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Early Penetration in South India by Muslim Traders

Attempts have been made by Mr M.A. Ghani to show that the Muslims came to India as early as A.D. 637 and settled in large numbers not as fighters but as tradesmen and missionaries and impressed Indians profoundly by the purity of their living, their zeal for a new faith and the principle of world-wide brotherhood. The principle on which Ghani relies is Buzurg-bin-Shahriyar's Aja'ibul Hind, a book composed in the tenth century A.D. and described in the Encyclopaedia of Islam as 'Mere Sailors' tales with fantastic exaggerations, though, there may be some elements of truth.¹ There was maritime intercourse from very early period between India and the western world including Arabia and Persia, and we have definite evidence that the relation continued even after the spread of Islam in those countries. It is, therefore, possible that Muslim traders, who frequented the coastal regions, near the important ports, lived there for long or short periods and some of them might even have settled there on more or less permanent basis. But there is no reliable evidence to show, as has been maintained by some, that they settled in Malabar coast in large numbers in the seventh century A.D. Such a theory is mainly based on the

traditions current among the Moplahs, Navayats, and Labbes of South India.²

Islam in Western peninsular India first arrived with peaceful enclaves of Arab merchants, who had settled along the Konkan and Malabar coasts. In A.D. 916-17 the Arab traveller Mas'udi described a settlement in Chaul (25 miles south of modern Bombay) as consisted thousand Muslims whose ancestors had come from Arabia and Iraq to engage in the pepper and spice trade. This settlement enjoyed the degree of political autonomy granted by a local Raja. This Muslim population was composed mainly of Arabs who had been born in Chaul and had intermarried with the local population.³

The earliest Muslim settlers in India were Persian and Arab traders who were engaged in trade on the Western coast of India from early times. Persian and Arab (now turned Muslim) merchants entered into the inheritance of their predecessor. Their activities received a booster from the recovering of the Indian seas by Arab fleets. The first Muslim fleet appeared at Thana near Bombay in A.D. 636 during the Caliphate of Umar, only four years after the death of prophet Muhammad. About the same time expeditions were sent to Broach and Debal. Land approaches to India were also explored during this period leading ultimately to the conquest of Sind by Muhammad-bin-Qasim in early eighth century A.D.⁴ Arab fleets also attacked Broach and ports on

the Kathiawad coast. Muslims were present on the Malabar coast from seventh century.⁵ But Dr. P.M. Joshi and Dr. M. Husain say: "Small colonies of Arab traders had settled at various points in and near the ports in the coastal region from Thana (near Bombay) to Bhatkal and further south from the eighth century onwards."⁶ In the eleventh and twelfth centuries Muslim merchants were found on the Western and Eastern coasts of India who had settled permanently in Indian port-towns others having visited them on business off and on.⁷

The Arab and Persian vessels started either from the red sea or from the Persian Gulf, came to the mouth of the Indus or the Gulf or Cambay, then sailed along the coast, reached Malabar, the Malay peninsula, the Eastern archipelago and China. In India some of them landed on the Western coast called Konkan, others Eastward of Cape Comorin.⁸ Arab merchants went almost everywhere. Their ships sailed from Siraf and Hurmuz on the Arabian Gulf, and from Katif and Muscat to the Indian ports of Spendapur, Mangalore, Fandraina and Cranganore to buy their 'Indian cane' (i.e., sugarcane), cinnamon, pearls, perfumes and paper ... the last mainly the Kaukamali on the Malbar coast. Also their caravans and ships reached Morocco and Spain in the West and Russia in the Northwest.⁹ The Arab merchant was not hero or pirate, as were the earlier Greeks. Nor was he a big businessman who let his money and his slaves work for him, as did the Roman senators or their freedmen. The Arab was an adventurer, gambling rather than

calculating placing his firm trust in Allah, he sailed forth into the unknown. If it was written that he should drown in the waves of the sea, or fall into the hands of pirates, he could not escape his fate anyway. Thus trusting in oriental hospitality, he travelled on the back of his camel Morocco to the Chinese frontier. Months, perhaps years, would pass before he returned whether rich, or poor, it was all in Allah's hand.¹⁰ In the Mysore census Report, 1901, the Arabs are described as itinerent tradesman, whose chief business is horse-dealing, though some deal in cloths.¹¹

Trading Places of Muslim Merchants in South India

In South India the places were as follows. From Cambay to Saimur (near Bombay) there were many trading centres on the sea coast, like Broach, Sopara (Subara), Sindan, Thana and Chaul where Hindu and Muslim merchants were busy in active commerce. Cambay was well known as naval and trade station. Goods from every country were found there and the goods were exported to many countries from here. The inhabitants of Broach were rich because of its commerce and they freely entered upon speculation. It was a port for vessels coming from the direction of China and Sind. Sopara was a busy town and the trade centre of India.

