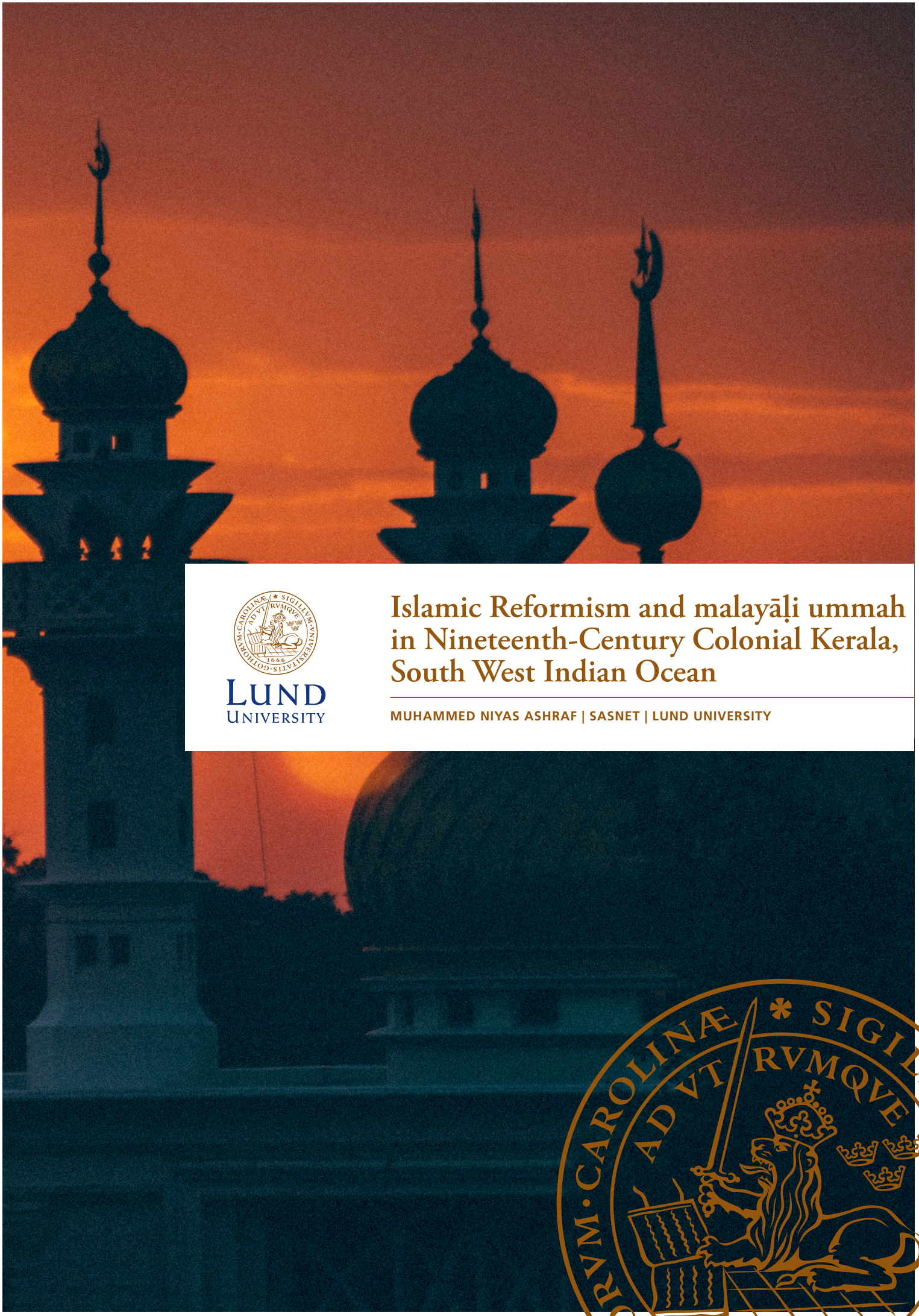

Islamic Reformism and malayāḷi ummah in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Kerala, South West Indian Ocean

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Content

Abstract

This paper offers a social history of the relationship between Islamic reform and *malayāḷi* Muslim in the context of colonial Kerala. Kerala Muslims are one of the largest Muslim communities in India, and a majority are the descendants of Arab traders and local women, or of local converts known as *Mappilas*. This article relates the reformist agenda in the writings of Sayyid Sanā'ullāh Makti Taṅṅaḷ (1847-1912), who argued for a reinterpretation of Islamic principle based on scriptural purity and return, to pristine Islam. Makti Taṅṅaḷ believed direct access to, and proper understanding of, the Quran and the Hadith would distance Muslims from accretions to Islam that he thought of as impure. Invoking the distinction of '*harām and halāl*,' as the cornerstone of Islamic law, he argued against the legitimacy of un-Islamic elements of Popular Islam. These efforts took place in late nineteenth-century Kerala, and had a huge impact on the socio-religious landscape, particularly on the inevitability and imminence of Islamic reform in the colonial era. Furthermore, this paper highlights how Makti advocated textually defined Islamic codes of practice to safeguard 'Muslimness' and shape a new vision of a moral community for *malayāḷi* Muslims.

Keywords: Scriptural Islam, Reformism, Muslimness, *Malayāḷi Ummah*, Makti Taṅṅaḷ

Conceptualizing Islamic Reform

This study discusses how the writing of Sayyid Sanā'ullāh Makti Taṅṅaḷ reformed Islamic faith among Kerala Muslims. These writings challenged amoral practices (*anācāraṁ*) and erroneous customs (*durācāraṁ*) which, according to Makti were un-Islamic, and therefore had to be rejected (*veṭiyuka*) in order to create a new Islam (*putu islāṁ*) and social progress (*sāmūhika abhivṛd'dhi*) for the *malayāḷi ummah*. As the foremost reformist voice in the southwest Indian Ocean from the middle of the nineteenth century, his reformism (*pariṣkāraṁ*) exemplified the rationality (*vivēkaṁ/yukti*) of Islamic belief and thought. He demanded scriptural stimulation (*pramāṇa balaṁ*) to distance Muslims from the mediators of religious authority, thereby preserving individual piety and the personal responsibility of each Muslim. His efforts advocated textually defined Islamic codes of practice to safeguard 'Muslimness'—an identity anchored in Islamic scripture—and to shape a new vision of self-sustaining moral community for the *malayāḷi ummah* (*malayāḷi musliṁ/kēraḷa musliṁ*) under the bewildering conditions of colonial rule in Kerala. The Islamic world's nineteenth-century socio-religious reform movements provided the rhetoric to return to what was perceived to be a pristine form of the religion. Islamic reformism in South Asia has been described as an 'inward turn' (Robinson 2000, 115); a reorganization of individual behavior according to fundamental principles in order to secure the survival of the Muslim community (Lapidus 2002, 457). Historians have paid substantial attention to formal or organized Islamic reform movements in the north Indian context, which is considered the epicenter of modernist and rationalist Islamic reformist thought in the Indian subcontinent (Metcalf 1982; Troll 1978; Robinson 2001; Jones 1989). However, this has overlooked the contribution of the peripheral and regional spaces, in part due to limited linguistic expertise and the relative inaccessibility of vernacular sources from these other regions (Osella & Osella 2013; Jose 2014).

The most salient features of reformist Islam are (1) an assault on the total authority of the past, (2) a new emphasis on Muslim individualism and human will in the absence of a reliable political power, (3) a transformation of the self and a conscious adoption of Islamic practices, and (4) the rationalization of Islam through a scripturalist lens in order to form religious ideological beliefs and critique superstitions and local customs. (Robinson 2013, 28). It blended modern Islamic concepts with western philosophical

thought to institute a new sense of religious change and individual moral responsibility. This fashioned a 'protestant Islam', which was rationalizing in the sense that it made religion 'self-conscious, systematic and based on abstract principles' (Robinson 2000, 127). Hisham Sharabi points out that Islamic reformism was succinctly concerned with safeguarding Islamic faith by rejuvenating the essential principles of the Islamic tradition through a contextual interpretation of the sacred texts (Sharabi 1999). Similarly, Osella and Osella define Islamic reformism as an endeavor to align of religious beliefs and practices with the core foundations of Islam, by avoiding—and purging when necessary—innovation, accretion and the intrusion of local custom (Osella & Osella 2013). Generally, Islamic reformism emerged as an attempt to release Islam from the shackles of rigid orthodoxy and to produce reforms that were adaptable to the complex demands of modern life; an effort underpinned by theological considerations. In this vein, rationalist Muslim reformists in nineteenth and twentieth-century India advocated a flexible, continuous reinterpretation of Islam in order to tackle the challenges that emerged during colonialism (Pearson 2008). Thus, the Islamic reformist of nineteenth-century India bolstered a reinterpretation of Islam's normative sources, the Quran and the Hadith, and rationally held the view that a return to a 'true,' 'pure' and 'unadulterated' Islam could answer the questions posed by the modern age (Hasan 2014).

Modernist like Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) presented a hybrid program that blended two categories of Islamic reform: rationalizing Islam and its religious renewal (*tajdīd*) based on Quran on the one hand, and social reform on the other. He sought secular education (based on Victorian morals) for Muslims, to equip them for positions within the colonial bureaucracy and for their social progress (islāh) (Devji 2007, 66-67). Within this framework, Makti Taṅṅaḷ can be situated as an *islāh* who wished to reform the Islamic faith by eliminating various accretions that led to the moral deterioration of Muslims and instead bringing them close to Islamic core beliefs. He made deliberate and conscious efforts to renew Islamic faith and reformulate Islamic values and principles based on reasoning. For example, existing interpretations of authoritative texts were challenged and rational understanding encouraged to make Muslims live in better way during the changing colonial context; one shaped by the historical engagement of modernity in the specific political and religious circumstances of nineteenth-century British India (Robinson 2007). Moreover, as a *mujadīd* (renewalist), Makti's reformist strategy intended to reconcile the Islamic tradition with aspects of modernity to create an internal renewal emphasizing a return to the Quran and the prophetic tradition. This would create a path for the moral and religious self, realigning Islamic thought with modern liberal values. Makti's function as *islāh* and *mujadīd* labeled him as a 'theological reformer' (Miller 2015, 96), while safeguarding and ensuring the continuity of Muslims as a moral community within the institutional and conceptual boundaries authorized by Islamic scriptures. Hence he challenged conventional western understanding of modernity as a European imagination and instead asserted the superiority of Islam as the inventor of modernity (*pariṣkkāra prabhu*), demolishing the oppositional dichotomies between Islamic tradition and modernity and connecting contemporary Muslim society with the sacred Islamic past to produce future-oriented, modern Muslim subjects in colonial Kerala (MTSK 2012, 640).[1] Viewed from this perspective, for Makti, modernity and reform were neither innovation nor novelty, but a human right (*manuṣyāvakāśaṁ*) that was deeply embedded in the Islamic tradition.

