community. It appears therefore Beemapalli never existed as a pilgrim centre before 1800.

Coming to Central Kerala the tomb of Hydross Kutty Mupan is another pilgrim centre with the largest Nercca at present. But Hydross Kutty Moopan himself was one of the commanders of Tipu who later revolted in protest against some of Tipu's measures, fought with his army, and died in 1788. Then he was enshrined as a martyr. But the present structure above the Jaram is a modern one and the pomp of the Nercca is enabled by petrodollar.

Further north there was the shrine of Mamburam Tangal, by whose feet people solemnly swore an oath; "was the most popular pilgrim centre". The devotees used to visit his Jaram during the outbreaks of the 19th century to get his blessing to die as martyr.

In Calicut there is the Shaykhinre Palli where 'Appani' festival is celebrated. It was an important centre of pilgrimage. The saint who lies buried there, Shaykh Abul Wafa Mohammad al-Kalikutti is believed to

have fought against the Portuguese in the Chaliyam battle in 1571. It was by the dawn of 17th century his grave became a centre of pilgrimage.

In Kanjiramarram an interior settlement of Cannanore, there is the shrine of Shaykh Abdul Qadir as Sani who had lived in the 16th century as his *Manaqib* proves, and at least by the 17th century he had become a popular saint. Such was the case of 'Aliyyulkufi, the saint of Kanakamala, who also lived in the 16th century and lies buried near the mosque of Peringattur. The local tradition says that he died in 200 A.H. But clear evidence had been available in this study to show that he lived in the 16th century and was a contemporary of Abdul Qadir as-Sani.

Still north there had been the Darga of Ullal. Though outside the State by a few miles the Ullal Dargha of Hazrath Madani is one of the largest and most popular shrine on the Western-Coast. He is said to have been settled in the village of Ullal in the 14th century. He is still treated as the patron saint of mariners and fisherfolk. The Dargha had been a centre of pilgrimage from very early times. A visitor can see the large number of the replica of ships, odams, and boats offered

as offerings made at the face of some imminent calamity on high seas. The Dargha is the most popular shrine of the whole of Malabar and South Canara. The popularity of the saint is understood even in the interior Malabar from the kind of nerccas made. A goat is vowed to the saint and with a small purse of cloth it is set free. It moves undisturbed eating whatever it likes along the road. No one dares to hurt it. People respectfully put coins into the bag. It is said after wandering months covering hundreds of miles the goat would finally come to the Dargha to be sacrificed for the annual Urs. The foul smelling, stinking goat is so familiar in the countryside that if someone looks untidy and dirty friends would comment, "There goes the goat of Ullal!" The Dargha is a very rich institution which runs Madrasahs, schools and even an Arabic college from its funds. Sufficient to say that two full-time clerks are on duty to keep the accounts of the ever-increasing income. The Dargha is a magnificent and stupendous structure.

Every village or town had its own patron saint. Some Sayyid or Auliya lies buried in them. There was no dearth of such Jarams, or tombs; for Thurston noted a very curious incident; "A beggar died as reported by

Tottenham; (probably of starvation) by the road-side in Walluvanad Taluk. When alive no one worried about him. But, after he died, it was said that celestial voices had been heard, uttering the call to prayer at the spot. The Mappilas decided that he was a very holyman, whom they had not fed during his life, and who should be canonised after death. A little tomb was erected and a light may be seen burning there at night. Small banners are deposited by the faithful who go in number to the place and there is, I think a money-box to receive their contributions".⁴⁵ Such Jarams very soon acquired fame and consequent wealth and pomp to attract more and more devotees. An old man or woman might often say to have been dreamt of a divine person commanding to do something. People may throng to his presence and on death will be enshrined as divine. Such was the case of 'Paital's Jaram' of recent origin where a 'Paital' (a very small baby) was buried. In fact such local centres of religion was a social necessity for those who had converted from lower castes who in their pre-conversion days had innumerable gods, deities and sub-deities.

45. E. Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Madras, (1909), Vol. IV, p. 464.

Jamaat organisation was very loose, because the jamaats were not organised on democratic lines. The Jamaat was always headed by the Karanavar or Mutuvalli' (custodian of the mosque) and even the Qazi had a subservient role. The Mutavallis were often the senior member of a Taravad who might have initially made 'waqf' (voluntary gift), the plot for Masjid and a considerable amount of property attached to it. Since the Karanasthanam (Office of Karanavar) was prestigious possession, the Taravads never liked to part with it and in many cases even when all the wealth and power of the Taravad, was gone, the Karanasthanam remained with them. There were disputes over this only when a family was split into many groups, that too was limited to among the members of the same family. The rest were mere spectators in the game. The only way to acquire Karanasthanam of a mosque was to found a new one, donating site and some property for the purpose. The appointment and dismissal of a Qazi was the personal affair of the Mutavalli in which members of the Jamaat had no voice. This was the case everywhere except in such cases where Qaziship was hereditary as in the case of Nalakath Qazis of Calicut, or of the Bukhara Tangals of Valarpattanam. In such cases Qazis were independent and had decisive voice in the day-to-day administration of the Jamaat. The Qazis therefore never

interfered in the Jamaat administration and gave their opinion only when asked for. Thus however sincere they were, they lacked initiative and was rendered impotent. To supplement their income they practiced sorcery and magic or engaged private tuitions in the houses of the rich. Thus they held the community in darkness, as the blind leads the blind not out of darkness. Responding to the call of jihad to fight the worshippers of cross the community fought against foreigners until 1921, which estranged Muslims from the system of vernacular education, since it was established by foreigners. While the rest of the society advanced in many walks of life, the Muslims continued in their superstitions and hatred of foreigners. The condition was different in southern parts of Kerala where the Christian missionaries had set up many educational institutions and social welfare activities. Thereafter much hesitation the Muslims were compelled to move with the rest of the country in social advancement. Moreover their attitude to foreigners had not been so bitter as the Mappilas of Malabar, who continuously for one century had bred nothing but enmity and hatred against them.

At least the Christian community stood in sharp contrast to the Muslims in social advancement.

While the Christians made use of the Christian British administration to protect their interests by enactment of laws and for upliftment of the community especially with the initiative of missionaries, Muslims stood aloof from the administration.—The administration which turned inimical. They had no leadership and the religious leadership, which would in the circumstances have been the only uniting force, was rendered impotent, and community continued to be subservient to the vices of the landowning aristocracy. The Qazis only gave their opinion when asked for in solving cases and disputes but the decision was always of the Elders, ofcourse not contradictory to the Sheriah'. One of the factors that rendered the institution of Qazi weak was that they were always people from outside the Mahal, and without roots in the Jamaat. Even now they are the lowest-paid group and by virtue of their profession are deprived of any other vocation or trade, that would supplement their income. The only attraction of the profession was that they were welcome guests in every household, on all occasions.

The marriage was always conducted by a Qazi, who would be present on special summons from the householder, accompanied by the Mulla and Mukri. Often it

was with the Qazi that the Elders and Karanavars also presented themselves in the house. ^{some times the Qazi refused} But such instances were very rare, and were soon overcome with some fine or apology as the case may be, or a Musaliar of some other place was available to conduct the Nikah.

The Mulla and Mukri were other functionaries of the Mosque and Jamaat. Mulla was a local resident who was a teacher of the Madrasah and a local sorcerer and the man who would recite the Quran in houses or recite yasin or fatiha on important occasions. Some times he also served as Mukri. He was respectfully called Mullakka (Mulla + Kaka), a word of Persian origin used in Gujarathi too.

'Mukri' was the third functionary of a Masjid. He was the man in charge of the maintenance of the mosque, dusting and cleaning, and filling water for ablution in the hauz (tank). He also called the Bank (Adhan) and beat the Nagara (the big drum).⁴⁶ He also called out

46. Nagara is a Persian word, meaning a big drum beat for announcement, the sound of which could be heard at great distances. Its use was necessary in the days when loud speakers were not available.

on Fridays the believers to assemble and take their places, holding the wooden sword in hand. As he was one of the teachers of the madrasah, the origin of the word 'Mukri' is traced to be "Muqriun" (the one who make others read). But it seems to be a corruption of a Persian word, i.e., mukhi (the chief or head). Dr. S.C. Misra has noted that the Chhaparbandhs, a Muslim community of Ahmadabad had "till recently a generally acknowledged leader of the Jammāt called Patel or Mukhi".⁴⁷ It is quite possible that the word Mukri in its earlier days was Mukhi and later on significance of the office diminished and function remained more or less the same. When all other words with religious connotations are of Persian origin⁴⁸ in Kerala, the word Mukri need not necessarily remain an exception.

Two names with nautical connotations are used among religious functionaries in Kerala. 'Muallim' which means a religious teacher in Northern Kerala and 'Sidi' with the same meaning in the southern parts. Muallim is

47. S.C. Misra, Muslim Communities in Gujarat, Bombay (1964), p. 85.

48. Refer to the words like 'Bank' used for Adhan only in Kerala. Naghara (big drum) Mulla, Misan, Zanzan - all are Persian words.

the leader or captain of the ship, also used to mean the man who climbs the mast and watches the sea, essentially an Arabic word. It is quite possible since Muslims came in groups as mariners under a Muallim who used to teach them (perhaps they were apprentices) the word came to be used for religious teachers too. The word Sidi seems to be of non-Arabic origin, probably Turkish since we are familiar with Sidi Ali Rais the Turkish captain sent to Indian waters by the ruler of Egypt, Sultan of Turkey. It is possible that the word Sidi with the same function as a 'Muallim' came to be called so.

