

DIVINATION, ASTROLOGY AND ISLAM IN SOUTH ASIA: BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**Divination, Astrology and Islam in South Asia: Beliefs and Practices**” submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** is my own work. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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Introduction

“Whoever goes and meet an astrologer and believe what he says, according to the religion which is given to prophet Muhammad, he is a *Kafir*, a non Muslim.¹”

“God has never decided the life, death, food, and other things according to the stars. It is the astrologers say lies in the name of God using stars.²”

“Hafsa reports as said by prophet Muhammad : if someone goes to an astrologer and takes his advise , his prayers wont be accepted for the next forty days.³”

The Hadith quoted as reported by Sharvani⁴ is this, “if a true believer says that, rain has happened due to particular star, it is neither Haram⁵ nor Karahat⁶”.

“In principle it is appropriate to believe that it is the convention of God, that before the occurrence of an event, God shall send signals via stars and planets, but then it is imperative on the believer to believe that is the God who is capable of doing things, neither stars nor planets⁷.”

These are the Hadith's , or the saying of prophet regarding astrology. Now from this Hadith's itself we could see that there is a contradiction in the way astrology is seen. It is condemned with strongest terms, but at the same time there we could see that, there is a Hadith which favours the astrology. Throughout in the discussion about astrology and Islam we could see that, this contradiction exists. Making sense of the same thus becomes an important point to begin the enquiry about astrology and Islam.

Thus in this hadith there is no denial the fact that the fate of a person is not predetermined, which is called qadr⁸ . There are obvious questions which emerges that , if the person's fate is already determined then what makes him accountable for his own activities in this world for

¹ Cited by M.A.Jaleel Saqafi Pullara in his book, *Nahs Dinanagalum, Andhavishawasavum*(Inauspicious days and superstitious beliefs)(n d) as Hadith is reported by Twabrani, Bassar, Abu Ya'la

² M.A.Jaleel Saqafi Pullara cites this Hadith as Mishkath:394

³ M.A.Jaleel Saqafi Pullara cites this Hadith as Mishkath:393

⁴ Who reported or collected the Hadith is an important way for the religious scholars to decide which is authentic and not.

⁵ *Haram* means , forbidden act. Believers aren't supposed to do it and if they do it is believed that they will be punished by the God.

⁶ The term *Karahat* denotes acts which are strongly advised not to do, but will not be punished by God if the act is done.

⁷ M.A.Jaleel Saqafi Pullara cites this Hadith as – Fatawal Hadisiyya:40

⁸ Qadr, meaning predestination.

which he is rewarded hereafter. This question has indeed sparked lot of debates among Islamic theologians and philosophers. Judy Pugh in her chapter, 'Astrology and Fate, the Hindu and Muslim Experience' (1983), in her attempt to make a comparison between the practice of astrology among Hindus and Muslims in the city of Banaras, is trying to see how both of them see the concept of fate. Although she is not making any attempt to go deeply into the astrological practices among Muslims, which in a way is presented as a kind of extension and adaption from Hindu astrologers, her attempt becomes important as it addresses the concept of fate. Fate, according to the Muslim respondents can be altered through prayers, and they see the night of Bara'at with extreme importance as it is believed that, their fate for next year is fixed on that particular time and the prayers made on that night may influence their fate.

Astrology in a way is a system to understand the fate of a person which is believed to have predetermined before the birth of a person. We could see that, Islam has the same concept with that of qadr which clearly laid out the possibility for astrology. Astrology and divinatory practices thus becomes an interesting terrain as it represents one of the important principles in Islam which at the same time disputes another.

I actually wanted to work on astrology which I felt that, despite being a very popular practise wasn't given much attention by scholars and there is something to see beyond generally calling it as superstition to serve our carefully presented "modern", "scientific" self. While the discussion was going on, he asked me that whether I do practise astrology? I said that, there is no astrology among Muslims and going to an astrologer or listening to it is considered as shirk. As a child, that is what I learned from my religious education in Madrasa which went besides formal schooling. There were also instances while the Kurathis⁹, came to our home they were send back while some of our Muslim neighbours who thus considered as the kind of people "not that much religious" entertained them.

As a Mappila Muslim¹⁰, I come across researches about the community occasionally and this brief description about occultism among the Mappila's struck me in a PhD thesis¹¹. In that brief description there was a tendency to snub occultism as mostly followed by "illiterate

⁹ Women who read palm is known as Kurathi's , they usually go around and read palm to make an income for themselves. They are however considered as a lower status group. When I have asked about Kurathi's about a Panikkar who also practices astrology, and enjoys higher social status than that of Kurathi's , refused to recognise or identify with them.

¹⁰ This is the term used generally for the Muslims of Northern Kerala, however this is not a blanket term as there are Syed's who are locally known as Thangals.

¹¹ See UnPublished PhD thesis, Hussain K, University of Calicut 1998

Muslims, especially fishermen”. Understandably this statement comes from not only as an effort to showcase the community as “modern”, also is deeply imbued with caste prejudices. It was from this moment that I have decided to search more about the divinatory and astrological practices among Mappila’s.

There are different ways in which the concept *qadr* or fate or auspicious time manifest in the everyday conversation’s of a Mappila. The wealthy person is often praised for his “*Thalavara*” which literally means the line drawn over head, indicating ones fate decided by God. There are also occasions when someone asked to be careful while riding a bike or any such activity which involves danger to be careful as something may happen because of “*kalakkedinu*” means bad time. Those people who talks like this may say that astrology is not there in Islam. But we could see that, such a way of thinking is there in the everyday conversations.

The concept of *qadr* is something contested, theologically and philosophically. The fundamental question emerges at this moment is that, if the fate of a person is already decided, then what is the point in making someone accountable for his own actions in life in this world for which it is believed to be rewarded hereafter. However one of the popular belief is that, although the there is something called *qadr*, with prayers someone can have a better life. Prayer thus becomes an act through which you ask for your wishes. In the collective prayers, asking for god to take care of someone from a danger which is awaiting him is a common theme.

The concept of *qadr* was once explained when there was an outbreak of Nippah virus in the districts of Malappuram and Kozhikkode in the months of May and June, 2018¹² the Khateeb¹³ was warning the believers who congregated for the customary Friday prayer that not to go to the places where it is spreading. Then he himself raked up another question that, what if someone believes that it is only those who are fated to be infected by it is going to get and doesn’t take care of himself? He pointed out that it is the duty of a believer to take care of the disaster brought down to earth by God. Since the God always do things with a visible reason, Nipah is virus is just a reason through which the fate of God unfolds. However, it is the duty of a true believer to take care of himself and stay away from any such dangers. He then mentions what is called *qadr* and *quada*. While the meaning of *qadr* means fate which is

¹² There was an outbreak of Nipah virus in the districts of Kozhikkode and Malappuram, in the months of May and June , 2018

¹³ The one who leads customary Friday prayer , Jumu’a

believed to have decided when the foetus is four month old and quada means the timely occurrence of those things which are already decided.¹⁴ He went on to say that, although there are these two things exist, which doesn't mean that someone doesn't take care of himself.

This belief in predestination that is qadr and the timely unfolding of the same, qada is something which shows the possibility or space for an astrology as it is a system to understand the predestination of someone. But how this is something which is concealed from the masses and how it is practiced is another question to ponder.

At different times in the history, it was different disciplines which was dominating the scene, and science became a dominant discipline only by 20th century, until which it was theology dominating, thus we should see the debates of whether astrology is science or not in such a context. Keith Thomas in his book, 'Magic and Divination in Early Islam' (1941) has written about astrological practices in the 17th century of England. Astrology predicted not only about individual human beings and his life, but could also predict on many other things including planets, minerals and nations etc. Since, as the stars influenced upon planets and minerals, disciplines like botany and metallurgy as well as psychology presupposed a good deal of astrological dogma. Isaac Newton's attempt to use astronomical data to reconstruct the otherwise lost chronology of the ancient world (The chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended 1728), was the product of an intellectual milieu in which a relationship between the history of stars and of nations had been long assumed.

The word Astrology is derived from the Greek, *astron*(star) and *logos*(word), thus meaning "the speaking stars". Astrology, according to Oxford dictionary is "the study of the movements and relative positions of celestial bodies interpreted as having an influence on human affairs and the natural world". Devotees believe that an understanding of the influence of the planets and stars on earthly affairs allows them to both predict and affect the destinies of individuals, groups, and nations. Astrology is largely divided into four types: a)Horoscope (*Jataka*): entire life of a person is predicted here based on the planetary positions at the time of birth. b)Hoary or *Prashna*: in which the astrologer or *Jyotishi* notes the time of the question being asked. Sharma in Symbols of a Kinship Identity: In a North Indian Village' (2011) argues that , this is a unique area of Hindu Jyotisha and in the case of marriage, it has two important roles, when the exact time of birth is unknown and when there is disagreement

¹⁴ Qadr meaning predestination , while qada means the timely unfolding of those pre decided events.

among astrologers about interpreting natal horoscope this method is used. c) Electional or *muhurtas* : finding an auspicious time for marriage, to tie the knot and for many other important things in life is found through this kind of astrology. d) Predictive or *Varshaphala* is a one year prediction for an individual about his life¹⁵.

It is interesting to look at different kind of astrological practices among different societies in the world. Roman senate would undertake no major venture without consulting a specialist who could interpret the flights of birds and declare the outcome would be favourable or not (Inden 2006). When it comes to the cosmology of the region of Sub Saharan Africa, the universe is broadly divided into three zones; sky/heaven, earth, and an underworld. Astrological practices are/were not codified or systematic like Indian or Hellenistic astrology, Campion in his book, 'Astrology and Cosmology in World Religions' (2012) argues that, astrology in Africa is "chaotic" and it is systematic only where it is influenced by Islamic-Indian astrological systems. Time, as we saw in the case of electional astrology, is having a central role in astrology, Campion gives an example of a practice among the Luo people in Western Kenya, people are named after the time of the day when they were born, the identity between individual and star could also be represented via bodily markings in some areas of Mozambique.

China was one of the centre of astrology, Campion (2012) criticises Joseph Needham, the sinologists for ignoring astrology while extensively talking about astronomy. It can be seen that throughout the world, astrology flourished along with astronomy and it caused political upheaval so and so that, in China it was the king who interpreted important astrological affairs relating to the country than using any other astrologer.

Before going to discuss about the codified systematic astrology in South Asia, it will be interesting to look at astrological practices where it was not codified as we see in the case of Indian, Hellenistic traditions of astrology which are very systematic. It also gives an introduction into the process of how astrology gets systematic due to various influences.

¹⁵In the case of marriage it is drawn to determine whether a particular year is good for marriage or not, or there is a chance for marriage settlement and if it is there, from which direction. So, once they know the direction, usually they will search in that direction. Sharma , 2011

While describing about Sub Saharan Africa and the practice of astrology, Nicolas Champion(2012) point out at the fact that , in the region astrology is “chaotic” as there are little indication of codified systems of astrological practices except where Islam is dominant whereas Champion also argues that anthropologists generally gave attention to terrestrial cosmology whereas it ignored astronomical dimension, which he is substantiating by indicating the lack of consistent and comprehensive scholarship in the area.

Kitab al-falak(Book of the Planets), written by the Moroccan astrologer ‘Abd al-Haqq, was read throughout west Africa in the 16th and 17th centuries. A Near Eastern system of astrological geomancy, which relies on number and symbol rather than on the planets, was adopted by the Yoruba in Nigeria, and may also have reached the island of Madagascar, on the other side of the continent. Champion (2012) is more interested in finding the threads or influence Of South Asian, Arabic and Indonesian influences in the astrological practices among the region. He sees an influence of this, especially Arabic, in Madagascar, as in land as in Botswana, as north as Somalia to Kenya down to Mozambique. There are interesting convergences of different traditions too, as in Somali astrology, Friday is auspicious but not Thursday which is contrary to Islamic tradition, and if a year begins on a Thursday, that entire year will be difficult.

Astrology is an indispensable part in South Asia and comparing natal horoscopes are an important thing among Hindus to check compatibility. There were also practices among Muslims in the region as well who were following an astrological practice to check the compatibility among potential spouses which I will explain later. Amit Kumar Sharma(2011), in his study titled Symbols of kinship identity in a North Indian village conducted in five villages of Bihar during the late 1980’s finds out how important is the role of astrology in marriage settlement and negotiation.

Astrology becomes important as in the natal horoscope there is a chart which deals with his or her kin man or woman, which indicates how his or her life is going to influence kin man or woman and getting influenced by theirs too, thus matching of natal horoscopes becomes important. In this particular study, author says that, marriage is a *samskar* or sacrament for Hindus and it cannot be done without a priest. The priest is also considered as *Guru*(which means the ritual guardian who has initiated the family head in a particular tradition of mantra) of the family in some cases .When there is a problem in the family of her husband , it is the

woman's astrology is studied before anybody else's as it is believed that she is the cause of the problem, as she has the capacity to effect her husband's life.

Another case is that of mangala and mangali. Once, a girl is found as mangali the author says about instances when all other negotiations are set aside and an astrologer is called to decide upon the compatibility of the couples. This shows that being a "mangali" is enough not to get any marriage proposal from those who take astrology seriously.

Sharma (2011) is extensively talking about mangalidosha, people who are having mangalidosha if not able to find a solution would find it very difficult to find a solution as this aspect indicates a problematic married life. Interestingly, the author is describing the astrological methods of mangalidosha as well as remedies and reaches a conclusion that, it is the ill educated astrologers and the prejudice of people makes mangalidosha a hoax, which is manipulated for getting dowry. Another instance is that, when both groom and bride is mangala, the capacity of groom's party to bargain for dowry is less, but this is also manipulated by not sharing horoscope with bride's party. If a girl is mangali, her parents may claim that they don't have her horoscope, sometimes fake horoscopes are made.

It is not only natal horoscopes (janamkundali or jataka), almanacs (panchang) are used in analyzing clients' problems, but also the soil (mitti) and land (zamin) where people live is also analysed. (Guenzi & Singh 2008) in their study of geomancy or *vastushastra* practiced in the city of Banaras brings out an extensive analysis of the practice. Geomancy is from the Greek word, geo meaning earth, and *manteia* meaning divination; divination through investigating the characteristics of land and soil. It is important to analyse the land and soil where people live as it also determines the destiny of people who are living in it. The sufferings due to soil and land are called as *bhumidosh* or *vastu dosh*. In order to detect any defects or possible causes of suffering there are two techniques are majorly employed; soil inspection (*mittisodhan*) and land investigation (*zaminsodhan*).

When people suffer due to soil defect or land defect, people go to Ojhās too and not necessarily to those who practice "geomancy". Ojhās are exorcists who generally hail from lower castes and treat clients afflicted by ghosts. Ojhās follow a divinatory procedure described as "intuitive", "inspirational" or revelatory". While Ojhās clients largely come from the lower caste and rural areas, the *vāstushāstrīs* clients are generally urban families from middle or upper classes. (Guenzi & Singh 2008) Both of the practitioners will try to identify defects (dosh) or the ghosts (bhūt-pret).

There are different methods and techniques to do this. Sometimes, although contested by a section of astrologers itself, astrologers analyze dust(dhūl) from the house where people live, for example if there is a problem between husband and wife, then the dust from the bedroom is collected and submitted to astrologer; sometimes the soil from near the house is taken as sample, (still there are contestation among astrologers that which soil is authentic and which is not, also how to take a sample, especially in the case of an urban settlement). Rice taken from the storage container of the household is also used, if it is difficult to take the sample of soil. In the case of any physical afflictions happened, the afflicted person is asked to sleep on a pillow filled with rice and the same taken to astrologer for divination. This will help someone to identify if someone is suffering due to sorcery (tona-totka).

Soil is divided according to its Varna and Brihat Samhita of Varaha Miraha, sixth century astronomer and astrologer has written about it. It divided, soil according to its color and the function, for example; Brāhmana soil is a bright, light-coloured, white or yellow soil, this kind of soil is appropriate for educational institutions, Kshatriya soil is red, but there will be constant fight between people who live on this land, suggested as good for establishing military establishments; a dark, humid and varied soil is called as Shūdra soil, which is very good for agriculture but not auspicious for human beings. The belief is thus that, each type of soil, is having an influence (prabhāv) on the people who live on it.

The soil which is taken for sample is smelled by astrologers. Astrologers claim that, through smelling soil, they could say the history of the soil as well as detect whether something adhārmik, immoral happened. After smelling, they could also categorize the land as pure(shudh), or impure(ashudh), auspicious(shubh) or inauspicious(ashubh), fruitful(phalit) or non-fruitful(aphal), alive(jivit) or dead(mrit). “Perfumed smell” of a soil is auspicious whereas bad “smell” indicates fault, sin, defect, *dosa*.

A land is investigated if several members in a house as well as animals get afflicted as well as if somebody would like to make a house or building. When investigating a land, both the objective characteristics as well as subjective feeling of astrologer are taken into consideration. The subjective feelings include, shivering, unusual heart beating, bad thoughts, night mares etc due to the influence of the place (sthan ka prabhav). The objective test include the pit (gaddā) test, which is also found is having empirical foundations as it checks the humidity of soil.

Interpretations of omen's (laksan, sakun) is used to understand the quality of land, for example trees such as the papal, banyan and nim, are considered to be signs of ghosts roaming on the land as well as a bad vegetation is considered as bad signs. Bones visible or hidden in the land is considered as a bad sign, for example donkey bones shows wealth and cattle destruction. The sight of a snake on the way to the land shows that, the place is protected by a "snake deity" and ancient wealth is hidden in the land.

The concepts, living lands and dead lands shows the reciprocal relationship between human beings and land. The belief is that, over a period of time, both the land and the human being lives on it, influence each other. A few bad act happens, the land will make up, but if evil acts are done repeatedly the land will not able to make up and it will die. A dead land produce disastrous effects upon people living on it. Another category is that of awake and asleep lands. If a family is lacking religious devotion, it will sleep and the effects of a sleeping land is that of a the efforts of people living on it will be fruitless. But if the family becomes religiously devoted again, then again the land will wake up slowly. But still astrologers know faster methods to wake up the land.

