CHAPTER V

MUSLIM SOCIAL LIFE IN KERALA

An outstanding feature of the social life of Kerala was its uniformity in habitat, dress, food and manners. However, before 1792, i.e., roughly two hundred years ago communities were more segmented and dissimilarities were more apparent especially in matters of dress and manners.

A house of an average Muslim like his Hindu brethren was built of wood and laterite stone. Poor people built their houses with mud walls, bamboo and thatched roof. The well-to-do people built their houses in the fashion of the same 'Malukettu' of the Hindu aristocracy. Houses were built in strict conformity to the principles of 'Tattusastra' (science of architecture). According to the 'Manushyalaya Chandrika', a standard work devoted exclusively to domestic architecture, "before commencing the building of a house the site has first to be chosen, for which rules are laid out as in the case of construction of temples". The selection of the site mainly depended on slope of the land and the flow of water. These rules were strictly followed in the
case of construction of permanent dwellings. Since it was always a carpenter who decided the site, size and plan of the house the Muslims also followed these principles. Anything which went against these principles was believed would bring early death to the residents and calamity and quarrels in the family. Such faulty construction were either demolished fully or partly or new constructions were made to cover the defective aspects.

The 'Malukettus' were built for accommodating the joint families, which was accepted as the pattern for wealthy Muslim houses also. Especially in the case of those following matriliney such big houses were necessary. Even the verandahs, front door openings and cattle-sheds in proper places were accepted by Muslims as the set pattern. They were generally roofed with thatches of palm leaves. Gold or silver pieces were placed when the 'Mulakkalulu' (generally the first stone at the north western corner) was laid. If any calamity or immature death occurred in the family the mantravadis, Tangals or Sorcerers were first asked to see if there was anything against the Taceusastras in the construction of the house. Toilets were never attached with Muslim houses, though bathrooms

1. This is an important source of income for such people and they often exploited the superstitions of the people.
near the wells were constructed. The 'Thandas' (Toilets) were built at sufficient distance from the house.

The houses of the well-to-do had separate structures as prayer halls. Often these structures constructed on waysides were used as the local Niskarappalli by neighbours. The Fadippura (gate complex), in the Muslim houses sometimes served as Niskarappally, where sometimes a Mulla (keeper of the local Masjid) used to teach Quran to the children. Such Mullas sometimes resided in such Fadippuras, therefore also served as gate-keepers in the night. 2

At dusk bronze lamps were lit. Lighting of lamps was considered an auspicious ceremony among the Hindus. But old houses, electrified, had been seen in the course of the field work with the auspicious brass lamps still hanging from the roof on a long iron chain. Squatting around the bronze lamps lit with oil and wick, the children of the wealthy Muslim houses read Quran or sung some 'Bayt' while in the poor mud huts, children did the same squatting around kerosene lamps.

2. The Mullas and Mukris were to have their meals from the Karanavar of the Masjid and as such they often accompanied the house-owner from the Masjid to his house with the lighted areaa lamps (Rantals) and slept in their houses. Feeding such people were considered a good deed, privilege and mark of respect.
Rich houses had costly furniture made of Rosewood. Their drawing rooms were decorated with Elephants' tusks with golden edges or the horns of Bison and deer. On the walls of the old Muslim houses Bison skulls and Deer horns were hung, mounted on wooden boards as a symbol of aristocracy. Tiger or leopard skins were also spread on wood chairs, since hunting was a passtime of aristocracy.

In the trading centres Muslims used to live in the town itself. In such cases the front portion of the house was constructed as shops and in the back rooms the trader lived with his family, which was more convenient to his business and community life. In that case, he was contented with a very minute backgarden if he had one at all. These back yards were surrounded by a high wall to protect his women from public gaze.

Dress of the Muslims varied considerably from their Hindu brethren. Mappilas in the coastal towns 'dressed elegantly after the Persian style, as Abdur Razzak says: "Elegantly as we do". This had been the case of all those foreign Muslims who had been to Calicut. The native style of dress of the Nayars and even that of the Zamarins had been well described by Barbessa and others, wherein the males went out naked above the waist.
with a drawn up sword and even the women as described by Barbosa in a royal procession went about naked above waist while they were richly dressed from the waist down. In the countryside the poor Muslims also were dressed in one dhoti, the end of which they tied to left while the Hindus tied the end to right and they never wore a shirt. Another 'Mundu' was used as a turban. It was a typical form of dressing, while in the field or in the hours of work a Mappila Muslim would dress in his mundu reaching just up to his knees and make with his dhoti a turban to protect him from the hot sun. In the market place he used to wear the dhoti and would make mundu a turban and used the same Mundu to cover his head and shoulders during the hours of prayer. He wore a wide belt round the waist and on it was thrust a dagger within the scabbered—the famous war-knife of Malappuram—which was captured and banned by the British administration following the Mappila outbreaks of the 19th century, especially after Collector Conolly's murder. The Sayyids were the long-flowing white dress with cap and turban or

3. "..... Beautifully dressed with jewelled necklaces, golden beads, anklets and bracelets......... "From the waist down they wear garments of rich silk, above the waist they are naked as they ever are......". Duarte Barbosa, The Book of Duarte Barbosa, (Tr.) M.L. Dames, London (1921), Vol. II, pp. 18-19.
a headger. The Labbais and Rawthars of Tamil origin used to wear lungis and Kuppayam, waist coat (Kambayam). Mappilas of Malabar shaved their heads clean. Beards were worn especially by the old Musaliars and Tungalas. Hajis and other holymen often dyed the beard red with henna.

Muslim women in those days as even now in the interior parts used to wear the black lungi, a loose white blouse and a Tattam (a long Mundu specially made for this purpose) some of them used to wear the Makkana (veil) and the rich, especially Sayyid women, observed purdah, and went out only accompanied by maid servants. It seems that the black lungi of Muslim women called it 'Yudattuni' (Jewish cloth) is not only that the dress of black Jews as described by L.A. Krishna Ayyar (the photograph of which is given in 'Cochin Tribes and Castes') but would seem exactly the same as the Mappila Muslim dress of the elder ladies. The younger ones preferred lungies of white, blue or green colour. Children below 3 or 4 years generally wore nothing and even for girls no skirt was in use, but for boys and girls dhotis of different sizes were available. The Madrasah-going boys either used a mundu to cover head or a 'rumal' (handkerchief). Especially when Quran was read the head had to be covered. Elegant silk dress were preferred for wedding.
A bridegroom usually dressed in white dhoti, shirts with long sleeves and a cap or a turban with mundu with borders of golden tissues which was called 'Kasavu'. A bride's dress was beyond description, that has roused the imagination of hundreds of Mappila songs. Elegant and colourful silks with golden brocades were worn. A Mappila bride wore Mattappu, over which the gold or silver belt (Aranjan) was worn on the waist. The blouse equally elegant, and the headgear was a makkana (veil) of black silk in front of which gold laces were strewn and over that another silk tattam was worn. Wrists were covered with bangles of gold in the case of the rich, and fingers had gold rings over all of them. Ear rings with holes were hung with golden cippus and on the ear lobe wore studs of varying styles. Some Muslim brides among the communities of Tamil origin also wore 'Makkutti' a stud on one side of the nose. A bride's neck was loaded with gold ornaments of various names and sizes. The most popular necklaces were, 'Koralaram', Pavan Mala, Mullappu Mala, Manga Mala, 'Nakshatramala' and others. Anklets of gold or silver were also worn. The 'cakkaramala' was the queen of ornaments. It was a series of chains hung in order from both ends. The chains varied from 4 to 14 and the weight
of the garland was 32 'Pavans' (256 gms.). 'Makkatte mala' was one speciality. Hajis used to bring stones of various colour and size and these were given gold coverings to join them together and that was the 'Makkatte mala'. There was also the practice of wearing so many rings on 'Kontala', 4 (The end of the dhoti hung in the waist to one side).