Makti Taṅṅaḷ: Pioneer of Islamic Reformism in Kerala

Sayyid Sanā'ullāh Makti Taṅṅaḷ was a reformer, thinker, writer, polemicist, printer and publisher who provided intellectual foundations to Muslims; a pioneering figure in reformist movement in Kerala. The strategy of 'being modern in Islamic way' (combining religious and modern secular education) was the foundation of his modernist programs that traced the 'modern' in the roots of Islamic tradition (Ashraf 2015). Makti was born in 1847 in Veliyancode in Ponnani taluk, a coastal town in Northern Kerala, as the son of Sayyid Ahmad Taṅṅaḷ, a religious leader, and Shareefa Beevi who belonged to the Hamdani tribe, a well-known Yemeni clan. His maternal grandfather Sayyid Ahmad Makti, belonged to Mughal lineage, was a *munshi* (scribe) for the British government in Hosur (Kareem, 1997). He claimed a genealogical connection with the prophet's family (*pravācaka santānaṁ*) and consistently used the surname '*taṅṅaḷ*,' a Malayalam honorific title, indicating his nobility and exalted position (MTSK 2012, 565). The word *taṅṅaḷ* (yourself) is the plural of *tan*, which is a personal pronoun that is a high form for 'you' or 'thou'. It represented the highest form of address in Malayalam and signified a blood relation to the prophet's family, illustrating a high esteem for this kinship (Miller 2015, 268).

Moreover, Makti paternal ancestors were from the Saqqaf tribe, originally from Hadhramaut in Yemen were the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad's paternal uncle, Al-Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib (Kareem 1991, 412.). His grandfather Muhammad Maqdoom Saqqaf Taṅṅaḷ was a famous religious intellectual, tutor, and Sufi devotee who lived in Veliyancode. Thus, Makti's lineage and intellectual influences closely related to the Hadrami family on the southwest Indian coast. The intellectual heritage of the Hadramis in the conglomeration of a rationally-oriented new scientific world had a colossal impact on Makti's childhood and educational career. Since childhood, Makti was surrounded by learned members of his family. He received his early lessons of education under the tutelage of his father and acquired his elementary education at Chavakkad Higher elementary school. He joined the famous *dars* (religious school) of Veliyancode, Marancheri, Ponnani for his religious education and training in the classical Islamic curriculum, where he was trained in the memorization and recitation of the Quran, initial hadith studies, Islamic jurisprudence, and Quranic exegesis. He was literate in English, Malayalam, Arabic, Hindustani, Persian, Tamil, and Arabi-Malayalam.[2] Until the age of 35, he worked as an excise officer in the British colonial government when he resigned his job to pursue a career in writing. He published his first polemical work *Kaṭhora Kuḍoraṁ* (The Hardest Fortress), a polemical tract against Christianity in 1884 (MTSK 2012, 637; Kareem & Maulavi 1978, 60).

Makti believed in the worthiness of composing monographs (*eḻuttu sambhāṣaṇaṁ uttamamākunnu*) and understood the significance of print as a viable technology to transform religious life and foster new Muslim sensibilities (MTSK 2012, 638). He published widely following the establishment of his Muhammadeeya press in 1891 at Cochin, frequently producing booklets and monographs in Malayalam that repudiated missionary polemics and generated confidence for *malayāḷi* Muslims in the emerging Keralan public sphere (MTSK 2012, 223; Ilias & Hussain 2018, 92). This publishing venture offered him unprecedented opportunities to disseminate his polemical and reformist discourse to a broader *malayāḷi* audience. His *Parōpakāri* (The Benevolent), a Malayalam publication from Calicut and Cochin between 1898 and 1901 was particularly significant and provided a venue for his critical writings in the form of polemical exchanges that defended Islam against 'anti-Islamic' (*mata virodhaṁ*) missionary critics. He also dealt with religious jurisprudence (*matavyavahāraṁ*) to create awareness among Muslims about Islamic rules and regulations (MTSK 2012, 637 & 719). His journalistic activities began with columns for the weekly *Satyaprakāśaṁ* (True Light) in 1888 as sub-editor where he communicated his significant concerns about the Muslim community and suggested reform through internal change. What made Makti a pioneer and a distinguished figure in the reformist movement of the nineteenth-century Kerala was his role as the first Muslim to write in vernacular Malayalam. He used Malayalam

extensively to spread his reformist messages to Muslims community of Kerala. More significantly, Makti believed that since Muslims were not comfortable with either English or Malayalam, it was important that they had publications in Arabi-Malayalam. His efforts in this direction began in 1894 through the fortnightly nal *Tuhfath-ul Akhyar Va Hidayth-ul Ashrar* (A Gift and Instructions to Noble People). In this magazine, his articles fell under twelve headings including: local and overseas news, interpretation of the Quran, history, self-development, questions and answers, and responses to queries.

Moreover, these magazines were only a small portion of Makti's oeuvre, which included books, newspaper pieces, journals, and religious tracts. In all of these, the primary issue remained the question of how a Muslim could be modern within the bounds of Islam. Makti was conscious of the importance of print in the formation of Muslim identity. He held that print was crucial not just for the defense of the community but also for its reformist potential in three areas of discourse: a) efforts relating to language and education,[3] b) efforts to revive pristine Islam and to criticize the syncretic elements and c) efforts to challenge and refute the critique of Islam advanced in missionary polemics (Ashraf 2017). Through his vernacular efforts, Makti falls under the category of what Metcalf calls 'lay leaders,' those trained in traditional centers of learning but exposed to new education and ways of thinking through subsequent education in western-style institutions or employment in the colonial offices (Metcalf 2009).

First, this article begins with an explanation of nineteenth-century Islam in Kerala and how Makti's outlook on vernacular education generated his ideas around 'new' Islam. Second, this is followed by a discussion of how Makti, as a religious reformer, made a conscious effort to differentiate between scriptural Islam and popular Islam, and criticized the pluralistic nature of Muslim society in Kerala. Third, the next section describes his writings on 'scripturalistic piety,' a return to 'true' Islamic theological and philosophical principles abandoning innovations and syncretic elements like worshipping and celebrating Sufis and saints. Fourth, the following section deals with the rejection of matrilineal customs as a central theme in his social reform. Like Muslim reformers elsewhere, Makti considered women to be the symbol of Islamic tradition and Muslim identity, ultimately limiting women's autonomy and constructing them only as victims with little agency. Finally, the conclusion deals with Makti's thoughts on allegiance towards the British rule that were articulated in his writings during the Mappila outbreaks of the late nineteenth century. Rather than supporting the Mappila outbreaks, Makti advised Muslims to remain loyal to the British government insofar as it opened up new vistas in the identity formation of Kerala Muslims. As we shall see, one of the most striking features of his reformist thought is an articulation of a global collective identity that repudiated all that was considered un-Islamic and untrue to the tenets of the faith, hence constructing a sense of Muslim *ummah*.

Popular Islam, Vernacular Language, and Reform in the Nineteenth Century Kerala

Makti disputed the claims of missionaries about conversion to Christianity by arguing that conversion happened on a very limited scale. To this end, he quoted the census and argued: 'the appeal of Islam among the lower caste is incredible. The census between 1871 and 1881 clearly shows an increase of 92,000 in the Muslim population, while the Christian population increased only by a few thousand' (MTSK 2012, 211).[4] It is true, however, that conversion in the Muslim population—especially in the Malabar region—was a regular phenomenon from the sixteenth century onwards and had increased in strength by the accession of Tipu Sultan (1750-1799), the ruler of the Mysore Kingdom (Logan 1887, 295). Many of the converts were low or outcast—for example, the *Cherumars* who were agricultural slaves. According to Edgar Thurston, the number of *Cherumars* converted to Islam between 1871 and 1881 were 40,000 (Thurston 1909, 61). However, it is crucial to note that this kind of mass conversion did not occur uniformly across Malabar regions. In southern parts of Malabar, the conversion was much higher than in the north. From 1851-1921, although the Mappila population had increased by eight percent, most converts did not wholly abandon their earlier customs and beliefs. Explaining the situation, K.N Panikkar argues, 'conversion to Islam among lower castes was gaining ground, as one of the results of the abolition of slavery. These converts carried their traditional social practices to their new faith and continued to behave in their social life as if nothing had changed' (Panikkar 1989, 63).

The persistence of old customs and practices troubled reformers like Makti who stressed the importance of divesting Islam of what he considered impurities. He acknowledged the missionary's criticism regarding the ignorance of Kerala Muslims who strayed from the doctrine of scriptural Islam (*pramāṇa poruḷ*). However, he countered that Islam arrived in Kerala 1,100 years ago and the degeneration (*doṣappeṭal*) of faith was a subjective process that could be reformed (*pariṣkaraṇaṁ*) (MTSK 2012, 311). He further alleged that Muslims were deeply attached to and followed archaic patterns (*pūrvika svabhāvaṁ*), such as superstitious practices linked to Hindu culture, which inflicted extreme harm on the community. He condemned these practices as amoral (*an*ācāraṁ), and erroneous customs (*durācāraṁ*) whose scurrilous conditions (ābhāsasthiti) would lead to the annihilation of Islamic virtue (*islāmika avakāśa nāśaṁ*) (MTSK 2012, 166). In his writings, Makti argued for adherence to the authority of Quran and Hadith, while severely criticizing *shirk* (polytheism), *bida-at* (erroneous innovation) and other superstitious beliefs that mislead Muslims from true Islam. He called for the banishment of practices ceremoniously anticipating the accession of dead saints and Prophets as agents for godly intercession (*istighatha*), or appealing to sacred and pious personage (Moulavi 1954). In this, he resembled the restrictive and condemnatory approach of the Saudi Arabian reformer and the ideologue of the Wahhabi movement, Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (d. 1791) against intercession (Haj 41, 2008).

