CHAPTER II

THE ORGANISATION OF THE TEMPLE AND THE PRIESTHOOD

The Rajabag Sawar temple of Yamanur called also as the temple of Yamanur peera or Yamanur Darga faces towards the east; it is situated on the bank of the river Bennihalla, which has taken its birth in Dundashi, taluk Kundgol of Dharwad district in Karnataka State. The river is so called as the story goes, because an old woman while crossing the river at its origin with butter on her head for sale slipped in the wet cowdung and fell down. From that day onwards, people began to call this river Bennihalla or Benniriver.

Location of Bennihalla:

The location of Bennihalla occupies north central part of Dharwad district and lies between Lat. $15^\circ 25' 0''$ and $15^\circ 45' 6''$ and Long. $75^\circ 15' 0''$ and $75^\circ 30' 0''$ (please see map). The basin covers an area of 733 square kilometres and covered in survey of India toposheet Nos. 48 $\frac{M}{6}$ and 48 $\frac{M}{7}$. This basin is known as Bennihalla basin and covers part of Navalgund taluk of Dharwad district, Karnataka State.

The water of the river is salty, and its flows one and half Km. from the temple. The water is used for the worship of the temple. The water has magico-religious
FIG. MAP SHOWING RIVER BENNIHALLA & TUPURIHALLA
powers, it cures many skin diseases; that is why, the devotees have great faith in the power of this water. The procession on the annual fair is also taken up to this river. At that time the priests walk over the people who sleep on the road. The people think themselves, blessed by the deity. (please see photograph)

Mr. A.S.Rao in his M.Phil Dissertation Hydrogeo chemical studies of part of Bennihalla Basin in Dharwad district has analysed the chemical properties of surface water of Bennihalla as given in the following table. (1985 : 8,9)

Table No.4
Showing the results of chemical analysis of surface waters of Bennihalla basin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.No.</th>
<th>Bennihalla near Bennur</th>
<th>Gadanyal Tuparihalla</th>
<th>Bennihalla near Sotaknhal</th>
<th>Bennihalla near Navalgund</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>BHR 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>pH</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.5</td>
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<td>Ca</td>
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<td>T.D.S.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ref.No.</td>
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<td>BHR 7</td>
<td>BHT 1</td>
<td>BHT 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ca</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mg</td>
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He has come to the conclusion that the water of Bennihalla is not potable and not useful for irrigation. The water content exhibits salt contents and salt is anti-biotic in the opinion of physicians. The physicians also say that high Alkaline is also found in the water of Bennihalla which acts on the skin; and it is preventive of skin diseases. The sulphate which is good for skin diseases is also found in the water. If the water is containing less Acidic properties, it is antiseptic in nature. Thus the conclusions of the physicians after examining the chemical properties of Bennihalla water are of the opinion that this water is preventive of skin diseases; and antiseptic in nature. Thus the superstitious use of the water of Bennihalla for skin diseases is proved to be scientifically good. This reveals that some of our religious rituals are scientifically proved to be good.
This was found in those days by the people, saints and priests without analysing the properties of the water. Merely on the basis of trial and error method they had come to know the medical use of the water of Bennihalla used for thousands of people since hundreds of years.

The following common skin diseases are being cured by the water of Bennihalla:

1. Scabis (Huruku).
2. Boils (Kura), Pioderma.
3. Lecoderma (Tonnu, Bilupu).
4. Exzema (Isabu).
5. Lepracy (Kushta roga).
6. Veneral diseases (Guhya roga).
7. Itching (Turaki).
8. Prichlyheat (Bevarasali).
9. Vorms (Naru etc.).
10. Skin Alergil disorders (Charma roga)
11. Skin Aleer (Hunnu).
12. Wounds (Gaya).
13. Ring worms (Taddu).
14. Burns (Sutta gaya).
15. Cyphalis and Ghanoria (Guhya roga)

The devotees take home the sacred water of this river in small bottles. That is why there is great sale of small empty bottles near the temple. The devotees take a sacred dip in the holy water of Bennihalla near the temple. The water of the river is sweetish at its origin becomes saltish near Yamanur for about 2 miles, and becomes sweetish again
before joining the Malaprabha river. That is why it has gained its importance. The water is also used for burning the lamp in the temple at the time of annual fair (Ursu). But according to the narration of the priests the edible oil is mixed with the water for burning of the lamp. The priests also say that in olden times without mixing of the edible oil the lamp used to burn only with the water of the Bennihalla. (please see map)

It may be also inferred that because of the salt content in the water, the skin diseases like, lepracy, Tonnu, Huruku, Veneral disease, etc. are cured. During the worship the salt and edible oil are offered to God Brahmadeva who is situated at the main gate of the temple. This significance of salt and saltish water plays a great role in the worship of this temple. In this connection the role of salt is discussed by Claude paque in current Anthropology in the issue of April 1984: 237 - 238 : "In Morocco no salt may be brought into the house during the first week of an infants life. Salt is considered apt to inferiate the ever present house spirit, thus endangering the child's life. Therefore meals are prepared without salt to protect the baby".

