

HADRAMIS IN MALABAR SUFISM

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The migration of Hadrami sayyids to Malabar region of Kerala produced tremendous changes in the life and culture of Muslims of Kerala as happened elsewhere in the Indian Ocean coasts. Their migration was mainly to the Malabar region, the north of Kerala where the rulers have been very cordial towards the immigrants from the Middle East. The Zamorins, rulers of Calicut and later the Vellatiris, the rulers of Valluvanad, and the Kolathiris of the Northern Malabar accorded all facilities to the migrants particularly those from Arab lands in order to develop foreign trade in their respective principalities. The policy of equity and justice, characteristic of the Zamorins' rule and the complete security of person and property that the Zamorins vouchsafed to all those who frequented their dominions had attracted many trading communities to Calicut among whom the Arabs predominated. As told by Barabosa "the king gave each one (Moorish merchant) a Nair to guard and serve him, a Chetty scribe for his accountant and to take care of his property and a broker for his trade."¹ The friendship developed between the Zamorins and the Arabs became so close that in the ninth century a Zamorin is said to have embraced Islam and presented a robe of honour (*khil'a*) to Ka'ba.²

Many Hadrami traders and preachers had settled themselves at Calicut. When Sufism developed into tariqas many sufis from Arab lands migrated here and maintained their hospices. Ibn Battuta says that, a monastery was maintained in Calicut to reside for the spiritual leaders and Arab Muslims. Here offerings were made in the name of Shaikh Abu Ishaq Gazeruni (d.1034). Shaikh Shihabuddin Gazeruni was the head of the monastery.³ Abu Ishaq Ibrahim Gazeruni belonged to Shiraz in Persia and died at Gazerun. The sufi order called Gazeruniyya was started in his name. It was believed that the offerings in his name were effective safeguard against the perils in seetravel to India and China. A monastery in his name was also maintained at Zaitun in China.⁴

¹ K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *A History of Kerala*, Cochin, Government Press, Ernakulam, Vol. 1.1924p.538

² P.S.M. Burhanuddin, *Hazrath Ubaidullah Madaniyum Arbikkadalile Pavizhadweepukalum*, By the Author, 1976, p. 25

³ Velayudhan Panikkasseri, *Ibn Battuta Kanda Keralam*, National Book Stall, Kottayam, 1993, pp. 82-83.

⁴ Trimingham, *The Sufi orders in Islam*, Oxford, 1971, p. 236

It was the tolerance and respect shown by the Zamorin towards the Muslims that attracted Shaikh Sayyid Jifri, a prominent Ba Alawi sufi of Hadhramaut to come and settle at Calicut in 1746 A.D. He was received by Manavikraman, the Zamorin along with Muhyaddin b. Abdussalam, the qazi of Calicut. The king requested the shaikh to settle at Calicut and granted him a coconut grove on the banks of the Kallai river and a land and a house near the pond at Kuttichira. He was exempted from all the taxes.⁵ Following Shaikh Jifri his brother Hasan Jifri reached Calicut in 1754 AD. He later settled at Tirurangadi. More members from the Jifri and other Ba Alawi sayyid families migrated to Malabar and settled at various parts. Quilandy became a centre of sayyid families from Hadhramaut. Other centres of Ba Alawi migration were Koilandy, Pantalayani, Kadalundi, Ponnani, Malappuram, Parappanangadi, Thirurangadi, Chaliyam, Kuttayi, Chavakkad, Kannur, Valapatanam, Kappad and Cochin. In all the places the sayyids started sufi centres and served the common people by giving them spiritual relief.