There was no a singular argument in the Islamicate culture, to borrow Marshall Hodgson's phraseology. In every Muslim society, reformers were concerned with Muslim 'degeneration' and realized how dangerous these practices were to the survival of the moral community. Three foremost proponents of Islamic reform – Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (d. 1897), Muḥammad ʿAbduh (d. 1905) and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1935) developed harsh criticisms towards heterodox beliefs, especially specified expressions of Sufism as un-Islamic practices (Commins 1990). They often argued for a 'rational Islam' and a vision of modernity centrally located in the Islamic tradition (Haj 66, 2008). Part of their reform was to prepare Muslims to compete with European colonizers. For this, they demanded the cleansing of Islam from un-Islamic innovations and heterodox theologies and practices which they often found in Sufi rituals and theologies, returning instead to the pure Islam of the *salaf al-ṣāliḥ* (the first three generations of followers of the Prophet Muhammad) (Sorgenfrei 2018). In South Asia, the complete repudiation of the perceived heterodoxies in Islam came in the eighteenth-century teachings of Shah Walli Allah from North India. In his emphasis on the eradication of what

he felt were accretions to Islam, he urged his followers to stick to the authority the Quran, the Hadith and the pious Arabs, declaring that 'as a mark of gratitude for the blessings we should, as far as possible, not abandon the customs and mores of the early Arabs, because they were the immediate followers of the prophet Muhammad. We must not adopt the mores of the Hindus or the people of Ajam' (non-Arabs of countries beyond Arabia) (Pearson 2008, 29). Aziz Ahmad observed, 'the Indian Islam represents a mosaic of demotic superstitions and syncretic beliefs which movements of mass reform like that of the *mujahiddin* of the nineteenth century have tried to erase, but not with complete success' (Ahmad 1964, 44). From this perspective, it should be clear that Makti's method of disputation and his insistence of a return to pure Islam were not wholly new, but his approaches and strategies were part of the long-standing tradition of reformist Islam proposed by various reformers.

Considering Muslims in rural Bengal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Richard Eaton observes that they 'were remarkably open to accepting any sort of agency, human or superhuman, that might assist them in coping with life's everyday problem' (Eaton 1993, 273-274) and the tradition of *pir* and *saints* worship whose cults were converged and overlapped with the veneration of local guardian and hero divinities (Roy 2014, 164). In the case of South India, Susan Bayly notes that the syncretic Islam practiced by Muslim communities in south India was an example of 'strong link with the Hindu sacred landscape' (Bayly 1989, 11). In this vein, Makti implicitly condemned certain practices of the Muslims, especially those of the Mappilas of Malabar,[5] which included visitation to tombs demanding saintly intercession or help (*nerccās*); invocation of saints or other holy persons through the recitation of hagiographical poetries special prayers and litanies knew (*maulīds* and *mālapāṭṭŭ*); the attribution of miraculous powers to Sufi saints and trust in their blessed power (*barakā*); the unconditional surrender of the individual devotee to a Sufi master; and many innovative practices borrowed from Hindu religious tradition such as matrilineal practice were deemed syncretic. He rebuked these practices as conjunctions of the distinct and mutually exclusive spiritual practices of a universal Hinduism and a global Islam which historians and anthropologists term 'popular,' 'localized,' 'vernacular' and 'syncretic'. In other words, these practices were alien to pristine Islam and were corrupted deformations of true Islamic customs.[6] Several rituals like *Urūz* and *nerccā* festivals, reciting *mālapāṭṭŭ*, *maulīds* and *rātibs* were practiced by the Mappilas along with some Hindu social customs like *marumakkathāyam* (a matrilineal system of inheritance) and beliefs in astrology (Miller 1976, 240-246).[7] The Mappilas of south Malabar, who were more rural compared to the north, were very much a part of this shared world.

For Makti, Muslims were required to counter the challenges from European modernity and colonization, making religious, educational, and social reform inevitable. In Esposito's words, a new theology was needed to respond to modern change (1993, 58). Like Afghānī, ʿAbduh, and Ahmad Khan, Makti promoted a rational reinterpretation of Islam and accepted the knowledge and techniques of the west. He meticulously rationalized his critique, testifying that only 'pristine' Islam that could accommodate the concept of being modern. He alleged that since Muslims in Kerala drew heavily from popular religious practices, they did not get enough assistance from the local *ulema* for a subtle understanding of the true essence of Islam. He further suggested that ignorance of the Malayalam language was a significant hurdle for moral progress and accused the orthodox *ulema* of instilling a belief that learning Malayalam made a *malayāḷi* Muslim infidel (*kāfir*). Without it, the community would be in a state of stagnation and be left behind when compared to the social progress of others. Textual Islam (both the Quran and hadith) were both in Arabic, and the common Muslim masses did not have access to them. In turn, the *ulema* made little attempt to impart the import of these texts to those who were unable to read them directly. Makti invited Muslims to embark on a path towards Islamic modernity by utilizing secular knowledge (*laukika abhyāsaṁ*), community reform (*samudāya pariṣkaraṇaṁ*) and individual progress (*jana pariṣkaraṇaṁ*) (MTSK 2012, 311).

In this context, Makti argued consistently for the translation of the Quran in Malayalam and for learning vernacular Malayalam. Language was an essential part of renewal, and it was only through Malayalam that the purification of Islam could take place (Makti 1906/2012, 442). Muslims had to learn scripture through teaching and texts in Malayalam. Thus, language and a new kind of religious education would ensure the transmission of what Makti considered 'legitimate Islam', therefore producing the modern Muslim subject that he envisioned. Makti aimed to translate scriptures into Malayalam in order to expedite rationalized faith. Hence, the development of scriptural faith sought to assert the 'reification

of Islam' in Muslim consciousness with a mass vernacular scholarship (Robinson 2008, 280). Makti enhanced the rationalization of belief (*yuktānusaraṇa n'yāyaṅṅaḷ*) through the preservation of scriptural Islam together with individual human conscience that would be accomplished by translating Islam in vernacular terms for general receipt (MTSK 2012, 509). In his view, modernity meant a return to 'true Islam' purely based on the Quran and the Hadith, accessed directly without the interpretation of intermediaries, which was only possible through vernacular language (Ashraf 2015). He urged the establishment of modern schools/madrasa for learning languages as the fundamental element of acquiring ethical sensibility to redeem Muslim souls, so that educated persons could enhance their moral advancement (*mathabhvridhi*), and spiritual progress to collectively generate individual reform as the quintessence of faith (*matahṛdayaṁ*) (MTSK 2012, 443)

In this endeavor, Makti received consistent support from other Muslim intellectuals of Kerala like Saidalikutty Master, Vakkaṁ Abdul Khādir Maulavi and Cālilakat Kuññaham'mad Hāji[8] who were actively involved with publishing journals and periodicals that promulgated that scriptural Islam is compatible with reason. This compelled the use of *ijtihād* (reasoning) to understand Islamic scriptures. These intellectuals initiated various efforts towards linguistic competence to generate radical changes in Muslim religious life. Their scholarly network played a crucial role in reviving the position of Kerala Muslims towards an Islam-oriented modernity, encouraging conceptual changes in theological education through learning Islamic scriptures in vernacular expressions and the growth of secular education to fashion a modern Muslim in an Islamic way. They did not have organizational linkages, but close interpersonal relationships that ensured common interests, as well as an appeal for modern education and Islamic reform. Confronting the perils of a colonized world, these reformist intellectuals contributed to each other's respective publications, exchanged information on Muslim social issues, and connected their reformist concerns. These reformers generally sympathized with Muslims ensnared by the clutches of traditional *ulema* and branded the latter as 'conservative, ignorant and unenlightened' (MTSK, 497). Their tireless efforts stimulated modern education with linguistic knowledge, and their vernacular publishing enterprises opened new vistas for educated Muslims to directly access Islamic knowledge through printed texts, without interpretation meditated through or approved by the *ulema,* thus eliminating *taqlid* (blind following). Makti insisted that seeking knowledge in one's own language was an individual obligation (*fard 'ayn*) for every Muslims bestowed by God.

Makti considered that strict compliance with the tenets of Islam was possible through an understanding of the language of the Quran, in Arabic. Since most Kerala Muslims were illiterate in the Arabic language, Makti opined that 'one should be aware of themes expressed within the Quran in his/her lingua franca' for an enhanced understanding of the universality of its message and asserted 'the *malayāḷi* Muslims became insensible and irrational without knowing Arabic, the language of the Quran and hence, translation to vernacular would be beneficial for relieving them from being senseless' (MTSK 2012, 447). Advocating the translation of the Quran into Malayalam, he went against the prevailing notion by insisting that the Muslims should understand the message of God in their mother tongue. He wrote: 'as the Quran is in Arabic, a translated version which in this case would be in Malayalam is a possible method to understand its essence' (MTSK 2012, 448). Makti declared that the Malayalam language, as mother tongue (*mātṛbhāṣa*), should be employed for daily interaction, learning Islamic rules and appealing before God, implied the significance of *malayāḷa Islam* for a Muslim. He argued that weekly Friday sermons (*ālccānta prasaṅgaṁ*) should be performed in the spoken language of Malayalam. Emphasizing the importance of sermon as a religious rhetorical device for presenting ideas of Muslim reform, Makti intended to deliver it in colloquial language so that the ordinary Muslims could comprehend Islamic teachings in the absolute essence of Islam. The possession of a rationalizing (*vivēcanaṟivu*) soul (*qalb*), according to him, enabled Muslims to discern un-Islamic and syncretic practices. This reification would eventually lead them to abandon innovations through human instrumentality, an individual's ability to shape their own religious knowledge. Hence, he maneuvered Friday sermons to achieve community reform, religious prosperity and individual progress (MTSK 2012, 311).