Southwards, all along the Western coast, there were ports and trade centres, some prominent ones being Dabhol, Sandabul (Goa?), Calicut and Quilon. Between Calicut and Quilon the board

was thickly studded with many large and small ports. The reason was that if it were not imperative to sail on the high seas, then the ships, which were not strong as the modern ones, sailed as close to the seashore as possible for the sake of safety. Moreover, as explained above, the frequency of halts for collecting provisions necessitated many points of anchor and rest. Ibn Batuta visited most of these ports in the fourteenth century.¹²

On the Eastern coast there were Muslim settlements like Kayalpattanam in Tinnevely district on the mouth of the Tamrapani river, Madura, and a few other places, and the Coromandel coast became the Ma'bar (passage) of the Muslim traders.¹³ According to Wassaf, it extended from Koulam to Nilawar (Nellore), nearly 300 para sangs. The curiosities of China and Machin, and the beautiful products of Hind and Sind laden on large ships (which they call junks) ... are always arriving there. The wealth of Isles of Persian Gulf in particular, and in part the beauty and adornment of other countries, from Irak and Khursan as far as Rum and Europe, are derived from M'abar, which is so situated so as to be the key of Hind ...¹⁴ the Arab horses, which were brought by ships to Ma'abar there were no good horses here, and each one was reckoned worth 220 dinars.¹⁵

The merchants export from Ma'abar silken stuffs, aromatic roots; large pearls brought up from the sea. The produces of this country were carried to Irak, Khurasan, Syria, Rum, and Europe. The country produced rubies and aromatic grasses, and in the sea

there were plenty of pearls. M'abar is, as it were, the key of Hind. There were no horses in Ma'abar, or rather those which were there were weak, it was agreed that every year Jamalu-d-din Ibrahim should send to the Dewar 1,400 strong Arab horses obtained from the island of Kis and 10,000 horses from all the islands of Fars, and other islands such as Katif, Lahsa, Bahrein, Hurmuz, Kilihat, etc. Each horse is reckoned worth 220 dinars of red gold current.¹⁶

Lt. Colonel John Briggs states: Anterior to the propogation of the Mahomedan faith, the Christians and Jews had established themselves as merchants in that country; till at length, during the reign of a prince called Samiry (Zamorin of the Portuguese historians). Some vessels from Arabia having Mahomedans on board, going to a pilgrimage to the footsteps of Adam, on the island of Selandeeep (Ceylon) which is also called Lunka, where the Samiry raja resided. This prince received the strangers with hospitality, and was so pleased with holy men who were among the pilgrims, that having enquired respecting the Mahomedan faith, he became a convert; and leaving his kingdom, went to Mecca, died in one of the ports of the Red sea. Before his death, he wrote to his representative in Malabar to receive the Mahomedans in future with hospitality, and permit them to settle and build Musjids. This communication was written in the language of Malabar, whose ruler henceforward assumed the title of Samiry.¹⁷

In consequence of this letter the Mahomedans were treated with kindness by the reigning prince, who wrote to the governors of his districts in these words: "Whereas Mullik, the son of Hubeen, and certain other Mohomedans have come to visit this our country, and intend residing among us, it is our royal order, agreeably to the imperial command of the late Samiry, that wherever the said Mullik or any of his tribe wish to reside, ground shall be allotted to them in order to build either habitations or places of worship."¹⁸ Mullik first settled at Cranganore, where he built a Musjid, and cultivated some garden land; afterwards, having gone farther into the country, he established a colony of Mahomedans in the town of Quilon. Thence he went Hurryputtum, Daraputtum, Madura, Jay Faknoor, Mangalore, and Kalinjurkote in each of which towns he built Musjids, and established Moollas to preach the true faith; and as Mahomedans in Malabar are mostly of the Shafay Persuasion ...¹⁹

The Relationship Between the Balhara, the Arabs and Muslims

Balhara is the title borne by all the kings of this dynasty. It is similar to the Cosroes (of the Persians), and is not a proper name. The kingdom of Balhara commences on the seaside, at the country of Komkam (Konkan), on the tongue of land which stretches to China.²⁰

... And so the account given of the Balhara by their geographers, vague and meagre as it is, exceed all that is

recorded by them of the other contemporary kingdoms. The extent of the Balhara's territory can only be surmised, and no doubt it underwent continual change. Masudi, by implication, places Tanna within his dominions, but this is farther south than would seem to be warranted.²¹

The inhabitants of the Balhara's country say that if their kings reign and live for a long time, it is solely in consequence of the favour shown to the Arabs. The Balhara kings were quite good to the Arab and hence their subjects also followed their example.