Through this piece of writings Osella & Osella (2009) is trying to understand the malayali attachment towards land. Reminding what Guenzi has said earlier, it can be seen that, Punja, the paddy field is inhibited by lower caste and home to fiercest spirits. In the case of Kerala, it is the Asari, the carpenters are having a major role in the case of Vastu. Osella & Osella (2009) describes the method of Asaris. It is the *Vastupurusan* (Mahavishnu) who is believed to fell into earth during a fight between the Devanmar and Asuranmar. Each and every marked plot contains a Vastupurusan plus 81 gods who lives on his body. Thus, it is imperative to respect the body of Vastupurusan; and the first job of Asari is to map him out without disturbing. They are trying to make a connection between land plot, house building and funeral rituals. They also argues that, it is the connection and flow matters, and these channels exist within the bodies of Bhūmi –Dēvi, Vāstupurusan- and persons, living and dead.

It is not only an individual, or a family that becomes subject to astrological divination, rather it is also used as a method to identify the problems in temple, which is called as *Devaprashnam*, which basically happens in the temples of South India, which Gillis Tarabout has written about in his book, '[Religious Uncertainty, Astrology and the Courts in South India]. (2015)

Devaprashnam happens in the case of temple when “devotees want to improve the temple buildings or the ceremonies, or when there is the perception that past unfortunate events point to a divine imbalance”. Remedies may be suggested after this process. Omens or *nimittams* are important in this process, the time when astrologers are called to temple to formulate questions is noted. It begins in temple by asking a child to put a gold coin in the zodiac chart drew in the ground , a lot of things are taken into calculations like, the body part which the child touched after putting gold coin in the chart. Astrologer has to go through a lot of uncertainties too , as he is having a lot of data and have to decide what it indicates. *Devaprasnam* is followed by *carcca* which means, deliberation, reflection, recollection, debate, this process, which is evidently dialogical involving the audience too, is used to eliminate errors and to reach in a “correct” conclusion. *Ozhivunokki* , literally means “looking for cessation” is the process to which astrologers proceed at regular intervals for each important statements and for reaching a conclusion with a specific question in mind like is the deity satisfied or the conclusion is correct drawing cowries. *Devaprasnam*’s also lead to findings hitherto not found , as in the case when the presence of female deity is found in the idol of a Ganesha temple , sometimes a change in the main deity of the idol itself as in the case of *Mettukkada Kamaskshi* temple in 1999, where the main deity *Kamakshi* was no longer been present and goddess *Rajeshwari* replaced. It also says how tactfully astrologers present it in front of audience. Invoking the court accepting *devaprasnamr* results as a basis to make a judgment , and it ordering prohibition of the entry of young women inside *Sabarimala* temple Tarabout (2015) argues that of how Judicial judgments is not questionable where as astrological findings are always open for dispute and questioning, looking into the intersections of divinity and legality.

Tarabout in his book, ‘Authoritative Statements in Kerala Temple Astrology’ (2007) also looks into the point that, how problematic certain understandings of sin and expiation in Indian context and argues that how complex , ambiguous and ambivalent it is from the western perception of it. Tarabout (2007) makes an analysis of how sin and affliction is described in the Sanskrit text of 1650 ,*Praśnamārggam* which is widely used by astrologers in Kerala. According to this text, diseases are having its origin in one’s own sin, which is both seen and unseen which provoke the wrong position of planets and leads to the agitation of three body humors (*tridōṣa*). To heal medicines has to be taken for the seen causes and repent (*prāyascittam*) for unseen. The focus here is on divine anger which basically the results of one’s own action, except in the cases of enemies, Tarabout (2007) says it citing

frequently used Malayalam words in the commentary of this Sanskrit text. Looking into the differences between his interpretation and the practice of the same in Kerala, he finds that, from the interpretation of the text that , diseases are the result of one's own deeds in the previous birth , in practice it is also explicitly interpreted as diseases could also be due to the sins of one's own ancestors too(ancestor comes as *prētam* and afflicts the patient. So this understanding of a collective responsibility and then not confining the causes of disease to one person or his past deed is later explained invoking *devaprasnamin* the temple where there is flaw(*dosam*) is found the people in the locality are bound to suffer until and unless remedial measures are taken. Tarabout (2007) explains in detail about how the ritual is performed(*olīvu*) in which a *prētam* is transformed into good ancestors. The article thus tries to establish that, sin is not a deed rather it is a situation, thus the moral responsibility which is present in astrology is not a discourse on guiltiness and forgiveness , but a discourse about the laws of the world and the effects on their transgressions.

Judy F Pugh (1983) in her study is trying to make an interesting comparison about how the notion of fate is perceived among Hindus and Muslims by looking into the astrological practices among both community in Banaras. Since celestial realm is important to South Asian life world, Pugh (1983)brings two terms *Karma* and *Kismet* into comparison, and substantiate the selection of astrological practices to look into these concepts as there is a reciprocal relatedness of all entities as well as celestial entities determining the events and conditions in the realm of human action. Pugh is trying to locate how fate is understood at a popular level , which weren't like "high" Hinduism or Islam. Several astrologers whom Pugh met were busy writings books about astrology too which she thought indicates astrology as a bridge between the transcendental complex and the pragmatic complex. According to Pugh (1983), "Fate is manifested in the general features of the person's physical and psychical constitution and socio familial relationships, which together articulate a whole panoply of life experiences, including among many others , experiences associated with health and disease, family crises, and economic circumstances".

Is there any independent status for God in fate or is it just controlled by planets? It is believed that God controls planets and planetary deities are subordinates, and powerful deities like Shiva and Hanuman can control planets. But God is also seen as powerless, especially in the case of Saturn affliction, one has to wait till the period ends.

Statement of the Problem

Astrology and divinatory techniques are often a contested terrain in Islam. There are and were fierce opposition against astrology within the Muslims but it can also be seen that, beliefs such as *qadr* or, predestination gives an edge to the argument that there is astrology in Islam and not merely that it is followed by “corrupted” Muslims. In such a situation it is important to look into the questions of astrology and Islam, the particular socio historical conditions in which the arguments against astrology, the practice of astrology among Muslims emerged etc. There is always this contradiction of whether astrology in Islam is really Islamic, how as an anthropologist we could study astrology as an Islamic system of knowledge etc , the reasoning’s and rationalities given by those who practice it , the contestations as well as negotiations.

Research Objectives

1. To explore how astrology is theoretically perceived as a meaningful Islamic system of knowledge
2. To undertake a sociological study on the theory and contemporary practice of Islamic astrology among Mappila Muslims of Kerala
3. To examine the contemporary practice of Islamic astrology among Mappila Muslims, attending to its internal contestations within Islam and external negotiations with astrological practices among Hindus

Methodology of Research

Initially I was of the opinion that there is no astrology among Muslims and the conversation with my supervisor and subsequent searches showed that there is indeed astrology among Muslims. I have found texts which has got astrological and other divinatory practices in it. There were texts which are in circulation for more than a century. From further investigations which I have found that these texts were used by Muslim healing practitioners and this knowledge was taught secretly with lot of preconditions to it. I have then tried to interact with them and it was difficult to get into it although I was an insider to the community. The two dominant texts used by the healing practitioners, which has astrological and divinatory practice in it is examined to understand the theory and practice of the same. It was important to understand how among the Muslims of Kerala, internal contestations within Islam as well as external negotiations with Hindu astrological tradition is being made. The same is investigated through looking at the small popular books, which carries opinion of each section of the Muslim community regarding astrology and other divinatory practices.

However, the section of people who gives a blanket rejection of all these practices, especially that of Salafi's – those who stands for a puritanical version of Islam- is not given much attention as they give no scope for a discussion. The focus is more given to those sections among the Sunni's, whom constitute more than 90% of the Muslim population in Kerala.

Chapterisation

This study is organized into five chapters. The second chapter sets the theoretical framework of this work. It examines how Islam could be seen as an object of anthropological enquiry, which then makes the analysis of astrology as a meaningful Islamic knowledge system. It also examines how the notions of qadr, which means predestination as well as the notion of shirk, which means associating partners to the singular God and how astrology negotiates with both of these notions which are important in Islam. It also looks into the Islamic eschatology and shows how it provides a scope for astrology citing the example of kingship in the Mughal India and Safavid Iran. The third chapter looks into the theory and practice of astrology and other divinatory practices among the Mappila Muslims of Kerala by looking into the two dominant and popular texts among them. How the practice is explained and the theory behind it is presented in the text and as well as the instructions of how to do it etc is explained there. The fourth chapter is looking into the contemporary debates on the practice of astrology among the Muslims of Kerala, what are the ways through which the internal contestations within Islam as well as the external negotiations with the Hindu astrology and divinatory practices is examined.

1. Astrology and Divination in Islam: Controversies and Contestations

1.1 Introduction

Astrology and divination techniques are a controversial terrain in Islam as it oscillates between the concepts of qadr and shirk, that is the notion of predestination as well as the notion of associating a partner with God as the stars or planets are not supposed to be worshipped. It is thus important to look at how astrology as an Islamic system of knowledge can be studied as anthropologists, beginning from the question of how to constitute Islam as an anthropological object. Beyond the concept of qadr and shirk, it is also important to look at the Islamic eschatology and how it interacts with astrology.

1.2 Islam as an Anthropological Object

Before delving into the contested terrain of astrology and divination in Islam, it is important to look into the validity of Islam as an analytical category or as an object of enquiry in anthropology. How an anthropologist is going to decide what is Islamic or what is not Islamic, while the question of whether it is his/her job to do that is equally relevant question. May be we could ask, what should be the anchoring point of our analysis or study. Should we focus only on texts and then interpret the practices accordingly or should we look exclusively into their practices. Obviously anthropologists who studied Muslim communities are having differing opinions on this. Talal Asad in his article titled 'The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam'(1986) takes on this murky question by responding to Abdul Hamid el-Zein's arguments in the article 'Beyond Ideology and Theology: The Search for an Anthropology of Islam' (1977)

El-Zein (1977) argues that, Islam cannot be used as an analytical category until and unless it is not part of a cultural system. One of his crucial argument is that, there is a logic behind the content in each system and it is difficult to go only for that logic without looking into the content of that system. He goes on to argue that, although these contents may vary from one culture to another, the logic is the same which el-Zein thinks, is shared unconsciously. Such logic is only understood through the careful analysis of the content in a cultural system. With this argument not only he brushes aside the dichotomy of folk Islam and elite Islam but also argues that, a predefined "Islam" as an analytical category cannot be imposed on the analysis of any society, as it doesn't exist independently without being part of any cultural system. Since the meanings are relational, it must be understood placing it within the entirety of

system, not cherry picked meanings according to the standards of truth by the analyst. Objectivity is thus achieved by looking into the shared structures of the analyst and subject. Talal Asad(1986) begins with the question of how to conceptualise Islam as an object of anthropological inquiry. The three obvious answers are that, first, in the final analysis there is no such theoretical object as Islam, second it is a label for a heterogeneous collection of items and third, Islam is a distinctive historical totality which organizes various aspects of social life.

The second answer , that Islam is a label for an heterogeneous collection of items faces a paradox as, if an anthropologist takes Islam as what Muslims everywhere says, then there are Muslims who also says what others takes as Islam is not Islam at all. This paradox, Asad says cannot be resolved by taking what informants own beliefs and practices as it is impossible to define it in terms of an isolated subject.

Asad takes on the third answer extensively by analysing the work of Ernest Gellner's Muslim Society (1983) as he thinks that, this work is representative in character as there are many elements which could be found in the writings of anthropologists, orientalist's and journalists. The first point Asad raising is about the comparison between Christianity and Islam in which Europe and Middle East is portrayed as the true locus of both respectively as he is concerned about the impact of such a comparison upon the conceptualisation of Islam.

Islam is the blueprint of a social order. It holds that a set of rules exist, eternal, divinely ordained, and independent of the will of men, which defines the proper ordering of society. . . . Judaism and Christianity are also blueprints of a social order, but rather less so than Islam. Christianity, from its inception, contained an open recommendation to give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's. A faith which begins, and for some time remains, without political power, cannot but accommodate itself to a political order which is not, or is not yet, under its control. . . . Christianity, which initially flourished among the politically disinherited, did not then presume to *be* Caesar. A kind of potential for political modesty has stayed with it ever since those humble beginnings. . . . But the initial success of Islam was so rapid that it had no need to give anything unto Caesar. (Asad 1986: 3)

Asad finds it unacceptable that, the Christian practice and discourse wasn't connected with the political power and its relationship as much as it was in Muslim societies, by invoking the history of Europe in which the social conditions are created and maintained in a way by both political and religious authorities so that, people might live Christian lives. According to him, going beyond drawing parallels of this kind and looking for differences is important and he cites the effort of Fischer as well as his own efforts to analyse, the medieval inquisition in the twelfth century Western Europe, monastic ritual and sacrament of confession etc in the west which he says shows a very different connections between power and religion in both Europe and Middle East. He points out the fact that, Jews and Christians in the Middle Eastern society were an integral part of it and there must have been a different strategy to develop moral subject and control subject populations in the Middle East by the political and religious authorities in contrast to that developed in the Europe.

Asad also responds to the argument that, classical or in the post-classical periods, Muslim scholars showed least interest towards the Christian Europe. Is it because of the military success Islam or the perception of Europe as darkness with unbelievers? Asad, says that, turning around the question and asking why the Roman Christians were interested in studying others is important. After all, Muslim scholars went to the Africa and Asia and wrote about it and neither the Christians lived along with Muslims in Middle east were interested in studying Europe. Asad argues that, the systematic emergence of knowledge has to do with various structures of power which varies according to historically changing systems of discipline and not with the essential character of Islam or Christianity. He point out that, the problem with Gellner is about the terms which he used to analyse which are misleading which show the need to develop concepts in order to describe the differences.

Asad argues that, the moment anthropologist try to understand religion by placing it conceptually in its social context, and see the social structures of Muslim societies in terms of overlapping spaces and times, the dual typology of Islam will become less plausible as well as Middle East will be seen as focus of convergence and many possible histories.

Asad criticises the organizing ideas of diversity by Gellner, who divides traditional Islam into three in which, there is a Drukhemian way of looking at the Islam among the tribes, an enactment of the sacred is given significance, what Asad calls as an emotional affect. But the religion among the urban poor, is presented as what Asad terms as an emotional cause, the

opium of the masses. The bourgeoisie Muslim in the city is viewed with Weberian lenses. The problem with this classification is that, all these three approaches are different textual constructions which are incompatible. For Asad, more than inconsistency, it is the falls conceptual oppositions and equivalences which Gellner and many other sociologists uses while analysing Islam which lead them to make ill founded assertions about motives, meanings and effects, which also makes the formulation of questions which Asad thinks relevant.

The elective affinity proposed by Gellner by scriptural Islam towards Marxism in terms of the implementation of divine order as well as the totalism, according to Asad is an example of this. What is misunderstood here for Asad is the social effectivity of ideologies. He argues that, there was no Muslim society so far which was ruled by Islamic law more than a fragment of life. The legal, administrative regulations of modern secular states which are able to control the details social life than ever before, not the textual specifications or the social blue print of Islam is what is to be looked at than this sort of comparison.

Asad introduces the concept of discursive tradition as an effort towards a coherent anthropology of Islam, which according to him is impossible based on the notions of a determinate social blue print and in the ways Gellner and others tried to do it. Discursive tradition includes and relates to the founding texts including Quran and Hadith and marks the beginning of an anthropological analysis of Islam. Islam for Asad is a tradition and neither a distinctive social structure nor a heterogeneous collection of beliefs. Tradition according to Asad is:

A tradition consists essentially of discourses that seek to instruct practitioners regarding the correct form and purpose of a given practice that, precisely because it is established, has a history. These discourses relate conceptually to *a past* (when the practice was instituted, and from which the knowledge of its point and proper performance has been transmitted) and *a future* (how the point of that practice can best be secured in the short or long term, or why it should be modified or abandoned), through *a present* (how it is linked to other practices,

institutions, and social conditions). An Islamic discursive tradition is simply a tradition of Muslim discourse that addresses itself to conceptions of the Islamic past and future, with reference to a particular Islamic practice in the present. Clearly, not everything Muslims say and do belongs to an Islamic discursive tradition. Nor is an Islamic tradition in this sense necessarily imitative of what was done in the past. For even where traditional practices appear to the anthropologist to be imitative of what has gone before, it will be the practitioners' conceptions of what is *apt performance*, and of how the past is related to present practices, that will be crucial for tradition, not the apparent repetition of an old form. (1986: 15)

Since all the instituted practices are oriented to a conception of the past, the proper theoretical beginning is therefore an instituted practice set in a particular context with a particular history into which Muslims are inducted as Muslims. Another issue of Asad with Gellner and others is that of the contention that it is the orthopraxy and not orthodoxy which matters in Islam. There is an undermining of the concept of orthodoxy, which for Asad is a relationship of power in which the correct practices and incorrect practices are differentiated and regulated wherever Muslims has the power to do so. Since for Asad an Islamic practice is something which is authorized by discursive traditions of Islam and taught to Muslims, orthodoxy is crucial for all Islamic traditions.

The ideological opposition between tradition and reason made the orientalist and anthropologist to attribute argument's and reason emerging in the tradition as a sign of a tradition in a crisis. Asad argues that, this ideological view of reason and tradition makes them blind towards the fact that reason and argument are part of tradition when a particular traditional practice is to be taught or when a doubt arises etc. It is therefore the task of anthropologists to look into the reason inherent in the traditional practice which will further show the process and the power, resistance involved in such reasoning's and arguments. Traditions according to Asad are not homogenous and the same goes to Islamic traditions which are different across times and places which are emerged under different socio historical context. The task of anthropologist is thus to understand those conditions which made specific discursive traditions.

