



# Mamburam Thangal Family: Symbolizing Mappila Struggle through Literature

**Dr. Sukesh Kumaradas**

Assistant Professor

Department of Islamic History  
Government College Malappuram

## Abstract:

Postcolonial literature reflects opposition to colonisation. In Malabar, early resistance was led by the Mappilas, supported by the Zamorins. Religious leaders framed the movement as a jihad against the Portuguese, but its importance extended beyond its religious context. Most existing research in this area is essentially reconstructions based on Portuguese and British sources, which inherently carry colonial biases. Furthermore, there is a substantial body of native literature in Arabic and Arabic-Malayalam that has recently come to light but remains underutilized. This paper's objective is to survey the material produced by the Mamburam Thangal family and emphasize the perspectives of these indigenous authors. This familial lineage gave rise to two distinguished individuals who ardently endeavoured to confront the looming spectre of foreign hegemony. Throughout their relentless struggles, they found solidarity amongst the marginalized strata of society, for they had been ensnared in the web of caste-based oppression, perpetrated by the dominant forces known as the *janmi*. Penned by the illustrious scions of the Mamburam Thangal lineage, a constellation of literary masterpieces has graced the annals of history, with two shining as the brightest stars amidst this cosmic tapestry. The oeuvres attributed to Saiful Bathar, Uddathu-al-Umara and Thanbeeh al Ghafileen are not merely the inked expressions of a bygone era; they embody profound testaments to the human spirit's ceaseless yearning for emancipation from the shackles of colonial subjugation. These writings inspire resilience and reform. These important writings remain powerful symbols of resistance against British rule and continue to help us understand the complex history of colonialism. They teach us valuable lessons about the harmful effects of oppression and the strong spirit of resistance. The enduring impact of these works shows the Mappila community's determination to fight against foreign domination.

*Key Words:* mamburam thangal-sayyid alavi, sayyid fazl, saiful bathar, uddathul umara, tanbeeh al ghafileen, anti-imperialist writings, colonial government, religious scholars, feudalism, social change movements

Prominent Malabar religious leaders played a pivotal role in the unyielding struggle against colonial forces.<sup>1</sup>

They unequivocally called for Jihad and authored prolific works in Arabic and vernacular, leaving an enduring literary legacy. For example, Sheikh Zainuddin Al-Malibari's astute writings navigated colonial discourse adeptly. These leaders meticulously analyzed the complex interplay of religion, politics, and society in Kerala's historical context during this period. Foremost among these literary works, the most renowned is "*Tuhfat al Mujahidin Fi Baa'di Ahwalil-Burthugaliyyeen*."<sup>2</sup>(Junior). In Kerala's early history, Zainuddin Makhdam Senior<sup>3</sup> stands as a monumental figure, revered for his invaluable anti-colonial literature. Notably, the works "*Tahridul ahilil Iman Ala Jihadi abadathissulban*" by Shikul Islam Abu Yahya Zainuddin Ibn Ali, (Senior)<sup>4</sup>

"Qasidat ul Fath ul Mubin" by Qazi Muhammed ibn Abdul Aziz,<sup>5</sup> "Manaath Parambil Kunhi Marakkar Ballad" (Kottupally Maala) by an anonymous author,<sup>6</sup> and "Muhimmiitil Muamin"<sup>7</sup> by Aminummantakath Pareekkutty Musliar, collectively served to elucidate the populace on the potency of employing nonviolent resistance against the British colonial regime. However, my particular focus lies on three noteworthy figures: Mamburam Syed Alavi Thangal, the author of "*Assaiful Bathaar Alaa Man Yuvalil Kuffar*" (The incisive sword against those who designate non-believers as guardians), and his progeny Syed Fazal bin Alawi, the author of "*Uddathu-al-Umara wal Hukkaum li Ihanath al Kafarat wa Abdat al Asnam*" (A primer for Judges and Leaders to subvert the Idolaters and Unbelievers), and *Thanbeeh al Ghafileen* (Awakening the Negligent).

Mamburam is situated on the northern bank of the Kadalundi River, in direct juxtaposition to Tirurangadi, which resides on the opposite shore.<sup>8</sup> It is here that the eminent luminaries of the Mamburam lineage find their eternal rest.<sup>9</sup> The Ba-Alavi clan constitutes an Arab familial entity that embarked on a migration from the Yemeni region of Tarim within Hadramawt to the Indian state of Kerala. Within the broader spectrum of Arab Muslim diasporic communities, the Alawis emerge as a distinctive subset, tracing their roots back to the venerable Hadhramaut region in Yemen. In contrast to many Hadhrami Arabs, the Alawis belong to the esteemed lineage of Sayyids.<sup>10</sup> They are devout Muslims who proudly trace their ancestry to the revered Prophet Muhammad, following a noble lineage that extends through the distinguished progeny of his daughter, Fathima, and her illustrious husband, Ali. He received a tax-free land grant from the Zamorin of Calicut.<sup>11</sup> The Zamorin's exceptional tolerance for Muslims lured Shaikh Sayyid Jifri, a prominent Ba Alawi Sufi from Hadhramaut, to settle in Calicut in 1746. The Zamorin, Manavikraman, and Muhyaddin ibn Abdussalam, the Qazi of Calicut,<sup>12</sup> warmly received him. The king urged the Shaikh to establish himself in Calicut, generously gifting him a coconut grove on the Kallai riverbanks, a house, and land near the Kuttichira pond. Furthermore, he granted the Shaikh exemption from all taxes.<sup>13</sup> The Taramal Thangal lineage,<sup>14</sup> recognized as the Mambram Thangals,<sup>15</sup> was established under the aegis of Sayyid Shaikh Jifri Thangal, a Mufti hailing from Mecca, who arrived in Kerala in 1755 with the mission of propagating Islam. Revered for his profound religious erudition and unwavering piety, he concluded his earthly journey in 1805 and found his eternal resting place in Calicut.