Sulayaman, Ibn Khur ^adbbhben, Ibn Rusta and Idrisi say that the title of Balhara signifies, King of Kings ... He was the first who bore the name Balhara which became subsequently the title of every sovereign of that great capital down to our time which is the year 332 A.H.²² Hence it may be presumed that Balhara of these writers from Masudi to Abul Faraj refers to the Rastrakuta kings who were in power till 973 A.D. Ibn Hawqal (975 A.D.) credits the Balhara with the authorship of a book of proverbs. This Balhara may be identified with Amoga Varsa, one of the Rastrakuta princes who is represented as having been a devoted worshipper of a holy Jaina Saint named Jinasena.²³

The greatest king of India is the Balhara, whose name imports "King of Kings". He wears a ring in which is inscribed the

following sentence: 'What is begun with resolution ends with success'.²⁴

Of all kings of Sind and India, there is no one who pays greater respect to the Musulman than the Balhara. In his kingdom Islam is honoured and protected.²⁵ The relationship between the Balhara and the Arabs and the Muslims has been spoken of very highly by various Muslim merchants and travellers such as Sulayman (851 A.D.?), Masudi (943 and 955 A.D.), Istakhri (950 A.D.) and Ibn Hawqal (975 A.D.).²⁶

The establishment of Muslim settlements particularly on the West coast of India was due mainly to the encouragement to trade given by the Hindu rulers. Of these the rulers of Balhara dynasty in the North and the Zamorins of the Malabar coast were known to be most partial to Muslims. Many of the Muhammadan traders, encouraged by this kindly attitude of the Hindu chieftains, took up their abodes in places like Anhilwara, Cambay, Calicut and Quilon. They were treated with great consideration, allowed to build mosques and permitted to practice their religion without hindrance, with the result that these early Arab Muslim settlers established themselves all along the coast, intermarried with the Hindu population, and thus gave rise to the various Muslim communities on the coast that are found today.²⁷

Salayman says that in the whole country of Hind there is none more affectionate to Arabs than the Balhara and likewise his

subjects also profess the same love for the Arabs.

The Balhara line of kings lived for a long period, many ruled for fifty years. The people of the country of the Balhara believe that the longevity of their sovereigns and their prosperity in the land was due to their love for the Arabs. Masudi gives the following information: There is no sovereign either in Sind or Hind who honours the Muslims like the Balhara in his kingdom.²⁸ Neither in Hind nor in Sind, is there a sovereign who disturbs the peace of the Muslims in their own country (Sprenger, p. 338). Then, in a footnote to this, Sprenger says: 'One copy reads, 'who persecutes the Muslims in his country, so for instance, the Balhara' and all that follows respecting the longevity of the kings is said there in reference to the Balhara.'²⁹

Islam is, therefore, flourishing in his country. The mosques and cathedral mosques are built and prayers are regularly said in these. The Balhara kings are long lived and reign forty, fifty and more years and the people of his country believe that the length of the life of their sovereigns is due to the justice and the respect paid to the Muslims.

Istakhri says that here are, in the cities of the Balhara, Muslims and none but Muslims rule over them on behalf of the Balhara. There are mosques built in these cities and prayers are regularly said. Ibn Hawqal who gives similar information has

additional details. He says: "There is the same practice that is found in most of the cities ruled over by infidel king like Khazar, al-Sarir, al-Lan, Ghana and Kugha. In all these cities the Muslims, however few they are, will not tolerate the exercise of authority, nor the imposition of punishment, nor the testimony of a witness except by Muslims. But in some parts I have seen Muslims seeking witness among non-Muslims who have reputation for honesty and the other party is satisfied. Sometimes the other party refuses to accept the witness and Muslim takes his place and so the decision will be reached."³⁰

Muslim Settlement in South India Before 1498

There were many Muslim colonies and places in South India where many Muslims were settled from early in 7th century A.D. These are as follows:

I) Sagar (Saghar) ... which lies 20 miles Southeast of Nasik. The inhabitants of this city are just, pious and honourable and all their deeds are praiseworthy. They have gardens containing hospices (Zawaya) for the way farers.³¹ The term Zawiya - Zawaya being plural - is applied to a small chapel or building which serves as a hospice or asylum for poor Muslim students and others (Lane) it was a convent or monastery for sufi ^vderishes called Khangah in the East and Zawiya in the West.³²

II) Cambay: Cambay is one of the most beautiful cities as regards

the artistic architecture of its houses and the construction of its mosque. The reason is that the majority of its inhabitants are foreign merchants, who continually build their beautiful houses and wonderful mosques. Among the grand buildings are also included the house of Malik-ut-tujjar al-Kazeruni with his mosque adjacent to it and the house of the merchant Shams-ud-din the cap maker. Another great merchant in Cambay was Najm-ud-din. He built a large house and mosque in this city.³³

III) Gandhar (Qandahar) The ruler of Gandhar (Qandahar) is an infidel named Jalansi who is subject to the government of Islam and sends to the emperor of India a present every year. The chief Muslims of his entourage like the sons of Khwaja Bohra visited us and among them there was the ship-owner Ibrahim who owned six ships meant for his special use.³⁴

IV) Sandapur (Sandabur) is the old name of Goa. Sandabur or Sandapur was the name by which the island and bay of Goa were known to the early Muslim traders and taken from them by the first European travellers. The older name Goa did not come into general use until the sixteenth century. It was captured by the Muhammadans for the first time in 1312, and was subsequently taken and retaken more than once.³⁵