Makti ultimately concluded that learning languages could facilitate philosophical inquiry (*tatvānēṣaṇaṁ*) and reasoning (*anweshanam*), and hence instituted both concepts as the core elements of human right fundamentally satisfying personal wisdom (MTSK 2012, 452). Therefore, his advocacy for proper religious education inculcated with learning the native language opened up

new terrain to enable educated Muslims to read authoritative texts alone, engage Islamic forms of reasoning, and reach their own decisions regarding good and evil (*guṇa doṣaṁ*) elements in Islam and society (MTSK 2012, 166). This perception encouraged consensual authority that subverted the power of the *ulema* as the sole interpreters of scriptures and guardians of Islam. This personal conscience oversaw individualistic piousness to true and scriptural Islam, which ensured an overall submission to Islamic principles in independent and self-affirmative, worldly behavior (Robinson 1997, 9).

Countering Sufi Philosophies

For the scripturalist reformers, the most extreme challenge to Islam came from Sufism in its diverse manifestations, because of its immense popularity amongst the masses, often superseding religious boundaries. These reformers advocated for a radical transition away from 'mystical-magical' Sufi style religiosity to scriptural Islam (Bruinessen 136, 2009). As Ahmad and Reifield pointed out, 'most puritanical and orthodox Muslims see any form of Sufism or close interchange with other religions as a danger to true Islam' (Ahmad & Reifield 2004, xxii). Given the prevalence of Sufi sects and *pīrs* in Malabar, Makti attacked Sufi devotionalism, including mystical practice, as un-Islamic. While his writings concerning Sufism were mostly directed against Sufi cults, he also condemned the silence of the orthodox *ulema* and their toleration of miraculous and magical practices. Indeed, he pointed out that many of the *ulema* who propagated Sufism based their ideas on miracle-working holy men and living saints who emerged from the traditionalist circle. In other words, the *ulema* liked to emphasize their supernatural power (*barakā*) and sold the miracles (*karāmat*) of Sufi saints to make a day to day living. Pearson, too, argues that in Islamic communities around the littoral of Indian Ocean, one could not make a clear distinction between the Sufis and orthodox *ulema* because most *ulema* were also the members of Sufi orders (Pearson 2006, 158). The reformists held a common assumption that traditional *ulema* and Sufis collectively became adversaries to their movements and social changes as Sufi customs initiated the backwardness of Muslim society.[9] They criticized the *ulema* who simply echoed Sufi masters with caring whether his disciples had basic knowledge of the teachings of scriptural Islam.

Sufism in Kerala spread through migration from the early 12th century but got a new stimulus from the sixteenth century onwards due to the large-scale immigration of different Hadrami houses to Kerala.[10] From the beginning of the 17th century, Malabar Muslims were split into these Sufi *tariqa*s (doctrinal paths); in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, animosity between these *tariqa*s took a new turn, and polemical debates, disputes, occasional conflicts and the banning of mosques were a common occurrence (Kunhali 2004, 67; Samad 1998, 45). For his part, Makti Taṅṅaḷ equated Sufism with esoteric belief that encouraged *shirk* (idolatry), *bid'a* (innovation in worship) and *taqlīd* (blind following of a tradition). Most of his speeches emphasized the Quranic teachings against idolatry and advocated that Muslims should stick to the principle of the oneness of Allah, *tawḥīd* which meant that Muslims were not expected to seek help from anyone except Allah. He also campaigned against the practice of individual Muslims praying directly and seeking fortune and help from *sheikhs/shaykhs* (sufi masters) and *awliyā* (friends of God) (Kareem 1997, 23). Simultaneously, Makti blamed a large number of Sufi impostors and charlatans who humiliated Muslim progressions and also appeared with an intention to exploit the Muslims financially.

Makti's anti-Sufi polemics included a small tract titled *la majudīn la poyint* (the philosophy of monism in Islam). In this tract, he argued that Sufi practices distracted the Mappilas from the basic teachings and principles of the Quran and Sunnah and led individuals to a state of servitude. He wrote:

> Individuals with less education fall into the trap of the Sufi followers who persuade them to become devotees of certain Sufi saints. They scared them into thinking that if they did not become a devotee, they would be a sinner. However, once

> they did, money was constantly collected from these individuals by the followers. The latter, however, was never concerned about learning scripture, scientific and progressive principles, and accumulation of modern knowledge. Most of them preached that education and learning in schools were against the principles of Islamic scripture (Makti, 2012, 451).

Makti's approach was no different from other reformers. For example, Afghānī held that the Sufis were responsible for the decline of Muslims because of their false interpretations of Islam, and ʿAbduh ridiculed Sufi tradition such as the veneration of saints' tombs, belief in the intercession (*tawaṣṣul*) of saints and their miracles against the rationality of Islam (Sirriyeh 1999).

Makti emphasized devotions centered on rural miracle-working saints as mystics with an economic enterprise as irrational and blamed their spiritual activities based on unsophisticated prayers and techniques. The disciples of the Sufi sheikh exaggerated the number of followers in each Sufi order, boasting that the numbers would range from 30,000 to 50,000. According to him, these fights over followers were similar to declarations of affluent households that showcase their extent of wealth.[11] Fear was instilled in the minds of innocents who were told, 'if an individual does not have a *sheikh* as his spiritual guru, his mind will be distracted and destroyed by the devil' (Makti 2012, 443). Makti was influenced by a contemporary debate amongst religious scholars about whether a *dhikr* (hymn) entitled *la maujudil-Allah* (nothing exists except Allah) is recitable or not. The concept of *la maujudil-Allah*, according to most of the Islamic reformers of the nineteenth and twentieth century was the opposition of *la ilaha il-Allah*, which means the unity of God. This concept expresses that 'there is no God but Allah' which exemplifies the denial of polytheism in Islam. While *la ilaha il-Allah* denies all the polytheistic practices, the Sufi version of *la maujud il-Allah* asserted that there is no existence except God, which is an emphasis on the immanence of God rather than his transcendence.

In Kerala also, the religious scholars and intellectuals divided themselves into two camps and debated this *dhikr* (Makti 2012, 443). This was not uncommon: according to V.M Kunhali, 'prolonged disputes on religious ideologies had been one aspect of Mappila society' (Kunhali 2004, 68). A *fatwa* (legal opinion) was distributed by a certain group of intellectuals that included religious intellectuals like Mawlānā Āhmed Ṣiṟāsi of Nadapuram, Veḷiyancode Taṭṭāṅṅara Kuṭṭyāmu Musliyār, and Cālilakkat Ali Hasan Musliyār that permitted to recite the *dhikr*. However, *la maujudil-Allah* was associated with the philosophical concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (unity of being), a Sufi metaphysical principle accepting the unity of existence between the creator and the created. They relied on the same idea: that existence in the universe is consisted of reflections of the creator. Reformers including Makti, Kuppathu Umar Musliyār of Thaliparambu, Hamadāni Taṅṅaḷ of Vaduthala, Sulaimān ibn Ādaṁ Musliyār of Alappuzha, and Cennettu Vaḷappil Abduṟahmān Haidros Aṭima Musliyār were against the practice of reciting this *dhikr* and promoted that the philosophy of God and his creation must be entirely separate. They argued that *waḥdat al-wujūd* was a concept introduced to the Muslim world by the Sufi scholar Ibn al-ʿArabī who stated that in God lives in everything, essentially contradicting the principle of *tawḥīd* (the oneness of God) by suggesting the entities other than God.[12] The interpretation of 'unity of being' as the identification of God with nature, or belief in an immanent God was contrary to the concept of the transcendent God accepted by the majority of Muslims (Makti 2012, 686).[13]

Makti's criticism of *waḥdat al-wujūd* was mainly because he sensed that there were some similarities found in the teachings of this with that found in the Sankaracharya's *Advaita* philosophy and Vedantic concept of ātma/*dēhaṁ* (human soul/body) and *paramātma*/*dēhi* (god/creator) (Makti 2012, 455). Firstly, he condemned the concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd* semantically, in terms of its association with Hindu *Advaita* philosophy. He argued:

> 'the term *maujūd* referred to God as a reality *(karttāv)* consisted within the actuality *(karmaṁ)* which expressed the union of God and creation, a concept contrary to the notion of the oneness of God. Moreover, the term *wujūd* etymologically meant as an actual entity (āsti), a secondary concept against the notion of the transcendental existence of God. Both these thoughts were largely adopted from the trilateral components of the *waḥdat* philosophy (the consciousness of existence) comprised of (a) a connection between the creator and creation, (b) no other reality other than the only existent is being the one, and c) the reality strengthened through a spiritual union

> with God. Hence, these three elements constituted the mystical concept of the unity of God as in union with God have extensive similarities with the doctrine of ātma-*Brahma* concept preached in Hinduism, but in theory, negated the difference between God and the creation' (Makti 2012, 454).

Makti promoted the philosophy of *waḥdat al-ṯhuhūd* (unity of witness) the being (God) was separable from the existents (creation), even though God was the ultimate source of all existence. Moreover, for Makti, Sufi teaching considered a spiritual union with God attained through verbal repetition of *la maujūd il-Allah* in which the union with God as the highest level of spirituality appeared antithetical to the teaching of God, hence heretical and un-Islamic. He challenged the notion of a Muslim soul reunited with God as a concept which must be foreign to Islam. Contrary to such foreign concepts, he believed there should always be a clear, hierarchical distinction between God as the creator and man as the creation. Though the human soul originates from God, the demarcation line between the Creator and the created (God-man relationship) should be maintained under all circumstances (Makti 2012, 453).