1.3 Astrology, Divination and Medieval Islam

Precisely because of the volatility and impact astrology and divinatory techniques had, as the predictions had the capacity to bring political chaos as well as difficulties in the life of common man. It had its ups and downs and it is important to be aware about these things while trying to think through these contestations which came in the form of Fatwa's, historical treaties. Ibn Khaldun(ad 1332-1406), in his Muqaddimah (1377) gives a picture of the practice of astrology, how difficult it is to do. He is following the point that, it is not allowed, but he also doesn't say it doesn't exist. He uses Quran verse there. He then describes about astrology, talisman's and the famous work at his time.

Ibn Khaldun too is not taking a stand in favour of astrology, divination or magic. While describing about the practice of astrology and divination he is trying to put it into the category of sorcery which makes the task of calling it as a prohibited art easy. Through his work it can be seen that how it was difficult to practice astrology as it was a prohibited and no open learning of it was possible. He argues that, it is an impossibility to learn and master astrology as it is not practiced publicly anymore and the subject itself is too difficult with many sub disciplines.

He thus talks about talisman's, letter magic known as *simian* and evil eye. It should be noted that, in Muqaddimah there is a consistent effort to put talisman and other divinatory and magical practices as sorcery. He argues that, even though people those who are practising divination and magic, who are Muslims is trying to avoid their act called as sorcery by invoking long prayers before it, yet it still be sorcery. He point out that, those who are practising sorcery must be killed. He thus makes a comparison between evil eye and sorcery and the punishment for both as evil eye doesn't happen intentionally.

Ibn Tymiyyah is a 13th century influential theologian. A Fatwa is the opinion by a religious scholar in the light of Quran and Hadith. It has different implications depending on the power a religious scholar wields in a Ibn Tymiyyah and his fatwa is analysed here because it is an epitome of the arguments against astrology and divination in Islam. There were other refutations of divination and magic too existed like that of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's(AD 1292-1350) who was student of Ibn Tymiyyah. By invoking Hadith and Quran, Tymiyyah refutes astrology and divination in Islam. It can be seen that, divination and magic are inter related and inter woven.

There are three main aspects to Tymiyyah's Fatwa. First, by invoking Hadith and Quran he establishes that astrology and magic are the least desirable thing, secondly, it can be seen that, he is not entirely wiping out the possibility of truth in divination and magic where he says, the third aspect where he is more concerned about the social impact of these kind of practices.

Tymiyyah then quotes from Quran and Hadith:

Prophet: There are among us, people who frequent the diviners,' -they are nothing! - O Messenger of God, they sometimes tell us something and it comes true!' the messenger of God, God bless him and grant him peace, then said: "this utterance if the truth, it is the jinni who hears it and he puts it in the ear of his friend. All the inhabitants of one heaven inform the inhabitants of the heaven who follow them, so that the information gets ultimately to the lowest heaven. Devils there sometimes hear a word, before the shooting star catches them.(Michot 2004:62) .

They have followed what the devils were reciting over Solomon's reign. Solomon did not un believe but the devils un believed: they were teaching men magic. They also have followed that which had come down on the two angels in Babylon, Harut and Marut, although these two taught no one till they had said : we are but a trial; therefore do not un believe!" So people learn from these two, things by which they brig division between a man and his wife. They are however injuring no one thereby, except by God's permission. They are thus learning things that harm them and do not profit them! And surely they do know that he who traffics therein, for him there is no share (of happiness) in the hereafter. And evil indeed is that for which they have sold their souls! Had they but known! If they had believed and feared God, a reward from God would indeed have been better! Had they but known.

(as cited in Ibn Tymiyyah on Astrology :Annotated Translation of Three Fatwas, Yahya J.Michot, 2004:289)

After establishing Quranic verses and Hadith against astrology, his take on eclipse becomes interesting. It should be noted that, in Islam there are special prayers at the time of eclipse as it is a sign of frightening from God. While saying that, eclipse never happens because of someone's death, disastrous things like death could happen because of eclipse, i.e. vice versa. He then talks about the importance of ascendant in one life, where as her argues that it causes

little influence on a new born baby and his or hers life, rather it is the social back ground of parents and such influences are much more important than ascendant.

One of the argument Tymiyya brings is that of, these “corruptions” in Islam is brought by Shiites (a sect among Muslims) , Jews and other co existing non Islamic communities. It can be seen that he is more concerned about the social impact of divination and magic as he thought that it could cause a lot of issues in the society. He thus ends his fatwa by ordering to prohibit the practice of astrology. It can be seen that, astrology and predictions had the capacity to make political situation volatile, also with the use of tactics and techniques astrologers and magicians had the capacity to make common man’s life vulnerable.

1.4 Islamic Cosmology and Astrology

Astrology and divination were part of all the major civilisations, from Greeks to Persians to India, in somewhat coherent and systematic manner, which implicates the place of the same in the cosmologies of those civilisations. Divinatory practices, including astrology in Islam are influenced by these civilisations and therefore it is important to look at how is it possible to place these practices in an Islamic cosmology. While running the risk of questioning one of the basic principle of Islam, how astrology and divinatory practices incorporated into Islamic civilisation. Syed Nasr Hussain (1976) in his book, ‘Islamic Science: An Illustrated Study’ argues that, it is the nature of symbolism of astrology which made it to be part of Islamic civilisation. There are different worlds in Islam which are structured in a hierarchical manner in which the heavens influence the affairs in earth and to it , the way astrology is structured is somewhat in the same way is a strong appeal to Islamic cosmology.

Hussain (1976) tries to explain the hierarchical fashion in which Islamic cosmology, he begins with angels. In Islam, angels are neither capable of brining good or evil independently, on their own, rather they are merely the messengers of God and assigned with particular functions. The symbolism here is that of a close relationship between the heaven and the earth, in which the angels are not capable of having any independent role or say in anything, but they are specified with certain functions of their own upon the command of God. They thus become the instruments through which the will of God is executed.

What is crucial to Islamic cosmology is the relationship between the origin and the universe and it has manifested in different possible ways. The ascent of prophet Muhammad into the heaven , which is later called as *Lai'la'tul Mi'raj* and the descent of Quran from the heaven to earth, which is called as *Lai'la-tul Qadr* forms an important part of Islamic cosmology. One of the fundamental nature of Islamic cosmology is its hierarchical nature. Syed Nasr Hussain draw such an hierarchy in which he argues that, the divine names , which are considered as very important and sacred in Islam in which each name indicates one of the quality of the God forms an integral part of cosmologies formed based on Islamic tradition.

The angels are an important figure in between as they are one of the connecting figures between the heaven and earth, the four archangels and eight angels near divine throne forms the top of the world of angels which are hierarchical too. From these higher worlds , it then ends up in the psychic (nafs) and physical world(najm). Perhaps what is very important and interesting would be in the case of Islam is the way it has arranged the number of “worlds” in a hierarchical fashion. In that multiplicity of different worlds, the different forms and facets, which are arranged in a hierarchical fashion is nonetheless anchored around one of the crucial aspect that is, that they are arranged in a manner in which it ends and begins from the one supreme aspect, the divine names and qualities. The hierarchical nature of Islamic cosmology was depicted in a number of Islamic cosmography. The divine names and qualities are of greater importance in Islamic gnosis. It is believed that it has enormous powers, about which I will describe in the coming chapters. Ibn Arabi who is considered as an important figure in Islamic gnosis, synthesized, the Divine Names, astrological signs, numerology as well as Arabic alphabets.

1.5 Qadr – The Belief in Predestination

It should be noted that, the belief in divine predestination is one of the six basic principles of Islam. It means God has already written, or already knows what happened and what is going to happen as he is not bound by time and space. This principle however sparked a lot debate among Muslims and different sects have followed different approach towards it. There are very obvious questions emerges with these principles, for example if the destiny is already written and then where is the chance of human beings having free will. If the human beings are not allowed to have free will then how come he becomes culpable of his actions?

One of the view , which showed a middle path by Asha'ri school was that of the concept of *kasb* , which means God creates acts and the human beings acquire these acts , hence they become culpable. But it still never goes beyond the concept of predetermination.

Pugh(1983) is attempting an interesting comparison between astrological practice among Muslims in the city of Banaras. She is trying to analyse the astrological practices among the Muslims and Hindus using the concept of fate, the karma among the Hindus and the Qismat among Muslims. Her work is a spot on when it comes to the concept of Qismat, the fate. As I have already mentioned , the concept of predestination is an important principle in Islam and there are different opinion among different sections of Islam about what does it mean, or whether there is any free will of man, if there is not how come he becomes culpable of his own actions. Pugh, however is not going into the Islamic importance on the concept predestination deeply , rather she is sticking into the practise , that is the night Muslims believe that, their fate for next year is decided, and how do they venerate that night with prayers and all. The astrological and divinatory practices among Muslims are not properly looked into; rather Muslims are projected as depended on Hindu astrologist as it is considered as polytheism.

1.6 Astrology and Islam in South Asia

Afzar Moin's work , *The Millennial Sovereign*(2013) is an excellent account of how astrology and divination had an important role in the kingship in Islam which he is explaining through the story of Timurids, Mughal India and Safavid Iran. It can be seen that, the while writing the biography of Akbar, his horoscope too provided there. Also, the conjunction of mars and Saturn used to have enormous power as it was believed that, it is those who born at that time are the savoir or the renewer of religion. This however was effectively used by many kings. It can also be seen that, divination and magic were deeply influenced the kingship. Even the Mughal King Aurangazeb who refused to accept astrological practices waited for the appropriate time to ascend the throne. Shattari brothers , the famous Sufi's who were associated with the Mughal rulers produced the famous work on astrology, divination called *jawahiri khamsa* which was widely used in South India and Deccan for divinatory purposes(Sharif:1972).

The particular Kingship in emerged in the Safavid Iran and Mughal India , in which there was amalgamation of Kingship and sainthood , in which the King claimed the sainthood too using astrological calculations, titles such as Mahdi(messiah) and Mujaddid(according to

Prophetic tradition there will be a renewer of Islam appearing at the beginning of each Islamic century). Mughal King Akbar called himself as the Millennial Mujaddid, with certain astrological calculations. The association of Kingship and sainthood started from Timur , where he was called as Lord of Conjunction¹⁶ because of the unprecedented success of him. Ibn khaldun, who at some point of time opposes astrology, gives a detailed description about why Timur can be called as the Lord of Conjunction. That tradition, then later on went on to the Safavid Iran, where the Shah Isma`il , who inherited both Sufi tradition fought with his soldiers, who were also his followers and believed that he is the Mahdi(messiah). This particular kind of sovereignty was in Mughal India too. Shah Jahan called himself as the second Lord of Conjunction after Timur, the court of Humayun was arranged according to astrological calculations, also the color of the dresses etc. These titles of Mahdi, Mujaddid etc were not only claimed by these Kings, but also Sufi's of that time which often lead to conflicts. These king saints had the patronage of a dominant Sufi tradition.

Judy F Pugh(1983) in her study is trying to make an interesting comparison about how the notion of fate is perceived among Hindus and Muslims by looking into the astrological practices among both community in Banaras. Since celestial realm is important to South Asian life world, Pugh(1983)brings two terms *Karma* and *Kismet* into comparison, and substantiate the selection of astrological practices to look into these concepts as there is a reciprocal relatedness of all entities as well as celestial entities determining the events and conditions in the realm of human action. Pugh is trying to locate how fate is understood at a popular level , which weren't like "high" Hinduism or Islam. Several astrologers whom Pugh met were busy writings books about astrology too which she thought indicates astrology as a bridge between the transcendental complex and the pragmatic complex. According to Pugh(1983), "Fate is manifested in the general features of the person's physical and psychical constitution and socio familial relationships, which together articulate a whole panoply of life experiences, including among many others , experiences associated with health and disease, family crises, and economic circumstances".

Is there any independent status for God in fate or is it just controlled by planets? It is believed that God controls planets and planetary deities are subordinates, and powerful

¹⁶ Conjunction of two important planets, Saturn and Jupiter, the person who are born on this conjunction is believed to be world famous making changes in society. Prophet Muhammad is also believed as a Lord of Conjunction , see Moin,A.(2012). The Millennial Sovereign.

deities like Shiva and Hanuman can control planets. But God is also seen as powerless, especially in the case of Saturn affliction, one has to wait till the period ends.

In an interesting way, Judy is trying to make a comparison between Hindu and Muslim astrologer's. The conclusion are this- both Hindus and Muslims consider themselves as part of greater order of events which is reflected in the notions of Karma and kismet, both of them feel moral quality influence their fate as well God plays a role in deciding one's fate, also that stars influence their course of life (sizeable number of Muslim's too). But there is a difference between when God and planets are compared in the question of which is paramount, as Hindu beliefs are describes above whereas, Muslims believe celestial bodies are subordinate to Allah. Another important difference is that, Hindu's consider when Muslim's makes shorter span of astrological predictions whereas Hindus makes are 'oriented towards specification of the unfolding of fate over long span of time'. Before stating conclusion, I would like describe how Muslim astrology worked and the contestations within the community which obviously I could see any book concerning to astrology among Muslim's.

The importance Muslim's gave in this case to Shab-i-barat, the fourteenth night of the month Shaban is interesting, because that is the night "Allah weighs each person's thoughts and acts of the preceding year on that night and makes a decision about their kismet for the coming year. Muslims believe that their fulfillment of duties and responsibilities during the past year contributes to a positive decision, they also know that God may act will fully to influence or alter the course of events in a person's life without regard to the moral quality of his deeds".

Many Muslim's reject astrology as "magic", futile and blasphemous. The one who practice astrology is called as maulavi, learned man. Maulavi's rarely cast a horoscope, instead they use existent horoscopes printed in Urdu almanacs, they also make use of "electional" devices, dice or dishes of tokens labeled with the names of planets from which clients may make blind selections and a given selection / configuration of dice indicates planetary influence at that point of time. Judy then goes to say that, fate is manifested in the personal events and make an attempt to describe astrology as a site, in which it is explained very clearly, like "tangible" in her word and then she just describes how Hindu astrology works.

While doing anthropology of Islam, according to Asad the first task of an anthropologist of Islam is to describe and analyse, the different Islamic reasoning's and arguments of traditional practices which varies in different times, places and populations. Asad takes the

stand that , not everything Muslims says or do is Islamic and the criteria to understand what is Islamic is to look into the discursive traditions in which the very fundamental texts like Quran and Hadith are having an important role.Hussain, while describing the Islamic cosmology point out at the fact that, one possible reason that astrology coexisted with Islam could be, the kind of symbolism which is part of astrology, as the heavens are influencing actions in the earth.

Looking into the Fatwa of Tymiyyah or the historical descriptions of Ibn Khaldun, we could see that in the medieval Islam, there were fierce opposition to astrological practices, on the grounds that, it is kind of polytheism and may led to social problems. However, in the same way astrology is able to make the political situations volatile which made the Caliph to order the destruction of astronomical one of the major astronomical observatory, it had very positive connotations too, as it can be seen that, it had an important role in the concept of Kingship in Islam. As Afzar Moin is trying to show in his work, by comparing the Mughal India and Safavid's Iran, what is termed lightly as “superstitious” inclinations, had an important in the formation of Kingship as they could claim the status of the renewer of Islam, the Millenal Mujaddid, Mahdi etc with the help of planets, namely the great conjunctions.

It can be seen that, the Hadith and Quranic verses are not denying the possibility of the astrological predictions becoming true, rather it is presented as predictions with little truth, it doesn't say there is no truth at all. Obviously these Hadith must be having its own context.

While studying about astrological and divinatory practices in Islam , one of the fundamental principle of Islam , that is of predestination is less debated as far as I have seen. Although Judy Pugh tried to show this aspect, she hasn't gone down deeply into how such a concept works rather she has just confined herself to the practices on the night of Bara'at. While astrology is basically about knowing the destiny which is pre decided based, then why the concept of predestination in Islam can't be showed as a sign of existence of astrology in Islam? Although there are different conceptions regarding the predestination and the free will of human beings which makes them culpable of their action, fundamentally the concept of predestination is already there in Islam. The point is but to investigate, how astrology and this concept of predestination is laid and negotiated in Islam and the practices of Muslims.

1.7 Conclusion

Talal Asad gives an important idea about how to study Islam as an anthropological object by illustrating the works of Gellner and others. According to Asad, Islam as an object of anthropological enquiry, the beginning should be from the Islamic discursive traditions. Opposing the ideological position of Weber and others that, reason and tradition as something which goes in opposite direction, and reason comes only when the tradition is in crisis, Asad argues that looking at the reasoning's of particular tradition is the proper anthropological way of beginning an enquiry. Thus the proper way to begin an enquiry into astrology and other divinatory practise is to look into the reasoning's of that tradition. If we go by this, the two important notions of qadr and shirk , which is in a way are important principles of Islam, is rather in an opposing way and thus it is interesting terrain to explore about the negotiations as well as contestations.

Looking into the Fatwa of Tymiyyah or the historical descriptions of Ibn Khaldun, we could see that in the medieval Islam, there were fierce opposition to astrological practices, on the grounds that, it is kind of polytheism and may led to social problems. However, in the same way astrology is able to make the political situations volatile which made the Caliph to order the destruction of astronomical one of the major astronomical observatory, it had very positive connotations too, as it can be seen that, it had an important role in the concept of Kingship in Islam.

Judy Pugh is trying to explore the notion of predestination, in a rather limited way by looking into the concept of kismat or fate. Judy makes a limited attempt to explore the relationship between astrology , fate between in the living traditions of both Muslims and Hindu's.

If the notion of kismat or fate is a limited understanding of qadr, we could see that Islamic eschatology is a larger version or picture of it. Ibn Khaldun, who wrote against astrology, is however calls Timur as the Lord of Conjunction. In the work of Afzar Moin, we have also seen how Islamic eschatology , astrology and Kingship intermingled.