Of the service groups in Kerala only one community the 'ossans' remained unchanged. It is true that vocational groups like Pusalans remained. Yet even in the unstratified society of Kerala, ossans remained at the bottom. This was probably because of the kind of service they were supposed to render.

Muslims of Kerala with their ardent religious zeal maintained many of the Arab or Persian traits, adopted themselves to meet the challenges, gave and took from the rest of the society and yet remained a distinctly proud community with its unique features and identities.

CHAPTER VI

MUSLIM FOLK LIFE IN KERALA

There was an overwhelming influence of Sufism among the Muslims of Kerala. Traditions of hundreds of Sufis are extant all over the land. The Sufis came from Arabia as early as the 8th century as in the case of Malik Dinar group and the Kazaruni Sufis of the 13th and 14th centuries, mentioned by Ibn-Battuta came from Persia. From the Coramondal coast came the Makhdums of Ponnani and somewhere from Eastern coast came the saints of Bimappalli. The Hamdani Sayyids came from Bukhara. Sufis had migrated to Kerala even through the Palghat gap of the Western Ghats as did Muhammad Waliyullah. Therefore all along the coast and the interior innumerable Jarams sprang up with their own specific traditions. But the most popular saints were of the Qadiri and Tariqahs.

During the Taifa stage, the main reason for men getting introduced to a Tariqah was the desire to get the blessing or Karamah of the saint. The reputation of the saints varied according to their power to perform Karamah. So the murids, devotees and sympathisers helped in giving currency both to trustworthy and also unreliable Karamahs.

Saints, Sufis and non-Sufis were readily given the honorific title of Auliya by Muslims.¹ They were then considered to be the near-ones to God, and befitting treatment of Wali were meted out to them. Even during the life-time of Biran Auliya, Moulud was held in his honour.² The Muslim concept of Auliya was always as personified in the Muhyiuddin Mala. All the hagiographic works that followed were composed on similar lines.³ Rifai Mala, second only to Muhyiuddin Mala in popularity, has characterised Ahmad Kabir al-Rifai as an 'Auliya'. It should be remembered that Rifai mala was sung in every house-hold in the early hours of the night and especially on appointed days.⁴ The Mala has lines extolling the merits and greatness of Shaykh Rifai. "When his carrying mother asked whether it is son or daughter, he said, son, Ahmad al-Kabir". When he was to be born on earth he asked God "If Paradise is given to me (promised) and to those who follow me, I shall descend on earth". "I am there in Ilm al-Yaqin, Ayn al-Yaqin and Haqq al-Yaqin", he said. "I have created

-
1. Supra, the incident of canonising the dead beggar in Ernad.
 2. At Manjeri in a house a money-box in his name was kept. Mouluds were held on every Thursday night in his honour.
 3. It would suffice to reproduce Muhyiuddin's words. "My wills are the wills of Allah, If I say 'be' (Kun) it will become (Yakun)". Muhyiuddin Mala, p. 4.
 4. Rifai Mala's significance as protection against snake-bite and burning has been discussed elsewhere.

you to be company with me, thus he heard the words". "The eighteen thousand worlds are not sufficient for one step of mine, he said". He is characterised as the unique wali because "for forty days 'Khizr' came and stood in front of him, but he did not utter a word and then Khizr said "I have not seen any one like him among the Auliya".⁵ The Auliya were considered to be above all the creations, Jinn and Ins. Jinn were at their command as people believed, that it was with the help of the Jinn that they performed miracles. Jinn would even fight for them.⁶ People believed that any thing incomprehensible to their mind was done by supernatural beings, the Jinn.

They were the people to whom 'Ghayb' was made known, the Mappilas believed. The Muhiyudin-Mala and Rifai-Mala have verses to the effect that their eyes were always in 'Lauh' (Lauh-al-Mahfud), the most secret thing known only to God. Some Karamah connected with Makkah and Haram' were always attributed to all saints. One day, people saw Hazrat Sayyid Madani while performing ablution, throwing water in the air three times. When

5. Zayn ud-din Ibn Ahmad, Rifai Mala, pp. 1-10.

6. When Nayar soldiers attacked the shrine of Kondotty Tangal, they were defeated and they ran away from the battlefield abandoning their weapons and even cannon. The devotees believed that they were frightened seeing the Jinn of the Tangal. Ibn Meeran Kutty, Hazrat Muhammad Shah (Mal.), pp. 23-4.

they asked him he said "I saw a fire in Haram". That year Hajis who returned after Hajj confirmed that there was a fire in Haram and water from the sky descended to extinguish it".⁷

It was believed that they could ride over time and space. Muhiyuddin was considered omni-present. "If anybody calls me from any land, I will answer him before he closes his mouth (finishes the call), Sayeth Muhiyuddin". One day, Abdul Qadir as-Sani was travelling in a boat from Baliapattam to Cannanore. When the boat was nearing the port the Shaykh disappeared. The fellow-sailors landed and finished their prayer. Then the Shaykh returned and said "My teacher (Shaykh), Ahmad al-Khabushani, died and I performed the prayer (Namaz) for the dead".⁸ Another instance is cited in his Manaqib that one day a group of his murids were going back after visiting him. At Cannanore⁹ they performed the Subh prayer, and began to recite the 'Asrad' advised by the Shaykh. One of them committed a mistake. Then they heard the sound of a strong blow from the Shaykh's walking

7. Qadi Bappan Kunhi Musaliyar, Sayyid Madani Mala (Arabi-Malayalam) The Manaqib of Abdul Qadir as-Sani, and Nuruddin Mala has similar lines.

8. Manaqib Abdu al-Qadir as-Sani, pp. 8-10.

9. About sixteen miles away from the Shaykh's residence at Porattel.

stick. They were terror-stricken. Some of them out of fear began to recite the awrad aloud and some of them wept and amidst them stood the Shaykh with his stick in hand.¹⁰ People believed that this was made possible by Jinn's help. Such a concept itself was taken from Prophet's Miraj (journey to heavens, when "He transported His servant in one night from 'Masjid al-Haram to Masjid al-Aqsa". He could have the knowledge of hidden things due to Jibril's assistance. When he was questioned by those who did not believe the story of his ascent, questioned him on the Dome of Rock, it is said, that Jibril held a replica of the sacred Dome of Rock and the Prophet described it to those who questioned. Angels will be obedient only to Prophets but Jinn could be propitiated and made obedient by Jinnu Seva.

Several Manaqibs and Malas ascribed to their heroes the power of mind reading. It is quite the same what Prof. K.A. Nizami mentioned of Shaykh Farid, that "he could read a man's inner heart by a glance at his face".¹¹ Not a single work among the hagiographic

10. Manaqib Abd al-Qadir as-Sani, p. 11.

11. K.A. Nizami, Life and Times of Shaikh Farid ud-din Ganji-i-Shakar, p. 3.

literature produced in Kerala was without the Saint or Wali curing an incurable disease, curing the blind or chronic diseases. The saints were even otherwise well-known for their knowledge of medicine. People believed that by the Karamah of the saint, recitation of his Mala would keep off all Balal¹² and 'Musibat'.¹³ One of the lines of Istighasa in the Badr Mala runs. "From all the Balal and Afat and strains and Musibat, Oh God, please give me Shifa with the Barakah of Badringal".¹⁴

People believed that reciting these malas themselves would bring happiness to the one who recited and to his whole household. Illiterate masses considered it auspicious to have copies of these malas in their house. A guest would ask for a particular mala to sing himself or if it was an elderly person he or she may ask children of the house to sing it to them.¹⁵ Perhaps the best example of such beliefs was the Malappuram Patappattu" (Malappuram war-song) the most popular song in Malabar and which was said to be one of the stimulants

12. evils.

13. Trouble.

14. The shahids of Badr.

15. I have seen in my boyhood days elderly guests asking the girls to recite these Malas. A guest would appreciate it and recommend to his relatives that they should hear such and such Mala being sung by so and so.

to the Mappila rebellion of 1921. The author named it 'Kulliyat us-Shifa' (Remedy for all) that is 'Hymn of praise for the benefit of all mankind'. That was composed as a necklace for the kings. Those who wear that necklace here will be rewarded by God in the Hereafter with a necklace of God. Naming every ill and misfortune possible to men the author prays to God that for the sake of the Malappuram Shahids the man (who recites) may come to no harm. The song is also intended to be repeated amidst vows in times of sickness, for wants to be supplied, diseases to be cured, wells to be filled and even cholera to be driven away.¹⁶

Sea-faring people, fishermen, and boat-men had special devotion to certain saints. The reverence with which the Saint of Ullal Darghah, Sayid Madani, is held by mariners has been discussed. Hydross Kutty Mupan of Chavakkad, is patron-saint of fisherman community of both Muslims and non-Muslims in recent times. One of the Karamah of Mamburam Tungal is said to have saved a lost ship. Once he asked one of his murids to bring a

16. Fawcett, "War songs of the Mappilas of Malabar", I.A., XXX (1901). The belief that cholera and small-pox were the work of Shaitan, was a lingering of the old faith, that persisted among Muslims too. A procession with banners of the local Wali chanting moulds under the Tungal was taken out beating drums to drive away the Satan (devil).

burning bundle of olas (dry cocconut palm leaves).¹⁷
Then he asked one of them present to climb on top of a cocconut tree and to wave the burning bundle in the air. Far in the sea, those seamen who had lost their course had prayed so Mamburam Tangal for help. The sailors saw the light and they paddled ashore.¹⁸ Poor farmers used to invoke his blessings against pests.¹⁹

The dualism of Islam and attachment of women-folk to Pirs are discussed elsewhere in the work. All the saints could be invoked for a smooth delivery. A number of Malas, Mouluds and Manaqibs that were examined for the study revealed the fact that they had special

17. People used to tie these 'olas' in a bundle usually three or four feet long. The bundle is tied so tightly that even when lighted, it would not burn to flames except when waved in the air. These bundles served the purpose of torches.