But the poor Muslim bride had to be satisfied with just one or two gold ornaments, the 'Pavan Mala' or Paranna Elassu, and a silver 'Aranjan'. There had been marriages taking place with no gold ornaments at all. The condition of the marriage was only the 'Mahr'.

The foreign traders who brought gold with them could easily win over the ladies who were keen to contract 'Nuta';5 marriages with local women. The parents often took the golden opportunity to enrich themselves by contracting such marriages especially as they were by nature matriloclal. When these foreigners, Arabs mainly, returned after pronouncing 'talaq' they were always kind


enough to grant their ladies sufficient security for their future, in the form of money, building or business. In many cases children of such unions especially males were lucky to be taken by their fathers to their native country, to be given decent employments or share in property. This was another avenue of growth of the community and its economic improvement and social change.6

Dress and ornaments could always lure away women. One of the practices of the Portuguese in Malabar as described in a contemporary poem was to "adorn their women with dress and ornaments to lure away Muslim women".7

Marriage talks in the northern parts of Kerala was initiated by girl's party, in the central Kerala namely the 'Mappilanadu' it was the groom's party to take initiative and again to south in the Travanoore-Cochin region the girl's party used to take the lead. Once both parties agreed on the give-and-take the elders met for 'Urappikkal' (agreement) which often took place in the girl's house. The next step was 'Nischayam' (betrothal). For this purpose the parents, Qasi, elders

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6. Such examples are extant even in recent times. An Arab would up his business in Calicut, where he had contracted Muta marriages. Later he took his son to his mother country.

and relatives assembled in the boy's house or sometimes in girl's house according to convenience. The day of marriage, mehr, and other conditions were to be either, publically discussed or mutually agreeed through Dallals (brokers) and declared if necessary.

On the day of marriage, which usually used to take place in the night, a party of young boys and elders preferably the brother of the girl and her uncle would first go to bridegroom's house. This was the 'Tettam' (going in search of). After feasting and other things the bridegroom used to start to the bride's house. This was called the 'Putiyappila Irakkam' (Bridegroom's departure). On the arrival of the bridegroom the younger brother of the bride washed the feet of the bridegroom. Some coins or sometimes a sovereign was put by the bridegroom in the waterpoint. It was to be equally reciprocated when the bride reached the bridegroom's house, by his sister. 'Sharbats' and betel were then provided and meticulous care was taken that nobody missed the 'betel bundle' or pan supari. A man used to hold a basket or a tray full of pan supari and

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8. Washing the feet when one enters a house was a Hindu practice. But this has been followed by Muslims too. If not washed at least water was sprayed. A. Sreekara Menon, Kerala District Gazetteers, Quilon, Trivandrum (1944), p. 205.
called out 'If there was anybody to receive pan supari', and if any missed, it was considered a disgrace for the family. This shows the importance of 'pan supari' in social etiquette. Then the 'Nikah' is performed. There was the practice of Mahr being handed over to the father of the bride and paying a salaam standing up in the Pandal so that all the assembled may witness. Among certain communities especially in the Central and southern Kerala, there was the practice of tying 'Tali', which was again a pure Hindu practice followed by Muslims. In such cases the bridegroom entered the women's chamber where the bride was seated and he would, among much merry making of the assembled, tie the tali for which he was helped by his sister to fasten it. A sumptuous feast then followed and the assembled dispersed. The bridegroom in some cases would stay back with a few friends to take the bride and her attendants to his house. Among the Pulavar community of Tamil origin there was the practice of avoiding journeys between 4 to 6 in the evening to avoid "Rahukalam", so that the bridegroom would reach his house with the ladies before 6 or after 6 O'clock, used to leave for the bride's house again to

9. A description of Nikah is given in Chapter IV 'Communities', on Mappilas.
spend 3 or 7 days there in the 'Maniyara' (nuptial chamber), where he was most affectionately treated by the girl's parents. After 7 days a party would come from his own house to accost them, and then would follow the invitation of relatives and friends. This was the case in southern parts of Kerala also.

Among the Mappilas who were more modest and conservative, the bridegroom departed with his friends after Nikah. Then followed the 'Putukkam' (bridal procession), the most colourful ceremony of Muslim marriage where the friends and relatives of the bride, majority of them of same age, clad in equally attractive dresses and covered with gold ornaments accompanied the bride. Among the Koyas of Calicut there was the practice of 'Iqapputiyotti' (close friend of the bride) who was an unmarried girl of the same age well-dressed, and adorned with the same ornaments. This helped to ward off the embarrassment of the bride in the whole of the formalities, with the teasings and amusements of her friends. The 'Putukkam' (bridal procession) had great social significance. Though there were elder ladies always present it was mainly an event of young maidens, and the prospective mother-in-law or father-in-law would search for a daughter-in-law in such gatherings, and
sometimes make preliminary enquiries if they were satisfied with a girl. Parents of unmarried girls therefore took utmost care to clad their daughters in fine attire and load them with ornaments even on loan.

Often the brides were chosen by parents, in many cases the boy never saw the girl before marriage. There were no facilities in the small houses for the pair meeting on the same night as there would be a host of friends and relatives. The next day morning itself the bride was taken for 'Salkaram' (hosting) by the sister-in-law to her husband's house, which was considered to be a privilege and a must by Mappilas. Many days were thus spent the bride changing hosts from sisters, to aunts and uncles. Finally it may take weeks before the girl met her husband. These practices have now been adjusted for convenience.

After the marriage followed a series of salkarams (Banquets). Always the bride's people were hosts. First it was the turn of brothers-in-law of the bridegroom, then his friends, parents, uncles, elders and so on. In Northern Kerala especially in regions like Tellicherry and Cannanore where Muslims were fairly rich, a marriage had to be celebrated for 40 days. It is not an exaggeration to say that many of the old aristocratic Taravads were ruined conducting marriages.
The system of 'ara', a separate room for the pair in the matrilocal families itself was a costly affair. It was in the layout, decoration and furnishing of the 'ara' that the whole prestige of the family was to be exhibited. The friends and relatives of the bridegroom would visit the ara to pass their comments and if they were pleased would give presentation to the man in-charge of preparation of the ara. Once the bridegroom entered the ara, even in his absence, not even a member of the family other than his wife would enter the ara. Presents had to be exchanged on important occasions, sweetmeat, dress and costly fishes were important items of such presentations.

