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THE BUKHARI SAYYIDS OF MALABAR

The Bukhari sayyids are very influential among the Muslims of Malabar, on the western coast of India. They trace their lineage from Sayyid Ahmad Jalauddin Bukhari who settled at Valapatanam, near Kannur in sixteenth century. Sayyid Jalauddin belonged to Bukhara in the present state of Uzbekistan. The Bukharis were also known as Kadimi, after Musa al Kadimi (745-799). Sayyid Jalauddin is connected with Prophet Muhammed in the following line:

Sayyid Jalauddin(d. 1569)
Sayyid Ismail
Sayyid Mahamud
Sayyid Husain
Sayyid Salim
Sayyid Jalaluddin Mahammad
Sayyid Zainuddin Mahamud
Sayyid Tajuddin Yunus
Sayyid Ismail Nasaruddin
Sayyid Husain Makhdum (1308-1384)
Sayyid Ahmad al Kabeer
Sayyid Husain Jamauddin (1063-1160)
Sayyid Muayyad Ali (1039-1144)
Sayyid Ja'far(1009-1089)
Sayyid Muhamad (990-1045)
Sayyid Mahamud Bukhari (951-1014)
Sayyid Ahmad(930-986)
Sayyid Abdullah(884-968)
Sayyid Ali asghar (865-913)
Sayyid Ja'far Zaki (841-885)
Sayyid Ali al Hadi (827-868)
Sayyid Muhammed Taqi al Jawad (811-835)
Sayyid Ali Riza (766-818)
Sayyid Musa al Kadim (745-799)
Sayyid Ja'far Sadiq (702-765)
Sayyid Muhammad Baqir(676-733)
Sayyid Zain al Abideen (657-713)
Imam Husain (626-680)
Fathima (605-634)
Prophet Muhammed (571-632)

Musa al Kadim son of Jafar Sadiq(d.765) was imprisoned by Khalifa Harun Rashid and brought to Baghdad where he was poisoned by the order of Khalifa in 799. He was buried at Baghdad. His son Ali al Rida was also poisoned by al Ma'mun, the successor of Khalifa

Harun Rashid in 818. His body was laid to rest at Mash-had in Iran. His successor Muhammed Taqi al Jawad was also poisoned by the khalifa in the age of twenty six(835) and his grave is at Baghdad near the grave of Musa al Kadimi. His son and successor Ali al Hadi Al Naqi met the same fate as his father in 868 and was buried at Baghdad in the premises of Askari mosque. The progeny through his son Ja'far Zaki (d. 885)is known as Naqwis. Sayyid Ali Asghar son of Ja'far migrated from Baghdad to Bukhara and died there according to one version. His son Sayyid Abdullah(d.968) is buried at Bukhara. Sayyid Ahmad Sulthan son of Abdullah died in 986 and was laid to rest at Bukhara.

Sayyid Mahamud Bukhari (b.957), son of Sayyid Ahmad was a pious man with miraculous powers. From his time onwards the family came to be known as Bukharis. His burial place is at Bukhara. His son Muhammed Bukhari also died at Bukhara. His son Jafar Bukhari died at the age of 82 and was also buried at Bukhara. His son Mu'yyad Al Bukhari, also known as Kamaluddin died at the age of 88 and was buried at Baghdad. His son Sayyid Husyn Jalaluddin migrated to India and lived in Uchch (Pakistan). He always wore a red rob and was called as Mir Surkh and founded the jalali sufi order under Suhrawardi Tariqah. He died at the age of 100 and has been buried at Uchch. His son Ahmad Kabir lived in Bukhara and in 1232 migrated to Uchch. No information is available regarding his life period. His son Sayyid Jalaluddin Makhdum- i Jahaniyan also known as Jahangasht became famous through his travels and piety. He was born in Uchch in Bhawalpur, Pakistan and travelled extensively for acquiring knowledge. He is said to have visited Makkah 36 times. The saint was very close to Firoz Shah Tughluq, the Delhi Sulthan. He sent him presents and sought his prayers for his well being. He used to distribute among the people, whatever he got in charity. He belonged to Suhrawardi order of sufism and people thronged to him for his guidance and prayer. His mausoleum in [Uch](#) is still an attraction for thousands of devotees. There is a mosque called Masjid e Hajjaj near his mausoleum. It is said that Jahangasht would pray in the same mosque. [Baba Fareed al Din Ganj Shakar](#) and [Naseerudin Chiragh Dehlvi](#) also observed prayers in this mosque. It is from the family of Makhdum -i Jahaniyan, Sayyid Ahmad Jalaluddin, the first Bukhari sayyid reached Malabar.