18. K.K.M.A. Karim, Mamburam Sayyid Alavi Tangal (Mal.), pp. 46-48. C.K. Muhammad, Mamburam Mala (Arabi-Malayalam), p. 4.

19. When farmers complained of the pests one day Mamburam Tangal asked them to catch some insects and put them in a drum. Thereafter the pests disappeared. "The Mala of Shaykh Muhammad Waliyullah (d.1590) of Palghat has the same Barakah recorded. In the paddy fields of country-side of Malabar may still be seen white flags on short poles to guard against pests, obviously a reminiscent of the old flags taken out of a Jaram in bygone days.

appeal to women.²⁰ It was believed that if the Cherusiti Tangal Mala was sung for 41 days barren women will conceive.²¹

The fishing community of Badagara, where Cherusiti Tangal's Jaram is situated, believed that if the sea is without fish they could invoke his blessing for a good catch. Lost things could be recovered by making vows to the saints. It is recorded in the Mamburam Mala that a man approached the Tangal, complaining of the loss of his ox. The Tangal gave him a key and told him to go back and he would get back his ox. It was raining heavily when the man was on his way back and he took shelter on the veranda of a locked and uninhabited house. The wind and rain was too severe that he could not withstand the cold. He said to himself, "Why should not I try to open the house with this key". He opened the house, and there stood his lost ox in the room. The man remembered with gratitude the words of the Tangal.²²

The veracity of the above Karamah and Barakah

20. Nuruddin Mala, p. 8; Madani Mala, p. 10; Teruvatte Palli Mala, p. 7; and Shadili Mala, p. 12 (All Arabi-Malayalam works).

21. T. Mammad, Cherusiti Tangal Mala (1925), vide, Publishers note.

22. K.K.M.A. Kareem, Mamburam Sayyid Alavi Tangal, (Mal.), pp. 42-44.

as people believed may be questioned, but the intent behind them were sincere love and blind belief in the saints. It has got some practical values too. The Kondetty Tangals still removed the thorn or bones from throat with chanted plantain. The most curious fact is that if the patient cannot eat the plantain, his friend will be asked to squat with their backs touching each other and will be made to eat the fruit. The patient would get relief by this act.²³

Mappilas considered it solemn to take an oath. 'By the foot of Mamburam Tangal' is the sacred seal for every Mappila contract. They also swear in their saints' names. Mappilas believed that if false vows were taken or oaths were made, the liar would be punished by the saint. Many Malas mention how of false vows a person lost his sight. These Walis were, thus the guardian saints of common folk, the fountain of their hopes and solace in distress.

23. Removing bones from throat is a Karamah attributed to many saints. Kondetty Tangals continue this treatment for generations. On one night in October, 76, some of the non-Muslim friends brought a youth to be immediately taken to the hospital. The doctors at Manjeri District hospital asked him to go the Calicut Medical College. On the way anyhow they decided to try at Kondetty. The patient got cured by the chanted plantain given by the Tangal.

Devotional acts to the saints consisted of celebration of Moulids and performance of Ratib. Celebration of Moulids of the Prophet and Saints was practised in other parts of the Islamic world too. Muslim legal opinion considerably differed on the topic. Ibn Taimiyya (d.1328 A.D.) condemns it and Hallaj (d.1336), his contemporary, criticised the participation of women. Suyuti (d. 1505 A.D.) concluded it as an innovation but bid'atun hasanah. He considered the recitation of the Quran and of the history of the Prophet often in verse or in a combination of prose and poetry as the core of the celebration, and the processions, feastings and fairs later accretions. These panegyrics on Prophet's life later on began to emphasize its miraculous character and dwell reverently and extravagantly on his manaqib or virtues. Later on recitation of Maulids was conducted on all important occasions. The fact that 'Dhikr' meetings were an integral part of Maulid celebrations testifies Sufis' role in popularising Moulids. Later on, Moulids and Manaqibs came to be composed on all important companions, heroes Sufis and Saints. They were recited on the third, seventh or fortieth day of death or on the occasion of circumcision ceremony, on fulfilling a vow, or on starting any new venture. On appointed days

often on the day of death of a saint, Moulids were recited or on particular days of the week by devotees.²⁴

The Nerccas²⁵ were celebrated with great pomp and reverence by Muslims on the day of death of the saints. The term used in Andu Nercca.²⁶ In the case of Kendotty Nercca, the date was fixed by the murids and the Tangals. This nercca had no fixed date. The date was fixed when the paddy fields around the 'Kubba' were harvested in the summer for convenience of the assembling devotees. It was on the conclusion of Kendotty Nercca that the Tungal and murids declared the date of the 'Pullara Nercca'.²⁷ Days before the Nercca 'Kodiyerren'²⁸ was conducted. A white banner was hoisted on a permanent

24. The most popular Mawlid recited in Malabar is Mangus Mawlid on the Prophet by Shaykh Zayn uddin Ibn Ali of Ponnani. (d.923 A.H./1521 A.D.).

25. Means Annual Urs. Sometimes the single term 'Andu' (annual) is also used.

26. 'Nercca' literally means a vow. The use of the word for festival is derived from the practice of taking oaths in the name of the saint concerned and fulfilling the vows on particular day, generally on the day of death of the Shaykh.

27. Celebrated in commemoration of some of the shahids of Pullara. This Nercca is significant by its colourful fire works. The experts of fire works of Pullara are often invited to other festivals. The fire works in urs is a local custom.

28. Flag-hoisting ceremony.

often on the day of death of a saint, Moulids were recited or on particular days of the week by devotees.²⁴

The Nerccas²⁵ were celebrated with great pomp and reverence by Muslims on the day of death of the saints. The term used in Andu Nercca.²⁶ In the case of Keadetty Nercca, the date was fixed by the murids and the Tangals. This nercca had no fixed date. The date was fixed when the paddy fields around the 'Kubba' were harvested in the summer for convenience of the assembling devotees. It was on the conclusion of Keadetty Nercca that the Tungal and murids declared the date of the 'Pullara Nercca'.²⁷ Days before the Nercca 'Kediyarram'²⁸ was conducted. A white banner was hoisted on a permanent

24. The most popular Mawlid recited in Malabar is Mawlid on the Prophet by Shaykh Zayn uddin Ibn Ali of Pennani. (d.923 A.H./1521 A.D.).

25. Means Annual Urs. Sometimes the single term 'Andu' (annual) is also used.

26. 'Nercca' literally means a vow. The use of the word for festival is derived from the practice of taking oaths in the name of the saint concerned and fulfilling the vows on particular day, generally on the day of death of the Shaykh.

27. Celebrated in commemoration of some of the shahids of Pullara. This Nercca is significant by its colourful fire works. The experts of fire works of Pullara are often invited to other festivals. The fire works in urs is a local custom.

28. Flag-hoisting ceremony.

flag-post.²⁹ This flag-hoisting was followed by similar acts by the devotees. During the Urs season white flags were seen fluttering all over the adjacent localities. Special sweets-shops fully decorated, sold the special 'Neroca Mittayi',³⁰ and people sent them to relatives as a token of love and respect. On the days of the Urs, 'Varavu',³¹ or 'Petti' are still conducted. These 'Varavu' were made colourful and interesting with bands playing, dancing and even fancy dress. Groups from various localities compete in making them most colourful. "The banner-bearer goes ahead followed by the musicians. Then follow some young men of the party, encircling their leader and dancing according to the tempo given by him. He swings a sword, a stick or a handkerchief in the air and dances with them, thus giving the tempo..... While singing and dancing the party clap their hands in a rhythmical way".³² The above description of Von Grunebaum of the Urs festival of Musa Nabi in Jerusalem seems to be quite typical of such processions or 'Varavu' in Malabar too. These Varavu were received by the representatives of the Dargha near the shrine and in the case of

29. Even the 'Kotimaram' (flag post) is considered sacred.

30. Urs sweets prepared only during the season.

31. Varavu means coming. Literally people coming with Petti (box) with offerings to the Shaykh or the deceased saint.

32. G.E. Von Grunebaum, Muhammedan Festivals, pp. 81-83.

Kondotty Nercca the Tangal's representative rides a horse half a mile from the Jaram to welcome the procession. The offerings carried are bestowed to the Shaykh. In Kondotty and Malappuram Nerccas, the communal harmony is exhibited in the act of the last 'Varavu' of a Tattanre Petti.³³

The most important Nercca of Malabar was the Malappuram Nercca which commemorates the death of forty-four Mappilas martyred in a battle against the Hindu ruler of the area defending a mosque in the year 1148 A.H./1734 A.D., according to the Mala.³⁴ This Nercca, more than any other single event, illustrates the emotional spirit, occasionally approaching frenzy, which arises from the religious commitment of especially the poorer and uneducated Mappilas. Parades (Varavu) from several villages come to the narrow street of old Malappuram bringing money offerings and bearing flags. The columns mass together and proceed with high commotion to the mosque where the martyrs are buried. On the way, they were met by representatives of the four original families from whom the martyrs came and were escorted to the mosque

33. Tattan means gold-smith. His coming being the last, in rural Malabar 'Tattanre petti' is a phrase used for the last item of any work.