Salt plays a fundamental part in human nutrition, and man cannot live without it. For infants and children
adequate salt intake is more vital than for adults. One might even say limiting "because of the particular vulnerability to dehydration, Diarrhea and Cholera, like syndromes which are in fact mere salt water imbalances, Salt deficiency in Moroccan children following early evening has been observed to lead to salt water metabolic disorders such as, hypobolemie (extracellular) thirst extracellular dehydration compete an orexia (even for milk) diarrhea and severe malnutrition".

But here in this temple the devotees offer salt to God Brahma in connection with the weeping infants so that children stop weeping. This shows that there is some connection between the belief and the medicinal value of the salt and the saltishwater of the river. It is also true that they also offer raw sugar to the main temple which is the local Muslim practice. Because whenever the Muslims go to their place of worship, they carry with them the small packets of raw sugar. This is followed here by all, irrespective of their caste, creed and religion. The large amount of sugar is sold outside the temple. The priests again sell it to the merchants and thus taking a circle of sale of sugar and salt in the temple complex.
A. The main temple of Yamanur:

The road from Hubli to Solapur which is the State
high way No.63 runs from South to North before the main gate
at a distance half a furlong from the temple. Near this road
which connects the way to temple, there are two big pillers
of 8 feet height at the entrance to the way to the temple.
These pillers are "Deepastambas" (Lamp pillers). The lamp
pillars are commonly found before the Hindu temples. Infront
of these pillars there is a name board of the temple on which
it is written "Rajabag Sawar or Changadev temple".

In olden days the lamp pillars were lit with edible
oil. But recently these have been replaced by the electric
lamps.

The temple is situated in the middle of the village.
There are some permanent shops which sell sugar, salt, edible
oil etc. before the temple in two rows. The arch of the
main gate (Gopuram) of the temple is in the Muslim style, but
there is a tower built on it in Hindu style. There is a
room on the tower of the temple. The architecture of the
main gate of the temple itself is a combination of the Hindu-
Muslim style. This (New one) was built in 1982-83 by the
donation of two persons, namely, G.Mehaboobkhan and
Mr. Pujari of Kottur in Kudalagi taluk of Bellary district,
Karnataka state. One is a Muslim and the other is a Hindu.
Here also we find the Hindu-Muslim synthesis in building the
The main gate of the temple.

Separate Qs for ladies and gents before the temple.
new gate, when the old gate had become ruined. The old one was built with mud and sun-baked mud bricks. The new gate is built with the factory made bricks, mortar and cement. On this main gate of the temple is written the name of the temple: Rajabag Sawar or Changadev temple.

As we enter the main gate, we find the statue of Brahmadeva at the right side of the main gate. Here the devotees offer the salt and edible oil, refined sugar, fried bengal gram etc. It is said and believed that Brahmadeva (God of creation) soothes the crying children, and the children stop the crying. At the left side of the main gate there are two tombs. One belongs to the original priest Kshetroji Rao Burge. In one tomb are laid the ashes of the Kshetroji Rao Burge and in the other that of his wife Smt. Narasubai. Over the tomb of Narasubai the sacred basil plants have been planted. Along with the ashes of Narasubai, her bangles also have been buried in the same tomb.

It may be noted here that Smt. Narasubai died first which is considered as meritorious, because it is the belief of the Hindus that the dying of the wife before the husband is a blessing, while the dying of the husband first, which brings widowhood to the woman is a curse.

This place is called Brindavan. The devotees offer worship to these tombs. To the left of these tombs there is
LAYOUT OF THE TEMPLE COMPLEX OF RAJA-BAG SAWAR IN YAMANUR

1 - GOD BRAHMA
2 - TOMBS
3 - NEEM TREE
4 - PLATFORM
5 - HOUSE OF PRIESTS
6 - TYPANUM
7 - MAIN TEMPLE
8 - CRADLE
9 - NAME BOARD
10 - HUBLI-SOLAPUR ROAD
11 - LAMP PILLERS
12 - COMPOUND WALL
an old neem tree which is of magico-religious importance. Under this tree there is an altar which is used for sacrificing sheep, fowls. The exorcism is practiced under this tree as it is believed that under this tree the ghosts that possess men and women will be made to free them.