The sufis or *tangals*, as the sayyids are called in Kerala, practiced spiritual treatment called white magic(al ruqya or simiya) which is a branch of spiritualism (*ilm al Ruhani*) to cure physical and mental diseases. It is a kind of secret knowledge transmitted through the family members. One has to get a consent or *ijaza* from the elders or the guide (*murshid*) to practice white magic. The practitioners should adhere to the rules of religion and should abstain from vices. The common people visited these sufis to save themselves from mental agonies and worries or physical problems. The sufis gave them some divine threads after chanting some Quranic verses or names of God and blowing on them, a practice which was observed by most of the Ba Alawis. Water also was provided after chanting some verses over it and asking the patients to drink them with utmost reverence. Some times Quranic verses were written on porcelain plates or on some leaves, often on the leaf of Jack fruit tree, with some black ink often called as Arabic ink and the patient was asked to wash the writings with water and drink. Some sufis chant some verses on the head of the patients to get rid of evils. The sufis also asked the patients to recite certain Quranic chapter, mostly the Yasin, the thirty sixth chapter of the Quran or the Quranic verse called *Ayat al Kursiyy* to get rid of the diseases.⁶ Selected prayers from the Quran and the incantations using the

⁵ He was born at Tarim in 1139/1726-27 and by the age of twenty attained the perfection of knowledge. He was initiated to the Qadiri order by Muhammad b. Hāmid b. Shaikh 'Abdullah [Trimingham puts the year of the death of Shaikh 'Abdullah as 1720 (Trimingham, op.cit., p.216)]. If it is correct Shaikh Jifri had no chance of meeting him because he was born seven years after the death of 'Abdulla) and to Ba'Alawi order by 'Abdullah al Haddād, Shaikh 'Abdu Rahnan, *Kawkabiddurriyya fi Manaqibi Qutub Shaikh Jifri*, Published by the Author, 1329/1911 .p.2

⁶ For the verse *Ayat al kursiyy*, see Holy Quran, English translation of the Meanings and Commentary, Ministry of Hajj and Endowments, Saudi Arabia, 1413H, pp114-115.

names of God also are prescribed for fulfilling various needs.⁷ Repetition of certain words or verses of the Quran is always prescribed by the thangals.⁸ Sometimes some mysterious verses were written on paper of zink plates (*takidu*) and put it in aluminum or copper cases (amulets) and the patients were asked to tie them around their neck or on the wrist. Different types of squares are drawn in papers or in metal plates, some Arabic alphabets are written in the squares and they are kept in some particular places to drive away the devil or to fulfill desires. The numerical system based on Arabic letters (*abjad*) is followed for calculations in white magic.⁹ The sufis followed astrology and other classical methods to cure the diseases or knowing the fate or the future. Different calculations called *pal kanakku* or *Qurrat al Anbiya* or *mashi nottam* are used for different purposes.¹⁰

The Ba Alawis believe that their divine power is a gift from Prophet Muhammad which was transferred from the sheikh to his disciples and it will continue till the end of world. They started hospices (ribat or taqiyya) or mosques in the name of famous sufis like Shaikh Muhyaddin, Shaikh Rifai, Nafeesa al Misri and Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi of Egypt to spread the message their sufi doctrines in the length and breadth of the region. They prescribed the Muslims to recite the poetical compendium called *maulids* (panegyrics)¹¹ or praises of sufis written in local dialect called *malas*¹² in the houses to keep away the evils and for prosperity. The Ratib of Haddad was specially prescribed

⁷ See Konganam Veetil Ahmed Bava Musliyar, Ponnani, Paropakaram or ale Ulsaram, 1982, p.81

⁸ For eg., in order to increase one's wealth he is recommended to repeat 'Ya Ghani, Ya Mughni' thousand times each after morning and evening prayers; Jafar Sherif, Jafar Sharif, *Islam in India, Qanun-i-Islam, The Customs of the Musalmans of India*. Trans., G.A. Herklots, Revised edn., by William Crooke, Curzon Press. London, Dublin, 1972, Re print, 1975. p.231

⁹ For Arabic alphabetical numeral system, see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Brill., Vol. I, pp. 97-98

¹⁰ For details see Konganam Veetil Ahmad Bava Musliyar, *Upakarasaram Athava Upakara Tarjuma*, Ponnani, 1988.

