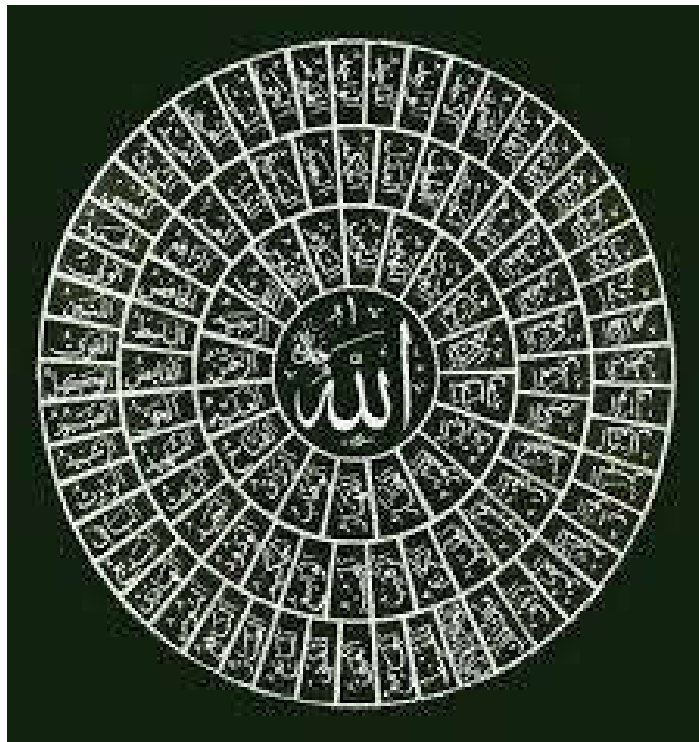


HUSSAIN RANDATHANI

MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT IN SOUTH INDIA

**OCCULTIC PRACTICES OF MAPPILA
COMMUNITIES OF MALABAR
(THE ASMA' AND THALSAMAT)**



Occultism encompasses a wide range of theories and practices connected with supernatural forces or beings. Such beliefs and practices have occurred in all human societies, throughout history with considerable variations, both in their nature and in the attitude of societies towards them. It is believed that the occultist has the ability to manipulate natural laws for his own or his clients' benefit and such beliefs are strengthened by religion. Astrology, divination, magic, witchcraft and sorcery are the different aspects of occultism that appear to be common to all human societies.

Occultism, as popularly, conceived is an ancient secret philosophy which derives ultimately from Hellenistic magic and alchemy on the one hand and from Jewish mysticism on the other.¹ In Islam occultism is known as *al ruqya* or *simiya* (white magic) which is a subordinate branch of spiritualism (*ilm-al Ruhani*) and it is generally divided into two branches, that which is high and related to God ('*ulwi and rahmani*) and that which is low and devilish (*sifla or shaitani*), with the latter of which is connected with the black art proper (*sihr*).² All the occultist practices except those connected with the names of God and the Qur-anic verses are condemned by Islamic law.³

Among the illiterate Mappilas occultism is a common phenomenon. They depend mostly up on the white magic sanctioned by Islamic law and approach Muslim divines for the purpose. These divines treat the patients with the glorious attributes of God (*As-ma'al Husna*) and the Qur-anic verses. They are pious people belonging to any Sufi order. Most of them belong to Sayyid families and few from 'Ulama class; the former known as Tangals and the latter as Musliyers.

A true divine must acquire his secret knowledge from some learned guide (*Murshid*) whose consent (*ijaza*) is a requisite for his practice as an occultist. The *silsilah* (the chain of the order) of the guide should reach Prophet Muhammad who is regarded as the source and authority of this secret knowledge. Besides, the practitioner should strictly adhere to the religious laws and should abstain completely from vices. He should be very keen and cautious in using the Qur-anic verses for the treatment and should never adopt the prohibited practices like sorcery, black magic and astrology.⁴

Those people who practise the black magic (*sihr*) is called the sorcerer (*sahir*); the Mappila equivalent is *Isminte Panikkaran* or *Kanakku nokkunnavan*.⁵ The illiterate Mappilas believe that these sorcerers can cause not only illness but also death by performing black

magic. They engage with a host of mercenaries such as fortune tellers, diviners, magicians, exorcists and others in order to ward off the effects of sorcery, witchcraft and black magic.⁶

Two Arabic-Malayalam works on occultism are popular among the Mappilas: *Upakara Saram* or *Upakara Tarjuma* (Beneficial Meaning or Beneficial Translation) and *Paropakaram* or *Pale Ulsaram* (Translation of Mutual benefits or various Inner Meanings). The latter, written in 1310/1892 is a revised edition of the former written in 1306/1888. Both the works are authored by Konganam Veetil Ahmad Bawa Musliyar (d. 1314/1896) son of Makhdum Zainuddin Kutty Musliyar.⁷ As claimed by the author his works are compiled with references from sixty Arabic works on the subject. The black Magicians or the sorcerers mostly follow the traditional secrets employed by the ancients. Many of these secrets are mentioned in the above work, but with the warning that, those are prohibited by the religion.

Astrology

Astrology is the method of predicting the future based up on the assumption that the celestial bodies, particularly the planets and the stars, in some way, either determine or indicate changes in the sub lunar world. The theoretical basis of this assumption lies historically in Hellenistic philosophy and it was first categorized and catalogued in ancient Mesopotamia. It entered Islamic civilization in the eighth and ninth centuries through Greek, Indian and Persian streams. Early Muslim intellectuals paid much attention to the astrology but under attack by theologians, for denying divine intervention in the world and man's free will, astrology rapidly declined in its appeal to Muslim intellectuals. However, its supernatural power had deeply influenced the day today life of Muslim masses, despite the religious objection to it.

The Mappilas often followed the Hindu astrology and approached the Hindu astrologers called Kanishan or Panikkar, to know their horoscope. Often certain Mullahs and sorcerers (*sahir*) also practise astrology and such people are called *Kanakku nokkunnawar* as mentioned above. The author of *Paropakaram*, after describing the secrets of astrology at length with all its details, advise the readers that to believe in astrology and to practise it are prohibited (*haram*) in Islam.⁸ The author also a theologian, justify the description of the astrology in his work by saying that it was for the study purpose and to know the method, but not either to believe in or to practise it.⁹

Abjad Numerical System: As stated above the Mappila astronomy is maintained according to the Arabic texts. All the magical works follows certain calculations and this is prepared after giving a fixed number to each Arabic alphabet. The Arabic alphabet consists

of twenty eight letters which are grouped into eight. As the first group includes the letters a, b, j, d, the numerical system got the name *Hisab-al Abjad* (the abjad calculation). The whole arrangement is made in accordance with the old semitic alphabets. The eight groups of letters and their corresponding numerical values are the following:

a, b, j, d 1,2,3,4	h, w, z 5,6,7	h, t, y 8, 9,10
k, l, m, n 20,30,40,50	S, 'a, f, 's 60,70,80,90	Q, r, sh, t 100,200, 300,400
	th, kh, d 500,600,700	z, 'z, gh ¹⁰ 800,900,1000

It is believed that the above twenty eight letters are connected with the twelve signs (*rashi*) of the zodiac (*buruj / nakshatam*), the seven planets (*tali; or graham*) and the four elements (*unsur or kur*).

The signs (*rashi*)

Greek	Arabic	Malayalam
Aries	Haml	Medam
Taurus	Thawr	Idavam
Gemini	Jauza	Midhunam
Cancer	Sartan	Karkkidakam
Jeo	Asad	Chingam
Virgo	Sunbul	Kanni
Libra	Mizan	Tulam
Scorpio	'Aqrab	Vrikshikam
Sagitarious	Qaws	Dhanu
Capricorn	Jady	Makaram
Aquarius	Dali	Kumbham
Pisces	Hut	Meenam

The Planets

Greek	Arabic	Malayalam
Sun	Shams	Suryan
Moon	Qamar	Chandran
Jupiter	Mushtari	Vyazham

No.	Signs of the zodiac and the corresponding Malayalam names	Planets	Elements	Male /Female	Relative disposition of the planets	Shape	The birth of the prophets
1	Haml/ Medam	Mars	Fire	Masc.	Saturn	Sheep	Adam
2.	Thawr/ Edavam	Venus	Earth	Fem	.	Oxen	Shish
3.	Jawaza/ Midhunam	Mercury	Wind	Masc.	Jupiter	Twin	Zakariya
4.	Sartan/ Karkkidakam	Moon	Water	Fem	-	Crab	Idris
5.	Asad/ Chingam	Sun	Fire	Masc.	Saturn	Lion	Muhammad
6.	Sunbula/ Kanni	Mercury	Earth	Fem.	-	Bunch	Khizr
7.	Mizan/ Tulam	Venus	Wind	Mas	-	Balance	Dil Qarnain
8	Aqrab/Vrikshikam	Mars	Water	Fem.	Venus	Scorpin	Solomon
9.	Qaws/Dhanu	Jupiter	Fire	Msc.	Mercury	Archer	Jacob
10	Jady/ Makaram	Saturn	Earth	Fem	Saturn	Goat	Moses
11.	Dali/ Kumbham	Saturn	Wind	Masc.	Satrun	Man& Woman	-
12	Hut/Meenam	Jupiter	Water	Fem	-	Fish	-
Mercuri		Atarid			Budhan		
Saturn		Zuhul			Shani		
Mars		Mirrikh			Chovva		
Venus		Zuhra			Shukran		