34. Ahmad Kutty Musliar, Malappuram Shahid Nerccappattu, (Arabi-Malayalam), p. 7.

where they place the flags on posts and give to the head of the mosque.

Because of the explosive nature of the gathering, frequently erupting into violence, and in the light of tensions related to participation, the Madras Government placed a ban on the conduct of the festival in 1947. In 1957, it was again permitted by the Communist Government of Kerala as a favour to Muslim voters, but after violent incidents it was banned again in 1960. In 1967 and 1972 the Government granted permission to conduct the Nercca under the supervision of large numbers of special police.

The Appani Nercca conducted at the Shaykh's mosque in Calicut is next in importance. Shaykh Abdul Wafa Muhammad al-Kalikutti was a man well versed in physical feats and he had led the Muslim armies in the Battle of Chaliyam in 1571 A.D. against the Portuguese. He died on 18th Rajab of the year 980 A.H./1579 A.D. His fame had reached far and wide as a Wali with innumerable karamahs. The sea-farers vow to his Jaram 'Appam' the special sweets which they carry even from far-off gulf countries.³⁵ According to tradition one night some

35. K.M. Muhammad Koya, Al-Shaykh Abul Wafa Muhammad al-Kalikutti, (Mal.), pp. 16-20. The custodian of the Jaram gave us the Arab's sweets given as offering-fulfilling some vow made on the sea, when we visited the tomb for the study.

Muslims dreamt that his grave near the shore was being washed away by heavy seas. They hurried to open the grave and found the body not only intact but as it was in life. After that the saint's corpse was re-interred in a safer place and the mosque was constructed. The Nercca is called 'Appam (bread) festival' because devotees bring rice-cakes and bread to the mosque as offering, which are later distributed to the poor.³⁶

But it is only in the Nercca of Hydros Kutty Muppan of Chavakkad where a replica of the Jaram is taken out in procession through the streets. In other Nerccas devotees carry only banners and flags. Hydros Kutty Muppan was a Muslim chieftain of the eighteenth century. When Haider Ali, the Mysorean ruler invaded Malabar, Chavakkad and the nearby villages were entrusted to him for revenue collection. Later on, in the time of Tipu Sultan due to some misunderstanding they became enemies and in a battle Hydros Kutty Muppan was killed.³⁷ His Barakah was considered helpful from sea perils, especially by fisherfolk regardless of faith. Though Chavakkad is a panchayath it is the place where price of land is highest

36. R.E. Miller, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, pp. 244-46.

37. P.A. Syed Mohammed (Ed.), Kerala Muslim Directory, p. 428 for Mappila festivals, pp. 424-28.

due to the flow of foreign money. Vows are made to the saint for Pettiyedukkal.³⁸ The devotees with gulf money compete in adding pomp and grandeur to the festivals, and the mosque, adjacent to the tomb itself being the best example of the community's prosperity. In 1976 forty-six caparisoned elephants were paraded in the procession. But it was about 1784 that Hyross Kutty Muppan was killed. Therefore before 1792 he was not probably enshrined.

Social and economic causes keep the Nerccas flourishing. People take them as occasions to family get-together. The convenience of those abroad is specially considered in the Malik Dinar Nercca of Kasaragod and it is held only once in three years.³⁹ But this oldest Nercca was held annually till the first half of this century. During the Nerccas devotees bring all their

38. Pettiyedukkal literally means taking the box. Parents would vow that if their son gets visa they will take 4 or 5 boxes. The ceremony is, an elephant from the Jaram would come to the house, where it will be given something to eat, and go back with the petti (box), one of the family member often a boy riding the elephant, if they like. An amount is fixed for one box. If five boxes are vowed either five elephants would go together or an elephant would go five times.

39. In 1975 the President of the celebration committee explained the reason, at the 'Urs' festival. He said it was an arrangement made for the convenience of those residing abroad especially in Malaya, Singapore and Gulf regions, who would find it difficult to attend the Urs if it was annually held.

offerings fulfilling their oaths. The floor-rent paid by various temporary trading-stalls, theatres of amusements and moving zoos provide another source of income for the custodians of the Darghas. The hotels and shops in the whole town get roaring business. Therefore, businessmen often take initiative in organising Nerccas though they may have little faith in the saint or his Karmah.

Ratib was another devotional rite performed in Kerala. This is practised by the followers of the famous Sufi Ahmad al-Kabir al-Rifai (d.578 A.H./1182 A.D.). Ratib originated only as 'Awrad' and Adhkar, referred to in the Quran and Hadith. But in course of time modifications occurred and they used to be very long and were concluded usually late at night. They were followed by a feast as in the case of Mawlid and were meant for invoking the blessings of a saint for curing an epidemic or for preventing a calamity. Ratibs of Muhiyuddin Shaykh, and Rifai Shaykh were important. The most popular Ratib recited is Haddad Ratib composed by Abdulla Ibn Alavi-al Haddad⁴⁰ (1132 A.H/1726 A.D.) Ratibs were

40. Popularity of Haddad Ratib among Mappilas could be attributed to their respect for Ba-Alavi saints of Tarim.

of two kinds, one consisting of only 'Awrad' and 'Adhkar' and the other followed by beating of drums followed by striking of the body with sticks, clubs, swords or knives.⁴¹

Ratib was celebrated in Laccadive Islands also where Islam is believed to have spread from Malabar. K.P. Ittaman in his book on 'Amini Islanders' has given a lively description of a Ratib performance. "Dhikrs were sung to the accompaniment or rhythmic beating of tamburines known as Daffs. This singing of 'dhikr' is known as Baith. The persons who participated in the Baith - about 10 or 15 in number - grouped themselves into two rows, each holding a Daff in his left hand, and performed a series of well-timed bending exercises, keeping perfect time between bending and beating on their Daffs, while five or more performers who showed astounding feats with different weapons danced up and down between the rows. Gradually the performers who recited the Baith increased the speed of their recitation and also bending exercises which created a sudden impulse in the performers of feats who then jumped into the air as if caught in a fit of frenzy, shouting all the time

41. Ratibs were embodiment of religious frenzy and not always associated with Sufi orders but with individual saints as in the case of 'Bimappalli'. It is also held by the devotees of Muhiyuddin Shaykh.

'Said Mohammed Kasim' and striking their chest or abdomen with all their might with the weapons or instruments like sword and pointed needles, which they held in their hands".⁴² Some performers would pass pointed needles right through their cheeks or lips. The extraordinary thing was that very little blood oozed out from these wounds.⁴³ Haddad Ratib was recited in every household after Maghrib prayers especially by the ladies.

Aravankali is another devotional dance. Devotees with Daff stand in a circle with their leader in the centre. The songs are 'Baith' or some Mala on some saints. Gradually the song, the beating of the drum and the bending exercises get a fast tempo when the performers move as if in a trance. Now-a-days this practice is seen only in Kondotty. The team of performers is trained under Avaran Mulla, a near associate of the Kondotty Tangal. The Kolkali is another devotional act. Though it is a folk-play of lower castes in Kerala, it seems that the play might have continued, obviously

42. Thousands of the viewers witnessed piercing the cheek with an iron needle in an unbelievable manner by the performers on the stage at the exhibition of Mappila arts during the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of Farook College, held in 1973.

43. K.P. Ittaman, Amini Islanders, pp. 92-93. Rateeb performance in Bimappalli is given in Census of India, 1961, Vol. VII, Kerala, Part VII B(1) Fairs and Festivals of Kerala, Trivandrum (1966), pp. 94-98.

the songs being replaced in theme and spirit. The lower class Harijans still play Kolkali where they sing simple and humorous folk-songs. Instead the Mappilas sing, songs on the Prophet or Shahids. This had been recognised as a Muslim folk-play decades ago. Muslims have included rhythms and sounds in accordance to their spirit. Familiar words from the Quran and sounds like Allah, Ha-Allah can be heard in dancing. The circling of players in the Sufi dances is compared with the eternal circling of the earth and leaping high is described as man's hope, symbol of human longing to reach the High.

Often along wayides in Kerala may be seen Nerccapettis, in the name of some Auliya or Shuhadakkal. Painted green, these boxes were opened by the custodians of the Mahal who would utilise the money for Nerccas. A Muslim would consider it auspicious to have such a box installed on his wall or compound wall on which would be written 'Biran Auliya Nerccapetti (box to put Nerccas), for Biran Awliya.) or any other Shaykh or Shahadakkal. In rural Malabar, school-going children would be seen depositing coins in these boxes for passing the examination or not to be beaten by the Musalyar or Mulla. A passing mother would suddenly halt seeing a Nerccapetti and put

some coins to fulfil some vow she had taken earlier to cure her children's disease or to see her daughter wedded.