When the most heated debates about *la maujudil-Allah* was going on, Makti traveled to some Muslim areas in northern Malabar and spoke in public against it, sometimes experiencing physical opposition to his words. There are even accounts of hotels in particular places denying him food (Kareem 1997, 22). An Arabic-Malayalam tract entitled *Maktiyuṭe Muṭantan Vādaṁ* (Makti's False Argument) was published against Makti's argument on Sufi practices and their un-Islamic character. As a result of this incident, many intriguing stories revolved around Makti. E. K Moulavi, one of the stalwarts of the Kerala Renaissance included one such incident in his article *History of the Islahi Movement in Kerala*. He wrote that when Makti was sitting in a grocery shop in Kayamkulam, a goat entered and started to eat grains from the shop. On seeing this, Makti tried to shoo the goat away. However, people forbade him from doing so, saying that the goat was dedicated to Muhiyud'dhīn Sheikh *alias* ʿAbd al-Qādir Gīlān (1077-1166), founder of the Qadiriyya *tariqa* with a great reputation as a supernatural protector. That very evening Makti delivered a polemical speech on a topic regarding 'Goat never becomes Muhiyud'dhīn and Muhiyud'dhīn never becomes a goat.' This speech was controversial. The very same day, one person died in a *r*ātìb ceremony which was held by devotees in the name of a saint to seeking protection from evil and for blessings for the family. People immediately inferred that Makti was a Sufi saint who wanted to become his disciple (Moulavi 1954). Makti considered this incident an archetypal example of the blind faith of Sufi practices that gained the following of the masses without proper reasoning. Thus, he directly challenged the heretical assumption of the divine powers of Sufi saints, which he considered to be a deviation from the conception of the oneness of God.

In addition, Makti strongly believed that man, even at his highest level of spirituality, could not be absorbed into God. He also stressed that the highest level of spirituality (*cittaikāgrābhyāsaṁ*) for a man aiming for divine unity was accessible only through five-time prayer (*pañcakāla-namaskāraṁ*), the canonical prayers ideally performed daily (MTSK 2012, 451). He perceived *namaskāraṁ*, a Malayalam term for prayer, as a spiritual practice of accepting the principle of *tawḥīd* that affirmed the believer's proximity to the divine unity through its performance. According to him, the absolute submission to the unique lord (ēkanāya tampurān) was implored with a conversation of prayer (*jabaṁ*) and meditation with the soul (*dhyānaṁ*), constituting worship (*ibāda*) through the mental ability of reasoning (*jñāna hṛdayaṁ*) and physical insight (MTSK 2012, 166). He intensified the spiritual purpose (ātmīka abhyāsaṁ) of prayer—reflecting the absolute submission of mind and body to God—with fear and obedience, symbolically folding the hands and prostrating before God as a request for his protection and benevolence. In this, Makti intended to present prayer as an embodied *tawḥīd* practice interrelated with two concepts: the physical expression of subordination and surrender to God (Islam) and a gesture of submission of the body as an act of religious devotion through worshiping to God alone. Hence, Makti claimed prayers as a crucial component of *tawḥīd*, a spiritual prayer embodied with the wholeness of mind, body and soul; what Gilsenan describes as a 'liturgy of communication' between the human and the divine (Gilsenan 1973: 185).

Makti emphasized the Quranic injunction the articulated prayers as an austere expression of individual worship and a vital facet of 'commanding the good and forbidding the evil'. This was a central Quranic duty of the community (MTSK 2012, 452), preventing sins and erroneous customs. He also emphasized the prophet's saying to

perform prayers with purity of intention and mindfulness as an essential spiritual practice for the divine. Both these statements constituted prayers as at least a 'correct practice,' never mind one which could be interpreted as truly Islamic and sanctioned by the sources of the tradition. Islamic reformers situated prayer as a shared symbol of Islamic religious performance that had the potential to accumulate religious feeling within the entire Muslim community (Pemberton 2009, 173). This meant prayers were not only a matter of faith, but their performance was a universal Islamic practice, a mark of belonging to the Muslim *ummah*. Endorsing the importance of prayers in the Muslim life, Makti intended to define the prayer as a shared sense of ideal Islamic piety and a marker of collective identity to the global faith. Hence, reformers entrusted prayer as a ritual with a function of creating and expressing community identity and solidarity binding the Muslims together in a community of knowledge and practice (Katz 2013, 155). Makti endorsed the performance of the obligatory prayers as proper practice for the whole Muslim's spiritual path and rejected Sufi traditions as pagan accretions to the pristine faith and the conception of scripturalist piety.

Defending Scriptural Islam: Questioning Matriliny of Mappilas

A vital practice borrowed from their Hindu counterparts by the Muslims of Kerala was the practice of *marumakkattāyaṁ* (the matrilineal system) (Lakshmi 2012, 33). Matriliny was a social system where relations were traced through the mother's family. Inheritance and ancestry were also traced through the mother, while men had rights to a share of the family property of the household only while he resided there. Matriliny amongst the Mappilas implied that the *putiyāppiḷa* (husband) would visit his wife at day or night in the *herāra* (bridal chamber) without living at her home permanently (Schneider and Gough 1974). This custom was followed by Mappilas of North Malabar (north of the Kora River), together with some small pockets of Mappilas in Kozhikode, Tirur, and Ponnani in South Malabar and some of the ports of Travancore (Makti 2012, 513). The origin of matrilineal customs among Muslims is considered to be rooted in the influence of the Nairs or the intermarriage between Arabs and local women called *mut'a* marriages (temporary alliances). In these marriages, fathers did not hold vital importance and children always stayed in the mother's homes. In this marriage system, children never belonged to the husband and who, in turn, had no rights over children and his wife (Lakshmi 2012, 35). Lewis Moore wrote, 'The Mappilas of north Malabar follow the *marumakkattāyaṁ* law; the practice frequently prevails of treating the self-acquisitions of a man as discernible to his wife and children under the Muhammadan law' (Moore 1905, 323).

Muslim reformers considered matrilineal inheritance and matrilocal residence as plainly in contradiction to the written law of Islam and their central ideological motivation was to abolish matrilineal customs and bring in the 'correct Islamic practices.' (Lapidus 2012). The reformist version of Islam regarded these practices as a local intrusion which directly challenged Islamic teachings. In his part, Makti condemned the matrilineal practices of Mappilas as un-Islamic because a father did not belong to the household; instead, the mother's uncle was responsible as a guardian and generally ran the family system. He condemned the practice of female line descendance in matters of family authority and property and demanded that property should be inherited through the patrilineal line as addressed in the Quran. He wrote, 'the *ummah* of north Malayalam (North Malabar) did not leave behind the matrilineal system even after they accepted Islam 1000 years before' (Makti 2012, 513).[14] Identifying this system as a strong remnant of Hindu culture, a small note in his tract *Pārkkalītta Porkkaḷaṁ* (The Arena for Deciding the Comforter) and an 1903 article in *Salah-ul Iqvān* titled *Musliṁṁaḷuṁ Marumakkattāyavuṁ* (Muslims and Matriliny) included strident criticism of the practice.

In contrast to the matrilineal system where the women remained within their own kinship group while the children belonged to the mother's clan, Makti argued for a patriarchal system, where the women belong to the husband's family after the marriage, as pattern central to the sphere of Islam. According to Makti, 'matrilineal custom emerged as a strong remnant of Hindu culture, and its origin was deeply related to the legend of *Parasurāma*' (MTSK 2012).[15] His concern with matriliny was largely of worldly pragmatic apprehension, but firmly argued with scriptural framework of *harām* (permissible) and *halāl* (forbidden). In an article in *Malayāli* magazine, he declared that whoever followed matrilineal custom will not enter paradise and will be ineligible to meet Prophet Muhammad, because it is forbidden in *shariʿā* (Islamic law) (Makti 2012, 653). He urged that the matrilineal system was fundamentally similar to heinous crimes such as prostitution and the consumption of alcohol, cautioning, 'matriliny is usually followed by licentious tribes who observe customs like prostitution and alcohol consumption without any compunction, and any Muslim who follows such a practice will not be considered a true Muslim and will be included as one amongst those tribal' (MTSK 2012, 514).

Makti was the first Muslim reformer in Kerala who argued that the 'matrilineal system is against all natural laws and scriptural religious tradition because it denies every parental right enforced in the Quran and the father does not belong to the family of his wife, considered be an outsider' (Makti 2012, 514). He observed that 'all religions have two eyes, spiritual and material. Wealth and children are two important aspects which the material world gives importance and respect. However, matriliny denies the right of a man to possess both of these' (Makti 2012, 515). In the context of wealth, he further explained that:

> If a person who does not possess any inherited or ancestral property, he only spends his daily wages in a matrilineal joint family household where his wife and children reside. This amount is never taken seriously by anyone in that household. This money is like a payment to a concubine and her children because even though he is spending the money, his wife does not obey or honor him. He is forced to leave the *tharavād* if his wife or her *kāranavar* or her brother insisted him leaving. The essence of respect that a husband intends to obtain is absent in this system. In this system, the father cannot love his children, and children suffer at the hands of nieces and nephews and live like beggars in the joint family (Makti 2012,167).

Makti gave much weight to *shariʿā* based interpretations of the family and the inheritance system for complicated matrilineal families. He argued that the matrilineal system fell outside the ambit of Islamic scripture because the husband was merely a guest in the house of his wife and inheritance was strictly limited to females, with males inheriting nothing at all (Makti 2012, 513). The historical context into which Makti entered into the debate against the matriliny is crucial. The colonial state also questioned the practice, citing orientalist texts to do so. It enacted the Malabar Wills Act of 1898, an intervention that Makti took seriously in order to argue against matrilineal traditions as outside the bounds of the law. He wrote, 'according to Islamic law, both religious people of *tharavāds* and rulers (the colonial state) have supported my opinion that matriliny is against the principles of Islam and they advise people not to follow it' (Makti 2012, 150). According to him, the only type of family acceptable in Islamic law was patriarchal, with the father as the responsible head. He proposed that a woman's right to the protection of her husband for herself and her children cannot be sanctioned. Anglo-Muhammadan law provided the reference point for his demand to avoid matriliny and transform ownership of land through female lineages. It was gaining momentum against the customary practices of matriliny and the reformist ideological attack on matrilineal customs by the Hindu reform movements in Kerala.