Hassan Jifri, following in the footsteps of his sibling Jifri Thangal, made his way to Malabar, taking residence in Mamburam, where he eventually passed away in 1764. Hassan Jifri Thangal initially travelled from Calicut to Ponnani, then to Tirurangadi, and finally settled in Mamburam, where he established his family's permanent

residence. He orchestrated the matrimonial union of his twelve-year-old daughter with Syed Alavi, an Arabian newcomer. Syed Alavi ibn Muhammad, who arrived in Calicut at the age of seventeen, swiftly emulated the footsteps of his esteemed uncles and established an enduring reputation, now venerated as the paramount Mappila saint. His son, Syed Fazl Pukkoya Thangal, possessed a remarkable history, marked by elements of divinity.<sup>16</sup> Syed Alavi, a key figure, played a pivotal role in founding several mosques and providing spiritual guidance in the fight against British colonialism. He gained widespread fame for miraculous acts, including healing the sick,<sup>17</sup> apprehending thieves, finding lost items, invoking rain, and assisting those in physical distress.<sup>18</sup> Sayyid Alavi passed away in 1844. Sayyid Alavi and his son, Sayyid Fazl, held esteemed spiritual roles in the 19th-century Mappila community. Their mystic contemplations earned them universal acclaim and profound reverence from various communities, elevating them to the highest echelons of esteem.<sup>19</sup>

His chief work was *Alsayfulbataar alaa man yualikufaar wayatakhiduhum min dunillah warasulihisalla Allahu alayhi wasallam walmuminin ansar* (The sharp sword against those who take infidels as protectors avoiding God, His messenger, peace be upon him, and believers). Thangal, a staunch social reformer, fervently exhorted lower-caste individuals to cease venerating the upper-caste Hindus and unequivocally reject partaking in any remnants left by them. Numerous historical accounts, notably those by travellers like Abdur Razzak<sup>20</sup> of Persia and Ibn Battuta,<sup>21</sup> offer vivid descriptions that elucidate the intricate complexities of Kerala's caste system. Contemporary authors frequently attribute a substantial number of conversions to Islam to the fervent aspiration of the marginalized lower castes to liberate themselves from the oppressive constraints enforced upon them by the stratified Hindu social order.<sup>22</sup> He spearheaded an exclusive festival for the lower castes in Munniyurur, a tradition that endures annually. Thangal remained acutely cognizant of the British stratagems to sow division among Malabar's Hindus and Muslims, cunningly enlisting the upper echelons to perpetuate their dominion. Saiful Bathar resoundingly implored the populace to forge an indomitable alliance, transcending the divisive shackles of caste, creed, religion, and territorial boundaries, in a resolute stand against the encroaching invaders. It fervently called upon the downtrodden peasants and the destitute to rise in unwavering opposition against the entrenched Zamindars who had colluded with the British government, rallying under the resounding banner: "Unite against the British government's nefarious policy of divide and conquer." The Muttichira Zamindars, in an unholy alliance with the British military, ruthlessly subjugated the beleaguered Mappila peasants. A grave provocation unfolded when a sentry of a Zamindar, in a brazen act of insolence, defiled the garments hung to

dry in the hallowed precincts of the Muttichira mosque. In retaliation, as the Mappilas sought vengeance, the relentless British armed forces apprehended and summarily executed thirteen of them. It was in the wake of this harrowing incident that the resonant clarion of Saiful Bathar was authored. The composition of this piece was inspired by the tumultuous events of the 1841 Mutichira Riot.