The Elements

English	Arabic	Malayalam
Fire	Nar	Thiyy
Earth	Arz	Mannu
Water	Ma'	Tanneen
Wind	Reeh	Katt

The Arabic-Malayalam works on occultism provides detailed tables to explain the signs of the zodiac, the planets and the elements and the Malayalam month corresponding to the sign of the zodiac. The stars of the prophets also are included in the table.¹¹

The nature and conditions of men and women who are born in their respective stars have also been given. For e.g. Those who are born in the sign of *haml* will be of noble birth; his head will be big in size; he will gain wealth through permitted (halal) means; he will be helpful for friends, relatives and parents; sons and daughters will be born to him-one of them will die and one will give him happiness here and hereafter. Most of his diseases will be of evil spirits. He may divorce his first wife and marry another one. He may be having illegal connections with other ladies. He will make long journeys to eastern side of his home place and collect numerous benefits. He will perform hajj and will be respected by all.¹²

Jafar Sharif in his work *Islam in India* provides an astrological table which he had prepared from *Jawahir-i-Khamsa*, the Persian work of Muhammad Ghawth Gauleri. The table, though not so popular among the Mappilas, is widely used by the Muslims of the Deccan and South India. The table is given below.¹³

Four Elements				The Planets with their Influences	The perfumes of the planets
Water	Air	Earth	Fire		
He.H 8	Ze.Z 7	Waw.W 6	He.H 5	Jupiter Good	Benzoin Sugar
Lam.L 30	Kaf.K 20	Ye.Y 10	Toe.T 9	Mars Evil	Banzoin Wood Aloes
'Ain.'A 70	Sin.S. 60	Nun.N 50	Mim.M 40	Sun Middling	Benzoin Cinnamon
Khe.KH 600	Se.S 500	Te.T 400	Shin.SH 300	Mercury Good	Benzoin Sandalwood
Ghain. GH 1,000	Zoe,Z 900	Zwad.z 800	Dal.D 700	Moon Middling	Benzoin Camphor
Re.R 200	Qaf.Q 100	Swad.S 500	Fe.f 80	Venus Good	Benzoin White sandal
Crab.Scorpi on,Fish	Twins, Scales, Watering pot	Bull Virgin She-goat	 Ram, Lion,Archer		

As a further illustration of this table, if a man Ahmad desires intimacy with a woman Rabia, which he wishes to accomplish by means of magic, must be ascertained whether the elements, planets and the zodiacal signs agree or do not agree. Here the first letter of Ahmad is A whose element is fire and that of Rabia whose first letter is R is water. Hence the elements are opposed to each other.

Now the relative disposition of the planets have to be determined. It is as shown in the table:

Venus & Saturn	Venus & Moon	Sun & Venus	Jupiter & Venus	Jupiter & Sun	Sun & Moon	Jupiter & Moon	Friendship
Moon & Mercury	Saturn & Mercury	Sun & Mercury	Jupiter & Mercury	Mars & Mercury	Venus & Mercury	Mars & Venus	Indifferent
Saturn & Sun	Saturn & Moon	Mars & Sun	Mars & Sun	Saturn & Moon	Jupiter & Mars	Jupiter & Saturn	Enmity

Since the planet of Ahmad is Saturn and that of Rabia is Venus and these being friendly it appears that the man and woman will live happily together.

Thirdly we come to the signs. The signs are divided into three male, female and hermaphrodite. Ram, Lion, Scorpion, Fish and Archer are males, Bull, Scales and Rat are females and Twins, Virgin, Shegoat and Watering pot are hermaphrodites. Between males and females exists friendship, between males and hermaphrodites some times friendship and sometimes enmity and between females and hermaphrodites, the most inveterate enmity. The above instance finds favourable because Ahmad has Ram, Lion and Archer as the signs and Rabia has Crab, Scorpion and Fish.¹⁴

A detailed table has been given in Upakara Saram, describing the different states of a man in accordance with the elements.¹⁵ His positions, enemies, diseases, dreams, deaths, signs of the zodiac, spirit etc., are given. The illiterate Mappilas who follow the table approach the Kanakku nokkunnavar or the Hindu Panikkans or Jolsyans to relieve from the evils of their stars and to get supernatural treatments.

Certain special relations are said to be existing between particular celestial bodies and their varied motions, configurations with each other and the processes of generation and decay apparent in the world of fire, air, water and earth. These relations are sometimes

regarded as so complex that no human mind could completely grasp them; thus the astrologer might be readily excused for errors.

The astrological theory, in its most rigorous aspect, postulates a totally mechanistic universe, denying to the God the possibility of intervention and to man that of free will. As such, it was rigorously attacked by Muslim scholars and pious Muslims who regard astrology a part of polytheism, never approach an astrologer and follow the horoscope.

Palkanakku¹⁶

The Palkanakku is the magic device to know the thief, to find out the missed cattle, to know the troubles in the life, to know the child in the womb, to know the conditions of a traveller etc. Palkanakku is of various types and the names of each one are connected either with the prophets or with the saints: Qur-at al Lateef of J'afar-al Sadiq. Qur-'at-al Anbiya of Prophet Daniel, Qur-'at al Tuyur of Shaikh Muhyaddin and Qur-at-al Mubarak of Ibn 'Arabi are some of them.

In the Palkanakku of J'afar al Sadiq a square has to be made and the Arabic letters A, B, J, D (ا, ب, ج, د) are to be written on the four sides. The square is thrown on the ground three times and in each time the letter coming on the upper part of the square is to be taken. From the table given below the results of the letters can be found.¹⁷

ABJ	ADA	AJA	ABA	AAD	AAJ	AAB	AAA
good	bad	good	bad	wait	good	bad	good
ADD	AJJ	ABB	ABT	ADB	AJD	ABD	AJB
bad	wait	good	bad	good	bad	good	bad
BJB	BAJ	DDA	JJA	BBA	DDD	JJJ	BBB
bad	good	wait	wait	good	good	good	good
BAD	BJA	BAB	BDB	BJJ	BAA	BJD	BBD
good	bad	good	good	bad	good	wait	wait
JAD	JAJ	JDD	JBJ	JAA	JJD	JJB	BDA
wait	good	good	wait	good	wait	good	bad

In the *Qur'at al Anbiya'* the names of thirty two apostles are given. One has to put his finger on any one of the apostles by closing his eyes. The result of each apostle is given in a

table. In the palkanakku there is one Qur-ānic method which is very simple. After taking ablution recite the first and the last two chapters (Al Fatiha, al Ikhlas and al Falaq) of the *Qur-ān* for three times. Then chanting certain prayers open the book, count seven more pages and in the seventh page see the last letter of the seventh line. The fate of each letter is given in a table. The author himself says that the Qur-ānic method is not recommended since it is prohibited by Muslim Scholars.¹⁸

Besides the Palkanakku, different types of mathematical calculations using *abjad* numerical systems are relevant among the Mappilas. The future of sick persons can be predicted through calculations (*kanakku nottam*). For this it is to be ascertained the time when one was taken to ill. If the date has been forgotten or not known, the number of the letters in the names of the patient and of his mother are to be added together and divided by seven. If one remains he might have been taken to illness on Saturday; 2 on Sunday; 3 on Monday; 4 on Tuesday; 5 on Wednesday and 6 on Thursday. If no number remains then the day would be Friday.¹⁹ Diseases are also decided through urine test (by looking to the colour of the urine) and also by the writhing of the muscles at different parts of the body.²⁰ For eg: if there is writhing on the right side of the head, it points either to the unhappiness in the married life or to the possibility of a journey from which he would be returned safely. If the writhing is on the left side, it is the sign of a happy and prosperous life and the possibility of a safe journey. These methods, however, are prohibited by the theologians.²¹

Magic and witchcraft

Magic and witchcraft are other forms of occultism besides astrology. The divinatory or magical arts are many, and it varies according to the different cultural settings. As mentioned earlier, all kinds of divinations including astrology is a consultative institution and the matter posed to a diviner may range from a query about a few lost coins to high questions of state. The casual and solemn nature of the matter is normally matched by that of the diviner in terms of attitude, technique and style. The divinatory magic essentially refers to a ritual performance or activity that is thought to lead to influencing of human or natural events by an external and impersonal mystical force beyond the ordinary human sphere. The performance involves the use of special objects or the recitation of spells with an innate power by magician. Magic is often confused with witchcraft. Modern anthropologists, however, makes the useful distinction between magic and witchcraft; the former being as the manipulation of an external power by mechanical or behavioural means to effect others and the latter a personal quality motivated to the same ends. In this classification, the word sorcery or black magic is used for the magic that aim to harm other people, whereas magic used for beneficial end is white magic. Islamic law counts the black magic among the major

sins while the other one as a permitted practice²² Black magic is of two types; the one effecting morals and minds and the other causing harm to the body. The former may lead to madness and the latter can cause even death. According to Islamic sources, the art of magic had come from Babylonia, through the angels Harūt and Mārūt. They taught the people, the secret of the art with the warning that it should not be used for evil purpose²³ But disobeying the advice, the people used it for evil purpose,²⁴ for which Islam decreed capital punishment.²⁵

Witchcraft is commonly referred to the black magic and sorcery. For anthropologists it is a neutral term, though the actions involved may be classified as productive, protective or destructive. Sorcery belongs to the category of destructive magic and that is regarded as anti-social and illicit, the resort of misguided persons who should instead have used arbitration or litigation for settling the issues that have aroused their anger, envy or malice. Such people used to approach the witches secretly and they, it is believed, can cause harm or death to the adversary of his client.