The matrilineal households of the Nairs came under attack by urban middle-class Nair reformers (Arunima, 2003). Makti noted this criticism in his note very clearly. He wrote, 'as the Hindus themselves have attacked this system, why should the Muslims retain it?' (Makti 2012, 167). He further stressed that Anglo-Muhammadan law was the Islamic legal system formed by the colonial government in the nineteenth century, adapting the *sharī a* principles into the modern jurisprudential framework of British law. This provided an abstract idea of the 'correct' Islamic familial practice and gave legitimacy to the paternal family. He stated that modern institutions like courts also shared a similar notion that the matrilineal system was a 'vulnerable' and 'corrupt' practice inherited from the past. The court also posted how an ideal Islamic family and inheritance law could operate within strange customs outside of the religious regulations. The citation

of Anglo-Muhammadan law as one sites of correct Islamic familial practice proliferated a discussion of family and domestic issues, particularly rights of women, as an expression of Islamic reform. The new sense of responsibility assigned for the women by Islamic reformers demanded their proper conduct. Avoiding the matrilineal custom was principally based on the reformist propaganda of human instrumentality, inserting heavy responsibility of women as the transmitters of correct Islamic values and symbols of Muslim identity (Robinson 2008, 269).

In his condemnation of matriliny, Makti did a selective reading of scripture where he ignored those sections of the Quran that dealt with women's property rights, especially in its fourth chapter *an-nisa* (The Women) which asserts that women are entitled to inherit a portion of wealth from their father or husband (Kozlowski 2008, 20). He disparaged matrilineal society in which inheritors ranged on the mother's side of the lineage because the property inherited was collectively transferred to the daughters or the nieces from the female side without being divided into smaller shares for sons. The sole beneficiaries were the females, reflecting a social system where women emerged as the focus of the matrilineal structure. Instead, Makti favored the male as the center of the family system. His selective reading of the Quran lay moral and social boundaries for the so-called 'emancipation of women' and was mobilized in favor of patriarchal arguments about the role of women in society.

In attacking matrilineal traditions as 'un-Islamic Hindu-oriented practice' in need of change, Makti was championing a patrilineal inheritance and patrilocal family form. Rallying around the banner of Islamic reform agitated for a radical transformation that paved the way for a policy to enforce the *shari'ā* stipulated in the Quran. In this vein, Makti's demand to end the matrilineal practice was concerned with the rediscovery of the Islamic spirit, rather than with adherence to local customs and traditional laws. In the early twentieth century, a series of legislation instituted the basis of patrilocal families in Kerala. This process of redefining tradition through legal intervention underpinned by scriptural authorities had severe implications for the domestic sphere and for the redefinition of patriarchy itself. Women who had once enjoyed specific rights as holders of land and houses in the matrilineal household were further marginalized in the process of reform. The process of reform in patrilineal families predominantly set family structures that preferred men over women, father over mother, and husband over wife, establishing relations of protection and dependence between husband and wife, and father and children. This operated against the matrilineal family among matrilineal Muslim groups. The structural features of patriarchal families included patrilocal residence, patrilocal descent, and patrilineal inheritance and succession, all of which emphasized male-oriented kinship and profoundly affected women's lives. The concern and anxiety towards matriliny raised by reformers like Makti denounced the autonomy and empowerment of women to make decisions or choices and exercise female agency in the household. As a result, the colonial state implemented Islamic law in various legislation, leading to the Mappila Marumakkatayam Act of 1933. This abolished the matrilineal system and legitimized and sustained the centrality of males to the continuity and well-being of Muslim families.

Advocating Patriotism: Loyalty and Allegiance towards British

In his monograph *Rājabhaktiyuṁ Dēśābhimānavuṁ* (Sovereignty and Patriotism), Makti encouraged a loyalist attitude towards the colonial state and saw no ideological conflict with learning the English language. Indeed, his insistence on the importance of learning English was an attempt to grapple with the realities of a colonial situation by internalizing European modernity (Ashraf 2017). He underscored learning Malayalam to be a 'good believer,' and English to be a 'Muslim gentleman' and 'loyal subject' of the British, removing the anti-colonial tag of Muslims. (MTSK 2012, 90) To protect Muslim interests in education and government jobs, he argued, 'learning English is inevitable because most of the rules and regulations of our country (*rājyaniyamaṁ*) are in that language' (MTSK 2012, 506). Makti also argued that opportunities like grants for education were lost to the Muslim community because of the lack of knowledge of English (MTSK 2012, 443). To understand his conciliatory stand towards the British, it should be necessary to comprehend the period in which he wrote. In his tract *Qur'ān vēdavilāpaṁ* (The lament of Scriptural Quran) authored in 1906, Makti condemned the backwardness of Muslims in the context of the Mappila uprisings of the nineteenth century Malabar and argued that these outbreaks left a lousy impression amongst the British towards the Mappilas who stigmatized them as uncivilized, barbaric and fanatics (MTSK 201, 557). He accused a section of Muslims of 'remaining ignorant, unreformed, outlawed and Muslims considered ruthless and ethically erroneous by the state. These circumstances directly related to the absurdity of our present religious customs that reprimanded our God and religion as well' (MTSK 2012, 559). He asserted that there was a need for a civilizing mission to decriminalize them, producing a straight-forward affirmation of the colonial grand narrative of the 'civilizing mission.'

Since 1802, Mappila peasantry of Malabar had started rising up against the oppression of *jenmis* (land lords). By 1896 Malabar had witnessed thirty-six Mappila uprisings against the alliance of colonial and feudal upper caste landlords, opposing economic tyranny and peasant evictions.[16] As a result of these, the Mappilas were increasingly marginalized from mainstream society and were perceived by colonial officials as 'religious fanatics' or 'fanatical Muslims,'[17] who also labelled them 'jungle Moplahs, professional criminals and robbers.'[18] The British officials produced poverty, tensions between peasants and landlords, and illiteracy ('ignorance'), all of which offered more grounds for 'oubreaks' of unrest in the the nineteenth century (Logan 1887). In spite of this, the colonial state considered the Mappilas 'a constant source of danger to the public peace' and delegitimized their uprisings by framing the peasants as 'rebels' who acted only in response to the government's decision to restore land rights to the Hindu landlords (Abraham 2014, 382). This was the context in which Makti asked Muslims to develop loyalty to the British and tried to persuade them they could only escape from their impoverished state by becoming a close ally of the British culture and knowledge (Makti 2012, 504). In this regard, he sharply criticized the involvement of Mappilas in nineteenth-century uprisings.[19] After the rising of 1896, the Collector of Malabar invited him to deliver public speeches to the Mappilas of Malappuram, Angadipuram, and Vandoor (MTSK 2012, 540). Makti exhorted the Mappilas to discontinue the uprisings and to obtain a secular education in order to return to their past glory of Islam. He urged Muslims to learn English so they could engage with the rules and institutions of the new government and gain opportunities in the emerging colonial political economy, and argued that Muslimness would never be lost through English education. He also wrote a small treatise *Paropadrava Parihār* (Solution to the Assaults) that attempted to neutralize the violent situation (Kareem 1997, 45).

Makti recommended that Muslims should assert themselves as a part of mainstream colonial society—and in doing so, he strongly encouraged them to learn English to expose them to the colonial schema and empower them in the modern colonial space. In his writings, he highlighted the invisibility of the Muslim community in the bureaucracy and other administrative positions, meaning they lose opportunities to establishment new educational institutions, grants, and endowments offered by the British by virtue of their ignorance. Addressing the dilemma of Muslim community in new colonial context, he put for-

ward the idea of language learning as a bridge between the colonial British and native Muslims. He wrote:

> As English is the language of bureaucracy and administration (*rāja bhāṣa*), the Muslims should learn this language to enter government jobs and administrative positions. At this moment, only a few Muslims are seen in bureaucratic positions. One of the primary duties of an individual is to learn the language of his own country and government. Islam considers this as a right and a necessity' (MTSK 2012, 492 & 508).

For Makti, allegiance was an essential element for a community to grow and prosper. For this, he argued that Muslims should place importance on acquiring government jobs and positions. In the past, the Mappilas had been constrained by their dislike of the English and saw roles in bureaucratic positions as anti-Muslim. In contrast, Makti asked Muslims to accept any opportunity for attaining employment with the government. He urged the Muslims to be loyal to the British and believed that a loyalist attitude would mitigate the vindictive view the British government held towards the community (MTSK 2012, 506). Consequently, the government would generate more grants and aid to Muslims for their social and economic development.

The encouragement of English was of course, not uncommon amongst modern Muslim reformers. Sayyid Ahmad Khan made sustained efforts to encourage English learning and argued that the education of a new generation of Muslim leaders of Indian Muslims under British rule and the adaptation to the political and scientific culture of the modern world was vital for the survival for the community (Lapidus 2014, 519). Ahmad Khan, too, affirmed the legitimacy of British rule, admiring its freedom of conscience and norms of moral behavior. Writing in the context of the significant anti-British armed uprising of the 1857, Ahmad Khan's main desire was to bring a policy of reconciliation between Muslims and the British government. He regarded British rule to be good for India as 'no one else was in a position to govern' (Rahman 2018, 114). He developed his argument dismissing allegiance for the Turkish sultan granted by a particular section of Muslims and concluding that 'Indian Muslims are the subjects of the British government, not the subjects of Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan II' (1842-1918) (Rahman 2018, 114). Defying the colonial and missionary polemics that condemned Islam as a fanatical religion which encouraged the use of the sword for *jihād* and forceful conversion, he apologetically defended and refuted such polemical discourse by publishing monographs that described and interpreted the spirit of Islam. Ahmad Khan wrote, in reply to W.W Hunter's stigmatization and generalization of Muslims as rebellious, 'as Mussalmans can preach the unity of God in perfect peace, no Mussalman can, according to his religion wage war against the rulers of that country, of whatever creed they be' (Khan, 47). His prime motive was to use arguments from the Quran to prove that Indian Muslims were not zealots who had waged religious war. In his book entitled *The Loyal Mohammadans of India* (1860-1861), his exegesis of the Quran in Urdu entitled *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān wa huwā al-hudā wa al-furqān* (the Exegesis of the Quran and the Guidance from the Nook) described his pertinent views about *jihād* (see Rahman). Furthermore, his *Asbāb-ē-Baghāwat-ī Hind* (Causes of the Revolt), written in Urdu, contained accounts of Muslims who had remained allied with the Raj and his *History of the Revolt*, written in Bijnor spoke of his own experiences during the revolt (Jones, 64). Through these works, he sought to lay the foundations for good terms with the colonial British. He assured the British that Islam taught that 'if, through the will of God, we are subdued by a nation which gives religious freedom, rules with justice, maintains peace in the country and respect on individuality and property, as it is done by the British rule in India, we should be loyal to it' (Baljon 1949, 14).