In the centre of the island there are two cities of which one is old and has been built by the heathens, while the second was built by the Muslims when they conquered this island for the

first time. In this city there is a large congregational mosque which has the resemblance to the mosques of Baghdad and was built by the ship-owner Hasan, the father of Sultan Jamal-ud-din Muhammad of Onore (Hinawr). In this island we met a Jogi. I was carrying in my hand a rosary of Zeila (Zayla) (Zeila was a commercial town on the African coast opposite to Aden. Ibn Batuta visited it in 1331) which he turned in my hand. So I gave it to him. He rubbed it in his hand, smelt it and kissed it and pointed to heaven and then made signs in the direction of the Gibla (i.e., the West, in which direction all Muslims bow in prayers). My comrades did not understand his signs; but I understood his indication that he was a Muslim and that he concealed his faith in Islam from the inhabitants of that Island and I said to them, 'The man is a Muslim. Did you not see how he pointed to heaven indicating that he knew the exalted God?' 'and did you not notice how he pointed to the Gibla indicating that he knew the prophet?'³⁶

V) Hinawr (Hinawr - an old seaport, now destroyed, on the eastern coast of India South of Sandapur). The inhabitants of the city of Hinawr profess the Shaf'al Cult (i.e., the Shafil School of Islamic law founded by Imam Abu'Abdullah Muhammad bin Idris, commonly known as al-Shafil (767-820 A.C.)). They are pious, devout at sea ... the inhabitants of Hinawr earn their living by maritime trade, since they possess no fields and the inhabitants of Malabar (Mulaybar) send a yearly tribute of fixed

amount to Sultan Jamal-ud-din, king of Hinawr, for fear of him and because of his overwhelming maritime power and forces consist of six thousand cavalry as well as infantry.

Sultan Jamal-ud-din regularly performed the congregational prayers. He is accustomed to come into the mosque before day break; then he reads the Qur'an (Mashaf) until the first light of morning appears and he prays at the earliest hour.³⁷

VI) Barcelore (Abusarur) - [According to Yule Abusarur, the Basaru of Abul Fida, has been identified with the town of Barcelore which flourished in the sixteenth and seventh centuries.] In the seventeenth century there was a Dutch factory here.³⁸ In the sixteenth century Coondapoor or lower Basrur became a possession of the Portuguese, and early in the eighteenth century a Dutch factory was also established there. Basrur is also supposed by some to be Berace of Pliny.³⁹ The head of the Muslims there is Shaikh Jum'a known as Abu Sitta a generous man who used to spend his wealth for poor and needy until it was exhausted.⁴⁰

VII) Fakanar (Fakanar may be identified with modern Barkur - village in south Canara district of Madras). Yagut and Dimishqu mention Faknur as Barkur. It is the traditional capital of Tuluva. It now stands about three miles inland, but was perhaps originally a coast town on the common estuary of the Sitandi and Swarnanadi, the little port of Hangarkatta, which now stands there being also

known as the port of Barkur. It is also one of the towns in which a mosque is said to have been built in the 9th century A.D. by the adherents of Cheraman Perumal. Later on it was the local capital of Hoysal Ballala dynasty.

The traces of a great fort and ruins of Buddhist temples and inscriptions testify that in the fourteenth century Barkur was the seat of Viceregal government of the Raja of Vijayanagar.⁴¹

The raja (Sultan) of Fakanar is an infidel named Bas Deo (Basadau) who has about thirty warships. The commander of it is a Muslim.⁴² That a Muslim held the top neval post in a Hindu state affords an illustration of the culture and liberalism attained in India in 14th century A.D.⁴³

VIII) Manjarur: Dimishqui and Abul Fida give information about Manjarur. Dimishqui states that the city of Manjarur is situated on a river known by the same name and which amplies into the sea where there is ebb and low tide. There is a large quantity of pepper available here.

Abul Fida says that Manjarur is situated to the east of Sindabur, Hannur and Basrur. It is said that Manjarur is the biggest town in Manibar (Malabar). Its king is an infidel⁴⁴ ... In this city most of the merchants from Fars and Yemen (Yaman) disembark and there is an abundance of pepper and ginger. In this city there are about four thousand Muslims, who inhabit a

suburb of their own inside the jurisdiction of the city. There is fighting between them and the inhabitants of the city often, but the raja (Sultan) intercedes since he has need of merchants. There is a Qazi in Manjarur, an accomplished and beneficent man of the Shaf'at cult, named Badr-ud-din of Ma'bar who patronised learning. He came to us on board the ship, and asked us to disembark at his town. Not until the ruler, sends his son to stay on board our ship. We replied. The Sultan of Fakanar did this because the Muslims in his own have no power. But as for us, the Sultan fears us, he rejoined.⁴⁵

IX) Hili: Hili was originally Eli. Ibn Battuta says, "There is a small mosque which is visited on certain holy days by a large number of Moplas (native Muslims from Malabar). The city of Hili stands in high regard with the Muslims as well as with the infidels because of its congregational mosque, which enjoys pentitude of blessings and radiates the light of heaven. Navigators offer it considerable oblatory presents; so it possesses a large fund under the supervision of Husain, the orator (Khatib) and Hasan-ul-Wazzan, chief of the Muslim (Kabir-ul-Muslemin). In this mosque there are a number of students who learn the sciences (ilm) and get scholarships out of the funds of the mosque. It has a kitchen in which food for the wayfarers, the visitors and the poor Muslims of the town is prepared. In this mosque I met a pious jurist from Mogdishu (a town on the Zanzibar coast in the East Africa) named Sa'id - a man of handsome

looks and fine character ..."