¹¹ *Maulid* is the expression of individual gratitude, collective awareness and communal appreciation of Allah's mercy. It is an assembly of the praising and remembrance of the Prophet Mohammad.

¹² For *mulids* and *malas* see, *Munnutti Muppatti Munnu Vaka Mawlid Kitab*, Tirurangadi, 1992.

by the Alawi sufis to be recited after evening (maghrib) prayers or after night (Isha) prayers. These practices are continued up to this time.

Veneration of the tombs¹³ are deep rooted among the Ba Alawi sayyids. They erected tombs over their sufi masters and learned ones and venerated them. Muslims in general visited the tombs and offerings are made to the tombs in order to invoke the dead to fulfill their needs. Vows for visiting the shrines or promising offerings to them for fulfilling desires are the common tradition among the Mappila Muslims. A living or dead sufi played an important role in the social and cultural life of the common people that the sufi shrines or mausoleums became a centre of hope and refuge. For sufficient rain, to get rid of the locusts, to get a fine harvest, to get profits in the business, the people, despite their religious differences, gave offerings in the name of the sufi saint and made prayers at his dargah. According to the belief the saints while alive were endowed with *barakah*, a beneficent supernatural potential or virtue and this force emanates from their tombs, so that a visit to a shrine can benefit the supplicant.¹⁴ In Malabar tombs have been erected over all the important Ba Alawi Sayyids. The tombs of Shaikh Jifri at Calicut and that of Sayyid Alawi at Mamburam¹⁵ are still famous. The tombs are decorated with lamps and green silk clothes and Muslims even believed that covering the tomb with a new cloth a sacred deed. Sometimes some oil is kept in a bronze lamp as sacred and the lamp is lit throughout the day and night. People take oil from the lamp and smear it on their head and moustache as a mark of respect. At Mambram tomb the custodian keep a flag with him and it is waved over the head of the visitors as a mark of healing their mental and physical problems.

At Mamburam tomb weekly prayer congregations (*salat*) are held and the devotees assemble there after evening prayers on every Thursday. The Quranic chapter, *Yasin* is recited three times and followed by *tahleel* (repetition of the words of profession of faith or *kalimah*). Then the leader of the congregation will raise his hands and seek blessings of God through the intercession of Sayyid Alawi Tangal. People throng to the tomb during the annual ceremony which is held in the first seven days of the Arabic month of Muharram. Flag is hoisted on the first day and every day *moulid* in the name of Prophet Muhammad and Sayyid Alawi is recited. People from all parts of Malabar participate in the annual ceremony. Food is served to all the participants. The people who visit the tomb will make their prayers at the tomb and they kiss the velvet cover of the tomb as a mark of respect. The non Muslims of the area also visit the tomb and give offerings to fulfill their needs.

At Jifri house the annual ceremony is held from eighth to tenth Dil Q'ad month of Arabic. During these days Quran is recited at full length (*khatm*) and there after

¹³ In Kerala a tomb is generally called *jaram* or *maqam*, but for the tomb of Sayyid Alawi at Mambram and that of Jifri at Calicut the word *maqam* alone is used.

¹⁴ Trimingham, *Sufi Orders in Islam*, op.cit, p. 31

¹⁵ See below

maulid written by Jafar bin Hasan al Barzanji¹⁶ is also recited. Food is served to all the participants. Mostly the annual celebrations of at Jifri *maqam* are held as a family affair by the sayyids. The Ba Alawis accepted a large number of disciples from among the *ulama* and the common people alike.