The dress for the bride was always brought by the bridegroom's party, by a group of ladies following them. 'Ammayippuda' (Dress for the mother-in-law) had also to be brought. If the grand-mother (Mother's mother) was alive she was also entitled for this set of dress, but not father or grand-father. Among certain communities there was the custom of a group of girls going to the male house and inviting all the ladies to the bride's house for wedding. These girls also brought 'Maylanachi' (henna) and plastered the bridegroom's hand. In return he used to give some money to the girls. At the same
time (the previous night of wedding) in the house of the well-to-do people 'Maylanachi Kalyanam' (anointing the henna) took place. The bride was pasted with henna amidst a lot of singing and dancing. The 'Maylanchipattu' (song of the henna) is a very popular Mappila song where prophet's marriage with Asiya Beevi (Pharaoh's wife) and Mariyam Beevi (Mother of Jesus) are described in imaginative style. This marriage was supposed to be one of the important events in 'Svargam' (heaven). There, angels led by Jibril would bring henna for Muhammad. 'Paighambar Muhammad', 'Sultan al-Ambiya' would come on a white elephant, and the Shahids by virtue of their martyrdom will have the honour of being seated on the elephant's tusk. These songs were sung in solemn respect and rejoice, and then the singers would narrate the events of the next day, the charm and smart-ness of the bridegroom, and then the nuptial union and so on, which was again an event of much teasing and merry-making.

Professional singers attended the marriages, often without being invited. When all the members of such a party would assemble they may sit in one round and would catch up some pot or drum or used two brass pieces to strike in rhythm. There also the theme was
something on Prophet Muhammad or other Prophets of Islam. Hired singers both male and female were also present. Until gramophone music became popular about 50 years ago, these hired singers were the sources of attraction. Oppana, the great Muslim tradition of Kerala, was invariably held on the wedding and the previous night, during Mayilanchi Kalyanam as well.¹⁰

Marriage among the Muslims was a most expensive affair especially when families and Tarawads competed to rival each other in pomp and show. The series of communal feasts and formalities, ornaments and presentation ruined many families.

'Kufw'¹¹ (matching) of the families was the foremost condition for alliance. Among the Sayyids Kufw was decided by thoroughly examining genealogy and economic status. Among the well-to-do the lineage, and family prestige were also considered. Now rich who tried to contract marriage alliance with old Taravads to enhance their social status was repulsed, at the same time the aristocrats never married their daughters to men of

¹⁰ 'Oppana' a peculiar dance of Muslims, male and female, is described in Chapter VI, on Folk life.
¹¹ S.C. Misra calls it "Kifaat". S.C. Misra, Muslim Communities in Gujarat, p. 120.
inferior status however poor the family was. Wealth in
the Southern Kerala and Coastal towns as well were
counted in terms of business, boats and, groves, and
among the Mappilas in terms of the extent of wet-land
and the amount of paddy received in the form of Pattam,
(land rent). In the Cannanore-Tellicherry region
wealth was counted in terms of the yield of coconuts
per month. Number of elephants in possession of a
family was also a status criteria. An interesting inci­
dent was reported during the field work. An aristocratic
family of Malappuram wanted to contract a marriage
alliance with a family in Tellicherry. During the talks
it was asked "how many thousand coconuts do you get
monthly"? The Malappuram man had to say 'nil'. But he
was educated and as a friend of Britishers had been the
first to plant rubber in Malabar, owned much land,
buildings, and was immensely rich. But all these did
not convince the Tellicherry people and his proposal was
turned down. He was belittled, and immediately on his
return he planted coconut trees in hundreds of acres in
his possession saying; "None of my sons or grand-sons
in future should be denied a lady (marriage) for lack of
coconuts".12

12. This plantation to the east of Malappuram extending
ever hundreds of acres could still be seen on either
side of road to Perinthalmanna.
Among the lower section even turban and chappal was considered to be a status symbol. Turban was privilege in Malayali Society and had to be removed in the presence of the upper classes. So also chappal had to be removed while passing the boundary of a Naduvasi's or Adhikari's household. 'Talakkettucariyal' (lean the turban to one side) was a term used for be falling disgrace on one's family.

An elder woman accompanied a rich wife to her husband's house and stayed for sometime until she got acquainted with the family. Sometimes they permanently stayed and served as nurses for their children, and thus became 'Ayes' for one or two generations.

Pregnancy was celebrated and the first delivery always took place at the girl's house. On the 7th or 8th month the girl amidst much rejoicing of the elders was accosted to her house. A party of women would come from her house with new clothes and she may take leave of the husband's house-holders. This ceremony was called 'Ney Kudi' (consuming ghee). 13

13. Non-Muslims also held such ceremony which they called 'Pulikudi' (consuming Tamarind) The practice among Gujarati Muslims was called 'Satvansah', Brahmins observed such a ceremony which they called 'Pumsavanam' also intended to secure male offspring. C.A. Innes, Malabar Gazetteer, Madras (1951), p. 164.
Great care was taken to protect a carrying woman from evil spirits. The "Pulappedi and Mannappledi" common in the Malayali society had influenced Muslims also. It was believed that the Vannan Caste could perform 'odi' or 'odi mariyal' which would cause death of the enemy. The Parayas or Vannans performed odi with potion prepared from the womb taken alive from a carrying mother for this purpose. It was believed, they would go ground the house, then the carrying lady would open the door. They would capture her and open her abdomen, taking out the baby fill her belly with straw and dry leaves. The lady would return to her bed unaware of the whole incident. She would soon develop illness and die. The belief in odi was so strong that cane rings were worn around the upper arm to beat the odi and walking sticks with anti-odi potions and capacities were specially prepared by the Mantravadis. Chanted threads were ties round the neck or on the wrist, Takidu, and Talismans called 'Elassu' (hollow cylinders) were worn on the waist and around neck. In fact a garland of many such Talismans wrapped in waxed cloth or inserted in gold or silver Elassu was seen in abundance among the illiterate interior Muslim communities and among the fisher-folk.

Yasin (Surah Yasin) was recited by women around
a lady in pains, 'Burdah' was sung and a lot of other 'Bayts', 'Bassi' was also given to drink. The Ossatti, Muslim barber ladies helped as midwives. The Vannatti, woman of the Vannan caste, who were washerwomen of the villages rendered special service during confinement. Bank (Adhan) was called into the baby's ears on birth by a male member of the family. During Haqiqa the well-to-do people performed 'Wuduhiyyat' (Sacrifice) of bullocks generally and two-thirds of the meat was distributed among the neighbours and relatives. One third was reserved for the consumption of the assembled. The knife was applied on the animal simultaneously when the Ossen, barber brought by the male party would apply his razor to shave the head of the child. One measure of rice, betel leaves and a white cloth was placed in front of the Ossen, of which the cloth and betel leaves were taken by him and the rice would be taken by

14. Qasidat al Burdah of Busiri, wherein the poet composed the poem in praise of Prophet Mohammed, in return of which he was cured of his illness. It was believed the singing of the poem would bring easy delivery.