At the left of this neem tree there are two small rooms where the sacrificing animals are kept and the persons suffering from diseases take shelter. At the left of these two rooms there is a small gateway which leads to the houses of priests.

Now we come to the main temple of Changadev or Rajabag Sawar. The temple is built on the square platform which is about four feet high from the ground. The main temple is divided into two parts. The entrance is an open space with flat roof. The roof is made of wood and slate stones, mud and mortar. The bells small and big are hanging to the roof here and there, throughout the open space. The big tympani a type of drum which can be beaten to produce a type of sacred sound at the time of worshipping is kept in one of the corners of this part of the temple.

The other portion of the temple is called "Garbha Gudi" (The main temple where there is a platform on which the following idols are kept for worship.
Inner part of the temple.

Jnanadev and Changadev.
1. Panjas six, small and big, made of Brass.
2. The idol of Narashima, half human being and half lion- an incarnation of Lord Vishnu made of Bronze.
3. Two sacred fans, made of bamboo sticks and cloth.
4. Peacock feathers.
5. The idol of tiger, made of Bronze.
6. Sacred waterpot, made of copper.
7. Sacred ashpot, made of stone.
8. The idol of small silver horses.
9. Incense burning handle, made of wood and metal.
10. Two wooden sticks bent towards left.
11. Sacred cot, made of wood, and a bed.
12. The handle for burning camphor, made of Brass.
13. The lamp stand.
14. A trident, made of steel and a wooden staff, a pair of wooden foot wears (symbol of (God) Shiva).

We also see these handing some small cradles, threads, clades etc.

It is said that a black stone called saligram, which is chiefly found in the river Gandaki is kept under of the plat form, while building it. This saligram is worshiped as sacred to Lord Vishnu. We see some white and green flags.
The devotees gathered in the fair.

The sacred fans in the temple.

The devotees gathered in the fair.
here and there in the sacred complex. The white flags are the symbol of Hinduism, and the green flags are the symbol of Muslim (Islam), so this indicates that both the symbols of Hinduism and Islam are incorporated in the sacred centre and the cult.

There are two Asylums (Dharmashalas) one temporary and another permanent which are mainly meant for the pilgrims who come to visit this sacred centre. Thus, in this temple we find the symbols of troid, God Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwar of Hindus besides Muslim panjas. The main temple Rajabag Sawar or Changadev is surrounded by a compound wall.

B. Another (Muslim) temple of Yamanur:

In Yamanur there is another temple of Rajabag Sawar or Changadev which is situated at a distance of a furlong from the main temple. Here also the panjas and the idol of Narashimha and certain other articles are mainly found in the main temple of Yamanur are also seen here. This temple was branched off from the main temple of Yamanur, because of the disputes for priesthood of the temple. At present a Muslim priest, belonging to Makandars family, is the priest of this temple. This tradition of Muslim priest is carried on in some other places like, Chinchali, Malasamudra in Dharwad district.

Generally, when the pilgrims come to the main temple, the Muslim devotees who are related to the Muslim temple
request the pilgrims to visit this temple also. The pious pilgrims sometimes visit this temple also irrespective of caste, creed and religion. This temple is built by sunbaked bricks with flat mud roof. There is only one room in the temple.

2. HUBLI: A maratha devotee who was a disciple of the main temple of Yamanur took the cult to Hubli and built a temple of Rajabag Sawar or Changadev there. Some devotees who come to Yamanur visit this temple also on their way. Besides, there are a large number devotees in Hubli itself who are pattegars, Muslims and people belonging to other castes and religions. The temple was built in the middle of the large area donated to it. But later the government acquired the area and the temple was shifted to one of its corners. Even today the temple is working and the devotees after worship as we see in Yamanur temple.

3. RAMDURGA: A member of the Burge family took the cult to Ramdurg in Belgaum district at present and then in the princely state of Ramdurg. This temple is entirely built of stone. Even there are stone pillars for the building. The temple is huge and gracious. The Royal family of Ramdurg princely state used to visit this temple as token of Hindu-Muslim integration.

4. DODDAMANGADI HALLI: Three Kmts from Ramdurg, there is a village called Doddamangadi Halli where the temple is on
the bank of Malaprabha river. The priests belong to the same caste of Marathas but of different family. This is a very small temple, but for this tinny village it has become a great centre for religious pilgrimage. The fashion of the idols and worship are similar to that of Yamanur. The cult was actually carried from Yamanur by the priest of this temple himself. Once when he was offering sugar to the main temple of Yamanur an idol of small silver horse had come in the packet of sugar. So he thought that the God has blessed him to start a new temple in his village and accordingly he started this temple in his own village. The worship had started before a century, but a new temple was built very recently. It is said that in other sacred centres of Changadev or Rajabag Sawar, the plan of the temple is very similar to that at Yamanur.