X) Jurfattan: Dimishqi states that Jurfattan is on the coast and its inhabitants are infidels.⁴⁶ Yule identifies Jurfattan with Cannanore which does not seem to be correct. For, according to the description in Tuhfat-al Mujahidin of a mosque built by Malik ibn Dinar Jurfattan is to be identified as Cannore. In Srikanthapuram the ancient mosque of Ibn Dinar stands to this day. It is still a popular Mappila village.⁴⁷ Ibn Battuta mentions Hili, Jurfattan, Budfattan, Dahfattan, which were under the Raja Kuwayl (Kotattiri). Ibn Battuta says: I was told that it was the father of Sultan Kuwayl who had built this bain confronting this here is for the Muslims a congregational mosque which has staircases descending into the bain, so that people can take water from it for their ablution and bath."⁴⁸

XII) Budafattan (Budafattan or Pudupattana was one of the oldest harbours of Malabar Southeast of Mahe. It has also been identified with Valarpattanam, a village near a river of the same name). Ibn Battuta says: "Budfattan, a large city on a large bay outside it there is a mosque near the sea resorted to by foreign Muslims for there are no Muslims in this city... The majority of the inhabitants are Brahmins, who are revered by the infidels and inspire hatred in the Muslims. That is why there is no Muslim there."⁴⁹

XIII) Panderani (Fandarayana) Ibn Battuta mentions that there

are three Muslim quarters each of which has a mosque, while the congregational mosque lies on the coast. The judge (Qazi) and the orator (Khatib) of the city is a man from Oman, and he has a brother who is accomplished.⁵⁰

XIV) Quilon: Ibn Battuta mentions: "It is one of the most beautiful places in the country of Malabar with magnificent bazars. The merchants of Quilon are known as Suli (Choolia is, in Ceylon and Malabar a Bohra - Khoja the Sanskrit Chuda, the top hair which a Hindu wears and is cut off on conversion to Islam (Yule). It seems to be the same word as the suli of Ibn Battuta.)⁵¹ and possess considerable wealth, so much so that one of them buys a ship with everything in it and loads it with the goods in his stock. There live a number of Muslim merchants whose head is Ala-ud-din-Awachi (al-Awaji) from Iwah in the country of Iraq ... the judge of the town is an accomplished man of the Qazwin, while the head of the local Muslims is Muhammad, the Shabundar (Shahbandar), who was a brother of an accomplished and generous man named Taqi-ud-din. The congregational mosque of the town is marvellous and has been built by the merchant Khwaja Muhadhhab. Here the Muslims are honoured and respected."⁵²

XV) Calicut: Abd-Er-Razzak mentions: "Calicut is a perfectly secure harbour, which like that of Ormuz, brings together merchants from every city and from every country; in it are to be found abundance of precious articles brought thither from

maritime countries, and especially from Abyssinia, Zirbad and Zanguebar; from time to time ships arrive there from the shores of the House of Gods (Mecca) and other parts of the Hedjaz, and abide at will, for a greater or longer space, in this harbour; the town is inhabited by infidels, and situated on a hostile shore. It contains considerable number of Mussulmauns, who are constant resident, and have built two mosques, in which they meet every Friday to offer up prayer. They have one Kadi, a priest and for the most part they belong to the sect of Schafei.⁵³

XVI) Kawlam: It is a city, the last one of the pepper land. It is situated in a gulf. There is a separate quarter for Muslims in this city where there is also a cathedral mosque.⁵⁴

XVII) Fattan: Dimshqi mentions Fatni as one of the cities of big Ma'bar and says that Fatni is the qasba of Tanda (Thondi). Fatni has fallen into ruins; it has a mountain named Kaward. The description by Ibn Battuta of a fine mosque, built of stone in Fattan leaves little doubt in the choice of Kilakkarai as the place meant. The mosque still exists there, a beautiful building of stone, very rare in the Tamil districts. Further, there is the mention of "Crazy dervishes" whom Ibn Battuta met in Fattan.⁵⁵

XVIII) Madura: Ibn Battuta narrates about Madura as follows: "I left for his capital, namely the city of Madura which is a big city with spacious streets. The first Sultan who had made it his capital was my father-in-law, Sultan Sharif Jalal-ud-din

Ahsan Shah. He had made it the like of Delhi and built it remarkably well.