15. Bayt, songs in praise of Sufi saints.

16. The local sorcerer of Muslims would be approached with a Bassi (a porcelain plate) on which Arabic letters in mysterious order was written as a chart which was believed to have hidden meanings and capacity to cure ailments or bring relief. This plate was then taken to the patient, washed and given to her as a medicine. People used to consume such Bassi or Vassi sometimes during the 40 day's period of confinement.
Ossatti. The ossan (brought by the male members) had the right for the head of the animal, which he carried home with him and the ossatti had the right to get the right hind lad in full. The hair was cleaned and weighed against gold or the amount calculated and the same was distributed among poor or given to religious institutions. On 'Khatna', religious teachers of the boy received presents.

A man could keep four wives at the same time. Marriage alliance with a fifth was considered illegal until the man had separated himself from one of his wives and the period of 'Iddah' had expired. A woman who had been divorced three times was prohibited to the same husband until she had been married to some one else, lived with him and had been divorced.

A woman in 'Iddah' following the death of husband or divorce could not be married. In the case of those who could afford the ladies observed iddah for 90 days. During this period they could not see a male other than blood relatives or even hear a male's sound. The orthodox women believed that even hearing a cock's crowing was not permitted.

The Keyis and Nahas followed matriliny, but
were duolocal. Islam unequivocally emphasized the superiority of the husband. In surah Al-Nisa, Quran has made the superiority of men explicitly clear: "Men are guardians over women because Allah has made some of them excel others, and because they (men) spend of their wealth. So virtuous women are those who are obedient, and guard the secrets of their husbands with Allah's protection. And as for those on whose part you fear disobedience, admonish them and leave them alone in their beds, and chastise them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Surely, Allah is High, Great". 17 Matriliny was not in conformity with the above-said injunction of the Quran. As human acts are classified as obligatory, recommended, permissible, disapproved and absolutely forbidden, somewhere among these categories social customs could be accommodated. Further the provision of Ijtihad, 18 Ijma, 19 and Qiyas 20 could also justify long-standing social institutions as social institutions as social necessities, so long it was not diametrically opposed to the canons of the Quran. 21

18. Opinion of religious scholars.
19. Public opinion.
20. Precedents of similar incidents.
The Koyas of Calicut followed matriliney and were matrilocal in nature. But the kinship terminology of the Muslims were dissimilar from those of the non-Muslims, though the mother tongue was Malayalam, everywhere. Father was addressed as Bappa.\(^{22}\) with its various forms like Uppe, Bava, and Baichi. Mother was addressed as Umma\(^{23}\) with its local variations as Imma, and Immacci. Father's younger brother was called 'Elappa' and elder brother was called 'Muttappa'. The elder brother was called 'Kakka'\(^{24}\) and elder sister 'Tatta'. Mother's brother was called 'Ammon'.\(^{25}\) The similarity of kinship terminology tempts us to believe an overwhelming Gujarati influence on Mappila community. The Persian influence on the Muslims of Kerala in the form of distinct terminologies ever for religious rites like Bank for Adhan, etc. has been discussed elsewhere in this work. Though this influence may not help us to formulate any hypothesis yet a second-thought on the notion of all prevailing Arab influence may be appreciated.

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22. Bappa seems to be of Persian origin, also in Gujarati 'Bapu'.

23. Umma is Arabic word for mother.

24. Kakka or Chacha was the word for father's brother in Gujarathi.

25. The word for Mother's brother in Gujarathi was 'Mamun'.
The pattern of food habits of Muslims throughout the state was more or less same. Boiled rice was the staple food which was consumed with vegetables, fish or meat. Beef was a favourite item of food. Tea and coffee were not popular and the working people always relished 'conjee' (Rice porridge) with condiments. Two regular meals were taken one at mid-day (lunch) and other at night (supper). Dishes made of rice were preferred. Wheat was looked down upon as poor man's food who could not afford to have rice. Tapioca and fish formed the substitute of rice for poor men. Coconut oil and condiments were used in all culinary preparations. Coconut was an indispensable ingredient in almost all curries.

Muslims served expensive wheat preparations on special occasions. It was not pounded but boiled with tender chicken, until the whole meat perfectly mixed with boiled wheat which was then fried in ghee and consumed with sprinkling of sugar. This formed an important item of the 'Nombu Turakkal' (Iftar). The 'Tarikanji' (Rava boiled with cashewnuts and dry grapes and fried in ghee), was first served to all the assembled on Iftar. 'Tengaccor', a special dry preparation of rice with coconut and onion was a special Muslim preparation, which
was not prepared by non-Muslims. Ghee rice and Biriyani were favourite food items of Muslims. Meat and fish were consumed. On special occasions people considered it to be a symbol of aristocracy to have meat of bison or deer. These were caught by hunting or employing hunters. Fishing with nets, and hook and line, were favourite pastimes. Special break cakes 'Kalathappam' was prepared on occasions like, 'Laylat ul-Qadr', 'Badrinagale Andu' and the like. 'Cakkarycoru' (rice pudding with unbleached rice) was also prepared to celebrate solemn occasions, like Moulud, Ratib and Nerccas. Fatiha OtaX (reciting Fatiha) was an important rite held on many occasions and since the Mulla or Musaliar would be present, some special dish was prepared. Muslims conducted Fatiha OtaX to propitiate or ward off many evil spirits, and special dishes for such occasions were traditionally decided. For conducting the Moulud of Sheykh Rifai 'Avil' was necessary. This was conducted among the Mappillas during the time of harvest so that fresh paddy was made available for the purpose. Devotees believed that if any of these special dishes of the occasion were relished before conducting Fatiha, it would bring the wrath of the spirit to be propitiated.

26. Paddy is dipped in water, fried and pounded to flatten it which required much experience, to prepare 'Avil', consumed with tea or coffee.
The Muslim style of eating was different from the rest of the community both Hindus and Christians, though the dishes were the same. "The traditional Malayali sits cross-legged on the floor and eats his food from the plate with his right-hand. On ceremonial occasions like feasts, the plantain leaf is used instead of the plate". Zamorin's custom of eating has been described by Barbosa. "Another custom is that of eating. No man must be present while the Zamorin is eating, except four or five servants who wait on him. Before eating he bathes in a clean tank inside the palace. Then he dresses in fine garments and proceeds to a house which is arranged for his meal. There he sits on a round board placed on the ground. Then the servants bring him the silver dish and a pot of boiled rice. After the rice they bring in many other pots and dishes, each one into its own proper saucer. Then the Zamorin begins to eat with his right hand...... and if there is any Brahmins present when he is eating, he asks them to eat on the ground little away from him....."  