The Analogous Cults in Karnataka

a) Veerashaiva Math of Savalagi:

There is a monastery of Savalagi in Gokak taluk of Belgaum district, Karnataka State, on the bank of the river Ghataprabha. This monastery is also carries a synthetic cult of Hinduism and Islam. The story of this Veerashaiv Math is told as follows:
Swamiji of Savalagi Math in a Muslim garb.
During the Muslim rule in India at about the end of 16th Century A.D., there was a famous saint of Muslim called Kwaza Bandhe Nawaz in Gulburga. He heard much about the Veerashaiva monastry of Savalagi near Gokak in Belgaum district. Therefore, Kwaza Bandhe Nawaz called the Veerashaiv saint Shivalingeshwar Swamiji to visit Gulburga his place.

But the saint Shivalingeshwar rejected the request of Kwaza Bandhe Nawaz of Gulburga. Then became angry with this and sent his army men to bring him forcefully, the Hindu saint of Veerashaiva Math of Savalagi. The army men were killed by the feet of saint of Savalingeshwar. One hearing this news Kwaza Bandhe Nawaz of Gulburga started towards Savalagi riding on a tiger. Knowing this by intuition Shivalingeshwar Swamiji sitting on a wall platform began to flot himself in the air. The saint Kwaza Bandhe Nawaz of Bulburga was amazed at this fete and became the disciple of Shivalingeshwar. Hence Kwaza Bandhe Nawaz of Gulburga built up this huge Math in memory of their friendship. Therefore we see in this monastry the synthetic cult of Hinduism and Islam. Both the saints are being worshiped here, though monastry belongs to Veerashaiva, a set of Hindus. Whenever the saint of this Veerashaiva monastry dresses himself, he dresses once in the saffron colour and some other times he dresses in green robes which is a symbol of Muslim saint. Both Hindus and Muslims are devotees of this monastry.
The monastery is built in the Hindu Muslim style. Both Hindu Muslim saints are revered here. The service to the monastery is offered both by Hindu Muslims.

This Veerashaiva monastery runs educational institutions like High Schools and Colleges. There is sufficient facility of free boarding and lodging for devotees. This is an outstanding monastery in this part of the country wherein we see the synthesis of Hindus and Muslims.

b) Fhakeerswami Math of Shirahatti:

There was a famous Muslim saint (Walli) called Khaji Ameen Deen in Bijapur during the rule of Adilshahis in 16th and 17th centuries. Hindus and Muslims were the disciples and devotees to this saint. This saint was performing miracles. One day a woman brought a baby which was dead and placed it before him and prostrated and left the dead child and went away, as she had enough of other children at home. The saint with his miraculous power brought the dead baby to life and named him Fhakeer. The baby belonged to a Veerashaiva sect of Hinduism. The boy was brought up in the monastery under the care of the saint. He was trained well under the saint; in course of time the saint died, but the boy was still staying there. One day
the saint (Walli) appeared to him dream and told him to go to Shirahatti in Dharwad district, and to carry on his cult of magico-religious activities irrespective of caste, creed and religion. The very next day the boy left for Shirahatti and established himself there in Shirahatti. The people of Shirahatti were amazed at the miraculous powers and accepted him as their own religious head in Shirahatti.

The saint (Swamiji) as he was influenced by the then existing cults of Veerashaivism or Lingayats, and the boy himself was born in the family of Lingayats, the large number of Lingayats and Muslims who were rich and became his devotees. The popularity of the monastery of Fhakeerswami of Shirahatti increased day by day.

It is said that, swamiji used to catch the serpants and to put them round his neck just like Lord Shiva. He could eat fire and bring rain whenever the people wanted rain. He was a very good exorcist. The philosophy of life of this saint was influenced by both Hinduism and Islam. He was trained by a Muslim saint and therefore some of the ritualistic symbols and practices are those of the Islamic religion; were also being practiced by the saints of this monastery. However, the boy was born as a Lingayat and large number of devotees of Fhakeerswamiji comprised of these of Lingayats (Hindus). Therefore even to day the monastery has preserved the cult and philosophy of Veerashaivism and Islam.
So to say the monastery is completely secular. Any person belonging to any caste or creed can ascend the throne of swamiji. In the list of descendents of Fhakeerswamy, the persons who become swamiji's of saints or Fhakeers are drawn from all communities, irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Once it so happened that the swamiji of that monastery was going on an elephant and saw a dumb boy belonging to a tribal community. This boy attracted the swamiji, and he was brought to the monastery and made the principal swamiji or saint of that monastery (Math).