A man with a long beard, an old coat and a fez cap with some beads hanging on his hands and a staff from the shoulder, beating a Daff may still be found going round singing some unfamiliar tune in a dull voice and claim Nerccas. He would claim to be the one coming from Ajmir or Nagur. Often a lady with him will have a wooden box with silver replica of human organs-eyes, legs, hands or tongue. The practice is that when the leg is broken or somebody has an eye disease, the householder mostly women without male's knowledge vow a silver leg or silver eye to the Nagur Shaykh or Ajmir Shaykh.⁴⁴ The woman would then handover the replica to the ladies. They would return it with its price as demanded by the vagabonds. They believe that their vows are fulfilled. Hardly any one bothered to ascertain whether these Nerccas actually reached Nagur or Ajmir or even to verify the veracity of their claims.

Sufis had an important role in the spread of Islam in South India, as have already been discussed in

44. To Khawaja Muin ul-din Chishti. But only 'Ajmir' is pronounced. Many of them even may not know who the saint of Ajmir is.

Chapter II of this work. It is said while Alauddin Khalji's armies came to south "the disciples of Nizamuddin Auliya led three consecutive expeditions of their spiritual army, each of which was 700 strong. These Sufi-Missionaries led a spiritual life and by their spirituality and humanity attracted to themselves not only the Muslims but also low-caste Hindus and also a few Brahmins".⁴⁵ Malabar was a land where no Muslim invader had entered before 1766.⁴⁶ In this land where "different deities co-existed in peace like wild beasts forgetting their natural animosity in the vicinity of a holy hermitage",⁴⁷ the peaceful propagation of Islam by the Sufis, was welcomed. People who welcomed Buddhism, Jainism, Judaism and Christianity, with innumerable gods and goddesses and a strong tradition of hero-worship had no difficulty even in deifying some of the Muslim heroes. The best example is Vavar⁴⁸ of Sabarimala

45. M.G. Panse, 'Religion and Politics in Early Medieval Deccan (A.D. 1000-1350)', Journal of Indian History, (1967), p. 684.

46. Haider Ali invaded Malabar in 1766 with 12000 men.

47. Atula, Musakavansa Kavya, as quoted in M.G.S. Narayanan, Cultural Symbiosis, introduction, p. 11.

48. Vavar was according to tradition a pirate but later became the close associate of Sri Ayyappan, the Svami of Sabarimala, the most important Hindu pilgrim centre in Kerala. Ayyappa Darsana is permitted only after making offerings to Vavar.

and the Mappila Theyyams of Ali Bappan and Ali-Chamundi.⁴⁹ The conversion effected by various saints has been discussed in their proper contexts. Von Grunebaum's statement that "the miracles of saints cut across denominational lines", is true in the case of Kerala also. A lower caste Hindu would take his problems to a local saint to seek his blessings or Barakah for curing a disease or for protection from an evil spirit.

For the Muslims adoration and homage to saints and veneration of Sayyids had great practical value. These divines were themselves conscious of their responsibility in leading the community as a religious duty. Syed Hussain Kunhi Koya stated: "My reason for joining these people arises from the dictates of religion; for when a member of Mussalmans are in trouble and in danger, it is for us Syeds to join and die with them".⁵⁰ True

49. Theyyam is a temple folk-dance of lower castes in north Malabar. It is a corrupt form of 'Daivam', god. According to a tradition goddess Chamundi was one day taking bath in a tank. Ali, a Muslim happened to pass by. He was dazed by the beauty of the goddess and tried to do some mischief. The goddess cursed him and he died. But after death as he died due to the curse of a goddess, devotees deified him and the Theyyam of Ali-Chamundi came to be celebrated. K.K.N. Kurup, Cult of Theyyam and Hero Worship, pp. 76-77.

50. Correspondence on Mappilah Outrages in Malabar (1849-1853), Vol. II, p. 32. The Tangal was being interrogated for joining Mappila outbreaks.

to this commitment the Sayyids and Sufis stood with the community in thick and thin and strove hard for its uplift. It was Putiya Maliyakkal Pukkoya Tangal, an Aydaruse saint who organised the Maunath al-Islam Sabha of Ponnani in 1900 A.D. with 800 representatives from all over Malabar. Vakkam Abdul Qadir Moulavi in Travancore pioneered the uplift of the community at the same time. Makhdum Abdul Azis Mabari of Ponnani, the Chisti saint personally led the Mappila allies in 1571. Shaykh Abul Wafa Muhammad al-Kalikutti was himself a good archer who took part in this battle.⁵¹ With him was Qazi al-Qusat Abul Azis al Kalikutti Sayyid Fasal, the Ba-Alavi saint was banished by the British government for his inspiring the Mappila outbreaks, which was a regional variant of Muslim revivalist movement of the 19th century.⁵² Sayyid Hussain Tangal, the Aydaruse saint and great-grandfather of the present Aydaruse Shaykh was imprisoned by the British and banished in 1882. He died in captivity and was buried in the grave yard of the mosque attached to Baqiyat us-Salihah Arabic College at Vellore. Diwan

51. Qazi Muhammad, Fathul Mubin (1573), in Jawahir al-Ashar, p. 251.

52. K.K. Mohammad Abdul Kareem, Mamburam Sayyid Alavi Tangal, p. 64. For his role in the outbreaks, vide, Stephen F. Dale, "The Mappila outbreaks", Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. XXXV(1), pp. 90-97.

Rajagopalachari inaugurated an Arabic college on 6th May 1914 at Alwaye and the man behind it was Hamadani Tungal, a Suhrawadi Sufi. From 1911 onwards the Chisti Shaykhs, Makhdum Tungal and Valiya Jarattingal Kunhi Sithi Tungal and the Aydaruse Gufi Putiya Maliyakkal Muttukoya Tungal of Ponnani were working for the educational uplift of the community.⁵³ All Musaliyar, the Khilafat leader was a disciple of Makhdums of Ponnani who spent seven years in Masjid ul-Haram for higher studies.⁵⁴ Variyam Kunnath Kunhahmad Haji, the man who for six months ruled Eranad defying the British Army in 1921, was a bullock-cart driver and had only Madrasah education. It was Moulavi Abussabah, the man who topped the highest examination of Al-Azhar in 1936, who was instrumental in the foundation of Farook College.

The above examples clearly indicate the fact that Saints, Sufis and theologians were always the leaders of the community in its struggle for survival and attempts for reform. It was not only English education but also the inner realization of the need that helped the reform of the Mappilas. The political unity

53. P.A. Syed Mohammed, Kerala Muslim Charithram (Mal.), pp.211-220.

54. K.K. Mohammed Abdul Karim, 1921 Khilafat Lahalayam Ali Musaliyarum (Mal.), pp. 9-15.

of the community under the leadership of Sayyids helped them to bargain for their real rights including reservation in jobs, age relaxation in appointments and proportionate representation in government services in recent times. To a great extent it was the charisma of P.M.S.A. Pukkoya Tangal, the late Aydaruse saint that saved Muslim League from the chaos that followed the death of its former President, Sayyid Abdurahiman Bafaqi Tangal. Bafaqi Tangal was a wholesale rice dealer having ware-houses in Burma and Ceylon. He was one of the architects of the present political set-up in Kerala and of the first experiment of coalition government in the country bringing Muslim League to power.⁵⁵ The glowing tributes paid by eminent educationists to Pukkoya Tangal reflects the character of that great lover of humanity. "Pious and loving Tangal combined in him the qualities of a Sufi. He was of course a Sufi, who lived among the people and identified himself with their problems and never an ascetic living in seclusion..... He lived among the people and toiled hard to relieve them of their miseries and agonies. His tenderness and unbounded hospitality were just manifestations of his inner love

55. For his life and activities, Attakoya Pallikkandi, Bafaqi Tangal (Mal.), pp. 7-11.

and generosity and they were real sources of his captivating personality. His charming low voice had sometimes the power and magnanimity of thunder. All his memories are pleasant and sweet".⁵⁶

Perhaps Muslim divines and Sayyids were more in number in other parts of the country. But they could not take the leadership of the community as among the Muslims of Kerala. One reason was perhaps that these people were pushed behind in their confrontation with political power and had to bow down. In Kerala they were always supreme, never subject to any such authority and were held in high esteem, which made them bold enough to take the reign in their hands.

These Sufis were also responsible for the communal harmony in Kerala. In their presence were settled family quarrels, property disputes, and political and communal discords. Thousands of disputes of mosques were referred to them for solution, hundreds of separated couples were united. If anybody brought a word that the Tangal wanted to settle the problem among themselves, the concerned parties sat together days and nights for an agreement and a court was never approached. Their

56. K.A. Jaleel, article in Panakkad Tangal Smaraka Grandham (Mal.), p. 76.

decisions social and communal problems were regarded with equal respect by Muslims and non-Muslims, thus averting many a chance of communal conflicts. Sufism was a creative ideology and force for the Muslims; in fact it was the all-comprising dominant factor guiding their life.

The Muslims of Kerala have been influenced by a number of local and purely Hindu customs and traditions. The reason was obviously the large-scale conversion from the Hindu population who even after conversion did not part with some of their older practices. The influence of such customs are more evident among communities continuing as vocational groups, their old profession, which compelled them to continue the necessary rites and ceremonies required by their calling. The complexities of social organisation and economic set-up compelled them to persist in those vocations since it assured them employment, and such groups would find it hard to be absorbed in any other profession. Since by tradition and compulsion there was a near-total absence of education, the lack of modern education again helped the persistence of such rituals and ceremonies to form a vicious circle. Such communities as Pusalans are fine units for studying the persistence of pre-conversion rites and ceremonies.