The sufis and their tombs played a very significant role in the religious in the social reforms and religious amity in Malabar. They fought against the caste system through the propagation of the Islamic ideals among the people, particularly among the lower class. The sixteenth century Portuguese writer, Gaspar Correa reports that, "by becoming Moors they (the lower class) could go wherever they liked and eat as they pleased. When they became Moors, the Moors gave them clothes and robes with which to cloth themselves."¹⁷ When the lower castes realised that conversion to Islam accorded them higher status in the society and they would surpass many vexations and discriminations, they accepted Islam in large scale. C.A. Innes has pointed out that a "number of recruits come from time to time from the ranks of Tiyyans and from the Cherumans and the serf caste to whom the 'honour of Islam', bring franchisement from all the disabilities of an out caste."¹⁸

The Ba Alawi ascendancy over other sufi orders in Malabar was brought with the arrival of Shaikh Jifri of Hadhramaut at Calicut in 1748. It was Shaikh Jifri who introduced the Ba 'Alawi *tariqa* in the region. About the same time Sayyid Abdul Rahman 'Aidarus (d.1164/1751) also migrated to Malabar and settled at Ponnani. He also maintained the Ba Alawi *tariqa* with a slight difference that his way was very close to Kubrawiyya order, an off shoot of the *Qadiri* *tariqa*. Both Jifri and Aidarus held influence over the common people, particularly the fishermen folk of the coast. These people found the sayyids as saviours when they were neglected by the upper castes and this led to the conversion of a large number of fishermen community to Islam. The *Valiya Tangals*, as the successors of 'Abdurahman Aidarus were known, continued as the spiritual leaders while the line of Shaikh Jifri was continued by his nephew Sayyid 'Alawi (d.1260/1844) who established his centre at Mambram near Tirurangadi. The

¹⁶ Imam Barzanji, born in 1716 at Madina, was a Shafi' scholar. His family hailed from Shahrazur in Kurdistan. He wrote an eulogy on Prophet Muhammad and it is known as Barzanji Moulid.

¹⁷ Gasper Correa, *Lenda da India* Eng. Trans. Henry Stanely, *Three Voyages of Vasco de Gama*, Hakluyt Society, London, 1849, 155f, quoted in Rolland, E.Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala, A study in Islamic Trends*, Orient Longman, Madras 1971. p. 56.

¹⁸ C.A. Innes, *Malabar: Madras District Gazetteers*, Superintendent, Government Press, Madras, 1951 (First Published in 1908 edited by F.B. Evans and republished in 1933). p. 186, see also Diwan Bahadur C. Gopalan Nair, *Malayalathile Mappilamar*, Basel Mission Press, Managlore, 1917, pp. 97 - 98.

popularity of Sayyid 'Alawi became increased so much so that he came to be regarded as the *Qutb-al Zaman* (the Pivot of the Age) by his contemporaries. The famous 'ulama and sufis of the time became his spiritual disciples. He gave leadership to the Mappilas in the period of troubles and his presence became a great relief to the tenants.¹⁹ After his death his son Sayyid Fazl (d. 1318/ 1901)²⁰ continued the work of his father and inaugurated an era of reformation in the society along with the Ba Alawi lines. The Makhdums of Ponnani, and the renowned 'ulama of Malabar like 'Umar Qazi²¹ of Veliyamcode and Aukoya Musliyar²² of Parappanangadi actively assisted the proselytizing and reforming endeavour of Sayyid 'Alawi and his son. A number of mosques in southern Malabar were constructed at their behest. The litanies and devotional songs belonging to the Ba Alwi order became common among the Mappilas in nineteenth century. *Ratib* of 'Abdullah b. 'Alawi al Haddad and *qutubiyyat*²³ are chief among them. *Ratib* of Haddad was the common invocation among the Mappila Muslims as it was the tradition of the Ba Alawis. Rituals like *māla* and *maulūd* recitations²⁴ provided a feeling of oneness to the community. The Mappila festivals called *nērchas*²⁵ also played an important role in providing solidarity to the community. The *nērchas* were generally held to commemorate the heroic deeds of sufis and martyrs. The commemoration included not only of the local martyrs but also of the martyrs of battles of Islam like those at Badr and Karbala.