Saiful Bathar, a significant work of literature, emerged during a British-engineered conflict between Hindus and Muslims near Tirurangadi, resulting in many casualties. Upon reaching Muttiyara, the police unscrupulously instigated violence while in pursuit of wrongdoers within the mosque premises. Numerous Muslims, among them influential figures, met their untimely demise as martyrs in this turbulent episode, henceforth revered as the Muttiyara Shuhadakkal. In the aftermath of this incendiary event, which catalyzed Muslim resistance against British dominion, Thangal penned the compelling *Saiful Bathaar*. The work is attributed to Sayyid Alavi Thangal of Mamburam and meticulously assembled by Abdullah Bin Abdul Bari Al Ahdal, adopting a format that presents a series of questions followed by their corresponding answers. Within his pamphlet titled "Assayful Bathar"<sup>23</sup> or "Powerful Sword," this significant literary work took shape. Mamburam Sayyed Alavi Thangal, in a resolute stance, promoted defiance against inequitable British and landlord regulations, particularly advocating resistance against tenant evictions from agricultural lands. In retaliation, British forces declared open hostilities against Thangal. In his groundbreaking treatise on Islamic jurisprudence and political philosophy, he offers Muslims valuable insights for dealing with Western imperialism. The book explores complex issues like cultural assimilation and the ethics of their presence in colonized lands. In this text, the designation "Nazarene Christian" is employed exclusively when alluding to the government, with a specific reference to the British authority. Intriguingly, Arabic terminology is conspicuously absent when addressing the British. The book, consisting of eight queries and their corresponding responses, commences its preface with customary Arabic invocations to Allah and Prophet Muhammad, paying homage to those who made sacrifices for the preservation of Islam. The author, under compelling circumstances, responds to pivotal queries, grounding their answers in core Islamic tenets such as the Quran, Hadith, Ijma, and Qiyas. The Mamburan Thangals bolster each response and religious judgment with a wealth of authoritative Quranic verses, exemplifying their profound erudition. The work, adhering to the Shafei Madhhab, expresses fervent resistance against foreign dominion, driven by a profound aversion to the British, while championing zealous patriotism for the newly established Christian rulers, perceived as pragmatic and commerce-oriented sovereigns. The work strongly asserts that nurturing

amicable associations with foreign powers and embracing their governance runs counter to Islamic principles. It categorizes individuals as either righteous believers or sinful ones, or potentially even apostates, contingent solely upon these determinants, underscoring the profound gravity of the situation. These convictions underscore the unwavering anti-British and patriotic sentiments of the Mamburam Thangal. The initial query pertains to a Muslim relocating to a region governed by devout Christians. Mamburam Thangal divides the question into three distinct components, affirming that, despite Christian dominion, as long as the land retains its fundamental Muslim character, reclaiming it constitutes a religious obligation supported by authentic Islamic sources. The second query concerns Muslims residing in Muslim territories who openly identify as subjects of Christian rulers and adopt Christian symbols. The faith of those who do so unwittingly should be elucidated, with their error clarified. However, for those who knowingly engage in such acts, they are deemed as disbelievers, rejecting the truth. The third question pertains to individuals who extol non-Muslim rulers while disparaging Muslim rulers, esteeming the former as righteous. The fourth inquiry pertains to the permissibility of obstructing the flow of trade commodities into a Christian realm and appropriating their assets. The fifth question addresses the predicament of devout individuals compelled to reside in a Muslim territory conquered by non-believers. The sixth query delves into conflicts between two individuals offered the opportunity to migrate to Hijra. The seventh query centres on determining the precedence in prayer between the deceased body of a Muslim hailing from a Christian nation and a Muslim from a Muslim state. Lastly, it probes a scenario wherein a Muslim, subject to Islamic jurisprudence, enters into conflict with a Muslim subject to Christian legal principles, questioning whether the latter would be considered an apostate. Mamburam Thangal furnishes lucid responses to these intricate inquiries. The Saiful Bathar, encompassing responses to the eight inquiries, faced severe opposition from the British authorities. The Fatwas dispatched by Mamburam Thangals and their allies were clandestinely intercepted and incinerated due to their perceived anti-British sentiment and potential to foment unrest. The possession and dissemination of the work were vehemently prohibited by the British, leading to its discovery during home searches and subsequent destruction, as it posed a substantial threat to British rule. Fazl Pookoya Thangals apprehension and exile ensued, and the book saw a subsequent republication in Egypt in 1856, possibly originating from Istanbul. It finds mention in the second chapter of Uddatul Umara, alongside compositions and fatwas authored by other scholars. Although it was translated into Malayalam by K.K. Muhammed Abdul Kareem and Swalih Putuponnai, some historians contend that it may not faithfully represent the perspectives of the Mamburam Thangals. The Saiful Bathar manuscript is archived within the compilation

