

# **HISTORY OF BĀ-'ALAWIS IN KERALA**

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**THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT  
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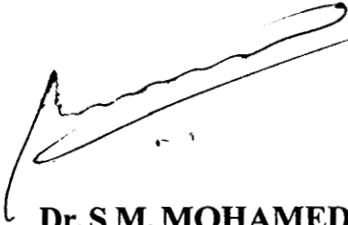
**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
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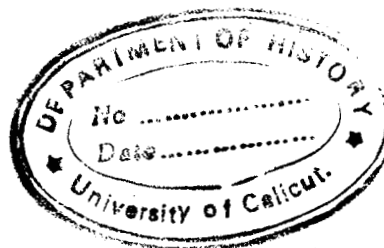
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## **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that this thesis, **History of Bā-'Alawis in Kerala**, submitted for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of the University of Calicut is a record of bonafide research carried out by **Mr. Mohammed Abdul Sathar K.K.** under my guidance and supervision, and that no part of it has been submitted for any degree before.

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Dated: 9 August 1999.

  
**Dr. S.M. MOHAMED KOYA**  
(Supervisor)



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*Calicut University Campus*

*K K Mohammed. Abdul Sathar*



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## ABBREVIATIONS

BRC	- Board of Revenue Consultation
CMO	- Correspondance of Moplah Outrages
MDR	- Malabar District Records
GO	- Government Order
KSA	- Kerala State Archives
MOA	- Malabar Outrages Act
MJCR	- Malabar Joint Commissioner Report
NNPRM	- Native News Papers Report, Madras
RC	- Revenue Consultation
RAK	- Regional Archives, Kozhikode
TNA	- Tamil Nadu Archives

## PREFACE

This study is an attempt to trace out the history of Ba-Alawis in Kerala. Ba-Alawi is an important Sayyid family which came from Tarim in Hadramawt of Southern Arabia and settled in and around Calicut during the middle of the eighteenth century. The study covers a period from the middle of the eighteenth century to the first quarter of the twentieth century. A detailed analysis of the life and career of the Ba-Alawi Sayyids of Kerala - Sayyid Shaikh Jifri, Sayyid Hasan Jifri, Sayyid Alawi and Sayyid Fazl - is possible only on the basis of a thorough scrutiny of the available sources in different languages - Arabic, English, Malayalam and Arabi - Malayalam (a local dialect of Mappilas). The contemporary records and source materials of the topic under study are preserved in different places and it made the task laborious, with the result that an important period in the history of Mappila Muslims of Kerala remained largely unexplored. The hurdles are not fully over come and there is no claim of perfection or finality but care has been taken to make the best use of available materials - both archival and local - in order to reconstruct the history of Ba-Alawi Sayyids of Kerala and make it sensible and intelligible.

The work has been divided in to six chapters. The first chapter deals with the origin and growth of Bā-'Alawi clan. Their manifold activities in various parts of the world including India as religious missionaries and social reformers, their attitude towards English and speacial reverance received by them as a result of their noble descent etc. are discussed. The geneological table would clearly indicate their relationship with Prophet Muhammad. (The second chapter discusses in detail the life sketch of Sayyid Shaikh Jifri, the first Bā-'Alawi Sayyid who reached Calicut in 1755. His missionary activities are mentioned. He vehemently criticised the religious views and practices of Kondotty Tangal who was dubbed as Shia. The polemic war between Jifri faction (Ponnani Kai) and Muhammad Sha faction (Kondotty Kai) is given proper treatment and the results of this controversy are discussed in depth. The third chapter sketches the life history of Sayyid Hasan Jifri. The lack of sufficient source material is an important problem faced when dealing with Hasan Jifri. However, the known sources are used to the maximum with utmost care to reconstruct the history of Sayyid Hasan Jifri.

The fourth chapter deals with manifold activities of Sayyid 'Alawi. His leadership was

responsible to a great extent for the growth of militancy among the Mappilas during the British rule. His anti-colonial outlook is discussed in detail and his activities are evaluated in the background of socio-economic, religio - Political conditions of the Mappilas. The important Mappila uprisings like Cherur riot are also examined. (The fifth chapter analyses the life and career of Sayyid Fazl, the last Bā-'Alawi saint of Kerala. Both archival and local sources are used to reconstruct the life history of Sayyid Fazl and his struggle against the ignorance of the Mappila Community and oppression and exploitation of the British. He used both his tongue and pen to educate the people against the evils of colonialism and oppression of the upper caste landed gentry. The result was a number of spontaneous peasant uprisings during his period. He had not actively participated in the peasant protest but his preachings created a fighting mood among the illiterate Mappila peasants. Finally he was deported to Arabia in 1852. On the basis of archival sources an earnest effort has been made to throw light on the activities of Sayyid Fazl abroad, his attempt to return to Malabar etc. Mr. Conolly's murder is treated as a direct reaction of the Mappila Community against British betrayal of Sayyid Fazl. The last part of this

chapter deals with the attempt made by Sayyid Fazl's children to return to Malabar and their effort to recover their possessions and properties of Mamburam. All efforts made by them to acquire their property were tampered by the British and the custodian of Mamburam Maqam properties who was a loyal servant of the Crown.

Sixth chapter throws new light on the ideological background of the inherent strong anti-colonial outlook of the Mappilas. It examined in detail the potential of Islam as a liberatory force and the modus operandi of the awareness created by Bā-Alawi Sayyids among the Mappilas against landlordism and colonialism. The role played by various religious institutions like mosques, religious schools, ceremonies, rituals, congregations etc. in moulding the culture of anti-colonialism among the Mappilas is an aspect of this study. Similary a variety of literature published in Arabic and Arabi - Malayalam languages such as Moulids, Malas, Padappattu etc. succeeded in creating a general awareness among Mappilas to struggle against the unholy alliance of landlordism and colonialism.

A large number of source materials belonging to the period under study have been traced from the

personal collections of Dr. C.K. Kareem, Dr. M. Gangadara Menon, Sayyid Shihabuddin Imbichi Koya Tangal, K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, A.P. Muhammed Ali Musliyar and Ettuveetil Shafi. Some of the Arabic documents were collected from the mosque library of Kakkov.

The archival sources are mainly traced from Tamil Nadu Archives and Kerala State Archives Trivandrum and Kozhikode Regional Archives. These official documents and records have been of immense help in this study. Interviews with certain experts in the field also provided insight to the study.

The present study is considered as an attempt to shed light on certain un explored field of Kerala history. I hope it will inspire students of social science to explore the areas lying beyond the scope of this work.

# INTRODUCTION

Mohammed Abdul Sathar. K.K “History of ba-alawis in Kerala” Thesis.  
Department of History, University of Calicut, 1999

## INTRODUCTION

The genesis and development of Islamic society in Kerala is quite different from the process of expansion of Islam in northern and central India. In the coastal areas of India including Kerala Muslim communities did not spring up in the wake of Muslim conquest but developed peacefully as an accompaniment to Muslim commercial expansion. The early Muslim settlers of Malabar came from the red sea coast, south Arabia and the Persian Gulf region. Thus the settlers were generally ethnically Arabs who adhered to shafi branch of Islamic law and among the Arabs, the Sayyids of Hadramawt in Southern Arabia occupied a unique position of leadership in the community. The Bā'-Alawi sayyids formed an important branch of the Sayyids of Hadramawt.

The Sayyids of Hadramawt traced their origin to the prophet through his daughter Fathima and cousin and son-in-law Ali. In Southern Arabia, a group of Sayyid families who successfully claimed such descent were assumed to have special sanctity because of their geneology. They overtly asserted their special status by practising social exclusiveness, which took its most extreme forms in its restrictions on women, who were

often forbidden any contact with non-sayyid families. As a result of this sanctity Hadrami Sayyids often acted as neutral intermediaries in disputes where their sacrosanct status might bind a tribal truce or political compromise.

Bā-~~Ā~~lawis' of Tarim in Hadramawt formed one of the important sayyid families of South Arabia. In Tarim and most other parts of Southern Arabia they had been endowed with a unique spiritual power as a result of their descent. The 'Alawi Sayyids had transmitted Islamic teachings to parts of India and to South East Asia, as their migration to these areas grew in volume from the sixteenth century.

The first Bā-~~Ā~~lawi Saint Sayyid Shaikh Jifri reached Calicut in 1755 A.D. He travelled up and down the country side preaching the true principles of Islam and calling upon the Muslims to eschew evil practices and superstitions. His successors Sayyid Hasan Jifri, Sayyid 'Alawi and Sayyid Fazl also spent their time and energy in spreading the Islamic principles.

By the time of the last two Sayyids-Sayyid 'Alawi and Sayyid Fazl - the country has passed under British control. In the course of their country wide

travel they came to witness the oppression of the Mappilas by the upper caste Hindu landed aristocracy and the British authorities. They were forced to take up a stand against these landed gentry and the British officials against their oppression of the poor, illiterate Mappila peasants. The result was the beginning of a series of sporadic violent outbreaks styled as 'Moplah out rages' in the period 1836 to 1852. For the suspected involvement in the outbreaks, Sayyid Fazl, the last Bā'-Alawi saint of Malabar was deported to Arabia by the British in 1852. Now, it is clear that the Bā'-Alawi Sayyids of Kerala, popularly known as Mamburam Tangals, occupied a unique position in the annals of Kerala history, as being religious missionaries as well as reformers and anti-colonial fighters. Unfortunately, the life and career of Bā'-Alawi sayyids' have not received proper attention at the hands of scholars in the academic world owing to various reasons like inaccessibility of primary source materials written in various languages and lack of a proper vision regarding their service to the Mappila community in particular and the country in general as anti-colonial agitators and socio-religious reformers. Therefore, a meaningful and purposeful analysis of the history of Bā'-Alawi Sayyids may be helpful to re-

construct their contributions to the Country in a proper perspective.

#### Previous works

Only a few works have so far appeared dealing with the career and achievements of Bā-'Alawi Sayyids. Of the Arabic works Sayyid Shaikh Jifri's Kanz al Barahin al - Kasabiyya deals with the genesis of Bā-'Alawi Sayyids and contains a geneological tree of the clan. The manuscript of this work was written in 1785 and it was published from Istanbul by Sayyid Fazl in 1865. Sayyid 'Alawi's work, Assaif - al - Battar (The sharp sword) sheds light on the anti-colonial outlook of Bā-'Alawis. This is a collection of fatawa issued by Sayyid 'Alawi regarding the policies of believers towards colonial rulers. This work was edited and published from Egypt by Sayyid Fazl in 1856. Sayyid Fazl's 'Uddat al Umara Wal Hukkam li Ihanat al Kafarat wa Abdat al Asnam (Requirements for leaders and rulers to prevent disbelief and idolatry) was published from Egypt in 1856. This book was prohibited in Malabar by Conolly, the then District Collector. Sayyid Fazl's work (Uddat...) had included Saif - al - Battar also. These works are important sources to study the attitude

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of the Mappila religious leadership towards the British rule.

Of the works in English, William Logan's Malabar Manual Vol.I published in 1887 is an important source material to re-construct the history of Bā-'Alawis. He traced out the influence of Bā-'Alawi Sayyids or Mamburam Tangals among Mappila masses. He used excellently the official records to draw a detailed picture of the Mappila outbreaks of nineteenth century which were supposed to be sponsored or blessed by the Mamburam Tangals. He was the first British official who took pains to trace out the economic and agrarian factors behind the Mappila uprisings. The result of his investigations were later utilised by C.A Innes and F.B. Evans in their pioneering work entitled, Madras District Gazetteers Malabar Vol.I (1908).

A few studies in English exclusively on Mappilas of Kerala have come out recently. Important among them are: 1) Sayed Mohideen Shah, Islam in Kerala (Trichur, 1974), 2) Roland E. Miller, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, A study in Islamic Trends (Orient Longman, Madras, 1976), 3) Stephen Frederic Dale, The Mappilas of Malabar, 1498-1922, Islamic society on the South Asian Frontier (Oxford University Press, New York,

1980), 4) S.M. Mohamed Koya, Mappilas of Malabar (Calicut, 1983) 5) A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, their History and Culture (Sandhya Publications, Trivandrum, 1989) and K.M. Bahahuddin, Kerala Muslim's the long struggle (Kottayam, 1992). All these works provide only a micro level information on the Bā-Alawi Sayyids of Kerala. It is quite natural since their thrust area was not the history of the Bā-Alawis. However, Stephen Frederic Dale through his outstanding work sheds light on various aspects of the life and career of the later Bā-Alawi saints namely Sayyid 'Alawi and Sayyid Fazl. He treated them as champions of an Islamic revivalist movement in Malabar. He also considered them as the chief fomentors of the nineteenth century Mappila out breaks. He has seldom depended upon indigenous sources and accepts the official records without question. Politely speaking, Dale through this work was echoing the formulations of T.L.Strange.

Indigenous historians and social scientists who conducted well documented studies in peasant uprisings of colonial India never missed to record the role of Tangals and Sayyids especially Sayyid 'Alawi and Sayyid Fazl in the so called Mappila uprisings of

Malabar during the nineteenth century. A few works worthy to mention are: 1) A.R. Desai (ed.), Peasant struggles in India (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1979), which contains a chapter on 'Mappila uprisings of Malabar during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' written by Prof. K.N. Panikkar. 2) D.N. Dhanagare, Peasant Movements in India 1920-1950 (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1983), which presents an elaborate sketch of the significant Peasant revolts of Malabar during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He has examined the influence of religious ideology and the role of Tanqals in the uprisings based on official and archival sources. 3) Conrad Wood, The Moplah Rebellion and Its Genesis (Peoples Publishing House, New Delhi, 1987), an important study on the Peasant revolts of Malabar. It is a well documented study on the genesis of Mappila 'outrages' culminating in the rebellion of 1921. He discusses various theories regarding the origin of the outbreaks and brings out the religious and social factors leading to them. 4) Prof.K.N. Panikkar, Against Lord and State, Religion and Peasant uprising in Malabar 1836-1921 (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1989), a well written authentic work on the role of traditional intellectuals in the uprisings. In it Bā-'Alaw Sayyids'

- Sayyid 'Alawi and Sayyid Fazl - profound influence on the Mappila Peasants is clearly illustrated. Though he gave an economic analysis of the Mappila revolts, the influence of religious ideology and Tangals was never ruled out. This work is highly useful for reconstructing the theoretical aspects as well as methodology of the present study. Most of these recent works seek to analyse the role of religious ideology, nature of leadership, methods of mobilization and attitude of the state towards the leaders and rebels. All of them made use of the archival sources preserved in Indian and foreign Archives. These works to a certain extent succeed in depicting the anti-colonial outlook of the Mamburam Tangals. But none of them used the Arabic works authored by the Tangals which can be called the 'prose of insurgency'.

Malayali Muslim scholars also published a few works in Malayalam language dealing with the history of Bā-'Alawis along with the cultural and social history of Mappilas of Kerala. They are: 1) Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Tangal life history published by the Mamburam Restoration Committee, Parappanangadi, Calicut, 1934, 2) P.A. Sayed Muhamed, Kerala Muslim Directory (Cochin, 1960), 3) K.K. Muhammed Abdul Kareem, Hazrat Mamburam

Sayyid 'Alawi Tangal (Tirurangadi, 1975), 4) C.N. Ahmed Moulavi and K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, Mahataya Mappila Sahitya Paramaryam (Calicut, 1978), 5) C.K. Kareem, Kerala Muslims, History, Statistics and Directory (Charitram Publications, Cochin, 1991). This work comprises the Malayalam translation of Sayyid Alawi's Assaif-al-Battar.

Most of these works are for popular reading and not written as per the rules of historical methodology. However, they provide a lot of information regarding the history of Bā-'Alawis.

There are a lot of source materials in Arabi-Malayalam language in the form of Moulids (Songs celebrating the Prophet's nativity), Marziya, Padappattu, ballads etc. Similar moulids were composed on Sayyid 'Alawi, Sayyid Fazl et. al. These moulids - Minhat-al-kavi fi-manqibi Qutubi Sayyid 'Alawi al Mamburami composed by Moypoth Arreekal Muhamad Musliyar, Al-Nafhat fi - Manakib Sayyid 'Alawi Maolu Davila composed by Pang Ahmed Kutty Musliyar. etc - Present the life and career of both these saints. The Marziya composed by Veliyankode Umar Qazi at the time of the death of Sayyid 'Alawi presents the Tangal's activities in a broader perspective. Examples of Padappattu are Cherur Chint composed by Kayyat, Cherur Padapattu

composed by Mammed kutty and Muhiyudheen etc. Some of the historical facts suppressed by the colonial officials related to Mappila uprisings were focussed in these compositions. Most of the war songs glorifying the heroic fight of the Mappila rebels were dedicated to the Mamburam Tangals.

The works written by the European scholars depended largely on the official documents which depicted the Sayyids in black colour only. On the other hand the works of Malayali Muslim scholars relied more on legends, hearsay and oral traditions than historical documents. Almost all the composers of Arabi-Malayalam literature on the Bā-'Alawi saints projected their super human qualities and miracles. These writers were intoxicated with extreme reverence, love and affection towards the Tangals and hence their writings were eulogies.

Therefore, for a purposeful and meaningful study of the topic the students of history must be cautious. The truth lies in between these two approaches -the European and indigenous. Both official as well as local sources should be used simultaneously to reach perfection to the maximum. Historians cannot write history simply depending on the official

documents and records only, especially when they have to deal with certain sensitive subjects like the Mappila outbreaks of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Therefore there is a strong case for a fresh enquiry with a more precise application of historical method and perspective. Such a study of the career and activities of the Bā-Ālawi Sayyids will be a purposeful study of the reformation of the Mappila society and the anti-colonial struggle they supported. But such a study is not an easy task owing to the conflicting and contradicting statements and facts contained in various available sources. It is the business of students of history to distinguish between facts and fiction.

#### Methodology

The present study is not a mere biographical sketch of eminent Bā-Ālawi Sayyids. Care has been taken to depict the biographical sketch on the background of the significant development in socio-economic, religious and political areas of Mappila community during the nineteenth century. Bā-Ālawi Sayyids' activities were indeed the by-product of the changing scenario of the age. Therefore emphasis has been given to the major changes in the socio-economic

and religious life of the Mappilas of Malabar that occurred during the period under study. There is little or scanty source materials to reconstruct the life and career of the first two Bā-ʿAlawi Sayyids - Sayyid Shaikh Jifri and Sayyid Hasan Jifri. They never mingled in political activities as the British presence had not become a source of terror among the Muslims during that period. They engaged in missionary works and religious reform activities only.

Sayyid ʿAlawi and Sayyid Fazl lived under British dominance. Mappilas were deprived of their previous status. They faced greivous socio-economic and often religious issues under the hegemony of upper caste Hindu landlords and English authorities. Therefore, owing to their socio-religious responsibility these two Sayyids were not in a position to remain as silent spectators of colonial oppression and exploitation of Mappila peasants by upper caste landed gentry. The result was the emergence of a new era - an era of sporadic violent outbreaks which rocked the region from 1836 to 1852. These outbreaks have been subjected to scrutiny and deep study for exploring the role played by Bā-ʿAlawi Sayyids. Both archival and indigenous sources have been abundantly used to trace

out the causes of the outbreaks as well as the role played by Bā'-Alawi Sayyids.

Even after the deportation of Sayyid Fazl in 1852 to Arabia, the 'ghost' of the Tangal was haunting the British. It paved the way for the teacherous murder of H.V. Conolly by Mappilas. During the first quarter of the twentieth century, Muhamad Abdu Rahman, the great Muslim Nationalist leader of Malabar took up the issue of the return of Sayyid Fazl's children to Malabar. He took initiative to organise country wide peaceful agitation under the aegis of the Mamburam Restoration Committee. Though the Committee failed in its task, it succeeded in spreading the message of National Movement among Mappilas and in checking the growth of communal politics among Mappilas to a certain extent, for the time being.

An ideological analysis of the anti-colonial approach of Bā'-Alawi Sayyids indicate that they were conscious about the potential of Islam as a liberating force. It is true that class consciousness never developed among Mappila peasants. But they sought solution to all problems in religion. The traditionally trained Ulema, including Bā'-Alawi Sayyids tried to interpret every thing under the

purview of religion. As a result of the mass illiteracy, ignorance and poor standard of life as well as the gross negligence of their burning issues by the colonial authorities, Mappila peasants had no other way except to accept the guidance of the Ulema.

# ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF BA- ALAWI CLAN

Mohammed Abdul Sathar. K.K “History of ba-alawis in Kerala ” Thesis.  
Department of History , University of Calicut, 1999

## CHAPTER - I

### ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF BĀ-ĀLAWI CLAN

There were one hundred and sixty clans in Yemen and Hadramawt of South Arabia who claimed their origin from Prophet Muhammad through his daughter Fathima and Cousin Ali<sup>1</sup>. Almost all these clans were commonly known as Hadrami Sayyids. "Nor can any branch of the numerous Sharif and Saiyid families founded over fourteen centuries ago claim a more varied sphere of activity, of achievements indeed, than the 'Alawi Saiyids of Hadramawt"<sup>2</sup>. However, the noble descent of Bā-Ālawi is said to have been challenged in the year AD 1000. One of the Sayyids of the Bā-Ālawi clan went to Basarah and produced some sixty respected Basarans to attest the relationship with the Iraqi Sayyids in presence of the Hadrami Contingent at the Meccan pilgrimage. Ever since the 'Alawi Sayyids have maintained their family register with scrupulous care. Sayyid Fadl's work Fuyusat-al-Ilahiyah published in AD

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1. Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Ahamed Ibn Umar Al-Shathri, Al-Mu 'ajjamu-Latif-li-Ahsabi-al-Qubi-Wal-Qunafi - Nasbi Sharief (Arabic), Jeddah, 1986, p.135
  2. R.B. Serjeant, The Saiyids of Hadramawt, London, 1957, p.3

1890 from Arabia deals with the origin of Bā-'Alawi clan and succeeded in establishing the link with Prophet Muhammad's family<sup>3</sup>.

The geneological table of the Bā-'Alawi Sayyids is traced as follows:-

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      Muhammad, the Prophet
      :
      Fathima + Ali Ibn Abu Talib
      :
      -----
      :
      :
      Al-Husain Ibn Ali           Al-Hasan Ibn Ali
      :
      Zain-al-Abideen Ibn Hussain
      :
      Muhammad Baqir Ibn Zain-al-Abideen
      :
      Jafar al-Sadiq Ibn Muhammad Baqir
      :
      Ali Ibn Jafar-al-Sadiq
      :
      Muhammad Ibn Ali
      :
      Isa Ibn Muhammad
      :
      Ahammed Ibn Isa
      :
      Ubaidullah Ibn Ahmed
      :
      'Alawi Ibn Ubaidullah
      :
      Maulu Dawila Ibn 'Alawi (Founder of Bā-'Alawi clan)4
  
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3. 'Samastha Sammelana Special' (Malayalam), Parappanangadi, 1961, p.100.

4. Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Ahamed Ibn Umar Al-Shathri, op.cit., p.137.

When Islam was three centuries old, Prophet's descendants through his daughter Fathima and his cousin 'Ali numbered thousands. Though they were deprived of political power and subjected to persecution, the masses in general respected them. They had even grown wealthy on the contributions of their adherents. The Hadrami Sayyids turned to learning and preaching. Owing to the invasion of Basarah by the Qarmatians in AD 900<sup>5</sup>, Ahamad Ibn Isa, of the 8th generation from Fathima through her son Husain left Basarah accompanied by his second son. Thanks to Qarmatians he could not even perform the piligrimage until AD 930. After the piligrimage they went to Yemen. Some authorities place their further migration to Hadramawt about the year AD 952. For a time they lived in al-Hajarain village in Hadramawt. Later they settled in al-Husaiyishah where Ahamed Ibn Isa met with his death and his tomb survives<sup>6</sup>.

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5. Masudul Hasan, History of Islam, vol.I, Delhi, 1992 p.270 Qarmatians were an Ismaili section of the Shias who established an indepedant state in Bahrain under Abu Zaid Jannabi towards the close of 9th century AD.

6. R.B. Serjeant, *op.cit.*, p.8

When the Sayyids reached Hadramawt, the local scholars of the Mashayikh classes or noble families welcomed them and consoled them as they had to leave their home land. These scholars who distinguished themselves from the tribesmen, towns folk and peasants enjoyed the privilege and honour of a unique spiritual power in Southern Arabia and governing the sacred enclaves known as hawtah<sup>7</sup>. There were three important Mashayikh families in Tarim, a village in Hadramawt. They were the 'Al-Bā-Abbād, the Al-khatib, and the Al-Bā-Fadl. In due course the influence of the Sayyid family in Hadramawt increased at the expense of the Mashayikh family. Al Bā-Fadl historian, Al-Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Awad had stated that the Bā-Fadl had the power and shaikhdom before the arrival of the 'Alawi Sayyids. However, when the influence of the Sayyids increased the Mashayikh surrendered their right of the Taqbil (the privilege of having the hand or knee kissed, colloquially known as Shammah) and of the title 'habib to the 'Alawi Sayyids. But the Sayyid scholar 'Abdullah Bā-al-Faqih rejects this statement as unhistorical and states that similar privileges were

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7. R.B. Serjeant, op.cit,p.11

the prerogative of Mashayikh in districts where Sayyid influence was weak<sup>8</sup>. What had actually happened was that due to the Sayyid's noble decent, they had been endowed with a unique spiritual power of blessing the masses. But the rivalry of Sayyids and Mashayikh never hurt their personal friendship and relation. It never acted as a barrier for the transmission of religious knowledge to each other.

Hadrami Sayyids played a major role in the propagation of Islam in distant countries. From Tarim they spread east and west. In Aden they have made little progress, since the inhabitants were uneducated traders. Some of the Sayyids reached in Yemen and their connection with Mecca has been very close and continuous. Their great emigration to Africa took place in the 14th and 15th centuries.

Richard Burton in his work titled, first Foot steps in East Africa reports a tradition that in 1430 some forty four Hadrami Saints landed at Berbera<sup>9</sup>. Bā-

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8. Ibid, pp.13-4

9. Richard Burton, First Foot Steps in East Africa, London, 1894, p.54, quoted in R.B. Searjeant, Ibid, p.24

'Alawi Sayyids then entered Africa also at Mogadisho and points on the Kenya coast. Early Swahili poetry traces the influence of Hadrami Sayyids. They settled in Madagascar, Zanzibar and Komoru where a Sayyid house once held sway.<sup>10</sup> Sayyid Fazl's work, Fuyusat-al-Ilahiya, also deals with the migration of Hadrami Sayyids to different parts of the world including Africa. He writes: "there are 8300 descendants of Hazrat 'Alawi Ibn Ubaidulla, who lived in the 4th century Hijara in Samal village of Hadramawt engaged in the propagation of Islam in Hadramawt, Yemen, Hijaz, India, Java, Sumatra, West Africa East Africa etc."<sup>11</sup>

Hadrami Sayyids' settlement in India had begun in 1220 A.D. They settled in important commercial, cultural and political centres like Bijapur, Surat, Ahmedabad, Broach, Hyderabad, Delhi, Baroda, Malabar and Bengal. They travelled from place to place propagating the religion of Islam and settled in various parts of South East Asia also. They emigrated to Java, Sumatra, Malaya, Borneo, Philippines etc.<sup>12</sup>.

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10. Ibid.

11. 'Samastha Sammelana Special' (Malayalam), Loc.cit

12. R.B. Serjeant, op.cit.

Hadrami Sayyids in general avoided contacts with political authorities especially with the British. At the same time they did not hesitate to warn those in power when they turned against the interest of the people.<sup>13</sup> This inherent tradition of Bā — 'Alawis' prompted Sayyid 'Alawi and his son Sayyid fazl to fight against the atrocities of the British.

#### Religious outlook of the Bā-'Alawis

Regarding the religious outlook of Bā-'Alawis there was no unanimous opinion among scholars. Sayyid scholars maintain that Ahamed Ibn Isa popularly known as al-Muhajir (the Emigrant) revived and spread the teaching of the Sunnah (tradition of the prophet) according to the Shafi rule, "but this can be little else than a projection of later circumstances in the past, for there are no historical sources near contemporary."<sup>14</sup> There would be every possibility of making slight changes in their religious outlook in order to meet the challenges they had to face in different countries. Some Sayyid historians here

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13. Ibid, p.21

14. Ibid, p.8

propounded the theory that al-Muhajir and his son were Imami Shia<sup>15</sup> when they reached in Hadramwt, they found it as a stronghold of Ibadism<sup>16</sup> and were not able to propagate their religious views. Therefore, to make a rapproachment with the Ibadis al-Muhajir's descendants changed their religious outlook. Similarly, the Sayyids adapted local customs and traditions in to the frame work of the Islamic social structure.

Though Bā-'Alawi Sayyids were Imami Shias during the days of Al-Muhajir, after their emigration to different countries, almost all Sayyids have spread Shafi<sup>17</sup> orthodoxy. At the same time Dutch Islamicist C. Snouck Hurgronje in his work, The Achchnese observes, "while all Sayyids are accorded reverence, not all necessary functioned as members of the Ulema. Indeed the majority had no formal religious occupation

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15. One of the major sects of Shiism who were then followers of the Imams of the house of Muhammad. They were also called Isna - 'Asharias (the twelvers) who accept the leadership of twelve Imams. For a detailed study on different sect of Shiaism See Amir Ali, The spirit of Islam, London, 1964, pp.320-50.

16. Ibadism: an extreme Shia sect.

17. One of the Sunni Schools of thought.

at all, yet continued to be reversed, whether they were traders or agriculturalists".<sup>18</sup>

Bā-'Alawi Sayyids of Malabar in particular and the Sayyid who settled in other parts of the world in general did not virtually denounce the first three Caliphs as usurpers nor did they subscribe to the complex Shiite theology. This is made clear by Sayyid Shaikh Jifri, the first Bā-'Alawi saint of Malabar who settled in Calicut in the middle of 18th century. In his work titled Kanz-al-Barahin Sayyid Jifri explicitly criticises those who argue that the first three Caliphs usurped the leadership of the Islamic community from Ali.<sup>19</sup> In fact the faith of the Bā-'Alawis was a conservative Sunni Orthodoxy of the Shafi School. Another noted feature of the Bā-'Alawi Sayyids is their reluctance to establish contact with rulers and Sultans and were not ready to engage in marriage contract with non-Sayyid men of all ranks.<sup>20</sup>

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18. Quoted in Dale and Menon, "The Sayyids of Malabar" unpublished article, p.2

19. Ibid.

20. Stephen Frederic Dale, The Mappilas of Malabar (1498-1922), New York, 1980, p.144.

## 'Alawi tariqah and mode of conduct

Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Muhammad (1178 AD/1255AH) an eminent Bā 'Alawi saint of Hadramawt was a central figure in South Arabian mysticism and the founder of the 'Alawi tariqah. He was also known as Al-ustadh al-azam (the great master) and al-Faqih-al-Muqaddam<sup>21</sup>. He was the first Bā-'Alawi Sayyid who turned to Sufism in the early years of the 13th century. Till this period the Bā-'Alawis were known only for Fiqh, law and Sharaf. "It seems that Hadrami Ulema at first resisted the Sufi movements, for on hearing this (formation of 'Alawi tariqah) his (Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Muhammad) teacher Abu Marwan 'Ali Ibn Ahamed Ibn Salim, with whom he had read fiqh, broke with him"<sup>22</sup>.

Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Muhammad was a close friend of the famous Sufi Sufyan-al-Yemani who is said to have brought about rainfall in Hadramawt after a long drought, through his miracle. Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Muhammad has no published work other than some

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21. E.J. Brill (ed.), Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol 1, London, 1979, p.828

22. R.B. Serjeant, op.cit, p.19.

letters addressed to his friends, sufyan-al-yemani and saad-ud-din Ibn-al-zafari. He was the first to introduce special sufistic discipline known as Tahkim,<sup>23</sup>. He ascribed an injunction to the Sayyids and disciples to abandon arms for the pursuit of religious and moral aims. Bā 'Alawi Sayyids considered it as the best tariqah based on the principles of holy Quran, the Sunnah and the beliefs of the Pious.

According to the injunction of the 'Alawi tariqah, no Sufi was permitted to go counter to the ways of Pious Ancestors and they had to act with utmost humility, piety and lofty motive and should consider the Prophet as a model for all activities. The 'Alawi sufi must love austerity, dislike manifestations, withdraw from the madding crowd, but he must warn against neglect of religious duties.<sup>24</sup> Thus 'Alawi Sayyids were sticking to the principles of Quran and Sunnah and did their level best to warn the people - both nobles and masses-against their neglect of religious duties. This duty was earnestly performed by 'Alwi Sayyids in different parts of the world including Kerala.

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23. E.J. Brill (ed) Encyclopaedia of Islam, op.cit.

24. R.B. Serjeant, op.cit,p.20

Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Muhammad also took measures to ensure the service of Bā-'Alawi sufis to the society in general. An 'Alawi sufi is to show kindness to wife, children, neighbours, relations, to the tribes, and all Muslims.<sup>25</sup> Bā-'Alawi Sayyids of Kerala, Sayyid Shaikh Jifri, Sayid Hasan Jifri, Sayyid 'Alawi and Sayyid Fazl strictly struck to this principle.<sup>26</sup> A 19th century Sayyid writer, 'Alawi Ibn Ahamed al-Saqqaf advised the saints as follows: Not to mix with the people of that evil age when rulers are inclined to injure those of religious rank. Silence and restraint are best; if perforce you meet evil persons, speak little and leave as soon as possible.<sup>27</sup> This dictum clearly indicates the course of action to be followed by Bā-'Alawi saints towards an evil ridden society and individuals. In any way they were not permitted to

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25. Ibid.

26. For details of the generosity and charity showered by these personalities to the people of Malabar irrespective of caste and creed, see, K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, Hazrat Mamburam Sayyid 'Alawi Tangal 8th Edition, Venniyur Malappuram Dist, 1989. It will be discussed in the succeeding chapter.

27. 'Alawi Ibn Ahamed al-Saqqaf, Majmuah Kutub Mufidah (No date and place) p.178 quoted in R.B. Serijeant, opcit, p.20.

cope with such rulers and individuals. A sort of non-co-operation was advocated by 'Alawi Ibn Ahamed al-Saqgef. 'Alawi saints were not allowed to follow any other tariqah. But in later period there were deviation from this instruction. For instance, Sayyid Shaikh Jifri, the first Bā-'Alawi saint of Malabar was a leading Shaikh of the Qadiriyyah tariqah.<sup>28</sup> Abdulla al-Haddad, the famous blind saint of the 18th century stated that Bā-'Alawi tariqah is acknowledged the best by the Yamanis despite their heresy (bid'ah), and the Sharifs of Mecca despite their own honourable rank.<sup>29</sup> The 'Alawis never encouraged eccentric practices such as dancing or self mortification in the name of tariqah.<sup>30</sup> There was no evidence to show that they established their own Kanqah to promote such practices. Usually their dhikr known as 'Alawi dikhr was held in the mosques and 'Alawi Sufi musicians sing sufi song (devotional song) to pipe and without any musical instruments.<sup>31</sup>

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28. A. P. Ibrahim Kunju, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1989, p.217.

29. R.B. Serjeant, Loc.cit.

30. S.F. Dale: opcit, p.114

31. R.B. Serjeant, Loc cit

Bā-'Alawi saints possessed the lofty qualities of politeness, hospitality, generosity etc. and avoided contact with Sultans and rulers as far as possible. The cult of hero-worship was deep rooted among them. "The reverence for the Pious Ancestors (Salaf) is so strong that Hadramis scarcely think of the dead departed. Indeed, the traveller entering Tarim is immediately confronted by its cemeteries and domed tombs<sup>32</sup>. This practice was followed by the Bā-'Alawi Sayyids of Malabar also. There are tombs of Sayyid saints in Jakarta, Java etc.<sup>33</sup>

Bā-'Alawi Sayyids usually gave much importance to the issue of Kafa'ah (eligibility in marriage). i.e. that they will never marry their daughters to any one but a Sayyid or Sharif. Bā-'Alawis of Malabar also followed this tradition more or less intact. When Sayyids migrated to different parts of the world, it paved the way for mixing their blood with various nationalities such as Malays, Indians, Chinese, Africans etc. The emigration of Sayyid women was not at all permitted, for, they considered it as a

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32. Ibid., p.21

33. Ibid.

disgrace. Therefore, Sayyid men were forced to marry non Sayyid women of these countries. Hadrami Sayyids were conservative and traditionalist in their religious outlook but were not at all fanatical. They had taken keen interest in promoting education in Hadramawt and elsewhere. In Kerala, a long net works of mosques were established by them which acted as educational institutions also.<sup>34</sup> Hadrami Sayyids in general were conscious about their own birth rights and were born with leadership qualities.

#### Bā-'Alawis in Malabar

The first emigration of Hadrami Sayyids to India is around 1220 A.D. But it is not possible to date precisely the first settlement of Hadrami Sayyids in Malabar, although it is believed that their migration from Hadramawt became especially marked from the sixteenth century. The Bā-'Alwi Sayyids presence in Malabar is conformed at least by the eighteenth century through the geneology of Sayyid Hassan Jifri, the descendent of Sayyid Shaikh Jifri. His

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34. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit, pp.40-41.

geneological table shows several generations of Hadramis, both 'Alawis and Jifris settling in Calicut.<sup>35</sup>

Among the Bā-'Alawi Sayyids settled in Kerala, Sayyid Shaikh Jifri, Sayyid Hasan Jifri, Sayyid 'Alawi popularly known as Tarammal Tangal and his son Sayyid Fazl deserve special mention because of their hectic religious, social and political activities spread during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sayyid Shaikh Jifri, the first among Bā-'Alawi Saints settled in Calicut in the middle of the eighteenth century.<sup>36</sup> The Zamorin of Calicut provided him accomadation. His cousin Sayyid Hassan Jifri came after him and settled at Mamburam (near Tirurangadi, In Malappuram District). These two Tangals engaged in missionary activities and kept aloof from political issues.<sup>37</sup>

The last two Tangals-Sayyid 'Alawi and Sayyid Fazl-began their activities, when the country began to experience the evils of the British rule. Hence the changing circumstance knowingly or unknowingly

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35. The geneological tree is available at Jifri house, Calicut.

36. Muhammed Abdul Kareem, opcit, p.15.

37. Ibid., p.27

influenced their careers. In 1792 Tipu ceded Malabar to the East India Company according to the Treaty of Srirangapatam. The destruction of Tipu's authority in Malabar and early British settlement policies led to the restoration of the social and economic position of the dominant castes<sup>38</sup>. The British authorities had recognised Jenmis as the absolute owners of landed properties and the Court, Revenue officials as well as the police took all measures to serve their ends. For instance "the British Courts had recognised his (Jenmi's) right to expel the tenant at the end of every twelve years."<sup>39</sup> In Malabar most of the Jenmis were uppercaste Hindus and majority of the tenants were members of Mappila community. The Mappilas and their leaders felt that they had lost out to the dominant castes under British rule. Manjeri Athan Gurukkal, leader of the 1849 Mappila uprising is reported to have said that "None of us is safe. Some one or other will prefer complaints against us (the Mappilas) and the evidence of the Nairs shall be received and we shall

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38. Stephen Federic Dale, 'Islam and Social conflict, the Mappilas of Malabar, 1498-1922', unpublished doctoral dissertation, (TNA), p.84

39. A.R. Desai (Ed), Peasant struggles in India, Delhi, 1985, p.606

all be apprehended and hanged"<sup>40</sup>. The British judicial system became a tool to safeguard the interest of the upper caste land owners. Since Mappilas in general were considered as the allies of Tipu Sultan, they were denied due share in Government service also. Under the British, most of the Government officials were Hindus. Though Mappilas educational backwardness had played a major role in creating such a situation, they were denied opportunities to serve under the British Government which doubted their loyalty. Malabar Collector H.V. Conolly reported that in the existing Taluks of Ernad, Sheranad and Walluwanad the population was almost equally divided, 1,55,686 Hindus and 1,27,734 Mappilas. At the same time Mappilas representation is very little in various Government jobs, for instance, among 81 Adhikaris (village headmen) only 20 Mappilas, all village accountants were Hindus, and of 142 village peons only 20 were Mappilas.<sup>41</sup> There were disputes between Mappilas and upper caste Hindu landlords regarding the erection of

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40. MDR, 1800, Political, p.168

41. MDR, 1817, letter received, Police, p.437

mosques in various parts of Malabar.<sup>42</sup> One of the prime causes for most of the Mappila uprisings of nineteenth century was agrarian disputes.<sup>43</sup>

Sayyid 'Alawi and Sayyid Fazl were arch enemies of the British and they were moved by the deplorable condition of the people under British rule. Hence, when Mappilas resorted to violent action to protest against the atrocities of Jenmis supported by the English, The tangals blessed or sanctioned their actions in the name of religion. For instance, Sayyid Fazl in his Friday sermon delivered at Tirurangadi mosque says as follows: "It is no sin, but a merit, to kill a jenmi who evicts"<sup>44</sup> Sayyid 'Alawi through his work Assaif-al-Battar was inciting the people to fight against the British.<sup>45</sup>

There are striking similarities between the action plan of Mamburam tangals and the important Ulema of North India who organised hectic agitations against

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42. Correspondence of Special Commissioner and Government, 1852 Vol.V. pp.29-30.

43. S.F.Dale op.cit., Appendix pp.22-32.

44. William Logen, Malabar, vol.I, Trivandrum, 1981, p.691

45. A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, opcit, p.218

the English. "The Ulema never reconciled to the British rule and they opposed any party or organisation or individuals who supported it"<sup>46</sup> Muinuddin Ahamed Khan traces the similarity between Faraidi Movement of Bengal and the Mappila uprisings of Malabar in the following words: "Parallel between Kerala and Bengal, between the Mappila outbreaks and the Faraidi movement, was especially close, for in each case a dominant religious figure articulated the grievances of a Muslim agricultural class. In Kerala that was Sayyid Fazl, a Hadrami Sayyid who had inherited the conservative Islamic Orthodoxy of South Arabia, while in Bengal Haji Shariat Ullah had been steeped in the puritanical traditions of early nineteenth century Mecca"<sup>47</sup>. Jamaludheen Afghani's idea of Pan-Islamism and animosity against the British also helped Sayyid Fazl to mould his policy.<sup>48</sup> Shah waliullah (1702-1762), Sayyid Ahmed Shahid (1786-1831), Shah Ismail Shahid (1781-1831) and other north Indian Ulama-turned

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46. Asghar Ali Engineer (Ed): The Role of Minorities in Freedom struggle, Delhi, 1986, p.2

47. Muinuddin Ahmed Khan, Faraidi Movement, 1965, Karachi, quoted in S.F. Dale, op.cit, p.6

48. Stephe Federic Dale, op.cit, p.7

fighters against colonialism and superstitious beliefs might have influenced Sayyid Fazl's policy.<sup>49</sup> Thus, eighteenth and nineteenth century Ulama and religious leaders of north and south India opposed foreign rule and did their level best to protect the interest of the oppressed. For instance, Nasir Alias Titu Mir struggled in western part of Bengal with peasant support. That was a semi-religious movement; fighting both to establish a more just social order and to purify and re-vitalise Islam.<sup>50</sup> Ulema in general under British rule, reacted to the socio-religious and economic degradation of Muslims in particular and the lower classes in general. But they had adopted different course of actions. For instance, Non-co-operation, complete withdrawal from public life and pursuits for learning, sanction of individual or collective uprisings, taking up leading role in the agitations etc. Though, the modus operandi was varied from person to person or place to place, all Ulema, who opposed colonialism and socio-economic injustice of the

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49. For a study and evaluation of the life and career of these three personalities, See Mushirul Hasan (Ed), Communal and Pan-Islamic Trends in Colonial India, New Delhi, 1985, pp.382-88.

50. K.H. Qadiri, Hazrat Mohani, Delhi, 1985, p.40

landed aristocracy had imbibed inspiration from the same source —tradiitonal Islam. They considered Islam as a liberation force which put an end to the oppression, atrocities, discrimination and social injustice. Therefore, the anti-colonial policy of Sayyid 'Alawi and Sayyid Fazl should be evaluated in this context.

There were several branches of Hadrami Sayyids in Kerala, besides Bā-'Alawis. Aydrus, Ba-Fakih, al-Jufri, al-Habshi, al-Haddad, al-Sakkaf, Shihabuddin clans were important among them who had settled in different parts of Malabar in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

# ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF BA- ALAWI CLAN

Mohammed Abdul Sathar. K.K “History of ba-alawis in Kerala ” Thesis.  
Department of History , University of Calicut, 1999

## CHAPTER - I

### ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF BĀ-ĀLAWI CLAN

There were one hundred and sixty clans in Yemen and Hadramawt of South Arabia who claimed their origin from Prophet Muhammad through his daughter Fathima and Cousin Ali<sup>1</sup>. Almost all these clans were commonly known as Hadrami Sayyids. "Nor can any branch of the numerous Sharif and Saiyid families founded over fourteen centuries ago claim a more varied sphere of activity, of achievements indeed, than the 'Alawi Saiyids of Hadramawt"<sup>2</sup>. However, the noble descent of Bā-Ālawi is said to have been challenged in the year AD 1000. One of the Sayyids of the Bā-Ālawi clan went to Basarah and produced some sixty respected Basarans to attest the relationship with the Iraqi Sayyids in presence of the Hadrami Contingent at the Meccan pilgrimage. Ever since the 'Alawi Sayyids have maintained their family register with scrupulous care. Sayyid Fadl's work Fuyusat-al-Ilahiyah published in AD

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1. Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Ahamed Ibn Umar Al-Shathri, Al-Mu 'ajjamu-Latif-li-Ahsabi-al-Qubi-Wal-Qunafi - Nasbi Sharief (Arabic), Jeddah, 1986, p.135
  2. R.B. Serjeant, The Saiyids of Hadramawt, London, 1957, p.3

1890 from Arabia deals with the origin of Bā-'Alawi clan and succeeded in establishing the link with Prophet Muhammad's family<sup>3</sup>.

The geneological table of the Bā-'Alawi Sayyids is traced as follows:-

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      Muhammad, the Prophet
      :
      Fathima + Ali Ibn Abu Talib
      :
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      :
      :
      Al-Husain Ibn Ali           Al-Hasan Ibn Ali
      :
      Zain-al-Abideen Ibn Hussain
      :
      Muhammad Baqir Ibn Zain-al-Abideen
      :
      Jafar al-Sadiq Ibn Muhammad Baqir
      :
      Ali Ibn Jafar-al-Sadiq
      :
      Muhammad Ibn Ali
      :
      Isa Ibn Muhammad
      :
      Ahammed Ibn Isa
      :
      Ubaidullah Ibn Ahmed
      :
      'Alawi Ibn Ubaidullah
      :
      Maulu Dawila Ibn 'Alawi (Founder of Bā-'Alawi clan)4
  
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3. 'Samastha Sammelana Special' (Malayalam), Parappanangadi, 1961, p.100.

4. Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Ahamed Ibn Umar Al-Shathri, op.cit., p.137.

When Islam was three centuries old, Prophet's descendants through his daughter Fathima and his cousin 'Ali numbered thousands. Though they were deprived of political power and subjected to persecution, the masses in general respected them. They had even grown wealthy on the contributions of their adherents. The Hadrami Sayyids turned to learning and preaching. Owing to the invasion of Basarah by the Qarmatians in AD 900<sup>5</sup>, Ahamad Ibn Isa, of the 8th generation from Fathima through her son Husain left Basarah accompanied by his second son. Thanks to Qarmatians he could not even perform the piligrimage until AD 930. After the piligrimage they went to Yemen. Some authorities place their further migration to Hadramawt about the year AD 952. For a time they lived in al-Hajarain village in Hadramawt. Later they settled in al-Husaiyishah where Ahamed Ibn Isa met with his death and his tomb survives<sup>6</sup>.

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5. Masudul Hasan, History of Islam, vol.I, Delhi, 1992 p.270 Qarmatians were an Ismaili section of the Shias who established an indepedant state in Bahrain under Abu Zaid Jannabi towards the close of 9th century AD.

6. R.B. Serjeant, *op.cit.*, p.8

When the Sayyids reached Hadramawt, the local scholars of the Mashayikh classes or noble families welcomed them and consoled them as they had to leave their home land. These scholars who distinguished themselves from the tribesmen, towns folk and peasants enjoyed the privilege and honour of a unique spiritual power in Southern Arabia and governing the sacred enclaves known as hawtah<sup>7</sup>. There were three important Mashayikh families in Tarim, a village in Hadramawt. They were the 'Al-Bā-Abbād, the Al-khatib, and the Al-Bā-Fadl. In due course the influence of the Sayyid family in Hadramawt increased at the expense of the Mashayikh family. Al Bā-Fadl historian, Al-Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Awad had stated that the Bā-Fadl had the power and shaikhdom before the arrival of the 'Alawi Sayyids. However, when the influence of the Sayyids increased the Mashayikh surrendered their right of the Taqbil (the privilege of having the hand or knee kissed, colloquially known as Shammah) and of the title 'habib to the 'Alawi Sayyids. But the Sayyid scholar 'Abdullah Bā-al-Faqih rejects this statement as unhistorical and states that similar privileges were

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7. R.B. Serjeant, op.cit,p.11

the prerogative of Mashayikh in districts where Sayyid influence was weak<sup>8</sup>. What had actually happened was that due to the Sayyid's noble decent, they had been endowed with a unique spiritual power of blessing the masses. But the rivalry of Sayyids and Mashayikh never hurt their personal friendship and relation. It never acted as a barrier for the transmission of religious knowledge to each other.

Hadrami Sayyids played a major role in the propagation of Islam in distant countries. From Tarim they spread east and west. In Aden they have made little progress, since the inhabitants were uneducated traders. Some of the Sayyids reached in Yemen and their connection with Mecca has been very close and continuous. Their great emigration to Africa took place in the 14th and 15th centuries.

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9. Richard Burton, First Foot Steps in East Africa, London, 1894, p.54, quoted in R.B. Searjeant, Ibid, p.24

'Alawi Sayyids then entered Africa also at Mogadisho and points on the Kenya coast. Early Swahili poetry traces the influence of Hadrami Sayyids. They settled in Madagascar, Zanzibar and Komoru where a Sayyid house once held sway.<sup>10</sup> Sayyid Fazl's work, Fuyusat-al-Ilahiya, also deals with the migration of Hadrami Sayyids to different parts of the world including Africa. He writes: "there are 8300 descendants of Hazrat 'Alawi Ibn Ubaidulla, who lived in the 4th century Hijara in Samal village of Hadramawt engaged in the propagation of Islam in Hadramawt, Yemen, Hijaz, India, Java, Sumatra, West Africa East Africa etc."<sup>11</sup>

Hadrami Sayyids' settlement in India had begun in 1220 A.D. They settled in important commercial, cultural and political centres like Bijapur, Surat, Ahmedabad, Broach, Hyderabad, Delhi, Baroda, Malabar and Bengal. They travelled from place to place propagating the religion of Islam and settled in various parts of South East Asia also. They emigrated to Java, Sumatra, Malaya, Borneo, Philippines etc.<sup>12</sup>.

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10. Ibid.

11. 'Samastha Sammelana Special' (Malayalam), Loc.cit

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Hadrami Sayyids in general avoided contacts with political authorities especially with the British. At the same time they did not hesitate to warn those in power when they turned against the interest of the people.<sup>13</sup> This inherent tradition of Bā — 'Alawis' prompted Sayyid 'Alawi and his son Sayyid fazl to fight against the atrocities of the British.