Since the sixteenth century, Muslim *ulema* of Malabar constructed a consistent consciousness of resistance against the imperial powers of the Portuguese and the British in their scribal and theological engagements (Yasser 2018). The *ulema* that were part of an ever-evolving transnational knowledge network of Indian Ocean Shafite cosmopolis that produced multiple texts on *jihād* (armed resistance). Sheikh Zainuddin Abu Yahya bin Ali bin Ahmadul Ma'abari (1467-1522) and his grandson Ahmad Zainuddin ibn Muhammad al-Gazzali (1531-1583), both were *ulema* of Ponnani advocated the Muslims to wage holy war against infidel Portuguese in *Tahreed Ahlil Iman Ala Jihādi Abaadathi Sulban* (Incitement of Believers to a fight Against the Worshippers of the Cross and Attraction to Paradise and Rescue from Hell) and *Tuhfat-al-Mujahidin fi Baazi Akhbari al-Burthuqaliyyin* (Gift to the Holy Warriors in Respect of a Brief Account of the Portuguese)

respectively. This *jihādi* textual discourse was continued in the fatwas issued by prominent religious scholars from Mampuṟaṃ like Sayyid Alawi's (1750-1844) *Assaif-al-Battar ala man Yuali al-Kuffar* (The Sharp Sword on those who take Unbelievers as Protectors) and Sayyid Fazl Pūkkōya Taṅṅaḷ's (1824-1901) *Uddat al-Umara wal Hukum Li-Ihanatil Kafarat wa-Abadat al-Asnam* (A weapon for Amirs to Subdue Disbelievers and Idol Worshippers) which delivered strong assertions against colonialism and the formulation of *jihādi* ideology in the nineteenth century Malabar (Sathar, 2012). However, in dismissing all *jihādi* writings that advocated armed resistance against the British, Makti pacified the Mappilas by critiquing the conventional argument regarding *jihād*. During this time, a widespread belief spread amongst the Mappilas that *jihād* was the only way to guarantee the salvation of a believer and ensure they go directly to heaven (MTSK 2012, 504). By problematizing the concept of *jihād*, Makti indirectly criticized the orthodox position of the *ulema* against the British. In contrast to the orthodoxy, he advocated that Islam was not a religion of the sword. Instead of the sword, Muslims should use their knowledge to educate the non-Muslim masses through their interpretations of the true teachings of Islam (MTSK 2012, 634). He used Tippu Sultan as an example to make his point. According to him, conversions increased during the rule of Tippu Sultan, not through forceful conversion and swords, but due to social reforms introduced for the wellbeing of lower caste Hindus (MTSK 2012, 634).[20]

Makti claimed that since there had been no outbreak of violence since 1896, his efforts to distance Malabar Muslims from *jihād* had been successful. He asked Muslims

> to obey and respect the crown and its rules and regulations, which are equal to devotion to God. But, if the crown orders some injustice to our God, it is not necessary to follow it and do not adore it above the God. A citizen must follow and obey the ruler for his good deeds…. knowing a country's rules is a citizen's right… it is similar to his awareness of religious norms, which is not only a part of devotion but something that provides him with certain powers (MTSK 2012, 506).

Substantiating his argument further, he brought forward the concept of *ulul aṁṟ*, which means those charged with authority. According to him, Muslims of Kerala could follow and obey a third authority after the Quran and the Prophet. According to Makti, in the colonial context it was the government that was that third authority. Quoting the Quran, Makti says:

> O Ye who believes. Obey Allah and obey the messenger (prophet) and obey those who are charged with authority amongst you *(ulul aṁṟ)*. If you differ amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and his messenger, if you do believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best and most suitable for final determination (MTSK 2012, 506).

In the context of loyalty and allegiance, Makti highlighted the concept of *vandē mādaraṁ* as a fundamental principle. According to him,

> *vandē* means slave and *mādaraṁ* means mother. An individual considers the birth land as their mother and as a slave, they are always bound to the mother. A mother needs a husband, as people need a protector, so that is the crown as it rules now. Everyone should show their allegiance and be loyal to the crown. Even though people of Kerala comprise various religious groups, all of them should follow the principle of *vandē mādaraṁ* as their birthplace is Kerala forms a community. Every Keralite must honor the motherland, love of one's native place and to strive for its progress. All Muslims of Kerala have to be patriotic and work for the progress of the *Malayāḷi* community (MTSK 2012, 509).

In this regard, it is significant to note his labeling of Muslims as *malayāḷi Muslims*, *malayāḷa Islam* and *Kerala Islam* (MTSK 2012, 223 & 272 & 715). In using *malayāḷi*, *malayāḷa,* and *Kerala* together with *Muslim* and *Islam*, Makti sought to affirm a pan- Islamic identity within the social space of *malayāḷi* identity; a way of expressing two sides of a Malayalam-speaking Muslim identity, of being 'simultaneously' Muslim and *malayāḷi*. These terms were not just a religious identity but formulated a religious-sociolinguistic pattern that strongly imagined the developing cognizance of Muslim integration in the emerging *malayāḷi* community, a rejoinder against the imposed stigma of Muslims as outlaws. Designating Kerala as the motherland for Kerala Muslims and advocating

to honor and strive for her prosperity and development, Makti articulated a sense of regional belonging alongside with Hindus and Christians ethnic groups and propounded the notion that '*malayāḷi* was a central identity equal to Islamic religious allegiance' and vice versa (MTSK 2012, 507 & 510). For this prosperity and development, every Muslim learns languages and obtains government jobs as their primary duty to show their allegiance. His advocacy for learning Malayalam and English, for example, was essentially pertained for endorsing Muslims into mainstream civil society, moreover, equipped them for minor administrative positions under the colonial bureaucracy carving a dignified space for them. He encouraged Kerala Muslims to be the first community to offer social progress and reform in upholding the self-esteem of Kerala. Therefore, 'every Muslim is obliged to be trained in *rājya bhāṣa* (Malayalam) and *rāja bhāṣa* (English) for serving the government in their bureaucratical functions. Hence, religious dignity (*matābhimānaṁ*), self-sufficient community (*janābhimānaṁ*) and social pride (*dēśābhimānaṁ*) could be accomplished' (MTSK 2012, 507). His primary intention was to formulate a policy of reconciliation to bring maximum advantage to the disadvantaged Muslim communities of Kerala. The modernization of Muslims, Makti believed, would only take place with extensive assistance from the colonial government (MTSK 2012,507). Therefore, he supported British government and recommended that the Muslims of Kerala accept, socialize and work with the new rulers. However, in suggesting Muslims show allegiance and loyalty towards British in his writings, Makti ignored the social and economic realities of the Mappilas of Malabar. He considered the Mappila uprisings of the nineteenth century an act of fanatics in parallel to the narratives of colonial administration. Thus, he overlooked that the impoverished condition of Mappila's peasants was a result of British economic exploitation and the ruthless policies of feudal landlords.

Conclusion

Recent studies attempt to polemically situate Makti either as modern Islamic reformer or religiously conservative social revivalist. Those who claimed him as an *islāh* considered his endeavors to reprimand religious innovations and customs among nineteenth-century Kerala Muslims and his efforts to safeguard them from social backwardness and denigration as modern Islamic reformism. In this vein, P.M.A. Gafoor compares his reformist themes to illuminative flares in the social darkness, sowing the seed of renaissance (*navodhanam*) in Kerala (Gafoor 2009, 53). However, certain scholars consider Makti as a *tajdīd*, undertaking conscious efforts to bring about a renewal of religious faith and practice and emphasizing strict adherence to the traditional conservative prescriptions of Islam. For them, his social renewal efforts neither modernized nor reformed Islam, but primarily endorsed traditional customs among Kerala Muslims (Faizy 2015, 28). His conservatism sought to essentially revitalize the faith and empower the Muslim *ummah* without rebuking endured orthodox customs. They frame Makti as a conservative reformer who never challenged the popular beliefs of Kerala Muslims, but strongly upheld notions of orthodoxy Islam (Mannalaakunnu 2015, 20).

This study, however, demonstrates how his reformist inclinations towards the promotion of modern secular education, the revitalization of a traditional pedagogy system, his allegiance towards the British, and his persistence in the transforming matrilineal custom to Islamic hereditary practice were based largely on his idea of returning to 'pure Islam.' He ideologized Islam for enriching a moral Muslim community through his concept of 'scripturalist piety'; a return to a 'true' Islam that he located in the revealed scriptures or in the lives and times of the prophet Muhammad. His task of reformism was primarily religious and educational. The efforts endeavored to supersede the rudimentary practices drawn from local customs and to replace the teachings of conservative *ulema*, which were clouded with doctrinal misunderstanding and superstitious belief. In their place, he advocated a 'new' kind of Islamic teaching, based on rational interpretation of the Quran and Hadith, combined with a modern educational agenda to accustom Kerala Muslims to the colonial era. These tendencies were equally important in order to reject blind acceptance of intermediary authority and to encourage acceptance of modern ideas that were not against the teachings of Islam. Makti's conception of

'proper Muslim practice' rejected Sufi traditions as pagan accretions to the pristine faith and instead saw the execution of the obligatory prayers and observance of the law as central to a Muslim's spiritual path of enhanced scripturalistic piety. These scripturalist notions intensified the perception of boundaries around Islamic belief and practice, and rejected what Makti considered accretions to Islam.