The Bukharis in Malabar

Sayyid Ahmad Jalaluddeen son of Ismail migrated to Malabar from Bukhara in 1521. We have no information about his life at Bukhara. He was accompanied to Malabar by his wife, disciples and servants. He was received by the Qazi Seethi Ibrahim and Muslims of Valapattanam near Kannur. Valapattanam has been a Muslim centre at an early time under Qazi Ramazan. Qazi Seethi Ibrahim belonged to this family. The family belonged to the descendants of Hazrat Abubakkar, the first Kahlifa of Islam. Sayyid Jalaluddeen was accommodated in a house near kunnammal mosque. Meanwhile his wife fell ill and died afterwards. Now Qazi Seethi gave his own daughter in marriage to the the sayyid and a house was constructed for the couple and the house is known as 'sayyidintakath' till this day. When Seethi Ibrahim died the elders appointed Jalaluddeen as the qazi and the qazi ship remained in the hands of the Bukharis for long.

The Cochin Bukhari branch was started by Sayyid Ismail Bukhari (1538-1612), son of Sayyid Jalaluddeen. He reached Ponnani, in the south Malabar for his higher studies. Here

he studied under Shaikh Abdul Aziz Makhdum (d.1586). After his studies he moved to Cochin where he stayed at Chethuparambu in Mattancheri. He died at an age of seventy six and was buried at Chempittapalli, Kochi. His mausoleum still stands on the northern side of the mosque.

Sayyid Muhammad(1589-1676) son of Ismail Bukhari, was born and brought up at Valapatanam. After his higher studies at Ponnani he went back to his native place. However after few years he settled at Paravanna near Tirur (Malabar). He died there and buried near the Juma Masjid of Paravanna. Sayyid Ismail Bukhari son of Sayyid Muhammed(1638-1701) started a new branch at Karuvanthuruthi near Feroke, Calicut. He was born at Valapatanam and had his studies at Ponnani. He settled for a while at Paravanna where his father has been laid to rest. Later he moved to Ponnani and married from the family of Makhdums. Two children were born to him –Sayyid Ahmad and Sayyid Abdu Rahman. When his wife died he moved to Karuvanthuruthi and married from there. Though a daughter was born she died as an infant. Later he returned to Ponnani and died there. His resting place is near Ponnani Grand Juma Masjid. His son Sayyid Ahmad changed his residence from Ponnani to Karuvanthuruthi, Feroke.

Sayyid Ahmad later moved to Malappuram. Here he married from the qazi family and a child Sayyid Ismail Akbar was born to him. Later he settled at Chaliyam, near Calicut. His grave is near Muhyaddin Masjid on the Tipu Sultan road. Sayyid Abdu rahman (b.1754) brother of Sayyid Ahmad settled at Karuvanthiruthi. His house was near the Juma Masjid and he died there. His sons moved to different places- Sayyid Ahmad moved to Puthanangadi near Perinthalmanna (Malabar) and died there. His other sons moved to Chaliyam, Tanur, Areecode and Malappuram.

Sayyid Ba Fakhruddin son of Sayyid Abdu Rahman settled at Malappuram and died in 1742. His grave is in the Bukhari grave yard of Malappuram. Sayyid Ba Fakhruddin son of Sayyid Ismail (Cochin) moved to Ponnani and died there and his grave is on the northern side of Grand Juma Masjid. Sayyid Muhammad (Muhammed Ponnani)son of Ba Fakhrudddin of Ponnani moved to Valapatanam from where he went to Kavarathi island and died there. He is buried near Kavarathi Juma Masjid.