The proselytizing zeal of the sufi leadership caused a tremendous increase of the converts and the outbreaks in no way affected the conversion but accelerated it in many ways. Many of the Hindu tenants found refuge in Islam to relieve themselves from the yoke of caste atrocities and after shifting to Islam, they joined with the

¹⁹ For details see, Dr.Hussain Randathani, Mappila Muslims, A Study on Society and Anti Colonial Struggles, Calicut,2007

²⁰ Karim. C.K, *Kerala District Gazatteer, Malappuram*, (ed.), Adoor. K.K. Ramachandran Nair, Ernakulam, I 986. p.241-248

²¹ *Veliyankot Hazrat Umar Qazi (ra)yude Jeeva Charitravum Kritikalum.* Mahallu Jama'ath, Veliyamcode, 1988.

²² Karim. C.K, *Kerala District Gazatteer, Malappuram,op.cit.*, p. 254-256

²³ *Qutubiyyat* is a devotional song written by Sadaqatullah al Qahiri. In the song Shaikh 'Abdul Qadir Jilani, is invoked by continuous repetition of his name loudly in congregation, For *Qutubiyyat* see, 333 *Vaka Moulid*, op.cit., p. 460.

²⁴ For a study of *mala* and *mawlud* see, O. Abu, *Arabi-Malayala Sahitya Charithram*.Kottayam, 1970

²⁵ *Nerchas* are the festivals held to commemorate the death of the divines or the martyrs. For details see., Stephen Frederic Dale, *The Mappilas of Malabar. , 1498-1922, Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier*. London. 1980. pp.76 and 222.

Mappilas in their rebellion. The new converts were always the back bone of the Mappila peasant revolts. The personality and the spiritual enlightenment of the *tangals* won the hearts of many of the Hindus who approached them for blessings and many of them accepted Islam at their feet. The strength of the community increased due to conversions which provided enough man power to the rebellions. This was one of the considerations which twenty years later prompted T.H. Baber, a judge of the Criminal Court, to suggest that it might be a good idea to outlaw conversion altogether.²⁶ But the government, however, gave no serious consideration to the suggestion. And paradoxically enough, it is found that in the early years the caste Hindus raised no serious objection to the conversion of Hindu low caste tenants.²⁷

Apart with the growth of militant spirit, the scholastic activities also increased. Many of the *'ulama* composed scholarly works which even now guide the Mappila community in the field of religion and philosophy. Sayyid Fazl, and his contemporaries 'Umar Qāzi, Marakkarakath Awkoya Musliyār and Sayyid Faqrud-din are eminent authors of the period. Sayyid Fazl had ten important works to his credit.²⁸

In Malabar Shaikh Jifri and his followers had to confront with a sufi order preached by one Muhammed Shah, known as the *faqir*²⁹ who had settled at Kondotti near Calicut. Muhammad Shah was not a hadrami and his forefathers belonged to Persia. When Tipu Sultan conquered Malabar certain Muslim scholars complained to him of the heretic beliefs of the *faqir* and his successor. There upon the sultan brought him to his presence and the *faqir* answered the questions posed by the Muslim scholars. The *faqir* denied the allegations and asserted that he was true in his belief and followed the *Qadiri* order of sufism. Then he recited a poem before the Sultan and it bears the following meaning: "Islam is my religion, Muhammad is my prophet, the Qur-ān is my guide and Karam 'Ali is my shaikh. I belong to the mystic orders of Shaikh Mu'inuddin Chishti and 'Abdul Qadir Jilani."³⁰ Thus the Shah could convince the sultan that he was a true sufi. When Tipu Sultan was constructing his headquarters at Feroke he invited sufis and *'ulama* there and requested them to pray for success in his campaigns. He made Muhammed Shah an *inamdar* and granted him extensive lands as tax free.