2. Divination and Astrology among Muslim's in Kerala; An Analysis of Textual Tradition

2.1 Introduction

Now that we have already traced the beliefs and practices historically, this chapter will be focusing on astrology and divinatory practices among Kerala Muslim's. Muslim's in Kerala, are concentrated in the northern part of it, is having a rich tradition and culture. Arabian sea has brought much to this land from the other side. Islam is believed to have reached at Kerala at the time of prophet itself. The Ulama's (the religious scholars as well as leaders) and the Thangal's (people those who claim lineage with prophet) had a crucial role in the life of community which still continues. Religious education and scholarship were vibrant although it had ups and down. There are various books which describes divinatory practices as well as magic. It is also interesting to see how the trajectory of these books. Some of them are kept private as it is passed from one generation to other , but at the same time some books are available in the public domain. Also it is taught secretly. This chapter, will be taking different divinatory techniques from those books which are representative in character of each type and then a description is given. The language used to write books either used to be Arabic or Arabi-Malayalam, i.e. Malayalam language and Arabic Script , and the two texts analysed here also written in Arabi Malayalam. Arabi Malayalam according to Saidlavi(2013) is a mixed language emerged out of the contact between Arabia and Kerala. It has the grammar and syntax of Malayalam and its lexis included vocabulary from Arabic, Urdu and Tamil. It is written in Arabic script, with some new symbols to denote Malayalam consonants unfamiliar to Arabic alphabet. It can be viewed as a fusion of Malayalam grammatical base, Arabic script with special orthographic features and vocabulary from Malayalam, Arabic, Tamil, Urdu and Persian.

Muslims in the northern part of Kerala, locally known as Mappila's are the oldest Muslim community in South Asia¹⁷. Because of the location near Arabian Sea, Kerala had a great tradition of trade relationship with rest of the world especially with Middle East. Islam reached to Kerala much before it reached to other part of India. Mappilas have a rich tradition of religious scholarship and there were learning centres like that of Ponnani to which students

¹⁷ See Roland Miller,(2015) Mappila Muslim Culture How a Historic Muslim Community in India Has Blended Tradition and Modernity. Sunny Press. New York

from places like Malaysia had come. Those who are known as Thangals, the people who claimed lineage from Prophet Muhammad, commanded great respect, power and authority which still continue. The religious scholars who had a leadership role in the community is known as Ulama's. Majority of the Muslims in Kerala falls into the denomination of Sunni and follows the school of Imam Shafi¹⁸ when it comes to Islamic Jurisprudence.

2.2 Muslim Healing Practices and Texts – Paropakram Terjuma

Paropakaram is a popular text which is used by Islamic healers. It is first published in the year of 1896 by Konganam Veettil Ahmad¹⁹ and it still publishing and available which shows an active life of a text. The full name of the book is Paropakaram Tarjuma, the term Tarjuma means translation and Paropakaram means helping others. Indeed, this text can be seen as that of “useful translations”. In the beginning of this book, it is given that this text is the result of translating from various other sources.

The content of the book, Paropakaram Terjuma is about, various divinatory techniques, stars and zodiacs, planets and the characteristics of people born in a particular star, how to heal if someone is confronted with sorcery, how to get away with afflictions due to Jinn, how to treat madness, how to achieve the favour of rulers as well as keep away from their anger, how to achieve one's desires, how to get away from poverty and struggle, how to achieve the love and affection of people, how to control pest in the agriculture etc. Besides this there are also methods to dream prophet, to see the mischief's done by wife and children secretly in a dream etc. There are particular method to do all these things. These practices are generally known as Thwalsamath(Enstrusting) or Asma'ul'Husna(The Divine Names).

Asma-ul-Husna means the attributes of God. There are ninety nine attributes of God and it is believed that, it has the magical capacity to do lot of things. If the sounds and writings can have lot of effects in the visible world, why we can't believe that if one writes the names of it will have its effect on the invisible world, K.V.Muhammad Musliyar Panthavoor asks in the preface of his book.²⁰ However there are lot of conditions prescribed if one is to start the practice of *Thwalsamath*.

¹⁸ There are four schools of thought about Islamic Jurisprudence, which is known as Fiqh. Those who follow the school of thought of Imam Shafi is known as Shafi Madhab.

¹⁹ Konganam Veettil Ahmad, who is also known as Bava Musliyar is the son of Makhdoom Thangal, see page number 240, Paropakaram terjuma

²⁰ See, Shamsu'l Ma'arifuk Kubra, by K.V.M.Panthavoor, 2014

Each name of God has an angel as its servant who will be doing things. Thwalsmath is the larger term used for all these practices, the term means entrusting, which indicates Asma-ul-Husna , that is the practice of invoking the names of God in a methodical way for an anticipated result. There however certain conditions laid down for the practice of Thwalsmath, which we may call as Muslim healing practices. The conditions are basically, the person who intends to start practising it should lead his life strictly according to Islamic laws, he shouldn't do anything using these healing methods to break the relationship between people or to hurt someone, he should keep away from bitching about other people, neither he should lie, he should be inheriting a *thwareekath*²¹ which means a way from a guru, if he doesn't have it then he should have Ijazath²² and he should follow the prayers in his life which his guru suggested, before doing these things he should be facing Qibla, he should not miss Tahajjud²³ namaz , he should eat halal²⁴ food only, while he is doing a particular practice , he should not be eating meat of any kind , he should know the stars, planets and zodiacs , he should not use these to amass wealth.

There are famous texts which are famous texts such as Shams'al'Ma'ariful Kubra which are beings translated to Malayalam. If we look into the text Paropakaram we could see that, as the name suggest that and as the author stated , the text is a translation of sixty classical texts. K.V.M.Panthavoor however translated a few of those famous texts and in the preface of one of the book; he says the difficulties he has faced because of his endeavour. He says that because of his translation to these Arabic texts into Malayalam, many people are angry at him as they are insecure because once it is translated to Malayalam; its exclusive nature has gone. He also says that, there are people who say that these things are something which are kept to be secretive. He argues that, there no rule which says that these kind of secretive knowledge should only be written in Arabic, and there is no way that a laymen could understand these books as there many inner meanings than the obvious ones which only people who are experts in this knowledge understand. He warns that, people who practice things without following the conditions, things will bounce back to them.

²¹ Thwareekath literally means a way, this is a common terminology while talking about Sufism as there are many ways to reach God.

²² Ijazath in this context means the consent a guru gives to his students to practice Thwalsmath, it is believed that without the consent of a proper guru these practices will not yield results.

²³ It is a prayer done before the early morning prayer ,usually at midnight

²⁴ Halal means righteous

Now I have focused on those part in which astrology and other divinatory techniques are explained. Table 2.1 shows the basic understanding of planets and stars in the text Paropakaram Tarjuma.

Table 2.1²⁵

Zodiacs, Planets, Sign , Elements

NO	Zodiacs with its Malayalam Name (Burooj) (1)	Planets (2)	Sign (3)
1	Al-Hamal –Medam (Aries)	Al-Mirreekh	The lamb
2	At-tawr – Edavam (Taurus)	Al-Zuhrath	The bull
3	Al-jawzā' – Midhunam Gemini	Al-Twarid	The twin
4	As-saraṭān – Karkkidakam (Cancer)	Al-Qamar	The crab
5	Al-asad – Chingam(Leo)	Al-Shams	The lion
6	As-sunbulath-Kanni (Virgo)	At-twarid	The ear of a plant

²⁵ The Malayalam name of those twelve zodiacs were given in the text itself, however the English translation of it is added. In the case of planets, there were no Malayalam name of it was given , however the English of the same is added.

7	Al-mīzān-Thulam (Libra)	Al-Zuhrath	The scale of blance
8	Al-aqrab – Vrishchikam- (Scorpio)	Al-Mirreekh	Scorpio
9	Al-qaws – Dhanu (Sagittarius)	Al-Mushthari	The thrower
10	Al-jady – Makaram- (Capricorn)	Al-Zuhal	The goat
11	Ad-dalw – Kumbham- (Aquarius)	Al-Zuhal	The waterer
12	Al-hūt – Meenam (Pisces)	Al- Mushthari	The whale

Table 2.1 (Continues)

Male/Femal	Competition With ²⁶	Prophets Born
(4)	(5)	(6)
Male	Al-Zuhal	Adam
Female	Unrecognizable	Sheeth
Male	Al-Mushthari	Zakariyya

²⁶ This concept is not really explained and it seems difficult to understand what the meaning is.

Female	None	Idris
Male	Al-Zuhal	Muhammad
Female	Al-Mushthari	Khilr
Male	None	Dulkharnain
Female	Al-Zuhrath	Sulaiman
Male	At-twarid	Yakoob
Female	Al-Zuhal	Moosa
Male	Al-Zuhal	Ali Ibn Abu Twalib–(he is not a prophet)
Female	None	None

From the above table it can be seen that, in the text there are twelve zodiac signs which are given with their Malayalam name in it, the form of the constellation as well as the element which is also given. This table which is given in the first part of the book gives a basic understanding of the names of zodiac signs in Arabic and their Malayalam names. Another interesting part of it is the association of prophets and their names along with these stars and planets. The association of prophets can be seen in many of the astrological books at different occasions. However it is not only the Prophets and their stars are marked, rather the Jinn's

and their zodiac sign is also matters as it helps the healing practitioner to identify the kind of Jinn afflicted.

Table 2.2

Zodiac Signs of Devils²⁷ and the Signs of their Affliction

No.	Zodiac	The name of devil born on this date	The place they are usually found (devils)	The Lakshanam' If it is afflicted
1	Al-Hamal –Medam (Aries)	Karbardar	Junction	Head, eyes and back pain with sleeplessness
2	Aṭ-ṭawr – Edavam (Taurus)	Hunthooth	An old bull stable or horse stable polinja veed or a dark place	Head, hands and legs pain
3	Al-jawzā' – Midhunam Gemini	Uja'il	Under the tree, maqbarayum, old house	Will be dreaming this devil everyday and then , heads and eyes will pain
4	As-saraṭān – Karkkidakam (Cancer)	Muhthoom	A junction where three roads and rivers are joined , malikkappuravum,	Ears, navel and body pain along with fever

²⁷ When I used the term devil, I intend to mean those Jinn's who troubles human beings. According to Islam, there are human beings, Jinn's and Angels. It is the Jinn's and human beings are fallible whereas angels are known as infallible. There are different types of Jinn's with different characteristics.

			under a green tree or water	
5	Al-asad – Chingam(Leo)	Ya’udu	Old house, dark room, temple, place where people gather and in bazaar	There will be a sound in the ears and then there will be fever along with loss of consciousness headache and body pain
6	As-sunbulath-Kanni (Virgo)	Yamnash	A cart driven by donkey, caves in the hills, dark place	Head , brain, abdomen pain
7	Al-mīzān-Thulam (Libra)	Ifrit	Near the sea and street	The afflicted person will become pale and thin
8	Al-aqrab – Vrishchikam- (Scorpio)	Hunthoor	Generally in stables as well as places where goats are kept, dark house	Kavil, hands, thighs pain
9	Al-qaws – Dhanu (Sagittarius)	Ma’u feehi	Over the roof of house, old well, below the tree	Head and body pain

10	Al-jady – Makaram- (Capricorn)	Khathathoon	None a symbol is given – don't know what does that mean- see page number 26	Who body pain, as well as back (muthuk) , ankle pain
11	Ad-dalw – Kumbham- (Aquarius)	Khanthooth	Old house, river side	
12	Al-ḥūt – Meenam (Pisces) ²⁸	None	None	None

Table 3.2 shows the different nature of Jinn's and their characteristics according to their zodiac signs. There is a story given in the *Paropakaram Tarjuma* before this table about the table. Prophet Sulaiman, who is believed to have command over the Jinn's and summoned Jinn's who are born in each zodiac sign and asked them their characteristics and the place they usually will be as well as the kind of affliction they cause. Jinn are mentioned in the Quran itself and they are an important part of Islamic cosmology. If we look at the signs of afflictions, the kind of pain one had is believed to be because of an affliction of Jinn.

2.2.1 Zodiac Signs and Prediction

The behaviour, physique and other important things in the life of a person is given in *Paropakaram Terjuma*. These predictions however represent particular world view and time, like all the astrological predictions.

1. Al-Hamal –Medam (Aries).

Men

The person born in this zodiac will have a brownish complexion. He shall have a good life and have righteous living. In terms of marriage, there is probability of divorce and extra marital affairs. There will be two offspring's from marriage where one might die but the other

²⁸ Ee kallikalil ezhuthathath asl alif , swad 0, lam 0.

may live a happy life now and hereafter. His life is riddled with journeys that can benefit him immensely along with high potentialities of doing Hajj. When it comes to illnesses, he might suffer from migraine or afflictions due to the Jinn. Death is foreseen in the year when the Al-Mirreekh and Al-Aqrab comes together.

Women

She has got reddish fair complexion. There will be marks on her face, abdomen and chest. She will be spending her money on useless things and she will get her richness back between 25 and 30. She won't be keeping good relationship with her female siblings while she will have good relationship with her male siblings. Most of her kids will be boys and if the first child is a girl then she will not be having much happiness from her children. She is prone to have diseases regarding liver which may cause death. She is also prone to afflictions caused by Jinn. She may find it difficult to cope up with people.

2. At-tawr – Edavam (Taurus)

Men

The person born on this day will have a fair complexion with a well built body and flat face. He will be making money without many difficulties. There will be enmity between him and parents and he may end up killing any of them. He will have both boys and girls as his children's and one may die younger which brings sadness in his life, however another kid will bring happiness. He may marry up to four and will also be in love with boys. He may lose wealth by frequenting many other women. He may have issues around his knees, liver and head. In his life there will not be much travelling, however he will benefit from journeys which involves crossing of the sea and there are also chances of doing Hajj. Travels towards the direction of west on Saturday morning may be bringing good results. He will command respect among the honoured people. There will be many competitors for him and his relatives loves to hate him.

Women

She has got plump lips with long nose and short nape. She will be having a good life and will be prosperous until she reaches thirty. However she comes back to prosperity in a while. She will have both male and female siblings and it is better to leave them. She will be close to her

parents while she is young and she will be very useful or helpful to them when she grows up. She will inherit the wealth, but she will not find it useful. She will be having more girls as her children and she may mourn the death of one of her child while another brings happiness to her. The first husband of her may die or divorce and she may not be in good humour with her second husband too. She may find her girlfriends compete with her.

3. Al-jawzā' – Midhunam Gemini

Men

He has got tall and well built body with a yellowish fair complexion. His eyebrows and eyes are beautiful. There will be marks on his head, and feet. He will be less wealthy while he is young, but he will make more as he grow old. However there are chances that he will lose money because of careless spending which he will repent later. Although he will have a lovely relationship with his parents while he is young, there will be fight between them once he grows up. He will also compete with his sisters and brothers. He may find his children's are not that useful to him. He is however generally liked by women and may have a kid before even marriage.

Women

She has got a yellowish or reddish fair complexion with beautiful eyebrows. There will be marks on her face and head. She will have less wealth while she is young however she amasses it after thirty. She will be loved by her parents and she will inherit the wealth too. Most of her kids will be boys. Since there are no troubles in their marriage , she will be happy with her husband. She will be fond of things related to writing.

4. As-saraṭān

Men

He has got a thin body with a yellowish fair complexion with a good looking face and long neck. There will be marks on his face. He will have more girl kids and he may find that children's are less useful for him. He will be having less wealth. He may have one or two marriage and the first wife will leave him. There will be lot of women in his life. Travelling, including the one which includes crossing of sea will be beneficial to him as well as the travelling on Thursday. He will be competing with his relatives.

Women

She will have fair complexion, with black hair and good looking face with big chest. There will be marks on face and chest. Although she will be making wealth, she may have to face poverty in between but the prosperity will come back. She will have both male and female siblings. She will be liked by parents and she will be useful to them too, however the wealth she inherits which may cause discord and she will end up losing it. She will have both boys and girls as her children , while one child may bring misery , the other one brings happiness. She will be a respected figure as well as she is able to achieve her desires and set targets.

5. Al-asad – Chingam(Leo)

Men

He has got a fat body, with round face and wide chest. He will have long nose and there will be marks on his head. He will be inheriting wealth from parents which may cause discord within the family ending up losing the same wealth. He will be loved by leaders and women while he is young. He is adamant to work on the objective he has set in his mind.

Women

She has got yellowish fair complexion with small or slim thigh with wide chest and mouth and a big nose. There will be marks on her face. Her heart is dominated by thoughts of making wealth and she will be wealthy. She however spends her wealth carelessly which makes her losing the wealth and prosperity. Still she will be able to get wealth and prosperity back when she nears her old age. She won't be in good terms with her siblings and however she will be loved by her parents and she will inherit their wealth. She will have both boys and girls as children and she may face lot of troubles by them, however one of her child brings her happiness later in life. She may have two husbands. She has the ability to achieve her desires.

6. As-sunbulath

Men

He will be tall with fair complexion. There will be marks on his face as well as feet. If he makes wealth through the ways which are prohibited by Islam, he will be losing it. He may have to face poverty at midlife from which he will recover later. Most of the kids will be girls

and he will find his kids who are boys less useful. He may marry up to four women , in which one may die and one may divorce. He will have a cordial relationship with his parents. Travels towards the direction of west will be beneficial. He is able to get whatever he likes to, and he makes his fortunes through travelling and he will be liked by kings too. There are also chances of he is going to Hajj.

Women

Yellowish fair complexion with a well built body. There will be marks on face, abdomen, and front side of the neck. She will have enough wealth however if she acquires wealth through unfair means she will end up losing everything. She may find difficulties at the mid of her life. Both male and female siblings of her will be loyal to her. She will have more boys when it comes to children and some of the children may bring happiness while others are prone to afflictions due to evil eye. She will be able gain close affinity with people who are highly placed.