" When I reached Madura, I found that an epidemic was raging there and that the people affected with it died in no time. Whoever caught infection died on the morrow, or the day after; and if not on the third day, then on the fourth. Whenever I went out I saw people but diseased or dead. I had purchased a slave girl believing that she was quite sound and healthy, but she died the following day. One day there came to me a woman, whose husband was one of the Vazirs of Sultan Ahsan Shah, together with her eight year old son. The son looked noble, sagacious and intelligent. The woman complained of her poverty and I gave some money to her and her son. Both were healthy and sound: but O! She came the following day soliciting a shroud for her very son who had died instantly ... I saw in his (Sultan's) hundreds of female servants who had been brought there to pound the rice used as diet for the inmate other than himself. All of them were sick and had exposed themselves to the rays of the sun."⁵⁶

XIX) Fandarina: Idrisi and Dimishqi both mention Fandarina, although they have entirely independent information of the place. Idrisi says that from Tana to Fandarina is four marhalas (four days, Elliot, Vol. I, p. 89) from Fandarina to Jurbatan is five marhalas (five days, Elliot, Vol. I, p. 90). Fandarina is a

town built at the mouth of a river at Manibar (Malabar) where vessels from India and Sind cast anchor. The inhabitants are rich, the market well supplied and trade flourishing. North of this town there is a very high mountain covered with trees, villages and flocks. The pepper vine grows in the island of Mali as Fandarina and Jurbatan, but it is found no where else but in these three places.⁵⁷

Dimishqi says that most of the inhabitants of Fandarina are Jews and Hindus. Muslims and Christians are few in number.

According to Tuhfatal-Mujahidin, Malik ibn Dinar founded one of the mosques at Fandarina. A natural hollow in a rock on the sea shore close to the mosque has been chiselled into the likeness of a foot, and this mark is said to be the print of Adam's foot, as he landed in India, his next stride taking him to Adam's peak in Ceylon. Off the town is one of the curious mud banks peculiar to the West coast, and Vasco-da-Gama probably moved to its shelter from Kappat where he first touched in 1498 A.D.⁵⁸

Compare Ibn Battuta Fandarayana, a large and a fine town with orchards and bazaars. The Muslims occupy three quarters in it, each of which has a mosque. It is at this town that the Chinese vessels pass the winter."⁵⁹

XX) Saymur: Yaqut says that Saymur is situated on the other slope

of the Kafur on the North. The inhabitants of Saymur are of extraordinary beauty, because they are mixed breed of the Turks and the Chinese. The trade of Turks is in that direction ... They dress like the Chinese, have synagogues, churches, mosques and fire temples (They do not slaughter animals after the manner of Muslims, nor eat animals which die a natural death).⁶⁰

XXI) Sandan and Saymur: It is noteworthy that Maqdisi does not speak of Cathedral mosques and Muslim precepts in his accounts of Sandan and Saymur.⁶¹

XXII) Tana: Dimishqi says that Tana is in the second climate... It is on the coast. Tanash is on the coast; there is a cathedral mosque for the Muslims; then a port full of merchants and merchandise.

Mehren translates thus: 'Tanesh, ^h situee non loin de la mer, avec une grande mosquee, est un lieu d'etape pour les merchants et continent beaucoup de richesses'⁶² Mehren-Dimishqi, p. 233.

Ibn Battuta said: Tana is the last of the cities of Lar, well known in the mouths of merchants. The inhabitants of this coast of India are all infidels who worship idols. Muslims also live among them.⁶³

XXIII) Maganor: Abd-Er-Razzak says that "Here I had the honour of being admitted to the society of the Sheriff Emir Seid-Ala-eddin-Meskhedi, who was a hundred and twenty years old for many

fears he had been an object of veneration of both to Mussulmans and idolaters."⁶⁴

XXIV) Jooneer: Athanasius Nikitin describes about Jooneer as follows. Jooneer stands on a strong island; no human hand built it - God made the town. A narrow road, which it takes a day to ascend, admitting of only one man at a time, leads up the hill to it.

O God, true God, merciful God, gracious God.

At Jooneer the Khan took away my horse, and having heard that I was no Mahomedan, but a Russian, he said: "I will give thee the horse and a 1000 pieces of gold, if thou wilt embrace our faith, the Mahomedan faith; and if thou wilt not embrace our Mahomedan faith, I shall keep the horse and take a 1000 pieces of gold upon thy head". He gave me four days to consider and all this occurred during the fast of the Assumption of our Lady, on the eve of our saviour's day. And the lord took pity upon me because of his holy festival and did not withdraw his mercy from me, his sinful servant, and allowed me not to perish at Fooneer among the infidels. On the eve of our Saviour's day there came a man from Khorassan, Khozaiocha Mahmet, and I implored him to pity me. He repaired to the Khan into the town and praying him delivered me from being converted, and took from him my horse. Such was the Lord's wonderful mercy on the savⁱour's day.⁶⁵

Now, Christian brethren of Russia, however of you wish to go to the Indian country may leave his faith in Russia, confess Mahomet, and then proceed to the land of Hindostan. Those Mussulman dogs have lied to me, saying I should find here plenty of our goods; but there is nothing for our country. All goods for the land of Mussulmans, as pepper and colours, and these are cheap.