The researcher visited the monastery and saw a large number of buildings built of fine stone, with a very big compound. There are elephants, camels and horses. The monastery owns a large number of cultivable and fallow lands. The people are being fed free every day, which is called Dasoha, a system of Veerashaiva monastery, which has come down from the time of Basaveshwara. The food eaten here is called prasada (sacred food). Many students receive their education by staying in free boarding and lodging of this monastery. The different types of sacred education is being imparted in this monastery (Math).

At present the swamiji belongs to Veerashaiva Lingayat religion. Whenever the desciples of this monastery are initiated, both Hindu and Muslim rituals are observed.
At the time of initiation the Muslim priests are invited to initiate the successor to the headship of the monastery. At the same time the Veerashaiva lingayat priests are also invited. So in this way the monastery of Phakeerswamy of Shirahatti, like that of the monastery of Savalagi Shivalingeshwar Swamy is the combination of Hindu Muslim religion.

c) The Shareef Saheb of Shishuvinahal:

The saint was born in the village Shishuvinahal in Shigganv taluk of Dharwad district in Karnataka State, in the family of Muslims whose father was known as Imamsaheb and mother was known as Hajjumma. This boy was born with the blessings of Hajaresh Khadiraling of Hulgur, in Shigganv taluk of Dharwad district in the year 1819. It may be recalled here that a Muslim saint Khadiraling was born by the blessings of God Mouneshwar of Navalgund district Dharwad to a Pinjar woman (a coman of Muslim sect) in Hulgur Shigganv taluk.

It is amazing to note that Shareef Saheb of Shishuvinahalli was born by the blessings of this Khadiraling. These events signified the development of secularism and Hindum Muslim religious synthesis in those days. Shareef Saheb was initiated by Govind Bhat, a Brahmin priest of Kalasa in Shigganv taluka of Dharwad district, near by
Shishuvinahal. Govind Bhat was not only a Brahmin priest but he was also a saint. Shareef Saheb in course of time was naturally influenced by the cult and philosophy of Veerashaivism, the existing popular religion of this part of the country, and thus Shareef grew into a saint, a poet and a philosopher.

Therefore Shareef became very popular and his followers belonged to Islam, Brahmanism and Veerashaivism. He became a secular saint and the people of all religions began to worship him. The Veerashaiva Swamiji’s and priests belonging to Islam and Hinduism began to visit the math.

d) Bunde Nawaz Darga of Gulbarga:

There is a Muslim shrine called Bunde Nawaz Darga in Gulbarga built over the tomb of a Muslim saint. It has been observed by researcher that there is a tomb of a Veerashaiva saint called Gurushiddeshwar Swamiji. A tomb of a Veerashaiva in the Muslim shrine is definitely a sign of Hindu Muslim religious synthesis. There is every possibility that such types of shrines where Hindu Muslim religious synthesis has taken place are large in number. Here are given only a few such institutions which have been marked by the researcher.
In all these monasteries the miracles done by the saints and the pictures of the saints and their deeds have been depicted by way of mural paintings. Besides, there are photographs which have been artistically developed by the artists on the religious themes of the monasteries and Dargas.

The researcher visited the place in order to study the Hindu Muslim religious synthesis here. The tomb of Shareef Saheb is there in Shishuvinahal. It has been renovated by building a huge platform with marbles and other fine stones. The tomb is surrounded by a large number of different types of trees is in the open air. To this tomb Brahmins, Muslims, Lingayats and people belonging to all other castes, creed and religion come.

On one side a Muslim priest chants the Quaranie spells while worshiping with the burning of insense. On another side another Muslim priest breaks the co-conuts which is a Hindu custom. It is said that the priests are the descendents of the family of Shareef Saheb. There is a Dasoha (sacred food), free boarding. At present, because of the modernisation, the trust committee of the tomb of Shareef Saheb has started a High School, wherein the poor boys are provided with free boarding and lodging facilities. They have built a temple also with fine architecture in the style of Hindu Muslim combination. The top of the temple has
a solid arch in the Muslim style and the tower is decorated with the status or pictures of meditating saints in yogic style. (please see photograph) The temple complex is managed by the trust in which the members are mostly Hindus and the Muslim priests belonging to family of Shareef Saheb only are included in the trust committee.