²⁶ Tamil Nadu Archives, *Malabar District Records, Magisterial*, I 822.pp.236-7

²⁷ Poona Residency Correspondence, No. 51, p. 43, Karim C.K. *Kerala Under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan*, Kerala History Association, Cochin, 1973t., p.191

²⁸ C.N. Ahmad Maulawi and K.K. Muhammad Abdul Karim, *Mahathaya Mappila Sahitya Parambaryam*, Calicut, 1978, p. 85.

²⁹ Common name used to call the sufis. The word literally means, poor. For details of Muhammed Shah, . K.K.Muhammad Abdul Karim, *Hasrath Muhammad Shah Tangal, Kondotti*, 1995. p.13

³⁰ K.K. Muhammad Abdul Karim, *Hasarath Muhammad shah.... op.cit..* p.21

Loyalty to the British and the Shia practices of the *faqir* and his successors brought him the enmity of the majority of the '*ulama* including the Ba Alawi sayyids who anathematized the *faqir* and his disciples as heretics. So the *faqir* was never able to attract more than a relatively small proportion of the total Muslim population of interior south Malabar.

When Tipu Sultan came to Malabar, he visited Shaikh Jifri at *Māliyakkal* house and accepted his discipleship. Tipu invited Jifri along with *faqir* of Kondotti to his headquarters at Feroke. A number of Mappilas had joined the order of Jifri and spread his message far and wide from the north to the south of Malabar. Among his *murids* there were eminent '*ulama* and *sayyids*. He had close relation with the *Makhdūms*, the Muslim scholars at Ponnani in Malabar. *Makhdūms* also, like the *jifiris*, had migrated from south Arabia. Besides, 'Abdurahman Hydross (d.1751), his disciple, relative and a native of Hadramaut had married from the family of *Makhdūms* and had acquired considerable influence among the Mappilas. The *Makhdūms* and the '*ulama* who had their studies at Ponnani accepted Sayyid Jifri as their spiritual leader. Through the Ponnani '*ulama* who had been leaders of the religious activities of Mappilas, the message of Jifri, reached every nook and corner of Malabar.

The mystic path of Sayyid Jifri was made popular in Malabar by his nephew Sayyid 'Alawi. Jifri was a learned *shaikh*, and had produced a number of scholarly works, among which the *Kanz-al Barahin*, the *Kawkab-al Durriyya*, the *Natija* and *Al Karbat wal Asrar* are the most important. He died at Calicut on Thursday 8 Dil-Qa-'ad 1222/Feb. 1807 at the age of eighty three and was buried near the *Maliyakkal* house.

Shaikh Jifri had met the *faqir* at Kondotti and had realised that he belonged to the Shia sect, though the *faqir* himself had vehemently denied any connection with Shiism and claimed himself to be a Shafi Sunni. In his *Kanz-al Barahin* Shaikh Jifri declares Muḥammad Shah as a pseudo-sufi "moving in wrong path and misleading others. Jifri points out his irreligious and heretical activities like discouraging *namāz* and *hajj*, preventing the people going to mosques and making permissible the mixing of men freely with women."³¹ He criticised the two 'self styled' *qāzīs* of the *takiyya*-Musliyarakath 'Abdul 'Aziz and Koyamutti who were justifying the *faqir* in the name of the *shari'ath*, whatever the 'ignorant' *faqir* had said and did.³² He says:

Look to the *faqirs* like those of Kondotti
Who are absolutely the worst
Indulged in the smoking of *hashish*
Wouldn't you see any one of them
Except with intoxication.
And they say, if walked naked
One can reach God.³³

³¹ Shaikh Sayyid Jifri, *Kanz al Barahin al Kasbiyya* (written in 1784), Published by Sayyid Fazl, Istanbul, 1864-65, p.42

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid., p. 463

Shaikh Jifri depicts the *qāzis* as fools and *kāfirs* moving in wrong path and leading the people to infidelity.³⁴ Qāzi 'Abdul'Aziz Musliyar who was also known as Awdilichi Musliyār composed verses against Jifri and justified the path of the *faqir*. Quoting the statement of Imam Shāfi, the renowned Muslim jurist, 'Abdul 'Aziz stated that the theologians had nothing to do with the actions and methods of the sufis who moves outside the purview of the *shari'ath*.³⁵ Shaikh Jifri, in the same coin, brought out the blunders and errors in the statements of 'Abdul 'Aziz and asserted that the methods adopted by the *faqir* is un Islamic and against the *shari'ath* which all the Muslims including the sufis are bound to follow.