Sayyid Muhammad Maula Bukhari (1731-1792), son of Muhammed Bukhari, a famous sufi was born at Kavarathi. Later he moved to Malabar and studied at Valapatanam. Then he moved to Cochin and South Kerala. At Cochin he made Chembitta Palli as his centre. He renovated the mosque with the help of one Jew called Shanjur, who happened to listen the speech of Maula at Cochin. The jew was very much pleased with the story of Prophet Moses revealed by Maula in his speech and donated a large teak tree for the renovation of the mosque. Sayyid Maula also preached at Thiruvithamcode in Tamilnadu and it is said that the place got the name from Thiru Vamcode where Maula performed Azan (Vanku). Shaikh Umar al Qahiri, a saint and a scholar from Kayalpatanam, Tamilnadu was his disciple and a large number of people from Tamilnadu accepted him as their guide (murshid). He died at the age of sixty three and buried at the City Juama masjid at Kannur.

The Kadappuram (Thrissur) branch of Bukharis was started by Sayyid Ahmad al Bukhari, son Muhammad Bukhari the fifth son of Sayyid Ahmad Jalaluddeen. He was also the son of Zaidaniyya Bibi, the sister of Maula Bukhari. He was born at Kavarathi and later moved to Nettur (Malabar) where he lived with his uncle Maula Bukhari. Maula gave his daughter in marriage to Ahmad and later he asked his nephew and family to move to Kadappuram near Thrissur (Malabar). When he reached on the way at Chetwai near Chavakkad he settled there and became famous among the people of all religions. The place he settled belonged to three land lords. The sayyid cured the disease of one lady of the family of the lord called Mamjalai Nair who donated land to the sayyid to construct his house and mosque. The mosque is known as Masjid al Samadani. The sayyid purchased about 100 acres of land around the mosque and the land came to be called as Koyante Awayil. He died on 19th November 1822. His mausoleum is on the eastern side of the Bukhara Masjid.

One of his sons Sayyid Muhammed Bukhari went to Madura (Tamil Nadu) for preaching. He died there and his grave is at Qazi Muqalla in Madura. Another son Sayyid Ibrahim Kunhi Koya (Masthan Thangal) was famous due to his piety and service. He lived at Nettur, Puthiya Kavu, Puthiyangadi and Kannur. He died on 28 August 1840. He is buried in the city Juma Masjid of Kannur near the grave of Maula Bukhari.

Musthafa Kochu Koya Thangal, the third son of Sayyid Ahmad, became a great scholar and poet and healer. He studied at Nettur and Ponnani. He married the daughter of Puthiyakath Ahmad al Haddad. Sayyid Ba Fakhruddin, the fourth son of Sayyid Ahmad became a rich business man, who was responsible for constructing the Bukhara house and he is the first to be buried at Bukhara maqam of Kadappuram (Thrissur). He died at the life time of his father.

Sayyid Ismail Bukhari son of Sayyid Ba Fakhruddin of Malappuram had a son called Sayyid Abdul Qadir who lived at Pazhamallur near Malappuram and his family settled there. Sayyid Kunhutty Koya Bukhari son of Sayyid Muhammed Koya son of Ismail Bukhari settled at Vadakkangara (Malappuram). His son Imbichi Koya selected Nellikkuth (Malappuram). The Pandikkad branch was started by Sayyid Abdu Rahman Unnikkoya Thangal son of Imbichikoya.

At Uddaram in Thrissur a branch was started by Sayyid Ismail Bukhari, the son of Sayyid Ahmad, the grandson of Sayyid Ahmad Jalaluddin of Valapattanam. He had two sons, Ahmad and Muhammad. Their sons spread at Kadappuram, Kochi, Puthiya kavu etc. The Puthiya kavu branch is called *Srambikkal Thanganmar*. Sayyid Muhammed Bukhari son of Sayyid Husain son of Sayyid Hamid son of Sayyid Muhammad and his offsprings also settled at Vadakkangara near Malappuram. The Muslim League leader K.K.S Thangal was from this branch and he was the son of Ismail Bukhari.

