CONCLUSION

CHAPTER VII

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The ulama of the Muslim community have played their role beyond the periphery of the religion. It is in this respect that they have taken an active role in the anti-colonial struggle everywhere in the Islamic world. They acted as the spokespersons of the society and leaders of the community in all walks of life. They upheld the scriptures and acted as the real heirs of the prophets in guiding the community both in the spiritual and worldly affairs. They were successful in imparting the points of their mission among the common mass. The masses, in return, acknowledged their guidance and leadership almost unquestionably. This reciprocal relation has contributed a lot in shaping the history of the Muslim community in Malabar from its very commencement till the present time.

The hallmark of the ulama was their knowledge in religion. People irrespective of their joy and sorrow, peace and violence, birth and death turned to the ulama for help and guidance. Owing to their influence on Muslim masses, the political authorities always approached the ulama
and tried to woo them. The *ulama* also enjoyed covetable positions both under the Muslim and non-Muslim rulers. But, in spite of these dignified positions in the administrative system, the *ulama* did not succumb to the selfish motives of the rulers.

The *ulama* used *fatwa* as a potential weapon to exert their hold on both the government and the community. They also used the *fatwa* both as an offensive and defensive weapon, as verdict on religious issues and as stimulant for *jihad* against the enemies. The authorities were at the doorsteps of the *ulama* for getting *Fatwas* in favour of them.

*Jihad* is another powerful instrument in the hands of the *ulama*. They used it frequently against the enemies of both the religion of Islam and the Muslims all over the world and at all times. It has got four stages. The first three stages are constructive and only in the last stage the believers resorted to weapons. The *ulama* were particular about keeping order in the society.

Right from the beginning, the history of Islam is full of prompt interferences by the *ulama*. In the modern period of colonialism and imperialism their interferences is more conspicuous than ever before. In
the Islamic world the ulama were the first to question the colonial intrusion. They challenged the activities of the colonial powers. They not only mobilized the people but also led them to the battlefront. To them service to God and service to the nation are only two sides of the same coin.

When taken in the world context we come across many great ulama leading anti-colonial movements in different parts of Islamic world. Mahdi of Sudan, Jamaludhin Afghani, Muhammad Abdu, Rashid Ridha and Hasan ul Banna of Egypt against the British, Abdul Hamid Ibn Badis of Algeria, Sayyid Mohammad Ibn Ali, Sayyid Mohammad Idris and Sheikh Siddi Umar Mukhtar of Libya against the French, Mullah Ibn Abdullah Hasan of Somaliland and Hamid Idris Awati of Eritrea against the Italian, Imam Bunugool of Indonesia against the Dutch and Imam Khomeni of Iran against the American colonialists are some names in the long list of the ulama who gave leadership in the anti-colonial struggle.

Right from the very beginning of the Muslim rule in India, the ulama enjoyed high positions among the rulers and the ruled. They even acted as a check on the autocratic authority of the rulers. Their
interferences in administration constituted a serious matter of discussion in the history of medieval period. But as they constituted a part and parcel of the administration, they did not take up the grievances of the people against the government.

The entry of European colonial powers into the Indian political arena changed the role of the ulama from governmental into anti-governmental. They took the colonial rule as anti-Islamic and declared colonial India as Dar ul Harb. The activities of the Christian missionaries were more serious to the ulama than anything else. Thus the ulama like Shah Waliullah, Shah Abdul Aziz, Sayyid Ahmad of Barely, and Maulana Sayyid Ismail Shahid initiated the anti-colonial struggle. A number of anti-colonial movements also took shape under the ulama. The Faraizi, Taaiyuni, Tariqa-i Mohammadiyyah, Wahabi were some of the movements under the ulama.

The role of the ulama in the Great Revolt of 1857 was second to none. They marched to the battle ground with the people and courted death, gallows, jail and banishment. Following the ruthless suppression of the revolt there was a temporary withdrawal of the ulama from the political scene. It took a decade for the return of ulama to the platform.
In this time the *ulama* like Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanutavi and Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi took serious steps for the purpose. *Dar ul Uloom* and *Frangi Mahal* also prepared the ground for their come back. Soon these centres became a strong bastion of defence against the British incursions. They reared and geared the nationalist movement in all its steps. They were the precursors of the Indian National Congress and many of its activities during the first half of the 20th century.