#### Religious outlook of the Bā-'Alawis

Regarding the religious outlook of Bā-'Alawis there was no unanimous opinion among scholars. Sayyid scholars maintain that Ahamed Ibn Isa popularly known as al-Muhajir (the Emigrant) revived and spread the teaching of the Sunnah (tradition of the prophet) according to the Shafi rule, "but this can be little else than a projection of later circumstances in the past, for there are no historical sources near contemporary."<sup>14</sup> There would be every possibility of making slight changes in their religious outlook in order to meet the challenges they had to face in different countries. Some Sayyid historians here

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13. Ibid, p.21

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Though Bā-'Alawi Sayyids were Imami Shias during the days of Al-Muhajir, after their emigration to different countries, almost all Sayyids have spread Shafi<sup>17</sup> orthodoxy. At the same time Dutch Islamicist C. Snouck Hurgronje in his work, The Achchinese observes, "while all Sayyids are accorded reverence, not all necessary functioned as members of the Ulema. Indeed the majority had no formal religious occupation

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15. One of the major sects of Shiism who were then followers of the Imams of the house of Muhammad. They were also called Isna - 'Asharias (the twelvers) who accept the leadership of twelve Imams. For a detailed study on different sect of Shiaism See Amir Ali, The spirit of Islam, London, 1964, pp.320-50.

16. Ibadism: an extreme Shia sect.

17. One of the Sunni Schools of thought.

at all, yet continued to be reversed, whether they were traders or agriculturalists".<sup>18</sup>

Bā-'Alawi Sayyids of Malabar in particular and the Sayyid who settled in other parts of the world in general did not virtually denounce the first three Caliphs as usurpers nor did they subscribe to the complex Shiite theology. This is made clear by Sayyid Shaikh Jifri, the first Bā-'Alawi saint of Malabar who settled in Calicut in the middle of 18th century. In his work titled Kanz-al-Barahin Sayyid Jifri explicitly criticises those who argue that the first three Caliphs usurped the leadership of the Islamic community from Ali.<sup>19</sup> In fact the faith of the Bā-'Alawis was a conservative Sunni Orthodoxy of the Shafi School. Another noted feature of the Bā-'Alawi Sayyids is their reluctance to establish contact with rulers and Sultans and were not ready to engage in marriage contract with non-Sayyid men of all ranks.<sup>20</sup>

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18. Quoted in Dale and Menon, "The Sayyids of Malabar" unpublished article, p.2

19. Ibid.

20. Stephen Frederic Dale, The Mappilas of Malabar (1498-1922), New York, 1980, p.144.

## 'Alawi tariqah and mode of conduct

Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Muhammad (1178 AD/1255AH) an eminent Bā 'Alawi saint of Hadramawt was a central figure in South Arabian mysticism and the founder of the 'Alawi tariqah. He was also known as Al-ustadh al-azam (the great master) and al-Faqih-al-Muqaddam<sup>21</sup>. He was the first Bā-'Alawi Sayyid who turned to Sufism in the early years of the 13th century. Till this period the Bā-'Alawis were known only for Fiqh, law and Sharaf. "It seems that Hadrami Ulema at first resisted the Sufi movements, for on hearing this (formation of 'Alawi tariqah) his (Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Muhammad) teacher Abu Marwan 'Ali Ibn Ahamed Ibn Salim, with whom he had read fiqh, broke with him"<sup>22</sup>.

Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Muhammad was a close friend of the famous Sufi Sufyan-al-Yemani who is said to have brought about rainfall in Hadramawt after a long drought, through his miracle. Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Muhammad has no published work other than some

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21. E.J. Brill (ed.), Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol 1, London, 1979, p.828

22. R.B. Serjeant, op.cit, p.19.

letters addressed to his friends, sufyan-al-yemani and saad-ud-din Ibn-al-zafari. He was the first to introduce special sufistic discipline known as Tahkim,<sup>23</sup>. He ascribed an injunction to the Sayyids and disciples to abandon arms for the pursuit of religious and moral aims. Bā 'Alawi Sayyids considered it as the best tariqah based on the principles of holy Quran, the Sunnah and the beliefs of the Pious.

According to the injunction of the 'Alawi tariqah, no Sufi was permitted to go counter to the ways of Pious Ancestors and they had to act with utmost humility, piety and lofty motive and should consider the Prophet as a model for all activities. The 'Alawi sufi must love austerity, dislike manifestations, withdraw from the madding crowd, but he must warn against neglect of religious duties.<sup>24</sup> Thus 'Alawi Sayyids were sticking to the principles of Quran and Sunnah and did their level best to warn the people - both nobles and masses-against their neglect of religious duties. This duty was earnestly performed by 'Alwi Sayyids in different parts of the world including Kerala.

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23. E.J. Brill (ed) Encyclopaedia of Islam, op.cit.

24. R.B. Serjeant, op.cit,p.20

Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Muhammad also took measures to ensure the service of Bā-'Alawi sufis to the society in general. An 'Alawi sufi is to show kindness to wife, children, neighbours, relations, to the tribes, and all Muslims.<sup>25</sup> Bā-'Alawi Sayyids of Kerala, Sayyid Shaikh Jifri, Sayid Hasan Jifri, Sayyid 'Alawi and Sayyid Fazl strictly struck to this principle.<sup>26</sup> A 19th century Sayyid writer, 'Alawi Ibn Ahamed al-Saqqaf advised the saints as follows: Not to mix with the people of that evil age when rulers are inclined to injure those of religious rank. Silence and restraint are best; if perforce you meet evil persons, speak little and leave as soon as possible.<sup>27</sup> This dictum clearly indicates the course of action to be followed by Bā-'Alawi saints towards an evil ridden society and individuals. In any way they were not permitted to

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25. Ibid.

26. For details of the generosity and charity showered by these personalities to the people of Malabar irrespective of caste and creed, see, K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, Hazrat Mamburam Sayyid 'Alawi Tangal 8th Edition, Venniyur Malappuram Dist, 1989. It will be discussed in the succeeding chapter.

27. 'Alawi Ibn Ahamed al-Saqqaf, Majmuah Kutub Mufidah (No date and place) p.178 quoted in R.B. Serijeant, opcit, p.20.

cope with such rulers and individuals. A sort of non-co-operation was advocated by 'Alawi Ibn Ahamed al-Saqgef. 'Alawi saints were not allowed to follow any other tariqah. But in later period there were deviation from this instruction. For instance, Sayyid Shaikh Jifri, the first Bā-'Alawi saint of Malabar was a leading Shaikh of the Qadiriyyah tariqah.<sup>28</sup> Abdulla al-Haddad, the famous blind saint of the 18th century stated that Bā-'Alawi tariqah is acknowledged the best by the Yamanis despite their heresy (bid'ah), and the Sharifs of Mecca despite their own honourable rank.<sup>29</sup> The 'Alawis never encouraged eccentric practices such as dancing or self mortification in the name of tariqah.<sup>30</sup> There was no evidence to show that they established their own Kanqah to promote such practices. Usually their dhikr known as 'Alawi dikhr was held in the mosques and 'Alawi Sufi musicians sing sufi song (devotional song) to pipe and without any musical instruments.<sup>31</sup>

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28. A. P. Ibrahim Kunju, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1989, p.217.

29. R.B. Serjeant, Loc.cit.

30. S.F. Dale: opcit, p.114

31. R.B. Serjeant, Loc cit

Bā-'Alawi saints possessed the lofty qualities of politeness, hospitality, generosity etc. and avoided contact with Sultans and rulers as far as possible. The cult of hero-worship was deep rooted among them. "The reverence for the Pious Ancestors (Salaf) is so strong that Hadramis scarcely think of the dead departed. Indeed, the traveller entering Tarim is immediately confronted by its cemeteries and domed tombs<sup>32</sup>. This practice was followed by the Bā-'Alawi Sayyids of Malabar also. There are tombs of Sayyid saints in Jakarta, Java etc.<sup>33</sup>

Bā-'Alawi Sayyids usually gave much importance to the issue of Kafa'ah (eligibility in marriage). i.e. that they will never marry their daughters to any one but a Sayyid or Sharif. Bā-'Alawis of Malabar also followed this tradition more or less intact. When Sayyids migrated to different parts of the world, it paved the way for mixing their blood with various nationalities such as Malays, Indians, Chinese, Africans etc. The emigration of Sayyid women was not at all permitted, for, they considered it as a

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32. Ibid., p.21

33. Ibid.

disgrace. Therefore, Sayyid men were forced to marry non Sayyid women of these countries. Hadrami Sayyids were conservative and traditionalist in their religious outlook but were not at all fanatical. They had taken keen interest in promoting education in Hadramawt and elsewhere. In Kerala, a long net works of mosques were established by them which acted as educational institutions also.<sup>34</sup> Hadrami Sayyids in general were conscious about their own birth rights and were born with leadership qualities.

#### Bā-'Alawis in Malabar

The first emigration of Hadrami Sayyids to India is around 1220 A.D. But it is not possible to date precisely the first settlement of Hadrami Sayyids in Malabar, although it is believed that their migration from Hadramawt became especially marked from the sixteenth century. The Bā-'Alwi Sayyids presence in Malabar is conformed at least by the eighteenth century through the geneology of Sayyid Hassan Jifri, the descendent of Sayyid Shaikh Jifri. His

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34. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit, pp.40-41.

geneological table shows several generations of Hadramis, both 'Alawis and Jifris settling in Calicut.<sup>35</sup>

Among the Bā-'Alawi Sayyids settled in Kerala, Sayyid Shaikh Jifri, Sayyid Hasan Jifri, Sayyid 'Alawi popularly known as Tarammal Tangal and his son Sayyid Fazl deserve special mention because of their hectic religious, social and political activities spread during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sayyid Shaikh Jifri, the first among Bā-'Alawi Saints settled in Calicut in the middle of the eighteenth century.<sup>36</sup> The Zamorin of Calicut provided him accomadation. His cousin Sayyid Hassan Jifri came after him and settled at Mamburam (near Tirurangadi, In Malappuram District). These two Tangals engaged in missionary activities and kept aloof from political issues.<sup>37</sup>

The last two Tangals-Sayyid 'Alawi and Sayyid Fazl-began their activities, when the country began to experience the evils of the British rule. Hence the changing circumstance knowingly or unknowingly

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35. The geneological tree is available at Jifri house, Calicut.

36. Muhammed Abdul Kareem, opcit, p.15.

37. Ibid., p.27

influenced their careers. In 1792 Tipu ceded Malabar to the East India Company according to the Treaty of Srirangapatam. The destruction of Tipu's authority in Malabar and early British settlement policies led to the restoration of the social and economic position of the dominant castes<sup>38</sup>. The British authorities had recognised Jenmis as the absolute owners of landed properties and the Court, Revenue officials as well as the police took all measures to serve their ends. For instance "the British Courts had recognised his (Jenmi's) right to expel the tenant at the end of every twelve years."<sup>39</sup> In Malabar most of the Jenmis were uppercaste Hindus and majority of the tenants were members of Mappila community. The Mappilas and their leaders felt that they had lost out to the dominant castes under British rule. Manjeri Athan Gurukkal, leader of the 1849 Mappila uprising is reported to have said that "None of us is safe. Some one or other will prefer complaints against us (the Mappilas) and the evidence of the Nairs shall be received and we shall

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38. Stephen Federic Dale, 'Islam and Social conflict, the Mappilas of Malabar, 1498-1922', unpublished doctoral dissertation, (TNA), p.84

39. A.R. Desai (Ed), Peasant struggles in India, Delhi, 1985, p.606

all be apprehended and hanged"<sup>40</sup>. The British judicial system became a tool to safeguard the interest of the upper caste land owners. Since Mappilas in general were considered as the allies of Tipu Sultan, they were denied due share in Government service also. Under the British, most of the Government officials were Hindus. Though Mappilas educational backwardness had played a major role in creating such a situation, they were denied opportunities to serve under the British Government which doubted their loyalty. Malabar Collector H.V. Conolly reported that in the existing Taluks of Ernad, Sheranad and Walluwanad the population was almost equally devided, 1,55,686 Hindus and 1,27,734 Mappilas. At the same time Mappilas representation is very little in various Government jobs, for instance, among 81 Adhikaris (village headmen) only 20 Mappilas, all village accountants were Hindus, and of 142 village peons only 20 were Mappilas.<sup>41</sup> There were disputes between Mappilas and upper caste Hindu landlords regarding the erection of

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40. MDR, 1800, Political, p.168

41. MDR, 1817, letter received, Police, p.437

mosques in various parts of Malabar.<sup>42</sup> One of the prime causes for most of the Mappila uprisings of nineteenth century was agrarian disputes.<sup>43</sup>

Sayyid 'Alawi and Sayyid Fazl were arch enemies of the British and they were moved by the deplorable condition of the people under British rule. Hence, when Mappilas resorted to violent action to protest against the atrocities of Jenmis supported by the English, The tangals blessed or sanctioned their actions in the name of religion. For instance, Sayyid Fazl in his Friday sermon delivered at Tirurangadi mosque says as follows: "It is no sin, but a merit, to kill a jenmi who evicts"<sup>44</sup> Sayyid 'Alawi through his work Assaif-al-Battar was inciting the people to fight against the British.<sup>45</sup>

There are striking similarities between the action plan of Mamburam tangals and the important Ulema of North India who organised hectic agitations against

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42. Correspondence of Special Commissioner and Government, 1852 Vol.V. pp.29-30.

43. S.F.Dale op.cit., Appendix pp.22-32.

44. William Logen, Malabar, vol.I, Trivandrum, 1981, p.691

45. A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, op.cit, p.218

the English. "The Ulema never reconciled to the British rule and they opposed any party or organisation or individuals who supported it"<sup>46</sup> Muinuddin Ahamed Khan traces the similarity between Faraidi Movement of Bengal and the Mappila uprisings of Malabar in the following words: "Parallel between Kerala and Bengal, between the Mappila outbreaks and the Faraidi movement, was especially close, for in each case a dominant religious figure articulated the grievances of a Muslim agricultural class. In Kerala that was Sayyid Fazl, a Hadrami Sayyid who had inherited the conservative Islamic Orthodoxy of South Arabia, while in Bengal Haji Shariat Ullah had been steeped in the puritanical traditions of early nineteenth century Mecca"<sup>47</sup>. Jamaludheen Afghani's idea of Pan-Islamism and animosity against the British also helped Sayyid Fazl to mould his policy.<sup>48</sup> Shah waliullah (1702-1762), Sayyid Ahmed Shahid (1786-1831), Shah Ismail Shahid (1781-1831) and other north Indian Ulama-turned

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46. Asghar Ali Engineer (Ed): The Role of Minorities in Freedom struggle, Delhi, 1986, p.2

47. Muinuddin Ahmed Khan, Faraidi Movement, 1965, Karachi, quoted in S.F. Dale, op.cit, p.6

48. Stephe Federic Dale, op.cit, p.7

fighters against colonialism and superstitious beliefs might have influenced Sayyid Fazl's policy.<sup>49</sup> Thus, eighteenth and nineteenth century Ulama and religious leaders of north and south India opposed foreign rule and did their level best to protect the interest of the oppressed. For instance, Nasir Alias Titu Mir struggled in western part of Bengal with peasant support. That was a semi-religious movement; fighting both to establish a more just social order and to purify and re-vitalise Islam.<sup>50</sup> Ulema in general under British rule, reacted to the socio-religious and economic degradation of Muslims in particular and the lower classes in general. But they had adopted different course of actions. For instance, Non-co-operation, complete withdrawal from public life and pursuits for learning, sanction of individual or collective uprisings, taking up leading role in the agitations etc. Though, the modus operandi was varied from person to person or place to place, all Ulema, who opposed colonialism and socio-economic injustice of the

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49. For a study and evaluation of the life and career of these three personalities, See Mushirul Hasan (Ed), Communal and Pan-Islamic Trends in Colonial India, New Delhi, 1985, pp.382-88.

50. K.H. Qadiri, Hazrat Mohani, Delhi, 1985, p.40

landed aristocracy had imbibed inspiration from the same source —tradiitonal Islam. They considered Islam as a liberation force which put an end to the oppression, atrocities, discrimination and social injustice. Therefore, the anti-colonial policy of Sayyid 'Alawi and Sayyid Fazl should be evaluated in this context.

There were several branches of Hadrami Sayyids in Kerala, besides Bā-'Alawis. Aydrus, Ba-Fakih, al-Jufri, al-Habshi, al-Haddad, al-Sakkaf, Shihabuddin clans were important among them who had settled in different parts of Malabar in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

SAYYID HASAN JIFRI  
(1720 AD- 1764 AD )

Mohammed Abdul Sathar. K.K “History of ba-alawis in Kerala ” Thesis.  
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## CHAPTER - III

### SAYYID HASAN JIFRI (1720 AD - 1764 AD)

Sayyid Hasan Jifri was the cousin of Shaikh Jifri.<sup>1</sup> He was born in 1720 A.D. (1133 A.H.) at Tarim in Hadramawt. His father was Hasan Ibn Shaikh Ibn Hasan Ibn Alawi. He came to Malabar in 1755/'56 AD (1168 AH) on the invitation of Shaikh Jifri. About his arrival in Malabar W. Logan observes: "In the early part of the 18th Century a Tangal named Sayyid Hussain Ibn Alabi Jifri Tangal, who is supposed to have settled at the place called Mampuram".<sup>2</sup> He was the disciple of Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Hamid of Quilandi. At first Sayyid Hasan Jifri settled at Quilandi and then moved to Ponnani for higher studies along with Sayyid Abdu Rahman Hydrose.<sup>3</sup> During this period Ponnani was the major centre of Islamic learning. He was very much worried about the ideological differences among Muslim theologians and masses. Hasan jifri was an arch critic of adopting customs and traditions which marred the

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1. C.K. Kareem, Kerala Muslim History, Statistic, Directory (Malayalam), Vol.III, Kochi, 1991, p.239.
  2. W. Logan, Malabar, Vol.II, Madras, 1889, p.ccclix.
  3. C.N. Ahmed Moulavi, K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, Mahataya Mappila Sahitiaya Paramparyam (Malayalam), Calicut, 1978, p.174.

teachings of Quran and Hadith. He had succeeded to present his arguments in a logical and coherent way.<sup>4</sup>

#### Settlement at Mamburam

Jamaludheen Maqdam, the Qazi of Tirurangadi invited him to settle there. Hence Sayyid Hasan Jifri moved to Tirurangadi and settled there. Tirurangadi was a centre of religious learning as well as the hot bed of anti-British anti-colonial activities. Before his arrival in Tirurangadi, a saint popularly known as 'Arabi Tangal' (Whose real name and native place is not known) settled in Tirurangadi and persuaded the Mappilas to fight the British. As a result of his anti-colonial activities, the British committed all sorts of atrocities in Tirurangadi. Thus, the Mappilas were looking for a new leadership which would guide them properly.<sup>5</sup>

Sayyid Hasan Jifri gave successful guidance and leadership to the people of the locality. He convinced them that dynamic and strong leadership as well as sufficient preparations were essential for

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4. C.K. Kareem, op.cit., pp.239-40.

5. C.N. Ahmed Moulavi and K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit., pp.174-75.

meaningful agitation against colonial rule. British authorities tried their maximum to appease him.<sup>6</sup> But he had followed the glorious tradition of Bā-Alawi Sayyids of Hadramawt in this respect as noted by R.B. Serjeant.<sup>7</sup>

Sayyid Hasan Jifri got a rousing welcome in Tirurangadi. According to W.Logan Tirurangadi means the sacred bazar or the place of Dazar in the sacred country of Cheranad. Tirurangadi is in Trikulam Amsom and the seat of the Deputy Tahsildar of the Sub Registrar of Assurances and of the Police Inspector of the Division, and contains a Post office, a bazar and a well attended weekly market.<sup>8</sup> It shows Tirurangadi was not only a centre of religious learning but also a commercial centre, where people from remote areas met weekly to exchange their products. Therefore, news of the settlement of a person having noble descent spread like wild fire among the rural masses.

After a few days stay at the Jama't mosque of Tirurangadi, Sayyid Hasan Jifri shifted to the

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6. Ibid.

7. See, R.B. Serjeant, Sayyids of Hadramawt for Bā-Alawis' view on Sultans and English.

8. W. Logan, op.cit., p.ccci.

'Valiyakathodi' house which was given by Kammu Molla, the Mutawalli of Tirurangadi Jama Masjid. The 'Valiyakathodi' house was located in the south of the mosque. He married Kammu Molla's daughter.<sup>9</sup> After his marriage Hasan Jifri set up his family's permanent residence at Mamburam on the northern bank of the Kadalundi river. He lived in a house called Tarammal. The term Tarammal derived from Tarim. After settling down there the Bā-'Alawi Sayyids were very popular as Mamburam Tangals or Tarammal Tangals. After Sayyid Hasan Jifri, the Two Tangals - Sayyid 'Alawi and his son Sayyid Fuzl - chose the same place to settle and Tirurangadi became the centre of attraction of the whole country as a result of the Mappila uprisings of nineteenth century. He had a daughter named Fathima in his first marriage.<sup>10</sup> Besides Kammu Molla's daughter, Sayyid Hasan Jifri married a sister of Sayyid Mahmud, a person who came from Arabia.<sup>11</sup> But there is no reference about his children in this marriage.

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9. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, Sayyid Alawi Tangal, Reprint, Veniyur, 1982, p.20.

10. Ibid., p.21.

11. C M O, Vol.I, p.56.

## Missionary Activities

Following the traditions of Bā-Alawi Sayyids, Sayyid Hasan Jifri travelled in Ernad, Walluwanad and Ponnani taluks preaching the message of Islam. He advised the Muslims to observe the sharia, warned them against forbidden practices and asked them to keep away from bidat or heresy. Actually this type of preaching had been the profession of Bā-Alawi saints for generations. He had sent out his disciples to various parts of south Malabar for missionary activities. His father-in-law Kammu Molla was sent to Pang for the same purpose.

A large number of people belonging to different caste and creed used to visit him and sought his spiritual blessings. He advised his disciple to be the living examples of the tolerance taught by Islam.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, his abode at Mamburam was a seat of communal harmony, friendship and religious unity. Perhaps the institution of blessing-which later created constant head-ache to the British authorities - was instituted by Hasan Jifri.

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12. C.K. Kareem, op.cit., p.240.

Sayyid Hasan Jifri led the life of a sufi. He never amassed wealth. He got valuable presents and donations from his visitors and disciples. But he gave it as charity to the needy and poor. He vehemently opposed superstitious practices and beliefs as well as raised his voice against injustice.<sup>13</sup> Before his death he had made arrangements to marry his daughter Fathima to his sister's son Sayyid 'Alawi, who had also come from Arabia.<sup>14</sup>

There was not even a single work authored by him.<sup>15</sup> He devoted his time to meditation, learning and preaching and was ready to bless the people who approached him for solving their personal problems. He had prepared the geneology of Bā-'Alawi clan.<sup>16</sup> Sayyid Hasan Jifri died at Mamburam in 1764 A.D. (1178 A.H.). His tomb is located in the West part of the Mamburam shrine.<sup>17</sup> This shrine was built over the grave of his

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13. Ibid.

14. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit., p.21.

15. None of the published works mentioned it.

16. Dale & Menon in their article 'Sayyids in Malabar' quote it from the Plate of Geneology and Jifri, p.36.

17. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit., p.22.

uncle by Sayyid 'Alawi in the third year after his arrival at Mamburam or in the 8th year after his uncle's death.<sup>18</sup> This shrine later became a centre of pilgrimage. Both Mappilas and Hindus visited the shrine for seeking recovery from prolonged sickness, for good crops etc.<sup>19</sup>

Hasan Jifri never indulged in political or socio-economic grievances of the people, though he raised his protest against injustice, he never aimed at organising the oppressed in large scale to fight the oppressors. His aim seem to be purify the Mappila community from superstitious beliefs and customs and to maintain cordial relation with fellow beings. In this respect his mission had got only partial success. Of course, his nephew and son-in-law Sayyid 'Alawi had begun his mission from where Sayyid Hasan Jifri had ended or Sayyid Hasan Jifri had prepared the ground for the anti-colonial activities that culminated under Sayyid 'Alawi and his son Sayyid Fazl.

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18. W. Logan, op.cit., p.cclix.

19. Govt. of Madras, judicial, G.O. 2nd May 1885, No.1169.

# SAYYID 'ALAWI ( 1750 AD -1844 AD)

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## CHAPTER - IV

### SAYYID 'ALAWI (1750 AD - 1844 AD)

Sayyid 'Alawi was one of the most famous of the Bā-'Alawi Sayyids of Kerala. Sayyid Hasan Jifri was his maternal uncle. Though we have little knowledge about his early life, he is known to have been directly involved in Mapila uprisings of the 19th century. There are ample sources to reconstruct his life and career in Malabar.

Sayyid Alawi was born in 1750 AD (1163 AH) at Tarim of Hadramawt. His father Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Sahl Mauludhaveela was a renowned scholar and theologian of Tarim.<sup>1</sup> Sayyid Hasan Jifri's sister Sayyida Fatima, famous for nobility and charity was his mother. He had lost his parents at the early age of his life. Being an orphan, he was under the cares of his mother's sister who turned out to be his first tutor. He has possessed all the lofty ideals and virtues at the prime of his life.<sup>2</sup>

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1. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, Sayyid Alawi Tangal, Reprint, Venniyur, 1982, p.22

2. Ibid., p.23

Sayyid Alawi's geneological table is as follows:-

1. As-Shaikh al-Qutub Sayyid Sirajuddin Abdul Fazl al Habi Sayyid Alawi
2. Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Sayyid Sahl
3. Sayyid Sahl Ibn Sayyid Muhammad
4. Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Sayyid Alawi
5. Sayyid Alawi Ibn Sayyid Sulaiman
6. Sayyid Sulaiman Ibn Sayyid Umar
7. Sayyid Umar Ibn Sayyid Muhammad
8. Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Sayyid Sahl
9. Sayyid Sahl Ibn Sayyid Abdu Rahman Moula Qaila
10. Sayyid Abdu Rahman Ibn Sayyid Abdullah
11. Sayyid Abdulla Ibn Sayyid Alawi
12. Sayyid Alawi Ibn Sayyid Muhammad Mouludhaveela
13. Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Sayyid Ali
14. Sayyid Ali Ibn Sayyid Alawi
15. Sayyid Alawi Ibn Sayyid Muhammad Faqih al Muqaddam
16. Sayyid Muhammad Faqih al Muqaddam Ibn Sayyid Muhammad Sahibil Mirbat
17. Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Sahibil Mirbat bin Sayyid Ali Khalekhazam
18. Sayyid Ali Khalekhazam Ibn Sayyid Alawi
19. Sayyid Alawi Ibn Sayyid Muhammad
20. Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Sayyid Alawi

21. Sayyid Alawi Ibn Sayyid Ubaidullah Ba-Alawi
22. Sayyid Ubaidulla Ibn Sayyid Ahmed al-Muhajir
23. Sayyid Ahmed Ibn Isa Naqib
24. Isa Naqib Ibn Sayyid Muhammad
25. Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Ali al Huraidi
26. Ali Huraidi Ibn Imam Sayyid Jafar Sadiq
27. Imam Jafar Sadiq Ibn Imam Sayyid Muhammad Baqir
28. Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Ibn Imam Sayyid Zainul  
Abideen Ali
29. Sayyid Zainul Abideen Ali Ibn Sayyid Imam Hussain
30. Sayyid Imam Hussain Ibn Ali Ibn Abu Talib
31. Ali Ibn Abu Talib Wa binth Sayyida Fathima
32. Sayyid Fathima wa binthi Rasool (the Prophet).<sup>3</sup>

Sayyid Alawi had acquired knowledge to recite the Quran by heart (Hafiz) at an early age. He completed his primary education under a respectable scholar of Tarim. He was born and brought up in a spiritual atmosphere. The early training helped him very much to mould his career. Just like his predecessors he upheld the puritan and uncompromising Islamic ideology.

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3. Abdu Rahman Ibn Muhammad Hasan Ibn Abdulla, Shamsudhaheera (Arabic), Hyderabad, 1925, p.32.

Sayyid Alawi in Malabar:

Sayyid Alawi has arrived in Malabar on February 7, 1768 AD (Ramzan 19, 1181 A.H.)<sup>4</sup> at the age of seventeen and settle down at Mamburam, where his maternal uncle, Sayyid Hasan Jifri had been a religious teacher. He came to Kerala, probably, at the invitation of Sayyid Shaikh Jifri. Because of his noble descent, he enjoyed a religious authority unmatched by anybody else in Malabar at that time. During the course of the century he developed as an erudite religious leader, widely respected and venerated and as a result, Mamburam became an important religious centre.<sup>5</sup>

Sayyid 'Alawi married Fathima, the daughter of his uncle, Hasan Jifri, and settled down in the Maliyekkal (Tarammal) house of Mamburam. Tiriurangadi Qazi Jamaluddin Maqdam took particular interest in the marriage as ordered by Sayyid Hasan Jifri.<sup>6</sup> By his first marriage Sayyid 'Alawi had one daughter named

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4. P.P. Mammad Koya Parappil, Kozhikode Muslingalude Charitram, Calicut, 1994, p.95

5. K.N. Panikkar, Against Lord and State Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar, 1836-1921, New Delhi, 1992, p.61.

6. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit., pp.27-8.

Sherifa Kunhivi. After the death of his first wife he married Fathima, daughter of Kovil Kandi Ambakantakath Abubakr Madani of Quilandy. Sayyid Fazl was the son of his second wife.<sup>7</sup> Then he married Aysha, daughter of Sayyid Habib-al-Bukhari, Qadi of Ponmundam of whom he had two daughters named Fathima and Saliha. After the death of Fathima of Quilandi he married an Indonesian woman, belonging to the Sayyid family, named Saliha Timore.<sup>8</sup> But they had no children.

#### Sayyid 'Alawi's missionary activities

Following the proud traditions of the Bā-'Alawi Sayyids, Sayyid 'Alawi took special interest in missionary activities. He travelled throughout Ernad and Walluwanad taluks for this purpose. He had realised the importance of mosques in Islamic solidarity of Mappilas and so took initiative to erect mosques in various parts of Ernad and Walluwanad, as a centre of religious and cultural activities of Mappilas. Following were the important mosques erected by the Tangal. Tanur Vadakke (North) mosque, Munniyur Odungat Chinakkal mosque, Muttiara mosque and Ponmundam

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7. P.P. Mammad Koya Parappil, op.cit., p.95.

8. Ibid.

mosque.<sup>9</sup> Regarding his missionary activities and their purposes, K.N. Panikkar observes: "The real importance of the teachings of Sayyid 'Alawi Tangal was that they initiated a process of revitalization and regeneration among the Mappilas. His efforts were mainly addressed to the purification of religious practices and the creation of a sense of solidarity among Muslims. He travelled extensively, delivering religious discourses in different parts of the district where he helped to establish new, and renovate the old, mosques. He stressed the importance of unity and urged strict compliance with the tenents of Islam. His emphasis was on self purification - a jihad against Nafs - which he considered essential for the advance of the community".<sup>10</sup>

Sayyid 'Alawi's sense of justice and equality as well as his courage to protest against evils is illustrated by his treatment of a rich and noble man of Kalpakanchery. In the course of his country wide journey Sayyid 'Alawi visited the Banglow of Mandayapurath Ahmed Kutty Moopan of Kalpakanchery.

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9. C.N. Ahmed Moulavi, K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, Mahataya Mappila Sahitya Paramparayam, Calicut, 1978, p.177.

10. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.62.

Ahmed Kutty Moopan was the wealthiest land lord of the area and member of the age old taravadu (family). Moopan's servant served food to Sayyid 'Alawi when the Moopan was playing chess (chaturanga) with his friends. Sayyid 'Alawi performed the midday and evening prayers from there, but Ahmed Kutty Moopan continued his play without performing the prayers. Sayyid 'Alawi took his walking stick and beat the Moopan for shirking his duty as a Muslim. Moopan repented and the Tangal was allowed to return only with a boatful of rice and vegetables.<sup>11</sup>

Sayyid 'Alaiw neither established any tariqah nor introduced practices and cusotms alien to the spirit of Islam. He had called upon the Muslims to the teachings of Holy Quran and Sunnah. Just like his ancestor Shaikh Jifri, he was an ardent critic of the teachings and practices of Kondotti Tangal and his disciples. Sayyid 'Alawi depicted Muhammed Shah as a Shia belonging to the Bohra sect. He says, "Among the Pathans there are four groups belonging to sunnis; Shaikhs, S~~ay~~yids, Mughals and Pathans. This Kundotti faqir belonged to none of these groups but to the Bohra which came under an extreme heretic shia group called

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11. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit., pp.28-9.

Rawafiz.<sup>12</sup> During his career he achieved an undying reputation and holds a firm place as the greatest of the Bā-Alawi saints of Kerala. His life is described as an epitome of Islamic virtues.<sup>13</sup> He was keen in observing the requirements of fard (compulsory religious duties) and Sunnah (voluntary religious duties). He followed the example of the Prophet and his immediate comrades in all walks of life. Following the tradition of Bā-Alawi saints, he spoke little and kept his promise. He was a well wisher of the poor and destitutes. He observed fast weekly and slept little. He has spent his time in studying Quran, Hadith and meditation. He had practised what he had preached. This was the secret behind his success as a missionary.<sup>14</sup>

Yet, Sayyid 'Alawi was not a narrowminded aggressive missionary. He was an angel of communal harmony and brotherhood. Though he was not ready to compromise with un-Islamic practices, he never mocked at the customs and traditions of other religious sects.

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12. The Statement of Sayyid 'Alawi on Dec. 1840/13th Ramzan 1256.

13. Roland E. Miller, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Revised Ed., Hyderabad, 1992. p.256.

14. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit., pp. 31-32.

A large number of Hindus approached him for blessing. He maintained cordial relation with upper caste Hindu nobles as well as lower castes. His scribe and secretary was one Konthu Nair, who remained as a constant companion of the Tangal till his death.<sup>15</sup> Sayyid 'Alawi's advice and leadership was even accepted by the Hindus particularly belonging to the low caste. Kozhi (kock) Kaliyatam of Muttiara (Munniyur), a low caste festival connecting with the beginning of rainy season and agricultural activities was sanctioned by Sayyid Alawi. He even fixed its day as Friday being a holiday for Mappilas to ensure their participation as a token of communal harmony. Prof. K.M. Bahahuddin observes: This fact alone refutes the communal propaganda let loose against him by the British.<sup>16</sup> In spite of all these facts, Mr. Conolly depicted him as 'an Arab fanatic of the worst description'.<sup>17</sup>

As a result of Sayyid 'Alawi's missionary activities, Mappila Muslims in large scale returned to the true faith and practices of Islam. "The Mamburam

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15. Ibid., p.117.

16. Bahahuddin, K.M., Kerala Muslims, the Long Struggle, Kottayam, 1992, p.111.

17. C M O, Vol.I, p.33.

Tangals and their teachings were, nevertheless, highly influential elements in the cultural and religious life of the Mappilas".<sup>18</sup> The wide spread belief among Mappilas that the Mamburam Tangal could do miracles also prompted them to follow his foot-prints. Members of Hindu community were also moved by his supernatural powers.

Sticking to the tradition of his predecessors of Malabar in particular and Bā-'Alawi saints of Hadramawt in general, Sayyid 'Alawi was always ready to help the needy, the poor and the destitute. His rich disciples and devotees donated rice, vegetables, money, gold and silver to the Tangal. That was given to the needy irrespective of caste and creed.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, there is no wonder that this saint had conquered the heart of Mappilas as well as the oppressed classes of Malabar.

#### Sayyid 'Alawi's Anti-Colonial Outlook

It is already mentioned that Sayyid 'Alawi and his son Sayyid Fazl adopted strong anti-colonial policy

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18. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.63.

19. For details of his charity, see K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit., pp.43-6.

due to the change in circumstance. During this period, the country was under British rule. British authorities did their best to appease the Tangal, the religious leader of the Mappila community. But Sayyid Alawi, following the age old traditions of Bā-Alawi Sayyids of Hadramawt refused to meet any government official. Non-co-operation was the method adopted by the Tangal and other Ulema of Malabar (for instance, Umar Qazi of Velliankode) of the time towards the British government'.<sup>20</sup> His anti-colonial outlook is clearly depicted in the famous work Assaif-al-Battar (The Sharp sword). This work is a collection of fatwa issued by Sayyid Alawi against the British. It is the reply of Sayyid Alawi to eight questions raised by Abdulla Ibn Abdul Bari Abdal Tangal of Quilandi. Copies of the fatwa were secretly circulated in Mappila Mahals of Malabar. The copies of the fatwa were proscribed and destroyed by the British. But its original copy was with the questioner and he handed it over to Sayyid Alawi's son Sayyid Fazl. Sayyid Fazl compiled it and published it along with other fatawa of Arabi-Hindi theologians from Egypt in 1856-'57 AD (1273

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20. A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1989, p.218.

AH) titled, Uddat-al-Umara wal Hukum Li-Ihanatil Kafarat wa-Abadat al-Asnam. Assaif-al-Battar included in this collection from page 24 to 38.<sup>21</sup> Most of the questions raised by the questioner are on the attitude and policy of Muslims towards colonial rule. Sayyid 'Alawi gave his views in detail regarding the attitude of believers towards colonial rulers. Sayyid 'Alawi declares that jihad becomes compulsory for the moment the infidels (Kuffar-here the British) entered the country. In such a situation all including those up on whom military service is not compulsory such as old, women, and children also should participate in jihad.<sup>22</sup> Quoting Quranic verses and traditions Sayyid 'Alawi asserts: Since the Kufars (the British) had entered the country all the Muslims despite the old and women upon whom the participation in the fight is not compulsory should take part in the fight.<sup>23</sup> The fatwa of Sayyid 'Alawi mentioned above, unequivocally declared Jihad against the British who had usurped the rule of the country and oppressed the people, as obligatory upon all Muslims.

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21. The copy of this work is available at Kakkov Jama Masjid Library.

22. Sayyid Fazl, Uddat al-Umara wal Hukkam li-Ihanatil Kafarat wa-Abadat al Asnam, Egypt, 1856/57 (1273 AH), p.27.

23. Ibid., p.26

In a fatwa Sayyid 'Alawi stated that Europeans are the worst unbelievers. If any Muslims praises the Christians and their rule, it is a sin and he should repent for it. If one praises the Christian belief he becomes an infidel and God's anger will be fall up on him. Those Muslims who praise the rule of Kuffar (the British) are fools and they may be following all the vices of the Kuffar and will become are among them.<sup>24</sup>

Sayyid 'Alawi exhorted the Muslims to take by-heart the sufi texts like Nafais al-Durar, Hidayat al-Adkyai and Jawharath al-Tawhid till the English leave the country because these works are the food of saintly men .

Sayyyid 'Alawi tried to interpret all problems of the Muslims through religious perspective. He never believed that Mappilas would get justice from British Court. When asked about the position of those Muslims who approached the court of Christians, Sayyid 'Alawi gave the following answer: "If one approach the Court of Christians with the belief that the code of Christians are better than that of Islam, then he is an apostate (murtad). If he do so accepting the

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24. Ibid., p.28, 29, 30, 31.

supramacy of Islam then he is a debanchee (Fasiq).<sup>25</sup> Sayyid 'Alawi issued such a verdict knowing fully the nature and purpose of British judiciary. As stated by a British official, "In the British Court a Mappila is not equal to a Hindu, his documents are not authentic, the cases are decided in favour of the jenmi and the poor Mappila tenant is evicted from the land mercilessly."<sup>26</sup> His final conclusion and order to the Muslims was that it is the obligation of believers to liberate the country from colonial rule. And he advised them to fight the British till the end.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, Sayyid 'Alawi's anti-colonial view was largely an extension of his religious beliefs and his teachings aroused anti-British, anti-colonial feelings among Mappilas.

Along with this religious factor, socio-economic policies of the British prompted the Tangal to adopt such a stand. Tipu ceded Malabar to the British through the treaty of Srirangapatam in 1792. 'The

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25. Ibid., P.37

26. H. Wigram, Officiating Distict Judge, south Malabar, to the Chief Secretary to Government, 8 Nov., 1880, No: 319, Quoted in K.K.N Kurup, William Logan, A study in the Agrarian Relations of Malabar, Calicut, 1981, pp. 17-18.

27. Sayyid 'Alawi, Assaiful-al-Battar, op.cit., p.29.

destruction of Tipu's authority in Malabar and early British settlement policies led to the restoration of the social and economic position of the dominant castes'.<sup>28</sup> The recongnisation of Hindu Jenmis as the legal owners of land by the British and the deliberate measures taken by the judiciary, court, police and other organs of the British administration to safeguard the interest of landed gentry had worsened the fate of Mappila tenants. The economic and educational backwardness of Mappilas was aggravated by the none too friendly attitude of the British officials, particularly during the first half of the 19th century. This policy of the British authority might have invited the wrath of Sayyid Alawi. Stephen Fredarick Dale suggest that these kind of unnecessary harsh actions of British official paved the way for immediate outbreaks.<sup>29</sup>

In his struggle against the British, probably, he drew his inspiration from the heroic struggle launched by the north Indian Ulama against British raj.

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28. S.F. Dale, 'Islam and social conflict, the Mappilas of Malabr, 1498-1922', unpublished doctoral dissertation (T N A), p.84

29. Ibid., p.91

His contemporary Umar Qazi of Veliyankode<sup>30</sup> continued his unique fight against colonialism by introducing novel and revolutionary methods of agitation such as non-co-operation and non-payment of taxes. Sayyid 'Alawi emphasised the need for Hindu-Muslim unity to fight th British.<sup>31</sup>

Important Mappila Uprisings during Sayyid 'Alawi's period

a) Athan Gurukkal's revolt of 1817

British officials suspected that Sayyid 'Alawi was behind the Mappila uprisings led by Unni Mutha Moopan, Manjeri Athan Gurukkal (senior) and Chemban Poker during 1800-1801. Thus they had even contemplated his (Sayyid Alawi's) arrest. What held them back was fear of a possible protest riot'.<sup>32</sup> The reason for the

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30. Ummar Qazi of Veliyankode (175-1852) was a close friend of Sayyid 'Alawi. They exchanged their religious and political views. Because of his anti-colonial activities, he was summoned to appear before the Deputy Collector of Chavakkad. When he appeared he was detained in the lock-up. Later he was summoned to Calicut and the collector put him under arrest. Sayyid 'Alawi and Mappilas of Malabar marching to Calicut, demanded his release. Fearing a mass Mappila uprising, Collector Macelud released him (for details, see K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem's Velyenkode Umar Qazi).

31. C.K. Kareem, Kerala Muslim History, Statistics, Directory (Malayalam), vol.I, Cochin, 1991, p.544.

32. S.F. Dale, op.cit., pp.116-17.

proposed arrest was that two of the participants of revolt were found in the Tirurangadi mosque.<sup>33</sup>

Manjeri Athan Gurukkal was killed in the revolt of 1801. His land was escheated by the state. In March 1817, his son Athan Gurukkal (Junior) led hundreds of Mappila brigades to seize and occupy the lands which his father previously held. After five days, the rebels were defeated and arrested. The British suspected Sayyid 'Alawi Tangal of complicity in the revolt. According to the official record, the person who headed the revolt was 'a Mussalman Moplah of the name of Taramalle Coya (Sayyid 'Alawi) an Arab by birth, but who had been settled in the province for upwards of 40 years and whose reputation for sanctity is so great that every Moplah Mussalman in Malabar looks upon him almost as a prophet.'<sup>34</sup> But there is, no clear cut evidence to establish Sayyid 'Alawi's active involvement in the revolt of 1817. "Apparently Sayyid 'Alawi did not actually accompany this expedition, hardly surprising in view of the fact that he was sixtyfive years old in 1817, but the Tannal

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33. Bahahuddin, K.M., op.cit., pp.111-12.

34. M D R, 1817, letter Received, Police, pp.435-36.

(Tangal) is known to have instigated or atleast sanctioned the occupation,..."<sup>35</sup>

After the revolt of 1817, Sayyid Alawi was summoned to Calicut to report before the Collector James Vaughan (1816-26). Sayyid Alawi reached Calicut with a large band of armed party, vowing never to surrender himself to the authority. Actually he was summoned to Calicut to be imprisoned. This fact is clear from the message sent by the Collector to his higher authorities, expressing his inability to arrest him. As long as he returned the power of wielding his weapon' the collector remarked, "from his reputation for sanctity and the high estimation in which he is held by the Moplah high and low... I had reason to believe that any attempt to seize the Tangal by force would be attended with the most dreadful consequences. No less than a general rise of the population ... and the police chiefly consisting of Nairs, a caste most hostile to the other; the flames would rise to most alarming heights'."<sup>36</sup>

b) Muttiara riot (Munniyur uprising)

British authorities never lost a chance which helped them to destroy Hindu-Muslim unity of Malabar.

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35. S.F. Dale, The Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922, New York, 1980, p.117.

The best example is the Muttiara riot of 1841. Muttiara lies in the north western part of Mamburam apparently two miles away from the seat of Sayyid Alawi. Tottachery Tachu Panikar was an influential jenmi of the locality. He lodged a complaint against the Muslims that they encroached upon his land and one Naganar Moideen built a small shop and a school-room on waste land belonging to him.<sup>37</sup> But Mappilas denied this charge through a writing left by them and found after their murder. Accordingly, they had obtained the land from Panikkar, first on mortgage and afterwards on full purchase.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, the origin of the Muttiara uprising was agrarian problem or dispute overland.

Panikkar and his men along with the peon had insulted the Mappilas while they were at prayer in the month of fasting. Moideen had been dragged out of the mosque and was being bound by the party of Tachu Panikkar. Moideen's relatives who had assembled at the

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36. M D R, 1817, op.cit.

37. T.L. Strange Commission Report, dated 25 Sept., 1852, p.411.

38. Ibid.

mosque fell upon the aggressors and killed Panikkar and the peon.<sup>39</sup> Though T.L. strange quoted the above facts from the letter of Mappila participants of the uprising, he rejected it as 'falsehood',<sup>40</sup> depending on the statement of the Tahsildar that only a peon was sent with Panikar to summon the Mappilas. There would be possibility of the jenmis band joining him. Secondly, T.L. Strange pointed out that if Mappilas had any complaint against the landlord, they might simply have gone to the Taluk cutcherry.<sup>41</sup> In a system which whole heartedly supported the case of upper caste Hindu Land lords, it is natural that Mappilas had little faith in British administrative institutions. Hence, they never sought their mercy. Thirdly, even chief secretary of Madras had admitted the excess committed by the peon. "It appears that the occurrence at Sheranad (Sic-Ernad) was owing chiefly to the manner in which the Nair peon who was deputed with the summon to Naganar Moiden and other Mappila associated with him".<sup>42</sup>

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39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., p.412

41. Ibid.

42. Extract from the Minutes of Consultation under date 8th Feb. 1842, Jucicial Department, No:90.

Mappilas of the locality had intimated the matter to Sayyid Alawi. He advised them to desist from such activities and appealed them to maintain communal harmony. Mappilas returned agreeing to abide by the order of the Tangal.<sup>43</sup>

British officials exploited this unfortunate incident to inflame communal hatred and attacked the Mappilas. The British troops laid seize on the mosque of Muttiara and launched attack against Mappilas on November 13, 1841. Mappilas under Kaithakkakath Marakkarutty fought vigougrously against the British. However, they were defeated and killed. Eleven Mappilas lost their lives including Kaithakkakath Moideenkutty.<sup>44</sup>

The dead bodies of these Mappila martyrs (Shahids) were buried by British officials and they posted guards to prevent Mappilas from entering the burial ground. However, on 17th November 1841, a large band of Mappilas, estimated at 2000, set at defiance the police party on guard over the spot where the above Mappila martyrs had been burried, and forcibly carried

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43. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op, cit., p.49.

44. Ibid., p.50.

of their bodies and interred them with honours at a mosque (the dead bodies were buried on western side of the Muttiara mosque by the Mappilas).<sup>45</sup> After this uprising, Sayyid 'Alawi issued his fatwa titled Assaif-ul-Battar, advocating the Mappilas to fight the British till the end.<sup>46</sup> After the cremation of the deadbodies at Muttiara, a wall was built around their tombs and lights burned there and offering made to their memories. In every year Hindus and Muslims took part in the Nercha conducted there for commemorating the memories of Muttiara Shahids (Martyrs).<sup>47</sup> The massive participation of Hindus in this Nercha is a clear proof of the non communal character of the uprising.

c) Cherur riot

Cherur riot was the last incident which occurred during the life time of Sayyid 'Alawi. There are enough official as well as local sources to recreate the uprising in full historical light. It is a revolt of complex nature. Both religious and socio-economic factors had played a dominant role in the

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45. W.Logan, Malabar Manual Vol.I, Reprint, Trivandrum, 1987, p.625.

46. C.N. Ahmed Moulavi and K.K Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit., p.178.

47. C.K. Kareem, op.cit., p.545.

uprising. Kaprat Krishna Panikar, the Adigharee was the centre figure of the riot. In August 1843 a complaint was made by the Mappilas of Tirurangadi village that he had thrown great dishonour on Mappilas by forcing a lower caste Hindu (Tiyya) woman convert to apostatize from Islam.<sup>48</sup> The local ballad, 'Cherur Padapattu'<sup>49</sup> described the event as follows: Six persons (3 male and 3 female) of Venniyur, Tirurangadi embraced the religion in the presence of the Tangal and their names were Husain, Sahl, Ahmed, Khadeeja, Aysha and Aleema. When Kaprat Krishna Panikar came to know about the incident, he summoned the converts. As per the order of the Adigharee, all converts met him. When he threatened to punish them if they refuse to return to their old faith, they (One of the female converts was Krishna Panikkar's maid-servant) refused to budge.

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48. Letter from H.V. Conolly to J.F. Thomas, Secretary to Govt., Judicial Dept. dated 30th Oct 1843, Calicut, No.27/43, C M O, vol.II, p.97.

49. This ballad is composed by two Mappila poets of Cherur named Mammad Kutty and Muhiyudheen, just after the riot and became very popular and acted as a source of inspiration for Mappila rebels. Cherur Padapattu (War song) was printed and published by Sayeed Ali of Tellicherry from Madaharul Muhimmath litho press. British officials sealed the press and proscribed the copies of the ballad before its circulation (see C.K. Kareem, op.cit., vol.II, p.242).

The woman, by wearing a blouse and standing very near to the Adigharee, and addressing him 'you' (in the singular) had challenged the social status of upper castes. The Thiyya woman by doing so violated the caste rule because, "the tradition fostered by the Brahmins ascribes to the mandate of *Parasurama* which ordained that Sudra women would put off chastity and devote themselves to satisfy the desire of Brahmins".<sup>50</sup> K.N. Panikkar observes: "The younger Tangal (Sayyid Fazl) also issued some fatwas regulating the social conduct of Mappilas, particularly their intercourse with Hindus. In the injunctions, the Tangal disapproved the use of the honorific 'you' (in the plural) in addressing Nairs,...."<sup>51</sup> The District Collector had the opinion that these injunctions tended 'to increase the uneasiness felt by the Hindus because of the altered tone assumed by many of the lower classes of Moplahs.'<sup>52</sup> Through these injunctions, the Tangals' aimed at the unity in the social contacts of Mappilas and to raise the social status of lower caste converts.

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50. C. Achuthamenon, Cochin State Manual, Cochin, 1910, p.193.

51. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.62.

52. CMO Vol. I., p.276.

The Ezhava woman is depicted as follows in the official record. 'The woman a bold desirable looking person had taken advantage of her new creed.... As the teer (Ezhava) of the day, before she had approached only within 12 paces of him and called him, by the respectable title of lord or master. As the Mussalman of the next day she came close to him and called him by his proper and familiar name a peculiar insult in this country from an inferior to a superior'.<sup>53</sup> When the woman refused to remove her blouse as a symbol of her return to the old creed, the Adigharee got angry. He had his retinue surrounded the converts and forcefully removed the blouse and boots of the woman.<sup>54</sup>

#### Enquiry of Mr. Conolly

Mr. Conolly, the Collector of Malabar had conducted detailed enquiry on the complaint of Mappilas lodged against Kaprat Krishna Panikar. He reported, "... I had all the parties before me examined them at length, and as it appeared that the Adigharee had acted very injudiciously to say the least/in forcing this woman who was an outdoor manual in his family to take off the loose boddies with which she had been arrayed

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53. CMO. vol.II., pp.97-98.