All magic whether white or black has four recurring elements: performance of rituals or prescribed formal symbolic gestures, use of material substances and objects that have symbolic significance, utterances of closely prescribed spell or of a less formal address and a prescribed condition of the performer.

The Spirit (Jinn)

The Spirit or Jinn is the super natural beings, which is believed to play as the spiritual medium in occultism. The Jinn, also called as Ruhān²⁶ is created with free will and live on the earth in a world parallel to that of man, and is invisible to human eyes in its normal state. The *Qur-an* affirms that the Jinns are created from the fire of a scorching wind²⁷ and are differed from angels who are created directly from fire.²⁸

The Arabic word jinn comes from the verb janna meaning to hide and the English term genie is synonymous to Jinn. In Islamic literature the word Shaitan (Satan or devil) is the name given to the disbelieving Jinns. The Jinns also eat and drink and propagate their species, sometimes in conjunction with human beings. They have bodies, but from the circumstances of their being internal, that which is not seen. The extent of their knowledge is likewise hidden from human being. The Jinns differ from mankind in three particulars: in their spirit, form and speech. Those among them who perform virtuous actions are generally called Jinn and those who cause evil are called Shaitan. The Islamic tradition puts the Jinn in five orders: viz: Jann, Jinn, Shaitán, Ifrit, and Mārid.²⁹

Baizāwi in his commentary on the *Qur-an* describes, the Shaitan as the offspring of the Jinn and that God gave him the title *Azāzil*, the fallen angel.³⁰ Imam Zāhid had recorded that it was owing to his obedience that Satan received the name Iblis, he who despairs of the mercy of God, because he refused to prostrate before Ādam and because in his malignity he tempted Ādam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit.³¹ Iblis is said to be the son of Huliānus who is the son of Tārnus. the son of Sumas, the son of Jann. Shailān has four deputies or Khalifa: Maliga son of Ātiqa. Hamu son of Jānus, Mablūt son of Balabat and Yusuf son of Yasif.³² As Ādam's surname is Abu al Bashar that of Satan is Abu-al Marrat,³³ The legends say that Malik Gushtan is the king of all Jinns and lives in the mount Qaf, a legendary mountain which surrounds the world, resting on the stone Sakhrat, a great emerald which gives its colour to the sky³⁴ Among the Jinns there are Muslims, Hindus and fire-worshippers. The names of the kings of Muslim Jinns ends in 'nūs'³⁵ while those of the fire worshippers end in 'nas'³⁶ (Jatunās) and those of Hindus in 'tas' (eg. Naqtās).³⁷ In the *Tafsir-i-Kabir* it is stated that the Jinn are of four kinds: the Falakiyya, who inhabit in the firmament; Qulubiyya who reside about the north pole; Wahmiya who haunt the imaginations of men and Firdausiya, who dwell in paradise. The *Tafsir-i-Niyabiya* introduces twelve troops of Jinn; Six occupying Rome and Europe, Greece, Russia, Babylon and Sahbatan. The other six are in the region of Gog and Magog,³⁸ Nubia, Zanzibār, India and Sind. Among these three legions are of Muslims and their king is Bakhtanus. As to the real nature of the Jinns they are nine-tenths spirits and one tenth flesh.³⁹ As mentioned above, the evil Jinns are known as Shaitan and are the offsprings of the Iblis and die not but with him, where as the other Jinns die before him. Iblis is also said to have possessed authority over the animal and spirit kingdom.⁴⁰ The word Shaitān is Arabic and is derived from shain meaning opposition ie., one who opposes and the name Iblis is derived from balas meaning a wicked or profligate person.⁴¹ The common Mappilas and neo-converts following their ancestral customs believe in the Hindu spirits. The Hindu tradition introduces at least fourteen evil spirits,⁴² while the Mappilas believe in around eighteen spirits causing epilepsy, convulsion and other diseases.⁴³

A tradition says that the devil rests on his throne up on the waters and sends his armies to excite contention and strife amongst the mankind, and those in his armies who are nearest to him in power and rank are those who do the most mischief. One of them returns to the devil and says, 'I have done so and so' and he says, 'You have done nothing'. After that another comes and says, 'I didn't quit him till I made a division between him and his wife.' Then the devil appoint him in a place near to himself and says, 'You are a good assistant'⁴⁴ According to another tradition recorded in *Parōpakāram*, the prophet Sulyman commanded the Jinns to bring all the devils, born in different stars. The Jinns did so and Sulyman asked

every one of these devils their names, dwelling place and the diseases caused by them. The following table shows the details:⁴⁵

Star	Name of Devil	Dwelling place	Disease caused by Devil
Aries	Karbardar	Junction of four routes	Pain on the back, eyes and head; sleeplessness
Taurus	Huntut	Old stables of horses and bullocks, dark areas and old houses	Pain on the leg , hand and head
Gemini	Ujajil	Grave yard, Under the trees and old houses	Pain in the heart, eyes and joints and the patient dreams this devil every day
Cancer	Humtut	In the upstairs of the houses, junction of the routes; Under green trees and in the water	Pain in the body, ear and in the naval
Leo	Ya'udu	Old houses, dark rooms, temples and bazaars	Sound in the ear, fever, back pain, joint pain and head ache
Virgo	Yamnash	Stable of the donkeys, mountains, caves and dark places	Pain in the head and the stomach
Libra	Ifrit	On the coasts and bazaars	Body will become pale and lean
Scorpio	Huntut	Stables of Buffalo and goat; dark places	Heat and pain on the cheeks, hands and thighs
Sagittarius	Ma'ufihi	In the upstairs, old wells and under the tree	Pain on the body, on the head and joints
Capricorn	Khatatun	In the upstairs , old wells and under the trees	Pain on the back, ankle and the body
Aquarius	Khantut	Old houses and the banks of the river	Pain in the joints
Pisces	Not known	Not known	Not known

Among the Mappilas, the thangals and muslivārs practice the white magic. But for the sorcery they mostly approach the Hindu witches and sometimes the Muslim specialists called Isminte Panikkaran (Those who practice with the God's Names). However, the man and women who are possessed with Jinn are more popular for magic and sorcery. They are called Jinn Hazrats and are usually approached to cure illness caused by spirits and sorcery. The Jinn Hazrats are invariably thangals and rarely Muslim woman. The occasional possession of man by the Jinn may be due to usual desires on the part of the Jinn, capricious whims, or even love, just as it may be among human. The Muslim tradition also holds the view that Jinns and humans may also have intercourse with each other and beget children.⁴⁶ This is a frequent occurrence which is well known to Muslim legal scholars who have discussed it at length. However, possession is most often a result of Jinns being angry because some wrong has been done to them, thus it is a punishment by them to those who wronged them.⁴⁷ Demonic possession sometimes also occurs as a result of horseplay. Jest or plain evil on the part of the jinn just as evil and mischief occurs among humans for similar reasons.

The devil possessed Hindus, called Murtisēvarullavan are approached by Muslim fishermen and the illiterates for treatment and protection from devil. These Hindus come normally from non-caste groups, especially from Cherumans and Parayars, Kaniyans, Panikkars. Panans, Izhavas and rarely Brahmins are also concerned with black magic and witchcraft. The Mappilas, despite their religious prohibition consult them and accept their treatment. The Hindu magicians are generally known as Mantravaldis are very influential among the common people and caste, colour and community distinctions are overlooked in this respect. It is said that the demon may take the form of animals like snakes, scorpions, camel, cow, goat, sheep, horse, mules, donkeys and birds.⁴⁸ In Malabar, the Parayans, an untouchable Hindu caste, possessed by demons could render themselves invisible or transform themselves into oxen, cats and dogs at their sweet will and pleasure and could even attack or kill their enemies. This kind of black magic is called Odi which is a cult practised exclusively by Parayans.⁴⁹ The common Mappilas had firm belief in Odi and took extreme care for not to make any harm or insult to the Parayans whose main occupation is making baskets and winnows with bamboo.

Curing Methods and Techniques

Various methods and techniques are adopted by magicians to get rid of evils and to fulfil desires. The holymen and saints adopt *Quranic* methods and treat with the great names of God (Asma ul Husna). Their amulets, talisman und squares are in accordance with the Islamic tradition while the witches and the sorcerer had various methods including olivunokkal, mashinotam, uzhinju vungal, amulets, plates, homam, bali etc. The *Qur-anic* treatment called al Ruqaya is authenticated by a prophetic tradition which says: "Surely, there is a cure for your disease in the *Qur-an*." ⁵¹ The treatment includes the incantation of certain verses, use of amulets and squares of *Qur-anic* verses, and writing the *Qur-anic* verses on vessels, plates and leaves and drinking it (waraq ezhuth/Pinjanamezhuth) etc. The thangal or the musliyar asks the patient to repeat certain verses of the *Qur-an* or the great names of God to a fixed number or himself blow to a glass of water or milk after chanting certain verses and gives it to the patient to drink. Sometimes instead of blowing to the water the divines directly blow on the head and body of the patient. He will also write some *Qur-anic* verses or certain numbers on a paper and will give it to the patient as an amulet or talisman. The most often used *Qur-anic* verse to cast off the evil is the 'Verse of the Throne' (Āyat-al Kursiyy, *Quran*,2/255). The *Qur-anic* chapters of al Fathiha (the opening chapter) and al-Mu'awwadain (the last two chapters) are also used for the same purpose. Selected prayers from the *Qur-an* and the incantations using the names of God also are prescribed for different purposes. ⁵² "If *Ayat-al Fath* ⁵³ (the verse of victory)" says Jafar Sherif, "is constantly recited for fixed times God will undoubtedly grant one's desires within forty days. The verse should be repeated forty times after each of the five obligatory prayers." ⁵⁴ In order to increase one's wealth he is recommended to repeat the following names of the God thousand times each after morning and evening prayers: "Ya Ghani, Ya Mughini" ⁵⁵