P.R.G. Mathur in his Mappila Fisherfolk of Kerala has given deep and informative discussion on the ritual complex.⁵⁷ The Amini Islanders of the Laccadives Islands, where Islam is believed to have spread from Malabar and who lag behind half-a-century from the main land, have also preserved many of the folk-rituals and magico-religious rites.

P.R.G. Mathur noted the following folk-rituals as practised by the fisher-folk of Tanur.

Moulud was a non-Quranic ritual conducted by Muslims all over Kerala on appointed days, generally on Thursday nights. It was also held on specific occasions like birth-day of the Prophet, sometimes on the two 'Id' occasions and circumcision ceremony. On the beginning of a new venture like business or launching of new boats and nets of fishermen and on the successful completion of any act by way of thanks-giving or to fulfill a vow taken earlier also Mouluds were held. In particular mosques or at the home of a murid of a Sufi silsila or in any household Moulud was conducted.

The relations, neighbours of immediate vicinity are invited, where they assemble in a room, filled with

57. P.R.G. Mathur, Mappila Fisherfolk of Kerala, Trivandrum (1971), pp. 203-15, 221-47.

the fragrance of the burning incense. When all the guests arrived a sumptuous feast is given to them before the Moulud ceremony begins. The Moulavis then take their seat facing Qibla, whereas the guests crouch on the mats spread on the floor. The host then express his gratitude to the guests for their company and explains the reason that prompted him to hold the Moulud. These are generally in the nature of poor business, bad crops, illness of children, attack of evil spirits and so on and so forth. The Moulavi then recite Fatiha and Surahs from the Quran. Then follows the 'Duairakkal' (begging supplications), where the Moulavi invokes Allah's help and the blessings of Prophet Muhammad for the fulfilment of the intentions of the house-holder. The assembled then utter in chorus, 'Amin, Amin' whenever the Moulavi pauses. When the Duairakkal is over they rub their palms on their face as if they are getting up from slumber. When the prayer is over the Moulavi begins to read loudly stories connected with the birth, life, miracles and sayings of the Prophet or his predecessors or descendants or the saint in whose honour the ceremony is performed, as the case may be. The reading takes about two hours. When the reading is over, the Moulavis are invited to a 'Shirni' (sweets- generally Halwa, sweet bread cakes, cocoanut pieces, etc.).

The Moulud session comes to an end with another Duairakkal, in which the Moulavi invokes the blessings of Allah and the Prophet in favour of the host, by uttering 'Oh, Patachone! (Oh! creator), Enre Rabbe! (my lord)'. The host and all the assembled in unison says 'Amin'.

Moulud forms the core ritual of the Muslims of Kerala especially of Mappilas and Pusalans. Moulud was the foremost of non-Quranic ritual invariably practiced all over Malabar and in Laccadives where Islam is said to have spread from Malabar itself.⁵⁸ P.R.G. Mathur observes on the practice of Moulud among the fishermen. "The Moulud symbolizes the mystic element the Mappila society and the unity of the fishermen. Friends, neighbours, members of the fishing crew, kins, departed ancestors, near-forgotten deities, etc. get together as a social group in the Moulud feast and they pledge mutual support and co-operation. The Moulud introduces a new element among the Mappilas which helps to minimize uncertainty, tension and conflict".⁵⁹

Moulud was performed collectively in the local masjid or individually in one's own household, in honour of a number of personalities. "The Prophet, his four

58. K.P. Ittaman, Amini Islanders, New Delhi (1976), pp. 91-96.

59. P.R.G. Mathur, Mappila Fisherfolk of Kerala, p. 308.

companions Abu Baker, Umar, Usman and Ali, Refai Shaikh (21st grandson of the Prophet), Shaikh Muhiyuddin Abdul Qadir Jilani (Mohiyuddin Shaikh in short), Khadeeja (wife of Prophet), Fathima (daughter of Prophet) Hamza, Husain and Hasan, Nagore Shahul Hameed, Mwaaja Moinuddin of Ajmer, and the Mamburam Tangal are the most important worthies in whose honour Mouluds are held on their birth days every year".⁶⁰ The predecessors of the Prophet, such as Khizr Nabi, Ilyas Nabi, Sulayman Nabi and Isa Nabi are also honoured by holding Moulud sessions. The martyrs of Malappuram and Badr (Badrungal) are also honoured so. The communal mouluds are held to ward off fire hazards, natural calamities and epidemics like cholera and small-pox.

The most popular moulud in Kerala was Manqus Moulud. It was composed by Sheikh Abdul Azis Makhdum of Ponnani (d.1521). Among the Muslims of Kerala Pusabans were by nature of their vocation bound to perform Moulud to invoke the blessings of the Prophet and various patron saints, for instance to mark the launching of new nets and boats, and getting bumper catches. A new net was always launched either on Friday afternoon or on Sunday

60. Ibid.

after the sunset. The belief in the auspicious occasion of Friday afternoon was as it still is a universal fact all over Kerala. A new venture is started, a new car is taken for registration after Juma on Friday, so also a New bus makes its first regular trip only on Friday after Juma. In the case of Pusalans they ear-mark the occasion for performing Manqus Moulud. They believe that the failure to perform Manqus Moulud before launching new nets and boats would cause their fishing equipment sink in the sea. "The performance of Manqus Moulud is an insurance against uncertainties". Such insurance notions were universal among mariners. During the middle ages Shaykh Khazaruni was considered to be the patron saint of voyages to India and China in whose name a 'powerful insurance system came into existence' as noted by Spencer Trimmingham.⁶¹ In Northern Kerala Hazrat Madani, the Saint of Ullal Dargha had been always

61. At the face of calamities on high seas mariners used to vow a sum to the Khanqah of Shaykh Khazaruni to avert such calamity, which they would write down on a paper. When the ship reached the shore the men of Khazaruni Khanqa of the place would go to the ship and demand the amount. They would even give a bill to a needy person to collect the sum from such ships, the balance of which could be claimed by the custodians later on.

the patron-saint of mariners.⁶² When the building of a boat was completed, Pusalans performed 'Kurripuja' (ceremony performed by the carpenter on finishing a house or boat).

Khattam Otikkal, the reading and recitation of the full text of the Holy Wuran by one or more Moulavis was another important rite. Reading the Quran by oneself would be rewarded, as Quran itself declares. But to perform this in the form of a rite was never sanctioned by the Quran. Khattam otikkal was held in honour of (1) The Prephet, (2) Muhiyuddin Shaykh, (3) Rifai Shaykh, (4) Shahul Hamid,⁶³ (5) Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, (6) Fatima and Khadija, (7) Badringal, (8) Hamza, (9) Abu Baker, Umar, Usman and Ali, (10) Mamburam Tangal, Ilyas Nabi, Sulayman Nabi, Isa Nabi and Yunus Nabi. Khattam Othikkal was generally held even after death or as a vow. The Pusalans who were more habituated to rituals performed this rite for getting bumper catches, prevention of capsizing of boats, curing of illness caused by sorcery and

62. The devotees on high seas vowed a sum to the Dargha with the replica of their boat to be presented to the Dargha of Hazrat Madani to avert calamities. The custodian of the Dargha showed me large number of such models of boats of different name, size and shape received for fulfilment of such vows.

63. Shahul Hamid Tangal was popular only with coastal communities. He was believed to be instrumental in introducing Ratib in Amini Islands.

spirits, getting ownership in fishing units, restoration of the irregular menstrual periods of fisherwomen, easy and natural delivery, etc. One to ten Moulavis are generally engaged for performing this ceremony.

Ratib was performed in honour of Shaykh Muhiyuddin and Shaykh Rifai, and in honour of local walis and saints.

Muslims also believed that sorcerers, mantravadis, and astrologers would bring about good and evil by practising witchcraft. Besides a number of Muslim sorcerers like many Tangals, Musaliyars and Mullas, Hindu Kaniyans (Astrologers), Panas (sorcerers by tradition) were approached. Certain Jinn Hadarats (people who claimed to be possessed by Islam Jinn) also appeared among illiterate Muslims, whose fame soon spread as helpful in finding out lost things. In this case the possessor would utter some unfamiliar sounds which a helper would translate into words. But the reputation of such Jinn Hadarats very soon be lost the whole episode ending as a farce.

People resorted to 'ulinjuvungal' and even 'homan' to get cured from diseases. The Pussalans believed in various Hindu spirits like, Karinkutty, Akasa Gandharvan, Cetta, Kutticcattan and Oulikan and Muslim spirits like

Ruhan Jinn (spirit of a person who met with unnatural death) and in Apasmara Murtikal (spirits who cause epilepsy).

Among the Muslims of the interior settlements, where the bulk of the population formed converts from low castes some of the Hindu spirits had their Muslim counter-parts. Thus Kutticcattan had Cekkuttipappa Caittan the Hindu spirit had Ruhani or Jinn. These equivalents were evident in the rituals, to ward off the evils of the spirits. When the Hindus made offerings to the local Bhagavati temple to ward off 'Cetta', the goddess of smallpox, chicken-pox and cholera, the Muslims performed 'Kutta Bank' (Mass Bank - call of prayer) and took out the flag and banner from the Jaram of the local Tangal, to the accompaniment of moulud and beating of drums. Such rituals and beliefs provided relief from the stress and strain of daily life boosted the confidence and morale in one's own action and revived the religious consciousness of common man.