54. Cherur Padapattu

as a sign of the conversion to Mohamedanism. I seemed it proper to remove him from his public situation".<sup>55</sup> The Government accepted his suggestion and removed the Adigharee from his office on 15th October 1843.

But this measure never satisfied the rebels. The Taluk Peshkar, a respectable Mappila was asked to collect the taxes from Tirurangadi. The people of Tirurangadi refused to pay tax. It resulted in a collision between the Mappilas and Government officials. As a result two village peons were wounded, a Mappila who was responsible for this incident was taken into custody and brought to Calicut on October 18 for trial. His fellow comrades were preparing to rescue him. But the government took all necessary precautions to thwart their plan. The next day (October 19) a Nair taluk peon was found killed. The officials attributed this murder to the disciples of Sayyid 'Alawi.<sup>56</sup> But this was only an assumption and there was no proof to establish it. Rather it was part of a general tendency of the British authorities to attribute all murders and clash to disciples of Sayyid 'Aalawi.

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55. CMO Vol.II, p.97.

56. Ibid., p.100.

Murder of Kaprat Krishna Panikkar

Kaprat Krishna Panikkar was described as a powerful jenmi who was an emblem of persecution and oppression in a work titled, Malayaalethile Janmimar (Jenmis in Malayalam) written by K.C.M. Raja and Krishna Warriar published in 1907 or 1908 from Trichur.<sup>57</sup> Now, Panikkar who had lost his official post due to his atrocities against an Ezhava woman convert, was exposed to the fury of the rebels on 19th October 1843. Kunnancheri Ali Athan and five others killed him.<sup>58</sup> There is no evidence, however to show whether the rebels had any personal grievance to do so.

After killing Panikkar, the rebels took refuge at an apartment of a rich Nair, Kuttiporata Panikkar. The rebels plan was to kill him because he had withheld wages of one of the rebels but he was not there on 22nd October 1843.<sup>59</sup> A detachment consisting of 1 lieutenant, 1 Subadar, 1 Jemadar, 3 havildars, 4 naigues, 1 drummer, 51 prwates, 1 puckalli and 1 lascar

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57. This work is not seen by the Reaserch scholar. It is told by an eminent Mappila historian, K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem in an interview dated 30th April 1996.

58. W. Logan, op.cit., p.626.

59. CMO Vol. II, p.102.

of the 5th Regiment Native Infantry, under Captain Leader was deputed to the spot.<sup>60</sup> They took all precaution to prevent the escape of the rebels. The commanding officer ordered that the police and peons should not fire at the rebels without orders and they were asked to guard on all sides of the house with ropes to receive the rebels. Thus all chances for the escape of the rebels were closed. The British army and sepoys wanted to catch them alive. British Regiment demanded the surrender of the rebels. They asked them to come out of the house. The rebels replied, 'wait a bit, as soon as we finish a prayer or two we will come. Get ready for us! We have done this by Sayyid Alawi's order, and with his blessing, to remove the slur from our religion'.<sup>61</sup>

The rebels came out and troops fired, but missed and what followed was a fierce battle. Cherur Pada Patta illustrates the ferocity of the battle as follows: "The number of men killed by tiger Husain's blows and the number who fell by Bookari's strokes - hands down, feet up, broken-necked, we know not, and

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60. W. Logan, Loc.cit.

61. Cherur Padapattu, quoted in W. Logan op. cit., p.129.

the number of heads and arms separated by Ali Hasan's blows we cannot tell, neither can we estimate the number destroyed by the lion-cub Mohidin'.<sup>62</sup> Though the above description of the pitched battle is not free from poetic imagination, its content is more or less the same as in the official records. It is true that British soldiers met heavy loss as a result of the war.

There were conflicting opinions regarding the casualties of the war. Mr. R.G. Burtton's article in the 'Journal of The United Services Institute of India' on Mappila outbreaks recorded that in Cherur riot seven Mappilas were killed. One Subedar (Kasim) and three soldiers were murdered by Mappilas. One British citizen, five soldiers and seven sepoy were injured.<sup>63</sup> Cherur Padapattu presents a different picture on the casualties of the war. The dead bodies of seven shahids (martyrs - Mappilas) lay straightly... twenty dead bodies of the disbelievers (British soldiers, sepoy) found, injured disbelievers numbered fifty or twenty four'.<sup>64</sup> Among the injured British personnel, Captain Leader's name was also included.

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62. Ibid.

63. Quoted in C.N. Ahmed Moulavi, K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit., pp.128-29.

64. Cherur Padapattu.

Puvadan Muhiyudheen, Punatakkapuram Moideen Puntiruti Ismail, Pattarkadavu Hussain, Moosakutty, Ali Hassan Chokkad Bukhari were the seven Mappila Sahids (martyrs) of Cherur riot.<sup>65</sup> Regarding the burial of their dead bodies there were confusing reports in the official records and the account of Mappila Muslim historians of Malabar. Mappila Muslim writers are of the opinion that their dead bodies were brought to Tirurangadi for cremation by the British officials. Owing to the staunch opposition of the Mappilas under Sayyid 'Alawi, British officials were forced to abandon the plan and the dead bodies were given to Mappilas and they had buried it at Tirurangadi Mandani Parampu (site) with full religious respect and honour.<sup>66</sup>

After stating about the burial of Mappila rebels dead bodies near the Taluk Cutcherry of Tirurangadi, Mr. Conolly observes; "This precaution was observed in order to avoid a recurrence of what took place in the same Taluk/and immediate vicinity/in Nov.1841 (Muttiara riot) - where a large body of Moplahs decelerated the corpses of similar criminals

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65. C.K. Kareem, op.cit., p.242.

66. C.K. Kareem, loc. cit, C.N. Ahmed Moulavi and K.K. Mohamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit., p.179.

which had been burried by the Government officers and paid them funeral homage as martyrs.<sup>67</sup> Thus, the government has taken all precautions to avoid the repetition of what had happened after the Muttiara riot. They had even abandoned the idea of cremating the dead bodies of Mappilas and Musalman peons were entrusted this task. "The Mussalman peons were directed to take the bodies of the murderers to Tiruwangady (Tirurangadi) to be buried. And the bodies of the Subedar and Supoys (Sepoys) who were killed together with the peons are ready to be sent up by boat to Calicut".<sup>68</sup> 'Cherur Pada Pattu', a contemporary source of the event also agreed with the official statements. "The Peschar master and others took the corpses to Tirur (Tirurangadi) and buried in the mountain parampa (Mandani Parampu near Tirurangadi taluk cutcherry).<sup>69</sup> If the Mappilas under Sayyid 'Alawi rescued the corpses as stated by Mappila Muslim historians, it would have been burried in Cherur, the prime spot of the war and not in Tirurangadi as happened in the case of Muttiara riot.

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67. CMO Vol.II., p.102.

68. Ibid., p.34.

69. Cherur Padapattu.

The Cherur riot was a shock to the British authorities. Though they were supported by a British Regiment of sixty soldiers under Captain Leader and hundreds of local peons, they were not able to catch a single rebel alive. These trained soldiers and sepoys were not able to check the casualties met by them. "In consequence of the death of Subedar (Kasim) and the wounds of Commanding Officer (Captain Leader), the sepoys were very much down hearted."<sup>70</sup>

#### Role of Sayyid Alawi in Cherur riot

Kaprat Krishna Panikkar whose atrocities paved the way for Cherur riot, had close contact with Sayyid Alawi and used to send presents to the Tangal. A number of Mappilas of Cherur were his employees. In order to avoid a possible rising of Hindu-Muslim brethren against colonialism, British officials exploited the rift that arose between upper caste Hindus and Muslims as a result of the conversion of an ezhava woman.<sup>71</sup> Probably, the atrocities of Kaprat Krishna Panikkar might have destroyed the friendly relation of the Tangal with him. Sayyid Alawi's

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70. CMO Vol.II., p.37.

71. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit., pp.57-9.

attempt to regularise the social customs and ideological beliefs of Mappilas, especially new converts also invited the wrath of the custodians of status, i.e. the guardians of caste system, untouchability and other social evils, for instance, Sayyid 'Alawi and his son Sayyid Fazl had taught the Mappilas to abandon the honorific title 'You' in addressing upper caste Hindus, and asked the poorer Mappilas to desist from eating the left over food of rich Hindus during the occasion of festivals. They, moreover, asked them to halt their work on Friday for better observation of religious obligations.<sup>72</sup> Regarding the validity of the injunctions, K.N. Panikkar observes: "They were issued at a time when conversion to Islam among lower castes was gaining ground, as one of the results of the abolition of slavery. These converts carried their traditional social practices to their new faith and continued to behave in their social life as if nothing had changed. They tended to maintain and express the same respect to upper caste Hindus as they had in the past, and most of them being poor received and ate left over food from Hindu households. Unaccustomed to the idea of congregational

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72. CMO Vol. I., p.276.

worship on a fixed day, and work being a necessary daily routine, they did not regularly attend Friday prayers in the mosques".<sup>73</sup> Therefore, the teachings of Sayyid 'Alawi and his effort to raise the social standard of lower caste converts might have alarmed the vested interests. This fact is clear from the manner in which Kaprat Krishna Panikar had tackled the issue of the conversion of one of his maid-servants. He was provoked by the violation of caste custom by the woman which he thought would destroy his superior social status.

British officials had strongly suspected the involvement of Sayyid 'Alawi in the outbreaks which occurred during this period. Mr. Conolly, Collector of Malabar had informed J.F. Thomas, Secretary to Government, Madras, on 30th November 1843 as follows: ".... I thought it desirable to issue for an Arab priest (Sayyid Alawi) who had great influence with the Moplahs in that part of the country (Ernad, Walluwanad Taluks), and questioned him about it."<sup>74</sup> But Mr. Conolly himself expressed his fear of dealing with the Tangal. He says: "But it is my duty to warn the

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73. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.63.

74. CMO Vol. II., p.94.

government that an attempt to remove these men (the Tanglas ie. Sayyid Alawi, his son and son-in-law) might be attended with serious consequences...".<sup>75</sup> Therefore the government is reluctant to take any action against Sayyid 'Alawi and his family members.

Though they were reluctant to take measures against Sayyid 'Alawi and other Arab priests, they never spared any chance to warn them against the dire consequence of their activities. Mr. Conolly advised the priests to instill better principles in their followers head. According to him, "No man would commit murder, then throw away his life if he believed that such conduct would lead him to Hell instead of to Paradise".<sup>76</sup> And he also warned them that if they desist from this duty it will be treated as a guilty.

There was a firm belief among the Mappilas of Tirurangadi that Sayyid 'Alawi fought incognito in the Cherur riot. Accordingly, his presence in the battlefield was one of the reasons for the heavy casualties of the British. They also believed that he was wounded on the leg which proved fatal.<sup>77</sup> After the

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75. CMO Vol. II., p.111

76. Ibid., pp.394-95.

77. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op. cit., pp.59-61.

Cherur war, British troops were asked to move to Tirurangadi. Then the Shirestadar made a personal inquiry on the whereabouts of Sayyid Alawi. He had sent his agent to the Tangal to persuade him to warn the insurgents against mispropriety of their conduct, who were roaming in and around Tirurangadi with arms. Sayyid Alawi replied: "He could not do anything in the affair and that government may take what steps they choose to punish the offenders".<sup>78</sup> The Shirastadar had sent an emissary to Mamburam from Tirurangadi to enquire of him. The emissary was told that Sayyid Alawi had not been there and he never made his public appearance on October 23rd 1843.<sup>79</sup> This official statement coincided with the general belief mentioned above. But his active participation was doubtful, since he was of course, ninety three years old in 1843. Sometimes, age never dimmed his physical strength. However, there is no doubt that Sayyid Alawi had blessed and sanctioned the action. This is evident from the sayings of the rebels as cited in the Cherur Pada Pattu.<sup>80</sup>

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78. CMO Vol.II, p.35.

79. Ibid., p.35.

80. W. Logan, op.cit., p.129.

British authorities began to think about the measures to suppress such 'outrages' in future. Mr. Conolly has suggested the disarming of Mappilas of the locality as a measure to check further uprisings.<sup>81</sup> T.L. Strange, the Special Commissioner appointed to enquire about the Mappila 'outrages' in 1852 treated the Cherur riot as "a case of the purest fanaticism".<sup>82</sup> He rejected the ill treatment of tiyya woman by the Adigharee as baseless<sup>83</sup> and according to him, Kaprat Krishna Panikar had simply persuaded the parties to throw off the 'Moplah costume'.<sup>84</sup> Mr. Strange's attempt was to simplify the whole event. A civilized person is not in a position to justify the atrocities of Kaprat Krishna Panikar against a woman of the lower caste. Mr. Conolly in his report had clearly described the atrocities of the Adigharee and recommended for dismissal.

#### Miracles attributing to Sayyid 'Alawi

Sayyid Alawi Tangal's devotees attributed several miracles to him. According to them Sayyid

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81. CMO Vol. II., p.114.

82. Report of T.L. Strange, the special Commissioner dt. 25 Sept. 1852, p.414.

83. Ibid., p.415.

84. Ibid.

Alawi was a wonder-worker. Bā-Alawi Sayyids possessed supernatural powers is an age old belief prevalent among the people of Hadramawt.<sup>85</sup> But this aspect of Sayyid Alawi's life is very complicated and confusing. It cannot be treated under the purview of history. It is connected with faith. However, there are variations in the narration of the same event. For instance as one story goes, a person lost his ox. He complained it to the Tangal. He gave him a cock and asked him to follow it. The cock directed him to the shed where the ox was locked.<sup>86</sup> The same story was narrated by another author in a different way. There the 'hero' was not a cock but a key.<sup>87</sup> However "the popular belief which credited them with supernatural powers and stories about their supposed ability to work miracles had wide currency"<sup>88</sup>. His other miracles include healing the sick, to trace stolen property, the ability to fore cast the future and to induce rain during draught, etc. Sayyid Alawi was said to have attributed

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85. T.B. Searjeant, Sayyids of Hadramawt, p.17.

86. Abdu Rahman Muhammad Husain bin Abdulla, op.cit., p.20.

87. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit., p.54.

88. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.63.

all these works to the power of Allah.<sup>89</sup> Sayyid 'Alawi as a man who possessed super natural powers arrested the attention of Mappilas in particular and people belonging to other castes in general. This was one of the reasons which prompted the people to look for his leadership. Along with this, he is known to have hated the British and evidently offered his sanctified prestige in support of the activities of the rebels.<sup>90</sup>

#### Maulid (Eulogy)

The life and career of Sayyid 'Alawi are discussed in detail in various moulids written in Arabi-Malayalam language. It has formed an important local source for recreating the history of Bā-'Alawi's in general and Sayyid 'Alawi in particular. The following are noted moulids composed on Sayyid 'Alawi.

1. 'Mamburam Moulids': It is composed by Karatil Kunhippari Musliyar. Its first copy was printed in 1892/'93 AD (1310 AH) from Ponnani - It deals with the life history of Sayyid 'Alawi and various miracles attributed to him.

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89. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit., pp.48-52.

90. Stephan Federic Dale, op.cit., p.116.

2. Umar al-Madani of Madeena composed a moulid on Mamburam Sayyid Alawi. It is printed from Tirurangadi Manhah-ul-uloom press, in 1895/'96 AD (1313 AH) title: 'Manaqib Sayyid Alawi al Malabari'.

3). "Minhat-ul-Kavi fi-Manqabi Qutubi Sayyid al-Mamburami' (Partly available), printed at Tirurangadi in 1912 AD (1330 AH).

4. First Maulid on Sayyid Alawi was composed on Keedakat Alikutty Musliyar. It is printed at Tirurangadi in 1884/'85 AD (1302 AH). It deals with the history of Sayyid Alawi Tangal. Later it was also printed from Ponnani, titled, 'Manqib Sayyid Alawi Mamburamiyyah'.

5. Qazi Mohiyuddin II of Calicut wrote a moulid on Sayyid Alawi.

6. 'Al-Nafhat-fi.Manaqib Sayyid Alawi Mouludhaveela' composed by Pang A.P. Ahmed Kutty Musaliyar was the largest Moulid composed on Sayyid Alawi. It contains 71 pages. It printed at Ponnani Nurul Hudu Press in 1934/'35 AD (1353 AH).

7. 'Mahdanul Yavakeeth' was composed by Kuzhiyanthodi, Abdurahman Kutty of Tirurangadi in 1899/1900 AD (1317 AH). It is printed in Mafatih-ul-Huda Press,

Tirurangadi. It deals with the life and career of Sayyid Alawi.

8. Sayyid Alawi Qissa Pattu was composed by Koormath Mam'ud Kutty.

### Marzia (Elegy)

A number of Sayyid Alawi's disciples composed Elegy after his death. His close friend and a crusader against colonialism, Umar Qadi of Veliyankode composed a marzia. Kunhippari Musliyar, Qazi Muhiyuddin and Havvani Veetil Ahmed Koya Musliyar composed their own marzias on Sayyid Alawi. All these Arabi-Malayalam poems depicted various aspects of Sayyid Alawi's life and career. However, they gave much importance to his miracles in these compositions.

'Cherur Chint' is a Padapattu (war songs) composed on the heroic fight conducted by the Mappilas against British troops at Cherur in October 1843. It also throws light on the participation of Sayyid Alawi and his miracles in the battle field. It is composed by Kunhammed whose pen-name is Kayyat. It is sung at the time of the annual nercha of the Cherur shahids. British authorities had banned it. It is not printed only manuscripts available.

### Death of Sayyid 'Alawi

Sayyid 'Alawi died in the night of January 29th 1844 AD (7th Muharram 1260 AH).<sup>91</sup> He has suffered from serious illness for several months. A number of local physicians had treated him. Before his death he summoned his close disciples and devotees and advised them to propagate the message of Islam in Kerala peacefully and told them to safeguard the Hindu-Muslim unity and to revitalize the freedom struggle of the people.<sup>92</sup> When he died his close friend, Umar Qazi of Veliyankode mourned that, "the patron for our time and the light of Islam departed from the temporal world to the eternal house".<sup>93</sup> His dead body was buried near the tomb of Sayyid Hasan Jifri at Mamburam.

His important disciples and friends were the following: Umar Qazi of Veliyankode, Baithan Muhammad Musliyar (Payyanad), Muhuyuddin Ibn Abdul Aziz (Kozhikode Qazi), Chakkeri Avaran Sahib, Arikkad Ahmed Sahib, Puthupparambil Kunhali Sahib etc.<sup>94</sup>

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91. P.P. Mammad Koya, op.cit., p.95.

92. Ibid., p.90

93. Umar Qazi, Marzia 'Ala Sayyid Alawi Mamburami' (Unpublished).

94. C.K. Kareem, op.cit., p.243.

### Mamburam Maqam

The early structure of Mamburam shrine was built by Sayyid 'Alawi over the grave of his uncle and father-in-law, Sayyid Hasan Jifri in the 3rd year of his arrival at Mamburam. In many Muslim countries such shrines have been constructed honoring famous sufi leaders or saints, who, it is believed could work miracles during their lives and even after their death. Such shrines are called Maqam. On the foundation floor of the domed hall are laid nine coffins including those of Sayyid 'Alawi.<sup>95</sup> The shrine was enlarged by a wealthy Karachi merchant whose merchantile ships, according to tradition, were saved by Sayyid 'Alawi from a heavy storm through his miracles.<sup>96</sup> Then Puthiya Maliyekkal Sayyid Abdulla Koya had repaired the structure and replaced, the old dome with a new one. The expense was met from the fund raised for that purpose. People belonging to all castes make visit to receive divine blessing (barakath). W. Logan observes: "This shrine has been frequently visited by the Mappila fanatics for the purpose invoking the barakaths of the great Tangal

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95. W.Logan, Malabar Mannual, Vol.II, p.cclix

96. Ibid.

(Sayyid 'Alawi) hurried there, previously to the execution of their designs. And it is also largely resorted to by other Mohammedans and by Hindus to involve the great Tangal's aid in many enterprises in which they are interested".<sup>97</sup> Logan's observation is partly true that pilgrims belonging to Mappila and Hindu communities frequently visited the tomb for seeking solution to their problems. But there is no clear cut proof to establish that the rebels exploited this tendency. Mamburam maqam even today attracts hundreds of pilgrims both Mappilas and Hindus daily. But there is not even slightest evidence to show that it helped to instill militancy or hatred among Mappilas towards fellow communities. Seeking blessings of saints and sufis by visiting their tombs became one of the focal points of popular Islam. But such practices have been criticised by both vigorous Muslim Scholars and by modern reformist groups among Muslims as bidah or heretical innovation added to authentic early Islam.<sup>98</sup>

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97. W. Logan, Ibid.

98. John L. Esposito (ed.), The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World, Vol.I, New York, 1995, p.117.

# SAYYID FAZL( 1824 AD -1900 AD)

Mohammed Abdul Sathar. K.K “History of ba-alawis in Kerala ” Thesis.  
Department of History , University of Calicut, 1999

## CHAPTER - V

### SAYYID FAZL (1824 AD - 1900 AD)

Sayyid Fazl was born in 1824 AD (1240 AH). His mother was Sayyid 'Alawi's third wife Fatima of Quilandi.<sup>1</sup> Sayyid Alawi's marriage with Fatima and the birth of Sayyid Fazl was the theme of a Mappila Song (Pattu) titled, 'Mahdanul-Yavakeeth' written by Kuzhiyenthadathil Abdu Rahman Kutty of Tirurangadi<sup>2</sup>. According to it, one day Sayyid 'Alawi went to Quilandi and met the Qazi of the mosque and told his intention to marry a lady from the locality. The Qazi offered his daughter's hand to Sayyid 'Alawi. Thus the marriage became a reality. Fatima's first child was Sayyid Fazl. Sayyid 'Alawi discussed circumcision of his son with his close disciples named Palamadathil Kunhali, Kolipilakkal Hasan Kutty, Chakkeri Avaran, Areekat Muhiyudheen, Kuzhiyan thottathil Musa, Arakkal Kutti Hasan (Tirur) etc<sup>3</sup>. Sayyid Fazl's early tutors were his maternal uncle Hasan, Chalilakath Ibrahim Alias

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1. W. Logan, Malabar Manual Vol.II, Madras 1889 p. ccclix
  2. Copy of this work is available in the home library of K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem.
  3. Kuzhiyan Thadathil Abdurahman Kutty, Mahdenul yawakeeth (Arabi-Malayalam songs). pp.111-13.

Kuzayy Haji of Tirurangadi, Shaikh Sayyid Abdullah Ibn Umar of Hadramawt in South Arabia, Abubacker Koya Ibn Hisham al-Marakkari known as Aukoya Musliyar of parappanangadi and Qazi Zainudheen Musilyar of Tirurangadi.<sup>4</sup> Within a short period he had mastered in Quran, Hadith and Tarique (History). He was twenty at the time of the death of his illustrious father. Soon after the death of Sayyid 'Alawi, he went on Hajj and returned in 1848. Sayyid Fazl married twice and had nine children. Two of his daughters died. Names of his surviving children are Sayyid Hasan, Sayyid Sahl, Sayyid Ahamed, Sayyid Muhammad, Sayyid Yousaf, Sayyid Ali and Sayyida Sherifa Nur<sup>5</sup>.

#### Geneology of Sayyid Fazl

Following is the geneology of Sayyid Fazl:

1. Sayyid 'Alawi
- 2). Sayyid Muhammad
- 3). Sayyid Ahmed
- 4). Sayyid Umar
- 5). Sayyid Muhammad
- 6). Sayyid Sahl
- 7). Sayyid Abdurahman Maula
- 8). Sayyid Abdulla
- 9). Sayyid 'Alawi
- 10). Sayyid Muhammad Mauludawila
- 11). Sayyid Ali
- 12). Sayyid Muhammad

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4. Kanheerala Kunhirayin, Misbah-ul-Fuad (Arab-Malayalam lyrics) p.51
  5. Abdu Rahman Ibn Muhammad Ibn Hasan Ibn Abdulla, Shamsudhaheera, Hyderabad, 1925, pp.22-3.

Faqih-al-Muquaddam 13). Sayyid Ali 14). Sayyid Muhammad Sahib al-mirabat 15). Sayyid Ali Khale-Khazam 16). Sayyid Alawi 17). Sayyid Muhammad 18). Sayyid Alawi 19). Sayyid Abdulla 20). Sayyid Ahamed al-Muhajir 21). Sayyid Isa-al-naqbi 22). Sayyid Muhammad 23). Sayyid Ali al-Huraidi 24). Sayyid Jafar - Al-Sadiq 25). Sayyid Muhammad al - Baqir 26). Sayyid Zain-ul-Abideen 27). Sayyid Imam Hussain 28). Sayyid Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib Wa Bin Sayyida Fathima binthi Muhammad 29). Muhammad, the Prophet.<sup>6</sup>

Sayyid Fazl had a remarkable personal history. He was a model of piety and virtues. He devoted his time for the pursuit of knowledge. He was a recognised authority in religious knowledge. A large number of Mappilas - both learned and laymen - sought fatwa from him on religious issues. He considered Islam as a code of life and persuaded the community to follow Islamic tenets in all walks of life. For imparting better training to believers in religious tenets, he erected the Mamburam juma masjid and began the congregational sermon at Mamburam. In these sermons, "he sought not only to direct Mappilas towards the practice of orthodox Islam, but also attempted to

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6. Ibid., pp.19-20.

heighten their awareness of their Islamic identity and increase their independence from the dominant Hindu castes".<sup>7</sup> Sayyid Fazl's Friday sermon was intended to make general awareness among Mappilas on religion in particular and on contemporary social issues in general. The aim of these sermons was to attack the existing social order in which the powerful Nair landlords and officials enjoyed high esteem as well as to improve the social status of lower caste converts. This is evident from the following proclamation of the Tangal that Mappilas were no longer to accept left over food from Hindus, a practice which many poor converts had of necessity continued even after they had accepted Islam. He wanted to establish the cultural and social identity of Mappilas different from that of Hindus. Sayyid Fazl stoutly attacked the socio-economic predominance of upper castes and tried to establish the Islamic identity and social autonomy of Mappilas, for he told Mappilas that they should not plough on Fridays the Islamic Sabhath nor use the honorific plural when addressing Nairs.<sup>8</sup> The teaching of Sayyid Fazl was in league with the traditional missionary activity of

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7. CMO, Vol.iv, p.276.

8. Ibid.

Hadrami Sayyids. This was shown by the testimony of one of sayyid Fazl's cousins, Sayyid Abdurahman Hydrus. He had been making a pilgrimage to Mamburan in November 1855, when he was arrested by the British authorities, He stated as follows: 'I warn my people against acts forbidden by principles of religion such as drinking, worship punjas (Muharram feast), making shabby marriage and saying bad words'<sup>9</sup>. In fact, Sayyid Fazl was also a critic of such un Islamic practices. He says that Quran and Hadith of the Prophet are the basis of Islam and Muslims should follow them<sup>10</sup>.

Sayyid Fazl practiced what he had preached. He promptly performed the Fard (compulsory) and Sunnah (voluntary) prayers. He recited the holy quaran and valuable works on Islamic theology regularly. He engaged himself in scholarly discourses with guests and visitors. He paid equal attention on performing duties as husband and father. Every day after night prayer, he recited dikr. His dikrs were very familiar among Mappilas as 'the rathib of Pookoya Tangal'. Its

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9. Ibid., p:154

10. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, Sayyid 'Alawi Tangal, Reprint, Venniyur, 1982, p.66

content is the dikr and dua included in the Quaran and Hadith.<sup>11</sup> Sayyid Fazl's wahabi connection was mentioned by a British official in his report as follows: "He maintains even in Arabia a marked pre-eminence as a fanatical ostentatious wahabee of considerable influence refusing to recognise any dignitary...."<sup>12</sup> Just like his father he criticized practices like kissing the hand, prostrating before the Shaikh etc. Because of his piety, simplicity, wisdom and noble character the Mappilas of Malabar had accepted his leadership. His dynamism, charisma and readiness to attend to the problems of the oppressed turned out to be a blessing to the poor Mappila peasants. He persuaded them to stand firm without bowing their heads before land lords and British authorities.

#### Sayyid Fazl as an author

Sayyid Fazl was a prolific writer. He authored around twenty five works in a range of subjects. The theme of most his works are Tasawwuf Fiqh and Aqidah All works are composed in Arabic. Following is a list of Sayyid Fazl's noted works:

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11. Ibid., pp.66-'7

12. Letter from W. Robinson to Pycroft, Palghat, 18 November 1856, No: 1754, CMO, vol.II, p.386

1. Kaukab-u-durar: deals with mysticism.
2. Ulul-Ihsan li-Tas'inil-Insan: deals with moral and ethical principles of Islam.
3. Fususat-al-Islam.
4. Asas-ul-Islam li-bayanil Ahkaam. These two works dealt with the basic principles of the religion and its jurisprudence.
5. 'Alama'n Yuvaril Kuffar
6. Qisalat-fi-Tasawwufi
7. Vawarak al-fatunath-li-Taqviyet-al-vitanat
8. A'durruzzamin li-Akhl wa-kil Fatih
9. A'Shiat a'la Taraq-al-Hanafiya: deals with the sufi orders and right Tariqah.
10. Tahdir-al-Akiyar min rukuhil Ariwanari
11. Uddatal-al-Umara wal-Hukam li-Ihanatil Kafarat wa-Abadat-al Asnam: This is a collection of fatwa issued by various Indo-Arab scholars against colonial authorities.
12. Ihadat-Asrar-al-Huluviyat wa-minhajul Alawiyah, deals with the missionary activities of Bā-'Alawis.

13. Wa-warikul Hidayat li-Sahibul Widayat
14. Fuyusat-al-Ilahiyah, deals with the family history of Bā-Alawi Sayyids<sup>13</sup>

Among these, Uddatul Umara wal-Hukam li-Ihanatil Kafarat wa-Abadat-al Asnam deserves special mention due to its content. It called up on the leaders and masses to fight against the English. It was printed in Arabia and distributed sereethy in the country side. The book was proscribed by collector Conolly.<sup>14</sup> 'Alaman Yuvaril Kuffar deals with Muslims' social contact with non-Muslims and the tolerance propounded by Islam.<sup>15</sup>

#### Sayyid Fazl's Political view

Sayyid Fazl became a central figure in the Nineteenth century history of Malabar. He seems to have enjoyed the same sanctified respect as his father and like his father, he was a political activist.<sup>16</sup>

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13. The list of Sayyid Fazl's works is traced from the home library of Nellikuth Muhamed Ali Moulavi, grandson of Ali Musaliyar, leader of 1921 Malabar Rebellion.

14. A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1989, p.220.

15. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit., p. 67-8.

16. Dale and Menon, 'Sayyids in Malabar', (Unpublished article) p.4

Sayyid Fazl's political view was derived from his political ideology Pan-Islamism. This factor is clear from his activities in Hijaz and Zufar, the west Arabian principality where he ruled in the name of the Ottoman Sultan during the 1870's. He had spent his last five years in Istanbul as the guest of the Ottoman Sultan<sup>17</sup>. He had constant touch with religio-political reform movements in other parts of India and the Islamic world, for instance, there are striking similarities in the teachings and activities of Sayyid Fazl and Haji Sharistu-llah, the founder of the Faraidi movement of Bengal. Shariat-ullah persuaded a considerable number of Muslim around him, that they and their fathers had departed from the true tenets of the Quran. He promulgated several new rules for the guidance of his followers, who professed to adhere to the strict letter of the Quran and reject all ceremonies that were not sanctioned by it<sup>18</sup>. Among others he prohibited Hindu rites and joining Hindu religious ceremonies<sup>19</sup>. In 1840, Mr. Conolly, the Collector of Malabar reported that he had interrogated

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17. Ibid.

18. Narahari Kaviraj, Wahabi and Faraizi Rebels of Bengal, New Delhi, 1982, p.64.

19. District Gazetteer, Rajshahi, quoted in, Ibid.

an Arab priest in Calicut. His name was Sayyid Muhammad Sallah and came from Bagdad. Sayyid Muhammad Sallah stated that he had left Bagdad sixteen years earlier and after travelling from Arabia, he had come to India where he had lived in various cities for six or seven years. He said that he employed himself in religious instruction, and he carried a letter from the Raja of Ramanatapuram to Muslims in certain villages which empowered Sayyid Muhammad to enforce the observance of orthodox Islamic doctrine. When asked if he knew any one in Kerala he replied that he was acquainted with Sayyid Fazl, as well as other Arabs in Calicut.<sup>20</sup>

The class base of Sayyid Fazl's and Haji Shariatullah's followers were also the same. Majority of the followers of Sayyid Fazl were converts of lower castes and mainly tenants of upper caste Hindus. Shiva Kumar observes, "... the overwhelming majority of the cultivators are Moplahs (Malayali converts to Islam) whereas the land lords are in variably Hindus".<sup>21</sup> The majority of Muslims of East Bengal were converts from the lower Hindu castes, especially of rural areas,

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20. M D R, Magesterial, 1841, pp. 51-64.

21. Shivakumar, Peasantry and Indian National Movement (1919-1933). A survery and Assessment, p.32.

engaged in the various local occupations.<sup>22</sup> Sayyid Fazl's attitude towards the British was a replica of Sayyid Jamaluddin Afghani's policies. Sayyid Fazl was very much in Afghani's mould, in his hatred of the British, his advocacy of violent action in defence of the Islamic community and especially in his later career as an advisor on Pan-Islamic affairs to the Ottoman sultan Abdul Hamid. Infact, the two men must have known one another since both were Abdul Hamid's Pensioners in the five years before Afghani's death in 1897.<sup>23</sup>

From the very beginning of his career in Malabar he was an ardent enemy of the British because of the policy of British towards Mappilas. Upper caste janmis had exploited the poor Mappila tenants which the British officials connived at. They were evicted and levied undue taxes and presents with the support of courts. False litigations were made against Mappila tenants. It was in these circumstances that Sayyid Fazl issued fatwa against jenmis<sup>24</sup> Sayyid Fazl wrote a

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22. Mujeeb Ashraf, Muslim attitude towards British rule and western culture in India, Delhi, 1941, p.144.

23. Stephan Frederic Dale, Mappila Muslims of Malabar 1498-1922, New York, 1980, p.7.

24. C M O, vol iv, p.441.

pamphlet from Arabia and its copies were secretly circulated in Mappila Muslim circles of Malabar, titled, 'Uddat - ul - Umara' wal-Hukam li -Ihanatil Kafarat wa-Abadat-al Asnam (A weapon to Amirs to subdue disbelievers and idol worshippers). This work contains 24 pages. Disbelievers mentioned in the title were Englishmen and idol worshippers. They were upper caste jenmis who supported the British and persecuted the poor tenants. Through this work, he called up on the people fight against the British.<sup>25</sup>

Along with the campaign against British and upper caste jenmis, sayyid Fazl warneted the Mappilas against deviation from the teachings of Islam. And he drew the attention of the people to the stress laid by Islam on education. He tried his level best to link the anti-British agitation of Malabar Mappilas with Pan-Islamic activities centering at Istanbul under Sultan Abdul Hamid.<sup>26</sup>

#### Mappila uprisings of Nineteenth Century and British Policy

The direct or indirect involvement of Bā-Alawi Sayyids in the Mappila uprisings of 19th century is a

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25. A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, op.cit., p.220

26. C. Hamza, 'Adhinivesha Virudha Samars Sahithiangal' (Malayalam), Prabodhanam Specail Edition, Calicut, April 1998, p.39.

bone of contention. There is ample evidence in British official records<sup>27</sup> and the writings of certain modern scholars to emphasize the role of Mamburam Tangals in the outbreaks of 19th century.<sup>28</sup>

Mappila uprisings usually occurred in the southern Taluks of Malabar Districts. Most of these took place in the predominantly rural areas of Ernad and Walluwanad Taluks. Taken as a whole, these uprisings represent the Mappila tenants reaction against the economic and social hegemony of the upper castes and, by extension, a challenge to the political authority of the British. There were about thirty two Mappila outbreaks in Malabar between 1836-1921. More than half of them were recorded in the first sixteen years of this period. Most of the Mappila rebels were young between fifteen and thirty years of age and poor tenants, landless labourers and petty merchants. Their standard of life, provisions etc. were too pitiable to explain. The overwhelming majority of their Hindu victims were not only members of the upper castes but were also jenmis or local officials.<sup>29</sup>

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27. M O A, Madras Criminal Procedure Act, XX of 1859, p.44

28. Stephen Frederic Dale, op.cit., pp.127-146.

29. Ibid., p.145.

A thorough analysis of the socio-economic order of Malabar under the British is essential for tracing the role of Mamburam Tangal in the uprisings of 19th century. As noted in the previous chapter, Malabar was ceded to the East India Company in 1792 by Tipu. The destruction of Tipu's rule in Malabar and early British settlement policies adversely affected the Mappila fortunes. Really Mappila interest began to suffer due to their constant and continuous struggle with the Portuguese for dominance in trade in the 16th century. Because of their defeat they had to move to the interior region of Malabar seeking fresh job. The Europeans who looked up on the Mappilas as the allies of the Arabs and hence their natural enemies, were not keen on utilising their services, though they could not do without the help of the wealthy Mappilas who controlled the internal trade. Nevertheless none of the Mappilas were preferred as far as possible.<sup>30</sup> Europeans tried their maximum to keep away Mappilas from trading activities. Therefore a good number of Mappilas were forced to migrate to the

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30. There are references to Nairs and Tiyyars taking upon the functions earlier performed by the Mappilas. K.M. Panikkar, Malabar and the Portuguese, pp. 181-2 and Asim Das Gupta, Malabar in Asain Trade, p.4, Quoted in K N Panikkar's Against Lord and State, Religion and Peasant uprisings in Malabar, 1836-1921, Delhi, 1992, p.51.

interior in search of alternative employment. This migration as well as the establishment of mosques and religious centres paved the way for the spread of Islam among the lower castes. Mappila population increased rapidly. One possible reason for the increase was conversion from the lower castes, Particularly, Cheruman, Pulayar, Vettuvan and Mukkuvan - the first three being agrestic slaves and last fishermen.<sup>31</sup>

The overwhelming majority of Mappilas were cultivating tenants, landless labourers, petty traders and fishermen. Land owning Mapplas were very few. Of the 103 principle jenmis called by Thomas warden, the Collector for consultaiton in 1803, only 8 were Mappilas, all the others except one who was a Tiyya wer upper cast Hindus.<sup>32</sup> Similarly Mappilas had never got their due share in Government service due to thier educational backwardness. They gave much importance to religious education and a large number engaged in religion work.

The early British policy was formulated by Jonathan Duncan who in January 1793 wrote a letter to

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31. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.52

32. B R C, 1803, Vol 352, No:61 (Quoted in K.N. Panikkar, Ibid, p.53)

Dow, who had agreed to under take the settlement of the Southern Taluks. Duncan made no attempt to label the Mappilas as aggressors. He suggested abrogation of Rajas' power and substitution of direct British rule.<sup>33</sup> During the first half of the 19th century British authorities had changed their earlier policy and treated Mappilas as their natural enemies, since they had benefitted from Mysorean rule. A large number of Hindu chieftains and landlords sought refuge in the Southern Kerala on the eve of Mysorean invasion of Malabar. The Joint Commission observed that Mappila Kanakars, taking advantage of the flight of Hindu landlords during the late Mohamedan government considerably augmented their formerly more circumscribed possessions and had become the 'principal land holders in South Malabar'.<sup>34</sup> This view was accepted by the officials<sup>35</sup> and with slight modifications by historians.<sup>36</sup> Prof. K.N. Panikkar abruptly rejected the so called Hindu flight from Malabar on the eve of

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33. Stephen Frederic Dale, Islam and Social conflict, The Mappilas of Malabar, 1498-1922, Unpublished doctoral dissertation (T N A), p.88

34. M J C R, p.119.

35. M D R, Political, 1800, pp. 283-2

36. Stephen Federic Dale, op.cit, Chapter IV

Mysorean invasion. He writes: "Except for general statement in official reports about the flight of the Hindu chieftains and their retainers who had opposed Tipu and therefore feared punishment and of a few substantial Nambudiri jenmis, there is not definite information about a mass Hindu movement out of Malabar during this period. Therefore, it seems doubtful that the Mysorean rule marked the end of Hindu landlordism and resulted in large scale transfer of ownership of land to Mappila tenants..... The Mysorean phase in Malabar was neither a peirod of Mappilas domination nor of Mappilas rule.<sup>37</sup>

After the annexation of Malabar to Madras Presidency, British officials took a conciliatory policy towards Mappilas. The "Mappila turbulence" was not attributed to the aggressive character of Mappilas but to the oppression of landlords and various exactions made by them. Similarly, steps were taken to protect the interest of Mappila tenants by abolishing Purushantaram (a death duty imposed on Mappilas) and regulation was issued to protect the Mappilas from Nair landlords.<sup>38</sup> Gradually this lenient policy underwent

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37. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., pp. 55-6

38. MJCR, p.119

a change due to resistnace encountered by the officials in the collection of land revenue and the establishment of law and order.<sup>39</sup> The revolt of some Mappila leaders like Unni Mutha Mooppan, Chemban Poker and Athan Gurukkal in 1800's might have prompted the British to change their policy towards Mappilas. "... they raised the banner of revolt against the Government, calling upon their co-religionists to join them to protect the interest of the community which, according to them, was not safe under the British."<sup>40</sup>

The Malabar land tenure system poured fuel in the burning fire. It recognised the jenmis as the superior land holder. British regarded Jenmam holding as the clearest example of an Indian system of private property.<sup>41</sup> Besides this, upper caste dominance in almost all walks of life further worsened the condition of Mappila tenants. "In this situation the courts were not the social balance which Duncan had intended, but, were manipulated by the upper castes for their own interests"<sup>42</sup>. Various measures of exploitation were

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39. M D R, Vol 11727, pp. 332-4, 36-7, 50-2

40. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.57

41. Stephen Federic Dale, Doctorial dessertation (Unpublished), op.cit., pp. 99-100.

42. Ibid., p.103

introduced by the jenmis with the support of British authorities. The most common features of exploitation were through the enhancement of rent, eviction and imposition of renewal fees.<sup>43</sup> Over a period of nine years the price of almost all produce increased by more than hundred percent.<sup>44</sup> With the result value of land and its demand increased. Land owners realized their significance and power. British Court had recognised landlords right to expel the tenant at the end of every twelve years. Armed with these powers the landlord not only demanded exorbitant rents and renewal fees but also introduced several provisions which facilitated eviction earlier than the stipulated period. Jenmis usually demanded presents during the time of marriages, births and festivals from tenants. The failure to give rent or even a present to the satisfaction of the landlord was considered sufficient reason for eviction.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, the economic condition of Malabar in the middle of the 19th century served the ends of the upper caste jenmis. Executive, Judiciary and Legilsation

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43. A.R. Desai, (ed.), Peasant struggle in India, New Delhi 1985, p. 604

44. Report of the Special Commissioner 1881-2, Vol. II, Appendix 11, p.194

45. A.R. Desai, (Ed.), op.cit., pp.606-8.

under the British was in favour of, the upper caste interests. In the social field also upper caste landlords enjoyed supreme status. As noted earlier Sayyid Fazl's teachings aimed at the social upliftment of Mappilas in particular and the lower castes in general. He vehemently attacked the existing social order and created a sense of liberty and freedom among Mappilas. His teachings raised their morale and enabled them to challenge upper caste hegemony in the socio-economic fields.

Immediately after the death of his father in 1844, Sayyid Fazl went on a Hajj pilgrimage and he returned to Malabar in 1849. The important uprisings of this period were the Manjery uprising, August 1849. The Kolathur outbreak of August 1851 and the Mattannur outbreak of Jan 1852. By then the Mappila 'outrages' had become a major administrative concern and therefore their cause and characteristics were meticulously inquired into and reported to the Government. Therefore a detailed examination of those uprisings is possible.

#### V. Important Mappila Uprisings of the Period.

##### (a) The Manjery uprising, August 1849

The Manjery uprising was one of the major incidents which occurred during the time of Sayyid

Fazl's stay at Mamburam. Manjery Athan Gurukkal was the master mind behind this uprising. Kunhikoya Tangal son of Sayyid Hasan Tangal of Mamburam was another leader of the outbreak. sixty six Mappilas took part in the revolt. the class content of the participants is as follows: 9 tenants, 33 labourers, 1 tangal, 2 musliyers who were the sons of an impoverished tenant, 2 charcoal burnes, 1 son of a gold smith, 1 barber, 1 leper and 14 others who were not identified.<sup>46</sup> Kunhikoya Tangal's two sons also took part.<sup>47</sup>

The Gurukkal family is divided into six branches located at Manjery, Payyanad, Ayanikad, Yellambra, Nellikode and Pilakode. Their hereditary occupation was training in the use of fire arms in which certain fees was collected. Besides this, they were cultivators.<sup>48</sup> Athan Gurukkal, the chief suspect of the Manjery uprising belonged to the Ayanikad branch. History of this branch deserves special mention to recreate the personality and character with full historical perspective.

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46. C M O, Vol.I, pp.108-37

47. Bahauddin, K.M., op.cit., p.114.

48. C M O, Vol.I, p.61.

Athan was the head of the Ayanikad family during 1800-02. After his death his two sons Ahmed Kutty Gurukkal and Athan Gurukkal divided their family property. Athan Gurukkal was the father of the leader of 1849 Manjery uprising. His annual income is supposed to have been 800 to 1000 paras. He had seven children, three sons and four daughters. The daughters are all married into families in no way connected with the late disturbances. Of the three sons, Athan Gurukkal, leader of the 1849 revolt was the eldest.<sup>49</sup>

British official records depicted the character of Athan Gurukkal as follows: Athan Gurukkal was little known beyond his own circle. He became a sports man and moved about teaching the use of fire arms, shooting for bets etc. and he levied the fees usually given to his father. He spent all his time in sports and was always accompanied by several companions and followers. Even after his marriage he lived with his father. Later his father was not able to feed him and his company. Therefore, they separated. His father gave him a separate hut and a piece of land for his support. However, Athan Gurukkal never engaged in cultivation in his own land. Therefore his father

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49. Ibid., p.63

obliged to cultivate both his own and his son's land and pay the revenue to his own son. Athan Gurukkal had no other means of livelihood, except the fee collected for teaching the use of firearms and contribution in cash or kind, he could collect from various Nairs, Namboodiris and bazars he visited.<sup>50</sup>

Athan Gurukkal acted himself the arbitrator in cases in which Mappilas were involved. It is stated that he had assumed a commission of this description from the Tarammal Tangal (Mamburam Tangal). He also possessed a sword from the hands of the Tangal which he always carried.<sup>51</sup> Athan Gurukkal was something like a Robinhood for the rural poor who were unjustly treated by government officials or landlords.<sup>52</sup> For instance, he compelled the village accountant of Chembresseri to return a bribe of Rupees 30 he had taken from a Mappila woman.<sup>53</sup> In another occasion, Athan Gurukkal interceded on behalf of a Mappila who was arrested and went to the extent of threatening the life of Payanad

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50. Ibid., p.65

51. Ibid.

52. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.72

53. CMO, Vol. I, p.66

Adigharee who had overtaxed a Mappila peasant.<sup>54</sup> Athan Gurukkal maintained cordial relations with fellow communities. This is clear from the following instance when a poor Mappila was accused of stealing paddy from the house of a landlord named Marat Namboodiri, Athan Gurukkal saved him from punishment by persuading the landlord to withdraw the complaint and standing surety for his future good behaviour.<sup>55</sup> Similarly many of the Hindu nobles of the locality like the Manjery Raja, the Marat Kovilakam, Kadereduth Namboodiri Illom, the Ponnuvariyaath and several other respective Nairs and Namboodiris have come to liberal terms with him. Though, the officials charged that he had received cash or kind from various Nairs and Namboodiris<sup>56</sup>, the Manjery Raja did not admit having given money to him.<sup>57</sup>

The first complaint against Athan Gurukkal was lodged by the Chembressery Amsom Accountant. He had been prevented from receiving a bribe of Rupees 30 from a Muslim woman due to the timely intervention of Athan Gurukkal. The Tahsildars of Ernad and Walluvanad were

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54. Ibid., p.68

55. Ibid., p.75

56. Ibid., p.65

57. Ibid., p.66

asked to report on the matter of the Gurukkal's behaviour. As per the order of the Tahsildars, Peschar of Pandalur, a Muslim submitted his report stating that Athan Gurukkal was in the habit of coming to him and they were in frequent communication. According to his report, Athan Gurukkal is a good and respectable man.<sup>58</sup>

Tahsildars of Walluwanad and Ernad had their own version regarding the character of Athan Gurukkal. The Walluwanad Tahsildar was a Hindu and forwarded the report stating that he found much fear among the Hindus of the country and several Hindus of the locality collecting guards for the defence of their house and property.<sup>59</sup> According to the report of Ernad Tahsildar Kuttoosa, a Mussalman, he never supported the opinion that Athan Gurukkal intended to break out and become a martyr. He stated that this opinion was fostered by persons anxious to be employed as guard in the houses of the wealthy people.<sup>60</sup> If the Hindus of the locality feared any attacks of Mappilas, they could have lodged complaints to the authority. There is no evidence that the Hindus of the locality raised any complaints against Athan Gurukkal. The Chembresseri Amsam

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58. Ibid., p.69

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

accountant's complaint had no validity. Since he had attempted to receive bribe from a Mappila woman and that was thwarted by Athan Gurukkal. Instead of taking action against the accountant for trying to receive bribe, the British authorities considered Athan Gurukkal as creating law and order problems and hence stamped him as a 'dangerous person'.

The Government looked up on the activities of the Gurukkal as a challenge to its authority and he was becoming an alternative centre of authority, leaving "the Magistracy helpless."<sup>61</sup> On 20th May 1849 orders were issued to prevent the Gurukkal from going about with armed followers and to watch him closely.<sup>62</sup> Really Gurukkal made no attempt to violate the standing Government order and he gave up in a great measure the practice of wandering with armed men.<sup>63</sup> Around this time he was joined by Kunhikoya Tangal.<sup>64</sup>

On 11th July a gang robbery was committed in the house of a disciple of Kondotty Tangal.<sup>65</sup> Since

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61. Ibid., p. 68

62. Ibid., p. 69

63. Ibid., p. 52

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

Gurukkal was a disciple of Mamburma Tangal, a rival of Kondotty Tangal, he was falsely implicated in this gang robbery. On the basis of this allegation, Tahsildar issued orders to apprehend Athan Gurukkal's old father. His house was searched, the old man was sent to the Cutchery and the Tahsildar also issued order to arrest Athan Gurukkal (Junior).<sup>66</sup> Athan Gurukkal (Junior) had appeared before the Peschar of Pandalur accompanied by armed followers denied the charges and refused to obey the summons.<sup>67</sup> Now, Gurukkal was convinced that he would be 'subjected to still greater disgrace'<sup>68</sup>. Therefore he decided to defy the British authority and resorted to fight till his last.