Seeking refuge in Allah from devil had also been prescribed in a number of verses in the *Qur-án*. For eg: "Say. My lord I seek refuge in You from the prodding of Satan and I seek refuge in You, my Lord, from their presence." ⁵⁶ Both the Aadān (call for prayer).and Iqamat (announcement of the prayer's commencement) have been recommended by the prophet as means of driving off the devil. ⁵⁷ There are various *Qur-ānic* prayers prescribed by the prophet to repel the devil. Once he said: "Who ever says, 'There is no God but Allah; Who is alone without partners; The dominion and praise is His and He is able to do all things,' one hundred times per day, he will have a reward similar to freeing ten slaves, one hundred good deeds will be recorded for him, one hundred of his sins forgiven and he will have a charm against Satan the whole day until the night. None can do better than that, except one who does it more times." ⁵⁸

Waraq ezhuth (Leaf writing)

It is the practice of writing the great names of God or *Qur-anic* verses or any hidden letters in a leaf or a plate. The leaves of jack fruit tree or porcelain plates are used for the purpose. The writing ink is specially prepared, the main ingredient of which is either galtnut (kadukka) or sesamum powder⁵⁹. The ink is kept in a bottle and the pen made up from the bamboo is dipped in the ink for writing. The writer, who is often a mullah or the musliyār, should keep ablution before writing. Simple letters are used ie. the letters will not have connection with one another. These writings are washed with clean water and is given to the patient to drink. For eg: to cast off the devil the following prayer is to be written repeatedly in a white porcelain plate and after washing, that water is to be given to the patient to drink: *Ya hayy heena; ya hayy fi dimumiyya mulkuhā wa baqaihi. Ya huyy.*⁶⁰

For all purposes *Qur-anic* verses or magic squares are written on plates, leaves or papers, the writings being washed off and drunk. If a woman has a difficult time in giving birth, certain *Qur-anic* verses are written in the plate and given her to drink. Here is one such verse: In the name of Allah; there is no God but Allah; the Gentle, the Generous. Glory be to Allah Lord of the Almighty Throne. All praise is due to Allah, Lord of all the worlds. The day they see it (the hell) it will be as if they only remain (in this world) an evening and a morning⁶¹ "The day they see what they were promised it will be as if they only remained an hour of the day. A notification: So will any but the sinful be destroyed⁶². Sometimes a portion of the washed water is given to the pregnant lady to drink and the other portion is sprinkled on her body.⁶³

Invocation of the Jinn

The possession of a jinn may leads to a number of diseases: some are struck dumb, others shake their heads: some go mad and walk about naked: they feel no inclination to do their usual business, but lie down and become inactive. Epilepsy or fits is believed to be a demonic disease. Even death is caused by demons. The possession of demon in a man is treated through invocation, which is the commanding of the presence of a Jinn or spirit by the magicians called Jinn hazrats (the man, in whom the jinn is present)⁶⁴. The hazrats with the help of certain Jinns who are always at their service invoke the demon which cause disease in a patient. These hazrats are invariably thangals, rarely ladies (Beevi). It is said that certain families hereditarily possess the power to invoke the Jinns.

To become a jinn hazrat or to make the presence of a Jinn various methods are adopted. In one of the methods, the person who wish to be a hazrat is asked to stay in an empty place and fast for forty days. He has to avoid all foods except black grapes, wheat and

bread. Then he has to repeat the following prayer hundred times after each compulsory prayer: "Oh, Banukh and Darmukh: Answer! Be quick; You and your children with the truth of Sam'at, Sham'u'a, Barhut, Barhin and As-heem: You do, Oh, the helpers, whatever, is commanded from the service, from the love, or from the separation, or from the predominance or acquisition to the ladies, or opening of the treasures or acquisition of goodness; 'Wherever you are, Allah will bring you together. For Allah has power over all things."⁶⁵

Each day the fast is to be broken after writing the above prayer anywhere. If he follows this practice without any break, his Jinn servant will appear before him as a tiger, and if he continue the prayer without any fear, the same servant will appear as a black man and this man will have a red stone in his hand. The stone will be given to him and if he turn this stone in his hand he may get his desires fulfilled.⁶⁶Najma, the daughter of the king Jinn Malik-al Ahmar can be invocated through certain techniques. For this one has to enter seclusion on Sunday and draw the square given below (Fig. 1) on his left palm.

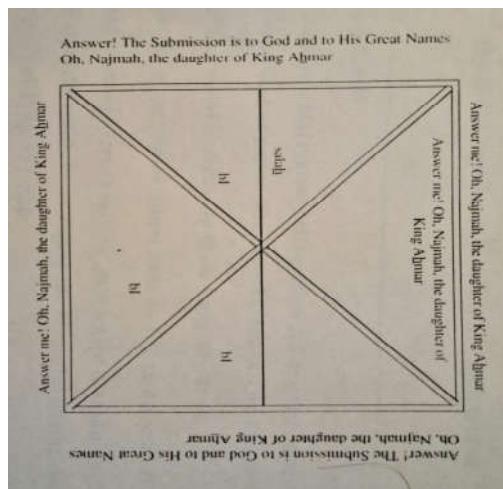


Fig.1

Then after burning red sandal, he had to chant certain prayers from the *Qur-an*. Then a white pigeon will appear before him and licking out the square on the left hand it will fly away. On the second day a beautiful lady will appear before him and he should pray her to assist him with the might of God. She may accept his prayer and stretch her hands towards him. Then he should wish her good bye. After that whenever he repeats the prayer she may answer him.⁶⁷ It is believed that the invocated magicians can cause and cure diseases with the help of their spirits. Besides, they drive away the demons which have possessed in the body of

the patients, with the help of certain rituals and techniques which are variously known as koodothram⁶⁸ shaitān ozhippikkal,⁶⁹ hōmam,⁷⁰ halilakkal⁷¹ and uzhinju vāngal.⁷²

The techniques include the use of magic circles or figures accompanied with certain rites and rituals. It is very much like that of the tantric methods, practiced elsewhere in India. There are magicians specialised in these methods. They cause a devil to enter a person or to cast it off away through incantations and rituals. Squares and figures are drawn on the ground or on a wooden plank (Fig.2) with various coloured powders, or with ashes or with charcoal and sometimes with sandal wood. The demoniac is placed in the centre of the figure and the incantations calling the name of spirit or demon is repeated. Sometimes *Qur-ānic* verses are used. Round these figures fruits, flowers, betel and sweets are placed. Some people sacrifice a cock before the figure, sprinkle its blood around it and place lighted candles or lamps up on it. Then certain Arabic incantation is recited over some cow dung ashes or over five kinds of corn the magician or exorcist each time blowing on the object and throwing it at the head and shoulders of the demoniac. The magician also breaths on the flowers and throws at him. The magician burns some perfumes and recites the invocation twenty one times directing the patient to sit with his eyes shut, and to smell the fumes well while he repeats the supplications. During the recital of the incantation, if any motion is observed in the body of the patient the magician should say, " If you would be a male devil low your head to the left: if a female to the right: if a hermaphrodite forward. Some demons violently shake the head and body of the demoniac. When the recital is finished, the magician asks the patient whether he feels any intoxication, lassitude. sense of weight in his head, any fear in his mind, or if he believes that some one behind him is shaking his head. If any such symptoms appear, the case is one of demon possession, otherwise not.⁷³ Some devils when they seize a person do not let him go for two or three weeks, nay, for as many months. The demoniac then never speaks, and though the devil may be present in him he doesn't move or walk.⁷⁴ To prevent certain devils from escaping, the magician ties a knot in the hair of the demoniac after reciting the following *Qur-ānic* verses, three times and blowing upon it: "Verily, when he intends a thing, His command is Be, and it is. So glory to Him in whose hands is the dominion of all things and to Him will you be al

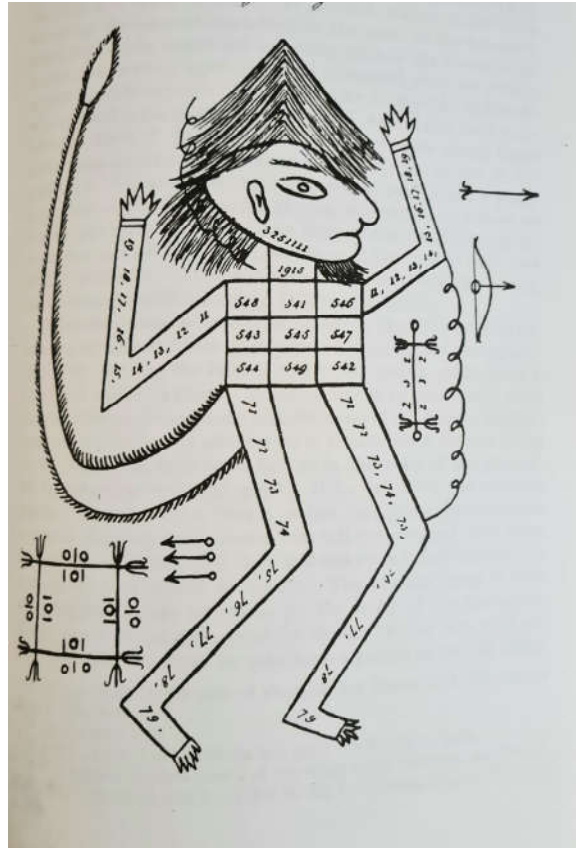


Fig.2

brought back.⁷⁵ Sometimes another verse is recited: "And We did try Solomon and placed a phantom (of the Jinn) on his throne, where up on he turned to Us in penitence"⁷⁶ Some magicians recite the following invocation and blow into one or both ears of the patient: "Oh, hearer, your know with you ears, your ears are within hearing. Oh, you hearer."⁷⁷ To ascertain whether a disease is due to a devil or to enchantment a figure (Fig. 3) is drawn on the ground or on a board. Some flowers are put in the sick man's hand and he is told to grasp them firmly and to put his closed fist near the diagram. The magician takes some more flowers and having read the following incantations over each and blowing up on it, he dashes it against the hands of the patient, when in a few minutes his hands will begin to move into one of the compartments in the figure (Fig. 4). Here is the incantation: "It is from Solomon and it is this: In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Set not yourselves against Me, but come to Me submitting yourselves as Muslims. Kaf Hāya, 'Ain, Seen, Swād, Hameen. 'A See Qin."⁷⁸ By the blessing of Solomon, son of David, warn me, warn me, May both his hands go