7. Al-mīzān-Thulam (Libra)

Men

He is a good looking person with round face, beautiful lips and fair complexion. There will be marks on his shoulder as well as on chest. He will have good relationship with his parents; however he won't be inheriting much from them. Although he will have less kids, most of them will be boys. Woman with the complexion of reddish fair will be compatible to him. Travelling which crosses the sea as well as travels towards the west on Wednesday will be beneficial. He will be doing Hajj. He will be in competition with his relatives and leaving them is good for him. People once helped by him may turn against him later.

Women

There are basically three types of them. The first kind has reddish fair complexion, good looking with well built body, she has got red lips and there are marks on her face, chest and below navel while the second type is brownish in complexion with plump lips and wide chest. Her height and weight are in perfect sync. There will be marks on her head and chest.

The third type will be the kind who has got a thin body with fair complexion. There will be marks on her chest, navels and legs. She will have both male and female siblings and leaving them is good for her. Since she inherits the wealth, there will be discontent and discord. Most of her children will be boys and she may mourn the death of one of her child while another one will bring her happiness. She is able to achieve what she desires. She may find that the loved girl friends of her may turn against her.

8. Al-aqrab – Vrishchikam- (Scorpio)

Men

There are three types of people in this if we go by the physique. The first one has got a well built body with fair red complexion with gray eyes and red lips. He is good looking. There will be marks in the abdomen. The second one is having a complexion of yellowish fair, and there will be marks on his face, and he will be short. Third one will be having reddish fair complexion and a well built body and he will be good looking , there will also be marks on his abdomen. He will have good, righteous life. Mother may die when he is young also he will be less useful the parents when he is young. Most of the siblings will be women. He may divorce the first woman he marries. If his first kid is girl, then he will have more boys and one of the sons may attain prosperity. Most of his competitors will be his relatives.

Women

She has got yellowish fair complexion, with a good looking face. She has got joining eye brows and beautiful eyes. She has got a well built body. She will be close to her father and leaving her siblings is good for her. She will inherit the wealth. Most of her children will be boys and she may have to face troubles by them , however one child will bring happiness to her. She will be promiscuous and she will have two husbands. Her women friends may turn against her and even her relatives to. She is however capable of getting her desires done.

9. Al-qaws – Dhanu (Sagittarius)

Men

There are three types of physique are there for people who are born under this zodiac. The first one is the type , who has got well built body with brownish complexion. He has got round face and wide chest with black hair. There will be marks on his face, shoulder and abdomen. The second has got fair complexion with wide chest and marks on his face. The

third type has got beautiful eye brows as well as plump lips and there will be marks on his face. He will be wealthy and after 30 he will earn more. He may have fight with both male and female siblings and it is better for him to leave them. He will be having good relationship with his parents; however he won't be inheriting much, even if he does, he will not be able to enjoy it. His first kids will be boys and one of the children may bring issues while another one brings happiness. However, he is not the one who benefits from travelling. He will command respect in the society and will be able to achieve his desires.

Women

She is fair in complexion with good looking baby face. She has got beautiful eyes. She has thin or slim thigh. There will be marks on her face, back, navels. Due to careless spending she will lose her wealth and will face lot of issues in financial front when she is below thirty, and things will get better after thirty. She will have both male and female siblings who are better off than her. She gains the respect of her mother. If she get any inherited wealth, it will end up in a fight with siblings. Her children are prone to attack from devils.

10. Al-jady – Makaram- (Capricorn)

Men

There are three types of physique for people born under this zodiac. The first one will be a good person with fair complexion with an oval shaped face. There will be marks on his head and feet. The second is the kind who has got a thin body with red lips and fair or brownish complexion. There will be marks on his face. The third is the kind who has got a yellowish fair complexion. He has got beautiful eyes and eye brows. There will be marks on his chest, abdomen. He is not wealthy when he is young, but he makes wealth ones he grows up and he will lead a good life. Most of his siblings will be women and he will be having disagreements with them. He will have a good relationship with his parents however he won't be enjoying if he inherits their wealth. Most of his children will be girls and one child will bring happiness to him when he becomes old. Travels on Wednesday will be beneficial. He will go for Hajj. He is able to achieve what he desires, and he will find other people useful than relatives.

Women

She is tall with brown complexion and she has got beautiful eyebrows. Although she is not wealthier when she is young, she will be wealthy after the age of thirty. She will have more

female siblings and it is better for her to keep away from them. If she inherits wealth, she won't be able to enjoy it. Most of her children will be girls and they will bring happiness to her. She may have more than one husband in her life. She is able to act according to her conviction.

11. Ad-dalw – Kumbham- (Aquarius)

Men

There are basically three types of physique for people who are born under this. The first one has got a reddish complexion with round shaped good looking face. He will have beautiful eyebrows. There will be marks on his face. The second will be thin with brownish complexion and will be dryness in the head. The third type is the one who has got a well built body with fair complexion. He has got a rough nape. He will be benefitting from trade, travelling also brings fortune to him. He may find his siblings less helpful. He will be liked by his mother. He is also liked by children. Most of his children will be boys and one of them brings happiness for him. He might have illicit relationships. There are chances of doing Hajj. Although there will be lot of competitors to him he will be winning ultimately and he achieves what he desires.

Women

She has got a well built body with round face; there will be marks on her neck and abdomen. Until the age of thirty there won't be much money, anyways she knows how to be prosperous, she knows the kind of work to do in order to be prosperous. Mostly will be male siblings and she will not be in harmony with them. She will be loved by parents and will inherit however she won't be able to enjoy it. Most of her children will be boys and one of them brings happiness to her. She is capable of getting her desires fulfilled.

12. Al-ḥūt – Meenam (Pisces)

Men

There are three type of physique for people who are born under this zodiac. The first one will have a fat body with brownish complexion. The second will be tall with long nose and good

looking face with fair complexion. The third is the kind who is tall. There will be less wealth while he is young , however he makes more once he grows up. He will have both male and female siblings. He will be liked by parents , if he inherits the wealth he won't be able to enjoy it. Most of his children will be girls , however there are also chances that he will mourn the death of one his child. He will be having illicit relationships. He may travel crossing the sea and he may do Hajj. He will gain the respect of rulers. Travelling done on Tuesday will be beneficial for him.

Women

Her complexion is yellowish or greenish fair complexion. She is good looking and she has got black hair. She has got big chest, abdomen and a wide mouth. There will be marks on her thighs, neck and chest. There will be poverty when she is young which peaks at the age of thirty five which marks the beginning of her journey to prosperity. She will be liked by her parents, however if she inherits wealth, she may not be able to enjoy it. She will have both boys and girls as her children and she will be happy because of one child while another brings sadness.

From the above predictions it can be seen that not only these predictions represent a particular time but also another location if we look into the part where it describes about complexion which is not in resonance with the people in Kerala. Also there is almost an obsession with inheritance of wealth, which shows the importance of that aspect at a particular point of time. There is another aspect which is given importance is that of travelling, crossing sea etc which shows the importance given to trade in Islam.

2.3 Muslim Healing Practices and Texts - Nujoominte Kanakku

Nujoominte Kanakku or *Mathwali'u'nnujoom* which can be roughly translated as stars and their calculation if we go by word by word meaning, however this small book which is published in the year 1978 is basically a brief description about Islamic astrology. Unlike Paropkaram Tarjuma which is a comprehensive texts of the kind of practices of Muslim healers which astrology and divinatory technique is part of, this is an exclusively small text.

Table No.2.3

Stars and their names in Arabic and Malayalam

	Arabic Names	Malayalam		Arabic Names	Malayalam
1	Sharthween	Ashwati	17	Iklin	Anizham
2	Buthwain	Bharani	18	Qalb	Thrikketta
3	Surayya	Karthika	19	Shaulath	Moolam
4	Dabran	Rohini	20	Na'a'im	Pooradam
5	Haq'at	Makayiram	21	Baldath	Uthradam
6	Han'at	Thiruvathira	22	Sa'du Zabih	Thiruvonam
7	Dira'a.	Punardam	23	Bal'a.	Avittam
8	Nasrath	Pooyam	24	Sa'du Saud	Chathayam
9	Thwarfath	Ayillyam	25	Aqbiyath	Pooruruttadi
10	Jabhath	Makam	26	Muqaddam	uthrattadhi
11	Zairath	Pooram	27	Far'u - Muakhar	Revathi
12	Swarfath	Uthram	28	Rasha	Abhijith
13	Awwa	Atham			
14	Samak	Chithira			
15	Gafrath	Chothi			
16	Zabanan	Vishakham			

Table No.3.3 shows the Arabic as well as the Malayalam of those twenty eight stars. In the text which we have analysed before Propakaram , there were no description of stars as such, but however this text begin with introducing the names of twenty eight stars and their Arabic

counterparts. This evidently shows that both of these astrological system's which are in some way similar and thus compatible to each other which makes an easy translation of the same.

2.3.1 Auspiciousness

Each hour is dominated by a particular planet and there are favourable activities which can be done and cannot be done in each hour. There is another system of knowing auspiciousness which is known as *Nahs*²⁹, however in it the presence of planets is not visible as well. *Nahs* is basically looking into auspicious days and not hours. Table 3.4 explains the results of each hours.

Table 2.4

Auspiciousness and Planets

		Time ³¹					
N	Days ³⁰	6 to 7	7 to 8	8 to 9	9 to 10	10 to 11	11 to 12
o							
1		Al-Shams ³²	Al-Zuhrath	Al-Twarid	Al-Qamar	Al-Zuhal	Al-Mushthari
	Sunday and night of Thursday	Good time to meet rulers and put on new dress	Favourable time to please the rulers	Good time to begin journey which will be profitable	Auspicious for purchase and sale	Favourable to do things to mitigate anger	Good time for approaching rulers for any matter
2	Monday and Night	Al-Qamar	Al-Zuhal	Al-Mushthari	Al-Mirreekh	Al-Shams	Al-Zuhrath

²⁹ This is the term used for inauspicious days in a year.

³⁰ Since Islam follows a calendar which is based on moon, the night of Thursday begins on Wednesday sunset and the same applies to every other nights. Also in this column, when it says Sunday and night of Thursday which means day time of Sunday, and the night of Sunday begins when sun sets on Saturday.

³¹ Here the time should be considered like this; if it is about Sunday day time, then 6 to 7 means 6 .a.m to 7 a.m, in the same column it is also given that it is also about night of Thursday, in that case it means 6.p.m. to 7.p.m

³² Each hour is dominated by a particular planet and it is written under each hours.

	of Friday	Favourable time for doing things related to love	Favourable time for everything	Favourable to start finding the missing person	Favourable to start healing	Favorable love and doing good things for relatives	Favourable to try for the wishes
3	Tuesday and Night of Saturday	Al-Mirreekh Un clear , refer page number 8	Al-Shams Favourable time to approach rulers	Al-Zuhrath Favourable for purchase and sale as well as marriage	At-twarid Favourable time to give na dtake	Al-Qamar Not favourable for anything	Al-Zuhal Not favourable for anything except for anger
4	Wednesday day and night of Sunday	At-twarid Favourable for love	Al-Qamar Not favourable for anything	Al-Zuhal Favourable for matters which may cause trouble to other people	Al-Mushthar Favourable time to do good things	Al-Mirreekh Favourable time	Al-Shams Favourable for travelling and writing
5	Thursday Day and night of Monday	Al-Mushthari Favourable time for	Al-Mirreekh Firakkunn a karyam	Al-Shams Not Favourable	Al-Zuhrath Favourable for	At-twarid Favourable for	Al-Qamar Favourable for

		ojeevanam kittunna karyangalk ku	cheyvan nannu	e to begin a journey	many things including marriage	marriage	travelling as well as many other things
6	Friday Day and night of Tuesday	Al-Zuhrath	At-twarid	Al-Qamar	Al-Zuhal	Al- Mushthar i	Al- Mirreekh
		Favourable time to do things for women	Favourabl e for activities to be liked by people	Favourabl e for matters which will be liked by people	Favourabl e to do things which shuts the mouth of people	Favourabl e every activities	Favourabl e time to entrust someone with something
7	Saturday Day and night of Wednesda y	Al-Zuhal	Al- Mushthari	Al- Mirreekh	Al-Shams	Al- Zuhrath	At-twarid
		Favourable time for everything except love	Favourabl e to mend the relationshi p between two fighting people	Favourabl e to break a relationshi p and make anger	Favourabl e time to approach rulers for favours	This time is good for nothing	Favourabl e time for hunting and other things

Table 2.4 (Continues)

Auspiciousness and Planets

		Time ³³					
N	Days	12 to 1	1 to 2	2 to 3	3 to 4	4 to 5	5 to 6
1	Sunday and night of Thursday	Al-Mirreekh	Al-Shams	Al-Zuhrath	At-twarid	Al-Qamar	Al-Zuhal
		Not good for anything	Favourable for every activity	Favourable for approaching the wealthy	Good time to do something good result	Favourable time for everything	Favourable time for doing matters which can trouble people
2	Monday and Night of Friday	At-twarid	Al-Qamar	Al-Zuhal	Al-Mushthar	Al-Mirreekh	Al-Shams
		Favorable for finding the rizq	Favourable for marriage	Favourable for collecting things or money	Favorable for soft affairs	Favourable for revenge	Favorable for things related to love
3	Tuesday and Night of Saturday	Al-Mushthar	Al-Mirreekh	Al-Shams	Al-Zuhrath	At-twarid	Al-Qamar
		Favourable	Favourable	Favourable	Not	Mudakkamul	Activities

³³ In the same way I have explained before , if we are looking for the first column, for Sunday , 12 to 1 means 12.p.m to 1 p.m, however in the case of night of Thursday it means 12 .am. to 1 a.m

		le for everythin g	le for taking out blood	e for love and marriage	favourabl e for anything	la karyathinu nann	are prone to elicit anger or may lose things
4	Wednesda y and night of Sunday	Al- Zuhrath Favourab le time for love	At-twarid Favourab le time to contain the crying of kids	Al-Qamar This time is good for nothing	Al-Zuhal Favourab le time to approach rulers	Al- Mushthari Favourable time to do matters which may cause issues (pinakkam)	Al- Mirreekh Favourabl e time for leaving someone or losing
5	Thursday Day and Night of Monday	Al-Zuhal Better to keep silence	Al- Mushthar i Favourab le for everythin g	Al- Mirreekh Favourabl e for matters regarding women	Al-Shams Favourab le time to approach rulers and relatives for their help or favour	Al-Zuhrath Favourable for matters regarding love	At-twarid Lokarodu m mattathil nilffanum mattum nannu
6	Friday Day and Night of Tuesday	Al-Shams Favourab le time to fulfil the wishes	Al- Zuhrath Favourab le for sending someone	At-twarid Favourabl e to do Barakath thing	Al- Qamar Favourab le to make someone	Al-Zuhal This time is good for nothing	Al- Mushthari Favourabl e time to have a lovely tie

			to do somethin g		flee		with people
7	Saturday Day and Night of Wednesda y	Al- Qamar Favourab le time to send someone to some place	Al-Zuhal Favourab le to do things which makes trouble	Al- Mushtari Favourabl e time for everything	Al- Mirreekh Favourab le time to do things which brings trouble	Al-Shams Favourable time to request something from rulers	Al- Zuhrath Favourabl e for thing which women love

Table No.3.4 gives hourly suggestions. Each hours are auspicious for what the favourable thing to do and the things not to do. While thinking about the social categories interacted with this text or this sort of knowledge, we can have two presuppositions are that , either these kinds of texts were popular and common among the Mappila's or these texts were used by particular social categories for particular reasons.

Table No. 2.5

Yearly Predictions According to the First Day of the Year

No.	Day	Results
1	Sunday	Agricultural production will increase, there will be fight with people , some may flee their place , it will be generally hot , there will be deaths and diseases , everything else will be good .
2	Monday	Influential people will do good things , there will be more agricultural production , more flowers , however there will be less fruits . Matters regarding religion will increase and there will be more rain. Diseases may happen at the end of the year.

- 3 Tuesday There will be lot of tragedies throughout the year. Human beings and animals will have to face diseases. Some of those good human beings may die. Less fruits and there will be more rain and wind.
- 4 Wednesday There will be more rain as well as the rulers will do justice and some of them may die. There will be more fruits, but the agricultural production will be less. Important people who are under the age of forty may die.
- 5 Thursday More women and kids may die. More wind will be there as well as the agriculture will be good. The weather will not be that cool. More fishes, poor may turn wealthy , love between people increases.
- 6 Friday There is not going to be many difficulties, and it will be good for good people whereas bad people may find difficult. There will be profits from trade.
- 7 Saturday There will be difficulties in the beginning months. Wealthier, religious leaders, kids will die. Poor becomes wealthy.

Table No.2.6

Inauspicious Stars in a Week

No.	Day	Stars which are considered to be inauspicious
1	Sunday	Bharani
2	Monday	Chitra
3	Tuesday	Uthradam
4	Wednesday	Avittam
5	Thursday	Thrikketta
6	Friday	Pooradam
7	Saturday	Revathi

Table 2.6 shows about the inauspicious stars in a day. If someone lends money, they won't get it back, if someone borrows they won't be able to pay back, if someone goes for a journey he may go mad, if someone takes a home he won't be able to live in it, if someone gets puberty, she may turn infertile, if someone gives birth, the newborn will die.