The Government would fear a mass uprising if they made an attempt to seize the Gurukkal.<sup>69</sup> There were difference of opinion among British officials regarding the modus operandi of the procedure against Athan Gurukkal. Assistant Magistrate suggested to try peaceful means rather than open force.<sup>70</sup> Dada Miya,

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66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid., p.71

70. Ibid.

the Peschar of Pandalur was told in a formal order to produce the Gurukkal within eight days. If the Peschar did not succeed within the stipulated date, "other means were to be resorted to."<sup>71</sup>

#### Pandalur incident

As per the order the Peschar proceeded to Ayanikad but abandoned his journey due to the news of the outbreak at Pandalur.<sup>72</sup> Koranganatha Unneen, a follower of Athan Gurukkal had killed Teyyunni Tiyyan (Ezhava). The reason for the murder was the false implication of Unneen in connection with a theft in the house of Teyyunni. Thus, the case was dismissed for lack of evidenc. Unneen considered it as a disgrace to him and he settled it through murder.<sup>73</sup> It shows that false suits were submitted against Mappilas. A Nair chieftain of the locality named Raman Kammal informed the Tahsildar regarding the murder case.<sup>74</sup> While a meeting of prominent Nairs was going on in the house of Raman Kammal, a group of four Mappila youths named Edakkadan Mammy, Mahmud Mulla, Kakote Koya, Kaipully

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71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid., p.73

74. Ibid.

Poker came to the scene and said: "they had killed Teyyunni, and that any one who wished to hear of us, must come after us to Ayanikad."<sup>75</sup>

Sixteen rebels assembled at the house of Athan Gurukkal and provisions were too short to them. Therefore they decided to move to Manjery temple. The reason for choosing the temple as asylum is described as follows in the official account: "The Manjery temple was without exception the most eligible (from its natural features and facilities of defence) of the whole country, and it was notoriously well provisioned."<sup>76</sup> This temple belonged to a Nair raja family. The Manjery Karanapad (Raja) does not suspect that any external influence was used to bring the rebels to Manjery. Mr. Robinson, the Assistant Magistrate also supported his view.<sup>77</sup>

On their way to Manjery, the rebels met a man named Kunnapally Kunhan Nair who was a close confidant of Marat Namboodiri and had taken a prominent role in implicating Karta Unniali in the theft case of paddy from Marrot illom. The case was settled due to the

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75. Ibid., pp. 73-4.

76. Ibid., p. 75

77. Ibid., p. 54

suerty given by Athan gurukkal regarding Unniali's future behaviour.<sup>78</sup> Unniali exploited the favourable situation and the innocent Nair was killed by him. The reason for this murder was also personal grudge rather than fanaticism. And there is no proof whether Athan Gurukkal sanctioned it or not.

#### Attempt to Murder Marat Namboodiri

Marat Namboodiri of Pandikkad was a wealthy landlord and money lender, whose life had been thrice threatened by the tenants.<sup>79</sup> Agrarian grievance was the root cause of the attack on Marat Illom. Nellengara Ali, a member of Athan Gutukkals' gang had to settle old scores with him. Ali's father Komu had taken one hundred paras of land from Marat Namboodiri on Kanam tenure by paying Rupees 22-9 Ana - 1 Paise as mortgage amount and one hundred Paras of Paddy as rent. The payment having fallen into arrears, the Namboodiri filed a suit to cancel the mortgage and oust Komu from possession of the land. The Court accepted the suit and premitted to evict him in 1846-47. However, an amicable settlement was effected which allowed him the possession of land but as a tenant at will (Verum

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78. Ibid., pp. 45-6

79. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.74

pattam) on an enhanced rent of one hundred and ten paras of paddy.<sup>80</sup> Thus the rent was increased and more importantly Komu was deprived of his Kanam rights. "The Namboodiri could now demand renewal of the lease every year, charging renewal fees and increasing the rent. Infact, the very next year he increased the rent by ten paras which was strongly resisted."<sup>81</sup> Nellengara Ali, his father and many other tenants of the Namboodiri were under the shadow of fear due to insecurity of tenure and possibility of eviction. Under this circumstance the rebels moved to the illam of Marat Namboodiri. "They (Mappilas) observed that he (Marat Namoodiri) had been about to make the family of one of the ten criminals vacate a small piece of land in which they had long lived."<sup>82</sup> And this was considered the greatest grievance.

Sensing danger, the Namboodiri left his illom before the rebels could reach there. The object of the gang was unquestionably the murder of the Namboodiri himself, but he had escaped. His servant Tachu who had offered resistance and planned his master's escape was

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80. CMO Vol.I, p. 76

81. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., pp. 74-5.

82. C M O, Vol.III, p.79

killed. No other member of the family was hurt. According to official report, Attan Gurkkal and Kunhikoya Tangal kept aloof from the attack move by Unniali and Melangat Ali and others on the Marat Brahmin house.<sup>83</sup>

From Pandikkad the rebels moved to Manjery temple where a banquet was going on in connection with the birth day of the Manjery Raja or Karanapad. His illom was located very near to the temple. Around fifty to hundred Brahmins and Namboodiris took part in the party. The rebels had the following reason to turned against the raja. Firstly, Athan Gurukkal had a long standing feud with the Raja of Manjery. One of the Gurukkals ancestors had fought against the Raja in 1785 but was defeated with the help of Tipu Sultan and was taken to Srirangapatnam as a prisoner where he died.<sup>84</sup> Secodnly, Paddy fields yielding an annaual rent of 9000 paras of paddy, attached to the family mosque of Athan Gurukkal was appropriated by the raja. This is actually waqf land.<sup>85</sup> Thirdly, the raja adopted all possible methods to lay heavy burden on the

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83. C M O, Vol. V, p. 85

84. Ibid., p. 26

85. Ibid., p. 50

shoulder of his tenants. For instance, in 1847-48 he ordered that all his tenants to contribute a year's rent towards the construction of a temple, threatening those who would not with eviction.<sup>86</sup> The raja had 528 tenants, of which 214 were Hindus and 311 Mappilas.<sup>87</sup> This demand created unrest among the Mappila tenants since, 'Apart from being an economic burden, contributing for the construction of a Hindu temple was an irreligious act for the Mappilas which could render them outcaste from their religion'.<sup>88</sup>

In the temple the rebels fired off guns in air and made much noise. In order to give chance to the people to escape and they never intended to attack either the people or the temple. 'Had their object been slaughter of Hindus', observed Robinson, "the carnage might have been fearful."<sup>89</sup> Only one Yembradiri (Namboodiri priest) was killed. The circumstance of his death are not known. He was last seen in the cook-room of the temple. It is believed that being deaf, an old man and a native of Bekul-in Canara, he neither understood the dialect nor the habits

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86. Ibid., p.51

87. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., pp. 75-6

88. Ibid.

89. CMO Vol.I, p.77

of the Mappilas under such circumstances, and it is conjectured that he put some faint resistance or insulted them, and lost his life.<sup>90</sup> Athan Gurukkal expressed regret and described it as the unwarranted work of the 'boys', and not done with his consent. He also offered to deliver the body without any injury to those who come to receive it.<sup>91</sup>

The rebels remained in the temple for the next eight days. Around twenty nine rebels under Athan Gurukkal were stationed there. Captain Watt rushed to the spot with a full Company of the 43rd N.I., but seeing the strong position occupied by the rebels, thought it best to ask for extra assistance from Calicut, before encountering them. On his request another Company of seventy men under the command of Lt. Burn was detached from Calicut.<sup>92</sup> Mappila rebels succeeded to repulse their attack. In this encounter on 28 August, Mr. Ways, a European officer, a jemandar and four sepoy were killed in the British side where as only one Mappila was killed and two wounded. The Mappila who was killed had pursued the retiring British

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90. Ibid.

91. Ibid., see also CMO Vol.V, p.85

92. Letter from Conolly to secretary dated 12 October 1849, No:27 (Ibid., p. 28)

sepoys accross a paddy field and was shot by a villager.<sup>93</sup>

The initial success against British troops had boosted the morale of Mappila rebels and their number increased with thirty seven fresh recruits from the near neighbourhood. Mr. Robinson made the following remarks on the new recruits: "All from the lowest walks of life, and apparently from all sides, all without any active recruiting on the part of the Kurikkal and his band on the Manjery hill, or mutual concert."<sup>94</sup> Most of them are lads under 22 years.

Athan Gurukkal decided to shift his camp to the Angadippuram temple thinking that Manjery temple was not suitable for an open fight. Mr. Conolly observed that the rebels primary object in shifting the camp to Angadipuram Pagoda was to secure a fair field for a hand to hand fight with the army.<sup>95</sup> When the rebels increased in number, they did not have enough provisions at Manjery and it was believed that Angadipuram temple had a well stored granary for

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93. Ibid.

94. CMO Vol.I, p.80

95. Ibid., p.29

feeding the Brahmins.<sup>96</sup> Prof. K.N. Panikkar observes: 'In fact in almost all cases, occupation of a temple was primerly motivated by the necessity of a strong place for defence or for procuring provisions. The destruction and defilement of a temple was, at worst, only incidental.'<sup>97</sup> Had they intended to defile temples and destroy the idols and property of Hindus, they had ample opportunity of doing so during those seven days, as stated by Mr. Robinson, "when the entire country had lain, in a manner, at their mercy....Had it been the object or desire of public servants, Tangals or even the heads of their own caste, that they should adopt this course."<sup>98</sup> Mr. Conolly also expressed the same opinion, "had the destruction of the temple been their primary object they could have executed it any of the previous seven nights".<sup>99</sup>

The class character and agrarian grievences of the rebels is clear from the destruction of all the documents and accounts which were stored in the Angadippuram temple. Mr. William Robinson, the Deputy

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96. Ibid., p.93

97. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.76

98. CMO Vol.I, p.88

99. Ibid., p.28

Collector of Malabar had expressed his comments on the destruction of the documents as follows: "But to me it appears so natural a step, for a set of ignorant Mopla lads taught from childhood to look on these as the weapons, with which the Nair and Raja jenmis (land proprietors) were ruining their caste in the courts and elsewhere".<sup>100</sup> Mr. H.V. Conolly had stated that Athan Gurukkal broke open the boxes in the Angadipuram temple, where there was an abundance of gold, but would not touch or allow to be touched a particle of it.<sup>101</sup> This is a conducive proof to prove the lofty character of Mappila rebel Athan Gurukkal.

The total number of the rebels are sixty six. Two of them were died in the first encounter in which the British troops met defeat. Their bodies were buried at the graveyard of Manjery mosque as per the will of the rebels.<sup>102</sup> On 4th September 1849, a pitched battle took place at Angadipuram between the European troops and Mappila rebels. The rebels had no intention to escape from death as reported by Mr. Conolly. Their ferocity and determination was only

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100. Ibid., P.94

101. Ibid., p.316

102. Ibid., p.29

equalled by the staidness of the Europeans. However, within a few minutes, all but one were killed. Only a few Europeans were injured.

The sole survivor was boy of eighteen, a converted gold smith who gave his own reason for joining in the rebel party as follows: 'I joined solely, because the Gurukkal advised me to do so. I had no particular reason for doing so. I attended to the Gurukkal's call to join the party, in consideration of the great friendship which subsisted between us'.<sup>103</sup> It shows this young man had no personal grievance to strive against the British. However, his close friendship with the Gurukkal persuaded him to join the party. Gurukkal's personality and character might have played a role in organising the rebels.

It is significant to note that religious sentiment alone was not the binding force of rebels. Along with religious motivation several material factors led to the revolt. Material and worldly grievances of the Mappila society in general is depicted in the statements of the Gurukkal which was found at the Manjery temple after his death. It reads: 'The Government is ignorant of the weight of the

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103. Ibid., p.45

grievance which the Mussalmans inhabiting the inland part of Malabar have been suffering of late years; since the Country has been under their rule the majority of the public servants being of the Hindoo caste, they as well as the landlords of Malabar and the Rajaa, who are also landlords, are from the beginning connected as fathers and sons, as also dependents, such as Pattola achans (hereditary accountants) Karyasthans (managers), adiyars (vassals) and tenants. Thus leagued, they have been preferring false and vexatious complaints in the adalat and police, against several wealthy Mussalman who held land on mortgage, fee simple rights, which were the means they had of supporting themselves and family, which complaint, the sirkar without knowing the real merits of the case, decreed against them, up on the arguments (false pleas) brought forward in support of them, and awards thus passed, were enforced. In many instances, property of great value were by stratagem set down as worth little. Some people (Mussalman) in order to avoid complaints of this nature, have been under the necessity of giving large sums, as bribes and presents. The consequence of all these has been reduced to a state of beggery, so much so, that they find themselves unable to represent, and prove to the sirkar, the real state of matters, with the view of putting a stop to such practices. hence

the cause of the events which took place before this, in this part of the country, when some of the landed proprietors and their adherents were cutdown and put to death, the perpetrators of which, after setting the public authority at defiance, were punished by Government".<sup>104</sup> No other proof is needed to picture the pathetic conditions of Mappila tenants of the interior Malabar during the nineteenth century than the above statement. There was an unholy alliance of upper caste Hindu landlords, corrupt officials and unjust and prejudiced courts to tamper with the legitimate rights of Mappila tenants. Athan Gurukkal said that Hindus also used their power to seize Inam or Waqf lands which had been granted to Muslim by Tipu Sultan.<sup>105</sup> Gurukkal's assessment was a largely accurate evaluation of Muslim - Hindu social and economic relations in the interior of the South Malabar Taluks.<sup>106</sup> Along with the general grievences of the Mappila tenants, his own personal experiences under British rule<sup>107</sup> might have prompted him to take the war path. In adopting this course, he was neither influenced by the desire for

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104. Ibid., pp.48-'9

105. Ibid.

106. Stephen Frederic Dale, op.cit., p.145

107. CMO, Vol.I, pp.52-'3.

martyrdom nor by the lure of pleasure of paradise or by worldly motives is evident from his own statement. "It was evident I should have been subjected to greater disgrace; hence the cause of our joining together in this way at so early a period. It is necessary for me to state in writing that no body will throw away his life unless forced to do it by unendurable grievance and dishonour".<sup>108</sup>

Kunhikoya Tangal another prime accused in the revolt explained his reason for joining as follows, "My reason for joining these people arises from the dictates of religion, for where a member of the Mussalman are in trouble and danger, it is for us, Sayeds, to join and die with them. Seeing their grievous state, I, thinking of the face of God, joined them. If, after this, the necessary inquiry is not made, and caused to be made, and them grievances of the remaining Mussalmen redressed, and themselves protected, recurrence of the present events will take place every time they are oppressed and distressed".<sup>109</sup> His statement clearly indicates the duties of Sayyids and Tangals as religious leaders and the liberative

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108. Ibid., p.52

109. Statement of Kuhikoya Tangal, Ibid., p.53

elements of the religion. These two eminent leaders statement unearthed the material as well as religious aspects of the revolt. Both worldly grievances and religious sentiments paved the way for 1849 Manjery uprising.

(b) Kolathur uprising

Kolathur uprising of 1851 was another serious outbreak that took place during the days of Sayyid Fazl. These rebels had no leader to guide their activities like the Manjery uprising. Kottaparambath Komu Menon and his brother Ittunni Rama Menon were two noted landlords of Mangada village in Walluwanad taluk. Komu Menon was a big landlord who had considerable influence in the society as a Karystan (manager) of the Walluwanad Raja and the former adhgaree of Mangada village. He used his position for increasing his holdings through eviction, over leases and acquisition of land against loans advanced to peasants.<sup>110</sup> For instance, one of his tenants Kundatodiyil Unniyaran who was also the prime rebel of the revolt, found that most of his land had passed in to the hands of Komu Menon through the above measures and feared that Komu Menon

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110. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.117

was trying to take possession of the rest of the land as well, which would make him an ordinary labourer.<sup>111</sup>

Komu Menon was a man between fifty and sixty, personally of great physical power and courage. Like too many of his caste he was addicted to intoxication; and both in his drunken and sober hours, his behaviour to those about him was generally very over bearing. To the Mappilas he was frequently abusive.<sup>112</sup> British authorities dismissed him from the post of adhigaree in 1845 for insulting the Mappilas by forcing one of them to substitute the Muslim call to prayer a call to swine flesh.<sup>113</sup> Mappilas in general had their own material and religious causes to hate him. They would have killed him a year earlier but for the prompt intervention of the Assistant Magistrate.<sup>114</sup>

His brother Ittunni Rama Menon was a moneylender and tried his maximum to exploit the poor. He was an 'extremely avaricious man and lent money and grain to a large extent and often for usurious

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111. Letter from H.V. Conolly to T. Pycroft, 30 September 1851, CMO, Vol.I, pp.80-'1

112. Ibid., p.187

113. Ibid., p.173

114. Ibid., p. 187-'8

interest... and it was expected his death would release many a man of their (Mappila) caste from a heavy responsibility.<sup>115</sup> Three of the rebels had their own reason to rally against him. Two of them had borrowed money from him at unequal rate of interest and the other one had borrowed twenty five paras of paddy from him at an interest of 40 percent for a period of eight months.<sup>116</sup>

The rebels belonging to the tenant-labour classes of these two land lords decided to act against them. Komu Menon was kill on 22 August 1851 by six Mappilas. One of his servants was also murdered. Then they proceeded to the house of Ittunni Rama Menon. Besides Ittunni Rama Menon, Kadakkotil Nambudiri, a Brahmin land lord, who was in Raman Menons' house was also killed.<sup>117</sup> But other members of these two families were allowed to escape. The number of the rebels increased to nine after these operations. Their next victim was Mundengara Rarichan Nair, a friend and companion of Komu Menon, and 'like him (Komu Mennon) was dissipated, and at times equally abusive and

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115. Ibid., pp. 170, 189.

116. A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, op.cit., p.94

117. K.N. Pankkkar, op.cit., p.78

offensive to Moplahs and in consequence nearly as much disliked'.<sup>118</sup> The rebels also burnt the house of Changara Warriar, a moneylender.<sup>119</sup> It shows that most of the victims of the uprising were either jenmis or moneylenders who had exploited the Mappila tenants and poor people by all means.

Then the rebels whose number had increased to seventeen proceeded to the house of the Kulathur Variyar, an influential jenmi who had refused to give a plot for the erection of a mosque.<sup>120</sup> He was a very rich landlord with extensive landed property in the Walluwanad, Ernad and Palakkad taluks, receiving nearly Rupees Twenty thousand per year as rent. During the time of Mysorean invasion he took refuge at Travancore and returned after Tipu's defeat and regained his properties from Mappilas who had occupied it during his absence. The band had killed Variyar and destroyed all his property deeds and documents. Their act shows that they wanted to put an end to the oppression of Mappila tenants. Finally, the rebels took their stand in Variyar's house and died fighting against British

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118. CMO Vol.I, p.190

119. Ibid.

120. A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, op.cit., p.94, see also CMO, Vol.I, p.191

troops on 27 August 1851.<sup>121</sup> K.N. Panikkar observes, "Unlike several other incidents, the rebels in this case had not sought the blessings of a tangal or a moulavi before embarking on their course of action".<sup>122</sup> However, J.F. Thomas, a member of the Governor's Council attributed this uprising to be a direct result of the teachings and influence of the tangals<sup>123</sup>. Though there was no proof on the direct involvement of any tangal or mullah, there is circumstantial evidence that religious teachings of tangals' had a role in the revolt. Along with it, economic grievances of Mappila tenants and the poor as well as the instigation of selfish wealthy Mappilas like Melumamil Emalukutti had played an equal or important role in the revolt.<sup>124</sup>

(c) Mattanur Uprising

Mattanur revolt of January 1852 was one of the severest revolts of 19th century. This was the only one to occur in North Malabar. This revolt was launched by Mappila tenants of Kallatil Brahmin family.

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121. CMO, Vol.I, pp. 168-9

122. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.78

123. Minute of J.F. Thomas, 18 October 1851, CMO, Vol. 1, p.205.

124. CMO, Vol.I, p. 189.

He was one of the largest and most influential landlords, moneylender and pepper merchant of Mattanur with about thirty Mappila tenants under him. As a landlord he had exploited the tenants by raising land rent and charging unusually heavy ponnam varom (landlords' share of the hill cultivation conducted by petty tenants) and his 'general management was exacting and not invariably just towards his tenants'.<sup>125</sup> His principal tenants belonging to two families - the Chooryoot and Tayyil. 'The head of the Chooryoot had become the bounded debtor of the Brahmin for a large sum. The Tayyil family were engaged in suits about gardens and lands, and threatened with eviction by the Brahmin.'<sup>126</sup>

Kottale Mappila family and other wealthy Mappilas were trying to increase their land possessions in the village. But their attempts were thwarted by the Brahmin through judicial proceedings.<sup>127</sup> However, they were the only people in the village who had the potential to oppose the Brahmin. Naturelly, Mappila peasants of the village looked up on them as champions

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125. Ibid., pp. 300-01

126. Ibid., p.304

127. Ibid., p.333

of their cause against their unpopular landlords.<sup>128</sup> Thus their influence gradually increased among Mappilas. K.N. Panikkar observes, 'It was there fore possible for the Kottale family to channelize peasant discontent to help them achieve what they could not through judicial institutions.'<sup>129</sup> Mr. Robinson has the opinion that the revolt was organised and controlled by wealthy, influential Mappilas who were not moved by religious spirit but 'their own interested motives and malice.'<sup>130</sup>

The initial band consisting of nine Mappilas made a piligrimage to Tirurangadi in November 1851. This piligrimage was sponsered by the kottale family.<sup>131</sup> They met the expense of the piligrimage to instil the religious feelings of the participants and to channelize it to achieve their selfish goals. However, some of the participants had their own personal grievance to rally against the Brahmin as stated by one of the participants, 'I am determined to die as a shaheed. The kallatil Brahmin had forged

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128. Ibid., p.334

129. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.80

130. CMO, Vol.I, pp. 302-03

131. Ibid., p. 306

deeds against me , and has filed a suit, and tries to ousting me out of my parambu (a piece of garden land), and I will not live no longer.<sup>132</sup> They sought the blessings of Mamburam Tangal to reinforce their decision to annihilate Kallatil Brahmin. The Tangal had supposedly sanctioned earlier uprisings against oppressive landlords.

After the pilgrims returned from Tirurangadi, for about two months they were making preparations for a general uprising, moving about in the society of their co-religionists, gaining recruits, widening their plans, and watching their opportunity for perpetrating their project. They were supported and fed by their instigators, relatives and neighbours, no doubt with the fullest knowledge of the ultimate intention.<sup>133</sup> It shows that the rebels had succeeded gaining the support of a large number of people belonging to different strata of Mappila society. They had used religious festivals like moulids to muster mass support as well as to boost the morale of the rebels. On January 4, 1852 the rebels assembled at the mosque of Pallot to

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132. Deposition of Ayar Kunyaeen 4 february 1852, Ibid p.298.

133. CMO, Vol.I, p.308

celebrate the anniversary of prophet's birth. On the morning of the 5th, armed with guns and knives, they marched to the house of kallatil Brahmin. There were 200 rebels. It shows the mass support of the rebels. Kallatil Brahmin and 15 of his family members including servants were killed. The rebels had destroyed all documents and accounts, dug up the floor apparantly in search of hidden jewels and valuables, set the house on fire and took away about Rupees 7000 in cash.<sup>134</sup> The rebels then attacked Kannambatta Brahmin. 'They destroyed his house and then proceeded to Pazhassi to make their final stand against the army'.<sup>135</sup> But they had changed their mind due to the interference of Vallapillangath Hasan Kutty, a wealthy Mappila of Irikkur. He had a personal score to settle with Kuliati Anandan the richest Hindu landlord of the village.<sup>136</sup> But Anandan was clever enough to take precautionary measures for self defence. He had employed three hundred armed retainers to ensure safety to himself, family members and property. When the rebels attacked Kuliati Anandan's house on 8th January 1852, the armed

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134. Ibid., p.313

135. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.82

136. CMO, vol-I, p.342

retainers posted there retaliated and all the Mappila rebels were put to death.<sup>137</sup> The Mattanur Mappila rebels had their own personal, economic or religious grievances against the Kallatil Brahmin. But after killing him they became victims of a drama enacted by the wealthy Mappila of the locality to settle his personal score with Kuliath Anandan. That proved fatal to them.

Role of Sayyid Fazl in the 19th Century uprisings-  
A critical analysis

There were three major Mappila uprisings - Manjery in 1849, Kulathur in 1851 and Mattanur in 1852 - during the middle of 19th century. Whether Sayyid Fazl played any pivotal role in these uprisings is a matter of controversy. There is only one incidental reference in the lengthy report of Mr. Robinson connecting the Mamburam Tangal with the Mappila rebels of 1849.<sup>138</sup> Mr. Conolly firmly believed that the

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137. Two of the rebels who survived for a few hours asserted in their statements that they participated in the revolt because kallatil Brahmin was an oppressive land lord who had cheated Mappilas over some land intended for a mosque (Ibid., p.252 and pp.279-80).

138. Ibid., p.65

Tirurangadi Tangal was behind the Revolt of 1849.<sup>139</sup> Athan Gurukkal, the leader of 1849 uprising, was believed to be a disciple of Tirurangadi Tangal. According to official report, the Tangal had appointed him the commission to settle the dispute between Mappilas themselves. His sword bore the seal of the Tangal and seems to be given by the Tangal. 'The Tiruwangady (Tirurangadi) Tangul's name has continuously figured in all the histories of the fanatical outbreaks of the last eight years.'<sup>140</sup>

Probably, the institution of blessing nourished by the Hadrami Sayyids and continued under the Mamburam Tangals prompted Mr. Conolly and other British authorities to suspect his complicity in the uprisings. But Sayyid Fazl outrightly denied the allegations of Conolly and stated that he held out no encouragement to 'fanaticism' or rebellion against Government, that crowds of people came to do him reverence, that he was obliged to receive and bless them, often in a mass, and that it was his misfortune if any evil-intentioned people, who partake of this blessing, in the mass should hold that it warranted

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139. Ibid., pp. 33-6

140. Ibid., p.33

them to commit any atrocity, which their perveted minds considered a service to God.<sup>141</sup> However, British officials never believed his statement on the ground that almost all outbreaks had taken place in and around the sphere of influence of the Tirurangadi Tangal and most of the participants were either diciples of the priest or at least sought his blessings before the operation.<sup>142</sup>

J.F. Thomas, a member of the Governers Council attributed the Kolathur uprising to be a direct result of the teachings and influence of the Tangals and the evil whisper of wealthy Mappilas against rich Hindus or in other words the priests and wealthy Mappilas had instigated their poor co-religionists against Hindu landlords.<sup>143</sup> All other British officials also had the same opinion.<sup>144</sup> However there was no circumstantial evidence to prove the complicity of Tirurangadi Tangal in this uprising.

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141. Ibid.

142. Ibid., p.35

143. Minute of J.F. Thomas, 18 October 1851 (CMO, Vol. I, p.205).

144. Letter from H.V. Conolly to T. Pyeroft, 30 September 1851 (Ibid., p.174), C. Collect to H.V. Conolly, 20 Sept. 1851 (Ibid., p.194).

The Mattanur uprising was a blessing in disguise as far as the policy of British authorities towards the Tangal was concerned. It provided a clue to prove the complicity of Tirurangadi Tangal in the outbreaks. Before embarking on the outbreak, the rebels, fifteen in number, had conducted a pilgrimage to Tirurangadi. Such a pilgrimage to Tirurangadi was not common among the Mappilas of Kottayam taluk. Tirurangadi lies 80 miles away from the centre of the outbreak. 'The fact that the decision to kill the landlord was taken prior to the pilgrimage did not deter the district officials from coming to this conclusion.<sup>145</sup> On the basis of his enquiry Mr. Robinson considered the Tangal as an aid of the rebel and suggested his immediate arrest.<sup>146</sup> Mr. Conolly had already reached the same conclusion and had sought the permission of the Government 'to secure the person of the Tangal',<sup>147</sup> Following the foot-print of British officials, Stephen Frederic Dale re-emphasised the significant role of Sayyid Fazl in this uprising. On the basis of the rebels pilgrimage to Tirurangadi, Dale observes, "The fact that no other outbreak occurred in North - Malabar, that no other Mappilas had been

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145. Ibid., p.98

146. CMO, Vol.I, p. 260

147. Ibid., p.239

known to travel the eighty miles south on pilgrimage both tend to reinforce the conviction that these Tangals (Mamburam Tangals) played a pivotal role in these outbreaks".<sup>148</sup>

It is true that Sayyid Fazl's father Sayyid Alawi's teachings and fatwa against Englishmen had played a significant role in the Mappila uprising of 1843. Mappilas firmly believed that Sayyid Alawi himself fought against the British in this uprising. In the case of Sayyid Fazl there was no proof to substantiate his direct involvement in any of the Mappila revolt during this period. On the basis of the following hypothesis British authorities made a connecting link between the Tangal and Mappila outbreaks.

1. The outbreaks have been confined to the neighbourhood and disciples of the Tirurangadi Tangal. Mr. Conolly observes: "There is no other part of Malabar, where outbreaks of this nature had taken place. They have been distinctly confined to the neighbourhood and disciples of the Tiruwangady Tangul."<sup>149</sup>

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148. Stephen F. Dale, 'Islam and Social conflict, The Mappilas of Malabar', 1498 - 1922, unpublished doctoral dissertation, (T N A), p.132.

149. CMO, Vol.IV, p.35

2. Pada Pattu (War songs), glorifying the heroic fight of Mappila rebels were dedicated to this Tangal. 'Written and unwritten songs are current, in honour of parties, who have earned paradise by a similar course to that pursued by these fanatics. The power of the ballad among the lower orders, is as strong in Malabar, as it is notoriously in other countries.<sup>150</sup> One of these songs were in the process of being composed in honour of kurikul and the martyrs of the 1849 revolts when Conolly discovered it.<sup>151</sup>

3. Almost all Mappila rebels had sought the blessings of the Tangal before embarking on the revolt.

4. The outbreaks in the middle of the 19th century occurred in two phases, the first between 1836 and 1843 and the second between 1849 and 1853. There is a brief interval coincided with the absence of the Tangal from Malabar. Sayyid Alawi died in 1844 and, immediately after, Sayyid Fazl went to Mecca on Hajj. "The British officials drew their conclusion by deductive logic; if uprisings had not occurred during the absence of the Tangal, his presence must have been responsible for their incidence".<sup>152</sup> Stephan Frederic Dale writes,

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150. Ibid., p.36

151. Ibid., pp.228-9

152. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.97

"The evidence regarding Sayyid Fazl is of three types: his known involvement with some of the shahids, his religious attitudes and doctrines and the example of his later career in Arabia and the Ottoman empire which illumines aspects of his personality and political attitudes".<sup>153</sup> Sayyid Fazl's teachings aimed at the social and economic liberation of lowercaste converts and Mappila tenants. For this he had forbidden ploughing in friday and also discouraged the use of honorofic titles when addressing upper caste Hindu landlords.<sup>154</sup> He is said to have preached in his Friday sermon at Tirurangadi; "It is no sin, but a merit, to kill a jenmi who evicts."<sup>155</sup>

On the basis of the above preachings and circumstantial evidence British officials considered Sayyid Fazl as the chief architect of Mappila revolts. Mr. Robinson, Assistant Magistrate of Malabar who inquired on the Mattanur uprising, reports, "I am fully convinced that the ends of justice require, and the evidence justifies, the immediate arrest of the Pakoya of Tiruwangady (Sayyid Fazl), with a view to his

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153. Stephen frederic Dale, The Mappila of Malabar 1498 - 1922, p.128.

154. CMO, Vol.IV, p.276

155. W. Logan, Malabar, Vol-I, p.691

committal to stand his trial with others on the charge of being accessory before the fact to all the crimes perpetrated by the late law-less gang".<sup>156</sup> Mr. Conolly in reply to a query from the Madras Government in 1851 states that there was no evidence of any kind to incriminate Mamburam Tangal<sup>157</sup>, though he had earlier suggested the removal of the Tangal from Tirurangadi to Cannanore.<sup>158</sup> The Government secretary also rejected the role of any external agencies in the outbreaks. "There is no trace of any influential agent, or leaders engaged in promoting these disturbances, or in creating a general spirit of lawlessness and oppositions to constituted authority."<sup>159</sup>

The fact is very clear that British authorities had no conclusive proof to implicate Sayyid Fazl in the Mappila outbreaks. Their reports were confusing and often contradictory in nature. Therefore, some other reasons might have prompted them to turn against Sayyid Fazl. They might have been worried

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156. CMO, Vol.I, p.260

157. Letter from H.V. Conolly to T. Pycroft Secretary to Government, 29 Nov, 1851, No:53 (CMO, Vol.II, p.221).

158. CMO, Vol.I, p.34

159. Extract from the Minutes of Consultation under date 8th March 1849 (CMO, Vol. III, p.154)

about the influence of Sayyid Fazl over the Mappila masses. He often acted as a parallel authority and created constant headache to British officials. "He had become an alternate centre of authority to whom the Mappilas submitted their disputes for adjudication, thereby undermining the power and authority of the administration".<sup>160</sup> Mr. Conolly observes that the Tangal is in every respect a dangerous person that the police is powerless against him, and that he really enjoys an imperium in imperio is a matter of no doubt.<sup>161</sup> In order to substantiate his argument Conolly forwarded a letter received from the Tahsildar of Sheranaad dated 23 January 1852. According to this letter, Sayyid Fazl's children were threatened by Chathu Menon, a drunkard and a relative of the head Gumasta (head clerk) of the Cutcherry. The Tangal's men approached the head police officer and demanded the apprehension of the guilty. They also requested to deliver him to them. Chathu Menon was sent to the Tangal and he gave him good advice and sent him away.<sup>162</sup> In another case, certain Mappilas approached the Tahsildar of Bettunad and informed him that they

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160. K.N. Panikkar, *op.cit.*, p.99

161. CMO, Vol.I, p.240

162. *Ibid.*, pp.242-3

prefer to settle a dispute over a cow in the presence of the Tangal rather than in the presence of the Tahsildar.<sup>163</sup> Reporting the earlier incident, in which about three hundred Mappilas had assembled to force the officer to accept the request of the Tangal the police official observed that, ".... the manner in which the Tangal and his people behave, I think they fear not the Government".<sup>164</sup>

It is true that rebels of various Mappila uprising used to visit Mamburam seeking the blessing of the Tangal before embarking on the revolts. All of them paid homage to the tomb of the diseased Tangal, Sayyid 'Alawi and might have sought the blessing of Sayyid Fazl. But whether they disclose or conceal their hidden agenda before the Tangal is not sure. From Sayyid Fazl's statement,<sup>165</sup> it is clear that he was not aware of their plan. "The rebels considered that the pilgrimage itself was a sanction, even praying at the tomb of Sayyid 'Alawi was construed by them as obtaining a sanction from his son".<sup>166</sup> Prof.

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163. CMO, Vol. II, p.240

164. Ibid., p.242

165. CMO, Vol.I, p.33

166. CMO, Vol.II, p.140

K.N. Panikkar refutes this statement, "A pilgrimage to an important shrine and its priest was scarcely evidence in itself and that they obtained his concurrence and blessing on the design was, at best, an assumption".<sup>167</sup>

Sayyid Fazl's manifold activities resented the British. His challenge against the Socio-economic system which flourished in South-Malabar under British supremacy and his un-bounding influence over Mappila masses in general forced them to institute punitive measures against him. Mappila outbreaks are used as a pretext for this purpose.

#### T.L. Strange Commission, An Appraisal

Mr. Conolly, the District Magistrate of Malabar suggested a thorough inquiry into the circumstances which contributed to the frequent disturbances in the district. 'The Madras Government was not averse to this idea and hence a Special Commissioner, T.L. Strange, who had earlier served in Malabar as a judicial officer, was appointed on February 1852.<sup>168</sup> T.L. Strange entered the Madras

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167. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.95

168. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit, p.94

service in 1825. He began serving in Malabar in 1829. He acted as the sub judge of Calicut in 1843 and served as the civil and session judge of Tellicherry in 1845. He was ascertaining the causes of the outbreaks and making a special enquiry in to agrarian disputes. He was also to determine what action should be taken against the Mamburam Tangal. The Government asked Strange to suggest remedies, while remembering that the 'grand object' of his Commission was "to secure to the Nair and Brahmin population, the most ample protection and safety possible against the effects of Moplah fanaticism and device those measures which shall either so damp or discourage this fanaticism, that its future outbreak may be comparatively unimportant and infrequent".<sup>169</sup> The Government had already pre-judged fanaticism as the cause of the uprising and the oppressors who were loyal to the Government were to be provided more protection. It was a Commission appointed to recommend more repressive measures. Strange followed these instruction faithfully. He submitted his lengthy report to T. Pycroft, secretary to the Government on 25th September 1852. After reviewing the circumstances of the past Mappila outbreaks, he went on to discuss the special topic of

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169. Extracts from the Minutes of Consultation, 17 Feb. 1852, (CMO, Vol. I, p.273).

his Commission. He gave a detailed report of the outbreaks occurred between 1836 and 1852. Of the thirty one outbreaks he discusses, the foremost reason was nothing but fanaticism, according to his estimate. He set aside all other relevant legible and genuine reasons as reported by the rebels and Mappila masses during the time of his enquiry. He outrightly rejected the idea that the outbreaks were due to agrarian discontent. He reported that there were only fourteen of them where any personal provocation was apparent, and that only half of these where land was the prime ground of quarrel.<sup>170</sup>

"It is apparent thus that in no instance can any outbreak that has arisen be attributed to the oppression of tenants by landlords. A great clamour is now raised on this regard, prominently in the Southern Taluks visited by me, the Moplah population seeking to throw the blame of these outbreaks up on the landlords by thus charging them with being the cause there of. I have given the subject every attention and am convinced that though instances may and do arise of individual hardship to a tenant, the general character of the

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170. Report of T.L. Strange, 25th Sept. 1852, (CMO, Vol.II, p.439).

dealings of the Hindu landlords towards their tenantry, whether Moplah or Hindu is mild, equitable and fore bearing."<sup>171</sup>

According to Strange's findings there is no immediate connection between any outbreak and the oppression of tenants by landlords. He corroborated all outbreaks with fanaticism of Mappilas. This was fostered by a 'selfish, ignorant and vicious priesthood',<sup>172</sup> in the minds of the illiterate Mappilas who were 'grasping, treacherous and vindictive in character'.<sup>173</sup>

On the basis of the above statement, T.L. Strange looked into the role of Mamburam Tangals or Tarammal Tangals in the Mappila outbreaks of 19th century. He writes "My experience of Malabar dates from the year 1829, and it accords all respects with that given forth by Mr. Berber as to the character of the Mappila priesthood, the noxious influence they exert, the direct encouragement to crime afforded by the Tarammal and condotty (Kondotty) Tangals, and the delusive and mercenary way in which, proselytism is

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171. Ibid., p.440

172. Ibid., p.446

173. Ibid., pp.443-'4

carried on."<sup>174</sup> According to him, Tarammal Tangals (Sayyid Alawi and Sayyid Fazl) had encouraged the rebels in nine cases and nine outbreaks were sanctioned by them<sup>175</sup> (three by Sayyid Alawi and the rest by his son). T.L. Strange had produced witnesses to prove his stand. They were the Tahsildar of Ernad, the Adigharees (village headmen) of Mankada and Kariawattam in Walluwanad, Koottacherry Poker, ex-cutwall of Malappuram, Kullathodiyil Hydros, ex-adhigharee of Melmuri and Waliemannil Mammed chief inhabitant of Manjery. All of them believed that Sayyid Fazl had sanctioned these outbreaks.<sup>176</sup>

T.L. Strange also pointed out the interval of six years in between the Cherur riot(1843) and the Manjery uprising(1849). The cessation, according to his view, occurred due to the death of Sayyid 'Alawi in 1844 and the pilgrim journey of Sayyid Fazl to Mecca in the same year. Sayyid Fazl returned to Malabar in 1849. "This circumstance is a very significant one when taken into consideration with the evidence there is to the old Tangul's (Sayyid Alawi) authorization of

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174. Ibid., pp.447

175. Ibid., p.448

176. Ibid., p.449

outbreaks before this interval, and to the son in turn performing his father's part so soon as he had fairly taken up the position held by him".<sup>177</sup> However, he argued that these Tangals were not the prime instigators, "they (Tangals) were infact themselves but tools - willing ones no doubt - in the hands of others".<sup>178</sup> Mr. Conolly believed that the Mamburam Tangals had an active role in sanctioning the outbreaks rather than acted as mere 'tools' in the hands of others. Stephan Federic Dale observes, "Thus in keeping with the rather muddled nature of his entire report, Strange correctly perceived the existance of an Islamic revival but failed to understand or to discover that it was probably influencing the Tangals as well as being preached by them."<sup>179</sup>

Strange Commission endorsed the repressive measures recommended by District Magistrate Conolly, a decade earlier and further recommended that the Mappila population be disarmed, the property of all martyrs be escheated to the Government. All would be martyrs should be deported, Imprisonment of all Mappilas who

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177. Ibid., p.450

178. Ibid., p.451

179. S.F. Dale, Doctorial dissertation, op.cit., p.148

were under suspicious of complicity or who failed to assist actively in the suppression of the outbreaks, the removal of Mappila official from outbreaks-ridden districts and prohibition of the erection of new mosques, even on Mappila jenman land.<sup>180</sup> On the bases of these proposals three Acts were enacted by him. One for the repression of fanatical outrages, a second controlling the construction of mosques and a third restricting the possession of arms. The first provided for the punishment of rebels and the escheat of their property, the deportation of those who withheld information or evinced sympathy for rebels, levy of fines on Mappilas living in the neighbourhood of outbreaks, deportation of preachers and inculcators of fanatical doctrines and the punishment of those who suppressed evidence.<sup>181</sup> According to K.N. Panikkar, "These provisions were so sweeping that the entire community would have been answerable for any revolt in one way or the other".<sup>182</sup> The second Act, to prevent the construction of mosques on disputed properties, which had often paved the way for outbreaks, forbade the erection of a mosque without the permission of the

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180. MOC Vol.IV, p.451

181. Ibid., pp.455-'63

182. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.96

Magistrate. Violation was to be made punishable.<sup>183</sup>

The third Act aimed at restricting the ownership of arms and forbide the possession of long knives.<sup>184</sup>

The Madras Government was in general agreement with the views of the Commissioner about the origin and growth of Mappila aggression and their pernicious consequences, and the Government considered that Mr. Strange is correct in the conclusion at which he has arrived. According to him these fanatical murders and crimes cannot be putdown under the existing laws, and that special power must be granted by the legislature in order to check and restrain them and to give security of person and property to the Hindu community of Malabar.<sup>185</sup> However, the Government did not accept all the recommendations of T.L. Strange Commission. The Government agreed to his additional proposal ie. a special police force be raised and trained to deal with the outbreaks and agreed to enact the proposals of

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183. CMO, Vol.IV, p. 463 - This act existed till the first E.M.S ministry of Kerala in 1957. E.M.S ministry issued an order on June 7, 1957 (No. M.A. 4516410/57/P2) removing this restriction for erecting mosques and Madrassas in accordance with the resolution moved by Muslim Leage member CH Muhamed Koya on May 9, 1957.

184. Ibid., p.464,

185. Ibid., pp.514-'15.

Conolly. Other measures suggested by Strange were accepted and incorporated in the 'Moplah Outrages Act' and 'Moplah war knives Act' in 1854.

#### Deportation of Sayyid Fazl

Even before the Strange Commission submitted his report, on 12th February 1852 the Madras Government ordered the banishment of Sayyid Fazl from Kerala as his prestige and influence constituted a challenge to the authority of the British administration.<sup>186</sup> One of the aims of the Strange Commission was to ascertain, "the complicity of the Tangal in the late outbreaks, his usual demeanour of setting himself above the law and intimidating the police officers and of suggesting the manner in which he should be dealt with".<sup>187</sup>

The modus operandi of the deportation plan was worked out by Conolly and his subordinate officials. Firstly, he thought about deploying a European troops in and around the Tirurangadi mosque from where they would be able to command the Tangal's house. Conolly had feared a massive Mappila uprising and large scale blood-shed. He observes: "the fear here is chiefly that

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186. CMO, Vol.I, p.266

187. Ibid., p.272

the excessive slaughter of the deluded wretches, who would cheerfully rush on certain death to help or avenge their spiritual head.<sup>188</sup> Conolly had no idea about the Tangal's reaction to the proposed plan and he thought that the Tangal would come out, in open fight against the opposing infidel (the British troops).<sup>189</sup> Conolly even wrote to Mr. Cubbon Head of a Regiment of Mysore cavalry seeking his help to secure the Tangal. "The Government have authorised me to indent on You for horsemen (Silladar), If I think they would be serviceable in an attempt which will probably have to be made to secure the priest at Tiruwangady."<sup>190</sup>

In a second thought, Conolly, probably decided to apply the policy of forceful persuasion in the case of the deportation of Sayyid Fazl. He wrote to his higher authority. "I be allowed to attempt to compromise the matter by requiring the principal Moplahs and Mussalman in the country to exert their influence to remove him quietly"<sup>191</sup>. Mr. Robinson, the

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188. Letter from H.V. Conolly to P. Pycraft, Secretary to Government, dated 7th Feb 1852 (CMO, Vol. I, p.257)

189. Ibid., Para 3

190. Letter from H.V. Conolly to M. Cubbon, (Private and confidential) 13 February 1852, Calicut. (CMO, Vol.I p.56).

191. Ibid., p.258

Assistant Magistrate of Malabar suggested to take this priest before the constitutional tribunal and then claim conviction against him as an accessory before the fact to all the horried tragedies which followed out of his consent and awful blessing, if not direct instigation.<sup>192</sup>

Conolly had entrusted the task of persuading the Tangal to leave Malabar to a number of eminent persons like Kuttussa, the Mappila Tahsildar of Ernad, C. Kanaran, the deputy Collector and Atta Koya Tangal, a relative of Sayyid Fazl and supporter of the British. Mr. Kuttussa's relations with the Tangal was highly criticised by T.L. Strange on the ground that he built a mosque in Manjery and dedicated to the Tangal.<sup>193</sup> Kuttussa and C. Kanaran met the Tangal in 14 March 1852 and the Tangal asked them what crime he did. They were not able to give a satisfactory answer.<sup>194</sup> Atta Koya Tangal was actively employed under Mr. Conolly in negotiating the departure of the Sayyid Fazl to Arabia.<sup>195</sup>

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192. Ibid., p.260

193. Correspondance of Special Commissioner and Government from sept-Nov. 1852, Vol-v, pp.29-30 (KSA).

194. CMO, Vol.I, p.63

195. Letter from C. Collect to T. Pyeroft, Secretary to Govt, dated 24 Sept. 1855, Calicut.

Owing to the constant and continues persuasion of British officials, Sayyid Fazl finally, decided to leave Malabar. Mr. Conolly remarks: "...as his blessing was sometimes misunderstood and his presence in the country unfortunately had led to deeds of horror, he was willing, if the Government chooses, to end further embarrassment by leaving Malabar and taking up his permanent abode among his people in Arabia.<sup>196</sup>

Mr. William Logan cited another reason for the deportation of Sayyid Fazl from Kerala. He writes, "... I may add that, as a matter of fact, the Collector Mr. Conolly, would not have insisted on the Tangal Syed Fazil's leaving the country if he would have consented to go to the Jammal mosque at Tirurangadi at a Friday service, and have there publicly withdrawn from the position which he had already taken up in his sermons to the congregation, viz-that it was a righteous act to kill a landlord. I had this on the best authority, namely, from the late deputy Collector C. Kanaran, who was the officer deputed by Mr. Conolly to enter in to personal negotiations with Syed Fazil, and through whose influence he was eventually prevailed up on to

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196. H.V. Conolly to Secretary, Judicial Department, dated 20 March 1852, MJP, No:216.

leave the Country. Syed Fazil persistently by refused to do as he was asked, and Mr. Conolly then insisted in his quitting the Country. The Government will search in vain in the published records for any notes of this fact".<sup>197</sup>

Now, the fact is clear that Sayyid Fazl's fatwa against landlords, his effort for socio-religious reform of Mappilas and lower caste converts and his stature as 'animperium in imperio' paved the way for his deportation from Malabar. Finally, Sayyid Fazl was deported to Arabia in 19th March 1852. He was accompanied by fifty seven persons including his family members and servants.<sup>198</sup> However, the Government 'anticipating resisitance by the Tangal and a general uprising of his followers, had alerted the army. Infact, the news about the impending deportation of the Tangal did arouse considerable resentment. In the first week of February ten to twelve thousand Mappilas, a good number of them armed, assembled in Tirurangadi but peacefully dispersed at the advice of

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197. Letter from W. Logan to Chief Secretary, Government of Madras No:33 Calicut, dated Dec. 13 1880 (Judicial Dept, GO No:281 dated 5th February 1881, (T N A).

198. CMO, Vol. I, p.360

the Tangal.<sup>199</sup> It shows that the Tangal was not willing to take the path of aggression or violence to enforce his stay at Malabar. If he wished so, he could have mobilised the armed Mappilas against the authority. British officials took all precautions to keep the news of his deportation secret. But their effort was in vain. About eight thousand Mappilas, showing strong signs of grief at his departure followed him to Parappanangadi where he embarked.<sup>200</sup> Sayyid Fazl was originally scheduled to set sail from Calicut, but seeing the number of Mappilas following him, the authorities requested him to take the boat from Parappanangadi.<sup>201</sup> Rupees six hundred was advanced to Sayyid Fazl in 1852 by Mr. Conolly to enable him to leave India.<sup>202</sup>

With the removal Sayyid Fazl from Malabar an era in the history of Malabar came to an end. Mappilas were shocked and in utter dismay due to the negative policy of British towards the Tangal. They thought

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199. Ibid., p.277

200. Ibid., p.361

201. Ibid.

202. Letter from the Secretary, Judicial Department, to the Magistrate of Malabar, dated 4th November 1856, No:45, 46 (Judicial Index 1856, Tamil Nadu Archives).

that Mr. Conolly had a pivotal role in the deportation of the Tangal. The wide spread hatred towards Conolly finally resulted in his murder. Sayyid Fazl had entrusted his properties of Mamburam to his sister and her son Sayyid Abdulla Koya Tangal, before his departure. Abdulla Koya Tangal acted as the Mukthiar holder of Mamburam shrine and properties.<sup>203</sup>

### Sayyid Fazl's Role in Ottoman Politics

Sayyid Fazl spent much of his time in al-Taif after his deportation from Malabar. During his life time thrice he visited Constantinople (Istanbul). His first visit to Constantinople was in 1853 AD (1269 A.H) Via Egypt. When he entered Egypt, Abbas Pasha the Khedive (the title of the Ottoman viceroy of Egypt) of Egypt called on him and requested him to stay there with family as a state guest. After some time he went to Constantinople, probably, on the invitation of Sultan Abdul Majeed I (1839-1861). Sultan Abdul Majeed had given him an arousing welcome.<sup>204</sup> After some time,

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203. Memorandum sent to the Government of India by the grand sons of Sayyid Fazl, dated 30th January 1947 p.1 (copies of the memorandum was sent to the Mappila notables of Malabar including Ettuveetil Kommu Kutty Sahib (Kakad Tirurangadi).

204. Mamburam Restoration Committee, Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Tangal, A brief life history (Malayalam) Published by the Mamburam Restoration Committee, Calicut, 1934, pp.1-2.

Sayyid Fazl had returned to Hijaz.<sup>205</sup> In 1855 the Ottoman Sultan had conferred on him a pension. During this period he was involved in Pan-Islamic anti-imperialist movement along with Jamaluddin Afghani.<sup>206</sup> He had enjoyed a pension of thousand dollars per year from the Sultan.<sup>207</sup> In 1871 Sayyid Fazl again visited Constantinople on the invitation of Sultan Abdul Aziz (1861-1876). Sayyid Fazl had advised the Sultan on certain issues connecting with the Khilafat. Fazl's advice on the reforms to be introduced in Hejaz was highly appreciated by the Sultan. He was impressed with his presence and returned him to Mecca with presents.<sup>208</sup> He settled in Mecca for a short period. He had married the daughter of Sayyid Shafi Habsi a well known Scholar of Mecca. Their children were Sayyid Ahmed and Sharifa Nur.<sup>209</sup> During this period Sayyid Fazl occasionally lived at Taif and Mecca. He had kept up a very large establishment, supporting

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205. Letter from G.F. Edmonstone Secretary to Government of India T. Pycroft, Secretary Government of Madras, No: 4985 dated 26 Sept. 1856 (CMO, Vol. II, p.385).