One Sayyid Ibrahim Thangal (d.1855) born in Valapattanam left for Nettur. He had his education from Ponnani and after that his family left for Padur where he constructed a monastery (Thakyav). His son Sayyid Hamza Kunhi Koya Thangal constructed a mosque called Manaluppali. One Sayyid Muhammed Kochu Koya Thangal, born at Valapattanam, after studying twelve years at Ponnani, settled at Kochangadi. He was a contemporary of famous Umer Qazi and was very close to him. Koch Koya Thangal wrote many poems and

books on Jurisprudence of which the poem on the rites after death is very important. He died on 12th August 1854 and was buried in front of Kochangadi Juma Masjid.

One Sayyid Hamid al Bukhari Koyakkutty Thangal(d.1851)migrated from Valapatanam and after studying at Ponnani Juma Masjid, settled at Padur, Kadappuram. Sayyid Muhammed Fakhruddin Thangal, son of Sayyid Ibrahim Masthan Thangal, born at Kottathara house, Vettath Puthiyangadi, was famous for his scholarship and devotion. He wrote the famous *Vaithulyam* an Arabic Malayalam work on Jurisprudence. Besides, he wrote a number of books on history and Sufism. He settled at Padur in Chavakkad and constructed the Masjid al Wustha or Valappil Palli. He died on 5 March 1881. His grave is on the southern side of Valappil Palli. His son Sayyid Muhammed Isa Kunhi Seethi Thangal (d.1915)was also an author many books. Sayyid Hamid Koya thangal son of Sayyid Muhammed Cheriya Koya Thangal was an eminent scholar in genealogy and wrote the history of the Bukhari sayyids known as *Matla'al Huda*. His work *Tuhfat al Zuhara* was famous among the scholars of Tamil Nadu. He died on 9 January 1934. Another Bukhari scholar Sayyid Muhammed Busthani Koyakkutty Thangal also excelled in his scholarship by producing many books and disciples. He died on 1 December 1960 at the age of 80.

The Valluvangad branch of Bukharis was started by Sayyid Muhammed Koya Kutty Thangal (1823-1879)who comes from Sayyid Muhammed Ismail Akbar through his son Sayyid Muhammed Paravanna; his son Sayyid ahmad Karuvanthuruthi, his son Sayyid Ahmad Chaliyam, his son sayyid Muhammad and his son Sayyid Ismail. He was an eminent scholar having close relationship with the leaders of the time like Sayyid Fazal Thangal of Mamburam and Sayyid Attakkoya Thangal of Panakkad. He was revered by the people due to his power of healing and his grave at Valluvangad(Manjeri) is still a place of visitation. His son Sayyid Jalaluddin Ahmad (1859-1922) and his son Sayyid Ismail Kunhikkoyakkutty (d.1977) were also influential persons.

The Konnara branch of Bukahris became famous due to their involvement in the anti British struggles and their devotion to God and close relationship with the people. The founder of this branch Sayyid Muhammad was the son of Sayyid Abdu Rahman Bukahri of Karuvanthiruthi. Sayyid Muhammed came to be called as Konnara Thangal. He actively participated in the struggles against the British for which he was imprisoned and hanged. The leadership of the struggle in Eranad and Vazhakkad areas was under Konnara Thangal, Karat Moideen Haji, Avokkar Musliyar and Koyamu Haji. Thangal was held responsible for spreading the rebellion to the parts of Kozhikode and by September 1922 many of his followers including Avokkar Musliyar were arrested. In the statement released by the Chief Secretary RA Graham, it is understood that Konnara Thagal was arrested from Talassery at the end of August 1922. According to the British records he was hanged by the authorities at Coimbatore.

The Chaliyam branch of Bukharis came into being through the sons of Sayyid Baba Fakhruddin son of Sayyid Abdurahman of Karuvanthiruthi. The Chairman of Ma'din Academy Sayyid Khalil al Bukhari of Kerala, India belonged to Chaliyam branch of Bukharis. His genealogy is as follows.