by Moyin Hudawi, entitled "Malayamma Mahmood Hudawi Panangangar," encompassed in the comprehensive work "Mamburam Thangal Jeevitam atmeeyata Porattam." In this extensive opus, the Arabic version of Saiful Bathar is meticulously preserved, spanning pages 608 to 623.<sup>24</sup> It serves as a repository for eight pivotal inquiries and their comprehensive expository responses. This seminal piece disseminated throughout the Muslim Mahals in Malabar and laid the cornerstone for the unwavering resolve of the Mappilas against colonial tyranny. The author fervently invoked Islamic scriptures to instil a fervent spirit of patriotism in the Malabar populace, persistently championing the cause of the oppressed, and vehemently opposing the ruling landlords throughout his lifetime. Upon recognizing the potent sway of the manuscript, the British authorities ruthlessly seized and proscribed it. The prevailing sentiment among British authors was that the actions of Mamburam Thangal had fanned the flames of the notorious Hal Uakkam<sup>25</sup> (Ial yellakum)<sup>26</sup> or 'frenzy-raising,<sup>27</sup>' faction among the Mappilas, to whom at least two of the calamitous incidents that year were unequivocally ascribed.<sup>28</sup> Subsequently, his son Syed Fazl, banished by the British and operating as a regional governor under Yamane's regime, resolutely republished it from the heart of Istanbul. The Cherur rebellion (Cherur Pada) of 1843 is widely believed to have transpired after the composition of Saiful Bathaar, and it gained formidable notoriety. In this event, seven valiant Mappila youths fearlessly confronted the entire British military might, even embracing martyrdom in their defiance. One subedar and five soldiers perished, while seven taluk sepoy's suffered grievous injuries. The fifth Madras Battalion, numbering a mere sixty soldiers, found itself embroiled in this turbulent episode, a catalyst that is presumed to have inflamed subsequent anti-British uprisings in southern Malabar. The concise but impactful Saiful Bathar booklet, spanning eleven pages, delves into a series of inquiries and responses aimed at addressing the profound anxieties of the Mappila populace ensnared under the oppressive yoke of British colonial dominion. It fervently aspires to delineate pathways for the Muslim community to adhere to the sacred tenets of Sharia amidst the constraining straitjacket of Western legal strictures foisted upon them by the colonial masters. Its central, unwavering mission is to inflame the flames of anti-British fervour within the hearts of the Mappilas, exhorting them to steadfastly resist any collaboration or acquiescence with the British authorities. The author's offspring, Syed Fazl, along with his ardent disciple, Umar Qadi of Veliyamkode, staunchly embraced the identical ideological principles and spearheaded a formidable no-tax crusade, an audacious act that culminated in Umar Qadi's incarceration by the unyielding British authorities in the year 1815. Mamburam Thangal boldly proclaims that the British military constitutes the sworn adversary of Allah, driven by insatiable avarice to despoil and enforce their faith upon the entire

nation. Their expulsion becomes imperative. Thangal vigorously endeavoured to substantiate this assertion through a rigorous scrutiny of the Quranic teachings and established traditions. Within the profound verses of Saiful Bathar, a stark declaration resounds: "The Europeans are the ultimate disbelievers, and Muslims commit a grievous transgression if they remain silent during the pernicious encroachment of Christendom. Their silence warrants exemplary punishment, even if they seek a placid existence under Christian rule." Moreover, it is sternly mandated that the adulation of European rulers be condemned, with remorse prescribed for those who dared to extol them. The elevation of European faith above Islam is unequivocally deemed an act of apostasy. Any momentary endorsement of European religion, however fleeting, thrusts one beyond the bounds of Islam. Muslims, it is decreed, shall not bear the sin of serving under a Christian government only if the land they inhabit is inherently Christian. Yet, they incur transgression by subjecting themselves to Christian rule in a nation wrested from Muslims by Christian forces. The prevailing counsel vehemently asserts that it is preferable to abandon conquered territory rather than endure the yoke of Christian conquerors, except when confident of an impending reclamation. Saiful Bathar's influence has cast a profound and enduring shadow over the Mappilas, with the tumultuous Malabar rebellion of 1921, motivated by none other than the resolute teachings contained within these resounding verses. Syed Fazal Pookoya Thangal, celebrated for his magnum opus, Uddat al Umara wa Hukkaum li Ihanat al Kufar wa Abdat al-Asnam (Preparation to Judges and Leaders to Undermine the Idolaters and Unbelievers), was unwaveringly dedicated to the unrelenting struggle against the yoke of colonialism and imperialism. This comprehensive treatise, authored by Sayyid Fazl, is a compendium of fatwas and theological rulings sourced from various esteemed religious scholars, meticulously fortified with Quranic scripture and Prophetic traditions. The Arabic text, first published in 1856 by Sayyid Abdullah bin Abdurahman in Egypt, encapsulates the profound synthesis of religious jurisprudence. Sayyid Fazl, with resolute conviction, assumed a pivotal role in the orchestration of revolts and vehemently proclaimed that the act of slaying a Janmi, who had dispossessed a peasant from their rightful land, was not a sin but rather an act of virtue.<sup>29</sup> This opus meticulously assembles the doctrinal pronouncements and fatwas of a myriad of erudite scholars, meticulously curated by Sayyid Fazl,<sup>30</sup> bolstered by irrefutable substantiation drawn from the sacred verses of the Quran and the profound utterances of the revered Prophet Muhammad.<sup>31</sup> The formidable impact of the Uddathul Umara<sup>32</sup> intensified British contemplations of deportation, culminating in the banishment. In 1851, the Malabar District Collector, HV Conolly, unilaterally imposed a stringent prohibition<sup>33</sup> on the dissemination of Uddathul Umara. Hence, it becomes evident that its composition likely transpired between 1849 and 1850, strategically poised