206. Prof. K.M. Bahauddin, op.cit., p.123

207. CMO, Vol. II, p.388

208. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit., p.70

209. Ibid.

fifty or sixty persons as servants or family members. He had purchased a house at Mecca by spending three to four thousand dollars.<sup>210</sup>

While Sayyid Fazl was residing at Mecca, certain dignitaries of Zufar visited the Tangal and requested him to become the Amir of Zufar. They agreed to obey his commands in all aspects of life, if he accepted their request. Therefore Sayyid Fazl and his elder son Sahl Pasha went to Zufar along with their retinues. The people of Zufar gave them an arousing welcome. Sayyid Fazl was made the Amir of Zufar. The post was made hereditary to his children.<sup>211</sup> He was the Amir of Zufar from 1875 to 1879. During his tenure, he succeeded in putting an end to the tribal disunity and disputes and complete unity was established among various tribes of Zufar. He introduced so many schemes in Zufar to improve the material condition of the people. His reformist policies and welfare schemes were applauded even by the British. The then Malabar Collector had informed

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210. Letter from Stephen Page Esq, Her Majesty's Acting Vice Consul and Honorable Company's Agent at Juddah to R.L. Play Fair Esq, Assistant to political Agent Aden, 31 October 1856, Juddah (Jeddah), No:40.

211. Mamburam Restoration Committee, *op.cit.*, p.8

Sayyid Fazl's nephew Sayyid Abdulla Koya Tangal as follows: "British Government and Queen Victoria had been under the impression that your uncle - Sayyid Fazl Pasha, present Amir of Zufar - was a trouble maker. But the Queen and Government realized that he was a reformist and lover of peace after reaching at zufar. There fore the Queen and British Government were very happy in his meretorious work and congratulate him. The Queen had entrusted you to convey to him Her Majesty's Sallam. You should convey this information to Sayyid Fazl at the earliest".<sup>212</sup> As per the instruction of the Collector, Sayyid Abdula Koya Tangal had conveyed this message to Sayyid Fazl. Sayyid Fazl's work as Amir was noted for his honesty, integrity and justice.<sup>213</sup>

Sayyid Fazl had lost his authority following a tribal rising in 1879 supported by the Amir of Muscat named Sayyid Turki. Sayyid Turki was invited to invade Zufar by some of the tribal chiefs who opposed the reforms of Sayyid Fazl. Sayyid Fazl had not sufficient force to defeat the enemy. And he wanted to avoid

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212. Ibid., pp. 8-9

213. Memorandum submitted by the grand sons of Sayyid Fazl to the Government of India dated 30 January 1947, p.1.

blood shed as far as possible. Finally he voluntarily abandoned the post and went to Muqalla, a port near Hadramawt, along with a few Sudanese and Hadramawt soldiers.<sup>214</sup> At this time he got the invitation of Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) of Constantinople. Because of his reputed qualities as an administrator and theologian, Ottoman Sultans had invited him on many occasions to consult him on religious and political problems.<sup>215</sup>

Sayyid Fazl and his two sons Sayyid Sahl and Sayyid Muhammad went to Constantinople via Egypt. After some years his son Sayyid Ahamed Fazl and other members of the family also joined with them in Constantinople.<sup>216</sup> Sulthan Abdul Hamid made him a minister of Ottoman cabinet. Sayyid Fazl proved his efficiency as a minister and hence became an influential person in Ottoman Government. He had introduced many schemes for the improvement of Ottoman administration. It was he who proposed the construction of Hijaz railroad.<sup>217</sup> This is "the most

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214. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit., p.72

215. Memorandum..., op.cit., p.1

216. Mamburam Restoration Committee, op.cit., pp.10-11.

217. Ibid.

spectacular addition to the Ottoman railroad net work, connecting Syria with the holy cities."<sup>218</sup> Among other schemes proposed by Sayyid Fazl included the Mecca-Jeddah railroad. Sayyid Fazl remained in his ministerial post till his death in 1900.

#### Sayyid Fazl's Attempt to return to Malabar

Mr. Robinson, the Assistant Magistrate of Malabar states: "When Syed Fazl left the country, he did not heartily believe that his departure would be final, and his return would be prevented for ever."<sup>219</sup> Therefore, during the time of his first visit to Constantinople in 1853, Sayyid Fazl sought the help of Sultan Abdul Majeed to persuade the British Ambassador of Porte to permit him to enter India. Probably, owing to the persuasion of the Sultan, Start Ford de Rediccliffe, the British Ambassador of Porte had given Sayyid Fazl a letter of introduction addressing to the Governor of Bombay to facilitate his return to India. The text of the letter is as follows: "I beg to recommend to your kind attention and good offices the

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218. S.J. Shaw & E.K. Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol-II, Cambridge, 1977, p.227.

219. CMO, Vol.II, p.386

bearer of this letter said (Sayyid) Fazl Effendi an inhabitant of Malabar. The Effendi who is now on his return from the pilgrimage to Mecca, is a person of distinction and from his descent an object of veneration among Mussalmans, and I have reason to believe that the Sultan and his ministers would be grateful for any assistance which it might be in the power of Her Majesty's authorities on the Honorable East India Company to afford him during his voyage to Malabar.<sup>220</sup>

From Constantinople Sayyid Fazl went to Egypt on his way back to India. In Cairo he lived like a state guest. Mr. Robinson, the Assistant Magistrate of Malabar had conducted detailed enquiry on the movements and influence of the Tangal in Arabia in the wake of Conolly's murder in 1855 and reported as follows: "I obtained in Cairo some curious intelligence relative to Syed Fazl's private life and conduct in Arabia. It appears that he first took up his residence at DJedda, but soon after, to escape the surveillance of the British Consul there, he removed down to coast,

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220. Letter from Start Ford de Redcliffe, British Ambassador to sublime Porte to the Governor of Bombay, Constantinople, dated 23 April, 1853 (GO No:1,2 dated 25 April, 1856, Judicial Department, p.36) - (T N A).

sometimes living at Tayoof (Taif) at other times going to the province of Hadramawt. He is a constant visitor at Mecca. He maintains even in Arabia marked pre-eminence as a fanatical ostentatious Wahabee of considerable influence, refusing to recognize any dignitary, and as my information runs, not taking notice even of a Pacha (Pasha) should he enter his house",<sup>221</sup>. It shows the position held by Sayyid Fazl in Arabia and elsewhere as a Hadrami Sayyid. And he led a life quite fit for a Hadrami Sayyid. He used to visit Mecca at the time of pilgrimage and it provided an opportunity to continue his link with Malabar Mappilas. In order to avoid his contact with Mappilas, Mr. Robinson even suggested to remove Sayyid Fazl, from Arabian coast to Demascus or Brussa or elsewhere, where his conduct might be watched and his influence neutralized.<sup>222</sup> In 1856 the Assistant British Political Resident in Aden had estimated that more than two thousand pilgrims from Malabar visited Mecca every year, according to him, most of them made a devotional visit to the Tangal.<sup>223</sup> On the basis of this finding

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221. CMO Vol-II, p.388

222. Ibid.

223. S.F. Dale, Doctoral dissertation, *Op. cit.*, p.154

and Sayyid Fazl's known correspondance with the Malabar coast,<sup>224</sup> S.F. Dale observes: "He was, of course, no longer present to bless would be martyrs, an important aspects in many incidents. But in the 1849 outbreak that ritual was performed by Kunhikoya Tangal a disciple of Sayyid Fazl and it is probable that by 1852 the Sayyid had attracted a considerable following who became custodian of his doctrines which perhaps is continuing to be influenced by him".<sup>225</sup> Indian Muslims' hatred towards Englishmen is clearly indicated by snouck Hurgronje who spent a year in Hijaz during the time of Hajj. He says, "One is struck by the fact that in Mekka one hears nothing from the lips of Indian Muslims but the words of the most bitter hatred for the Inglis".<sup>226</sup> British officials like Robinson thought that the very presence of Sayyid Fazl in such a place where he could exercise his influence over Mappila would be dangerous as far as the interest of colonialists were concerned. There fore he proposed to remove him from Arabia to Syria or elsewhere.

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224. Letter from W. Crawford, Senior Magistrate of Police to H.L. Anderson Secretary to Government, Bombay, 22 December 1855, CMO, Vol.V, p.178

225. S.F. Dale, Doctoral dissertation, op.cit., p.155

226. Snouck Hurgronje, Mekka, p.217, quoted in S.F. Dale, Ibid.

As far as the British were concerned, with the deportation of Sayyid Fazl, the headache created by his activities never ended in Malabar and Hajj provided an opportunity to both Sayyid Fazl and Mappilas to continue their ties. Therefore they took all cautions against the return of the Tangal or any of his relatives to Malabar.<sup>227</sup> The deportation, actually enhanced the influence of the Tangal both in Malabar and Arabia and later incidence proved that the deported Tangal was more powerful than the Tangal who lived in Mamburam. His activities in Arabia and Constantinople as an anti-British Pan-Islamist widened the sphere of opposition against the British. The local nature of the problem faded away and Sayyid Fazl got international importance as a result of his deportation. A large number of British officials and intelligence agencies in India and the Middle East were forced to focus on the movements of the Tangal and his close aides, relatives etc. till his death in 1900.

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227. a) Letter from Secretary to Government, Judicial Dept. to CJO Cole. Vice Consul & East India Co.'s Agent, Juddah, No:521, dt 10 Sept. 1853.

b). DO to SB Haines, Political Agent of Aden, No:523, dt.10 Sept. 1853.

c). DO to Secretary to Govt. Bombay, No:522, 10 Sept. 1853.

Even his relatives belonging to Second generation were not granted permission to enter Malabar under British rule.<sup>228</sup>

Sayyid Fazl arrived at Jeddah in June 1853 along with two letters - both from the British Ambassador of Porte addressing to the Governor of Bombay and to the British Consul of Jeddah requesting him to make arrangements for Sayyid Fazl's passage to India - Mr. C.J.D. Bale, British Consul of Jeddah refused to act up on it thinking that his letter had been obtained through misrepresentation. He had informed T.V. Pycroft that "without an order from His Excellency the Governor of Madras, I would not permit him (Sayyid Fazl) to embark from this port for India".<sup>229</sup> Mr. Bale, not only refused to act up on it but also forbade all of the Indian ship owners from giving Sayyid Fazl a passage to India. When the British authorities of Jeddah refused to act according to the order of the British Ambassador of Porte, Sayyid Fazl secured permission to visit Yemen, 'evidently with the intention of proceeding to Aden and from thence to

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228. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, op.cit., p.76

229. C.J.D. Bale, British Consul, Jeddah to T. Pycroft Secretary Govt. of Madras, dated 29 June 1853, Jedda, No:9.

India,<sup>230</sup> Sayyid Fazl's visit to Aden became futile due to the timely intervention Mr. Cole, the British Consul of Jeddah. There fore he returned again to Jeddah on 8th May 1855 and has received one years' pension from the Hejaz Government. According to Mr. Stephen Page, Acting Vice Consul of Jeddah, Sayyid Fazl was not in want of fund and he had an open credit in the house of the Shain Cadoo and co., of Bomaby. At the same time Mr. Stephan page had no idea about what amount Sayyid drew per year.<sup>231</sup>

The news of Sayyid Fazl securing permission to enter India from the Ambassador of Porte reached Calicut at once. This news was brought to Calicut by the Passengers of a ship which arrived from Jeddah. Mr. Conolly requested the Government of Bombay to take necessary steps to prevent it.<sup>232</sup> Mr. Conolly sought the support to Madras Government to check the entry of the Tangal in Malabar. Therefore Mr. Pycroft, Secretary to Government, Madras, had informed the

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230. Company's Agent at Juddah to R.L. Play Fair Esq, Assistant to political Agent, Aden, dated 31 October 1856, Jeddah, No:40.

231. Ibid.

232. From H.V. Conolly to A. Malet, Chief Secretary to Government, Bombay, Calicut dated 6th August 1853, No:1430.

British Consul of Jeddah about the Governments' attitude regarding the matter in the following words. "...the views of the Government and the Honorable Board of Directors in respect to him (Sayyid Fazl) have undergone no change and that he will not be permitted to return to India on any account whatever".<sup>233</sup>

Probably, the Queen of England had given permission to the Ambassador of Prote to give permission to Sayyid Fazl to return to India because of Sultan Abdul Majeed's interest. Attakoya, Sayyid Fazl's relative and a close aide of Mr. Conolly also believed the report was true, because in a letter from Arabia he had been informed that the Tangal's visit to Constantinople had been profitable and he believed that the Tangal would not think of returning without permission.<sup>234</sup> Mr. Conolly had given orders to authorities of all ports not to allow the Tangal to land, in case he should make his appearance.<sup>235</sup> The Bombay Government had also informed the senior

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233. T. Pycroft, Secretary to Government, Madras to the British Consul, Jeddah, dated 24 December 1852, Fort St. George, No:831.

234. H.V. Conolly to T. Pycroft, Secretary to Government Madras, Calicut, 20th July 1853, No:24

235. Ibid

Magistrate of Police, Bombay, the Magistrate of Surat, the Commissioner in Sind and the political agent in Kutch, Kattewar to take measures to inform themselves if the Arab priest (Sayyid Fazl) there in alluded to arrive within their jurisdiction and to acquaint him that he is not at liberty to proceed to Malabar.<sup>236</sup> In short, British authorities had taken all possible precaution to prevent Sayyid Fazl from entering Malabar. The whole Government machinery for a long time was channelized to achieve this aim. They even decided what to do in case Sayyid Fazl succeeded in entering Madras Presidency, 'he will be dealt with under the provisions of Regulation II 1819 of Madras Code, and confined as a state prisoner in some jail or other place of imprisonment at a great distance, from the district of Malabar.<sup>237</sup>

British authorities never allowed any one of Tangal's family to re-enter India. Sayyid Fazl's brother-in-law Sayyid Hussain Koya and his son, two uncles of Sayyid Fazl named Sayyid Muhamad Abdulla

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236. A Malet, Chief secretary Government of Bombay, dated 13 August 1853, No:3844

237. Pycroft to the Chief Secretary Government of Bombay, Judicial Department, dated 10 September 1852, No:522.

Koya, Imbichi koya alias Abdul kader Koya had disembarked from an Arab ship at Tellichery. Probably, they had accompanied the Tangal at the time of his deportation from Malabar in 1852. Mr. Conolly immediately sent order to stop them wherever they might be found.<sup>238</sup> Accordingly, orders were issued stating that Sayyid Husain Koya should be returned to Arabia within one month. The President thought that Sayyid Husain Koya came to Malabar to prepare the way for Sayyid Fazl's return.<sup>239</sup> On the basis of this assumption, the Magistrate of Canara summoned Sayyid Husain Koya who was at Mangalore and informed him the policy of government. Sayyid Husain Koya expressed his willingness to return to Arabia via Bombay.<sup>240</sup> Imbich Koya and Sayyid Muhammad Abdulla Koya were sent to Calicut for interrogation. Mr. Conolly deputed Attakoya to deal with them. Attakoya promised to return them to Arabia.<sup>241</sup> Finally, Husain Koya

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238. H.V. Conolly to Government Secretary Madras, Dated 19 September 1853, Calicut, No:522.

239. Minutes by the Right Honorable, the President Madras, dated 3 November 1853.

240. F.M. Maltby, Magistrate of Canara to Government Secretary, Madras Dated 3 November 1853.

241. H.V. Conolly to Government Secretary, Madras, dated 19 November 1853.

embarked on 16 December 1853 for Bombay to go to Arabia. 'His conduct while residing at Mangalore was peaceful.'<sup>242</sup>

The Government had sanctioned Rupees one hundred and fifty to the Joint Magistrate of Cochin for meeting the expense of embarking Imbichi Koya and Sayyid Muhammad Abdulla Koya to Arabia.<sup>243</sup> Therefore it is sure that they might have moved from Calicut to Cochin after discussion with Attakoya.

Later incidents proved that the expulsion of Sayyid Fazl and the subsequent legislation on the basis of Strange's report never put an end to the problems in Malabar. In 1880 the Madras Government received an anonymous petition describing the pathetic condition of Mappila tenants in particular and other tenant farmers of various caste in general and warned that a 'terrible outbreak' was about to occur.<sup>244</sup> The petition ascribed past outbreaks to the 'abolition of mosques, religious persecution, cruel oppression, and ejection of

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242. F.M. Maltby, Magistrate of Canara to Government Secretary Madras, dated 18 Feb 1854.

243. Minutes of Consultation dated 17 February 1854.

244. Madras Government, Malabar land Tenures, Memoranda and Official Correspondence, 1855, quoted in Dale, op.cit., p.169.

Mussalmans' by landlord.<sup>245</sup> On the basis of this petition, the government appointed William Logan as the second Special Commissioner in Malabar on 5 February 1881.

#### Murder of Conolly and its consequence

H.V. Conolly was the Collector of Malabar from 1840 to 1855. His tenure was one of the most important periods in the history of Malabar. He had witnessed a series of Mappila uprisings in various parts of the province. According to him, the outbreaks are distinctly confined to the neighbourhood of Tirurangadi, the seat of Mamburam Tangals. Therefore, in order to put an end to the Mappia uprisings, he sought the permission of the government "to secure the person of the Tangul".<sup>246</sup> He had also recommended the following punitive measures to suppress the revolts:-

1. The disarmament of the population, the deportatin of the Tangals in whose jurisdiction the outbreaks occured, the fining of wealthier Mappilas who lived in the areas of attacks, Prohibition of Mappila war knife,

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245. S.F. Dale, Ibid., p.15.

246. CMO, Vol.I, p. 239

the appointment of a gazi, the establishment of permanent troops in the outbreak zone, the appointment of a Muslim revenue official to settle the friction between Hindu officials and Muslim tenants.<sup>247</sup> However, the Government refused to act upon the most important of the recommendations of Conolly. Only some minor recommendations were accepted.<sup>248</sup> Through these recommendations Conolly actually gained the wrath of Mappila community.

Mr. Strange who had submitted his report on Mappila outbreaks on 25 September 1852, strongly endorsed the recommendations of Conolly. On the basis of Strange Report, the Government had introduced the 'Moplah Outrages Act' and 'Moplah war-knives Act' in 1854. On the basis of these Acts, In December 1854 Conolly conducted a tour through the length and breadth of the outbreak-hitten taluks of Malabar (Eranad, Walluwanad, and Ponnani) to collect the war-knives.<sup>249</sup> In the first tour he had procured 2725 war-knives.

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247. H.V. Conolly to I.F Thomas Esq, Secretary to Governemnt, judicial department, dated 6 February 1844, Calicut.

248. Extract from the Minutes of Consultation dated 8 March 1844, p. 154 (K S A).

249. H.V. Conolly to the Secretary to Government, Judicial Department, dated 28 December, 1854.

January 31st 1855 was the last date to surrender war-knives. By this date 7561 war-knives were surrendered.<sup>250</sup> Contrary to the expectation, Conolly found the number of war-knives held by Mappilas and Hindus to be proportionate to the population, while "in all other talooks the knives were chiefly in the hands of the Hindus", and "there was a general though natural exaggeration as to the number of weapons possessed by the Moplahs'.<sup>251</sup>

However, Conolly was consistently advocating strong-arm measures against Mappilas. Hence, he became a prey to Mappilas wrath. In the procurement of arms British officials seems to have followed double standards ie., Mappilas kept war-knives for offence and Hindus kept for defence. Mappilas in general suspected Conolly as the mastermind behind the deportation of Sayyid Fazl and that he had played an equal role in preventing Sayyid Fazls' return to India.

Following is a copy of the letter written by G.B. Tod, the Assistant Collector of Malabar informing the tragic incident (murder of Conolly) to the Chief

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250. H.V. Conolly to the Secretary to Government, Judicial Department dated 20 February, 1855

251. CMO, Vol.I, p. 73

Secretary of Madras. "It is my melencholy duty to inform you, for the information of the Right Honourable the Governor in Council, that Mr. Conolly, the Collector of this district, was most barbarously murdered this evening between eight and nine O'clock in the presence of his wife. He received seven wounds, one of which at least, was mortal".

"So far as the details at present are ascertained, the perpetrators were three Moplahs, who rushed in to the Vernadah and completed their deadly work before assistance could be called. In the present state of Mrs. Conolly, it is impossible to gather further particulars of the tragedy, of which she was the sole witness,...."<sup>252</sup> W. Logan presented further details of the incidents, "On the 4th August 1855 Convicts Valasserri Emalu, Puliyakunat Tenu, Chemban Moideenkutty and Vellattadayatta parambil Moideen escaped from their working party of jail convicts at Calicut and proceeded to Walluwanad. They loitered about in that Taluk for a few days and left it finally on the 20th, visiting on their way, the house of Tenu and taking with them Ossan Hyderman (a barber lad),

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252. G.B. Todd, Assistant Collector Malabar to T.Pyeroft, Chief Secretary Madras, dated 1 A.M., 12 September 1855.

whom they desired to show the way as far as the "new public road" running due east and west through the Payanad hills, which are connected with the Pandalur range. On the 23rd they (including the barber lad, who threw in his fate with the party) proceeded to Urotmala, where they went to the house of Moideen Kutty at night to take their food. After a brief halt there of three or four hours they left the house, visiting some of their relatives on their way, and reached Mamburam on the evening of the 24th. Here they met with Taramal Kunhikoya at the shrine of the great 'Tangal...."

"From Mamburam they proceeded to Vettutt Pudiayangadi on the 29th and 30th they visited certain shrines of local reputation lying within easy distance of that station. After this they roamed about the country till the 9th September, on which date they were harboured by one Malakal Mammu, whose house was situated three-quarters of a mile due east of Mr. Conollys' residence on West Hill, now occupied by the European detachment at Calicut. On the 10th there was a nercha (feast when a vow is made) in Mammu's house, at which these assassins were present. The ceremony consisted in the recital of a song called Moideen Mala

Pattu, and their war-knife was passed through the smoke of the incense burnt in the occasion".<sup>253</sup>

The four Mappila convicts who had escaped from the Calicut jail on 4th August 1855 were free to do what they intented. There was no evidence of any attempt made by the authority to book them again. The rebels left the house of Mammu on the evening of 11th September and noiselessly entered Mr. Conollys' residence between eight and nine O' clock. The murder is described by Mr. Collett, the Sub Collector as follows:"-

"Nothing could exceed the treachery with which the murder was begun, or the brutal butchery with which it was completed. Mr. Conolly was seated in a small verandah (as was his invariable custom at an evening) on a low sofa. Mrs. Conolly was on one opposite, a low table with light on it being between them, he was approached from behind, and even Mrs. Conolly did not catch sight of the first blow which must alone have proved fatal, the next moment the lights were all swept off the table, and the ruffians bouted upon their victim, slashing him in all directions. The left hand was nearly severed, the right knee deeply cut, and

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253. W. Logan, op.cit, pp. 643-4

repeated stabs inflicted in the back".<sup>254</sup> Mr. Conolly had twenty seven wounds. Mrs. Conolly cried for help but in vain. Assassins completed their task and ran away. Why did the servants and peons failed to turn up for the rescue of Mr. Conolly is yet to be answered. There are two possibilities, firstly, they might had been afraid of the assassins and hence cleverly shirking their duty on the pretext that they didn't hear Mrs. Conolly's cry for help. Secondly. Mr. Collett had pointed out that Mrs & Mr. Conolly used to sit in the Verandah on all evnings as a habit. Therefore, while the couples were engaging in private conversation, there is little possibility of any kinds of interference by the peons or servants. And the servants and peons were most probably, not present in the near vicinity of the veranda. The peons and servants came to the scene only after the escape of the assassins.

Mr. Tod, the Assistant Magistrate of Malabar was the first who arrived there to witness the terrible scene. "Supported by Mr. Tod, Mr. Conolly lingered another half hour and then expired, having addressed a

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254. C. Collett, joint Magistrate of Malabar in charge to T. Pyerfot chief secretary to Government, Calicut dated 21 September 1855, No:37 A.

few words only to Mrs. Conolly, and apparently endured intense agony.<sup>255</sup> The post mortum report revealed that Conolly died on 11 September 1855, at about 9.45 O' clock from wounds inflicted upon him about an hour before."<sup>256</sup>

The Government had ordered detailed investigation on the causes of the murder of Mr. Conolly and took all possible measures to book the culprits. The Government had offered a rewards of Rupees Five thousand for the delivery of any one of three or four murderers of Mr. Conolly.<sup>257</sup> They also decided to forfeit the properties of the assassins,<sup>258</sup> under Section II of the Act of XXIII, 1854 and to proceed against all who had connections with the assassination.

Various causes have been suggested as the motive for the murder of Mr. Conolly. An extract from the "Frinds of India", daily dated october 11, 1855

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255. Ibid.

256. E. Barker, Civil Surgeon, Malabar to the Chief Secretary to Government, Madras dated 12 September 1855, Calicut No: 178.

257. H.A. Murray to C. Collet, Joint Magistrate of Malabar Coonoor, 17 September, 1855.

258. T. Pycroft chief secretary Madras to the secretary to the Governemnt of India, Judicial Department, dated 22 September 1855.

reads:- "According to the 'Bombay Times', the real instigator of the outrage on Mr. Conolly is the Moplah High Priest (Sayyid Fazl). This individual has been deported by the ill fated officer and three years since Captain Haines, then political agent at Aden, warned him (Mr. Conolly) that his death had been resolved on. He refused to take any precautions whatever". But such a warning is not known in Malabar. "I cannot ascertain that any one here (Malabar) is aware of this alliged warning having been received.<sup>259</sup> There is no clear cut proof to establish that Mr. Haines had given a warning to Mr. Conolly. After examining all back files of the office of the Political Agent of Aden, Brigedier W.M. Coghlan, the Acting Political Resident and Commandant of Aden reports, "...on a cursory inspection of the Records of this Office, I have been unable to trace any warning given by Mr. Haines to the late Mr. Conolly...."<sup>260</sup>

After their heinous activity, the rebels proceeded through Tamarassery high road and reached at

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259. C. Collett, the joint Magistrate of Malabar, to the Magistrate of Malabar, Calicut, 19 November 1855, No:136

260. W.M. Coghlan, Acting Political Resident and Commandant, Aden to H.L Anderson, Secretary to Governemnt, Bombay dated 12 January 1856, No: 6

a village near Keravul, twelve miles away from West Hill. They went to the mosque of the locality. On 12th September 1855, around 4 PM, they went to Makat Namboodiri's illam (house) and stayed there till about 9 PM. From there they took away money and property worth Rupees three hundred. Then they struck back to the main road to Tamarassery and went to the house of Palkutti Moyi. At night they went to the Bhavat mosque and remained there till the following night (13th). On the 14th they were reported to have purchased provisions at the Tamarassery bazar. On the 15th they moved to the Tiruvanpadi amsam of the Calicut Taluk. The next day they met a village peon and wrested his musket from him. They compelled one Chapali Poker to act as their guide. He led them to Edavannapara and reached there at 4 pm on 17th September 1855.<sup>261</sup> While they were proceeding to Manjery, one peon happened to know one of them and ignoring their warning reported to the Mappila Adigharee of Kondotty. He immediately followed them with a party of twenty men. "When he came up with the criminals, he had some conversation with them, and they declared themselves the murderers

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261. W. Logan op.cit., p. 645

of Mr. Conolly, for which, though, no reason was assigned."<sup>262</sup>

Kondotty Adigharee and his men tried to apprehend them. Then the criminals threatened them by firing two shots at them. But they were not injured. The Adigharee's party had no guns and tried to resist the criminals by throwing stones against the assassins. About this time Kondotty Tangal's hundred armed men had reached the spot to help the Adigharee to seize the assassins. The rebels had abandoned a shield and a small bundle containing clothes and other little articles which were picked up by the Kondotty Adigharee.

All attempts of the rebels to escape was foiled by the entry of a third party under the Arimbra Adigharee. Kondotty, Arimbra Adigharees were competing in this matter to earn the good will and allowances from the higher authorities. Kondotty Tangal was a loyal servant of British and hence he was also eager to book the criminals. The rebels realized that there is little scope to escape, therefore they took to the main road from Kondotty to Manjery. Around one thousand Mappilas ran after them. Finding no other way, the rebels took shelter at the house of Mundamballutte

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262 C. Collett to T. Pycroft, dated 21 September 1855, No: 37 A.

Mussad."<sup>263</sup> Where they were shot the same evening by a detachment of Major Haly's Police Corps and a part of No.5 Company H.M's 7th Highlanders under the command of Captain Davies.<sup>264</sup>

Though the Governemnt ordered to secure the assassins alive and offered cash award of Rupees five thousand for the delivery alive of any one of the murders,<sup>265</sup> neither the local guards nor the British troops were able to do so. Though, the authorities were assisted by troops, police and locals their task was not so easy. In the encounter one European soldier was killed by a shot from the rebels and another very dangerously wounded.<sup>266</sup> The Government issued order to burn the bodies of the rebel in order to avoid a chance to venerate the remains of the rebels by Mappilas which would the Government, fears, cause further unrest in Malabar.<sup>267</sup>

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263. Ibid.

264. Mr. C. Collett's report of 17 September 1855 from Morar, 8 miles Northwest of Manjeri.

265. Extract Minutes of Consultaiton, 18 September 1855, No:3.

266. CMO, Vol.I, p.93

267. T. Pycroft, chief secretary to Government to the Joint Magistrate in charge of the District of Malabar, Ottacammund, dated 19 September, 1855, No:4

The bodies of the rebels were removed to Manjerry and were suspended on an iron bar and exhibited publicly. This was done as a warning to the people. Mr. Collett observes, "The bodies of great criminals used to be similarly treated in Malabar and I thought the peculiarity of these men's offence deserved such treatment."<sup>268</sup> The bodies were then sent to Calicut and publicly burnt on 8 October 1855. The ashes were subsequently collected and buried with in the walls of the jail. Both Mr. Collett and Major Haily reported that Mappilas were conspicuous by their absence in Manjery and Calicut.<sup>269</sup> It shows the general sympathy of Mappilas to the rebels and the their strong protest against burning the dead bodies of the rebels.

Mr. Collett had applauded the Kondotty Tangals' role in securing the criminals and recommended to the Government to present a handsome palenguin to the Tangal as a proof of the favour of Government for the well disposed and stimulate others of like rank to win a similar mark of favour."<sup>270</sup> Government accepted

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268. Ibid.

269. Ibid.

270. Ibid.

his recommendation and issued the following order. "The Government readily accede to the recommendation of the Joint Magistrate in favour of the parties who have been forward in affording informaiton and assistance to the District Authorities in their persuit of the ruffians. The acknowledgement of Government are especially due to the Kondotty Tangal. A handsome Palanquin will as suggested by Mr. Collett, be presented to the Tangal in testimony of his services."<sup>271</sup> Kondotty Adigharee got promotion as Taluk Sheristadar.<sup>272</sup> Therefore, those Mappila leaders who had assisted the authorities were appeased through these measures. However, the Mappila masses in general supported the rebels. They were not mvoed by the promises of the British.<sup>273</sup>

The Government had made elaborate enquiry regarding the role of Sayyid Fazl in the assassination of Mr. Conolly. Mr. Robinson was sent to Cairo to enquire about the movements and activites of the Tangal. The result was his detailed report on Sayyid

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271. Extract form the Minutes of Consultation, No:716 dated 3 October, 1855

272. Ibid.

273. CMO, Vol. II, p. 184.

Fazl's activities in Arabia and surrounding regions.<sup>274</sup> Mr. Collet's two reports indicate complicity of the Tangal in the murder of Mr. Conolly.<sup>275</sup> According to him Mr. Conolly compelled the Tirurangadi Tangal to leave Malabar and it provoked the assassins. However, the assassins admitted the crime but refused to disclose their motive when they met the Kondotty Adigharee at Edavannappara.<sup>276</sup> The circumstantial evidences proved that the assassins were moved by the manner through which Mr. Conolly had secured the deportation of Tangal. Along with this, they were also moved by personal feelings on account of the manner in which they had been put under restraint. The visit of the rebels to the shrine of Mamburam invited the wrath of the authorities and on the basis of this event Mr. Collett even suggested to raze to the ground the Tirurangadi mosque and the Mamburam Jaram where the dead body of Sayyid Alawi was cremated. British

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274. W. Robinson, Active Magistrate of Malabar to T. Pycroft, Chief Secretary to Government, dated 18th November, 1856, No. 1754, Palghat.

275. (a) C. Collett, Joint Magistrate of Malabar to T. Clarke Magistrate of Malabar, No: 281, dated 20th Oct. 1855, Calicut.

(b) C. Collett to R. Clarke Magistrate of Malabar, 15 December 1855, Calicut.

276. See, footnote No. 262.

authorities considered these as the centres of conspiracy against British rule as well as shelter of the rebels. He had also suggested to remove the remains of Sayyid 'Alawi to Arabia. He also proposed to destroy all mosques which are used as shelters by the rebels.<sup>277</sup> Mr. T Clarke, the Magistrate of Malabar also supported the extreme measures suggested by Mr. Collett.<sup>278</sup> In his report Mr. Clarke had even surpassed Mr. Collett. He writes, "After the remains of the Tangal (Sayyid 'Alawi) have been removed, for which a given time should be allowed, the mausoleum might be razed to the ground and the land given for cultivation to some Hindoo; or this be deemed too extreme a measure, care should be taken to prevent its again being converted into a place of worship".<sup>279</sup> However, the Government, for the time being couldn't accept such extreme proposals. "The Right Honourable the Government in Council is not at present in possession of such full information in regard to the

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277. C. Collett, Joint Magistrate Malabar to T. Clarke, Magistrate of Malabar, No: 281 Calicut, dated 20 October 1855.

278. T Clarke, Magistrate of Malabar to J.D Bourdillon Secretary to Government, Judicial Department, Madras, No:51

279. Ibid.

instigators and abettors of this great crime, their proceedings and motives, as will enable him to give at once distinct instructions as to the measures which shall be adopted. The authorities in Malabar will continue their efforts for tracing all parties implicated in the murders and when the result of the whole inquiry is before the Government, it will remain for them to take such steps as, on a review of all the circumstances of the case, may seem necessary for the punishment of the guilty, and for the prevention of such atrocious deeds for the future".<sup>280</sup>

Thus the Government took a bold and wise decision regarding the extreme measures suggested by the authorities of Malabar. The Government had expressed its inability to sanction such measures without concrete evidence. But agreed to take such steps only after completing the enquiry, if necessary. By taking such a decision the Government had saved Malabar from further outbursts. Had these recommendations been implemented the history of Malabar would have been something different. The Government never implemented these extreme measures even after

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280. Extract from the Minutes of Consultation, No:862, dated the 27th November 1855.

completing the enquiry on Mr. Conolly's murder. It seems that they were not provided with clear evidence to implement the measures advocated by Mr. Collett and T. Clarke.

Twenty four cases were changed after the completion of the enquiry. The total number of persons examined in these cases are one hundred and sixty four. Of these fourteen are women, one a boy and the remaining one hundred and forty nine men. "All were supposed to be more or less implicated either in aiding and abetting the assassins, with a full and guilty knowledge of their designs to murder Mr. Conolly and die as Shahids, or of harbouring and aiding the assassins after the murder."<sup>281</sup>

Of the one hundred and sixty four persons accused in twenty four cases, sixteen had died before Mr. Collett had completed his proceedings. He had recommended the unconditional release of thirty six, thirty one men and five women. Twenty were recommended to release on security under general rule. Eight persons were sentenced to simple imprisonment for short

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281. For details of case, see Appendix - I.

periods in the jail at Calicut. Eighty four persons were recommended to be deported for various terms from three years to life. Among them twenty persons were banished for life.<sup>282</sup>

Though eighty four prisoners were recommended for deportation, only thirty three Mappilas were deported. "I am directed to inform you that the Government, after careful scrutiny of Mr. Colletts' proceedings in the matter of Moplahs charged with complicity in the murder of late Mr. Conolly, have resolved to deport thirty three persons under the provisions of the Act XXIV, 1854 and Act VI 1856, and to confine them in small parties in the jails of Nellore, Masulipatanam, Cuddapah, Guntoor, Rajahmundry and Chicacole".<sup>283</sup> The Government had arranged a steamer from Bombay for the purpose of transporting the prisoners.<sup>284</sup> The authorities of Malabar were asked to take all precautions to check any further rebellions in connecting with the deportation.<sup>285</sup>

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282. T. Clarke, Magistrate of Malabar to T. Pycroft chief secretary to Government, No: 10 A, 25 February 1856, Calicut (CMO, Vol. II p. 280)

283. Judicial Consultation Vol. 644 A, 25 April 1856 (TNA).

284. Ibid.

285. CMO, Vol. II p.346

A very important provision of the 'Moplah Outrages Act' (Act XXIII of 1854) is on the imposition of mass fines in outbreak hitten villages and neighbouring villages. This provision was first introduced after the murder of Mr. Conolly.<sup>286</sup> Though the murder was the act of three or four persons, the authorities had imposed fine on seven hundred and nineteen Mappilas belonging to nine villages. Rupees thirty eight thousand three hundred thirty one and eight annas were collected as fine.<sup>287</sup> The rate of fine is as follows. From banished prisoners at a rate of twenty percent, from the implicated parties released at fifteen percent. The headmen of every village where the assassins rested were fined have been at the rate of seven percent, villagers at six percent and the inhabitanace of the neighbouring villages at six to three percent, according to their distance from that locality.<sup>288</sup>

The Magistrate accompanied by his special Assistant and fifty police corps moved to the taluks decided to be fined. Firstly, they proceeded to Nemeny in Walluwanad taluk. "After publicly declaring the

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286. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.100.

287. CMO, Vol II, p. 393

288. Ibid., p. 360

finer, a limit of 48 hours was allowed for the payment of smaller sums, and 60 hours for those which exceeded, 50 Rupees, with the exceptions of 7 Rupees, the whole amount has been collected without the sale of property, and was produced before the Magistrate with little show of objections or contumacy."<sup>289</sup> The following amounts implicated in the 'outrage' were fined the sums noted against each:-

Taluks	Umshoms	No. of persons fined	Estimated values of property		Fines collect			
			Rs.	A. P	Rs.	A. P		
Walluwanad	Nemeny	59	43,000	0	0	1857	8	-
	Kariavattom	60	32,000	-	-	1951	-	-
Betutnad	Kalpakanchery	90	52,054	1	2	16989	-	-
	Kanmanom	83	15,000	-	-	1869	-	-
	Vadakkomparam	73	21,000	-	-	1991	-	-
	Talakkad	109	55,207	14	2	8842	-	-
Sheranad	Kodovayoor	174	75,000	-	-	3303	-	-
Calicut	Cutcherry	32	12,000	-	-	1317	-	-
Kurumbranad	Kedavoor	39	10,000	-	-	512	-	-
		719	3,15,261	15	4	38,331	8	-
Add sale proceeds property belonging to the murders of the late Mr. Conolly & C.						293	10	8
Total						38,625	2	8
Expenses.....		4,878	12	5				
Compensation & c, paid		2,809	8	5				
		Total.....				7,688	4	10
Balance on hand		Rs.				30,936	13	10 <sup>290</sup>

289. Ibid.

290. Ibid., p.401

Conolly's tenure was 'the peak period of Mappila uprisings which seemed to be sanctioned by Sayyid 'Alawi Tangal and later his son Sayyid Fazl. Therefore Conolly had to tackle with the issue with firm stand. The outbreaks were initially considered as mere law and order problem and dealt as such. Though he had led the campaign to collect war-knives and the expulsion of Sayyid Fazl,<sup>291</sup> he recognised that the Mappilas must be brought into the Government Service. In reply to Hindu petitions opposing this enlightened policy, and arguing that he was actually responsible for the outbreaks.<sup>292</sup> He replied; They are desirous of a return to the policy in use in former days, and especially in the commencement of the century when Hindu ascendancy was the rigid rule, the Mappilas were kept down with a stern and severe hand"<sup>293</sup>

T.L. Strange, the Special Commissioner even pictured Conolly as a Mappila partisan.<sup>294</sup> Conolly had

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291. CMO, Vol.I, pp. 34, 36

292. Ibid p. 220 the petition said that Mappilas are by nature "vicious" It is therefore not wise to deal with them leniently. "they should be put down by the most severe measures possible."

293. Ibid pp. 213 f.

294. H.V. Conolly to T.L. Strange dated 10 September 1852, No: 122 (Correspondance of special commissioner and Government, from Sept-Nov. 1852, Vol.V, p.207 -KSA)

given a fitting reply to him in the following words. "I remember that I am sent here by the Government to act with impartiality and that no private inclination must be allowed to interfere with the imperative duty which is laid upon me. To dispense strict justice to Hindu and Mopla with an even hand,.... My policy towards the Moplas which you (T.L. Strange) apparently agree with the Hindus is attributing to "fear" is the policy which I have adopted after fully explaining it to the Government and getting their full sanction for its adoption."<sup>295</sup> Conolly's so called policy of 'Mappila partisan' was criticised by Chettur Sankaran Nair in the following words: "...when ever the projected Railway line had to pass a Mosque he would get the Engineer to divert it, but if it had to pass a temple he would tell my father to tell the Hindus to take the stone (idol) away. In other respects also he tried to conciliate them (Mappilas). He would appoint only Muhammadan officers and peons to deal with Muhammadans."<sup>296</sup> But Conolly had justified his stand of giving the Mappilas due share in Government jobs as

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295. Ibid.

296. C. Sankaran Nair, Autobiography, Chettor Sankaran Nair Foundation Ottappalam (Kerala), II edition 1998, p.5

followes: "The propriety of giving Moplas in Taluks where the population is largely Mopla, a share of the public patronage of trying to bind them by the ties of interest to the preservation of Government order has been highly approved by the Government."<sup>297</sup>

Regarding the Character of Mappilas T.L. strange observed: All who know the Moplas will have no difficulty in labing that they would have cruelly oppressed the Hindu had they been in power.<sup>298</sup> H.V. Conolly replied: "I doubt do not and a little rather that the Hindus would oppress the Moplas if they had then in the power".<sup>299</sup> Conolly had also opposed the view of T.L. Strange that the Mappila desecration of temples annoyed Hindus. Quoting the letter of Mr. Collett, Assistant Magistrate of Malabar dated 3 July 1852, he said that there is nothing to authorise the conviction that the "desecration was the work of the Moplahs".<sup>300</sup>

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297. Correspondance of Special Commissioner and Government, from Sept - Nov 1852, Vol. V, p.207. (K S A)

298. Ibid, quoted by H.V. Conolly from the letter of T.L. Strange.

299. Ibid., p. 226

300. Ibid., p. 237

The above exchange of words between Mr. Conolly and T.L. Strange, the Special Commissioner indicates the fair dealings meted out to Mappilas during Conolly's tenure as the Magistrate of Malabar. His aim was to do justice to the people irrespective of religion. At the same time he was not ready to league with the rebellious attitude of Mappilas. Hence he tried to arrest the growth of miscreants among Mappilas. Roland E. Miller writes: "Momentary Government acquiescence to Conolly's views was lost in the confusion that followed his symbolically useless death, and the development took the opposite course as hard liners won the day".<sup>301</sup>

Therefore, the post-murder period of Conolly witnessed a drastic change in the policies of the Government towards Mappilas. T. Clarke, the successor of Conolly as the Magistrate of Malabar advocated stringent measures against Mappilas. Thus the Emergency Act was applied. Mappilas who supported or sympathised with the rebels in any way were subjected to punitive measures. Some of them were deported to Botany Bay, Australia and Andaman. Others were

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301. Roland E. Miller, Mappils Muslims of Kerala, IInd ed., Madras, 1992, p.113.

deported to Arabia. Heavy collective fines were imposed on riot-hitten villages and neighbouring places. For the overwhelming majority of the Mappilas who were thus punished the fines were unbearably harsh due to their poverty. "The fines, therefore became a major source of resentment and, instead of curbing violence, contributed to its re-occurrence."<sup>302</sup> Malayalam news paper 'Kerala Patrika' observed in 1896 that the indiscriminate levy of fines was an important cause of the Mappila outbreaks, since they not only reduced the Mappilas to poverty, but also made them desperate.<sup>303</sup>

Hence, the immediate result of the murder of Mr. Conolly was the increase of the sufferings of Mappila community. They - both rich and poor - had experienced unbounded sufferings. The murder of Conolly was a blessing in disguise to those upper class Hindus and hard core British officials of Malabar who had been advocating more vigorous suppressive measures against the Mappilas. Wealthier Mappilas had begun to question the actions of the rebels which were

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302. K.N. Pnikkar, *op.cit.*, p.100

303. Kerala Patrika, 14 March 1846 and 21 March 1896, MNNR 1896 (T N A)

threatening the whole community and exerted pressure on the rebels to abandon confrontation with British authority.<sup>304</sup> Under the Presidency of Muthukoya Tangal, a relative of Sayyid Fazl, an organisation called "Himayat-ul-Islam Sabha" was formed, which called up on the Muslims to keep the peace. He issued a fatwa that no one should rebel against the British, that the learned should discourage the uneducated from doing so, and that the Government should be informed of such possible events in advance.<sup>305</sup> Muthukoya Tangal, who was in the good books of the British might have been prompted to do so to earn the good will of the British. The elite class among Mappilas wanted to maintain the statusquo to protect their own motives. They had everything to lose in the face of a revolt. However, as a result of their appeal, during the period of 1898-1915 Malabar was relatively at peace. In short, the murder of Conolly had adversely affected the fortunes of the Mappilas. Economically, socially and religiously it had destroyed the morale of the Mappila community.

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304. C.K. Kareem, (Ed.), "Malabar Lahala" (Malabar Rebellion), Charitram Special, Trivandrum, Oct-Dec., 1971, p.25

305. Ibid.

## Death of Sayyid Fazl:

Sayyid Fazl's glorious life came to an end at the age of seventy seven in Istanbul.<sup>306</sup> Regarding the death date of Sayyid Fazl there was no conclusive opinion among the scholars. It occurred<sup>on</sup> Rajab 2, 1318 AH, <sup>(October 25, 1900 AD)</sup> Friday at 1 pm.<sup>307</sup> His biographer stated that Sayyid Fazl passed away on Rajab 4th 1318 AH, Monday morning.<sup>308</sup> The deadbody was cremated near the gravey of Sultan Muhammad Khan.<sup>309</sup> Sayyid Fazl's funeral ceremony was attended by Sultan Abdul Hamid II and a large number of government officials, digniteries and scholars. Sultain Abdul Hamid II, Abdurahman Pasha (Minister for Justice and Law), Hasan Fahmi Pasha (Finance Minister), Ridwan Pasha (Vezier), Sayyid Abdulla Pasha (Mecca), Shaikh Dafir Affendi (external Affairs) Shaikh Hamza Affendi, Shafid Bakh (Commander in chief of the army), Faid Bakh (Guardian of the imperial Treasury), Sayyid Sherif Bakh (advisor of the Sultan), et. al. attended the funeral ceremony.<sup>310</sup>

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306. Kanheerala Kunhi Rayin Kutty, op.cit.

307. Mamburam Restoration Committee, op.cit., p.5

308. Kanheerala Kunhi Rayin Kutty, op.cit.

309. Mamburam Restoration committee, op.cit.

310. For a detail list of the digniteries attended the funeral ceremony, see, Kanheerala Kunhirayan Kutty, op.cit., pp. 56-57.

Sayyid Fazl's four sons - Sayyid Sahl Pasha, Sayyid Muhammad, Sayyid Ahmed, Sayyid Yusuf also present at Istanbul at the time of his death.<sup>311</sup> The presence of almost all known digniteries of the Ottomen Empire indicate the status enjoyed by Sayyid Fazl at Istanbul. Thousands of people besides these digniteries also took part in the funeral function.

#### The Mamburam Restoration Committee

Sayyid Fazl's children made several attempt to return to Malabar and to recover their ancestral properties of Mamburam Jaram. But all efforts were foiled by the British. During the post First World war period their conditions were very pathetic and deplorable. Because of economic stringency and failure in the First World War Ottomans were forced to cut off all sorts of religious endovements and pensions. Hence Sayyid Fazl's children suffered a lot. Before his departure from Malabar, Sayyid Fazl had left his properties in the hands of his nephew Sayyid Abdulla Koya Tangal under a Mukthiar. After his death his brother's son and his aunt's grandson Puthiya Maliyekkal Sayyid Hasan Ibn Sayyid Ahmed Jifri Khan

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311. Ibid.

Bahadur Muthukoya Succeeded as Mukthiar holder.<sup>312</sup>  
Sayyid Abdulla Koya Tangal might have sent the amount due from him to Sayyid Fazl. But after Sayyid Fazl's death, Khan Bahadur Muthukoya did not send the amount to his sons.<sup>313</sup>

Therefore, Sayyid Fazl's eldest son Sayyid Hyder Begh had invalidated Muthukoya's claim as Mukthiar holder. Sayyid Jifri Pookoya Tangal, another close relative of Sayyid Fazl was appointed as the new Mukthiar holder. But Muthukoya Tangal refused to give up his post and continued to act as the Mukthiar holder of Mamburam properties. Therefore with the permission of Sayyid Fazl's children a civil suit was filed in 1912 by Sayyid Jifri Pookoya Tangal. While the case was going on the World war of 1914 broke out and Turkey was considered as an enemy of Great Britain and as the successors to the property were in Egypt the case was left unconsidered for the time being. Infact, Muthukoya and his son Attakoya might have exerted their influence on the British authorities to delay the consideration of the suit. However, In

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312. Memorandum sent to the Government of India by the grand sons of Sayyid Fazl dated 30 January 1947, p.1

313. Ibid.

1920 the case was again taken up for consideration. The letters which were sent to the legally authorised Pookoya Tangal fell into the hands of the defendent Khan Bahadur Muthukoya Tangal and his son Atta Koya Tangal.<sup>314</sup> It means they had played a foul play to ensure that the letters sent by the descendants of Sayyid Fazl didn't reach the proper addressee. When the communication between the descendants of Sayyid Fazl and their Power of Atterny in Malabar Sayyid Jifri Pookoya Tangal was disrupted in this way, they were not able to produce necessary evidence to prove their calim. Muthukoya realized the gravity of the situation and tried to appease the descendants of Sayyid Fazl as stated by Sayyid Fazl's gradson Zain-ul-Abideen in the following words: "During this time we received letters from Muthukoya the defendent, attacking the reputation of Pookoya Tangal (their agent) and further an amount of Rs.3000/- was sent by Muthukoya towards the balance due from him. The letter guaranteed that he would sent the amount in time. Thus relying on his letter and promise we entrusted the property to Muthukoya Tangal and Attakoya Tangal".<sup>315</sup>

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314. Ibid.

315. Ibid.

Muthukoya never kept his promise. Not even a single penny was sent to Arabia to help the children of Sayyid Fazl. Therefore Sayyid Fazl's son Sayyid Sherief Yousuf Pasha approached the Government of Madras in 1927 to get permission to go over to Malabar. The Madras Government wrote to the Collector of Malabar who in his turn wrote to the Police, Tirurangadi for information. "The authorities were informed that, if the Sayed be allowed to enter Malabar a rebellion as in 1921 would break out. Thus Yusuf Pasha was refused permission to enter Malabar".<sup>316</sup> He returned to Syria. Sayyid Fazl's children and grand children thought that Khan Bahadur Attakoya was behind this Government decision.

Sayyid Fazl's grand son Sayyid Sherif Zainul-Abideen strongly believed that Attakoya had played a key role in destroying the records and documents kept in Sub Registrar Offices and Munsiff's Courts of Ernad taluks at the time of Malabar Rebellion 1921. He writes, "During the course of Malabar Rebellion many a sub Registrar's office and Magistrates' and Munsiffs' courts were burned to ashes. But this phenomena can be sighted at its maximum in Ernad Taluk. The reason for

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316. Ibid., p. 2

which can be attributed to the encouragement and enthusiasm infused into the minds of illiterate masses by Attakoya Tangal whose main idea was to get burnt as many records as possible and among the records those concerning the above mentioned property".<sup>317</sup> Usually the destruction of documents and title deeds in connection with the Malabar Rebellion of 1921 and the attack on Registrar offices and Munsiff courts had been considered as acts of protests expressed by tenants against landlords and British authorities. Through this narration Sayyid Sherif Zainul-Abideen certainly stressed the selfish motives of certain vested interests in destroying such records.