It was through the *ulama* of India that the Khilafat Movement received a worldwide dimension. In the Khilafat agitations, the *ulama* whole-heartedly accepted the leadership of Gandhiji to root out the foreigners from the Indian soil. They even declared the government posts under the British government to be *Haram*.

As part of integrating the *ulama*, *Jam’iyyat ul Ulama-i Hind* was formed. Soon it became an accelerating force in the freedom struggle and second in command to the Congress. A large number of *fatwas* demanding boycott and non-co-operation with the government were issued. They were uncompromising to the British.
They left no stone unturned in their attempt to bring harmony among the different communities. They stood firm against the partition and incurred the displeasure of All India Muslim League. Meanwhile, the British attempt of making breach among the ulama groups proved successful, and a strong pro-partition ulama group came into being.

Ever since the introduction of Islam till the advent of the Europeans, India was Dar ul Islam. But, the British India was nothing short of Dar ul Harb to the ulama. So they advised the Muslims either to do jihad or to do Hijrat. Maulana Abdu ul Bari and Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi were the main advocates of the movement.

The ulama of Malabar were on par excellence with their counterparts in the world in knowledge and contributions. From the very introduction of Islam in Malabar, the ulama became an integral part of the society of the area. The contributions of the ulama in the economic and political development of the Muslims of Malabar cannot be underestimated in any circumstances. They also enjoyed a privileged position under the Hindu Rajas. They shaped the character of generations through Maktabs, Madrassas and Dars. The floods of jihadi literature stand witness to their integrity and loyalty to the motherland. The people
trained by the *ulama* haunted the colonial powers from the Portuguese to the British. Their thirst for *Shahadath* or martyrdom literally shook the very foundation of the British Empire.

In intellectual pursuits, the *ulama* were *at par* with their counterpart in any other country even in Arabia. Many of them had studied at world-renowned centres of Islamic learning like Makkah, Madinah etc. It gave them an opportunity to develop an international scholarly network, and a broad outlook to all religious and national issues. This character invited a chain of *ulama* groups to Malabar who shaped the history and culture of the country in general and Muslims in particular.

Later when the history of Malabar became replete with the heroic fight against the colonial powers, the Mappilas joined under the *ulama en masse* and presented vigorous fight unparalleled in the history of India. The *ulama* declared that to protect the land from colonial oppression and to strengthen the hands of the local rulers were the religious duties of every Muslim. Theirs was not mere lip service and they proved their integrity by declaring, and participating in, *jihad*. 
When the Portuguese came to Malabar with a definite plan of establishing a strong hold here, the *ulama* were the first to sense it. They came out of the religious claddings and gave leadership in the fighting with the colonialists. They preached the need of defending the motherland from the foreign intruders. In the attempt of resistance, they used their pen as a mighty weapon. It may not be wrong to say that the *ulama* were the first to start a new branch of text called the ‘resistance literature’. It was most secular in scope and content and filled with patriotic spirit. The literature they produced included prose pieces, poems, ballads, folklores etc. The most noteworthy among the prose pieces are *Tuhfat ul Mujahidin*, *Fath ul Mubin*, etc. They were written in Arabic and Arabi-Malayalam. They were not only motivating but also declaring *jihad* mandatory on all Muslims.

Apart from the literary and oral fight, the *ulama* led their followers to the battlefront in person. They successfully made use of their international contact and won the support of many foreign countries in the struggle against colonialism. Local rulers like the Zamorin, the Kolathiri and Ali Raja realized the potentials of the *ulama* and tried to tap it to the maximum.
At the same time the ulama of high rank like the Qazil Quzat of Calicut and the Qazi of Lakshadweep were not away from the people’s problems. People had easy access to them. Even women of other communities could meet them and seek their blessings and redressal of grievances. The ulama did not preach for a Muslim ruler to Malabar or to the country as a whole. They wanted only an adil (just) ruler who may be a Hindu or a Muslim.

In this struggle, places like Ponnani, the centre of Makhdums, Mamburam, the seat of the Ba Alawis and Tirurangadi, the centre of Ali Musliar served as hubs of resistance. Besides these centres, the mosques and Durus all over Malabar also served as recruiting centres of jihadis under the ulama. The training and preachings of these centres created groups, which were nightmarish to the colonialists in Malabar throughout the period. The Marakkars and the Khilafatists were such proud outputs of these trainings.