Table No.2.7

Time to Start the Construction of House

No	Months	Results
1	Muharram	It will be difficult to complete the construction if it begins in this month
2	Safar	It will be difficult to complete the construction if it begins in this month

3	Rabee'ul'awwal	There will be barakth , happiness and prosperity and more kids
4	Rabee'ul'akhir	People living in it will be sick always for some reason or another
5	Jamadul' awwal	Prosperous blessed life
6	Jamadul akhir	Barkath as well as gold
7	Rajab	Prosperity
8	Shaban	They will be destroyed
9	Ramalan	The house will be destroyed by fire
10	Shawwal	Prosperity , happiness and Barakath
11	Dul Qad	It will be home to troubles
12	Dulhijja	There will be happiness

Table No.2.8

Kutti Adikkenda Samayam , Days

No	Days	Results
1	Sunday	It will be the devils who will be guarding that home
2	Monday	Barakth and more kids
3	Tuesday	He will do sadaqa and virunnu
4	Wednesday	Good people becomes their friend
5	Thursday	Will be knowledgeable and respected
6	Friday	Brings wealth and happiness
7	Saturday	There won't be good results

Table No.2.9

Days in a Month and their results

Dates	Results
1	The day Prophet Adam is created. Good to begin travel and trade. If any diseases happens , it will be cured soon
2	The day Ave created. Favourable for travel, trade and haajathin thedal. If diseases happens on this day, it won't be becoming acute
3	The day Adam got ousted from heaven. Good for nothing, travelling may become dangerous
4	The day Habeel , the son of Adam born. Favourable for marriage but not for travelling. If diseases happens it may gain strength
5	The day Khabeel , the son of Adam born and the day Habeel got murdered. This day is considered as Nahs ³⁴ . Good for marriage and hunting . If an disease happens it may last upto twenty days, however it will get healed after it.
6	Very good for travel, as well as marriage. If disease begins on this day , it may last upto eight days before it gets recede.
7	Good for every activity. If disease begins on this day it may go up to seven days
8	Good for trade and marriage , but not for travelling. Request to influential people may go in vain. If any disease begins on this day, death

³⁴ Nah's means inauspicious , it is elaborately explained in the next chapter.

- 9 After noon, everything will be fine. If disease begins , it will recede immediately
- 10 Birthday of Prophet Nooh. Good for trading. Lost items may be returned. If disease begins on this day, it will get receded soon.
- 11 Birthday of Prophet Sheeth. Diseases will be healed
- 12 Good for every activity. If any diseases begins on this day it will last for some long time , will get close to death and then will come back.
- 13 Good for nothing. Diseases will be cured
- 14 Favourable day for every activity. The child born in this day will have a long life. However, needs to be careful about the diseases which started on this day
- 15 Favourable day. Things will happen without many difficulties. However needs to be careful about diseases which begin on this day.
- 16 This day is good for nothing. Diseases will be healed
- 17 Good day, and favourable to start good things. People with diseases may face death, needs to be careful about it.
- 18 Good day for trade, however not favourable day for meeting influential people. Diseases will be healed
- 19 Birthday of Prophet Ishaq. Good day. Favourable for marriage. Disease means, death.
- 20 Favourable for trade, travel and marriage. If diseases begins on this day, it will get after seven days
- 21 Not good for anything. If diseases begin on this day, it will last longer before getting healed.
- 22 Favourable to get needs fulfilled. Those who are born this day will be wealthy. If diseases begins on this day, it will be cured after seven days

- 23 Favourable day to meet rulers/leaders , for house warming, and travel.
Trade will be profitable. Diseases will be healed.
- 24 Birthday of Firaun. There will be fights. If one travels, he won't return.
However favourable day for marriage. Diseases may take longer to heal.
- 25 Bad day. Diseases may take longer to heal.
- 26 The day marks the death of Firaun. Favourable for travelling and trade.
Diseases will be healed after seven days
- 27 Will win over enemies. Diseases will be healed after sometime
- 28 Birthday of Prophet Yakoob. Although a favourable day, there will be
difficulties too. Diseases will be cured
- 29 Favourable for everything. Travelling is favourable as it may yield
wealth. If diseases begins on this day, one should be very doubtful about
getting healed
- 30 Birthday of prophet Ismail. Good day. Favourable for marriage and
matters related to agriculture and various kinds of transactions. Diseases
may get cured.

At the end of the book, there is a detailed description for Muslim healing practitioners. They are supposed to know the Asma-ul-Husna (The Divine Names of God) of a particular day, the angel of that day, the Jinn of that day, the star and sky of that day. This shows that, towards whom this book *Nujoominte Kanakku* is intended to. However, all these healing practices which involves was not something which was taught publicly to anyone, rather it yields some sort of power and it is taught secretly. Since astrology and other divinatory techniques were part of such a knowledge system, we may well assume that the knowledge about it were limited to the practitioners rather than as a popular one with accessibility to everyone. People who were into these kind of healing practices commands respect and

perceived as very religious people. There are people who practice these things traditionally inheriting a *kitab*³⁵

2.4 Conclusion

These two texts analysed here, *Paropakaram Terjuma* and *Nujoominte Kanakku* , both 19th and 20th century texts are basically meant for Muslim healing practitioners. It is important to see how the notion of qadr as well as shirk are implicitly managed in these texts. Since both these texts are meant for Muslim healing practitioners who are usually learned, it can be seen that the knowledge about astrology and divinatory practices were restricted and was not popular. When it comes to belief, the common Muslims might think in terms of qadr , but the way the knowledge of these things preserved could be because of the notion of Shirk which makes the spread of these knowledge in a restricted way.

The text *Paropakaram* is basically a collection of sixty books on healing practices among Muslims, and it can be seen that most of these texts are coming from the Arabian world which is reflected in the kind of predictions we have seen. However, there is also an element of localisation as we have seen in the case of these astrological tables in which there is a compatibility found in the case of both Islamic astrology as well as the astrology among the Kerala Muslims. These two texts in a way talk not only the theories behind these divinatory practices, but also give a detailed account of how to do it as well. The Malayalam astrology coming back and forth shows an attempt to negotiate with the Hindu astrology.

³⁵ Kitab meaning book, here in this context what it means is that of a book which includes knowledge about healing practices , like that of healing practices

3. Divination and Astrology among Contemporary Muslim's of Kerala

3.1 Introduction

I began talking to the Musliyar's³⁶ nearby home, when I met them in a mosque asking about the Arabic –Malayalam text *Paropakaram*. (1896) As a religious scholar with a title of Baqavi³⁷, he looked at me and with that face said, “*why are you studying this, I have read that text long time ago and I have that kitab³⁸ with me, as soon as I started reading it, I stopped it.*” He then continued speaking to me saying how that kitab has the potential which may lead to *shirk*³⁹. Then I directly entered the question about astrology in Islam, the relationship between both of them, to which he answered saying “*astrology actually went to the Arabian world from India, and all these corrupted practices like astrology were practised by Muslims and it is not Islamic*”. I was baffled at this answer as I have read in those Arabi-Malayalam texts about the importance of stars, zodiac.

I have met a few more prominent Ulama's⁴⁰ hoping they may give me a clue about the importance of stars, about the divinatory practices and in the course of it, I realised that,

³⁶Musliyar's means men of religious learning's, who are having a say on things which are related to religion

³⁷ It is the title of the degree you obtain after completing the course from the seminary, Madrasa BaqiyathuSalihat, Vellore Tamil Nadu

³⁸A religious text

³⁹ Shirk – The term *shirk* generally implies assigning partners or equals to God, and is considered to be the paramount sin in Islam. The central doctrine of Islam is *tawhid* (divine unity), which came to mean that God does not need nor have partners to assist Him. By contrast, Muslims base their understanding of *shirk* on three passages from the Quran (34:20–24, 35:40, 46:4), which advise Muslims against associating helpers or partners with God. For instance, Sura 34:20–24 establishes the non-duality of God, arguing that evil and good originate in God's creative act and that evil (the *shaytan*) has no power over creation- see page number 630,631- Encyclopaedia of Islam and Muslim World, Volume 2.

⁴⁰The term for men of religious learnings

those Ulama's⁴¹ who aren't actively practising Islamic healing practices, I may not be able to investigate further upon. They all confirmed to my initial belief which I had as an insider to the community, that neither stars nor predictions are part of Islam. I then started approaching those Musliyar's and Thangal's who are actively practising Islamic healing and asked them my concerns, about the importance of stars and predictions in Islam. These people who are practising Islamic healing practices are also known as people of Thwalsamath⁴². *“Indeed the time of ones birth is significant as it will have an effect on the life as well as his/her parents, but if you believe that it is because of the planets that this is happening then you are going to commit shirk, rather it is the decision of Allah is revealed through these signs”* said one of my respondent who is prominent in the area and influential among the Sunni's in the area.

In these contradicting answers, the first answer which refutes any role of astrology as a legitimate Islamic practise or belief is more obvious in the community rather than the second response which is more oblique and not so easy to get. Indeed, there must be “Islamic reasoning's” behind these two positions and we are going to explore them in detail by looking into the arguments raised for and against. This is mainly done through analysing the books and articles which are published by the Muslims of Kerala belonging to different sects. It is also more reliable and useful way as each of them cautious to make their case through writing.

3.2 On Auspiciousness

Looking for auspicious time is known as *NahsuNokkal*. The word, Nahs (نحس) is an Arabic word, which means bad luck, misfortune. This word is opposite to sa'ad (سعد). M.A.Jaleel Saqafi Pullara(n.d) in his book, *Nahs Dinangalum Andha Vishwasavum* (Inauspicious Days and Supersition) elaborately talks about the importance of auspicious days and time and its difference with “superstitious beliefs”. An analysis of this book is important as the opinions in this book represents the beliefs of the larger section of Sunni's.

Let's begin with the fundamental question. Why the days should be good and bad. The first answer is that it is because of the things happened in the past, the historical incidents, also quoting the warning given by Prophet Muhammad where he says that, “you need to be careful about some days. But then you are not supposed to believe that, the days are having

⁴¹ Here the meaning intended is that of religious scholar

⁴² Thwalsamath is an Arabic term, which basically indicates Islamic healing practices using the names of God and many other things. This is practised by people who belongs to Syed's (people who claims lineage with prophet Muhammad) who are locally known as *Thangals* as well as *Musliyars*.

any capacity and the moment you are doing it, you are committing *shirk*. It is not the days which are able to do you any good or bad, rather it is the God who is behind it. You are supposed to look into Nah's days in a way that, it is the usual way of God to make bad things happen on certain days.

Imam Ibn Hajar (1372-1440) who is an important figure among the Sunni *Ulama* in Kerala as he is a prominent figure in Islamic jurisprudence who belongs to Shafi school of thought which is followed by majority of Kerala's Sunnis. Pullara is trying to answer the question about a statement made by Ibn Hajar in his book, *Al-Fatawa al-Hadithiyyah* (Modern Religious Rulings) where he says that, it is the Jews who look for the auspicious time and the job of a Muslim is to have belief in the plan of God or what is called as *Tawakkul*⁴³. Clearly, as an important figure in the Islamic jurisprudence who belongs to the Shafi School this looks like an embarrassment to those who follow the *Nah*'s.

But, Pullara taking examples from Ibn Hajar himself, argues that Ibn Hajar is basically talking about people believing in the stars and the days which are independently having any capacity to do good or bad independent of God. The author defends his case by bringing up Ibn Hajar's quote from other works where he says, Friday is the auspicious day for marriage as well as it is a *Sunnah*⁴⁴ also the auspicious time for Qadi⁴⁵ to enter his area of jurisdiction is Monday morning. However there is always an option to believe that, it is the God who is in power of everything, so he will take care of everything. Pullara argues that, for people who believe in the plan of God, and completely relying on him, is not going to affect him.

Interestingly the author goes on to quote another Hadith which gives an interesting insight into the relationship between astrology and Islam. The Hadith quoted as reported by Sharvani⁴⁶ is this, "if a true believer says that, rain has happened due to particular star, it is neither Haram⁴⁷ nor Karahat⁴⁸". This Hadith however is just not explained by the author and

⁴³ This is an important and popular concept among Muslims. Trusting the plans of God at the time of hardship is something often revoked by Muslims, relying on the plans of God and believing that the God who is in power of everything will take care of it.

⁴⁴ *Sunnah* means the actions or sayings of prophet which are not compulsory to follow, but is advised to

⁴⁵ The term Qadi or Kazi means a judge who settle disputes. In a place where it is not the Islamic law (Sharia) is prevailing, his duty is limited to settle the matters of religion, for example deciding the dates of Eid, Ramzan etc. For more see page number 557, Encyclopaedia of Islam and Muslim World, published by MacMillan Reference USA, 2004.

⁴⁶ Who reported or collected the Hadith is an important way for the religious scholars to decide which is authentic and not.

⁴⁷ *Haram* means, forbidden act. Believers aren't supposed to do it and if they do it is believed that they will be punished by the God.

looks like he left it at the discretion of the reader to interpret it and seems tight lipped here. If we go by the way author interpreted *Nah's* and *Sa'ad* it could be interpreted as that, a true believer is not going to believe that, rain happened not because of a particular star, rather the star is the sign of God's decision to of an upcoming rain. But it is interesting that, this Hadith is not explained like others, more specifically he is not denying that , stars could be interpreted as a sign of an event which is going to happen, here for example the rain. The same thing happened somewhere else in his book and I will come to it later.

To make his case stronger he brings up two verses from Quran;

So We sent upon them a screaming wind during days of misfortune to make them taste the punishment of disgrace in the worldly life; but the punishment of the Hereafter is more disgracing, and they will not be helped.(41:16).

Indeed, We sent upon them a screaming wind on a day of continuous misfortune (54:19).

These two verses he argues that are indicative of the presence of the belief in the auspicious and inauspicious times. Quoting the interpretation of these verses which says that, even though all days belongs to the God, he created some days and time is auspicious and some are inauspicious. However, it is not necessary that you stop doing any good work which you were supposed to do because of *Nah's*. As like other things, people who are having *Tawakkul* would not be affected by these things.

Pullara then talks about the merits of cupping therapy⁴⁹ which is also known as *Hijama* about which it is mentioned in a number of Hadith quoted by Pullara in his book. But it can be seen that, most of the Hadith's are about the days and the benefits if it is done on those days .But there are days when this therapy should not be done .On Tuesday, *Hijama* is prohibited as it was on that day, the Son of prophet Adam, Habil got killed by his brother. Doing *Hijama* thus may become dangerous as the blood may not get clotted on that day at a particular time. However, if the Tuesday is the seventeenth of a month then it is an auspicious day to practise *Hijama*. Pullara also says that, according to Prophet, someone is prone to vitiligo if he gets

⁴⁸ The term *Karahat* denotes acts which are strongly advised not to do, but will not be punished by God if the act is done.

⁴⁹ It is also known as *Hijama* , is a form of traditional medical practise in which they put cups on the skin to create suction.

Hijama treatment on Wednesday and Saturday or he cuts his nails on Wednesday. Pullara goes on to quote another Hadith where prophet talks about twelve days in a year and on those days someone needs to be careful not to lose his proud and prosperity. They are :Twelfth of Muharram , Tenth of Safar , Fourth of Rabi al-awwal , Eighteenth of Rabi ul-akhir , Fourteenth of Rabi-ul-akhar, Twenty Sixth of Sha’ban, Twenty Fourth of Ramadan, Second of Shawwal, Eighteenth of Dhu al- Qa’dah , Eight of Dhu-al-Hijjah.

Now the question emerges that whether there is a relationship between this inauspicious days and astrology, is it because of any particular astrological reason that these days are considered to be bad and good. Well, there are no obvious ways to connect with it other than what is said. But we could see that, there is an astrologically based division of time on an hourly basis too, which I will explain later.

Saqafi then goes on to say that, these astrologers are people who believe that it is the stars which are responsible for things happening. He also quotes a Hadith which gives a classification of different kind of astrologers and people who practise other divinatory practices⁵⁰. There are also a series of Hadith’s quoted by Pullara against astrology. The three Hadiths are:

“Whoever goes and meet an *Arraf* or *Kahin* and accept what he says, according to the religion which is given to prophet Muhammad, he is a *Kafir*⁵¹(according to Saqafi this Hadith is reported by Twabrani, Bassar, Abu Ya’la)”

“God has never decided the life, death, food, and other things according to the stars. It is the astrologers says lies in the name of God using stars(Saqafi quotes this Hadith as Mishkath:394)”

“Hafsa reports as said by prophet Muhammad : if someone goes to an astrologer and takes his advise , his prayers wont be accepted for the next forty days (Saqafi quotes this Hadith as Mishkath:393)”

⁵⁰ According to the Hadith quoted by Saqafi, the astrologer is generally called as *Munajjim* ,where as people who can find things which are lost using stars are called as *Arraf*, and *Kahinis* the one who predicts future.

⁵¹ Kafir is the word used to denote non-Muslim.

After quoting all these Hadith's Pullara goes on to talk about the contradiction in the astrological predictions. He finds out that, there is extreme contradiction in the way two Hindu astrologer's observation about the characteristics of people born in the same *nakshatra*. He says that, one astrologer says that, people who are born in the *nakshatra* of *Bharani* is observed as a person with strong body whereas another astrologer says that, he will be having a weak body, another contradiction which Pullara finds is that, the same *nakshatra* people are perceived to be a "person with love for brothers" as well as "cruel"

Thus arguing his case against astrology, Pullara says that, astrology is not related with what he calls looking for auspicious time and day that is of the practise *Nahsu Nokkal*, rather it is something accepted by Islam and it is important to avoid time which is not good. However, interestingly at the end of the chapter he quotes a hadith which is left with no explanation. It goes like this: "In principle it is appropriate to believe that it is the convention of God, that before the occurrence of an event, God shall send signals via *nakshatras* and *rashis*⁵², but then it is imperative on the believer to believe that is the God who is capable of doing things, neither *nakshatras* nor *rashis*. (quoted by Pullara as- Fatawal Hadisiyya:40)".