Generally, Shareef Saheb is considered the Kabir of Karnataka. The Hindus and Muslims have been revering, worshipping and singing the songs composed by Shareef Saheb. Especially his songs in the form of Bhajans (prayer songs) are very popular. His is folk literature respected by the scholars as well. It is said that Shareef Saheb himself used to visit the temple in Shishuvinahal belonging to Basava and Lingam. He has called this temple in his poems "Shishuvinahaladeesh" (Dr. M. Singagi 1983: 18). Rightly today the name board to this temple is written on one of the walls of the temple facing the road "Shishuvinahaladeesh".

The Shareef Saheb of Shishuvinahal, the saint Nagalingaswamy of Navalgund, the Hindu saint Madiwaleshwar off Garag taluka Dharwad in Dharwad district and Siddarudha Swamiji of Hubli use to meet each other and discuss the matters of philosophy and religion. It is quite possible that these secular saints might have visited the temple of Rajabag Sawar or Changadev of Yamanur. It has been already noted that he
Shishuvinahal Shareef Saheb has visited Yamanurappa, and it may be mentioned here, that he was visiting Yamanurappa of Yamanur.

From the above mentioned temples of Rajabag Sawar in North Karnataka and Maharashtra and the analogous temples, and saints of this part of the country, it appears that there was a movement of synthesising the prevalent religious cults of Hindus and Muslims.

The process of integration of Hindus and Muslims was possible in such a secular development of religion in India though Islam was iconoclastic whereas Hinduism though in the beginning was iconoclastic, because of the influence of Buddhism and Jainism. Hinduism developed as a religious of the worship of idolatry. This spirit of Hinduism being originally iconoclastic was very easy for them to accept the Islamic principles. However, Indian Muslim went on worshipping the saints and their tombs. The palms (panjas) that are worshiped by the Muslims resembled the worship of idolatry of Hindus.

The miracles made by the saints among Hindus and Muslims opened the door for mysticism, for the Hindus called this religion of mysticism Mayavada, and Indian Muslims accept it as suffism. Thus the practices of Muslims in India tended to conform to Hindu religious customs (Bhattacharya : 1969 : 586 – 592). Members of the two communities participated
in one another's religious festivals. It is said that Shankar of the 7th century A.D., the greatest architect of Modern Hinduism, was influenced by the Monim of Islam (Bhattacharya: 1956 : 586).

Fawucett in his notes on the people of Malbar (Anthropology : Vol: 3) draws attention to the Bhakti cult in the South). He suggests that this Bhakti cult was mainly due to the influence of Islam.

At the time of Babar as mentioned in his autobiography there was the growth of Hindustani like comprising the conducts of Hindus and Muslims in India. The court language was becoming common for both Hindus and Muslims. Even more significant was the co-operation of the Hindu Muslim communities in the evolution of the common language wherever Muslims settled among Hindus. Urdu, Hindi or Hindustani whatever be the name given to it was evolved out of material derived from ancient Indian sources as well as the innovations brought in by the new Muslim settlers, along with this growth of a common language. There was a remarkable phenomenon of the growth of literature in the different Indian languages.

Before the advent of Muslims Sanskrit was held as the pride among all learned men. This domination of Sanskrit retarded the growth of literature in the vernaculars. The advent of Muslim power created a new situation in which
Sanskrit was gradually dethroned, from its position and privilege. Religious reformers, mostly non Brahmins and even some non Hindus made their appeal in local languages.

In course of time Islam came to be accepted as a caste in India and at the same time, because of the influence of Hinduism on Islam, the caste system was created among Indian Muslims. Slowly Muslims came to be accepted as the people of the land in the village community life. Hindus and Muslims had to depend on each other for many socio-economic functions, and hence came in contact with the religious practices. The Hindus began to observe the Muslim festivals and the Muslims initiated the Hindu religious ceremonies. Thus the synthesis in the field of religion and religious places has been noticed, and it does not required elaborate description as it is so apparent and real. It may be said that from the point of view of both Hindus and Muslims there was an attempt at mutual understanding.

The lives of great men like Ramanand, Kabir, Nanak, Dadu and others, offer unmistakable testimony to this fact. The similarities between Vishnavism and Suffism have been often noticed. After the independence the acceptance of secularism of political and religious activities in India is another evidence of synthesis of Hinduism and Islam, the two great communities in India.
It may be recalled here that this type of synthesis of Hinduism and Islam gave birth to a new religion in India called Sikkism. It may be mentioned here that though Sikkism was accepted only as a sect among Hinduism, in fact it was a new religion, which was evolved on the Indian soil, through the synthesis of the principles of Hinduism and Islam.