The divines sitting on the mats spread in mosques were vigilant of the state of their land. The dealing of Milanese artillerymen by the Qazi tells us such an instance of vigilant religious leadership. It was these kinds of vigilance and prompt interference that saved Malabar and its
people from the clutches of the Portuguese domination. Otherwise Malabar would have been a part of Goa.

When Malabar was freed from the Portuguese menace, the ulama concentrated their attention on studies and socio-religious activities. The Mysurean rule made the ulama inactive. They had a feeling that the rights and privileges of the people were safe under the Mysurean rule. This detachment on the part of the ulama helped the British to infiltrate into Malabar political life.

When the landlords and colonialists joined hands, the life of the tenants became very pathetic. As Islam does not sanction exploitation in any form, the ulama stood with the tenants and fought for their just demands. The Ba Alawis of Mamburam gave the tenants moral and ideological support. When Mamburam and its suburbs became hotbeds of peasant struggles, the British held the Ba Alawis responsible for it. When Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Tangal was deported on charge of preparing the people for revolt, they accepted the verdict silently. Thus the rule of the law was recognized but the rule of exploitation was questioned. The deportation did not extinguish the Mappila spirit of agitations. When Fazl Pookoya Tangal was no more there in Mamburam, the Mappilas
drew their inspiration from the tomb of Sayyid Alawi Tangal. Thus the ulama, dead or alive served as guiding spirit to anti-colonial struggle. Getting excited from this spirit and out of thirst for shahadath a large number of suicidal bands were prepared in Malabar during the 19th century, which largely threatened the safety of the British imperialism.

There was a notion that non-co-operation and non-taxation were the strategies developed by the Indian National Congress. But in Malabar the same had already been presented by the ulama like Umar Qazi of Veliyancode in the early quarters of the 19th century.

Unlike the Portuguese the British did not interfere with the religious freedom of the people. But as the ulama made the mosques the nerve centres of their anti-colonial activities, the authorities had to impose restrictions on the construction of mosques.

The unsolved agrarian problems and the age-old miseries of the peasant community agonized the ulama like Kattilasserri. They started Kudiyan Sangham. When the Kudiyan movement began to gather momentum through national movement, the Khilafat issue came to the
scene. Thus the local, national and international issues merged together to form an irresistible anti-colonial movement.

Though the ulama were at the forefront of all anti-colonial struggles in Malabar, they lacked political cohesion. It was in this context that the Kerala Majlis ul Ulama was founded under the leadership of Maulawi Sayyid Alawi Tangal, Kattilasseri Muhammad Maulawi, K. M. Maulawi and E. Moidu Maulawi. The Majlis provided a common platform to the ulama all over Kerala. Thus the formation of the Majlis acted as a catalytic force to enter the anti-colonial movement.

Thus, the ulama were in the forefront of all the anti-colonial struggle such as Khilafat, National movement and tenant struggles. When the nationalist movement became an ulama dominated campaign, the British thought it wise to deal the ulama with the ulama by forming a Pro-British ulama group. But the nationalist ulama dealt them squarely.

With these movements the national movement became strong in Malabar. The All India leaders of Congress-Khilafat committees often visited and contacted with the leaders of Malabar including the ulama.
Fearful of the rising *ulama* influence, in the anti-colonial struggle, the British tried to convene an *ulama* conference of their supporters at Ponnani but miserably failed due to the excessive influence of the nationalist *ulama* and their counter conference at the same locality.

The *ulama* like Ali Musliar, Chembrasserri Tangal and Seethi Koya Tangal were true visionaries. Though they had no administrative training, the Khilafat Raj they founded was of Islamic (republic) in several aspects. Though short-lived, these states were models to any democratic state.

There was a sharp departure in the *ulama* attitude during the 20th century from that of the earlier period. Till the 20th century, the *ulama* had proved a group ready to sacrifice their life for the goal. They never tried to escape or to be imprisoned by the forces. But during the 20th century, the *ulama* developed the dream of a replacement of the British rule. Thus, the *ulama* and their followers always fought for the success and establishment of a rule of their own. When the revolt was suppressed ruthlessly the *ulama* left from the scene and the spiritual leadership suffered till the return of the nationalist *ulama* under Moidu Maulawi and Kattilasseri.
However the *ulama* were there in the vanguard from the beginning to the end of the struggle against colonialism in Malabar. The wonderful chapter they wrote in the history of India’s freedom struggle will be inspiring to all generations to come as they were a model to the *ulama* community all over the world. Religious bigotry was totally alien to them. To them the freedom of the motherland was integral part of their religious faith.