immediately after the tumultuous riots of 1849 and just before the explosive Kolatur riots of 1851, both of which were significantly underpinned by the ideological currents espoused within Uddathul Umara. The conflagrations in Kulathur and Mattanur were undeniably ignited by the fervent principles propagated within the text. Numerous individuals diligently transcribed the manuscript by hand, proliferating its message to all corners of the mahals and mosques, a customary practice during that era. The resonance of the message, openly proclaimed within the mahals, acted as a catalyst, impelling the Mappilas towards the inexorable path of rebellion. It was this potential for widespread mobilization that impelled the British government to issue a comprehensive edict outlawing the dissemination of Uddathul Umara, prompted by the apprehension of far-reaching and tumultuous protests. Saiful Bathar, a product of Malabar, stands as a resounding call to arms, compelling the masses to confront the avowed disbelievers and imperialist forces without concession or compromise.<sup>34</sup> The inaugural page of this extensive 168-page tome bears the complete nomenclature of the publication, with indisputable documentation attributing its compilation to the esteemed individual, Sayyid Fazl.<sup>35</sup> Comprising nine comprehensive sections, inclusive of an introductory segment, publisher's note, and the devoutly recited Ratheeb, each of these constituents is essentially an assemblage of treatises scribed on diverse occasions. Notably, these chapters amalgamate the literary contributions of esteemed luminaries, including the author's father, thereby fortifying the book's inherent credibility and gravitas. Each of these sections passionately exhorts the faithful to resolutely confront the dominion of the British and those who reject the true faith. The book commences its profound discourse by invoking the divine name of Allah, bestowing praise upon Him, and invoking blessings for the Prophet, his esteemed lineage, and his devout brethren, a stylistic hallmark echoing the venerable Arabic literary tradition. What truly distinguishes this work is its singular capacity to invigorate intellect and deepen one's religious cognizance when undertaken as a holistic and consecutive reading. Compliance with its guiding principles has the potential to buttress one's faith, ultimately paving the way to attain spiritual eminence and authority, referred to as Wilayat. Therefore, it is earnestly recommended that all earnestly engage with its contents and cherish it as a steadfast companion in their spiritual journey.<sup>36</sup> The ultimate chapter culminates with an emphatic delineation of the ruler's paramount responsibility to champion the cause of holy war and ardently advocate the defence of faith. When confronted with a formidable multitude of non-believers, it becomes the solemn duty of the sovereign to imbue his subjects with the righteous zeal for warfare, employing the art of poetry, crafted in the vernacular, as a potent instrument to kindle their fervour on all battlefronts. Poetry, akin to the keen edge of a finely honed weapon, assumes a



position of indispensable significance. Courage, as the bedrock of magnificence, is proffered as an unequivocal prerequisite; without it, excellence remains perpetually fragmented. Valour, inextricably intertwined with unyielding bravery, stands as the hallmark of distinction, encapsulated under the evocative appellation "Al Qaulul Mukhtar," denoting the final chapter's resounding title.<sup>37</sup> He authored a prolific array of literary works spanning diverse subjects, amassing a substantial body of knowledge. However, the colonial administration, deeming him a potent agitator inciting the Mappilas to take up arms against the British, orchestrated his banishment to the distant shores of Arabia. This particular tome was surreptitiously published in Arabia, and its clandestine circulation clandestinely infiltrated the secluded precincts of Malabari mahals. Through the pages of his works, he resolutely beckoned to challenge the hegemony of the British government, fostering a fervent anti-British doctrine within their writings. This ideological propagation, staunchly promulgated by Syed Fadl Pookkoya Thangal, served as a powerful catalyst, emboldening many to willingly embrace martyrdom in their relentless struggle against the British overlords.

The paramount objective of the seminal work, Uddath al Umara, was to diligently ready the Mappilas and their leaders for an impending conflict against the dual forces of British colonial domination and the oppressive landlordism entrenched in Malabar. The text, while not overtly antagonistic toward the British, is fervently dedicated to the cause of religious renewal and reformation among the Mappilas. Grounded in the citation of Quranic verses that exhort the propagation of faith, the text places unwavering emphasis on knowledge acquisition, education, moral rectitude, and the sacred duty of jihad. The author fervently champions the cause of literacy, resolutely equating ignorance with an inexorable path to impending doom, thereby underscoring the indispensable urgency of educational empowerment. Syed Fazl Pookkoya Thangal, a pioneering figure, catalysed nascent notions of social reform within the Mappilas of southern Malabar. Sayyid Fadhal Thangal, renowned for his relentless resistance against colonial dominion, ascended to the helm of Mappila's struggles following his father's demise. His astute assessment unearthed the deep-seated superstitions and misconceptions pervading the Mappila community of that era, unequivocally denouncing the act of capitulation to the Zamindars, the local landlords, and forthrightly decreeing the immediate cessation of all services rendered to them. "Abstain from tilling the land on Fridays; withhold your adulation from the Zamindars," such were the unwavering dictates set forth by Sayyid Fadhal. His active involvement in sociopolitical issues led to the British government levelling accusations against him, charging him with inciting the peasant revolts that raged during