It is true that though in other places in India, this kind of religious synthesis was prevalent among the people, it was not regarded as a different kind of religion, as it was done in the case of Sikkism. Even today there are numerous communities in India, especially among the tribals, Harijans and backward classes and communities, where people worship and observe both Hinduism and Islam. For this synthesing process, Mahatma Gandhi and other political leaders also said: "Ram and Rahim Ek hai" (i.e. the God is one whether Hindu God or Muslim God.) This kind of statement made by the political leaders of Independent India was to bring about synthesis among Hindus and Muslims of India.

ORGANISATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD:

The researcher observed different types of priesthood while studying the organisation of the temples. These priests depended wholly or partly for their livelihood on the sacred services to the above mentioned temples of Rajabag Sawar.
There were priests—peeras (monks), Mullas and other persons, who were engaged as intermediaries between the devotees and the God for worship, and other magico-religious activities that are performed in the temples. The temples required various types of functions to be carried on, besides the worship of the deity, and they are performed by other persons for eg. there is the person who beats the tympani of drum or the person who brings the flowers for the worship, and also the person who acts as the sacrificer in the sacrificing of sheep and fowls. It is true that the shop keepers, the sugar sellers, the salt sellers, they empty bottle sellers to carry the sacred water are not the part of the priestly organisation. However, certain religious activities can not be performed without the help of these persons. The role of these persons will be discussed in the priesthood they play the secondary important roles in the performance of sacred duties in the temples. Similarly, there are even others such as the musicians, the singers, reciters, palmists, astrologers etc. However, our attention will be focussed mainly on the priests, monks, peeras, muslim monks who are directly connected with the sacred performances in the temple.

As regards the priests in the Yamanur temple, belonging to the family of Burges, though the Muslim priests in the same temple revolted against the priesthood of Burge family they were not successful in this. The dispute is only at the priesthood level but not at the level of devotees. That is why they
established another temple of Rajabag Sawar in Yamanur and appointed their own Muslim priest, taking from the family of Makandars. In the main temple of Yamanur the priest belong to Maratha caste, Suryavanshi clan of Hindus. Because of the growth of the family they have taken the right of worship by turns, i.e. starting from every Wedensway evening and ending to the next Wedensday evening. The calender thus taken shows the influence of Islam because a new day starts for Muslims from the fall of night.

The following priests under take in turn the priestly work from the 40 families of Burges of Maratha caste.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the priests</th>
<th>Tenure of turn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Y.A. Burge.</td>
<td>1½ months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. S.V. Burge divided between the families of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Bavoorao Burge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Ganapat Rao Burge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Gulab Rao Burge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A.B. Burge, divided between</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Suresh Burge</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Dattoji Ram Burge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Shivaji Rao Burge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Pandurang Rao Burge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Tukaram Burge</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. V.B. Burge, divided between</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Suresh Burge</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Dattoji Ram Burge</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Shivaji Rao Burge</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Pandurang Rao Burge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Tukaram Burge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
a. Baburao Burge  
b. Dondirao Burge  
c. Bapusab Burge  
d. Ramesh Burge  
e. Ramachandra Burge

5. N.B.Burge  
6. Subbarao Burge  
7. Ambojirao Burge  
   (metrimonial discendent)  
8. Vishwamb Rao. B. Burge  
9. R.R.Burge

4½ months  
4½ months  
4½ months  
2 weeks  
2 weeks

This arrangement of rotation of priesthood to the temple of Yamanur has been made on the basis of the size of the families of the priests.

Among the total number of 55 priests interviewed of all types of priesthood in the temple complex 43 belong to the age group of 33 to 49 years of age. None was below 18 years and very few belong to other category of age group. Interestingly enough there was no female member who acted as a priest in the temple. In other centres of temples it is also observed that it is generally the male members who act as priests. Exceptionally, ofcourse in the Muslim temple of Rajabag Sawar of Yamanur there is a woman priest because there are no elderly males in her family.
Among 55 priests interviewed, 35 are educated at the Primary level, 9 at the Secondary level, and only one was a Graduate. 9 among 55 were illiterate. All of these 55 priests primarily and solely depended only on priesthood and they did not take up any other occupation. As regards their marital status, 47 among the 55 were married and others were unmarried. Among the 55 interviewed, 5 belong to the management of the temple. This managing or governing body of the temple owns 5 acres of cultivable land which is in the name of the temple.

Every year during the annual fair about Rs.12,000/- is collected from the devotees, and this amount is spent for organising the fair. They have to spend also on the repairs of the temple, construction, if any and white washing etc. Among the Muslim priests generally there are three types of priests:

1. Peeras
2. Fhakeeras
3. Mullas

At the time of the temple fair there will be about one hundred peeras. The daily attendance of peeras will be about five. Besides there will be five Fhakeeras and few Mullas. These Muslim priests come from Navalgund, Hirekumbi in Soundatti taluk of Belgaum district; Hubli, Savanur,
A Muslim priest (Peera) uttering spells on the bank of river Bennihalla.