This description shows the Hindu notion of

pollution and is sharply contrasted with the Muslim way of eating. Among the Muslims in a household individuals took food separately and if all of them happened to be present simultaneously a 'Supra' was spread on mats and food was served in big round plates. The curry was placed round the plate, and each one served sufficient rice and curries in the plate in which he ate. This was the system in communal gatherings, where ten or fifteen of the assembled would sit around the supra and banana leaves were spread and rice was heaped up from baskets. Then the curry, pappad and fried meat were also heaped on top of the rice bowls. All of them ate from the same rice bowl, which would be filled simultaneously by the servers. When the people of one round finished eating they saw to it that nothing was left over the banana leaf to be wasted. The leaves were then thrown away. Fresh rounds were formed and thus again served. In matrilineal, and matrilocal families with a large number of inmates 'Supra' had to be prepared. This style of eating was a pure Arab custom. Even now the Arabs eat from such big plates, and when a group is finished the plates are not removed but more food is

29. Supra is the Malayalam form of the Arabic word 'Sufra'. In Calicut the same was known as 'Masara'.
served in the same plates and a fresh group sits to eat. Rice being the staple food and the extra-ordinarily large quantity that Malayalis consumes, the system still continues without modification. These days rice is served in the plate with a lot of condiments and each one has a separate plate to which he serves as much as he wants and eats from the plate.

The 'Supra' is exclusively a Muslim custom, and though the Hindus interdine with Muslims, they hesitate to sit on a Supra and if compelled by situation, serves for him in his plate and turns round to eat.

Muslims of Kerala are generally followers of Shafi School of Sunni Sect, except a few communities of Tamil origin like Labbaits and the Dakhnis. From the 18th century there occurred a division among the Mappilas, a group preferring allegiance to Valiya Jarattinkal Thangal of Pennani and another group to Muhammad Shah, the Kondotty Thangal. Muhammad Shah, a native of Kardan, who claimed descent from Imam Husayn and Abdul Qadir Jilani, settled in Kondotty in the year 1130 A.H. His fame as a Sufi and possessor of Karsmah spread far and wide, and won him many murids which was not liked by the Makhdums of Pennani, who held the Qaziship of Kondotty
with the superior authority over Malabar Muslims in all matters of religion. The Ponnani faction did not like some of their Sufi practices and branded them as Shias. This gave rise to the 'Kondotty-Ponnani Kai Tarkan'.

The differences between the two parties sometimes became acute and lead to disturbance. At Mulliapurichithi in Valluvanad Taluk the two factions fought with each other in the month of September of 1901, marking the height of the dispute. Ponnani was the highest seat of learning all over Kerala and even of some South-eastern countries. Ponnani Jamaat mosque was said to have been founded in the 12th or 13th century by an Arab divine for the purpose of imparting religious education to Muslims. It was there as even now that the new converts were given religious instruction. After much learning and training the Mekhdum, chief of Ponnani College, conferred the title of Musaliyar on the selected few who were thus permitted to teach, preach and interpret the Quran. Ponnani became the religious centre of Muslims of Malabar, South Canara, and native states of Cochin and Travancore.

The Office of Qazi was almost entirely held

30. It was said that Muhammad Shah instructed that his murids should prostrate before him. But prostration (Sujud) according to the Quran is due to God alone.

by Tangals, yet with exceptions. A realistic mind would certainly raise the question 'Where from such number of Tangals came?' But we have to keep in mind the fact before 1881 when Logan was appointed Special Commissioner to look into the Mappila grievances, their main problems were non-availability of land for mosques and grave yards. This would mean that there were very few mosques and sufficient number of Sayyids or Tangals were available to hold Qasiship. There was the institution of 'Malikasi' or chief Qazi, which was just an honour, who had rarely to attend any duty connected with it. Shihabuddin Imbichikoya Tangal, The Va'iya Qazi of Calicut was Malikasi of the areas of the whole of Kozhikode Taluk except the Desoms of Olavanna and Beypore. It was the Zamorin who appointed the Malikasi and was ratified and notified in gazette in 1947. So also Qazi Nalakath Mohammed Koya had his jurisdiction over the whole area as that of the Shihabuddin Imbichi Koya Tangal. The reason for two Qasis' holding authority over the same area was a dispute about the question of succession, in the Qasi line 200 years before. Hence another line also came into existence with authority over the same area

32. An institution similar to Qasi al-Qusat of the Sultanat and Mughal Empire where the area of authority was defined. For Malikasi area was assigned, and some times the number of mosques was mentioned.
but this never caused hatred or conflict as it happened in the case of Kondetty-Ponnani Kaitarkam in Mulliakurichi. Qasi Malakath Mohamed informed that he was 18th Qasi of Calicut and eleventh in succession from Qasi Mohammed, the author of Muhiyuddin Mala.

The Valappattanam Qazis, known as Tangals of Bukhara were descendants of Sayyid Jalaluddin Bukhari who had settled in Valappattanam in the year 800 A.H. Valappattanam had been mentioned as an important Muslim centre by Ibn Battuta. These Sayyid Qazis have a very extensive area under their authority like the neighbouring regions of Valappattanam, Mankavu, Cheriyakara, Kattambally, Kannadipparambu, Kabani, Pannayankandi Palatinkavu, Nuncheri, Mundari, Manchur, Mullakkodi, Kairalam, Kandakkai, Kavvayi, Madayi Ramantali, Ettalam, which are now different Mahals, yet it shows that all these regions in olden days were under one Mahal, one Qasi and the Qasi was a Sayyid.

The Musliyars also held the office of Qasi but as Innes noted 'Musliyars were not necessarily attached to any mosque but travelled about preaching and teaching.'

Musaliyars also had the task of blessing the Mappilas to die as Shahid. 34

Two hundred years ago Madrasah system was in vogue in Malabar. Organised Madrasah system had not come into existence. Yet the community’s enthusiasm and ardour enabled it to develop into a unique institution namely the 'Palli Dars'. In this system a number of students were attracted to a renowned scholar who would be a Qazi in a masjid. This scholar himself might often be a man trained in a renowned institution, might have travelled in other Islamic countries, and a disciple of some Sufi saint or a student of renowned scholar or of many scholars, themselves masters of their own branches of learning. When such number of students were enrolled the village community found means to support it. One or more such students were assigned to families according to their resources, in fact they volunteered, to feed them and the Qazi himself was often fed from such a house or from many houses at different times. This arrangement is unique and no parallel can be cited elsewhere in the Islamic world. Perhaps only in Ethiopia a similar system

34. For details of functioning of Makhdum College of Pennani, Vide, E. Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol. IV, pp. 459-51.
worked. These an institution of religions learning would camp (they were essentially wandering or travelling institutions) for six months in a village when the local community fed them. They would move to another village for the next six months. Thus even the Ethiopian parallel comes nowhere near the Kerala system in effect, because it was reciprocal in nature. The students thus fed by families taught the primary lessons of religion, reading of the Quran and writing of Arabic to small children of the house. So the community never felt lack of religious teachers. In far off poor villages where such a Palli dars could not function a mulla or any old man would collect some children around him either in the local Niskarappalli or in some room of his house and teach the Quran and Arabic, often a parrot-like recitation as he himself knew it. He also served as the Mattu mulla, conducting 'Moulud', 'Fatiha' and also as the local sorcerer. These mulas received fixed measures of paddy during the seasonal harvests and supplemented their income with occasional presents from the parents of students and with remunerations received for initiating other religious rites. Thus however poor a child

was never left without instructions at least in basic practices of Islam. From such mulla-run 'ottupalli', as they were called, students went to the above-mentioned Palli Dars, and there joined the group of students according to their gradations. As the teachers (only one) of such Palli Dars were masters different branches of Islamic learning, students went on changing masters and finally reached the institutions of Ponnani or of later, Dar ul-Ulum of Deoband and 'Baqiyat ul-Salihat' of Vellore.