Finding equivalents in good and evil spirits, evolution of nerccas and mouluds and ratibs in place of local festivals and rituals are some of the features of wonderful adaptation of Islam in Kerala. Since there was a complete absence of Shism and the consequent influence

of 'Muharrem', during the period under discussion the taking out of the replica of the jaram, of Hydross Kutty Muppan in procession was a counter-part of the 'Elunnallatt' or 'Aratt' of a temple festival. The Malayalis who welcomed Buddhism, Jainism, Judaism and Christianity had no difficulty in even deifying some of the Muslim heroes as evinced in the Theyyams of Aliccamundi, Ali Bappan and Arum Pankanni.

APPENDIX

Silsila of Tarikat Qadiriyya al-'Aydarusiyya wa al-Alawiyyah*

Ali bin-Abi Talib	Abu bakar al-Sakrani
Hussain	al-Shaikh Ali
Ali Zain al-Abideen	Abd al-Rahman
Muhammad al-Baqir	Shihab al-Din Ahmad
Jaafar al-Sadiq	Umar
Ali al-Arid	Ali
Mohammad	Muhammad
Isa	Ali
Ahamad	Ahmad
Ubaidullah	Ali
Alavi	Husain
Muhammad	Muhlar
Alavi	Husain
Ali Khali al-Qasam	Muhammed
Muhammad Sahib al-Mirbat	Ahmad
Ali	Muhammad Ali Shihab
al-Faqih al-Muqadam Muhammad	(The President of Kerala State Muslim League)
Alavi	
Muhammad Maula al-Dhawilah	
Abd al-Rahman al-Qaf	

*The list is prepared from the Manuscript of Muhlar.

GLOSSARY

Ahl al-Bayt	: Prophet's family and descendants.
Akhiram	: Life after death.
Aleesa	: Wheat boiled with Chicken, fried in ghee and mixed with sugar; A Muslim dish.
Appam	: Rice Cake.
Aravana	: A Muslim folk play associated with Sufism.
Ars i Mushaf	: Ceremony of first showing the face of bride to bridegroom in a Mirror with Quran held in it.
Baith	: Songs in praise of Prophet, Awliya, Sufis and Martyrs.
Bank	: Adhan, Call for prayer.
Barakah	: Blessings of a bolyman.
Bid'a	: Innovation in religious matters, heresy.
Caithan	: Devil
Chakkaracheru	: Rice pudding with Jaggery.
Bismillah	: Initiation for reading Quran.
Dai	: Dai-ul-Mutluq
Daff	: A folk play connected with Sufism.
Dars	: Lesson in Arabic; The system of students undergoing religious education lodged in a Masjid.
Dar-ul-Harb	: (House of War) The portion of the world not under Muslim rule.

Faqir	: Possessed of one day's sufficiency for self and family.
Hafiz	: One who can recites the Quran from memory.
Haqiqah	: Ritual Shaving of the head.
Ijazah	: Leave, Command, Sanction or permission.
Inaputiyotti	: The close friend of bride dressed like her on the day of marriage among Koyas.
Imam	: Leader of prayer/ Head of the community of Shias.
Istighasa	: Appeal to holyman for intercession on the day of Judgement.
Jaran	: Burial place of a holyman (Dargha)
Jihad	: Holy War
Juluwa	: The ceremony of untying a Kankan of bride and bridegroom on the third day of marriage among Pathans.
Karamah	: Miraculous Powers.
Kathukuthu	: Earborning.
Khatib	: A public preacher; One who recited Khutba on Friday.
Khatnah	: Circumcision.
Koota Bank	: Mass Bank (Call for prayer) to ward off evil spirits.
Kolkali	: A folk play of men.
Kuttichathan	: A Hindu Evil spirit.
Malappattukal	: Songs in praise of Holyman among Muslims.

Mehr	: Dower Promised by husband to wife.
Moulavi	: A learned man, A teacher of Quran.
Moulud	: Songs in praise of holymen; Memorial sessions held in honour of saints.
Muadh'in	: The man who utters call for Prayer.
Muallim	: Teacher or preacher.
Mukri	: Functionary of a Mappila Mosque.
Mulla	: A Madrasa teacher
Muppan	: Leader, Elder.
Musalier	: Theologian Scholar, or Teacher, Chief functionary of a Mosque.
Nercha	: A vow, offering. An annual festival in honour of a holymen.
Niscayam	: Betrothal.
Niskaram	: Prescribed prayers in Islam.
Nishan Kallu	: Stones placed on the two ends of a grave.
Oppana	: Songs sung by Males or females on the occasion of marriage on religious Themes; or on bride and bridegroom.
Ossan	: Muslim Barber.
Ossathi	: Muslim Barber Woman; midwife.
Pally	: Masjid; Also used for Jewish and Christian Churches in Kerala.

Poosalan	: Pudu Islam (New convert). Mappila fishermen caste.
Pathiyapennu	: Bride.
Puthiyappila	: Bridegroom.
Qali	: Top functionary of a mosque, A Judge.
Qiyaman	: The day of Judgement.
Ratib	: Devotional acts performed by a group of devotees singing in ecstasy and torturing the body.
Sabeena	: Pious songs.
Shabid	: Martyr.
Sharah	: Commentary or religious themes.
Sharbat	: Sweet and Cool drinks.
Shirk	: Worshipping something else besides Allah/ Polytheism, idolatry.
Shirni	: Sweet dishes.
Sunnathukalyanam	: Circumcision.
Tabarruk	: Offering ritually participated in by those having made it/ Also Offerings distributed to devotees.
Tannal	: A Sayyid.
Tawassul	: Entrusting one self to Muslim Divines.
Tazia	: Structure constructed during Muharram.
Urs	: Annual commemorative celebrations held at various well-known mausoleums.
Zawiyah	: A cell, A hermitage.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abul Fazl, Aini Akbari (Trans.), H. Blochmann,
Delhi, 1965.
- Ahmad Moulaevi, C.N. and K.K. Muhammad Abdul Kareem,
Mahathaya Mappila Shakhithya Parambaryam (Mal.),
Calicut, 1978.
- Ahmad Kutty Musaliyar, Malappuram Shahid Mercappattu
(Ar.-Mal.), Tirurangadi, 1958.
- Arnold, T.W., The Preaching of Islam, Lahore, 1961.
- Ashraf, K.M., Life and Conditions of the People of
Hindustan, New Delhi, 1970.
- Athar Abbas Rizvi, A History of Sufism in India,
Delhi, 1977.
- Attakkoya Pallikkandi, Bafaqi Thengal (Mal.), Calicut,
1973.
- Azis Musaliyar, A., Manaqib Waliyullahi al-Rabbani Wal-
Ghawth al-Samadani al-Shaykh Abdul Qadir es-
Sani (Arabic), Tellicherry, 1953.
- Barbosa, Duarte, The Book of Duarte Barbosa (Trans.),
M.L. Dames, 2 Vols. London, Hakluyt Society,
1918.
- Bozer, C.R., The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, (1415-1825),
London, 1969.
- Buchanan, Francis, A Journey from Madras through the
Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar,
3 Vols., London, Cadell and Davies, 1807.

- Castenheda, The History of the Discovery and Conquest of India (Kerr, Collection of Voyages), 2 Vols., Edinburgh, 1181.
- Census of India 1961, Vol. VII, Kerala, Pt. VII B(1)
Fairs and Festivals of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1966.
- Correspondence on Moplah Outrages in Malabar, 1849-1853, 2 Vols., Madras, Superintendent, Government Press, 1863.
- Dale, Stephen, G., The Mappilas of Malabar, 1498-1922: Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier, Oxford, 1980.
- Danvers, F.C., The Portuguese in India, 2 Vols., London, 1894.
- Das Gupta, A., Malabar in Asian Trade, Cambridge University Press, 1967.
- D'Souza, Victor, S., The Navayats of Kanava, Dharwar, 1955.
- Dube Leela, Matriliny and Islam, Delhi, 1969.
- Eaton, Richard Maxwell, Sufis of Bimapur 1300-1700, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1978.
- Elliot H.M. and Dawson John (Ed.), History of India as told by Its Own Historians, 8 Vols., London, 1867-1877.
- Ferrolì, The Jesuits in Malabar, Vol. I, Bangalore, 1939.
- Farid ud-din Attar, Tadhkirat al-Awliya (Trans.), A.J. Arberry, Muslim Saints and Mystics. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966.

- Galletti, A., The Dutch in Malabar, Madras, 1911.
- Gaspar Correa, The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama,
London, 1849.
- Goitein, S.D., Studies in Islamic History and Institutions,
Leiden, 1966.
- Gopalan Nair, C., Diwan Bahadur, Malayalathile Mappilamar
(Mal.), Mangalore, 1917.
- Gesh, A., The City in Early Historical India, Simla,
1977.
- Hamilton, Alexander, A New Account of East Indies,
(John Pinkerton Ed.), Voyages and Travels,
Vol. VIII, London, 1811.
- Haurani, George Fadio, Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean
in Ancient and Early Medieval times, Princeton,
1951.
- Ibn Battuta, Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325-1354
(Trans.) H.A.R. Gibb, New York, 1929.
- _____, Rehla of Ibn Battuta (Tr.), Mahdi Husain,
Baroda, 1953.
- Ibn Meeran Kutty, Hazrath Muhammad Shah (Mal), Kondotty,
1964.
- Innes, C.A., Malabar, Madras District Gazetteers,
Madras, 1951.
- Ittaman, K.P., Amini Islanders, New Delhi, 1976.