Sayyid Ibrahim Khaleel Bukhari

Sayyid Ahmad Imbichi koya Thangal Bukhari, Kadalundi,
Sayyid Hamid Bukhari Karuvanthiruthi,
Sayyid Ba Fakhruddin Chaliyam
Sayyid Ahmad Chaliyam
Sayyid Ba Fakhruddin
Sayyid Abdu Rahman Karuvanthiruthi
Sayyid Ismail Karuvatnthiruthi
Sayyid Muhammed Paaravanna
Sayyid Ismail Kochi
Sayyid Ahmad Jaluddin Valapatanam

Sayyid Abdu Rahman Bukhari, known as Sayyid Kunhi Koya thangal Ullal (died 1 Feb. 2014), the leader of Sunni Jamiyyat al Ulama in Kerala also belonged to the above branch of Bukharis. His line is as follows:

Sayyid Abdu Rhaman Bukhari (Ullal Thangal)
Sayyid Abubakkar Bukhari
Sayyid Hamid Bukhari
Sayyid Muhammed Bukhari
Sayyid Ba Fakhruddin
Sayyid Abdu Rahman Bukhari
Sayyid Ismail Bukhari
Sayyid Muhammed Bukhari
Sayyid Ismail Kochi
Sayyid Ahmad Jaluddin Valapatanam

There existed a branch of Bukhari sayyids at Mamburam, near Thirurangadi, Kerala through Musthafa Habib, a son of Sayyid Fakhruddin of Chaliyam. Sayyid Fakhruddin is said to have married from Mamburam and Sayyid Musthafa Habib was born to him in 1716(?). When Sayyid Hasan Jifri settled at Mamburam he married Fathima the only daughter of Musthafa Habib. (Jifri's daughter was also named Fathima and she was married to the famous Sayyid Alavi Thangal of Mamburam). Musthafa Habib resided at Valiyakkathodu near the Mambram Masjid and his family came to be known as Valiyakkathodu Thanganmar. The sons of Musthafa Habib settled at different places. One Taqiyyul Bukhari moved to Wandoor and Sayyid Ahmad to Parappur near Kottakkal. Sayyid Ahmad Darvesh, son of Muhammed Habib sent his sons to Kodinhi and other places at the instructions of Mamburam thangal who had constructed mosques at different places. (However, the famous Malabar scholar Pangil Ahmad Kutty Musliyar rejects the existence of Valiyakkathodi Thanganmar by saying that no sayyids lived in Valiyakkathodi. They also deny that Sayyid Hasan Jifri married Fathima, not the daughter of any one belonging to sayyid family, but the daughter of Valiyakkathodi Kammu Molla who never belonged to a Sayyid family. The controversy still continues..)

Sayyid Habib Bukhari son of Sayyid Darvesh son of Sayyid Habib was sent to Ponnundam near Tirur, as qazi by Sayyid Alavi Thangal in 1883 and Hasan, his grand son was sent to Kananchery, near Randathani, where Sayyid Alawi Thangal paved way for the construction

of a mosque. Sayyid Habib son of Musthafa Habib had four sons and from them Sayyid Muhammed Bukhari became the qazi of Palappura Juma Masjid, Kottakkal. He had a son called Sayyid Abdullah Bukhari. His son Sayyid Ali Bukhari had a son, Sayyid Abdullah Bukhari whose son Sayyid Ali Bukhari moved to Vettichira near Valanchery. Sayyid Habib of Ponmundam had a son called Sayyid Ali, resided at Edarikkode, near Kottakkal. Sayyid Ismail Bukhari, grandson of Sayyid Habib through Sayyid Muhyaddin came to Moonakkal, near Valanchery. Because of his devotion and piety people visited him for blessings. Presence of his grave near the Moonakkal masjid attracted a large number of people even today. His progeny was spread to Valanchery, Karthala, vettichira, Valiya Prappur, Kalad and other places in south Malabar.

Sayyid Musthafa Habib had a son Sayyid Habib whose son Sayyid Zainuddin Bukhari, moved from Mambram to Kizhakkepuram, Randathani (Malabar). He, after long meditation on a hill called Kelan Kurunhi reached miraculously in the presence of Sayyid Alawi who directed him to move to Randathani. Kizhakkepuram got the name because of its position on the east of Kananchery Juma Masjid which was constructed by Sayyid Alawi himself. Sayyid Zainuddin reached here at the age of thirty five. He had twenty two sons. Most of them settled in the surrounding areas involving in the spiritual healing and service of the people.