During the period under discussion, theological developments remained static. But one should not forget the contribution of Makhdums and the relevance of 'Fath al Muin' and similar works. These works were more explanations and not innovations of scholarly analysis. Sayyids had been migrating to Kerala mainly from South Arabia. But while themselves were conservatives, inimical to puritan reforms of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1787) and therefore Wahhabism was not introduced to Kerala soon after its rise. Lack of Urdu tradition prevented any infiltration of the ideas of the rest of India. Yet by the first quarter of 19th century ideas

36. Ottupally was the name for the institutions where Brahmin boys were instructed in the Vedas.
of social reforms and a will to fight social and economic injustice to the community had been developed as revealed from the teachings of Sayyid Fazl and Arab preachers who were interrogated by British officers in Malabar. But none of them made any significant contributions in the field of theology. It was only in the second half of 19th century that revivalist and reformist movements began to gather momentum among Muslims of Kerala.

Books were produced for instruction in Madrasahs in Arabic and Arabi-Malayalam (Malayalam written in Arabic script). In this field Arabi-Malayalam went a step further, by formulating equivalents to all Malayalam sounds which could not be produced with existing Arabic alphabet. Books so written or printed were called Kitab, rather than its Tamil or Malayalam equivalent 'pustakam', and were considered sacred. They commanded almost the same respect as the Quran itself, and had been commanded not to touch with unclean hands.

Books of religious nature written or printed in Tamil or

37. Arab-Tamil had been invented by Tamil Muslims for the same purpose—Tamil written in Arabic script and the guttural sounds of certain words had to be softened down into Arabic sounds.
Malayalam characters may be left on the ground, but a Kitab of even secular character would always be placed on a special seat, and if it fell to the ground it was kissed and raised to the forehead.

Muslims of Kerala, bred and brought up in such reverence to religious edicts strictly followed the Islamic injunctions. The principles of 'Islam' and 'Iman' were followed. They were very punctual in saying the five times prayer, and attending the Friday sermon for which they walked many miles on Fridays. It is said that often in many places in those days people had to start walking to the mosque in the morning to reach for 'Jumah' at noon, because the Hindu landlords in the countryside did not give land for the construction of mosques and if a new Jamaat was to be founded there must be 'forty male adults' present for the congregation. The fast of Ramzan was strictly observed. In fact the month of Ramzan was the period of highest religious fervour. Many of the Mappila outbreaks of 19th century took place in the months of Ramzan or it was so regarded that they could be conducted only in a state of fasting. Since the British administrators called it Hal Ilakkam the month of Ramzan came to be called month of Hal Ilakkam.
Even now a popular joke in countryside runs thus:
"Ramzan is the month! Mappila is the man! take to your heels, Nayari!". The Muslims celebrated 'Laylatt ul-Qadr'. The night in which Quran was first revealed to the Prophet through Jibril. According to popular belief it fell on one of the even nights of the last ten of Ramzan. "the night honoured than one thousand months," (in respect of reward for good deeds). Popular belief is that it was the 27th night, and Muslim often spent the whole night in reciting the Quran, prayer and Dhikr, because "therein descend the Angels and the Spirit by the command of their Lord with every matter" and which is "all peace till the rising of the dawn". So Muslims used to give alms (Zakath) to the poor amounting to 2½ per cent of his money, cattle and merchandise. Muslims in general observed only the ninth and tenth days of Muharram, keeping fast and there used to be no taziya and beating of breast except in the case of the Pathans. But the Bohras, Shia community concentrated mainly in Calicut and Alleppy and Cannanore observed Muharram like the rest of the Shia world. Among the Pathans there

38. Holy Quran, Ch. 97, Verses, 2, 4, 5.
39. The Pathan and Bohr ways of celebrating Muharram is given in Chapter IV 'Communities'- Pathans and Bohras.
was the practice of Pulikali, when men would disguise as tigers painting their faces and making stripes like that of tigers during Muharram.

The Shab-i Barat, "night of record" on the fourteenth of Shaban was celebrated by observing fast, preparing sweet dishes and conducting a 'Fatiha'. It is supposed to be the night of Prophet Mohamed's ascension to heavens.

Kerala Muslims celebrated Zdul Fitr, and Idul Asha (Bakrid) enthusiastically like the rest of the Muslim world. Zdul Fitr marked the end of the month of fast and rigorous self-control. The first item of the celebration was distribution of food materials to the poor and deserving, intended to remove the possibility of any case of starvation in the community on that auspicious day. In the morning men, and children attired in their best dress proceeded to the mosque or Idgah, a place set apart for public prayers. The gathering then offered congregational prayers, led by Imam. After prayer the Imam delivered the 'Khutba'. At the end of the congregation members then embraced and saluted each other. On that day they visited neighbours, friends and relatives. It was an occasion of cheerful meeting of friends. Social calls were made, and presents were
distributed to dependants. Children used to be the most happy ones on the day and they made it an occasion to visit distant relatives. All the members of the family, assembled and newly-married couples were specially invited to the bride's houses where another round of 'Salkaram' took place. Girls assembled to sing and dance, and boys in groups organised folk games. 'Karakali', 'Talappandu', and 'Attakkalam' were some of the popular games of the boys.

Idul-Asha (Bakrid) was the biggest festival of Muslims in Kerala too. The festival falls on the 10th of Dhul-Hajj, the last month of the lunar year. It is celebrated in commemoration of Abraham's willingness to offer his only son as sacrifice in obedience to God's command. The sacrifice of animals which is an important item of the celebrations is a declaration 'that nothing will ever be withheld in the course of surrendering to the will of God'. Muslim houses woke up with the spirit of sacrifice and festivity and the day dawned

40. Beating a rubber ball with a stem of a bamboo taken with its roots, hence bent at the bottom, resembling modern hockey stick.

41. Still the popular folk game which is held on festivals like Onam in the countryside. One team throwing ball in various positions and the other trying to catch it.