that epoch. He, in essence, became an indomitable thorn in the side of British colonial rule. Sayyid Fadhal's fervent writings took the form of a multitude of pamphlets and booklets, ardently urging the Muslim populace to rise against the intrusive British occupiers. These disparate missives were ultimately aggregated into a cohesive volume christened 'Uddathul Umara'. The latter sections of this formidable work were composed in Constantinople, with an ardent dedication to the Ottoman Caliph, Sultan Abdul Aziz. Each page concludes with twin slogans: "May God aid the Ottoman Family with verity and serenity" and "Unleash a holy war against the adversaries of God, where paradise finds its abode beneath the benevolent shadow of the sword." In the year 1851, Malabar's district collector, Conolly, issued a stringent ban on the book. With a discerning gaze, the British government singled out Sayyid Fazl Pookkoya Thangal as the mastermind behind all the turbulent uprisings<sup>38</sup> that had engulfed Malabar, meticulously plotting his banishment from the region to the distant shores of Arabia. This underscores the profound and enduring imprint left by the book. Under the cloak of unsubstantiated suspicions of inciting rebellion, British authorities employed coercive measures to compel his exile to Arabia.<sup>39</sup> Aghast at the persistent Mappila uprisings, Connolly commissioned T. L. Strange<sup>40</sup> to undertake an inquiry aimed at elucidating the underlying catalysts of the Mappila revolts.<sup>41</sup> The Thangal vehemently denied promoting sedition and asserted that his teachings had been gravely misinterpreted by the Mappilas.<sup>42</sup> Based on the counsel proffered by Strange, Fazl Pookkoya Thangal was subjected to deportation to Makkah on the 19th of March in the year 1852. The primary suggestions delineated in the Strange report<sup>43</sup> encompassed punitive actions such as imposing substantial fines upon the Mappila populace dwelling in areas marred by upheavals, seizing the assets of those convicted of said disturbances, and exiling individuals suspected of collusion. To implement these measures, a specialized police force was assembled in the region of Ernad. The resultant report proved disheartening, as it eschewed an in-depth exploration of agrarian issues in favour of justifying the authorities' actions and accentuating the rights of landlords. According to his perspective, these disturbances stemmed from religious fanaticism, exacerbated by Muslim clerics and affluent, land-seeking Mappilas who cynically exploited the religious sentiments of their less-educated and impoverished compatriots. The recommendations put forth were rooted in a repressive policy and legislative approach to quell such outbreaks. Moreover, he accentuated the consequential involvement of spiritual authorities, specifically the Tarammal Thangals of Tirurangadi, in orchestrating a substantial portion of these uprisings. Mamburam Sayyid Alawi Thangal and Fazl Pookkoya Thangal were recurrently denoted in the Strange Report under the titles of Tarammal Thangal, Tirurangadi Thangal, and Mamburam Thangal.

Nonetheless, during this intervening period, Mr. Conolly demonstrated his negotiation prowess, skilfully convincing Syed Fazl to voluntarily embark on a peaceful departure<sup>44</sup> and settle permanently among his kinsfolk in Arabia.<sup>45</sup> Within the bounds of Malabar, he was revered as a religious martyr. Subsequently, Mr. Conolly met his fate through assassination at the hands of Mappilas. A multitude of conjectures have been posited, each proposing a spectrum of factors that may have fuelled the impetus behind Mr. Conolly's violent demise.<sup>46</sup> His oppressive and ruthless policy formulations, culminating in the involuntary exile of Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Thangal, and the draconian legislations of the 'Moplah Outrage Act'<sup>47</sup> and 'Moplah War-Knives Act' in 1854, undeniably stoked a blazing furnace of incendiary indignation within the Mappila community.<sup>48</sup> The ensuing measures, arising from the given recommendations, encompassed the imposition of penalties on Mappila transgressions, actions that were perceived as demeaning by the Mappila community. The Arabic work "Tanbeeh al Ghafileen"<sup>49</sup> by Syed Fazl played a pivotal role in fuelling anti-colonial sentiments among the Mappilas of Malabar. It is structured as an oration with Quranic verses interspersed throughout, employing the Arabic rhetorical technique of iqthibas. The text refrains from directly naming the British invaders, instead using the Quranic term "Kafirs" to denote adversaries during times of conflict. Syed Fazl firmly believed that Muslims could not accept colonialism in any form. He vividly described the atrocities committed by the British colonists and highlighted them as the primary enemies. The work also emphasized the importance of jihad, considering it a divine gift for those favoured by Islam. The text extensively quoted from the Quran and hadith to emphasize the duty of believers to resist injustice and oppressors, glorifying martyrdom. "Tanbeeh al Ghafileen" successfully rallied the Mappilas for a vehement ideological struggle against British colonial rule. After Sayyid Fazal's departure, no religious leader gained as much respect among the Mappilas.<sup>50</sup> He had a significant following, with disciples scattered throughout the district. His celebrated miracles elevated his standing in the public's perception, cementing his reputation as an authentic saint.<sup>51</sup> The sepulcher in question serves as the final resting place for Syed Alavi, but it is noteworthy that an additional nine individuals from his familial lineage have been interred within its precincts. The Mamburam Jaram, a popular pilgrimage center, attracted Mappilas from other areas who came to pray. The fact that "thangal" is the plural form of "tan"<sup>52</sup> is significant because it suggests that the person being addressed is not simply an individual, but rather a representative of a larger group, such as a family or community. This is especially relevant in the context of Mappila culture, where "thangal" is used to address members of the Prophet's family. This usage reflects the high esteem in which these individuals are held by Mappilas. The thangals are a large group in Mappila society

with many levels of status. They are found in all walks of life and are respected, but only a few are considered saints.