When the rebellion was over and Country wide peace and tranquility returned, "Attakoya began to work out his plan. The head of the document, "The Mukthiar of Mamburam Tarammal Syed Fazl Pookoya Tanqal" was changed to "Puthia Maliyakkal Janmam". Attakoya then renewed the "Kanam adharam" and the old "Kachits" were destroyed.<sup>318</sup> This shows that facts are sometimes unbelievable and stranger than fiction. A story of great betrayal and injustice had been re-told by Sayyid

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317. Ibid.

318. Ibid.

Sherief Zain-ul Abideen. Gradually, Mappilas of Malabar became aware of these facts and some of them established contacts with the descendants of Sayyid Fazl.

Muhammad Abdu Rahman Sahib, the eminent leader of the Nationalist movement in Malabar and a crusader against social injustice came to know the pathetic situation of the descendants of Sayyid Fazl while he was in Mecca for Hajj pilgrimage. He established contact with the family of Sayyid Fazl.

During the post - 1921 Malabar Rebellion peirod, Mappilas of Malabar suffered a lot as a result of repressive measures introduced by the British. Mappila Outrages Act, Wagan Tragedy, Antaman scheme and Sayyid Fazl problem were some of the issues which drew the attention of Muhammad Abdu Rahman.<sup>319</sup> He wanted to mobilize peoples' opinion against these injustices. Sayyid Fazl problem came to the fore front of the agitation due to the negation of justice to the children of Sayyid Fazl by the British. The custodians of Mamburam Maqam and properties during this period supported the British. Hence Abdu Rahman considered it

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319. S.K. Potakkat, et al, Muhammad Abdu Rahman, Calicut, 1978, p. 288.

as a powerful weapon to fight against the British as well as their local collaborators. During the 1930's Muhamad Abdu Rahman took up the issue and succeeded in connecting it with activities of the Nationalist movement in Malabar. Though the issue has a sectarian colour, Muhammad Abdu Rahman's dynamic leadership and style of propoganda gave it a national character.<sup>320</sup> Hindus in general supported the just cause highlighted by Muhammad Abdu Rahman. By raising this issue he had succeeded in broadening the mass base of the National movement among the illiterate Mappilas.

Muhammad Abdu Rahman convened a Public meeting at the town hall of Calicut on 16 January 1933 which was presided over by E. Moidu Moulavi. In the meeting Muhammad Abdu Rahman moved a resolution suggesting the need for organising a movement to ensure the re-entry of Sayyid Fazl's children to Malabar. Hence the Mamburam Restoration Committee became a reality. There were thirty three members in the Committee. Koyilandi Valiya Isariyakath Pookoya Tangal was the President of the Mamburam Restoration Committee.

Mamburam Restoration Committee whose soul was Muhammad Abdu Rahman launched peaceful and

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320. Ibid., p. 289

constitutional methods of agitation to achieve their aims. Notices, booklets and monographs were published to educate the people regarding the gravity of the matter. Public meetings were conducted in important centres of Malabar. As a result of these peaceful agitations, People, both Hindus and Mappilas became aware of the life history and manifold activities of Sayyid Fazl as well as the great betrayal by vested interests. People thought that British authorities silent support to the offenders worsened the situation. Hence public opinion reached its apex against the British and those who illegally and immorally occupied the properties of Mamburam Maqam. Muhammad Abdu Rahman had launched two-fold agitation targeting at the British authorities and his political rivalries of Malabar. Firstly, he demanded the immediate cancellation of Mappila Outrages Act which was the main obstacle with regard to the re-entry of Sayyid Fazl's children in Malabar. He considered 'the Sayyid Fazl Problem' as a measure to achieve this aim.<sup>321</sup> Secondly, along with Muhammad Abdu Rahman's strong sense of justice, his political rivalry with Attakoya Tangal might have influenced his course of

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321. Ibid., p. 292

action. Since he was defeated by the Tangal in the election to the vice president of the District Board.<sup>322</sup>

When Malabar became the hot bed of the agitation led by Mamburam Restoration Committee, the British authorities naturally thought that it would pave the way for outbreaks and hence resorted to suppressive measures. Attakoya was trying in his own way to dissuade Sayyid Fazl's sons attempt to re-enter Malabar. He had informed Sayyid Hyder Begh, one of the sons of Sayyid Fazl as follows: "Undoubtedly the British Government never allow you to enter Malabar. The Government is enquiring about your doings and movements every day. This enquiry is going on without any hindrance. The Government has closed all doors before you to prevent your entry to Malabar. You will not be permitted in any ways.<sup>323</sup> This letter of Attakoya clearly indicates that there was a conspiracy against the children of Sayyid Fazl hatched by the British authority and Attakoya. Probably, British

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322. Ibid., p. 293

323. Mamburam Sayyid Ali and Governemnt Notificatin (Malayalam) published by the secretary Mayyazhi Muslim Yuvajana Sangam, pp. 9-11 (quoted in S.K. Pottakat, et al, op.cit., pp. 292-3)

authorities were afraid of the re-entry of Sayyid Fazl's children due to the evil whisper of Attakoya. Moreover, they thought that their entry in Malabar would help the Mappilas to regain their morale.

Muhammad Abdu Rahman had established contact with Sayyid Fazl's son Sayyid Ali and persuaded him to try to get permission to re-enter Malabar. Sayyid Ali got permission to travel India, Ceylon and Iraq.. He started his journey to India from Cairo on February 1, 1934 through Ceylon. Muhammad Abdu Rahman had entrusted a rich Malayali merchant of Ceylon named Imbichi Haji to provide accomodation to Sayyid Ali.<sup>324</sup> Sayyid Ali left Ceylon (Srilanka) on 10 February 1934 and reached at Madras. Muhammad Abdu Rahman and a handful of his followers knew the departure of Sayyid Ali from Ceylon. From Madras Sayyid Ali travelled to Malabar by train Muhammad Abdu Rahman, Kunchi-Koyamutty Naha, a member of the Mamburam Restoration Committee and a few others waited at the Parappangadi Railway Station to receive Sayyid Ali.

Sayyid Ali reached at Parappangadi and decided to proceed to Mamburam. But Muhammad Abdu Rahman had advised him to go to Calicut by the same train and to

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324. Ibid., p. 293

submit an application to the Collector requesting him to permit him to settle at Malabar.<sup>325</sup> This proposal of Abdu Rahman again indicates his commitment to constitutionalism and respect towards existing law of the Country. The then Malabar Collector H.R Esili rejected the request at once and ordered him to return to Ceylon, Sayyid Ali had no option but to accept the order.

Abdu Rahman was too clever to foresee the treatment that Sayyid Ali was going to get at the Collector's bungalow. Therefore he had made all arrangements for Sayyid Ali's journey to Mahe, a place governed by the French. Dr. M.K. Menon, a close friend of Abdu Rahman was entrusted with providing accomodation to Sayyid Ali in Mahe.<sup>326</sup> Abdu Rahman thought that Sayyid Ali's presence at Mahe would intensify the agitation. Malabar Collector came to know that Abdu Rahman was responsible for the development of the matter in this way. The Collector issued a press notification denying permission to Sayyid Ali to enter Malabar.<sup>327</sup>

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325. Ibid., p. 294

326. Ibid., p. 295.

327. See Appendix - II

In this notification the Magistrate had mixed up truth with half truths. Though the Government denied Sayyid Ali permission to enter Malabar on the assumption that his presence would lead to law and order problem, they never substantiate it with concrete proof. The authorities seem to have been moved by the instigation of Atta Koya, the then Mukthiar of Mamburam Maqam properties.

British authorities wanted to put Sayyid Ali behind the bar by hook or by crook. Amu, the superintendent of Police was designated to fulfil the mission secretly. Abdu Rahman got wind of the plan from the then sub Collector Kunhi Rama Menon through the District Board member Kolai Sankaran Nair. Abdu Rahman contacted with Dr. M.K. Menon of Mahe and foiled the conspiracy with the support of French Police.<sup>328</sup> British officials were alarmed by the propoganda launched by the Mamburam Restoration Committee under Muhammed Abdu Rahman. Hence they issued arrest warrant agianst him. Muhammad Abdu Rahman escaped to Madras inorder to save himself from the arrest warrant. He met the law member of Madras Governemnt Mr. M. Krishnan Nair and as a result of his timely interference the

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328. S.K. Pottakkat, et.al, op.cit., p.298

officials withdrew the warrant.<sup>329</sup> The whole course of events took place after the arrival of Sayyid Ali clearly indicate that Muhammad Abdu Rahman succeeded to give a non - religious, non-communal colour to the issue. Hence he had been supported and assisted by a host of Hindu officials and personalities who served the British in various capacities. It also shows that the majority of the people of Malabar, irrespective of their religion, stood for doing justice to the descendants of Sayyid Fazl. There has been no evidence so far sighted to prove that any noted Hindus of Malabar opposed the Mamburam Restoration Committee.

Sayyid Ali stayed at Mahe for about eight months. On 30th September 1934 he left Mahe and returned to Egypt. But the agitation in support of his genuine cause never ended. Attakoya being an influential person of Malabar as well as the President of the Malabar District Board had launched a counter agitation against Sayyid Ali and the Mamburam Restoration Committee. Their main target of attack was Muhammad Abdu Rahman. He had raised several allegations against Muhammad Abdu Rahman including misappropriation of funds collected in the name of

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329. Ibid., p. 299

Sayyid Ali. Sayyid Ali himself refuted such charges in the following words: Attakoya and his followers utterances regarding my statements are nothing but false. I appeal to the people who loved my grand father Sayyid 'Alawi Tangal and my father Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Tangal that don't believe the utterances of Attakoya who had stolen my properties and I appeal to the people to ignore his words.<sup>330</sup>

On 20 March 1934 Muhammad Abdu Rahman moved a resolution in the District Board meeting requesting the Government to allow Sayyid Fazl's children to enter Malabar and to permit them to settle there if they wish.<sup>331</sup> But the Government rejected the resolution at once. Really, the resolution was passed with the strong objection of the President Attakoya Tangal. When his view was defeated by the members of the Board, he sought the support of the higher authorities to foil it. Sayyid Zain-ul-Abideen, the grand son of Sayyid Fazl believed that Attakoya was the master mind behind the adamant stand taken by the Government against Sayyid Ali. He writes: "on hearing the news (Attempt of Sayyid Ali to enter Malabar) Khan Bahadur Attakoya

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330. Al-Ameen, October 2, 1934

331. S.K. Pottakkat, op.cit., p.300

Tangal influenced the Collector and induced him to write to the police for information. The Khan Bahadur Tangal influenced the police too. The Police wrote that Sayyid Ali was not a gentle man. But even here a few police officials who really realized the treachery of Attakoya Tangal wrote that Syed Ali could be taken as a gentle man. They were bold enough to state that if Syed Ali be allowed in Malabar, the movements of Attakoya Tangal sould be watched and resticted, as otherwise Tangal may try to percipitate revolution.<sup>332</sup> It shows that some of the police officers were not ready to suppress the truth and they wanted to do justice to the children of Sayyid Fazl. They also drew the attention of the higher authorities to cast an eye on the doings of Attakoya, in case Sayyid Ali allowed to settle in Malabar.

The Mamburam Restoration Committee had submitted a memorandum to the Madras Governor through the Collector of Malabar to facilitate the re-entry of Sayyid Fazl's children in Malabar<sup>333</sup>. There was no evidence to show that Government took any action in

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332. Memorandum submitted to the Government of India by the grandsons of Sayyid Fazl, p. 2.

333. See, for details of memorandam, Appendix-III

response to this memorandum. It seems that the memorandum was put in the cold storage to appease the supporters of British among the Mappilas led by Attakoya.

Muhammad Abdul Rahman resorted to continue the peaceful methods of agitation to force the Government to do something in favour of the descendants of Sayyid Fazl. He never missed any platform which was suitable for raising the issue. In 1937 the Congress ministry under Rajaji came to power in Madras Presidency. Muhammad Abdul Rahman was a member of the Legislative Assembly. Being a member of the Assembly, his first task was to persuade the Assembly to cancel the 'Moplah Outrages Act', which was the main obstacle to the re-entry of Sayyid Fazl's children in Malabar. C.P. Cheriya Mammu Keyi, another member of the Assembly had also given a notice in this respect. Finally on 15 September 1937, the Assembly passed a resolution cancelling the 'Moplah Outrages Act'.<sup>334</sup> The news of the cancellation of 'Moplah Outrages Act' was welcomed by the people of Malabar with cheerful tears. Muhammad Abdu Rahman got the whole credit. Important Dailies like 'Mathrubhumi' and 'Al-Ameen' wrote editorials

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334. S.K. Pottakkad, et.al, op.cit., p:307.

praising the decision of the Governemnt. Al-Ameen published a special issue to celebrate it. Now there was no legal objection before the descendants of Sayyid Fazl to re-enter Malabar. Therefore, he took up the issue in the Assembly and requested the Government to allow them to enter Malabar. "But the provincial Government waved aside the request saying the question was with in the sphere of Government of India."<sup>335</sup> When the Assembly rejected his resolution, Muhammad Abdu Rahman decided to show them the mass support of the Mamburam Resortation Committee by organising a mass 'Signature Campaign' in support of their cause. As part of this agitation, Muhammad Abdu Rahman issued the following statement requesting the people irrespective of their caste and religion to take part in the signature campaign:

"Signature week" - to make a plea to the Government on the return of Sayyid Fazl's children to Malabar.

A week begining from November 5 to November 12 1937 is celebrated as a week to collect signatures from the people to prove without doubt that they are on the part of justice.

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335. Memorandum submitted to the Government of India by the grandson of Sayyid Fazl, p.2.

Eighty seven years have passed after the leaving of Mamburam Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Tangal. There is a possibility of a question why people want his descendants to return even after the passing of so many years.

The public still love Sayyid Fazl family and the Mapila community feels sad about thier miserable existance abroad. If they are willing to return, people wish them to come, settle and they expect that the Government will grant them perfect freedom.

If there are any objections to their return to their home land or if the Government has doubts about them, it is the duty of Mappila community to remove these doubts. By doing this the Mappilas community is doing their duty. Not granting them permission will be an insult to those who think that it is the Mappila riot that caused Sayyid Fazl to leave the country. It will be as unjust as the 'Moplah Outrages Act'.

We request you to repeal the above mentioned Act and repeat the earlier request to grand their came back.

I request you to celebrate the week commencing from Friday 5th November to Friday 12th November, 1937

as 'Signature week'.<sup>336</sup> Muhammad Abdu Rahman requested all voluntary organisation of Malabar to take part in this venture and appealed them to send the collected signatures either directly to the Government Public Department or to the Al-Ameen Press. He appealed them to collect both from Hindus and Muslims, at least four lakhs signature which is equal to one third of the total Mappila population of Malabar. He also appealed to the organisation to pass resolutions and send to the Government persuading them to do justice in the issue.<sup>337</sup>

People of Malabar both Hindus and Muslims wholeheartedly co-operated with the 'Signature Campaign'. Congress Committees passed resolution one by one and send them to the Government. The memorandum contains lakhs of signatures was submitted to Mr. Yakkub Hasan, Minister for Public Works Department, Madras Presidency on November 28, 1937. He received the memorandum while he was in Calicut to inaugurate the 'Swedeshi Exhibition'.<sup>338</sup>

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336. Copy of the statement in Malayalam is traced out from the Private Collection of K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem.

337. S.K. Pottakkat, et.al, op.cit., p. 308.

338. Ibid.

All these peaceful methods of agitation never made any fruitful result. Government took a 'deaf and dumb' attitude towards the problem. Meanwhile the Rajaji Ministry resigned and Abdu Rahman was put behind the bars. The coming years witnessed hectic political activities and various sorts of agitations in Malabar as well as in India. Hence, Sayyid Fazl's descendants' issue was gradually undermined. Meanwhile the second world war broke out and focus of attention was given to national and international issues. After Abdu Rahman's release from jail he lived for a short period. During that period he was busily engaged in some other crucial problems related to the freedom struggle of the Country, organisational matters and groupism in the Congress party. Therefore, these changes in the local, national and international scenario had adversely affected the genuine cause of Sayyid Fazl's children. However, the campaign created a general awareness among the people of Malabar regarding the 'great betrayal' of the descendants of Sayyid Fazl by Attakoya.

# IDEOLOGY AND ANTI-COLONIAL FEELING

Mohammed Abdul Sathar. K.K “History of ba-alawis in Kerala ” Thesis.  
Department of History , University of Calicut, 1999

## CHAPTER - VI

### IDEOLOGY AND ANTI-COLONIAL FEELING

The concept of ideology is used in social science by almost all social scientists with different meanings and interpretations. Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), the Italian Marxist theoretician, says that ideology is more than a system of ideas, it has to provide orientation for action. Ideologies, according to him, "Organise human masses, and create the terrains on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle etc."<sup>1</sup> He argues that a class can exercise hegemony over other classes by ideology. He also points out the role of intellectuals' in the production of ideology. In reality ideology serves as a functional apparatus in the development of consciousness among different sections of society.<sup>2</sup> Here is an attempt to analyse the ideological background of anti-colonial approach of Mappilas during the nineteenth century and Islam as an ideology in conditioning them for the revolts.

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1. A. Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Note Books, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1978, p. 377.
  2. K.K.N. Kurup, Peasantry Nationalism and Social change in India, Allahabad, 1991, p.179.

To get an idea on this matter, the origin and development of Mappila community in Malabar, and the role of Mappila traditional intellectuals in moulding their character and ideology need to be examined. The Mappilas as a religious community were existing in Malabar in and around the seventh century corresponding to the rise of the religion in Arabia. Though there are no inscriptional documents to prove this, there are circumstantial evidence to prove it. Arabs had trade relations with Malabar as early as the fourth century A.D; when with the decline of the Roman Empire, the Arabs came to dominate the Indian Ocean, Malabar became the chief centre of Arabs' trading activities and by the seventh century several of them had taken permanent residence in some of its ports.<sup>3</sup> K.N. Panikkar observes: "The earliest Islamic influence came to Malabar through the Arabs almost immediately after the faith was founded, at any rate, before the end of the seventh century".<sup>4</sup> However, the earliest inscriptional evidence for the presence of Muslims in Kerala dates

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3. George F. Hourani, Arabs Seafaring in the Indian ocean in Ancient and early Medieval Times, Princeton, 1951, p.61.

4. K.N. Panikkar, Against Lord and State, Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar 1836-1921, Delhi, 1982, p.50.

back to the middle of the ninth century. The Tarisappalli copper plates (849 AD), in which details relating to grant given to Syrian Christians by Sthanu Ravivarma, the king of Quilon were recorded. The testimony reads as, "...and witness to this Maimun son of Ibrahim and Ibrahim son of Al-Tay and Bahr son of Mansur and Al-Kasim son of Hamid and Mansur son of Isa, and Ismail son of Yakub...."<sup>5</sup> The presence of so many Muslim witnesses in an important document shows their social position and that they may have gained their importance and position over a period of time.<sup>6</sup>

Rowlandson, the translator of Tuhfat-al-Mujahidin says that the Muslim Arabs first settled on the Malabar coast about the end of seventh century.<sup>7</sup> According to Sturrock, from the seventh century onwards it is well known that Persian and Arab traders settled in large number at the different ports of the western coast of India and married women of the country and these settlements were especially large and important

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5. Elamkulam Kunhan Pillai, Studies in Kerala History, Kottayam 1970, p.370
  6. Bahauddin K.M., Kerala Muslims the Long Struggle, Kottayam, 1992, p.21.
  7. Rowlandson, Tuhfat al - Mujahidin, preface, quoted in Tarachand, Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, Allahabad, 1936, p.32.

in Malabar where from a very early time it seems to have been the policy to afford every encouragement to traders at the ports.<sup>8</sup> Muslim influence on the Malabar coast increased rapidly. The native rulers of Malabar welcomed them as traders and facilities were given to them to settle and acquire land and openly practise their religion. They engaged in missionary activities also. The natives both elite and subaltern were attracted to the fold of the religion as, "Islam appeared up on the scene with a simple formula of faith, well defined dogmas and rites, and democratic theories of social organisation".<sup>9</sup>

Under the patronage and encouragement of the zamorin the Muslim sphere of influence widened. They not only materially increased his power and wealth by their trade but directly supported him in his campaigns of aggrandizement. The Zamorin even encouraged conversion in order to man the Arab ships on which he depended for his aggrandizement. He gave orders that in every family of fishermen (Mukkuvans) in his dominion one or more of the male members should be

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8. Sturrock, J, South Canara Manual, Madras, 1834, p.180,

9. Tarachand, Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, Allahabad, 1936, p.34.

brought up as Muhammadens.<sup>10</sup> In the following centuries the influence of Mappilas continued to wax.

Thus the growth of Islam in Kerala up to sixteenth century was peaceful and steady. Several Muslim settlements developed around important trading ports, particularly Cannanore, Pandalayani, Kollam (Quilandy) Calicut and Quilon between 9th and 16th centuries. A number of travellers and geographers who visited the coast here noticed the existence of a considerable Muslim population during this period. Ibn Batuta, the fourteenth century traveller, found Muslim settlements in several parts of Kerala. Barbosa who lived in Malabar between 1500 to 1516 stated that the "Muslims were so rooted in the soil throughout Malabar that it seems to me that they are a fifth part of its people spread over all its kingdom and provinces".<sup>11</sup> He also notes their affluence, their control of its trade and the great number of mosques. Religious harmony, toleration and mutual respect was the order of the day. K.M. Panikkar writes, "Malabar was leading a

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10. Innes, C.A. and Evans, F.B (ed), Gazetteer of Malabar and Anjengo, Madras, 1908, p.190.

11. Barbosa, Daurte Barbosa, p.74 quoted in R.E. Miller, Mappilla Muslims of Kerala, Madras, 1976, p.58.

comparatively happy, though politically isolated life. In many ways her organisation was primitive, but she had evolved a system in which trade flourished, different communities lived together without friction and absolute religious toleration existed".<sup>12</sup>

Initially Mappilas settled in the coastal areas as traders. They had no political ambition. Their trading activities brought prosperity to the state. Therefore, local rulers encouraged their settlements. Mappilas were an integral part of the state. They obeyed the laws of the state and supported their kings. The relationship between different communities were cordial and there is no record of any conflict between communities before the arrival of the Portuguese.<sup>13</sup> With the advent of the Portuguese Mappilas had lost their predominant role in trade and became jobless. "Europeans looked up on them as the allies of the Arabs and hence their natural enemies and were not ready to utilize their services such as procurement of goods, transportation and other incidental jobs".<sup>14</sup> Europeans had created a communal

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12. K.M. Panikkar, Malabar and the Portuguese, Bombay, 1929, p.24.

13. Bahauddin, K.M., op.cit., p.26.

14. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.51.

cleavage in Malabar intended to wipe out Arab and Mappila influence from the sphere of trade and commerce. Perhaps, they might have moved by the unhealthy crusading spirit in this matter. Under the Portuguese and other Europeans Nairs and Tiyyas took up the functions earlier performed by Mappilas<sup>15</sup>. As a consequence, a good number of Mappilas formerly gainfully employed in the ports were compelled to migrate to the countryside in search of alternative jobs.<sup>16</sup> In other words, economic and social necessity prompted the Mappilas to put up their residence in interior regions of Malabar. Corresponding to their migration to rural areas, mosques and religious centres in large scale appeared and it gave a stimulus for further spread of Islam.

Thus from the sixteenth century onwards rural areas of Malabar became the strongholds of Mappila community. Mappila population increased rapidly due to the conversion of lower caste hindus in large scale, particularly, Cheruman, Pulayan, Vettuvan and Mukkuvan. Professionaly the first three were agrestic slaves and the last fishermen. They belonged to the grass roots

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15. Ibid., pp, 181-2.

16. Ibid., p.51.

of the Hindu society. They had no social status. Abolition of slavery in 1843 speeded the conversion, because it made the condition of Cherumans getting bad to worse. Conversion freed them from oppression of jenmis and raised their social status.<sup>17</sup> Tarachand observes: "A Mussalman could be seated by the side of a Nambutiri Brahman while a Nair could not"<sup>18</sup>. This statement clearly indicates the social strata of Hindu society and the caste rigidity cherished by them. If this was the fate of Nair community what would be the grievousness of the treatment meted out to lower castes during this period? Therefore, the caste rigidity, untouchability and other social evils might have prompted the lower castes to embrace Islam.

The majority of the rural Mappilas were cultivating tenants, landless labourers, petty traders and fishermen. Land owning Mappilas were very few. Of the 103 principal jenmis called by Thomas Warden, the Collector of Malabar for consultation in 1803, only 8 were Mappilas, all the others, except one who was a Tiyya, were upper caste Hindus<sup>19</sup>. Mappilas were also

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17. D.N. Dhanagare, Peasant Movement in India, Delhi, 1986, p.66.

18. Tara Chand, op.cit., p.35

19. B R C 1803, vol-352, No:61.

backward in education. So, they didn't get due representation in Government service. The general policy of the British authorities was not in favour of appointing Mappias in Government service. According to the census report of 1871, the rate of literacy among Mappilas was only 2.7 percent.<sup>20</sup>

The British Colonial Policy towards Mappilas and its effects

The early British policy towards Mappilas worsened their material and educational backwardness. During the first half of the 19th century, British officials treated Mappilas as the natural enemies of British Government on the pretext that they were the supporters of Tipu Sultan. They thought that Mappilas were the beneficiaries of Tipu's invasion and of the flight of a large number of upper caste Hindu landlords to central Kerala to escape themselves from the hands of the Sultan. As a result of the migration of Hindu landlords to central Kerala, according to the officials of British Government, Mappila kanamdars had become the principal land holders in South Malabar<sup>21</sup>. K.N.

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20. Census Report, 1871, p.355.

21. M J C R, p.119

Panikkar refutes this views. He writes: "It is pertinent to raise two questions in this connection first, how widespread was the exodus of the landlords and secondly, what arrangement came into being after their flight ? Except general statement in official reports about the flight of the Hindu chieftains and their retainers who had opposed Tipu and therefore feared punishment and of a few substantial Namboodiri jenmis, there is no definite information about the mass Hindu movement out of Malabar during this period. Therefore, it seems doubtful that the Mysorean rule marked the end of Hindu land lordism and resulted in large scale tranfer of ownership of land to Mappila tenants.<sup>22</sup> Official records show only a handful of Mappila chieftains like Elembulassery Unni Mutha Muppan, Chemban Poker and Athan Gurukkal who enhanced their wealth, power and influence through their connection with Tipu<sup>23</sup>. Really, Mysorean rule never brought about any significant changes in the day-to-day life of the poor Mappilas who formed bulk of the Mappila society of Malabar. The Mysorean phase in Malabar was neither a period of Mappila domination nor

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22. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.55

23. M J C R, pp.265-6

of Mappila rule. In fact certain Mappila chieftains like Athan Gurukkal revolted against Tipu for levying taxes.<sup>24</sup>

The occupation of Malabar by the British during the last years of the eighteenth century paved the way for changing the socio-economic structure of the province to a certain extent. Being their supporters against Tipu, the old landed gentry of Malabar were allowed to re-instate their power over Mappila tenants. Really Mappila Kanamdars had expressed their pleasure to place themselves under the rule of the Company and meet its revenue demands provided the jenmis due were not re-imposed. In fact, payment to the state and also the landlord was never practiced in Malabar.<sup>25</sup> During the Mysorean rule a portion of the rent they formerly paid to the land lord was now extracted by the Government as land revenue.<sup>26</sup> Thus, a basis for an understanding between the new

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24. M D R, Vol 2073, pp.58-90, Vol.2167, pp.21-6, Vol 2137, pp.1069-71.

25. Voucher No:39, W.G. Farmer's Report on the nature of the ancient Malabar tenures and the rent and revenue in Malabar 25 Feb, 1793, Government of Madras, Malabar Land Tenures, p.152.

26. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.55.

Government and the Mappilas of Malabar therefore existed. British officials like Mr. Stevans advocated a policy of land tenure in favour of the Kanamdars. He 'favoured a course of maintaining the kanamdars in possession of the disputed lands to the exclusion of the jenmis.<sup>27</sup> But that proposal was set aside by his higher authorities. They stated that "on grounds of justice and true policy", they were in favour of "restoring these jenmkars (jenmis) to their rights as far as the present state of the country will admit".<sup>28</sup> Thus the Hindu chieftains were again recognised as absolute owners (jenmis) of lands in Malabar and they were given unequivocal right to levy the revenue from Mappila peasants. The nexus between upper caste Hindu jenmis and British officials spared no chance to exploit the Mappila peasants. The kanamdars and verum pattamdar Mappilas were declared as tenants of the jenmi whose survival depends on the good will of landlords. Usually the British authorities' revenue

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27. Conrad Wood, The Moplah Rebellion and its Genesis, New Delhi, 1987, p.100.

28. Report of Messers Duncan and Boddam, Malabar Commissioners, to Sir John Shore, Governor General on their arrival in Calcutta 2 February 1794, Suppliment of Report of Joint Commission of 1792-93, Vol.III, p.211.

rates were very high<sup>29</sup>. British Government has given the right to collect taxes from Mappila peasants to Hindu rajas and chieftains. The Hindu chieftains exploited this privilege as far as possible. They followed an unequal assessment and Mappila peasants were rated more heavily than the Hindus<sup>30</sup>.

Through out the nineteenth century, British administrative and judicial institutions worked directly to restore the landed aristocracy of the uppercaste jenmis which paved the way for a series of Mappila uprisings. A tenant might be turned out of his property by false accusations supported by false deeds, and the amount adjudged to him by assessors in his ejection as improvement or tenant right might from evil influence be fixed lower than local usage and the law should have made it.<sup>31</sup> British revenue officials' rampant corruption and their illegal assistance to jenmis to tamper with deeds and contracts worsened the

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29. Reports of Joint Commissions from Bengal and Bombay appointed to inspect in the state and condition of the Province of Malabar in the years 1792-93, 3 vols, Bombay, 1793, Vol II - pp 68-9, 173-90.

30. Malabar District Gazetteers, Malabar and Anjengo, Vol-I, p.78.

31. File of correspondance Regarding the relation of landlord and tenants, Malabar 1852-56, Madras, 1881, pp.92-3.

condition of cultivators. With the newly established law courts jemis were able to extort more renewal fees and rent from their lease holders whom they simply threatened with legal eviction if they refused to pay.<sup>32</sup> The verum pattamdars and the landless labourers both Mappila and Hindu were the sufferers of these tactics.

The British tenurial policy and revenue system seriously affected the agrarian social structure of Malabar. In 1871 the first census report revealed that while in the Madras Presidency as a whole the proportion of cultivator-owners to the total male population was 31.3 percent, in Malabar itself it was only 15.9 percent; and that the proportion of agricultural labourers was 27.4 percent in Malabar but only some 13.1 percent in the Madras Presidency as a whole.<sup>33</sup> It shows the concentration of land ownership in fewer hands in Malabar. ✓

Thus, the British occupation of Malabar and their pro-jenmi policies created a tense situation in

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32. W. Logan, Malabar Manual, Vol.I, re-print, Trivandrum, 1982, p.

33. Malabar Special Commission (1881-2), Malabar land tenures, pp.558, 724, 3 vols, Madras, Vol I, Report, p. xxii.

the district. Almost all apparatus of British administration such as the revenue department, the law courts, judiciary, police and bureaucrats of various ranks remained not only as silent spectators of the oppression of the tenants but were also instrumental in such oppressive measures. Usually jenmis levied various kinds of customary presents, gifts etc. in festive occasions besides rent. Fines were also levied on investiture, on renewals and in various other occasions<sup>34</sup>. Therefore, ordinary peasant's life became miserable and they resorted to a series of revolts against the oppressors during the nineteenth century.

The first noted revolt against colonial rulers was launched by three Mappila chieftains-Elembulassery Unni Mutha Moopan, Chemban Poker and Athan Gurukkal in 1800-02. These chieftains were the beneficiaries of Tipu's rule. Unni Mootha Moopan and a hundred of his armed retainers were in the pay roll of Tipu Sultan from 1786-87 and he fought the British along with Tipu in 1791.<sup>35</sup> Athan Gurukkal and Chamban Poker were darogas (police chiefs) under the British in Ernad and

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34. File of Correspondance Regarding..., op.cit., p.93.

35. Conrad Wood, op.cit., p.104

sheranad Taluks respectively.<sup>36</sup> These Mappila chiefs wielded considerable power, wealth and influence in the southern taluks of Malabar. After the elimination of Tipu's power from Malabar, British authorities were free to handle the local Mappila chieftains on the pretext of establishing law and order in the region. The fall of Tipu Sultan created mixed response in Malabar. Mappilas were dismayed and upper caste Hindus considered it as an opportunity to re-instate their hegemony over Mappila tenants. During June 1799 "numerous complaints against various Mappilas for murders and robberies were preferred and numbers seized, who before could never be laid hold of".<sup>37</sup> This was an attempt fostered by British officials and the upper caste Hindu chieftains to provoke the Mappila chiefs into some action so that the entire might of the British army could be directed against them to destroy them.

On the pretext of enforcing law and order provocations were adopted against Unni Mutha, Chemban

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36. Ibid., p.107

37. 'Considerations on the late Mappila Disturbances' by J.W. Wye, Malabar translator, 5 February 1800, enclosure in Report of Major Walker, 15 April 1800, pp.3343-44 (quoted in Conard Wood, op.cit., p.106).

Poker and Athan Gurukkal. Unni Mutha's brother was executed in July 1799 for 'harbouring an outlaw and other heinous crimes' and in October his own rice crops, arms and movable property were seized for realization of revenue arrears, and Chemban Poker's house was destroyed by T.H. Baber, the shernad assistant. More over, in response to complaints about Chemban Poker's oppressive behaviour, he was dismissed from office and imprisoned in Palghat fortress from where he escaped in 1799.<sup>38</sup> Athan Gurukkal's brother-in-law was executed for a crime allegedly committed three years earlier.<sup>39</sup>

In response to the British policy, the Mappila chieftains established a loose confederation to resist the excesses of the authorities. Unni Mutha, Chemban Poker and Athan Gurukkal joined together and come out openly in defiance of the British. Asked about the reason for joining the revolt the Gurukkal replied: "None of us are safe, some one or other will prefer complaints against us and the evidence of the Nair shall be received and we shall all be apprehended and

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38. K.N. Panikkar, *op.cit.*, p.57

39. Bahauddin, K.M, *op.cit.*, p.99

hanged".<sup>40</sup> Unni Mutha and Chemban Poker warned the British that, "Since last year, the company's Government had begun to persecute several of the sect of Islam, since the oppression is increasing, it will be destroyed".<sup>41</sup> The revolt of these Mappila chieftains ended in 1802 with their failure. 'Nair corps' under captain Watson played a major role in defeating the Mappila rebels. 'Nair Corps' was made up very largely of Hindus of "the most respectable families"<sup>42</sup>. The revolt failed due to lack of proper planning and organisation.

The failure and suppression of the 1800-'02 rebellion marked the resurgence of upper caste Hindu jenmi hegemony over the poor Mappila peasants of Malabar with the support of British authorities. British authorities had introduced a reign of terror and oppression in Malabar. An immediate result of the new policy was a change in the pattern of recruitment

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40. M D R, Political, 1800, p.268.

41. 'Ola addressed by Unni Mutha and Chemban Poker to the inhabitation of Ariacotta', 10 Makaram (Jan-Feb 1800), Bombay Political and Secret Proceedings 17 June 1800, p.3227.

42. T. Warden, Principal Collector of Malabar to Secretary Judicial, 17 March 1808, MJP 17 March 1808, p.1358.

to subordinate posts in the revenue, judicial and police establishments<sup>43</sup>. Earlier the Mappilas had given certain consideration while appointments were made to revenue and police administration in the south Malabar taluks. Now, they were denied chance to get appointment in these departments. Hindus only were considered for appointment.<sup>44</sup> After 1800, only members of the Hindu land owning classes were considered for posts of Adigharees and Menons. Thomas Munro noticed it in 1817 and recommended the appointment of Mappilas in the above posts.<sup>45</sup> But his suggestion fell on deaf ears. The denial of Government jobs to Mappilas on the basis of doubting their loyalty resulted in preventing them from entering the mainstream of the society. During the first half of the nineteenth century, all Tahsildars and an overwhelming majority of village officials were Hindus, who represented the interest of the elites. Mr.H.V. Conolly, the collector of Malabar, in 1851 reported that there were 1,55,686 Hindus and 1,27,734 Mappilas in Malabar. But Government jobs were not all shared among them according to the proportion

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43. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.58.

44. J.W. Wye to the Board of Revenue, 4 February 1801.

45. Thomas Munro, A Report on the revision of the judicial system in the Province of Malabar, 4 July 1817, p.13.

of the population. There were only twenty Mappilas among eighty one Adhikaris, none among the village Accountants and only twenty out of the one hundred forty two village peons.<sup>46</sup> The first Mappila Tahsildar, Kuttoossa was appointed in 1842. His appointment was questioned by upper caste Hindus of the province. Twenty nine Hindus of Ernad, Walluwanad and Sheranad submitted a petition stating that the Collector's (H.V. Conolly) lenient policies (for instance, appointment of Kuttoossa as Tahsildar of Ernad) towards Mappilas was the root cause of the outbreaks.<sup>47</sup> But the Collector argued that their charge was baseless and no outbreak originated in any village presided over by a Mappila headman.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, during the first half of the nineteenth century Mappilas became an oppressed and highly depressed community of Malabar. Even Conolly's attempt to bring them back to the mainstream was criticised by upper caste Hindu jenmis and British officials like T.L. Strange.<sup>49</sup>

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46. C M O, Vol-I, p.214.

47. Ibid., pp.216-20

48. Ibid., p.218

49. H.V. Conolly to T.L. Strange, the Special Commissioner, Calicut 10 September 1852, No:1822.

This particular circumstance prevalent in Malabar acted as a prelude for the Mappila outbreaks of the nineteenth century. There were seventeen outbreaks in between 1836-1854 and seven outbreaks in between 1855-1887. In the first phase of the outbreak there was one every year and in the second phase one every four or five years.<sup>50</sup> Since so many of the outbreaks involved the selection of victims who were rich landlords or their agents and since so many of their assailants were men of social positions vulnerable to their adverse exercise of their economic and social power, Conardwood considered Mappila outbreaks were an "antagonism between landlord and tenant, or landlord and labourer"<sup>51</sup> Malabar Collector H.V. Conolly also subscribed to this view during the beginning of his tenure. He observes: "The most ready supposition on hearing such atrocities (outbreaks) committed by the lower on the higher ranks of society is that the people have been driven to desperation and forced to take the law in to their own hands by some intolerable tyranny".<sup>52</sup>

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50. Conrad Wood, op.cit., p.25.

51. Ibid., p.20

52. H.V. Conolly to Secretary Judicial Department, 2 January 1844, MJP No:69, 27 January 1844, p.266.

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Material factors like poverty, illiteracy, agrarian discontent due to exploitation of jenmis, denial of justice by British law courts etc. prompted the Mappilas to take the path of violence in the nineteenth century. The landlords of Malabar never spared a chance to persecute or to exploit the Mappila peasants. They had the right to evict any tenant at any time and were free to implement 'melcharths' or 'overleases' by which the landlord sold to a third party the right to oust and replace one of his tenants. The jenmi often refused to return the money they received from either the first mortgagee or the second mortgagee.

But, if the material factors were the sole reasons, then why were outbreaks confined to Muslim community alone or why the Hindu tenants and agricultural labourers who had suffered as much as the Mappilas desisted away from the outbreaks in general. It means that exploitation and oppression alone would not suffice to create an outbreak and it would not occur unless it was accompanied by an ideology.

Really, both the Hindus and Mappilas were living in villages by suffering extreme exploitation and they commonly shared economic discontent of the

rural poor. The social and ideological mediation of religion and culture formed the crucial element in peasant action. It did so negatively for the Hindu and positively for the Mappila peasantry, which accounted for the comparative quiescence of the former and the militancy of the latter. That the Hindus remained passive in fact provides an indication of what enabled the Mappilas to rebel. A non-event often illumines as event.<sup>53</sup>

The ideological influence derived from the religious sanction conditioned Hindu peasants to submit to the superior power of the upper caste jenmis and to accept the inviolability of their property rights. These were the norms of the social behaviour, Hinduism was believed to have prescribed for the low caste peasants. A departure from this was considered to be a sin. The ideological world of Hindu peasantry thus strengthened their bonds of fealty and subjection to the landlords.

Neither traditional intellectuals nor religious organisation helped the Hindu peasantry to overcome these religious inhibitions and develop

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53. K.N. Panikkar, *op.cit.*, p.194

solidarity and evolve a rationale for action. Religion performed an entirely opposite function for the Mappila peasantry. "To the Mappila peasantry religion was at once an ideology of action as well as an opiate".<sup>54</sup>

#### Potential of Religion as a liberative Force

Islam now acted as the mobilising force for the Mappilas in the nineteenth century to fight oppression and exploitation of jenmis supported by British officials, law courts and administrative departments. Religion, in its true sense, is not at all a reactionary force or an obstacle against progress. Karl Marx described religion as opium of people, according to Asghar Ali Engineer, "It must be understood not to condemn religion perse as it is often thought; he (Marx) called it opium in the sense that instead of changing unbearable conditions of life, it (religion) is used to perpetuate them. If it becomes an instrument of change, It would become a powerful weapon in the hands of the exploited masses"<sup>55</sup>. Frederick Engels also recognised the potentiality of religion as being transformed in to a revolutionary and

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54. Ibid., p.195

55. Asghar Ali Engineer, Islam and Liberation Theology, New Delhi, 1990, p.2.

militant force when he praised the religious and political ideology of Munzer, a revolutionary priest who broke away from Martin Luther for his support to the princes of Germany vis-a-vis the peasants.<sup>56</sup>

Islam actually rose in to prominence as liberative and revolutionary force which stood for the cause of the oppressed the poor and needy. Asghar Ali Engineer observes: Any historian would bear it out that the Prophet, as the messenger of God, threw a powerful challenge to the rich traders of Mecca. These traders belonged to the leading tribe of Mecca called Quraysh. These rich traders were arrogant and drunk with power. They violated the tribal norms and completely disregarded the poor and needy. When the Prophet began to preach his divine message, it was the poor and oppressed of Mecca including many slaves, who joined him. The Prophet himself was an orphan and came from a poor but a noble family of the tribe of Quraysh.<sup>57</sup>

According to Rafi Khoury, a Lebanese Marxist belonging to the Christian community, even the Muazzin's call was a summon for a revolutionary change.

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56. Frederick Engels, 'The Peasant war in Germany', See Marx and Engels on Religion, Newyork, 1964, p.112.

57. Asghar Ali Engineer, op.cit., pp.2-3.

He writes; "...that pristine call, that Allaho Akbar means, in plain language: Punish the greedy usurers ! Tax those who accumulate profits ! Confiscate the possessions of the thieving monopolists ! Guarantee bread to the people ! Open the road of education and progress to women ! Destroy all the vermin who spread ignorance and division amongst the community (Omnia) ! Seek out science, even as far away as china. Let the stars of freedom, of free counsel (Shura) and of true democracy shine forth".<sup>58</sup> Later developments of Islamic ideology, socio-economic and intellectual structure of the society proved beyond doubts that the elaborate description given by Rafi Khoury to Muazzin's call was nothing but true. Islam in its initial phase had clearly succeeded to pave the way for the establishment of an exploit free society by all means. In that society there was no room for ignorance, oppression, socio-economic injustice, intellectual degradation. Along with these material reforms Islam gave due attention to the spiritual and moral upgradings of the society which never received the proper attention of materialistic thinkers and scholars. Prophet Muhammad has clearly stated that a

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58. Rafi Khoury, Al-Thorah al-quami al-Arabi, nahno homato-h wa mokammilouh, al-Tariq Editions, Bairut, 1942, p.7 (Quoted in Maxime Rodinson, Marxism and the Muslim world, London, 1979, p.51).

country can survive with Kufr (unbelief) but not with Zulum (oppression). In another tradition he has equated poverty with unbelief and has sought refuge in God from both. Therefore, Prophet Muhammad through out his life time stood for protecting the poor, the needy and the oppressed. So, it is clear that Islam played the major role in precipitating the Mappila outbreaks. Islam recommended fight against oppressors<sup>59</sup> and the ulema issued fatwa to that effect.

The word 'Jihad' means to utilise one's full energy in a right just cause. A Mujahid means one who fights or strives for the right cause. A mujahid has been spoken highly of in the Quran. Quran says: "Allah hath conferred on those who strive with their wealth and lives a rank above those who sit at home".<sup>60</sup> It is also made clear that this jihad is not for promoting one's own interest or the interest of any establishment; it must be promoting the cause of the oppressed and the weak.<sup>61</sup> This fact is clear from the following Quranic verses: "And why should you not fight for the cause of Allah and for the weak among men,

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59. Quran, 2:193

60. Ibid., 4:75

61. Asghar Ali Engineer, op.cit., p.6

women and children who are crying: Our lord ! Deliver us from this city of the oppressors. Oh give us from Your presence some protecting friend ! Oh send us from Your presence some one to help us".<sup>62</sup> Now, it is clear that Jihad in Islam is to be primarily resorted to either for protecting the interest of the oppressed and the weak or to defend oneself against aggression.<sup>63</sup>

Really, the word 'Jihad' is the most misunderstood term in Islam. Orientalist scholars usually defined it to be so: According to Islamic law, Jihad, the religiously obligatory effort is violent and is necessary to establish sway of Islam over the world or to defend the Dar-ul-Islam.<sup>64</sup> Certain Muslim fundamentalist and extremist groups working in various parts of the world also used the term 'Jihad' as a powerful weapon to achieve their evil designs. Quran emphasised on Jihad for liberation not on jihad for aggression.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, Islam as a religion emphasised the need for liberating the oppressed classes from oppressors.

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62. Quran, 4:75

63. Asghar Ali Engineer, op.cit., p.7

64. P. Hardy, Muslims of British India, Cambridge, 1972, p.278.

65. Asghar Ali Engineer, op.cit., p.10

## Ulama and Anti-Colonial outlook

Muslim theologians, Tangals, Musliyors etc. were conscious of the above mentioned aspects of the religion. During the first half of the nineteenth century, they witnessed gross injustice, discrimination, oppression and exploitation of Mappila peasantry of Malabar by the upper caste Hindu landlords and British officials. Their anti-colonial outlook was not an isolated chapter in the history of India in particular and world in general. So many Muslim theologians in various parts of the world during this period were striving against colonialism. The Pan-Islamic movement of Jamalud-Din Afghani and the Wahabi movement were in the fore-front of this anti-colonial campaign. The pan-Islamic movement of Afghani stemmed from his conviction that only a united Muslim World could resist the onslaught of Western imperialism.<sup>66</sup> The Wahabi movement of north India under Shah Ahmed Shaheed, Sayyid Ahmed Bareilwi et al. had a glorious history of struggle against colonialism.<sup>67</sup> Similar movements were prominent in Bengal during the early

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66. Bahauddin, op.cit., p.154.

67. See, for details, Qeyamuddin Ahamed, The Wahabi Movement in India, Calcutta, 1966.

decade of Company's rule, against harsh exploitation of peasants. They included the revolt by Muslim moulavis under Titu Mir, who spread over Barsat, Nadia, Faridpur, Jessore and Calcutta regions in 1827-'31. The Muslim Pagal Panthis, converts from the Garo and Hajung tribes under Tipushah in northern Mymensingh in 1824-'33, and the Muslim Faraizi's of Bogra and Faridpur in 1831-51. Titu Mir was a disciple of Sayyid Ahmed of Bareilwi.<sup>68</sup> All of these movements attracted tens of thousands and they strove to drive out their Hindu landlords and British rulers and establish a reign of Islamic righteousness.<sup>69</sup> But in the case of the Mappila rebels of Malabar in Pre-1921 rebellion, there was no evidence to show that they aimed at the establishment of an "Islamic raj" in any part of the revolt hit areas. Really, there was no such attempt from the rebels. After fulfilling their aim, ie. elimination of oppressors like landlords, their agents or British officials, they waited for the arrival of the troops and attained martyrdom. This was the usual course of action followed by them.

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68. Ranajit Guha, Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India, Delhi, 1983, p.94.

69. Ketheleel Gough, "Indian Peasant uprisings", in A R Desai (Ed.), Peasant Struggles in India, Delhi, 1985, p.103.

Kerala Muslim religious leaders like Sayyid 'Alawi of Mamburam, Umar Qazi of Veliankode and Sayyid Fazl were among others who might have been influenced by the anti-colonial struggles led by Muslim theologians in India and abroad. The religious outlook and teachings of Mamburam Tangals (Sayyid 'Alawi and Sayyid Fazl) acted as a moving spirit for the poor Mappila peasants of Malabar to strive against landlordism and colonialism. S.F. Dale writes: "Mamburam Tangals seem to have been at the centre of an Islamic revivalist movement in Malabar... there is evidence that the Tangal Sayyid Fazl was in contact with reform movement in other parts of India and the Islamic world"<sup>70</sup>. The interrogation of two Arab priests by Malabar Collector Conolly in 1840 and 1855 respectively established the connection of Mamburam Tangals with the Arab world.<sup>71</sup> Following his expulsion from Malabar, in 1854 Sayyid Fazl proceeded to Istanbul via Arabia. He has graced the court of Sultan Abdul Hamid II along with Jamal'-ud-Din Afghani.<sup>72</sup> Sayyid

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70. S.F. Dale, Islam and social conflict, The Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, (T N A), pp. 133-4.

71. See M D R, Magisterial, 1840, pp.57-64, CMO vol iv, p.154.

72. Bahahuddin, Loc.cit.

Fazl had received yearly grant from the Ottoman Sultan till his death in 1900. On the wake of the murder of Mr. Conolly, the British authorities entrusted Robinson, the acting Magistrate of Malabar to conduct personal enquiry into the movements, connection and activities of Sayyid Fazl in Ottoman Empire. After conducting personal enquiries in Istanbul and Cairo he reported that Sayyid Fazl had connection with the Wahabis of Arabia<sup>73</sup>. Therefore, it can be assumed that the Mamburam Tangals religious and anti-colonial activities was a by product of the radical religious ideology and the deplorable circumstances that prevailed in Malabar under colonial rule.

Umar Qazi of Veliankode (1757-1852) was also a crusader against European colonialism. He used to take up cases of oppression of the people both by the landlords and the Government officials. He was a contemporary of Sayyid 'Alawi and maintained very cordial relations with him. They might have exchanged their views on colonial rule and oppression of jenmis. When the local landlords inordinately increased the pattom, Umar Qazi asked the tenants to resist such increases and not to remit taxes until the pattom was

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73. W. Robinson to T. Pycroft, chief secretary, Madras, 18 November 1856 (CMO Vol.V, pp. 386-'88).

reduced. The landlords complained to the Government officials. They dealt with the problem not as an agrarian question but as a law and order problem. Umar Qazi was produced before the Deputy Collector of Chavakkad and was detained in the lockup, but he escaped from the lockup. He was then summoned to Calicut, where the Collector put him under arrest. From the jail, he wrote a poem, detailing the events, "we should not suffer such oppression to continue. It is better for the Muslim to fight against oppressive rulers and die"<sup>74</sup>.

The way of thinking followed by the Mamburam Tangals and Umar Qazi of Veliankode had influenced the Mappila rebels. These religious scholars through their writings, speeches and fatwa tried to create an awareness among Mappilas on religion as well as colonialism. Mamburam Tangals preached their anti-colonial views through a series of publications. For instance, Sayyid Alawi's well known work Asaif-al-Battar called up on the Muslims to fight till the end to liberate the country from English.<sup>75</sup> Sayyid Fazl

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74. A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1982 p.226.