Another question Pullara is encountering about Imam Shafi(AD 767-820) and his relationship with astrology. Imam Shafi is the founder of the Shafi School in Islam which is followed by a large majority of Muslims in Kerala. Astronomy, which is known as *ilm-al-falak* were taught in the *Dars*⁵³ and it was important for those who were pursuing higher studies in Islam as finding Qibla⁵⁴, fixing the time of five time prayers etc is important in Islam. It can be seen that, the division of astronomy and astrology is a modern one as Imam Shafi, who according to Saqafi made many predictions out of his astrological knowledge and they were proven to be truth. However, according to Pullara, Imam Shafi felt bad about one of his prediction where he predicted the death of the baby of a women who was pregnant while she met him as she was grieving the death of her husband. His exact predictions was that, she will give birth to a girl child, and the kid will have problem with one of her eye as well as there will be a black mark on the right thigh and she will eventually die after twenty four days. Pullara says that, Imam Shafi felt bad about it and he then stopped making predictions and burnt down such books in his possession. According to Pullara, Imam Shafi

⁵² Nakshatra means lunar mansions while rashis denotes zodiac

⁵³ They can be called as maktabas too, this is the place where Islamic higher education is imparted. Usually happens in a mosque or adjacent to it.

⁵⁴ Qibla is the direction Muslims turn towards what is known as Kaaba, the holy building in Makka.

went on to write a poem about astrology where he says, that he doesn't believe in the predictions of stars, it is the God who is in power to decide things which happened in the past, present and future.

Here, in this instance it is clear that astrology as a system of knowing things is not that which is opposed, neither a denial of its existence, rather the way it is perceived is what makes Pullara apprehensive. However it is interesting to think, what must have made Imam Shafito grieve over his predictions and decided to stop it altogether. Is it the certainty of God's decisions which revealed to him through the system of astrology, or is it just the bad feeling he must have got that he made a prediction which was indeed a bad and unfortunate thing which was going to happen to the woman met him who was grieving the death of her husband.

Pullara belongs to the Sunni sect of Muslims which constitute over ninety percentage of Muslim population in Kerala, criticises Salafis⁵⁵ for calling the Sunni's for being "superstitious" as they do look for auspicious time i.e. *NahsNokkal*. Since Salafi's criticised the Sunni practises of visiting the cemetery and praying for them, or visiting the shrines of saints, looking for auspicious time, their belief in the effect of evil eye, etc., Saqafi argues that, these are established Islamic practises and it is the Salafi's who are actually being superstitious by denying all these established Islamic practices, practiced by true believers of Islam, that is according to him Sunni's who are the Ahlulsunna⁵⁶.

IslamikaJyotisham(Islamic Astrology) (2015) is the book written by Muhammad Basheer Chishti in which he is explaining the basics of Islamic astrology. This work becomes interesting in so many ways as we analyse, but becomes fundamentally important as this work is very forthright about astrology. The popularity of these books is another thing which is very interesting. Over 3000 copies have been published within few years after its publication. Who are those people who buy these books and read is another thing which is interesting. Although one could agree that these publishers might be trying to serve the curiosity of people, there is an important constituency who needs these knowledge as part of

⁵⁵ They are called as Wahabis denoting the person who propagated this ideology, or Salafis they are actually stands for a puritanical form of Islam and is often in conflict with the Sunni's over many matters concerning religion.

⁵⁶ This is the term for Sunni's, one of the largest group out of the three broadest denominations emerged after the death of prophet. Sunnis believe that prophet did not appoint a successor. For more see, page 481, Encyclopaedia of Islam and Muslim World. MacMillan Reference USA, 2004

a practise. The nature of these publishers, as in this case, K.Muhammad Kutty and Sons, Chanthappady, Thiroorangadi , Kerala is something I confirmed by directly visiting their main branch in Thirurangadi. I could see that, they are publishing books which in some way or other propagates religion and serving the community with essential books. Some point or other these books are having some importance rather than just satiating the curiosity.

Most of these publishing houses are having its own ideological positions, there are publishing houses which represent or support each sect among Muslims, within Sunni's etc. There are publishing houses which doesn't publish the books like that of *Islamika Jyotisham* (Islamic Astrology) (2015), or books about healing practises which has to do with *Thwalsamath*. But they must be publishing books for the Sunni's itself. But the same publishers must be publishing books about Islamic healing , but nothing to do with *Thwalsamath* or it appears like that, rather more emphasis is given on the verses of Quran as well as the practises of Prophet Muhammad. But coming back to our question that which is the constituency among the Muslims are who are targeted by these books, we could see that, it is those people who are practising Islamic healing.

This book, like all other books on astrology in Islam talks about the importance of astrology as those people who are practising Islamic healing , it is necessary as certain things are done at a particular time. Chishti(2015) however is little different in his approach. He is not in a hurry to hide that astrology is not part of Islam, rather he repeats the argument which we have seen elsewhere too, as believing that, planets and stars are having its own power to regulate the life of people is *shirk*, rather astrology is a way that you know those decision's of God.

The way the distinction is made between astrology among Muslims and Hindus by both Chishti (2015)and Pullara(n.d) is interesting. While Chishti is making it clear that, astrology as a method to know and do things is not un Islamic , rather believing that stars and planets are having its own capacity to influence and decide . He goes on to say that, it is the Rahu and Ketu⁵⁷ which marks difference between Islamic and Hindu astrology. But Pullara while agreeing with the point that worshipping planets and stars falls into the category of *shirk* , he is does not make any comparison between astrology among Muslims and Hindus , rather he is invoking stories which are sarcastic and comical about the way a Hindu astrologer failed to predict truth.

⁵⁷ Rahu and Ketu are two planets in addition in Hindu astrology

Thus, according to Hindu astrology, the time of an individual's birth is one of the deciding factor of his fate, the same is with astrology in Islam. But thinking that, it is because of the planets his fate is decided is shirk, rather it is the God who decided the time of his birth and the planets and stars are the ways or the signs through which you read his decision. This explanation becomes clearer when we understand another reason put forward by religious scholars.

One of my respondent explained it to me ; "*God doesn't make things happens just like that, there will always be a reason which are visible to human beings if they strive to understand it. The rain happens through a process which is understandable to us, but you cannot say that, it happens because of only that process, it is the God who makes it happen but there is a mechanism through which things happen. Astrology is also like that, it is the decision of God, who knows back and forth, is revealed through it. However there are certain things happens which you won't be able to reason, such things happens from people who are close to Allah, for example prophets*" .It can be seen that, magical things happens from people who are close to God is termed as *Mujizat*⁵⁸ if such things happens from prophets and *Karamat*⁵⁹ if it happens from other saints.

When it comes to auspicious time, other than explaining *Nahs*, Chishti gives an astrological version for the auspicious time on an hourly basis with the planets presiding those hours and the details about the activities that particular time is favourable for. This can be seen in the texts which explain Islamic healing activity too. If we look into the practise, looking for the stars and planets are important for people who are practising Islamic healing as there are specific time for performing certain activities which are part of it. One of the conditions for learning *Thwalsamth* is the knowledge about *nakshatras* and *rashis*. Thus, the knowledge about astrology in Islam is greatly held by people who are practising Islamic healing, but those people who are not into it, the usual response while asked about astrology and Islam would be the same that of Baqavi which I have mentioned in the beginning.

Chishti however goes to explain the character of people based on their *nakshatra* and *rashi*. He explains it in an elaborate way.

3.3 Ilm-al-falak- Astronomy

⁵⁸Mujizat – is the term used for the miracles by prophets

⁵⁹ Karamat- is the term used for the miracles performed by people who are pious and believed to be close to God

While discussing Islamic astrology, it is important to see how astronomy is perceived and differentiated by the Muslims. Astronomy becomes important to Muslims as they need to determine the time for five times of prayer, to determine the direction of Qibla⁶⁰. One of the controversy which occurred in the 19th and early 20th century among Kerala Muslims regarding the direction of mosques which is supposed to be in the direction of *Qibla*.

The problems began when ChalilakathKunjahammad Haji(1866-1919), came with a new method he has learned while being a student to determine the direction of Qibla. This new method mainly relied on mathematical calculations rather than the traditional system. He taught this new method to his students as well and they found out that the directions of mosques are incorrect according to their method and Chalilakath was convinced that, this needs to correct by modifying the existing mosques⁶¹. This made a huge outcry and people were jeopardized. There were public debates in which both Chalilakath and his students were on the one side and his own teacher Thattangara Kuttyamu Musliyar and Makhdoom KunjanBavaMusliyar on the other side. This controversy ended as, Kuttyamu Musliyar asked the Ulamas who agrees with the opinion that, “if the Muslims from Malabar turn towards the direction of west and perform *namaz* then it is valid” to sign in a paper where the same statement is written. This happened on the day of the public debate happened in the place called Mahi. Since, most of the Ulama’s signed except Chalilakath and a few, this controversy subsided. However, this controversy was an event which marked a new direction in the study of *ilm-al-falak* (Malayamma 2013)

Chalilakath marks a point in which *ilm-al-falak* increasingly separated from what is astrology. In the introduction of the book, *Khadi C.M. Abdulla Moulaviyude Gola Shastra Padanangal* (Astronomical studies of Khadi C.M.AbdullaMoulavi) (2013) which casts Khadi C.M.AbdullaMoulavi as the successor of Chalilakath as he expanded his studies in the way showed by him. *Kitabun Fil Buruji Wal ManasiliWaSabauSayyarathi*(A Book on Seven Stars and Their Motions) written by Kindangayam Ibrahim Musliyar (A.D 1898), as the name indicates, this text marks a time when both astrology and astronomy were together , and it makes MoinHudawi in his introduction to the works of C.M.AbdullaMoulavi that the works of Kidndangayam Ibrahim Musliyar was of a “different style”.

⁶⁰ The direction towards which Muslims stand while doing Namaz.

⁶¹ See Khadi C.M. Abdulla Moulaviyude Gola Shastra Padanangal (Astronomical studies of Khadi C.M.AbdullaMoulavi) [2013]

Ilm-al-falak was taught in Dars systematically at a point of time, however this was not a compulsory subject and not everybody taught this to their students, only those who were experts in the subject used to teach. Which means that, this subject wasn't taught like *Fiqh*(Islamic Jurisprudence) or *Tsawwuf*(spiritual science) which were very common. The texts of Chalilakath were taught in Dars for a long period of time, the book written by him, *Hashiyathul- Ala-Risalathul-Maradeeni* (Studies of Maradeeni, An Interpretation) which had techniques to find the time of *namaz* using quadrant as well as *Risalathul Hisab* (A treatise on Mathematics) which had the technique to find the same through *abjad*⁶² (Moin 2013).

An analysis into the works of Khadi C.M.AbdullaMoulavi regarding astronomy gives us an insight towards the extend of particular view point which C.M.AbdullaMoulavi developed. He and the books he has written becomes very important, as he as a figure is far more influential among the Sunni Muslims in Kerala as well as the book he has written and the power it yields Moin Hudawi Malayamma(2013) in his collection of articles written by C.M.AbdullaMoulavi regarding astronomy gives a brief summary of the works of Abdulla Moulavi.

- *Isthiqraju Auqathisswalatiwasumoothilqiblathi ala thwareekhhisablogaritham* (Finding the time of prayers and the direction of Qibla using logarithm) is the book written by C.M.AbdullaMoulavi. Since the determination of prayer times as well as the direction of Qibla was an important aspect, ilm-al-meeqat (science of fixed positions) which helped to find the exact position of planets, emerged. There were experts called as *Muvakkith* who will be taking care of these things employed in important mosques. Sibt-al-Maridini(1423 – 1506 AD), an Egyptian astronomer and his work *Risālaft al- 'Amal bi- 'l- rub ' al- mujayyab*(on using the sine quadrant) as well as *Risalat-al-Hisab* were taught in Dars. However, the mathematical method used in the book, *Risalat-al-Hisab* was the one using *abjad*, which was very tough to use. Instead of *abjad*, C.M.AbdullaMoulavi introduced Logarithm which made the calculation much easier.
- Ilm-al-Falak (Astronomy) which can be translated as astronomy is another book written by C.M.AbdullaMoulavi. He argues in this book that, the books taught in *Dars* about il-al-falak were that of written around the concept of a geocentric system. Since the claims of a geo centric world is proved false scientifically , they need to

⁶² Abjad is a number system in which the Arabic letters are given numerical values

learn *ilm-al-falak* of a heliocentric world, and this work of him is an attempt towards it.

- *Al BuswilathulMignadheesiyyaWanfirahua Anil JihathilAsliyya*(Magnetic Compass and its Deviation). In this book , he is trying to explain about how to overcome the errors when the direction of Qibla or anything else is decided using a magnetic compass.
- *TaweedulFikari Wal Himam.* Basically this is a mathematical work , in which the basic mathematics like, logarithm, trigonometry is included , which is useful in determining the direction Qibla as well as the time for *namaz*.
- Magnetic Compass and its Declination from Standard Direction. This is a work written in English, in which a brief history as well as working of a device called as *Tawakka*⁶³

Islamic astronomy, however existed for long time, and there was always a section of people who argued for the separation of or separated astronomy from astrology saying that, the proximity of astrology towards *shirk*. Its social as well as religious implications made astrology very difficult subject to deal with. However, there were always people who always held astrology and astronomy in proximity, like in this context the work of Kidndangayam Ibrahim Musliyar.

C.M.AbdullaMoulavi argues that, it is neither the geocentric system nor the heliocentric system that can be called as Islamic astronomy. He argues that, Islamic astronomy is something to be developed. By Islamic astronomy it means an astronomy which could align with Islamic cosmology, and he says Zuglool Ragib Muhammad Najjar(1933-) made an effort in that way, in which he argues that, there are seven skies the sun, moon, stars and the galaxies and all that visible world is the first sky and all other sky is above that. This concept of seven skies becomes an important part of Islamic cosmology as it is said in the Quran and the place of God, is believed to be beyond the seventh sky- which is called *Arsh* – that is the place where the divine throne (*kursiyy*) is placed. C.M.Moulavi goes on to quote Raghīb where he says that, seven earth which means the seven plates of earth. Moulavi says that, although there were many references about stars and skies in Quran, it is basically not a text intended to teach astronomy. Thus, he is pointing out towards efforts which are in need to make an Islamic astronomy with “scientific” backing.

⁶³ A traditional devise to decide time

Throughout in his articles on *ilm-al-falak* C.M. Abdulla Moulavi is trying to make a compatibility between the modern astronomy with that of verses from Quran, for example while explaining Newton's law of universal gravitation, he invokes the Quran verses from below:

It is Allah who erected the heavens without pillars that you [can] see; then He established Himself above the Throne and made subject the sun and the moon, each running [its course] for a specified term. He arranges [each] matter; He details the signs that you may, of the meeting with your Lord, be certain. (13:2)

When it comes to astrology, he is defining astrology as the belief that, it is the planets which are having the capacity to make things happen and therefore believing in it is *shirk*. He however is not making any comments on astrology in Islam rather he associates it with the Hindu traditions. Two possible reasons for this silence could be that, he is either thinking that, it is better to keep silence over astrology, which is not popular in Islam as it is in Hinduism, as well as talking about it may derail or is inappropriate in a work in which he is trying to make it look more scientific, or it could also be the case that, it is the role of Ulama's to adjust Islamic practices with that of modern knowledge, or it could be anything else.

3.4 Islamic Vastu

Vastu is the local term for the rules which are to be followed while building a new house or any other building for the well being of the people living in it. What is known as *Vastu Shastra* is basically comes with an understanding of the universe with a cosmology in it. Not following the rules of is often attributed to the misfortunes of those who are living in it. Although it is often associated with the Hindu belief system, here I am trying to make an attempt to understand the understanding of the same among Muslims. I will be analysing two books, which in a way represents two distinctive understanding as well as capture the controversies along with it. The basic question is whether not following *Vastu* is going to have any influence or not and what are the Islamic reasoning's provided by both. The two books which are analysed here is that of, the one written by Hakkim Konompara titled, *Kannimoolayilode Kufri Lekku (Becoming Unislamic through South West Corner)* [n.d.] which is stringently critiquing the belief around south-west corner of a plot, and Syed Alavi Thangal Chalissery titled *Muslim Vastu Shastram Adhava Dosha Mukta*

Bhavanam(Muslim Vaastu Shastram or a home without affliction) (Mention year of publication) is not only explaining the importance of following Vastu, but also trying to make it Islamic.

Let's begin with the arguments of Hakkim Konompara and his critique of Vastu. He is basically looking into the practise of Vastu through what is known as *Kannimoola* , the south-west corner of a particular plot which is believed as the corner occupied by devil, thus there should not be a toilet, or septic tank or a well as it may make the devil occupied it makes angry and it poses grave danger for the people living in it.

He begins with critiquing the concept of *Vastu Deva* itself, by explaining the concept itself. "After killing Andhakasura , one drop of sweat from the forehead of Lord Shiva has dropped to the earth. From that drop of sweat a monster has emerged and it sucked the blood of the whole Andhakasura tribe. He then made Lord Shiva appear by meditation and asked for the capacity to swallow three worlds and his wish was granted. He fell to the earth after it, at this moment Devas and Asuras kept Vastu Purusha there and he was not able to move. He begged for mercy and they gave him power over land and the buildings built on it. Thus it has become important to please him before building anything over it .

Konompara argues that, Vastu Purusha is a Hindu deity by invoking the prayers offered to him. Thus, while building a new house or anything on a plot, it is important to please *Vastu Purusha* by adhering to the rules which are meant to respect the position of *Vastu Purush* , if one follows the rules he is believed to be blessed by him, otherwise whoever stays in that home is supposed to be afflicted with bad luck and diseases.

It is believed that, south-west of any particular plot is ruled by an *rakshasa* while all other corners are ruled by Deva's , thus that particular corner is known as *Kannimoola*. That corner is supposed to be left empty , and neither toilets, not even septic tanks as well as no well should not be there. If someone built anything of the above there, since the *rakshasa* is more reactive, there will be bad things happening in the family of the person who is residing there.