The Muslim priest (Peera) worshipping with insens to the idol of Narashimha.
Laxmeshwar, Hulagur and Annigeri, all in Dharwad district. This shows that most of the Muslim priests come from Dharwad district.

The Hindu priests who stay in the temple complex, do all kinds of services to the deity and priestly works themselves. The beating of tympani, the bringing of flowers, the bringing of sacred water and other sacred duties are carried out by the family members, whenever they get their turn. It may be noted here that it is the Maratha Hindu priests that are the main functionaries, owners and managing of the temple. Even the panjas (palms) of Muslims in the main temple (Garbhagudi) are being worshiped by the Hindu priests. The Muslim priest will just stand in the premises of the temple and enjoy the rights and privileges that are assigned to them, for eg. the peeras standing their will bless the devotees with a touch of peacock feather and get money from them.

Besides, they visit the surrounding villages and towns and sing songs, like Kawwali, Riwayat and get money from the people. There are two senior peeras who reside at Navalgun, the taluka head quarter of Yamanur, they come daily to the temple of Yamanur and sit very near to the innerpart of the temple (Garbhagudi) and do the services as described above. They have got this hereditary right in the temple.
The Fhakeeras generally visit and ask for alms from the people and get it and go back to their places. They have not got any other right or privilege in the temple. The Fhakeeras also hold the peacock feathers in their hands and make bless the people, with their touch saying that they are purified by this holy touch.

One Mulla who resides in Yamanur will be always there in the temple of Rajabag Sawar. It is he who makes sacrifices of sheep, fowls etc. to the deity under the big neem tree before the temple and in the temple premises. After the sacrifice the nonvegetarian food is prepared by the devotees of pilgrims. This food is served to the peers, Mulas, Fhakeeras and Hindu priests of the temple, after the same nonvegetarian food is offered to the deity in the form of Naivedy (food for deity). At the time of worship of the deity in the temple, the Mulla chants the Quaranie spells which is called Phateha.

The holy water is prepared out of the water from the Bennihalla. The Hindu Maratha priests worship the deity of the temple once in the morning at 8 A.M. and again in the evening at 8 P.M. Early in the morning the Hindu priest washes the deity and applies the Vibhuti (sacred ash). During this ritual, the priests help the devotees by offering water food and shelter.
Traditionally, the Hindu priests wear Dothi and do not wear any upper garment. They wear the sacred thread. Now a days, when the younger generation do the worshipping, some times they wear even pants, paijam but not the upper garment. The peeras come in lungies (a piece of cloth rapped around waiste) and shirts the Fhakeeras wander in lungis and shirts, some times these peeras and Fhakeeras may also wear Dothis and shirts. But the Mulas generally wear Dothi and shirts.

The Muslim priests and other devotees who come to this temple are mostly idle, poor, suffering from disease, suffering specially from various skin diseases. Prostitutes and such other diseased persons in the society also visit the temple.

During the annual fair all the members of the priestly families, the peeras, Fhakeeras, and Mullas take part in controlling the mob, arranging Qs and such other works required of them in the annual fair.

Every day and on the special occasions some of the Hindus priests and Muslim priests are seen sitting on the country made wollen blankets (Kambali) at the reception. There they welcome the devotees, chit, chat with them, guide them and take care of the devotees.
The Hindu priests in the temple belong to the Maratha caste who are nonvegetarians and drinkers of wine. The Muslims priests and Muslim devotees are also non-vegetarians, and they drink wine. We notice similarity of food habits among the Hindus and Muslim priests of the temple. So this life condition of both the types of these priests has brought about some kind of religious synthesis among Hindus and Muslims.

Secondary priests:

As we mentioned earlier there are other persons who are engaged in the services of Deity in the temple directly or indirectly. If the above mentioned priests come directly in contact with the functions in the temple, the sugarseller, the saltseller, the empty bottleseller, the small horse silver idol seller, such other functionaries also render some service to the deity, without whose help the main priests could not carry out their functions in the temple. These persons engaged in the service of the Deity, belong to the communities of both Hindus and Muslims, and they discharge their duties irrespective of the feelings of caste, creed and religions. No doubt, the main motive of these functionaries is to earn their living and to make profit. However the primary priests are also not with the mercenary motive. Hence, these people can be considered as secondary priests along with those of the palmists, astrologer, singers, dancers etc.