XXV) Beuruk (Beder): Nikitin, a Russian traveller, visited South India in the 15th century A.D., who mentions about Bedar. In Beder there is a trade in horses, goods, stuffs, silks and all sorts of other merchandise, and also in black people; but no other article is sold but Indian goods, and every kind of eatable; no goods, however, that will do for Russia. And all are black and wicked, and the women all harlots, or witches, or thieves and cheats, and they destroy their masters with poison. Beder is the chief town of the whole of Mahomedan Hindostan; the city is large and contains a great many people. The Sultan (of Beder) is a little man, twenty years old, in the power of the nobles.⁶⁶

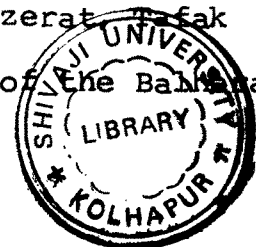
After the Mahomedan conquest the province of Beder was the seat of the Bhamener dynasty of Deccan sovereigns, the first of whom was Sultan Allah-ud-Deen Houssun Kangoh Bhamenee, A.D. 1347, whose capital was Kalbergah. Beder was formerly noted for works of tutenague inlaid with silver. Before the Mahomedan invasion it was the capital of Hindoo sovereignty. Near the ruins of the

olf Beder, Ahmed Shah Bhamenee founded the city Ahmedabad, which he made his capital in place of Kalbergah, this is the modern Beder.⁶⁷

XXVI) Dabul: Dabul is the last seaport in Hindustan belonging to the Mussulmans. Nikitin mentions: Dabyl (Dabul) is also a very extensive seaport, where many horses are brought from Mysore, Rabat (Arabia), Khorassan, Turkestan, Neghostan. It takes a month to walk by land from this place to Beder and to Kulburgah.

I have already passed the fourth great day in the Mussulman country, and have not renounced Christianity. But what may come hereafter, that God alone knows. "O gracious Lord, on thee I rely, and upto thee I pray to save me from destruction."⁶⁸

XXVII) Tafan: The King of Tafan is on friendly terms with the neighbouring sovereigns and with the Moslims, his military forces are less considerable than those of the Kings whom we have named. Sulaiman writes the name "Tafan"; Ibn Khuda'dba and Masudi have "Tafan". Reinaud cites also the variations "Takan" and "Taban". Founding his opinion on the statement as to the beauty of the women, whom he supposes to be Mahrattas, Reinaud places this country in the neighbourhood of Aurangabad. His argument is amusing, but is untenable, for it is inconsistent with the account given of the country by the Arab writers ... Reinaud's view of Juzr being Kanauj and Tafak being Aurangabad; for if Juzr be Guzerat, Tafak must be placed to the north of it, as the dominions of the Bahamani



where on the southeast.⁶⁹

XXVIII) Mankir: It is a land of infidels but there are Musalmans in its cities and none but Musalmans rule over them on the part of the Balhara. There are Jama masjids in them. The city in which the Balhara dwells in Mankir, has an extensive territory.⁷⁰ The same description is mentioned by Arab geographers as follows. It is a place of infidels but there are Musulmans in its cities and none but Musulmans rule over them on the part of the Balhara. There are many mosques in these places where Muhammadans assemble to pray. The city in which the Balhara resides is Mankir, which has an extensive territory.⁷¹

XXIX) Famhal, Sindan, Saimur: There are Jam'a Masjids at Famhal, Sindan, Saimur and Kambaya all of which are strong and great cities and the Muhammadan precepts are openly observed. They produce mangoes, cocoa-nuts, lemons, and rice in great abundance, also great quantities of honey, but there are no date trees to be found in them.⁷²

XXX) Daulatabad: Ibn Battuta mentions: "Then we journeyed from the city of Ujjain to the city of Daulatabad. This is a large and very important city which challenges comparison with the capital Delhi in its importance and the extent of its area which falls into three divisions. The first division is Daulatabad which is reserved for the Sultan's residence and his troops, the second division is called Kataka (it appears that the second

division of the city of Daulatabad was a military town) and the third is the peerless fortress which is called Deogir (Duwaygir) and has no equal in impregnability. In this city is the residence of Khan-i-a'zam (literary the greatest chief), Qutluq (Qatlu) Khan, the Sultan's teacher. He is the commandant of the city of Daulatabad and holds the position of the Sultan's deputy there.⁷³ The heathens of Daulatabad are tradesmen, the most important article of their trade being pearls - and their riches are considerable. These tradesmen are called Saha - a word of which the singular is Sah; they correspond to the Akarim of Egypt (Akarim was the name of a merchant class of the negroes of Egypt who were principally occupied in important business).