These reformist strategies claimed a sharp binary between 'orthodoxy' and 'reform' generated through reason, negotiation and compromise with modern notions, while responding to the west. As a reformist, Makti urged to Muslims to draw close to the imagined community of the global *ummah*, crafting a self-conscious process through which one could correct Muslim behavior based on universal Islamic principles. His usage of the term *ummah* referring Kerala Muslims distinguished them from non-muslims and non-believers, further articulating a sense of Muslim exclusiveness and Muslim self-awareness. In fact, the emergence of a strong Muslim communal identity resulted in tensions, contradictions and inner conflicts within Kerala Muslim society during the twentieth century. These became particularly fraught when modernist reformers attempted to purge Islamic belief and practice from what was described as the corrupting influence of local customs, in particular, that of Hinduism. In doing so, Makti did not merely mark the Muslim community as distinct from the Hindu community, but also marginalized those Muslims who did not adhere to his strict definition of what constituted Islam. On the other hand, reformism fed into a more significant process of community formation that also enabled the self-articulation of the Muslims as a political, claim-making subject. As Asim Roy put it, 'the revivalist movements must not be viewed purely as agencies of puritanical religious reform, as they gave the poorer Muslims a new awareness, a corporate voice, transformed the people into a community and paved the way for later political changes' (Roy 2014, 52).

With his emphasis on correcting Muslim behavior based on Islamic scripture, Makti's thought had many similarities in both meanings and structures of other South Asian movements, but a comparably smaller impact in the society of colonial Kerala. Makti's efforts to bring institutions, practices, and subjectivity under the core foundation of Islam—his method of stressing the process of renewal and appealing to scriptural traditions, avoiding local customs—could be categorized as reformism that crystalized ethnic identities, disrupted inclusiveness and religious toleration. However, he equally embedded a pattern of change that presents a new challenge to the understanding of scriptural Islam in Kerala. His more pragmatic and communal turn in Muslim reformist activities played a significant role in the construction of an exclusivist modern Muslim identity among the early twentieth century Muslims in colonial Kerala. It is difficult to comprehensively evaluate the contributions of Makti to the reformist tendencies of Muslim *ummah* in Kerala. His advanced and radical ideas were very influential to other reformers like Vakkaṁ Abdul Khādir Maulavi and Cālilakat Kuññaham'mad Hāji, both of whom spearheaded the reformist agendas in the twentieth century. Samad believed the reforms strived by Makti had culturally regenerated and awakened the community, and many reformers who emerged later amongst Kerala Muslims were either his disciples or legatees (Samad 1998, 42). Indeed, Makti remained a prominent author beyond his own time thanks to his writings on the concept of scriptural Islam. Coming from a traditional background, his belief in rationality and in religious thought gave an ideological authority to his reformist program and enshrined him as the pioneer of Islamic reformism in Kerala.

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Notes

1 Makti Taṅṅaḷuṭe Sampūrṇa Kr̥tikaḷ, the collected works of Makti Taṅṅaḷ was an anthology of Makti's published tracts and monographs compiled by K K Muhammad Abdul Kareem. This was initially released in 1977 and the second edition was reprinted in 2006 by Vachanam Books, Calicut. I am referring to this collection and here onwards MTSK.

2 Malayalam language is written in Arabic Script

3 For more details see, ASHRAF, 2015.

4 This particular tract tr̥śśivapērūr kristīya vāyaṭapp (Silencing the Thrissur Christians) published in 1888 extensively dealt with correspondence between C.D David, a missionary, and Makti. These letters discussed various issues that extended from the crucifixion of Christ, compares various miracles and deeds of Muhammad and Jesus etc.

5 Mappilas are one of the largest Muslim communities in India who are majorly Arab descendants and local converts belong to the Malabar Coast of Indian Ocean.

6 An excellent work on popular Islam as the interface of mutually exclusive Hindu and Muslim shared religious devotional practices in South India, See MOHAMMAD, 2013.

7 The Urūz is a festival in the tombs (Jarams) of famous saints or divines in connection with their death anniversaries having resemblances to the Hindu festivals. Nërccās or cult commemoration ceremonies combine nominally Islamic elements with specific features of indigenous folk festivals to show reverence to a pir/ shaykh (Sufi Saints) or shahids (martyrs) within a ritual framework derives from the worship of folk deities in Kerala. Mālapāṭṭŭ are hagiographical songs which commemorate the miraculous stories of Sufi saints or Islamic martyrs as well as heroic events in the history of the community Rātìb is a fixed office or litany that is held by the devotee in the name of a saint usually prescribed by the murshid (guide) to his disciple, for seeking protection from evils and for the blessings of the family. Mawlid or Mawlūd is an antiphonal reading of the life of a prophet, or a saint. For reciting Rātìb and Mawlid, the devotees invite a team, and the end of the ceremony serves a grand feast. For details on Muslim devotional festivities see, MILLER 2015.

8 C. Saidālikuṭṭi Master, Vakkaṁ Abdul Khādir Maulavi and Cālilakat Kuññaham'mad Hāji Master was the editor of Salāh-ul Iqvān, an Arabic-Malayalam journal devoted to socio-religious reforms in which Makti was the significant patron. Born in 1856 in Tirur, he was a teacher and school inspector by profession and a well-known educationist, reformist, and poet. Vakkaṁ Maulavi was a great humanist of that period, he persuaded Kerala Muslims to embrace modernity through modern education. His journalistic ventures included the Muslim in 1906, the Arabic Malayalam monthly Al-Islām in 1918 and Dīpika in 1931. His emphasis on the authentic interpretation of the Quran and the prophetic tradition and his criticisms on un-Islamic practices were reflected in Al-Manār Magazine. For more details on Vakkom Moulavi's reformist activities, see ABRAHAM 2014. Chalilakth Kunjahammad Haji was popularly known as the father of the modern Madrasa and Arabic Colleges of Kerala, he is remembered for the changes brought to the traditional educational system of the Muslims. He introduced Makti's methods and techniques in the institutions he was associated with.

9 Recent researches demonstrated how Sufis reinterpret Sufi thought as a source of inspiration for contemporary religious practice, adjusted their practices to engage with cosmopolitan Muslim cultures and modified social milieu of traditional Sufism to embrace its transformative process of Islamic renewal and reform which Azra called 'Neo-Sufi' and Howell termed 'Neo-Modernist'. See HOWELL, 2001 is a good example of the former. For a meticulous study on reform led by ulema and Sufi network see AZRA, 2004.

10 Significant tariqas appeared in Kerala since the sixteenth century were the Tariq Qadiri

al-Aydarusiya wal Alawiyaa, the Chisti Tariqa, the Naqshbandi Tariqa, the Rifa'I Tariqah, the Shadhili Tariqah and the Nurishi Tariqa made the last entry. For a detailed discussion on the origin and development of Sufism in Kerala, see KUNHALI 2004. Moreover, ritual recitation and performance of devotional literature devoted to their founding saints praising their glorious life and miraculous events, popularly known as mālāpāttū (Necklace songs) was a common religious custom among Kerala Muslims since the seventeenth century.

11 Disciples of different Sufi tariqas debate each other telling that "our Sufi tariqa has 30000 murīds (followers) and our predecessor has 50000. Makti made a joke of this system these as similar to a boasting by the members of the different household as Paliyath family has 80000 coconut trees, Parayai house has 50000, and Parakadavu house has 30000, etc.

12 For a detailed debate over these two main Sufi philosophies prevailed on the controversial topic of waḥdat al-wujūd, and waḥdat al-Shuhūd, see Rizvi, A. Abbas, A History of Sufism in India, Vol II (Munshiram Manoharlal Pub., New Delhi, 1992).

13 According to Muzzafar Alam, the Sufi belief of unity in rather than multiplicity, known as waḥdat provided doctrinal basis for all those un-Islamic rituals and practices developed in the process of religious synthesis and cultural amalgamation. See ALAM 2004, 91-94.

14 'A Notice on Matriliny', Salāh ul Iqvān, Vol. 4, Issue 10, November 18, 1902.

15 'A prologue on Matriliny', Salāh ul Iqvān, Vol. 1, Issue 11, January 1, 1903.

16 For more details on the Mappilas uprisings against their upper caste landlords who were supported by the British from the early nineteenth century, see Wood, 1974. For a framework that prioritizes economic factors in the uprising, see, PANIKKAR 1989.

17 The issue of religion and religious identity in the Mappila uprisings is an interesting one. On the one hand, colonial officials chose to depict the uprising in terms of the fanatical zealousness of the Mappila community. In recent times, historians like Stephen Dale have argued for a nuanced understanding of the role of religion in these movements that counters a notion of blind Islamic fanaticism. See DALE 1980. However, scholars like M T Ansari have argued that the Mappilas have been entirely stereotyped and stigmatized as a community of bigots described variously as illiterate, pagan, and ignorant. See ANSARI, 2005.

18 Francis Buchanan in his travelogue to Madras wrote 'Moplas of Malabar are both traders and farmers. As traders they are remarkably quite industrious but those in the interior parts of Malabar have become farmers and have been encouraged by Tipu in a licentious attack on the lives, persons and property of Hindus, are fierce, blood-thirsty bigoted ruffians', Francis Buchanan, A Journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar (Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1988), 422. In the Imperial Gazetteer of India represented the Mappilas as a 'tribe remarkable for savage fanaticism in successive revolts against Hindus', Imperial Gazetteer of India, Chapter VIII (Madras, 1881), 438. For details on colonial discourse in nomenclatures in making Mappilas as a criminal community, see, ABRAHAM 2014.

19 Mappilas regularly erupted in revolts against their upper caste landlords who were supported by the British from the early nineteenth century (1802-1921); the most spectacular of these movements being the uprising of 1921. For more see PANIKKAR 1989.

20 Tippu Sultan introduced certain social customs like denying the right for lower caste women to wear breast clothes, abolish polyandry and rigid caste rules attracted lower castes to Islam.

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