Demons	Fairies
Diseases	Enchanters
Jinn	

Fig.4

To cast off Shaitan, Jinn, Ruhani and Ifrit the Mappila sorcerers prescribe the following homam.⁸⁰ Two earthen pots, wood of kanjeeram (Strychnos Nux Vomica) or jack fruit tree, two meters of white cloth, a white cock, two eggs, two copper plates (takidu), one lead plate, vayambu, pinari, nagunam. kunthirikkam(francincense). kottakam, councn Idampiri and valampiri (clockwise and anti clock- wise), channi nayakam, perumkayam, somanadi kayam, garlic skin. cotton seed, sesame, galtnut, paddy, rice, salt, kiriyatha, horsegram, green gram, cuscus, chenchalyam, kachūram, sandal wood(each for one rupee weight) and few leaves of pūvaranji are the articles required for homam

Take one of the pots, inside which draw the square(Fig.5) and write the name or patient's mother. Then write 102nd chapter of the Qur-an (Al Takathur) in one cloth and the verses or cure⁸¹ (Ayat al Shifa) in the second with charcoal. Write on a leaf the first fourteen verses of the eighty first chapter of the *Qur-an* (Al Tak weer) and the square (Fig.6) and tie it to the neck of the cock. Take two measures (nāzhi) of rice and blow on it after reciting the verse, "Had we sent down this Qur-an on a mountain. Verily you would have seen it humble it self and cleave. Asunder for fear of Allah. Such are the similitudes which we propound to men that they may reflect."⁸² On each egg write the verses: "On that day will men proceed in group sorted out to be shown the deeds that they (had done). Then shall any on who has done an atom's weight of good see it, and anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it."⁸³ Draw the square (Fig. 7) in both the plates.

Now take seven leaves of poovaranji and on each of it write each of the following letters: th, kh, kh, z, sh, 'z and f.⁸⁴ Mix all the spices and medicines, and wave the mixture with pot, egg, plates, cloth, rice and the cock on the head of the patient by reciting the verse mentioned above.⁸⁵ Then make a pit, about 3/4 meter depth on the ground. Put the seven eggs and two plates in one pot and cover it with the other. Place it in the pit, cover it with the mud and burn the surface with wood. Tie one of the cloths upon the pit and with the other cover the patient. Tie the cock near the patient and give it rice and water. Continue this practice for seven days without putting the fire off and unveiling the cloth. Every day blow on the patient by reciting the *Qur-anic* verses, 59:21. 1:1-7. 112:1-4, 113:1-5, Ayat al kursiyyi⁸⁶ and the verses of cure⁸⁷ for two times. And taking a little of the mixture mentioned above and waving it on the head of the patient throw it in the fire. Repeat it for seven times per day. On

the seventh day take four coconuts, uncover it and write on each of it, the last three verses of the ninety ninth chapter of the Qur-an⁸⁸ and the Arabic letters sh, j, kh, r,sh, band f⁸⁹ and the words ya Qitmir and ya Hafeez three times. Repeat the same on two tender red coconuts. Write 'ya qitmir' three times each on three eggs. Then wave all the coconuts and the eggs three times over the head of the patient and break all of them with a knife. Take some water in a vessel and blow in it three times after reciting the verse "lau Anzalna ..."⁹⁰ and put off the fire with it. Wash the patient with same water.⁹¹

F	Z	Sh	Z	Kh	J	Th
Sh	Z	Kh	J	Th	F	Z
Kh	J	Th	F	Z	Sh	Z
Th	F	Z	Sh	Z	Kh	J
Z	Sh	Z	Kh	J	Th	F
Z	Kh	J	Th	F	Z	Sh
J	Th	F	Z	Sh	Z	Kh

Fig.5

4448	4451	4454	4441
4453	4442	4447	4452
4443	4456	4449	4446
4456	4445	4444	4455

Fig.6

Fig 7

Homam was a usual practice among the Mappilas and Hindus. Most often a permanent homa kundam (sacrificial pit) is made for the purpose. The leaves of Erikku (Calatropis Giyganta) is usually burnt in the pit. The leaves of Erikku (Calatropis Giyganta) is usually burnt in the pit. The homam is usually performed for twenty one days⁹² and often it is

followed by waving over the head and body as in the above case. This rite is called uzinju vāngal. The articles used for this rite are a fowl, a kötti (a five feet long new cloth), one ripe coconut, one tender coconut, twelve cadjan leaves, twelve eggs, four bananas, one hundred and one nails, a buffalo head with its horns, kuruthola kayhiru, one hundred and one wicks (tiris), one litre coconut oil, a big earthen pot, puffed rice, two measures (nāzhi) of raw rice powder, turmeric powder, burnt husk, green powder prepared from neem leaves and some black thread and plantain leaves

With the powders figures of spirits are drawn (kalam varakkal). The rites are performed near the figures. The cotton wicks are lighted and it is waved over the head of the family members. The puffed rice and bananas are collected in a plantain leaf and chants are repeated over it. All the articles are waved over and kept in the pot. The fowl also is likewise waved over. The nails are hammered on one hundred and one spots on the skull of buffalo and it is buried in the pit with its head to the north. The pot also is likewise buried after uzhinju vāngal⁹³

Squares and Amulets

The divines and the magicians use squares in which mysterious letters and numbers are written. These are variously called as kalam or ism by the Mappilas. The squares are used to cure various diseases, to cast out devils, to create love between wife and husband and to increase milk in the breast of a woman or in a cow etc. When sentences of the *Qur-ān* are used in charms and squares, the numerical values of the letters of the verses are added together and with the sum total the square is filled up. The square is drawn on papers, bottles, plates, egg, leaf, copper, zinc, or silver plates, porcelain plates, shoulder bone of the animals etc. Mostly these squares, after writing on papers, plates (takidu) or leaves are rolled, covered with wax and kept in the amulet cases made of copper, silver or even gold. The amulets are called as hykals, hirz or taksir by Mappilas and as yanthrams by local Hindus.⁹⁴ These cases are fastened to a string and tied round the waist, arm, on the loins, in the turban or tied in the corner of the handkerchiefs or hung on the neck of the person. Sometimes the squares are burnt and the patient is fumigated with the smoke or they are wound up in cotton soaked in perfumed oil and burnt in a lamp or they are engraved on rings which are kept on the fingers. Sometimes the amulet case is made to hold a stone engraved with verses of the *Qur-an* with the tiger's claws set in silver.⁹⁵ Here are the different types of amulets:



Fig.8

The squares are of various types in accordance with the number of divisions or compartments in a square.

a) Thulathi: This is the square of three divisions (Fig. 9). To make this square calculate the total of the name of the person through *abjad* system and also find out his element (water, fire, wind or earth). From the number of person, subtract twelve and with one third of the remainder fill up the compartments as follows: Suppose the total number of the person is 27, subtract 12. Then the remainder is 15 and the one third of which is 5. Put this number in the column in which number 1 is written and fill up the other column by adding 1 to each compartment until the whole is filled up. This square is meant for the element of the fire (Fig. 10). For the squares for the other three elements see figures 11, 12, and 13.

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

Fig.9

8	3	16
7	9	11
12	5	10

Fig.10

2	7	6
9	5	1
4	3	8

Fig. 11

6	7	2
1	5	9
8	3	4

Fig. 12

6	1	8
7	5	3
2	9	4

Fig.13

When taking the one third of the total, If one remains it should be added to the original in the seventh compartment and if the remaining number is two, add it to the fourth compartment

b) Rubai (Murabb'a): It is the square of four compartments (Fig.14). To make this square deduct 30 from the total number. Divide the remainder number by four and with one quarter of it fill up the sixteen compartments adding one to each number, according to the numbers put in the compartments of fig. 14. The rubai result for the four elements are given below:

8	11	14	1
13	2	7	12
3	16	9	6
10	5	4	15

Fig.14 Earth

14	4	1	15
7	9	12	6
11	5	8	10
2	16	13	3

Fig.15 Water

15	1	4	14
10	8	5	11
6	12	9	7
3	13	16	2

Fig.16 Air

1	14	15	4
8	11	10	5
12	7	6	9
13	2	3	16

Fig.17 Fire

When divided if one remains add one number more in the thirteenth compartment and if two remains increase one in the ninth, and if three remains add one to the fifth compartment.

c) Khumasi (Khamasi): It is the square of five compartments (Fig. 18). For the khumāsi take the total number and deduct twenty. Divide the balance into five compartments by increasing one in each. In the division if one remains add one to the 21st compartment. If two remain add one to the 10th; if it is three add one to 15th and if it is four add it to the 5th compartment.