42. A rural folk version of 'Kabadi'.
with resounding of Takbir (Allahu Akbar). Children were the happiest group in these festivals. Girls and small boys would be seen collecting the henna leaves three or four days before each festival. They applied henna, drawing various diagrams with jackfruit's gum so that when henna was removed these diagrams would be clearly seen. Women of all ages especially youngsters did apply henna. Often children of the neighbouring houses assembled in one house and the whole night was spent in amusements and plays while the elders would be busy in preparation for the next day's feast. Men and children dressed in their best attire and reciting Takbir proceeded to the Idgah. After the congregational prayer and Khutba, people greeted each other and returning houses enjoyed hearty feasts. Even the pardah-clad women enjoyed the occasion by going out to meet neighbours, friends and relatives.

Women did not attend Idgahs and Friday congregational prayers since it was only recently that they began attending congregational prayers that too in Wahhabi-dominated Mahals. The Orthodox Sunnis never allowed their women to attend the mosque. However in recent days women have begun going to mosques only to hear the sermons delivered on Fridays during the month of Ramzan. Since Wahhabism gained widespread support
only recently, it is reasonable to think that women did not attend congregational prayer or Idgah. Even in other parts of the world Muslim women's absence from mosques had been noted and Spencer Trimmingham called this aspect as the 'dualism' of Islam. When the Men went to Friday congregational prayer their women folk found solace and contentment in visiting the tombs of the local Wali.

Milad-i-Sharif, Prophet Muhammad's birthday, 12th Rabiul Awwal was celebrated throughout Kerala. This was celebrated by conducting Moulud, on the day, or any other convenient day of the month, or at least by reciting Yasin. Procession of students of Madrasahs with banners and slogans as is held these days was of recent origin. When Moulud or Yasin was conducted a special drink was prepared called 'Kulavi'. Any guest or participant was first served this drink of wheat, flour, coconut, spices and sugar and later on the usual food or feasts. Religious sermons were conducted during the month. People considered it a sacred month and abstained from conducting any family functions like marriage, up to 12th of the month.

43. J. Spencer Trimmingham, Sufi Orders in Islam.
Muharram was another important celebration for Muslims of Kerala. But it differed from Shia celebrations. Muslims observed fast during the 9th and 10th days of Muharram, and it was considered a very sacred and pious act. They desisted from launching upon any important acts like marriage or business and even talks of marriage were never held in the first ten days of Muharram. It was not because of the martyrdom of Hassan and Hussain that Muharram was considered sacred, but because of the fasts of 'Tasurah' and 'Ashurah', the ninth and tenth days respectively.

Muslims all over Kerala celebrated 'Badringle Andu', probably the most popular pious act as they considered it and not propounded in Sunnah or Shariat. Mouluds were conducted and Malas were sung. The height of the celebration was the communal feast for which rice and beef were prepared. Men, women and children went to the nearby mosque where the Andu Masgaa was held. A short discourse by the Qazi followed on the sacrifice of the martyrs of Badr. Then the communal dinner was held. Each one of the assembled had a separate pot

44. The anniversary of Badringal, the day of the Battle of Badr, the first battle of Islam where He gave victory to Muslims. Badringal were the first of the martyrs. In a people whose concept of martyrdom was an active force, the Martyrs of Badr became very popular.
which they took home and ate it as a sacred deed. Elders compelled all the members of the family to eat as it was believed, it would cure diseases and the effect would last for one year. It was on the model of the Andu Neroca of Badr that various other Nerocas of saints and martyrs came to be celebrated. Men came from distant places to take part in the Andu and family members assembled in their houses where the Neroca was celebrated. The community generously contributed for the celebration of Andu and 'Badr ingale! (Oh! people of Badr) was the first word that Muslims uttered in difficulties.

The Muslims of Kerala celebrated many other local and communal festivals, also a number of which are described in the Chapter on folk life.

Before the close of the Eighteenth century there were very few pilgrim centres in Kerala and if at all there had been a few, they have fallen into oblivion, except a few Jarams of Sayyids and in Malabar of few martyrs. The Bimappalli, situated three miles to the South-west of Trivandrum railway station was founded roughly 200 years ago. According to the informations available Beema Beevi and her son Mahin Abubacker Auliya came and settled in Punttura some 200 years ago, which
means the mosque raised near their burial place is a later structure and its gates and tower are still later structure renovated and enlarged by the local community. It appears therefore Beemapalli never existed as a pilgrim centre before 1800.

Coming to Central Kerala the tomb of Hydross Kutty Mupan is another pilgrim centre with the largest Nercca at present. But Hydross Kutty Moopan himself was one of the commanders of Tipu who later revolted in protest against some of Tipu's measures, fought with his army, and died in 1788. Then he was enshrined as a martyr. But the present structure above the Jaram is a modern one and the pomp of the Nercca is enabled by petrodollar.

Further north there was the shrine of Hamburan Tangal, by whose feet people solemnly swore an oath: "was the most popular pilgrim centre". The devotees used to visit his Jaram during the outbreaks of the 19th century to get his blessing to die as martyr.

In Calicut there is the Shaykhinare Palli where 'Appani' festival is celebrated. It was an important centre of pilgrimage. The saint who lies buried there, Shaykh Abul Wafa Mohammad al-Kalikutti is believed to
have fought against the Portuguese in the Chaliyam battle in 1571. It was by the dawn of 17th century his grave became a centre of pilgrimage.

In Kanjiramaram an interior settlement of Cannanore, there is the shrine of Shaykh Abdul Qadir as-Sani who had lived in the 16th century as his Hanaqib proves, and at least by the 17th century he had become a popular saint. Such was the case of 'Aliyyulkufi, the saint of Kanakamala, who also lived in the 16th century and lies buried near the mosque of Peringattur. The local tradition says that he died in 200 A.H. But clear evidence had been available in this study to show that he lived in the 16th century and was a contemporary of Abdul Qadir as-Sani.

Still north there had been the Darga of Ullal. Though outside the State by a few miles the Ullal Dargha of Hazrath Madani is one of the largest and most popular shrine on the Western-Coast. He is said to have been settled in the village of Ullal in the 14th century. He is still treated as the patron saint of mariners and fisherfolk. The Dargha had been a centre of pilgrimage from very early times. A visitor can see the large number of the replica of ships, oads, and boats offered
as offerings made at the face of some imminent calamity on high seas. The Dargha is the most popular shrine of the whole of Malabar and South Canara. The popularity of the saint is understood even in the interior Malabar from the kind of naqbas made. A goat is vowed to the saint and with a small purse of cloth it is set free. It moves undisturbed eating whatever it likes along the road. No one dares to hurt it. People respectfully put coins into the bag. It is said after wandering months covering hundreds of miles the goat would finally come to the Dargha to be sacrificed for the annual Urs. The foul smelling, stinking goat is so familiar in the countryside that if someone looks untidy and dirty friends would comment, "There goes the goat of Ullal!" The Dargha is a very rich institution which runs Madrasahs, schools and even an Arabic college from its funds. Sufficient to say that two full-time clerks are on duty to keep the accounts of the ever-increasing income. The Dargha is a magnificent and stupendous structure.