In Daulatabad grapes and pomegranates grow and bear fruit twice a year. It is one of the greatest and most important cities as far as the amount of its revenue and land taxes are concerned and an account of its great population and vast territories.⁷⁴

The Muslims in Malayali Society

Little is known of the settlement pattern or situation of Muslims in Kerala prior to Ibn Battuta's visit in 1342, by which time they had already come to dominate overseas commerce in the region. There may well have been Muslims in Kerala almost as soon as Islam had been established in Mecca, since the trade between west Asia and India was such a common place by the seventh century A.D. (for a general discussion see George F. Hourani,

Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean).⁷⁵

However, the first definite evidence of Muslim settlements in Kerala dates to the ninth century. Zaynal-Din suggests that it was then that the first mosque was founded in Kerala by missionaries from Arabia and there is inscriptional evidence from Kollam (Quilon) one of the sites listed by Zayan al-Din, which definitely indicates the presence of a substantial Muslim community in the city at that period. The inscription is a copper plate grant to a Syrian Christian Church dated to the middle to late ninth century, and there is a list of witnesses inscribed on it which includes both Muslim and Jewish names. It is quite probable that there were Muslim communities in all of Zayn al-Din's mosque sites by that time for in the late tenth century the Arab traveller Al-Masudi reported that there were ten thousand indigenous Muslims living in a town on the Canarese coast north of Kerala. Even allowing for exaggerated estimates this would imply settlements in more important trading centres in Kerala.⁷⁶

Finally, there is one other inscription which specifically locates a Muslim settlement before Ibn Battuta's visit. This is a grant by the Zamorin to the Muccunti mosque in Calicut dated by the evidence of the script and language to the thirteenth century.⁷⁷

In short, Arab Muslims had settled down on India's western

coast between the seventh and ninth centuries and were treated with regard and religious tolerance by Hindu rulers. They had complete freedom to propogate Islam and construct mosques. In these mosques they summoned their congregations by the usual mode of proclaiming the times of prayer. There is a Muslim inscription which records the construction of mosque at Cambay by Said bin Sharif in April 1218 (Muharram 615 H.). There are two others, one on his resting place and other on the grave of a Persian trader. An inscription from Patan records the death of a Persian trader (d. May 1282, Muharram 681 H.); another from Junagarh commemorates the construction of a mosque by an Arab ship-master, the benevolent chief, the great benefactor, the prop of the pilgrims to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.⁷⁸

In short, as Dr. Tara Chand rightly observes: "The Musalmans made their advent in south India on the western coast as early as the eighth century if not earlier, and in the tenth century on the eastern coast; that they soon spread over the whole coast and in a comparatively short time acquired great influence both in politics and in society ... on the one side of their leaders became ministers, admirals, ambassadors and farmers of revenue and on the other they made many converts, propagated the religious ideas, established mosques and erected tombs which became centres of activities of their saints and missionaries."⁷⁹

Penetration in South India by Sufi Saints

In south at the beginning of the 13th century, that is before the establishment of the Islamic political domination the Islamic saints and missionaries were wide spread. Most of them are found to be in the south from the 9th century.⁸⁰

Besides the coastal settlements, a few Muslim missionaries and saints had taken their abode at various centres in these three kingdoms (Yadavas of Devagiri, Kakatiyas of Warangal and the Hoyasalas of Dwarasamudra) had gathered round them a cluster of devotees some of whom must have been new converts to Islam. A number of these holy men had come into the Deccan by way of Dabhol, Bhatkal and other ports on the western coast, while others, particularly those in eastern Maharashtra and Cilangana, came from North India.⁸¹

In the medieval South India, there were 350 sufi or Muslim saints; and Barhanpur, Aurangabad, Hyderabad, Gulbarga, Bidar and Bijapur were the centres of the Islam.⁸² Most of the sufis of Bijapur who migrated to the city from the mid-fourteenth century belong to the Chishti, the Qadiri or the Shattari orders, each of which had already undergone considerable development in various parts of the Indian subcontinent before becoming significant in Bijapur.⁸³

According to Abdul Jabbar Malkapuri (in Tazkira-yi-Auliya-i-Dakan) long before the Khalji armies reached into Deccan sufis

had settled in various parts of the south and their pious ways and concern for the welfare of people had made them a welcome group in the large society of the Deccan.⁸⁴ The following are the prominent saints: Noorooddin from Dongaon, Jallaluddin Ganjarwan from Khultabad, Momin Aarif from Daulatabad, Abdul Jabbar from Malkapuri, Baba Sharafuddin Samshabad from Hyderabad, Hayat Kalandar from Mangarulepeer, Husamuddin from Gulbarga, Gesu Daraz from Gulbarga, Shaikh Sayyid from Talikot, Shaikh Saramasta Sagar from Shahapur, Shadulla Rehman from Elichpur, Syed Husain Tawakkulli from Khangamar etc. were the great sufi saints.

I have described in detail about sufi saints' arrival and their work in Chapter- . III

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