23	20	12	9	1
7	4	21	18	15
16	13	10	2	24
5	22	19	11	8
14	6	3	25	17

Fig.18

b) Write the square (Fig. 21) given below on an iron sheet, roll with a nail, and by covering with an amulet tie it to the patient.

ع	ى	ط	م
ط	م	ع	ى
م	ط	ى	ع
ى	ع	م	ط

Fig.21

c) To cast off devil, write the square below in an earthen pot and put it on the cooker and burn.

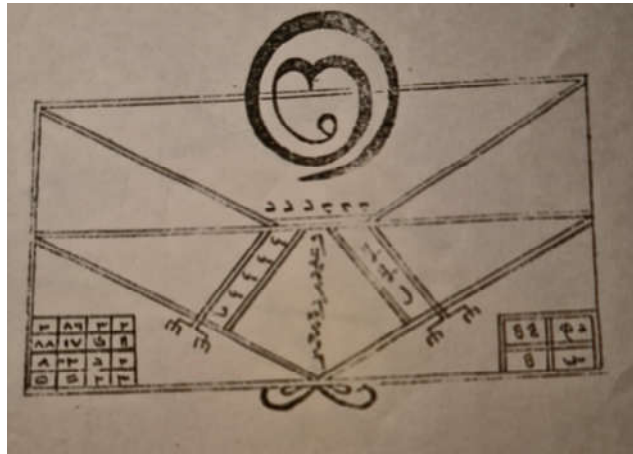


Fig.22

d) Write the following square (Fig. 23) on four earthen plates (chatti) and bury it in the four corners of the house.

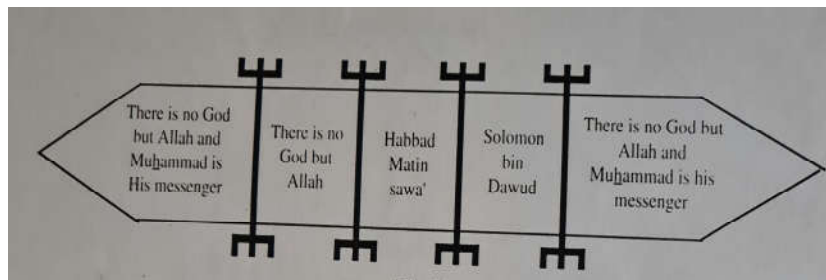


Fig.23

2. Charm to get rid of sorcery. Write the square (Fig. 24) on wax. put it in the water and blow in the water after reciting the thirty seventh chapter (Al-Saffat) of the Qu-rán seven times and bath with the same water.

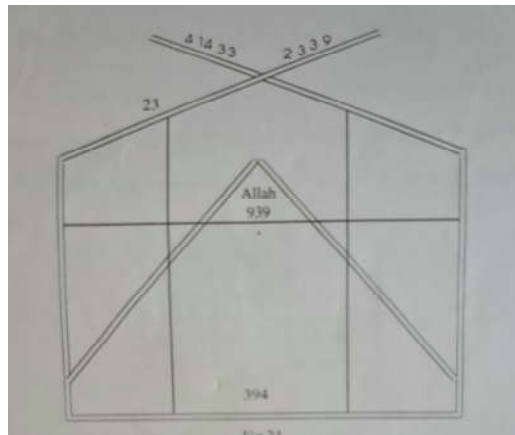


fig 24

3. To get back the stolen articles. Draw a square (Fig.25) on a paper and write in it the name of the stolen article. Write on each side of the square, Kāf, ha, Ya, 'Ayn, Swād, Ha,Meem, and 'Aseeqin. Pierce a needle and hang it in the air with a piece of leather.

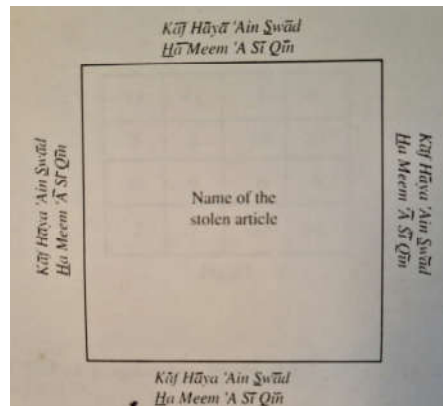


Fig.25

4. To cure all diseases. Write the square (Fig.26) in a paper, enclose it in an amulet and keep it in the body. Besides, write the same square in the plate, wash it and drink.

14680	14685	14678
14679	14681	14683
14674	14677	14682

Fig. 26

5. For small pox write the following square (Fig.27) in a paper and put it in the amulet and tie it to the patient.

11	41	. 1	8
5	4	15	10
16	9	6	3
2	7	21	31

Fig 27

6. For pregnancy: Draw the square (Fig.28) and tie it to the sterile lady or to the trees which give no fruit.

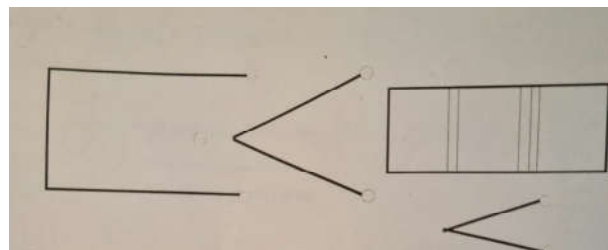


Fig 28

Evil Eye (Kannēru)

Evil eye called pottakkanum or kannēru is the belief that a man or a woman with an

evil or envious eye, may infect another man, women, or child by simply looking at them. Like all the other communities, the Mappilas also believe in the evil eye. Prophet Muhammad himself had said that the eye may cause man to enter the grave and to cause the camel to enter the cooking pot. Those who possess the evil eye are generally women; men rarely. The cause is in the eye itself and no evil spirit in any way is connected with it. A mother, having an eye can affect her own child without intention. A mere look by an evil eyed person at a beautiful or a healthy child will affect it and it is often unintentional. The power of eye to do mischief is altogether beyond the volition of its possessor; but it is excessively virulent when mischief is really intended. The effect of it on a child is that it becomes lean, feverish, loses its well-favoured appearance and cries in its sleep. Men and women suffer from head aches and pains in the limbs. Animals are disposed to lassitude and eat little. Cows will not give milk.

The Islamic perspective of the evil eye is clear from the statement of Imam Nawawi who in his *Sharah Muslim* had warned about the people having evil eye that they will not be allowed to enter the public places and will be asked by the authorities to remain in their own houses.⁹⁹ To know whether a disease is caused by evil eye or not certain experiments are prescribed though many of such experiments are prohibited by the religion.¹⁰⁰ The divines recommend the recitations of *Qur-anic* verses as a protection from evil eye. It is asked to write the *Qur-anic* chapters al 'Asr (no. 103), al Quraish(no. 106), al Falaq (no. 113) and tie it to the head so that one escape from evil eye. It is also recommended to recite, "So turn your vision: See you any fear. Again turn your vision, a second time. Your vision will come back to you dull and discomfited in a state worn out."¹⁰¹ Or "And the unbelievers would almost trip you up with their eyes, when they hear the message and they say, 'Surely he is possessed.' But it is nothing less than a message to all the worlds."¹⁰² If the following squares (Fig. 29&30) are written in a paper and tied to the body after enclosing it in an amulet, no evil eye will affect the person.

801	10	9	30	101
9	2	101	>	10
101	>	10	9	3
102		3	101	>
3	10	>	10	>

Fig.29

302	205	30
207	209	301
208	303	206

Fig 30

Mappilas generally follow indigenous methods to save themselves from the evil eye. When a new building is being constructed a hideous figure made of wood or straw (Fig-31) will be set up in a conspicuous position to avert the evil eye. KP.Padmanabha Menon records that, a kitchen garden in the fields with a fine growth of vegetables is always accompanied by a bogey of some sort is set up, generally a pot covered with cabalistic signs made in chunnam and charcoal or more often a branch of the prickly cactus or the model of a woman made of straw. This is to avert the evil eye of the passers by.¹⁰³ Sometimes it will be written below the side of the figures, 'karimkannā nokku (Look! oh, the black eyed). To avert the evil eye to the babies a black spot is put with collyrium on its cheek.



Fig.31

Mashi Nöttam

Mashināltam is an occult method to know where the treasure has been buried or the stolen goods have been concealed or to know the condition of a patient possessed by devil etc. It, as the name indicated is to look (nottam) in to the ink (mashi) and to find the result. Different kinds of inks are poured in to any vessel or to the palm, and after some rituals and recitations a child of eight or nine years is made to look in to it. Two kinds of Mashinūtām are prevalent among the Mappilas: 1. Qufin Qufin. For this, a square (Fig.32) has to be made in a porcelain vessel with the following words: 'quf, quf. taltalish taltalish, mirish, mirish,

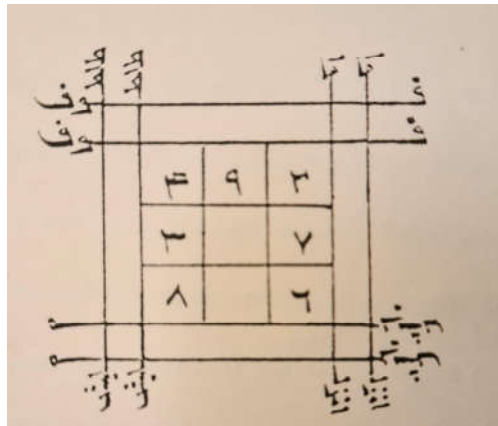


Fig.32

anzilu, anzilu'. Pour on it the ink and the Castrol oil.¹⁰⁴ Write the prescribed prayer on the forehead of a child and ask him to look into the vessel. 2. Abbasi: For Abbasi a square (Fig.33) is to be written either in a plate or in the palms and pour ink and Castrol oil into it. A child is called and certain verses are written on his nails, and he is asked to look into the ink after reciting certain prayers.