Every village or town had its own patron saint. Some Sayyid or Auliya lies buried in them. There was no dearth of such Jarams, or tombs; for Thurston noted a very curious incident; "A beggar died as reported by
Tottenham (probably of starvation) by the road-side in Valluvanad Taluk. When alive no one worried about him. But, after he died, it was said that celestial voices had been heard, uttering the call to prayer at the spot. The Mappilas decided that he was a very holyman, whom they had not fed during his life, and who should be canonised after death. A little tomb was erected and a light may be seen burning there at night. Small banners are deposited by the faithful who go in number to the place and there is, I think a money-box to receive their contributions." Such Jarams very soon acquired fame and consequent wealth and pomp to attract more and more devotees. An old man or woman might often say to have been dreamt of a divine person commanding to do something. People may throng to his presence and on death will be enshrined as divine. Such was the case of 'Paital's Jaram' of recent origin where a 'Paital' (a very small baby) was buried. In fact such local centres of religion was a social necessity for those who had converted from lower castes who in their pre-conversion days had innumerable gods, deities and sub-deities.

Jamaat organisation was very loose, because the jamaats were not organised on democratic lines. The Jamaat was always headed by the Karanavar or Mutuvalli' (custodian of the mosque) and even the Qazi had a subservient role. The Mutavallis were often the senior member of a Taravad who might have initially made 'waqf' (voluntary gift), the plot for Masjid and a considerable amount of property attached to it. Since the Karanasthanam (Office of Karanavar) was prestigious possession, the Taravadss never liked to part with it and in many cases even when all the wealth and power of the Taravad, was gone, the Karanasthanam remained with them. There were disputes over this only when a family was split into many groups, that too was limited to among the members of the same family. The rest were mere spectators in the game. The only way to acquire Karanasthanam of a mosque was to found a new one, donating site and some property for the purpose. The appointment and dismissal of a Qazi was the personal affair of the Mutavalli in which members of the Jamaat had no voice. This was the case everywhere except in such cases where Qaziship was hereditary as in the case of Nalakath Qazis of Calicut, or of the Bukhara Tangals of Valarpattanam. In such cases Qazis were independent and had decisive voice in the day-to-day administration of the Jamaat. The Qazis therefore never
interfered in the Jamaat administration and gave their opinion only when asked for. Thus however sincere they were, they lacked initiative and was rendered impotent. To supplement their income they practiced sorcery and magic or engaged private tuitions in the houses of the rich. Thus they held the community in darkness, as the blind leads the blind not out of darkness. Responding to the call of jihad to fight the worshippers of cross the community fought against foreigners until 1921, which estranged Muslims from the system of vernacular education, since it was established by foreigners. While the rest of the society advanced in many walks of life, the Muslims continued in their superstitions and hatred of foreigners. The condition was different in southern parts of Kerala where the Christian missionaries had set up many educational institutions and social welfare activities. Thereafter much hesitation the Muslims were compelled to move with the rest of the country in social advancement. Moreover their attitude to foreigners had not been so bitter as the Mappilas of Malabar, who continuously for one century had bred nothing but enemity and hatred against them.

At least the Christian community stood in sharp contrast to the Muslims in social advancement.
While the Christians made use of the Christian British administration to protect their interests by enactment of laws and for upliftment of the community especially with the initiative of missionaries, Muslims stood aloof from the administration—the administration which turned inimical. They had no leadership and the religious leadership, which would in the circumstances have been the only uniting force, was rendered impotent, and community continued to be subservient to the vices of the landowning aristocracy. The Qasis only gave their opinion when asked for in solving cases and disputes but the decision was always of the Elders, of course not contradictory to the Sheria'. One of the factors that rendered the institution of Qasi weak was that they were always people from outside the Mahal, and without roots in the Jamaat. Even now they are the lowest-paid group and by virtue of their profession are deprived of any other vocation or trade, that would supplement their income. The only attraction of the profession was that they were welcome guests in every household, on all occasions.

The marriage was always conducted by a Qasi, who would be present on special summons from the householder, accompanied by the Mulla and Mukri. Often it
was with the Qazi that the Elders and Karanavars also presented themselves in the house. But such instances were very rare, and were soon overcome with some fine or apology as the case may be, or a Musaliam of some other place was available to conduct the Nikah.

The Mulla and Mukri were other functionaries of the Mosque and Jamaat. Mulla was a local resident who was a teacher of the Madrasah and a local sorcerer and the man who would recite the Quran in houses or recite yasin or fatiha on important occasions. Sometimes he also served as Mukri. He was respectfully called Mullakka (Mulla + Kaka), a word of Persian origin used in Gujarathi too.

'Mukri' was the third functionary of a Masjid. He was the man in charge of the maintenance of the mosque, dusting and cleaning, and filling water for ablution in the hauz (tank). He also called the Bank (Adhan) and beat the Nagara (the big drum). He also called out

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46. Nagara is a Persian word, meaning a big drum beat for announcement, the sound of which could be heard at great distances. Its use was necessary in the days when loud speakers were not available.
on Fridays the believers to assemble and take their places, holding the wooden sword in hand. As he was one of the teachers of the madrasah, the origin of the word 'Mukri' is traced to be "Muqrium" (the one who make others read). But it seems to be a corruption of a Persian word, i.e., mukhi (the chief or head). Dr. S.C. Misra has noted that the Chhaparbandhs, a Muslim community of Ahmadabad had "till recently a generally acknowledged leader of the Jammat called Patel or Mukhi".47 It is quite possible that the word Mukri in its earlier days was Mukhi and later on significance of the office diminished and function remained more or less the same. When all other words with religious connotations are of Persian origin48 in Kerala, the word Mukri need not necessarily remain an exception.

Two names with nautical connotations are used among religious functionaries in Kerala. 'Muallim' which means a religious teacher in Northern Kerala and 'Sidi' with the same meaning in the southern parts. Muallim is

47. S.C. Misra, Muslim Communities in Gujarat, Bombay (1964), p. 89.

48. Refer to the words like 'Bank' used for Adhan only in Kerala. Naghara (big drum) Mulla, Misan, Zanjan - all are Persian words.
the leader or captain of the ship, also used to mean the man who climbs the mast and watches the sea, essentially an Arabic word. It is quite possible since Muslims came in groups as mariners under a Muallim who used to teach them (perhaps they were apprentices) the word came to be used for religious teachers too. The word Sidi seems to be of non-Arabic origin, probably Turkish since we are familiar with Sidi Ali Rais the Turkish captain sent to Indian waters by the ruler of Egypt, Sultan of Turkey. It is possible that the word Sidi with the same function as a 'Muallim' came to be called so.

Of the service groups in Kerala only one community the 'ossans' remained unchanged. It is true that occasional groups like Pusalans remained. Yet even in the unstratified society of Kerala, ossans remained at the bottom. This was probably because of the kind of service they were supposed to render.

Muslims of Kerala with their ardent religious zeal maintained many of the Arab or Persian traits adopted themselves to meet the challenges, gave and took from the rest of the society and yet remained a distinctly proud community with its unique features and identities.