Shaikh Jifri points out the the unIslamic practices of the *faqir* and his followers:

Oh, the people who
Smoke *hashish*, always
Neglect the House of God.
Abandon the prayer and fasting
And reject what God has made obligatory.
In the talks and in the deeds
They surpass the limits, and
Create trouble among the people
They embrace the *Iblis*
And become intoxicated.³⁶

Shaikh Jifri criticises both the *qāzis* for neglecting the Book of God and the tradition of Prophet Muḥammad and blames them for following the heretic *faqir*, and leading the people astray. He cautioned them with great perdition if they didn't repent for their wrongs.³⁷

The 'ulama who issued verdicts against Muḥammad Shah and his sufi practices along with the other rituals, highlighted the Shia practices followed in the *takiyya*. Sayyid 'Alawi of Mambram depicted the Shah as a Shia belonging to the Bohra sect. He says: "Among the Pathāns there are four groups belonging to Sunnis; Shaikhs, Sayyids, Mughals and Pathans. The Kondotti *faqir* belonged to none of these groups

³⁴ See Puthan Veetil Aḥmad Musliyār, *Hayat al Din Wa Mamat-alMa 'anidin, Athava Hidayat al Ikhwan fi Radd al Bustan*, Nalakath Muḥammad, Ponnani, 1310/ 1892-93, p. 164

³⁵ Pudiyakath Valiya Bava Musliyār, *Answer to the Questions of Kunheedu*(MS)

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

but to the Bohra sect which come under an extreme heretic Shia group called Rawafiz³⁸

Sayyid 'Alawi of Mambram after calling the *faqir* as a *Rafizi* and a Shia of the Bohra sect, mentions one of their strange customs of making models of Prophet Muḥammad and his three caliphs - Abubakkar, 'Umar and 'Uthman. A cavity is made in each of the model and honey is poured into them. They abuse these models for snatching away the prophet-hood from 'Ali and after breaking them they suck the honey as sucking the blood of the Prophet and the caliphs.³⁹ Sayyid 'Alawi also mentions that *Rafizi* leaders like 'Abdullah b. Sabbah, Ibn Sam'a, Mughira b. Said and Abi Khatab al Asadi had also recommended prostration before the Shaikh.⁴⁰

The joined criticism of Ba Alawis, Maqdums and the ulama of Malabar against the faqir, affected the activities of the faqir, though they were helped by the British authorities in most of the cases. Later the successors of faqir set for a compromise with the ulama under the maqdums and cleared the taqiyya of all un Islamic practices. Thus the ascendancy of Hadramis was established in religious affairs of Malabar.

The Ba Alawi tradition is still followed in the religious affairs of Malabar. Most often the sayyid leads the community in religio-political affairs. The sayyids who migrated from Bukhara region of Central Asia- the Bukhari sayyids- also follow the way the Ba Alawis and in all respects the sway of the sayyids in all matters is still firmly held.

³⁸ The statement of Sayyid 'Alawi, on 13 Ramazan 1256/December 1840, Chola Mammad kutty (ed.), *Fatawa Al-Radd Kondotti* (M.S), written in 1860, P.395; *Rafizis* belonged to an extreme Shi'a sect called *Rafiziyya* founded by 'Abdullah b. San'ai, a Jewish convert to Islam. The sect have been divided into, a number of groups among which the *Mukhtariyya* is very strong

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ See the *fatwa* of Puratheel Shaikh Muhammad. Ibid., pp. 17-18