75. Sayyid Alawi, Assaif-al-Battar, p.6.

wrote a pamphlet in Arabic, entitled Uddat-al-Umara wal-Hukkam li-Ihanatil Kafarat wa-Abadat-al-Asnam. Through this work he called up on the leaders and masses to fight against the "English". It was printed in Arabia and distributed secretly in the country side. The book was proscribed by collector Conolly.<sup>76</sup> In another occasion, Sayyid Fazl who took cognizance of the material conditions of the poor Mappila peasantry, seems to have preached as follows, "It is no sin, but a merit, to kill a jenmi who evicts"<sup>77</sup>, in one of his congregation sermons at Tirurangadi mosque. Therefore, the intellectual background of the Mappila uprisings of nineteenth century was prepared by these Mappila celebrities.

There was another branch of Tangals known as Kondotty Tangals, as they settled in Kondotty, a very important village of Ernad Taluk. Their religious as well as political outlook was entirely different from that of Mamburam Tangals and Veliyankode Umar Qazi. This branch of Tangals kept away from the mainstream of the revolts due to their own reasons. Firstly, they had no connection with the Islamic reformism that took

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76. A.P. Ibrahim kunju, op.cit., p.220.

77. W. Logan, op.cit., p.691.

place in Malabar under the leadership of Mamburam Tangals and Veliyankode Umar Qazi, because of their alien belief and practices. Secondly, Almost all Tangal families settled in Malabar traced their origin from Arabia where as the first Kondotty Tangal was a native of Kardan, near Bombay.<sup>78</sup> Thus, they had no connection with Islamic reformist movement originated in various parts of the Islamic world. Thirdly, Tipu sultan invited Muhamad shah to settle at Malabar to bring the Mappilas to the side of Mysorean rulers. It was at this time when Manjery Athan Gurukkal, Manattala Hydrose Kutty Moopan and others joined the Zamorin's side in an attempt to thwart the agrarian reforms of Tipu Sultan and created trouble in the country<sup>79</sup>. Therefore, Muhammad Shah was asked to introduce a tariqah to wean the Mappilas away from their opposition. Tipu also granted extensive lands tax-free and made him his Inamdar. Thus Kondotty Tangal became one of the richest landlords of Malabar. Therefore, he was not in a position to support the cause of poor Mappila peasants.

Kondotty Tangal always acted as 'His Masters voice' when Tipu was the ruler of Malabar, the Tangal

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78. A.P. Ibrahim kunju, op.cit., p.223.

79. Ibid.

supported him. After the acquisition of Malabar by the British in 1792, Muhammad Shah turned as the supporter of East India Company only to protect his selfish interests. This is clear from the following letter written by William Gamul Farmer, Supervisor of Malabar to Muhammad Shah of Kondotty: "..You (Kondotty Tangal) say that the produce of your lands being appropriated to the purpose of charity, you did not in the time of Tipoo pay any revenue and desire that the same may now be allowed by the Company, that in respect to your being zealous in all matters for the Company you say you will not if the Padinhara Kulota Raja's ask you for aid grant them any, and that you have made a similar requisition from the other Moplas not to afford them any assistance. This gives me great pleasure and has assured me of your good wishes for the Honorable Company. I have therefore sent an order to Mr. Stevans, the southern superindent, not to collect any revenue from your land for the year 969 (Malayalam year) inclusive, agreeable to what you have informed me was the custom in Tipoo's time. So long as you show yourself a faithful subject of the Company you may depend upon their support and protection always".<sup>80</sup>

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80. William Gamul Farmer to Shaikh Muhammad of Kondotty, dated October 2, 1793 (TNA).

This lengthy letter clearly indicates the factors behind the policy adopted by Kondotty Tangals regarding the Mappila uprisings of nineteenth century. They were eager to safe guard their own material benefits. But they never missed a chance to exploit the religious sentiments of Mappilas if things were against their intention. For instance, after the ceding of Malabar to British in 1792, the Takiya (Seat of Kondotty Tangal) was violently attacked by the Nairs on account of the Tangals' colse relations with Tipu Sultan. At this time, the Tangal appealed to the local Mappilas, whom he called up on to strive "for the victory of the community and of Islam".<sup>81</sup> Hence, Kondotty Tangals' refusal to support the Mappila peasantry not because they were the apostels of peace but, being members of the landed aristocracy they were not able to do it due to their class consciousness.

While the Kondotty Tangals were following a policy of appeasement towards the Company officials, Sayyid Alawi, Umar Qazi and Sayyid Fazl along with other ulema hated the British and jenmis atrocities against the Mappila peasants and exhorted them to struggle against their foreign rulers. During the life

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81. A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, op.cit., p.224

time of Sayyid Alawi, many British officials came to Mamburam to meet him, but he refused to meet any Government officials. Infact, "Non-Co-operation was the method adopted by the Tangal and other ulema of Malabar of the time towards the British Government"<sup>82</sup> Shortly, these two groups of Tangals - Mamburam and Kondotty Tangals - performed entirely different functions in the Mappila society. When the former strove hard to safeguard the interest of the subaltern classes of the society, the latter represented the interest of the elite classes.

Along with literary works, the religious brotherhood of Mappilas, certain basic institutions of Islam like the mosque, the congregation, ceremonies and festivals and the presence of large number of Ulema belonging to the peasant classes or their dependencies played a significant role in inciting a spirit of fight among the Mappila peasantry of nineteenth century. Ranajit Guha rightly observed the role played by Masjids in the peasant uprisings of Bengal in the following words: "The trial of the wahabis who had been the driving force, behind Titu Mir's historic rebellion at Barasat in 1831 and had then fought a

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82. Ibid., p.218

protracted but losing war for another fifty years against the Raj in the North - Western Frontier provinces, revealed how the humble masjids of rural Bengal used to act as the nerve centers of propaganda and recruitment for the jihad"<sup>83</sup> As far as the Mappila rebels of Malabar were concerned, the Masjids played more or less the same role. Mosques acted as a meeting place and binding force of Mappilas. "Certainly, among the many uses made of the mosque by outbreak participants, its utility as an aid to confederation emerges clearly in many outbreaks, with most disturbances each band of shahid (martyr) was drawn largely from single mosque congregations from which, indeed, on occasions, the gang proceeded directly to commit the initial act of blood"<sup>84</sup>. Usually religious festivals like moulids and nercha were conducted in the mosques. It would provide an opportunity to the Mappila to come together and share their grievances. Rebels before their operation conducted moulids and nerchas in the mosque near to the 'operation area'. When they assembled at a mosque for moulid or nercha there would be little possibility for

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83. Ranajit Guha, op.cit., p.171

84. Conrad Wood, op.cit., p.40.

doubting about their hidden agenda. Therefore such religious festivals were acted as a pretext for concealing the design of Mappila rebels. Noted Marxist thinker E.M.S. Namboodiripad notes about the influence of religious institutions on the uprisings: "They (Mappilas) had much higher sense of organisation than the Hindus. Their congregational prayers, their common feast and dinners, their conception of equality among themselves, etc. make them much more amenable to organised work than their brethren of other communities"<sup>85</sup> K.N. Panikkar re-instated the role of mosque in fomenting uprisings. "As far as the Mappilas were concerned mosques provided as a meeting place for organising and formulating plans of action. The congregation brought them together at the mosques and many an uprising was conceived and planned and recruits enlisted there, particularly at the time of festivals".<sup>86</sup>

At the same time such socio-religious gathering is quite unknown in Hindu community. Owing to the rigidity of caste system, Hindu peasants

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85. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, A Short History of Peasant Movement in Kerala, Peoples Publishing Home, Bombay, 1943, p.10.

86. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.195

belonging to the lowest stratum of the social structure were not able to stamp their protest against oppression of jenmis. A variety of ties-religious, communitarian and often marital - bound the Hindu peasantry with the upper caste landlords, who very often had not only economic but also social and religious powers vested in them. The Hindu peasantrys' subjection was, therefore, not limited to the economic sphere alone but extended to the social and ideological spheres as well. Therefore, an upper caste jenmi was in a position to use his religious, socio-economic influence and position to force the lower caste Hindu tenant to submit. Often, this was achieved through social sanctions, including excommunication and the denial of ritually important village services.<sup>87</sup> William Logan also noted that Hindu tenants were not ready even to submit petitions against their upper caste jenmis. During his enquiry, he had received 2200 petitions presented by 4021 individuals. 67% of the petitions were submitted by Mappilas. The rest were Nayars, Tiyars and christians<sup>88</sup>. Among those who submitted petitions to Logan, Hindu's were comparatively few,

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87. Ibid., p.194

88. D.N. Dhanagare, op.cit., p.67

only 1064 where as the Mappilas who did so were 2734.<sup>89</sup> Logan observes; "I do believe that very few Mappilas were deterred from coming forward. They seemed as a body to act well together and showed much independence. The Hindus, on the contrary, who had before their eyes the fear of caste censure, and fines and excommunication"<sup>90</sup>. Mappilas had no such fears and they succeeded in keeping a distance from Hindus through their religious institutions, fraternity, organisation and social customs. Religious heads like Tangals also trained and taught them to keep their socio-religious individuality. Really, large scale conversion from lower castes to Islam occurred due to the caste rigidity and social inhibitions. Conversion took place mainly from the Cherumars (Hindu slave-caste) because it freed them from oppression of jemis and raised their social status. "Among the depressed classes of Malabar there was no real disinclination to embrace the Moslem faith, for the honour of Islam neutralised all their former bad qualities and raised them several places (steps) socially".<sup>91</sup> They were no

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89. Report of Malabar Special Commission, Vol-I, para. 19.

90. Ibid., vol I, p.IX.

91. C. Gopalan Nair, Moplah Rebellion, Calicut, 1923, p.4.

more ruled over by upper caste landlords and priests after their conversion.

T.L. Strange in his report on Mappila uprisings had asserted that although the evictions and exactions affected both Hindu and Muslim tenants alike, only the Mappilas and not the Hindus had been in rebellion<sup>92</sup>. But there were evidences to show that gang robbery and other crimes doubled in Malabar between 1865-1880, particularly in southern taluks, and that the larger number of those convicted for gang robbery were Hindus.<sup>93</sup> This type of gang robbery of Hindus, according to D.N. Dhanagare, indicates that, "both the Hindu and Mappila peasant cultivators were rebelling, but their rebellion had taken different forms".<sup>94</sup> Since, the low caste Hindu peasantry were not able to break the caste bondage, they resorted to gang robbery, which is used as a means of protest against the rich and the landlords.

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92. T.L. Strange, Special Commissioner, Report dated 25 September 1852 (CMO I, pp. 441-2).

93. Report of Malabar Special Commissioner (1881-'2), Malabar land Tenure, vol I, Madras, 1896, Para.305-17, pp.IXXIV - IXXVII.

94. D.N. Dhanagare, op.cit., p.68.

The traditional intellectuals among Mappilas and Hindus represent different social strata and conflicting interests. The Hindu traditional intellectuals were closely linked with the land owning classes in a system of service and patronage and in many cases, they, themselves were landlords. So they were not able to provide either leadership or ideology for peasant uprisings. On the other hand, these persons used their material and spiritual powers to suppress the cause of peasants. "More over the form of worship in Hinduism did not create opportunities for common assembly, particularly for the lower orders who had very few public places of worship in Malabar. For the Hindu peasantry, therefore, combination and organisation were difficult to achieve"<sup>95</sup>. Most of the Mappila traditional intellectuals including Tangals and Musliyers belonged to the middle strata of the society. They earned their livelihood through religious services in which rich and poor Mappilas alike participated and also received alms from their followers. Mappila ulema had close touch with Mappila peasants and they knew the gravity of their problems, miseries and sufferings. Ulema as a class never were engaged in cultivation but

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95. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., pp.194-5.

their close relatives, neighbours and fellow men engaged in agricultural labour and cultivation. Therefore, Mappila traditional intellectuals were aware of the burning problems of the Mappila peasantry. They succeeded to give an ideological basis as well as religious sanction to their doings. Mappila traditional intellectuals succeeded in uniting different strata of the society through Islamic ideology. For instance, sixty two percent of rural Mappilas engaged in agricultural occupation and over eighteen percent of the total Mappila working population were traders and merchants. But under Islamic umbrella they exhibited unique example of unity and solidarity inspite of the economic and occupational inequality with in the community. The wealthy and influential Mappilas had never regretted the insurgency of their poor co-religionists, but had covertly supported the rebels, both morally and materially, without getting directly involved in rebellious activities. On several occasions, the public executions of the rebels were also boycotted by the entire community.<sup>96</sup> This solidarity among the different strata with in the community was due to the influence of the traditional intellectuals. The rich Mappilas silent support to the

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96. CMO vol I, pp.36, 191-4, vol-II, pp.81-2, 98-129.

cause of poor tenants, according to D.N. Dhanagare "came from fear of a strong reaction from the poor Mappilas",<sup>97</sup> which seems to be partly true owing to the fact that the colonial rulers were ready to provide all sorts of protection to the rich Mappilas if they whole heartedly supported their cause and acted as their spies. Traditional Mappila intellectuals succeeded in creating a general awareness among Mappila tenants about exploitation, social injustice and oppression. This is clear from the statement of a Mappila rebel who was interrogated by a British official. He stated that eviction of a tenant was according to Islam, 'a sufficient pretext' to murder the jenmi and became a shahid.<sup>98</sup>

Thus, the authorities had found religious ideology as the catalyst of the Mappila uprisings and even thought of controlling the religious education but realized that "any real attempt to control religious teaching and preaching would be viewed as persecution"<sup>99</sup> British officials had issued warning to

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97. D.N. Dhanagare, op.cit., p.74.

98. CMO vol I, p.195

99. Report of Winterbotham, 5 May, quoted in M. Gangadhara Menon, Malabar Rebellion of 1921-22, Allahabad, 1989, p.64.

traditional Mappila intellectuals several times and they were told to desist from such activities<sup>100</sup>. Some of the officials recommend deportation of 'Arab priest' or Tangal from Malabar.<sup>101</sup> Since the Tangals and Musliyers were the dependents of peasantry classes, they supported the uprisings. This was the view of British authorities. Therefore, Mr. Conolly recommended to appoint Qazis in various mosques with Government approval. Their salary and allowance should be met by the Government. Such a policy would alinate the priests and tanqals from the peasantry classes. In other words the priests would be free from economic dependency and the economic freedom and selfsufficiency would enable them to support the Government<sup>102</sup>. But because of their own reasons the higher authorities never implemented such drastic steps.

The role of religious ideology, thus becomes very important in the uprisings and for the Mappilas, their religion provided them the philosophy for the revolt. Though the revolts followed no set pattern,

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100. Correspondance regarding Moplah Outbreak from April 1841 - Nov. 1842, Vol.I, pp. 225, 233, see also vol.II, p.154.

101. Ibid., Vol.II p.117.

102. Ibid.

Mappila rebels considered each revolt as an act of jihad and they followed a ceremonial pattern; the decision to become a shahid was followed by divorce of wives, wearing white clothes, visit to a shrine (in most cases to the Mamburam shrine) for blessing, attack on jenmi or his attendants, taking refuge in a safe place and waiting for the arrival of British troops, attack on them and fighting to the last man. As observed by Roland E. Miller, "reckless bravery and the conviction that death for the faith brought a blessed end remained constant in all the incidents"<sup>103</sup> K.N. Panikkar observes: "The mediation of religion, however, played a dual role. On the one hand, it enabled the peasantry to act against oppression and on the other, it affected their potential by circumscribing their vision to the pleasure of the other world".<sup>104</sup> The close examination of the nature of nineteenth century Mappila revolts revealed that Mappila rebels were not ready to utilise their whole potential against the British in particular and the jenmis in general. Infact they were neither eager to mobilise public opinion infavour of their operation nor interested in

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103. Roland E. Miller, op.cit., p.109

104. K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.195

educating the masses regarding their plan of action. Most of the outbreaks were the act of a handful of persons. They fulfilled their vow and attained death at the hands of the British troops without making an attempt to defeat them.<sup>105</sup> It seems that Mappila rebels gave much importance to the reward of the other world than trying to create a heaven on the earth.

Erection of mosque in several parts of Malabar created tension between Mappila peasants and upper caste Hindu jenmis. For instance, on 22 August 1857 the Mappilas rose in revolt against Kolathur Warriar for not allowing them to construct a mosque<sup>106</sup>. In 1857 another revolt took place in south Malabar and the reason assigned to it was that the Mappilas had purchased a piece of land and built a mosque in the place where a number of Mappilas had been shot dead in the revolt of 19th October 1843. They had started holding annual festival in the mosque in honour of the martyrs.<sup>107</sup> At Wandoor a Jenmi had pulled down a mosque, giving melcharth over the head of poor tenants and forcibly reconverted new Muslims. The Mappilas led a revolt against him in 1896 and in the ensuing fight

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105. Ibid., p.89

106. W. Logan op.cit., p 563

107. Ibid., p;577

between the Mappilas and the army ninety nine of the former where killed.<sup>108</sup>

Mr. Logan points out that the "virulent class dissensions between the Hindus and Muhammadans will never be allayed so long as the latter are prevented by the former from the free exercise of their religious duties and are put to great inconvenience in providing decent burial for their dead".<sup>109</sup> He recommended so long as compromise between the two communities was not possible on their problems without the interference by the Government, the Government should arbitrate for a compromise. Earlier Mr. Strange in his report had recommended for imposing a penalty for erecting mosques anywhere without sanction of the Magistrate or the court. but he didn't propose to take up land for a mosque or burial ground even when there was an absolute necessity for it. The proposals of Strange, however, were not approved by the Government as it would ally the Government with Hindus and against Mappilas in matters of religion.<sup>110</sup> Logan opined that when ever

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108. J. Heweston, District Magistrate to the Chief Secretary, Judicial 2 March 1896, Para 38.

109. Malabar special commission, 1881-82, Malabar land Tenures, Madras, 1896, Para. 490, quoted in KKN Kurup, William Logan, op.cit., p.47.

110. Ibid., para. 492-93.

any dispute arose over the site of the mosque which had already been constructed, then it would be better that the landlord should give up his claim on the site. He also suggested that in future the erection of mosque without an official sanction should be penalised. The people of the locality should be made responsible for such creations undertaken without sanction. He also pointed out that reasonable facilities should be afforded to the Mappilas and all classes of society, to obtain sites for religious edifices and for burial grounds. Logan stated that it is "inherent in every single citizen, however, mean and humble his position may be, a right to have a place of internment in the soil of the state"<sup>111</sup> and the land for such purpose could be acquired through proper compensation. Through these proposals Logan wanted to impose a settlement by the Government whenever the two communities themselves failed to reach the same, regarding the problems connected with mosque and burial grounds.

Besides issues on erection of mosque burial ground etc., conversion and apostacy often played as auxiliary cases for the uprisings. As the conversion took place chiefly from the lower castes and Islamic

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111. Ibid., para. 51

training was lacking among them, the neo converts maintained the caste rules to a large extent in their dealing with the upper castes. But the inimical relationship between the landlord and the Mappila tenants and the extensive reforms introduced by Sayyid Fazl among the new Muslims, aggravated the problems. The converts from the lower castes no more respected the caste traditions and whenever the Namboodiris and Nairs pressed their demands with an iron hand Mappilas came to the rescue of the convert and it naturally led to uprising. Some times the class forcibly or voluntarily reconverted the new Muslims to their old faith and this also culminated in outbreak. For instance, in the Cherur uprising of 1843 the immediate cause was the demand of respect by a Nair from an Ezhava convert who had violated the caste rules. In September 1880 an outbreak occurred at Melattur in Walluwanad Taluk. Here, though agrarian discontent was the basic reason, the immediate cause, however, was religious conversion.<sup>112</sup>

Mappila devotional songs, Padapattu (war-songs), Moulids, and other ballads played a significant role in inspiring Mappila rebels to strike. The war

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112. G.O. 15 November 1880, No: 2241, quoted in KKN Kurup, William Logan, op.cit., p.16.

songs on the battles of Badr, Uhd, Hunain, Khandaq, Fath Makkah (the victory of Makkah) etc. were very popular among lower class Mappilas. Songs praising the martyrs and heroes called māla or nerchapattu were another kind of literature which became popular during the period of disturbance. They included Muhyuddin māla, Badr māla, Rifai māla, Nafeesath māla, Manjakulam māla, Mamburam māla, Malappuram māla etc. These songs were recited in the mammoth congregation and at market places where it helped to a large extent in developing religious awareness and sustaining the spirit of holy war among the community. These types of ballads were composed either in Arabic or in Arabi-Malayalam. Arabi-Malayalam is the medium of religious instruction of Mappilas. Since Mappilas gave due importance to religious education, this language became their chief medium of expression. Moulids were composed on the life history of Prophet Muhammad and so many Muslim celebrities like Sayyid Ālawi, Sayyid Fazl etc. These moulids present their life and career in a subaltern approach. Some of the historical facts suppressed by the colonial masters connected to Mappila uprisings were focussed on by these compositions. Hence Mappila ballads have been regarded as a useful source to reconstruct the history of Mappila uprising of nineteenth century.

Most of the padappattu glorifying the heroic fight of Mappila rebels were dedicated to the Mamburam Tangals. Among them, the cherur Padapattu, cherur chint, Manjery Padapattu were very important. The first two war songs were banned by the British authorities and its copies and the press where it printed were confiscated and destroyed. The Manjeri padapattu composed on the revolt of 1849 and dedicated to Athan Gurukkal and other martyrs, was unearthed by Conolly before its composition was completed.<sup>113</sup>

Padapattu were widely circulated among Mappilas and British officials realized the 'danger' created by Mappila war-songs. Therefore, steps were taken to proscribe them. As a part of this policy door-to-door searches were conducted and copies of war-songs were destroyed. H.V. Conolly observed, "written and unwritten songs are current, in honor of parties, who have earned paradise by a similar course to that pursued by these fanatics. The power of the ballad among the lower orders, is as strong in Malabar, as it is notoriously in other countries"<sup>114</sup> Therefore, it is clear that these ballads actually acted as source of the Mappila uprisings. The public and secret group

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113. CMO vol I, pp.228-9.

114. CMO vol. IV, p.36.

recitation of ballads inspired the young Mappilas in large numbers to fight against colonialism. And they were moved by the heroic path followed by Mappila martyrs in various uprisings. The ballads managed to create a strong conviction among old and young Mappilas as well to fight and die. They were inspired by the promises given by God to Shahids. Thus, knowing fully that they were fighting a losing battle Mappila rebels stood firm and fought heroically against their enemies. Their concept and logic of fight was very simple. If won, they would be relieved from oppression, insult and exploitation. If failed surely they would get a seat in Paradise. So in either case, according to them, they were not at all losers.

In the song that commemorates the cherur riot of 1843, the Mappilas who fought to the death to avenge an insult, congratulate each other to say: "we are now contented the disgrace to our religion is far removed. The balladeer concludes: The seven men died as martyrs. All Mussalmans should remember these martyrs and should hold them in veneration over their nearest relatives .... May God give courage to all Mussalman to remove disgrace from their religion".<sup>115</sup> The cherur

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115. P.A. Sayed Muhammed, Kerala Muslim History (Malayalam), Reprint, Calicut, 1988, p.27.

padapattu was proscribed by Conolly, charging that it roused the religious sentiments of Mappilas.

In the preface of his work, 'Uddat al umara wal hukkam li-Ihanatil-Kafarat wa-abdat-al - Asnam Sayyid Fazl make it a duty of the rulers and leaders, to compose songs on the virtues of jihad and rewards for the fighters in their own language, for such songs are like the file or rasp which sharpens the sword<sup>116</sup>. There are about fifty war songs in Arabi-Malayalam dialect and most of them came out in later half of nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>117</sup> These war songs, no doubt, were aimed at encouraging the Mappilas to revolt. The first ever known padappattu is the Saqum padapattu compiled in 1849 AD (1265 AH) by two anonymous authors on exploits of Hazrat Ali. The recitation of the war songs, a practice known as padiparayal (sing and say) became a part of Mappila art in later years. Achathodiyil Athan Moyi, Pottayil Semannu, Musatina and Madari Kunhamed were convicted on a charge of composing

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116. Sayyid Fazl, (ed), Uddat al umara . . . . , p.23.

117. F. Fawcett had translated a few of the war songs to English. See, F. Fawcett, 'War songs of Malabar', Indian Antiquary, XXX. Nov.- Dec. 1901, pp.499-508.

a Mappila song on revolt of 1849 and the song was considered seditious.<sup>118</sup>

Besides the war songs, the nerchas held in the memory of the martyrs also contributed to the promulgation of revolt. The nercha at cherur, a ceremonial type is conducted in memory of the 1843 Cherur Shahids (martyrs) and it was begun by some pious Mapilas from Mahe who purchased the site of the graves of Shahids and a mosque was constructed. The nercha was presided over by Sayyid Fazl until his expulsion in 1852. The nercha attracted an estimated number of 6000 Mappilas in 1858 and generated the same kind of heroic ballad literature as commemorated the battles with the Portuguese and the suicidal defence of the Malappuram mosque.<sup>119</sup>

Mappilas in general believed that the Tangals, Musliyers etc. could do miracles and possessed super natural powers. Umar Qazi, Sayid 'Alawi and Sayyid Fazl were man of miracles, according to the conviction of Mappilas. They were also believed to be endowed with super natural powers helped to reinforce their hold over the popular mind. According to the findings of

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118. Letter from Conolly to Pycroft, Secretary to the government, Madras, 29 Nov, 1851.

119. S.F. Dale, op.cit., p.132.

Kathleen Gough millenarian Cargo cult tradition prevailed among the Mappilas of nineteenth century Malabar.<sup>120</sup> Millenarian movement has arisen among the Mappilas which attribute the leader (here the tangals) with marvellous, magical powers. This was essential to rally the masses under the leader. This was the reason behind the wide spread of 'wonder making abilities' of the Tangals and Musliyers. For instance, Mappilas believed that Umar Qazi miraculously disappeared from police lock-up due to his super natural powers.<sup>121</sup> Sayyid 'Alawi's reputation was so wide spread that innumerable devotees approached him for solutions to their worldly problems. He is reported to have cured chronic diseases, restored stolen property, induced rain during draughts and restored fallen trees to their original position.<sup>122</sup>

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120. A type of religion in certain south pacific islands based on the belief that ancestors or supernatural beings will return bringing products of modern civilization and thus make the islanders rich and independant. Here it is believed that the Mamburam Tangal has taught the Mappila tenants that if they would give up cultivating, pray diligently, and organise for battle, a ship bearing arms and modern equipment for 40,000 men would miraculously appear on the horizon and the British would be driven out of Malabar (Kathleel Gough, op.cit; p.102).

121. C.N. Ahmed Moulavi, K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem Mahataya Mappila Sahitya Parampariyam, Calicut, 1978, p.200.

122. K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem, Mamburam Sayyid 'Alawi Tangal Venniyar, 1982, pp.48-51.

Mappilas believed that 'their leaders had the power to appear and disappear at will, to remain proof against bullets to cause the bullets to drop harmless the moment they issued from the rifles, and to successfully defy the attempts of any number of men to capture them alive.<sup>123</sup> Sayyid Fazl enjoyed utmost respect from the Mappilas. They regarded him as imbued with a portion of Divinity. They swear by his foot as their most solemn oath. Earth on which he had spat or walked is treasured up.<sup>124</sup> These type of belief and conviction prompted the Mappilas to fight till the end against colonial oppression and exploitation of landlords.

During the life time of Sayyid 'Alawi, a Mappila frenzy movement began to originate. It is known as the Halilakkam. This is a movement of the enthusiasts and it sprang during the out breaks among the lower orders of the Mappilas who claimed to possess miraculous powers. The word halilakkam which means frenzy raising may be connected with the ceremonial aspect of certain sufi orders which gave prominent place for self torture to harness feelings and imotions

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123.Times of Malabar, 13 January 1900, MNNR 1900 (TNA).

124.C.A. Innes, F.B. Evans, Malabar District Gazetteers, Malabar, Madras 1951, Madras, p.79.

and to lead the mind to ecstasy.<sup>125</sup> W.Loqan provides interesting accounts of halilakkam among the Mappilas during the period of outbreaks.<sup>126</sup> Many of the Mappilas pretended to be hal-stricken and fabricated false stories about themselves to make the people believe that they had attained supernatural status. Logan alludes the halilakkam to one Arab tangal with long hair and he was a close associate of Mamburm Tangal. The halar appeared to have adopted the dikr from that tangal.<sup>127</sup>

The halars increased rapidly because certain persons considered it as a profitable business. They wandered about with canes and knives in their hand without going to their houses and attending to their work. They normally moved in groups of five, six, eight or ten chanting prayers and the locals provided

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125. 'Hal in sufism is something that descends from God into a man's heart, without his being able to repel it when it comes or to attack it when it goes, by his own effort, see Shaikh 'Ali al Usman al Hujwiri, Kashf-al-Mahjub, English translation R.A. Nicholson, London, 1839, pp.181-371. The state of hal is attained through the repeated enunciation of invocations with control of birth, cordinated with body exercises, balancing and inclinations, spencer Trimingham, The sufi orders in Islam, The clarandone press, Oxford, 1971, p.200.

126 W. Logan, op.cit; pp.557-58.

127. Ibid. p.559

them food and accomodation. The halilakkam party provided men and amunition for the uprisings or the party at least acted as a recruiting agency of the uprisings.

### Nature and Character of Mappila Uprisings

Mr. T.L. Strange outrightly rejected the explanation that the Mappila uprising of nineteenth century had their origin in agrarian depression and Mappila destitution, "he (Strange) found their cause to be religious fanaticism fanned by the preaching of ambitious priests, like the Mamburam Tangals"<sup>128</sup>. The charge of 'religious fanaticism', raised by a responsible British official like Mr. T.L. Strange is need to be examined.

As stated by Bipan Chandra communalism is a belief that because a group of people follow a particular religion they have as a result, common social political and economic interests.<sup>129</sup> As the followers of a common religion, Mappilas of Malabar had any common socio-political and economic interests ? Their interests in various fields varied from section

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128.C.A. Innes, F.B. Evans, op.cit; p.80

129.Bipan Chandra, (ed.) Communalism in Modern India, Delhi, 1996, p.1.

to section according to their material and circumstantial situations. Mappilas of southern Malabar were tenants of Hindu landlords and hence they fought against both landlordism and colonialism. Whereas Mappilas of north Malabar comparatively led peaceful life and kept away from the mainstream of rebellions. Only one occasion, they rose in to revolt, that was the Mattanur uprising of 1852, that too was against landlordism. The Mappilas of Calicut owing to the influence exerted up on them by the Kozhikode Qazis, were asserting their loyalty to the British. The British authorities maintained close contact with the Qazis of Calicut and sought their advice in all the matters regarding the Muslims. Titles like Khan Bahadur and Khan Sahib etc. were bestowed to the nobles and influential Mappila leaders of Calicut. Arakkal Koyatti Haji (1830-1900) worked hard to make the visit of the Governor of Madras to Calicut a grand success. He was the first to receive the title Khan Bahadur in Malabar. Khan Bahadur Muttukoya Tangal (1852-1953) a close relative of Sayyid Fazl was a strong supporter of the British. The Government nominated him as the Muslim representative to the council for celebrating the accession of the Emperor. He gave instruction to all the mosques, to celebrate

the occasion with pomp and pleasure. He used his influence for not spreading the rebellions of southern Malabar to Calicut area. Khan Sahib Koyappathodi Muhammad Kutty Haji (d. 1934) used his influence for the rejuvenation of Muslim society with the help of the Government.<sup>130</sup> These Muslim nobles had their own class consciousness and they used their influence for helping the British raj. Therefore, when the religious leaders (Qazis of Calicut) and rich nobles adopted a pro-British stand in north Malabar. The masses were not in a position to stamp their protest against landlordism and colonialism.

In the case of south Malabar the religious heads (Tanqals and Musliyar) supported the cause of tenants since they also belonged or depended them for their livelihood. The Kondotty Tanqals supported the British authorities because of their own class interest.<sup>131</sup> Therefore, Mappilas, though they adhered the same religion and belief, as a community, each sections have their own economic and social, interests. These economic and social conflicts actually decide

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130.K. Hussain, Social and Cultural Life of Mappila Muslims of Malabar, (1800-1921), unpublished Ph.d thesis, Calicut University, 1997, pp.283-'84.

131.William Gamul Farmer to Shaikh Mohammed of Kondotty, dated Oct. 2 1793. (TNA).

their stand towards colonialism rather than their religious identity.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith in a pioneering study of Muslims in India characterised communalism as "that ideology which has emphasized as the social, political and economic unit the group of adherents of each religion, and has emphasized the distinction, even the antagonism, between such groups."<sup>132</sup> Of course, Mappila religious scholars like Tangals and Musliyers used religious sentiments of illiterate Mappila peasants as a force mobilizing factor of the revolts of 19th century. But a thorough and close analysis of their policy clearly indicate that they tried to interpret each and every problem of the Mappila masses in terms of religion. Therefore a religious colour and dimension was given to the whole matters. "The class struggle of the Mappila tenants against Hindu land lords and their anti-imperialist sentiments could be readily turned into communal channels because religiosity."<sup>133</sup> The religious, socio-cultural differences between Mappila tenants and Hindu landlords often prompted to depict the revolts as an antagonism on religious lines. "The

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132. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Modern Islam in India, A Social Analysis, Reprint, New Delhi, 1979, p.187.

133. Bipan Chandra, op.cit; p.192.

class cleavage and antagonism in Malabar ran along religious lines - the rebellious Mappilas were tenants and their landlords and moneylenders Hindu"<sup>134</sup>.

Mappila uprisings of 19th century was not on the basis of religious difference between the tenants and landlords. Only a few Hindu families left the riot-hit areas in the middle of the 19th century. In between 1841-1857 only twelve Hindu families left Walluwanad taluk. In between 1843-1857, four Hindu families left Cheranad (Shernaad) taluk<sup>135</sup> and during this period none have left Ernad taluk<sup>136</sup>. H.V. Conolly has sent this statement as a reply to Mr.T.L. Strange's following request: "I have the honour to request that you (H.V. Conolly) will inform me (TL Strange) of the names of all such heads of Hindu families as can be ascertained to have withdrawn with their families from the district where in the late

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134.Ibid; p.59, See also K.N. Panikkar, "Peasant Revolts in Malabar in the 19th and 20th centuries" pp;601 ff, W.C. Smith, Modern Islam in India pp.226-27, and KB Krishnan, the problems of minorities, pp.265-67, Lahore, 1939.

135.Letter from H.V. Conolly to T.L. Strange, the special Commissioner, dated 20th April, 1852. (See, Mr.Strange's Letter to Government, 10 March 1852-30 April 1852, Vol-I, p.182) -KSA.

136.Ibid; p.185

Mopla disturbances have arisen; through fear of being themselves assailed"<sup>137</sup>. There was no large scale Hindu exodus from the so called riot-hit areas of Malabar. Only a few aggrieved parties left Shernad, Walluwanad taluks. At the same time, not even a single Hindu landlord left Ernad taluk, where a Mappila tahsildar named Kuttoossa presided over. As noted by H.V. Conolly, all the great Mappila outbreaks took place not in the Ernad taluk but in Shernad and Walluwanad talukes, where Hindu tahsildars presided over.<sup>138</sup>

The Hindus of Walluwanad, Shernad and Ernad made a representation before T.L. Strange and raised the following complaints against Mappilas:- (1) The Mappilas did not yield the road to them, as a matter of right as had firmly been the custom<sup>139</sup>. (2) The Mappilas claimed for low caste converts to Mohammedanism the right of being considered free from ceremonial impurity which that low caste had attached

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137.Ibid., p.27 - Letter from T.L. Strange to H.V. Conolly, dated 19 March 1852, Calicut.

138.Ibid., p.68 (HV Conolly to TL Strange, dated 26 March 1852, Calicut).

139.Correspondance of Special Commissioner and Government, 18 January 1853 - 30 November 1853, Vol- IV (K S A), p.205.

to them so long as they were Hindus.<sup>140</sup> Hindus raised such complaints due to their reluctance to adjust themselves with the changing conditions. They wanted to maintain their socio-religious hegemony over the low castes who converted to Islam. H.V. Conolly replied that the Mappilas always addressed the Hindu by the honorific title "you" while the Hindu on his side used the deprecating term "thou". In course of time, these distinctive marks have been eroded with the emergence of a new generation.<sup>141</sup> Sayyid Fazl warned the Mappilas against using such honorific tile while addressing upper caste Hindus.<sup>142</sup> H.V. Conolly says, "The Substantial Mopla has began to think that he is at least as good a man as the, poor, Hindu - and that under a Government which treat all classes and sects with impartiality, there is no reason why he should submit to customs which evidently imply inferiority. To tell a freeman (Mappila) that he shall as a matter of right and not of courtesy give place on the public road to another free man (upper caste Hindu), would be a policy as inconsistant with the general views of the

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140.Ibid., p.207

141.Ibid., p. 205

142.See Chapter IV

British Government; as it would be difficult to carry out. The public roads were made free for the lower caste Hindu slaves (Cherumans) 9 1/2 years ago. Mr. Strange's plans would therefore depress the Moplas below this lowest caste".<sup>143</sup>

Some Nairs have beaten up a Mappila convert who had formerly been a slave (Cheruman) due to his refusal to follow caste customs. According to them his conversion never removed the caste impurity. H.V. Conolly citing this incident stated that ceremonial uncleanness belongs to the caste and not to the man. As a result of his conversion, the caste being lost and the uncleanness departed. This has always been the recognised fact in Malabar.<sup>144</sup>

The Hindu chieftains of the three riot-hit taluks -Waluwanad, Sheranad and Ernad - also lodged complaints against Kuttoossa the Mappila Tahsildar of Ernad. They complained that Kuttoossa was the instigator and fomenter of Mappila outbreaks being a disciple of the Mamburam Tangal. He built a mosque at Manjery and was dedicated to the Tirurangadi Tangal (Sayyid Alawi). One of his house keepers joined the

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143.Ibid., p. 207

144.Ibid., p. 208

fanatics in 1849.<sup>145</sup> All these allegations were outrightly rejected by the Tahsildar of Ernad<sup>146</sup>. The real reason which provoked the Hindu chieftains of Malabar was the exaltation of a Mappila "to so high a grade that of Tahsildar"<sup>147</sup>. H.V. Conolly writes, "For a very long time Hindu "ascendency" and Moplah depression has been the rule and the first departure from it (appointment of a Mappila as Tahsildar)<sup>148</sup> alarmed the Hindu chieftains. This appointment helped the Mappilas to hold their head up on an equality with the Brahmins or Nairs who have been accustomed for half a century to look on the Mappilas as a inferior creatures."<sup>149</sup>

T.L. Strange, the Special Commissioner asked H.V. Conolly to submit a report on the number of temples either plundered or desecrated by the Mappilas during the last twelve years (1840-1852) in the Taluks of Sheranad, Eranad and Walluwanad<sup>150</sup>. As per the

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145.Ibid., pp. 53-54.

146.Ibid., p.55

147.Ibid., p.77

148.Ibid.

149.Ibid., p.83

150.T.L. Strange to H.V. Conolly, dated 21 April, 1852, Feroke (See, Ibid., p.203).

order of H.V. Conolly, C. Collett, the Assistant Magistrate of Malabar produced an elaborate report regarding the issue. He listed six temples supposed to be destroyed by the Mappila rebels. They are :

1. Karuvampurate Karinkula Kavu temple
2. Putukode Vishnu temple
3. Narinkavu Bhagavati temple
4. Vakatoode Karinkula Kavu temple
5. Perumparambathe Vetakkoru Makan temple
6. Anapura Ayyappan temple<sup>151</sup>

Regarding temple theft C. Collett reported that thefts occur at times in Hindu temples, none denies, but that these are more frequently committed by Hindus than by Moplahs. The records of last twelve years lately furnished to the Special Commissioner prove it.<sup>152</sup> He continues, "At any rate there is no reason to assert that, it must have been done by Moplahs. About a year ago a case of theft from a temple occurred in the Walluwanad Taluk the thief was a Nair, amongst other acts he threw down the image, he was committed to court and convicted"<sup>153</sup>, Temple theft

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151. Correspondance of Special Commissioner and Government vol III (K S A), p.25.

152. Ibid., p.26

153. Ibid., p.48, para:31

was a common crime during this period due to two reasons. Firstly, Poverty: Poverty doesn't know the barriers of caste and religion. Both Hindu and Mappila poors often looked temples as storage of wealth and grains. Secondly, Hindu upper caste land lords who were naturally the guardians or patrons of local temples extract various kinds of fees from Mappila tenants to conduct temple festivals. In the case of the Perum parambathe Vetakkoru Makan temple, this illegal extraction provoked the Mappila tenants. Mr. Collett writes, "... It is said that there was about to be a festival celebrated at this temple and that the Mopla tenants very unwillingly paid the extra fees extracted from them by their landlord for this purpose"<sup>154</sup>. The Nair who had broken the idol of the temple did so to divert the attention of the authority towards Mappilas.

In the Anapura Ayyappan temple, the Ganapati idol was broken in to three pieces. The Manjery Adigharee, a Hindu, who had accompanied Collett to this temple told him that the idol was broken recently and an idol of Ayyappa was stolen. C. Collett reports: "I showed him (the Manjery Adigharee) that the fractures

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154. Ibid., pp.49-50, para:33

were evidently old. He maintained his objection. A Nair who lived near happened just then to come there, I turned to him and asked him when it was broken. When he replied, to the great confusion of the Adhigharee, "a long time ago, it has been broken ever since I can recollect."<sup>155</sup> From this statement it is clear that the Manjery Adigharee tried to mislead the Assistant Magistrate of Malabar who had investigated the temple theft and temple desecration of Mappilas. At the same time there was no conspiracy hatched against Mappilas to implicate them in this matter. This is clear from the statement of a Nair native mentioned above.

After completing his enquiry Mr. Collett made the following conclusion: Thus apart from all general considerations, it appears from the circumstances of each of these six instances<sup>156</sup> that the case of the sixth temple (Anapura Ayyapan temple) is clearly false, that it is much the most probable that the instance of the second temple (Puthukode Vishnu Temple) is equally groundless and fabricated for the present occasion, that the case of temple No.4 (Vakatode Karimkula Kavu temple) is open to a like strong suspicion, and that

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155.Ibid., p.51, para:34

156.Ibid., p.48

the case of temple No.5 (Perumparapathe Vetakkoru Makan temple) has been grossly exaggerated from a trifling offence in to a serious and fanatical out rage. Neither of the two other instances rest up on any evidence, and both, if true to the extant alleged, are equally liable to the objection that the acts stated are not such as we should naturally expect from fanatical Moplahs, and that if true there is nothing in them from which we must necessarily infer that they were committed by Mussalmans".<sup>157</sup>

Regarding temple robbery Mr.Collett has submitted an elaborate report to his superiors. A number of temples were looted in the Walluwanad and sheranad taluks during the last twelve years. Mappilas were not brought to the book in any of the cases, according to Mr. Collett. He reports: "Walloowanaad in 1850 with in two months three temples were robbed by a gang of four Tiers (Tiyyas)"<sup>158</sup>. In March 1851 a Nair had stealed property of a temple worth-Rupees eight thousand nine. He threw the image in a well.<sup>159</sup> In Sheranad, a temple was robbed twice, In 1846 and 1850.

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157.Ibid., p.53, para:33

158.Ibid., p.54

159.Ibid.

A patter (trading Brahmin) was the chief suspect. In 1852 property worth of Rupees hundred was stolen from a temple. This was done by the servants and their relatives of the guardian of the temple.<sup>160</sup> Mr.Collett has concluded his report as follows: "So that it is clear that the assertion now made that no Hindus would ever think of robbing in a Hindu temple much less doing anything to desecrate it, is quite false and disproved by facts".<sup>161</sup>

Quoting the facts sited by Mr. Collett, H.V. Conolly states: "....there is considerable reason to doubt whether in many of the cases brought to your notice (Mr.T.L. Strange) any desecration at all occurred, and secondly, that where desecration is allowed it is quite unreasonable as to say more so to suppose that it was the act of Hindoos as to suppose it was that of Mophlahs .... The account for the last twelve years in Ernad, Sheranad and Wallowanad furnished made your instruction on 22nd ultimatum, show that in every case in which proof was obtained against the perpetrators it was found that they were Hindus".<sup>162</sup>

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160.Ibid., p.55

161.Ibid.

162.Letter from H.V. Conolly to T L SStrange, dated 9th July 1852, Calicut, No:1325.

Dispute regarding the erection of mosques and burial grounds often gave a religious colour to the Mappila uprisings of nineteenth century. When T.L. Strange visited Manjery as part of his enquiry on Mappila revolts, an influential Brahmin lodged a complaint regarding a piece of land in Melekad desam, Irumbuzhi Amsom. The land situates opposites to the mosque erected by the Ernad Tahsildar. This land according to the Brahmin was "formerly used by them as the spot where they burnt the bodies of people of their caste. In consequence, however of the erection of the mosque they were unable to continue the practice"<sup>163</sup> Mr. Collett has enquired this matter and reported: "It would appear that, probably many years ago, the bodies of some patters (Brahmins) have been burnt on this piece of ground; but I think it will be deemed quite clear that the practice ceased altogether previous to the erection of the mosque"<sup>164</sup> Really the Patter had no legal right or ownership over the land under dispute. This proved by the verdict of a civil suit in the court of Manjery Munsiff (Case No.591/1847) in the year 1847.<sup>165</sup>

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163.Mr. Strange's letter to Government, vol III, p.81.

164.Letter from C. Collett to H.V. Conolly, dated 10 July 1852, para:2.

165.Ibid; para:6

It is interesting to note that the Patter had no complaint till Mr. Strange's arrival in Manjery and he never approached any authority in the last five years to revoke the verdict of the court.<sup>166</sup> Therefore it seems that the influential Brahmin of Manjery lodged a false complaint against Mappilas and Mr.T.L. Strange treated it as a clear proof of 'Mappila fanaticism' without taking to consider the ground realities noted by Mr.Collett and H.V. Conolly.

A dispute arose in between the Tirumulpad (Zamorin) and the Mappilas of Mailady in Nilambur Amshom, Ernad taluk regarding the rebuilt of a mosque in the locality. Mailady was actually a neglected place. The Tirumulapad never turned his attention to this place till the re-building of the mosque. Mailady was an example of communal harmony, "in which all caste might be allowed to live and trade".<sup>167</sup> The Tirumulpad complained that Mappilas had erected the mosque on ground belonging to him<sup>168</sup>. C. Collett, the Assistant Collector was entrusted to enquire about the issue.

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166.Letter from H.V. Conolly to TL Strange, dated 13 July 1852, Calicut, No:1342.

167.Letter from C. Collett to H.V. Conolly dated 24 July 1852, Malappuram,

168.Zamorin's letter to T.L. Strange dated 31 Edavam, 1027 (11 June 1852).

Mr. Collett personally visited the spot and examined the matter. He reports, "there could be left no doubt in my mind that there was an old mosque and burial ground... Mosque situated three miles from Tirumulpad's house and it situated in deep jungle.<sup>169</sup> The property where Mappilas erected the mosque might have belonged to the Tirumulpad, since he was the biggest landlord of the region. It is also true that an old mosque situates there. Perhaps, it was erected during the time of his predecessors, with their oral permission. When T.L. Strange was appointed to enquire about the causes of Mappila outbreaks and also asked to provide means "to secure to the Nair and Brahmin population, the most ample protection and safety possible against the effects of Moplah fanaticism",<sup>170</sup> the Tirumulpad might have decided to exploit the favours of British to the maximum. Therefore, he unearthed an old issue and brought it before the authority as a new problem. However, the construction of mosques and the objection raised by the landlords often aggravated the inimical relationship between the landlord and the Mappila peasants. For instance, the revolt of 1841 in Muttiyara

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169.Mr. Strange's letter to Government, Vol III, p.117.

170.Extracts from the Minutes of Consultation, 17 February 1852, See CMO, Vol.IV, p.273

(near Tirurangadi) arose on a dispute over the erection of a mosque on a piece of land which had been in the possession of a Mappila under different tenures for long and janmam (Superior land tenure right) purchased in 1832-33.<sup>171</sup>

By raising the issues of the erection of mosques and the burial grounds, upper caste Hindu landed aristocracy aimed at not the prevention of Mappilas from doing their religious obligations but to establish their hegemony over the Mappila peasants. Therefore this was a socio-economic issue rather than a religious problem. Hindu upper caste land lords might have realised the importance of mosque in socio-religious gathering of Mappilas. Besides mosques often acted *as* the recruiting centres of Mappila rebels as well as the centre of chalking out their operations. Moreover, mosques minimised the social-strata among Mappilas. Mappilas hailing from different social-strata mixed freely and joint together for performing religious rituals. The new converts mainly brought from lower castes were treated as equal to Mappila nobles. Therefore mosques played a pivotal role in the unity and integrity of the Mappila community. By lodging complaints against the erection of mosques, the

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171. See Chapter IV,

land lords thought that they could resist the social gatherings of Mappilas which according to them was responsible for the uprisings and enable the low caste converts to question their previous masters unsurpassed position in the socio-economic life.

When the Mappila uprisings of nineteenth century taken as a whole, it is true that the uprisings occurred not as a result of a single factor alone - ie., economic or religious. The British official view regarding the nature of the Mappila uprisings was 'fanatic outbreaks'. But agrarian grievances of Mappila tenants were also noticed by officials like H.V. Conolly and T.L. Strange. They recognised poverty and destitution of Mappilas but rejected it as a sufficient reason for uprisings. William Logan showed the audacity to declare that agrarian discontent and defects in the existing land tenurial system was the dominant factor paved the way for Mappila outbreaks of nineteenth century.<sup>172</sup>

Is there any inter relationship between economic grievances and religious ideology ? The majority of the Mappila traditional intellectuals came from the peasantry classes. They had no connection

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172. William Logan, op.cit; p.581.

with the land owners. They tried to interpret religious dogmas according to the needs of the time. Being members of the peasantry class they sought religious remedies to peasant problems. Mappila religious leaders like Tangals and Musliyers acted as the ideologues of the rural poor and interpreted religious tenets to suit the needs of the oppressed and provided moral and ideological justification for action against injustice. The uprising appeared as religious acts inspired by the ulema who formed the single, critical, determinant of the Mappila outbreaks.<sup>173</sup> Mappila dependence of religious leaders shows the growth of popular culture. Huge majority of Mappilas thought that religiously they were obliged to accept the words of these Tangals and Musliyers and they were responsible to see their deeds as guidance to proceed. Thus, Mappila uprisings of nineteenth century was a result of a variety of causation and motives. The inter action between different factors paved the way for the uprisings. Therefore Fawcett's remark, "fixing on any social phenomenon as the product of any single cause is and must be an error" is almost right as the Mappila uprisings of nineteenth century was concerned.

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173. Conrad Wood, "The Moplah Outbreaks: a discussion contribution", Journal of Asian Studies, Feb. 1979. pp.391-9.

# CONCLUSION

Mohammed Abdul Sathar. K.K “History of ba-alawis in Kerala ” Thesis.  
Department of History , University of Calicut, 1999

## CONCLUSION

The historical analysis of the life and career of Bā'-Alawi Sayyids in Kerala reveals certain basic issues relating to the socio-religious as well as economic features of Mappila society during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Whether the religio-social reforms of Bā'-Alawi Sayyids succeeded to bring notable changes in the then Mappila society? It is true that their reforms and preachings in this respect brought about substantial results, when the history of Mappilas of the period is taken as a whole. Certain unIslamic practices of Mappilas were questioned and criticised by Bā'-Alawis. Steps were sought to purify the customs and beliefs of neo-converts and they realized that religious reforms could be materialised only in a refined and modernised society. Therefore emphasis was given to social uplift of neo-converts. This type of social and religious reform alarmed those who wanted to perpetuate the statusquo. The result was the beginning of friction between Mappilas and the upper caste Hindus who were also the propertied classes as well as the custodians of traditional beliefs and customs.