## Conclusion

However, the suspicion of the Thangal's influence being a crucial factor in inciting the Mappila outbreak is unsubstantiated, and it's important to acknowledge that the Thangal was considered a virtuous individual. The Thangal, complying with the government's request, left Malabar. His departure was mourned by 8,000 Mappilas, demonstrating his deep acceptance within the community. The works written by Mamburam Thangals, criticized British rule and promoted social change. During the medieval era, Mappila resistance exerted a substantial impediment to Western encroachment in India, thereby nurturing a profound aversion toward Western attributes, particularly the English language and Western education, within the Mappila community. William Logan's assertion that the Mappilas harboured an antagonistic stance against modern education does not accurately capture the essence of their unwavering opposition. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that this resistance to modern education can also be rooted in a complex interplay of historical, cultural, and sociopolitical factors, which extend beyond a mere comparison to rote Quranic recitation.<sup>53</sup> The Mappilas resisted British rule and came to dislike everything Western, even though the British tried to teach them. The Mappilas resisted British rule and Western influences, led by Islamic scholars and revered Syeds. They advocated confrontation with the colonial powers. In the tumultuous context of the British colonial yoke, the writings of *Saiful Battar*, *Uddath ul Umara*, and *Thanbeeh al Ghafileen* galvanised the Mappila community and championed the cause of social justice with unwavering resolve. The Mamburam Thangals, imbued with the righteous fervor of the Ulama's fatwas, bequeathed a timeless legacy as visionary stalwarts of India's freedom struggle.

---

### End Note

<sup>1</sup> Ahmed Kutty E K., *Arabic in South India papers in honour of Prof. S.E.A. Nadvi*, Department of Arabic, university of Calicut. 2003, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> Al Mabari Zayn al Din, *Tuhfut ul Mujahideen, An historical work*, Ar. Tr. Eng. Rowlandson M.J., Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland, London, 1873.

<sup>3</sup> K.M. Bahauddin, *Kerala Muslims: A Long Struggle*, Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society Ltd, Kottayam, 1992, 96.

<sup>4</sup> C.K. Kareem, *Kerala Muslim Charithram, Sthithivivaranakku*, Directory Vol.I (M), Charithram Publications, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997, p. 98.

<sup>5</sup> Qazi Muhammad, *Qasidat ul Fath ul Mubin* (Ara.), compiled by Mankada Abdul Aziz, Calicut, 1996, verse.521, p. 32.