Konompara goes on to quote Kanippayyoor Krishnan Namboothrippadu , who is a famous Hindu astrologer in Kerala, there Kanippayyoor talks about *kannimoola* where he says that, that part of a plot is basically intended for women who takes rest after giving birth , since there are lot of "impurities" involved in the process after it, and if that corner of the plot is fir for such activities, then it is obvious that, it can be used for any purposes, except that, the

well should not be in that corner. If it becomes necessary to dig a well in that corner, then that space should be separated as a different plot, which will resolve the issue. HakkimKonompara cites the use of *yantaras*⁶⁴ in order to avoid any *doshas*. Konompara takes these points and argues that, it is not necessary that you demolish a toilet or any part of building citing *Vastu Dosha*, thus why there is a need for Muslims to follow this build and modify their buildings accordingly. It is the belief in the god and entrusting him of affairs is what expected from Muslims rather than following the *Vastu Shastra* which involves pleasing of a Hindu deity which amounts to *shirk*. He expresses shock over the involvement of people who believed to be *Alims*⁶⁵ are following these kind of practises.

Konompara has referred the book written by Syed Alavi Thangal Chalissery titled *Muslim VasstuShastramAdhavaDosha Mukta Bhavanam*(Muslim Vaastu Shastram or a home without affliction)(Year of publication) and this work takes quite a different approach from Konompara. Chalissery practices what he calls Muslim *vastu shastra*.

Chalissery observes that, in different districts of Kerala, Muslims are following different kinds of vastu. He argues for it to structure in an Islamic way and begins with modifying *Vastu Purusha*, interestingly by making he says that, in the present state of *Vastu Purusha* his head is towards north-east of a plot and his feet is towards south-west.

It is interesting to see, how the idea of Vastu Purushan is made “Islamic” by Chalissery. He says that the concept of Vastu Purushan gives is that of, the good things like that of concerned with life, prayer, meditation etc, it is the west and north which are auspicious for it and for the thing which needs to be removed is that of south and east. He says that, however in Vasstu Shastra these things are arranged in the opposite way and it is not the duty of Muslims to follow these kind of corrupted beliefs, rather he says that it is the Vastupursha needs to be facing the west, towards the Qibla⁶⁶ which is what he calls Muslim *Vastu Shastram*. May be in order to avoid the awkwardness of identifying *VastuPurushan* with that of the Hindu concept of the same, he later explain the meaning of it; VastuPurushan means, the man(purushan) lying down in the house or building(vastu)meditating the God, which obviously means his face towards the west and his back side facing the east. Such a concept he says is that of Islamic *Vastu Shastra*.

⁶⁴ A Yantram basically means a talisman which is supposed to prevent any afflictions

⁶⁵ Alim is the Arabic term used for a knowledgeable person

⁶⁶ In Islam it is a Sunnah to sleep facing the Qibla. Here, Syed AlaviThangalChalissery is trying to make the same model.

He talks about the importance of using odd numbers while fixing the size of building. He gives an example of the problems happened in a family in which there were three people, a father mother and a son. When the son got married, he became mad and once he got divorced he became normal. He then again went on to marry and again became mad. The problems according to Chalissery was that of *Vastu* as all the measurements (hand measurement which is locally known as *kolkannakku*) were in even numbers, as in the existing three people another person came and it lead to imbalances. He then quotes from the Qura and says that, it is the even numbers which needs to be considered as it will bring peace.

While thinking about build a new building, it is important to take care of *vastu*. If it is a big plot, it should be divided into four and then since the south-east corner is the corner of devil's , that corner needs to be avoided and kept void while building the new building. The difference here is that, the south west corner which is known as *Kannimoola*, which was known as the corner of devil or *rakshasa* is in the plan of Chalissery is south-east. The difference comes from his modification in which he believes the west is sacred as it is the direction towards Qibla. But however, it is clear that he is not completely denying the notion of *vastushastra* , rather he is “modifying” it to look Islamic.

He then explains *VastuDosha's*⁶⁷. Chalissery points out that, if a stove or hearth in the kitchen is placed against the position of well in a plot then there is going to be a lot of fight in the family. If the position of the well in a plot is in the south –east or south –west then it may cause grave problems like loss of life and money, diseases, chronicpoverty etc. Although Chalissery the position of *vastu purusha* from the original form, and did not took the concept of *kannimoola* , which means the concept of south-west corner of a plot being considered as occupied by a *rakshasa* , he agrees with the opinion of Kanippayoor that, digging well in that corner is going to cause *vastudosha* and that corner is fine otherwise.

The position of well is an important thing too. The stove or hearth in the kitchen is supposed to be in the direction of well. He also says that, well cannot be in the direction of east or south and if someone do it then it is going to make lot of issues for the people residing there including loss of life. He again reiterates that, the kitchen should not be in the side of south-

⁶⁷VastuDosha means the afflictions which is believed to happen to people when they are not following Vastu Shastra rules for building

east direction. This direction is possessed by devil according to Chalissery as this direction is respected by Hindu's⁶⁸.

The auspiciousness of land is also something to be concerned about according to Chalissery. If there is any dead body buried in the land, and if someone makes a building over it, then it may lead to grave issues for the people who are living on it. However, if they are certain about the place of the body buried, then they could dig six feet down and remove the entire soil from there, in order to avoid any possible afflictions due to it.

Another thing is that of what is called *Ethirpokku* or *Thervazcha*⁶⁹ in which Chalissery says that, if there is a temple in the western part, there will be a temple on the eastern side and the devil's are going to pass from one to another. If the house is built in their way, then again it may lead to lot of issues in the lives of people who are living there. This can be identified as the trees or plants in those areas may seem wilted.

There is a practise of burying gold under the main entrance of the home while construction among Muslims too, but Chalissery thinks that is actually a gift to *Vastu Devan* and is a practise Muslims shouldn't be doing. He also thinks that, the practices at the beginning of construction which is locally known as *Kuttiyadiakal*⁷⁰ is also something which involves practices by non-Muslims like that of using the part of a tree which is locally known as *Pala Maram*⁷¹; is that of pleasing devils, it should be known as the particular tree is associated with practices which involves magic.

The direction of stove or hearth in is actually in the direction of east in most cases among Muslims , however Chalissery contests this as an Un Islamic practise. He says that, such a practise is a part of tradition which involves the worship of sun. He argues that, it is the lower caste people who were made to do it in this way while the Brahmins were having it in the direction of west. He also gives a piece of "history" in which he says that, according to carpenters the direction of the hearth in the kitchen were towards the north while the Brahmins had it towards the west. The practise of keeping it towards is just aneighth hundred year old practise and they were made them to do it by upper caste, for in auspicious things.

⁶⁸ There is an interesting dynamics emerging in which what is God to someone is what is evil to someone else, neither of them are denying its existence.

⁶⁹ Ethirpokku or Thervazcha is the term used for the believed journey of devils from one temple to another

⁷⁰ Kuttiyadiakal denotes the ceremony at the beginning of construction in which wooden sticks are placed

⁷¹ Pala tree is also known as devil tree, black board tree, milk wood-pine , its scientific term is *Alstonia* Scholaris which is believed to be the tree of devils as the name indicates

3.5 Divination

Astrology is an important divinatory technique. However, there are other methods which help in finding lost items, people etc. What is known as *Palkanakku* is a popular divinatory technique among the Muslims. But is *Palkanakku* something just a technique that everybody could use or is it exclusive to Muslims? Chishti (2015) says that, it has stopped giving results to those people who are in greed of money and weren't being pious. He also invokes that, his other translations of magical books, was being used by non-Muslims and warns others that, they were backfired at them as they weren't doing it properly as obviously, they were not being pious Muslims. Also, he advises people not to misuse it, like making issues between people, breaking the relationships and warn them of doing it as they have to answer to all these on the day of judgement⁷².

Palkanakku (n.d.) basically contains columns with letters in it and the person is supposed to touch the column with a devoted mind and then find the interpretations which are given later about each column. To be exact, described by Hakim. M. Muhammad Musliyar in his book, *Palkanakku* (n.d.) about the method of doing it: "With having clear intention about what is in need to know through this method, one is supposed to recite Surah Fatiha, the first chapter in Quran thrice in the name of prophet and once in the name of the person to who made this particular *Palkanakku*. Then after closing the eyes, touch in the column. In a few *Palkanakku*, the columns basically contain a single Arabic letter. After opening the eyes, the next five letters are also needs to look at, and then if try to read it together you will get a verse from Quran which is given with *Palkanakku* along with its interpretation.

Hakim.M.MuhammadMusliyar in his *Palkanakku* gives different types of it for different needs, which according to him is made by Ibn Arabi. There is a wide variety of *Palkanakku*, for different matters, for example to know whether something will happen or not, whether a person will go for Hajj or not, whether a journey which is going to take place will yield results or not, whether there is going to be a war, to know the release about someone who is jailed, to know the sex of prenatal, to know whether someone will be able to marry the women he is intending to etc. There are also methods to find the thief, like to know the direction towards which thief is left, the look, to know Muslim or non Muslim etc. *Ramlis*

⁷² Day of judgment is the belief among Muslims, as all of their actions in life will be counted and have to go through a trial.

another divinatory technique. The method is basically about putting dots in a row without counting, with a pious mind. Later these dots are interpreted.

Dream interpretation is something very renowned in Islam. Ibn Sirin(AD 653-729) is the tallest figure in dream interpretation and small books in the name of him is quite popular. Not every dream is considered to be worthy of an interpretation, some are considered to originate from the devil. The time before *Fajr*⁷³ and the dream saw at that time yields special importance and worthy of interpretation.

3.6 Conclusion

So far, in this chapter we were analysing the way astrology and other divinatory practices practised and perceived by the Muslims of Kerala. The views are analysed through the writings of people who are influential among the Muslims as they are in some way representational. Obviously major focus was given to the opinions and practices by the Sunnis who form the majority of Kerala Muslims. Whenever there is going to be a discussion over these things, there are people who absolutely reject the existence of these things. But more focus was given to people who were on the borders as well as people who practiced and explained how they reasoned it which makes the case more interesting in scope and inquiry

The important concept we were encountering while discussing astrology is that of the concept of *Shirk* which plays in all the discussions around astrology. Those people who are arguing for astrology are very careful to make a distinction saying that, God always do things through a reason or sign and astrology helps us to identify those signs. The moment someone believes it is the stars and planets which are in control of affairs then it becomes a *Shirk*.

As a practice we could see that, astrology and other divinatory techniques are practiced by Islamic healers, it is a must to have the knowledge of rashi and nakshatras for the people who are doing it, as identifying the time favourable for particular acts is important. At a popular level, what is called *Nahs* , looking for auspicious time is also important thing. If we look into Islamic astronomy and its take on it by C.M.Abdulla Moulavi , we could see that there is not only an attempt to make it scientific, but also snubs astrology associating it with Hindu texts and not talking about the relationship between Islam and astrology, the same strategy is

⁷³ The term for the namaz performed in the early morning.

adopted by Konompara too by talking about the mistakes happened to an astrologer. We could also see that there were texts which contained both astronomy and astrology together. But it is importance to see that, astrology was there along with astronomy with more importance. But the truth is that, we cannot think about someone writing astrology and astronomy together these days even if he makes a clear distinction between both of them. It is also interesting to see how the Qibla controversy erupted which brought a new way of identifying the direction of it through mathematics challenging the old ways which gives an interesting insight into the development of astronomy among the Muslims of Kerala.

Islamic Vastu makes an interesting case as it represents an obvious plurality and how these things are confronted. Through the writings of Hakkim Konompara as well Syed Alavi Thangal Chalissery, we could sense a glimpse of reality about what is happening. The way a building is built is believed to have an effect on the people who are living in it. Hakkim Konompara confronts this through by questioning the concept of Vastu Devan itself and explain the Hindu mythology behind it to show that any of such practices are Un Islamic as it involves believing in someone other than God. He is basically looking into the belief of south-west corner of a plot is occupied by the devil which needs to be taken care while building it. Syed Alavi Thangal Chalissery is however is trying for an Islamic *vastu shastra* itself by trying to modify it by bringing in Islamic values such as a reverence towards the side of Qibla and the preference of that side for good things. Chalissery is also seen as worried about Muslims follows diverse kind of Vastu which makes the case for his version of “Islamic Vastu”. It can be seen that, in the works of Pullara, he is trying to differentiate between the auspiciousness and astrology, but at the same time we could see that Chalissery in his attempt to make an Islamic Vastu Shastra, is trying to negotiate with Hindu Vastu Shastra at the same time. Konompara is however is trying to take on the superstitious belief among the Muslims. What we could make out from the work of both of these people is that , the Muslims in Kerala is follows different kind of Vastu Shastra , which they accuse is comes from the Hindu myth of Vastu Purusha.

Conclusion

In the context of south Asia, the dominant form of astrology is that of Hindu astrology. In such a context, how Islamic astrology as a system of knowledge is able to make a distinction from the Hindu astrology and how it is negotiating with both Hindu astrology as well as the contestations within Islam is what given focus in this study. In that pursuit, the practice and theory of astrology among the Mappila Muslims of Kerala is examined by looking into the two dominant astrological texts. It then goes on to look into the contemporary debates about astrology among them looking into the small books through which different opinions which are of representative in character is examined.

We have begun this dissertation with the question of whether there is astrology among Muslims, and if there is how they reason it out. Along with that, the very context from which the question of whether there is astrology or not is emerging is also examined. Astrology or other divinatory practices are not something very popular among the Muslims, but it is something which comes as part of Muslim healing practice, which is taught secretly. From where the secretiveness is coming from as well as, the reasons behind this cautious approach towards these things is also something we have discussed.

As anthropologist, the important question while analysing astrology and other divinatory practices in Islam, comes is that of how to constitute Islam as an object of anthropological enquiry. The attempt of El-Zein to define the same is however ends without making much headway. Talal Asad however shows the particular lenses through which Muslim communities looked after by Ernest Gellner, Clifford Geertz etc. He takes on the work of Gellner particularly as he thinks that, his work “Muslim Society” is representative in character as many of the anthropologists, as well as many others write in the same way. Asad takes on the comparison made between Middle East and Europe as the locus of Islam and Christianity respectively, such a comparison is not only problematic , but also doesn't give a proper picture. The Middle East was not only inhabited by Muslims, which was also inherited by Jews and Christian and were an integral part of the society there. Asad argues that, such a difference is not something to be ignored as it makes an important difference between European and Middle Eastern society.

The point is thus to make sense of the diversity and difference. Asad shows that, the organizing ideas used by Gellner looking at the Islam among the tribal's with a Durkheimian approach and then the Islam among the urban poor as the opium of the masses, and the bourgeoisie in the city from a Weberian approach is incompatible as each of these are different textual constructions.

Gellner, Geertz and their way of looking at Muslim societies as an enactment of drama as well as the subject's who "behave"- to Asad all these kind of conceptualisations shows the urgent need of a concept through which a coherent anthropology of Islam is made possible. It is by introducing the concept of discursive tradition; Asad is looking for a coherent anthropology of Islam. An Islamic discursive tradition is a tradition of Muslim discourse which addresses itself to the conceptions of Islamic past and future, with reference to a particular Islamic practice in the present. Asad also brings forth the ideological opposition between tradition and reason by anthropologists and Orientalists, and attributing the reason in the tradition as a sign of the crisis. Asad denies the ideological opposition between tradition and reason and argues that, there is reason inherent in each tradition. The task of anthropologist is thus to unearth those reason in each tradition, the process, power and resistance. It is what precisely that I have tried to do in this dissertation.

The notion of predestination, that is qadr as well as the notion of shirk, that is associating anyone or anything with the singular God, are the important concepts in Islam. What we could see in all these is that astrology is something which often accused of shirk at the same time is associated with the concept of qadr. We could see that, these two concepts plays an important role in the debates and controversies about astrology and helps us to make sense of contradiction's as in the case of Ibn Khaldun who at the same time argues against astrology but at the same time calls Timur as the lord of conjunction. What infuriates Ibn Tymiyyah is also that of the possibility of shirk.

Islamic eschatology is also something which gives a scope for astrology. In the work of Afzar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign* (2017), we have seen that the sovereign claims were being made based on the messianic myth, and the social process through which an amalgamation of kingship and sainthood, astrology had an important role, whether it is in the case of lord of conjunction or mahdi or mujaddid. It can be seen that it was more pervasive.

The two dominant texts among the Mappila Muslims of Kerala , *Paropakram Tarjuma* and *Nujoominte Kanakku* shows the practice and theory of astrology among the Mappila Muslims

of Kerala. It explains itself about how to do each thing as well as there is an element of localisation in which the Malayalam names of stars and planets come back and forth. By explaining the “history” behind each astrological practices , as in the case of explaining the stars of Jinns and the possible afflictions they may cause and the place in which they reside etc are given , but the source of these knowledge is given as that comes from Prophet Sulaiman. Such an invocation of myth presented as “history”, can be seen in many other things. There are divinatory techniques in the name of Prophet Daniel, there are many other things in the name of many other tall figures of Muslims, both historical and mythical. This invocation in a way negotiates the internal contestations within Islam about astrology and other divinatory practices.

The two dominant astrological texts gives an important view about the practice and theory of astrology and other divinatory practices among the Muslims of Kerala. The internal contestations about the practice of astrology and other divinatory practices in the is explored through by looking at the contestations made by each sections among the Muslims of Kerala through those small books which are popular as well as authoritative. There are not only internal contestations, but also external negotiations as we see in the case of Vastu. The attempts of making Vastu Shastra Islamic by removing the mythology of Vastu Purusha from it, and the criticism of not following a homogenous Vastu by the Muslims is a classical example of internal contestations as well as external negotiations. Both astrology and astronomy is something which co existed at until the beginning of modern era. From the analysis of astronomy among the Muslims of Kerala, it can be seen that an attempt to make it more scientific makes people to snub astrology as entirely an affair of Hindus. It can also be seen that, astronomical texts were written by people who knows astrology.

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