On closer examination of the social status of the lower caste in particular and the tenants in

general, the teachings of Bā-ʿAlawi Sayyids could be looked as an earnest effort to revolutionize the social structure of the society. Europeans generally regarded themselves as the apostles of social change and reforms. But when they reached in Malabar, they forgot their 'tradition' and became the guardians of age-old rotten customs and institutions. They did not stop there but tarnished the image of Bā-ʿAlawi Sayyids as "fanatics of worst description".<sup>1</sup>

Bā-ʿAlawi Sayyids, especially Sayyid Fazl, succeeded to a certain extent to connect their reform activities with the reformist movements that worked among Muslims in all over the world. Therefore, the religio-social reform movements of Malabar under the guidance and leadership of Bā-ʿAlawi Sayyids was not an isolated phenomenon in the history of Malabar. As a result of the teachings of Bā-ʿAlawis, Mappila masses became aware of their own religio-social distinct identity as well as the necessity to get rid of the exploitation of landlords and colonial masters. This social consciousness of Mappilas paved the way for the antagonism between tenants and landlords. In the case of Malabar these two classes represent two distinct

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1. CMO, Vol.I, p.33

religious systems. Hence a communal colour was attributed to the struggle of peasants against landlordism and colonialism.

The intellectual and theoretical base of the nineteenth century Mappila resistance was laid by Bā-'Alawi Sayyids, especially Sayyid 'Alawi and Sayyid Fazl. There is an interaction between religio-social reforms and the material grievances of Mappila peasantry. When a section of Mappila peasants were religiously refined and socially upgraded as a result of the effort made by Bā-'Alawis, they became conscious about the oppression, exploitation and injustice on the part of landlords and colonial authorities. The collective consciousness of Mappila tenants was the by-product of the teachings of Bā-'Alawis.

As stated by S.F. Dale<sup>2</sup> the influence of the teachings of the Bā-'Alawis was felt in a limited area and in limited number of people. But it doesn't warrant the assumption that large number of Mappilas who faced the same material situation paid no heed to the preachings of Bā-'Alawis. Students of history are aware about the fact that almost all revolution or

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2. S.F. Dale, The Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922, New York, 1980, p.224.

uprising in a pre-literate society owed its origin to a single or a couple of traditional intellectuals. The message of insurgency passed from theoretician to a few individuals who acted as the core of the action. Same thing happened in the case of the nineteenth century Mappila uprisings. In a given society though majority of the people suffered a lot as a result of the existing situations, usually only a few individuals chose the path of revolt. The activities of this decisive minority would decide the course of history rather than the passive sections of the society.

The last Bā-ʿAlawi Sayyids, Sayyid ʿAlawi and Sayyid Fazl represent the tradition of insurgency. Sayyid Fazl was born and brought up in an atmosphere of strong anti-colonial attitude. The existing conditions of Malabar - hegemony of upper caste Hindu landlords and the British rule - had profound influence in moulding the character and outlook of the young Tangal. Therefore Sayyid Fazl followed the foot-prints of his father and succeeded in widening the theoretical and intellectual base of Mappila resistance by publishing a number of works authored by himself, his father and other anti-colonial ulema. Thus "prose of insurgency" provided the necessary social and legal legitimacy to Mappila uprisings and religious sanction to such

actions were given to a certain extent. Therefore Mappila resistance of the nineteenth century was not manifestation of emotions and sentiments.

Considering the ceremonial pattern<sup>3</sup> followed by the Mappila rebels before embarking on the operation, Mappila uprisings are usually labelled as "Suicidal jihad". The ceremonial pattern itself is a proof to negate this charge. It clearly indicates that after taking the vow to revolt, they lived in a different world. This unique psychological atmosphere prompted them to fight till the end. In a number of uprisings the participants got enough time to escape from the hands of the British, but they resorted to fight and die. Therefore their death was purposeful and pre-determined. It seems that they were moved by the reward promised to martyrs by God. According to K.N. Panikkar this was both the strength and weakness of the religious ideology which provide ideological sanction to peasant action. He observes: "Thus the

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3. The modus operandi of almost all uprisings are as follows: a few individuals decide to revolt due to their individual or collective grievances. Firstly, they conduct a pilgrimage to a religious centre, mostly to Mamburam, divorce their wives, wear white robes, stay at a mosque, engage in prayer, fasting, dikr and mouldid etc. Thus before starting the revolt, they set aside their worldly interest and prepared to meet any thing in this world.

mediation of religion played dual role. On the one hand, it enabled the peasantry to act against oppression and on the other, it negated their potential by circumscribing their vision to the pleasure of the other world."<sup>4</sup> Really Mappila rebels had sacrificed their life on the altar of exploitation and oppression for their ending.

The official documents always regarding the Mappila uprisings as "fanaticism". To S.F. Dale, "the most prominent cultural characteristics of the Mappilas was religious militancy"<sup>5</sup>. But prior to the advent of Europeans, Mappilas of the coast had led peaceful life. When the Europeans shook the very foundation of their socio-economic and religious life they revolted. Militancy was not the inherent character of Mappilas but the changing material condition forced them to adopt such a path. Fanatical and communal elements, if any, played a little role in the outbreaks. Attack on the places of worship of Hindus must be treated as an act of fanaticism. But in this respect Mappila uprisings during the period of Bā-Alawis' marked a rare exception. This fact is established by the report sent

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4. K.N. Panikkar, Against Lord and State, Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar 1836 - 1921, Delhi, 1992, p. 195.

5. S.F. Dale, op.cit. p.1.

by C. Collett to H.B. Conolly on an appeal of T.L. Strage.<sup>6</sup> Mappila rebels never attacked Hindus on the basis of religion. Only suppressors and exploiters among Hindus as well as those who acted as the 'tools of oppression' were dealt with. There was no communal hatred towards Hindus in general, there may be exceptional cases. But on the basis of isolated events it is not possible to draw general conclusion. There is the example of warning given by Sayyid Ālawi and Sayyid Fazl when Mappila rebels committed atrocities towards innocent Hindus. Therefore, the common character of Mappila uprisings during the Bā-Ālawis' period seems to be free from communal and sectarian influence. There is no evidence to show that lower caste Hindus lodged any complaints against Mappila rebels. Upper caste Hindu landlords' complaints were based purely on economic reason and not on religious ground. It follows that the communal harmony of Malabar remained more or less intact during the period of Bā-Ālawi Sayyids. This is because of the teachings, guidance and leadership of Bā-Ālawis.

An important issue need to be solved is: why did Mappila rebels choose a path of self sacrifice ?

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6. Correspondance of Special Commissioner and Government, Vol. III, p. 24 (KSA).

Instead of struggling to change the material circumstance with all possible efforts why did they sacrifice their life like insects on the lamp ? was this the effect of the teachings and trainings they got from Ba-Alawi saints and other Ulema ? In fact the limited resources, material circumstances, lack of political consciousness, the absence of a definite goal and lack of proper organisation, the absence of a strong frontal leadership etc. forced them to choose a path of self sacrifice. However, as a method of protest against landlordism and colonialism it succeeded to shake the very foundation of the colonial structure of Malabar. Perhaps, the most disturbing problem faced by the British authority in India during the nineteenth century was Mappila uprisings which they thought were sanctioned by the Ba-Alawi Sayyids. If the Ba-Alawis' were ready to provide a direct and effective leadership to the Mappila rebels, the history of Malabar would have been different and colonial masters and landlords would have got a fitting reply to their atrocities towards the tenants and the poor. Though the direct actions against colonialism and landlordism failed, its message reverberated and continued to burn like a fire which finally culminated in the 1921 Malabar Rebellion.

APPENDIX - I

Calicut, 7th January 1856

From

C. Collett, Esq.  
Joint Magistrate of Malabar.

To

T. Clarke, Esq.,  
Magistrate of Malabar

210. Of these twenty persons\* all except the 4th, 5th, 6th, 19th, and 20th prisoners reside in the Pattikad Desham, and omitting, perhaps on account of her being under the influence of her male relatives, the 14th prisoner, the wife of the 13th prisoner, and daughter of the 1st prisoner all the rest are richly deserving of punishment, and I should, I believe, satisfy the Government that there is sufficient ground for convicting them all under Act XXIII, 1854. Many of these people are more or less closely connected with the criminal Tenoo and others are his former companions in crime. Pattikad is a desham or village circle, almost entirely inhabited by Moplabs, it forms a wide sort of salley shut in by ranges of hills, some of which are very lofty and covered with jungle. The 10th prisoner is a connection by marriage of Tenoo, and is the Mukyasten or headman of the Desham, and the 8th and 9th

prisoners (a brother, and first cousin of Tenoo) are the other principal inhabitants, the rest being mostly men of no property. The 1st prisoner is connected by marriage with the 10th prisoner, and the 6th and 7th prisoners are also in near relations. This (the Amanant) family is most desreputable one, and 7th prisoner is an old companion of Tenoo, and himself a very dangerous character. The criminal Tenoo had an intrigue with the woman, the 6th prisoner. The 19th and 20th prisoners are father and son, and are also related to Tenoo, the former being married to his sister. The members of this family are men of very bad character. One son is now in jail for a gang-robbery, to which, in the words of the 20th prisoner "Tenoo took him" Another son was concerned in the great gang-robberies in 1849, in which the fanatic Atan Kurikkal was leader; he took to the jungles, and was not secured till I adopted most strangent measures for this purpose. The 2nd prisoner is an old companion in crime of Tenoo, and the 13th prisoner is his brother,

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\* Case No.1. 1. Cheriyaath coohithan, 2. Kunnadikuri Poker, 3.Kunnathparambil (alias Puliyathakota kudiyaal) Parakote Chekoony, 4.Palliyagath Moidin Kutti 5.Technyoden Poker

6.Kullidumbil Amanatha Thithiyumma, (female) 7.Amanatha  
Yenoo 8.Pulliyagath Veeran, 9.-do- Kunhalu, 10.Mykyasten  
Amanatha Ooni Moye, 11.Kaktil Coonhi Moidutty  
12.Manjalangadden Coonhi Oonhen 13.Kunnadikuri Moithu,  
14.Pathuma, wife of Kunnadikuri Moithu, 15.Nayarathudiyil  
Coya, 16.Kakattil Coonhollen, 17.Manhalangadden Moiddin,  
18.Mykyasten Vemulli Seyd, 19.Alpetta Syedutty,  
20.Coyamara, Son of Alppta Syedutty.

211.The 3rd prisoner is a newpew of Tenoo, and the 4th  
prisoner is Tenoo's elder brother. The 5th prisoner is  
a man of the worst character and an old comrade of  
Tenoo. I punished him for aiding Tenoo, when I last  
seized Tenoo, and also on account of his own bad  
character. He had been released shortly before the  
criminals escaped, and admits having tried to get  
security for Tenoo, and also another ruffian now in  
jail, on a requisition of security by me. He also,  
after his release, communicated, with Tenoo and actually  
gave him some Avia, or parched rice, when he was out  
with a patty of convicts working in Calicut. I have no  
doubt myself that both this man and the 7th prisoner  
would, if released, end their career in some fanatical  
outrage.

216. In the next case, the last and 2nd prisoners named in the margin, are the same as the 7th and 10th prisoners

Case No.2 in the above case, the object  
1. Amanat Enoo being to prove that the knife  
2. Amanat Uni Moyi found in possession of the  
criminals, when shot, was the property of the 1st  
prisoner, the case has been separated, and the 3rd  
prisoner in the above case examined as 3rd prisoner by  
the Head Police Officer, stated, that when the criminals  
came to his house on the 14th August, he saw in Tenoo's  
possession a war-knife which he recognized as the  
property of the 1st prisoner. On his being seized and  
questioned as to his having any war-knife, he admitted  
that he had not given up a knife which was broken, and  
which he subsequently threw into a tank where, on  
search, a broken knife mounted in iron was found. In  
the house of the 1st prisoner was also found the leather  
sheath of a war-knife.

218. Of the six persons named in the margin, the three first  
communicated with the harbored the criminals between the

Case No.3 15th and 20th August, and the  
1. Panatodiyil Kathir. three latter are under heavy  
2. Chariyat Kungi Umma. suspicion of having aided them  
3. Her daughter Achuma. between the 7th and 20th  
4. Mulla Check. August. The two females, the

5. Mulla Moithuty. 2nd and 3rd prisoners, make  
6. Palanikat Uni Owra. full confessions the criminals  
visited and slept in their house on three nights after  
the robbery on the 15th, with an interval of one night  
between the first and second visit; they are not certain  
of the dates; but, as it is certain that on the night of  
the 20th the criminals took away with them from his  
house the 5th criminal, the barber lad, and he did not  
come to the 2nd and 3rd prisoner's house, the dates of  
the three visits were probably the nights of the 16th,  
18th and 19th of August. Further, on the evening of the  
19th, the four criminals took their supper at the house  
of the barber aid, and then left it. Their third visit  
to the house of 2nd and 3rd prisoners was not till late  
at night, and they did not, as on the former occasions,  
have any rice cooked for them. They are stated to have  
on their first visit arrived at about 8 P.M. accompanied  
by 1st prisoner. In the preceding case the 11th and 12th  
prisoners state that about that time, on the 16th, they  
saw them at the house of the 1st prisoner in that case,  
the distance being several miles.

218. This apparent discrepancy may arise from the looseness  
with which natives speak about time, especially at night  
or from a mistake as to the night on the party of the  
11th and 12th prisoner for the 1st prisoner in that case

confessed in the Taluk that the criminals came to his house after the gang-robbery, that is on the 15th, or morning of the 16th.

221. Early on the evening of the 23rd August, they were seen by slaves and Hindus on the Urote hills, a large and  
Case No.4 lefty range greatly covered Karambil Kungi Kammad with jungle, partly in the Shernad Taluk. One of the number came down and purchased a supply of avla (parched rice beaten out), which would suffice for the day time. The remained concealed during the day in the jungle, and towards evening descended and struck across country to the house of the prisoner named in the margin. He is married to one of the sisters of the 3rd criminal chemban Moidin Kutty, who belonged to shernad, Here they arrived (a distance of six or eight miles from the Urote hills) after night-fall, took some food and left after a halt of three or four hours. The prisoner and his wife admit the visit, which is also proved by the evidence of a neighbour who saw them going to the house, and shortly afterwards went there and ascertained who they were, and stayed there till they left. Strictly speaking he ought also to be treated as a prisoner, as he omitted to give information, but it is very possible that he may not have known of their designs and only regarded them

as persons who had escaped from jail. Though the prisoner did not, I am inclined to believe, very strongly sympathize with the criminals, he certainly received and fed them, and neglected give information as he was bound to do.

223. From Kodavayur, on the evening of the 24th August, they proceeded to Mambratta, the tomb of the great Tanqal

Case No.5 near the town of Tiruvangady.  
1. Tarumel Kungi Coya. The distance is about six  
2. Mukri Atoly Uniyen. miles, and they arrived about  
the time of the yessary prayer of 8 1/4 P.M. In this,  
case No.5, there are two prisoners named in the margin.  
The first is a priest of some reputation though  
possessed of little or no property. His eldest son was  
one of the principals in the great outbreak of 1849, and  
it will be seen below that on the 30th August the  
offenders visited the house of his married daughter at  
Mambra\* in the Batutaad Taluk, and the 1st prisoner  
also, soon after that date, visited his daughter, and,  
there can be no room to doubt, became fully aware of the  
offender's visit there. That the offenders would omit  
to visit the tomb of the Tangul at Mambratta, I knew to  
be extremely improbable. In examining a child who lived  
in the house of the daughter of 1st prisoner, he  
incidentally stated that the offenders had mentioned



4. Mannamel Howran Kutty. else to be deported for a  
5. Ponakaran Ahammed. limited period. The 3rd and  
4th prisoners because the immediate vicinity of their  
dwellings to the tomb, and of their dwellings to the  
tomb, and the fact that they were especially deputed to  
watch to prevent such a visit, and yet it took place and  
became generally well known; render it quite incredible  
that men of their influence and opportunities could have  
remained ignorant of it. The 5th prisoner is under  
heavy suspicion because he was met by the 1st witness  
states that 1st prisoner at the time told him that he  
had been there. The 3rd prisoner is further the agent  
of the brother-in-law of the deported Tangul, who was  
sent out of the country along with him, but again  
returned and was deported in 1853. The 4th prisoner is  
also the agent of the Tangul and his family, and now  
resides and takes care of the Tangul's own house. Their  
knowledge of a general design, if it existed, would be a  
matter of course; and it is certain that, anyhow, when  
they learnt of the designs of the offenders, and their  
motive, they would never reveal it to the authorities.  
It is needless to observe that there is no ground for  
the committal of three prisons, though I feel convinced  
they richly merit coercion.

225. From the tomb the offenders proceeded that night six miles towards Poodiangady to the house of the first of

Case No.6  
Prisoners;

1. Parankil Marakar.
2. Choolanil, alias  
Thoorumbuth Marakar.
3. Kapankundil Marakar  
alias Irumpulli  
Marakar.
4. Parankel Chekoo.
5. Coonhy Coyah.
6. Appalakondiyil Mamod.
7. Eddakaparambil Coyah  
Kutti.
8. Parankel Moidin Kutti.

the prisoners named in the margin. There was some evidence offered as to their having visited the house of a man in the Tiruvangady bazar, but in this matter, I believe, the Tahisildar and Taluk Peshcar (both under suspicion) greatly misbehaved, and as I am fully sensible of the grave responsibility of having to recommed any person to Government for punishment under

the Act, I did not intended bringing forward a case in which I am not most completely satisfied as to the genuineness of whatever there may be against the accused. I pass on therefore to the case\* noted in the margin.

27. The list A annexed is of persons who, under the Act, should be treated as prisoners; and list B contains

Case No.7  
A  
Prisoners

1. Carutha Kunjussa.
2. Pathuma, his wife.
3. Ambatt Pathuma, wife.  
of criminal V. Moidin.
4. Ambatt Ayisha Umma,  
(female).
5. Nalagath Moidin.
6. -do- Pakey Cootty.
7. -do- Kamu-.
8. Madatil Parambil  
Yacoob.
9. Madatil Parambil.  
Kasmy.

B

1. Hyderman.
2. Madatil Parambil  
Moidin Kutti.
3. Takan Hussan.
4. Velaverassan Routen.
5. Vadakara Bhava.
6. Tarapidikel Ahmed.
7. Pullakel Ossanar  
Mulla, Mukri of the  
southern mosque.
8. -do- Enadin Kutty  
Mulla.
9. -do- Kanen Cooty  
Mulla.

those who are under more or less serious suspicion of having communicated with the offenders on their visit to poodiangady. The evidence against the prisoners would, I think, only authorize the committal of the 1st to the 4th prisoners. The 5th, 6th, and 7th prisoners are criminated by the 2nd prisoner, and though men of property are all bad characters, and the 6th prisoners especially was intimate with the criminal vellatadagatta Parambil Moidin, and there is little reason to doubt concerned in the gang-robbery for which he was imprisoned. The criminal's father is also a dependant of these prisoners, as is also the 1st prisoner in list A. The conduct of the 5th prisoner on the night of the 29th August was not suspicious, and there

10. Poodyil Ibrahim, Owner of the southern mosque. can be no moral doubt as to the guilt of the 5th, 6th and 7th prisoners, though it would be quite useless to commit them.
11. Audian Colangara Coonhally.
12. -do- Aodulachy.
13. Kalmaragat Hussain Cooty. The 2nd prisoner is wife of list prisoner, and aunt of the first wife of criminal V. Moidin. She states that one night the 5th, 6th and 7th prisoners brought Moidin and four other Moplahs desired her to prepare food for them, giving her a fowl, & c. for that she did so. She denies that they stayed in her house in the day time, but says, she believed they were in the mosque adjacent (about 60 yards off). The next evening the criminal's wife and her mother arrived at Poodiangady, and the five Moplahs also came to her (2nd prisoner) house, when the criminal V. Moidin divorced his wife.

230. The five prisoners named in the margin reside at Poratur (mentioned above), six miles from Poodiangady. One

Case No. 8

1. Potumel Ally Ummoo (I think most probably on the 27th August) and criminals came during the night to the house,
2. -do Umma Chumma
3. Kallatil Marri Umma

4. Beevee Umma, wife of 1st prisoner and the criminal Moidin then gave 46 Rupees to his mother  
5. Vetgen Vittil Muppen Coonhy Moidin (2nd prisoner), and 4 Rupees to his brother's (last prisoner's) wife (the 5th prisoner).  
He also gave 20 Rupees to his second wife (3rd prisoner), whom he divorced and 3 Rupees to her mother, the 4th prisoner). The prisoners all confessed, and acknowledge that, from the men being armed and from what they said, they were aware that they intended to die as shahids or martyrs; but they were not, they state, aware of the design to murder Mr. Conolly, or of their motive for dying as shahids.

231. The knew also that they were going to Poodiangady. Of the money received by 2nd and 5th prisoners, 5 Rupees and odd were expended, 4 Rupees were paid by 1st prisoner to 5th witness, and the remaining Rupees 40 and odd were delivered up from their house. Since the apprehension of the criminal V. Moidin on a charge of gang-robbery, the 3rd and 4th prisoners had been living in his mother's house; but after the divorce they returned to their country in the adjacement Taluk; and the 3rd prisoner gave the 23 rupees to her uncle, the 6th witness. The only evidence is that of the 1st and 2nd witnesses to the delivery up by prisoners of the money, and of the 5th and 6th witnesses. The 3rd and

4th witnesses (two Moplahs) speak to having seen four or five armed Moplahs one night about this time at a spot not far from prisoner's house. There is also other evidence that five armed Moplahs were seen in this vicinity at night; but there is not precision as to date or identity. The deposition of the 1st prisoner (brother of the criminal V. Moidin) contains these words; "On inquiry, afterwards, I 'heard that they (the criminals) were living at Poodiangady under the "Protection of Nalagatha Moidin (5th prisoner in preceding case), and 'his son Puckey Cootty (the prisoner). It was in the Nalagatha family 'that Moidin (the criminal) lived and grew up from his infancy. He 'was from childhood a friend and companion of Puckey Cootty (6th prisoner) and his associates'.

The next case is the Mambra and Tayyala bazar case in which the fourteen persons noted the margin are

Case No.9	prisoners, and might all be
1.Narakat Putan Vittil Syed Mohammed Coya Cootty.	satisfactorily convicted under the Act. After leaving the Poodiangady bazar on the night
2.Mambratta Beebee daughter of Kangi Coya Tangul.	of the 29th August, the offenders proceeded to Mambra
3.Tirunelly Veeran Cootty.	by the high road, a distance of

4.Vayakel Kotta about seven miles from  
Howran. Poodiangady. The tomb is

5.His son, Mamuny. called Mambra and is that of a

6.Vellakatory Enadin. Tangul of local reputation; it

7.Kunhiren Kunnen Kamu. is situated in a garden about

8.Chamayil Kungi Poku. 300 yards from the Tayyala

9.Mammy, husband of bazar, from one end of which it  
Kathi Yuma. is clearly visible. The house

10.Veeran, son of Kotta is clearly visible. The house  
Auran. of the 1st and 2nd prisoners is

11.Mandayapurata Mamud within the garden. The  
Kutti Muppen. offenders arrived here on the

12.His son, veeravuny. night of August 29th, and

13.Ambra Markar. stayed till 10 or 11 P.M. on

14.P. Abdulla Coyah the night of the 30th, being fed by the 2nd prisoner,  
and the 1st prisoner blessing their weapons at the tomb.

On the 30th August the 3rd to 10th prisoners all visited  
the offenders at the Mambra Tomb, and one of the  
offenders also came into the Tayyala bazar and played a  
game of 'Check' with the 7th prisoner at his shop. The  
11th is a moplah of greater wealth and most unbounded  
influence in that locality. His house is only a few  
hundred yards from the tomb and the Tayyala bazar. The  
12th prisoner is his son, and the Adighary or Headman of  
the parish in which the Tayyala bazar stands. The 11th  
prisoner is also married to a sister of the 5th prisoner

in case No.7, and was, it is admitted, about this time constantly in the habit of going to his house in Poodiangady. There is therefore abundant reason to believe that he must have been aware also of the visit of the criminals to Poodiangady, and probably of their intention to visit Mambra. The 11th prisoner, notwithstanding his wealth, is a man of the very worst character, well known to the Police though never convicted. Much of his wealth has been acquired by his evil deeds. He was a noted coiner has long being and still is, and aider and abettor of gang-robbers, and a too successful forger. His son is quite a young man, but of a very bad disposition, promising to emulate his father. There cannot be a shadow of a moral about that both these prisoners were at the time perfectly aware of the presence of the offenders, and of their designs, which they openly proclaimed, it will, though, be impracticable to furnish legal proof of this. The character of the 11th prisoner is notorious, but incapable of very tangible proof, his unbounded local power rendering it quite an absurdity that he should have remained, as he asserts, in ignorance of such an occurrence till many days after the murder. The strong ground there is to believe that the 3rd prisoner (his domestic servant) was actually sent by him on purpose to

communicate with the offenders; the utter incredibility that the 4th to 10th prisoners would have failed to give information to the 11th and 12th prisoners) that the 12th prisoner was the next day fully informed of the occurrence by the 1st prisoner, all tend to establish a moral conviction of guilt, though impracticable of proof in a Court. The only fact which remains to render more complete this conviction, and is capable of tangible proof, is that the 11th and 12th prisoners caused the 1st and 2nd witnesses prevent their evidence being procured.

Just as had been the case with Mambra and other places, there had been a strong rumour of the offenders

Case No.10  
Prisoners

1. Valiaparambil  
Coonhally.
2. Pully Mukri Bhava  
Kutti.
3. Taratil Moidu.
4. Karambitoduga &  
Coohni Ammu.
5. Kllatilhodyga  
Veeran.
6. Kallatilpadikel  
Mammuny.
7. Moseliaragath  
Coonhyally.

having visited this place indeed, when it was known that they were at Batutnad, the Hindoo inhabitants here took precautions. The native Police had failed to discover any evidence, though I think this was due to the want of energy on their part. As soon as I was able to do so I visited the place. The evidence in this case consists of that of three

8. Vettarpara Syed Aly.	Moplahs and one Hindoo women;
9. Koonatodi Cootty.	Thirty prisoners noted in the
10. Mukri Howderman.	margin are implicated thereby.
11. Vattarparakel Mammu.	the men of the place were first
12. Pulath Pokur.	closely cross-examined, but
13. Moseliaragath Libuny.	without result, except that two
14. Nedenparamben Mammed.	(this second and third
236. 15. Kuttiparambil Mammu.	prisoners) betrayed a good deal
16. Otan Marakar.	of confusion. I then suddenly
17. Taratel Coonchy Ahamed.	ordered all the women and
18. Kunanjara Athese.	children in their houses to be
19. Vallaraparambil Coonhally.	brought I questioned two women
20. Kutiparambil Howderman.	in vain, and the third (the 1st
21. Taratel Coonhally.	witness) also at first denied
22. Manakel Coyamu Mulla.	all knowledge, but gradually
23. Kallatel Cherria Coonhally.	becoming very confused and
24. Taratel Mammed.	agitated, I felt no doubt that
25. Pudukudi Coyamu.	she must have something to
26. Pandanhakara Moidu.	conceal. She is the wife of the
27. Mulla Hyder	3rd prisoner, whose duty it is
28. Moseliaragath Coonhally Kutti	to look after the Jaram or
	tomb. After a most patient and
	tedious examination, I
	extracted from her that the
	five criminals had been brought

29. Valiyaparambil  
Coonhy Poker. late at night by the 2nd and  
30. Mulla Coonhoker. 6th prisoners to her house,  
that they, by her husband's desire, were fed and allowed  
to stay there for the remainder of the night, but left  
at dawn to conceal themselves (as he heard) in the  
jungly hill behind the Jaram. During the day she was  
furnished with material, and prepared food, and the  
cakes used at a moplak feast. In the evening the men  
returned and took some food, and afterwards went to the  
tomb, where prayers and the feast took place. She could  
or would only recollect the names of the 1st to 4th and  
6th to 11th prisoners as having been present at the  
tomb. After this was over, the men with the criminals  
went to the lower Mosque for the yessar prayer., and  
then the five returned for a short time to her house and  
finally took leave and departed. Nothing could exceed  
the unwillingness. She endeavoured to slur over and  
conceal every incident. For instance, the presence of  
other at the tomb was detected by her in answering  
another question accidentally dropping the name of the  
1st prisoner (the principal man of the place) and then  
hurrying on with her story. She was of course caught up  
and pressed on this point, and after much fencing the  
truth was extracted. Nothing could be more convincing  
than the manner in which this testimony was given; but

the probability of such a witness (to say nothing of the fact of her being legally an accomplices) retracting, is easily calculated.

241. From this house the criminals must have travelled several miles over a wild and jungly country, which they might do without risk or recognition, during the day time, when they came to the poodiangady or Kulimad ferry across the great Beypore river, forming the boundary of the ernad and Calicut Taluks. Here they arrived on the afternoon of the 5th September, and were ferried over the list of the prisoners named in the margin. That this was with a guilty knowledge there can be no moral

Case No.12  
Prisoners

1. Kangeri Kutty coyamu.	doubt whatever. After the
2. Chambersherry Uni Moyi.	criminals had escaped, special
3. Kalerimam Ayisha Umma (Female)	orders were sent to the
4. Narangoly Kungi Rayen	ferryman to be on the look out,
5. Chambersherry Koyihmar	and this was one of the
	principal ferries. He admits too
	that when he heard seven or
	eight days afterwards of the
	murder of the Collector, that he at once suspected that
	these five strange Moplachs might have been the
	murderers, and though it is his business to ferry people
	across, it is clear from his being able to describe



August, the day after their escape. This rests on the statement of the 1st witness, a brazier, constantly employed by 1st prisoner on his premises. This man, I am convinced, knows more than he has stated. On the 6th September, he observed the five strange Moplahs on the eastern bank of the river, and told 1st prisoner, 2nd witnesses both saw prisoner in conversation with one of the Moplahs on the western bank, and the other four a little in advance. The 3rd witness, a neighbour, also saw the same, and the prisoner admits it, stating that the men said they were strangers and merely asked where they could get rice cooked. The 4th witness works for the 1st prisoner as pil-presser, and lives in a garden belonging to prisoner about a mile from his house. He says, that at evening the prisoner came, and after talking on another matter the five Moplahs came in, and prisoner said they were people going to the north to buy cattle, and desired him to order his wife to cook rice for them. He did so and the prisoner remained in conversation with the strangers for some time and then left. The strangers slept in the verandah, and left the next morning before dawn. The prisoner admits that he went in the evening to the 4th witness house, that he saw the same five Moplahs sitting in the public road near 4th witness' house and that after he went in, they

came also; but he denies, that he desired that they should be sheltered. The 5th witness, the wife of the 4th witness, corroborates the 4th witness; and both state that after the murder, the prisoner desired them to take their son (the 13th witness, a boy of eleven or twelve) to Arimbra in Ernad (to which part of the country they belong) that he might not be questioned by the authorities. There I found the boy, who was brought before me in the first instance, and most satisfactorily corroborated the 4th and 5th witnesses, adding that during the conversation, but when both 4th and 5th witnesses were inside the house, one of the criminals took out a sword from a package and gave it to prisoner. The boy described very naturally how he tried to take hold of the sword and look at it, when prisoner pushed him on one side. He also heard one of the prisoners called Moidin Cootty, one Emalu, and the lad, the "Ossan Kandan" or barber boy. The 4th and 5th witness also speak to the name of one of the strangers being Emalu.

247. The house of the 4th witness is situated at the foot of a range of hills covered with dense jungle, this was no doubt the principal reason for their being lodged there and not at the 1st prisoner's house, which is surrounded by

Case No.14  
 1st prisoner Pulikuri Moyi  
 2nd N-do- Mylangi KarumelMoidin

others, and otherwise unadapted to ensure a rapid retreat in case of need. It was through this jungle that the criminals took their course the next morning, and there concealed themselves during the day, arriving towards evening at the house of the 1st of the prisoner's noted in the margin. This house is a very little way off the high road from Tambercherry to Calicut, and is about sixteen miles from the latter place; it is though like the last house at the foot of jungle-covered hills where pursuit would be difficult.

248. From here the criminals proceeded, late in the night of Sunday the 9th September, to the house of the person with

<p>Case No.15 Prisoners</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Malakel Mammu.</li> <li>2. His son Kungi Peri.</li> <li>3. Mulla Marcad Kutti.</li> <li>4. Valasherry Kungi Raya</li> <li>5. Koyasan Kandy Imbicy Koya.</li> <li>6. Nalagatha Hassan cootty.</li> <li>7. Cherapankandy Mayen.</li> <li>8. Pariyankndan Hussan.</li> <li>9. Kannanpalli Ahmed.</li> <li>10. Ponamparatta Ahmed.</li> </ol>	<p>whom they had mentioned to the above prisoners they intended to stay. This is the first prisoner of the twelve named in the margin. He, his son (the 2nd prisoner), were guilty of harbouring the criminals with a guilty knowledge on the 10th and 11th September, and the 3rd to 11th prisoners were present at the nercha or ceremony performed on the evening of the 10th September, with the view</p>
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11.Kannen Kathir. of ensuring success to their  
12.Cunyachee, wife of project; and though they may  
1st prisoner not have all been aware of it  
and neglected give information to the authorities. The  
statements of the prisoners in the preceeding case would  
not be available as evidence in a Court against the 1st  
prisoner, though in arriving at a moral conviction of  
his guilt, they must be of much weight, as the fact was  
mentioned at a distance by men who did not know the 1st  
prisoner and could have no reason invent anything  
against him. The 1st prisoner has to two houses situated  
some 70 yards apart in different compounds-both stand on  
a somewhat open space on the east of the canal, about  
three quarters of a mile due-east of Mr.Conolly's house,  
which is nearly three miles due-north of the town of  
Calicut.

252.Immediately after the murder, the criminals proceeded  
along the high road to Tambercherry to a village named  
Case No.16 Koraval, a distance of about  
1st prisoner-Muckry twelve miles from Mr. Conolly's  
powra house. Here they at once went to the mosque, the muckry  
or sexton of which is justly liable to heavy suspicion  
from the fact that it was his duty to go to the mosque  
for the first would have left early after their  
journey. prayer before dawn, that is not likely that

the criminals and that they did not reach the house of the 2nd prisoner till after day-break though only a distance of a few hundred yards, in the words of Mr. Thomas, "I may as well here remark that throughout the whole of the inquiry I had ample evidence before me to prove, that though information was entirely withheld from Government, it was by no means kept a secret among themselves, i.e., among the Moplah community, but that on the contrary what was known to one was speedily known to all. On these grounds it seems to me but just and fair that persons, and especially at Moplahs, should be held liable to grave suspicion, depending along upon the locality of their houses; being near, they must have known and knowing, why did they not inform"

259. MINUTES BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT

3. There are in all sixteen cases mentioned. Fifteen have reference to circumstances and to persons supposed to be connected with them, previous to the murder of Mr. Conolly.

One has reference to facts which occurred subsequently.

4. Of these sixteen cases, there appear to be only four or give at the most, which Mr. Collett seems to think it would be advisable to bring into an ordinary Court.

278. A Bill to give effect to Act XXIII of 1854 from the time of its promulgation in the District of Malabar and to extend the applicaiton thereof in future.

Whereas by a proclamation published in the Fort Preamble. Saint George Gazette, under date the 18th September 1855, the Governor in Council of Fort Saint George, declared the whole of the District of Malabar to be subject to the operation of all the provisions of Act XXIII of 1854; and whereas long prior to such publication, namely before the 1st of March 1855, the said Act had been published and promulgated throughout the District of Malabar, and was believed by the class of persons therein described as Moplahs, and by all other classes of the inhabitants, to be immediately operative; and it is expedient that the said Act should have effect according to the general belief and understanding in that respect; and whereas it is expedient to extent the application of the said Act; it is hereby enacted as follows:

- I. Act XXIII of 1854 shall be deemed to have been in force for all purposes from the 1st of March 1855, in the same manner as if the said Act XXIII of 1854 to be deemed to have been in force from the 1st of March 1855. proclamation had been published on that date.

II. From and after the passing of this Act, the provisions of Act XXIII of 1854, shall apply to any Moplah who murders to all murders, & c. or attempts to murder any person; and to any Moplah who committed by Moplahs. person; and to any Moplah who takes part in any outrage directed by Moplahs against any person wherein murder is committed; and to any person who shall procure or promote the commission of any such crime as aforesaid, or shall incite or encourage any other person or persons to commit the same; or who after having committed or having been accessory to any such crime as aforesaid shall forcibly resist any person or persons, having lawful authority to apprehend him, or who shall join or assist or incite or encourage other persons to join or assist in such resistance.

III. The said Act XXIII of 1854, and this Act shall be read and constructed together as one Act.

Construction of  
Act.

(True Copy)

(Signed) CECIL BEADON,  
Secretary to the Govt. of India.

## APPENDIX - II

(Press Notification issued by the District Collector, Malabar. It is translated to Malayalam and copies were circulated among the Mappila Mahals as an effort to declare the policy of the Government on Mamburam issue. Copy of the Notification is traced out from the private collection of K.K. Muhamed Abdul Kareem).

Press Notification on Sayyid Ali Baig in Cairo.

Even when the Government of Madras ordered early in 1925, Sayyid Ali not to return to Malabar District, he defied the order of the Government by arriving at Calicut on February 12, without any consent from the Government.

Since he came there from Colombo he was allowed to go back there soon by the District Magistrate. And the Government conveyed this to him. Trusting his words the Government permitted him to go to the Railway station.

But Sayyid Ali violated the promise given to the District Magistrate. Instead of going back to Colombo he went to Mahe.

He not only disobeyed the order issued in 1925 but also violated the promise made to the Magistrate.

2. What motivated the Government for keeping him away from Malabar is to avert the crisis which was likely to erupt due to his presence. And the Government also wanted to avoid a clash over the property of Mamburam between Sayyid Ali and his opponents.

If he has any claim about the property he can very well raise it even from outside. Government won't prevent him from seeking justice through courts.

Government has no role in the property scuffle and the authority will not support either side. What made the Government to prohibit him from entering Malabar is not the petition from the present incumbent. Government thinks that his presence will disturb the law and order situation in Malabar.

It is obligatory on the part of the Mappilas to realise the truth and they shouldn't be swayed by rumours from different corners.

H.R. Esili  
District Magistrate.

### APPENDIX - III

(Memorandum sent by the Mamburam Restoration Committee to the Governor of Madras Through Malabar Collector, quoted in E. Moidu Moulavi's Ente Kootukaran Muhammad Abdu Rahman Sahib, 1st Ed Mohd. Abdu Rahmen Memorial Press, 1964, pp: 217-224, S.K. Pottakat, et.al, Muhammad Abdu Rahman, Calicut, 1978.

#### Descendents of Sayyid Fazl

A fervent plea to let them come to Malabar (sent by the Mamburam Restoration Committee to the Governor of Madras through Malabar Collector).

We, the undersigned people of Malabar (especially people living in the vicinity of Mamburam Jaram) request you to kindly look into the following and issue favourable orders on these.

The following resolution was passed by the meeting held at Calicut on May 13 and 14 which was presided over by Khan Bahadur Dr. (Sir) Muhammad Habeebulla, Member, Viceroy's Executive Council.

This conference kindly appeals to the Government to remove the impediments if any, involved in the return of descendents of Sayyid Fazl to Malabar

and to kindly allow them to come back to their native place. The conference also has the opinion that there will be no trouble as feared, once they return to Malabar. Along with this resolution, another resolution of a similar sort passed by the Kerala Muslim Youth Congress (President-Yakoob Hasan Sait) was also sent to the Government.

You might have come to know that these resolutions and other resolutions of a similar sort were the outcome of the peaceful and legal attempts made by Mamburam Restoration Committee. The Committee, which included the influential citizens was founded in mid-January with the good intention helping the descendants of Sayyid Fazl who were falsely accused and tortured.

We would like to inform You that Sayyid Fazl who was also known as Tirurangadi Tangal, was not deported from Malabar. That the news of deportation was fallacious was known to every body. He left for abroad voluntarily. "If the Government like", he said, "I would like to go to Arabia and spend the rest of my time with my family". He took this decision only after exreniating contention. From the letter sent to Attakoya (his relative and a messenger of lord Conolly)

dated 19-1852, it was clear that he resisted the attempts made by Mappilas to desist him from going away. Without taking into consideration the mass appeal, he left Malabar (Letter dated 27-1852 March 20) on a ship.

That the Government doubted Sayyid Fazl has some sort of indirect role in the intermittent riots of Mappilas.

According to Sayyid Fazl's own words, "I don't remember any of my acts which provoked the Government. But my blessings to the spiritual development of the people and of Islam were misinterpreted by certain groups and I strongly deny that I have no role in these subversive acts (3rd para Conolly's letter). Even Mr. Conolly was of the opinion that the charges against him could not be proved and they could only indict him indirectly on account of the visitors he used to receive (Conolly's letter No:8, 1852 dated January 20). We would like to bring to Your notice the letter of commendation from Queen Victoria about the developmental work and reform movements carried out by Sayyid Fazl as the ruler of Zafar, neighbourhood of Hadramawt. (Sayyid Ahmed Beg's letter from Ladika dated 5-4-33). Even when Sayyid Fazl had a role in

motivating the people of Malabar, it is unjust and inhuman to prohibit his descendants from entering Malabar just because they are his issues.

The descendants of Sayyid Fazl with the help of the Government of Turkey had a good time there. But after the post-war revolution in Turkey they were forced to leave Turkey and settled in Egypt, Syria and Iraq and were in dire straits. It was also from their letters that they would like to return and want to lead a good life with the help of their family property.

The famous 'Mamburam Jaram' the property of Mamburam Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Tangal and the property of his brother in law (Sayyid Husain) were in possession of Khan Bahadur Sayyid Husain P.M. Muthu Koya Tangal and it is now controlled by his son Khan Bahadur Sayyid Ahmed Jiffri P.M. Attakoya Tangal as a power of attorney (Mukthiar). The late Khan Bahadur used to send a small part of the income to the real owners. We feel sorry that the man, who is now in possession of the property, even when the 'real owners' are in trouble, is reluctant to send a single penny to them. Attakoya even tries to make it his own by hook or crook. People, with a sense of justice, cannot cope with the sort of cheating from the part of the trustees

and we feel this shouldn't be continued, when a refined Government is there in the state. We think that they don't allow this kind of injustice.

The descendants of Sayyid Fazl tried several times to come back and to settle here. Sayyid Ali in 1926, with the desire to come to Malabar came up to Madras Via Colombo. It came to our notice that the conspiracy hatched by Attakoya prevented them from coming here and they went back to Egypt. We haven't understood the logic of passing prohibitory orders against them, who are really harmless and we haven't forgotten the tendency of people like Attakoya who are enjoying their property without any sense of justice and producing false certificates against them and making false charges. Let us kindly inform you that the people think that it is the cause of the prohibitory orders from the Government-that they are held up there. People are really angry about this situation. We assure you that we will resort to only peaceful methods to work against the treacherous people like Attakoya.

We happen to know that all descendants of Sayyid Fazl, including Sayyid Ali Ibn Fazl, his brother in Syria Sayyid Yusuf and their brother in Iraq and his in-laws, are all pious, cultured and educated. Every

country would be proud of people like them and we are certain that their presence in Malabar will be helpful for communal harmony and also to the Government. Now, Malabar is a little improved as far as the transporting facilities are concerned and Mappilas here are more educated than their predecessors. It is not good on our part to point out that the Government is more efficient and well equipped to manage any situation. So, we would like to put forward the fact that their return may not be a cause for any sort of problem. We hope that the Government may take a favourable decision. In the light of these facts we request that they may be granted permission to come here and to enjoy their property.

## GLOSSARY

Adigharee (Mal) - Village (amsom) Officer in Malabar with some powers and functions related to revenue collection and maintenance of law and order hereditary post assigned to janmi or influential person in the locality by British.

Amsom (Mal) - an administrative Unit in Malabar District - Subdivision of Taluk

Aqida (Ar) - belief

Barakath (Ar) - blessing

bidat (" ) - Innovation, heresy

Cuttcherri / cutcherry (Mal) - a public office or a Court of justice Civil or Criminal.

desom / desam (Mal) - Smallest administrative unit in Malabar

dikr (Ar.) - religious hymns

dua (" ) - Prayer words

Fatwa (" ) - A legal decision of a Muslim jurist or religion Scholar

Fiqh - (" ) - Muslim jurisprudence

Illom (Mal) - Residence of a Namboodiri Brahmin

Imam (Ar) - Leader of prayer in Congregation, A rightly guided leader of men

Janmi/Jenmi (Mal) - landlord

Jaram/Maqam (Ar) - tomb

Jihad (Ar) - fighting in self defence, struggle in the right part

Juma (" ) - Friday Congregation

Kanam (Mal) - peculiar Malabar tenure having the nature of mortgage and lease

Kavu (Mal) - temple

Khilafat (Ar) - rule led by Khalifa or Caliph

Madhab (" ) - School of thought

Mahal (" ) - Parish

Mala (Ar-Mal) - literally garland or necklace, A literary composition

Marzia (Ar) - Elegy

Moulid (" ) - Eulogy, Celebration of Prophet's nativity

Muazzim (Ar) - One who called the people to the prayer

Mulla (Ar-Mal) - Islamic teacher in Madrassa

Murid (Ar) - Disciple

Mutawalli (Ar) - Patron or guardian

Nercha (Mal) - rituals and celebration conducted at the tomb of a saint

Padapattu (Mal) - Song dealing with battle

Sayyid - Descendant of Prophet Muhammad

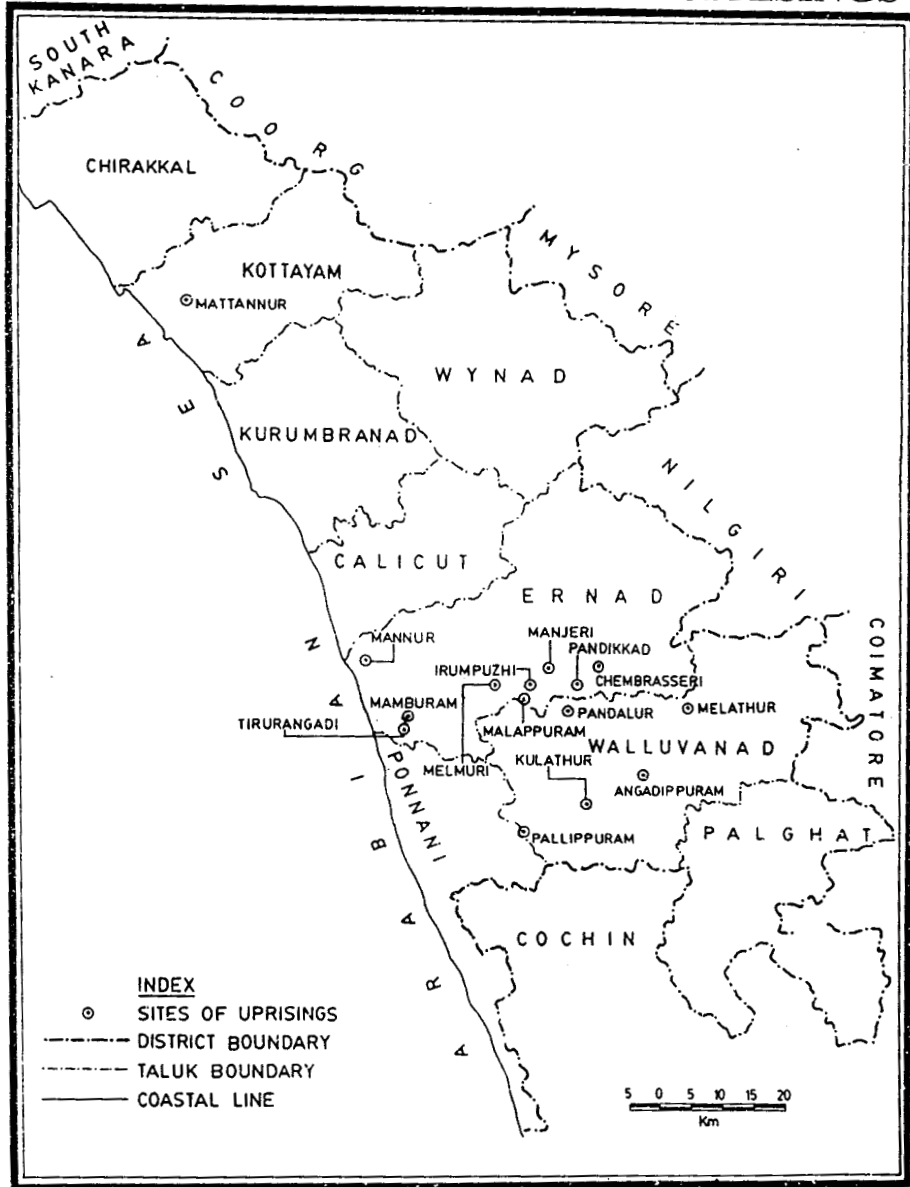
Parampu (Mal) - garden land

Shahid (Ar) - Martyr

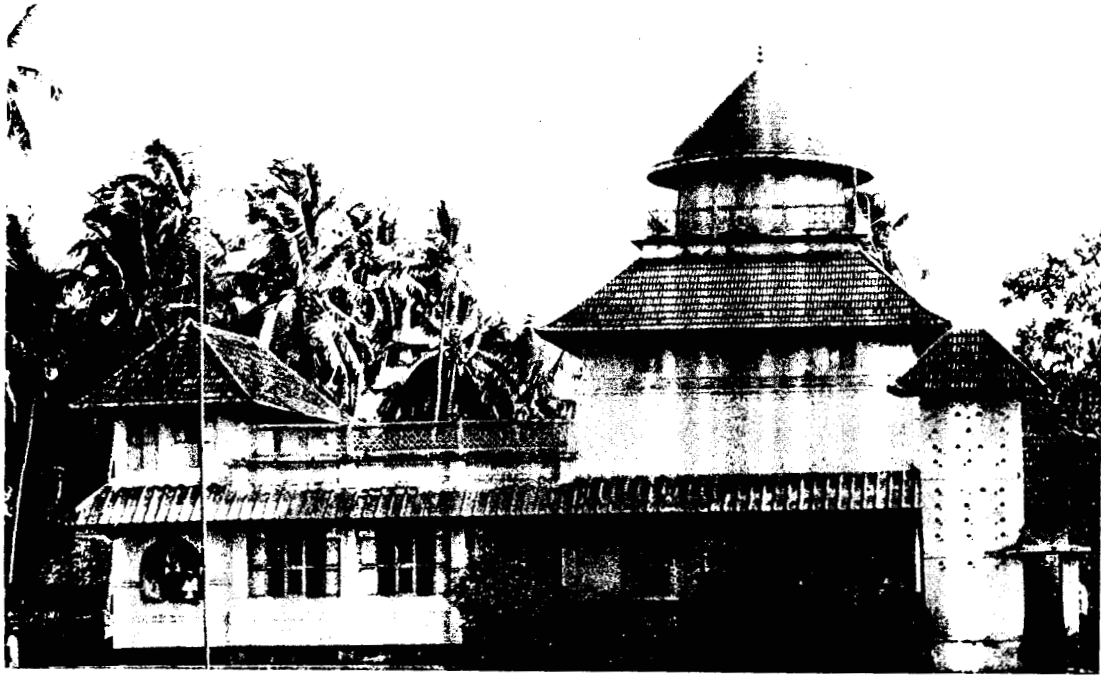
Sufi (" ) - One who follows Islamic mysticism

Shafi (") - An Islamic School of Jurisprudence  
Sunnah (Ar) tradition of the Prophet  
Tangal - Honorific title among Mappilas on Sayyid  
claiming descent from the prophet and respected as such  
Tantri (Mal) - Temple Servant  
Takiya (Ar) - Religious Commune  
Tariqah (") - A Path - a term used by the Sufis to the  
religious life.  
Tāriq̄h (Ar) - History  
Tasawwuf - Mysticism  
Ustad - Mentor  
Waqf - Religious endowment

# MALABAR DISTRICT : SITES OF NINETEENTH CENTURY UPRISINGS



28



Mamram shrine, burial site of Sayyid 'Alawi.



**SAYYID FAZL**

28

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