- <sup>6</sup> Kunhali V., "The Marakkar Legacy and Mappila Community," 64th Session Mysore, Indian History Congress Proceedings, Vol., 2003, pp. 369–373.
- <sup>7</sup> Aminummantakathu, Parikutty Musliyar, *Muhimmathul Muminin* Tr. 1921, Internet Achieve.
- <sup>8</sup> Diwan Bahadur C. Gopalan Nair, *The Moplah Rebellion 1921*, Norman Printing Bureau, Calicut, 1923, p. 27.
- <sup>9</sup> Willaim Logan, *Malabar*, Collector and Magistrate and the District and fellow of the University Madras, In II Vols, Vol. I., Superintendent Government Press Madras, 1951, p. 557.
- <sup>10</sup> Journal of Indian Ocean World Studies, 6, 1 2022. Wilson Chacko Jacob, The beginning End of Diaspora A Kernel of time in a mystical mode of existence, p. 67.
- <sup>11</sup> Roland E Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala A study in Islamic trends*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, p. 255.
- <sup>12</sup> Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Vol. 60, Diamond Jubilee, 1999, pp. 226-234 K.M. Mohamed, Arab relations with Malabar coast from 9<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, p. .232.
- <sup>13</sup> Hussain Randathani, *Hadramis in Kerala Sufism*, Department of Publications, University of Calicut, Calicut, 2017.
- <sup>14</sup> Roland E Miller, *Mappila Muslim Culture*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2015, p. 268.
- <sup>15</sup> Nizamudheen, *Mamburam Thangal*, Islamic Publishing Bureau, Books, 2020.
- <sup>16</sup> Willaim Logan, *Malabar*, op.cit., p. 567.
- <sup>17</sup> Roland E Miller, *Mappila Muslim Culture*, op.cit., p. 269.
- <sup>18</sup> Roland E Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala A study in Islamic trends*, op.cit., p. 256.
- <sup>19</sup> Hussain Randathani, *Mappila Muslims A study on society and Anti-colonial struggles*, Other Books, 2007, P. 139.
- <sup>20</sup> Major R.H., *India in the fifteenth Century being a collection of narratives of Voyages*, The Hakluyt Society, London, p. 17.
- <sup>21</sup> Ashok Srivastav. K., *India as described by the Arab travellers*, Sahitya Sansar prakasham, Gorakhpur, 1980, pp. 43-44.
- <sup>22</sup> Arabic manuscript, *Qissat Shakarwati al Farmad*, A tradition concerning the introduction of Islam to Malabar, Y. Friedmann, Israel Oriental studies V., Tel Aviv University, 1975, p. 245.
- <sup>23</sup> Saiful Battar, Archives, Department of History, PSMO College, Scanned copy., 1857. Documentation Date: August 20, 2021.
- <sup>24</sup> Moyin Hudawi Malayamma, Mahmood Hudawi Panangangara, *Mamburam Tangal Jeevitam Atmeeyata Porattam*, Biography study, Asas Book Cell, Darul Huda Islamic University, Chemmad, 2014, p. 608-623.
- <sup>25</sup> Willaim Logan, *Malabar Manuel*, in two Vols., Vol. I., Reprinted from the Superintendent Government press Madras, 1951, p. 557.
- <sup>26</sup> Report Special Commissioner's Office, Tellichery, 25th September 1852., *T.L. Strange, Special Commissioner to T. Pycroft*, secretary to Government, Judicial Department, Fort Saint, Madras, p. 401. 399-405, Archives, Department of History, PSMO College.
- <sup>27</sup> Diwan Bahadur C. Gopalan Nair, *The Moplah Rebellion 1921*, op.cit., p. 5.
- <sup>28</sup> C.A. Innes, *Madras District Gazetteers*, Malabar, Vol. I, reprinted by the superintendent Government Press Madras, 1951, p. 79.
- <sup>29</sup> Hussain Randathani, *Mappila Muslims A study on society and Anti-colonial struggles*, op.cit., p. 139.
- <sup>30</sup> Muhammed A Thahir, *Syed Fadl Pookkoya Tangal Mamburam*, Malaibar Press, 2022.
- <sup>31</sup> Hussain Randathani, op.cit., p. 139.
- <sup>32</sup> Gangadharan M., *Malabar Kalapam*, DC Books, Kottayam, 2019.
- <sup>33</sup> Hussain Randathani, op.cit., p. 139.
- <sup>34</sup> Moyin Hudawi Malayamma, Mahmood Hudawi Panangangara, *Mamburam Tangal Jeevitam Atmeeyata Porattam*, op.cit., p. 285.
- <sup>35</sup> A Group of Writers, *Mamburam sayyid fazal pookoya thangal: adhinivesa virudha charithrathile nithya sanidhyam adhinivesa virudha charithrathile nithya sanidhyam*, Chintha Publisher, 2020.
- <sup>36</sup> Moyin Hudawi Malayamma, op.cit., p. 286.
- <sup>37</sup> Moyin Hudawi Malayamma, op.cit., p. 527.
- <sup>38</sup> A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Their history and Culture*, Sandhya publications, Trivandrum, 1989, pp. 96-97
- <sup>39</sup> Roland E Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala A study in Islamic trends*, op.cit., p. 256.; C. A. Innes, *Madras District Gazetteers*, Malabar, op.cit., p. 80.
- <sup>40</sup> Report Special Commissioner's Office, Tellichery, 25th September 1852., T.L. Strange, op.cit., pp. 399-405.
- <sup>41</sup> Diwan Bahadur C. Gopalan Nair, op.cit., p. 123.
- <sup>42</sup> A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, op.cit., p. 97.

<sup>43</sup> Diwan Bahadur C. Gopalan Nair, op.cit., pp. 5-6.

<sup>44</sup> Journal of Indian Ocean World Studies, 6, 1 2022. Wilson Chacko Jacob, The beginning End of Diaspora A Kernel of time in a mystical mode of existence, pp. 65-80.

<sup>45</sup> Willaim Logan, *Malabar*, op.cit., pp. 567-568.

<sup>46</sup> Willaim Logan, *Malabar*, op.cit., pp. 573-574.

<sup>47</sup> C.A Innes, Madras District Gazetteers, Malabar, Vol. I, op.cit., p. 80.

<sup>48</sup> K. K Muhammed Abdul Sathar, *Mappila Leader in Exile: a political biography of Syed Fazl Pookkoya Thangal*, Calicut: Other Books, 2012, p. 120.

<sup>49</sup> Moyin Hudawi Malayamma, *Mahmood Hudawi Panangangara*, op.cit., 289.

<sup>50</sup> K.N. Panikkar, *Against lord and state, Religion and peasant uprisings in Malabar, 1836-1921*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1989, p. 154.

<sup>51</sup> Roland E Miller, *Mappila Muslim Culture*, op.cit., p. 269.

<sup>52</sup> Roland E Miller, *Mappila Muslim Culture*, op.cit., p. 268.

<sup>53</sup> Willaim Logan, *Malabar Manuel*, op.cit., p. 198.