Oh, Allah	Oh, Allah	Oh, Allah
Oh, Raḥman	Oh, Raḥman	Oh, Raḥman
Oh, Raḥim	Oh, Raḥim	Oh, Raḥim

Fig.33

Sometimes certain kind of collyrium is prepared out of different animals or plants and that which on rubbing on a person's eye, or forehead renders him invisible, while he himself is able to see things, which are unable to see with the ordinary eyes. For different purposes different kinds of collyriums are used.¹⁰⁵ Certain wicks (tiri) are used for the control of spirits. When such a wick is to be used take a new earthen pot with its cover, wash them well in water, rub few patches of sandal wood paste on the pot, tie wreathes of flowers round the neck, place near it all sorts of sweets and flowers and burn benzoic pastilles. Then pour some perfumed oil into the hollow of the cover, light a wick and repeat the appropriate spell in Arabic. The boy or girl is bathed, dressed in clean clothes, adorned with flowers and he or she is told to stare at the flames and it is said that the child can tell about stolen property, diseases and the like. Some people will make the following square (Fig.34) on a porcelain or copper plate, fill the latter with water and make the child look into it.

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

Fig.34

Lucky and Unlucky Days

The Mappilas like others, considered certain days of the week lucky and others unlucky. The unlucky days are called the days of *nahs* (bad luck). On the days of *nahs*, the Mappila will not begin a new work, or an important duty or ceremony. Before starting anything new, such as the opening of a house, or a shop, or the marriage etc., the Mappilas usually approached a divine who fixed a lucky day and time for such ceremonies and saved themselves from the unlucky days. In every Arabic month there are seven evil days in which no good work to be begun: 3rd, 5th, 13th, 16th, 21st, 24th and 25th. According to some others in every month there are two evil days: Muharram 4th and 5th; Safar 1st and 8th; Rabi' al Awwal 10th and 20th; Rabi' al Akhir 1st and 11th; Jamad al Awwal 1st and 11th; Rajab 11th and 13th; Shaban 4th and 6th; Ramazan 3rd and 20th; Di-al-Qa'ad 2nd and 3rd and Di-al-Hijjah 6th and

25th. The first ten days of the first two months (Muharram and Safar) are also considered as unlucky.¹⁰⁶

Of the days of the week Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday are auspicious and the others are unlucky. Tuesday is the least favourable day for all human undertaking, because Allah created all the unpleasant things on that day. Friday is the best day on which the sun rises, the day on which Adam was taken into paradise and¹⁰⁷ turned out of it and Friday is also be the Day of Resurrection.' Prophet Muhammad made his first entry into Madinah on Friday and on the same day he started the public worship. On Saturday, was created, the earth on Sunday the mountains; on Tuesday the darkness; on Wednesday, the light; on Thursday the animals and on Friday Adam.¹⁰⁸ Unlike the others, the Arabic day starts from the night and ends at the evening. That is why the night of Thursday is called Velliyázhcha rávu or the night of Friday which is considered as the most auspicious for all good works.

Indigenous Beliefs

The Mappilas of Malabar, followed many beliefs of indigenous origin. Such beliefs included the odi cult, omens and the local devils, etc. Odi, a kind of black magic is a notorious kind of sorcery practiced by the tribal caste called Parayans who it is believed, with the blessings of their goddess Kalladikkode Nili, can render themselves invisible or transform themselves into oxen, cats or dogs at their own will and pleasure. Odi is made possible by the Paraya wizard after rigorous rituals with a number of articles of which the oil made from the baby of the womb (pilla thailam) is the most important. It is said that, in order to get the oil, the Parayans kill pregnant ladies and the baby is taken¹⁰⁹ out. Mappilas sometimes engaged with the Paraya odians of distant villages to kill or torture their enemy through black magic. The cure for the affliction caused by the odi cult is the same for other diseases caused by sorcery. The magician or mantravadi is consulted to diagnose the patient and if his disease is suspected due to odi, the mantravadi puts a number of questions to the patient in order to ascertain the person by whom the odi is caused. If the person is known, then he is persuaded to give it up and if he refuses to relent, he may be avenged with counter measures.¹¹⁰ To get rid of odi, spells (manthrams) are written in silver or copper plates (thakidu) or on the eggs laid by a black hen. These are taken to a place where the skull of an animal or snake or the nail pairings of a man buried. Spells are recited on the tplates or takidu and on the eggs. Then the eggs are broken into two halves over the plate. Then the takidu is cut into two pieces and throw the halves into a flowing river."¹¹¹

Omens

Another indigenous belief which prevailed among the Mappila Muslims is the omen (shakunam). This becomes very important when one starts for a journey. The crow flying from left to right, a fox running from right to left and a peacock are good omens for a journey. Girls, kings, elephant, white flowers, cows and ducks are also good. Buffalo, black cat, widow. Salt, donkey, the handicapped, and broom are bad omens. Crying of cats and owl are bad. The cackle of a lizard had lots of information to give and there is a science which exclusively deals with the different types of the cackles of the lizard and their effect.¹¹² Mappilas generally followed the words of the soothsayers and palmists who tell one's future by examining the lines on the palm. A caste called Kurava is well versed in palmistry. Female members of this castet (kurati) visit the houses for the purpose. They often keep with them a cage in which a parrot is kept. The parrot make sounds and the Kurati translate it with the intention that the parrot is telling the future. The Mappila women folk often approach such people to hear the future of their married life or the future of the family.



A Kurathi with her cage

Foot notes:

1. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1993, Macropaedia, Vol, 25,76
2. The Hellenistic Indian and Sassanian practices had crept into the Muslim society. Arabic translation from the Greek and Syriac represented the Hellenistic sciences, from Sanskrit, the Indian version and from Pahlavi, the Sassanian combination of the two.

3. Auf bin Malik says: “We used to make incantations during the time of ignorance. We asked to the prophet (Muhammad), “ Oh, Messenger of Allah, What is your opinion in this matter?’ Prophet said: ‘ Let me hear your incantations, for incantations which do not have polytheism (Shirk) in them are fine.” Abdul Hameed Siddiqui, *Sahih Muslim*, English Translation, Darul Arabia, Beirut, n.d, Vol. 4, 5457, 1197. Aysha reports: When Prophet Muhammad was asked by the people about the astrologers, he said that they are nothing. Then the people asked, “Oh, Messenger, Sometimes their prophecies become true. Then the messenger said, “That truth is snatched away by the demons from the angels. The demons add hundred falsehoods with the truth. and gives it to the ears of the astrologer.” Imam Nawawi, *Riyaz al Saliheen*, Chap.303, No.1647, See also Chapter, 362, No.1799.
4. Konganam Veetil Ahmad Bava Musliyar (d. 1314/1896), *Upakara Saram*, Haji, V.M Abdulla &Co., Ponnani, 1988 (Hereinafter cited as *Upakara Saram*),178-88,238-9; Jafar Sherief, *Islam in India, The Customs of the Musalmans of India*. Trans., G.A.Herklots, Revised edn., by WilliamCrooke, Curzon Press. London, Dublin, 1972, Re print. 1975, 219-20
5. The practitioners of this art are mostly low castes. Sometimes Thangals and Musliyers also engage with sorcery.
6. PRG, Mathur, *The Mappila Fisher Folk of Kerala, A Study in InterRelationship between Habitat, Technology Economy, Society and Culture*, Kerala Historical Society, Trivandrum, 1977,303
7. There is a third book called *Maghanim al Ikhwan al Tarjuma*, written by the same author, but it was not popular.Beside the above works, the Mappila diviners depend the Arabic works like *Shams al Ma’arif* of Imam Buni, *Fath al Malik* of Dairabi, *Qur’at al Mubarak* of Ibn Arabi, and *Mujarrabat* of Imam Sanusi etc.
8. Konganam Veetil Bava Musliyar, *Paropakaram*, Haji. V.M. Abdullah and Company, Ponnani, 1988 (Herein after cited as *Paropakaram*),30
9. Ibid., 31
10. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol.1, Leiden, 2007, 97-98
11. *Paropakaram*, 14
12. Ibid., 14-25
13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., 222-28
15. *Upakara Saram*
16. Ibid.
17. *Paropakaram*, 6
18. Ibid., 8
19. Jafar Sherif, op.cit., 261-2
20. *Upakara Saram*, 46-47
21. Ibid., 51
22. For the Islamic perspective on Magic, See Ibn Khaldan, *Muqaddimah*. Mal. trans., Mutranisseri M. Koya Kutty. Mathrubhoomi Publications, Kozhikode, 1984, 814-839
23. *Qur-an*, 2:102
24. For details. See *Qur-an*, English Translation, King Fahad Holy Qur'an Printing Complex, Madinah, 1410/1989, 41
25. "Any one who goes to a foreteller or a diviner and verified him, he will lose his faith in what is revealed to Muhammad that he becomes a blasphemer' says Prophet Muhammad." Quoted from Dr. Sulyman Qush. *The Scientific Discoveries in Corelation to the Glorious Qur-an*, Islamic Da'wah Council of Philippines, 1988, 60. \
26. Sometimes a section of angels (malaik) are also known as *ruhan*, but generally *ruhan* is the name given to jinn, *Paropakaram*, 31
27. *Qur-an*, 13: 27, For the fire of scorching wind the term used by *Qur-an* is *marij*. Some regards it as a flame without smoke (Jafar Sharif, 232) which is of air and fire: On the other hand man is created out of clay which includes water and mud. The Prophet describes *jinn* 'as independent, living. Intelligent beings possessing a will and subject to commands and prohibitions See Abu Aminah Bilal Philips, *Ibn Taymeeyah's Essay on the Jinn (Demons)*, Tawheed Publications. Riyadh, 1989, p.5
28. *Qur-an*, 66:6
29. *T.P hughes, Dictionary of Islam*, Kazi Publications, USA, 1994, 134; Among the five orders *marid* is the most powerful
30. Imam Baizavi, *Tafsir Baizawi*, quoted from Jafar Sherif, 232-33
31. Ibid., 233
32. Jafar Sherif, 233
33. Satan had nine sons: *Dul Baizun*, who with his host occupies bazaars and he is behind all the wickedness; *Wassin*, the ruler over grief and anxiety; *Awan*, the companion of kings; *Haffan*, Patron of