Even now the Bukhari sayyids are active in the community service through their scholarship and spirituality. They are humble in nature and keep a pious and pure life. They are mostly engaged in religious pursuits and few are in politics. They generally follow the qadiri line of Sufism, but like the Hadrami sayyids many of them are inclined to Ba Alawi and Shadili branch. Like the hadramis, the mausoleums of the Bukharis are still a centre of relief and meditation to the common people who visit the darghas to invoke the blessings of the deceased. It is an interesting feature that the sayyids whether those of Hadarmouth or of Bukhara became indigenized when accepting Malabari culture and way of life. Though most of them married from sayyid families alone to avoid mixing their blood, some preferred Malayalis as their wives. The sayyids kept the honorific titles as "thangals or oar" (Excellency) which was formerly used as a titles to the high castes in northern Kerala. By seeing the pious nature and status of these sayyids the people might have called them with such titles. However it can be assumed that being the early migrants the Bukharis may be the first group of Sayyids with the title thangals. Since the title was prevalent in Kannur area the Bukharis of Valapatanam might have known as thangals for the first time.

The sayyids always kept a long name indicating their clan and genealogy, but in Malabar they accepted indigenous names which are usually used by common Muslims. Koya is a general name accepted by the sayyids of Malabar along with their clan name, though all the Koyas are not sayyids. The koya is derived from khoja which is basically a respective title adopted by noble classes among Muslim communities of Persian and Central Asian lands. Later the title khoja was accepted by some merchant families, many of whom settled in the coastal towns of Indian Ocean regions. Thus we have khojas in Calicut, Mumbai, Malacca, and Zanzibar. At Calicut Koya is the indigenized name for khoja and they became the faithful agents of Zamorin who appointed them as the head of Calicut port with the title

Shah Bandhar Koya. The sayyids and sufis were also known with the title khoja in Persian and Central Asian regions and this spread to other parts of Muslim world.

The sayyids always accepted a beloved Malayalam name such as Attakkoya, Kunhatta Koya, Pookkoya, Muthu Koya, Kunhi Koya, Nalla Koya and their consorts as Atta beevi, Mulla Beevi, Kunhu Beevi etc. The common people called them with such names and the real name was not generally known to any one. They also dressed like a high class Malayali with a white shirt and a turban to denote their religious status, but the ladies wearing the burqa and niqab as the Arabs. Nowadays there is a tendency among the sayyids to spread their Arabic name by concealing their Malayali names which remained as a household name. They now generally use the clan name to declare their sanctity and global connections.

In Kerala the Bukharis are actively engaged in revitalizing the sunni Islam with their influence and scholarship. Sayyid Abdu Rahman Al Bukhari, who formerly known as Kunhi Koya Thangal was the leading spirit of Sunni Ulama under the Sunni Markaz movement of Kanthapuram Abubakkar Musliyar who had united with him the leading sayyids of Kerala. Sayyid al Bukhari , is also known as Ullal Thangal due to his long service as a theologian at the seminary of the famous mausoleum of Sayyid Shareef Madani of Ullal in Karnatakka. Another Bukhari sayyid , Sayyid Ibrahim al Khalil Bukhari, belonging to Chaliyam, and Kadalundi branch of the Bukharis has now become a leading figure in Malabar by establishing an academia called Ma'din Saqafai al Islamiyya at Malappuram. His prayer congregation at Malappuram Salat Nagar on the 27 day of Ramzan, had brought wide attention of Muslims all over Kerala and even abroad. Renowned scholars of world attend the prayer in which prolonged prayers are chanted throughout day and night. Like hadramis, Bukharis also act as healers of physical and mental diseases through their prayers and chanted water and strings. Many of them had started their own centres adjacent to the darghas of their fathers. Some of them use Ayurvedic, Unani or Homeopathic medicines along with spiritual prescriptions.

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FAMILY TREE OF THE BUKHARI SAYYIDS OF MALABAR