- Jaffar, S.M., Some Cultural aspects of Muslim Rule in India (Reprint), Delhi, 1972.
- Jane, K.G., Vasco da Gama and His Successors, London, 1980.
- Kareem, K.K.M.A., Mamburam Sayyid Alavi Tangal (Mal.), Tirurangadi, 1970.
- _____, Khilafat Lahala (Mal.), Tirurangadi, 1966.
- _____, Khilafat Lahalayum Ali Musaliyerum (Mal.), Calicut, 1972.
- Klausen, A.M., Kerala Fishermen and Indo-Norwegian Project, Oslo, 1969.
- Krishna Ayyar, K.V., The Zamorins of Calicut, Calicut, Norman Printing Bureau, 1938.
- Krishna Iyer, L.A., The Cochin Tribes and Castes, Madras, 1909.
- Kunhi Marakkar Moulevis, Saifuddin Mala (Ar.-Mal.), Tirur, 1909.
- Kurup, K.K.N., The Cult of Theyyam and Hero Worship in Kerala, Calcutta, 1973.
- Logan, William, Malabar Manual, Madras, Superintendent, Government Press (Reprint), 1951.
- Mathur, P.R.G., Mappila Fisherfolk of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1977.
- Mammed, T., Cherusseethi Tangal Mala (Ar.-Mal.), Tellicherry, 1956.

- Maqbul Ahmad, S., Indo-Arab Relations, New Delhi, 1969.
- Michaud, History of Mysore under Hyder Ali and Tipposultan (Tr.), V.K. Raman Menon, Tripunithura, 1926.
- Miller, R.E., Mappila Muslims of Kerala, A Study in Islamic Trends, Orient Longmans, Madras, 1976.
- Misra, S.C., Muslim Communities in Gujarat, Bombay, 1964.
- Mohammed, K.M., Kerala's Contribution to Arabic Learning and Literature (An unpublished Thesis submitted for Ph.D. in AMU., Aligarh), 1976.
- Mohamed Husayn Nainar, Arab Geographers' Knowledge of South India, Madras, University of Madras, 1962.
- _____, Java as noticed by Arab Geographers, Madras, 1953.
- Moosa Moulavi, Hidayat al-Islam Tarjuma (Ar.-Mal.), Tirurangadi, 1956.
- Muhammad Kunhi, P.K., Muslimkalum Kerala Samakaram (Mal.), Trichur, 1982.
- Muhammad, C.K., Mamburam Mala (Ar.-Mal.), Tirurangadi, 1952.
- Muhammad, P.T. Nuruddin Mala, (Ar.-Mal.), Tirur, 1968.
- Muhammad Koya Musaliar, K.M., Al-Shaikh Abul Wafa Muhammad al-Kalikuthi, Chaliyam, 1973.

Nambiar, O.K., The Kunjalis, Admirals of Calicut,
Bombay, 1963.

Narayanan, M.G.S., Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala,
Kerala Historical Society, Triwandrur, 1972.

Nisami, K.A., Religion and Politics in India during
the Thirteenth Century, Delhi, 1978.

_____, Life and Times of Shaikh Farid ud-din
Ganj-i-Shakar, Aligarh, 1955.

Panikkar, K.M., A History of Kerala 1498-1801,
Annmalai Nagar, 1960.

Qazi Muhammad, Fath al-Mubin (Arabic), Abdul Rahman al-
Fadfar (Ed.), Jawahir al-Ashhar, Edava, 1936.
English translation in Studies in the foreign
relations of India (Prof. H.K. Sharvani
Felicitation Volume) M.A. Mind Khan, Indo-
Portuguese Struggle for Maritime Supremacy,
Hyderabad, 1975, pp.165-183.

Qureshi, I.H., The Muslim Community of Indo-Pakistan
Sub-Continent 610-1947, New York, Columbia
University. Reports of the Joint Commission
from Bengal and Bombay, appointed to inspect
into the state and condition of the Province
of Malabar in the years 1792 and 1793, Madras,
1863.

Sayyid Sulaiman Nadvi, Arbon Ka Jahasrani (Mal. Trans.),
K.K. Mahamed Abdul Kareem, Tirurkad, 1976.

Serjeant, R.B., The Sayyids of Hadramawt, London, 1957.

- Shamsulla Qadiri, Malabar, (Urdu), (Mal. Tr.), V. Abdul Qayyum, Calicut, 1954.
- Shangoenny Menon, P., A History of Travancore, Madras, 1878.
- Sheikh Ali, B., 'Malabar as a potent factor in the Second Mysore War in Eighteenth Century India', (Essays in honour of Prof. A.P. Ibrahim Kunju), Trivandrum, 1981, pp. 47-54.
- Sheikh Abrar Hussain, Marriage customs Among Muslims in India, New Delhi, 1976.
- Sovañi, N.V., Urbanisation and Urban India, Bombay, 1966.
- Sreedhara Menon, A., A Survey of Kerala History, Kottayam, 1967.
- _____, Kerala District Gazetteers, Quilon, Trivandrum, 1964.
- Surendra Nath Sen (Ed.), Indian Travels of Thevenot and Carexi, National Archives, Delhi, 1949.
- Syed Mohammed, P.A., Kerala Muslim Carithram (Mal.), Ernakulam, 1966.
- _____, (Ed.) Kerala Muslim Directory, Ernakulam, 1960.
- Syed Mohideen Shah, Islam in Kerala, Trichur, 1978.
- Tibbets, G.R., Arab Navigation in the Indian Ocean before the coming of Portuguese, London, 1971.
- Thurston, E., Castes and Tribes of Southern India, 7 Vols., Madras, 1909.

Trimmingham Spencer, Sufi Orders in Islam, Oxford, 1971.

Ubaid, T., Hazrat Malik Ibn Dinar (Mal.), Kasaragod,
1966.

Vasudevan, C., Keyis of Malabar.

Velayudhan Panikkasseri, Randu Keralolpattikal (Mal.)
Trichur, 1962.

Von Grunebaum, C.E., Muhammadian Festivals, New York,
1951.

Warmington, Commerce between the Roman Empire and India,
(Reprint), Delhi, 1974.

White Way, R.S., The Rise of Portuguese Power in India,
London, 1899.

Wilks, M., Historical Sketches of the South of India,
Madras, 1869.

Zaynuddin, Shaykh, Tuhfat-al-Mujahidin (Trans.),
S. Muhammad Husayn Nainar, Madras, University
of Madras, 1942.

Zayn uddin Ibn Ahmad, Rifai Mala (Ar-Mal.), Tirurangadi,
1954.

ARTICLES

- Abdurahiman, K.V., Ponnani, A brief Historical Account",
M.E.S. Ponnani College Souvenir (1969).
- Ali Kunji, M., 'Bafaqi Tangal' in Attakkoya Pallikkandi
Ed., Bafaqi Tangal Smaraka Grandham, Calicut
(1973).
- Fawcett, "War songs of the Mappilas of Malabar",
Indian Antiquary, XXX (1901).
- Hamid Ali, "The Moplahs" in T.K. Gopal Panikkar (Ed.),
Malabar and its folk, Madras (1929).
- Ibrahim Kunju, A.P., "Islam in Kerala", Journal of Kerala
Studies, Vol. IV, Pt. IV (1977).
- Jaleel, K.A., "Santiyude Uravidam" in Panakkad Tangal
Smaraka Grandham (Mal.), (1975).
- Kareem, C.K., "History of Tipu Sultan" in Carithram,
Malabar Lahala Special (Mal.), Trivandrum (1971).
- Lofgren, O., 'Ba-Alavi' and "Faqih Ba" and Aydarus.
Encyclopaedia of Islam, E.J. Brill Leiden,
New Edn.
- Mohamed Koya, S.M., 'Mutta Marriage among Muslims of
Malabar', IHC. Hyderabad Session (1978).
- Nafis Ahmad, "Arabs' Knowledge of Ceylon", Islamic
Culture, XIX, (1945), pp. 223-41.

Panse, M.G., "Religion and Politics in Early Medieval Deccan (A.D. 1000-1350)", Journal of Indian History IV (1967).

Serjeant, R.B., "Materials for South Arabian History", B.S.O.A.S. XIII (1) (1949).

_____, 'Ba-Alavi Sayyids', BSOAS, XIII Pt.
(1) (1949).

Shihabuddin Imbichi, "Priyappetta Peekkoya Kutty".

Koya Tangal, Panakkad Tangal Smaraka Grandham, Calicut (1975).

Dale, Stephen, F., "The Mappila Outbreaks". Ideology and Social Conflict in Nineteenth Century Kerala. "Journal of Asian Studies", Vol. XXXV (1) (1975).

D'Souza, Victor, "Status groups among the Moplahs on the South-West Coast of India" in Imtias Ahamad (Ed.), Caste and Social Stratification among Muslims in India, Delhi, 1978.