- wine bibbers; *Marra*, superintendent of music and dancing; *Lagis*, lord of the fire worshippers; *Ma'z* but master of news, who causes people to circulate malicious and false reports; *Dasim*, lord of mansions, who causes hatred between man and wife and *Dalhan*, whose abode is in the places of ablutions and prayer. See *Ibid.*,233.
34. *Ibid.*234
35. For eg. *Tarnus*, *Hulianus*, *Dakhiyanus*
36. For eg. *Jatunas*
37. Jafar Sharif. p. 234
38. *Ibid.*,35
39. *Ibid.*, 234-35
40. T.P Hughes, *op.cit.*, 84
41. *Ibid.* The word *shaitan* occurs in the Qur-an fiftytwo times and *iblis* only nine. According to another opinion *shaitan* denotes one who is far from truth and *iblis* is one who is without hope.
42. The main Hindu spirits are Karinkutti, Kuttichathan, Parakkutty, Odikkutty, Katta Bhairavan, Vanni Bhairavan, Chotala Bhadra kali, Dumapati, Narasimha Murthi, Kala Bhairavan and Odi Bhairavan. R. Fawcett, *Nayars of Malabar*, New Delhi, 1990, 314.
43. *Paropakaram*, 24-26
44. T.P Hughes,84
45. *Paropakaram*, 24-26
46. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, *Ibn Taymeeya's Essay on the Jinn*. *op.cit.*, p.31. Many monks and nuns of Medieval Europe reported that they were visited and ravished by voluptuous female demons which were officially called succubi and equally seductive and alluring fallen angels called incubi. Subsequently many nuns became pregnant and killed their children at birth burying them outside the nunneries. See L.T. Hobhouse. *Morals in Evolution. A Study of Comparative Ethics*, Chapman and Hall, London,1951,213. It has been assumed by modern western researchers that these demons were figments of their imagination due to their depravation from sex and that the pregnancies were all a result of illicit affairs with monks and priests. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, *op.cit.*. p. 32
47. For example when humans accidently harm or hurt them or urinating on them, by pouring hot water on them or by killing some of them, the jinns think that they have been intentionally harmed. *Ibid.*.p.32.

48. Ibid., p.41
49. For details of Odi cult, see Fawcett, op.cit.,312-13; Bhaskaranunni, op.cit., 72-74; See below,376-77
50. Besides the name Allah, God has ninety nine other names according to the *Qur-anic* tradition known as *Asmaul Husna*, the best names.
51. Sulyman Qush, op.cit., 52
52. For eg. To fulfill a desire one is recommended to recite the following prayer for hundred times: *Bismillahi al Ramāni al Rahim. Wala hawla wala quwwata Illabillāhi al-'Aliyyul 'a'zeem. Ya Hayy. Ya Qayyum. Ya Haleem. Ya Qadir, Ya Daim. Ya Fard, Ya Witr. Ya Ahad, Ya Samad* (In the name of Allah the most gracious and the most merciful. There is neither might nor power, but in God. Oh, the Alive, the Eternal, the Clement, the Poweful, the Everlasting, the Unique, the Odd one, the One. the Eternal) Parōpakaram op.cit., p. 91.
53. "And with Him are the keys of the unseen: None know them but He. He knows whatever is on the land and in the sea. And no leaf falls but He knows it: Neither is a grain in the darkness of the earth nor anything fresh or dry, but it is noted in a clear writing" Qur-ān. 6:59.
54. Jafar Sharif,232.
55. "Oh, the Rich. Oh, the Enricher." See Jafar Sharif. p.231: "Abu Huraira narrates: Prophet said: 'Verily Satan flees from a house in which the *Qur-anic* chapter al Baqarah (the Cow) is read" 'Abdul Hamid Siddiqui, *Sahih Muslim*, Eng. trans, op. cit., Vol. I.p.337, no. 1707.
56. Qur-an, 23: 97.
57. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *Sahihul. Bukhari*. Arabic-English, Maktabat al Riya'z al-Hadeeth. Riyadh, 1987. Vol. I. p.336: Sahih Muslim, op.cit., Vol.1, p.211
58. Ibid., Vol.IV,p.1415no.6508
59. Specially made ink for *waraq ezhuth* is called Arabic ink
60. *Upakara Saram*, 54
61. *Qur-an*, 79:46
62. Ibid., 46:35
63. Abdullah bin Ahmad quotes a tradition from his father who collected it from Ibn Abbas; Regarding this treatment he says: "I

- saw my father do writing for women in a bowl or something clean.”
 quoted from Abu Ameenah op.cit, 10-23
64. The Hindu magicians who invoke the demon are called
Kuttichathante Sevakkar.
65. *Upakara Saram*, 122
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid., 132-33
68. *Koodothram* is a Malayalam colloquial word derived from *Guta Patra*, meaning the hidden leaf or paper.
69. *Shaitan Ozhipikkal* means to drive away the devil
70. *Homam* is a sacrificial ritual done in fire to drive away devils.
71. *Haal Ilakkam* is “frenzy stir” It is a kind of traditional hypnotism.
 For the particulars of *Haal Ilakkam* among the Mappilas during the
 Malabar peasant struggles see William Logan, I, 557-60
72. *Uzhinju Vangal* means to wave the hands over the whole body either
 with fire or with substances prescribed by magicians.
73. Jafar Sharif, 235-36
74. The names of various demons invoked by the magicians are Fatuna,
 Habeebika, Amin, Saqika, Akesan, Balisan, talisman, Suradan,
 Kahlán, Mahlan, Sadidan and Nabian, Ibid., 236
75. *Qur-an*, 16: 82-83
76. Ibid., 18:33
77. Jafar Sharif, 237
78. These are the Arabic letters ق س ع م ح ص ع ي ه ك
 (Kaaf, Haaya, Ayn, Swad, Haa, Meem, Ayn, Seen, Qaf) which comes
 as the first verses of certain verses of the *Qur-an* as abbreviated
 letters, the meaning of which is unknown. See, the Holy *Qur-an*,
 the English Translations of the meanings and Commentary, op.cit,
 134-35
79. Jafar Sharif, 234-40
80. The same *Homam* is used to treat evil eye, sorcery and mental
 agony.
81. Six verses from the *Qur-an* are considered as verses of cure. they
 are: 9:14, 41:44, 10:57, 17:82, 16:69 and 26:80
82. *Qur-an*, 59:21
83. Ibid., 99:6-8
84. ب ظ ش ز خ ح ث
85. *Qur-an* 59:21

86. Ibid., 2:255
87. See f.n., 81
88. Ibid.
89. ب ظ ش ز ح ج ث
90. See, f.n., 82 above
91. Upakara Saram, 137-39, The author himself says that Homam is not recommended in Islam and Homamas using the living beings are strictly prohibited, Ibid., 129
92. PRG. Mathur, op.cit., 332-33
93. Ibid., 334-36
94. For hindu type of squares see Fawcett, op.cit., 305-07
95. For benefits of different amulets, see *Paropakaram*, 169-95
96. *Upakara Saram*, 177-8
97. Ibid., 179
98. Sulyman Qush, op.cit., 60
99. Upakara Saram, 83
100. Ibid., 81; *Paropakaram*, 45-46
101. *Qur-an* 67:3-4
102. Ibid., 68: 51-2
103. K. P Padmanabha Menon, A History of Kerala, Written in the form of Visscher's Letter from Malabar, ed., Sahitya Kalabham T.K.Krishna Menon, Asian Educational Service, New Delhi, Vol. 1, 1982, 142
104. *Upakara Saram*, 134
105. Ibid.
106. jafar Sharif, 280
107. T.P Hughes, 131
108. S.H Leader, Veiled Mysteries of Egypt and the Religion of Islam, London, 1912, 237
109. Bhaskaranunni, Pathimpatham Noottandile Keralam, *Kerala Sahithya Academy*, Thrissur, 1988, 72-74
110. PRG. Mathur, 338
111. Ibid., 339
112. Bhaskaranunni, 140-141